

*Richard the Redeless
and
Mum and the Sothsegger*

Preface

This volume makes available two somewhat neglected yet significant and instructive Middle English alliterative texts that are usually read in conjunction with William Langland's *Piers Plowman*. The texts, both anonymous, are *Richard the Redeless*, which concerns the governmental style of Richard II (1367–1400; reigned 1377–99), and *Mow and the Sothesegger*, which addresses social issues in the reign of Henry IV (1367–1413; reigned 1399–1413). They should be assigned reading not only for those interested in the later reception of *Piers Plowman* but also for those seeking to understand literary and historical forces in late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century England. *Richard the Redeless* — focusing on events in and around 1399 — offers an often regretful, sometimes sharp critique of Richard's kingship under the guise of advice; *Mow and the Sothesegger* provides a satirical look at bureaucratic institutions during Henry's regime. Both works reveal that alliterative poetry in the *Piers Plowman* tradition continued to be the chief vehicle for political and social criticism at the turn of the fourteenth century. Both are in the "advice to princes" genre exploited to a limited degree by John Gower in *Fox Clamantis*, Book 7 of the *Confessio Amantis*, *In Praise of Peace*, *O Deus Iuniorum*, and other poems; by Geoffrey Chaucer in *The Tale of Melibee*, *Lak of Stedfastnesse*, and (jestingly) in the *Complainte of Chaucer to his Piarce*; and by Thomas Hoccleve in his *Regiment of Princes*. Issues of good government and the common profit — the concerns of *Richard the Redeless* and *Mow and the Sothesegger* — were much on the minds of Ricardian and Henrician writers.

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*Chronology of Events Relating to Richard the Redeless
& Mum and the Sothsegger*

c. 1330	Birth of Langland
1337	Earliest English sumptuary law (restricted clothing according to class) Hundred Years' War begins
1348–49	Great Plague
1351	First Statute of Provisors (allowing English crown patronage in ecclesiastical preferment)
1353	First Statute of Praemunire (antipapal legislation)
1363	Sumptuary laws restricting clothing and food according to specific estates
1366	Birth of Henry Bolingbroke, Earl of Derby, later Henry IV
1367	Birth of Richard of Bordeaux, later Richard II (reigned 1377–99)
1368–74	<i>Piers Plowman A-text</i>
1376	Death of Edward, the Black Prince, Richard of Bordeaux's father (8 June) Good Parliament at Westminster (Commons, with Peter de la Mare as spokesman, draft 146 articles of complaint against the king's councillors, including the chamberlain, Lord Latimer, who is executed)
1377–81	<i>Piers Plowman B-text</i>
1377	Death of Edward III Richard crowned king in July

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1378	Great Schism, with rival popes in Rome and Avignon
1381-85	<i>Piers Plowman</i> C-text
1381	Great Rising (Peasants' Revolt)
1382	William Courtenay, Archbishop of Canterbury, and a London Council condemn twenty-four of Wyclif's propositions (ten as heretical and fourteen as erroneous)
	Statute against Itinerant Preachers
1384	Death of Wyclif
c. 1386	Death of Langland
1386	Robert de Vere, Richard's favorite, Earl of Oxford and Marquis of Dublin (1385), created Duke of Ireland
	Wonderful Parliament: Duke of Gloucester challenges Richard's "evil ministers"; succeeds in ousting the chancellor, Michael de la Pole, and others from office. A commission is established to reform (and in effect to rule) the government
1387	De Vere abandons his royal wife, Philippa de Coucy, for a Bohemian lady in waiting, outraging the dukes of Gloucester and Lancaster
	Lords Appellant, led by Henry Bolingbroke and including the Duke of Gloucester, challenge the Earl of Oxford at Radcot Bridge; Richard II takes refuge in the Tower of London
1388	Merciless Parliament (Westminster; February): Robert Tresilian, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, Nicholas Brembre, former Mayor of London, and Thomas Usk executed, along with four chamber knights, including Simon Barley, Richard's tutor.
	Battle of Otterburn or Chevy Chase (Scots defeat the English); 5 August

Chronology of Events

- Third Statute of Laborers in Cambridge Parliament, September (concerned with vagrancy)
- 1389 Richard II comes into his majority; rules in his own right
- 1390 Statute of Livery and Maintenance (forbids retaining private armies and identifying badges)
- Statute of Provisors (reiterating and expanding 1351 statute)
- c1390-95 Chaucer's ecclesiastical satires written (The Friar's & Summoner's Tales)
Jack Upstart
- William Woodford's reply to *Jack Upstart* (*Responsionary ad quæstiōnēs LXV*)
- 1391-93 Trial of Walter Brut, Lollard sympathizer, before Bishop Trefnant. In 1393 Brut is executed
- 1392 Richard II's quarrel with Londoners (moves Exchequer, Commons Bench, and Chancery to York)
- 1393 Great Statute of Prerogative (asserts king's right to bestow benefices in England)
Rising in Cheshire
- 1394 Hilary Parliament (quarrel between Lancaster and Arundel about Cheshire rising)
Death of Queen Anne
- 1394-95 Richard II's first expedition to Ireland
- 1395 *Twelve Concessions of the Lollards* (*Lollard Manifesto*) affixed to doores of Westminster and St. Paul's

Chronology of Events

- Cheshire yeomen and archers enlisted as King Richard's household troops; given badges with emblem of the White Hart
- c. 1395 *Piers the Plowman's Crede*
- 1396 Richard II marries Isabella of France, age 7
- 1397 Death of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, while imprisoned at Calais, in the custody of Thomas Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham
- Westminster Parliament. John Bushy appointed as speaker of the Commons. Four points of treason determined. Arrest and execution of Richard FitzAlan, Earl of Arundel; banishment of Thomas Beaufort, Earl of Warwick. At Richard's instigation, this Parliament created what Walsingham called the "daketti" (the "little dukes"), including the Earl of Derby (to Duke of Hereford); the Earl of Rutland (to Duke of Aumale); the Earl of Huntingdon (to Duke of Exeter); and the Earl of Nottingham (to Duke of Norfolk).
- Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, impeached and exiled
- 1398 Shrewsbury Parliament (accedes to king's wishes especially as regards burdensome taxation)
- King Richard interrupts judicial duel at Coventry: Henry of Hereford ("Bolingbroke"), versus Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk; Bolingbroke banished for ten years (later commuted to six)
- 1399 Death of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster (3 February)
- Henry of Hereford's banishment extended to life; Lancastrian estates confiscated
- Richard II's second Irish expedition, leaving the Duke of York as regent
- Henry of Hereford returns from banishment in Paris together with the exiled former Archbishop, Thomas Arundel (early July). Hereford moves quickly through England to Berkeley Castle, where he forced York to yield, and then marched to Bristol, executing Sir John Bushy and Sir Henry Green, two of Richard's ministers.

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	Deposition of Richard II by decree of parliamentary elements: lords spiritual and temporal (29 and 30 Sept.); accession of Henry of Lancaster as Henry IV; beginning of Lancastrian rule
	Richard II moved in secret from the Tower to Leeds Castle and then Pontefract (October)
	John Gower attaches the <i>Tripartite Chronicle</i> to <i>Fox clamantis</i>
1400	Death of Richard II (February)
	Death of Geoffrey Chaucer (25 October)
c. 1400	<i>Richard the Redeless</i>
	<i>The Plowman's Tale</i> (Chaucerian apocrypha)
	<i>There Is a Blasck That is Forgrowe</i> (On King Richard's ministers)
1401	Hilary Parliament (10 January–10 March) that paralleled Arundel's drafting of legislation on heresy (<i>De haeretico comburendo</i>) that sanctioned the burning of heretics
	William Sawtry, Lollard, burned at Smithfield for heresy
1402	Battle of Homildon Hill: Henry Hotspur defeats the Scots
	Rumors circulate — spread in part by friars — that Richard II is still alive; friars hanged on Tyburn for the treasonous report
1403	Henry IV marries Joan of Brittany (February)
	Battle of Shrewsbury (Henry IV and loyalist forces defeat the Percies; Hotspur killed)
1403–09	<i>Mum and the Soothsenger</i>

Chronology of Events

- 1404 Parliament levies taxes of two tenths and two fifteenths because of rebellions and for defense and maintenance of the realm; parliament also refuses to subsidize aliens in Henry's and Joan's households.
- 1405 Revolt of Northumberland Percies fails; Archbishop Scrope executed
- 1407-09 Archbishop Arundel's Constitutions (regulations drafted with Lollard and the suppression of Oxford University in mind)
- 1407 Arundel's examination of William Thorpe, heretic
- 1408 Death of John Gower
- 1409 Archbishop Arundel's Constitutions promulgated
- 1410 Burning of John Badby, Lollard heretic (5 March)
- 1411 Oxford board releases list of 267 heretics at the University; Oxford University compelled to submit to authority and discipline of Arundel
- 1413 Death of Henry IV; accession of Henry V
- 1414 Failure of Oldcastle Rising
- 1415 Battle of Agincourt (English defeat French)

Richard the Redeless

Introduction

In the troubled historical moment after Henry of Lancaster's deposition of Richard II, an unknown poet offered Richard retrospective — perhaps even posthumous — advice, composing, at the same time, a mirror for princes. This work has come to be known as *Richard the Redeless* — "Richard without Counsel" — because, as the work contends, Richard has been poorly advised, his kingdom mismanaged, his loyal subjects ill-served. Richard's epithet in this work seems to invoke another ill-advised king, Ethelred II, who was characterized after his death as "unred" (mistranslated as "the Unready"). The author expects that the advice he provides in his poetic treatise will help guide the kingdom in future years. If a Christian king were to pay close attention to his advice, he declares, "Ther mys no governour on the grounde ne sholdc gyc [govern] him the better" (Prol.42). He wants to counsel "my kyng and the lordis" (Prol.49). Therefore he endeavors, with all his faculties, "To travelle on this tretis, to teche men therafter / To be war of wylfulness, lest wondris arise" (Prol.51–52). He strives for the "public voice" that Anne Middleton¹ has identified as distinctive of Ricardian literature.

Richard the Redeless offers an important witness to political events and their meanings in late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century England. The poem centers on the year 1399, when Richard was in Ireland fighting the "wilde Yrisshe" (Prol.10) while Henry of Hereford (surnamed Bolingbroke), first son of John of Gaunt, had just returned from banishment in Paris, dispossessed of his Lancastrian inheritance by an increasingly imperious King Richard after Gaunt's death on 3 February. The point of departure for the poem occurs when the narrator arrives at Christ Church in Bristol — such is the fiction — and overhears political arguments for and against both King Richard and Henry. The poet also ranges back to previous political events, such as the Appellants' challenge to Richard at Radcot Bridge (1387), the Merciless Parliament of 1388, and the Shrewsbury Parliament of 1398, when Richard banished Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, for life and Henry Bolingbroke for ten years.

The premise of *Richard the Redeless* is that the king was thrust into office at too early an age for himself and for the kingdom: "Ye come to youre kyngdom er ye yourself knewe" (1.32). Richard was only eleven when King Edward III, his grandfather, died in 1377. Richard's father, the Black Prince, who would have inherited the kingship, died a year before his father,

¹ "The Idea of Public Poetry in the Reign of Richard II," *Sproutum* 53 (1978), 94–114.

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with the result that Richard was elevated before he or anybody was prepared for the event. Richard's uncle, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, fourth son of Edward, served as regent of England until Richard declared himself ready to govern in his own right (1389). In hindsight it is not difficult to see that Richard managed his kingdom poorly, especially in the final years of his reign, after the death of Gaunt. His reign fostered fear, mistrust, and anger; and his contemporaries judged his kingship far more in light of the deposed King Edward II than his much-revered son, Edward III.

The story of Richard's kingship largely concerns issues and quarrels within his family. The first crisis of Richard's reign was the Great Rising of 1381, which the king helped to calm.⁷ The second crisis occurred in 1387–88, shortly after John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, departed England to pursue opportunities in Spain. The Duke of Gloucester (younger brother of Lancaster), Richard, Earl of Arundel, and Thomas, Earl of Warwick — core of the group known as the Appellants — presented grievances to parliament concerning the king's favorites, especially the despised Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, whom the king had recently elevated, first, to the rank of marquis of Dublin and then to Duke of Ireland.⁸ De Vere scandalized the court by divorcing his royal wife — Richard's cousin — for a Bohemian lady-in-waiting of the queen's court. The general sentiment held that this nouveau duke and his friends exercised far too much influence on the young king. Among the king's several misuses in this episode was his declaration that he would seek aid from the French king, a statement which alarmed Gloucester and others. The Appellants were further roused when Richard ordered Londoners not to have business dealings with Arundel. On 14 November 1387, at Waltham Cross, where many had rallied in their support, the Appellants offered a formal accusation against five of Richard's friends and trusted advisors: Sir Michael de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk (erstwhile chancellor), Robert de Vere, Sir Robert Tresilian (chief justice of the King's Bench), Sir Nicholas Bremer (formerly mayor of London), and Alexander Neville, (Archbishop of York). The chronicler Henry Knighton calls these "the five evil seducers of the king."⁹ At the invitation of mediators, they took their case to parliament, at Westminster

⁷ For a brief survey of the details of this momentous event in British history, see "Literature of Richard II's Reign and the Peasants' Revolt," in *Medieval English Political Writings*, ed. Dean, pp. 119–22. For extended treatment of the documents, see *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381*, ed. R. B. Dobson, second ed. (London: Macmillan, 1983).

⁸ Derek Pearsall, in *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), calls Gloucester, youngest son of Edward III, an "explosion waiting to happen" because he was so frequently ignored or passed over for honors, including the Order of the Garter. Pearsall characterizes Gloucester as "an irascible man at the best of times and a great nurser of grievances" (p. 199).

⁹ Henry Knighton, *Knighton's Chronicle, 1337–1398*, p. 392. Knighton's phrase is "quinq[ue] nephevi seductores regis."

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Hall, where the king seemed to reach an accord with the Appellants for disposition of their impeachments in February of the new year. But the king failed to arrest the accused, who slipped away (some in disguise), with the exception of Brebree. De Vere fled to Chester and returned with forces, but the Appellants, now joined by Henry Bolingbroke, learned of his plans and blocked his route to London, trapping him at Radcot Bridge, Oxfordshire. He displayed the royal banner but was caught between the forces of Bolingbroke and Gloucester. Although de Vere managed to escape, the royalist forces were routed, forcing Richard to seek safety in the Tower. "The country was, in effect, in a state of insurrection."¹ The appellants arranged a parley with the king in the Tower and apparently uttered strong words to him about his conduct, while the king threw himself on their mercy and asked only that his royal dignity be preserved. At the February parliament the five appellants — Gloucester, Derby, Nottingham, Arundel, and Warwick — charged Richard's ministers with "accroaching" royal prerogatives, demanding that the accused appear to answer the indictments against them; but this they failed to do. The lords temporal pondered thirty-nine articles against the accused and pronounced the four absentee lords guilty of treason and subject to full penalties of the law (the archbishop, however, subject to papal judgment). After some political maneuvering, including a cascade of gloves thrown at Richard's feet by the Appellants and others when he defended Brebree, the lords found Brebree guilty of treason, and he was condemned on 20 February. When Tresilian was discovered in hiding in Westminster, he was executed at Tyburn. Brebree was similarly dispatched the next day. Others also lost their heads as a result of this parliament, which has come to be known as the Merciless Parliament (*unus misericordia*). Despite Richard and the queen's intercession, Sir Simon Barley, formerly the king's tutor, was executed along with three other chamber knights.

The final crisis of Richard's reign occurred in the years 1397–1400, when Richard settled old scores with the Appellants, became increasingly autocratic and tyrannical, and lost his throne and then his life in the Lancastrian revolution. The extended crisis might be said to begin when Thomas Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham, one of the original Appellants, reported to the king that the Appellants had met and devised plots against him at Arundel Castle. There the Appellants, by report, agreed to make common cause against the king and the Duke of Lancaster. When he learned of this, Richard ordered the arrest of Arundel and Warwick, imprisoning them in the Tower. The king himself went to Pleshey in Essex to secure Gloucester (the "Swan" in *Richard the Redeless*' beast allegory),² who, when he begged for clemency, was told he would receive just the same mercy he had shown to Simon Barley at

¹ D. W. Robertson, Jr., *Chaucer's London*, p. 165. For an extended treatment of the events involving the appellants, see Nigel Saul, *Richard II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 185–96.

² See Passus III, lines 26–29 and notes to those lines and *There Is a Blaunch That Is Forgrave*, in *Medieval English Political Writings*, pp. 150–51, lines 13, 20, and 25, and notes to those lines.

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the Merciless Parliament; and though his uncle was ill, Richard sent him to Calais where he died under suspicious circumstances in Nottingham's custody. Richard held his last parliament in London at Westminster Hall in September of 1397, with his Cheshire archers allegedly in attendance, armed and badged. Richard had formed his own band of appellants, who impeached the Earl of Arundel, Richard Fitzalan (the "Horse"). Arundel was denied a trial by combat and, on orders of John of Gaunt, executed on Tower Hill. Warwick (the "Bear") confessed to treason and was sentenced to perpetual exile on the Isle of Man. At the Shrewsbury Parliament (1398), Henry Bolingbroke, now Duke of Hereford, accused Mowbray (now Norfolk) of informing him that Richard intended to do away with both of them. Norfolk denied this and a judicial duel was arranged for 16 September at Coventry, but Richard halted the duel at the last minute and banished Norfolk for life and Bolingbroke for ten years (later commuted to six). John of Gaunt, who had managed the kingdom during Richard's minority, died in February of 1399, leaving Richard to his own counsel. Richard in quick order demanded "blank charters" of lords (in effect, blank checks) and seized the duchy of Lancaster, thereby depriving Henry Bolingbroke, in exile in France, of his inheritance while at the same time altering Bolingbroke's sentence to banishment for life. These measures alarmed the temporal lords as they became aware that their property and inheritances were no longer secure. Meanwhile Richard took this opportunity to sail to Ireland for a second expedition. While he was there Henry Bolingbroke decided to return to England to look after his interests, landing at Ravenspur in Yorkshire. He made his way across country to Pontefract, his ancestral seat, and then quickly to Bristol, which is when and where *Richard the Redeless* begins. When the king returned to England from Ireland, events rapidly overtook him: Hereford arrived in Chester before Richard and his troops; the Duke of Aumale (the Duke of York's son) and Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester, deserted Richard for Henry. Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, and Thomas Arundel trapped Richard in Conway castle in North Wales, offering him terms from Bolingbroke; Richard departed Conway only to fall into a trap and was conveyed to Flint Castle as a prisoner and then transferred to the Tower in London; documents were composed stating that Richard voluntarily resigned his crown and that he wished his heir to be Henry of Lancaster; Henry assumed the throne as Henry IV, his accession backdated to 30 September 1399 in the Rolls of Parliament.

While these historical particulars are important for understanding the miliea of *Richard the Redeless*, the poem is not a verse chronicle but a critique of Richard's kingship and his court. The narrator, who terms his poem a "writte" (Prol.31) or a "tretis" (Prol.51), is very explicit about blaming — and identifying — Richard as the source of problems. In the line that includes the poem's modern title, he accuses Richard of "lawlessly" conducting his life — not just of being poorly advised — and of governing his people with equal disregard for law and custom (1.2). At the beginning of Passus I the narrator assembles the accusations against Richard: greed and waste have ruined his kingship (1.3–8); fiscal deceit, treachery, and theft have impoverished the realm, along with heavy taxation in peacetime, all for the extravagance

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and waste of Richard's court (lines 11–18). The narrator skillfully distinguishes between a specific monarch, Richard, and his kingship, symbolized by the royal crown with its virtuous gems. He depicts Richard's court as corrupt and self-indulgent, pillaging from common people, including farmers, and lavish in its amusements. Other authors of this time wrote satires about the English court — for example, the anonymous composer of *On the Tyme* ("Syng I wolde, butt, alas!"), *Tax Hys Tenuis Alle, or There Is a Busch That Is Forgyouse* (On King Richard's Ministers);¹ but perhaps no Ricardian writer, not even John Gower, was so critical of Richard himself as was the author of *Richard the Redeless*. Others emphasize how evil ministers have misled the king rather than how the king in person has gone grievously wrong. "Wyneth it not youre conceill but wyteth it more youself," says the narrator of *Richard* (l.80). He wants his king to show more valor against malefactors both inside and outside the court — to, in Chaucer's phrase in *Lok of Stedfastesse*, "Shew forth thy swerd of castigacion" (line 26). The first person to advise Richard badly should "have hadde hongynge on hic on the foekin" (l.108).

Richard the Redeless includes satire on court manners and clothing fashions. The author repeats the charge — familiar from complaint literature — that the court has abandoned conventional distinctions between and among degrees, allowing people of inferior birth to occupy high positions and to exert undue influence on the kingship. Richard scandalized court observers when he elevated his favorite, Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, to the rank of marquis of Dublin (1385) and then Duke of Ireland (1386). Similarly he invited scorn when in 1397 he elevated a group of earls to the rank of duke — the "duketti" or "dukelets," as Thomas Walsingham, monastic chronicler of St. Albans, disdainfully termed them. Shortly after his promotion to Duke of Ireland, de Vere put aside his popular wife, Philippa de Coucy, for a Bohemian woman who was said to be of low birth. (The accusation of newly advanced persons unfit for such elevation occurs in *Piers Plowman* and in *Piers the Plowman's Crede* among other writings.²) One of the "lawless" aspects of the English court during Richard's reign was the creation of factions or affinities similar to political parties. Although parliament in 1390 enacted a statute outlawing private retainers (a practice termed maintenance) together with identifying livery and badges, the king himself had recourse to a special guard, livery, and badges. Richard bestowed this honor on his Cheshire archers and Welsh pikemen, giving them gold badges; by report they could be an intimidating presence in or around the court and parliament. The author of *Richard* devotes a colorful section of his poem to the evils of livery and maintenance with a special focus on the "chyders of Chester" (ll.317) — the brawlers from Chester who allegedly packed rural courts to discourage witnesses. These men

¹ See Medieval English Political Writings, pp. 140–52.

² See *Piers the Plowman's Crede*, lines 744–59 and note to lines 748–49, in *Six Ecclesiastical Satires*, ed. Dean, pp. 30–31, 47–48.

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"constrewed quarellis to quenche the peple, / And pletid with pollaxis and poynis of swerdis" (III.327–28). In another place similar types "schedewd her signes [badges] for men shulde drede / To axe ony mendis for her myndedis" (II.33–34). The narrator lays blame for their disorder on the king: "They leid on ths leidis, Richard, lassus ynow, / And drede nevore a dele the dome of the lawe" (III.338–39). He declares that for every man that he "merkyd" with a badge, he alienated "ten schore / Of homeliche hertis that the harme bente" (II.42–43). The narrator also critiques the court fashions and those who affect the new "guysis" (III.192). Here we find familiar complaints about "painted sleeves" and dagged clothing — clothing with holes or ornamental shapes and the kind of fashion that Chaucer's Parson deplores, including non-English items like "Duche," that is, German coats (III.193).⁴ But the narrator's real object of attack is the arrogance and presumption behind the fashions, the "stoutynge" (III.177) and viciousness that keep Wiz from even entering the court. "Lete ale him!" say the "sleves that slode uppon the erthe" (III.234) — these "sleves" being a synecdoche for overweening courtiers.

The author claims that his poem is "derklich endted" (I.20), obscurely composed, a phrase which seems to anticipate Spenser's "darke conceite" in his Letter to Raleigh concerning *The Faerie Queene* but which also echoes the narrator of *Piers Plowman*'s confusion as to the nature and location of Dowel: "Where Dowel is or Dobet derkliche ye shewen" (B 10.372), he says to Experience. *Richard the Redeless'* "derk" style includes beast allegories and word-play drawn from the prophetic tradition. The author uses beast allegory in at least two ways. He categorizes classes of people according to their characteristics. The most elaborate sequence of this kind is a passage on two partridges, one of which stands for Richard and the other for Henry (III.37–61). The partridge — the evil Richard — steals the baby partridges from the nest until the "true mother" (Henry) returns to feed them properly. Similarly, specific individuals receive an animal designation according to their symbolic badges. Because Richard's emblematic badge was the white hart — and those of his faction received badges displaying white harts — Richard's men are harts in the poem. But so are his people deer. From the poet's point of view it is these "homeliche hertis" (II.43), the loyal subjects of

⁴ See The Parson's Tale on both "superfluous of clothynge" and "horrible disorderful scantnesse of clothynge" in *The Canterbury Tales* (in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson et al. [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 1987]), X [II] 416–29. See also Huff's *A Galasent and The Pride of Women's Mores in Historical Poems of the XIV and XV Century*, ed. R. H. Robbins (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp. 138–39; and *Satirical Songs and Poems on Costume from the 13th to the 19th Century*, ed. F. W. Fairholt (London: Percy Society, 1849). For critical discussions, see Scattergood, "Fashion and Morality in the Late Middle Ages," and Davenport, "Lusty frenche galasent." For brief summaries and bibliography (to about 1975), see R. H. Robbins, "Poems on Contemporary Conditions," §§159–63, in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, ed. Hartung, pp. 1469–70, 1686–87.

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Richard (loyal hearts), who need careful guidance. Henry Bolingbroke is the Eagle (capitalized in the manuscript), the falcon, or the greyhound, while Arundel is the Horse, Warwick the Bear, and Gloucester the Swan. These emblems for the magnates are familiar from other allegorical writings, appearing for example in John Gower's *Cronica tripartita* and in the anonymous *There Is a Busch That Is Forgrowe*. The author of *Richard* often employs a special kind of wordplay, although these quibbles also appear in other writings of the period. A favorite (one that appears in the first-line "title" of *There Is a Busch That Is Forgrowe*) is "busch" for Sir John Bushy (or Bussy), one of Richard's minions, who was speaker of parliament in 1394 and again in 1397. The narrator turns "busch" into a verb meaning to beat down or oppress: "busshinge adoun of all youre beat frendis" (I.99) and "bushid with her brestis and bare adoun the pouere" (II.79).

The anonymous author of *Richard the Redeless* chose the alliterative style of William Langland's *Piers Plowman* as his poetic vehicle. This style is appropriate for the content because so many other political-satiric writings, from *Song of the Husbandman* to *The Crowned King*, were composed in it. Most alliterative lines contain three stressed syllables that alliterate and one that does not. In the first line — "And as I passid in my preiere ther prestis were at messe" — "passid," "preiere," and "prestis" alliterate, while "messe" does not. (The number of unstressed syllables may vary.) In the manuscript the scribe has placed a virgule or caesural mark (/) between "preiere" and "ther." Usually the virgule falls after the first two stressed words and before the last two. Sometimes the alliteration seems defective, as in I.49 and 50. In line 49, "But where this crouse biconne a clerk were that waste," the alliteration is probably on *c* but with some competition from *b*. In the next line, "But so as I can, declare it I thenske," there is no alliteration, unless we count "can" and the *e* of "declare." The poet has excellent facility with his alliterative lines to the extent that the sense can move easily from one line to the next without end-stopping. In a passage on the origins of rulers in Passus III, lines 263–66, one verse line naturally falls into the next:

It is not unknown to kynnyng leodis That newlers of newnes around all the erthe Were not yffloundid at the frist tyme To leve al at hlyng and lust of the world,	discerning people created live; pleasure
---	--

The poet was also skilled in the rhetorical technique of *anaphora* (also termed *repetitio* or *iteratio*) — the repetition of opening words from line to line. A good example occurs in Passus III, lines 27–31, with anaphora on *Ne*:

Ne to hertle wth haras, ne hors well attarned, Ne to steyve wth swan, though it sholle werre, Ne to bayten on the bere, ne bynde him nother,	hertle at stallions; tamed shall go to war baize; bear; nor bind
--	--

Richard the Redeless

Ne to wilne to woo that were hem ny sibbe,
Ne to hate for to loke that her ale blodde.

desire misfortune; near kin
desire to see their allies

Richard the Redeless exists in an incomplete, unique copy in Cambridge University Library MS L.1.14, a quarto paper manuscript of the second quarter of the fifteenth century. The dialect is East Midland — Cambridgeshire, according to the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*. The poem begins, on fol. 107b, just after a B version of Langland's *Piers Plowman*, and concludes on fol. 119. Six blank pages follow. The main text is executed in a single book hand "combining letter forms of secretary and *Anglicana* scripts," according to Linne Mooney.¹⁰ The scribe writes an *Anglicana* g (with a double loop) and sometimes a long-tailed r (or final r with a flourish) but a Secretary u, v, and d (with a looped descender which connects with the following letter).¹¹ There are two glossators of the manuscript. The first, in a secretary book hand of the fifteenth century, contributes glosses such as "kew kaw," "Takynge of presentes," "passus Tercius," and Latin glosses. This glossator provides definitions for many words, writing his equivalents above the MS term (*ffleyed above MS ffelwyd* at II.61 or *deserved above MS served* at II.185). The second glossator, in a later hand (perhaps sixteenth century), offers "Agayntis younge Counsayloris" on fol. 116b. In addition a glossator — probably the first — has underlined words in the text, sometimes in red (e.g., *Richard* [Prol.9], *Messri* [Prol.11], *prince*, *Wafir*, [Prol.23] *Ayng* [Prol.24]). There are nine large rubricated capital letters: at Prol.1; *Passus I.1, 20, 49; II.1; III.1, 37, 110; IV.1*. The MS scribe or first glossator has indicated *passus* divisions only for II, III, and IV, so Barr in her edition has designated the opening of the poem as "Passus I" rather than "Prologus" (like Skeat and Day & Steele). I have found it more useful in this edition to retain Skeat's divisions of Prologus for the opening 87 lines and "Passus Primus" at line 88, with its rubricated letter and mention of "Richard the redeles."

The text of the present edition is based on a good photocopy from Cambridge University Library, checked against Paul Szarmach's careful transcription of it which he generously provided to me. I have also consulted the editions of Thomas Wright (1838 for the Camden Society and 1859 for the Rolls Series); W. W. Skeat (1873 for the Early English Text Society and 1886 for Oxford University Press); Mabel Day and Robert Steele (1936 for the Early English Text Society); and Helen Barr (1993 for Everyman's Library). I have sometimes retained manuscript readings that Skeat, Day and Steele, and Barr reject — for example, at

¹⁰ In private correspondence of 3 August 1999. Her dating of the script coincides with the appraisal of Ian Doyle, "The Manuscripts," in *Middle English Alliterative Poetry and Its Literary Background: Seven Essays*, ed. David Lawton (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1982), p. 98.

¹¹ M. B. Parkes, *English Calligraphic Book Hands 1250-1500* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), Introduction, pp. xiv-xvi.

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Prol.42; Passus I.26; II.25, 55, 57, 117, 140, 148, 167; III.13, 111, 145, 163, 254, and 293. On other occasions — notably at II.64 and III.18 and 26 — I adopt previous readings.

In accordance with the editorial practices of the Middle English Texts Series, I have regularized thorn (*þ*) to *th*. The yogh (*ȝ*) I have transliterated as *gh* (*eygħte* for MS *ȝyȝte*), *g* (*geġur* for MS *a geġur*), *y* (*ye* for MS *ȝe*), or *z* when it appears as a plural indicator (*doċċoż* for MS *doċċoż*); and *ff* as *f* when it appears in the initial position (*for* and *folow* for MS *fōr* and *ffolow*). Hyphens join words that need to be compounds in order to be easily interpreted (*lo-fo* for MS *lo fo*; *Thoru-oste* for MS *þoru osta*). I have silently joined past participles with the *y-* prefix (which Skeat and Barr join with a hyphen); hence, *ydaugħiex*, *yħaggħid* and *yħamraħid* for MS *y daugħiex*, *y ħaggħid*, and *y ħamraħid*. But I have included a hyphen when the *y-* prefix might cause confusion (*y-jidħid* for MS *y yokħid*). Because the scribe was sometimes careless in writing words, I have on some occasions silently supplied a missing letter or deleted a letter to correct an obvious mistake. Hence, at IV.25 the scribe wrote *prøppit* for *proffit*; and on three occasions he wrote *clergie* for *clerlīc* (I.83, III.26, and III.190). I have on a number of occasions adopted one of Skeat's emendations for purposes of alliteration or of sense. For example, at II.170 the MS reads, "This lorell þat haddie / þin lobȝ away," which Skeat sensibly emends to "This lorell that laddle this lobȝ away." At III.272 the MS reads, "And to newle as neremys and rest on þe daises," which Skeat has emended by inserting "nor" before "to newle," thus restoring sense to the line. The scribe seems to have fallen victim frequently to dittoography (erroneously repeating a word or phrase from a previous line), and I have usually followed Skeat's suggestions for emendations. An example occurs at III.281-82: "And evere shall thou fynde, as fer as thou walkoste, / That wisdom and overewacħe wonneth fer asunder," where Skeat substitutes "That" for MS "And" before "wisdom." (The previous two lines have started with "And.") But I have not adopted Skeat's emendations for defective meter, as when a line is truncated. I have let stand the (perhaps) not entirely satisfactory line III.254 — "Thanne woldle reule, if reson where armongis us" — rather than include Skeat's wholly invented insertion: "Thanne woldle [right done] reule, if reson were armongis us." (Skeat's textual comment on this emendation reads: "We must supply *right done*, i.e. just judgment, or some such words.") Although the syntax is difficult in that line, there are many places in the MS where the syntax seems difficult or faulty. Skeat even writes a line of his own at III.346, a practice which raises more difficulties than it puts to rest. But I have in the following line adopted a suggestion from Barr and inserted two words for sense ("they werched"; see the note to line 347). I have on certain occasions let stand odd MS spellings because I have glossed the words in the margin or in an explanatory note. Examples include MS *counstir*, which Skeat and Barr emend to *counseil* (III.279), and *sergħasentis*, which Skeat and Barr emend to *sergħasentis* (III.348).

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Richard the Redeless

[Prologus]

And as I passid in my preiere ther prestis were at messe,	<i>prayer where priests; mass</i>
In a blessid borsugh that Bristol is named	<i>Bristol</i>
In a temple of the Trinité the toane even amyddis,	<i>i.e., in the town's center</i>
That Cristin Chiche is cleped amoung the common peple.	<i>called; common</i>
5 Soddynly ther sourdid selcouthe thingis,	<i>Suddenly; arene strange</i>
A grett wondir to wyse men, as it well myght,	<i>great wonder; might seem</i>
And dowtes for to dense for dredc coetynge after.	<i>to assas for fearful things</i>
So sore were the sawis of bothe two sidis,	<i>hewe; wuds of both sides</i>
Of Richard that regned so riche and so noble,	<i>who reigned</i>
10 That wyle he werrid be west on the wille Yrisse. ¹	
Henri was entrid on the est half,	<i>Henry advanced from the east</i>
Whorn all the londe loved, in lenghe and in bredc,	<i>land; everywhere</i>
And rosse with him rapely to rightyn his wronge,	<i>rose up; quickly</i>
For he shalld hem serve of the same after.	<i>in the same way later on</i>
15 Thus tales me troblid, for they trewe where,	<i>disturbed; were true</i>
And amarride my mynde rith moche and my wittis eke. ²	
For it passid my parceil and my prefis also	<i>swayned my understanding; experience</i>
How so wondiefull werkis wolle have an ende.	<i>astonishing doreh</i>
But in sothe when they sensibld some dede repeute,	<i>gathered; considered</i>
20 As knowyn is in campas of Cristen londis,	<i>is known throughout</i>
That rewthe was, if reson ne had reflourned	<i>pity; reformed</i>
The myssechell and the mysserele that men tho in endand.	<i>miserere; misere; then</i>
I had peté of his passion that prince was of Walis,	<i>pity; suffering; Wales</i>
And eke our crouned kynge, till Crist woll no lenger.	<i>also; longer</i>
25 And as a liege to his lord, though I lite hude,	<i>liege; possessed little</i>
All myn hoole herte was his while he in helthe regad.	<i>whole heart</i>
And for I waste not witterly what shalde fall,	<i>did not know clearly; happen</i>

¹ That he made war in the west on the wild frisk

² And confused my mind very much and also my wits

Richard the Redeless

	Whedir God wolde geve him grace soon to amende, ¹	
	To be oure gioure agyn or graunte it another,	leader; i.e., the kingdom
30	This made me to mase many tyme and ofte, For to written him a writte, to wissien him better,	write; treatise, to instruct
	And to meue him of mysserewle, his myndie to refreshe	apprise him
	For to preie the pynce that paradise made	beseach
	To fullfill him with feith and fortune above.	ful
35	And not to gruechen a grott ageyne Godis sonde,	complain a bit; dissipation
	But mekely to suffre what-so hem sente were.	whatssoever happens to him
	And yif him list to loke a leef other tweyse,	<i>if he pleases to look over a page or two</i>
	That made is to mende him of his myssededis,	composed; correct; misdeeds
	And to kepe him in conforte in Crist and nought ellis,	comfort; nothing else
40	I wolde be gladdie that his gost myghte glade be my wordis,	spirit; be gladdened by
	And grame if it greved him, be God that me boughte.	sorry; grieved; redeemed
	Ther nys no governour on the grounde ne sholdie gye him the better. ²	
	And every Cristen kyng that ony croane bereth,	any; bears
	So he were lerned on the largetage, my lyff durst I wedde, ³	
45	Yif he waite well the wordis and so werche therafter,	<i>If; consider; act</i>
	For all is tresour of the Trinité that turneth men to gode.	
	And as my body and my beste ouate to be my liegis,	<i>and (best part) might; liege's</i>
	So rithfully be reson my rede shuld also,	<i>rightfully; reason; advice</i>
	For to conceit, and I caughthe, my kyng and the lordis;	<i>counsel, if I could</i>
50	And therfor I fonsyd with all my fyve wytis	<i>strove; five wits (free note)</i>
	To traveile on this trevis, to teche men therafter	<i>work; instruct</i>
	To be war of wylffulness, lest wondris arise.	<i>on guard against wilfulness</i>
	And if it happe to youre honde, beholde the book orlys,	<i>comes into your hands; once</i>
	And redeth on him redely newin an hundred,	<i>read it quickly a hundred lines</i>
55	And if ye savere sundell, se it forth ovree,	<i>relish some of it; read all of it</i>
	For reson is no reppref, be the rode of Chester.	<i>reproach; cross</i>
	And if ye fynde fables or foly ther amone,	<i>find fables</i>
	Or ony fantasie yffeyned, that no frute is in,	<i>feigned; profit</i>
	Lete youre conceill corettit, and clerkeis togodyr. ⁴	
60	And amende that ys arrysse, and make it more better.	<i>what is wrong</i>

¹ Whether God would give him grace soon to make amends

² There is no ruler alive who might conduct himself better

³ So long as he can read English, my life dare I wager

⁴ Let your wisdom correct it, together with learned men

Passus Primus

	For yit it is secretic and so it shall lenger, Tyll wyser witzis han waytid it ovare, That n̄ be lone lawefull and lasy to here, For witterly, my will is that it well liked 65 You and all yours and yonge men leveste, To benyme hem her noyes that neweth hem ofe. For and they mase theron to the myddwards, They shall fele fawtis foare score and oode, That youghthe weneth alwey, that it be witt evere.	<i>As yet: secret; shall be longer Until wiser men have scrutinized it lawful tracking; delightful certainly, should please best take away; their troubles; renew (C: middle discover faults eighty and more youth always thinks old men think it sometimes pore over it in private; prove interpret each; significance harm them a bit</i>
70	And though that elde opyn it otherwhile amone, And poure on it prevyly and peve it well after, And constrewe ich clause with the culorum, It shalde not apeire hem a peere, a prynce though he were, Ne haeme nother harte the hyghest of the newme,	<i>old men think it sometimes pore over it in private; prove interpret each; significance harm them a bit Nor: most noble; realm health; friends is written; angry long, whose subject I should be</i>
75	But to holde hem in hele and helpe all his frendis, And if ony word write be that wrothe make myghte My sovereyne, that suget I shalde to be. I put me in his power, and preie him, of grace, To take the estest of my trouthe, that thoughte non yile.	<i>meant nothing ill anger no person saved</i>
80	For to wrath no wyght be my wyll nevere, As my soule be safi from synne at myn ende. The story is of non estate that stryven with her lustis, But tho that folwyn her flesh and here frelle thoughts; ¹ So if my conceyill be clere, I can saie no more,	<i>advice; clear whoever is distressed; and man consequent effects</i>
85	But ho be greved in his goot, governe him better, And blame not the berne that the book made, But the wickyd will, and the werkis after.	

[*Passus Primus*]

Now, Richard the rediles, reweth on you-self,
That lawlesse ledlyn youre lyf and youre peple beþe.²
For thoru the wyles and wronge and wast in youre tyme,
Ye were lyghtlich ylyfe from that you leef thoughte.

unadvised; pity yourself

*through; deceit; waste
quickly deprived; dear*

¹ *But those who pursue their flesh and their frail thoughts*

² *Who lawlessly led your life and that of your people also*

Richard the Redeless

- 5 And from youre willfull werkis, youre will was chaungid,
And rafte was youre riott and rest, for youre daiez weren wikkid.¹
- Thoru youre cursid concill youre karis weren newed,
And covetise hath crasid youre crouse for evere.
- Ratit omnia malorum cupiditas*
- 10 Of alegrance now lerneth a lesson other tweyne
Wherby it standith and stablishe moste —
- By dride, or be dyntis, or doomes untrewe,
Or by creance of coyne for casnes of gile,
- By pillyng of youre peple, youre prynces to plese,
Or that youre wylle were wroughte, though wisdom it noldie;
- 15 Or be tallage of youre townnes without ony werre,
By newthles rotaus that ryfilled evere,
Be preyssinge of polaxis that no peté hadde,
Or be dete for thi dees, dene as thou fyndest,
- 20 Or be ledinge of lawe with love well ytemprid.²
- Though this be derklich entidit for a dull noille,
Miche ned is it not to mowe ther-on,
- For as mad as I am though I littill kunne,
I cowde it discryve in a fewe wordys;
- For logiance without love littill thinge availth.
- 25 But graceles gostis, gyliours of hemself,
- That nevere had harness ne hayle-schooris,
- But walwed in her willis forweyned in here youthe,
- They sawe no manere eighth saff solas and ese,
- 30 And cowde no zrysse amende whan myschef was up,
- But sorwed for her lustis of lordshippe they hadde,
- And sevare for her trespasses no tere woldie they lete.
- Ye come to youre kyngdom er ye youtself knewe,
- Crouned with a crouse that kyng under hevene
- Mighte not a better have boughte, as I trowe;
- 35 So full was it filled with vertuous stones,
- With perlis of pris to purisye the wrongis,
- With rubies rede the righth for to dense,
- With gemmes and juellis joyned togodir
- care; removed
greed has broken
Greed is the root of all evil
- remains most stably
fear; blows; bad judgments
monetary credit; tricks; guile
robbing; people
exercised; says no
taming; towns in peacetime
pitiless gangs; ransacked
By appraising of pole-axes
debt; dice, judge
- darkly set down; head
There is not great need; more
insane; know little
could describe; words
fealty; avail little
persons; deceivers
armor; hail-showers
wallowed; pampered
- sight; except pleasure and ease
correct no wrong; afloat
pleasures; sovereignty
their; one year; let fall
become king; before
- believe
- gems with special properties
precious pearls
red; right; judge
gem; jewel

¹ And taken away was your revelry and rest, because your days were wicked

² Or by legal proceedings well tempered with love

Passus Primus

	And pees amoung the peple for peyne of thi lawis.	peace; penalty
40	It was full goodeliche ygrave with gold al aboute;	goodly engraved; about
	The braunchin above boren grett charge;	carried; weight
	With diamantis derive ydousatid of all	precious feared
	That wroute ony wrake within or withoute;	committed; evil
	With lewtē and love yloke to thi peeris,	loyalty; locked; peers
45	And sapheris swete that soughte all wrongis.	sapphires; sought out
	Ypouadride wyth petē ther it be oughte,	Powdered over; where
	And traylid wyth trouthe and treste al aboute;	patterned; decorated
	For ony Cristen kynge a croune well ymakyd.	made
	But where this croune biconie a clerk were that waste,¹	
50	But so as I can, declare it I theske.	think
	And nempe no name; but tho that nest were,	name; those; nearest
	Full prevyly they plucked thy power awy.	secretly
	And reden with realtē youre newme thorw-out,	rule; royalty
55	And as tyrantis, of tylers tokon what hem liste. <i>from husbandmen tool; they pleased</i>	
	And paide hem on her pennies whan her penyes lacked. ²	
	For non of youre peple durste pleyne of here wrongis,	none; dare complain; their
	For dede of youre dukys and of here double harmes.	fear; dukes
	Men myghten as well have him hantyd an hate with a tabre	tabor (drum)
	As aske ony mysendis for that thei mysdede,	restitution; what; did wrong
60	Or of ony of her men though men wulde plede,	plead
	For all was felawn and felawschipe that ye wth ferde,	accomplices; evil fellowship
	And no soule persone to ganryshe the wrongis;	single
	And that maddid thi men, as thei nede maiste.	your subjects
	For wo, they ne waste to whom for to pleyne.	woe; did not know; complain
65	For, as it is said by elderme dawis,	from the old days
	"The gromes and the goodmen both all eliche grette,	
	W'oll wo both the wones, and all that woneth ther-in!" ³	
	They ladde you with love that youre lawe draddic ⁴	
	To deme youre dukys mysadedis so derive thei were.	dukes' crimes; forsight
70	Thus was youre croune crassid till he was cast newe,	cracked; it

¹ *But what became of this crown there is a clerk who knows*

² *And paid them on their heads when their pennies failed*

³ Lines 66-67. "When serving-men and nobles be equally powerful, / Most wretched are the homes and all who live in them!"

⁴ *Those who feared your law guided you with love*

Richard the Redeless

	Thoru partinge of youre powere to youre paragals.	parcelling out; peers
	Thus lacchide they with lauginge, and lound longe after,	seized; glorified
	But frist sawe they it not, ne youreself nother;	first; neither
	For all was wiliche ywoughte as youre wittie dicned,	wisely done; as you believed
75	And no faustis yffounde till fortune aperid.	fault; worsened
	But had youre croune be kepte that comons it wiste,	guarded; knew
	Ther nadde morder ne myscheff be amonge the grette. ¹	had not
	Thus youre castell to the comoun hath comred you all,	doreit; troubled
	That, but if God helpe, youre hervest is yenne.	unfair; harvest has come in
80	Wyteth it not youre conceill but wyteth it more yourself,	Blame not
	The fortune that fallyn is to feiheles peple;	herd
	And wayte well my wordis and weappe hem togodir,	construe
	And constrwe clerlic the clause in this herte.	issues; put forward
	Of maters that I thenke to meve for the best	emperors
85	For kyngis and kayseris comynge hereafter,	throned as a lord oughe
	Whane ye were sette in youre se as a sir aughte,	discussion in common
	Ther carpeinge comynliche of conceill arisith,	principal advisors; chose
	The chevetyyna cheef that ye chuse evere,	too young; years; govern much
90	Weren all to yonge of yeris to yeme swyche a rnewme;	(see note)
	Other hobbis ye haddeyn of Hurlewaynis kynne,	realized; at once
	Reffuryng the reule of realles kynnde. ²	believe their teachings
	And whane youre conceill iknewe ye come so at ones	punishment at a later time
	For to leve on her loee and be led be hem.	protection; appealed to
	For dred that they had of destroyng therafter,	respect
95	And for curinge of hemself cried on you evere	To get a remedy of their own grievances (SA)
	For to hente hele of her own greves,	believe; could not rule
	More than for wurschep that they to you owed.	striking down (see note)
	They made you to leve that regne ye ne myghte	pretense; troubles; remove
	Withoutou busshinge adoun of all youre best friendis.	health
100	Be a fals colour her caris to wayre,	trust very; version
	And to holde hem in hele if it happe rayghte.	argued; spoke
	For trostith rith treasly and in no tale better.	to be called lords
	All that they moved or mynged in that mater	
	Was to be sure of hemself and sirs to ben ycallid;	

¹ There would have been neither murder nor knavery among the powerful

² Lines 90-91: Or common felowes you consortid with of Harlequin's ilk, / Scorning the laws pertaining to royal governance

Passus Secundus

- 105 For that was all her werchinge in worde and in dede.
 But had ye do daly and as a duke oughte,
 The frist that you foemed to that fale dede,
 He shalde have hadde hongyng on hie on the forckis,
 Though youre brother yborn had be the same.
- 110 Than wolde other boyndaris have been abasshyd
 To have meved you to oþy maters that mysaþeff had ben ymme.
 But for ye cleved to knavis in this cas, I avowe¹
 That boldid thi bernes to beilde uppon sorewe,
 And stirid you stouttely till ye stombled all.

*their working
 acted appropriately; should
 first one who instigated you
 high on the gallows*

*miscreants; disengaged
 advised; mischief
 emboldened; men; became strong
 stirred you up strongly*

Passus Secundus

- Bot moche now me merveilith and well may I in soþe,
 Of youre large lyverey to leodis aboughte
 That ye so goodliche gaf but if gile letted,
 As hertis yheedyd and horneyd of kynde,
- 5 So ryff as they roane youre rewese thors-oute,
 That non at youre nede youre name wolde nempe
 In ferrenesse ne in folkebed but faste fle awayward;
 And some stode astoryed and stared for drede,
 For eye of the Egle that oure helpe brouate.
- 10 And also in soþe the seson was paste
 For hertis yheedid so hy and so noble
 To make oþy myrthe for mowtyng that eyghed.
 That bawtid yoare bestis of here boide chere,²
 They severid and sondrid for somere hem faylid,³
- 15 And floweren into forest and feldis aboughte,
 All the hoole herde that heide so togadir;
 But yet they had hornes half yere after.
 Now liste me to lemme he me lere coade,
 What kynnes conceyll that the kyng had,
- 20 Or meved him most to merke his liegi,

*I wonder; in truth
 livery (see note); men in various places
 provided; guile prevented
 hairy; unlored; nature
 many; raw; realm
 none when you needed; name
 fierceness; folly; flee away
 stood astonished
 eagle; brought
 season; passed
 high
 molting; drew near
 fields here and there
 whole herd*

*Now I wish to learn who could instruct me
 and of
 caused; mark; liege-men*

¹ *But because you listened to knaves in this case I affirm*

² *That (the molting) deprived your beasts of their bold demeanor*

³ *They separated and went different ways for summer was slipping away*

Richard the Redeless

	Or serve hem with signes that swarmed so thikke Thoru-oute his lond in lengthe and in brede, That he-so had hobblid thora holtes and tounes Or ypassid the pathis ther the prynce dwellyd, Or hemis or hyndis on hassellis brestis, Or some lordis lyverē that the lawe stried. He shalde have ymette mo than ynowe. For they acombrede the coitē and many curse servid, And carpedit to the consounes with the kyngys mouthe, ¹	breadth wherever; stumbled; woods parts; where retainers' breast livery; destroyed the law encountered more; enough appressed
25	Or with the lordis ther they belefle were, That no renke shalde rise reson to schewe. They plucked the plomayle from the pore skynnes, And schewed her signes for men shalde drede To axe ony mendis for her mysdedis. ²	with whom they dwelt man plumage; skins of the poor To demand any redress for their misdeeds scorned; each one high up; breasts part brooches
30	Thus lyverez overeloked youre legis ichonne; For tho that had hertis on hie on her brestis, For the more partie, I may well avowē, They bare hem the bolder for her gay broches, And basshid with her brestis and bare adous the pouere ³	Subjects; evil doers townsfolk one; score simple; received served no purpose
35	Liges that loved you the lessie for her yvell dedis. So, trouthe to tellie, as toone-men said, For on that ye merkyd, ye myssed ten schore Of horneliche hertis that the harme hente. Thase was it foly in feith, as me thysketh,	all were with you kins; adhered to no other
40	To sette silver in signes that of nougnt served. I not what you eylid, but if it ese were; ⁴	Civil; separation widespread, ruined, break
45	For frist at youre anonymyng alle were yount owen, Bothe hertis and hyndis, and helde of non other; No lede of youre lond but as a liege aughte, ⁵	
50	Tyl ye, of your dulnesse, desveraunce made Thoru youre side signes that shente all the browet,	

¹ And spoke to the common people as the king's spokesman

² And thrust out their chests (with the badges) and oppressed the poor

³ I do not know what ailed you, unless it was loose living

⁴ There was no person of your land who did not behave as a subject should

Passus Secundus

	And cast adoun the crokk the colys arryd. ¹	
	<i>Omnis regnum in se dissidit de sollicitate (Luke 11:15)</i> ²	
55	Yit am I lewde and littill good schewe To coveyte knowliche of kyngis wittis,	ignorant
	Or wilne to witte how was the mevyng That lalide you to lykyng your liegis to merke, That loved you full leilly or lyverez begynse. ³	wish to know; it came about possessed; desire
60	And as rody to ride or renne at youre heste As wyghte myghte wilne wonnyng upon erthe, Tyll lyverez hem lette and lordyns wrongis, As yourself fonde well whane fortune you fayled.	ready; run; bidding a person; with living prevented; of lord found
65	For whan ye list to lene to youre own hymes. ⁴ They were so feble and feynte for faughte of youre lawe, And so wankel and wayke, wexe in the hamises, That they had no myghte to amend youre greves	feeble; weak; default unsteady; grow; slight suffering
	Ne to berte byrthen youre basere to helpe. But it longith to no liegeman his lord to annoy Nother in werk ne in word but if his wit faille.	bear the burden; bearer belongs; annoy Neither; nor
70	"No, redely," quod Reson, "that resule I allowe: Displese not thi demer in dede ne in wordis But if thee liste for to lede thi lyf in disesse.	advisedly; approve Displease not your judge you wish; lead; distress
	But yif God have graantyd thee grace for to knowe Ony manere mysacheff that myghte be arsencyd, Schewe that to thi sovereyne to schelde him from harmes;	Show; shield (if, the better for you)
75	For and he be blessid, the better thee betydyth In tyme for to telle him for thi trewe bene."	show I shall
	New for to telle trouthe, thus than me thynketh, That no manere meyntenanc shalde merkis bere, Ne have lordis lyveré the lawe to apeire,	maintainer; marks (budget)
80	Neither bragge ne boster, for no brymme wordis. But ho-so had knynge and conscience bothe To stonde unstombed and stronge in his wittis, Lele in his lesvynge, levyd by his owwn,	boaster; fierce surely Loyal; life, living on

¹ And cast down the crock (soap pot) amid the coals

² Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to dissolution (Luke 11:15)

³ Who loved you with full loyalty before the practice of livery began

⁴ For when you wished to be supported by your own limbs (see note)

Richard the Redeless

	That no manere mede shalde make him wrye,	
85	For to trien a trouthe betwysne two sidis, And lette for no lordschep the lawe to susseyne' Whense the pore pleynd that put were to wrongis, And I were of conceill, by Crist that me boughte, He shalde have a signe and surwhat be yers	<i>reward; turn corrupt judge a legal conflict</i>
90	For to kepe his contré in quiete and in rest. This were a good grounde, so me God helpe! And a trewe tente to take and to geve. For ony lord of this londe that lyveret usith.	<i>if; judge; redeemed badge; annual salary</i>
95	But how the gayes han ygon, God wotte the sothe! Amonge myghtfull men alle these many yeric: And whedir the grounde of gifte were good other ille, Trouthe hathe determinyd the tente to the ende,	<i>foundation purpose</i>
	And reson hath reherid the resceyne of all. Yit I trouwe youre entente at the ffirst tyme	<i>intention</i>
100	Was, as I wene, yif I well therike in multitude of peple, That ye were the more myghtier for the many signes That ye and youre servauntis aboughte so thikke sowid; And that they were more tristi and trewer than other	<i>thickly spread around markworthy; others</i>
	To love you for the lyverey that leguance stroide;	<i>destroyed</i>
105	Or ellis for a skylle that skathed youreself, That comounes of contré had costis aboughte Sholde knowe be hit quentise that the kynge loved best For her privy pryncipe passinge another.	<i>reason; harmed districts</i>
	Yif that was youre purpos, it passith ray wittis	<i>by their identifying uniform special mark surpassing</i>
110	To dene discretion of youre well-doyng. Thus were ye disceyved thoro youre dable hertis, That nevere weren to traste, so God save my soule!	<i>judge discretion deceived; false hearts/hearts</i>
	But had the good greehonde be not agreved, But cherischid as a cheffeteyne, and cheff of youre lese.	<i>greyhound (see note); offended group of hounds</i>
115	Ye hadde had hertis ynowe at youre will to go and to ride. ¹ And also in serreyne, the sothe for to tellle, I wondir not hylly, though heed-dere thou failid;	<i>highly; horned-deer</i>

¹ And fail to uphold the law because of powerful lords

² But how the lords have comporteth themselves, God knows the truth (see note)

³ You would have had hearts (supporters) enough at your pleasure to walk and to ride

Passus Secundus

	For litill on youre lyf thee list for to rewe On rascalle that royd with ribbis so lene,	pleaser you to take pity young deer; ribs; thin
120	For faughte of her fode that flateris stolen, And eveit with here wylis and wast ofte they hem anoyed, That povertie hem prickid full prevyliche to pleyne, But whene, they ne wiste ne ho it wolde amende,	luck; food; flatterers meal their wiles; waste poverty spurred them on did not know nor who resed
	Thus ye derid hem undaly with droppis of anger, And stonyed hem with stormes that stynted nevere, But plucked and polid hem anson to the skynnes, That the fresinge frost fretted to here hertis.	confounded; stopped
	So whanne youre hauntelese-dere where all ytakyn, Was non of the rasskayle aredy fall growe	So that; freezing; ate harts (antler-deer); taken
130	To bere ony bremse heed, as a best aughte, So wyntreis wedir hem wesah with the snowis, With many derke mytis that maddid her eyne, For well nowe ye wytyn and so nowe we all,	none; young deer ready; growth strong head; beast should winter's weather; washed; snows bedimmed their eyes may you know
	That harde is the scener ther sence schyneth nevere. Ye fostrid and fodid a fewe of the best, And leyde on hem lordschipe a leyne uppon other, And bereved the raskall that rith wolde ther hadde, ¹	in which sun never shines murthered; provided food to bestowed; one benefice
135	And knewe not the caris ne curis that walkyd. But mesure is a meri mene, though men moche yern. <i>Domi et cunctis clauorem pauperem, et iudicat cunctum eorum.</i>	afflictions moderation; mean; yearn
	<i>David in Psalms</i> ²	
140	Thus he the rotas youre raskall endurid, Tyll the blessed bredd brodil his wyngis To covere hem from colde, as his kynde wolde. Rith as the hous-hennes uppon londe hacchen	by eating roots; survived bird spread its protect them; nature
	And cherichen her chekonyis fro chele of the wynter, Ryth so the hende Egle the eyere of hem all, Hasteth him in hervest to howyn his bryddis, And besieth him besely to breden hem feedrin. ³	Aut; domestic hens; hatch cherish; chickens; chill autumn; brood over
145	Tyll her fre fedris be falliche yppynned, That they have wyngs at her wyll to wonne uppon hille;	noble feathers; fledged dwell

¹ And dispossessed the young deer that wanted justice

² God hears the cry of the poor, and he judges their cause; *David in Psalms*

³ And encopies himself earnestly to mantle them with feathers

Richard the Redeless

- 150 For venym on the valeye hadde foale with hem fare,
Tyll trouthe the triacle telde sonrse her sothes.
Thus baterid this breed on busshes aboughne,
And gaderid gomes on grene ther as they walkyd,
That all the schroff and schroup sondrid from other.
- 155 He mellid so the metall with the hand-molle
That they lost lenses the levest that they had.
Thus foylyd this faulkyn on fydis aboughne,¹
And caughte of the kytes a cartfull at ones.
That rentis and nobis with eaveyn evere laughte.²
- 160 Yit was not the fawcon full fed at his likynge,
For it cam him not of kynde kytes to love.
Than bated he boldeliche, as a brid wolde,
To plewme on his pray the pol fro the neckle;
But the blerryed boyward that his bagg stall,
- 165 Where purrable-is pulter was pyntyd full ofte,
Made the fawcon to floter and flush for anger
That the boy hadd be bounde that the bagge kepte.
But sone therafter, in a schorte tyme,
As fortune felwith ech fode till his ende,
- 170 Thus losell that laddle this loby away
Overe frithe and forde for his fals dedis.
Lyghte on the lordschepe that to the brid longid,
And was felliche ylaughte and huggid full ylle,
And broughte to the brydd and his blarnes rehersid
- 175 Prevyly at the parlament amongst all the peple.
Thus hawkyd this Egle and howed above
That, as God wolde that governeth all thingis,
Ther nas kyte ne knowe that kareyne hauntd,
That he ne with his lynage ne loyvd full sone.
- 180 For whoso they feide, be frysh or be wones,
Was non of hem all that him hide myghth,
But cam with hem a reclayme fro costis aboughne,
And fell with her fetheris flat uppon the erthe,
As madde of her mynde, and mercy besoughte.
- remou: finally; dealt
remedy; told; truths
battered: bird (see note)
men on the green:
scruff; ruff-ruff
spoke: metal; cracker (see note)
limbs; dearest
kites
- flew down
pult; prey; head from
blerryed secoundrel; stole (see note)
- poor folks' rags; fastened
flutter (to be anxious)
rogue should be bound
- person
- wretch; rag-wear
- woodland; stream
- Seized; inheritance; belonged
- cruelly caught; basely
- strong;
- honored
- was not; crow; fed on carrion
- kindred; humiliated
- wood; dwellings
- a call to return; regions

¹ Thus this falcon hunted wild fowl in fields all around

² That rapacious always seized revenue and fine robes

Passus Tercius

- 185 They myghte not anchourise the sorowe they had served,
 So lymed leves were leyde all aboughte,
 And panteris prevyliche pight appon the grunde,
 With gresses of good heere that God himself made,
 That whereso they walkid, they walrid downwardis;
 190 And evere hoved the Egle on hie on the skyes,
 And kenned clerliche, as his kynde axith,
 Alle the prevy payntis that the pies wrought.

evade; deserved
 leaves spread with lime
 trap; set
 snare; hair
 stumbled
 on high
 saw clearly; requires
 strategem; magpies

Passus Tercius

- Now leve we this bes brid till I restore,
 For mater that my mynde is meved in now,
 That whi the hie hertis her helle so mysside,
 That pasture axid rith to here pure wombis,
 5 I wolle schewe as I sawe, till I se better,
 And if I walke out of the wey, I wolle me repente.
 Now herkeneth, hende men, how that me thynkyth,
 Savynge sovereynes and sages avise,
 That the moiste myschaff upon molde on
 10 Is demed the dede ydo ageins kynde.
 Yt cleereth this clause no thinge my wittis,
 Without more mater what it mene wolde.
 I mene of the hertis that haastose of yeris,
 That pasture prikyth and her prevy age.
 15 Whan they han hobbid on the holte an hundred of yeris,
 That they feblen in fleiss, in felle and in bones,
 Her kynde is to kevere if they cacche myghth:
 Adders that harmen alle hende bestis:
 Thoru bassches and brooses this beste, of his kynde,
 20 Secheth and secheth tho schrewed wormes
 That stelieth on the stelis to stynge hem to deth.
 And whunse it happeneth the herte to bente the edder,
 He putyth him to peyne, as his pray asketh.
 And fedith him on the vescum, his felle to anewe,
 25 To leve at mone lykynge a longe tyme after.
 This is clerlie hir kynde, colis nat to greve,
 Ne to hurle with haras, ne hors well attamed,

beautiful bird; return to the subject
 ponders
 health; failed
 food; stomach
 show
 i.e., tray
 fitter; noble
 Except; wise men's opinion
 or earth
 committed; done contrary to nature's laws
 stateliness
 biter; manifest
 bubbled; wood
 weaken; flesh; skin
 recover; catch
 noble creatures
 brooms
 Seek; wretched snakes
 sneak up; horses
 chance; seize; adder
 death; prey requires (see note)
 feeds; skin to renew
 live in greater happiness
 colic; injure
 battle at stallions; tame

Richard the Redeless

	Ne to stryve with swan, though it sholle werr, Ne to bayten on the bere, ne bynde him nother,	shall go to war bait; bear; nor bind
30	Ne to wilne to woo that were hem ny sibbe, Ne to liste for to loke that her ale bledde; This was agains kynde, as clerkis me tolde — <i>Proposic ingratisitatem filii homo resocauerit in servitatem, ut in stimulo compunctionis, et in lege chalii</i> — ¹	desire misfortune; near his desire to see their allies
	And therfor the hertis here hele so mynsid, And myghte nat passe the poynete of her grime age.	their recovery condition
35	Now constrew ho-so kynne — I can saie no more, But fare I wolle to the fowle that I beffore tolde. O ff all billid breddis that the bough spareth, The proprté of partriche to preise me hastif. ²	construe whoever can proceed; bird beaked; outside
	That in the sooner seson whan sittinge tyeth, That ich soule with his fere folwith his kynde,	egg-laying season mate
40	This brid by a bank bildith his nest, And heipeth his eiren, and hetith hem after.	by
	And whane the daeme hath ydo that to the dede longith,	gathers together its eggs; warms
	And hopith for to hacche or hervest begynne,	mother
45	Thane cometh ther a congioun with a grey cote, As not of his nolle as be the nest made.	before the beginning of autumn villain
	Another proud partriche, and precyth to the nest,	closely cropped head to
	And prevyllich pirth till the daeme passe,	presses
	And seith on his sete with his softe plumes,	observer; leaves
50	And boveth the eyren that the hue laide,	soons; seat
	And with his corps kevereth hem, till that they kenne,	broadly over; eggs; mother bird
	And festrith and fodith till fedris schewe,	body; covers; hatch
	And cotis of kynde hem kevere all aboughte.	fends; feathers
	But as sone as they stiffe and that they steppe kanne,	coats
55	Than cometh and crieth his own kynde dame,	grow strong; know how to walk
	And they folwith the vois at the frist note,	their own birth mother
	And leveth the larker that hem er laddle,	sound
	For the schrewe schrapid to seldic for her wombis. ³	slacker; earlier fed fastingly

¹ The free man is called again into slavery because of ingratitude, as in *The Prick of Conscience and the civil law*.

² I wish to praise the nature of the partridge

³ Because the wretch too seldom scraped up food for their stomachs

Passus Tercius

60	That her londys were lene and leved with hunger. But than the dewe dame dineth hem swythe, And fosteneth hem forthe till they fle kynne. "What is this to meise, man?" manste thou axe, "For it is derklich entid for a dull panne; Wherfore I wilne, yif it thi will soore,	londys; thin; weakened rightful mother feeds; quickly fly
65	The parische propertis by whom that thou menest?" A, Hicke Hevyheed, hard is thi nolle To caecche ony kunninge, but castell begynnac! Herdist thou not with ooris how that I er tellide How the Egile in the est entrid his own,	partridge's qualities head learning unless trickery begins [at] easy; said earlier own possessions (see note)
70	And cried and clepid after his own kynde briddis, That weren anoyed in his nest and norished full ille, And well ny ywocewid with a wronge ledes? But the nedys nestlingis, whan they the note herde, Of the hende Egile, the heyer of hem all,	abused very nearly destroyed heir
75	They busked fro the busches and breris that hem noyed, And burnisched her beekis and best to-him-wardis. ¹ And followid hem fersly to fighte for the weongis; They babbid with her billis, how thei bete were, And tisyd with twygges two and twenty yeris.	buried; briars; troubled twittered; beats; beaten oppressed; rods
80	Thus lafte they the ledes that hem wrong laddie, And tyned no twynte, but tolled her comes, And gaderid the grotus with gyle, as I trowe. Than folwid they her fre fader, as goed feith wolde, That he hem fede shalde and fostre forther,	left; misgoverned them lost not a jot; taxed their grain money; guile nobility
85	And bringe hem out of bondage that they were broughth inne. Thanne sighed the swymmers, for the swan failid, And folwid this faeson thora feldes and tounes, With many faice fowle, though they scyntie were, And hevy for the herte that the horn hadde.	water birds (see note) fields, towns injury (see note)
90	Yit they ferkyd hem forth as faste as they myghte, To have the Egles helpe of harme that they hadde; For he was heed of hem all and heste of kynde To kepe the crouane, as cronicle tellith. He blythid the beere and his bond brasse.	hastened themselves forth because of their injuries head chronicle gladdened; bear; broke

¹ And polished their beaks and turned towards him

Richard the Redeless

95	And lete him go at large, to lepe where he woldie, But tho all the berlings brast out at ones, As fayne as the fosile that flieth on the skyes That Bosse was unbounde and broughte to his owen. They gaderid hem togodir on a grette roghte.	<i>leap</i> <i>But then all the bear cubs burst</i> <i>glad; bird</i> <i>Bear; brought</i> <i>great company</i>
100	To helpe the heoris that had many wrongis; They gaglide forth on the grene, for they greved were That her frendis were fallie thorou felonous castis. They mormyd for the morthir of manfull knyghtis. That many a stiffe storme withstode for the comunes;	<i>heirs</i> <i>cuckled; aggrieved</i> <i>friends; fallen; evil strategons</i> <i>mourned; murder</i> <i>strong</i>
105	They mormide the marchall for his myssedede, That evell coade his craft when he clothed the steed, And evere as they folwid this fasson aboughte. At icke mevinge fotte, veryamance they asked On all that assentid to that synfull dede.	<i>cursed; Earl Marshall (see note)</i> <i>drew; blindfolded; horse</i> <i>each step (moving foot); vengeance</i> <i>Let us return</i>
110	Arere now to Richard and rest here while, For a prevy poynt that persith my willis, Of faustin I fynde that first dede engendre Cursidnesse and combrance amone the yonge lordis, And the wikkid wershinge that walmed in her daies.	<i>obscure (hidden); pierces</i> <i>faults; first did</i> <i>oppression</i> <i>deeds; boiled up</i> <i>wiles; foretold</i>
115	And yit woll hereafter, but wisdom it lette. That were a lord of lond that lawe hathe in honde, That to lyghtliche leves or lewde apere, The tale of a trifflour in tormentours wede. That nevere reed good rewle, ne resots bookis! ¹	<i>That would be</i> <i>That too easily trusts before loyalty is shown</i> <i>trifflour; tormentor's clothes</i>
120	For ben they rayed arith, they recchith no farther, But studieth all in strostuynge and stireth amyys evere, For all his wile in his wede ys wrappid for sothe. More than in mater to amende the peple that ben mynsed, For I say for myself, and schewe, as me thynchith,	<i>strutting; stir up trouble</i> <i>it seems to me</i>
125	That ho is null of his ray, that light reeds him folwith. Yit swiche fresche foodis beth feet into chambris, And for her digneuse endauord of dallinshe nollis, And, if thou well wane, of no wight ellis.	<i>regal; raiment; poor advice</i> <i>gaily dressed people are fetched</i> <i>display admired; foolish patos</i> <i>consider; person</i>

¹ Who never studied good government, nor reason's books

² Provided they are dressed appropriately, they care no further

³ For all his wit in truth is wrapped up in his clothing

Passus Tercius

	<i>Qui molibus vestientur in domibus regum sunt: in Evangelio¹</i>	(see note)
	Thus waste mo wayes, how the white turneth	wheel
130	With gyaleris joyfull for hene gery jaces:	begaliers; changeable ribbons
	And for her wedis so wyde, wise beth yholde.	are deemed
	They casteth hem to creasance, the courte for to plesse,	resort to credit
	And hopen to be hied in hast, yif they myghte,	quickly favored
	Thoru swiche stuf stroostyng, that stroyeth the rewse. ²	
135	But here wey is all wronge ther wisdom is ynsed.	where; lodged
	For they leipeth als lyghtly at the longe goyng,	leap as; in the end
	Out of the domes carte, as he that threoff never.	hangman's cart; thrived
	For they keþeth no coyne that corneth to hene hondis,	
	But chaunchyth it for cheynes that in Chepe hangith,	exchange; Cheapside
140	And setteth all her silver in seimus and hornes,	ornaments (see note); drinking horns
	And for-doth the coyne and many other craftis,	clip the coins; ploys
	And maketh the peple for pens-lac in pointe for to wepe.	lack of money
	And yit they beth ytake forth and her tale leved,	fasured; believed
	And for her newe aysteté nexte to the lordis,	foolishness
145	Now, be the lawe of Lydford, in londe ne in water,	law of no standing (see note)
	Thelke lewde ladde oughte eyyll to thryve	That ignorant
	That hongith on his hippis more than he wyneth,	hips; arms
	And doughteth no dette, so dakis hem preise,	fears; provided that
	But beggith and borwith of burgesis in tounes	burgesses
150	Furnis of foyne and other felle-whare,	Furs of marten; furs
	And not the better of a bese, though they bore evere.	bear; borrow
	And, but if the slevis slide on the erthe,	sleeves (see note)
	Thei wold be wroth as the wynde and warie hem that it made;	wroth
	And but yif it were elbowis adown to the helis.	unless; heels
155	Or passinge the knee, it was not accounted.	
	And if Pernell preisid the glytis bilynde,	Pernell (see note); pleats
	The costis were accountid, paye whan he myghte.	
	The leesinge so likyde ladies and other	fashion so pleased
	That they yosed of the jette and gyside hem therunder,	apparel; disguised
160	And if Felice fondre oþy faute themse of the makynge.	fault
	Yt was ysent sone to shape of the newe.	refashioned soon to the new style
	But now ther is a gyse, the queyntest of all,	fashion; most up-to-date

¹ Those dressed in soft clothing are in the houses of kings: in the Gospel

² Through such insufferable swaggering, which destroys the kingdom

Richard the Redeless

	A wondir corioue craft, ycomme now late,	
	That men clepith keruing the clothe all to pecis,	call slacking; pieces
165	That sevene goode sowres saxe wekes after Mous not sett the seemes, ne sewe hem ageyn.	seamstressess
	Bat ther is a proffith in that pride that I preise evere,	Might; fit; reason
	For thei for the pesinge gaith pens ten dable	profit; appraise
	That the clothe costened, the craft is so dere. ¹	
170	Now if I sothe shall saie, and shorne side tales,	short digressions
	Ther is as moche good wite in swyche gornes nolls	common sense; men's heads
	As thou shaldest mete of a myst fro morwe tyll even.	encounter in a mist
	Yit blame I no burne to be, as him oughte,	person
	In cornlich clothinge, as his statt axith;	attractive; estate requires
175	But to ledyn her lust all here lyff-dases ²	
	In quentise of clothinge for to querne Sir Pride,	exquisite; gratify
	And everemore stroutyng and no stote kepe.	strutting mainly; assets
	And icke day a newe devyse; it dallith my wites	costume
	That ony lord of a lond shalde leve swiche thingis,	
180	Or clepe to his conceill swiche maners cotis,	cost (i.e., men)
	That loveth more her lastis than the loue of oure Lord.	their pleasures; teachings
	And if a lord his lyverey lyste for to geve,	livery; give
	Tber may no gone for goodnessesse gette therof but lte	
	For curtesie, for comlynnesse, ne for his kynnde herte,	
185	But rather for his rancour and remynge overe peple.	running
	For braggynge and for bostynge and beringe uppon eilles,	flattering (see note)
	For cursidnes of conscience and contrynge to the assises.	going to court (see note)
	This makith men mysdo more than oughte ellis,	
	And to stroune and to stare and stryve agayn vertu.	
190	So clerlie the cause comith in grette.	commences in the nobility
	Of all manere mysscheff that men here asyn.	
	For wolde they blame the barries that broughte newe gysis,	
	And dryve out the dagges and all the Duche cotis,	slashed fashion; German
	And sette hem aside and scorne of hem telle,	
195	And lte hem pleye in the porche and preuse non ynnere,	enter no further
	Ne no proude peniles with his peyne sleeve.	penniless person; painted

¹ Lines 168-69. *For they for the piecing pay twenty times more / Than the clothe itself cost, so expensive is the craft*

² *But to pursue their pleasure all the days of their life*

Passus Tercius

	And eke repreve robbers and rufflers of peple,	reprove; despisers
	Flateris and fals men that no feith useuth.	
200	And alle deabelik doeris, dispise hem ichone, And coile out the kryghtys that knowe well hemself, That were sad of her sawis and suffre well couade, ¹ And had travellid in her tyme and temprid hemself.	diabolical agents select labored; restrained cheerfully cherish; chief
	And cherliche cheriche hem, as cheff in the halle For to ordeyne officeris and all other thyngis,	appoint
205	Men shuld wene in a while that the world wolde arrende; So vertue wolde flowe whan vices were abbd. But now to the mater that I before meved, Of the gomes so gay that grace hadde offendid	know mentioned men so wanton; offended
	And how stille that steddefaste stode amoung this recchelis peple. ²	
210	That had awilled his wyll, as wisdom him taughte: For he drough him to an hymre at the halle ende, Well homelich yhelid in an holsum gyse.	controlled drew; took modestly covered; sensible costume
	Not overlonge, but ordeyned in the olde schappe, With grette browis ybentis and a bende eke,	conceived; style eyebrows; beard
215	And ywounde in his wedis, as the wedis axith. He wondrid in his wittis, as he well mygthe, That the hic housinge herborowe ne mygthe Halfidell the houshould but hales hem helped;	wrapped building lodge Half of; unless cubans
	But for craft that he couade caste themse, or bethenke,	
220	He mygthe not wonne in the wones, for witt that he usid, But, arousyd for his ray and rebuked ofte, He had leve of the lord and of ladies alle For his good governaunce to go or be drak.	dwell; place; discretion banished; dress permission before
	Ther was non of the mené that they ne merveilid moche	company; marveled
225	How he cam to the courte and was not yknowe. But als sone as they wiste that Witt was his name,	knew; i.e., Wisdom
	And that the kyng knewe him not, ne non of his knyghtis.	
	He was halowid and yhantid and yhotte trusse.	hoisted up; sent away
	And his dwellinge ydensed a bowe-drawte from hem,	bow-shot away
230	And ich man ycharchid to schoppe at his crouse;	ordered; chap; head
	Yif he nybed hem oysere, than they had him nempned.	came any closer; identified

¹ Who were serious in their statements and knew how to be patient

² And how calmly that steadfast one stood among this frivolous crowd

Richard the Redeless

	The portir with his pikis tho put him uttere, And warned him the wickett while the wacche durid;	pikes; outside denied; gave; lashed
235	"Lete sle him!" quod the sleves that sode uppon the erthe, And alle the beoldes burnes bayed on him evere, And schorned him, for his slaveyn was of the olde schappe.	beardless boys scorned; hood dominating
	Thus Malaperte was myghtfull and maister of hout. And evere wandid Wisdom without the gatis.	outside
	"By Him that wroughte this world!" quod Wisdom in wrath,	
240	"But yif ye woll sumysme I walke in amouge you. I shall forbede you barnesse the best on this erthe, That is, governance of getinge and grace that him follith: ¹	men; best thing
	For these two trewly twynned yet nevere."	divided
	And so it fell on hem, in feith, for faughtis that they usid,	happened; faults; had
245	That her grace was agoo for gruccinge chere, For the wrong that they wroughte to Wisdom affore. For tristith, als trewly as tyllinge us helpeth.	gone; grudging conduct did; before
	That iche rewme under roff of the reynebowe ² Sholde stable and stonde be these thre degrés:	trust; plowing helps us be stable; ranks (see note)
250	By governaunce of grete and of good age; By styffnesse and strengthe of steeris well y-yokyd. That beth myghtfull men, of the mydill age;	the mobility well-paired oxen powerful
	And be laboreris of land that lyfflode ne fayle. ³	
	Thasne wolde reule, if reson where amoung us,	were among
255	That ich leode lokide what longid to his age. ⁴ And nevere for to passe more oso peynt foether	one step
	To usurpe the service that to sages bilongith, To become conselleris er they kumme rede.	
	Is schenshepe of sovereynes, and shame at the last.	destruction
260	For it fallith as well to fodes of twenty four yeris, ⁵ Or yonge zsen of yestiday to geve good redis,	advice
	As becometh a kow to hoppe in a cage!	cow

¹ That is, prudent management of revenues and the favor that follows from it

² That each realm under the arch of the rainbow

³ And by laborers on the land so that livelihood does not fail

⁴ That each person attended to what pertained to his age

⁵ For it is as appropriate for men of twenty four years

Passus Tercius

	It is not unknownen to kumyng leodis	<i>discerning people</i>
	That rewlers of rewnes around all the erthe	
265	Were not yffoundid at the frist tyme	<i>created</i>
	To leve al at likyng and last of the world,	<i>live; pleasure</i>
	But to laboure on the lawe, as lewde men on plowes,	<i>unlevered</i>
	And to merke meynstrenourz with maces ichonne,	
	And to strie stroosters that sterede agene rithis. ¹	<i>strike maintainers (see note)</i>
270	And alle the myssedoers that they myghte fynde,	
	To put hem in preson, a peere though he were;	<i>prison; peer of the realm</i>
	And not to rewle as retemys and rest on the daies,	<i>bans (see note)</i>
	And spende of the spicerie more than it neded,	<i>spicer</i>
	Bothe wexe and wyn, in wast all aboughne,	
275	With deynstis ydoubldid and daunsinge to pipis,	<i>scandal; wax; wine; waste</i>
	In myrthe with moppis, myrrours of synne.	<i>daunsties multiplied; dancing</i>
	Yit forbede I no bame to be blithe sun while,	<i>buffoons</i>
	But all thinge hath tymse, for to tempre gles:	<i>person; festive</i>
	For caste all the couuris that the kyng holdish,	<i>merriment</i>
280	And loke how these lordis loggen hemself,	<i>reckon; accounts</i>
	And evere shall thou fynde, as fer as thou walkoste,	<i>lodge themselves</i>
	That wisdom and overewacche wooneth fer asundre. ²	
	But wharese the governaunce goth thus with tho the houz gie shalde,	<i>administer</i>
	And letith lyghtis of the lawe and lesse of the peple,	<i>think lightly</i>
285	And herkeneth all to honour and to ese eke. <i>heud only: leisured folk (i.e., powerful)</i>	
	And that ich wyght with his witt waite on him evere,	
	To do hem reverence aright, though the rigge best.	<i>back break (see note)</i>
	This wariness in welth with wy appon erthe	<i>glow of wealth; any person</i>
	Myghe ne longe dare, as doctoarz us tellith.	<i>last: learned men</i>
290	For he so thus leved his lyff to the ende,	
	Evere wrappid in welle, and with no wo mette, ³	<i>what was never seen</i>
	Myghte scie that he swete that sic was nevere:	<i>off its singer</i>
	That hevene were unhonge out of the hookis,	<i>ready</i>
	And were boan at his bidding yif it be myghte.	<i>yet</i>
295	But clerkes knew I non yete that so couerde rede	
	In bolcis ybounde, though ye broughte alle	

¹ And to rain arrogant men who acted against right

² That wisdom and late hours dwell far apart

³ Always surrounded with advantages, and never encountering setbacks

Richard the Redeless

	That ony wy welldith wortysnge appon erthe;	man possessed living weal
	For in well and in wo the world evere turneth.	reversal (see note)
	Yit ther is kew-kaw, though he come late,	annoy
300	A new thing that nayeth nedys men and other.	nobles travel
	Wherene realles remeveth and ridith thoru lounes,	wander; where
	And carieth overe contré ther corunes dwelleth,	imprison; locates
	To preson the pilourz that overe the pore ressenth,	exactly
	For that were evene in her weye if they well ride.	flow
305	But yit ther is a foule faugne that I fynde ofte:	demand; pleading
	They prien affler presentis or pleynantis ben yclepid,	their powerful wills (?)
	And abatedh all the billis of tho that nougth bringid; ¹	pledges (see note)
	And ho-so gracie or grose agens her grette willes	brought low
	May lese her lyff lyghtly and no lesse weddis.	miscreants
310	Thus is the lawe loyld thoru myghty lordis willys,	undone more
	That meynekeyne mynadoers more than other peplic.	earth: work
	For mayntenaunce many day — well more is the reuth! —	brawlers; were chosen (see note)
	Hath yhad mo men, at mete and at melis,	To bes of conceill for causis that in the court hangid,
	Than ony Cristen kynge that ye knewe evore:	and
315	For, as reson and rith rebersid to me ones,	coif: wear
	The ben men of this molde that most harme wochten.	brought agt; issues
	For chydres of Chester where chose many daies	concocted falsehood; settlement (see note)
	To bes of conceill for causis that in the court hangid,	pleaded their cases
	And pledid pipoudris alle manere pleyntis. ²	Judgment drew
320	They cared for no coyffes that men of court usyn,	allowed men to experience; clubs
	But meved many maters that man never thought,	head-piece; heads; protect
	And feyned falshed, till they a fyne had,	cover; lawyer's coif
	And knewe no manere cause, as corunes tolde. ³	contrived (legal) disputes; squawk
	Thei had non other signe to schewe the lawe	pleaded their cases
325	But a prevy pallete her pannes to kepe,	Judgment drew
	To hille here lewde heed in stede of an hove.	allowed men to experience; clubs
	They constrewed quarellis to quenche the peple,	
	And pletid with pollaxis and poynatis of swerdis,	
	And at the dorne-gervynge drowe out the bladis,	
330	And lente mes lyverey of her longe battis.	

¹ And cancel all the legal accusations of those who bring nothing

² And pled at piepowder courts all manner of complaints (see note)

³ "They understood no legal pleading, as the common reported" (DdS)

Passus Tercius

	They lacked alle vertues that a juge shalde have:	<i>powers of evaluation</i>
	For, er a tale were yoldie, they woldie trac the harmes,	<i>legal case; assess the damages</i>
	Wrhoutis any answeris but ho his lyf hatid. ¹	
	And ho-so pleyned to the prince that pees shalde kepe,	
335	Of these mystirmen, medlers of wrongis,	<i>men like this, provokers</i>
	He was lyghtliche ytaughte and yluggyd of many,	<i>quickly seized; goaded</i>
	And yntumynd on the mouthe and manaced to the deth.	<i>silenced; menaced</i>
	They leid on thi leigis, Richard, lasshs ynow,	<i>laish; subjects; lashing</i>
	And dredic sevare a dele the domes of the lawe.	
340	Ther nas rial of the rewse that hem durste rebuke,	<i>noble</i>
	Ne jage ne justice that jewis durste hem dese	<i>punishment; judgment</i>
	For oote that thei toke or trespassid to the peple.	<i>anything; mole; against</i>
	This was a wondir world, ho-so well lokyd,	
	That gromes overegrewe so many gretie maistris;	<i>serving-men</i>
345	For this was the rewle in this rewme while they here regnyd.	
	Though I same sevensyght and slepte full selide,	<i>sat up a week</i>
	Of many mo wrongis they werched than I write corasde;	
	For selide were the sergauntis soughte for to plete,	<i>servants-at-law</i>
	Or any peyne of courte preied of his wittis,	<i>apprentice; requested</i>
350	The while the degonyis domes weren so endausid,	<i>charly'; esteemed</i>
	Tille oure Sire in His see above the seven sterriis,	<i>throne; stars</i>
	Sawe the many myncheshevys that these men dede,	
	And no mendis ymade, but merreynd evere	<i>amends</i>
	Of him that was hiest, yholde for to kepe	<i>refugard</i>
355	His liegis in lawe, and so her love gette.	<i>subjects</i>
	He sente for his seruauntis that sensibled many,	<i>assembled</i>
	Of baronys and baucheleris, with many brighthe helmes,	<i>young knights; helms</i>
	With the comunes of contres they cam all at ones;	<i>districts</i>
	And as a duke doughty in dedis of armes,	<i>formidable</i>
360	In full reall aray he rood upon hem evere,	<i>royal; rode against</i>
	Tyll Degon and Dobyn, that merrys doris brastyn,	<i>doors break down (see note)</i>
	And were ydabbid of a duke for her while domes. ²	
	Awakyd for wechis and wast that they usid,	<i>night revels</i>
	And for her breme blatis buffettis bester.	<i>bitter; received blows</i>
365	Than gan it to calme and clete all aboute.	

¹ Without any answer except for the person who hated his life

² And were dubbed by a king (leader) for their cravvile judgments

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That icke man myghte, ho-so mynde hadde,	<i>had a mind to</i>
Se, be the sone that so brighte schewed,	<i>See</i>
The mons at the mydday meve, and the sternis,	<i>move</i>
Folwinge felours for her false dedis,	<i>Pursuing criminals</i>
370 Devourours of vetaile that foughten er thei paide.	<i>provisions</i>

Passus Quartus

For where was everey Cristen kynge that ye evere knewe	
That helde swiche an household be the halfdelle	<i>half such a household</i>
As Richard in this resme, thoru myserule of other,	
That alle his fymys for faughtis, ne his fee-fernes,	<i>fines; faults; fee farms (see note)</i>
5 Ne for-feyturis fele that felle in his daies,	<i>forfeitures many; before</i>
Ne the nowmagis that newed him evere —	<i>estate fees (see note); renewed</i>
As March and Mowbray, and many mo other. ¹	
Ne alle the issues of court that to the kyng longid,	<i>profit from fines; belonged</i>
Ne sellynge, that sowkis silver rith faste,	<i>drained</i>
10 Ne alle the prophete of the lond that the prince owed,	<i>profit; owned</i>
Whan the courtis were caste with the custome of walles. ²	
Myghte not areche ne his rent nother,	<i>suffice; revenue</i>
To gaie the pore peple that his purvynous toke,	<i>purveyors; took from (see note)</i>
Without greiere at a parlement a poundage bisside,	<i>tax per pound (see note)</i>
15 And a fifteenth and a dyne eke,	<i>fifteenth; tenth (taxes?)</i>
And with all the custome of the clothe that cometh to fayres?	<i>cloth customs</i>
And yet, ne had creunce icoine at the last ende,	<i>credit been extended</i>
With the comunes curse that cleved on hem evere,	<i>cleved</i>
They had be drawe to the devyll for dethe that they owed.	<i>drawn; devil</i>
20 And whanne the reot and the revell the rent thus passid, ³	
And no thing ylafie but the bare boggis,	<i>left; empty bags</i>
Than felle it afforse to fille hem ageyne,	<i>it became necessary</i>
And seyned sum folie that failid hem never,	<i>feigned; madness</i>
And cast it be colis with her concill at evere,	<i>contrived; tricks</i>
25 To have prevy parlement for proffitt of hemself.	

¹ As for example [the earls of] March and Mowbray, and many others as well (see note)

² When the accounts were reckoned, with the wool customs

³ And when the riot and the revels that surpassed their income

Pasmer Quartier

	And lete write writhis all in wex cload,	sealed with wax
	For peeris and prelatis that thei apere shalld,	peers of the realm
	And sente side sondis to schrevys aboughte	messages; sheriff (see note)
	To chese swiche chevalleris as the charge wold,	knights
30	To scheue for the schire in company with the grete.	represent; nobility
	And whanze it drowe to the day of the dede-deyngt,	drew; action
	That sovereynes were semblid and the schire-kynghtis,	
	Than, as her forme is frist, they begynne to declare <i>their; according to initial protocol</i>	
	The cause of her comyng and than the kyngis will.	
35	Cornliche a clerk than comaid the wordis,	Appropriately; commenced
	And pronouncid the poynnis aperte to hem alle,	issues; openly
	And meved for mony more than for out ellis,	money; anything else
	In glosing of gretene, lest greyses arise. ¹	
	And whanze the tale was tolde anson to the ende,	
40	Amorwe thei must, affore mete, mete togedir,	Next morning; dinner; meet
	The kynghtis of the comuneti and carpe of the masters,	shire-knight; discuss
	With citiseyns of shiris, ysent for the same,	citizens; same purpose
	To rehers the artelis and graunte all her askynige.	go over; all their demands
	But yit for the manere to make men blynde,	
45	Somme argued agen rith then a good while,	
	And said, "We beth servauntis and salleré fongen,	receive a salary
	And ysent fro the shiris to shewe what hem greveth,	what is troubling them
	And to parle for her prophete and passe no ferther,	speak; profit
	And to graunte of her gold to the grett watin	people
50	By no manere wronge way but if we're were;	there were war
	And if we ben fai to tho us here fyndyth,	those who find us
	Evyll be we worthy to weldes oure hire." ²	
	Than same summe as syphe doth in awgrym,	tert; arithmetic (see note)
	That noteth a place, and no thing availleth.	
55	And some had yscouped with Symond ovre even,	
	And schewyd for the shire and here schew lost, ³	
	And somme were tinaleris and to the kyng wente,	taxfarer
	And formed him of foos that good frendis weren.	informed; foes

¹ "In deceivynge the grete, lest [legal] grievances arise" (Sk)

² We are hardly worthy to receive our payments

³ Lines 55–56: And some had supped with Simon (ecclesiastic) the night before / And appeared for the shire and gained nothing thereby

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	That babbid for the best and no blame served Of kyngs ne conceyll ne of the comunes nother, Ho-so take good kepe to the culorum.	talked; observed <i>paid close attention; meaning</i>
60	And somme slombrid and slepte and said but a lite; And somme mafflid with the mouth, and nyxt what they ment;	mumbled; knew not <i>payment; change</i>
	And somme had hire and helde therwith evere.	<i>sullen</i>
65	And woldie no farther affoott for fer of her maistris; And some were so soleynse and sad of her wittis That er they come to the clos acorbed they were,	<i>do no more; fear; masters</i> <i>sullen</i>
	That thei the conclusion than constrewe ne couthe, No burne of the besche of borowe nother ellis. ¹	<i>end; addled</i> <i>could not construe</i>
70	So blynde and so ballid and bare was the reson.	<i>bald</i>
	And some were so fets at the frist come	<i>aggressive</i>
	That they bente on a bonet and bare a topte sail Affor the wynde freshly to make a good fare.	<i>spread an extra sail; bore a top sail</i> <i>journey</i>
	Than lay the lordis alee, with laste and with charge.	<i>to leeward; heavy cargo</i>
75	And bare aboughte the barge and blamed the master, That knewe not the kynde coars that to the craft longid,	<i>put about (see note)</i> <i>belonged</i>
	And warned him wisely of the wedle-side.	<i>windward-side</i>
	Thanne the maste in the myddis at the monthe-ende,	<i>midships</i>
	Bowid for brestyng and broughte hem to land;	<i>Bow to breaking</i>
80	For ne had thei strikod a strok and sterid hem the better, And abaned a bonet or the blast come,	<i>tales in a reef; staved</i> <i>struck sail; storm</i>
	They had be throwe overe the borde backwarde i schone. ²	
	And some were acorbrid with the conceill before,	<i>troubled</i>
	And wiste well ynow how it sholde ende,	<i>knew</i>
85	Or some of the scriblid shulde reperte.	<i>Before; company</i>
	Some helde with the mo how it evere wente,	<i>the majority</i>
	And somme dede rith so and wold go no farther.	
	Some parled as perte as provyd well after,	<i>openly; proved</i>
	And clappid more for the coyne that the kyng owed hem	<i>spoke up (see note)</i>
90	Thanne for comforde of the comyne that her cost paied,	<i>expenses</i>
	And were behote harsell if they helpe woldie	<i>promised reward</i>
	To be servyd sekirly of the same silvere.	<i>compensated assuredly</i>
	And some dradde dakis, and Do-well forsoke . . .	<i>fearred</i>

¹ No judge (man of the judge's bench) from the borough or somewhere else² Each one of them would have been thrown backwards overboard

Notes

Abbreviations: **B**: Barr's edition of *RiR*; **D&S**: Day and Steele's edition of *RiR*; **IMEV**: Carlton Brown and Rossell Hope Robbins, *Index of Middle English Verse*; **MED**: *Middle English Dictionary*; **MEPW**: Dean, ed., *Medieval English Political Writings*; **MS**: Cambridge University Library MS L.1.14.14; **OED²**: *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed.; **PP**: *Piers Plowman*, ed. Schmidt; **SES**: Dean, ed., *Six Ecclesiastical Satires*; **Sk**: Skeat's 1886 edition of *RiR*; **Se**: Paul Szarmach's transcription of the MS; **Usk**: *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*, ed. Given-Wilson; **WGO**: Dean, *The World Given Old in Later Medieval Literature*; **Wr**: Wright's 1838 edition of *RiR*.

[Prologue]

Prologue. I use Sk's and D&S's editorial designations for poem divisions — here indicated within brackets — toward the beginning of the work because some of the material in the traditional Prologue seems roughly parallel to the Prologue of Langland's *PP*. The MS does include passus markers after I.114 ("Passus secundus"), after II.192 ("Passus Tercius"), and after III.371 ("Passus quartus"). B argues against a Prologue, designating the first unit as Passus I. She makes no division after line 87 (beginning "Now Richard þe redeles"). The MS contains large capital letters at Prologue line 1; Passus I lines 1, 20, 49; Passus II line 1; Passus III lines 1, 37, 110; Passus IV line 1.

1 *And as I passid.* The poem begins abruptly, which has suggested to some editors that material has been lost before the manuscript's first lines. But other poems begin with the word "And"; for example, "And by a chapell as Y Cane / Mett Y whyte Iesa" (IMEV 298) or John Audelay's "And leue þi god ouer al þyng / þi neþore as þi self I say" (IMEV 304). The large capital "A" of "And" is in red.

2 *Bristol.* The author is familiar with Bristol and the location of Christ Church. This town also is important in the conflict between Henry Bolingbroke, the duke of Lancaster, and Richard after Henry's return from exile. Bolingbroke, along with the Percies of Northumberland, the Earl of Westmoreland, and the Duke of York (whom Richard had appointed as Regent when he went to Ireland), trapped Richard's favorites and advisors — William Scrope, treasurer of England, Sir John Bushy,

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formerly Speaker of Parliament, and Sir Henry Green — as prisoners at Bristol on 28 July 1399. These were executed as traitors to the realm on the following day.

- 9 Richard. The scribe or a reader has underlined this proper name and many other names and terms in red. In the opening 25 lines the following words are so underlined: "Richard" (line 9); "Hewm" (line 11); "prince" and "Walis" (line 23); and "kynge" (line 24). For this and other details about the manuscript I am indebted to Paul Szarmach for his close inspection and transcription of it.
- 11 *Hewri . . . est half*. Henry of Lancaster landed at Ravenspur on the lower Humber on 4 July 1399, while Richard was waging a campaign against the "wilde Yrische" (line 10). He quickly set out for Pontefract Castle — a Lancastrian bastion — and thence to Bristol. The Pervies joined him at Pontefract. His rapid progress south through the midlands perhaps caused the author of *RiR* to proclaim him the "greehond" (greyhound). See below ll. 113 and note.
- 17 *parceit*. This word, which Sk glosses as "power of perception" and B as "perception," means "the power of understanding" or "comprehension" (MED, s.v. *parceit*, 1, citing this line from *RiR*).
- 25 *as a liege to his lord*. MS: *as a lord to his liege*. Sk follows the MS, but D&S, B, and Sz all transpose since the poet is liege rather than lord.
- 27 *waste*. D&S and B emend MS: *wost* (2 singular pres. indicative) for the past tense. "MS. *wost*; but see Pass. i. 11.49 and 64, below" (Sk, I, p. 604).
- 28 *grive*. So D&S and B; MS and Sk: *jawe*; Wr: *jewe*. The "g" sound rather than the "y" sound is required for the alliteration, as in *ageya* in line 29.
- 33 *prvie*. MS: *preine*. B's emendation.
- 42 D&S move this line to line 45.
- 43 *crouse*. So Sk, D&S, and B. MS and Wr: *grossende*. *Grossende* in this line is dittography (inadvertent repetition) from *grossende* in the previous line and does not alliterate, as *crouse* does, with *Crouse* and *bryng*.
- 50 *fondyd*. So Sk, D&S, and B. MS: *fordyd*, with a written above the *r*. The *fysse wyttis* here means, as in *Sir Gwain and the Green Knight* (lines 640 and 2193), the five

Notes to Prologue

senses. The senses can have moral as well as physical value, for example, as guardians of the soul in *PP*. Sir Iewit (conscience, moral sense) has "fyve faire sones":

Sire Se-wel, and Sey-wel, and Sire Here-wel þe hende,
Sire Werch-wel-wib-pyn-hand, a wijk man of strengþe,
And Sire Godefray Go-wel . . .
(B 9.19, 20-22)

See; Say; Hear
Work, powerful

- 51 *avens*. David Lawton has argued that alliterative poets, claiming to be "God's instrument," would refer to their work in "the morally elevated term 'wetylse'" ("The Unity of Middle English Alliterative Poetry," p. 80).
- 56 *rode of Chester*. B notes that the same oath is used by Sloth in *PP*, V.460 (p. 251), though, given the author's apparent concern for the king whom he would counsel in this section of the poem and the loyalty of the Chester retainers to Richard, the oath may have additional significance.
- 60 *make it more better*. The humility trope is common in late fourteenth-century poetry as the author presents his work for amendment or correction.
- 68 *shall fele fawtiz*. Sk, I, p. 605, suggests that *fynde* has been omitted and emends the line. The sense of *fele* (adj.) in his reading would be "many." B reads *fele* as a verb (albeit not in the usual participial form) and glosses the term "discover." I have followed her reading.
- 69 *youghlike*. So Sk, D&S, and B; MS, Wr, *youghle*.
- 72 *culorem*. Short for *is saeculum saeculorum*. This contraction ('culorem) signifies, as in *paxus* IV.61 (or in *PP* A III.258, B III.280, C III.432), "final meaning," conclusion, or "when all is said and done" and which closes prayers, hence the essence of something. In the MS "culorem" is underlined.
- 77 *My sovereyne*. Ostensibly his king is Richard, but since he will attack Richard and his government so forcefully at the beginning of *paxus* I, he might be referring to Henry. In another sense the appeal might be to a Lord whose reign will never go astray.

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[**Passus Primus**]

- 6 *davez*. MS: *davetz*.

wereν wikkid. I follow D&S and B in adding these two words to the end of line 6. In the MS, *Weron wikkid* begins line 7.

- 8a *Radix omnium malorum cupiditatis*. In the margin, glossing "covetise" (line 8).

- 17 *pete*. A corrector has somewhat clumsily emended this to *pyte*. The phrase *preyngage of polaxis* is in this context ironic.

- 20 *derklich endwed*. "obscurely composed," an important phrase repeated at III.63. The MED glosses *derkliche* in signification 2 as "Of speaking or writing: (a) in a veiled or figurative manner; allusively, mysteriously, subtly; (b) vaguely, obscurely." The author, who seems to draw on both significations in his narrative, foregrounds his technique of alluding to historical persons through heraldic animals (Henry of Hereford is variously the greyhound, the eagle, the hen, and the falcon; his supporters are chickens or waterfowl; and so forth). His metaphors can become extended and mixed. See the Introduction.

- 25 *gostis*. So Sk, B; Wr reads *geris*, and this might be the correct reading. It appears that a corrector has altered the e of *gostis* to o.

- 26 *harmese*. So the MS, Wr, Sk, and B. D&S errrend to *harmisse* ("harmis," "injuries").

- 32 *Ye come . . . asewe*. Richard's father, the Black Prince, died in 1376 and King Edward III, Richard's grandfather, died in 1377, elevating Richard to the kingship at the age of eleven. The sentiment here echoes the biblical admonition, "Woe to thee, O land, when the king is a child" (Ecc. 10.16; and see PP Prol. 195a). Usk frames his chronicle as follows: "Many great things were hoped for in the time of this Richard's reign; but, because he was tender of age, other persons who had charge of him and of the kingdom did not cease to inflict wanton evils, extortions, and other intolerable injustices upon the realm" (p. 3).

- 35 *vertoiso*. MS: *verno*, with os written above the n.

- 42 *derwe*. So Sk, D&S, and B (*derue*). Wr in this line and at line 69 reads *derwe*, dark, secret, hidden. The MS minims can support either reading but *derwe*, from OE

Notes to Passus Primus

deorfaw, makes best sense in this context, and this is the sense supported by the MED (s.v. *derve*, 2, and glossed as "precious" [jewel]).

- 46 *ther it be oughe*. B, noting the defective alliteration in the half-line, inserts "pounced" (embossed) after *it* and before *be*.
- 51 *nest*. So MS; Wr: *nest*.
- 55 *pounser*. With a quibble on *pence*.
- 58 *hunyd*. So Wr, Sk, D&S, and B; MS: *hunyd*.
- 61 *that ye with ferde*. As with language elsewhere in *RiR*, this line contains echoes of moral lyrics on the transitoriness of the world such as "Al es bot a farrum þ' we with flare" (MfEV 189; compare 190).
- 66-67 The charge of social climbing and a ruinous leveling of class distinctions as a sign of social decay was common in satirical and prophetic literature. See *PP* B III.203-05; *Piers the Plowman's Crede*, lines 748-51 and note to lines 748-49, and *The Plowman's Tale*, lines 301-08, in 6ES; and *Thomas of Erceldoune's Prophecy*, line 15 and note, in *MEPW*. These two lines are bracketed in the MS.
- 67 *Woll wo*. Sk emends to *Well wo*.
- 73 *not*. So D&S, B; MS: *nott* (?). It is not clear that the scribe intended the second *t*, which is faint.
- 77 *middle*. MS: *had not* written above in a different hand.
- 78 *cantell*. MS: *crafte* written above in a different hand.
- 79 *youre harvest is yone*. The clear implication is that it is a bitter harvest: as you sow, so shall you reap. Also, as Sk observes, "you need not expect further help" (II, p. 290).
- 80 *wyseth*. So Wr, Sk, D&S, B (*wyteleþ*); MS: *wytch*. Sk translates: "Blame not your council, but rather yourself for it, viz. for the fact that ill fortune has befallen the faithless" (II, p. 290).

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- 83 *cleric*. So D&S and B. MS and Wr: *clergie*. Sk: *{þoru} clergie*. The scribe regularly spells this word *clergie*, including at III.26 and 190.
- 85 *kayseris*. So Sk, D&S, B; MS, Wr: *Kayseceris*. In the MS *lordes / rulers* is written in a different hand above *Kayseceris*. As the author anticipates a future readership for his poetic treatise, he situates it in a "mirror for princes" tradition. See Judith Fetterley, *Fictions of Advice*, pp. 36–37.
- 86 *sir*. MS: *lorde* written above in a different hand.
- 89 *yome*. MS: *gude/rule* written above in a different hand.
- 90 *Harlewaynis kynne*. The kin of Harlequin would be goblins or sprites who cause mischief in the night. It thinks this phrase applies especially well to Richard's much-criticized favorites Robert de Vere, John Bushy, William Bagot, and Henry Green (the latter three comprising Shakespeare's "caterpillars of the commonwealth"). The further implication from the entire passage is that these ministers are too common to help Richard govern effectively; hence they remain strangers to the nature ("kynde") of statecraft.
- 99 *bushingy adous*. This phrase refers to Richard's ruthless treatment of those who, in the poet's judgment, were most loyal to him: the Appellants Arundel (executed), Gloucester (murdered), and Warwick (banished). In *bushingy* — explained by Sk as "pushing, butting" — there is wordplay on John Bushy, one of "Harlewaynis kynne" (line 90). Richard's despised favorites were often the subject of such wordplay, as in *There is a Busk That Is Forgross* (in *MWPW*), whose anonymous author attributed Gloucester's death to Bushy.
- 100 *a fols colour* means "false pretense; as in Acts xxvii.30. This false colour was Green; see Pass. ii. 153" (Sk, II, p. 290).
- 113 *burnes*. MS: *barons* written above in a different hand.

Passus Secundus

- 2 *lyverys*. MS: the fiesty written over an e, here and in most other instances of the word (II.26, 35, 57, 60, 79, 93, 104; III.182, 330). So too the y in *by* (II.83 and III.41) and *beymone* (II.80). Sk, D&S, B, and Sz all read e, as in *levere*, *be*, and *bremme*, all of

Notes to Passus Secundus

which instances are suited to the dialect. I have followed the *y* forms (which also suit the dialect) on grounds that it is not possible to determine whether the correction has been made by the original scribe or a later normalizer. It is perhaps of interest that the use of *y* in these instances brings *RiR* into conformity with practices in *Mm*.

Livery were uniforms identifying men used as a private army, and the liveries usually included identifying badges as well as colors. King Richard provided livery to special troops or household retainers — such as the Cheshire guard — who wore badges as well. The king's special badge was a white hart (see II.4). The hart in Passus II becomes the chief element in an extended metaphor of hunting and exploitation of the poor by violent retainers, either those of Richard or of powerful barons. Magnates retained their own armies, which made for considerable complaint in the late fourteenth century. In 1390 Parliament passed the Statute of Livery and Maintenance outlawing private armies and their uniforms. For a discussion of the social implications of this statute, see Paul Strohm, *Social Chaucer* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 18–20. See also *Mm* line 803 and note.

- 3 *gaf*. So D&S, B; */g/af*; MS, Wr, Sk; *ayf*. The alliteration in this line and in Prol.28 requires the "g" rather than the "y" sound.
- 9 *Eagle*. The Eagle is Henry Bolingbroke. "That the *Eagle* means Bolingbroke is placed beyond all doubt by Pass. iii. l. 69. An eagle was one of the numerous badges of his grandfather Edward III" (Sk, II, p. 292). The Eagle is capitalized by the scribe in this line and elsewhere in the poem. It is also sometimes underlined in red.
- 14–17 *They severid . . . half yere after*. Richard's ministers flee, but they retain their horns (i.e., they are still dangerous).
- 16 *regadir*. *to* was inserted above the line.
- 17 *yere*. MS: *a* inserted above *yere* to indicate *a yere*.
- 20 *merke his liegis*. This refers to the sign of the White Hart, Richard's special badge or emblem, which identified his special liege-men.
- 25 *Or*. So MS, Wr, Sk, D&S, and B emend to *OY*, which is possible (dittography from lines 24 and 26); but the difficulties of syntax and meaning in this passage are not eliminated by the emendation.

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- 28 *many curse servid.* Although an early reader has written "deserved" above *servid* in the MS, the sense is that people were served curses as if they were receiving legal writs of summons. See also II.185 and note.
- 40 *Lieges.* So Sk, Wr; D&S and B read *Ligerz*. The MS vowel is either an *a* or an imperfectly formed *e*.
- 43 *homeliche hertis.* The quibble on *hertis* = Richard's *harts* and *hertis* = men's "hearts" is most explicit in this phrase: those of simple heart receive the injuries from Richard's ravaging *hertis*.
- 50 *Tyl.* So Sk, D&S, B; (Wr: *Tylly*), MS: *Ty* with *l* inserted with a caret.
- 53-54 *Yet am I lewde . . . To covete.* D&S translate these lines: "Yet I am ignorant, and manifest leide of any good quality which could entitle me to covet, &c." (p. 90).
- 55 *how.* So MS, Wr, Sk; D&S, B: *what*.
- 56 *laide.* So Sk, D&S, B; MS and Wr omit.
- 57 *begynne.* So MS and Wr; Sk, D&S, B emend to *beginne*.
- 61 *fayled.* So D&S, B; Wr, Sk: *ffayled*. The word *fayled* is written above *ffayled* in the MS.
- 62 *lere to your own lynes.* This is a figurative expression referring to Richard's acting with the aid of his supporters (limbs). The king, as director of the body politic, should be the "head," but Richard has dispersed political authority among his favorites. See Introduction, pp. 8-9.
- 64 *wankel.* D&S's excellent emendation, adopted by B, MS, Wr, and Sk; *fable*, which is probably dittoigraphy from the previous line and which spoils the alliteration.
- 69-76 *Reson* — here close to the virtue of Prudence — speaks as an allegorical figure, agreeing that a counselor must advise a lord with caution and yet he must speak the truth to protect his lord.
- 93 *For.* So D&S, B; MS, Wr, Sk: *And*.

Notes to Passus Secundus

- 94 *gøyen*. Sk glosses this word as "ornaments": "a gøy signifies anything gaudy or gay, as a highly coloured child's picture, or a fine piece of clothing . . . It here refers to the badges and privileges already spoken of" (II, p. 293). Although this is doubtless the case, the syntax in this line requires personification of gøyen or persons who wear the badges.
- 102 *sowid*. MS: shewed written above.
- 106 *had cooris*. MS: had may be stricken, though it is unclear; or appears in a later hand in superscript. Sk, D&S, and B all read *or cooris*, which is satisfactory, but so is *had cooris*. Sk omits *aboughie* at end of the line to *abouſte*, as does B.
- 108 *privy*. D&S gloss this word as "manifest" rather than "secret" or "special" and explain: "Apparently a ME. adjective 'preue,' proved, manifest, was confused by scribes, with 'preue,' 'privy'" (p. 90). Sk glosses as "secret, special."
- 113 *good greehonde*. Henry of Lancaster (Bolingbroke), even though he has already been cast as the eagle (II.9). He may be called the "greehonde" because of his swift progress through England from Ravenspur to Bristol after his return from exile. But the chronicler Adam of Usk explains the eagle and greyhound symbolism for Henry in terms of the prophecies of Merlin and John of Bridlington:

According to the prophecy of Merlin, this duke Henry is the eaglet, for he was the son of John; following Bridlington, however, he should rather be the dog, because of his livery of linked collars of greyhounds, and because he came in the dog-days, and because he drove from the kingdom countless numbers of harts — the hart being the livery of King Richard (p. 53).

For the prophecies of Merlin, see *MEPW*, pp. 9–10; for a Lancastrian application of the prophecy of Merlin involving Henry, see Strohm, *England's Empty Throne*, pp. 12–13. The author of *Mom* includes a section mocking Merlin prophecies such as these (see lines 1723–33). In the MS lines 113–14 are joined with a bracket in the left margin.

- 114 *leſe*. The MED, referring to this line, defines leſe as "An establishment, or department in the king's household, for keeping of coursing hounds" (signification 3).
- 117 *thow*. So MS (*þ*'), Wr, Sk, B. D&S omits to you based on past practice of addressing the king with *ye, you*.

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- 118 *For linn on youre lyf.* Sk translates this line, "For little, during your life, it pleased you to have pity on the inferior sort of deer"; and he comments, "A rascal was a lean deer, fit neither for hunting nor eating. So also in l. 129" (II, p. 293). See II.129a.
- 129 *runcayle.* "The young, lean, or inferior deer of a herd, distinguished from the full-grown antlered bucks or stags" (OED²).
- 139 *a meri.* MS: *aweri.* The idea behind this expression, which becomes proverbial, is that moderation brings joy and happiness in ways that excess does not.
- 139a *Deus exaudit clamorem pauperum.* D&S: "Cp. Ps. ix.37-8, 'Desiderium pauperum exaudivit Dominus . . . judicare pupilo et humili.' (The Lord hath heard the desire of the poor . . . To judge for the fatherless and for the humble.) There is an insert sign from the marginal quotation that lines up between lines 139 and 140.
- 140 *Thas be the rotas.* So MS, Wr, Sk; D&S, B: *Thas rend be the rotas.*
- 144 *chale.* MS: *colde* written above.
- 145 *Egle the eyere.* So Wr; MS, B: *Egle be Eyere;* Sk, D&S: *Egle the keyere.* *Egle* is one of the words underlined in the MS; it is similarly capitalized and underlined in lines 176 and 190. B, defending the MS reading, argues that "*Eyere* must mean 'female' in the restricted sense of 'mother'" (p. 267). The eagle is depicted as tending the brood of chicks like a mother hen.
- 148 *yppynned.* B emends to *fayl-y-pynned* because a negative sense seems to be required. The meaning of the passage is clearly "until they have fully fledged" and are ready to exercise their wings.
- 151 *Tyll trouthe the triacle.* Sk translates: "Till Truth, the remedy (for slander), told her true tales to some" (II, p. 294).
- 152-54 *Thas baterid . . . sondrid from other.* There is obvious wordplay on Bushy, Green, and Scrope in these lines (see above, notes to Prol.2 and I.99). Sk translates so as to highlight this wordplay: "Thus this bird battered the bushes around, and gathered up men as they walked on the Green, till all the 'scruff' and Scrope parted asunder" (II, p. 294). The poem *There Is a Bush That Is Forgrowe — On King Richard's Ministers* — begins:

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There is a busch that is forgrown,
Crop it wellie, and hold hit lowe,
Or elles hit wolle be wylde.
The long gras that is so grene
Hit most be mowe, and raked close —
For-grown hit hath the felde.

155-56 *He mellid . . . that they had.* Sk translates: "He so mixed the metal with the hand-mould, (i.e. so moulded events) that they lost, of their limbs, the dearest that they had," i.e. their heads" (II, p. 294).

156 *That they lost lenes.* So D&S, B; Sk: *That [they] lost [of their] lenes;* MS and W: *That lost lenes.* Those who lost their heads were Bushy, Green, and Scrope.

157 *fowlyd.* Henry, as falcon, acted as a "fowler" or one who hunts birds. The wild birds are described as kites or predatory birds.

158 *kytes.* MS: *kaynter,* with *kytes* written above.

159 *laughte.* MS: *caught* written above.

164 *beynard that his bogg stall.* "Bogg" refers to Sir William Bagot, Sheriff of Leicestershire, who went to Ireland to inform Richard of Henry of Lancaster's return from exile.

164-75 *But the bler-eyed . . . all the peple.* Sk paraphrases: "The eagle was striving to seize his prey (Lord Scrope), that he might rend his head off; but the blar-eyed scoundrel (Bagot) who had stolen the treasurer's bag, in which the spoils of the poor were often fastened tightly, made the falcon angry, and anxious that Bagot should be bound. But soon after, this wretch (Iorrell, viz. Bagot) who had led away this looby (Scrope) all the way over forest and ford, fell, on account of his false deeds, into the domain belonging to Henry, and was caught and brought before him and publicly reproofed" (II, p. 295).

165 *Where purraile-is . . . full ofte.* "Wherein the very rags of the poor were often penned or fastened" (Sk, II, p. 295).

167 *hadd.* So MS, Wr, Sk; D&S, B: *nadd.* The word *hadd* seems to be governed by "floter" in the previous line; Henry is anxious that this scoundrel be brought to justice.

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- 170 *haddle*. MS: *haddle*. Sk's emendation.
- 179 *ne with*. Sk emends to *ne / los peſi* with.
- 180 *losyld*. From *lowe*, humiliate, abase.
- 182 *reclayme* means a call to return to court (and derives from a French word for recalling a falcon).
- 185 *served*. A reader has written "deserved" above this word, which seems like the correct interpretation of it. See also II.28 and note.
- 186 *lymed leves*. Birds were trapped by spreading branches and leaves with birdlime.

Passus Tercius

- 1 *beu brid*. Henry, the "beau" bird (Eagle or falcon). The author says he will turn to the other animals — the harts (noblemen) — and question why they have acted contrary to their interests.
- 9–10 These two lines are underlined in the MS, as if the reader regarded the sentiment as proverbial or particularly noteworthy.
- 11–12 *fir clereth . . . mene woldē*. The sense of these lines is that just articulating the problem (saying the *clause*) does not clear up the author's confusion until he investigates further (*more mater*).
- 13 *shar*. So MS, Wr, Sk; D&S, B: *qf*. It is possible that the scribe wrote "þ" anticipating the first word of the next line, but the sense is clear with the MS reading. D&S paraphrase lines 13–16: "I mean, with regard to the harts of strength that has come with years, pricked on by good living and their lusty age, that when they have lived 100 years, they grow weak, etc." (p. 95).
- 18 *armen*. So Wr, Sk, B; MS, D&S: *armen*. Medieval bestiaries contain the legend about stags — first formulated by Pliny and transmitted by Isidore of Seville and others — that the stag, when it grows old, seeks poisonous snakes in order to drink the venom and so renew its aged skin.

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- 23 *as his pray asleth.* Sk: "as his prey (i.e. the necessity of swallowing his prey) requires" (II, p. 296).
- 26 *clerlie . . . nar.* I adopt two emendations in this line. The scribe once again has written *clergie* for *clerlie* (see also 183 and note), although Wr and Sk retain the MS reading. A corrector has inserted *nar* above the line in the MS, marked with a caret.
- 26–29 *coltir . . . hors . . . swan . . . bær.* The references in these lines are to nobles executed, murdered, or exiled in 1397 because of their complicity in events of 1388 at the Merciless Parliament. The horse is the Earl of Arundel, Richard Fitzalan, beheaded on Tower Hill, whose badge was a white horse; the colt stands for his son Thomas, who escaped and joined Henry; the swan is Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, murdered at Calais under the ostensible protection of Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk; and the bear is Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, exiled to the Isle of Man, whose badge was a black bear. These same symbols appear in *Ther Is a Burch That Is Forgrowe* and in the prose headnote to John Gower's *Cronica tripartita*: "There were then three nobles of the realm who were especially disturbed about all this [the events surrounding Richard's deposition], namely, Thomas Duke of Gloucester, who is commonly called the Swan; Richard Earl of Arundel, who is called the Horse; and Thomas Earl of Warwick, whose name is the Bear" (trans. Stockton). The justification for Arundel's execution was his responsibility for the death of Simon Burley, who was executed in 1388 with the connivance of Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick, despite Queen Anne's alleged begging for mercy on her knees. For more on the swan, horse, and bear, see below, lines 86, 89, 94, and notes to those lines.
- 32a *Propter ingratitudinem . . . in lege ciuitatis.* "The free man is called again into slavery because of ingratitude, as in the Prick of Conscience and the civil law." In the MS the quotation is in the right hand lower margin of fol. 113a. Although the quotation begins on the same line as 30, I place the Latin quotation, with Sk and B, after line 32 (Wr omits). The anaphora of the English lines ("Ne to") would be broken up by inserting the quotation after 30.
- 37–61 The metaphor now shifts from deer to partridges and their nature as described in medieval bestiaries (books about beasts). The two partridges in this passage stand for Richard, who loses — deservedly — the young partridges to Henry Bolingbroke, the "true mother." In bestiaries the partridge is said to be a "cunning" and "disgusting" bird and "perverted creature" whose male "sometimes mounts the male, and thus the chief sensual appetite forgets the laws of sex." The female will "steal the eggs of

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another female" even as Richard is said to do in this passage. See T. H. White, *The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts* (New York: Putnam/Capricorn, 1954), pp. 136-37.

- 37 *bough sparesk*, that is, birds who build nests on the ground rather than in trees.
- 42 *eiven*. So Sk, D&S, B; MS, Wr: *heires*. Sk's textual note: "MS. *heires*, which is obviously a blunder; for see l. 50 below. *Heires* = heirs; but *eiven* = eggs" (l. p. 616). But *heires* makes sense too insofar as egg-bearing partridges are concerned with their lineage.
- 45 *cogisoun*. Wr reads this word, which is underlined in the MS (indicating an unfamiliar or doubtful term to the reader), as *cogisoun*.
- 69 *Egle in the est entrid his own*. See the note to Pro1.11. Henry of Hereford returned to England to claim the Lancastrian estates after Richard confiscated his inheritance. These lines addressed to the dull-witted Hicke Hevyheed (line 66) — a type — explain and try to justify the author's method of referring to historical personalities in heraldic cypher.
- 74 *hende*. MS: the *h* is in superscript.
- 79 *teryd . . . twenty yeric*. Richard governed from 1377-99. The nestlings — those who follow Henry, the true leader — have complained about Richard's reign for twenty-two years. *Teryd* appears in the opening line of the macaronic lyric "Tax has temet us alle" (MEPW, page 147), a poem on the Great Rising of 1381.
- 81 *tyned*. So D&S, B; MS, Wr, Sk: *tyned*.
- 82 *grotes*. MS: *e* in superscript above the *a*.
- 86 *swan*. The swan refers to Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, who *faulid* because he died — doubtless murdered — at Calais in 1397 under the ostensible protection of the Earl of Nottingham. In the margin of the MS next to this line: "P' Swan."
- 87 *fiacon*. MS: *ffiacon*, underlined in red.
- 89 *hors*. The horse refers to Richard Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, who was beheaded in 1397 under escort by King Richard's Cheshire guards and in the presence of his own

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son-in-law, the Earl of Nottingham. The poem's assertion that people were upset because of the horse's *hire* is an example of understatement. In the margin next to this line: "p' horse."

- 93 *cronicle*. Many chroniclers were eager to support Henry of Lancaster as ablest to govern England in 1399. Adam Usk reports that the Archbishop of Canterbury delivered a sermon of the theme "A man shall rule over them," in which "he praised unreservedly the vigour, good sense, and other qualities of the duke of Lancaster, commanding him, and deservedly, as ruler" (p. 69). In the same sermon he censures King Richard.
- 94 *bond*. So Sk, D&S, B; MS: *bround*; Wr: *broad*. The *bevere* refers to Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, whom King Richard sentenced to perpetual banishment on the Isle of Man. In the margin next to this line: "p' Beat." Henry *myrthid* the beat because he revoked Warwick's banishment (*his bond bruste*).
- 96 *berlingis*. Warwick's son Richard and his wife Elizabeth.
- 97 *ar.* So Sk, D&S, B; MS, Wr: *war*.
- 105 *They*. So Wr, Sk, D&S, B; MS: *þe*. Wr reads *mownde* as *moonde*. The *marshall* refers to Thomas Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham, the "horse's" (line 106) son-in-law, who was present at Arundel's execution. The Earl Marshall's *myssefedde* was his presence at the execution of Arundel and his blindfolding of him.
- 106 *clothed the stode*. Nottingham is said to have bandaged his father-in-law's eyes at the execution. D&S and B, on the strength of Henry Bradley's suggested emendation, read *cloyed*, "lamed," for MS *cliged*, Sk's reading. Wr reads *cloped*.
- 111 *perish*. So MS, Wr, Sk, B. D&S amend to *passik*, "surpasses."
- 124 *thynchith*. So Sk, D&S, B; MS, Wr: *thyntith*.
- 126 *fresche foodir*. The author in this section describes what other satirical writers call "gallants": overdressed young men who slavishly follow fashion trends, some of them extravagant and even ridiculous, who affect a certain swagger ("strouatyng") and who announce their presence with "Haff!" or "Ho!" See *On the Times*, lines 117 and 181 (and note) in *MEPW*.

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- 128a *Qui mollibus . . . Euangello.* The Gospel reference is to Luke 7.25: But what went you out to see? a man clothed in soft garments? Behold they that are in costly apparel and live delicately, are in the houses of kings.
- 136 *For.* So Sk, D&S, B; MS, Wr: *But* (repeated from previous line).
- lyghly. So Sk, D&S, B; MS, Wr: *lyghly, at the longe goyng.* "The 'longe goyng' here signifies death upon the gallows" (Sk, who translates the phrase as "at their long journey," II, p. 299).
- 136–37 *leghid . . . domes carte.* The idea is that the person to be hanged, whether finely clothed or dressed in rags (he who never thrived), will swing in the same way from the gallows' rope (leap as lightly) when the hangman's cart drives away. B observes, "The line draws an ironic contrast between the *zrouutynge* of line 134 and the leap made by a criminal from the cart which takes him to the gallows. For all the antics of the overdressed courtiers, they will overreach themselves and come to an unfortunate end" (p. 277).
- 140 *seimis.* Sk, who reads *seimis* or *semiris* (Wr: *seimis*), comments "perhaps samites. Samite was a rich silk, into which silver was sometimes interwoven. The line perhaps means 'And use all their silver for interweaving with samites or for ornamenting drinking-horns'" (II, p. 299). D&S translates *seimis* as "belts." It is clear that the finely dressed courtiers are wasting their money rather than using it prudently.
- 141 *for-dash the coyne.* A frequent complaint in satirical literature was the debasement of currency through shaving or clipping gold from existing coins or the introduction of coins with debased metals such as the "Jashburnes." See *WFGO*, pp. 216–17; *Statutes of the Realm*, 2:87 (against melting down money and against foreign currency, 1393, anno 17 Richard II); and "Poems against Semony and the Abuse of Money," in *MEPW*, pp. 179–242.
- 145 *lawe of Lydford, in londe ne in water.* The allusion is apparently to a proverbial legal practice in the court at Lydford: "First hand and draw, / Then hear the cause of Lydford Law" (Sk II, p. 299). Skeat goes on to point out that the court had jurisdiction only in cases "that did not affect land, life, or limb." Sk, D&S, and B emend MS *ne* to *of* because *ne* "seems to have been written over an erasure" (Sk, II, p. 299) and because "in land and in water" is "closer to the legal formula" (B, p. 277). See Alford, p. 89, who notes that "in londe and in water is a legal formula expressing exclusive jurisdiction."

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- 152 *slevis slide on the erthe*. Fashion dictated long, dangling sleeves for women but also for men, as in British Library MS Harley 1319, fol. 57, showing the empty throne just after Richard's deposition and fashionably-dressed courtiers with elaborate sleeves extending almost to the floor. The fashion began in France, which provided further weapons to those who would denounce the new trends as degenerate imports. See also Chaucer's *The Parson's Tale*, which denounces "the superfluous in lengthe of the forseide gownes, traulynge in the dong and in the mire, on horse and eek on foote, as wel of man as of woman" (X [I] 419). For more on these sleeves, see below line 196 and note and line 234.
- 154 *but*. Wr's emendation, adopted by Sk and B. The sense of the line requires "unless."
- 156 *Pernell*. Pernell, like Felice (line 160) was a "type" in medieval literature: a woman who loves fine clothes, as Pernell in *PP* who fails to put her "purfill" (trimming) "in hire huicche" (chest); see B IV.116 (A IV.102). In B V.26-27 (A V.26-27), similarly, Waster asks Pernell to put aside "hir purfile" and "kepe it in hire cofre for catel at hire nede." In *RiR*, Pernell, Felice, and Sir Pride comprise a little fashion group of their own.
- 159 *the jette*. This is a term used satirically to describe Chaucer's Pardoner in the General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*: "Hym thought he rood al of the newe jet" (I [A] 682). See also *The Simonie*, line 118, and *Above all thing thow arte a kyng*, line 10 (as a verb), with the sense of "to swagger": money "makyth the galandes to jett." See *MEPW*, pp. 197 and 213. In *Above all thing thow arte a kyng* (*MEPW*) occurs the following stanza:

In kynges coris, where money dothe roun,
Yt makyth the galandes to jett,
And for to were gorgousse ther gere,
Ther cappes awry to set.
galand: swagger
their gorgeous clothing

- 160 *Felice*. Another "type," like Pernell, from *PP*: "Felice hir faimesse fel hire al to
sclaundre" (B XII.46).
- 163 *now late*. Either the scribe or the reader/corrector has inserted, with a caret, of above
the line between *now* and *late* (and very possibly in the same hand as the MS); and Sk
and D&S read *now of late*. Wr and B read *now late*. Since "now late" is a common
Middle English expression — see, for example, Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, line
45 — I retain the uncorrected reading.

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- 164 *kerving . . . to pecis.* Another important new style of men's clothing involving the sleeves was called "daggering" (see below, line 193). The cloth was cut — wastefully, according to satirical writers — to put curves or ruffles on the edges or holes in the fabric at strategic locations. Chaucer's Parson complains of "so muche pownsonyng [piercing] of chasels to maken holes, so muche daggyng of sheres" (XII.418). In the margin, a reader has written "kervinge of clothes."
- 167 *priflysch.* So Wr: (*priflysch*); Sk, D&S, B: *priflyr*. MS: *pefflysch*.
- 186 *beringe appor oilles.* To bear or hold up oil(s) means to use flattering speech, as in John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, when men speak not honestly and forthrightly, "Bot holden up his oil and sein / That al is wel, what evere he doth" (7.2194–95; see also 7.2584–85).
- 187 *assises.* The court of assizes determined legal matters of fact by means of assessors or jurymen ("assiseurs"). See Alford, Glossary, siv. *Sise*, and *The Simonie* line 469 and note, in *MEPW*. Assessors were proverbial for bringing false and malicious testimony into court.
- 190 *clericis.* MS: *clergie*.
- 193 *Duche cottis.* That is, German coats. Observers of the English court sometimes wrote satires against extravagant or foreign (hence allegedly outlandish) dress. The point about the "Duche" coats is that they were alien, not English. In 1337 and 1363 the English parliament felt so strongly about clothing that they passed legislation — called sumptuary laws — to restrict dress according to class.
- 194 *scorne.* So D&S: (*schorn*); MS, Wr, Sk, B: *scorte*. B glosses as "speak slightly," (p. 123). D&S cite the *Paston Letters* for the phrase "tell scort" and comment, "No such phrase as 'tell short' is recorded, though *Piers Plowman*, B. xii. 124 has 'sette short be here science'" (p. 101).
- 196 *peynies.* Peynes may or may not be a personification of a "type," like Sir Pride (line 176), Wit, Malaperte, and Wisdom (lines 226, 237, and 238 below). *On the Times* mentions a "Pues Penytes" who, with "Galauntes," "behold, wander through the countryside" (*per ricos ecce vagantur*; lines 117–18 in *MEPW*). The phrase *peynie sleeve* also appears in *On the Times*, line 85, for "Jarrers with paynyt sleeves" are the retainers of noblemen (*inopes famuli dominorum*), a fashion detail which indicates both their status and their ruthlessness.

Notes to Piersus Tercius

- 201 *coswade*. So Wr, D&S, B; Sk: *cosde*; MS: *codide*; same at line 219.
- 218 *hales*. These are structures, sometimes hastily constructed, for specific purposes. See MED s.v. *hale* n. (2): "A temporary structure for housing, entertaining, eating meals, etc." The first entry is from the Middle English *Twaits*: "Arthare . . . made a feste . . . in Wales, / And after mete, þare in þe hales."
- 220 Next to this line, in the MS right margin, appears "Wytt was banysshed oute of the course." In venality satires, the doce and doorkeepers — *juniiores* — can be obstacles for the poor or virtuous. See *Becu qui exarant*, line 78 and note, in *MEPW*, pp. 190, 226.
- 221 *arowatyd*. "driven out of the assembly" (Sk). At lines 207–10, D&S speculate that "Somewhere earlier a passage seems to have been omitted describing how Wisdom came to the court and was slighted by graceless courtiers" (p. 101). But the sudden arrival, otherwise unannounced, of a figure of authority is typical of abrupt appearances of Piers Plowman in Langland's poem. Moreover, the narrator here alludes to the story of his expulsion from the court.
- 222–23 *leve . . . he drak*. Ironic: the lord and ladies are not pleased with men of discernment and good judgment such as Witt.
- 228 *yhonne trasse*. A "trasse" is a pack or a bundle, so Witt is "sent packing" or given the "bum's rush." For this use of *yhonne* — commanded — see MED s.v. *hōnen* 3a (f).
- 234 *sleves . . . erthe*. The rhetorical device of synecdoche, or part for whole, a favorite of Langland's in *PP*. "Sleves" here are collectively those with fashionable garments featuring long, trailing sleeves. They might be capitalized (like Malaperte in line 237) and hyphenated: "Sleves-that-slode-appon-the-erthe." For comparable characters in *PP*, see B IV.20 ("Suffre-til-l-se-my-tyme") and B XX.312 ("Sire Leef-to-lyse-in-lecherie").
- 237 *Malaperte*. A personification of an impudent, bold person.
- 242 *governance of gettinge*. I.e., "a just mode of getting money, by imposing moderate taxes; a proceeding which will win grace, i.e. favour. In l. 250 it means government, counsel" (Sk, II, p. 300).

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- 249 *these thre degris*. The social ranks mentioned in lines 249–53 include wise counsellors of high standing ("of good age"; "grete"); a warrior class in middle age; and labourers to sustain themselves and the other degrees. In the left-hand margins of the MS the degrees are numbered "1," "2," and "3."
- 254 *Thasne woldē reule*. So MS, W^r; Sk, D&S, B; *Thasne woldē frīght domēj reule*. The emendation is unnecessary if we understand line 255 as a noun-clause subject of *woldē reule* (with anacoluthon or shift in syntax). In the right-hand margin of the MS is written "Agaynste yoonge Cōnsaylers."
- 260–61 *For it fallib... geve good redi*. The scribe or a reader has marked off these two lines with a connector (|), as if they were proverbial or worthy of special note.
- 262 *kow to hoppe in a cage*. Proverbial figure of ungentleness. See B. J. Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases from English Writings Mainly Before 1300* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), C499. See also *The Stevie of Ainech*, line 14 (in *Heroic Women from the Old Testament in Middle English Verse*, ed. Russell A. Peck [Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1991], p. 22).
- 265 *not yffoundid... tyme*. Augustine notably discusses the origins of kingship in *The City of God* 4 and 19, which he attributes to lawlessness and *Resipolink*. See #FGO, pp. 151–52. R&R in this section argues that kings were not ordained originally to follow a pleasure principle but to work, like plowmen, for the common profit. For a discussion of the common good in the Ricardian period, see Russell A. Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit in Gower's Confessio Amantis* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), pp. xxi–xxv.
- 268 *meyntesourz*. MS, *meyntesourz*. "To mark 'maintainers' with maces,' i.e. to beat them; in contradistinction to the marking with badges mentioned above" (Sk, II, p. 300). "Maintainers" were men who served as a private army for the king or powerful lords; they often wore special livery and distinctive badges.
- 272 *And not... dates*. "The word *nor* has been dropped, making nonsense of the whole. Restore it, and we have — 'And not to rule like bats (awake only at night), and rest all day,' etc." (Sk, II, p. 300). B glosses *dates* as "dais."
- 282 *Thar*. So Sk, D&S, B; MS, W^r; *What*. In the right-hand margin in the scribe hand as the MS: "nota, nota, nota / Over Watchyng."

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- 287 *To do . . . brest.* "To do them right reverence, though his back break," viz. with stooping. We ought to read *hem* for *him* in l. 286, or else *him* for *hem* here" (Sk, II, p. 300).
- 288-89 *This warmessesse . . . longe dure.* "This glow of wealth may not last long with any mortal wight" (Sk, II, p. 300).
- 293 *hevene.* So MS, Wr, Sk; D&S: *hevene-[gate]*; B: *hevene-[gave]*. B in support of her emendation cites PP V.594: "Of almesedes ar the hokes that the gates hangen on."
- 295 *knew.* So Wr, Sk, D&S, B; MS: *kne.*
- 299 *kew-kaw.* This term also appears in the margin. D&S: "the sense of the passage is that the justices have to be bribed" (p. 102). Sk and B understand the term as "vudden change," "subversion," or "reversal." B moves line 305 to line 300.
- 306 *prier after presents.* In margin: "Takynge of presents."
- 307 *abuneth all the hills.* "And put down (refuse) all the complaints" (Sk, II, p. 300).
- 309 *weddys.* Legal pledges as surety for some legal action. The syntax of this passage is difficult, but the sense seems to be that people will lose their lives all too easily and that pledges will do them no good. In margin: "maystenance."
- 317 *clyders of Chester.* The Chester guard constituted Richard's personal army of archers who were noted for their arrogance and brutality. The chronicler Adam Usk regards them as a ruthless gang who unwittingly contribute to Richard's downfall: "The king, meanwhile, ever hastening to his fall, among the many burdens which he inflicted upon his realm also kept about him in his following four hundred supermarteries from the county of Cheshire, men of the utmost depravity who went about doing as they wished, assaulting, beating, and plundering his subjects with impunity; wherever the king went, night and day, they stood guard over him, armed as if for war, committing adulteries, murders, and countless other crimes; yet so inordinately did the king favour them that he would not listen to anyone who complained about them, indeed he regarded such people with loathing; and this was the chief cause of his ruin" (p. 49).
- 319 *plodid pipoudris.* The summary court of "Pie-Pouder" — held at fairs and markets — was so called because those who attended the court had dusty feet. The author of *RiR*

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imagines that the Cheshire guard disrupts the already-corrupt proceedings with their intimidating presence. As B observes: "To plead *p[ro]positus* for all *p[ro]positis* . . . is tantamount to disregarding proper legal procedure altogether" (p. 285).

- 320 *coyfles . . . axyn*. This line is vaguely reminiscent of PP B Prol.211–13: "Yet houed
þer an hundred in howues [hoods] of selke --- / Sergeantz, it seemed, þat serveden at
þe Barre, / Plededen for peryses and pounds þe lawe." The passage is unique to the B
version. Of the *coyfles*, Sk declares, "coifs such as were worn by the sergeants-at-law;
cf. B, prol. 210; and see *hōse*, i.e. hood, in l. 326" (ll. p. 391). See also Ahew, lines
1141–44.
- 322 *fyne*. The implication is that the Cheshire guard raises such a ruckus in court with their
false pleading that they bring about a final settlement, a *fyne*, although that settlement
is unjust.
- 330 *And lente . . . battis*. "And gave men the free experience of their long staves." To *lend*
leverē is to deliver blows; see Wm. of Palerne, ed. Skeat; ll. 1233, 3822" (Sk, ll. p.
301).
- 336 *lyghtliche*. MS: *lyghliche*. For the phrase *lyghtliche ylonglite*, compare PP and the
belling of the cat episode: "And oerleop hem lyghtiche and laugte hem at his wille" (B
Prol. 160; not in the A version).
- 346–47 Between these two lines Sk adds a "missing" line: ["I myȝte not reche redis to rekene
the nombre"]. His line count is hereafter off by one from this edition.
- 347 *O[ne] many . . . couade*. The MS reads, *O[ne] many mo wrongis / þan I write couade*, which
Wr retains. D&S adopt Sk's insertion of a line before this: *I myȝte not reche redis /*
to rekene þe nombre. B has */They wrought/ many mo wrongis than I write couade*,
which I revise for my reading. The *O[ne]* is pleonastic.
- 351 *seven sterri*. Medieval writers use "stars" and "planets" indistinguishably. The seven
heavenly bodies alluded to in this line are the moon, Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars,
Jupiter, and Saturn. "Apparently God is the sun, and Bolingbroke and his army the
moon and stars" (D&S, p. 104). See below lines III.367–68.
- 353 *menteyned*. Sk, D&S, B; MS, Wr: *menteyne it*.

- 361 *Tyll Degon . . . brastyw*. Degon and Dobyn (Diggon and Dobbin) must be names for violent rustic types — similar to Chaucer's Miller or Robin of The Miller's Tale — who are noted for breaking doors in. The difference here, of course, is that these are courtroom doors and part of the Cheshire guard's attempts to derail legal procedure.
- 363 *Awakydffor*. So D&S: *Awakyd ffōf*. MS: *And awakydffor*; W: *And a-wakydffor*; Sk: *Awakyd ffōf*; B: *And awakyd ffōf*. The initial *And* may be dittography from the previous line or eyeskip from the next line.

Passus Quartus

- 1–16 *For where . . . cometh to fayres?* This is one long verse sentence, with considerable anaphora (repetition of first words of poetic lines) on *we* and *another*.
- 4 *fyrys . . . faughtis . . . fee-farmes*. These terms seem to refer to Richard's attempts to extort money from those who were involved with the challenge to the crown in 1387–88. After the Shrewsbury Parliament dissolved in 1398, Richard demanded that such persons and the seventeen counties that supported his foes seek pardons from him — his *plessance* — by midsummer. *Fee farm* were estates that yielded an annual rent due the crown. In Shakespeare's Richard II, John of Gaunt complains to Richard that England "Is now leas'd out" and "Like to a tenement or a pelting farm" (2.1.59–60).
- 6 *nownagis*. Nounages were revenues to the crown on land a minor inherited. See also the note to line 7.
- 7 *Marek and Mowbray* are two examples of men elevated to titles and estates at a very young age, thus yielding nounages. Roger Mortimer became fourth Earl of March in 1381, age seven, while a ward of the Earl of Arundel; Thomas Mowbray (spelled *mōibray* in the MS), at the age of seventeen, inherited the barony of Mowbray in 1383. "The Chancellor, Richard, Baron Scrope, father of the Scrope who was later King Richard's favourite, objected to the king's extravagant action in thus granting the lands, and was deprived of his office" (D&S, p. 104). Richard seized Mowbray's properties in 1385, when he married against the king's desires. This is an example of the "fer-seytus" mentioned in line 5.
- 13 *purveyours*. Sk translates lines 12–13: "Might not go far enough, even with the addition of his rent, to repay the poor for that which his purveyors took from them" (II, p. 302). Purveyors were officials who seized property; the act of "purveyaunce" — the carrying off of property — was a subject of complaint literature. In *God Spele the*

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Plough, for example, the narrator says, "The kyngis purvous also they come, / To have whete and otys at the kyngis node; / And over that befe and mutton, / And batter and pulkyn, so God me spede!" (*MEPW*, p. 254).

- 14 *posondage*. "In the Parliament of 1397 the Commons granted Richard 12d. on every pound of merchandise and 3s. on every tun of wine entering or leaving the kingdom for the next three years" (D&S, pp. 104-05).
- 15 *a fifteenth . . . ale*. Two kinds of taxes: a fifteenth and a tenth. At the Shrewsbury Parliament, "Richard had previously demanded an aid of the commons; and on the fourth day (i.e. Jan. 31, 1398) they voted him, with the assent of the lords, a tenth and a half, and a fifteenth and a half; and in addition, as if they sought to make him independent of parliament, granted him the tax on wool, wool-fells, and hides, not for a short and determinate period as usual, but for the whole term of his natural life" (Sk quoting Lingard). "This is clearly," Sk adds, "the very occasion to which our author is referring" (II, p. 302).
- 17-19 *we had crewance . . . dene that they owed*. This means, says Sk, "that the court-revellers spent so much that they would have been utterly ruined by debt if they had not paid some of it by promises only" (II, p. 302). Bolingbroke in Shakespeare's *Richard II* characterizes Richard's spendthrift friends as "the caterpillars of the commonwealth" (2.3.165).
- 28 *sente . . . absoultive*. In defiance of custom and law, Richard allegedly appointed knights of the shire and others to sit in the 1397 parliament. See McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century*, pp. 486-87 and Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 383-84. His purpose was to ensure that the Parliament acceded to his wishes. Sir John Bushy, from Richard's faction, was the Speaker of this parliament. The official record of this Parliament is in *Rotuli parliamentorum*, 3: 347-85. Also in this parliament Richard promoted a number of earls to the rank of duke. Walsingham reports that the common people referred to these men not as dukes but as "duketti," the little dukes (*fassoles*, p. 223). Among the promotions were Thomas Mowbray, the Earl of Nottingham (to Duke of Norfolk) and Henry Bolingbroke, the Earl of Derby (to Duke of Hereford); the last of the "duketti" became king of England.
- 44-45 *But yit . . . while*. The idea behind these lines is that members of parliament went through the motions of presenting arguments, even though their intent was to ratify the actions. "Some argued against the king's right of taxation, but this was merely a blind" (Sk, II, p. 303).

Notes to Passus Quirius

- 53 *sipher . . . argrym*. The cipher has no meaning in itself but only in relation to other numbers, just as some of the members of parliament take up space but contribute nothing.
- 55 *yscupid with Symond*. "Sapping with Simon" means bobsnobbing with ecclesiastics — "to share in the revels which some churchmen indulged in" (Sk, II, p. 303). This scene recalls Will's meal with Patience, friars, and a gluttonous Doctor of Divinity (*PPB XIII*) or the narrator's encounter with a huge Dominican friar, "With a face as fat as a full bladder" in *PPCr* (line 222). D&S think the reference is to Simon Magus and simony (pp. 105–06).
- 57–59 *somme were ayndris . . . no blame served*. "These went to the king, and informed him of foes, who were really friends and spoke for the best, and deserved no blame at all" (Sk, II, p. 303).
- 66–70 *some . . . the reson*. Sk says these lines refer to "the logic-splitters" (II, p. 303).
- 71–82 *And come . . . icloune*. D&S remark, "This nautical metaphor is especially appropriate on the lips of a Bristol man" (p. 106). The metaphor of the "ship of state" was common as a way of expressing the situation of the commonwealth. See, for example, "A dere God what may this be," a lament on the death of Edward III (*JMEV* 5).
- 74–77 *Thaw lay . . . weath-ride*. "This seems to mean that the lords lay comfortably sheltered on the lee-side, and warned the steersman as to what was going on on the weather-side; doing so, probably, by guess. Yet the line [77] is rather obscure. The result was that the mast bent, and nearly broke (l. 79); and if they had not taken in the additional sails in time, they would have fallen overboard owing to the lurching of the vessel" (Sk, II, pp. 303–04).
- 75 *bare aboughe . . . maister*. As the lords sheltered their boats around the king's barge, they altered the course of (bare aboughe) the barge and then blamed the steersman.
- 89 *ownd*. So D&S, B; Sk: *oweth*; MS: *own*. "Some, instead of looking after the money due to the commons, asked for what the king owed themselves, and so far succeeded that they were promised an earnest of money (himself) if they would help the king; for they should be helped to some of the same silver as he received himself" (Sk, II, p. 304).

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- 93 *And some . . . for-roke.* "And some forsook well-doing, because they feared the great" (Sk, II, p. 304). The poem breaks off on the eleventh line of fol. 119b. The rest of the page is blank. Six blank pages follow.

Mum and the Sothsegger

Introduction

Mum and the Sothsegger, ostensibly a debate poem on the merits of holding one's tongue (keeping mum) or speaking out (soothsaying or telling the truth), is in fact an alliterative verse meditation on statecraft and an often satirical anatomy of contemporary institutions, especially the estates and courts of law. The anonymous early fifteenth-century author does include the trappings of a debate between Mum and the Sothsegger, hence the poem's conventional (and scribal) title. But as with the "debate" between Griffon and Pelican in the pseudo-Chaucerian *Ploeman's Tale*, the debate in *Mum* is one-sided: the scorned, derided Sothsegger is a figure of truth, a voice crying in the wilderness, whereas the popular, influential Mum is an exemplar of all that is wrong with the author's society. The narrator of *Mum* goes on a search for the nature and qualities of both Mum and the Sothsegger with the particular goal of determining which of these two ways of self-expression should, in the poem's words, "have / The mainstre" (lines 574–75). Although the poem is fragmentary — we have neither the beginning nor the end of it — the clear victor is the Sothsegger. An interesting feature of the poem is that the narrator, who seeks the Sothsegger, represents himself as a truth teller.

Mum upholds the virtues of reticence and silence, which can be admirable qualities. No less an authority than "Cato" — pseudonymous author of the *Disticks of Cato* whose sayings appear several times in *Mum* — championed speaking little. Probably the best known of Cato's adages (1.3 of *Cato major*) proclaims, "I think the first virtue is to guard your tongue; he is close to God who can be advisedly silent." Every medieval schoolchild encountered this and other disticks of Cato among their very first exposures to studying Latin. Yet in *Mum* those who are guarded in their speech get no credit for it: they are time-servers, men too timid or duplicitous to speak the truth forthrightly and sincerely. Mum becomes a synonym for hypocrisy and fraud. Unlike a soothsayer, who is difficult to find, figures of "mum" abound and are everywhere prosperous. They are, like Placebo from Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale*, the yes-men who advise the king, princes, and dukes of the realm with flattery. Their teachings undermine the commonwealth, rather than sustain it.

The poem is structured around the narrator's travels to individuals and groups who might help illuminate the nature of Mum and the Sothsegger; these travels include a series of powerful scenes or vignettes as part of estates satire. After the initial section on protecting the crown and the necessity of identifying truth tellers, the narrative moves to a dialogue between the narrator and Mum, a sequence identified by a scribe as "the disputacion betwyne Mum and the Sothsiger." This encounter leaves the narrator troubled — "in a wyre" (line 296), in

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perplexity. He wanders to universities in search of enlightenment about keeping silent or speaking out, and he consults the Liberal Arts, including a curmudgeonly Grammarian ("Sire Grumbald" [line 330]) and an unharmonious Music (line 332). A rather too literal-minded and narrowly focused Doctor of Philosophy (lines 360 ff.) acknowledges that he has never heard of this debate, so the narrator travels to his next chosen group, the friars (lines 392–535). The narrator's movement from one group to the next as he seeks instruction is reminiscent of another poem in the "Piers Plowman tradition," *Piers the Plowman's Crede.*¹ In the latter a narrator visits four orders of mendicants trying to learn the Creed, all to no avail because the friars spend their time attacking the other orders rather than teaching him his Creed, which they do not seem to know in any case. He finally learns the Creed from Piers the Plowman, who instructs him on the evils of friars as well. The friars in *Mum* similarly have no good answer for the narrator but they have more of an answer than the academic clerks. "Bestow the prize on Mum," they urge, "since he generously endows our convents." The narrator regards friars as hapless: they interpret riddles as poorly as Lollards, and for their ineptitude they end up just as dead. He takes the opportunity to deliver a philippic against mendicants which includes the familiar charge that friars take their origins from Cain, architect of the City of Man. He fares no better among the monks (lines 536–52), for they are interested only in enhancing their great monastic houses, or among the secular clergy and those who hold more than one benefice (pluralists).

When the narrator tires of his search, he listens to a parish priest's sermon, which concerns tithing and offering gifts to the priest. Instead of finding solace in his local church, he is asked to offer gifts of all kinds, including, in a bizarre passage, a cornucopia of vegetables and meats. For this parish priest the road to heaven is paved with grapes, garlic, geese, and pigs (line 604). When the narrator reflects upon virtuous ecclesiastics of previous eras, Mum (or one of his students) drifts in like an unwanted alter ego to debate him. This section provides a conclusion to the narrator's inquiries among clerics. His next stop on his picturesque journey to learn answers about Mum and the Sothsegger is the town and its citizens (lines 788–840). As was the case with the friars and monks, Mum is master in the towns as well, for he controls the mayor and city councils with the result that the poor never receive a proper hearing concerning their grievances. Soothsayers do not sup in the halls of burghesses; the Sothsegger "[d]lyneth . . . with Dede" in a separate room and drinks not fine ale but "durn-seode" or a drink of silence (line 838–39). The narrator is outraged and ponders all the places he has been (lines 841–70). In a long sequence reminiscent of Will's dream of the world in *Piers Plowman* B XI, the narrator falls asleep and dreams about the commonwealth in a moralized allegory of bees and a beekeeper (lines 871–1287). The beekeeper stands for the prudent sovereign who exterminates, ruthlessly if need be, the unproductive drones who infiltrate the hive bent on

¹ The origins of the quest in *PPC* may be found in *Piers Plowman* B VIII.1–61 (A IX.1–52).

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taking the honey the other bees have worked so hard to manufacture. The drones represent the wastrels in Henry's realm — those who subvert the commonwealth by despoiling its substance. The beekeeper — a sage and "An olde auncyng man of a hanfriid wistre" (line 956) — is a version of the Sothegger. He is also a gardener, who roots out "the wedes that wyrwen my plantes" (line 979). The narrator asks the beekeeper to explain the "propriete" (lines 990, 993) of bees, which leads to a lengthy description chiefly drawn from a medieval encyclopedia by Bartholomaeus Anglicus (Bartholomew the Englishman). After a brief discussion of medieval dream theory concluding that dreams are significant, there is an anticlerical passage on abuses within the church hierarchy, including visitations by the archbishop that fail to uncover patent wrongs. The narrator claims to have found secret written documents that detail these abuses — "a pryye poysse" (line 1344) and "a volume of visitacion" (line 1353). These are the first of a number of alleged documents he will cite in his satirical critiques. In some the narrator learns of false rumors told about lords and the king, which leads him to muse that such rumor-mongers would not thrive under the regime of Genghis Khan; as an exemplum for rulers, he tells the story of the Great Khan (derived from the popular *Travels of John Mandeville*). This section harmonizes with the beekeeper episode, since Genghis as a ruler governs on the principle that might makes right, a philosophy that the author of *Maw* seems to endorse. Genghis demands that his lords slay their sons as proof of their loyalty, and thus they do. "Thay sparid not to spille blode that sponges of thaymself" (line 1442), declares the narrator approvingly. He deplores pride and lack of humility shown by some who refuse to yield to authority; and he observes that this surquidry has damaged the crown on many occasions. He finds other documents, including a "raggeman rolle" (line 1565) composed by the devil himself which brings everyone to ruin. In a most interesting passage toward the end of the extant fragment, he archly dissects a Merlin prophecy. He identifies the prophecy as popular — "how the people constreyneth / And mouneth on the mervailles that Merlyn dide devyse" (lines 1723–24). The result of their confused musings is lethal — "heedes been hewe of and hoppe on the grene" (line 1732).

Richard the Redeless contains specific allusions to events and personalities of Richard II's reign, but this is not the case with *Maw*, at least not in the same way. One passage — lines 206–31 — includes cautious praise of Henry IV, especially of his martial, manly qualities. The author of *Maw* claims he described Henry's court and its ministers in detail before the poem as we have it begins. He says: "And next I have ynamed as rygh as I couthe, / And the condicions declarid of alle, / Rehersing no nasaille ne riders aboute" (lines 208–10). It is significant that precisely those names and the conditions "of alle" have not survived in the manuscript, either because that section is missing (by accident or design) or because the author never got around to writing it. The author himself may have reconsidered the passage — to be a truth teller and name names may have proved too much for him. He prefers more general, satirical attacks to explicit personalities or incidents. He does mention taxation on several occasions; and the extant part of the poem begins with this financial issue. Those who petition

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the crown for monies the crown does not have will eventually come to grief when tax "collectours coensen to caicche what thay habben" (line 8). The author observes that the commons are especially hard hit by some levies: "Of custome and of coytaige the comunes shuld be easid" (line 149), and these folk "collectours haten" (line 1663). There is also a significant anticlerical strain in Mum that manifests itself not only in criticism of the friars but also the portrayal of Mum as a bishop ("Mum with his myter" [line 579]; "Mum wol be no martir while mytres been in sale" [line 1236]).

Since the discovery of the British Library manuscript, scholars have identified and proclaimed connections between *Richard the Redeless* and Mum. Often when people speak of Mum they mean both poetic fragments; and Day and Steele and others were convinced that "the two fragments form part of one larger composition."¹ John Bale (1495–1563), an important early antiquarian and bibliographer, identified what Sloane named *Richard the Redeless* as "Mum, Soth-segger!"² The two alliterative fragments do have much in common. They both presume to advise a king, include satirical critiques (for example, clothing satire), and irritate *Piers Plowman*, by far the most important source for both poems. They both have an intimate knowledge of law and the courts, which has led some to believe that the author or authors were law clerks.³ Both poems manifest a delight in word play, though this is typical of alliterative poems generally. But the differences between the poems are striking as well. *Richard the Redeless* focuses wholly and exclusively on Richard II and the latter part of his regime, whereas Mum ignores Richard's rule to concentrate exclusively on problems during Henry IV's administration.⁴ It seems best to hold open the possibility that there may be a connection between them, but there may not be.

¹ Day and Steele, p. x.

² Day and Steele, p. xxii (continued from p. ix) and note 1 (which includes Bale's translation into Latin of the first two lines of RIR). See also Barr's discussion, p. 15. Embree points out that the title Bale cites is appropriate only for the Mum text and not at all for RIR ("Richard the Redeless and Mum and the Sothsegger," p. 5).

³ See "The Law Courts and Their Abuse," in Day and Steele, pp. xxvi–xxix; Barr, with help from John A. Alford (*Piers Plowman: a Glossary of Legal Diction* [Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1988]), has chronicled the many legalisms and words with legal nuance to be found in both poems. Of RIR she says: "Throughout the poem a keen interest in legal matters and an abundance of legal diction suggest that its author could have been a parliamentary clerk. There is no evidence of the advanced learning that would have come from a university education" (p. 17). See also her Chapter 5, "Legal Fictions," in *Sigures and Satire*, pp. 133–66.

⁴ For the case for two separate poems, see Dan Embree, "Richard the Redeless and Mum and the Sothsegger." Doyle may have it right when he characterizes Mum as a "sequel" to RIR ("The Manuscripts," p. 98).

Introduction

* * *

MS BL Additional 41666 exists in a unique vellum manuscript, whose quality has deteriorated over the years. Editing *Mwm* requires a different approach from editing *Richard the Redeless*. A reader or editor has carefully marked up the British Library manuscript, perhaps preparing to recopy it. Sometimes the corrector seems to want to alter spellings (e.g., "Hough" is marked for replacement with "How" in line 1); sometimes, to gloss or replace an unfamiliar word (e.g., "casche" is marked as "caste" in line 8); and sometimes, to substitute a reading that makes better sense to him (e.g., manuscript "come yn and" of line 5 is marked to be replaced with "comyn," the commoner). A modern editor's dilemma is knowing when to retain the manuscript reading and when to emend based on a corrector (or to emend nor based on a corrector).¹ Previous editors have many times chosen to adopt readings based on a corrector; and I do the same for this edition but more conservatively than previous editors. Because of uncertainties as to the status of corrections, I have as much as possible kept to the manuscript readings, explaining early corrections and modern emendations in the Notes. Test cases occur at lines 5 and 169. Line 5 reads, in the manuscript, "Leste vncarryng come yn and caste vp þe halter," which Day and Steele and Barr, based on a corrector, emend to "Leste uncarryng [comyn] caste vp þe halter." I retain the uncorrected manuscript version (save for the normalized orthography) and read "uncarryng" as a substantive — ignorant people — rather than an adjective modifying "comyn" (commoner). Line 169 in the manuscript reads "Or y blent or y shent or sum sorowe huse." A corrector or editor has placed a dot over "blent," blinded, to be replaced with "brent," burned. This is a plausible emendation, and Day and Steele and Barr adopt "y brent" for their editions. Barr, following David Lawton, notes that blinding was not a legal punishment at the time of *Mwm*'s composition but that William Sawtrey was burned as a heretic in 1401 just prior to the statute *De haeretico comburendo*, which licensed the burning of heretics.² I retain MS "y blent" (spelled "ybrent") on the grounds that historical circumstances may not govern word choice here.

The BL Additional MS contains a number of pertinent Latin quotations and English remarks which, in the manner of *PP*, *Friar Dawe's Reply*, or *Upland's Rejoinder*, comment on the main action of the text and offer biblical support and proverbial wisdom. In the manuscript the quotations appear in the margins with indications as to which line they illuminate, but I have placed them within the text and in italics at the indicated locations. Following the precedent of *PP* editions, I assign line numbers to these quotations with o. I have also placed one English

¹ Another way of stating the dilemma: do the corrections indicate the author's final intentions or are intentions better reflected in the marginal corrections? A case could be made for each. I emend only if a corrector suggests a reading or if a previous editor has resolved a great difficulty in the MS.

² See Lawton's analysis in "Lollardy and the *Piers Plowman* Tradition," p. 788. For a discussion of this eris, see James Simpson, "The Constraints of Satire," p. 14n7.

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marginal comment at line 205 — "Here bigynseth the disputacion bitwyne Mum and the Sothsegger" — in the text, something that previous editors have not done. It furnishes a point of reference in a poem without *passus*.

The dialect of *Mow*, like that of *Richard the Redeless*, is Midlands. Like most other Midlands poems it contains words not found, or found only rarely, in Chaucer's London vocabulary. The distinctive Midlands vocabulary can be observed in the many words for "man" that appear in the work: *berne* (also spelled *burne* and *barne*), *side*, *froke*, *gome*, *kemp*, *lende*, *renke*, *segge*, and *wylfe* (*wight*, *wy*) alongside *man*.¹ Some other words to be found in *Mow* and *Sir Gawayn and the Green Knight* but not in Chaucer's or Gower's writings include *snelle*, to speak (OE *meddla*); *laughte*; took (OE *brecan*); *dwefe*, illusion (OE *gedwele*).²

Some eccentricities of spelling by the manuscript's scribe include separating the *y-* prefix for the past participle from the verb form. Hence *y shent* and *y kidde*, which I have rendered *yshent* and *ykidde*. I have used a hyphen to join the *y-* prefix to a vowel, however (*y-asid* rather than *y-sid* at line 1463). The scribe also separates the possessive form *is* from the noun or pronoun it modifies: *lyng is* for *kyngis*, which is how I spell such possessives. Line 880 in the MS reads "By a cliffe vn y knowe of Crist is owen makyn," which I have spelled "By a cliffe unyknowe of Cristis owen makyn." I have not, however, elided the possessive form when the noun ends with an *e*; hence *wyke-is* not *wykes* ("week's," line 10). I have rendered MS *ff* with capital *F* at the beginning of lines except in Latin marginal comments included in the text. I have not recorded mid-line virgates (caesurae), although I have sometimes taken my cue for punctuation from these, with a comma or even a semicolon. For example, on a number of occasions I have followed the scribe's practice of using virgules or caesurae as partial stops in mid-line. On the basis of virgates, I have rendered MS line 1312, "Dreemes / and vndide þaym / as deede provid after," as "Dreemes, and undide thaym, as deede provid after." I transcribe MS line 1573, "And drawen hym clese fro his dees / he dysmeth þere nomore," as "And drawen hym clese fro his dees; he dysmeth there nomore." At key moments in the MS, the scribe left a small letter indicator, along with two lines of indent, for the rubricator to fill in with a larger letter later on. I have inserted large capital letters at these points, as did Day and Steele in their edition for EETS.

¹ Of this list Chaucer and Gower use only *man/mow* and *wylfe*. The others are "upland" terms appropriate to the "num, rum, ru" of alliterative verse. Of the list, *froke*, *kemp*, *segge*, and *wylfe* do not appear in *R&R*.

² But see Chaucer's *The Reeve's Tale* I [A] 4161: "ben nedode na dwale" (they did not need a sleeping potion), perhaps an imitation of Midlands speech.

Introduction

Select Bibliography

Manuscript

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Blamires, Alcuin. "Mum and the Soothsenger and Langlandian Morn." *Newophilologische Mitteilungen* 76 (1975), 583–604. [Finds many parallels between *PP* and *Mum* — in theme, structure, and language.]

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Mum and the Sothsegger

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Mohl, Ruth. "Theories of Monarchy in *Mum and the Sothsegger*." *PMLA* 59 (1944), 26-44. [Believes that same author wrote both *RifR* and *Mum* but that he was bold in the first part of the poem and circumspect in the second. Monarchy is the best form of government to check abuses of "feudalism."]

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Wawn, Andrew. "Truth-Telling and the Tradition of *Mum and the Sothsegger*." *Yearbook of English Studies* 13 (1983), 270-87. [Sets *Mum* in a specific tradition of telling the truth and the consequences of failing to be truthful. The formula "who sayth soth he shalbe shent" occurs in collections of proverbs and in literary works such as *The Plowman's Tale*, *On the Times*, and as a refrain in a Vernon MS lyric and in a Simeon MS poem.]

Wenzel, Siegfried. "*Mum and the Sothsegger*, Lines 421-422." *English Language Notes* 14 (1976), 87-90. [In an antifraternal passage Mum preserves a proverbial saying that appears, ironically, in Friar John Bromyard's *Sermo praedicantium*.]

For Source and General Studies of *Mum and the Sothsegger* in relation to *Richard the Redeless*, see Select Bibliography for *Richard the Redeless*, pp. 17-21.

Mum and the Sothsegger

	Hough the coroune mooste be kepte fro covetous people Al boole in his hande and at his heeste eke, That every knotte of the coroune close with other, And not departid for prayer ne profit of grete.	Now; crown must whole; command also armament; interlock distributed; the nobility
5	Leste uncammyng come yn and caste up the halter And cric on your cunsel for croigne that ye lacke, For thay shal smacieche of the smoke and smerte thereafter Whenne collectours comen to caioche what thay habben. ¹	ignorant folk; cast off/restrain demand; funds taste; have pain
10	And though your tresorier be trewe and tymber not to high, ² Hit wil be never the worse atte wyke-in ende, For two yere a tresorier twenty wyrte after May lyve a lordis life, as leued men tellen.	It; never; at the week's lord's; as common folk say chancellor; discipline
15	Now your chanchellier that chief is to chaste the people With conscience of your curseil that the coroune keþth, And alle the scribes and clerex that to the court longen, Boþe justice and juges yþoyned and other,	knowledge; guards clerk; are attached appointed and otherwise serve; money at the bar junior barrister, best
20	Sergeantz that seruen for soulde ate barre, And the prestys of court, priost of alle, Loke ye reeche not of the riche and rewte on the poure ³ That for faute of your fees fallen in thaire pleynties.	lack; fail; legal pleas complaint listen to
25	Have pite on the penylees and thaire pleynte harkeneth, And here thayn as hertly as though ye hare had, ⁴ For the love of Hym that your life weldeþ; And grauerteth thaym for Godis sake and with a good chiere	controls God's; will
	The writing of writyng and the waxe eke; And thay wil love you for the lawe as liege men aughte, More thenne for mayntenance that any man useth,	legal writs; wax seals also should than; maintenance (see note)

¹ When tax collectors arrive to take what they have

² And though your treasurer be loyal and builds not too high

³ Be sure that you do not advantage the rich and [that you] take pity on the poor

⁴ And hear them out as sincerely as though you had payment (hire) from them

Mum and the Sothsegger

	Or for any frounting for faute of the coigne. Now ye have yherde of the baselle names Of officiers wiflyme and withoute eke, But yit of alle the barnes the beste is behinde Ferto serve a soavrayn in somer and in wintre, And most nydefal at eve and at morowe eke, And a profitable page for princes or for dace	insulting; lack of money heard about; retainers' outside [of court] also now; yet to come lord, summer morning
30	Or for any lay lord, leterid or elles, That litel is ytake fourth or his tale lyved. And yf ye willeth to wite what the wight batte, ¹ Hit is a Sothesigger that seilde is yseye To be cherisched of chief in chambre or in halle,	court official; duke; educated or not furthered; believed
35	40 But for his rath reasons is rebukid ofte, And yf he fable to ferre, the foote he goeth undre. ² There is no clere with the king that clothid hym ones, But clothid hym at Cristmasse and al the yere after. ³ "Saunder the serviselees" shuld be his name,	"Alexander without livery" the end [of the year] do not like
45	For he abideth in no household half a yere to th' ende But the lord and the lady been looth of his wordes, And the meyny and he mowe not accorde, But al to-teereth his toppe for his trewe tales. He can not speke in termes ne in tyme norther,	household; do not agree (the household) tears out its hair formally; appropriately
50	55 But babbith fourth bustusely as barn un-ylerid, ⁴ But ever he hitteth on the heed of the mayle-is ende, That the pure poynt pricketh on the sothe Til the foole flesh worny for attre. Theune is this freeke afrountid for his feithful tale, And yfalled undre foote while falsenes goeth aboute	i.e., hits the nail on the head truth sumit; poison bold man impugned stampid; rooms abroad
	With castelle and with coigne ferto caste deceiptz. ⁵	

¹ And if you wish to know what the man is called

² And if he speak too forthrightly, he is turned out

³ Lines 42-43: There is no clerk of the king's who ever clothed him [the Soothsayer] even once / Although he [the clerk] clothed himself at Christmas and all the next year

⁴ But babbles on boisterously like an unchained child

⁵ With trickery and with bribery to devise deceptions

Mun and the Sothsegger

	Hough trouthe might be travessid and tournid of the weye. ¹	
	Thenne fareth fals fourth and flatereth alle beste,	<i>falsehood</i>
	And lightly is plyvd withoute long tale,	<i>lightly; believed</i>
60	And every gome of hym glad, so glorieously he loketh	<i>man</i>
	Thorough the peynture of the preynite that in the palme bongeth. ²	
	Right as the cockil corneth fourth ere the coeme ripe,	<i>cockleseed: ripe</i>
	With a cleer colour, as cristal hit semeth,	<i>clear</i>
	Among the grayne that is grene and not ful growe.	<i>grain: green, fully grown</i>
65	Right so fareth falsnesse that so freysh loketh	<i>just; fresh</i>
	Thorough the colour of the crosse that many men incansbeth.	<i>ensures</i>
	But whense trouthe alre torment hath tym ferro kerne	<i>reversal; grow seed</i>
	And to growe fro the grounde anone to th'ende,	<i>full height</i>
	Thenne fadeth the flour of the fals cockol.	
70	That lykne I to lyers, for atte the long goyng,	
	Of every segge-is sawe the sothe wol be knowe. ³	
	Yit is hit not my cunsel to claire what me knoweth	<i>counsel; chancery</i>
	In sciamandre ne scathe ne scorne of thy brother,	<i>slander; injury</i>
	For though thy tale be trowe, thyn tente might be nayous.	<i>intent; harmful</i>
75	For whiche thou mighte be harmed and have that thou servest. ⁴	
	For go to the Gospel, that ground is of lore,	<i>basis; teaching</i>
	And there shal thou see thyself, yf thou can rede.	<i>for yourself</i>
	Whethir I wisse thee wel wisely or elles.	<i>direct you, or not</i>
	He seith that thou shaldest the synne of thy brother	
80	Telle hym by tym and til hymself oon,	<i>quickly; to; alone</i>
	Yn fal wil to amende hym of his myssedeedes.	
	<i>Si peccaserit in te frater tuus corrigere etc.</i> ⁵	
	And yf he chargeth not thy chariti but chodeth thee agaynes,	<i>credit: beware you</i>
	Yit leve hym not so lightly though he loure oones,	<i>abandon; glorify once</i>
	But funde hym to freyne ofte of the newe.	<i>strive to question him again in a new way</i>
85	And havé wittenes thee with that thou wel knowes,	<i>hold your purpose with what</i>
	And spare not to speke, spedie yf thou mowe,	<i>succeed; may</i>

¹ *How truth might be contravened and turned aside*

² *Through the image of the impression that remains in the palm (see note)*

³ *Lines 70-71: I liken that to liars, for in the long run, / Of every man's speech the truth will be known*

⁴ *For which you might be harmed and receive back what you deliver*

⁵ *If your brother sins against you set him straight etc.*

Mom and the Sothsegger

	And he that moost is of might thy mede shal quite For such sooth sawes that sounen into good, And of a reasonable man rewards to have.	reward; bestow truthful speech; contribute to
90	For whenne thy tente and thy tale been temprid in oone, And menys no malice to man that thou spekys, But forto mende hym makely of his misdeodes, Sory for his synne and his shrewed taisches,	brought into accord you intend; speak correct; meekly
95	And the burne be yblessid and balya canne eschewe And thrifty and towarde, thou shal thankis gote. Were I a lord of a lande that lawe aughte goaverne, Suche a siker servant shuld have robes,	wretched vices troubles can aften profitable; promising law should govern faithful
	Though he seide ever sothe and servyd of noon other. B ut now wolde I wite of a wise bume,	know
100	What kynnes creature that me couthe telle Where to finde this freek, yf the king wolde Have hym in housholde, as holsum were.	sort of beneficial
	"By Crist," cothe a clere that conceipte he had, "There is no wiseman, I wene, wolde be ywiddid	said; clerk; understanding joined
105	To such a simple service, assay where the liketh. ¹ For no maniere mede that thereto belongeth,	manner reward comes with [the post] Nor for promotion
	Ne ferthryng ne frendship whyle flatryng helpeth. For alle the greet clerke that with the long lenth	dwell
	Knoweth this as kindly as clere doeth his bokes:	naturally; books
110	Hit is no siker service but for a somer saeson, But yf hit were for a fool that wold not be ferthred. He might say sothe sum while among thaym	secure; that lasts only advanced
	And shuld be holde foole though hit feul after."	speak; for a while foolish; proved true later
	But muche now I mervaille, and so mowen other,	might others
115	That oure corouned king is kepte fro tho lades —	crowned; those men
	<i>Ei nunc reges intelligite crudelitatem qui indicat terram, etc. David</i> — ²	
	Ferto saye hym the sothe sum while among	
	Hough he shuld grece the griefe or the woundz ganne festre	How; salve; began to
	And so to leede his life in love of the royaume.	realm
	For the poure peple hath prece of thaym many	a multitude
120	Ferto tellle thaym thaire toyes twyse a woke;	trifles twice a week

¹ To such a simple post, look where you please

² And now, O ye kings, understand: receive instruction, you that judge the earth, etc. David

Maur and the Sotheby's

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| | And any neighebourgh be nigh on eve or a moewe,
Hit wold not long be lefte, my life durste I wedde; | wager |
| | And that is grace and thaire good happ to gouerne thyrm better
And in welthe to be ware, ere that woo falle. | fortune |
| 125 | But the king ne his cunseil canne not mete with thyrm,
But cleerly the cause I knowe not for sothe, | misfortune befall (them)
can not meet |
| | But dreede of the deeth dryveth thyrm thens,
Or elles looste of thaire likerous life uppon erthe. | fear of death; away
gratification; lavish |
| | Thus is the court accumbrid and knoweth not thaire happens | disturbed; fortunes |
| 130 | Ne God neither goodman ne thaymself nothir,
Til fortune for foolie falle atte laste, | |
| | And al the world wondre on thare wilde deedes. | |
| | But yf the king might knowe that the conseyn talketh
Hough grotz been ygadrid and no grief amendid | |
| 135 | And hough the lawe is ylad wherene poure men pleyne,
I believe loyally oure liege lord wolde | gross; gathered
constrained; complain |
| | Have pitie on his peple for his own profit
And amende that were amyssye into more ease. | a better situation |
| | But the cause why the king knoweth not the mischief
Is for faute of a fabuler that I before tolde of, | |
| 140 | Ferto telli hym the texic, and toache not the glose,
How the worde walketh with oon and with other. | Jack; nookshaper
commentary (see note) |
| | But wherene oure comely king came first to londe,
Tho was eche burne boilde to bable what hym aylid | |
| 145 | And to fable ferther of faute and of wrongz,
And romansid of the missereule that in the royaume groved, ¹ | landed (see note)
what troubled him
speak; failings |
| | And were behote high helpe, I herde hit myself
Yeried at the crone, and was the kingis wille | |
| | Of custome and of coylage the costumes shuld be easid. | promised |
| 150 | But how the covenant is ykepte I can not discryve,
For with the kingis cunseil I come bat side. | Proclaimed; king's
customs; taxation; relieved
agreement; say |
| | But psez with a papegeay parlid of oones,
And were yplumed and ypullid and put into a caige. | riddon
magpies; parrot disputed
feathered; plucked; cage |
| | Soth the briddes were ybete the beke is undre whinge, | |
| | But yf they parle privyly to thaire owen peers. | |
| 155 | But the king ne his cunseil may hit not knowe
Unless; speak; peers | |

¹ And reconnected the missile that grew in the realm.

Mum and the Sothsegger

	What is the comune clamour ne the orye nother,	ostery neither
	For there is no man of the meeyne, more nother lassie, ¹	
160	That wol wisne thaym any worde but yf his witte faille,	advise
	Ne telle thaym the trouthe ne the teixe nother,	exact words
	But sherry forto shewe what the shire meneth,	shun; shire folk are saying
	And beguile thaym with glose, so me God helpe,	flattery
	And speke of thaire own spede and spie no ferther,	concerns; discern
	But ever kepe thaym clos for caecching of wordes.	vigilant; overhearing
165	And yf a burne bolde hym to bable the sothe	is so bold as to blab our
	And mynde hym of mischief that misserule asketh,	remind; causes
	He may lose his life and laugh here no more,	
	Or yputte into prisone or yppyned to deeth	be put; tortured
	Or yblest or yshent or sum sorowe have,	blinded; ruined
170	That ffo scorne other scathe scape shal he never.	injury escape; never
	Thus is trouthe dounse yroode and tenyd ful offe,	downtrodden; harmed
	Ybete and ybounde in borghes and in shires,	Bosten; enclosed; towns
	And principaly of princes yppyned therme of other,	tortured; by others
	Yhauld and yhauntid and yhoote trasse,	Cried after; sent packing
175	That he shoneth to be seye forto shewe his harmes,	shame; seen; injuries
	But ever hideth his heede fro the haylstones,	head; halibutner (see note)
	And is overwoxe with wrong and wickid wedes,	overgrown; weeds
	And tenyd with tares and al amisse temprid.	choked; wholly discordant
	Yit wole he growe fro greve and his grayne bere,	grief
180	And after sowe his seede whense he seeth tymie.	
	For alle the gomes under God, goyng uppon erthe,	people; alive
	Were never so slygh yit forto ale trouthe:	canny; clay
	Though thay hate hym with battz and bete on hym ever,	battre; clabs; beat
	Trouthe is so tough and loeth forto teote	loath; tear
185	And so pryy with the prince that paradis made	close
	That he hath graunt of his lyfe while God is in hevene;	promise
	For though men breue the bosough there the burne loiggeth. ²	
	Or elles hewe of the heede there he a hown had,	chop off; house
	Or do hym al the disease that men devise curare,	cause; trouble
190	Yit wol he quyke agayne and quite alle his foes	revive; pay back
	And treede over the tares that over his toppe groused,	ruad; head grew

¹ For there is no man from the king's retinue, more influential nor less

² For although men have the town where the man dwelt

Mum and the Sothsegger

- And al wickid wede into waste tourne.
And therefore my cunsel — though the king knowe hit
And alle the lordz of this londe, right lite is my charge —
195 Ys to be at oone with trouthe and tarre hym nomore,
Lewe he tucke at your tabart ere two yere been eridid,
But ye saffre his servant to be seye oones
Among you in a moneth (but yf ye more wil)
Ferto saye you the sothe, though ye shame thenke.
200 For hit wol savere your mouthe swetely wifthyng short after
Whense fortune you fleeth and falleth elleswhere;
And yf ye savere on his sawe and serve thereafter
And eke wirche by his wondre, the whelc wol tourne
205 And eke chasnge his cours of care and of sorowe,
And tourne into tidewel, terme of your lifes.¹

Here bigynneth the disputation betwene Mum and the Sothsegger

- Now is Henryis houer holsomly yrmade
And a meritable meyng of the moste greet,
And next I have ynamed as nygh as I couthe,
And the condicions declaid of alle,
210 Rehearsing no rascaille ne riders aboute.
But he hymself is souvrain, and so mote he longe,
And the graciousist gayer goyng uppoun erthe,
Witti and wise, worthy of deedes,
Ykidle and yknowe and cunning of werre.²
215 Feers ferto fighte, the felde ever keptith,
And trasteth on the Trinité that trouthe shal hym helpe;
A doughtful doer in deedes of armes
And a cornely knight ycome of the grettist,
Ful of al vertues that to a kong longeth,
220 Of age and of al thing as hym best semeth.
But hit be wel in his dayes we nowe dreode alre
Lest foendes falie withynne fewe yeres,
But God of His goodnes that governith alle thingz.

*Henry's house flyingly
meritorious company; noblest
closely*

*Rehearsing no riffraff
(be for) long
most gracious leader*

*Fierce; battlefield; dominating
foursome participant*

manly qualities; belongs

¹ *And turn it into good fortune, for the rest of your life*

² *Well known and notable and astute in warfare*

Mum and the Sotheegger

	Hym graente of His grace to gaye wel the people	lead
225	And to reule this royaume in pees and in rest, And stable hit to stonde stille for oure dayes.	stabilize it; remain peaceful
	But I dred me sore, so me God helpe,	
	Lete covetise of cunsel that knoweth not hymself (Of sun and of certayn, I seye not of alle)	itself certain people
230	That of profitable pourpos putteth the king ofte, There his witt and his wil wolde wirche to the bestie — “Nomore of this matiere,” cothe Mum therme,	purpose kinders said
	“For I mervaille of thy momeling more therme thou wenys.	mumbling; think
	Saides not thou thyself, and sothe as me thoughte,	Did you yourself not say
235	That thees sothesuggers seruen noon thankes?” And thou knowes this by clergie, how cans thou thee excuse That thou ne art ryzier than a narne ryne-folle tyme,	receive no thanks excuse yourself more foolish
	Ferto wite that thy wil thy wite shal passe!”	know; will; surpass
	I blussid for his bablyng and abode stille	blushed; words; waited quietly
240	And knytte there a knotte and construd no ferther; But yit I thoughte ere he wente, and he wold abide, To have a disputeson with hym and spie what he hant.	paused; pondered see; was called
	“I am Mum thy maister,” cothe he, “in alle maniere places	
	That stith with souverayns and servyd with grecce.	
245	Thaire wille ne thaire wordes I wilseye never,	deny
	But folowe thaym in thaire folie and fare muche the bettre,	
	Easily for oyle, sire, and elles were I ryce.	flattery; or; foolish
	Thus leede I my life in heste of my herte,	at my own pleasure
	And for my wisedame and witte wone I with the bestie,	wisdom; discretion dwell
250	While sergantz the sechth to saise by the lappe For thy wilde wordes that maken worth the ofte. ¹	
	Thow were better folowe me fourre score wynter	You would do better
	Therme be a soethsugger, so me God helpe,	
	Oon myle and nomore waye, I Mum wol avowen. <i>For twenty minutes (see note); testify</i>	
255	And therefore I rede, yf thou reste wildest, Campaignye with no contra yn no kynnes wise. ²	advise; wish to rest speak; please

¹ Lines 250-51: While sergeants-at-law search for you to drag you into court / Because of your wild words which often cause anger and dissension

² Do not hold company with any-nyyers at all

Mum and the Sothsegger

	For there nys lord of this londe ne lady, I wene,	<i>is not; think</i>
	Prince nether prelat ne peer of the royaume,	
260	Bachillier ne bourgoys ne no barrie elles	<i>Bachelor-knight nor burgess; man</i>
	That yf thou wite what thou arte, that wil thee desire	
	Or coveste to his campaigne while contra thee foloweth. ¹	
	"Now to this ateracion," cothe I, "an answere behoveth,	<i>is required</i>
	For I fele by thy fabeling thou art feile of werkes ²	
265	And right worldly wise of wordes and deedes,	
	And ever kepis thee cloos for casting behind. ³	
	Thou wol not putte thee in pees but profit be the more ⁴	
	To thy propre persone; thou passes not the bondes	<i>yourself; bounds</i>
	Foro geve any grucche for glauuyng of boites.	<i>reproach; shooting of arrows</i>
270	Thus me semeth that thou serves thyself and no man elles,	<i>it seems to me</i>
	And has housholde and hire to holde up thy oyles,	<i>reward; flattery</i>
	And eke bouche of coart for colte and for crave.	<i>food allowance; servant</i>
	And yit thou suffris thy souvrayn to shame hymself	<i>allow</i>
	There thou mightes amende hym many tyme and ofte.	<i>While you could</i>
	<i>fficiens culpam habet qui quod potest corriger negligit ewendare in secretis etc.</i> ⁴	
275	Now suche another servant, the same and noon other,	
	Mote dwelle with the deuel, til Do Bette hym helpe. ⁵	<i>Do Better (see note)</i>
	Thus after talkyng we twynned asandre,	<i>parted company</i>
	Bothe Mum and I, and oure mote endid;	<i>conversation</i>
	But muche mervailed I, wherene Mum was passid,	<i>had left</i>
280	Of his opinion that he beulde ever,	
	And provyd hit by profitable poyntz ynowe	
	That better was a barme to abide stille	<i>person to remain quiet</i>
	Thanne the sooth to seye that sineth in his berte,	
	Forso warne the wy that he with dwellith,	<i>man</i>
285	Or mynne hym of mischief that miscrewle askith.	<i>warn; misrule grows</i>
	And ever he concludid with colorable wordes	<i>deceptive</i>
	That whoso mellid muche more than hit nedeth	<i>spoke; was required</i>
	Shold rather wynde weping watre thesse robes.	<i>gain heirs</i>

¹ *For I sense by your fable-making that you are malicious in your actions*

² *And ever you keep close so that you are not left behind*

³ *You will not engage with people unless there is profit in doing so*

⁴ *He who can reform but who secretly neglects to do so shares the fault of the evil-doer*

Mum and the Soothsenger

- 290 And cleerly Caton construceth the same,
And seyth soothly, I saw hit in youthe,
That of "babble" cometh blame and of "be stille" never — Cato explains
Nunnulla vocis vocet, vocet esse locutum —¹
"idle chatter"; "be quiet"
And a wise worldly wodde, as me thensketh,
Of the whiche I was hevy and highly abawyd,
And for the double doute as dol as an asse.
295 And troublid for the travers, and amisse temprid,
That I wenche in a wyre a gretre while after.
For woo I ne wisne who had the better
Of Mum and of me, and misusid faste,
Rechershynge the reasons of bothe two sides,
300 The pro and the contra as clergie askith.
But for wine that I warne I wolde that he knewe
I was never the myre, but as newe to begyrne
As clerke is to construe that can not reede.
Thenne thoughte I on Sidac and Salomonis termes,
305 And Seneca the sage I soughte for the nones,
That whilom were the wisest wies appon erthe
Foro wise any wighte, whatso hym grieved.
I bablid on tho bookes that tho barnes made,
And waitid on thaire woodes aswel as I couthe,
310 But of the matiere of Mum might I nought finde,
Ne so maniere nycte of the newe jesse,
But al homely usage of the olde date.
How that good gouernance graciously esdith.
But glymaying on the glaze, a general reule
315 Of al maniere mischief I merkid and radde:
That whoso were in wile and wold be y-easid
Moste shewe the sore there the salve were.
Thenne was I wel ware what he wolde meone,
That I shulde curse of clergie to knowe the sothe,
Foro dome the doute that me so dol made.
320 I was wilful of wil and wandrid aboute,
Til I came to Cambrigge couthe I not stynte,
To Oxenford and Orleance and many other places
- sad; addled
very great doubt
legal denial; out of sorts
quandary
woo
- arguments
learning requires
awareness; acquired
manner
read
- Sydrac (see note)
at that time
formerly; new
edify; creature
read aloud from
studied; at best
- kind of subtlety; style
- ends favorably
glancing at
noted; read
perplexity; comforted
where
- consult learned men
resolute; doubt
- strip
Oxford; Orleans

¹ *No harm comes from remaining silent, harm comes from speaking*

Mum and the Soothsenger

	There the congregacion of clercz in scole	gathering; school
325	Were stablid to stonde in strengthe of belieue.	established
	I moeved my matiere of Mum, as ye knowe,	stated
	And of the Soethsiger in fewe shorte wordes.	
	To alle the vij sciences I shewed as I couthe,	seven arts (<i>Liberal Arts</i>)
	And how we dwelid in dome, for doate of the better.	judgment; uncertainty
330	Sire Grumbald the grammicer tho glowed for anger	grammarius then glowered
	That he couthe not congruly knytle thayn togedre.	harmoniously
	Music and Mum mighte not accorde,	agree
	For thay been contrary of kynde, whoso caanne spie.	by nature; discern
	Phisic diffled al the bothe sides,	defiled both sides
335	Bothe Mum and me and the Soethsiggere;	
	He was accumbrid of oare campaignye, by Crist that me bought,	redeemed
	And as fays of oare voiding as foal of his make.	glad; leaving; bird; mate
	Astronomyis argumentz were alle of the skyes,	
	He is touche no twynne of terrene thinges.	<i>His conversation no jor; earthly</i>
340	Rethoricis reasons me luste not rehersse,	<i>Rhetoric's arguments I do not care to</i>
	For he concryved not the caas, I knewe by his wordes;	grapzed; situation
	But a subtile shophister with many sharpe wordes	shopister (<i>Logic</i>)
	Sette the Soethsiger as shorte as he couthe. ¹	
	But he wolde melle with Mum ner more ner laise,	speak; neither; nor
345	So chiding and chatering as choghe was ever.	though (see note)
	Jeomette the joynour jablid fante,	<i>Geometry; joiner; gabbled</i>
	And caste many campus, as the crafte askith, ²	
	And laide level and lyse along by the squyre.	square
	But I was not the wiser by a Walsh nose.	walnut
350	Of the matiere of Mum that marred me ofte,	troubled
	And stode al astonyed and stand for angre	astonished; stared in
	That clericie couthe not my cares amende,	the academic clerisy
	And was in pourpoos to paase fourth right in pure wreth.	leave
	But a semely sage that satte al abouwe,	steedly
355	Ychose to the chaire forte chaste foolcs. ³	
	Whom alle the seven sciences servyd at wille,	seven Liberal Arts
	Bothe in werke and in worde weren at his beste,	command

¹ Called into question the Soothsayer as curstly as he could

² And set up many compasses, as the (geometric) art requires

³ Selected for the professorial chair to chastise fools

Mum and the Sotheegger

	And more burse at his bede than boy til his maister. ¹	
	He satte as a souverayn on a high siege.	near
360	A doctour of douts, by dere God he semyd, For he had lokid al that lay to the .vij. artz; He was as ful of philosophie and vertues bothe As man upon molde myghte perceyve.	expert in logical difficulties studied; pertained
	This comely cleve me called agaynes,	earth
	365 And cunscilid me so cleerly that I caughte ease, And seide, "Soon, seest thou this semblé of clerz, How thay bisien thaym on thaire bokes and beten thaire wittz, And how thay loken on the levis the letter to knowe?"	called me to him took comfort Son; assembly strive
	370 For whenne thay knownen the scripture thay constrauen no fether Foro sottille ne to siche no side-wayes. ²	seen; pages; meaning interpret
	But as long as I have lerned and lokid in bokes, And alle the seven sciences ysoughte to th'ende, Yit knewe I never sache a caas, ne no cleve here, As thou has ymoevyd among us alle.	looked into books; investigated to the end situation brought forward
375	Hit is sum noyous nycté of the newe jette, ³ For the teste truly tellet us nomore	Than how; beneficially if
	But how that goode gouernance graciously endith, But and thou woldes be wise and wirche as I tellic, I woldis wisse thee to wite where that thou shuldest	advise; know
380	Have knowlaiche of thy caas cleere to thynt intent, And thy cumberouse question quicly be assailed. Now harke and holde and hye to th'ende.	troublesome; quickly be resolved
	Sum of this semblé that thou sees here, Whenne thay have lokid the lettre and the lyfex over	listen; continue assembly pages
385	Of alle the seven sciences, or sum as thaym liketh, Thay walken fourth in the worlde and wosten with lordes, And with a covelous croke Saynt Nicholas thay throwen, And travallen nomore on the teste, but tounsen to the glose,	dwell
	And putten thaym to practike and plaisirance of wordes.	crook; leave (see note)
390	But thay curse deme thy doute, by dere God in hevene, I can not knowe of thy caas who couthe elles."	labor; turn; gloss unless; resolve else could

¹ And more responsive to his bidding than young apprentice to the master

² To argue subtly or to seek out any deeper meanings

³ It is some pernicious foolishness of the new fashion

Mum and the Sothesigger

	Thenne ferkid I to freres, alle the fourt ordres,	went; friars
	There the fundament of feith and felnesse of workes	foundation; plenitude
	Hath ydwelid many day, no doste, as thay tolle.	
395	I fraysned thaym faire to fele of thaire wites,	questioned; politely; round out
	And moevyd my matiere of Mum, as ye knowe,	
	And of the Sothesigger in fewe shorte wordes.	
	To every couple I construed my caas for the nones,	pair (see note)
	Til the cloisire and the quyne were so accorded	choir; agreed
400	To geve Mum the maistrie withoute mo wordes,	maistery
	And shewid me exemplies, the sohest uppon erthe.	dowest
	N'ad Mum be a more frende to making of thaire houses	<i>If Mum had not been</i>
	Thenne the Sothesigger, so God shold thaym helpe,	
	Hit had be unheldid half a yere after.	
405	Now ne were thre skiles and scantily the ferthe,	<i>A</i> (their houses); arranged
	I woldle love as litel thaire life and thaire deedes	logical reasons; fourth
	As man upon molde, til Amedes me prayed.	
	The fwest is a faire poynt forto wynne hevene,	fixing; gain heaven
	Whenne thay stirid a statute in strengthe of believe	urged
410	That no presti shold preche save seely poure freres. ¹	
	But this deede dide thay not, I do you to wite,	tell you
	For no manere mode that mighte thaym befallie.	reward
	Ne forto gete the more good, God wote the sothe,	<i>[worldly] goods</i>
	But for good herte that thay have to hele manis soules.	men's
415	The secund is a pryy poynt, I pray hit be heldid:	subtle; kept hidden
	Thay curste not neede redelles aright, as me thinketh;	interpret riddles
	For furst solewid freres Lollardz manieres,	ways
	And sith hath be shewed the same on thaymself,	themselves
	That thaire lesingz have lad thaym to lolle by the secke;	lies; swing
420	At Tibourne for traision ytwyght up thay were.	Tyburn hill; strong
	<i>Patere legem quam ipse fecerit</i> — ²	
	For as hit is yaside by aldryn dawes —	<i>from the old days</i>
	"That the charle gaft a dome whiche came by hym afre." ³	
	The third is no lesing ne no long tale:	third; falsehood
	Thees good grey freres that mouche love gotten	<i>Franciscans; much</i>

¹ *That no priest should preach except poor holy friars*

² *You yourself must be vulnerable to the law you imposed*

³ *"That the knave rendered a judgment which came back to haunt him later"*

Mum and the Sothsegger

425	For keping of thaire conscience clener than other, Thay goon al bare aboue the foote and byneth the double With smale semyd socks and of softe wolle, For the love of ouare Lord harde life indures.	purer double layers beneath seamed; wool endure
430	Thay mellen with no monaye more nother lasse, But sturen hit with a sticke and stanyn on hit ofte, And doon thaire bisynes therewith by obedience of th'ordre; But in the herte ne in the hande ne may hit not come,	deal; money affair punished by
	For thenne thay shuld bee shent of the surprisour. The fourthe poynt is fructuous and fundid al in love;	profitable: based
435	Wherme freres goon to chapitre for charite-is sake, They casten there the cuntry and coostz aboue, And parten the provynce in parcelle-mele. And maken limitacioun in lengthe and in breode,	chapter-house; love's divide; dispart; regimes divide up; parcelling
	Til eche hous have his own as hym aughte.	begging districts; broadrik monastic house
440	Theree hath the limitour leue to lerne where he cometh' To lye and to liche or elles lose his office. But sum been so courtoys and konde of thaire deeds	lie; flater (for money)
	That with thaire charitē thay chaungen a knyfe for a peyre, But he wol pille ere he passe a parcelle of whete	exchange; trifle steal: portion
445	And chose of the chese the chief and the besie. He is so cunning in the crafte that whereso he cometh He leveth the lasse for the more deele. ¹	choose; cheese skilled
	Thus with thaire charitē and with thaire fayre chere Thees good Godis men gadren al to thaym'	gracious demeanor
450	And kepen hit to thaire owen cruppe alone fro other. For though a frere be fat and have a ful coffre	more separate from
	Of gold and of good, thou getys but a lite Froto bete thy bale, though thou begge ever.	material goods; little cause; suffering
	But that is no mervail, by Marie of hevene,	wonder; Mary
455	For to begge of a begger what hote is hit But who wolde halle his heede to breke harde stones?	profit
	Thus thaire conscience is yknowe and thaire crafte eke, That hath be kepte cuseil and cloos many dayes.	strike; head; break profession secret, private

¹ *Then has the licensed friar permission to leave where he may come (see note)*

² *He abandons the inferior portion for the better*

³ *These good men of God gather everything to themselves*

Mum and the Sothesigger

	Til al the world wote what thay wold meene;		
460	And that is this treuly, tende whose wil,	pay attention	
	Thorough crafte of confession to knowe men intente:	man's inner thoughts	
	Of lordz and ladies that lustes desieren,	pleasures	
	And with thaire wylly wittz wirchen on ever	work	
	And malden up the matiere to make thaym fatte,	shape things	
465	And gouvernem the grene and gulen the paore.	control; powerful; hoodwink	
	Now take my tale as my intent desseth,		
	And ye shal wel wite I wil thaym no mischief	wish; harm	
	By my wondre ne by my wille as wissely foersothe'		
	As God that is oure gouvermoult me gye at my nede.	guide	
	<i>Honora dominum de tua substantia. Prophetæ.¹</i>		
470	For whenne they come to your cote to crave that thaym nedeth, ²		
	Gyfe thaym, for Godis sake and with a good wille,	Give	
	Metz or monaye as ye mowe indare,	Food; can afford	
	And gefe thaym sauce therewith of the Sothesigger	"sauce" (see note)	
	Ferto preche the people the peril of synne,		
475	How symone shendith al heoly churche,	simony: twin	
	And not forbere bisshop ne baron that lyveth		
	That thay teche treuly the teste as hit standeth,	the fitterself test	
	And abide thereby with a boilde herte,	hold to it	
	And spare for no spicerie ne no speche elles,	bribery	
480	But telle oure the trouthe and tourne not aside		
	How Covetise hath caste the knyght on the grene,	thrust down; greenward	
	And woneth at Westmynstre to wynne newe spores,	spurs (conquests)	
	And cannot crepe thens while the crosse walketh.	formented/cross (see note)	
	He multiplieth monaye in the mote-halle	counsel chamber	
485	More for his mayntenance and manasshing of wordes	menacing words	
	Therne with draughte of his swerde or deedes of armes.	drawing	
	And tolle the frere a toquen, that trouthe wote the sothe	taken	
	Why men mervallen more on thaym thaune on other —		
	That suche a campaigrye of confessours estee not yelde	gang; produce	
490	Oon marlit amoung thaym in seven score wynter.	One martyr	
	Thay prechen alle of penanche as though thay parfite were,	penance; perfect	

¹ Neither by word nor will as surely indeed

² Honour the Lord with thy substance. The Prophet

³ For when they come to your cottage to beg what they need

Mum and the Sothsegger

	But they prove hit in no poyst there thaire peril shuld arise.	
	Thaire clothing is of conscience, and of Caym thaire werkes,	Caym (see note)
	That fadre was and fundre of alle the foun ordres,	founder
495	Of deedes they doon deceipynge the people,	deceiving
	As Armacanes argumentz, that thaire actes knewe,	FitzRalph's (see note)
	Provyn hit apertly in a poysie-wise;	Prove; patently; poetry
	For of Caym alle came, as this cleve tolde.	
	For who writheth wel this worde and withoute titil,	abbreviation mark (see note)
500	Shal finde of the figures but evenie fourre lettres:	aerostic shapes; only
	C. for hit is crokid, thees Carmes thou mōs take, ¹	
	A. for thees Augustines that amoreux been ever,	are ever amorous
	I. for thees Jacobynes that been of Judas kynne,	Jacobins (Dominicans); Judas' kin
	M. for thees Menours that monsyd been thaire werkes. ²	
505	I seye of thaym that succe been and cesse agaynes other,	cause to criticize
	But wel I wote that wilful and worldly thay been sum,	same (of them)
	And eke spracke and spitoos, and splices wel thay loven,	zealous; spiteful
	For Symonis sensors thay settē al to taskē,	Simony's; take up earnestly
	And feele other fante fourtene hanthrid	many other faults; hundred
510	Thay lepen over lightly, and lyen woundre thickē. ³	
	I cannot dene devely of what degré thay bee;	truly; real
	Thay been not weddid, wel I wote, though thay wifes have;	
	But knighth yit of conscience I couthe of thaym make,	
	For thay have joygned in justes agayns Rhesus werkes. ⁴	
515	And ferto prove thiym prestes thees poynz been agayne thaym.	priests
	I cannot redee redily of what reule thay been,	read; rule
	For hooly churche ne hevē hath not thaym in mynde,	
	Save in oon place thaire office and ordre is declarid:	
	I sawe hit in a ympne and is a sentence trewē,	lyme; true statement
520	And elleswhere in hooly writte I berde thaym ynempryd;	heard; named
	<i>Aufeite gentem perfidam. Credentiam de finibus.</i>	
	<i>Deleantur de libro vivencium, et cum iustis non scribantur.</i> ⁵	

¹ C, because it is crooked, for Carmelites you must understand

² M, for these Minorites (Franciscans, Friars Minor), curved are their works

³ They leap over lightly (i.e., overlook wrongs), and lie wonderously much

⁴ For they have engaged in jousts against Jesus' works

⁵ Lines 520a–b; Let him carry off the treacherous people, of the believers in the last things; / Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and with the just let them not be written

Mum and the Sothesigger

	But of the matiere of Mum ne of the Sothesigger, This is not to pourpoos the pare of oon pere,	<i>purpose the paring of a pear</i>
	And therfore my wil is to walke more at large Foro fynde sum freeke that of feith were	<i>more</i>
525	Not double, but indifferent to deme the sothe, Whether Mum is more better or Melle-sunstyme	<i>double; impartial</i>
	Foro amende that were amysse into more ease.	<i>Speak-Sometime wrong; something better</i>
	And for the fikelle freres were fully withholdie And alied to Mum in many maniere wises,	<i>fickle; supported</i>
530	And eeke ful partie, as provyd by thaire wordes. I lyeyed wel the laise thaire loev and thaire deedes,	<i>wholly biased</i>
	And forto eschewe chiding I chalanged thaym alle,	<i>believed; less; teaching</i>
	And lepte lightly fro thaym, leste I caught were;	<i>avoid; challenged</i>
	For thaire curtesie is crok-id there thay caste ill,	<i>caught</i>
535	And that witen thay wel that han wrastlid with thaym. Thense passid I to priories and personages many,	<i>contrive wickedness</i>
	To abbeys of Augustyn and many hooly places,	<i>wrestled</i>
	There prestz and prelatz were perfilyte yelosid	<i>monasteries; personages</i>
	To singe and to reede for alle Cristen soules.	<i>houses of Austin canons</i>
540	But for I was a meen man I might not entre: For though the place were yspighte for poure men sake	<i>meanly dressed</i>
	And eeke funded therefore, yit faillen thay ofte	<i>established</i>
	That thay doon not eche day do bespe of alle.	<i>founded</i>
	For the fundacions of the fundours ment	<i>intended</i>
545	Was groundid for Godis men, though hit gret serv.	
	<i>Mutuerant caritatem in cupiditatem. Sapientia'</i>	
	Thay koveiten no comers but yf thay come helpe	<i>welcome no visitors unless</i>
	Foro amende thaire mynstre and to maynteyne thaire rente. ²	<i>serve</i>
	Or in worke or in worde waite thaire profit,	<i>dined</i>
	Or elles entreth he not til thay have ysopid.	
550	Thus thaire portier for my povreté putt me thern, And grauntid me of his goodnessse to go where me luste	<i>porter; drove me away</i>
	And to wandry where I wolde withoute the gates.	<i>I pleased</i>
	Thense taughte I fro religion, redelees of wites,	<i>wander; outside</i>
	And caried to closes and cathedral churches	<i>went away; at my wits' end</i>
		<i>traveled; precincts</i>

¹ They have turned charity into cupidity. Wisdom

² To repair their church and to sustain their income

Mum and the Sothesigger

555	There that pluralitē was prisely ystablid. ¹ I queyntid me with the quyre for my questions sake, And moevid of Mum more thense thaym liked.	acquainted myself; chose talked
	I was as wise whenne I wente as whenne I came to thayns, Thay wolde not intrereite of ner nother side,	intervene on either
560	But ever kepte thaym cloes to craccine and to mangier. ² And fedde so the foule flesh that the velle ne might Unethe kepe the caroigne but yf hit cleve shuld; ³	skin
	And n'ad the gutes groaned there thay gude were. ⁴ Thay had bee sike of swete mete, so me God helpe,	sick; sweetmeats
565	For piking of provendre passing th'assise. ⁵ And n'adde thay partid with the poure as prestz doon thaire offryng.	shared
	That patten alle thaire masse penyes in thaire purses.	mass pennies
	Thay had be blamyd of Belial for thaire bolde riding	<i>i.e.</i> , the devil
	Yn gardellz of good gold or gile att leste.	belts; gilt
	<i>Nolite possidere aurum neque argentum in domis vestris.</i> ⁶	
570	Therein wexe I wonderre wary of wandering aboute Thorough the wilde weyes that I wente had,	grew; wonderfully weary had gone through
	Ful wo for I ne wiste what was my beste Reed — forto reste or come more at large,	Woeful; did not know Advice; room
	Til I wiste wittely who shalde have	knew certainly
575	The mantrie, Mum or the Sothesigger.	mastery (upper hand)
	And every man that I mette mad for my wordes Wende that I were, wisten thay non other.	
	And as I stode staring, storyd of this matiere, Mum with his nyter manached me ever,	amazed by miser; menaced
580	And cancellid me to cusky and care for myself,	subdue

¹ To where the principle of pluralities (multiple benefices) was nobly established (*see note*)

² But they always remained near the food bin and the manger

³ Scarcely contain the flesh unless it should rupture

⁴ And had not their guts groaned where they were girt

⁵ Far filching of foodstuff beyond the legal amount

⁶ Do not possess gold or silver in your purses

⁷ Lines 576-77: And every man that I encountered believed I was mad because of my words / they knew no other explanation!

Mum and the Sothsegger

	And leste I soughte sorowe, cease by tyme. ¹	
	I dousid of his deedes, for his delectacion	delight
	Was more in his mynde thens the masse-bokes,	
	And boode til a baron, blessid be he ever —	wanted
585	His name is yncempyd among the seven ordres —	named
	Sente a safconduyt so that I wolde	safe-conduct
	Maymeyne no staciere to amende myself,	
	Ne caicche no colour that came of my wittes,	seize on any figment
	But shewe for a souvraya to shewe hit forth after. ²	
590	This boldid me to bisynes to bringe hit to ende	emboldened
	Thorough grace of this good lord that governeth al thing.	
	Theranc sought I forth sevnyght and slepte ful sulde,	wool; aridom
	And cessid on a Saterday til sunne roose amorowe,	
	And burrys and belles ballid togedre,	men; bells bear
595	Morneling on thaire matyns and to the masse after.	Morning
	I same in a siege my service to hire,	seat; bear
	Til the preest in a pulpite began forto preache	peace
	The people to pees and the peril of synne,	to give money
	And also t'offre as ofte as thayrn blod.	
600	He taughte thaym by tyme thaire tithing to bringe	
	Of al maner grene that groweth uppon erthe	green produce
	Of fructe and of floxe in felde and in homes,	fruit; flax
	Of polaille and of peris, of apples and of plummes,	poultry; pears
	Of grapes and of garlik, of gees and of pigges,	
605	Of chibollz and of chirries and of thaire chese eke,	chives; cherries
	Herbaige and eygauns and alle suche things	Herbs; onions
	That growen in thaire gardynes, lete God his parte have,	gardens
	Of hony in your llyves and of your hotycombes,	honey; hives
	Of malte and of menaye and of al that multiplieth,	
610	Of wolle and of wexe and what-so yow increceth	wool; wax; increase
	Or newith yow, the nine partie aymeth to your self,	is newed: ninth part take for
	And tewly the tithing taketh hooly churche.	
	And ever I waitid whensse he wolle sun worde moeve	say
	How hooly churche goodes shal be yspendid.	
615	And declare the deedes what they do shalde	

¹ And lest I was looking for trouble, cease [the search] immediately

² But explain it to a sovereign so it can be pressed afterwards (see note)

Mum and the Sotheegger

	To have such a harvest and helpe not to erie. But soeow on the sible he shewed of that matiere, ¹	plow
	For Mum was a meen and made hym to leve. And as wery as I was, yit was I wrothe ecke	intermediary; break off
620	With Mum, for he made the moppe so lewed To leve men to lense the lawe sith he knewe hit. Thenne ferkid I forth as faste as I mighete Sevene yere Suredayes and solempne festes, ²	angry
	Yf prest or prelat or prechour wolde Sey sothe of hymself and serve thereafter	fool
	And tecche how the tithinge shuld trewly be departid.	allow
	But as wide as I wente, was noon of thaym alle	went
	Wolde moeve of that matiere more nother lasse.	
	And why that thay wolde not wol ye gladly wite,	divided
630	They have a memoure of Mum among alle other, Ys moe in thaire mynde thenne martires of hevene That token the deeth for trouthe of tirantz handes.	speake
	But here a querele or a question quyk mighete thou make:	
	Martires had more might and moe mynde ecke,	<i>[Which] is; martyrs suffered death; tyrants' objection; quickly</i>
635	And couthe more on clergie thenne come now a thousand. But thereto I answere as I am lerid:	knew; about; know
	Thou, lewed laudate, Inel witt has.	have been taught
	Hit was for no cuntryng ne clergie nother	foolish dross
	That thay chosid the deeth, but for derve love	book-learning
640	And kindenes to oure Creatour that creed us alle,	bald
	And for pure trouthe that thay taught ever.	affinity; created
	<i>Propter veritatem dominum omnes familiaritatem etc.</i> ³	
	This made thaym martires moe thanne ought elles.	known; at that time
	For clerke were not knowe by thaire clothing that tymse,	
	Ne by royal raye ne riding aboute,	array
645	Ne by service of souverayns, so me God helpe,	
	Ne by revel ne riot ne by rente nothir,	income
	Ne by thaire doable dees, ne thaire deupe hoodes,	dair; deep
	Ne by drynkyng of dollid wyne ne by datz at eve.	warmed; dates in the evening

¹ But he did not utter a single syllable on that matter

² For seven years on Sundays and feast-days

³ For truth's sake do away with all human afflictions

Muny and the Sothebys

	Ne by worldly workes of writes ne soelyng, Ne by no maniere niceñe that thay now usen, But by the deedes that thay dide, I do you to wite. For I am but lewed and letrid ful lite, And yit me semeth the sentence that I shewe couthe And teche how the tithing shuld trewly be departid, For in thre lynes hit lith and not oon lettir more.	writi: sealing was engage in cause; know judgment
650	Now hendeli hireth how I begynne: That ye clepe Godis parte, lete Godis men have hit, Reservyng for yourself sustenance for your foode, And the overplus over that for omenementz of the churche.	lex kindly hear surplus
655	Though this be shortly yseide, yit so me God helpe, Whoso had casyng and a clerc were, Might make a long sermon of thees fewe wordes;	knowledg
660	And though he toke to his thesene "the tresour is among thaym And the revylle of the royaume and the richesse bothe,"	termon theme revuly
665	He shuld not wende of the waye two whete cornes, For they have tollid so the tithing thay han the two dooles, And been so usid to ease erly and late	gr; wheatsgains tweud; both portions
670	That they canne no crafte save kepe thaym warne. Thay busien more for benefices therne Bibles to reede, And been as worldly wise and wynners ecke	busy themselves professors
675	As man appon molde, and as mache loven. Mam and the monaye, by Marie of hevene, For mayntenance and mede been thaire two matres.	earth
680	"Yit wil thou melle more," cothe Mam, "therne hit nadeth, Be stille lest thou stumble, for thou stondes ful slide. And thou moeve any more suche maniere wordes.	shaggery; reward speak; is required at great peril
685	Thay been not holsum for thy heed ne for thy herte nother, For thou mos holde with thec mo yf thou dry helliche willes; And so I have yholde thee twyng and oones.	if; words of that kind beneficial
690	Thou art mad of thy mynde, and anysse levis That Mum hath a maister there men been of goode; For Mum maketh mo men at a moneth ende	twice and again insane; wrongly believe men are wealthy in a month
	Thanne the Sortheusager in sevene score winter;	

¹ That which you call God's share, let God's men (the poor) have it.

⁷ You must agree with the majority (the mass) if you desire to maintain your health.

Muse and the Sothsegger

685	For he is privy with the proudest and there the peice caicchet, ¹	drawn; date; dairies
	As is ydrawe to the deys with deynstées yservyd Whence the Sothsegger dares not be seye.	dare; seen
	For and a master be moeved at mete or at eve Or in pryvy places there peers assemblen,	at supper or in the evening private; peers
	Mum marsh theron and maketh many caustelles	ponders; devices
690	With a locke on his lippe and loketh aboute. He spendith no speche but splices hit make,	
	Til he wite whitherward that wil doo drawt. ²	
	But therne he knimith a knotte and cometh al at ones	pauses a moment; comes on
	And getith hym a greet thanke to go among the beste.	receives; reward
695	Fle folly therefore, and frendes thee make, And areis, I thee rede, and romne no ferther	Flee folly; make friends stop; advise; room
	For thou walkis of the weye foeto wynne silver.	stray out of the way; gain
	And carpe no more of clergie but yf thou canste leape,	speak; leap
	For and thou come on thaire cloache, thou crepis not thena. ³	
700	Til thou wite right wel with whom that thou mellys. ⁴	rangle
	"Iwys I wil not," cothe I, "til I wite more.	Certainly
	For prestz been not perillous but pacient of thaire werkes,	dangerous
	And eke the plantz of pees and ful of pitie ever,	fruit
	And chief of al charitè ychlose afore other.	chosen before others
705	Foro fighte ne to flite hit falleth not to thaire ordre,	dispute; belongs
	Ne to prece to no place there peril shuld be ynone.	creed into any
	That proveth wel by parlement, for pealz shuld be voidid	dismissed
	Wherne any dome of deeth shal be do there.	sentence; enacted
	Al for cause thaire conscience to kepe unywrermityl.	unblemished
710	A man may saye thaym the sothe sonest of alle,	soonest
	Without grucche other gosyn, but gote many thankes.	grousing or complaint
	Thay moste bowe for the beste, God forbede hit elles.	yield
	To shewe us exemple of suffrance ever."	patient endurance
	<i>Sic lucet lux vestra coram hominibus ut videant opera vestra bona etc.</i> ⁵	
	"Yee, yit be ware of wiles and waite wel aboute,	

¹ For he is intimate with the proudest and takes his price from that association

² Lines 691-92: He squanders no speech unless bribes cause it, / Until he knows which way desire will tend

³ For if you come into their clutches, you may not creep away from there

⁴ So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works

Mum and the Sothsegger

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 715 | For me semeth that thy sight is vandele a-dasid
And al myndelces," tothe Mum, "and al amyssē demys;
For though thou shuddest thyself be a sothesigger,
Thou has no cleere conceypt to knowe alle thaire werkis.
And that I pryd by a poynt thou perceipus never. | somewhat dased
judges |
| 720 | Al a-twart thy intent and thy tale eeke,
For Pilat in the Passion among al the people
Wilsed affre watre to waisshe with his hundes. ¹
To shewz hym, by that signe, of the bloode-shedding
Of Crist that us creed and on the Crosse deyed. | understanding
proved; perceive
contrary to
Pilate |
| 725 | His conscience was clemid as clene as his handes.
Yit was he ground of the grame and moste guilty eeke,
For every man that mynde hath may wel wite
That prelatz aughten have pitē when princē bee misseved,
And rede thaym so that rancune roote not in hert, | created, died
cleansed; clean
source; damage |
| 730 | And ere the grame grove ferre, the ground so to wede
And arnende that were myssē ere any moore caicche
Of manslaughter or moudre, as hath many dayes.
For who hath knowlache of a cloude by cours of abouve,
And wil stande stille til the storme falle, | meight n̄; angered
advise; anger
damage; far; weed
take root
murder
its movements |
| 735 | And wende not of the waye, the wite is his own.
Though hit heidle on his heide, who is to blame?
For who hath sight of a showee that sharpeley ariseth,
And wil not caste hym to kepe with covryng abouve
Til hit droppe al adoune and dung-wete hym make, | misere nor to shelter; blame
haled |
| 740 | And eeke falle on his frende, in feith as me therikeith,
He is auctor of al the harme and th'ache
And so pryyv to the peynes that peers indaren.
And also in castrey hit is a comuse speche
And is ywritte in Latyne, lerne hit whose wil: | author; discomfort
party to; pains; comrades
saying |
| 745 | The reason is "qui facit consentire videtur."
And whose hath insight of wilde-couthe thingz,
Of synne or of shame or of shonde outher,
And luste not to lette hit, but leteth hit forth passe
As elercz doon construe that knownen alle bokes, | "he who is silent is seen to consent"
strange
disgrace either
prevent; allows; happen |
| 750 | He shal be demynd doser of the same deede. | |

¹ Wished for water afterwards with which to wash his hands

Mum and the Sothsegger

	And eeke in londis lawe I lernyd by anothir:	land's law interrogated; bar
	Yf a freeke for felonye is frayned ate barre	tongue
	For treason or for trespass, and he a tango have	indicted for
	And wil not answer to the deede he is of indined.	stand; offers
755	But stont stille as a stoone and no wortde stirre,	convicted
	But he be deaf or dum, to deeth shal he wende,	troubled
	As atteynyt for the trespass, and is a teewe lawe.	quarreling; nobility who
	This cursid custame hath cunbrid us alle;	showered; tolerance
	The gruccing of grete that shuld us gouerne	nasty; prevented
760	Han yshoarid sharply thorough suffrance of clerckz,	contrived
	That lightly with labour ylettid thay myghte,	head aches; limbs
	The conseil of clergie yf thay had caste for hit.	Suffer
	For there the heede aketh alle the lymes after	
	Pysen, wherene the principal is put to unease —	
	<i>Dum caput inflatum cetera membra dolent —</i> ¹	
765	(Of sum and certayn, I saye not of alle,	certainly; see
	But of the same surely that suche mansere usen). ²	
	"Now treuly," cothe I, "thy talking me pleaseth,	
	For thou has saide as sothe, so me God helpe,	
	As ever sage saide sith Crist was in erthe;	
770	For thou has rubbid on the rote of the rede galle	root; red gall
	And eeke yserched the sore and sought alle the woundz.	searched
	And yf thou woldes do wel, wende to thyrm alle	
	And tellle the same tale that thou has tolde here;	
	Thou might be man made and menshifd for ever."	honored
775	"Nay, there I leve thee, Lucas, go loke for an oþer,	leave you, Luke (see note)
	For I wil wende no waie but wit go before. ³	
	Ne tellle no tales for teryng of hodes,	tearing of hoods (i.e., for quarreling)
	So taughte me the trauty techer on erthe,	most traitorously
	My maister and maker, Mum, that I serve.	
780	Go walke where thy wil is and waite wel aboate,	in the wrong places
	For thou has sought al aside sith thou beganne	
	With clerckz of Cambrigge and cathedralle churches.	
	Fare foeth therefore to finde that thou sechis,	what you seek
	And come not with clergie leste thou a-croke walke,	crookedly

¹ When the head ails the other members grieve

² For I will go down no path unless crafty precaution shoves the way

Mum and the Sothesegger

785	But tourne now to tournes and temporal lorde, There prece is of people, and pray thaym to telle Yf any sothesegger serve thaym long. ¹	towns <i>Where there are crowds</i>
790	Thenne ferkid I to the men and frankoleysas mory, To bondemen and bourgeois and many other barnes, To knyghtz and to comunes and craftmen eke, To citezeym and souvrayns and to many grete sires, To bachilliers, to banerettz, to barons and erles, To princes and peers and alle manere estate; But in every court there I came or campaigny oother I fonde mo summers atte moneth-ende	free; landowners bondsmen; burgesses <i>lords</i> <i>bachelor-knights (see note)</i> <i>peers; classes of persons</i> <i>man-folk</i>
795	Than of sotheseggers by sevene score thousand. For alle the knyghtz of the court that with the king dwelles, For the more partie — yee, mo than an hundred — Heiden Mum for a maister, and more do myghte	
800	With king and his counsel and al the court affer. And every tourne that I trade twelfe moneth togodre, Mum was a maister and with the maire ever, And al of oon lyvraye and looke so togodre	Field <i>road</i> <i>mayor</i> <i>livery</i>
805	That a poure manis prayer departe thaym ne myghte. There was no maner man the maire had levir Bydde of the burns in benche there he sanc As Mum to the mete among al the rewe;	<i>poor man's: separate</i> <i>would rocker</i> <i>invite</i> <i>food; raw</i>
810	For he couthe lye and laugh and leape over the balkes There any gracioche or groyne or grame shold arise. ² He was ful couchant and coy and curtoys of specche, And parlid for the partie and the playnre lefte. ²	<i>bar; overleap hurdles</i> <i>humble; courteous</i> <i>openly; pleasant</i>
815	The maire presid hym apert for his plaisant wordes; He was a blesid barne and beste couthe suffre Wherene souvrayns were assembled to saye what thaym liked. He tolde no manese travers tense yere togodre.	<i>offered no contradiction</i> <i>defeated</i> <i>seal on a document</i> <i>alliances; income</i> <i>Appropriate</i>

¹ Where any groacing or complaining or difficulty should arise

² And spoke up for the [influential] party and ignored the merits of the legal pleading

Mum and the Sothesegger

820	And yelde hym with a yere-is gifte ere the yere passed. Mum with the mayre to the mete wenle, And ever I after, al unaspied, For to knowe of my caas couthe I not stynte. There shaldrid sergeantz to serve atic mete	reward; year's gift unnoticed ease; stop shouldered bag
825	For a male fal of misseededz that Mum had in keping. I stoode stille as a stoone and starid aboute And lokid lightly along by the bordes, Yf any sothesegger were sette in the halle. But sorowe on the shyne I sawe of hym there,	casually; tables (To see) if not a glimpse
830	But yf he were a soleyn and servyd aloon. For alle was hyst in the halle sauf "holde up the oyles." And forto saye sothe and shone long tale. The sunne and the sergeantz my sight so dasid That I might not eche messe merke as me laste.	soldier person; alone hushed; flattery avoid (than) a dazzled meal course mark
835	I askid of a eldeyn man as I beste couthe Yf any sothesegger sate in the halle, And he awurnd sharply that "the Sothesegger Dyneth this day with Deede in a chambree. And hath ydrunike dum-seede, and dar not be seye	elderly
840	Sith Mum and the mayre were made suche frendes." Thenne waxe I wondres wrothe, as I wel might, And drowe me to the doreward and dwelled no lenger, ¹ But roosed forth needelces, remembryng ofte That Mum was suche a maister among men of good.	"silence drink"; soon became; angry
845	And as I lokid the loigges along by the streetz, I sawe a sothesegger, in sothe as me thought, Sitte in a shoppe and salwyn his woundes. <i>Beati qui persecutionem paciantur propter iustitiam. Evangelium.²</i>	roamed around confused wealth places putting salve on
850	Thenne was I ful-come and knewe wel the sothe That Mum upon melde myrier life had Thenne the Sothesegger, asay whoso wol; But the better barne to abide stille And to lyve with a lord to his life-is ende Ys the Sothesegger, asay whoso wol.	fully informed world murier investigate man to remain constant life's

¹ And went toward the door and stayed there no longer

² Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice's sake. Gospel

Mum and the Sothsegger

- Yit was I not the wiser for waye that I wente;
855 This made me al madde as I most nede,
And wel fleuble and faynt, and fealle to the grounde,
weak; fall
And lay done on a lynche to lithe my boones,
farrow; relieve
Rolling in remembraunce my remyng aboute
And alle the perillous patthes that I passid had,
As priorities and personagz and pluralites,
860 Abbayes of Augustyn and other hooly places,
To knigtes courtz and crafty men many,
To mayers and maisters, men of high wittes,
And to the felle feiris, alle the fourre ordres,
865 And other bobbes a heape, as ye herde have —
And nought the neer by a note, this noyed me ofte
That thorough comtryng of clercz that knewe alle bokes
That Mum shuld be maister mooste upon erthe.
And ere I were ware, a wynke me assailed.
870 That I slepte sadly sevne houres large.
Thenze mette I mervailles mo thanse me laste
To tellle or to talkle of, til I se tyme;
But sum of the silde-coubhes I wol shewe hereafter,
For dreme is no dwel by Daryelin wodes,
875 Though Caton of the contrarye carpe in his bokes.
Me thought I was in wildernes walking alone,
There bestes were and briddes and no barnie elles,
Yn a earne crossing on a creste wise,
Al gras grene that gladdid my herde,
880 By a cliffe anyknowe of Cristis owen makynge.
I lepte forth lightly along by the heigges
And movid forth merrily to mantrie the hilles,
For til I came to the coppe coubhe I not stynte
Of the highest hille by halfe alle other.
885 I tourmyd me twyes and totid aboute,
Beholding heigges and holtz so grene,
The mansions and medoes mowen al newe,
For suche was the saeson of the same yere.
I lifte up my eyaledes and lokid ferther
890 And sawe many swete sightz, so me God helpe,
The wodes and the waters and the welle-springes
And trees ytraylid fro toppe to th'erthe,
festooned

Mum and the Sorhsegger

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| | Coriously ycovrid with cutelle of grene,
The floues on feeldes flavryng swete, | covered: knoll
smelling |
| 895 | The come on the crofthes ycroppod ful faire,
The reuryng rivyere rusching faste,
Fal of fyssh and of frie of felefold kinde,
The breria with thaire berries bent over the wayes,
As horysoocles hongyng uppon eche half, | wheat; fields cut
running river
spawn of diverse sorts
briars; berries; paths |
| 900 | Chesteynes and chirries that children desirer
Were loigged undre loves fal lusty to seen.
The hasthorne so holium I behelde ecke,
And bough the benes blowid and the broome floures; | Chestnuts; cherries
situated; leaves |
| | Pers and plummes and pescoddles grene, | broom blossomed; broom |
| 905 | That ladies lusty loken mache after,
Were gadrid for gomes ere they gunne ripe.
The grapes groud agrete in gardyns aboute,
And other fruytz felefold in feldes and closes; | Pears; plums; peascodds
spirited greatly desire
men; ripened |
| | To nempsie alle the names hit nedith not here. | grew abundantly
manifold
name |
| 910 | The cosyngz fro covert covrid the bankes
And raughte oun a raundon and retournyd agaynes.
Pleyed forth on the playne, and to the pitte after,
But any hound hente thaym, or the hay-nettes. | rabbits from shelter covered
dashed; quickly |
| | The hare hied hym faste and the houndes after,
For knishing of his croupe acauntwise he wente, | seized; animal trap |
| 915 | For n'ad he tournyd twics his tail had be licked,
So ernestly Ector yechid hym after.
The shepe fro the sunne shadued thaymself,
While the lambes laikid along by the heigges. | snipping; rump zigzag |
| 920 | The cow with hire calfe and coltes ful faire
And high hors in haies hurtelid togodre, | stallions in corral |
| | And pressid the pasture that prime-sauce thaym made. | high-spirited |
| | The dore on the dale drowe to thaire desses, | deer; west |
| | Ferkid forth to the fernc and feulle dounc amyddes. | bracken; fell |
| 925 | Hertz and hyndes, a hunthrid togodre,
With rayndeir and roobuc runne to the wodes, | Harts; hindis |
| | For the kenettz on the cleene were unycouplid; | roebuck run |
| | And backes ful burnysshid that baren good greece, | hunting dogs; clearing; unleashed |
| | Foure hunthrid on a herde yhecid ful faire, | burnished (see note); far |
| 930 | Layen lowe in a launde along by the pale,
A swete sight for souvrayns, so me God helpe. | antlered
clearing; edge of the forest |

Mum and the Sothsegger

	I moved doone fro the moe to the midwardz And so adoune to the dale, dwelled I no longer, But such a noise of nestlingz ne so swete notz.	hill; middle slopes on down young birds; notes
935	I hende not this halfe yere, ne so hevenely As I didde on that dale adoune among the heigges, For in every bush was a brid that in his beste wise Bablid with his bille, that blisse was to hire.	Chirped; bill sang fragrance; summer infused notice vanished from me
940	That what for flavour of the fruyte and of the somer flores, The smelling smote as spices, sic thought, That of my travail treuly toke I no kepe, For al was vanessid me fro thorough the fresche sightes.	freehold (see note) turned aside; stopped person
945	Thenne lepte I forth lightly and lokid aboue, And I behelide a faire hous with halles and chaembres, A frankleynys freeholde al fresche newe. I bente me aboue and bode atte dore	saplings; many other off the lawns
950	Of the gladdest gardyn that gorne ever had. I have no tym to tellie alle the names Of ympes and herbes and other feele thinges That growed on that gardyn, the grounde was so noble.	Clothed hoary hair fresh
955	I passid ymre prively and palled of the fruytes And roened th'aleys rounde al aboue; But so sensely a sage as I sawe there I sawe not sothely sith I was bore:	inclosed; wickedness
960	An olde auncyen man of a hanturid wintre, Ywedid in white clothe and wisely ymade, With hore heres on his heede more thanne half white, A faire visage and a vresse and vertuous to sene.	nature made grave; appearance
965	His eyen were al errest, eggid to noon ill, With a broode besmet herde, ballid a lire, As comely a creature as ever kunde wrought. He was sad of his semblant, softe of his speche,	tended; hive; honey

¹ With a broad broom-shaped beard, a little bald

² Well proportioned and vigorous for his age

Maur and the Sothsegger

	Fro dranes that destred hit and dide not elles;	<i>drones, nothing else</i>
	He thaste thaym with his thunbe as thicke as they come,	<i>squashed</i>
	He laffe noon alive for thaire lither taicches.	<i>wicked vices</i>
970	I wondred on his workes, as I wel myght, And ever I neyed hym nere as ney as me ought, ¹	<i>greeted; politely</i>
	And halsid hym hendly as I had leryd;	<i>greeted</i>
	And he me grete agayne right in a gode wise,	
	And askid what I wolde, and arone I tolde	
975	My wil was to wite what man he were.	<i>knew who he was</i>
	"I am gardynere of this garth," cothe he, "the grounde is myn ownen,	<i>garden</i>
	Forte digge and to delve and to do suche deedes	
	As longeth to this leyghtone, the lawe wol I doo,	<i>pertains; garden</i>
	And wrote up the wedes that wyrwen my plantes;	<i>dig; destroy</i>
980	And wormes that wochten not but wasted my herbes,	<i>slugs; plants</i>
	I daisshe thaym to deeth and delve oute thaire dennes.	<i>dark; dig</i>
	But the dranes doon worste, deye mote thay alle;	<i>may they all die</i>
	Thay haunten the hyve for honey that is yngre,	
	And lurken and licken the liquor that is swete,	
985	And travelyn no twynte, but taken of the beste	<i>frequent; within it</i>
	Of that the bees bryngen fro blossomes and floures.	
	Qui non laborat non manducet. Bernardus. ²	
	For of alle the bestes that biden appon erthe	<i>breed</i>
	For qualité ne quantité, ne question, I trowe	<i>believe</i>
	The bee in his busynes beste is allowed,	
990	And provyd in his propriété passing alle other,	<i>proved; disposition</i>
	And pretiest in his wirching to profite of the people." ³	<i>cleverest</i>
	"Swete sene," sayde I, in slepe as me thoughte,	
	"The proprieté of bees I pray that ye woldé	<i>qualities</i>
	Declare with thaire deedes, and of the drane ecke."	
995	"Blethely, burse, thy beede shal bee doo!"	
	Yf thou wil tende treuly my tale to th'ende	<i>lives</i>
	The bee of alle bestz beste is ygoouerned	<i>creatures</i>
	Yn lowlynnes and labour and in lawc ecke.	<i>humility</i>
	Thay have a king by kinde that the coroune bereth,	<i>nature</i>

¹ And I continued to draw nearer to him as near as I should

² He who labors not does not eat. Bernard

³ Gladly, good man, your bidding shall be done

Maw and the Sothsegger

1000	Whorn thay doo sue and serve as souvrayns to thaym alle, And obeyen to his biddynge, or elles the boke lieth. The highest hoole in the hywe, he holdeth hit hymself, For there thay setten hym in his see by hymself oone, And maken mansions bynethe, that nerval hit is to knowe	<i>follow</i>
1005	The bilding of the boures that the bees maken. For the curiosite carpistier undre cope of hevene Couthen not caste thaire copies ne cuntruele thaire workes. ¹	<i>alone</i>
1010	Thaire tymbre and thaire tile stones and al that so thaym longeth, Thay feyechen hit of floares in feldes and in crofthes. Thay dwellingz been dyvyded, I do hit on thaire combes, ²	<i>chambers</i>
1015	And many a quaynt cave been compassid wytthynne. And eche a place hath a principal that peesith al his quarter, ³ That reuleth thaym to reste and rise whenshit nedith, And alle the principals to the prince ful prest thay been at node. ⁴	<i>most skilful; vault</i>
1020	To rere thaire resense to righte alle the fates; For thay knownen as kindly as cleric doeth his bokes Wastours that wyrchen not but wormes forto fille.	<i>gather; pasture</i>
1025	Thaire workes been right wondreful, wite thou for sothe, For sum, as thou sees, thay shape thaym to the feldes To souke oute the swetenes of the soener floares, And sum abides at home to bigge up the loigges,	<i>curious room; enclosed</i>
1030	And helpen to make honey of that thay home bringen, And doon other deedes thorough done that is among thayt; Yf hit be temperate tyme to travayle or to leve, Thay eten alle at oones, and never een by hymself,	<i>tuck</i>
	Thorough warmyng of thaire waithoer, lesle waste were among thaym. The homelyng of the bees, as Bartholomeus us tellith, Thair noyse and thaire note at eve and ecke at morowg, Lyve hit wel, thair lydene the leste of thaym hit knoweth. ⁵	<i>build; chambers</i>
		<i>a few</i>
		<i>watch; weather</i>
		<i>the right time; work; stop</i>
		<i>watchman</i>
		<i>bumbling</i>

¹ Could not design their rafters nor imitate their works

² Their living-quarters are partitioned. I prove it by their honeycombs

³ And each chamber has a leader who keeps the peace in his quarter

⁴ And all the principals are ready for the prince when they are needed

⁵ Believe it well, the least among them know their language

Mum and the Sothsegger

	The mosse merciful among thaym and mekest of his deedes Ya king of bees comanely, as cleric us telleth, And spereles, and in wil to spare that been hym under, Or yf he have oon, he harmeth ne herteth noon in sothe.	mekest <i>without a stinger</i>
1035	For venym doeth not folowe hym, but vertue in alle workes, To reule thaym by reason and by rightfal domes, Thorough contente of the campaigne that closeth alle in oone. And yf the king coveite the colours to beholde Of the freshh floures that on the feldes growen	venom <i>judgments</i> consent; agree wishes
1040	Evermore amyddes as maister of thaym alle His place is yproperid for peril that mighte falle; And yf he fleuble or feyste or funder dounewaerd, The bees wullen bere hym til he be better amended. But of the dñe is al the dñe, the deveil hym quelle,	in the middle appointed; arise grow weak; sink support; improvised peril; kill
1045	For in thaire wide wombes they wol hide more Thenne twenty bees, and travailles not no tyme of the day — But gaderyn al to the gote and growen grete and farte And filien thaire bagges brateful of that the bees wyrchen. <i>Quorum deus venter est et gloria in confusione: psalms 45:1</i>	stomach <i>brateful</i>
1050	Wherene thay have soope the swete, the souce cometh afre, For wherene the bee-is bisynes is bribed fro the hyve Thorough drases that deceipuen thaym and doon no thing elles, Thenne seen the bees thair subtilte and seruen thaym thereafter As Bartholomew the Bestiary babbith on his bakes,	sipped; sour <i>bees'; lured</i> deceive plot
1055	And of other pryyv poystz, but I wol passe over. "By this skile," cothe 1, "there shuld scant honny Yf every hyve huse thus and have suche a ende." "Be certayne," he seide, "that is a sothe tale But yf the gardyner have grace and gouverne hym the bettre	reason; By little quarrel
1060	And wisely awaite wherene drases furste entyn, And nape thaym on the nolle erc thay thaire neste caicche; For been they oones yassed, his eyen shal be dasid Fro al kinde knowlache, so covert thaym helpeth." "Yit wolde I wite," cothe 1, "yf your wil be,	strike; head, reach inside; dazed concealment

¹ *Where God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame. Paul*

² *But bear how they end with their whale gathering*

Mum and the Sothesigger

- 1065 Hough to knowe kindly, thorough craft of your scole,
 The drane that devoureth that deue is to other,
 By colour or by cursidnesse or crie that he maketh.
 Kerneseth me the cunning, that I may knowe after."
 "Thay been long and lene," cothe he, "and of a lither hue,
 1070 And as bare as a bord, and bringen nought with thaym;
 But have thay hausted the lyve half yere to th'ende,
 Thay growen under gardel greeter than other,
 And noon so sharpe to stinge ne so sterne nother."
*Nicif alverius pauperis cum surget in altam. Gregorius.*¹
 "Yit I mervaille," cothe I, "and so mowen other,
 1075 Why the bees wullen not wirwe thaym by tyme,
 And falle on thaym fersly furst whanne thay ente,
 For so shuld they save thaymsilf and thaire goodes."
 "The bees been so basi," cothe he, "aboute conture profit,
 And tendeth al to travail while the tyme dureth
 1080 Of the somer saison and of the swete floures;
 Thayr wittes been in wirching and in no wile elles
 Ferto waite any waste til winter approche,
 That licour thaym lacke thair lyfe to susteyne.
 But as soon as thay see thaire swynke is ystole
 1085 Thenese flocken thay to fighte, thair fates to amende,
 And quellen the dranes quickly and quiten alle thaire wrongz."
 "Now wol mote ye worthe," cothe I, "for your wise tale,
 For hit hath muche mereng, whoso muse coathe,
 But hit is to mistike for me, by Maies of hevene,
 1090 So wol I leve lightly withoute long tale.
 But and ye dwelle, as I dar, derive I you preye
 Done question to construe that I come fore:
 For I have soughte sevene yere and sum dele more,
 And meme I never man yit that me wise coathe
 1095 Cleere to my knowing, clerc nother lewed,
 Of the matiere of Mum that mote me anghith,
 That he shuld have maisters mor than oon hanbrid,
 Whenne the Sothesigger shuld siche his mete.
 I have travailed tenne yere to temporal estatz,

instruction: school

what is due

fraud

Teach

lean; evil

bard

been present in

abdomen; fatter

eager; fence

destroy

fiercely

thereby

lasts

no other scheme

look out for

drink

their labor has been avales

fates to make up

kill; revenge

prosper

can ponder it

too mystical (i.e., obscure)

dare, boldly

explain to me

So I could understand; untautored

Wheraz: seek; food

¹ Nothing is so harsh as the poor man when he is raised to an exalted position. Gregory

Mum and the Sothesigger

- 1100 And spied of spiritual and sparid for no wret¹
 Forto wite witterly who shuld have know with certainte
 The maistry, Mum or the Sothesigger.
 For alle the fouse ondres agayne thaire fundacion against, founding principles
 Provyd hit ofte by prechement, for peril that myght falle, preaching
 1105 That Mum shuld be maister and maymeyne th'orde; each
 And alle other estatz every after other
 Healden moche more with Mum therne with the Sothesigger.
 And yf ye deme as thay doon, by dene God in hevene,
 By no wittie that I wote I wol go no ferther
 1110 Forto seke shadowe there no sunne apperith." shadow; appears
 "Swete soon, thy seching," seide the freke therne, son; searching; man
 "And thy travail for thy trouthe shal tourne thee to profit,
 For I wol go as rygh the gronda as Gospel us techeth near
 Forto wise thee wisely to thy wate-is ende. To instruct you wisely; way's end
 1115 For of al the mischief and myssereale that in the royaume groweth
 Mum hath be maker alle thees many yeres, has been the maker
 And oek more and mosilide, I may wel adwowe; (see note); arrow
 And principally by parlment to prove hit I themke,
 When knighth for the comune been come for that deede, community
 1120 And scriblid forto shewe the sores of the royaume assembled; ill
 And spare no speche though thay spille shuld, should die [for af
 But berste oute alle the boicches and blaynes of the hert bals; blisters
 And lete the ranscane renne oute arushe al at ones. spike run
 Leste the fals felon festre withynne;
 1125 For as I herde have, thay helen wel the rather heal; sooner
 Whanne th'anger and th'atre is al oate yrenne, venome; drained
 For better were to breste oute there bone might falle ready
 Thenne rise agayne regale and the royaume trouble. rise up [for rebellion]; royalty
 The voiding of this vertue doeth venym forto growe absence; causes
 1130 And sores to be salvelees in many sundry places, without balm
 Sith souvrays and the shire-men the sothe have eschewed knights of the shire
 Yn place that is proprid to parle for the royaume appointed; speak
 And fable of tho fastes and founde thaym to amende. talk; strive
 For alle the perillous poyntz of prelatz and of other, dangerous arguments

¹ And investigated spiritual authorities without stint despite anger [directed against me?]

Mum and the Sothsegger

- 1135 As peres that have pouaire to pollie and to leve,¹
 Thay wullen not partie of tho poynz for peril that might falle, speak; happen
 But hidien alle the hevynes and halten echone seriousness; hesitate each one
 And makes Mum thaire messaigier thaire mote to determyne, envoys; suit to judge
 And bringen home a bagge ful of boicches un-yeurid, uncur'd boile
 1140 That nedis most by nature envoys thaym thereafter. must needs; ver
Qui potest contradicere peccato & non contradicit actor est peccati. Sidrac²
 And in al the kingis court there coiphes been and other rogh (lawyers)
 Mum is maister there more thenne men wenem, know
 For sum of the segges wolle siche sidewayes, men; seek crooked ways
 Whenne thay witen wel ynow where the hare walketh. i.e., what is what
 1145 Thay leden men the long waye and love-dayes breken³ fools; merry
 And maken moppes wel myrry with thaire muddle tales,
 Ferto sowe silver seede, and solve ere thay singe,⁴ beat fasts
 To have yntre thaire harveste while the hote dureth. *favor & premium timor & odium persuetant verum iudicium. Canon⁵*
 Now feithfully, my ful frende, I wil not feyne to thee:
 1150 There is no wronge on this world wrought, as I wene — suppose
 Treason nother trespass ne trouble that falleth,
 Felonye ne falshede ne no faute elles, other crime
 Rancune ne riotic ne revyng of people, Brack; plundering
 Courshidnes ne cumbrance ne no caste of guile —⁶
 1155 That Mum n'ys the maker and moste cause ecke.
 And that shal I shewe thee by exemplis ynowe;
 For Lucifer the lyer that lurketh aboute Due
 Ferto gete hym a grounde that he may graffe on foundation; graft on to
 And to sowe of his seede siche as he usith.
 1160 That groweth al to greviance and gartlyng of heedes, grievance; beheadings
 He leyeth his lynes along that luste may be clepid⁷

¹ Such as peers of the realm who have the power to refuse and to allow

² He who is able to discern sin and does not is the door of sin. *Sidrac*

³ They lead men the long way round and break love-days (appointed for reconciliation)

⁴ To accept bribes, and to solfe before they sing (see note)

⁵ Influence and reward, fear and hatred pervert true justice. *Canon law*

⁶ Cursedness or oppression or contrivance of fraud

⁷ He spreads his lines in such a way that may be called desire

Mum and the Sothesegger

- Of oure foule flesh that foundrih ful ofte,
And of glore of this gronde his griefz been ymade.
That who be heft in his hoke he shal be holde faste
Til he be caste with covetise or sun crok elles.
Seminator zizomie d' agricola diabolus.
- Thenne fareth he forth folaship to gete,
To holde his opinion over alle thingz.
Whense he is laught on the lyne he can not lepe them,
So the cursid covetise cleaveth on his herte.
Or elles drede forte do wel dalleth his wittz.
But seche what he seche wol and asaye ecke,
There is no sothesegger that wol assent to hym,
But conseileth hym the contrary and construeth the doutes
And poynteth hym the perillz and pleynely telleth
As a sicour servant, and sheweth hym the happens.
He shoneth for no salaire ne soulde that he fangeth,
Ne for no likerous lyvelode ne losing of his office,
That he ne telleth the tirant how hit tourne wol
Harnward by his hows, and harme most hymself.
Thenne fleeth he fro his frend and to his foo tourmeth,
For til he mete with Mum may he never reste.
He wol abide with no burne that hotene hym wolde
Ne arayne hym arere with reasonis bridel.
So loveth he go large to lepe where hym liketh,
And liketh faste as a colte that casteth downe hymself,
And fondeth forte finde this freeke I have nemptyd,
That fayne is to folowe hym for fees and robes.
Thenne meteth he with Mum and his matiere sheweth,
That shortly assentith as a shrewed hyne,
And sparcth for no sparsyng, but spedith the matiere,
And wircheth up with wiles a walle of deceiptes,
Til the fale fundement falle atte laste.
That thay stumblen after stroutyng and stappen no farther,
But lyen deune on the dicke, as wel aygh ydolven,
Bothe the muister and his man ymarid at oones.
Sache mansere medes Mum can deserve
- founders
glory; earth; ill
caught; took
cast down; crook
Sower of weeds and the devil's farmer
supporters
caught; trap
cleaves to
dread
seek; appraise
points out
faithful; adversary
pleasant food; loving
tyrant
Homeward; house
foe
meet
amend
rein; backwards; reason's
freely to roam (*i.e.*, do)
kicks
person; named
wicked servant
i.e., obstacle
foundation
strutting; step
buried
imprisoned
rewards

¹ He does not shirk [his duty] for income or payment that he might receive.

Mum and the Sothesigger

	Ferto mende his maister for meete and for hure	payment
	But by the feith that I finge atte wantstone	received at fence-stone
	Shal no Mum be my man and I may aspie.	(if I may be on guard
1200	And namely nygh use, but next shal he never.	near; next [to me], never be
	And therefore I fende thee, by feith that thou awes,	forbid; owe
	That thou live in no lere of suche lewed gomes	believe
	That fikelly fablen and fals been withynne,	deceitfully
	But see the Sothesigger and seche thou no ferther.	follow
1205	And though hit tene for a tymme, hit rideth wel after,	troubles; turns out
	And He that made the molde and man with His handes	
	Shal quite thee with a quittance wherine querelliz been up	reward; quittance (see note)
	Of this newe novellerie that noyeth men ofte.	novelty; annoy
	Hit is the holsemyst lyne for halle and for chambre	servant
1210	To benghe boldely abedide the best of the royaume	man
	And arise with the renke, rihershing agaynes	
	Salamon and Seneca and Sidrac the noble.	
	Hit is a siccour servant ferto serve lordes,	
	And to knighthis of the cuntri his conseil availleth;	is helpful
1215	And thou he dwelle with a duc and dide not elles	though; dale
	But ferto seye hym the sothe in seasonable tymes,	
	He might serve sum day sevene yeres wages. ¹	
	"Grand mercy, gardiner," colbe I, "and God thee foryelede,"	
	For thou has demed devely the doute I was ymme;	rightly
1220	But yit wote I not in sothe, ne am not infourmed,	informed
	How to come to the court there the kemppe dwelilit."	man
	"Him dwellyng to discryve," colbe he, "I do hit on alle clerez	
	That I shal seche thee trouly the tourmyng to his place.	the way to
	Yn manis herte his housing is, as hooly writte techet,	dwelling; trache
1225	And mynde is his maner that made alle th'estres.	rooms
	<i>In corde fidelis est habetatio teritoriarum.</i>	<i>Truth's dwelling is in the faithful heart</i>
	There feoffed hym his Fadre freely ferto dwelle,	granted
	And put him in possession in paradise terrestree	earthly paradise
	Yn Adam oure auncetere and al his issue after.	ancestor
	He spirith hym with His sprite that sprange of Hymself	inspires
1230	To holde that habitacion and hevene afterwards,	
	To serve Hym in sothenes and no soutrayn eschewy	

¹ "Many thanks, gardener," I said. "and God reward you"

Mum and the Sothsegger

	For dreede of dyeng ne no disease elles.	<i>dying</i>
	As wold God that eche gone that gre hath take in scoles ¹	
	Wolde holde that opinion and overlepe hit never,	<i>never transgress it</i>
1235	For hit was never so nedefal as now sith Noe-is dayes.	<i>Noah's</i>
	But Mum wol be no martir while mytres been in sale	<i>for sale</i>
	And but the Sothsegger sey the same wordes	
	Whense thou comys to his court, knave of myn eres.	<i>care</i>
	<i>Qui non intrat per ostium in ovile sed altam / fur est et latro. / Euangelium.²</i>	
	Now I have ywised thee the weye to his place,	<i>instructed</i>
1240	Hye ther bens to his bows and hippe evene amyddles; ³	
	For though his leigge be lite, hit is unloke ever,	<i>house; always unlocked</i>
	That thou mays intre eche day bothe erly and late,	<i>may enter</i>
	Foro walke where thou wolt wythynne and withoute	
	And to moeve of his mote in measurable tyme	<i>advance; case in due</i>
1245	And have concours to Criste and come yn agaynes.	<i>reassurance</i>
	For thay been britherm by baptesme, as the boke telleth,	
	And he is ysibbe to the Sire abouve the sevene sterres,	<i>fix; i.e., God; stars</i>
	For trouthe and the Trinité been two rygh frendes.	<i>close</i>
	Yf thou wol folowe this fode, thou mos be faire of speche	<i>person</i>
1250	And soft of thy sawys, bat sourrayneté hit helpe;	<i>speech; authority</i>
	For poverté hath a pressoncre whense he doeth passē bordes. ⁴	
	And be wel ware of wiles, the world is ful of mases.	<i>deceit</i>
	And loke wel a-lechalf lest thou be beguylid,	<i>to leeward</i>
	For Mum hath a man there, and is a muche shrewe,	<i>great scoundrel</i>
1255	Antecristis angel that eche day us ennoyeth.	
	He dwelth faste by the dore and droppeth many wiles	
	Yf he might wynne over the wallie with a wronge entir.	<i>get; wrongful</i>
	He debateth eche day with Do-welle wythynne,	
	And the maistrie among and the mote wynnet,	<i>debate</i>
1260	And shoveth the Sothsegger into a syde-heme,	
	And taketh Covetise the keye to come ymre when hym liketh.	<i>side-corner</i>

¹ *Would to God that each man who has taken a degree in school*

² *He who enters not by the door into the sheepfold but from another place / is a thief and a robber. / Gospel*

³ *Speed you hence to his house and hap straight in*

⁴ *For poverty has a jailer when he steps over his bounds*

Mann and the Sothebyges

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| | Therne Dreede with a dore-biere dryveth eute the beste, ¹
And maketh the Sothesigger seche a newe place,
And to walke where he wol withoutte on the grene
Til sorowe for his synnes seese hym agaynes
And the tenaunt atourne to treuthe al his life. | seise: again
turn
soo |
| 1265 | Though thou slepe now, my soon, yit whanne thou seis tyme,
Loke thou write wisely my wordes echone;
Hit wol be exemple to sum men sevene yere hereafter.
And loke thou seye ever sothe, but shame not thy brother, | Be sure to |
| 1270 | For yf thou telle hym trouthe in tirantis wise,
He wol rather wexe wrother thenne fotto wirche after.
But in a make manere thou mos hym asaye,
And not eche day to egge hym, but in a deue tyme. | weak; examine
urge; due |
| 1275 | Do thus, my dere soon, for I may dwelle no longer,
But fare to my good frend that I fro come.
I have informyd thee faire, loke thou folowe after
And make up thy matiere, thos may do no better. | you properly
may |
| 1280 | Hit may arrende many men of thaire misdeedes.
Sith thou felys the fresh, lete no feynt herte
Abate thy blessid bisynes of thy boke-making
Til hit be complete to clapsyng, caste aweye doutes | feel vigorous
Slacken: activity; book-making
clapping |
| 1285 | And lete the sentence be sothe, and sue to th'ende;
And furst feoffe thou therewith the freyst of the royaume,
For yf thy lord liege alone hit begynne,
Care thou not though knyghtz copie hat echone, | follow through
nobles |
| 1290 | And do write eche word, and wicke thereafter. ²
Therne soodaynly of svevene and slepe I abrayed
And woke of my wynke and waitid abouste,
Wondring on my wittz, as I wel aughte, | act accordingly
suddenly; dream; awake
sleep; looked
ought |
| 1295 | Where the gome and the gardyn and the gayu sports
And alle the sightz that I sawe were so sone voidid,
Hit ferde as a fairye, but feithfullly the wordes
Were ful wise of the wye in the white clothes, | passimes
vanished
enchantment
man |
| 1300 | And ecke nedeful and notable for this newe world,
And ecke pleasant to my pay, for thay putten me to reste | biking |

¹ Then Dread with a door-bar drives out the most virtuous people

² He will sooner grow angry than follow your advice.

Mum and the Sothesigger

- Of my long labour and loitryng aboate.
 For he provid by profitable poyntz and fele
 That the Sothesigger shuld have the better
 1300 Of Mum, and the maistrie, malgré his chekes.
 He made Mum a man-sleer and armys thewed
 And likemyd hym to a loren ate long goyng
 And shortly hit sheweth right so by thayr werkes
 To clerenz of concepte that corntruen thaire workes.
 1305 He chargid me cleerly to change not myn intent
 Til the matire of Mum were made to th'ende,
 And that I shuld seyc sothe and sette no drede
 Of no creature of clay, for Criste so hym taughe.
 And though sum men of swevenes savery but lite,
 1310 Yit the lere of the lode shal like me ever,
 For Daniel in his dayes declard ful ofte
 Dreernes, and undide thaym, as deede provid after:
 And Joseph the gentil, Genesis thou saye
 (The Bible bereth witnessse, a boke of bilieve),
 1315 He mette that the mone and eleven sterres
 With the shynant sunne stodaynely at ones
 Abowid to his bidding borairely, hym thought,
 And dide hym worship therewith, that wroth made after
 His brethern that bisied thaym to bringe hym of dawe.
 1320 Hit servyd by his swevene thay sayden tho among thaym
 Shuld falle that thayr fadre and thay been fayne ecke
 To mete hym with thayre modre in a make wise,
 And pray hym in his posaire pitie forte have
 Of thaym, and thaym helpe fro hungre and elles.
 1325 And so it fealle sothely, thay sought hym thereafter
 Ernestly in Egypce, or elles the boke lieth,
 For hunger that thay hadde, and helpe couthe thay none
 But lowly to loute, his lordship to sike,
 Forte graunt of his grayn what hym good likid
 1330 That fer faute of thayr fode famyne long durid.
 And so hit sermeth in certayne, that sum bee right trewe
 And sothe of thes swevenes of sobre men wittis,
 And proven ofte to the poynt of pourpoos in deede.
 And therefore my doate and drede is the lasse
 1335 To do that the barse bade that the bees kepte
- many
i.e., in spite of him
man-slayer; ill-natured
rascal/foolish
understanding
have no fear
i.e., no human
little appreciate dreams
man; please
explained
interpreted
faith
dreamed; moon; stars
bowed down; graciously
to slay him
then
meek
power
before truly
humbly to bow; seek
what he pleased [to spare]
luck; food
some [dreams]
man's
purpose

Mum and the Sothesigger

	Foro saye surwhat of suth er I passe How the greete of this ground been ygoverned. Theune softe I the sootes to serche thayn withynne, And seurely to salve thayn, and with a newe salve	truth; conclude powerful; earth soften; wounds
1340	That the Sothesigger hath sought many yeres And mighte not mete therewith for Mum and his ferys That bare awye the bagges and many a bose eke. N ow forto conseille the king unknyttie I a bagge	companions carried opened <i>secret verse is printed</i>
1345	Where many a prydye poysse is preyntid withynne Yn bokes unbredid in balade-wise made, Of vice and of vertue falle to the margys, That was not y-openyd this other half wintre.	<i>unsealed</i> opened
	There is a quayer of quatances of quetlyn goodes, That bisshoppz han begged to binde al newe.	quire; receipts; bequeathed
1350	And a penywoeth of papir of perys that thay fongen For lemmans and lotebies in thes late dayes, And lies on the lettura, for lawe was hit never.	paper; receive sweethearts; whores <i>lie; learning</i>
	Fe illis qui vendunt peccatum propter pecatum. Lincolnensis. ¹	
	T here is a volume of visitacion of viflene leve ²	
1355	How persones and prestes been ypassid over Thorough favour of fangynge and no faste amendid, But liggen at London in lordens courtz: And pleyen litle for lalle with many leude kitte.	persons; overlooked bribery Be around <i>in for sat; i.e., misses</i>
1360	Thay lasten for to leme of lettura no ferther Therne to the lesson of laudate al thaire life-dayes, Foro preche thaire parroisse how Pernelle is arayed And with the tolle of the tithing fetisly atired.	learning Lauds (first lesson) parish; dressed tax; elegantly clothed breakers
1365	Thay been losers of the lawe, and lewde men makes The bolder for thaire badnes and breke the Tenne Hestes. T here is a rolle of religion, how thay thaire rentz hadde Foro parte with the poure a paecelle otherwhale,	Commandments rollbook; incomes share; poor; portion sometimes
	But thay been rotid in a newe to refreshye green. ³ To maysteyne thayre manhole, and matieres they have to doo For pleding and for pourchas, to pasture thayn the swetter,	dignity; lewds feed; sweter

¹ Woe to those who sell sin for money. Grossete

² There is a volume of fifteen pages on the archdeacon's visitation (to check on priests)

³ But they are rooted in a row (in the roll-book) to enrich the nobility

Mum and the Sothsegger

	So poure thay been and penyloes aith the pestilence tyme.	"poor": Great Plague
1370	Y it is there a paire of pamphiletz of prelatz of the royaume Yn the bottome of the bagge, how boldely thay ride, Thees persones and thees prebendiers pluralitē that haven, ¹	pamphlets
	Poperyng on thaire palefrays fro oone place to another, And lernen to lede ladies, and lewed men envien	Gallowanting: palefrays escort
1375	To do al thing as thay do, as by thaire deedes proveth. Thay autorisen with argumentz, and allegen for thaym That of oon kinde alle caue, ther can no man seye other.	authorize; claim a single nature
	Thus leden thay thaire lyves in lustes and in sportes, And spenden on thaire speciales that thay spare shuld	play mispasses; waste
1380	For pourale of thaire parroshens, and present to be among thaym Ferto salve thaire shepe whenne thay sike were. ²	surgeon; profession
	But how shuld a surgeon serve wel his hyre That cometh not in sevene yere to se the sort oones —	
	<i>Ye pastoribus</i> —	<i>Woe to the pastors</i>
	That thay shal not se oon shyne how soutelly thay wirchen.	glimpse; subtly
1385	I say not but of sum that suche maneres usen, For every wynsan that is wise, she wircheth to the beste,	woman
	And conseilleth al to conscience, leste there come happenes.	misfortune
	Y it is there a copie for costumes of culmes fourre and twenty	contracts
	How sum tellen tidings at home uppon thaire benches.	news (rumors)
1390	Or elles at eve after souper, or erely atte nalle, And lyen on the lordz — lorelles and noon other.	early; ale
	Thaire tales been so troublē that tourmen men thoughtz	tell lies about; scoundrels
	The more that men museon thayns, the madder thay been after.	confused: [they] turn men's
	I survail but thay mette so, how hit might be	dreamt
1395	That thay finde fables and been so ferre fro them	for; thence
	That though thou ride remyng, and reste but a lite —	running
	Fro London forth the long waye to the landis ende,	
	And comes right fro the kingis courte and his cunsel bothe,	council
	Fro prelatez unto peers in prystetē or elles —	peers; private
1400	Y it shal tidings bee ytolde tenne dayes ere thou come, That never was of worde spoke ne wroughtie, as thou shal hire.	hear

¹ These persones and these canons (prebendaries) who have plural benefices

² Lines 1380-81: For the poor of their parish, and they should be present among them / To heal the wounds of their sheep (congregation) when they were sick

Mum and the Sothsegger

- Lesingz been so light of fote, thay lepen by the skyes,
And as swifte as a swalwe shestyng oure at oones
As falsly forgiid as though a freno had made thaym.
*Ramores fuge ne incipias noscas dector haberi.*¹
- 1405 That harde happes mote thay have that Henry so appereis,²
Or any lord of this lande that loveth pees and resto.
Though the buene my brother were, I bid hit with my berte.
Yit wol thay carpe of the coroune as thay of cunzell were,
And ordeyne more in oon hoare than other half wintre
1410 Al the kingis cunzell couthe wel bringe aboste.
Thus esellen thay with matieres to meistre thaire wites,
And gruccchen whenne the gadryng is that goeth for us alle,³
I seye yf hit be sette so and in sucche thinges.⁴
Ful ille couthe thay corde with Changwys-is deedes,
1415 That conquerid many a cuntrē as long withynne hymself,
And how he came to his coroune I shal you ketene sone.
The greate God of goodnes that gouverneneth alle thingz,
He nemped furst his name to the sevēn nacionz
That were wel nygh destroed and disware of thaire lives
1420 And in disease and desperat thorough thaire double intenz.
*Omnē regnum in se divisione desolabitur.*⁵
Thaire division dide thaym harne (and so hit doeth elleswhere),
That thay were sette in servitate by souvrays of the marches,⁶
That had ywontē and ywastid wel nygh alle the landz.
The principale of this people pryyly by sightz
1425 A voice thaym folowed in vision in fourbering of thaymself,
And bade thaym coreoun Changwys king of al thaire people,
A children man of aymetrie that aged was a lite,
And so the deode was ydo when day and tyme came after,
And when this Changwys was ycorouned, as cronicle of hym tellef,

*Lies; i.e., insubstantial
swallow sheathing*

*prey
talk about*

interfere; show off

*accord; Genghis's
death*

*destroyed in despair
false*

elderly; noble lineage

¹ *Flee from gossip lest you begin to be taken for their author*

² *May those who have damaged Henry experience misfortunes*

³ *And complain when the tax collection happens that applies to all of us*

⁴ *I say if their destiny were so appointed and in similar circumlocutions*

⁵ *Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation*

⁶ *Such that they were placed in slavery by kings of surrounding countries*

Mum and the Sothsegger

- 1430 And sette in his se with sceptre on his handes,
He stablid two statutz, as storie of hym writeth,
I berde never harder, and yit thay holde were:¹ *throne
ordained*
- The furst that he funded to sele trewe hertz
And his principal people to prove and assaye *established to investigate loyal
leaders; test*
- 1435 Was that the souvrayns of the servene nacions
Shuld sle thayre soones, th'eldest and thaire hoires;
The secund that thay shuld eeke sese hym in hire lande,
And yelde hit up in erniste, and geve hit hym for ever,
To have and to holde is his high grace. *lads
heirs
cede their lands to him*
- 1440 And as the king commandid accordid thay were,
Consentynge to his covetise with crise alle at oones.
Thay sparid not to spille blode that sponge of thaymself,²
Ne to lose thayre lordship and lande at his wille.
Now forso telle trouthe, I trowe hit be no lesung, *(the lord) were agreed
a shout*
- 1445 Who welde have grieved for a grote, he wold have gruched there.³
Thus proved this prince his people and thaire hertz,
And to fel of thaire fiance ful felly he wroughte.
And whensoe he wiste that his wil was not encountrid,
But that he had thaire hertz al boole at his wil, *allegiance; directly
knew; thwarted*
- 1450 He forgaf thaym thaire graunt and goodly thaym thanked.
Thenne clepid he to conseil knightz and other,
And wroughte alle with oon wil as wise men shuld,
And warne wisely agen wiflyne a while after *won back*
- The lande and the lordship that thay loste had,
1455 And conquerid cuntries, as Cathayis lande, *Cathay's
rain Rivers over*
- That is the richesto royaume that reyne over hoveth.
*Ecce quam bonam & quam iocundam habilitate fratres in uera.*⁴
- Now by Crist that me creed, I cannot betherke
A kindly cause why the conun shuld
Contre the kingis wil ne construe his werkes. *created
communally
Oppose*
- 1460 I carpe not of knightz that cometh for the shires,
That the king clepith to conseil with other.

¹ I never heard of harder flaws], and yet they were followed

² They did not spare the blood of their own offspring

³ He who would have grieved for a great would have moaned at that

⁴ Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity

Mum and the Sotheegger

	But hit longeth to no laborier the lawe in agayne thaym.	<i>laborer</i>
	And yit hit is y-usid with unwise people	
	And availeth not a ferthing, but vireth the herte;	<i>inflames</i>
1465	And tourmen with thaire tales the tente of the lordes,	<i>attention</i>
	That they leuen the labour the londe to defende,	<i>cause</i>
	To bisey thaym on the bordures to bate oute oure foes,	<i>borders; beat back</i>
	And maysteyne the marches fro myschief and elles.	<i>borderlands</i>
	Thus clappeth the corran and knocketh thaymself.	<i>chatters; horns</i>
1470	For the tayl of thaire talking teneth thaym ofte.	<i>conclusion; appetites</i>
	Thou mayst leme that lesson in the nexte lyne,	
	For and thy heede be herte, thy hond wol apeire,	<i>hand will be harmed</i>
	And whoso hewe over heede, though his hoode be on,	<i>cut; overhead</i>
	The spones wol springe oute and spare not the eye.	<i>splinters</i>
1475	Thay finde many fautes and fallen moste thaymself	
	Of deedes of deuotiō that they do shuld.	<i>duty</i>
	Thay shalde love loyally the lordz aboate,	
	That they mighte leme a lesson of thaire lowe herte	
	To reule thaym by reason and by right lawe,	
1480	Thay shalde be ready to ride and renne at thayre heste	<i>bidding</i>
	For soule and for silver as they might aserve,	<i>payment; deserve</i>
	And obeye to thayre bidding and bable no ferther —	
	<i>Potencioribus pares esse non possumus. Sapientia</i> — ¹	
	For suche lewed labbing the lande doeth apeire.	<i>chattering; injure</i>
	But God of His goodnes graunt thaym to arrende,	
1485	To knowe what thaire kinde is and commenche bityme	<i>begin soon</i>
	The conseilie of Changwys and construe no ferther.	
	But love so ouare hege al ouare life-dayes	<i>liege lord</i>
	That he may leede us with love as hymself liketh.	<i>rule</i>
	T here is a scroue for squyers that asquere walken	<i>scroll; alowf</i>
1490	Whense a tale is yoldie, yf hit touche grete ²	<i>have rubbed</i>
	That piled han poure men of penys and of goodes.	
	Thay wol neghen no neir but yf they noye therke ³	
	And alleigge for the lord and lawe dounse bere,	<i>give evidence; bear down</i>
	Lest seouldre and thaire service cesse al at ones.	<i>pay</i>

¹ We cannot be equals with the more powerful. *Wisdom*

² When a court pleading is told, if it concerns powerful men

³ They will approach no nearer unless they think to cause trouble

Maur and the Sothsegger

1495	Thus poare men pleynz been pledid ful ofte, For reasonis retenuen moste restis nedis. There robes rebercyn the rightz of the parties, There is a writte of hgh wil ywritte al newe, Yknytis in a corner of the bagge-ende,	lawmats must needs rest When justices, sum up cranny
1500	And is a corsyld courasge and costefal bothe That serveth al for souvrauns of semblable pouaies, For ever equalitē errith and stryveth More thanne the mene man with his mone heigher, For whensse a matiere is ymoevyd among men of goode,	cursed Jeruzal; costly similar power equality err; contends bumble; superior property
1505	Though there happe no harme save hertz aggrediggiid, Thay stelle into strivynge and strien thaymself And strien so that stuffore and store doon apeire, ² And ecke losen thaire good loos with thaire lewed pride, And annoyen thaire neighborowes nyne style aboute.	strial; contention; destroy reputation
1510	For every feithful frend wol fande to helpe And leve there he loveth, for lothe or elles; Suche wilfulness and wisedame women asunder. — widow dwel apart from one another Thou mays haathe on a brooke to the breggardelle, But passe not the polle farther for peril that foloweth.	try believe; harm bathe; waist head <i>Iru odius general concordia natrii amorem.</i> ³
1515	"Thus" — stryeth that oon side — "shule I obeye Or make amendes or makyn myself? Nay, are I worke suche a worke, but my witte faille, Hit shuld stande right straite with stoenes of my houses, For lever themne to lowe me while my lile dureth	bumble before rather; abuse myself
1520	I wol do a deede that I dide never: Sille for silver my sherte and my clothes, Or borowen til I begge themne bowe oones. And I were caste in my contré and hit knowe were I shold be eschewid and oversettis ofte.	Self submit defeated; region shamed; disgraced
1525	Ney, I wol maynteyne my manhoode, malgrē that gracheth, ⁴ And spare swete splices and spende on my foes."	

¹ Though no damage occurs except aggravated hearts

² And behavie such that household goods and provisions are damaged

³ Wrath inspires hatred; peacefulness nourishes love

⁴ Nay, I will maintain my dignity, despite those who complain

Mum and the Sothsegger

	That other side seyeth right so and the same wordes.	<i>the same</i>
	As wilde and as wode and as wrothe ecke,	
	And braggeth and boasteth and wol brenne watres	<i>bare waters</i>
1530	And rather rense in rede blode therne arere oones.	<i>retreat</i>
	<i>Ira requiescit / non in sanitas mentis / ac corporis / Salomon.¹</i>	
	Thus thay blowe as a bore til bothe repente.	<i>bluster; bear</i>
	Hit is no wittie, as I wene, to waste so silver	
	For a woodie wil and weetthe in thy herte,	<i>mad; eager</i>
	And no harme on thy heede in hunde ne in goodes,	
1535	But yharte on the hert with a high pride.	
	For suche maniere medling al to many tymes,	
	Though hit gaine in the bigynnyng, hit growtheth so alre	<i>grows to such an extent</i>
	That lymes been ylost and lyfes ful ofte.	<i>limbs; lives</i>
	<i>Superbus generat omnem malitiam usque ad mortem. Salomon.²</i>	
	And ecke hit is no worldly wittie, as me theriketh,	
1540	To tolle there no trespass is do to account. ³	
	But hit semeth to a souvrain that ymnesight lacketh,	<i>insight</i>
	Whenne his mynde is ymoevid to medle in his ire,	<i>mored</i>
	That though his grounde be not goode and he gaste were	<i>(legal) cause; if fearful</i>
	Or feynte forto folowe but fersse to th'ende. ⁴	
1545	Hit shal be arrested for reproif whenne hit were rebencyd,	<i>set down; reproof</i>
	And he yscete the shorter at shire and aboute. ⁵	
	Sache cursid construyng accombeith the people.	
	For cantrey that conceipt I can make a reason,	<i>against; notion; argument</i>
	And a trewe, as I trowe, whoso taketh heide:	
1550	Whenne rascuse ther redeth to reire debatz,	<i>mount debates</i>
	Or angre at alre arteth thy herte	<i>bitterness constrain</i>
	Ferto commenche a cause not cleere in the winde. ⁶	
	Bowe ere thou breste whenne thou arte bette yfourmyd,	<i>Tield; burst; informed</i>
	And reule ther by reason and rense not to faste,	<i>run</i>

¹ Wrath may not rest in a sound mind or body. *Salomon*

² Pride brings forth all wickedness even unto death. *Salomon*

³ To contend at law where there is no offence due to property [recorded in an account]

⁴ "If he were slow to prosecute, though eager for his object" (D&S)

⁵ And he thought less of in the shire and round about

⁶ To inaugurate legal proceedings whose basis is not clear

Mae and the Sosiegger

- 1555 But gif hit up with good wille whense thy grounde failleth,
And faille of with fayrenes leste fors thee assaille.¹
For yf thou leve are thou ligge thensel wol thy loos springe.²
But yf thy tale be trewe, to toyll thee hatis. *case; just; contend; hate*
So wol the worde walke with oon and with other
- 1560 And cuomforte thy cauntrē in cumpas aboue
To be nere at thy nede another tyme after.
And bilieve loyally, in lawe yf thou were,
Or medlist with a matiere, thy mote were trowe, *case*
Elles woldes thou not worthe on hit longe.
- 1565 There is a raggeman rolle that Ragenselle hymself *legal document; i.e., the Devil*
Hath made of maystenance and moyng of the people, *litigation*
Hough thay shewe at sises and sessions aboue, *above; courts of assizes*
And halen so the hockerope, oon halfe agayne other, *pall; hock-rope (see note)*
Til the strong steriers and styvest on the heedes *inciters; i.e., most bold-headed*
- 1570 Strifis so and swicchen straignt adounse the poure. *Contend; pull down*
Gold and good thaym gleith so, thay wol not go asundre,³
Til thay have haled the bouslord oute att halle-dore *dragged; house-lord*
And drawnen hym clese fro his dees; he dyneth there nomore. *day; dies*
This same cursid custume the coroune doeth apeyre *damage*
- 1575 And bringeth a bitter byworde abrode among the people, *proverb; abroad*
And is in every cauntrē but a comane tale
That yf the pouer playne, though he pleide ever *poor man*
And harleth with his higher, hit haggett ofte-tynse *despise; superior*
That he wircheth al in waste and wynneth but a litle. *in vain*
- 1580 Thus laboreth the loos among the comune people *spread the report*
That the wacker in the writte wol have the wors ende; *wacker*
Hit wol not gayne a goky a grete man forto pleide, *benefit a poor man*
For lawe lieth mische in lordship sith loyaute was exiled. *since*
And poure men pleynites penylees abateth. *complaints conclude penitent*
- 1585 But David demed not so, I do hit on his bokes. *prove it by*
Maneu super innocentem non accipies. Do not take breses against the innocent
Yit is there a forelle that I forgate that frayed in a litle, *book cover*
How the fleable fareth that followed bee in shires *weak; prosecuted*

¹ And withdraw gracefully lest force assault you

² For if you quit before you are defeated then will your reputation rise

³ Gold (money) and property so unite them that they cannot be separated

Maw and the Sothsegger

	Whenne thay grien greete, though the guilte be lite.	vet the powerful
	And he have any hors or elles hedid bestes,	horses; beasts with horns
1590	He shal be houled so in high courte and holde so agogge That hym were bettre lose his lande thenne long so be toyld. ¹	assaulted; in expectation
	Suche crokes been ycovnid and coloured under lawe, To strue a man with strength the statutz been so made.	tricks; covered; cloaked destroy; statutes
	For though men pleide and poussyde and in thaire playntz falle prosecute; withdrawe	
1595	And newe thaym after nonsayles ryntene hantheed, Withoute grounde or guilte, but forto gete a beibe,	re-open; failures (see note)
	Yit shal thay have no harme though thay harle ever.	contend
	But shuld thay picche and paye at ecce pleyntz-is ende	pay ready money
	And compe alle the costz of men of court and elles,	reckon
1600	And taske al the trespass, as trouthe wolde and reason, Thay wolde ceise sum tymse for shedding of thaire silver.	suit; violations
	I sye as wel of simple men that wan aginst grete, And of the poure pouste that peynes ofte thaire better,	the same; sue
	That causelees accusen thaym to king and to the lordz.	proud folk; injure
1605	As I doo of dacez that suche deedes usen;	without cause
	For lordz and labours been not like in costes,	daces; employ
	Hit wold pese the people and many pleyntes bane	i.e., what they can spend
	And chaunge al the chancellerie and chevallerie armende	pacify; ease
	And ease be to every man that been of evene states.	knights
1610	And solas be to souvtayns and to thaire servante alle,	equal estates
	And a miracle to meen men that moe lite currie. ²	
	Were this oon yere y-asid as I have declarid —	
	That of every write withoute wronge there were amedes made,	
	And paye for alle the costes at every pleyntz-is ende.	
1615	And tolle for the trespass as trouthe wolde and reason —	pay
	The lawe wold like as wel, and ever the lenger the bettre.	serve; longer
	But pouars of prerogative that poynth hath reservyd	power; prerogative
	That every fode have fredome to folowe mynyssibid.	man, possessive
	But Civile seith us not so, that serveth for al people	Civil Law
1620	That habitht ondrē hevene, heben men and other.	live; teachen
	And Cristis lawe is ycanonized Canon, yf thou loke,	Canon Law
	And ecce the glorious Gospelle, grounde of alle lawes,	

¹ That it would be better for him to lose his land than to be so long in litigation

² And a miracle to poor men who know little of legal debate

Mum and the Sothsegger

	Techeth us a newe teste that toucheth this ilke matiere.	concerns; same
	For in my conscience ne in my credo yit couthe I never velle	feel
1625	But that oure lawe length there a litle, as me thenketh.	is biased
	There is a librarie of lordes that losen ofte thaymself	a whole history
	Thorough lickynge of the lordship that to the coroune lengtheth,	infringing upon
	And wench hit be wel ydo; but wors dide thay never	
	Thenne sith thay gonne that game, I gronde me on reason.	
1630	For every wighte wote wel, but yf his wite faille,	one head
	That hit is holsum forto have a heede of us alle,	
	That is a king yconoured to kepe us under lawe,	
	To put us into prisone whensse we passe boundes.	
	For but we had a souvayn to sene us into rest, <td>peace</td>	peace
1635	Thees rechelees renkes wolde renne on ech other.	irresponsible men
	Thenne of fyne foyrs hit foloweth, as me thenketh,	
	That a certayne substance shold be ordynyd	amount of revenue
	To susteyne this souvayn that shold us govern.	
	And so I wote wel hit was atte fust tyme,	
1640	But now hit is bynone hym th' old and the newe,	taken away from him (see note)
	Notwithstanding statutz ful strately ymade	strictly
	To stable many statutz and strong lawes make.	firm up
	But execucion faille, what may hit availle ¹	
	Ne more thenne the mose may or the Maij floares	moss
1645	To broke doyne bastiles that besite is ymade?	towers
	Hit is as dede as a dore rayle, though the dome come after,	dead; doornail
	Without execucion thees wise men hit knoweth.	
	Thees knighthz of the conseil that mygh the king dwellem,	
	And eke lordz yletted of oone lawe and other,	i.e., civil and canon law
1650	Fofto kepe his coroune fro coveteous people,	
	Han pulled thaymself the peres right to the pere stalke,	pears
	And lickid so the leves he hath the leste dele,	sampled: (the king) has; least part
	For thy holden of his honour halfendele and more.	i.e., more than half
	This was grounde and bigymnyng of gardyng of heedes,	beheadings
1655	And eke more, and moundre, and manyfolde wronges	murder; crimes
	That han yfallen for foly withynne thees fourty wintre.	
	For th'egre envye that ech had to other	bitter envy
	Dide thaym preece to be prysy and put awye the besite,	wrge; anger

¹ Unless the laws are executed, what may they avail?

Mam and the Sotkregger

- But muche more for the mede to make thaymself riche
 1660 Thenne to canseille the king of the costume wile,
 Or for any dese doone or defence of the royaume appropriate judgment
 This same cursid costume oure coroune hath speyred, weakened
 And cause is most that communes collectours haten, commons hate tax collectors
 For nedis moste oure liege lord like his estat
 1665 Have for his houshold and for his haynous werres heinous wars
 To maynteyne his manhoode, there may no man seye other, dignity; otherwise
 But of his own were the beste, whose coathe hit bringge, bring about
 To lyve uppon his laboriers, hit may not long indure. labours
 Whenne hit is haled al awey, thenne is wo the nexte carried
 1670 To you that shullen silver to solve themne were tyme. owe, time [to pay up] (see note)
 For trusteth right treuly, talkie what men liketh,
 And wendith and trendith twys in oon wike, And twist and turn twice in one week
 And clepith to your cunsel copes and other, i.e., clerics and others
 And pleyne atte parlament, but yf the deede proufe
 1675 That the coroune in his kinde come ymme agaynes, circle
 Clene in his campas with croppes and braunches, Little by little
 Lite and a line, right as the lawe asketh,
 Wel mowe we wilne and wisshe what us liketh
 And eeke waite after welthe but as my witt demseth.
 1680 Oure wyntynge and worship wol be the lause gains; praise; less
 With knight and with comune til the king have the commons
 Alle boole in his hande that he have oughte.
 There is a copie of covetise, how conscience is rouled writing on greed; ruled
 Whenne he hath gadrid a greeete bagge and good at his wil,
 1685 And wrongfully ywombe hit thorough wiles of his herte,
 And is ymme in riches thorough ryfling of the people, robbing
 He maketh maisons deu therewith whenne he may live no lenger; hospitals
 But while he had power of the penyes, the poure had but lite.
 Hit is a high holynes and grete helth to the soule
 1690 A man to lyve in lustes alle his life-dayes
 And have no pitie on the poure, ne parte with thaym nother,
 But holde hit ever in his hande til the herte broke, share
 But thenne he shapeth for the soule whenne the sunne is doun.¹ it breaks one's heart
 But while the day durid he delte but a lite; gave [for charity/

¹ But then he makes provision for the poor when the sun goes down (i.e., at the end of his life)

Mum and the Soothsayer

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| 1695 | Now muche moste his merite be that mendeth so the poire,
That gifeth his goode for Godis sake whenne his geste is passed. ¹ | benefits |
| | There is a litle of a testament that I tolde never,
How pryyly they been provid and yput aside, | section; will |
| | For so the silver be yselvid for the seal of th' office
And the feis alle yflunge, they folden thaym togedre | unrepetitiously; probated |
| 1700 | And casten thaym in a coffre leste they copied were,
And sith thay seure thaym by thaymself and seyen thees wordes: | paid; seal (as the will)
fees; received
assure |
| | "Hit is no wisedame fortio wake Warrok while he slepeth." ² | i.e., a ferocious dog |
| | For though a quynzene were yquethe, oon quaintance shal be geven. ³ | |
| 1705 | Though executours afterwarde execute hit never,
Ne do nocht for the dede, as I do whennie I slope. | nothing |
| | And yit thay seyen for thaymself right a subtile reason:
"Why shuld we dele for the dede? He dide not while be myghte, | |
| | He made us in his myndc among alle his frendes | |
| 1710 | To be his trewe attourneys and tretey for his debtcs,
For so that thay have halfendele, thay smowe thaym holde content. ⁴ | |
| | Yit wol not the good go so ferre, so mote we grounde oure tale,
For I wol seye for myself, seye thou whennie thee liketh, | |
| | Yf we do as he dede, may no man dene us yvel, | (the testator did, badly |
| 1715 | Ne rightfully by reason reprove us hereafter. | ensure according to law |
| | He was bothe ware and wise while he was on live, | guarded; alive |
| | And me lust not be lewed leste I fare the wors. | incusious |
| | His custume was to kepe his good, so lete us kepe hit eke, | |
| | And thenne after oure deeth day lete dele for us alle, | |
| 1720 | For oure executours afre us shal have the same charge." ⁵ | directive
heritage |
| | Thus thay chiden with charite and chacheth eche other,
That til the Day of Domes the deile is not parfoumid. | Judgment; deile; distributed |
| | Yf it is there a poynt of prophecie how the people construeþ | |
| | And misseth on the mervailles that Merlyn dide devyse, | |
| 1725 | And redith as right as the Ram is hornyd, ⁶ | mad |
| | And helpe me the high God, I holde thaym halfe amasid. | |
| | For there nys wight in this world that wote bifornc eve | |

¹ Who borrows his prosperity for God's sake when his spirit has departed.

¹ For although a fifteenth were demanded, a twelfth shall be given.

¹ For as long as they have half of it, they must hold themselves contented.

⁴ And determined as straightforwardly as the Rom. is deemed (*i.e.*, consolidated).

Muse and the Soothsenger

- How the winde and the wedee wol wirche on the morowe,
Ne noon so carrying a cleric that construe wel couthe
1730 Ere Sameday a sevnyght what shal faille.¹ weather; believe
Thus thay muse on the mase on mose and on sterres
Til heedes been hewe of and hoppe on the grene,
And al the wide world wondre on thaire workes.
Yit sawe I there a cedale soudely indited
1735 With tuly silke intachid right atte nolle-is ende,
Ywritte ful of wordes of woundres that han faille,
And fele-folde ferlees wythynne thees fewe yers,
By cause that the clergie and knighthoode togedre
Been not knyttie in conscience as Crist dide thaym stable.
1740 For who so loketh on the lawe may lense, yf hym like,
Thayre ordre and office and how thay ought wyrche.
For thay folowe no foote of thaire forme-fadres,
I do hit on thaire deeth-day, and dene no further,
For seuely sumtyme I sawe hit not late
1745 Yn cronicle of clercz and kingz lygnies
How peilitz of provinces pride moste hatid
For the theme that thay taughte was tachid on thaire hertz.
Thay preached the people and provyd hit thaymself
And were lasternes to lewed men to lyve thaym after.
1750 Thay pourchachid no prelacies wth prince norther elles² i.e., examples for
Thorough prayer ne pounds but thorough proufe of thayre workes.

¹ What should happen a week before Sunday

² They purchased no church appointments from a prince or someone else

Notes

Abbreviations: **B**: Barr's edition of *Mor*; **D&S**: Day and Steele's edition of *Mor*; **IMEV**: Carlton Brown and Rossell Hope Robbins, *Index of Middle English Verse*; **MED**: *Middle English Dictionary*; **MEPW**: Dean, ed., *Medieval English Political Writing*; **MS**: MS British Library Additional 41666; **OED¹**: *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed.; **PP**: *Piers Plowman*, ed. Schmidt; **PPCr**: *Piers the Plowman's Crede*, in *6ES*; **RiR**: *Richard the Redeless*; **6ES**: Dean, ed., *Six Ecclesiastical Satires*; **Sk**: Skeat's 1886 edition of *RiR*; **Sz**: Szarmach's transcription of the MS; **Usk**: *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*, ed. Given-Wilson; **WGO**: Dean, *The World Grown Old in Later Medieval Literature*; **Wr**: Wright's 1838 edition of *RiR*

- 1 *Hough*. A corrector D&S designate "M" has written *how* in the left-hand margin. D&S differentiate among four main correctors or editors (A, B, C, and D), who place a dot over the word to be corrected, and other correctors, including M (whom they suspect is the scribe of the MS); N (who underlines words to be corrected); P (who inserts with a caret); S, in two hands (who uses interlineation or marginal corrections); O (who designates words for omission); and L (who inserts single letters). Both Barr and Doyle believe that fewer editors and correctors were involved in marking the MS. That material has been lost from the beginning is clear from the lack of a large initial letter (such as the one that appears at line 29).

The sentiment and wording of line 1 is repeated in line 1650. *covetous people* may refer to Henry's first supporters — notably the Percies of Northumberland, including the Duke of Northumberland and his son, Henry Percy (called Hotspur) — who helped put him on the throne but who felt neglected once he became king.

- 4 *profit of grete*. MS: *profit of oþer*. Emended by D&S and B, adopting the marginal suggestion of one of the correctors (called, by D&S, "A"). The MS's *oþer* seems to be ditography (inadvertent repetition) from the *oþer* at the end of line 3. The "A" corrector has placed a dot over the *oþer* of line 4 and has written the word *grete* in the right-hand margin. In this line "A" has placed a dot over *departid* and, in the left margin, written *parte*, with a dot over it.

- 5 *Lestie uncoutryng come yn and caste*. So MS; D&S and B use the corrector's marginal gloss "comyn," interpreting *come yn* as the commons. I read *uncoutryng*

Mom and the Sotheegger

substantively rather than adjectivally. D&S comment: "caste sp þe helter: cast off restraint. Perhaps 'þe' should be inserted before 'vncarryng'" (p. 106).

- 6 According to K. B. McFarlane, Henry IV's councils were not fixed, predictable sessions but instead were "nebulous" and "indistinct." See "Council and Parliament" in *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), pp. 82–89.
- 7 *smaicche of the smoke*. The word *smaicche* — "taste" — signifies a sampling of something (Old English *sweac*), usually something pleasant (as nectar), but here the connotation is ironic.
- 9 *tymbre sur so high*. This wording seems to have been suggested by: "þes tynbred nouȝ so heize" (*PP*, B III.85; compare A III.74, C III.84).
- 11–12 *For two yere . . . leade men telles*. The idea here is that even a loyal Treasurer may make a small fortune in a brief time of service. D&S summarize: "Even if the Treasurer be honest, he can do well for himself, for in two years (men say) he will make enough to live as a lord for twenty years." The "A" corrector wants to substitute "leade," presumably ignorant, for *lewed*, men who may be believed or men in the know.
- 17 *Sergeantz . . . ate barre*. The A text of *PP* contains similar language: "Serjeantz, it semide, þat servide at þe Barre: / Pleted for peis and peusades þe lawe, / And nouȝt for losse of Oure Lord vñlose here lippes ones" (Prol.85–87). "Sergeants were the most prestigious and powerful lawyers of Chaucer's time; they ranked above esquires, and were the equal of knights. Their group, called the Order of the Coif, was small (only twenty-one sergeants were created during Richard II's reign), chosen from among the most accomplished apprentices who had spent at least sixteen yeares studying and practicing law. They had exclusive rights to plead cases in the Court of Common Pleas, and all judges were chosen from this group" (Patricia J. Eberle in *The Riverside Chaucer*, p. 811).
- 18 *prenys of court*. The apprentices "were practising lawyers who had received legal training in the central law courts, or . . . students who were currently receiving such training. These lawyers might practise as advocates, attorneys, advisers, clerks or officials." See Maureen Jarkowski, "Lawyers and Lollardy in the Early Fifteenth Century," in *Lollardy and the Gentry in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Margaret Aston

Notes

and Colin Richmond (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), pp. 155, 156 respectively.

19 *reeche nor of the riche*. The MS does not include *nor*. D&S and B properly insert it.

24 *grawnteth thayw*. So D&S, B; MS: *grawnteth kym*.

with a good *chiere*. The meaning of *chiere* is usually "demeanor," "countenance," but a corrector or reader — identified by D&S as the "E" corrector, has written "wille" in the right-hand margin.

25 *writtz . . . waxe*. The narrator asks that the "penytees" be granted legal redress in the form of *writtz* and then sealed in *waxe*. In some Middle English complaint poems the green wax sealing legal writs was reason for consternation. See, for example, *Song of the Husbandman*, note to line 55, in *MEPB*, p. 261.

27 *meyntenanc*. Maintenance was the practice of wrongfully supporting one side in litigation, often accompanied by threats of violence or other forms of intimidation. A "meyntenour," explains Sk in his note to *RiR* II.78, is "a technical term for one who abets another in wrong-doing, and supports him in defeating justice" (II, p. 292).

29 *Now*. There "is space left for cap N; only small letter for prompt to rubricator" (Sz).

38 *Sothesegger*. My convention throughout the text and notes of the poem is to capitalize the one "Sothesegger" who is the object of the narrator's quest (parallel to Langland's Piers Plowman) but to use lower-case "sothesegger" for the generic type: "the Sothesegger" versus "a sothesegger."

41 *And yf . . . andre*. The idea here is that if a soothsayer oversteps what people want to hear, he will be summarily ousted.

42-43 *There is . . . yere after*. My translation of these lines is speculative and based on the readings of D&S and B. The sense of the lines seems to be that the Soothsayer provides his own clothes because no one wants to sponsor him. Hence he is called, in line 44, "Alexander without livery."

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- 42–46 *There is . . . Bar the.* The left-hand margin has been cut away so as to omit the first letters of lines 42–44 and the first words of lines 45–46. D&S reconstructed them, and I follow their suggestions.
- 52 *pure poynt . . . saike.* The truth in effect lances the wound and drives out the disease of falseness and corruption.
- 61 *peyntare.* MS: *preynte.* Stricken, with *peyntare* written faintly in the margin. The scribe reduplicated the subsequent *preynte*, though the reduplication makes sense too. The impression in this case is of a coin which has greased someone's palm. The "crosse" in line 66 also refers to the impression from a coin.
- 66 *crosse.* See note to line 61.
- 76 *For.* MS: *Fort.* D&S and B emend to *For.* The "D" corrector suggests *now.*
- 81a *Si peccauerit . . . corrigere etc.* The wording is based on Matthew 18.15: "But if thy brother shall offend against thee, go, and rebuke him between thee and him alone." The Latin is in the right-hand margin and marked by an editor to be placed after line 81.
- 87–89 *And he . . . to have.* D&S translate the important part of these lines: "'He that is most of might shall . . . have regard of a reasonable man,' i.e. thyself" (p. 107). The "he" who is "most of might," however, might be Christ rather than a temporal lord.
- 88 *sooth.* "So P (dot and carel)" (D&S, p. 29).
- 106 *mede.* So D&S, B. MS: *soulfe* but "A" corrector suggests *mede.*
- 113 *though . . . after.* I.e., although what the Soothsayer said proved to be true after he left the service for which he was held to be foolish.
- 114–24 *but mache . . . woo faille.* The narrator wonders that *oure coroned king* (line 115) does not have a soothsayer to help govern the realm. The poor, he claims, have many such to help them manage their wealth and guide them when misfortune should arise. King Henry did in fact have at least one advisor who risked his wrath with stern advice.

Notes

- 115a *Et nunc . . . David.* This is based on Psalm 2.10 and is inserted in the right-hand margin next to line 120, but with a mark indicating that the Latin should be inserted after line 115, which is where it appears in D&S.
- 116 *saye.* So D&S, B, based on a correction ("B"). MS: *telle.* The scribe may have anticipated the beginning of line 120. At the top of fol. 2a and "keyed to end of 116" (Sz) four verse lines in English are appended:
- Thorough mayntenance and mystewrie of masters above
And al is conseil to þe king / þe knoweth not þe lawes
For lacke of a lorenman / þat lesinges hanþ
That wold telle hym þe trouthe / and trippre not aude (Sz's transcription)
- 120 Next to this line appears the following verses (transcribed by Sz):
- And souerayns soothly / þay serve but a whiles / yit shuld hit lengþe þayre lyves / and
þe lawe mende.
- At the bottom of fol. 2a similar verses appear, with the "margin cut away" for the opening words (transcribed by Sz):
- [And] souerayns soothly / þay serve but a whiles
[Yit] shuld hit lengþe þayre lyves / and þe lawe mende.
- 124 *ware, ere.* There is a caesural mark, a virgule, between these two words, which I have marked with a comma in the text.
- 124–29 *Hough . . . But.* The margin for these lines is lost. I follow D&S's reconstruction of the initial letters of the first words of these lines.
- 141–42 *Porto telle . . . with other.* A soothsayer — "fabuler" — could enlighten the king as to the true situation (the *rewe*) without obfuscating it with misleading rhetoric (the *glisse* or *glozing*). This truth teller could explain how words work with respect to both truth and falsehood (the *owc* and the *other*).
- 143 *king . . . lande.* A reference to Henry Bolingbroke's landing at Ravenspur on his return from exile in France in July, 1399, at which time Henry was seeking allies for his cause against Richard, who had confiscated his father's estates. This action is mentioned at the beginning of *RiR*. See note to Prol. II.

Mom and the Soothsenger

- 148 the crosse. Perhaps the Bristol cross featured in *RiR* Prol. 56 ("the rode of Chester"). "The market-cross was everywhere the place where proclamations were made" (D&S, p. 108).
- 149 *and*. I adopt B's excellent emendation, since customs and taxation of the people — the latter much discussed in this poem — are different things but both cause for abuses. A corrector has inserted the word *and* above the line between *customs* and *of*.
- 152–55 *Burpierz . . . ewen peeris.* D&S in their marginal paraphrase of these lines say, "The magpies who once disputed with the parrot were punished, and dare not now complain openly" (p. 32). In their explanatory notes they offer: "Once some of the commons discussed their grievances with some one of higher rank, and consequently suffered fines and imprisonments. Now they dare not speak, except privately among themselves" (p. 108). The semantics of the lines do not permit such confidence about the relationship between and among the magpies and the parrot, as B observes in her discussion of *parle* (line 155). The magpies may be holding a conclave with or disputing with the parrot — they may be allies or foes. B speculates that if the magpies and parrot are allies, then these lines may refer to the Cirencester rebellion of 1399–1400. The magpie would be Sir Ralph Lucy, "whose heraldic charge was three parrots." The rebels "were not executed for their part in the rebellion but were imprisoned for a short time in the Tower of London. This would fit the *corage* of line 153" (p. 299).
- 166 *synde.* This is the reading that a corrector suggests in the left-hand margin. The MS reads *warn* but that word does not alliterate according to the poet's usual pattern. D&S and B, on the strength of line 285, emend *synde* to *mynne*, "remind."
- 169 *yblent.* So MS (*y-blent*); D&S and B emend to *y-brent* ("burned") on the strength of a corrector.
- 176 *haystones.* These hailstones are part of the extended metaphor of the silencing of truth, which is bouldered, shouted down, shrined, and injured by princes. The extended metaphor begins at line 171.
- 179 *fro greve.* So D&S, B, based on a corrector's *ouze of greve*; MS: *fro grayen* (perhaps anticipating *his grayne* later in the same line).

Notes

- 180 A corrector or editor has added, at the bottom of the page, "that draweth al to goodnesse and gouernauunce after" for insertion into the text between lines 180 and 181 (Sz).
- 181 *goyng appos erke* means simply "alive," as also at line 212.
- 196 *tabard*. A tabard was a short gown, often emblazoned and worn over armor. The phrase "tack at your tabard" means to pay someone back.
- 205a *Here . . . the Soothsiger*. This statement occurs in the right-hand margin. Previous editions have not included it in the textual portion.
- 228-31 *Lesie . . . Of . . . That . . . There*. The left-hand margin is torn for the initial letters of these words. I follow D&S's reconstruction of them.
- 234 *not* is suggested by a corrector and is required for the sense.
- 238 *Porto . . . paire*. D&S gloss "Seeing that thy desire (to talk) will set aside thy understanding" (p. 109). Mum upholds the virtues of reticence and silence, which can be admirable qualities. But the debate between Mum and the Soothsayer concerns when it is better to speak out and properly advise the king and his council than to hold one's tongue.
- 240 *kyste . . . knotte*. D&S explain this phrase as "broke off what I intended to do" (p. 110); B glosses as "to conclude" with the sense of "coming to a decision." But the meaning here must be something like paused for the length of time it takes to compose a knot: the narrator as Soothsayer appropriately stops talking for a time after Mum's harangue.
- 244 *finissh*. So D&S and B; MS: *finish*.
- 247 *for oyle*. Oil, as in line 271, is associated with flattery. See *RiR* III.186 and note.
- 254 *Oon . . . waye*. This phrase means "only twenty minutes" (time measured by distance). Lines 252-54 may be paraphrased "You would be better served to follow me (Mum) for eighty long years than be a soothsayer, God help me, for twenty short minutes."

Mum and the Soothsayer

- 256 *contra* here and in line 262 has the sense of a contrarious speaker, someone who causes strife with his words. D&S translate this line "have nothing to do with contradiction" (p. 110).
- 262 *covete . . . campaigie*. The syntax of this phrase and of lines 261–62 is difficult. B extends *his campaigie* to *thy campaigie*. The meaning is clearly that nobody will want to be in the same room with Soothsayer while he is so quarrelsome as to have *Contra* for a companion.
- 266 *cusing*. So D&S and B; MS: *cufing*. My translation of this line is based on B's glosses.
- 269 *glasmyng of boites*. These shafts are metaphorical. The Soothsayer says Mum keeps himself well out of harm's way through his flattering, non-controversial speech.
- 272 *boache . . . cuse*. Mum knows when to keep quiet so as not to interfere with his sinecure from the count (his *boache*) for both his beast and his serving-man. The MS reads *cuse* rather than *cuse*, the emendation formulated by D&S and adopted by B.
- 273 *yit*. So a corrector, D&S, and B; MS: *yf*.
- 274a *ffacientis . . . in secretis etc.* Attributed to Gregory the Great in the *Speculum Christianorum: A Middle English Religious Treatise of the Fourteenth Century*, ed. G. Holmstedt, EETS o. s. 182 (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 63 and *passim*. The English translation reads: "Wyth-outen doute he has the gylte of the doynghe that reckey not to amende that thyng that [he] myghte correcte, et cetera."
- 276 *Do Bette* is one of three stages of action and sometimes an allegorical figure in *PP*, the other two being *Dowel* (*Do Well*) and *Dobest* (*Do Best*). The narrator of *PP* goes on a long search for *Dowel* over the course of the poem.
- 281 *ynowe*. So MS (*y nose*), B (*y-nose*). D&S: add [*and fele*] to the end of the line based on a corrector's "feble" and line 1298.
- 289 *Cato*. A reference to *The Disticha of Cato* (third century?), an immensely popular and influential series of sayings, authorship unknown, studied by every schoolchild as part of his early training in Latin, as the narrator acknowledges when he says, of

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Cato's book, "I saw hit in youthe" (line 290). The name "Cato" became attached to the *Monosticks* (one-line adages) and *Disticks* (couplets) because the author was thought to be "Diuersus Cato" or Marcus Porcius Cato of Utica (Cato the Censor's great-grandson). The *Monosticks* were known as *Petit Cato* or *Little Cato* and the *Disticks* as *Magnus Cato* or *Great Cato*. Perhaps the best-known aphorism is from Book 1, distich 3, which appears in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* as "firste vertu is to kepe tonge" (III.294); see also The Merchant's Tale, IX (H)332–33. Another of Cato's oft-quoted sayings is alluded to below in line 875 (and see note to that line).

- 291a Now . . . locution. From Cato's *Disticks* (*Magnus Cato*) 1.12. The Latin is marked for insertion between lines 291 and 292 (Sz). A Middle English translation of this Latin couplet reads:

For to be still may noyste dysplese,
& mekyll speche dose off dysese,
But it be nowled be ryght.

mack, often causes harm

From the edition of Sarah M. Hornall, "Christian Cato: A Middle English Translation of the *Disticha Catonis*," *Florilegium* 3 (1980), 158–97, at p. 164 (lines 73–75).

- 304 *Sidrac and Salomonis terres*. The narrator is on a quest for wisdom and help trying to make sense of Mum and his own situation. He turns to authors and works regarded in the late Middle Ages as containing important sayings and truth. Sidrac was said to be a descendant of Japhet born 847 years after the Flood. In Middle English poems (JMEV 772, longer version; JMEV 2147, shorter version), king Boetus asked Sidras 847 questions. "The result is a comprehensive medieval encyclopedia, one of the largest, in dialogue form" (F. L. Utley, in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, Vol. 3, ed. A. E. Hartung [New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1972], p. 745). "Sydrac and Boetus" is item 75 in Utley's section on "Dialogues, Debates, and Catechisms." "By Solomon the middle ages understood all the Wisdom literature, as in Melibeu 2249–50, where two passages from Ecclesiasticus are assigned to Ihesus Syrik and Salomon respectively" (D&S, p. xxv). For these three wisdom literature figures cited together, see *The Tale of Beowulf*, line 2666 and note, in the *Canterbury Tales: Fifteenth-Century Continuations and Additions*, ed. John M. Bowers (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), pp. 129, 188.

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- 305 *Seneca* the sage refers to a collection of aphorisms attributed to the Roman philosopher Seneca. Solomon, Seneca, and Sidrac are cited again in line 1212.
- 311 *the newe jette*. MS: *yette*. So D&S, B: *jette*. The phrase "new jet" appears often in medieval satires on clothing fashion and refers both to new fashions and to an arrogant manner of carrying oneself, one's demeanor. See MED s.v. *gern*, I (a) and (b); Chaucer's General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* II(A)682 (said of the Pardoner); and MEPEW *The Somone*, line 118 and note. The author of *Mum* uses the word for new fashions in academic inquiry as well, as when the Doctor of Philosophy renders his opinion of Mum's argument: "Hit is sum noyous nycté of the newe jette" (line 375).
- 313 *good*. D&S (on the strength of a corrector) and B insert this word, which is required for the alliteration and metrics of the line. MS: *þot gouernance*.
- 321–91 The narrator in these lines visits universities at Cambridge, Oxford, and Orleans in search of sure knowledge about Mum and the Sothsegger. "The episode," explains B, "satirizes the uselessness of academic learning in a fashion reminiscent of Wycliffite polemics" (p. 24).
- 322–23 *Combrigg or . . . Orleans*. The English universities were highly regarded for theology and law; Orleans was famous for its school of law.
- 328 *seven sciences*. The narrator has wandered to the universities to seek academic wisdom about when to speak and when to keep silent. He queries the Liberal Arts of Grammar, Music, Physics, Astronomy, Rhetoric, Logic, and Geometry but, like the narrator of *PP* or of *PPCr*, he is little the wiser for this visit to the great universities.
- 329 *for doute . . . better*. For uncertainty of the better world (i.e., heaven). The MS reads *dome / and doute of þe better* but a corrector suggests *for* for *dome*, and B adopts that correction. D&S read *And how we dwelld in [dweare] / and doute of þe better*. *Dweare* means doubt.
- 330 *Sire Griswold* is an allegorical figure for the stern Grammarian who wants words to fit together neatly and to make sense. The Grammarian's expertise fails when it comes to parsing the issues that separate Mum from the Sothsegger.
- 334 *þe*. So D&S, B (based on a corrector). MS: *y*; Sz: "MS = *y*, almost *b* [sans *e*]."

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- 337 *of his make*. MS: *on the slyer*, which anticipates line 338. So D&S and B on the strength of a corrector (*with his make*).
- 342 *shophister*. Logic, who can manipulate words.
- 343 *sle*. So D&S, B, based on a corrector. MS: *a*.
- 345 *as choghe was ever*. So a corrector. D&S, B: *as choghe was he ever*; MS: *and couache was he never*. The chough is a crowlike bird regarded as noisy and chattering, as in "Jack Upland's" rejoinder to *Friar Daw's Reply*. Upland claims that Friar Daw — whose name means a chattering bird — "grounded his logic" on "curvynges and false glōse, / Chidlyng with blasphemie, on chytryng as chowghes" (6ES, p. 204, lines 4–5).
- 354 *nemely sage*. Described as a "doctour of doutz" (line 360), the sage is a Doctor of Theology.
- 368 *letter*. So D&S, B (based on a corrector's *lettare*). MS: *better*.
- 373–77 *Yit knowe . . . enſiſh*. D&S paraphrase: "Neither I nor they have ever heard of such a question as you have brought forward. It is some foolish newfangled idea, for orthodox doctrine only tells us how good government has good results" (p. 38).
- 387–88 *Saint Nicholaz . . . the glōſe*. Saint Nicholas was the patron saint of scholars, so these scholars abandon study and give themselves over to flattery and easy reading (the gloss, which explains the text).
- 392 *fourre ordres*. The four orders, as in PPCP, are the Franciscans (Greyfriars, or Friars Minor), the Dominicans (Blackfriars, or Preaching Friars), the Augustinians, and the Carmelites (White Friars).
- 397 *shorte*. So D&S, B. MS: *shōſte*.
- 398 *every couple*. The friars traveled in pairs, so the narrator interrogates pairs of friars about his *cas* — Mum versus the Soothsayer. The antifratalian lyric *Preste, Ne Monke, Ne Fit Chanoce* laments "that ever it shuld be so, / Suche clerkes as thau about shuld go, / Fro town to town by two and two, / To seke their sustynaunce" (MEPW, p. 48).

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- 399 *Til the cloustre and the quyre.* "The sense of the line . . . appears to be that in all departments of the friars' houses, from the religious to the more secular, Mum was lord" (D&S, p. 112).
- 409 *stirid a statute.* This may imply that friars were behind parliamentary legislation authorizing friars to preach, to the detriment of parish priests and, later on, Lollards. Wycliff and Wyclifite writers such as the author of *Jack Upland* denounced the expanded role of the friars in matters traditionally the preserve of the parish priest. The most important anti-Lollard legislation was the statute *De haeretico comburendo*, passed shortly after William Sawtrey was burned as a heretic, in 1401.
- 411 *deonde.* So D&S, B (based on a corrector). MS omits.
- 417 *manieres.* So MS, B; D&S: names (based on a corrector). D&S argue vigorously on behalf of the corrector's reading saying "the sense clearly is that friars first gave Lollards their names, and now they must have the same name given them" (p. 112). That is, because the friars have visited destruction on the Lollards through branding them, they must suffer a similar fate. The author of *Mam* alludes to the hanging of Franciscans (and others) on Tyburn Hill in 1402 for spreading earcoes — judged as treason — that Richard II was still alive. See also a possible allusion to this event in *Upland's Rejoinder*, lines 271–72, in 6ES. For critical and historical commentary, see McNiven, *Heresy and Politics in the Reign of Henry IV*, pp. 95–97, and the *Eulogium historiarum* (monastic prose chronicle), ed. F. Haydon, 3.393 (under the year 1402), and *Chronica et annales*, ed. H. T. Riley, pp. 340 (one Franciscan executed for proclaiming that Richard II lives) and 341 (eight Franciscans executed for treason, exact reason unstated). The story is also told by E. F. Jacob, *The Fifteenth Century*, pp. 27–29 (drawing heavily on the *Eulogium*).
- 420a *Patere . . . naleriz.* The MS is torn at this point and D&S have reconstructed from . . . egen quod . . . eris. This line in the Vernon Little Cato is translated as follows:

Suche lawe as þou hast broȝt
And haunȝt hast bi-fore
þou most hit mekely suffre,
ffor winnyng or for lone.

Lines 93–96, in *The Minor Poems of the Vernon Manuscript*, Part II, ed. F. J. Furnivall, EETS o.s. 117 (London: Kegan Paul, 1901), p. 560. B places the

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quotation after line 422, although the mark for insertion follows line 420. The quotation is not from Seneca but from *Mosætichus* of Cato.

- 426-27 *They goon . . . softe woffe.* An issue that arose with respect to mendicant poverty was whether friars should wear shoes. *PPCr* (lines 298-300) portrays friars as favoring shoes despite the rule against them:

Fraunces bad his beþteren barfote to wenden.
Now han thes buckled shoen for bliswynghe of her heles.
And hosen in harsc moder, yhamled by the ankle.
go
*buckled shoen; surys on
cat short at*

- ⁴³⁰ *staves for... stick.* Because the Franciscan rule forbids friars to accept money, they handled money with a stick.

- 471 by obedience of th' ord're. This phrase, like so much else in this passage, is highly ironic. The mendicants are indeed supposed to submit to the discipline of their order — they take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience — but in this case their obedience is more like indulgence: they are ordered to accept money (with a stick) and to beg for cash in specific limited districts. See note to line 440.

- 436-37 *They costen . . . parcell-evele.* The Provincial Chapter meetings included the parceling out of begging districts called "limitaciōn" (see line 438). Those so licensed to beg in a district were termed, like Chaucer's Friar Huberd, "limitour[s]" (line 440). Friar Huberd was "the besite beggere in his hōus" (General Prologue 1 [A]252), which means that he contrived the greatest income.

- ⁴⁴⁰ *Levitor.* A limiter was assigned to a particular area and was licensed to beg within it. See also the note to lines 436-37 above.

- 451 *frere be fatt.* One of the persistent charges against friars in anti-friarist literature was that they pampered themselves and were overfed. The narrator of *PPCr*, for example, comes upon a huge, grotesque Dominican in the convent's refectory, "A greet cherl and a grym, growen as a tonne [barrel], / With a face as fat as a full bladder / Blowne bretfull of beoth . . ." (lines 221–23). Chaucer's friar, "a wanlowne and a merye," fills his "double worstede . . . seymycope" as "rounded as a beffe out of a press," he is so fat (General Prologue I [A] 210ff., 262–63).

- 454 *But that . . . hevene.* A corrector adds in the right-hand margin: "ne to noo creature
but can ony reason" (S2).

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- 456 *balle his heede*. So MS; D&S, B: *balle fæstf his /browe/*, with the notation "MS omits." A corrector suggests "lanc ball with his browe" (Sr). The question posed in lines 455–56 is, "What use is it to beg from a beggar unless you would break hard stones by smashing your head against them?"
- 461–65 *Thorough crafte . . . guylor the poure*. D&S paraphrase these lines: "They aim at controlling the great by means of the sacrament of penance" (p. 40).
- 468 *forsythe*. So D&S, B: *{for}f sothe*; MS: *sothe*.
- 469a *Honora dominum*. From Proverbs 3.9.
- 473 *sause*. Friars should receive, that is, a "piquant accompaniment" (D&S, p. 157) with their food — namely, a lecture on truth telling. The condiment metaphor continues in line 479 with the word "spicerie."
- 475 *simony*. Simony was the practice of selling church pardons, offices, and benefits, widely regarded as corrupt among Wycliffites, Lollards, and reformists generally. It takes its name from Simon Magus, who attempted to purchase with money the power of God dispensed through the Apostles' hands (Acts 8.18–19).
- 481 *Covetise . . . the grewe*. Covetousness here is depicted as a knight — "Sire Covetise" — who has the better of another knight in a jousting tournament. The other knight is overcome with greed. Lines 481–86 chronicle the spread of Covetousness into Westminster, council chambers, and the courts.
- 482 *worseth at Westmynstre*. A corrector or editor adds in the margin: "At shire and at sessions thaire shoon bay appere" (Sr).
- 483 *while the croise walketh*. The "croise" refers to the back of a coin, hence a figure for covetousness, with wordplay on the Veneration of the Cross at the Good Friday ceremony mentioned in PPB 18.428, "And crepēþ to þe crōs on knees, and kisēþ it for a iuwel." Compare C 20.474. Here the "croise" walks in procession, as money goes from hand to hand.
- 485 *mayntenanc*. See above, note to line 27.

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- 487 *toques*. The "token" in case is a piece of truth from the non-fraternal or anti-mendicant perspective; the wonder is that "holy" people such as the friars have not yielded even one martyr in more than a century (according to the narrator).
- 490 *sever*. So D&S, B based on "the conventional number for such formulae"; MS: *vij*. "Note the play on the words 'Confessors' and 'Martyrs' — two of the classes of saints in the Liturgy" (D&S, p. 115).
- 491 *shay*. So D&S, B based on a corrector; MS omits.
- 492 *in no*. So D&S, B. "[in no]: MS: *not* with a space after it; crossed out by original scribe and *in no* added above line by M" (D&S, p. 41).
- 493–98 of Caym thaire werke . . . clerc tolde. In antifraternal literature the friars were compared both with Antichrist and with Cain (who was one of the first two "brothers" and the first fratricide). Piers in *PPCr* testifies that friars are "Of the kynrede of Caym" (line 486); and in *Jack Upland* they are said to be "Caymes castel-makers" (and see *Friar Daw's Reply*, line 105). In 6ES, pp. 122 and 153, Cain was said to be the founder of mendicant orders:

It semes sothe that men sayne of haue them
In many dyvers londe.
That that caytyfe cursed Cayme
First this ordre fonde.

See *MEPW*, p. 50. Cain appears thematically as an evil principle in *PP*. For critical discussions of Cain in this literature, see Penn Scottia, *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 163–64, 229–30 and *WGO*, pp. 120–25; 205–12.

- 494 *fundre of alle the fourre ordres*. The issue of the origins of the fraternal orders vis-à-vis the historical church was important to the mendicants and their critics alike. Christ never authorized the mendicant orders; and they were not part of the apostolic church either. Wyclif and writers in the *PP* tradition returned to this question often. Each of the friars questioned by the narrator of *PPCr* tries to claim primacy for his order. The Franciscan says that "we Measures most scheweth / The pure Apostells life," while the Dominican claims "our foundement was first of the otheres" (lines 103–04; 250). The Austin friar traces his order's founding back to "Paul, primus heremite" (line 308), while the Carmelite boasts "we Karmes first

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comen / Even in Elyes tyme, fist of hem all" (lines 382-83). Antifraternal writers trace the origins back even further — to the first brother-slayer and constructor of the city of man.

- 496 *Armacanes*. Richard FitzRalph, Archbishop of Armagh, and scourge of friars in well-known sermons preached at St. Paul's Cross in 1357. For FitzRalph's influence on the anti-mendicant literature of the later fourteenth century, see Penn R. Scitka, *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), chapter 3: "The Antifraternal Ecclesiology of Archbishop Richard FitzRalph," pp. 123-54.

- 499 *this wordē . . . n̄t*. The *wordē* mentioned signifies *Caym*, *n̄t* refers to the abbreviation mark (a macron) over the *y* in the name *Caym*; that is, the name "Caym" must be written out in full to include the four letters that signify the four orders. See note to line 500.

- 500 *four letters*. These four letters — C, A, I, and M — in the form of an acrostic was a favorite with late medieval English antifraternal writers. D&S trace the derivation to Wyclif's *Dialogues* 4.33. In *Preste, Ne Monke, Ne Tir Chonour* appears the following lines:

Nou se the sothe whedre it be swa,
That ther Carres come of a k.
The frer Austynes come of a,
Frer Iacolynnes of i,
Of M comen the frer Mensours.
Thus grounded Caym ther four ordours,
That filleth the world ful of errors
And of ypcracy. (lines 109-16)

Now observe, truly whether

- In *MEPW*, p. 59; see note to line 110 on p. 100.
- 505 A corrector or editor adds at the bottom of fol. 6a: "Hit shal not greue a good frere though gilty be assendid" (Sc).
- 514 *in juster*. So D&S. B-based on a corrector (who reads *roures*); MS: justice.
- 520a-b The first quotation is from the hymn "Placare Christi servis" for the Vesper of All Saints. The quotation beginning *Delecastar de libro vivenciam* is Psalm 68.29.

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- 535 A corrector or editor adds next to this line:
- Vit gesse I þat good men of grey and of blake
And of þe white witerly I wote wel been many
But das conuent þe compaignie as my credo secheth
Cunne mo crokis / þas crist ever taught.
- 536 *Therse passid I.* The narrator turns away from the friars and looks for help among the monastic houses; but he receives as little help from the monks as he did from the friars. He cannot even enter the monastery (line 552).
- 544 *fundacion* of. So MS. D&S; *fundacion* of. B; *fundacion* at.
- 544–45 *For . . . serve.* Although the syntax is difficult, the meaning seems to be: "For the founders intended the founding [of the monastic houses] to be established for God's men, though it serves the powerful."
- 545a *Munisement . . . in cupiditatem.* Although the attribution to Sapientia would suggest that the quotation is from the Book of Wisdom, it is from some other source.
- 549 *ysepid.* So D&S, B; MS. *y sepid*.
- 555 *plurality.* Pluralum was the holding of more than one benefice with the cure of souls. Pluralism, a widespread practice that led to absentee benefice-holders, was forbidden by Lateran IV and other decrees.
- 560 *cracche.* So D&S and B (based on a corrector); MS: *racke*, which does not alliterate. *Cracche* can mean horse's manger. Both *cracche* and *manger* in this line seem to refer to the choir's food provisions.
- 566 The offering at Mass and tithes were to be distributed to the support of the parish priest, to the upkeep of the church, and to the poor.
- 566–69 *And n' addle . . . atte leste.* D&S, glossing Belial, suggest a possible paraphrase for these lines: "Having given nothing to the poor, they travel with money in their purses. Hence (though they may be blamed by Christ), they will never be blamed by the devil [Belial]" (p. 116).
- 567 *purses.* So MS; D&S, B: *purses /botame/* based on a corrector.

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- 569a A corrector has added *Matthei /o/* capitals: Matthew 10.9 reads "Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses."
- 588 *char.* So B; MS, D&S: *air*, which may be anticipation of the *air* in line 589. The syntax of the lines in this section is difficult, but the meaning is clearly that God approves the narrator's course of action and sends him safe-conduct through the dangerous political climate in which he finds himself. God does not want the narrator to alter his current course of action (lines 587-88).
- 589 *But showe . . . after.* My translation is very provisional. A corrector adds at the bottom of fol. 7a, for insertion after this line, "the high maker of molde and man with his handes" (Sz). The corrector apparently wants to gloss *souvraye*; according to this explanation, God would seem to want the narrator to maintain his course of action and not seek shelter in some figment of his "wittes."
- 594 *ballid.* So MS, B; D&S: *belvid.* B suggests that "the sounds of men and bells clashing together . . . belittle[s] the institutionalised services of the established church" (p. 319).
- 603 *plummres.* So D&S and B based on a corrector; MS: *notes.*
- 604 An expander writes, at the bottom of fol. 7b, for inclusion after this line (Sz):
*of lyke and of lynne seede of lambes and egges
of coltes and of calues / bat þe cow lycketh
of bernes and of boutre / bat bele doo make*
- 610 *what-ro.* So D&S, B; MS: *an.* A corrector suggests "or what so ye wynne."
- 621 *leve.* So D&S, B; *lone.* Sz: *leue* but with the notation "almost looks like *lone*."
- 623 An expander adds "To hire of þair holy nesse for harvest is sake" (Sz).
- 637 According to the MED, a *laiclate* as a term of abuse means "?an unlearned priest who knows only these two, most frequently recited, Psalms." See also below lines 1358-59.
- 639 *derve.* So D&S, B; *derne.* Sz: *derne* but with the notation *derne?*

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- 641 ever. So D&S, B based on a corrector. MS: were. Since the narrator has been emphasizing the martyrs' love of God as opposed to instruction, ever makes best sense.
- 644-50 *Ne by . . . asen*. The rhetorical device of repeating the first word(s) of verse lines was known as anaphora. The Mum-poet uses this technique to good effect in these lines, contrasting the clerks of former days with their modern-day counterparts.
- 647 *double deev*. "Daises above the ordinary height" (D&S, p. 118), hence another indication of modern-day clerical arrogance.
- 655 *litb*. So D&S, B. MS: light.
- 666 *two dooles*. Both portions; that for the poor and that for the church.
- 685 *As*, MS: *ar*; D&S, B emend to *And*.
- 692 *Til he . . . drive*, "i.e., which is going to be the popular side" (D&S, p. 118).
- 694 *And geth . . . beste*. D&S translate: "And gets for himself a great reward, which may be accounted among the best" (p. 119).
- 707-08 *prefest . . . do there*. Bishops in their clerical role were not permitted to take part in death sentences; hence they would have to leave Parliament during such discussions.
- 713a *Sic laetus . . . opera nostra bona etc.* From Matthew 5:16.
- 719 *never*. Sz, noting that this word is in darker ink, asks "later?"
- 720 *a-twart*. MS: *tw* and a space afterwards. So D&S, B based on a corrector.
- 745 *qui . . . violetar*. Underlined in red (Sz).
- 752-57 *If a freeke . . . newe lawe*. In felony trials the accused was compelled to state how he would be tried after a plea of not guilty. He was supposed to respond, "By God and my country" in order for the trial to proceed. If he said nothing — if he "stoed mute" — a jury had to decide whether he was deliberately trying to forestall the trial process or whether he was deaf or dumb. Mum's citing this precedent is ironic and

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self-condemnatory, since the prisoner's silence is taken for guilt unless he is physically unable to hear or speak; in this legal situation it is better to be a truth teller than mum.

- 761–62 *That lightly . . . caste for hit.* "Which (quarrels) the Church might easily have prevented by its action, if it had devised wise counsel against the occasion" (D&S, p. 120).
- 775 *Lucas.* B explains MS *lucus* as "a common name which fits the alliteration," while D&S gloss it, tentatively, as "?? 'luck-ace,' luckless person," since ace is "the lowest throw of the dice." MS reads *yf an othir* rather than *for an othir*, D&S's emendation accepted by B.
- 792 *To bacheliers, to bumeretts, to barons and erles.* Bachelor knights and knights banneret define the two grades of knighthood, the second — the banner-bearing knights — being of a higher rank. Barons and earls, then princes and peers (line 793), complete the progression toward lofty, worldly establishment.
- 796 *sotheseggerz.* So D&S, B. MS: *sothe ragger*.
- 798 *yer.* So D&S, B. MS: *ee.*
- 803 *al . . . lyvraye.* A reference to identifying uniforms and often badges worn by private armies in the service of magnates. Parliament tried to check the abuses associated with such activities with the Statute of Livery and Maintenance in 1390. See *RiR* II.2 and note; see also Paul Strohm, Appendix 2: "The Literature of Livery," in *Hochzon's Arrow: The Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 179–85.
- 820 *pere-is gife.* Refers to gifts bestowed either at New Year's (see *PP* B X.47; A XI.34) or at the beginning of a term of office (*PP* B III.100; A III.92).
- 824 *sergeantz.* So D&S, B based on a correction; MS: *a sergeant* (but *a* crossed out and *z* added to *sergeant*). The same pluralization of MS *sergeant* occurs in line 833.
- 837–40 "*the Sothesegger . . . sache frondes.*" Following D&S and B, I place these words in quotation marks as direct speech rather than reported speech, but it might be reported speech.

Notes

- 647a *Besti . . . propter iusticiam.* Matthew 5.10.
- 865 *a heape.* D&S and B spell this *a-heape* and gloss it "in a crowd" (D&S, p. 133), and "a-plenty" (B, p. 168). I suggest "a heap of other common fellows."
- 875 *Catoe . . . boles.* Cato's *Disticha* 2.31 — *Sonnia ne cures* — paraphrased by Pertelote in Chaucer's The Nun's Priest's Tale as "Ne do no fers of dremes" (VII [B¹]2941); pay no heed to dreams. A Middle English translation of 2.31 reads: "On dremes, son thynke þou not lang, / Bot also þai corn, so lat þain gange, / & pas out of þi mynd" (lines 448–50 in Sarah M. Horrell's edition, "Christian Cato: A Middle English Translation of the disticha Catonis," *Florilegium* 3 [1981], 176).
- 928 *bareysshif.* Refers to the antlers, which have been scraped clean of velvet.
- 935 *ne so hevenely.* So MS; D&S, B: *ne so hevenely [soone]*.
- 939 *cheerly.* So D&S, B; MS: *cleerly*, which spoils the alliteration on *ch*.
- 946 *freholde.* An estate held in fee simple or owned outright for the term of one's life.
- 954 *a sage.* Here begins a long sequence within the narrator's dream on a beekeeper who is also a gardener. This wise man, himself a truth teller, explains that the Sothsegger may be located "Yn manas herre" (line 1224); "And mynde," he adds, "is his mansion that made alle th'estees" or rooms (line 1225). The beekeeper sequence concludes at line 1287, when the narrator awakens.
- 959 *newe.* So D&S, B; MS: *sene*.
- 976 *garth.* So D&S; MS, B: *gate*, which B glosses as "plot of land" or "furrow" or "track to the ploughed" (p. 336). She points out that the beekeeper also "digs" and "delves" in the land (as in line 977). As gardener the beekeeper anticipates the Gardener of Shakespeare's *Richard II*, who roots out "The noisome weeds which without profit suck / The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers" (3.4.38–39) — as Richard II should have done from his commonwealth.
- 978 *leyghtone.* See MED s.v. *leigh-ton*, "A garden; esp. a kitchen garden, herb-garden." The word derives from the Old English word for "leek-enclosure," *leac-* or *leah-tan*.

- 982 *doon worse*. To "do worst" is the polar opposite of the social and spiritual idea in *PP* — to "do best." The drones not only undermine the common profit, they also subvert the spiritual enterprise — "the deved hym quelle," says the gardener. Later on the gardener speaks of Lucifer, sower of poisonous weeds (heretics and schismatics), who fears "forto do wel" (line 1170), a reversal of the dreamer's quest in *PP*. Mum's servant, Antichrist's angel and a "muche shrewe," lurks at truth's door to debate "eche day with Do-welle withynne" (lines 1254, 1258). The gardener finally identifies composing a work on truth-telling as the best he can do: "thou mayst do no better" (line 1278).
- 987a *Qui . . . mandacer*. The quotation from St. Bernard derives from 2 Thessalonians 3.10: "if any man will not work, neither let him eat." In *Speculum Christianorum: A Middle English Religious Treatise of the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Gustaf Holmstedt (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), pp. 64, 65 this is attributed to *Apostolus* and is translated into Middle English as "He that travels [works] not, lete hym not ete" (p. 64). The idea is picked up in *PP* B.7, where Hunger helps Piens keep people employed.
- 1001 *the boke*. Refers to *De proprietatibus rerum* of Bartholomaeus Anglicus, thirteenth-century Franciscan writer, whom the beekeeper cites at lines 1028 and 1054 ("Bartholomeus the Bestiary"). The *De proprietatibus rerum* is an encyclopedic work on such subjects as theology, philosophy, botany, and zoology, including the bee lore that found its way into Mum. See *On the Properties of Things: John Trevoria's Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus de proprietatibus rerum, a critical text*, ed. M. C. Seymour, et al. 2 vols (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975).
- 1006 *eope*. So D&S, B (suggested by a corrector); MS: *erke*.
- 1011 *wylynnse*. So D&S, B: /wyf-/lynnse; MS: *bylynne*.
- 1026 *Thay*. So D&S, B; MS: *That*.
- 1030 *Iydene*. So D&S, B; MS: *Iydene*.
- 1044 *drene . . . hym*. So MS, B; D&S: *drene/s/ . . . baym*.
- 1045 *in thaire wide . . . hide*. The point is that the drones have eaten them.

Notes

- 1048a *Quoram . . . confusione.* Philippians 3.19. "Could presumably go after 1046 (so D&S) though positioned at 1048 in marg." (Sz). I have followed Sz's suggestion for positioning after line 1048.
- 1054 *Bartholomew the Bestiary* sounds like a title or designation for *De proprietatibus rerum*, but that work contains much more than a bestiary. The designation or title does appear in other writings. See Klaus Bitterling, "Mun and the Sothebiger und Bartholomeus Anglicus," *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literatur* 216 (1979), 345–56.
- 1062 *shal.* So D&S (based on a corrector), B; MS: *shald*.
- 1089 *hir is to mislike.* The authors of both *RiR* and *Muw* include these built-in disclaimers about their allegorical sections. See *RiR* "derkliche entited," I.20, and note, and III.63.
- 1115 *of.* So D&S, B; MS: *ffor of*.
- 1117 *more and mouldre.* The expression seems to mean that Lucifer is the origin and exemplar of evil deeds. B emends the phrase to *more. [e]f mouldre*.
- 1117–21 There is a large oval hole in the manuscript at these lines, but the scribe has worked the lines around on both sides of it, as he did on the verso side of fol. 13 at lines 1163–65.
- 1118–28 *And principally . . . trouble.* D&S paraphrase these lines: "This I can prove by what happens in Parliament, where the knights of the shire should speak out boldly their complaints, lest they fester as an abcess within their hearts and break out in rebellion" (p. 59).
- 1140a *Qui potest . . . peccati.* The side-note identifies the quotation as from "Sidrac" but it does not appear in the common extant Sidrac collections (D&S, p. 123).
- 1147 *solve ere they ringe.* That is, they would perform complicated musical exercises before they knew how to sing at all. The word *solve* here is the same as modern *solfège* or *solfege*: "vocal exercises sung to a vowel (a, o, u) or the syllables of solmization (ut [doo], re, mi, etc.), which are used instead of a text" (Willi Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. [Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1972], p. 785).

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- 1159 *sowe . . . seede.* This line (with a glance back to "grounde" and "graffe" in the previous line) inaugurates an extended yet very familiar metaphor about the devil and his "crop," namely weeds (tares). The language is drawn from Christ's parables, especially the parable of the sower (Matthew 13). See also line 1165a and note.
- 1164 *Aher . . . hoke.* The devil and Christ were both cast as fishers of men in Christian art and iconography. Christ said to Peter and other disciples, who were fishermen, that he would make "fishers of men" (Matthew 4.19, Mark 1.17). The devil would try to hook humans and snare them into hell, but Christ would trap the trapper and rescue souls from the great serpent or whale.
- 1165a *Seminator . . . diabolii.* Heretics were said to be *zizanioria*, darnels or cockle — noxious weeds growing up among the orthodox wheat (Matthew 13.25). See, for example, the language of Pope Gregory XI's condemnation of John Wyclif in his Bull directed to Oxford University: "you through a certain sloth and neglect allow tares to spring up amidst the pure wheat in the fields of your glorious University" (as quoted in Jeanne Krochalis and Edward Peters, eds., *The World of Piers Plowman* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975], p. 128). The Bull is recorded in the great collection of anti-Lollard texts known as *Fasciculi zizaniorum* in the Rolls Series. The Host of the *Canterbury Tales* takes exception to the Parson's condemnation of his oaths by saying "I smelle a Lollere in the wynd" and "He wolde sowen som difficulte / Or springen cokkel in our clene corn" (Epilogue of The Man of Law's Tale, II[B']1173, 1182-83). Gower uses the same metaphor in his discussion of Christianity in Book 5.1874-87 ("To sowe cokkel with the corn," line 1881) and in his Latin verse treatise on the evils of Richard's time ("Carmen super multiplici viciorum pestilencia") he exploits the coincidence of the word Lollard and the Latin for "darnel," *lollia* (line 29). He also speaks of the Lollards as spreading their bad seed among the sacred fields: "Semina perfida sacra dispersa per agros" (line 22). See *The Complete Works of John Gower*, ed. G. C. Macaulay (Oxford: Clarendon, 1902), 4: 347, 346. For a brief discussion of the linguistic history of *lolla* in a context of English heresy, see Strohm, *England's Empty Throne*, p. 37.
- 1173 *the contrary.* So D&S, B (based on a corrector); MS: *be contrary*.
- 1179 An expander has prepared for insertion after this line this declaration: "Baris consultus / Ciceris debet homo omnia mala pati quam malo consentire" (Sz), or "A man versed in law ought rather to suffer every ill than consent to evil."

Notes

- 1207 *quittance . . . been ap.* A quittance is a release from debt or receipt. When there are no more quarrels — no more struggle between evil and good, Lucifer and Christ, and no more "novellerie that noyeth men ofte" (line 1208) — then the ones who have done well will have their reward in heaven. The language in this section is reminiscent of the famous pardon scene from *PP* passus VII. For a good introduction to the theological implications of this theme, see James Simpson, *Piers Plowman: An Introduction to the B-Text* (London: Longman, 1990), pp. 75–87.
- 1215 *thow.* So D&S, B (based on a corrector); MS: *do.*
- 1216 *reasonable.* So D&S; MS, B: *reasonable.*
- 1223 *ther.* D&S, B: *the;* MS: *ayw.*
- 1225a *In corde . . . veritatis.* The thought is a medieval commonplace. D&S, p. 123, direct to Proverbs 14.33 ("In the heart of the prudent resteth wisdom") and to *PP*: "Thow shalt see in þiseler Treuge sime in þyn herte" (B V.606).
- 1226 *froffed hym.* The metaphoric language is legal, with God depicted as a feudal lord bestowing on Adam and his issue (his successors) possession of the earthly Paradise "and hevene afterwardes" (line 1230) as their inheritance as a reward for following truth, which the gardener/bookkeeper here equates with truth telling or soothsaying.
- 1235 *Noe-is dayes.* According to Matthew 24.37, earthly conditions were similar to the last days before Christ's Second Coming.
- 1236 *while mynster . . . sale.* That is, while bishoprics are up for the highest bidder, a reference to the scandal of simony in the Church. See above, note to line 475.
- 1238a *Qui non intrat . . . latro.* Based on John 10.1.
- 1247 *And he is.* MS: *And is.*
- 1303 *hit.* So D&S (based on a corrector); MS, B: *he.*
- 1309–33 *swevenes.* The author grounds the truth of his dream-vision in spiritual revelations such as Daniel's regarding Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon and Joseph's of his rise to prominence over his older brothers and the years of feast and famine. Medieval literary writings often include discussions of the meaning and truth-claims of

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dreams. Chaucer features such discussions in the *House of Fame* and in Chauntecleer and Pertelote's quarrel in The Nun's Priest's Tale. Pertelote, who cites Cato's "Ne do no fors of dremes" (VII [B²]2941), sees dreams as insignificant. Chauntecleer, who champions dreams as revelations of truth, turns out to be correct in this fiction. In Mum the dream and the gardener's advice in it license the author to compose his narrative.

- 1336 *Foro . . . I passe.* So D&S, B (based on a scribal expander); MS omits. A line like this is needed to lead into line 1337.
- 1343-75 *Now forto . . . deedes proveth.* For a discussion of the implications of the various documents the author of Mum brings forward in these lines — "the disruptive potential of literacy itself" — see Richard Firth Green, *A Crisis of Trust: Literature and Law in Ricardian England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 280-81. He concludes: "The material solidity of his actual documents, reminiscent of the reassuringly solid weds [symbolic tokens] of the old trothplight, supplies an ironic counterpoint to this depiction of universal faithlessness" (p. 281).
- 1343-47 *Now forto conseille . . . half'wisdre.* The author in these lines stresses the perils of trying to relate true aspects of good government to a sovereign and his court. As he characterizes the situation, the relevant writings have existed in unopened boxes and bags which he now intends to bring to light.
- 1353 *There is . . . leves.* The bishop or archdeacon would visit dioceses or parishes and record what he found in a book. But sometimes, according to the narrator, the bishop would accept bribes in return for not setting down abuses ("prestes been ypassid over," line 1354), such as a priest's abandoning his parish to go to London and live a life of ease and luxury in the court of a nobleman (line 1356). Chaucer's narrator praises the Parson for staying at home, with his parish, and not running off to London and St. Paul's.
- 1354 *prestes.* D&S, B: *prestis.*
- 1357 *ille for ille.* This phrase was used to translate Exodus 21.25, *livorem pro fratre*, "stripe for stripe" (Rheims). The charge here is that priests are engaging in sexual hanky-panky with uneducated, uncaring sluts rather than tending to their home congregations — and, worse, the archdeacon is turning a deaf ear to it.

Alw. So D&S and B, based on a reading suggested by a corrector. MS: *right.*

Notes

- 1360 *Pernelle*. See *R/R* III.156 and note.
- 1373 *Poperyng*. So D&S, B (based on a corrector); MS: *Propering*. "Palfreys" were fine riding horses. Chaucer's pilgrim Monk rides a palfrey (General Prologue 1[A]207).
- 1374-77 *And lernen . . . seye oþer*. "The higher clechy vie with the common people in immorality, as we see by their deeds. They justify themselves by arguments, declaring, in their own support, that all are the children of Adam, as is certain" (D&S, p. 126).
- 1377 *mar*. So D&S, B; MS: *may*.
- 1383a *Pe pastoribus*. From Jeremiah 23.1, which reads, "Woe to the pastors, that destroy and tear the sheep of my pasture, saith the Lord."
- 1404a *Ramores . . . haberi*. This is the first line of Cato's *Dinicks* 1.12, whose second verse was quoted at line 291a. A commentator in the margin says of this: "but cato is al contra, and his conseil bothe."
- 1414 *Changveys*. Or Genghis (Jenghiz) Khan (died 1227), Mongol conqueror. Mention of Genghis Khan in this line begins an exemplum on this great ruler drawn largely or entirely from chapter 24 of John Mandeville's *Travels* (the "chronicle" mentioned in line 1429), an immensely popular "travel book" composed in the mid-fourteenth century and quickly translated into many languages. Of the so-called *Tya Chae* — the "many statutes and ordinances" that Changuis or the "Grete Chase" ordained partly in order to test his subjects from the seven nations — Mandeville writes:
- After he [Changuis] commanded to the princypales of the vii. lynesages that ther scholde leuen and forsaken alle that ther hadde in godes and heritage and fro thensforth to holden hem payd of that that he wolde yewe hem of his grace. And ther diden so anon. After he commanded to the princypales of the vii. lynesages that every of hem scholde brysga his eldest sone before him and with here owne handes amyien of here hedes withouten taryenge. And anon his comandement was performed. (p. 162)

The point of the Genghis Khan exemplum is similar to that of the drone-squashing beekeeper of lines 954-1287: it is sometimes necessary to take harsh measures against those who would subvert the common profit. For a description and account of the manuscripts and bibliographical references to Mandeville's *Travels*, see Christian K. Zacher, *Curiosity and Pilgrimage: The Literature of Discovery in*

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Fourteenth-Century England (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), chapter 6; and Zacher, "Travel Literature," in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, Vol. 7, pp. 2239–41, 2452–57.

- 1420a *Omne . . . de solabiner.* Luke 11.17; Matthew 12.25. This quotation is a favorite with political and theological writers. See, e.g., *RiR* II.52 and Dante's *De monarchia* 1.5. Gower in the Prologue to *Confessio Amantis* establishes division — in the human psyche and in the political world — as the cause of the world's decline from earlier times. He especially focuses on the Schism and Lollardy. See *WGO*, chapter 6, esp. pp. 250–55.
- 1424 *principalz.* So B; MS, D&S: *principal*. *Principal* should agree in number with "souvrayns" of line 1422.
- 1425 *in vision.* So D&S, B (based on a corrector); MS: *by nightes*.
- 1437 *sese hym in hire lande.* So D&S, B (based on a corrector); MS: *þaym in his handes*.
- 1446 *people.* So D&S, B; MS: *plesple*.
- 1448 *whenne he.* So D&S, B; MS omits.
- 1470 *sayl.* So D&S, B (based on a corrector); MS: *tale*.
- 1472 *hond.* MS: *hoode*, stricken, with *hond* in right margin. D&S amend to *{honde}*. Perhaps no emendation is necessary in that *hoode* makes sense.
- 1482a *Potencioribus . . . non possemus.* B, p. 356, directs to Ecclesiasticus 8.1, "Non litiges cum homine potente, ne forte incidas in manus illius" ("Strive not with a powerful man, lest thou fall into his hands"). The MS is torn away here; I follow Sz's reconstruction, which is based on D&S. B reads *Potencioribus pares non esse non possumus. Sapientia*.
- 1483 *fabling.* So D&S, B (based on a corrector); MS: *babling*.
- 1503 *menē.* So D&S, B; MS: *more*.

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- 1504–11 *For whensse . . . or elles.* D&S paraphrase these lines: "Even in a trifling matter, they will waste their estates in legal proceedings. Their neighbors will be involved, because a friend will believe in and help his friend's cause" (p. 70).
- 1505 *herrz.* So D&S, B (based on a corrector); MS: *herg.*
- 1513 *breggardele.* An Old English word for want, loss, or things connected with these (coin-cloth, for example), from *brec-gordle*. See MED s.v. *breach-girdel* (n.)2. The idea in these lines 1513–14 seems to be that one may safely venture into water (that is, enter into arguments with powerful men) to a certain point — the *breggardele* — but venturing farther may result in being over one's head.
- 1514a *Ira . . . amorem,* from Cato's *Disticha* 1.36. The Vernon MS English version of this line reads, "Wraþþe godereþ gret hate, / Loue norisacheþ saȝtyng [reconciliation]."
- 1515 *I.* So D&S, B; MS omits.
- 1523 *And.* So D&S, B; MS: *A.*
- 1524 *exchesid.* So D&S, B; MS: *so thewid.*
- 1528 *wilfe and.* So D&S, B (based on a corrector); MS omits *and.*
- 1530a *Ira . . . ac corporis.* Paraphrasing Ecclesiastes 7.10, "ne velox sis ad irascendum quia ira in sinu stulti requiescit" ("Be not quickly angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of a fool"). The book of Ecclesiastes was attributed to Solomon in the Middle Ages. Parts of this left-hand marginal quotation are "torn away." "Less appears legible now" (S2).
- 1534 *hande.* So MS, B; D&S errand to *lende* but mar the alliteration in so doing. The general idea, as D&S suggest in a side margin, is that "It is foolish to waste money thus where nothing material is at stake" (p. 71).
- 1538a *Superbia . . . ad mortem.* B, p. 358, cites Ecclesiasticus 10.5: "for pride is the beginning of all sin: he that holdeth it, shall be filled with maledictions, and it shall ruin him in the end." The notion that *radix malorum est cupiditas* (money is the root of all evil, 1 Timothy 6.10) was a medieval commonplace, providing the theme for Chaucer's Pardoner's Tale.

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- 1545 *arretned.* So D&S, B; MS: *settē*, perhaps in anticipation of "ysette" in line 1546.
- 1547 *people.* So D&S, B; MS: *plesple.*
- 1557–58 *For yf . . . shew hant.* D&S paraphrase these lines: "If you stop before you are defeated, then the report will be spread concerning you that, unless your story is a good one, you will refuse to go to law" (p. 128).
- 1563 *more.* So B; MS, D&S: *more.* More meaning discussion, debate, issue, or case in law (OE *mot*, *woof*) has been used in lines 278 and 1138. See also "motyng" (litigation), in line 1566.
- 1565 *raggetmar role.* A legal document, with ragged edges, containing accusations. The term "rigmarole" or "rigmaruole" derives from the alleged petty legalisms of these rolled-up parchment documents.
- Ragenevile* is the name of a devil or demon.
- 1568 *Hockerope.* D&S explain: "Hock-tide is the Monday and Tuesday following the second Sunday after Easter. 'On Hock-Monday, the women "hocked" the men; that is to say, they went abroad with ropes, caught and bound any man they came across, and exacted a forfeit. On Hock-Tuesday, the men retaliated in similar fashion upon the women. Bishop Carpenter of Worcester forbade this practice in his diocese in 1450.' (Sir E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, i.155, q.v. for further descriptions of Hock-tide customs.) The description here, however, more resembles a tug-of-war" (p. 129).
- 1569–73 *To the strong . . . there comow.* The syntax of these lines is difficult, and scribes and modern editors have been busy trying to sort out their complexities. The sense of the lines is that legal wranglings and tug-of-war — rigmaroles — develop in district courts of assize such that householders, because of the intimate connections between money and property (line 1571), lose their dwellings: "they dine no longer in their houses" (line 1573). D&S rearrange lines and phrases but without improvement of the sense. I have kept the words and lines as they appear in the MS.
- 1582 *goky.* This rare word means a fool or here specifically a hapless poor man at a great disadvantage when pitted against influential, powerful men in courts of law. In *PP* a goky is someone who commits errors in mass offices (see MED s.v. *goki* and the reference to *PP* B XI.299–300: "Be gone þat gloseth so chartres for a goky [vt.

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- gooky; C: goky; vr. gooky] is holden; So is it a goky, by god, þat in his gospel faileth, Or in masse or in matynes maketh any defaute.)
- 1585a *Masera . . . non accipies.* Adapted from Psalm 14.5: "he that hath not put out his money to usury, nor taken bribes against the innocent."
- 1587 *fleable.* So D&S, B (based on a corrector); MS: *people*.
- 1591 *strength.* So D&S, B (based on a corrector's *strength*); MS: *laue*, which is followed by a blank space. A corrector has emended MS *strenue* to *stature*.
- 1594–97 *For though . . . harie ever.* D&S paraphrase these lines as referring to the powerful: "For the great, if defeated once, will go on again without feeling any loss" (p. 73).
- 1595 *nonmaynes.* So D&S, B; MS: *notmayne*. Non-suits were suits that were never brought to conclusion, either because the plaintiff failed to proceed with his case or because he was unable to bring sufficient evidence.
- 1619 *Civile.* Civil Law is comprised of statutes created for the secular government and courts, based on the Roman Law.
- 1621 *Oriatir . . . Canon.* Canon Law is the officially established rules governing the faith and practices of Christians, formulated by and ratified in church councils. The narrator observes in line 1622 that the Bible is the basis for all law, civil and canon. D&S and B place a hyphen between *lawe* and *is*, but *is* is a verb not a possessive.
- 1623 A corrector has added next to this line a pithy quote from Pope Innocent III's *De miseria humanae conditionis*: "nulum malum impunitum. evangelium." That is, "No evil shall go unpunished (Gospel)."
- 1624 *my credo.* "My personal belief." The narrator brings inward resources to bear on issues of law that he knows intimately.
- 1626 *librarie of lordes.* "There is a collection of books concerning lords who infringe on the king's revenue" (D&S, p. 74).
- 1640 *th'olde . . . newe.* Because of encroachments on the king's revenues, the crown is deprived of both its regular sources of revenue ("th'olde") and the monies levied by Parliament ("the newe").

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- 1641 *Notwithstanding.* So D&S, B; MS: *Not wairtanding.*
- 1648–53 *Thees knyghtz . . . haifendeir and more.* These lines represent criticism of Henry's "temporal and spiritual lords who had got into their hands by grants or leases or other methods the endowed revenues of the crown" (E. F. Jacob, *The Fifteenth Century 1399–1455*), p. 79, citing B. P. Wolfe, "Acts of Resumption in the Lancastrian Parliaments," *English Historical Review* 73 (1958), 587).
- 1650 *ape . . . peple.* This phrase echoes the opening of the poem (as we have it). See note to line 1.
- 1660–62 The right-hand margin is torn away at these lines. I follow D&S's reconstruction of the words.
- 1664–68 *For nedis . . . long indare.* D&S paraphrase these lines in the margin: "The king must have money to support his household. It should come from his own estate, not from taxes, or the people will suffer" (p. 75).
- 1665 *haynous werres.* The MS is blank after *for his.* A corrector supplies "haynous werres."
- 1666 *oder.* The right-hand margin is torn away at this word and "bringge" in line 1667. I follow D&S's reconstruction of the words.
- 1670 *To you . . . tyme.* "To you who owe money it would then be time to pay up" (D&S, p. 130).
- 1671–82 *For trusteth . . . he have oughte.* The sense is: "For trust well, despite what men may say, twisting and turning twice in a week, calling clerics and others to the council and complaining at Parliament, unless it happens that the crown is brought back into the picture (?) — clear as it should (?), little by little as is required by law — then may we want and wish what we please, our profit and praise will be the less with knights and with the commons until the king has in his hands all [the revenues] that he should have."
- 1684 *Aark.* So D&S, B (based on a corrector); MS omits.
- 1687 *mairons deu.* "Houses of God," were hospitals. The complaint in lines 1683–88 is that some people make a great deal of money dishonestly and live lavishly but

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without giving any of their ill-gotten gains to the poor until the very end of their lives, when they donate money for the building of hospitals. The end of line 1687 is torn away in the MS; I follow D&S's reconstruction of them.

- 1697 *lise.* D&S and B needlessly extend to *[title].* "Little" designates a portion.
- 1702 *wordes.* This word and the last words of lines 1703–05 have been torn away in the MS. I follow D&S's reconstructions.
- 1704–05 *For though . . . never.* "Even if a whole fifteenth is bequeathed and a receipt given, the executors keep the donations for themselves" (B, p. 366).
- 1706–12 *Ne do nocht for . . . oare tale.* The left-hand margin is torn at these lines. I follow D&S's reconstructions.
- 1724 *mervailles that Merlyne dide devyse.* These refer to the many prophecies — retrospective predictions in verse — attributed to Merlin, the magician of King Arthur legends. See, for example, the three "Merlin" prophecies included in the section "Poems of Political Prophecy," in *MEPW*, pp. 9–10. For a discussion of Merlin prophecies and contemporary English politics, see Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne*, chapter 1 ("Prophecy and Kingship"), esp. pp. 6–9. For general information on the Merlin prophecies, see R. H. Robbins, "Poems on Contemporary Conditions: The Merlin Prophecies," in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, Vol. 5, pp. 1519–22; 1714–16.
- 1731–33 *on mone . . . rhaire worker.* Eckhardt interprets this as an allusion to the Percies, who wore a crescent moon on their badge. She adduces Adam Usk, who speaks of the "horns of the moon" meaning Hotspur and his uncle. See "Another Historical Allusion," p. 496.
- 1741 *ougkr.* So D&S, B (based on a corrector); MS: *shield*.
- 1746 *How . . .* The left-hand margin is torn away at this line and through line 1751. I follow D&S's reconstruction.

Glossary

aboughte about; round about	construen explain, explicate; interpret
afore before	coroune, crowne crown; the king
agayne, ageine again; against	co(u)the said (variant of quod)
al at; also	covetise greed, avarice
and and; if	cowde, caughthe, couthe could; might;
apeire damage, harm; grow weaker	know (how to)
asketh requires	Cristen Christian
atte at the	cumme learn; know
asen ask; require	cunning knowledge
ayen again	cunsell council; advice
bable, babblyng bubble; rum	dawe day; daws pl.
be by	dede (sb.) deed
berne man, person; also barne	dede (vb.) did (pl.)
bestes beasts, creatures	deme judge, think; weigh, estimate;
beth are	resolve
betyme, bityme soon; early	denyd judged, deemed
bbynys business; activity	double false, fraudulent, deceitful
borugh city; town	drede, dreede fear, dread; ase
bot bar	darste dare, dare to
bryddis, breddys, birds	
burne man, person; also berne, barne	echone, echson each-one; every one
but if unless	eite again
 	eke, eke also
caan case, situation; plight	ellis else; other
carpe speak	ese pleasure; luxury, ease
caste devise, contrive; devised;	eten eat
defeated, overthrown, abandoned	everich every
clepen call	everich a each
clepid called; named	
clergie learning, training, education	fables say, narrate, speak, talk
comounwe commonly; estate commons	fallen happen, occur; befall
conceill counsel, advice; wisdom	fayne glad; eager

Glossary

fedris feathers	ho-so whosoever; he who
fele many	hough how
fele, fell investigate, test; sound out	hundred hundred
felefold diverse, manifold	
fer, ferre far	ich each
ferkid went	ichanse each one
fondesth endeavors	iwis, ywis indeed, certainly
fondyd tried	
foote foolishness, folly	kenne know
for because	kinde, kynde nature
forte in order to	kindely naturally
fourth forth; fourth	kunne know; understand
freke, freeke man, person	
frere friar	lele loyal
frist first	leodis people, men
fre from	lesing lie, falsehood
gaderen gather, collect; pt. gadrid,	lette prevent, hinder; forbid
ygadered	lere permission, leave
gode, goode possessions, property;	leved lived
goods; also goodes	leved, lyved, lyved believed
gome man, person	leven live
gest, goast soul; spirit; mind	lewde ignorant; unlettered
grette nobility; the great, powerful	lewte loyalty
gruechen complain	-liche -ly
guonne did (helping verb)	liegis subjects, citizens
han have	list please (impersonal construction:
hele health	him list it pleases him; he wishes)
hem them	lite, litel, littill little; small portion
hende noble	lither evil, bad; inferior
her, here their	loigges lodges, chambers, loges, places
herte hart; heart	longid belonged
hervest autumn	lust pleasure; own will
hie, hy high	
hire hour	maniere manner; manner of, kind of
hit it	matiere matter
he who; whoever; he who	mede reward, payment; bribery; also
hole whole	medes
	meke weak; humble
	mekely humbly

Glossary

melle speak; thos mells you are speaking	of of, off
mellen concern themselves; interfere	off of
mete food, meal; dinner, banquet	ofte often; ful ofte very often
mette dressed	any any
meve, meuve bring forward, advance; say, articulate, state	anys, ones, ones once; at ones at once
meyny, meyné household, retinue	ee, een one; alone, solely
mo more	er before
moche much	other, outher other; or
molde earth; world; upon molde alive	out anything; ought
monaye money	owes owe
mony many	
mor man	parle speak; hold a conversation
most may	pees peace
mowe may	peple, people people; subjects
myssdeedes misdeeds	peté, pytē pity
mysschell misfortune	pleyne complain
myssedoer evil-doer; miscreant	pleynte complaint; legal pleading
mysserewle misrule; bad governance	pouaire power
n'ad, n'adde had not (ne + hadde)	poore, pover poor; poor man
nas was not (ne + was)	poyatz arguments; legal reasonings
ne not; nor; ne . . . ne neither . . . nor	prele pray, beg
nede need	prelere prayer
nempnes to name; identify	prevy manifest, proved; vigorous, lusty
ne . . . neither neither . . . nor	prevyly secretly; privately
nerc never	
solde would not (ne + woldē)	quod said; also cothe
sollē head; sollis (pl.)	
not do not know (ne + wot)	rancuse anger
oother nor; neither	rascalle, raskall young lewd deer; rabbit, riff-raff
naught nothing	ray, raye cloaking, array
nyce foolish	reche, reeche care, care for; favor
nyctē, nysetē foolishness, absurdity	rede advice; counsel; advise, give counsel
nygh near; nigh	regne reign; rule; regald ruled
nys it is not (ne + ys)	rennen to race
nyst did not know (ne + wist)	reson reason; common sense
	rewē play, rush
	rewme, royme realm, kingdom

Glossary

rewthe pity; shame

righth, **rith** right, justice; very

rith as . . . ryth se just as . . . just so

rith then just then; at that moment

royaume, royaume realm, kingdom

saff, sauf except

sale, seie say

sauf except; save

sawe speech, statement, saying

schappe style, fashion

schewe show; manifest, demonstrate

seche, sike seek

seie see

semblé gathering, assembly

semblid gathered, assembled

sewly assuredly

seyt seen

sicour faithful; sure, certain

sidis sides

sith, syth since

skynnes skins

sodeynly suddenly

soeth truth, truth

sonde dispensation; message; plan

soon soon

soot son

sothe, sooth truth; in sothe in truth;
indeed

soulide money; pay; fee

souvrain lord, king, sovereign

styff strong; stout; stynnesse

stynnen, stinten to stop, cease, halt

suem follow, pursue; imitate

suffre endure; suffer

sum some

swevese dream

swiche, swyche such

tales stories, sayings

teate intention, purpose

thaym them

thaymself themselves

thende the end

thenne than; then

ther where, there where

therafter afterward; in the future

thilke that; that same

the then

tho, thos those

thoru, thorough through; because of;
owing to

thoru-oute throughout

to to; too

togedyr together; also

tourne turn

trouthe truth; trutk, fidelity, loyalty

trouwe believe, think, deem

tweyne two; both

tyl to; until

usethe scarcely, barely

waite consider, ponder; attend; watch
out for

waxen to grow, to become

wede, wedis cloaking

wedir weather

well prosperity, weal

wesen believe, think

werchen, wirchen work, act, do

werk work; deed

werkis accomplishments, works

wete know

were grow

whane when

whedir whether

where where; were

Glossary

- wilne** wish, desire
wilnest wish
wirchen work, do
wisse advice, council
wissen to instruct, teach; advise
wite blame
witen to know
witte understanding, intelligence,
judgment
wolde would; wished, would wish;
required
wonen dwell, live
wones dwellings, homes
woo woe, misfortune; destruction
wyghte, wight, wy man, person;
creature; pl. *wies*
- y-** sign of past participle
yeris years
yif if
yit yet; as yet
yllyved believed
ynne in
ynnesse enough, sufficient; considerable
yonc young
yeoughthe youth
yn is
ywhi indeed, certainly