

# THE N-TOWN PLAYS

Edited by  
Douglas Sugano

with assistance by Victor I. Scherb



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## INTRODUCTION

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“N-Town’s spectators, whatever selection from the *compilatio* they were served with, could not have seen their world reflected as in a plane mirror, but playfully refracted into something rich and strange.”

— Alan Fletcher, “N-Town Plays,” p. 184.

In the late 1400s in eastern England, a scribe was in the process of compiling a large dramatic manuscript of over two hundred vellum folios. No one knows who compiled them nor where, why, or for whom this work was done — and we may never know. The sketchy history of the N-Town Plays, so named for the variable nature of its own Banns announcement, answers none of the above questions; in fact, the manuscript’s history and its scholarly treatment have created more questions. It is to some degree because of these vagaries that the N-Town Plays have received the least treatment of all of the four surviving major English play cycles, the others being York, Chester, and Towneley. Perhaps these vagaries explain recent scholars’ attraction to this set of plays and why the N-Town Plays will continue to provide a rich field for further study, as well as being a valuable entrée into the study of early English theater.

In treating the manuscript as an organized anthology or compilation of plays, not exactly like a play cycle, we hope that readers will see the N-Town Plays’ uniqueness in the British Isles and Western Europe. Even though this edition owes much to other editions such as to K. S. Block’s *Ludus Coventriae* and Stephen Spector’s *N-Town Play*, this Middle English Texts Series edition recognizes Peter Meredith’s lead in his separate editions of *The Passion Play* and *The Mary Play*, for they best reflect the eclectic and evolving nature of the N-Town manuscript. The manuscript contains components of an independent Mary Play, parts one and two of an independent Passion Play, and an independent Assumption of Mary Play, as well as ten play subjects that appear in no other English cycles — the killing of Lamech in the Noah Play (Play 4), the Root of Jesse (Play 7), the story of Joachim and Anne (Play 8), the Presentation of Mary in the Temple (Play 9), the Parliament of Heaven (Play 11), the Trial of Mary and Joseph (Play 14), the scene of Mary and the cherry tree in the Nativity Play (Play 15), the Death of Herod (Play 20), the scene of Veronica’s kerchief in the Procession to Calvary (Play 32), and the appearance of the risen Christ to the Virgin Mary in her Assumption Play (Play 41).<sup>1</sup> It is important to note the manuscript’s emphasis on Marian material, both in the inclusion of these subjects and in a later reviser’s work. This edition acknowledges the N-Town compiler who took plays from various contexts and integrated them into an existing cycle of plays, thus treating the manuscript as if it were a super-structure whose parts could be replaced, renovated, and supplemented without altering the

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<sup>1</sup> Coletti, “N-Town Plays.”

fundamental coherence of the overarching design. This general plan, memorialized in the heavily revised and inaccurate Banns, gives the N-Town plays a superficial resemblance to the York or Chester civic cycles. However, the N-Town manuscript is neither a civic register nor an antiquarian text that preserves an actual or intended performance. In fact, the N-Town manuscript was probably never played in its entirety as a Creation-to-Doomsday sequence, and substantial textual evidence indicates that individual plays or play sequences were performed apart from the rest after the compilation of the manuscript that survives. N-Town, then, is a manuscript that probably served several purposes: part of it was likely a play cycle at one time; later, it probably served as a regional depository of plays which were lent or rented out as smaller playbooks according to the needs of various producers. Moreover, it is quite possible that for the compiler or patron, the manuscript may also have been used for devotional reading, but it is important to remember that however the manuscript may appear, this is no closet drama, for all of the plays in the manuscript are eminently theatrical, highly producible dramas, with much to appeal to the eyes and ears of late medieval East Anglian audiences.

Like other volumes in the series, this edition of the N-Town Plays is intended to be a text accessible enough to be useful to both students and established scholars in a variety of disciplines. Not only should those engaged in literary study be able to use this text, but also students of theater, theater history, religion, English and European history, gender studies, theology, philosophy, musicology, and art history all should find considerable material in the N-Town Plays relevant to their studies. Graduate students and scholars in a variety of disciplines should find the text and notes accurate and thought-provoking enough to stimulate their own research. In other words, readers at all levels should use this text as a vehicle to enter imaginatively into the language, stagecraft, and culture of these five-hundred-year-old plays. With this edition, we hope readers will take the opportunity to re-envision the theatrical experience of the N-Town Plays. In the process of doing so, we hope that the N-Town Plays will help people to acquaint themselves in fresh ways with the social and aesthetic rituals from the late Middle Ages, and come to sense the complexity and vivacity of East Anglia at one of the high water marks of late medieval culture.

#### A CONTEXT FOR THE N-TOWN PLAYS

“Religion was a ritual method of living, not a set of dogmas.”

— Gail McMurray Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, p. 41.

The dialect of the N-Town main scribe has been traced to an area near the western border of Norfolk and Suffolk counties, near East Harling, Thetford, and Bury St. Edmunds.<sup>2</sup> Primarily for this reason, scholars have decided that the N-Town Plays were written and performed in East Anglia, that protruding landmass across the channel from the Lowlands. The 1468 date found at the end of the Purification Play seems consistent with the dating of the dialects found in the manuscript. Hence, critics have come to assume that the N-Town Plays are an East Anglian product of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The more scholars study this region of England during this period, the more likely such an assumption seems. As Gibson observes:

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<sup>2</sup> *Linguistic Atlas*, ed. McIntosh, Samuels, and Benskin, 3:307–08, 339–44, 4: map 6.

East Anglia in the fifteenth century was not an economically depressed backwater, but the thriving center of the English cloth trade. A quarter of the late medieval cloth production in England came from these two counties. The village of Lavenham, near Bury St. Edmunds, had grown prosperous enough in the cloth industry to be listed . . . by 1525 . . . the twelfth richest community in England — and the great Norfolk port of Norwich would be richer than London.<sup>3</sup>

By 1515, Suffolk was the seventh richest county and Norfolk the twelfth out of the thirty-eight English counties.<sup>4</sup> Not only were these two counties prosperous, but they were also densely populated. The combination of these two demographic factors during this period no doubt explains East Anglia's 1400 churches, 2400 manor houses (one-fourth of them religious), and several hundred religious guilds.<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that Norfolk, of all counties, produced the most grain in England; and the most lucrative industry in Suffolk, wool production, peaked in the 1470s, a date concurrent with many of these building projects and with the N-Town manuscript.<sup>6</sup>

Not only were material wealth and population density important factors in explaining East Anglia's cultural richness, but also this region's religious piety was recognized in England and in Western Europe. Norfolk, for example, possessed the highest density of anchorites in medieval England. Walsingham and Ipswich, known for their Marian shrines, were major pilgrimage sites in the late Middle Ages. Other East Anglian cities or towns such as Thetford, Kersey, Lynn, and Hoxne were known for their images of Mary or St. Edmund. Many of the architectural works mentioned before — such as churches, chapels, religious houses, and hospitals — were built to commemorate saints or the dearly departed. Many buildings, both secular and ecclesiastic, contained memorial works of religious art such as stained glass, wood carvings, mural paintings, roof bosses, and baptismal fonts. Private citizens, religious houses, parish organizations, and religious guilds formed a dense network of pious patronage that manifested itself in many ways, including the production of devotional manuscripts, the formation of chantries and guilds, the support of anchorites, the repair and construction of churches and altars, and even the fostering of religious drama.

#### RELIGIOUS AND PARISH GUILDS

"Late medieval society was diverse and in some respects highly mobile. To this extent, it was in tension with a system of parishes defined geographically. The guilds, often created in explicit response to social change, served to ease this tension."

— Gervase Rosser, "Communities of Parish and Guild," p. 35.

Religious guilds, perhaps responsible for the N-Town compilation, had many roles that contributed to the complex social and religious setting that gave rise to this problematic manuscript. Late medieval religious guilds, in England and in Western Europe, served three

<sup>3</sup> Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Farnhill, *Guilds and the Parish Community*, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Donkin, "Changes in the Early Middle Ages," p. 152; Emery, *Greater Religious Houses*, 2:9–13.

<sup>6</sup> Nichols, *Seeable Signs*, p. 3. Nichols' work emphasizes the need for scholars to study more interdisciplinary and Continental connections for East Anglian art, literature, and drama.

basic functions: to perpetuate devotion to the saints, usually through the maintenance of a guild's torch or candle; to intercede for the soul of a departed brother or sister, often through funerals and through memorial masses; and finally to edify the local community through the guilds' regulations, celebrations, and charitable works.<sup>7</sup> Most of these religious guilds were created as ancillary organizations to support the parishes' or religious houses' ongoing activities. These guilds' funds supplied the lights in churches and chapels, constructed or repaired buildings, supported charitable activities, and paid for the guild's annual feast or ale. While these organizations were ostensibly benign and charitable in nature, they also represented, for some authorities, economic and political power. Henry V believed that the guilds were both an economic and judicial threat, so in 1436, he required them to register with both the justices of the peace and the local authorities. Evidently, the king realized that the religious guilds controlled not only considerable wealth, but also the members who contributed to that wealth. Many guilds had provisions that "disputes between members be brought before guild leaders rather than legal authorities."<sup>8</sup> These same guilds possessed ordinances that dictated the behavior of their members. It is possible that the unique N-Town Trial of Mary and Joseph Play (Play 14) mirrors such guild ordinances and proceedings. While it seems odd that the government would wish to control such religiously orthodox organizations, it does make sense that the king might feel threatened by popular groups, whether they be orthodox or Lollard. Incidentally, East Anglia was also known during this period for its Lollard preachers and occasional religious dissenters. Both N-Town Passion Play 1 (Plays 26–28) and the Cleophas and Luke Play (Play 38) refer to such heretics and expect the audience to recognize — and perhaps even identify with — the tensions created by religious divergence. In such a complex religious landscape, it seems likely that contemporary East Anglian audiences included people of diverse sympathies, who may well have interpreted these plays in different ways.

The number and the rising influence of East Anglia's religious guilds also attested to the increasing interest in lay devotional activities during the late Middle Ages. As the wool industry became more lucrative and as more of the middle class shared economic wealth, rising literacy, interest in religious arts, and a desire for a more personal religious instruction became more prominent in the area. Not only do the N-Town Plays teach medieval religious fundamentals such as Bible stories, the proper order of contrition, the Ten Commandments, the Seven Deadly Sins, instructions on proper devotional practice at Mass (from *The Lay Folks' Mass Book*), and the Seven Corporal Acts of Mercy, the plays sometimes model this same religious piety and literacy through such sequences as Mary and Elizabeth's Latin and English recitation of the Magnificat in the Visit to Elizabeth Play (Play 13). It is worth noting here that the N-Town Plays often stress the role of female piety and literacy, an emphasis that may also be reflected in the local religious guilds' egalitarian rules that frequently allowed female membership and ignored social standing and occupation; there were even a few exclusively female guilds.<sup>9</sup> It is certainly possible that parts of the N-Town Plays were performed by religious or parish guilds; it is likely that the plays were, indeed, performed by several guilds in different East Anglian towns.

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<sup>7</sup> Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 142–43.

<sup>8</sup> Sanok, "Performing Feminine Sanctity."

<sup>9</sup> See Rosser, "Communities of Parish and Guild," p. 35, and French, "Maiden's Lights."

## THE N-TOWN MANUSCRIPT

“The letter N is placed for the *nomen* of the town, which was to be filled up as occasion required, by the person making the proclamation.”

— John Payne Collier, *History of English Dramatic Poetry*, 2:156.

Apart from this contextual information, our paucity of evidence about the N-Town Plays stands in sharp relief to other surviving late medieval English religious play texts. The York, Chester, Coventry, and Norwich plays, as well as the documents from these other cities, depict a rich if incomplete picture about the religious plays produced by craft guilds such as the York Pinners (nail-makers) who were responsible for the Crucifixion Play. In general, civic authorities set aside a day on which the participating craft guilds, sometimes in cooperation with religious houses and religious guilds, would contribute a play in order to participate in the outdoor celebration. Because of England’s wet climate, the celebratory date would usually be during the summer — often a religious holiday such as Corpus Christi Day or Pentecost but sometimes a secular occasion such as Midsummer’s Day. Many of these dramatic occasions took the form of long biblical cycles in which a series of plays depicted subjects beginning with the creation of the world and Old Testament stories, continuing through New Testament stories, and ending with the Last Judgment, or Doomsday. From the late Middle Ages into the seventeenth century, dramatic cycles such as these were performed in a number of cities and towns across the British Isles.

There are records of such performances (but no play texts) from cities and towns such as Beverley, Newcastle upon Tyne, London, Hereford, and Dublin. Often, there were meaningful connections between the craft guilds producing the plays and their respective play material: as mentioned earlier, the York Pinners’ guild put on the Crucifixion Play; in Chester, the Waterleaders and Drawers of Dee produced the Noah Play, and the Bakers put on the Last Supper. In these urban contexts, craft guilds would agree to produce a play complete with script, costumes, props, pageant wagon or stage, and actors; the guilds would submit their scripts to the civic authorities for appropriateness (which is the *raison d’être* for the York Register); the civic authorities would decide on the times, order, and location of the plays in the city; and then the craft guilds would produce and process the plays throughout the town all day, sometimes more than once. It was a great event and a commercial boon for the city, for before the plays were performed, banns riders would advertise the plays in surrounding towns and areas, and merchants would undoubtedly do brisk business all day. The theme for the day was not only a religious commemoration of the body of Christ, of Pentecost, of the Trinity, etc., but it was also one of civic, communal, and guild pride. For example, the post-Reformation Chester Banns mention Randle, meaning Ranulf Higden, quite probably as a way of creating a kind of faux antiquity and authority for the Chester plays as they came under increasing attack from reformist elements both within and without the city. The Banns also address Sir John Arneway, the mayor of Chester, the participating guilds and their respective plays, and the specific performance day. The play manuscripts from York, Chester, Coventry, and Norwich denote the craft guild or guilds that produced each play. In other words, there are clear relationships between the dramatic texts from these cities and the organizations that produced the individual plays. No such clarity is evident for Towneley or N-Town, however, because they probably represent very different kinds of texts.

The Towneley manuscript mentions the Yorkshire town of Wakefield twice and alludes to local places a handful of times.<sup>10</sup> But there is little evidence that a small town such as Wakefield could have put on such a large cycle of plays. And, judging from the decorative nature of the Towneley manuscript (almost a coffee-table book), it is possible that it had commemorative value for the patron who ordered it. In fact, there is very little evidence that the manuscript had any connection to theatrical performance. In the John the Baptist Play, next to a canceled stanza (folio 66), the marginal note “corrected and not playd” appears to be the single piece of theatrical evidence. The latest editor of the Towneley Plays, Martin Stevens, admits that the manuscript’s stage directions “have little practical value” and that the manuscript “may have existed for some of its early life as a literary text that had little direct connection with the actual performance of plays.”<sup>11</sup> Recent research has tended to push the date for the Towneley manuscript more towards the middle of the sixteenth century and suggests that it — somewhat like the earlier N-Town manuscript — is a deliberate attempt to create an artificial cycle, an anthology of plays once performed in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The collection itself may date from a time when the performance of biblical plays was already being actively scrutinized and even suppressed by local authorities.

The N-Town manuscript, however, lacks the somewhat problematic references to guilds and places that we find in a few of the Towneley Plays. Instead, the manuscript promises a performance “A Sunday next . . . / At six of the belle . . . / In N. town” (Banns, lines 525–27). These lines are not a great help in determining the home or the agencies responsible for the play. Although vague and reliant upon the variable “N. town,” these lines can nevertheless tell us much about the nature of drama in East Anglia at the time. Beside the N-Town manuscript, there are thirteen other surviving dramatic texts from East Anglia, four of which are fragments. Only two of the thirteen reveal a locality, the Norwich Grocers’ Play and *The Croxton Play of the Sacrament*. The Norwich Play is clearly an urban craft-guild play similar to those found in Chester and in York, but the reference in the *Sacrament* Banns may indicate only one of many places where the play was performed. Similarly, the Banns that introduces *The Castle of Perseverance* leaves blanks in the vexillators’ or banner-bearers’ speeches where a place name should be: “At . . . on the grene . . . / . . . Ye manly men of . . . , ther Crist save you all!”<sup>12</sup> Such intentional lacunae indicate that — except for the Norwich Play — most surviving East Anglian dramatic texts were purposely written to be variable or even anonymous, to suit the needs of different patrons or producers, individuals, towns, parishes, religious houses, and religious guilds as the occasions required. Many scholars have suggested that the N-Town Plays and these other East Anglian plays, because of their variable nature, were meant for traveling players, but this may not be the case for many of the plays. Some of the plays require large casts and staging equipment impractical for small traveling companies. In East Anglia the surviving evidence suggests the prevalence of traveling playbooks or playbooks meant for borrowing.<sup>13</sup> Apparently in the late Middle Ages and the early modern period, East Anglian dramatic games assumed local and even regional collaboration among various civic and religious agencies: “Often parishes and religious houses paid visiting players; sometimes a town sent its own players to neighboring towns.

<sup>10</sup> *Towneley Plays*, ed. Stevens and Cawley, 1:xix–xxii.

<sup>11</sup> *Towneley Plays*, ed. Stevens and Cawley, 1:xxiv–xxv.

<sup>12</sup> *Castle of Perseverance*, ed. Bevington, lines 134 and 145.

<sup>13</sup> *N-Town Plays: A Facsimile*, ed. Meredith and Kahrl, pp. 19–20.

Towns contributed money, props, costumes, or even playbooks toward neighboring towns' games, and these theatrical networks frequently emanated from a central location, a hub."<sup>14</sup> This pattern of regional collaboration is quite unlike that organizational pattern found in York and Chester. While there may have been few set rules about how this collaboration would take shape, it is clear that even playbooks were lent out and copied. Such lending may explain the two copies (in the Digby and Macro manuscripts) of the play of *Wisdom* as well as the eclectic nature of the N-Town Plays. In this particular East Anglian context — quite apart from the civic-guild organizations of York, Chester, and even Norwich — the piecemeal nature and the "inconsistencies" of the N-Town Plays begin to make more sense.

The *compilatio* or collection of manuscript booklets, part of the N-Town manuscript's physical condition, were popular in Western Europe before the rise of middle-class literacy and the widespread use of printed books. Occasionally, these are called "miscellanies" or "commonplace books." As more families could read and could afford to have booklets copied, it also became the custom to collect or to bind them together. Sometimes the bound booklets had nothing to do with one another: they simply found themselves together, bound for the owner's convenience. There are many early modern *compilatio*s with a bewildering array of papers bound together in one book. For example, Bodleian MS Tanner 407, a commonplace book from Norfolk (c. 1471–99), contains legal documents, historical facts, inventories, devotional poetry, medical information, churchwardens' accounts, an epilogue to a play, and three stanzas from an entirely different play.<sup>15</sup>

Sometimes, if the owners had many booklets on many different subjects, then the booklets were bound together according to subject matter, need, or function. There is another *compilatio* of drama, the Macro Plays (Folger MS V.a.354), which contains three plays — *The Castle of Perseverance*, *Wisdom*, and *Mankind*. While the *Castle* booklets date to the first third of the century, the remainder of the manuscript is roughly contemporary (c. 1470) to the N-Town compilation and is also from East Anglia. It is probable that the Macro manuscript, like N-Town, was a collection of local or regional drama. The play *Wisdom* also appears in another East Anglian *compilatio*, Bodleian MS Digby 133, also known as the Digby Plays. This Digby manuscript contains three other plays, but also treatises by Galileo and Roger Bacon as well as other scientific tracts and tables, embodying the way in which the use and copying of booklets during this period could create eclectic but fluid anthologies. These examples give us a glimpse at the literary and professional context in which the N-Town compiler was working. The compiler was, in short, keeping a library of plays in an orderly anthology, although one that was never fully completed, at least to the compiler's satisfaction.

The manuscript's status as a compilation makes its date and purpose problematic, for such manuscripts could often be assembled over a period of time, using material and texts drawn from different places, and by their very nature these texts often comprehended many different intentions. The most significant piece of information that exists for the N-Town manuscript, suggesting that it was being compiled and used between 1460 and 1520, is the date 1468 which appears at the end of the Purification Play (Play 19), a play that was added at some later point to the manuscript. In actuality, no one can be sure what the date means. It could be the date when the compiler incorporated the play into the manuscript; it could be a date that was on the exemplar from which the compiler copied; it could be a commem-

<sup>14</sup> Sugano, "“This game wel pleyd,”" p. 229.

<sup>15</sup> *Non-Cycle Plays*, ed. Davis, pp. cxx–cxxi.



orative date of the last or of a future performance of the Purification Play. This discussion about the dating raises the larger and perhaps more important issue of the manuscript's purpose, about which no one can be sure. However, quite a bit can be inferred from various details in the manuscript. There were likely three distinct purposes for the N-Town manuscript: 1) it was a library or anthology of either local or regional plays; 2) it carried devotional import for the owner or compiler; and 3) significant parts of it functioned as playbooks for performances after their compilation into the larger manuscript.

First of all, it is evident that the compiler wanted to collect and to maintain a library of drama that could be performed. We can be fairly certain from marginal notations and prompt notes that portions were performed after the anthology was compiled. If the compiler had wanted to keep a collection of plays for antiquarian, commemorative, or private reading purposes, then there would have been little need to retain the stage directions as he was copying. The compiler is also responsible for many alterations in the manuscript. Of these changes, perhaps most telling is his adding an alternative ending to the Visit to Elizabeth Play (Play 13). It seems unlikely that the compiler would offer alternatives unless there had been some impulse to have the drama performed, although it is possible that such alternatives could have been used as a means of enhancing pious meditation on a devotional subject. In addition, the compiler or the patron seems to have had a personal interest in the manuscript and its development. Even though it is not as highly decorated with gold leaf or painted illuminations as the Ellesmere Canterbury Tales or even as ornate as the Towneley manuscript, the N-Town manuscript is relatively neat, marked with different lettering styles (some letters in red ink), and fairly orderly. The compiler paid considerable attention to detail, even if he was not entirely successful at incorporating all of the plays neatly into the manuscript. In other words, she or he kept to a program of collecting the "best" plays available that would fit into the Creation-to-Doomsday cosmic historical narrative.

But the manuscript was not just a collection of drama for the compiler. There are five marginal additions that permit a glimpse into the compiler's more personal interests. These notations, usually in a more decorative lettering, are genealogies of Adam to Noah and Noah to Lot, the dimensions of Noah's ark and the depth of the flood, a genealogy of Christ's relatives through Mary's mother Anne, a table and genealogical notes explaining the relationships of the five Annas, and a calendar note giving the day of St. Joseph, the day of Adam's creation, and the day of Mary Magdalene's Translation.<sup>16</sup> What appears on folios 37r (see Illustration 1) and 37v of the manuscript is a genealogy of St. Anne (written in *textura quadrata* script) that has been added after the fact to fill a gap between the Root of Jesse Play (Play 7) and the beginning of the Mary Play (Plays 8–11, 13). Although this genealogical table adds no useful theatrical information for a producer or for actors, the table must have carried significance for the compiler, especially since he was adding the Mary Play into the larger compilation. While these may seem odd marginalia for a script, they seem normal for a *compilatio*. It would appear that these notations were significant topics for the compiler, and that he felt these would add authority to the dramatic texts, rather like footnotes in scholarly editions. It would also appear, then, that the compiler regarded the play material he was accruing as material for devotional reading as well, and — quite possibly — saw little distinction between the two.

Even if the compiler treated the N-Town manuscript as a devotional work, it did not remain so for long. Stephen Spector has identified a reviser, Scribe C (c. 1470–1520), who

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<sup>16</sup> *N-Town Plays: A Facsimile*, ed. Meredith and Kahrl, p. xxiii.

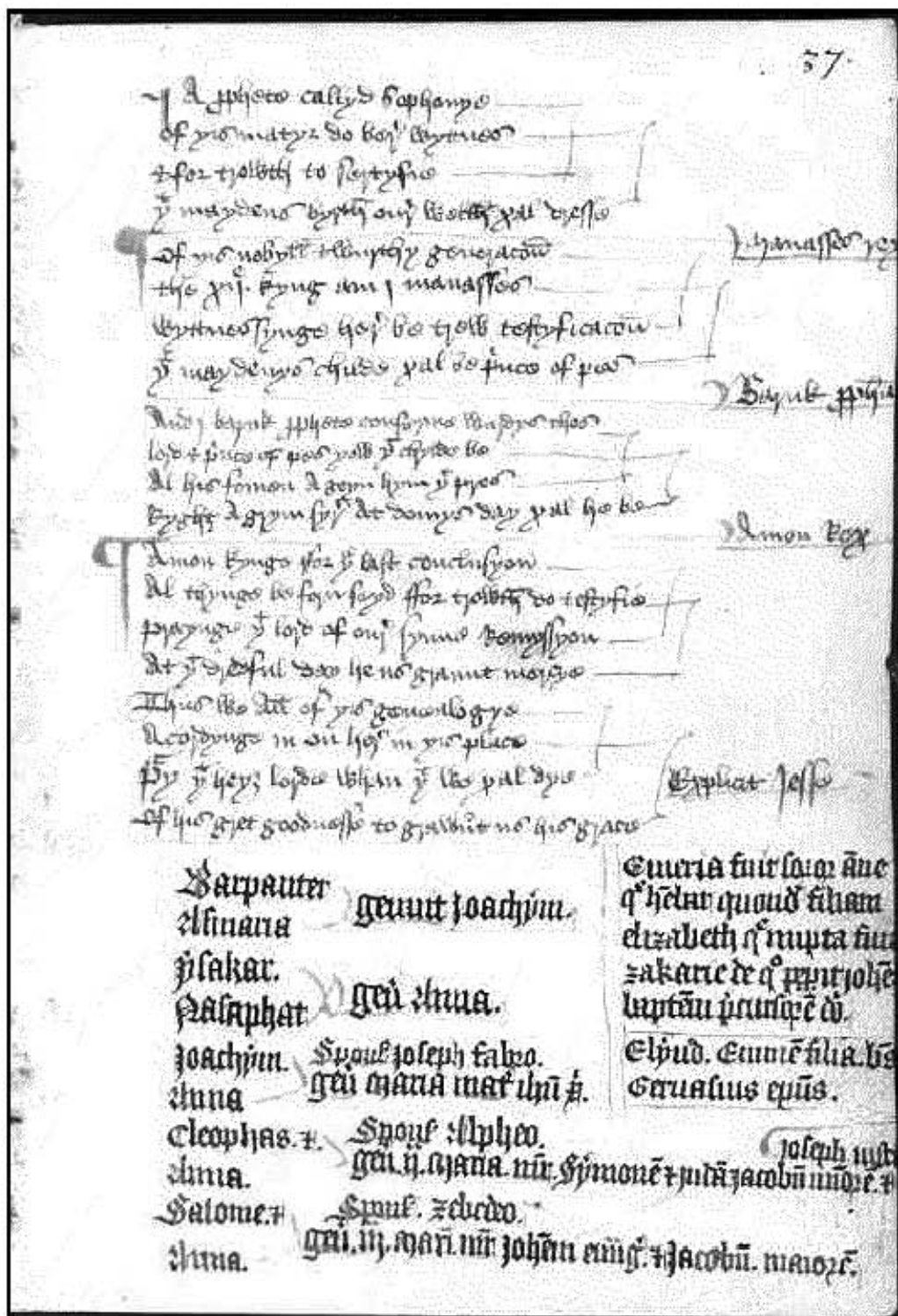


Illustration 1. London, British Library MS Cotton Vespasian D VIII, fol. 37r. Reproduced by permission of the British Library. © British Library Board. All rights reserved.

made substantial changes to the Shepherds Play (Play 16), the Magi Play (Play 18), the Slaughter of the Innocents Play (Play 20), the Baptism Play (Play 22), and to the end of Passion Play 2 (Plays 29–34). Most of his revisions were to modernize diction, interpolate lines, parts, and whole sections, but also to alter stage directions and to provide prompt notes for actors. Spector suggests that this reviser may have even designated a break in the performance in Passion Play 2.<sup>17</sup> Again, this additional layer of revisions suggests that portions of the manuscript may have been performed well into the sixteenth century.

Even though the manuscript appears mostly in the hand of one scribe, the one who compiled the various plays, the manuscript changed substantially over a period of time. Not only did the main scribe incorporate new plays into the manuscript, but at least two later revisers altered or restored material (probably for later performances), all of which implies that there were at least four parts to the N-Town manuscript's compilation.

At some early point, there was a large cycle of plays which the Banns adequately describe. These plays were written in thirteener stanzas (such as those found in the Banns) and perhaps some of the plays were written in octaves. These plays would include: the Creation of Heaven/Fall of Lucifer (Play 1), the Creation of the World/Fall of Man (Play 2), most of Cain and Abel (Play 3), most of Noah (Play 4), Moses (Play 6), the Root of Jesse (Play 7), some of Joseph's Doubt (Play 12), the Trial of Mary and Joseph (Play 14), the Nativity (Play 15), the Shepherds (Play 16), the Magi (Play 18), the Slaughter of the Innocents (Play 20), Christ and the Doctors (Play 21), most of the Baptism (Play 22), the Temptation (Play 23), the Woman Taken in Adultery (Play 24), the Raising of Lazarus (Play 25), the Announcement to the Marys (Play 36), Appearance to Mary Magdalene (Play 37), Cleophas and Luke (Play 38), the Ascension (Play 39), Pentecost (Play 40), and Judgment Day (Play 42, most of which is now lost).

The second assemblage of material, or booklet, that the scribe added to the manuscript was the Mary Play, which contains episodes or scenes of Joachim and Anne (Play 8), Presentation of Mary in the Temple (Play 9), the Marriage of Mary and Joseph (Play 10), the Parliament of Heaven/Salutation (Play 11), and possibly part of the Visit to Elizabeth (Play 13). All of this material is written in long-lined octaves.

Sometime later, the scribe revised Joseph's Doubt (Play 12) and added the Purification Play (Play 19) that bears the date 1468. These revisions, written in ten-line stanzas, were added to the existing Nativity sequence of plays. The scribe afterwards added two booklets, the two Passion Plays (Plays 26–34). It is clear from the Banns and from other parts of the manuscript that these plays had lived lives independent of the compiled manuscript. Contemplacio's prologue introduces a set of two Passion Plays that were performed in alternate years, certainly not related to the Passion material described in the Banns. While there are some affinities with the Mary Play (e.g., the use of Contemplacio as a prologue), many stylistic features are quite different in the Passion Plays. Most obvious are the stanzas that appear mostly in octaves and quatrains.

At some even later point, the scribe finally added another booklet, the Assumption of Mary Play (Play 41), not mentioned in the Banns, a play that is in another scribe's handwriting, although the compiler seems to have made some corrections to it.

The beginning of the Nativity Play (folio 82r of Play 15; see Illustration 2) offers a glimpse into the intricacy of the compiler's work. In order to discuss the changes that the compiler made, we must begin by examining lines 187–90 of the Banns, the quatrain that

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<sup>17</sup> *N-Town Play*, ed. Spector, 1:xxiii–xxiv.

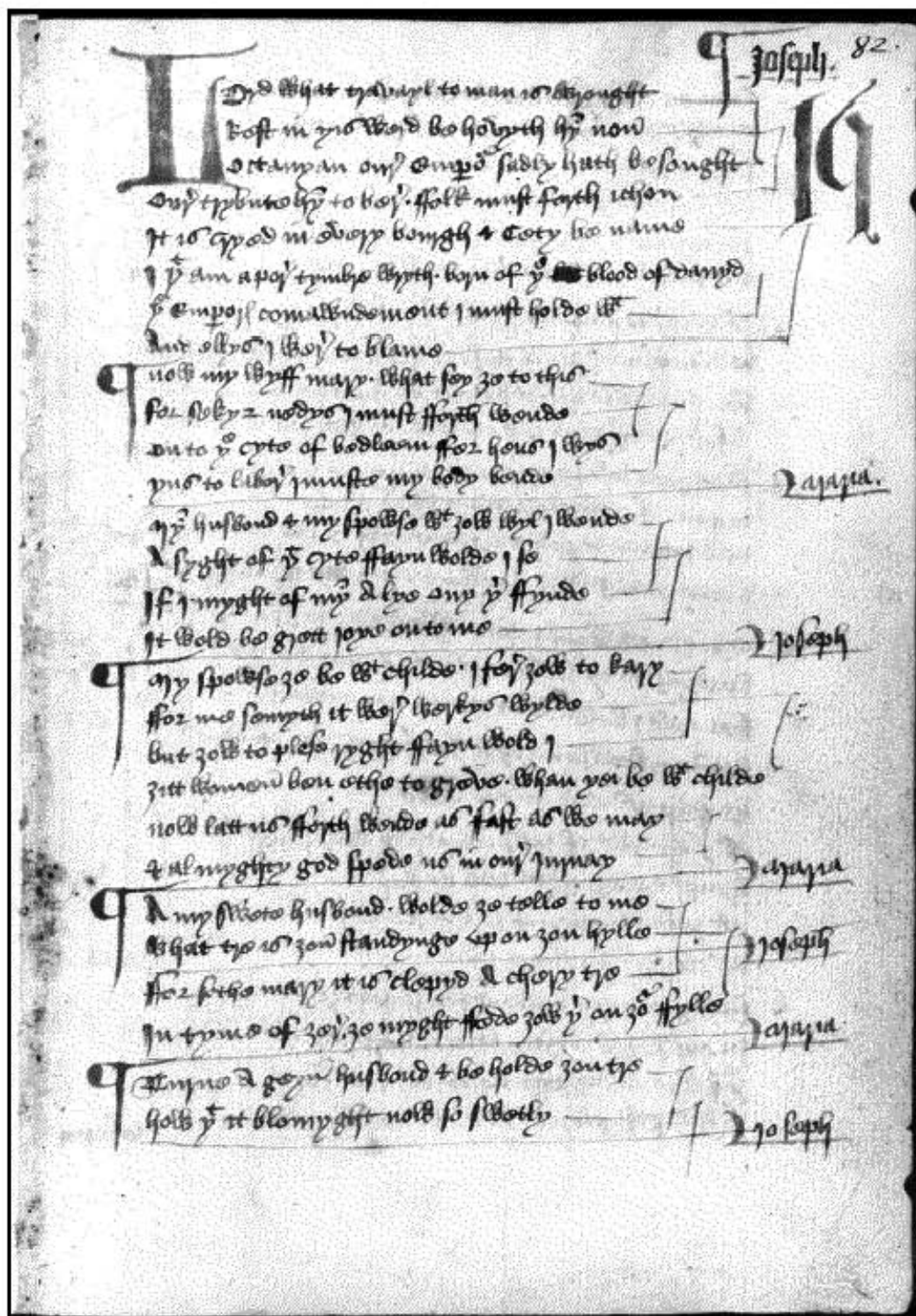


Illustration 2. London, British Library MS Cotton Vespasian D VIII, fol. 82r. Reproduced by permission of the British Library. © British Library Board. All rights reserved.

ineptly summarizes the play. First of all, we must note that most of the plays in the Banns are described by thirteener stanzas and that the Banns descriptions that appear in quatrains always compensate for added or altered material such as the Mary Play or the two Passion Plays. In this case, the Banns neglects most of the Mary Play, but picks up its narrative (in quatrains) with the Trial of Joseph and Mary (Play 14, but incorrectly numbered 13 in the Banns) and the Nativity (correctly numbered 15). But strangely enough, the only Nativity event described in the Banns is Joseph's attempt to find a midwife: the arrival in Bethlehem and the birth of Christ are ignored. From the erroneous numbering and the quatrain play summaries, it is evident that the scribe needed to alter both the Banns and the Nativity Play to accommodate the newly acquired Mary Play material.

There are two unusual aspects to folio 82r, the opening lines of the Nativity. First of all, this folio contains four different types of stanzas: the opening nine-line stanza (possibly a truncated thirteener stanza) followed by an octave, a quatrain, a couplet, and finally two more quatrains (the last of which continues on folio 82v). It seems as if the scribe was attempting to incorporate material from at least two different exemplars. It is possible that the nine-line stanza is a remnant of a thirteener, and the scribe went to some effort to make the nine-line stanza look like an octave, the predominant stanza in the play. In the manuscript, he wrote lines six and seven on the same line: "I that am a pore tymbre-wryth • born of the blood of Davyd." The point which separates the two lines ("wryth • born") is the same punctuation that he uses in other parts of the manuscript when he wished to squeeze two or three lines into one. The ensuing octave may have come from one of the other exemplars (or booklets), and seemed to fit here near the beginning of the play. The quatrain, couplet, and subsequent quatrains are likely attempts to reconcile the material written in thirteeners with the material written in octaves. Quatrains and couplets, which are more common in the two Passion Plays (and used occasionally in the Banns), often bridge larger sections of material. It is clear that the compiler was reconciling various exemplars in order to accommodate the newly acquired Mary Play, hence the incorrect numbering of the Trial of Joseph and Mary in the Banns.

It is also interesting to note the unusual rubrication here at the beginning of the Nativity. While it has the customary large red initial and the large red play number in the right margin, Joseph's name, as the first speaker, is rubricated with a red capitula and written in textura quadrata. This same rubrication style is used for only five other plays in the manuscript: Noah (Play 4), Joseph's Doubt (Play 12), the Trial of Mary and Joseph (Play 14), the Purification (Play 19), and Judgment Day (Play 42). Noah contains a genealogical table written in textura quadrata (folios 21r–22v); the Trial of Joseph and Mary, the Nativity, the Purification, and Judgment Day all were likely revised to accommodate new material. The first three were altered by the inclusion of the Mary Play, and Judgment Day had to make room for the Assumption of Mary (Play 41).

#### POSSIBILITIES OF STAGING

"In staging their faith by means of a variety of theatrical traditions, local scribes, actors and producers gave expression to the diverse and complex culture that was late-medieval East Anglia."

— Victor I. Scherb, *Staging Faith*, p. 202.

Since it is clear that the N-Town manuscript developed over a period of time with material from different playbooks, likely from different areas and institutions in East Anglia, it should

also be apparent that the different booklets or exempla of the manuscript could represent a variety of staging possibilities. In the course of compiling the manuscript, it is possible that the scribe suppressed unusual or outlandish theatrical styles of staging, costuming, or props so that the manuscript would retain its usefulness as a “text for borrowing.” As Meredith concludes: “In N-Town we have a scribe adapting, blending and revising to produce an all-inclusive play apparently adequate to anyone’s needs.”<sup>18</sup> Even though many different cities or towns in East Anglia have been suggested for the performance of the N-Town Plays — Lincoln, East Harling, Bury St. Edmunds, Thetford, etc. — in light of Meredith’s conclusion, finding such locations may be impossible, or even a moot point. As James Stokes has found in Lincolnshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk, late medieval playing places can be churchyards, village greens, town squares, marketplaces, taverns, inns, manors, parish churches, monasteries, cathedrals, tournament grounds, and designated outdoor playing areas. Even though Meredith’s and Stokes’ conclusions lead us to few specifics (but exciting possibilities) about the staging of the N-Town Plays, we can nonetheless make useful observations about the manuscript’s different exempla and how they (at some point) may have been performed.

Those plays which the Banns adequately describes — written mostly in thirteener stanzas and short-lined octaves: the Banns through the Root of Jesse (up to Play 7), some of Joseph’s Doubt (Play 12), the Trial of Mary and Joseph through the Magi (Plays 14–18), the Slaughter of the Innocents through Lazarus (Plays 20–25), the Announcement to the Marys through Pentecost (Plays 36–40), and Judgment Day (Play 42) — can be associated with the N-Town Game, a play “cycle” that became the framework for the eventual manuscript. There are two meanings for “game” in the *MED* that aid our understanding of this type of performance. Not only was an East Anglian game a theatrical play in our contemporary sense, but this “game” could also have referred to a tournament, a jousting, or a battle. James Stokes’ work with the dramatic records of Lincolnshire sheds more light on such events and game places. Stokes found open-air “game places” or “playing places” in Lincolnshire that doubled as battlegrounds “associated . . . with the processes of justice.”<sup>19</sup> His more recent research on REED’s Norfolk and Suffolk volumes reveals even more of these “gaming” sites in East Anglia proper. A clear example would be the East Anglian *Castle of Perseverance*, a play that conflates the notions of theatrical playing, of the spiritual battle between good and evil, and of human or divine judgment. *Perseverance*, which self-referentially uses the term “game” eight times, was probably performed in one such a judicial playing place. It is also likely that the N-Town Game, this early version of the N-Town manuscript, which itself uses the term “game” sixteen times, was considered by its audiences in the same light as *Perseverance*: that is, a theatrical play (or script) that traveled, relied on banns criers, and combined entertainment with depictions of spiritual combat and judgment.<sup>20</sup>

At some point, these plays were likely performed as a long “cycle” of plays, possibly occupying two days or more. These plays have much in common dramaturgically, calling for small casts of three to eight players, requiring very little in terms of props or staging. They would likely have been played in an open area where various loci such as heaven, hell, the temple, paradise (or a garden), and a hill could be defined or built. At most, these plays would have needed just a few scaffolds and a hellmouth. In general, the stage directions for these plays are

<sup>18</sup> Meredith, “Scribes,” p. 21.

<sup>19</sup> Stokes, “Lost Playing Places,” p. 276.

<sup>20</sup> Sugano, “From Playbooks to *Compilatio*,” pp. 240–41.

in Latin, are terse, occasionally invoke music, and rarely give more than obvious and necessary direction. The most unusual and detailed from this group of plays describe the course of Noah's ark about the playing area (Play 4, line 141, stage direction; hereafter 4.141, s.d.), Moses' reaction to the burning bush (6.16, s.d.), and Jesus' writing in the sand as the Pharisees await his judgment on the woman taken in adultery (24.196, s.d., 208, s.d., and 232, s.d.).

The Mary Play, an added booklet (Plays 8–11, 13), very likely came from a source different from the first group of plays. Dramaturgically speaking, the Mary Play requires more resources than the other plays written in thirteeners and short octaves. The cast for this play is not necessarily bigger, but the play requires a temple, a heavenly locus, a heavenly choir, and considerably more music and liturgical singing, possibly suggesting that, in an earlier form, this Mary Play was performed indoors, possibly in a church. Scherb notes:

The scenic units apparently include the houses of Joachim and Anna, Mary and Joseph, and Zacharias and Elizabeth. . . . The largest and sturdiest locus would have to be the temple, occupied by nearly twenty actors at one point and reached by a staircase of fifteen steps. . . . In a manner similar to the smaller-scale stage plays, the dramatic structure works to focus the spectator's attention on a series of contemplative (and often spectacular) stage pictures. Some of these must have been remarkable: "*Here the aungel descendith; the hefne syngyng*" (78/173 s.d.). Similarly, the meeting of Joachim and Anna at the golden gate, Mary's ascension up the temple steps, Joseph's flowering rod, or Mary's conception all form significant devotional moments.<sup>21</sup>

Mary's conception in the Annunciation, as several other scenes in this play group, is also theatrically spectacular. The stage direction reads: "*Here the Holy Gost descendit with thre bemys to our Lady, the Sone of the Godhed nest with thre bemys to the Holy Gost, the Fadyr godly with thre bemys to the Sone. And so entre all thre to her bosom*" (11.292, s.d.). In this scene, the Holy Ghost descends from the heavens, and Mary's heart or womb is theatrically pierced with gilt beams of wood or metal. The audience must have been transfixed. As Scherb implies, there is a clear cloistered interiority to this play, and, as he states, the staging attempts to move the audience to affective devotion.

At some later point the two Passion Plays were added to the manuscript (Plays 26–34), and, with them, a place-and-scaffold stage more akin to that found in Castle of Perseverance than to anything else in the N-Town manuscript. The two N-Town Passion Plays that were blended into the manuscript are large, expansive, outdoor plays that call for numerous scaffolds or structures: scaffolds for Annas, Caiaphas, and Pilate; an upper room; a moot hall; Jesus' tomb; a hellmouth with massive gates. In addition, there needs to be a park-like place, angel machinery, and a Golgotha. Bevington's place-and-scaffold staging in the round is certainly possible, but need not be the case.<sup>22</sup> It seems that nearly any place-and-scaffold arrangement (linear, semi-circular, as examples) could work. But perhaps that flexibility and adaptability to the local playing place is the manuscript's point. As Martial Rose observes:

The unity of the Passion Plays, and the uniformity of the staging methods discernable throughout, argue a centrally-organized system of production, rather than a dispersed system in which trade-guilds were responsible for each separate play in the mystery cycle.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Scherb, *Staging Faith*, pp. 194–95.

<sup>22</sup> *Medieval Drama*, ed. Bevington, p. 480.

<sup>23</sup> Rose, "Staging of the Hegge Plays," p. 221.

In other words, these were plays that called for either a wealthy producing organization (such as a large religious house or cathedral) or considerable local or regional collaboration. The latter seems more likely.

The casts required are correspondingly large: Passion 1 has over thirty parts; Passion 2 has forty-two: even if doubling were observed, each play would need a minimum of seventeen players. These plays were meant to be impressive, grand, and spectacular: in the prologue, Satan, dressed as a fifteenth-century lord, attempts to recruit souls for his army; during his entry in to Jerusalem, Jesus is greeted by flowers and a children's choir; Mary Magdalene is exorcized of her seven demons in the upper room; Judas skulks between the upper room and the Jews' moot hall during the Last Supper; in Gethsemane, Jesus is arrested by a fully armed band of late fifteenth-century soldiers; Jesus is dragged from one leader's scaffold to the next during his judgment; as the Crucifixion is concluding, Jesus harrows hell as a two-step process: once to cast out demons, and once to release the good souls. Besides the scale and scope of these events, these Passion Plays display considerable theatrical sophistication and attention to detail.

First of all, these plays depict simultaneous action by interrupting scenes, such as in this stage direction from the Last Supper:

*Here the buschopys partyn in the place, and eche of hem takyn here [their] leve by contenawns, resortyng eche man to his place with here meny, to make redy to take Cryst. And than shal the place ther Cryst is in shal sodeynly uncloze rownd aboutyn, shewyng Cryst syttyng at the table, and hese dyscypulys, eche in ere degré, Cryst thus seyng . . . (27.348, s.d.)*

As the Jewish leaders have concluded their conspiratorial meeting, a curtain which encloses the upper room suddenly reveals Christ with the disciples. We know that the playwright is prescribing simultaneous action because Judas “*shal gon ageyn to the Jewys*” (27.465, s.d.), but Jesus' Last Supper discourse will continue for another one hundred lines while Judas meets with the Jewish leaders. Another example of this simultaneous action occurs with the Burial and Guarding of the Sepulcher play (Play 34) that is sandwiched between the bipartite Harrowing of Hell.

The extensive stage directions (in English) for these Passion Plays also call for costuming and acting details unseen in other contemporary English drama. Annas' and Caiaphas' costumes are prescribed:

*Here shal Annas shewyn hymself in his stage beseyn after a busshop of the hoold [old] lawe in a skarlet gowne. And over that, a blew tabbard furrey with whyte and a mytere on his hed after the hoold lawe, twey doctorys stondyng by hym in furrey hodys, and on befor hem with his staff of astat. And eche of hem on here hedys a furrey cappe with a gret knop in the crowne, and on stondyng befor as a Sarazyn, the wich shal be his masangere. (26.164, s.d.)*

*Cayphas shewyth himself in his scaphald, arayd lych to Annas, savyng his tabbard shal be red furrey with white, twey doctorys with hym arayd with pellys after the old gyse and furrey cappys on here hedys. (26.208, s.d.)*

Clearly, there must be some point to the symbolic specificity of these costumes. As Lynn Squires notes, there is still some ambiguity about what the costuming is suggesting.<sup>24</sup> The “gret knop” in late medieval costuming usually indicates a Jewish figure or leader, but

<sup>24</sup> Squires, “Law and Disorder,” pp. 279–81.



Squires sees the phrase “hoold lawe” as problematic, possibly referring to Judaism, but also possibly referring to a recent (late fifteenth-century) change in the robes for English judges. Both the detail and the ambiguity make such stage directions richly suggestive. Even though the East Anglian audience knows it is watching a Passion Play, it may also be receiving subtle contemporary allusions to the volatile judicial and political climate in East Anglia during the Wars of the Roses. Hence, in the course of the Passion Play 2, Jesus is enduring the endless machinations of a first-century Jewish or Roman legal process that looks suspiciously like a late fifteenth-century East Anglian assize court.

The Passion Plays also contain another layer of theatrical detail that is unusual in the manuscript, that of acting direction. As opposed to other plays in the N-Town manuscript, actors are sometimes directed specifically *how* to act. Judas, as he leaves the Last Supper to conspire with the Jewish leaders, “*rysytþ prevely*” (27.268, s.d.); Jesus kisses his disciples’ feet “*mekely*” (27.527, s.d.); at the opening of Satan and Pilate’s wife, Satan enters the playing place “*in the most orryble wyse*” (31.1, s.d.); and after her encounter with a demon, Pilate’s wife “*shal come beforþ Pylat leke a made woman*” (31.57, s.d.). Perhaps the most intricate acting direction appears in the Burial, after Jesus’ side is pierced by Longeus, who will accidentally or “*avantorsly . . . wyþe his eyne*” (34.100, s.d.). Far from demonstrating the Passion Plays as closet drama, these stage directions show the profound understanding the playwright had of theatrical practice, and perhaps showed his need to keep directing the action as these plays may have traveled from place to place or from producer to producer.

Somewhat later in the manuscript’s development, the Assumption of Mary Play (on different paper, in another scribe’s hand, and in a somewhat different dialect) was added to the compilation. Since this play is not mentioned at all in the Banns, we can assume that it was an independent play that the compiler added later to the compilation. The differences from the other plays in the N-Town manuscript are clear: the stanzas (mostly thirteeners and octaves) have different rhyme and metrical patterns; the play’s expositor is called the “Doctor” (not Contemplacio or a vexillator); and this play has a very large cast of at least sixteen players, not including the choruses of martyrs and angels. Furthermore, the Assumption requires spectacular machinery that does not exist in other N-Town Plays such as the mechanical “whyte clowde” (angel machinery? cars that look like clouds?) that transports the apostle John to Mary’s door. While other plays in the manuscript (Mary Play and the Passion Plays) call for angel machinery, this play does, too, but with a substantial difference. Toward the end of the play, just before Mary’s soul is taken up to Heaven, the stage direction says: “*Hic dissendet Dominus cum omni celesti curia*” (41.311, s.d.). Either God and his court are descending a stairway together, or they are being lowered in some sort of scaffold that can hold all of them.<sup>25</sup> Finally, it seems that the Assumption playwright was designating an indoor performance. The term *organa* is used in two stage directions, “*hic cantabunt organa*” (41.313, s.d.), and “*Et hic assendent in celum cantantibus organis*” (41.521, s.d.). It is interesting to note that the playwright uses the verb “*cantare*” with the plural noun “*organa*.” Francis Galpin explains that this particular combination of terms can refer either to a stationary church organ or to a particular style of singing with an accompanying organ.<sup>26</sup> In either case, a stationary organ (as opposed to a portative organ) is being described. Hence, the Assumption Play was, at least initially, designed for an indoor performance.

<sup>25</sup> Sugano, “From Playbooks to *Compilatio*,” pp. 202–15.

<sup>26</sup> Galpin, *Old English Instruments of Music*, p. 166.

After the N-Town manuscript was compiled in its final form, two later hands (called Revisers A and B by the facsimile editors) revised several portions for their own performances. Reviser A (c. 1490–1500) added speeches for the Marriage of Mary and Joseph (folios 51–52) and marked Episcopus' speeches: it appears that he was preparing a separate Betrothal Play for performance. Reviser B (c. 1490–1520) interpolated speeches into the Magi Play (folios 95–96) and an opening leaf for the Baptism: this was likely restorative work. But he also revised portions of the Shepherds, the Magi, and the Slaughter of the Innocents, possibly for a Nativity play. It is interesting to note that this reviser prescribed his own two-day Easter performance with the Burial, the Harrowing of Hell 2, and the Resurrection on the first day; and the Three Marys, Mary Magdalene, and Cleophas and Luke on the second. Meredith and Kahrl, in their facsimile edition, remark that this reviser was clearly preparing a prompt copy meant for production (*N-Town Plays: A Facsimile*, p. xxiv). It is evident that the manuscript, even after its “final” compilation, was used for various occasional performances, possibly into the early sixteenth century.

#### CRITICAL TREATMENT OF THE N-TOWN PLAYS

“The continued study of N-Town’s text and spectacle and pursuit of its origins may not bring the N-Town plays home; but these efforts surely will extend even further our knowledge about the rich cultural imagination that created East Anglian biblical drama at the end of the Middle Ages.”

— Theresa Coletti, “N-Town Plays.”

Scholars for hundreds of years have complicated the critical treatment of the N-Town Plays in a variety of ways. To date, the N-Town Plays have been called by seven different names, many of them used concurrently. The manuscript’s first known owner was a Robert Hegge (c. 1597–1629), who may have inherited it from his father, Stephen. So, the plays have been known as the “Hegge Plays” or “Hegge Cycle.” Another name, the British Library’s manuscript descriptor given by Richard James, is “MS Cotton Vespasian D.viii,” so called the “Cotton Plays” because it was donated by Sir Robert Bruce Cotton, and because it was in the bookcase with the bust of the Emperor Vespasian (and happened to be book number eight on shelf D of that case). Mr. James may have assumed that the plays were from Coventry, a city well known in the Elizabethan age for its religious plays. James’ assumption led to two of the manuscript’s other names, “the Coventry Plays” and “Ludus Coventriae.” In 1656, William Dugdale wrote that the manuscript contained New Testament plays that were performed by the Grey Friars of Coventry. This misleading description codified the name “Ludus Coventriae” until the 1990s. The present name, “The N-Town Play,” was proposed by W. W. Greg in 1914, but was not used by scholars until the late 1960s and was not considered a standard title until the mid-1980s. Stephen Spector codified this name in 1991 with his excellent edition for the Early English Text Society. Still, it is important to note that this METS edition follows Meredith and Kahrl’s title “The N-Town Plays” (with an “s”) to recognize the various independent parts of the manuscript.

The critical desire to fix a proper name upon the plays has been paralleled by the critical search for a fixed point of origin. From the mid-seventeenth century until the first quarter of the nineteenth, the plays were believed to be from Coventry; then, from 1825 until about 1914, philologists thought the plays were from Lincoln, north and west of East Anglia. In the twentieth century, however, linguists have confirmed that the scribe’s dialect is from

East Anglia, but that observation did not help scholars who were seeking dramatic records.<sup>27</sup> For those studying the plays at York and Chester, there appears to be a neat network of civic, guild, and religious records that scholars could correlate with the respective guild plays. For N-Town, however, there appear to be no such records that provide any information about the plays. To begin with, there is not even the name of one town. Many locations in East Anglia have been suggested: Bury St. Edmunds, East Harling, Thetford, and Lynn, but finding such a “home” for the N-Town Plays may be beside the point, at least for now, for compilations such as the N-Town probably grew out of different scribal and dramatic traditions than the plays associated with York, Coventry, and Chester.

If manuscript books such as the N-Town Plays are “‘fluid, developing entities,’ cobbled together piecemeal depending on the exemplars available,” then our notions of authorship, a cycle of religious plays, and even our present notions of what a book is may not apply.<sup>28</sup> Rather than thinking of the N-Town manuscript as an imperfect example of an urban cycle, readers may find it more valuable to see it as an incomplete, eclectic, regional anthology that is the collaborative product of scribes, playwrights, revisers, actors, readers, and producers.<sup>29</sup> In sum, what may have once been the N-Town Plays’ shortcoming, in its lack of a home and corresponding documentation, is now grounds for proclaiming it a substantial late medieval work of art, perfectly suited to postmodern sensibilities. If the current New Historicist and Cultural Studies program to which many scholars now subscribe is “to restore drama to the rich field of its social origins, insisting on its embeddedness in . . . histories,” then “N-Town Plays” may be the best title (at least, for now) for this set of plays so dependent upon its purposefully variable nature.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps such a title and all the possibilities it implies may provide students, scholars, actors, and directors with a large, rich, and fertile field in which to exercise their own creative and collaborative insights and imaginations.

#### NOTES ON THE TEXT

##### *Text*

This text is coordinated for ease of cross-reference with Spector’s *The N-Town Play: Cotton MS Vespasian D.8* (1991); but it also consults Meredith and Kahrl’s *The N-Town Plays: A Facsimile of British Library MS Cotton Vespasian D VIII* (1977), Block’s *Ludus Coventriae; or the Plaie called Corpus Christi* (1922), Meredith’s *The Mary Play from the N-Town Manuscript* (1987) and *The Passion Play from the N-Town Manuscript* (1990), Greg’s *The Assumption of the Virgin: A Miracle Play from the N-Town Cycle* (1915), and Bevington’s *Medieval Drama* (1975). Since most scholars will be familiar with Spector’s edition, the line numbers in this edition correlate with his. But I do recognize Meredith’s attempts to identify the two Passion Plays and the Mary Play as playbooks that were brought into an existing manuscript and have maintained running line numbers marked by asterisks for those larger play sequences. Those numbers do not always correspond with Meredith, however.

<sup>27</sup> Beadle, “Medieval Drama of East Anglia,” 1:88.

<sup>28</sup> Ralph Hanna III, quoted in Lerer, “Medieval English Literature,” p. 1253.

<sup>29</sup> Cox and Kastan, *New History of Early English Drama*, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> Cox and Kastan, *New History of Early English Drama*, p. 4.

*Versification*

Stanzaic forms such as thirteeners, octaves, quatrains, couplets in the manuscript are indicated in the textual notes and reflected in the text.

*Spelling, Punctuation, and Fonts*

In general, the Middle English spelling in the text follows the original with the following exceptions:

- Thorns (*þ*) are represented by *th*; yoghs (*ȝ*) are changed to *y*, *g*, or *gh*; the East Anglian *x* for words such as *xal* has been changed to *sh* as in *shall*.
- Many confusing spellings or words for contemporary readers — such as the Middle English *here* for Modern English *her*, ME *off* for ModE *of* are rendered in ModE. The ME *the* which could be either *thee* (pronoun) or *the* (article) will be rendered *thee* and *the*, according to the meaning in the line.
- Since *u* for late medieval scribes could represent either ModE *v* or *u*, I have followed modern spelling practices. For example, ME *doue* will be rendered *dove*.
- The letter *w* is occasionally rendered *u*, especially after a vowel.
- Ordinal and cardinal numerals written as Roman numerals in the manuscript are spelled out as ME words.
- Punctuation has been added following modern practice.
- Words specifically referring to God and specific theological terms are capitalized.
- Latin words and stage directions are printed in italics.

*Speakers' Names and Stage Directions*

- Spelling of speakers' names will be regularized to whichever form is most commonly used in the play or play section, but when that same speaker takes on another function or role, the manuscript will be followed. For example, in the Lazarus Play, Consolator 4 also plays the role of Nuncius later in the play.
- Some speakers' names in the manuscript, such as *Quartus Judeus*, are reduced (*Judeus 4*).
- Stage directions are indented, set off by one initial square bracket, and in italics. In general, stage directions will be glossed within the text, not in the margins or at the foot of the page.

*Line Numbering*

For the most part, the line numbering in this text accords with Spector's. As Spector practices in the two Passion Plays (Plays 26–34), I have also kept a running count of the total lines for those larger play sequences. In addition, I have kept a running count of the total lines for the proposed Mary Play (Plays 8–11, 13), but I have not included the Joseph's Doubt Play (Play 12). Meredith notes that this play was likely inserted into the existing Mary Play.<sup>31</sup> So, the numbering for the proposed Mary Play leaps over the Joseph's Doubt Play and resumes for the Visitation scene which concludes the Mary Play. There are Latin lines in the Mary Play that are not part of the stanzaic or rhyme scheme (as in the Presentation of Mary and the Parliament of Heaven) that Spector, somewhat inconsistently, does not count. In end notes, textual notes or explanatory notes, these uncounted lines will be designated by the previously numbered line followed by lowercase letters, such as 45a, indicating the first uncounted line (according to Spector) after line 45.

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<sup>31</sup> *Mary Play*, ed. Meredith, p. 124.

## CORRESPONDING MATERIAL BETWEEN N-TOWN AND OTHER LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLISH PLAYS

Play sequences in bold existed as separate playbooks (Mary Play [**MP**], Passion Play 1 [**PP1**], and Passion Play 2 [**PP2**]) before their introduction into the manuscript. Play numbers for Chester are from *Chester Mystery Cycle*, ed. Lumiansky and Mills; play numbers for Towneley are from *Towneley Plays*, ed. Stevens and Cawley; and play numbers for York are from *York Plays*, ed. Beadle.

N-Town	Chester	Towneley	York	Others
Banns	Banns	—	—	<i>Play of the Sacrament; Castle of Perseverance</i>
1. Creation of Heaven; Fall of Lucifer	1	1	1, 2	—
2. Creation of the World; Fall of Man	2a	2	3, 4, 5, 6	Norwich Grocer's Play
3. Cain and Abel	2b	2	7	—
4. Noah	3	3	8, 9	Newcastle Play
5. Abraham and Isaac	4b	5	10	Brome, Northampton Abraham and Isaac Plays
6. Moses	5a	—	—	—
7. Root of Jesse	—	7	—	—
<b>8. Joachim and Anne (MP)</b>	—	—	—	—
<b>9. Presentation of Mary in the Temple (MP)</b>	—	—	—	—
<b>10. Marriage of Mary and Joseph (MP)</b>	—	—	—	—
<b>11. Parliament of Heaven; Salvation and Conception (MP)</b>	6a	10	12	Coventry Shearmen and Tailors
12. Joseph's Doubt	—	—	13	Coventry Shearmen and Tailors
<b>13. Visit to Elizabeth (MP)</b>	—	11	12	—
14. Trial of Mary and Joseph	—	—	—	—
15. Nativity	6b	—	14	—
16. Shepherds	7	12, 13	15	Coventry Shearmen and Tailors

<b>N-Town</b>	<b>Chester</b>	<b>Towneley</b>	<b>York</b>	<b>Others</b>
18. Magi [There is no play 17 in the MS.]	8, 9	14	16	Coventry Shearman and Tailors
19. Purification	11a	17	17	Coventry Shearman and Tailors, Digby Killing of Children
20. Slaughter of the Innocents; Death of Herod	10	16	19	Coventry Shearman and Tailors, Digby Killing of Children
21. Christ and the Doctors	11b	18	20	Coventry Shearman and Tailors
22. Baptism	—	19	21	—
23. Parliament of Hell; Temptation	12a	—	22	—
24. Woman Taken in Adultery	12b	—	24a	—
25. Raising of Lazarus	13b	31	24b	—
<b>26. Conspiracy; Entry into Jerusalem (PP1)</b>	—	20	25, 26	—
<b>27. Last Supper; Conspiracy with Judas (PP1)</b>	14a, 14b, 15a	20	23a, 27	—
<b>28. Betrayal; Procession of Saints (PP1)</b>	15b	20	28	—
<b>29. Herod; Trial before Annas and Cayphas (PP2)</b>	16	22	29, 31	—
<b>30. Death of Judas; Trials before Pilate and Herod (PP2)</b>	16	22, 32	30a, 30b, 32	—
<b>31. Satan and Pilate's Wife; Second Trial before Pilate (PP2)</b>	—	22	30, 33	—
<b>32. Procession to Calvary; Crucifixion (PP2)</b>	16a	23, 24	34, 35, 36	—
<b>33. Harrowing of Hell (1) (PP2)</b>	17	25	37	—
<b>34. Burial; Guarding of the Sepulcher (PP2)</b>	—	—	—	Christ's Burial (Bodleian e Museo 160)

<b>N-Town</b>	<b>Chester</b>	<b>Towneley</b>	<b>York</b>	<b>Others</b>
35. Harrowing of Hell (2); Appearance to Mary; Pilate and Soldiers	17, 18	25	37	—
36. Announcement to the Marys; Peter and John at the Sepulcher	18	26	38	Christ's Resurrec- tion (Bodleian e Museo 160)
37. Appearance to Mary Magdalene	—	—	39	Christ's Resurrec- tion (Bodleian e Museo 160)
38. Cleophas and Luke; Appearance to Thomas	19	27, 28	40, 41	—
39. Ascension; Selection of Matthias	20	29	42	—
40. Pentecost	21	—	43	—
<b>41. Assumption of Mary</b>	—	—	44, 45, 46	—
42. Judgment Day	24	30	47	—



## THE N-TOWN PLAYS

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### THE BANNS (PROCLAMATION)

<b>VEXILLATOR 1</b>		Now gracyous God, groundyd of all goodnesse	
		As thi grete glorie nevyr begynnyng had,	
		So thu socour and save all tho that sytt and sese	<i>those; cease [talking]</i>
		And lystenyth to oure talkyng with sylens style and sad.	
5		For we purpose us pertly style in this prese	<i>intend; openly; throng</i>
		The pepyl to plesse with pleyes ful glad.	<i>people; plays</i>
		Now lystenyth us, lovely, bothe more and lesse,	
		Gentyllys and yemanry of goodly lyff lad. <sup>1</sup>	
		This tyde,	<i>occasion</i>
10		We shal you shewe — as that we kan —	<i>as we are able</i>
		How that this werd fyrst began	<i>world</i>
		And how God made bothe molde and man	<i>earth</i>
		If that ye wyl abyde.	
<b>VEXILLATOR 2</b>		In the fyrst pagent we thenke to play	
15		How God dede make thurowe his owyn myth	<i>through; might</i>
		Hevyn so clere upon the fyrst day,	<i>bright</i>
		And therin he sett angell ful bryth.	<i>angels; bright</i>
		Than angell with songe — this is no nay —	<i>Then; this is true</i>
		Shal worchep God, as it is ryth.	<i>right</i>
20		But Lucifer, that angell so gay,	<i>brilliant</i>
		In suche pompe than is he pyth,	<i>then; placed</i>
		And set in so gret pride,	
		That Goddys sete he gynneth to take.	<i>God's seat; attempts</i>
		Hese Lordys pere hymself to make	<i>His Lord's peer</i>
25		But than he fallyth, a fend ful blake,	<i>fiend; black</i>
		From hevyn, in helle to abyde.	<i>dwel</i>
<b>VEXILLATOR 3</b>		In the secunde pagent by Godys myth	<i>might</i>
		We thenke to shewe and pley bedene	<i>indeed</i>
		In the other sex days by opyn syth	<i>six; in full view</i>
30		What thenge was wrought; ther shal be sene	

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 7–8: *Now listen to us, beloved [people], both rich and poor, / Gentlemen and yeomen of upright (goodly) conduct*



- How best was made and foule of flyth,  
 And last was man made, as I wene.  
 Of mannys o ryb, as I you plyth,  
 Was woman wroughth mannys make to bene  
 35 And put in paradyse.  
 Ther were flourys bothe blew and blake,  
 Of all frutys thei myth ther take,  
 Saff frute of cunnyng thei shulde forsake  
 And towche it in no wyse.
- 40 The serpent toke Eve an appyl to byte,  
 And Eve toke Adam a mursel of the same.  
 Whan thei had do thus agens the rewle of ryte,  
 Than was oure Lord wroth and grevyd al with grame.  
 Oure Lord gan appose them of ther gret delyte  
 45 Both to askuse hem of that synful blame.  
 And than Almythy God for that gret dyspite  
 Assigned hem grevous peyn as ye shal se in game  
 In dede.  
 Seraphyn, an angell gay,  
 50 With brennyng swerd, this is verray,  
 From paradise bete hem away  
 In Bybyl as we rede.
- VEXILLATOR 1** We purpose to shewe in the thryd pagent  
 The story of Caym and of hese brother Abelle,  
 55 Of here tythyngys now be we bent  
 In this pagent, the trewth to telle.  
 How the tythyng of Abel with feyr was brent  
 And accept to God, yf ye wyl dwelle,  
 We purpose to shewe as we have ment  
 60 And how he was kyllyd of his brother so felle.  
 And than  
 How Caym was cursyd in al degré  
 Of Godys own mowthe ther shal ye se.  
 Of trewe tythyng this may wel be,  
 65 Exawmple to every man.
- VEXILLATOR 2** The thryd pagent is now yow tolde.  
 The fourte pagent of Noe shal be  
 How God was wroth with man on molde  
 Because fro synne man dede not fle.  
 70 He sent to Noe an angel bolde  
 A shyp for to makyn and swymmen on the se,  
 Upon the water both wood and coolde.  
 And eight sowles ther savyd shulde be,  
 And one peyre of everich bestys in brynge.
- beasts were; fowl of flight  
 think  
 One of man's ribs; promise  
 mate to be  
 blue; white  
 might  
 Except; knowledge  
 in no way  
 gave  
 morsel  
 done; rule of right  
 Then; with anger  
 question; sensual delight  
 excuse them both  
 crime  
 see performed  
 burning; true  
 drove them  
 Bible  
 third  
 his  
 their offerings; we will turn  
 fire; burned  
 acceptable; stay  
 intend  
 killed by; cruel  
 then  
 From God's  
 third  
 fourth; Noah  
 angry; earth  
 from; flee  
 float; sea  
 stormy  
 souls; should  
 pair; every beast brought inside*

75      Whan fourty days the flode had flowe,  
           Than sente Noe out a crowe  
           And after hym he sent a dowe  
           That brouth ryth good tydyng.

*flood; flowed*  
*Then*  
*dove*  
*brought; good news*

<b>VEXILLATOR 3</b>	Of Abraham is the fyfte pagent	<i>fifth</i>
80	And of Ysaac his sone so fre, How that he shulde with fere be brent And slayn with swerd as ye shal se. Abraham toke with good atent His sone Ysaac and knelyd on kne.	<i>noble should; fire see intent</i>
85	His suerd was than ful redy bent And thouth his chylde ther offered shuld be Upon an hyll full ryff. Than God toke tent to his good wyl And sent an angel ryth sone hym tyl	<i>sword; drawn thought; should readily paid attention to very soon to him</i>
90	And bad Abraham a shep to kyl And savyd his chyldys lyff.	<i>commanded; kill child's</i>

<b>VEXILLATOR 1</b>	The sexte pagent is of Moyses	<i>sixth; Moses</i>
	And of tweyn tabelys that God him took	<i>two</i>
	In the which were wrete, without les,	<i>written; lies</i>
95	The lawes of God to lerne and lok,	<i>observe</i>
	And how God charged hym be wordys these	<i>by</i>
	The lawes to lerne al of that book.	<i>teach</i>
	Moyes than doth nevyr more sese	<i>cease</i>
	But prechyth duly — bothe yere and woke —	<i>dutifully; week</i>
100	The lawes as I yow telle.	
	The Ten Commaundementys alle bedene	<i>all together</i>
	In oure play ye shal hem sene —	<i>them see</i>
	To alle tho that there wyl bene —	<i>those; will be there</i>
104	If that ye thenke to duelle.	<i>to stay</i>

<b>VEXILLATOR 2</b>	Of the gentyl Jesse rote	<i>root</i>
	The sefnt pagent forsothe shal ben	<i>seventh; in truth; be</i>
	Out of the which doth sprynge oure bote	<i>remedy</i>
	As in prophecye we redyn and sen.	<i>read; see</i>
	Kyngys and prophetys with wordys ful sote	<i>sweet</i>
110	Schull prophesye al of a qwen,	<i>queen</i>
	The which shal staunch oure stryff and moote	<i>stop; strife; dispute</i>
	And wynnyn us welthe withoutyn wen	<i>blemish</i>
	In hevyn to abyde.	<i>dwell</i>
	They shal prophecye of a mayde	
115	All fendys of her shal be affrayde.	<i>fiends</i>
	Her sone shal save us — be not dismayde —	
	With hese woundys wyde.	<i>his</i>

<b>VEXILLATOR 3</b>	Of the grete bushop Abyacar	<i>bishop</i>
	The eighte pagent shal be, without lesyng,	<i>lying</i>
120	The which comaundyth men to be war	<i>beware</i>
	And brynge here douterys to dew wedding.	<i>their daughters; appropriate</i>
	All that ben thirteene yere and more,	
	To maryage he byddyth hem bryng.	
	Wherevyr thei be, he chargyth sore	<i>commands strictly</i>
125	That thei not fayle for no lettyng,	<i>hindrance</i>
	The lawe byddyth so than.	<i>then</i>
	Than Joachym and Anne so mylde,	<i>Then</i>
	Thei brynge forthe Mary, that blyssed chylde.	
	But she wold not be defilyde	
130	With spot nor wem of man.	<i>stain</i>
	In chastyté, that blysfyl mayde	
	Avowyd there her lyff to lede.	
	Than is the busshop sore dysmayde	<i>Then; very</i>
	And wonderyth sore al of this dede.	<i>is puzzled sorely by</i>
135	He knelyd to God as it is sayde	
	And prayth than for help and rede.	<i>then; counsel</i>
	Than seyth an angel, "Be not a frayde	<i>Then</i>
	Of this dowte. Take thu no drede,	<i>marvel. Have no fear</i>
	But for the kynrede of Davyd thu sende.	<i>kindred</i>
140	Lete hem come with here offryng	<i>them; their</i>
	And in here handys white yerdys brynge.	<i>their hands; rods</i>
	Loke whose yerde doth floure and sprynge,	<i>rod; bloom</i>
	And he shal wedde that mayden hende."	<i>gentle</i>
<b>VEXILLATOR 1</b>	In the ninte pagent, sothe to say,	<i>ninth; truth</i>
145	A masangere forthe is sent.	
	Davydis kynrede, without delay,	<i>David's kindred</i>
	They come ful sone with good entent.	<i>Soon</i>
	Whan Joseph offeryd his yerde that day	<i>rod</i>
	Anon ryth forth in present	<i>Immediately; in plain view</i>
150	The ded styk do floure ful gay	<i>dead stalk flowered</i>
	And than Joseph to wedlok went,	<i>then</i>
	Ryth as the angel bad.	<i>commanded</i>
	Than he plyth to his wyff,	<i>Then; plighted</i>
	In chastyté to ledyn here lyff.	<i>lead their</i>
155	The busshop toke here thre maydonys ryff;	<i>gave; readily</i>
	Som comforte there she had.	
<b>VEXILLATOR 2</b>	In the tende pagent goth Gabryell	<i>tenth</i>
	And doth salute oure Lady fre,	<i>excellent</i>
	Than grett with chylde, as I yow tell,	<i>Then</i>
160	That blyssed mayde — forsothe is she.	<i>true</i>
	Tho thre maydenys that with her dwelle	<i>Those</i>

	Here gret spech, but noon thei se.	<i>Hear; no one; see</i>
	Than they suppose that sum angell,	<i>Then</i>
	Goddys masangere that it shuld be.	<i>should</i>
165	And thus	
	The Holy Gost in her is lyth	<i>alights within her</i>
	And Goddys Sone in her is pygth.	<i>her is implanted</i>
	The aungell doth telle what he shal hyght,	<i>be called</i>
169	And namyth the chylde Jhesus.	
	<b>VEXILLATOR 3</b> In the hellenthe pagent, as I yow telle,	<i>eleventh</i>
	Joseph comyth hom fro fer countré.	
	Oure Ladyes wombe with chylde doth swelle,	
	And than Joseph ful hevy is he.	<i>grieved</i>
	He doth forsake her with hert ful felle.	<i>heavy</i>
175	Out of countré he gynnyth to fle;	
	He neyrmore thenkyth with her to dwelle,	
	And than oure Lady ryth sore wepyth she.	<i>then</i>
	An angell seyd hym ryf:	<i>promptly</i>
	“God is with thi wyff sertayn.”	
180	Therfore Joseph turne hom agayn.	
	Than is Joseph in herte ful fayn	<i>Then; glad</i>
	And goth ageyn onto his wyff.	
	<b>VEXILLATOR 1</b> The twelfte pagent I sey yow bedene	<i>indeed</i>
	Shal be of Joseph and mylde Mary,	
185	How they were sclawndryd with trey and tene	<i>slandered; abuse and malice</i>
	And to here purgacyon thei must hem hy.	<i>their; themselves hasten</i>
	<b>VEXILLATOR 2</b> In the thirteente pagent shewe we shal	
	How Joseph went withoute varyauns	<i>hesitation</i>
	For mydwyvys to helpe oure Lady at all	<i>midwives</i>
190	Of childe that she had delyverauns.	
	<b>VEXILLATOR 3</b> In the fourteente pagent Cryst shal be born.	
	Of that joy aungelys shul synge	
	And telle the shepherdys in that morn	
	The blysseful byrth of that king.	
195	The shepherdys shal come him befforn	<i>before him</i>
	With reverens and with worchepying	
	For he shall savyn that was forlorn	<i>lost</i>
	And graunt us lyff evyrmore lesting,	<i>life; lasting</i>
	Iwys.	<i>Truly</i>
200	This gle in gryth	<i>joy in peace</i>
	Is mater of myrth.	<i>matter</i>
	Now Cristys byrth	
	Bryng us to his blys.	

**VEXILLATOR 1** In the fifteente pagent come kingys thre

205	With gold, myrre, and frankynsens. King Herowdys styward hem doth se And bryngyth all to his presens. The kyngys of Coleyn with hert ful fre Tolde King Herownde here dylygens,	<i>Herod's steward them</i>
210	That thei south in that countré A kyng of kyngys from fere thens, A sterre led hem the way. The chylde is young and lyth in stall: He shal be Kyng of Kyngys all.	<i>Cologne; noble their mission sought far away showed them lies</i>
215	Before hym we thynk on kne to fall And worchep hym this day.	<i>honor</i>

**VEXILLATOR 2** In the sixteente pagent as wroth as wynde

	Is King Herownde — the soth to say — And cruel knytnys and unkende	<i>angry as the wind truth knights; brutal</i>
220	To sle male chylderyn he sendyth that day. But Cryst Jhesu thei may not fynde, For Joseph hath led that childe away Unto Egyth as we have mende, As angel to Joseph dyd byd and say	<i>slay</i>
225	In hyght. Tho chylderyn that syt in here moderys lap To sowkyn ful swetly here moderys pap: The knyhtys do sle hem evyn at a swap.	<i>understood</i>
229	This is a rewly syth.	<i>command Those; their mother's suck; their mother's breast stroke rueful sight</i>

**VEXILLATOR 3** In the sefnteente pagent the knyhtys bedene

	Shull brynge dede childeryn befor the kyng. Whan Kyng Herownde that syth hath sene Ful glad he is of here kylling. Than Kyng Herownde withowtyn wene	<i>seventeenth; all together the dead sight their</i>
235	Is sett to mete at his lykyng. In his most pride shal come gret tene As ye shal se at oure pleyng. His sorwe shal awake Whan he is sett at hese most pryde.	<i>Then; without doubt banquet; pleasure great pride; harm</i>
240	Sodeyn, Deth shal thrylle his syde And kille his knyhtys that with hym byde, The devyl ther soulys shal take.	<i>Suddenly; pierce knights; dwell</i>

**VEXILLATOR 1** In the eighteente pagent we must purpose

245	To shewe whan Cryst was twelve yer of age, How in the temple he dede appose And answerd doctoris ryth wyse and sage. The blyssyd babe, withowte glose,	<i>debate</i>
		<i>deceit (verbal tricks)</i>

Overcam olde clerkys with suych langage *clerks*  
 That thei merveylyd. Ye shal suppose *marveled; understand*  
 250 How that he cam to suche knowlage.  
 And in this whyle  
 Thre days he was oute *absent*  
 Fro his modyr. Without doute,  
 Wepying she sowth him rownde aboute, *sought*  
 255 Jheruselem many a myle.

**VEXILLATOR 2** In the nineteente pagent shal Seynt Jhon *John the Baptist*  
 Babtyse Cryst — as I yow say —  
 In the watyr of Flom Jordan *River*  
 With which devys as we best may. *device*  
 260 The Holy Gost shal ovyr hym on; *hover over him*  
 The Faderys voys shal be herd that day *Father's*  
 Out of hevyn that blisful tron. *throne*  
 The Fadyr shal be herd — this is no nay — *undoubtedly*  
 And forthwith pleyne *without embellishment*  
 265 The Holy Gost shal be his gyde *(i.e., Christ's)*  
 Into desert therin to abyde  
 Fourty days — a terme ful wide — *very long time*  
 And fourty nyghtys to faste sarteyn. *certainly*

**VEXILLATOR 3** In the twentieth pagent, all the develys of helle  
 270 They gadere a parlement as ye shal se.  
 They have gret doute, the trewth to telle, *fear*  
 Of Cryst Jhesu whath he shulde be.  
 They sende Sathan — that fynde so felle — *fiend so cruel*  
 Cryst for to tempte in fele degré. *in many ways*  
 275 We shal yow shewe, if ye wyl dwelle, *stay*  
 How Cryst was temptyd in synnys thre *sins*  
 Of the devyl, Sathan, *By*  
 And how Cryst answeyrd onto alle  
 And made the fende away to falle. *fiend*  
 280 As we best may this shewe we shalle *show*  
 Thorwe grace of God and man. *Through*

**VEXILLATOR 1** The twenty-fyrst pagent of a woman shal be,  
 The which was take in adultryé. *taken*  
 The Pharysewys falsed ther ye shal se, *Pharisees' falsehood*  
 285 Cryst to convycte how they were slye. *convict; cunning*  
 They conseyyd this sotylté: *subtlety*  
 Yf Cryst this woman dede dampne trewly *did condemn*  
 Ageyn his prechying than dede he *Against*  
 Which was of peté and of mercy. *pity*  
 290 And if he dede her save, *did*  
 Than were he agens Moyses lawe *Then; against Moses'*

- That byddyth with stonys she shulde be slawe. *should be slain*  
 Thus they thowth undyr ther awe *thought; power*  
 294 Cryst Jhesu for to have.
- VEXILLATOR 2** The grettest meracle that evyr Jhesus *miracle*  
 In erthe wrouth befor his Passyon *wrought*  
 In the twenty-secund pagent we purpose us  
 To shewe in dede. The declaracyon  
 That pagent shal be of Lazarus  
 300 In whos place and habytacyon  
 Cryst was logyd, the gospel seyth thus, *lodged*  
 And oftetye toke ther consolacyon. *hospitality*  
 But yyt *yet*  
 Lazarus, as I yow say,  
 305 Was four days ded and beryed in clay. *buried*  
 From deth to lyve the fourth day. *to life*  
 Cryst reysed hym from that pyt. *raised; tomb*
- VEXILLATOR 3** In the twenty-thryd pagent Palme Sunday  
 In pley we purpose for to shewe — *to show*  
 310 How childeryn of Ebrew with flourys ful gay *Israel; bright*  
 The wey that Cryst went thei gun to strewe. *road; began*
- VEXILLATOR 1** In the twenty-forte pagent, as that we may,  
 Cryst and his apostelys alle on rewe — *row*  
 The Mawndé of God ther shal they play *Last Supper*  
 315 And sone declare it with wordys fewe. *immediately*  
 And than *then*  
 Judas, that fals traytour,  
 For thretty platys of werdly tresour *30 pieces of worldly*  
 Shal betray oure Savyour  
 320 To the Jewys, certan. *certainly*
- VEXILLATOR 2** For grevous peyn — this is no les — *lie*  
 In the twenty-fifte pagent, Cryst shal pray  
 To the Fadyr of Hevyn that peyn for to ses, *pain to cease*  
 His shamful deth to put away.  
 325 Judas, that traytour, befor gret pres *crowd*  
 Shal kys his mouth and hym betray.  
 All his dyscyples than do dyscres *fall away*  
 And forsake Cryst, the soth to say. *truth*  
 For doute — thei do hem hede — *fear; themselves hide*  
 330 Hese dyscyplys all everychon *His; everyone*  
 Do renne away and leve hym alon.  
 They lete hym stondyn amonge his fon  
 And ronne away for drede. *leave him standing; foes*  
*run; fear*

- VEXILLATOR 3** Than in the twenty-sexte pagent,  
 335 To Cayphas Cryst shal be brouth.  
 Tho Jewys ful redy ther shul be bent,  
 Cryst to acuse with worde and thouth.  
 Seynt Petyr doth folwe with good intent  
 To se with Cryst what shuld be wrouth.  
 340 For Crystys dysciple, whan he is hent,  
 Thryes he doth swere he knew hym nowth.  
 A kok shal crowe and crye —  
 Than doth Petyr gret sorwe make,  
 For he his lord thus dede forsake.  
 345 But God to grace hym sone doth take  
 Whan he doth ask mercye.
- Then  
brought  
Those; determined  
thought  
wrought  
when; caught  
Thrice; not  
sorrow  
did*
- VEXILLATOR 1** In the twenty-sefint pagent, Sere Pylat  
 Is sett in sete as hy justyce.  
 Whan he is set in his astat,  
 350 Thre thevys be brout of sinful gyse.  
 And Cryst — that lovyd nevyr stryff nor bat,  
 But trewth and goodnesse on every wyse —  
 As for a thef with ryth gret hatt  
 Is browth to stondyn at that same syse.  
 355 And than as I yow say  
 The wyff of Pilat goth to rest  
 Coveryd with clothis al of the best.  
 Than for to slepe she is ful prest —  
 359 Al this we thenke to play.
- Sir  
high  
throne  
brought; conduct  
debate  
in every way  
As if he were; haste  
assize court  
Then; ready*
- VEXILLATOR 2** In the twenty-eighte pagent shal Judas —  
 That was to Cryst a fals traytour —  
 With wepyng sore evyr crye “alas!”  
 That evyr he solde oure Savyour.  
 He shal be sory for his trespas  
 365 And brynge agen all his tresour,  
 All thretty pens to Sere Cayphas.  
 He shal them brynge with gret dolowre,  
 For the which Cryst was bowth.  
 For gret whanhope — as ye shal se —  
 370 He hangyth hymself upon a tre.  
 For he noth trostyth in Godys peté,  
 To Helle his sowle is browth.
- again  
30 pence; Sir  
sorrow  
bought  
despair  
Because he didn't trust; mercy  
brought*
- VEXILLATOR 3** In the twenty-ninte pagent, to Pylatus wyff,  
 In slepe aperyth the devyl of helle  
 375 For to savyn Crystys lyff,  
 The devyl her temptyth, as I yow telle.  
 Sche sendyth to Pylat, anon ful ryff,
- Pilate's wife  
Christ's life  
right away*



- And prayth that Cryst he shuld not qwelle. *kill*  
 Than Pylat is besy and ryth blyff *Then; very quick*  
 380 Cryst for to savyn, he gevyth councele *spare*  
 For he dede nevyr trespas. *Because*  
 The Jewys do crye fast for to kyllle, *eagerly*  
 The rythful man thei aske to spylle. *righteous; kill*  
 A thef thei save with herty wylle *great zeal*  
 385 That callyd is Barrabas.
- VEXILLATOR 1** In the threttieth pagent, thei bete out Crystys blood *thirtieth; Christ's*  
 And nayle hym al nakyd upon a rode tre *cross*  
 Between twey thevys. Iwys, they were to wood; *two; Truly; too crazed (angry)*  
 They hyng Cryst Jhesu, gret shame it is to se. *hang; see*  
 390 Seven wurdys Cryst spekyth hangyng upon the rode, *words; cross*  
 The weche ye shal here, all tho that wyl ther be. *which; hear; those*  
 Than doth he dye for oure allther good. *Then; all our*  
 His modyr doth se that syth — gret mornyng makyth she — *sight; mourning*  
 For sorwe she gynneth to swowne. *begins to swoon*  
 395 Seint Johan evyn ther, as I yow plyth, *as I promise you*  
 Doth chere oure Lady with al his myth, *Comfort; might*  
 And to the temple anon forthryth *immediately*  
 He ledyth her in that stownde. *hour/place*
- VEXILLATOR 2** We purpose to shewe, in oure pleyn place, *to show; open staging area*  
 400 In the thretty-first pagent thorwe Godys myth, *through*  
 How to Crystys herte a spere gan pace *heart; did enter*  
 And rent oure Lordys bryst in ruly plyth. *breast in rueful plight*  
 For Longeus, that olde knyth blynd as he was, *Because; knight*  
 A ryth sharpe spere to Crystys herte shal pyth *truly; thrust*  
 405 The blod of his wounde to his eyn shal tras; *eyes; travel*  
 And thorwe gret meracle ther hath he syth. *through; miracle; sight*  
 Than in that morn *Then*  
 Cristys soule goth down to helle  
 And ther ovyrcomyth the fende so felle, *cruel*  
 410 Comfortyth the soulys that therin dwelle,  
 And savyth that was forlorn. *[those] who were lost*
- VEXILLATOR 3** Joseph and Nycodemus, to Cryst trew servaunt, *servants*  
 In the thretty-second pagent the body thei aske to have. *body [of Christ]*  
 Pylat ful redyly the body doth hem graunt.  
 415 Than thei with reverens do put it in grave *Then*  
 The Jewys more wyckyd than ony geawnt *any giant*  
 For Crystys ded body kepers do thei crave. *guards*  
 Pylat sendyth four knytys that be ryth hardaunt *knights; very bold*  
 To kepe the bloody body in his dede conclave. *tomb*  
 420 And yit, be his owyn myth, *yet, by*  
 The body that was hevy as led —

- Be the Jewys nevyr so qwed — *By; wicked*  
 Aryseth from grave that ther lay ded  
 424 And frayth than every knyth. *frightens then*
- VEXILLATOR 1** In the thretty-thryd pagent the soule of Cryst Jhesu *thirty-third*  
 Shal brynge all his frendys from helle to paradyse.  
 The soule goth than to the grave and be ryth gret vertu, *great power*  
 That body — that longe ded hath loyn — to lyf agen doth ryse. *lain*  
 Than doth Cryst Jhesu onto his modyr sew *Then; mother proceed*  
 430 And comfortyth all her care in temple ther she lyse. *where she dwells*  
 With suche cher and comforth his modyr he doth indew, *endow*  
 That joy it is to her, ther spech for to devyse. *discern*  
 And than, *then*  
 Oure Lady of Hefne so cler  
 435 In herte sche hath ryth glad chere.  
 Whan her sone thus doth apere,  
 Her care away is tan. *taken*
- VEXILLATOR 2** In the thretty-forte pagent shal Maryes thre  
 Seke Cryst Jhesu in his grave so coolde. *Seek*  
 440 An aungel hem tellyth that aresyn is he. *them (the Marys)*  
 And whan that this tale to them is tolde,  
 To Crystys dyscyplis, with wurdys ful fre, *excellent*  
 They telle these tydyngys with brest ful bolde. *tidings*  
 Than Petyr and Johan, as ye shal se, *Then*  
 445 Down rennyng in hast over lond and wolde — *running swiftly; woodland*  
 The trewth of this to have.  
 Whan thei ther comyn, as I yow say, *When; came*  
 He is gon from undyr clay.  
 Than thai wytnesse anoon that day *at once*  
 450 He lyth not in his grave. *lies*
- VEXILLATOR 3** Onto Mary Mawdelyn, as we have bent, *intend*  
 Cryst Jhesu shal than apere *then*  
 In the thretty-fifte pagent.  
 And she wenyth he be a gardenere *thinks*  
 455 Mary, be name, verament, *truly*  
 Whan Cryst her callyth with spech ful clere,  
 She fallyth to ground with good entent  
 To kys his fete with gladsom chere. *joyful*  
 But Cryst byddyth her do way. *asked her to desist*  
 460 He byddyth his feet that sche not kys  
 Tyl he have styed to hefne blys. *ascended; heaven's bliss*  
 To Cristys dyscyplys Mary, iwys, *I believe*  
 Than goth, the trewth to say. *Then*

- VEXILLATOR 1** In the thretty-sexe pagent shal Cleophas *thirty-sixth*  
 465 And Sent Luke to a castel go.  
 Of Crystys deth, as thei forth pas, *Christ's; travel*  
 They make gret mornynge and be ful wo. *woeful*  
 Than Cryst them ovyrtok, as his wyl was, *Then*  
 And walkyd in felachep forth with hem too. *fellowship; both of them*  
 470 To them he doth expowne, bothe more and las, *expound; less*  
 All that prophetys spak and of hymself also *spoke*  
 That nyth, in fay. *night; truly*  
 Whan thei be set within the castell, *When; seated*  
 In brekyng of bred thei know Cryst well.  
 475 Than sodeynly, as I yow tell, *Then suddenly*  
 Cryste is gon his way.
- VEXILLATOR 2** In the thretty-sefint pagent than purpos we *thirty-seventh; intend*  
 To Thomas of Ynde Cryst shal apere. *India*  
 And Thomas, evyn ther as ye shal se,  
 480 Shal put his hand in his woundys dere. *precious wounds*
- VEXILLATOR 3** In the thretty-eichte pagent up stye shal he *ascend*  
 Into hefne that is so clere. *bright*  
 All hese apostel ther shul be *his*  
 And woundere sore and have gret dwere *fear*  
 485 Of that ferly syth. *marvelous sight*  
 Ther shal come aungell tweyn *two angels*  
 And comfforte hem, this is certeyn, *them*  
 And tellyn that he shal comyn ageyn  
 489 Evyn by his owyn myth. *might*
- VEXILLATOR 1** Than folwyth next, sekryly, *Then; certainly*  
 Of Wyttsunday, that solemne fest *Pentecost*  
 Whych pagent shal be nyne and thretty. *thirty*  
 To the apostelys to apere be Crystys hest *by Christ's command*  
 In Hierusalem were gaderyd twelve opynly. *Jerusalem*  
 495 To the cenacle, coming from west and est, *upper room*  
 The Holy Gost apperyd ful vervently, *fierily (ardently)*  
 With brennyng fere thyrlyng here brest, *fire piercing their*  
 Procedyng from hevyn trone. *heaven's throne*  
 All maner langage hem spak with tung — *spoke in tongues*  
 500 Latyn, Grek, and Ebrew among.  
 And after thei departyd and taryed not long  
 Here deth to take ful sone. *Their; accept willingly*
- VEXILLATOR 2** The fortyeth pagent shal be the last,  
 And Domysday, that pagent shal hyth.  
 505 Who se that pagent may be agast *Doomsday; be called*  
 To grevyn his Lord God, eyther day or nyth. *Whoever sees*  
*offend*

	The erth shal qwake, bothe breke and brast,	<i>break and burst</i>
	Beryelys and gravys shul ope ful tyth.	<i>Tombs; quickly</i>
	Ded men shul rysyn, and that ther in hast,	<i>haste</i>
510	And fast to here ansuere thei shul hem dyth	<i>prepare themselves</i>
	Beffore Godys face.	<i>God's</i>
	But prente wyl this in youre mende:	<i>imprint well</i>
	Whoso to God hath be unkende,	<i>has been unkind</i>
	Frenchep ther shal he non fynde,	<i>Friendship</i>
515	Ne ther get he no grace.	<i>Nor</i>
<b>VEXILLATOR 3</b> Now have we told yow all bedene		
	The hool mater that we thynke to play.	<i>together</i>
	Whan that ye come, ther shal ye sene	<i>whole</i>
	This game wel pleyd in good aray.	<i>When</i>
520	Of Holy Wrytte this game shal bene	<i>all prepared</i>
	And of no fablys be no way.	<i>Scripture</i>
	Now God them save from trey and tene	<i>by no means</i>
	For us that prayth upon that day,	<i>pain; suffering</i>
	And qwyte them wel ther mede.	<i>requite; reward</i>
525	A Sunday next, yf that we may,	<i>On</i>
	At six of the belle we gynne oure play	<i>6 a.m.; begin</i>
	In N. town, wherfore we pray	
	That God now be youre spede.	<i>motivator (helper)</i>
	Amen.	

## 1. CREATION OF HEAVEN; FALL OF LUCIFER

<b>DEUS</b>	<i>Ego sum alpha et oo, principium et finis.</i> <sup>1</sup>	
	My name is knowyn, God and kynge.	
	My werk for to make, now wyl I wende.	<i>undertake</i>
	In myself restyth my reynenge:	<i>reigning</i>
	It hath no gynnyng ne non ende.	<i>beginning nor end</i>
5	And all that evyr shal have beyng,	
	It is closyd in my mende.	<i>contained; mind</i>
	Whan it is made at my lykynge,	
	I may it save; I may it shende	<i>confound (bring to destruction)</i>
	After my plesawns.	<i>At my pleasure</i>
10	So gret of myth is my pousté,	<i>might; power</i>
	All thyng shal be wrowth be me.	<i>made by</i>
	I am oo God, in personys thre	<i>one</i>
	Knyt in oo substawns.	<i>one</i>

<sup>1</sup> *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.* (See Apocalypse 1:8)

15 I am the trewe Trenyté *Trinity*  
 Here walkyng in this wone. *place*  
 Thre Personys, myself I se  
 Lokyn in me, God alone. *Locked*  
 I am the Fadyr of Powsté; *Power*  
 My Sone with me gynnyth gon; *proceeds*  
 20 My Gost is grace in magesté.  
 Weldyth welthe up in Hevyn tron *Wields*  
 O God in thre I calle: *One God in three; am called*  
 I am Fadyr of Myth; *Might*  
 My Sone kepyth ryth; *justice*  
 25 My Gost hath lyth *light*  
 And grace withalle.

Myself begynnyng nevyr dyd take,  
 And endeles I am thorw myn owyn myth. *through; might*  
 Now wole I begynne my werke to make:  
 30 Fyrst, I make hevyn with sterrys of lyth. *stars of light*  
 In myrth and joy evermore to wake.  
 In hevyn I bylde angell ful bryth, *create angels*  
 My servauntys to be, and for my sake  
 With merth and melody worchepe my myth. *might*  
 35 I belde them in my blysse, *create*  
 Aungell in hevyn evyrmore shal be.  
 In lyth ful clere, bryth as ble, *light; brightest colors*  
 With myrth and song to worchip me,  
 Of joye thei may not mys.

*[Hic cantent angeli in celo: "Tibi omnes angeli tibi celi et universe potestates. Tibi cherubyn et seraphyn incessabili voce proclamant: 'Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth.'"]*<sup>1</sup>

**LUCIFERE** To whos wurchipe synge ye this songe? *honor*  
 41 To wurchip God or reverens me?  
 But ye me wurchipe ye do me wronge, *Unless*  
 For I am the wurthyest that evyr may be!  
**ANGELI BONI** We wurchipe God of myth most stronge *might*  
 45 Whiche hath formyd bothe us and thee!  
 We may nevyr wurchyp hym to longe, *too long*  
 For he is most worthy of magesté!  
 On knes to God we falle,  
 Oure Lorde God wurchyp we,  
 50 And in no wyse honowre we thee!

<sup>1</sup> Here sing the angels in heaven: "To you all angels, the heaven, and the powers of the universe cry out unceasingly: 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts'"

A gretter lord may nevyr non be *none ever be*  
 Than he that made us alle!

**LUCIFERE** A wurthyer lorde forsothe am I  
 And worthyer than he evyr wyl I be!  
 55 In evydens that I am more worthy,  
 I wyl go syttyn in Goddys se *sit on God's throne*  
 Above sunne and mone and sterrys on sky. *moon; stars*  
 I am now set as ye may se!  
 Now wurchyp me for most myhty, *mighty*  
 60 And for youre lord honowre now me,  
 Syttyng in my sete.

**ANGELI MALI** Goddys myth we forsake, *God's might*  
 And for more wurthy we thee take.  
 Thee to wurchep honowre we make  
 65 And falle down at thi fete.

**DEUS** Thu, Lucyfere, for thi mekyl pryde — *great pride*  
 I bydde thee falle from hefne to helle.  
 And all tho that holdyn on thi side, *those who have taken your*  
 In my blysse nevyrmore to dwelle.  
 70 At my comawndement anoon down thu slyde *now*  
 With merth and joye nevyrmore to melle! *to mingle*  
 In myschyf and manas evyr shalt thou abyde *menace*  
 In byttyr brennyng and fyer so felle, *burning; cruel*  
 74 In peyn evyr to be pyht. *violently cast out (afflicted)*

**LUCIFERE** At thy byddyng, thy wyl I werke  
 And pas fro joy to peyne smerte. *great pain*  
 Now I am a devyl ful derke  
 That was an aungell bryht.

Now to helle the way I take,  
 80 In endeles peyn ther to be pyht. *fixed (set)*  
 For fere of fyre a fart I crake *fear; crack*  
 In helle donjoon, myn dene is dyth! *den is prepared*

## 2. CREATION OF THE WORLD; FALL OF MAN

**DEUS** Now hevyn is made for aungell sake. *the angels'*  
 The fyrst day and the fyrst nyth;  
 The secunde day watyr I make,  
 The walkyn also ful fayr and bryth;  
 5 The thryd day, I parte watyr from erthe, *firmament*  
 Tre and every growyng thing,  
 Bothe erbe and floure of suete smellyng;

- The thryd day is made be my werkyng.  
Now make I the day that shal be the ferthe. *by fourth*
- 10 Sunne and mone and sterrys also, *moon; stars*  
The forthe day I make in-same. *together*  
The fyfte day: werme and fysch that swymme and go,  
Byrdys and bestys, bothe wylde and tame.  
The sexte day, my werk I do
- 15 And make the man, Adam be name. *by name*  
In erthelech paradys withowtyn wo *earthly*  
I graunt thee bydyng lasse thu do blame. *to live in unless; sin*
- Flesch of thi flesch, and bon of thi bon: *bone*  
Adam, here is thi wyf and make. *mate*
- 20 Both fysche and foullys that swymmyn and gon  
To everych of hem a name thu take. *them; you give*  
Bothe tre and frute and bestys echon, *each one*  
Red and qwtie, bothe blew and blake — *white; pale*  
Thu geve hem name be thiself alon, *them; by*
- 25 Erbys and gresse both beetys and brake. *bracken*  
Thi wyff thu geve name also. *wife*  
Loke that ye not ses *do not cease*  
Yowre frute to encres — *increase*  
That ther may be pres *a throng*
- 30 Me worchipe for to do. *To worship me*
- Now come forth, Adam, to paradys!  
Ther shalt thou have all maner thyng:  
Bothe flesch and fysch and frute of prys, *excellence*  
All shal be buxum at thi byddyng. *obedient*
- 35 Here is pepyr, pyan, and swete lycorys — *peony; licorice*  
Take hem all at thi lykyng — *them*  
Both appel and pere and gentyl rys. *rice*  
But towche nowth this tre that is of cunnyng. *not; knowledge*  
Allthyng, saff this, for thee is wrought. *Everything, except this; created*
- 40 Here is allthinge that thee shulde plese. *everything*  
All redy made onto thin ese. *your pleasure*  
Ete not this frute ne me dysplese, *nor*  
For than thou deyst thou skapyst nowth. *die without escape*
- Now have I made allthyng of nowth, *from nought*  
45 Hevyn and erth, foul and best. *fowl; beast*  
To allthyng that myn hand hath wrowth,  
I graunt myn blyssyng that evyr shal lest. *last*  
My wey to hefne is redy sowth: *to be found*  
Of werkyng I wole the sefnt day rest. *seventh*
- 50 And all my creaturys that be abowth,

- My blyssyng ye have both est and west, *east*  
 Of werkyng the sefnt day, ye sees. *seventh; cease*  
 And all tho that sees of laboryng here *those; cease; hear (understand)*  
 The sefnt day, withoutyn dwere, *certainly (without doubt)*  
 55 And wurchyp me in good manere —  
 Thei shal in hefne have endles pes. *peace*
- Adam, go forth and be prynce in place, *[that] place*  
 For to hefne I sped my way.  
 Thi wyttys wel loke thu chase, *encourage*  
 60 And gostly governe thee as I say. *guide yourself spiritually*
- ADAM** Holy Fadyr, blyssyd thu be, *blessed*  
 For I may walke in welthe anow. *enough*  
 I fynde datys gret plenté, *dates [in]*  
 And many fele frutys ful every bow. *fine; bough*  
 65 All this wele is govyn to me *wealth; given*  
 And to my wyf that on me lowh. *smiles*  
 I have no nede to towche yon tre  
 Agens my Lordys wyl to werke now — *Lord's*  
 I am a good gardenere.  
 70 Every frute of ryche name *honorable*  
 I may gaderyn with gle and game. *with glee and pleasure*  
 To breke that bond I were to blame *would be a sin*  
 That my Lord bad me kepyn here. *bade me*
- EVA** We may both be blythe and glad,  
 75 Oure Lordys comaundement to fulfyll *Lord's*  
 With fele frutys be we fayr fad, *abundant; fed*  
 Woundyr dowcet and nevyr on ill. *Wondrously sweet; a bad one*  
 Every tre with frute is sprad  
 Of them to take as plesyth us tyll.  
 80 Oure witte were rakyl and ovyrdon bad *unstable and evil*  
 To forfeate ageyns oure Lordys wyll *To transgress; Lord's*  
 In ony wyse. *any way*  
 In this gardeyn I wyl go se  
 All the flourys of fayr bewté  
 85 And tastyn the frutys of gret plenté  
 That be in paradyse.
- SERPENS** Heyl, fayr wyff and comely dame!  
 This frute to ete I thee cownsele.  
 Take this appyl and ete this same!  
 90 This frute is best as I thee telle.  
**EVA** That appyl to ete I were to blame,  
 From joy oure Lorde wold us expelle!  
 We shuld dye and be put out with schame



- 95 In joye of paradyse nevyrmore to duelle  
 God hymself thys sayde!  
 What day of that frute we ete.  
 With these wurdys, God dyd us threte *threaten*  
 That we shuld dye, our lyff to lete. *forfeit*
- 99 Therffore, I am affrayde.
- SERPENS** Of this appyl — yf ye wyl byte —  
 Evyn as God is, so shal ye be!  
 Wys of connyng — as I yow plyte — *I swear to you*  
 Lyke onto God in al degré!  
 Sunne and mone and sterrys bryth, *moon; stars*  
 105 Fysch and foule, bothe sond and se, *shore; sea*  
 At your byddying bothe day and nyth:  
 Allthynges shal be in yowre powsté. *Everything; power*  
 Ye shal be Goddys pere!  
 Take this appyl in thin hond, *your*  
 110 And to byte therof, thu fond. *try*  
 Take another to thin husbond;  
 Therof have thu no dwere. *your*  
*fear*
- EVA** So wys as God is in his gret mayn *strength*  
 And felaw in kunnyng fayn wold I be. *equal; gladly*
- SERPENS** Ete this appyl, and in certeyn, *truly*  
 116 That I am trewe sone shalt thou se! *truthful immediately*
- EVA** To myn husbond with herte ful fayn, *gladly*  
 This appyl I bere as thou byddyst me.  
 This frute to ete, I shal asayn. *try*
- 120 So wys as God is — yf we may be — *[To be] as wise*  
 And Goddys pere of myth. *God's peer; might*  
 To myn husbond I walke my way  
 And of this appyl I shal asay *try*  
 To make hym to ete — yf that I may —  
 125 And of this frewte to byth. *bite*
- [*Hic Eva reueniet Ade viro suo et dicet ei:*<sup>1</sup>
- My semely spowse and good husbond,  
 Lysteneth to me, sere, I yow pray: *sir*  
 Take this fayr appyl all in your hond,  
 Therof a mursel byte and asay. *try*
- 130 To ete this appyl, loke that ye fonde: *try*  
 Goddys felaw to be alway. *God's equal*  
 All his wysdam to undyrstonde,

<sup>1</sup> Here Eve returns to Adam her husband and says to him

	And Goddys pere to be for ay, Allthyng for to make,	<i>God's peer; all time Everything</i>
135	Both fysch and foule, se and sond, Byrd and best, watyr and lond. This appyl thu take out of myn hond — A bete therof thu take.	<i>sea and shore beast hand bite</i>
<b>ADAM</b>	I dare not towch thin hand for dred	<i>your</i>
140	Of oure Lord God omnypotent! If I shuld werke after thi reed, Of God, oure Makere, I shuld be shent! If that we do this synful dede, We shal be ded by Goddys jugement!	<i>advice By; punished dead</i>
145	Out of thin hand, with hasty spede, Cast out that appyl anon present For fer of Goddys threte!	<i>your right now fear</i>
<b>EVA</b>	Of this appyl, yf thu wylt byte, Goddys pere thu shalt be pyht.	<i>God's equal; set</i>
150	So wys of kunnyng — I thee plyht — This frute yf thu wylt etc.	<i>I swear to you</i>
<b>ADAM</b>	If we it ete, oureself we kylle! As God us told, we shuld be ded To ete that frute and my lyf to spylle.	<i>dead ruin</i>
155	I dar not do aftyr thi reed!	<i>dare; advice</i>
<b>EVA</b>	A fayr aungell thus seyde me tylle: “To ete that appyl, take nevyr no dred. So kunnyng as God in hevyn hille, Thu shalt sone be withinne a sted; Therfore, this frute thu etc.”	<i>to me fear Heaven's hills in a moment</i>
160	Therfore, this frute thu etc.”	
<b>ADAM</b>	Of Goddys wysdam for to lere, And in kunnyng to be his pere, Of thyn hand I take it here	<i>learn peer</i>
164	And shal sone tast this mete.	<i>food</i>
	<i>[Adam dicit sic:</i>	<i>Adam says this</i>
	Alas! Alas, for this fals dede! My flesly frend, my fo I fynde. Schameful synne doth us unhede: I se us nakyd before and behynde — Oure Lordys wurd wold we not drede.	<i>fleshly; foe reveals Lord's; fear</i>
170	Therfore, we be now caytyvys unkynde! Oure pore prevytes for to hede — Summe fygge levys fayn wolde I fynde, For to hyde oure schame. Womman, ley this leff on thi pryvyté!	<i>wicked scoundrels poor private parts; hide leaves leaf; privates</i>

- 175 And with this leff I shal hyde me.  
Gret schame it is, us nakyd to se  
Oure Lord God thus to grame! *anger*
- EVA** Alas, that evyr that speche was spokyn  
That the fals aungel seyde onto me.
- 180 Alas, oure Makers byddyng is brokyn, *Maker's commandment*  
For I have towchyd his owyn dere tre.  
Oure fleschly eyen byn al unlokyn, *eyes are unlocked*  
Nakyd for synne, ouresylf we se.  
That sory appyl that we han sokyn *wretched; fed upon (consumed)*
- 185 To deth hath brouth my spouse and me.  
Ryth grevous is oure synne  
Of mekyl shame now do we knowe! *great*  
Alas, that evyr this appyl was growe  
To dredful deth, now be we throwe *thrown*
- 190 In peyne us evyr to pynne. *to fix*
- DEUS** Adam, that with myn handys I made,  
Where art thou now? What hast thou wrought? *you done*
- ADAM** A, Lord, for synne oure flourys do fade! *flowers*
- 194 I here thi voys, but I se thee nought.
- DEUS** Adam, why hast thou synnyd so sone,  
Thus hastyly to breke my bone? *soon*  
And I made thee mayster undyr mone, *commandment*  
Trewly of every tre. *[the] moon*  
O tre, I kept for my owe: *own*
- 200 Lyff and deth therin I knowe.  
Thi synne fro lyf now thee hath throwe, *cast*  
From deth thou mayst not fle.
- ADAM** Lord, I have wrought agens thi wyll! *against*  
I sparyd nat mysylf to spylle. *to ruin*
- 205 The woman that thou toke me tylle — *gave to me*  
Sche brouth me therto.  
It was her counsell and her reed: *advice*  
Sche bad me do the same deed.  
I walke as werm withoutyn wede, *as a worm; clothing*
- 210 Awey is schrowde and sho. *Without clothing or shoes*
- DEUS** Womman, that arte this mannys wyffe,  
Why hast thou steryd youre bothers stryffe? *man's*  
Now ye be from youre fayr lyffe *stirred up strife for both of you*  
And are demyd for to deye. *doomed*
- 215 Unwys womman, sey me why *tell me*  
That thou hast don this fowle foly? *foul*

	And I made thee a gret lady In paradys for to pleye.	<i>to enjoy</i>
<b>EVA</b>	Lord, whan thou wentyst from this place,	
220	A werm with an aungelys face — He hyth us to be ful of grace, The frute yf that we ete. I dyd his byddyng, alas, alas! Now be we bowndyn in dethis las.	<i>serpent; angel's promised that we'd be death's snare</i>
225	I suppose it was Sathanas To peyne he gan us pete.	<i>Satan he put us in pain</i>
<b>DEUS</b>	Thou werm — with thi wyls wyk — Thi fals fables, thei be ful thyk. Why hast thou put dethis pryk	<i>snake; wicked wiles thick</i>
230	In Adam and his wyff? Thow thei bothyn my byddyng have brokyn, Out of whoo yet art not wrokyn. In helle logge thou shalt be lokyn	<i>Though they both woe; [you] are not rescued locked</i>
234	And nevyr mo lacche lyff.	<i>take</i>
<b>DIABOLUS</b>	I shal thee sey wherefore and why I dede hem all this velony, For I am ful of gret envy Of wreth and wyckyd hate That man shulde leve above the sky,	<i>tell you caused them; villainy wrath live; (i.e., in heaven)</i>
240	Whereas sumtyme dwellyd I. And now I am cast to helle sty Strete out at hevyn gate.	<i>at one time the pit of hell heaven's</i>
<b>DEUS</b>	Adam, for thou that appyl boot Agens my byddyng well I woot,	<i>bit Against; know</i>
245	Go teyl thi mete: with swynk and swoot Into thi lyvys ende; Goo nakyd, ungry, and barefoot; Ete both erbys, gres, and root. Thy bale hath non other boot,	<i>till [for] your food; toil and sweat Unto; life's hungry herbs, grass suffering; relief</i>
250	As wrecch in werlde thou wende.  Womman, thou sowtyst this synnyng And bad hym breke myn byddyng. Therefore, thou shalt ben undyrlyng To mannys byddyng bend.	<i>sought bade be an man's</i>
255	What he byddyth thee, do thou that thyng, And bere thi chyldere with gret gronyng, In daungere and in deth dredynge Into thi lyvys ende.	<i>danger; dreading Unto; life's</i>

Thou wyckyd worm, ful of pryde,  
 260 Fowle envye syt be thi side. *by*  
 Upon thi gutt thu shalt glyde,  
 As werm wyckyd in kende. *by nature*  
 Tyl a maydon in medyl-erth be born — *on earth*  
 Thu fende, I warn thee befor —  
 265 Thorwe her thi hed shal be totorn. *Through her; torn to pieces*  
 On wombe away thu wende. *On your belly; go*

**DIABOLUS** At thi byddyng, fowle I falle.  
 I kreppe hom to my stynkyng stalle. *dwelling*  
 Helle pyt and hevyn halle  
 270 Shul do thi byddyng bone. *command*  
 I falle down here a fowle freke. *demon*  
 For this falle I gynne to qweke — *to fart*  
 With a fart my brech I breke — *breeches*  
 274 My sorwe comyth ful sone. *soon*

**DEUS** For youre synne that ye have do, *done*  
 Out of this blysse sone shal ye go.  
 In erthly labour to levyn in wo *to live*  
 And sorwe thee shal atast. *taste*  
 For youre synne and mysdoynge,  
 280 An angell, with a swerd brennyng, *burning sword*  
 Out of this joye he shal yow dyng. *drive*  
 Your welth away is past.

*[Hic recedit Deus, et angelus seraphicus cum gladio flammea verberat Adam et Euam extra paradisum].<sup>1</sup>*

**SERAPHIM** Ye wrecchis unkend and ryht unwyse: *wicked*  
 Out of this joye hygh yow in hast, *haste*  
 285 With flammyng swerd from paradise  
 To peyn I bete yow, of care to tast. *with sorrow to taste*  
 Your myrth is turnyd to carfull syse; *sorrowful sighs*  
 Your welth with synne away is wast. *wasted*  
 For youre false dede of synful gyse, *conduct*  
 290 This blysse I spere from yow ryth fast. *shut off from*  
 Herein come ye no more  
 Tyl a chylde of a mayd be born  
 And upon the rode rent and torn *cross*  
 To save all that ye have forlorn, *lost*  
 295 Your welth for to restore.

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<sup>1</sup> Here God withdraws, and a seraphic angel with a flaming sword beats Adam and Eve out of paradise

- EVA** Alas, alas, and wele away, *woe is me*  
 That evyr towchyd I the tre!  
 I wende as wrecch in welsom way *go; desolate*  
 In blake busshys my boure shal be. *black; dwelling*  
 300 In paradys is plenté of pleye: *joy*  
 Fayr frutys ryth gret plenté —  
 The gatys be schet with Godys keye. *shut; God's*  
 My husbond is lost because of me.  
 Leve spowse, now thu fonde. *Dear; go on*  
 305 Now stomble we on stalk and ston,  
 My wyt away is fro me gon! *mind*  
 Wrythe onto my necke bon *Wring my*  
 With hardnesse of thin honde! *your hand*
- ADAM** Wyff, thi wytt is not wurth a rosch! *worth a rush (i.e., worthless)*  
 310 Leve woman, turne thi thought. *Dear*  
 I wyl not sle fleschly of my flesch. *slay flesh*  
 For of my flesch, thi flesch was wrought.  
 Oure hap was hard; oure wytt was nesch *fortune; weak*  
 To paradys whan we were brought. *when*  
 315 My wepyng shal be longe fresch: *last a long time*  
 Schort lykyng shal be longe bought. *Brief pleasure*  
 No more telle thu that tale:  
 For yf I shulde sle my wyff, *slay*  
 I sclow myself withowtyn knyff *slay; without a knife*  
 320 In helle logge to lede my lyff *In hell's prison*  
 With woo in wepyng dale. *valley of tears*
- But lete us walke forth into the londe:  
 With ryth gret labour oure fode to fynde,  
 With delvyng and dyggyng with myn hond;  
 325 Oure blysse to bale and care to pynde. *my hand*  
 And wyff, to spyne now must thu fonde, *to lessen our suffering and cares*  
 Oure nakyd bodyes in cloth to wynde *try*  
 Tyll sum comforth of Godys sonde *dress*  
 With grace releve oure careful mynde. *God's messenger*  
 330 Now come, go we hens, wyff. *sorrowful*
- EVA** Alas, that ever we wrought this synne  
 Oure bodely sustenauns for to wynne.  
 Ye must delve, and I shal spyne  
 In care to ledyn oure lyff.

## 3. CAIN AND ABEL

- ABEL** I wolde fayn knowe how I shuld do *gladly*  
 To serve my Lord God to his plesyng.

- Therfore Caym, brother, lete us now go  
Unto oure fadyr withowte lettyng, *father without delay*
- 5 Suenge hym in vertu and in norture *Paying homage to him; upbringing*  
To com to the hyghe joy celestyall,  
Remembryng to be clene and pure.  
For in mysrewle, we myth lythly fall *misconduct; might easily*  
Agens Hevyn Kynge. *Away from Heaven's*
- 10 Lete us now don oure dyligens *(i.e., hasten)*  
To come to oure faderys presens. *father's*  
Good brother, passe we hens *let's go*  
To knowe for oure levyng. *learn how to live*
- CAYM** As to my fadyr, lete us now tee *father; go*  
15 To knowe what shal be his talkyng, *advice*  
And yet I holde it but vanyté  
To go to hym for any spekyng — *talk*  
To lere of his lawe. *learn*  
For if I have good anow plenté, *enough*
- 20 I kan be mery, so mot y the. *i.e., provided that I prosper*  
Thow my fadyr I nevyr se, *Though my father*  
I gyf not therof an hawe! *a hawthorn (i.e., I don't care)*
- ABEL** Ryth sovereyn fadyr, semely, sad, and sure: *father; wise*  
Ever we thank yow in hert, body, and thowth *heart; thought*
- 25 And alwey shull whyll oure lyf may indure, *shall while*  
As inwardly in hert it kan be sought, *As sincerely*  
Bothe my brother and I. *By both*  
Fadyr, I falle onto youre kne *Father; at your knees*  
To knowe how we shul rewlyd be, *be governed*
- 30 For godys that fallyth bothe hym and me *goods that come to*  
I wolde fayn wete trewly. *know truly*
- ADAM** Sonys, ye arn — to spekyn naturally — *humanly speaking*  
The fyrst frute of kendely engendrure, *natural procreation*  
Befforn whom — saff youre modyr and I — *save your mother*
- 35 Were nevyr non of mannys nature. *of humankind*  
And yit were we al of another portature *likeness*  
As ye have me oftyn herd seyde sothly.  
Wherfore, sonys, yf ye wyl lyff sad and sure: *live soberly*  
Fyrst, I yow counseyll most syngulerly, *particularly*
- 40 God for to love and drede. *fear*  
And suche good as God hath yow sent,  
The fyrst frute offyr to hym in sacryfice brent, *burnt*  
Hym evyr besechyng with meke entent *humble*
- 44 In all youre werkys to save and spede. *works; prosper*

- ABEL** Gramercy, fadyr, for youre good doctrine. *Many thanks*  
 For as ye us techyn, so shal we do.  
 And as for me, thorwe Goddys grace dyvyne, *through God's*  
 I wyl forthwith applye me therto.
- CAYM** And thow me be loth, I wyl now also *though I hate to*  
 50 Onto youre counsell, fadyr, me inclyne. *receive*  
 And yitt I say now to yow both too, *both of you*  
 I had levyr gon hom well for to dyne! *would rather*
- ADAM** Now, God graunt good sacryfice to yow both too.  
 He vowchesaff to acceptyn yow and all myne  
 55 And geve yow now grace to plesyn hym soo *give*  
 That ye may come to that blysse that hymself is inne  
 With gostly grace: *spiritual*  
 That all youre here levying *life here*  
 May be to his plesyng,  
 60 And at youre hens partyng  
 To com to good place.
- [Abell dicit:* *Abel says*
- ABEL** Almyhtty God and God ful of myth, *might*  
 Be whom allthing is made of nowth, *By; everything; nought*  
 To thee myn hert is redy dyht; *ready to offer*  
 65 For upon thee is all my thought.
- O, Sovereyn Lord, reygnyng in eternyté:  
 With all the mekenesse that I kan or may,  
 This lombe shal I offre it up to thee. *lamb*  
 Accept it, blyssyd Lord, I thee pray.  
 70 My gyft is but sympyl — this is no nay — *there's no denying*  
 But my wyl is good and evyr shal be  
 Thee to servyn and worchepyn both nyht and day.  
 And ther to thi grace grawnt thu me  
 Throwh thi gret mercy *through*  
 75 Which in a lombys lyknes *lamb's*  
 Thu shalt for mannys wyckydnes *man's*  
 Onys ben offeryd in peynfulnes *Once be*  
 And deyn ful dolfoly. *die very painfully*
- For trewly, Lord, thu art most worthy  
 80 The best to have in eche degré —  
 Both best and werst ful certeynly —  
 All is had thorwe grace of thee. *through*  
 The best schep full hertyly — *sheep*  
 Amongys my flok that I kan se —  
 85 I tytthe it to God of gret mercy.  
 And bettyr wold if bettyr myht be,



- Evyn here is myn offryng.  
 I tythe to thee with ryht good wylle  
 Of the best thu sentyst me tylle. *to me*
- 90 Now, gracyous God on hevyn hille,  
 Accept now my tythyng.
- CAYM** Amongys all folys that gon on grownd *the foolish; live on earth*  
 I holde that thu be on of the most: *one of*  
 To tythe the best — that is not sownd —  
 95 And kepe the werst — that is nere lost! *ruinous*  
 But I more wysly shal werke this stownde: *right now*  
 To tythe the werst and make no bost.  
 Of all my cornys that may be fownde *grain*  
 In all my feldys — both crofte and cost — *here and there*  
 100 I shal lokyn on every syde. *look*  
 Here I tythe this unthende sheff. *worthless sheaf*  
 Lete God take it or ellys lef. *leave it*  
 Thow it be to me gret repreff *reproof*  
 104 I geve no fors this tyde. *I don't care*
- ABEL** Now Caym, brother, thu dost ful ill,  
 For God thee sent both best and werst;  
 Therfore, thu shewe to hym good wyll  
 And tythe to God evyr of the best!
- CAYM** In feyth thu shewyst now a febyll skyll. *feeble reasoning*  
 110 It wolde me hyndyr and do me greff *cause me grief*  
 What were God the bettyr thu sey me tyll? *say to me*  
 To gevyn hym away my best sheff *To give; sheaf*  
 And kepe myself the wers?  
 He wyll neyther ete nor drynke,  
 115 For he doth neyther swete nor swynke. *sweat nor toil*  
 Thu shewest a febyl reson, methynke.  
 What, thu fonnyst as a best, I gesse! *act as foolishly; beast*
- ABEL** Yit me thynkyth my wyt is good: *judgment*  
 To God evermore sum love to shewe,  
 120 Of whom we have oure dayly food,  
 And ellys we had but lytyl drewe. *Or else; scarcely any food*
- CAYM** Yitt methynkeht thi wytt is wood, *I think; crazy*  
 For of thi lore I fynde but fewe. *doctrine; few [people]*  
 I wyll neverthemore chawnge my mood, *mind*  
 125 For no wordys that thu dost shewe —  
 I sey I wyll tythe the werst!
- ABEL** Now, God that syt in hefne above, *Heaven*  
 On whom is sett all myn hool love *all my love*  
 This wyckyd wyll from thee he showe  
 130 As it plesyth hym best.

[*Hic ardent decimum Abel, et Caym quo facto dicit:*<sup>1</sup>

<b>CAYM</b>	Herke, Abel, brother, what aray is this? Thy thyng brennyth as fyre ful bryght! It is to me gret wondyr, iwys!	<i>what is going on</i>  <i>indeed</i>
134	I trow this is now a straunge syght.	<i>I swear</i>
<b>ABEL</b>	Goddys wyll, forsothe, it is That my thyng with fyre is lyth. For of the best were my thythis And of the werst thu dedyst hym dyght. Bad thyng thu hym bedede!	<i>God's; truly</i> <i>lit</i> <i>tithes</i> <i>did; offer him</i> <i>offered</i>
140	Of the best was my thyng, And of the werst was thin offryng. Therfor, God Almyghty, Hevyn Kyng Alowyht ryht nowth thi dede.	 <i>your</i>  <i>Allowed not</i>
<b>CAYM</b>	What, thu stynkyng losel, and is it so?	<i>scoundrel</i>
145	Doth God thee love and hatyht me? Thu shalt be ded! I shal thee slo! Thi Lord, thi God, thu shalt nevyr se! Tythyng more shalt thu nevyr do. With this chavyl bon I shal sle thee!	<i>hates</i> <i>slay</i>   <i>jawbone</i>
150	Thi deth is dyht — thi days be go. Out of myn handys, shalt thou not fle! With this strok, I thee kille! Now, this boy is slayn and dede. Of hym I shal nevyr more han drede.	<i>set; gone</i>   <i>kill</i>  <i>have dread</i>
155	He shal hereafter nevyr ete brede. With this gresse I shal hym hylle.	 <i>grass; hide</i>
<b>DEUS</b>	Caym! Come forth and answere me! Asoyle my qwestyon anon ryght. Thy brother, Abel, wher is now he?	<i>Answer; right now</i>
160	Ha don, and answere me as tyght!	<i>Hurry up; now</i>
<b>CAYM</b>	My brothers kepere ho made me? Syn whan was I his kepyng knyght? I kannot telle where that he be. To kepe hym was I nevyr dyght.	<i>brother's; who</i> <i>Since when; keeper</i>  <i>appointed</i>
165	I know not wher he is.	
<b>DEUS</b>	A! Cursyd Caym, thou art untrewed, And for thi dede, thou shalt sore rewed. Thi brothers blood that thou slewed Askyht vengeauns of thi mys.	 <i>regret</i> <i>brother's</i> <i>sin</i>

<sup>1</sup> Here Abel's tithe burns, and Caym, at this, says

- 170    Thu shalt be cursyd on the grounde, *on earth*  
       Unprophitable whereso thou wende, *thou go*  
       Both veyn and nowthty and nothyng sounde. *worthless*  
       With what thing thou medele, thou shalt it shende. *do; destroy*
- CAYM**    Alas, in whoo now am I wounde, *in woe*  
 175    Acursyd of God as man unkende! *wicked*  
       Of any man yf I be founde, *By anyone*  
       He shal me slo — I have no frende! *slay*  
       Alas, and weleaway! *Woe is me*
- DEUS**    Of what man that thou be sclayn,  
 180    He shal have sefne-folde more payn. *seven*  
       Hym were bettyr nevyr to be sayn *to be seen*  
       On lyve be nyth, ne day. *Alive by night, nor by*
- CAYM**    Alas, alas, whedyr may I go?  
       I dare nevyr se man in the vesage. *look anyone; face*  
 185    I am woundyn as a wrecch in wo *wrapped*  
       And cursyd of God for my falsage. *falsehood*  
       Unprofytabyll and vayn also  
       In felde and town, in strete and stage —  
       I may nevyr make merthis mo. *have mirth*  
 190    I wot nevyr whedyr to take passage. *I'll never know*  
       I dare not here abyde.  
       Now wyl I go, wende my way — *make my way*  
       With sore syeng and welaway — *sighing and moaning*  
       To loke where that I best may  
 195    From mannys syht me hyde. *man's*

#### 4. NOAH

*[Introitus Noe.]*

*Enter Noah*

- NOE**    God, of his goodnesse and of grace grounde, *[the] foundation*  
       By whoys glorious power allthyng is wrought, *whose; everything*  
       In whom all vertu plenteuously is founde, *abundantly*  
       Withowtyn whos wyl may be ryth nought, *nothing at all*  
 5    Thy servautys save, Lord, fro synful sownde *utterance*  
       In wyl, in werk, in dede, and in thouht. *thought*  
       Oure welth in woo lete nevyr be fownde. *woe*  
       Us help, Lord, from synne that we be in brought — *brought into*  
       Lord God, ful of myght.  
 10    Noe, serys, my name is knowe. *sirs; known*  
       My wyff and my chyldere here on rowe, *altogether*  
       To God we pray with hert ful lowe *humble*  
       To plese hym in his syght.

- In me, Noe, the secunde age  
 15 Indede begynnyth as I yow say.  
 Afftyr Adam, withoutyn langage,  
 The secunde fadyr am I in fay.  
 But men of levyng be so owtrage —  
 Bothe be nyght and eke by day —  
 20 That lesse than synne the soner swage  
 God wyl be vengyd on us sum way,  
 Indede.  
 Ther may no man go therowte  
 But synne regnyth in every rowte;  
 25 In every place rownde abowte  
 Cursydnes doth sprynge and sprede.
- UXOR NOE** Allmyghty God of his gret grace:  
 Enspyre men with hertely wyll  
 For to sese of here trespase,  
 30 For synfull levyng oure sowe shal spyll!  
 Synne offendyth God in his face  
 And agrevyth oure Lorde full ylle.  
 It causyth to man ryght grett manace  
 And scrapyth hym out of lyvys bylle,  
 35 That blyssyd book.  
 What man in synne doth allwey scleppe,  
 He shal gon to helle ful depp.  
 Than shal he nevyr after crepp  
 Out of that brennyng brook.
- 40 I am youre wyff, youre childeryn these be.  
 Onto us tweyn it doth longe  
 Hem to teche in all degré,  
 Synne to forsakyn and werkys wronge.  
 Therefore, fere, for love of me,  
 45 Enforme hem wele evyr amonge,  
 Synne to forsake, and vanyté  
 And vertu to folwe that thei fonge  
 Oure Lord God to plese.
- NOE** I warne yow, childeryn, on and all,  
 50 Drede oure Lord God in hevyn hall  
 And in no forfeite that we ne fall,  
 Oure Lord for to dysplese.
- SHEM** A, dere fadyr, God forbede  
 That we shulde do in ony wyse  
 55 Ony werke of synful dede,  
 Oure Lord God that shulde agryse!  
 My name is Shem, youre son of prise.

*plainly speaking*  
*father; faith*  
*men's conduct; outrageous*  
*by; also*  
*unless sin lessens immediately*  
*avenged*

*cannot go anywhere*  
*everywhere*

*Noah's Wife*  
*heartfelt*  
*to cease of their*  
*behavior; destroy*

*erase; the book of life*

*slip*

*burning*

*both it is our duty*  
*Them; in every way*

*husband*  
*them*

*to follow; try*

*one*  
*Fear; heaven's*  
*misdeed*

*any manner*

*offend*  
*worthy son*

- I shal werke aftere youre rede  
And also, wyff, thee weyll awyse,  
60 Wykkyd werkys that thu non brede,  
Never in no degré.
- UXOR SHER** Forsothe, sere, be Goddys grace!  
I shal me kepe from all trespase  
That shulde offende Goddys face,  
65 Be help of the Trynyté.
- CHAM** I am Cham, youre secunde son,  
And purpose me be Goddys myght  
Nevyr suche a dede for to don  
That shuld agreve God in syght.  
**UXOR CHAM** I pray to God me grawnt this bone,  
71 That he me kepe in such a plyght —  
Mornynge, hevenynge, mydday, and none —  
I to offendyn hym day nor nyght,  
Lord God, I thee pray.  
75 Bothe wakyng and eke in slepe  
Gracious God, thu me keppe  
That I nevyr in daunger crepe  
On dredfull Domysday.
- JAPHET** Japhet thi thryd sone is my name.  
80 I pray to God wherso we be  
That he us borwe fro synfull shame  
And in vertuous levynge evyrmore kepe me.  
**UXOR JAPHET** I am youre wyff and pray the same,  
That God us save on sonde and se,  
85 With no grevauns that we hym grame,  
He grawnt us grace synne to fle.  
Lord God, now here oure bone.
- NOE** Gracious God, that best may,  
With herty wyl to thee we pray  
90 Thu save us sekyr bothe nyght and day  
Synne that we noon done.
- DEUS** Ow, what menyht this myslevyng man  
Whiche myn hand made and byldyd in blysse?  
Synne so sore grevyht me, ya, in certayn:  
95 I wol be vengyd of this grett mysse!  
Myn aungel dere, thu shalt gan  
To Noe, that my servaunt is.  
A shypp to make on hond to tan  
Thu byd hym swyth for hym and his  
100 From drynchyng hem to save.
- advice  
advise yourself well  
bring forth*
- sir; by God's*
- By the*
- I intend by*
- grieve God's sight  
prayer  
manner  
evening; noon  
not to offend*
- Doomsday*
- third  
wheresoever  
protect us*
- shore and sea  
anger*
- hear; boon*
- [That] you keep us secure  
[So] that we commit no sin*
- means; sinful mankind  
established  
grieves; certainly  
wickedness  
go*
- to undertake  
at once  
drowning them*

- For as I am God of myght,  
 I shal dystroye this werd downryght!  
 Here synne so sore grevyht me in syght,  
 Thei shal no mercy have! *world outright  
 Their; grieves*
- 105 *Fecisse hominem nunc penitet me.*<sup>1</sup>  
 That I made man sore doth me rewe, *regret*  
 Myn handwerk to sle sore grevyth me,  
 But that here synne here, deth doth brewe *their sin; brings about*  
 Go sey to Noe as I bydde thee:
- 110 Hymself, his wyf, his chylderyn trewe — *Those*  
 Tho eighte sowlys in shyp to be — *flood's*  
 Thei shul not drede the flodys flowe, *not*  
 The flod shal harme them nowht. *pair*  
 Of all fowlys and bestys, thei take a peyre
- 115 In shypp to save both foule and fayere. *unclean and clean [creatures]*  
 From all dowytyng and gret dyspere *fears*  
 This vengeauns or it be wrought. *before*
- ANGELUS [AD NOE]** Noe, Noe! A shypp loke thu make  
 And many a chaumbyr thu shalt have therinne. *chamber*
- 120 Of every kyndys best a cowpyl thu take. *kind of beast; couple*  
 Within the shypbord, here lyvys to wynne, *their lives to save*  
 For God is sore grevyd with man for his synne *grieved*  
 That all this wyde werd shal be dreynt with flood, *world; inundated*  
 Saff thu and thi wyff shal be kept from this gynne, *Save; instrument*
- 125 And also thi chylderyn with here vertuys good. *their virtues*
- NOE** How shuld I have wytt a shypp for to make? *the skill*  
 I am of ryght grett age, fyff hundryd yere olde!  
 It is not for me this werk to undyrtake,
- 129 For feynnesse of age my leggyss gyn folde. *febleness; begin*
- ANGELUS** This dede for to do be bothe blythe and bolde!  
 God shal enforme thee and rewle thee ful ryght. *guide thee completely*  
 Of byrd and of beste take — as I thee tolde — *beast*  
 A peyr into the shypp, and God shal thee qwyght. *pair; reward you*
- NOE** I am ful redy, as God doth me bydde,  
 135 A shypp for to make be myght of his grace. *by*  
 Alas, that for synne it shal be so betyde *so happen*  
 That vengeauns of flood shal werke this manase. *menace*  
 God is sore grevyd with oure grett tresspass *sorely grieved*  
 That with wylde watyr the werd shal be dreynt. *world; flooded*

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<sup>1</sup> Now I am sorry that I had made man. (See Genesis 6:6)

140 A shyppe for to make, now lete us hens pas go  
That God agens us of synne have no compleynt.

*[Hic transit Noe cum familia sua pro navi. Quo exeunte locum interludii, sub intret statim Lameth, conductus ab adolescente, et dicit:]*<sup>1</sup>

**LAMETH** Gret mornyng I make, and gret cause I have. *mourning I am having*  
Alas, now I se not, for age I am blynde.  
Blyndenes doth make me of wytt for to rave! *insanely*  
145 Whantynge of eyesyght in peyn doth me bynde. *Lacking eyesight*  
Whyl I had syht, ther myht nevyr man fynde *might*  
My pere of archerye in all this werd aboute. *peer; world*  
For yitt schet I nevyr at hert, are, nere hynde, *shot; hart; hare, nor*  
But yf that he deyde, of this no man have doute. *Except that*

150 Lameth, the good archere, my name was ovyr all *everywhere*  
For the best archere, myn name dede ever sprede!  
Record of, my boy, here wytne this, he shal. *Watch this*  
What merk that wer set me, to deth it shuld blede! *target*

**ADOLESCENS** It is trewe mayster, that ye seyn, indede, *what you say*  
155 For that tyme ye had youre bowe bent in honde, *hand*  
If that youre prycke had be half a myle in brede, *target; breadth*  
Ye wolde the pryk han hitte if ye ny had stonde.<sup>2</sup>

**LAMETH** I shuld nevyr affalyid what marke that ever were sett *missed; target*  
Whyl that I myght loke and had my clere syght,  
160 And yit as methynkyht, no man shuld shete bett *shoot better*  
Than I shuld do now if myn hand were sett aryght.  
Aspye som marke, boy! My bow shal I bende wyght *target; quickly*  
And sett myn hand evyn to shete at som best, *to shoot; beast*  
And I dar ley a wagour, his deth for to dyght. *dare lay; to ready*  
165 The marke shal I hitt; my lyf do I hest. *target; I bet*

**ADOLESCENS** Under yon grett busche, mayster, a best do I se! *beast; see*  
Take me thin hand swyth and holde it ful styll. *Give me your hand quickly*  
Now is thin hand evyn as evyr it may be.  
169 Drawe up thin takyll, yon best for to kyll. *your weapon*

**LAMETH** My bowe shal I drawe ryght with herty wyll.  
This brod arwe I shete that best for to sayll.<sup>3</sup>  
Now have at that busch, yon best for to spylle, *go to; beast; kill*  
A sharppe schote I shote therof — I shal not fayll.

<sup>1</sup> Here Noah crosses with his family in front of the ship. As he exits the playing place, let Lameth immediately enter, led by a boy, and say

<sup>2</sup> You would have hit the target if you had stood nearby

<sup>3</sup> This broad-tipped arrow I shoot that beast to assail (slay)

**CAYM** Out, out, and alas! Myn hert is on-sondyr!  
 175 With a brod arwe I am ded and sclayn!  
 I dye here on grounde, myn hert is all to tundryr  
 With this brod arwe it is clovyn on twayn.  
**LAMETH** Herke, boy, cum telle me the trewth in certeyn!  
 179 What man is he that this cry doth thus make?  
**ADOLESCENS** Caym thu has kyllid, I telle thee ful pleyn;  
 With thi sharp shetyng, his deth hath he take.

*heart; split*  
*broad-tipped arrow*  
*aflame*  
*cloven in two*  
*sharp shooting*

**LAMETH** Have I slayn Cayme? Alas, what have I done?  
 Thu stynkyng lurdeyn! What hast thou wrought?  
 Thu art the why I sle hym so sone!  
 185 Therefore, shal I kyll thee here: thu skapyst nowght.

*scoundrel*  
*the reason I slayed*  
*not*

*[Hic Lameth cum arcu suo verberat adolescentem ad mortem, dicente adolescente:]<sup>1</sup>*

**ADOLESCENS** Out, out, I deye here! My deth is now sought!  
 This theffe with his bowe hath broke my brayn!  
 Ther may non helpe be, my dethe is me brought.  
 189 Ded here I synke down as man that is sclayn.

*found here*

**LAMETH** Alas, what shal I do, wrecch wykkyd on woolde?  
 God wyl be vengyd ful sadly on me,  
 For deth of Caym, I shal have sefne folde  
 More peyn than he had, that Abell dede sle.  
 These to mennys deth full sore bought shal be!  
 195 Upon all my blood God wyll venge this dede  
 Wherefore sore wepyng, hens wyl I fle  
 And loke where I may best my hede sone heyde.

*on the earth*  
*seven*  
*did slay*  
*two men's deaths*  
*avenge*  
*head soon hide*

*[Hic recedat Lamet et statim intrat Noe cum nauī cantantes.]<sup>2</sup>*

**NOE** With doolful hert syenge sad and sore,  
 Grett mornyng I make for this dredful flood.  
 200 Of man and of best is dreynte many a skore.  
 All this werd to spyll these flodys be ful wood.  
 And all is for synne of mannys wylde mood  
 That God hath ordeyned this dredfull vengeaunce.  
 In this flood spylt is many a mannys blood,  
 205 For synfull levyng of man, we have gret grevauns.  
 All this hundryd yere ryght here have I wrought  
 This schypp for to make as God dede byd me.  
 Of all maner bestys a copenyl is in brought

*heart sighing*  
*mourning*  
*beast; drowned*  
*crazy*  
*man's wild conduct*  
*man's*  
*living*  
*did bid me*  
*couple*

<sup>1</sup> Here Lameth beats the boy to death with his bow, with the boy saying

<sup>2</sup> Here Lameth withdraws and Noah enters immediately with his boat, singing



- Within my shyppborde on lyve for to be. *alive*
- 210 Ryght longe God hath soferyd, amending to se,  
All this hundyrd yere God hath shewyd grace.  
Alas, fro gret syn man wyl not fle.  
God doth this vengeauns for oure gret trespase.
- UXOR NOE** Alas, for gret ruthe of this gret vengeaunce, *pity*  
215 Gret doyl it is to se this watyr so wyde, *It is distressing*  
But yit thankyd be God of this ordenaunce *this provision*  
That we be now savyd on lyve to abyde. *alive*
- SHEM** For grett synne of lechory all this doth betyde.  
Alas, that evyr such synne shulde be wrought.  
220 This flood is so gret on every asyde  
That all this wyde werd to care is now brought. *world; to sorrow*
- UXOR SHEM** Becawse the chylderyn of God that weryn good  
Dede forfeite ryght sore what tyme that thei were, *Did forfeit*  
Synfully compellyd to Caymys blood. *driven to Cain's*
- 225 Therefore, be we now cast in ryght grett care.  
**CHAM** For synful levyng this werd doth forfare, *living; perish*  
So grevous vengeauns myght nevyr man se.  
Ovyr all this werd wyde, ther is no plot bare *world*
- 229 With watyr and with flood — God vengyd wyll be.
- UXOR CHAM** Rustynes of synne is cawse of these wawys. *Corruption; waves*  
Alas, in this flood this werd shal be lorn *world; lost*  
For offens to God: brekyng his lawys  
On rokkys ryght sharp is many a man torn. *rocks*
- JAPHET** So grevous flodys were nevyr yett befor. *Such*  
235 Alas, that lechory this vengeauns doth gynne. *begin*  
It were well bettyr ever to be unborn  
Than for to forfeit evyrmore in that synne. *transgress*
- UXOR JAPHET** Oure Lord God, I thanke of his gret grace  
That he doth us save from this dredful payn.  
240 Hym for to wurchipe in every stede and place *everywhere*  
We beth gretly bownde with myght and with mayn. *bound; strength*
- NOE** Fourty days and nyghtys hath lasted this rayn,  
And fourty days this grett flood begynnyth to slake. *lessen*  
This crowe shal I sende out to seke sum playn. *land*
- 245 Good tydyngys to brynge this message I make.

[*Hic emittat coruum et parum expectans iterum dicat:*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Here let him release a raven, and after waiting a while, let him say

This crowe on sum careyn is fall for to ete;  
 Therfore a newe masangere I wyll forth now sende.  
 Fly forth, thu fayr dove, ovr these waterys wete,  
 And aspye afftere sum drye lond oure mornynge to amend.<sup>1</sup>

*fallen; carrion*

[*Hic euolet columba qua redeunte cum ramo viridi olive.*<sup>2</sup>

250 Joye now may we make of myrth that yet were frende!  
 A grett olyve bush this dowe doth us brynge,  
 For joye of this tokyn ryght hertyly we tende.  
 Oure Lord God to worchep, a songe lete us synge.

*friends*

*dove*

*intend*

[*Hic decantent hos versus: "Mare vidit et fugit. Jordanis conuersus est restrorsum. Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam." Et sic recedant cum nauis.*<sup>3</sup>

## 5. ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

[*Introitus Abrahe et cetera.*

*Enter Abraham, etc.*

**ABRAHAM** Most myghty makere of sunne and of mone,  
 Kyng of Kyngys and Lord over all,  
 Allmyghty God in hevyn trone,  
 I thee honowre and evyrmore shal.  
 5 My Lord, my God to thee I kall:  
 With herty wyll, Lord, I thee pray —  
 In synfyll lyff lete me nevyr fall,  
 But lete me leve evyr to thi pay.

*moon*

*life*

*live; pleasure*

10 Abraham, my name is kydde  
 And patryarke of age ful olde,  
 And yit be the grace of God is bredde  
 In myn olde age a chylde full bolde —  
 Ysaac, lo, here his name is tolde.  
 My swete sone that stondyth me by,  
 15 Amongys all chyldeyn that walkyn on wolde,  
 A lovelyer chylde is non trewly.

*known*

*yet by; bred*

*on earth*

I thanke God with hert well mylde  
 Of his gret mercy and of his hey grace  
 And pryncepal for my suete chylde

*high*

*sweet*

<sup>1</sup> And look for some dry spot that will mend our mourning

<sup>2</sup> Here let the dove fly away, and return with a green olive branch

<sup>3</sup> Here let them sing these verses: "The sea saw and fled: Jordan was turned back. Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name give glory." And let them withdraw with the ship. (See Vulgate Psalm 113:3, 9)

- 20 That shal to me do gret solace.  
 Now, suete sone, fayre fare thi face, *sweet; may you have good fortune*  
 Ful hertyly do I love thee; *heartily*  
 For trewe herty love, now in this place, *fervent*  
 My swete childe, com kysse now me.
- YSAAC** At youre byddyngge youre mouthe I kys,  
 26 With lowly hert I yow pray. *humble*  
 Yourre fadyrly love, lete me nevyr mysse, *fatherly*  
 But blysse me, youre chylde, both nyght and day.
- ABRAHAM** Almyghty God, that best may,  
 30 His dere blyssyng he graunt thee.  
 And my blyssyng thu have allway *always*  
 In what place that evyr thu be.
- Now, Isaac my sone so suete,  
 Almyghty God loke thu honoure,  
 35 Wich that made both drye and wete,  
 Shynyng sunne and scharpe schoure. *shower*  
 Thu art my suete childe and paramoure. *beloved*  
 Ful wele in herte do I thee love. *heart*  
 Loke that thin herte in hevyn toure *your; heaven's*  
 40 Be sett to serve oure Lord God above.
- In thi yonge lerne God to plese,  
 And God shal quyte thee weyl thi mede. *youth*  
 Now suete sone, of wordys these *reward you well*  
 With all thin hert thu take good hede!
- 45 Now fareweyl, sone, God be thin spede. *prosper you*  
 Evyn here at hom thu me abyde. *wait for me*  
 I must go walkyn, for I have nede.  
 I come agen withinne a tyde. *a while*
- YSAAC** I pray to God, Fadyr of Myght, *Father*  
 50 That he yow spede in all youre waye.  
 From shame and shenshipp, day and nyght, *dishonor*  
 God mote yow kepe in youre jornay. *may*
- ABRAHAM** Now fareweyll, sone, I thee pray:  
 Evyr in thin hert loke God thu wynde, *you keep*  
 55 Hym to serve bothe nyght and day.  
 I pray to God send thee good mynde. *desires*
- Ther may no man love bettyr his childe  
 Than Isaac is lovyd of me.  
 Almyghty God, mercyful and mylde:  
 60 For my swete sone I wurchyp thee.  
 I thank thee, Lord, with hert ful fre *free*

- For this fayr frute thu hast me sent.  
 Now, gracyous God, wherso he be  
 To save my sone evyrmore be bent. *inclined*
- 65 Dere Lord, I pray to thee also,  
 Me to save for thi servvaunte  
 And sende me grace nevyr for to do  
 Thyng that shulde be to thee displesaunte. *offensive*  
 Bothe for me and for myn infaunte,
- 70 I pray thee, Lord God, us to help.  
 Thy gracyous goodnes thu us grawnt  
 And save thi serwaunt from helle qwelp. *servant; the spawn of hell*
- ANGELUS** Abraham! How, Abraham!  
 Lyst and herke weyll onto me. *I.e., Ho! Listen*
- ABRAHAM** Alredy, sere, here I am — *sir*
- 76 Tell me youre wyll what that it be.
- ANGELUS** Almyghty God thus dothe bydde thee: *command*  
 Ysaac, thi sone, anon thou take  
 And loke hym thu slee anoon, lete se, *slay now, let's see*
- 80 And sacrafice to God hym make.
- Thy welbelovyd childe thu must now kylle,  
 To God thu offyr hym as I say.  
 Evyn upon yon hey hylle *high*  
 That I thee shewe here in the way. *show*
- 85 Tarye not be nyght nor day,  
 But smertly thi gate thu goo. *Tarry; by quickly your way*  
 Upon yon hille thu knele and pray  
 To God and kylle the childe ther and scloo. *slay [him]*
- ABRAHAM** Now Goddys comaundement must nedys be done. *God's*
- 90 All his wyl is wourthy to be wrought — *done*  
 But yitt the fadyr to scle the sone?  
 Grett care it causyth in my thought. *yet; father to slay*  
 In byttyr bale now am I brought, *worry*  
 My swete childe with knyf to kylle, *suffering*
- 95 But yit my sorwe awaylith ryght nowth,  
 For nedys I must werke Goddys wylle. *yet; nothing*  
 God's
- With evy hert I walke and wende,  
 My childys deth now for to be. *heavy; go child's*  
 Now must the fadyr his suete son schende! *sweet; destroy*
- 100 Alas, for ruthe, it is peté!  
 My swete sone, come hedyr to me! *remorse; a pity*  
 How, Isaac, my sone dere. *hither*

- Com to thi fadyr, my childe so fre,  
For we must wende togedyr in fere. *father; excellent  
go; the both of us*
- YSAAC** All redy, fadyr, evyn at youre wyll, *father*  
106 And at youre byddyng I am yow by,  
With yow to walk ovyr dale and hill.  
At youre callyng I am redy!  
To thee fadyr, evyr most comly, *father; most fittingly*  
110 It ouyth the childe evyr buxom to be. *The child must be obedient*  
I wyl obey ful hertyly  
To allthynge that ye bydde me. *everything*
- ABRAHAM** Now, son, in thi necke this fagot thu take, *on your neck; bundle of sticks*  
And this fyre bere in thinne honde; *hand*  
115 For we must now sacrefyse go make,  
Evyn aftyr the wyll of Goddys sonde. *God's command*  
Take this brennyng bronde, *burning torch*  
My swete childe, and lete us go.  
Ther may no man that levyth in londe *lives on earth*  
120 Have more sorwe than I have wo. *sorrow*
- YSAAC** Fayre fadyr, ye go ryght styll — *father, you walk in silence*  
I pray yow, fadyr, speke onto me.
- ABRAHAM** Mi gode childe, what is thi wylle? *good*  
Telle me thyn hert, I pray to thee.
- YSAAC** Fadyr, fyre and wood here is plenté, *Father*  
126 But I kan se no sacryfice.  
What ye shulde offre, fayn wold I se *Whatever; I would like to see*  
That it were don at the best avyse. *in the best way*
- ABRAHAM** God shal that ordeyn, that sytt in hevynne, *provide*  
130 My swete sone, for this offryng.  
A derere sacryfice may no man nempne *dearer; name*  
Than this shal be, my dere derlyng.
- YSAAC** Lat be, good fadyr, youre sad wepyng! *Stop; father*  
Your hevycher agrevyth me sore! *mournful; grieves*  
135 Tell me, fadyr, youre grett mornyng, *father; mourning*  
And I shal seke sum help therfore.
- ABRAHAM** Alas, dere sone, for nedys must me *ordained*  
Evyn here thee kille as God hath sent. *father*  
Thyn owyn fadyr thi deth must be!  
140 Alas, that evyr this bowe was bent! *process began*  
With this fyre bryght thu must be brent! *burnt*  
An aungelle seyde to me ryght so.  
Alas, my chylde, thu shalt be shent — *destroyed*  
Thi careful fadyr must be thi fo. *sorrowful father; foe*

- YSAAC** Almyghty God of his grett mercye,  
 146 Ful hertyly I thanke thee, sertayne. *certainly*  
 At Goddys byddyng here for to dye, *God's*  
 I obeye me here for to be sclayne. *slain*  
 I pray yow, fadyr, be glad and fayne *father; eager*  
 150 Trewly to werke Goddys wyll. *God's*  
 Take good comforte to yow agayne,  
 And have no dowte youre childe to kyll.
- For Godys byddyng, forsothe, it is *God's; truly*  
 That I, of yow, my deth schulde take.
- 155 Agens God ye don amys, *Against; wrong*  
 His byddyng yf ye shuld forsake.  
 Yowre owyn dampnacyon shulde ye bake *damnation; prepare*  
 If ye me kepe from this rod. *punishment*  
 With youre swerd my deth ye make *sword*
- 160 And werk evyrmore the wyll of God.
- ABRAHAM** The wyll of God must nedys be done,  
 To werke his wyll I seyde nevyr nay,  
 But yit the fadyr to sle the sone — *yet; father; slay*  
 My hert doth clynge and cleve as clay. *harden; break*
- YSAAC** Yitt werk Goddys wyll, fadyr, I yow pray, *Yet; God's; father*  
 166 And sle me here anoon forthryght, *slay; right now*  
 And turne fro me youre face away *away from*  
 Myne heed whan that ye shul of smyght. *head; will strike off*
- ABRAHAM** Alas, dere childe, I may not chese. *choose*  
 170 I must nedys my swete sone kyll!  
 My dere derlyng, now must me lese, *destroy*  
 Myn owyn sybb blood now shal I spylle! *child's*  
 Yitt this dede, or I fulfyll, *Yet; before I do it*  
 My swete sone, this mouth I kys.
- YSAAC** Al redy, fadyr, evyn at youre wyll.  
 176 I do youre byddyng as reson is. *as is reasonable*
- ABRAHAM** Alas, dere sone, here is no grace,  
 But nedys ded now must thu be. *needs be dead*  
 With this kerchere I kure thi face — *kerchief I cover*
- 180 In the tyme that I sle thee,  
 Thy lovely vesage wold I not se — *face*  
 Not for all this werdlys good, *world's goods*  
 With this swerd that sore grevyt me *grieves*  
 184 My childe I sle and spylle his blood. *slay*
- ANGELUS** Abraham, Abraham, thu fadyr fre! *noble father*  
**ABRAHAM** I am here redy — what is youre wyll?

- ANGELUS** Extende thin hand in no degré! *your*  
 I bydde thu hym not kyll!  
 Here do I se by ryght good skylle *say; understanding*  
 190 Allmyghty God that thu dost drede,  
 For thu sparyst nat thi sone to spylle. *not; destroy*  
 God wyll aqwhyte thee well thi mede. *reward you well*
- ABRAHAM** I thank my God in hevyn above,  
 And hym honowre for this grett grace,  
 195 And that my Lord me thus doth prove  
 I wyll hym wurchep in every place.  
 My childys lyff is my solace; *child's life*  
 I thank myn God evyr for his lyff!  
 In sacrifice here or I hens pace, *before I leave here*  
 200 I sle this shepe with same knyff. *slay*
- Now this shepe is deed and slayn; *dead*  
 With this fyre it shal be brent.  
 Of Isaac, my sone, I am ful fayn *glad*  
 That my swete childe shal not be shent. *killed*  
 205 This place I name with good entent  
 "The Hill of Godys Vesytacyon," *God's Visitation*  
 For hedyr God hath to us sent *hither*  
 His comforte after grett trybulacyon.
- ANGELUS** Herke, Abraham, and take good heyd: *heed*  
 210 By hymself God hath thus sworn  
 For that thu woldyst a done this dede, *Since; have done*  
 He wyll thee blysse both evyn and morn.  
 For thi dere childe thu woldyst have lorn *lost*  
 At Goddys byddyng, as I thee telle. *God's*  
 215 God hath sent thee word befor:  
 Thi seed shal multiplye wherso thu duelle. *dwell*
- As sterrys in hevyn byn many and fele, *stars; be countless*  
 So shal thi seed encrese and growe.  
 Thu shalt ovyrcome in welth and wele *surpass; prosperity*  
 220 All thi fomen reknyd be rowe. *foes that can be accounted for*  
 As sond in the se doth ebbe and flowe *sand; sea*  
 Hath cheselys many unnumerabyll, *pebbles*  
 So shal thi sede — thu mayst me trowe — *seed; believe me*  
 Encres and be evyr prophytabyll. *fruitful*
- 225 For to my spech thu dedyst obeye, *Since*  
 Thyn ennyes portys thu shalt possede. *enemies' gates; possess*  
 And all men on erthe — as I thee seye —  
 Thei shal be blyssed in thi sede.

Almyghty God thus thee wyll mede *reward*  
 230 For that good wyll that thu ast done. *you have done*  
 Therfore, thank God in word and dede  
 Both thu thiself and Ysaac, thi sone.

**ABRAHAM** A, my Lord God to wurchep on kne now I fall.  
 I thank thee, Lord, of thi mercy.

235 Now, my swete childe, to God thu kall  
 And thank we that Lord now hertyly. *heartily*

**YSAAC** With lowly hert to God I crye.  
 I am his servvant both day and nyght.  
 I thank thee, Lord, in hevyn so hyghe  
 240 With hert, with thought, with mayn, with myght. *strength*

**ABRAHAM** Gramercy, Lord and Kyng of Grace; *Many thanks*  
 Gramercy, Lord ovyr lordys all!  
 Now my joye returnyth his trace! *its way*  
 I thank thee, Lorde in hevyn, thin halle. *your*

**YSAAC** Ovyr all kyngys crownyd, Kyng I thee kalle!  
 246 At thi byddying to dye with knyff,  
 I was ful buxum, evyn as thi thralle. *obedient; servant*  
 Lord, now I thank thee — thu grauntyst me lyff. *life*

**ABRAHAM** Now we have wurchepyd oure blyssyd Lorde  
 250 On grounde knelyng upon oure kne.  
 Now lete us tweyn, sone, ben of on acorde *both; one accord*  
 And goo walke hom into oure countré.

**YSAAC** Fadyr, as ye wyll, so shal it be.  
 I am redy with yow to gon.  
 255 I shal yow folwe with hert full fre. *freely*  
 All that ye bydde me sone shal be don.

**ABRAHAM** Now God, althyng of nowth that made, *everything*  
 Evyr wurchepyd he be on watyr and londe.  
 His grett honowre may nevyr more fade *never lessen*  
 260 In feld nor town, se nor on sonde. *field; sea; shore*  
 As althyng, Lord, thu hast in honde *everything; hand*  
 So save us all wherso we be  
 Whethyr we syttyn, walk, or stonde.  
 Evyr on thin handwerke thu have pyté. *your handiwork*

[*Explicit.*

*The end*





- 35 Now have I my shon of take. *shoes taken off*  
 What is youre wylle, Lord, fayn wold I wete. *gladly would I know*
- DEUS** Com nere, Moyses, with me to mete.  
 These tabellis I take thee in thin honde, *tablets; give; your*  
 With my fynger in hem is wrete *them is written*
- 40 All my lawys, thu undyrstonde.
- Loke that thu preche all abowte:  
 Hooso wyll have frenshipp of me, *Whoso*  
 To my lawys loke thei lowte, *obey*  
 That thei be kept in all degré. *in all ways*
- 45 Go forth and preche anon, let se — *now, let's see*  
 Loke thu not ses nyght nor day. *cease*
- MOYSES** Your byddyng, Lord, all wrought shal be; *done*  
 Your wylle to werk, I walk my way.

*Custodi precepta Domini Dei tui: Deutronomini sexto.*<sup>1</sup>

- 50 The comaundment of thi Lord God, man, loke thu kepe  
 Where that thu walk, wake, or slepe.
- Every man take good hede,  
 And to my techynge take good intent,  
 For God hath sent me now indede  
 Yow for to enforme his comaundment. *to teach*
- 55 Yow to teche, God hath me sent,  
 His lawys of lyff that arn ful wyse.  
 Them to lerne, be dyligent,  
 Your soulys may thei save at the last asyse. *judgment*
- 60 The preceptys that taught shal be,  
 Be wretyn in these tablys tweyn. *two tablets*  
 In the fyrst ben wretyn thre *are written*  
 That towch to God, this is serteyn. *That concern*  
 In the secund tabyl be wretyn ful pleyn *tablet*  
 The tother sefne that towch mankende. *Other seven*
- 65 Herk now well, man, what I shal seyn *Listen*  
 And prent thise lawys well in thi mende. *imprint these; mind*

*I<sup>us</sup> Primum mandatum: non habebis deos alienos.*<sup>2</sup>

The fyrst comaundement of God, as I yow say  
 Of the fyrst tabyl forsothe is this:

<sup>1</sup> *Keep the precepts of the Lord thy God: Deuteronomy 6*

<sup>2</sup> *First commandment: You will not keep strange gods*

- 70      Thu shalt have, neythyr nyght nore day,  
 Noon other god but the Kyng of Blysse.  
 Undyrstonde wele what menyth this —  
 Every man in hys degré — *his place*  
 And sett nevyr youre hert amys *amiss*  
 Upon this werdlys vanyté. *world's*
- 75      For if thou sett thi love so sore *so much*  
 Upon ryches and werdly good, *worldly goods*  
 Thi wurdly rycches thou takyst evermore  
 Evyn for thi god, as man ovyrwood. *extremely mad*  
 Amend thee, man, and chaunge thi mood! *heart*
- 80      Lese not thi sowle for werdlys welth!  
 Only hym love which bodyly food *Damn; world's*  
 Doth geve all day and gostly helth. *give; spiritual*

2. *Secundum mandatum: non assumes nomen Dei tui in vanum.*<sup>1</sup>

- 85      The second precept of the fyrst tabyll: *tablet*  
 The name of God take nevyr in vayne;  
 Swere none othis be noon fals fabyll. *no oaths by; fictions*  
 The name of God thou nevyr dysteyn. *disdain*  
 Bewhare of othis for dowte of peyn! *fear of pain*  
 Amonges felacheppe whan thou dost sytt, *Amongst; when*  
 A lytyl othe — this is serteyn — *oath*
- 90      May dampne thy sowle to helle pytt. *damn*
- Man, whan thou art sett at the nale, *alehouse*  
 And hast thi langage as plesyth thee, *talk*  
 Loke thin othis be non or smale, *oaths; small*  
 And yett alwey loke trewe thei be. *that they be true*
- 95      But swere not oftyn by rede of me, *my advice*  
 For yf thou use oftyntyme to swere, *are wont to*  
 It may gendyr custom in thee! *become a habit*  
 Byware of custom, for he wyl dere. *it will harm (you)*

3. *Tercium mandatum: memento ut sabbatum sanctifices.*<sup>2</sup>

- 100      The thryd comaundment of God, as I rede *read*  
 Doth bydde thee halwe well thin haly day. *[to] hallow; your holy*  
 Kepe thee well fro synfull dede, *deeds*  
 And care not gretly for rych aray. *rich clothing*  
 A ryght pore man — this is non nay — *this is true*

<sup>1</sup> *Second commandment: You will not take the name of your God in vain*

<sup>2</sup> *Third commandment: Observe the day of the Sabbath to sanctify it*

105 Of sympyl astat in clothis rent *estate; torn clothing*  
 May be bettyr than rych with garmentys gay. *bright*  
 Oftyntyme doth kepe this comaundment.

For rych men do showe oftyntyme pompe and pride  
 On haly days as ofty n is sene *holy days*  
 Whan pore men passe and go besyde. *pass by*  
 110 At wurthy festys, riche men woll bene. *will be*  
 Thyn haly day thu kepyst not clene: *holy day*  
 In glotenye to lede thi lyff.  
 In Goddys hous ye shulde, bedene, *God's; indeed*  
 Honoure your God, both mayden and wyff.

4. *Quantum mandatum: honora patrem tuum et matrem tuam.*<sup>1</sup>

115 Of the secunde tabyll the fyrst comaundment *tablet*  
 And in the ordyr the fourte I sey in fay. *fourth; truth*  
 He byddyth thee evermore with hert bent *resolved*  
 Both fadyr and modyr to wurchep alway. *father; mother to honor*  
 Thow that thi fadyr be pore of array, *Though; poor in possessions*  
 120 And thow never so rych of golde and good, *though*  
 Yitt loke thu wurchep hym nyght and day,  
 Of whom thu hast both flesch and blood.

In this comaundmente includyd is  
 Thi bodyli fadyr and modyr also. *bodily father; mother*  
 125 Includyd also I fynde in this:  
 Thi gostly Fadyr and Modyr therto. *spiritual Father; Mother*  
 To thi gostly Fadyr evyr reverens do;  
 Thi gostly Modyr is Holy Cherch.  
 These tweyn save thi sowle fro woo, *two; woe*  
 130 Ever them to wurchep loke that thu werch. *work*

5. *Quintum mandatum: non occides.*

*Fifth commandment: You shall not kill*

The fyfft comaundement byddyth all us:  
 Scle no man, no whight that thu kyll. *Slay; no one*  
 Undyrstonde this precept thus:  
 Scle no wyght with wurd nor wyll. *Slay; command or deed*  
 135 Wykkyd worde werkyht oftyntyme grett ill, *words work*  
 Bewar therfore of wykkyd langage.  
 Wyckyd spech many on doth spyll. *many a one; destroy*  
 Therfore of spech beth not owtrage. *outrageous*

<sup>1</sup> *Fourth commandment: Honor your father and your mother*

6. *Sextum mandatum: non makaberis.**Sixth commandment: Do not commit adultery*

	The sexte comaundement byddith every man	
140	That no wyght lede no lecherous lay.	<i>no man; life</i>
	Forfet nevyr be no woman	<i>Never have sex with</i>
	Lesse than the lawe alowe thi play.	<i>Unless; sexual relationship</i>
	Trespas nevyr with wyff, ne may,	<i>nor maid</i>
	With wedow, nor with non othyr wyght.	<i>widow; no other person</i>
145	Kepe thee clene, as I thee say,	<i>yourself pure</i>
	To whom thu hast thi trowth plyght.	<i>troth promised</i>

7. *Septimum mandatum: non furtum facies.**Seventh commandment: Do not steal*

	Do no thefte, nothyng thu stele,	<i>steal</i>
	The sefint precept byddyth thee ful sore.	<i>seventh</i>
	Whyll thu arte in welth and wele,	<i>prosperity</i>
150	Evyl-gett good loke thu restore	<i>Ill-gotten goods; return</i>
	Off handys and dede be trewe evyrmore,	<i>Of</i>
	For yf thin handys lymyd be,	<i>your; are sullied</i>
	Thu art but shent: thi name is lore	<i>ruined; reputation is lost</i>
	In felde and town, and in all countré.	<i>field; countries</i>

8. *Octavum mandatum: non loqueris contra proximum tuum falsum testimonium.*<sup>1</sup>

155	The eyghte precept thus doth thee bydde:	
	Fals wyttnes loke non thu bere;	
	The trowth nevyrmore loke that thu hyde.	<i>do not hide</i>
	With fals wyttness no man thu dere,	<i>dare</i>
	Nowther for love, ne dred, ne fere.	<i>Neither; nor dread; fear</i>
160	Sey non other than trowth is.	<i>the truth</i>
	Fals wyttness, yf that thu rere,	<i>speak</i>
	Agens God thu dost grettly amys.	<i>Against; sin</i>

9. *Nonum mandatum: non desiderabis uxorem proximi tui, et cetera.*<sup>2</sup>

	The ninte precept of lawe of lyff,	<i>ninth</i>
	Evyn thus doth bydde every man:	
165	Desyre not thi neyborys wyff	<i>neighbor's wife</i>
	Thow she be fayr and whyte as swan,	<i>Though</i>
	And thi wyff brown, yitt natt for than.	<i>not even then</i>
	Thi neyborys wyff thu nevyr rejoyse.	<i>enjoy</i>
	Kepe thee clene as evyr thu can;	<i>yourself</i>
170	To thin owyn wyff and thin owyn choyse.	<i>your</i>

<sup>1</sup> *Eighth commandment: Do not bear false witness against your neighbor*<sup>2</sup> *Ninth commandment: Do not covet your neighbor's wife, etc.*

10. *Decimum mandatum: non concupisces domum proximi tui, non servum, non ancillam, non bovem, non asinum, nec omnia que illius sunt, et cetera.*<sup>1</sup>

	The tente comaundement of God and last is this:	
	Thi neyborys hous desyre thu nowth,	<i>neighbor's; not</i>
	Maydon nor servaunt nor nowth of his,	<i>nothing</i>
	Desyre hem nevyr in wyll nor thowth	<i>them; thought</i>
175	Oxe nere asse that he hath bought,	<i>nor</i>
	Nere nothyng that longyht hym to.	<i>Nor anything; belongs</i>
	Godys lawe must nedys be wrought:	<i>God's; be done</i>
	Desyre nothyng thin neybore fro.	<i>of your neighbor</i>
	The sexte comaundement of lechory	
180	Doth exclude the synfull dede,	
	But theys tweyn last most streytly	<i>these two; strictly</i>
	Both dede and thought thei do forbede.	<i>forbid</i>
	In wyll nere thought no lechory thu lede,	<i>or</i>
	Thi thought and wyll thu must refreyn.	<i>restrain</i>
185	All thi desyre, as I thee rede,	<i>desires; as I tell you</i>
	In clennes of lyff thiself restreyn.	<i>restrain</i>
	Frendys, these be the lawys that ye must kepe.	
	Therefore, every man sett well in mende —	<i>mind</i>
	Wethyr that thu do wake or slepe —	<i>Whether</i>
190	These lawys to lerne thu herke ful hynde.	<i>heed diligently</i>
	And Godys grace shal be thi frende,	<i>God's</i>
	He socowre and save yow in welth fro woo.	<i>succor; from woe</i>
	Farewell gode frendys, for hens wyll I wende	<i>go</i>
	My tale I have taught yow, my wey now I goo.	
	<i>[Explicit Moyses.]</i>	<i>The end of Moses</i>

## 7. ROOT OF JESSE

<b>YSAIAS</b>	I am the prophete callyd Isaye,	<i>Isaiah</i>
	Replett with Godys grett influens,	<i>Filled; God's</i>
	And sey pleynty be spyryte of prophecie	<i>by the spirit</i>
	That a clene mayde thourgh meke obedyens	<i>through</i>
5	Shall bere a childe which shal do resystens	<i>resistance</i>
	Ageyn foule Zabulon, the devyl of helle.	<i>Against; Zebulon</i>
	Mannys soule, ageyn hym to defens —	<i>Man's; against; to defend</i>
	Opyn in the felde — the fend he shal felle.	<i>field; fiend; vanquish</i>

<sup>1</sup> *Tenth commandment: Do not covet your neighbor's house, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything else that is his, etc.*

- Wherefore I seye: *Quod virgo concipiet*  
 10 *Et pariet filium nomen Emanuel.*<sup>1</sup>  
 Oure lyf for to save he shal suffyr deth *life*  
 And bye us to his blysse, in hevyn for to dwell. *restore us*  
 Of sacerdotale lynage the trewth I yow tell *priestly lineage; truth*  
 Flessch and blood to take, God wyll be born!  
 15 Joye to man in erth and in hevyn aungell, *on earth; angels*  
 At the chyl dys byrth, joye shal make that morn. *child's; shall be made*

- RADIX JESSE** *Egredietur virga de radice Jesse*  
*Et flos de radice eius ascendet.*<sup>2</sup>  
 A blyssyd braunch shal sprynge of me  
 20 That shal be swettere than bawmys breth. *balm's breath*  
 Out of that braunch in Nazareth  
 A flowre shal blome of me, Jesse Rote, *blossom*  
 The which by grace shal dystroye deth  
 And brynge mankende to blysse most sote. *sweet*

- DAVID REX** I am David of Jesse Rote,  
 26 The fresch kyng by naturall successyon. *bold*  
 And of my blood shal sprynge oure bote *salvation*  
 As God hymself hath mad promysyon: *promised*  
 Of regall lyff shal come suche foyson *life; abundant grace*  
 30 That a clene mayde modyr shal be — *maid mother*  
 Ageyns the Devellys fals illusyon — *Devil's*  
 With regall power to make man fre.

- JEREMIAS PROPHETA** I am the prophete Jeremye, *Jeremiah*  
 And fullich acorde in all sentence *fully agree*  
 35 With Kyng David and with Ysaie,  
 Affermyng pley nly befor this audyens  
 That God of his high benyvolens  
 Of prest and kynge wyll take lynage  
 And bye us all from oure offens *redeem*  
 40 In hevyn to have his herytage.

- REX SALAMON** I am Salamon, the secunde kynge, *King Solomon*  
 And that wurthy temple forsothe made I *truly*  
 Which that is fygure of that mayde yunge *a prefiguration; young*  
 That shal be modyr of grett Messy. *mother; Messiah*

- EZECHIEL PROPHETA** A vysion of this ful verly  
 46 I, Ezechiel, have had also

<sup>1</sup> Lines 9–10: *Behold a virgin will conceive / and bear a son, by name Emmanuel.* (See Isaías 7:14)

<sup>2</sup> Lines 17–18: *A rod out of the root of Jesse / and a flower will ascend from his root.* (See Isaías 11:1)

Of a gate that sperd was trewly *was shut*  
 And no man but a prince myght therin go.

**ROBOAS REX** The thryd kynge of the jentyll Jesse,  
 50 My name is knowe Kyng Roboas. *King Rehoboam*  
 Of oure kynrede yitt men shul se, *yet*  
 A clene mayde trede down foule Sathanas. *tread; Satan*

**MICHEAS PROPHETA** And I am a prophete calde Mycheas. *Micah*  
 I telle yow pleynly that thus it is:  
 55 Evyn lyke as Eve modyr of wo was, *mother*  
 So shal a maydyn be modyr of blyss.

**ABIAS REX** I that am calde Kynge Abias *Abijah*  
 Conferme for trewe that ye han seyde *what you have*  
 And sey also as in this cas

60 That all oure myrth comyth of a mayd.  
**DANYEL PROPHETA** I, prophete Danyel, am well apayed: *pleased*  
 In fygure of this I saw a tre. *fiends*  
 All the fendys of hell shall ben affrayd  
 64 Whan maydenys frute theron thei se. *When [the] maiden's fruit*

**ASA REX** I, Kynge Asa, beleve all this:  
 That God wyll of a maydyn be born  
 And us to bryngyn to endles blys,  
 Ruly on rode be rent and torn. *Pitifully on the cross*

**JONAS PROPHETA** I, Jonas, sey that on the thryd morn *Jonah; third*  
 70 Fro deth he shal ryse — this is a trew tall. *tale*  
 Fyguryd in me the which longe befor  
 Lay thre days beryed within the qwall. *Prefigured*  
*buried; whale*

**JOSOPHAT REX** And I, Josophat, the sixte kynge serteyn, *Jehosaphat; surely*  
 Of Jesse Rote in the lenyall successyon, *lineal*  
 75 All that my progenitouris hath befor me seyn *progenitors; said*  
 Feythfully beleve withowtyn all dubytacyon. *without any doubt*

**ABDIAS PROPHETA** I, Abdias prophete, make this protestacyon *Obadiah; affirmation*  
 That after he is resyn to lyve onys agen, *once again*  
 Deth shal be drevyn to endles dampnacyon *driven*  
 80 And lyff shal be grawntyd of paradys ful pleyn. *in paradise*

**JORAS REX** And I, Joras, also in the numbere of sefne *Joram; seven*  
 Of Jesse Rote kynge, knowlych that he, *Kings of the Jesse Root, acknowledge that he*  
 After his resurreccyon, returne shal to hefne, *heaven*  
 Both God and verry man ther endles to be. *true man*

**ABACUCH PROPHETA** I, Abacuch prophete, holde wele with thee: *Habbakuk; agree*  
 86 Whan he is resyn he shal up stye *When; ascend*  
 In hevyn as juge sitt in his se *seat*  
 Us for to deme whan we shal dye. *to judge*



- OZIAS REX** And I, Ozyas, kyng of hygh degré,  
 90 Spronge of Jesse Rote, dar well sey this:  
 Whan he is gon to his dygnyté,  
 He shal send the Sprytt to his disciplis.  
*Uzziah; prestige dare*  
*When; position of honor [Holy] Spirit*
- JOELL PROPHETA** And I, Joel, knowe full trewe that is  
 God bad me wryte in prophesye:  
 95 He wolde sende down his Sprytt, iwys,  
 On yonge and olde ful sekrylye.  
*bid me to write indeed certainly*
- JOATHAS REX** My name is knowe, Kyng Joathan,  
 The ninte kyng spronge of Jesse.  
 Of my kynrede God wol be man,  
 100 Mankend to save, and that joyth me.  
*Jotham ninth gladdens*
- AGGEUS PROPHETA** With yow I do holde that am prophete Aggee,  
 Com of the same hygh and holy stok.  
 God of oure kynrede, indede, born wyl be  
 From the wulf to save al shepe of his flock.  
*I agree; Haggai*
- ACHAS REX** Of Jesse, Kyng Achas is my name  
 106 That falsly wurchepyd ydolatrie  
 Tyl Ysaie putt me in blame  
 And seyde a mayd shulde bere Messye.  
*King Ahaz Isaiah Messiah*
- OZIAS PROPHETA** Of that byrthe wyttnes bere I,  
 110 A prophete Osyas men me calle.  
 And aftyr that tale of Isaye  
 That mayd shal bere Emanuelle.  
*Hosea story; Isaiah*
- EZECHIAS REX** My name is knowyn, Kyng Ezechyas,  
 The hellenthe kyng of this geneologye  
 115 And say forsothe, as in this cas,  
 A mayde be mekenes shal brynge mercye.  
*Hezekiah eleventh by*
- SOPHOSAS PROPHETA** I, a prophete callyd Sophonye,  
 Of this matyr do bere wyttnes  
 And for trowth to sertyfie:  
 120 That maydens byrth oure welth shal dresse.  
*Zephaniah maiden's; bring about*
- MANASSES REX** Of this nobyll and wurthy generacyon  
 The twelfte kyng am I, Manasses,  
 Wyttnessynge here be trew testyficacyon:  
 That maydenys childe shal be Prince of Pes.  
*Manasseh by true testimony maiden's; Peace*
- BARUK PROPHETA** And I, Baruk prophete, conferme wurdys thes:  
 126 Lord and Prince of Pes thow that chylde be,  
 Al his fomen ageyn hym that pres  
 Ryght a grym syre at Domysday shal he be.  
*Baruch; these though foes against; assail A very grim; Doomsday*
- AMON REX** Amon Kyng, for the last conclusyon:  
 130 Al thyng befor seyd for trowth do testyfie  
*truth*

Praynge that Lord of oure synne remyssyon *sins' remission*  
 At that dredful day he us graunt mercye.  
 Thus, we all of this genealogye  
 Acordynge in on here in this place, *Agreeing as one*  
 135 Pray that heygh Lorde whan that we shal dye *high; when*  
 Of his gret goodnesse to grawnt us his grace.

[*Explicit Jesse.*]

## THE MARY PLAY (PLAYS 8–11 AND 13)

### 8. JOACHIM AND ANNE

**CONTEMPLACIO** Cryst conserve this congregacyon  
 Fro perellys past, present, and future, *perils*  
 And the personys here pleand, that the pronunciacyon *playing*  
 Of here sentens to be seyd mote be sad and sure, *their words; may be weighty*  
 5 And that non oblocucyon make this matere obscure, *errors; matter*  
 But it may profite and plese eche persone present *But that*  
 From the gynnyng to the endynge so to endure *remain*  
 That Cryst and every creature with the conceyte be content. *idea*

This matere here mad is of the Modyr of Mercy: *made*  
 10 How be Joachym and Anne was here concepcyon, *by*  
 Sythe offred into the temple compiled breffly — *Afterwards*  
 Than maryed to Joseph, and so, folwyng the Salutacyon, *then*  
 Meting with Elyzabeth and ther with a conclusyon,  
 In fewe wordys talkyd that it shulde nat be tedyous  
 15 To lernyd nyn to lewd nyn to no man of reson.<sup>1</sup>  
 This is the processe — now preserve yow Jhesus! *story*

Therfore of pes I yow pray all that ben here present, *peace*  
 And tak hed to oure talkyn, what we shal say. *heed*  
 I betече yow that Lorde that is evyr omnypotent, *entrust you to*  
 20 To governe yow in goodnes as he best may,  
 In hevyn we may hym se.  
 Now God that is Hevyn Kynge, *Heaven's*  
 Sende us all hese dere blyssynge,  
 And to his towre he mote us brynge. *may*  
 25 Amen for charyté.

**YSAKAR** The prestys of God offre sote ensens *sweet incense*  
 Unto here God, and therfore they be holy. *their God*

<sup>1</sup> Neither to learned men nor to unlearned men nor to anyone of reason

- We that mynistere here in Goddys presens,  
In us shuld be fownd no maner of foly.
- 30 Ysakar, prynce of prestys, am I  
That this holyst day here have mynystracyon,  
Certyfyenge all tribus in my cure specyaly,  
That this is the hyst fest of oure solemnyzacyon.
- This we clepe *Festum Encenniorum*,  
35 The newe fest, of which thre in the yere we exercyse.  
Now all the kynredys to Jerusalem must cum  
Into the temple of God here to do sacryfyse:  
Tho that be cursyd, my dygnyté is to dysspyse,  
And tho that be blyssyd here holy sacrefyse to take.
- 40 We be regal *sacerdocium*: it perteyneth us to be wysse  
Be fasting, be prayng, be almes, and at du tyme to wake.<sup>1</sup>
- JOACHYM** Now all this countré of Galylé  
With this cetye of Nazareth specyal,  
This fest to Jerusalem must go we
- 45 To make sacrefyce to God eternal.  
My name is Joachym, a man in godys substancyall.  
“Joachym” is to say, “He that to God is redy.”  
So have I be and evyrmore shal,  
For the dredful domys of God sore dred I.
- I am clepyd ryghtful, why wole ye se,  
50 For my godys into thre partys I devyde:  
On to the temple and to hem that ther serving be;  
Anodyr to the pylgrimys and pore men; the thryd  
for hem with me abyde.  
So shulde every curat in this werde wyde
- 55 Geve a part to his chauncel, iwys;  
A part to his parochonerys that to povert slide;  
The thryd part to kepe for hym and his.
- But blyssyd wyff Anne, sore I drede  
In the temple this tyme to make sacryfice  
60 Becawse that no frute of us doth procede.  
I fere me grettly the prest wole me dysspyce,  
Than grett slawndyr in the tribus of us shulde aryse.<sup>2</sup>  
But this I avow to God with all the mekenes I can:  
Gyff of his mercy he wole a childe us devyse,
- 65 We shal offre it up into the temple to be Goddys man.

*God's  
sinfulness*

*authority  
tribes [of Israel]; care  
feast; rites*

*Feast of Incense  
three; celebrate*

*Those  
those; their  
priests; wise*

*feast*

*goods*

*been  
judgments*

*called righteous; will  
goods  
One; them*

*Another; them  
priest; wide world  
chancel, indeed  
parishioners; into poverty*

*fruit (i.e., children)  
scorn*

*promise*

*God's*

<sup>1</sup> By fasting, by praying, by giving alms, and to keep watch at the proper time

<sup>2</sup> Then that great slander about us should arise in the tribes

- ANNE** Youre swemful wurdys make terys trekyl down be my face. *pitiful*  
 Iwys, swete husbond, the fawte is in me. *Surely; fault*  
 My name is Anne, that is to sey, "grace."  
 We wete not how gracyous God wyl to us be. *know*
- 70 A woman shulde bere Cryst, these profecyes have we.  
 If God send frute, and it be a mayd childe,  
 With all reverens I vow to his magesté,  
 Sche shal be her footmayd to mynyster her most mylde.<sup>1</sup>
- JOACHYM** Now lete be it as God wole: ther is no more. *willis*  
 75 Tweyn turtelys for my sacryfice with me I take, *Two turtledoves*  
 And I beseche, wyff, and evyr we mete more  
 That hese grett mercy us meryer mut make. *His; merrier may*
- ANNE** For dred and for swem of youre wourdys I qwake! *sorrow*  
 Thryes I kysse yow with syghys ful sad, *Thrice; sighs*  
 80 And to the mercy of God mekely I yow betake. *entrust*  
 And tho that departe in sorwe, God make ther metyng glad. *those*
- SENIOR TRIBUS** Worchepful Sere Joachym, be ye redy now? *sir*  
 All your kynrede is come yow to exorte, *kindred*  
 That thei may do sacrifice at the temple with yow,  
 85 For ye be of grett wurchep as men yow report.
- JOACHYM** All synfull, seke, and sory God mote comforte *sick; may*  
 I wolde I were as men me name.  
 Thedyr in Goddys name now late us all resorte. *There; let*  
 A, Anne, Anne, Anne, God sheeld us fro shame! *from*
- ANNE** Now am I left alone; sore may I wepe.  
 91 A, husbond, ageyn God wel mote yow brynge *may bring you safely*  
 And fro shame and sorwe he mote yow kepe. *sorrow; may*  
 Tyl I se yow ageyn, I kannot sees of wepyng. *cease*
- SENIOR [TRIBUS]** Prynce of oure prestys, if it be youre plesynge *pleasure*  
 95 We be com mekely to make oure sacrefice.
- YSAKAR** God do yow mede bothe elde and yynge! *reward you; old; young*  
 Than devoutly we wyl begynne servyse. *Then*
- [There they shal synge this sequens — "Benedicta sit beata Trinitas."<sup>2</sup> And in that tyme,  
 Ysakar with his ministerys ensensyth the autere, and than thei make her offryng, and  
 Ysaker seyth:
- Comyth up, serys, and offeryth all now, *sirs*  
 Ye that to do sacryfice worthy are.  
 100 Abyde a qwyle, sere! Whedyr wytte thu? *What are you doing*

<sup>1</sup> She shall be her footmaid to serve her best<sup>2</sup> "Blessed be the glorious Trinity"

Thu and thi wyff arn barrany and bare! *barren*  
 Neyther of yow fruteful nevyr yet ware. *were*  
 Whow durste thu amonge fruteful presume and abuse? *How dare*  
 It is a tokyn thu are cursyd thare!  
 105 Wherffore with grett indygnacyon thin offeryng I refuse! *your*

*[Et refudit sacrificium Joachim.]*
*And he refuses Joachim's sacrifice*

Amonge all this pepyl, barreyn be no mo. *childless; not allowed*  
 Therefore comyth up and offeryth here alle.  
 Thu, Joachym, I charge thee: fast out the temple thu go!

*[Et redit flendo.]*
*And he returns weeping*

Than with Goddys holy wourde blysse yow I shalle. *Then*

*[Ministro cantando:]*
*With the minister singing*

110 *Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini,* *Our help is in the name of the Lord*  
**CHORUS** *Qui fecit celum et terram.* *Who made heaven and earth*  
**MINISTER** *Sit nomen Domini benedictum:* *Blessed be the name of the Lord*  
**CHORUS** *Ex hoc nunc et usque in seculum.* *From this time on, and forevermore*  
**EPISCOPUS** *Benedicat vos divina maiestas et una Deitas*  
 115 *Pater, et Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus.*<sup>1</sup>  
**CHORUS** Amen.

*[Signando manu cum cruce solemniter et recedant tribus extra templum.]*<sup>2</sup>

**EPISCOPUS** Now of God and man blyssyd be ye alle.  
 Homward agen now returne ye,  
 And in this temple abyde we shalle  
 120 To servyn God in Trinyté.

**JOACHYM** A, mercyfful Lord, what is this lyff? *life*  
 What have I do, Lorde, to have this blame? *done*  
 For hevynes I dare not go hom to my wyff, *dejection*  
 And amonge my neyborys, I dare not abyde for shame!  
 125 A, Anne, Anne, Anne, al oure joye is turnyd to grame! *grief*  
 From youre blyssyd felacheppe I am now exilyd —  
 And ye here onys of this fowle fame, *If you hear once*  
 Sorwe wyl sle yow to se me thus revylyd. *slay*

<sup>1</sup> Lines 114–15: *May the divine majesty and one God — Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost — bless you*

<sup>2</sup> *Making the sign of the cross solemnly with his hand, and the tribes will withdraw from the temple*

- But sen God soferyth thys, us must sofrom nede.<sup>1</sup>
- 130 Now wyl I go to my shepherdis and with hem abyde *them*  
 And ther evyrmore levyn in sorwe and in drede. *sorrow*  
 Shame makyth many man his hed for to hyde.  
 Ha, how do ye felas? In yow is lytel pryde.  
 How fare ye and my bestys this wete wolde I, veryly.<sup>2</sup>
- PASTOR 1** A, welcom hedyr blyssyd mayster! We pasture hem ful wyde.<sup>3</sup>
- 136 They be lusty and fayr and grettly multiply. *full of life*
- How do ye mayster? Ye loke al hevyly. *sorrowful*  
 How doth oure dame? At hom sytt she and sowyht? *sews*  
**JOACHYM** To here thee speke of her, it sleyth myn hert, veryly. *hear*
- 140 How I and sche doth, God hymself knowyth. *God knows*  
 The meke, God lyftyth up; the proude, overthrowht. *[he] overthrows*  
 Go do what ye lyst! Se youre bestys not stray. *please! Make sure; [do] not*
- PASTOR 2** Aftere grett sorwe, mayster, evyr gret grace growyht. *sorrow; grows*  
 Sympyl as we kan, we shal for yow pray.
- PASTOR 3** Ya, to pray for careful, it is grett nede. *for the sorrowful*
- 146 We all wul prey for yow knelende. *kneeling*  
 God of his goodnes send yow good spede,  
 And of youre sorwe yow sone amende! *sorrow; soon*
- JOACHYM** I am nott wurthy, Lord, to loke up to hefne. *heaven*
- 150 My synful steppys an venymyd the grounde. *steps have poisoned*  
 I, lothfolest that levyth — thu Lord hyst in thi setys sefne.<sup>4</sup>  
 What art thu, Lord? What, am I wrecche werse than an hownde? *dog*  
 Thu hast sent me shame which myn hert doth wounde! *heart*  
 I thank thee more herefore than for all my prosperité. *then*
- 155 This is a tokyn thu lovyst me; now to thee I am bounde.  
 Thou seyst thu art with hem that in tribulacyon be.
- And hoso have thee, he nedyth not care thanne; *whoso; then*  
 My sorwe is feryng I have do sum offenses. *sorrow; fearing; done*  
 Punchyth me, Lorde, and spare my blyssyd wyff Anne, *Punish*
- 160 That syttyth and sorwyth ful sore of myn absens.  
 Ther is not may profyte but prayour to youre presens. *Nothing will*  
 With prayorys prostrat byfore thi person I wepe.

<sup>1</sup> But seeing that God allows this, we must needs suffer [it]

<sup>2</sup> I would know, truly, how you and my beasts fare

<sup>3</sup> Ah, welcome here, blessed master! We pasture them quite well

<sup>4</sup> I, the most loathsome thing that lives — [and] you, Lord, most high in your seven seats

Have mende on oure avow for your mech magnyficens.<sup>1</sup>  
And my lovyngest wyff, Anne, Lord, for thi mercy kepe.

**ANNE** A, mercy, Lord! Mercy, mercy, mercy!  
166 We are synfolest! It shewyth that ye send us all this sorwe.<sup>2</sup>  
Why do ye thus to myn husbond, Lord? Why, why, why?  
For my barynes, ye may amend this thiself and thu lyst tomorwe,<sup>3</sup>  
And it plese so thi mercy. Thee, my Lord, I take to borwe. *If; to witnes*  
170 I shal kepe myn avow qwhyl I leve and leste.  
I fere me, I have offendyd thee; myn herte is ful of sorwe.<sup>4</sup>  
Most mekely I pray thi pety, that this bale thu wyl breste. *pain; heal*

*[Here the aungel descendith, the hefne syngyng: "Exultet celum laudibus, resultet terra gaudiis, angelorum gloria sacra canunt solemnna."]<sup>5</sup>*

**JOACHYM** Qwhat art thou in Goddys name that makyst me adrad? *What; afraid*  
It is as lyth abowt me as al the werd were fere! *light; as [if]; world; on fire*  
**ANGELUS** I am an aungel of God com to make thee glad!  
176 God is plesyd with thin helmes and hath herd thi prayere. *your alms*  
He seyth thi shame, thi repreff, and thi terys cler. *sees; reproof; tears*  
God is avengere of synne and not nature doth lothe.<sup>6</sup>  
Whos wombe that he sparyth and maketh barreyn here, *barren here [on earth]*  
180 He doth to shewe his myth and his mercy bothe. *might*  
  
Thu seest that Sara was nynty yere bareyn: *ninety years*  
Sche had a son Ysaac to whom God gaff his blyssynge. *gave*  
Rachel also had the same peyn:  
She had a son Joseph that of Egypt was kynge,  
185 A strongere than Sampson nevyr was be wrytynge. *never was written of*  
Nor an holyere than Samuel, it is seyde thus, *holier one*  
Yet here moderys were bareyn both in the gynnyng — *their mothers*  
The concepcyon of all swych, it is ful mervelyous. *such ones*  
  
And in the lykewyse, Anne, thi blyssd wyf, *the same way*  
190 Sche shal bere a childe shal hygth Mary *be called*  
Which shal be blyssyd in her body and have joys fyff. *five*

<sup>1</sup> *Keep in mind our vow for your great magnificence*

<sup>2</sup> *We are the most sinful! It shows that you send us all this sorrow*

<sup>3</sup> *With regard to my barrenness, you [Lord] may amend this yourself if you wished to at any time*

<sup>4</sup> *Lines 170–71: I shall keep my vow while I live and endure. / I fear for myself, [since] I have offended you; my heart is full of sorrow*

<sup>5</sup> *Let the heaven rejoice with praises, the earth resound with joys; they sing in festival to the glory of the archangels*

<sup>6</sup> *God is the avenger of sin and does not hate human nature*

	And ful of the Holy Goost inspyred syngulyrly, Sche shal be offryd into the temple solemly That of her non evyl fame shuld sprynge thus.	<i>solemnly no infamy</i>
195	And as sche shal be bore of a barrany body, So, of her shal be bore without nature Jhesus,	<i>barren intercourse</i>
	That shal be Savyour unto al mankende. In tokyn, whan thu come to Jherusalem to the Gyldyn Gate, <sup>1</sup> Thu shalt mete Anne thi wyff; have this in thi mende:	<i>Who mind</i>
200	I shal sey her the same her sorwys to rebate. <sup>2</sup>	
<b>JOACHYM</b>	Of this imcomparabyl comfort I shal nevyr forgete the date! My sorwe was nevyr so grett, but now my joy is more! I shal hom in hast, be it nevyr so late. A, Anne, blyssyd be that body of thee shal be bore!	<i>time sorrow</i>
205	Now fare wel, myn shepherdys! Governe yow now wysly.	<i>yourselves</i>
<b>PASTOR 1</b>	Have ye good tydyngys, mayster? Than be we glad.	<i>master</i>
<b>JOACHYM</b>	Prayse God for me, for I am not wourthy.	
<b>PASTOR 2</b>	In feyth, sere, so we shal with all oure sowlys sad.	<i>sir; souls</i>
<b>PASTOR 3</b>	I holde it helpfful that on of us with yow be had.	<i>one</i>
<b>JOACHYM</b>	Nay, abyde with youre bestys sone in Goddys blyssynge.	<i>beasts soon</i>
<b>PASTOR 1</b>	We shal make us so mery, now this is bestad	<i>is settled</i>
212	That a myle on your wey ye shal here us synge!	<i>for a mile; hear</i>
<b>ANNE</b>	Alas, for myn husbond, me is ful wo! I shal go seke hym whatsoevyr befall.	<i>woeful</i>
215	I wote not in erth which wey is he go. Fadyr of Hefne, for mercy, to youre fete I falle.	<i>do not know; gone</i>
<b>ANGELUS</b>	Anne, thin husbond ryght now I was withall, The aungel of God that bar hym good tydynge. And as I seyde to hym, so to thee sey I shal:	<i>your; with bore</i>
220	God hath herd thi preyour and thi wepynge.	
	At the Goldyn Gate thu shalte mete hym ful mylde, And in grett gladnes returne to youre hous. So be proces, thu shalt conseyve and bere a childe Whiche shal hyght Mary, and Mary shal bere Jhesus,	<i>humbly in due course be called</i>
225	Which shal be Savyour of all the werd and us. Aftere grett sorwe evyr grett gladnes is had. Now myn inbassett I have seyde to yow thus. Gooth in oure Lordys name, and in God beth glad.	<i>world message</i>

<sup>1</sup> As a sign, when you come to the Golden Gate in Jerusalem

<sup>2</sup> I shall say to her the same thing in order to lessen her sorrows



**ANNE** Now blyssyd be oure Lorde and all his werkys ay! *forever*  
 230 All heffne and erthe mut blysse yow for this! *may*  
 I am so joyful, I not what I may say!  
 Ther can no tounge telle what joye in me is:  
 I to bere a childe that shal bere all mannys blys, *man's bliss*  
 And have myn hosbonde ageyn — ho myth have joys more?<sup>1</sup>  
 235 No creature in erth is grauntyd more mercy, iwys. *surely*  
 I shal hye me to the gate to be ther before. *hurry*

*[Here goth the aungel agen to hefne.]*

A, blyssyd be oure Lord! Myn husbond I se! *see*  
 I shalle on myn knes and to hymward crepe. *approach him*  
**JOACHYM** A, gracyous wyff, Anne, now fruteful shal ye be!  
 240 For joy of this metyng in my sowle I wepe!  
 Have this kusse of clenness, and with yow it kepe. *pure kiss*  
 In Goddys name now go we wyff, hom to oure hous. *say*  
**ANNE** Ther was nevyr joy sank in me so depe!  
 Now may we sey husbond: God is to us gracyous,  
 245 Veryly!  
**JOACHYM** Ya, and if we have levyd wel here before *lived*  
 I pray thee, Lord, thin ore, *mercy*  
 So mote we levyn evyrmore, *may live in*  
 And be thi grace more holyly. *by*  
  
**ANNE** Now homward, husbond, I rede we gon, *urge*  
 251 Ryth hom al to oure place, *Straight home*  
 To thank God that sytt in tron, *on [His] throne*  
 That thus hath sent us his grace.

### 9. PRESENTATION OF MARY IN THE TEMPLE

**CONTEMPLACIO** Sovereynes, ye han sen shewyd yow before *Friends; have seen*  
 Of Joachym and Anne, here botherys holy metyng, *their holy meeting together*  
 How oure Lady was consevid, and how she was bore. *born*  
 We passe ovyr that, breffness of tyme consyderynge,  
 5 And how oure Lady in her tendyr age and yying *young*  
 Into the temple was offryd, and so forth proced.  
 \*260 This sentens sayd shal be hire begynnyng. *part; her*  
 Now the Mother of Mercy in this be our sped. *help*  
  
 And, as a childe of thre yere age, here she shal appere  
 10 To alle pepyl that ben here present.

<sup>1</sup> And to have my husband again — who might have more joys?

And of her grett grace now shal ye here: *hear*  
 How she levyd evyr to Goddys entent *lived; God's will*  
 With grace.  
 That holy matere we wole declare, *matter; will*  
 15 Tyl fortene yere, how sche dyd fare. *Until age 14*  
 Now of youre speche, I pray yow spare, *refrain*  
 \*270 All that ben in this place.

*[Here Joachym and Anne with oure Lady between hem being al in whyte as a childe of thre yere age presente here into the temple, thus seying Joachym:*

**JOACHYM** Blyssed be oure Lord! Fayr frute have we now!  
 Anne, wyff, remembyr wole ye *will*  
 20 That we made to God an holy avow  
 That oure fyrst childe, the servaunt of God shulde be. *first*  
 The age of Mary, oure dowtere, is yerys thre.  
 Therfore to thre personys and on God lete us her present. *one*  
 The yonger she be drawyn, the bettyr semyth me, *brought*  
 25 And for teryeng of oure avow of God, we myth be shent.<sup>1</sup>

**ANNE** It is as ye sey, husbond, indede.  
 \*280 Late us take Mary, oure dowtere, us between *Let*  
 And to the temple with her procede.  
 Dowtere, the aungel tolde us ye shulde be a qwen! *queen*  
 30 Wole ye go se that lord youre husbond shal ben, *Will; what lord; shall be*  
 And lerne for to love hym and lede with hym youre lyff?  
 Telle youre fadyr and me her youre answey, let sen! *here; let's see*  
 Wole ye be pure maydyn and also Goddys wyff?

**MARIA** Fadyr and modyr, if it plesyng to yow be,  
 35 Ye han mad youre avow, so sothly wole I *have made; vow; truly*  
 To be Goddys chast servaunt whil lyff is in me.  
 \*290 But to be Goddys wyff, I was nevyr wurthy!  
 I am the sympelest that evyr was born of body. *humblest*  
 I have herd yow seyde: "God shulde have a modyr swete." *mother*  
 40 That I may leve. To se hire, God graunt me for his mercy *believe; see her*  
 And abyly me to ley my handys undyr hire fayr fete! *allow; her*

*[Et genuflectet ad Deum. And she will kneel to God*

**JOACHYM** Iwys, dowtere, it is wel seyde! *Indeed*  
 Ye answey, and ye were twenty yere olde. *as if you*  
**ANNE** Whith youre speche, Mary, I am wel payd! *pleased*  
 45 Can ye gon alone? Lett se! Beth bolde! *Let's see! Be*

<sup>1</sup> And for waiting upon our vow of God, we might be destroyed

- MARIA** To go to Goddys hous, wole ye now beholde.  
 \*300 I am joyful thedyward, as I may be! *to that place*
- JOACHYM** Wyff, I am right joyful oure dowtere to beholde!  
**ANNE** So am I, wys husbond. Now in Goddys name go we.
- JOACHYM** Sere prince of prestes, and it plese yow, *Sir; if it*  
 51 We that were barreyn, God hath sent a childe.  
 To offre her to Goddys service, we mad oure avow; *made; vow*  
 Here is the same mayde, Mary most mylde.
- YSAKAR** Joachym, I have good mende, how I yow revyled. *well remember*  
 55 I am right joyful that God hath gove yow this grace *has given*  
 To be amonge fruteful. Now, be ye reconsylid!  
 \*310 Com, swete Mary, com! Ye have a gracyous face! *beautiful*
- [Joachym flectendo ad Deum sic dicens: Joachim, kneeling to God, says thus*
- JOACHYM** Now Fadyr and Son and Holy Gost,  
 On God and Personys Thre: *One*  
 60 We offre to thee, Lorde of myghtys most,  
 Oure dowtere thi servaunt evyrmore to be.
- ANNA** Therto most bounde evyrmore be we!  
 Mary, in this holy place, leve yow we shall,  
 In Goddys name. Now up go ye!  
 65 Oure fadyr, oure preste, lo, doth yow call. *behold*
- MARIA** Modyr, and it plese yow, fyrst wole I take my leve *if it*  
 \*320 Of my fadyr and yow, my modyr, iwys; *indeed*  
 I have a fadyr in hefne, this I beleve.  
 69 Now, good fadyr, with that fadyr ye me blysse. *bless*
- JOACHYM** *In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.*<sup>1</sup>  
**MARIA** Amen. Now ye, good modyr.  
**ANNE** *In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.*  
**MARIA** Amen.
- Now oure Lord thank yow for this: *bless (attend to) you*  
 75 Here is my fadyr and my modyr bothe.  
 Most mekely I beseche I may yow kys.  
 \*330 Now forgeve me yf evyr I made yow wrothe. *angry*

*[Et amplexendo, osculabit patrem et matrem.]*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *In the name of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost*

<sup>2</sup> *And embracing them, she will kiss her mother and father*

**JOACHYM** Nay, dowtere, ye offendyd nevyr God nor man.  
 Lovyd be that Lord, yow so doth kepe. *who keeps you*  
**ANNE** Swete dowtyr, thynk on youre modyr An,  
 81 Youre swemyng smytyht to myn hert depe. *grieving cuts my*  
**MARIA** Fadyr and modyr, I shal pray for yow and wepe  
 To God with al myn hert specyaly. *heart*  
 Blysse me day and nyght evyr her ye slepe, *wherever*  
 85 Good fadyr and modyr, and beth mery.

**JOACHYM** A, ho had evyr such a chylde, *who*  
 \*340 Nevyr creature yit that evyr was bore? *yet*  
 Sche is so gracious; she is so mylde:  
 So shulde childyr to fadyr and modyr evyrmore. *children*  
**ANNE** Than shulde thei be blyssyd and plese God sore! *blessed; greatly*  
 91 Husbond, and it plese yow, not hens go we shal *if*  
 Tyl Mary be in the temple above thore — *there*  
 I wold not for al erthe se her fal. *all the world see*

**EPISCOPUS** Come, gode Mary. Come babe, I thee call:  
 95 Thi pas pratyly to this plas pretende. *steps carefully; direct*  
 Thu shalt be the dowtere of God eternal!  
 \*350 If the fyftene grees thu may ascende, *steps*  
 It is meracle if thu do, now God thee dyffende! *defend you*  
 From Babylogy to hevynly Jherusalem, this is the way:  
 100 Every man that thynk his lyf to amende,  
 The fyftene Psalmys in memorye of this mayde say.

[*Maria. Et sic deinceps usque ad finem xv<sup>im</sup> Psalmorum.*<sup>1</sup>

**MARIA** The fyrst degré gostly applyed: *spiritually*  
 It is holy desyre with God to be.  
 In trobyl to God I have cryed *trouble*  
 105 And in sped that Lord hath herde me. *quickly*

*Ad Dominum cum tribularer clamaui, et exaudiuit me.*<sup>2</sup>

The second is stody, with meke inquysisson veryly: *study; inquiry*  
 \*360 How I shal have knowynge of Godys wylle.  
 To the mownteynes of hefne I have lyfte myn ey, *mountains; my eyes*  
 From qwens shal comyn helpe me tylle. *whence*

*Leuavi oculos meos in montes; unde ueniat auxilium mihi.*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mary. And thus from the beginning to the end of the fifteen psalms*

<sup>2</sup> *In my trouble I cried to the Lord, and he heard me. (See Vulgate Psalm 119:1)*

<sup>3</sup> *I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from whence help may come to me. (See Vulgate Psalm 120:1)*

110 The thrydde is gladnes in mende in hope to be *third; mind*  
 That we shall be savyd all thus.  
 I am glad of these tydyngys ben seyde to me:  
 Now shal we go into Goddys hous. *God's*

*Letatus sum in hiis que dicta sunt mihi: in domum Domini ibimus.*<sup>1</sup>

The fourte is meke obedyence as is dette *as is due*  
 115 To hym that is above the planetys sefne: *seven*  
 To thee I have myn eyen sette  
 \*370 That dwellys above the skyes in hefne.

*Ad te leuavi oculos meos: qui habitas in Celis.*<sup>2</sup>

The fyfte is propyr confessyon  
 That we be nought withowth God thus, *not*  
 120 But God in us have habytacyon, *Unless*  
 Peraventure oure enemyes shulde swelle us. *perchance; swallow*

*Nisi quia Dominus erat in nobis, dicat nunc Israel: nisi quia Dominus erat in nobis.*<sup>3</sup>

The sexte is confidens in Godys strenght alon, *God's*  
 For of all grace from hym comyth the strem: *stream*  
 They that trust in God as the Mownt Syon,  
 125 He shal not be steryd, endles that dwellyth in Jherusalem. *stirred*

*Qui confidunt in Domino sicut Mons Syon,  
 Non commouebitur in eternum qui habitat in Hierusalem.*<sup>4</sup>

The sefte is undowteful hope of immortalyté: *seventh is steadfast*  
 \*380 In oure Lordeis grace and mercy. *Lord's*  
 Whan oure Lord convertyth oure captivité, *transforms*  
 Than are we mad as joyful mery. *Then; made also*

*In conuertendo Dominus capiuitatem Syon, facti sumus sicut consolati.*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *I rejoiced in these things that were said to me: We shall go into the house of the Lord.* (See Vulgate Psalm 121:1)

<sup>2</sup> *To you have I lifted up my eyes: You who live in heaven.* (See Vulgate Psalm 122:1)

<sup>3</sup> *If it had not been that the Lord was with us, let Israel now say: If it had not been that the Lord was with us.* (See Vulgate Psalm 123:1–2)

<sup>4</sup> *They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Sion: / he shall not be moved for ever who lives in Jerusalem.* (See Vulgate Psalm 124:1)

<sup>5</sup> *When the Lord brought back the captivity of Sion, we became like men comforted.* (See Vulgate Psalm 125:1)

- 130 The eyted is contempt of veynglory in us, eighth  
 For hym that al mankende hath multiplyed.  
 But yf oure Lord make here oure hous, But unless  
 They an laboryd in veyn that it han edyfied. have labored; have built
- Nisi Dominus edificantuerit domum, in uanum laborauerunt qui edificant eam.*<sup>1</sup>
- 135 The nynte is a childely fer, indede, ninth; childish fear  
 With a longyng love in oure Lord that ay is. ever  
 Blyssyd arn all they that God drede, who fear God  
 \*390 Which that gon in his holy weys. Who go
- Beati omnes qui timent Dominum, qui ambulant in uiuis eius.*<sup>2</sup>
- 140 The tende is myghty soferauns of carnal temptacyon, tenth; endurance  
 For the fleschly syghtys ben fers and fel: sights; fierce; deadly  
 Ofte yough is fowth with, with suech vexacyon; youth; afflicted; such  
 Thu seyng God say so, clepyd Israel. seeing; called
- Sepe expungnauerunt me a iuuentute mea, dicat nunc Israel.*<sup>3</sup>
- 145 The elefnte is accusatyff confessyon of iniquité, eleventh; accusatory  
 Of which ful noyous is the noyis: great is the pain  
 Fro depnes, Lord, I have cryed to thee! From the depths  
 Lord, here in sped my sympyl voys! hear quickly
- De profundis clamaui ad te, Domine: Domine, exaudi uocem meam.*<sup>4</sup>
- \*400 The twelfte is mekenes that is fayre and softe  
 In mannys sowle withinne and withowte: man's  
 Lord, myn herte is not heyved on lofte raised on high  
 Nyn myn eyn be not lokynge abowte. Nor are my eyes
- Domine, non est exaltatum cor meum; neque elati sunt oculi mei.*<sup>5</sup>
- 150 The threttene is feyth therwith: thirteenth  
 With holy dedys don expresse, deeds; openly  
 Have mende, Lorde, of Davyth, Remember; David  
 And of all his swettnes. gentleness

<sup>1</sup> Unless the Lord will build the house, they labour in vain that build it. (See Vulgate Psalm 126:1)

<sup>2</sup> Blessed are all they who fear the Lord, [and] who walk in his ways. (See Vulgate Psalm 127:1)

<sup>3</sup> Often have they fought against me from my youth, let Israel now say. (See Vulgate Psalm 128:1)

<sup>4</sup> Out of the depths I have cried to you, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice. (See Vulgate Psalm 129:1)

<sup>5</sup> Lord, my heart is not exalted: nor are my eyes lofty. (See Vulgate Psalm 130:1)

*Memento Domine, David, et omnis mansuetudinis eius.*<sup>1</sup>

The fourtene is brothyrlly concorde, iwys, *accord, certainly*  
 155 That norchyth love of creaturys echon: *nourishes; each one*  
 Se how good and how glad it is,  
 \*410 Bretheryn for to dwelle in on. *as one*

*Ecce quam bonum et quam jocundum; habitare fratres in unum.*<sup>2</sup>

The fyftene is gracyous, with on acorde, *one accord*  
 Which is syne of Godly love, semyth me: *a sign*  
 160 Se now, blysse oure Lord, *See*  
 All that oure Lordys servauntys be. *Lord's*

*Ecce nunc benedicite Dominum, omnes serui Domini.*<sup>3</sup>

**EPISCOPUS** A, gracyous Lord, this is a mervelyous thyng,  
 That we se here all in syght!  
 A babe of thre yer age so yunge *young*  
 165 To come up these grecys so upryght! *steps*  
 It is an hey meracle, and by Goddys myght, *high; by God's*  
 \*420 No dowth of she shal be gracyous. *doubt that she*  
**MARIA** Holy fadyr, I beseche yow forthryght: *ask you*  
 169 Sey how I shal be rewlyed in Godys hous. *Tell me; be governed (taught)*

**EPISCOPUS** Dowtere, God hath govyn us commaundementys ten, *given*  
 Which, shortely to say, be comprehendyd in tweyn. *two parts*  
 And tho must be kept of all Crysten men *those; Christian*  
 Or ellys here jugement is perpetual peyn. *else their*  
 Ye must love God sovereynly and youre evyn Crystyn pleyn;<sup>4</sup>  
 175 God fyrst for his hygh and sovereyn dygnyté.  
 He lovyd yow fyrst; love hym ageyn. *in return*  
 \*430 For of love, to his owyn lyknes, he made thee.

Love Fadyr, Sone, and Holy Gost:  
 Love God the Fadyr, for he gevyth myght.  
 180 Love God the Sone, for he gevyth wysdam thu wost. *know*  
 Love God the Holy Gost, for he gevyth love and lyght,  
 Thre personys and on God, thus love of ryght. *one*  
 With all thin hert, with all thi sowle, with all thi mende *heart; soul; mind*

<sup>1</sup> O Lord, remember David: and all his meekness. (See Vulgate Psalm 131:1)

<sup>2</sup> Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. (See Vulgate Psalm 132:1)

<sup>3</sup> Behold now bless the Lord, all servants of the Lord. (See Vulgate Psalm 133:1)

<sup>4</sup> You must love God above all and your fellow Christians

- 185 And with all the strenghtis in thee bedyght; *set*  
 Than love thin evyn Crystyn as thiself withowtyn ende.<sup>1</sup>
- \*440 Thu shalt hate nothyng but the devyl and synne:  
 God byddyth thee lovyn thi bodyly enemy. *enemy*  
 And as for youreself here, thus shal ye begynne:  
 Ye must serve and wurchep God here dayly
- 190 For with prayyer, with grace and mercy, *First with*  
 Se thee have a resonable tyme to fede *to eat*  
 Thanne to have a labour bodyly *Then; work*  
 That therin be gostly and bodely mede. *spiritual; physical rewards*
- 195 Youre abydyng shal be with youre maydenys fyve, *home; maidens*  
 Swyche tyme as ye wole have consolacyon. *At what time*
- MARIA** This lyff me lyketh as my lyve. *life*  
 \*450 Of here namys, I beseche yow to have informacyon. *their names*
- EPISCOPUS** There is the fyrst, Meditacyon,  
 Contryssyon, Compassyon, and Clennes,  
 200 And that holy mayde Fruysson: *Fruition*  
 With these blyssyd maydenes shal be youre besynes. *work*
- MARIA** Here is an holy felachepp I fele. *feel*  
 I am not wurthy amonge hem to be! *them*  
 Swete systerys, to yow all I knele. *sisters*
- 205 To receyve me, I beseche youre charyté!
- EPISCOPUS** They shal, dowtere, and on the tothere syde se *other side*  
 \*460 Ther ben sefne prestys, indede, *seven priests*  
 To schryve, to teche, and to mynystryn to thee, *hear confession; minister*  
 209 To lerne thee Goddys lawys, and Scripture to rede. *To teach*
- MARIA** Fadyr, knew I here namys, wele were I. *their names; happy*  
**EPISCOPUS** Ther is Dyscresson, Devocyon, Dylexcyon, and Deliberacyon: *Love*  
 They shal tende upon yow besyly *attend*  
 With Declaracyon, Determynacyon, Dyvynacyon.  
 Now go ye maydenys to youre occupacyon
- 215 And loke ye tende this childe tendyrly.  
 And ye, serys, knelyth, and I shal gyve yow Goddys benyson
- \*470 *In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.*<sup>2</sup>

[*Et recedet cum ministris suis; omnes virgines dicent "Amen."*]<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Then love without end your fellow Christian as you would be loved yourself*

<sup>2</sup> Lines 485–86: *And you, sirs, kneel and I will give you God's blessing / In the name of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost*

<sup>3</sup> *And he will return with his ministers; all the maidens will say "Amen."*



**MARIA** To yow, fadyr and modyr, I me comende.  
 219 Blyssyd be the tyme ye me hedyr brought. *here*  
**JOACHYM** Dowtere, the Fadere of oure feyth thee mot defende, *may*  
 As he of his myght made all thyng of nowth. *nought*  
**ANNE** Mary, to thi sowle solas he sende *solace*  
 In whos wysdam all this werd was wrought. *world; made*  
 Go we now hens, husbonde so hende, *gracious*  
 225 For owth of care now are we brought. *out*

*[Hic Joachim et Anna recedent domum.]*

*Here Joachim and Anna return home*

**MARIA** Be the Holy Gost at hom be ye brought! *By*

*[Ad virgines:]*

*To the maidens*

\*480 Systerys, ye may go do what ye shall:  
 To serve God fyrst here is al my thought.  
 Beforn this holy awtere on my knes I fall. *altar*

230 Lord, sefne petycyons I beseche yow of here: *seven*  
 Fyrst, that I may kepe thi love and thi lawe;  
 The secunde, to lovyn myn evyn Crystyn as myself dere; *fellow*  
 The thrydde, from all that thu hatyst, me to withdrawe; *third; hate*  
 The fourte, all vertuys to thi plesauns knawe; *pleasing to you*  
 235 The fyfte, to obey the ordenaryes of the temple echon; *lawes; each one*  
 The sexte, and that all pepyl may serve thee with awe,  
 \*490 That in this holy temple fawte be non. *be no fault*

The sefnte, Lord, I haske with grett fere: *seventh; ask; fear*  
 That I may se onys in my lyve *see once; life*  
 240 That lady that shal Godys Sone bere, *God's*  
 That I may serve her with my wyttys fyve. *five wits*  
 If it plese yow, and ellys it is not therewith to stryve. *if otherwise*  
 With prayers prostrat for these gracys I wepe. *favours*  
 O, my God, devocyon depe in me dryve  
 245 That myn hert may wake in thee thow my body slepe! *heart; though*

*[Here the aungel bryngyth manna in a cowpe of gold lyke to confeccyons. The hefne syngynge, the aungel seyth:]*

**ANGELUS** Merveyle not mekest maydon of my mynystracyon! *service*  
 \*500 I am a good aungel sent of God Allmyght  
 With aungelys mete for youre sustentacyon, *angel's food; sustenance*  
 Ye to receyve it for natural myght. *physical*  
 250 We aungellys shul serve yow day and nyght!  
 Now fede yow therewith, in Goddys name. *shall*  
*God's*

	We shal lerne yow the lyberary of oure Lordys law lyght, <sup>1</sup> For my sawys in yow shewyth sygnes of shame.	<i>words</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	To thank oure sovereyn Lord, not sufficyth my mende. <sup>2</sup>	
255	I shal fede me of this fode my Lord hath me sent. All maner of savowrys in this mete I fynde!	<i>myself</i> <i>fragrance; food</i>
*510	I felt nevyr non so swete ner so redolent.	<i>tasted; fragrant</i>
<b>ANGELUS</b>	Eche day therwith ye shal be content,	
259	Aungelys alle howrys shal to yow apere.	<i>Angels at all times</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	Mercy, my Makere, how may this be ment? I am the sympelest creature that is levynge here.	<i>living</i>
<b>ANGELUS</b>	In your name Maria, fyve letterys we han:	<i>have</i>
	M: Mayde most mercyfull and mekest in mende;	<i>mind</i>
	A: Averter of the anguysch that Adam began;	
265	R: Regina of Regyon, reyneng withowtyn ende; <sup>3</sup> I: Innocent be influens of Iesses kende;	<i>by; Jesse's kin</i>
*520	A: Advocat most autentyk, youre antecer Anna. Hefne and helle here kneys down bende	<i>ancestor</i> <i>Heaven; their knees</i>
269	Whan this holy name of yow is seyde, Maria!	<i>When; yours</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	I qwake grettly for dred, to here this commendacyon!	<i>hear</i>
	Good, swete aungel, why wole ye sey thus?	<i>will</i>
<b>AUNGELUS</b>	For ye shal here aftere have a salutacyon	<i>greeting</i>
	That shal this excede, it is seyde amonge us,	<i>transcend</i>
	The Deyté that dede shal determyn and dycus.	<i>Deity; deed</i>
275	Ye shal nevyr, Lady, be lefte here alone.	
<b>MARIA</b>	I crye thee mercy, Lorde, and thin erthe cus,	<i>earth kiss</i>
*530	Recomendynge me to that Godhyd that is tryne in trone. <sup>4</sup>	
 <i>[Hic osculet terram.<sup>5</sup> Here shal comyn alwey an aungel with dyvers presentys goynge and comyng. And in the tyme thei shal synge in hefne this hymne, "Jhesu corona virginum."<sup>6</sup> And after, ther comyth a minister fro the busschop with a present and seyth:</i>		
<b>MINISTER</b>	Prynce of oure prestes, Ysakare be name,	<i>by name</i>
	He hath sent yow hymself his servyce, indede,	
280	And bad ye shulde fede yow spare for no shame <sup>7</sup>	

<sup>1</sup> We shall teach you the body of our Lord's luminous law<sup>2</sup> Just to thank our sovereign Lord is insufficient to my way of thinking<sup>3</sup> R: Queen of Creation, reigning without end (forever)<sup>4</sup> Recommending me to that Godhead that is triune on the throne<sup>5</sup> Here she kisses the ground<sup>6</sup> "Jesus, crown of virgins"<sup>7</sup> And bid you should feed yourself without shame

	In this tyme of mete no lenger ye rede.	<i>find</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	Recomende me to my fadyr, sere, and God do hym mede. <sup>1</sup>	
	These vesselys agen sone I shal hym sende.	<i>dishes; soon</i>
	I shal bere it my systerys; I trowe they have more nede.	<i>[to] my; believe</i>
285	Goddys foyson is evyr to his servauntys hendyr than we wende. <sup>2</sup>	
	Systerys, oure holy fadyr Isakare	
*540	Hath sent us hese servyce here ryght now.	<i>his food</i>
	Fede yow therof hertyly! I pray yow nat spare,	<i>do not hold back</i>
	And if owght be leve, specyaly I pray yow,	<i>if anything be left; ask</i>
290	That the pore men the relevys therof have now.	<i>have the leftovers</i>
	Fayn, and I myth, I wolde do the dedys of mercy:	<i>Gladly, if I might</i>
	Pore folk faryn, God knowyth how —	<i>subsist</i>
	On hem evyr I have grett pety.	<i>them ever; pity</i>
	<b>CONTEMPLACIO</b> Lo, sofreyne, here ye have seyn	<i>friends</i>
295	In the temple of oure Ladyes presentacyon,	<i>Lady's</i>
	She was nevyr occapyed in thyngys veyn,	<i>occupied</i>
*550	But evyr besy in holy ocupacyon.	
	And we beseche yow of youre pacyens	
	That we pace these materys so lythly away.	<i>pass; lightly</i>
300	If thei shulde be do with good prevydens,	<i>done; preparation</i>
	Eche on wolde suffyce for an hool day.	<i>Each one; whole</i>
	Now shal we procede to her disponsacyon	<i>betrothal</i>
	Which aftere this was fourtene yere,	
	Tyme sufficyth not to make pawsacyon.	<i>a pause</i>
305	Hath pacyens with us, we besech yow her.	<i>here</i>
	And in short spas,	<i>space [of time]</i>
*560	The Parlement of Hefne sone shal ye se	<i>Heaven soon</i>
	And how Goddys Sone com man shal he	<i>become</i>
	And how the Salutacyon aftere shal be,	
310	Be Goddys holy gras.	<i>grace</i>

# 10. MARRIAGE OF MARY AND JOSEPH

*[Tunc venit Ysakar Episcopus.*

*Then comes Ysakar the bishop*

<b>EPISCOPUS</b>	Listenyth, lordyngys, both hye and lowe,	
	And tendyrly takyth heyd onto my sawe:	<i>heed; speech</i>
	Beth buxom and benyngne, youre busshopp to knowe.	<i>humble; meek</i>

<sup>1</sup> *Recommend me to my father, sir, and God reward him*

<sup>2</sup> *God's abundance is always nearer to his servants than we think*

- For I am that lord that made this lawe  
 5 With hertys so hende herkyn nowē. *hearts; obedient listen*  
 Youre damyselys to weddyng, ya, loke that ye drawe. *bring*  
 \*570 That passyn fourtene yere for what that ye owe, *as you should*  
 The lawe of God byddyth this sawe: *these decrees*  
 That at fourtene yere of age,  
 10 Every damesel whatso sche be *whosoever*  
 To the encrese of more plenté, *increase; fruitfulness*  
 Shulde be browght in good degré *the proper way*  
 Onto here spowsage. *marriage*
- JOACHYM** Herke now, Anne, my jentyl spowse,  
 15 How that the buschop, his lawe hath tolde,  
 That what man hath a dowtyr in his house *daughter*  
 \*580 That passyth fourtene yerys olde,  
 He muste her brynge, I herde hym rowse, *proclaim*  
 Into the tempyl a spowse to wedde.  
 20 Wherfor oure dowtyr ryth good and dowse, *sweet*  
 Into the tempyl sche must be ledde  
 And that anoon ryght sone. *right away*
- ANNE** Sere, I grawnt that it be so. *Sir*  
 Agen the lawe may we not do! *Against*  
 25 With her togedyr lete us now go —  
 I hold it ryght weyl done.
- JOACHYM** Sere busshopp, here aftyr thin owyn hest, *Sir bishop; command*  
 \*591 We have here brought oure dowtyr dere:  
 Mary, my swete childe, she is ful prest *ready*  
 30 Of age: she is ful fourtene yere.
- EPISCOPUS** Welcome, Joachym onto myn areste, *dwelling*  
 Both Anne, thi wyf, and Mary clere. *pure*  
 Now, Mary chylde, to the lawe thu leste *listen*  
 And chese thee a spowse to be thi fere: *choose; partner*  
 35 That lawe thu must fulffylle.
- MARIA** Agens the lawe wyl I nevyr be,  
 \*600 But mannys felachep shal nevyr folwe me! *I.e., I'll never come near man's company*  
 I wyl levyn evyr in chastyté *live*  
 39 Be the grace of Goddys wylle!
- EPISCOPUS** A, fayre mayde, why seyst thu so?  
 What menyth thee for to levyn chast?  
 Why wylt thu not to weddyng go? *mean you to live*  
 The cawse thu telle me, and that in hast! *reason; haste (immediately)*
- MARIA** My fadyr and my modyr, sertys, also *father; mother; certainly*  
 45 Er I was born, ye may me trast,  
 Thei were bothe bareyn, her frute was do. *Before; trust*  
 \*610 They come to the tempyl at the last *barren; fertility was past*  
*came*

- To do here sacryfice. *their*  
 Bycause they hadde nothyr frute nere chylde, *neither*  
 50 Reprevyd they wore of wykkyd and wylde. *for wicked [behavior]*  
 With grett shame, thei were revylyd, *reviled*  
 Al men ded them dyspyce. *did scorn them*
- My fadyr and my modyr, thei wepte full sore; *father; mother*  
 Ful hevy here hertys wern of this dede! *sorrowful their hearts*  
 55 With wepynge eyn thei preyd, therfore, *eyes*  
 That God wolde socowre hem and sende hem sede. *help; them seed*  
 \*620 Iff God wold graunt hem a childe be bore, *them; born*  
 They behest the chylde her lyff shulde lede *promised [that]; life*  
 In Goddys temple to serve evyrmore  
 60 And wurchep God in love and drede. *fear*  
 Than God, ful of grace, *Then*  
 He herd here longe prayour, *their*  
 And than sent hem both seed and flowre. *then; them*  
 Whan I was born in here bowre, *When; their bower*  
 65 To the temple offryd I was.
- Whan that I was to the temple brought *When*  
 \*630 And offerde up to God above,  
 Ther hestyd I, as myn hert thought, *I promised; heart*  
 To serve my God with hertyly love. *unrestrained*  
 70 Clennesse and chastyté myn hert owth,  
 Erthely creature nevyr may shove. *Purity; possesses*  
 Such clene lyff shuld ye nouht, *Earthly; banish [them]*  
 In no maner wyse, reprove. *not*  
 To this clennesse I me take. *reject*  
 75 This is the cawse, as I yow tell, *offer myself*  
 That I with man wyll nevyr mell. *reason*  
 \*640 In the servyse of God wyl I evyr dwell: *have intercourse*  
 I wyl nevyr have other make. *mate*
- EPISCOPUS** A, mercy God! These wordys wyse  
 80 Of this fayr mayde clene,  
 Thei trobyl myn hert in many wyse! *heart; ways*  
 Her wytt is grett, and that is sene  
 In clenness to levyn in Godys servise. *to live*  
 No man her blame non her tene. *[may] blame nor censure her*  
 85 And yit in lawe, thus it lyce  
 That such weddyd shulde bene *yet; remains*  
 \*650 Who shal expownd this oute: *be*  
 The lawe doth after lyff of clenness, *clearly explain*  
 The lawe doth bydde such maydenes expres *a life of*  
 90 That to spowsyng they shulde hem dres. *openly*  
 God help us in this dowhte! *for marriage; prepare themselves*  
*doubt*

- This ansuere grettly trobelyth me. *answer*  
 To mak a vow to creaturys, it is lefful — *people; lawful*  
*Vovete et reddite* in Scripture have we. *Pray and render [tithes]*
- 95 And to observe oure lawe, also it is nedful  
 In this to dyscerne to me, it is dredful. *daunting*
- \*660 Therefore, to cowncell me in this cas I calle *counsel*  
 The holde and the wyse and swich as ben spedful: *old; wise; helpful*  
 99 In this, sey youre avyse, I besech yow alle. *advice*
- MINISTER** To breke oure lawe and custom, it wore hard indede!  
 And on that other syde, to do agen Scripture, *against*  
 To geve sentens in this degré, ye must take good hede. *judgment; care*  
 For dowteles, this matere is dyffuse and obscure. *complicated*  
 Myn avyse here in this, I yow ensure, *advice; assure*  
 105 That we prey all God to have relacyon *all pray; instruction*  
 For be prayour, grett knowleche men recure. *knowledge; obtain*  
 \*670 And to this, I counsell yow to geve assygnacyon. *direction*
- EPISCOPUS** Trewly youre counsell is ryght, good, and eylsum. *wholesome*  
 And, as ye han seyde, so shal it be. *have said*
- 110 I charge yow, bretheryn and systerys: hedyr ye com *come here*  
 And togedyr to God now pray we  
 That it may plese his fynye deyté, *definite deity*  
 Knowleche in this to sendyn us.  
 Mekely ech man falle down on kne,  
 115 And we shal begynne: “*Veni Creator Spiritus*.” *Come Creator Spirit*
- [*Et hic cantent “Veni Creator.”*<sup>1</sup> And whan “*Veni Creator*” is don, the buschop shal seyn:
- Now, Lord God of Lordys, wysest of all,  
 \*680 I pray thee, Lorde, knelynge on kne,  
 With carefull herte I crye and calle. *heavy heart*
- 119 This dowteful dowte enforme thu me! *uncertain; explain to*
- ANGELUS** Thy prayour is herd to hygh hevyn halle.  
 God hath me sent here down to thee  
 To tell thee what that thu do shalle,  
 And how thu shalt be rewlyd in iche degré. *each*
- Take tent and undyrstond: *Pay attention*
- 125 This is Goddys owyn byddyng, *God’s*  
 That all kynsmen of Davyd the kyng  
 \*690 To the temple shul brynge here du offryng. *shall; their due*  
 With whyte yardys in ther honde. *branches; hands*

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<sup>1</sup> And here they sing “*Come Creator*”

- Loke wele what tyme they offere there! *Look well*  
 130 All here yardys in thin hand thu take. *their branches*  
 Take heed whose yerde doth blome and bere, *bloom; bear [leaves]*  
 And he shal be the maydenys make. *maiden's mate*  
**EPISCOPUS** I thank thee, Lord, with mylde chere. *humble*  
 Thi wurde shal I werkyn withowtyn wrake. *dispute*  
 135 I shal send for hem, bothyn fer and nere, *them*  
 To werke thi wyl I undyrtake.  
 \*700 Anon it shal be do! *Quickly; done*  
 Herk, masangere — thu wend thi way: *now go your way*  
 Davyd kynsmen, as I thee say. *[To] David's*  
 140 Byd hem com offyr this same day *Bid them*  
 And brynge white yardys also. *branches*
- NUNCIUS** Oy! All maner men takyth to me tent *Listen!; manner [off]; attention*  
 That be owgth of kynrede to David the kyng! *any relation*  
 My lord, the busshop, hath for yow sent  
 145 To the temple that ye come with youre offryng.  
 He chargight that ye hast yow, for he is redy bent *commands; hasten*  
 \*710 Yow to receyve at youre comyng!  
 He biddyth yow, ferthermore, in handys that ye hent *take*  
 A fayre white yerde, everych of yow, ye bryng *branch, every one*  
 150 In hyght. *On high*  
 Tary not, I pray yow!  
 My lord, as I say yow,  
 Now to receyve yow  
 Is full redy dyght. *prepared*
- JOSEPH** In gret labore my lyff I lede!  
 156 Myne ocupasyoun lyth in many place; *work lies*  
 \*720 For febylnesse of age, my jorney I may not spede. *get there*  
 I thank thee, gret God, of thi grace.
- GENERACIONIS DAVID 1** What chere, Joseph? What ys the case *is the matter*  
 160 That ye lye here on this ground?
- JOSEPH** Age and febylnesse doth me enbrase *embrace*  
 That I may nother well goo ne stond. *neither; nor stand*
- GENERACIONIS DAVID 2** We be commandyd be the beschoppys sond *by the bishop's messenger*  
 That every man of Davyd kynrede *David's kindred*  
 165 In the tempyll to offyr a wond; *wand*  
 Therfor in this jorney, let us procede!
- JOSEPH** Me to traveyll, yt is no nede.  
 \*731 I prey you, frendys, go forth youre wey.
- GENERACIONIS DAVID 3** Yis, com forth, Joseph, I you rede, *urge you*  
 170 And knowyth what the busshop woll sey.

<b>GENERATIONIS DAVID 4</b>		Ther ys a mayd whos name ys clepyd Mary, Doughter to Joachym as it is told. Her to mary they woll asay, To som, many dowty and bold.	<i>called</i>  <i>they will try to marry</i> <i>worthy</i>
<b>JOSEPH</b>		<i>Benedicite</i> , I cannot undyrstande	<i>Bless me</i>
176		What oure prince of prestys doth men	<i>mean</i>
*740		That every man shuld come and brynge with hym a whande. Abyl to be maryed, that is not I, so mote I then. I have be maydon evyr and evyr more wele ben —	<i>wand</i> <i>may I prosper</i> <i>a virgin</i>
180		I chaungyd not yet of all my long lyff! And now to be maryed, sum man wold wen: It is a straunge thyng — an old man to take a yonge wyff.	<i>think twice</i>
		But nevyrthelesse, no doute of, we must forth to towne. Now, neyborys and kynnysmen, lete us forth go.	<i>no doubt</i>
185		I shal take a wand in my hand and cast of my gowne. Yf I falle than I shalle gronyn for wo.	<i>cast off</i> <i>then</i>
*750		Hoso take away my staff, I say he were my fo! Ye be men — that [ye] wele ren — go ye before! I am old and also colde. Walkyng doth me wo.	<i>Whoever; foe</i> <i>run fast</i>
190		Therefore now wolde I, so my staff holde I, this jurney to wore. <sup>1</sup>	
<b>EPISCOPUS</b>		Serys, ye shal undyrstande	<i>Sirs</i>
		That this is the cawse of oure comynge And why that ech of yow bryngyth a wande. For of God we have knowynge:	<i>knowledge</i>
195		Here is to be maryde a mayde yynge. All youre roddys ye shal brynge up to me,	<i>young</i>
*760		And on hese rodde that the Holy Gost is syttyng, He shal the husbond of this may be.	<i>whose rod</i> <i>maiden</i>
		[ <i>Hic portent virgas.</i>	<i>Here they bring the branches</i>
<b>JOSEPH</b>		It shal not be I, I ley a grote!	<i>I bet</i>
200		I shal abyde behynde prevyly. Now wolde God, I were at hom in my cote! I am aschamyd to be seyn, veryly.	<i>secretly</i> <i>cottage</i> <i>truly</i>
<b>GENERACIONIS DAVID 1</b>		To wurchep my Lord God, hedyr am I come, Here for to offyr my dewe offryng,	<i>hither</i> <i>due</i>
205		A fayr white yarde in hand have I nome, My lord, sere busshop, at youre byddyng.	<i>branch; taken</i> <i>sir bishop</i>
<b>GENERACIONIS DAVID 2</b>		Of Davythys kynred, sertys, am I com.	<i>David's kindred, indeed</i>

<sup>1</sup> Therefore I desire that now, as I hold my staff, this journey were done



- \*771 A fayr white yarde in hand now I bryng.  
My lord, the busshop, after youre owyn dom *judgment*  
210 This yarde do I offre at youre charging *bidding*  
Ryht here.
- GENERACIONIS DAVID 3** And I, a yarde have both fayr and whyght, *white*  
Here in myn hond it is redy dyght. *all set*  
And here I offre it forth within syght,  
215 Ryght in good manere.
- GENERACIONIS DAVID 4** I am the fourte of Davidis kyn, *David's kin*  
\*780 And with myn offrynge, my God I honoure.  
This fayr whyte yarde is offryng myn.  
I trost in God of sum socoure. *trust; help*  
220 Com on, Joseph, with offrynge thin *your offering*  
And brynge up thin as we han oure! *yours; have ours*  
Thu taryst ryth longe behynde, certeyn. *stall too long, certainly*  
Why comyst not forth to Goddys toure? *dwelling*  
Com on, man, for shame!
- JOSEPH** Com, ya, ya! God help, full fayn I wolde! *[With] God's help; gladly*  
226 But I am so agyd and so olde *aged*  
\*790 That both myn leggys gyn to folde — *begin*  
I am ny almost lame! *nearly*
- EPISCOPUS** A, mercy Lord! I kan no sygne aspy! *can see no sign*  
230 It is best we go ageyn to prayr.
- VOX** He brought not up his rodde yet, trewly,  
To whom the mayd howyth to be maryed her. *ought to be; here*
- EPISCOPUS** Whath, Joseph? Why stand ye there byhynde? *What*  
Iwys, sere, ye be to blame! *Indeed, sir*
- JOSEPH** Sere, I kannot my rodde fynde! *Sir*  
236 To come ther, in trowth, me thynkyht shame. *truly, seems shameful to me*
- EPISCOPUS** Comyth thens!
- JOSEPH** Sere, he may evyl go that is ner lame! *with difficulty go*  
239 In soth, I com as fast as I may! *In truth*
- EPISCOPUS** Offyr up youre rodde, sere, in Goddys name! *sir*  
\*804 Why do ye not as men yow pray? *ask you*
- JOSEPH** Now, in the wurchep of God of Heaven,  
I offyr this yerde as lely whyte, *branch; lily*  
Praying that Lord of gracyous stewyn *Praying [to]; speech*  
245 With hert, with wytt, with mayn, with myght. *heart; mind; strength*  
And as he made the sterrys seven *stars*  
\*810 This sympyl offrynge that is so lyght *little*  
To his wurchep he weldygh evyn. *receives*  
For to his wurchep this yerd is dyght. *branch; ready*  
250 Lord God, I thee pray:

	To my herte thu take good hede, And nothyng to my synful dede, Aftyr my wyl thu qwyte my mede As plesyth to thi pay.	<i>heart; heed not to; deeds reward me pleasure</i>
255	I may not lyfte myn handys heye. Lo, lo, lo! What se ye now?	<i>high see</i>
<b>EPISCOPUS</b>	A, mercy, mercy, mercy, Lord, we crye!	
*821	The blyssyd of God we se art thou!	<i>blessed; see</i>
	<i>[Et clamant omnes, "Mercy! Mercy!"]</i>	<i>And they all cry</i>
	A, gracyous God in hevyn trone, 260 Ryht wundryful thi werkys be! Here may we se a merveyl one — A ded stok beryth flourys fre! Joseph, in hert withoutyn mone, Thy mayst be blyth with game and gle!	<i>on heaven's throne  marvel dead stock; fine flowers heart; regret happiness</i>
265	A mayd to wedde thu must gone Be this meracle I do wel se —	<i>go do By; see</i>
*830	Mary is her name.	
<b>JOSEPH</b>	What, shuld I wedde? God forbede! I am an old man, so God me spede!	<i>forbid God help me</i>
270	And with a wyff now to levyn in drede, It wore neyther sport nere game.	<i>wife; live in dread It would be neither; nor</i>
<b>EPISCOPUS</b>	Agens God, Joseph, thu mayst not stryve! God wyl that thu a wyff have. This fayr mayde shal be thi wyve —	<i>Against wills wife</i>
275	She is buxum and whyte as lave.	<i>humble; bread</i>
<b>JOSEPH</b>	A, shuld I have her? Ye lese my lyf!	<i>destroy</i>
*840	Alas, dere God, shuld I now rave? An old man may nevyr thryff With a yonge wyf, so God me save!	<i>be passionate thrive</i>
280	Nay, nay, sere, let bene! Shuld I now in age begynne to dote? If I her chyde, she wolde clowte my cote, Blere myn ey and pyke out a mote. And thus oftyntymes, it is sene.	<i>sir, let it be  scold, she'll beat me Blur my vision; chide about a trifle</i>
<b>EPISCOPUS</b>	Joseph, now as I thee saye, 286 God hath assygnyd her to thee.	<i>say to you</i>
*850	That God wol have do, sey thu not nay! Oure Lord God wyl that it so be.	<i>will have done, don't refuse wills</i>
<b>JOSEPH</b>	Agens my God not do I may.	<i>Against</i>
290	Her wardeyn and kepere wyl I evyr be. But fayr maydon, I thee pray —	<i>warden I ask</i>

Kepe thee clene as I shal me. *chaste*  
 I am a man of age!  
 Therefore, sere bussshop, I wyl that ye wete — *will have you know*  
 295 That in bedde we shul nevyr mete, *meet*  
 For iwys, mayden suete, *indeed; sweet*  
 \*860 An old man may not rage. *be passionate*

**EPISCOPUS** This holiest virgyn shalt thou maryn now. *marry*  
 Youre rodde floreschyth, fayrest that man may se. *blooms, fairest; see*  
 300 The Holy Gost we see syttyht on a bow. *bough*  
 Now yelde we all preysyng to the Trenyté. *yield; praising; Trinity*

[*Et hic cantent: "Benedicta sit beata Trinitas"*<sup>1</sup>

Joseph, wole ye have this maydon to your wyff, *will; maiden*  
 And her honour and kepe as ye howe to do? *ought*  
**JOSEPH** Nay, sere, so mote I thryff, *sir; may I prosper*  
 305 I have ryght no nede therto. *just have no need*  
**EPISCOPUS** Joseph, it is Goddys wyl it shuld be so!  
 \*870 Sey after me, as it is skyl. *Say; proper*  
**JOSEPH** Sere, and to performe his wyl, I bow therto,  
 309 For allthyng owyght to ben at his wyl. *everything ought to be*

[*Episcopus, et idem Joseph:*

*The bishop, and then Joseph*

**EPISCOPUS** Sey than after me: "Here I take thee, Mary, to wyff; *then*  
 To havyn, to holdyn, as God his wyl with us wyl make;  
 And as long as bethwen us lestyght oure lyff, *between; lasts our life*  
 To love yow as myselff, my trewth I yow take." *my troth; pledge*

[*Nunc ad Mariam sic dicens Episcopus:*

*Then to Maria the bishop says*

Mary, wole ye have this man,  
 315 And hym to kepyn as youre lyff? *to keep; life*  
**MARIA** In the tenderest wyse, fadyr, as I kan *way*  
 \*880 And with all my wyttys fyff. *five wits*

**EPISCOPUS** Joseph, with this ryng, now wedde thi wyff,  
 319 And be her hand now thou her take. *by*  
**JOSEPH** Sere, with this ryng, I wedde her ryff *promptly*  
 And take here now her for my make. *her; mate*  
**EPISCOPUS** Mary, mayd, withoutyn more stryff, *argument*  
 Onto thi spowse thou hast hym take. *Unto*  
**MARIA** In chastyté to ledyn my lyff, *lead*

<sup>1</sup> And here they sing: "Blessed be the Holy Trinity"

- 325 I shal hym nevyr forsake,  
But evyr with hym abyde.
- \*890 And, jentyll spowse, as ye an seyd, *gentle; you have said*  
Lete me levyn as a clene mayd. *live; virgin*  
I shal be trewe, be not dysmayd, *true*  
330 Both terme, tyme, and tyde. *(i.e., always)*
- EPISCOPUS** Here is the holyst matremony that evyr was in this werd! *world*  
The hygh names of oure Lord we wole now syng hy. *high; will*  
We all wole this solempn dede record *solemn deed*  
Devowtly: *Alma chorus Domini nunc pangat nomina Summi.*<sup>1</sup>
- 335 Now goth hom all in Godys name. *go; God's*  
Whereas youre wonyng was before *Wherever; dwelling*  
\*900 Maydenys, to lete her go alone, it wore shame, *Maidens*  
It wold hevyr youre hertys sore. *sadden; hearts greatly*  
Ye shal blysse the tyme that sche was bore. *bless; born*  
340 Now loke ye at hom her brynge. *bring her home*  
**MARIA** To have youre blyssyng, fadyr, I falle yow before. *blessing*  
**EPISCOPUS** He blysse yow that hath non hendyng: *blesses; no ending*  
*In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti.*<sup>2</sup>
- Joseph, thiselph art old of age, *you yourself are*  
345 And thi wyff of age is yonge, *young*  
And as we redyn in old sage *read; sages*  
\*910 Many man is sclepyr of tonge. *slippery*  
Therfore evyl langage for to swage, *to lessen*  
That youre good fame may lest longe, *reputation; last*  
350 Thre damysellys shul dwelle with yow in stage *damsels; in your house*  
With thi wyf to be evyrmore amonge.  
I shal these thre here take:  
Susanne, the fyrst shal be;  
Rebecca, the secunde shal go with thee;  
355 Sephore, the thrydde. Loke that ye thre *third. Look*  
This maydon nevyr ye forsake. *maiden*
- SUSANNE** Sere, I am redy at your wyll
- \*921 With this maydon for to wende. *to go*
- REBECCA** Youre byddyng, sere, I shall fulfyl
- 360 And folwe this maydon fayr and hende. *follow; worthy*
- SEPHOR** To folwe hyr, it is good skyl, *her; quite right*  
And to youre byddyng wole I bende. *will*
- JOSEPH** Now, sere buschop, hens go I wyl, *hence I will go*

<sup>1</sup> Gracious chorus of the Lord proclaim now the names of the Most High<sup>2</sup> In the name of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost

	For now comyth onto my mende	<i>mind</i>
365	A matere that nedful is.	<i>necessary</i>
<b>EPISCOPUS</b>	Farewel, Joseph and Mary clere!	<i>pure</i>
*930	I pray God kepe yow all in fere	<i>together</i>
	And send yow grace in good manere	
369	To serve the Kynge of Blysse.	
<b>MARIA</b>	Fadyr and modyr, ye knowe this cas,	<i>situation</i>
	How that it doth now stonde with me.	
	With myn spowse I must forth passe	<i>go</i>
	And wott nevyr whan I shal yow se.	<i>know not when</i>
	Therfore, I pray yow here in this plas	<i>place</i>
375	Of youre blyssynge for charyté,	
	And I shal spede thee betyr and have more gras	<i>prosper; grace</i>
*940	In what place that evyr I be.	
	On knes to yow I falle.	
	I pray yow, fadyr and modyr dere:	
380	To blysse youre owyn dere dowtere	<i>daughter</i>
	And pray for me in all manere,	
	And I for yow all.	<i>I [will do so] for</i>
<b>JOACHYM</b>	Almyghty God, he mote thee blysse,	<i>may he</i>
	And my blyssynge thu have also.	
385	In all godnesse, God thee wysse	<i>guide</i>
	On londe, or on watyr, wherevyr thu go.	<i>land; water</i>
<b>ANNA</b>	Now God thee kepe from every mysse	<i>keep thee; misfortune</i>
*951	And save thee sownd in welth from wo.	<i>keep thee safe</i>
	I pray thee, dowtyr, thu onys me kys	<i>kiss me once</i>
390	Or that thi modyr parte thee fro.	<i>Before; from thee</i>
	I pray to God thee save.	
	I pray thee, Mary, my swete chylde:	
	Be lowe and buxhum, meke and mylde,	<i>humble; obedient</i>
	Sad and sobyr and nothyng wylde,	<i>unruly</i>
395	And Goddys blyssyng thu have.	<i>God's</i>
<b>JOACHYM</b>	Farwel, Joseph, and God yow spede,	<i>Farewell</i>
*960	Wherso ye be in halle or boure.	<i>Wherever; bower</i>
<b>JOSEPH</b>	Almyghty God youre weys lede	<i>[May]; lead</i>
399	And save yow sownd from all doloure.	<i>keep; sound; grief</i>
<b>ANNA</b>	Goddys grace on yow sprede!	
	Farewel, Mary, my swete flowre!	
	Fareweyl, Joseph, and God yow rede!	<i>guide</i>
	Fareweyl, my chylde and my tresowre!	<i>treasure</i>
	Farewel, my dowtere yyng!	<i>young</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	Farewel, fadyr and modyr dere!	<i>father; mother</i>
406	At yow I take my leve ryght here.	<i>From you</i>

- \*970 God that sytt in hevyn so clere  
Have yow in his kepyng. *May God; sits; bright*
- JOSEPH** Wyff, it is ful necessary this ye knowe  
410 That I and my kynrede go hom before,  
For in soth, we have non hous of oure owe. *kindred*  
Therfore I shal gon ordeyn, and thanne come yow fore. *truth; no house; own*  
*prepare; for you*
- We ar not ryche of werdly thyng,  
And yet of oure sustenauns, we shal not mys. *worldly*  
415 Therfore, abydyth here styлле to youre plesynge: *lack*  
To worchep youre God is all youre blysse. *still; pleasing*  
*bliss*
- \*980 He that is and evyr shal be,  
Of hefne and helle ryche kynge, *heaven*  
In erth hath chosyn poverté *On earth*  
420 And all ryches and welthis refusynge. *wealth refuses*  
**MARIA** Goth, husbond, in oure Lordys blyssynge. *Go*  
He mote yow spede in all youre nede. *May he prosper you*  
And I shal here abyde youre agen comynge, *I shall await; return*  
And on my Sawtere book, I shal rede. *Psalter*
- 425 Now, blyssyd be oure Lord for this:  
Of hefne and erthe and all that beryth lyff, *Heaven; earth; life*  
\*990 I am most bound to yow, Lord, iwys, *indeed*  
For now I am bothe mayde and wyff.
- Now, Lord God, dysspose me to prayour *settle me*  
430 That I may sey the holy psalmes of Davyth, *David*  
Wheche book is clepyd the Sawtere,  
That I may preyse thee, my God, therwith. *Whose; called; Psalter*  
Of the vertuys therof, this is the pygth: *praise you; with that*  
It makyht sowles fayr that doth it say; *virtues; pith (heart)*  
435 Angelys be steryd to help us therwith; *souls fair*  
It lytenyth therkeness and puttyth develys away. *Angels are stirred*  
*lightens darkness*
- \*1000 The song of psalmus is Goddys deté: *God's ditty (song)*  
Synne is put away therby;  
It lernyth a man vertuysful to be; *teaches; virtuous*  
440 It feryth mannys herte gostly. *inspires man's heart spiritually*  
Who that it usyth custommably, *uses it habitually*  
It claryfieth the herte, and charyté makyth cowthe. *purifies; makes known*  
He may not faylen of Goddys mercy *fail; God's*  
That hath the preysenge of God evyr in his mowthe. *praise*
- 445 O, holy Psalmys! O, holy book!  
Swetter to say than any ony! *honey*

- \*1010 Thu lernyst hem love, Lord, that on thee look *teach them*  
 And makyst hem desyre thyngys celestly. *them; heavenly*  
 With these halwyd psalmys, Lord, I pray thee specyaly *hallowed; ask*
- 450 For all the creatures, qwyke and dede, *people, living; dead*  
 That thu wylt shewe to hem thi mercy *show; them*  
 And to me specyaly, that do it rede. *reads it*
- I have seyde sum of my Sawtere, and here I am *Psalter*  
 At this holy psalme, indede:  
 455 *Benedixisti Domine terram tuam.*<sup>1</sup>  
 In this holy labore, Lord, me spede. *help me*
- JOSEPH** Mary, wyff and mayde most gracyous, *wife; maid*  
 \*1021 Displese yow not, I pray yow, so long I have be. *have been*  
 I have hyryd for us a lytyl praty hous, *rented; well-made little*  
 460 And therin ryght hesely levyn wole we. *comfortably we will live*
- Come forth, Mary, and folwe me *follow*  
 To Nazareth now wele we go. *will*  
 And all the maydonys bothe fayr and fre *maidens; noble*  
 With my wyff comyth forth also.
- 465 Now lystenyth well, wyff, what I tell thee:  
 I must gon owth hens fer thee fro; *go far away from thee*  
 \*1030 I wyll go laboryn in fer countré *far*  
 With trewth to maynteyn oure housholde so. *Truly*  
 This nine monthis thu seyst me nowth. *These; you will see me not*
- 470 Kepe thee clene, my jentyll spowse *pure*  
 And all thin maydenys in thin howse, *your maidens*  
 That evyl langage I here not rowse, *hear not spoken*  
 For hese love that all hath wrought. *for God's sake*
- MARIA** I pray to God he spede youre way,  
 475 And in sowle helth, he mote yow kepe *soul's health; may*  
 And sende yow helth bothe nyth and day, *health; night*  
 \*1040 He shylde and save yow from al shenschepe. *shield; disgrace*  
 Now, Lord of Grace, to thee I pray:  
 With morny mood on kne I krepe, *mournful; knee I creep*  
 480 Me save from synne, from tene and tray. *pain; grief*  
 With hert I mourne; with eye I wepe!  
 Lord God of peté, *heart*  
 Whan I sytt in my conclave, *pity*  
 All myn hert on thee I have! *private room*  
 485 Gracyous God, my maydenhed save, *heart*  
 Evyr clene in chastyté. *virginity*  
*Ever pure*

<sup>1</sup> Lord, you have blessed your land. (See Vulgate Psalm 84:1)

## 11. PARLIAMENT OF HEAVEN; SALUTATION AND CONCEPTION

	<b>CONTEMPLACIO</b>	Fowre thowsand, sex undryd, foure yere, I telle,	<i>4604 years, I say</i>
*1051		Man, for his offens and fowle foly	<i>offence</i>
		Hath loyn yerys in the peynes of helle,	<i>lain years; pains</i>
		And were wurthy to ly therin endlesly,	<i>deserved to lie</i>
5		But thanne shulde perysche youre grete mercye.	<i>then; perish</i>
		Good Lord, have on man pyté!	
		Have mende of the prayour seyde by Ysaie:	<i>keep in mind; Isaiah</i>
		“Lete mercy meke thin hyst magesté.”	<i>temper</i>
		Wolde God, thu woldyst breke thin hefne myghtye	<i>break open</i>
10		And com down here into erth	
*1060		And levyn yerys thre and threttye,	<i>live 33 years</i>
		Thyn famyt folke with thi fode to fede.	<i>Your famished; food</i>
		To staunche thi thursté, lete thi syde blede,	<i>satisfy your thirsty</i>
		For erste wole not be mad redempcyon.	<i>otherwise will; made</i>
15		Cum vesyte us in this tyme of nede!	<i>Come visit</i>
		Of thi careful creaturys have compassyon!	<i>On thy wretched</i>
		A, woo to us wrecchis of wrecchis be!	<i>wretches of wretches born</i>
		For God hath haddyd sorwe to sorwe.	<i>added sorrow</i>
		I prey thee, Lord, thi sowlys com se!	<i>souls come see</i>
20		How thei ly and sobbe for syknes and sorwe!	
*1070		With thi blyssyd blood from balys hem borwe,	<i>suffering redeem them</i>
		Thy careful creaturys cryenge in captyvyté!	<i>wretched</i>
		A, tary not, gracious Lord, tyl it be tomorwe!	<i>delay</i>
		The devyl hath dysceyved hem be his iniquité!	<i>deceived them by</i>
25		“A,” quod Jeremye, “Who shal gyff wellys to myn eyne	<i>give; eyes</i>
		That I may wepe bothe day and nyght	
		To se oure bretheryn in so longe peynes?”	<i>see; pains</i>
		Here myschevys amende may thi mech myght.	<i>Their sins; great</i>
		As gret as the se, Lord, was Adamys contrissyon ryght.	<i>sea; Adam’s</i>
30		From oure hed is falle the crowne.	<i>head; fallen</i>
*1080		Man is comeryd in synne — I crye to thi syght:	<i>engulfed; before you</i>
		Gracious Lord, gracious Lord, gracious Lord, come down!	
	<b>VIRTUTES</b>	Lord, plesyth it thin hygh domynacyon,	<i>your great</i>
		On man that thu made to have pyté,	
35		Patryarchys and prophetys han made supplicacyon.	<i>have made</i>
		Oure offyse is to presente here prayerys to thee —	<i>role; their</i>
		Aungelys, archaungelys, we thre	<i>three</i>
		That ben in the fyrst ierarchie	<i>are; hierarchy</i>
		For man to thin hy magesté:	
40		Mercy, mercy, mercy we crye!	



- \*1090 The aungel, Lord, thu made so glorious  
Whos synne hath mad hym a devyl in helle, *Whose; made*  
He mevyd man to be so contraryous. *moved; rebellious*  
Man repentyd, and he, in his obstynacye, doth dwelle.
- 45 Hese grete males, good Lord, repelle *His; malice*  
And take man onto thi grace!  
Lete thi mercy make hym with aungelys dwelle *angels*  
Of Locyfere to restore the place.
- PATER** *Propter miseriam inopum*  
*Et gemitum pauperum*  
*Nunc exurgam.*<sup>1</sup>
- For the wretchydnes of the nedy *needy*  
50 And the porys lamentacyon *poor's*
- \*1100 Now shal I ryse that am almyghty.  
Tyme is come of reconsyliacyon:  
My prophetys with prayers have made supplicacyon;  
My contryte creaturys crye all for comforte.
- 55 All myn aungellys in hefne, withowte cessacyon, *angels; Heaven*  
They crye that grace to man myght exorte. *arise*
- VERITAS** Lord, I am thi dowtere Trewth. *daughter Truth*  
Thu wylt se I be not lore. *see; I am not lost*  
Thyn unkynde creaturys to save were rewthe. *would be calamitous*  
60 The offens of man hath grevyd thee sore. *offence; grieved you greatly*  
\*1110 Whan Adam had synnyd, thu seydest thore *said there*  
That he shulde deye and go to helle. *die*  
And now, to blysse hym to resstore — *(i.e., heaven)*  
Twey contraries mow not togedyr dwelle. *Two contradictions may*
- 65 Thy trewth, Lord, shal leste withowtyn ende. *last*  
I may in no wyse fro thee go. *from*  
That wretche that was to thee so unkende, *unnatural*  
He may not have to meche wo! *too much*  
He dyspysyd thee and plesyd thi fo! *despised*
- 70 Thu art his creatour, and he is thi creature.
- \*1120 Thu hast lovyd Trewthe, it is seyde evyrmo. *said evermore*  
Therfore in peynes lete hym evyrmore endure! *pains*
- MISERICORDIA** O, Fadyr of Mercy and God of Comforte  
That counsell us in eche trybulacyon, *tribulation*  
75 Lete youre dowtere Mercy to yow resorte *daughter; approach*  
And on man that is myschevyd have compassyon. *ruined*

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 48a–c: *Because of the misery of the needy / And the groans of the poor / Now will I arise.* (See Vulgate Psalm 11:6)

- Hym grevyth ful gretly his transgressyon. *distresses in*  
 All hefne and erthe crye for mercy! *heaven; earth*  
 Me semyth ther shuld be non excepcyon, *It seems to me; no objection*  
 80 Ther prayers ben offeryd so specyally. *Their; are; forcefully*
- \*1130 Threwth seyth she hath evyr be, than. *Truth; always been, then*  
 I graunt it wel, she hath be so. *been*  
 And thu seyst endlesly that Mercy thu hast kept for man.  
 Than, mercyabyl Lorde, kepe us bothe to. *Then, merciful; two*  
 85 Thu seyst: "*Veritas mea et Misericordia mea cum ipso.*"<sup>1</sup>  
 Suffyr not thi sowlys, than, in sorwe to slepe. *then; sorrow*  
 That helle hownde that hatyth thee, byddyth hym ho! *[God] bids him stop*  
 Thi love, man, no lengere lete hym kepe. *no longer lets him [the fiend] keep [you]*
- JUSTICIA** Mercy, me merveylyth what yow movyth! *I marvel at what moves you*  
 90 Ye know wel I am youre systere Ryghtwysnes! *Righteousness*  
 \*1140 God is ryghtful, and ryghtffulnes lovyth! *righteous; righteousness*  
 Man offendyd hym that is endles;  
 Therfor, his endles punchement may nevyr sees. *punishment; cease*  
 Also, he forsoke his makere that made hym of clay, *forsook*  
 95 And the devyl to his mayster he ches! *master; chose*  
 Shulde he be savyd? Nay, nay, nay!
- As wyse as is God, he wold a be! *he (man) would have been*  
 This was the abhomynabyl presumpcyon!  
 It is seyde ye know wel this of me,  
 100 That the ryghtwysnes of God hath no diffynicyon.<sup>2</sup>  
 \*1150 Therffore, late this be oure conclusyon: *let*  
 He that sore synnyd ly styll in sorwe. *lies*  
 He may nevyr make aseyth be reson: *make atonement by*  
 Whoo myght thanne thens hym borwe? *then thereafter redeem him*
- MISERICORDIA** Systyr Ryghtwysnes! Ye are to vengeaby! *too vengeful*  
 106 Endles synne, God endles may restore!  
 Above all hese werkys, God is mercyabyl! *his works*  
 Thow he forsook God be synne, be feyth he forsook hym neverthemore. *by*  
 And thow he presumyd nevyr so sore, *though; so greatly*  
 110 Ye must consyder the frelnes of mankind. *frailty of mankind*  
 \*1160 Lerne and ye lyst — this is Goddys lore: *Learn; if it pleases you; teaching*  
 The mercy of God is withowtyn ende.
- PAX** To spare youre speches, systerys, it syt. *it is fitting*  
 It is not onest in Vertuys to ben dyscencyon! *honest; be dissenting*

<sup>1</sup> My Truth and my Mercy will be with him. (See Vulgate Psalm 88:25)<sup>2</sup> That the righteousness of God has no limits

- 115 The pes of God overcomyth all wytt. *peace; reason*  
 Thow Trewth and Ryght sey grett resoun, *Though; argue well*  
 Yett Mercy seyth best to my pleson. *satisfaction*  
 For yf mannys sowle shulde abyde in helle, *man's*  
 Betwen God and man evyr shulde be dyvysyon. *division*
- 120 And than myght not I, Pes, dwelle. *then; Peace, exist*
- \*1170 Therefore, mesemyth best ye thus acorde; *it seems to me; agree*  
 Than hefne and erthe, ye shul qweme: *Then heaven; shall unite*  
 Putt bothe youre sentens in oure Lorde. *judgments to*  
 And in his hygh wysdam, lete hym deme. *high wisdom; judge*
- 125 This is most syttyng, me shulde seme. *fitting, it seems to me*  
 And lete se how we fowre may all abyde. *let us see; four; get along*  
 That mannys sowle, it shulde perysche, it wore sweme, *pity*  
 Or that any of us fro othere shulde dyvyde. *any; separate*
- VERITAS** In trowthe hereto I consente;
- 130 I wole prey oure Lorde it may so be.
- JUSTICIA** I, Ryghtwysnes, am wele contente,
- \*1181 For in hym is very equityé. *equity*
- MISERICORDIA** And I, Mercy, fro this counsel wole not fle *will not turn away*  
 Tyl Wysdam hath seyde I shal ses. *said; cease*
- PAX** Here is God now; here is unyté: *unity*
- 136 Hefne and erth is plesyd with Pes. *Heaven; earth; pleased; Peace*
- FILIUS** I thynke the thoughtys of Pes and nowth of wykkydnes.
- This I deme, to ses youre contraversy: *judge; cease; argument*  
 If Adam had not deyde, peryschyd had Ryghtwysnes, *perished*
- 140 And also Trewth had be lost therby. *been*
- \*1190 Trewth and Ryght wolde chastyse foly  
 Yiff another deth come not, Mercy shulde perysch, *If; perish*  
 Than Pes were exyled fynyaly. *exiled forever*  
 So, tweyn dethis must be yow fowre to cherysch.<sup>1</sup>
- 145 But he that shal deye, ye must knawe, *die; know*  
 That in hym may ben non iniquyté, *be no sin*  
 That helle may holde hym be no lawe, *by*  
 But that he may pas at hese lyberté. *leave as he pleases*  
 Qwere swyche on his, prevyde and se *Where such a one is, search*
- 150 And hes deth, for mannys deth, shal be redempcyon. *If his*
- \*1200 All hefne and erth seke now ye. *heaven; earth*  
 Plesyth it yow, this conclusyon? *Does it please you*

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<sup>1</sup> Thus, two deaths must occur to cherish you four

- VERITAS** I, Trowthe, have sowte the erthe withowt and withinne,<sup>1</sup>  
 And, in sothe, ther kan non be fownde *truly; can none*  
 155 That is of o day byrth withowte synne *one; born*  
 Nor to that deth wole be bownde. *will*
- MISERICORDIA** I, Mercy, have ronne the hevynly regyon rownde,  
 And there is non of that charyté *run*  
 That, for man, wole suffre a deddly wounde. *much love*  
 160 I cannott wete how this shal be. *imagine*
- JUSTICIA** Sure, I can fynde non sufficyent,  
 \*1211 For servauntys unprofytable we be ech on. *worthless; each one*  
 Hese love nedyth to be ful ardent  
 That, for man, to helle wolde gon. *go*
- PAX** That God may do is non but on.<sup>2</sup>  
 166 Therfore this is Pesys avyse: *Peace's advice*  
 He that gaff this counsell, lete hym geve the comforte alon *gave; give*  
 For the conclusyon in hym of all these lyse. *remains in him*
- FILIUS** It peyneth me, that man I mad,  
 170 That is to seyn, peyne I must suffre fore. *made*  
 \*1220 A counsel of the Trinité must be had — *for [him (i.e., man)]*  
 Which of us shal man restore?
- PATER** In youre wysdam, Son, man was mad thore, *there*  
 And in wysdam was his temptacyon.  
 175 Therfor some sapyens, ye must ordeyn herefore *wisdom; call up*  
 And se how of man may be salvacyon. *see*
- FILIUS** Fadyr, he that shal do this must be both God and man!  
 Lete me se how I may were that wede. *wear that clothing*  
 And syth in my wysdam, he began, *since; he (man)*  
 180 I am redy to do this dede.
- SPIRITUS SANCTUS** I, the Holy Gost, of yow tweyn do procede. *you two*  
 \*1231 This charge I wole take on me.  
 I, Love, to youre lover shal yow lede. *lead you*  
 This is the assent of oure unyté. *unity*
- MISERICORDIA** Now is the loveday mad of us fowre fynialy! *reconciliation day made*  
 186 Now may we leve in pes, as we were wonte. *live; peace; accustomed*  
*Misericordia et Veritas obviauerunt sibi* *Mercy and Truth have met each other*  
*Justicia et Pax osculate sunt.* *Justice and Peace have kissed. (Vulgate Psalm 84:11)*
- [Et hic osculabunt pariter omnes* *And here they kiss each other*

<sup>1</sup> I, Truth, have searched the earth inside and out<sup>2</sup> For God is the only one who may do that

- PATER** From us, god aungel Gabryel, thu shalt be sende *good; sent*  
 190 Into the countré of Galylé. *Galilee*  
 \*1240 The name of the cyté Nazareth is kende *is called*  
 To a mayd weddyd to a man is she,  
 Of whom the name is Joseph, se, *behold (see)*  
 Of the hous of Davyd bore. *born*  
 195 The name of the mayd fre *noble*  
 Is Mary, that shal al restore.
- FILIUS** Say that she is withowte wo and ful of grace, *woe*  
 And that I, the Son of the Godhed, of her shal be bore. *born*  
 Hyge thee! Thu were there apace *Hurry; quickly*  
 200 Ellys we shal be there thee beffore! *Or else*  
 \*1250 I have so grett hast to be man thore *haste; there*  
 In that mekest and purest virgyne.  
 Sey her, she shal restore *Tell*  
 Of yow aungellys, the grett ruyne. *great fall*
- SPIRITUS SANCTUS** And if she aske thee how it myth be, *might*  
 206 Telle her I, the Holy Gost, shal werke al this.  
 Sche shal be savyd thorwe oure unyté. *through; unity*  
 In tokyn, her bareyn cosyn Elyzabeth is *As a sign, her barren cousin*  
 Qwyk with childe, in her grett age, iwys. *Pregnant; indeed*  
 210 Sey her, to us is nothyng impossible. *Tell her*  
 \*1260 Her body shal be so fulfylt with blys *filled; bliss*  
 That she shal sone thynke this sownde credyble. *soon; message (communication)*
- GABRYEL** In thyn hey inbassett, Lord, I shal go! *On; high embassy*  
 It shal be do with a thought. *done*  
 215 Beholde now, Lord, I go hereto:  
 I take my flyth and byde nowth. *delay*  
  
*Ave, gratia plena, Dominus tecum!*  
  
 Heyl, ful of grace, God is with thee!  
 Amonge all women blyssyd art thu.  
 Here, this name *Eva* is turnyd *Ave*,  
 220 That is to say, withowte sorwe ar we now! *sorrow*  
  
 \*1271 Thow sorwe in yow hath no place, *Though*  
 Yett of joy, Lady, ye nede more.  
 Therefore, I adde and sey, "Ful of grace,"  
 For so ful of grace was nevyr non bore. *never born*  
 225 Yett who hath grace, he nedyth kepyng sore. *protection greatly*  
 Therfore, I sey, God is with thee,  
 Which shal kepe yow endlessly thore! *uphold; there*  
 So amonge all women, blyssyd are ye!

- MARIA** A, mercy, God! This is a mervelyous herynge! *speech*  
 230 In the aungelys wordys, I am trobelyd here. *By; troubled here*  
 \*1281 I thynk how may be this gretynge? *wonder; greeting*  
 Aungelys dayly to me doth aper, *appear*  
 But not in the lyknes of man, that is my fer. *companion*  
 And also thus hyghly to comendyd be *highly*  
 235 And am most unwurthy — I cannot answeere. *respond*  
 Grett shamfastnes and grett dred is in me! *shyness*
- GABRYEL** Mary, in this take ye no drede,  
 For at God, grace fownde have ye! *with*  
 Ye shal conceyve in youre wombe, indede,  
 240 A childe, the Sone of the Trynyté!  
 \*1291 His name of yow, Jhesu, clepyd shal be. *called*  
 He shal be grett, the Son of the Hyest, clepyd of kende.<sup>1</sup>  
 And of his fadyr Davyd, the Lord shal geve hym the se, *throne*  
 244 Reynyng in the hous of Jacob, of which regne shal be non ende.
- MARIA** Aungel, I sey to yow,  
 In what manere of wyse shal this be? *what way*  
 For knowyng of man I have non now. *intercourse with*  
 I have evyrmore kept and shal my virginyté.  
 I dowte not the wordys ye han seyde to me, *have said*  
 250 But I aske how it shal be do. *done*
- GABRYEL** The Holy Gost shal come fro above to thee,  
 \*1301 And the vertu of hym hyest shal schadu thee so. *power; overshadow*
- Therefore, that Holy Gost of thee shal be bore. *born*  
 He shal be clepyd the Son of God sage.  
 255 And se Elyzabeth, your cosyn, thore? *there*  
 She hath consevid a son in hyre age. *conceived; old age*  
 This is the sexte monyth of her passage, *sixth; pregnancy*  
 Of her that clepyd was bareyn. *was called barren*  
 Nothyng is impossyble to Goddys usage; *God's*  
 260 They thynkyth longe to here what ye wyl seyn. *hear; will say*
- [Here the aungel makyth a lytyl restyng, and Mary beholdyth hym and the aungel seyth:
- \*1310 Mary, come of and haste thee, *come on*  
 And take hede in thyn entent *mind*  
 Whow the Holy Gost — blyssyd he be — *How*  
 Abydyth thin answeere and thin assent! *Awaits you*  
 265 Thorwe wyse werke of Dyvinyté, *Through*  
 The Secunde Persone, verament, *truly*

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<sup>1</sup> He shall be great, the Son of the Highest, chosen of nature

- Is mad man by fraternyté *made; being man*  
 Withinne thiself, in place present. *right here*
- Ferthermore, take hede this space, *at this time*  
 270 Whow all the blyssyd spyrytys of vertu *How; spirits*  
 \*1320 That are in hefine byffore Goddys face,  
 And all the gode levers and trew *good and true believers*  
 That are here in this erthely place.  
 Thyn owyn kynrede, the sothe ho knew *Your; who knew the truth*  
 275 And the chosyn sowlys, this tyme of grace *souls*  
 That are in helle and byde rescu. *await*
- As Adam, Abraham, and Davyd in fere *together*  
 And many othere of good reputacyon,  
 That thin answeyre desyre to here, *hear*  
 280 And thin assent to the Incarnacyon,  
 \*1330 In which thu standyst, as persevere, *as preserver*  
 Of all mankende savacyon! *salvation*  
 Gyff me myn answeyre, now Lady dere,  
 To all these creaturys comfortacyon! *creatures' comfort*
- MARIA** With all mekenes, I clyne to this acorde, *agree*  
 286 Bowynge down my face with all benyngnyté. *meekness*  
 So here the handmayden of oure Lorde. *here [is]*  
 Aftyr thi worde, be it don to me.
- GABRYEL** Gramercy, my Lady fre! *Many thanks*  
 290 Gramercy of youre answeyre on hyght;  
 \*1340 Gramercy of youre gret humylyté;  
 Gramercy, ye lanterne of lyght! *of*
- [Here the Holy Gost descendit with thre bemys to our Lady, the Sone of the Godhed nest  
 with thre bemys to the Holy Gost, the Fadyr godly with thre bemys to the Sone. And so  
 entre all thre to her bosom, and Mary seyth:]
- MARIA** A, now I fele in my body be  
 Parfyte God and parfyte man, *perfect*  
 295 Havyng al schapp of chylldly carnalyté *shape of a child's flesh*  
 Evyn al at onys, thus God began. *once*
- Nott takynge fyrst o membyr and sythe another<sup>1</sup>  
 But parfyte childhod ye have anon. *immediately*  
 Of your handmayden, now ye have mad youre modyr *made; mother*  
 300 Withowte peyne in flesche and bon. *flesh and bone*  
 \*1350 Thus conceyved nevyr woman non *never*

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<sup>1</sup> Not taking shape as first one member and then another

- That evyr was beynge in this lyff. *has ever lived*  
 O, myn hyst Fadyr in youre tron *highest; throne*  
 It is worthy, youre Son — now my son — have a prerogatyff.
- 305 I cannot telle what joy, what blysse  
 Now I fele in my body!  
 Aungel Gabryel, I thank yow for thys.  
 Most mekely recomende me to my Faderys mercy. *Father's*  
 To have be the Modyr of God, ful lytyl wend I. *become; mother; think*
- 310 Now, myn cosyn Elyzabeth, fayn wold I se, *gladly would I see*  
 \*1360 How sche hath conseyyd as ye dede specyfy. *specify*  
 Now, blyssyd be the hygh Trynyté!
- GABRYEL** Fareweyl, turtyl, Goddys dowtere dere! *turtledove; daughter*  
 Farewel, Goddys mother, I thee honowre!
- 315 Farewel, Goddys sustyr, and his pleyng fere! *sister; companion*  
 Farewel, Goddys chawmere and his bowre! *chamber; bower*
- MARIA** Farewel, Gabryel, specyalye!  
 Farewel, Goddys masangere expresse! *special*  
 I thank yow for youre traveyl hye. *high mission*
- 320 Gramercy of youre grett goodness, *Many thanks for*
- \*1370 And namely of youre comfortabyl massage, *inspiring message*  
 For I undyrstande by inspyracyon  
 That ye knowe by syngulere prevylage *what; special privilege*  
 Most of my sonys Incarnacyon. *son's*
- 325 I pray yow take it into usage *practice*  
 Be a custom ocupacyon *By; regular*  
 To vesyte me ofte be mene passage. *during the pregnancy*  
 Your presence is my comfortacyon.
- GABRYEL** At your wyl, Lady, so shal it be.
- 330 The gentyllest of blood and hyst of kynrede *highest; kin*  
 \*1380 That reynyth in erth in ony degré *on Earth; every*  
 Be pryncypal incheson of the Godhede. *cause*
- I commend me onto yow, thu trone of the Trinyté!  
 O, mekest mayde, now the modyr of Jhesu,  
 335 Qwen of Hefne, Lady of Erth, and Empres of Helle, be ye!  
 Socour to all synful, that wole to yow sew. *appeal*  
 Thorwe youre body beryth the babe, our blysse shal renew. *Through*  
 To yow, Modyr of Mercy, most mekely I recomende,  
 And as I began I ende, with an *Ave* new, *Hail*
- 340 Enjonyd hefne and erth, with that I ascende. *Joined*



[*Angeli cantando istam sequenciam: "Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum virgo serena."*]<sup>1</sup>

## 12. JOSEPH'S DOUBT

<b>JOSEPH</b>	How, dame, how! Undo youre dore, undo!	<i>Hey; Open up</i>
	Are ye at hom? Why speke ye noht?	<i>not</i>
<b>SUSANNA</b>	Who is ther? Why cry ye so?	
	Telle us youre herand, wyl ye ought?	<i>errand</i>
<b>JOSEPH</b>	Undo youre dore, I sey yow to!	
6	For to com in is all my thought.	
<b>MARIA</b>	It is my spowse that spekyth us to!	
	Ondo the dore — his wyl were wrought!	<i>done</i>
	Wellcome hom, myn husbond dere!	
10	How have ye ferd in fer countré?	<i>fared; far</i>
<b>JOSEPH</b>	To gete oure levyng, withowtyn dwere,	<i>earn; doubt</i>
	I have sore laboryd for thee and me.	
<b>MARIA</b>	Husbond, ryght graciously now come be ye!	<i>come in</i>
	It solacyth me sore, sothly, to se yow in syth.	<i>comforts; truly; sight</i>
<b>JOSEPH</b>	Me mervelyth, wyff! Surely, youre face I cannot se,	
16	But as the sonne with his bemys, quan he is most bryth!	<i>Except</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	Husbond, it is as it plesyth, oure Lord that grace of hym grew.	
	Who that evyr beholdyth me veryly,	<i>Whoever</i>
	They shal be grettly steryd to vertu.	<i>stirred</i>
20	For this gyfte and many moo, good Lord, gramercy.	<i>more; great thanks</i>
<b>JOSEPH</b>	How hast thu ferde, jentyl mayde	<i>fared</i>
	Whyl I have be out of londe?	<i>the country</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	Sekyr, sere, beth nowth dysmayde,	<i>Surely, sir, be not</i>
	Ryth aftyr the wyl of Goddys sonde.	<i>God's message</i>
<b>JOSEPH</b>	That semyth evyl, I am afrayd:	
26	Thi wombe to hyghe doth stonde!	<i>too high</i>
	I drede me sore I am betrayd.	<i>I greatly fear</i>
	Sum other man thee had in honde	<i>at hand</i>
	Hens sythe that I went.	<i>Here while I was away</i>
30	Thy wombe is gret; it gynnyth to ryse!	<i>big; begins to grow</i>
	Than has thu begownne a synful gyse!	<i>Then; begun; business</i>
	Telle me now in what wyse	<i>why</i>
	Thyself thu ast thus schent!	<i>you have; disgraced</i>

<sup>1</sup> Angels singing this sequence: "Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord be with you, fair virgin"

	Ow, dame, what thinge menyth this?	
35	With childe, thu gynnyst ryth gret to gon? Sey me, Mary — this childys fadyr, ho is? I pray thee, telle me and that anon!	<i>Getting yourself so great Tell; child's father, who immediately</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	The Fadyr of Hevyn and ye it is; Other fadyr hath he non.	
40	I dede nevyr forfete with man, iwys. Wherfore I pray yow, amende youre mon: This childe is Goddys and youre!	<i>did; transgress; indeed complaint God's; yours</i>
<b>JOSEPH</b>	Goddys childe — thu lyst, in fay! God dede nevyr jape so with may!	<i>God's; lie, truly play; maiden</i>
45	And I cam nevyr ther, I dare wel say, Yitt so nyh thi boure.	<i>Yet; nigh; womb</i>
	But yit I sey: Mary, whoos childe is this?	
<b>MARIA</b>	Goddys and youre, I sey, iwys!	<i>God's and yours; indeed</i>
<b>JOSEPH</b>	Ya, ya, all olde men to me take tent	<i>listen to me</i>
50	And weddyth no wyff, in no kynnys wyse, That is a yonge wench, be myn asent, For doute and drede and swych servyse! Alas, alas, my name is shent!	<i>under no circumstances young; by; advice ruined</i>
	All men may me now dyspyse	<i>despise</i>
55	And seyn: "Olde cokwold, thi bow is bent Newly now after the Frensche gyse!" Alas, and welaway! Alas, dame, why dedyst thu so?	<i>cuckold just as the French do! did</i>
	For this synne that thu hast do,	
60	I thee forsake and from thee go For onys evyr and ay!	<i>once and for all</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	Alas, gode spowse, why sey ye thus? Alas, dere hosbund, amende your mod! It is no man, but swete Jhesus!	<i>good mood</i>
65	He wyll be clad in flesch and blood, And of youre wyff be born!	
<b>SEPHOR</b>	Forsothe, the aungel thus seyde he That Goddys Sone in Trynit�	<i>Truly God's</i>
	For mannys sake, a man wolde be	<i>mankind's</i>
70	To save that is forlorn.	<i>lost</i>
<b>JOSEPH</b>	An aungel? Allas, alas — fy for schame! Ye syn now in that ye to say, To puttyn an aungel in so gret blame!	
	Alas, alas, let be, do way!	<i>stop</i>
75	It was sum boy began this game That clothyd was clene and gay,	<i>business showy</i>

- And ye geve hym now an aungel name! *give; angel's*  
 Alas, alas, and welaway *woe*  
 That evyr this game betydde! *happened*
- 80 A, dame, what thought haddyst thu?  
 Here may all men this proverbe trow: *believe*  
 "That many a man doth bete the bow; *boughs*  
 Another man hath the brydde." *bird*
- MARIA** A, gracious God in hefine trone, *heaven's throne*  
 85 Comforte my spowse in this hard cas! *situation*  
 Mercyful God, amend his mone *grief*  
 As I dede nevyr so gret trespas. *never did*
- JOSEPH** Lo, lo, serys! What told I yow? *sirs*  
 That it was not for my prow *good*
- 90 A wyff to take me to.  
 An that is wel sene now, *And*  
 For Mary, I make God avow, *I swear*  
 Is gret with childe — lo!  
 Alas, why is it so?
- 95 To the busshop, I wole it telle *bishop; I will*  
 That he, the law, may here do, *fulfill the law*  
 With stonys her to qwelle! *to kill*
- Nay, nay, yet God forbede *forbid*  
 That I shuld do that vengeabyl dede! *vengeful*
- 100 But if I wyst wel qwy!  
 I knew never with her, so God me spede, *If only I knew; why*  
 Tokyn of thyng in word nor dede *exchanged with her*  
 That towchyd velany! *A token*  
 Nevyrtheles what forthy, *touched sin*  
 105 Thow she be meke and mylde, *Notwithstanding this*  
 Withowth mannys company, *man's*  
 She myght not be with childe!
- But I ensure, myn was it nevyr!  
 Thow that she hath not don her devyr, *assure you*  
 110 Rather than I shuld pleynyn opynly! *Though; duty*  
 Serteynly yitt had I levyr *complain openly*  
 Forsake the countré forevyr *Certainly; I'd prefer*  
 And nevyr come in her company! *Leave*  
 For and men knew this velany, *For if*  
 115 In repreff thei wolde me holde. *reproof*  
 And yett, many bettyr than I,  
 Ya, hath ben made cokolde! *been made a cuckold*

	Now alas, whedyr shal I gone?	<i>where; go</i>
	I wot nevyr whedyr nor to what place,	<i>I don't know</i>
120	For oftyntyme sorwe comyth sone	<i>sorrow</i>
	And longe it is, or it pace.	<i>before it passes</i>
	No comforte may I have here!	
	Iwys, wyff, thu dedyst me wronge!	<i>Indeed; did</i>
	Alas, I taryed from thee to longe!	<i>too</i>
125	All men have pety on me amonge,	<i>pity</i>
	For to my sorwe is no chere.	<i>sorrow; cheer</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	God, that in my body art sesyd,	<i>is possessed</i>
	Thu knowist myn husbond is dysplesyd	
	To se me in this plight!	
130	For unknowlage, he is desesynd.	<i>not knowing; troubled</i>
	And therfore, help that he were esyd	<i>eased</i>
	That he myght knowe thee ful perfyght.	<i>you perfectly</i>
	For I have levyr abyde respyt	<i>rather remain in waiting</i>
	To kepe thi sone in privité,	<i>in secrecy</i>
135	Grauntyd by the Holy Spyryt,	
	Than that it shulde be opynd by me.	<i>revealed</i>
<b>DEUS</b>	Descende, I sey, myn aungelle,	
	Onto Joseph for to telle	
	Such as my wyl is.	
140	Byd hym with Mary abyde and dwelle,	
	For it is my Sone ful snelle	<i>wise</i>
	That she is with, iwys.	<i>carrying, indeed</i>
<b>ANGELUS</b>	Almyghty God of Blys,	<i>bliss</i>
	I am redy for to wende	<i>to go</i>
145	Wedyr as thi wyl is,	<i>Where</i>
	To go, bothe fer and hynde.	<i>far and wide</i>
	Joseph, Joseph, thu wepyst shyrle!	<i>weep shrilly</i>
	Fro thi wyff, why comyst thu owte?	<i>From</i>
<b>JOSEPH</b>	Good sere, lete me wepe my fylle!	
150	Go forthe thi wey and lett me nowght!	<i>hinder me not</i>
<b>ANGELUS</b>	In thi wepynge, thu dost ryght ylle!	<i>weeping; ill</i>
	Agens God thu hast mys wrought!	<i>done wrong</i>
	Go chere thi wyf with herty wylle	<i>good will</i>
	And chawnge thi chere — amend thi thought!	<i>change; mood</i>
155	Sche is a ful clene may!	<i>pure maid</i>
	I telle thee, God wyl of her be born	<i>a virgin</i>
	And sche, clene mayd as she was beforne,	<i>lost</i>
	To save mankynd, that is forlorn.	
	Go, chere hyr, therfore I say!	<i>her</i>

- JOSEPH** A, Lord God, *benedicite!* *bless me*  
 161 Of thi gret comforte, I thank thee  
 That thu sent me this space. *opportunity*  
 I myght wel a wylt, pardé, *understand, by God*  
 So good a creature as she *person*  
 165 Wold nevyr a don trespase, *have done*  
 For sche is ful of grace.  
 I know wel I have mys wrought! *misunderstood*  
 I walk to my pore place  
 And ask forgyfnes — I have myst thought. *thought wrongly*
- 170 Now is the tyme sen at eye *plainly seen*  
 That the childe is now to veryfye *prove true*  
 Which shal save mankende, *Who*  
 As it was spoke be prophesye. *by*  
 I thank thee, God — that syttys on hye —
- 175 With hert, wyl, and mende — *mind*  
 That evyr thu woldyst me bynde *bind*  
 To wedde Mary to my wyff.  
 Thi blysful sone, so nere to fynde,  
 In his presens to lede my lyff.
- 180 Alas, for joy, I qwedyr and qwake! *quiver*  
 Alas, what hap now was this? *what happened*  
 A, mercy, mercy, my jentyl make! *gentle mate*  
 Mercy! I have seyde al amys! *all amiss*  
 All that I have seyde here, I forsake!
- 185 Youre swete fete, now lete me kys! *sweet feet*  
**MARIA** Nay, lett be my fete, not tho ye take! *feet; those*  
 My mowthe, ye may kys, iwys, *kiss, indeed*  
 And welcom onto me!
- JOSEPH** Gramercy, myn owyn swete wyff! *Many thanks*  
 190 Gramercy, myn hert, my love, my lyff!  
 Shal I nevyr more make suche stryff  
 Betwyx me and thee! *Between*
- A, Mary, Mary, wel thu be,  
 And blyssyd be the frewte in thee,  
 195 Goddys Sone of myght!  
 Now, good wyff, ful of pyté,  
 As be not evyl payd with me *Do not be angry*  
 Thow that thu have good ryght. *Though*  
 As for my wronge in syght *obvious wrong*  
 200 To wyte thee with ony synne, *accuse you; any*  
 Had thu not be a vertuous wythe, *been; person*  
 God wold not a be thee withinne. *have been within you*

- I knowlage I have don amys. *acknowledge; amiss*  
 I was never wurthy, iwys, *indeed*  
 205 For to be thin husbonde.  
 I shal amende aftere thys, *be better*  
 Ryght as thin owyn wyl is,  
 To serve thee at foot and honde, *hand*  
 And thi chylde bothe to undyrstonde,  
 210 To wurchep hym with good affeccyon.  
 And, therfore, telle me, and nothyng whonde, *hold back*  
 The holy matere of your concepcon.
- MARIA** At youre owyn wyll, as ye bydde me.  
 Ther cam an aunge hyght Gabryell *angel named*  
 215 And gret me fayr and seyde "Ave"! *greeted me; "Hail"*  
 And ferthermore to me gan tell *began to tell me*  
 God shulde be borne of my bodé,  
 The fendys powsté for to felle. *devil's power; vanquish*  
 Thorwe the Holy Gost, as I wel se, *Through*  
 220 Thus God in me wyl byde and dwelle.
- JOSEPH** Now I thank God with spech and spelle *speech and words*  
 That evyr, Mary, I was weddyd to thee!
- MARIA** It was the werk of God, as I yow telle.  
 Now blyssyd be that Lord so purveyd for me. *provided*

## 13. VISIT TO ELIZABETH

- MARIA** But husbond, of oo thyng I pray yow most mekely: *one*  
 \*1391 I have knowyng that oure cosyn Elyzabeth with childe is.  
 That it plese yow to go to her hastyly,  
 4 If owught we myth comforte her, it wore to me blys. *might*
- JOSEPH** A, Godys sake! Is she with childe, sche?  
 Than wole her husbond Zakarye be mery! *will*  
 In montana they dwelle, fer hens, so mot Y thee, *mountains; far; may I prosper*  
 In the cety of Juda, I knowe it veryly.  
 It is hens, I trowe, myles two and fyfty. *I think*  
 10 We are lyke to be wery, or we come at that same. *before; that place*  
 \*1400 I wole with a good wyl, blyssyd wyff Mary. *will*  
 Now go we forthe, than, in Goddys name. *then*
- MARIA** Goth, husbond, thow it be to yow peyne. *although*  
 This jurny I pray yow, lete us go fast,  
 15 For I am schamfast of the pepyl to be seyne *ashamed; seen*  
 And namely of men, therof I am agast. *fearful*  
 Pylgrymagys and helpyngys wolde be go in hast. *almsgivings; haste*

The more the body is peynyd, the more is the mede. *rewarded*  
 Say ye youre devocyons, and I shal myn, I cast. *I intend*  
 20 Now, in this jurny, God mote us spede. *may God help us*

**JOSEPH** Amen, amen, and evyrmore.

\*1411 Lo, wyff, lo, how starkly I go before. *see; boldly*

*[Et sic transient circa placeam.*

*And they travel around the playing place*

**CONTEMPLACIO** Sovereynes, undyrstondyth that Kynge Davyd here

Ordeyned foure and twenty prestys of grett devocyon *ordered*  
 25 In the temple of God aftere here let apere. *appear*

Thei weryn clepyd *summi sacerdotes*, for here mynistracyon.<sup>1</sup>

And on was prynce of prestys, havynge dominacyon *one*

Amonge which was an old prest clepyd Zakarye, *called*

And he had an old woman to his wyff of holy conversacyon *conduct*

30 Whiche hyth Elizabeth, that nevyr had childe, verylye. *Who was called*

\*1420 In hese mynistracyon, the howre of incense, *During his service, at the time of incensing*  
 The aungel Gabryel apperyd hym to

That hese wyff shulde conseye: he gaff hym intelligence. *gave; news*

He, seinge hese unwurthynes and age, not belevyd so; *did not believe*

35 The plage of dompnese hise lippis lappyd, lo. *muteness; were sealed*

Thei wenten hom, and his wyff was conseyyenge.

This concepcyon Gabryel tolde oure Lady to,

And, in soth, sone aftere, that sage sche was sekyng, *wise woman*

And of here tweyners metyng

40 Here gynnyth the proces. *meeting of the two*

*the story*

\*1430 Now God, be oure begynnynge,

And of my tonge, I wole ses. *will cease*

**JOSEPH** A, a, wyff, in feyth, I am wery!

*truly*

Therfore, I wole sytt downe and rest me ryght here.

*will*

45 Lo, wyff, here is the hous of Zakary!

Wole ye, I clepe Elyzabeth to yow to apere.

*If you want, I'll call*

**MARIA** Nay, husbond, and it plese yow, I shal go ner.

*if it*

Now, the blyssyd Trynité be in this hous!

A, cosyn Elizabeth, swete modyr, what cher?

50 Ye grow grett! A, my God, how ye be gracyous! *beautiful*

**ELIZABETH** Anon as I herd of yow, this holy gretynge,

*As soon as*

\*1441 Mekest mayden and the Modyr of God, Mary,

Be youre breth, the Holy Gost us was inspyrynge. *By*

<sup>1</sup> They were called high priests, for their services

- 55 That the childe in my body enjoyd gretly, *rejoiced*  
 And turnyd down on his knes to oure God reverently! *knelt down*  
 Whom ye bere in youre body, this verly I ken. *truly I know*  
 Fulfyllyd with the Holy Gost, thus lowde I cry: *Filled; loudly*  
 Blyssyd be thou amonge all women!
- 60 And blyssyd be the frute of thi wombe, also.  
 \*1450 Thou wurthyest virgyne and wyff that evyr was wrought,  
 How is it that the Modyr of God me shulde come to, *creature*  
 That wrecche of all wrecchis, a whyght wers than nought?  
 And thou art blyssyd that belevyd verly in thi thought,  
 That the wurde of God shulde profyte in thee.
- 65 But how this blyssydnes about was brought, *about*  
 I cannot thynk nyn say how it myght be. *nor say*
- MARIA** To the preysynge of God, cosyn, this seyde mut be. *must*  
 Whan I sat in my lytyl hous, onto God praynge,  
 Gabryel come and seyde to me, “Ave!” *came*
- 70 Ther I conceyvyd God at my consentynge —  
 \*1460 Parfyte God and parfyte man, at onys beynge. *Perfect; at once being*  
 Than the aungel seyde unto me *Then*  
 That it was sex monethys syn youre consevyng. *six months since*  
 This cawsyth my comynge, cosyn, yow to comferte and se.
- ELIZABETH** Blyssyd be ye, cosyn, for youre hedyrcomynge. *coming here*  
 76 How I consevyd, I shal to yow say:  
 The aungel apperyd the howre of incensynge *at [the] service hour*  
 Seynge I shulde conseve, and hym thought nay. *(Zacharias) thought*  
 Sethe, for his mystrost, he hath be down alway. *Since; dumb (mute)*
- 80 And thus of my concepcon, I have tolde yow sum.
- MARIA** For this holy psalme, I begynne here this day:
- \*1471 *Magnificat anima mea Dominum*  
*Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.*<sup>1</sup>
- ELIZABETH** Be the Holy Gost, with joye, Goddys Son is in thee cum *By; come*  
 85 That thi spyryte so injouyde the helth of thi God so. *spirit rejoiced in*
- MARIA** *Quia respexit humilitatem ancille sue,*  
*Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.*<sup>2</sup>
- ELIZABETH** For he beheld the lownes of hese handmayde, ye, *lowness*  
 89 So ferforthe for that, all generacyonys blysse yow in pes. *So much that; bless*

<sup>1</sup> Lines 82–83: *My soul magnifies the Lord / And my spirit rejoiced in God my Savior.* (See Luke 1:46–47)

<sup>2</sup> Lines 86–87: *Because he has regarded the humility of his handmaid, / For behold from henceforth all generations will call me blessed.* (See Luke 1:48)



**MARIA** *Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est,*

\*1480 *Et sanctum nomen eius.*<sup>1</sup>

**ELIZABETH** For grett thyngys he made and also myghtyest  
And ryght holy is the name of hym in us.

**MARIA** *Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies*

95 *Timentibus eum.*<sup>2</sup>

**ELIZABETH** Ya, the mercy of hym fro that kynde into the kynde of pes,<sup>3</sup>  
For all that hym drede, now is he cum.

*dread*

**MARIA** *Fecit potenciam in brachio suo,*

99 *Disspersit superbos mente cordis sui.*<sup>4</sup>

**ELIZABETH** The pore in his ryght arme, he hath mad so

*power; made*

\*1490 The prowde to dyspeyre, in the thought of here hertys only.<sup>5</sup>

**MARIA** *Deposuit potentes de sede,*

*Et exaltauit humiles.*<sup>6</sup>

**ELIZABETH** The prowde men fro hey setys put he,

*high seats*

105 And the lowly upon heyth in the sete of pes.

*high; seat; peace*

**MARIA** *Esurientes implevit bonis,*

*Et diuites dimisit inanes.*<sup>7</sup>

**ELIZABETH** Alle the pore and the nedy he fulfyllth with his goodyes,

*goods*

109 And the ryche, he fellyth to voydnes.

*strikes down to nothingness*

**MARIA** *Suscepit Israel puerum suum*

\*1500 *Recordatus est misericordie sue.*<sup>8</sup>

**ELIZABETH** Israel, for his childe, uptoke he to cum  
On his mercy to thynk, for hese that be.

*he raised up and encouraged*

*his [own]*

**MARIA** *Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,*

115 *Abraham et semini eius in secula.*<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lines 90–91: *Because he who is mighty has done great things for me: / And holy is his name.* (See Luke 1:49)

<sup>2</sup> Lines 94–95: *And his mercy is from generation to generations, / To those fearing him.* (See Luke 1:50)

<sup>3</sup> *Yea, the mercy of him is from that generation into the generation of peace*

<sup>4</sup> Lines 98–99: *He has made power in his arm / He has scattered the proud in the mind of his heart.* (See Luke 1:51)

<sup>5</sup> *The proud to despair, in the thought of their hearts alone*

<sup>6</sup> Lines 102–03: *He has put down the mighty from their seat / And exalted the humble.* (See Luke 1:52)

<sup>7</sup> Lines 106–07: *He has filled the hungry with good things / And the rich he sent away empty.* (See Luke 1:53)

<sup>8</sup> Lines 110–11: *He has received Israel his servant, / That recalled his mercy.* (See Luke 1:54)

<sup>9</sup> Lines 114–15: *As he spoke to our fathers, / to Abraham and to his seed for ever.* (See Luke 1:55)

**ELIZABETH** As he spak here to oure forfaderys in clos, *forefathers in secret*  
 Abraham and to all hese sed of hym in this werd, sa. *seed; world, so*

**MARIA** *Gloria Patri et Filio* *Glory be to the Father and to the Son*  
 119 *Et Spiritui Sancto.* *And to the Holy Spirit*

**ELIZABETH** Preysyng be to the Fadyr in Hevyn, lo;  
 \*1510 The same to the Son, here be so;  
 The Holy Gost, also to ken. *acknowledge*

**MARIA** *Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper,* *As it was in the beginning and now and forever,*  
*Et in secula seculorum, amen.* *And into the age of ages, amen*

**ELIZABETH** As it was in the begynnyng, and now is, and shal be forevyr,  
 126 And in this werd, in all good werkys to abydyn then. *world*

**MARIA** This psalme of prophesye seyde betwen us tweyn. *two*  
 In hefne, it is wretyn with aungellys hond *angel's handwriting*  
 Evyr to be songe and also to be seyn *read*  
 130 Everyday amonge us at oure evesong. *evensong (vespers)*

\*1520 But, cosyn Elyzabeth, I shal yow here kepe  
 And this thre monethis abyde here now *months*  
 Tyl ye han childe to wasche, skore, and swepe, *have; wash, scour*  
 And in all that, I may to comforte yow.

**ELIZABETH** A, ye Modyr of God, ye shewe us here how  
 136 We shulde be meke, that wrecchis here be. *wretches*  
 All hefne and herthe wurchep yow now *heaven and earth; may*  
 That are trone and tabernakyl of the hygh Trinité!

**JOSEPH** A, how do ye? How do ye, fadyr Zacharye?  
 140 We falle fast in age, withowte oth! *surely*

\*1530 Why shake ye so your hed? Have ye the palsye?  
 Why speke ye not, sere? I trowe ye are not wroth. *think; angry*

**ELIZABETH** Nay, wys fadyr Joseph, therto he were ful loth. *unwilling*

It is the vesytacyon of God: he may not speke veryly.  
 145 Lete us thank God, therffor, both *both of us*  
 He shal remedy it whan it plesyth his mercy.

Come, I pray yow specialy.  
 Iwys, ye are welcome, Mary. *Indeed*  
 149 For this comfortabelest comynge, good God, gramercy. *most comforting*

**CONTEMPLACIO** Lystenyth, sovereynys, here is conclusyon:  
 \*1540 How the *Ave* was made, here is lernyd us. *taught*  
 The aungel seyde: "*Ave, gratia plena! Dominus tecum.*  
*Benedicta tu in mulieribus.*"  
 Elizabeth seyde: "*Et benedictus*

155 *Fructus uentris tui.*" Thus the chirch addyd "Maria" and "Jhesus" here.<sup>1</sup>  
 Who seyth oure Ladyes Sawtere dayly for a yer thus, *Psalter*  
 He hath pardon, ten thousand and eyte hundryd yer.

Than ferther to oure matere for to procede,  
 Mary, with Elizabeth abod ther styлле  
 160 Thre monthys fully, as we rede,  
 \*1550 Thankynge God with hertly wylle.

A, Lord God, what hous was this on *one*  
 That these childeryn and here modernys to *their two mothers*  
 As Mary and Elizabeth, Jhesus and John,  
 165 And Joseph and Zakarye, also!

And evyr oure Lady abod styлле thus  
 Tyl Johan was of his modyr born.  
 And than Zakarye spak, iwus, *then; indeed*  
 That had be down, and his spech lorn. *become mute; lost*

170 He and Elizabeth prophesyed as thus:  
 \*1560 They mad *Benedictus* them befor  
 And so *Magnificat* and *Benedictus*  
 Fyrst in that place ther made worn. *were first done*

Whan all was don, oure Lady fre *noble*  
 175 Toke her leve than aftere this,  
 At Elizabeth and at Zakarie  
 And kyssyd Johan and gan hym blys. *began to bless him*

Now, most mekely, we thank you of youre pacyens  
 And beseke you of youre good supportacyon. *support*  
 180 If here hath be seyde ore don any inconvenyens,  
 \*1570 We asygne it to youre good deliberacyon. *entrust*  
 Besekynge to Crystys precious Passyon, *Beseeching*  
 Conserve and rewarde youre hedyrcomynge. *Keep; coming here*  
 With *Ave* we begunne, and *Ave* is oure conclusyon: *Hail*  
 185 "*Ave regina celorum*" to Oure Lady we synge. *Hail, queen of heaven*

#### 14. TRIAL OF MARY AND JOSEPH

**DEN** Avoyd, serys, and lete my lorde the buschop come *Clear the court; bishop*  
 And syt in the courte, the lawes for to doo! *enforce*

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 152–55: *The angel said, "Hail, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. / Blessed art thou among women." / Elizabeth said, "Blessed be / The fruit of thy womb." Thus the church added Mary and Jesus here*

- And I shal gon in this place, them for to somowne!  
 Tho that ben in my book, the court ye must com too! *to summon  
Those who are; to*
- 5 I warne yow here all abowte  
 That I somown yow all the rowte! *summon; crowd*  
 Loke ye fayl for no dowte *do not fail*  
 At the court to pere: *to appear*  
 Both Johan Jurdon and Geffrey Gyle,  
 10 Malkyn Mylkedoke and fayr Mabyle,  
 Stevyn Sturdy and Jak-at-the-Style *Stile*  
 And Sawdyr Sadelere,
- Thom Tyndere and Betrys Belle,  
 Peyrs Pottere and Whatt-at-the-Welle,  
 15 Symme Smalfeyth and Kate Kelle,  
 And Bertylmew the bochere, *butcher*  
 Kytt Cakelere and Colett Crane,  
 Gylle Fetyse and Fayr Jane,  
 Powle Pewterere and Pernel Prane,  
 20 And Phelypp the good flecchere.
- Cok Crane and Davy Drydust,  
 Luce Lyere and Letyce Lytyl Trust,  
 Miles the myllere and Colle Crake Crust,  
 Both Bette the bakere and Robyn Rede.  
 25 And loke ye rynge wele in youre purs,  
 For ellys youre cawse may spede the wurs, *dig into your purses*  
 Thow that ye slynge Goddys curs *Or else; worse*  
 Evyn at myn hede! *Though you; God's curse*  
 Fast com away, *my head*
- 30 Bothe Boutyng the browstere and Sybyly Slynge,  
 Megge Merywedyr and Sabyng Sprynge,  
 Tyffany Twynkelere, fayle for nothyng!  
 The courte shal be this day!
- [*Hic intrabit pagentum de purgacione Marie et Joseph.*  
*Hic dicit Primus Detractor:*<sup>1</sup>
- DETRACTOR 1** A, a, serys! God save yow all! *sirs*  
 35 Here is a fayr pepyl, in good fay! *fair company; faith*  
 Good serys, telle me what men me calle —  
 I trowe ye kannot be this day, *think; by*  
 Yitt I walke wyde and many way, *yet*  
 But yet ther I come I do no good:

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<sup>1</sup> Here begins the play of the Trial of Mary and Joseph. / Here the First Detractor says

- 40 To reyse slawndyr is al my lay —  
Bakbytere is my brother of blood. *raise slander; practice Backbiter*
- Dede he ought come hedyr in al this day;  
Now wolde God that he wore here!  
And be my trewth, I dare wel say  
45 That yf we tweyn togedyr apere,  
More slawndyr we to shal arere  
Within an howre thorweouth this town  
Than evyr ther was this thowand yere,  
And ellys I shrewe yow bothe up and down! *I wish he would; hither were troth we two; appear two; raise throughout else I curse you*
- 50 Now, be my trewth, I have a syght  
Evyn of my brother — lo, where he is.  
Welcom, dere brother, my trowth I plyght,  
Yowre jentyll mowth, let me now kys. *by my troth I swear to you gentle mouth*
- DETRACTOR 2** Gramercy, brother, so have I blys!  
55 I am ful glad we met this day!  
**DETRACTOR 1** Ryght so am I, brothyr, iwys!  
Mech gladdere than I kan say. *indeed More glad*
- But yitt, good brother, I yow pray —  
Telle all these pepyl what is youre name,  
60 For yf thei knew it, my lyf I lay,  
They wole yow wurchep and speke gret fame!  
**DETRACTOR 2** I am Bakbytere, that spylyth all game,  
Bothe kyd and knowyn in many a place.  
**DETRACTOR 1** Be my trowth, I seyde the same,  
65 And yet sum seyden thu shulde have evyl grace. *I bet my life speak of your fame ruins all joy recognized By my troth have said; bad luck*
- DETRACTOR 2** Herk, Reysesclaundyr! Canst thu owth telle  
Of any newe thyng that wrought was late?  
**DETRACTOR 1** Within a short whyle, a thyng befelle.  
I trow thu wylt lawgh ryght wel therate,  
70 For be trowth ryght mekyl hate,  
If it be wyst, therof wyl growe.  
**DETRACTOR 2** If I may reyse therwith debate,  
I shal not spare thee seyde to sowe. *Raiseslander; aught done lately laugh; thereat by the truth; great hate be known raise seed to sow*
- DETRACTOR 1** Syr, in the tempyl a mayd ther was  
75 Calde Mayd Mary, the trewth to tell.  
Sche semyd so holy withinne that plas.  
Men seyde sche was fedde with holy aungell.  
Sche made a vow with man nevyr to melle,  
But to leve chast and clene virgine.  
80 Howevyr it be, her wombe doth swelle  
And is as gret as thinne or myne! *place fed by have intercourse live as a yours or mine*

**DETRACTOR 2** Ya, that old shrewe Joseph — my trowth I plyght — *rascal; I swear*  
 Was so anameryd upon that mayd *enamored of*  
 That of hyr bewté whan he had syght, *her beauty when*  
 85 He sesyd nat tyll he had her asayd! *ceased not; had intercourse with her*  
**DETRACTOR 1** A, nay, nay, wel wers she hath hym payd! *worse than that*  
 Sum fresch yonge galaunt she loveth wel more  
 That his leggyss to her hath leyd. *lain upon*  
 And that doth greve the old man sore! *grieves*

**DETRACTOR 2** Be my trewth, al may wel be, *By my troth*  
 91 For fresch and fayr she is to syght,  
 And such a mursel — as semyth me — *morsel*  
 Wolde cause a yonge man to have delyght!

**DETRACTOR 1** Such a yonge damesel of bewté bryght *such beauty*  
 95 And of schap so comely also *shape*  
 Of hir tayle ofte tyme be light *pudendum; lascivious*  
 And rygh tekyl undyr thee, too! *titillating*

**DETRACTOR 2** That olde cokolde was evyl begylyd *badly deluded*  
 To that fresche wench whan he was wedde! *when*  
 100 Now muste he faderyn anothyr mannys chylde *father; man's child*  
 And with his swynke, he shal be fedde. *his toil*

**DETRACTOR 1** A yonge man may do more chere in bedde *give more pleasure*  
 To a yonge wench than may an olde.  
 That is the cawse such a lawe is ledde, *reason; practice occurs*  
 105 That many a man is a kokewolde. *cuckold*

*[Hic sedet Episcopus Abizachar inter duos legis doctores et, audientes hanc defamacionem, vocat ad se detractores dicens:]<sup>1</sup>*

**EPISCOPUS** Herke ye, felawys! Why speke ye such schame *fellows*  
 Of that good virgyn, fayr Mayd Mary?  
 Ye be acursyd, so hir for to defame! *her*  
 She that is of lyff so good and holy *life*  
 110 Of hir to speke suche velany, *villainy*  
 Ye make myn hert ful hevy of mood. *heart; heavy*  
 I charge yow sese of youre fals cry, *cease; outcry*  
 For sche is sybbe of myn owyn blood. *kinswoman*

**DETRACTOR 2** Syb of thi kyn thow that she be, *Kinswoman though*  
 115 All gret with chylde hir wombe doth swelle! *her*  
 Do calle her hedyr — thiself shal se *hither*  
 That it is trewthe that I thee telle!

<sup>1</sup> Here Bishop Abiyachar sits between two doctors of the law and, hearing the slander, calls the detractors to him, saying

<b>DETRACTOR 1</b>	Sere, for youre sake I shal kepe cowncelle Yow for to greve, I am ryght loth,	<i>Sir; keep your secret to grieve you; loath</i>
120	But lest, syrrys, lyst what seyth the belle — Oure fayr mayd, now gret with childe goth.	<i>listen sirs, what is rumored</i>
<b>DOCTOR LEGIS 1</b>	Take good heed, serys, what ye doth say. Avyse yow wele what ye present. Gyf this be fownd fals anothyr day,	<i>sirs If Completely</i>
125	Ful sore ye shal youre tale repent.	<i>Sir; attractive</i>
<b>DETRACTOR 2</b>	Sere, the mayd, forsothe, is good and gent, Bothe comely and gay and a fayr wench, And feetly with help, sche can consent To set a cokewolde on the hye benche.	<i>handsome; beautiful craftily To toast a cuckold</i>
<b>DOCTOR LEGIS 2</b>	Ye be to besy of youre langage!	<i>too loose; talk</i>
131	I hope to God yow fals to preve! It were gret rewthe she shulde so outrage Or with such synne to myscheve.	<i>to prove you pity; sin so to do wrong</i>
<b>EPISCOPUS</b>	This evy talys, my hert doth greve	<i>Such heavy tales</i>
135	Of hir to here such fowle dalyawnce. If she be fowndyn in such repreve, She shal sore rewe her governawns!	<i>her to hear; foul talk found; reproof regret her behavior</i>
	Sym Somnore, in hast wend thu thi way! Byd Joseph and his wyff be name	<i>Summoner; go; your way by name</i>
140	At the coorte to appere this day, Here hem to pouрге of her defame. Sey that I here of hem grett schame, And that doth me gret hevynes. If thei be clene withowtyn blame,	<i>Here them to purge hear of them</i>
145	Byd hem come hedyr and shew wyttnes.	<i>them; hither; bear witness</i>
<b>DEN</b>	All redy, sere, I shal hem calle. Here at youre courte for to appere, And yf I may hem mete withall, I hope ryght sone thei shal ben here.	<i>sir; them them meet soon</i>
150	Away, serys, lete me come nere! A man of wurchep here comyth to place. Of curtesy, me semyth ye be to lere! Do of your hodys, with an evyl grace!	<i>sirs to need instruction Take off (i.e., bow); curse you!</i>
	Do me sum wurchep befor my face, Or, be my trowth, I shal yow make If that I rolle yow up in my race, For fere I shal do your ars qwake! But yit sum mede, and ye me take, I wyl withdrawe my gret rough toth.	<i>Give me a tip I'll force you summon you; my haste fear; shall make reward retract my fangs (i.e., let you off)</i>

- 160 Gold or sylvyr, I wol not forsake,  
But evyn as all somnorys doth. *silver  
summoners*
- A, Joseph, good day with thi fayr spowse!  
My lorde, the buschop, hath for yow sent.  
It is hym tolde that in thin house *bishop; you  
told to him; your*
- 165 A cockoldeis bowe is ech nyght bent.  
He that shett the bolt is lyke to be schent — *cuckold's bow; each  
shot; to be ruined*  
Fayre mayde, that tale ye kan best telle.  
Now, be youre trowth, telle youre entent — *troth; version*  
Dede not the archere plese yow ryght well?
- MARIA** Of God in hevyn I take wyttnes:  
171 That synful werk was nevyr my thought!  
I am a mayd yit of pure clenness, *yet; virginity  
world*  
Lyke as I was into this werd brought!
- DEN** Othyr wyttnes shal non be sought. *witnesses; none*  
175 Thu art with childe, eche man may se!  
I charge yow, bothe, ye tary nought,  
But to the buschop com forth with me! *bishop*
- JOSEPH** To the buschop with yow we wende — *we go*  
Of oure purgacyon have we no dowth. *exculpation have; doubt*
- MARIA** Almyghty God shal be oure frende  
181 Whan the trewth is tryed owth! *When; determined*
- DEN** Ya, on this wyse excusyth here every scowte *in this way; slut*  
Whan here owyn synne hem doth defame. *When their own; them*  
But lowly than they gyn to lowth *then; begin to bow*  
185 Whan thei be gylty and fowndyn in blame. *When*
- Therefore, com forth, cokewolde be name — *by name*  
The busschop shal your lyff appose. *bishop; examine*  
Com forth, also ye goodly dame —  
A clene huswyff, as I suppose. *housewife*
- 190 I shal yow tellyn, withowtyn glose: *truly*  
And ye were myn, withowtyn lak, *If; without fail*  
I wolde ech day beschrewe youre nose *each; curse*  
And ye dede brynge me such a pak. *If; package (baby)*
- My lord the buschop, here have I brought  
195 This goodly copyl at youre bydding *couple*  
And as mesemyth, as be her fraught, *judging by her freight*  
“Fayr chylde, lullay” sone must she syng! *(a lullaby) soon*
- DETRACTOR 1** To her a credyl, and ye wolde brynge, *cradle, if*  
Ye myght save mony in her purse  
200 Becawse she is youre cosyn yyng. *young*  
I pray yow, sere, lete her nevyr fare the wers! *sir; worse*



- EPISCOPUS** Alas, Mary! What hast thou wrought? *done*  
 I am aschamyd evyn for thi sake! *ashamed*  
 How hast thou chaungyd thin holy thought? *your*  
 205 Dude old Joseph with strenght thee take, *Did; overtake*  
 Or hast thou chosyn another make *mate*  
 By whom thou art thus brought in schame?  
 Telle me, who hath wrought this wrake? *harm*  
 How hast thou lost thin holy name?
- MARIA** My name, I hope, is saff and sownde. *safe*  
 211 God to wyttnes, I am a mayd!  
 Of fleshly lust and gostly wownde *spiritual wound*  
 In dede nere thought I nevyr asayd. *deed nor thought; experienced*
- DOCTOR LEGIS 1** How shulde thi wombe thus be arayd — *be that way*  
 215 So grettly swollyn as that it is —  
 But if sum man thee had ovyrlayd? *Unless; lain with*  
 Thi wombe shulde never be so gret, iwys! *indeed*
- DOCTOR LEGIS 2** Herke, thou Joseph! I am afrayd  
 That thou hast wrought this opyn synne! *plainly evident sin*  
 220 This woman thou hast thus betrayd  
 With gret flaterynge or sum fals gynne. *ploy*
- DETRACTOR 2** Now, be myn trowth, ye hytte the pynne!  
 With that purpose, in feyth, I holde! *you've got it*  
 Telle now how thou thus hir dudyst wyne *idea; I agree*  
 225 Ore knowlych thiself for a cockewolde! *did win her*  
*Or acknowledge; cuckold*
- JOSEPH** Sche is, for me, a trewe clene mayde,  
 And I, for hir, am clene also *for her*  
 Of fleshly synne I nevyr asayde *have never tried*  
 Sythyn that sche was weddyd me to. *Since*
- EPISCOPUS** Thou shalt not schape from us yitt so: *escape; yet*  
 231 Fyrst, thou shalte tellyn us another lay. *tale*  
 Streyt to the awter thou shalt go, *altar*  
 The drynge of vengeawns ther to asay. *drink of vengeance; to try*
- Here is the botel of Goddys vengeawns — *God's*  
 235 This drynk shal be now thi purgacyon.  
 This hath suche vertu by Goddys ordenauns *God's ordinance*  
 That what man drynk of this potacyon *potion*  
 And goth serteyn in processyon —  
 Here in this place, this awtere abowth — *altar*  
 240 If he be gylyt sum maculacion, *sin*  
 Pleyn in his face shal shewe it owth. *openly*
- Iff thou be gylyt, telle us — lete se —  
 Ouyr Godys myght be not to bolde — *Our God's; too*

- If thou presume and gylty be,  
 245 God thou dost greve many afolde. *grieve many times over*
- JOSEPH** I am not gylty as I fyrst tolde,  
 Allmyghty God I take wytnes.
- EPISCOPUS** Than this drynke in hast thou holde, *Then; in haste*  
 And on processyon anon thee dresse. *soon prepare*
- [Hic Joseph bibit et sepcies circuivit altare, dicens:<sup>1</sup>*
- JOSEPH** This drynk I take with meke entent  
 251 As I am gyltles to God, I pray.  
 Lord, as thou art omnypotente,  
 On me thou shewe the trowth this day. *the truth*
- [Modo bibit. Now he drinks*
- About this awtere I take the way. *altar*  
 255 O gracious God, help thi servaunt  
 As I am gyltles agen yon may *against; maiden*  
 Thin hand of mercy, this tyme me graunt. *Your*
- DEN** This olde shrewe may not wele gon! *rascal; can't move*  
 Longe he taryeth to go abowth. *tarries; about*  
 260 Lyfte up thi feet! Sett forth thi ton,  
 Or, be my trewth, thou getyst a clowte! *Move it! (set forth your toes)*  
*by my troth; beating*
- DETRACTOR 2** Now, sere, evyl thedom come to thi snowte!  
 What heylyght thi leggy's now to be lame? *sir; bad luck; snout*  
 Thou dedyst hem put ryght freschly owte *ails your legs*  
 265 Whan thou dedyst pley with yon yonge dame! *used them eagerly*  
*did play (i.e., have sex)*
- DETRACTOR 1** I pray to God, gyf hym myschawns!  
 Hese leggy's here do folde for age! *give; bad luck*  
 But with this damysel, whan he ded dawns  
 The olde charle had ryght gret corage. *when; did dance (have sex)*  
*churl; spirit*
- DEN** The shrewe was than sett in a dotage *rascal (Joseph)*  
 271 And had good lust that tyme to pleyn. *to play*  
 Gaff sche not yow cawdel to potage *Gave; warm drink; meal*  
 Whan ye had don to comferte youre brayn? *When; mind*
- JOSEPH** A, gracious God! Help me this tyde  
 275 Ageyn this pepyl that me doth fame *company; defame*  
 As I nevyrmore ded towch her syde *did touch*  
 This day help me fro werdly schame *worldly*  
 Abowte this awtere to kepe my fame. *altar; reputation*

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<sup>1</sup> Here Joseph drinks and goes seven times around the altar, saying

- Sefne tymes I have gon rownd abowte! *Seven*  
 280 If I be wurthy to suffyr blame,  
 O, ryghtful God, my synne shewe owughte! *openly*
- EPISCOPUS** Joseph, with hert, thank God thi Lorde *heartily*  
 Who heygh mercy doth thee excuse. *high*  
 For thi purgacyon we shal recorde:  
 285 With hyr of synne thu dedyst never muse. *her; consider*  
 But Mary, thiself mayst not refuse —  
 All grett with chylde we se thee stonde. *stand*  
 What mystyr man ded thee mysuse? *kind of man did*  
 Why hast thu synned ageyn thin husbonde? *against your*
- MARIA** I trespassyd nevyr with erthely wyght; *earthly creature*  
 291 Therof I hope thurowe Goddys sonde *through God's dispensation*  
 Here to be purgyd before youre syght,  
 From all synne clene, lyke as myn husbonde.  
 Take me the botel out of youre honde. *Give*  
 295 Here shal I drynke beforn youre face  
 Abowth this awtere than shal I fonde, *altar then; submit*  
 Sefne tymes to go, by Godys grace! *Seven; God's*
- DOCTOR LEGIS 1** Se, this bolde bysmare wolde presume *wretch*  
 Ageyn God to preve his myght!  
 300 Thow Goddys vengeauns hyr shuld consume, *Against; test*  
 Sche wyl not telle hyr fals delyght! *Though God's; her*  
 Thou art with chylde, we se in syght!  
 To us thi wombe thee doth accuse!  
 Ther was nevyr woman yitt in such plyght *yet*  
 305 That from mankynde hyr kowde excuse. *her human nature*
- DETRACTOR 1** In feyth, I suppose that this woman slepte  
 Withowtyn all coverte whyll that it ded snowe *cover; while it did*  
 And a flake therof into hyr mowthe crepte, *her mouth*  
 And therof the chylde in hyr wombe doth growe! *her*
- DETRACTOR 2** Than beware, dame, for this is wel iknowe: *Then; known*  
 311 Whan it is born, yf that the sunne shyne, *When*  
 It wyl turne to watyr ageyn, as I trowe, *I believe*  
 For snow onto watyr doth evyr more reclyne. *return*
- DOCTOR LEGIS 2** With Goddys hygh myght loke thu not jape *God's high; joke*  
 315 Of thi purgacyon, wel thee avyse! *I advise thee*  
 Yf thu be gylty, thu mayst not schape! *escape*  
 Beware evyr of God, that ryghtful justyce!  
 If God with vengeauns set on thee his syse, *his judgment*  
 Not only thu, but all thi kyn is schamyd!

- 320     Bettyr it is to tell the trewth devyse *tell the truth completely*  
        Than God for to greve and of hym be gramyd! *grieve; be punished*
- MARIA** I trostyn in his grace: I shal hym nevyr greve. *grieve*  
        His servaunt I am in worde, dede, and thought. *deed*  
        A mayd undefyled I hope he shal me preve. *prove*
- 325     I pray yow, lett me nought. *do not hinder me*
- EPISCOPUS** Now be that good Lord that all this werd hath wrought, *by; world*  
        If God on thee shewe ony manyr tokyn, *any manner of sign*  
        Purgacyon, I trowe, was nevyr so dere bowth *I believe; dearly bought*  
        If I may, on thee, in any wyse be wrokyn. *be avenged*
- 330     Holde here the botel and take a large draught *swallow*  
        And abowth the awtere go thi processyon. *around the altar*
- MARIA** To God, in this case, my cawse I have betaught. *have entrusted*  
        Lorde, thorwe thin helpe I drynke of this potacyon. *through; potion*
- [Hic Beata Virgo bibit de potacione et postea circuiuit altare, dicens:<sup>1</sup>*
- God, as I nevyr knew of mannys maculacyon *defilement*  
        But evyr have lyved in trew virginité,  
        Send me this day thin holy consolacyon *your*  
        That all this fayr peple my clennes may se!
- O gracious God, as thu hast chose me  
        For to be thi modyr of me to be born,  
        340     Save thi tabernacle that clene is kepte for thee,  
        Which now am put at repref and skorn. *reproof*  
        Gabryel me tolde with wordys, he befor, *before*  
        That ye, of youre goodnes, wold become my chylde.  
        Help me now of youre hyghness my wurchep be not lorn.<sup>2</sup>
- 345     A, dere sone, I pray yow, help youre modyr mylde!
- EPISCOPUS** Almyghty God, what may this mene?  
        For all the drynke of Goddys potacyon, *God's potion*  
        This woman with chylde is fayr and clene  
        Withowtyn fowle spotte or maculacyon! *stain*
- 350     I cannat be non ymagynacyon *by any act of the*  
        Preve hyr gylty and synful of lyff! *Prove her; life*  
        It shewith opynly by her purgacyon: *exculpation*  
        Sche is clene mayde, bothe modyr and wyff! *mother; wife*

<sup>1</sup> Here, the Blessed Virgin will drink the potion, and afterwards go around the altar, saying

<sup>2</sup> Help me now by means of your majesty so that my honor (integrity) be not lost

<b>DETRACTOR 1</b>	Be my fadyr sowle, here is gret gyle!	<i>By my father's soul; guile</i>
355	Becawse sche is syb of your kynreed, The drynk is chaungyd by sum fals wyle That sche no shame shulde have this steed.	<i>a relative trick this time</i>
<b>EPISCOPUS</b>	Becawse thu demyst that we do falshede, And for thu dedyst hem fyrst defame,	<i>are judging; falsehoods did defame them</i>
360	Thu shalt ryght here, magré thin heed, Beforn all this pepyl drynk of the same!	<i>in spite of all you do</i>
<b>DETRACTOR 1</b>	Syr, in good feyth, oo draught I pulle, If these to drynkerys have not all spent.	<i>I'll take a swig two drinkers; drained it</i>
<i>[Hic bibit et scenciens dolorem in capite, cadit et dicet:<sup>1</sup></i>		
	Out, out! Alas, what heylyth my sculle?	<i>aileth; skull</i>
365	A! Myn heed with fyre me thynkyht is brent! Mercy, good Mary! I do me repent Of my cursyd and fals langage!	<i>head; I think is burning</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	Now, god Lord in hevyn omnytpotent, Of his gret mercy youre seknes aswage.	<i>good sickness assuage</i>
<b>EPISCOPUS</b>	We all on knes fall here on grownd!	
371	Thu, Goddys handemayd prayng for grace, All cursyd langage and schame onsownd, Good Mary, forgeve us here in this place!	<i>God's unwholesome</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	Now God forgeve yow all yowre trespase	
375	And also forgeve yow all defamacyon That ye have sayd, both more and lesse, To myn hynderawnce and maculacyon.	<i>hindrance; defilement</i>
<b>EPISCOPUS</b>	Now, blyssyd virgyne, we thank yow all Of youre good hert and gret pacyens.	<i>heart; patience</i>
380	We wyl go with yow hom to youre halle To do yow servys with hygh reverens.	<i>service; high</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	I thank yow hertyly of youre benevolens. Onto youre owyn hous I pray yow ye goo And take this pepyl hom with yow hens.	
385	I am not dysposyd to passyn hens froo.	<i>go from here</i>
<b>EPISCOPUS</b>	Than farewel, mayden and pure virgyne. Farewel, trewe handmayd of God in blys. We all to yow lowly incline And take oure leve of yow as wurthy is.	<i>Then bow</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	Allmyghty God, youre weys wysse,	<i>wise ways</i>

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<sup>1</sup> Here he drinks, and feeling pain in his head, he falls and says

- 391 For that hygh Lord is most of myght.  
 He mote yow spede that ye not mys *may help you*  
 In hevyn of hym to have a syght.
- JOSEPH** Honouryd in hevyn be that hygh Lord  
 395 Whos endles grace is so habundaunt. *abundant*  
 That he doth shewe the trewe recorde *show*  
 Of iche wyhgt that is his trewe servaunt. *each creature*  
 That Lord to wurchepe with hert plesaunt *heart*  
 We bothe be bownd ryght on this place  
 400 Which oure purgacyon us dyde graunt *exculpation; did*  
 And prevyd us pure by hiegh grace. *high*
- MARIA** Forsothe, good spowse, I thank hym highly *Truly*  
 Of his good grace for oure purgacyon. *exculpation*  
 Oure clenness is knowyn ful opynly  
 405 Be vertu of his grett consolacyon. *By virtue*
- [Explicit cum gaudio.* *It ends here with joy*

## 15. NATIVITY

- JOSEPH** Lord, what travayl to man is wrought! *hardship*  
 Rest in this werd behovyth hym non! *world; is not due*  
 Octavyan, oure emperour, sadly hath besought *resolutely called for*  
 Oure tribute hym to bere — folk must forth, ichon, *everyone*  
 5 It is cryed in every bourgh and cety be name. *town and city; by*  
 I that am a pore tymbre wryth, *carpenter (wright)*  
 Born of the blood of Davyd,  
 The emperours comawndement I must holde with, *emperor's; obey*  
 And ellys I were to blame. *Or else*
- 10 Now, my wyff, Mary, what sey ye to this?  
 For sekyr, nedys I must forth wende *surely; go*  
 Onto the cyté of Bedleem fer hens, iwys, *Bethlehem far; indeed*  
 Thus to labore I must my body bende. *apply my body*
- MARIA** Myn husbond and my spowse, with yow wyl I wende, *go*  
 15 A syght of that cyté fayn wolde I se. *gladly; see*  
 If I myght of myn alye ony ther fynde, *any of my family*  
 It wolde be grett joye onto me.
- JOSEPH** My spowse, ye be with childe — I fere yow to kary, *fear; travel*  
 For mesemyth it were werkys wylde, *an unwise act*  
 20 But yow to plese ryght fayn wold I. *gladly*  
 Yitt women ben ethe to greve whan thei be with childe. *Yet; easy to upset when*

- Now latt us forth wende as fast as we may,  
And Almyghty God spede us in oure jurnay. *let; go*
- MARIA** A, my swete husbond, wolde ye telle to me  
25 What tre is yon standynge upon yon hylle? *over there*
- JOSEPH** Forsothe, Mary, it is clepyd a chery tre.  
In tyme of yere, ye myght fede yow theron youre fyllle. *Truly; called  
In season*
- MARIA** Turne ageyn, husbond, and beholde yon tre,  
How that it blomyght now so swetly! *Turn around  
blooms*
- JOSEPH** Cum on, Mary, that we worn at yon cyté,  
31 Or ellys we may be blamyd, I telle yow lythly. *[it is time] that we were  
in trouble; in haste*
- MARIA** Now, my spowse, I pray yow to behold  
How the cheryes growyn upon yon tre, *grow*  
For to have therof ryght fayn I wold! *gladly*
- 35 And it plesyd yow to labore so mech for me. *would please you; so much*
- JOSEPH** Youre desyre to fulfyllle I shal assay, sekyrly. *try surely*  
Ow! To plucke yow of these cherries — it is a werk wylde *hard work*  
For the tre is so hygh, it wol not be lyghtly! *easy*  
Therefore, lete hym pluk yow cheryes begatt yow with childe. *who got you*
- MARIA** Now, good Lord I pray thee, graunt me this boun, *boon*  
41 To have of these cherries and it be youre wylle. *if it is*  
Now I thank it, God — this tre bowyth to me down!  
I may now gaderyn anowe and etyn my fyllle. *gather enough; eat*
- JOSEPH** Ow! I know weyl I have offendyd my God in Trinyté,  
45 Spekyng to my spowse these unkynde wurdys,  
For now I beleve wel it may non other be *can only be*  
But that my spowse beryght the Kyngys Son of Blys! *bears; King's*  
He help us now at oure nede.  
Of the kynrede of Jesse, worthely were ye bore: *worthily; born*
- 50 Kyngys and patryarkys gow beffore. *patriarchs go*  
All these wurthy of youre kynred wore, *kindred were*  
As clerkys in story rede. *clerks; histories*
- MARIA** Now, gramercy, husbond, for youre report. *many thanks*  
In oure weys wysely late us forth wende. *let us go forth*
- 55 The Fadyr Allmyghty, he be oure comfort;  
The Holy Gost glorious, he be oure frende.
- JOSEPH** Heyl, wurchepful sere, and good day! *honorable sir*  
A ceteceyn of this cyté ye seme to be. *citizen*  
Of herborwe for spowse and me, I you pray, *lodging*
- 60 For trewly, this woman is ful weré *very weary*

- And fayn at reste, sere, wold she be. *gladly; sir*  
 We wolde fulffylle the byddynge of oure emperour  
 For to pay trybute as ryght is oure, *as it is right for us*  
 And to kepe oureself from dolowre, *grief*  
 65 We are come to this cyté.
- CIVES** Sere, ostage in this town know I non *an inn; none*  
 Thin wyff and thu, in for to slepe. *Your*  
 This ceté is besett with pepyl every won, *in every place*  
 And yett thei ly withowte ful every strete. *filling the outside*
- 70 Withinne no wall man comyst thu nowth. *not*  
 Be thu onys withinne the cyté gate, *once*  
 Onethys in the strete a place may be sowth *Scarcely; sought*  
 Theron to rest, withowte debate. *without question*
- JOSEPH** Nay, sere, debate that wyl I nowth! *not*  
 75 All such thyngys passyn my powere,  
 But yitt my care and all my thought  
 Is for Mary, my derlynge dere. *darling*
- A, swete wyff, what shal we do?  
 Wher shal we logge this nyght?  
 80 Onto the Fadyr of Hefne pray we so, *lodge*  
 Us to kepe from every wykkyd whyt. *wicked creature*
- CIVES** Good man, o word I wyl thee sey — *one word; say to you*  
 If thu wylt do by the counsel of me,  
 Yondyr is an hous of haras that stant be the wey. *a stable; stands by*  
 85 Amonge the bestys herboryd may ye be. *the beasts lodged*
- MARIA** Now, the Fadyr of Hefne, he mut yow yelde! *may he reward you*  
 His sone in my wombe, forsothe he is. *truly*  
 He kepe thee and thi good be fryth and felde. *everywhere*  
 Go we hens, husbond, for now tyme it is.
- 90 But herk now, good husbond, a new relacyon *declaration*  
 Which in myself I know ryght well:  
 Cryst, in me, hath take incarnacyon — *has become flesh*  
 Sone wele be borne the trowth I fele. *Soon will; truth*
- 95 In this pore logge my chawmere I take, *chamber*  
 Here for to abyde the blyssyd byrth *await*  
 Of hym that all this werd dude make. *did make the world*  
 Betwyn myn sydys I fele he styrth! *sides; stirs*



**JOSEPH** God be thin help, spowse, it swemyth me sore,  
 Thus febyly loggyd and in so pore degré —  
 100 Goddys sone amonge bestys for to be bore,  
 His woundyr werkys fulfyllyd must be.

*your; distresses*  
*estate*  
*God's son; beasts*  
*wonderful works*

In an hous that is desolat, withowtyn any wall  
 Fyer nor wood non here is.

**MARIA** Joseph, myn husbond, abydyn here I shal,  
 105 For here wyl be born the Kyngys Sone of Blys.

*stay*  
*Son of Bliss*

**JOSEPH** Now, jentyll wyff, be of good myrth,  
 And if ye wyl owght have, telle me what ye thynk.  
 I shal not spare for schep nor derth.  
 Now telle me youre lust of mete and drynk.

*for plenty or scarcity*  
*your desire for food*

**MARIA** For mete and drynk lust I ryght nowth:  
 111 Allmyghty God my fode shal be.  
 Now that I am in chawmere brought,  
 I hope ryght well my chylde to se.  
 Therfore, husbond, of your honesté,  
 115 Avoyd yow hens out of this place,  
 And I alone with humylité  
 Here shal abyde Goddys hygh grace.

*I desire not*  
*food*  
*chamber*  
*decency*  
*Leave here*  
*await God's*

**JOSEPH** All redy, wyff, yow for to plese.  
 I wyl go hens out of youre way  
 120 And seke sum mydwyvys, yow for to ese  
 Whan that ye travayle of childe this day.  
 Farewell, trewe wyff and also clene may,  
 God be youre comforte in Trinyté.

*seek; midwives; ease*  
*When; go into labor*  
*pure maiden*

**MARIA** To God in hevyn for yow I pray —  
 125 He yow preserve wherso ye be.

[*Hic dum Joseph est absens, parit Maria Filium Unigenitum.*<sup>1</sup>

**JOSEPH** Now God of whom comyth all releffe,  
 And as all grace in thee is grownde,  
 So save my wyff from hurt and greffe  
 Tyl I sum mydwyvys for her have fownde.  
 130 Travylynge women in care be bownde  
 With grete throwys whan thei do grone!  
 God helpe my wyff that sche not swownde —  
 I am ful sory sche is alone.

*relief*  
*founded*  
*grief*  
*midwives*  
*laboring*  
*throes; when*  
*swoon*

<sup>1</sup> Here while Joseph is away, Mary bears the Only Begotten Son

- It is not convenient a man to be —  
 135 Ther women gon in travalyng!  
 Wherefore sum mydwyff fayn wold I se,  
 My wyff to helpe that is so yenge.
- ZELOMY** Why makyst thu, man, suche mornynge?  
 Tell me sumdele of youre gret mone.
- JOSEPH** My wyf is now in gret longynge,  
 141 Travelynge of chylde and is alone.  
 For Godys love that sytt in trone,  
 As ye mydwyvys that kan youre good  
 Help my yonge spowse in hast anone!  
 145 I drede me sore of that fayr food.
- SALOMÉ** Be of good chere and of glad mood —  
 We tweyn mydwyvys with thee wyll go.  
 Ther was nevyr woman in such plyght stood  
 But we were redy her help to do.
- 150 My name is Salomee — all men me knowe  
 For a mydwyff of wurthy fame.  
 Whan women travayl, grace doth growe.  
 Theras I come, I had nevyr shame.
- ZELOMY** And I am Zelomye — men knowe my name.  
 155 We tweyn with thee wyl go togedyr  
 And help thi wyff fro hurt and grame.  
 Com forth, Joseph, go we streyth thedyr.
- JOSEPH** I thank yow, damys — ye comforte my lyff.  
 Streyte to my spowse walke we the way
- 160 In this pore logge lyght Mary, my wyff,  
 Hyr for to comforte, gode frendys asay.
- SALOMÉ** We dare not entre this logge, in fay!  
 Ther is therin so gret bryghtnes —  
 Mone be nyght nor sunne be day  
 165 Shone nevyr so clere in ther lyghtnesse!
- ZELOMY** Into this hous dare I not gon!  
 The woundyrffull lyght doth me affray!
- JOSEPH** Than wyl myself gon in alon  
 And chere my wyff, if that I may.
- 170 All heyl, maydon and wyff, I say!  
 How dost thu fare? Telle me thi chere,  
 Thee for to comforte in gesyn this day.  
 Tweyn gode mydwyvis I have brought here,
- Where; into labor  
gladly  
young*
- mourning  
some; grief  
distress*
- Laboring with  
God's; who sits on the throne  
can do good  
haste at once  
I fear for that young woman*
- two midwives*
- When; are in labor  
I've never failed*
- two; together  
harm  
there straightaway*
- dames*
- poor lodging lies  
Her; try  
in faith*
- Moon by; by*
- go  
frighten me  
Then*
- How are you doing?  
childbed  
Two good*



**MARIA** I thank the Fadyr of his hygh grace.  
His owyn son and my chylde here ye may se.

**ZELOMY** All heyl, Mary and ryght good morn!  
215 Who was mydwyfe of this fayr chylde?

**MARIA** He that nothyng wyl have forlorn *will abandon*  
Sent me this babe, and I mayd mylde.

**ZELOMY** With honde lete me now towch and fele *my hand*  
Yf ye have nede of medycyn.

220 I shal yow comforte and helpe ryght wele  
As other women, yf ye have pyn. *pain*

**MARIA** Of this fayr byrth that here is myn,  
Peyne nere grevyng fele I ryght non. *Neither pain nor grief*  
I am clene mayde and pure virgyn:

225 Tast with youre hand yourself alon. *Feel*

*[Hic palpat Zelomye Beatam Mariam Virginem, dicens:<sup>1</sup>*

**ZELOMY** O myghtfull God, have mercy on me! *mighty*  
A merveyle that nevyr was herd beforne! *marvel*  
Here opynly I fele and se:  
A fayr chylde of a maydon is born

230 And nedyth no waschyng as other don, *washing; do*  
Ful clene and pure forsoth is he, *truly*  
Withoutyn spot or ony polucion, *any uncleanness*  
His modyr, nott hurte of virgynité. *virginity intact*

Coom nere, gode systyr Salomé: *good sister*  
235 Beholde the brestys of this clene mayd, *breasts*  
Ful of fayr mylke, how that thei be. *milk*  
And hyr chylde clene, as I fyrst sayd —  
As other ben, nowth fowle arayd — *not foul at all*

But clene and pure, bothe modyr and chylde!  
240 Of this matyr I am dysmayd *matter; confounded*  
To se them both thus undefyled!

**SALOMÉ** It is not trewe! It may nevyr be  
That bothe be clene! I cannot beleve — *did see*  
A mayd mylke have! Never man dyde se  
245 Ne woman bere chylde withowte grett greve! *Any; grief*  
I shal nevyr trowe it, but I it preve *believe it, unless; prove*  
With hand towchyng, but I assay. *touching, unless I examine it*

<sup>1</sup> Here Zelomy touches the Blessed Virgin Mary, saying

In my conscience it may nevyr cleve  
That sche hath chylde and is a may. *heart; accept it  
maid*

**MARIA** Yow for to putt clene out of dowth, *To put you; doubt*  
251 Towch with youre hand and wele asay: *test me*  
Wysely ransake and trye the trewth the owth *Thoroughly examine; truth*  
Whethyr I be fowlyd or a clene may. *befouled; maiden*

[*Hic tangit Salomee Mariam et cum arescerit manus eius, ululando et quasi flendo dicit:*<sup>1</sup>

**SALOMÉ** Alas, alas, and weleawaye,  
255 For my grett dowth and fals beleve! *belief*  
Myne hand is ded and drye as claye! *dead*  
My fals untrost hath wrought myscheve! *distrust; trouble*

Alas, the tyme that I was born  
Thus to offende agens Goddys myght!  
260 Myn handys power is now all lorn — *against God's  
hand's; gone*  
Styff as a stykke and may nowth plyght, *stick; not move*  
For I dede tempte this mayde so bright *did test*  
And held agens her pure clennes! *disputed*  
In grett myscheff now am I pyght. *affliction; fixed*  
265 Alas, alas for my lewdnes! *wickedness*

O Lord of Myght, thu knowyst the trowth,  
That I have evyr had dred of thee. *truth*  
On every power whyght evyr I have rowthe *poor creature; pity*  
And gove hem almes for love of thee, *gave them*  
270 Bothe wyff and wedowe that askyght for thee, *widow; for thy sake*  
And frendles chylderyn that haddyn grett nede,  
I dude them cure and all for thee, *did*  
And toke no rewarde of them nor mede. *money*

Now as a wrecch for fals beleve *belief*  
275 That I shewyd in temptynge this mayde, *testing*  
My hand is ded and doth me greve! *dead; causes me sorrow*  
Alas, that evyr I her assayde! *questioned (examined)*  
**ANGELUS** Woman, thi sorwe to have delayde, *assuaged*  
Wurchep that childe that ther is born.

280 Towch the clothis — ther he is layde,  
For he shal save all that is lorn. *lost*

**SALOMÉ** O glorious chylde and Kynge of Blysse:  
I aske yow mercy for my trespase.

<sup>1</sup> Here Salome touches Mary and when her hand has withered, howling and weeping she says

285 I knowlege my synne — I demyd amys. *acknowledge; judged wrongly*  
 O blyssyd babe, grawnt me sum grace;  
 Of yow, mayde, also here in this place.  
 I aske mercy knelynge on kne.  
 Moste holy mayde, grawnt me solace —  
 Sum wurde of comforte sey now to me.

**MARIA** As Goddys aungel to yow dede telle, *God's; did tell*  
 291 My chyld is medycyn for every sor: *sickness*  
 Towch his clothis, be my councelle — *clothes, by my counsel*  
 Yowre hand ful sone he wyl restor. *full soon*

[*Hic Salomee tangit fimbriam Christi, dicens:*<sup>1</sup>

**SALOME** A, now blyssyd be this chylde evermore!  
 295 The Sone of God, forsothe he is, *truly*  
 Hath helyd myn hand that was forlore *healed; lost*  
 Thorwe fals beleve and demynge amys. *Through; belief; bad judgment*

In every place I shal telle this:  
 Of a clene mayd that God is born,  
 300 And in oure lyknes God now clad is, *likeness*  
 Mankend to save that was forlorn — *lost*  
 His modyr, a mayde as sche was beforne, *mother*  
 Natt fowle, polutyd as other women be, *Not foul, polluted*  
 But fayr and fresch as rose on thorn,  
 305 Lely-wyte, clene with pure virginyté. *Lily-white*

Of this blyssyd babe my leve now do I take  
 And also of yow, hygh Modyr of Blysse.  
 Of this grett meracle more knowlege to make,  
 I shal go telle it in iche place, iwys.  
**MARIA** Farewel, good dame, and God your wey wysse. *mother*  
 311 In all youre jurnay, God be youre spede, *declarations*  
 And of his hygh mercy that Lord so yow blysse *each; truly*  
 That ye nevyr offende more in word, thought, nore dede. *guide your way*  
*prosper you*  
*bless you*  
*deed*

**ZELOMY** And I also do take my leve here  
 315 Of all this blyssyd good company,  
 Praynge youre grace bothe fere and nere *far and near*  
 On us to spede youre endles mercy.  
**JOSEPH** The blyssyng of that Lord that is most myghty *blessing*  
 Mote sprede on yow in every place, *May*

<sup>1</sup> Here Salome touches the hem of Christ's garment, saying

320 Of all youre enmyes to have the victory, *Over; enemies*  
 God that best may grawnt yow his grace.  
 Amen.

## 16. SHEPHERDS

[*Angelus ad pastores dicit: "Gloria in excelsis Deo."*<sup>1</sup>]

**ANGELUS** Joye to God that sytt in hevyn  
 And pes to man on erthe grownde! *on the earth*  
 A chylde is born benethe the levyn *the heavenly lights*  
 Thurwe hym many folke shul be unbownde! *Through*  
 5 Sacramentys ther shul be sefne, *seven*  
 Wonnyn thorwe that childys wounde. *Won through; child's wounds*  
 Therfore, I synge a joyful stevene: *song*  
 The flowre of frenchep now is founde, *friendship*  
 God that wonyght on hygh. *dwells*  
 10 He is gloryed, mannys gost to wynne; *glorified, man's spirit*  
 He hath sent salve to mannys synne; *healing; man's*  
 Pes is comyn to mannys kynne *Peace; mankind*  
 Thorwe Goddys sleytys slygh. *Through God's sly devices*

**PASTOR 1** Maunfras, Maunfras, felawe myne — *Shepherd 1; my fellow*  
 15 I saw a grett lyght with shene shyne! *brilliance*  
 Yit saw I nevyr so selkowth syne *wonderful a sign*  
 Shapyn upon the skyes! *Made in*  
 It is bryghtere than the sunnebem; *realm*  
 It comyth ryght ovyr all this rem! *Bethlehem*  
 20 Evyn above Bedleem *burn thrice*  
 I saw it brenne thryes.

**PASTOR 2** Thu art my brother, Boosras.  
 I have beholdyn the same pas! *event*  
 I trowe it is tokenynge of gras, *I think; grace*  
 25 That shynynge shewyght beforne: *is shown*  
 Balaam spak in prophesye *spoke*  
 A lyght shuld shyne upon the skye  
 Whan a sone of a mayd Marye *When*  
 In Bedleem were iborn. *Bethlehem*

**PASTOR 3** Thow I make lytyl noyse, *Though*  
 31 I am an herde that hattyht Moyse. *herder called Moses*  
 I herde carpynge of a croyse, *talk; cross*

<sup>1</sup> The angel says to the shepherds: "Glory to God in the highest"

Of Moyses in his lawe,  
 Of a mayd, a barne born.  
 35 On a tre he shulde be torn,  
 Delyver folkys that arn forlorn —  
 The chylde shulde be slawe.

*Moses  
 child  
 tree  
 are lost  
 slain*

**PASTOR 1** Balaam spak in prophecie:  
 Out of Jacob shuld shyne a skye,  
 40 Many folke he shulde bye  
 With his bryght blood —  
 Be that bryght blod that he shulde blede.  
 He shal us brynge fro the develys drede  
 As a duke most dowty, in dede,  
 45 Thorwe his deth on rode.

*spoke  
 star  
 redeem  
  
 By  
 from fearing the devil  
 mighty  
 Through; a cross*

**PASTOR 2** Amos spak with mylde meth:  
 A frute swettere than bawmys breth,  
 His deth shulde slen oure sowlys deth  
 And drawe us all from helle.  
 50 Therfore, such lyght goth befor  
 In tokyn that the childe is born  
 Whiche shal save that is forlorn,  
 As prophetys gonne spelle.

*spoke; mild manner  
 child; balm's breath  
 slay our soul's  
 lead us  
  
 lost  
 have declared*

**PASTOR 3** Danyel the prophete thus gan speke:  
 55 Wyse God from woo us wreke,  
 Thi bryght hevyn thu tobreke  
 And medele thee with a mayde.  
 This prophecye is now spad.  
 Cryst in oure kend is clad:  
 60 Therfore, mankend may be glad  
 As prophetys befor han seyde.

*woe deliver us  
 break open  
 join  
 done  
 likeness  
 mankind*

[*"Gloria in excelsis Deo" cantent.*

*Let them sing, "Glory to God in the highest."*

**PASTOR 1** Ey, ey, this was a wondyr note  
 That was now songyn above the sky!  
 I have that voys ful wele, I wote —  
 65 Thei songe "Gle, glo, glory."

*wonderful song  
  
 I remember; voice; I think (ascertain)  
 They sang*

**PASTOR 2** Nay, so mot y the, so was it nowth!  
 I have that songe ful wele inum;  
 In my wytt weyl it is wrought:  
 It was "Gle, glo, glas, glum."

*so might I thrive; not  
 understood  
 mind; recorded*

**PASTOR 3** The songe methought it was "Glory."  
 71 And aftyward, he seyde us to

*said to us*



Ther is a chylde born shal be a prynce myghty!  
For to seke that chylde, I rede we go.

*to seek; suggest*

**PASTOR 1** The prophecye of Boosdras is spedly sped.

*speedily done*

75 Now leyke we hens as that lyght us lede.

*let's go*

Myght we se onys that bryght on bed —

*once; fair [child]*

Our bale it wolde unbynde —

*troubles*

We shulde shodyr for no shoure.

*shudder; rain shower*

Buske we us hens to Bedleem bour

*Hurry; Bethlehem town*

80 To se that fayr fresch flowre,

The mayde mylde in mynde.

**PASTOR 2** Lete us folwe with all oure myght,

*follow*

With songe and myrth we shul us dyght

*shall prepare*

And wurchep with joye that wurthy wyght,

*creature*

85 That Lord is of mankyne.

Lete us go forthe, fast on hye

*quickly*

And honowre that babe wurthylye —

*with devotion*

With merthe, songe, and melodye.

Have do! This songe begynne.

*Hurry up!*

*[Tunc pastores cantabunt "Stella celi extirpavit" quo facto ibunt ad querendum Christum.<sup>1</sup>*

**PASTOR 1** Heyle, floure of flourys, fayrest ifownde!

*Hail; flowers; found*

91 Heyle, perle, peerles primerose of prise!

*pearl, peerless primrose; price*

Heyl, blome on bedde! We shul be unbownde

*bloom; freed*

With thi bloody woundys and werkys full wyse!

*bloody wounds; works*

Heyl, God grettest! I grete thee on grownde!

*to the earth*

95 The gredy devyl shal grone grysly as a gryse

*horribly as a boar*

Whan thu wynnyst this worlde with thi wyde wounde<sup>2</sup>

And puttyst man to Paradys with plenty of prys!

*in Paradise; riches*

To love thee is my delyte.

Heyl, floure fayr and fre,

*excellent*

100 Lyght from the Trynyté!

Heyl, blyssyd mote thu be!

*may*

Heyl, mayden fayrest in syght!

**PASTOR 2** Heyl, floure ovyr flowrys fowndyn in fryght!

*in the woodlands*

Heyl, Cryst kynde in oure kyth!

*noble one; country*

105 Heyl, werker of wele to wonyn us wyth!

*good fortune to dwell with us*

Heyl, wynnere, iwys

*victor, indeed*

Heyl, formere and frende

*Maker*

Heyl, fellere of the fende

*destroyer of the fiend*

<sup>1</sup> Then the shepherds will sing "The star of the heavens has uprooted," whereupon they go to look for the Christ

<sup>2</sup> When you win this world with your wide wounds

	Heyl, clad in oure kende!	<i>form</i>
110	Heyl, Prince of Paradys!	
<b>PASTOR 3</b>	Heyl, Lord ovyr lordys that lyggyst ful lowe!	<i>lies</i>
	Heyl, kynge ovyr kyngys thi kynrede to knowe!	
	Heyl, comely knyth, the devyl to overthrowe!	<i>knight</i>
	Heyl, flowre of alle!	
115	Heyl, werkere to wynne	<i>worker</i>
	Bodyes bowndyn in synne!	<i>bound</i>
	Heyl, in a bestys bynne,	<i>beasts' stable</i>
	Bestad in a stalle.	<i>Placed</i>
<b>JOSEPH</b>	Herdys on hylle	<i>Shepherds</i>
120	Beth not styлле	
	But seyth youre wylle	
	To many a man:	
	How God is born	
	This mery morn —	
125	That is forlorn	<i>Whoever is lost</i>
	Fyndyn he can.	
<b>PASTOR 1</b>	We shull telle	<i>shall</i>
	Be dale and hylle	<i>In valleys and hills</i>
	How Harwere of Helle	<i>the Harrower</i>
130	Was born this nyght,	
	Myrthis to melle	<i>Mirth to bring</i>
	And fendys to quelle,	<i>fiends; kill</i>
	That were so felle	<i>fierce</i>
	Agens his ryght.	<i>Against</i>
<b>PASTOR 2</b>	Farewel, babe and barne of blys!	<i>child</i>
136	Farewel, Lord that lovely is!	
	Thee to wurchep thi feet I kys.	
	On knes to thee I falle,	
	Thee to wurchepe I falle on kne.	
140	All this werd may joye of thee!	<i>world; rejoice</i>
	Now farewel, Lorde of grett pousté!	<i>great power</i>
	Ya, farewel kynge of alle.	
<b>PASTOR 3</b>	Thow I be the last that take my leve,	<i>Though</i>
	Yit, fayre mullynge, take it nat at no greve.	<i>fair darling; do not grieve</i>
145	Now, fayre babe, wele mut thu cheve!	<i>may you fare</i>
	Fayr chylde, now have good day.	
	Fareweyl, myn owyn dere derlyng:	
	Iwys, thu art a ryght fayr thyng!	<i>Indeed</i>
	Farewel, my Lorde and my swetyng!	<i>sweet one</i>
150	Farewel, born in pore aray.	<i>poor estate</i>

**MARIA** Now ye herdmen, wel mote ye be,  
 For youre omage and youre syngynge  
 My sone shal aqwyte yow in hefine se,  
 And geve yow all ryght good hendynge.  
 Amen.

*may  
 homage  
 reward; from heaven's throne  
 endings*

**18. MAGI***(see note)*

**HERODES REX** As a lord in ryalté in non regyon so ryche,  
 And rulere of all remys I ryde in ryal aray,  
 Ther is no lord of lond in lordchep to me lyche,  
 Non lofflyere non lofsummere, evyrlastyng is my lay!<sup>1</sup>

*royalty  
 realms; royal array  
 the land; like me*

5      Of bewté and of boldnes I bere evermore the belle;  
 Of mayn and of myght I mastyr every man!  
 I dyng with my dowtynes the devyl down to helle,  
 For bothe of hevyn and of herth I am kyng sertayn!

*take the prize  
 Of strength  
 strike; might  
 of earth; certainly*

10     I am the comelyeste kyng clad in gleteryng golde,  
 Ya, and the semelyeste syre that may bestryde a stede!  
 I welde att my wyll all wyghtys upon molde!  
 Ya, and wurthely I am wrappyd in a wurthy wede!

*comeliest; glittering  
 seemliest  
 wield; creatures on earth  
 worthily; attire*

15     Ye knyghtys so comely, bothe curteys and kene  
 To my paleys wyl I passe, full prest I yow plyth.<sup>2</sup>  
 Ye dukys so dowty folwe me bedene!  
 Onto my ryal paleys the wey lyth ful ryght!

*courteous; warlike  
 dukes; mighty; at once  
 royal palace; lies*

20     Wyghtly fro my stede I skyppe down in hast  
 To myn heygh hallys I haste me in my way.  
 Ye mynstrell of myrth, blowe up a good blast  
 Whyll I go to chawmere and chaunge myn aray.

*Nimbly from; in haste  
 high halls  
 minstrels  
 [my] chamber*

**REX 1** Heyl be ye, kyngys tweyne,  
 Ferre rydyng out of youre regne!  
 Me thynkyth be youre presentys seyne  
 Ye sekyn oure Savyour.  
 25     Fro Saba have I folwyd ferre,  
 The glemyng of yon gay sterre,  
 A chyl dys blood shal bye us dere  
 That ther is born in bestys boure.

*two  
 Far; reign  
 by; presents seen  
 seek  
 From Arabia; followed  
 shining star  
 child's; redeem us for a high price  
 in a beasts' stall*

<sup>1</sup> None lovelier or more admirable, everlasting is my law

<sup>2</sup> To my palace will I go, very quickly I assure you

30	My name is Kynge Baltazare, Of prophetys speche I am ware. Therefore, a ferre wey I fare, A maydenys childe to seche, For he made man of the moolde And is Kynge of Hevyn holde.	<i>prophets'; aware great distance I travel seek earth Heaven's</i>
35	I wyl hym offere the rede golde As reson wyl me teche.	<i>red gold will tell</i>
<b>REX 2</b>	Melchizar, that my name is kydde, In hote love myn hert is hydde To the blosme upon his bedde	<i>known ardent; wrapped blossom</i>
40	Born by bestys bynne. In Tarys I am kynge with crowne, By bankys and brymmys browne. I have travaylid by many a towne, My Lordys love to wynne.	<i>beasts' stalls Tarshish shores traveled Lord's</i>
45	I seke hym with ensens sote. Of all prestys he shal be rote. His bryght blood shal be oure bote To brynge us out of bende. The childe shal be chosyn a preste,	<i>incense sweet the source salvation bondage</i>
50	In all vertuys fowndyn meste! Beforn his Faderys fayr breste, Ensens he shal up sende.	<i>the greatest Father's Incense</i>
<b>REX 3</b>	In Ypotan and Archage I am kynge knowyn in kage.	<i>Mesopotamia(?); Arcadia on high</i>
55	To seke a childe of semlant sage, I have faryn ryght ferre. Jasper is my name knowyn In many countrés that are myn owyn. Thorwe byttyr blastys that gyn blowyn,	<i>wise demeanor traveled; far gusts of wind</i>
60	I stryke aftere the sterre.  I brynge myrre to my present, A byttyr lycour, verament, For he shal tholyn byttyr dent. In a maydonys flesch is clad,	<i>pursue; star  as my spice; truly suffer; blows maiden's</i>
65	On byttyr tre he shal be bent — Man and God omnypotent. With byttyr betynge his flesch be rent Tyl all his blood be bledde.	<i>tree will be torn bled out</i>
<b>HERODES REX</b>	Now I regne lyk a kynge arayd ful rych, 70 Rollyd in rynggys and robys of array!	<i>richly Covered with rings; costly</i>

- Dukys, with dentys, I dryve into the dych;  
 My dedys be ful dowty demyd be day!  
 I shall marryn tho herytykys that belevyn a mysse,  
 And therin sette there sacramentys. Fallse they are I say!
- 75 Ther is no lorde in this werde that lokygh me lyke, iwysse;  
 For to lame herytykkys of the lesse lay,  
 I am jolyere than the jay!  
 Stronge thevys to steke  
 That wele oure lawys breke —
- 80 On tho wrecchis I wyll be wreke  
 And hont hem undyr hay
- In kyrtyl of cammaka kynge am I cladde!  
 Cruel and curryd in myn crowne knowe —  
 I sytt here ondyr Sesar in my sette sadde!
- 85 Sorwyn to sottys, such seed wyll I sowe,  
 Boys now blaberyn, bostynge of a baron bad  
 In bedde is born, be bestys suche bost is blowe!  
 I shal prune that paphawk and prevyn hym as a pad<sup>1</sup>  
 Scheldys and sperys shall I ther sowe,
- 90 My knyghtys shalle rydyn on rowe,  
 Knave chylderyn for to qwelle,  
 Be Mahound, dyngne duke of helle,  
 Sowre deth his lyff shall selle,  
 Such thrett wolde me throwe.
- 95 Styward bolde,  
 Walke thu on wolde  
 And wisely beholde  
 All abowte  
 Iff any thyng
- 100 Shuld greve the kynge.  
 Brynge me tydyng  
 If ther be ony dowte.
- SENECALLUS** Lord, kynge in crowne:  
 I go fro towne
- 105 By bankys browne  
 I wyll abyde,  
 And with erys lyste  
 Est and west  
 Iff any geste
- 110 On grownde gynnyth glyde.

*Dukes; with my blows  
 deeds; judged mighty; by  
 destroy those heretics  
 their  
 world; looks like me  
 lesser law*

*thieves to stab  
 laws  
 those wretches; avenged  
 chase them into a net*

*tunic; cammock (a fine fabric)  
 flattered(?); recognized  
 Caesar; dignified seat  
 Sorrow; fools  
 blabber; evil child  
 In bed; by beasts; told*

*Shields; spears  
 shall ride together  
 Male children; kill  
 By Mohammed, noble  
 Bitter; life  
 such a threat would I offer*

*Steward  
 throughout the land*

*grieve  
 news  
 any doubt*

*from*

*await  
 listening ears*

*tale  
 travels about the earth*

<sup>1</sup> *I will cut off that suckling babe and pierce him like a toad*

[*Tunc ibit Senescallus et obuiabit tribus regibus et dicit eis:*<sup>1</sup>

	Kyngys thre,	<i>three</i>
	Undyr this tre	
	In this countré	
	Why wyll ye abyde?	<i>stay here</i>
115	Herowde is kyng	
	Of this wonynge!	<i>place</i>
	Onto his dwellynge	
	Now shul ye glyde.	<i>go</i>
<b>REX 1</b>	Now lede us alle	
120	To the kyngys halle.	<i>king's</i>
	How it befallé	<i>happens</i>
	We pray to thee,	<i>ask</i>
	Wyttys to wete,	<i>Information to find out</i>
	He may us peté:	<i>pity us</i>
125	In flesshe be glete,	<i>is embodied</i>
	Godys frute fre.	<i>God's noble</i>
<b>SENESCALLUS</b>	Folwith in stownde	<i>Follow now</i>
	Upon this grownde	<i>From here</i>
	To the castel rownde.	
130	I shal yow tech	<i>show you</i>
	Where kyng gynnyth wyde	<i>does puff himself up</i>
	Up in this tyde	<i>now</i>
	In pompe and pryde —	
	His myght gynnyth reche.	<i>does grow</i>
135	Sere kyng in trone,	<i>Sir; on throne</i>
	Here comyth anone	<i>soon</i>
	By strete and stone	
	Kyngys thre.	<i>three</i>
	They bere present.	
140	What thei have ment	<i>intend</i>
	Ne whedyr thay arn bent	<i>Nor where; going</i>
	I cannot se.	<i>see</i>
<b>HERODES REX</b>	I shal hem crave	<i>I desire of them</i>
	What they have.	
145	Iff they rave	
	Or waxyn wood,	<i>act insane</i>
	I shal hem reve,	<i>plunder them</i>
	Here wyttys deve;	<i>Their; stupefy</i>

<sup>1</sup> *Then the steward will go and meet the three kings, and say to them*

- Here hedys cleve,  
 150 And schedyn here blood. *shed their*
- REX 1** Heyl, be thu kynge in kage ful hye! *dais*  
 Heyl, we nyghe thin halle ryght nye! *approach your; nigh*  
 Knowyst thu ought that chylde slye *wise*  
 He is born here abowth?
- 155 He is born of a mayd yynge; *young*  
 He shal be kynge ovyr every kynge.  
 We go to seke that lovely thyng,  
 To hym fayn wolde I lowth. *gladly; bow*
- REX 2** Balaam spak in prophecy: *spoke*  
 160 A sterre shulde ful lovely *star*  
 Lyhtyn upon mayd Marye. *Alight*  
 Comyn of Jacobys kynne, *Jacob's*  
 The childe is born and lyth hereby, *lies*  
 Blomyd in a madenys body. *Born; maiden's*  
 165 A sterre hath strekyn upon the sky *streaked across*  
 And ledde us fayr be fenne. *safely through the fens*
- REX 3** The sterre hath ledde us out of the est *star; east*  
 To seke a baron born best. *boy*  
 He shal be kynge of myghtys mest, *most*  
 170 As prophecy gynneth spelle. *does spell*  
 We be kyngys in wey wery. *on our weary way*  
 Syr kynge, for thi curtesy:  
 Telle us to that childe so lovely —  
 In what town gynnnyth he dwelle? *does he dwell*
- HERODES REX** Ye thre kyngys rekenyd be rowe: *altogether*  
 176 Ley now downe youre wurdys lowe.  
 Such a carpynge is unknowe, *a rumor is unknown*  
 Onrekenyd in my regne! *Not spoken of*  
 I am a kynge of hygh degré!
- 180 Ther shal non ben above me!  
 I have florens and fryhthis fre, *florins; property plenty*  
 Parkys and powndys pleyne. *open ponds*
- But goth to fynde that ye sech, *that which you seek*  
 And yf ye knowe such a lech *healer*  
 185 And ye hym fynde, I yow besech  
 Comyth agen be me, *by me*  
 And I shal be both blyth and bowne *happy; ready*  
 That all worchep to hym be done!  
 With reverens I shal seke hym sone *seek; soon*  
 190 And honour hym on kne.

	And therfore, kyngys, I yow pray Whan ye have don youre jurnay, Come agen this same way The trewth to me to telle.	<i>When</i>
195	Come and telle me, as ye spede, And I shal qwyte ryght wel youre mede With gold and tresour and rych wede, With furrys rych and wurth pelle.	<i>hasten reward you attire valuable furs</i>
<b>REX 1</b>	Kynge, have good day!	
200	I go my way To seche Lord of myght. He shal be ryght Oure leche.	<i>seek  protector</i>
<b>REX 2</b>	Kynge, ful sterne	<i>bold</i>
206	Be felde and ferne I goo To sekyn a kynge. He takyth wonynge In woo.	<i>By field  his dwelling woe</i>
<b>REX 3</b>	If we hym fynde, Oure kynge ful kynde, Be a may From kynge and qwen,	<i>By a maiden</i>
215	We comyn agen This day.	
<b>HERODES REX</b>	A, fy, fy on talys that I have ben tolde Here befor my cruel kne! How shulde a barn wax so bolde	<i>tales  baby become</i>
220	Be bestys yf he born be? He is yong, and I am old An hardy kyng of hye degré! This daye tho kynggys shal be kold If they cum ageyne be me!	<i>If by beasts  A stern those; dead by me</i>
225	My goddys I shall upreyse! A derke devyll with falsnese, I saye, Shall cast a myst in the kynggys eye Be bankys and be dalys drey That be derk, thei shall cum this weyys.	<i>gods; raise up  kings' eyes By; by dismal dales dark; this way</i>
<b>REX 1</b>	Go we to sek owr lord and our lech!	<i>seek; healer</i>
231	Yon stere will us tech the weyis full sone! To save us from myschyff, God, I here besech!	<i>star; show; path; soon beseech</i>



Onto hys joyis that we may rech *reach*  
 I pray hem of this bone. *him; boon*

*[Tunc ibunt reges cum muneribus ad Jhesum et Primus Rex dicit:]*<sup>1</sup>

- 235 Heyle, be thu kyng cold clade! *clad in cold*  
 Heyll, with maydynys mylk fade! *maiden's; fed*  
 Heyll, I cum to thee with gold glade! *bright*  
 As wese wrytyng bere it record: *As the wise*  
 Gold is the rycheeste metall,
- 240 And to weryng most ryall. *royal*  
 Gold I gyff thee in this hall, *give*  
 And know thee for my lorde.
- REX 2** Lorde, I knele upon my kne.  
 Sote encence I offere to thee. *Sweet incense*
- 245 Thow shalte be the fyrst of hygh degré,  
 Non so mekell of myght *great of*  
 In Goddys howse as men shall se! *God's*  
 Thow shalt honour the Trynité,  
 Thre personys in oon Gode free *one excellent God*  
 250 And all oo Lord of Myght. *one*
- REX 3** Lord, I knele downe be thy bede.  
 In maydyns fleshe thu arte hede. *bed*  
 Thy name shal be wyde rede *maiden's; hidden*  
 And kyng ovyr all kynggys! *widely spoken of*
- 255 Byttyr myre to thee I brynge,  
 For bytter dentys on thee thei shall dyng, *myrrh*  
 And byttyr deth shall be thy endyng, *blows; strike*  
 And therfor I make mornyng. *mourning*
- MARIA** Kynggys kynde,  
 260 Frome the fende *fiend*  
 God yow defende. *defend you*  
 Homwarde ye wende *you go*  
 And to your placys ye lende *return*  
 That ye shulde tende. *keep*
- REX 1** Now have we the place fownde!  
 266 To Herode go we this stownde — *this instant*  
 With ovr wordys we were bownde  
 That we shulde cum ageyne.  
 Go we a pace and sey ovr spech, *Let us depart*

<sup>1</sup> Then the kings will go with gifts to Jesus and the first king says

270	For we have fownde oure lord and lech. All the truth we wyll hem tech How the kyng is borne of a quene.	<i>healer tell him (Herod)</i>
<b>REX 2</b>	Myn hede is hevy as lympe of leede, But yf I slepe, I am adrede	<i>head; lump; lead afraid</i>
275	My witt shall fare the warse! I wax hevy in lyme and flanke — Downe I ley me upon this banke, Under this bryght sterre, iwys.	<i>mind I grow; limb and flank indeed</i>
<b>REX 3</b>	Brother, I must lye thee bye!	<i>lie beside you</i>
280	I will go never ovyr this styte Tyll I have a slepe. The yong kyng and hys mother Mary Save us all frome every velany! Now Cryst us save and kepe.	<i>this way villainy</i>
<b>REX 1</b>	Such hevynese have us cawght —	
286	I must drynk with yow a drawght To slepe a lytyll whyle. I am hevy, heed and footte I shulde stumbyll at resch and root	<i>draft head; foot rushes</i>
290	And I shuld goo a myle.	<i>If; go another mile</i>
<i>[Hic dormiunt reges et venit Angelus et dicit eis:]<sup>1</sup></i>		
<b>ANGELUS</b>	Ye kynggys on this hill: Werk ye not aftyr Herodys wyll! For yf ye do, he wyll yow kyll This day or nyght.	<i>Do not do</i>
295	My Lorde yow sent this tydyng To rest yow kynggys in rych clothyng. And whan ye rysyn and goo to your dwellyng, Tak home the wey full ryght!	<i>news To stop you rise most direct</i>
300	Whether that ye be wakyn or slepe, My Lorde God shall yow keppe. In goode tyme, ye dede down drepe To take yowr rest. Herodes, to the devyll he tryst, To marre yow in a myrke myste.	<i>awake protect At the right time; droop trusts in the devil harm you; dark</i>
305	My Lord God is ful of lyste To glathe yow for his geste.	<i>desire To welcome you; guest</i>

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<sup>1</sup> Here the kings sleep and the angel comes and says to them

And therfore, kyngys, whan ye ryse,  
 Wendyth ferth be weys wyse  
 Ther your hall be sett in syse  
 310 In dyverse londe.  
 Fadyr of God, in all thyng  
 Hath yow grawntyd his swete blyssynge.  
 He shal yow save from all shendynge  
 With his ryght honde.

*when  
 Go forth by ways  
 properly set*

*disgrace*

*[Tunc surgant reges et dicat Primus Rex: Then let the kings rise and the First King says*

**REX 1** A bryght sterre ledde us in to Bedleem —  
 316 A bryghtere thyng I saw in drem,  
 Bryghtere than the sunnebeem!  
 An aungell I saw ryght here.  
 The fayre flowre that here gan falle  
 320 From Herowdys Kynge he gan us kalle.  
 He taught us hom tyll oure halle  
 A wey by another mere.

*Bethlehem  
 a dream*

*did fall  
 Herod the King  
 told us  
 route*

**REX 2** I sawghe a syght —  
 Myn hert is lyght  
 325 To wendyn home.  
 God, ful of myght,  
 Hath us dyght  
 Fro develys dome.

*To go  
 delivered us  
 From the devil's power*

**REX 3** Oure God I blysse —  
 330 He sent us, iwys,  
 His aungel bryght.  
 Now we wake  
 The wey to take  
 Home full ryght.

*bless  
 indeed  
 Straight home*

### 19. PURIFICATION

**SYMEON** I have be prest in Jherusalem here  
 And tawth Goddys lawe many a yere,  
 Desyrynge in all my mende  
 That the tyme were neyhand nere  
 5 In which Goddys Son shul apere  
 In erthe to take mankende,  
 Or I deyd that I myght fynde  
 My Savyour with myn ey to se.  
 But that it is so longe behynde,  
 10 It is grett dyscomforte onto me.

*been [a] priest  
 taught; God's  
 mind  
 near at hand  
 God's  
 On  
 Before I died  
 eye  
 overdue*

	For I wax olde and wante my might	<i>grow; lack; strength</i>
	And begynne to fayle my syght,	
	The more I sorwe this tyde,	
	Save only as I telle yow ryght:	
15	God of his grace hath me hyght	<i>called me</i>
	That blysful byrth to byde.	<i>await</i>
	Wherfore now here besyde	
	To <i>Sancta sanctorum</i> wyl I go	<i>the Holy of Holies</i>
	To pray God to be my gyde,	
20	To comfort me aftyr my wo.	
	<i>[Here Symeon knelyth and seyth:</i>	
	A, gode God in Trinité:	
	Whow longe shal I abyde thee	<i>How; await</i>
	Tyl that thu thi Son thu doth sende,	
	That I in erth myght hym se?	
25	Good Lord, consydyr to me!	<i>take pity on me</i>
	I drawe fast to an ende,	
	That or my strenthis fro me wende.	<i>strength; go</i>
	Gode Lorde, send down thi Son	
	That I, with my ful mende,	<i>[So] that; mind</i>
30	Myght wurcheppe hym if I con.	<i>can</i>
	Bothe with my fete and hondys to,	<i>two</i>
	To go to hym and handele also	
	My eyen to se hym in certayn,	<i>for certain</i>
	My tonge for to speke hym to	
35	And all my lemys to werke and do,	<i>limbs</i>
	In his servyse to be bayn.	<i>ready</i>
	Send forth thi Son, my Lord sovereyn,	
	Hastely, anon withowte teryenge,	<i>tarrying</i>
	For fro this world I wolde be fayn!	<i>from; gladly be</i>
40	It is contrary to my levyng.	<i>way of life</i>
	<b>ANGELUS</b> Symeon, leff thi careful stevene,	<i>stop your sad speech</i>
	For thi prayer is herd in hevene.	
	To Jherusalem fast now wyne,	<i>get</i>
	And ther shalt se, ful evene,	<i>you shall see</i>
45	He that is Goddys Son, for to nemene.	<i>to speak of</i>
	In the temple ther thu dwellyst inne —	
	The dyrknes of orygynal synne	
	He shal make lyght and clarefye.	<i>purify</i>
	And now the dede shal begynne	<i>deed</i>
50	Whiche hath be spokyn be prophecye.	<i>been; by</i>

**SYMEON** A, I thanke thee, Lord of Grace,  
 That hath grauntyd me tyme and space  
 To lyve and byde thys. *await*  
 And I wyl walk now to the place  
 55 Where I may se thi Sonys face, *Son's*  
 Which is my joye and blys. *bliss*  
 I was nevyr lyghtere, iwys, *lighter, indeed*  
 To walke nevyr here befornt!  
 For a mery tyme now is  
 60 Whan God, my Lord, is born. *When*

**ANNA PROPHETESSA** Al heyl, Symeon! What tydyngys with yow? *you*  
 Why make ye al this myrth now?  
 Telle me whedyr ye fare. *where you are going*

**SYMEON** Anne, prophetes, and ye wyst whow *prophetess, if you knew why*  
 65 So shulde ye — I make a vow — *As you should*  
 And all maner men that are, *manner of*  
 For Goddys Son — as I declare —  
 Is born to bye mankende! *buy (redeem) mankind*  
 Oure Savyour is come to sesyn oure care! *end our woes*  
 70 Therfore, have I grett merth to wende. *in traveling*

And that is the cawse I hast me *I hurry*  
 Onto the temple, hym to se,  
 And therfore lett me not, good frende. *don't hinder me*  
**ANNA** Now blyssyd be God in Trinyté  
 75 Syn that tyme is come to be!  
 And with yow wyl I wende *I go*  
 To se my Savyour ende *gracious*  
 And wurchep hym also  
 With all my wyll and my ful mende. *mind*  
 80 As I am bound, now wyl I do.

*[Et tunc ibunt ambo ad templum.*

*And then both of them go to the temple*

**SYMEON** In the temple of God, who undyrstod, *truth be told*  
 This day shal be offeryd with mylde mood  
 Which that is kynge of alle *He who is*  
 That shal be skorgyd and shedde his blood, *scourged; [will] shed*  
 85 And, aftyr, dyen on the rood, *die on the cross*  
 Withowtyn cawse to calle;  
 For whos Passyon ther shal beffalle *Without reason*  
 Swych a sorwe bothe sharpe and smerte *sorrow; painful*  
 That as a swerd perce it shalle, *pierce*  
 90 Evene thorwe his moderys herte. *through; mother's heart*

**ANNA PROPHETISSA** Ya, that shal be as I wel fende,  
 For redempcyon of all mankende,  
 That blysse for to restore,  
 Whiche hath be lost fro oute of mende  
 95 As be oure fadyr of oure owyn kende,  
 Adam and Eve beffore.

*well find  
 time out of mind  
 by; father; own kind*

**MARIA** Joseph, my husbond, withowtyn mys,  
 Ye wote that fourty days nere is  
 Sythe my sonys byrth ful ryght.  
 100 Wherefore, we must to the temple, iwys,  
 Therfore to offre oure sone of blys  
 Up to his Fadyr in hyght.  
 And I in Goddys sight  
 Puryfyed for to be,  
 105 In clene sowle with al my might  
 In presence of the Trinyté.

*certainly  
 know; it is nearly  
 Since my son's; exactly  
 indeed  
 son of bliss  
 on high  
 God's  
 Purified  
 soul*

**JOSEPH** To be purefyed have ye no need  
 Ne thi son to be offeryd, so God me spede;  
 For fyrst thou art ful clene,  
 110 Undefowlyd in thought and dede.  
 And anothe, thi son, withowtyn drede,  
 Is God and man to mene.  
 Wherefore it nedyd not to bene  
 But to kepe the lawe on Moyses wyse  
 115 Whereffore we shal take us between  
 Dovys and turtelys for sacrefyce.

*purified  
 Nor; God help me  
 Undeified  
 without a doubt  
 to mediate between  
 according to Moses  
 for the two of us  
 Doves and turtledoves*

*[Et ibunt ad templum.*

*And they (Mary and Joseph) go to the temple*

**SYMEON** All heyl, my kyndely comfortour!  
**ANNA PROPHETISSA** All heyl, mankyndys creatoure!  
**SYMEON** All heyl, thou God of Myght!  
**ANNA PROPHETISSA** All heyl, mankyndys Savyour!  
**SYMEON** All heyl, bothe kynge and emperour!  
**ANNA PROPHETISSA** All heyl, as it is ryght!  
**SYMEON** All heyl, also Mary bryght!  
**ANNA PROPHETISSA** All heyl, salver of seknes!  
**SYMEON** All heyl, lanterne of lyght!  
**ANNA PROPHETISSA** All heyl, thou modyr of mekenes!

*mankind's creator  
 mankind's  
 healer of sickness  
 mother of meekness*

**MARIA** Symeon, I undyrstand and se  
 That bothyn of my sone and me  
 Ye have knowynge clere.  
 130 And also in youre compané,

*both  
 certain  
 company*

My sone desyryth for to be,  
And therffore have hym here.

*[Et accipiet Jhesum.]*

*And he (Simeon) welcomes Jesus*

**SYMEON** Welcome, prynce withowte pere!  
Welcome, Goddys owyn sone!  
135 Welcome, my Lord so dere!  
Welcome, with me to wone!

*peer  
God's own son*

*to dwell*

*Suscepimus Deus misericordiam tuam.*<sup>1</sup>

Lord God, in magesté:  
We have receyvyd this day of thee,  
In myddys of thi temple here  
140 Thy grett mercy as we may se.  
Therfore thi name of grett degré  
Be wurchepyd in all manere  
Over all this werde, bothe fer and nere,  
Yevyn on to the uterest ende;  
145 For now is man out of daungere  
And rest and pes to all mankende.

*Amidst*

*great reverence*

*world; far  
Even; most distant*

*peace; mankind*

*["Nunc dimittis servum tuum Domine," et cetera.]*<sup>2</sup> *The psalme songyn every vers, and  
therquyl Symeon pleyth with the child and qwhan the psalme is endyd, he seyth:*

Now lete me dye, Lorde, and hens pace,  
For I, thi servaunt in this place,  
Have sen my Savyour dere,  
150 Whiche thu hast ordeyned befor the face  
Of al mankynde this tyme of grace,  
Opynly to appere:  
Thi lyth is shynand clere  
To all mankyndys savacyon.  
155 Mary, take youre childe now here  
And kepe wel: this man is savacyon.

*die; hence pass*

*ordained*

*light; shining  
mankind's salvation*

*guard him well; salvation*

**ANNA PROPHETISSA** Ne I rowth nere to dye also,  
For more than fowre skore yere and to  
This tyme hath bede to se,  
160 And sythe that it is come therto,  
What Goddys wyl is with me to do,  
Right evyn so mot it be.

*Nor am I reluctant to die  
four score and two years  
lived to see  
since  
God's  
may*

<sup>1</sup> *We have received your mercy, O God* (compare Psalm 47:10)

<sup>2</sup> *"Now you dismiss your servant, O Lord," and so on*

**JOSEPH** Take here these candelys thre — *three candles*  
 Mary, Symeon, and Anne —  
 165 And I shal take the fowrte to me *fourth*  
 To offre oure child up, thanne. *then*

**MARIA** Hiest Fadyr, God of powere:  
 Your owyn dere Son I offre yow here.  
 As I to your lawe am sworn.  
 170 Receyve thi childe in glad manere,  
 For he is the fyrst, this childe so dere,  
 That of his modyr is born. *mother*  
 But thow I offre hym yow befor, *though*  
 Good Lord, yit gyf me hym agen, *yet give him to me again*  
 175 For my comforte were fully lorn *would be lost*  
 If we shuld longe asondyr ben. *be apart*

*[Mari leyth the childe on the autere.]*

**JOSEPH** Sere prest of the temple, now *Sir priest*  
 Have here fyff pens unto yow, *five pence*  
 Oure childe agen to take.  
 180 It is the lawe, as ye woot how. *know*  
**CAPELLANUS** Joseph, ye an do ryght anow *have done the right thing*  
 As for youre childys sake. *child's*  
 But othere offerynge yett must ye make.  
 And therfore take youre sone, Mary, *son*  
 185 In meche joye ye may awake *much*  
 Whylys he is in youre company. *While*

**MARIA** Therto I am ful glad and fayn *happy*  
 For to receyve my childe agayn,  
 Ellys were I to blame;  
 190 And afterwarde, for to be bayn *willing*  
 To offre to God, in ful certayn, *most certainly*  
 As in my sonys name *son's*  
 With fowlys, bothe wylde and tame, *fowls*  
 For in Goddys servyse I shal nevyr irke. *God's service; get weary*  
**JOSEPH** Lo, Mary, have here tho same *those same ones*  
 196 To do thi dewtys of Holy Kyrke. *duties; Holy Church*

*[And ther Mary offeryth fowlys onto the autere and seyth:]*

**MARIA** Allmyghtyfful Fadyr, mercyful Kynge:  
 Receyvyth now this lytyl offrynge,  
 For it is the fyrst in degré  
 200 That youre lytyl childe so yynge *young*  
 Presentyth today be my shewyng *by*



	To youre hygh magesté.	<i>majesty</i>
	Of his sympyl poverté,	
	Be his devocyon and my good wyll,	<i>By</i>
205	Upon your awtere receyve of me	<i>altar</i>
	Your sonys offrynge, as it is skylle.	<i>son's; fitting</i>

## 20. SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS; DEATH OF HEROD

*[Tunc respiciens, Senescallus vadyt, ad Herodem dicens:]*<sup>1</sup>

<b>SENESCALLUS</b>	Lord, I have walkyd be dale and hylle	<i>by</i>
	And wayted as it is youre wyll.	<i>spied</i>
	The kyngys thre stelyn away full styll	<i>have sneaked</i>
	Thorwe Bedleem londe.	<i>Through Bethlehem</i>
5	They wyl nevyr, so mot y thee,	<i>may I prosper</i>
	Com in the lond of Galylé	<i>Galilee</i>
	For to se youre fayr ceté	<i>city</i>
	Ne dedys of youre honde!	<i>Nor deeds; hand</i>

<b>HERODES REX</b>	I ryde on my rowel, ryche in my regne!	<i>ride spurring, potent</i>
10	Rybbys ful reed, with rape shal I rende!	<i>Ribs; red, in haste</i>
	Popetys and paphawkys I shal puttyn in peyne!	<i>Children; suckling babies</i>
	With my spere prevyn, pychyn, and to pende	<i>test, pierce, and stab</i>
	The gomys with gold crownys ne gete nevyr ageyn! <sup>2</sup>	
	To seke tho sottys, sondys shal I sende.	<i>those sots, messengers</i>
15	Do howlott howtyn, hoberd and heyn,	
	Whan here barnys blede undyr credyl bende! <sup>3</sup>	
	Sharply, I shal hem shende —	<i>kill them</i>
	The knave childeryn that be	<i>male</i>
	In all Israel countré!	
20	Thei shul have bloody ble,	<i>complexions</i>
	For on I calde unkende!	<i>one I consider traitorous</i>

	It is tolde in Grw:	<i>Greek</i>
	His name shulde be Jhesu	
	Ifownde.	<i>Found to be</i>
25	To have hym, ye gon —	<i>go</i>
	Hewe the flesch with the bon	<i>through the bone</i>
	And gyf hym wownde!	<i>wounds</i>

<sup>1</sup> Then looking back, the Steward goes to Herod, saying

<sup>2</sup> Those men with gold crowns will never beat me again

<sup>3</sup> Lines 15–16: Make screech owls hoot, knave and rascal, / When their children bleed under swaddling clothes

	Now, kene knyghtys, kythe youre craftys,	<i>brave knights, show</i>
	And kyllyth knave chylderyn and castyth hem in clay!	<i>male; them</i>
30	Shewyth on youre shulderys scheldys and schaftys!	<i>shields; spears</i>
	Shapyht amonge scheltrownys a shyrling shray,	<i>troop formations a shrill outcry</i>
	Doth rowncys rennyn with rakyng raftys	<i>Make horses run; piercing spurs</i>
	Tyl rybbys be torent with a reed ray!	<i>ribs be torn; all in blood</i>
	Lete no barne beleve onbete baftys	<i>baby; be left unbeaten on the backside</i>
35	Tyl a beggere blede be bestys baye!	<i>knave; by the beasts' stall</i>
	Mahound, that best may!	<i>Mohammed; can [do this]</i>
	I warne yow, my knyghtys,	
	A barn is born, I plyghtys,	<i>baby; I swear</i>
	Wolde clymbyn kyng and knyts	<i>Would climb over; knights</i>
40	And lett my lordly lay!	<i>lessen; rule</i>
	Knyghtys wyse,	
	Chosyn ful chyse	<i>the choicest ones</i>
	Aryse! Aryse,	
	And take youre tolle!	<i>toll</i>
45	And every page	<i>boy</i>
	Of twey yere age	<i>two years of</i>
	Or evyr ye swage	<i>Before; cease</i>
	Sleyth ilke a fool.	<i>Slay every baby</i>
	On of hem alle	<i>One of them</i>
50	Was born in stalle,	<i>a stall</i>
	Folys hym calle	<i>Fools call him</i>
	Kyng in crowne!	<i>Crowned king</i>
	With byttyr galle	
	He shall down falle!	
55	My myght in halle	<i>in this hall</i>
	Shal nevyr go down.	
<b>MILES 1</b>	I shall sle scharlys	<i>churls</i>
	And qwenys with therlys,	<i>whores (women); piercings</i>
	Here knave gerlys	<i>Their boys</i>
60	I shal steke!	<i>stab (stake)</i>
	Forth wyl I spede	
	To don hem blede	<i>To make them</i>
	Thow gerlys grede	<i>Though the babies cry</i>
	We shul be wreke!	<i>satisfied</i>
<b>MILES 2</b>	For swerdys sharpe	<i>swords</i>
66	As an harpe	<i>harpoon</i>
	Quenys shul karpe,	<i>Women; wail</i>
	And of sorwe synge	
	Barnys yonge!	<i>Young babies</i>
70	They shul be stunge	<i>stabbed</i>

Thurwe levyr and lunge!  
We shal hem stynge. *Through liver  
pierce them*

**ANGELUS** Awake, Joseph, and take thi wyff,  
Thy chylde also; ryd belyff, *wife  
ride at once*  
75 For Kynge Herowde, with sharpe knyff,  
His knyghtys he doth sende!  
The Fadyr of Hevyn hath to thee sent  
Into Egypte that thu be bent, *bound*  
For cruel knyghtys thi childe have ment  
80 With swerde to sle and shende. *destroy*

**JOSEPH** Awake, good wyff, out of youre slepe,  
And of youre childe takyght good kepe *take good care*  
Whyl I youre clothis ley on hepe *gather*  
And trus hem on the asse. *tie them*  
85 Kynge Herowde the chylde wyl scloo! *slay*  
Therefore, to Egypte muste we goo.  
An aungel of God seyde me soo *said so to me*  
And therefore lete us passe! *go*

[*Tunc ibunt milites ad pueros occidendos, et dicat Prima Femina:*<sup>1</sup>

**FEMINA 1** Longe lullynge have I lorn! *lullabies; wasted*  
90 Alas, qwhy was my baron born? *child*  
With swappynge swerde now is he shorn,  
The heed ryght fro the nekke! *smiting sword; cut  
head; from the neck*  
Shanke and shulderyn is al totorn!  
Sorwyn I se behyndyn and beforne, *Legs; shoulders; torn*  
95 Both mydnyth, mydday, and at morn! *Sorrow; behind  
midnight, midday*  
Of my lyff I ne recke! *care nothing*

**FEMINA 2** Sertheynly, I sey the same! *For certain, I say*  
Gon is all my good game — *pleasure*  
My lytyll childe lyth all lame, *wounded*  
100 That lullyd on my pappys. *slept; breasts*  
My fourty wekys gronyng  
Hath sent me sefne yere sorwyng! *weeks of labor  
seven years of sorrow*  
Mykyl is my mornynge,  
And ryght hard arne myn happys. *Great; mourning  
are my fortunes*

**MILES 1** Lorde in trone:  
106 Makyght no mone! *Make; complaints*  
Qwenys gyn grone *Women (whores) begin to wail*

<sup>1</sup> Then the knights go to kill the male children, and let the first woman say

	In werld aboute!	<i>Around the world</i>
	Upon my spere	
110	A gerle I bere!	<i>baby</i>
	I dare well swere —	
	Lett moderys howte!	<i>scream</i>
<b>MILES 2</b>	Lord, we han spad	<i>have fulfilled</i>
	As ye bad.	<i>ordered</i>
115	Barnis ben blad	<i>Babies have bled</i>
	And lyne in dych.	<i>lie</i>
	Flesch and veyn	
	Han tholyd peyn,	<i>suffered pain</i>
	And ye shul reyne	
120	Evermore rych!	
<b>HERODUS REX</b>	Ye shul have stedys	<i>shall; steeds</i>
	To youre medys,	<i>For your reward</i>
	Londys and ledys,	<i>Landed property (landholdings)</i>
	Fryth and fe!	<i>Property and goods</i>
125	Wele have ye wrought!	<i>Well; done</i>
	My fo is sought,	
	To deth is he brought!	
	Now come up to me.	
	In sete now am I sett as kyng of myghtys most!	<i>On throne</i>
130	All this werd, for ther love to me, shul thei lowt!	<i>world; shall they bow</i>
	Both of hevyn and of erth and of helle cost,	<i>hell's coast</i>
	For dygne of my dygnyté, thei have of me dowl!	<i>Out of respect; fear</i>
	Ther is no lord lyke on lyve to me wurth a toost —	<i>alive; toast</i>
	Nother kyng nor kayser in all this worlde about!	<i>Neither; caesar</i>
135	If any brybour do bragge or blowe agens my bost,	
	I shal rappe tho rebawdys and rake them on rought <sup>1</sup>	
	With my bryght bronde!	<i>sword</i>
	Ther shal be neyther kayser nere kyng	<i>neither emperor nor</i>
	But that I shal hem down dyng,	<i>shall strike them down</i>
140	Lesse than he at my byddyng	<i>Unless</i>
	Be buxum to myn honde.	<i>obedient; my hand</i>
	Now, my jentyll and curteys knyghtys: herke to me this stownde! <sup>2</sup>	
	Good tyme sone me thynkygh at dyner that we were.	<i>dinner</i>
	Smerly, therfore, sett a tabyll anon here ful sownde	<i>now; ample</i>
145	Coverid with a coryous cloth and with rych wurthy fare,	<i>costly; dishes</i>

<sup>1</sup> Lines 135–36: *If any scoundrel blusters or complains against my decree / I will seize those rascals and kill them altogether*

<sup>2</sup> *Now, my gentle and courteous knights, listen to me right now*

- Servyse for the loveliest lorde that levyng is on grownde!<sup>1</sup>  
 Beste metys and wurthyest wyne loken that ye non spare! *meats*  
 Thow that a lytyl pynt shulde coste a thowsand pownde,<sup>2</sup>  
 Brynge alweye of the beste — for coste, take ye no care! *all of*
- 150 Anon that it be done! *Do it now*  
**SENESCALLUS** My lorde, the tabyl is redy dyght!  
 Here is watyr — now wasch forthryght. *all ready*  
 Now blowe up, mynstrall, with all youre myght!  
 The servyse comyth in sone. *play, minstrel soon*
- HERODES REX** Now am I sett at mete,  
 156 And wurthely servyd at my degré!  
 Com forth, knyghtys! Sytt down and ete, *worthily; for my rank*  
 And be as mery as ye kan be! *knights*
- MILES I** Lord, at yowre byddynge we take oure sete.  
 160 With herty wyl obey we thee! *hearty*  
 Ther is no lorde of myght so grett  
 Thorwe all this werde in no countré *Throughout; world*  
 In wurchepp to abyde. *to continue*
- HERODES REX** I was nevyr meryer here befor  
 165 Sythe that I was fyrst born *I have never been merrier*  
 Than I am now ryght in this morn! *Since*  
 In joy I gynne to glyde! *right now*  
*Into joy I begin to pass*
- MORS** Ow! I herde a page make preysyng of pride — *a knave; proud boasts*  
 All prynces he passyth, he wenyth, of powsté!<sup>3</sup>  
 170 He wenyth to be the wurthyest of all this werde wyde — *imagines [himself]*  
 Kyng ovyr all kyngys, that page wenyth to be! *knave thinks*  
 He sent into Bedlem to seke on every side *Bethlehem to seek*  
 Cryst for to qwelle yf thei myght hym se, *to kill*  
 But of his wykkyd wyl, lurdeyn, yitt he lyede! *rogue, yet he lies*  
 175 Goddys Sone doth lyve; ther is no lorde but he: *God's Son*  
 Over all lordys he is kyng!  
 I am Deth, Goddys masangere. *God's messenger*  
 Allmyghty God hath sent me here,  
 Yon lordeyn to sle, withowtyn dwere,  
 180 For his wykkyd werkyng. *rogue; slay, certainly*  
*actions*
- I am sent fro God: Deth is my name!  
 Allthyng that is on grownd I welde at my wylle, *on earth; wield*  
 Both man and beste and byrdys, wylde and tame. *beast; birds*  
 Whan that I come them to, with deth I do them kylle: *But when*

<sup>1</sup> Food for the loveliest lord that is living on earth

<sup>2</sup> Though a little pint might cost a thousand pounds

<sup>3</sup> He thinks he surpasses all princes in power!

- 185 Erbe, gres, and tres stronge — take hem all in same!<sup>1</sup>  
 Ya, the grete myghty okys, with my dent I spyllē!  
 What man that I wrastele with, he shal ryght sone have schame!  
 I geve hym such a trepett, he shal evyrmore ly styllē,<sup>2</sup>  
 For Deth ken no sporte.
- 190 Wher I smyte, ther is no grace,  
 For aftere my strook, man hath no space  
 To make amendys for his trespase,  
 But God hym graunt comforte.
- Ow, se how prowdeley yon kaytyff sytt at mete!  
 195 Of Deth hath he no dowte — he wenyth to leve evyrmore!  
 To hym wyl I go and geve hym such an hete  
 That all the lechis of the londe, his lyf shul nevyr restore!  
 Agens my dredful dentys it vaylyth nevyr to plete  
 Or I hym part fro, I shal hym make ful pore!  
 200 All the blood of his body I shal hym owt swete!  
 For now I go to sle hym with strokys sad and sore  
 This tyde.  
 Bothe hym and his knyghtys all —  
 I shal hem make to me but thrall,  
 205 With my spere, sle hem I shall,  
 And so cast down his pride.
- HERODES REX** Now kende knyghtys, be mery and glad!  
 With all good diligens shewe now sum myrth,  
 For, be gracyous Mahound, more myrth never I had!  
 210 Ne nevyr more joye was inne from tyme of my byrth,  
 For now my fo is ded and prenyd as a padde!  
 Above me is no kynge on grownd nere on gerth!  
 Merthis therfore make ye, and be ryght nothyng sadde!  
 Spare nother mete nor drynke, and spare for no dyrthe  
 215 Of wyne nor of brede,  
 For now am I a kynge alone!  
 So wurthy as I may ther be none!  
 Therfore, knyghtys, be mery echone,  
 For now my fo is dede!
- MILES 1** Whan the boys sprawlyd at my sperys hende  
 221 By Sathanas, oure syre, it was a goodly syght!  
 A good game it was, that boy for to shende  
 That wolde abene oure kynge and put yow from youre ryght!
- MILES 2** Now trewly, my lorde the kynge, we had ben unhende

<sup>1</sup> Herbs, grass, and strong trees — [I] take them all the same<sup>2</sup> I [would] give him such a tripping up [that] he will lie still forever

- 225 And nevyr non of us able for to be a knyght  
 If that any of us to hem had ben a frende *to him*  
 And asavyd any lyff agen thi mekyl might *[had] saved; life against; great*  
 From deth hem to flytt. *him to save*
- HERODES REX** Amonges all that grett rowthte *group*
- 230 He is ded — I have no dowte!  
 Therfore menstrell, rownd abowte *minstrels*  
 Blowe up a mery fytt! *Play; tune*

*[Hic dum buccinant Mors interficiat Herodem et duos milites subito. Et Diabolus recipiat eos.]*<sup>1</sup>

- DIABOLUS** All oure! All oure! This catel is myn! *ours; chattel*  
 I shall hem brynge onto my celle! *cell*
- 235 I shal hem teche pleys fyn *teach him fine games*  
 And showe such myrthe as is in helle!  
 It were more bettyr amongys swyn *among swine*  
 That evyrmore stynkyn ther be to dwelle.  
 For in oure logge is so gret peyn *lodge; pain*
- 240 That non erthely tonge can telle! *no earthly tongue*  
 With yow I go my way!  
 I shal yow bere forth with me *carry you*  
 And shewe yow sportys of oure gle! *glee*  
 Of oure myrthis now shal ye se  
 245 And evyr synge “Welawey!” *Alas*
- MORS** Of Kynge Herowde all men beware  
 That hath rejoycyd in pompe and pryde,  
 For all his boste of blysse ful bare *sheer bliss*  
 He lyth now ded here on his syde.
- 250 For whan I come, I cannot spare *when*  
 Fro me no whyht may hym hyde! *creature can hide*  
 Now is he ded and cast in care *torment*  
 In helle pytt evyr to abyde! *hell's pit (grave)*  
 His lordchep is al lorn. *lost*
- 255 Now is he as pore as I:  
 Wormys mete is his body; *Worm's food*  
 His sowle in helle ful peynfully *soul*  
 Of develis is al to-torn. *devils; torn to pieces*
- 260 All men dwellyng upon the grownde: *on earth*  
 Beware of me be myn counsel, *by my*  
 For feynt felachep in me is fownde. *little*  
 I kan no curtesy as I yow tel, *know; courtesy; you*

<sup>1</sup> Here while they blow trumpets Death suddenly kills Herod and the two knights. And the Devil captures them

	For be a man nevyr so sownde, Of helth in herte nevyr so wel,	<i>by; sound heart</i>
265	I come sodeynly within a stownde! Me withstande may no castel My jurnay wyl I spede. Of my comyng no man is ware, For when men make most mery fare,	<i>suddenly in an instant No castle can withstand me make successful aware</i>
270	Than sodeynly I cast hem in care And sle them, evyn indede.	<i>act most merry suddenly; in distress indeed</i>
	Thow I be nakyd and pore of array And wurmys knawe me al abowte, Yit loke ye drede me nyth and day,	<i>poorly attired worms gnaw Yet look [that]; fear</i>
275	For whan Deth comyth, ye stande in dowte! Evyn lyke to me — as I yow say — Shull all ye be here in this rowte! <sup>1</sup> Whan I yow chalange at my day, I shal yow make ryght lowe to lowth	<i>when; in fear</i>
280	And nakyd for to be Amongys wormys, as I yow telle! Undyr the erth shul ye dwelle, And thei shul etyn both flesch and felle As thei have don me.	<i>When I challenge you shall make you bow low</i>  <i>Amongst shall skin done to me</i>

## 21. CHRIST AND THE DOCTORS

[*Modo de doctoribus disputantibus cum Jhesu in templo.*<sup>2</sup>

<b>DOCTOR 1</b>	<i>Scripture sacre esse dinoscimur doctos:</i> <sup>3</sup> We to bere the belle of all manere clergyse.	<i>two are the best of all clergy</i>
<b>DOCTOR 2</b>	<i>Velud rosa omnium florum flos:</i> Lyke on to us was nevyr clerke so wyse.	<i>As the rose of all flowers, (we are) the flower</i>
<b>DOCTOR 1</b>	Loke what scyens ye kan devyse	<i>learning; conceive of</i>
6	Of redyng, wrytyng, and trewe ortografye. Amongys all clerkys we bere the prysse Of gramer, cadens, and of prosodye!	<i>reading; orthography are the most eminent grammar, rhetoric; versifying</i>
<b>DOCTOR 2</b>	No clerke abyll to bere oure book	<i>can compare with us</i>
10	Of versyfyng nor of other scyens! Of swete musyke, whoso wyll look — Seke no ferther but to oure presens!	<i>learning For sweet music</i>

<sup>1</sup> Lines 276–77: *All of you in this crowd shall end up just like I am — I swear to you!*

<sup>2</sup> *Now for the doctors disputing with Jesus in the temple*

<sup>3</sup> *We are recognized as the experts in the Sacred Scriptures*



- Of dyaletyk we have the hygh excellence  
 Of sophestre, logyk, and phylosophye!  
 15 Ageyn oure argemente is no recystence  
 In metaphesyk ne astronomye. *formal reasoning  
subtle disputation  
Against; argument  
metaphysics nor*
- DOCTOR 1** Of calculacyon and negremauncye — *sorcery*  
 Also of augrym and of asmatryk — *computing; art of measuring*  
 O lynyacyon that longyth to jematrye — *use of lines in geometry*  
 20 Of dyetis and domys that longyth to phesyk — *diets; medical opinions*  
 In all this scyens is non us lyke *there is none like us*  
 In Caton, Gryscysme, nor Doctrynal! *Cato, Graecismus; Doctrinale*  
 And for endytyng with retoryke *writing; rhetoric*  
 The hyst degré is oure be call. *ours for the asking*
- DOCTOR 2** In grett canon and in cevyle lawe, *civil*  
 26 Also in scyens of polycye *political science*  
 Is non to us wurthe an hawe! *Everyone is worthless compared to us*  
 Of all cunnyng we bere the maystrye! *we are the masters*  
 Therfore, in this temple we sytt on hye  
 30 And of most wurchep kepe the sovereynté: *sovereignty*  
 Ther is on erthe no man so wurthe  
 The hygh stat to holdyn as we tweyn be. *position; two do*
- JHESUS** *Omnis sciencia a Domino Deo est:* *All wisdom is from the Lord God*  
 Al wytt and wysdam of God it is lent.  
 35 Of all your lernynge withinne youre brest  
 Thank hyghly that Lord that hath yow sent. *Be thankful; sent to you*  
 Thorwe bost and pryde, youre soulys may be shent. *boasting; destroyed*  
 Of wytt and wysdome, ye have not so mech *so much*  
 But God may make, at hese entente, *at his will*  
 40 Of all youre connynge many man yow lech. *cleverness; men such as you*
- DOCTOR 1** Goo hom, lytyl babe, and sytt on thi moderys lappe, *little; mother's*  
 And put a mokador aforin thi brest, *bib on*  
 And pray thi modyr to fede thee with the pappe! *her breast*  
 Of thee for to lerne, we desyre not to lest. *From thee; to listen*
- DOCTOR 2** Go to thi dyner, for that behovyth thee best! *dinner; fits thee*  
 46 Whan thu art athreste, than take thee a sowke! *thirsty, then have a suck*  
 Aftyr, go to cradyl therin to take thi rest, *your cradle*  
 For that canst thu do bettyr than for to loke on book. *read a book*
- JHESUS** Stondynge that ye be so wytty and wyse —  
 50 Can ye owth tellyn how this werde was wrought? *world was made*  
 How longe shal it laste? Can ye devyse *say*  
 With all the cunnyng that ye han sought? *have*
- DOCTOR 1** Nay, all erthely clerkys that telle can nought! *cannot tell that*  
 It passyth oure wytt that for to contrive! *to understand*

- 55      It is not possyble aboutght to be brought: *to be done*  
           The worldys endyng no man kan descryve! *world's end; describe*
- JHESUS** How it was wrought, and how longe it shal endure? *was it made*  
           That I telle be good delyberacyon. *by*  
           Not only therof, but of every creature —
- 60      How it is wrought, I knowe the plasmacyon. *made; creation*
- DOCTOR 2** Of thi wurdys I have skorne and derysyon! *For; derision*  
           How schulde a chylde that nevyr lettyr dude lere *did learn his letters*  
           Com to the wytt of so hygh cognysion *such high comprehension*
- 64      Of tho grete werkys that so wundyrfull were? *those great works*
- JHESUS** All thyng is brought to informacyon *made manifest as knowledge*  
           Be thre personys, oo God in Trynité. *By three; one*  
           And on of tho thre hath take incarnacyon, *one; those; taken*  
           Bothe flesch and blood of a mayd fre. *noble maid*  
           And be that myght of tho personys thre, *those*
- 70      Hevyn and erth and all thyng is wrought. *made*  
           And as it plesyth that hygh Magesté,  
           Allthyng shal leste and lenger nowght. *last and no longer*
- DOCTOR 1** I grawnt weyl allthyng that God dyde make,  
           And withowtyn hym, nothyng may be,
- 75      But o thyng thou seydst, and that I forsake, *one; said; reject*  
           That oo God alone was personys thre. *one*  
           Ryght onpossyble that is to me! *impossible*  
           That on is thre I kanoot thynke. *one; three; conceive*  
           If thou canst preve it anon lett se, *prove; now let's see*
- 80      For in oure hertys it may nevyr synke. *penetrate*
- JHESUS** In the sunne, consydyr ye thyngys thre: *three*  
           The splendure, the hete, and the lyght. *radiance; heat*  
           As tho thre partys but oo sunne be, *those three; one*  
           Ryght so thre personys be oo God of myght. *are one*
- DOCTOR 2** In very feyth, this reson is ryght!  
           But yitt, fayr babe, oo thyng we pray yow: *yet; one; ask you*  
           What do all tho thre personys hyght? *those; call themselves*  
           Us to enforme, ye sey to me now. *tell me*
- JHESUS** The fyrst is calde the Fadyr of Myght;  
           90      The secunde the Sone of Wysdam and Wytt;  
           The Holy Gost the thyrd, of Grace he is hyght; *third; is called*  
           And in oo substauns all these thre be knyht. *are united*
- DOCTOR 1** Another questyon I aske yow yitt: *yet*

- Ye seyð on of these thre toke flesch and blood,<sup>1</sup>  
 95 And sche a clene mayde? I kannot beleve it — *pure maiden*  
 Clene mayde and modyr nevyr yit in oo persone stood.<sup>2</sup>
- JHESUS** Lyke as the sunne doth pers the glas, *pierce*  
 The glas not hurte of his nature; *its nature*  
 Ryght so the Godhed entryd has *has entered*  
 100 The Virgynes wombe, and sche mayd pure. *Virgin's; maiden*  
 That maydonys childe shal do grett cure: *maiden's; go to great lengths*  
 Convicte the devyl in the opyn felde, *Defeat; in battle*  
 And with his bolde berst fecch hom his creature, *[the child's] fair breast*  
 Mankende, to save — his brest shal be the shelde. *His (Christ's) breast*
- DOCTOR 2** This childys doctryne doth passe oure wytt. *child's*  
 106 Sum aungel of hevyn I trowe that he be! *I think*  
 But blyssyd babe, of oo dowte yitt. *one; yet*  
 We pray yow, enforme us for charyté:  
 Which toke flesch of the personys thre,  
 110 Ageyn the fende to holde such batayle? *Against the fiend; battle*  
**JHESUS** The secunde persone, forsothe, is he *truly*  
 Shal fray the fende withowte fayle. *Who shall attack the fiend*
- DOCTOR 1** Why rather he than any of that other? *of the others*  
 The fyrst or the thyrde, why come they nowth? *third; not*
- JHESUS** This is the cawse why, sertys, and non other. *reason why, certainly*  
 116 Ageyn the secunde, the trespas was wrought *Against; sin was committed*  
 Whan the serpent Adam to synne browth. *When; brought*  
 He temptyd hym nowght be the Faderys myght. *not by; Father's*  
 Of the Gostys goodnes spak he ryght nowght, *Spirit's; spoke not*  
 120 But in connyng he temptyd hym ryght. *him alone*
- Myght is the Faderys owyn propyrté;  
 To the Gost aproperyd is goodnes. *Father's; attribute*  
 In none of these tweyn temptyd he. *Holy Ghost assigned*  
 Mankende to synne, whan he dede dresse, *two*  
 125 To the Sone connyng doth longe expres. *when he did cause it*  
 Ther with the serpent dyd Adam asay. *cunning is long associated*  
 “Ete of this appyl,” he seyð no lesse, *did tempt Adam*  
 “And thu shalt have connyng as God, verray.” *said*  
*truthfully*
- Thus the secunde person attrIBUTE *Person's*  
 130 Was only towchyd be temptacyon, *by*  
 Wherefore hymself wyl hold the sewte *suit*

<sup>1</sup> You said one of these three had taken [the form of] flesh and blood

<sup>2</sup> [A] pure maiden and [a] mother never yet in one person existed

- And kepe his propyrté fro maculacyon. *attribute from defilement*
- DOCTOR 2** This is an hevynly declaracyon!  
 Oure naturall wytt it doth excede!
- 135 So yonge a childe of such informacyon  
 In al this werld nevyr er non yede. *never before has lived*
- DOCTOR 1** We be not worthy to kepe this sete *seat [of honor]*  
 Whyll that oure mayster is in presens. *teacher*  
 The maystry of us, this childe doth gete! *mastery over us; has won*
- 140 We must hym wurchep with hygh reverens.  
 Come forth, swete babe of grett excellens,  
 The whysest clerke that evyr yett was born! *wisest*  
 To yow we geve the hygh resydens, *give; seat*  
 Us more to teche as ye have done befor.
- [*Hic adducunt Jhesum inter ipsos et in scanno altiori ipsum sedere faciunt, ipsis in inferioribus scannis sedentibus, et ait Doctor 2:*<sup>1</sup>
- DOCTOR 2** So yonge a chylde, suche clergy to reche, *learning; reach*  
 146 And so sadly to sey it, we woundyr sore: *maturely; wonder greatly*  
 Who was youre mayster who dede yow teche? *teacher; did teach you*  
 Of what man had ye this wurthy lore? *teaching*
- JHESUS** My wytt and my lernynge is no yonge store. *not recent*  
 150 Or this worde was wrought, allthinge dede I knowe. *Before; world*  
 Fyrst, or ye wore borne, yerys many score *before*  
 Thorwe the myght of my Fadyr, my wytt in me dede flowe.
- DOCTOR 1** Or that we weryn born? Nay, that may nat be! *Before; were*  
 The yongest of us tweyn is thre score yere of age! *two; years*
- 155 And thiselfe art but a chylde — al men may wel se.  
 Late camst out of cradyl as it semyth be thi vesage. *cradle; by your face*
- JHESUS** I am of dobyl byrth and of dobyl lenage: *double; lineage*  
 Fyrst, be my Fadyr, I am without gynnyng, *by my Father; beginning*  
 And lyke, as he is hendeles in his hygh stage, *endless; throne*
- 160 So shal I also nevyrmor have endynge.
- For be my Fadyr, Kynge Celestyall *by*  
 Without begynnyng, I am endles.  
 But be my modyr that is carnall, *by my mother*  
 I am but twelf yere of age — that is expres. *twelve years; is clear*
- 165 My body of yough doth shewe wyttnes  
 Which of my modyr here I dude take *youth; bear witness*  
 But myn hygh Godhede, this is no lesse. *mother; did*  
 Allthyng in this worlde forsothe dude I make. *Everything; truly did*

<sup>1</sup> Here they lead Jesus between themselves and have him sit in the higher seat, they taking the lower seats, and the second Doctor declares

<b>DOCTOR 2</b>	Be youre fadyr that endles is —	<i>[Swearing] by your father</i>
170	Who is your modyr? Telle us, we pray!	
<b>JHESUS</b>	Be my Fadyr, the hygh Kynge of Blys, A modyrles chylde I am, veray.	<i>Father; Bliss motherless; truly</i>
<b>DOCTOR 1</b>	Who was youre fadyr, to us than say, Be youre modyr, a woman that was!	<i>father; then [Swearing] by your mother</i>
<b>JHESUS</b>	I am fadyrles. As for that may	<i>maiden</i>
176	Of fleschly luste, she dude nevyr trespass.	<i>did never sin</i>
<b>DOCTOR 2</b>	Telle us, I pray yow, what is youre name? What hyght youre modyr, telle us also.	<i>I ask you What is your mother called</i>
<b>JHESUS</b>	Jhesu of Nazareth, I am the same, 180 Born of a clene mayd — prophetys seyde so. Ysaye seyde thus: “ <i>Ecce virgo</i> ” — A mayd shal conceive in clennes a chylde, Yitt ageyn nature and al kende, loo, From all wem of synne, pure and undefylde.	<i>pure maid “Behold, a virgin” in virginity Yet against; natural law all stain</i>
185	Mary, the chylde of Joachym and Anne, Ys that clene mayd, and her childe am I. The frute of her wombe shal save every manne From the grett dowte of the fyndys tormentry.	<i>great fear; fiend’s torment</i>
<b>DOCTOR 1</b>	All the clerkys of this worlde, trewly, 190 Cannot brynge this to declaracyon Lesse than thei have of God Almyghty Sum influens of informacyon!	<i>clerks cannot say this Unless they inspired source</i>
<b>DOCTOR 2</b>	Now, jentyl Jhesu, we yow pray Whyl that we stodye awhyle to dwelle	<i>ask you study; to stay</i>
195	In cas mo dowyngs that we fynde may The trewth of hem ye may us telle.	<i>more doubts them</i>
<b>JHESUS</b>	Goo, take youre stodye, and avyse yow well, And all youre leysere I shal abyde. If any dowyngs to me ye mell, 200 The trewth therof I shall unhyde.	<i>studies; reflect leisure; await doubts; tell reveal</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	Alas, alas myn hert is wo! My blyssyd babe away is went! I wott nevyr whedyr that he is go! Alas, for sorwe myn hert is rent!	<i>is gone don’t know where; gone sorrow; heart; broken</i>
205	Jentyl husbond, have you hym sent Out on herrande to any place? But yf ye knowe were he ys bent, Myn hert for woo asondyr wyl race.	<i>you sent him on an errand Unless; bound heart; break into pieces</i>
<b>JOSEPH</b>	On my message I hym not sent, 210 Forsothe, good wyff, in no degre.	<i>On an errand Truly; no way</i>

	How longe is it that he hens went?	<i>hence</i>
	What tyme dude ye youre childe last se?	<i>did</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	Trewly, gode spowse, not these days thre!	<i>three</i>
	Therfore, myn herte is cast in care,	<i>heart</i>
215	Hym for to seke wherso he be!	<i>seek</i>
	In hast, good husbonde, lete us forth fare!	<i>In haste; go forth</i>
<b>JOSEPH</b>	Than to Hierusalem lete us streyte wende,	<i>Then; go directly</i>
	For kynred gladly togedyr wole gon.	<i>kin; would go together</i>
	I hope he is ther with sum good frende;	
220	Ther he hath cosynys ryght many on.	<i>cousins; many a one</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	I am aferde that he hath fon,	<i>foes</i>
	For his grett wyttys and werkys good	<i>Because of; wits; works</i>
	Lyke hym of wytt, forsoth, is non:	<i>truly</i>
	Every childe with hym is wroth and wood.	<i>angry and raging</i>
225	Also, my babe, my blys, my blood —	<i>bliss</i>
	Whedyr art thu thus gon fro me?	<i>Where</i>
	My sowle, my swetyng, my frute, myn food —	<i>my darling, my son</i>
	Send me sum wurd where that thu be!	<i>word</i>
	Telle me, good serys, for charyté —	<i>sirs</i>
230	Jhesu, my childe, that babe of blysse,	
	Amonge this compayné dude ye hym se?	<i>did</i>
	For Godys hygh love — telle where he is!	<i>God's</i>
<b>DOCTOR 1</b>	Of oo qwestyon I am bethought:	<i>one; I have thought</i>
	All of youre modyr, that blyssyd may —	<i>blessed maiden</i>
235	In what governauns is she brought?	<i>In whose keeping</i>
	How is sche rewlyd be nyght and day?	<i>ruled by</i>
<b>JHESUS</b>	An old man Joseph, as I yow say,	<i>say to you</i>
	Her weddyd be meracle onto his wyff,	<i>wedded miraculously</i>
	Her for to fede and kepe alway	
240	And bothyn in clenness be maydonys o lyff.	<i>both be virgins for life</i>
<b>DOCTOR 2</b>	What nede was it her to be wedde	
	Onto a man of so grett age,	
	Lesse than thei myght bothe ago to bedde	<i>Unless; have gone</i>
	And kept the lawe of maryage?	<i>marriage</i>
<b>JHESUS</b>	To blynde the devyl of his knowlache	<i>from knowing</i>
246	And my byrth from hym to hyde,	
	That holy wedlok was grett stopage,	<i>barrier</i>
	The devyl in dowte to do abyde.	<i>to keep in doubt</i>
250	Also, whan sche shulde to Egypte gon	<i>when; went</i>
	And fle from Herowde for dowte of me,	<i>fled; out of fear</i>
	Becawse she shulde nat go alon;	
	Joseph was ordeyned her make to be.	<i>ordained to be her mate</i>

- My Fadyr, of his hygh magesté,  
Her for to comforte in the way.
- 255 These be the cawsys, as ye may se, *are the causes*  
Why Joseph weddyd that holy may. *maiden*
- MARIA** A, dere childe! Dere chylde, why hast thu thus done?  
For thee we have had grett sorwe and care! *sorrow*  
Thy fadyr and I thre days have gone
- 260 Wyde, thee to seke of blysse ful bare. *Widely; seek; sorrowfully*
- JHESUS** Why have ye sought me with evy fare? *heavy faces*  
Wete ye not wele I muste been *Know you not well*  
Amonge hem that is my Faderys ware, *them; Father's business*  
His gostly catel for to ovyrsen. *spiritual goods to oversee*
- MARIA** Youre Faderys wyl must nedys be wrought. *Father's; must be done*
- 266 It is most wurthy that it so be,  
Yitt on youre modyr have ye sum thought *Yet of your mother*  
And be nevyrmore so longe fro me! *from*  
As to my thynkyng, these days thre
- 270 That ye absente have ben away  
Be more lengere in ther degré *Seemed longer*  
Than all the space of twelf yere day. *your entire twelve years*
- JHESUS** Now for to plese my modyr mylde, *mother*  
I shal yow folwe with obedyence. *follow you*
- 275 I am youre sone and subjecte childe  
And owe to do yow hygh reverence. *ought; you*  
Home with yow I wyl go hens;  
Of yow clerkys my leve I take. *you clerks*  
Every childe shulde, with good dyligens,
- 280 His modyr to plese, his owyn wyl forsake. *mother*
- DOCTOR 1** O, blyssyd Jhesu, with yow we wende! *we will go*  
Of yow to have more informacyon,  
Ful blyssyd is youre modyr hende *gracious mother*  
Of whom you toke youre incarnacyon. *took*
- 285 We pray yow, Jhesu, of consolacyon  
At oure most nede of yow to have.  
All that hath herd this consummacyon *heard; performance*  
Of this pagent, youre grace them save.  
Amen.

## 22. BAPTISM

JOHANNES *Ecce vox clamantes in deserto:*<sup>1</sup>

- I am the voys of wyldirnese *voice*  
 That her spekyth and prechyth yow to! *here; to you*  
 Loke ye forsake all wrecchidnesse!  
 5 Forsake all synne that werkyth woo, *works woe*  
 And turne to vertu and holynese!  
 Beth clene of levyng in your sowle also! *Be*  
 Than shall ye be savyd from peynfulnese, *Then*  
 Of fyere brynnyng in hell! *burning*  
 10 If that ye forsak synne,  
 Hevyn blysse shall ye wyne! *Heaven's bliss; gain*  
 Drede ye not the devyllys gynne — *devil's tricks*  
 With angellys shall yow dwell! *angels*
- Penitenciam nunc agile*  
 15 *Appropinquabit regnum celorum:*<sup>2</sup>  
 For your trespas penaunce do ye, *penance*  
 And ye shall wyn hevyn Dei Deorum. *gain; the God of Gods' heaven*  
 In hevyn blyse ye shall wyn to be *arrive*  
 Among the blyssyd company, *omnium supernorum.* *over all*  
 20 Ther as is all merth, joye, and glee  
*Inter agmina angelorum,* *Among the hosts of angels*  
 In blyse to abyde. *to dwell*  
 Baptyme I cowncell yow for to take *Baptism; counsel*  
 And do penaunce for your synnys sake. *sins'*  
 25 And for your offens amendys ye make, *offense*  
 Your synnys for to hyde. *to cover*
- I gyff baptym in water puere *give; pure*  
 That is callyd Flom Jordon. *River Jordan*  
 My baptym is but sygnyfure *a sign*  
 30 Of hys baptym that hys lyke hath non. *that is like no other*  
 He is a lord of gret valour!  
 I am not worthy to onbokyll his schon, *unbuckle; shoes*  
 For he shall baptyze — as seyth Scryptour — *Scripture*  
 That comyth of hem, all everychone, *them; everyone*  
 35 In the Holy Goost.  
 He may dampne, and he may save — *condemn*  
 All goodnese of hem we have. *him*  
 Ther may no man his werkys deprave, *disparage his works*  
 For he is Lord of myghtys most!

<sup>1</sup> Behold, a voice of one crying in the wilderness. (See Matthew 3:3)

<sup>2</sup> Lines 14–15: Do penance now for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand. (See Matthew 3:2)



*[Hic accedit Jhesus ad Johannem, quem intuens Johannes dicat, digito demonstrans Jhesum:]*<sup>1</sup>

40 *Ecce Agnus Dei qui tollit peccata mundi:*<sup>2</sup>

Beholde the Lombe of God is this	<i>Lamb</i>
That comyth now here beforne,	
The wich shall wasch the worldys mys	<i>Who; world's sin</i>
And save all that was forlorne.	<i>lost</i>
45 This same lombe, forsoth it is,	<i>lamb; truly</i>
That of a mayd full clene was borne.	<i>pure maiden</i>
Shamfull deth this lambe, iwys,	<i>indeed</i>
Shall suffer for us and be all to-torne	<i>torn to pieces</i>
And rent on a roode!	<i>torn; cross</i>
50 He shall suffer for mannys sake,	<i>man's</i>
Lytyll rest and moch gret sorow and wrake.	<i>Little; much; harm</i>
His bake shall be bowndyn to a stake,	<i>back; bound</i>
And betyn owt all his bloode.	<i>beaten</i>

**JHESUS** Johan Baptyste, myn owyn good frende,

55 That feythfully doth prech my wylle:	
I thee thanke with all my mende	<i>mind</i>
For that good servyse thu dost me tylle.	<i>do for me</i>
Thy desyre is synne to shende;	<i>avoid</i>
All synful lyff thu woldyst spylle.	<i>life; destroy</i>
60 Thyn entente hath a good hende:	<i>end</i>
The lawe of God thu dost fulfylle.	
This tyde,	<i>At this time</i>
Baptym to take, I come to thee	
And conferme that sacrement that newe shal be!	
65 In Flom Jordon thu baptyze me	
In water that is wyde.	

**JOHANNES** My Lorde God, this behovyth me nought

*is not fitting for me*  
*hands*

With myn hondys to baptyze thee!  
I shulde rather of thee have sought  
70 Holy baptym than thu of me.

**JHESUS** Suffyr now, Johan, my wyl were wrought.

*Allow; to be done*

All ryghtfullnes thus fulfyll we.	<i>righteousness</i>
Me to baptyze take thu no dowth:	<i>have no fear</i>
The vertu of mekenes here tawth shal be,	<i>here taught</i>
75 Every man to lere	<i>learn</i>
And take ensawmple here by me	<i>example</i>

<sup>1</sup> Here Jesus, looking at John while he is speaking, approaches John, who points at Jesus

<sup>2</sup> Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. (See John 1:29)

How mekely that I come to thee.  
 Baptym confermyd now shal be  
 Me to baptyze, take thu no dwere.

*doubt*

**JOHANNES** All men may take exaunple, lo,  
 81 Of lowly mekenes — evyn ryght here —  
 Be oure Lorde God that comyth me to,  
 Hese pore servaunt and his sutere.  
 Every man lere to worke ryght so,  
 85 Bothe kynge and caysere and gret empere;  
 Be meke and lowe, the pore man, to,  
 And put out pryde in all manere!  
 God doth here the same.  
 To thi byddynge, my Lord so dere,  
 90 I me obey with gladsum chere  
 And baptyze thee with watyr clere,  
 Ever halwyd be thi name.

*example*

*By  
 His; follower  
 work; this way  
 caesar  
 low; too*

*glad  
 pure  
 hallowed by*

*[Spiritus Sanctus hic descendat super ipsum, et Deus, Pater Celesti, dicet in celo:<sup>1</sup>*

**DEUS** This is my wel-belovyd chylde  
 Over whom my Spryte doth oversprede,  
 95 Clene and pure and undefyld  
 Of body, of sowle, for thought, for dede.  
 That he is buxhum, meke, and mylde  
 I am wel plesyd, withowtyn drede.  
 Wysly to wysse yow from weys wylde  
 100 To lysten his lore — all men I rede —  
 And youre erys to herke.  
 Take good hede what he doth preche,  
 And folwyth the lawys that he doth teche,  
 For he shal be youre altheris leche  
 105 To save yow from develys derke.

*beloved  
 Spirit; extends*

*deed  
 obedient  
 certainly  
 Wisely to guide; wild ways  
 to his teaching; advise  
 ears to listen*

*the healer of all of you  
 dark devils*

**JOHANNES** Here I se with opyn syght  
 The Sone of God that thu erte!  
 The Holy Goost over thee doth lyght!  
 Thi Faderys voys I here ful smerte!  
 110 The childe of God — as I thee plyght —  
 That thu be whilys I am qwerte!  
 I shall wyttnes to every whyght  
 And teche it trewly with all myn hert!  
 To sese, it were grett synne,  
 115 For Goddys Sone, I wurchypp thee!

*in plain view  
 are  
 alight  
 Father's; distinctly hear  
 I assure you  
 as I am sound and whole  
 creature*

*To cease; it would be  
 God's*

<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Spirit descends upon him, and God, the Heavenly Father, says in heaven*

From hevyn, thin hygh magesté,  
 Thu comyst hedyr from dygnité,  
 Mannys sowle to wyne. *power*  
*here; high position*  
*Man's soul*

**JHESUS** Johan Baptyste, thu be wyttnes:  
 120 The trewth loke that thu nat hyde, *truth see; not*  
 For now I passe forth into wyldernes,  
 The Holy Gost shal be my gyde.

*[Hic Ihesus transit in desertum dicens et cetera.]*<sup>1</sup>

In whylsum place of desertnes *wild; desolation*  
 Fourty days, a terme ful wyde, *long time*  
 125 And fourty nyghtys, both more and lesse, *(the whole duration)*  
 Withowtyn bodyly fode, therto abyde — *to remain*  
 For man thus do I swynke. *labor*  
 Into deserte I passe my way,  
 For mannys sake — as I yow say — *man's; say to you*  
 130 Fourty nyghtys and fourty day  
 I shal nowther ete nor drynke. *neither*

**JOHANNES** In place where I passe, wyttnes I bere. *I go*  
 The trewth shal I telle wheresoevyr I go  
 That Cryst, the Sone of God, is become oure fere, *our friend*  
 135 Clad in oure clothynge to sofer for us wo. *to suffer; woe*  
 I baptyzid with myn owyn handys Cryst Jhesu ryght here,  
 And now he is to wyldyrnes, penawns ther to do, *in the wilderness, penance*  
 Informyng so all us that Lord that hath no pere *Teaching; peer*  
 To do for oure trespase, penawnce here also.  
 140 Of penawnce do I preche  
 In wyttnes ryght be this: *witness; by*  
 That what man for his mys *sin*  
 Doth penawns here, iwys, *penance; indeed*  
 His sowle he doth wel leche. *heal*  
 145 All men on ground that be yitt on lyve: *yet alive*  
 For youre grett offens, loke ye be repentaunt! *offenses*  
 Of all youre venym synne, I rede that ye yow shryve;<sup>2</sup>  
 For God is ful redy, mercy for to graunt.  
 Be contryte for youre trespas, and penauns do belyve! *do quickly*  
 150 Reconsyle youreself and be to God plesaunt.  
 With contrysyon, schryffte, and penauns the devyl may ye dryve,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Here Jesus goes to the wilderness saying, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Of all your venomous sins, I advise that you confess yourselves

<sup>3</sup> With contrition, confession, and penance you may drive the devil away

- For fro youre felachep he shal not be erraunt! *fellowship; wandering*  
 Yow for to meve *move*  
 To penauns, and synne forsake  
 155 Shryfte of mowth loke that ye make; *Oral confession*  
 And than the fende in helle so blake, *then; fiend; black*  
 He shal yow nevyrmore greve. *grieve*
- A tre that is bareyn and wyl bere no frute, *barren*  
 The ownere wyl hewe it down and cast it on the fyre! *cut*  
 160 Ryght so it be man that folwyth the fowle sute *does the same foul deeds*  
 Of the devyl of helle and werkyth his desyre!  
 God wyl be vengyd on man that is both dum and mute *avenged; dumb*  
 That wyl nevyr be shrevyn but evyrmore doth delyre. *confess; goes astray*  
 Clothe thee in clennes: with vertu be indute, *be covered*  
 165 And God, with his grace, he wyl the sone inspyre  
 To amendynge of thi mys. *sin*  
 Schryfte of mowthe may best thee save. *Confession*  
 Penauns for synne, what man wyl have. *Penance; is what*  
 Whan that his body is leyd in grave, *When; laid*  
 170 His sowle shal go to blys.
- Corne that is good, man kepe it ful clene; *Grain*  
 Chaff that is sympyl is sett wul nere at nought: *Lowly chaff is nearly worthless*  
 So good men of levyng to God chosyn bene *living; are*  
 Whan synful men be lyke chaff and to helle shul be brought, *When*  
 175 Good penauns yow to preche ful hertyly do I mene, *penance; mean to do*  
 Shryfft and satsfaccyon evyrmore to have in thought.  
 What man in good penauns and schryfte of mowth be sene<sup>1</sup>  
 Of God, he is wel-belovyd, that all this worlde hath wrought *who all*  
 And allthinge of nowth dede make. *everything of nothing did*  
 180 Now have I tawght yow good penauns. *penance*  
 God graunt yow grace at his plesauns  
 To have of synne delyverauns,  
 For now my leve I take.

## 23. PARLIAMENT OF HELL; TEMPTATION

- SATHAN** Now Belyard and Belzabub, ye derwurthy devel of helle *excellent devils*  
 And wysest of councel amongys all the rowte: *among; company*  
 Herke now what I sey! A tale I shall yow telle  
 That trobelyth sore my stomak, therof I have grett dowte! *troubles; doubt*  
**BELYALL** Syr Sathanas, oure sovereyn syre, with thee wol we dwelle! *will*  
 6 All redy at thi byddyng to thee do we lowte! *bow*

<sup>1</sup> Whatever man is seen in good penance and spoken shrift (confession)

- If thou have any nede of oure wyse counselle,  
Telle us now thi qwestyon, all out and oute  
Sey al thi dowte, bedene. *completely*  
*Express; doubt (fear), indeed*
- BELSABUB** Ya, sere, telle us thi dowte by and by  
11 And we shul telle thee so sekyrly *so surely*  
That thou shalt know verryly *truly*  
What thi dowte doth mene.
- SATHAN** The dowte that I have — it is of Cryst, iwys: *indeed*  
15 Born he was in Bedleem, as it is seyde, *Bethlehem*  
And many a man wenyth that Goddys sone he is, *believes; God's*  
Born of a woman, and she a clene mayde. *virgin*  
And all that evyr he prechyth, it is of hevyn blys. *heaven's bliss*  
He wyl lese oure lawe — I am ryght sore afrayd!  
20 Fayn wold I knowe who were fadyr his, *Gladly; his father*  
For of this grett dowte I am sore dysmayd, *doubt*  
Indede!  
If that he be Goddys childe *God's*  
And born of a mayde mylde, *mild maiden*  
25 Than be we ryght sore begylde *Then; totally beguiled*  
And short shal ben oure spede. *success*
- Therefore, serys, sumwhat that ye shewe *sirs; in some degree*  
In this grett dowth what is best to do:  
If he be Goddys sone, he wyl brede a shrewe *God's; cause a wicked result*  
30 And werke us mech wrake, both wrech and woo!  
Sorwe and care he wyl sone strewe! *work; much harm; pain*  
All oure gode days than shulde sone be goo, *soon spread*  
And all oure lore and all oure lawe he wyl down hewe, *good; soon be gone*  
And than be we all lorn if that it be soo! *teaching; cut down*  
35 He wyll don us all tene; *then; lost*  
He wyll be lorde over hevyn and helle, *do us all harm*  
And feche away all oure catelle! *fetch; chattel (souls)*  
Therefore, shewe now sum good counselle,  
What comfort may best bene. *best be*
- BELYALL** The best wytt that I kan say — *plan*  
41 Hym to tempte, forsoth, it is. *truly*  
With sotyl whylys, if that thou may  
Asay to make hym to don amys. *subtle wiles*  
If that he synne — this is no nay — *Try; to do amiss*  
45 He may nat be Kynge of Blys! *this is for sure*  
Hym to tempte, go walke thi way  
For best counsell I trowe be this —  
Go forth now and assay. *think*  
*test [him]*
- BELSABUB** The best wytt I hold it be: *plan*  
50 Hym to tempte in synnys thre, *three sins*

	The whiche mankende is frelté Doth falle sonest away.	<i>mankind's frailty quickly</i>
<b>SATHAN</b>	So afftyr youre wytt now wyll I werke. I wyll no lengere here abyde.	<i>advice stay</i>
55	Be he nevyr so wyse a clerke, I shal apposyn hym withinne a tyde.	<i>Even if he's the wisest test; in a moment</i>
<b>BELSABUB</b>	Now lovely Lucyfer in helle so derke, Kynge and lorde of synne and pryde, With sum myst his wyttys to merke,	<i>dark mist; wits to dull</i>
60	He send thee grace to be thi gyde And evyrmore be thi spede.	<i>May he help</i>
<b>BELYALL</b>	All the develys that ben in helle Shul pray to Mahound, as I thee telle That thu mayst spede this jurney well	<i>devils; are Shall; Mohammed succeed in</i>
65	And comferte thee in this dede.	<i>deed</i>
<b>JHESUS</b>	Fourty days and fourty nyght Now have I fastyd for mannys sake. A more grett hungyr had nevyr no wyght Than I myself begynne to take!	<i>man's no one</i>
70	For hungyr in peyn, stronge am I pyght, And bred have I non, myn hungyr for to slake. A lytel of a loof relese myn hungyr myght, But mursele have I non, my comferte for to make. This suffyr I, man, for thee —	<i>fixed bread; none; to appease a loaf morsel; none</i>
75	For thi glotenye and metys wronge I suffyr for thee, this hungyr stronge! I am afferde it wyl be longe Or thu do thus for me.	<i>gluttony; sinful meals afraid; a long time Before</i>
<b>SATHAN</b>	The Sone of God if that thu be, 80 Be the grett myght of thi Godhede, Turne these flyntys, anon lett se, From arde stonys to tendyr brede! More bettyr it is as I telle thee, Wysely to werke aftyr my reed	<i>By rocks, now let's see hard stones; bread work; advice</i>
85	And shewe thi myght of grett majesté Than thorwe grett hungyr for to be dede! These stonys now bred thu make, Goddys Sone, if that thu be. Make these stonys bred, lett se!	<i>great power through; to be dead God's let's see</i>
90	Than mayste thu ete ryght good plenté, Thyn hungyr for to slake.	<i>Then; eat to lessen</i>
<b>JHESUS</b>	Nott only be bred mannys lyff yitt stood But in the Wurde of God, as I thee say!	<i>by bread man's life Word</i>

- 95 To mannys sowle is nevyr mete so good *man's; food*  
 As is the Wurd of God that prechid is alway! *is preached*  
 Bred materyal doth norch blood, *Physical bread; nourish*  
 But to mannys sowle — this is no nay — *man's soul; this is the truth*  
 Nevymore may be a betyr food  
 Than the Wurd of God that lestyth ay. *lasts forever*  
 100 To here Goddys Wurde, therfore, man, love: *hear God's Word*  
 Thi body doth love materal brede. *physical bread*  
 Without the Wurde of God, thi soule is but dede. *Word; dead*  
 To love prechyng, therfore, I rede, *advise*  
 If thu wylt duellyn in blysse above. *will dwell*

- SATHAN** For no grett hungyr that I kan se  
 106 In glotony thu wylt not synne.  
 Now to the temple com forth with me,  
 And ther shal I shewe thee a praty gynne! *show; clever trick*  
 Up to this pynnable now go we.  
 110 I shal thee sett on the hyghest pynne. *point*  
 Ther I preve what that thu be. *prove*  
 Or that we tweyn part atwynne, *Before we part*  
 I shal knowe what myght thu have. *powers*

[*Hic ascendit Deus pinnaculum templi dum diabolus dicit quod sequitur:*<sup>1</sup>

- Whan thu art sett upon the pynnable, *When*  
 115 Thu shalt ther pleyn a qweynt steracle *play a strange scene*  
 Or ellys shewe a grett meracle, *else perform*  
 Thyself from hurte thu save.

[*Hic Satanas ponit Ihesum super pinnaculum, dicens:*<sup>2</sup>

- Now if thu be Goddys Sone of myght, *God's*  
 Ryght down to the erth anon thu falle, *soon*  
 120 And save thisylf in every plyght, *danger*  
 From harm and hurte and scappys alle! *slips*  
 For it is wretyn: with aungelys bryght *by means of angels*  
 That ben in hevyn, thi Faderys halle, *Father's mansion*  
 Thee to kepe, both day and nyght, *guard*  
 125 Shul be ful redy as thi thralle, *Shall; servants*  
 Hurt that thu non have. *So that you will not*  
 That thu stomele not ageyn the ston *stumble; against*  
 And hurt thi fote as thu dost gon *foot; go*

<sup>1</sup> Here God ascends the temple's pinnacle while the devil says the following

<sup>2</sup> Here Satan places Jesus on the pinnacle, saying

	Aungell be redy, all everychon, 130 In weys thee to save.	<i>Angels; all of them</i>
<b>JHESUS</b>	It is wretyn in Holy Book: "Thi Lorde God thou shalt not tempte." All thyng must obeye to Goddys look. Out of his myght is non exempt. 135 Out of thi cursyngnes and cruel crook, By Godys grace, man shal be redempt! Whan thou to helle, thi brennyng brook To endles payne shal evyr be dempt, Therin alwey to abyde. 140 Thi Lorde God thou tempt no more — It is nott syttenge to thi lore. I bydde thee sese anon, therefore, And tempte God in no tyde.	<i>the Bible be obedient in God's eyes nothing clutches redeemed burning damned to remain fitting; doctrine cease now never</i>
<b>SATHAN</b>	Ow, in gloteny nor in veynglory it doth ryght nott away! 145 Cryst for to tempt, it profyteth me ryght nought! I must now begynne to have a newe travayl: In covetyse to tempt hym it comyth now in my thought, For if I went thus away and shrynkyl as a snayle, Lorn were the labore all that I have wrought. 150 Therfore in covetyse oure syre I shal asayle And assay into that synne yf he may be brought. Anon, forthryght. Syr, yitt onys I pray to thee: To this hygh hyl com forth with me — 155 I shal thee shewe many a ceté And many a wurthy syght.	<i>does no good nothing approach covetous Lost; done assail see if Right now yet one more time show; city</i>
<i>[Tunc Ihesus transit cum diabolo super montem, et diabolus dicit:<sup>1</sup></i>		
	Into the northe loke forth evyn pleyn: The towre of Babolony ther mayst thou se; The ceté of Jerusalem stondyth ther ageyn; 160 And evyn fast therby stondyth Galylé; Nazareth, Naverne, and the kyngdom of Spayn; Zabulon and Neptalym — that is a rych countré; Bothe Zebee and Salmanna thou mayst se, serteyn; Itayl and Archage, that wurthy remys be; 165 Both Januense and Jurye; Rome doth stonde before thee ryght; The Temple of Salamon, as sylver bryght;	<i>look staight ahead Babylon near Navarre Zebulon; Nephtali certainly see Italy; Arcady; realms Genoa(?); Judea right before you Solomon</i>

<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus goes with the devil up on a mountain, and the devil says



- And here mayst thou se openly with syght  
Both Fraunce and Normandy. *see clearly*
- 170 Turne thee now and this syde, and se here Lombardy,  
Of spycery ther growyth many an hundryd balys; *Lombardy*  
Archas and Aragon and grett Almonye; *spices; bales*  
Parys and Portyngale and the town of Galys; *Arcas; Germany*  
Pownteys and Poperynge and also Pycardye; *Paris; Portugal; Galicia*  
175 Erlonde, Scottlonde, and the londe of Walys; *Poitiers; Poperinghe*  
Grete pylis and castellys thou mayst se with eye! *Ireland, Scotland; Wales*  
Ya, and all the wyd werde — withoute mo talys — *towers; castles*  
All this longygh to me. *world*  
If thou wylt knele down to the grownde *belongs*
- 180 And wurchep me now in this stownde, *this instant*  
All this world that is so rownd  
I shal it gyve to thee.
- JHESUS** Go abak, thou fowle Sathanas! *Get away*  
In Holy Scrypture, wretyn it is,
- 185 Thi Lorde God to wurchipp in every plas, *place*  
As for his thrall and thou servaunt his. *As if you [were]; slave*
- SATHAN** Out, out! Harrow! Alas, alas!  
I woundyr sore — what is he, this? *greatly wonder*  
I cannot brynge hym to no trespas
- 190 Nere be no synne to don amys! *Nor by; do wrong*  
He byddyth me gon abakke! *go away*  
What that he is I cannot se — *discern*  
Whethyr God or man, what that he be?  
I kannot telle in no degré! *in any way*
- 195 For sorwe I lete a crakke. *sorrow; a fart*
- [*Hic venient angeli cantantes et ministrantes ei: "Gloria tibi Domini," dicens.*<sup>1</sup>]
- JHESUS** Now all mankende exauple take  
By these grete werkys that thou dost se *great works*  
How that the devyll of helle so blake, *so black*  
In synne was besy to tempte me. *busy*
- 200 For all hise maystryes that he dyd make, *cunning tricks*  
He is overcom and now doth fle!  
All this I suffyr for mannys sake, *man's*  
To teche thee how thou shalt rewle thee. *conduct yourselves*  
Whan the devyll dothe thee assayle,
- 205 Loke thou concete nevyr to synne, *consent*  
For no sleytys, ne for no gynne. *tricks, nor; wiles*

<sup>1</sup> Here come angels singing and ministering to him, saying: "Glory to you, Lord," and he [Jesus] saying

	And than the victory shalt thou wyne: The devyl shal lesyn all his travayl.	<i>then waste; work</i>
210	To suffyr temptacyon, it is grett peyn: If thou withstonde it, thou wynnyst grett mede Of God, the more grace thou hast serteyn. If thou withsett the devyl in his dede, Thow that the fende tempt thee ageyn, Of his power take thou no drede, 215 For God hath thee govyn both myght and mayn. Hym for to withsytt, evyr at nede, Thou hast more myght than he. Whan the devyl doth tempte thee, thoo, Shewe thi myght agens thi foo 220 Whan thi sowle partyth thee froo In blysse, than, shal it be. Amen.	<i>win great rewards certainly resist; deeds Even though; fiend; again no fear given; strength to resist  When; though against; foe soul parts from you then</i>

## 24. WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY

[*Hic de muliere in adulterio deprehensa.*      *This deals with the woman taken in adultery*]

<b>JHESUS</b>	<i>Nolo mortem peccatoris.</i> <sup>1</sup> Man, for thi synne take repentaunce. If thou amende that is amys, Than hevyn shal be thin herytaunce.	<i>amiss Then; your inheritance</i>
5	Thow thou have don agens God grevauns, Yett mercy to haske, loke thou be bolde. His mercy doth passe, in trewe balauns, All cruel jugement be many folde.	<i>trespass to ask balance by</i>
10	Thow that your synnys be nevyr so grett, For hem be sad and aske mercy. Sone of my Fadyr, grace ye may get With the leste teer wepyng owte of youre ey. My Fadyr me sent, thee, man, to bye All thi raunsom, mysylfe must pay. 15 For love of thee, mysylfe wyl dye. Iff thou aske mercy, I sey nevyr nay.	<i>Though; sins them Soon smallest tear; eye to redeem</i>
	Into the erth from hevyn above, Thi sorwe to sese and joye to restore! Man, I cam down all for thi love!	<i>sorrow to cease</i>

<sup>1</sup> *I do not wish the death of the sinner.* (See Ezechiel 33:11)

- 20 Love me ageyn — I aske no more.  
 Thow thu myshappe and synne ful sore, *Though; stray*  
 Yit turne agen and mercy crave.  
 It is thi fawte and thu be lore: *fault if you are lost*  
 Haske thu mercy and thu shalt have. *Ask*
- 25 Upon thi neybore be not vengabyl *neighbor; vengeful*  
 Ageyn the lawe if he offende. *Against*  
 Lyke as he is, thu art unstabyl, *apt to fall*  
 Thyn owyn frelté evyr thu attende. *attend to*
- 30 Evermore thi neybore helpe to amende,  
 Evyn as thu woldyst, he shulde thee. *would*  
 Ageyn hym wrath if thu accende, *Against; kindle*  
 The same in happ wyll falle on thee. *perhaps*
- Eche man to othyr be mercyable, *merciful*  
 And mercy he shal have at nede.
- 35 What man of mercy is not tretable *approachable*  
 Whan he askyth mercy, he shal not spede. *prosper*  
 Mercy to graunt I com, indede.  
 Whoso aske mercy, he shal have grace.
- 40 Lett no man dowte for his mysdede, *fear; misdeeds*  
 But evyr aske mercy whyl he hath space. *the opportunity*
- SCRIBA** Alas, alas! Oure lawe is lorn! *lost*  
 A fals ypocryte, Jhesu, be name — *hypocrite; by*  
 That of a sheppherdis dowtyr was born — *shepherd's daughter*  
 Wyl breke oure lawe and make it lame!
- 45 He wyl us werke ryght mekyl shame! *cause us great*  
 His fals purpos — if he upholde — *if he succeeds*  
 All oure lawys he doth defame!  
 That stynkyng beggere is woundyr bolde! *wonderously*
- PHARISEUS** Sere Scrybe, in feyth! That ypocryte *Sir; hypocrite*  
 50 Wyl turne this londe al to his lore! *teaching*  
 Therfore I counsell hym to indyte  
 And chastyse hym ryght wel, therfore! *advise [that we] accuse him*
- SCRIBA** On hym beleve many a score:  
 In his prechyng he is so gay, *eloquent*  
 55 Ech man hym folwygh ever more and more! *follows*  
 Agens that he seyth, no man seyth nay. *what; contradicts*
- PHARISEUS** A fals qwarel — if we cowde feyne — *could contrive*  
 That ypocrite to puttyn in blame! *to blame*  
 All his prechyng shulde sone disteyne *be sullied*  
 60 And than his wurchepp shuld turne to shame. *then*  
 With sum falshede to spylyn his name, *falsehood; ruin*

	Lett us assay his lore to spylle, The pepyl with hym yff we cowde grame. Than shulde we sone have al oure wyll.	<i>try; teaching to destroy could anger Then; soon; desires</i>
<b>ACCUSATOR</b>	Herke, Sere Pharysew and Sere Scrybe:	<i>Sir Pharisee</i>
66	A ryght good sporte I kan yow telle! I undyrtake that ryght a good brybe We all shul have to kepe counsell: A fayre yonge qwene hereby doth dwelle,	<i>bawdy tale  this secret harlot</i>
70	Both fresch and gay upon to loke, And a tall man with her doth melle. The wey into hyr chawmere ryght evyn he toke.	<i>beautiful stalwart; is having intercourse her chamber; directly</i>
	Lett us thre now go streyte thedyr, The wey ful evyn I shall yow lede,	<i>three; there</i>
75	And we shul take them both togedyr Whyll that thei do that synful dede.	
<b>SCRIBA</b>	Art thu sekyr that we shal spede? Shall we hym fynde whan we cum there?	<i>sure; succeed</i>
<b>ACCUSATOR</b>	Be my trowth, I have no drede.	<i>truth; fear</i>
80	The hare fro the forme we shal arere.	<i>burrow; flush out</i>
<b>PHARISEUS</b>	We shal have game and this be trewe! Lete us thre werke by on assent. We wyl her brynge evyn beforn Jhesu, And of her lyff the truth present,	<i>sport if three; with one mind</i>
85	How in advowtrye hyr lyff is lent! Than hym beforn whan she is browth, We shul hym aske the trew jugement, What lawfull deth to her is wrouth.	<i>adultery her life Then before him; brought  is fitting</i>
	Of grace and mercy hevyr he doth preche, And that no man shulde be vengeable. Ageyn the woman, if he sey wrech, Than of his prechyng he is unstabyll! And if we fynde hym varyable	<i>ever vengeful pronounces punishment Then; inconsistent</i>
90	Of his prechyng that he hath tawth, Than have we cawse bothe juste and able, For a fals man that he be cawth.	<i>taught Then caught</i>
<b>SCRIBA</b>	Now be grete God, ye sey ful well! If we hym fyndyn in varyaunce, We have good reson, as ye do tell,	<i>by; rightly</i>
100	Hym for to brynge to foule myschauns. If he holde styлле his dalyauns And preche of mercy — hir for to save —	<i>grief should persist in; dalliance her</i>

- Than have we mater of gret substauns,  
Hym for to kylle and putt in grave. *matter*
- 105 Grett reson why I shal yow telle, *tell you this*  
For Moyses doth bydde in oure lawe  
That every advowterere we shuld qwelle, *adulterer; kill*  
And yitt with stonys thei shulde be slawe. *slain*  
Ageyn Moyses if that he drawe *Against; contradicts*
- 110 That synful woman with grace to helpe, *to help that woman*  
He shal nevyr skape out of oure awe, *escape; power*  
But he shal dye lyke a dogge whelpe. *puppy*
- ACCUSATOR** Ye tary ovyrlonge, serys, I sey yow  
They wyl sone parte, as that I gesse! *I think*
- 115 Therfore, if ye wyl have youre pray now, *prey*  
Lete us go take them in here whantownnesse. *their wantonness*
- PHARISEUS** Goo thu befor, the way to dresse.  
We shal thee folwe within short whyle. *to ready*  
Iff that we may that quene dystresse, *whore*
- 120 I hope we shal Jhesu begyle.
- SCRIBA** Breke up the dore, and go we inne!  
Sett to the shuldyr with all thi myght!  
We shal hem take evyn in here synne, *them; their*  
Here owyn trespas shal them indite. *Their; accuse them*
- [*Hic Juvenis quidam extra currit in deploydo, calligis non ligatis et braccas in manu tenens; et dicit Accusator:*<sup>1</sup>
- ACCUSATOR** Stow that harlot, sum erthely wyght, *Arrest; someone*  
126 That in advowtrye here is fownde! *adultery*
- JUVENIS** Yiff any man stow me this nyth, *stops; night*  
I shal hym geve a dedly wownde!
- If any man my wey doth stoppe,  
130 Or we departe, ded shal he be! *Before*  
I shal this daggare putt in his croppe! *belly (or throat)*  
I shal hym kylle, or he shal me! *before he shall [kill] me*
- PHARISEUS** Grett Goddys curse mut go with thee!  
With suche a shrewe wyl I not melle! *May God's curse*
- JUVENIS** That same blyssynge I gyff yow thre *scoundrel; mix*  
136 And qwheth yow alle to the devyl of helle! *give you three*  
*bequeath you*

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<sup>1</sup> Here, the young man runs outside in his underwear with his boots untied and holding his pants in his hand, and the Accuser says:

- In feyth, I was so sore affrayd  
 Of yone thre shrewys — the sothe to say —  
 My breche be nott yett well upteyd!
- 140 I had such hast to renne away  
 Thei shal nevyr cacche me in such a fray.  
 I am full glad that I am gon!  
 Adewe, adewe — a twenti devyl way!  
 And Goddys curse have ye everychon!
- SCRIBA** Come forth, thou stotte! Com forth, thou scowte!  
 146 Com forth, thou bysmare and brothel bolde!  
 Com forth, thou hore and stynkyng bych clowte!  
 How longe hast thou such harlotry holde?
- PHARISEUS** Com forth, thou quene! Come forth, thou scolde!  
 150 Com forth, thou sloveyn! Com forth, thou slutte!  
 We shal thee tecche with carys colde,  
 A lytyl bettyr to kepe thi kutte!
- MULIER** A, mercy! Mercy, serys, I yow pray!  
 For Goddys love, have mercy on me!  
 155 Of my myslevynge, me not bewray!  
 Have mercy on me, for charyté!
- ACCUSATOR** Aske us no mercy! It shal not be!  
 We shul so ordeyn for thi lott  
 That thou shalt dye for thin advowtrye!  
 160 Therefore, com forth, thou stynkyng stott!
- MULIER** Serys, my wurchep if ye wyl save,  
 And helpe I have non opyn shame,  
 Bothe gold and sylver ye shul have,  
 So that in clennes ye kepe my name.
- SCRIBA** Mede for to take, we were to blame  
 166 To save suche stottys! It shal not be!  
 We shal brynge thee to suche a game  
 That all advowterers shul lern be thee.
- MULIER** Stondynge ye wyl not graunt me grace,  
 170 But for my synne that I shal dye,  
 I pray yow kille me here in this place  
 And lete not the pepyl upon me crye.  
 If I be sclaudryd opynly,  
 To all my frendys, it shul be shame.
- 175 I pray yow, kille me prevyly.  
 Lete not the pepyl know my defame.
- PHARISEUS** Fy on thee, scowte! The devyl thee qwelle!  
 Ageyn the lawe shul we thee kyll?

*scoundrels; truth*  
*underpants; tied*  
*run*  
*assault*  
*the devil take you*  
*each one of you*

*slut; rascal*  
*wretch; harlot*  
*bitch*  
*have you done*  
*harlot*  
*filthy woman*  
*deadly concerns*  
*cunt*

*sirs*  
*sinful life; expose*

*adultery*  
*slut*

*no public shame*  
*silver*  
*unspotted*  
*A bribe; would be ashamed*  
*sluts*  
*have such play with you*  
*adulterers; by you*

*Since*

*people*  
*slandered*

*privately*  
*people; shame*

*wretch; kill*  
*Against*

Fyrst shal hange thee — the devyl of helle —  
 180 Or we such folyes shulde fulfyll!  
 Thow it lyke thee nevyr so ill,  
 Befforn the prophete thu shalt have lawe!  
 Lyke as Moyses doth charge us tyll,  
 With grett stonys thu shalt be slawe.

*We would first  
 Before; follies  
 Although you would hate it  
 charged us to do  
 slain*

**ACCUSATOR** Com forth apase, thu stynkyng scowte!  
 186 Before the prophete thu were this day,  
 Or I shal geve thee such a clowte  
 That thu shalt fall down evyn in the way.

**SCRIBA** Now, be grett God, and I thee pay,  
 190 Such a buffett I shal thee take  
 That all the teth, I dare wel say,  
 Withinne thin heed for who shul shake.

*quickly; wretch  
 a blow  
 by; if I strike you  
 deliver  
 head for woe*

**PHARISEUS** Herke, sere prophete, we all yow pray —  
 To gyff trewe dom and just sentence  
 195 Upon this woman, which this same day  
 In synfull advowtery hath don offense.

*judgment  
 adultery*

*[Hic Jhesu, dum isti accusant mulierem, continue debet digito suo scribere in terra.]<sup>1</sup>*

**ACCUSATOR** Se, we have brought her to your presens  
 Becawse ye ben a wyse prophete  
 That ye shal telle, be consyens,  
 200 What deth to hyr ye thynke most mete.

**SCRIBA** In Moyses lawe, ryght thus we fynde  
 That such fals lovers shul be slayn!  
 Streyte to a stake we shul hem bynde  
 And with grett stonys brest out ther brayn!

205 Of your concyens, telle us thee playn:  
 With this woman, what shal be wrought?  
 Shall we lete her go qwyte agayn,  
 Or to hir deth shal she be brought?

*by your sense of justice  
 her; fitting  
 Moses'  
 him (the offender)  
 their brains  
 In your judgment  
 done  
 free  
 her*

*[Jhesus nichil respondit sed semper scrybyt in terra.]<sup>2</sup>*

**MULIER** Now, holy prophete, be mercyable!  
 210 Upon me, wrecch, take no vengeaunce,  
 For my synnys abhomynable!  
 In hert I have grett repentaunce!

*merciful  
 In [my] heart*

<sup>1</sup> Here Jesus, while they accuse the woman, should write continuously in the earth with his finger

<sup>2</sup> Jesus responds with nothing, but continues to write on the ground

I am wel wurthy to have myschaunce,  
Both bodyly deth and werdly shame,  
215 But, gracyous prophete, of socurraunce,  
This tyme pray yow, for Goddys name!

*grief*  
*worldly*  
*succor*

**PHARISEUS** Ageyn the lawe thu dedyst offens:  
Therefore, of grace speke thu no more!  
As Moyses gevyth in law sentens,  
220 Thu shalt be stonyd to deth, therefore.

*Against; did*  
*punishment*

**ACCUSATOR** Ha don, sere prophete! Telle us youre lore!  
Shul we this woman with stonys kyll,  
Or to hir hous hir home restore?  
224 In this mater, tell us youre wyll.

*Get on with it; decision*  
*Shall*  
*her; return*

**SCRIBA** In a colde stodye me thynkyth ye sytt.  
Good sere, awake! Telle us youre thought:  
Shal she be stonyd? Telle us youre wytt:  
Or in what rewle shal sche be brought?

*deep thought*  
*sir*  
*judgment*  
*under what law*

**JHESUS** Loke which of yow that nevyr synne wrought  
230 But is of lyff clenner than she?  
Cast at her stonys, and spare her nowght,  
Clene out of synne if that ye be.

*committed*  
*life cleaner*  
*not*  
*Sinless*

*[Hic Jhesus iterum se inclinans scribet in terra; et omnes accusatores, quasi confusi, separatim in tribus locis se disiungent.]*<sup>1</sup>

**PHARISEUS** Alas, alas! I am ashamyd!  
I am aferde that I shal deye!  
235 All myn synnys — evyn propyrly namyd —  
Yon prophete dede wryte befor myn eye!  
Iff that my felawys that dude aspye,  
They wyll telle it bothe fer and wyde!  
My synfull levyng, if thei out crye,  
240 I wot nevyr wher myn heed to hyde.

*afraid*  
*every one*  
*did*  
*fellows; did spot it*  
*far*  
*proclaim it*  
*will never know; head*

**ACCUSATOR** Alas, for sorwe, myn herte doth blede!  
All my synnes, yon man dude wryte!  
If that my felawys to them toke hede,  
I kanot me from deth acqyte.  
245 I wolde I wore hyd sumwhere out of syght  
That men shuld me nowhere se, ne knowe,  
Iff I be take, I am afflyght  
In mekyl shame I shal be throwe.

*sorrow; heart*  
*did*  
*fellows*  
*acquit myself*  
*were hidden*  
*nor*  
*taken; afraid*  
*thrown*

---

<sup>1</sup> Here Jesus, bending down again, will write in the dirt; and all of the accusers, as if confused, will disperse into three directions



- SCRIBA** Alas, the tyme that this betyd! *happened*  
 250 Ryght byttyr care doth me embrace! *distress*  
 All my synnys be now unhyd! *revealed*  
 Yon man befor me, hem all doth trace. *them; has traced*  
 If I were onys out of this place, *at once*  
 To suffyr deth gret and vengeauns able,  
 255 I wyl nevyr come befor his face  
 Thow I shuld dye in a stable. *Even though*
- MULIER** Thow I be wurthy for my trespas  
 To suffyr deth abhomynable —  
 Yitt, holy prophete, of youre hygh grace,  
 260 In your jugement, be mercyable! *merciful*  
 I wyl nevyrmore be so unstable. *immoral*  
 O, holy prophete, graunt me mercy!  
 Of myn synnys unresonable,  
 With all myn hert I am sory! *heart*
- JHESUS** Where be thi fomen that dude thee accuse? *foes; did*  
 266 Why have thei left us to alone? *two*
- MULIER** Bycawse they cowde nat hemself excuse, *not themselves*  
 With shame they fled hens, everychone. *everyone*  
 But, gracyous prophete, lyst to my mone:  
 270 Of my sorwe take compassyon. *listen; petition*  
 Now all myn ennyes hens be gone,  
 Sey me sum wurde of consolacyon. *Say to me*
- JHESUS** For tho synnys that thu hast wrought, *committed*  
 Hath any man condempnyd thee?
- MULIER** Nay, forsoth that hath ther nought, *none*  
 276 But in youre grace I putt me.
- JHESUS** For me, thu shalt nat condempnyd be.  
 Go hom ageyn and walk at large.  
 Loke that thu leve in honesté *live*  
 280 And wyl no more to synne, I thee charge.
- MULIER** I thanke yow hyghly, holy prophete,  
 Of this grett grace ye have me graunt. *granted me*  
 All my lewde lyff I shal doun lete *forsake*  
 And fonde to be Goddys trewe servaunt. *try; God's*
- JHESUS** What man of synne be repentaunt,  
 286 Of God if he wyl mercy crave,  
 God of mercy is so habundawnt *abundant*  
 That, what man haske it, he shal it have. *whoever asks*
- Whan man is contrite and hath wonne grace, *When*  
 290 God wele not kepe olde wreth in mynde: *wrath*

	But bettyr love to hem he has,	<i>him</i>
	Very contryte whan he them fynde.	<i>when</i>
	Now God that dyed for all mankende:	<i>died</i>
	Save all these pepyl, both nyght and day,	
295	And of oure synnys he us unbynde,	
	Hyghe Lorde of Hevyn that best may.	
	Amen.	

## 25. RAISING OF LAZARUS

[*Hic incipit de suscitacione Lazari.*][*Here begins the raising of Lazarus*]

<b>LAZARUS</b>	God, that all thyng dede make of nowth	<i>did; nothing</i>
	And puttyst eche creature to his fenaunce,	<i>divine purpose</i>
	Save thyn handwerke that thu hast wrought,	<i>made</i>
	As thu art Lord of hygh substauns.	
5	O, gracyous God, att thi plesauns,	<i>will</i>
	Of my dysese now comforte me,	<i>disease</i>
	Which thurowe syknes hath such penawnce!	<i>suffering</i>
	Onethys for heedache may I now se!	<i>Scarcely for [my] headaches</i>
	Systyr Martha and Mawdelyn eke,	<i>also</i>
10	With hast helpe me in bedde to dresse,	<i>haste; get in bed</i>
	For trewly, I am so woundyrly seke	<i>wondrously ill</i>
	I may nevyr schape this grett seknes!	<i>escape; sickness</i>
	My deth is com now, I gesse.	
	Help into chawmere that I be led,	<i>my room</i>
15	My grett desesse I hope shal lesse	<i>suffering</i>
	If I were leyd upon a bed.	
<b>MARTHA</b>	Lazarus, brother, be of good cher!	
	I hope youre syknes ryght wel shal slake.	<i>lessen</i>
	Upon this bed rest yow rygh here	<i>right here</i>
20	And a good slep assay to take.	<i>try</i>
<b>MAGDALYN</b>	Now, jentyl brothy, for Goddys sake,	
	Lyfte up yowre hert and be not feynt.	
	An hevy housholde with us ye make	<i>sorrowful</i>
	If dedly syknes have yow ateynt.	<i>gotten</i>
<b>LAZARUS</b>	Forsothe, dere systeryn, I may not slepe —	<i>Honestly, dear sisters</i>
26	My seknes so sore doth evyr encrese!	
	Of me I pray yow take ryght good kepe	<i>good watch</i>
	Tyll that my peyne begynne relese.	<i>abate</i>
<b>MARTHA</b>	God graunt grace that it may sese.	<i>cease</i>
30	Of syknes, God make yow sownde	<i>healthy</i>

Or ellys oure joy wyll sone dyscres  
In so grett peynes if ye ly bownde. *decrease*

**MAGDALYN** A, brothir, brothir! Lyfte up youre herte! *heart*  
Your hevy cher doth us grevaunce. *countenance causes us grief*  
35 If deth from us yow shulde departe,  
Than were we brought in comberaunce. *Then; distress*  
Ye be oure brothyr, syb of alyaunce! *of common parentage*  
If ye wore deed, than had we none! *were dead, then*  
Ye do us brynge in distemperaunce *despair*  
40 Whan ye us telle ye shal hens gone. *When; hence*

**CONSOLATOR 1** Dame Martha and Magdalyne —  
How faryth youre brothire? Lete us hym se.

**MARTHA** He is ryght seke and hath grett pyne! *pain*  
I am aferde deed he shal be. *dead*

**MAGDALYN** A man may have ryght grett peté,  
46 The fervent hete of hym to fele. *high fever; to feel*

**CONSOLATOR 2** Take ye no thought in no degré!  
I hope that he shal fare ful wele.

**MARTHA** He may nat leve! His colowre doth chaunge! *not live*

50 Com to his bed — ye shal hym se.

**MAGDALYN** Iff he longe leve, it wyl be straunge,  
But as God wole, so mut it be. *wills, so must*  
Chere hym, gode frendys, for charyté —  
Comforte of hym we kan non gete. *can get none*  
55 Alas! Alas, what eylight me? *ails*  
Myne herte for wo is wundyr grete. *very heavy*

**CONSOLATOR 3** Al heyl, Syr Lazarus! How do ye fare?  
How do ye fele yow in youre herte?

**LAZARUS** I am with syknes all woundyn in care. *wound up in*  
60 And loke whan deth me shulde departe. *look when; cause me to part*

**CONSOLATOR 4** Ye shal have hele and leve in qwart  
If ye wol take to yow good chere. *well-being; live in health*  
*cheer up*

**LAZARUS** Whan deth on me hath shet his dart,  
I shal have hele and ly on bere! *When; shot*  
*well-being; on a bier*

**CONSOLATOR 1** Be of good comforte, and thynke not so.

66 Put out of herte that idyl thought!  
Youre owyn mysdemynge may werke yow wo *misjudgment*  
And cause yow sonere to deth be brought! *sooner*

**CONSOLATOR 2** With gret syknes, thow ye be sought *though*  
70 Upon youresylf have no mystruste. *doubt*  
If that ye have, I wundyr ryght nought *it would be no wonder if*  
Thow ye be deed and cast in duste.

<b>CONSOLATOR 3</b>	Many on hath had ryght grett syknesse, And aftyr, hath had his hele agayn.	<i>Many [a] one health</i>
75	And many a man, this is no lesse, With his wantruste hymself hath slayn! Ye be a man of ryght sad brayn.	<i>this is no lie lack of trust</i>
	Thow that youre syknes greve yow ryght ill, Pluk up youre herte with myght and mayn	<i>Though; grieve Take heart</i>
80	And chere youresylf with all youre wyl!	
<b>LAZARUS</b>	Ageyn my syknes ther is non ese, But Jhesu Cryst, my maystyr dere — If that he wyst of my dyssease Ryght sone I trust he wolde ben here.	<i>Against; relief  knew; disease</i>
<b>CONSOLATOR 4</b>	I shal go to hym withoutyn dwere,	<i>certainly (without doubt)</i>
86	And of youre syknes telle hym serteyn. Loke that ye be of ryght good chere Whyll that I go and com ageyn.	<i>While</i>
<b>MARTHA</b>	Now, jentyl frend, telle hym ryght thus:	
90	He that he lovyth hath grett syknes, Hedyr to come and comforte us. Say that we prayd hym of his goodnes.	<i>Hither asked</i>
<b>MAGDALYN</b>	Recomende us onto his hyghnes, And telle hym all oure hertys wo.	<i>heart's woe</i>
95	But he comforte oure hevynes, Oure werldly joy away wyl go.	<i>Unless; sadness worldly</i>
<b>CONSOLATOR 4</b>	The trewth, forsoth, all every dele As ye have told, so shal I say. Go to youre brothyr and cheryse hym wele, For I walke forth streyte in my way.	<i>truly; every bit  care for him well go straightaway</i>
<b>MARTHA</b>	What chere, good brothyr? Telle me, I pray. What wele ye ete? What wele ye drynk? Loke what is plesynge to youre pay. Ye shal have what ye wole thynke.	<i>How are you  Consider; desires whatever you will wish</i>
<b>LAZARUS</b>	My wynde is stoppyd — gon is my breth!	
106	And deth is come to make myn ende! To God in hevyn, my sowle I qweth! Farwell, systeryn, for hens I wende.	<i>give sisters; I go hence</i>
<i>[Hic Lazarus moritur, et cetera.]</i>		<i>Here Lazarus dies, etc.</i>
<b>MAGDALYN</b>	Alas! For wo myn here I rende!	<i>woe; hair; tear out</i>
110	Myn owyn dere brothyr lyth here now ded! Now have we lost a trusty frende, The sybbest blood of oure kynreed.	<i>closest; kindred</i>

**MARTHA** Alas! Alas, and weleway! *(cry of woe)*  
 Now be we tweyn bothe brotherles! *we two*  
 115 For who my hert is colde as clay! *woe my heart*  
 A! Hoo shal comforte oure carefulnes? *Who; sorrow*  
 Ther had nevyr woman more doolfulnes! *grief*  
 A, systyr Magdalyn, what is youre reed? *counsel*  
 What whith may helpe oure hevynes *person (wight); woe*  
 120 Now that oure brother is gon and deed *dead*

**MAGDALYN** Alas, dere systyr, I cannot telle.  
 The best comforte that I can sey  
 But sum man do us sle and qwelle, *Unless; kill*  
 Lete us ly down by hym and dey!  
 125 Alas, why went he alone away?  
 If we had deyde with hym also,  
 Than had oure care all turnyd to pley! *Then; sorrow; happiness*  
 Ther now all joye is turnyd to woo.

**CONSOLATOR 1** Be of good comforte, and thank God of al,  
 130 For deth is dew to every man. *due*  
 What tyme that deth on us shal fal  
 Non erthely wyght the oure telle can. *No earthly creature; hour*  
**MARTHA** We all shul dye — that is sertain, *certain*  
 But yit the blood of kynde nature *close relatives*  
 135 Whan deth, the brothyr away hath tan, *When; taken*  
 Must nedys murne that sepulture. *mourn; burial*

**CONSOLATOR 2** Good frendys, I pray yow holde youre pes! *peace*  
 All youre wepynge may not amende itt.  
 Of youre sorwyng, therfore now ses *cease*  
 140 And helpe he were buryed in a cley pitt. *him to be*  
**MAGDALYN** Alas, that wurde myn herte doth slytt! *slit*  
 That he must now in cley be grave, *be buried*  
 I wolde sum man my throte wulde kytt, *cut*  
 That I with hym myght lyne in cave. *lie in the grave*

**CONSOLATOR 3** Bothe heed and foot now he is wounde  
 146 In a chete bothe fayr and clene. *sheet*  
 Lete us bere hym streyte to that grounde  
 Where that ye thynke his grave shal bene.  
**MARTHA** We be full lothe, that pytt to sen *unwilling; see*  
 150 But stondynge it may no bettyr be. *Since*  
 The coors take up yow thre between — *corpse; among you three*  
 With carefull herte yow folwe shal we. *sorrowful hearts*

[*Hic portauit corpus ad sepeliendum.*

*Here they carry the corpse to the sepulcher*

- MAGDALYN** Alas, comforte I se non othyr *no other*  
 But all of sorwe and care and woo!
- 155 We dulfull women must burry oure brothir! *sorrowful*  
 Alas, that deth me wyl not slo. *slay*  
 If I to pitt with hym myght go,  
 Therin evyrmore with hym to abyde;  
 Than were my care all went me fro, *Then; sorrow*
- 160 Ther now grett sorwe doth wounde me wyde.
- CONSOLATOR 1** This coors we burry here in this pytte, *corpse*  
 Allmyghty God, the sowle mut have.  
 And with this ston, this grave we shytt *shut*  
 Fro ravenous bestys, the body to save. *From; beasts*
- MAGDALYN** He is now brought into his cave. *grave*
- 166 Myn hert for wo, this syght doth kylle!  
 Lete us sytt down here by the grave  
 Or we go hens, wepe all oure fylle. *Before; hence*
- MARTHA** Us for to wepe, no man may lett *allow*
- 170 Beforn oure face to se this syght.  
 Alas, qwy doth deth us not fett, *why; fetch*  
 Us for to brynge to this same plyght? *state*
- CONSOLATOR 2** Arys, for shame! Ye do not ryght! *Arise*  
 Streyth from this grave ye shul go hens. *hence*
- 175 Thus for to grugge ageyns Godys myght,  
 Agens hygh God ye do offens! *to complain; God's*
- MAGDALYN** Syth I must nedys with yow hens gon, *needs; hence*  
 My brotherys grave lete me fyrst kys. *brother's*  
 Alas, no whith may helpe my mon! *no person; alleviate my sorrow*
- 180 Farewel, my brothyr! Farewel, my blys! *bliss*
- CONSOLATOR 3** Hom to your place we shal yow wysse, *guide*  
 For Goddys love, be of good chere. *God's*  
 Indede ye do ryght sore amys *wrong*  
 So sore to wepe as ye do here!
- MARTHA** Lete us go hom, than, to oure place. *then*
- 186 We pray yow all with us to abyde, *stay*  
 Us to comforte with sum solace  
 Tyl that oure sorwe doth slake and sclyde. *lessen; abate*
- CONSOLATOR 1** Yow for to comforte at every tyde,  
 190 We shall dwelle here bothe nyght and day,  
 And God that made this werd so wyde *world*  
 Be yowre comforte that best may.

[*Hic Consolator 4 et Nuncius loquitur Jhesu, dicens:*<sup>1</sup>

- CONSOLATOR 4** Heyl, holy prophete, Jhesu be name!  
 Martha and Mawdelyn, tho systeryn too *by*  
 195 Recomende hem to youre hygh fame *those two sisters*  
 And bad me sey to yow thus, loo: *themselves*  
 How that Lazare, qwhich that ye lovyd so, *bid*  
 With grett syknes is sore dysseysd! *diseased*  
 To hym they prayd yow that ye wolde goo *asked*  
 200 If that youre hyghnes therwith were plesyd.
- JHESUS** Dedly syknes Lazare hath non  
 But for to shewe Goddys grete glorye, *God's*  
 For that syknes is ordeynyd alon *solely*  
 The Sone of God to gloryfie. *glorify*
- NUNCIUS** They be in dowte that he shal deye, *in fear*  
 206 Grett syknes hym sore doth holde.  
 For vervent hete his blood doth dreye; *fervent heat*  
 His colore chaungyth as they me tolde.
- JHESUS** Goo hom ageyn and telle hem thus:  
 210 I shal come to hem whan that I may. *them when*
- NUNCIUS** At your comaundement, O prophete Jhesus.  
 I shal hem telle as ye do say. *them*
- JHESUS** Come forth, bretheryn, walke we oure way —  
 Into Jurye go we anon. *Judea; now*  
 215 I cam not there ful many a day; *not long ago*  
 Therefore, thedyr now wyl I gon. *there*
- OMNES DISCIPULI** The Jewys ageyn thee were grym and grylle: *against; cruel*  
 Whan thu were there, they wolde thee aslayn! *have killed*  
 With stonys they sowte thee for to kyll, *stones; sought*  
 220 And wylt thu now go thedyr ageyn? *there*
- JHESUS** Twelve owrys the day hath, in certeyn. *hours; certainly*  
 In them to walke, both clere and bryght  
 He shal not stomble ageyn hyll nor pleyn. *against*  
 That goth the wey whyl it is daylyght.
- 225 But if men walke whan it is nyght,  
 Sone they offende in that dyrknes *Soon; stumble*  
 Becawse they may have no cler syght.  
 They hurte there fete ofte in suche myrkenes. *their; darkness*  
 But as for this, yitt nevyrthelesse, *yet*  
 230 The cawse, therfore, I thedyr wyl wende *reason; travel there*

<sup>1</sup> Here the Fourth Comforter and Messenger [one and the same] speaks to Jesus, saying

	Is for to reyse from bedde expresse Lazare that slepyth, oure althere frende.	<i>that very bed friend of us all</i>
<b>OMNES DISCIPULI</b>	Of his syknes, he shal be save; If that he slepe, good sygne it is.	<i>saved sign</i>
<b>JHESUS</b>	Lazare is deed and leyd in grave.	<i>dead</i>
236	Of his slepyng, ye deme amys. I was not there — ye knew weyl this — To strengthe youre feyth, I am ful glad.	<i>judged wrongly  strengthen</i>
	Therefore, I telle yow the trewthe, iwys:	<i>indeed</i>
240	Oure frende is deed and undyr erth clad.	<i>dead; buried</i>
<b>THOMAS</b>	Than goo we all ryght evyn streyth thedyr Thereas oure frende Lazare is deed, And lete us deye with hym togedyr Theras he lyth in the same stede.	<i>there right now  die together place</i>
<b>JHESUS</b>	Thee for to deye, have thu no drede;	<i>to die</i>
246	The wey streyth thedyr in hast we take. Be the grett myght of myn Godhede, Oute of his slepe he shal awake.	<i>straight there in haste By</i>
<b>NUNCIUS</b>	All heyl, Martha and Mawdelyn, eke!	<i>also</i>
250	To Jhesu I have youre massage seyde. I tolde hym how that youre brothyr was seke And with grett peyn in his bed leyde. He bad ye shulde not be dysmayde — All his syknes, he shal askape!	<i>bid escape</i>
255	He wyll byn here within a brayde As he me tolde he comyth in rape.	<i>be; short time haste</i>
<b>MAGDALYN</b>	That holy prophete doth come to late! Oure brothyr is beryed thre days or this! A grett ston stoppyth the pyttys gate —	<i>too before grave's entrance</i>
260	Thereas oure brothere beryde is.	
<b>NUNCIUS</b>	Is Lazare deed? Now God his sowle blys. Yit loke ye take non hevynes — So longe to wepe, ye don amys. It may not helpe your sorynes.	<i>May God; bless no sadness amiss</i>
<b>MARTHA</b>	Oute of myn herte all care to lete,	<i>sorrow</i>
266	All sorwe and wo to caste away. I shal go forth in the strete To mete with Jhesu, if that I may.	
<b>CONSOLATOR 2</b>	God be your spede, bothe evyr and ay,	<i>always</i>
270	For with youre sustyr we wyl abyde. Her to comforte we shal asay And all her care to caste assyde.	<i>try sorrow</i>



- CONSOLATOR 3** Mary Mawdelyn, be of good herte, *cheer*  
 And wel bethynke yow in youre mynde.
- 275 Eche creature hens must depart:  
 Ther is no man but hens must wende. *Every man*  
 Deth to no wyht can be a frende: *no one*  
 Allthinge to erth he wyl down cast. *Everything*  
 Whan that God wol, allthyng hath ende, *wills everything*  
 280 Lengere than hym lyst, nothyng may last. *Longer than he (God) likes*
- MAGDALYN** I thanke yow frendys for youre good chere —  
 Myn hed doth ake as it shulde brest. *ache; burst*  
 I pray yow, therfore, while ye ben here  
 A lytil whyle that I may rest.
- CONSOLATOR 4 / NUNCIUS** That Lord that made bothe est and west
- 286 Graunt yow good grace suche rest to take.  
 That onto hym shulde plese most best *the most*  
 As he this worlde of nought dyd make. *nothing*
- MARTHA** A, gracyous lord, had ye ben here,  
 290 My brother Lazare this tyme had lyved!  
 But foure days gon upon a bere, *bier*  
 We dede hym berye whan he was ded. *did; bury*  
 Yitt now I knowe withowtyn drede *fear*  
 What thyng of God that thu do crave —  
 295 Thu shalt spede of the hygh Godhede. *accomplish*  
 Whatso thu aske, thu shalt it have.
- JHESUS** Thy brothyr Lazare agen shal ryse,  
 A levyng man agen to be. *living*
- MARTHA** I woot wel that at the grett last syse *know; judgment*  
 300 He shal aryse, and also we.
- JHESUS** Resurreccyon thu mast me se, *you may see [in] me*  
 And hendeles lyff I am also. *endless*  
 What man that deyth and levyth in me, *who dies; believes*  
 From deth to lyve he shal ageyn go.
- 305 Eche man in me that feythful is  
 And ledyth his lyff aftere my lore,  
 Of hendeles lyff may he nevyr mys. *teaching*  
 Evere he shal leve and deye nevyrmore. *endless; lack*  
 The body and sowle I shal restore *live*
- 310 To endeles joye — dost thu trowe this? *believe*
- MARTHA** I hope in thee, O Cryst, ful sore! *completely*  
 Thu art the Sone of God in blys!
- Thy Fadyr is God of Lyff endeles;  
 Thiself is Sone of Lyff and Gras. *You are; Life; Grace*

- 315 To sese these wordlys wrecchydnes, *cease this world's*  
 From hefne to erth, thu toke the pas. *went*
- JHESUS** Of hevyntyly myght, ryght grett solas *solace*  
 To all this world me shul sone se. *shall see in Me*  
 Go calle thi systyr into this plas; *place*  
 320 Byd Mary Mawdelyn come hedyr to me. *here*
- MARTHA** At thi byddyng I shal her calle —  
 In hast we were here yow befor. *haste*
- MAGDALYN** Alas, my mowth is bytter as galle!  
 Grett sorwyn my herte on tweyn hath scorn, *sorrow; in two has cut*  
 325 Now that my brothyr from syth is lorn! *sight is lost*  
 Ther may no myrth my care releve! *can relieve my sorrow*  
 Alas, the tyme that I was born!  
 The swerde of sorwe myn hert doth cleve. *sword of sorrow; heart; split*
- CONSOLATOR 1** For his dere love that all hath wrought,  
 330 Ses sumtyme of youre wepyng, *Cease*  
 And put all thyng out of thought  
 Into this care that yow doth bryng. *mourning*
- CONSOLATOR 2** Ye do yourself ryght grett hyndryng  
 And short youre lyff or ye be ware! *harm*  
 335 For Goddys love, ses of youre sorwyng, *shorten; before you know it*  
 And with good wysdam refreyn youre care! *God's; cease*  
*refrain from mourning*
- MARTHA** Sustyr, Magdalen, com out of halle! *the house*  
 Oure maystyr is com, as I yow say!  
 He sent me hedyr, yow for to calle. *hither*  
 340 Come forth in hast, as I yow pray. *haste*
- MAGDALYN** Ha! Where hath he ben many a longe day?  
 Alas, why cam he no sonere hedyr?  
 In hast I folwe yow, anon the way!  
 Methynkyth longe or I come thedyr. *here no sooner*  
*haste; follow; right now*  
*too long before*
- CONSOLATOR 3** Herke, gode frendys, I yow pray  
 346 Aftyr this woman in hast we wende!  
 I am aferde ryght, in good fay, *haste we go*  
 Herself for sorwe that she wyl shende. *very afraid; faith*  
*sorrow; kill herself*
- CONSOLATOR 4** Her brothyr so sore is in hir mende,  
 350 She may not ete, drynke, nor slepe. *so much; mind*  
 Streyte to his grave she goth on ende  
 As a mad woman therfor to wepe. *endlessly*
- MAGDALYN** A, sovereyn lord and mayster dere!  
 Had ye with us ben in presens — *present*  
 355 Than had my brother on lyve ben here, *Then; alive would be*  
 Nat ded, but qwyk that now is hens! *Not; living; gone*

Ageyn deth is no resystens!  
 Alas, myn hert is woundyrly wo  
 Whan that I thynke of his absens,  
 360 That ye, youreself in herte, lovyd so.

*Against  
incredibly woeful*

**CONSOLATOR 1** Whan we have mynde of his sore deth,  
 He was to us so gentyl and good.  
 That mend of hym, oure hertys sleth —  
 The losse of hym doth marre oure mood.

*remember; awful  
memory; slays our hearts*

**CONSOLATOR 2** Be bettyr neybore nevyr man stood;  
 366 To every man he was ryght hende;  
 Us he dede refresch with drynk and food.  
 Now he is gon — gon is oure frende.

*By  
kind*

**JHESUS** Yowre grett wepyng doth me constreyne  
 370 For my good frend to wepe also.  
 I cannot me for wo restreyn,  
 But I must wepe lyke as ye do.

*compels me  
restrain myself*

*[Hic Jhesus fingit se lacrimari.]*

*Here Jesus pretends that he is crying*

**CONSOLATOR 3** Beholde this prophete, how he doth wepe, lo!  
 He lovyd Lazare ryght woundyrly sore!  
 375 He wolde not ellys for hym thus wepe so  
 But if that his love on hym were the more.

*greatly  
else  
Unless*

**NUNCIUS** A straw for thi tale! What nedyth hym to wepe?  
 A man born blynde — dede he nat geve syght?  
 Myght he nat thanne his frende on lyve kepe  
 380 Be the vertu of that same hygh myght?  
**JHESUS** Where is he put? Telle me, anon ryght!  
 Brynge me the weye streyth to his grave.  
**MARTHA** Lord, at youre wylle, we shal brynge yow tyght  
 Evyn to that place ther he doth lyne in cave.

*That's absurd!  
not then; alive  
By virtue; power  
right now  
straight  
immediately  
lie in his grave*

**MAGDALYN** Whan that we had the massangere sent  
 386 Or he had fullych half a myle gon,  
 Deyd my brother and up we hym hent.  
 Here in this grave we beryed hym anon.  
**JHESUS** The myght of the Godhed shal glathe yow everychon,  
 390 Suche syght shal ye se hens or ye wende.  
 Sett to youre handys — take of the ston.  
 A syght lete me have of Lazare, my frende.

*When  
Before; a full half-mile  
picked him up  
at once  
gladden everyone  
see here before you go  
off*

**MARTHA** He stynkygh ryght fowle longe tyme or this!  
 Foure days gon, forsothe, he was dede!  
 395 Lete hym ly styll ryght evyn as he is.

*stinks; before  
truly*

- The stynke of his careyn myght hurte us, I drede! *corpse*
- JHESUS** As I have thee tolde, syght of the Godhede  
Thyself shuldyst have, feythful if thou be.  
Take of the ston! Do aftyr my rede! *off; as I say*
- 400 The glorye of the Godhede anon ye shal se. *now*
- CONSOLATOR 1** Youre byddyng shal be don anon ful swyfte! *now; swiftly*  
Sett to youre handys and helpe echon! *everyone*  
I pray yow, serys, help me to lyfte!  
I may not reyse it myself alon!
- CONSOLATOR 2** In feyth, it is an hevye ston, *heavy; weight*  
406 Ryth sad of weyth and hevye of peys! *heavy; weight*
- CONSOLATOR 3** Thow it were twyes so evy as on, *Though; twice as heavy as one*  
Undyr us foure we shal it reyse.
- CONSOLATOR 4** Now is the ston take from the cave.
- 410 Here may men se a rewly syght *pitiful sight*  
Of this ded body that lyth here grave *buried*  
Wrappyd in a petefful plyght. *pitiful state*
- [Jhesus elevatis ad celum oculis dicit: Lifting his eyes to heaven, Jesus says*
- JHESUS** I thanke thee, Fadyr, of thin hygh myght,  
That thou hast herd my prayour this day.
- 415 I know ful wel, bothe day and nyght  
Ever thou dost graunt that I do say.
- But for this pepyl that stondyth about  
And beleve not the power of thee and me,  
Them for to brynge clene out of dowe, *doubt*
- 420 This day oure myght thei all shul se.
- [Hic Jhesus clamat voce magna, dicens: Here Jesus cries out in a loud voice, saying*
- Lazare! Lazare, my frende so fre! *excellent*  
From that depe pitt come out anon! *now*  
Be the grett myght of the Hygh Magesté — *By*  
Alyve thou shalt on erth ageyn gon.
- LAZARUS** At youre comaundement, I ryse up ful ryght! *right now*
- 426 Hevyn, helle, and erth, youre byddyng must obeye,  
For ye be God and man and Lord of most myght!  
Of lyff and of deth ye have both lok and keye.

[*Hic resurget Lazarus ligatis manibus et pedibus ad modum sepulti, et dicit Jhesus:*<sup>1</sup>

- JHESUS** Goo forthe, bretheryn, and Lazare ye untey  
 430 And all his bondys losyth hem asundyr.  
 Late hym walke hom with yow in the wey  
 Ageyn Godys myght, this meracle is no wundyr.
- PETRUS** At your byddynge, his bondys we unbynde.  
 All thyng muste lowte youre magesté!  
 435 Be this grett meracle, opynly we fynde  
 Very God and man, in trewth, that ye be!
- JOHANNES** That thu art very God every man may se!  
 Be this meracle so grett and so mervayll,  
 All thyng undyr hevyn must nedys obey thee!  
 440 Whan agens thee thowh deth be, he may not prevayll.
- OMNES CONSOLATORES** We all with o voys for God do thee knowe!  
 And for oure Sayour we do thee reverens!  
 All oure hool love now in thee doth growe.  
 O, sovereyn Lord of most excellens:  
 445 Helpe us of youre grace whan that we go hens,  
 For agens deth us helpyht not to stryve,  
 But agen youre myght is no resistens.  
 Oure deth ye may aslake and kepe us styлле on lyve.
- JHESUS** Now I have shewyd in opyn syght  
 450 Of my Godhed, the gret glorie.  
 Toward my Passyon I wyl me dyght:  
 The tyme is nere that I must deye  
 For all mankynde, his sowle to bye.  
 A crowne of thorn shal perchyn myn brayn  
 455 And on the Mont of Calvarye,  
 Upon a cros I shal be slayn.

*untie*

*take off*

*Let him*

*Considering*

*obey*

*By*

*By; marvelous*

*against; though*

*one*

*whole*

*when; hence*

*help us*

*against*

*keep away; alive*

*prepare Myself*

*to redeem*

*pierce*

## PASSION PLAY 1 (PLAYS 26–28)

### 26. CONSPIRACY; ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

#### [PROLOGUE OF SATAN]

- DEMON** I am youre Lord Lucifer that out of helle cam,  
 Prince of this werd and gret Duke of Helle,

*world*

<sup>1</sup> Here Lazarus rises with his hands and feet bound for burial, and Jesus says

	Wherefore my name is clepyd Sere Satan Whedch aperyth among yow, a matere to spelle.	<i>called Sir matter to declare</i>
5	I am norsshene of synne to the confusyon of man, To bryng hym to my dongeon, ther in fyre to dwelle. Hosoevyr serve me, so reward hym I kan, That he shal syng "Wellaway!" ever in peynes felle.	<i>nourisher  Whosoever Woe is me; fierce</i>
10	Lo, thus bountevous a lord, than, now am I To reward so synners, as my kend is. Whoso wole folwe my lore and serve me dayly Of sorwe and peyne anow, he shal nevyr mys.	<i>generous nature will follow my teaching enough; miss</i>
15	For I began in hefne, synne for to sowe Among all the angellys that weryn there so bryth. And therfore was I cast out into helle ful lowe, Not withstanding I was the fayrest and berer of lyth.	<i>Heaven bright  light</i>
20	Yet I drowe in my taylor of tho angelys bryth With me into helle — takyth good hed what I say! I lefte but tweyn agens on to abyde there in lyth; But the thrydde part come with me, this may not be seyde nay.	<i>drew; those; bright heed two to one third; denied</i>
	Takyth hed to youre prince, than, my pepyl everychon And seyth what maystryes in hefne I gan ther do play. To gete a thowsand sowlys in an houre, me thynkyth it but skorn <sup>1</sup> Syth I wan Adam and Eve on the fyrst day!	<i>heed; everyone deceits; caused  Since; won</i>
25	But now, marvelous mendys rennyng in myn remembrans. Of on Cryst wiche is clepyd Joseph and Maryes sone. Thryes I tempte hym be ryth sotylle instawnce Aftyr he fast fourty days ageyns sensual myth or reson, For of the stonys to a mad bred, but sone I had conclusyon. <sup>2</sup>	<i>thoughts one Thrice; insistence might</i>
30	Than upon a pynacle, but angelys were to hym assystent His answerys were marvelous: I knew not his intencyon, And at the last to veynglory, but nevyr I had myn intent.	<i>Then; helping  pride; wish</i>
35	And now hath he twelve dysypulys to his attendauns! To eche town and cety he sendyth hem as bedellys, In dyverce place to make for hym purvyauns. The pepyl of hese werkys, ful gretly merveyllys: To the crokyd, blynd, and down, his werkys provaylys. Lazare, that foure days lay ded, his lyff recuryd!	<i>disciples them; heralds preparations marvelous mute (dumb); prevail restored</i>

<sup>1</sup> To get a thousand souls an hour seems to me [to be] but [a] small [feat]

<sup>2</sup> Of stones to have made bread, but soon I failed

- 40 And where I purpose me to tempt, anon he me asaylys — *soon; assails*  
Mawdelyn playne remysseyon, also he hath ensuryd. *full pardon; ensured*
- Goddys Son he pretendyth, and to be born of a mayde, *pretends to be*  
And seyth he shal dey for mannys salvacyon; *says; die; man's*  
Than shal the trewth be tryed and no fordere be delayd! *further*  
45 Whan the soule fro the body shal make separacyon, *When; from*  
And as for hem that be undre my grett domynacyon, *them; great*  
He shal fayle of hese intent and purpose, also. *his*  
Be this tyxt of holde remembryd to myn intencyon: *By; text of old*  
*"Quia in inferno nulla est redemptio."* *Because in hell, there is no redemption*
- 50 But whan the tyme shal neyth of his persecucyon, *when; near*  
I shal arere new engynes of malycyous conspiracy: *arrear; devices*  
Plenty of reprevis I shal provide to his confusyon! *reproofs*  
Thus shal I false the wordys that his pepyl doth testefy! *twist*  
His discipulis shal forsake hym, and here mayster denye. *their*  
Innoumberabyl shal his woundys be of woful grevauns! *Innumerable; pain*  
55 A tretowre shal countyrfe his deth to fortyfye.<sup>1</sup>  
The rebukys that he gyf me shal turne to his displeauns! *harm*
- Some of hese dyscypulys shal be chef of this ordenawns *plot*  
That shal fortifye this term: "That in trost is treson." *saying*  
Thus shal I venge be sotylté al my malycyous grevauns, *by subtlety*  
60 For nothyng may excede my prudens and dyscrecyon.
- Gyff me youre love! Grawnt me myn affeccyon, *Give; Grant*  
And I wyl uncloze the tresour of lovys alyawns! *reveal; love's alliance*  
And gyff yow youre desyrys aftere youre intencyon! *give yourself over to*  
No poverté shal aproche yow fro plentevous abundauns. *from plentiful*
- 65 Byholde the dyvercyté of my dysgysyd varyauns, *disguised duplicity*  
Eche thyng sett of dewe naterall dysposycyon, *due natural order*  
And eche parte acordynge to his resembelauns, *its*  
Fro the sool of the foot to the hiest asencyon: *sole; highest point*
- 70 Of fyne cordewan, a goodly peyre of long, pekyd shon,<sup>2</sup>  
Hosyn enclosyd of the most costyous cloth of crenseyn; *made of; crimson*  
Thus a bey to a jentylman to make comparycyon, *boy*  
With two doseyn poyntys of cheverelle, the aglottys of sylver feyn;<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A traitor shall contrive to assure his [Jesus'] death.

<sup>2</sup> Of fine cordovan, a good pair of long, pointed shoes

<sup>3</sup> With two dozen fringes of kid leather, with points of fine silver

- A shert of feyn Holond — but care not for the payment — *fine linen*  
 A stomachere of clere Reynes, the best may be bowth;<sup>1</sup>  
 75 Thow poverté be chef, lete pride ther be present, *Though; in force*  
 And all tho that repreff pride, thu sette hem at nowth; *reprove*
- Cadace, wolle, or flokkys — where it may be sowth — <sup>2</sup>  
 To stuffe withal thi dobbelet and make thee of proporcyon: *doublet*  
 Two smale legges and a gret body, thow it ryme nowth, *though; matches not*  
 80 Yet loke that thu desyre to an the newe faccyon; *to have; fashion*
- A gowne of thre yerdys — loke thu make comparison *three yards*  
 Unto all degrees dayly that passe thin astat. *social ranks; your estate*  
 A purse withoutyn mony, a daggere for devocyon,  
 And there repref is of synne, loke thu make debat. *where reproof*
- 85 With syde lokkys I schrewe thin here, to thi colere hangyng down,<sup>3</sup>  
 To herborwe qweke bestys that tekele men onyth; *living animals (lice); at night*  
 An hey, smal bonet for curyng of the crowne, *high; covering the head*  
 And all beggerys and pore pepyll have hem on dyspyte. *despise them*  
 Onto the grete othys and lycherye gyf thi delyte. *oaths; lechery give*  
 90 To maynteyn thin astate, lete brybory be present, *your estate; thievery*  
 And yf the lawe repreve thee, say thu wylt fyth *reprove; fight*  
 And gadere thee a felachep after thin entent. *gather; posse*
- Loke thu sett not be precept nor be comawndement, *value; by*  
 Both sevyle and canoun, sett thu at nowth; *civil [law]; canon [law]*  
 95 Lette no membre of God, but with othys be rent.<sup>4</sup>  
 Lo, thus this werd at this tyme, to myn intent is browth. *world; brought*  
 I, Sathan, with my felawus, this werd hath sowth, *fellows; world; sought*  
 And now we han it at houre plesawns! *have; our pleasure*  
 For synne is not shamfast, but boldnes hath bowth. *shy; bought it*  
 100 That shal cause hem in helle to han inerytawns. *them; have an inheritance*
- A beggerys dowtere to make gret purvyauns *beggar's daughter; provision*  
 To cownterfete a jentylwoman, dysgeysyd as she can. *disguised*  
 And if mony lakke, this is the newe chevesauns: *lack; way*  
 With her prevy plesawns, to gett it of sum man, *secret pleasure*  
 105 Her colere splayed and furred with ermyn Calabere or satan, *satin*  
 A seyn to selle lechory to hem that wyl bey. *sign; buy*

<sup>1</sup> A waistcoat of fine cloth from Rheims, the best that may be bought

<sup>2</sup> Padding, wool, or tufts — wherever it may be sought

<sup>3</sup> I curse your hair with side locks hanging down to your collar

<sup>4</sup> Lines 94–95: Both civil and canon law you [should] value not at all / Leave alone no part of God, but [let his whole body] with oaths be torn



- And thei that wyl not by it, yet inow shal thei han,  
And telle hem it is for love — she may it not deney. *buy; enough; have them*
- I have browth yow newe namys, and wyl ye se why?  
110 For synne is so plesaunt, to ech mannys intent. *brought; names man's*  
Ye shal kalle “pride,” “onesté,” and “naterall kend,” “lechory”;<sup>1</sup>  
And “covetyse,” “wysdam” — there tresure is present.
- “Wreth,” “manhod,” and “envye” callyd “chastément” —<sup>2</sup>  
Seyse nere sessyon, lete perjury be chef — *Assize courts; supreme be*  
115 “Glottenye,” “rest” — let abstynawnce beyn absent,  
And he that wole exorte thee to vertu, put hem to repreff. *reproof*
- To rehers all my servauntys, my matere is to breff,  
But all these shal eneryth the dyvicyon eternal. *name; too brief enter; division*  
Thow Cryst, by his sotylté, many materys meef, *Though; stirs up*  
120 In evyrlastyng peyne with me dwellyn thei shal.
- Remembre oure servauntys whoys sowlys ben mortall,  
For I must remeffe for more materys to provyde. *whose souls are depart; matters*  
I am with yow at all tymes, whan ye to councel me call.  
But for a short tyme, myself I devoyde. *remove*

### [PROLOGUE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST]

- JOHANNES BAPTISTA** I, Johan Baptyst, to yow thus prophesye  
126 That on shal come aftyr me and not tary longe. *one times stronger*  
In many folde more strengere than I  
Of whose shon I am not worthy to lose the thonge. *shoes; loosen*  
Wherefore I councel thee, ye reforme all wronge
- 130 In youre concyens of the mortall dedys sevyn *conscience; seven deadly sins*  
And for to do penawns, loke that ye fonge, *penance, look; begin*  
For now shal come the kyngdham of hevyn.
- The weys of oure Lord cast yow to aray *to prepare*  
And therin to walk, loke ye be applyande *striving*  
135 And make his pathys as ryth as ye may, *straight*  
Keepyng ryth forth and be not declinande, *turned astray*  
Neyther to fele on ryth nor on lefte hande, *too far; right middle*  
But in the myddys, purpose yow to holde. *pleasing*  
For that, in all wyse, is most plesande  
140 As ye shal here whan I have tolde. *hear when*

<sup>1</sup> You will call “pride” “honesty” and “human nature” “lechery”

<sup>2</sup> “Wrath” [will be] “manhood” and “envy” [be] called “chastisement”

- Of this wey, for to make moralysacyon: *to teach spiritually*  
 Be the ryth syde ye shal undyrstonde mercy, *By; right*  
 And on the lefte syde lykkenyd dysperacyon. *likened to despair*  
 And the patthe betwyn bothyn — that may not wry — *err*
- 145 Schal be hope and drede, to walke in perfectly,  
 Declynyng not to fele for no maner nede. *Turning; too much; reason*  
 Grete cawsys I shal shoue yow why, *reasons; show*  
 That ye shal sowe the patthe of hope and drede. *seek*
- On the mercy of God, to meche ye shal not holde *too much; depend upon*  
 150 As in this wyse, behold what I mene: *mean*  
 For to do synne, be thu no more bolde  
 In trost that God wole merciful bene. *trust; will be*  
 And yf be sensuallité, as it is ofte sene, *by*  
 Synnyst dedly — thu shalt not therfore dyspeyre, *You sin mortally*  
 155 But therfore do penawns and confesse thee clene. *yourself clean*  
 And of hevyn, thu mayst trost to ben eyre. *trust to be an heir*
- The pathe that lyth to this blyssyd enherytawns *lies; blessed*  
 Is hope and drede, copelyd be conjunccon. *coupled by union*  
 Betwyx these tweyn may be no dysseverawns: *Between; two; difference*  
 160 For hope withoutyn drede is maner of presumpcon,  
 And drede withowtyn hope is maner of dysperacyon. *dread*  
 So these tweyn must be knyt be on acorde. *two; knit together*  
 How ye shal aray the wey, I have made declaracyon, *prepare*  
 Also the ryth patthis agens the comyng of oure Lord. *straight paths for*

## [CONSPIRACY]

*[Here shal Annas shewyn hymself in his stage beseyn after a busshop of the hoold (old) lawe in a skarlet gowne. And over that, a blew tabbard furreyde with whyte and a mytere on his hed after the hoold lawe, twey doctorys stondyng by hym in furreyde hodys, and on befor hem with his staff of astat. And eche of hem on here heds a furreyde cappe with a gret knop (knob) in the crowne, and on (one) stondyng befor as a Sarazyn, the wich shal be his masangere, Annas thus seyng:]*

- ANNAS As a prelat am I propreyd, to provyde pes. *designated; peace*  
 166 And of Jewys, jewge, the lawe to fortefye. *judge; uphold*  
 I, Annas, be my powere, shal comawnde, dowteles, *by*  
 The lawys of Moyses, no man can denyen.  
 Hoo excede my comawndement, anon ye certefye! *Whoever; report now*  
 170 Yf any eretyk here reyn, to me ye compleyn. *heretic lives here*  
 For in me lyth the powere, all trewthys to trye, *lies; truths*  
 And pryncypaly, oure lawys, tho must I susteyn. *those*

- Yef I may aspey the contrary, no wheyle shal thei reyn,<sup>1</sup>  
 But anon to me be browth and stonde present *soon; brought*  
 175 Before here jewge wich shal not feyn, *their; who; hesitate*  
 But aftere here trespase to gef hem jugement *their trespass to give them*  
 Now, serys, for a prose, heryth myn intent. *sirs, in plain words, hear*  
 There is on Jhesus of Nazareth that oure lawys doth excede. *one*  
 Yf he procede thus, we shal us all repent, *regret*  
 180 For oure lawys he dystroyt dayly with his dede. *by his deeds*
- Therefore be youre cowncel, we must take hede *by; counsel*  
 What is best to provyde or do in this case,  
 For yf we let hym thus go and ferdere prosede, *further*  
 Ageyn Sesare and oure lawe we do trespase. *Against Caesar*
- ANNAS' DOCTOR 1** Sere, this is myn avyse that ye shal do: *Sir; advice*  
 186 Send to Cayphas for cowncel, knowe his intent, *counsel*  
 For yf Jhesu procede and thus forth go,  
 Oure lawys shal be dystroyd, thes se we present. *this see; presently*
- ANNAS' DOCTOR 2** Sere, remembre the gret charge that on yow is leyd: *Sir*  
 190 The lawe to kepe, which may not fayle.  
 Yf any defawth prevyd of yow be seyde, *fault proved*  
 The Jewys, with trewth, wyl yow asayl.  
 Tak hed whath cownsayl may best provayl! *heed what counsel; prevail*  
 After Rewfyn and Leyon, I rede that ye sende — *advise*  
 195 They arn temperal jewgys that knowth the perayl — *judges; peril*  
 With youre cosyn Cayphas, this matere to amende.
- ANNAS** Now, surely this cowncel revyfe myn herte! *counsel revives; heart*  
 Your cowncel is best as I can se. *counsel; see*  
 Arfexe, in hast, loke that thu styrt  
 200 And pray Cayphas, my cosyn, come speke with me. *haste, look; start*  
*ask*
- To Rewfyn and Leon, thu go also  
 And pray hem thei speke with me in hast, *them; haste*  
 For a pryncipal matere that have to do *most important*  
 Wich must be knowe or this day be past. *before this day*
- ARFESE** My soveryn, at youre intent, I shal gon.  
 206 In al the hast that I kan hy *speed I can muster*  
 Onto Cayphas, Rewfyn, and Lyon  
 And charge youre intent that thei shal ply. *request; follow*

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<sup>1</sup> If I find rebels, not long shall they remain

*[Here goth the masangere forth, and in the menetye Cayphas shewyth himself in his scaphald, arayd lych to Annas, savyng his tabbard shal be red furredd with white, tweye (two) doctorys with hym arayd with pellys (fur) aftyr the old gyse and furredd cappys on here (their) hedys; Cayphas thus seyng:*

- CAYPHAS** As a primat most preudent, I present here sensyble<sup>1</sup>
- 210 Byschopys of the lawe with al the cyrcumstawns. *due formalities*  
 I, Cayphas, am jewge with powerys possyble *powers*  
 To distroye all errouris that in oure lawys make varyawns. *conflict*  
 All thyngys I convey be reson and temperawnce, *by*  
 And all materis possyble, to me ben palpable. *are clear*
- 215 Of the lawe of Moyses, I have a chef governawns  
 To severe ryth and wrong in me is termynable. *To judge; final*
- But ther is on Cryst that in oure lawys is varyable. *one; who; inconstant*  
 He perverte the pepyl with his prechyng ill.  
 We must seke a mene onto hym reprevable, *way to reprove him*
- 220 For yf he procede, oure lawys he wyl spyll! *destroy*
- We must take good cowncel in this case: *counsel*  
 Of the wysest of the lawe that kan the trewth telle,  
 Of the jewgys of Pharasy, and of my cosyn Annas. *Pharisees; cousin*  
 For yf he procede, be prossesse oure lawys he wyl felle.<sup>2</sup>
- CAYPHAS' DOCTOR 1** Myn lord, plesyt yow to pardon me for to say *may it please you*
- 226 The blame in yow is, as we fynde,  
 To lete Cryst contenne thus day be day *allow Christ [to]; by*  
 With his fals wichcraft, the pepyl to blynde.  
 He werkyth fals meraclis ageyns all kende *false miracles contrary to all nature*
- 230 And makyth oure pepyl to leve hem in. *believe in them*  
 It is youre part to take hym and do hym bynde *bind him*  
 And gyf hym jugement for his gret syn. *give*
- CAYPHAS' DOCTOR 2** Forsothe, sere, of trewth this is the case: *sir, truly*
- 235 Onto oure law ye don oppressyon, *harm*  
 That ye let Cryst from you pace *pass*  
 And wyl not don on hym correxion! *offer him*  
 Let Annas knowe youre intencion  
 With prestys and jewgys of the lawe, *priests; judges*  
 And do Cryst forsake his fals oppynyon, *make Christ; doctrine*
- 240 Or into a preson lete hem be thrawe. *prison; thrown*

<sup>1</sup> As a primate (prelate) most prudent, I represent in the flesh

<sup>2</sup> For if he continues, in due time our laws he will destroy

**CAYPHAS** Wel, serys, ye shal se withinne short whyle — *sirs; see*  
 I shal correcte hym for his trespass.  
 He shal no lenger oure pepyl begyle; *longer; fool*  
 Out of myn dawngere he shal not pas! *power; pass*

*[Here comyth the masangere to Cayphas, and in the menetyme, Rewfyn and Lyon schewyn hem (themselves) in the place in ray (striped) tabardys furryd and ray hodys, abouth here neckys furryd, the massangere seyng:]*

**MASANGER** Myn reverent sovereyn, and it do yow plese,  
 246 Sere Annas, my lord, hath to you sent. *Sir*  
 He prayt you that ye shal not sese *asks; cease*  
 Tyl that ye ben with hym present.

**CAYPHAS** Sere, telle myn cosyn I shal not fayl. *Sir*  
 250 It was my purpose, hym for to se  
 For serteyn materys that wyl prevayle *be effective*  
 Thow he had notwth a sent to me. *not sent word*

**MASANGER** I recomende me to youre hey degré; *high rank*  
 On more massagys I must wende. *errands; go*

**CAYPHAS** Farewel, sere, and wel ye be.  
 256 Gret wel my cosyn and my frende. *Greet*

*[Here the masager metyth with the jewgys, sayng:]*

**MASANGER** Heyl, jewgys of Jewry, of reson most prudent! *judges*  
 Of my massage to you, I make relacyon:  
 My lord, Sere Annas, hath for you sent,  
 260 To se his presens withowth delacyon. *delay*

**REWFYN** Sere, we are redy at his comawndement,  
 To se Sere Annas in his place.  
 It was oure purpose and oure intent  
 To a be with hym withinne short space. *have been*

**LEYON** We are ful glad his presence to se,  
 266 Sere, telle hym. We shal come in hast.  
 No declaracyon therin shal be *explanation*  
 But to his presens, hye us fast. *let us hurry*

**MASANGER** I shal telle my lord, seris, as we say: *sirs*  
 270 Ye wyl fulfulle al his plesawns. *pleasure*

**REWFYN** Sere, telle hym we shal make no delay,  
 But come in hast at his instawns. *request*

*[Here the masangere comyth to Annas, thus seyng:]*

**MASANGER** My lord, and it plesse you to have intellygens: *if it; news*  
 Ser Cayphas comyth to you in hast.  
 275 Rewfyn and Lyon wyl se youre presens  
 And se yow here, or this day be past. *before*

**ANNAS** Sere, I kan thee thank of thi dyligens.  
 Now ageyn my cosyn I wole walk. *to my cousin*  
 Serys, folwyth me onto his presens,  
 280 For of these materys, we must talk.

*[Here Annas goth down to mete with Cayphas, and in the menetye, thus seying:*

**CAYPHAS** Now, onto Annas let us wende, *go*  
 Ech of us to knowe otherys intent. *Each; the others'*  
 Many materys I have in mende, *mind*  
 The wich to hym I shal present. *which*

**CAYPHAS' DOCTOR 1** Sere, of all othere thyng, remembre this case:

286 Loke that Jhesus be put to schame.

**CAYPHAS' DOCTOR 2** Whan we come present beforn Annas,

Whe shal rehers all his gret blame.

*We; repeat; crimes*

*[Here the buschopys with here clerkys and the Pharaseus mett at the myd place, and ther shal be a lytil oratory with stolys (stools) and cusschonys clenly beseyn, lych as it were a counsel hous, Annas thus seying:*

**ANNAS** Welcome, Ser Cayphas and ye jewgys alle!

290 Now shal ye knowe all myn entent.

A wondyr case, serys, here is befall

On wich we must gyf jewgement

Lyst that we, aftyre the case, repent

Of on Cryst, that "Goddys Sone" some doth hym calle.

295 He shewyth meraclys and sythe present

That he is Prynce of Prynces alle!

*performs miracles; then claims*

The pepyl so fast to hym doth falle!

Be prevy menys as we aspye

Yf he procede, son sen ye shalle

300 That oure lawys, he wyl dystrye.

*follow*

*By secret means; spy*

*soon see*

*destroy*

It is oure part, this to deny.

What is youre cowncell in this cas?

*counsel*

**CAYPHAS** Be reson, the trewth here may we try.

*By reason*

I cannot dem hym withouth trespase

*judge; sin*

305 Because he seyth in every a place

That he is Kyng of Jewys in every degré!

- Therefore he is fals, knowe wel the case:  
Sesar is kyng, and non but he! *state of affairs*  
*Caesar*
- REWFYN** He is an eretyk and a tretour bolde *heretic; traitor*  
310 To Sesare and to oure lawe, sertayn! *Caesar; certainly*  
Bothe in word and in werke, and ye beholde —  
He is worthy to dey with mekyl peyn! *die; much pain*
- LEYON** The cawse that we been here present  
To fortefye the lawe and trewth to say: *To uphold*  
315 Jhesus ful nere oure lawys hath shent! *nearly; destroyed*  
Therefore, he is worthy for to day! *to die*
- ANNAS' DOCTOR 1** Serys, ye that ben rewelerys of the lawe, *Sirs; rulers*  
On Jhesu, ye must gyf jugement. *give*  
Let hym fyrst ben hangyn and drawe *hanged and drawn*  
320 And thanne his body in fyre be brent. *burned*
- ANNAS' DOCTOR 2** Now shal ye here the intent of me:  
Take Jhesu that werke us all gret schame! *causes us*  
Put hym to deth! Let him not fle,  
For than the comownys, thei wyl yow blame. *commoners; you*
- CAYPHAS' DOCTOR 1** He werke with wechecrafte in eche place — *witchcraft*  
326 And drawyth the pepyl to hese intent. *his will*  
Bewhare, ye jewgys! Let hym not passe!  
Than be my trewth, ye shal repent! *Beware; judges*  
*Then by; troth*
- CAYPHAS' DOCTOR 2** Serys, takyth hede onto this case,  
330 And in youre jewgement be not slawe. *judgment; slow*  
Ther was nevyr man dyd so gret trespase  
As Jhesu hath don ageyn oure lawe. *against*
- ANNAS** Now, bretheryn, than wyl ye here myn intent? *then; hear*  
These nyne days, let us abyde. *wait*  
335 We may not gyf so hasty jugement,  
But eche man inqwere on his syde. *on his own*  
Send spyes abouth the countré wyde  
To se and recorde and testymonye. *witness*  
And than hese werkys he shal not hyde *then his works*  
340 Nor have no power hem to denye. *to deny them*
- CAYPHAS** This cowncell acordyth to my reson.
- ANNAS** And we all to the same.

**[ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM]**

**JHESUS** Frendys, beholde the tyme of mercy,  
 The whiche is come now withowt dowth!  
 345 Mannys sowle in blys, now shal edify,  
 And the Prynce of the Werd is cast owth!

*doubt*  
*Man's; be exalted*  
*World; out*

Go to yon castel that standyth yow ageyn.  
 Sum of myn dyscypelis, go forth ye to.  
 There shul ye fyndyn bestys tweyn,  
 350 An asse tyed and her fole, also.  
 Unlosne that asse and brynge it to me pleyn.  
 Iff any man aske why that ye do so,  
 Sey that I have nede to this best, certeyn,  
 And he shal not lett yow, youre weys for to go,  
 355 That best brynge ye to me.

*behind you*  
*disciples*  
*shall; find two beasts*  
*foal*  
*Untie; directly*  
*beast, certainly*  
*prevent*  
*beast*

**APOSTOLUS 1** Holy prophete, we gon oure way.  
 We wyl not youre wourd delay.  
 Also, sone as that we may  
 We shal it brynge to thee.

*word*  
*soon*

*[Here thei fecch the asse with the fole, and the Burgeys seyth:]*

**BURGENSIS** Herke ye, men! Who gaff yow leve,  
 361 Thus this best for to take away?  
 But only for pore men to releve  
 This asse is ordayned, as I yow say.  
**PHILIPPUS** Good sere, take this at no greff.  
 365 Oure mayster us sent hedyr this day.  
 He hath grett nede, withowt repreff.  
 Therefore, not lett us, I thee pray,  
 This best for to lede.

*gave you permission*  
*beast*  
*to relieve*  
*provided for*  
*sir; grief*  
*here*  
*reproof*  
*do not prevent us*  
*beast*  
*Since*

**BURGENSIS** Sethyn that it is so, that he hath yow sent,  
 370 Werkyth his wyll and his intent.  
 Take this beste as ye be bent  
 And evyr wel mote ye spede.

*beast; you wish*  
*may you prosper*

**JACOBUS MINOR** This best is brought ryght now here, lo!  
 Holy prophete, at thin owyn wylle,  
 375 And with his cloth anon also,  
 This bestys bak we shal sone hylle.

*beast*  
*now*  
*beast's back; cover*

**PHILIPPUS** Now mayst thu ryde whedyr thu wylt go,  
 Thyn holy purpos to fulfyll.  
 Thy best ful redy is dyth thee to.  
 380 Both meke and tame, the best is styлле,  
 And we be redy also.  
 Iff it be plesynge to thi syght,

*beast; ready for you*  
*beast*



Thee to helpe anon forth ryght.  
 Upon this best that thu were dyght,  
 385 Thi jurney for to do.

*now  
 beast; prepared for you*

*[Here Cryst rydyth out of the place and he wyl, and Petyr and Johan abydyn styll. And,  
 at the last, whan thei have don ther prechyng, thei mete with Jhesu.]*

**PETRUS** O, ye pepyl dyspeyryng, be glad!  
 A grett cawse ye have, and ye kan se:  
 The Lord that allthyng of nought mad  
 Is comynge youre comfort to be!  
 390 All your langoris, salvyn shal he!  
 Youre helthe is more than ye kan wete.  
 He shal cawse the blynde that thei shal se,  
 The def to here, the dome for to speke!

*despairing  
 reason; if you can  
 everything; nothing made  
 miseries, heal  
 know  
 blind; see  
 deaf to hear; mute (dumb)*

Thei that be crokyd, he shal cause hem to goo  
 395 In the wey that Johan Baptyst of prophecyed:  
 Sweche a leche kam yow nevyr non too!  
 Wherefore what he comawndyth, loke be applyed!  
 That som of yow be blynd, it may not be denyid,  
 For hym that is youre makere, with youre gostly ey, ye shal not knowe.  
 400 Of his comaundementys, in yow gret necglygens is aspyed.  
 Wherefore def, fro gostly heryng, clepe yow I howe.

*crippled; them  
 Such a doctor has never come to you  
 see to it  
 spiritual  
 is perceived  
 spiritual; I ought to call you*

And some of yow may not go, ye be so crokyd,  
 For of good werkyng in yow is lytyl habundawns.  
 Tweyn fete hevery man shuld have, and it were lokyd,<sup>1</sup>  
 405 Wyche shuld bere the body gostly, most of substawns:  
 Fyrst is to love God above all other plesawns;  
 The secunde is to love thi neybore as thin owyn persone;  
 And yf these tweyn be kepte in perseverawns,  
 Into the celestyal habytacyon, ye arn habyl to gone.

*walk; crippled  
 works; abundance  
 spiritual body  
 desires  
 your  
 two; with perseverance  
 (heaven); able to go*

Many of yow be dome. Why? For ye wole not redresse  
 410 Be mowthe youre dedys mortal, but therin don perdure,  
 Of the wych, but ye have contrycyon, and yow confesse.  
 Ye may not inheryte hevyn, this I yow ensure.  
 And of all these maladys, ye may have gostly cure,  
 415 For the hevynly leche is comyng now, for to vicyte.  
 And as for payment, he wole shewe yow no redrure,  
 For with the love of yowre hertys, he wole be aqwhyte.

*mute; will  
 continue  
 assure  
 spiritual  
 physician; visit  
 harshness  
 hearts; paid*

<sup>1</sup> Two feet every man should have, if it were to be considered

- JOHANNES** Onto my brotherys forseyd rehearsall, *brother's aforesaid words*  
 That ye shuld geve the more veray confydens, *true belief*  
 420 I come with hym as testimonyall *witness*  
 For to conferme and fortifye his sentens. *corroborate; speech*  
 This Lord shal come without resystens  
 Onto the cetyward, he is now comyng!  
 Wherefore dresse yow with all dew dyligens *prepare yourselves; due*  
 425 To honowre hym as youre makere and kyng.
- And to fulfille the prophetys prophesé, *prophet's*  
 Upon an asse he wole hedyr ryde *will ride here*  
 Shewyng yow exawmple of humylyté, *humility*  
 Devoydyng the abhomyneable synne of pryde *Driving out*  
 430 Which hath ny conqwerd all the werd wyde, *nearly; wide world*  
 Grettest cause of all youre trybulacyon.  
 Use it hoso wole, for it is the best gyde *Practice it whoso will*  
 That ye may have to the place of dampnacyon.
- Now, brothyr, in God, syth we have intellygens *Since; the knowledge*  
 435 That oure Lord is ny come to this ceté, *nearly; city*  
 To attend upon his precyous presens,  
 It syttyth to us, as semyth me, *It is fitting*  
 Wherfore to mete whit hym — now go we. *meet with*  
 I wold fore nothyng we where to late. *not be late for anything*  
 440 To the cetéward, fast drawyth he! *Toward the city*  
 Me semyth he is ny at the gate! *It seems to me; nearly*

*[Here spekyth the foure ceteseynys, the fyrst thus seyng:]*

- CIVES 1** Neyborys, gret joy in oure herte we may make  
 That this hefly kyng wole vycyte this cyté! *heavenly; visit*  
**CIVES 2** Yf oure eerly kyng swech a jorné shuld take *earthly; such; journey*  
 445 To don hym honour and worchepe, besy shuld we be!  
**CIVES 3** Meche more than to the hevynly kyng bownd are we, *Much; bound*  
 For to do that shuld be to his persone reverens. *honor*  
**CIVES 4** Late us than welcom hym with flowrys and brawnchis of the tre, *Let*  
 For he wole take that to plesawns because of redolens.<sup>1</sup>

*[Here the foure ceteseynys makyn hem redy for to mete with oure Lord goyng barfot and barelegged, and in here shyrtys savyng, thei shal have here (their) gownys cast abouth theme. And qwan thei seen oure Lord, thei shal sprede ther clothis beforn hyme, and he shal lyth and go therupon. And thei shal falle downe upon ther knes all atonys (at once), the fyrst thus seyng:]*

<sup>1</sup> *He will take that as pleasing because of [the] fragrance*

**CIVES 1** Now, blyssyd he be that in oure Lordys name *Lord's*  
 451 To us in any wyse wole resorte! *will come*  
 And we beleve, veryly, that thu dost the same, *truly*  
 For be thi mercy shal spryng mannys comforte! *by; man's*

*[Here Cryst passyth forth. Ther metyth with hym a serteyn (certain number) of chyldeyn with flowrys and cast beforh hym. And they synggyn "Gloria laus," and beforh, on seyt (one says):*

Thow sone of Davyd! Thu be oure supporte *help*  
 455 At oure last day whan we shal dye! *die*  
 Wherefore, we alle atonys to thee exorte, *at once*  
 Cryeng, "Mercy, mercy, mercye!"

**JHESUS** Frendys, beholde the tyme of mercy,  
 The wich is come now, withowtyn dowth. *without a doubt*  
 460 Mannys sowle in blysse now shal edyfy, *Man's; be exalted*  
 And the prynce of the werd is cast owth! *world*  
 As I have prechyd in placys abowth *about*  
 And shewyd experyence to man and wyf,  
 Into this werd Goddys Sone hath sowth *world; sought*  
 465 For veray love, man to revyfe. *true; revive*

The trewthe of trewthys shal now be tryede, *tried*  
 And a perfyth of corde betwyx God and man, *perfect accord*  
 Wich trewth shal nevyr be dyvide, *divided*  
 Confusyon onto the fynd Sathan. *fiend*

**PAUPER HOMO 1** Thu Sone of Davyd! On us have mercye! *Son*  
 471 As we must stedfast belevyn in thee! *believe*  
 Thi goodnesse, Lord, lete us be nye, *nigh*  
 Whech lyth blynd here and may not se.

**PAUPER HOMO 2** Lord, lete thi mercy to us be sewre, *sure*  
 475 And restore to us oure bodyly syth. *sight*  
 We know thu may us wel recure *cure*  
 With the lest poynt of thi gret myth! *least bit; might*

**JHESUS** Yowre beleve hath mad you for to se *belief; made*  
 And delyveryd you fro all mortal peyn. *from*  
 480 Blyssyd be all tho that beleve on me *those*  
 And se me not with here bodyly eyen. *their; eyes*

*[Here Cryst blyssyth here eyen (their eyes) and thei may se, the fyrst seyn:*

**PAUPER HOMO 1** Gromercy, Lord of thi gret grace! *Many thanks*  
 I that was blynd now may se!

**PAUPER HOMO 2** Here I forsake al my trespace *sin*  
 485 And stedfastly wyl belevyn on thee.

## 27. LAST SUPPER; CONSPIRACY WITH JUDAS

*[Here Cryst procedyth on fote with his dyscipulys after hym. Cryst wepyng upon the cyté, sayng thus:*

**JHESUS** O, Jherusalem, woful is the ordenawnce *fate*  
 Of the day of thi gret persecucion!  
 Thu shalt be destroy with woful grevans *destroyed; pain*  
 And thi ryalté browth to trew confusyon. *royalty brought*  
 5 Ye, that in the ceté han habytacyon, *have*  
 \*491 Thei shal course the tyme that thei were born, *curse*  
 So gret advercyté and trybulacyon  
 Shal falle on hem, both evyn and morwyn. *them; evening; morning*

Thei that han most chylderyn sonest shal wayle *have; most recently*  
 10 And seyn, "Alas! What may this meen?" *say*  
 Both mete and drynk sodeynly shal fayle; *suddenly*  
 The vengeance of God ther shal be seen.  
 The tyme of comyng hes woo shal ben, *its woe*  
 The day of trobyl and gret grevauns.  
 15 Bothe templys and towrys, they shal down cleen *towers; fall completely*  
 \*501 O ceté! Ful woful is thin ordenawns! *your fate*

**PETRUS** Lord, where wolte thu kepe thi Maundé? *Passover meal*  
 I pray thee, now lete us have knowyng *ask*  
 That we may make redy for thee,  
 20 Thee to serve withowte latyng. *delay*

**JOHANNES** To provyde, Lord, for thi comyng,  
 With all the obedyens, we kan atende  
 And make redy for thee in althyng. *everything*  
 24 Into what place, thu wylt us send?

**JHESUS** Serys, goth to Syon, and ye shal mete *Zion*  
 \*511 A pore man in sympyl aray  
 Beryng watyr in the strete.  
 Telle hym I shal come that way  
 Onto hym mekely, loke that ye say *humbly*  
 30 That hese house I wele come tylle; *his; come to*  
 He wele not onys to yow sey nay, *will; once*  
 But sofre to have all youre wylle. *accept*

**PETRUS** At thi wyl, Lord, it shal be don,  
 34 To seke that place, we shal us hye. *hurry*

**JOHANNES** In all the hast that we may go, *haste*  
 \*521 Thin comawndement nevyr to denye.

*[Here Petyr and Johan gon forth, metyng with Symon Leprows (the Leper) beryng a kan with watyr, Petyr thus seyng:]*

**PETRUS** Good man! The prophete, oure Lord Jhesus,  
 This nyth wyl rest wythin thin halle. *your*  
 On message to thee he hath sent us, *With a message*  
 40 That for his sopere, ordeyn thu shalle. *supper; prepare*  
**JOHANNES** Ya, for hym and his dyscypulys alle —  
 Ordeyn thu for his Maundé *Prepare; Passover meal*  
 A paschall lomb whatso befallé, *lamb; happens*  
 44 For he wyl kepe his Pasch with thee. *Passover*

**SYMON** What? Wyl my Lord vesyte my plase? *visit my place*  
 \*531 Blyssyd be the tyme of his comyng!  
 I shal ordeyn withinne short space *prepare quickly*  
 For my good Lordys welcomyng. *Lord's*  
 Serys, walkyth in at the begynnyng *first*  
 50 And se what vetaylys that I shal take. *food; choose*  
 I am so glad of this tydyng; *news*  
 I wot nevyr what joye that I may make! *know; speak of*

*[Here the dyscypulys gon in with Symone to se the ordenawns (preparations), and Cryst comyng thedyrward, thus seyng:]*

**JHESUS** This path is calsydon be goostly ordenawns, *difficult by spiritual decree*  
 Wech shal convey us wher we shal be. *Which*  
 55 I knowe ful redy is the purvyauce *preparation*  
 \*541 Of my frendys that lovyn me.  
 Contewnyng in pees, now procede we, *Continuing; peace*  
 For mannys love, this wey I take. *man's*  
 With gostly ey, I veryly se *spiritual eye; see*  
 60 That man, for man, an hende must make. *an end*

*[Here the dyscypulys come ageyn to Cryst, Petyr thus seyng:]*

**PETRUS** All redy, Lord, is oure ordenawns *preparation*  
 As I hope to yow plesyng shal be,  
 Seymon hath don at youre instawns. *command*  
 64 He is ful glad, youre presens to se. *to see*

**JOHANNES** Allthyng we have, Lord, at oure plesyng *Everything; to our desire*  
 \*551 That longyth to youre Mawndé with ful glad chere. *is necessary for*  
 Whan he herd telle of youre comyng,  
 Gret joye in hym than dyd appere. *then*

*[Here comyth Symon owt of his hous to welcome Cryst.]*

**SYMON** Gracyous Lord, welcome thu be!  
 70 Reverens be to thee, both God and man.  
 My poer hous, that thu wylt se, *see*  
 Weche am thi servaunt, as I kan. *Which*

**JHESUS** There, joye of all joyis to thee is sewre. *sure*  
 Symon, I knowe thi trewe intent.  
 75 The blysse of hefne, thu shalt recure — *obtain*  
 \*561 This rewarde, I shal thee grawnt present. *presently*

*[Here Crist enteryth into the hous with his disciplis and ete the Paschal lomb. And in the menetye, the counsel hous beforseyd shal sodeynly onclose, shewyng the buschopys, prestys, and jergys sytting in here astat (their places) lyche as it were a convocacyone, Annas seyng thus:]*

**ANNAS** Behold, it is nowth al that we do! *[for] naught*  
 In alle houre materys, we prophete nowth. *our matters; profit not*  
 Wole ye se wech peusawns of pepyl drawyth hym to *Will; what crowds*  
 80 For the mervaylys that he hath wrowth! *marvels; has wrought*

Some othyr sotylté must be sowth, *subtlety; sought*  
 For in no wyse, we may not thus hym leve. *stop him*  
 Than, to a schrewde conclusyon we shal be browth, *bad conclusion*  
 For the Romaines, than wyl us myscheve, *then; ruin us*

85 And take oure astat and put us to repreve, *authority; disgrace*  
 \*571 And convey all the pepyl at here owyn request, *control; their*  
 And thus, all the pepyl in hym shal beleve!  
 Therefore, I pray yow, cosyn, say what is the best.

**CAYPHAS** Attende now, serys, to that I shal seye!  
 90 Onto us all, it is most expedyent  
 That o man for the pepyl shuld deye *one*  
 Than all the pepyl shuld perysch and be shent. *Rather than; perish; destroyed*

Therfor, late us werk wysely that we us not repent. *let; not be sorry*  
 We must nedys put on hym som fals dede. *needs; deed*  
 95 I sey for me, I had levyr he were brent *rather; burned*  
 \*581 Than he shuld us alle thus ovrlede. *rule*  
 Therefore, every man on his party, help at this nede, *for his part*  
 And cowntyrfete all the sotyltés that ye kan. *counterfeit; schemes*  
 Now late se ho kan geve best rede *let [us] see who; advice*  
 100 To ordeyn sum dystruccyon for this man. *To design*

- GAMALYEL** Late us no lenger make delacyon,  
 But do Jhesu be takyn in hondys fast,  
 And all here folwerys to here confusyon,  
 And into a preson do hem be cast.  
 105 Ley on hem yron that wol last,  
 \*591 For he hath wrouth agens the ryth.  
 And sythyn, aftyr, we shal in hast  
 Jewge hym to deth with gret dyspyth.
- delay  
 have Jesus; in sure hands  
 his; their  
 them  
 iron  
 worked; right  
 And then  
 Judge; humiliation*
- REWFYN** For he hath trespassyd agens oure lawe!  
 110 Me semyth this were best jewgement:  
 With wyld hors, lete hym be drawe,  
 And afftyr, in fyre, he shal be brent!
- punishment  
 horses; drawn  
 after; burned*
- LEYON** Serys, o thyng myself herd hym sey,  
 That he was Kyng of Jewys alle!  
 115 That is anow to do hym dey,  
 \*601 For treson to Cezar, we must it calle!
- Sirs; one; heard  
 enough to put him to death  
 Caesar*
- He seyde also to personys that I know,  
 That he shuld and myth serteyn  
 The gret tempyl mythtyly ovyrthrow,  
 120 And the thrydde day, reysynt ageyn!
- can indeed  
 destroy  
 third; raise it*
- Seche materys, the pepyl doth constreyn  
 To geve credens to his werkys alle.  
 In hefne, he seyth, shal be his reyn —  
 124 Both God and man, he doth hym calle.
- compel  
 heaven; reign  
 himself*
- REWFYN** And all this day, we shuld contrive  
 \*611 What shameful deth Jhesu shuld have.  
 We may not do hym to meche myscheve,  
 The worchep of oure lawe to save.
- too much harm  
 honor*
- LEYON** Up on a jebet, lete hym hongyn be,  
 130 This jugement, me seemyth, it is reson,  
 That all the countré may hym se  
 And beware be his gret treson.
- the gallows; hanged  
 reasonable  
 see  
 by*
- REWFYN** Yet o thyng, serys, ye must aspye  
 And make a ryth sotyl ordenawns  
 135 Be what menys ye may come hym bye,  
 \*621 For he hath many folwerys at his instawns.
- one; observe  
 subtle scheme  
 By what means; near  
 command*
- ANNAS** Serys, therof we must have avysement  
 And ben acordyd or than we go.
- a decision  
 be agreed before*

- How we shal han hym at oure entent, *have*  
 140 Som wey we shal fynd therto.
- MARIA MAGDALENE** As a cursyd creature closyd all in care, *enveloped*  
 And as a wyckyd wrecche all wrappyd in wo,  
 Of blysse was nevyr no berde so bare *woman; bereft*  
 As I, myself, that here now go.  
 145 Alas, alas, I shal forfare *be lost*  
 \*631 For tho grete synnys that I have do *those; done*  
 Lesse than my Lord God sumdel spare *Unless; somewhat*  
 And his grett mercy receyve me to!  
 Mary Maudelyn is my name.  
 150 Now wyl I go to Cryst Jhesu,  
 For he is lord of all vertu,  
 And for sum grace, I thynke to sew. *to ask*  
 For of myself, I have grett shame.
- A, mercy, Lord, and salve my synne! *heal*  
 155 Maydenys floure, thu wasch me fre. *Maiden's child; wash me clean*  
 \*641 Ther was nevyr woman of mannys kynne *mankind*  
 So ful of synne in no countré!  
 I have be fowlyd be fryth and fenne, *sinned everywhere (wood and fen)*  
 And sowght synne in many a ceté,  
 160 But thu me borwe lord, I shal brenne *Unless; redeem me; burn*  
 With blake fendys, ay bowne to be! *black fiends, forever bound*  
 Wherfore, Kynge of Grace,  
 With this oynement that is so sote, *ointment; sweet*  
 Lete me anoynte thin holy fote. *feet*  
 165 And for my balys thus wyn some bote *pains; relief*  
 \*651 And mercy, Lord, for my trespase.
- JHESUS** Woman, for thi wepynge wylle,  
 Sum socowre God shal thee sende. *Some help*  
 Thee to save, I have grett skylle,  
 170 For sorwefful hert may synne amende. *sorrowful heart*  
 All thi prayour I shal fulfyll  
 To thi good hert, I wul attende *will*  
 And save thee fro thi synne so hylle, *from; ill*  
 And fro sefne develys, I shal thee fende. *seven devils; defend*  
 175 Fendys, fleth your weye! *Fiends, flee*  
 \*661 Wyckyd spyritys, I yow conjowre: *conjure*  
 Fleth out of hir bodyly bowre! *Depart from; body*  
 In my grace, she shal evyr flowre  
 179 Tyl deth doth her to deye. *causes*
- MARIA MAGDALENE** I thanke thee, Lorde, of this grett grace!  
 Now these sefne fendys be fro me flytt! *are from me flown*



- I shal nevyr forfeit nor do trespas  
 In wurd, nor ded, ne wyl, nor wytt.  
 Now I am brought from the fendys brace  
 185 In thi grett mercy, closyd and shytt.  
 \*671 I shal nevyr returne to synful trace  
 That shulde me dampne to hell pytt.  
 I wurchep thee on knes bare.  
 Blyssyd be the tyme that I hedyr sowth,  
 190 And this oynement that I hedyr brought,  
 For now myn hert is clensyd from thought  
 That fyrst was combryd with care.
- JUDAS** Lord, me thynkyth thu dost ryght ylle  
 To lete this oynement so spylle!  
 195 To selle it, yt were more skylle,  
 \*681 And bye mete to poer men.  
 The box was worth of good moné —  
 Thre hundryd pens, fayr and fre!  
 This myght a bowht mete plenté  
 200 To fede oure power ken.
- JHESUS** Pore men shul abyde.  
 Ageyn the woman thu spekyst wronge,  
 And I passe forth in a tyde.  
 204 Of mercy is her mornynge songe.
- [Here Cryst restyth and etyth a lytyl and seyth, syttyng to his disciplis and Mary Mawdelyn:
- JHESUS** Myn herte is ryght sory, and no wondyr is.  
 \*691 Too deth I shal go and nevyr dyd trespas.  
 But yitt, most grevyth myn hert evyr of this:  
 On of my bretheryn shal werke this manas;  
 On of yow here syttyng, my treson shal tras;  
 210 On of yow is besy, my deth here to dyth.  
 And yitt was I nevyr in no synful plas  
 Wherefore my deth shuld so shamfully be pyght.
- PETRUS** My dere Lord, I pray thee, the trewth for to telle:  
 Whiche of us ys he that treson shal do?  
 215 Whatt traytour is he that his Lord that wold selle?  
 \*701 Expresse his name, Lord, that shal werke this woo.
- JOHANNES** If that ther be on that wolde selle so,  
 Good mayster, telle us now opynly his name!  
 What traytour is hym that from thee that wolde go,  
 220 And with fals treson fulfille his grett shame?

*sin**word; deed; will; thought**fiends' embrace**enclosed and shut**ways**condemn me**sought [you] here**here**encumbered**ill**waste**sensible**buy food for poor**a lot of money**300 pence**have bought food**poor kin**will always be**Against**short time**mourning / morning**[Here Cryst restyth and etyth a lytyl and seyth, syttyng to his disciplis and Mary Mawdelyn:**yet; heart**One; menace**One; plot**One; arrange**yet; condition**appointed**Say; woe**one*

<b>ANDREAS</b>	It is right dredfull, such tresson to thynke And wel more dredful to werk that bad dede, For that fals treson to helle, he shal synke!	<i>false treason</i>
224	In endles peynes, grett myscheff to lede.	<i>harm to endure</i>
<b>JACOBUS MAJOR</b>	It is not I, Lord, for dowte I have drede	<i>fear</i>
*711	This synne to fulfyllen cam nevyr in my mende! If that I solde thee, thy blood for to blede In doying that treson, my sowle shulde I shende.	<i>mind</i>  <i>destroy</i>
<b>MATHEUS</b>	Alas, my dere Lord, what man is so wood	<i>insane</i>
230	For gold or for sylver hymself so to spylle He that thee doth selle for gold or for other good? With his grett covetyse, hymself, he doth kille!	<i>silver; to ruin</i> <i>other goods</i>
<b>BARTHOLOMEUS</b>	What man soevyr he be of so wyckyd wylle, Dere Lord, among us — tell us his name all owt,	<i>openly</i>
235	He that to hym tendyth this dede to fulfille!	
*721	For his grett treson, his sowle stondyth in dowl.	<i>doubt</i>
<b>PHILIPPUS</b>	Golde, sylver, and tresoor soone doth passe away, But withowtyn ende evyr doth laste thi grace. A, Lord, who is that wyll chaffare thee for monay?	<i>treasure</i>  <i>deal you away</i>
240	For he that sellyth his Lord — to grett is the trespase.	<i>too</i>
<b>JACOBUS MINOR</b>	That traytour that doth this orryble manace, Both body and sowle, I holde he be lorn — Dampnyd to helle pytt, fer from thi face,	<i>horrible</i> <i>lost</i> <i>Damned; far</i>
244	Amonge all fowle fyndys to be rent and torn.	<i>foul fiends</i>
<b>SYMON</b>	To bad a marchawnt that traytour, he is,	<i>Too evil a merchant</i>
*731	And for that monye, he may mornyng make! Alas, what cawsyth hym to selle the Kyng of Blys? For his fals wynnyng, the devyl hym shal take.	<i>mourning</i>  <i>winnings</i>
<b>THOMAS</b>	For his fals treson, the fendys so blake	<i>fiends; black</i>
250	Shal bere his sowle depe down into helle pytt. Resste shal he non have, but evyrmore wake, Brennyng in hoot fyre, in preson evyr shytt.	  <i>Burning; hot; shut</i>
<b>THADEUS</b>	I woundyr ryght sore who that he shuld be, Amongys us all bretheryn that shulde do this synne.	
255	Alas, he is lorn; ther may no grace be	<i>lost</i>
*741	In depe helle donjeon, his sowle he doth pynne.	<i>dungeon; imprison</i>
<b>JHESUS</b>	In my dysche he etyht, this treson shal begynne. Wo shal betydyn hym for his werke of dred. He may be ryght sory swych ryches to wynne,	<i>dish; eats, [who]</i> <i>Woe; befall; fearful deed</i> <i>such riches</i>
260	And whysshe hymself unborn for that synful ded.	<i>wish; deed</i>
<b>JUDAS</b>	The trewth wolde I knowe as leff as ye, And therfore, good sere, the trewth thu me telle:	<i>as much as</i> <i>sir</i>

- Which of us all here, that traytour may be?  
 264 Am I that person that thee now shal selle?  
**JHESUS** So seyst thiselff. Take heed att thi spelle. *words*  
 \*751 Thu askyst me now, here, if thu shalt do that treson?  
 Remembyr thiself; avyse thee ryght welle! *Consider carefully*  
 Thu art of grett age and wotysst what is reson. *majority; know; right*
- [Here Judas rysyth prevely (secretly) and goth in the place and seyt, "Now cownterfetyd":*
- JUDAS** Now cowntyrfetyd, I have a prevy treson, *contrived; secret*  
 270 My maysterys power for to felle. *master's; overthrow*  
 I, Judas, shal asay be some encheson *try; pretext*  
 Onto the Jewys hym for to selle.  
 Som mony for hym, yet wold I telle *count*  
 Be prevy menys, I shal asay. *By secret means; try*  
 275 Myn intent I shal fulfyllen,  
 \*761 No lenger I wole make delay.
- The princys of prestys now be present. *high priests*  
 Unto hem, now my way I take. *them*  
 I wyl go tellyn hem myn entent;  
 280 I trow ful mery I shal hem make! *I believe; them*  
 Mony I wyl non forsake *Money; not*  
 And thei profyr to my plesyng. *offer*  
 For covetyse, I wyl with hem wake, *watch over them*  
 And onto my maystyr, I shal hem bryng.
- 285 Heyl, prynsesse and prestys that ben present! *rulers; are*  
 \*771 New tydyngys to yow I come to telle!  
 Yf ye wole folwe myn intent,  
 My mayster, Jhesu, I wele yow selle,  
 Hese intent and purpose for to felle, *His; overthrow*  
 290 For I wole no lenger folwyn his lawe. *follow*  
 Late sen what money that I shal telle, *Let's see; make*  
 And late Jhesu, my maystyr, ben hangyn and drawe.<sup>1</sup>
- GAMALYEL** Now, welcome, Judas, oure owyn frende!  
 Take hym in, serys, be the honde! *sirs; by the hand*  
 295 We shal thee both geve and lende, *give*  
 \*781 And in every qwarel by thee stonde. *quarrel; stand*
- REWFYN** Judas, what shal we for thi mayster pay?  
 Thi sylver is redy, and we acorde: *agree*

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<sup>1</sup> And let Jesus, my master, be hanged and drawn

- 300      The payment shal have no delay,  
But be leyde down here at a worde. *paid*
- JUDAS**    Late the mony here down be layde,  
And I shal tell yow as I kan.  
In old termys, I have herd seyde:  
304      “That mony makyth schapman.” *sayings  
the merchant*
- REWFYN**   Here is thretty platys of sylver bryth *thirty pieces; bright*  
\*791      Fast knyth withinne this glove. *knitted*  
And we may have thi mayster this nyth, *If; master; night*  
This shalt thou have and all oure love.
- JUDAS**    Ye are resonable chapmen to bye and selle. *businessmen; buy*  
310      This bargany with yow now shal I make! *bargain*  
Smyth up! Ye shal have al your wylle, *Agreed!; what you wish*  
For mony wyl I non forsake. *money; not forsake [you]*
- LEYON**    Now, this bargany is mad ful and fast: *bargain; firm*  
Noyther part may it forsake! *Neither party*  
315      But, Judas, you must telle us in hast *in haste*  
\*801      Be what menys we shal hym take. *means*
- REWFYN**   Ya, ther be many that hym nevyr sowe *have never seen him*  
Weche we wyl send to hym in fere. *altogether*  
Therfor, be a tokyn, we must hym knowe *by a sign*  
320      That must be prevy betwyx us here. *a secret*
- LEYON**    Ya, beware of that, for ony thyngel *wary; anything*  
For o dyscypil is lyche thi mayster in al parayl, *one disciple; like; dress*  
And ye go lyche in all clothyng, *alike*  
324      So myth we of oure purpose fayl. *might*
- JUDAS**    As for that, serys, have ye no dowth. *sirs; doubt*  
\*811      I shal ordeyn, so ye shal not mysse. *plan it; fail*  
Whan that ye cum, hym all abowth, *When*  
Take the man that I shal kysse.
- 330      I must go to my maystyr ageyn. *master*  
Dowth not, serys, this matere is sure inow. *Doubt; sirs; enough*  
**GAMALYEL**   Farewel, Judas, oure frend serteyn! *for certain*  
Thi labour, we shal ryth wel alow. *reward well*
- JUDAS**    Now wyl I sotely go seke my mayster ageyn, *subtlety*  
And make good face as I nowth knew — *pretend; nothing*  
335      I have hym solde to wo and peyn. *woe*  
\*821      I trowe ful sore he shal it rew! *I am sure; regret*

*[Here Judas goth in sotylly wheras he came fro.*

**ANNAS** Lo, serys, a part we have of oure entent, *desire*  
 For to take Jhesu now, we must provyde *arrange*  
 A sotyl meny to be present *cunning mob*  
 340 That dare fyth and wele abyde. *fight and stand their ground*

**GAMALYEL** Ordeyn eche man on his party — *each; for his part*  
 Cressetys, lanternys, and torchys lyth — *Oil lamps*  
 And this nyth to be ther redy *night*  
 344 With exys, gleyvis, and swerdys bryth. *axes, spears; swords bright*

**CAYPHAS** No lenger, than, make we teryeng, *longer, then; tarrying*  
 \*831 But eche man to his place hym dyth, *ready himself*  
 And ordeyn prevely for this thyng *prepare secretly*  
 That it be don this same nyth. *night*

*[Here the buschopys partyn in the place, and eche of hem takyn here (their) leve be contenawns (by gesturing), resortyng eche man to his place with here meny (retinue) to make redy to take Cryst. And than shal the place ther Cryst is in shal sodeynly uncloose rownd aboutyn, shewyng Cryst syttyng at the table, and hese dyscypulys, eche in ere degré (his proper place), Cryst thus seyng:*

**JHESUS** Brederyn, this lambe that was set us befor *Brethren*  
 350 That we alle have etyn in this nyth, *eaten; night*  
 It was comawndyd be my Fadyr to Moyse and Aaron *by; Moses*  
 Whan thei weryn with the chylderyn of Israel in Egythp. *When*

And as we with swete bredys have it ete, *unleavened bread; eaten*  
 And also with the byttyr sokelyng, *bitter clover*  
 355 And as we take the hed with the fete *head; feet*  
 \*841 So ded thei in all maner thyng.

And as we stodyn, so ded thei stond, *stood; did they stand*  
 And here reynes, thei gyrdyn veryly, *their loins (kidneys); girded*  
 With schon on here fete and stavys in here hond. *Shoes on their*  
 360 And as we ete it, so ded thei hastyly. *did they*  
 This fygyre shal sesse: anothyr shal folwe therby *cease; follow*  
 Weche shal be of my body that am youre hed, *Which; head*  
 Weche shal be shewyd to yow be a mystery *Which; shown; by*  
 Of my flesch and blood in forme of bred. *bread*

365 And with fervent desyre of hertys affeccyon, *heart's*  
 \*851 I have enterly desyryd to kepe my Mawndé *entirely; Passover meal*  
 Among yow, er than I suffre my Passyon, *before*  
 For of this, no more togedyr suppe shal we. *Because; sup*  
 And as the Paschal lamb etyn have we,

370 In the Old Lawe was usyd for a sacryfyc; *sanctified by*  
 So the newe lomb that shal be sacryd be me *most costly*  
 Shal be usyd for a sacryfyc most of price.

*[Here shal Jhesus take an oble (wafer) in his hand, lokyng upward into hefne to the Fadyr, thus seying:]*

Wherefor to the Fadyr of Hefne that art eternall,  
 Thankyng and honor I yeld onto thee, *Thankfulness; yield*  
 375 To whom be the Godhed I am eqwall, *by*  
 \*861 But be my manhod, I am of lesse degré. *by; manhood*  
 Wherefore I, as man, worchep the Deyté, *Deity*  
 Thankyng thee, Fadyr, that thu wylt shew this mystery  
 And thus thurwe thi myth, Fadyr, and blyssyng of me, *through your might*  
 380 Of this that was bred, is mad my body. *bread; made*

*[Here shal he spekyn ageyn to his dyscipulys, thus seying:]*

Bretheryn, be the vertu of these wordys that rehercyd be, *by; are spoken*  
 This that shewyth as bred to your apparens *appears; sight*  
 Is mad the very flesche and blod of me, *made; blood*  
 To the weche thei that wole be savyd must geve credens. *which; give*

385 And as in the Olde Lawe, it was comawndyd and precepte *ordained*  
 \*871 To ete this lomb to the dystruccyon of Pharao unkende, *lamb; wicked*  
 So to dystroy youre gostly enmye, this shal be kepte *spiritual enemy*  
 For youre Paschal lombe into the werdys ende. *world's end*

For this is the very lombe withowte spot of synne *Lamb*  
 390 Of weche Johan the Baptyst dede prophesye *did*  
 Whan this prophesye he ded begynne *When*  
 Seyng: "Ecce agnus Dey."  
*Behold the Lamb of God*

And how ye shal ete this lombe, I shal geve infformacyon: *instructions*  
 In the same forme as the Eld Lawe doth specyfye, *Old*  
 395 As I shewe the gostly interpretacyon. *spiritual*  
 \*881 Therfore to that, I shal sey youre wyttys loke ye replye.<sup>1</sup>

With no byttyr bred, this bred ete shal be: *eaten*  
 That is to say, with no byttrynesse of hate and envye,  
 But with the suete bred of love and charyté, *sweet*  
 400 Weche fortetyet the soule gretlyé. *Which builds; greatly*

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, make sure you will respond to that (spiritual interpretation/intention).

	And it schuld ben etyn with the byttyr sokelyng:	<i>bitter clover</i>
	That is to mene, yf a man be of synful dyspocycyon,	
	Hath led his lyff here with myslevyng;	<i>life; with sin</i>
	Therfore in his hert, he shal have byttyr contrycyon.	<i>heart; contrition</i>
405	Also the hed with the feet, ete shal ye:	<i>head</i>
*891	Be "the hed," ye shal undyrstand my Godhead,	<i>By</i>
	And be "the feet," ye shal take my humanity.	
	These tweyn, ye shal receyve togedyr, indede.	<i>two</i>
	This immaculat lombe, that I shal yow geve,	<i>lamb</i>
410	Is not only the Godhed alone,	
	But bothe God and man, thus must ye beleve.	
	Thus, the hed with the feet, ye shal receyve echon.	<i>each one</i>
	Of this lombe unete, yf owth be levyth, iwys,	<i>uneaten; any be left</i>
	Yt shuld be cast in the clere fyre and brent:	<i>bright fire; burned</i>
415	Weche is to mene, yf thu undyrstand nowth al this, <sup>1</sup>	
*901	Put thi feyth in God, and than thu shalt not be shent.	<i>then; damned</i>
	The gyrdyl that was comawndyd, here reynes to sprede,	<i>loins to cover</i>
	Shal be the gyrdyl of clenness and chastyté:	<i>purity</i>
	That is to sayn, to be contynent in word, thought, and dede,	<i>chaste; deed</i>
420	And all leccherous levyng, cast yow for to fle.	<i>living; set yourselves</i>
	And the schon that shal be youre feet upon	<i>shoes</i>
	Is not ellys but exawnpyl of vertuis levyng	<i>none else; virtuous living</i>
	Of youre form-faderys, you befor.	<i>forefathers</i>
	With these schon, my steppys ye shal be sewyng.	<i>shoes; following</i>
425	And the staf that in youre handys ye shal holde	
*911	Is not ellys but the exawmpyls to other men teche.	<i>none else; examples</i>
	Hold fast youre stavys in your handys, and beth bolde,	<i>staves</i>
	To every creature, myn preceptys for to preche.	
	Also ye must ete this Paschall lombe hastyly,	<i>lamb</i>
430	Of weche sentens, this is the very entent:	<i>which meaning</i>
	At every oure and tyme ye shal be redy	<i>hour</i>
	For to fulfille my cowmawndement.	
	For thow ye leve this day, ye are not sure	<i>though you live</i>
	Whedyr ye shal leve tomorwe or nowth.	<i>Whether; live; not</i>
435	Therfor, hastyly every oure, do youre besy cure	<i>hour; work diligently</i>
*921	To kepe my preceptys, and than thar ye not dowth.	<i>then need you; fear</i>

<sup>1</sup> Which is to say, if you do not understand all this

Now have I lernyd yow how ye shal ete *taught*  
 Youre Paschal lombe that is my precyous body.  
 Now I wyl fede yow all with awngellys mete. *angel's food*  
 440 Wherefore to reseyye it, come forth seryattly. *receive; one by one*

**PETRUS** Lord, for to receyve this gostly sustenawns *spiritual*  
 In dewe forme, it excedyth myn intellygens, *due; comprehension*  
 For no man of hymself may have substawns, *stature*  
 To receyve it with to meche reverens. *too much honor*

445 For with more delycyous mete, Lord, thou may us not fede *food; feed*  
 \*931 Than with thin owyn precyous body.  
 Wherefore, what I have trespacyd in word, thought or dede *sinned; deed*  
 With byttyr contrycyon, Lord, I haske thee mercy. *ask*

*[Whan our Lord gyvyth his body to his dyscypulys, he shal sey to eche of hem, except to Judas:]*

**JHESUS** This is my body, flesch, and blode *blood*  
 450 That for thee shal dey upon the rode. *die; cross*

*[And whan Judas comyth last, oure Lord shal sey to hym:]*

Judas, art thou avysyd what thou shalt take? *Have you considered*  
**JUDAS** Lord, thi body I wyl not forsake.

*[And sythyn, oure Lord shal sey unto Judas:]* *then*

**JHESUS** Myn body, to thee I wole not denye.  
 Sythyn thou wylt presume therupon, *Since*  
 455 Yt shal be thi dampnacyon, verylye. *truly*  
 \*941 I geve thee warnyng now befor.

*[And aftyr that Judas hath reseyyd, he shal syt ther he was, Cryst seyng:]*

On of yow hath betrayd me *One*  
 That at my borde with me hath ete. *table; eaten*  
 Bettyr it hadde hym for to a be *have been*  
 460 Both unborn and unbegete. *unbegotten*

*[Than eche dyscypyl shal loke on other, and Petyr shal sey:]*

**PETRUS** Lord, it is not I!

*[And so alle shul seyn tyl thei comyn at Judas weche shal sey:]*

**JUDAS** Is it owth I, Lord? *aught*



*[Than Jhesus shal sey:*

**JHESUS** Judas, thu seyst that word.

\*949 Me thu ast solde that was thi frend. *you have*  
 465 That thu hast begonne, brenge to an ende. *What you have begun, bring*

*[Than Judas shal gon ageyn to the Jewys, and yf men wolne, shal mete with hym and sey  
 this spech folwyng or levynt (omit it) whether thei wyl, the devyl thus seyn:*

**DEMON** A! A! Judas derlyng myn! *darling*  
 Thu art the best to me that evyr was bore!  
 Thu shalt be crownyd in helle peyn, *hell's pain*  
 And therof, thu shalt be sekyr forevymore! *fixed*

470 Thow hast solde thi maystyr and etyn hym, also. *master; eaten*  
 I wolde thu kowdyst bryngyn hym to helle every del, *could; entirely*  
 But yet I fere he shuld do ther sum sorwe and wo *fear; sorrow*  
 That all helle shal crye out on me that sel. *at that time*

Sped up thi matere that thu hast begonne! *business*  
 475 I shal to helle for thee to mak redy. *to make ready*  
 \*961 Anon, thu shalt come wher thu shalt wonne — *Soon; dwell*  
 In fyre and styng shalt sytt me by.

**JHESUS** Now, the Sone of God claryfied is, *glorified*  
 And God in hym is claryfied also. *glorified*  
 480 I am sory that Judas hath lost his blysse  
 Weche shal turn hym to sorwe and wo. *Which*

But now in the memory of my Passyon,  
 To ben partabyll with me in my reyn above, *To be able to partake; reign*  
 Ye shal drynk myn blood with gret devocyon,  
 485 Wheche shal be shad for mannys love. *Which; shed; man's*

\*971 Takyth these chalys of the Newe Testament *chalices*  
 And kepyth this evyr in youre mende. *mind*  
 As oftyr as ye do this with trewe intent,  
 It shal defend yow fro the fende. *fiend*

*[Than shal the dysciplys com and take the blod, Jhesus seyn:*

490 This is my blood that for mannys synne *man's*  
 Outh of myn herte, it shal renne. *heart; run*

*[And the dysciplys shul sett them agen ther thei wore, and Jhesus shal seyn:*

- Takyth hed, now bretheryn, what I have do, *heed; done*  
 With my flesch and blood, I have yow fed.  
 For mannys love, I may do no mo *man's; more*  
 495 Than for love of man to be ded. *dead*
- \*981 Werfore, Petyr and ye everychon *everyone*  
 Yf ye love me, fede my schep, *sheep*  
 That for fawth of techyng, thei go not wrong, *want of teaching*  
 But evyr to hem takyth good kep. *take good care of them*
- 500 Gevyth hem my body, as I have to yow, *Give them*  
 Qweche shal be sacryd be my worde, *Which; by*  
 And evyr I shal thus abyde with yow  
 Into the ende of the werde. *world*
- Hoso etyth my body and drynkyth my blood *Whoso eats*  
 505 Hol God and man he shal me take. *Whole*  
 \*991 It shal hym defende from the devyl wood, *insane*  
 And at his deth, I shal hym nowth forsake. *not*
- And hoso not ete my body nor drynke my blood, *whoso does*  
 Lyf in hym is nevyr a dele. *none at all*  
 510 Kepe wel this in mende for your good, *in mind*  
 And every man save hymself wele.
- [*Here Jhesus takyth a basyn with watyr and towaly (towel) gyrt abowtyn hym, and fallyth beforn Petyr on his o (one) kne.*]
- Another exawmpyl I shal yow showe,  
 How ye shal leve in charyté.  
 Syt here down at wordys fewe *live*  
 515 And qwat I do, ye sofre me. *with few words*  
*what; allow me to do*
- [*Here he takyth the basyn and the towaly and doth as the robberych (rubric) seyth beforn:*]
- PETRUS** Lord, what wylt thou with me do?  
 \*1002 This servyce of thee, I wyl forsake — *deny*  
 To wassche my feet, thou shal not so! *wash*  
 I am not worthy, it of thee to take.
- JHESUS** Petyr, and thou forsake my servyce all, *if you*  
 521 The weche to yow that I shal do, *The which*  
 No part with me have thou shal,  
 And nevyr com my blysse onto!
- PETRUS** That part, Lord, we wyl not forgo!  
 525 We shal abey his comawndement. *obey*

\*1011 Wasche hed and hond, we pray thee so; *head; hand*  
 We wyl don after thin entent. *do*

*[Here Jhesus wasshyth his dyscipulys feet by and by, and whypyth (wipes) hem and kyssyth hem mekely. And sythyn settyth hym down, thus seyng:*

**JHESUS** Fren dys, this wasshyng shal now prevayll. *become customary*  
 Youre lord and mayster ye do me calle,

530 And so I am withowtyn fayl, *doubt*  
 Yet I have wasschyd yow alle.

A memory of this have ye shall

That eche of yow shal do to othyr

With umbyl hert submyt egal,

*one another  
 humble; equally*

535 As eche of yow were otherys brother. *each other's*

\*1021 Nothyng, serys, so wele plesyth me *sirs*  
 Nor no lyf that man may lede

As thei that levyn in charyté.

*live*

In efne, I shal reward here mede.

*heaven; give them their reward*

540 The day is come — I must procede

For to fulfyll the prophecy:

This nyth, for me, ye shal han drede

*night; have dread*

Whan noumbyr of pepyl shal on me cry. *When many*

For the propheys spoke of me,

545 And seydyn of deth, that I shuld take, *said*

\*1031 Fro whеч deth I wole not fle, *From which*

But for mannys synne amendys make. *man's; amends*

This nyth, fro yow be led I shal,

*night, from*

And ye, for fer, fro me shal fle.

*fear, from*

550 Not onys dur speke whan I yow call,

*Not once will you dare*

And some of yow forsake me.

For yow shal I dey and ryse ageyn.

*die*

Un the thrydde day, ye shal me se

*On; third*

Beforen yow all walkyng playn

*in plain view*

555 In the lond of Galylé. *Galilee*

**PETRUS** Lord, I wyl thee nevyр forsake,

\*1032 Nor for no perellys, fro thee fle! *perils, from*

I wyl rather my deth take

Than onys, Lord, forsake thee! *once*

**JHESUS** Petyr, yn ferthere than thu doyst knowe. *it is beyond what*

561 As for that promese, loke thu not make, *promise; look*

- For or the cok hath twyes crowe,  
Thryes thu shal me forsake. *before; twice  
Thrice*
- But all my frendys that arn me dere,  
565 Late us go — the tyme drawyth ny. *dear to me  
Let; time; nigh*  
\*1051 We may no lengere abydyn here, *longer abide*  
For I must walke to Betany.
- The tyme is come — the day drawyth nere —  
Onto my deth I must in hast. *haste*  
570 Now, Petyr, make hall thi felawys chere. *give comfort to all the fellows*  
My flesch, for fere, is qwakyng fast. *fear*

**28. BETRAYAL; PROCESSION OF SAINTS**

*[Here Jhesus goth to Betany ward (toward Bethany), and his dyscipulys folwyng with sad contenauns (countenance), Jhesus seying:*

- Now, my dere frendys and bretheryn echon: *each one*  
Remembyr the wordys that I shal sey.  
The tyme is come that I must gon  
\*1060 For to fulfyll the prophesey
- 5 That is seyde of me — that I shal dey, *said; die*  
The fendys power fro yow to flem, *fiend's; from; to banish*  
Weche deth I wole not deny, *Which; deny*  
Mannys sowle, my spouse, for to redem. *Man's soul; redeem*
- The oyle of mercy is grawntyd playn  
10 Be this jorne that I shal take. *By; journey*  
Be my Fadyr, I am sent, sertayn, *By; certainly*  
Betwyx God and man, an ende to make. *agreement*
- Man, for my brother, may I not forsake,  
\*1070 Nor shewe hym unkendenesse, be no wey. *unkindness, by*  
15 In peynys for hym, my body schal schake, *pains*  
And for love of man, man shal dey. *die*

*[Here Jhesus and his discipulys go toward the Mount of Olyvet. And whan he comyth a lytyl ther besyde in a place lych (like) to a park, he byddyt his dyscipulys abyde hym ther and seyth to Petyr or he goth:*

- Petyr, with thi felawys, here shalt thou abyde *fellows*  
And weche tyl I come ageyn. *watch; again*  
I must make my prayere here yow besyde.  
20 My flesch qwakyth sore, for fere and peyn. *fear*

**PETRUS** Lord, thi request doth me constreyn.  
 In this place I shal abyde styлле,  
 Not remeve tyl that thu comyst ageyn,  
 \*1080 In confermyng, Lord, of thi wylle. *move*  
*In accordance*

*[Here Jhesu goth to Olyvet and settyth hym down on his knes and prayth to his Fadyr, thus seyng:]*

**JHESUS** O, Fadyr, Fadyr, for my sake  
 26 This gret Passyon, thu take fro me *from*  
 Wech arn ordeyned that I shal take! *Which; ordained*  
 Yf mannys sowle savyd may be, *man's*  
 And yf it behove, Fadyr, for me *behooves me*  
 30 To save mannys sowle that shuld spylle, *man's; be ruined*  
 I am redy in eche degré,  
 The uyl of thee for to fulfyllе. *will*

*[Here Jhesus goth to his dyscipulis and fyndyth hem sclepyng (sleeping), Jhesus thus seyng to Petyr:]*

Petyr, Petyr, thu slepyst fast!  
 \*1090 Awake thi felawys and sclepe no more! *fellows*  
 35 Of my deth, ye are not agast? *afraid*  
 Ye take your rest, and I peyn sore! *am in great pain*

*[Here Cryst goth ageyn the second tyme to Olyvet and seyth knelyng:]*

Fadyr in hevyn, I beseche thee:  
 Remeve my peynes be thi gret grace, *remove; by*  
 And lete me fro this deth fle, *from*  
 40 As I ded nevyр no trespace! *never did sin*  
 The watyr and blood owth of my face *out*  
 Dystyllyth for peynes that I shal take. *Runs*  
 My flesche qwakyth in ferful case  
 \*1100 As thow the joyntys asondre shuld schake! *though the joints asunder*

*[Here Jhesus goth agen to his discipulis and fyndyth hem asclepe, Jhesus thus seyng, lattyng hem lyne letting:]*

45 Fadyr, the thrydde tyme I come ageyn, *third*  
 Fulleche myn erdon for to spede — *Fully my errand; complete*  
 Delyvere me, Fadyr, fro this peyn *from*  
 Weche is reducyd with ful gret drede! *Which; recalled*  
 Onto thi Sone, Fadyr, take hede!  
 50 Thu wotyst I dede nevyр dede but good. *know; did; deeds*  
 It is not for me, this peyn I lede, *suffer*  
 But for man, I swete bothe watyr and blode. *sweat*

*[Here an aungel descendyth to Jhesus and bryngyth to hym a chalys with an host therin.]*

**ANGELUS** Heyl, bothe God and man, indede!

\*1110 The Fadyr hath sent thee this present.

55 He bad that thu shuldyst not drede,  
But fulfyll his intent

As the Parlement of Hefne hath ment,  
That mannys sowle shal now redemyd be.  
From hefne to herd, Lord, thu wore sent,

60 That dede appendyth onto thee.

*Heaven; intended  
man's; redeemed  
earth; were  
deed belongs*

This chalys ys thi blood; this bred is thi body  
For mannys synne evyr offeryd shal be.  
To the Fadyr of Heffne that is almythty,

*chalice; bread  
man's*

\*1120 Thi dyscipulis and all presthood shal offere fore thee.

*[Here the aungel ascendyth agen sodeynly.]*

**JHESUS** Fadyr, thi wyl fulfyllyd shal be.

66 It is nowth to say agens the case:

I shal fulfyll the prophesye

And sofre deth for mannys trespase.

*not to go against  
suffer; man's*

*[Here goth Cryst ageyn to his dyscipulys and fyndyth hem sclepyng styll.]*

Awake, Petyr, thi rest is ful long!  
70 Of sclep, thu wylt make no delay!

Judas is redy with pepyl strong  
And doth his part, me to betray.

*sleep  
people*

Ryse up, serys, I you pray!

*sirs*

\*1130 Onclose youre eyne for my sake!

*Open; eyes*

75 We shal walke into the way

And sen hem come that shul me take!

*see them; shall*

Petyr, whan thu seyst I am forsake  
Amonge myn frendys and stond alone,  
All the cher that thu kanst make

*comfort  
everyone*

80 Geve to thi bretheryn everychone.

*[Here Jhesus with his dyscipulis goth into the place, and ther shal come in a ten personys weyl beseen in white arneys (armor) and breganderys (battle gear) and some dysgyssed in odyr garmentys with swerdys, gleyvoys (lances), and other straunge wepone as cressettys (oil lanterns) with feyr and lanternys and torchis lyth. And Judas formest of (in front of them) al conveyng hem to Jhesus be contenawns (gesturing), Jhesus thus seyng:]*

**JHESUS** Serys, in your way, ye have gret hast

To seke hym that wyl not fle!

*Sirs; haste  
seek; flee*

Of yow, I am ryth nowth agast. *not at all afraid*  
 \*1140 Telle me, serys, whom seke ye? *sirs*

**LEYON** Whom we seke here, I telle thee now, *seek*  
 86 A tretor is worthy to suffer deth! *traitor*  
 We knowe he is here among yow —  
 His name is Jhesus of Nazareth.

**JHESUS** Serys, I am here that wyl not fle.  
 90 Do to me all that ye kan,  
 Forsothe, I telle yow, I am he, *Truly*  
 Jhesus of Nazareth, that same man.

*[Here alle the Jewys falle sodeynly to the erde (earth) whan thei here Cryst speke. And gwan byddyth hem rysyn, thei rysyn agen, Cryst thus seying:]*

Aryse, serys! Whom seke ye? Fast have ye gon! *sirs*  
 \*1150 Is howth youre comyng hedyr for me? *ought; hither*  
 95 I stond beforn yow here, echon, *everyone*  
 That ye may me bothe knowe and se. *see*

**REWFYN** Jhesus of Nazareth we seke,  
 And we myth hym here aspye. *If; might; spot*

**JHESUS** I told yow, now with wordys meke  
 100 Beforn you all, that it was I.

**JUDAS** Welcome, Jhesus, my mayster dere! *master*  
 I have thee sowth in many a place! *sought*  
 I am ful glad I fynd thee here, *very*  
 \*1160 For I wyst nevyr wher thu wace. *did not know where; were*

*[Here Judas kyssyth Jhesus. And anoon (soon) all the Jewys come abowth hym and ley handys on hym and pullyn hym as thei were wode (crazy) and makyn on hym a gret cry all atonys (at once). And aftyr this, Petyr seyth:]*

**PETYR** I drawe my swerd now, this sel! *right now*  
 106 Shal I smyte, mayster? Fayn wolde I wete! *strike; gladly you know*

*[And forthwith he smytyth of (off) Malcheus here (ear), and he cryeth "Help! Myn here! Myn here!" And Cryst blyssyth it, and tys hol.]*

**JHESUS** Put thi swerd in the shede, fayr and wel, *sword; sheath*  
 For he that smyth with swerd, with swerd shal be smete. *smiles; smitten*

A, Judas, this treson cowntyrfetyd has thu? *treason contrived*  
 110 And that thu shalt ful sore repent!

- Thu haddyst be bettyr a ben unborn now.  
 Thy body and sowle thu hast shent.
 *to have been  
destroyed*
- GAMALYEL** Lo, Jhesus, thu mayst not the cace refuse!
 *case*
- \*1170 Bothe treson and eresye in thee is fownde.
 *treason; heresy*
- 115 Stody now fast on thin excuse
 *Consider*
- Whylys that thu gost in cordys bownde.  
 Thu kallyst thee kyng of this werd rownde!  
 Now lete me se thi gret powere,  
 And save thiself here hool and sownde,
 *While; go; cords  
call yourself; world  
see  
whole; sound*
- 120 And brynge thee out of this dawngere!
 *yourself; danger*
- LEYON** Bryng forth this tretoure! Spare hym nowth!  
 Onto Cayphas, thi jewge, we shal thee lede.  
 In many a place we have thee sowth,
 *traitor; not  
judge; lead  
sought*
- \*1180 And to thi werkys, take good hede.
 *works*
- REWFYN** Come on, Jhesus, and folwe me!  
 126 I am ful glad that I thee have!  
 Thu shalt ben hangyn upon a tre,  
 A melyon of gold shal thee not save!
 *million*
- LEYON** Lete me leyn hand on hym in heye!  
 130 Onto his deth, I shal hym bryng!  
 Shewe forth thi wychecrafte and nygramansye!  
 What helpyth thee now, al thy fals werkyng?
 *lay hands; in haste  
black magic  
actions*
- JHESUS** Frendys, take hede, ye don unryth!  
 \*1190 So unkendely with cordys to bynd me here,  
 135 And thus to falle on me be nyth  
 As thow I were a thevys fere?  
 Many tyme befor yow I dede apere  
 Withinne the temple, sen me ye have,  
 The lawys of God to teche and lere,  
 140 To hem that wele here sowlys save.
 *are doing ill  
cruelly; cords  
to attack; by night  
though; a thief's accomplice  
did appear  
seen  
to teach and give counsel  
them; their souls*
- Why dede ye not me dysprave  
 And herd me preche, bothe lowd and lowe?  
 But now as woodmen, ye gynne to rave  
 \*1200 And do thyng that ye notwth knowe.
 *did; disprove  
soft  
madmen; begin  
not know*
- GAMALYEL** Serys, I charge yow, not o word more this nyth,  
 146 But onto Cayphas, in hast, loke ye hym lede!  
 Have hym forth with gret dyspyte  
 And to his wordys take ye non hede.
 *Sirs; one; night  
haste; lead  
insult  
no heed*



*[Here the Jewys lede Cryst outh of the place with gret cry and noyse, some drawyng Cryst forward and some bakwarde, and so ledyng forth with here (their) weponys alofte and lytys brennyng. And in the menetye, Marye Madgalene shal rennyn (run) to our Lady and telle here of oure Lordys takyng, thus seyng:]*

- MARIA MAGDALENE** O, immaculate modyr of all women, most meke, *mother; meek*  
 150 O, devowtest in holy medytacyon evyr abydyng,  
 The cawse, lady, that I to youre person seke *seek*  
 Is to wetyn yf ye heryn ony tydyng *know; have heard any news*
- Of youre swete sone and my reverent Lord Jhesu,  
 \*1210 That was youre dayly solas, your gostly consolacyon. *solace; spiritual*
- MARIA** I wold ye shuld telle me, Mawdelyn, and ye knew, *if you*  
 156 For to here of hym, it is all myn affeccyon. *hear*
- MARIA MAGDALENE** I wold fayn telle, lady, and I myth for wepyng! *gladly; if I may*  
 Forsothe, lady, to the Jewys, he is solde! *Truthfully*  
 With cordys thei have hym bownde and have hym in kepyng.  
 160 Thei hym betyn spetously and have hym fast in honde! *beat cruelly*
- MARIA** A! A! A! How myn hert is colde!  
 A hert hard as ston, how mayst thu lest *heart; last*  
 Whan these sorweful tydyngs are thee told!  
 \*1220 So wold to God, hert, that thu mytyst brest! *I wish to God; break*
- 165 A, Jhesu, Jhesu, Jhesu, Jhesu!  
 Why shuld ye sofere this trybulacyon and advercyté?  
 How may thei fynd in here hertys, yow to pursewe, *their hearts; pursue*  
 That nevyr trespacyd in no maner degré, *in any way*  
 For nevyr thyng but that was good thowth ye. *thought*  
 170 Wherefore, than, shuld ye sofer this gret peyn? *then*  
 I suppoce, veryly, it is for the tresspace of me, *my sin*  
 And I wist that myn hert shuld cleve on tweyn! *know; break in two*
- For these langowrys may I susteyn? *sorrows; endure*  
 \*1230 The swerd of sorwe hath so thyryld my meende! *sword; pierced; mind*  
 175 Alas, what may I do? Alas, what may I seyn? *say*  
 These prongys, myn herte asondyr thei do rende. *agonies; asunder*
- O Fadyr of Hefne, wher ben al thi behestys *Heaven; are; promises*  
 That thu promysyst me whan a modyr thu me made? *mother*  
 Thi blyssyd sone I bare betwyx tweyn bestys, *bore between two beasts*  
 180 And now the bryth colour of his face doth fade. *bright*
- A, good Fadyr, why woldyst that thin owyn dere Sone shal sofre al this?  
 And ded he nevyr agens thi precept, but evyr was obedyent? *did; law*

And to every creature most petyful, most jentyl, and benyng, iwys;  
 \*1240 And now for all these kendnessys is now most shameful schent?<sup>1</sup>

185 Why wolt thu, gracyous Fadyr, that it shal be so? *will*  
 Why man not ellys be sayvd be non other kende? *by some other way*  
 Yet, Lord Fadyr, than, that shal comforte myn wo *then*  
 Whan man is sayvd be my chylde and browth to a good ende. *brought*

Now, dere sone, syn thu hast evyr be so ful of mercy *since you have*  
 190 That wylt not spare thiself, for the love thu hast to man.  
 On all mankend, now have thu pety, *pity*  
 And also thynk on thi modyr, that hevvy woman. *grieving*

## [PROCESSION OF SAINTS]

**DOCTOR 1** O, thou altitude of al gostly ryches! *highest; spiritual*  
 \*1250 O, thu incomperhensibele of grete excyllence! *boundlessness*

195 O, thu luminarye of pure lyghtnes,  
 Shete out thi bemys ontyl this audyens! *Shoot; unto*

**DOCTOR 2** O, *Fily Altissimi*, clepyd by eternalyté! *Son of the Most High; eternalness*  
 Hele this congregacyon with the salve of thi Passyon. *Heal*  
 And we prey thee, *Spiritus Paraclete*, *Holy Paraclete*  
 200 With the fyre of thi love, to slake all detraccyon. *end all slander*

**DOCTOR 1** To the pepyl not lernyd, I stonde as a techer  
 Of this processyon, to geve informacyon;  
 And to them that be lernyd, as a gostly precher *spiritual*  
 \*1260 That in my rehersayl, they may have delectacyon. *speaking; delight*

**DOCTOR 2** Welcome of the apostelys, the glorious qwere! *to; choir*  
 206 Fyrst, Petyr, youre prynce and eke youre presydent. *leader*  
 And Andrewe, youre half-brother, togedyr in fere *in company*  
 That fyrst folwyd Cryst, be on assent. *by one assent*

**DOCTOR 1** O, ye tweyn luminaryes, Jamys and Jhon, *two*  
 210 Contynualy brennyng as bryght as the sonnbem, *burning; sunbeam*  
 With the chene of charyté, bothe knyght in on *chain; knit in one*  
 And offeryd of youre modyr, to Cryst in Jherusalem.

**DOCTOR 2** Welcome, Phelypp, that convertyd Samaryan *who*  
 \*1270 And convertyd the tresorere of the Qwene Candas *treasurer*

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 183–84: *And to every creature most sympathetic, gentle, and kind, indeed / And now for all these kindnesses is most shamefully disgraced*

215 With Jamys, the Lesser, that apud Jherosolyman *at Jerusalem*  
 Was mad fyrst patryarke by the ordenauns of Cephas. *made; order*

**DOCTOR 1** Heyl, Mathew, the apostel and also evangelyst  
 That was clepyd to the flok of gostly conversacyon *called; spiritual life*  
 From thyrknes of concyens that ye were in fest<sup>1</sup>  
 220 With Berylmew that fled all carnall temptacyon. *Bartholomew*

**DOCTOR 2** Heyl, Symeon Zelotes, thus be your name,  
 And Judas that bothe wel lovyd oure Lord.  
 Therefore, ye have bothe joye and game *pleasure*  
 \*1280 Wher nevyr is stryff, but good acorde *strife*

**DOCTOR 1** Heyl, Poul, grett doctour of the feyth *faith*  
 226 And vessel chosyn be trewe eleccyon! *by*  
 Heyl, Thomas, of whom the Gospel seyth  
 In Crystys wounde was youre refeccyon. *Christ's; sustenance*

**DOCTOR 2** Heyl, Johan Baptyst, most soveryn creature  
 230 That evyr was born be naturall conseyyng, *by*  
 And hyest of prophetys, as wytnessyth scripture. *highest*  
 Heyl, voys that in desert was allwey cryeng. *rejoicing*

## PASSION PLAY 2 (PLAYS 29–34)

### 29. HEROD; TRIAL BEFORE ANNAS AND CAYPHAS

*[What tyme that processyon is enteryd into the place and the Herowdys takyn his schaffalde and Pylat and Annas and Cayphas here (their) schaffaldys. Also than come ther an exposytour in doctorys wede (clothing), thus seyng:]*

**CONTEMPLACIO** Sofreynes and frendys, ye mut alle be gret with gode!<sup>2</sup>  
 Grace, love, and charyté evyr be you among!  
 The maydenys sone preserve you, that for man deyed on rode. *the cross*  
 He that is o God, in Personys Thre, defende you fro your fon. *one; foes*

5 Be the leve and soferauns of Almythty God, *By permission*  
 We intendyn to procede the matere that we lefte the last yere, *matter*  
 Wherefore we beseche yow that youre wyllys be good  
 To kepe the Passyon in youre mende that shal be shewyd here. *mind*

<sup>1</sup> From [the] darkness of conscience that you were fixed in

<sup>2</sup> Sovereigns and friends, may you all be full of goodness

- The last yere we shewyd here how oure Lord, for love of man  
 10 Cam to the cety of Jherusalem, mekely his deth to take, *came; city*  
 And how he made his Mawndé, his body gevyng than *Paschal meal; then*  
 To his apostelys evyr with us, to abydyn for mannys sake. *man's*
- In that Mawndé, he was betrayd of Judas, that hym solde *Paschal meal*  
 To the Jewys for thretty platys to delyvyr hym that nyth. *pieces; night*  
 15 With swerdys and glevys to Jhesu, they come with the tretour bolde,<sup>1</sup>  
 And toke hym amongys his apostelys about mydnyth. *from; midnight*
- Now wold we procede, how he was browth than *brought then*  
 Beforn Annas and Cayphas, and syth befor Pylate — *then*  
 And so forth in his Passyon, how mekely he toke it for man *took*  
 20 Besekyng you, for mede of youre soulys, to take good hede theratte.<sup>2</sup>

## [HEROD]

[Here the Herowndys shal shewe hymself and speke:

- REX HEROWDES** Now sees of youre talkyng, and gevyth lordly audyence! *cease; give*  
 Not o word I charge you that ben here present, *one; are*  
 Noon so hardy to presume, in my hey presence, *None; high*  
 To onlose hese lypmys ageyn myn intent! *unloose his lips against*  
 25 I am Herowde, of Jewys kyng most reverent, *honored*  
 The lawys of Mahownde, my powere shal fortifye, *Mohammed; enforce*  
 Reverens to that lord of grace moost excyllent,  
 For be his powere allthinge doth multiplye. *by*
- Gef ony Crystyn be so hardy, his feyth to denye, *If any Christian; bold*  
 30 Or onys to erre ageyns his lawe, *once*  
 On gebettys with cheynes, I shal hangyn hym heye *gallows; chains; high*  
 And with wylde hors tho traytours shal I drawe!  
 To kille a thowsand Crystyn, I gyf not an hawe<sup>3</sup> *horses those traitors*  
 To se hem hangyn or brent. To me is very plesauns *them hanged; burnt*  
 35 To dryvyn hem into doongenys, dragonys to knawe,  
 And to rend here flesche and bonys, onto here sustenauns!<sup>4</sup>
- Johan the Baptyst crystenyd Cryst, and so he dede many on; *many [a] one*  
 Therfore myself dede hym bryng o dawe! *did bring; to death*

<sup>1</sup> With swords and lances to Jesus, they come with that bold traitor

<sup>2</sup> Beseeching you, for the reward of your souls, to take good heed to that [play]

<sup>3</sup> To kill a thousand Christians, I don't give a hawthorn fruit (i.e., nothing)

<sup>4</sup> Lines 34b–36: It is a great pleasure to me / To drive them into dungeons [for] dragons to gnaw, / And to tear their (Christians') flesh and bones for their (dragons') sustenance

- 40      It is I that ded hym kille, I telle you everychon!  
             For and he had go forth, he shuld a dystroyd oure lawe! *did; everyone*  
*if he; should have*
- Whereas Crystyn apperyth to me is gret grevauns. *Christians; grievance*  
             It peynyth myn hert of tho tretowrys to here! *those; hear*  
             For the lawys of Mahownde, I have in governawns, *Mohammed*  
             The which I wele kepe. That lord hath no pere, *peer*
- 45      For he is God most prudent!  
             Now I charge you, my lordys that ben here: *are here*  
             Yf any Crystyn doggys here doth apere, *dogs*  
             Bryng tho tretorys to my hey powere, *those traitors; high*  
             And thei shal have sone jewgement. *judgment soon*
- MILES 1**    My sovereign lord, heyest of excillens, *excellence*  
 51      In yow all jewgement is termynabye. *judgment; final*  
             All Crystyn doggys that do not here dyligens, *dutifully obey*  
             Ye put hem to peynes that be inportable! *them; unbearable*
- MILES 2**    Nothing in you may be more comendable  
 55      As to dysstroye tho traytorys that erre *those traitors*  
             Ageyn oure lawys! That ben most profytable, *against*  
             Be rythwysnesse, that lawe ye must proferre! *by righteousness; advance*
- REX HEROWDES**    Now be glorious Mahownd, my sovereign savyour, *by*  
             These promessys I make, as I am trewe knyht! *promises; true knight*
- 60      Thoo that excede his lawys be ony errour *Those; by any*  
             To the most shamefullest deth, I shal hem dyth! *death; condemn*  
             But o thyng is sore in my gret delyte: *one; troubling*  
             There is on Jhesus of Nazareth, as men me tellyth, *one*  
             Of that man I desyre to han a sythte, *have a sight*
- 65      For with many gret wondrys, oure lawe he fellyth! *wonders; topples*
- The Son of God hymself he callyth;  
             And Kyng of Jewys, he seyth is he,  
             And many woundrys of hym befallyth. *wonders; happen*  
             My hert desyryth hym for to se! *desires; see*
- 70      Serys, yf that he come in this cowntré, *Sirs; country*  
             With oure juresdyccyon, loke ye aspye, *jurisdiction; watch him*  
             And anon that he be brouth onto me, *immediately; brought*  
             And the trewth myself, than shal trye. *then*
- MILES 1**    Tomorwe my jorné I shal begynne  
 75      To seke Jhesus with my dew dilygens. *orders*  
             Yf he come youre provynce withinne,  
             He shal not askape youre hey presens. *escape; high*
- MILES 2**    Myn sovereign, this my counsel that ye shal take: *counsel*  
             A man that is bothe wyse and stronge,

- 80     Thurwe all Galylé, a serge to make. *Through; Galilee; search*  
       Yf Jhesu be enteryd youre pepyl among,  
       Correcte hese dedys that be do wronge. *his deeds*  
       For his body is undyr youre bayle, *jurisdiction*  
       As men talkyn hem among, *themselves*  
 85     That he was born in Galylé. *Galilee*
- REX HEROWDES** Thanne of these materys, serys, take hede, *Then; matters, sirs*  
       For a whyle I wele me rest. *will*  
       Appetyde requyryth me so indede, *Physical needs*  
       And fesyk tellyth me, it is the best. *medical advice*

## [TRIAL BEFORE ANNAS AND CAYPHAS]

*[Here shal a massanger com into the place, rennyng and cryng, "Tydyngys! Tydyngys!" and so rownd abowth the place, "Jhesus of Nazareth is take! Jhesus of Nazareth is take" and forthwith heylyng (hailing) the prynces, thus seyng:]*

- MASSANGER** All heyle, my lordys, princes of prestys! *high priests*
- 91     Sere Cayphas and Sere Annas, lordys of the lawe!  
       Tydyngys I brynge you; reseve them in youre brestys! *receive; breasts*  
       Jhesus of Nazareth is take, therof ye may be fawe! *glad*
- 95     He shal be browth hedyr to you anon, *here*  
       I telle you trewly, with a gret rowth *truly; company*  
       Whan he was take, I was hem among, *taken; them*  
       And ther, was I ner to kachyd a clowte! *nearly given a blow*
- 100     Malcus bar a lanterne and put hym in pres. *was pushed forward*  
       Anoon, he had a towche, and of went his ere! *blow; off; ear*  
       Jhesus had his dysciple put up his swerd and ces, *sword; cease*  
       And sett Malcus ere ageyn, as hool as it was ere! *whole; before*
- 105     So mot Y thee, methowut it was a strawnge syth! *I dare say it seemed bizarre to me*  
       Whan we cam fyrst to hym, he cam us ageyn *first; up to us*  
       And haskyd whom we sowth that tyme of nyth. *asked; sought; night*  
       We seyde, "Jhesus of Nazareth — We wolde have hym fayn." *gladly*
- And he seyde, "It is I that am here in youre syth." *sight*  
       With that word, we ovyrthrowyn bakward everychon, *were thrown down*  
       And some on here bakkys, lyeng upryth! *flat on their backs*  
       But standyng upon fote, manly, ther was not on! *upright; as a man; one*
- 110     Cryst stod on his fete as meke as a lom, *lamb*  
       And we loyn styлле lyche ded men tyl he bad us ryse. *lain; like dead men*

Whan we were up, fast handys we leyd hym upon, *we laid hands on him*  
 But yet methought I was not plesyd with the newe gyse. *state of things*

Therfore takyth now youre cowncel and avyse you ryth weyl  
 115 And beth ryth ware that he make you not amat, *well aware; confounded*  
 For, be my thryfte, I dare sweryn at this seyl *by my fortune; this time*  
 Ye shal fynde hym a strawnge watt. *strange creature*

*[Here bryng thei Jhesus beforn Annas and Cayphas, and on (one) shal seyn thus:]*

**JUDEUS 1** Lo, lo, lordys — here is the man  
 That ye sent us fore.

**ANNAS** Therfore we cone you thanke, than, *can; then*  
 121 And reward ye shal have the more.

Jhesus, thou art welcome hedyr to oure presens! *here*  
 Ful oftyntymes we han thee besyly do sowth. *have; sought*  
 We payd to thi dysciple for thee thretty pens, *thirty pence*  
 125 And, as an ox or an hors, we trewly thee bowth. *As [if]; bought*

Therfore now art oure, as thu standyst us before. *you are ours*  
 Sey why thu ast trobelyd us and subvertyd oure lawe! *have troubled*  
 Thu hast ofte concludyd us, and so thu hast do more, *frustrated; done*  
 Wherefore it were ful nedful to bryng thee a dawe. *needful; to death*

**CAYPHAS** What arn thi dysciplys that folwyn thee aboute? *follow*  
 131 And what is thi dottryne that thu dost preche? *doctrine*  
 Telle me now somewhath, and bryng us out of doute *something*  
 That we may to othere men thi prechyng forth teche. *teach*

**JHESUS** Al tymes that I have prechyd, opyn it was don, *done openly*  
 135 In the synagog or in the temple where that all Jewys com.  
 Aske hem what I have seyde and also what I have don.  
 Thei con telle thee my wordys, aske hem everychon. *can; them everyone*

**JUDEUS 1** What, thu fela, to whom spekest thu?  
 Shalt thou so speke to a bushop? *bishop*  
 140 Thou shalt have on the cheke — I make a vow — *take [one] on*  
 And get therto a knok! *blow*

*[Here he shal smyte Jhesus on the cheke.]*

**JHESUS** Yf I have seyde amys, *anything wrong*  
 Therof wytnesse thou mayst bere.  
 And yf I have seyde but weyl in this, *but well*  
 145 Thou dost amys me to dere. *too much wrong*

- ANNAS** Serys, takyth hed now to his man *heed*  
 That he dystroye not oure lawe!  
 And brynge ye wytnesse agens hym that ye can *witnesses against*  
 So that he may be browt of dawe. *brought to death*
- DOCTOR 1** Sere, this I herd hym with his owyn mowth seyn: *Sir; say*  
 151 “Brekyth down this temple without delay, *Break*  
 And I shal settynt up ageyn *set it*  
 As hool as it was be the thrydde day.” *whole; by; third*
- DOCTOR 2** Ya, ser, and I herd hym seyn also *sir*  
 155 That he was the Sone of God,  
 And yet many a fole wenyth so, *fool thinks*  
 I durst leyn theron myn hod! *dare bet my hood*
- DOCTOR 3** Ya, ya, and I herd hym preche mech thing *many things*  
 And agens oure lawe every del, *against; bit*  
 160 Of wheche it were longe to make rekenyng *which; too long; account*  
 To tellyn all at this seel. *time*
- CAYPHAS** What seyst now, Jhesus? Whi answeryst not?  
 Heryst not what is seyde agens thee? *against*  
 Spek man, spek! Spek, thu fop! *fool*  
 165 Hast thu scorn to speke to me?
- Heryst not in how many thyngys thei thee acuse?
- Now, I charge thee and conjure be the sonne and the mone *by*  
 That thu telle us and thu be Goddys Sone! *if; God's*
- JHESUS** Goddys Sone I am. I sey not nay to thee.  
 170 And that ye all shal se at Domysday *see; Doomsday*  
 Whan the Sone shal come in gret powere and magesté *When*  
 And deme the qweke and ded as I thee say. *judge; living; dead*
- CAYPHAS** A! Out! Out! Allas, what is this?  
 Heryth ye not how he blasfemyth God?  
 175 What nedyth us to have more wytness?  
 Here ye han herd all his owyn word! *have heard; own*
- Thynk ye not he is worthy to dey? *deserves to die*
- [*Et clamabunt omnes:* *And they all cry out:*
- OMNES** Yys, yys, yys, all we seye! He is worthy to dey! Ya, ya, ya! *Yes; die*



**ANNAS** Takyth hym to yow and betyth hym som del *beat; somewhat*  
 180 For hese blasfemyng at this sel. *his; time*

*[Here thei shal bete Jhesus about the hed and the body and spyttyn in his face and pullyn hym down, and settyn hym on a stol (stool) and castyn a cloth ovyr his face. And the fyrst shal seyn:*

**JUDEUS 1** A, felawys! Beware what ye do to this man,  
 For he prophecye weyl kan! *can prophesy well*

**JUDEUS 2** That shal be asayd be this batte! *determined by; blow*

*[Et percuciet super caput. And they strike him on the head.*

What, thu Jhesus? Ho gaff thee that? *Who gave you*

**JUDEUS 3** Whar, whar! Now wole I  
 186 Wetyn how he can prophecye! *Know; prophesy*  
 Ho was that? *Who*

**JUDEUS 4** A! And now wole I a newe game begynne  
 That we mon pley at, all that arn hereinne! *may; are*  
 190 Whele and pylle — whele and pylle! *Spin and pluck*  
 Comyth to halle hoso wylle. *whoso*  
 Ho was that? *Who*

*[Here shal the woman come to Jewys and seyn:*

**ANCILLA 1** What, serys, how take ye on with this man? *sirs; what are you doing*  
 Se ye not on of hese dysciplys, how he beheldyth you, than? *one; then*

*[Here shal the tother (the other) woman seyn to Petyr:*

**ANCILLA 2** A, good man, me semyth be thee — *it seems to me*  
 196 That thu on of his dysciplys shulde be. *one*

**PETRUS** A woman! I sey nevyr er this man *have seen; before*  
 Syn that this werd fyrst began! *Since; world*

*[Et cantabit gallus. And the cock will crow*

**ANCILLA 1** What, thu mayst not sey nay! Thu art on of hese men! *one of his*  
 200 Be thi face wel we may thee ken! *know*

**PETRUS** Woman, thu seyst amys of me! *wrongly*  
 I knowe hym not, so mote I thee! *so may I thrive*

- JUDEUS 1** A, fela myn, wel met!  
 For my cosynys ere thu of smet! *You struck off my kinsman's ear*
- 205 Whan we thi mayster in the yerd toke,  
 Than all thi felawys hym forsoke. *When; yard took  
 Then; fellows forsook him*
- And now thu mayst not hym forsake,  
 For thu art of Galylé, I undyrtake. *I would guess*
- PETRUS** Sere, I knowe hym not, be hym that made me,  
 210 And ye wole me beleve for an oth!  
 I take record of all this companye *by  
 will; oath  
 I swear before you all  
 the truth*  
 That I sey to yow is soth.
- [Et cantabit gallus (And the cock will crow). And than Jhesus shal lokyn on Petyr. And Petyr shal wepyn and than he shal gon out and seyn:*
- A! Weelaway! Weelaway! Fals hert, why whylt thu not brest? *break*  
 Syn thi maystyr, so cowardly, thu hast forsake! *Since*
- 215 Alas, qwher shal I now on erthe rest *where*  
 Tyl he, of his mercy, to grace wole me take? *will*
- I have forsake my mayster and my Lord Jhesu  
 Thre tymes as he tolde me I shulde do the same *Three*  
 Wherfore I may not have sorwe anow! *enough*
- 220 I, synful creature, am so mech to blame. *much*
- Whan I herd the cok crowyn, he kest on me a loke *heard; cock; cast; look*  
 As who seyth, "Bethynke thee what I seyde before."  
*Remember*  
 Alas the tyme that I evyr hym forsoke,  
 224 And so wyl I thynkyn from hens evyrmore.

## 30. DEATH OF JUDAS; TRIALS BEFORE PILATE AND HEROD

**CAYPHAS** Massangere! Massangere!**MASSANGER** Here, lord, here!

- CAYPHAS** Massanger, to Pylat in hast thu shalt gon *haste*  
 And sey hym we comawnde us in word and in dede *commend ourselves*
- 5 And prey hym that he be at the mot halle anoon, *ask; moot hall soon*
- \*230 For we han a gret matere that he must nedys spede. *have; take care of*

In hast now, go thi way

And loke thu tery nowth!

**MASSANGER** It shal be do, lord, be this day.

- 10 I am as whyt as thought. *haste  
 look; tarry not  
 done; by  
 swift*

*[Here Pylat syttyth in his skaffald, and the massanger knelyth to hym, thus seyng:]*

Al heyl, Sere Pylat, that semly is to se, *seemly*  
 Prynce of al this Juré and kepere of the lawe. *Jewry*  
 My lord Busshop Cayphas comawndyd hym to thee  
 14 And prayd thee to be at the mot halle by the day dawe.<sup>1</sup>

**PYLAT** Go thi way, praty masanger and comawnde me also.<sup>2</sup>  
 \*240 I shal be there in hast, and so thu mayst say *haste*  
 Be the oure of prime, I shal comyn hem to. *By the hour of prime; to them*  
 I tery no longer nor make no delay.

*[Here the massanger comith agen and bryngith an ansuere, thus seyng:]*

**MASSANGER** Al heyl, myn lordys and buschoppys and princys of the lawe! *bishops*  
 20 Ser Pylat comawndyth hym to you and bad me to you say *bade*  
 He wole be at the mot halle in hast, sone after the day dawe.<sup>3</sup>  
 He wold ye shuld be ther be prime withouth lenger delay. *longer*

**CAYPHAS** Now weyl mote thu fare, my good page. *well may*  
 24 Take thu this for thi massage. *message*

### [THE DEATH OF JUDAS]

*[Here enteryth Judas onto the Juwys, thus seyng:]*

**JUDAS** I, Judas, have synyd and treson have don,  
 \*250 For I have betrayd this rythful blood! *righteous*  
 Here is youre mony agen, all and som, *again; all of it*  
 For sorwe and thowth, I am wax wood. *sorrow; thought; going insane*

**ANNAS** What is that to us? Ayse thee now — *Think about it*  
 30 Thu dedyst with us covnawnt make; *did; contract*  
 Thu soldyst hym us, as hors or kow; *him [to] us; cow*  
 Therefore, thin owyn dedys, thu must take. *deeds; accept*

*[Than Judas castyth down the mony and goth and hangyth hymself.]*

<sup>1</sup> And asked that you be at the moot (meeting) hall by daybreak

<sup>2</sup> Go your way, good messenger and return my compliments

<sup>3</sup> He will be at the moot hall in haste, soon after the day dawns

## [TRIAL BEFORE PILATE]

**CAYPHAS** Now, serys, the nyth is passyd; the day is come. *sirs; night*  
 It were tyme this man had his jewgement, *judgment*  
 35 And Pylat abydyth in the mot halle alone *waits; moot hall*  
 \*260 Tyl we shuld this man present.

And therfore, go we now forth with hym in hast.  
**JUDEUS 1** It shal be don, and that in short spas! *done; quickly*  
**JUDEUS 2** Ya, but loke yf he be bownd ryth wel and fast! *make sure*  
**JUDEUS 3** He is saff anow. Go we ryth a good pas. *safe enough; pace*

[Here thei ledyn Jhesu abowt the place tyl thei come to the halle.]

**CAYPHAS** Sere Pylat, takyht hede to this thing *take heed*  
 42 Jhesus we han befor thee browth, *have; brought*  
 Wheche oure lawe doth down bring *Who*  
 And mekyl schame he hath us wrowth. *great shame; made*

**ANNAS** From this cetye into the lond of Galylé,  
 46 He hath browth oure lawys neyr into confusion *brought; nearly*  
 \*271 With hese craftys wrowth be nygramancye, *made by magic*  
 Shewyth to the pepyl be fals simulacyon. *people by; deceit*

**DOCTOR 1** Ya, yet, sere, another and werst of alle:  
 50 Agens Sesare, oure emperour that is so fré, *Caesar; noble*  
 Kyng of Jewys he doth hym calle. *call himself*  
 So oure emperourys power, nowth shulde be? *nothing*

**DOCTOR 2** Sere Pylat, we kannot telle half thee blame *Sir*  
 That Jhesus in oure countré hath wrowth! *wrought*  
 55 Therefore, we charge thee in the emperorys name *emperor's*  
 \*280 That he to the deth in hast be browth! *haste be brought*

**PYLAT** What seyst to these compleynts, Jhesu?  
 These pepyl hath thee sore acusyd  
 Because thu bryngyst up lawys newe  
 60 That in oure days were not usyd.

**JHESUS** Of here acusyng, me rowth nowth. *their; I am not concerned*  
 So that thei hurt not here soulys, ne non mo. *their souls, nor those [of any] others*  
 I have nowth yet founde that I have sowth. *that [which]; sought*  
 For my Faderys wyl, forth must I go.

**PYLAT** Jhesus, be this than I trowe thu art a kyng *by this then I think*  
 \*290 And the Sone of God, thu art also —

- 67 Lord of erth and of allthing. *earth; everything*  
Telle me the trowth, if it be so. *truth*
- JHESUS** In hefne is knowyn my Faderys intent, *heaven; Father's*  
70 And in this werlde I was born.  
Be my Fadyr, I was hedyr sent *By; here*  
For to seke that was forlorn. *lost*
- Alle that me heryn and in me belevyn *who hear; believe*  
And kepyn here feyth stedfastly, *their faith*  
75 Thow thei weryn ded, I shal them recuryn *Though; were dead; regain*  
\*300 And shal them bryng to blysse endlesly.
- PYLAT** Lo, serys, now ye an erde this man — how thynk ye? *sirs; have heard*  
Thynke ye not all, be youre reson, *by*  
But as he seyth it may wel be,  
80 And that shulde be, be this incheson. *If that; be by this reasoning*
- I fynde in hym non obecyon *fault*  
Of errour nor treson, ne of no maner gylt. *treason; nor*  
The lawe wele, in no conclusyon *wills*  
84 Withowte defawth, he shuld be spylt. *killed*
- DOCTOR 1** Sere Pylat, the law restyth in thee, *Sir*  
\*310 And we knowe veryly his gret trespas!  
To the emperour, this mater told shal be, *truly*  
Yf thu lete Jhesus thus from thee pas. *matter*
- PYLAT** Serys, than telle me o thyng — *Sirs; one*  
90 What shal be his acusyng? *charge*
- ANNAS** Sere, we telle thee altogedyr, *Sir*  
For his evyl werkys, we browth hym hedyr! *works; brought; here*
- And yf he had not an evyldoere be, *been*  
94 We shuld not a browth hym to thee! *Have brought*
- PYLAT** Takyth hym, than, aftyr youre sawe *then; words*  
\*320 And demyth hym after youre lawe. *judge*
- CAYPHAS** It is not lefful to us, ye seyn, *lawful; see*  
No maner man for to slen. *to slay anyone*
- The cawse why we bryng hym to thee,  
100 That he shuld not oure kyng be. *Is that he*

	Weyl thu knowyst, kyng we have non But oure emperour alon.	<i>Well; none alone</i>
<b>PYLAT</b>	Jhesu, thu art kyng of Juré?	<i>Jewry</i>
<b>JHESUS</b>	So thu seyst now to me.	
<b>PYLAT</b>	Tell me, than,	<i>then</i>
106	Where is thi kyngham?	<i>kingdom</i>
<b>JHESUS</b>	My kyngham is not in this werld,	<i>kingdom</i>
*332	I telle thee at o word.	<i>in one</i>
	Yf my kyngham here had be,	<i>kingdom; had been</i>
110	I shuld not a be delyveryd to thee.	<i>have been</i>
<b>PYLAT</b>	Serys, avyse now as ye kan:	<i>consider</i>
	I can fynde no defawth in this man.	<i>fault</i>
<b>ANNAS</b>	Sere, here is a gret record! Take hed therto,	<i>testimony; heed</i>
	And knowyng gret myschef in this man,	
115	And not only in o day or to,	<i>on one day or two</i>
*340	It is many yerys syn he began!	<i>years since</i>
	We kan telle thee tyme, where and whan	<i>when</i>
	That many a thowsand turnyd hath he,	<i>seduced</i>
	As all this pepyll record weyl kan,	<i>can well witness</i>
120	From hens into the lond of Galylé!	<i>here; land of Galilee</i>
	[ <i>Et clamabunt, "Ya, ya, ya!"</i> ]	<i>And they will cry</i>
<b>PYLAT</b>	Serys, of o thyng, than, gyf me relacyon	<i>one; then, give me word</i>
	If Jhesus were outborn in the lond of Galelye:	<i>born way out; land</i>
	For we han no poer ne no jurediccyon,	<i>Because; have; neither power nor</i>
	Of no man of that contré.	<i>Over any one</i>
125	Therefore, the trewth ye telle me,	<i>truth</i>
*350	And another wey I shal provyde	
	If Jhesus were born in that countré:	
	The jugement of Herowdys, he must abyde.	<i>Herod; await</i>
<b>CAYPHAS</b>	Sere, as I am to the lawe trewly sworn,	<i>truly</i>
130	To the trewth, I have no fer.	<i>Honestly; equal</i>
	In Galelye I know that he was born—	
	I can telle in what place and where.	
	Agens this no man may answee,	<i>Against; respond</i>
	For he was born in Bedlem Judé,	<i>Bethlehem of Judea</i>
135	And this ye knowe now, all and have don here,	<i>concluded</i>
*360	That it stant in the lond of Galelye.	<i>is located</i>

- PYLAT** Weyl, serys, syn that I knowe that it is so, *sirs, since*  
 The trewth of this I must nedys se. *truth; must see*  
 I undyrstand ryth now what is to do: *right now; to be done*
- 140 The jugement of Jhesu lyth not to me. *lies*  
 Herowde is kyng of that countré,  
 To jewge that regyon in lenth and in brede. *judge; length; breadth*  
 The jursdyccyon of Jhesu now han must he. *have*  
 Therfore, Jhesus, in hast, to hym ye lede. *haste*
- 145 In hall, thee hast that ye may spede, *To his hall, as quickly as*  
 \*370 Lede hym to the Herownde anon present. *Herod there now*  
 And sey I comawnde me with worde and ded, *I greet him; deed*  
 And Jhesu to hym that I have sent.
- DOCTOR 1** This erand in hast sped shal be, *haste*  
 150 In all the hast that we can do!  
 We shal not tary in no degré  
 Tyl the Herowdys presens we com to. *Herod's*

**[TRIAL BEFORE HEROD]**

*[Here thei take Jhesu and lede hym in gret hast to the Herowde. And the Herowdys scaffald shal uncloze shewyng Herowdys in astat (enthroned), all the Jewys knelyng except Annas and Cayphas. Thei shal stondyn, et cetera.]*

- DOCTOR 1** Heyl, Herowde, most excyllent kyng!  
 We arn comawndyd to thin presens: *your*
- 155 Pylat sendyth thee, be us gretyng, *by our greeting*  
 \*380 And chargyth us be oure obedyens. *by*
- DOCTOR 2** That we shuld do oure dylygens *duty*  
 To bryng Jhesus to Nazareth onto thee  
 And chargyth us to make no resystens  
 160 Becawse he was born in this countré.
- ANNAS** We knowe he hath wrowth gret folé *wrought great harm*  
 Ageyns the lawe, shewyd present. *shown here and now*  
 Therfore, Pylat sent hym onto thee  
 164 That thu shuldyst gyf hym jugement.
- REX HEROWDES** Now, be Mahound, my god of grace, *by Mohammed*  
 \*390 Of Pylat this is a ded ful kende! *deed; kind*  
 I forgyf hym now his gret trespase,  
 And schal be his frend withowtyn ende.
- Jhesus, to me that he wole sende, *will*  
 170 I desyred ful sore hym for to se. *greatly; see*

	Gret ese in this Pylat shal fynde! And Jhesus, thu art welcome to me!	<i>benefit</i>
<b>JUDEUS 1</b>	My sovereyn lord, this is the case: The gret falsnesse of Jhesu is opynly knawe.	<i>openly known</i>
175	Ther was nevyr man ded so gret trespas,	<i>who has done</i>
*400	For he hath almost dystroyd oure lawe!	
<b>JUDEUS 2</b>	Ya, be fals crafte of soserye Wrowth opynly to the pepyll alle, And be sotyl poyntys of nygramancye,	<i>by; sorcery</i> <i>Wrought; people</i> <i>points of black magic</i>
180	Many thowsandys fro oure lawe be falle.	<i>have fallen</i>
<b>CAYPHAS</b>	Most excellent kyng, ye must take hede! He wol dystroye all this countré, both elde and yying Yf he ten monthis more procede! Be his meraclys and fals prechyng,	<i>will; old; young</i> <i>By his miracles</i>
185	He bryngyth the pepyl in gret fonnyng	<i>error</i>
*410	And seyth dayly among hem alle That he is Lord, and of the Jewys kyng, And the Sone of God, he doth hym calle.	<i>daily; them</i> <i>himself</i>
<b>REX HERODES</b>	Serys, alle these materys, I have herd sayd	<i>Sirs; matters; heard</i>
190	And meche more than ye me telle. Alle togedyr thei shal be layde, And I wyl take theron cowncelle.	<i>much</i> <i>placed</i> <i>consider them</i>
	Jhesus, thu art welcome to me — I kan Pylat gret thank for his sendyng.	<i>owe</i>
195	I have desyryd ful longe thee to se	
*420	And of thi meracles to have knowyng.	<i>understanding</i>
	It is told me thu dost many a wondyr thyng: Crokyd to gon and blynd men to sen, And thei that ben dede gevyst hem levyng,	<i>wonderful</i> <i>Crippled walk; see</i> <i>have been dead; them life</i>
200	And makyst lepers fayre and hool to ben.	<i>fair and healthy</i>
	These arn wondyr werkys wrought of thee! Be what wey, I wolde knowe the trew sentens! Now, Jhesu, I pray thee — lete me se O meracle wrought in my presens!	<i>amazing works</i> <i>By; means; meaning</i> <i>see</i> <i>One</i>
205	In hast now, do thi dilygens	<i>haste; job</i>
*430	And peraventure, I wyl shew favour to thee! For now thu art in my presens — Thyn lyf and deth, here lyth in me!	<i>perhaps; show</i> <i>Your life and death</i>



*[And here Jhesus shal not speke no word to the Herowde.]*

210 Jhesus, why spekyst not to thi kyng?  
What is the cawse thu stondyst so styлле?  
Thu knowyst I may deme allthyng: *judge everything*  
Thyn lyf and deth lyth at my wylle!

What? Spek, Jhesus! And telle me why  
This pepyl do thee so here acuse!  
215 Spare not, but telle me now on hey *Don't hold back; in haste*  
\*440 How thu canst thiself excuse.

CAYPHAS Loo, serys, this is of hym a false sotylté!  
He wyl not speke, but whan he lyst; *sirs; trick*  
Thus, he dysceyvvyth the pepyl in eche degré! *when he likes*  
220 He is ful fals, ye veryly tryst! *deceives; every way*  
*you can be sure*

REX HERODES What? Thu onhangyd harlot! Why wylt thu not speke?  
Hast thu skorne to speke onto thi kyng  
Becawse thu dost oure lawys breke?  
224 I trowe, thu art aferd of oure talkyng! *think; afraid*

ANNAS Nay, he is not aferde, but of a fals wyle *using a trick*  
\*450 Becawse we shuld not hym acuse  
If that he answerd yow ontylle. *Until; unto*  
He knowyth he cannot hymself excuse.

REX HERODES What? Spek, I say! Thu foullyng, evyl mote thu fare!<sup>1</sup>  
230 Loke up! The devyl mote thee cheke! *the devil choke thee*  
Serys, bete his body with scorgys bare *Sirs, beat; scourges*  
And asay to make hym for to speke! *attempt*

JUDEUS 1 It shal be do withoutyn teryeng. *done; delay*  
Come on, thu tretour, evyl mot thu thee! *traitor, evil may be your reward*  
235 Whylt thu not speke onto oure kyng? *will*  
\*460 A new lesson we shal lere thee! *teach*

*[Here thei pulle of Jhesus clothis and betyn hym with whyppys.]*

JUDEUS 2 Jhesus, thi bonys we shal not breke, *bones*  
But we shal make thee to skyppe! *jump*  
Thu hast lost thi tonge? Thu mayst not speke?  
240 Thu shalt asay now of this whippe! *try*

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<sup>1</sup> What? Speak, I say! You foul thing, may evil take you

**JUDEUS 3** Serys, take these whyppys in youre hande *Sirs; whips*  
 And spare not whyl thei last *while*  
 And bete this tretoure that here doth stonde! *traitor*  
 244 I trowe that he wyl speke in hast. *believe; quickly*

*[And qwan (when) thei han betyn hym tyl he is alle bloody, than the Herownd seyth:*

**REX HERODES** Sees, serys, I comawnde you be name of the devyl of helle! *Cease*  
 \*470 Jhesus, thynkyst this good game?  
 Thu art strong to suffyr schame.  
 Thu haddyst levyr be betyn lame *would rather*  
 Than thi defawtys for to telle? *faults*  
 250 But I wyl not thi body all spyl, *spoil*  
 Nor put it here into more peyn.  
 Serys, takyth Jhesus at youre owyn wyl *Sirs*  
 And lede hym to Pylat hom ageyn.  
 Grete hym weyl and telle hym serteyn *Greet him well*  
 255 All my good frenchep shal he have.  
 \*480 I gyf hym powere of Jhesus. Thus ye hym seyn *give; over; will say*  
 Whether he wole hym dampne or save. *will condemn*

**DOCTOR 1** Sere, at your request, it shal be do. *Sir; done*  
 We shal lede Jhesus at your demawnde *request*  
 260 And delyver hym Pylat onto  
 And telle hym all, as ye comawnde.

### 31. SATAN AND PILATE'S WIFE; SECOND TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

*[Here enteryth Satan into the place in the most orryble wyse. And qwyl (while) that he pleyth, thei shal don (put) on Jhesus clothis and overest (over all) a whyte clothe and ledyn hym abowth the place and than to Pylat, be (by) the tyme that hese wyf hath pleyd.*

**SATHAN** Thus I reyne as a rochand with a rynggyng rowth, *regent; noisy gang*  
 As a devyl most dowty, dred is my dynt! *powerful; blow*  
 Many a thowsand develys, to me do thei lowth, *devils; bow*  
 Brennyng in flamys as fyre out of flynt! *Burning; flames*  
 5 Hosoe serve me, Sathan, to sorwe is he sent *Whoso; sorrow*  
 \*490 With dragonys in doungeyns and develys ful derke. *dungeons; devils*  
 In bras and in bronston, the brethellys be brent *brass; brimstone; wretches*  
 That wone in this werd, my wyl for to werke. *live in this world*  
 10 With myschef on moolde here membrys I merke *earth; limbs I afflict*  
 That japyn with Jhesus that Judas solde. *fool with*  
 Be he nevyr so crafty nor conyng clerke, *cunning scholar*  
 I harry them to helle, as tretour bolde. *traitor*

- But ther is o thyng that grevyth me sore. *one*  
 Of a prophete that Jhesu men calle.  
 15 He peynyth me every day, more and more *pains*  
 \*501 With his holy meraclis and werkys alle! *miracles; works*
- I had hym onys in a temptacyon *once*  
 With glotenye, with covetyse, and veynglorye! *gluttony; covetise*  
 I hasayd hym be all weys that I cowde don, *tested; by; could do*  
 20 And uttyrly he refusyd hem and gan me defye! *them; defied me*
- That rebuke that he gaf me shal not be unqwyt! *gave; unanswered*  
 Somwhat I have begonne and more shal be do! *done*  
 For all his barfot goyng, fro me shal he not skyp, *barefoot; escape*  
 But my derk dongeon I shal bryngyn hym to! *dark*
- 25 I have do made redy his cros that he shal dye upon,  
 \*511 And thre nayles to takke hym, with that he shal not styrte! *tack; escape*  
 Be he nevyr so holy, he shal not fro me gon, *from me go*  
 But with a sharpe spere, he shal be smet to the herte! *struck to the heart*
- And sythyn he shal come to helle, be he nevyr so stowte. *since; strong*  
 30 And yet, I am aferd and he come, he wole do some wrake! *if; vengeance*  
 Therefore, I shal go warnyn helle that thei loke abowte, *warn; be alert*  
 That thei make redy chenys to bynd hym within lake. *chains; [the] pit*
- Helle! Helle! Make redy, for here shal come a gest! *guest*  
 Hedyr shal come Jhesus, that is clepyd Goddys Sone! *Here; called*  
 35 And he shal ben here be the oure of none, *by the hour of 3 p.m.*  
 \*521 And with thee here, he shal wone *dwell*  
 And han ful shrewyd rest. *have; terrible*
- [Here shal a devyl spekyn in helle:
- DEMON** Out upon thee, we conjure thee  
 That nevyr in helle we may hym se! *see*  
 40 For and he onys in helle be, *if he once*  
 He shal oure power brest! *break*
- SATHAN** A! A! Than have I go to ferre! *Then; gone too far*  
 But som wyle help, I have a shrewde torne. *Unless some trick; things will turn bad*  
 My game is wers than I wend here! *plot is worse; thought*  
 45 I may seyn my game is lorne! *say; is lost*
- \*531 Lo, a wyle yet have I kast *wile; contrived*  
 If I myth Jhesus lyf save. *might Jesus' life*  
 Helle gatys shal be sperd fast *Hell's gates; locked up tight*  
 And kepe style all tho I have. *secure; those*

50 To Pylatys wyff I wele now go, *Pilate's wife I will*  
 And sche is aslepe, abed ful fast. *asleep, fast asleep*  
 And byd her withowtyn wordys mo *more words*  
 To Pylat that sche send in hast. *in haste*

I shal asay, and this wol be, *try; will*  
 55 To bryng Pylat in belef. *To convince*  
 \*541 Withinne a whyle ye shal se *while*  
 How my craft I wole go pref. *demonstrate*

*[Here shal the devyl gon to Pylatys Wyf. The corteyn (curtain) drawyn as she lyth in bedde, and he shal no dene (noise) make, but she shal, sone after that he is come in, makyn a rewly (pitiable) noyse, coming and rennyng of the schaffald. And her shert and her kyrtyl (gown) in her hand, and sche shal come beforn Pylat leke (like) a mad woman, seying thus:*

**UXOR PILATY** Pylat! I charge thee that thu take hede!

Deme not Jhesu, but be his frende! *Judge*  
 60 Yf thu jewge hym to be dede, *condemn him to death*  
 Thu art dampnyd withowtyn ende! *damned*

A fend aperyd me beforn *fiend appeared*  
 As I lay in my bed slepyng fast.  
 Sethyn the tyme that I was born *Since*  
 65 Was I nevyr so sore agast! *afraid*

\*551 As wylde fyre and thondyr blast, *wildfire; thunder*  
 He cam cryeng onto me. *came crying*  
 He seyde, "Thei that bete Jhesus or bownd hym fast —  
 Withowtyn end dampnyd shal be!" *damned*

70 Therefore, a wey herein thu se *see a way*  
 And lete Jhesu from thee clere pace. *openly escape*  
 The Jewys, thei wole begyle thee *will beguile*  
 And put on thee all the trespase. *guilt*

**PYLAT** Gramercy, myn wyf, forevyr ye be trewe. *Many thanks*  
 75 Youre cowncel is good, and evyr hath be. *counsel; has been*  
 \*561 Now to youre chawmer, ye do sewe, *chamber; go*  
 And all shal be weyl, dame, as ye shal se. *well; see*

#### [SECOND TRIAL BEFORE PILATE]

*[Here the Jewys bryng Jhesus agen to Pylat.*

**DOCTOR 1** Sere Pylat, good tydandys thu here of me! *Sir; tidings; hear*  
 Of Herowd the kyng, thu hast good wyl.

80 And Jhesus he sendyth agen to thee, *again*  
 And byddyth thee chese hym to save or spylle. *choose; kill*

**DOCTOR 2** Ya, ser, all the poer lyth now in thee, *sir; power lies*  
 And thu knowyst oure feyth, he hath ner schent! *faith; nearly ruined*  
 Thu knowyst what myschef therof may be.  
 85 We charge thee to gyf hym jwgement! *give; judgment*

**PYLAT** Serys, trewly ye be to blame, *Sirs, truly*  
 \*572 Jhesus thus to bete, dyspoyle or bynde *beat, strip, or bind*  
 Or put hym to so great schame,  
 For no defawth in hym I fynde. *fault*

90 Ne Herowdys nother — to whom I sent yow — *Nor; neither*  
 Defawte in hym cowde fynde ryth non, *find no fault*  
 But sent hym agen to me be yow, *again; by you*  
 As ye knowe wel everychon. *As everyone of you knows*

Therefore, undyrstande what I shal say. *understand*  
 95 Ye knowe the custom is in this londe  
 \*581 Of youre Pasche day that is ner honde: *Passover; nearly here*  
 What theff or tretore be in bonde, *thief; traitor; imprisoned*  
 For worchep of that day, shal go fire away. *In honor*

Without any price. *ransom*  
 100 Now than me thynkyth, it wore ryth *then; right*  
 To lete Jhesus now go qwyte *free*  
 And do to hym no mo dyspyte. *no more insult*  
 Serys, this is myn avyse. *advice*

I wolde wete what ye say. *know*

*[Here alle thei shul cryen:]*

**OMNES** Nay, nay, nay!

**DOCTOR 1** Delyvere us the theff Barabas *thief*  
 \*592 That for mansclawth presonde was! *murder imprisoned*

**PYLAT** What shal I, than, with Jhesu do? *then*  
 109 Whethyr shal he abyde or go? *Where*

**DOCTOR 2** Jhesus shal on the cros be don! *put*  
 Crucifigatur, we crye echon. *Crucify him; everyone*

**PYLAT** Serys, what hath Jhesus don amys? *Sirs; wrong*

[*Populus clamabit:*

*The people cry out*

**OMNES** *Crucifigatur, we sey at onys!*

*Crucify him; all together*

**PYLAT** Serys, syn alगतys ye wolyn so

*since no matter what*

115 Puttyn Jhesu to wo and peyn,

\*601 Jhesus, a wyle with me shal go.

*awhile*

I wole hym examyne betwix us tweyn.

*just the two of us*

[*Here Pylat takyth Jhesu and ledyth hym into the cowncel hous and seyth:*

Jhesus, what seyst now, lete se?

This matere now, thu undyrstonde.

120 In pes thu myth be for me,

*safety; might be as far as I'm concerned*

But for thi pepyl of thi londe.

*If not for your people*

Busshoppys and prestys of the lawe:

*Bishops; priests*

Thei love thee not as thu mayst se,

*see*

And the comon pepyl agens thee drawe.

*turn against you*

125 In pes, thu myth a be for me,

*safety; might have been*

\*611 This I telle thee pleyn.

*plainly*

What seyst, Jhesus? Whi spekyst not me to?

Knowyst not I have power on the cros thee to do?

*to put*

And also I have power to lete thee forth go.

130 What kanst thu here to seyn?

*can you say here*

**JHESUS** On me poer thu hast ryth non,

*Power over me; none*

But that my Fadyr hath grawntyd befor.

*Only; Father*

I cam, my Faderys wyl to fulfyll,

*Father's*

That mankynd shuld not spylle.

*perish*

135 He that hath betrayd me to thee at this tyme,

*to you*

\*621 His trespas is more than is thine.

*trespass*

**DOCTOR 1** Ye pryncys and maysterys! Takyth hed and se

*princes; leaders; heed and see*

How Pylat in this matere is favorabyl,

*disposed to show good will*

And thus oure lawys dystroyed myth be,

*If; might*

140 And to us alle unrecurabyl.

*unrecoverable*

[*Here Pylat letyth Jhesus alone and goth into the Jewys and seyth:*

**PYLAT** Serys, what wole ye now with Jhesu do?

*Sirs; will*

I can fynde in hym but good.

*only*

It is my cowncel ye lete hym go:

*counsel*

144 It is rewthe to spylle his blood.

*a shame*

**CAYPHAS** Pylat, me thynkyth thu dost gret wrong

\*631 Agens oure lawe thus to fortefye *Against; enforce*  
 And the pepyl here is so strong  
 Bryngyng thee lawful testymonye.

**ANNAS** Ya, and thu lete Jhesu fro us pace!

150 This we welyn upholdyn alle: *from; escape*  
 Thu shalt answer for his trespase, *will maintain*  
 And tretour to the emperour we shal thee kalle! *traitor; call*

**PYLAT** Now, than, syn ye wolne non other weye

But in alwyse that Jhesus must deye — *then, since you want no*  
*in any case*

155 Artyse! Bryng me watyr, I pray thee,

\*641 And what I wole do, ye shal se.

*[Hic unus afferet aquam. Here one brings water*

As I wasche with watyr, my handys clene

So gyltles of hese deth I mut ben. *guiltless; his death; may be*

**DOCTOR 1** The blod of hym mut ben on us

160 And on oure chyldyr aftyr us! *may be*  
*children*

*[Et clamabunt (And they will cry) "Ya! Ya! Ya!" Than Pylat goth agen to Jhesu and bryngyith hym, thus seyng:*

**PYLAT** Lo, serys, I bryng hym here to youre presens  
 That ye may knowe I fynde in hym non offens.

*sirs*  
*no offense*

**DOCTOR 2** Delyvere hym! Delyvere hym, and lete us go

164 On the crosse that he were do! *Hand him over*  
*put*

**PYLAT** Serys, wolde ye youre kyng I shulde on the cros don?

*Sirs; put*

**DOCTOR 3** Sere, we seyn that we have no kyng but the emperour alon!

*Sir; say*

**PYLAT** Serys, syn alगतys it must be so.

*in any case*

\*653 We must syt and oure offyce do.

*job*

Brynge forth to the barre that arn to be dempt,

*bar; are; sentenced*

170 And thei shal have here jugement.

*their*

*[Here thei shal brynge Barabas to the barre, and Jhesu, and tweye thewys (two thieves) in here shertys bare leggyd, and Jhesus standing at the barre betwyx them. And Annas and Cayphas shal gon into the cowncelle house qwan (when) Pylat syttyth.*

**PYLAT** Barabas, hold up thi hond,  
For here at thi delyveré dost thou stond. *release*

*[And he halt up his honde.*

Serys, qwhat sey ye of Barabas, thef and tretour bold?  
174 Shal he go fre, or shal he be kept in holde? *prison*

**DOCTOR 1** Sere, for the solennyté of oure Pasche day, *solemnity; Passover*  
\*661 Be oure lawe, he shal go fre away! *By*

**PYLAT** Barabas, than I dymysse thee *then*  
And geve thee lycens to go fre. *license*

*[Et curret. And he runs off*

Dysmas and Jesmas, theras ye stondys, *stand*  
180 The lawe comawndyth you to hald up youre hondys. *hold; hands*

Sere, what sey ye of these thevys tweyn? *Sir; thieves two*  
**DOCTOR 2** Sere, thi ben both gylty, we seyn. *Sir; are; guilty; say*

**PYLAT** And what sey ye of Jhesu of Nazareth? *say*  
**DOCTOR 1** Sere, we sey he shal be put to deth. *Sir*

**PYLAT** And kone ye put agens hym no trespas? *can; against*  
**DOCTOR 2** Sere, we wyl all that he shal be put upon the crosse! *Sir; all insist*

*[Et clamabunt omnes voce magna dicentes:<sup>1</sup> "Ya! Ya! Ya!"*

**PYLAT** Jhesu, thin owyn pepyl han dysprevyd *your; have refuted*  
\*673 Al that I have for thee seyde or mevyd. *put forward*

I charge you all at the begynnyng  
190 As ye wole answere me befor *will answer; before*  
That ther be no man shal towch youre kyng *touch*  
But yf he be knyght or jentylman born. *Unless*

Fyrst, his clothis ye shal of don *clothes; remove*  
And maken hym nakyd for to be.  
195 Bynde hym to a pelere, as sore as ye mon, *pillar, as hard as you can*  
\*681 Than skorge hym with qwyppys that al men may se. *Then scourge; whips*

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<sup>1</sup> *And they all cry in a great voice*



- Whan he is betyn, crowne hym for youre kyng  
And than to the cros ye shal hym bryng; *When; beaten then*
- 200 And to the crosse thu shalt be fest;  
And on thre naylys, thi body shal rest. *fastened three nails*
- On shal thorwe thi ryth hand go,  
Anothyr thorwe thi lefte hand also. *One; through; right through*
- The thred shal be smet thour bothe thi feet  
Whech nayl therto be mad ful mete. *third; struck through Which nail; made the right size*
- 205 And yet, thu shalt not hange alone,  
\*691 But on eyther syde of thee shal be on: *either; one*
- Dysmas, now I deme thee  
That on hese ryth hand thu shalt be; *sentence you his right*
- 210 And Jesmas, on the left hand hangyd shal ben  
On the Mownth of Calverye that men may sen. *shall be hanged Mount; see*
- [Here Pylat shal rysyn and gon to his schaffalde, and the bussshopys with hym. And the Jewys shul crye for joy with a gret voys and arryn (harass) hym and pullyn of (off) his clothis and byndyn hym to a pelere (pillar) and skorgyn hym on (one) seyng thus:*
- JUDEUS 1** Doth gladly oure kyng!  
For this is your fyrst begynnynng! *just the beginning*

### 32. PROCESSION TO CALVARY; CRUCIFIXION

- [And qwan he is skorgyd, thei put upon hym a cloth of sylk and settyn hym on a stol (stool) and puttyn a krown of thornys on hese hed with forkys (spikes). And the Jewys knelyng to Cryst, takyng hym a septer and skornyng hym. And than thei shal pullyn of (off) the purpyl cloth and don on ageyn his owyn clothis and leyn the crosse in hese necke to berynt (bear it) and drawyn hym forth with ropys. And than shal come to (two) women wepyng and with here (their) handys wryngyn, seyng thus:*
- MULIER 1** Allas, Jhesus! Allas, Jhesus! Wo is me  
That thu art thus dyspoyld! Allas! *ill-treated*  
\*700 And yet nevyr defawth was fownd in thee, *fault*  
But evyr thu hast be fole of grace! *full*
- MULIER 2** A! Here is a rewfyl syth of Jhesu so good, *pitiful sight*  
6 That he shal thus dye agens the ryth! *die unjustly*  
A! Wykkyd men, ye be more than wood *insane*  
To do that good Lord so gret dyspyte! *great shame*

*[Here Jhesus turnyth agen to the women with his crosse, thus seyng:*

**JHESUS** Dowterys of Hierusalem, for me wepyth nowth, *Daughters; Jerusalem; not*  
 10 But for youreself wepyth, and for youre chyldyr, also. *children*  
 For the days shal come that thei han aftyr sowth *sought after*  
 Here synne and here blyndnesse shal turne hem to wo. *Their; them to woe*

\*710 Than shal be sayd: “Blyssyd be the wombys that beryn be, *wombs that are barren*  
 And wo to the tetys tho days that do gevyn sokyng.” *teats*  
 15 And to here faderys, they shul seyn, “Wo to the tyme that thu begat me.”  
 And to here moderys, “Allas, wher shal be oure dwellyng?” *their mothers*

Than to the hyllys and mownteynes, they shal crye and calle:  
 “Oppyn and hyde us from the face of hym syttyng in trone, *throne*  
 Or ellys ovyrthrowyth, and on us now come falle *Or else fall down*  
 20 That we may be hyd from oure sorweful mone.” *hidden; lamenting*

*[Here Jhesus turnyth fro the women and goth forth, and ther thei metyn with Symonem  
 (Simon of Cyrene) in the place, the Jewys seyng to hym:*

**JUDEUS 1** Sere, to thee, a word of good — *Sir*  
 A man is here thu mayst se *see*  
 \*720 Beryth hevy of a rode *a heavy cross*  
 Whereon he shal hangyd be.

25 Therefore we prey all thee:  
 Thu take the crosse of the man,  
 Bere it with us to Kalvarye,  
 And ryth gret thank thu shalt han. *thanks; have*

**SYMON** Serys, I may not in no degré! *Sirs; any*  
 30 I have gret errandys for to do; *errands*  
 Therfore I pray yow excuse me,  
 And on my herand lete me go! *errand*

**JUDEUS 2** What, harlot? Hast thu skorne *scoundrel*  
 \*731 To bere the tre whan we thee preye? *tree when; ask*  
 35 Thu shalt berynt haddyst thu sworn *bear it as if you'd sworn to*  
 And yt were ten tyme the weye. *If; time the distance*

**SYMON** Serys, I prey you, dysplese you nowth! *don't be displeased*  
 I wole help to bere the tre *will; bear the tree*  
 Into the place it shal be browth *brought*  
 40 Where ye wole comawnde me. *will*

*[Here Symon takyth the cros of Jhesus and beryth it forth.*

**VERONICA** A, ye synful pepyl! Why fare thus? *people; are you doing*  
 For swet and blood, he may not se! *sweat; see*  
 \*740 **Allas**, Holy Prophete, Cryst Jhesus!  
 Careful is myn hert for thee! *Sorrowful*

*[And sche wyppeth his face with her kerchy (veil).*

**JHESUS** Veronyca, thi whipyng doth me ese. *wiping; ease*  
 46 My face is clene that was blak to se. *see*  
 I shal them kepe from all mysese *suffering*  
 That lokyn on thi kerchy and remembyr me. *your veil*

**[CRUCIFIXION]**

*[Than shul thei pulle Jhesu out of his clothis and leyn them togedyr. And ther thei shul pullen hym down and leyn hym along on the cros, and after that, naylyn hym theron.*

**JUDEUS 1** Come on, now! Here we shal asay *shall see*  
 50 Yf the cros for thee be mete! *right*  
 Cast hym down here in the devyl way! *devil's way*  
 How long shal he standyn on his fete?

**JUDEUS 2** Pul hym down, evyl mote he the, *evil may he suffer*  
 \*751 And gyf me his arm in hast, *give; haste*  
 55 And anon we shal se *soon*  
 Hese good days, thei shal be past. *His*

**JUDEUS 3** Gef hese other arm to me! *Give*  
 Another take hed to hese feet, *heed; his*  
 And anon we shal se *soon*  
 60 Yf the borys be for hym meet. *holes; right*

**JUDEUS 4** This is mete — take good hede. *right; heed*  
 Pulle out that arm to thee, sore! *hard*

**JUDEUS 3** This is short — the devyl hym sped — *devil take him*  
 64 Be a large fote and more! *By more than a foot*

**JUDEUS 2** Fest on a rop and pulle hym long, *Fasten; stretch him out*  
 \*763 And I shal drawe thee ageyn. *pull against*  
 Spare we not these ropys strong  
 Thow we brest both flesch and veyn. *break; flesh*

**JUDEUS 3** Dryve in the nayl anon! Lete se *Let's see*  
 70 And loke and the flesche and senues well last. *if the sinews will hold*

**JUDEUS 4** That I graunt, so mote I the. *so may I suffer*  
 Lo, this nayl is dreve ryth wel and fast! *driven very; deeply*

**JUDEUS 1** Fest a rop, than, to his feet *Fasten; then*  
 74 And drawe him down long anow. *pull; enough*  
**JUDEUS 2** Here is a nayl for both good and greet! *long*  
 \*773 I shal dryve it thorwe, I make a vow! *I swear*

*[Here shule thei leve of and dawncyn abowte the cros shortly.]*

**JUDEUS 3** Lo, fela, here a lythe takkyd on a tre! *fellow; light (eminent person) nailed*  
**JUDEUS 4** Ya, and I trowe thu art a worthy kyng! *think*  
**JUDEUS 1** A, good sere — telle me now — what helpyth thi prophecy thee? *sir*  
**JUDEUS 2** Ya, or any of thi fals prechyng?

**JUDEUS 3** Serys, set up the cros on the hende *on its end*  
 82 That we may loke hym in the face. *look*  
**JUDEUS 4** Ya, and we shal knelyn onto oure kyng so kend, *kneel; kind*  
 \*781 And preyn hym of his gret grace. *ask*

*[Here qwan (when) thei han (have) set hym up, thei shuln gon before hym seyng eche affter other thus:]*

**JUDEUS 1** Heyl, kyng of Jewys, yf thu be!  
**JUDEUS 2** Ya, ya, sere, as thu hangyst there, flesche and bonys!  
**JUDEUS 3** Com now down of that tre! *off*  
**JUDEUS 4** And we wole worchepe thee all atonys! *will; at once*

*[Here shul poer comonys (poor commoners) stand and loke upon the Jewys, foure or fyve, and the Jewys shul come to theme and do (make) theme hange the thevys.]*

**JUDEUS 1** Come on, ye knavys, and set up thise to crosses ryth *knaves; two; upright*  
 90 And hange up these to thevys anon! *two thieves now*  
**JUDEUS 2** Ya, and in the worchip of this worthy knyth *knight*  
 \*787 On eche syde of hym shal hangyn on. *one*

*[Here the symfyl men shul settyn up these to (two) crossys and hangyn up the thevys be the armys (by the arms). And ther whylys shal the Jewys cast dyce for his clothis and fytyn (fight) and stryvyn. And in the menetye shal oure Lady come with thre Maryes with her and sen (afterward) Johan with hem (them) setting hem down asyde afore the cros, oure Lady swuonyng and mornyng and be leysere (with deliberation) seyng:]*

**MARIA** A! My good Lord, my sone so swete!  
 \*791 What hast thu don? Why hangyst now thus here?  
 95 Is ther non other deth to thee now mete, *proper*  
 But the most shamful deth among these thevys fere? *the company of these thieves*

A! Out on my hert! Whi brest thu nowth? *why burst you not*  
 And thu art maydyn and modyr and seyst thus thi childe spyle. *see; die*

How mayst thou abyde this sorwe and this woful thowth? *sorrow; thought*  
 100 A, deth, deth, deth! Why wylt thou not me kyllle?

*[Here oure Lady shal swonge (swoon) agen, and our Lord shal seyn thus:*

**JHESUS** O Fadyr Almythy, makere of man! *Almighty*  
 Forgyff these Jewys that don me wo! *make me suffer*  
 \*800 Forgeve hem, Fadyr. Forgeve hem than, *them; them then*  
 104 For thei wete notwh what thei do. *know not*

**JUDEUS 1** Ya, vath! Vath, now! Here is he *Yeah! (with contempt)*  
 That bad us dystroye oure tempyl on a day, *in a day*  
 And withinne days thre,  
 He shulde reysynt agen in good aray! *raise [it] again; order*

**JUDEUS 2** Now, and thou kan do swech a dede *if; such a deed*  
 110 Help now thiself yf that thou kan,  
 And we shal belevyn on thee withoutyn drede *believe in; dread*  
 And seyn thou art a myhty man! *say; mighty*

**JUDEUS 3** Ya, yf thou be Goddys Sone, as thou dedyst teche, *God's; did teach*  
 \*811 From the cros come now down!  
 115 Than of mercy, we shal thee beseche *Then*  
 And seyn thou art a lord of gret renown! *say*

**JESTES** Yf thou be Goddys Sone, as thou dedyst seye, *God's; did say*  
 Helpe here now, both thee and us!  
 But I fynde it not al in my feye *But I do not believe it.*  
 120 That thou shuldyst be Cryst, Goddys Sone, Jhesus! *should; God's*

**DYSMAS** Do wey, fool! Why seyst thou so? *Away with you*  
 He is the Sone of God — I beleve it well!  
 \*820 And synne ded he nevyr, lo, *did*  
 That he shuld be put this deth tyl. *to this death*

125 But we ful mech wrong han wrowth! *many wrongs have wrought*  
 He ded nevyr thing amys. *never did anything wrong*  
 Now, mercy, good Lord, mercy, and forgete me nowth *not*  
 When thou comyst to thi kyngham and to thi blysse. *kingdom; bliss*

**JHESUS** Amen, amen, thou art ful wyse.  
 130 That thou hast askyd, I grawnt thee. *What; grant*  
 This same day in paradyse  
 With me, thi God, thou shalt ther be.

**MARIA** O, my sone, my sone, my derlyng dere! *darling dear*  
 \*831 What? Have I defendyd thee? *offended*

- 135    Thu hast spoke to alle tho that ben here, *those that are*  
       And not o word thu spekyst to me! *one*
- To the Jewys thu are ful kende; *most kind*  
       Thu hast forgove al here mysdede. *forgiven; their offenses*  
       And the thef thu hast in mende — *thief; remembered*
- 140    For onys haskyng mercy, hefne is his mede! *once asking; reward*
- A, my Sovereyn Lord, why whylt thu not speke  
       To me that am thi modyr, in peyn for thi wrong? *mother, in pain*
- \*840   A, hert, hert! Why whylt thu not breke, *heart; break*
- 144    That I were out of this sorwe so stronge? *sorrow*
- JHESUS** A, woman, woman! Behold ther thi sone,  
       And thu, Jon, take her for thi modyr. *mother*  
       I charge thee to kepe her as besyly as thu kone. *diligently; can*  
       Thu, a clene mayde, shal kepe another. *virgin*
- And woman, thu knowyst that my Fadyr of hefne me sent  
   150    To take this manhod of thee, Adamys rawnsom to pay. *Adam's ransom*  
       For this is the wyl and my Faderys intent: *Father's*  
       That I shal thus deye to delyvere man fro the develys pray. *devil's prey*
- \*850   Now, syn it is the wyl of my Fadyr, it shuld thus be. *since; will*  
       Why shuld it dysplese thee, modyr, now my deth so sore? *painful*
- 155    And for to suffre al this for man, I was born of thee,  
       To the blys that man had lost, man agen to restore. *bliss; again*
- [*Her oure Lady shal ryse and renne (run) and halse (embrace) the crosse.*]
- MARIA MAGDALENA** A, good lady, why do ye thus?  
       Youre dolfol cher now chevith us sore. *sorrowful cheer; grieves us*  
       And for the peyne of my swete Lord Jhesus, *pain*
- 160    That he seyth in you it peyneth hym more! *sees*
- MARIA VIRGO** I pray yow alle, lete me ben here *be*  
       And hang me up here on this tre
- \*860   Be my frend and sone that me is so dere, *By*
- 164    For ther he is, ther wold I be! *where; would*
- JOHANNES** Jentyl lady, now leve youre morning *mourning*  
       And go with us now, we you pray, *we ask you*  
       And comfort oure Lord at hese deparyng, *his*  
       For he is almost redy to go his way.

*[Here thi shal take our Lady from the crosse. And here shal Pylat come down from his shaffald with Cayphas and Annas and all here mené (their retinue) and shul come and lokyn on Cryst. And Annas and Cayphas shul skornfully seyn:*

**CAYPHAS** Lo, serys, lo! Beheldyth and se!

170 Here hangyth he that halpe many a man! *helped*  
 And now, yf he Goddys Sone be, *God's*  
 Helpe now hymself, yf that he kan!

**ANNAS** Ya, and yf thu Kyng of Israel be,

\*871 Come down of the cros among us alle, *off*  
 175 And lete thi God now delyvere thee,  
 And than oure kyng we wole thee calle! *will*

*[Here shal Pylat askyn penne and inke. And a tabyl (tablet) shal be take (taken to) hym, wretyn afore: "Hic est Jhesus Nazarenus, Rex Judeorum"<sup>1</sup> And he shal make hym to wryte and than gon up on a leddere and settyn the tabyl (sign) abovyn Crystys hed. And than Cayphas shal makyn hym to redyn and seyn:*

**CAYPHAS** Sere Pylat, we mervelyth of this, *Sir; marvel at*  
 That ye wryte hym to be Kyng of Jewys. *wrote*

Therfore, we wolde that ye shuld wryte thus, *would*  
 180 That he namyd hymself Kyng of Jewus!

**PYLAT** That I have wretyn, wretyn it is, *written*  
 And so it shal be for me, iwys. *indeed*

*[And so forth. All thei shal gon agen to the skaffald. And Jhesus shal cryen:*

**JHESUS** Heloy, heloy! Lamazabathany!<sup>2</sup>

\*881 My Fadyr in hevyn on hy! *on high*

185 Why dost thu me forsake?  
 The frelté of my mankende *frailty; humanity*  
 With stronge peyn, yt gynnyth to peynde! *begins to suffer*  
 Ha! Dere Fadyr, have me in mende, *in mind*  
 And lete deth my sorwe slake! *sorrow lessen*

**JUDEUS 2** Methynkyth he this doth calle Hely.

191 Lete us go nere and aspy *Elijah*  
 And loke yf he come prevely, *near; watch*  
 \*890 From cros hym down to reve! *if he (Elijah); secretly*  
*snatch him away*

<sup>1</sup> Here is Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews (compare Matthew 27:37, Luke 23:38, John 19:19)

<sup>2</sup> My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (compare Matthew 27:46)

<b>JHESUS</b>	So grett a thrust dede nevyr man take	<i>great a thirst did</i>
195	As I have, man, now for thi sake.	
	For thrust asundyr my lyppys gyn crake;	<i>thirst; lips begin to crack</i>
	For drynes, thei do cleve.	<i>break open</i>
<b>JUDEUS 3</b>	Youre thrust, Sere Hoberd, for to slake,	<i>thirst, Sir Hubert; lessen</i>
	Eyzil and galle here I thee take.	<i>Vinegar; give</i>
200	What? Me thinkyth a mowe ye make!	<i>wince</i>
	Is not this good drynk?	
	To crye for drynke, ye had gret hast,	<i>haste</i>
*900	And now, it semyth it is but wast.	<i>wasted</i>
	Is not this drynk of good tast?	<i>taste</i>
205	Now, telle me how ye thynk.	
<b>JUDEUS 4</b>	On lofte, Sere Hoberd, now ye be sett!	<i>high, Sir Hubert</i>
	We wyl no lenger with you lett.	<i>longer; linger</i>
	We grete you wel on the newe gett,	<i>fashion</i>
	And make on you a mowe.	<i>sneer</i>
<b>JUDEUS 1</b>	We grete you wel with a scorn,	
211	And pray you bothe evyn and morn —	<i>ask; evening</i>
	Take good eyd to oure corn	<i>Keep an eye on; grain</i>
*910	And chare away the crowe!	<i>scare; crows</i>
<b>JHESUS</b>	<i>In manus tuas, Domine.<sup>1</sup></i>	
215	Holy Fadyr, in hefly se,	<i>on heavenly throne</i>
	I comende my spyryte to thee,	<i>spirit</i>
	For here now hendyth my fest.	<i>ends; fast</i>
	I shal go sle the fende, that freke.	<i>slay the fiend; monster</i>
	For now, myn herte begynnth to breke:	<i>break</i>
220	Wordys mo shal I non speke —	<i>more; not speak</i>
	<i>Nunc consummatum est.<sup>2</sup></i>	
<b>MARIA</b>	Alas! Alas! I leve to longe	<i>have lived too long</i>
*920	To se my swete sone with peynes stronge,	<i>see; son; pains</i>
	As a theff on cros doth honge,	<i>thief; hang</i>
225	And nevyr yet dede he synne!	<i>did</i>
	Alas, my dere chyld to deth is dressyd!	<i>put to death</i>
	Now is my care wel more inressyd.	<i>increased</i>
	A! Myn herte with peyn is pressyd,	<i>pain</i>
	For sorwe myn hert doth twynne.	<i>sorrow; heart; split</i>
<b>JOHANNES</b>	A, blyssyd mayde, chaunge youre thought,	<i>blessed maid</i>
231	For thow youre sone with sorwe be sought;	<i>though; afflicted</i>

<sup>1</sup> *Into your hands, O Lord [I commend my spirit]* (compare Luke 23:46)

<sup>2</sup> *Now it is consummated* (compare John 19:30)



- Yitt by his owyn wyl this werk is wrought, *Yet; own will*  
 \*930 And wylfully, his deth to take.  
 Yow to kepe, he chargyd me here —  
 235 I am youre servaunt, my lady dere.  
 Wherefore, I pray yow, be of good chere  
 And merthis that ye make. *mirth*
- MARIA** Thow he had nevyr of me be born, *of my flesh was*  
 And I sey his flesch thus al totorn — *see; torn apart*  
 240 On bak, behyndyn, on brest befor, *back, behind*  
 Rent with woundys wyde. *Torn*  
 Nedys I must wonyn in woo *Needs; live; woe*  
 \*940 To se my frende with many a fo, *foe*  
 All to rent from top to too, *torn; toe*  
 245 His flesche withowtyn hyde. *skin*
- JOHANNES** A, blyssyd lady, as I yow telle,  
 Had he not deyde, we shuld to helle *died*  
 Amongys fendys ther evyr to dwelle, *Among fiends*  
 In peynes that ben smert. *are keen*  
 250 He sufferyth deth for oure trespase,  
 And thorwe his deth, we shal have grace *through*  
 To dwelle with hym in hevyn place. *in heavenly*  
 \*950 Therefore, beth mery in hert. *heart*
- MARIA** A, dere frende, weel woot I this *well know*  
 255 That he doth bye us to his blyss. *redeem*  
 But yitt of myrth evyrmor I mys *yet; lack*  
 Whan I se this syght. *see*
- JOHANNES** Now, dere lady, therfore I yow pray *ask you*  
 Fro this dolful dolour wende we oure way, *deep pain let us go*  
 260 For whan this syght ye se nought may *when; do not see*  
 Your care may waxe more lyght. *become lighter*
- MARIA** Now sythe I must parte hym fro, *since*  
 \*960 Yit lete me kysse or that I go, *Yet; before*  
 His blyssyd feyt that sufferyn wo *blessed feet*  
 265 Naylid on this tre.  
 So cruelly with grett dyspyte, *great contempt*  
 Thus shamfully was nevyr man dyghte. *treated*  
 Therefore, in peyn myn hert is pyghte, *pain; fixed*  
 Al joye departyth fro me.

[*Hic quasi semi-mortua cadat prona in terram et dicit Johannes:*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Here, she falls to the ground as if dead, and John says

- JOHANNES** Now, blyssyd mayd, come forth with me! *blessed*  
 271 No lengere this syght that ye se. *longer*  
       I shal yow gyde in this countré *guide*  
 \*970 Where that it plesyth yow best.  
**MARIA** Now, jentyl Johan, my sonys derlyng, *gentle; son's beloved*  
 275 To Goddys temple thu me bring *God's*  
       That I may prey God with sore wepynge *pray to*  
       And mornynge that is prest. *deep mourning*
- JOHANNES** All youre desyre shal be wrought. *desires; done*  
       With herty wyll, I werke youre thought. *heartly will*  
 280 Now, blyssyd mayde, taryeth nowth *delay not*  
       In the temple that ye ware, *would be*  
       For holy prayere may chaunge youre mood  
 \*980 And cawse youre chere to be more good. *better*  
       Whan ye se not youre childys blood, *When; see; child's*  
 285 The lasse may be youre care. *less*

[*Tunc transiet Maria ad templum cum Johanne, et cetera.*<sup>1</sup>

- MARIA** Here in this temple, my lyff I lede *life; lead*  
       And serve my Lord God with hertyly drede. *heartfelt fear*  
       Now shal wepynge me fode and fede. *weeping nourish and feed me*  
       Som comforte tyll God sende, *until*  
 290 A, my Lord God, I thee pray:  
       Whan my childe ryseth the thrydde day, *third*  
       Comforte, thanne, thyn handmay, *then; handmaiden*  
 \*990 My care for to amende. *remedy*

### 33. HARROWING OF HELL (1)

- ANIMA CHRISTI** Now all mankende in herte be glad *mankind; heart*  
       With all merthis that may be had, *mirth*  
       For mannys sowle that was bested *man's soul; placed*  
       In the logge of helle. *lodge*  
 5 Now shal I ryse to lyve agayn  
       From peyn to pleys of paradyse pleyn! *pain; joys; clear*  
       Therfore, man, in hert be fayn: *heart; glad*  
       In merthe now shalt thu dwelle. *mirth*
- I am the sowle of Cryst Jhesu,  
 10 The which is Kynge of all vertu!  
 \*1001 My body is ded — the Jewys it slew —

<sup>1</sup> Then, Maria goes to the temple with John, etc.

- That hangyth yitt on the rode, *yet; cross*  
 Rent and torn, all bloody red. *Ripped*  
 For mannys sake my body is deed; *man's sake; dead*  
 15 For mannys helpe my body is bred, *man's help; bread*  
 And sowle drynk my bodyes blode. *souls; body's*
- Thow my body be now sclayn, *Though; slain*  
 The thrydde day — this is certayn — *third*  
 I shal reyse my body agayn
- 20 To lyve as I yow say. *live*  
 \*1011 Now wole I go streyth to helle *will; straight*  
 And feche from the fendys felle *fetch; fierce fiends*  
 All my frendys that therin dwelle *friends*  
 To blysse that lestyth ay. *bliss; lasts forever*
- [*The sowle goth to helle gatys (gates) and seyth: "Attolite portas, principes vestras, et eleuamini porte eternas, et introibit Rex Glorie."*<sup>1</sup>]
- 25 Ondothe youre gatys of sorwatorie! *Undo; gates; pride (surquidry)*  
 On mannys sowle I have memorie. *man's soul; a claim*  
 Here comyth now, the Kynge of Glorye  
 These gatys for to breke! *gates; break*  
 Ye develys that arn here withinne *devils; are*  
 30 Helle gatys, ye shal unpynne! *unbolt*  
 \*1021 I shal delyvere mannys kynne *mankind*  
 From wo I wole hem wreke. *woe I will deliver them*
- BELYALL** Alas! Alas! Out and harrow! *(cries of distress)*  
 Onto thi byddyng must we bow *bidding*  
 35 That thu art God now, do we know!  
 Of thee had we grett dowte; *great doubt*  
 Agens thee may nothyng stonde! *Against; stand*  
 Allthyng obeyth to thyn honde, *Everything; hand*  
 Bothe hevyn and helle, watyr and londe!  
 40 Allthyng must to thee lowte! *Everything; bow*
- ANIMA CHRISTI** Agens me, it wore but wast *Against; a waste*  
 \*1032 To holdyn or to stondyn fast. *stand*  
 Helle logge may not last *lodge*  
 Agens the Kynge of Glorye! *Against*  
 45 Thi derke dore, down I throwe!  
 My fayr frendys, now wele I knowe: *friends*  
 I shal hem brynge reknyd be rowe *them; row by row*  
 Out of here purgatorye. *their purgatory*

<sup>1</sup> *Lift up your gates, you princes, and be lifted up, O eternal gates, and the King of Glory shall enter in* (compare Vulgate Psalm 23:7)

## 34. BURIAL; GUARDING OF THE SEPULCHER

**CENTURIO** In trewth now I knowe with ful opyn syght

\*1040 That Goddys dere sone is naylid on tre.

These wundryful tokenys aprevyn ful right

*Quod vere Filius Dei erat iste.*<sup>1</sup>

*fully prove*

**ALIUS MILES 2** The very childe of God I suppose that he be,

6 And so it semyth wele be his wundryful werk.

*by*

The erth sore qwakyth, and that agresyth me!

*earth; terrifies*

With myst and grett wedyr, it is woundyr dyrk!

*bad weather; very*

**ALIUS MILES 3** Such merveylis shewe may non erthely man!

*marvels; no earthly man*

10 The eyr is ryght derke that fyrst was ryght clere!

*air; dark*

The erthquake is grett! The clowdys waxe whan!

*earthquake; grow dark*

\*1050 Those tokenys preve hym a lorde without any pere!

*prove; peer*

**CENTURIO** His fadyr is pereles kyng of most empere,

*the greatest empire*

Bothe lorde of this world and kyng of hevyn hyghe!

*high*

15 Yit, out of all synne to brynge us owt of daungere,

*Yet*

He soferyth his dere sone for us all to dye.

*allowed*

**NICHODEMUS** Alas, alas! What syght is this?

To se the Lorde and Kyng of Blys

That nevyr synnyd ne ded amys

*sinned nor did wrong*

20 Thus naylid upon a rode!

*cross*

Alas, Jewys, what have ye wrought?

*done*

\*1060 A ye wykyd wytys? What was youre thought?

*Have; wits*

Why have ye bobbyd and thus betyn owth

*struck; beaten out*

All his blyssyd blood?

*blessed*

**CENTURIO** A, now trewly telle wel I kan

*truly; well; can*

26 That this was Goddys owyn sone.

*God's own*

I knowe he is both God and man

Be this wark that here is done.

*By; work*

Ther was nevyr man, but God that cowde make this werk

*never*

30 That eyr was of woman born.

Were he nevyr so great a clerk,

*cleric*

\*1070 It passeth hem all thow thei had sworn.

*them; though*

Hese lawe was trewe, I dare wel saye,

That he tawth us here amonge.

*taught*

35 Therfore I rede ye turne youre faye

*advise; faith*

And amende that ye han do wronge.

*have done*

<sup>1</sup> Because truly the Son of God was he (compare Matthew 28:54)

- JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA** O good Lord Jhesu, that deyst now here on rode: *dies; on the cross*  
 Have mercy on me and forgyf me my mys. *forgive; sins*  
 I wold thee worchep here with my good *will; goods*  
 40 That I may come to thi blysse.
- To Pylat now wole I goon *will I go*  
 \*1080 And aske the body of my Lord Jhesu  
 To bery that now wold I soon *bury; will*  
 In my grave that is so new.
- 45 Heyl, Sere Pylat, that syttyth in sete! *sits on the throne*  
 Heyl, justyce of Jewys, men do thee calle!  
 Heyl with helthe, I do thee grete.  
 I pray thee of a bone whatso befalle. *a boon*
- To bery Jhesusis body I wole thee pray, *bury Jesus'; will*  
 50 That he were out of mennys syth. *men's sight*  
 For tomorwyn shal be oure holyday *tomorrow; holiday*  
 \*1090 Than wole no man hym bery, I thee plyth. *Then will; bury; assure*
- And yf we lete hym hange ther styлле, *let*  
 Some wolde seyn therof anow;  
 55 The pepyl therof wold seyn ful ylle; *say plenty about it*  
 That nother shuld be youre worchep nor prow.<sup>1</sup> *would speak ill*
- PYLAT** Sere Joseph of Baramathie, I graunt thee *Arimathea*  
 With Jhesuis body do thin intent, *Jesus'; your*  
 But fyrst I wole wete that he ded be *will know; dead*  
 60 As it was his jugement. *sentence*
- Sere knyts, I comawnd yow that ye go  
 \*1100 In hast with Josepht of Baramathie *Arimathea*  
 And loke ye take good hede therto  
 That Jhesu surely ded be. *is surely dead*
- 65 Se that this comawndement ye fulfyllе *See*  
 Without wordys ony mo *any more*  
 And than lete Joseph do his wylle, *then*  
 What that he wyl with Jhesu do.
- [Here come to (two) knyts beforн Pylat atonys (at once) thus seynг:
- MILES 1** Sere, we shal do oure dylygens *duty*  
 70 With Joseph, goynг to Calverye.

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<sup>1</sup> That would be neither to your honor or advantage

Be we out of thi presens,  
 \*1110 Sone, the trewth we shal aspye. *Though we are out  
 Soon; truth; see*

**JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA** Gramercy, Pylat, of youre jentylnesse  
 That ye han grawntyd me my lyst. *have granted; wish*  
 75 Anythyng in my province, *district*  
 Ye shal have at youre request.

**PYLAT** Sere, all your lest ye shal have *wishes*  
 With Jhesuis body, do youre intent *Jesus'*  
 Whethyr ye bery hym in pyt or grave. *bury*  
 80 The powere I grawnt yow here present.

*[The to (two) knygtys go with Joseph to Jhesus and stand and heldyn (look) hym in the face.]*

**MILES 2** Methynkyth Jhesu is sewre anow; *safe enough*  
 \*1120 It is no ned his bonys to breke. *There is no need*  
 He is ded — how thinkyth yow?  
 He shal nevyr go nor speke.

**MILES 1** We wyl be sure, or than we go *before*  
 86 Of a thyng I am bethowth. *I am mindful of one thing*  
 Yondyr is a blynd knyth I shal go to, *knight*  
 And sone awchyle here shal be wrowth. *soon; working*

*[Here the knyth goth to blynde Longeys and seyth:]*

Heyl, Sere Longeys, thu gentyl knyth!  
 90 Thee I prey now ryth hertyly *Sir; knight*  
 That thu wylt wend with me ful wyth. *I ask you*  
 \*1130 It shal be for thi prow, veryly. *come with me quickly  
 advantage*

**LONGEUS** Sere, at youre comauwndement, with yow wyl I wende.  
 In what place ye wyl me have,  
 95 For I trost ye be my frend. *trust*  
 Lede me forth, sere, oure Sabath you save. *sir; Sabbath; observe*

**MILES 1** Lo, Sere Longeys, here is a spere,  
 Both long and brood and sharp anow. *broad-headed; enough*  
 Heve it up fast that it wore there, *Heave; were*  
 100 For here is game! Show, man, show! *fun; Thrust (Shove)*

*[Here Longeys showyth (shoves) the spere warly (warily), and the blood comyth rennyng to his hand. And he avantorysly (by chance) shal wype his eyne (eyes).]*

**LONGEUS** O good Lord! How may this be  
 \*1140 That I may se so bryth now? *clearly*

This thretty wyntyre I myght not se,  
 And now I may se I wote never how!  
 105 But ho is this that hangyng here now?  
 I trowe it be the maydonys sone,  
 And that he is now — I knowe wel how  
 The Jewys to hym this velany han don.

*For thirty winters; might  
 don't know how  
 who  
 maiden's son  
 villainy have done*

*[Here he fallyth down on his knees.]*

Now, good Lord, forgyf me that,  
 110 That I to thee now don have,  
 For I dede I wist not what.  
 \*1150 The Jewys, of myn ignorans, dede me rave.  
 Mercy, mercy, mercy, I crye!

*have done  
 I did not know what I did  
 out of my; made me foolish*

*[Than Joseph doth set up the ladders, and Nychodemus comyth to help hym.]*

**NICHODEMUS** Joseph ab Aramathy, blyssyd thu be,  
 For thu dost a fol good dede.  
 I prey thee — lete me help thee  
 That I may be partenere of thi mede.

*of  
 very  
 partner; reward*

**JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA** Nychodemus, welcome indede!

I pray yow ye wole help therto.  
 120 He wole aqwyte us ryth weyl oure mede,  
 And I have lysens for to do.

*will  
 reward us well  
 license to do so*

*[Here Joseph and Nychodomus takyn Cryst of the cros, on on o ledyr (one on one ladder) and the tother on another leddy. And qwan (when) he is had down, Joseph leyth hym in oure Ladys lappe, seyng the knyghts (knights) turnyng hem, and Joseph seyth:]*

**JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA** Lo, Mary, modyr good and trewe,

\*1161 Here is thi son, bloody and bloo,  
 For hym myn hert ful sore doth rewe.  
 125 Kysse hym now onys eer he go.

*blue  
 pity  
 once before*

**MARIA** A! Mercy! Mercy, myn owyn son so dere!

Thi bloody face now I must kysse;  
 Thi face is pale, withowtyn chere.  
 Of meche joy now shal I mysse!  
 130 Ther was never modyr that sey this —  
 So her sone dyspoyled with so gret wo,  
 \*1170 And my dere chylde never dede amys!  
 A, mercy, Father of Hefne, it shulde be so.

*without spirit  
 much  
 mother; has seen this  
 stripped  
 did wrong*

**JOSEPH** Mary, youre sone, ye take to me  
 Into his grave it shal be browth.

*it (the body); brought*

**MARIA** Joseph, blyssyd evyr mot thu be *may*  
 137 For the good dede that ye han wrowth. *deed; have done*

*[Here thei shal leyn Cryst in his grave.]*

**JOSEPH** I gyf thee this syndony that I have bowth *give; shroud; bought*  
 To wynde thee in whyl it is new. *wind*

**NICHODEMUS** Here is an onyment that I have browth *ointment; brought*  
 141 To anoynt withall myn Lord Jhesu.

**JOSEPH** Now Jhesu is withinne his grave  
 \*1181 Wheche I ordeyn somtyme for me. *ordered once for myself*  
 On thee, Lord, I vowche it save: *vouchsafe*  
 145 I knowe my mede ful gret shal be. *reward*

**NICHODEMUS** Now lete us leyn on this ston ageyn,  
 And Jhesu in this tombe styll shal be.  
 And we wyl walke hom ful pleyn, *directly*  
 The day passyth fast, I se.  
 150 Farewel, Joseph, and wel ye be!  
 No lengere teryeng here we make. *longer tarrying*

**JOSEPH** Sere, Almythy God be with thee; *Sir*  
 \*1191 Into his blysse he mote you take. *may*

**MARIA** Farewel, ye jentyl princys kende. *kind*  
 155 In joye evyr mote ye be. *may*  
 The blysse of hefne withowtyn ende *heaven*  
 I knowe, veryly, that ye shal se.

*[Here the princys shal do reverens to oure Lady and gon here (their) way and leve the Maryes at the sepulcre. Cayphas goth to Pylat, seying thus:]*

**CAYPHAS** Herk, Sere Pylat, lyst to me! *Sir; listen*  
 I shal thee telle tydyngys new  
 160 Of o thyng we must ware be *one; be wary*  
 Er ellys here after, we myth it rewe. *Or else; might; rue*

\*1200 Thu wotyst weyl that Jhesu, *well know*  
 He seyde to us with wordys pleyn,  
 He seyde we shuld fynd it trew — *true*  
 165 The thryd day, he wold ryse ageyn. *third*  
 Yf that hese dyscyplys come serteyn *surely*  
 And out of his grave stele hym away, *steal*  
 Thei wyl go preche and pleyn seyn *openly say*  
 That he is reson the thryd day! *risen; third*



- 170 This is the cowncel that I gyf here: *give*  
 Take men and gyf hem charge therto *give them*
- \*1210 To weche the grave with gret power *guard*  
 Tyl the thryd day be go. *be gone*
- PYLAT** Sere Cayphas, it shal be do, *Sir; done*  
 175 For as ye say, ther is peryl in  
 And it happend that it were so. *If*  
 It myth make our lawys for to blyn. *might; laws to cease*  
 Ye shal se, sere, er that ye go *see; sir; before*  
 How I shal this mater save
- 180 And what I shal sey therto,  
 And what charge thei shal have. *duties*
- \*1220 Come forth, ye Ser Amorawnt  
 And Sere Arphaxat, com ner also, *come near*  
 Sere Cosdram and Sere Affraunt,
- 185 And here the charge that ye must do: *hear*  
 Serys, to Jhesuis grave, ye shal go *Jesus'*  
 Tyl that the thryd day be gone, *third*  
 And lete nother frend nor fo *neither friend nor foe*  
 In no wey to towche the ston. *stone*
- 190 Yf ony of hese dyscipelys come ther, *any; his*  
 To fech the body fro you away,
- \*1230 Bete hym down — have ye no fere — *fear*  
 With shamful deth do hym day! *kill*
- In payn of youre godys and youre lyvys — *goods; lives*  
 195 That ye lete hem nowth shape you fro — *them not escape from*  
 And of youre chyldere and youre wyfys, *children; wives*  
 For al ye lese and ye do so. *lose if*
- AMERAUNT** Sere Pylat, we shal not ses! *cease*  
 We shal kepe it strong anow. *enough*
- ARFAXAT** Ya, and an hunderyd put hem in pres, *if a hundred press us*  
 201 Thei shal dey, I make a vow. *die*
- COSDRAM** And han honderyd? Fy, on an honderyd and an honderyd therto!<sup>1</sup>
- \*1241 Ther is non of hem shal us withstonde! *none of them*
- AFFRAUNT** Ya, and ther com an hunderyd thowsand and mo, *if there*  
 205 I shal hem kylle with myn honde! *them; my hands*

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<sup>1</sup> And a hundred? Fie on a hundred and a hundred [more] as well

**PYLAT** Wel, serys, than youre part ye do! *sirs; then*  
 And to youre charge, loke ye take hede. *duties; heed*  
 Withowtyn wordys ony mo *any more*  
 Wysly now that ye procede. *Carefully*

*[Here the knyts gon out of the place.]*

210 Lo, Sere Cayphas, how thynkyth yow? *Sir*  
 Is not this wel browth abowth? *brought about*  
**CAYPHAS** In feyth, ser, it is sure anow. *enough*  
 \*1251 Hardely, have ye no dowth. *Certainly; doubt*

**ARFAXAT** Let se, Ser Amaraunt, where wele ye be? *Let's see; will*  
 215 Wole ye kepe the feet or the hed? *Will; guard*  
**AMERAUNT** At the hed, so mote I the, *may I prosper*  
 And hosso come here, he is but ded! *whoso; dead*

**ARFAXAT** And I wole kepe the feet this tyde *guard; right now*  
 Thow ther come both Jakke and Gylle. *Jack and Jill (i.e., whoever)*  
**COSDRAM** And I shal kepe the ryth syde, *right side*  
 221 And hosso come, I shal hym kyllle! *whoso; kill*

**AFFRAUNT** And I wole on the lefte hand ben,  
 \*1261 And hosso come here, he shal nevyr then! *whoso; never thrive*  
 Ful sekyrly his bane shal I ben *death; be*  
 225 With dyntys of dowte! *doughty strokes*  
 Syr Pylat, have good day!  
 We shal kepyn the body in clay, *guard; in the earth*  
 And we shal wakyn wele the way *watch well*  
 And wayten all abowte. *Keep our eyes open*

**PYLAT** Now, jentyl serys, wole ye vowchsaft *sirs, will; vouchsafe*  
 231 To go with me and sele the graffe *seal; grave*  
 \*1270 That he ne aryse out of the grave *not arise*  
 That is now ded?

**CAYPHAS** We graunte wel, lete us now go  
 235 Whan it is selyd and kepte also. *When; sealed*  
 Than be we sekyr withowtyn wo *Then; secure*  
 And have of hym no dred. *fear*

*[Tunc ibunt ad sepulcrum Pilatus, Cayphas, Annas, et omnes milites et dicit:<sup>1</sup>*

**ANNAS** Loo, here is wax ful redy dyght *prepared*  
 Sett on your sele, anon ful ryght. *seal, now*

<sup>1</sup> Then Pilate, Cayphas, Annas, and all the knights will go to the sepulcher and say

- 240 Than be ye sekyr, I yow plyght *Then; certain; promise*  
 He shal not rysyn agayn. *rise*
- PYLAT** On this corner, my seal shal sytt  
 \*1281 And with this wax, I sele this pytt. *seal; grave*  
 Now dare I ley he shal nevyr flytt *I bet; escape*  
 245 Out of this grave, serteayn. *certainly*
- ANNAS** Here is more wax ful redy, loo!  
 All the cornerys, ye sele also. *seal*  
 And with a lokke, loke it, too! *lock; lock*  
 Than lete us gon oure way
- 250 And lete these knyntys abydyn therby. *knights stay*  
 And yf hese dysciplys com prevyly *secretly*
- \*1290 To stele away this ded body,  
 To us they hem brynge without delay. *bring them*
- PYLAT** On every corner now is sett my seale.  
 255 Now is myn herte in welthe and wele. *well-being; ease*  
 This may no brybour away now stele *thief*  
 This body from undyr ston. *stone*  
 Now, syr buschoppe, I pray to thee  
 And Annas also, com on with me,
- 260 Evyn togedyr all we thre, *together*  
 Homward, the wey we gon.
- \*1300 As wynde wrothe, *the angry wind*  
 Knyghtys now goht! *go*  
 Clappyd in cloth, *Shrouded*
- 265 And kepyth hym well! *guard him (Jesus)*  
 Loke ye be bolde  
 With me for to holde. *to consider*  
 Ye shul have gold  
 And helme of stele. *steel helmets*

*[Pylat, Annas, and Cayphas go to ther skaffaldys (scaffolds), and the knyghtys sey:*

- AFFRAUNT** Now, in this grownde  
 271 He lyeth bounde,  
 \*1310 That tholyd wounde *suffered wounds*  
 For he was fals.  
 This lefft cornere,
- 275 I wyl kepe here,  
 Armyd clere *fully*  
 Bothe hed and hals. *neck*
- COSDRAM** I wyl have this syde  
 Whatso betyde. *happens*

- 280 If any man ryde  
To stele the cors, *steal; corpse*
- \*1320 I shal hym chyde *abuse*  
With woundys wyde,  
Amonge hem glyde *them pass*
- 285 With fyne fors! *sheer force*
- AMERAUNT** The hed I take *head*  
Hereby to wake, *to guard*  
A stele stake *lance*  
I holde in honde.
- 290 Maystryes to make, *great deeds*  
Crownys I crake, *Heads; crack*
- \*1330 Schafftys to shake *Shafts; tremble*  
And schapyn schonde. *bring about ruin*
- ARFAXAT** I shal not lete *cease*
- 295 To kepe the fete. *feet*  
They are ful wete, *wet*  
Walterid in blood. *Drenched*  
He that wyll stalke,  
Be brook or balke, *(I.e., anywhere)*
- 300 Hedyr to walke — *Here*  
Tho wrecchis be wood! *Those wretches; crazy*
- AMERAUNT** Myn heed dullyth; *head feels dull*
- \*1341 Myn herte fullyth *fills*  
Of slepp. *sleep*
- 305 Seynt Mahownd, *Holy Mohammed*  
This beryenge grownd *burial*  
Thu kepp! *watch*
- ARFAXAT** I sey the same. *say*  
For any blame, *Despite*
- 310 I falle!  
Mahownde whelpe, *Mohammed's child*
- \*1350 Aftyr thin helpe, *your*  
I calle.
- COSDRAM** I am hevy as leed. *lead*
- 315 For any dred,  
I slepe.  
Mahownd of myght,  
This ston tonyght,  
Thu kepe!

**AFFRAUNT** I have no foot  
 321 To stonde on root *stand*  
 \*1360 By brynke. *the edge*  
 Here I aske  
 To go to taske *to take*  
 325 A wynke. *nap*

### 35. HARROWING OF HELL (2); APPEARANCE TO MARY; PILATE AND SOLDIERS

*[Tunc dormyent milites. Et veniet Anima Christi de inferno cum Adam et Eva, Abraham, Johan Baptista, et aliis.]*<sup>1</sup>

**ANIMA CHRISTI** Come forthe, Adam and Eve, with thee,  
 And all my fryndys that herein be!  
 To paradys come forthe with me,  
 In blysse for to dwelle.  
 5 The fende of helle, that is your foo, *Fiend; foe*  
 He shal be wrappyd and woundyn in woo. *consumed and enclosed; woe*  
 Fro wo to welthe now shul ye go *From woe; shall*  
 With myrthe evyr more to melle. *to live*

**ADAM** I thanke thee, Lord, of thi grett grace  
 10 That now is forgovyn my grett trespase. *forgiven*  
 Now shal we dwellyn in blysfyl place,  
 In joye and endeles myrthe.  
 Thorwe my synne, man was forlorn, *Through; lost*  
 And man to save, thu wore all torn *were*  
 15 And of a mayd in Bedlem born, *Bethlehem*  
 That evyr blyssyd be thi byrthe. *blessed*

**EVA** Blyssyd be thu, Lord of Lyff!  
 I am Eve, Adamis wyff. *Life*  
 Thu hast soferyd strok and stryff *Adam's wife*  
 20 For werkys that we wrought. *beatings and strife*  
 Thi mylde mercy haht all forgovyn; *works; did*  
 Dethis dentys on thee were drevyn. *has forgiven all*  
 Now, with thee, Lord, we shul levyn. *Death's blows*  
 Thi bryght blood hath us bowth. *shall live*  
*bought*

**JOHANNES BAPTISTA** I am thi cosyn; my name is Johan. *cousin*  
 26 Thi woundys hath betyn thee to the bon. *beaten; bone*  
 I baptyzid thee in Flom Jordon *River Jordan*  
 And gaff thi body baptyze. *gave; baptism*

<sup>1</sup> Then the knights will sleep. Anima Christi will come from hell with Adam and Eve, Abraham, John the Baptist, and others

- 30 With thi grace now shul we gon  
From oure enmyes, everychon,  
And fyndyn myrthis many on  
In pley of paradyse. *shall  
enemies, everyone  
joys many a one  
joys of*
- ABRAHAM** I am Abraham, fadyr trowe,  
That reyned after Noes flowe. *true  
reigned; Noah's flood*  
35 A sory synne Adam gan sowe *spread*  
That clad us all in care. *sorrow*  
A sone, that maydenys mylk hath sokyn,  
And with his blood oure bonde hath brokyn, *a virgin's milk; sucked  
our bonds*  
Helle logge lyth unlokyn *Hell's lodge lies unlocked*  
40 Fro fylth with frende we fare. *From; friends; go*
- ANIMA CHRISTI** Fayre frendys, now be ye wunne! *won*  
On yow shyneth the sothfast sunne! *shines; true*  
The gost that all grevaunce hath gunne *spirit; begun*  
Ful harde I shal hym bynde!  
45 As wyckyd werme thu gunne apere *worm (serpent); began to appear*  
To tray my chylderyn that were so dere; *To betray; children*  
Therfore, traytour, hevermore here *evermore*  
Newe peynes thu shalt evyr fynde!
- 50 Thorwe blood I took of mannys kynde, *Through; man's form*  
Fals devyl, I here thee bynde! *bind*  
In endles sorwe I thee wynde *wind*  
Therin evyrmore to dwelle. *flee*  
Now thu art bownde; thu mayst not fle,  
For thin envyous cruelte  
55 In endeles dampnacyon shalt thou be, *damnation*  
And nevyr comyn out of helle.
- BELIAL** Alas! Herrow, now am I bownde  
In helle gonge to ly on grownde! *hell's cesspool; lie*  
In hendles sorwe, now am I wounde; *endless sorrow*  
60 In care evyrmore to dwelle;  
In Helle logge I lygh alone. *lodge; lie*  
Now is my joye away al gone,  
For all fendys shul be my fone! *fiends shall; foes*  
64 I shal nevyr com from Helle.
- ANIMA CHRISTI** Now is your foo boundyn in Helle *foe*  
That evyr was besy, yow for to qwelle. *busy; you; to kill*  
Now wele I rysyn flesch and felle *the whole body*  
That rent was for youre sake. *torn*  
Myn owyn body that hyng on rode — *hung on the cross*  
70 And be the Jewys nevyr so wode — *by; insane*

It shal aryse both flesch and blode,  
My body now wyl I take.

[APPEARANCE TO MARY]

[*Tunc transiet Anima Christi ad resuscitandum corpus quo resuscitato dicat Jhesus:*<sup>1</sup>

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>JHESUS</b> Harde gatys have I gon,<br/>And peynes sofryd many on:<br/>75 Stomblyd at stake and at ston,<br/>Nygh thre and thretty yere.<br/>I lyght out of my Faderys trone<br/>For to amende mannys mone.<br/>My flesch was betyn to the bon;<br/>80 My blood I bledde clere.</p> <p>For mannys love I tholyd dede,<br/>And for mannys love I am rysyn up rede.<br/>For man I have mad my body in brede,<br/>His sowle for to fede.<br/>85 Man, and thu lete me thus gone,<br/>And wylt not folwyn me anone;<br/>Such a frende fyndyst thu nevyr none<br/>To help thee at thi nede.</p> <p><i>Salve, sancta parens</i>, my modyr dere!<br/>90 All heyl, modyr, with glad chere!<br/>For now is aresyn with body clere<br/>Thi sone that was dolve depe.<br/>This is the thrydde day that I yow tolde:<br/>I shuld aresyn out of the cley so colde.<br/>95 Now am I here with brest ful bolde;<br/>Therefore no more ye wepe.</p> <p><b>MARIA</b> Welcom, my Lord! Welcom, my grace!<br/>Welcome, my sone and my solace!<br/>I shal thee wurchep in every place.<br/>100 Welcom, Lord God of Myght!<br/>Mekel sorwe in hert I leed<br/>Whan thou were leyd in dethis beed,<br/>But now my blysse is newly breed:<br/>All men may joye this syght.</p> | <p><i>Through grievous paths<br/>pains suffered; a one</i></p> <p><i>Nearly thirty-three years<br/>descended; Father's throne<br/>man's sorrow<br/>beaten<br/>fully</i></p> <p><i>man's; suffered death<br/>quickly<br/>made; bread</i></p> <p><i>if; let<br/>follow; now</i></p> <p><i>Hail, holy mother</i></p> <p><i>arisen; pure<br/>buried deep<br/>third; told you of</i></p> <p><i>honor</i></p> <p><i>Great sorrow; suffered<br/>When; laid; death's bed<br/>born<br/>enjoy</i></p> |
|---|---|

<sup>1</sup> Then the soul of Christ will go to revive his body, and when it is revived, let Jesus say

- JHESUS** All this werlde that was forlorn *lost*  
 106 Shal wurchepe you, bothe evyn and morn; *honor; evening*  
 For had I not of yow be born, *been*  
 Man had be lost in helle. *would have been*  
 I was deed, and lyff I have; *dead; life*  
 110 And thorwe my deth, man do I save. *through*  
 For now I am resyn out of my grave;  
 In hevyn, man shal now dwelle.
- MARIA** A, dere Sone, these wurdys ben goode.  
 Thu hast wel comfortyd my mornynge moode. *mournful*  
 115 Blyssyd be thi precyous bloode  
 That mankende thus doth save. *saves mankind*
- JHESUS** Now, dere modyr, my leve I take.  
 Joye in hert and myrth ye make,  
 For deth is deed, and lyff doth wake. *dead; life*  
 120 Now I am resyn fro my grave.
- MARIA** Farewel, my sone! Farewel, my childe!  
 Farewel, my Lorde, my God so mylde!  
 Myn hert is wele that fyrst was whylde. *well; wild*  
 Farewel, myn owyn dere love!  
 125 Now, all mankynde beth glad with gle,  
 For deth is deed, as ye may se!  
 And lyff is reysed, endles to be *dead; see*  
 In hevyn dwellynge above. *raised*
- Whan my sone was naylyd on tre, *When; nailed*  
 130 All women myght rewe with me, *mourn*  
 For grettere sorwe myght nevyr non be *greater sorrow*  
 Than I dede suffyr, iwys. *did; indeed*  
 But this joy now passyth all sorwe *sorrow*  
 That my childe suffryd in that hard morwe, *morning*  
 135 For now he is oure alderers borwe *redeemer of us all*  
 To brynge us all to blys. *bliss*

## [PILATE AND SOLDIERS]

[*Tunc evigilabunt milites sepulcri, et dicit Primus Miles:*<sup>1</sup>

- AMERAUNT** Awake! Awake!  
 Hillis gyn qwake! *begin to*  
 And tres ben shake *are shaken*

<sup>1</sup> Thereupon the knights at the sepulcher will awaken, and the First Knight says



- 140 Ful nere atoo! *nearly in two*  
 Stonys clevyd; *cleaved*  
 Wyttyts ben revid; *Wits are snatched*  
 Erys ben devid; *Ears are deafened*  
 I am servid so! *treated*
- ARFAXAT** He is aresyn, this is no nay! *arisen; lie*
- 146 That was deed and colde in clay, *dead*  
 Now is resyn, belyve this day! *believe*  
 Grett woundyr it is to me! *Great wonder*  
 He is resyn by his owyn myght, *risen*
- 150 And forth he goth his wey ful ryght. *straight away*  
 How shul we now us qwyttte *explain ourselves*  
 Whan Pylat doth us se? *When; see*
- COSDRAM** Lete us now go  
 Pilat ontoo.
- 155 And ryght evyn so  
 As we han sayn *have said*  
 The trewth we sey:  
 That out of clay  
 He is resyn this day *risen*
- 160 That Jewys han slayn. *have*
- AFFRAUNT** I holde it best, *think*  
 Lete us nevyr rest,  
 But go we prest *at once*  
 That it were done.
- 165 All heyl, Pilatt  
 In thin astat! *On your throne*  
 He is resyn up latt *risen; lately*  
 That thu gast dome. *Whom you judged*
- PYLAT** What? What? What? What?
- 170 Out upon thee! Why seyst thu that? *Shame on you*  
 Fy upon thee, harlat! *scoundrel*  
 How darst thu so say! *dare*  
 Thu dost myn herte ryght grett greff! *heart; great grief*  
 Thu lvest upon hym, fals theff! *tell lies about; thief*
- 175 How shulde he rysyn ageyn to lyff *rise again to life*  
 That lay deed in clay? *dead*
- AMERAUNT** Ya, thow thu be nevyr so wroth, *Though; ever so angry*  
 And of these tydandys nevyr so loth. *tidings; displeased*  
 Yitt goodly on ground, on lyve he goth, *Yet splendidly; alive*  
 180 Qwycke and levyng man! *Alive*  
 Iff thu haddyst a ben ther we ware, *had been where we were*

	In hert, thu shuldyst han had gret care — And of blysse a ben ryght bare, Of coloure, bothe pale and whan.	<i>distress have been wan</i>
<b>PYLAT</b>	Or ye com there,	<i>Before; went</i>
186	Ye dede all swere To fyght in fere And bete and bynde! All this was trayn!	<i>did together betrayed</i>
190	Your wurdys wore vayn, This is sertayn. Yowe fals I fynde.	<i>were empty certain You</i>
<b>ARFAXAT</b>	Be the deth the devyl deyde, We were of hym so sore atreyde	<i>By; death; died so afraid</i>
195	That, for fer, we us down leyde, Ryght evyn upon oure syde. Whan we were leyde upon the grounde, Stylle we lay, as we had be bounde. We durst not ryse for a thowsand pounde,	<i>lay down When; lying been bound dared</i>
200	Ne not for all this worlde so wyde!	<i>Nor not</i>
<b>PYLAT</b>	Now fy upon youre grett bost! All youre wurchep is now lost In felde, in town, and in every cost, Men may you dyspravyn.	<i>boasting reputation everywhere condemn</i>
205	Now all youre wurchep, it is lorn: And every man may yow wel scorn, And bydde yow go syttyn in the corn And chare away the ravyn.	<i>respect; lost sit; grain fields scare; ravens</i>
<b>COSDRAM</b>	Ya, it was hygh tyme to leyn oure bost,	<i>give up</i>
210	For whan the body toke agen the gost, He wold a frayd many an ost — Kynge, knyght, and knave! Ya, whan he dede ryse out of his lake,	<i>spirit have frightened; an army when; did rise; pit</i>
	Than was ther suche an erthequake,	<i>Then</i>
215	That all the worlde it gan to shake! That made us for to rave!	<i>began</i>
<b>AFFRAUNT</b>	Ya, ya! Herke, felawys what I shal say! Late us not ses be nyght nor day, But telle the trewth ryght as it lay	<i>Listen, fellows Let; cease by night straight out</i>
220	In countré where we goo. And than, I dare ley myn heed That thei that Crystys lawys leed,	<i>wherever then; bet my own head teach Christ's laws</i>

	They wyl nevyr ses tyl they be deed, His deth that brought hym too.	<i>cease until; dead to</i>
<b>AMERAUNT</b>	Be Belyall, this was now wele ment.	<i>By; well intended</i>
226	To this cowncell lete us consent. Lett us go tellyn with on assent — He is resyn up this day.	<i>counsel one risen</i>
<b>ARFAXAT</b>	I grawnt therto and that forthryght	<i>agree</i>
230	That he is resyn by his owyn myght, For ther cam non be day nor nyght To helpe hym owte of clay.	<i>risen no one by</i>
<b>PYLAT</b>	Now, jentyl serys, I pray yow all — Abyde style, a lytyl thrall	<i>sirs; ask a little while</i>
235	Whyll that I, myn cowncel call And here of ther councell.	<i>While; council hear; their counsel</i>
<b>AMERAUNT</b>	Syr, att youre prayour, we wyl abyde Here in this place a lytel tyde. But tary not to longe, for we must ryde —	<i>bidding a little while too long</i>
240	We may not longe dwelle.	<i>stay</i>
<b>PYLAT</b>	Now, jentyl serys, I pray yow here Sum good cowncel, me to lere, For sertys, serys, without dwere,	<i>sirs; ask counsel; give certain, sirs; doubt</i>
244	We stounde in right grett dowte.	<i>perplexity</i>
<b>CAYPHAS</b>	Now trewly sere, I yow telle, This matere is both fers and felle — Combros it is therwith to melle, And evyl to be browth abowte.	<i>fierce and treacherous Cumbersome; deal with evil</i>
<b>ANNAS</b>	Syr Pylat, thu grett justyse,	
250	Thow thu be of wittys wyse, Yit herke ful sadly with good devyse What that thu shalt do. I counsel thee be my reed: This wundryful tale, pray hem to hede.	<i>Though; intelligence Yet listen; seriously; good intent  by my advice bid them to hide</i>
255	And upon this, geve hem good mede, Bothe golde and sylver also.	<i>give them; rewards</i>
	And, sere, I shall tell yow why In youre erys prevyly, Betweyn us thre serteynly.	<i>sir ears privately certainly</i>
260	Now herk, serys, in youre erys.	

*[Hic faciant Pilatus, Cayphas, et Annas privatim inter se consilium. Quo finito dicat:]*<sup>1</sup>

ANNAS	For mede doth most in every qwest,	<i>reward; endeavor</i>
	And mede is mayster, bothe est and west.	<i>reward; master; east</i>
	Now trewly, serys, I hold this best —	<i>sirs</i>
264	With mede, men may bynde berys.	<i>bind bears</i>
CAYPHAS	Sekyr, sere, this counsell is good.	<i>Surely, sir</i>
	Pray these knyhtys to chaunge ther mood.	
	Geve them golde, feste, and food,	<i>Give; feast</i>
	And that may chaunge ther wytt.	<i>minds</i>
PYLAT	Serys, youre good councel I shal fulfyll.	<i>Sirs</i>
270	Now, jentyl knyhtys, come hedyr me tylle!	<i>knights; here to me</i>
	I pray yow, serys, of youre good wylle	
	No ferther that ye flytt.	<i>go away</i>
	Jentyl knyhtys, I yow pray,	
	A bettyr sawe that ye say:	<i>story</i>
275	Sey ther he was cawth away	<i>stolen</i>
	With his dyscyplis be nyght;	<i>by night</i>
	Sey he was with his dyscyplis fett.	<i>fetched</i>
	I wolde ye worn in youre sadelys sett	<i>were; saddles</i>
	And have here gold in a purs knett,	<i>knitted in a purse</i>
280	And to Rome rydyth ryght.	<i>straightaway</i>
AFFRAUNT	Now, Syr Pylatt,	
	We gon oure gatt.	<i>go our way</i>
	We wyll not prate	<i>talk</i>
	No lengere now	<i>Any longer</i>
285	Now we have golde;	
	No talys shul be tolde	<i>tales shall</i>
	To whithtys on wolde,	<i>anyone on earth</i>
	We make thee a vow.	
PYLAT	Now, ye men of myth,	<i>might</i>
290	As ye han hyght,	<i>are called</i>
	Eryn so forthryght	
	Youre wurdys not falle.	<i>[may] not fall</i>
	And ye shul gon	
	With me anon	<i>now</i>
295	All everychon	<i>everyone</i>
	Into myn halle.	

<sup>1</sup> Here Pilate, Cayphas, and Annas will privately consult among themselves. When they are done he (Annas) says

**AMERAUNT** Now hens we go,  
 As lyth as ro, *light; deer*  
 And ryght evyn so  
 300 As we han seyde. *have said*  
 We shul kepe counsel *the secret*  
 Wheresoevyr we dwell.  
 We shul no talys tell — *tales*  
 Be not dysmayd.

### 36. ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE MARYS; PETER AND JOHN AT THE SEPULCHER

*[Hic venient ad sepulcrum Maria Magdalene, Maria Jacobi, et Maria Salome, et dicit Maria Magdalene:]<sup>1</sup>*

**MARIA MAGDALENE** Swete systeryn, I yow besech *sisters; beseech*  
 Heryght now my specyal speche. *Hear*  
 Go we with salvys for to leche *anoint*  
 Cryst that tholyd wounde. *suffered wounds*  
 5 He hath us wonnyn owt of wreche, *won; misery*  
 The ryght wey God wyl us teche,  
 For to seke my Lorde, my leche, *healer*  
 His blood hath me unbownde.  
  
 Sefne develys in me were pyght. *Seven devils; fixed*  
 10 My love, my Lord, my God Almyght,  
 Away he weryd tho fyndys wight *drove those fierce fiends*  
 With his wyse wurde! *words*  
 He droff fro me the fendes lees: *drove from; fiend's lies*  
 In my swete sowle, his chawmere I ches. *chamber I choose*  
 15 In me, belevyth the Lord of Pes;  
 I go to his burryenge boorde. *lives; Peace*  
*funeral feast*

**MARIA JACOBI** My systerys sone I woot he was; *sister's; know*  
 He lyth in here as sunne in glas.  
 The childe was born by oxe and asse,  
 20 Up in a bestys stall. *beasts'*  
 Thow his body be graydyd undyr gres, *Though; buried underground*  
 The grete Godhede is nevyrthelasse.  
 The Lord shal rysyn and gon his pas *go his way*  
 And comfortyn his frendys all.

**MARIA SALOMÉ** My name is Mary Salomé,  
 26 His modyr and I, systerys we be. *mother; sisters*

<sup>1</sup> Here Mary Magdalene, Mary Jacobi, and Mary Salome will come to the sepulcher, and Mary Magdalene says

	Annys dowterys we be all thre —	<i>Anne's daughters</i>
	Jhesu, we be thin awntys.	<i>your aunts</i>
	The naylis gun his lemys feyn,	<i>nails went through; limbs fine</i>
30	And the spere gan punche and peyn.	<i>began to pierce; hurt [him]</i>
	On tho woundys, we wold have eyen:	<i>those wounds; set eyes on</i>
	That grace now God graunt us.	

**MARIA MADGALENE** Now go we styлле

	With good wyll.	
35	Ther he is leyde.	
	He deyde on crowch;	<i>died on the cross</i>
	We wolde hym towch	<i>touch</i>
	As we han seyde.	<i>have said</i>

[*Tunc respicit Maria Magdalene in sepulcro dicens:*<sup>1</sup>

	Where is my Lord that was here,	
40	That for me bledde, bowndyn in brere?	<i>bound in thorns</i>
	His body was beryed ryght by this mere,	<i>buried; boundary marker</i>
	That for me gan deye.	<i>died</i>
	The Jewys, fekyll and fals, fownde!	<i>fickle; false, found [it]</i>
	Where have thei do the body with wounde?	<i>put; wounds</i>
45	He lyth not upon his grownde!	
	The body is don aweye!	<i>been taken</i>

**MARIA JACOBI** To my Lord, my love, my frende —

	Fayn wolde I salve a spende	<i>have spent [money for]</i>
	And I myght aught amende	<i>If; help</i>
50	His woundys depe and wyde.	
	To my Lord, I owe lowlyté,	<i>loyalty</i>
	Both homage and fewté.	<i>fealty</i>
	I wolde with my dewté	<i>duty</i>
	A softyd hand and syde.	<i>Have soothed</i>

**MARIA SALOMÉ** To myghtfful God, omnyotent,

56	I bere a boyst of oynement.	<i>jar</i>
	I wold han softyd his sore dent,	<i>softened; blows</i>
	His sydys al abowte.	
	Lombe of love, withowt loth,	<i>Lamb; fault</i>
60	I fynde thee not! Myn hert is wroth!	<i>angry</i>
	In the sepulcre, ther lyth a cloth,	
	And jentyll Jhesu is owte!	

<sup>1</sup> Then Mary Magdalene looks into the sepulcher, saying

- ANGELUS** Wendyth forth, ye women thre,  
 Into the strete of Galylé!  
 65 Youré Savyour ther shul ye se,  
 Walkynge in the waye.  
 Your fleschly Lorde now hath lyff  
 That deyed on tre with strook and stryff.  
 Wende forth, thu wepynge wyff  
 70 And seke hym, I thee saye.
- Now goth forth fast, all thre  
 To his dyscyplys fayr and fre,  
 And to Petyr, the trewth telle ye.  
 Therof have ye no dreed.  
 75 Spare ye not the soth to say:  
 He that was deed and cloyd in clay,  
 He is resyn this same day  
 And levyth with woundys reed.
- MARIA MAGDALENE** A! Myrthe and joy in herte we have,  
 80 For now is resyn out of his grave!  
 He levyth now, oure lyf to save,  
 That dede lay in the clay.
- MARIA JACOBI** In hert, I was ryght sore dysmayd,  
 The aungel to us whan that he sayd  
 85 That Cryst is resyn. I was affrayd  
 The aungel whan I say.
- MARIA SALOMÉ** Now lete us all thre fulfyllen  
 The aungelys wurde and Goddys wylle.  
 Lett us sey with voys wul shrylle:  
 90 Cryst — that Jewys dede sle,  
 Oure Lord, that naylyd was on the rode  
 And betyn out was his bodyes blode —  
 He is aresyn, though they ben wode!  
 A, Lorde, yitt wele thu be!
- [*Maria Magdalene dicit Petro et ceteris apostoli:*<sup>1</sup>
- MARIA MAGDALENE** Bretheryn, all in herte be glad,  
 96 Bothe blythe and joyful in herte ful fayn,  
 For ryght good tydandys have we had  
 That oure Lord is resyn agayn!  
 An aungel us bad, ryght thus sertayn,  
 100 To thee, Petyr, that we shulde telle

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<sup>1</sup> *Mary Magdalene says to Peter and the other disciples*

- How Cryst is resyn, the which was slayn,  
A levyng man evyrmore to dwelle. *who was living*
- MARIA JACOBI** To lyve is resyn ageyn, that Lorde,  
The qwych Judas to Jewys solde. *life which*  
105 Of this I bere ryght trewe recorde *true testimony*  
By wurdys that the aungel tolde.  
Now myrth and joye to man on molde! *on earth*  
Every man now myrth may have:  
He that was closyd in cley ful colde *buried*  
110 This day is resyn owt of his grave. *risen*
- PETRUS** Sey me, systeryn, with wurdys blythe: *Tell; sisters*  
May I troste to that ye say? *trust*  
Is Cryst resyn ageyn to lyve,  
That was ded and colde in clay?
- MARIA SALOMÉ** Ya, trostyth us truly! It is no nay! *trust; there's no denying it*  
116 He is aresyn! It is no les, *no lie/nothing less*  
And so an aungel us tolde this day  
With opyn voys and speche expres. *open voice; clear*
- JOHANNES** Ya, these be tydyngys of ryght gret blys,  
120 That oure mayster resyn shulde be!  
I wyl go renne in hast, iwys, *run; indeed*  
And loke my Lord, yf I may se. *seek*
- PETRUS** For joye also I renne with thee, *run*  
My brothyr Johan, as I thee say.  
125 In hast, anon, evyn forth go we *now*  
To his grave, we renne oure way. *run*
- [*Hic currunt Johannes et Petrus simul ad sepulcrum, et Johannes prius venit ad monumentum, sed non intrat:*<sup>1</sup>
- JOHANNES** The same shete, here I se *sheet; see*  
That Crystys body was in wounde, *Christ's; wrapped in*  
But he is gon, wheresoever he be!  
130 He lyth not here up on this grownde.
- [*Petrus intrat monumentum, et dicit Petrus:* *Peter enters the monument, and Peter says*
- PETRUS** In this cornere, the shete is fownde,  
And here we fynde the sudary *head cloth*  
In the whiche his hed was wounde *wound*  
Whan he was take from Calvary. *When*

<sup>1</sup> Here, John and Peter run together to the sepulcher, and John arrives first at the monument, but does not enter



*[Hic intrat Johannes monumentum, dicens:      Here John enters the monument, saying*

**JOHANNES** The same sudary and the same shete *head cloth*  
 136 Here with my syth I se both tweyn. *sight; see the two*  
 Now may I wele knowe and wete *understand*  
 That he is rysyn to lyve ageyn.  
 Onto oure bretheryn, lete us go seyn *say*  
 140 The trewth, ryght hevyn as it is: *truth; even as*  
 Oure mayster lyvyth, the which was slayn, *who*  
 Allmyghty Lorde and Kynge of Blys!

**PETRUS** No lengere here wyll we dwelle. *longer; stay*  
 To oure bretheryn, the wey we take.  
 145 The trewth to them, whan that we telle, *truth; when*  
 Grett joye in hert than wul thei make. *then will*

*[Hic Petrus loquitur omnibus apostolis simul collectis:<sup>1</sup>*

Beth mery, bretheryn, for Crystys sake!  
 That man that is oure mayster so good —  
 From deth to lyve, he is awake, *death to life*  
 150 That sore was rent upon the rood. *greatly; torn; cross*

**JOHANNES** As women seyde, so have we fownde:  
 Remevyd away we saw the ston. *Moved*  
 He lyth no lengere undyr the grownde; *longer*  
 Out of his grave, oure mayster is gon!

*[Omnibus congregatis.      All gathered*

**THOMAS** We have grett woundyr, everychon, *wonder; each of us*  
 156 Of these wurdys that ye do speke!  
 A ston ful hevvy lay hym upon!  
 From undyr that ston, how shulde he breke? *escape*

**PETRUS** The trewth to tellyn, it passyth oure witt. *truth; understanding*  
 160 Wethyr he be resyn thorwe his owyn myght, *through*  
 Or ellys stolyd out of his pite  
 Be sum man prevely be nyght — *else; grave*  
 That he is gon, we saw with syght, *By; secretly by*  
 For in his grave, he is nowth. *not*  
 165 We cannot tellyn in what plyght *condition*  
 Out of his grave that he is browth. *brought*

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<sup>1</sup> Here Peter speaks to all the apostles gathered together

## 37. APPEARANCE TO MARY MAGDALENE

[*Maria Magdalene goth to the grave and wepyth and seyth:*

**MARIA MAGDALENE** For hertyly sorwe, myn herte doth breke, *heartfelt sorrow*  
 With wepynge terys I wasch my face!  
 Alas, for sorwe, I may not speke!  
 My Lorde is gon, that hereinne wase. *was*  
 5 Myn owyn dere Lorde and Kynge of Gras, *Grace*  
 That sefne develys fro me dyd take — *devils*  
 I kannat se hym, alas, alas!  
 He is stolyn away owt of this lake. *grave*

**ANGELUS** Woman that stondyst here alone,  
 10 Why dost thou wepe and morne and wepe so sore?  
 What cawse hast thou to make such mone?  
 Why makyst thou such sorwe, and wherefore? *and for what reason*

**MARIA MAGDALENE** I have gret cawse to wepe evyrmore.  
 My Lord is take out of his grave,  
 15 Stolyn away and fro me lore! *lost*  
 I cannot wete where hym to have. *understand*

[*Hic parum deambulet a sepulcro, dicens:*<sup>1</sup>

Alas! Alas, what shal I do?  
 My Lord away is fro me take!  
 A, woful wrecche! Whedyr shal I go? *Where*  
 20 My joye is gon owth of this lake! *from this grave*  
**JHESUS** Woman, suche mornynge why dost thou make?  
 Why is thi chere so hevy and badde?  
 Why dost thou sythe so sore and qwake? *sigh; shake*  
 Why dost thou wepe so sore and sadde?

**MARIA MAGDALENE** A grettyr cawse had nevyr woman  
 26 For to wepe both nyth and day *night*  
 Than I myself have, in serteyn, *certainly*  
 For to sorwyn evyr and ay! *mourn forever*  
 Alas, for sorwe myn hert doth blede!  
 30 My Lorde is take fro me away!  
 I muste nedys sore wepe and grede — *lament*  
 Where he is put, I cannot say.

But, jentyl gardener, I pray to thee, *ask you*  
 If thou hym took out of his grave,

<sup>1</sup> Here she will walk a little from the sepulcher, saying



- 75      How myght I more gretter joye have  
       Than se that Lorde with opyn syght, *to see; in plain view*  
       The whiche my sowle from synne to save, *soul*  
       From develys sefne he made me qwyght. *seven devils; free*
- 80      There kan no tounge my joye expres *tongue*  
       Now I have seyn my Lorde on lyve. *alive*  
       To my bretheryn I wyl me dresse *go*  
       And telle to hem anon ryght belyve; *them at once*  
       With open speche I shal me shryve, *confess*  
       And telle to hem with wurdys pleyn *them; aloud*  
       How that Cryst from deth to lyve *life*  
 85      To endles blys is resyn ageyn. *risen*
- 90      Bretheryn, all blyth ye be, *joyful*  
       For joyful tydyngys tellyn I kan! *tidings*  
       I saw oure Lord Cryst — lyste wel to me — *listen*  
       Of flesch and bon, quyk, levynge man! *bone; alive*  
       Beth glad and joyful as for than, *then*  
       For trost me, trewly, it is ryght thus! *trust; the truth*  
       Mowth to mowth, this is sertayn, *Face to face*  
       I spak ryght now with Cryst Jhesus! *spoke*
- PETRUS** A woundyrful tale, forsothe, is this,  
 95      Ever onowryd oure Lorde mote be! *honored; may*  
       We pray thee, Lord, and Kynge of Blys:  
       Onys thi presence that we may se,  
       Ere thou ascende to thi magesté. *Before*  
       Gracyous God, if that ye plese,  
 100      Late us have sum syght of thee, *Let*  
       Oure careful hertys to sett in ease. *sorrowful*  
       Amen.

*[Explicit apparicio Marie Magdalene.      Here ends the appearance to Mary Magdalene]*

### 38. CLEOPHAS AND LUKE; APPEARANCE TO THOMAS

*[Hic incipit aparicio Cleophe et Luce.      Here begins the appearance to Cleophas and Luke]*

- CLEOPHAS** My brothir, Lucas, I yow pray: *Luke*  
       My plesynge to yow if that it be, *Would it please you*  
       To the castel of Emaus a lytyl way *village of Emmaus*  
       That ye vowchesaf to go with me? *agree*
- LUCAS** All redy, brother, I walke with thee  
 6      To yone castell with ryght good chere.

	Evyn togedyr, anon go we, Brother Cleophas, we to in fere.	<i>now two together</i>
<b>CLEOPHAS</b>	A, brother Lucas, I am sore mevyd	<i>moved</i>
10	Whan Cryst, oure mayster, comyth in my mynde. Whan that I thynke how he was grevyd, Joye in myn herte kan I non fynde. He was so lowlye, so good, so kynde, Holy of lyf and meke of mood.	<i>harm'd heart humble heart</i>
15	Alas, the Jewys! Thei were to blynde — Hym for to kylle that was so good!	<i>too</i>
<b>LUCAS</b>	Brothyr Cleophas, ye sey ful soth! They were to cursyd and to cruell! And Judas — that traytour — he was to loth,	<i>the truth too wicked; too too evil</i>
20	For gold and sylvyr, his mayster to selle; The Jewys were redy, hym for to qwelle, With skorgys, bete out all his blood! Alas, thei wer too fers and felle: Shamfully, thei henge hym on a rood.	<i>kill scourges fierce; cruel hung; cross</i>
<b>CLEOPHAS</b>	Ya, between to theyys — alas for shame —	<i>two thieves</i>
26	They henge hym up with body rent! Alas, alas! They were to blame. To cursyd and cruel was ther intent. Whan for thurste he was nere shent,	<i>hung; torn  Too wicked; their When; nearly dead</i>
30	Eyzil and galle thei govyn hym to drynke. Alas, for ruthe, his deth thei bent In a fowle place of horryble stynte.	<i>Vinegar; gave what a shame; carried out</i>
<b>LUCAS</b>	Ya, and cawse in hym cowde they non fynde! Alas, for sorwe what was here thought:	<i>a reason sorrow; their</i>
35	And he dede helpe bothe lame and blynde, And all seke men that were hym browght. Agens vice alwey he wrought — Synfull ded wold he never do, Yit hym to kylle, thei sparyd nought.	<i>sick Against; acted deeds Yet</i>
40	Alas, alas! Why dede they so?	<i>did</i>
<b>JHESUS</b>	Well ovyrtake, ye serys in same — To walke in felachep with yow, I pray.	<i>caught up; together I ask</i>
<b>LUCAS</b>	Welcom, sere, in Goddys name — Of good felachep we sey not nay!	<i>sir; God's will not deny</i>
<b>JHESUS</b>	Qwat is youre langage to me ye say	<i>What is the topic</i>
46	That ye have togedyr, ye to? Sory and evysum ye been alway — Youre myrthe is gon. Why is it so?	<i>of you two grieving; heavy; all the while</i>

- CLEOPHAS** Sere, me thynkyth thu art a pore pylgrym  
 50 Here walkyng be thiselfe alone. *by yourself*  
 And in the ceté of Jerusalem,  
 Thu knowyst ryght lytyl what ther is done,  
 For pylgrymys comyn and gon ryth sone, *frequently*  
 Ryght lytyl whyle pylgrymes do dwelle. *Briefly*  
 55 In all Jerusalem, as thu hast gone,  
 I trowe no tydyngys that thu canst telle. *I believe*
- JHESUS** Why, in Jerusalem, what thyng is wrought? *has happened*  
 What tydyngys fro thens brynge ye? *from there*
- LUCAS** A! Ther have they slayn a man for nought: *no reason*  
 60 Gyltles he was, as we telle thee.  
 An holy prophete with God was he,  
 Myghtyly in wurde and eke in dede. *word; deed*  
 Of God he had ryght grett poosté! *power*  
 Amonge the pepyl, his name gan sprede.
- 65 He hyght Jhesu of Nazareth, *is called*  
 A man he was of ryght grett fame.  
 The Jewys hym kylde with cruel deth,  
 Without trespas or any blame. *fault*  
 Hym to scorne, they had grett game *sport*  
 70 And naylid hym streyte ontyll a tre. *onto a cross*  
 Alas, alas! Methynkyth grett shame —  
 Without cawse that this shulde be.
- CLEOPHAS** Ya, sere, and ryght grett troste in hym we had, *trust*  
 All Israel countré, that he shulde save.
- 75 The thrydde day is this that he was clad *third; covered*  
 In coold cley and leyd in grave.  
 Yitt, woundyrful tydyngys of hym we have  
 Of women that sought hym beforn daylyth. *daylight*  
 Wethyr they sey truthe or ellys do rave, *else*  
 80 We cannot telle the trew verdyth. *real conclusion*
- Whan Cryst in grave thei cowde not se,  
 They comyn to us and evyn thus tolde  
 How that an aungell seyde to them thre *the three of them*  
 That he shulde leve with brest ful bolde! *live*  
 85 Yitt Petyr and Johan preve this wolde: *would prove*  
 To Crystys grave, they ran thei tweyne, *Christ's; both*  
 And whan they come to the grave so coolde, *when*  
 They fownde the women ful trewe, sertayne! *were truthful, certainly*
- JHESUS** A, ye fonnys and slought of herte! *foolish; slow of heart*  
 90 For to beleve in Holy Scrypture, *In order*

- Have not prophetys with wurdys smerte  
 Spoke be tokenys in signifure  
 That Cryste shulde deye for youre valure  
 And syth entre his joye and blys?  
 95 Why be ye of herte so dure  
 And trust not in God that myghtful is?
- sharp words  
 spoken in signs as evidence  
 [to redeem] your worth  
 then enter  
 hard-hearted*
- Bothe Moyses and Aaron and othyr mo  
 In Holy Scrypture, ye may rede it.  
 Of Crystis deth, thei spak also,  
 100 And how he shuld ryse out of his pitt.  
 Owt of feyth, than, why do ye flitte  
 Whan holy prophetys yow teche so pleyne?  
 Turne youre thought and chaunge youre witte  
 And truste wele that Cryst doth leve ageyne!
- Moses; others  
 read  
 Christ's; spoke  
 Faithless, then; go  
 teach; plainly  
 mind  
 live*
- LUCAS** Leve ageyn? Man, be in pes!  
 106 How shulde a ded man evyr aryse?  
 I cowncell thee such wurdys to ses.  
 For dowte of Pylat, that hygh justyce,  
 He was slayn at the gret asyse  
 110 Be councell of lordys, many on.  
 Of suche langage — take bettyr avise  
 In every company ther thu dost gon.
- be quiet!  
 to cease  
 Out of fear  
 court session  
 By; a one  
 talk; be careful*
- CHRISTUS** Trewth dyd nevyr his maystyr shame.  
 Why shulde I ses, than, trewth to say?  
 115 Be Jonas, the prophete, I preve the same  
 That was in a whallys body thre nyghtis and thre day:  
 So longe Cryst in his grave lay  
 As Jonas was withinne the se.  
 His grave is brokyn that was of clay:  
 120 To lyff resyn agen now is he.
- its master  
 cease, then  
 By; prove  
 whale's  
 Just as long  
 in the sea  
 life risen again*
- CLEOPHAS** Sey nott so, man! It may not be —  
 Thow thyn exaunple be sumdele good.  
 For Jonas on lyve evyrmore was he,  
 And Cryst was slayn upon a rood.  
 125 The Jewys on hym, they were so wood  
 That to his herte, a spere they pyght!  
 He bled owt all his herte blood.  
 How shulde he, thanne, ryse with myght?
- Though your example; somewhat  
 still alive  
 cross  
 insane  
 thrust  
 heart's  
 then*
- CHRISTUS** Take hede at Aaron and his dede styk  
 130 Which was ded of his nature,  
 And yit he floryschyd with flowrys ful thyk  
 And bare almaundys of grett valure.
- heed; dead stick  
 dead; its nature  
 it flourished  
 almonds; value*

- The ded styk was signifure  
How Cryst, that shamfully was deed and slayn.  
135 As that ded styk bare frute ful pure,  
So Cryst shuld ryse to lyve ageyn.
- LUCAS** That a deed styk frute shulde bere,  
I merveye sore therof, iwys.  
But yitt hymself fro deth to rere  
140 And leve ageyn, more woundyr it is!  
That he doth leve, I trost not this,  
For he hath bled his blood so red.  
But yitt of myrthe, evyrmoor I mys  
Whan I have mende that he is ded.
- CHRISTUS** Why be ye so hard of truste?  
146 Ded not Cryst reyse thorwe his owyn myght  
Lazare, that deed lay undyr the duste  
And stynkyd ryght foule, as I yow plyght?  
To lyff Cryst reysid hym agen ful ryght,  
150 Out of his grave — this is serteyn.  
Why may nat Cryste hymself thus qwyght  
And ryse from deth to leve ageyn?
- CLEOPHAS** Now trewly, sere, youre wurdys ben good.  
I have in yow ryght grett delyght!  
155 I pray yow, sere, with mylde mood  
To dwelle with us all this nyght.
- CHRISTUS** I must go hens anon ful ryght,  
For grett massagys I have to do.  
I wolde abyde yf that I myght,  
160 But at this tyme I must hens go.
- LUCAS** Ye shal not gon fro us this nyght!  
It waxit all derke! Gon is the day!  
The sonne is downe; lorn is the lyght.  
Ye shal not gon from us away.
- CHRISTUS** I may not dwelle, as I yow say.  
166 I must this nyght go to my frende.  
Therfore, good bretheryn, I yow pray  
Lett me not, my wey to wende.
- CLEOPHAS** Trewly from us ye shal not go.  
170 Ye shal abyde with us here styll!  
Youre goodly dalyaunce plesyth us so,  
We may nevyr have of yow oure fylle!  
We pray yow, sere, with herty wylle:  
All nyght with us abyde and dwelle,
- a signifier (foreshadowing)*  
*dead*  
*dead stick*  
*marvel; indeed*  
*to raise up*  
*live*  
*live*  
*lack*  
*When; remember*  
*through*  
*lay dead*  
*assure you*  
*life*  
*not; deliver*  
*live*  
*sir*  
*sir; gracious*  
*away right now*  
*errands*  
*stay*  
*hence*  
*go from*  
*grows dark*  
*lost*  
*remain*  
*ask you*  
*Don't hinder me; to go*  
*conversation*  
*sir; hearty*



- 175 More goodly langage to talkyn us tylle *conversation; to us*  
 And of youre good dalyaunce more for to telle. *words*
- LUCAS** Ya, brothyre Cleophas, be myn assent: *by*  
 Let us hym kepe with strenth and myght.  
 Sett on yowre hand with good entent *Grab him*  
 180 And pulle hym with us, the wey well ryght. *rest of the way*  
 The day is done, sere, and now it is nyght. *sir*  
 Why wole ye hens now from us go? *will; hence*  
 Ye shal abyde, as I yow plyght; *stay; assure you*  
 Ye shal not walke this nyght us fro. *from us*
- CLEOPHAS** This nyght fro us ye go not away.  
 186 We shal yow kepe betwen us tweyne. *both*  
 To us, therfore, ye sey not nay,  
 But walke with us — the wey is pleyne.
- CHRISTUS** Sythyn ye kepe me with myght and mayn, *Since*  
 190 With herty wyll I shal abyde. *stay*
- LUCAS** Of youre abydyng we be ful fayn — *staying; glad*  
 No man more welkom in this werd wyde. *world*
- CLEOPHAS** Of oure maystyr, Cryst Jhesu — *Of; teacher*  
 For ye do speke so mech good, *much*  
 195 I love yow hertyly, trust me trew —  
 He was bothe meke and mylde of mood. *of heart*  
 Of hym to speke is to me food.  
 If ye had knowe hym, I dare wel say —  
 And in what plyght with hym it stood — *danger*  
 200 Ye wold have thought on hym many a day.
- LUCAS** Many a day, ya, ya, iwys. *indeed*  
 He was a man of holy levyng *living*  
 Thow he had be the childe of God in blys. *Although; been; heaven*  
 Both wyse and woundyrfull was his werkynge. *deeds*  
 205 But aftere youre labour and ferre walkynge, *far*  
 Takyth this loff, and etyth sum bred; *loaf; eat*  
 And than wyl we have more talkynge *then*  
 Of Cryst, oure maystyr, that is now ded.
- CHRISTUS** Beth mery and glad with hert ful fre, *heart; free*  
 210 For of Cryst Jhesu that was youre frende,  
 Ye shal have tydyngs of game and gle *joy*  
 Withinne a whyle, or ye hens wende. *before you go hence*
- With myn hand this bred I blys *bless*  
 And breke it here as ye do se.

215 I geve yow parte also of this,  
This bred to ete, and blythe to be. *joyful*

*[Hic subito discedat Christus ab oculis eorum.]*<sup>1</sup>

**CLEOPHAS** A! Mercy, God! What was oure happe? *just happened to us*  
Was not oure hert with love brennyng *heart; burning*  
Whan Cryst, oure mayster, so nere oure lappe *When; close to us*  
220 Dedde sitte and speke such suete talkynge? *Did; sweet*  
He is now quyk and man lyvenge *alive; living*  
That fyrst was slayn and put in grave.  
Now may we chaunge all oure mornynge,  
For oure Lord is resyn, his servauntys to save! *risen*

**LUCAS** Alas, for sorwe! What hap was this? *happened*  
226 Whan he dyd walke with us in way *When; on the way*  
He prevyd by scripture ryght wel, iwys, *proved; indeed*  
That he was resyn from undyr clay.  
We trustyd hym not, but evyr seyde nay! *still denied it*  
230 Alas, for shame! Why seyde we so?  
He is resyn to lyve this day  
Out of his grave oure Lord is go! *gone*

**CLEOPHAS** Latt us here no lengere dwelle, *Let*  
But to oure bretheryn the wey we wende. *go*  
235 With talys trewe to them we telle *tales*  
That Cryst doth leve, oure mayster and frende. *live; master*

**LUCAS** I graunt therto with hert ful hende: *I agree; heart; amenable*  
Let us go walke forthe in oure way.  
I am ful joyfull in hert and mende *heart; mind*  
240 That oure Lord levyth that fyrst ded lay. *lives; lay dead*

**CLEOPHAS** Now, was it not goodly don *well done*  
Of Cryst Jhesu, oure mayster dere?  
He hath with us a large wey gon, *long way*  
And of his uprysyng he ded us lere. *resurrection; did teach us*  
245 Whan he walkyd with us in fere, *together*  
And we supposyd hym both deed and colde, *dead*  
That he was aresyn from undyr bere — *the grave*  
Be Holy Scripture, the trewth he tolde! *By*

**LUCAS** Ryght lovyngely don, forsothe, this was! *lovingly; truly*  
250 What myght oure mayster tyl us do more *to us*  
Than us to chere, that forth dede pas? *did continue on*

<sup>1</sup> Here Christ suddenly disappears from their sight

- And for his deth, we murnyd ful sore *mourned*  
 For love of hym, oure myrthe was lore. *lost*  
 We were, for hym, ryght hevy in herte, *before him; heart*  
 255 But now, oure myrth he doth restore,  
 For he is resyn bothe heyl and qwert! *healthy; whole*
- CLEOPHAS** That he is thus resyn, I have grett woundyr: *wonder*  
 An hevy ston ovyr hym ther lay.  
 How shulde he breke the ston asoundyr *asunder*  
 260 That was deed and colde in clay? *dead*  
 Every man, this mervayle may *marvel at this*  
 And drede that Lorde of mekyl myght, *great*  
 But yit of this, no man sey nay, *can deny*  
 For we have seyn hym with opyn syght. *seen him in plain view*
- LUCAS** That he doth leve, I woot wel this. *live; know*  
 266 He is aresyn with flesch and blood,  
 A levyng man, forsothe he is, *living; truly*  
 That rewly was rent upon a rood. *pitifully; torn; cross*  
 All heyl, dere brothyr, and chaunge youre mood, *Cheer up*  
 270 For Cryst doth levyn and hath his hele! *health*  
 We walkyd in wey with Cryst so good *on the way*  
 And spak with hym wurdys fele. *many words*
- CLEOPHAS** Evyn tyll Emawus, the grett castell,  
 From Jerusalem with hym we went —  
 275 Syxti furlonge, as we yow telle — *Sixty*  
 We went with hym, evyn passent. *steadily going*  
 He spak with us with good entent;  
 That Cryst shuld leve, he tolde tyll us *live; told us*  
 And provid it be Scripture, verament. *proved it by; truly*  
 280 Trust me trewe — it is ryght thus! *truly*
- LUCAS** Ya, and whan he had longe spokyn us tylle, *when; to us*  
 He wold from us agon his way. *have gone*  
 With strenght and myght we keptyn hym styлле. *from leaving*  
 And bred we tokyn hym to etyn, in fay. *gave; in faith*  
 285 He brak the loff as evyn on tway *broke; loaf; perfectly in half*  
 As ony sharpe knyff shuld kytt breed *any; cut bread*  
 Therby, we knew the trewth that day:  
 That Cryst ded leve and was not deed. *did live; dead*
- PETRUS** Now trewly, serys, I have grett woundyr *sirs; wonder*  
 290 Of these grete mervaylis that ye us telle. *marvels*  
 In brekyng of bred ful evyn asoundyr *asunder*  
 Oure mayster ye knew and Lord ryght well?  
 Ye sey Cryst levith that Jewys dyd qwelle? *lives; kill*

- 295 Tyll us glad tydyngys, this is serteyn! *To us*  
 And that oure mayster with yow so longe dede dwelle, *did*  
 It doth well preve that he levith ageyn.
- A, brother Thomas, we may be ryght glad  
 Of these gode novell that we now have. *good news*  
 The grace of oure Lorde God is over us all sprad! *spread*  
 300 Oure Lord is resyn, his servauntys to save!
- THOMAS** Be in pes, Petyr! Thu gynnyst to rave! *Be quiet*  
 Thy wurdys be wantowne and ryght unwyse! *reckless*  
 How shulde a deed man that deed lay in grave *dead*  
 With qwyk flesche and blood to lyve ageyn ryse? *living flesh*
- PETRUS** Yis, Thomas, dowte thee not oure maystyr is on lyve. *alive*  
 306 Record of Mawdelyn and of her systerys too? *Remember; two*  
 Cleophas and Lucas, the trewthe for to contryve, *discover*  
 Fro Jerusalem to Emaws with hym dede they go! *From; did*
- THOMAS** I may nevyr in hert trust that it is so. *in my heart*  
 310 He was ded on cros and colde put in pitt, *dead; the cross; a grave*  
 Kept with knyhtys foure — his grave sealyd also. *Guarded*  
 How shulde he levyn ageyn that so streyte was shitt? *tightly; shut*
- PETRUS** Whan Mawdeleyn dede tell us that Cryst was aresyn, *Magdalene did*  
 I ran to his grave, and Johan ran with me.  
 315 In trewth, ther we fownde he lay not in presyn! *confined*  
 Gon out of his grave and on lyve than was he! *alive then*  
 Therefore, dere brother Thomas, I wole rede thee: *would advise*  
 Stedfastly thu trust that Cryst is not deed.  
 Feythfully beleve a qwyk man that he be, *living*  
 320 Aresyn from his deth by myght of his Godhed.
- THOMAS** I may nevyr beleve these woundyr merveles *wonderful marvels*  
 Tyl that I have syght of every grett wounde  
 And putt in my fyngyr in place of the nayles.  
 I shal nevyr beleve it ellys for no man on growunde *on earth*  
 325 And tyl that myn hand, the sperys pytt hath fowunde *Unless; spear's hole*  
 Which dede cleve his hert and made hym sprede his blood! *heart; spill*  
 I shal nevyr beleve that he is qwyk and sownde, *alive; sound*  
 In trewth, whyl I knowe that he was dede on rood. *dead on the cross*
- PETRUS** Cryst be thi comforte and chawnge thi bad witt: *judgment*  
 330 For feyth but thu have, thi sowle is but lorn. *Unless you have faith, your soul is lost*  
 With stedfast beleve, God enforme thee yitt. *belief; teach; yet*  
 Of a meke mayde, as he was, for us born. *maiden*
- CHRISTUS** Pees be amonge yow! Beholde how I am torn! *Peace; wounded*  
 Take hede of myn handys, my dere brother Thomas.

- THOMAS** My God and my Lorde! Nyght and every morn  
 336 I aske mercy, Lorde, for my grett trespas! *sin*
- CHRISTUS** Beholde wele, Thomas, my woundys so wyde  
 Which I have sufferyd for all mankynde.  
 Put thin hool hand into my ryght syde, *your; whole*  
 340 And in myn hert blood, thin hand that thu wynde. *lifeblood; your; cover*  
 So feythffull a frend, were mayst thu fynde? *where*  
 Be stedfast in feyth, beleve wel in me;  
 Be thu not dowtefful of me in thi mynde, *doubtful*  
 But trust that I leve that deed was on a tre. *live; dead; tree (the cross)*
- THOMAS** My Lord and my God with syght do I se —  
 346 That thu art now quyk, which henge deed on rode. *alive, who hung dead; cross*  
 More feythful than I, ther may no man be,  
 For myn hand have I wasch in thi precyous blode. *washed; blood*
- CHRISTUS** For thu hast me seyn — therfor, thi feyth is good;  
 350 But blyssyd be tho of this that have no syght *seen*  
 And beleve in me. They, for here meke mood, *those who*  
 Shall com into hefne, my blysse that is so bryght. *their meekness*  
*heaven*
- THOMAS** As a ravaschyd man whos witt is all gon, *ravaged*  
 Grett mornynge I make for my dredfful dowte. *mourning*  
 355 Alas, I was dowteful that Cryst from undyr ston —  
 Be his owyn grett myght — no wyse myght gone owte. *By; in no way*  
 Alas, what mevyd me thus in my thought? *moved*  
 My dowtefful beleve ryght sore me avexit!  
 The trewthe do I knowe, that God so hath wrought: *belief; vexes me*  
 360 *Quod mortuus et sepultus nunc resurrexit.*<sup>1</sup>
- He that was bothe deed and colde put in grave  
 To lyve is aresyn by his owyn myght!  
 In his dere herte blood myn hand, wasch I have. *heart's blood; washed*  
 Where that the sperepoynt was peynfully pyght *spearpoint; placed*  
 365 I take me to feyth, forsakyng all unryght. *unrighteousness*  
 The dowte that I had ful sore me avexit, *vexes me*  
 For now have I seyn with ful opyn syght: *in plain view*  
*Quod mortuus et sepultus nunc resurrexit.*
- I trustyd no talys that were me tolde *tales*  
 370 Tyll that myn hand dede in his heart blood wade. *Until; did; heart's blood*  
 My dowte doth aprevyn Cryst levynge ful bolde, *prove; living*  
 And is a grett argument in feyth, us to glade! *faith; to gladden*  
 Thu man that seyst this, from feyth nevyr thu fade: *faith never fade*

<sup>1</sup> *He that was dead and buried is now risen* (see also lines 368, 376, and 384)

- My dowte shal evyr chere thee — that sore me avexit. *vexes me*  
 375 Trust wele in Cryst, that such meracle hath made: *who*  
*Quod mortuus et sepultus nunc resurrexit.*
- The prechyng of Petir myght not converte me  
 Tyll I felyd the wound that the spere dyde cleve. *Until; I felt; did cut*  
 I trustyd nevyr he levyd that deed was on a tre *lived; dead; tree*  
 380 Tyll that his herte blood dede renne in my sleve. *Until; heart's blood; run*  
 Thus be my grett dowte, oure feyth may we preve — *by; prove*  
 Behold my bloody hand, to feyth that me avexit; *vexes me*  
 Be syght of this myrroure from feyth not remeve: *By; remove*  
*Quod mortuus et sepultus nunc resurrexit.*
- 385 Thow that Mary Magdalyn in Cryst dede sone beleve, *Though; soon*  
 And I was longe doweftful; yit putt me in no blame. *doubtful*  
 For be my grett dowte, oure feyth may we preve *by; prove*  
 Agens all the eretykys that speke of Cryst shame. *heretics; Christ's*
- 390 Truste wel Jhesu Cryst, the Jewys kyllid the same;  
 The fende hath he feryd, oure feyth that evyr avexit. *devil; made fearful; vexes*  
 To hevyn yow brynge, and save yow all in same:  
 That *mortuus et sepultus iterum resurrexit.*<sup>1</sup>  
 Amen.

## 39. ASCENSION; SELECTION OF MATTHIAS

[*Hic incipit Ascencio Domini nostri cum Maria et undecim discipulis et duobus angelis  
 sedentibus in albis; et Jesus dicit discipulis suis et cetera:*<sup>2</sup>

- JHESUS** *Pax vobis!* Amonge yow, pes *Peace unto you; peace*  
 Bothe love and reste and charyté —  
 Amonge all vertues, lete it not ses, *cease*  
 For amonge all vertues prynspal his he. *it is the utmost*
- 5 Ye be to blame, I may wel preve, *prove*  
 For I wyl use to yow wordys pleyn —  
 That ye be so hard of herte to beleve *heart*  
 That from deth to lyve I am resyn ageyn. *life*  
 Notwithstondynge, as ye knowe, serteyn, *certain*
- 10 To yow eighte sythys aperyd have I, *times appeared*  
 Be soundry tymes, the trewth to seyn *By; to say*  
 And this is the ninte tyme, sothly, *ninth; truly*

<sup>1</sup> *He that was dead and buried is risen again*

<sup>2</sup> *Here begins the Ascension of our Lord with Maria and eleven disciples and two angels in albs seated; and Jesus says to his disciples, etc.*

- Evyn and no mo. *exactly; more*  
 But now, sum mete *food*  
 15 Anon doth gete, *Now get*  
 For I wyl etc  
 With yow and goo.
- My dyscyplis here what I sey, *hear*  
 And to my wourdys gevyth attencyon.  
 20 From Jerusalem loke ye go nott away,  
 But mekely abydyth my Fadyres promiscyon, *await; Father's promise*  
 Off whiche, be my mowth, ye have had informacyon *by*  
 Whyll bodyly with yow I was dwellynge. *While*  
 For Johan, sothly, for mannys salvacyon *John [the Baptist], truly; man's*  
 25 Onlye in watyr was me baptysynge,  
 But I yow behete *vow to you*  
 Withinne few days that ye  
 In the Holy Goost shul baptyzid be.  
 Therefore, rysyth up and folwyht me *follow*  
 30 Onto the Mownte of Olyvete.
- JACOBUS MAJOR** O Lord, vouchesaff us for to telle *agree to tell us*  
 If thou wylt now, withowte more delay,  
 Restoryn the kyngdam of Israell  
 And geve us the joye, Lord, that lestyth ay. *give; lasts forever*  
**JHESUS** Serys, the tymes and the monthis knowe ye ne may *Sirs; months; not*  
 36 Whiche my Fadyr hath put in his owyn power,  
 But ye shul take within short day  
 Of the Holy Goost the vertu cler, *sheer virtue*  
 Thorwe whiche shul ye  
 40 In Jerusalem and in Jury, *Jewry*  
 And moreovyr also in Samary, *Samaria*  
 And to the worldys ende uttyrly, *world's*  
 My wyttnes only be. *witness*
- 45 Lovyth no wrath nor no wronge,  
 But levyth in charyté with mylde stevyn. *speech*  
 With myrthe and melody and aungell songe, *angels'*  
 Now I stey streyte from yow to hevyn. *ascend straight*
- [Hic ascendit ab oculis eorum et in celo cantent et cetera].<sup>1</sup>*
- ANGELUS** Returnyth ageyn to youre loggynge, *lodging*  
 To Jerusalem, for he wyl thus  
 50 His promys mekely ther abydynge. *promise; awaiting*

<sup>1</sup> Here, he ascends from their sight, and in heaven they sing, etc.

- For dowteles, this forseyd Jhesus,  
 Whiche from yow is take  
 In a clowde, as ye hym seyn, —  
 Steyng up — so shal comyn ageyn!  
 55 Of al mankynde, this is serteyn,  
 Jugement shal he make.
- PETRUS** O ye bretheryn, attendyth to me  
 And takyth good hede what I shal seyn:  
 It behovyth the Scripture fulfyllyd to be  
 60 That of Davyd was seyde with wourdys pleyn,  
 Of Judas whiche was the gyde, serteyn,  
 Of hem that Cryst slow cruelly;  
 Which aftyr from deth ros up ageyn,  
 And hath abedyn in erthe ful days fourty.  
 65 And aftyr all this  
 Before oure eye  
 In a bryght skye,  
 He ded up stye  
 To hevyn blys.
- 70 This seyde Judas was amongys us  
 Nombryd apostyll and had lych dygnyté,  
 But whan he betrayd oure Lord Jhesus,  
 He hynge hymself upon a tre;  
 In whos sted muste nedys ordeyned be  
 75 Another, oure nombere for to restore,  
 On of tho whiche as well knowe we,  
 Han be conversaunt here longe before  
 In oure company —  
 Whiche shall wyttnes  
 80 Berun expresse  
 To more and lesse  
 Of Crystys resurrexion stedfastly.
- [Hic statuent duos Joseph Justum et Mathiam, et cetera.]*<sup>1</sup>
- O, sovereyn Lorde, whiche of every man  
 The hertys dost knowe most inwardly:  
 85 With all the lowlyness we may or kan,  
 To thee we prey ful benygne  
 That thu vowchesaff thorwe thi mercy,  
 Us — hym to shewe — whiche in this cas

*doubtless; aforesaid  
 taken  
 have seen him  
 Ascending  
 certain*

*say  
 said  
 guide  
 those who slew Christ  
 stayed on earth*

*did ascend  
 heaven's bliss*

*aforesaid; among  
 Called; the same office  
 when  
 hanged  
 stead; we must appoint*

*One; those  
 Has been with us*

*Bear expressly  
 (i.e., To everyone)  
 Christ's*

*hearts*

*obediently  
 deign through  
 Show us him*

<sup>1</sup> Here stand both Joseph Justum and Mathias, etc.



90      Thu lykyst to chesyn effectuously      *to choose truly*  
       To ocapye the lott of Judas plas.      *occupy; position of Judas' place*

*[Hic dabunt sortes et cadet super Mathiam, et cetera.]*<sup>1</sup>

      Now, gramercy, Lord!      *many thanks*  
       And to fulfyll  
       Thin holy wylle      *Your*  
       As it is skylle,      *right*  
 95      We all accorde.      *agree*

#### 40. PENTECOST

*[Modo de die Pentecostes. Apostoli dicant genuflectentes; Spiritus Sanctus descendat super eos, et cetera.]*<sup>2</sup>

**PETRUS**      Honowre,  
**ANDREAS**      wurchipp,  
**JACOBUS MAJOR**      and reverens,  
**JOHANNES**      Glorye,  
**PHILIPPUS**      grace,  
**JACOBUS MINOR**      and goodnes,  
**THOMAS**      Dygnité,  
**BARTHOLOMEUS**      vertu,  
**SYMON**      and excellence,  
**MATHEUS**      Bewté,  
**JUDAS**      blyssynge,  
**MATHEAS**      and bryghtnes  
 5    **PETRUS**      Be to that Lord heye wurthynes,  
**ANDREAS**      Whiche hath performyd that he us hyght,      *called us to*  
**JACOBUS MAJOR**      And us enbawmyd with suche swetnes,      *endued*  
**JOHANNES**      Whiche to dyscrye fer passyth oure myght.      *describe far*  
**PHILIPPUS**      This we all wel kenne!      *proclaim*  
 10    **JACOBUS MINOR**      Now, gracyous Lord Jhesu,  
**THOMAS**      Conferme us in thi vertu  
**BARTHOLOMEUS**      And graunt us grace, evyr it to sew.      *follow*  
**SYMON**      Sey we all togedyr, amen, amen.

*[Et omnes osculant terram.]*      *And all kiss the ground*

**JUDEUS 1**      Now, felawys, take hede! For be my trewthe,      *fellows; by; troth*  
 15      Yondyr syttyth a dronkyn felacheppe!      *drunken fellowship*

<sup>1</sup> Here they cast lots and it will fall on Matthias, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Now of the day of Pentecost. Genuflecting, the apostles speak; the Holy Spirit descends on them, etc.

<b>JUDEUS 2</b>	To don hem good, it were grett ruthe!	<i>To treat them well; pity</i>
<b>JUDEUS 3</b>	Ya, I prey God geve hem all shenscheppe!	<i>give them; disgrace</i>
<b>JUDEUS 1</b>	Muste in here brayn so slyly doth creppe	<i>New wine in their brains so slyly</i>
	That thei cheteryn and chateryn as they jays were!	<i>twitter; chatter</i>
<b>JUDEUS 2</b>	Ya, were they ony wel browth asclepe,	<i>falling asleep</i>
21	It wore almes to the revere hem to bere,	<i>would be charitable; river them</i>
	There hem to baptyze!	<i>them</i>
<b>JUDEUS 1</b>	That were as thynkyth me —	<i>I was thinking the same</i>
	A jentyll sport to se;	
25	A bettyr game to be	
	Cowde no man devyse!	
<b>PETRUS</b>	Serys, alas, what do ye mene?	<i>Sirs</i>
	Why scorne ye now thus Goddys grace?	<i>God's</i>
	It is nothyng as ye do wene —	<i>not what you think</i>
30	Ther is no drunke man in this place!	
	Wherefore, ryght grett is yowre trespase.	<i>fault</i>
	But, syrys, lyst what it doth sygnyfye:	<i>sirs, listen to</i>
	Fulfyllyd is now to mannys solace	<i>man's</i>
	Of Johel the pregaunt prophecy	<i>Joel; portentous</i>
35	In whiche that he,	
	That ye han seyn	<i>have seen</i>
	In wourdys pleyne	
	Declaryth serteyn.	<i>certainly</i>
	Now blyssyd God be!	
	Amen.	

## 41. ASSUMPTION OF MARY

[*Ad mea facta Pater assit Deus et sua mater.*<sup>1</sup>

<b>DOCTOR</b>	Ryht worchepful sovereynes, liketh yow to here	
	Of the Assumpcion of the glorious Moder Mary	
	That Seynt Jhon the Evangelist wrot and tauht as I lere	<i>read</i>
	In a book clepid Apocriphum, wythoutyn dyswary.	<i>called Apocrypha; doubt</i>
5	At fourteen yer sche conseved Cryste in hire matere clere,	<i>sinless state</i>
	And in the fiftene yer, sche chilyd, this avowe dar I,	<i>I dare declare</i>
	Here lyvyng with that swete sone thre and thretty yere.	<i>thirty-three years</i>
	And after his deth in erthe, twelve yer ded sche tary.	
	Now acounte me thise yeris wysely:	<i>skillfully count for me</i>
10	And I sey the age was of this maide Marye,	
	When sche assumpte above the ierearchye,	<i>ascended; angels</i>

<sup>1</sup> May God the Father and his mother be present to aid my work

- Thre score yer as Scripture dothe specyfye.  
*Legenda Sanctorum* autorysyth this trewely. years  
Saints' legends affirm
- 15 She was inhabith in Juré by the Mounte of Syon lived in Israel  
 After the Assencion of hir sone, conseyyed in spoused. wedlock  
 Alle the holy placys in erthe that Criste duellyd on, places on earth  
 Devouthly sche went hem, honouryng the Godhed. [to] them  
 Ferste, to the place there Criste cristenyd was clepid Flum Jordon:<sup>1</sup>
- 20 There, he fastyd and takyn was by malicious falshed; falsehood  
 There, he beryed was and roos victoryously alon; victoriously alone  
 There, he assendid alle hevenys, God in his manhed. manhood  
 Thus was sche occupyed, I rede, read  
 And meche she was in the temple preyand. much; praying  
 Now, blissid mot sche be, we owe to be seyand. ought
- 25 How sche was assumpte, here men schul be pleyand — taken to Heaven; playing  
 Preyng you of audience, now ses and tak hede! Asking; cease; take heed
- MILES** Pes now youre blaberyng in the develis name! Stop; blabbing; devil's  
 What lousy begchis mow ye not se! bitches may  
 Owre worthy prynsis, lo, are gaderid in same rulers; gathered together  
 30 That are statys of this lond, hye men of degré. lords; of rank  
 By there hye wisdom, they schal now attayne their; discern  
 How alle Juré beste governyd may be. Jewry  
 And of this pillid prechouris that oure lawis defame, tensured preachers  
 They schul ben slayn, as they say, or fayn for to fle! be slain; glad to flee  
 35 Wherefore in pes be ye, peace  
 And herkenyth onto hem, moste stille I. them, I must be quiet  
 For what boy bragge outh, hym spille I cries out; I'll kill  
 As knave wyth this craggyd knad, hym kyllle I! jagged club  
 Now herkenyth oure pryncis, alle kneland on kne! listen to; kneeling
- EPISCOPUS LEGIS** Now, ye prynsis, I, prest of the lawe, princes; priest  
 41 Of this demaunde responcyon, I aske here anon— a response; now  
 Ys there ony renogat among us, fer as ye knawe, any renegade; far  
 Or any that pervertyth the pepil wyth gay eloquens alon? people; skillful  
 Yif there be, we muste onto hem set awe, make them fear
- 45 For they feyne falsly oure feyth — hem preve I houre fon.  
 Sweche schul ben bounden up be the beltys til flyes hem blawe,  
 And gnaggyd up by the gomys tyl the devyl doth hem grone.<sup>2</sup>  
 We may not won refrain  
 To sweche harlotis settyn reddure rogues to deal harshly  
 50 That geynseyn oure lawe and oure scripture. gainsay

<sup>1</sup> First to the place where Christ was christened, called [the] River Jordan

<sup>2</sup> Lines 45–47: For they falsely represent our faith — I [will] prove them our foes. / Such shall be tied up until flies lay eggs in them, / And hung up by the gums until the devil makes them groan

	Now let sere pryncis in purpure In sayynge of oure lawys, now telle on!	<i>sir princes; purple speak</i>
<b>PRINCEPS 1</b>	Sere, syn we slew hym that clepid hym oure kyng And seyde he was Goddis sone, lord over all,	<i>since; who called himself God's</i>
55	Syn his deth, I herd of no maner rysyng, And, lo, yif he hadde levyd, he had mad us his thrall.	<i>Since; no such uprising lived; made; slaves</i>
<b>EPISCOPUS</b>	Therefore, oure wysdam was to schortyn his endyng: Whoso clyme over hie, he hath a foule fall.	<i>hasten his end climbs too high</i>
<b>PRINCEPS 2</b>	Ya, yit of on thing I warne yow at the gynnyng —	<i>one; beginning</i>
60	His dame is levyng, Mary that men call. Myche pepil halt hire wythall. Wherfore in peyne of repreffe Yif we suffre hyre thus to relefe, Oure lawys sche schal make to myscheffe	<i>mother; living attend upon her danger of reproof allow her; remain bring to ruin</i>
65	And meche schame don us, she schall!	<i>much; cause us</i>
<b>EPISCOPUS</b>	A, sere, ye ben bolde inow! Art thou ferd of a wenche? What trowyste that sche myht don us agayn?	<i>enough; afraid think you; against us</i>
<b>PRINCEPS 3</b>	Sere, there are other in the contré that clenche And prechyn he is levyng that we slewe, they seyn!	<i>insist preach that breed</i>
70	And yif they ben sufferyd thus, this will bredyn a stench, For thorow here fayre speche, oure lawys they steyn! And therefore, devyse we now upon this pleyn bench What is beste for to do, hem for to atteyn.	<i>through their; stain in full council to bring them to judgment</i>
74	We are but loste yif they reyn.	<i>hold sway</i>
<b>EPISCOPUS</b>	Why, let se, than. Sey me youre ententis.	<i>then; Tell me; intent</i>
<b>PRINCEPS 1</b>	Let us preson hem til here myht schent is!	<i>imprison them; ruined</i>
<b>PRINCEPS 2</b>	Bettyr is to slen hem wyth dentis!	<i>slay them with blows</i>
<b>PRINCEPS 3</b>	Nay, best is to hang hem wyth peyn!	<i>them; pain</i>
<b>EPISCOPUS</b>	Nay, seris, nowth so. Youre better ayve	<i>sirs, not; advice</i>
80	Have in syth before, what after may tide. Yif we slewe hem, it wolde cause the comownys to ryse, And rathere the devyl sle hym than we schulde that abide. <sup>1</sup> But be that seustere ded — Mary, that fise —	<i>Have in mind; may happen once; sister is dead; old fart burn; ashes</i>
85	We shal brenne her body and the aschis hide, And don her all the dispith we can here devise, And than sle tho disciplis that walkyn so wyde, And here bodyes devyde! Halde ye not this beste as is sayde?	<i>do [to] her; disgrace then slay those disciples their bodies cut up Think; should be</i>
<b>PRINCEPS 1</b>	Wyth youre wysdam, sere, we are wel payed.	<i>pleased</i>
<b>EPISCOPUS</b>	Than, ye knyhtis, I charge yow beth arayed!	<i>Then; knights; prepared</i>
91	And, ye turmentouris, redy that tyde!	<i>tormentors; now</i>

<sup>1</sup> And [I'd] rather [that] the devil slays them than we should have that happen

When Mary is ded,  
And but she deye the sunere, the devyl smyte of her hed! *sooner; off*

*[Hic est Maria in templo orans et dicens: Here is Mary in the temple praying and saying*

**MARIA** O hye Wysdam in youre dygne deyté! *noble deity*  
 95 Youre infynyth lovenesse mad oure salvacyon, *infinite humility made*  
 That it lyst you of me, sympilest, to take here humanité. *it pleased*  
 Wyth dew obeschauns I make you gratulacyon. *obedience; give thanks*  
 And glorious Lord and Sone, yif it like youre benygnyté, *it pleases*  
 Nouth to be displesid wyth my desideracyon — *Not; desire*  
 100 Me longith to youre presense, now conjunct to the Unité *joined*  
 Wyth all myn herte and my sowle, be natures excitacyon, *by; urging*  
 To youre domynacyon. *have faith*  
 For all creaturis in you don affye *by marriage*  
 And myche more owe I, youre moder be alye, *Since*  
 105 Syn ye wern born God and man of my bodye, *form given*  
 To desyre yowre presens, that were oure ferst formacyon.

**SAPIENTIA** My suete moderis preyere onto me doth assende. *sweet mother's*  
 Her holy herte and her love is only on me, *heart*  
 Wherfore, aungyl, to her thou schalt now dyssende, *angel; descend*  
 110 Seynge her sche shal comyn to myn eternyté. *[to] her*  
 Myn habundaunt mercy on her I extende, *abundant*  
 Resseyvyng her to joye, from worldly perplexité, *Receiving*  
 And in tokyn therof this palme now pretende, *proffer*  
 114 Seynge her sche fere no maner of divercyté. *adversity*

**ANGELUS 1** By youre myth I dissende to youre moder in virginité. *might; descend*  
**ANGELUS 2** For qwyche message injoyeth the hefnely consorcyté. *which; fellowship*

*[Hic descendet angelus, ludentibus citharis, et dicet Marie:]<sup>1</sup>*

**ANGELUS 1** Heyl, excellent prynces, Mary most pure! *princess*  
 Heyl, radyant sterre: the sunne is not so bryth! *star*  
 Heyl, Moder of Mercy and mayde most mure! *demure*  
 120 The blessing that God gaf Jacob upon you now is lyth! *gave; alighted*  
**MARIA** Now wolcom, bryth berde, Goddis aungel, I seuer! *bright bird; swear*  
 Ye ben messenger of Allmyhty — wolcom wyth my myhtis. *welcome; my strength*  
 I beseke you now, say me, upon youre hie nortur: *beseech; tell; courtesy*  
 124 What is the very name that to youre persone dith is? *assigned to you*

**ANGELUS 1** What nedith you, lady, my name ben desyrand? *Why; are desiring*  
**MARIA** A, yis, gracyows aungyl, I beseke you requyrand. *I entreat you as a suitor*

<sup>1</sup> Here an angel descends, with citharas playing, and says to Maria

<b>ANGELUS 1</b>	My name is gret and merveylous. Treuly you telland, The hye God, youre sone abidyth you in blis. The thrydde day hens, ye schul ben expirand	<i>telling</i> <i>third; be expiring</i>
130	And assende to the presence, there my God, youre sone, is.	
<b>MARIA</b>	Mercy and gromercy, God, now may I be seyand, Thankyng you, suete aungyl for this message, iwys!	<i>great mercy; saying</i> <i>sweet; indeed</i>
<b>ANGELUS 1</b>	In tokenyng whereof, lady, I am here presentand — A braunce of a palme owth of paradise com this.	<i>token; presenting</i> <i>branch; out</i>
135	Before youre bere, God biddith it be bore.	<i>bier; carried</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	Now, thanke be to that Lord of his mercy evermore!	
<b>ANGELUS 1</b>	Yowre meknesse, youre lounesse, and youre hie lore Is most acceptable in the Trynité syth. Youre sete ryall in hefne apparaled is thore.	<i>humility; learning</i> <i>Trinity's sight</i> <i>royal seat; prepared there</i>
140	Now dispose yow to deye, youre sone wyl, thus rith. <sup>1</sup>	
<b>MARIA</b>	I obbeye the commaundement of my God here before, But on thyng I beseke, that Lord of his myth: That my brether, the appostelis, myht me be before To se me, and I hem or I passe to that lyth.	<i>one; beseech; might</i> <i>brethren; might</i> <i>them before; light</i>
145	But they ben so deserverid, me thynkyth it nyl be.	<i>scattered; will not</i>
<b>ANGELUS 1</b>	A, yis, lady, impossible to God nothyng, trowe ye.	<i>yes; you think</i>
	For he that sent Abbacuc with mete to Babylonye from Juré, <sup>2</sup> Into the lake of lyonys to Danyel, the prophete Be an her of his hed, lo, so myhty was he!	<i>den of lions</i> <i>By a hair</i>
150	Be the same myht God make may the appostolis here mete!	<i>might; meet</i>
	And, therefore, abasche you not, lady, in yowre holy mende.	<i>distress; mind</i>
<b>MARIA</b>	No more I do, glorious aungyl in kynde.	<i>by nature</i>
	Also I beseke my son I se not the fende, What tyme outh of this word, I schal passe hens,	<i>beseech; see; fiend</i> <i>Until; world</i>
155	His horrible lok wold fere me so hende; Ther is nothyng I dowte but his dredfull presens.	<i>look; frighten; greatly</i> <i>fear</i>
<b>ANGELUS 1</b>	What nedith it to fere you, empres so hende, Syn be the fruth of youre body was convycte his vyolens? <sup>3</sup> That horrible serpent dar not nyhyn youre kende.	<i>frighten; gracious</i> <i>approach your nature</i>
160	And yowre blosme schal make hym recistens That he schal not pretende.	<i>child (Jesus); opposition</i> <i>attempt it</i>

<sup>1</sup> Now prepare to die, [it is] your son's will, indeed

<sup>2</sup> For he that sent Habbakuk with food to Babylon from Jewry

<sup>3</sup> Since by the fruit of your body was overcome his (Lucifer's) violence

Desyre ye outh ellys now rythis? *anything else right now*  
**MARIA** Nouth but blessyd be my God in his myhtys. *to be blessed by*  
**ANGELUS** To yow I recomaunde me than, moste excellent in sithis,<sup>1</sup>  
 165 And wyth this, ageyn, to God I assende.

*[Hic ascendit angelus.]*

*Here the angel ascends*

**MARIA** Now, Lord, thy swete holy name, wyth lounesse I blysse *humility; bless*  
 Of qwyche hefine and erthe eche tyme pshalmodyeth<sup>2</sup>  
 That it lykyth youre mercy, me to you to wysse *to guide*  
 My sympil sowle in serteyn, youre name magnifyeth. *particular*  
 170 Now, holy maydenys, the servauntis of God, as I gysse: *maidens; think*  
 I schal passe from this world as the aungyl sertefyeth. *angel confirms*  
 Therfore to my sympil habitacyon, I telle you now this,  
 I purpose me to go, besekyng yow replyeth *beseeking your reply*

And assedually wachith me be dayes and nythis.<sup>3</sup>

**VIRGO 1** We schal, gracyous lady, wyth alle oure mythis. *might*  
 176 Schal ye from us passe, swete sonne of socoure, *sun of succor*  
 That are oure sengler solas, radyant in youre lythis, *singular; light*  
 Youre peynful absence schal make me doloure. *give me agony*  
**VIRGO 2** Moste excellent princes in all vertu that dith is: *princess; fixed*  
 180 Alle hefine and erthe, lady, you doth honoure. *heaven; honor*  
 We schal wachyn and wake as oure dewe and ryth is *watch; due; right*  
 Into the tyme ye passe to that hye toure. *high tower (heaven)*  
 Wyth . . .  
**MARIA** God thanke you, and so do I.  
 185 Now I wyl dispose me to this jurné redy. *journey prepare*  
 So wolde God, my brether were here me by *brethren*  
 To bere my body that bare Jhesu, oure Savyoure. *bore*

*[Hic subito apparet Sanctus Iohannes Evangelista ante portam Marie.]*<sup>4</sup>

**JOHANNES** A, myrable God, mech is thy myth! *wonderful; much; might*  
 Many wonderis thou werkyst, even as thi wyll is!  
 190 In Pheso I was prechyng, a fer contré ryth, *Ephesus; far*  
 And by a whyte clowde, I was rapt to these hyllys. *brought; hills*  
 Here dwellyth Cristis moder, I se wel in syth. *Christ's mother; sight*  
 Sum merveyulous message is comyn that mayde tyll. *unto that maiden*

<sup>1</sup> To you I commend myself then, most excellent in sight

<sup>2</sup> Of which the heavens and earth continually celebrate in song

<sup>3</sup> And assiduously watch me by day and night

<sup>4</sup> Here St. John the Evangelist suddenly appears before Maria's door

195 I wyl go saluse that berde that in vertu is moste brith, *salute; woman; bright*  
 And of my sodeyn comyng, wete what is the skele. *know; reason*

*[Hic pulsabit super portam, intrante domum Marie sibi dicente:]<sup>1</sup>*

Heyl, Moder Mary, mayden perpetuall! *mother*

**MARIA** A, wolcome, mayde Johan, wyth all myn herte in specyall! *chaste John*  
 For joye of youre presence, myn herte gynnyth sweme. *begins to swoon*  
 Thynke ye not, Johan, how my child eternall  
 200 When he hynged on cros, sayd us this tyme: *hung; these words*  
 “Lo, here thy sone, woman.” So bad he me you call, *he told me to call you*  
 And you, me, “Mother,” eche othir to queme. *you [to call] me; gratify*  
 He betok you the governayl there of my body terestyall,  
 On mayde to another, as convenyens wold seme.<sup>2</sup>

205 And now, that gracyows Lord hath sent me yow, sone. *quickly*

**JOHANNES** Now, good fayr lady, what is ther to done? *to do*  
 Tellyth the cause why I am heder sent. *here*

**MARIA** Swete sone Johan, so wyll I anone. *son; soon*  
 Oure Lord God sent to me an aungyl that glent *gleamed*  
 210 And sayde I schulde pass hens where thre were in one. *three*  
 Tho, I askyd the aungyl to have you present. *Then*

**JOHANNES** A, holy moder, schul ye from us gone?  
 My brether, of this tydyngis sore, wyl repent *brethren; sad news; sorry*  
 That ye shuld ben absent!

215 Ever trybulacyon, Lord, meche thu us sendyst: *much*  
 Thou, oure mayster and oure comfort, from us ascendist *ascended*  
 And now oure joye, thy moder, to take thou pretendist. *intend*  
 Thanne, all oure comfort is from us detent! *taken*

But what seyde the aungyl, moder, onto you more? *the angel, mother*

**MARIA** He brouth me this palme from my sone thore, *brought; there*  
 221 Qwyche I beseke as the ayngyl me bad *asked for; bade me*  
 That afor my bere, by you it be bore, *before my bier; carried*  
 Saynge my dirige, devouthly and sad, *dirge*

224 For, Johan, I have herde the Jewys meche of me spelle. *talk much*

**JOHANNES** A, good lady, what likyth it you to telle?

<sup>1</sup> Here he will knock on the door, entering Maria's house and saying to her

<sup>2</sup> Lines 203–04: *He entrusted [to] you the keeping there of my terrestrial body, / One maid to another, as would be appropriate*



**MARIA** Secretly, they ordeyne in here conseytis felle *plan in their wicked minds*  
 When my sowle is paste, where Godis liste is, *past; God's joy*  
 To brenne my body and schamly it quelle! *burn; shamefully destroy*  
 For Jhesu was of me born that they slew with here fistis, *their hands*  
 230 And therfore, I beseke you, Johan, both flech and felle, *skin*  
 Helpe I be beryed, for yn yow my tryst is. *me [to] be buried; trust*  
**JOHANNES** Fere yow not, lady, for I schal wyth you duelle. *stay*  
 Wolde God, my brether were here now and wist this. *brethren; knew*

*[Hic subito omnes apostoli congregentur ante portam, mirantes.]*<sup>1</sup>

**PETRUS** A, holy brether! Wyth grace be ye met here now!  
 235 Lord God, what menyth this sodeyne congregacyon? *sudden gathering*  
 Now, swete brother Powle, wyl ye take this upon yow?  
 Preye to God for us all, we may have relacyon. *an explanation*  
**PAULUS** Good brother Peter, how schuld I here pray now  
 That am lest and most unworthy of this congregacyon? *the least*  
 240 I am not worthy to ben clepyd apostle, sothly I say yow, *called*  
 For as a woodman ageyn Holy Cherche I mad persecucyon. *madman; made*

But, nevertheless, I am by the grace of God in that that I am lo. *lowly*  
**PETRUS** A, gret is youre lowness, Powle, brother evermo. *humility*

**PAULUS** The keyes of hevene, Peter, God hath you betake. *entrusted to you*  
 245 And also ye ben peler of lith and prynce of us all! *pillar of light; ruler*  
 It is most sitting to you this preyere to make, *fitting*  
 And I, unworthy, wyth yow preyen here schall.

**PETRUS** I take this upon me, Poule, for youre sake.  
 Now, Almyhty God that sittiste above cherubyn halle,  
 250 In sygne of thyn Holy Cros, oure handis we make,  
 Besekyng thy mercy may upon us falle, *Beseeching*

And why we ben thus met, yif it lyke us lare. *are; please us [to] learn*  
**JOHANNES** A, holy brether, alle welcom ye are! *brethren*

Why ye be met here I schal you declare:  
 255 For Mary, Goddys moder, by message is sent *God's mother*  
 That from this wrechid world to blysse sche schal fare, *go*  
 And at her deying, sche desyryth to have us present. *dying*  
**PETRUS** A, brother Johan, we may syhyn and care — *sigh and mourn*  
 Yif it displese not God — for these tydyngis ment. *intended news*  
**PAULUS** Forsothe, so we may, Peter, hevyin evermare *grieve evermore*  
 261 That oure moder and oure comfort schuld be us absent,

<sup>1</sup> Here suddenly all of the apostles will meet before the door, marveling

- But nevertheles, the wyl of God fulfyllid mot be. *must be*
- JOHANNES** That is wel seyde, Poule, but herof bewar ye.  
 That non of you for her deth schewe hevy speche, *mournful*  
 265 For anon to the Jewys, it schuld than notyd be *immediately*  
 That we were ferd of deth, and that is ageyn that we teche. *afraid; against what*  
 For we seyn all tho belevyn in the hol Trynyté, *[to] all those [who]; whole*  
 They schul ever leve and nouth deye — this truly we preche. *live; not die*  
 And yif we make hevynesse for her, than wyl it seyde be: *laments*  
 270 “Lo, yone prechouris, to deye, they fere hem ful meche!”<sup>1</sup>
- And, therefore, in God, now beth glad everychon! *everyone*
- PETRUS** We schal don as ye sey us, holy brother Johan. *tell us*  
 Now we beseke you, let us se oure moder Marie.
- JOHANNES** Now, in Goddys name, to her, than, all let us gon. *then*  
 275 Sche wyl ben ful glad to se this holy companye.
- PETRUS** Heyl, moder and maydyn! So was never non, *anyone*  
 But only ye, most blissid, treulye! *blessed, truly*
- PAULUS** Heyl, incomparabil quen, Goddis holy tron! *queen, God's; throne*  
 Of you spreng salvacyon and all oure glorie! *sprang*
- 280 Heyl, mene for mankynde and mendere of mys! *mediator; mender of sin*
- MARIA** A, wyth all myn hol herte, brether, ye are wolcom, iwys! *indeed*  
 I beseke you now to telle me of youre sodeyne metyng. *sudden meeting*
- PETRUS** In dyveris contreys we prechid of youre sone and his blis.  
 Diveris clowdys eche of us was sodeynely curyng;  
 285 We in on were brouth before youre gate here, iwys!<sup>2</sup>  
 The cause why, no man cowde telle of oure comyng. *could*
- MARIA** Now I thanke God of his mercy! An hy merakle is this! *great miracle*  
 Now I wyl telle yow the cause of my sonys werkyng: *son's work*
- 289 I desyrid his bodily presence to se.
- JOHANNES** No wonder, lady, thow so dede ye. *that you did so*
- MARIA** Tho my sone Jhesu, of his hye peté, *Then; pity*  
 Sent to me an aungyl, and thus he sayd *angel*  
 That the thredde nyth I schuld assende to my sone in Deité. *third night*  
 Thanne to have youre presence, brether, hertly I prayed,  
 295 And thus, at my request, God hath you sent me.
- PETRUS** Wys, gracious lady — we are ryth wel payed. *Wise; pleased*

<sup>1</sup> Lo, those preachers, they themselves fear death very much

<sup>2</sup> Lines 382–85: *In various countries, we preached of your Son and his bliss. / Various clouds each of us was suddenly covering; / We as one were brought before your doorway here, indeed*

**MARIA** Blissid brethere, I beseke you, than, tent me. *then, attend to me*  
 Now wyl I rest me in this bed that for me is rayed. *prepared*

299 Wachith me besily wyth youre laumpys and lithtis.<sup>1</sup>

**PAULUS** We schal, lady. Redy all thyng for you dith is. *Prepared*

**MARIA** Now, sone schul ye se what Godis myth is. *soon shall; God's might*  
 My flech gynnyth feble be nature. *grows weak by*

*[Hic erit decenter ornatus in lecto. Here she shall be appropriately adorned in a bed*

**PETRUS** Brether, eche of you a candele takyth now rithis, *Brethren; right now*  
 And lith hem in haste whil oure moder doth dure. *light them; still lives*  
 305 And bisyli let us wachyn in this vergyne sythis *intently; virgin's sight*  
 That when oure Lord comyth in his spoused pure, *spiritual wedlock*  
 He may fynde us wakyng and redy wyth oure lithtis, *lights*  
 For we knowe not the hour of his comyng now sure.

And yn clenness alle, loke ye be redy. *purity*

**MARIA** A, swete Sone, Jhesu, now mercy I cry!  
 311 Over alle synful, thy mercy let sprede! *sinful [people]*

*[Hic dissendet Dominus cum omni celesti curia et dicet:]<sup>2</sup>*

**DOMINUS** The voys of my moder me nyhith ful ny. *draws closer*  
 I am dyssend onto her of whom I dede sede. *descend; was born*

*[Hic cantabunt organa. Here the organs will play*

**MARIA** A, wolcom, gracyous Lord! Jhesu, Sone, and God of Mercy!  
 315 An aungyl wold a suffysed me, hye Kyng at this nede. *would have; need*

**DOMINUS** In propure person, moder, I wyl ben here redy *In my own person*  
 Wyth the hefnely quer, yowre dirige to rede: *choir; dirge; direct*

*Veni tu electa mea et ponam in te thronum meum*  
*Quia concupivit rex speciem tuam.<sup>3</sup>*

**MARIA** *Paratum cor meum Deus, paratum cor meum,*  
 321 *Canabo et psalmum dicam Domino.<sup>4</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Watch me intently with your lamps and lights

<sup>2</sup> Here the Lord descends with the whole heavenly court and says

<sup>3</sup> Lines 318–19: Come, my chosen one, and I will set you upon my throne / Because the king has desired your beauty

<sup>4</sup> Lines 320–21: My heart is ready, Lord, my heart is ready, / I will sing and recite a psalm to the Lord

**APOSTOLI** *Hec est que nesciuit thorum in delictis,  
Habebit requiem in respectu animarum sanctarum.*<sup>1</sup>

**MARIA** *Beatam me dicent omnes generationes,  
325 Quia fecit michi magna qui potens est, et sanctum nomen eius.*<sup>2</sup>

**DOMINUS** *Veni de Libano, sponsa mea; veni coronaberis.*<sup>3</sup>  
**MARIA** *Ecce venio quia in capite libri scriptum est de me,  
Ut facerem voluntatem tuam Deus meus,  
Quia exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.*<sup>4</sup>

*[Hic exiet anima Marie de corpore in sinum Dei.]*<sup>5</sup>

**DOMINUS** Now com, my swete soule in clenness most pure  
331 And reste in my bosom brithtest of ble. *appearance*  
Alle ye myn apostelis, of this body takyth cure. *care*  
In the Vallé of Josephat, there fynde schul ye  
A grave new mad for Maryes sepulture. *newly made; Mary's sepulcher*  
335 There, beryeth the body wyth all youre solempnité *solemnity*  
And bydyth me there styлле thre dayes seuere, *await me there; assured*  
And I schal pere ageyn to yow to comfort your advercyté. *appear again*

Wyth this swete soule, now from you I assende.

**PETRUS** In oure tribulacyouns, Lord, thou us defende. *protect*  
340 We have no comfort on erthe but of thee alon.  
O, swete soule of Mary, prey thy sone us defende. *pray*  
Have mynde of thy pore brether when thou comyst to thi tron.

**CHORUS MARTYRUM** *Que est ista que ascendit de deserto,  
Deliciis affluens, innixa super dilectum suum?*<sup>6</sup>

**ORDO ANGELORUM** *Ista est speciosa inter filias Jerusalem sicut vidistis eam,  
346 Plenam caritate et dilectione; sicque in celum gaudens suscipitur,  
Et a dextris Filii in trono glorie collocatur.*<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lines 322–23: *This is she who knew no bed in sin; / She will have rest in the visitation of holy souls*

<sup>2</sup> Lines 324–25: *All generations will call me blessed / Because he that is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name*

<sup>3</sup> *Come, my bride of Lebanon; come that you may be crowned*

<sup>4</sup> Lines 327–29: *Behold I come, as it is written in the scroll of the book regarding me, / So that I might do your will, my God, / For my spirit rejoices in God my Savior*

<sup>5</sup> *Here Maria's soul departs from her body into the lap of God*

<sup>6</sup> Lines 343–44: *Who is this who comes up from the wilderness, / Flowing with delights, leaning on her beloved*

<sup>7</sup> Lines 345–47: *She is beautiful among the daughters of Jerusalem as you have seen her, / Full of charity and love and thus, to be assumed into heaven in joy, / To be set on her throne in glory at the right hand of the Son*

[*Hic cantabit omnis celestis curia.*

*Here all of the heavenly court sings*

**PRIMA VIRGO** Now, suster, I beseke you, let us do oure attendaunce *sister; beseech*  
 And wasche this gloryous body that here in oure sith is, *wash; sight*  
 350 As is the use among us wythoutyn ony varyaunce. *custom; any*  
 Now, blessid be this persone that bar God of Mythis. *bore*  
**VIRGO 2** I am redy, suster, wyth all myn hol affyaunce, *sister; faith*  
 To wesche and worschepe this body so brith is. *wash; bright*  
 All creatyurs therto owyn dew obeschaunce, *owe due obeisance*  
 355 For this body resseyved the Holy Gostis flitthis. *received; Holy Ghost's flights*

[*Et osculabunt corpus Marie.*

*And they kiss Mary's body*

**JOHANNES** Now, holy brother, Peter, I hertely you pray *heartily ask*  
 To bere this holy palme before this gloryous body,  
 For ye ben prince of apostelis and hed of oure fay. *chief; faith*  
 Therfore it semyth you best to do this offis, treuly. *truly*  
**PETRUS** Sere, and ye slept on Cristis brest, seyng all celestly —  
 361 Ye are Goddis clene mayde, wythoutyn ony nay.<sup>1</sup>  
 This observaunce is most like you to do dewly. *accordingly*  
 Wherefore tak it upon you, brother, we pray, *ask*

And I schal helpe for to bere the bere.

*bear the bier*

**PAULUS** And I, Peter, wyth oure brether in fere, *with us*  
 366 This blessid body schal helpe to the ground.  
 This holy cors now take we up here, *corpse*  
 Seyng oure observaunce wyth devouth sound. *Speaking*

[*Hic portabunt corpus versus sepulturam cum eorum luminibus.*<sup>2</sup>

**PETRUS** *Exiit Israel de Egipto, domus Iacob de populo barbaro. Alleluia.*<sup>3</sup>

**APOSTOLI** *Facta est Iudea sactificacio eius, Israel potestas eius. Alleluia.*<sup>4</sup>

[*Hic angeli dulciter cantabunt in celo, "Alleluia."*<sup>5</sup>

**EPISCOPUS** Herke, sere princys! What noyse is all this? *sound*  
 372 The erthe and the eyer is ful of melodye! *earth; air*

<sup>1</sup> Lines 360–61: *Sir, because you slept on Christ's breast, seeing all heavenly [sights] — / You are God's pure virgin without a doubt*

<sup>2</sup> *Here they will carry the body to the sepulcher with their lights*

<sup>3</sup> *Israel went out of Egypt and the house of Jacob from among a barbarous people. Alleluia*

<sup>4</sup> *Judea became his sanctuary, Israel his dominion. Alleluia*

<sup>5</sup> *Here the angels sweetly sing in Heaven, "Alleluia."*

- I herde never er swyche a nowse now, iwys!  
 Con ye outh say what they signefye?  
**PRINCEPS 1** I, not be my God that of myht mech is,  
 376 Whatsumever they be — hougely they crye!  
 I am aferd there wyll be sumthyng amys.  
 It is good, prevely among us, we spye  
 Wythowte.  
**PRINCEPS 2** Now I have levyd this thre skore yer,  
 381 But sweche another noyse herd I never er!  
 Myn herte gynnyth ogyl and quake for fer!  
 There is sum newe sorwe sprongyn, I dowte.
- before such; indeed  
 Can you tell  
 much might  
 Whatever; loudly  
 amiss  
 secretly  
 Out there  
 threescore years  
 before  
 begins to shutter; fear  
 sorrow growing, I fear*
- PRINCEPS 3** Ya, that there is sothly, I say yow.  
 385 The prophetis moder, Mary, is ded.  
 The disciplis her beryn in gret aray now,  
 And makyn alle this merthe in spyth of oure hed.  
**EPISCOPUS** Fy on yon lousy doggys! They were better nay!  
 Outh! Harrow! The devyl is in myn hed!  
 390 Ye dodemusyd prynces, faste yow aray,  
 Or I make avow to Mahound — youre bodyes schul blede!  
 Now, that queene is ded.  
 Ye coward knyts in plate  
 And ye tormentours, thryfe schul ye late!  
 395 Faste, harlotys! Go youre gate,  
 And brynge me that bychyd body, I red!
- truthfully; to you  
 prophet's mother  
 bear in great ceremony  
 to spite our dignity  
 dogs; to stop  
 stupid; do something  
 swear; Mohammed; shall  
 whore  
 knights; armor  
 your time is up  
 Quicky, scoundrels; Go your way  
 vile; I tell you*
- PRINCEPS 1** Dowte you not, sere bischop, in peyne of repref,  
 We schal don schame to that body and to tho prechours.  
**PRINCEPS 2** Sere, I schal geyne tho glabereris or gramly hem gref!  
 400 Tho teynt tretouris schul tene yif my loke on hem louris.<sup>1</sup>  
**PRINCEPS 3** To hurle wyth tho harlotys, me is ful lef.  
 I schal snarle tho sneveleris wyth rith scharp schowris.<sup>2</sup>  
**EPISCOPUS** Hens than, a devylis name, and take me that thef!  
 And brynge me that bygyd body, evyn tofore these touris!<sup>3</sup>  
 405 And here disciplis, ye slo!  
 Hye you hens, harlotys, atonys!  
 The devyl boyes mot breke youre bonys!  
 Go, stent me yone body wyth youre stonys!  
 Outh! Harrow! Al wod now I go!
- sir; disgrace  
 those  
 their; slay  
 Go; scoundrels, at once  
 devil's boys may; bones  
 stop; stones  
 Out; crazed*

<sup>1</sup> Lines 399–400: *Sir, I will get those blabbers or grievously harm them! / Those tainted traitors will suffer if my scowl falls upon them*

<sup>2</sup> Lines 401–02: *To attack those scoundrels I am full glad. / I will entrap those snivelers with very sharp blows*

<sup>3</sup> Lines 403–04: *[Go] hence then, in a devil's name, and bring me that scoundrel! / And bring me that vile body, even before these towers*

*[Hic descendunt principes cum suis ministris ut feroci percucientes petras cum eorum capitibus.]*<sup>1</sup>

- PRINCEPS 2** What, devyl! Where is this mené?  
 411 I here here noyse, but I se ryth nouth! *company*  
 Allas! I have clene lost my posté! *hear their; see nothing*  
 I am ful wo! Mad is my thowth! *strength*  
**PRINCEPS 3** I am so ferd, I wold feyn fle! *full of woe; thought*  
 415 The devil hym spede, hedyr me brouth! *afraid; gladly flee*  
 I renne! I rappe — so wo is me *take him who brought me here*  
 Wyndand wod — wo hath me wrouth! *run; rush about*  
 To deye I ne routh. *Raving madness; caught me up*  
**PRINCEPS 1** A, cowardis! Upon you, now fy! *I don't care if I die*  
 420 Are ye ferd of a ded body? *afraid*  
 I schal sterte therto manly! *go there, boldly*  
 Alle that company, fere I ryth nouth! *I fear not at all*

*[Hic saltat insanus ad feretrum Marie et pendet per manus.]*<sup>2</sup>

- Allas, my body is ful of peyne! *pain*  
 I am fastened sore to this bere! *bier*  
 425 Myn handys are ser, bothe tweyne *withered, both of them*  
 O, Peter, now prey thy God for me here!  
 In Cayfas halle, when thou were seyne, *Caiphas'; seen*  
 And of thee, Peter, a mayde acusid there — *accused*  
 I halpe thee tho! Now helpe me ageyne! *then; in return*  
 430 That I were hol, outh of this fere! *whole; fearful condition*  
 Sum medycyn me lere! *Teach me some*  
**PETRUS** I may not tend to thee, sere, at this hour, *sir*  
 For ocupacyon of this body of honour, *honorable body*  
 But nevertheles, beleve in Jhesu Criste, oure Saveyour,  
 435 And that this was his moder that we bere on bere. *bear on this bier*  
**PRINCEPS 1** I beleve in Jhesu, mannys salvacyon! *man's*  
**PETRUS** In Goddis name, go doun than, and this body honure. *then*  
**PRINCEPS 1** Now, mercy God, and gromercy of this savacyon! *great mercy*  
 In Jhesu and his moder to beleve, ever I seuere. *promise*  
**PETRUS** Than take yone holy palme and go to thi nacyon *Then; people*  
 441 And bid hem beleve in God yif they wyl be pure, *them*  
 And towche hem ther wyth both hed, hand, and facyon. *them; face*  
 And of her sekenesse, they schal have cure, *their*  
 And ellis in here peynys indure. *whatever else their*

<sup>1</sup> Here the rulers with their attendants descend like wild beasts dashing their heads against rocks

<sup>2</sup> Here the madman leaps to Maria's bier and hangs there by his hands

**PRINCEPS 1** Gromercy, holy fader Peter! *Many thanks; father*  
 446 I schal do as ye me teche her, *teach me here*  
 Thankyng God ever in my speche her *here*  
 Wyth hye repentaunce and herte most mure. *humble*

*[Hic portabunt feretrum ad locum sepulture. Here they carry the bier to the sepulcher]*

**PETRUS** Now, holy brether, this body let us take, *brethren*  
 450 And wyth alle the worschepe we may ley it in the grave,  
 Kyssyng it alle atonys for her sonys sake. *at once; son's*  
 Now, insence ye, and we schal put her in this cave. *burn incense*

*[Hic ponent corpus in sepulcrum, insensantes, et cantantes.<sup>1</sup>]*

**JOHANNES** *De terra plasmasti me et carne induisti me;*  
*Redemptor meus, Domine, resuscita me in novissimo die.<sup>2</sup>*

455 Now, God, blysse this body, and we oure synge make. *sign [of the cross] make*

*[Hic, unanimiter, benedicent corpus in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti.<sup>3</sup>]*

The fruth that it bar, oure soules schal save. *bore*  
 Now reste we us, brether, upon this pleyn lake *open grave*  
 Tyl from oure God and oure Lord tydyngis we have,  
 Here must we belave. *believe*

**PAULUS** So muste we, Johan, as ye say,  
 461 Thanne byde we here and pray,  
 Besekyng hym of comfort that best may,  
 Restyng here abowtyn this grave.

*[Hic vadit Princeps ad Judeos cum palma.<sup>4</sup>]*

**PRINCEPS 1** Ye Jewys that langour in this gret infyrmyté, *languish*  
 465 Belevyth in Crist Jhesu, and ye schal have helthe!  
 Throw vertu of this holy palme that com fro the Trinyté  
 Yowur sekenesse schal aswage and restore yow to welthe.<sup>5</sup>

**PRINCEPS 2** I beleve in Crist Jhesu, Goddis Sone in unyté, *God's*  
 And forsake my maumentryes, fals in here felthe. *idols; their filth*

<sup>1</sup> Here they put the body in the sepulcher, incensing it, and singing

<sup>2</sup> Lines 453–54: From the earth you formed me, and out of flesh you clothed me. / My redeemer, O Lord, raise me up in the last day

<sup>3</sup> Here, as one, they will bless the body in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost

<sup>4</sup> Here the ruler will go to the Jews with the palm

<sup>5</sup> Lines 466–67: By virtue of this holy palm that came from the Trinity / Your sickness will [be] assuage[d] and restore[d] [will] you [be] to health



[*Hic tangat credentes cum palma et sanati sunt.*<sup>1</sup>

470 A, I thanke thee, gracyous Lord, and thy moder of peté! *mother of pity*

Now are we hol of oure seknesse and of oure foul belthe. *evil*

**PRINCEPS 3** What, harlotys? Forsake oure lawe? *scoundrels*

**PRINCEPS 2** So hald I best thee do! *think*

**PRINCEPS 3** Hens fro me in the develis name ye go! *devil's*

475 I deye! Outh! Outh! Harro! *die*

The wylde develys mot me to drawe! *are tearing me apart*

**DEMON 1** Herke, Belsabub and Belyal, Sere Sathan in the herne: *Harken; pit*

Us fettyn oure servauntis to this preson! *Let us fetch*

Blow flamys of fer to make hem to brenne! *them burn*

480 Mak redy ageyn! We com to this, demon! *those scoundrels; run*

**DEMON 2** Faste for tho harlotis, now let us renne *pit; down deep*

To caste hem in this pet here that depe is adon! *burn; boil; freeze*

They schul brenne and boyle and chille in oure denne! *devil's; may*

Go we now, a develys name as faste as we mon!

485 Harrow! Harrow! We com to town! *scoundrels; quickly*

**DEMON 1** Drag we these harlotis in hye *pit*

Into the pet of helle for to lye! *Go*

**DEMON 2** Gowe now, helle houndis, ye crye! *Sir; hear; sound*

Sere Sathan may heryn oure son.

**DOMINUS** Now, aungyl and alle this court celestyall, *angel*

491 Into herthe now descendityh wyth me *earth; descend*

To reyse the body of my moder terestyall *raise; terrestrial mother*

And bryng we it to the blysse of my deyté.

Assent ye here to, now, the Unyté?

**ANGELI** Ya, for yowre hye mercy, Lord, al hefne makyth melodé!

[*Hic descendit et venit ad apostolos, dicens:*<sup>2</sup>

**DOMINUS** Pes be to yow alle, my postelis so dere! *Peace; apostles*

497 Lo, me here, yowre Lord, and youre God, now ryhtis. *right now*

**PETRUS** A, wolcom, Criste, oure comfort, in thy manhed clere! *manhood pure*

Gret, merveylous God, mekyl now thy myth is! *Great; great; might*

**DOMINUS** What worschepe and grace semyth you now here *does it seem to you*

501 That I do to this body, Mary, that hyth is? *that is called*

**JOHANNES** Lord, as thou rese from deth and regnyst in thyn empere,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Here he touches the believers with the palm, and they are healed

<sup>2</sup> Here he will descend and come to the apostles, saying

<sup>3</sup> Lord, as you rose from death and now reign in your empire

So reyse thou this body to thy blysse that lyth is: *raise; joyful*  
 Us semyth this ryth is. *This seems right to us*  
**MYCHAEL** Ya, glorious God, lo, the sowle here prest now *ready*  
 506 To this blissid body, likyth it you to fest now? *to join (soul and body)*  
 Hefne and erthe wold thynke this the best now, *Heaven; earth*  
 Inasmyche as sche bare you, God, in youre mythitis. *bore; powers*

*[Hic vadit anima in corpus Marie.*

*Here the spirit will go into Mary's body*

**DOMINUS** Go, thanne, blyssid soule to that body ageyn! *blessed*  
 510 Arys now, my dowe, my nehebor, and my swete frende!  
 Tabernacle of joye, vessel of lyf, hefnely temple to reyn:<sup>1</sup>  
 Ye schal have the blysse wyth me, moder, that hath non ende,  
 For as ye were clene, in erthe, of alle synnys greyn; *earth; all sins' stain*  
 So schul ye reyne in hefne, clennest in mend. *reign; mind*  
**MARIA** A, endles worchepe be to you, Jhesu, reletere of peyn! *releaser of pain*  
 516 I and alle erthe may blisse ye, com of owre kend. *bless; come; our kind*  
 Lo, me redy wyth you for to wend. *I am ready; to go*  
**DOMINUS** Aboven hefnys, moder, assende than, we, *the heavens; ascend then*  
 In endles blysse for to be.  
**MICHAEL** Hefne and erthe now injoye may ye, *Heaven; earth*  
 521 For God, throw Mary, is mad mannys frend. *through; made man's friend*

*[Et hic assendent in celum cantantibus organis.<sup>2</sup>*

*Assumpta es, Maria, in celum.*

*Mary, you are taken up into heaven*

**DOMINUS** Yow to worchepe, moder, it likyth the hol Trinyté<sup>3</sup>  
 Wherefore I crowne you here in this kyndam of glory. *kingdom*  
 525 Of alle my chosyn, thus schul ye clepyd be *shall you be called*  
 Qwen of Hefne and Moder of Mercy. *Heaven*  
**MICHAEL** Now blysid be youre namys, we cry! *blessed; names*  
 For this holy assumpcyon, alle hefne makyth melody!  
*Deo gracias.* *Thanks be to God*

<sup>1</sup> Lines 510–11: *Arise now, my dove, my neighbor, and my dear one! / Tabernacle of joy, vessel of life, heavenly temple to reign*

<sup>2</sup> *And here they will ascend into heaven with organs playing*

<sup>3</sup> *To honor you, mother, it pleases the holy Trinity*

## 42. JUDGMENT DAY

[*Hic incipit Dies Iudicii, et Ihesu descendit cum Michael et Gabriele, Archangelis, et Michael dicet, et cetera.*<sup>1</sup>

<p><b>MICHAEL</b> <i>Surgite!</i> All men aryse!  <i>Venite ad iudicium,</i>          For now is sett the hygh justyce          And hath assygnyd the Day of Dom!          5 Rape yow redyly to this grett assyse,          Bothe grett and small, all an sum!          And of youre answer yow now avyse          What ye shal sey whan that ye cum,          Yowre ansuere for to telle.          10 For whan that God shal yow appose,          Ther is non helpe of no glose:          The trewth ful trewlye, he wyl tose          And send yow to hevyn or helle.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Arise!</i>  <i>Come to judgment</i>    <i>Judgment</i>  <i>Hasten; readily; trial</i>  <i>high and low</i>  <i>you now consider</i>  <i>when</i>    <i>when; interrogate you</i>  <i>deceit</i>  <i>search out</i></p>
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<p><b>GABRYELL</b> Bothe pope, prynce, and prysste with crowne,          15 Kyng and caysere and knyhtys kene:          Rapely ye renne youre resonys to rowne,          For this shal be the day of tene —          Nowther pore ne ryche of grett renowne          Ne all the develys in helle that bene          20 From this day, yow hyde not mowne,          For all your dedys here shal be sene          Opynly in syght.          Who that is fowndyn in deedly gylte,          He were bettyr to ben hylte!          25 In hendeles helle he shal be spylte —          His dedys, his deth shal dyght.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>priest</i>  <i>emperor; brave knights</i>  <i>Quickly; run; reasons; give</i>  <i>tribulation</i>  <i>Neither; rich; renown</i>  <i>Nor; devils; that are</i>  <i>you may not hide</i>  <i>deeds; seen</i>    <i>found in mortal guilt</i>  <i>to be buried</i>  <i>endless; destroyed</i>  <i>deeds; bring about</i></p>
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[*Omnes resurgentes subter terram clamauerunt "Haaa! Haaa! Haaa!" Deinde surgentes dicant "Haaa!" et cetera.*<sup>2</sup>

<p><b>RESURGENTES</b> Haaa! Cleve asundyr ye clowdys of clay!          Asundyr ye, breke, and lete us pas!          Now may oure songe be "weleaway"          30 That evyr we synnyd in dedly trespas!</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Split open; clods</i>  <i>Sunder yourself; let; pass</i>  <i>alas</i>  <i>mortal transgressions</i></p>
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[*Omnes demones clamant:* *All the demons cry out*

<sup>1</sup> Here begins the Day of Judgment, and Jesus descends with Michael and Gabriel, Archangels, and Michael will say, etc.

<sup>2</sup> All the resurrected cry out underground: "Haaa! Haaa! Haaa!" Then, the resurrected say, "Haaa!" etc.

**DEMONES** Harrow and owt! What shal we say? *(cries of distress)*  
 Harrow, we crye owt, and alas!  
 Alas! Harrow is this that day  
 To endles peyne that us must pas? *pain; we; pass*  
 35 Alas! Harrow, and owt we crye!

*[Omnes anime resurgentes dicant, et cetera: Let all the resurrected souls say, etc.]*

**ANIME RESURGENTES** A, mercy Lorde, for oure mysdede, *sins*  
 And lett thi mercy sprynge and sprede!  
 But alas, we byden in drede! *remain in dread*  
 It is to late to aske mercye! *too late*

**DEUS** *Venite, benedicti*, my bretheryn all! *Come, blessed ones*  
 41 *Patris mei*, ye childeryn dere! *To my home*  
 Come hedyr to me to myn hygh hall. *here*  
 All tho myn suterys and servauntys were — *those [who] my followers*  
 All tho fowle wyrmys from yow falle! *foul worms*  
 45 With my ryght hand I blysse yow here: *bless you*  
 My blessinge burnyschith yow as bryght as berall. *burnishes; beryl*  
 As crystall clene, it clensyth yow clere, *purifies*  
 All fylth from yow fade.  
 Petyr, to hevyn gatys thu wende and goo, *gates; make your way*  
 50 The lokkys thu losyn and hem undo. *locks; loosen; undo them*  
 My blyssyd childeryn, thu brynge me to,  
 Here hertys for to glade. *Their hearts; gladden*

**PETRUS** The gatys of hevyn I opyn this tyde. *now*  
 Now welcome, dere bretheryn, to hevyn, iwys! *indeed*  
 55 Com on and sytt on Goddys ryght side *God's*  
 Where myrthe and melody nevyr may mys. *lack*

**OMNES SALVATI** On kne we crepe, we gon, we glyde *go; crawl*  
 To wurcheppe oure Lorde that merciful is,  
 For thorwe his woundys that be so wyde, *through; wounds*  
 60 He hath brought us to his blys. *bliss (paradise)*  
 Holy Lorde, we wurcheppe thee!

**DEUS** Welcome ye be in hevyn to sitt  
 Welcum, fro me shul ye nevyr flitt *from; shall; fly away*  
 So sekyr of blys ye shul be yitt. *sure of bliss; shall; yet*  
 65 To myrth and joye, welcum ye be!

**ANIME DAMPNANDUM** Ha! Ha! Mercy, mercy we crye and crave!

A, mercy, Lorde, for oure mysdede! *sins*  
 A, mercy, mercy! We rubbe! We rave! *weep*  
 A, help us, good Lord, in this nede! *time of need*  
**DEUS** How wolde ye wrecchis any mercy have? *wretches*  
 71 Why aske ye mercy now in this nede? *time of need*

	What have ye wrought, youre sowle to save?	<i>done</i>
	To whom have ye don any mercyful dede,	
	Mercy for to wyne?	<i>win</i>
<b>DIABOLUS 1</b>	Mercy? Nay! Nay, they shul have wrake	<i>shall; punishment</i>
76	And that on here forehed — wyttness I take,	<i>their; I take as evidence</i>
	For ther is wretyn with letteris blake	<i>written; black letters</i>
	Opynly all here synne.	<i>their</i>
<b>DEUS</b>	To hungry and thrusty that askyd in my name,	<i>thirsty</i>
80	Mete and drynke wolde ye geve non;	<i>Food; give none</i>
	Of nakyd men had ye no shame;	<i>For</i>
	Ye wold nott vesyte men in no preson;	<i>visit; prison</i>
	Ye had no peté on seke nor lame:	<i>pity; sick</i>
	Dede of mercy wold ye nevyr don!	<i>Deeds; do</i>
85	Unherborwed men ye servyd the same;	<i>Homeless; treated</i>
	To bery the deed pore man wold ye not gon:	<i>bury; dead; do</i>
	These dedys doth yow spylle!	<i>deeds; ruin you</i>
	For youre love was I rent on rode,	<i>torn; the cross</i>
	And for youre sake I shed my blode.	<i>blood</i>
90	Whan I was so mercyfull and so gode,	<i>When; good</i>
	Why have ye wrought agens my wylle?	<i>gone against my will</i>
<b>DIABOLUS 2</b>	I fynde here wretyn in thin forheed:	<i>written on your</i>
	Thu wore so stowte and sett in pryde,	<i>were; stout</i>
	Thu woldyst not geve a pore man breed,	<i>give; bread</i>
95	But from thi dore thu woldyst hym chyde.	
<b>DIABOLUS 3</b>	And in thi face here do I rede	<i>read</i>
	That if a thrysty man com any tyde —	<i>thirsty; anytime</i>
	For thrust thow he shulde be deed —	<i>Even though [from] thirst</i>
	Drynk from hym thu woldyst evyr hyde:	
100	On covetyse was all thy thought.	
<b>DIABOLUS 1</b>	In wratth, thi neybore to bakbyte,	<i>neighbor; backbite</i>
	Them for to hangere was thi delyte.	<i>to anger; delight</i>
	Thu were evyr redy, them to endyte.	<i>indict</i>
	On the seke man, rewyst thu nought.	<i>had no pity</i>
<b>DIABOLUS 2</b>	Evymor on envye was all thi mende:	<i>mind</i>
106	Thu woldyst nevyr vesyte no presoner;	<i>visit</i>
	To all thi neyborys, thu were unkende;	<i>neighbors; unkind</i>
	Thu woldyst nevyr helpe man in daunger.	
<b>DIABOLUS 3</b>	The synne of slauth thi sowle shal shende:	<i>sloth; destroy</i>
110	Mass nore mateynes woldyst thu non here;	<i>matins; not hear</i>
	To bery the deed man, thu woldyst not wende.	<i>bury; dead; go</i>
	Therefore, thu shalt to endles fere!	<i>fire</i>
	To slowth thu were ful prest.	<i>By sloth; possessed</i>
<b>DIABOLUS 1</b>	Thu haddyst rejoyse in glotonye,	<i>rejoiced in</i>
115	In dronkesheppe and in rebawdye;	<i>drunkenness; ribaldry</i>

Unherborwyd, with velonye  
 Thu puttyst from here rest.

*[Those who were] unprotected; villainy  
 deprive them of their*

**DIABOLUS 2** Sybyle Slutte, thu salte sewe:

All youre lyff was leccherous lay;

*filthy sow  
 life; given to lechery*

120 To all youre neyborys, ye wore a shrewe;

*neighbors; were*

All youre pleasauns was leccherous play;

*pleasure*

Goddys men ye lovyd but fewe.

*God's*

Nakyd men and febyl of array

*poorly clothed*

Ye wolde nott socowre with a lytel drewe

*help; morsel of food*

125 Nott with a thred, the soth to say,

*thread; the truth*

Whan they askyd in Godys name.

*When; God's*

**OMNES DAMPNANDI** A! Mercy, Lord, mekyl of myght!

*great*

We aske thi mercy and not thi ryght,

*justice*

Not after oure dede, so us quyth!

*requite*

130 We have synnyd! We be to blame!

**DEUS**

**[End of manuscript.]**





## EXPLANATORY NOTES

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**ABBREVIATIONS:** **Bev:** *Medieval Drama*, ed. Bevington (1975); **Bl:** *Ludus Coventriae*, ed. Block (1922); **Da:** *Corpus Christi Play*, ed. Davies (1972); **G:** *Assumption of the Virgin*, ed. Greg (1915); **H:** *Ludus Coventriae*, ed. Halliwell (1841); **MP:** *Mary Play*, ed. Meredith (1987); **MED:** *Middle English Dictionary*; **OED:** *Oxford English Dictionary*; **PL:** *Patrologia Latina*, ed. Migne; **PP:** *Passion Play*, ed. Meredith (1990); **S:** *N-Town Play*, ed. Spector (1991); **s.d.:** stage direction; **s.n.:** stage name; **Whiting:** Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases*.

### THE BANNS (PROCLAMATION)

A medieval European banns took three basic and public forms: a lord's proclamation, a marriage announcement, or an advertisement of a play performance. The N-Town Banns, identified as the Proclamation by Spector and Block, is similar to the prologues of the *Croxton Play of the Sacrament* and *The Castle of Perseverance* (both texts from East Anglia); all three utilize vexillators (or flag bearers) and proclaim a future performance at a different site. In contrast, the Chester Banns (produced by civic organizations and craft guilds), announced an imminent performance within the city itself. It is likely, then, that the N-Town vexillators were hired by local religious guilds or parishes to travel about neighboring towns to announce the play at another (perhaps central) location. Even though the N-Town Banns may have thus been functional at one time, the main scribe's various interpolations and revisions rendered it no more than an approximate table of contents for the whole manuscript. By incorporating into the manuscript different plays such as the Mary Plays, the two Passion Plays, and the Assumption of Mary (likely at different times), the main scribe eventually must have realized that he could not revise the Banns to accommodate all of the changes. The Banns, however, reflects the main scribe's various attempts: renumbering the plays (before eventually giving up), writing new synopses in different stanzaic forms, and ignoring whole plays such as the Assumption. The top of the first folio has a title, "The Plaie called Corpus Christi," in an Elizabethan hand that is much later than the main scribe's or those of the various revisers. Very likely a misnomer, this title has unfortunately influenced generations of editors and critics. For an overview of the N-Town manuscript's development, see Spector, S 2:537–41 and 2:548–54.

Most of the Banns is written in thirteener stanzas.

- 15      *myth*. The *t* is an unaspirated stop, not /ð/; so too, in *bryth* (line 17), *ryth* (line 19), *pyth* (line 21), *syth* (line 29); i.e., /mɪht/, not /mɪð/, etc. This orthography, representing a basic phonological feature of the poet's dialect, is found throughout the plays and is sometimes confusing where there are instances in which the *-th* is pronounced /ð/, thereby indicating a word different from *-th* /ht/.



- 20 *Lucifer . . . so gay*. The reference is to Lucifer, or the brightest angel, the “light-bearer” (Latin *lux* + *ferre*). This particular guise of Satan was prevalent in later Christian mythology, deriving from Jerome’s Vulgate translation of the Septuagint’s *heosphoros* (“bringer of the dawn”) in Isaiah 14:12–14 — a passage originally meant to refer to the king of Babylon and Satan. Previous writers had made use of the name “Lucifer” as a poetic term for a morning star or, more specifically, for Venus (e.g. Virgil’s *Georgics* 3.324–25 or Statius’ *Thebaid* 2.134), but after Jerome the word becomes, to many commentators, the proper name of the Devil.
- 24 *Hese Lordys pere*. The language is deliberately feudal, associating the relationship between God and Satan with that between a lord and his vassal, and warning, perhaps, against subversion.
- 36 *blake*. Perhaps “black,” but a pale color such as yellow or white is more likely. The term could be a scribal error for *bleik*, meaning “pale” or “white.” See Spector, S 2:417: “blake: ‘yellow’; so rendered by E.V. Gordon in *Pearl*, 27: ‘Blomez blayke and blew and rede’ (*Pearl*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1953). *MED* cites Pr 36 [The Banns] under *blak* adj. 6(b) in the sense, ‘white, but cf. 2/23 (a line that Pr 36 recalls): ‘Red and qwyte, bothe blew and blake.’ Rendering *blake* as ‘white’ in 2/23 would be redundant since *qwyte* already appears in that line.” Figuratively, the colors could reflect a prelapsarian state: blue would connote constancy and white, innocence. Or, if *blake* means yellow, the sun or divinity — though yellow, like black, can also imply the infection of perfection by Satan. See Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols*, p. 275. Such visual punning is attractive here, given that in this play the serpent tempts Adam and Eve under the guise of virtue.
- 118 *Abyacar*. Known in Joachim and Anne as the high priest Ysakar. Possibly the scribe was working with two different sources.
- 153–54 Spector notes that these lines are spoken by Mary in the Marriage of Mary and Joseph, line 324.
- 183–90 The appearance of quatrains in lines 183–90 further shows the main scribe’s attempts at incorporating the Mary Play into the manuscript.
- 191–528 Written in thirteener stanzas.
- 208 *The kyngys of Coleyn*. The three magi were thought to be buried at Cologne.
- 259 *With which devys as we best may*. This suggests that the proclamation is made by the troop of players themselves, who show both concern and pride in the “special efforts” of their productions. The illusion of water was often created by wafting blue cloth, as in productions of the drowning of Pharaoh’s army in the Red Sea. It is interesting to contemplate here that the Flom Jordan (line 258) would itself be represented by a device “as we best may,” which could add a certain glamor to the scene, what with the “Holy Gost” (line 260) hovering over and the voice of the father — “this is no nay” (line 263) — speaking from the “blisful tron” of heaven (line 262). The comments here suggest an elaborate staging with multiple playing areas and technical machinery. See Introduction, pp. 12–17.

- 286 *sotyllé*. A wily stratagem, though the term might also have a more technical meaning of dramatic device of public display. See *MED sotille*, n.5, which cites the term as a culinary decoration for the presentation of food.
- 308–20 Stanzas break from the usual pattern of describing one play per thirteener stanza. Again, this may suggest that the main scribe was incorporating new material into the manuscript. The same may be seen in lines 476–89.
- 332 *lete*. “Leave,” but with connotations of “abandon,” “forsake,” “desert,” “neglect,” or “reject.” See *MED leten*, v.6(a).
- 368 *the which* refers to the thirty pence Judas received in payment.
- 399 *pleyn place*. This refers to more than a simple playing area. Stokes notes that dedicated spaces which were formerly battle or tournament grounds sometimes later became dramatic places. Citations in *MED* for *pleyn place* are from *Castle of Perseverence* (and N-Town). It is likely that late medieval audiences connected the notion of a tournament ground resolving suits (a *plaint*) with the idea of a spiritual battlefield presented in a drama (a play).
- 405 *tras*. Trace, “travel in a line.” The idea is that Christ’s blood went purposefully to Longinus’ eye.
- 407 *that morn*. Not the time of the Crucifixion and death, which is supposed to have occurred just before sundown on Good Friday, but the time of the harrowing of hell which is here portrayed both figuratively and literally as a dawn act — bringing light to the souls in hell. This makes Jesus the new light-bearer, bringing light to the infernal realm of the old Lucifer (see note to line 20).
- 432 “That it is a joy to her (i.e., Mary) to engage in their conversation” (S 2:418).
- 465 *castel*. Christ’s appearance to the two apostles on the road to Emmaus is described in Luke 24:13–22, where Emmaus is called simply a village. Emmaus is generally identified as Latrun, the legendary burial place of the “good thief” crucified with Jesus. The alteration from village to castle adds feudal associations but was also a point of fact in the Middle Ages: the construction of the crusader fortress Toron des Chevaliers at Latrun gave rise to an automatic association between Emmaus and castles. In describing the environs of Jerusalem, for example, Mandeville describes the location variously as “þe castel of Emaux” or “þe castel of Cheynay” (*Defective Version*, ed. Seymour, pp. 39, 52, 54).
- 477–84 Quatrain and nine lines of a thirteener may show the main scribe’s revision.
- 495 *the cenacle*. The upper room in which the apostles met; described in Acts 1:13, Mark 14:15, and Luke 22:12 (S 2:418).
- 496 *vervently*. “Fierily,” “brilliantly,” but also “ardently” or “passionately,” given the Holy Spirit’s capacity to pierce men’s hearts (“thyrling here brest” with “brennyng fere,” line 497).
- 519 *game wel pleyd in good aray*. Throughout the proclamation of the banns the vexillators emphasize the spectacle — “as ye shal se” (line 480, etc.). Here the vexillator puns upon the careful preparation of the play but also the costuming, which,

- like the sets spoken of elsewhere, purports the visual and the emotive impact of the *game*.
- 525–26 As Spector notes, a performance time of 6 a.m. on a Sunday means that the main scribe did not intend the play for actual performance on Corpus Christi, which was the third Thursday after Trinity Sunday (S 2:418).
- 527 *N. town*. Critics generally concur that “N” in this instance stands for *Nomen*, with the names of different towns or places to be inserted as appropriate. Whether this indicates an itinerant company of actors or a playbook that was circulated between playing places is hard to judge (S 2:418). *The Castle of Perseverence* similarly accounts for banns criers’ changing venues and playing times: “At . . . on the grene in ryal aray, . . . Ye manly men of . . . ther Crist save you all!” (lines 134 and 145).

# 1. CREATION OF HEAVEN; FALL OF LUCIFER

All English dramatic versions of the creation story are based upon Genesis 1. The N-Town Creation of Heaven and the Fall of Lucifer Play corresponds most closely to Chester’s Play 1 that recounts the creation of the heavens and Lucifer’s fall. Quite differently, Towneley addresses the creation of the heavens, earth, Adam and Eve and the fall in one long play. And York, possibly due to its abundance of active guilds, portrays the fall of the angels in one play (Play 1), but the other creation and fall subjects are played in five other short plays (Plays 2–6). Spector notes that the N-Town Play “includes on the first day the extra-biblical creation of the angels. Jubilee 2:2 also allocates that event to the first day, and Augustine asserts in *De Civitate Dei* that the angels were themselves the light that was called ‘day’” (S 2:418).

The play is written entirely in thirteener stanzas.

- Before 1 *Ego sum alpha et oo, principium et finis*. All four of the principal cycles begin with this crucial line from Apocalypse 1:18 or 22:13, which announces the overall scope of God, history, and the cycles — from Creation to the Last Judgment, i.e., from beginning to end. Line 1’s “My name is knowyn” implies the theological point that all Creation is figured in the name of God and is preceded by his knowing, as if to announce that God’s idea precedes Creation, which flows from it. In Apocalypse the voice of the proclamation is that of Jesus, in whose Word the world resides.
- 1–28 This passage may be based on the Athanasian Creed, which reiterates the persons and respective powers of the Trinity (see S 2:418).
- 12–13 Compare the Athanasian Creed: “Unum Deum in Trinitate, et Trinitatem in Unitate veneremur; neque confundentes personas: neque substantiam separantes” (S 2:419).
- 30–31 Compare Baruch 3:34, Job 38:7
- 35 *belde*. Spector cites the *MED*, which defines “belden” as “to protect” (S 2:418). But it is also likely that the scribe meant “bilden,” “to create.”
- 39, s.d. *Hic cantent angeli in celo*. As John Stevens points out, “The most frequent use of music in the plays is to symbolize heaven. . . . Singing angels represent a higher har-

mony, a more complete ‘order’ than we can know on earth. Music is a mirror or *speculum* of the God-created Universe” (“Music in Mediaeval Drama,” p. 82). In the Banns to Play 1, we are told that the “angell with songe — this is no nay — / Shal worchep God, as it is ryth” (Banns, lines 18–19), a point that is made evident right from the start of N-Town as the newly-created angels sing from the *Te Deum*, which is part of the Corpus Christi Mass (see Dutka, *Index of Songs*, pp. 42–43). As Rastall observes: “The descriptions of Heaven as a joyful place in Play 1 are closely related to the sound of music there: We find that Heaven and the stars were created to exist ‘In myrth and joy’ (1.30–31), and that the angels were created to worship God ‘with merth and melody’ (1.32–34) and ‘With myrth and song’” (1.36–38). The last of these results in music at 1.39, s.d.” (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 79).

40 *To whos wurchipe synge ye this songe?* As in the Barkers’ Play of the Creation and the Fall of Lucifer, in the York Cycle, the turning point in Lucifer’s fierce jealousy is prompted by the singing of the Sanctus. The good angel answers Lucifer’s question — the song honors God — to whom Lucifer replies, “A wurthyer lorde forsothe am I / And wurthyer than he evyr wyl I be” (lines 53–54). When Angeli Mali agrees — “Goddys myth we forsake” (line 62) — Deus casts them out, doomed by their own words.

44 s.n., 62s.n. *ANGELI BONI . . . ANGELI MALI*. The debate of good and bad angels appears at the outset of the fall of the angels plays in all four cycles. Debate poems make their initial appearance in English literature in the thirteenth century (Conlee, *Middle English Debate Poetry*, p. xii) and became a favorite form of exemplary argument in legal circles. In the plays, the debate of good and evil is writ large as forces of right and wrong contend for the soul of Mankind even up and into the Last Judgment. The patterns are laid out, most efficiently, in N-Town, in this definitive exchange.

53 ff. Compare Isaias 14:12 ff.

56–57 *I wyl go sytlyn in Goddys se / Above sunne and mone and sterrys on sky*. The location of God’s throne (see note to line 56, below) is somewhat anachronistic since the sun, moon, stars, and sky will not be created until the first lines of the next play. In theological terms, the poet seems to present the notion that heaven and hell are necessary cosmological preconditions to creation. That is, they must be established before creation can take place. One implication of this framework is that the fall of man seems to be a necessary working-out of preconditions: a place of punishment is necessary only if man is, ultimately, to be in need of punishment, which itself is a consequence not of Eden but of expulsion from it. While one might see man’s culpability in the fall as thereby lessened, the poet no doubt sees in such a structure a heightened necessity for the coming of Christ: Creation, from the beginning, was in need of his salvation. That the end is prefigured in the beginning is apparent from the start of this play, as Deus’ first pronouncement declares that he is alpha and omega, beginning and end (see note to Before 1, above).

56 *Goddys se*. In Middle English, the noun *se* can carry a wide variety of connotations, meaning anything from a simple chair or dwelling place to a royal or ecclesiastical throne, palace, cathedral, or holding (see *MED se* n.2). Here the meaning intended is the throne of God, later said to belong to Jesus (7.86–87):

- the seat from which, according to Mary, he will judge (16.153). Lucifer refers to it simply as the throne of God, a seat that functions symbolically to represent the authority of God over his dominion (i.e., creation). Presumably the staging here helps to underscore the self-deceptive pride of Lucifer as he usurps God's place in physical act (by mounting a raised chair of some kind). Lucifer then declares, in line 61, that he is "Sytyng in my sete."
- 64–65     *Thee to wurcheþ honowre we make / And falle down at thi fete.* The rebellious angels speak an unwitting self-condemnation, for their transposition of Lucifer to the center of worship that is rightfully God's immediately results in God's order that they "falle from hefne to helle" (line 67).
- 71         *With merth and joye nevyrmore to melle!* "When God deprives Lucifer of the *merth and joye* in Heaven (1.71) . . . the audience is aware that this is a deprivation of music, too, even though Lucifer has clearly taken no part in the angels' song (1.40). . . . He now cracks a fart (1.81) instead of musical notes. (The cracking of a fart is not yet a parody of the angelic music, merely a substitution. A similar allusion is probably intended by Satan's letting of 'a crakke' at 23.195)" (Rastall, *Minstrels Playing*, p. 79; see also Rastall, *Heaven Singing*, pp. 205–06, where he develops further the juxtaposing of Satan's cracking farts "whereas he formerly cracked musical notes").
- 81         *For fere of fyre a fart I crake.* Martial Rose suggests that to make the sound carry the actor playing Satan may have used gunpowder to provide comic reinforcement to his fearful farting in outdoor performances, noting "medieval devices for making Satan's breaking of wind carry" that are set out in the staging of *The Castle of Perseverance*: "and he þat schal play belyal loke þat he haue gunnepowdyr brennyng In pypys in his handys and in hys eyrs and in hys ars whanne he gothe to batayl" (i.e., at the siege of the castle, lines 1969 ff.) (*Staging of the Hegge Plays*, p. 218). Such cracking of farts may accompany Belial's first appearance in the play, as well, where he moves about excitedly announcing that "bothe the bak and the buttoke bresteth al on brenne" (*Castle*, line 201). See Bevington (Bev, pp. 796–97), for a reproduction and explication of the stage place. For further discussion of pyrotechnics in early drama, see Butterworth, *Theatre of Fire*, especially "Fireworks, Wildmen and Flaming Devils" (pp. 21–36), and "Fireworks as Light, Sound, Smoke and Heat" (pp. 37–54), which includes some discussion of gunpowder's effects in the N-Town Doomsday Play (pp. 12, 28, 83–84) and the Resurrection and Descent into Hell (pp. 12 and 83).

## 2. CREATION OF THE WORLD; FALL OF MAN

The N-Town manuscript places the creation of the world, the creation of Adam and Eve, their fall, and their expulsion from paradise in a combination of plays. The creation story is based upon Genesis 1:6–25. Spector notes that the order of events here has been changed (S 2:419); the story of the fall in the garden is based on Genesis 3. As remarked in the notes to the previous play, this organization is close to Towneley's (Play 1) and Chester's (Play 2), but quite different from York's organization that separates all of the aforementioned subjects into separate plays (Plays 2–6). There are two versions of a Creation and Fall play by

the Norwich Grocers (see *Non-Cycle Plays*, ed. Davis, pp. 8–18). N-Town's economy is worth noting, as God recounts the creation of the universe, the world, and people in a matter of twenty-five lines.

It is important to note that only the play number in the N-Town manuscript separates this play from the previous one. Spector notes that Play 2 begins at the fifth line of a thirteener, the first four serving as the conclusion to Play 1 (S 2:419). It could be that these two creation plays were played continuously, without a break. See Martin Stevens, *Mystery Cycles*, pp. 186–87.

Most of the play is written in threeners.

- 1–17      The first two stanzas are a nine-line stanza followed by an octave.
- 35      *pyan*. The powdered root and/or seed of the peony was used as a spice in wine and also for medicinal purposes, e.g., as a stay against epilepsy and frenzy (Bartholomeus, *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, 7.10, which cites Galen, Platarius, Constantine, and Aiascorides as authority), or to staunch bladder ache or “þe flux of þe matrice” (*Macer*, ed. Frisk, lines 158–59); or as “a precyus medcyn” against “þe fallyng evyll” (John of Burgundy, *Practica Phisicalia*, ed. Schöffler, 228.22). See *MED pioné*, n., and note *Pearl*, line 44, where it is cited with other medicinal herbs in a proto-Edenic setting.
- 38      *this tre that is of cunnyng*. Usually known as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but here, as in a few other medieval cases, a tree of cunning (S 2:420). See Ashley, “‘Wyt’ and ‘Wysdam,’” pp. 121–35.
- 46      Compare Genesis 2:17.
- 57–60      These are a quatrain.
- 87, s.n.      *SERPENS*. The serpent is, of course, Lucifer in disguise. See note to line 235.
- 117–18      *To myn husbond with herte ful fayn . . . as thu byddyst me*. Though Serpens has given Eva two apples, one for herself and one for Adam (lines 109–11) and told her to eat (line 115), there is no evidence that she does, in fact, eat first. Rather her response seems to reflect a proper loyalty to Adam with whom she would gladly share the boon, albeit even as Serpens bid her to do, but only after serving Adam first.
- 156      *A fayr aungell*. Spector reviews a debate about Lucifer's appearance, possibly as an angel or as a snake with an angel's face (S 2:520). See Woolf's conjecture that in this play the compiler is following a tradition originating in the Book of Enoch (picked up in *Genesis B*) wherein Satan appears to Adam and Eve as an angel (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 117).
- 164, s.d.      Though the stage direction does not specify the act, its interposition in their exchange indicates a pause in their dialogue during which Adam partakes of the forbidden fruit and then makes his woeful exclamation. In other plays Eve eats from the fruit before carrying it to Adam. But in N-Town Serpens seems mainly concerned with getting Adam to eat. Perhaps she eats somewhere between lines 119 and 121, but more likely she shows good manners and serves Adam first (see note to lines 117–18). In line 152, Adam says “if we it ete, ourself we kyll,” which seems to imply that Eve has not yet taken the fruit. That she does in fact

- taste the fruit we know only after Adam's penitential response when she notes that "that sory appyl that we han sokyn" (line 184).
- 165–90 Compare Genesis 3:7.
- 169 *Oure Lordys wurd wold we not drede*. The line carries multiple meanings, as *wurd* could refer either to ME *word* (from OE *word*) meaning God's speech, his precautionary words (lines 38–43); or to ME *werd* (from OE *wyrd*), meaning God's pronouncement of destiny, his fate or fortune for the world. Likewise, in the summary plot of N-Town, *wurd* also could refer more spiritually to Christ, God's *Logos* or Word, as the actual agent of Creation and the Last Judgment: that Judgment that Adam and Eve must face and would thus most *drede*.
- 191–282 These lines make up a quatrain followed by octaves.
- 193–94 Woolf notes: "The conjoining of the idea of man's diminished apprehension of God with the beautiful and perennial symbol of transience is especially effective: the poetry conveys a nostalgic sense of loss rare in medieval literature" (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 119).
- 203–10 Compare Genesis 3:12. Adam's admission that he walks now as a *werm* (line 209) is not found in the biblical account, and suggests a loose correspondence between man's fallen nature and that of Lucifer, who will be referred to in several subsequent lines as a "worm" (lines 220, 227, 259, and 262). On the other hand, it also associates Adam's body with worms, whose food he has become, now that he is mortal. But mainly it is a humility trope that sets him apart from the fallen angels in that this worm, through humility, will ultimately fly.
- 235, s.n. *DIABOLUS*. I.e., Lucifer, by another of his multiple designations. That his stage name here shifts from *SERPENS* (in his conversations with Eve) to *DIABOLUS* indicates a shift in costuming as Lucifer, previously disguised as a serpent, is now revealed as the Devil.
- 243–66 Compare Genesis 3:14–19.
- 275–82 Compare Genesis 3: 23–24.
- 304–12 Spector cites M. D. Johnson's note that Eve's request to die at Adam's hand derives from *The Life of Adam and Eve*; he cites several additional medieval sources as well (S 2:421). It is noteworthy that Adam would consider such an act a form of suicide since Eve is wrought from his own flesh and "I wyl not sle flescly of my flesch" (line 311).
- 304 *fonde*. Block and Davies gloss this as "findest; provest." Spector glosses this word as "proceed; endeavor" (to go) (S 2:421). I think the whole line should be: "Dear husband, go on without me."
- 311–13 Woolf notices that: "The author . . . has taken pains to minimize the unpleasant impression left by the Genesis accusations" (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 119). Here, as opposed to the other English dramatic versions, N-Town's Adam shares responsibility for the fall.
- 316 Proverbial. See Whiting M642. Compare Towneley Play 13, lines 97–99 (S 2:421).

- 321 *wepyng dale*. Main meaning is “valley,” but “grave” is also possible (*MED*). Figuratively, this phrase refers to Adam and Eve’s new fallen nature which includes sin, mortality, and spiritual death.
- 322–34 Compare Genesis 3:17–19.
- 331–34 It is pleasing that Eve is given the final pronouncement of the play, demonstrating her healthy sense of responsibility and care.

### 3. CAIN AND ABEL

This play is a dramatization of the story found in Genesis 4:1–16. It bears comparison with the Cain and Abel plays in the York (Play 7), Chester (last half of Play 2), and Towneley Plays (Play 2). The idea of spiritual and earthly genealogy pervades all of the N-Town Old Testament plays. Martin Stevens observes: “The Old Testament Play is perforce the play in which the role of God the Father dominates. . . . And God the Father . . . is actively engaged throughout the segment in defining the limits of earthly fatherhood in the light of his celestial presence” (*Mystery Cycles*, p. 196).

As mentioned in the textual note to 2.309, at the foot of folios 16–17 of the manuscript (in large liturgical script) is a genealogy from Adam through Lamech, the father of Noah (compare Genesis 5:1–30). This genealogical chart is in the main scribe’s handwriting and may have been an attempt at linking this play with the ensuing one.

Most of the play is written in thirteeners.

- 1–31 These lines make up a quatrain followed by three nine-line stanzas.
- 4–11 *Unto oure fadyr withowte lettyng . . . come to oure faderys presens*. Although Abel seems to be referring to going obediently to Adam for instruction, the journey he outlines resonates with his pilgrimage toward the presence of God through the prayer and sacrifice that he is about to undertake. That journey ultimately transpires for Abel in all his integrity. But for Cain, who does not want “talking” with the father or to “lere his lawe” (line 18), or even to see him again, no pilgrimage will take place. His disregard for Adam leads immediately to equivocation and a disregard for God and, ultimately, to his own doom. N.b., Boone on Cain and “equivocation” (“Skill of Cain”). See also notes to lines 112–15 and 183–86.
- 13 *knowe for oure levyng*. Spector glosses this as “learn how to live” but notes that *MED* cites this line under *knouen*, v.10a: “to worship” (S 2:422).
- 36 *another portature*. *MED* cites *portature* here as “shaping, construction.” I think, however, that “likeness” makes more sense referring to God’s likeness (Genesis 1:26). Spector glosses the phrase to mean “a different appearance,” but also notes *The Book of Adam and Eve*, where Adam and Eve say “Our body is changed from the similitude in which it was at first, when we were created” (i.e., into *another portature*) (S 2:423).
- 62–65 This is a quatrain.
- 75–78 Woolf notes that this is the only English mystery play to parallel specifically Abel’s lamb and Christ (S 2:423).



- 92 ff. Compare Matthew 5:22, Genesis 4:3–4.
- 109 *a febyll skylle*. The word *skylle* here can mean “cause, reason, basis, ground, or foundation.” Compare “Thu shewest a febyl reson, me thynke” (line 116). See Boone: “The two brothers are unable to argue about sacrifice because they are not talking about the same thing when they try to do so” (“Skill of Cain,” p. 121). Cain shows “reson” and “skylle” rather than “good will” as he attempts to subvert the rites of sacrifice, whether in the N-Town, Chester, or Towneley Cain and Abel plays. See Harnett, “Cain and the Medieval Towneley Play.”
- 112–15 *To geuyn hym awey my best sheff / And kepe myself the wers? / He wyll neyther ete nor drynke, / For he doth neyther swete nor swynke*. Boone, citing Harnett (“Cain and the Medieval Towneley Play,” p. 21), observes: “‘Cain’s ignorance in the mystery plays is evident in his total misunderstanding of the nature of sacrifice: he can see it only as intended to repair a deficiency in God. This attitude is closely related to his concupiscence; he covets the sheaves because he can think only in earthly terms.’ This observation goes to the heart of Cain’s dilemma, and it need only be added that Cain’s ignorance is a moral condition, a self-willed blindness that is manifested in his language, which itself is the expression in psychological and economic terms of the basic structural ambivalence of his position” (“Skill of Cain,” p. 128).
- 149 Spector (S 2:423) recounts the theories behind Cain’s use of the jawbone, the weapon depicted in the *Holkham Bible Picture Book*, *The Life of Adam and Eve*, *The Middle English Metrical Paraphrase of the Old Testament* (line 236), *Cursor Mundi* (line 1073), the Cornish *Creation*, and Towneley (2/326). Schapiro (“Cain’s Jaw-Bone”) sees this particular image in English art from the eleventh through the sixteenth centuries. Bonnell (“Cain’s Jaw Bone”) and Hassall see this as an English motif that migrated to Northern Europe (*Holkham Bible Picture Book*, ed. Hassall, fol. 5v, pp. 67–68).
- 153 *boy*. Likely a term of abuse (S 2:423).
- 159–80 Compare Genesis 4:9–15.
- 170–73 Woolf remarks that “the theme of the continuing fall reaches its conclusion in Cain’s banishment: as Adam and Eve become exiles from paradise, so Cain becomes an exile from all the dwellings of men; but Adam and Eve still awaited ‘sum comforth,’ whereas Cain will ‘nevyr make merthis mo’” (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 131).
- 183–86 *Alas, alas, whedyr may I go? . . . cursyd of God for my falsage*. “In the extant English mystery cycles, Cain is the character who best illustrates the Augustinian doctrine of the punishment of sin by sin. The punishment is progressive: the immediate judgment of God, the intensification of ignorance and concupiscence, is followed by the sinner’s struggle against that judgment. Finally there is God’s ultimate judgment, his abandonment of the sinner to the uninhibited pursuit of sin, with no possibility of return” (Harnett, “Cain and the Medieval Towneley Play,” p. 21).
- 188 *strete and stage*. Rose glosses this as “at street level and on the scaffold” (“Staging of the Hegge Plays,” p. 204). The “scaffold” could be a dramatic stage or even a gallows (*MED*).

## 4. NOAH

The biblical story appears in Genesis 6:5–8:22, and is commonly reproduced in late medieval English and Western European religious plays. There are several other English versions: York Plays 8 and 9, Towneley Play 3, Chester Play 3, and two reconstructions of a Shipwrights' play from Newcastle ("Newcastle Play," in *Non-Cycle Plays*, ed. Davis, pp. 19–31). Most of the English versions depict Noah's wife as a carousing shrew who would avoid salvation. In this N-Town version, she is as godly and accommodating as the rest of the family. In addition, this version (as opposed to the other English ones) includes a Lamech episode (compare Genesis 4:23–24) which is likely included to portray the depths of human depravity before the flood. Many other medieval sources include such an episode (S 2:424 and 2:426). Woolf states that Lamech episodes appear in the *Historia Scholastica* (PL 198:1079), the *Glossa Ordinaria* (PL 113:101–02), the *Mystère du Viel Testament*, the *Holkham Bible Picture Book*, and in carvings found in the south porch at Malmesbury as well as Norwich roof bosses (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 135). In the manuscript, at the bottom of folios 21r–22v, is a genealogy of Noah, his sons, and their children.

- 1–52      This portion of the play is in thirteener stanzas.
- 10        *Noe, serys, my name is knowe*. It is noteworthy that characters often introduce themselves to the audience in N-Town. See line 40, where Uxor identifies herself, or lines 57 ("My name is Shem"), 66 ("I am Cham"), 79 ("Japheth thi thryd sone is my name"), etc. The wives are not given names, but they are given voices that demonstrate their dignity through direct address as they stand "here on rowe" (line 11), a potent image of familial strength. See note to lines 222–38.
- 11        *here on rowe*. The sense is "here all together," though the term resonates in other ways as well — iconographically, where the domestic togetherness commonly places the family in a row along the side of the ark or in an "orderly" arrangement as in the Norwich Ministry ceiling boss of Noah and family in the ark. As Noah makes his utterance the flood has not yet occurred, but the orderliness of his prayer is evidence of why God chose him for the new reordering of the world after its destruction.
- 14–17    *the secunde age*. Noah is following St. Augustine's division of the units of history: the first age is the age of Adam, the second of Noah, the third of Abraham, the fourth of David, the fifth of David and the exile, the sixth of John the Baptist, the seventh of the Last Judgment. See Augustine, *Tractate 9* on the Gospel of John. As namesake of the second age Noah is thus, after Adam, "The secunde fadyr . . . in fay" (line 17).
- 27–48    This pairing of a prayer of supplication by Uxor with Noah's prayer at the outset of the play, thereby including the woman's wisdom and desire for holiness as part of mankind's appeal for humanity, is unique to N-Town. In the York Cycle (the Shipwrights' Play), Noah first receives instructions from God to build the ark, which he proceeds to do. Then, in a second play, put on by the Fishermen and Mariners' guilds (Noah and his wife and the Flood), Noah attempts to summon the family to get on the ark, but Uxor refuses, setting up their obstinate squabbling. Similarly, in Towneley, Uxor first appears in the second scene, ques-

- tioning Noah's mission and fighting it, since she has had no part in the planning. In Chester, God gives the command, Noah accepts, and his sons volunteer to help. Uxor helps too, summoning the other wives to do so also, and, together, they build the ark. N-Town gives Uxor the most dignified role, praying that God cleanse mankind and asking Noah to help her instruct their children against sin (lines 40–48). Spector notes that the Cornish *Creation* and *Origo Mundi* also present Uxor as "obedient rather than contentious" (S 2:424).
- 34 *scrapyth hym out of lyvys bylle*. Compare Vulgate Psalm 68:29; Apocalypse 3:5, 13:8, 20:12, 21:27 (S 2:425). That the name would be "scraped" out of "the book of life" reminds us of scribal practices of corrections. See "Chaucers Wordes Unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn," line 6: "It to correcte and eke to rubbe and scrape."
- 36 *slepppe*. Spector suggests that "sleep" is the better gloss as it rhymes better with *deppe* and *creppe* (S 2:425). Block glosses *slepppe* as "slip," which makes more sense in the phrase.
- 53–117 Consists of a nine-line stanza and a quatrain followed by thirteener stanzas.
- 92 *Ow, what menyht this myslevyng man*. God here addresses the audience, not Noah and his virtuous family.
- 96 Spector notes that in Genesis God, not an angel, addresses Noah (S 2:425).
- 105 This line is roughly translated in the following line. Compare Genesis 6:6. (See S 2:425).
- 118–253 Written in octaves.
- 120–25 Compare Genesis 6:17–19.
- 127 It appears that, according to the biblical account, Noah should be six hundred years old. Spector attributes this discrepancy to different sources and summarizes the problem with calculating Noah's age (S 2:425).
- 142–97, s.d. Lamech is a frequent subject in patristic exegesis (see S 2:424). Reiss observes that "Lamech is further a general figure . . . suggesting several sins," such as lechery, gluttony, pride and wrath ("Story of Lamech," p. 46). Nitecki notes that "Lamech is the ethical opposite of the other old man in the play, Noah, the obedient second father of the human race" ("N-Town Lamech"). But such observations provide little reason for N-Town's unique placement of Lamech and his servant boy with his accusations against Lamech in the midst of this play of Noah's Flood. *Cursor Mundi* refers to Lameth as "þe last man" at the time of the Flood (lines 1489–92), as if to mark the end of the curse of Cain and the first phase of life in the fallen world. N-Town uses Lamech similarly to mark the end of the old order as angry Lamech slays the boy, thereby reenacting Cain's malice (see line 224) that now concludes with God's "dredull vengeance" (line 204).
- 150 On Lamech as a "good archere," see Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* (PL 198: 1079d).

- 155–57 “When you bent your bow (if the target had been a half-mile wide), you would have hit it (if you’d stood really close).” Clearly Adolescents (or the servant boy) is playing to the audience by mocking the elder Lameth.
- 174–85 Spector finds parallels with the French *Viel Testament* (S 2:426). Reiss (see note to 142–97, s.d.) notices the verbal and visual punning on Lamech’s bow (*arc*), and Noah’s ark (*arce*) as found in the *Holkham Bible Picture Book* (72). It is interesting to note that the N-Town version does not mention or display a rainbow as that found at the end of the Chester play, “that ilke bowe” (3:318).
- 176 *to lundyr*. Literally, turned into tinder (*MED*).
- 197, s.d. *statim intrat Noe cum naui cantantes*. “The singing is a surprise to the extent that Noah’s first lines are of great sadness. The music to be sung is presumably sorrowful — a rare enough phenomenon in the plays — which also suits the end of the previous scene, in which Caym and Adolescents are both killed by Lameth, while Lameth knows himself to be a cursed outcast” (Rastall, *Minstrels Playing*, p. 80). John Stevens draws a parallel with Noah’s family singing as they enter the Ark and close the windows against the rain in the Chester Deluge Play: “*Tunc Noe claudet fenestram Archae et per modicum spatium infra tectum cantent psalmum ‘Save mee O God’ et aperiens fenestram et respiciens*” [“Then Noah will shut the window of the Ark and for a little while beneath the roof (i.e., inside) let them sing the psalm ‘Save me O God’”] (“Music in Mediaeval Drama,” p. 87).
- 218–37 According to many medieval sources, adultery was a chief cause of the Flood. See Spector (S 2:427), who cites *The Book of Adam and Eve*, *Historia Scholastica*, and rabbinical commentaries, along with scholarly studies by Lewis and Poteet.
- 222, s.n.–238, s.n. *UXOR SHEM . . . UXOR CHAM . . . UXOR JAPHET*. N-Town is the only one of the cycles to give voices to the wives of Noah’s three sons. The effect is orderly as each of the eight people on the ark speaks a quatrain on the justice of God’s judgment and on their gratitude for salvation. Rather than words about the rainbow and a new covenant, as at the end of the Chester Noah, or Noah’s wife’s poignant lament for the dead from the Wakefield Noah — “From thens again / May they never win?” (Bev 307) — here the octet sings God’s glory as embodied in Vulgate Psalm 113 while they disembark, setting out, like the new children of Adam, to repopulate the earth. This is the only Noah play to end with song.
- 223–24 “Very severely transgressed when they were sinfully driven (by desire) to the daughters of Cain” (S 2:427).
- 240–41 *wurchipe in every stede . . . We beth gretly bownde*. Rastall suggests that although no singing is specified in a stage direction, there may have been music to represent praise at this point. See also the “praise” ending to the play (line 253) where the text, Vulgate Psalm 113, is given in the stage direction following (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 80).
- 246 As Spector notes, the raven’s eating carrion is non-biblical (S 2:427).
- 253 *Oure Lord God to worchep, a songe lete us synge*. See note to lines 240–41, above.

- 253, s.d. This Psalm verse (Vulgate Psalm 113:3) comes from the Sarum Breviary, II, p. 194 (see Dutka, *Index of Songs*, p. 34).

## 5. ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

The story of Abraham and Isaac is found in Genesis 22:1–18. The other English versions — York’s Play 10 (Parchemyners and Bokebynders), Chester’s last half of Play 4 (the Barbers’ Play), Towneley’s Play 4, and the Brome Play — all accentuate the anguish of Isaac’s impending sacrifice. What sets this N-Town play apart from the other English versions is its lack of pathos. Even though the dramatic tension in this N-Town version is more muted than in the other versions, it comes across as the most pietistic and typologically evocative. In other words, in this play neither Abraham nor Isaac doubt God’s word or the necessity of the sacrifice. In this way, the play clearly foreshadows Christ’s willing sacrifice in the Passion Plays.

The play is written entirely in octaves. The biblical source is Genesis 22:1–19.

- 14        *My swete sone that stondyth me by.* Here, as in the Noah Play with its lineup of characters, the play begins with an exemplary display, as if casting an emblem that reveals meaning through its typology.
- 72        *save thi serwaunt.* A common appeal for salvation. E.g., compare Vulgate Psalm 21:21, cited in Da, p. 103n2.
- 73        *Abraham! How, Abraham.* In Genesis 22:1 it is God, not an angel, who summons Abraham. Spector notes the same practice of God speaking through angels rather than in person in the N-Town Noah Play, and also in York, Northampton, and Brome Abraham plays. As precedent see the *Viel Testament* (S 2:428).
- 78        *Ysaac, thi sone, anon thu take.* See Genesis 22:2.
- 125–30   See Genesis 22:7–8.
- 137–84   Woolf notes that this version is the only English one in which Isaac is unafraid to die (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 150). Martin Stevens agrees, stating that this play “is the first developed illustration of standard typology in the cycle, and consequently it conditions the expectations of the reader/spectator to apply ‘typological thinking’ to the text and to the performance. . . . The playwright makes every effort to bind his dramatic action together and to show us that no single part of his drama can be separated from the whole” (*Mystery Cycles*, pp. 234, 236).
- 179        As Spector observes, covering Isaac’s face is not in the Genesis account. But it is part of the York, Chester, Brome, and the French plays. See Rendall, “Visual Typology,” pp. 227–28 (cited in S 2:428). Typologically, the kerchief foreshadows Veronica’s action in Passion 2 (32.41–48).
- 185–92   See Genesis 22:11–12.
- 199–202   Spector raises the dispute whether the *shepe* is a lamb, prefigurative of Christ, or the Old Testament sacrificial ram (S 2:428). Rendall, “Visual Typology,” is part of the discussion. The generic term *shepe* can refer either to a male or a female (*MED*).

- 205–08    See Genesis 22:14.
- 209–24    See Genesis 22:15–18.
- 240        *With hert . . . thought . . . mayn . . . myght.* Isaac acknowledges God in accordance with Deuteronomy 6:5. This statement, which Christ calls “the greatest and the first commandment” in Matthew 22:36–38, is biblically from the mouth of Moses: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength” (Deuteronomy 6:4–5). Augustine famously concluded that “the end of the commandment is love (*caritas*)” (*On Christian Doctrine* 1.26). Together with the next two verses (see note to 6.47–50), this passage is a primary liturgical reading for the compline service on Maundy Thursday. Isaac’s testament as a sacrifice saved by God’s “shepe” (line 200) is thus juxtaposed directly with the Maundy Thursday revelations of the coming sacrifice of God’s lamb (i.e., Christ).

## 6. MOSES

In the British Isles, there are dozens of references to medieval and early modern Moses plays depicting different episodes such as Miriam and Moses, Moses and Aaron, the Israelites in Egypt, Moses and Pharaoh, the Exodus, and Moses receiving the Ten Commandments. Yet we have only four play texts. Chester’s version begins with the promulgation of the Decalogue from Sinai (lines 1–95), but continues with the comic Balaam and the ass story (Numbers 22–24), and concludes with Phineas’ ending of the plague (Numbers 25). It is clear that the Chester Moses Play is more of a prophets’ play that (with the Doctor’s frequent comments) points toward the Nativity. Woolf observes that the York Moses Play (and the Towneley version, which is a variant of the York play) follows the *Speculum humanae salvationis* in juxtaposing the Exodus from Egypt with the Harrowing of Hell (*English Mystery Plays*, pp. 153–54, 379n53). In this parallel, Pharaoh prefigures Satan, and Moses prefigures Christ. It makes good sense, then, for the York version to focus on Moses’ birth in captivity, his childhood, the encounter with the burning bush, and Moses’ miracles that eventually lead to Pharaoh’s demise and the Israelites’ release from bondage.

The N-Town Moses Play, on the other hand, consists of only two episodes: the burning bush and a sermonic rendering of the Decalogue, two events which seem to have little in common. (See Exodus 3:1–12, 20:1–17, and Deuteronomy 5:6–21.) It seems that this play could have been two plays spliced together by a playwright or even the compiler. The unique couplet in the play (for the rest of the play is entirely in octaves), “The comaundment of thi Lord God, man, loke thu kepe / Where that thu walk, wake, or slepe” (lines 49–50), appears to be a linking reiteration of later lines, “Frendys, these be the lawys that ye must kepe. . . . / Wethyr that thu do wake or slepe” (lines 187, 189).

It is interesting to note that the N-Town Moses describes the Decalogue as existing in two distinct tablets, divided into three and seven commandments (lines 59–60). Furthermore, the ecclesiastical thrust of the sermonic commentary on the Ten Commandments found in N-Town is somewhat unusual. While it may be predictable for the gloss on the third commandment to say that we should spend Sunday “In Goddys hous” (line 113), the sermon on the fourth commandment (“fadyr and modyr to wurchep alway,” line 118) ends with:

To thi gostly Fadyr evyr reverens do;  
 Thi gostly Modyr is Holy Cherch. . . .  
 Ever them to wurchep loke that thu werch. (lines 127–28, 130)

As opposed to York and Chester, which foretell the work of Christ's salvation, this N-Town Moses Play points to other elements of the cosmic plan of salvation — the Virgin birth and the birth of Holy Church, Ecclesia — embodied in the Virgin Mary. The *Speculum humanae salvationis* explains that Mary's heart contained the two tablets of the Decalogue (lines 1243–48) and that the burning bush before Moses prefigures the immaculate conception. (The association between Mary and the burning bush is also assumed in numerous similar contexts; see note to line 21.) Clearly this Moses Play, in employing the burning bush, emphasizes the Virgin Mary, but more specifically her role as Ecclesia. For further studies that discuss the burning bush and the Decalogue together, see Freeman, "Iconography of the Merode Altarpiece," p. 131; Harris, "Mary in the Burning Bush"; Richard, "Iconography of the Virgin Portal at Amiens"; and Cannon, "Simone Martini," p. 70.

This play is written entirely in octaves. The Latin rendering of the Decalogue is not included in the stanzas.

- 14        *Enforme and teche*. This is the first specific indicator of the play's didactic goals.
- 21        "The burning bush as a type of Mary, which seems to have been current in Church commentary by the fourth century (Graef, p. 60), was a familiar image in English literature. See, for example, Chaucer's *ABC* and the prologue to the *Prioress' Tale*; Lydgate's 'To Mary, the Queen of Heaven', 'Ave, Jesse virgula!' (*Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, ed. Henry Noble MacCracken, EETS es 107 (1911), I: 286/33, 299/6), and the *Life of Our Lady* (ed. Joseph A. Lauritis, Pittsburgh, 1961, II: 799–802); and the *Myroure of oure Ladye* (ed. John Henry Blunt, EETS es 19 (1873), p. 296); also Towneley 12/359–67 and Chester 19/80–7. See E. Harris, 'Mary in the Burning Bush', *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 1 (1937–8), 281–6, and Anderson, pp. 24–5" (S 2:429–30).
- 47–50    *Your byddyng, Lord, all wrought shal be . . . Where that thu walk, wake, or slepe*. The playwright, having made use of Deuteronomy 6:4–5 in the previous play (see note to 5.240), continues from this section of the Bible with Deuteronomy 6:6–7: "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart. And thou shalt tell them to thy children, and thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house, and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising."
- 48a        Spector does not number the Latin lines here. Apparently he looks upon them as a kind of stage direction. It may well be, however, that Moses speaks the Latin lines, in which case the vernacular verses that follow serve as a commentary on the word of God that Deus has bestowed upon him. So here, then later in lines 98a, etc., to the reciting of the Tenth Commandment in line 170a.
- 59–64    Spector notes that Isidore of Seville, Bede, and Hugh of St. Victor endorsed this particular division of the Decalogue into 3 and 7 (S 2:430).
- 71–82    It is noteworthy that this first commandment, in late medieval terms, stands against envying another social station (*degré*, line 72) and idolatry (*this werdllys vanyté*, line 74). Spector comments on the latter idea (S 2:430). Spector also cites

- Cawley, who notes anti-Lollard attitudes in this play's failure to mention image worship.
- 99      *as I rede*. *Rede* might mean "advise [you]," though it probably simply means "read," which would confirm the idea that Moses speaks the Latin passages aloud prior to each explication.
- 101–06      See the demon's prologue in Passion Play 1, 26.65–84.
- 130a      Compare Exodus 20:13. See Spector (S 2:431) on the exposition given here of lines 131–38.
- 138a      Compare Exodus 20:14. Spector (S 2:431) points the reader to *Lay Folks' Catechism*, p. 98.
- 170      *thin owyn choyse*. Moses abjures his listeners not only to think of their own choices in marriage (i.e., that those who are married should not go into another bed) but also to consider the greater implications of *choyse* (i.e., free will) and, perhaps, other marital options (i.e., marriage to the Church, which likewise cannot be betrayed).
- 179–86      Spector (S 2:431) attributes the emphasis of the sixth commandment (lechery) to Augustine (*In Heptateuchum*, PL 34:621) and Hugh of St. Victor (PL 220:420–21).

## 7. ROOT OF JESSE

The scriptural background for this play is found in the account of David's anointing (1 Kings [1 Samuel] 5:1–13) and in the prophecy that describes the branch of the house of David (Isaiah 11:1). For an iconographic history of the Jesse Root, see Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, pp. 15–22. It is possible that a source for this play could have been the *Biblia Pauperum* (or some other literary or art work based on it) because all of the thirteen prophets are listed in the *Biblia Pauperum*, and four of the thirteen scriptural citations are exact.

With its paired sets of thirteen prophets and thirteen kings, this play reveals the Christ as the synthesis of fleshly and spiritual power (Sugano, "From Playbooks to *Compilatio*," pp. 71–73). While the play is, perhaps, the most tableau-like in the manuscript, it carries powerful iconographic and numerological significance. For example, there are twenty-seven speakers (prophets, kings, and Jesse), or three cubed, the Trinitarian number signifying the realization in time and space of integrity and perfection. Thus, the speeches in this play divide into three groups of nine speeches: the first group reveals Mary's role as the gate of heaven; the second group attests to Christ's life on earth; and the third section praises his ministry, grace, and eventual judgment. Scholars have noted the N-Town version's emphasis on both Christ's and Mary's coming. (See Martin Stevens, *Mystery Cycles*, p. 186, and Brawer, "Form and Function of the Prophetic Procession," pp. 108–10. See also textual note after line 136 below.) It is important to note that while the iconographic references are strong for late medieval audiences and readers, there is not always an inherent textual connection between the kings and prophets of the Jesse Root and their respective messages. In other words, the particular prophetic messages in this play are not always found in the Bible.

Spector notes that the patristic source for this play is likely the pseudo-Augustinian *Contra Iudaeos*. There are French religious prophets' and kings' plays as well (S 2:432). The



names of the thirteen kings are found in the patriarchal genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:1–16. The only other extant English Prophets Play is Towneley Play 7, which has only four characters: Moses, Daniel, David, and the Sibyl. This is not to say, however, that prophets' pageants were uncommon in England. There are dozens of references to such plays or pageants in the late Middle Ages (compare Lancashire, *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain*), many of them part of Palm Sunday events. The Jesse Tree or Root was a common subject depicted in breviaries, church windows, and in carvings. See *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves*, pl. 90 "Tree of Jesse" for the Saturday Hours of the Virgin in Prime, which was used as the model for staging the play in the Poculi Ludique Societas (Toronto) production of the play, 28–29 May 1988, where the actors filled the branches of the tree that grows from sleeping Jesse's body. Implicit in the references to branches and shoots both in this play as well as several parts of the proposed Mary Play is the Latin pun on *virga* (branch) and *virgo* (virgin). Interestingly enough this pun applies not only to Mary but to Joseph as well. On the iconographic value and consistent pattern of images of ripeness, flowering, and fruitfulness around the figure of Mary here and elsewhere in N-Town, see Fewer, "Fyfigure," pp. 128–30.

The play is written in octaves.

- 4–10      Compare Isaias 7:14–17. See also Spector, S 2:433, and Watson, *Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse*.
- 6          *Zabulon*. According to Block (Bl, p. 382) and Spector (S 2:433), *Zabulon* is synonymous with the Devil.
- 13        *sacerdotale lynage*. The genealogy is twofold: royal, through David's (Joseph's) line; and priestly, through the prophet's (Mary's) line. See Play 14, line 113 and note. The play is remarkably skillful in presenting through the procession of prophets the history of Israel between the time of Moses and the Old Law and the play of Mary and the New Law. The prophets present a genealogy of people but also of their sins and misdirections that make evident the need for Jesus to be born from Mary, the new temple, through the "cloistre blisful" (CT VIII[G]43) of whose sides Christ is born. See note to lines 41–44 below.
- 17–18    See Isaias 11:1. As Spector describes, in a typical depiction of the Jesse tree, Jesse either sleeps at the foot of the genealogical tree or the tree grows from his body (S 2:433). See headnote to Play 7.
- 27–32    Compare Vulgate Psalms 21:28, 71:11, 84:12–13, 109:1 (S 2:433).
- 35–40    Compare Jeremias 33:14–18 (S 2:434).
- 41–44    *MED* notes (3b) that *figure* is a prefiguration, foreshadowing, or a foreboding. It is significant that Solomon, the king who completed the Temple, is the prophet of this particular speech. Spector notes (by way of Ambrose and Rabanus Maurus) that the Temple was a type of the Virgin (S 2:434), and vice versa. See Chaucer's Second Nun on "the cloistre blisful of [Mary's] sydis" (CT VIII[G]43). The *Biblia Pauperum*, on the page depicting the Presentation of Christ (plate d), makes it clear that the temple was Mary's body, but, also, that it is Christ's (*Biblia Pauperum*, p. 55). Nichols, citing Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* (trans. Ryan, 2.83–84), observes that Mary is "the tabernacle . . . the dwelling place of

- the Son of God" ("Hierosphthitic Topos," pp. 29–39). See also Raby, *History of Christian-Latin Poetry*, p. 366, and Gibson, "*Porta haec clausa erit*," p. 143.
- 45–48 Compare Ezechiel 44:1–3 and 46:1–2 (see S 2:434), and also Canticles 4:9. The closed gate is read exegetically as a figure of Mary's virginity. See Gibson, "*Porta haec clausa erit*."
- 51–52 Compare Genesis 3:15 and N-Town 2.263–65. Rehoboam was the king who caused the kingdom of Israel to divide.
- 55–56 Compare Micheas 4:9–13. Spector also cites Micheas 1:3, 5:2, and 7:18–20 (S 2:434).
- 57–60 King Abijah was Rehoboam's son who tried to reunite Israel.
- 61–64 Compare Daniel 4:10–15. See Collins (*N-Town Plays*, pp. 3–9) on the fruit of life trope; Martin Stevens (*Mystery Cycles*, p. 241) on Maiden's fruit; Bonnell ("Source in Art," pp. 334–35) on Seth's vision of the Christ-child in a tree; and Mozley ("*Vita Adae*," pp. 123–24) on Daniel's vision.
- 65 King Asa was a godly reformer, compare 2 Paralipomenon (Chronicles) 15.
- 65–88 Spector suggests that these lines recall the Apostles' Creed (S 2:435): see note to lines 85–88.
- 69–73 Compare Jonas 1:17. N.b. the configuration represented in the *Biblia Pauperum*, pl. g and pl. i, where Jonah is juxtaposed with Joseph being cast into the well, as commentary on the Entombment of Christ, then coming out of the fish's mouth and juxtaposed with Samson removing the gates of the city, which are juxtaposed with the Resurrection from the tomb as the soldiers sleep.
- 73–74 Jehoshaphat was the son of Asa and known for establishing the judges (2 Paralipomenon [Chronicles] 19).
- 77–80 Spector (S 2:435) cites Abdias (Obadiah) 1:17, but 1:18–21 are the more relevant verses.
- 81 Joram, or Jehoram, was the son of Jehoshaphat (see Matthew 1:8). Compare 2 Paralipomenon (Chronicles) 21. Spector (S 2:435) cites Kretzmann (p. 32), who links the idea here to a liturgical exegesis on the genealogy in Matthew 1: "Joras: Nemo ascendit in caelum nisi qui descendit de caelo: Filius hominis qui est in caelo" ["Nobody ascends into heaven unless he descends from it: The Son of Man who is in heaven" — my translation].
- 85–88 Compare Habacuc 1:1–4, 2:6–20. Habacuc's testament closely resembles part of the Roman Symbol, the so-called Apostles' Creed, which survives in its earliest form from the pen of Hippolytas but which, according to legend, was written down by the Apostles ten days after Christ's Ascension. The *credo* reads, in part: "tertia die resurrexit a mortuis; ascendit ad caelos; sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris omnipotentis; inde venturus [est] judicare vivos et mortuos" ["the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead"].

- 89, s.n. *OZIAS REX*. Uzziah, or Azariah, was a king of Judah. Compare 4 Kings (2 Kings) 15:1–7.
- 93–96 Compare Joel 2:28. See also Spector (S 2:435), who draws parallels with York 12.85 ff and Chester 5.376–84 (MS H).
- 97, s.n. *JOATHAS REX*. Jotham was king of Judah and son of Azariah (see Matthew 1:9). Compare 4 Kings (2 Kings) 15:32–38, 2 Paralipomenon (Chronicles) 26:21–27.
- 101–04 Spector cites Joel 2:28, Aggeus (Haggai) 2:8, and Jesse Trees in late medieval art (S 2:435).
- 105, s.n. *ACHAS REX*. King Ahaz was son of Jotham and known for idolatry and alliances with Assyria. Compare 4 Kings (2 Kings) 16, 2 Paralipomenon (Chronicles) 28, Isaiaas 7, and Matthew 1:9.
- 109, s.n. *OZYAS PROPHETA*. Although the book of Osee (Hosea) does not overtly prophesy the birth of Emmanuel, there is a strong redemptive message that is intimately related to God's marriage to humankind. Osee marries a harlot at God's command to demonstrate God's love of mankind who, even though unfaithful, will be redeemed. The work is often linked with Canticles as are Marian texts, Mary being the true and worthy bride of Christ who mediates in the redemption of the unworthy. The *Biblia Pauperum* often uses Osee in conjunction with the story of Mary: e.g., Osee 5:6 as commentary on the flight into Egypt (pl. e), and Osee 10:2 as commentary on the Holy Family's sojourn there (pl. f); also Osee 8:4 to comment on the Slaughter of the Innocents (pl. g), and Osee 11:1 to comment on the Holy Family's return from Egypt (pl. h). Osee 9:15 is cited as commentary on Christ's cleansing of the Temple (pl. p), and Osee 13:14 as commentary on Christ's descent into Limbo (pl. h), and Osee 6:3 on the Resurrection (pl. i). Finally, the *Biblia Pauperum* cites Osee 2:14 as commentary on the daughter of Jerusalem discovering her spouse as Christ appears to Mary Magdalene (pl. l), and Osee 2:19, "I will wed you forever," as commentary on the final plate (v) on the Crowning of the Bride and Apocalypse 21:9 as John the Evangelist reveals the secret things of God.
- 113, s.n. *EZECHIAS REX*. King Hezekiah was known for restoring the Temple. Compare 2 Paralipomenon (Chronicles) 29–31 and Sirach 48:17–22.
- 117, s.n. *SOPHOSAS PROPHETA*. The prophet Sophonias (Zephaniah) claims to be a descendent of King Hezekiah (Sophonias [Zephaniah] 1:1). The book of Sophonias preaches judgment. While he does not write about *that maydens byrth* (line 120), he does foretell a day of restoration. Compare Sophonia (Zephaniah) 3:9–20.
- 121, s.n. *MANASSES REX*. King Manasseh was the son of Hezekiah. Compare 4 Kings (2 Kings) 21, 2 Paralipomenon (Chronicles) 33.
- 125, s.n. *BARUK PROPHETA*. Plate v of the *Biblia Pauperum* has a portrait of Baruch and this verse: "If they fall to the ground they do not get up again by themselves: (Baruch 6:26)." Clearly, as the last lines (in this play) form a prophecy, this speech is about judgment. It is interesting to note that the other scriptural and visual types on the *Biblia Pauperum* page juxtapose the foolish virgins (Matthew

25:1–13), the Fall of Lucifer (Apocalypse 13:9 and Isaías 14:12–15), two Old Testament prophecies about the revelation of the Messiah (Lamentations 2:16 and Isaías 53:2–3), and Jesus' arresting party being thrown to the ground (John 18:4–6 and Matthew 26:36). See also Spector, S 2:435.

- 129, s.n. *AMON REX*. King Amon (rendered Amos in Matthew 1:10) was the son of Manasseh. Compare 4 Kings (2 Kings) 21:18–26, 1 Paralipomenon (Chronicles) 3:14, 2 Paralipomenon (Chronicles) 33:21–25.

### THE MARY PLAY (PLAYS 8–11)

The first scholar to notice the independent nature of the Mary Play was E. Martin Browne, who edited it as the *Play of the Maid Mary*. Since that time, the most noteworthy treatment of the play has been Peter Meredith's *Mary Play*. The evidence for a discrete Marian play-book is convincing as there are scribal disruptions in the manuscript (lacuane, changes in the scribal hands to accommodate this new material, various attempts at reconciling old and new play material, etc.). The internal evidence is convincing as well. The N-Town Banns displays two types of disruptions to accommodate the Marian material. First of all, the Banns has been revised to this end, and even with the revisions, fails to describe the full extent of the Mary Play. The main scribe attempted to reconcile the new material, in part, by renumbering the plays. This proved a difficult task, as the corrected numbering in the Banns skips from play 7 (Root of Jesse) to play 10 (the Marriage of Mary and Joseph). The next stanza in the Banns, which should typically describe another play, is again enumerated as play 10. It is clear that the compiler never finished reconciling the old and new material. Secondly, the versification in the Banns changes, indicating a change in source material. Several stanzas in this part of the Banns are written as quatrains, not the usual thirteener stanzas found in the Banns and in the older cycle material. The Banns also neglects to mention the Presentation of Mary in the Temple and the Visit to Elizabeth.

Another noteworthy feature of this group of Mary plays is the figure of Contemplacio, who serves as a kind of wise counselor/narrator with his insightful meditations/mediations that both pace and advance the action of the plot and, at the same time, engage the spirit of Christian culture as it contemplates the events unfolding before the very eyes and ears of the audience. His role in these plays is so pronounced that these Marian plays are sometimes referred to as "The Contemplacio Group" (Rastall, *Minstrels Playing*, p. 60). Rastall also notes that the English stage directions tend to be longer and more developed in the Marian group, though there is, he argues, a complete lack of musical directives in this section, suggesting that the concern over musical performance, so prominent elsewhere in N-Town, is written into the cycle later, after the Mary plays had been originally assembled (*Minstrels Playing*, pp. 66–67, 78). Apparently the *Ave Maria*, in 11.223, 226, was to have been spoken, rather than sung, for instance, as was "the rather unusual saying [in Latin] of the *Magnificat*" in 13.82 ff. (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 76). Likewise, the *Nunc dimittis*, originally written to be spoken (19.146, s.d.), is sung only after the addition of a subsequent marginal stage direction (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 77). There are, it must be pointed out, several stage directions of music in the surviving manuscript of these plays, though these, Rastall suggests, are all later additions. See the notes to 8.97, s.d., 8.172, s.d., or 8.211–12, below.

The use of eclectic sources is reflected in the play as well. Woolf sees influences in Continental plays (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 161), and Forrest sees liturgical sources ("Apocryphal

Sources of the St. Anne's Day Plays"). The primary apocryphal sources are: Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, *Nativity of Mary*, *The Life of St. Anne*, Nicholas Love's *Mirroure of the Blessed Lyf of Christ*, *Protoevangelium*, Pseudo-Matthew, and *The Charter of the Abbey of the Holy Ghost*. Of particular interest is Love's *Mirroure* (a translation and expansion of the *Meditationes*) because of its specifically anti-Lollard stance. The *Mirroure* was also an important source for the N-Town Passion Plays (S 1:xliv–xlv, 2:538–41).

Besides the aforementioned disruptions in the manuscript, the narrative functions of Contemplacio, the initial exclusion of music, and the use of eclectic sources, the versification shifts in the Mary Play as well. In general, the thirteeners and the nine-line stanzas are likely remnants of the older cycle material while the octaves and quatrains arise from either the exemplar for the Mary Play or the main scribe's revisions. It is clear that this play was relatively new to the manuscript, but that it also led a life apart from and prior to its inclusion into the larger N-Town compilation. This can be seen in the main scribe's alternative ending to the Mary Play. And we may deduce that the different endings may represent different performance contexts. For more complete manuscriptal discussions of the Mary Play, see Spector (S 2:537–43), Meredith (*MP*, pp. 1–6), Fletcher, "Layers of Revision," and Sugano, "From Playbooks to *Compilatio*" (pp. 103–33). For discussion on the numbering of lines within the Mary Play and other issues of editing, see the headnote to the text, pp. 18–19, above.

## 8. JOACHIM AND ANNE

Woolf notes that "the history of salvation must begin, not with the Annunciation as had previously been done, but with the story of Joachim and Anna" (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 161). N-Town is the only one of the English cycles to devote a play to the moment; it sets off the miraculous birth of Mary's Son but also sets up the pairing of Christ's Ascension with Mary's Assumption (see Play 40), which the Ascension makes possible. The Joachim and Anne Play, with its divine interventions, prepares the audience, as Kinservik argues, "for the important function her flesh will serve in the salvific mission. From conception, Mary's sinless body serves a calling that will transcend all earthly rules" ("Mary's Body," p. 194), and even the laws of the Mosaic code. See note to 10.76. Fitzhenry, picking up on Gibson's notion of an "incarnational aesthetic" (*Theater of Devotion*, p. 7) in the play, discusses "self-reflexive characters and situations in N-Town through which the personal becomes a vehicle for a much more intellectualized version of drama," especially with "characters like Contemplacio, Demon, the Virgin Mary, and Herod the Great [who] are concretely realized characters that simultaneously raise important philosophical questions about theater, religion, and politics" ("Politics of Metatheater," pp. 23–24).

- 1-25      Contemplacio's opening speech, as in other parts of the Mary Play, is in octaves, except for his final nine-line stanza here.
- 3-8      *the pronunciacyon . . . oblocucyon . . . conceyte*. On Contemplacio's meditations as a dramatic narrator and his apology for the amateur quality and capabilities of the cast, as well as the script, see Fitzhenry, "Politics of Metatheater," p. 28.
- 9-16      Contemplacio outlines plays in the earlier Mary Play: 1) The Conception of Mary; 2) The Presentation of Mary in the Temple; 3) The Betrothal of Mary and Joseph; 4) The Annunciation; and 5) The Visitation with Elizabeth. It is interesting to note that Contemplacio's prologue ignores Joseph's Doubt, a play that

was likely part of the older cycle material, not the original Mary playbook, which apparently did not include the Assumption Play either, though neither is that play mentioned in the Banns. Gibson calls *Contemplacio* “the most extraordinary expositor figure in medieval drama” (*Theater of Devotion*, p. 130).

- 26–29 Rastall observes that this is “a free translation of the Offertory for Corpus Christi: *Sacerdotes Domini incensum et panes offerunt Deo: / et ideo sancti erunt Deo suo, et non pollutent nomen ejus, alleluia*. It is therefore possible, especially in view of the offerings made later in the play, that the entrance of Ysakar and his priests is a processional one with the singing of *Sacerdotes Domini*” (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 95).
- 26–105 Written in octaves.
- 30 *Ysakar, prynce of prestys, am I*. N-Town, particularly in the Mary Play, offers the most positive presentation of the Jewish “priesthood” in medieval drama. The *prestys* know the law well, yet are open to interpretation and revelation. Occasionally they are prophetic and, when confronted with contradiction, they try to understand the discrepancies humanely. Even when they are perverse and deceitfully destructive, as Phariseus, Accusator, and Scriba are in Play 24 (the Woman Taken in Adultery), when exposed they have a capacity for remorse and deep-seated self-examination. On Ysakar as emblem of the Old Law, see Bennett, “Communication and Excommunication,” pp. 121–28, where “Ysakar’s hermeneutic is the (perceived) literalism of the Old Law — misfortune signifies curse; bad signifies bad — whereas Joachim’s is the Augustinian hermeneutic of *caritas*: ostensible misfortune actually signifies (as it must) divine love” (p. 128). But, Bennett insists, Ysakar is not to be viewed simply as a negative character, despite his harsh sentence. See Meredith on Ysakar’s interface with the New Law: “no other surviving English play goes to such lengths to re-create a solemn church ritual, nor uses the Christian liturgy so imaginatively” (*MP*, p. 16). N.b., for example, his singing with his ministers the *Benedicta sit beata Trinitas* (line 97, s.d.): “The singing of the sequence in honour of the Trinity, the solemn censuring of the altar, the presence not only of the bishop but also of his ministers, the echoes of the preparation of the mass all serve to establish the grandeur of ‘God-dys hous’” (*MP*, p. 16). See note to 9.172–85. But Bennett moves beyond Meredith to demonstrate how with Joachim’s retirement to the company of his shepherds and Anne’s withdrawal into private meditation God acts beyond the regulation of church hierarchy in ways strongly sympathetic to Lollard views of God’s jurisdiction. The “countryside-Temple antinomy seems to deliberately echo an East Anglian Lollard idiom” (p. 127).
- 34–37 *Festum Encenniorum . . . to do sacryfyse*. The three major pilgrim-feasts, so-called because all Jewish males were commanded to make pilgrimage to “appear before the Lord thy God” in Jerusalem and there make sacrifice, are defined in Exodus 23:14–17 as the Feasts of Passover, Weeks, and Tabernacles. The Feast of Incense (or, as some of the poet’s sources call it, the “feast of Dedication” — e.g., Jacobus de Voragine’s *Golden Legend*, trans. Ryan, 2:151), however, is the Feast of Lights, Hanukkah, a relatively minor feast which did not require travel to Jerusalem to celebrate and which commemorates the Maccabean re-dedication of the Temple (see 1 Machabees 4:41–64). The proximity of Hanukkah to the New Year is

probably responsible for Ysakar's calling it a *neue fest* (line 35). It would seem that tradition either has assumed Hanukkah to have a greater importance as a result of its proximity to Christmas or has confused Hanukkah with the Feast of the Tabernacles which occurs at the end of the fall harvest and during which the First Temple had originally been dedicated (3 Kings [1 Kings] 8). Interestingly, it was during the earlier feast that the women's court of the temple was illuminated and the fifteen Gradual Psalms were historically sung by the approaching pilgrims, a detail that is picked up in the Marian tradition (see below, 9.101 ff.). Also of note in these matters is the fact that it is during Hanukkah that Jesus proclaims his divinity at the temple in John 10:22–30.

- 40 *We be regal sacerdocium*. Ysakar identifies himself as part of the royal priesthood, the order of Melchizedek. See 1 Peter 2:9, Vulgate Psalm 109:4.
- 41 Meredith and Spector note that these four methods of expiation — “prayingis, fastingis, almes dede, and wakyngis” — are listed in *Speculum sacerdotale* (see *MP*, p. 88n41; S 2:438).
- 81 Proverbial saying about sorrow. Whiting S515.
- 82, s.n. *SENIOR TRIBUS*. “Head of the tribe (or clan).”
- 97, s.d. *There they shal synge this sequens*. Here we have a specific designation of music in the Mary plays, but, Rastall argues, the stage direction may be “not as old as the text: That is, the service may originally have been said, with the music being added at some stage.” So too line 172, s.d. (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 81). Rastall notes that “*Benedicta sit beata trinitas* is found in the Sarum Use as the sequence for Trinity Sunday, but it also appears in the octave of the Feast of Pentecost and for a Nuptial Mass. This play is not concerned with a marriage but with the Immaculate Conception, so a reference to the Holy Spirit was perhaps intended” (p. 95). See also *MP*, p. 89n97sd. Dutka provides the entire sequence (*Index of Songs*, pp. 22–23).
- 98–134 Joachim's expulsion from the Temple has been likened to the expulsion of penitents at Lent (Fletcher, “Design of the N-town Play of Mary's Conception”). Bennett views the expulsion as a form of excommunication, a volatile contemporary topic in an area known for its Lollardy (“Communication and Excommunication”).
- 106–16 In quatrains, followed by a non-metrical Latin line.
- 110–16 Rastall notes: “The responsorial performance of *Adjutorium nostrum* and the episcopal blessing *Benedicat vos divina* are found in the Sarum Manual after the nuptial mass . . . although they do not seem to have been invariable. Line 109 marginal stage direction turns it into a sung performance. The signs of the Cross in this blessing are written in red in the play text, as they would be in a liturgical source” (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 96).
- 114, s.n. *EPISCOPUS*. Apparently Ysakar and Episcopus are one and the same person. The manuscript uses the more formal designation here for the instructional pronouncements. The stage direction after line 97 indicates that Ysakar approaches “with his ministries” and apparently one of the ministers speaks line 112. Then

the voice of instruction returns to Ysakar who would probably be identified by his mitre.

117–236 In octaves with two quatrains, lines 117–20 and 145–48.

133–34 These two verses have been marked apart from Joachim's speech by lines and *pastores* has been written in a different, more faint hand above and at the end of line 133 (see S 2:439). Perhaps the rough lines indicate that the actor has crossed from the Temple to a grazing area as he speaks and addresses the shepherds, which would suggest that the manuscript has been used as a performance script. Spector goes on to note letters written in the left margin: "a" before 135, "b" before 139 and 141, "c" before 143, and "d" before 145. "This lettering may have been corrected to the cancellation at line 139 of the speaker heading 'ijus Pastor' and the writing 'Joachym' above it." But Spector's suggestion does not take into account the rough line between lines 134 and 135, which extends all the way over to the first shepherd's speech marker.

135–212 There is some scribal confusion regarding the three shepherds' parts. Meredith and Spector suggest that Joachim's speech (lines 139–42) was once delivered by Pastor 2 (see textual note to line 139). Meredith also proposes that this scene may have been intended, at one point, to be a separate or independent play (MP, p. 90n133–212).

141 *The meke, God lyfthyth up.* Foreshadows the Magnificat said by Mary and Elizabeth in the Visit to Elizabeth Play, at the very end of the Mary Play (13.81–126).

143 Proverbial. Whiting S507.

144 *Sympyl as we kan, we shal for yow pray.* In praying for Joachim and Anne's conception of Mary, the shepherds pray unwittingly for the advent of Christ. In the Nativity Play, this prayer of kindness will be answered manifold.

153–56 *Thu hast sent me shame . . . for all my prosperité . . . to thee I am bounde . . . in tribulacyon.* Joachim finds joy in his shame and tribulation. Meredith (MP) compares his paradoxical response to Apocalypse 3:19: "Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise," and Proverbs 3:12: "For whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth." (See also Job 5:17 and Hebrews 12:5–6.)

155 *tokyn.* The *tokyn* is paradoxical, signifying Anne's barrenness and her blessedness simultaneously (Bennett, "Communication and Excommunication," p. 128).

156 *Thou seyst . . . in tribulacyon be.* Joachim could be thinking of any number of biblical passages that present God as a refuge in times of trouble. E.g., Isaiah 41:10, 43:1–3; Vulgate Psalm 30:5, 45:1–3, or, perhaps most famously, 22:14: "The Lord ruleth me . . . For though I walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for thou art with me."

162 *prayors prostrat byfore thi person.* Bennett ("Communication and Excommunication," p. 130) argues that "the pervasive Lollard doctrine of a priesthood of all believers seems to be endorsed by the efficacy of the shepherds' ministry. . . . It is Joachim's [devout prayer] that matters . . . not the offering Ysakar refuses, and God's acceptance of that prayer coincides with his election of Joachim [and



- Anne] to originate, through Mary and Jesus, the new ‘kingly presthod’” cited in the Wycliffite Bible that gives primacy to prayer over ritual.
- 172, s.d. *Exultet celum laudibus*. The hymn *Exultet celum laudibus* appears in the Sarum Antiphoner, though not precisely with this wording. Rastall suggests that the author of the stage direction perhaps quotes the whole first verse to specify a known variant version (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 96). Spector (S 2:439–40) notes that the hymn is used for Lauds at the Feast of the Apostles (see also *MP*, p. 91n172sd); the *Conversion of St. Paul* ends with this hymn, as well (see *Late Medieval Religious Plays*, ed. Baker, Murphy, and Hall).
- 173–99 Spector compares the angel’s speech to its equivalent passage in Jacobus de Voragine’s *Golden Legend*, which the compiler “faithfully renders” (S 2:440).
- 191 *joys fyff*. The five joys of Mary are the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Assumption. See the several lyrics on this moment in *Middle English Marian Lyrics*, ed. Saupe, pp. 137–46.
- 198 *Gyldyn Gate*. Meredith notes that this is Jerusalem’s eastern gate through which Christ passed on Palm Sunday (*MP*, p. 92n198); it is also called the Beautiful Gate (see Acts 3:2).
- 211–12 *We shal make us so mery . . . ye shal here us synge*. Rastall suggests: “Note the connection of merriment with song: the shepherds can sing loudly, apparently. The song must happen immediately, covering the scene-change after 8/212” (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 81).
- 225 *werd*. While I have glossed this as “world,” it is difficult not to see a pun on OE *word* and *wyrd*, as well. See explanatory note to 2.169, above.
- 226 Proverbial. See Whiting T484, B52, B325, etc.
- 237–53 Thirteener stanza followed by a quatrain.
- 238 *I shalle on myn knes and to hymward crepe*. As Spector notes (S 2:441), there is no known precedent for Anne’s crawling to meet Joachim.

## 9. PRESENTATION OF MARY IN THE TEMPLE

- 1 *Sovereynes, ye han sen shewyd yow before*. Contemplacio serves as a narrator linking the several Mary plays that have been *shewyd yow before* as if they were episodes of a single drama. The specific reference here is of course to Play 8: Joachim and Anne. *Sovereynes* is a polite form of address that suggests something more elevated than a general audience of varying classes, perhaps a more genteel middle- or upper-class audience. Contemplacio puts such emphasis on “alle pepyl that ben here present” (line 10) “in this place” (line 17) that it is conceivable the play was performed serially, in a more enclosed space than most pageants, perhaps even indoors. The summary of the scope of this particular play replaces the function of an induction and enhances the intimate atmosphere of a more restricted audience.
- 1–65 In octaves, with a nine-line stanza (lines 9–17).

- 23 *to thre personys and on God.* The reference to the Trinity, while somewhat anachronistic at this point, clearly makes Mary the child of theologically correct parents. That is, even though Jesus has yet to appear, Joachim and Anne are aware of the role that he (and the Holy Spirit) play in the godhead. See further lines 58–71, and the note to lines 172–85.
- 66–77 Written as three quatrains.
- 74 *thank yow.* Mary has asked her father (line 69) and her mother (line 71) for their blessings, which they have done through their invocation of the Trinity. Now Mary asks God’s blessing on them in return. See *MED thanken* v.3b and c: “to praise, extol the merits of”; “to be solicitous toward, attend to.”
- 78–161 Three octaves followed by quatrains with extra-stanzaic Latin lines.
- 101 ff. The fifteen psalms are the Gradual Psalms (119–33 in the Vulgate), which are the fifteen steps between the Beautiful Gate and the Gate of Nicanor in Herod’s Temple. The steps separate the courts of women and men. Mary speaks a quatrain on each step, which is followed by the first verse of the Latin psalm. One might expect that the Latin would come first, but here it comes after the child gives her recitation. Rastall suggests that after Mary declaims her lines “all present [would] say (or sing, to a normal psalm-chant) the first verse of each in Latin, as given” (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 97). Episcopus would, of course, lead the recitation or chant (for more, see note to lines 105 ff., below). For a lovely pictorial representation of this event, see *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves*, Hours of the Virgin — Terce, pl. 6: The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple. Meredith and Spector note the miracle of Mary’s ascending the Temple’s fifteen steps (*MP*, p. 94n350–51; *S* 2:442). On the connections of the signs to Jewish rites, see note to 8.34–37, above.
- 105 ff. The Latin lines are unnumbered and unattributed by Spector (whose example I have followed for ease of cross-referencing). In his note, Spector seems to indicate that the Latin lines are to be spoken by Mary (*S* 2:442–43). But more likely the Latin serves as a divine voice spoken by Episcopus in a liturgical call and response between priest and celebrant. This liturgical reading would dramatize Mary’s role as mediatrix as she stands between the priest and the watching audience, leading them step by step toward the inner sanctum of the Temple of God.
- 115 *planetys sefne.* Ptolemy stated that the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn all orbited the earth, in that order.
- 144 *Fro depnes, Lord, I have cryed to thee.* In addition to being one of the Gradual Psalms (see note to lines 101 ff.), *De profundis* (Vulgate Psalm 29:1) is, according to the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*:

also one of the seven Penitential Psalms which, in the East and the West, were already used as such by the early Christians. In the Divine office the *De profundis* is sung every Wednesday at Vespers, also at the second Vespers of Christmas; the words *Apud Dominum misericordia et copiosa apud eum redemptio*, remind us of the mercy of the Father Who sent His son for the redemption of mankind. It is also used in the ferial prayers of Lauds and in the Office of the Dead at Vespers. The Church recites this psalm principally in her prayers for

the dead; it is the psalm of the holy souls in purgatory, the words of the Psalmist applying well to the longing and sighing of the souls exiled from heaven. It is recited at funerals by the priest, before the corpse is taken out of the house to the church.

- 162 Manuscript marks the speaker as *Episcopus*, but he is likewise clearly Ysakar. The scribe's change in designation could emphasize Ysakar's institutional (as opposed to familial) role, but it is also possible that this change in the speaker's name indicates a different exemplar for the scribe.
- 162–293 Written in octaves, with a quatrain (lines 226–29).
- 172–85 The anachronism of pre-Christ individuals declaring themselves to be Christians is plain, as is their use of New Testament scriptures (see note to lines 183–85, below, where again *Episcopus* speaks in the voice of Christ). Perhaps much of the power of an anachronism lies precisely in this apparent paradox. One implication is that *Episcopus* is a priest like Ysakar, but also a figure beyond time, God's sacred spokesperson whose insights range from the divinely established priesthood of Malchizadek until the Last Judgment (see note to 8.30). It is as if the inner spirit of the Old Law speaks directly to those who have ears to hear and understand.
- 180 *he gevyth wysdam*. Ashley associates Christ with Wisdom, a central theme of the N-Town Plays; see "'Wyt' and 'Wysdam' in the N-Town Cycle."
- 183–85 Compare Luke 10:25–28, especially verse 27: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself." See also Mark 12:30–31, Matthew 22:37–39, and Deuteronomy 6:5.
- 194–245 *maydenys fyve*. Pseudo-Matthew mentions five maidens who will attend Mary. The maidens' names — *Meditacyon*, *Contryssyon*, *Compassyon*, *Clennes*, and *Fruyssyon* — suggest their own and Mary's qualities (*MP*, pp. 96–97n481–82).
- 211–16 Spector remarks: "The seven alliterative qualities personified by the priests are devotional and intellectual" (S 2:444).
- 230–45 Meredith notes that the seven petitions appear in the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* (*MP*, p. 513n513–23).
- 231 *kepe thi love and thi lawe*. See Carlson ("Mary's Obedience," pp. 353 ff.) on Mary's perpetual affirmation of the Law as well as her love of God. Compare "Agens the lawe wyl I nevyr be" (10.36), or her agreement "to observe oure lawe, also it is nedful" (10.95) — though never to break her vow of celibacy.
- 241 *wytllys fyve*. Normally, the five senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch), but Meredith renders the five as: "eyes, tongue, hands, feet, knees" (*MP*, p. 98n524).
- 245, s.d. *The hefne*. "The 'heaven' in this case must have been a separate platform or 'scaffold', in which the singing angels were housed" (John Stevens, "Music in Mediaeval Drama," p. 84).
- 248–53 *aungelys mete*. As in the previous stage direction, angel food refers to manna. In this theatrical case, as Meredith suggests, possibly communion wafers were used

- (*MP*, p. 98n528sd). Spector notes that in several medieval versions of Mary's life, "she eats angel's food and distributes her earthly food among the poor" (S 2:445). See also 28.52, s.d.–64, s.d.
- 262–69 *your name Maria . . . this holy name*. Just as medieval theologians commonly celebrate the many names of God, here the poet celebrates five of the dozens of traditional epithets for Mary, reading her name as if it were an acronym. The clever deconstructing of Mary's name that results (lines 263–68) is packed with alliteration, calling attention to this moment as an independent poetic unit of ritual sanctification.
- 265 *Regina of Regyon*. Queen, that is, of all Creation, including both heaven and hell. Compare line 268.
- 266 *Iesses*. While it is the practice of the Middle English Texts Series to regularize *i/j*, and thus typically to present the name here as "Jesse," in this instance I have chosen to ignore this principle in order to highlight the strong alliteration present in the text at this moment. Note also that the alliteration is probably not just orthographic, as the pronunciation of Jesse's name, here at least, likely follows the Vulgate "Isai."
- 268–69 Compare Philippians 2:10: "That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth," which now is extended to the name *Maria* as well.
- 277, s.d. Forrest notes that the hymn is sung at Lauds for the feats of the Virgin ("Apocryphal Sources of the St. Anne's Day Plays," p. 46n71). Dutka, *Index of Songs*, p. 32, provides the complete lyrics. On *in hefne*, see note to line 245, s.d., above.
- 285 Proverbial. Whiting G228, G231.
- 294–310 Two quatrains, followed by a nine-line stanza. I have left this speech at the end of Play 9, to keep the numbering of the plays congruent with Spector. But probably the speech should be looked upon as Prologue to Play 10, the way Contemplacio's speech at 9.1–17 serves as an induction to the Presentation of Mary in the Temple, and his speech at 11.1–32 introduces the Parliament of Heaven, etc.
- 303 Meredith notes that sources differ regarding Mary's age (*MP*, p. 99n586). Some sources say she is 12; here, she is 14.

#### 10. MARRIAGE OF MARY AND JOSEPH

- 1, s.d. *Ysakar Episcopus*. MS: *Abysakar Episcopus*. The odd spelling of his name could be the main scribe's attempt at reconciling his different sources. The name appears to be a conflation of Abyachar and Ysakar. See Banns, line 118, and textual note to this line.
- 1–91 Written in thirteener stanzas.

- 18–22 In contradiction to Contemplacio’s speech at the end of the Presentation of Mary, Mary here is not in the temple but at home.
- 44–74 Meredith remarks that “Mary tells the story of her own conception and presentation in the temple because there was no previous presentation of these episodes” (*MP*, p. 100n637–62). In other words, this recounting may be evidence that the Mary Play led an independent existence before its inclusion in this manuscript.
- 70–73 “No earthly creature may drive out the purity and chastity in my heart. You should not reproach such a pure life.” Or, possibly, *shove* (from ME *shouven*) might mean “thrust” or “penetrate,” in which case the sense might be: “Purity and chastity possess me; no earthly creature may [ever] have intercourse with me,” thus putting aside the possibility of marriage that Ysakar has suggested. See line 76, which seems to affirm this sexual meaning.
- 76 *I with man wyll nevyr mell.* Mary chooses her special service to God over “the lawe of God” (line 8), an act which, though it defies the Law of Moses, affirms the special sanctity of her birth and her body’s role in the birthing of Christ. See Kinservik, “Mary’s Body,” p. 194.
- 92–115 Written in octaves.
- 100 *To breke oure lawe and custom.* The Minister speaks as guardian of the Old Law, but is open-minded about its relationship to God, as he turns to prayer and guidance from Episcopus to understand the situation. Episcopus accepts Minister’s good counsel and charges the “bretheryn and systerys” (line 110) to sing *Veni Creator Spiritus*, thereby evoking a response from Angelus. As Bennett has argued (see note to 8.30), the effect is somewhat akin to a Wycliffite prayer meeting.
- 112 *fynyte deyté.* Block, Meredith, and Spector all suspect that “fynyte” is a scribal error for *infynyte* (Bl, p. 388; *MP*, p. 54; S 2:448). While this is a possible reading, it is also possible that the word is correct. According to the *MED* and the *OED*, *fynyte* means “fixed” or “definite.” In other words, the entire phrase could be emphasizing God’s fixed nature, to be differentiated from human nature.
- 114–115 *Mekely . . . Veni Creator Spiritus.* Rastall observes that the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, the hymn for Pentecost, “is sung by all kneeling. This performance of *Veni creator* is additional to the marriage service, and comes well before it in the play: its function is that of a prayer for guidance” (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 98).
- 115, s.d. *Veni Creator.* One of the most famous of hymns, *Veni Creator Spiritus* is used often in the Roman Breviary at Pentecost in Vespers I, II, and Terce, as well as throughout the octave. *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* notes its use “at such solemn functions as the election of popes, the consecration of bishops, the ordination of priests, the dedication of churches, the celebration of synods or councils, the coronation of kings, etc. It is also sung in the more private devotions attending the opening and closing of that scholastic year in institutions of learning.” Meredith points out, too, that it could be sung as part of a priest’s preparation for Mass (*MP*, p. 100n708sd). See Dutka, *Index of Songs*, p. 141, for complete lyrics.
- 116–54 Written in thirteener stanzas.

- 120 The intervention of God, with instructions on how to find the right husband, makes possible the fulfilling of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception and the upholding of the law that would require pubescent girls to marry.
- 128 *whyte yardys in ther honde*. There seems to be sustained punning on *yardys* and its analogues throughout this section of the play since, in addition to a primary sense as a stick or pole or branch of some kind (*MED yerd* n.[2]1), a “yerd” can also mean a penis (n.[2]5). Note, however, the variance of terms used for the “sticks” that the men are bringing in their efforts to win the virgin: “rod” (e.g., lines 193–98) is cited by the *OED* as first carrying the meaning “penis” in 1902; “staff” (line 190) and “wond” (line 165) likewise can carry phallic implications. See note to 162, 235, below.
- 131 *Take heed whose yerde doth blome and bere*. The biblical precedent for this extra-biblical tale is the miraculous blossoming of Aaron’s rod in Numbers 17. It was this miracle which established once and for all Aaron as the high priest of Israel, and thereby conveyed the priesthood to the members of the tribe of Levi. This event was often read Christologically. In the *Biblia Pauperum*, for example, the scene is represented, along with Moses at the burning bush (which was not consumed and thus presages the virgin birth), as figuring the nativity. The caption reads in part: “This rod represents the barren Virgin Mary who, without male seed, brought forth a son” (pl. b.5). It is precisely this event that Joseph’s blooming rod will invoke.
- 150 *In hyght*. “On high.” See the Purification Play 19.102, where, as here, the approach to the altar elevates the acolyte “on high.” Another reading in this instance might be “in haste,” given the urgency of line 151.
- 155–98 Written in octaves and one quatrain (lines 171–74).
- 162, 235 *nother well goo ne stond. . . . I kannot my rodde fynde*. On the play’s jokes about Joseph’s lack of sexual power, his inability to go or *stond* or even to find his *rodde*, see Vasvari, “Joseph on the Margin,” p. 170. On the spiritual content of the marriage set off by the *senex amans* analogues, see Lipton, “Performing Reform,” pp. 412–13. Lipton cites Augustine, *Harmony of the Gospels*, on marriage defined by affections of the mind rather than sexual contact, and discusses subtleties among theologians (Jerome, Hugh of St. Victor, Peter Lombard, Wycliffe, Lollard sermons, Roger Dymmock, Robert Brunne, and others) on the marriage of Mary and Joseph.
- 179 *maydon*. It is clear that this version posits Joseph’s virginity. Meredith notes that other medieval sources such as the *Protoevangelium* (ch. 9), Pseudo-Matthew (ch. 8), and *Cursor Mundi* (lines 10750–56) describe him as a widower with children (*MP*, p. 101n752).
- 182 *It is a straunge thyng — an old man to take a yonge wyff*. Proverbial. See Cato’s maxim in *Liber Catonis*, cited by Chaucer’s Miller: that “man sholde wedde his simylitude” (*CT* I[A]3228). On Joseph’s fear of being taken on a charivari donkey ride as a cuckold mocked by younger men, see Vasvari, “Joseph on the Margin,” p. 170, where she draws parallels between this play and the French *Nativité de N. S. Jésus Christ*. Compare 10.470–71, where his anxiety still disturbs his con-

- fidence as he sets out on his “nine monthis” (line 469) absence from the “lytyl praty hous” (line 459) he has rented for Maria.
- 199–228 Quatrain followed by two thirteener stanzas.
- 223 *Goddys toure*. Meredith notes that “God’s tower” is an “unusual” characterization for the Temple, “but particularly appropriate if the scaffold is doubling for heaven” (*MP*, p. 102n796). It is also appropriate in terms of the greater implications of what is about to unfold. Mary is metaphorically presented as the soon-to-be-revealed vessel for Jesus, whom Paul calls the “foundation” of “God’s building,” the Church (1 Corinthians 3:9–17).
- 225–28 *Com . . . I am ny almost lame*. Joseph’s insistence that he cannot come as quickly as the younger men suggests that age has left him deficient, a point Joseph reemphasizes in line 238. See notes to lines 128 and 162, 235, above.
- 229–41 Quatrain followed by a nine-line stanza.
- 231, s.n. *VOX*. Theatrically, this could be played as the voice of God, the voice of an angel, or the Holy Ghost. N.b., the Holy Ghost is also alighting on the branch as this occurs.
- 242–58 A thirteener stanza followed by a quatrain.
- 243 *I offyr this yerde as lely whyte*. The attribution associates Joseph’s *yerde* with the lily flower, whose whiteness was a sign of virginity and thereby of the Virgin Mary. See, e.g., the address of Chaucer’s Prioress to Christ, who was born “of the white lylle flour” that “is a mayde alway” (*CT* VII[B<sup>2</sup>]461–62). On the punning implications, see the note to line 128, and on the further implications about Joseph’s virginity, see the note to line 179.
- 246 *sterrys seven*. Either Ptolemy’s seven planets or the Pleiades, used by mariners for navigation.
- 255–56 *I may not lyfte myn handys heye. / Lo, lo, lo! What se ye now?* Meredith remarks that the sense has been “upset” by the thirteener preceding (*MP*, p. 103n828), but this is not necessarily the case. Joseph, ordered to offer up his rod, has prayed to God that his meager offering be well-received (clearly playing in a humility trope and not expecting or desiring to be chosen). He then tries to offer up the rod in his hands but finds it too heavy, a characteristic with perhaps its own theological connections. As he is holding it in his hands, it blooms (it may have been necessary in terms of props that Joseph keep hold of the rod at this moment in order to activate its blooming). The sense, then, seems clear.
- 259–97 Written in thirteener stanzas.
- 264 *game and gle*. This is a catchphrase used in the cycle material, possibly referring to itself as an East Anglian theatrical game. See Sugano, “This game wel pleyd,” pp. 220–23.
- 275 *whyte as lave*. The term *whyte* has been used repeatedly in this passage, from the “whyte yardys” of the potential suitors (line 128) to Joseph’s specifically “lely whyte” rod (line 243) to this description of Mary. These adjectives are all meant

- to emphasize the spiritual cleanliness, moral purity, innocence, and virginity of these characters (see *MED whit*, adj.1c). In this final instance the connection to bread (*lave*) no doubt has additional theological significance.
- 283 *Blere myn ey*. Spector suggests “hoodwink me” (S 2:449). He also notes that *pyke out a mote* refers to the mote in Matthew 7:3–5 and Luke 6:41–42. It appears that Joseph is afraid that his young wife will become a shrew and dominate him.
- 298–317 A quatrain followed by an octave, followed by two quatrains.
- 301 *Now yelde we all preysyng to the Trenylé*. Rastall sees this as a cue for the singing of *Benedicta sit beata Trinitas* shown in the Latin stage direction (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 81).
- 302–30 For texts of the Sarum and York versions of the official marriage service, see the *Manuale ad usum percelebris ecclesiae Sarisburiensis*, ed. Collins, pp. 47–49; or *Manuale et processionale ad usum insignis ecclesiae Eboracensis*, ed. Henderson, 63.26–27. The service in the play retains much of the original wording of English versions of the service.
- 309, s.d. Meredith notes that this sequence is primarily for masses of the Holy Trinity, but is also appropriate for nuptial masses (*MP*, p. 103n874sd).
- 310–13 As Joseph is supposed to be repeating after Ysakar, it would seem that there might be four lines missing. Perhaps the pattern is understood and thus the lines would be repeated by Joseph, or at least paraphrased.
- 318–30 Written in a thirteener stanza.
- 320 *ryff*. “Promptly” (*MED ryff*, adv. 3b), implying Joseph’s obedience. But the effect might also be comic, with *ryff* meaning “quickly,” as if to get the business over with in order to get out of the public eye. Or, as *MED* suggests, it might simply be a rhyming tool.
- 331–43 A quatrain followed by an octave with an additional extra-metrical Latin line.
- 332–34 Episcopus announces that they will now sing the *Alma chorus Domini nunc pangat nomina Summi*, which is from the sequence for a nuptial mass in the Sarum use. (See Rastall, *Minstrels Playing*, pp. 81 and 99, on its use in a late fourteenth-century Norwich diocese missal.)
- 344–408 Written in thirteener stanzas.
- 350 *in stage*. The phrase could refer to a room or an area of a house, or it could also refer to an indefinite period of time. The former seems more likely as Mary, in some accounts, has female attendants throughout her life.
- 350–55 *Thre damysellys . . . Susanne . . . Rebecca . . . Sephore*. As Meredith suggests, these are likely the same maidens who attend Mary in the Presentation in the Temple (*MP*, p. 104n910). The names are from Pseudo-Matthew, which lists five. These would correspond (presumably) with the earlier five wits. The “missing” two are Abigea and Zahel.
- 409–28 Two quatrains followed by an octave (lines 417–24) and then by another quatrain.



- 421–56 Mary’s extended praise of the psalter reflects both an emphasis on private devotion and basic liturgy (*MP*, p. 105n1002–25). Furthermore, this passage could also be an encouragement to cloistered women or middle- and upper-class women to sharpen their own literacy skills. The placement of the praise at this point of the play sequence is particularly apt, as it functions as a bridge between Old and New Testament narratives and the Old and New Laws. The psalms were often thus interpreted as a “between” text, widely considered to have all of the Old and New within (or between) its lines. These figurative qualities are borne out in the literal shaping of the text of the Bible, as Psalms is followed by the prophets which in turn give rise to the New Testament. This, too, functions in *N-Town*, as the next play will begin with ample citations of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Lamentations (see 11.8–30).
- 429–52 Written in octaves.
- 446 Compare Ezekiel 3:3. See also *Charter of the Abbey of the Holy Ghost* I.398.
- 450 *creatures, quwyke and dede*. I.e., not only for the living, but for those suffering in purgatory or hell. The phrase “the quick and the dead” is the traditional English translation to part of the Roman Symbol (*vivos et mortuos*); see note to 7.85–88. Mary’s prayer for the mercy of the Lord in judgment is thus, unbeknownst to her, a prayer to her child-to-come, who will ultimately be the source of final judgment.
- 453–60 Two quatrains.
- 455 *Benedixisti Domine terram tuam*. Mary’s blessing comes from Vulgate Psalm 84:1 and, Rastall suggests, identifies “the particular part of the psalter that Mary has reached in her reading. This psalm foretells the Incarnation, and is here appropriate for that reason” (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 99). Rastall goes on to note that it also looks forward to the playwright’s use of the same psalm in 11.187–88. See below.
- 461–86 Written in thirteener stanzas.
- 483 *conclave*. This is a particularly evocative word choice as the *MED* notes that it could refer to the private apartment in which the election of the pope occurs. It also means a “private room or retreat,” a “death chamber,” or, figuratively, “the Virgin’s womb.” See also Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, p. 146. Meredith notes that the term may look forward to the Annunciation (*MP*, p. 106n1056).

## 11. PARLIAMENT OF HEAVEN; SALUTATION AND CONCEPTION

In octaves, except for Latin lines 48a–c and seven quatrains (lines 185–88, 213–20, 293–96, 313–20, and 329–32).

- 1–32 Meredith notes that Contemplacio’s speech was divided between two speakers at line 1084: “In the manuscript an older arrangement shows through in Contemplacio’s speech in the 1<sup>st</sup> before l. 1060 and the 2 to the left of l. 1076, both in red. It seems that the speech was originally divided between two speakers representing either the prophets and patriarchs or the angels and archangels” (*MP*, p. 106n1060–91). See Fletcher, “‘Contemplacio’ Prologue,” pp. 111–12.

- 1 *Fowre thowsand, sex undryd, foure*. None of the early calculations of time between Creation and the Nativity fit the play's assertion of 4604 years. See Spector (S 2:452–53) for an excellent summary of scholarship on the date. Pollard notes that there are nearly two hundred medieval computations of the interval. *The Book of Adam and Eve* says 5500 years from the fall to the redemption; Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, *Meditationes*, and Love's *Mirroir* all say that the patriarchs spent 5000 years in hell before Christ released them. Meredith (MP, p. 106n1060) observes that 4604 years likely derives from the *Charter of the Abbey of the Holy Ghost* 1.345.
- 1 ff. This play could be played for Trinity Day as well as the appropriate saints' days or other feasts such as the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25).
- 8 Compare Isaias 30:18: "The Lord waiteth that he may have mercy on you."
- 9–10 Compare Isaias 64:1: "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens, and wouldst come down!"
- 25–27 Compare Jeremias 9:1: "Who will give water to my head, and a foundation of tears to my eyes? I will weep day and night for the slain daughter of my people." See also 45:3: "Woe is me, wretch that I am, for the Lord hath added sorrow to my sorrow: I am wearied with my groans, and I find no rest." Meredith says that Rolle's *Charter of the Abbey of the Holy Ghost* may be the source for this and the quotations from Jeremias.
- 29 *As gret as the se*. Lamentations 2:13: "To what shall I compare thee . . . O daughter of Jerusalem . . . for great as the sea is thy destination: who shall heal thee?" Woolf notes that this is an antiphon for Holy Thursday (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 166).
- 30 Compare Lamentations 5:16: "The crown is fallen from our head: woe to us, because we have sinned."
- 32 *Gracious Lord, gracious Lord, gracious Lord*. The triple address could be emblematic of God's Trinitarian qualities. N.b. the three repetitions of "mercy" in line 40, also addressed to God.
- 33 *VIRTUTES*. Also called the Powers. Evidently, the playwright is not following the more familiar Pseudo-Dionysian nine orders (three rows of three ranks of angels) since the *Virtutes* here claim to be in the first rank with angels and arch-angels. Keck notes that even though Pseudo-Dionysius' version (popularized by Gregory the Great) was widespread, there was still little agreement in the details regarding the specific angelic ranks and rows: "As long as a reading did not violate one of the central tenets concerning the place and purpose of the angels . . . a reading could be both valid and devotionally useful. . . . For medieval Christians, angelic exegesis thus was also something of an exercise of the aesthetic or poetic sensibility" (Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, p. 69).
- 41 *aungel . . . thu made so glorious*. That is, Lucifer. See the note to the Banns, line 20, and more generally Play 1 on his fall from heaven.
- 48 *the place*. Possibly an evocative pun, as the playing area is called "the place." Compare Banns, line 399. The restorative allusion is to God's creation of hu-

- mankind to replace the gap left by the fallen angels. See Gower's *Confessio Amantis* 8.1–32. Compare lines 196 and 203, in which Mary is designated as the means toward restoration.
- 49–51 In the manuscript of the Latin text, a large rubricated couplet, in a different uncial-like font, is bracketed, with a third line to the right of the bracket. These lines are a rough translation of the Latin verses inserted after line 48. The triplet is based on Vulgate Psalm 11:6: “by reason of the misery of the needy, and the groans of the poor, now will I arise,’ saith the Lord.” The passage functions as a different voice like the voice of God from some nondiegetic space. I have followed Block and Spector in not numbering the lines, which are part of the play but outside the dramatic action.
- 57–188 Meredith explains that the debate of the four Daughters of God comes from an Annunciation sermon of St. Bernard (*MP*, p. 108n1119–1250). It is a popular motif in medieval literature and art. In another East Anglian play, *The Castle of Perseverance*, the four Daughters of God debate the justice of salvation for a fallen mankind (lines 3129–3394). In *Piers Plowman* (in the Palm Sunday dream vision) the four Daughters of God discuss the necessity of the incarnation and weigh the mercy and righteousness of salvation and eternal punishment (18.110–214) (Langland, *Vision of Piers Plowman*, pp. 223–26). See also Diller, “From Synthesis to Compromise.”
- 65 Compare Vulgate Psalm 116:2: “The truth of the Lord remaineth forever.”
- 71 Compare Vulgate Psalm 50:8: “For behold thou hast loved truth: the uncertain and hidden things of thy wisdom thou hast made manifest to me.”
- 73–74 Compare 2 Corinthians 1:3–4: “Blessed be the God and Father . . . of mercies. . . . Who comforteth us in all our tribulation.”
- 83–85 Compare Vulgate Psalm 88:29: “I will keep my mercy for him forever: and my covenant faithful to him.”
- 91–96 Compare Vulgate Psalm 10:8: “For the Lord is just and hath loved justice: his countenance hath beheld righteousness”; and Deuteronomy 32:18: “Thou hast forsaken the God that begot thee, and hast forgotten the Lord that created thee.”
- 97 Compare Genesis 3:5, on the serpent presumptuously encouraging Eve to eat of the fruit so that her eyes might be opened to be as gods “knowing good and evil.”
- 100 Compare Vulgate Psalm 110:3: “His work is praise and magnificence and his justice continueth forever and ever.”
- 107 Compare Vulgate Psalm 144:9: “The Lord is sweet to all, and his tender mercies are ever all his works.”
- 112 Compare Vulgate Psalm 102:17: “But the mercy of the Lord is from eternity and unto eternity upon them that fear him.”
- 137 Compare Jeremiah 29:11: “For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of affliction, to give you an end and patience.”

- 178 *that wede*. As Coletti suggests, this could be a reference to Mary's cloth-making or knitting ("Devotional Iconography," pp. 252–53), especially as Mary's craft applies to the weaving for Filius of a human body in her womb. See the Prologue to Chaucer's Second Nun's Tale, where Mary "in blood and flessch to clothe and wynde. . . . Withinne the cloistre blisful of thy [Mary's] sydes" (CT VIII[G]42–43) did knit for the Son his human weeds.
- 187–88 *Misericordia et Veritas obviamurunt sibi / Justitia et Pax osculate sunt*. Vulgate Psalm 84:11, the passage that gave rise in Christian exegesis to the concept of the four Daughters of God, who are prominent especially in the Parliament of Heaven section of this play.
- 189–96 Compare Luke 1:26–28 on the Annunciation.
- 193 *se*. A dramatic gesture in a relatively static, tableau-like play. Pater addresses the sight-lines of both Filius and the audience as he focuses attention from his heavenly perspective toward not only "the cyté Nazareth" (line 191) where Jesus will be born, but toward the scriptural foundation of the forthcoming event in the "hous of Davyd" (line 194), or, rather, in Mary, whom he names (lines 195–96): Mary, that crucial "place" through whom all — both the fallen world and the order of angels (line 204) — shall be restored (line 196). The speech makes one ponder what the set might be toward which God's "behold" is addressed, as if the word (*se*) effects the manifestation itself, like "God said, 'Let there be light, and light was made,'" a gesture that sets up Filius' energized response (lines 197–204), along with Spiritus Sanctus' descriptive overview of the Salutation and Conception sequence that follows.
- 197–210 *Say . . . Hyge thee! . . . Sey her*. In this amazing moment we see the Trinity in conversation with itself. Filius is so eager to be born of Mary that he urges Pater to say the Word so that he might be born. See note to line 193, above, where God effects events through his pronouncements. I have glossed *Sey her* (line 203) as "Tell her," though there is, as well, a theological implication in the agency of God's Word as it declares the glories that will ensue. See Vulgate Psalm 18:1, where the heavens declare (*enarrant*) the glory of God while the firmament declares (*adnuntiat*) the work of his hands. Spiritus Sanctus also defers to Pater by asking him to *telle her* that God's Word will be carried out by the *Holy Gost* (line 206): *Sey her, to us is nothyng impossible* (line 210). It is an exciting moment as aspects of the Trinity worry in their eagerness that each might get there before the other has done what must be done. It is remarkable to find a passage in which the Trinity dialogues with such intensity of passionate gladness. See lines 171–72, where Filius declares that "A counsel of the Trinité must be had — / Which of us shal man restore?" whereupon Pater praises his wisdom.
- 197 *withowte wo*. Meredith astutely remarks that in Latin, this phrase would literally be, "a-ve" (MP, p. 113n1259). See also line 219.
- 206–12 Compare Luke 1:34–37, on the commission to visit Elizabeth.
- 216a *Ave, gratia plena, Dominus tecum*. The line is rubricated and written in a larger, uncial-like script. In the manuscript, *Maria* is crossed out after *Ave*, whereby the

- phrase corresponds to the translation in line 217. See Luke 1:28, the source for the famous salutation. Rastall observes: "This offertory would be very suitable for a greeting sung by an archangel, who would have to be played by a professional singer. The lack of any indication of singing would however suggest that the line was spoken in the Mary Play, whatever might have been the case later" (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 101).
- 219–20 This idea of *Eva* turned around to become *Ave* is common in early Christian and medieval liturgy and in carols, and reflects, in essence, the happy fall, as one inversion supplants another.
- 225 *kepyng*. See St. Bonaventure on the perpetual need of God's sustaining grace — *Deus conservantur* (Bonaventure, *II Sententiae* d.37.a.1.q.2 and *conclusio* in *Opera Omnia*).
- 237–50 Compare Luke 1:30–37 on the angel's reassurance of Mary and provision of signs of confirmation.
- 242 *clepyd of kende*. This is the only detail in lines 241–44 that is without precedence in Gabriel's pronouncement to Mary in Luke 1:31–33. It could be variously interpreted as "so-called because of his descent," "naturally named," or, more theologically, "chosen of nature." This last possibility would add an emphasis on Jesus' humanity that is missing from the biblical source but dwelled upon at some length in N-Town.
- 249–52 Compare Luke 1:29 on troubled Mary pondering the words in her heart.
- 252 *schadu*. See *MED shadwen*, v.2(a, b). The shadow of the Holy Spirit falling upon the Virgin signifies her impregnation and Christ's incarnation. The penumbra also implies divine protection. See also *MED shadwen*, v.3. If the immaculateness of the insemination is to be the focus of attention, a beam of light is the usual metaphor, light which can pass through glass without breaking it. See Play 21, lines 97–98, below, and the Wakefield Annunciation play, lines 35–38, as an example of this trope. The N-Town playwright gives dramatic realization to the idea in the elaborate staging of the triple beam of light descending upon Mary following line 292.
- 253 *Holy Gost*. As Meredith observes, this is a striking translation for the *sanctam* of Luke 1:35 (*MP*, p. 115n1300–22). For his part, Spector omits *Gost* altogether (see textual note to this line). While it is possible that *Gost* has been mistakenly transferred from line 251 and that we ought, therefore, to emend this line to read *Holy One* or simply *Holy*, there is a certain theological impact to retaining the manuscript reading. In Trinitarian terms, the birth of the Son *is* the birth of the Holy Ghost (so, too, of the Father). The iconographic representation of the Annunciation/Conception inevitably presents a sequence of the Trinity directed at Mary's right ear and her womb. Thus the *Biblia Pauperum* (pl. a), for instance, shows first the descent of a dove (sign of the Holy Spirit), then of a Christ-child "diving" toward her, then an image of a cloud/sun breathing (or speaking) the other two into motion (a sign of the Father).

- 260      *They thynkyth longe to here what ye wyl seyn.* That Mary must give “assent” (line 264) to the conception is a detail from the extra-biblical traditions, here derived directly from Love’s *Mirroure* (see S 2:458).
- 281      *persevere.* The author is emphatic in elevating Mary’s role in God’s scheme as “preserver” of all mankind through the instrumentality of her body. The comfort of all creatures (line 284) is dependent upon her obedient, handmaidenly cooperation.
- 287–88      Compare Luke 1:38: “And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word.”
- 289–92      *Gramercy.* Gabryel’s gratitude reflects the heartfelt thanks of the whole divine community that recognizes its own fulfillment in Mary.
- 289–320      Meredith observes that the repeated thanks and farewells are a feature of several devotional sequences in the Mass, especially the Mass for Mary on Christmas Day (*MP*, p. 115n1352–55).
- 292      *lanterne of lyght.* The phrase configures a host of biblical metaphors brought into focus here. See John 9:5 on Christ as the light of the world. But Mary is the lantern, the container of that light, God’s chosen vessel. She presents the light as it alights in her. Compare the hymn to the Virgin in the Prologue of Chaucer’s Prioress’s Tale (*CT* VII[B<sup>2</sup>]470–72), as she speaks of the Holy Ghost “alighting” in Mary, thereby “lighting” (also, lifting and thus making “lighter”) her heart.
- 292, s.d.      *Here the Holy Gost descendit with thre bemys to our Lady.* These are likely theatrical representations of light beams, possibly done as rods painted gold, or perhaps with ribbons. Kahrl and Nelson cite a St. Anne’s Guild Play from Lincoln that included a gilded mask with beams. See Lancashire, *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain*, pp. 170–71. But what is perhaps most remarkable is that each of the three persons of God perform the rite of insemination, together. See Meredith, “Carved and Spoken Words,” pp. 380–83, where he discusses similar attitudes toward Mary and the conception of Jesus figured in the pew carvings of South Walsham Church, which seems to suggest common “discourse communities whose thinking and seeing echo that of a play” (p. 383). Although there is no stage direction saying so, this moment of the descent of three beams of light into Mary’s bosom may well have been accompanied by music. As John Stevens explains: “The principle never varies: the singing symbolizes the irruption of God’s truth and God’s order into the darkness and chaos of this earthly life. It is not, of course, the only symbol. A shining light is often a token of divine intervention: ‘here the holy gost descendit.’” Stevens goes on to compare the Appearance of Our Lady to Thomas, in the York Cycle, where angels sing the *Veni de Libano sponsa* while Thomas arises to see the Virgin borne aloft by angels in a bright light (“Music in Mediaeval Drama,” p. 85).
- 293–306      The impregnation of Mary is presented in remarkably erotic terms, as Mary describes her physical sensations to the watchful Gabriel and tells him how *now I fele in my body* (line 293, a line she repeats at the end of the passage, line 306, thereby creating a frame) the *carnalyté* (line 295) of the babe within. The event

- has not taken place *fyrst o membyr and sythe another* (line 297), which, given the three beams of light that God used to enter her bosom, might imply three “members” of the Trinity which come as one, not one after the other. *Member* has a sexual connotation in Middle English, as it still does have. Part of the miracle here is that this triple member that enters simultaneously causes her no *peyne in flesche and bon* (line 300), but only an all-surpassing pleasure: *I cannot telle what joy, what blysse* (line 305) that permeates her whole body. As she thanks Gabriel for his watchful attendance upon this moment (line 307), she seems to be fully aware of the hypostasis within, as she terms it, *Parfyte God and parfyte man* (line 294). For this miracle that she feels within her body she thanks God on his throne for *yourre Son — now my son* (line 304), a supremely emotive and mysterious *prerogatyff* (line 304 — “election,” “privilege,” “preeminent precedent”). See notes to line 304.
- 304 *yourre Son — now my son*. The line between Jesus’ divinity and humanity is often blurred in Christian writings. The N-Town-poet, however, seems at pains to make distinctions in the matter to tease out the possibilities of the various corresponding relationships. I have called attention to this through the capitalizations of Christ-references here and elsewhere.
- prerogatyff*. A legal/theological term defining God’s sovereign jurisdiction, without restriction or interference, over his whole domain. N-Town’s Mary is a model of two women saints whose intellectual superiority enables them to comprehend fully the dignity (*worth*) of God’s ordinations. This sense is reflected in Gabriel’s repeated designating of Mary as “trone of the Trinyté” (line 333), i.e., the place of prerogative.
- 315 *pleynge fere*. Gabriel sees in the mother the child’s playmate. But he also foresees in her one of the principal dramatis personae: the greatest of all dramas, the Passion play, where she will be his “pleynge fere” indeed.
- 340 *Enjonyd hefne and erth*. The phrase looks forward to the singing of the angels, prompting them (*hefne*) to join in the singing of the *Ave Maria* (perhaps with *erth* standing for the audience?). At the same time, the phrase looks backward to the events of the play, marking the whole as a joining of heaven and earth, God and man.
- 340, s.d. *Angeli cantando*. Here, as in all the known Shepherds’ plays, a heavenly host sings the “Ave Maria.” See John Stevens, “Music in Mediaeval Drama,” p. 84. In the Visit to Elizabeth Play (13.69), however, when Mary greets Elizabeth, the Ave is spoken (“seyde”), not sung. See Dutka, *Index of Songs*, p. 21, for the complete lyrics here.

## 12. JOSEPH’S DOUBT

As the main scribe was incorporating the Mary Play into the larger manuscript, it is likely that he worked Joseph’s Doubt about Mary into the Marian material. Dramatically, this was an interesting move, but editors such as Meredith (*MP*, p. 124) and Spector (*S* 2:460, 540) argue that this play was never part of the larger Mary Play. It is possible that Joseph’s Doubt is an earlier play that the main scribe was reluctant to excise or is a later play

(or a revision about the same vintage as the Purification Play) that he wished to place into the manuscript. The Banns does describe this play (lines 170–82), announcing it immediately after the Annunciation. Although it interrupts the central material of the Mary Play as it precedes the Visit to Elizabeth, there is a kind of appropriateness at this point as the secular world breaks in upon Mary's reverie. According to John 10, Christ is the door — the door of the sheepfold and the door to heaven. Mary, likewise, is just such a door, well closed and guarded, especially during her pregnancy. The primary scriptural text behind the idea is Ezechiel 44:2: "And the Lord said to me: This gate also shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it: because the Lord God of Israel hath entered in by it, and it shall be shut for the prince." The passage was glossed by Christian commentators, such as Ambrose, as a sign of the Virgin Mary ("Mary is the door which was closed and not to be opened" — *De institutione Virginis*, PL 16:320 [my translation]). This link of the closed door or gate with Ezechiel comes as no surprise here, since "Ezechiel" made the point earlier in the Root of Jesse Play, when he, anticipating Mary as centerpiece and thereby introducing the Mary plays (8–13), asserts: "I, Ezechiel, have had also [a vision] / Of a gate that sperd [closed] was trewly / And no man but a prince myght therin go" (7.46–48). See Gibson's fine essay "*Porta haec clausa erit*," which includes detailed discussion of the trope in Latin commentaries and fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English vernacular literature, and several manuscript illuminations of the idea. E.g., "She was eke the gate, with the loke3 breght . . . Of wech sumtime the prophete had a sight / Ezekiel in his vision / Wheche stooode euere close" (Lydgate, *Life of Our Lady*, lines 328–32). The keeper of the gate is also prominent in Marian lore in representations of the Visitation. The opening of the door can have sexual connotations, the point here being that Mary is pregnant though the door has remained locked, a point which is addressed comically through the "undo the door" motif as Joseph returns. See Vasvari, "Joseph on the Margin," pp. 170–83, on secular analogues to the sacred cuckolding from French farce, fairy tale (the Snow Child), and fabliaux, to the Mérode Altar triptych, books of hours, and various paintings of the life of Joseph that include his tools and several mousetrap jokes.

This play material of the Annunciation, the Visitation, and the Nativity is placed variously in the different English play versions: "Doubts of Joseph" plays are found in the Coventry Shearmen and Taylors' pageant; Chester Play 6 (at the beginning of the Nativity); in Towneley Play 10 (after the Annunciation but before the Visitation); and in York Play 13 (after the Visitation but before the Nativity). Even though the play is based on Matthew 1:18–25, this N-Town version draws heavily from apocryphal sources such as the *Protoevangelium* and Love's *Mirror*.

1–20      An octave followed by three quatrains.

1      *Undo youre dore, undo.* The undo-the-door trope is common in Middle English romances (see especially the *Squire of Low Degree*, which, with its repetition [lines 5 and 8] enacts a comic affect that is to be taken quite seriously). That the door is locked against the husband by a pregnant wife heightens Joseph's doubts as he attempts to understand the mystery that has just been laid out so magnificently in the previous play. But as Joseph demonstrates love for his wife even though he cannot understand the events and returns to the wilderness rather than harm her, he merits the revelation that the angel bestows upon him so that he may return in faith to accompany his pregnant wife in public as they go to visit Elizabeth. That



- the “undo the door” command is repeated twice more (lines 5 and 8) suggests “Trinitarian significance” to Gibson, “*Porta haec clausa erit*,” pp. 151–52.
- 3, s.n. Susanna is one of the maidens left with Mary in the Marriage of Mary and Joseph Play, lines 357–58.
- 8 “Open the door — his will should be done!” Mary behaves as the obedient wife eager to welcome him into this new world in which she finds herself. See Coletti (“Purity and Danger,” p. 83) on the way that Mary’s virginal status and the physicality of her pregnant body challenge “traditional ideologies of gender” along with “contradictions sustained within the sex and gender system.”
- 16 *But as the sonne*. Mary, the lantern of God, outshines the sun. Her countenance is initially blinding to Joseph.
- 21–48 Two thirteener stanzas followed by a couplet.
- 26 *Thi wombe to hyghe*. Joseph, unable to look her in the face, observes her womb, which he reads both rightly and wrongly. His response probably evokes laughter — the audience, who appreciate the incongruity even as he does and does not — “Ow, dame, what thinge menyth this?” (line 34). For an extended discussion of the literary, theatrical, and figurative art stagings of Joseph as cuckold in a fabliau world, see Vasvari, “Joseph on the Margin,” pp. 163–89. Woolf puts the matter adroitly when she observes, “the fabliau world exists only in Joseph’s imagination, while Mary still lives in the spotless and serene world of the Annunciation” (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 173). See also Moll, “Staging Disorder,” p. 148.
- 34 *what thinge menyth this*. See note to 7.41–44 above. Mary not only embodies the Temple of the Old Testament and the New Testament Church, but her son will become the fulfillment of both. In this regard, as Owst notes, she is the perfect woman (*Literature and the Pulpit*, p. 21).
- 42 Compare York Play 13, line 103, and Towneley Play 10, line 195.
- 49–83 A thirteener stanza followed by a nine-line stanza, followed by another thirteener.
- 55–56 *Olde cokwold, thi bow is bent / Newly now after the Frensche gyse*. See Vasvari’s discussion of the stanza and Joseph’s shame (lines 71 ff.) in terms of secular literary and visual types (“Joseph on the Margin,” pp. 170–73). On the bending of the bow and French guise as representation of lechery, see Spector (S 2:461), citing Baird and Baird (“Fabliau Form,” p. 160) and *Handlyng Synne* (lines 4151–52), among other references.
- 81–83 Proverbial language. See Whiting B604.
- 84–117 A quatrain followed by three ten-line stanzas.
- 96–97 The Mosaic punishments for adultery are found in Leviticus 20:10, Deuteronomy 22:22, Ezechiel 16:40, and John 8:5. See also Spector, S 2:461.
- 118–46 A nine-line stanza followed by two ten-line stanzas.
- 127 *sesyd*. See Meredith on the legal diction here with regard to an overlord’s rights (*MP*, p. 132n127).

- 133 *respyl*. Both Meredith and Spector suggest that *despyte* might make more sense in this context. For their fuller explanations, see *MP*, p. 133n133–36, and *S* 2:462.
- 147–79 A thirteener stanza followed by two ten-line stanzas.
- 149 *Good sere*. It is clear that Joseph does not recognize the angel because he is so occupied by his own embarrassment at feeling cuckolded. This scene parallels Abraham's visit from Melchizedek at which point Abraham (also unaware of his visitor's identity) learns that he will be the father of the nation of Israel (Genesis 14:18–15:6).
- 166 *ful of grace*. This line could be Joseph's acknowledgment of Mary's special status as the Mother of God. Compare with 11.216a–23.
- 172–73 Compare Matthew 1:21–22.
- 174 *that syttys on hye*. Though the phrase is common to indicate theologically that high heaven where Jesus dwells, here the observation might be taken more literally to indicate the presence of an actor representing God in a lofty stage-place, overseeing the whole play.
- 180–212 A thirteener stanza followed by two ten-line stanzas.
- 185 *Youre swete fete, now lete me kys*. Joseph's action here foreshadows Mary Magdalene's intentions after the Resurrection in 37.40–41.
- 213–24 An octave followed by a quatrain.

### 13. VISIT TO ELIZABETH

- 1–22 A quatrain followed by two octaves and a couplet.
- 5 *A, Godys sake! Is she with childe, sche?* Joseph believes now as the true husband. Rather than suggest that Zachary has been cuckolded, he shares in the joy of Mary and Elizabeth and provides reassuring guidance for the long fifty-two mile journey. Mary worries about the trip (lines 13–20), but her husband provides reassurance with purpose and affection.
- 15–16 *I am schamfast of the pepyl to be seyne / And namely of men*. Mary's fear of being seen in public by "men" reflects already the fabliaux mentality of men that she has been exposed to even by her husband, whom most she trusts.
- 17 *Pylgrymagys and helpyngys wolde be go in hast*. Mary is wary of public attention and knows that pilgrims, who may or may not be honest, will be crowding the roads. Those who are *helpyngys* may be performing charitable acts or providing spiritual aid, though given the lecherous disposition of her detractors, they may be more like Autolycus in Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* or the Canon and his Yeoman in Chaucer, "helping themselves," who snatch up whatever trifles or gossip they may.
- 22, s.d.–42 As Joseph and Mary travel about the place, Contemplacio, acting as chorus, fills the audience in on Elizabeth's story.
- 23–42 Two octaves followed by a quatrain.

- 26 *clepyd summi sacerdotes*. I.e., “called high priests,” or as the next line calls them, “prynce[s] of prestys.”
- 31–36 Compare Luke 1:5–13 on the angel’s visit to the barren Elizabeth.
- 41 Meredith notes that this is the beginning of “Deus sit in principio,” a common prayer to bless any new endeavor (*MP*, p. 118n1452).
- 43 *A, a, wyff. . . I am wery*. Joseph graciously steps aside so that the pregnant women may share their thoughts on the mystery they are a part of.
- 43–74 Written in octaves.
- 51–66 Compare Luke 1:41–45 on the meeting of Mary and Elizabeth.
- 64 *the wurde of God shulde profyte in thee*. Editorial decisions about capitalization can be fraught with difficulty. Here, for example, capitalizing *wurde* would help make clear what seems to be an immediate reference being made to Jesus or *logos*, the Word of God (see John 1:1). But capitalizing would also obscure the primary reference being made, which is to God’s promise, his assurance of redemption, a reading that draws particular strength from the economic import of *profyte*. Since it is this latter use that is closer to the poet’s Lucan source (1:45), I have maintained lower case on *wurde*.
- 75–117 A seven-line stanza followed by quatrains.
- 82–126 The playwright provides here the *Magnificat* and doxology, which constitutes the high point of the Visitation. (See Luke 1:46–55.) Rastall observes: “The *Magnificat* and doxology are said in pairs of lines antiphonally, the Latin by Mary and its translation by Elizabeth: the whole Latin text is in larger, more formal script, while the translation is in the normal text script. The [speech markers] make it clear that the Latin is heard, and Mary also states her intention to ‘begynne’ the ‘holy psalme’ (line 81). Although ‘begin’ in this context, as a translation of *incipiat*, might imply singing, it evidently does not do so here, for in line 127 Mary states that the psalm has been *said* between them” (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 102).
- 82–85 Lines 84–85 do not translate the Latin in lines 82–83.
- 118–30 A five-line stanza followed by two quatrains.
- 127–30 Rastall (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 81) points out that here, as with the Ave, the *Magnificat* is said, not sung. See, further, note to line 129, below.
- 127 *propheye*. Twycross notes that this means “to speak with divine inspiration,” not “to foretell the future.” She also concludes that Mary’s function in the Visitation emphasizes her role as a prophet (“Kissing Cousins,” pp. 120–30).
- 129 *Evyr to be songe and also to be seyn*. The line makes clear Rastall’s point that there are distinctions to be made between which lines are spoken and which are to be sung. Such distinctions are often indicated by stage directions within the text or, as in the “Mary Play,” added in marginal directions. But there are many instances in which the manuscript leaves such distinctions unmarked, which puts the burden of such decisions on the director of specific productions.

- 131–32 Compare Luke 1:56: “Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.”
- 131–49 Two octaves followed by a triplet.
- 150–85 An octave followed by five quatrains, followed by an octave.
- 152–53 See line 53.
- 154–55 Meredith remarks that the division of the *Ave Maria* here is similar to that found in the *Lay Folks’ Catechism* (MP, p. 121n1567–68). Compare 11.227–28.
- 166–69 Compare Luke 1:67 ff. On Zachary regaining his speech and glorifying God.
- 184–85 Meredith notes that Contemplacio could be referring to the beginning of his speech (lines 1569–70) or to *Ave* as a greeting, suggesting that the Mary Play has gone full circle (MP, p. 121n1595).
- 185 An antiphon sung for a procession for the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (MP, p. 121n1596). See Dutka, *Index of Songs*, p. 21, for the complete lyrics.

#### 14. TRIAL OF MARY AND JOSEPH

As many scholars have pointed out, the N-Town Trial of Mary and Joseph (from Pseudo-Matthew) is unique among the extant English and Continental religious plays. The play encompasses features of both moralities (as does the N-Town Slaughter of the Innocents) and miracle plays (as does the N-Town Nativity). The character of the Den, or Dean, raises issues about the play’s setting. The late medieval *den* could either be a church official with jurisdiction over part of an archdeaconry or a guild officer (*MED*). While both are possible for this particular Den, the latter seems more likely, as this Den does not appear to have either the authority or the decorum of the clergy. Rather, he is probably a dean of a religious lay fraternity (or religious guild) whose primary function was to summon members to meetings. Furthermore, religious guilds (as well as ecclesiastical courts) did pass judgment about infractions such as adultery and slander (see McRee, “Religious Gilds and Regulation of Behavior”). The closest scriptural analogue is from Numbers 5:11–31, which describes a trial for adultery. Interestingly enough, this Old Testament account involves the drinking of a bitter potion. Compare with Trial of Mary and Joseph, lines 232 ff.

Other scholars have noted the significance of the play’s need to negotiate or to control sexual behavior in the late Middle Ages. See Coletti, “Purity and Danger,” pp. 79–82; Fitzhenry, “Politics of Metatheater,” pp. 33–36; and Carlson, “Mary’s Obedience,” pp. 348–53. Elsewhere, Carlson states: “N-town goes farther than York, Chester, or Wakefield [Towneley] because the resolving of Joseph’s trouble about Mary in N-town does not settle the matter of the Virgin’s integrity in this cycle. From private doubts and a near comic tone as Joseph behaves as the stereotypical old man cuckolded, N-town moves to public denunciation, trial, and truth serums” (“Like a Virgin,” p. 210).

- 1–2 *Avoyd, serys, . . . the buschop come . . . the lawes for to doo.* “Den, a mere summoner for the bishop’s court, introduces the human law in its more sordid aspect as a legal system prone to abuse by its administrators. . . . Den is a rather small fish

- himself, accustomed to prey on those smaller still, smaller by virtue of their lack of a friend at court" (Carlson, "Mary's Obedience," pp. 354–55).
- 1–20 A quatrain followed by octaves.
- 9–32 A list of names functions as a summoning prologue. Such a list appears in "Cocke Lorelles Bote," an early sixteenth-century satirical poem (S 2:68 and H 2:413). Fewer sees the catalogue of names as "an allegorization of the network of occupations that constitutes the East Anglian civic polity" ("Fygure," p. 138). But mainly the effect of the list is to conjure up the rout of lascivious, gossip-hungry people hastening to see the trial. The result is an effective use of shifting attention to a new playing area.
- 16 *Bertylmew the bochere*. *Bertylmew* is the colloquial form of Bartholomew. Perhaps dark comedy is implicit here in that St. Bartholomew was flayed alive in his martyrdom, hence his affiliation with butchers.
- 20 *flecchere*. A fletcher is the one who puts the feathers on arrows, hence an arrow-maker.
- 21–33 A thirteener stanza. The remainder of the play is written in octaves.
- 40 *To reyse slawndyr*. See Hunt, "Maculating Mary," on the legal complexities for dealing with slander and detraction in fifteenth-century East Anglia. On the play's engaging in contemporary political issues pertaining to sex and marriage, see also Lipton, "Performing Reform," pp. 428–33.
- 41 *Bakbytere*. I.e., detractor (see line 62). Compare *Castle of Perseverence*, lines 647–98, 777–84, 1754–66, 1778–90, 1823–35, and 1844–52. Bakbytere's brother, who is speaking here, is Detraccio in *Perserverence* as he is here.
- 105, s.d. *Abizachar*. Spector observes that in Pseudo-Matthew, Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*, and his "Fifteen Joys and Sorrows of Mary," the name is Abiathar (S 2:468). In the N-Town Banns, the name is Abyachar (line 118). The speaker appears to be Ysakar, regardless of the spelling. See explanatory note to 10.1, s.d.
- 113 *sybbe of myn owyn blood*. Compare 7.13 and note.
- 129 *To set a cokewolde on the hye benche*. Spector (S 2:468) cites Halliwell (H 2:414), who quotes "The Cokwoldes Daunce": "Cokwoldes schuld begynne the bord, / And sytt hyst in the halle." Hence, the cuckold is being "feted." Another possible reading, considering the legal nature of the play, is for the *hye benche* to be a judge's seat in which the cuckold passes judgment, perhaps ironically, on the wayward wife.
- 154–61 Not unlike Chaucer's Summoner, this one is proud of his vocation and is unashamed to beg for his pay. And like Chaucer's summoner in the Friar's Tale, he threatens to summon those who refuse to pay him. That he will not forsake *gold or sylvyr* (line 160) again reminds us of the Friar's summoner, who would go to hell rather than forego the widow's twelve pence. His *rough toth* (line 159) also recalls the Wife of Bath's appetite for money as well as sex.

- 164–69 Sayings about a bow and arrow describe events set into motion. This passage is also filled with sexual allusions describing a cuckold's humiliation (see S 2:461).
- 197 "*Fayr chylde, lullay*" *sone must she syng!* Perhaps Mary sings in the background as Den and the detractors comment on her behavior.
- 200 *Because she is youre cosyn yyng.* "Just as the Detractors are eager to believe the worst they can of Mary, so are they willing to believe the worst of the justice they themselves have invoked" (Carlson, "Mary's Obedience," p. 335).
- 212 *gostly wounde*. In this case, *wounde* refers to a spiritual imperfection caused by sin (MED, n.1c). It is possible that Mary is distinguishing herself from Jesus in that while she did not sin, she also does not bear other sins as Jesus did during the crucifixion. *Wounde* was a common Middle English term to refer to Christ's Passion sufferings.
- 226–27 *Sche is, for me, a trewe clene mayde, / And I, for hir, am clene also*. Moll observes that if the Mary Play is removed "what remains is essentially the cycle that is described in the Proclamation [Banns], namely: 'The Betrothal of Mary' . . . 'Joseph's Doubt,' and 'The Trial of Mary and Joseph.' In these plays Mary does not overshadow her doddering husband. In fact, Joseph's role is so fully developed that at times he appears more prominent than the Virgin Mother" ("Staging Disorder," pp. 146–47). While Moll may go too far in seeing Joseph as upstaging Mary in importance, his point is well taken, especially in this play, where the two work together, undertaking the same trials, and especially demonstrating their faith and *clene* lives. On the problems confronting the chaste in chaste marriages in a late medieval world, see Moll, "Staging Disorder," pp. 149–52.
- 230 ff. Compare Numbers 5:11–31 on jealousy and testing the adulterous woman by making her drink a bitter potion (compare *the botel of Goddys vengeauns*, line 234) (S 2:468). Seven is the number of totality and also is a sign of the mutable world and the measure of human life. In essence, this number indicates fullness and the meeting of the cosmic and the human. In this particular case, seven represents the purity of Mary and Joseph's marriage as well as the perfection of Christ.
- 233 *The drynge of vengeawns ther to asay*. Carlson notes that while trial by ordeal as a means of legal confirmation had been abolished by papal decree in 1215, "it remained as a powerful motif in literature precisely because it demonstrated the divine judgment on the factual bases of the words of the parties to a legal dispute" ("Mary's Obedience," p. 355).
- 234–41 The testing of the truth, particularly before God in a trial, was a significant issue for the courts in the late Middle Ages. See Lipton, "Language on Trial," pp. 217–28. For the effects of such truth tests upon the broader community, see Hunt, "Maculating Mary," pp. 11–29.
- 250 ff. Joseph agrees to take the drink with confidence in his own guiltlessness. In Pseudo-Matthew, the potion is called "the water of jealousy," possibly derived from Numbers 5 (see headnote above). The two detractors, Den and Doctor Legis 1, ridicule him, confident in their understanding of human sexual behavior and biology. It is interesting to note that the detractor who imbibes and is pun-

- ished is Reyse slawnder (Raise-slander) and his brother's name is Bakbyter (Back-biter). These two particular infractions were particularly frowned upon in late medieval religious guilds. There is also the possibility that this scene refers to the sacred communal bond celebrated by the guild ale.
- 306–13 The detractors retell the medieval story of the snow-child, which Spector (S 2:469) notes as “deriving from Latin poems of the tenth to the twelfth century and later fabliaux.” Spector cites, among others, Raby (*History of Secular Latin Poetry*, 1:295–97, 2:34), Bédier (*Les Fabliaux*, pp. 460–61), and Woolf (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 176).
- 334 *I nevyr knew of mannys maculacyon*. According to the *MED*, the use of *maculacyon* here is unique to this play. It means “spotless” or “sinless,” but also may refer to Mary’s immaculate conception, a doctrine that became part of the larger schismatic debates of the fifteenth century. The feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary was declared by the Council of Basel (in schism from the pope) in 1439; Rome confirmed the holiday in 1483. See Pelikan, *Christian Tradition*, 4:45. This latter date could be contemporaneous with the N-Town Mary Play. Mary’s words point to the divine presence within her marriage. “Her body becomes the visual sign of the divine child she carries within” (Lipton, “Performing Reform,” p. 401).
- 340 *tabernacle*. Mary is the tabernacle who holds the new ark of God (Christ) who will bear a New Law. Compare Chaucer’s Second Nun on the “cloistre blisful” of Mary’s sides (*CT* VIII[G]43). “Mary’s test becomes a theatrical defense of the ability of religious representation to abide against idolatrous misreading and convey spiritual conviction” (Lipton, “Performing Reform,” p. 401). See also notes to 7.41–44 and 19.18.
- 353 *Sche is clene mayde, bothe modyr and wyff*. The issue of the pageant “is not the integrity of Mary’s rights but her physical integrity” (Carlson, “Mary’s Obedience,” p. 356). The scene demonstrates Mary’s virtue — her chastity and pregnancy, what Peter Brown, in his discussion of the ordeal, refers to as “the crowning mercy of Truth in human affairs” (*Society and the Holy*, p. 315, as cited by Carlson, p. 357). By its physicality the ordeal has the peculiar power of reuniting divided factions in the society. Through the ordeal Mary’s “humility can purify the workings of the corrupted and corruptible human law” (Carlson, p. 348).
- 374 *Now God forgeve yow all yowre trespase*. Even before Christ is born, Mary is assuming her role as mediatrix, that is, asking God’s forgiveness for Episcopus and the detractors.
- 380 *We wyl go with yow hom to youre halle*. Moll sees this to be a peaceful processional at the end of a charivari introduced in the great sequence of names (14.9–32) who, in fact, are “characters” summoned by Den who mock and detract and make travesty of pious behavior until after the trial through which the bodies of Mary and Joseph became hallowed despite the scorn and mockery (“Staging Disorder,” pp. 146–48, 154–57).

## 15. NATIVITY

The N-Town Nativity is loosely based upon Luke 1:1–7, but is much closer to the account in Pseudo-Matthew, as is the Trial of Mary and Joseph. Like the Trial of Mary and Joseph, the Nativity contains elements of folklore (the cherry tree scene) and saints' miracles (the healing of the midwife). See Spector, S 2:469. The *Golden Legend's* version involves a date palm, and not a cherry tree, which is probably an English or northern European revision of the tale. There is only one other extant English Nativity play proper, York Play 14. The healing of the unbelieving midwife appears both in N-Town and in Chester Play 6, but the cherry tree story is unique to N-Town. (Both scenes are from Pseudo-Matthew.) Joseph's complaints of old age and his solicitous desire to please Mary supply the levity in this version.

This play consists mainly of octaves and quatrains, but there are also three nine-line stanzas and one couplet.

- 3            *Octavian*. Luke's account of the nativity is the only Gospel account that mentions a Roman emperor, in this case Caesar Augustus (Luke 2:1). Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* (trans. Ryan, 1.37), as does this play, calls him Octavian.
- 39            Joseph's offhanded remark and exasperation in attempting to please Mary offer her a chance to show her (and God's) power over the natural world. Compare "Cherry-Tree Carol": "O then bespoke Joseph, / With words most unkind: Let him pluck thee a cherry / That brought thee with child" (Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 2.2). Contrast the cheerful spontaneity of Coll's "Have a bob of cherys" at the end of the Second Shepherd's Play (Towneley 13.1036), which also celebrates the generous a-seasonality of the Christmas gift.
- 49–50        Compare 8.143–224.
- 100          Spector notes that the prophecy regarding the Christ-child's being found between two beasts is in the Old Latin Habacuc 3:2 (S 2:470). The *Catena Aurea* comments not only on Christ's humble nativity, but (citing Bede) observes that "He who is the bread of Angels is laid down in a manger that He might feed us, as it were the sacred animals with the bread of His flesh" (*Catena Aurea*, trans. Newman, 3.68). See also the *Biblia Pauperum*, pl. b, which locates the manger above the door like a feed box with the ox and ass looking down from either side.
- 126 ff.        For an examination of the role of midwife in the early modern period, see Ryan, "Playing the Midwife's Part," pp. 435–48.
- 145           *foy food*. Literally, "I am afraid for that young girl" (i.e., Mary). *Food* may also be a wonderful pun that may be Joseph's unwitting eucharistic acknowledgment of his son Jesus as spiritual food for all. For an extended discussion of spiritual food, see Collins, *N-Town Plays*, pp. 2–9.
- 177, s.d.–193    Mary's laughter is subversive on many different gestural and societal levels. See Carlson, who quotes Irigaray in "Mary's Obedience," p. 362.
- 246–49        See Spector, S 2:470: "Then said Salome: as the Lord my God liveth, unless I thrust in my finger, and search the parts, I will not believe that a virgin has brought forth" (*Protevangelium*, p. 365).



- 253, s.d. *Hic tangit Salomee*. See Ryan's discussion of legal rules governing midwives in the late Middle Ages and early modern period. Legally a midwife was "entrusted with the *right to touch*" the mother's genitals. That is, it is not the touching that withers Salome's hand but rather her lack of faith (her "untrost," line 257). It is for this reason that her hand is restored once she believes and touches the hem of Christ's garment (Ryan, "Playing the Midwife's Part," pp. 440–42). The touching enables her to testify to the birth, which is one of the legal requirements of the midwife.
- 256–57 *drye as claye*. See Spector, S 2:470. In the *Protoevangelium*, Salome's hand withers as if consumed by fire (ch. 20); in Pseudo-Matthew, Salome's hand simply withers (ch. 13). The use of clay here is interesting. Later in Pseudo-Matthew, in Jesus' childhood accounts, Jesus takes clay from pools and forms sparrows that come to life (ch. 27). The son of Annas (the high priest) breaks up the pools with a stick, and Jesus withers him, but later revives him after Joseph chides the child Jesus.
- 265 *my lewdnes*. Salomé's *lewdness* works on at least two levels: she is lewd because she is testing Mary's hymen; she has also been deeply disrespectful to the Mother of God.
- 321–22 *God that best may grawnt yow his grace. / Amen*. Rastall notes that the *Amen* is extra-stanzaic, suggesting that this "blessing" ending of the play might evoke a cast and audience response of *Amen*, as well (*Minstrels Playing*, pp. 103–04). See also the *Amen* at the conclusion of 21.289, 23.222, and 24.297, which may also have functioned responsively.

## 16. SHEPHERDS

As part of the Nativity sequence, shepherds' plays were popular and common. Even though all of the English versions — York Play 15, Towneley Plays 12 and 13 (the First and Second Shepherds Plays), Chester Play 12, and part of the Coventry Shearmen and Taylors' Pageant (lines 192–312) — are based on Luke 2:8–20, they all contain substantial elaborations on the biblical account. All of the versions perform the angels' song, the shepherds' inability to understand the song, their trip to Bethlehem, their appreciation of the Christ-child's poverty, and Mary's blessing upon them. Curiously, as Spector notes (S 2:472), N-Town is the only version that omits the shepherds' gifts. Woolf calls the N-Town Shepherds the "most severe and reserved" of all of the English plays (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 183). (But see note to lines 90–102, below.)

This N-Town Shepherds Play shows substantial revision, likely for its independent production after the manuscript's final compilation. The play is written in thirteeners, octaves, and quatrains.

Before 1, s.d. *Gloria in excelsis Deo*. Compare Luke 2:14 and Dutka, *Index of Songs*, pp. 28–29, for the complete lyrics.

- 5 The seven sacraments are: Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Ordination, and Matrimony, the latter two being "not common to all." In essence, the seven (a number signifying totality and the measure of

human life) sacraments are signs or forms of a mysterious and invisible reality: they are special graces that carry one from the cradle to the grave. The angel may be pointing to God's grace provided in Christ's incarnation and the various ecclesiastical graces that are being provided for everyone's corporeal existence. See Pelikan, *Christian Tradition*, 3:208–14.

- 7 *Therefore, I synge a joyful stevene*. See Rastall's lengthy note on the passage to suggest that although the Angelus begins with a paraphrase of the Gloria the text is perhaps sung by the solo angel, rather than a heavenly host, though subsequently the three shepherds seem to have heard different voices. Perhaps the singing by more voices occurs after the shepherds discuss the prophecies (16.14–61). See the plural verb *cantent* in 16.61, s.d. Rastall suggests a reordering of the lines that ties the musical components together more coherently (*Minstrels Playing*, pp. 83–84).
- 15 *shene shyne*. Spector glosses this as “brilliant radiance” (S 2:472).
- 21 *brenne thryes*. Boosras' having sighted the star three times attests to the veracity of his statement. This triple sighting may also suggest perfection, completeness, realized unity, and the Trinity (Peck, “Number as Cosmic Language,” p. 77).
- 26–29 Compare Numbers 24:17 and, below, 18.159–66. In *Biblia Pauperum*, pl. c, Balaam's prophecy is cited as a figuration of the Epiphany.
- 32 *carpynge of a croyse*. The cross spoken of by Moses may also allude to the brazen serpent of Numbers 21:4–9 referred to in John 3:14–15, where Jesus likens himself to the serpent raised in the wilderness by Moses. See the *Biblia Pauperum*, pl. e, which juxtaposes the image of the elevated serpent with the crucifixion and Abraham almost sacrificing Isaac (Genesis 22:7–8). The verse “Lesi curantur serpentem dum speculantur” (the wounded are cured when they look upon the serpent, i.e., Jesus on the Cross) appears beneath the panel depicting Moses' observation of the riddle (*Biblia Pauperum*, pp. 39, 81, 124).
- 39 *skye*. This is apparently a unique usage of the word, to mean “star,” but the word can also refer to a specific astrological configuration (*MED*).
- 46–49 The exact passage in Amos is unclear. Amos 8:1–2, 9:11, and 9:13 have all been proposed (see S 2:472). Amos 9:14–15 is also possible.
- 54–57 Compare Daniel 7:13–14, though no specific mention of meddling “with a mayde” is given, only that of a night “one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven . . . even to the ancient of days.”
- 62–70 There is clearly comic inversion as the illiterate shepherds here, as in the Chester Shepherds' Play (7.358–447, s.d.), seem to understand and learn Latin very quickly. See Woolf, *English Mystery Plays*, p. 190. In the later Chester Play, the shepherds seem to pick up Latin by osmosis. In this N-Town version, there is some comedy in the shepherds' bumbling attempts at interpreting the angels' song. It is possible that the playwright is invoking the linguistic results of the fall, that is, the vernacular's inherent inferiority to the church's Latin. The shepherds attempt to match their imperfect yet natural understanding to the angel's perfect message. In the *City of God*, Augustine (11.18) recalls that the shepherds decide

- to see “this word” (*hoc verbum*) which has come to pass (Luke 2:15). John Alford states: “On one level *verbum* represents the fusion of deed and word, and one another the fusion of Christ and his gospel” (“Grammatical Metaphor,” p. 744).
- 65, 69 *Gle, glo, glory . . . Gle, glo, glas, glum*. The First and Second Shepherds try to understand the angelic Latin, riffing on a phoneme or perhaps are trying to decline what they heard, struggling with what has entered their heads, both confident that their ears have worked accurately. The Third Shepherd seems to make better sense of the event, though it is the first shepherd who recalls the prophesy of “Boosdras” (line 74). That the shepherds struggle with the Latin, does not mean that they are not intelligent. See the note to lines 62–70, above.
- 74 *prophecy of Boosdras*. See Isaiah 63:1: “Who is this that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, this beautiful one in his robe.” This passage goes on to compare the red garments to theirs who tread at the wine press (Isaiah 63:2), and the visitation of the Holy One to the shepherds (Isaiah 63:11). The dye of the blood-red winepress was in turn seen to anticipate the Eucharistic blood of the Crucifixion (see *Hours of Catherine of Cleves*, pl. 87, on Christ as a winepress).
- 82–89 *Lete us folwe with all oure myght . . . This songe begynne*. The Second Shepherd suggests that they sing as they travel to Bethlehem, making mirth, worship, song, and melody as they go. Such a journey might provide a physical transition as they literally carry the sight lines of the audience from one acting station to another. But Rastall notes that the marginal stage direction at line 89 seems to require that they sing the *Stella celi extirpavit* in place and only then progress to Bethlehem (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 85). Whatever the case, the actors would do well to permit their shepherds to sing harmoniously at this point; though they may be clowns, who initially respond to the angels somewhat foolishly, they are, nonetheless, inspired by the voices of heaven and are engaged in a beautiful mission.
- 89, s.d. *Stella celi extirpavit*. Compare Dutka, *Index of Songs*, pp. 37–38. Here the human comedy moves to the sublime as the pre-Edenic Word becomes performative amidst the simple shepherds as they participate in the eloquent presence of Glory, Mary, and the babe itself. Rastall notes the *Stella celi* is one of several Mary-antiphons in use in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries that never found a regular place in service books nor had a set tune associated with them. Probably it would have received a plainsong performance rather than being sung polyphonically. “The text is in fact a prayer for protection against plague. Granted that such a prayer was always necessary at the time, it is not at all clear why it should be considered appropriate in a shepherds’ play” (Rastall, *Minstrels Playing*, p. 104).
- 90–102 *Heyle, floure of flourys . . . perle . . . blome . . . With thi bloody woundys . . . Whan thu wynnyst this worlde with thi wyde wounde / And puttyst man to Paradys with plenty of prys*. In the joyous hailing spirit of all the prophecies that come instantaneously to life in the celebratory vision of the shepherds, their *Stella celi* song and spontaneous response is, perhaps (contra S 2:472), the greatest gift possible for the babe. They give their understanding that reaches from the blooming of the peerless primrose to the confounding of the devil through Christ’s brilliant

wounds that restore humankind to Paradise. They honor the Word with words of insight and music that participate in the fullness of revelation, experienced this fully by no one else in the N-Town Plays, which seems hardly as “severe and reserved” as Woolf suggests (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 183). (See the headnote to this play and also the note to lines 119–26, below.)

- 119–26 Joseph’s request for more merry comfort from the shepherds is tribute to the eloquence of their gift — *Beth not styлле / But seyth your wyлле / To many a man: / How God is born / This mery morn*. His two-stress quatrains (aaab/cccb) quicken the eagerness of his response. Perhaps in line 126 it would seem appropriate that *he* refers to Christ as the Good Shepherd, who can find whoever the lost one might be (see Luke 15:3–7).
- 127–50 In this farewell sequence by the shepherds the trio again praises the child Jesus, somewhat aware of his divinity (e.g., as *Harwere of Helle*, line 129, who will defeat the fiend who would impinge upon *his rygght*, line 134) yet now focusing our attention upon his humanity with the change in versification, lines 135 ff. The innocence thereby renders the child *Lorde of grett pousté* (line 141), or *kynge of alle* (line 142), albeit a *fayre mullynge* (line 144), a beloved infant still without words other than mumblings. See Vulgate Psalm 83 on the power of suckling infants to confound and destroy God’s enemies.
- 151–54 *Now ye herdmen . . . My sone shal aqwylte yow . . . Amen*. As in the other shepherds’ plays, Mary graciously accepts the gifts of the herdsmen — all their hailing and heartfelt farewells. Rastall points out that here, in the last speech of the play, “Mary refers to the shepherd’s homage and to their singing,” which could mean that they did, in fact, sing as they walked to the new station (contrary to the Latin marginal stage direction) and that they “were still singing when they arrived; or that they sang another song while they were at the stable; or that we are to suppose that Mary heard their singing from a distance. There is no evidence for the second of these; and as there is really nothing to choose between the first and last, the question must be resolved according to the director’s staging of the episode” (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 85).

#### *Note for Play 17*

Even though there is no play 17 in the manuscript, there was probably one at some point. Spector observes that four leaves (eight pages that could have contained approximately 160 to 240 lines) were removed between the Shepherds’ and Magi plays (S 1:xx–xxi, 2:473, and Spector, “Symmetry,” pp. 170–72). It is interesting to note that the existing Purification Play has 206 lines and could have easily fit into those missing leaves. Both Block (Bl, p. xxviii) and Spector believe that the Purification Play was moved from this position (following the Shepherds’ Play) into its present position (following the Magi Play). The evidence is convincing. Block notes that a rubricated “1” is erased before play number “20.” So, if Purification Play had been number 17, then the Slaughter of the Innocents (the present play 20) would have been number 19. Such an ordering agrees with Pseudo-Matthew, *The Life of St. Anne*, and other sources. The order, as it presently stands, agrees with other medieval sources.

In English plays and processions, the placement of the Purification material is similarly divided. The N-Town Purification Play — as those from York, Hereford, and Beverley — immediately follows the Shepherds' Play. In contrast, the Chester, Towneley, Coventry, and Digby versions place the Purification material *after* the Slaughter of the Innocents or the Death of Herod (Lancashire, *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain*). The compiler may have moved the Purification Play between the Magi Play and the Slaughter of the Innocents/Death of Herod in order to accentuate Mary's role in the Nativity and to heighten the poignancy of Simeon's and Anna's prophecies in the temple.

### 18. MAGI

In comparison to the other English Magi plays, this N-Town version is relatively economical and efficient. All of the various plays' plots agree with the Epiphany narrative found in Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* (trans. Ryan, 1:78–84), though the story of the Magi originates in Matthew 2:1–12. In the N-Town Play, there are minor differences, however, from the other longer plays. Towneley (Play 14), the York Masons'/Goldsmiths' Play (16), and the Chester Vintners' Play (8) all have characters who advise Herod (Consultus in Towneley; Counselors in York; Doctor in Chester) and deliver the prophecies of Christ's nativity. The N-Town playwright gives these lines to the Magi themselves. While the other three plays have messengers, N-Town introduces a more developed character, the comic Senescallus, who also appears in the Slaughter of the Innocents (Play 20). The tyrannical Herod from this play, as in Chester and York, blusters in bombastic alliterative verse, though his entrance in N-Town is unique. The Chester Magi play begins with the Magi themselves as they approach Herod's Jerusalem, where Herod, in his court, awaits. Towneley starts with Herod standing in his court verbally attacking the audience; in his frustration and anger he sends out Nuncius as a spy to monitor unrest in his kingdom. The York Herod presents himself in his court (the audience) boasting of his splendor as he likens himself to Jupiter, Jove, Mars, and Mercury, a god akin to the sun and moon, riding upon the clouds as gracefully as a soaring gull. But in N-Town he enters the playing area riding a horse: "I ryde in ryal aray!" (line 2), "the semelyeste syre that may bestryde a stede" (line 10), boasting his glory until "Wyghtly fro my stede I skyppe down in hast, / To myn heygh hallys I haste me in my way" (lines 17–18). As he enters his court he sees to it that minstrels "of myrth, blowe up a good blast" (line 19) while he enters his chamber to change clothes. Then, from a different playing area, the kings enter, shifting attention away from Herod's palace (lines 21 ff.).

The play is written in thirteeners, octaves, sestets, and quatrains.

- 4–12      In most of the English plays, Herod boasts of his beauty in extravagant terms. Compare the York Magi play, lines 1–22, which is the most splendiferous of all in its hyperbole. But N-Town comes close with its added detail of the horse.
- 21 ff.      The action onstage divides the audience's attention between Herod's court and the Magi's travels. Line 69 returns us to Herod's court, but it is not until line 151 that Herod actually meets the Magi. Spector notes that the number of the Magi as three "derives from Church commentary, as do their identification with the kings of Psalm 71:9–11 (Vulgate) and the association of the star with Balaam's prophecy in Numbers 24:17" (S 2:473), a connection made explicit in Chester.

- 25, 41, 53 *Saba . . . Tarys . . . Ypotan*. Jacobus de Voragine, citing Peter Comestor and Remy, notes that such geography as Saba (line 25), Tarys (line 41), and Ypotan (line 53) marks the Magi as being “from the borderland of Persia and Chaldea,” a fact that accounts for their following Persian tradition in never going “empty-handed before a god or a king” (*Golden Legend*, trans. Ryan, 1:83). In Towneley they are said to be from Saba, Tars, and Araby (14.363). Spector observes that Saba (a river in Arabia) and Tarys (Tarshish) are found in Vulgate Psalm 71:10 (S 2:474).
- 25–68 The names for the Magi are found in various medieval sources, such as Peter Comestor’s *Historia Scholastica*, Jacobus de Voragine’s *Golden Legend*, and the apocryphal infancy Gospels (see S 2:474).
- 35–36 *the rede golde / As reson wyl me teche*. Red is the color associated with gold in its molten form, cleansed of its impurities, making red gold a sign of the highest form of wealth in the Middle Ages. But, as line 36 helps to reveal, there is a second meaning to *rede* functioning in the context of this gift: the gold signifies Christ’s place as the font of reason and good counsel (*MED red* n.1); see, for instance, the “red purs” of *Owl and Nightingale*, line 694. This connection of the gold to Christ’s kingly wisdom is shown in exegetical commentaries (see note to lines 35–61).
- 35–61 *rede golde . . . encens sole . . . myrrre*. The three gifts have provoked a wide range of exegetical commentary. In addition to their function as customary gifts (see note to lines 25, 41, 53), Jacobus de Voragine (*Golden Legend*, trans. Ryan, 1:83) cites Bernard as observing that the gold is a gift to relieve Mary’s poverty, the frankincense is “to dispel the bad odor of the stable,” and the myrrh is “to strengthen the child’s limbs and drive out harmful worms.” A more common reading, also given by Jacobus, can be found in the *Glossa Ordinaria*, which states that the three gifts of the Magi reflect aspects of Christ’s nature: gold, as a sign of tribute, represents his kingly power; frankincense, as an incense used during sacrifices and prayer, represents his divine majesty; and myrrh, as an anointment for the dead prior to burial, represents his human mortality (*PL* 114:75). The *Catena Aurea* (*Expositio* 1:106) supports the *Glossa*’s interpretation, adding Anselm’s view that the gold also signifies the luminous wisdom that is proper to Christ’s kingship (see note to lines 35–36). Anselm goes on to suggest that the opening of the gifts demonstrates faith in the Trinity and Scripture in its historical, moral, and allegorical senses as well as the logical, natural, and ethical implications of the Magi’s faith.
- 41 *Tarys*. See note to lines 25, 41, 53 above.
- 53 *In Ypotan and Archage*. Ypotan is unidentified. Scholars have suggested Mesopotamia. *Archage* is likely Arcadia in Greece (S 2:474).
- 73–76 Several words here are illegible. Spector (S 1:172) offers a revision based on a later reviser:
- I xall marryn þo men þat r . . . yn on myche,  
And þerinne sette here sacramentys sottys . . . say!  
Þer is no lorde in þis werde þat lokygh me lyche.  
For to lame l . . . of þe lesse lay . . .

- 82 *cammaka*. Cammock is a plant that was woven into a fine fabric (*MED*).
- 83 *curryd*. Davies glosses the word as “well-combed”; Spector suggests “excellent”; Block believes that the word is a mistake for *cursyd* (S 2:474).
- 88 *prevyn*. To “test” or “pierce” or even “to trim the feathers of a bird” (*MED proien* and S 2:474).
- 92 *Mahound*. Spector notes that *Mahound* is from Old French *mahon*, a short form of *Mahomet*. In English and Continental plays, this is a devil or a false god (S 2:475).
- 93–94 “Bitter death will deliver up the life of anyone (who) would threaten me in this way” (S 2:475).
- 119–20 *Now lede us alle / To the kyngys halle*. As the Seneschal leads the Magi to the false king we arrive at a key exegetical moment in the story. The Magi, previously following the constant star, here abandon the road marked by that sign of faith in order to seek human information. According to legend, the star therefore disappears during their time with Herod in Jerusalem. Jacobus de Voragine notes the *Glossa*’s further statement (*PL* 114:73–75) that not only does this disappearance punish their faithless act, but it also marks their continued status (soon to be rectified) as unbelievers: “as the apostle says, signs are given to infidels but prophecy to the faithful: therefore the sign that was given to the Magi while they were still infidels would not appear to them while they were still among the believing Jews” (*Golden Legend*, trans. Ryan, 1:81). This idea is explicitly spelled out in Chester 8, where the kings, following the star, “goe downe to the beastes and ryde abowt” (8.112, s.d.) only to lose sight of it — “alas, where is this sterre iwent?” (8.113). It is not until they depart from Herod that the star reappears: “Syr, wee see the starre appeare / in the east withouten were” (8.213–14).
- 121–26 “We ask thee [if] he (Herod) will have pity on us and will tell us how this (the birth of Christ) has happened.” See also Spector, S 2:475. *Glete* (line 125) is an evocative word meaning: a) earthly filth or slime; b) the human body; c) fig., sin (*MED*). Christ’s incarnation is, at least from the divine perspective, an ungainly process.
- 131 *gynnyth wyde*. The context (lines 133–34) suggests Herod’s bold self-aggrandizement. Hence, the verb *widen*, “to enlarge” or “to spread out” (*MED*) does make sense. Spector suggests “to go, to advance” or “to go mad” (S 2:475).
- 159–64 Spector observes that Balaam’s prophecy became associated with the Magi, as demonstrated in the liturgy (S 2:475). See also note to 16.26–29.
- 166 *be fenne*. A rare topographical reference in the manuscript that places the play in or near East Anglia.
- 226–29 Herod is apparently casting a misdirection spell over the Magi (lines 273–90). Ironically, by warning the Magi, the angel works Herod’s sorcery to the good.
- 230–31 *Go we to sek our lord and our lech! / Yon stere will us tech*. Once they have left Herod’s court and once more taken the path of faith, the star reappears for the Magi. See the note to lines 119–20.
- 230–34 This is a five-line stanza.

- 235 ff. Woolf suggests that here, as in Towneley, the Magi recognize the presence of the Trinity (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 195), though they are not yet able to understand fully how the baby fits into the mystery (see lines 247–50, 270, 284).
- 314 *his ryght honde*. Referring to God's protecting the Magi from Herod's scheming.

## 19. PURIFICATION

Plays that retold the story of Candlemass, or Mary's purification in the Temple, Simeon's long wait for the Messiah, and Anna's prophecy were performed throughout the British Isles. We have six extant play texts: Chester Play 11, a large portion of the Coventry Weavers' Pageant (lines 176–718), York Play 17, Towneley Play 17, the Digby Candlemass Play, and N-Town's. The Towneley and York plays concentrate on Simeon and Anne's prophecies regarding the Christ-child. Chester and Coventry curiously conflate Candlemass with Christ's meeting with the doctors of the temple, which, according to Luke 2:41–52, happened twelve years later. In the Chester and Coventry versions, Mary and Joseph (mostly Mary) dispute their son's identity with the temple doctors. The Digby version combines Mary's purification rites in the temple with the massacre of the innocents. Spector notes that this particular N-Town play is not mentioned in the Banns and interrupts the plot and chronology of the Magi and Slaughter of the Innocents plays (S 2:476). The topos of the sacrificial firstborn appears repeatedly in the Old Testament. It appears first with Abraham's offering of Isaac found in Genesis 22:1–14. It is significant that the angel allows Abraham to "buy back" his son, that is, to sacrifice a ram in Isaac's place. This same topos occurs in the Passover of Exodus, when the firstborn of Egypt are sacrificed, but those of the Israelites are saved through blood redemption (Exodus 11:4–6, 12:1–13:15; Deuteronomy 26:1–13).

The play consists of ten-line stanzas, an unusual form in the manuscript that is also found in Joseph's Doubt. Because of the Purification's place in the manuscript and its stanzaic form, Spector suggests that this play was added later to the collection. It is noteworthy that the date at the end of the play, 1468, has been used by scholars to date the whole manuscript even though no one is certain of the date's significance.

- 18 *Sancta sanctorum*. Literally, the Holy of Holies inside the temple. When Solomon completed the temple, which was begun by his father David, the priests could not enter the inner sanctum because the glory of the Lord filled it (3 Kings [1 Kings] 8:13–21 and 2 Paralipomenon [Chronicles] 6:1–11 and 7:1–22). God blesses the temple but also promises Solomon that David's line will continue as part of the covenant. It is clear to Simeon and Anna that they are witnessing the fulfillment to that prophecy.
- 21–40 The pathos of Simeon's speech lies in the tension between "the aged Symeon's eagerness to be rid of life but yet greater longing to see the Christ-Child" (Woolf, *English Mystery Plays*, p. 197). This version balances Simeon's hope in the Trinity (implied in the existence of the Christ-child) in the third stanza (lines 21–30) with the feebleness of his faculties and limbs in the fourth, as he inches his way toward death (lines 31–40). The other English versions allude to his age, but they all display Simeon's unalloyed confidence that he will see the Messiah before he dies.



- 46 *temple ther thu dwellyst inne*. Simeon's speech (lines 1–40) and the angel's allusion to the temple recall 2 Peter 1:13 and 2 Corinthians 5:1–8. Both biblical passages correlate the earthly temple with corporeal existence. See also the previous note.
- 68 *bye mankende*. See the headnote for the long Old Testament tradition of atonement. While animal sacrifice was part of the tradition (for various transgressions and offerings), there are exceptional cases in which God requires the sacrifice of the firstborn son.
- 82 *offeryd*. See the headnote for the tradition of Old Testament sacrifice.
- 88–90 Compare Luke 2:35: "And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that, out of many hearts, thoughts may be revealed."
- 91–94 Compare Luke 2:38: "Now she . . . spoke of him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel."
- 91–96 The only sestet in the play, possibly a partial ten-line stanza.
- 98 *fourty days*. Luke 2:22 states that Mary's purification after giving birth to Jesus fulfilled the Mosaic Law. Leviticus 12:1–5 mandates the male child's circumcision on the eighth day and the mother's purification (keeping her from the temple) lasting thirty-three days, a total of forty days.
- 115–16 Compare Luke 2:24 ("offer a sacrifice . . . a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons") and Leviticus 12:6–8 ("a young pigeon or a turtle for sin . . . and if her hand find not sufficiency, and she is not able to offer a lamb, she shall take two turtles or two young pigeons"). Medieval sources noted that doves were offerings of the poor while lambs were offered by the rich (S 2:476).
- 136, s.d. *Suscepimus Deus misericordiam tuam*. On the several relationships of this psalm text to the Latin liturgy, see Rastall, *Minstrels Playing*, p. 105.
- 137–45 This passage begins with the extra-metrical Latin line. The lines following the Latin line are a version of Vulgate Psalm 47:10–12, but are also used in the Sarum Missal (see S 2:476 and Woolf, *English Mystery Plays*, p. 390n44).
- 146, s.d. The song is known as "The Canticle of Simeon" and is sung at compline and as an antiphon (Dutka, *Index of Songs*, p. 35). It is also sung in the Chester Play 11 after line 167. See also Rastall's note on ways and uses of performance of the song in liturgy (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 106).
- 147 *Now lete me dye*. The *nunc dimittis* is an ancient device defining the long suffering servant/watchman who waits in good faith until the mission is complete. It is found even in Homer's *Odyssey*, where the hero's dog Argus waits twenty years for his lord, then, when he comes, wags his tail and dies peacefully.
- 156 *And kepe wel: this man is savacyon*. See textual notes for this line. The manuscript places punctuation after *wel* and clearly separates *man* from *is*. Spector renders the line: "And kepe wel this, man's savacion." Block renders it: "And kepe wel — this man is savacion." In Block's and in my version, "keep" recalls the things (events) that Mary ponders in her heart. Spector's version would make the phrase adjectival, and thus less of a declaration. In his line, "keep" would mean "to guard or

- to watch.” There appears to be a foreshadowing of the Passion and Crucifixion in the direct equation between Christ’s flesh and salvation for humankind.
- 163–66 An introduction to the feast of Candlemass, celebrated on 2 February. It is the last feast in the Christmas liturgical cycle.
- 177–80 Compare Numbers 18:15–16: “the redemption of it shall be . . . for five sicles of silver.” See also Spector, S 2:175 and 2:476.
- 181, s.n. **CAPELLANUS**. The chaplain.
- 203–06 Mary offers the fowls on the altar (line 196 s.d.), but it is clear that her words unknowingly presage Christ’s offering his own life.
- After 206 MS: 1468. The date could be the date of this play’s inclusion into the manuscript, a commemorative date of the play’s performance, the first or last date of the play’s performance, the date of the manuscript’s completion, etc.

## 20. SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS; DEATH OF HEROD

Plays or pageants depicting the slaughter of the innocents seem to have been spread throughout the British Isles. Besides the six existing plays, there are records of performances in Beverley, and possibly in Cambridge and in Edinburgh (Lancashire, *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain*). All of the extant plays are based upon Matthew 2:16–20, but the Chester (Play 10), Digby Candlemass, and N-Town versions include the holy family’s flight into Egypt (Matthew 2:13–15), a subject which is a separate and preceding play for Towneley (Play 15) and York (Play 18). Each version possesses its own characteristics, however. In York Play 19, Herod concludes that the soldiers have missed the Christ-child; in Chester Play 10, Herod realizes that his own son has been killed with the other male children; Towneley Play 16 ends with Herod’s triumph; and the Digby version is presented as a St. Anne’s Day play that includes a Purification scene as well as a comic messenger named Watkyn. N-Town, Chester, and Digby all conclude with Herod’s death (Acts 12:20–23). (Evidently, the historical Herod of Ascalon and his grandson, Herod Agrippa, have been conflated in these versions; see Hussey, “How Many Herods in the Middle English Drama?” p. 252.) It is interesting to note that the N-Town Banns describes two separate plays—the Slaughter and the Death of Herod. Clearly, the compiler made several changes as he chose to include the Purification. See Spector, S 2:477.

The play is composed of thirteeners, octaves, and one sestet.

- 1, s.d. This stage direction indicates that this play was, at one point, part of, or was intended to follow, the Magi Play (see S 2:477).
- 9–10 *I ryde on my rowel . . . Rybbys ful reed, with rape shal I rende!* Herod’s tyrannical rage at being thwarted by the kings is rich with violent sexual puns, as he boasts: “I ride on my spike-wheel spurs, potent in reign (with pun on the reining in of the horse); I shall rend (tear, impale) the horse’s sides (ribs) until they are bloody, red with my rape (blows).” The next line anticipates the slaughter of the women and children whom he plans to pierce and stab with his spear, and effeminizes the pretty kings with their gold crowns whom he will stab as well. In line 34 he then returns to the bloody impaling of ribs, now of the children he plans to

- impale by the beasts' stalls, as he announces his plans for the slaughter. To enhance his potency Herod speaks in heroic alliterative verse.
- 11 *Popetys*. Glossed here as "children," but clearly ironic as it is usually a term of endearment.
- 13 *gomys with gold crownys*. Spector notes: "'The gold-crowned children will never thrive,' or 'The children will not profit from (bribery with) gold crowns.' The reference is less probably to the Magi, the men with gold crowns, whom Herod tries to intercept and kill in Pseudo-Matthew. *gomys* has been altered, perhaps to *gollys*. If glossed 'gulls, unfledged birds' (i.e., the Innocents), this would be consistent with Herod's avian imagery in this stanza" (S 2:477).
- 31 *sheltrownys*. A *sheltrown* was a battle formation (*MED*). Spector takes these lines as referring to the crying mothers, but this is not likely (see S 2:478).
- 32 Conceivably, *raftys* is derived from *riften*, meaning to tear, cleave, or rend, though I have followed *MED*'s suggestion of *raftys* for "spear," adapted here to the point of a spur.
- 48 *fool*. Spector glosses as "rascal" (S 2:587). But *MED* cites this line under *fole* n.1a (male colt), with the specialized meaning (n.1a[e]) "young child," "mere child," which is surely the sense here.
- 58 *qwenys*. Derogatory term; "low-class women" or whores (*MED*).
- therlys*. "piercings" (*MED*). See Spector, S 2:478.
- 65–66 *sharpe / As an harpe*. See Rastall (*Heaven Singing*, pp. 49–50) on what the sense of a sharp harp might imply. Perhaps "it is the penetrating power of the instrument that makes the metaphor a usable one; and that its carrying sound-quality was regarded as one of the harp's virtues. This may point towards a metal-strung clarach rather than a gut-strung harp as the instrument best known to an East Anglian audience." But it is more likely that the playwright shortened one of two ME words that have nothing to do with music, namely *arpago* or *arpagoun*, meaning a grappling hook or "harpoon" (*MED*), which gets at the vicious behavior of the soldiers better than harp does.
- 67 See the explanatory note to line 58.
- 73 *Awake, Joseph*. The angel addresses the Holy Family situated in a different playing area of the stage, perhaps opposite to Herod's palace.
- 139 *I shal hem down dynge*. Herod imagines himself to be a powerful death figure, heedless that Death stands near him, watching.
- 143 *dyner*. Herod celebrates the butchery with a feast, a grand meal for his knights accompanied by pomp and circumstance. We, as audience, are acutely aware of another silent presence, namely Mors, who is, even as Herod boasts, orchestrating the greatest feast of all — Death's feast. See note to line 139.
- 153, 232 *blowe up . . . Blowe up*. This particular minstrel plays a horn or a wind instrument. John Stevens compares Herod's use of minstrels for revelry here with the

- beginning of the Magi Play (18.19). "Herod has music wherever a king or duke would in real life. . . . Minstrelsy is part of 'the sweet fruition of an earthly crown'" ("Music in Mediaeval Drama," p. 88).
- 168 ff. Spector observes that Mors' or Death's speeches bear comparison with those in *Castle of Perseverence*, lines 2778–2842 (see S 2:478).
- 189 *ken*. MS: *kan*. If the word is *ken*, then there is clever wordplay: *ken* can mean "to recognize" but also "to engender" (*MED*). It is also possible that *kan* is correct and that the *no* that follows ought to be *ne* or *not* (and *sporte* is not reflexive) in which case the line would read: "Death cannot play."
- 196 *hete*. Most likely "fever," but "a blow" is also possible. Line 200, "I shal hym owt swete," would seem to make "fever" more likely. See also Spector, S 2:478, and Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, trans. Ryan, 1:58–59. There is a possibility that Herod suffers symptoms of the plague or other European pandemics, something of which even fifteenth-century East Anglians might well have been aware. See McEvedy, "Bubonic Plague," pp. 3–4.
- 220–22 *boys* . . . *boy*. Abusive terms (see S 2:479).
- 233–34 *All oure! . . . I shall hem brynge onto my celle*. As Mors slays each knight and then Herod, Diabolus gathers them together in a Dance of Death to trail them out of the staging area, leaving Mors alone to address the audience with his chilling moral (lines 246 ff.).
- 244–45 *Of oure myrthis now shal ye se / And evyr synge "Welawey!"* The devil, under the watchful eye of Mors, captures the souls of Herod's court as they are smitten one by one, and, in a Dance of Death, leads them to Hell where they will dance to a different tune: "Note the nature of the perversion of heavenly mirth: it results not in the joyful singing of the mirthful person but in someone else metaphorically singing sadly" (Rastall, *Minstrels Playing*, p. 86).
- 265–66 These lines are also found in other works such as *Everyman* (see S 2:480).

## 21. CHRIST AND THE DOCTORS

We have records of this play's subject being performed in other parts of the British Isles besides Coventry, York, and Chester. There is even a play by John Bales on the topic. The five extant texts (York Play 20, part of Chester Play 11, Coventry Weavers' Pageant [lines 719–1187], Towneley Play 18, and N-Town's) are all based upon Luke 2:41–52. The York, Coventry, and Towneley plays are similar. Chester's version, while briefer, is awkwardly yoked to the Purification Play. All of these plays depict the twelve-year-old Jesus as a prodigious scholar of the law who can summarize the Mosaic Law in one great commandment. In the N-Town version, however, Jesus' dispute with the doctors results in their musing upon the conundrum of the Christ's fleshly and divine nature. Woolf (*English Mystery Plays*, pp. 214–15) regards this play as a marvelous scholastic debate on the natures of the Trinity and of redemption that finds echoes in the *Summa* (III.iii.8) as well as other N-Town Plays (2.182–85 and Play 23, Temptation). For a fuller discussion of the patristic bases (St. John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Augustine, Aquinas, Gregory the Great, Anselm, Peter

Lombard, Jerome, etc.) for this debate, see Fry, “Unity,” pp. 529–39, particularly his notes. It may even be possible to view the debate between Jesus and the doctors as a thinly veiled Jewish-Christian debate.

The play is written entirely in octaves.

- 1        Roughly translated in the following line. In the larger passage, lines 1–32, the doctors’ weaving of the Latin and the English ostentatiously displays their academic status and learning. Their vaunting efforts are ironic, particularly in light of Herod’s demise in the previous play.
- 1–32     The doctors show their mastery of the jargon of the seven liberal arts: the Trivium (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the Quadrivium (arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy). Their “learned” exchange provides a masterful subversion of their pretensions by the playwright that sets up the pointed spiritual insight of young Jesus’ interrogation of their “connyng” (line 40) which is so deficient in wisdom (n.b. lines 50–52, 57).
- 3        Loosely translated in the following line.
- 11–12   *swete musyke . . . Seke no ferther but to oure presens!* Although there is no evidence that live music accompanies this scene, that music is among the two doctors’ accomplishments should surely be taken as “an indication that the doctors have their hearts in the right place” (Rastall, *Minstrels Playing*, p. 86).
- 16       *astronomye*. Astronomy, especially as Doctor 2 uses the term here, denotes what we would call astrology — the influential powers of stars and planets on earthly activities. Genius, in Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*, 7.633–1506, provides a good overview of its scope. See Jean Gerson’s *Trilogium astrologie theologizate* on uses and abuses of the art.
- 17       *negremauncye*. On uses of astrological and mathematical calculation for magical arts, see Spector, S 2:481, which cites Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, pp. 85–86, and Thorndike, *History of Magic*, 4:124. Spector compares this line in N-Town with Lydgate’s *Siege of Thebes* (lines 4051–52): “What stood hym stede his nigromancye, / Calculacioun, or astronomye.”
- 19       *jematrye*. Not only geometry, or the art of measuring and design, but also the occult art of geomancy (*MED*), in which numbers are correlated with letters whereby words may be read as numbers for mystical investigation, etc.
- 22       *Caton, Gryscysme, nor Doctrynal*. Cato’s *Disticha de moribus ad filium*, on ethics; *The Gryscysme*, by Evrad de Béthune, a grammatical treatise; and *The Doctrinale*, another grammar, or possibly a reference to Christian doctrine (*MED*).
- 33       Translated in the next line. Compare Ecclesiasticus 1:1: “All wisdom is from the Lord God, and hath been always with him, and is before all time.” Compare with line 90 as well.
- 50–52, 57   Jesus’ interrogation is similar to God’s confrontation of Job with the big questions (Job 38–39). Line 57 might best be appreciated as a clever self-reference to the entire N-Town Cycle.

- 60 *plasmacyon*. Jesus out-jargons the jargoners.
- 66 *oo God in Trynité*. From the Athanasian Creed: “Fides autem catholica haec est: ut unum Deum in Trinitate . . . veneremur” (as cited in S 2:482).
- 81–92 See Spector, S 2:482, citing Block, Bl p. iii n2, who notes that this comparison of light and Trinity “is found in V. de Beauvais and goes back to Augustine,” but does not cite specific passages. See also the Salutation (ll. 292, s.d.–312) and the Digby *Candlemass*, lines 485–96.
- 97–98 On the mystery of light passing through glass without harming its nature, see note to 11.252.
- 102 *in the opyn felde*. Another clear reference to the playing area as a field of contest. In this case, figuratively speaking, Jesus is a jouster who would defeat (*convicte*) Satan in this field of combat. See also note to Banns, line 399, above.
- 126–28 Compare with 2.100–03.
- 143–44, s.d. Although the two doctors were initially complacent academics, it is noteworthy that, through their conversation with young Jesus, they are able to see beyond the cleverness of rhetoric to the inner meaning of their texts, to acknowledge the superiority of his wisdom, and to place him in the higher seat of learning, a dramatic demonstration of the potency of true reading skills as the spirit of the text becomes supreme. Jesus has, in effect, taken them on a journey; whereas first he talked about wisdom coming from God (line 33) and then spoke of Trinitarian thought through the analogy of light passing through glass (lines 97–98), he now moves to a direct assertion of his hypostatic being. See line 149, where Jesus as Second Person of the Trinity addresses them in the first person.
- 149 *My wytt and my lernynge*. Although it has been our policy to use lowercase for Jesus as a human figure in N-Town, in this passage the hypostasis of his dual nature is made plainly evident: “I am of dobyl byrth and of dobyl lenage” (line 157). Indeed, convincing the doctors of this very fact seems both the point of his arguments and of the play itself, as Jesus speaks of himself as the one “without gynnynge” (line 158) who is also “endles” (line 162). That Jesus is successful in his arguments demonstrates that the true Jewish priesthood, as keepers of the Law, have within themselves a capacity of epiphany as they realize true divinity in their minds. See note to lines 281–88.
- 149–52 Compare York 20, lines 107–08: “Certis, I was or 3e, / And schall be aftir 3our”; and Towneley 18, lines 83–84: “certain, syre, I was or ye, / And shall be after you.” Jesus attests to his true identity by revealing the divine source of his *wytt* (wisdom, knowledge, and memory). *Or this worde* contains a fine pun on “word” (as in this speech) and “world” (to which he was pre-existent).
- 157 *I am of dobyl byrth and of dobyl lenage*. As Jesus acknowledges his double birth he demonstrates the ambiguity of every human’s genealogy, which goes back to their earthly parents but, more importantly, to what Chaucer calls “the ferste stok,” which is God himself, “the firste fader in magestee” (“Gentilesse,” lines 1, 8, and 19). Although he acknowledges his “carnall” mother (21.163), he is

- “fadyrles” (21.175), his “Godhede” (21.167), like that of “the hygh Kyng of Blys” (21.171) being from the beginning. These passages on the hypostasis of the Trinity are central to much of the recurrent Trinitarian doctrine that runs throughout N-Town.
- 180–84 Compare Isaias 7:14: “Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel”; and 7.1–16, above.
- 241–56 Jesus reveals the messianic secret that is meant to keep his true identity from Satan (see S 2:483). See also Woolf, *English Mystery Plays*, pp. 215–16. When Doctor 2 asks about Jesus’ biological parentage, he replies that his parents’ unlikely marriage, his mother’s “untimely” pregnancy, and Joseph’s fidelity (however foolish in human eyes) were designed *To blynde the devyl of his knowlache* (line 245). Compare these lines to the demon’s prologue to Passion Play 1 (26.25–32, 41–42) and to the Parliament of Hell scene (23.14–39).
- 263 *Faderys ware*. Literally, “my father’s stock in trade.” See Luke 2:49: “did you not know, that I must be about my father’s business?” Jesus, of course, refers to God’s spiritual business and spiritual concerns such as heaven and salvation.
- 269 *these days thre*. The three-day absence and Mary’s concern seem to prefigure the fearful dark night of the soul prior to the Resurrection. Or it is perhaps worth paralleling Jesus’ entrance into the temple to lead the two confused doctors toward the revelation they ultimately affirm to Play 35: Harrowing of Hell (2), which concludes in N-Town with the reassurance of Mary.
- 281–88 Although initially in this play the doctors had looked upon Jesus as a “lytyl babe . . . on thi moderys lappe” (line 41) who should return to suckle at his mother’s breast, now, having understood the progress of his instruction, they have placed themselves at his feet. Here, the playwright creates a dramatic moment of epiphany whereby the First Doctor, even in the presence of Mary, freely and willingly recognizes the true divinity of Jesus within the hypostasis of the incarnation.
- 287 *consummacyon*. Either the performance “of this pageant” or the end of the whole pageant (see S 2:572).
- 289 *Amen*. See note to 15.321–22 on a response said by all.

## 22. BAPTISM

The Baptism Play is based on Matthew 3:1–4:2, Mark 1:3–11, Luke 3:3–22, 4:1–2, and John 1:6–24. There are records of other such plays in the British Isles (including one by John Bale), but there are only two extant texts apart from the N-Town version. N-Town’s version differs from York Play 22 and Towneley Play 19 in two ways: first, God speaks directly (not through angels), approving of Christ’s actions; and, second, this play clearly prepares an audience for the ensuing Temptation Play. Woolf states that this play “is exceptional, not only in giving the prominence of centrality to John the Baptist as prophet but also in giving emphasis to John the Baptist as preacher” (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 217). It is interesting to note John the Baptist’s emphasis on proper and institutional penance

consisting of “schryfte of mowthe.” Evidently, this particular point was a stumbling block for the Lollards who were opposed to this sort of institutional dispensation.

Martin Stevens posits that the Baptism, Temptation, Woman Taken in Adultery, and the Lazarus plays were meant to be performed or read as a single ministry play (*Mystery Cycles*, pp. 200–02). This entire play is written in thirteener stanzas, except for one Latin line, line 40.

- 27–35      Compare Luke 3:16: “John [the Baptist] answered, saying unto all: I indeed baptize you with water; but there shall come one mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to loose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”
- 40          *Ecce Agnus Dei qui tollit peccata mundi*. Rastall argues that this line should be spoken, not sung (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 107).
- 93–98      Compare Matthew 3:16–17, Mark 1:10–11, and Luke 3:22.
- 100–01     Compare Love’s *Mirroure*, p. 88 (see S 2:484).
- 121–31     Compare Matthew 4:1–2, Mark 1:12–13, and Luke 4:1–2.
- 151          The sacrament of penance consists of contrition, confession, and satisfaction followed by absolution and the fruits of satisfaction. Compare Chaucer’s Parson’s Tale, *CT* X(I)106–07.
- 158–59     Compare Matthew 3:10 and Luke 3:9: “Every tree therefore that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire.”
- 171–74     Compare Matthew 3:12 and Luke 3:17: “The chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

### 23. PARLIAMENT OF HELL; TEMPTATION

Based on the gospel account (in Matthew 4:1–11, Mark 1:12–13, and Luke 4:1–13), the subject of Christ’s temptation was performed in many parts of the British Isles and continental Europe. The other existing English cycle plays such as the York Smiths’ Play (22) and the Chester Butchers’ Play (first half of Play 12) focus on the episode as Satan’s attempt at discerning Jesus’ true identity. N-Town’s Temptation begins, as some Continental versions do, with a Parliament of Hell in which Satan asks his captains the best way to discover Jesus’ identity. It is possible that this parliamentary scene served as a model for the Parliament of Heaven from the Mary Play, or vice-versa.

This play is written entirely in thirteener stanzas.

- 1–65          Spector notes that demonic dialogues of this sort are found in other medieval works such as the *Gospel of Nicodemus* and the *Deuelis Perlament*, citing Moore, “Infernal Council” (S 2:484). See also Woolf, *English Mystery Plays*, pp. 220–21.
- 4, 9, 13      *dowte*. Could also be “fear.”
- 27–30          Wee observes: “Aquinas quotes Ignatius and Jerome, who suggest that the reason for Mary’s marriage is ‘that the manner of His Birth might be hidden from the



- devil, who would think Him to be begotten not of a virgin but of a wife.' He then goes on to quote Augustine, who explains the deception in Christ's incarnation and youth as a protection against the devil's malice" ("Temptation of Christ," p. 5).
- 50–52 "To tempt him in the three sins that always cause man's frail nature to fall most quickly" (S 2:484).
- 57–61 Lucifer and the demons regularly comment upon the darkness of hell and the darkness of their minds (reason). These facts contrast Lucifer's original condition as an angel of light who, through pride, dared to sit *in Goddys se / Above sunne and mone and sterrys on sky* (1.56–57). Theologically speaking, Christ's career in the plays moves from obscurity to glorification; Lucifer's in just the opposite direction. Pride is often noted as the first apostasy; compare Gower's *Confessio Amantis* 1.581 ff.
- 66–143 Compare Matthew 4:1–7 and Luke 4:1–4, 9–12.
- 75 *wronge*. Likely "sinful" or "spiritually entangling" (*MED*), but because of its proximity to *gloteny*, it probably should be rendered "excessive."
- 92–104 In the N-Town ministry plays, Jesus' words (while revelatory and self-reflexive) also conceal his true nature. In contrasting material bread (which he is) with the spiritual word of God (which he is), he can at once confuse Satan, hide his (Christ's own) divine nature, and act as the fulfillment of both abstract and concrete divinity. This simultaneous contrast and consummation of *material brede* and *Goddys wurde* foreshadows his teaching at the Last Supper (27.361–448).
- 100 This line is a command.
- 109 This line is a command.
- 117, s.d. Satan gets Jesus onto the pinnacle of the temple but, uncharacteristically, there is no stage direction getting him down. Woolf observes: "Here one must imagine that, insofar as stage properties permitted it, Christ was shown standing upon the topmost tower of the Temple, and that, after refusing Satan's taunting invitation to reveal His divinity by throwing Himself down unscathed, He walked calmly down some steps . . . and returned to the ground in the natural, human way" (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 221).
- 144–47 Spector observes that, according to Gregory, Jesus overcame the three sins that Adam first committed at the fall: gluttony, pride, and covetousness (S 2:485).
- 157–76 Compare Matthew 4:8–10 and Luke 4:5–8. Spector remarks that such alliterative catalogues were part of a stock braggart's (or tyrant's) boast as in the Towneley Play 16, *Play of the Sacrament*, and *Castle of Perseverance* (S 2:485). While it is likely that these particular place-names were chosen for their alliterative value (and thus not necessarily for their connotations), the list can tell us about the playwright's and the audience's reference points and worldviews.
- 161–75 Spector has identified most of these places (see note to 23.157–76). *Naverne* or Navarre is in Spain. *Zabulon*, *Neptalym* (or Nephtalim), and Galilee are all men-

tioned in Matthew 4:15. *Zebee* and *Salmana* are Midianite kings from Judges 8:5. *Archage* is probably Arcadia in Greece. *Januense* could be either Genoa or Janina in Ionian Greece. *Archas* is likely Arcas, in Arabia. *Aragon* is in Spain, and *Almonye* is Germany. *Pownteys* is likely Poitiers, known in the fifteenth century for its university and its posh bourgeois hotels. *Poperynge* is in Belgium. For Arcas and Janina, see Setton, *History of the Crusades*, vols. 5 and 6.

- 195     *For sorwe I lete a crakke*. In his frustration, unable to determine whether Jesus is God or man, which had been the goal of the Temptation scene, Satan makes another sulfurous exit with gunpowder farts. See note to 1.81.
- 195, s.d.     “Gloria tibi Domini” is a response or doxology in the Sarum rite (Dutka, *Index of Songs*, pp. 172–73). Compare Matthew 4:11 and Mark 1:13. The stage direction admirably exemplifies Stevens’ affiliating angels with music and the voicing of heaven.
- 215–16     Compare 1 Corinthians 10:13.
- 222     *Amen*. See note to 15.321–22 on a response said by all.

#### 24. WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY

Of all the existing dramatic versions of this episode, N-Town’s is the longest and most detailed. Both the Chester (second half of Play 12) and York (first half of Play 14) versions are combined with other play material: Chester’s is yoked to the Temptation; York’s is combined with the Raising of Lazarus. (In addition, York’s is incomplete.) All of these are based upon the Gospel account from John 8:1–11. As opposed to the other versions, the more graphic N-Town version also has comic characters such the scantily clad Juvenis and the salacious Accusator. While the N-Town Woman Taken in Adultery Play is not a dynamic drama, it does accomplish, as Gibson argues, “the *imaging* of scripture in human flesh that is the generating force of the medieval religious drama. The highest purpose of medieval biblical drama . . . was not explication of the word — not preaching or *ministry* at all — but the sacramental revelation of the *mysterium* or word made flesh” (“Writing before the Eye,” pp. 401–02, emphases hers).

This play is written entirely in octaves.

- Before 1–1     “Here of the woman taken in adultery. / I do not wish the sinner’s death.” Compare Ezechiel 18:23 and 32, 33:11. Meredith relates this line to the Lenten liturgy.
- 7–8     “Weighed in the scales of heavenly truth, his mercy surpasses all harsh judgment many times over” (Bev, p. 461).
- 17–24     See Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, pp. 214–18 (see also S 2:486).
- 19–20     Echoed in Demon’s Prologue to Passion Play 1 (26.61–62).
- 29–30     Bevington notes that these lines restate the Golden Rule of Matthew 7:12 (p. 462).
- 66     *sporte*. It is clear that the Pharisee and the Scribe are interested in salacious talk, if not actions, hence their frequent use of *sporte* and *game* in this play. The Accusator’s *sporte* could be a simple joke, but is more likely a prurient allusion to sexual activity (*MED*).

- 67–68 “I warrant that we’ll be well bribed to keep a secret (i.e. the prostitute whom we’re going to raid will try to bribe us not to expose her shame)” (Bev, p. 463).
- 69 *qvene*. At very least a lowborn woman, but more likely a prostitute (*MED*). Their low language reveals the scorn of common humanity perpetrated by the accusers.
- 71 *tall*. In Middle English, this is a clear double entendre perhaps describing his height (or handsomeness), but more likely alluding crudely to his imagined sexual endowment. According to the *MED*, big codfish (read *phallus*) were described as *tall*.
- 80 *The hare fro the forme we shal arere*. Another lascivious assertion by Accusator. I.e., “We will catch them in the act,” with more obscene connotations.
- 145–53 The Scribe and the Pharisee hurl a cartload of Middle English obscenities at the woman.
- 147 *Com forth . . . bych clowte*. A “bitch” cloth (*MED*), but also possibly “bloody rag.” Spector (S 2:486) suggests “‘rag of a whore,’ or perhaps ‘cursed rag.’” But see Gibson’s livelier reading (that echoes David Mills): “Come forth thou whore and stinking dog-turd” (“Writing before the Eye,” p. 404).
- 152 *to kepe thi kutte*. At very least, an admonition to cover her privates and to be more modest, but also a command for her to take better care of her pudendum. See Spector (S 2:486) for various euphemistic glosses on the phrase, such as “defend your virtue” or “keep one’s distance, be coy or reserved” (*OED*).
- 153–54 *A, mercy! Mercy, serys, I yow pray! / For Goddys love, have mercy on me*. Although Juvenis reveals himself to be a defiant, though comically exposed, clown, Mulier always responds with dignity and an earnestness that compels us to take her plight seriously and with compassion. Bevington puts the matter well when he observes: “The adulterous woman recalls Eve as fallen woman, and yet by her dignity in the face of compassion she also reminds us of the Virgin Mary bravely facing her detractors” (Bev, p. 460).
- 161–64 The woman’s desire to hide her dishonor and keep her public name unspotted is not a sign of hypocrisy, but rather concern over her friends and public companions whom she would not dishonor by association. See note 174–75.
- 174–75 *To all my frendys, it shul be shame. / I pray yow, kyll me prevyly*. Mulier’s prayer that she be put to death rather than dishonor her friends shows a humane consideration that sets her far above her hypocritical and vicious accusers.
- 183 That both the adulterer and the adulteress should be put to death has biblical authority; see Leviticus 20:10: “let them be put to death both the adulterer and the adultress.”
- 189 *pay*. Not only to recompense, but to strike as a punishment (*MED*).
- 225 *colde stodye*. This is a state of deep concentration or meditation, not unlike a trance. Jesus clearly sees beyond the trickery of the accusers’ activities.

- 232, s.d. *scribet in terra*. Gibson uses the enigmatic writing in the dirt as a trope “grained” in Scripture that opens up to the observer the mysterious nature of grace as it is “seen also by me” (1 Corinthians 15:8) as “Yon prophyte dede wryte befor myn eye” (line 236) (“Writing before the Eye,” pp. 404–05). Bevington (Bev, p. 461) suggests that Jesus, throughout the play, is situated in the platea of an arena theater, along with the audience, rather “than on a scaffold or pageant wagon.” See also 208, s.d.: “scrybyt in terra.”
- 233 ff. *I am ashamyd*. See note to 8.30 that deals with N-Town’s thoughtful presentation of the Jewish priesthood.
- 252 One theory is that Jesus was writing down the accusers’ sins in the dirt.
- 256 *Thow I shuld dye in a stable*. Clever use of irony that contrasts the Scribe’s greatest fear — ignominious death — and Jesus’ humble birthplace.
- 257 ff. *Thow I be wurthy for my trespas*. See Gibson’s salient point that Mulier “is humanity in medieval symbolic theological discourse. . . . The whore is . . . Everyman” whose honest repentance wins “Christ’s tender mercies” even as the penitent does in the N-Town Judgment Play (“Writing before the Eye,” p. 405).
- 285, s.n. See the textual note to this line. It is interesting that a reviser decided to give Jesus’ last word in this play (amounting to a sermon) to a doctor.
- 297 *Amen*. See note to 15.321–22 on a response said by all.

## 25. RAISING OF LAZARUS

The N-Town Banns declares that this play is “The grettest meracle that evyr Jhesus / In erthe wrouth” (lines 295–96). While there are Continental texts and two other English Lazarus scenes in existence, Towneley Play 31 and N-Town are the only independent Lazarus plays. The Chester Glover’s Play (Play 13) is combined with Jesus’ Healing of the Blind Chelidonian; the York Capper’s Play (Play 24) is in tandem with the Woman Taken in Adultery. All of these plays are based upon the John 11:1–46 account, but the N-Town version is still the longest and most detailed of the English plays. N-Town elaborates on the relationships among the three siblings of Bethany (Mary, Martha, and Lazarus), the roles of the consolators, and the sisters’ extensive lamentations which prefigure those found in Passion Play 2.

The play is written entirely in octaves.

- 9 *Mawdelyn*. In the Middle Ages, she was commonly conflated with Mary of Bethany. See Coletti (*Mary Magdalene*, pp. 22, 94–99, 128–39, 170–79, and 221–28) on the conflation of biblical Marys with *Mawdelyn*, especially by Gregory the Great. Mary Magdalene often was favored by social groups ranging from commercial organizations to theater groups, but especially for charities, which is particularly apt for Lazarus’ appeal here. “In late medieval England the ideology of charity and the cult of Mary Magdalene converged in the hospital, the cultural institution most devoted to fostering charitable values and practices and to promoting, through its rounds of prayers and almsgiving, the spiritual health of its

- benefactors while also attending to the bodily sickness of its inmates" (Coletti, *Mary Magdalene*, p. 39).
- 61 ff. At the beginning of the play, the consolators offer hope that Lazarus will survive the illness. It is worth noting that all of the consolators' attitudes change toward death. At the beginning of the play, they display stoicism: "deth is dew to every man" (line 130) and "Of youre sorwyng . . . now ses . . . / And helpe he were buryed in a cley pitt" (lines 139–40). At the end, all four consolators attest to their altered viewpoints and to Jesus' divine nature, saying in unison: "For agens deth us helpyht not to stryve, / But agen youre myght is no resistens" (lines 446–47). This same attitude can be seen in the Passion Plays in which most of the witnesses to the Passion undergo a similar change in attitude.
- 85 Since Consolator 4 also serves as a messenger to Jesus, he is also designated *Nuncius* as a speaker.
- 101–04 Martha's solicitous characterization is likely drawn from Luke 10:38–42. In this account, Martha seems overly concerned with worldly matters while Mary concentrates on spiritual ones. Nonetheless, her observation "Ye shal have what ye wole thynke" ("you may have whatever you wish") resonates deeply, given the implications of intent and purpose layered within *thynke*. Compare line 296, Martha's "Whatso thu aske, thu shalt it have."
- 122–27 In her poignant sympathy, Magdalyn, always noted for her empathy, expresses a desire to die with Lazarus, just as Thomas offers to die with Jesus in John 11; so too in lines 141–44, 156–60, and 171–72 of this play. The loneliness of death ("why went he alone away," line 125) is a potent terror often confronted in medieval literature on death, e.g., the emphasis on the solitude of Everyman in his play about dying.
- 130 Proverbial. Compare Whiting D97–101 and *Wisdom*, line 876.
- 131–32 Proverbial. Compare Whiting D96.
- 168 *wepe all oure fylle*. Mary is commonly given more leeway than most in matters of grief, since empathy is one of her defining characteristics (see, e.g., Crashaw's poem, "The Weeper"). Chaucer's Prudence defines the proper balance as she suffers Melibee "to wepe and crie as for a certein space" before advising him to suffer "in pacience as wel as he abideth the deeth of his owene propre persone" (CT VII[B<sub>2</sub>]978–84). Mary empathizes deeply at the appropriate time, then turns to the wise counsel of Jesus. One might well argue that the N-Town Raising of Lazarus is a study in counsel on the value and limitations of grief through Jesus' wise counsel on the Christian's reception of death that is clarified by the example of Lazarus' resurrection. See the note to lines 171–72, below.
- 171–72 Martha also expresses a desire to die with her brother. See note to lines 122–27 above. The playwright draws a fine line between empathy and the deadly sin of *acedia*, to which the sisters appear to be succumbing. In the late Middle Ages, the dual sins of *acedia* (sloth) and *tristitia* (despair, sadness, or grief) became conflated; see Wenzel, *Sin of Sloth*, pp. 171–74. Martha's dilemma exemplifies the dangerous road of excessive grief; Wenzel explains that "in the scheme of the

Three Enemies [the World, the Flesh, and the Devil] the temptation of unreasonable grief . . . accompan[ies] the Devil" (p. 171). The reasonable mourner, in contrast, understands both the futility of excessive sadness — she or he cannot, after all, resurrect the loved one — and its disruption of public life. See 2 Kings (2 Samuel) 12:18–24, where David grieves at the death of his and Bathsheba's first child; David explains to his public officials that "now that he is dead, why should I fast? Shall I be able to bring him back any more? I shall go to him rather: but he shall not return to me" (12:23).

- 192, s.n.–412 It is interesting to note that from line 97 to the end of the play the scribe sometimes calls Consolator 4 *Quartus Consolator*, sometimes *Nuncius*, and on four occasions, both titles. Clearly, when this character acts as messenger — to retrieve Jesus and to give the sisters news of Jesus' impending arrival — he is *Nuncius*.
- 213–44 John 11:6 says that Jesus waited two days before making his way to Bethany. Spector compares *Cursor Mundi* 14218–29, where Thomas wishes to die with Lazarus, where in York 24.144–45 he would willingly die with Jesus. See also Towneley 31.37–38 (S 2:487).
- 221 ff. *Twelve owrys*. Jesus measures time according to the ecclesiastical clock, which divides daylight into twelve equal hours of different length, depending upon the time of year, but according to which the hours of prayer are told. The trope is apt in that Jesus is concerned with the way people stumble in darkness (lines 225–32), especially at death, and thus wish to bring Lazarus back to daylight so that he might instruct them all in preparation for the great night journey.
- 240 *Oure frende is deed and undyr erth clad*. Usually Lazarus is presented as lying in a cave or sepulcher, as in Luke. N-Town emphasizes his being laid in the earth (buried in clay), though at the actual raising, the stone is introduced at the door of a cave and all four consolators struggle together to bear its weight. In emphasizing the clay, the playwright appears to be confirming two biblical traditions, one of Adam being created from clay, to which he returns in death, and the variant on that idea in John, where Jesus heals (re-creates the vision of) the blind man by placing clay on his eyes which then falls away.
- 277 Proverbial. Compare Whiting D85.
- 296–310 The lines are a close rendering of John 11:22–26.
- 357 Spector cites "Against Death Is No Defence," *Religious Lyrics of the Fifteenth Century* no.156 and Whiting D78 (S 2:488).
- 372 *I must wepe lyke as ye do*. Here Jesus affirms the spiritual value of empathy even as he demonstrates its limitation. The playwright focuses on the apparent contradiction of human and divine perspective in the opposite responses of the two consolators (lines 373–80). The detail of Jesus' weeping is not found in Lazarus plays in other cycles. See John 11:35: "Et lacrimatus est Iesus."
- 377 *straw for thi tale!* An interjective imprecation. Compare Harry Bailly's "straw for youre gentillesse!" directed toward the patronizing Franklin (CT V[F]695). The N-Town playwright is once again brilliant in his turning of a simple detail in

John (“Jesus wept”) into a remarkable/remarked-upon theological issue as the stage direction notes: “Hic Jhesus fingit se lacrimari” [“Here Jesus pretends that he is crying”]. Then the poet has Consolator 3 remark upon their friend’s great empathy (see note to line 372). By having Nuncius rudely challenge the wise counselor he turns the emotional trial into a matter of faith, based on what they should all already know about this prophet. If he can heal a blind man, he can surely rescue Lazarus. The response is uniquely tied to the Gospel of John, the book of signs which puts such emphasis on teaching mankind to learn to read as the sixth sign leads to the seventh in anticipation of the eighth. This playwright, instead, knows the pathways of biblical exegesis, to which he gives theatrical life.

407–08     The consolators carry out Jesus’ command without questioning, but this does not keep two of them (Consolators 2 and 4) from expressing their fears — that the stone is heavy and that Lazarus’ corpse will be an unfortunate sight with an unpleasant smell.

449         *Now I have shewyd.* This concluding speech is addressed to the audience.

#### PASSION PLAY 1 (PLAYS 26–28)

The previous editors Block, Meredith, and Spector have already described the Passion Plays’ interpolation into the existing manuscript of plays. The evidence is overwhelming: 1) As with the Mary Play, the play descriptions and the numbering of these plays in the Banns do not accurately reflect the Passion Plays. The fact that there are fewer inconsistencies with the Passion Plays (compared with the Mary Play) may indicate that the Passion Plays were incorporated into the manuscript before the Mary Play and that there is additional older cycle material that has been interpolated into the Passion Plays. 2) Since Passion Play 1 is self-contained in quires P and R and Passion Play 2 in quires S and T, it is likely that these were independent playbooks that the scribe integrated into the manuscript. Passion Play 2 is on paper with a watermark that is unique in the manuscript. In addition, the first leaf of Passion Play 1 is worn and soiled, indicating that it was once a cover or an outside leaf. 3) The main scribe and Meredith’s “Reviser B” (Spector’s “Scribe C”) made changes to the Passion Plays that suggest that they were performed independently (of the other plays in the manuscript) after the Passion Plays had been included in the manuscript (PP, pp. 7–9; S 1:xviii–xxiv, 1:xxxix–xl, 2:538–43). 4) As with the Mary Play, the Passion Plays display a variety of stanzaic forms: long- and short-lined octaves, quatrains, couplets, five-line stanzas, and thirteeners. It is likely that the main scribe was working from different exemplars. (For clarity’s sake, I will use Meredith’s designations of “Main Scribe” for the writer and compiler of most of the N-Town Manuscript [c. 1486] and “Reviser B” to denote the scribe who made several alterations and prompt notes in PP2 [c. 1500–25]; for more on the dating of the handwriting, see S 1:xxiii.)

Theatrically speaking, the Passion Plays are radically different from all other plays in the manuscript. Most noticeable are the comparatively detailed and voluminous stage directions that describe costumes, sets, and small stage movements unknown to the other portions of the manuscript. The stage itself is also detailed and elaborate. In addition to the heavenly machinery and the hellmouth that are in other plays in the collection, Annas,

Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod have their own scaffolds, and there is a large council (moot) hall in the center of the playing area. In addition, the cast for the Passion Plays is much larger than any other play cast in the manuscript. The arrest scene in Passion 1, for example, calls for at least fifteen actors, probably more. Finally, as mentioned before, there are marginal notations, prompt notes, and added lines that indicate that both plays were produced after their inclusion into the manuscript. (For a discussion and a proposed staging diagram see Bev, pp. 477–80; see also Weimann, “Mystery Cycles.”)

There are two noteworthy features of the Passion Plays which are not characteristic of the other parts of the N-Town Manuscript or other contemporary English dramas. Martin Stevens notes: “Passion Play I could easily stand as a complete play. In effect, the plot takes in the major events from the Conspiracy to the Arrest, and thus includes among its major episodes the Entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper (which is here conflated with Jesus’ visit to Simon of Bethany), the Betrayal, and the Agony in the Garden. It is noteworthy that the play interweaves without break the action of the conspirators and of Jesus and his disciples. . . . It is therefore impossible to separate the action of either the Last Supper or the Conspiracy into one distinct episode” (*Mystery Cycles*, p. 203). First of all, this Passion playwright attempted to stage simultaneous action in two scenes (one in Passion 1; one in Passion 2), the split Last Supper discourse that is “interrupted” by Judas’ contract with the high priests. The second scene is the split Harrowing of Hell scene that is divided by Pilate’s guards’ reactions to the earthquake and foul weather. The second feature that opens Passion 1 is actually a theatrical induction, a dramatic feature that most scholars consider an early modern innovation. The dialogue here between Satan and John the Baptist is a true induction because it: 1) introduces the characters and their motivations; 2) gives the plot; and 3) frames the action of Passion 1 and parts of Passion 2 referring to contemporary issues. As with the Mary Play, I have used a double numbering scheme which maintains the integrity of Meredith’s play division and also the incorporation theory. The latter is numbered in italics following an asterisk.

The apocryphal sources for the Passion Plays are the *Northern Passion*, the *Meditationes Vita Christi*, Love’s *Mirroure of the Blessed Lyf of Christ* (a translation/expansion of the *Meditationes*), the *Pepysian Gospel Harmony*, and the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. As noted before in the headnote to the Mary Play, Love’s *Mirroure* was an anti-Lollard tract, and a clear influence in the N-Town Passion Plays; for Passion 1, particularly in Satan’s and John the Baptist’s prologues, Conspiracy, Entry into Jerusalem, Last Supper, Conspiracy with Judas, and Betrayal. (See Sargent’s edition of Love’s *Mirroure*, pp. xlv–lxix.) The biblical sources for the Passion Plays are Matthew 23:37–28:20, Mark 14:1–16:11, Luke 22:1–24:12, and John 18:1–20:18. The dramatic material in the N-Town Passion Plays roughly corresponds to these plays in English: Plays 25–39 from York, Plays 20–26 in the Towneley Manuscript, Plays 14–18 from Chester, and *Christ’s Burial* and *Christ’s Resurrection* from MS E. Museo 160 (see *Late Medieval Religious Plays*, ed. Baker, Murphy, and Hall, pp. 141–93).

## 26. CONSPIRACY; ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

- 1–4 ff.     The speech marker designates the speaker as Demon, though he names himself Lord Lucifer and Sere Satan, thus heightening our awareness of the shape-shifter’s loss of his identity after the Fall. Now he is only projections of limited functions he imagines might pertain.



- 13–20 Compare Isaias 14:12–15, Luke 10:18, 2 Peter 2:4, and Apocalypse 12:7–9.
- 16 Compare note to Banns, line 20.
- 17 *drowe in my tayle*. Meredith notes that this phrase could mean either “after me” or “in my retinue” (*PP*, p. 164). The phrase could also refer to Lucifer’s self-conscious storytelling ability as well as his arse.
- 19 *tweyn agens on*. Lucifer claims that one-third of the angels fell with him. Meredith comments that other medieval sources claimed that one-tenth of the angels fell (*PP*, p. 164).
- 22 *I gan ther do play*. This is a nice play on words. Lucifer remembers his fall as a power struggle that he still imagines he can win. He thinks of himself as playing a dramatic character who began a great epic struggle.
- 25–32 Fitzhenry observes: “It is Demon’s retelling of the Temptation of Christ in his ‘Prologue’ that demonstrates his multivalent status in the N-Town Passion sequence. His revision of this story casts him simultaneously in the roles of representer and represented, author and audience, perhaps ironically foreshadowing Christ’s role in the N-Town ‘Last Supper’ where Christ is at once signifier and signified, sacrificer and sacrificed” (“Politics of Metatheater,” pp. 22–43.)
- 31 *His answerys were mervelous: I knew not his intencyon*. Though Demon “is the confident authorizer of his own signifying practices,” his attempts to tempt Jesus here, as in Play 23, the Temptation, painfully “reveal the Demon’s status as a failed dramatic author whose intent has been frustrated,” exposing him as “an unperceptive spectator who cannot read the signs that have been presented to him” (Fitzhenry, “Politics of Metatheater,” p. 32). His only real success is as “a clownish breaker of wind” (p. 33).
- 48 Meredith traces this to Job 7:9 and to the matins of the Office of the Dead (*PP*, p. 166). Compare Langland, *Piers Plowman*, 18.149.
- 50 *engynes*. These are not only physical weapons, but schemes and strategies.
- 57 *ordenawns*. This word (and its variations) appears frequently in the Passion Plays to particular effect. On the whole, the word contrasts the many schemes against Jesus with what is “ordained” by God. The word is also frequently used by late medieval religious guilds in their own governance.
- 58 *That in trost is treson*. For this proverb, Spector cites the play *Mankind*, line 750, and Whiting T492 (S 2:490).
- 65–92 Lucifer satirizes three late fifteenth-century issues in England: 1) sumptuary laws that defined class by dress code; 2) tariffs on foreign imports, particularly cloth, like *Holond* (line 73); and 3) *To maynteyn* (line 90), the problem of English lords employing private men and armies to terrorize locals. Part of maintenance consisted of the lord’s giving livery (colors or clothing) to his men, as Lucifer appears to be doing here. See Kendall, *Yorkist Age*, pp. 208–10; Sponsler, *Drama and Resistance*, pp. 4–14. See also Bellamy, *Crime and Public Order*, pp. 95–96; Haward, “Economic Aspects of the Wars of the Roses”; and Spector, S 2:490.

- 109–16 Like many diabolical characters in late medieval drama, Lucifer renames the seven deadly sins. Although Sloth is not specifically mentioned, it could be conflated (in this case) with *Glottenye* as “rest” (line 115).
- 114 *Seyse nere sessyon, lete perjery be chef.* The assize courts were regional judicial sessions held by circuit-riding judges sent from London. Thetford, near Bury St. Edmunds, was known for its assize sessions. Fifteenth-century English courts were also known for their corruption. See Jacob, *Fifteenth Century*, pp. 549–50.
- 123 Meredith notes Lucifer’s echoing Matthew 18:20 (*PP*, p. 170).
- 124 *I devoyde.* “I remove myself from this scene,” but it could also serve as a clever self-deprecating pun that negates the significance of his presence and his work.
- 125–64 John the Baptist’s speech that follows Lucifer’s prologue makes the whole prologue a medieval *débat* because John addresses the main issues that Lucifer raises: Jesus’ identity, the seven deadly sins, a life well-lived, and the inheritance of a believer. It could be argued, in addition, that this prologue is similar to an induction. See Scherb, “Liturgy and Community,” pp. 480–82.
- 164, s.d. Both Meredith and Spector note Annas’ costume (*PP*, p. 171, and S 2:493, s.d.). See also Squires, “Law and Disorder,” pp. 272–85. Squires observes that Annas’ two lawyers (doctors) are attired as fifteenth-century judges while Rewfyn and Leyon wear the striped robes of sergeants-at-arms. A parody of the contemporary legal climate is likely here. A statute of 1455, citing the rise of litigation in East Anglia, actually restricted the number of attorneys coming to the King’s Courts from Norfolk and Suffolk (*Reeves’ History of English Law*, 3:483).
- 194 *Rewfyn and Leyon.* As noted above, arrayed as sergeants-at-arms, but Spector notes that they are names of devils (S 2:493). Meredith says that “Ruffyn” is given as a devil’s name in Chester 1.220 (*PP*, pp. 172–73).
- 196 Spector notes that Annas is Caiphas’ father-in-law in John 18:13 (S 2:493).
- 199 *Arfexe.* This character is the Saracen messenger of line 164, s.d.
- 215–16 “I am the chief authority on Mosaic Law, / So my judgments are final”; Caiphas speaks with the voice of a tyrant.
- 219 “We must seek a way to bring him into disrepute” (*PP*, p. 174). Here, as in *Woman Taken in Adultery*, Jesus’ adversaries attempt to control by manipulating public opinion.
- 223 *jewgys of Pharasy.* Traditionally, the Pharisees have been seen as a religiously and politically influential sect of Jewish society of Jesus’ time, even Jesus’ archenemies. They have been seen as the learned upper class (or upper middle class) that had some control over religious practice. It is likely that this commonly held view of the Pharisees is too simple and, perhaps, unfair. See “Pharisees,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary*.
- 244, s.d. *ray tabardys . . . ray hodys.* Here *ray* means “striped,” a sign that they are lawyers. See note to 26.164, s.d.

- 288, s.d. Meredith clarifies this stage direction: “here clerkys” are Annas’ and Caiaphas’ lawyers; “the Pharaseus” are Rewfyn and Leyon (*PP*, pp. 174–75; see also Bev’s staging diagram, p. 480).
- 309 *evetyk and a tretour*. Meredith notes that these are both fifteenth-century capital offenses (*PP*, p. 175).
- 319–20 The punishment that Annas’ Doctor 1 prescribes for Jesus is twofold. The first sentence, that of being hanged and drawn (and quartered) would seem to be for the crime of treason. The second punishment, burning, would seem to be for heresy or sorcery (or both). It is interesting to note that the latter sentence for ecclesiastical offenses was not common, or even legal, until 1401, when Lollards were being brought to trial in England. There were dozens of such Lollardy trials in East Anglia in the fifteenth century, and some of them ended with burnings. See Pollack and Maitland, *History of English Law*, pp. 505, 511, 544–52. See also McSheffrey, *Gender and Heresy*, pp. 16–19.
- 334 *nyne days*. Meredith calls nine a mystical number (*PP*, p. 175).
- 341–42 These two unrhyming lines appear to stand alone.
- 348 *Sum of myn dyscyplis*. Note that the Bible says two disciples went forth (e.g., Luke 19:29, Matthew 21:1), but does not name them.
- 359, s.d.–360, s.n. *Burgeys . . . BURGENSIS*. These refer to a burgess who was a freeman of a town. Sometimes a burgess could also be a town magistrate or even a member of the House of Commons (*MED*).
- 385, s.d. *and he wyl*. Read “if he will.”
- 386–441 Peter and John’s preaching to the crowd keeps up the idea of disciples working in pairs (compare the Seventy of Luke 10:1). These two also become significant later.
- 404 *Tweyn fete*. Meredith cites Augustine who says: “Thy feet are thy charity. Have two feet, be not lame. What are thy two feet? The two commandments of love, of thy God, and of thy neighbor” (*PP*, p. 176n361–66). “Everyone should have two feet, if it should be considered, / Which should bear the more substantial spiritual body.”
- 416–17 Contrast with Demon’s prologue, lines 60–61.
- 426–27 Compare Zacharias 9:9.
- 449, s.d. *in here shyrtys savyng*. I.e., “only in their shirts.” It is also possible that they are wearing hair shirts.
- 450–52 Meredith remarks that these lines echo the antiphon of the Palm Sunday service (*PP*, pp. 177–78n407–14).
- 450–51 *Now blyssyd he be that in oure Lordys name / To us in any wyse wole resorte!* A free translation of “Benedictus qui venit in nomine domini.” The four-line speech that the first citizen has prepared to greet Christ on his entry into Jerusalem is probably meant to be spoken rather than sung as it would be if it were in Latin. Although no singing is mentioned in lines 450–53, the stage directions following

the citizen's remarks (line 453, s.d.) clearly return the audience to the mode of celestial music as the children come forth with flowers that they cast before Jesus as they sing the *Gloria laus* (see Rastall, *Minstrels Playing*, pp. 87, 108–09).

453, s.d. *Gloria laus*. Meredith and Spector note that this is a processional hymn for Palm Sunday (*PP*, p. 178n410s.d.; S 2:494). Complete lyrics are in Dutka, *Index of Songs*, p. 29.

463 *shewyd experyence*. Meredith glosses this as “demonstrated” (*PP*, p. 178n420).

## 27. LAST SUPPER; CONSPIRACY WITH JUDAS

The N-Town Passion Plays' use of place-and-scaffold staging allows for remarkable dramaturgical flexibility, but also suggests many different layers of symbolism in the action. This portion of Passion 1, in a particularly modern fashion, shifts rapidly from an outside Jerusalem scene (place) to the upper room (a large scaffold?), to the moot hall (a structure in the place), and a hellmouth (another structure at the edge of the place). About these N-Town plays and other large-scale East Anglian plays, Scherb observes: “The very breadth of the action in these plays takes on symbolic meaning as the dramatists attempted to convey the importance of the events they relate through the sheer physical scale of their productions. Large numbers of actors, framed by numerous scenic structures, give these plays a singular capacity to communicate large emotional effects” (*Staging Faith*, p. 57, noting Seale, *Vision and Stagecraft*, p. 14). On the liturgical component of this play — the Mandatum and the Eucharist — see Rastall's excellent discussion (*Heaven Singing*, pp. 272–78).

The play is written in thirteners, octaves, and quatrains.

1 *ordenawnce*. This word and its variants appear repeatedly in Passion 1, possibly referring to a religious guild's patronage of this play. In general, “ordinaunce” also recalls the dicta for the church. See also Love's *Mirroure*, ed. Sargent, p. li.

1–16 Compare Chester 14.209–24.

9–16 See Luke 19:41–44. Also Matthew 24:2, prior to the Last Supper. The passage in N-Town is even less forgiving than in Luke and Matthew and perhaps reflects a *Vindicta Salvatoris* tradition. On the destruction of Jerusalem, see *Siege of Jerusalem*, notes to lines 1229 and 1231–32.

17 *Maundé*. Meredith traces this word back to the “mandatus” of the first antiphon sung at the washing of the feet on the Thursday before Easter, Maundy Thursday (*PP*, p. 179n459).

36, s.d. Clearly a conflation of stories. Gospel accounts do not identify Simon the Leper as the one who hosted the Last Supper, but he did host a supper in Bethany where a woman anointed Jesus' feet. Compare Matthew 26:6–16, Mark 14:3–9. Meredith cites the *Metrical Life* (lines 1938–69). Spector cites Robert de Boron's *Roman du Saint-Graal* (S 2:496).

53 *calsydon*. MED renders it “calcedoine,” referring to the semi-precious stone chalcedony which was also used to make prayer beads. Block (Bl, p. 403) cites Bede and *Court of Sapience* on the hardness of the stone, thus the gloss of “difficult.”

- Spector notes that, according to medieval legend, this stone allowed believers to “show forth the light within them when called upon to give public display of faith” (S 2:496), which perhaps has bearing on the passage as well.
- 91–92 Compare John 11:49–50, 18:14. In these passages, Cayphas may also be referring to Isaías 53:8.
- 101, s.n. *GAMALYEL*. Meredith and Spector mention him as part of the Jewish delegation who accused Jesus before Pilate (*PP*, p. 181n543s.d.; S 2:496). Meredith notes that Gamaliel is referred to in Acts 5:34 as a leading Pharisee and as Paul’s teacher in Acts 12:3.
- 109–12 Rewfyn would execute Jesus according to fourteenth-century penalties for treason. Compare Leyon’s punishment in lines 129–32. For a more detailed commentary on East Anglian capital punishment, see Delaney, *Impolitic Bodies*, pp. 9–11.
- 119–20 On the destruction of the temple, see *Siege of Jerusalem*, pp. 4–5.
- 141 *As a cursyd creature closyd all in care*. N-Town is unique in introducing Mary Magdalene into the Last Supper scene, along with her exorcism, her weeping and anointing of Jesus’ feet, and her participation in the eucharistic feast itself. See Prosser (*Drama and Religion*, pp. 110–46, 201–05) on her importance as a penitential figure in the eucharistic process, especially for later medieval convents, where the role of women in the Passion is celebrated and which may well have had a role in the provenance of N-Town as Sugano points out: “For many late medieval women and mystics, the Magdalene was the sole medium through whom any believer could relive Christ’s Passion” (“Apologies for the Magdalene,” p. 167). In his edition of the Passion Play Meredith relegates the scene to an appendix, but to do so is to underappreciate the centrality of women to this playwright’s vision. For the N-Town playwright Mary Magdalene is “an apt symbol for this religion of Word and flesh . . . [who enjoys] apostolic authority along with that of the other disciples” (Coletti, *Mary Magdalene*, pp. 228–29).
- 158 *fowlyd be fryth and fenne*. “Sinned everywhere.” *Fryth* is the woods and *fenne* refers to bogs, both dark, wild places.
- 162–204 Spector points out that the woman who anointed Jesus is unnamed in Matthew 26:6–7 and Mark 14:3 (S 2:497). But many stories concerning Mary Magdalene (and other Marys) were conflated in the Middle Ages. In John 11:1–2 and 12:1–3, she is called Mary of Bethany, who was sometimes identified as Mary Magdalene. See also Sugano, “Apologies for the Magdalene.” For Mary Magdalene’s importance to Love’s *Mirroure*, see the edition by Sargent, pp. xlvii–xlix.
- 167–79 *Woman . . . Sum socowre God shal thee sende . . . Tyl deth doth her to deye*. The exorcism of the fiends from Mary Magdalene was a favorite moment in medieval drama. Compare the Digby Mary Magdalene, lines 686–91, where, at Jesus’ command — “vade in pace” — “seven dyllys shall devoide from the woman, and the Bad Angyll enter into hell with thondyr.” In the Digby Magdalene the event occurs before the raising of Lazarus. In N-Town the placement is particularly apt as Jesus cleanses Mary of devils just after she cleanses his feet (see Coletti, *Mary Magdalene*, pp. 90–99). In the *Poculi Ludique Societas* (University of Toronto)

production of the play in June of 2002, Mary was placed on a small platform staging area so that the seven sins, readily identified by iconographic costume, seemed literally to come screaming out of her body and flee through the audience as thunder sounded and Satan himself was driven to hell. Mary seemed placid and beautiful in her cleansed condition. Compare the Poculi Ludique Societas production of the N-Town Pageants on 28–29 May 1988, in which identifiable fiends seemed to pour forth from Mary's body at Jesus' command, leaving her in Christ's grace, *Tyl deth doth her to deye* (line 179).

- 176–78     *Wyckyd spyritys, I yow conjoure: / Fleth out of hir bodyly bowre! / In my grace, she shal evyr flowre.* When Jesus conjures the wicked spirits to depart from *hir bodyly bowre* so that Christ's grace might *evyr flowre* in her, the corporeal metaphor echoes "the enclosed space of the Virgin Mary's body" from whence Jesus himself sprang as the "maydenys floure," demonstrating the concrete "corporeal transformation" whereby "her body 'so ful of synne' is now metaphorically likened . . . to the fecundity . . . that the penitent woman has just attributed to Jesus and his mother. What was permeable by demons is now rendered open to Jesus' own productive, flowering grace" (Coletti, *Mary Magdalene*, pp. 90–91).
- 204, s.d.     *Cryst restyth and etyth . . . [with] his disciplis and Mary Mawdelyn.* See Sugano ("Apologies for the Magdalene" pp. 165–71, esp. 170) on the theological controversy developing around the Magdalene's presence at the Last Supper.
- 243     *fer from thi face.* To James the Lesser, an integral part of hell's torment is simply one's separation from God.
- 253, s.n.     *THADEUS.* The speaker also known as Jude or Judas. Compare the *Procession of Saints*, line 1281.
- 277     *The princys of prestys.* There is irony, not only in Judas' leaving the Last Supper to betray Christ, but in dealing the Prince of Princes to *the princys of prestys*, as he calls them.
- 304     *mony makyth schapman.* Proverbial, see Whiting M629, an adage that can be paraphrased as "money talks." See also Whiting M628.
- 305–06     "Glovesilver" was a medieval and early modern term for a judicial bribe. As it was customary for barristers to give a judge a pair of gloves, it also became customary to sew money into the glove's lining to reward the judge for a favorable decision and his discretion (*OED*, *MED*).
- 312     Although Judas refuses to forsake Rewfyn, he readily forsakes his master for money.
- 322–24     Not only is Leyon remarking on the similarity of the disciples' attire, but his comment recalls the Demon's prologue on fashionable attire (26.65–92) and foreshadows Jesus' commentary on clothing (lines 417–27).
- 348, s.d.     Meredith astutely notices that the Jews' secrecy is theatrically emphasized by their making signs, "be contenawns" (*PP*, p. 182n662sd). In addition, this stage direction implies the simultaneity of the conspiracy and the Last Supper.

- 349–448 The foods and accouterments of the Last Supper come from the Passover feast dictated by Exodus 12. See Coletti, “Sacrament and Sacrifice.”
- 357–64 These lines contrast the Demon’s words of the Prologue to Passion 1 (26.65–92, 101–05).
- 372, s.d. *oble*. These are sacramental wafers. Meredith notes a parallel with the Mass (*PP*, p. 183n675).
- 382 *This*. Referring to the *oble*.
- 397–436 Spector notes that this section draws heavily from Rabanus’ commentary in the *Patriologia Latina* (S 2:498–99).
- 405–06 *hed*. Meredith observes that there is a pun on “hed,” also referring to one’s master or leader (*PP*, p. 183n676).
- 440 *come forth seryattly*. Meredith parallels this staging with the serving of the Eucharist (*PP*, p. 186n754). Compare 1 Corinthians 11:29.
- 460 ff. Spector cites many parallels with the *Northern Passion* (S 2:500–01) from here until 28.142.
- 465, s.d. *levynt*. I.e., “omit.” It is interesting that the actor playing Demon has the option of saying this speech. Both Bevington and Meredith emend this stage direction to the effect that Judas shall meet with the Jews.
- 466–77 Spector cites an iconographic tradition in which Satan is present in the betrayal scene (S 2:500).
- 486 *these chalys*. “This chalice.” The words of institution for the sacrament of the Eucharist establish the chalice’s symbol as the vessel for Christ’s blood. The figurative meaning (*MED*, 2c) implies that of “one’s fate” is bound to *the Newe Testament*.
- 567 *Betany*. Meredith remarks that Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives are in the same general direction of Bethany (*PP*, p. 189n880 and n884sd); see, too, “Bethany ward” in the stage direction by line 571.

## 28. BETRAYAL; PROCESSION OF SAINTS

The play is written in octaves and quatrains.

- 9 *oyle of mercy*. A common image for salvation also seen in *Wisdom* (line 321), *Mary Magdalene* (line 759), *Towneley* (3.46). According to Spector (S 2:502), Seth journeyed to Paradise in search of this; in *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, the Son of God will anoint all believers with this oil.
- 20 *My flesch qwakyth sore, for fere and peyn*. The playwright stresses the pathos of Jesus’ humanity.
- 44, s.d. *lattyng hem lyne*. I.e., “letting them lie down or sleep.”

- 52, s.d. *host*. A eucharistic wafer. These props are clearly fifteenth- or sixteenth-century ecclesiastical renditions of the Last Supper's simple bread and wine.
- 57 *Parlement of Hefne*. Refers to 11.1–188 in which the Daughters of God debate the efficacy of Jesus' incarnation.
- 60 *dede*. Bevington glosses it as "death," but, as Meredith indicates, the word is more likely "deed" (*PP*, p. 271).
- 61–62 *This chalys ys thi blood; this bred is thi body, / For mannys synne evyr offeryd shal be*. "The angel in effect administers Communion to Jesus" (Rastall, *Minstrels Playing*, p. 109).
- 64 *all presthood*. Meredith notes that this phrase brings the sacramental act into a contemporary context for the audience (*PP*, p. 191n945–48).
- 80, s.d. *white arneys and breganderys*. Meredith says that the white harnesses (or hardshell armor) and the flexible body armor are typical of fifteenth-century battle gear (*PP*, p. 191n964sd).
- 93 *Aryse, serys! Whom seke ye?* As Jesus bids the Jews to arise he echoes the *Quem quaeritis* trope that is at the foundation of the earliest liturgical drama, a rich irony in that the words marking the Resurrection here parody the ultimate meaning of the Passion as the blind seek to kill him.
- 104 *For I wyst nevyr wher thu wace*. By admitting that he had no idea where Jesus was (a lie), Judas is also admitting his spiritual perdition.
- 148, s.d. Meredith notes the simultaneous actions of Jesus' arrest and Mary Magdalene's report to the Virgin Mary (*PP*, p. 192n1032sd).
- 161–92 This is the *Planctus Mariae* or "Lament of the Virgin Mary" (*PP*, p. 192n1045–76). Spector notes that Woolf observes that the French mystery cycles (as opposed to the English plays) place Mary's *Planctus* earlier in the Passion accounts (S 2:504).
- 173 *may I susteyn?* Bevington emends the line to read "may I not susteyn," treating it as a question. Spector, like Bevington, puts "not" before "susteyn," but continues with line 174, treating these two lines as a single statement. I prefer the latter treatment, but doubt that the "not" is necessary.
- 176 *prongys*. This is an evocative word choice, for according to the *MED*, the "pronges of deth" were death throes and "womanes pronges" were birth pangs. It also refers, as it does now, to pointed instruments.
- 179 *betwyx tweyn bestys*. As Meredith notes, this phrase refers to the ox and ass in Jesus' nativity stall (*PP*, pp. 192–93n1063).
- 206 Compare Matthew 16:18–19.
- 207 Compare Matthew 4:18 and John 1:40.
- 210 *bryght as the sonnbem*. Clearly their luminary stature in the church, possibly stemming from their nicknames, "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17), as well as their presence at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1, Mark 9:2, and Luke 5:10).



- 213–16     Compare Acts 6:5 and 8:26–39.
- 220        *Berylmew*. According to Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, in his work in India, Bartholomew cast out many demons and overthrew a local god (trans. Ryan, 2:109–12).
- 221        *Symeon Zelotes*. Simon, the brother of Jesus. See Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3.
- 225–26     This could refer to Paul's baptizing the Ephesians with the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:6) or to his divine revelations (2 Corinthians 12:1–4), all of which contribute to his stature as an apostle (1 Corinthians 9:2, 2 Corinthians 11 and 12:2, 2 Timothy 3:10).
- 229        *Johan Baptyst*. Compare Play 22.
- 230        *be naturall conseyyng*. Although Elizabeth conceived John through divine intervention (Luke 1:5–25), the playwright specifies the natural conception of John to differentiate his begetting from that of Jesus and the immaculate conception so elaborately detailed in Play 11.

#### PASSION PLAY 2 (PLAYS 29–34)

Just as Passion 1 did, the Passion 2 playbook led a life independent of the other plays in the manuscript. There are two blank folios that precede Passion 2, and yet at some later time, the main scribe managed to blend this existing Passion 2 (written on paper with a different watermark) with the rest of the older “cycle” material. We cannot be sure where the “original” Passion 2 actually ended. Meredith ends his edition of the *Passion Play* at the closing of the Appearance to Mary Magdalene, where the manuscript says: “*Explicit apparacio Mary Magdalene*,” on fol. 201r, but there is prosodic and paleographic evidence that the main scribe began integrating different exemplars as early as folio 184, the Crucifixion. See Spector (S 1:72–76, 1:113–18, 2:541). Except for one nine-line stanza at the end of Herod's opening speech (lines 41–49), Passion 2 appears largely in couplets, quatrains, and octaves. Passion 2 draws from Gospel narratives such as Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, and John 18. The dramatic material in Passion 2 correlates to these other English plays: York Plays 29–37, Christ's Burial and Christ's Resurrection from Bodleian MS e Museo 160 (*Late Medieval Religious Plays*, ed. Baker, Murphy, and Hall), Chester Plays 16–17, and Towneley Plays 22–25. The non-biblical sources are in the notes to Passion 1. As noted in the introduction to Passion 1, the Passion playwright drew heavily from Nicholas Love's *Mirroure*. In Passion 2, Love's influence can be seen most clearly in Procession to Calvary, Crucifixion, Burial, and Guarding of the Sepulcher.

#### 29. HEROD; TRIAL BEFORE ANNAS AND CAYPHAS

- Before 1     This is a suggestive but unclear stage direction. It could be that the Doctors' procession (or Procession of the Saints) added to the end of Passion 1, opens Passion 2; or it could be that there is a separate procession for Passion 2 such as a liturgical procession or a procession of the actors before they attend their scaffolds. (See *PP*, p. 193n1sd; Bev, p. 520n150.)

- doctorys wede*. Likely the robe, stole, and hat of a scholar.
- 1–20 *Sofreynes and frendys*. Possibly not intended for the same audience that the Banns addresses. The use of *sofreynes and frendys* and the expositor's name of Contemplacio suggests a similar audience to that of the Mary Play. Separate introductions here as with Contemplacio's speeches in the Mary Play and the Demon's Prologue in Passion 1 all suggest these plays' independence from other plays in the manuscript.
- 6 *last yere*. Evidently, at some point in this play's life, Passion 2 followed Passion 1 the following year, or perhaps these plays were always played in alternate years.
- 21–22 Herod, as with many medieval expositors, must silence the audience at the beginning of the play.
- 29–30 *his feyth to denye. . . his lawe*. These refer to Herod's faith in Mohammed and Mohammed's law. The "lawys of Mahownde" stand for any form of "heathen" (even demonic) belief, Judaism included. It is likely that Herod's adherence to a supposed Islam only makes him more despicable to medieval audiences. An anachronism because Herod of the first century could not have possibly believed in Mohammed, who came six centuries later. It is evident, then, that Islam (to fifteenth-century audiences in Western Europe) was a marker for different types of idolatry and heathen beliefs.
- 124–25 *We payd to thi dysciple for thee thretly pens, / And, as an ox or an hors, we trewly thee bowth*. "The betrayal of Jesus is explicitly represented as an absurd commodification carried out by the bishops of the old law" (Fewer, "Fygure," p. 32).
- 151–53 See John 2:19–21.
- 177, s.d.–178 Meredith remarks that this is the first time the crowd appears, and he estimates the size of the crowd to be ten to fifteen (*PP*, pp. 196–97n178–79).
- 185–92 As in Towneley Play 21, this *neue game* (line 188) of wheeling (spinning the blindfolded Jesus around) and *pylle* (plucking or hitting, line 190) also consists of Jesus' guessing who hit him in order for them "to test" his prophetic powers (*PP*, pp. 197–98n89–93).
- 204 *cosynys*. Evidently Judeus 1's kinsman, Malchus of 28.106, s.d.
- 209 *I knowe hym not*. Peter's denial certainly parallels Judas'. But the irony of this denial and the subsequent public swearing is keen considering what Peter says during the Last Supper (27.524–27, 556–59, 28.21–24, 105–06).

### 30. DEATH OF JUDAS; TRIALS BEFORE PILATE AND HEROD

- 5 ff. *mot halle*. The moot hall was a meeting place used as an administrative headquarters of justice, a town hall, a courtroom, or a council chamber (*MED*).
- 17 *prime*. The first hour of the day, 6:00 a.m. or 9:00 a.m. sometimes.
- 48 *Shewyth*. Bevington renders this "which he shows" (Bev, p. 529).

- 122        *outborn*. Born outside of Pilate's jurisdiction (S 2:509).
- 152, s.d.   *in astat*. Likely, Herod is in his own scaffold on his throne, surrounded by his legal entourage.
- 177–80     The other English plays, except for York, do not charge Jesus with sorcery. The fifteenth-century punishment for treason (dragging by wild horses, drawing, and burning; or hanging in the gibbet) is described in 27.110–12, 129–32.
- 237        Compare John 19:36 which refers to the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12) and the afflictions of the righteous (Vulgate Psalm 33:20).
- 245–49     This is a five-line stanza with a triplet, perhaps a remnant of a thirteener stanza.

### 31. SATAN AND PILATE'S WIFE; SECOND TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

- 1–37        Satan's dense, alliterative cant (typical of dramatic tyrants) recalls Herod's raging speeches from the plays of the Magi (18.1–20) and the Slaughter of the Innocents (20.9–56). It attempts to "out-Herod Herod."
- Before 1, s.d.   *in the most orryble wyse*. In order to scare the audience, Satan may be wearing an horrific mask, setting off firecrackers in his arse, and poking audience members with a pitchfork. The "whyte clothe" may suggest Jesus' innocence or priesthood (*PP*, p. 203n486sd). The same costume for Jesus is used in York Play 31 and Chester Play 16.
- 7            *bras*. According to Spector, molten copper was used for torture (S 2:510).
- 33–37       A five-line stanza with a triplet in the middle, possibly the remnant of a thirteener.
- 38–41       A quatrain that begins with a triplet, possibly the end of a thirteener at some earlier time.
- 45           *my game is lorne!* Kolve notes: "In short, the whole of human history can be understood as a game in which the opponents are the Triune God and Satan, and it is in such terms that Satan . . . realizes that if Christ is killed, he will have lost" (*Play Called Corpus Christi*, p. 204).
- 57, s.d.     This begins as a dumb show, "he shal no dene make," but ends with "a rewly noyse," possibly screeching or moaning (*MED*).
- 126–30      A five-line stanza.
- 155          *Artyse*. This is the name given to Pilate's personal servant.
- 159–60      In the minds of the medieval European writers, there is a clear relationship between the Jews' "bloodguilt" for Jesus' death and the destruction of Jerusalem. See *Siege of Jerusalem*, lines 637–896 and 1237–40.
- 170, s.d.     This direction is true to fifteenth-century English judicial practice.
- 177–78       The release of Barabas may also have been all too familiar for an East Anglian audience of the fifteenth century. Maddern has observed that in East Anglia,

- between 1422 and 1442, 84% of those tried were acquitted (*Violence and Social Order*, pp. 50–52.)
- 179 *Dysmas and Jesmas*. Spector notes that the non-biblical Dysmas and Gestas are so named in the *Gospel of Nicodemus* (S 2:513).
- 200 *thre naylys*. Not scriptural, but could be inferred from John 20:25–27 when Thomas asks to see the resurrected Jesus' hands and side. It is very likely that the tradition of the three nails is based largely upon typological associations. Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* cites Bernard, who describes the three fruits of the Passion: remission of sins, the granting of peace, and the manifestation of glory (trans. Ryan, 1:207).
- 204 *ful mete*. This means the nails are long enough to go through both his feet.

### 32. PROCESSION TO CALVARY; CRUCIFIXION

- Before 1, s.d. Spector observes that the forks are used to force the crown onto Jesus' head (S 2:513).
- 9–20 *Dowterys of Hierusalem*. See Luke 23:28–31. This regards the coming destruction of Jerusalem as in *Siege of Jerusalem*, lines 1015–20 and 1285–96.
- 29, s.n. *SYMON*. Simon of Cyrene; compare Matthew 27:32, Mark 15:21, and Luke 23:26.
- 41–48 For the story of Veronica and her veil, see Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* (trans. Ryan, 1:212). Veronica's veil also plays a significant role in *Siege of Jerusalem*, lines 165–68 and 209–64. There is also a miracle from Pseudo-Matthew in which Jesus has Joseph raise a dead man by placing Joseph's kerchief on the dead man's face (chap. 40).
- 49–132 Compare York Play 35.
- 51 *in the devyl way*. This is a clever pun as Judeus 1 is clearly cursing by consigning Christ to the devil or to hell, but in another way, the executioners are ironically putting Christ in a position (on the cross) to impede the devil's plan.
- 63–76 As Meredith notes, the stretching of Jesus's limbs with ropes is depicted in all of the English plays (*PP*, p. 208n763).
- 76, s.d. Rastall observes: "The Jews' dancing about the cross separates the scene of the nailing from that with the raised cross leading to Christ's death. It seems that the four executioners must dance around the cross after they have raised it — that is, their work is done and they celebrate in this way before taking their ease in mocking Christ. There is little evidence for the kind of dance performed, and none for the kind of music (if any) that accompanies it: perhaps they sing for their own dance" — possibilities for which Rastall describes (*Minstrels Playing*, pp. 132–33). Dutka and Meredith consider possibilities of an actual dance (*Index of Songs*, p. 151, and *PP*, pp. 208–09), citing images of such activities at scourging and crucifixion scenes. See also Rastall, *Heaven Singing*, pp. 212–15.

- 77 *Lo, fela, here a lythe takkyd on a tre.* Several senses are possible here depending on how the actor pronounces *lythe*. If the phoneme is /lit/, which is the usual pronunciation of that word in the play, the sense would be “light” or “lantern,” but also “a signal or sign.” Jesus has just told Veronica that her “kercy” will henceforth be a sign to all who behold it that will protect them from “mysese” (lines 45–48). So, too, will Christ on the Cross be a beacon — “the light of the world” (John 8:12) — to all who behold it, a sign unwittingly prepared by the four hardworking Jews. See *MED light* 2b, 3a, and 3d. A second possibility would be that Judeus 3, in his mocking of the fellow *takkyd on a tre*, asks Jesus to *here alythe* (i.e., jump down). See line 87, where, with the reading which would require a comma after *alythe*, he repeats his taunt “Com now down of that tre!” and line 114, where Judeus 3 repeats himself a third time. But, if the actor pronounces *lythe* /lið/, then the sense might be “Behold, fellow, here a *body* nailed to a tree.” See *MED lith* n.3b, where the example offered is from *Piers Plowman* B.16.181 speaks of “þre leodes [persons] in o lith [body].”
- 102–04 Jesus’ first of seven words on the cross.
- 105–08 The mocker recalls Jesus’ mysterious assertion in John 2:19–21.
- 130–32 Jesus’ second utterance from the cross.
- 145–46 Jesus’ third utterance from the cross.
- 156, s.d. Meredith observes that Mary Magdalene, not the Virgin Mary, is usually in medieval iconography grasping the foot of the cross (*PP*, p. 210n854sd).
- 183–84 This is Jesus’ fourth utterance from the cross. These lines comprise a rhyming couplet.
- 185–89 A five-line stanza.
- 187 *peynde*. This could be any of three possible ME words: 1) *pinden*: to pierce; 2) *pinen*: to torture; and 3) *peinen*: to punish (*MED* and *PP*, p. 211n886).
- 194–97 Jesus’ fifth utterance on the cross.
- 198 *Sere Hoberd*. Clearly a term of abuse, possibly “Sir Hubert.” Meredith suggests a derivation from “Robert,” possibly “robbere,” suggesting the fitness of Jesus’ being executed with other thieves (*PP*, p. 211n897). *MED* suggests a name for a magpie (noisy bird in a tree?) or a name for the man in the moon (since he is so high up?).
- 208 *newe gett*. The “new fashion,” i.e., a sneer. Compare 26.80.
- 214 Here, Jesus’ sixth utterance from the cross, but traditionally enumerated the seventh.
- 221 Here, Jesus’ seventh utterance from the cross, usually the sixth.
- 222 ff. Traditionally, this scene delivers Mary’s *Planctus*. The contrast between Mary’s and John’s lines is striking as Mary reacts as a mother who has just witnessed her son’s death. John, on the other hand, comforts Mary by reminding her of her role in the divine soteriological plan.

- 274–93 Mary goes to the temple in agreement with the Banns, lines 395–98, but N-Town is the only English play to add this detail about Mary's whereabouts after the Crucifixion.
- 274 *sonys derlyng*. John is considered the “beloved disciple,” and this is based largely on his role at the Crucifixion (lines 145–48), the Last Supper, and his self-references at the end of the John's Gospel (John 13:23 and John 21:20 and 24).

### 33. HARROWING OF HELL (1)

This play is written in tail-rhymed octaves.

- 1, s.n. *ANIMA CHRISTI*. “Soul of Christ.” Note that while Jesus is in hell, he is Anima Christi. At the Resurrection, beginning line 1434, the speaker's name becomes “Jhesus” once again.
- 1 ff. As with the split Last Supper scenes (27.141–571), the twin Harrowing of Hell scenes suggest simultaneity. While Anima Christi is clearing out hell, Jesus' body is buried and Pilate's guard stands watch over the sepulcher. Meredith and Spector cite the source of this scene as the *Gospel of Nicodemus* (PP, pp. 212–13n993ff.; S 2:516).
- 24, s.d. Vulgate Psalm 23:7, part of the collect for Palm Sunday, loosely translated in lines 25–28.
- 25 *Ondothe youre gatys*. The *undo the door* trope common in romances (see *The Squire of Low Degree*).
- 25 ff. Meredith and Spector cite *Northern Passion* as a major source for this section (PP, p. 214n1101–02; S 2:520).

### 34. BURIAL; GUARDING OF THE SEPULCHER

- 4 Loosely translated in the following line. Compare Matthew 27:54, Mark 15:39, and Luke 23:47.
- 57 *Baramathie*. As Meredith notes, possibly from the Latin, “ab Aramathie” (PP, p. 214n1099). Could also be from the Hebrew “bar,” meaning “son of.”
- 82 *no ned his bonys to breke*. See John 19:33, where the Evangelist is mindful of the Passover Feast (Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12), where no bone of the Paschal meal is to be broken. John, with the unique reference to the Agnus Dei (John 1:29), looks upon this moment of the Crucifixion as a step toward the Eucharist's displacing the Passover Feast.
- 114–51 N-Town is the only English version that mentions rewards for Nicodemus' and Joseph of Arimathea's good deeds. It is possible that these lines reflect the work of local religious guilds, e.g., to bury the dead.
- 154–57 The loving courtesy of Mary's “farewell gentle princes” quatrain reflects the

- queen-of-courtesy tone of *Pearl* and some of the Marian lyrics of the fourteenth century, but is unusual in drama. Mary's beautiful and moving farewell to Joseph and Nicodemus serves as a farewell to her son as well, as her benediction turns attention toward the new day, a day in which Adam and Eve and the patriarchs recover bliss, but also in which the true value of Mary will be honored. See also 35.121–36.
- 182–84 Meredith observes that the knights' names, except for Affraunt, agree with the list in Reynes' *Commonplace Book* (1470–1500) (p. 257). Arfaxat is from Genesis 10:22, but the other names are from romances (*PP*, p. 217n1224–26). See Spector's note to 34.182–205, which traces the names and behavior to the *Northern Passion* and MS Ashmole 61, as cited by Horstmann ("Nachträge zu den Legenden"). Spector cites parallels between *Northern Passion* and lines 34, 194–97, 200–05, 214–25, and 302–25.
- 209, s.d. Meredith notes that, in spite of the stage direction, the knights should not leave the playing place (*PP*, p.218n1251sd), but it could very well be that the tomb is outside or at the edge of the playing place, and above ground. Note that in 36.157–58, the stone covering the tomb seems to be atop the grave. (See note below.)
- 219 *Jakke and Gylle*. Common forms for John or James and Gillian, such common names that they stand for any or every boy and girl (*OED*, *MED*).

### 35. HARROWING OF HELL (2); APPEARANCE TO MARY; PILATE AND SOLDIERS

This play is written in tail-rhymed octaves.

- Before 1, s.d. Meredith notes (*PP*, p. 219n1367sd) that there is no mention of such a procession in the Banns, but rather of Jesus' frightening the knights.
- 10 *my grett trespass*. Adam claims his guilt, and has spent sufficient time in Purgatory for his original sin. Compare 2.165 ff.
- 73–80 Spector cites the Middle English *Harrowing of Hell*, ed. Hulme.
- 89–90 *Salve, sancta parens . . . All heyl, modyr*. Spector identifies this as from the Introit for Lady Masses (S 2:521). This appearance first to the Virgin Mary is unique to N-Town. In other cycles Jesus appears first to Mary Magdalene or the three Marys (Magdalene, Jacobi, and Salome in York, Towneley, and Chester). This privileging of the Blessed Virgin Mary emphasizes the Son's love of his mother and, through its reiteration of the *Hail Mary* of the Assumption (see Play 41), elevates the Marian adoration that gave us the Mary Play and will conclude in the Ascension Play, which is also unique to this cycle. Christ's appearance to the three Marys will come later, after the soldiers awaken and sound the alarm to Pilate and Cayphas, as in other cycles.
- 89–136 Meredith observes that although this scene between Jesus and his mother appears in no other English plays, it does appear in the *Meditationes*, Jacobus de

- Voragine's *Golden Legend*, and in the *Vita Christi* (*PP*, p. 221n1456). See also Martin Stevens, *Mystery Cycles*, p. 252.
- 105–06 *All this werlde . . . Shal wurchepe you*. “While Christ’s suffering allows for mankind’s salvation, Mary’s sinless body made the process possible, for had he not been born of her, there would be no salvation. Just as his wounds demand gratitude and worship, so does Mary’s nurturing role merit her the devotions of mankind” (Kinservik, “Mary’s Body,” p. 197).
- 133 *But this joy now passyth all sorwe*. Perhaps the allusion is to John 16:21–22, where Jesus anticipates the joy of the Resurrection, the sorrow and pain a mother feels in the birthing process which is forgotten once the child is born, or, in this instance, reborn.
- 137 ff. The poet changes the verse form to the skipping meter of short lines and tupples rhymes, to reflect the anxiety of the soldiers as they awaken, bestirring themselves after the more significant arousal has already taken place. The hasty rhythms set a comic tone for Pilate’s “What? What? What? What?” (there *are* four soldiers, after all), lines 169 ff.
- 206–08 Pilate threatens the four knights with crucifixion. Note that in the Crucifixion scene, Judeus 1 says to Christ: “Take good eyd to oure corn, / And chare away the crowe” (32.212–13).
- 261–62 Proverbial. See Whiting M490, G296.
- 264 Proverbial. See Whiting B105.
- 265 *this counsell*. Refers to bribing the knights.
- 279 See explanatory note to 27.305–06.
- 289–92 “Now, ye mighty men, as you are called — from this point on, you will not talk.”

### 36. ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE MARYS; PETER AND JOHN AT THE SEPULCHER

This play is written in octaves with one sestet.

- Before 1, s.d. Mark 16:1 says that Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James (Jacobi), and (Mary) Salomé came to the tomb. According to Meredith, Mary Jacobi is also called Mary Cleophas, daughter of Anne and Cleophas and half-sister to the Virgin Mary. She is traditionally the mother of Simon, Jude, James the Lesser, and Joseph the Just. Mary Salomé is the daughter of Anne and Salomé, and another half-sister to the Virgin Mary. She is the mother of John the Evangelist and James the Greater (*PP*, p. 339).
- 2 Meredith renders this line as: “Listen carefully to what I have to say” (*PP*, p. 224n1673).
- 16 *burryenge boorde*. Either a funeral feast or a funeral table (*MED*).
- 18 *as sunne in glas*. Compare with 21.97–100.



- 29 *feyn*. Meredith glosses this word as “joined (to the cross),” “mortally wounded,” or “enfeebled” (*PP*, p. 225n1700). Davies suggests “bruised” or “pierced” (Da, p. 339).
- 40 *bowndyn in brere*. This refers to the crown of thorns. But it is worth noting that fifteenth-century heretics were sometimes “bound in briar” as they were carted to their deaths and were surrounded by briars as they were being burned at the stake.
- 41 *mere*. “Boundary-marker” does not do justice to the complexity of this term. The most common sense is “lake” or “pool of water,” but it also is used to suggest a margin (*MED mere*, n.[3]1), an outer limit (n.[3]2a), or “the end of one’s life” (n.[3]2b). In this respect the term is akin to the poet’s frequent use of the term “lake,” which also means a body of water but here with the more specialized sense of a pit, shaft, hole, grave, sepulcher (*MED lake* n.3a and 3b) to designate the place through which Anima Christi goes to harrow hell, but through which he returns for his body and from which he arises to revisit humankind. See also 31.32, 35.213, 37.8, 37.20. The poet uses the term “lake” again in the Assumption Play, line 457, to mark that transitional place through which Mary passes prior to the Assumption as Jesus returns her soul to the body and then resurrects it. The watery connotations bear resemblances to folktale themes of ties by passage into a mysterious otherworld, here the realm of death and Purgatory through which Jesus passes to reclaim the patriarchs for God’s worship.
- 93 *they*. Referring to the Jews.
- 107–10 See alternate lines in textual note to lines 107–10. The *woundys fyve* in the alternate lines were to Christ’s hands, feet, and side.
- 157–58 Note that the stone seems to be atop the grave rather than in front of it. This may indicate how this scene was staged. Compare note to 34.209, s.d.

### 37. APPEARANCE TO MARY MAGDALENE

Both York and N-Town include separate plays devoted to Christ’s appearance to Mary Magdalene, and they are both based on John 20:11–17.

This play is written in double-quatrain octaves.

- 8 *lake*. Compare line 37.20. See note to 36.41.
- 9–12 *Woman that stondyst here alone. . . and wherefore*. In John 20:12 we are told that two angels appear. In York 39 there are no angels: Jesus himself simply appears behind Mary to question her about the reasons for her sorrow. N-Town collapses the two angels into one, with questions that give Mary the opportunity to express her sense of personal loss before Jesus speaks to her.
- 25–26 *A grettyr cawse had nevyr woman / For to wepe both nyth and day*. The poet focuses nicely on the paradox of Mary Magdalene as the weeper (see Richard Crashaw’s poem, “The Weeper,” and the tradition of affective piety), a paradox of the empathizer’s weeping/bleeding sorrow (“for sorwe myn hert doth blede,” line 29)

- and the vital joy whereby now “in herte I am so glad, / So grett a joy nevyr wyff had non” (lines 72–73).
- 37, s.d. Meredith comments that the stage direction could refer to Mary Magdalene or Christ, or even both of them (*PP*, p. 227n1879sd).
- 50 *to ordeyn yow a place*. The poet reappropriates the words of Jesus’ sermon after the Last Supper (John 14:2–3), where he told of the many mansions of his father’s house where he will go to prepare a place for his followers.
- 102 *Amen*. See note to 15.321–22 on the response said by all. Rastall notes that here “Amen” is written three times in the margin (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 112).

### 38. CLEOPHAS AND LUKE; APPEARANCE TO THOMAS

The N-Town Cleophas and Luke Play is but one of many such Continental and English plays, more commonly known as pilgrim plays, for Cleophas and Luke are apparently returning from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. All of these plays are based on Luke 24:13–45, John 20:20–29, and Mark 16:11–14. The N-Town version, like Chester Play 19, combines the pilgrim play with the risen Christ’s appearance to Thomas. York Play 40 and Towneley Play 27 precede separate Thomas plays. What distinguishes N-Town from the others is found in the following observations. Woolf notes the “companionable hospitality” by which Cleophas and Luke compel Christ to stay with them (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 281). Martin Stevens points out that the effectiveness of this play derives from its reliance upon typological argument (using biblical symbols) and from Jesus’ serving as the expositor of his own resurrection (*Mystery Cycles*, pp. 238–40).

This play is written entirely in octaves, except for lines 209–16 and 297–304, which are two quatrains. Perhaps these stanzas splice different material, as the Banns describes this play as two separate pageants — Cleophas and Luke and a Thomas play (Banns, lines 464–80).

- 1 *Lucas*. None of the Gospel accounts mentions Luke’s name. Only the Gospel of Luke mentions Cleophas, and the other Gospel accounts mention no names. That Luke accompanied Cleophas is possibly passed through Jacobus de Voragine’s *Golden Legend* (trans. Ryan, 2:250), which mentions Gregory’s *Moralia* and another unnamed church father as sources.
- 3 *castel of Emawus*. Spector observes that *castellum* in the Vulgate is a village, but that in art, Emmaus is depicted as a castle (S 2:524); see the note to the Banns, line 465.
- 32 *a fowle place*. Golgotha was Jerusalem’s garbage dump.
- 83 Spector notes that Cleophas’ account of a single angel agrees with Passion 2, Matthew 28:2–5, and Mark 16:5, but contradicts Luke 24:4 and John 20:42 (S 2:524).
- 92 *tokenys in signifure*. Jesus is speaking typologically. In this discussion (through line 152), he argues from biblical types and foreshadowing (prophecy). For example, Jonah’s three days and nights in the whale foreshadows (prophesies) Christ’s burial and resurrection. See *Biblia Pauperum*, pl. g and pl. i for graphic juxtapositions of the texts.

- 113, s.n. *CHRISTUS*. In the manuscript, as here, the speaker's name *Jhesus* (see line 89) switches to *Christus*. This appears to be deliberate on the playwright's (or scribe's) part, for it is at this point in the play that Jesus the pilgrim is transformed (although not recognized by Cleophas and Luke) into the risen Christ before the audience's eyes. He speaks as an instructor using exempla that they, if they were good readers, should be able to explicate — the story of Jonah, Aaron and the dry stick, etc. — iconography of Christ which fourteenth-century Christians should be able to "read," iconography that illuminates in the story of Lazarus, where all was made plain. The pilgrims, Lucas and Cleophas, were not among the disciples, but must, nonetheless, know Christ by faith.
- 113 Proverbial. See Whiting T510.
- 115–18 Compare Jonas 2:1, Matthew 12:39, and Luke 11:29–32.
- 129–42 Compare Numbers 17:8. This play parallels the blooming of Aaron's rod with Christ's resurrection (or all Christians' redemption). See also 10.242–67 and Spector, S 2:524. The *Biblia Pauperum* juxtaposes Aaron's blooming rod with the Nativity, pl. b, which in turn anticipates the Resurrection.
- 146–52 Compare Play 25, Raising of Lazarus.
- 161–90 Cleophas and Luke spend many lines and much energy convincing Christ to stay with them. Woolf draws parallels with Jacob's wrestling with the angel (Genesis 32), but this may be beside the point. The point seems to be Christian hospitality. While the two pilgrims threaten Christ with bodily restraint, they do so *with herty wylle* (line 173) and *with good entent* (line 179). I detect a jocular threat, not wrestling.
- 197 *to me food*. This clearly foreshadows the miracle of the loaf in lines 213–16, as the pilgrims share their food. They fulfill Christ's maxim that if you do kind deeds even to the least of brethren, you do it for Christ (Matthew 25:40).
- 217–328 While the recounting of the encounter with Christ is repetitious, it does serve a purpose. Martin Stevens notes that "The N-Town playwright thus allows the characters themselves not only to question the truth of Scripture but also the truth of the play" (*Mystery Cycles*, p. 239). In other words, Peter and Thomas are addressing the audience's doubts.
- 279 See textual notes after lines 272, 279–80, and 290. Gibson notes a John Worliche who was a mason in Bury St. Edmunds and a few other possibilities (*Theater of Devotion*, p. 26 and p. 184n33). There are several Worliches (with many variant spellings) in this area of Norfolk and Suffolk. Another enticing candidate would be a Sir John Wyrlych who was a priest of Hopton, Suffolk, who died in 1503 (NRO, 397 Popy).
- 285–86 Compare Towneley 28, line 265; *Cleanness*, lines 1105–08; and the *Shrewsbury Fragments*, line 75 (S 2:525).
- 289 It is uncertain at what point Cleophas and Lucas encounter Peter and Thomas and what, exactly, Peter has heard them say. It could be as early as line 241 or as late as line 273. See textual note after 272.

- 301–08 Compare Towneley Play 28, lines 184, 236–39, and 260–63 and York Play 41, lines 135–38 (S 2:525).
- 353–92 This lyric is similar to two found in *Political, Religious, and Love Poems*, ed. Furnivall, pp. 233–42. Note the difference in the final line, line 392.
- 360 Roughly translated in lines 361–62.
- 370 *myn hand dede in his heart blood wade*. As Fewer points out, Thomas' hand serves as "a 'myrroure' [38.383] authenticating the miracle of the resurrection and confirming the faith of the Christian polity" ("Fygure," p. 136).
- 377–93 *The prechyng of Petir myght not converte me . . . Thow that Mary Magdalyn in Cryst dede sone beleve . . . Amen*. Coletti suggests that "Thomas' speech calls to mind the early Christian tradition that debated rival claims to spiritual authority represented by Peter and Mary Magdalene. . . . The N-Town Resurrection sequence acknowledges the possibility of feminine access to spiritual truth . . . to suggest the parity of their evangelical influence" (*Mary Magdalene*, p. 97).
- 393 *Amen*. See note to 15.321–22 on a response of blessing said by all.

### 39. ASCENSION; SELECTION OF MATTHIAS

The N-Town Ascension (called pageant 38 in the Banns, but numbered 39 in the manuscript), is the briefest (95 lines) of all the extant English versions (Towneley Play 29, York Play 42, and Chester Play 20). These Ascension plays are two to four times longer than N-Town's, but all of the English versions are based on the accounts in Mark 16:14–19 and Acts 1:2–11. What sets N-Town apart is its inclusion of the appointment of Matthias, the apostle who replaces Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:15–26). It may also be worth noting that there is a record of a Weavers' pageant of the Ascension in Bury St. Edmunds (possibly near the scribal home of the N-Town manuscript), c. 1477, close to the 1468 date found in the N-Town manuscript. (Macray, "Manuscripts of the Corporation of Bury St. Edmunds," pp. 133–38, cited as Suffolk R.O. B9/1/2 in *Records of Plays and Players in Norfolk and Suffolk*, ed. Wasson and Galloway, p. 148.)

This play is written in thirteeners, with an opening quatrain.

- 1–4 Compare Gower's *In Praise of Peace*, lines 78–91 and 379–85.
- 10 *eighte sythys*. Spector claims that Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* and the *Stanzaic Life of Christ* list eight scriptural appearances (S 2:526), but in actuality, the *Golden Legend* enumerates ten (trans. Ryan, 1:219). Either the playwright has miscounted the appearances in the sources or in the play manuscript. It is also possible that plays with appearances were added to the manuscript after this play was written or included in the manuscript.
- 29–30 Spector notes that in Luke 24:50, Christ leads the disciples to Bethany (S 2:526).
- 35–43 The Great Commission. Compare Matthew 28:18–20, Mark 16:15, and Luke 24:47–49.

- 47, s.d. The song is unspecified, but there are a number of possibilities for Ascension Day. Woolf notes that the antiphon, “Ascendo ad patrem meum,” is used in other play cycles (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 284). See also Dutka, *Index of Songs*, p. 20, and S 2:526.
- 48–56 The angel’s speech seems to relate to the unspecified music announced in the previous stage direction. See Rastall (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 113) for various liturgical pieces that the passage seems to paraphrase.
- 59–62 Spector cites Acts 1:20, Vulgate Psalms 68:25 and 108:8 (see S 2:526).
- 70–73 Compare 30.32, s.d.; Acts 1:18–19; and Matthew 27:5.

#### 40. PENTECOST

Comprising only thirty-nine lines, this Pentecost play is easily the briefest of the existing English play texts; it is only one-fifth the length of York’s Play 43 and one-tenth the length of Chester’s Play 21. Woolf describes it well: “The author . . . prudently does not try to reconstruct a realistic historical scene but compresses into forty lines a doxology of the apostles, the Jews’ contemptuous skepticism, and Peter’s sermon” (*English Mystery Plays*, p. 284). What is also unusual about this version is the layout of the first four lines (see the textual notes below) in which all of the disciples’ names and virtues (which they speak) are arranged in a three-by-four block. The layout suggests that the main scribe was saving space, was emulating an iconographic design, or was suggesting something about the performance mode. It is possible that this play was performed more as a pageant or a tableau vivant, with the apostles arranged on stage (or a scaffold) holding scrolls or placards.

Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Easter, is the last celebration in Eastertide. A movable feast such as Pentecost (or Whitsun) can be celebrated as early as the middle of May and as late as the middle of June. Hence, this feast day was often celebrated as the beginning of summer.

This play is the thirty-ninth play in the Banns, but is numbered 40 in the manuscript. It is written in three thirteener stanzas.

- 1–4 Spector cites Gauvin, *Cycle du Théâtre Religieux Anglais*, pp. 204–05, who suggests that each apostle receives a virtue from the Holy Spirit (S 2:527).
- 4 This Judas, not to be confused with Judas Iscariot, is the son of James (Luke 6:16, John 14:22, and Acts 1:13) and may be the Thaddeus of Matthew 10:3 and Mark 3:18.
- 7 *enbarwmyd*. *MED* (1a, b) indicates that this word (beside the more familiar modern meanings) also refers to perfuming and to the administration of a sacrament. Thus, the disciples are being inducted into the presence of and receiving a sacrament of the Holy Spirit.
- 34 *pregnaunt prophceye*. Besides the familiar meaning, *pregnaunt* can refer to the significance or hidden meaning of a prophecy; it can also apply to a compelling or cogent argument (*MED*). Compare Joel 2:28–29.

- 36        *seyn*. Spector notes that Gauvin, *Cycle du Théâtre Religieux Anglais*, p. 204, emends this to *sleyn* to reflect Acts 2:23, but this emendation hardly seems necessary (S 2:527).
- 40        *Amen*. See note to 15.321–22 on the extra-stanzaic response presumably said by all present.

#### 41. ASSUMPTION OF MARY

There is little doubt that the N-Town Assumption Play was brought into the manuscript after having lived an independent existence. This play is not mentioned in the Banns; the play quire was interpolated into the manuscript; the handwriting does not appear anywhere else in the manuscript; and the play is written on paper that is unique in the manuscript. The play, furthermore, exhibits different prosody, style, staging, and spelling (see S 2:527). Block (Bl, p. xvi), agreeing with Halliwell (*Ludus Coventriae*, p. 417), suggests that the handwriting can be dated as the early sixteenth century, but Meredith, Kahrl, and Greg disagree, saying that this scribe's hand is late fifteenth century, contemporary with the main scribe's (*N-Town Plays*, ed. Meredith and Kahrl, p. xiii; *Assumption*, ed. Greg, p. 6). Even though the dialect in the Assumption is still East Anglian, the playwright likely did not write any other plays in the N-Town manuscript.

This play adds a fascinating dimension to the climax of N-Town, a remarkable complement to Christ's Ascension (39) and the Pentecost Play (40). As Kinservik points out, the play "is the logical end of historical time in the salvation story, and . . . N-Town could not achieve dramatic or theological closure without assuring the bodily integrity of the Blessed Virgin" ("Mary's Body," p. 190). "Only after the sanctity of Mary's body is ensured through her death and assumption," Kinservik argues, "are the struggles between the Jews and the followers of Christ ended and the mechanism of Christian salvation finally established in N-Town. To understand this movement we need to examine Mary as the vessel of the New Law, the importance attached to the inviolability of her body, and the functions she serves as intercessor and relic" ("Mary's Body," p. 192). There are several close sources for this play, the Greek *Discourse of St. John the Divine concerning the Falling Asleep of the Holy Mother of God*, the *Transitus Mariae*, and Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* (trans. Ryan, 2:77–97). This play parallels three plays from York (Plays 44–46) known as the Death of the Virgin, the Assumption of the Virgin, and the Coronation of the Virgin. There are also records of other Assumption plays (now lost) from Chester, Ipswich (Suffolk), Lincoln, London, and Sutterton (Lincolnshire).

- 1–91      Long-lined thirteener stanzas.
- 4        *book clepid Apocriphum*. "A book called the Apocrypha." Greg glosses this as "a book said to be apocryphal" (*Assumption*, p. 65n6). In any case, the reference is to Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* or any other apocryphal text mentioned above in the headnote.
- 11        *assumpte above the ierearchye*. Brown attributes these lines to John Lydgate. See Spector, S 2:528, and Brown, "Lydgate's Verses," p. 230.
- 13        *Legenda Sanctorum*. "Legend of the Saints," probably referring to Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*.

- 31 *attayne*. Greg emends this to *attame*, “to undertake,” but “to discern” or “to find out” seems more likely (*Assumption*, p. 66n34).
- 33 *pilled prechouris*. “Tonsured preachers,” or possibly referring to the doctor who just delivered the prologue.
- 40, s.n. *EPISCOPUS LEGIS*. Bishop of the Law, literally, but here a Jewish high priest.
- 58 Proverbial. Compare Whiting C296 and *Wisdom*, line 444 (see *Macro Plays*, ed. Eccles, p. 208nW444).
- 63 *relfe*. Greg renders this as “relieve” or “rise again,” but Block and *MED* gloss it as the more likely “remain” (Greg, *Assumption*, p. 66n70; S 2:529; Bl, p. 395).
- 92–93 A rhyming couplet.
- 94 *Wysdam*. Apparently, Mary is praying to Christ. Compare with the Parliament of Heaven (11.133–34, 173–74). See also the East Anglian play *Wisdom* (*Macro Plays*, ed. Eccles).
- 94–106 A thirteener stanza.
- 107, s.n. *SAPIENTIA*. The Son, the second person of the Trinity, the Wisdom figure. In paradigms of the Trinity modeled on the mind, the Father equates with Memory, the Son with Intellect or Wisdom, and the Holy Spirit with Will, Desire, or Love.
- 107–16 An octave and a rhyming couplet.
- 116, s.d. “‘Heaven is music,’” John Stevens notes, “so at the crises in the drama when heaven actively intervenes, music too intervenes” (“Music in Mediaeval Drama,” p. 83), which is certainly the case here as the *hefnely consorcyte* bursts into song with her cithera as she descends to Mary. Heavenly music is more prominent in this play than in any other in N-Town. This is a play about music triumphant, so much so that the final play on the Last Judgment seems almost anticlimactic. For an extended discussion of uses of music in the Assumption Play, see Rastall, *Minstrels Playing*, pp. 134–35.
- 117–34 Two octaves with a rhyming couplet in between.
- 121 *bryth berde*. Literally, “bright noble.” *Berde* is related to two words: “birth or lineage” and “bride, or young woman.” *MED* notes that this expression is used mostly in verse, referring to a young person of noble birth, sometimes used for Christ or even the Virgin Mary.
- 135–50 A rhyming couplet followed by an octave, followed by a couplet and then a quatrain.
- 147–50 See the story of Bel and the Dragon in Daniel 14:30–42 (Vulgate). Spector cites also the *Golden Legend* for these lines and 153–54 and 157–58 (S 2:529–30).
- 151–65 A couplet followed by a thirteener stanza.
- 153–56 A common medieval European fear was to have demons snatch a dying person, hence a rationale for last rites as well as wakes.

- 166–74 An octave followed by a single line.
- 173 *replyeth*. Block glosses this “to apply” (p. 395); Spector renders it “to reply” (S 2:530). The latter seems to make more sense here.
- 175–95 A thirteener stanza followed by an octave.
- 196–218 A single line followed by an octave, followed by another single line, followed by a thirteener stanza.
- 219–25 A single line followed by a quatrain, followed by a rhyming couplet.
- 226–51 Two octaves followed by a couplet and then another octave.
- 252–62 A couplet followed by an octave and then a single line.
- 263–80 An octave followed by a single line followed by another octave and single line.
- 267 *hol*. The spelling could either be correct, meaning “whole” or “united,” or, it could be an error for *holi*, or “holy.”
- 281–90 An octave followed by a rhyming couplet.
- 291–309 An octave followed by a rhyming couplet, followed by another octave and then a single line.
- 303–09 Peter’s speech here recalls both the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1–13) as well as the disciples’ falling asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane (28.33–80).
- 310–17 Two quatrains.
- 313, s.d. Spector notes that this direction could refer to: 1) a fixed keyboard organ; 2) a portative reed organ; or 3) a consort of instruments (S 2:531–32). The latter two possibilities seem more likely than the first.
- 317 *yowre dirige to rede*. “*rede*” does not necessarily exclude singing here” (Rastall, *Minstrels Playing*, p. 89).
- 318–19 The desire of the king of Heaven for her “beauty” perhaps alludes to Christ’s love of his spouse in Canticles 4–6.
- 318–25 These lines are in couplets.
- 326–29 A quatrain.
- 329, s.d. Mary dies here. See Rastall (*Minstrels Playing*, pp. 114–22) on liturgical responses invoked in this section of the play.
- 330–42 An octave followed by a single line followed by a quatrain.
- 333 *Vallé of Josephat*. Mentioned in Joel 3:1–2, which refers to the restoration of the nation of Israel after Armageddon: “I will gather together all nations and will bring them down into the valley of Josaphat: and I will plead with them there for my people and for my inheritance Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations and have parted my land” (Joel 3:2). Evidently, the Assumption is



- viewed as one of the critical events which will unite the Church (hence the apostles being convened earlier in the play) and restore Israel to its true kingdom. See *Siege of Jerusalem*, p. 96n431.
- 343–47 These verses come from Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* (trans. Ryan, 2:80). The lines are a couplet followed by a triplet.
- 348–63 Two octaves.
- 360 *seyng all celestly*. Spector notes that "seyng" is likely "seeing" rather than "saying." In other words, John was privileged to see heavenly sights (S 2:533). The apocryphal Greek narrative of the Assumption of the Virgin (see headnote) was attributed to John the Apostle (to whom Revelation was attributed).
- 364–68 A single line followed by a quatrain.
- 369–448 Two single lines followed by six thirteener stanzas.
- 415 Spector glosses this line as "May the devil reward him (who) brought me here" (S 2:534). It is clearly ironic.
- 417 *Wyndand wod*. Both Greg (*Assumption*, p. 72n533) and Spector (S 2:534) think this phrase should be rendered "raving mad." "Wyndand" could be related to "winden," which means "to go" or "to wander" or even "to writhe" (*MED*).
- 427–28 Compare 29.192–212.
- 449–55 A quatrain followed by two Latin lines and a single English line.
- 453–54 This is an antiphon from the Sarum inhumation rites (see Dutka, *Index of Songs*, p. 24).
- 456–89 An octave followed by two thirteener stanzas.
- 480 Spector glosses this as "Make ready for (the time that) we return to this (place), demon" (S 2:534).
- 490–95 A quatrain and a rhyming couplet.
- 495, s.d. Although the stage direction makes no mention of music being performed, the line itself, "al hefne makyth melodé," makes clear that this transpiring is filled with angelic choral music.
- 496 *Pes be to yow alle*. That Dominus (Jesus) appears and speaks to Peter, John, and, presumably, Paul, as well as Michael, is a marvelous revelation, as all agree. When he places Mary's soul back into her body and she speaks of her readiness to ascend (line 517), the conflict over the body is finally over. As Kinservik observes, "the mechanism of salvation is at last in place, and the historical time of the salvation story has come to a complete end" ("Mary's Body," p. 203).
- 496–521 Two thirteener stanzas.
- 510–11 *Arys now, my dowe, my nehebor, and my swete frende! / Tabernacle of joye, vessel of lyf, hefne temple to reyn*. Rastall notes that this is a translation of *Surge propera mea* as it appears in York Play 45: *Surge propera mea, columba mea, tabernaculum glorie*,

*vasculum vite, templum celeste*. “It is possible, then, that a setting of the Latin text was sung after the soul’s return to Mary’s body at line 508 s.d.” (*Minstrels Playing*, p. 90). Dutka suggests an antiphon from the Sarum inhumation rites (*Index of Songs*, p. 24).

- 522 Spector notes that this line is used in an antiphon and alleluia verse for the Feast of the Assumption (S 2:535). See also Dutka, *Index of Songs*, pp. 20–21.
- 523–28 A quatrain followed by a rhyming couplet.
- 528 *For this holy assumpcyon, alle hefne makyth melody*. “The last line of the play, and a clear indication of a musical tableau to end. The Latin *incipit* that follows, ‘Deo gracias,’ which is in a different hand, may identify the work to be sung but is more likely an expression of thanksgiving for the end of the play” (Rastall, *Minstrels Playing*, p. 90).

## 42. JUDGMENT DAY

This play, likely the last play in the manuscript (according to the Banns), is incomplete. It is written on paper that matches most of the other parts of the manuscript, but not the paper of the previous play, the Assumption of Mary. This N-Town version does not deviate much from the other English Doomsday plays, those from York Play 47, Chester Play 24, and Towneley Play 30. Each version, based on Matthew 25:31–46, begins with God’s (or the angels’) raising the dead. Then, Jesus proclaims his fitness to judge souls, by virtue of his suffering on the cross. He deems the souls good or evil according to their good works, based upon the corporal acts of mercy. God/Jesus then welcomes the good souls into heaven and leaves the bad souls to be taken away by demons. If this N-Town version parallels the others, then little of the plot is lost: only the condemnation of the bad souls and their capture by the demons is missing. The play ends abruptly, indicating that the last leaves or quire became detached.

This play appears in thirteener stanzas, such as those found in the Banns.

- 14–15 Compare *Castle of Perseverence*, lines 3611–12. See *Macro Plays*, ed. Eccles, p. 110.
- 68 *rubbe*. Spector glosses this as “run about” (S 2:536). *MED* indicates that it could also be “wiping one’s eyes” while crying.
- 76–78 *on here forehed . . . with letteris blake . . . all here synne*. See Apocalypse 14:9–11, the proclamation of the third angel, which places the mark of the beast on the foreheads of the damned.
- 79–86 Spector observes that the other English plays list only six corporal acts of mercy. The seventh, burying the dead, is mentioned only in N-Town (S 2:536).
- 118 *salte sewe*. Spector renders this “lecherous sowe” (S 2:536). *MED* also mentions that “salte” can mean “filthy,” a likely reading.
- 131, s.n. *DEUS*. The play is incomplete. See introductory note, above.





## TEXTUAL NOTES

**ABBREVIATIONS:** see Explanatory Notes.

### THE BANNS (PROCLAMATION)

- 1, s.n. *VEXILLATOR 1*. MS: *Vexillat*, remainder cropped.
- 1–182 Most of the Banns is written in thirteener stanzas.
- 14, s.n. *VEXILLATOR 2*. MS: *Vexilla*, remainder cropped.
- 18 *angell*. So MS. H: *angelle*. Bev: *angell[ys]*.
- 26 *abyde*. So Bl, S. H, Bev: *abide*. MS: *a*; page was cropped.
- 27, s.n. *VEXILLATOR 3*. MS: *Vexilla*, remainder cropped.
- 39 *it in no*. So MS. Bl, Bev: *it no*.
- 44 *delyte*. So MS. Bl: *debyte*.
- 65 *Exawmple*. So S. MS: *Exawple*, followed by Bl. Bev: *Example*.
- 79, s.n. *VEXILLATOR 3*. MS: *Vexil*, remainder cropped.
- 81 *with*. MS: several letters canceled before.
- 92, s.n. *VEXILLATOR 1*. MS: *Vexil*, remainder cropped.
- 119–91 *eighte*. MS: *tende*, followed by H, Bl, S. When the Banns start describing the Mary Play, the numbering becomes difficult to follow. The main scribe was attempting to incorporate the new material into the manuscript without making large-scale changes to the Banns, a clear impossibility (S 2:541–43). After this point, I follow Bev's numbering and spelling.
- 122 *thirteen*. MS: *xiiij*, followed by H.
- 126 *than*. MS: ~~*sertayn*~~ *than*. H reads *sertayn than*.
- 144 *ninte*. MS: *x<sup>de</sup>*, altered from *ix<sup>de</sup>*. H, Bl, S: *x<sup>de</sup>*.
- 156 *had*. MS: ~~*hadde*~~, with final *de* canceled.
- 157 *tende*. MS: *xj<sup>de</sup>*, altered from *x<sup>de</sup>*. H, Bl, S: *xj<sup>de</sup>*.
- 170 *hellenthe*. MS: *xij* written above *hellenthe*, which is canceled. H, Bl, S: *xij*.
- 179 *sertayn*. MS: corrected from *serteyn*. Bev: *sertain*.
- 180 *agayn*. *a<sub>2</sub>* altered from *e*. Bev: *again*.
- 183 *twelfte*. MS: *xij<sup>de</sup>ij*, altered from *xij<sup>de</sup>*. H, Bl, S: *xiiiij<sup>de</sup>*.
- 186 After this line, 55 mm remains blank on fol. 3v; 36 mm blank on fol. 4r before line 187. These spaces would allow room for the completion of full stanzas describing the twelfth and thirteenth pageants (lines 183–90).
- 187 *thirteente*. MS: *xv*, altered from *xiiij*. H, Bl, S: *xv*.
- 189 *mydwyrys*. MS: final *y* altered from another letter. Bev: *midwyrys*.
- 190 After this line, 53 mm left blank.
- 191 *fourteente*. MS: *xvj*, altered from *xiiiij*. H, Bl, S: *xvj*.

- 203 *Bryng*. MS: ~~Now~~ *bryng*. Bev: *Bring*.  
 204 *In*. So S, Bev. MS: omits, followed by H, Bl.  
 207 *all*. S notes "an incomplete letter canc[eled] before" (1.11). H reads *alle*.  
 249 *merveylyd*. So S. MS: *meveylyd*, followed by H, Bl, Bev.  
 268 *sarteyn*. S notes that the *a* has been altered from an *e*.  
 293 *undyr*. S notes that the *n* has been blotted.  
 297 *the*. So S. MS: omits, followed by H, Bl, Bev.  
 302 *oftelyme*. S notes the *f* is possibly altered from another letter.  
 320 *certan*. The *e* has been smudged.  
 334, s.n. *VEXILLATOR 3*. MS: *Ve*, remainder cropped.  
 356–57 MS: corrected reversed lines.  
 365 *tresour*. MS: *s tresour*, with *s* canceled before.  
 383 *The rythful*. MS: *The rfff rythful*.  
 389 *is*. MS: corrected from *was*.  
 392 *dye*. MS: *e* altered from another letter.  
 413 *pagent*. MS: *page*, retained by Bl.  
 425 *thetty-thryd*. MS: *xxiij*, retained by H, Bl. S: *xxxiiij*.  
 427 *ryth*. MS: written over the line.  
 438, s.n. *VEXILLATOR 2*. MS: *Vexil*, remainder cropped.  
 459 *byddyth*. MS: a letter has been canceled before.  
 465 *castel*. MS: *c* altered from another letter.  
 471 *and*. So S. MS: *ad*, retained by H, Bl. Bev: *spakad*.  
 474 *know*. Bev: *knew*. S notes that the MS could read "*know* or *knew*" (1.19).  
 493 *the*. MS: ~~to~~ *the*, followed by S. H, Bl, Bev retain *to*.  
 503 The lack of any provision for an Assumption of the Virgin in the Banns (numbered 41 in the manuscript) again demonstrates how the N-Town manuscript continued to evolve during the process of compilation.  
 507 *brast*. So H, Bl. MS: S notes revision to *brest*, but *brast* meets the rhyme.  
 528 After the line, 88 mm left blank at the bottom of fol. 9v.

# 1. CREATION OF HEAVEN; FALL OF LUCIFER

- Before 1 *Hegge Dunelmensis*, perhaps with other words (*Roberti?*), cropped at top of 10r.  
 2–4 MS: large play number *1* in right margin.  
 22 *in*. MS: omitted, possibly a scribal error.  
 34 *worchepe my myth*. S: supplies *to* before *worchepe*. MS: *worchepe my myth my*.  
 37 *as ble*. S, Da: *of ble*.  
 39, s.d. Script *m* with loop [*memorandum?*] atop in left margin preceding the stage direction. Rubrication precedes first *Tibi*.  
 45 *thee*. S notes that *e* is written over another letter and another *e* is written above.  
 50 *we*. MS: omitted, but written above the line by the main scribe.  
 59 *mythty*. MS: ~~worthy~~ *mythty*.  
 74 *pyht*. MS: ~~py~~ *pyht*.  
 After 82 MS: no break between plays.

**2. CREATION OF THE WORLD; FALL OF MAN**

- 1–3 MS: large play number 2 in right margin.  
 2 MS: script capital *N* appears in left margin.  
 4 *bryth*. MS: altered to *lyth*.  
 47 *lest*. MS: ~~last~~, with *e* written above and deleting dot below the *a*.  
 49 *sefut*. MS: ~~feste~~ *vijte*.  
 62 *welthe anow*. MS: obscured by blot.  
 65 *govyn*. Bl: *geven*.  
 70 *ryche*. Bl: *rythe*.  
 85 *plenté*. MS: *t* written above canceled letter.  
 95 *sayde*. S notes that *a* is altered from an *e*.  
 109 *hond*. MS: corrected from *hand*.  
 117 MS: line preceded by capitulum but not a stanza break.  
 151 *ete*. MS: final *e* blotted.  
 161 *Of*. MS: *Off*.  
 167 *unhede*. MS: *vnhede*, perhaps corrected from *unhede*.  
 182 *byn*. MS: *h* canceled before *byn*.  
 195 MS: line lacks capitulum.  
 212 *stryffe*. MS: *r* smudged and written above.  
 213 *be*. MS: omitted and written above the line.  
 233 *lokyn*. MS, Bl: *loky*.  
 243, s.n. MS: ~~Ad~~ precedes *Deus*.  
 253 *undyrlyng*. MS: letter canceled before *l*.  
 260 *Fowle*. MS: *o* altered from another letter.  
 282, s.d. MS: rubricated *m* with loop precedes s.d. in margin.  
 309 MS: lacks capitulum.  
 MS: at the foot of fols. 16v–18 is written in larger script (textura quadrata) a genealogy: *Adam genuit Caym/Abel/Seth) Caym genuit Enoch genuit Irad*  
*genuit*. On fol. 17, it says: *Maynael genuit Matussahel genuit Lamech*. And  
 the main scribe has added in his usual hand: *Pat slow Caym. Pis Lame[ch]*  
*had 2 wyffys, Ada and Sella. Of Ada com Jabel, fadere of tentys and herdmen*.  
 The rest of the note is cropped. On fol. 17v, again in the larger script, is:  
*Seth genuit Enos genuit Caynan genuit Malalchel genuit Jared genuit*. Con-  
 tinued on fol. 18r is: *Enok genuit Matussalem genuit Lamech genuit Noe*.  
 320 *logge*. S suggests that could also be read *longge*.  
 325 *to pynde*. MS: erasure precedes *pynde*.  
 After 334 MS: no break between plays.

**3. CAIN AND ABEL**

- 1–4 MS: large play number 3 in right margin.  
 Before 5 MS: lacks capitulum.  
 16 *yet*. MS: *y<sup>t</sup>*. Bl: *pat*.  
 36 MS: above the line is written: *As ye have me oflyn seyde sothly*, a variation on line  
 37, but is canceled.  
 47 *thorwe*. MS: *pour*. Bl and S: *thorwe*.

- dyvnye. MS: *ydyvnye*, with the first *y* canceled.  
 58–61 MS: two lines are written as one.  
 Before 66 MS: lacks capitulum.  
 73 *grawnt*. MS: *grawunt*.  
 Before 120 MS: upper left corner of fol. 19v marked as 20.  
 129 *showe*. MS: *shoue*.  
 155 *He*. MS: *Here*, with *re* erased.  
 180 *sefne*. MS: *vij*.  
 181 *nevyr*. MS: *never* written above the line in another hand.  
 186 *falsage*. MS: *ffalfage*.  
 193 MS: *Introitus Noe* appears in right margin in larger script.  
 After 195 Remainder (100 mm) of fol. 20v is blank.

#### 4. NOAH

- 1 *Noe*. This speaker's name is written in larger textura quadrata script, perhaps meant to act as both speaker's name and play title.  
 4–8 MS: large play number 4 in right margin.  
 After 30 At the feet of fols. 21r through 22v appears this genealogy in textura quadrata script. On fol. 21r appears: *Noe genuit Sem/Cham/Japhet*. On fol. 21v appears: *Sem genuit Arfaxit genuit Sale genuit Heber genuit Phaleg*. On fol. 22r appears: *genuit Reu genuit Sarug genuit Nachor genuit Thare genuit Abraham/Nacor/Aran*. On fol. 22v appears: *Aran genuit Loth*.  
 40 *wyff*. MS: *wyff these ch*.  
 44 *fere*. Bl: notes that it should be *sere*.  
 50 *hevyn*. MS: *hevy*.  
 51 *we*. Bl: notes that it should be *ye*.  
 57 *Shem*. Manly: *Chem*. Also letter canceled before *youre*.  
 63 MS: scribbles in right margin.  
 68 MS: scribbles in right margin.  
 81 *us*. MS: erasures after *us*.  
 94 *certayn*. MS: *a* corrected from another letter.  
 95 *be*. MS: ~~he~~ *be*.  
 96 *gan*. MS: altered from *gon*.  
 108 *synne*. MS: *e* corrected from another letter.  
 111 *eighte*. MS: *vij*.  
 112 MS: letter canceled before *not*.  
 118, s.n. *Angelus*. MS: *Anglus ad Noe* on same line.  
 118–263 Written in octaves.  
 127 *fyff hundryd*. MS: *vc*.  
 129 *feynnesse*. MS: *ffeyynnesse*. H reads *ffeythnnesse*.  
 134 *bydde*. MS: ~~d~~ *bylde*.  
 141, s.d. *dicit*. MS: *di*, remainder cropped.  
 156 *brede*. MS: ~~dede~~ *brede*.  
 192 *sefne*. MS: *vij*.  
 197 ff. At the foot of fol. 24r, the main scribe wrote: *Noe schyp was in lenght ccc cubytes. In brede fyfty. And the heyth thretty. The fold 15 above hyst montayn.*

- 210 *soferyd*. MS: *fsoferyd*, first *f* canceled.  
 222 *the*. Bl, MS: *of*.  
*good*. MS: ~~gode~~ *good*.  
 242 *Fourty*. MS: *xl<sup>th</sup>*.  
 243 *Fourty*. MS: *xl<sup>th</sup>*.  
 249, s.d. *redeunte*. Da: *redeinte*. MS: *redeinte* or *redemte*.  
*viridi*. Bl: *virid*.  
 250 *yet*. MS: *y<sup>t</sup>*. S: *yet*. Bl: *pat*.  
 253 *lete*. MS: letters smudged after *lete*.  
 After 253, s.d. The Abraham and Isaac Play follows immediately after Noah Play in the MS.

### 5. ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

- Before 1, s.d. This play continues immediately after the Noah Play. The first stage direction is on the same line as the final stage direction of the Noah Play.
- 1–264 This play is written entirely in octaves.
- 1, s.n. *ABRAHAM*. MS: omitted.
- 4–11 MS: large play number 5 in right margin.
- 20 *solace*. MS: *s* smudged. S suggests written over another letter; Bl suggests *ss*.
- 41 *yonge*. Bl: notes *yongthe*.
- 57 *childe*. MS: letter erased before *c*.
- 68 *thee*. So S. MS, Bl: *pi*. Since *displesaunte* is an adjective, *Thee* makes more sense.
- 90 *his*. MS: *h* partly covered by stain.
- 94 *childe*. MS: letter erased before *c*.
- 106 This line is repeated at the top of the next page, and crossed out.
- 115 *For*. MS: *o* or loop (?) written above existing *o*.
- 116 *wyll*. MS: *w* written over another letter (?).
- 131 *derere*. So Bl, S. MS: double *r* corrected.
- 132 *derlyng*. MS: ~~der~~ *derlyng*.
- 143 *shalt*. So Bl, S. MS: *a* corrected from *u*.
- 153 *it*. MS: written above the line.
- 155 *Agens*. MS: ~~Ages~~ *Agens*.
- 158 *rod*. So S. MS, Bl: *reed*. MS is an unlikely reading. Spector renders it *rod* so that it rhymes with *God* in line 160 and so that there is a typological reference to the Rood, or Cross (2:428). I have accepted his emendations.
- 163 *yit*. So Bl, S. MS: *e* written above *i*.  
*to sle*. MS: *to sch sle*.
- 185, s.n. *ANGELUS*. The speech marker is here *Anglus*.
- 193 *in hevyn*. MS: *in me hevyn*, where *me* is altered from *in*.
- 206 *of*. MS: written above the line.
- 221 MS: In left margin mistakenly marked fol. 30; should be 29v.
- 228 *blyssed*. MS *by* *blyssed*.
- 244 *halle*. MS: corrected from *aalle*.
- 247 *thralle*. MS: *r* corrected over another letter with another letter written above.
- 264 The remainder of fol. 30r (84mm) and the following folio, 30v, are left blank.



**6. MOSES**

- 1, s.n. *MOYSES*. MS omits speaker's name.  
 1–3 MS: large play number 6 in right margin.  
 15 *mot.* MS: *not.*  
 16, s.d. *rubum*. So S. MS, Bl, Da: *rubrum*.  
 51 MS: lacks capitulum.  
 64 *sefne*. MS: *vij*.  
 66a and ff. MS: *i<sup>us</sup>* and other ordinal numbers preceding Latin phrases from Decalogue are rubricated in the left margin.  
 82a *assumes*. H, Bl, MS: *assumens*.  
 98a *sanctifies*. Da, Bl, MS: *sanctificet*.  
 99 *thryd*. MS: *ij<sup>de</sup>*.  
 116 *fourte*. MS: *iiij<sup>de</sup>*.  
 148 *sefnt*. MS: *vij<sup>de</sup>*.  
 155 *eyghle*. MS: *viiij<sup>de</sup>*.  
 171 *tente*. MS: *x<sup>te</sup>*.  
 After 194 MS: remainder of fol. 34v blank, except for where a later hand has recopied line 189 immediately after 194.

**7. ROOT OF JESSE**

- 1–4 MS: large play number 7 in right margin.  
 9, 10 MS: double back slashes follow *seye* in line 9 and *filium* in line 10.  
 23, 40 MS: + in right margin.  
 27 *sprynge*. MS: ~~*spryn*~~ *sprynge*.  
 44 *of*. MS: written above the line.  
 45, 47 MS: + in right margin.  
 49 *thryd*. MS: *ij<sup>de</sup>*.  
*jentyll*. MS: ~~*jeng*~~ *jentyll*.  
 59 MS: circled *I* and *Danyel* written in right margin.  
 70 *trew*. MS: *trow* also possible.  
*tall*. MS: corrected from *tale*.  
 72 *qwall*. MS: corrected from *qwale*.  
 76 *dubytacyon*. MS: *dubytacoun*.  
 99 MS: ~~*gold*~~ *God*.  
 119 *to*. S: *do*.  
 127 *Al*. S: supplies *To* before *al*.  
 Below 136 The remainder of fol. 37r (at the bottom) begins a genealogical table for Anne, the mother of Mary, written in textura quadrata. The table continues into fol. 37v and into the beginning of the Mary Play. On fol. 37r:

<i>Barpanter</i>	<i>Emeria fuit soror Anne</i>
}genuit Joachym	<i>que habebat quondam filiam</i>
<i>Asmaria</i>	<i>Elizabeth que nupta fui[t][t cropped]</i>
	<i>Zakarie de quo peperit Johanne[m] [m cropped]</i>
<i>Ysakar</i>	<i>Baptistem precurorem Domini</i>
}genuit Anna	<i>Elyud Eminē filia beatus</i>



- 87 *were*. So Bl. S: *wore*. MS: *were* or *wore*.
- 97, s.d. MS: rubricated *m* with loop [*memorandum?*] precedes s.d.
- 105, s.d. *Et refudit sacrificium Joachim*. MS: written in right margin.
- 109 *holy*. MS: written above the line.
- 110 *Adjutorium nostrum*. MS: phrase rewritten at right.
- 115 MS: rubricated cross precedes *Pater, et filius, et spiritus*; presumably as cues for Episcopus to make the sign of the cross.
- 116, s.d. *solemniter*. MS: *solemniter*.
- 117, s.n. MS: omitted.
- 123 *hevynes*. MS: ~~*darre*~~ *hevynes*.
- 129 *sen*. So S, MP. MS: *son*. Bl: *sofron*.
- 130 *shepherdys*. So S. MS, Bl, MP: *sherherdys*.
- 132 MS: *pastores* written in right margin in another hand.
- 135 An *a* is written in the left margin.
- 139, s.n. *JOACHYM*. MS: written above a canceled *ij pastor*. See explanatory note to lines 135–212.
- A b* is written in the left margin.
- 141 *A b* is written in the left margin.
- 142 *Se*. MS: *So* is also possible.
- 143 An *a* or a *cc* is written in the left margin.
- 145 *A d* is written in the left margin.
- 149 Notation in the left margin.
- 150 *an venymyd*. So MS, S, MP. Bl: *Anvenymyd*.
- 158 *feryng*. MS: *r* perhaps altered from another letter.
- 168 *Ye*. So S, Bl, MP. Manly, MS: *he*.
- 172, s.d. *canunt*. MS: *canut*.
- 173, s.n. MS: appears in right margin above 173, s.d.
- 182 *son*. MS: blotted and difficult to read.
- 194 *of her*. MS: written above the line.
- 196 MS: at bottom of fol. 40v are catchwords *that xal be sayyour*.
- 197–724 MS: written on different paper, same as paper for quires F–M.
- 201 *incomparabyl*. So MS, Bl, S. MP: *incomparabyl*.
- 211 *now this*. MS: *now is this*.
- 212 MS: a line marks the end of the shepherds' scene.
- 229 *ay*. MS: *y* obscured.
- 240 *metyng*. MS: ~~*wetpy*~~ *metyng*.
- 243 *nevyr*. MS: written above the line.
- 245 *Veryly*. MS: written right of line 244, preceded by rubrication.
- 250 MS: no capitulum.
- After 253 MS: no break between plays.

## 9. PRESENTATION OF MARY IN THE TEMPLE

- 1 MS: play number indicates beginning of Mary in the Temple.
- 6–10 MS: large play number 9 in right margin.
- 11 *now*. MS: ~~*here she xal*~~ *now*.
- 17, s.d. *thus*. MS: *s* or *f* canceled before word.

- After 17, s.d. MS: *here Johym and Anne with* written in another hand at bottom of 42r.
- 18, s.n. *JOACHIM*. MS: written in textura quadrata with a capitulum.
- 40 *mercy*. MS: ~~your~~ *mercy*.
- 48 *am*. So S. MS, MP: omitted.
- 73 *Amen*. MS: written in right margin after 72.
- 77, s.d. *amplexendo*. So S. MS, H, Bl, MP: *explexendo*.
- 82, s.n. *MARIA*. MS: omitted and supplied by a reviser.
- 85 *beth*. So Bl, S, MP. MS: ~~betht~~.
- 90 *sore*. MS: unclear, could also be *sere*.
- 92 *thore*. MS: unclear, could also be *there*.
- 101, s.d. *finem*. So MP, S. Bl, MS: *fine*.
- 102–169 MS: no capitula.
- 104 ff. The internal numbering for the play follows Spector, who does not include the Latin lines in his numbering scheme. See explanatory note to these lines.
- 127 *Lordeis grace*. So S. MP: *Lorde-is grace*. MS, Bl: *lorde is as gracy*.
- 129 *joyful*. MS: two letters erased after.
- 133 *it*. MS: two letters erased after.
- 133, s.d. *laborauerunt*. So Bl, MP, S. MS: *laborauerut*.
- 141 *Thu*. So S, MP. Bl: Thou. H: *Than*.
- 148 *heyved*. So Bl, MP. S: *heynd* or *heyued*.
- 162, s.n. See explanatory note to this line.
- 162 MS: no capitulum.
- 166 *by*. So MS. S: *be*.
- 174 *sovereynly*. So MP, S. MS, Bl: *severeynly*. MS: written above the line.
- 183 *thi mende*. MS: *thi mende might*.
- 190 *For with*. Could be read either as *forwith*, suggesting primacy or as *forthwith*, suggesting immediacy. See MP, p. 96n473.
- with prayer, with grace and mercy*. So MS, Bl. MP, S: *with prayer come grace and mercy*.
- 191 *Se thee*. So Bl, S. MS, MP: *Sethe*.
- 205 *beseche*. MS: ~~beseke~~ *seche*.
- 217, s.d. *recedet*. So MP, S. MS, Bl: *recedent*.
- 218, s.n. *MARIA*. MS: omitted.
- 225, s.d. MS: squeezed into right margin.
- 234 *plesauns knawe*. So MS, Bl, MP. S: *plesauns to knawe*.
- 246, s.n. *ANGELUS*. MS: omitted.
- 254 *sovereyn*. So S. MS, Bl, MP: *soveryen*.
- 259 *Aungelys*. So MP, S. MS, Bl: *aunge*.
- 264 *Averter*. So S. MS, Bl, MP: *auerte*.
- 272 *have*. MS: ~~a~~ *have*.
- 298, 302 MS: no capitula.
- 301 MS: play number 10 opposite lines 301–04.
- 301–304 MS: large play number 10 in right margin, possibly scribal confusion about the beginning (?) of the next play.
- After 310 MS: remainder of fol. 48r blank.

## 10. MARRIAGE OF MARY AND JOSEPH

- Before 1, s.d. *Ysakar*. H: *ab Ysakar*. Bl, MP, S: *Abysakar*.
- 1, s.n.–133 *EPISCOPUS*. MS: omitted. Starting here with *A*, capital letters in the left margin mark Ysakar's lines (in a later hand). Clearly an attempt to identify or emphasize Ysakar's speeches for interpolated quires E and F. Fol. 51r is in a different hand, and fols. 1v through 52v (quire E) are blank. See explanatory note for 1, s.d.
- 1–4 MS: large play number 10 in right margin.
- 18 *rouse*. H: *kouse*.
- Before 31 MS: fol. 49v marked 50.
- 31, s.n. MS: *B* in left margin. See note to 1, s.n.–133.
- 40, s.n. MS: *C* in left margin. See note to 1, s.n.–133.
- 79, s.n. MS: *D* in left margin. See note to 1, s.n.–133.
- 92–115, s.d. These lines, written in octaves, not thirteener stanzas, were skipped between the bottom of fol. 50r and the top of 50v. Marks of insertion there correspond to this material, which has been written on to the otherwise blank verso of fol. 48v, the recto side of which has the end of the Presentation of Mary (lines 297–310).
- 97 *cowncell*. So S, MP. MS, Bl: *cowcell*.
- 102 *good*. So MP, S. MS, Bl: *goo*.
- 108, s.n. MS: *E* in left margin. See note to 1, s.n.–133.
- 115, s.d. MS: written right of line 113.  
*seyn*. So S, MP. MS, Bl: *seyng*.
- 116, s.n. MS: *F* in left margin. See note to 1, s.n.–133.
- 133, s.n. MS: *G* in left margin. See note to 1, s.n.–133.
- 141 *also*. MS: ~~also~~ *also*.
- 145 ff. Fol. 51 contains material to be inserted on fol. 53r. In a later hand.
- 155–74 MS: these lines are in an interpolated quire (fols. 51–52) on a different paper. These are in a later hand and consist of quatrains and one octave.
- 155, s.n. *primus generacionis* crossed out and replaced with *JOSEPH*.
- 163, s.n. *GENERATIONIS DAVID 2*. MS: *Generatio*, the rest cropped.
- 165 *to offyr*. So MS, Bl, MP. S: *to* omitted.
- 167, s.n. *JOSEPH*. MS: ~~iiiij generacionis~~, with *Joseph* written below.
- 169 *Yis*. So MS, Bl, S, MP. H: *This*.
- 171, s.n. *GENERATIONIS*. MS: *Gener*, the rest cropped.
- 172 *is told*. MS: ~~have heard~~, with *is told* written above.
- 175, s.n. *JOSEPH*. MS: *Primus Generaciones David* canceled and *Joseph* written above.
- 175 MS: text resumes on 53r.
- 186 MS: dots after *falle* and *xalle*, for internal rhyme.
- 187 MS: dots after *away* and *say*, for internal rhyme.
- 188 *ye*. MS: omitted.  
MS: dots after *men* and *ren*, for internal rhyme.
- 189 MS: dots after *old* and *colde*, for internal rhyme.
- 190 MS: dots after *wolde I* and *holde I*, for internal rhyme.  
*wolde*. So MP, S. MS, Bl: *wole*.
- 199 *be I*. So S, MP. MS, Bl: *I* omitted.

- 203 To. MS: *to my*.  
 204 *dewe*. MS: ~~de~~ *dewe*.  
 206 To my *woursyp* written to the left of this line in a different hand.  
 237 *Comyth thens!* MS: In right margin.  
 240 *Offyr up*. MS: ~~Hold~~ *up*, with *Offyr* written above.  
 288 *so be*. So MP, S. MS, Bl: *be so*.  
 301, s.d. MS: written in right margin.  
 309, s.d. MS: written in right margin.  
 345 MS: *Episcopus*, s.n. written to left of line.  
 359 *I shall*. So S, MP. Bl, MS: *I* omitted.  
 371 *How*. MS: *W* or *ll* canceled before word.  
 396 *Farwel*. So, S, MP. MS, Bl: *Forwel*.  
 413 MS: lacks capitulum.  
 425 MS: lacks capitulum.  
 449–51 MS: *of the vyn*. R. *Wych* scribbled in right margin.  
 450 *creatures*. MS: possibly corrected from *creaturys*.  
 After 486 MS: remainder (20 mm) of fol. 58r blank.

## 11. PARLIAMENT OF HEAVEN; SALUTATION AND CONCEPTION

- 1–32 On the possible previous division of this speech between the two speakers,  
 see the explanatory note to these lines.  
 1–4 MS: large play number *11* in right margin.  
 1 Above the line is *I<sup>us</sup>* (primus) in a different hand.  
 10 *into*. MS: ~~into~~ *to*.  
 13 *thyrsté*. So S, MP. MS: *thyrste*. Da: *thirsty*.  
 17 To the left of the line is 2, written in a different hand.  
*of. that* written above the line in a different hand.  
 20 *sobbe for syknes and sorwe*. MS: reviser altered to *Sobbe bothe eve and morewe*.  
 35 *made*. MS: *d* or *de* has been corrected. So MP, Bl. S: *mad*.  
 36 *prayerys*. MS: ~~soy~~ *prayerys*.  
 42 *hath*. MS: ~~hath~~ *hath*.  
 45 *grete*. So Bl, MP. MS: *grete* or *grett*. S: *grett*.  
 48a–c. These Latin lines written in textura quadrata to set off the divine voice  
 speaking.  
 49 *For the*. MS: *ffor the* written in right margin in another hand.  
 63 *resslore*. MS: second *s* written over another letter.  
 93 *sees*. So Bl, MP. S: *sese*. MS: final *se* in darker ink, possibly corrected.  
 Before 105 MS: top left corner, fol. 60v marked 60.  
 111 First worde, *erne* (?) has been canceled.  
 133 MS: unnecessary capitulum.  
 141 *Trewth*. MS: *r* written over incomplete *h* (?). Browne: *Terrewth*.  
 153 *withowt*. MS: *with inne and with* *owt*.  
 156 *to that*. H: *that to*.  
 160 *I*. So S. MS: *I I*.  
 163 *Hes*. MS: *he* has been corrected to *hes*; the *s* is added in a different hand.  
 166 *Pesys avyse*. MS: reviser altered to *by hys avyse*.

- 174 *was*. MS: letter canceled before word.
- 183 *yow lede*. MS: ~~procede~~ *yow lede*.
- 213, s.n. MS: written in decorative hand.
- 216a MS: *Ave Maria*. S.  
MS: written in textura quadrata.
- 217 MS: no capitulum; *of of*.
- 229 *herynge*. MS: *thyng* altered to *herynge*.
- 244 *non*. So S, MP. Bl: *no*.
- 245, s.n. *MARIA*. MS: Speech marker written to the right of the line.
- 253 *Gost*. So MS, Bl, M. S omits on the claim that it has been deleted, but there is no evidence in the MS that this is the case. MP (p. 115n1300–22) suggests a possible emendation to *one*.
- 276 *rescu*. MS: canceled and then rewritten in another hand.
- 281 *persevere*. MS: second *e* corrected over *y*.
- 289 *my*. MS: written above the line.
- 291 *of*. MS: *of of*.
- 292, s.d. *entre*. A prompt note (?) written by another hand below the stage direction.
- 293 MS: stanza lacks capitulum.
- 317, s.n. MS: lack rubrication.
- 329, s.n. MS: lack rubrication.
- 337 *Thorwe*. So S. MS: *Thour*, followed by Bl, M.
- 340 *Enjonyd*. So H, Bl, MP. S: *enjowyd*.
- 340, s.d. *serena*. So H, MP, S. MS, Bl: *sesena*.  
MS: the stage direction is followed by: ~~And than Mary seyth~~. The line has been deleted to accommodate Joseph's Doubt.
- After 340, s.d. MS: remainder of 66r (138 mm.) and all of 66v blank, except for scribbles.

## 12. JOSEPH'S DOUBT

- 1–2 MS: large play number 12 in right margin.
- 1, s.n. *JOSEPH*. MS: Speaker's name written in textura quadrata script.
- 12 MS: *how hast* (the start of line 21) written and canceled between lines 12 and 13.
- 13, s.n. MS: *Maria* written in right margin in another hand.
- 14 *yow*. MS: ~~yow~~ *yow*.
- 28 MS: at the bottom of fol. 67r is a large *G* written in another hand.
- 47 MS: no capitulum.
- 51 *be*. So MS. S: *by*.
- 62 *thus*. MS: ~~so~~ *thus*.
- 72 *to*. MS: two letters canceled before.
- 89 *not*. MS: ~~that it~~ *not*.
- 91 *sene*. MS: *sone*.
- 97 *her*. MS: ~~tw~~ *her*.
- 99 *vengeabyl*. MS, H: *vegeabyl*.
- 102 *Tokyn*. MS: ~~newythel~~ *tokyn* (eyeskip from line 104).
- 125 *on me*. MS: *omme* corrected to *on me* by cancellation of the final minim of first *m*.

- 133 *respyl.* So MS. G, S: *despyt.*  
 181 MS: a different hand has written an *A* in the bottom right hand corner of  
 the page; an *F* is in the bottom left.  
 212 MS: at the bottom of fol. 70r is a *D* in a different hand.  
 214 *aunge.* So MS, Bl. S: *aungel.*  
 217 *shulde.* MS: *shulde shulde.*  
 After 224 MS: remainder of fol. 70v (119 mm.) blank.

## 13. VISIT TO ELIZABETH

- 1, s.n. MS: speaker's name is in textura quadrata.  
 8–11 MS: large play number 13 in right margin.  
 8 *I.* MS: ~~to~~ *I.*  
 11 *wole.* MS: ~~wyl~~ *wole.*  
 13 *Goth.* So MS, Bl, MP. S: *Good.*  
 19 *I cast.* So MS, Bl. H: *reast.* MP: *i-cast.* S: *icast.*  
 25 *let.* So MS, Bl. MP: *lot.* S: *lot to apere.*  
 26 *weryn.* So MP. MS, Bl: *weryd.* S: *were.*  
 29 *woman.* MS: ~~wyff~~ *woman.*  
 34 *He, seinge.* So S, MP. MS, Bl: *Hese jüge.*  
 35 *lippis.* MS: above the line.  
*lo.* MS: ~~to~~ *lo.*  
 37 *tolde.* MS: ~~gab~~ *tolde.*  
 74 *cosyn.* MS: two letters canceled before.  
 77 *of incensynge.* MS: *of* written above the line.  
 82–124 MS: the Latin verses are in textura quadrata.  
 88 *handmayde, ye.* Bl, MP: *maydaydeze.* S: *hand-may ye.* MS: It is apparent that a  
 reviser added the *de* in different ink, making the previous version *hand-*  
*may ye.*  
 89 *So.* So MS, Bl, MP. S: *Lo.*  
 101 *in the.* So S. MS, H, MP, Bl: *and the.*  
 142 *Why.* MS: letter (*h*?) canceled before word.  
 144 *vesytacyon.* So S, MP. Bl: *vesytacion.*  
 147–49 MS: a triplet, but written in the bottom margin with the note *si placet*, indi-  
 cating an alternative conclusion to the play. See Meredith, MP, Appendix  
 3 and pp. 134–37 and Spector (2:466n13/147–185a). At this point, I have  
 chosen the manuscript's alternative ending for the play at the bottom of  
 fol. 73v.  
 Contemplacio then concludes with his speech, lines 150–85. Spector con-  
 sideres Contemplacio's speech part of the alternative ending because it is  
 squeezed into the rest of the folio (S 2:137). Below is the conclusion that  
 Block and Spector have chosen but Meredith places in an appendix.

JOSEPH	Of your dissesse thynkys no greff! Thank God of all adversyté, For he wyl chastyse and repreff Tho that he lovyth most hertylé.	<i>misfortune; grief</i>   <i>reprove</i> <i>Those; heartily</i>
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Mary, I hold best that we go hens.  
We have for hom without fayl.

**MARIA** Al redy, husbond, without defens. *denial*  
I wyl werke be your counsayl.  
Cosyn, be your leve and your lycens, *by: permission*  
For homward now us must travayl. *travel*  
Of this refreschyng in your presens, *spiritual refreshment*  
God yeld yow that most may avayl. *give you help*

**ELIZABETH** Now, cosynes, bothe God yow spede *both of you*  
And wete yow wele withoutyn mo. *grant you weal without end*  
Your presens comfortyth me, indede,  
And therefore now am I ryght wo *sorrowful*  
That ye, my frendys and my kynrede,  
Thus sone now shul parte me fro. *shall; from me*  
But I pray God, he mote yow lede *may lead you*  
In every place wherso ye go.

[*Here Mary and Elizabet partyn and Elizabeth goth to Zakarie and seyth:*

Good husbond, ryse up, I beseke yow *beg you*  
And go we to the temple now fast  
To wurchep God with that we mow *may*  
And thank hym bothe — this is my cast *purpose*  
Of the tyme that is comynge now.  
For now is cum mercy, and venjauns is past. *vengeance*  
God wyl be born for mannys prow *man's good*  
To brynge us to blysse that ever shal last. *forever*

- 153–185 MS: Latin words, proper names, and verses in lines 153–55, 171–72, and 185 are in textura quadrata.  
163 *That. S: That held.*  
181 *deliberacyon.* MS: *deliberaco* with cropped edge.  
After 185 MS: no break between plays.

#### 14. TRIAL OF MARY AND JOSEPH

- Before 1 MS: cross in top margin of 74v.  
1, s.n. *Den.* MS: Speaker's name written in different script, fere-textura.  
1–33 MS: the play number, 14, is actually on fol. 75r, after Den's prologue.  
Spector and Greg agree that the Den's prologue was added after the play was transcribed (S 2:468; G, p. 130).  
5 MS: no capitulum.  
29 *Fast com away.* MS: this should be a separate line, not as a single line (lines 28–29) as Block and Halliwell show. See S 2:468.  
31 *Sprynge.* MS: ~~spy~~ *sprynge*.  
33, s.d. *pagentum.* So S. MS, Bl: *pagetum*.

- after 33 MS: at the foot of fol. 74v are notations concerning holy days. They read: *a. 14 kl. Aprilis translacio Sancte Marie Magdalene, et Sancti Joseph sponsi Dei genetricis Marie e.x. kl. Aprilis Adam creatus est.* Above this note two words are scribbled in a different hand.
- 34, s.n. *DETRACTOR I.* MS: omitted.
- 37–42 MS: large play number 14 in right margin.
- 40 *slawndyr.* MS, Bl: *slawdyr.*
- 66, s.n. *DETRACTOR .* MS: *Detract*, remainder cropped.
- 68, s.n. *DETRACTOR .* MS: *Detract*, remainder cropped.
- 75 *the.* MS: one letter canceled before.
- 80 *it.* MS: ~~it~~.
- 85 *he had.* So S. MS, Bl: *he* omitted.
- 102 MS: capitulum erased before line.
- 105, s.d. *defamacionem.* So S. MS, Da: *defamacionem.* Bl: *de-famocionem.*
- 161 *But evyn.* So MS, Bl. S: *But do evyn.*
- 171 *thought.* MS: ~~wer~~ *thought.*
- 214, s.n. *DOCTOR.* MS: *o* written over another letter.
- 229 *sche.* So S. MS, Bl: *sch.*
- 236 *hath.* MS: written above the line.
- 238 *And.* MS: the *d* is inserted above the line.
- 244 *presume.* MS: ~~presue~~ *presume.*
- 267 *leggys.* MS: *y* written over *e.*
- 281 *shewe.* MS: ~~sw~~ *shewe.*
- 300 *consume.* MS: ~~presume~~ *consume.*
- 313 *reclyne.* MS: ~~ren~~ *reclyne.*
- 342 *he befor.* So MS, Da, Bl. S: *herebeforn.*
- 354, s.n. *DETRACTOR.* MS: *Detract*, remainder cropped.
- 363, s.d. *scenciens.* MS: *scencienes.*
- 364 *sculle.* So MS, Bl. S: *soulle.*
- 386 MS: no capitulum.
- 390 *wysse.* So S. MS, Bl: *wys se.*
- 401 *pure.* MS: several letters canceled before.
- 405 After line 405 the phrase “explicit cum gaudio” is framed by small circles.  
The rest of fol. 81v is blank, with the exception of a cross sign further down the page.

## 15. NATIVITY

- 1, s.n. *JOSEPH.* MS: Speaker’s name written in textura quadrata.
- 1–5 MS: large play number 15 in right margin.
- 6–7 MS: written as one line, divided by dot.
- 7 *blood.* MS: ~~bw~~ *blood.*
- 12 MS: no capitulum.
- 59 *for spouse.* So MS, Bl. H, S: *my* before *spouse* supplied.
- 90 MS: no capitulum.
- relacyon.* MS: ~~rat~~ *relacyon.*
- 102 *withowtyn.* MS: *withowty.*

- 108 *derth*. MS: ~~derke~~ *derth*.  
 138, s.n. Above Zelomy's name, the scribe has written z z z.  
 146 MS: no capitulum.  
 148 *in*. MS: *ɿ in*.  
 177, s.d. A cross is just above *Maria* in the manuscript, which reads: *His Maria subridendo dicat. Maria*.  
 182 *lawghe*. MS: *lawghte* (*t* canceled).  
 185 MS: *Zellony* written in another hand in right margin.  
 202 *sche*. MS, Bl: *sch*.  
 210 MS: no capitulum.  
 225 *youre*. MS: ~~ɿ~~ *youre*.  
 230 MS: no capitulum.  
 240 *dysmayd*. MS: ~~dyf~~ *dysmayd*.  
 244 *mayd mylke have*. So S. MS: *maydys mylke have*, with the emendation to *mayd* and the cancelation of *have* in a different ink. Bl follows the revision.  
 245 An *H* is at the bottom of fol. 86r.  
 246 An *x* is written above this line in a different hand.  
 253 *ransak* is written by another hand in the right margin.  
 253, s.d. *Mariam*. So S. MS, Bl, Da: *Marie*.  
 278, s.n. *ANGELUS*. MS: this and all subsequent speaker's names are marked with a red stroke.  
 279 *childe*. MS: ~~ɿ~~ *childe*.  
 280 *layde*. So Bl. S: *leyde*. MS: *a* corrected over an *e*.  
 314 MS: *call* written in left margin in another hand.  
 MS: *saff* written in the left margin in a different hand.  
 318 MS: unnecessary capitulum.  
 After 321 MS: remainder of 87v (39 mm) and fol. 88r left blank.

## 16. SHEPHERDS

- Before 1, s.d. *Gloria in excelsis Deo*. MS: crossed out in fainter ink, possibly by the reviser who altered other parts of this play.  
 5–8 MS: large play number 16 in right margin.  
 6 *thorwe*. So S. MS: *powe* crossed out, altered to *thorough* (?) above the line.  
 9 *hygh*. MS: *hyȝ*, but reviser added an *e* to the end.  
 13 *sleytys slygh*. MS: *sleytys* partially erased; *hye* written over *slyȝ*, followed by *wysdam I saye* in a reviser's hand.  
 14 *breme* is written to the right of the line in a different hand, perhaps as a comment on the brightness of the *gret lyght* in the line following. The passage has evidently caught the attention of the reviser, who is experimenting with wording. See note to the next line.  
 15 *shyne*. MS: *bryght* written above the line by reviser.  
 16 *selkowth*. MS: *selkowth* nearly erased with *mervelus* written above it. Reviser also added *a* before *syne*.  
 24 *tokenynge*. MS: one letter canceled before.  
 28 *sone*. MS: ~~some~~ with *child* written above in reviser's hand.  
 30 *lytyl*. MS: *lyty* with a final *l* added by reviser.

- 31–34 MS: reviser has written *man þat* after *herde* above the line, crossed out *Moyse*, written *saying* above the line, and added *amys* after the line. In line 32, the reviser has crossed out *carpyng*, replacing it with *spekyng* above, has crossed out *born*, replacing it with *xuld be borne* at the right. The revision reads:

I am an herde man þat hattyht sayyng amys.  
 I herde spekyng of a child of blys  
 Of Moyses in his law  
 Of a mayd a child xuld be borne.

- 62–102 MS: lines 74–89, s.d. appear first, but are marked B. Lines 62–73 appear second, but are marked A. Lines 90–102 appear third in this passage and are marked C. The text reflects the ordering as marked. Bl renders the order in the manuscript, ignoring the compiler's attempt to reorder the material. Thus, in her edition, line 61 is followed by lines 74–89, which are then followed by lines 62–73.

67 *inum*. MS: *inum*, *v* correcting another letter.

72 *shal*. MS: ~~æt~~ *shal*.

77 *bale*. MS: reviser canceled *bale* and replaced it with *sorrow*.

78 *shodyr*. Bl: *shadyr*. MS: ~~shodyr~~, with *not let* written above the line.

79 *Buske*. MS: reviser canceled *Buske*, replacing it with *Go* at left.

99 MS: fol. 90v marked 90 in left margin.

119–34 MS: written two lines as one, divided by punctuation.

After 154 MS: remainder of fol. 91r blank (85 mm), except for scribbling. Fol. 91v contains several names, all in later hands:

W William dere  
 Polerd  
 William dere  
 John Hasycham  
 Joh Taylphott of parish  
 Bedonson wee that will no  
 when we paie when we would  
 we shal find nay  
 [scribbles]  
 And [scribble] Evosund  
 John [at the bottom of the page]

**[There is no Play 17 in the manuscript]**

## 18. MAGI

- 1, s.n. *HERODES REX*. MS: *Herode*, remainder of speaker's name cropped.  
*regyon*. MS: written above the line.  
 4–7 MS: large play number 18 in right margin, 8 is cropped.  
 5 MS: no capitulum.  
 12 MS: capitulum meant for line 13 mistakenly placed here.

- 17 *Wyghtly*. MS: final *y* written over another letter.
- 20 *chawmere*. MS: ~~h~~ *chawmere*.
- 21 *ye*. So MS, S. Bl: *the*.
- 47 *be*. MS: *ben* was written, but the *n* has been erased.
- 63 *tholyn*. MS: obscured by a hole in the leaf. A reviser has written *suffyr* over it (S 1:171).
- 69 *regne lyk a*. So MS, followed by H. The manuscript is clearly revised at this point, and S tries to recover the original, now obscured, reading, which might result in *regne her as thi* (S 1:171). Bl Reads *regne . . . be*.
- 73–76 These four lines have been substantially revised in the manuscript and are printed accordingly. H follows the revision with the exception of *herytykys* in line 73, which he casts aside in favor of the canceled original *men*. S opts to print what is recoverable of the original text:
- I xall marryn þo men þat r .... yn on myche,  
And þerinne sette here sacramentys sottys .... say!  
þer is no lorde in þis werde þat lokygh me lyche.  
For to lame I . . . . . of þe lesse lay (S 1:171–72).
- Bl does the same, though she notes that the obscured word in line 76 might be *loversys* or *leversys*.
- 81 *hay*. MS, Bl: *ha*, but last letter cropped.
- 82–94 Spector observes that this stanza is misplaced and probably should be in Play 20, the Slaughter of the Innocents (S 2:474).  
*here ondyr Sesar in my sette*. So H, following the revision of MS. Bl and S both try to recover and print the original, which read *in vndyr sesar in my se . . e*.
- 87 *bedde*. So Bl, S. The reviser has altered the original word to *bedlem*, which is followed by H.
- 88 *prune that paphawk*. So Bl, S, based on the obscured original of MS. The reviser alters to *prycke þat paddoke*, which is partially followed by H: *prune that paddok*.
- 89 *sperys shall I ther*. So H, following the revision of MS. Bl and S try to recover the erased original, printing: *shaftys sh . . . lh . . . y*.
- 94 *thrett wolde me throwe*. So Bl, S, following original of MS. Revised version reads *prettys wolde me overthrowe*, followed by H.
- 95–150 MS: two lines are written as one, divided by points.
- 96 *on wolde*. So Bl, S, following canceled original of MS. Revised version reads *ovyr moulde*, followed partially by H: *on mowlde*.
- 100 *the*. So Bl, S, H, following original of MS. Revised to *þat*.
- 110, s.d. MS: reviser added a note above the s.d.: *[H]erodes nup . . .* with the rest of the note cropped.
- 119–216 MS: three lines are written as one, divided by virgules.
- 131 *Where*. MS: *h* written above the line.  
*gynnyth*. So S. MS, Bl: *gynny*. MS: reviser canceled *gynny* and wrote *wonyt above*.
- 187 *bowne*. MS: ~~de~~ *bowne*.
- 212 *kynde*. So S, Bl. MS: *kynde* or *kende*.
- 217, s.n. MS: *transient* in right, next to s.n.

- 221–302 MS: some reviser, S's Scribe C, wrote fols. 95–96 on different paper. S notes that this scribe (who revised much of this play) may have restored or revised lost material (2:475).
- 223 *tho.* So MS, S. Bl: *the*.
- 230, s.n. *REX 1.* MS: *Primus*, with *Rex* cropped.
- 243, s.n. *REX 2.* MS: *Secundus R*, remainder cropped.  
*my kne.* MS: *my ~~kne~~ kne.*
- 245 *degré.* MS: ~~*dr*~~ *degree.*
- 251, s.n. *REX 3.* MS: *Tercius R*, remainder cropped.
- 273 *is.* MS: written above the line.
- 275 *warse.* So MS, S. Bl: *wurse.*
- 276 *flanke.* MS: *flamke.*
- 283 *all.* MS: written above the line.
- 285 MS: the line is written at the top of the page, but crossed out and rewritten below and to the right.
- 287 *whyle.* MS: ~~*wyll*~~ *whyle.*
- 291, s.n. *ANGELUS.* MS: *Ange*, remainder cropped.
- 293 *For.* MS: written in left margin.
- 299 *be.* MS: written above the line.  
*slepe.* MS: ~~*stepne*~~ *slepe.*
- After 302 MS: remainder of fol. 96r blank (78 mm), and all of 96v blank.
- 303 MS: main compiler's hand resumes with fol. 97v.
- 304 *myrke.* MS: reviser has altered to *thyrke.*
- 311 MS: *pe* written by a reviser in left margin.
- 315, s.n. *REX 1.* MS: omitted.
- 323–334 MS: three lines written as one. These are short-lined sestets.
- 331 *bryght.* MS: ~~*bt*~~ *bryght.*
- 332 *wake.* MS: *be* added by a reviser before *wake.*  
*to.* MS: reviser has canceled and replaced with *we.*
- After 334 MS: remainder of fol. 97r (67 mm) blank.

## 19. PURIFICATION

- Before 1 MS: a cross sign is in the top left of fol. 97v.
- 1, s.n. *SYMEON.* MS: *Symeon Justus*, written in larger script, textura quadrata.
- 2–5 MS: large play number *19* in right margin.
- 4 *were.* So S. MS, Bl: *we.*
- 28 *down.* So S. MS, Da: *dow.*
- 30 MS: *Angelus* is written in the left margin in another hand, possibly a stage prompt.
- 41 MS: *cum do* written at right, with the remainder cropped. Possibly a later stage direction for the angel to come down (?).
- 46 *temple.* So S. MS, Bl: *templ.*
- 64 *whow.* MS, S, Bl: *whov.*
- 73 MS: a cross or *t* deleted before *And.*
- 80, s.d. MS: the stage direction adds *et prophetissa* which makes sense only if the next speaker were to be Anna.

- 81 *undyrstod*. MS: a letter has been canceled before.  
 91, s.n. *PROPHETISSA*. MS: *Prop*, remainder cropped.  
*fende*. MS: altered to *fynde* by another hand.  
 103–06 MS: two lines written as one, separated by double slashes.  
 136a This is an extra-metrical Latin line written in textura quadrata that introduces the next eight lines.  
 144 *utere*. So S. MS, Bl: *utere*.  
 146, s.d. MS: the Latin lyric is written in textura quadrata.  
 156 *And kepe wel: this man is savacyon*. MS: *And kepe wel . þis man is savacyon*. Bl: *And kepe wel — this man is savacion*. S: *And kepe wel þis, man's savacyon*.  
 Below 157 MS: ~~*To all mankyndys*~~ below the line.  
 162 *evyn*. MS: letter canceled before word.  
 178 *here*. So S. MS, Bl: *he*.  
 194 *servyse*. MS: written above the line.  
 After 206 MS: *1468* written at right. Remainder of fol. 100v (64 mm) left blank.

## 20. SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS; DEATH OF HEROD

- Before 1 MS: rubricated *1* in red erased before play number 20.  
 1–5 MS: large play number 20 in right margin.  
 7 *fayr*. So S. MS, Bl: *fay*.  
 9, s.n. MS: without rubrication.  
 13 *gomys*. So S, Bl. MS: reviser altered it to *gollys* (“gulls,” referring to the children).  
*gele*. MS: ~~*re*~~ *gele*. and *thei* added above the line by reviser.  
*ageyn*. So Bl, MS. S: *geyn*.  
 22–27 MS: three lines are written as one, actually a sestet.  
 28 *kythe*. MS: reviser canceled and wrote *scharpe* above.  
*craftys*. MS: reviser canceled and wrote *knyvys* above.  
 31 *scheltrownys*. MS: *schelchownys*, changed to *schelchowthys* by reviser. S: *schelchownys*. Bl: *schel chownys*.  
*shray*. MS: ~~*shar*~~ *shray*.  
 32 *rowncys*. MS: reviser canceled and wrote *your speris*.  
*raftys*. MS: reviser canceled it and wrote *long (?)* above.  
 34 *barne*. MS: reviser canceled word and revised it to *child* above the line.  
 37–72 MS: two lines written as one.  
 39 *clymbyn*. MS: a word canceled before.  
*knytys*. MS: ~~*ky*~~ *knytys*.  
 42 *Chosyn*. MS: ~~*cof*~~ *Chosyn*.  
 48 *fool*. MS: *foal* may also be a possible reading.  
 51 MS: *Angelus* written in left margin in another hand.  
 105–28 MS: written two lines as one, in short-lined octaves.  
 108 *werld*. MS: *werdl*.  
 MS: reviser added *go hom wardys* in right margin.  
 130 *werd*. So MS, Bl, S. Bev: *werld*.  
 131 *helle*. MS: ~~*heyn*~~ *helle*.  
 135 *do*. MS: ~~*or bragger*~~ *do*.

- 138 *neyther*. So S. MS, Bl: *neythey*. Bev: *neither*.  
 141 *myn*. So MS, Bl, S. Bev: *mine*.  
 148 *thousand*. So S, Bev. MS, Bl: *MI*.  
 160 *thee*. So Bev. MS, Bl, S: *the*.  
 162, 170 *werde*. So MS, S, Bl. Bev: *werlde*.  
 179 *Yon*. MS: letter canceled before.  
 185 *take hem*. So MS, Bl, S. Bev: *I tak hem*.  
 186 *dent*. MS: ~~des~~ *dent*.  
 188 *ly*. So MS, Bl, S. Bev: *lie*.  
 202 MS: unnecessary capitulum.  
 224 *unhende*. MS: *un* ~~hende~~ with *kende* written above by reviser.  
 227 *asayyd*. So MS, S, Bl. Bev: *a-sayyd*.  
 234 *celle*. MS: ~~et~~ *celle*.  
 255-58 MS: two lines written as one.  
 269 *mery*. MS: ~~me~~ *mery*.  
 274 *nyth*. MS: ~~et~~ *nyth*.  
 284 MS: remainder of fol. 104v (58 mm). To pof fol. 105r has one line: *all men dwellyng upon the* repeated from previous folio. The rest is left blank.

## 21. CHRIST AND THE DOCTORS

- 5-8 MS: large number 21 written in right margin.  
 7 *all*. MS: *ll* written over another letter.  
 15 *argemente*. MS: ~~argern~~ *argemente*.  
 16 *metaphesyk*. MS: *a* written over another letter.  
 23 *retoryke*. MS: ~~retor~~ *retoryke*.  
 24 *be call*. MS: reviser canceled and wrote *over all* above the line.  
 34 *lent*. MS: ~~sent~~ *lent*.  
 42 *mokador*. MS: second *o* written over another letter.  
 44 *lest*. MS: ~~lyest~~ *lest*.  
 56 *descryve*. S reads *desscryve*.  
 58 *I*. MS: *can* written by a reviser above the line after *I*.  
 61 *derysyon*. So S. MS, Bl: *deryson*.  
 62 *dude*. MS: altered to *dyde* by another hand.  
 80 *synke*. MS: *f synke*.  
 91 *hyght*. So MS, B. S: *lyght*.  
 93 *I aske*. MS: ~~yitt~~ *I aske*.  
 97 *pers*. MS: *perysch*, but corrected to *pers* by a reviser.  
 103 *bolde*. MS: *bolde* canceled, and *bluddy* written above by a reviser.  
 122 *aproperyd*. So MS, S. Bl: *apperyd*. *aproperyd* is likely an alternate spelling of either *ypropren* or *propren*, "To be appointed or assigned," referring to the persons of the Trinity (MED). *Properyd* is also used in Passion 1 (26.165).  
 134 *naturall*. MS: letter canceled before word.  
 139 *doth*. MS: ~~to~~ *doth*.  
 142 *born*. MS: ~~bar~~ *born*.  
 152 *dede flowe*. MS: ~~dede flawe~~ *dede flowe*.  
 159 MS: *g* written in top right corner of fol. 109r.



- 165 *yough*. MS: *zough*3.  
 167 *But myn*. So MS, Bl. S supplies *be* after *But*.  
 174 *modyr*. MS: ~~to~~ *modyr*.  
 193 *Now*. So S. MS, Bl: *No*.  
 205 *have you hym sent*. So S. Bl: *have him sent*. MS: reviser, above the line, added *you*.  
 207 *he*. So S. MS, Bl: *her*.  
 210 *good*. MS: ~~god~~ *good*.  
 219 *is*. So S. Bl: omitted. MS: omitted, but added by reviser.  
 232 *hygh*. So S, Bl. MS: canceled.  
 Before 241 MS: fol. 110v marked 110.  
 249 MS: *Jhus aduc* has been canceled in the right margin.  
 250 *And*. MS: ~~And~~.  
 260 *blysse*. MS: canceled and replaced by *comfort* above the line in a reviser's hand.  
 261 *evy*. MS: reviser wrote *he* over *e*.  
 280 *forsake*. MS: reviser has written *to* above the line before *forsake*.  
 289 MS: *Amen* written by two other hands above and below the original *Amen*. An *O* is written at the bottom of the page. The remainder of fol. 111r is blank. Fol. 111v is blank except for a few lines written at the top in a later hand: *Hic incipyt Johannes Baptysta*. Below that: *Tho kinge the younger hath demised*; as well as another scribble or inscription.

## 22. BAPTISM

- Before 1–53 MS: this is an interpolated folio written by a reviser, S's Scribe C (S 2:207).  
 3 *prechyth*. So S. MS, Bl: *prechych*.  
 4–5 MS: play number mostly cropped.  
 6 *to*. MS: written above the line.  
 23 *for to*. MS: ~~take~~ *for to*.  
 After 30 MS: *vt* written in lower right corner of fol. 112r.  
 32 MS: letter canceled before *onbokyl*.  
 33 *seyth*. MS: ~~scripture~~ *seyth*.  
 38 *no*. MS: written above the line.  
 40 MS: extrametrical Latin line.  
 47 *lambe*. MS: *b* corrected over *p*.  
 54–183 MS: main scribe's hand resumes.  
 59 *synful lyff*. So S. MS: written as one word.  
 64 *newe*. S: *nowe*; Bl: *newe*. In the MS, it does appear to be *newe*, but Matt. 3:15 would support S's reading.  
 79 *dwere*. MS: canceled and revised to *fere* in another hand.  
 83 *sulere*. MS: *suw(?)tere*. A letter, perhaps a *w* is erased after the *u*. H renders it *sulere*.  
 84 *man*. MS: omitted and written above the line.  
 92, s.d. *Pater*. MS: capitulum before the word.  
 93, s.n. *DEUS*. So S. Bl: omitted. MS: omitted, but possible that capitulum in 92, s.d. meant to serve (after the fact) as s.n.  
 96 *for dede*. MS: ~~of dede~~, and *for* written above the line.  
 106, s.n. *JOHANNES*. MS: *Johannes Bap*, remainder cropped.

- 151 *contryscyon*. MS: ~~conty~~ *contryscyon*.  
 154 *penauns*. MS: ~~per~~ *penauns*.  
 156 *fende*. MS: *fende*, corrected from *felle* (?).  
 160 *be*. So MS, Bl. S: *be* [*be*].  
 After 183 MS: remainder of fol. 115r (110 mm) and all of fol. 155v left blank.

**23. PARLIAMENT OF HELL; TEMPTATION**

- 2–5 MS: large play number 23 in right margin.  
 9 *bedene*. MS: *beden*, remainder cropped.  
 17 *clene*. MS: *l* altered from another letter, possibly *h*.  
 25 *ryght*. MS: *rygh*.  
 26 *oure*. MS: several letters canceled before.  
 33 *lore*. MS: a word canceled before.  
 34 *than be*. MS: *be* *H*.  
 65 *dede*. MS: ~~caas~~ *dede*.  
 100 MS: capitulum erased before line.  
 122 *with*. S: *that*, but probably is not warranted.  
 125 *thralle*. MS: *tharalle*, with deleting dot under first *a*.  
 134 *is*. MS: two letters canceled before.  
 137 *brennynge*. MS: *re* corrected over another letter or two.  
 146 *travayl*. MS: ~~trar~~ *travayl*.  
 181 *world*. MS: *l* corrected over another letter.  
 189 *no*. MS: several letters canceled before.  
 After 222 MS: remainder of fol. 119v blank (90 mm) except for scribbles. Fols. 120r and 120v are blank as well, except for scribbles and what look like mathematical calculations.

**24. WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY**

- 1 *Nolo mortem peccatoris*. MS: this line is on the same line as the given title, so Bl and Da do not include it as part of Jesus' speech. Bev and S consider it the first line of the play. At the top margin in fol. 121v, the main scribe has written *gyn at Nolo morte*. See Meredith, "'Nolo Mortem' and the Ludus Coventriae Play," pp. 38–54. So Bev, S.  
 4–8 MS: large play number 24 in right margin.  
 29 MS: fol. 121v marked 120 in left margin.  
 84 MS: at the bottom of fol. 122r is a capital *K* in another hand.  
 92 *unstablyl*. MS: altered from *unstable*.  
 122 MS: *s shuldyr*.  
 124, s.d. *in deploydo*. So S, Bev. MS, Bl: *indeploydo*.  
 129 *If*. So Bev, S. MS, Bl: *I*.  
 130 *he*. So Bev, S. MS, Bl: *I*.  
 132 *hym*. So Bl. MS, S: *hem*. Bev: *him*.  
 137 MS: lacks capitulum.  
 141 *afray*. So MS, Bl, S. Bev: *a fray*.  
 145 *scowte*. MS: *scowtte*, with deleting dot under first *t*.

- 175 *prevyly*. So MS, Bl. S: *in this place*.  
 183 *us*. So S, Bev. MS, Bl: *ut*.  
 191 *teth*. MS: several letters canceled before.  
 209, s.n. *MULIER*. MS: speaker's name omitted, but supplied by reviser.  
 216 *Goddys*. MS: ~~g~~ *goddys*.  
 234 *aferde*. MS: ~~afet~~ *ferde*.  
 254 *vengeauns able*. So MS, Bl, S. Bev: *vengeaunsable*.  
 257 *my*. MS: a letter has been canceled before.  
 273 *tho*. So MS, Bl, Bev. S: *the*.  
 285, s.n. *JHESUS*. MS: canceled and *Doctor* written in reviser's hand.  
 297 MS: at bottom of fol. 126r is a capital *M* in another hand. Fols. 126v and 127r are blank except for scribbles.

## 25. RAISING OF LAZARUS

- 4–8 MS: large play number 25 written in right margin.  
 33, s.n. MS: speaker's names lack rubrication on fol. 128r. Also applies to lines 41, s.n.; 43, s.n.; 45, s.n.; 47, s.n.; 49, s.n.; and 51, s.n.  
 61, s.n. *CONSOLATOR 4*. MS: *iiii<sup>us</sup> Consolator et Nuncius*. Applies to lines 97 and 285 as well.  
 63 *deth*. MS: *eth* blotted, corrected over other letters.  
 74 *agayn*. MS: altered from *ageyn*.  
 76 *slayn*. MS: altered from *sleyn*.  
 80 MS: *hath* written by another hand at the bottom of fol. 128v.  
 100 MS: *Here goth he his way*, as a stage direction or prompt note added by a reviser.  
 106 *come*. MS: a letter has been canceled before.  
 118 *Magdalyn*. MS: ~~mad~~ *magdalyn*.  
 122 *sey*. MS: ~~say~~, corrected with *e* above canceled *a*.  
 146 *chete*. MS: reviser has altered to *schete*.  
 173 *shame*. MS: a letter has been canceled before.  
 207 *dreye*. MS: *drre* with deleting dots under first *r*, canceled before *dreye*.  
 211, s.n. MS: *Nuncs*.  
 219 MS: fol. 131v marked 130.  
 222 *walke*. MS: *l* written over another letter.  
 233 *syknes*. MS: *k* written over another letter.  
 237 *knew*. MS: a letter has been canceled before.  
 245 *Thee for*. MS: *The for*. It is also possible that an *r* was omitted, and that the word is *Therfor*.  
 250 *seyd*. MS: corrected from *sayd*.  
 257, s.n. MS: *w* in *Mawdelyn* corrected over another letter.  
 259 *ston*. So S. MS: *stone* entered by reviser.  
 283 *while*. MS: ~~wyt~~ *while*.  
 285, s.n. MS: *Nunc*, with remainder cropped.  
 292 *was*. MS: ~~was~~ *was*.  
 311 *thee*. MS: // follows the word.  
 326 *releve*. MS: a letter has been canceled before.

- 362 *gentyl.* So MS, Bl. S: *jentyl.* S believes that a reviser altered the *j* to a *g*.  
 365, s.n. MS: letter canceled before s.n.  
 370 *to.* MS: ~~to~~ *to*.  
 378 *dede.* MS: altered to *dyde* by reviser.  
 387 *Deyd.* MS: altered to *dyyd* by a reviser.  
 389 *Glathe.* MS: altered to *gladd* by reviser.  
 394 *foure.* MS: *Iij*.  
*he.* MS: ~~to~~ *he*.  
 396 *hurte.* MS: ~~hurte~~ *hurte*.  
 401 *anon.* MS: *an*; *n* canceled, and *non* inserted in left margin.  
 404 *myself.* MS: *self* altered from *seff*.  
 407 *evy.* MS: altered to *hevy* by reviser.  
 411 *here.* MS: *in* supplied by reviser after *here*.  
 412, s.d. MS: *I thanke thee fadyr* canceled in red with stage direction written at right.  
 420 *thei.* MS: altered to *they* by a reviser.  
 428, s.d. *sepulti.* So Bl, S. MS: *sepult*.  
 429 *bretheryn.* MS: ~~brethyn~~ *bretheryn*.  
 434 *lowte.* MS: *unto* inserted by reviser after *lowte*.  
 448 *us.* MS: ~~us~~ *us*.  
 After 456 MS: remainder of fol. 135v (35mm.) blank except for some scribbles.

### PASSION PLAY 1 (PLAYS 26–28)

#### 26. CONSPIRACY; ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

- 3–6 MS: large play number 26 in right margin.  
 10 *reward.* MS: *d* written over another letter.  
 13 MS: to the right of this line, *Wylliam Dere* is written in another hand.  
 23 *me thynkyth.* So MS, Bl, Bev. *PP*, S: *methynkyth.* MS: letter canceled before *me*.  
 26 *on.* So MS, Bl, *PP*, S. Bev: *one*.  
*wiche.* So MS, Bl, *PP*, S. Bev: *whiche*.  
 28 MS: at the bottom of fol. 136r is a capital *N* written in a different hand.  
 55 *countyrfe.* So MS, Bl, *PP*, S. Bev: *countirfet*.  
 58 *trost.* MS: *r* written over another letter.  
 68 *Fro.* MS: *r* written over an *o*.  
 72 *sylver.* MS: *s* written over a *y*.  
 73 *Holond.* MS: *holond* ~~clott~~.  
 85 *schrewe thin here.* MS: *ovyr pin eyn* and *ovyr pin herys* written as alternative above the line.  
 88 *on.* MS: either *in* or *on*.  
 91 *repreve.* MS: ~~#~~ *repreve*.  
 103 *newe.* MS: ~~to~~ *newe*.  
 125, s.n. *BAPTISTA.* MS: *Baptis*, remainder cropped.  
 137 *hande.* MS: ~~syde~~ *hande*.  
 141 MS: Below this line two lines have been written and canceled: *Be the ryth syde lyknyd dysperacyon / And the patthe betwyn bothyn*.  
 148 *sowe.* MS: *sewe* or *sowe*.

- 163 *declaracyon*. So Bev, PP, S. MS, Bl: *declararacyon*.
- 173 *contrary*. So Bev, PP, S, Bl. MS: second *r* altered to an *l* (?).
- 176 *to gef*. So Bl, Bev, PP. S deletes *to*, reading punctuation before *to* as a deleting dot.
- 182 *best*. So Bev, S, PP. MS: *be*.
- 185 ff. MS: *Annas* as part of the speaker's name, referring to one of Annas' lawyers, has been added by a reviser. It was probably added to differentiate between Annas' and Caiaphas' discrete pairs of lawyers.
- 187 *procede*. So Bev, PP, S. MS: *proce*.
- 190 *kepe*. So Bev, PP, S. MS: *ke*.
- 195 *perayl*. So MS, S, PP, Bl: *parayl*. Bev: *parail*.
- 216 *severe*. MS: *deuere* canceled before *seuere*.
- 217 *in*. Supplied by S, PP, Bev. MS, Bl: omitted.
- 222 *lawe*. MS: ~~#~~ *lawe*.
- 224 *lawys he*. MS: ~~#~~ *he*.
- 225, s.n. *DOCTOR I*. MS: *Doct*, remainder cropped.
- 225–33 MS: *Cayphas* confused with *Annas* by reviser.
- 226 *fynde*. MS: ~~have fors~~ *fynde*.
- 229 *ageyns*. MS: ~~all kende~~ *ageyne*.
- 230 *to*. MS: ~~to~~.
- 233 MS: *Cayphas* written in another hand below the s.n. *Secundus Doctor*.
- 240 *be*. MS: ~~#~~ *be*.
- 251 *prevayle*. MS: *provayle*.
- 252 MS: Below this line *thow* is written by another hand.
- 256 *frende*. So Bev, PP, S. MS, Bl: *frede*.
- 273, s.n. MS: *Masan*, with remainder cropped. 317, s.n.; 321, s.n.; and 329, s.n. are completely missing or cropped.
- 285, s.n. *CAYPHAS'*. MS: *C*.
- 288, s.d. *at*. So Bev, S, PP: *in*. MS, Bl: *and*.
- 289 *jewgys*. MS: *g* written above the line.
- 292 *jewgement*. MS: after *jewgement*, *alle* is written above and crossed out.
- 300 MS: *that oure lawys* repeated below this line in another hand.
- 301 *this*. MS: possibly corrected to *his* from *pus*.
- 306 *is*. So Bev, PP, S. MS, Bl: omitted.
- 317, s.n. *ANNAS'*. MS: *An* or *Ann*, remainder cropped.
- 321, s.n. *ANNAS'*. MS: *An* or *Ann*, remainder cropped.
- 324 *comownys*. MS: an extra letter before the *m* has been canceled.
- 325, s.n. *CAYPHAS'*. MS: *Cayp*, remainder cropped.
- 325 *wechecraftle*. MS: a letter has been canceled before.
- 328 *trewthe*. So Bl, Bev, PP. S: *trowthe*.
- repent*. MS: two letters have been canceled before *pent*.
- After 342 MS: a s.d. and six lines are canceled, but read in the manuscript as following:

[Here enteryth the apostil Petyr, and Johan the Euangelyst with hym, Petyr seyng:

O, ye pepyl despeyryng be glad,  
A gret cause ye have, and ye kan se:

The Lord of allthing of nowth mad  
 Is coming youre comfort to be.  
 All youre langorys salvyn shal he,  
 Youre helthe is more than kan wete.

This is clearly an earlier version of lines 385, s.d. through 391, recopied onto fol. 143, an interpolated quire. *PP* places this six-line section, with the s.d., after line 342 and connects the end with line 392.

343–91 In MS, these lines appear on an interpolated folio (fols. 143–143v, likely copied from the older “cycle”) that contains a quatrain, followed by three thirteener stanzas, and ends with an octave that used to follow line 342. This folio was likely interpolated because an earlier version of *Passion 1* did not have a scene in which the disciples prepare for Jesus’ entry.

352 *man*. MS: *mas*.

361 *best*. MS: *ff best*.

362 *pore*. MS: a letter has been canceled before.

363 MS: ~~Thus this best to take~~ appears below the line.

367 *I*. MS: *ȝ I*.

386 *dyspeyryng*. MS: last *y* written over an *e*.

397 *be*. So S. MS, Bev, *PP*: *ye*.

398 *not be*. MS: *be* inserted above the line.

*denyid*. MS: ~~dey~~ *denyid*.

416 *redrure*. So MS, Bl, Bev, *PP*. S: *reddure*.

441, s.d., 457 MS: a later hand added, *here enterith be fyrst prophete*. *PP* notes this as evidence that this section was later adapted for a Palm Sunday procession or even a civic entry (p. 177n398sd). A similar stage direction for a second prophet appears after line 457.

448, s.n. *CIVES 4*. MS: *Ci*, remainder cropped.

454–57 MS: missing speakers’ names could indicate that the speaker is i<sup>us</sup> Cives, a child; or, as M suggests, ii<sup>us</sup> Cives (p. 178n411sn).

460 At the bottom of fol. 145r another hand has written *here entreth the parts off the ij<sup>de</sup> prophete* and indicated that the stage direction should be inserted after line 460.

463 Bev emends it to read *shewyd [by] experience* (p. 496).

470 *Davyd*. MS: *a* written above the line.

482 MS: capitulum missing.

After 485 MS: no break between plays.

## 27. LAST SUPPER; CONSPIRACY WITH JUDAS

Before 1, s.d. In the left-hand margin of the manuscript is a large sign of the cross against this stage direction and the following few lines.

4–7 MS: large play number 27 in right margin.

24 *wylt*. So *PP*, S. MS, Bl: *wylt* or *wyht*. Bev: *wilt*.

35 *go*. So MS, Bl, Bev, *PP*. S: *gon*.

36 *comawndement*. So *PP*, Bev, S. MS, Bl: *comawdement*.

53 *PP* emends this to read “cald Syon” (pp. 66, 180n495).

- 81 *sowth*. MS: ~~wrowth~~ *sowth*.
- 89 MS: capitulum missing.
- 121 *constreyn*. So *PP*, S. MS, Bl, Bev: *conseyve*. In the manuscript, the word seems to be *conseyve* and would fit in the line, but it does not rhyme with *reyn* in line 123.
- 130 *it is*. MS: ~~is~~ *it is*.
- 141–268 This quire, quire O, was interpolated to include Mary Magdalene's exorcism as well as her anointing of Jesus' feet. It is interesting to note that lines 141–92 are written in thirteeners, likely from an older exemplar. The usual octaves and quatrains of the Passion Plays resume with line 198. The scribe made some attempt to reconcile the thirteeners with the octaves, as Judas' speech of lines 193–200 contains a rhyming triplet (lines 197–99), a feature usually found in the thirteeners. At the bottom of the folio is a stage direction: *here judas caryoth comyth into the place* followed by *Jesus* as the next speaker. These are crossed out. In addition, there are three alternate catchwords: *now counterfetyd*, *myn hert is ryth*, and *as a cursyd*. Clearly other versions of the play did not include this folio but continued from line 141 to line 205 or line 268. *PP* does not include lines 141–267 (\*626–\*752) in his text, but places them in an appendix (pp. 234–41).
- 144 *I*. MS: a letter has been canceled before.
- 164 *anoynte*. MS: ~~anoy~~ *noynle*.
- 173 *hyllle*. MS: ~~hende~~ *hyllle*.
- 178 *she*. MS: ~~æ~~ *she*.
- 204, s.d. MS: *gohth here outh* written at the end of the stage direction but canceled, indicating that, perhaps in one version or performance, the scribe wanted Mary Magdalene to exit.
- 206 *Too*. MS: *Thoo*, with deleting dot under the *h*.
- 211 *synful*. MS: ~~fyn~~ *synful*.
- 240 *trespace*. MS: one letter canceled before.
- 246 *monye*. MS: ~~mo~~ *monye*.
- 247 *to*. MS: ~~t~~ *to*.
- 260 *And*. So *PP*, Bev, S. MS, Bl: *Ad*.
- 268 MS: remainder of fol. 151r blank except for scribbles at the bottom. A new quire, P, begins with line 269.
- 268, s.d. *cownterfetyd*. MS: *cownter*, remainder cropped.
- 271 *encheson*. MS: one letter canceled before.
- 291 *what*. MS: *w* written over another letter.
- 293, s.n. *GAMALYEL*. MS: cropped edge took the "l" away. Also true through line 341, s.n.
- 296 At the bottom of the page is a capital *Q* in a different hand. Scribbles in left margin of fol. 152v.
- 327 *cum*. So Bev. MS, Bl, *PP*, S: *cvm*.
- 342 *lyth*. MS: ~~bryth~~ *lyth*.
- 344 *gleyvis*. MS: *le* written over other letters.

- 348, s.d. *Here the buschopys partyn in the place.* MS: The *H* in *Here*, the *p* in *the*, the *b* in *buschopys*, and the *l* in *place* have very tall ascenders that reach into the top margin.  
*shal sodynly.* So MS, Bl, Bev. *PP*, *S* omit *shal*.
- 349 *John Hollond* for written in the left margin of fol. 153v, in a different hand, along with some scribbles.
- 353 *bredys.* MS: letter canceled before the word.
- 369 *Paschal lamb etyn have.* MS: as in line 348, s.d., tall ascenders (*h* in *paschal*, *l* in *lamb*, *h* in *have*) reach into the top margin.
- 381 Bl remarks that this line in the manuscript is omitted and written in the margin where it is partially cut away, but is also repeated at the bottom of the page. All editors agree with the emendations which treat the line rendered (in red ink) at the bottom of the page as authoritative. *Vertu* and the *re* of *rehercyd* were likely cropped. All editors supply these.
- 396 *wyttys.* So MS, Bl, *S*, Bev: *willys*.
- 397 *bred.* *PP* emends *bred* to read *lombe*, but no other editors agree (*PP*, p. 174 n711). There is indecipherable scribbling in the left margin of fol. 154v.  
*be.* MS: *ye* is written but canceled.
- 402 *man.* MS: a word has been canceled before.
- 404 *contrycyon.* MS: *contrycon*.
- 426 *not.* MS: ~~*f*~~ *not*.
- 440 *come.* MS: ~~*f*~~ *come*.  
*seryattly.* MS: ~~*sey*~~ *seryattly*.
- 449, s.n. *JHESUS.* MS: speaker's name omitted.  
 MS: *hollond* and some scribbles written in the left margin of fol. 155v.
- 462, 464 MS: capitula missing.
- 465, s.d. *shal mete with hym.* So MS, Bl, *S*, Bev adds *there* before *shal*. *PP* adds *the devil* before *shal*.
- 466, s.n. *DEMON.* MS: written bottom of fol. 155v and top of fol. 156r.
- 490 MS: capitulum missing.
- 504 *drynkyth.* MS: *r* written over first *y*.
- 511, s.d. MS: after the direction, *Petrus* is erased at the foot of the right margin.
- 514 *wordys.* MS: ~~*for*~~ *wordys*.
- 524, s.n. MS: end of s.n. cropped.
- 524 MS: capitulum missing.
- 527, s.d. *sythyn.* MS: *sythym*.
- 528, s.n. MS: end of s.n. cropped.
- 560 *yn.* H: *thou*. *PP*: either *yn* or *thu*.
- 570 *hall.* So Bl, Bev, *PP*, *S*: *all*, citing a deleting dot under the *h*.
- After 571 MS: no break between plays.

## 28. BETRAYAL; PROCESSION OF SAINTS

- 1–4 MS: large play number 28 in right margin.
- 8 *spouse.* Bl, *S*, *PP*: *spovse*. MS: *v* written over the *u*.
- 38 *my.* MS: ~~*y*~~ *my*.
- 48 *drede.* MS: ~~*s*~~ *drede*.



- 61 *blood*. MS: *l* written over an *o*.  
 80, s.d. *seyng*. MS: *s*, remainder cropped.  
 81 *Serys*. MS: ~~What~~ *Serys*.  
 97 MS: ~~and we~~ at the end of the line.  
 104 *wher*. MS: *h* above the line.  
 106 MS: *Petyr put his* is written before the stage direction, but is crossed out.  
 111 *haddyst be bettyr*. So MS, Bl, Bev, PP. S: *haddyst better*, claiming that *be* is deleted in the manuscript.  
 122 *lede*. MS: final *e* written over a *d*.  
 128 *A*. MS: ~~m~~ *A*.  
 138 *the*. MS: corrected from *this*.  
 140 *save*. MS: *sawe*.  
 144 *knowe*. MS: *knoue*.  
 145, s.n. *GAMALYEL*. MS: name is cropped.  
 147 MS: fol. 161v marked 160.  
 157, s.n. *MAGDALEN*. MS: *Magd*, remainder cropped.  
 160 *betyn*. So Bev, PP, S. MS, Bl: *bety*.  
 173 *may I susteyn*. So MS, Bl, PP. Bev, S: supply *not* after *I*. See explanatory note 28.173–74.  
 178 *promysyst*. So MS, Bev, Bl. S: *promysyd*.  
 184 *is now*. So MS, Bl, Bev, PP. S states that *now* is deleted in MS.  
 187 *myn*. MS: written above the line.  
 After 192 MS: fol. 162r has 56mm blank; fol. 162v blank.  
 193–232 PP relegates this to an appendix, and calls it an interpolation (pp. 242–45). S calls this section “The Procession of Saints” and says that it recalls a Corpus Christi tableau (2:505). Bev says it may be incomplete, but appreciates its parallels with Jesse Root Play (p. 520). But Bevington omits these lines from his Passion Play 1 text. This section written completely in quatrains.  
 211 *chene*. MS: ~~t~~ *chene*.  
 216 *Cephas*. MS: *l petyr* written above the word.  
 232 *voys*. So PP, S. MS, Bl: *joys*.  
 After 232 MS: Procession of Saints ends on fol. 163v. Fols. 164r and 164v are blank except for scribbles: *In nomine Dei Amen, Ego R.H. Dunelmensis possideo, Wylliam*.

## PASSION PLAY 2 (PLAYS 29–34)

### 29. HEROD; TRIAL BEFORE ANNAS AND CAYPHAS

- Before 1 MS: large play number 29 written at top of fol. 165 r.  
 Before 1, s.d. *than come ther*. So MS, Bl, Bev, PP. S: supplies *xal* after *ther*.  
 1 ff. Passion Play 2 (comprising quires S and T, and different paper than used for Passion Play 1) begins with fol. 164, which has signs of wear. Passion Play 2 may (for a time) have been separated or separately bound from Passion Play 1 and the rest of the manuscript. Like Passion Play 1, this play is written in a mixture of quatrains and octaves.  
 6 *intendyn*. MS: *d* written over *t*.

- 9 *last*. MS: ~~last~~ *last*.  
 13 *Mawndé*. MS: *ṡ mawndé*.  
 15 *to*. So Bev, PP, S. MS, Bl: *toke*.  
 Before 21 MS: top margin of fol. 165v repeats *Herodes Rex* (from last line of 165r), but in large textura quadrata.  
 41 MS: lacks capitulum.  
 43 *lawys*. MS: *aw* written over other letters.  
 47 *here*. MS: *r* written over a *d*.  
 58, s.n. *HEROWDES*. MS: *Herow*, remainder cropped.  
 97 *And ther, was I*. So MS, Bl, Bev, PP, S: *And that I was*.  
 117, s.d. *Cayphas*. MS: *C*.  
 118, s.n. *JUDEUS 1*. So PP. MS, Bl, Bev, S: omit s.n.  
 125 *ox*. MS: written over other letters.  
 131 *dottryne*. So Bl. MS: *dottryne* or *doctryne*. Bev, PP, S: *doctryne*.  
 157 *hod*. MS: *hed*, but *e* corrected to *o* above.  
 166 MS: this line stands alone and lacks capitulum and rhyme brackets.  
 167–68 A mark resembling an alpha is affixed to couplets (usually rhyming) and stage directions. This same symbol runs from lines 177 to 34.157s.d. The same marks resume in the Assumption Play.  
 177–78 These two lines rhyme if we overlook the last three interjections in 178.  
 178 S: supplies s.n. *Omnes*.  
*ya*. MS: *a* cropped in final *ya*.  
 183, s.d. MS: not underlined.  
 192, s.d. *Jewys*. So MS, Bl, Bev, PP, S: supply *the* before *Jewys*.  
 198 *werd*. So MS, Bl, PP, S. Bev: *werld*.  
 After 224 MS: no break between plays.

### 30. DEATH OF JUDAS; TRIALS BEFORE PILATE AND HEROD

- 1–2 MS: large play number 30 written between lines and s.n.s.  
 18 *longer nor*. MS: ~~and~~ *nor*.  
 31 *soldyst*. So Bl, Bev. PP, S: *seldyst*.  
 45 *cetye*. MS: ~~cetye~~ *cetye*.  
 59 *newe*. MS: ~~ne~~ *newe*.  
 77 *an erde*. So MS, Bl, PP, S. Bev: *han herde*.  
 87 *emperour*. So MS, Bl, S, Bev. PP notes that MS says *emperouur*.  
 97 *ye seyn*. MS: *we* canceled and *ze* written above.  
 105–110 MS: written as two lines in one.  
 106 *is*. MS: written above the line.  
 Before 129 MS: fol. 172v marked 170 in top left.  
 145 MS: no capitulum.  
 181 *Most excellent kyng*. MS: ~~excellent~~ *excellent*.  
 214 *thee*. MS: a letter has been canceled before.  
 229, s.n. *HERODES*. MS: *Hero*, remainder cropped.  
 233, s.n. *JUDEUS 1*. MS: *Jude*, remainder cropped.  
 236, s.d. *pulle of*. So MS, Bl, PP, S. Bev: *off*.  
 237, s.n. *JUDEUS 2*. MS: *Jude*, remainder cropped.

- 241 *whyppys*. MS: *h* written over a *y*.  
 245 *HERODES*. MS: omitted.  
 259 *demaunde*. So *Bev*, *PP*, *S*. MS, *Bl*: *demaunde*.  
 After 261 MS: play ends at bottom of fol. 174v; Play 31 begins top of fol. 175r.

### 31. SATAN AND PILATE'S WIFE; THE SECOND TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

- 2 *dynt*. MS: ~~dyth~~ *dynt*.  
 4–7 MS: large play number 31 in right margin.  
 6 *ful*. So *PP*, *S*. MS, *Bl*: *fu*.  
 13 *me sore*. MS: ~~myn her~~ *me sore*.  
 19 *cowde*. So *PP*, *S*. MS, *Bl*: *cownde*.  
 83 *knowyst*. MS: ~~h~~ *knowyst*.  
 94–103 MS: these are one five-line stanza with a triplet in the middle followed by a quatrain that begins with a triplet, possibly partial thirteeners. A reviser reversed lines 99 and 100, which makes less prosodic sense.  
 94 MS: no capitulum.  
 98 MS: letters canceled before *shall*.  
 99 MS: no capitulum.  
 105 *OMNES*. MS: omitted.  
 112, s.d. *Populus*. MS: *omnes* first written, then canceled.  
 127 *not me to*. MS: ~~not spekyt not to me to me to me to~~ written above the line.  
 MS: superfluous capitulum.  
 133, 135 MS: rubricated *m* used instead of capitula.  
 143 *cowncel*. So *PP*, *S*. MS, *Bl*: *cownce*.  
 170, s.d. *sytyth*. So *Bl*, *S*. MS: *syty*, remainder cropped.  
 172 *dost*. MS: ~~he~~ *dost*.  
 174 *shal he*. So *PP*, *S*. MS, *Bl*: *he shal*.  
 178, s.d. MS: in right margin and not rubricated.  
 186, s.n. *DOCTOR*. MS: *Doct*, remainder cropped.  
 After 212, s.d. MS: no break between plays.

### 32. PROCESSION TO CALVARY; CRUCIFIXION

- 1–7 MS: large play number 32 in right margin.  
 1, s.n. *MULIER 1*. MS: *i<sup>us</sup> mulier*, but should be *i<sup>a</sup>*.  
 5, s.n. *MULIER 2*. MS: *ij<sup>us</sup> mulier*, but should be *ii<sup>a</sup>*.  
 21, s.n. *JUDEUS 1*. MS: *Jude*, remainder cropped.  
 After 24 *therefore we prey* written as catchphrase at the bottom of fol. 179v.  
 41 *fare thus*. So MS, *Bl*, *S*. *PP*: supplies *ye* after *fare*.  
 44, s.d. MS: squeezed into right margin.  
 45, s.n. *JHESUS*. MS: *Jh* written over *Ve*.  
 After 48 Capital *T* at the bottom of fol. 180r.  
 63 *the*. MS: *p* written over a *d*.  
 65, s.n. MS: *John* written in another hand near s.n.  
 72 MS: this line is repeated at the bottom of fol. 180v.  
 75 *greet*. MS: *g* written over *r*.

- 76 *dryve*. MS: *r* written over *y*.  
 78, s.n. *JUDEUS 4*. MS: *Ju*, remainder cropped.  
 84, s.d. *hym*. MS: *hyn*.  
 90 *And hange up*. MS: repeated below the line in a different hand.  
 91, s.n. *JUDEUS 2*. MS: *Jud*, remainder cropped.  
 92, s.d. *be leysere*. So Da, S, MS, Bl, PP: *be* omitted.  
 102 *wo*. MS: ~~wo~~ *wo*.  
 105 *vath*. MS: a letter has been canceled before.  
 121 *Do*. So MS, Bl, PP, S, H: *Go*.  
 126 *He ded*. MS: *He* written in left margin, followed by erasure before *ded*.  
 Before 133 MS: fol. 182v marked 180.  
 152 *develys*. MS: *l* written over *r*.  
 158 *chevith*. MS: *cheu<sup>t</sup>*.  
 168, s.d. *seyn*. MS: *sey*, remainder cropped.  
 177–81 MS: Lines 177, 179, and 181 have capitula.  
 182, s.d. MS: *Jhesus* is rubricated as a s.n.; hence no s.n. for next line.  
 183, s.n. *JHESUS*. MS: omitted.  
 184–85 MS: written as one line, separated by punctuation.  
 185 MS: no capitulum.  
 193 *cros*. MS: *r* written over an *o*.  
 206–13 MS: scribe compressed these stanzas, two lines for each line.  
 214–33.40 MS: fols. 184–185 are interpolated on different paper; Meredith regards them as inserted to accommodate the independent Passion Play 2. This is the last codicological evidence of a pre-existing Passion Play 2.  
 269, s.d. *semi-mortua*. So PP, S, MS: *seminor tua* Bl: *semi mortua*.  
 284 *not*. MS: *not<sup>3</sup>*.  
*childys*. MS: *t childys*.  
 After 293 MS: no break between plays. Large play number 33 written to the right of lines 291–93 and play 33, line 1.

### 33. HARROWING OF HELL (1)

- 18 *certayn*. MS: *e* erased over *y*.  
 24, s.d. MS: in the left margin is written *Nota anima latronis* (“Note: soul of thief”) in the hand of a reviser for a later performance (S 2:520; PP, pp. 213n1016sd, 252–53). Red versus mark appears before Latin lines.  
 After 48 MS: no break between plays.

### 34. BURIAL; GUARDING OF THE SEPULCHER

- 5–8 MS: large play number 34 written in right margin.  
 37, s.n. *ARIMATHEA*. MS: *Ara . . . m*, remainder lost in a hole and cropped.  
 41 *goon*. MS: ~~god~~ *goon*.  
 73, s.n. *JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA*. MS: *Joseph ab*, remainder cropped.  
 76 *request*. MS: *resquest*. First written as *rest*, then corrected.  
 106 *maydonys*. So PP, S, MS, Bl: *mayndonys*.  
 113 MS: written to right of line 110, not metrical.

- 121, s.d. *he*. MS: omitted, but added for clarity by *PP* and *S*. *PP* further notes that Mary's sudden appearance in this stage direction attests to the incorporation of several source materials (p. 216n1163sd).
- 146, s.n. MS: *Nichodem*, remainder cropped.
- 157, s.d. MS: to the left of this stage direction are *Nota* ("Note") and *Incipit hic* ("Begin here") in the hand of a reviser. It is possible that this section was performed at some later point as a Resurrection play (*PP*, p. 216–17n1200). *Cayphas*. MS: ~~Go~~ *Cayphas*.
- 165 *ageyn*. So *PP*, *S*. MS, Bl: *agey*.
- 166–97 MS: scribe compressed two lines on each line, probably to accommodate a new quire which begins with the next folio.
- 182 MS: *Nota hic* written at left of the line by a reviser.
- 194 MS: no capitulum.
- 199–35.297 MS: sometimes the knights as speakers' names are denoted by a number (e.g., *i<sup>us</sup> Miles*), sometimes by their names, and sometimes both. The main scribe's scheme (i.e., Arfaxat, as Knight 1; Amaraunt, as Knight 2; Cosdram, as Knight 3; and Affraunt, as Knight 4) actually causes problems. A reviser decided that it would make more sense if Amaraunt were Knight 1 and Arfaxat were Knight 2. I am following the reviser's assignations.
- 202 *honderyd*. MS: written as *C* each time.
- 209, s.d. MS: letter canceled before *out*.
- 214, s.n. MS: reviser has written *j<sup>us</sup>* before s.n.
- 216, s.n. MS: reviser has written *ij<sup>us</sup>* before s.n.
- 216 MS: this line has replaced *So mote I the I wole be at the h*.
- 220, s.n. MS: reviser has written *ii<sup>us</sup>* before s.n., *Affraunt 4*.
- 222, s.n. MS: reviser has written *iii<sup>us</sup>* before s.n.
- 222 MS: *So mote I the I wole be at the h* between lines 215 and 216.
- Before 225 MS: catchword *Syr pilat* at bottom of fol. 189v.
- 226 MS: *Nota* written by a reviser to the left of the line, possibly to denote the new quire V, or possibly a prompt note for Pylat.
- 231 *graffe*. MS: a letter has been canceled before.
- After 231 Capital *V* at the bottom of fol. 190r in a different hand. *Pilatus* written faintly below and to the right in a different hand.
- 254, s.n. MS: *Pilatus*, possibly corrected from *Pilatas*.
- 256 *This*. So MS, Bl, *PP*. *S*: *Ther*.
- 262–301 MS: two lines are written as one, but the stanzas should be short-lined octaves.
- 268, s.d. *seyn*. MS: *n* cropped.
- 270, s.n. *AFFRAUNT*. MS: *Affraunt 4*.
- 270 *grownnde*. MS: ~~tyde~~ *grownnde*.
- 274 *lefft*. MS: second *f* written over a *t*.
- 278, s.n. *COSDRAM*. MS: *Cosdram 3*.
- 286, s.n. *AMARAUNT*. MS: *Amaraunt i<sup>us</sup>* altered to *ij<sup>us</sup>* by reviser (?).
- 293 MS: above *schapyn schonde*, a reviser has written *sle fre and bonde*.
- 294, s.n. *ARFAXAT*. MS: *Arfaxat 2<sup>us</sup>* altered to *I<sup>us</sup>* by reviser (?).
- 296 *wete*. MS: letters are obscured.
- 302–25 MS: three lines are compressed into one. In addition, these lines are written as short-lined sestets, an unusual stanzaic form in the MS.

- 302, s.n. *AMERAUNT*. MS: *i<sup>us</sup> Miles*.  
 302 MS: has capitulum, as have lines 308, 314, and 320.  
 308, s.n. *ARFAXAT*. MS: *ij<sup>us</sup> Miles*.  
 314, s.n. *COSDRAM*. MS: *3<sup>us</sup> Miles*.  
 320, s.n. *AFFRAUNT*. MS: *4<sup>us</sup> Miles*.  
 After 325 MS: no break between plays.

**35. HARROWING OF HELL (2); APPEARANCE TO MARY; PILATE AND SOLDIERS**

- 1–8 MS: very large play number 35 in right margin.  
 21 MS: ~~h~~*all*.  
*forgovyn*. So MS. Bl: *for-govyn*. PP: *for3ovyn*. S: *forgevyn*.  
 40–41 MS: in the left margin in a reviser's hand, is *Nota anima caym* ("Note: soul of Cain."). Following line 40 is a speaker's name, *Anima Caym*, presumably with a speech to be spoken between lines 40 and 41, before Anima Christi's speech.  
 56 MS: word or words erased in right margin.  
 57, s.n. *BELIAL*. MS: to the left of the speaker's name a few words have been erased.  
 58 *on*. MS: inserted above an erased word.  
 64 MS: below this line, in the left margin beside lines 65–72, and to the right of lines 63–66 is another revision by Scribe B. See PP, p. 253 and S 2:520. Below is PP's reconstruction of this revision.

Beliall: I shal nevyr com from helle  
                   [*Nota ye devyll*  
 Thought many be gon, I am glad, etc.  
 . . . .  
 Hens I wyll ye bere.  
                   [*and than Cayme shal sey:*  
 Now is your foo, etc.

Clearly, as seen in the note above to 40–41, Scribe B was interested in having Cain added to the cast as a character, presumably to confirm his condemnation in Hell for being a murderer.

- Before 73 MS: fol. 192v marked 190.  
 82 *rede*. PP notes that the handwriting in the manuscript is unclear (p. 221n1449). The Middle English word is either "red" or "rade," both adverbs meaning "quickly" or "readily." Da suggests the color red (p. 330).  
 106 *you*. MS: written above the line.  
 111 *I am resyn*. MS: *I aresyn*, with a dot and curved line above the *a* and another curved line under the *a*.  
 113 MS: a letter canceled before *ben*.  
 123 *is*. MS: written above the line.  
 137–44 MS: two lines written as one.  
 142 *revid*. MS: ~~rewi~~ *revid*.  
 153–68 MS: two lines written as one.  
 177, s.n. MS: *3 Miles*.  
 185–92 MS: two lines written as one.

- 206 *wel.* So *PP*, S. MS, Bl: *we*.  
 213 *he.* MS: ~~æ~~ *he*.  
*lake.* MS: ~~h~~ *lake*.  
 281–304 MS: two lines written as one, separated by various punctuation.  
 289 *men of.* MS: ~~men of~~ *men of*.  
 After 304 MS: no break between plays.

### 36. ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE MARYS; PETER AND JOHN AT THE SEPULCHER

- Before 1, s.d. MS: in the margin, left of this stage direction appears *finem 1<sup>e</sup> die Nota* (“Note: end of the first day.”) in Scribe B’s hand. Evidently, line 304 marked the end of a first day’s performance, likely an Easter or a Resurrection play.  
 1–5 MS: large play number 36 in right margin between lines and s.n.  
 14 *In.* MS: written in left margin.  
 15 *In.* MS: omitted and added in the margin.  
 22 *nevyrthelasse.* MS: *a* written over an *e*.  
 26 MS: ~~systerys douterys bothe~~ above the line.  
 41 *ryght.* MS: *rygh*.  
 64 *of.* MS: ~~g~~ *of*.  
 79, s.n. *MAGDALENE.* MS: *Magdalen*, remainder cropped; *g* written over *d*.  
 95, s.n. MS: omitted.  
 98–101 MS: Scribe B has added alternative lines in the left margin. Clearly the goal was to have Mary Magdalene refer again to Jesus’ appearance to the Three Marys. Here is *PP*’s (p. 254) reconstruction of the alternate lines:

That oure Lord is resyn and aperyd to us serteyne  
 Lyk as he dyede, nakyd as he was borne.  
 And commend us to go to Peter and John and his dyscipulis all,  
 And tell to yow he wolde apere in Lyknes as he was befor.

- 105 *trewe.* MS: a letter has been canceled before.  
 107–10 MS: as in the previous stanza, Scribe B wrote alternate lines, this time in the bottom margin. Below is *PP*’s reconstruction (p. 254):

Allso he aperyd to us with body bolde  
 And he schewyd us his woundys fyve.  
 He that was closyd in cley ful colde,  
 And therfor beleve us that he is man alyve.

- 106 *By.* MS: a reviser has added *for* before *By*.  
 117 MS: Scribe B has an alternate line in the left margin: *And so he badd us tell yow this daye.* (*PP*, p. 254)  
 119 *Ya, these.* MS: ~~Be ye~~ *ya these*.  
 154, s.d. *Omnibus congregatis.* So S. MS, Bl: *omnes congregati*, abbreviated form for *omnibus congregatis* (?). *PP*: *omnes congregate Thomas*, treating the s.d. and s.n. as one.  
 After 166 MS: no break between plays.

**37. APPEARANCE TO MARY MAGDALENE**

- 1 *sorwe*. MS: *o* written over another letter and written above.  
 2–7 MS: large play number 37 in right margin.  
 7 *kannat*. MS: ~~se~~ *nat*.  
 10 *wepe and morne and wepe*. So MS, Bl, S. *PP*: omits *and wepe*, as scribal repetition.  
 28 *For*. MS: ~~And~~ *For*.  
 37 *M.A.R.I.A.* So MS, Bl, S.  
 44 *hye*. MS: *Hy3*.  
 92 *is*. So *PP*, S. MS: omitted, but appears in a stanza copied in fol. 201 (*PP*, p. 227n1929). Bl: omitted but noted.  
 102 *Amen* written twice more in the margin. The remainder of fol. 201r repeats lines 72–93 in another hand; for the lines, see S 1:369. Fol. 201v is blank except for some scribbling at the bottom. *PP* ends his edition at this point.  
 102, s.d. *Magdalene*. MS: *Magdale*, end of name is cropped.

**38. CLEOPHAS AND LUKE; APPEARANCE TO THOMAS**

- 1–6 MS: large play number 38 in right margin.  
 29 MS: fol. 202v marked 200.  
 42 *I*. MS: ~~p~~ *I*.  
 43 *sere*. MS: *serys*.  
 59 *Ther*. MS: a letter has been canceled before.  
 64 *gan*. MS: *a* written over an *r*.  
 109 *gret*. MS: *gre*.  
 116 *thre*. MS: *iii*.  
 141 *this*. MS: ~~t~~ *this*.  
 142 *red*. MS: ~~at~~ *red*.  
 143 *myrthe*. MS: *y* written over an *r*.  
 160 *hens*. MS: *s* correcting another letter.  
 175 *langage*. MS: second *g* written over another letter.  
 213 MS: lacks capitulum.  
 217, s.n. *CLEOPHAS*. So S, noted in Bl. MS: omitted.  
 After 272 MS: bottom of fol. 206v, *Vade Worlych* is written. This appears to be a prompt note for an elderly actor playing Petrus to enter.  
 279–80 MS: in right margin is *Vade Worlych, nota worlych* in a reviser's hand. See note above.  
 286 *breed*. MS: ~~be~~ *breed*.  
 290 MS: in right margin is written *nota worlych*, and then is canceled.  
 297–392 MS: these octaves are the only other stanzas (except for the quatrains in lines 209–16) that deviate from the short-line octaves found in this play. Perhaps these stanzas spliced two plays, Emmaus and Thomas. Spector notes that the octaves from 305 to the end of the play (comprising the Thomas Play?) are long-lined octaves (S 2:524).  
 300 *servauntys*. So S, noted in Bl. MS: *seuauntys*.  
 311 *foure*. MS: *iiij*.  
 315 *presyn*. MS: reviser altered to *preson*.



- 324 *growunde*. So Bl, S. MS: possibly *grounnde*.  
 325 *fowunde*. So Bl, S: *fownnde*. MS: either *fowunde* or *fownnde*.  
 333 *torn*. MS: a letter has been canceled before.  
 336 *aske*. MS: ~~ak~~ *aske*.  
 361 *bothe*. MS: *b* written over a *d*.  
 362 *myght*. MS: ~~my~~ *myght*.  
 388 *eretykys*. MS: second *y* correcting an *i*.  
 390 *feyth*. MS: *feyyth*, with deleting dot under first *y*.  
 After 393 The rest of fol. 209r is blank; another hand has written *that mortuus et se* below the line. Fol. 209v is blank except for *hic incipit ascencio* at the top of the page, in another hand.

### 39. ASCENSION; SELECTION OF MATTHIAS

- 1 *Pax vobis*. MS: written in textura quadrata.  
 3–9 MS: large play number 39 written in right margin.  
 10 *eighte*. MS: *viiij*.  
 12 *ninte*. MS: *ix*.  
 After 27 MS: capital *W* written at the bottom of fol. 210r in another hand.  
 37 *short*. MS: *t* canceled and written above.  
 After 52 MS: *hic ascendit ab oculys* and *Joh* written by another hand at the bottom of fol. 210v.  
 55 MS: large space after 55.  
 57, s.n. *PETRUS*. So S. MS, Bl: omitted.  
 66–69 MS: three lines written as one, divided by punctuation.  
 76 *well*. MS: *weel*.  
 79–82 MS: two lines written as one, divided by punctuation.  
 82, s.d. *Justum*. MS: *Justus*.  
 92–95 MS: two lines written as one, divided by punctuation.  
 After 95 MS: remainder of fol. 211v blank except for *modo de die* and *hic dabunt so* in another hand.

### 40. PENTECOST

- Before 1, s.d. *dicant*. So S. MS, Bl: *dicat*.  
 MS: large play number 40 in right margin.  
 1–4 MS: the speakers' names appear in larger red script, and there are three speakers' names and three words to a line so that the word(s) spoken by that speaker are directly beneath that speaker's name. In other words, there is a block of twelve speakers' names and words arranged three in a row by four lines.  
 5 *Lord heye*. So MS, Bl, S: *Lord of heye*.  
 18 MS: fol. 212v marked 210.  
 19 *cheteryn*. Bl: *chateryn*.  
 23–26 MS: two lines written as one, divided by punctuation.  
 After 39 MS: *amen* written again below main scribe's *Amen*. Remainder (67 mm) of fol. 212v blank. Fol. 213r blank except for *the Lord be thanked for his g* in

a different hand at the top. Several indecipherable letters and *Amen* are at the bottom. Fol. 213v blank except for *ad mea facta* at the top, several indecipherable letters and *John* at the bottom.

#### 41. ASSUMPTION OF MARY

- 1–529 MS: entire play, fols. 213–222, are interpolated and are on paper unique to the MS. Fol. 213r is blank except for *The Lord be thanked for his g* at the top of the folio and scribbles at the bottom. Fol. 213v is blank except for *ad mea facta* at the top of the folio and other scribbles at the bottom. The play text begins on fol. 214r.
- 1 *Ryht*. MS: *Lu* is written to the left.
- 9–12 MS: large play number *41* in right margin.
- 16 *duellyd*. MS: *e* above the line.
- 20 *victoryously*. So S. Bl: *vittoryously*. MS: either *victoryously* or *vittoryously*.
- 27, s.n. *MILES*. MS: *Mi*, remainder cropped.
- 33 *oure*. MS: *u* written over *r*.
- 36 *stille I*. So Bl. S: *stilly*.
- 37 *spille I*. So S. Bl: *spilly I*.
- 38 *knad*. So MS, Bl. S: *knag*.
- 40 *pryncis*. So S. MS, Bl, G: *prysis*.  
*I, prest*. So MS, Bl, S. H: *i-prest*.
- 67 *that*. So Bl. S: *thou*. MS: corrected from *thou* to *that*, or vice-versa.
- 68, s.n. *PRINCEPS 3*. MS: *Prince*, remainder cropped.
- 70 *will bredyn*. So Bl, S. MS: *will* written above the line.
- 75, s.n. *EPISCOPUS*. MS: *Ep*, remainder cropped.
- 76, s.n. *PRINCEPS 1*. MS: *Prin*, remainder cropped.
- 77, s.n. *PRINCEPS 2*. MS: *secund*, for *secundus*, remainder cropped.
- 78, s.n. *PRINCEPS 3*. MS: *Terc*, for *tercius*, remainder cropped.
- 79, s.n. *EPISCOPUS*. MS: *Ep*, remainder cropped.  
*Youre better*. So MS, Bl. S: *You better*. The manuscript is clear, and my version takes *Youre better advyse* as the subject of a sentence that is completed in line 80. S's *You better advyse* is a command.
- 82 *abide*. MS: *abi*, remainder cropped.
- 83 *seustere*. So S. Bl: *senstere*.
- 92, 125 MS: capitula before line to mark off couplets (?).
- 104 *myche*. MS: a letter is canceled before.
- 115 MS: no capitulum.
- 116, s.d. *ludentibus citharis*. So S. MS, H, Bl: *ludent' cithar'*.
- 117, s.n. *ANGELUS 1*. MS: *Primus A*, remainder cropped.
- 118 *is*. S places this word at the end of the line.
- 120 *is*. S places this word as well at the end of the line.
- 131, s.n. *MARIA*. MS: *Ma*, remainder cropped.
- 133, s.n. *ANGELUS 1*. MS: *Ang*, remainder cropped.
- 136, s.n. *MARIA*. MS: *Mari*, remainder cropped.
- 137, s.n. *ANGELUS 1*. MS: *Primus Angel*, remainder cropped.
- 141, s.n. *MARIA*. MS: *Mar*, remainder cropped.

- 149–50 MS: lines are reversed, but corrected.
- 150 *Be.* So G, S. MS: *Se*.
- 151 MS: capitulum precedes couplet.
- 157 *nedith.* MS: *nedith you lady*.
- 165 *ageyn.* MS: *e* written over *a*.
- 168 *mercy.* MS: a letter is canceled before.
- 174 MS: sign in red precedes line.
- 175, s.n. *VIRGO I.* MS: *Prima virg*, remainder cropped.
- 179 *dith is.* So S. MS, Bl: *is dith*, but breaks the rhyme scheme. In the manuscript, *is* originally followed *dith*, was erased and placed above the line before *dith*.
- 181 *ryth is.* So S. MS, Bl: *is ryth*. See previous note, since the end of line 181 received the same treatment.
- 183 *Wyth.* MS: rest of the line after *Wyth* is cropped.
- 184, s.n. *MARIA.* MS: *Ma*, remainder cropped.
- 188–95 MS: scribe attempted to change the rhyme scheme in this stanza (S 2:530).
- 193 *is.* MS: erased but added above the line. S: *comyn that mayde tyll is*.
- 194 *is.* MS: erased but added above the line.
- 195 *is.* MS: erased but added above the line. S: *what the skele is*.
- 199–204 Compare 32.145–48.
- 205 *sone.* MS: letter canceled after *n*.
- 209, 211 *aungyl.* MS: *y* written over another letter.
- 214 MS: the line is written in the margin, probably by the main scribe of the manuscript, not the Assumption scribe (Bl, p. 361n7). ~~*ye schuld . . . bsen*~~ written in left margin by Assumption scribe.
- 215 *thu us.* G: *yn*.
- 216 *from.* So S, Bl. MS, G: *fron*.
- 216–17 MS: lines are reversed, but corrected.
- 219 *the.* So Bl, S. MS, G: *then*.
- 227 *liste.* MS: added above ~~*wyff*~~.
- 233, s.d. *portam, mirantes.* MS: *portam mirates*.  
~~*Petrus*~~ possibly written as s.n.
- 238 *Peter.* MS: ~~*poute*~~ *peter*.
- 239 *congregacyon.* So Bl, S. MS: *congregacyon*, with flourish after *n*.
- 242 *by.* MS: omitted.
- 244–250 MS: end rhymes erased in lines 244, 246, 248, and 250.
- 246 *preyere.* MS: ~~*pre*~~ *preyere*.
- 248, s.n. *PETRUS.* MS: *Petr*, remainder cropped.
- 254 *met.* MS: ~~*sent*~~ *met*.
- 258, s.n. *PETRUS.* MS: *Petru*, remainder cropped.
- 266 *is.* MS: written above the line.
- 267 *hol.* So MS, Bl, S. Either the entire Trinity or a scribal error for *holy*.
- 273 *moder.* MS: letter canceled before.
- 274 *to her.* MS: *to* ~~*let*~~ *here*.
- 285 *We.* So Bl, S. MS: *W*.
- 302, s.d. MS: not underlined.
- 305 *let.* G emends this to “bet,” but this doesn’t seem necessary (p. 70n382).
- 311, s.d. *celesti.* So Bl, S. MS, G: *celester*.

314	MS: has capitulum.
318–370	MS: lines 318, 320, 322, 324, 326, 343, 345, 369, 370 preceded by versicle marks.
327, s.n.	<i>MARIA</i> . So S. Bl, MS: omitted.
329	<i>meo</i> . So Bl, S. MS, G: <i>mes</i> .
329, s.d.	<i>sinum</i> . So S. MS, G, Bl: <i>sinu</i> .
331	<i>my</i> . So Bl, S. MS, G: <i>ny</i> . <i>brithtest</i> . MS: <del>brist</del> <i>brithtest</i> .
338, 339	MS: no capitula.
340	<i>on</i> . So Bl, S. MS: <i>on</i> or <i>in</i> .
345, s.n.	<i>ANGELORUM</i> . So Bl, S. MS: <i>Angelo</i> , remainder cropped (?). G: <i>Angels</i> .
347, s.d.	MS: <del>Prima Virgo</del> precedes s.d.
359	<i>treuly</i> . MS: <del>tra</del> <i>treuly</i> .
361	<i>clene</i> . MS: <i>l</i> written over <i>h</i> .
365, s.n.	<i>PAULUS</i> . MS: not rubricated.
369, s.n.	<i>PETRUS</i> . MS: <i>Petru</i> , word ending is cropped.
381	<i>another</i> . MS: <del>another</del> <i>another</i> .
384, s.n.	<i>PRINCEPS 3</i> . MS: <i>tercius prin</i> , remainder cropped.
385	<i>Mary</i> . MS: <del>is</del> <i>Mary</i> .
388	<i>nay</i> . MS: word canceled afterwards.
390	<i>aray</i> . MS: word erased afterwards.
Before 392	MS: <i>vii iv</i> written in top margin of fol. 220v.
402	<i>snarle</i> . MS: <del>snarl</del> <i>snarle</i> .
404	<i>brynge</i> . So S. MS, Bl: <i>brnge</i> or <i>bringe</i> .
409	<i>Al wod</i> . So Bl, S. MS: <i>alwod</i> .
409, s.d.	<i>percucientes</i> . Bl: <i>percutientes</i> . MS, B: <i>percucient</i> , with flourish.
422, s.d.	<i>ad</i> . So S. MS, G, Bl: <i>af</i> .
425	<i>handys</i> . MS: <i>hodys</i> or <i>hadys</i> canceled before.
435	<i>moder</i> . MS: <del>mder</del> <i>moder</i> .
436, s.n.	<i>PRINCEPS 1</i> . So Bl, S. MS: omitted.
444	<i>indure</i> . MS: letter canceled before.
453	MS: preceded by capitulum.
Before 453	MS: <i>vv</i> written in top margin of fol. 221v.
457	<i>brether</i> . So Bl, S. MS: either <i>brether</i> or <i>brother</i> .
458	<i>Lord</i> . MS: <del>ð</del> <i>Lord</i> .
478	<i>preson</i> . So Bl, S. MS: <i>preson</i> , with line over <i>n</i> , signifying <i>-un</i> or <i>-on</i> .
484	<i>dewelys</i> . MS: <i>dewelys</i> .
494	<i>here to</i> . So MS, Bl. S: <i>hereto</i> . <i>the</i> . So MS, Bl. S: <i>in</i> .
501	<i>hytht is</i> . So S. MS, Bl: <i>hythtis</i> .
509	<i>ageyn</i> . MS: <i>e</i> written over another letter.
Before 517	MS: <i>v</i> written in top margin of fol. 222v.
522	MS: preceded by capitulum.
527	MS: no capitulum.
After 528	<i>Deo gracias</i> . MS: written in a reviser's hand. Remainder (110 mm.) of fol. 222v blank except for <i>Deo gracias</i> .

**42. JUDGMENT DAY**

- 1–130 MS: written on different paper by main scribe. Fol. 223r blank except for *lo me redy with yow to wend* (41.517) in another hand. Fol. 223v marked 220.
- 1, s.n. *MICHAEL*. MS: written in larger, squarish hand, textura quadrata.
- 2–7 MS: large play number 42 written in right margin.
- 14 *prysste*. MS: *sst* written over *nc*.
- 26, s.d. *clamauerunt*. So S. MS, Bl, Da: *clamauit*.  
*Haaa!Haaa!Haaa!* So MS, S. Bl: *Ha aa- Ha aa- Ha-aa*.  
*dicant*. So S. MS, Bl, Da: *dicat*.
- 27, s.n. *RESURGENTES*. MS: omitted.
- 31, s.n. *DEMONES*. MS: omitted.
- 43 *were*. MS: *be* written, but does not fit the rhyme scheme. Both Bl and S correct this.
- 50 *lokkys*. MS: *kk* written over other letter(s).
- 67 *oure*. MS: ~~*ore*~~ *oure*.
- 79 ff. MS: as the outside leaf for the entire manuscript for some period of time, it is worn and stained.
- 123 *array*. MS: *ar* above the line.
- After 130 MS: play is incomplete. Last folios lost.

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## GLOSSARY

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- a** *have; an, a*  
**abey** *obey*  
**abowth** *about*  
**abyde** *wait, dwell*  
**abyl** *enable, allow*  
**accende** *kindle*  
**ac(c)orde** (n.) *harmony; (v.) agree*  
**acounte** *compute*  
**adon** *down*  
**advowterere** *adulterer*  
**advowtrye** *adultery*  
**aferde** *afraid*  
**affendyn** *offend*  
**affye, affyaunce** *faith*  
**afor** *before*  
**agast** *afraid*  
**agens** *against, away from, contrary to*  
**agresyth** *terrifies*  
**agrevyth** *grieves*  
**agryse** *offend, frighten*  
**alगतys** *in any case*  
**al(l)thing** *everything*  
**althere** *of all*  
**an** *have*  
**anameryd** *enamored*  
**anon, anoon** *at once, as soon as*  
**anow** *enough, abundant*  
**apace** *quickly*  
**apayed** *pleased*  
**appendyth** *belongs*  
**appose** *debate, examine*  
**appropriyd** *assigned*  
**aqwhyte** *paid*  
**ard** *hard*  
**are** (n.) *hare; (v.) are*  
**arere** *raise*  
**areste** *dwelling*  
**arn** *are*  
**arneys** *harness, battle gear*  
**arwe** *arrow*  
**aryght** *properly*  
**asay** *try, test*  
**aseyth** *atonement*  
**askape** *escape, recover from*  
**aslake** *keep away*  
**asmatryk** *art of measuring*  
**asondyr** *apart*  
**asoyle** *answer*  
**assayed** *tested, experienced*  
**assedually** *assiduously*  
**assyse** *judgment*  
**ast** *haste*  
**astat** *rank, estate*  
**aswage** *assuage*  
**atent** *intent*  
**athreste** *thirsty*  
**ato** *in two*  
**atonys** *at once*  
**attreyd** *afraid*  
**augrym** *algorithms; computing*  
**autorysyth** *authorizes, confirms*  
**avantorysly** *by chance*  
**avexit** *vexes*  
**avoid** *make room; go away*  
**avyse, awyse** (n.) *advice; (v.) advise;*  
     *reflect*  
**awntys** *aunts*  
**awter** *altar*  
**ay** *forever, eternally*  
  
**baftys** *be left*  
**bake** (n.) *back; (v.) prepare*  
**balauns** *set of scales*  
**bale, balys** *suffering, trouble*



- balk** *ridge, mound*  
**barn(e)** *baby*  
**bar(r)eyn** *barren*  
**barynes** *childlessness*  
**baye** *stall*  
**bayn** *ready*  
**be** *by; be*  
**bedellys** *heralds*  
**bedene** *indeed; alle bedene* *all together*  
**bedyght** *set*  
**beffalle(yth)** *come(s) to pass, occur(red)*  
**befornseyd** *aforesaid*  
**begchis** *bitches*  
**begyle** *outwit, delude*  
**behest, behete** *promise, vow*  
**behestys** *promises*  
**behovyth** *is due, proper to*  
**belde** *build*  
**belthe** *evil*  
**bende** (n) *bondage; (v.) draw back*  
**bene** *be*  
**bent** *brought about, drawn, resolved*  
**benyng** *benign*  
**berall** *beryl*  
**berde** *bird*  
**bere** (n.) *bier; (v.) bear*  
**bereynge** *burial*  
**berun** *bear*  
**bery(ed)** *bury, buried*  
**beryelys** *burials (graves)*  
**beschrewe** *curse*  
**beseke** *beseech*  
**best** *beast*  
**bestad, bested** *settled, lodged; afflicted*  
**besynes** *business, work*  
**betake** *entrust, commend*  
**bete** *beat; bite*  
**beteche** *entrust*  
**beth** *be*  
**bethowth** *mindful*  
**bethwen** *between*  
**bethynke** *remember, consider*  
**betok** *entrusted to*  
**betyd(d)e, betyd** *happen(ed)*  
**betydyn** *befall*  
**bewhare** *beware*  
**bewté** *beauty*  
**bey** *boy*  
**ble** *color, appearance*  
**blew** *blue*  
**blyn** *cease*  
**blys(s)** (n.) *bliss; (v.) bless*  
**blyssyng** *blessing*  
**blyth** *happy*  
**bon** *bone*  
**bone** *command, request, boon*  
**boord(e)** *feast*  
**boot** (n.) *relief; (v.) bit*  
**borde** *table*  
**bore** *born*  
**borwe** *protect*  
**bote** *remedy, salvation*  
**botherys** *of them; both*  
**boure, bowre** *bower*  
**bow** *bough, boughs*  
**bowndyn** *bound*  
**bowth** *bought*  
**boyst** *jar*  
**brake** *bracken*  
**brast** *burst*  
**brayde** *short time*  
**bredde, bred, brede** (adj.) *breadth*  
**bred(d)e** (n.) *bread; (v.) breed*  
**breganderys** *body armor*  
**brenge** *bring*  
**brennyng** *burning*  
**brere** *briars (thorns)*  
**brethellys** *wretches*  
**brothel** *harlot*  
**brouth, browth, brought** *brought*  
**brybory** *thievery*  
**brybour** *scoundrel, thief*  
**brymmes** *shores, banks*  
**bryst** *breast*  
**bryth** *bright*  
**buske** *hasten*  
**buxom, buxhum** *obedient, humble*  
**by** *buy, redeem*  
**bychyd, bygyd** *vile*  
**byden** *abide, remain*  
**bynne** *stall, stable*  
**bysmare** *wretch*

- cacche(yd)** *catch, arrest(ed)*  
**cadens** *rhythm*  
**Calabere** *a kind of fur*  
**cammake** *cammock (a fine fabric)*  
**cano(u)n** *canon law*  
**careful** *wretched*  
**cast** *intention, purpose*  
**catel** *chattel*  
**cawdel** *warm drink, broth*  
**caysere** *emperor*  
**celestly** *heavenly*  
**cenacle** *upper room*  
**certain** *certainly*  
**cese** *cease*  
**cessacyon** *ceasing*  
**ceteceyn** *citizen*  
**cetye** *city*  
**chaffare** *buy and sell*  
**chapmen** *merchants*  
**chare** *scare*  
**chargight** *commands*  
**chargyng** *commanding*  
**charle** *churl*  
**chateryn** *chatter*  
**chavyl** *jaw*  
**chere** *cheer up*  
**cheselys** *pebbles*  
**cheteryn** *twitter*  
**cheve** *fare*  
**chevesauns** *stratagem, manner*  
**chevyth** *grieves*  
**childyd** *gave birth*  
**claryfieth** *purifies*  
**clenche** *insist*  
**clene** *pure, purely*  
**clennesse** *purity, chastity*  
**clepyd, clepid** *called*  
**cler(e)** *clear, pure*  
**clergy(s)e** *learning, knowledge*  
**cloudys** *clods*  
**clowte** *a blow; rag*  
**clyne** *incline, agree*  
**combros** *cumbersome*  
**comely** *handsome*  
**comeryd** *engulfed*  
**comfortacyon** *comfort*  
**conclave** *private room*  
**concyens** *conscience*  
**congregacyon** *gathering*  
**conjunct** *joined*  
**consorcyté** *fellowship*  
**contewnyng** *continuing*  
**contraryous** *rebellious*  
**convicte, convycte** *defeat(ed)*  
**convocacyon** *convocation, assembly*  
**coors** *corpse*  
**cost** *outlying land, region*  
**cote** *cottage*  
**counter** *country*  
**cowncelle** *counsel; council*  
**cowthe** *known*  
**cragged** *jagged*  
**crakke** *crack; break wind*  
**credyl** *cradle*  
**creNSEYN** *crimson*  
**creppe** *creep*  
**cressetys** *oil lamps*  
**crofte** *small enclosed field*  
**croppe** *throat*  
**cros(se), croyse, crowch** *cross*  
**cure** (n.) *care, keeping; (v.) take care of*  
**curryd** *well combed*  
**curyng** *covering; curing*  
**cus** *kiss*  
  
**dale(ys)** *pit(s); dale(s)*  
**dawe** *day*  
**day** *die, kill*  
**daylyth** *daylight*  
**ded(e)** (n.) *deed; (v.) did; (adj.) dead*  
**degré** *way, manner; rank, step*  
**deme** *judge*  
**dempt** *damned*  
**dent, dentys** *blows*  
**deprave** *disparage*  
**dere** (adj.) *dear; severe; (v.) harm*  
**derth** *scarcity*  
**derwurthy** *excellent*  
**desesynd, dyssesynd** *distressed*  
**desideracyon** *desire*  
**desyrand** *desiring*  
**deté** *ditty (song)*  
**detent** *taken*  
**deve** *stupefy*

**devid** *deafened*  
**devoyde** *leave, go away*  
**devyr** *duty*  
**devyse** *discern, make provision for*  
**dewe** *due*  
**dewly** *accordingly*  
**dey, dye, deyst** *die(s)*  
**deyté** *deity*  
**displesauns** *harm*  
**displesaunte** *offensive*  
**disponsacyon** *betrothal*  
**distemperaunce** *despair*  
**dith** *assigned*  
**do** *do, done*  
**dodemusyd** *stupid and bemused*  
**dolve** *buried*  
**dom(ys)** *judgment(s)*  
**dompnesse** *dumbness*  
**don** *to do*  
**donjoon** *dungeon*  
**doute, dowe(e)** *fear; marvel*  
**dowcet** *sweet*  
**dowm** *dumb*  
**dowse** *sweet, dear*  
**dowty** *worthy, strong*  
**dowtyr** *daughter*  
**dowtys** *doubts, fears*  
**doyl** *dole, sorrow*  
**drewe** *food*  
**dreynt** *drowned, flooded*  
**dronkesheppe** *drunkenness*  
**dubtyacyon** *doubt*  
**dulfull** *doleful, sorrowful*  
**duly** *dutifully*  
**dur** *dare*  
**dure** *hard*  
**dwere** *fear, doubt, awe*  
**dyaletyk** *dialectic, logic*  
**dylexcyon** *delectation*  
**dylygens** *mission*  
**dyng** *drive*  
**dyrk** *dark*  
**dyrth** *dearth*  
**dyscrye** *describe*  
**dyspravy(n)** *condemn*  
**dyssende** *descend*  
**dysseverawns** *separation*

**dysspice** *scorn*  
**dysteyn** *disdain*  
**dystrye** *destroy*  
**dyswary** *doubt*  
**dyth, dyght** *prepare, ready*  
**dyvynacyon** *prophecy*  
  
**efne** *heaven*  
**egal** *equally*  
**eke** *also*  
**empere** *emperor*  
**endyte** *indict*  
**endytynge** *writing*  
**eneryth** *enter*  
**enforme** *inform*  
**engines** *schemes*  
**ensens** *incense*  
**enspyre** *inspire*  
**er(e)** *before*  
**erbe** *herbs*  
**eresye** *heresy*  
**eretyk(s)** *heretic(s)*  
**ermyn** *ermine fur*  
**erraunt** *wandering*  
**erre** *transgress*  
**erste** *otherwise*  
**erthelech** *earthly*  
**ete** *eaten*  
**ethe** *easy*  
**evy** *heavy*  
**evyn** *evening*  
**evyn, evene** *indeed, exactly, even*  
**excercyse** *observe*  
**excitacyon** *urging*  
**exorte** *arise; implore; issue forth*  
**expirand** *expiring*  
**extende** *bestow; raise*  
**exys** *axes*  
**eylight** *ails*  
**eyn, eyen, eyne** *eyes*  
**eyr** *air*  
**eyre** *heir*  
**eyted** *eighth*  
**eyzil** *vinegar*  
  
**facyon** *face*  
**fade** *fed*

- fadyr** *father*  
**falsage** *wickedness, falseness*  
**fame** *defame*  
**famyt** *famished*  
**fare** *behavior; appearance*  
**faryn** *fare; subsist*  
**fast(e)** (v.) *abstain from food; (adj.) strong, firm; quick; (adv.) firmly, soundly*  
**fawt** *fault*  
**fay, feye** *faith*  
**fayn, feyn** (adj.) *happy; (adv.) eagerly, gladly*  
**fe** *goods, money*  
**feetly** *craftily*  
**fekyll** *false, treacherous*  
**fel** *much*  
**fele** *many; fine*  
**felfelle** (adj.) *cruel, treacherous*  
**felle** (v.) *vanquish*  
**felthe** *filth*  
**fenaunce** *ending*  
**fende** (n.) *fiend; (v.) defend*  
**fer(e)** (adj.) *far*  
**ferd** *afraid; fared*  
**ferly** *marvelous*  
**fer(r)e** (n.) *fire; fear; partner; (v.) be afraid; frighten; (adv.) together*  
**fers** *fierce*  
**ferthe, forthe** *fourth*  
**feryth** *inspires*  
**fett(yn)** *fetch*  
**fewté** *fealty*  
**fewth, feye** *faith*  
**feyn** *fine*  
**feynnesse** *feebleness*  
**feyth** *faith*  
**fise** *fart*  
**flecchere** *maker or seller of arrows*  
**flem** *banish*  
**flitt(e), flytt(e), fly** *drive away; deliver*  
**flode** *flood*  
**flom** *river*  
**flyntys** *rocks*  
**fo(o)** *foe; fon* *foes*  
**fode** *food*  
**folwe** *follow*  
**fonde** *go; try, undertake*  
**fonge** *try, attempt; begin*  
**fonnys** *fools*  
**fonnyst** *act foolishly*  
**footmayd** *maidservant*  
**fordere** *further*  
**forfare** *perish, be lost*  
**forfet(e)** (n.) *transgression; (v.) transgress*  
**forlorn(e)** *lost*  
**fors** *importance, value*  
**forseyd** *previously spoken*  
**forsoth(e)** *in truth*  
**fortefyet** *fortifies*  
**forthryght, forthryth** *immediately*  
**fowlyd** *befouled*  
**fowth** *afflicted*  
**foyson** *abundance*  
**fraught** *burden, freight*  
**fray** *attack*  
**frayth** *frightens*  
**fre** *noble, excellent*  
**Frensche** *French*  
**frewte** *fruit*  
**fro** *from*  
**fryth** *woodland*  
**fullich** *fully*  
**fullyth** *fills*  
**fyere** *fire*  
**fynde** *fiend*  
**fynyte** *definite*  
**gaderid** *gathered*  
**gaff** *gave*  
**gan** *go*  
**geawnt** *giant*  
**gendyr** *engender, create*  
**gerle(ys)** *boy(s), children*  
**gerth** *enclosed yard*  
**geynseyn** *gainsay, speak against*  
**ghostly** *spiritual*  
**glabereris** *blabbers*  
**glathe** *welcome*  
**gle(e)** *joy, rejoicing*  
**gleyvis** *spears*  
**glose** *misrepresentation*  
**gnaggyd** *pinned, hanged*



- heyde** *hide*  
**hey(e), hy, hyge** *high*  
**heylyght** *ails*  
**heyn** *rascal*  
**hiegh** *high*  
**hire** *her*  
**ho** *who*  
**Hoberd** *knave (term of abuse)*  
**Holond** *linen cloth from Holland*  
**hom** *home*  
**hond(e), honed** *hand, hands*  
**hont** *hunt, chase*  
**ho(o)l** *whole*  
**hoold** *old*  
**ho(o)so** *whoso*  
**hore** *whore*  
**hosyn** *leggings*  
**howlott** *owl*  
**howte** *scream*  
**howth** *ought*  
**howtyn** *screeches*  
**huswyff** *wife; housewife*  
**hy(e), hyge, high** *hasten; hurry*  
**hygh, hyth, hyght** *be named; called*  
**hylle** *ill*  
**hylte** *buried*  
**hynde** (n.) *hind; (adj.) wide; (adv.) diligently*  
**hyng(e)** *hang, hung*  
**hyre** *her*  
**hyryd** *rented*  
**hyth, hytht** *promised; called*  
  
**iborn** *born*  
**icast** *say*  
**iche** *each*  
**ierarchie, ierearchye** *hierarchy*  
**inbassett** *embassy; message*  
**incheson** *cause*  
**inclyne** *accede; bow; direct*  
**inconuenyens** *improper act*  
**indew** *endue*  
**injouyid** *rejoiced*  
**injoyeth** *rejoices*  
**inportable** *unbearable*  
**instawns** *command; request*  
**into** *until*  
  
**irke** *grow weary*  
**iwys** *I believe, indeed, certainly*  
  
**jape** *have sex with; joke, mock*  
**jebet** *gibbet, gallows*  
**jematrye** *geometry*  
**jentyl** *gentle*  
**jewgys** *judges*  
**Juré, Jury** *Jewry*  
**jurresdyccyon** *authority, power*  
  
**kachyd** *catch*  
**kage** *dais*  
**karpe** *wail*  
**kary** *transport*  
**kaytyff** *caitiff, scoundrel*  
**ken** (n.) *kin; (v.) acknowledge*  
**kend(e)** *nature, kind*  
**kerchere** *kerchief*  
**knad** *spear*  
**knawe** *know; gnaw*  
**knop** *tassel, tuft*  
**knowlych** *knowledge*  
**knytys** *knights*  
**kok** *cock*  
**kokewold** *cuckold*  
**krepe** *creep*  
**kure** *cover*  
**kusse** *kiss*  
**kutte** *privates*  
**kyd(de)** *known*  
**kyndam** *kingdom*  
**kyn(ne), ken** *kin, family, blood relatives*  
**kyrtyl** *tunic*  
**kythe** *show*  
  
**lacche** *take*  
**lake** *pit; grave*  
**lame** *injure, wound*  
**langoris** *miserics, sorrows*  
**langour** *languish*  
**lappyd** *sealed*  
**lasse** *unless*  
**latyng** *delay*  
**lave** *fine bread*  
**lay** *life; law; tale*  
**lechis** *doctors*

- lede** *lead*  
**lederys** *ladders*  
**le(e)che** (n.) *physician; protector; (v.) heal*  
**lefful** *lawful*  
**lemys** *limbs*  
**lende** *lend, given, granted*  
**lere** *learn; read; teach*  
**lernyd** *taught*  
**les** (n.) *lie, lies; (v.) ruin, destroy*  
**lesse** *unless*  
**lest** *wishes*  
**leste** *listen*  
**lestyght, lestyth** *lasts*  
**lete** *cease*  
**lett** *hinder, prevent; letting hindrance, delay*  
**leve** (v.) *leave, left; live; (adj.) beloved*  
**levyn** *live*  
**leyn** *lay down*  
**leysure** *opportune time*  
**lofflyere** *lovelier*  
**lofsummere** *more admirable*  
**lofte** *exalted, up high*  
**logg(e)** *lodge, lodging; prison*  
**lokygh** *looks*  
**loof** *loaf*  
**lordeyn** ⇒ **lurdeyn**  
**lore, doctrine** (n.) *teaching*  
**lore, lorn** (v. and adj.) *lost*  
**losel** *scoundrel*  
**loth** *fault; evil*  
**lounesse** *humility*  
**louris** *lours; lowers*  
**loveday** *reconciliation*  
**lowh** *smiles*  
**lowte, lowth** *obey; bow*  
**loyn** *lain*  
**lurdeyn, lordeyn** *scoundrel*  
**lyberary** *collection (of laws)*  
**lyce** *lies*  
**lych** *like*  
**lyff** *live*  
**lyg** *lie*  
**lyme** *limb*  
**lyne** *lie*  
**lynacyon** *use of lines in geometry*  
**lyst** *listen; wish*  
**lytentnyth** *listen*  
**lyth** *light*  
**lythly** *lightly; easily; hastily*  
**lyve** *life*  
**maculacion** *sin, defilement*  
**magré** *in spite of*  
**make** (n.) *mate; (v.) make, perform, bring about*  
**makyn** *make*  
**males, malyse** *hatred; wickedness*  
**manase** *menace, harm, threat*  
**manhed** *manhood*  
**marre, marryn** *harm; confuse; disturb*  
**massage, message** *messenger; errand*  
**masterye, mastery** *sovereignty*  
**mateynes** *matins*  
**maumentryes** *idols*  
**may** *maid*  
**mayn** *strength*  
**maystryes** *deceits, tricks*  
**me** *me, my, myself*  
**meche, myche, much**  
**mede** *reward, desert*  
**me(e)nd(e)** *mind, understanding*  
**meke** *meek*  
**mekel, mekyl** *great*  
**mell(e)** *join*  
**melyon** *million*  
**mené, meny** *gang, company*  
**meracale** *miracle*  
**mercyable** *merciful*  
**mere** *country; route; boundary marker*  
**merke** *make cloudy; dull*  
**mervayle** *marvel, wonder at*  
**mesemyth** *it seems to me*  
**mest** *most*  
**mete** (n.) *food, banquet; (v.) meet*  
**meve** *tempt*  
**mevyd** *moved, incited*  
**mo, moo** *more*  
**modyr** *mother*  
**mokador** *bib*  
**molde** *earth*  
**mon(e)** *complaint, sorrow; moon*  
**montana** *mountains*

**moote** *dispute*  
**morny** *sad, mournful*  
**mornynge** *mourning*  
**morwe** *morning*  
**mot(e), moty, mow, mowne** *may*  
**mullynge** *darling*  
**mure** *demure; humble*  
**mut** *may*  
**myrable** *wonderful*  
**myrkenes** *darkness*  
**mys, mysse** *sin, misfortune; miss, lack*  
**mysdede** *misconduct*  
**mysdemynge** *misjudgment*  
**mysthought** *thought wrongly*  
**mysuse** *debauch*  
**myswrought** *done wrong*  
**myth** *might*  
  
**nailyn** *to nail*  
**nale** (fig.) *alehouse*  
**nedy** *needy*  
**nempne, nemene** *name*  
**ner(e), neyr** *nearly, near*  
**nerre** *nor, not at all*  
**nesch** *weak*  
**nest** *next*  
**neyhand** *near at hand*  
**neyth** *draw near, approach*  
**noell, novell** *news, tidings*  
**nome** *brought*  
**none** *nones, noon or mid-afternoon*  
**noon** *none, not any, no one*  
**norsshere** *nourisher*  
**norture** (n.) *upbringing; (v.) nurture*  
**noht, nowth, nowht** *nought; not*  
**nothyr** *neither*  
**novell** ➤ **noell**  
**nowther** *neither*  
**nowthty** *worthless*  
**ny(e), nyh** *nearly*  
**nyth** *night*  
  
**o, oo, on** *one of*  
**obeschauns, obeschaunce** *obedience; obeisance*  
**ocapye** *occupy*  
**of** *of; off; from*

**off** *of; off*  
**offis** *office*  
**ogyl** *shudder*  
**omage** *homage*  
**on** *in; one*  
**onbete** *unbeaten*  
**onbokyll** *unbuckle*  
**onclose** *open*  
**ondo, undo** *open*  
**ondothe** *undo*  
**ondyr** *under*  
**oneoblucucyon** *mispronunciation*  
**onest** *honest; onesté* *honesty*  
**onethys** *scarcely*  
**onlose** *unloose*  
**onowryd** *honored*  
**onpossyble** *impossible*  
**onrekenyd** *not spoken*  
**onsondyr** *split into parts*  
**ontyl** *unto*  
**ontyll** *to, into*  
**ony** *any; honey*  
**ope** *open*  
**or** *ere, before*  
**oratory** *chapel*  
**ordenaryes** *laws*  
**ordenauns, ordenawns** *plot; fate; preparation*  
**ordeyn** *prepare*  
**orryble** *horrible*  
**ortografye** *orthography*  
**ostage** *inn*  
**othe** *oath; othis* *oaths*  
**outborn** *born out of the region*  
**overest** (adj) *on top of the rest*  
**ovyrall** *everywhere*  
**ovyrwood** *extremely mad*  
**ovyth** *behoves*  
**ow** *own*  
**owrys** *hours*  
**owth, owght, owgth** *at all; anything*  
**owth** *out*  
**owughte** *openly*  
**oy** *hear ye*  
  
**pace** *pass*  
**pad** *toad*



- paphawk** *suckling baby*  
**pappe** *breast*  
**Paraclyte** *Holy Ghost*  
**paramour** *darling*  
**parayl** *apparel, dress*  
**pardé** *by God*  
**paryl** *means*  
**pas** *paces, steps*  
**Pasche** *Passover*  
**pawsacyon** *a pause*  
**pay** *pleasure*  
**payed** *pleased*  
**peler** *pillar*  
**pellys** *furred cloaks*  
**pende** *pain*  
**pepyr** *pepper*  
**peraventure** *perhaps*  
**perdure** *continue*  
**pere** (n.) *peer; pear; (v.) appear*  
**perellys** *perils*  
**pers** *pierce*  
**persevere** *recipient*  
**pertly** *openly*  
**pes** *peace*  
**pete** *put*  
**peté, pety** *pity*  
**peusawns** *crowds*  
**peyn(e), peynes** *pain(s)*  
**peyr(e)** *pair*  
**peys** *weight*  
**Pharao** *Pharaoh*  
**Pharysew** *Pharisee*  
**pillid** *tonsured*  
**pith, pyht, pygth** (v.) *placed, implanted, fixed*  
**plasmacyon** *creation*  
**platys** *pieces*  
**pleand** *playing*  
**plesawns** *pleasure*  
**pleson** *satisfaction*  
**plete** *plead*  
**pleyn, playn** *perfect, complete*  
**plyght, plyth** *danger; manner, state*  
**plyth, plyte** *promise; plight, assure*  
**po(o)sté** *power*  
**popetys** *children*  
**pore** *poor; power*  
**portature** *appearance*  
**portys** *gates*  
**postelis** *apostles*  
**potacyon** *potion*  
**potage** *soup, meal*  
**pousté, powsté** *power*  
**praty** *pleasant, excellent, clever*  
**pratyly** *carefully, nicely*  
**prenaunt** *portentous*  
**prendyd** *apprehended, captured*  
**preson, presyn** (n.) *prison, confinement; (v.) imprison*  
**prest** *at once*  
**pretend** *direct*  
**pretende** *attempt*  
**pretendist** *intend*  
**prevydens** *preparation*  
**prey, prevy** *privy, secret*  
**processe** *story, narrative*  
**properyd** *designated*  
**prose** *story*  
**provaylys** *prevails*  
**prow** *advantage*  
**pryk, prycke** *target*  
**prysse** *prize*  
**prysste** *priest*  
**punchement** *punishment*  
**purcatorye** *purgatory*  
**purgacyon** *purgation, exculpation*  
**purpure** *purple*  
**pursewe** *persecute*  
**purveyd** *provided*  
**purvyauns** *preparations*  
**pyan** *peony*  
**pychyn** *pierce*  
**pyght** (adj.) *appointed; (v.) thrust*  
**pygth** *pith*  
**pylle** *tear; pluck up*  
**pyinne** *point; imprison*  
**quan** *when*  
**quelle, qwelle** *kill, vanquish*  
**quem** *gratify*  
**quer** *choir*  
**qwall** *whale*  
**qwarel** *quarrel*  
**qwat** *what*

**qweche** *which*  
**qwed** *wicked*  
**qwedyr** *quiver*  
**qweke** *fart*  
**qwelle, quelle** *kill, overcome*  
**qwelp** *whelp*  
**qweme** *unite*  
**qwen(ys)** *queen, harlot; queens*  
**qwens** *whence*  
**qwere** (inter.) *where; (n.) choir*  
**qwert** *sound and whole*  
**qwethynge** *speaking*  
**qweynt** *strange*  
**qwhat** *what*  
**qwheth, qweth** *bequeath*  
**qwhich** *which*  
**qwhy** *why*  
**qwyke** *quick (alive)*  
**qwyle, qwhyl** *while*  
**qwtie** *white*  
**qwyght** *quit, free*  
**qwyte, qwyght, quyte, quyth** *requite, reward*  
**qwytte, quyte** (v.) *acquit; explain*  
  
**race** (n.) *hurry; (v.) go in pieces*  
**raftys** *sticks*  
**rage** *take sexual pleasure*  
**rake** *kill*  
**rakyl** *unstable*  
**rakyng** *fast-moving*  
**rape** (n.) *haste; (v.) seize*  
**rapely** *quickly*  
**rappe** *rush about*  
**rave** *go mad, speak wildly*  
**ray** (n.) *array, attire; (adj.) striped*  
**rayed** *prepared*  
**rebate** *lessen*  
**rebawdye** *ribaldry*  
**rebawdys** *rogues*  
**rech(e)** *spread, attain*  
**recke** *care about*  
**recure** *cure; obtain*  
**recuryd** *restored*  
**rede, reed** (n.) *advice; (v.) advise(s); read(s)*  
**redresse** *amend*

**red(r)ure** *harshness*  
**reed, red(e)** *read; advise; direct, guide, protect*  
**refeccyon** *sustenance*  
**regal(l)** *royal*  
**rehersall, rehersayl** *recitation*  
**relefe** *remain*  
**remeffe** *remove, depart*  
**remys** *realms*  
**ren** *run*  
**rennyn** *running*  
**rent** *torn*  
**requyrand** *entreating*  
**rere** *speak, raise up*  
**responcyon** *a response*  
**reve** *plunder; lacerate*  
**rever** *river*  
**revid** *taken away*  
**rew** *rue, regret*  
**rewe** *row*  
**rewyst** *have pity*  
**reyn** *live, reign*  
**reynes** *loins*  
**reysynt** *raise*  
**rith** *right*  
**ro** *roe*  
**roberych** *rubric*  
**rode** *rood, cross*  
**rolle** *enroll*  
**rollyd** *wrapped, covered*  
**ronne** *run*  
**roos** *rose*  
**rosch** *rush*  
**rowel** *spur; wheel*  
**rowne** *give*  
**rowse** *proclaim*  
**rowte, rowthte, rought** *crowd*  
**rubbe** *weep*  
**ruly** *rueful, pitifully*  
**ruthe, routh** *pity, care*  
**ryff** *readily, promptly*  
**rys** *rice*  
**ryth** *right*  
  
**sa** *so*  
**sacerdotale** *priestly*  
**sacryd** *consecrated*

- sad(de)** dignified, sober  
**saff** (adv.) save, except  
**salte** filthy  
**saluse** salute  
**salvyn** heal  
**sarteyn, serteyn** certain(ly), true/truly; a specific number  
**saten** satin  
**saughe** saw  
**savacyon** salvation  
**sawe** words, decree  
**Sawtere** Psalter  
**sayll** assail, attack  
**scappys** slips  
**schadu** overshadow  
**schamfast, shamfast** modest  
**schape** escape  
**schapman** merchant  
**schapyn** bring about  
**scharles** churls  
**schenship** disgrace  
**schep** sheep  
**schet** shot  
**schle** slay; **scloo** slew  
**schonde** ruin  
**schoure** shower  
**schryfte, shryfte** confession; shrive  
**sclayne** slain  
**sclep, scleppe** sleep  
**sclepyng** sleeping  
**sclepyr** slippery  
**sclycle** abate  
**score** scour  
**scowte** rascal  
**sed** said  
**se(e)** (n.) sea; seat; (v) see; seen  
**sefne** seven  
**sefnt, sefte** seventh  
**seke** sick  
**sekyr** truly; **sekyrly** certainly  
**selkowth** wonderful, strange  
**semely** decorous  
**semblant** semblance, appearance  
**sen** see  
**sere** (adj. or n.) Sir  
**serte(a)yn, serteynly** certain(ly)  
**sertys** indeed  
**seryattly** one by one  
**ser(y)s** Sirs  
**ses(e), sees** cease  
**sesyd** ceased; placed in possession  
**sesyn** cease  
**sete** seat  
**seuer(e)** affirm, promise  
**sew** appeal; seek  
**sewe** sow  
**sewre** sure, safe  
**sewte, sute** legal action  
**sewyng** following  
**sex** six; **sexte** sixth  
**seyd** said; (n.) seed  
**seyn** seen  
**seyse** assize court  
**seyth** sees; says; said  
**shad** shed  
**shamfastnes** modesty  
**shank** knees; legs  
**shede** sheath  
**sheff** sheaf  
**shende** destroy  
**shendynge** disgrace  
**shene** bright, shining  
**shenshipp** dishonor  
**shent** destroyed, ruined; dead  
**shete** shoot; **shetyng** shooting  
**shitt, shytt(e)** shut  
**shon** shoes  
**shoue** show; thrusts, shoves in  
**showyth** thrusts  
**shrew(e)** curse  
**shrewe** rascal  
**shryfte, shryfft** ➔ **schryfte**  
**shryve** confess; **shrevyn** confessed  
**shulde** should  
**shynand** shining  
**shytt(e), shitt** close, shut; lock  
**signifure** signification  
**skapyst** escape  
**slauth, slowth** sloth  
**slawe** (v.) slain; (adj.) slow  
**sle** slay  
**sleytys** sleights, deceptions  
**slought** slow  
**sloveyn** slattern

- slow** *slew*  
**smertly** *quickly*  
**snarle** *entrap*  
**snelle** *wise*  
**sneveleris** *snivelers*  
**socour, socowre** *succor, comfort*  
**sodeyne** *sudden*  
**soferauns** *endurance*  
**soferyd** *endured*  
**sofron** *suffer*  
**softyd** *soothed*  
**sokelyng** *clover*  
**sokyn** *sucked*  
**somnorys** *summoners*  
**somowne** *summon*  
**sond(e)** *messenger; sand, shore*  
**sone** (n.) *son*; (adv.) *soon*  
**so(o)th** *truth*  
**sopere** *supper*  
**sore** *strongly*  
**soserye** *sorcery*  
**sote** *sweet*  
**sotely, sotyly** *subtly*  
**sothfast** *true*  
**sotyl, sottle** *subtle*  
**south, sowth** *sought*  
**sowe** *seek*  
**sowte** *searched*  
**sowyht** *sews*  
**sparyst** *refrain; preserves*  
**spas** *space*  
**sped** *come to pass*  
**spede** *prosper; help*  
**spedful** *helpful*  
**spelle** (n.) *words*; (v.) *declare, talk*  
**spere** *close off*; **sperd** *shut*  
**spowsage** *marriage*  
**sprede** *cover*  
**spylle, spyllyn** *kill, destroy, ruin*  
**spythe** *spite, defiance*  
**sted(e)** *stead, place*  
**stent** *stop*  
**steracle** *show, spectacle*  
**stevene, stewyn, stevyn** *speech*  
**steyn** *villify, stain*  
**ste yng** *ascending*  
**stok** *kindred, line of descent*  
**stol** *chair, stool*  
**stomachere** *waistcoat*  
**stomele** *stumble*  
**stoppage** *obstacle*  
**stotte** *slut*  
**stow** *stop*  
**stownde** *place; hour, instant*  
**stowte** *stout*  
**stye** *path*  
**stye(d)** *ascend(ed)*  
**styrte** *start*  
**substancyall** *wealthy*  
**substauns, substawns** *essential nature*  
**sudary** *head cloth*  
**suenge** *following*  
**suerd** *sword*  
**suete, swete** *sweet*  
**sumdele** *part; somewhat*  
**sunne, sonne** *sun*  
**suterys** *followers*  
**swage** *lessen, cease*  
**swap** *stroke*  
**swappyng** *smiling*  
**swat** *stroke*  
**swelle** *swallow*  
**swem(e)** (n.) *sorrow, a pity*; (v.) *swoon*  
**swemful** *pitiful*  
**swemyng** *grieving*  
**swemyth** *distresses*  
**swetyng** *sweet one*  
**swoot** *sweat*  
**swowne, swonge** *swoon*  
**swych** *such*  
**swynke** *work, toil*  
**swyth, swythe** *at once*  
**sybb** *relation, child's*  
**syhyn** *sigh*  
**syndony** *shroud*  
**syne, syng** *sign*  
**syse** *assize court; judgment*  
**syt(tyng)** *fil(ing)*  
**syth** *sight*  
**sythe** *then*  
**tabard(ys)** *upper garment*  
**tabeliis** *tablets*  
**tall** *tale*

- tan** *taken, undertake*  
**tarye** *tarry*  
**tawth** *taught*  
**tayle** *pudendum*  
**tee** *go*  
**tekele** *tickle*  
**tekyl** *gotten*  
**telland** *telling*  
**teme** *theme*  
**tende** *tenth, tithe*  
**tendyth** *intends*  
**tene** (n.) *malice, suffering, tribulation;*  
           (v.) *censure; suffer*  
**tent** (n.) *attention; (v.) attend to*  
**teryeng** *tarrying*  
**tetys** *breasts*  
**teynt** *tainted*  
**than** (adv.) *then*  
**therkeness** *darkness*  
**therlys** *piercings*  
**thin** *thine*  
**thiselph** *thysself*  
**tho** *those*  
**tholyd** *suffered*  
**thong** *strap, lace*  
**thore** *there*  
**thorw, thurowe** *through*  
**thorwe** *through*  
**thorweouth** *throughout*  
**thouth, thowt** *thought*  
**thowand** *thousand*  
**thrall(e)** *slave; a while*  
**thrawe** *thrown*  
**threttene** *thirteenth*  
**thretty** *thirty*  
**threwth** *truth*  
**thruste** *thirst; thirsty*  
**thyr(yng)** *pierce; piercing*  
**thyrlyd** *pierced*  
**to, too** *to; too; two*  
**tokenys** *signs*  
**torent** *torn*  
**tose** *search out*  
**toth** *tooth*  
**tothere** *other*  
**tou** *thou*  
**toure** *tower*  
**towaly** *towel*  
**tras** *travel; devise*  
**travayl** *hardship*  
**tray** *betray*  
**trede** *trample*  
**trepett** *tripping up*  
**tretable** *able to be entreated*  
**tretour** *traitor*  
**trewly** *truly*  
**trey** *pain, abuse*  
**tron** *throne*  
**trou** *believe*  
**trowe** *true*  
**trus** *truss, pack*  
**tryne** *triune*  
**tundyr** *tinder (aflame)*  
**tweyn** *twain, two*  
**tyde** *occasion, space of time*  
**tyll** *to*  
**tyxt** *text*  
**umbyl** *humble*  
**un** *on*  
**unbegete** *unbegotten*  
**unbynde** *undo, dissolve, set free*  
**unclose, onclose** *open*  
**undo** *open up*  
**undowteful** *certain*  
**undryd** *hundred*  
**ungry** *hungry*  
**unhed, unhyde** *reveal*  
**unhende** *discourteous*  
**unherborwed, unherborwyd**  
           *homeless; unprotected*  
**unkende** *unkind; unnatural*  
**unknowlage** *lack of knowledge*  
**unpynne** *unbolt*  
**unqwyt** *unrequited*  
**unthende** *meager*  
**upholdyn** *guarantee*  
**uprysyng** *resurrection*  
**upryth** *face upward*  
**uptoke** *raised up*  
**uterest** *farthest*  
**uyl** *will*

**valure, valour** *worth, value*  
**varyauns, varyawns** *discord, inconsistency*  
**vaylyth** *avails*  
**velany, velony(e)** *villainy*  
**vemynynd** *envenomed*  
**verament** *truly*  
**verdyth** *verdict, conclusion*  
**verily** *truly*  
**verray** *true*  
**vertuysful** *virtuous*  
**vervent** *fervent*  
**vesage** *visage, face*  
**vesytacyon** *visitation*  
**vetaylys** *victuals, food*  
**vowcheasaf(f)** *agree; deign*  
**voydnes** *emptiness, nothing*  
**vyl** *will*  
  
**wachith, watchyn** *watch(ed)*  
**wagour** *wager*  
**walkyn** *firmament*  
**walterid** *drenched*  
**wand(e), whande, wond** *stick, rod*  
**wantruste** *lack of trust*  
**wardeyn** *guardian*  
**ware** *aware, wary*  
**wast** *wasted, lost*  
**watt** *fellow*  
**wawys** *waves*  
**way(e), wey(e)** *way, away*  
**weche** *which*  
**wede** *clothes*  
**wedow** *widow*  
**wedyr** *weather*  
**welaway, wellaway** *alas, "woe is me"*  
**weldygh** *receives*  
**wele** *well*  
**welsom** *desolate, wild*  
**wen** *blemish, stain*  
**wend(e), wendyth** *travel, go*  
**wene, wende, wenyth** *think, believe*  
**werd** *word*  
**werd, werld(e)** *world*  
**werdly, wurdly** *worldly*  
**werk(ys), werch** *work(s)*  
**werkyht** *works*

**wer(m)e, worm(ys)** *serpent(s)*  
**werst** *worst*  
**weryd** *drove*  
**wete** *know, imagine*  
**weyth** *weight*  
**weyys, weyis** *ways*  
**whan** *wan, dark*  
**whanhope** *despair*  
**whantownnesse** *lasciviousness*  
**whantynge** *lack, wanting*  
**whe** *we*  
**whedyr** *whither, whether*  
**whihtys** *wights, people*  
**whonde** *hold back*  
**whow** *how*  
**why** (n.) *reason; (adv.) why*  
**whylde** *wild*  
**whylsum** *wild and lonely*  
**whylys** *wiles*  
**withsett, withsytt** *resist*  
**wo, woo, whoo** *woe*  
**wod(e)** *wood; stormy; insane*  
**woke** *week*  
**wolde** *woodland, earth*  
**wole** *will, wills*  
**woll** *will*  
**won** (n.) *place; (v.) refrain*  
**wond** *wand*  
**wondyr** *wondrous*  
**wonte** *accustomed*  
**wonyng** *place, dwelling*  
**woodman** *madman*  
**woot** *know*  
**wore** *were*  
**wotys(s)t** *know*  
**woundyrly** *to an astonishing degree*  
**wrake** *enmity, harm; punishment*  
**wreke** *deliver; avenged*  
**wrete** *written*  
**writhe** *wring*  
**wrokyn** *avenged*  
**wroth(e)** *angry, grieved, vexed*  
**wrouth** *wrought*  
**wry** *err*  
**wryth** *wright, carpenter*  
**wurchep** *worship*  
**wurd** *word(s)*

**wyff** *woman*  
**wyght, whyt** *person*  
**wyghtly** *expertly*  
**wyk** *wicked*  
**wynd(e)** (n.) *wind; breathing; (v.) wrap*  
*up, enclose, clothe*  
**wys** *believe*  
**wyse** (n.) *way, manner; (adj) learned*  
**wysse** *guide, conduct, instruct*  
**wyst** *knew, known*  
  
**wyte** *accuse*  
**wythe** *person*

**wytte** *go*  
**wytty** *learned*  
**wyttys** *information*  
  
**yard** *branch*  
**yardys, yerdys** *branches, rods*  
**yis** *yes*  
**yng(e), yynge** *young*  
**yough** *youth*  
**ypocryte** *hypocrite*  
**yyt** *yet*