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FROM THE N-TOWN CYCLE  
EDITED BY W. W. GREG, LITT.D.

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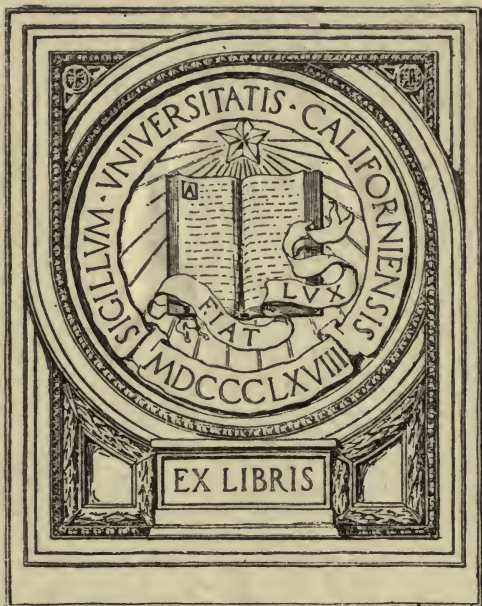
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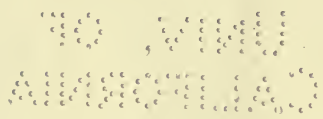
THE ASSUMPTION OF THE  
VIRGIN · A MIRACLE PLAY  
FROM THE N-TOWN CYCLE  
EDITED BY W. W. GREG, LITT.D.



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THE ASSOCIATION OF THE  
VIRGINIA ACADEMY  
FROM THE MOUNTAIN  
OF THE MOUNTAIN

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS  
LONDON EDINBURGH GLASGOW NEW YORK  
TORONTO MELBOURNE BOMBAY  
HUMPHREY MILFORD M.A.  
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY



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\*.\* The Facsimiles are inserted between pages 44 and 45.

*Macula*, moder, was neuere in thee,  
*Filia Syon*, thou art the flour;  
Full sweteli schalt thou sitte bi me  
And bere a crowne with me in tour,  
And alle my seintis to thin honour  
Schal honoure thee, moder, in my blis,  
That blessid bodi that bare me in bowur,  
*Veni, coronaberis.*

Lambeth MS. 853.



## INTRODUCTION

IN the Cottonian Manuscript, Vespasian D. viii, containing the N-town cycle of miracle plays, commonly but incorrectly known as the *Ludus Coventriae*, there is one play, that numbered forty-one, treating of the Death and Assumption of the Virgin, which stands markedly apart from the rest. It is written in a hand which appears nowhere else in the volume, and this hand presents certain peculiarities differentiating it sharply from that in which, with few exceptions, the whole of the rest of the cycle is written. The paper of the play likewise is quite distinct from any used in other parts of the volume; it forms a single quire inserted in the middle of one of the other quires of the manuscript, and could be removed without in any way interfering with the remaining leaves. These facts necessarily raise a question as to how far this particular play forms an integral part of the cycle in which it appears, or at least as to whether it may not have an origin essentially different from the rest. It is noteworthy that the play in question is not recorded in the very explicit catalogue which serves as a prologue to the cycle, but the same is true of other plays which do not differ in handwriting from their companions. To enter fully into this question would be to raise the whole intricate problem of the origin and history of the N-town cycle, which it is not my purpose to do on the present occasion. My immediate and more modest intention is to inquire whether any marked difference in dialect or style of composition exists between the Assumption play and the bulk of the cycle, such as could be adduced in support of the bibliographical evidence for an independent origin. This limited inquiry would hardly of itself have necessitated, or perhaps even justified, reprinting the text in question, since the whole cycle is already accessible in J. O. Halliwell's edition, issued by the Shakespeare Society in 1841 under the title of *Ludus Coventriae*. I have, however,

been impelled to the more ambitious course by two other considerations. The first of these is that one of the most remarkable characteristics of the play is its metrical structure, and that this, though perfectly clear in the manuscript, is very effectively concealed in the printed edition. The other is the opportunity which a reprint affords of bringing the English text into close relation with its source in the narrative of the *Legenda Aurea*, and thus of drawing attention to the importance of Jacobus de Voragine's work for the study of the religious drama. For this purpose I have reprinted at the end of this Introduction those portions of the legend of the Assumption upon which our present play is based.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Henry Bradley, to whose expert assistance is due whatever may be found of value in my Notes, and to Mr. C. E. Stuart for help with the Latin both of the manuscript and of the *Legenda*.

#### 1. THE SCRIBE.

The bulk of the N-town cycle is written in a clear, rather commonplace hand of the later fifteenth century. At the end of one of the plays is the date 1468, and there does not appear to be any reason to suppose that this is not the date of writing. The scribe makes free use of *y* (*þ*) for *th*, though the latter also appears, and likewise of the letter *ȝ*, though more often for *y* than for *gh*. He also has the well-recognized East Anglian, or at least East Midland, peculiarity of writing *x* in place of *sch* in such words as *shall*, &c. The ink used is generally some shade of brown.

Of the play of the Assumption Halliwell remarks (p. 417): 'The whole of this pageant is written in a more recent hand, of the time, I should think, of Henry VIII.' I do not know upon what ground he based this opinion, possibly upon the fact that the special letters, or uses of letters, just mentioned as occurring in the rest of the manuscript, are all but entirely absent from the play in question. But whatever may have suggested Halliwell's opinion, that opinion is wrong. There is nothing whatever in the character of the hand, as may be seen by consulting the accompanying facsimiles, to suggest that it is not contemporary

with that of the main scribe, and it is easy to prove that it is so. For the whole manuscript, including our play, has been rubricated at one time and in one manner, obviously by one person, and a careful examination of his work throughout the volume will show that that person was none other than the main scribe. Moreover, at line 261 of our particular play, some words that had been added in the margin and subsequently mutilated have been written over again by a different hand, and this hand is that of the main scribe. It follows, therefore, that the Assumption play was written at any rate not long after the rest of the manuscript and may even have been written before it. The ink is black.

The main scribe we know belonged, as already said, to the East Midlands, probably to the more restricted area to which the term East Anglia may be applied. Is there any indication as to the locality in which our play was written down? In it the letter *ȝ* does not appear, *ȝ* is used only twice, and *y* for *th* is so rare as to suggest mere accident. Nor does *x* replace *sch*. This obvious criterion of East Anglian writing is therefore absent. But another recognized test exists in the dropping of the guttural. The peculiarity is properly a scribal, not a dialectal, one, for the sound probably went out of pronunciation in the midlands early in the fifteenth century, but except in the extreme eastern district it continued as a rule to be written. We start in OE with final *-h* or *-ht*; in ME these are represented by *-ȝ*, *-ȝt* or *-gh*, *-ght*. With the loss of the guttural *-ȝ*, *-gh* disappear altogether, *-ȝt* gives *-t*, and *-ght* may give *-ht*. In the last case, the *h* having no phonetic value, the termination comes to be written indifferently *-ht* or *-th*, and this leads to the substitution of *-th* for *-t* even where there was no original guttural. The question has been discussed at some length by Furnivall in his 'Afterwords' to the EETS edition of the *Macro Plays* (1904, p. xxxv). He there cites many such forms as *fite* (fight), *lite* (light), *rith* (right), *sith* (sight), *deth* (dead), *kyth* (cut), from Norfolk manuscripts. Now this peculiarity, though observable in the main body of the cycle (p. 58, *syte*; p. 87, *nowth*; p. 147, *sowth*; p. 186, *rowthte*, rout), is not very prominent; we usually find the more customary spellings. But in the Assumption play the case is altered. Spellings with *gh* seem to be as completely

absent as those with 3. A final guttural usually disappears, as in *hye* for high (l. 33), but we once find *nyhyn* (l. 194). Before *t*, however, the scribe does not affect mere omission. The ending *-ght* becomes regularly *-th* or *-tht* or, less frequently, *-ht* (l. 5, *tauht*, l. 146, *myhtis*, l. 199, *myhtys*).

The only other orthographic peculiarity that seems worth mentioning is the use of *qw* for *wh*, which occurs more than once in our play, though by no means regularly (ll. 137, 269, *qwyche*). This is peculiarly though not exclusively northern; Furnivall in the above-mentioned 'Afterwords' cites instances from the East Midland play of *Mankind*. Anyhow it occurs in other parts of the cycle (see Halliwell's glossary), and is, therefore, not distinctive of the present piece.

There is one striking piece of evidence that the scribe had northern leanings, to say the least of it. In line 238, namely, we find the form *skele* for *skill*. Now this form is characteristically northern, or even Scotch, but it will be observed that it is due to the scribe, not the author, for the rime requires *skill*. Curiously enough there is just such another isolated piece of evidence that the main scribe of the other portions of the cycle had the same northern tendency. We once (p. 404) find the very distinctively northern spelling *ssalte*, in place of what would be the regular *xalte*, shalt.

Consequently, I do not think that there is any reason to suppose that the play of the Assumption was written down in a different locality from the rest of the manuscript in which it is found.

A word may be added on the use of contractions by the scribe. In the English text these are as a rule perfectly normal and present no difficulty. It will be sufficient to remark that the contraction for *ser* consists of a long *f* with a mark like a 7 through it. This I have represented by 'f3' (ll. 194, 209, 210), which must be regarded as a single symbol. Whether the cross stroke of *tt* and *ñ* was intended by the scribe to have any particular meaning it is difficult to say, but the fact that he avoids adding a final *e* to these letters seems to indicate that the marks were not wholly devoid of significance. As is so often the case, difficulty is caused by the final curl over a letter which may be either *n* or *u*. I have printed *ñ* wherever possible. But now and then the temptation to print *ñ* has been great: for instance in

*adoñ* and *moñ*, ll. 620, 622. But it must be observed that in the same rime-series we have *demon* which requires no *u*, and *towñ* where the insertion would be preposterous. I think, therefore, that the curls are best regarded as throughout insignificant.

In the Latin portions the contractions are much more frequent and less usual, the scribe apparently considering that a curl might be expected to do duty for any termination, or indeed for any part of a word which he felt disinclined to write in full. In certain cases his forms are, to say the least, misleading. For specific instances the notes may be consulted. I have there considered such difficulties as arise, and have also indicated the meaning of certain normally contracted forms which may nevertheless be unfamiliar to modern readers.

## 2. DIALECT.

The problem of determining whether the dialect of the Assumption play differs from that of the rest of the N-town cycle is rendered the more difficult by the fact that even apart from this play the collection is manifestly of very complex origin and may well include portions originally composed in widely different localities. In what follows it must, therefore, be borne in mind that if we succeed in showing that the one play under review possesses dialectal peculiarities not shared by any of its companions, we shall, of course, have satisfactorily established its independent origin, but that if, on the other hand, we fail to do so, it does not in the least follow that the dialect of the whole cycle is homogeneous, nor even, strictly speaking, that the dialect of our particular play is identical with that of any other single member of the collection.

The language of the N-town cycle was investigated by Dr. Max Kramer as long ago as 1892 in his dissertation on *Sprache und Heimat des sogen. Ludus Coventriae*. His object was to compare the dialect of the plays with that of the Coventry records, and his result that the former, so far from being identical with the latter, belonged in its present form rather to the northern border of the East Midland district. He treated the dialect of the cycle as a whole, and though recording certain anomalous forms, made no attempt at a more individual treatment of the

separate pageants. I propose, nevertheless, to take his investigation as a basis, and to examine how far, in the extensive collections of variant forms his work contains, those from the Assumption play can be regarded as forming a class by themselves. The only statement regarding the dialect of this particular play with which I am acquainted is one by Mrs. M. H. Dodds in the *Modern Language Review* for January 1914 (vol. ix, p. 90). Speaking of the N-town cycle she says: 'All the plays are in the dialect of the East Midlands except the addition of "The Death, Funeral, Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin", which bears some traces of the northern dialect'. No evidence, however, is adduced in support of this opinion.

In the following survey I shall adopt the order of Dr. Kramer's paragraphs. OE *a* gives in ME *a* (sometimes *ǣ* in open syllables), but this in turn gives *æ* in NE, and it may be asked whether this process had already begun at the time when the N-town cycle was written. That it had seems proved by rimes with words of which the vowel is derived from OE *e* or *ǣ*. But it should be observed that the evidence for this seems stronger in the case of the Assumption play (A) than in that of the rest of the cycle (LC). Thus we find, A 575, *save* (OF *salver*), *have* (OE *habban*), riming with *belave* (OE *belǣfan*), and, A 310, *declare* (OF *declarer*), *fare* (OE *faran*), *care* (OE *cearu*): *lare* (OE *lǣran*). Elsewhere we do indeed find rimes of *care*, *fare*, *spare* (OE *sparian*), with *ware*, *were* (OE *wæron*), but the latter is open to the suspicion of having been influenced by ON *wǽru* (LC 47<sup>12</sup>, 73<sup>10</sup>, 183<sup>26</sup>: the large figures indicate the pages, the superior figures the lines, of Halliwell's edition). One clear case, however, is quoted, LC 30<sup>27</sup>, *qweke* (OE *cwacian*): *freke* (OE *freca*), *breke* (OE *brecan*). Possibly the same sharpening of the sound may be observed in rimes with OF *ai*, particularly the word *sertayn*, of which there are several instances, LC 43<sup>1</sup>, 227<sup>18</sup>. One case occurs in A 30, *name* (OE *nama*), *same* (ON *samr*), *defame* (L *defamare*): *attayne* (OF *attaindre*), but here the text is very likely corrupt. As a rule before *m*, *n* the *a* seems to remain pure or to become *o*. An exception is, according to Kramer, A 45, *on* (OE *an*): *won* (OE *wunian*). But here it must be observed that *on* being emphatic has been assimilated to the *ǫn*-rimes, and that *won* is rather from ME *wǫnien*, OE

*wanian*, or else perhaps from OE *wāndian*. However, these words undoubtedly show the Anglian change of *a* > *o* before a nasal.

The ME vowel derived from OE *æ*, or by shortening from *ǣ*, rimes both with *a* and *e*. No instances from our play are quoted, and very few appear to exist. In the rime, A 269, *bad* : *sad*, the vowel in either case goes back to OE *æ*, and nothing can therefore be inferred. There is one instance of an *e*-rime, A 314, *ment* (OE *mǣned*) : *sent* (OE *sended*), but this belongs to a group which regularly has *e* in ME. Once we have, A 575, *grave* (OE *græf*) : *cave* (OF *cave*), *have* (OE *habban*), but these vowels, as we saw above, must have been sharpened, for the rime series likewise includes *lare* (OE *lǣran*). The paucity of examples of rime words with these vowels in our play is unfortunate, for the cycle as a whole shows a marked tendency to make these rime on *e*, indeed whole classes, such as the preterites and participles which in OE end in *-ǣdan*, *-ǣpan*, do so exclusively. The tendency points to the southern and south-eastern district.

The ME representative of OE *u* is found riming with the vowels derived from OE *ū* (OF *o*), from OE *ū*, and once from OE *a* (*o*) before *ng*. Only the second of these is illustrated by Kramer from our play, and this in the word *won*, A 45, which he takes to represent OE *wunian*, whereas we have already seen that it represents either OE *wanian* or else OE *wāndian*.

The weakening of OE *i* to *e* does not seem to be illustrated in our play; on the other hand, the parallel weakening of OE *y* to *e* is common, as throughout the cycle. Rimes with short *e* are A 184, *mende* (OE *gemynd*), *kynde*, *kende* (OE *cynd*) : *hende* (OE *gehende*), *pretende* (OF *pretendre*); A 660, *mend*, *kend* : *ende* (OE *ende*), *wend* (OE *wendan*); A 596, *felthe* (OE *fylþ*?) : *helthe* (OE *hælp*), *welthe* (ME *wēle*, OE *wela*), the vowel in each case being probably shortened; A 614, *herne* (OE *hyrne*), *brenne* (ON *brenna*). Rimes with *é* are only found in the case of the word *meche* (OE *mycel*), as in A 326, where it rimes with *speche* (OE *spæc*), *teche* (OE *tæcan*), *preche* (OF *prêcher*). It may be remarked that of course the representative of OE *y* also rimes with *i*, as in A 232, *hyllys* (OE *hyll*) : *wyll is* (OE *gewill*), though indeed both may have become dulled.

That OE *ā* had in the great majority of cases developed into

*ð* is shown by the frequent rimes with OF *o* and the representative of OE *ð*. Instances from our play are, for the former, A 333, *gon* (OE *gân*) : *tron* (OF *trone*) ; A 430, *alon* (OE *ân*) : *tron* ; for the latter, A 250, *son*e (OE *sôna*), *done* (OE *dôn*) : *one*, *none* (OE *ân*), *gone*,<sup>8</sup> (OE *gân*) ; for both, A 608, *do* (OE *dôn*) : *go* (OE *gân*) : *harro* (OF *haro*). But in a certain number of cases the northern tendency to retain *â* manifests itself, as appears from rimes between the representative of OE *â* and OF, ON, or OE *a*. Examples from the cycle are, LC 5<sup>9</sup>, *more* (OE *mâra*), *sore* (OE *sâr*) : *war* (OE *wær*, ON *var*), *Abyacar* ; LC 43<sup>1</sup>, *gan* (OE *gân*) : *man* (OE *mann*, *monn*), *tan* (ON *taka*), *certayn* (OF *certain*) ; from our play, A 310, *evermare* (OE *mâra*) : *fare* (OE *faran*), *care* (OE *carian*), *declare* (OF *declarer*) : *lare* (OE *lêran*). It will be observed that not only does the Assumption agree with the rest of the cycle in sometimes retaining OE *â*, but likewise in indicating a certain sharpening of this sound as shown by the rimes with *certayn* and *lare* respectively.

As one would expect, the open and closed values of *ð* rime freely together throughout the cycle, though their different development in NE (to *ð* and *û* respectively) shows that they can never have been identical. It is also to be observed that our play agrees with the rest in riming the representative of OE *âw* with that of OE, ON *ag* ; for instance, LC 87<sup>12</sup>, *knawe* (OE *gecnâwan*) : *lawe* (OE *lagu*), *withdrawe* (OE *dragan*), *awe* (ON *agi*) ; A 44, *knawe*, *blawe* (OE *blawan*) : *lawe*, *awe*.

The OE *æ* gave in ME both open and closed *ê* according as it was derived from Germanic *ai* or not. In Chaucer the two values are distinguished : not so in any part of the N-town cycle. We may instance, LC 40<sup>22</sup>, *sprede* (OE *sprædan*, Gm. *\*spraidjan*) : *indede* (OE *dæd*, Gm. *\*dædis*) ; LC 91<sup>28</sup>, *lede* (OE *lædan*, Gm. *\*laidjan*) : *sede* (OE *sæd*, Gm. *\*sædom*) ; and, A 389, *sprede* : *sede*. In the same way ME *ê* (open) from OE *æ* from Gm. *ai* rimes with the closed *ê* from OE *ê* ; and ME *ê* (closed) from OE *æ* not from Gm. *ai* rimes with open *ê* from OE *êa*. Examples of the former are, LC 132<sup>16</sup>, *arere* (OE *âræran*, Gm. *\*raizjan*) : *here* (OE *hêr*) ; LC 285<sup>20</sup>, *lere* (OE *lêran*, Gm. *\*laizjan*) : *here*, *fere* (OE *gefêra*) ; and A 542, *lere* : *bere* (OE *bêr*, Gm. *\*bêrâ*), *here* ; for the latter, LC 27<sup>5</sup>, *reed* (OE *ræd*, Gm. *\*rædoz*), *dred* (OE *andrædan*, Gm. *\*drædan*) : *ded* (OE *dæad*), *sted* (OE *stede*) ;



LC 157<sup>21</sup>, *methe* (OE *mæþ*, Gm. \**mæþiz*), *brethe* (OE *bræþ*, Gm. \**bræþoz*): *dethe* (OE *dæaþ*); and A 492, *red* (OE *rædan*, Gm. \**rædan*), *blede* (OE *blædan*): *ded*.

We have already, in considering OE *ð*, found an instance in our play of the representative of OE *æ* riming with *ð*, namely, A 310, *lare* (OE *læran*, Gm. \**laizjan*): *evermare*, *fare*, *care*, *declare*. A similar instance is, A 575, *belave* (OE *belæfan*, Gm. \**bilaibjan*): *grave*, *cave*, *save*, *have*. No such rimes are quoted by Kramer from the rest of the cycle. They are, however, to be explained less as broadening of the *ê* than as sharpening of the *ð*, *a*, and of this, as we have seen, there is evidence elsewhere in the cycle.

Beside the common forms *there*, *were* (from *be*) the N-town cycle also presents instances in which both the vowels *a* and *o* appear: LC 73<sup>10</sup>, *thare*, *ware*: *are* (OE Merc. *earun*, North. *aron*), *bare* (OE *bær*); LC 47<sup>12</sup>, *were*: *care* (OE *cearu*), *fare* (OE *faran*), *bare*; LC 111<sup>24</sup>, *thore*: *bore* (OE *boren*), *beffore* (OE *fore*), *restore* (OF *restorer*); LC 146<sup>24</sup>, *wore*: *bore*, *beffore*. In the Assumption the form *there* only occurs once in a rime, A 542, *there*: *bere* (OE *bær*), *here* (OE *hær*), *fere* (OE *fær*), *lere* (OE *læran*), while the form *thore* occurs twice, A 164, *thore*: *evermore* (OE *mæra*), *lore* (OE *lær*), *before*; A 266, *thore*: *more*, *bore*. Neither *thare* nor any of the forms of *were* appears in a rime. Kramer derives the forms *thore*, *wore* from ON *þær*, *wáru* (*váru*). In the case of the latter this is no doubt correct, but as regards *there* the ON form is *þar* not *þær*. This, however, raises no difficulty, for in OE the forms *þær*, *þæra* are well-established variants of *þær*. As regards the forms *thare*, *ware* Kramer points out that the vowels may be instances of the retention of *ð*, a tendency we have already observed, or that they may really represent *ê*-sounds riming with a sharpened *a*, and he decides for the latter alternative on the ground that the forms also appear in texts which show no other evidence of the retention of original OE, ON *ð*. This, then, affords further evidence of the sharpening of the *a*-sound outside the Assumption play. Kramer further remarks that in some cases OE *mænan* has given the form *mone* in the N-town cycle, and he quotes LC 98<sup>7</sup>, 346<sup>14</sup>. But in both these cases *mone* is the substantive, moan, which must go back, not to OE *mænan*, but to the unrecorded OE \**mân* from the same prehistoric stem \**main-*. The word does not

occur in the rimes of the Assumption unless, A 319, *ment* is an instance.

In a few cases, according to Kramer, the representative of OE *ê* rimes with *e*-sounds from OE *ê*, *æ*, *eo*, OF *e*. He quotes LC 349<sup>19</sup>, *lyff* (OE *lif*): *greff* (OF *gref*), *theff* (OE *þeof*); and A 243, *teme* (OE *tîma*): *sweme* (OE *aswæman*), *queme* (OE *cwēman*), *seme* (OE *seman*). The first of these appears to be correct, the second is not. The word *teme* is not OE *tîma*, time, but OF (\**teme*) *tesme*, theme. Similar to the *ê*:*ê* rimes are those of *ô*:*û*. Of these may be quoted, LC 190<sup>22</sup>, *book* (OE *bôc*): *sowke* (OE *sûcan*); LC 146<sup>15</sup>, *boun* (ON *bôn*): *downe* (OE *dûne*); LC 315<sup>19</sup>, *don* (OE *dôn*): *mon* (OE *mugon*). In our play we find the strange assortment of rimes, A 615, *preso(u)n* (OF *prison*, *prisun*): *demon* (OF *demon*, med.L *dêmon*): *so(u)n* (AF *soun*, OF *son*; OE *sôn* from L *sonus* probably did not survive): *ado(u)n* (OE *of dûne*): *mo(u)n* (OE *mugon*): *town* (OE *tûn*), but it may be questioned whether any of these were strictly *ô*-sounds.

The Assumption play agrees with the rest of the cycle in riming the word *here*, hear, with *ê* only: LC 79<sup>9</sup>, *here*: *appere* (OF stem *aper-*, *apareir*); LC 114<sup>15</sup>, *here*: *fere* (OE *gefêr*), *persevere* (F *persévérer*), *dere* (OE *dêore*); and A 3, *here*: *lere* (OE *lêran*), *clere* (OF *cler*), *yere* (OE *gêar*). This shows derivation from the Anglian *hêran* and not WS *hÿran*.

Throughout the cycle the words *frende* and *fende* (OE *frêond*, *fêond*) are found among the ordinary rimes in *-end*, and no indication appears of any such difference of quantity as appeared later and lead to different developments in NE. Thus, LC 136<sup>20</sup>, *frende*: *wende* (OE *wendan*); A 660, *frend(e)*: *ende* (OE *ende*), *mend* (OE *gemynd*), *kend* (OE *cynd*), *wend*; and LC 276<sup>2</sup>, *ffende*: *mende*; A 184, *fende*: *mende*, *kynde*, *hende* (OE *gehende*), *pretende* (OF *pretendre*), *assende* (L *ascendere*).

Discussing the diphthong *ay* with its variants, the representative of OE *æg*, *eg* both long and short, Kramer attempts to show that the word *again* rimes in the N-town cycle with the representative of OE *ê*, *eo*. We have, LC 168<sup>4</sup>, *azen*: *qwen* (OE *cwên*); LC 169<sup>28</sup>, *ageyne*: *quene*; LC 177<sup>28</sup>, *azen*: *ben* (OE *bêon*); LC 379<sup>4</sup>, *ageyn*, *serteyn* (OF *certain*): *seyn* (OE *sêon*). He also quotes, A 659, *ageyn*: *greyn*. He does not say what origin he proposes for the latter word, but his quoting it in this connexion

implies that he takes it as OE *grene*, green. It is, however, certainly OF *grain* in the sense of dye, stain. The word *again* occurs three times in our play, but always riming with true diphthongs. Moreover, it does not appear to be correct to say that the instances quoted above show the English diphthong riming with the simple vowel. For in OE the form *ongén* is found beside the earlier *ongegn* at a time before the diphthongization took place, and *ongén* developed regularly into ME *azen* with a pure vowel correctly riming with *quén*, *bén*, *sén*; the form *ongegn* giving ME *azein*, while the North. *again* goes back to the variant form OE *ongægn*, perhaps influenced by ON *gagn-* (adverbial prefix).

We now come to consider the consonants. Starting with the labials Kramer has a curious blunder in connexion with *p*. He remarks on the noteworthy phenomenon 'that OE final *p* is occasionally found riming with *f*', and quotes, LC 36<sup>12</sup>, *sheff* (OE *scēp*): *lef*, *repreff*; LC 36<sup>21</sup>, *sheff*: *greff*. But, of course, *sheff* is not OE *scēp*, sheep, but OE *scēaf*, sheaf. Cain offered 'de fructibus terrae' not 'de primogenitis gregis' like his brother. In no part of the cycle, therefore, is there evidence of what Kramer calls 'the inclination of final *p* to aspiration'.

The retention of *w* before *r* seems indicated by alliteration, LC 52<sup>2</sup>, *wrought*, *wyl*, *wourthy*; LC 94<sup>10</sup>, *wrake*, *wurde*, *werkyn*, *withowtyn*; LC 120<sup>30</sup>, *wronge*, *I-wys*, *wyff*. To these may be added, A 315, *wrechid*, *world*; A 533, *wrouth*, *wyndand*, *wod*, *wo*. There is, indeed, nothing to show that in these cases *wr* was meant to alliterate, for alliteration in this cycle is purely sporadic, but according to Sweet (*History of English Sounds*, § 919) the *w* continued to be sounded well on into the NE period.

Intrusive *d* has established itself in several instances in the cycle, though in some it is only the rime that shows it, as in, LC 14<sup>11</sup>, *swowne* for *swownde* (OE *swōgnian*): *stownde* (OE *stund*). In the word *sound* (OF *son*) the *d* is not yet fixed, A 615, *so(u)n*: *town* (OE *tūn*), &c.; A 466, *sound*: *ground* (OE *grund*). The only instances of the word recorded are from the Assumption.

An alleged peculiarity of our play is the riming of *nd*: *nt*, the instance quoted being, A 196, *pretende* (OF *pretendre*): *assende* (OF *assentir*). Kramer proceeds: 'Consequently we cannot conclude from the rime *sende* (past part.): *kende* (OE *cennan*)

that in the former word the change of *d* to *t* after voiceless *n* (which belongs to a much earlier date) has not taken place.' But in the above-cited instance, as also in A 126, *assende* is clearly not from OF *assentir* but from L *ascendere*. The rime of *sende* : *kende* must therefore be considered on its own merits. Kramer gives no reference for it; it is not in our play. In favour of the retention of the *d* is the fact that this spelling persisted even into the xvi cent. (e.g. *Everyman*, Huth text, ll. 90, 92, not in rime). In support of an assimilation of the *t* and *d*-sounds (or more probably simply for the resort to impure rime) may be quoted, LC 165<sup>7</sup>, *glete* (OE *gliden*) : *wete*, *pete*, supposing always that Kramer's derivation is here correct. The question does not affect our play.

As regards *r* a number of cases can be cited from the cycle in which it is simply neglected in the rime. Among others we find, LC 36<sup>24</sup>, *wers* : *gesse*; LC 105<sup>10</sup>, *erthe* : *nede*; LC 274<sup>10</sup>, *beforn*, *therupon*. From the Assumption we have, A 614, *herne* : *brenne*, *renne*, *denne*. In the instance, LC 72<sup>7</sup>, *grythe* : *myrthe*, *byrthe*, we should perhaps assume the North. form *gyrthe*.

If we may trust the alliteration *k* retains its sound before *n*. Out of several instances we may quote, LC 8<sup>16</sup>, *knytes*, *cruel*, *unkende*; A 41, *knave*, *knad*, *craggyd*, *kylle* (cf. also A 51). According to Sweet (*History of English Sounds*, § 924) the *k* did not wholly disappear till well on in the NE period.

The development of OE *c* between vowels and also finally was twofold, giving in the N-town cycle both the guttural and palatal sounds, represented by *k* and *ch* respectively. For the former we have the evidence of the rime in, LC 284<sup>5</sup>, *seke* (OE *sêcan*) : *meke* (ON *mîlkr*); LC 189<sup>18</sup>, *lyke* (OE *gelîc*) : *phesyk*. Our play affords no instance of rimes in *-eke*, but the spelling *beseke* (OE *besêcan*) occurs repeatedly, A 147, 174, 187, 309, 349. The palatal value is shown by the rimes, LC 273<sup>10</sup>, *teche* (OE *têcan*) : *preche* (OF *prêcher*); LC 161<sup>1</sup>, *lyche* (OE *gelîc*) : *ryche* (OE *ricc*, but the ME form *rike* was early lost under influence of OE *riche*); A 326, *speche* (OE *spêc*), *teche*, *meche* (OE *mycel*) : *preche*. In LC 167<sup>5</sup>, *seche*, *beseche* : *leche* (OE *lêce*), the pronunciation is strictly only evidenced by the spelling, but as a matter of fact no such form as *leke* is recorded.

As regards the representative of OE *hw* it has already been

observed, when discussing the scribe's peculiarities, that the Assumption play agrees with the rest of the cycle in occasionally having *qu*, *qw* in place of the more usual *wh*. Kramer remarks that no evidence is forthcoming of any pronunciation other than *w*, since we find *w* and the representative of OE *hw* freely alliterating together. There do not, however, appear to be any instances of this in the few *w*-alliterations of our play. According to Sweet (*History of English Sounds*, § 725) the voiceless *w* persisted throughout ME.

Unetymological *h* is prefixed to words in not a few instances; thus, LC 160<sup>26</sup>, *hendynge*; LC 201<sup>8</sup>, *hende*; LC 222<sup>20</sup>, *haske*. From our play we may quote, A 49, *houre*, and probably, A 307, *halle*.

We have now to consider the inflections. An examination of ablaut formations yields little result; terminations seem rather more hopeful. The cycle shows an even balance between *-th* and *-s* as the ending of the third person singular in the present indicative. Seven instances of each, witnessed by the rime, are quoted. Of these only two come from the Assumption, and both these show *-s*: A 507, *louris* : *prechours*, &c.; A 641, *hythtis* : *rythtis*, &c. The *-th* ending is not evidenced in this play by the rime, but we do find, A 206, *pshalmodyeth*, *magnefyeth*, *sertefyeth* : *replyeth* (plural imperative) where there is no reason to suspect that the endings are not original. We also have the spelling, A 3, *liketh*, and A 68, *halt*, probably for *haldeth*. All three persons of the plural are in the vast majority of cases without ending, but there are a few instances of the first ending in *-n*, the second in *-n* or *-s*, the third in *-n* or *-th*. Only one such instance occurs in the Assumption play, namely, A 75, *they seyn* (OE *secgan*) : *agayn*, &c.

As a rule the plural imperative is without ending. Occasionally, however, forms appear with the regular *-th*, or even with an anomalous *-n*. Thus LC 341<sup>26</sup>, *Knyghtes now goht* : *wrothe*, *clothe*; LC 180<sup>1</sup>, *To have hym ze gon* : *bon*; LC 307<sup>7</sup>, *thus ze hym seyn* : *peyn*. Our play affords one riming instance, A 212, *(yow) replyeth* : *(he) sertefyeth*, and the spelling *wachith* in the next line. How the forms in *-n* are to be explained is not clear, but it is worth while calling attention to the strange form, A 615, *fettyn*. As it stands the line can only be construed by taking this as a plural imperative addressed to Belsabub, Belyal, and

Sathan of the line before. If an imperative is out of the question emendation becomes necessary.

As in the cycle in general, so too in our particular play, certain infinitives in *-n* occur. There are in all, according to Kramer, forty-three instances, of which thirty-four occur in the descendants of OE *béon*, *gân*, *dôn*, *séon*, and *secgan*. In our play we have only, A 250, *done, gone : one, &c.* ; A 333, *gon : Iohn, &c.* (but see A 615, note).

The occurrence of present participles in *-ende* and *-ande*, beside the later and more southern *-ing* (*-ynge*), is established by the rimes, LC 74<sup>30</sup>, *knelende : amende* ; LC 243<sup>26</sup>, *applyande, declinande : hande, plesande*. The forms also occur in our play, but are not vouched for by the rime: A 25, *preyand, seyand, pleyand* ; A 150, *desyrand, requyrand, telland, expirand, seyand, presentand*. We also find, A 42, *kneland* and, A 533, *Wyndand*. The only rimes in *-ing* in our play are, A 58, *kyng, rysyng, endyng, gynnyng* ; A 349, *metyng, curyng, comyng, werkyng*, and of these *curyng* alone is a participle. Indeed I fancy that present participles in *-ing* are much less common in rimes than seems to be implied by Kramer's statement that 'The present participle and the verbal substantive both end in *-ynge* in the great majority of cases'. It will be observed that there are twelve instances of participles in *-ande, -ende* at the end of lines, though only three of these are actually certified by the rime. Now rimes in *-ing* (*-ynge*) are very common at any rate in certain portions of the N-town cycle, but a good many of these are words such as *bring, zinge, &c.*, and of the rest the vast majority are verbal substantives. Apart from the one case in the Assumption play mentioned above, the following are the only instances of riming participles in *-ing* that I have been able to find: LC 7<sup>25</sup>, *lestyng*, 31<sup>4</sup>, *brennyng*, 96<sup>11</sup>, *syttyng*, 125<sup>10</sup>, *conseyvenge*, 125<sup>12</sup>, *sekyng*, 125<sup>27</sup>, *inspyryng*, 126<sup>10</sup>, *prayng*, 126<sup>13</sup>, *beyng*, 286<sup>4</sup>, *abydyng*. There are then ten instances, all confirmed by the rime. But it will be noticed that exactly half of these come out of one short passage from the Visit to Elizabeth, and this there are independent grounds for believing to be late revisional work. The certified majority in favour of the southern *-ing* over the northern *-and* is then not so overpowering after all. If we eliminate the Visit to Elizabeth and the Assumption the proportion of northern

to southern forms actually established by rime is three to four.

As regards past participles it is to be noticed that OE *boren*, *-loren*, from the verbs *beran*, *-léosan*, give in the N-town cycle the double forms *born*, *bore*, *lorn*, *lore*. Of these *bore* alone is found in the rimes of the Assumption, A 164, 270. It is indeed characteristic of the cycle that participles in *-n* seldom appear, some whole ablaut-classes not producing them at all. This tendency is if anything even more marked in our play than elsewhere.

The so-called substantive verb presents in the present indicative a variety of forms. For all persons of the plural we usually find *be*, occasionally *bene* for the third. Our play has, A 312, *ye are : lare*, &c. This does not seem to be used elsewhere, but we find one instance of, LC 174<sup>10</sup>, *(they) are : fare*.

Certain points connected with plural nouns may last be noticed. The strong plural ending is still syllabic, at least for the purposes of rime (see, however, the note to line 351). Instances are particularly numerous in the Assumption owing to the writer's fondness for dissyllabic rimes: thus, A 85, *ententis*, *dentis : schent is*; A 146, *myhtis : dith is* (see also A 213, 372, 446, 641); A 234, *hyllys : wyll is*; A 279, *fistis : liste is*. Examples from other parts of the cycle are, LC 127<sup>15</sup>, *goodys : bonis*; LC 146<sup>20</sup>, *wurdys : blys*; LC 355<sup>4</sup>, *awntys : graunt us*. The instances Kramer quotes from A 211, 213 are due to his having misunderstood the rime-scheme. On the other hand, the ending is not syllabic in, LC 294<sup>15</sup>, *thretty pens : presens*. Weak plurals in *-n* are still found in the case of certain words which no longer form them: the only one in our play is, A 49, *fon* (OE *gefān*, NE *foes*): *alon*, &c. This occurs four times in the rest of the cycle, also *ton*, *toes*, *schon*, *shoes*, *eyn*, *eyes*. Certain original strong neuters, which in NE are usually assimilated to the strong masculines, still show uninflected plurals in the N-town cycle. The commonest of these, and the only one in our play, is OE *gêar*, A 9, *thretty yere : here*, &c.; A 486, *thre skore yer : er*, *fer*. This indeed can hardly be said to be obsolete even now. The others found in the cycle are *londe* and *thyng*. There are further certain anomalous cases of uninflected plurals in the cycle, but none occur in the Assumption.

I have followed Dr. Kramer in his arrangement of the evidence,

and I have for the sake of argument accepted his interpretation of it. It is not necessary to inquire exactly how far that interpretation is correct. I think it is easy to push arguments of the sort too far. Suppose, for instance, that one writer rimes together two sounds of diverse origin, whereas another writer does not. To argue that in the pronunciation of the former the sounds approximated closer than in that of the latter seems to imply a knowledge of the metrical scrupulousness of the two writers which must be somewhat difficult to attain. Such inquiries are, however, irrelevant to our immediate purpose. This is merely to inquire whether as a matter of fact we can detect a difference of riming habit between the Assumption play and the rest of the N-town cycle. If we can, it may then be necessary to inquire whether this arises from a difference of dialect or merely a difference of poetic temperament; if we cannot, *cadit quaestio*.

Now, when we take into consideration the very narrow limits of the Assumption play compared with the whole cycle, something less than a twentieth, and remember that we must consequently expect to find some peculiarities in the whole, of which no examples happen to occur in the part, I think that we shall be struck by the great similarity of riming characteristics that can be traced throughout the whole cycle. Our investigation has yielded us practically no criterion by which to distinguish the language of our play from that of its companions.

The rime of *a : e* is better evidenced in the Assumption than elsewhere, and that of *ā : ē* is confined to it. Both peculiarities, however, seem best explained by a sharpening of the *a*, *ā*-sound for which other evidence can be adduced from other parts of the cycle. This, therefore, will not serve to distinguish our play. Nor will the practical absence of *ê : î* and *ô : û* rimes, for these are anyhow of rare occurrence. The southern tendency for OE *æ* to become ME *e* which is marked in the cycle cannot be traced in the Assumption, though neither can it exactly be denied. On the other hand, the other notably southern tendency observable in the cycle, namely the dropping of *-n* in the past participle of strong verbs, is if anything more marked in our play than elsewhere. That, I think, is the total result of our inquiry.



In the notes to the Assumption play certain peculiarities of form or spelling have been noted as northern or Scotch. They are, A 68, *halt*, holdeth, northern but also Anglian; A 70, *relefe*, relieve, northern, witnessed by the rime; A 238, *skele*, skill, Scotch, but the rime requires *skill*; A 582, *synge*, sign, Scotch; A 660, *dowe*, dove, Scotch. Our investigation into the dialect has shown plenty of instances of a northern tendency in the cycle as a whole. Here it will be sufficient to add, for the dialect, the distinctively northern *tan*, taken (past participle of OE *tacan* from ON *taka*), LC 15<sup>24</sup>, *tan* : *than*, LC 227<sup>21</sup>, *tan* : *man*, *can*, *sertan*, and for the writing, as already mentioned in the former section, LC 404<sup>32</sup>, *ssalte*, shalt.

In respect to the N-town cycle as a whole the outcome of Dr. Kramer's inquiry was to the effect that, whereas there could be no doubt of the East Midlands as the general home of the work, the deeper lying peculiarities pointed towards a southern, the more superficial towards a northern connexion. From this he inferred that the cycle must have had its origin on the borders between the eastern and southern districts, possibly in Wiltshire, but that it had been worked over on the northern border of the East Midlands. Whether these conclusions are in themselves sound I am not sufficient of a philologist to pronounce: I can only suggest that the writer has perhaps not taken sufficiently into consideration the possibility of a fundamentally complex origin for the cycle. What does appear to me abundantly clear is that, whatever conclusions the phonetic evidence may justify as to the cycle as a whole, will be equally valid for the Assumption play in particular.

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The above inquiry of course necessitated making a rime-index to the Assumption play. This I print here in case any reader should wish to carry the investigation further. In the headings final -E is not syllabic unless accented (-É). The line number is added to the first word of each rime-group. The words are given in the exact form in which they occur in the text. Bad rimes (other than repeated) and rime-words mis-written by the scribe are marked by asterisks. Words in brackets are either erased or cut away in the original.

## RIME-INDEX.

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*wyst this		lithis		tron	
ITÉ		_____		ONIS	
deyte	112	sith is	444	onys	518
humanite		myhtis		bonys	
benygynte		brith is		stonys	
vnyte		flithis		ORE	
_____		_____		bore	164
*me	127	ryhtis	641	eu'more	
eternyte		myth is		lore	
pplexite		hyhtis		thore	
diu'cyte		lyth is		before	
viginite		ryth is		before	
cōsorcyte		myhtis		_____	
_____		O		more	266
Infyrmyte	595	lo	297	thore	
t'nyte		eu'mo		bore	
vnyte		_____		ORE	
*pete		slo	517	o(u)N	
13T		go		presoñ	615
syth	169	_____		demon	
rith		do	608	adoñ	
myth		go		moñ	
lyth		harro		towñ	
_____		ONE		soñ	
myth	231	syoñ	16	OUND	
ryth		on		groñd	466
syth		Iordoñ		sound	
brith		alon		OURIS	
13TIS		_____		prehours	507
bryth [is]	141	anon	45	louris	
lyth [is]		alon		schouris	

touris		URE		nature	377
OUT		reddure	53	dure	
owte	482	scripture		pure	
dowte		purpure		sure	
OU3T		—		—	
nouth	526	pure	140	pure	419
yowth		mure		cure	
brouth		seu'		sepulture	
wrouth		nortur		severe	
routh		—		—	
nouth		socoure	216	honure	557
OW (see AY NOW)		doloure		seuere	
now	288	honure		pure	
yow		toure		cure	
pray now		[honure?]		indure	
say yow		savyoure		mure	
		—			

### 3. METRE.

The stanzaic arrangement of the Assumption play presents at first sight a curious confusion. Indeed, so long as I studied the piece in Halliwell's edition only, I was quite unable to discover, in most of it, any regular arrangement at all. A glance at the manuscript, however, showed that not only had the rubricator understood it, but that he had been at considerable pains to make it clear to the reader. For it became evident that, whereas in other portions of the cycle he had distinguished the beginning of each stanza by a similar mark, he had here used two different marks, a larger and a smaller paragraph, and a little consideration showed that, if the lines following the smaller paragraphs were in each case omitted, there resulted a perfectly normal, though not perfectly regular, sequence of stanzas. The stanzas had namely been bound together, or separated, as we please to regard it, by a series of intercalary lines and couplets which broke the regular stanzaic sequence, and if not somehow distinguished from the stanzas themselves, had the effect of reducing the whole scheme to apparent chaos. For it is not as though these lines were obvious intruders bearing on the face of them evidence of their independence of the stanzaic structure of the play. They are, in the majority of cases, intimately connected with the rime-scheme of one of the neighbouring stanzas. To the manner of their connexion I shall return later on.

When these intercalary lines have been eliminated the play is seen to consist for the most part of a mixture of stanzas of thirteen and of eight lines respectively. As far as line 124 and from line 476 to the end the former prevail; in the intervening portion, with few exceptions, the latter. Each has its peculiarities.

The thirteen-line stanza is in essence one which is found in various other parts of the N-town cycle and is probably that in which its oldest and most original portions were composed. The same stanza is also found in a considerable body of work of northern origin, to which the term 'alliterative' is usually applied. But in the present case it shows a curious variation from type. The usual rime-scheme is a b a b a b a b c d d d c. As if this were not already a sufficiently severe test of the writer's ingenuity, he has here adopted the form a b a b a b a b b c c c b. It is, indeed, open to question whether we are right in regarding the ninth and thirteenth lines as deliberately intended to continue the b-rimes, or whether it would not be better to regard them rather as possessing fresh rimes more or less accidentally attracted to the b-form in obedience to the love of continuous jingle so characteristic of medieval times. This is not, as might be thought, a distinction without a difference. If the b-rime persists throughout the stanza, then we have a right to expect good rimes everywhere. If, on the other hand, the ninth and thirteenth lines really possess distinct rimes, then they may without offence repeat words already used in the b-rimes. It should be observed that the author does not always use the variant form. In four instances he uses the normal stanza, though it is true that in one of these, the first stanza of the play, the intention is not quite as clear as it might be. Further, in one instance the ninth and thirteenth lines have been assimilated, not to the b-rimes, but to the a-rimes, giving the rime-scheme a b a b a b a b a c c c a. All this points rather to attraction than to intentional modification of type.

Before considering the question of the repetition of rimes in this connexion I must make a short digression on the subject of repeated rimes in general. It must of course be borne in mind that words the same in form but different in sense are to be regarded as perfect rimes. This makes the rime-scheme

dependent upon the interpretation of the text, which is unfortunate, for it renders our criticism a little uncertain. All cases, however, of repeated rime will be found discussed in the notes, as well as recorded in the metrical synopsis at the end of the present section, and few remain in any way doubtful as regards sense. It will be sufficient if I summarize here. There are 506 lines of verse in the play. Of these fifty-five end with the same word as one of the other lines with which they are supposed to rime: there are twenty-six pairs and a triplet. For the latter there is no excuse. Of the pairs five are perfectly good rimes. Twelve are wholly without justification. There remain nine which must be classed as more or less doubtful. They are probably all bad rimes, but in each case something may be pleaded in extenuation.

I return to the consideration of the thirteen-line stanza. There are in all twenty-two such stanzas in the play; seventeen in which the b-rime is carried through. In these there are eight instances of the ninth or thirteenth line containing a repeated rime. Twice it is the ninth line which repeats from the second, the first time making a thoroughly bad rime, the second time a perfectly good one. Once the thirteenth line makes a perfectly good rime by repeating the fourth. In the remaining five cases it is the thirteenth line which repeats the second, that is, the last b-rime of the stanza repeats the first. This is a very remarkable fact, which I cannot regard as accidental, even though it be true that one of these rimes is good whereas all the others are bad. The author must, I imagine, have regarded such a doubling back of the rime-sequence to form a closed series as an embellishment, and have adopted it intentionally. This would imply that he did regard the sequence as an integral whole. And since apart from these apparently intentional instances of repetition the ninth and thirteenth lines only show a single instance of a bad repeated rime, I assume that such is indeed the fact. The three different types of the stanza might be represented graphically thus:

normal type:	a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b	c	d	d	d	c
variant type:	a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b	b	c	c	c	b
attracted type:	a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b	c <sup>b</sup>	d	d	d	c <sup>b</sup>
	⏟								⏟				
	body								tail				

Passing to the eight-line stanza we find a somewhat similar



departure from normal usage. Stanzas of eight lines are among the commonest in fifteenth-century verse, but as a rule the rime-scheme is a b a b b c b c, whereas we here find the more rigorous form a b a b a b a b. The latter is, of course, also well recognized in Middle English, though it is far from common. What it is important to observe here is that the octave is identical with the first part of the thirteen-line stanza already discussed, and the question forces itself upon us whether after all these octaves are anything more than *disiecta membra* of original stanzas of the longer type. Into this question, however, I do not now propose to enter as I see no means of arriving for the moment at any positive answer. It should be mentioned that there are nineteen stanzas with the scheme a b a b a b a b, and one with a b a b b a b a, besides six plain quatrains with alternate rime.

I have observed above that the intercalary lines are usually associated in rime with one of the neighbouring stanzas. In only two cases is an independent couplet introduced. In three cases a couplet continues the last rime of the previous stanza, and it may be noteworthy that in only one of these three cases are the lines distinguished by the customary paragraph. There remain in all twenty-six lines, eight couplets and ten single lines, which anticipate the first rime of the following stanza. Now it may be worth while to inquire how far these lines are to be regarded as actually absorbed into the metrical schemes of the stanzas in question, and how far as independent units merely attracted into the same rime-jingle. The distinction is the same as that observed above in connexion with the ninth and last lines of the thirteen-line stanza, the position namely of repeated rimes. Of the thirty-two lines which are associated with the rimes of a neighbouring stanza four repeat a rime in that stanza. That is to say, one intercalary line in eight has a repeated rime, and with one doubtful exception all these repeated rimes are bad. As we have already seen, of the 506 lines of the play, fifty-five end with a repeated rime. Excluding intercalary lines altogether there are in 470 lines of text forty-eight which end with the same word as one of the other lines with which they are intended to rime. This is slightly over one in ten. But then of these forty-eight instances five pairs are really perfectly good rimes and nine pairs must be classed as doubtful. If we deduct the pairs forming good rimes

we are left with one bad or doubtful repetition in about twelve and a half lines, whereas we found in the intercalary lines one in eight. The proportion in the latter is therefore distinctly higher, but I cannot persuade myself that it is high enough to make us suppose that in these lines the author regarded himself as at liberty to repeat what rimes he pleased.

What then is the meaning, and what is the origin, of these intercalary lines? Three possibilities, I think, suggest themselves. It is conceivable, in the first place, that some reviser, either the original author going over his work, or some other, may have inserted the lines to remedy what seemed too abrupt transitions in the original text. In favour of this is the fact that they can as a rule be excised without serious injury to the text. But if the lines are insertions it is at least remarkable that they should appear nowhere but between stanzas, while in some instances they appear almost too closely interwoven with the structure of the speeches to make the theory of interpolation possible. Or again we might suppose that the whole piece was originally composed in thirteen-line stanzas, and that the intercalary lines are the remains of, or substitutions for, the tails that were excised in the process of reducing a large part of the text to octaves. This explanation is suggested by the remarkable fact that these intercalary lines are almost confined to the octave portion of the text, and it is in itself certainly attractive. There are, however, it seems to me, two objections to it, which, together at any rate, must be fatal. One is that there is no sufficient reason for the excision of the tails, since, if lines had to be substituted, the saving in length would be insignificant compared with the expenditure of labour involved. The other is that a reviser making such a change in stanzas of the modified type (a b a b a b a b c c c b), such as we should suppose these to have been, if ever they were thirteen-line stanzas at all, would almost certainly have retained for his intercalated lines the two existent b-rimes of the tail, rather than invent for them fresh a-rimes of the following rime-scheme.

We are therefore driven, so it appears, to the conclusion that the intercalary lines formed part of the play as originally written. This, if correct, supplies an answer to the question previously raised as to whether the play may not have been originally com-

posed throughout in thirteen-line stanzas, a view which is now seen to be untenable, or at least highly improbable. In the central portion, where the shorter stanzas are used, the writer appears to have constantly found that he had exhausted his eight lines before having expressed what he wished to say, and to have disliked beginning a new stanza at the fag end of a speech. He seems to have hit on the device, which would commend itself to one with the love of continuous jingle he had shown in his treatment of the thirteen-line stanza, of finishing off the speech or discussion in one or two lines on a fresh rime and then of using this new rime as the starting-point for his scheme in the next stanza. It is noticeable that in general the intercalary lines belong in sense to the preceding, though in rime to the following, stanza. I do not think that the use of extra-stanzaic lines was due to mere incompetence on the writer's part, for the device laid on him fresh burdens of rime which he sustained with some success, but in some measure, at least, to a desire for greater richness of sound. At the same time it was unfortunate that he should have done anything to add to the difficulties of a form of composition which already taxed to the utmost his not very remarkable powers of intelligible expression.

As might be expected from the choice of such an intricate rime-scheme by an inferior writer, the rimes themselves are often of very doubtful purity. Without troubling to enter into phonetic subtleties we may at once point to various licences that would have been avoided by a more careful poet. Accent is, of course, commonly neglected. 'Mary' rimes both as a trochee and as an iamb within a single stanza, the first. 'Peter' is made to rime with 'teche her' and 'speche her', 'wyst this' with 'fistis', and many other doubtful rimes might be quoted. Words ending in the same syllable are freely used as rimes, and have to be accepted as current: 'spoused' 'godhed' 'falshed' 'manhed'; 'rysyng' 'endyng' 'gynnyng'; 'humanite' 'benygnyte' 'vnyte', and so forth. Of repeated rimes I have already spoken. The justification of individual instances, or the reverse, will be found discussed in the notes.

But in connexion with repeated rimes there is one very remarkable feature to which attention should be directed. Many of them are entirely indefensible, and all but a very few are

open to grave objection. This the author seems to have recognized, and unless I am mistaken he endeavoured to remedy matters in a somewhat peculiar fashion. The a-rimes of the stanza beginning at line 362 are as follow: *pete, deite, sent me, tent me*. Now *me* is, of course, a perfectly good rime, but *me, me* is a helpless repetition. As it appears the stanza has not four a-rimes at all: the formula should be written a b a b c b c b. But is this what the author intended? Turn to the stanza beginning at line 288. Here we have the a-rimes: *now, yow, pray now, say yow*. In this case we are debarred from the expedient of importing a c-rime, because, unlike *sent me, tent me*, the words *pray now, say yow* are incapable of forming a new dissyllabic rime. The writer finds himself forced to use over again the rime-words *now* and *yow* which have already done duty in the first half of the stanza; to mitigate the licence he resorts to the device of making the penultimate words of the lines rime as well. In the absence of any clear idea of the relation of rime and accent he is able to regard *pray now* and *say yow*, not in their relation as wholes (which will afford no rime), but as riming *pray : say* and *now : yow*. And this throws an entirely new light upon the case we considered above. To the writer that was not a rime of *sent me : tent me* as wholes, but of *sent : tent* and of either *me* with *pete, deite*. And I suspect that we find another, though more obscure, case of the same thing later on. In the stanza beginning at line 491 the a-rimes are: *say yow, aray now, nay [   ], aray [   ]*. The two erasures are presumably of the word *now*. But to this series there is a double objection. For one thing *say yow* does not rime with any of the other lines: for another *aray : aray* cannot be regarded as a good rime even though we have in one case the substantive, in the other the verb. Now I dare to conjecture that in line 498 what the original author wrote was not *faste yow aray now* but *faste now aray yow*. According to his ideas the rimes would then resolve themselves into the series *say : aray : nay : aray*, supported, as was desirable in view of the repetition of *aray*, by the subordinate series *yow : now : now : yow*. Perhaps even it was this same theory of rime that gave us the strange sequence *Peter : teche her : speche her* mentioned above. These considerations have led me to write the formula for the stanza beginning at line 362, not a b a b c b c b, but a b a b ā b ā b.

I fancy that these duplicate rimes are as original a device of our author as are the extra-stanzaic couplets.

Although from his ingenious use of paragraphs it may be inferred that the rubricator thoroughly understood the stanzaic structure of the play, it is questionable whether the same can be said of the scribe. For after writing the text he appears to have made a number of alterations and erasures with a view to removing certain very awkward dissyllabic rimes. Sometimes he merely deleted an unemphatic 'now', for instance, at the end of the lines, leaving them to rime monosyllabically on the preceding words; sometimes he removed a final 'is' and inserted it earlier in the line. In one or two cases he was able to carry out this process throughout the stanza, leaving it perfectly regular, but generally he was only able to do so in one half, and he does not appear to have observed that in these cases his alterations rendered the metrical structure anomalous. These alterations were evidently made after the rime-lines had been drawn, but in some instances these have been subsequently continued over the erasures. The rime-lines ought to tell us a good deal as to the scribe's comprehension of the stanzaic structure. Unfortunately they are inserted very mechanically, and illustrate it by no means adequately. Even in other portions of the cycle, where the scribe, the rubricator of our play, undoubtedly understood the metre perfectly, the rime-lines show no clear evidence of the fact. The point may be clearly seen in the accompanying facsimiles.

I append a rime-scheme for the whole play. The numbers on the left are those of the first lines of the various stanzas. The large paragraphs of the manuscript are represented by ¶, the small by \*. Intercalary lines, whether designated by a paragraph or inferred by analogy, are shown in italic type. The letters *xx* indicate a riming couplet not associated with the scheme of any stanza. The numerals in square brackets are the line numbers of Latin passages which stand outside the stanzaic arrangement. A letter enclosed in square brackets indicates a conjectural restoration of a defect in the manuscript. Letters in parentheses indicate lines which as originally written certainly or presumably rimed correctly, but which have ceased to do so owing to subsequent alterations by the scribe as explained

above. A point under a letter indicates a bad rime. Diacritical marks over or through letters indicate repeated rimes whether permissible or not. Their quality is indicated by the words in the right margin. Of these *good* and *bad* speak for themselves: *doubt[ful]*, indicates that the two words though identical are yet distinguished by some difference of meaning or use, or that some doubt exists as to the interpretation of the passage, while *dupl[icated]*, means that the repeated rime is supported by subsidiary riming words after the manner already explained. A few notes are added at the end.

### RIME-SCHEME.

3	¶ a b a b a b a b c d d d c	
16	¶ a b a b a b a b b c c c b	
30	¶ a b a b a b a b b c ç c b	
44	¶ a b a b a b a b b c c c b	
58	¶ a b a b a b a b b c c c b	
74	¶ a b a b a b a b b c c c b	
93	¶ a b a b a b a b b c c c b̄ * x x	<i>good</i>
108	¶ a b a b a b a b b c c c b	
126	¶ a b a b ¶ a b a b b̄ b̄	
140	¶ a(b)a(b)a b a b	
150	* a a ¶ a b a b a b a b	
164	* a a ¶ a b a b ã b ã b	<i>doubt.</i>
177	* a a ¶ a b a b	
184	¶ a ã ¶ a b â b â b ã b a c c c a	<i>doubt., good</i>
205	¶ a b a b a b a b	
213	* a ¶ a b a b(a)b(a)b[b]c c c b	
231	¶ a b a b a(b)a(b)	
240	* a ¶ a b a b a b a b	
250	* a ¶ a b a b a b a b b c c c b	
266	* a ¶ a b a b	
272	* a a ¶ ã b a b ã b a b	<i>good</i>
288	¶ ã b â b ã b â b	<i>dupl., bad, dupl.</i>
297	* x x ¶ a b ã b a b ã b	<i>doubt., doubt.</i>
310	* a a ¶ a b a b a b a b	
323	* ã ¶ a b ã b a b ã b	<i>bad</i>
333	* a ¶ a b a b a b a b	
346	a ¶ ã b a b ã b a b	<i>bad</i>
358	* a a ¶ a b a b ã b ã b	<i>dupl.</i>
372	* ã a ¶ a b a b a b ã b	<i>bad</i>

386	* $\bar{a}$ ¶ a b a b ¶ a b $\bar{a}$ b [b' 401-16]	<i>bad</i>
419	¶ a b a b a b a b	
427	a $\bar{a}$ b $\bar{a}$ b [b' 434-9]	<i>bad</i>
443	¶ a b a b a b a b	
454	¶ $\bar{a}$ b a b b a b $\bar{a}$	<i>bad</i>
463	* a ¶ a b a b [b' 471-4]	
476	¶ a b a b a b a b c d d d c	
491	¶ a b $\bar{a}$ b (a) b ( $\bar{a}$ ) b b c c c b	<i>bad, dupl., bad</i>
506	¶ a b a b a b a b c d d d c	
525	¶ a b a b a b a b b c c c b	<i>bad</i>
541	¶ a b a b a b a b b c c c b	<i>bad</i>
555	¶ $\bar{a}$ b $\bar{a}$ b a b a b b c c c b	<i>doubt.</i>
574	¶ a b a b [¶ 580-1] a [583] b a b b c c c b	<i>bad</i>
595	¶ a b a b a b a b c d d d c	
614	¶ a b a b a b a b b c c c b	
631	¶ a b a b * b b	
640	¶ a b a b a b a b b c c c b	<i>good, good</i>
659	¶ a b a b a b a b b c c c b [¶ 676]	<i>bad</i>
678	a b a b b b	

3. In the first stanza it is possible that *c* may be intended to continue *b*, but it does not in fact do so, being if anything a monosyllabic and not a dissyllabic rime. It has indeed really been attracted to *a*.

93. The intercalary couplet does not belong to the rime-scheme of either stanza. It is best taken with the preceding, as a break in the action follows.

177. The order of the lines is corrected.

184. This is a quite anomalous stanza, *a* being carried through the tail in place of *b*.

213. One rime is missing owing to the cropping of the manuscript. It was not improbably a repeated rime.

250. The order of the lines is corrected.

288. A curiously irregular stanza.

297. Another instance of a wholly independent couplet. It is possible that the repeated rimes in this stanza may be good.

454. This stanza is anomalous in that it reverses the rimes in the second half.

491. Another very irregular stanza. The duplication in the second repeated rime is conjectural, it may be merely doubtful or bad. If it is duplicated, then the first line of the stanza is involved in the duplication, and is not merely incorrect.

555. There may possibly be repetition and duplication in *c*.

631. This is the only instance in which intercalary lines, so marked in the manuscript, rime with the preceding stanza.

#### 4. AUTHORSHIP.

It is time to review the evidence which we have collected. We may be said to have failed completely in our search for any dialectal differences between the language of the Assumption play and that of the N-town cycle as a whole. It is true that the evidence upon which we had to rely is to some extent unsatisfactory in quantity and quality alike, and did we propose to base on it any positive argument that the play in question was written either by the same author as its companions, or by a different author from them, it would be sadly deficient for our purpose. But it will suffice for the moment if we draw the purely negative inference that there is nothing in the dialect of our play to necessitate our supposing a difference of authorship, or even to suggest that any such difference exists.

There are, however, two other considerations which may, and in point of fact pretty clearly do, point in that direction, namely metre and style. Of the latter I do not propose to speak in this place, since it must always remain largely a subjective matter, upon which each reader had best be left to form his own opinion. I will only record here my personal view that several different styles may be traced in the cycle as a whole, and that while it would hardly be possible to differentiate that of our play from every one of these, it is quite certainly not that of any prominent section of the cycle elsewhere.

The question of metre, or rather of stanzaic structure, we have already examined at length. The stanzas employed are, with certain modifications, those in which considerable portions of the rest of the cycle are written. What chiefly characterizes this play, and differentiates it from all its companions, is the fact that the stanzas are connected by an elaborate system of inter-stanzaic lines. I may be merely exposing my ignorance, but I do not remember to have met with anything at all similar elsewhere in Middle English literature. It is a highly original device, and I am not sure that, if used with greater skill and discretion, it might not prove highly effective. Moreover, the stanzas themselves, though ostensibly of rather common types, have minor peculiarities that give them a character of their own.



In the thirteen-line stanza the b-rime is usually carried through the tail in a manner practically, if not entirely, unknown elsewhere. The octave has throughout two rime-sounds only in place of the usual three. Another metrical peculiarity of the Assumption play is the prevalence of dissyllabic rimes. Of course there are plenty of these elsewhere in the cycle, but nowhere do they abound as they do here. In particular, what is fairly common in this particular play, and, I believe, very rare in all the rest, is the use of two words to make up the double rime. It will have been noticed that in collecting above the evidence for the syllabic value of the plural ending *-is*, eight quotations were given from our play, all double rimes, while from the whole of the rest of the cycle only two could be gathered and of these one was monosyllabic. Lastly we must remember the very peculiar device by which the writer has endeavoured to support bad repeated rimes by a subsidiary rime-sequence. This, taken in conjunction with the intercalary lines and the modification of the thirteen-line stanza, I think shows the writer to have been, if not himself a skilful versifier, at any rate profoundly interested in metrical experiment. If any other verse exists showing the same peculiarities it ought to be identified and closely studied for its prosodic interest. Personally, however, I know of none.

There seems, therefore, ample evidence of a metrical character for saying that the Assumption play does stand apart from the rest of the cycle, not in handwriting only, but in composition likewise. That it is by a different author from any other part of the cycle, I am not prepared to assert ; but it does seem to me that if the same writer's work appears anywhere else it can only be in incidental passages. There is no such marked individuality of style as to render this unlikely, while the writer's metrical experiments would naturally be confined to the one play which was entirely, or at any rate substantially, his own composition.

Whether or not the play is entirely the original composition of the writer whose characteristics it manifestly bears, is a difficult point to decide. I do not think that the differences of stanza observable are due to composite origin. The close and continuous dependence of the text upon its source renders any theory of amalgamation highly improbable. Some of the

thirteen-line stanzas, notably those beginning at lines 476, 525, 541, consist of lines far shorter and less rambling, or shambling, than the average, and in this resemble some of the plays near the beginning of the cycle for instance. But it will be noticed that two out of these three stanzas are of the peculiar rime-structure only found in the present play, and we are, therefore, driven to the conclusion that the difference of rhythm they exhibit was deliberate on the author's part. The occurrence of the rare word *celestly* in our play (l. 459) suggests some connexion with Mary's praise of the psalter in the Betrothal play, which is the only other recorded passage in which the word is found. The suggestion that that passage was likewise written by our author must at once be rejected on the ground of style. Nor do I think it likely that we have in the Assumption a revision of earlier work by the author of the Betrothal, for there is good reason to believe that the passage concerning the psalter is itself late revisional work. Most likely the author of the Assumption had seen the Betrothal play in its present form and borrowed from it the word in question. A similar borrowing, probably, is the word *lake* in the sense of grave, which occurs in line 585 of our play and also in the account of the Resurrection (p. 350).

We have not come to any definite conclusion as to the significance of the change of handwriting which marks the Assumption play. It is to be observed that the play is not autograph, for it contains errors, such as the alterations of the rimes, of which the author himself could hardly have been guilty. Apparently the copy from which our text was transcribed made use of a *y*-shaped *þ*. If the difference in handwriting means that the copy was commissioned at a distance (though from an original produced in the same district) with a view to its incorporation in the cycle, it is unlikely that any work of the same author appears elsewhere in the cycle. If, on the other hand, the difference of scribe is accidental (and the apparent acquaintance of the author with other parts of the cycle in a late form would lead us to suppose so), the inference does not follow.

The general result, then, at which we have arrived is that the Assumption play is probably an original work of a single author, who, if responsible for anything else in the cycle, is responsible for revisional work only, though the dialect in which he wrote is

not distinguishable from that of the rest of the collection, and further that his play was copied by a scribe who, though different from the one who wrote the bulk of the volume, belonged to the same district and had some of the same peculiarities.

## 5. SOURCE.

I print below the story of the Assumption contained in Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* in so far as it was used by the author of the play in the N-town cycle. The natural course would have been to reprint the fragment as given in the edition by T. Graesse published in 1846 (ch. CXIX, p. 504), but on examination this proved to offer so unsatisfactory a text that I have preferred to resort to a copy of the Strassburg edition of 1482 in my possession. This I have reproduced, only normalizing the spelling, adding such punctuation as seemed necessary, and correcting a few slips of the compositor (viz. printing p. 41, l. 8 *in matrem* for *matrem*, p. 43, l. 8 *lectulo* for *lemulo* and *manibus* for *recanibus*, l. 25 *pones* for *ponens*). I have not made any minute inquiry into Graesse's edition, and cannot say what use he has made of the manuscripts and early prints of the work. So far as the legend of the Assumption is concerned, his text does not differ in any fundamental way from that of 1482, but it is characterized by very queer spelling, awkward punctuation, and a heavy sprinkling of bad misprints. Thus, compared with the present reprint he has: p. 40, l. 12 *Probabiliter* for *Probabilius*, p. 41, l. 36 *die* for *de*, p. 42, l. 24 *quae* for *quia*, l. 27 *portasti* for *potasti*, l. 31 *corporis* for *corpus*, l. 33 *suum* for *sum*. He also has, p. 41, l. 37 *Tunc cantor omnibus intonavit dicens excellentius*, which is certainly wrong; and further p. 41, l. 28 *thronum* for *torum*, l. 31 *te in* for *in te*, and p. 43, l. 25 *ponas* for *pones* (where 1482 has *ponens*), which are probably so. Otherwise the most important variant is perhaps the repetition of the words *de Libano* before *coronaberis*, p. 41, l. 39. In the Vulgate the passage reads, Cant. Sal. iv. 8: 'Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni de Libano, veni: coronaberis de capite Amana,' &c. The version of Graesse is supported by Caxton's translation, that of 1482 by our play. We also find, p. 43, l. 33 *corpus Iesu* for *corpusculum*, which I fancy is wrong (cf. l. 39), and l. 34 *archangelus* for *angelus*, which may be right.

## LEGENDA AUREA, Cap. CXIII

### De Assumptione Beatae Mariae Virginis.

Assumptio beatae Mariae uirginis qualiter facta sit ex quodam libello apocrypho, qui Iohanni euangelistae ascribitur, edocetur. Apostolis namque ob praedicationis gratiam diuersas mundi subeuntibus regiones uirgo beata in domo iuxta montem Sion posita dicitur remansisse. Omniaque loca filii sui, scilicet locum baptismi, ieiunii, orationis, passionis, sepulturae, resurrectionis et ascensionis, quoad uixit deuotione sedula uisitauit. Et secundum quod ait Epiphanius uiginti quatuor annis post ascensionem filii sui superuixit. Refert ergo quod beata uirgo quando Christum concepit erat annorum quatuordecim et in quinto decimo ipsum peperit et uixit cum eo annis triginta tribus, et post mortem Christi superuixit <sup>10</sup> uiginti quatuor annis. Et secundum hoc quando obiit erat annorum septuaginta duorum. Probabilius tamen uidetur quod alibi legitur, ut duodecim annis filio superuixerit, et sic sexagenaria sit assumpta, cum apostoli totidem annis predicauerint in Iudaea et circa partes illas, sicut ecclesiastica tradit historia. Die igitur quadam dum in filii desiderium cor uirginis uehementer accenditur aestuans animus commouetur et in exteriorem lacrimarum abundantiam excitatur, cumque ad tempus subtracti filii aequanimiter non ferret subtracta solacia, ecce angelus cum multo lumine eidem astitit et reuerenter utpote sui domini matrem salutauit. 'Aue', inquit, 'benedicta Maria suscipiens benedictionem illius qui mandauit <sup>20</sup> salutem Iacob. Ecce autem ramum palmae de paradiso ad te dominam attuli quem ante feretrum portare iubeas cum die tertia de corpore assumeris, nam filius tuus te matrem reuerendam exspectat.' Cui Maria respondit, 'Si inueni gratiam in oculis tuis obsecro ut nomen tuum mihi reuelare digneris. Sed hoc peto instantius ut filii et fratres mei apostoli ad me pariter congregentur, ut eos antequam moriar corporalibus oculis uideam, et ab eis sepeliri ualeam, et ipsis praesentibus spiritum deo reddam. Hoc iterum peto et obsecro ut anima mea de corpore exiens nullum spiritum teterrimum uideat, nullaque mihi Sathanae potestas occurrat.' Cui angelus, 'Cur scire desideras, domina, nomen meum quod admirabile <sup>30</sup> est et magnum? Ecce autem omnes ad te hodie congregabuntur apostoli qui nobiles tibi exhibebunt exsequias funeris, et in eorum conspectu spiritum exhalabis. Nam qui olim prophetam de Iudaea in Babylonem in crine attulit subito, ipse procul dubio ad te apostolos adducere poterit in momento. Malignum autem spiritum uidere cur metuis cum caput eius omnino contriueris et spoliaueris ipsum suae potestatis imperio? Fiat tamen uoluntas tua ut ipsos non uideas.' His dictis angelus cum multo lumine

caelos ascendit. Palma autem illa nimia claritate splendebat, et erat quidem uirgae uiriditate consimilis, sed folia ipsius ut stella matutina fulgebant. Factum est autem, dum Iohannes in Epheso predicaret, caelum repente intonuit et nubes candida ipsum sustulit ac raptum ante Mariae ianuam collocauit. Percutiensque ostium interius introiuit et reuerenter uirgo uirginem salutauit. Quem felix Maria conspiciens uehementer obstupuit et prae gaudio lacrimas continere nequiuit. Dixitque, 'Fili Iohannes, memor esto uerborum magistri tui quibus me tibi in matrem et te mihi in filium commendauit. Ecce a domino euocata debitum humanae conditionis exsoluo, ac corpus meum tibi cura sollicita recomendo. 10 Audiui enim Iudaeos iniisse consilium, dicentes, "Exspectemus, viri fratres, quoadusque illa quae Iesum portauit subeat mortem et corpus eius continuo rapiemus ac iniectum ignibus comburemus." Tu igitur hanc palmam deferri facies ante feretrum cum corpus meum duxeritis ad sepulcrum.' Dixitque Iohannes, 'O utinam hic essent omnes apostoli fratres mei ut decenter tibi parare possemus exsequias ac exsoluere laudes dignas.' Haec illo dicente omnes apostoli de locis in quibus praedicabant a nubibus rapiuntur et ante Mariae ostium collocantur. Qui uidentes se ibidem insimul congregatos mirabantur, dicentes, 'Quaenam causa est propter quam nos hic dominus insimul congregauit?' Iohannes igitur ad eos 20 exiit et dominam de corpore recessuram praedixit. Et addidit dicens, 'Videte, fratres, ne cum obierit aliquis eam defleat, ne hoc uidens populus conturbetur et dicat, "Ecce quomodo isti timent mortem qui tamen alii predicant resurrectionem!"'. . . Cum autem beata Maria omnes apostolos uidisset congregatos, dominum benedixit et in medio eorum ardentibus lampadibus et lucernis consedit. Circa uero horam noctis tertiam Iesus aduenit cum angelorum ordinibus, patriarcharum coetibus, martyrum agminibus, confessorum acie, uirginumque choris, et ante torum uirginis acies ordinantur et dulcia cantica frequentantur. Quales autem exsequiae ibidem celebratae sint ex praedicto libello qui Iohanni ascribitur edocetur. 30 Nam prior ipse Iesus incohauit et dixit, 'Veni, electa mea, et ponam in te thronum meum, quia concupiui speciem tuam.' Et illa, 'Paratum cor meum, domine, paratum cor meum.' Tunc omnes qui cum Iesu uenerant dulciter intonauerunt, dicentes, 'Haec est quae nesciuit torum in delictis, habebit fructum in refectione animarum sanctarum.' Ipsa autem de semetipsa cecinit dicens, 'Beatam me dicent omnes generationes quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est et sanctum nomen eius.' Tunc cantor cantorum omnibus intonauit excellentius, 'Veni de Libano, sponsa, veni, coronaberis.' Et illa, 'Ecce uenio quia in capite libri scriptum est de me ut facerem uoluntatem tuam, deus, quia exultauit spiritus meus in te 40 salutari meo.' Sicque Mariae anima de corpore egreditur et in ulnas filii.

Cast  
+hou

aduolauit. Fuitque tam a dolore carnis extranea quam a corruptione  
exstiterat aliena. Dixitque apostolis dominus, 'Corpus uirginis matris in  
uallē Iosaphat deferte et in monumento nouo quod ibidem inuenietis  
illud recondite, et me ibidem triduo donec ad uos redeam exspectate.'  
Statimque circumdederunt eam flores rosarum scilicet coetus martyrum et  
lilia conuallium agmina scilicet angelorum confessorum et uirginum. Post  
eam apostoli clamitant dicentes, 'Virgo prudentissima, quo progredieris?  
Esto nostri memor, o domina.' Tunc ad concentum ascendentium coetus  
qui remanserant admirati concite obuiam processerunt. Videntesque  
regem suum feminae animam in ulnis propriis baiulantem, illamque 10  
super illum innixam, obstupefacti clamare coeperunt, dicentes, 'Quae est  
ista quae ascendit de deserto deliciis affluens innixa super dilectum suum?'  
Quibus concomitantes dixerunt, 'Ista est speciosa inter filias Hierusalem  
sicut uidistis eam plenam caritate et dilectione.' Sicque in caelum  
gaudens suscipitur et a dextris filii in throno gloriae collocatur. Apostoli  
autem uiderunt eius animam tanti esse candoris ut nulla mortalium lingua  
possit effari. Tres autem uirgines quae ibidem erant cum corpus eius  
lauandi gratia exspoliassent tanta statim corpus claritate resplenduit, ut  
tangi quidem ad lauandum posset, uideri autem non posset. Tamdiu  
autem lux illa ibidem resplenduit donec corpus a uirginibus lotum fuit. 20  
Apostoli autem corpus eius reuerenter ceperunt et super feretrum posue-  
runt. Dixitque Iohannes Petro, 'Hanc palmam ante feretrum, Petre,  
portabis, quia dominus nobis te praetulit et suarum ouium pastorem et  
principem ordinauit.' Cui Petrus, 'Hanc potius portare te conuenit, quia  
uirgo a domino es electus et dignum est ut palmam uirginis uirgo ferat.  
Tu super pectus domini recumbere meruisti et exinde sapientiae ac  
gratiae plus ceteris fluente potasti, et iustum uidetur ut qui a filio  
recepisti plus muneris impendas uirgini plus honoris. Tu igitur portare  
debes hanc palmam luminis ad exsequias sanctitatis qui potatus es poculo 30  
sanctum corpus. Ceteri autem apostoli fratres nostri circumdantes  
feretrum referant laudes deo.' Paulus autem dixit ei, 'Et ego qui mini-  
mus omnium uestrum sum portabo tecum.' Eleuantes itaque Petrus  
et Paulus feretrum, Petrus incipit cantare ac dicere, 'Exiit Israel de  
Aegypto, alleluia.' Ceteri autem apostoli cantum dulciter prose-  
quuntur. Dominus autem feretrum et apostolos nube protexit, ita quod  
ipsi non uidebantur sed tamen eorum uox audiebatur. Affuerunt et  
angeli cum ipsis concinentes et totam terram sonitu mirae suauitatis  
replentes. Excitati omnes ad tam dulcem sonum et melodiam de ciui-  
tate uelocius exeunt, et quidnam hoc sit diligenter sciscitantur. Tunc 40  
exstitit qui diceret, 'Mariam illam discipuli Iesu efferunt mortuam, circa

illam hanc quam auditis concinunt melodiam.' Tunc ad arma omnes concurrerunt, et se mutuo hortabantur, dicentes, 'Venite omnes discipulos occidamus ac corpus illud quod seductorem illum portauit ignibus comburamus.' Princeps autem sacerdotum hoc uidens obstupuit et ira repletus ait, 'Ecce tabernaculum illius qui nos et genus nostrum conturbauit, qualem gloriam nunc accipit.' Et hoc dicens manus ad feretrum misit uolens illud euertere ac ad terram deducere. Tunc manus eius subito ambae aruerunt et lectulo adhaeserunt, ita ut ad lectulum manibus penderet et nimio cruciatu uexatus lamentabiliter eiularet. Reliquus autem populus ab angelis qui erant in nubibus caecitate percussus est. Princeps autem 10 sacerdotum clamabat, dicens, 'Sancte Petre, in hac tribulatione me non despicias sed pro me obsecro ad dominum preces fundas. Memor enim debes esse qualiter aliquando tibi astiti et qualiter te accusante ancilla ostiaria excusauit.' Cui Petrus, 'In obsequiis dominae nostrae impediti sumus et curationi tuae intendere non ualeamus. Verum tamen si in dominum nostrum Iesum et in hanc quae ipsum genuit et portauit credideris spero quod continuo sanitatis beneficio potieris.' Qui respondit, 'Credo dominum Iesum Christum uerum esse filium dei et hanc sacratissimam matrem eius.' Statimque a feretro manus eius solutae sunt sed tamen in brachiis adhuc ariditas remansit et dolore uehemens 20 non recesserat. Dixit ei Petrus, 'Osculare feretrum et dic, "Credo in deum Iesum Christum quem ista in utero portauit et post partum uirgo permansit."'" Quod cum fecisset continuo pristinae est redditus sanitati. Dixitque ei Petrus, 'Accipe hanc palmam de manu fratris nostri Iohannis et pones eam super populum excaecatam, et quicumque credere uoluerit recipiet uisum, qui autem credere noluerit uidere non poterit in aeternum.' Mariam autem portantes apostoli in monumento posuerunt et iuxta illud ut dominus iusserat conederunt. Tertia autem die ueniens Iesus cum multitudine angelorum ipsos salutauit, dicens, 'Pax uobis.' Qui responderunt, 'Gloria tibi, deus, qui facis mirabilia magna solus.' Et dixit apostolis 30 dominus, 'Quid gratiae et honoris uobis uidetur ut meae nunc conferam generici?' Et illi, 'Iustum uidetur, domine, seruis tuis ut sicut tu deuicta morte regnas in saecula, sic tuae resuscites matris corpusculum et a dextris tuis colloques in aeternum.' Quo annuente Michael angelus continuo affuit et Mariae animam coram domino praesentauit. Tunc saluator locutus est, dicens, 'Surge, proxima mea, columba mea, tabernaculum gloriae, uasculum uitae, templum caeleste, ut sicut per coitum labem non sensisti criminis, sic in sepulcro solutionem corporis minime patiaris.' Statimque anima ad Mariae accessit corpusculum et de tumulo prodiit gloriosum. Sicque ad aetherium assumitur thalamum comitante secum multitudine ange- 40 lorum . . .

## FACSIMILES.

- I. Folio 202 recto, beginning of the Emmaus pageant, in the hand of the main scribe of the cycle.
- II. Folio 218 verso (lines 333-79 of the present text), showing the hand of the scribe who wrote the Assumption play.

In each case the facsimile is three-quarters the size of the original.





The incipit of the cleophs & lucas

**O**y brother lucas god may  
plesynge to geve us if it be  
to y<sup>e</sup> capital of emulbus delytful way  
y<sup>e</sup> 30 volche fuf to geve us mo

**C**leophs  
**L**ucas

All yedy brothoz i walks l<sup>t</sup> tye  
to yno castoll l<sup>t</sup> myght good choy  
Eyn to gedyz anon go l<sup>t</sup>  
brothoz cleophas l<sup>t</sup> to mifer

**C**leophas

**A** brother lucas i can sey madynd  
Whan gyt our maystoz comyt in my mynde  
Whan that i thynke holl go was gedynd  
pys in myn herte kan i non fynde  
ho was so lobblye so good so kynde  
holy of lye & make of mood  
Alas y<sup>e</sup> volche yor l<sup>t</sup> to blinde  
hym for to bylle y<sup>e</sup> was so good

**L**ucas

**W**hore & cleophas so styful soth  
they l<sup>t</sup> to amyd & to cruel  
And ydas y<sup>e</sup> tye to ho was to both  
for golde & for hys hys myght to sette  
the yolkys they yedy hym for to shelle  
l<sup>t</sup> they go betw out all hys blood  
Alas yor l<sup>t</sup> so for & shelle  
shamfully they honge hym on a wood

**C**leophas

**I**a be thou to thoye alas for shame  
they honge hym up l<sup>t</sup> body yent  
Alas alas they l<sup>t</sup> to blame  
to amyd & cruel was y<sup>e</sup> intent

and the fyre in god wolle both glad and cheere  
 the that son of god for us helpe brother John  
 wolle be lesse you let us be. and of made. wylie  
 wolle in godlyr name to here for. the all be to god  
 the that bein full glad to be. the holy compung  
 best made. and maxen to be. the best non  
 but only ye most blessed the  
 best incomparible god. gaderis holy tron  
 of non freng fallacoun. and all the gloire  
 best mane for mankynde. and menderis of synn

12  
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 24

¶ A word all myn helpe to brother John  
 I lesse you wolle to telle me. of mye. the  
 In dyntis conge. the grettyng of mye. the  
 In dyntis conge. the grettyng of mye. the  
 In dyntis conge. the grettyng of mye. the  
 In dyntis conge. the grettyng of mye. the  
 In dyntis conge. the grettyng of mye. the  
 In dyntis conge. the grettyng of mye. the  
 In dyntis conge. the grettyng of mye. the  
 In dyntis conge. the grettyng of mye. the

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 40

¶ I desyre bro. ladye of god to be  
 no wonder lady. shall be. the  
 the my lone the. of god. the  
 but to me an amyte. and thus he sayd  
 that the three myte. should asende to my lone in dete  
 thanne to have none. the. the. the. the. the.  
 And thus at my request. god hath you. the. the.  
 the. the. the. the. the. the. the. the. the. the.

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¶ I desyre bro. ladye of god to be  
 the my lone the. of god. the  
 but to me an amyte. and thus he sayd  
 that the three myte. should asende to my lone in dete  
 thanne to have none. the. the. the. the. the.  
 And thus at my request. god hath you. the. the.  
 the. the. the. the. the. the. the. the. the. the.

61  
 62



THE ASSUMPTION OF  
THE VIRGIN

## NOTE.

The following text aims at reproducing the manuscript as exactly as possible. All contractions are retained; and no readings have been intentionally altered, however strong the presumption of scribal error appeared. Square brackets indicate deletions of all kinds, their precise nature being indicated at the foot of the page. Pointed brackets indicate the edge of the leaf where it is probable or possible that a portion of the text has been cut away. The footnotes are confined to information concerning peculiarities of the text: insertions, deletions, alterations, doubtful readings, and the like. No attempt at emendation is made; all matters of interpretation being reserved for the critical notes at the end.

The manuscript has been rubricated by a hand which is not that of the scribe, but is that of the corrector in ll. 261-2. Certain words and passages have been underlined in red: these are here printed in italics. The rubricator also added the paragraphs, both large and small, which mark the stanzaic arrangement, and the signs (b'=versus) which distinguish certain Latin versicles, and placed the number of the play, 41, in large arabic numerals in the right margin opposite ll. 11-14. He further crossed out a number of words and letters which the scribe had merely expunged.

The original is contained in a quire of ten leaves inserted in a volume of which it was originally independent. The first leaf is blank. The numbers of the remaining leaves, 2-10, are here placed in the margin opposite the top line of each recto and verso. The leaves of the inserted quire correspond to fols. 213-22 of the complete manuscript.

**R**yht worchepful Souereynes · liketh yow to here  
 of the assūpcioñ of the gloryous moder mary  
 that seynt Ihoñ the eu<sup>a</sup>ngelist · wrot and tauht as I lere  
 In a book clepid Apocriphū · wythoutyn dyswary  
 At fourten yer sche conseyyed cryste in hire matere clere  
 and in the fiftene yer sche chilyd · this avowe dar I  
 here lyvyng wyth that swete sone · thre and thretty yere  
 And after his deth in erthe · xij yer dede sche tary  
 Now acounte me thise yeris wysely  
 and I sey the age was of this maide marye  
 when sche assūpte above the Ierarchye  
 thre score yer · as scripture dothe specyfy  
 legenda s̄coꝝ autorysyth this trewely

10

**S**he was inhabith in Iure by the moūte of syoñ  
 after the assencioñ of hir sone · conseyyed in spoused  
 alle the holy placys in erthe · that criste duellyd on  
 devouthly sche went hem · honouryng the godhed  
 Ferste to the place there criste c<sup>l</sup>stenyd was clepid Flū Iordoñ  
 there he fastyd and takyn was · by malicious falshed  
 there he beryed was and roos · victoryously alon  
 there he assendid alle hevenys · god in his manhed  
 Thus was sche occupyed I rede  
 and meche sche was in the temple preyand  
 now blissid mot sche be · we owe to be seyand  
 how sche was assūpte · here men schul be pleyand  
 preyng you of audience · now ses and tak hede

21

Mi<sup>l</sup>

**P**es now youre blaberyng in the develis name  
 what lousy begchis mow ye not se  
 owre worthy prynsis lo are gaderid in same  
 that are statis of this lond · hye men of degre  
 by there hye wisdam they schal now attayne  
 how alle Iure beste gou<sup>n</sup>nyd may be  
 and of this pillid prechouris · that oure lawis defame  
 they schul ben slayn as they say · or fayn for to fle  
 wherfore in pes be ye  
 and herkenyth on to hem moste stille I  
 For what boy bragge outh · hym spilly I  
 as knave wyth this craggyd knad · hym kylle I  
 now herkenyth oure pryncis alle kneland on kne

fol. 2<sup>b</sup>

31

40

Eps lege

5 I] probably inserted.      7 matere] first e altered from r      11 thise] se  
 altered from s      18 duellyd] e interlined.      35 Iure] e altered?      36 oure]  
 u altered from r      39 stille] e probably altered from i altered from y      1] added.

¶ Now ye prysis · I prest of the lave  
 of this demaunde responcyoñ · I aske here anon  
 ys there any renogat among vs · fer as ye knawe  
 or ony that puertyth the pepil · wyth gay eloquēs alon  
 yif there be we muste on to hem set awe  
 for they feyne falsly oure feyth · hem preve I houre fon  
 Sweche schul ben boūden vp be the beltys · til flyes hē blawe 50  
 and gnaggyd vp by the gomys · tyl the deuyl doth hē grone  
 we may not won  
 to sweche harlotis settyñ reddure  
 that geynseyne oure lawe and oure scripture  
 now let sere pryncis in purpure  
 In savyng of owre lawys now telle oñ

—*P<sup>m</sup> princeps*

¶ Sere syn we slew hym · that clepid hym oure kyng  
 and seyde he was goddis sone · lord ou' aſt  
 Syn his deth I herd of no maner rysyng 60  
 and lo yif he hadde levyd · he had mad vs his thraſt

—*E<sup>ps</sup>*

Therefore oure wysdam was to schortyn his endyng  
 who so clyme ou' hie · he hath a foule faſt fol. 5

—*ij<sup>o</sup> p<sup>inceps</sup>*

ya yit of on thing I warne yow at the gynnyng  
 his dame is levyng mary that men caſt  
 Myche pepil halt hire wythast  
 wherfore in peyne of reprefe  
 yif we Suffre hyre thus to relefe 70  
 oure lawys sche schal make to myschefe  
 and meche schame don vs sche schast

—*E<sup>ps</sup>*

¶ A sere ye ben bolde I now · art thou ferd of a wenche  
 what trowyste thou sche myht don vs a gayn

—*iiij p<sup>inceps</sup>*

Sere there are other in the contre that clenche  
 and prechyn he is levyng that we slewe they seyn  
 and yif they ben sufferyd thus this wiff bredyn a stench [ ] 80  
 for thorow here fayre speche oure lawys they steyn  
 and therefore devyse we now · vp on this pleyn bench  
 what is beste for to do · hem for to atteyn  
 we are but loste yif they reyn

—*E<sup>p</sup>*

why let se than · sey me youre ententis

—*P<sup>m</sup>*

44 prysis] *first s inserted?* 51 tyl] *beginning of l after t* 68 Myche]  
 y altered? 75 thou] *ou altered from s?* 77 clenche] *first e altered.* 78 is]  
 i over erasure? 79 this] *is over erasure.* will] *interlined.* erasure at end.



let vs preson hem til here myht schent is

—Scd⟨

bettyr is to slen hem wyth dentis

—Terc⟨ 90

may best is to hang hem wyth peyn

—Eþ⟨

¶ Nay seris nowth so · youre bett' avyse [ ]  
haue insyth before · what after maytide

yif we slewe hem · it wolde cause the comownys to ryse⟨  
and rathere the devyl sle hym · than we schulde that a bid⟨

But be that seustere ded mary that fise [ ]

fol. 3<sup>b</sup>

we shal brenne here body · and the aschis hide

and don here aff the dispith · we can here devise

100

and than sle tho disciplis · that walkyn so wyde

and here bodyes devyde

halde ye not this beste as is sayde

—Prim<sup>o</sup>

Wyth youre wysdam sere we are wel payed

—Eþs

than ye knyhtis I charge yow beth arayed

and ye turmentouris · redy that tyde

¶ When mary is ded

and but she deye the sunere · the devyl smyte of here hed

—Maria 110

*hic est maria in templo orans et dicens*

¶ O hye wysdam in youre dygne deyte

youre infynyth lovnese mad oure saluacyoñ

that it lyst you of me sympilest · to take here humanite

Wyth dew obeschyaũs · I make you gratulacyoñ

and gloryous lord and sone · yif it like youre benygnyte

nouth to ben displesid wyth my desideracyoñ

me longith to youre presense now cõĩmct to the vnyte

Wyth aff myn herte and my sowle · be natures excitacyoñ

To youre domynacyoñ

120

For aff creaturis in you don affye

and [ ] myche more owe I · youre moder be alye

syn ye wern born god · and man of my bodye

to desyre yowre presens · that were oure ferste formacyoñ

—Sap̃ia

¶ My suete moderis preyere on to me doth assende

here holy herte and here love · is only on me

93 erasure at end. 97 erasure of we ? 106 arayed] ayed over  
erasure of adye? 109 the sunere] t altered. 115 I] inserted?  
118 presense] final e added. 122 a letter crossed out. 124 yowre]  
y altered? presens] first s inserted?

Wherfore aungyl to here thou schalt now dyssende  
seyinge here sche schal comyn to myn eternyte  
myn habundaüt mercy · on here I extende  
resseyuÿge here to Ioye · from worldly pplexite  
and in tokyn ther of this palme now pretende  
Seyinge here sche fere no man' of diu'cyte

Angelus I{

By youre myth I dissende to youre moder in viginite

Angts ij{

For qwych message inioyeth the hefnely cōsorcyte

*hic descendet angelus ludent' cithar' & dicet marie*

Pim<sup>o</sup> A{

140

heyl excellent prynces · mary moste pure  
heyl radyant sterre · the suñe is not so bryth [is]  
heyl moder of m'cy and mayde most mure  
the blessing that god yaf Iacob vp on you now is lyth [is]

Maria{

Now wolcom bryth berde · goddis aügyl I seu'  
ye ben messenger of all myhty · wolcom wyth my myhtis  
I beseke you now say me · vp on youre hie nortur  
what is the very name · that to youre psone dith is

Angts{

150

¶ what nedith you lady my name ben desyrand

Maria

A yis g<sup>a</sup>cyows aügyl I beseke you requyrand

Angts

¶ My name is gret and m'veylous · treuly you telland  
the hye god youre sone abidyth you in blis  
the thrydde day hens · ye schul ben expirand  
and assende to the presense · there my god youre sone is

Ma{

Mercy and grom'cy god now may I be seyand  
thankyng you suete aügyl for this message I wys

160

Ang{

In tokenyng where of lady I am here presentand  
A braunce of a palme · outh of paradis com this

¶ be fore youre bere god biddith it be bore

Marik

now thanke be to that lord · of his mercy eu'more

Angt{

138 *descendet*] s altered from c?      141, 143 is . . . is] first interlined,  
second erased.      145 seu'] might be señ      148 dith is] is apparently erased  
and rewritten.      157 presense] final e added.      163 a] inserted.

Yowre meknesse youre lovnese and youre hie lore  
is most acceptable in the trynite syth  
youre sete ryall in hefne apparaled is thore  
now dispose yow to deye · youre sone wyl thus rith

17

---

*Mar*

fol. 4

I obbeye the cōmaūdemēt · 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

¶ But they ben so deseuerid · me thynkyth it nyl be

---

*Angelus*

A yis lady impossible to god nothyng trowe ye  
¶ For he that sent abbacuc w<sup>t</sup> mete to babylonye from Iure  
¶ In to the lake of lyonys to danyel the pphete  
b Se the same myht god make may the appostolis here mete  
a be an her of his hed lo · so myhty was he

180

¶ And therfore abasche you not lady · in yowre holy mende

---

*Maria*

no more I do glorious aūgyl in kynde  
¶ also I beseke my sone · I se not the fende  
¶ What tyme outh of this word · I schal passe hens  
his horrible lok wold fere me so hende  
ther is nothyng I dowte · but his dredfull p'sens

190

---

*Angts*

what nedith [yow lady] it to fere you emp's so hende  
syn be the fruth of youre body · was convyctē his vyolens  
that horrible s̄pent · dar not nyhyn youre kende  
and yowre blosme · schal make hym recistens  
that he schal not pretende  
Desyre ye outh ellys now rythis

---

*Maria*

nouth but blessyd be my god in his myhtys

---

*Angts* 200

to yow I recomaunde me than · moste excellent in sithis  
and wyth this ageyn to god I assende

---

*hic ascendet angelus*

---

*Maria*

¶ Now lord thy swete holy name · wyth lovnese I blysse  
¶ of qwyche hefne and erthe · eche tyme pshalmodyeth  
that it lykyth youre [ ] m'cy · me to you to wysse  
my sympil sowle in serteyn · youre name magnefyeth

183 myhty] first y over beginning of an h 192 yow lady] expunged and  
crossed out. 202 ageyn] e altered from a 203 ascendet] second  
e altered from i 206 pshalmodyeth] ? s altered from c 207 beginning  
of y expunged and crossed out.

Now holy maydenys the s̄uauntis of god as I gyse  
I schal passe from this world · as the aūgyl s̄tefyeth  
therfore to my sympil habitacyoñ I telle you now this  
I p<sup>u</sup>pose me to go · besekyng yow replyeth

210

¶ And assedually wachith me be dayes and nythis

fol. 5<sup>a</sup>

—*P<sup>i</sup>ma virg*⟨

¶ we schal g<sup>a</sup>cyous lady · wyth alle oure mythis  
schul ye from vs passe swete sonne of socoure  
that are oure sengler solas · radyant in youre lythis  
youre peynful absence · schal make me doloure

—*Virgo S̄cda*⟨

Moste excellent p<sup>i</sup>nces in aſt vertu that is dith [is]  
alle hefne and erthe · lady you doth honure  
we schal wachyn and wake as oure dewe & ryth [is]  
In to the tyme ye passe · to that hye toure

220

w<sup>t</sup>⟨

—*Mar*⟨

God thāke you and so do I  
now I wyl dispose me to this Iurne redy  
so wolde god my brether were here me by  
To bere my body · that bare ihu oure sayvoure

*hic subito apparet S̄c̄s Ioh̄es eu<sup>a</sup>ngelista ante portā marie*

—*Ioh̄el* 230

¶ A myrable god meche is thy myth [ ]  
¶ many wonderis thou werkyst evyn as thi wyſt is  
In pheso I was prechyng · afer contre ryth [ ]  
and by awhyte clowde · I was rapt to these hyllys  
here duellyth c<sup>i</sup>stis moder · I se wel in syth [ ]  
Sum m<sup>u</sup>veylous message is comyñ that mayde tyſt [is]  
I wyl go saluse that berde that in vertu is moste brith [is]  
and of my sodeyn comyng · wete what is the skele [is]

*hic pulsabit sup̄ portam intrante domū marie S<sup>i</sup> dicente*

¶ heyl moder mary maydyn perpetuall

240

—*Maria*⟨

¶ A wolcome mayde Ioh̄n · wyth aſt myn h̄te in specyall  
¶ For Ioye of youre p<sup>r</sup>sence myn herte gynnyth sweme  
thynke ye not Ioh̄n how my child eternall  
when he hyngē on cros · sayd vs this teme  
lo here thy sone womā · so bad he me you call  
and you me moder · eche othir to queme  
he betok you the gou<sup>n</sup>ayl therē of my body terestyall

220 is . . . is] first interlined, second erased. 222 &] interlined.  
is] erased. 231, 233, 235 erasures of now? 233 prechyng] ? pr.  
altered from p 236, 237, 238 is . . . is] first interlined, second erased.  
240 mary] y altered from i

on mayde to another as conveyens wold seme  
¶ And now that g<sup>a</sup>cyows lord · hath sent me yow son[ ]e fol. 5<sup>b</sup>  
Ioh̄es 251

¶ Now good fayr lady · what is ther to done  
tellyth the cause why I am heder sent  
Maria

swete sone Iohn so wyfl I a none  
owre lord god sent to me an aūgyl that glent  
and sayde I schulde passe hens · where thre were in one  
tho I askyd the aūgyl to haue you present

Ioh̄es

260

A holy moder schul ye from vs gone  
my brether of this tydyngis sore wyl repent y<sup>t</sup> 3e schuld ben  
eu<sup>7</sup> trybulacyoñ lord meche yn vs sendyst Absent

b and now oure Ioye thy moder to take thou p<sup>t</sup>ēdist  
a thou oure mayst<sup>7</sup> and oure cōfort fron vs ascēdist  
thanne afl oure comfort is from vs detent

¶ but what seyde then aūgyl moder on to you more  
Maria

¶ He brouth me this palme from my sone thore  
¶ qwyche I beseke as the aūgyl me bad  
that afor n my bere · by you it be bore 270  
saynge my dirige · devouthly and sad

¶ For Iohn I haue herde the Iewys · meche of me spelle  
Ioh̄es

A good lady what likyth it you to telle

Maria

¶ Secretly they ordeyne in here conseytis felle  
¶ Whē my sowle is paste where god is [wyfl] liste is  
to brenne my body · and schamly it quelle  
for Ihu was of me born · that they slew w<sup>t</sup> here fistis  
And therefore I beseke you Iohn · both flech and felle 280  
helpe I be beryed · for yn yow my tryst is

Ioh̄es

Fere yow not lady · for I schal wyth you duelle  
wolde god my brether were here now and wyst this

[Petrus]

*hic subito om̄s apli cōgregent<sup>r</sup> ante portū mirates*

Petrus

250 sone] something crossed out in red, ? n altered from m 253 tellyth] e altered? 258 aūgyl] y altered from e 260 ye] y altered from e? from] m altered from n 261-2 in the left margin is the addition ... ye schuld | ... bse ... crossed out in red, partly erased, and partly cut away, with a line drawn to mark the insertion: the words being repeated in a different hand on the right margin. 262 yn] y altered? 272 For] r added? 277 wyfl] expunged, and crossed out in red. liste] interlined. 285 expunged, and crossed out in red.

A holy brether wyth grace · be ye met here now  
lord god what menyth · this sodeyne congregacyoñ  
now swete brother powle wyl ye take this vp on yow  
preye to god for vs all · we may haue relacyoñ 290

Paulus

Good brother [powle] Peter how schuld I here pray now  
that am lest and most vnworthy of this cōgregacyñ fol. 6<sup>a</sup>

I am not worthy to ben clepyd apostle sothly I say yow  
For as a woodmã ageyn holy cherche I mad psecucyōñ

but neu<sup>t</sup>heles I am the g<sup>a</sup>ce of god · in that · þ<sup>t</sup> I am lo

Petrus

A gret is youre lownesse powle brother eu<sup>o</sup>mo

Paulus 300

the keyes of hevene peter · god hath you betake [ ]  
and also ye ben peler of lith · and pryce of vs all  
it is most sittying to you this [pre] preyere to make [ ]  
and I vnworthy wyth yow · preyen here schaff

Petr

I take this vp on me poule for youre sake [ ]  
now almythty god that sittiste · aboue cherubyn halle  
In syge of thyn holy cros · oure handis we make [ ]  
be sekyng thy m<sup>o</sup>cy · may vp on vs falle

And why we ben thus met yif it lyke vs lare

Ioñes 310

A holy brether alle welcom ye are

why ye be [sent] met here I schal you declare  
For mary goddys moder by message is sent  
that from this wrechid world · to blysse sche schal fare  
and at here deying sche desyryth to haue vs p<sup>o</sup>sent

Petr

A brother Ioñ we may syhyn and care  
yif it displese not god · for these tydyngis ment

Paulus 310

Forsothe so we may peter hevyin eu<sup>o</sup>mare  
that oure moder and oure comfort schuld ben vs absent

but neu<sup>t</sup>heles the wyl of god · fulfyllid mot be

Ioñes

that is wel seyde poule · but her of bewar ye  
that non of you for here deth schewe hevy speche  
For a non to the Iewys it schuld than notyd be  
that we were ferd of deth and that is ageyn that we teche  
For we seyn all tho belevyn in the hol Trynyte

290 vp] p altered?      293 powle] expunged, and crossed out in red.      301,  
303, 306, 308 erasures.      303 pre] expunged and crossed out: r inserted?  
308 syge] ? g altered from n      313 sent] expunged and crossed out.  
316 here] he altered?      319 yif] y altered?      328 is] interlined.

they schul eu' leve and nouth deye this truly we preche 330  
and yif we make hevynesse for here than wyl it seyð be  
lo yone p'chouris to deye · they fere hem ful meche

¶ And therefore in god now beth glad eu'ychoñ fol. 6<sup>b</sup>

*Petrus*

¶ we schal don as ye sey vs holy brother Iohn  
now we beseke you let vs se · oure [ ] moder Marie

*Iohes*

now in goddys name to here [let] thã aft let vs gon  
Sche wyl ben ful glad to se · this holy companye

*Petrus* 340

heyl moder and maydyn · so was neu' non  
but only ye most blissid treulye

*Paulus*

heyl incompabil quẽ · goddis holy tron  
of you spreng salvacyoñ · and aft oure glorye  
[ ] heyl mene for mankynde · and mendere of mys

*Maria*

¶ A wyth aft myn hol herte brether · ye are wolcom I wys  
I beseke you now to telle me · of youre sodeyne metyng

*Petrus* 350

In dyu'is contreys we prechid · of youre sone & his blis  
Diu'is clowdys eche of vs was · sodeynely curyng  
w in on were brouth before youre yate here I wys  
the cause why no man cowde telle of oure comyng

*Maria*

now I thanke god of his m'cy · an hy merakle is this  
now I wyl telle yow the cause · of my sonys werkyng

¶ I desyrid his bodily p'sence to se

*Iohes*

no wonder lady · thow so dede ye

360

*Maria*

¶ Tho my sone ihu · of his hye pete  
sent to me an aungyl · and thus he sayd  
that the thredde nyth I schuld assende to my sone in deite  
thanne to haue youre p'sence brether · hertly I prayed

And thus at my request · god hath you sent me

*Petrus*

wys g<sup>a</sup>cyous lady · we are ryth wel payed

*Maria*

blissid brethere I beseke you than tent me  
now wyl I rest me in this bed · that for me is rayed

370

336 a letter crossed out. 338 let] expunged and crossed out. 345 spreng] r  
inserted. 346 a large red paragraph erased. 348 herte] ? h altered from s  
354 why] h altered from y 359 Iohes] o over beginning of an h

¶ wachith me besily wyth youre laūpys and lithtis  
we schal lady redy aff thyng for you dith is

Paulus

Maria

¶ now sone schul ye se what god is myth is  
my flech gynnyth feble be nature

hic erit decenter ornatus in lecto

Petrus

brether eche of you a candeale takyth now rithis  
and lith hem in haste whil oure moder doth dure  
and bisyli bet vs wachyn in this v'gyne sythtis  
that when oure lord comyth in his spoused pure  
he may fynde vs wakyng · and redy wyth oure lithtis  
for we knowe not the ho<sup>u</sup> · of his comyng now sure

fol. 7<sup>a</sup>

38<sup>r</sup>

¶ and yn clenness alle · loke ye be redy

Maria

¶ A swete sone Ihu now mercy I cry  
ou' alle synful thy mercy let sprede

*hic dissendet dñs cū oīni celest' curia & dicet*

39<sup>o</sup>

Dñs

the voys of my moder me nyhith fulny  
I am dyssend on to here of whom I dede sede

*hic cantabunt org'*

Maria

¶ A wolcom gracyous lord · Ihu sone and god of m'cy  
an aungyl wold assuffysed me hye kyng at this nede

Dñs

Inppire psone moder I wyl ben here redy  
wyth the hefnely quer yowre dirige to rede

40<sup>o</sup>

¶ Veni tu electa mea & ponam in te thronū meū  
quia concupiuit rex speciem tuā

Maria

¶ Paratū cor meū deus patū cor meū  
cantabo et psalmū dicam dño

Apl'i

¶ hec est que nesciuit thorū in delictis  
habebit requiem in respectu aīarū scāarū

Maria

¶ Beatam me dicent oīnes generaciōes  
quia fecit michi magna qui potens est & sc̄m nomē eius

41<sup>o</sup>

Dñs

377 be] b altered from beginning of n? 378 not rubricated. 382 sythtis]  
second t inserted. 389 ou'] might be oī 400 rede] looks like ree



v' veni de libano sponsa mea veni coronaberis

Ecce venio quia in capite libri scriptū est deme  
vt facerem voluntatē tuā deus meus  
quia exultauit sp̄s meus in deo salutari mes

—Dñs

*hic exiet anima marie de corpore in sinu dei*

Now com my swete soule in clenness most pure  
J and reste in ny bosom [brist] brithtest of ble  
alle ye myn apostelis. of this body takyth cure  
In the valle of Iosephat · there fynde schul ye  
A grave new mad for maryes sepulture  
there beryeth the body wyth all youre solēpnite  
and bydyth me there styllē thre dayes severe  
and I schal pere ageyn to yow · to cōfort yo<sup>u</sup> adu'cyte  
Wyth this swete soule now from you I assende

fol. 7<sup>b</sup>

420

—Petrus

In oure t'bulacyoūs lord thou vs defende  
We haue no comfort in erthe · but of the alon  
O swete soule of mary prey thy sone vs defende  
haue mynde of thy pore brether · when thou comyst to p<sup>i</sup> tron

430

—Chorus m<sup>ari</sup>

v' Que est ista que assendit de deserto  
delicijs affluens innixa sup dilectū suū

—Ordo angls

v'. Ista est speciosa int' filias Ierlm sicut vidistis eam  
plenam caritate & dileccōe · sic q̄ in celū gaudēs suscipit<sup>u</sup>  
et a dextris filij · in trono glie collocatur

—[P<sup>i</sup>ma v<sup>o</sup>go] 440

*hic cantabit oīnis celestis curia*

—P<sup>i</sup>ma v<sup>o</sup>go

Now suster I beseke you · let vs do oure attendaūce  
J and wasche this gloryous body · that here in oure sith is  
as is the vse among vs wyth outyn ony varyaūce  
now blessid be this psone that bar god of mythtis

—Sēda v<sup>o</sup>go

I am redy sust<sup>?</sup> wyth all myn hol affyaūce  
to wesche and worschepe · this body that so brith is  
alle creaturys therto owyn dew obeschaūce  
For this body resseyved · the holy gostis flithtis

450

—Iohes

420 brist] expunged and crossed out. 422 there] might be there  
432 when] n altered from r 435 innixa] second i has an exaggerated dot  
which looks like a superior i over x 440 expunged, and crossed out in red.

Now holy brother peter · I hertely you pray  
to bere this holy palme · before this gloryous body  
For ye ben p'nce of apostelis · and hed of oure fay  
therefore it semyth you best to do this offis [tru] treuly

*Petrus*

Sere and ye slept on cristis brest · seyng aff celestly  
ye are goddis clene mayde · wyth outyn ony nay  
this observaūce is most like · you to do dewly  
Wherfore tak it vp on you · brother we pray

fol. 8<sup>a</sup>

460

and I schal helpe for to bere the bere

*Paulus*

and I peter wyth oure brether in fere  
this blessid body schal helpe to the groūd  
this holy cors now take we vp here  
Seyng oure observaūce · wyth devouth sound

*hic portabūt corpus versus sepulturā cū eorū luminibz*

*Petrus* 470

Exijt israel de egipto · dom<sup>9</sup> iacob de p'p'o barbaro Aſſa

*Apli*

Facta est iudea sc̄ificačo eius Isrl potestas eius Aſſa

*hic angli dulci<sup>r</sup> cantabūt in celo · Aſſa*

*Eps*

herke sere p'ncys · what noyse is aff this  
the erthe and the eyer · is ful of melodye  
I herde neu' er · swyche a noyse now I wys  
con ye outh say · what they signefye

*P'm<sup>9</sup> p'nc<sup>2</sup>* 480

I not be my god that of myht meche is  
What sūeu' they be · hougly they crye  
I am a ferd there wyll be sū thyng a mys  
It is good prevely among vs we spye

*Sčds p'nc<sup>2</sup>*

Now I haue levyd this thre skore yer  
but sweche [another] another noyse · herd I neu' er  
myn herte gynnyth ogyl · and quake for fer  
there is sū newe sorwe · sprongyn I dowte

*Terci<sup>9</sup> p'nc<sup>2</sup>* 490

457 tru] expunged and crossed out. 460 clene] l possibly altered to h  
464 not rubricated. 473 sc̄ificačo] c altered. 480 p'nc'] nc' altered  
from ce ? 483 am a] a inserted. 484 prevely] p altered?  
487 another] expunged, and crossed out in red: o interlined.

ya that there is sothly I say yow  
the pphetis moder [is] mary is ded  
the disciplis here beryn in gret aray now  
and makyn alle this m<sup>3</sup>the in spyth of oure hed

*Eps*

Fy on yon lousy doggys · they were bett<sup>3</sup> nay [     ]  
outh harrow · the devyl is in myn hed  
ye dodemvsyd prynces · faste yow aray [     ]  
or I make avow · to mahound youre bodyes schul blede  
Now that quene is ded  
ye coward knytyes in plate  
and ye tormentours · thryfe schul ye late  
Faste harlotys · go youre gate  
and brynge me that bychyd body I red

fol. 8<sup>b</sup>  
501

*Pim<sup>3</sup> p<sup>inc</sup>*

dowte you not sere byschop in peyne of repref  
We schal don schame to that body · & to tho prechours

*Sçds*

Sere I schal geyne tho glabereris or gramly hem gref  
tho teynt tretouris schul tene · yif my loke on hem louris

510

*Terci<sup>3</sup> p<sup>inc</sup>*

To hurle wyth tho harlotys · me is ful lef  
I schal [snrle] snarle tho sneveleris · wyth rith scharp schouris

*Eps*

hens than a devylis name · and take me that thef  
and brnge me that bygyd body · evyn to fore these touris  
and here disciplis ye slo  
hye you hens harlotis atonys  
the devyl boyes mot breke youre bonys  
go stent me yone body wyth youre stonys  
Outh harrow · alwod now I go

520

*Sçds p<sup>inc</sup>*

*hic descendūt p<sup>incipes</sup> cū suis ministris vt feroci  
percucient<sup>3</sup> petras cū eor<sup>3</sup> capitibz*

What devyl where is this mene  
I here · here noyse · but I se ryth nouth  
allas I haue clene lost my poste  
I am ful wo · mad is my yowth

*Terci<sup>3</sup> p<sup>inc</sup>*

I am so ferd I wold fayn fle  
the devyl hym spede · hedyr me brouth  
I renne I rappe · so wo is me  
Wyndand wod wo hath me wrouth

530

492 is] expunged, and crossed out in red.  
513 snrle] expunged, and crossed out in red.

496, 498 erasures at end.

To deye I ne routh

*Pim<sup>o</sup> pinc<sup>o</sup>*

A cowardis vp on you now fy  
are ye ferd of a ded body  
I schal sterte ther to manly  
alle that company fere I ryth nouth

*hic saltat insan<sup>o</sup> af feretrü marie & pendet pman<sup>o</sup>*

fol. 9<sup>a</sup>

¶ Allas my body is ful of peyne  
I am fastened sore to this bere  
myn [hödys] handys are ser · bothe tweyne  
o pet<sup>o</sup> now prey thy god for me here  
In cayfas halle · when thou were seyne  
And of the pet<sup>o</sup> amayde · acusid there  
I halpe the tho · now helpe me ageyne  
that I were hol · outh of this fere  
süm medycyñ me lere

54<sup>r</sup>

I may not tend to the sere at this ho<sup>a</sup>  
For ocupacyoñ of this body of hono<sup>a</sup>  
but neu<sup>o</sup>theles · beleue in Ihu criste oure saveyo<sup>a</sup>  
and that this was his [mder] moder that we bere on bere

*Petrus 55<sup>o</sup>*

¶ I beleue In Ihu mannys saluacyoñ

In goddis name go doñ than and this body honure

*Petrus*

now m<sup>o</sup>cy god and grom<sup>o</sup>cy of this savacyoñ  
In Ihu and his moder · to beleue eu<sup>o</sup> I seure

*Pim<sup>o</sup> pinc<sup>o</sup>*

56<sup>o</sup>

¶ Than take yone holy palme · and go to yi nacyoñ  
and bid hem beleue in god yif they wyl be pure  
and towche hem ther wyth both hed · hand and facyoñ  
and of her sekenesse · they schal haue cure  
and ellis in here peynys [ ] indure

*Petrus*

*Pim<sup>o</sup> pinc<sup>o</sup>*

grom<sup>o</sup>cy holy fader peter  
I schal do as ye me teche her  
thankyng god eu<sup>o</sup> in my speche her  
Wyth hye repentaunce · and herte most mure

57<sup>o</sup>

*Petrus*

541 my] y altered.  
reading doubtful.

543 hödys] expunged, and crossed out in red:  
554 mder] expunged, and crossed out in red.

566 a letter, ? e, crossed out.

*hic portabūt feretrū ad locum sepulture*

Now holy brether this body let vs take  
and wyth alle the worschepe we may ley it in the g<sup>au</sup>e  
kyssyng it alle atonys · for here sonys sake  
now insence ye · and we schal put here in this cave

*Iohes*

*hic ponent corpus insepulcrū insensantes & cantantes*

De terra plasmasti me & carne induisti me  
redemptor meus dñe resuscita me in novissimo die

fol. 9<sup>b</sup>  
581

Now god blysse this body · and we oure syng make

*hic unanimi<sup>9</sup> bñdicent corpus · In nōie pat's & filij & sp's s̄ci*

the fruth that it bar oure soules schal saue  
now reste we vs brether vp on this pleyn lake  
tyl from oure god and oure [d] lord · tydyngis we haue  
here muste we belave

*Paulus*

so muste we Iohn as ye say  
thanne byde we here and pray  
besekyng hym of comfort that best may  
restyng here abowtyn this g<sup>au</sup>e

590

*Pim<sup>9</sup> p̄nc<sup>9</sup>*

*hic vadit princeps ad Iudeos cū palma*

ye Iewys that lango<sup>n</sup> in this gret Infyrmyte  
belevyth in crist Ihu and ye schal haue helthe  
throw vertu of this holy palme · that com fro the t̄nyte  
yow<sup>n</sup> sekenesse schal aswage · and restore you to welthe

*S̄ds p̄nc<sup>9</sup>*

600

I beleve in crist Ihu · goddis sone in vnyte  
and forsake my mavmentryes · fals in here felthe  
*hic tangat credentes cū palma & sanati sūt*

A I thanke the g<sup>acyous</sup> lord · and thy moder of pete  
now are we hol of oure seknesse · and of oure foul belthe

*Terci<sup>9</sup> p̄nc<sup>9</sup>*

what harlotys forsake oure lawe

*S̄ds p̄nc<sup>9</sup>*

So hald I beste the do

*Terci<sup>9</sup> p̄nc<sup>9</sup>*

hens fro me in the develis name ye go  
I deye outh outh harro

610

586 d] *crossed out.* 603 thanke] *possibly* thenke 611 deye] *looks like* eeye

the wyldre develyng · mot me to drawe

*Pim<sup>o</sup> demon*

**H**erke belsabub and belyal sere sathan in the herne  
vs fettyn oure servauntis to this presoñ  
blow flamys of fer to make hem to brenne  
mak redy ageyn we com to this demon

*Sçds demon*

Faste for tho harlotis now let vs renne  
to caste hem in this pet here that depe is adoñ  
they schul brenne and boyle and chille in oure denne  
gowe now a dewelyng name as faste as we moñ  
harrow harrow · we com to towñ

630

fol. 10<sup>a</sup>

*Pim<sup>o</sup> demon*

drag we these harlotis inhye  
In to the pet of helle for to lye

*ij<sup>o</sup> demon*

gowe now helle hoūdis ye crye  
sere sathan may heryn oure soñ

*Dñs* 630

**N**ow aūgyl and alle this court celestyall  
In to herthe now discendith wyth me  
to reyse the body of my moder terestyall  
and bryng we it to the blysse of my deyte  
**C**assent ye here to now the vnyte

*Angli*

ya for yowre hye m<sup>c</sup>cy lord · al hefne makyth melode

*Dñs*

*hic descendit et venit ad aptos dicens*

**P**es be to yow alle · my postelis so dere  
lo me here yowre lord · and youre god now rythtis

640

*Petrus*

A wolcom criste oure comfort · in thy māhed clere  
gret merveyulous god · mekyl now thy myth is

*Dñs*

what worschepe and g<sup>a</sup>ce · semyth you now here  
that I do to this body · mary that hythtis

*Iohes*

lord as thou rese from deth · and regnyst in thyn empere  
so reyse thou this body · to thy blysse that lyth is  
vs semyth this ryth is

650

*Mychael*

ya gloryous god · lo the sowle here prest now  
to this blissid body · likyth it you to fest now

652 *Mychael*] a altered from e?

hefne and erthe wold thynke this the best now  
In as myche as sche bare you god in youre mythtis

—*Dñs*

*hic vadit aīa in corpus marie*

¶ Go thanne blyssid soule to that body ageyn  
arys now my dowe · my nehebo<sup>n</sup> · and my swete frende 660  
tabernacle of Ioye · vessel of lyf · hefnely tēple to reyn  
ye schal haue the blysse wyth me moder · that hath non ende  
For as ye were clene in erthe · of alle synnys greyn  
so schul ye reyne in hefne clennest in mend

—*Maria*

A endles worchepe be to you Ihu · relesere of peyn  
I and alle erthe may blisse ye com of owre kend  
lo me redy wyth you for to wend

fol. 10<sup>b</sup>

—*Dñs*

A bouen hefnys moder assende than we  
In endles blysse for to be

670

—*Michael*

hefne and erthe now in Ioye may ye  
For god throw mary is mad mannys frend

*Et hic assendēt in celū cantantibz organis*

¶ Assūpta es maria in celū

—*Dñs*

yow to worchepe moder · it likyth the hol trinyte  
Wherfore I crowne you here · in this kyndam of glory  
of alle my chosyn · thus schul ye clepyd be 680  
qwen of hefne · and moder of mercy

—*Michael*

Now blysid be youre namys we cry  
For this holy assūpyoñ · alle hefne makyth melody

¶ Deo gracias

659 ageyn] e altered from a  
y altered from s

664 mend] more like mene

683 blysid]

## LIST OF VARIANTS IN HALLIWELL'S EDITION.

Some of the following variants are silent emendations ; a few arise through doubtful readings. The latter will be found mentioned in the footnotes. In all cases of the omission or insertion of a word the context on both sides is quoted.

6 wythowtyn	229 <i>Mariæ</i>	474 <i>cælo</i>
8 chyldyd	239 <i>Mariæ</i>	478 sweche
dare	242 welcome	496 you
19 honoringng	249 another at	501 The coward
24 occupyed	258 aungel	knytis
29 ( <i>omitted.</i> )	262 meche thou	502 And the
30 Ces	264 from	507 Ded schal
31 now ye	277 Godis sete is	body to
34 wisdom	286 <i>mirantes</i>	508 <i>Secundus Princeps.</i>
shal	287 ( <i>omitted.</i> )	509 glaberis
37 se or	295 to be	512 the
39 stillyn	308 syngel	515 develys
43 <i>Episcopus.</i>	315 wrecchid	516 bringe
44 prynsis	319 Xif it	thes
lawe	321 evermore	524 <i>pecucienter</i>
50 blowe	332 youe	528 thowth
56 oure	342 only the	530 would
75 that sche	348 welcom	533 Wynd and
87 Lete	353 And in	540 <i>adferetrum</i>
myght	366 Aud	<i>Mariæ</i>
96 abyde	380 nowe	544 thi
97 senstere	382 let	555 <i>Primus Princeps. I</i>
103 <i>Primus Episcopus.</i>	sythis	560 senere
105 ( <i>omitted.</i> )	383 sponseed	562 youe
107 And the	390 <i>celestē</i>	569 as the
116 glorious	396 welcom	585 rest
118 conjunct	407 Hæc	brother
122 modyr	quæ	587 must
124 youre	410 generationes	594 <i>Judæos</i>
131 Resservyngel	416 spes meus	598 Yowr
133 man of	mee	604 foule
137 consorcyt	418 <i>Mariæ</i>	608 best
138 <i>ludentibus</i>	419 come	620 cast
<i>citharis</i>	424 withe	622 fast
<i>Mariæ</i>	430 on erthe	632 with
145 welcom	434 Quæ	634 deyt
aungel	quæ	643 welcom
sen	435 injunxa	649 requyst
152 A ! this	437 Jherusalem	654 likyth you
157 presence	438 dilectione	658 <i>Mariæ</i>
163 of palme	cælum	664 schal
179 A ! this	gandeus	667 blisse the
trowe the	439 gloriae	668 with
194 dare	444 glorious	675 <i>cælum</i>
201 most	451 resseyvid	676 <i>cælum</i>
202 agayn	453 <i>Mariæ</i>	679 glorye
203 <i>ascendit</i>	460 any	683 blissid



## NOTES

3. *liketh*, impersonal interrogative.

6. a book clepid *Apocriphum*, not 'a book named Apocryphum', but 'a book said to be apocryphal'. NED quotes: Capgrave, *Chron.* 7. 'The Penauns of Adam be cleped Apocriphum', i.e. is called spurious. The *Legenda Aurea* has: 'ex quodam libello apocrypho qui Iohanni euangelistae ascribitur'. All the same, the dramatist may have misunderstood his source, for if the book was written by John it was not apocryphal. The work indicated is apparently the Greek *Dormitio Mariae* printed by Tischendorf (*Apocalypses Apocryphae*, 1866, p. 95), which is headed: Τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ θεολόγου λόγος εἰς τὴν κοίμησιν τῆς ἁγίας θεοτόκου. There is, however, a sufficiently close verbal agreement with the Latin text, Tischendorf's *Transitus Mariae* B (*ibid.* p. 124), to suggest that this may really have been the source. Some manuscripts of the *Transitus* represent the work as written by Melito after the instruction of John, and one apparently actually prefixes to the text the account given in the *Legenda Aurea* (*ibid.* p. XLIII). The work was in fact declared apocryphal by Pope Gelasius.

13. *assumptie*, ascended. But the passage is certainly wrong as it stands. Possibly *was* has been omitted, cf. 27. The verb *assume* can only mean to take up into heaven, not to ascend, and moreover the pret. is *assumed*. From the part. *assumpt* was formed a new verb, but this had the same meaning, and formed the pret. *assumpted*. It is moreover not found till xvi cent.

15. *legenda sanctorum*, i.e. the *Legenda Aurea*.

16. *inhabith*. The *h* has probably got appended by analogy with the cases in which the loss of a guttural has left a long vowel, see Introd. p. 7. Similar instances are 113 *infynyth*, 468 *devouth*. Both *inhabite* and *inhabtt* are recognized forms of the part., while the use of the passive, with the sense of being resident, is also well established for xv-xvi cent. The phrase 'Merchauntes Adventurers inhabite and dwelling in divers parties of this Realme' is quoted by NED from the Statutes of 12 Hen. VII, c. 6.

17. *spoused*, for *spushed*, wedlock.

19. *went*, almost a technical term. You *go* a pilgrimage (cognate object), hence you *go* the stations of a pilgrimage (transitive). The transitive use appears to be a late one, but NED quotes Caxton, 1483: Golden Legend, 47 b/1, 'With my staf I have goon this ryver of Jordan'.

28. *ses*. If we take this as the imper. pl. of *see* the form is certainly

northern; but in that case we should rather expect the spelling *seis*, and also *takis* or *tas*. It is more probably from *cease*.

29. *Mi*, partly cut away: no doubt *Miles*.

30. *Pes*, not *peace* (subs.) but *pease* (vb. imper.), appease, still.

31. *begchis*, bitches: NED records *begch* as an exceptional form, without, however, giving a quotation.

33. *statis*, estates; the use is elliptical, persons of rank.

34. *attayne*, the rime is bad and the sense strained. The former might be mended by substituting *attame*. This has the sense of undertake, endeavour, but though used with an infinitive is not recorded with an indirect question.

36. *pillid*, literally peeled, hence bare, poor, miserable. The expression 'pillede screwe!' occurs in the A-text of *Piers Plowman*, vii. 143 (NED). However, it also had the sense of bald, hence tonsured, which is perhaps the appropriate meaning here.

39-41. The scribe has misunderstood the rimes: that in 41 alone is correct. *stille I* should be *stilly*. This, in all probability, was the original reading, for the tail of a *y*, partly erased, is still visible under the *e*. But there is also a dot above which is not erased; so that the *y* seems to have been replaced by an *i*, though what the object of the alteration may have been is not clear. Then the body of the *i* was altered to *e* and *I* was added at the end to make it agree with 41. This last alteration took place after the rime-lines had been inserted. *spilly I* has not been altered, it should, of course, be *spille I*.

41. *craggyd knad*, I suppose a knotted cudgel. *knad* may be connected with *knag*, the stump of a branch. NED omits the word, though it quotes the present passage s.v. *Cragged*. Halliwell, in his glossary, gives *knad*, knife, on what authority I know not.

43. *Episcopus legis*, bishop of the (old) law.

44. *prysis*, the word has been altered; read *prynsis*.

*I prest of the lave*, I, priest of the law = episcopus legis. Halliwell's explanation, *I-prest*, pressed, is nonsense, and his conjecture *and prest* is not much better.

*lave*, sic for *lawe*.

46. *fer as*, as far as, NED *As B I 3*.

51. *gnaggyd*, or *knaggyd*, hung up; I suppose, hung from a *knag*, cf. 41.

52-3. 'We must not *won*, i.e. fail or hesitate, (to) set *reddure*, i.e. severity, upon such harlots', cf. 48. The word *won* is not from OE *wunian*, to dwell, but perhaps ME *wānien*, from OE *wanian*, to wane, diminish. The sense is a curious one; nearest comes the OE trans. use, meaning to cause to fail. Or else *won* may be an alteration, for the sake of the rime, of *wonde*, OE *wandian*, to turn aside, hesitate.

68. *halt hire wythall*, holds with her. The form *halt*, with *t*, is good for the 3 pers. sing., contracted from *holdeth*; the vowel is said to be Anglian and northern.

70. *relefe*, relieve, rise again. The form is northern.

71. *make to myschefe*, bring to harm.
77. *clenche*, affirm; the only quotation in NED.
93. Halliwell punctuates so as to give the sense: your better judgement is not so. Otherwise *youre* must be an error for *you*.
94. *maytide*, sic for *may tide*, may happen.
97. *be . . . ded*, i.e. when she is dead. *mary that fise* is parenthetical, in apposition to *seustere*.  
*fise*, a form of *fist*, fart, as a term of contempt.
107. *tyde*, time, occasion. In origin no doubt the word is identical with that in 94, but the meaning is sufficiently different to make an allowable rime.
110. *Maria*. This should come after the stage direction, 111; cf. 285-7.
113. *lounesse*, for *lownesse*, humility, as in 168, 205; cf. 299.
115. *obeschyaūs*, sic, for *obeyschaūs* presumably, but we have the form *obeschaūce* in 450.
118. *cōiūct*, sic for *cōiūct*, conjunct.
125. *Sapientia*, the second person of the Trinity.
130. The paragraph at the top of the page is an error of the rubricator's.
137. *consorcyte*, fellowship, company. Not recorded in NED, which, however, quotes one instance of the form *consorce* in 1512.
138. *ludent' cithar'*, *ludenter cithare* or *ludentur citharæ*. Halliwell's *ludentibus citharis* may be better Latin, but I question whether it is what the scribe intended, cf. 675.
141. The rime has been altered here and in 143, but the change has not been carried through the second half of the stanza.
145. *wolcom*, the form is unusual but recurs, see 146, 242, 396.  
*seu'*. The rime shows that the word intended must be *seu'*, i.e. *seure* and not *señ*. Cf. 560 *seuere*. From *suren*, for *assuren*, to promise.
163. After this a line has been drawn in error.
173. *before*. So far as the preposition has any sense here it seems to be temporal, while in 175 it is local: such at least is the only excuse for allowing the word to rime with itself.
179. Perhaps the author intended an *is* somewhere in the line.
180. For Habakkuk's journey see Vulg., *Daniel*, xiv. 32, &c., a passage relegated in AV to the Apocrypha (*Bel and the Dragon*, 33, &c.).
181. *lake of lyonys*, den of lions, 'lacus leonum', i.e. lion pit, *Daniel*, vi. 7, 16 and xiv. 30.
- 182-3. The order of these lines should be reversed, as indicated by the marginal letters.
182. *Se*, I suppose an error for *Be*, by; if not, then *myht* should be *myhty*.
184. The rubricator has by error put a large, in place of a small, paragraph.
186. *kynde*. The rime requires *kende*, as in 194. There is some difference of sense in the two passages, nature and race.

189. *hende*, near at hand. The word rimes in its other sense of gentle in 192.

194. *szpent*, i. e. *serpent*.

196. *pretende*, I suppose, to make a claim; but the absolute uses of this verb are rare, and NED does not give any meaning quite suitable.

197. *now rythis*. *rythis*, i. e. *rights*, is the genitival adv.: 'right now'. Cf. 380, also 641.

201. *sithis*. The plural is probably a concession to the rime; cf. 382.

209. *szuauntis*, i. e. *seruauntis*.

210. *sztefyeth*, i. e. *sertefyeth*, certifies.

212. *replyeth*. The word offers some difficulty both of form and meaning. The termination precludes the possibility of dependence on what precedes; consequently *besekeyng yow* must be parenthetical and *replyeth* imper. pl. There are several odd uses of *reply* in which the etymological origin is still prominent. In this case we may possibly have either an intr. for refl. use with the sense of turn back or retire, or else a trans. use with the sense of lead back, the object being *me* in 213.

220-2. The rime has been altered without regard to the preceding quatrain.

221. *w<sup>t</sup>*. Part of a short line intended to come after 223 and to rime with 228: possibly *with honoure*, in spite of the repetition of rime it would involve.

233. *afer*, for *a fer*, a far.

234. *awhyte*, for *a whyte*.

236-8. The rime has been altered without regard to the first half of the stanza.

238. *skele*, i. e. *skill*, cause. A most unusual form, which would appear to be Scotch: the rime, however, requires the common *skyll* or *skylle*.

239. This stage direction is not very satisfactory. *S<sup>t</sup>* is the usual contraction for *sibi*, which is perhaps not an impossible reading, though one would rather expect *sic* (*S<sup>o</sup>*). There is no line drawn between the direction and the following text.

255. *a none*, for *anone*.

262. *yn*. The sense of upon is well recognized, and 'thou' might possibly be understood. So at least the scribe may have intended the passage. Halliwell prints *thou* for *yn*, having evidently read the word as *bu*. The scribe does not as a rule use *þ* or *y* for *th*. His copy, however, clearly had a *y*-shaped *þ*, which occasionally led him to write *y* in error for *th*; cf. 528, 562 (the instance in 261 is in a different hand). The present is most likely another case in point. He also has two clear instances of *þ*, 297, 432.

263-4. The order of these lines should be reversed, as indicated by the marginal letters.

264. *fron*, sic for *from*.

266. *then*. This must be an error either for *the* or *then the*. The

form *then*, if demonstrative, would be acc. sing. masc., and even were it recorded as late as xv cent. there could be no reason for its use here.

277. *god is*, sic for *godis*.

280. *felle*, a perfectly good rime with the adj. of 276.

286. *portū mirates*, sic.

293-9. These lines are thoroughly irregular in the matter of rime. There is no excuse for any of the repeated rimes, but on the quasi-double rimes of 293, 295 see Introd. p. 32.

294. *cōgregacyñ*, sic. Probably an *o* has simply been omitted after the *y*, but one might of course read *cōgregacyñ*.

297. This curiously involved line is presumably corrupt. The passage is, of course, a paraphrase of 1 Cor. xv. 9-10 to the words: 'Gratia autem Dei sum id quod sum'. It would be easy to emend: 'but neuertheles by the grace of god I am that I am lo', but that would not explain how the corruption arose.

*bat*. The only other instance of *þ* is in 432.

307. *cherubyn halle* is perhaps the hall or abode of the cherubim: to take *halle* as *all* would make a bad rime with 302, though this, to be sure, is no very serious objection:

308. *syže*, i.e. *sygne*, sign: the scribe has been driven to an unusual expedient. The line is obscure. I suppose the meaning to be: we make our hands into the image of thy holy cross, that is, we cross our hands. But *make* has already occurred in 303. It is perhaps just possible that here *make* may have the sense of join, which would render the rime acceptable. But it is very improbable, for though the sense of mate, pair, match, is recorded in NED, it is rare, and that of join does not seem to occur.

309. *be sekyng*, for *besekyng*.

310. It is possible that *thee* has been omitted after *lyke*.

314-15. The construction of these lines is peculiar. Formerly the object of *send*, sc. a message, could be replaced by a clause of indirect statement expressing the message, a construction which we commonly use with *convey*. Here the clause, i.e. *that . . . fare*, has become the subject of a passive use of the verb. *mary* is dative.

319. *ment*. This word has the appearance of having been added for the rime rather than the sense. It is not easy to attach much meaning to it. Presumably it has the sense of told, though it might possibly have that of lamented.

322. *vs absent*. The dative is certainly an unusual construction, but perhaps not impossible.

327. *a non*, for *anon*.

331. *be*, a rime repeated from both 323 and 327 for which there is no excuse.

346. The rubricator placed a large paragraph opposite this line in error for 348. He erased it when he discovered his mistake, but forgot to put the small one that should be there.

351. *dyueris*. The spelling here and in 352 is clearly influenced by

that of the gen. and pl. terminations. By xv cent. these had usually become -s in pronunciation, though they continued to be written as though they were syllabic. This occasionally led to the insertion of *e*, *i*, or *y* before the final -s of other words.

352. *was*. The subject is *clowdys*, the verb being attracted into the sing. by the intervening object, or else perhaps *Diueris clowdys* was felt in a partitive sense.

*curyng*, from *cure*, a shortened form of *cover*.

353. *w*, sic for *we*.

*I wys*, another repeated rime.

365. After this the scribe has drawn a line in error.

370. For the rime here see Introd. p. 32.

376. *god is*, sic for *godis*.

378. *ornatus*, sic.

382. *bet*, sic for *let*.

*in this virgyne sythtis*, in the sight of this virgin. Possibly *sythtis* is plural because there are several persons under her view, cf. 201.

383. *spoused*, cf. 17, bridal, in allusion to Matt. xxv. 10.

384. *lithtis*, this repeats the rime of 372.

390. *celest'*, *celester*, apparently for *celesti*.

392. *fulny*, sic for *ful ny*.

393. *dede sede*, did seed, sprang, was born. According to NED the only recorded instance of the use.

394. *org'*, presumably *organa* or *organis*, cf. 675.

396. The paragraph has been placed here in error.

397. *assuffysed*, for a *suffysed*, have sufficed.

399. *Inppire*, sic for *In propire* (proper).

*redy*, this repeats the rime of 386.

401. *v'*, i.e. *versus*, versicle; added by the rubricator.

414. The speaker's name, *Maria*, has been omitted, and consequently the versus-mark likewise.

*deme*, sic for *de me*.

416. *mes*, sic for *meo*.

418. *sinu*, sic for *sinum*.

420. *ny*, sic for *my*.

425. *severe*. Severe gives neither rime nor sense. The form *seuere*, sure, occurs twice for the verb, 145, 560, but the adj. seems to be written *sure*, 385. The emendation *secure* would give sufficiently good sense.

426. *yo"*, i.e. *your*.

427. There should be a small paragraph to this line and a large one to 429.

431. *defende*, a repeated rime for which the fact that in 429 the word is imper. while here it is infin. is hardly an excuse.

432. *pi*, cf. 297.

433. *m<sup>a</sup>rt'*, i.e. *martyrum*.

436. *angts*, sic, read *angelorum*.

437. *Iertm*, i.e. *Ierusalem*.

438. *sic q<sub>3</sub>*, sic.

439. *glie*, i.e. *glorie*.
450. *obeschañce*, obeisance, cf. 115.
452. The speaker's name should follow 453, cf. 440-2.
459. *celestly*. The only instance of this word quoted in NED is from the Betrothal play of the same N-town cycle (*Ludus Cov.* ed. Halliwell, p. 103), where in Mary's praise of the Psalter occurs the line: 'And makyst hym desyre thynghys celestly'. In that passage the word appears to be an adj. and I conjecture that it may be the same here, *all celestly* meaning everything heavenly. Perhaps *celestly* was formed from *celest*, celestial, under the influence of *heavenly*.
460. *clene*. The *l* looks very much as though it had been altered to *h*, but I suppose that the tail which gives it this appearance must be due to an accidental slip of the pen.
462. *pray*, a repeated rime.
471. *pplo*, i.e. *populo*. *Atta*, i.e. *Alleluia*.
482. *wyth owte*, a separate line, intended to come after 484 and to rime with 489.
483. *a ferd*, for *aferd*.
488. *ogyl*, oggle, shudder. This is the only instance quoted in NED.
491. None of the repeated rimes in this stanza appear the least defensible, but see *Intro.* p. 32.
496. Apparently a *now* has been erased at the end of this line and of 498, without regard to the preceding quatrain.
497. *hed*, a repeated rime.
498. *dodemsyd*, probably, dotty and bemused. This is the only instance quoted in NED.
504. *bychyd*, apparently a nonce formation from *bitch*, not recognized by NED. Cf. *Pardoner*, "bicched bynes"
509. *geyne*. This is apparently an instance of the verb *gain*, from ON *gegna*, with the sense of encounter, oppose. NED only quotes one doubtful example from the Chester plays, viii, l. 157: 'There is none so great that me dare gaine.'
- glabereris*, probably a variant, not recognized by NED, of *glaverers*, deceitful talkers.
510. *tene*, grieve, intr. for refl.
512. *hurle wyth*, hurl (myself) against.
516. *brnge*, sic, read *bringe*.
- bygyd*, apparently a variant of *bychyd*, cf. 504.
518. *atonys*, for *at onys*.
520. *stent*, presumably an error for *stene*, stone.
521. *alwod*, for *al wod*, altogether mad.
522. The speaker's name should follow 524.
523. *feroci*, sic.
524. *percucient*', apparently for *percutientes*.
528. *yowth*, i.e. *yought*, *bought*. One of the instances of *y* for *th*, cf. 262.

533. *Wyndand wod.* This must mean raving mad, though no example of the phrase seems to be recorded. *Wyndand* may possibly be from *winden* in the sense of writhe.

534. *routh*, i.e. *rought*, pret. of *reck*, care, here apparently used for the pres.

539. *nouth*, a repeated rime.

540. *af*, sic for *ad*.

*þman*<sup>ð</sup>, for *per manus*.

546. *amayde*, sic for *a mayde*.

*acusid.* The phrase *accuse of* (a person) is uncommon. Unless the line is corrupt the word must be used in the sense of bring an accusation, make complaint, a rare sense, but not unknown. But it is tempting to take *of* with *a mayde*.

554. *bere*, a repeated rime.

555. The speaker's name, *Primus princeps*, is omitted.

559. *savacyoñ*, a desperate attempt to improve the rime by using a slightly different form of the word.

562. *yi*, thy, cf. 262.

568. *þeter*, a very poor rime, for the accent is not on the termination, but see Introd. p. 32.

576. *atonys*, for *at onys*.

578. The speaker's name should follow 579 if not 581.

579. *insepulcrum*, sic for *in sepulcrum*.

*insensantes*, incensing.

580. One would have expected a versus-mark here, and the paragraph at 582.

582. *synge*, I suppose this must be *sign*, i.e. the sign of the cross made in blessing the body. The spelling is said to be Scotch (NED).

584. John's speech continued.

585. *pleyn*, I suppose, full, filled up.

*lake*, grave. This is a rather uncommon use, from *L. lacus*, pit, cf. 181. The word is found in the same sense in the account of the Resurrection in the same N-town cycle (*Ludus Cov.* ed. Halliwell, p. 350): 'whan he dede ryse out of his lake'.

587. *belave*, this must be an anomalous form (used for the sake of the rime) of *beleave* or *belive*, remain.

592. *gaue*, a repeated rime.

593. The speaker's name should follow 594.

598. *yow*<sup>n</sup>, this can hardly be anything but a slip, read *yo*<sup>n</sup>, your.

601. *felthe*, probably var. of *filth*, for the sake of the rime.

602. This is rubricated, but there are no lines separating it from the text.

604. *belthe*. No such word is known. Possibly it is a downright invention for the sake of the rime, probably with a suggestion of *belch*.

608. *the*, most likely an error for *that we*.

614. *herne*, corner, the rime though very doubtful is perhaps passable.

615. *vs fettyn*. Unless the form *fettyn* can be imper. pl. from *fet*, fetch



(see Introd. p. 17), we shall be forced to read either *we fettyn* (indic.) or *lat vs fettyn* (inf.).

622, 628. *gowe*, sic, for *go we*.

625. *inhye*, for *in hye*, in haste.

635. *the vnyte*, if this is really what the author wrote I fail to gather his meaning. Perhaps we should read *in vnyte*.

638. The speaker's name should follow 639.

639. *aplos*, i.e. *apostolos*.

649. *rese*, this is quite anomalous as the pret. of *rise*, probably an error for *rase* or *rose*.

651. *ryth is*, riming with the adv. *rythtis* in 641.

656. *mythtis*, riming with *myth is* in 644.

657. The speaker's name should follow 658.

658. *aia*, i.e. *anima*.

660. *dowe*, dove, the form is Scotch.

670. *A bouen*, for *Abouen*.

674. *frend*, a repeated rime.

676. We should expect a versus-mark here, and the paragraph at 678.

#### ADDENDUM.

604. *belthe*. Dr. Bradley writes to point out that two examples of the word *belth* occur in G. Douglas' *Æneid* (Works, ed. J. Small, 1874). Thus vol. ii, bk. III, p. 145, l. 5: 'that hellis belth' is applied to Charybdis; and vol. iii, bk. VII, p. 104, l. 5: 'That bismyng belch' (read *belth*) to Alecto. He adds: 'The sense would agree with the derivation of the word from *bale* (OE *bealo*), though the formation is rather difficult. I owe these references to Dr. Craigie.'

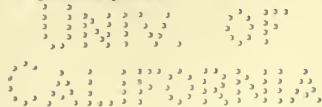
## GLOSSARIAL INDEX

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- absent, 322.  
 acusid, 546.  
 affye, 121, trust.  
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 apocriphum, 6.  
 assedually, 213, assiduously.  
 assumpte, 13.  
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- be, 97.  
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 brether, 432, brothers.  
 bychyd, 504.  
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- dentis, 89, blows.  
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 dyswary, 6, doubt.  
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- fer as, 46.  
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- geyne, 509.  
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