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After a woodcut by Hans Weiditz in H. Ziegler's German translation of Boccaccio's *De casibus*, published by Steiner in Augsburg, Feb. 27, 1545, fol. ii. verso. The woodcut is one of 261 completed by Weiditz in the years 1519-20, and first published in the "Trostsiegel," Steiner, Augsburg, 1532. (See Dodgson, *Catalogue of Early German and Flemish Woodcuts in the British Museum*, II. pp. 144, 157.) Approximately original size, 157 x 100.

2025*

John LYDGATE'S
FALL OF PRINCES

EDITED BY
HENRY BERGEN

PART I.
(BOOKS I. AND II.)



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LYDGATE'S FALL OF PRINCES

PART I.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE, THE METRE, BOCCACCIO'S
AND LAURENCE'S PREFACES, Etc.

BOOKS I. AND II.

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ERRATA

- On page 174, line 6172, *patisynge* is a more correct reading than *paryschyng*.
- On page 426, line 3514, for *Lacedemonios*, read *Lacedemonois*.
- On page 815, line 1453, for *impreuable* read *imprenable*.



ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS FALL OF PRINCES.

- Part I, p. xlix, line 2 from bottom, *for hoies read homines.*
- „ p. 3, line 88, Miss Hammond suggested to me that "spare" means to spar up, support, in other words that it is not related to OE sparian, to spare, but is a verb formed from ME sparre, a spar, timber.
- „ p. 46, line 1659, "thenbracyng of Pheton." This is not the English word "embracing," but, as Laurence says, "lembracement de Pheton qui en grec signifie feu ou challeur" (*comp.* Part IV, 144. Lat. *brīsa*, Fr. *braise*, glowing charcoal; *braiser*, to cook on hot charcoal; *embraser*, to set fire to, to make glow).
- Part III, p. 809, side-note to 1223-24 should read: "Lead, called leprous gold and Tin of Jupiter, is dull of sound; mercury is false and fugitive."
- „ p. 1029, line 110, *insert hast after in.*
- Part IV, p. 92, line 12 from bottom: *delete* (also Wayland).
- „ pp. 113, 114. To the twelve copies of Pynson's 1494 edition mentioned, a thirteenth may be added; namely, the Newbattle Abbey copy, which was sold by the American Art Association in New York on January 28, 1932. According to the catalogue (*Selections from the Famous Libraries of the most hon. the Marquess of Lothian*, New York, 1932, p. 57 (facing facsimile of title-page), the volume is imperfect: 57 leaves (a 1-8, b 2-3, h 6-8, i 1-3, k 4-8, l 1-2, 4-5, n 4-9, o 1-8, p 1-3, q 1-2, 7-8, r 2-8, s 1-4, C 1 and D 4-5) are missing and have been made up with leaves taken from the edition of 1527.
- On p. 49 of the same catalogue it is stated that the Newbattle Abbey copy of the Colard Mansion edition of Laurence's first version is "one of three known copies . . . the two others are both in public libraries and both are imperfect." Actually there are thirteen or fourteen known copies; the Newbattle Abbey copy, however, is according to Henri Michel the only known copy in the third state (*comp. Fall of Princes*, Part IV, 128).
- „ p. 120. For a discussion of Wayland's print and its relation to the *Mirror for Magistrates*, see Professor W. T. Trench, *A Mirror for Magistrates*, London, 1898, and Lily B. Campbell, *The Suppressed Edition of A Mirror for Magistrates* in the *Huntington Library Bulletin*, No. 6, November 1934.

THE DAUNCE OF MACHABREE

As a result of an abortive attempt to collate both Harley 116 and Lansdowne 699, each of which belongs to a different group of MSS. (Harley to the Ellesmere group (A), and Lansdowne to the B group) and of the fact that the incomplete variants were pieced together, in part with incorrect attributions, while I was in America in 1918-19, only to be forgotten and left unrevised on my return to England in 1919, and finally, in 1923, inadvertently printed as they stood, the footnotes to the *Daunce of Machabree* are in a state of error and confusion that must be seen to be believed. The only amends I can make is: 1. to refer the reader to the edition of the

Dance of Death edited by the late Miss Florence Warren, with introduction and notes by Miss Beatrice White of King's College, London, where he will find the Ellesmere and Lansdowne MSS. printed complete, together with a collation of all the known MSS., and 2. to supply the following revised collation of Harley 116 and Lansdowne 699.

I was not struck by it at the time, but I now have a strong suspicion that in spite of their manner, and to a certain extent their vocabulary, many if not all of the additional stanzas in the B group, as well as the major variants, are not by Lydgate, who so far as we know was not in the habit of revising his work, but by another hand (or hands). All the at present known MSS. are late and excessively corrupt, but with few exceptions the additional stanzas, substituted lines and other textual alterations in the B group are at the worst so inferior and at the best so indifferent both in sentiment and in metre as compared with the A group, that I find it difficult to believe that Lydgate had anything to do with them. Even the *Empresse*, the *Mayr*, the *Chanoun Regular* and the *Doctor utriusque Juris*, although I should hesitate to include them positively as later additions, have a certain emptiness difficult to parallel in the A version and could very well be imitations of Lydgate's style. On the other hand, the *Justice* and *Monialis* are metrically impossible as they stand, the *Artifex* (also metrically bad, and in which *Death* appears as a woman), the *Sergeant in Law*, the substituted seventh line of the *Jurour*, the *Famulus*, and *Machabre the Doctour*, seem to be hardly more than a travesty of Lydgate. It is also difficult to believe that the *Dean*, the *Physician*, the *Minstrel* (especially his *Response*) and the two final stanzas are revisions. A careful study of the relations of the MSS. to one another as well as of the poem itself—its vocabulary, rhyme and metre—would be of great interest.

VARIANT READINGS IN MS. LANSDOWNE 699 = L:

The first five stanzas are omitted. 46 of *Machabree*] which that ye see. 47 ylike] *om.* 48 ne] *nor.* 49 wight] *man.* 51 toforn] *before—shall go.* 56 oo] *oon.* — yforged] *Forgid.* 57 most] *om.* 59 hath] *have.* 60 and states temporall] *most in especiall.* 65 for] *with deth.* 71 which al] *sich.* 75 mot] *must.* 77 leue your] *lat.* 79 is worth] *vailleth.* 81 that] *om.* — me] *om.* 82 Whan deth me sailith that doth me constreyn. 83 helpen] *socour.* 86 and] *and my.* 87 Wher vpon sore I me compleyn. 90 sheweth] *seemeth.* 91 yet for-thy] *for al that.* 92 folke my] *estates this.* 93 ye] *om.* 95 I feere. 96 honour] *worship.* 97 certes this] *trewly it.* 98 to drede. 101 vnto] *to.* 102 eke] *heer.* 103 which] *the which.* — conceyued] *lernyd.* 104 That worldly] *How that al.* Two stanzas, the *Imperatrix* and her *response*, are here included in L: Lat se your hand / my lady dame *Empresse*: Have no disdeyn / with me for to daunce: Ye may a side / leyn al your richesse: Your fresh attyres / devises of plesaunce: Your soleyн cheeris / your strange countenaunce: Your clothis of gold / most vncouthly wrouht: Hauyng of deth / ful litel remembrance: But now se weel al is come to noult: *Responsum*: What availleth / gold richesse o[r] perre: Or what availleth / hih blood or Ientylnesse: Or what availleth / freshnesse or beaute: Or what is worth / hih porte o[r] straunge-nesse: Deth seith chek mat / to al sich veyn noblesse: All worldly power / now may me nat availe: *Raunsoun* kyndrede / frenship nor worthynesse: Syn deth is come / myн hih estat tassaile. 105 O] *Right.* 107 That som tyme had so gret possession. 108 Rewmys obeyng / vn to your hih noblesse. 109 Ye most of nature / to this daunce yow dresse. 110 & fynally your croume / & sceptre leete. 111 Who] *For who so.* — here] *om.* 113 nought] *nat.* — toforn] *afforn.* 115 Wher bi I see / ful cleerly in substauce. 116 or force of high linage] *force or hih parage.* 119 is] *that is.* — I holde hym most sage] *hath most avauntage.* 121 Sir *Patriarch* / ful sad & humble of cheere. 122 Ye mote with othir / gon on this daunce with. 125 very] *trowth.* 126 Be possid / in hast as I rehers can. 127 Trusteth] *Trust.* 129 gret] *om.* 131 olde ioyes] *ioies old.*

— tristesse] distresse. 132 treasours] honour. 133 for] to. 134 estates] estat. — wasten] waste. 135 Who so montith highest stonndith most in drede. 136 Greate] Such heuy. — hym oft] hem often. The Cunstable is replaced by the Princeps, in which only the third line is similar to that in the A group: Riht myhty prynce be rith weell certeyn: This daunce to yow is not eschewable: For more myhty than euer was Carlemayn: Or worthy Arthour of prowes ful notable: With al his knyghtes of the rounde table: What did ther platis ther armour or ther maile: Ther strong corage ther sheeldes defensable: A geyns deth availe] when he hem dide assaile. The reponse shows fewer variations. 145 whole] myn. 146 assail] assigid. 147 And bryngte folke] Rebellis to bryng. 148 To seeke worshipis] fame & grette rychesse]. 149 See] se weel. — prowess] e.s. 150 which is a great] wher of I have. 151 eke] om. — swetnesses. 153 you] so. 154 So frowardly] Your look your face. 155 Yee must obey to] my] mortal lawe. 156 contrary] constreyme. 157 For day bi day] be right wele certeyn. 158 the] om. 159 Preestes & deth may nat be holden a geyn. 160 a daye] oon our. — contith. 162 haue so gret] stonde in sich. 163 might] power. 164 That who-so] But who that it. 166 And seyn A-dieu] pompe and pride also. 167 My peynted paleys] tresour & richesse. 169 Erl or Baron] which that thourh regiouus. 170 Have sore laboured] for worship & renoun. 172 This] om. 173 Whylom] som tyme. — and] & your. 174 Was in estat] & wordly wurship to glade. 175 oft it] often tyme. 177 ofte sith] often tyme. 178 empryse—thyng. 179 high & low] gret estates. 180 ladies & women] princes & lordis. 181 Ne] Nor. 182 lordes courte] roial courtes. — was] weer. 185 But deth vnwarly] al power makith lame. Under] And vndir. The next two stanzas, the Princess and her response, are omitted in L. 201 My Lord] Com ner. — with] with your. 202 soothlyve I] soth I yow. 207 counte. 208 ouer] on. 209 Of these tidynges] I am no thyng glad. 210 Which deth to me] so sodeynly doth bryng. 211 It makith my face & countenance] ful saad. 213 now to my] to me in. 215 And needis we must] on to our departyng. 217 Commeth forth Syr Squyer] Knyght or scwyer—gises. 219 fresshe] wele. 220 devise. 221 on you so] upon yow. — high emprise] straunge emprises. 224 stroke] power. 225 Sith. 226 that] om. 228 whilom] som tyme. 229 Adieu beaute] that lastith but short space. Here L, together with the other MSS. of the B group, includes the following four stanzas on the "Maïor" and the "Canonicus Regularis": Com forth sir Mayr] which had gou-ernaunce: Bi pollicie] to rewle this cite: Thowh your power] were notable in substauce: To see my daunce] ye have no liberte: Estate is noon] nor wordly dygnyte: That may escape] out of my daungeris: To tynde rescue] example ye may se: Nouthur bi richesse] nor force of off-ces. Responsum: What helpith now] thestat in which I stood: To rewle Cites] or Comouns to gouerne: Plente of richesse] or increce of good: Or oble wyunnyng] that cometh to me so yerne: Deth al defaceth] who so list to lerne: Me for tareste] he comyth on so faste: Eche man ther fore] shold a fore discerne: Prudently] to thynk vpon his laste. The Canonicus Regularis: Lat see your hand] sir chanon Regular: Som tyme sworn] to religio:n: As humble soget & obediencer: Chastly to live] lik your professio:n: But ther may be] no consolacio:n: Ageyn my sawes] sodeyn & cruell: Except oonly] for short conclusio:n: Who liveth in vertu: mot nedis dey weel. Responsum: Whi shulde I grutche] or disobeye: The thyng which of verrey kyndly riht: Was I ordeyned] & born for to deye: As in this world] is ordeyned euery wiht: Which to remembre] is no thyng liht: Praying the lord] that was sprad on the roode: To medle mercy] with his eternal myht: And save the sowles] that he bouht with his blood. 233 Commeth forth Syr Abbot] Sir Abbot and priour. 234 To been abassht] ye have a maner riht. 236 nothyng] nat. 237 Leven your lordship. 239 Who that] Who so—to hym] I have. 240 In his grave] sonnest shal putrefie. 241 o] no. 242 know] om. — al] al maner. 244 This doth to me] somewhat the lesse grevaunce. 245 libertes. 246 availe. 248 in dying] to forn deth. 250 mantyl. 252 bedes sister] beddes softe.

255 for] *om.* 256 no] *om.* 257 this for me] *om.* 258 it nought declyne] nat hym eschewe. 259 If it so be ful oft] Vnto this of riht. 260 That heer with othir / I must his trace sewe. 261 This pilgrymage / to every man is dewe. 262 An earnest mateer / a mateer of no iape. 263 Who that is alwey redy / shal nevir rewe. 264 The hour abydyng / that god hath for hym shape. Here are inserted four stanzas, the Iudex and the Doctor vtiusque juris and their responses. The two stanzas on the Bayly are omitted. That hand of youres / my lord Iustice : That have rewlied / so long the lawe : Weel may men holde / yow war & wise : So that this draught / be weel drawe : Escape shal ye nat / wold ye neuer so fawe : Sich dome to have / as ye have youen in soth : Wher fore men seyn / of an olde sawe : Weel is hym / that alwey weel doth. Response : Allas ne were / that myn entent : Was weele dresssid / though I othir while erryd : Now shuld I vtirely / be shamyd & shent : For many causes / that I have oftyn d[e]ferrid : Sauff mercy oonly / now were I marrid : Blissid ther fore / is euery wight : As bi holy scriptur / may ben averrid : That in all tyme / doth lawe & kepith riht. The Doctor Vtiusque juris : Com forth doctour / of Canon & Cyvile : In bothe these lawis / of long continuance : Your tyme hath spent / bewar ye did no gile : In your mateers / for to han fortheraunce : Now must ye lerne / with me for to daunce : All your lawe / may yow nat a vaile : Giff me your hand / & make no perturbauce : Your hour is come / this is withouten faile. His response : A mercy Iesu / whow mankynde is freele : And litel tyme / in this worlde abydyng : No man of his liff / hath charter nor seele : Ther fore it may / be likned in all thyng : Vnto a Flour / so amorously floorsshyng : Which with a Froste / bi gynneth riht sone to fade : Whan cruell deth / his massage list to bryng : Al liffly thyng / he bryngeth in the s[h]ad. 281 Maister] *om.* — lookest] loken. 287 aresteth] doth arrest. 289 and] *or.* 290 nought] *om.* 291 Ne in the] Nor in. — seke] serche out. 292 nor] *or.* 294 descriven. 296 Who liueth alyght] *om.* The two stanzas on the Burgess are omitted. The Chanon Seculer is headed Decanus in L. 313 And ye Syr] Sir dean *or.* 315 In gret array / your tresour to dispende. 316 With all your richesse / & your possessionns. 317 For kynde hath sett / hir revoluciousns. 318 Eche man som day / to daunce on dethis brynk. 319 Ther of ye may, etc. 320 For deth cometh evir, etc. 321 My divers cures / my riche personages. 322 God wot ful lite] Allas ful litel thei. 323 Deth vpon me / hath geten his advantages. 324 That] *om.* — can make me now no sporte. 325 gris] grey. — wyl] must. 326 a surples and] with many a gret. 327 For which trewly / as clerkis can reporte. 328 deye. Here follow two stanzas, " Monialis " and response, in L : Though ye be barbid / & claad in clothis blaake : Chastly receuyed / the mantil & the ryng : Ye may nat the cours / of nature for sake : To daunce with othir / now at my comyng : In this world / is non abidyng : Nouthir of maide / widewe nor wiff : As ye may seen / heer clearly bi wrytyng : That a geyns deth / is founde no preseruatif. The Response : It helpith nat / to stryve a geyn nature : Namely whan deth / bi gynneth tassaile : Wher fore I counseil / euery creature : To been redy / a geyn this fel batayle : Vertu is sewerer / than othir plate or maile : Also no thyng / may helpe at sich a nede : Than to provide / a sur acquyttaile : With the hand of almesse / to love god & drede. 329 Ye] Come. — ye mot] &. 330 That passid haue] Which hast passid. — ful] *om.* 331 regard] reward. 333 ye, your] thou, thyn. 334 Al thyn old labour / wher is it be come now. 336 covexitith than he that hath. 338 many] *om.* 339 Bi straunge secis carried. 341 ay] evir. 342 now] *om.* — me doth] doth me. 344 litel] he lityl. Two stanzas, the " Artifex " and his response, follow here in L : Yeve hidir thyn hand / thou Artificer : For ther is founde / no subtilite : Bi witt of man / that fro my daungeer : To save hym silff / can have no liberte : My strook is sodeyn / fro which no man may flee : Bi coriouste / nor cunnyng of fressh devise : Kynde hath ordeyned / it will non othir be : Eche man mote passe / whan deth settith assise. The Response : Ther is no craft / serchid out nor soult : Cast nor compassid / bi old nor newe entaile : I se ful weel / withynne myn owen thouht : A geyns deth / [whiche that may] availe :

She *pershith* sheeldis / she *pershith* plate & maile : A geyns her strok
cunnyng nor science : Whan that hir list mortally to assaile : Alas allas
 ther may be no defence. 347 and your self doth your chyne. 351 as
 outward. 353 long agon ago ful longe. 355 And *om.* 356 Dreadeth
 Dredith hym. — kindly naturall. 358 But please to God. Please it lorde.
 361 Sir *om.* — your thi. 362 nor nor no. 364 ye thou. 366 you the.
 367 sturdi a. 368 another is also deth is vit mor. 369 durste darst.
 370 That Which. 371 Which And. — bothen walkyng. 372 ful
 surquedous of with ful dispitous. 373 arested arest. 374 can may.
 375 both *om.* 376 for *om.* The four stanzas on the Monke and the
 Usurer, as well as the stanza, "The Poore Man boroweth of the Usurer,"
 are omitted in L. The stanzas on the "Physicien" are quite different in
 L: Ye phisiciens for mony that loken so fast : In othir mennys wattris
 what thei eyle : Look weel to your silf or att last : I not what your
 medicynes nor crafte may availe : For deth comyng sodeynly doth
 assaile : As weel lechis as othir that shal ye knowe : Atte last Iugement
 withouten any faile : Whan al men shal repe as thei have sowe. The
 Response : Allas to long and to myche in phisik : For lucre I plye'd al
 my bysnesse : Bothe in speclacioun & in practik : To knowe & konne al
 bodely siknesse : But of gostly helthe I was reklesse : Wher fore shal
 helpe nother herbe nor roote : Nor no medicyne sauif goddes goodnesse :
 For a geyns deth is fynaly no boote. The two stanzas on the Amerous
 Squire are omitted in L. 451 ye was *om.* 452 and *om.* 453 thei went
om. 455 daunger long in loue deynous daunger. 456 Vnto this daunce
 ye mote your fotyng dresse. 457 sparist. The Man of Law is called the
 Sergeant in Lawe in L. 495 Syr Aduocate Come neer sir Sergeant. 466
 highe iudge Iudge on hihe. 467 quarell quarell thouth. 468 to folke
 refuge folk gret remedie. 469 Ther shal your sotil wittis be deemyd
 foly. 470 Yiff sleathe & covetise be nat exiled. 471 Be war bi tymes
 & labour for mercy. 472 For thei that trust most them silf ar sonnest
 bigiled. 474 I can alleggen nor make no defence. 475 Nor bi sleithe
 nor statute me with drawe. Tescape a way from this dreedful sentence.
 477 For al my witt nor gret prudence. 478 No thyng in erthe may no
 man preserve. 479 Agayn A geyns. 480 *om.* Here L omits Master
 John Rikil Tregetour and the Parson, four stanzas. 515 like to aittir.
 519 But lat se now that wythinne so short a space. 520 Before—acquyte.
 521 Som tyme I was callid, etc. 524 whom *om.* 525 Hang—acquyte.
 528 a man is oon wole be. The two stanzas on the Minstrel are replaced
 by two others so different that they must be given entire : Gentil menstral
 shewe now thi witt : How thou canst pleye or foote ariht this daunce :
 I dar weel sei that an harder fitt : Than this nil neuyr to thi chaunce :
 Look ther fore what may best avauce : Thi sowle as now & vse that I
 reede : Refuse nyce play & veyn plesauce : Bettir late than neuyr to
 do good deede. The Response : Ey benedicite this world is freele : Now
 glad now sory what shal men vse : Harpe lute phidil pipe farwell :
 Sautry Sithol & Shalmuse : Al wordly myrthe I here refuse : God
 graunte me grace of sich penaunce : As may myn old synnes excuse :
 For alle be nat mery that othir whyle daunce. The two following stanzas,
 the *Famulus* and his response, are included here in L : Seruant or officer
 in thyn office : Yiff thou hast ben as god wold & riht : To poore & riche
 doon pleyne iustice : Fled extorcious with al thy myht : Than maist thou
 in this daunce go liht : Or elles ful hevye shalt thou be thanne : Whan alle
 domys shal fynaly be diht : Go we hens the tyde a bidith no man. The
 Response : Shal I so sone to dethis daunce : That wend to have lyved
 yeeris many mo : And sodeynly forsake al my plesauce : Of offices
 & profites that long ther to : Yit oon thyng I counsel or I go : In office
 lat no man doon outrage : For dreede of god & peyn also : Also service
 is noon heritage. 546 ful *om.* 547 Ye must eke Thou must here. 548 if
 thouth. 550 this the. — from thee for. 551 The This. — can so folkes
 causith folk to. 552 He For he. 554 Albe that Al thouth. 556 to haue
 gon at the plowe & gon forth at the plough. 558 diked—atte cart.
 559 telle platly howe pleyntly avow. 560 In this world here rest is ther

noon. 561 Come forth thou frere / to the, etc. 562 To] Vpon. — you] the. 563 your] thi—hast ful often tauht. 564 most] *om.* 565 Albe] al thouh. — thereto] ther of. 566 nor] ne. 567 Death dare hym rest] I dar arrest hym. 570 to abide] for tabide. 571 Strength] Strengthe nor. — so] *om.* 572 Of] O. 579 before] to forn. 580 in hast by fatall] with hem with sotil. 518 ouer] of. — upon my] on this. 582 escape in soth] in soth skape. 584 Who] Who so. 585 a] o. 586 so] ful. 587 so] ful. 588 list no lenger to] of his strok list. 589 come] cam. 590 Of me no] On me more. — ye] *om.* 592 As] For as. — man] sheep. The stanzas on the Yong Clerke are omitted in L. 610 there] *om.* At the laste yet] Tyme is come that. 612 theexperience. 613 may be] is. 614 hermitage] heritage. 615 aduert to] advertise. 616 That this liff heer / is but a pilgrymage. 617 To liue] Liff. 618 again] a geyns. — respite none nor space] no respite nor [sp]ace. 620 by] be. 621 hym] my lord. 622 and great habundaunce] such as I have assayed. 624 that lacketh suffraunce] but he that halt hym payed. The next stanza, Death speaketh agayn to the Hermite, is omitted in L. The last three stanzas are entitled "Conclusio" in L. 633 Ye] Ye ye. — loken—portrature] scripture. 634 Beholding] Conceyveh. — all] that al. 635 been] be. 637 haueth] have. 638 Be fore your mynde / a boven al thyng. 640 fine of our] ende of your. 641 What is mannys liff / but a countenance. 642 Or [as] a puff of wynde / that is transitorie. 643 As may be weel / perceived bi this daunce. 644 Ther fore ye / that reden this storye. 645 Keepe thentent / in your memorye. 646 And it shal steer yow / in to gostly liff. 647 Teschewe peyn / & come vnto glorie. 648 And be your socour / in al gostly stryff. The final stanza in L is as follows : Be nat a fferd / this scriptur in tyme of play : In your mynde / to revolve & reede : For trust trewly / ye shal nevyr the sonner deye : But it shal cause yow / synne for to dreede : The which refusid / ye shal have gret meede : Ther fore a mong / have mynde on this lettir : And vse vertu / prayer & almese deede : And than I dar sey / ye shal doon the bettir. The Lenuoye of the Translatoure, two stanzas, is omitted in L.

Variant readings in MS. Harley 116 = H : 3 euer lasten] laste euer. 4 prouidence] prudence. 5 To see a fore. 6 be] dethe (*corrected to sleth*). 7] *om.* 8 high & loue. 9 not hight ne law. 11 in] in thaire. 13 Her] The. 17 Consideryng. 18 it] yit. 19 the example. 20 Full] But. 21 Ther of franch clerkes. 30 that] whiche. 32 may clerly ther. 33 intentes. 36 surpluses. 38 declare] delyuere. 40 *is transposed after 36.* The next stanza, "The Wordes of the Translatour," is included in the Prologue in H. 42 which] which pat. The following stanza (lines 49–56) is omitted. 57 O ye. — high] hight. 59 to] as. — hath] hadde. 61 ye] *om.* 64 of all] *om.* 68 Seynt Petris] petres. 69 fro] *om.* 70 Vpon this] On his. 74 Most] *om.* — surmountyng] and hieste. 79 is worth] worthe is. 83 gin] bote. 88 litle auauntage] so lytell vayntage. 90 it sheweth] me semeth. 97 this] pat. — faile] fable. 100 All myn array to leue be hend me (*mispaced after 101*). 101 vnto] to. 107 whylom had] hadd somtyme. 109 great] *om.* 110 ye] you. 113 toforn] a fore. 114 sauage] sage (sa[ua]ge). 115 through] for. — by] my. 116 or] *om.* — of] or. 118 Great] bothe grett. 119 hym] he is. 121 al] with al. 122 quiteth] quite. — nor] for. 137 my] *om.* — arest you and] rest and you. 140 enforcede. 141 ne] nor. — this] is. 142 Nor] Ne. 143 most] *om.* 146 assail] haue assayled. — mighty] *om.* — forresse. 150 see] see well. 153 you] so. 158 the] *om.* 160 a] oo. 163 to escape. — no] non. — se] seen. 166 &] my. 168 Thyng] For thinge. 169 Lordes] ladies. 172 nor] ne. 173 Whylom] Som tyme. 174 daunsen] davne. 176 One] that oo. 177 sith] tymes. 178 Empryse. 185 good] and. 188 Nether] Noper. — nor] ne. 190 whylom couth] somtyme cowde holde so. 195 this] his. 196 nis] is. 197 bountie nor in her] beaute ne in. 198] That she of Right most nedys the trace sew. 199 When] For to. — fairnes] fresshnes. 200] Oure Reuced age saith farwell adiev. 201 with] with your. 203 For] *om.* 208 ouer] *om.* 209 nother] nothing. 214 Which al estates] That al folkes. 217 Commeth] Come. — of] in. 218 daunces] davnce. 221 toke] take.

223 Daunseth Davnce. — no^r not. 225 Sithe. 227 now^r om. 228 whilom^r somtyme. 229 al^r om. 233 Come. 234 Beeth nought^r Be not—haue. 235 rounde large. 239 Who is most fatte. 241 manace^r trefysete. — haue^r o gret^r I haue noon. 243 cloystre. 244 is^r om. 246 they vayne^r avaylle. 247 aske I I haske. — devoute^r hartly. 251 your ryng^r passing. 252 bedes sister beddys softe. — mot now leyn a-syde^r must now lay on syde. 254 borne^r and borne. 256 man^r wyght. 259 If Thogh. 263 with^r doth. 265 knowen^r know. 268 Extorcoun. 271 exclude. 274 To^r To the. 276 Whilom^r Somtyme. 277 by labour oit^r for favor or. 278 sethyn—by^r ne. 279 wel^r om. 280 Aven. 281 loken. 285 Sith that—genelogie. 291 difference^r defence. 292 domifying^r demonstryng. 294 our^r all our. 296 Who liueth aryght mot^r But who so lyueth Ryght most. 299 strong^r strange. 300 Toward^r To. — mot you^r muste now. 302 came^r come. 308 fordoth^r distroioeth. 310 on^r of. 311 it^r is. — the worlde wil it^r and he will hit. 319 no^r none. 320 ay^r euer. 321 benefices—mony^r many a. 322 lite^r lytell. 323 of^r on. 324 That^r om. — may^r may be. — nought disport^r not support. 325 wyl^r om. 329 a^r om. 328 dye. 329 mot^r must. 330 many a. 337 a^r om. 339 downe^r do. 340 more^r mo. 349 striue^r strve. 351 as^r om. 355 And Thoghe. 358 please^r pleas it. 359 Fro^r From. — 2nd fro^r om. 360 arne to-day^r men be this day—not. 362 nor^r ne no. 402 eke^r om. 404 none^r no. 406 loke^r se. 408 seen^r se. 417 on^r in. 420 cunne^r kanne. 421 so ferforth is iRonne. 422 Avenste. 423 haue^r hath. 426 eke^r om. 432 Avenste. 435 of hert eke desirous *is erased*. 436 change^r chance. 438 into^r vnto. 439 al^r all your. 442 A yenste. 446 so fresh so wel^r so well and iresshe. 451 whilom^r somtyme. 455 hath lad^r haue lede. 462 many a man haue alluerede. 463 sentement^r sentence. 466 plete^r and plete. — highe^r om. 468 done to^r to do. 470 auaille may^r may a wale. 471 scapeth^r schapith. 472 Be fore—nought teint^r not tayne. 474 nought^r om. — against^r a yene. 475 kepen^r or^r kepe ne. 476 al^r om. 478 Nor nothyng^r No no man. 479 make^r make no. 480 quiteth^r quiethe. *The Tregelour and the Parson follow the Man of Law in Tette, otherwise the order is as in H.* 481 whilom^r somtyme. 485 my^r this. 487 ne^r and. 489 magike^r maun^rkynde. 492 the heauens^r heuen. 493 A yenste. 496 wrought^r wrome, with "at longe" *written over it in a later hand as a correction*. 497 now^r om. 499 &^r and your. 500 of^r on. 502 to^r vnto. 504 And^r As. 506 and^r om. 513 at^r is at. 515 devise. 516 gaue^r haue. 517 bothe^r om. 518 folkes. 521 Whilom^r Somtyme. 523 Not. 525 Hange. 527 say. 529 canst. 530 do. 531 anone^r soon. 532 go. 533 neper. 536 schewe. 539 doth^r dethe. 540 measures^r musures. 543 not. 545 Thou^r O thou. 547 Ye^r Thou—not. 548 if^r thoghe—not. 550 from^r om. 551 The^r For the. — so^r om. 552 lyve. 553 wished^r wissede. 555 haue^r had. 557 haue labored. 558 Doluen and ditched^r Delue and dyke. 559 platlye^r playnly. 560 here there. 563 taught. 564 that^r om. 565 om. 567 hym rest^r arest hym. — mede^r man. 571 nor what so^r ne what pat. 572 Of^r om. 573 nor^r ne. 577 Enfante. 579 to forne. 580 ledd. 593 Clarke—iree^r so iree. 594 Fro^r For. 595 wend^r om. 597 highest^r hie. 598 ayenste. 599 at^r in. 604 Ne—ne. 611 muste. 613 per ayen. 615 perior—to^r om. 617 To liue^r Lyū. 618 a yent—ne. 619 houre^r stewyne. 624 suifraunce^r suffysance. 627 all his^r om. 629 deserue God quiteth^r serue god quite. 630 To^r The. 633 folke^r folken—purturature. 636 not elles. 637 haueth^r haue. — ave^r euer. 638 whylom^r somtyme. 641 Mans lyfe is nought els^r Man is life elles (life inserted above the line). 644 haue. 645 Remembre. 645 the^r om. 648 in heuen that maketh. 649 been there^r ther ben. 652 errours. 655 lyue. 657 my lordes & maisters^r maistres and folkes. 659 pray^r pray you. 663 suppowle. 666 in^r the. 667 fro. 670 me^r om. 672 Her^r Theyer.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

It was probably not long after May 1431 that Lydgate began his "Fall of Princes,"¹ at the request of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who was lieutenant and warden of England from April 1430 to early January 1432 during the absence of Henry VI. in France.² The mention of Gloucester's prowess against heretics (Prologue, 400-413) no doubt refers, as Miss Hammond has suggested,³ to the suppression of the Lollard risings at Oxford, Salisbury and London in the spring of 1431, and perhaps to Gloucester's presence "at the beheading, at Oxford, of a small band of men led by the bailiff of Abingdon," in May 1431.⁴ We do not know the date of the completion of the work, but as Lydgate complains of his age, "more than three score years," in Book VIII. (he was sixty-five in 1436), and was engaged on the "Life of Albon and

¹ There has been confusion in regard to the title of the book: some students write "falls" and others "fall"; one or two have on occasion used both forms. Tottel's title-page seems to have been responsible for the plural, as Wayland printed "tragedies" in his title and "fall" in the heading of the table of contents, and Pynson "fall" (falle) in the titles and colophons of both his editions. Among others who have followed Tottel are Thomas Arnold, Henry Morley, Ten Brink, Koerting, Schick (who prefers "fallës"), A. W. Ward, Courthope, Saintsbury, and Lee (art. Lydgate, Dict. Nat. Biog.). G. Ellis, Hazlitt's Warton, Taine, David Laing, Hortis, MacCracken, Miss Hammond, the Dict. Nat. Biog. (art. Humphrey of Gloucester), and practically all catalogues of MSS., including Ward, have "fall." R. Lane Poole prints "falls" on p. 229 of his edition of Bale, Oxford, 1902, and "fall" on pp. 228 and 231; E. Gordon Duff, "falls" in Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., II. 321, and "fall" elsewhere in his bibliographical works. Earlier writers, such as William Baldwin (preface to "Mirror of Magistrates," ed. 1563), and Edward Phillips (*Theatrum Poetarum Anglicanorum*, ed. Brydges, 1800), and Thomas Gray have "fall"; Watt quotes "falls" from Tottel; but Tottel himself printed "fall" in the heading of his table of contents and in the colophon, fol. ccviii verso. I have used "fall" because there is no doubt that Lydgate himself called his book "The Fall of Princes." He refers directly to it in lines VI. 304 and IX. 3622, and in the same terms to Boccaccio's original, I. 51, 77, 270, 471, III. 133, VI. 231, and to Chaucer's "Monk's Tale" of the same title, I. 249 and IX. 3422. He also used "fall" as a subject of general interest (in reference to the opinions of Andalus di Nigri), III. 174. "Fallys" he uses once as a subject of general interest, IX. 3450, and, so far as I have been able to discover, four times in reference to the the "fallis" of specific princes.

² Prologue, 372 ff. ³ *Anglia*, 38. 133-136. ⁴ *Anglia*, loc. cit.

Amphabel" in 1439, it is quite possible that, as Professor Schick conjectures, it was finished in 1438 or 1439,¹ perhaps before the end of 1438; and there was at least a partial interruption in 1433, while Lydgate was engaged in writing the "Legend of St. Edmund and Fremund" at the command of Abbot William Curteys, during and after a visit of Henry VI. to St. Edmund's Bury, which lasted from Christmas 1432 to Easter 1433.²

The "Fall of Princes" consists of 36,365 lines of decasyllabic verse arranged in seven and eight line stanzas,³ rhyming *ababbcc* (rhyme royal) and *ababbcbc*, and is a paraphrase of *Des Cas des Nobles Hommes et Femmes*, Laurence de Premierfait's second, amplified version in French prose of Giovanni Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*.⁴ The original Latin prose work was written by Boccaccio between 1355 and 1360 and dedicated to his friend, the chevalier Mainardo dei Cavalcanti, because "no emperor, king, prince or pope" seemed to him worthy of his regard; and although a revised and somewhat augmented edition was issued at a later date (probably before 1374), we are here concerned with the earlier text, which is the one Laurence used in making his translation.⁵

The *De Casibus* might, as Henri Cochin suggests,⁶ be called a history of Fortune; for it is a collection gathered throughout the centuries describing the most memorable and crushing

¹ Temple of Glas, p. cvii.

² Legend of St. Edmund and Fremund, I. 187 ff. Temple of Glas, p. cvi.

³ There are but few eight-line stanzas. See the Envoys on Arsinoe, Antiochus, the Scipios, Herod, and Charles of Anjou; the Chapitle of Fortune; the Last Envoy, addressed to Humphrey, and the Words of the Translator to his Book (IV. 3445, V. 1590, 1846, VII. 246, IX. 2017, 3239, 3541, 3589).

⁴ We sometimes meet with the title, *De Casibus Virorum et Faminarum Illustrium*; but as Paul Durrieu has pointed out in his *Le Boccace de Munich*, Munich, 1909, p. 19, the word *virorum* was used in the general sense of "human beings," or, as we say, "people." (Parmi les écrits latins de Boccace, celui qui eut de beaucoup la plus grande notoriété fut le traité intitulé *De Casibus virorum illustrium*, le mot *casibus* répondant à la vieille expression française *cas*, signifiant vicissitude de fortune, et le mot *virorum* étant entendu dans le sens général de genre humain, ce qui fait que le titre *De Casibus virorum illustrium* est devenu, dans le français du XV^e siècle, *Des Cas des nobles hommes et femmes*.)

⁵ See Henri Hauvette, *Boccace, Étude Biographique et Littéraire*, Paris, 1914, pp. 391 and 393, note. Also the chapter on *Les Œuvres Latines*, pp. 389, 396 and 347 ff.

⁶ Henri Cochin, *Boccace, Études Italiennes*, Paris, 1889, p. 122.

blows dealt by fate to the illustrious personages of mythology and history, and written, as the author himself said,¹ with the object of teaching princes the virtue of wisdom and moderation by holding up to them the example of misfortunes provoked by egotism, pride and inordinate ambition.² The form is the familiar one of a vision or dream, the author representing himself at work in his study, while the "famous unfortunates" pass before him in succession, and each tells the story of his fall. Some are presented to Boccaccio by the goddess Fortuna as those to whom she had at one time shown her favour and afterwards thrown from her wheel; others enter unannounced and clamour to be allowed to speak; and there are several who take part in excited conversations with one another or with the author, as in the chapters on Atreus and Thyestes; Messalina, Tiberius and Caligula; and Brunhilde. Occasionally, Boccaccio himself contributes a tale by way of illustration, and several stories are told by Fortuna;³ and the work is filled with ironical remarks on the vicious stupidity of those to whom fate has given power over the lives of their fellow men. The Latin book is more dramatic and of greater literary value than either Laurence's or Lydgate's translation. The dedicatory epistle to Mainardo dei Cavalcanti, written in 1363,⁴ and Boccaccio's preface were translated by Laurence, but the former appears as such only in his first and more literal version; and although he worked parts of it into the preface of his second version, very little was preserved by Lydgate, who also omitted the long dedication by Laurence to the Duke of Berry.

At the present day Boccaccio is known best as the earliest and greatest master of Italian prose, as the author of charming lyrical poems and interludes, and of the first heroic epic in the language; he is hardly known at all as the moralist, historian and man of science of the prose Latin works, *De Genealogia Deorum*, *De Claris Mulieribus*, *De Montibus*, and *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*, all of which were compiled or written during the latter part of his life. The history and natural

¹ See Boccaccio's preface, "*Exquirenti mei*," etc., p. xlvii. below.

² Comp. Boccaccio's preface and Hauvette, *loc. cit.*, p. 347.

³ See the beginning (first few hundred lines) of Book VI.

⁴ See Hauvette, p. 392.

science of the fourteenth century have little interest for us now except as antiquarians; the moral and political doctrines of *De Casibus* are commonplace and could hardly have been considered very remarkable even at the time they were written, and its art, in spite of its dramatic form and the power of its bitter satire, is not distinguished enough to hold it above the level of the books that perish for all but a few curious students and collectors. But from the fourteenth to the end of the sixteenth century the case was very different. Although the Decameron had been translated into French by Laurence in 1411, there was no public then capable either of comprehending its historical importance or appreciating its style; and the indelicacy of a few of its stories, no greater than that of many other popular tales of the time, was certainly not such as to cause any great commotion except in ecclesiastical circles, outraged far less by indecency than by the satire of the priesthood. So it was inevitable that, as far as his contemporaries and immediate successors were concerned, Boccaccio's fame as a writer should rest chiefly on his Latin works; and it was as a moralist and man of profound learning that he was best known and respected. To judge by the number of existing manuscripts, the *De Casibus* had an exceedingly large circulation. It was the sort of book that would especially appeal to the great personages of the time: it told about people just like themselves; and although very naturally it taught them nothing — as if the impulses and desires of men were controlled by either precept or example — it at any rate interested them. They were all exposed to the vicissitudes of fortune, and, the world being then very much as it is to-day, many of them became victims of the same disasters that had afflicted and destroyed their predecessors;¹ and it was no doubt a source

¹ En plus d'une occasion, dans les deux cents années qui ont suivi la composition de cet ouvrage, le *De Casibus* a pu servir de réconfort moral à des malheureux. Pour ne citer qu'un exemple, nous savons qu'au XV^e siècle le duc Charles d'Orléans, retenu prisonnier en Angleterre, se fit envoyer pour charmer les loisirs de sa captivité un exemplaire du traité de Boccace. — Durrieu, *loc. cit.*, pp. 20, 21, who refers to Léopold Delisle, *Le Cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale*, Paris, 1868-1881, I. p. 106. Even in the middle of the sixteenth century, Hieronymus Ziegler, editor and translator of the *De Casibus*, an able man and no pedant, wrote, "Ich habe nie etwas gelesen was mehr Vergnügen und Belehrung gewährt." — Marcus Landau, *Boccaccio*, Stuttgart, 1877, p. 218.

of consolation to some of them, when their hour of trial came, to read about the tribulations of others. And as many of these great people were unable to read Latin, it is quite evident that Laurence was certain of a large and influential public for his translation.

Laurence,¹ who took his name from the village of Premierfait near Arcis-sur-Aube, was clerk of the diocese of Troyes, a competent writer in French and a Latin scholar, and in the eyes of his contemporaries a poet and orator of distinction. He seems to have made his living chiefly by translating, and his first and more literal version of *De Casibus* was finished on November 13, 1400, and dedicated to Duke Louis of Bourbon. At about this time he became a confidential advisor and clerk to Jean Chanteprime, conseiller du roi de France. In 1405 he translated Cicero's *De Senectute* into French for Duke Louis of Bourbon. Between 1405 and 1409 he translated *De Amicitia* and completed his second version of *De Casibus*² for the Duke of Berry while living in the house of Bureau de Dammartin, trésorier de France. During the years 1411-14 he translated the Decameron, and in 1417 Aristotle's Economics; a version of Martin Dumiense's *De quatuor virtutibus* is also attributed to him. He died in Paris in 1418, "année terrible de massacres, d'épidémie et de misère," and was buried in the Cimetière des Innocents.³

Of Laurence's first version there are but few manuscripts⁴ and only two printed editions, that of Colard Mansion, Bruges, 1476, and the Lyons edition of 1483. Considering the attitude of translators of his time to their originals, it is a comparatively complete and straightforward rendering, and

¹ For the above details in regard to Laurence I am indebted to A. Hortis, *Studi sulle opere latine del Boccaccio*, Trieste, 1879, p. 618 ff.; Durrieu, *loc. cit.*, p. 19 ff. See also Hauvette, *De Laurentio de Primofato* (thesis), Paris, 1903, and *Recherches sur le "De Casibus virorum illustrium" de Boccace*, Paris, 1901 (*Extrait du volume "Entre camarades" publié par la Société des anciens élèves de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Paris*).

² Cy fine le liure de Jehan Boccace des cas des nobles hommes et femmes translate de latin en francois par moy laurens de premierfait clerck du diocese de troies et fut complice ceste translacion le XV^e jour d'auril mil IIII et IX. Cest assauoir le lundi apres pasques.—Various MSS. Some add the word "closes" to "pasques."

³ Durrieu, p. 21.

⁴ In the British Museum, Additional 11,696 and Harley 621.

includes Boccaccio's dedicatory epistle to Mainardo dei Cavalcanti. In his second version Laurence enlarged his earlier work, extending it to more than double its original length by the addition of geographical and historical notes and explanations, interpolating all manner of odd pieces of information from the books he had read — Justin, Florus, Livy, Vincent, Valerius Maximus and others — with the result that much of the dramatic form and power of the original is lost. Although he omitted Boccaccio's epistle to Mainardo, he nevertheless used parts of it as material for his own preface, and added a long dedication to the Duke of Berry, in which he discussed the question of man's relation to fortune, the abuses of the church and priesthood, the conduct of the nobility and the condition of the agricultural labourers.¹

As Durrieu points out, the work thus transformed became for the French reader "not only a subject for moral discussions and a suitable guidance for the restoration of courage in adversity, but a collection of facts and anecdotes, of curious information about countries and men, and almost a picture in perspective of universal history from Adam and Eve up to the middle of the fourteenth century." It was considered to be an original work rather than a translation, and its success was great. Copied and recopied many times during the entire fifteenth century, it was printed in Paris by Jean du Pré in 1483, in the next year for Antoine Vérard, again for Vérard (n. d., but after 1503), by Michel le Noir in 1515, by Nicolas Couteau in 1538, and finally superseded by a new version by Claude Witart, which appeared in 1578. Magnificent manuscript copies² were in the possession of the last dukes of the house of Burgundy, from Jean sans Peur to Charles le Téméraire, of Jacques d'Armagnac, duke of Nemours, le Grand bâtard de Bourgogne, Queen Charlotte of Savoy, wife of

¹ See p. liv. ff.

² See Paulin Paris, *Les Manuscrits François de la Bibliothèque du Roi*, Paris, 1836-38; Léopold Delisle, *Le Cabinet des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Impériale (Nationale)*, Paris, 1868-81; Hortis, *loc. cit.*, p. 933-938. The manuscripts of Laurence's second version in the British Museum are Royal 18. D. VII., Royal 20. C. IV., Royal 14. E. V., Add. 18,750 and Add. 35,321, of which the last mentioned has been described by Sir Edward Maunde Thompson in the *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. VII. (1905), pp. 198-210, with reproductions of six half-page miniatures.

Louis XI., Louis' sister, Jeanne de France, duchess of Bourbon, his illegitimate daughter, Jeanne, countess of Rousillon, Jean d'Orléans, count of Angoulême (grandfather of Francis I.), Louise of Savoy (mother of Francis I.), Catherine d'Alençon, Henry VII. of England, and many others.¹ A beautifully illuminated codex was presented to the Duke of Berry towards the end of 1410 by Martin de Gouges, bishop of Chartres,² and there is a manuscript in the National Library, Munich (described by Durrieu in the work already referred to), with many large miniatures attributed to Jean Fouquet (1415-1485), the most distinguished French painter of the fifteenth century.

The Duke of Berry,³ for whom Laurence translated the *De Casibus* and Decameron, was born November 30, 1340, third son of king John II. In 1356 he was created Count of Poitiers and made king's lieutenant in southern France, and later on received the province of Languedoc. He suppressed a revolt of the peasants with barbaric severity, collected a fine of £15,000 from the states of the province, fought against the Flemings at Rosebeke in 1382, was active in suppressing the Parisian revolts, and by his bungling and procrastination is said to have caused the failure of a naval expedition planned against England in 1386. In 1389 Charles VI. went to Languedoc to investigate his uncle's government, with the result that the duke was disgraced and his agent Bétisac burnt. And although he was restored in 1401, he did not dare show himself in the province, but delegated his authority to Bernard d'Armagnac. He died in Paris, June 15, 1416, "leaving vast treasures of jewelry, objects of art, and especially of illuminated MSS., many of which have been preserved."⁴

¹ Comp. Durrieu, p. 24.

² Hortis, *loc. cit.*, p. 621.

³ See L. Raynal, *Histoire du Berry*, Bourges, 1845.

⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article on the Duke of Berry. Hiver de Beauvoir says in his *La Librairie de Jean Duc de Berry au Château de Mehun-sur-Yèvre*, Paris, 1860, p. 1, "Jean, duc de Berry, frère de Charles V, fut le prince le plus magnifique de son temps, s'inquiétant peu des moyens dès qu'il s'agissait de bâtir, et surtout d'amasser des reliquaires et des joyaux d'église, pour lesquels sa passion alla jusqu'à la manie." And in Léopold Delisle, *loc. cit.*, I. p. 58, we read, "On savait partout, en France et même à l'étranger, le bonheur que le duc de Berry éprouvait à posséder des livres et la munificence avec laquelle il récompensait les cadeaux qui lui étaient faits. Aussi s'empressait-on de lui offrir des volumes dont la beauté devait flatter les plus délicats des bibliophiles du XIV^e et du XV^e siècle."

He was fiercely satirized in *Le Songe véritable*, an anonymous pamphlet of the fifteenth century, for, as Henri Moranvillé tells us, in order to satisfy his expensive tastes, "le duc de Berry, dans les lieutenances royales qui lui furent confiées, n'hésita jamais à accabler d'exactions de tous genres les populations soumises, bien malgré elles, à son autorité. Aussi la réputation de ce prince était-elle exécration de son temps; on n'ignorait point ses goûts dispendieux et on les haïssait, parce qu'on en souffrait cruellement. . . . Après lui avoir retiré très justement la lieutenance en Languedoc à la suite de scandales financiers, où Bétisac avait payé pour son maître, on avait eu le tort de la lui rendre. Aussi, n'ayant plus de frein, dépensait-il énormément, ruinant le domaine, absorbant le revenu des aides; l'argent fondait littéralement entre ses mains et enrichissait d'indignes favoris. Froissart a raconté qu'il s'était pris d'une inexplicable affection pour un tailleur de chausses; le *Songe véritable* parle d'un papeur."¹

Laurence's long dedication, in which he expresses his indignation aroused by the abuses of the church, the bad behaviour of the nobility and the sufferings of the agricultural labourers, must have had a peculiar interest for the Duke of Berry; although it is quite probable that he read it much as it pleases one to think that the good Duke Humphrey, who appears to have been equally egoistic, avaricious, untrustworthy, intriguing and dissolute, read Lydgate's gravely offered moral and political wisdom, with serious and wholly detached interest. It is an irony of Boccaccio's fate that the translations of his *De Casibus* should have been dedicated to two such men. It is also obvious that both the French and the English versions differed greatly from the original, no less in spirit than in style. As already mentioned, Boccaccio's book was not only more dramatic and concise, but, in spite of its pretentious and artificial manner, which was fashionable at the time, a far more powerful and able work, the work of a great man. The chief effect of Laurence's remarkable capacity for making interpolations was only to impair the literary value of the original, however much it may have added to its interest for con-

¹ Henri Moranvillé, *Le Songe véritable*, pamphlet politique d'un parisien du XV^e siècle. In *Mémoires de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France*, Vol. XVII. (1890), Paris, 1891, p. 227.

temporary readers; and Lydgate, his translator, suffering under the same inability to let well enough alone, might have made matters still worse had it not been for his choice of verse instead of prose, his echoes of Chaucer, and the occasional intrusion of his by no means unsympathetic personality. As it is, Lydgate's version is very superior to that of Laurence and can at least be looked upon as the work of one who, had he written less, might have been an artist, an implication into which there was never any danger of Laurence's falling.¹

In regard to the spirit of the three authors, especially their reaction to their environments, it can be said with reasonable certainty that Laurence was not much of an idealist or very distinguished intellectually: he added no original thought to the work, except perhaps his prefaced plea for the agricultural labourers, who, as we know, were so badly treated as to endanger their efficiency; and if this plea was the utterance of a kind heart, as no doubt it was, rather than an expression of precocious utilitarianism, nevertheless his loyalty and reverence for the great personages of the day were no less unquestioned than his approval of the social and political system under which they lived; and his willingness to kick the dead lions of the past, after Boccaccio had kicked them, both dead and alive, hardly betrayed a disposition to rashness. Still, he did not hesitate to condemn in general terms what he considered wrong, and took advantage of every occasion to lament the tyranny and avarice of the feudal lords, laity and ecclesiastics, and the unhappy condition of the people; and although he appears occasionally to have reproved the nobility (without being too specific), his tone is moderate, supplicating, seldom admonitory; his wish was to serve and instruct, and he never grew weary of telling his princes that neither their position nor their lives would be secure unless they were willing

¹ "Tuttochè il Lydgate modestamente si contentasse d'essere tenuto per traduttore del Premierfait, il suo lavoro può dirsi opera originale. Egli aveva anima da poeta, e lo manifesta già l'ardito pensiero di tradurre in versi un' opera di prosa. Da poeta, egli modifica, come più gli torna, l'ordine de' capitoli, e allarga e ravviva il testo francese, abbastanza prosaico, che gli sta dinanzi. Un concetto filosofico egli abbellisce con leggiadre similitudini tolte per lo più da' fiori o dalle gemme; le storie e le leggende rende piacevoli con particolarità immaginose, poetiche," etc. — Hortis, p. 649.

to defend the people and preserve them in their well-being and safety.¹

Boccaccio studied his princes from a wholly different point of view. They were to him objects of hostility and bitter scorn, for whom he had neither sympathy nor respect.² As he said in his dedicatory Epistle to Mainardo, there was none living, pope, emperor, or king, to whom he cared to dedicate his book. They made him sick.³ And he believed that as a result of their luxury, magnificence and pride, their avarice, idleness and licentiousness, their hatred of one another and desire for revenge, all honesty, justice and virtue were lost, and that by the example of their superiors the people were contaminated and led into evil customs.⁴ So he wrote, hoping to bring the erring to the right path, to suppress vices, to arouse the indolent from their slumber, and to incite all men

¹ Hortis, p. 627.

² Qualiter hoc faciant principes hodierni, viderit Deus. In Tyrannidem versi sunt regii mores, et despecta impotentia subditorum: auro, gemmisque splendere uolunt, longo scruiantium ordine circumdari, palatia in excelsum erigere, grege pellicum, et histrionum, deformi sodalicio oblectari: obscœnitatibus aures complere, conuiuia in longissimam noctem deducere, ebrietatibus, atque ignominiosis libidinibus vacare, dies in somnos profundissimos perdere, populos in suam salutem uigiles permanere: et bella non iure, sed iniuria sumere, magnificum arbitrantur: consilia proborum respuere, sibi tantum credere: bonos deprimere, improbos extollere: ciuitates vectigalibus onerare, ciues torquere, in exilium agere, trucidare, & luti more calce calcare. O scelestum malum, O prædonum, lurconumque, ne regum dicam, inhonesta, & horrenda facinora. O longa, immo vecors patientia populorum, & stolidi confidentia dominorum, si putent, dum talia peragunt, à populis sibi obsequi cum fide. Quæso cum videam eum, cui honorem meum, libertatem, maiestatem, officium, præmientiam omnem concessi: cui obsequium iussus impendo, cui desudo, cuius substantias meas imparcior, cuius in salutem sanguinem effundo meum, in extenuationem, desolationem, vituperium, & perniciem inuigilare meam: sanguinem sitire, haurire, emungere, inhonestis fœminis, & perditissimis quibuscunque hominibus prodige facultates (quibus sustentare egenos, et miserabiles debuerant) effundere, atque disperdere: & in consilium niti pessimum, & pessimis operibus delectari: ac circa salutem publicam segnem, torpentem, desidemque video, regem dicam? principem colam? tamquam domino fidem seruabo? absit. Hostis est, in hunc coniurare, arma capessere, insidias tendere, vires opponere magnanimi est, sanctissimum est, & omnino necessarium. Cum nulla fere deo sit acceptior hostia Tyranni sanguine: durum quippe, & importabile pro meritis iniuriam reportare. Recalcitrent quantum libet reges, si centies negent, regnant tamen suffragio populorum, eorumque vires illos formidabiles faciunt. Quasi minus iuste cædibus, aut iniuriis extenuent, suum sentient confestim diminutum imperium.—*De Casibus*, II. 5, *In Superbos*, from Hieronymus Ziegler's edition, Augsburg, 1544.

³ See Epistle to Mainardo.

⁴ Comp. Boccaccio's preface.

to virtue; but unlike Laurence and Lydgate, he wrote not for the personal advantage of the princes, for whose benefit his translators believed their subjects existed, but for the welfare of the community.¹

Boccaccio was also responsible for an attack on women in the eighteenth chapter of Book II., *In Mulieres*, which deserves more than passing reference. We know that invectives and satires of women were especially popular during the Middle Ages. Stories, many of them of oriental origin, such as were included in collections like the *Disciplina Clericalis* of Petrus Alfonsi (baptised in 1106), the influence of asceticism, of sentiments similar to those expressed in the latter part of the third chapter of Isaiah, and of writers like the thirteenth century Franciscan, Brother Jacopone da Todi,² whose *Lauda viii.*, "O femene, guardate," is still delightful to read, helped to create an atmosphere in which Boccaccio found himself even more at home than Guido delle Colonne, author of the "Troy Book," had been a century earlier. For towards the end of 1354, a few years before the *De Casibus* was begun, he at the age of forty-one was most unkindly rebuffed and ridiculed by a young widow to whom he had been imprudent enough to write declaring his affection. At first, as Hauvette tells the story, he was overcome with mortification, and fancied that he could see the passers-by pointing their fingers at him in the street — he could even hear their smothered laughter — for the rebuff had included personal remarks of a gross nature, and he was grey and precociously stout; but as time went on his mortification gave way to anger, which, according to

¹ "Il Boccaccio, cittadino di una libera repubblica, da lungo dimentico del feudalismo, aveva co' propri occhi veduto il mal governo de' principi d' allora, e la cacciata di uno che aveva tentato di farsi tiranno in Firenze. Dallo studio amoroso e intelligente dell'antichità latina egli aveva acquistato un modo di pensare democratico e pagano, che s'accordava mirabilmente col suo amore d'indipendenza. Il Premierfait legge tutti gli autori, ma de' profani e classici s'appropria le notizie, non il modo di pensare. I suoi libri erano chiesti e letti dai principi; ma nelle opere del Boccaccio, più spesso che panegirici, i principi potevano leggere la propria satira." — Hortis, p. 626.

² For Brother Jacopone, see two admirable articles in the "Times Literary Supplement" of April 15 and December 23, 1920. The *Lauda* have been edited by Giovanni Ferri and published by the *Società Filologica Romana*, Rome, 1910, as well as in the series *Scrittori d'Italia*, Bari, 1915, and there are translations, together with the texts, of many of them in Evelyn Underhill's "Jacopone da Todi," London, 1919.

Hauvette, "fut très vif, et se manifesta tout d'abord par un immense désir de vengeance." So he sat down and wrote his *Corbaccio*, an unimaginative and unpleasantly interesting book, and was apparently still very angry when he wrote the *In Mulieres* chapter of the *De Casibus*, in which, returning to the same subject, he presents us with another instructive, if one-sided, description of the artifices employed for various purposes by the women of fashion of his time. However, as we have seen, he did not spare the men, nor, for that matter, did Brother Jacopone; their blows were equitably distributed.

The attitude of Lydgate to his surroundings, and especially to his princes, was quite different from that of either Boccaccio or Laurence. Although always ready to counsel and advise, and, when he considered it necessary, to admonish, he was never rude, like Boccaccio, nor servile, like Laurence, but wrote throughout as a man of the world, an aristocrat and courtier, whose contempt for the political capacity of the people was exceeded only by Boccaccio's scorn for the political and moral accomplishments of their sovereigns. He omitted most of Boccaccio's censure of the clerics, which Laurence had allowed to remain in his versions, and showed himself by his fierceness to heretics much less tolerant in religious matters than the great Italian. Neither foolish nor ill-bred enough to take his "manly and wise" patron to task for his infidelities and excesses, he nevertheless stood out firmly enough for the domestic virtues and did not hesitate to tell princes, at least in the abstract, to lead sober, industrious lives and to set aside their concubines.¹ Murder, poison, bloodthirstiness and tyranny (p. 310), deceit (p. 323), dishonesty (p. 416), slander and hasty belief in it (p. 126), pride (pp. 38, 170), suspicion, ingratitude (p. 655), bad behaviour to the church (p. 278), covetousness (p. 432), and vulgar materialism (p. 399), are among the things which he mentions with special reprobation in his envoys.

In spite of his expressed opinion that the people were there chiefly for the personal advantage of their rulers,² he nevertheless believed that if a man of humble origin is ordained by God to be a king he will succeed in overcoming the resistance of all earthly princes;³ for nobility is by the grace of God and

¹ Pp. 299, 360.

² Comp., for example, I. 1393.

³ See the stories of Nimrod, I. 1282, and Cyrus, III. 2962.

not by blood, and poverty is no bar to royalty; nor can anything good ever come of an evil stock. His attitude towards women remains the same as it was in the "Troy Book:" some of Boccaccio's remarks he leaves out; for others he apologises. It must be remembered, however, that Boccaccio also qualified his apparently sweeping assertions, and that not only the sentiments expressed on pages 188 and 189, but the very words, are his as well as Lydgate's. An old and not very brilliant jest on marriage makes its appearance apropos of the story of Orpheus; but it evidently pleased Lydgate and his readers (the lines are marked in approval in several MSS.), just as Dr. Thomas Lisle's version is said to have pleased Benjamin Franklin, and, as we have reason to believe, it pleases certain of the public to-day.¹

Although Lydgate's work was much admired by his contemporaries and immediate successors and enjoyed at least one hundred and fifty years of popularity, no one in more recent times, so far as I am aware, except Thomas Gray in his "Remarks," who was hardly enthusiastic, and Mrs. Browning,² who approved of him for other than purely aesthetic reasons, has given him much praise as an artist. A writer who usually contrives to spoil even his most felicitous passages before he has done with them, who systematically pads out his lines with stock phrases and rhyme-tags, and pours out unending streams of verse during apparently the whole of a very long life, cannot well be taken seriously as one of the great poets. We search his works in vain for evidence either of imagination or originality, of sympathetic insight into character, sensibility, delicacy of feeling or a fine instinct for form; nor is he distinguished for more purely intellectual qualities. On occasion he shows that he has power and rises to a sombre dignity of manner, well seen in parts of the "Fall of Princes"³ and in the *Daunce of Machabree*, and this, together with a strain of melancholy, which was in the air at the time and a few years later inspired François Villon to his finest

¹ For Dr. Thomas Lisle and "The Power of Music," see "The London Mercury," Vol. V., p. 295. For a modern instance, see the "At Random" column of "The Observer," February 27, 1921.

² In "The Book of the Poets." Comp. Schick, p. clvii.

³ See the Envoy on Rome, II. 4460, the Envoy on Cæsar, especially the latter part, VI. 2871, the Envoy on Charles of Anjou, IX. 2017, and the Chapter and Envoy on King John of France, IX. 3134.

work, is perhaps his strongest point. No doubt in his day he was highly commended for both pathos and humour; but the latter when not unconscious is as a rule little more than clumsy playfulness, and the former too obvious and exaggerated to make any deep impression on the reader (although Thomas Gray seems to have thought highly of it),¹ and neither is sufficient to make a poet. However, considering his intellectual environment, his position, and his public, he surely did all that can reasonably be expected of him. The rude men of action of the time were slow-witted and uneducated; even the clerks, if we are to judge, as we must, by their literary performances, were a singularly prosaic lot, and taste was evidently unknown in their circles. As Gray remarked, "it is a folly to judge of the understanding and of the patience of those times by our own. They [the reading public] loved, I will not say tediousness, but length and a train of circumstances in a narration." They got both in the "Fall of Princes." Even Boccaccio laid aside much of his genius when he began to write histories for the edification of the men of the world of his day; and whatever qualities of greatness the work possesses lie rather in the hammer blows of its subject-matter than in the art either of the author or of his translators.

On the other hand, the "Fall of Princes" is a document of considerable historical and philological importance. Taken together with the original Latin and Laurence's French translation, it does indeed illumine the intellectual life of its day,² if only faintly, for the thought reflected on the pages of both Laurence and Lydgate is unfortunately that of a very narrow and conservative group and cannot be considered as representative of the best minds of the time. The most that may be said of either of them is that he was able to recognize that, in general, men reap what they have sown.

From the philological point of view the book is of interest, in part because we may assume that the language in which it was written is the English of the most highly educated classes of its period, in part because, just as in the case of the "Troy

¹ Gray says that Lydgate, in the Epistle of Canace, "has touched the very heart-springs of compassion with so masterly a hand, as to merit a place among the greatest poets."

² Comp. Hortis, p. 654.

Book," many words borrowed early in the fifteenth century from the French make their first documented appearance on its pages. Practically the entire literature of the "Fall of Princes" has yet to be investigated. There is no modern edition either of Boccaccio or of Laurence; neither the one nor the other has been printed since the sixteenth century; no adequate study of their sources has been published; and except for Dr. Koeppel's short essay,¹ we have no account of Lydgate's sources or of the influence of his work on succeeding writers. The most recent edition of the "Mirror for Magistrates" is Haslewood's of 1815.

The text of the present edition is based on MS. Bodley 263 (B), collated throughout with the British Museum MSS. Royal 18. D. iv. (R) and Harley 1245 (H), and in part (especially in regard to doubtful points) with MSS. Royal 18. B. xxxi. (R 3), Harley 4203 (H 5), and the Rylands-Jersey MS. (J). Use has also been made of Sloane 4031, Add. 21,410, the Phillips-Garrett MS. in the Library of Princeton University, and Tottel's print, which, considering the time of its publication, is most excellent and derived from a good manuscript. The "Envoy to Gloucester" (IX. 3303-3540), the "Last Envoy" (IX. 3541-3588), and six stanzas missing from the story of Lucrece (II. 1058-1099) have been supplied from Harley 1766, a unique abridged but early MS., and one stanza of the Villon-like "Envoy on Rome" (II. 4460 ff.) is from Tottel, collated with the Phillips-Garrett MS.

In preparing the text for the press I have supplied capital letters when necessary and punctuated according to modern usage; but I have not noted blunders or slips of the pen that were subsequently corrected by the original copyist unless they are of special interest. All alterations in spelling by the editor are noted, with one exception: the awkward form "wordly" of the Bodley copyist, for which I have consistently substituted "worldly"; and all other changes in the text are marked by asterisks. The numerous hooks and flourishes of the scribe, which, when they signify only a final *e* (and often they are quite meaningless), have not as a rule been expanded unless the *e* is of more than graphical significance. For the crossed *b*'s, *k*'s, *l*'s and double *l*'s, I have

¹ Munich, 1885.

substituted plain letters, except when the horizontal stroke actually stands for a contraction, as, for example, "Boch" with crossed *b* = *Bochas*, "who" and "hy" with *b*'s crossed = *whom* and *hym*, "makyg" with crossed *k* = *makyng*. The crossed *l* is usually a contraction for a following *e*, as is also the crossed double *l*; the latter, which is commonly used in manuscripts of the period to represent *lles*, is rarely, if at all, employed for that purpose in B. The occasional horizontal strokes over *m*'s and *n*'s and *u*'s are as a rule omitted to avoid confusion, and expanded only when actually necessary, as is certainly not the case in such words as *Chaucer*, *up*, *favour*, or *dismembred*.

In the following brief survey of the contents of the "Fall of Princes" the references are to the pages, and passages of special interest or charm are marked with asterisks.

Book I. Prologue; *Adam and Eve, 13; Nimrod, 28; *Against the Pride of Princes, 36; Saturn and the Process of Time, 39; Zoroaster, Ninus, Moses, 42; Ogygus, Isis, 45; Erysichthon, Danaus, Philomela and Procne, 49; Cadmus, 51; Æetes, Jason, Theseus, Scilla, Nisus, 60; Sisera, Deborah, Gideon, 79; Jabin, 86; Œdipus, 87; *Atreus and Thyestes, 106; The Story of Theseus, 118; *Envoy on Hasty Credence, 126; Facetious defence of Woman accused by *Bochas* of unstableness, 132; On the Suspicion and Dread of Lords, 134; *Althæa* and *Meleager*, 136; *Hercules*, 141 (lines 5104 ff. are excellent); *Narcissus*, *Byblis*, *Myrrha*, *Orpheus* (playful lines about marriage), 156; *Marpessa*, *Priam* and *Troy* Book, 166; *Against the Pride of Those who Trust in Riches, 170; *In Praise of Poverty, 172; *Samson, 179; *Chapter on the Malice of Women, 184; *Pyrrhus*, son of *Achilles*, 190; *Canace* and *Macareus*, 193; *The Letter of *Canace*, 194.

Book II. *Saul*, 204; On the Virtue of Obedience, 214; *Reho-boam*, 216; On the Governance of Princes (analogy of human body to body politic), 221; *Mucius Scævola*, *Lucrece* (first appearance), 225; *Appius* and *Virginia*, 237; *Jeroboam*, *Zerah*, *Ahab*, *Athaliah*, 240; *Dido*, 253; *Satirical Envoy to Widows by *Lydgate*, 262; **Sardanapalus*, On Virtuous Industry, 263; **Amaziah* and *Uzziah*, *Jehoash* (good lines on the *Cypress* and the *Puff-Ball*), 272; *Hoshea*, *Sennacherib*, *Zedekiah*, 278; The Story of *Cyrus*' Youth (nobility comes by grace of God not by blood, poverty no bar to a throne), 283; **Candaules* and *Gyges*, 294; *Midas*, *Belshazzar*, Envoy advising Princes to set aside their Concubines, 296; *Cræsus* and *Cyrus*, the

end of Cyrus, 300; Romulus and Remus, 311; * On the Abuse of Deifying Men, 318; Metius Suffetius, 319; * Against Deception, Hostilius, 323; * Envoy on Rome, 325.

Book III. * Prologue; the Strife between Fortune and Glad Poverty (tedious except for a few lighter touches), 333; Hostilius, Ancus Marcius, Lucinio, 349; Lucrece (second appearance), 355; * Bochas on the Immorality of Princes, 360; Cambyses, Smerdis, Oropastes, Otanes, Darius, 374; Coriolanus, 381; Miltiades, 386; Envoy on the Fickleness of the People; Xerxes, Leonidas, 390; * On the Vulgar Materialism of Men, 399; Artabanus and Darius, 402; Phalanthus and his Spartans, 405; Ceso Quintius, Clælius Gracchus, 410; * On the Tyranny of Appius, 413; On the Dishonesty of Judges and The Former Age (some interesting lines), 416; * An Exclamation against Dishonest Officials, 419; Alcibiades, 420; * Exclamation on the Death of Alcibiades, 430; * On Worldly Covetousness and Ambition, 432; * In Praise of Industrious Men, On Poets, 434; Machæus, Himilco, Hanno, 437; * Against Covetous People, 447; Evagoras of Cyprus, Theo of Egypt, Amyntas, Philip of Macedon, Epaminondas, 454; Haman and Mordecai, Esther, 462; Artaxerxes and Cyrus, Darius, An Envoy on Fraternal Strife, 465.

Book IV. * Prologue on Poets and Writing, 473; Marcus Manlius, Roman Crowns and Wreaths, 479; A description of Roman Triumphs, the Tarpeian Rock, 487; Nectanebes, Pausanias, Heliarchus, 492; * Dionysius of Syracuse, Envoy on Tyranny, on Princes who hold themselves Gods, 495; Polycrates, 500; Alexander and Callisthenes, 504; Alexander of Epirus, 513; Darius and Alexander the Great, 517; * Envoy on Darius, 527; On the Misery and Ruin of War, the Heirs of Alexander, Eumenes, Antigonus, 528; Envoy on Sudden Adversity, * Queen Olympias, 536; Envoy on Murder and Vengeance, 543; Agathocles (a crown of gold is not suitable for the head of a knave; a crowned ass is more to dread than a lion), 545; Envoy — every creature takes after his parents' stock, 553; Cassander, Bersane, Antipater, Peucestas, Amyntas, Sandrocottus, 554; Seleucus and Antiochus, Arsinoë and Ceraunus, * Envoy on Fortune's Variance, 562; Ceraunus slain by the Gauls, Brennus, who had no respect for the gods, Pyrrhus of Epirus, Aristotimus, 569; Arsinoë, wife of Magas, and Demetrius, her daughter's husband, 582.

Book V. Bochas' Disdain of those who set all their Joy to excel in Beauty, Spurina, * Envoy on the Fragility of Worldly Fairness, 585; Seleucus and Antiochus, 588; Laodameia of Sicily, Cleomenes, Hiero of Syracuse, Xanthippus, 592; Marcus Regulus, 597; Ptolemy Philopator, Britomaris, 608; Syphax and Masinissa, Hasdrubal, Scipio, 614; Nabis of Macedonia, 617; The Wars between Rome and Carthage, 619; Perseus

of Sparta, the Destruction of Corinth, 621; Seleucus and Antiochus, Laodice and the Ring and Anchor, 626; Hieronymus of Syracuse, the Ingratitude of the Romans to the Scipios, 630; Philopœmen, 634; the Story of Hannibal, 638; Prusias of Bithynia, Persa of Macedon, Azariah, Andriscus (a cur is more impudent than a lion), Alexander Balas, 645; An Envoy on Ingratitude; Caius and Tiberius Gracchus, Hasdrubal's wife, Jonathan Maccabeus, Demetrius II., Zebina, Bituitus, 655; Ptolemy Euergetes, Jugurtha, 666.

Book VI. *Fortuna appears to Bochas; they converse together, 675; Fortuna tells Bochas about Saturninus, Marius, Drusus, Fanaticus, Spartacus, Viriathus, Orodes and Pompey, 689; Marius and Sulla, 701; Mithridates, 711; Envoy on Worldly Variance, Eucratides of Scythia, Orodes and Crassus, Fymbria, Adrian of low degree, usurper of Rome, Sothimus, Description of Thrace, 720; Pompey and the Wars with Cæsar, 729; Pompey's Death, Julius Cæsar, Juba, *A Digression on Clothes, the last Scipio, Pompey's son Pompey, 743; the Death of Cæsar, Envoy on Cæsar, Octavian, Tully, 751; A Chapter on Rhetoric and Oratory, 763; Sextus Pompey, Antony and Cleopatra, 769.

Book VII. Antony's son, Antony, Cæsarion, Julia, Agrippa, Cassius, *Herod, Herod Antipas, 775; *The Words between Messalina, Caligula, and Tiberius, 784; *Nero, Eleazar, Galba, Otho, *Vitellius, 791; Bochas on The Vice of Gluttony, *A Description of the Golden World, 806; *The Destruction of Jerusalem, 812.

Book VIII. *Petrarch appears to Bochas, 823; the Roman Emperors, Domitian, Commodus, Severus, Antoninus, Macrinus, Antoninus Aurelius, Marcus Aurelius, Maximus, Gordian, the two Philips, Decius, Gallus, Volusian, Æmilian, Gallien, *Valerian, Gallienus, Quintilius, Aurelian the Dane, Probus, Clarus, 829; Zenobia, 842; Diocletian, Carausius, Maximian, Galerius, Maxence, Licinius, Constantine and Crispus, 844; Constans and Constantius, Vetrician, 853; *Constantine the Great, 856; *Julian the Apostate, On Blasphemy and Oaths, 864; Valens, Theodosius I., Hermanric, Gratian, *Theodosius the Great, 870; Alaric, Radagaisus, Rufinus, Stilicho, Heraclius, Odoacer, and *On the Conduct of Kings, 882; "Remembre o Rome," Trasilla, Busar, Philete, Symmachus, Boethius, 894; *King Arthur and Britain, An Exclamation against Men who are Unkind to their Kindred, 898; Gelimer, Amarales, Sindbal, *Queen Rosamond, 913.

Book IX. The Emperor Maurice, *Muhammad, *Brunhilde, 919; Heraclius and Chosroes, Constantine, son of Heraclius, who was murdered in a stew, Gisulf and his wife Romilda, Justinian Temerarius, Philippicus, an odious heretic, 933; The Covetousness and Pride of the Priesthood, Four strangely

dressed kings of Lombardy; Desiderius, Pope Joan, a woman with child, Arnulph, natural son of Carloman, made unfortunate by worms and lice, 942; Bochas against the Pride of Princes, Pope John XII., Duke Charles of Lorraine confounded by hunger, Salamon of Hungary, Diogenes Romanus, Robert of Normandy, Josselyn of Rages, Andronicus I. Comnenus, Envoy on Vicious Princes, 948; the Emperor Isaac, Robert Surrentine, Tancred, Guy de Lusignan, John of Brienne, Henry, son of Frederick II., A Commendation of Love between Kindred, 962; Manfred of Naples, Enzo of Sardinia, A Water that makes Thieves Blind and an Herb that makes People Laugh themselves to Death, Frederick, son of Alphonse of Castile, Maumetus of Persia, and Argones, 970; Charles of Lorraine, * Envoy to Charles, Ugolino of Pisa, Aiton of Armenia, Pope Boniface VIII., who ate his hands, 972; The Order of Templars, A Commendation of three Philosophers for their Patience, A Commendation of Patience, Philip the Fair and his Sons, 979; * Dante appears to Bochas and tells him to write the Story of Duke Gaultier, 990; * Philippa Catanensi, Louis of Jerusalem, * King John of France, 998; * Envoy to John of France, * A Chapter of Fortune, Envoy to Duke Humphrey, * The Last Envoy, Words of the Translator to his Book.

THE METRE

During the years that I have been occupied with the "Fall of Princes" the conclusion has been forced upon me more and more that Lydgate's decasyllabic lines are far better, in the sense of being more capably written from a purely metrical point of view, than some of his modern critics, who evidently had no proper facilities for studying his work, were able to discover. It is most improbable that his reputation as a poet among his contemporaries and immediate successors would have been as great as it was had he not had a good ear for rhythm and been a competent and, in spite of the convention of exaggerated modesty which led him to speak always in disparagement of his ability, skilful writer of metrical English. Nor is it easy to believe that his introduction of variety into what would have been otherwise an intolerably monotonous flow of regular decasyllabics was not both conscious and intentional. As Mr. Bridges has pointed out in one of his Oxford lectures on poetry, the fundamental motive of our pleasure in the beauty of verse "may be described as a balance between the expected and the unexpected," that "arises from our knowledge of the normal rhythm (the type) beneath the varieties which the poet delights to extend and elaborate; his skill in this sort of embroidery being to push its disguises as far as he dare without breaking away from the type."¹ It has also been well said by Mr. Owen Barfield,² that the music of poetry is "a kind of elusive discrepancy between two rhythms. Some rigidly regular metrical form is taken, . . . and on to this, as on an iron frame, is fitted a soft fabric of words already woven in a rhythm of their own . . . the rhythm of natural speech or prose. . . . The two rhythms clash and overlap, and subtly intersect in such a way that one

¹ Quoted from a review in the "Times Literary Supplement," July 4, 1918.

² "The New Statesman," January 15, 1921.

delicate, unreal echo is struck out from their jarring; and this is the main music of poetry." Accent is not constant, nor ought it to be constant, for if perfectly regular the effect of a long passage is ruined by its monotony.

Although such principles as these may not seem readily applicable to the art of a writer who usually manages to ruin his long passages in a wholly different and even less creditable manner, they are nevertheless to be considered in his case precisely as in that of any other writer of verse.

In the introductory note to the "Troy Book" I said that no fault could legitimately be found with the metre so long as Lydgate paid due regard to the swing of his dominant five beats; and I was no less unable to agree then than I am now with the opinion that because of his so-called broken-backed line, which can be on occasion a very fine line indeed, and the blunders of copyists he should be considered as inferior as a metrist as he undoubtedly was as a poet and thinker. If we are to do justice to Lydgate's metre, it is first of all necessary for us to know what Lydgate wrote. Even in the oldest manuscripts many lines occur in a distorted, mutilated form, and there are invariably some lines which appear to be defective in all manuscripts. It would be no less unfair to make Lydgate responsible for lines like these, than difficult, assuming that he did write them, to decide which of the alternative readings should be accepted as his. Another source of uncertainty to the present-day editor, of which I shall have occasion to speak later on, is a result of the increasing negligence of copyists during the fifteenth century, not only in regard to such small matters as final *e*'s, to which they gave no attention whatever, and various prefixes and suffixes, but sometimes extending to the insertion or omission of articles, conjunctions and prepositions, like *the* and *as*, or *for* preceding the *to* of the infinitive, and the alternative use of synonyms or parallel word-forms having an unequal number of syllables.

A further cause of trouble, which should not be forgotten, as it has had more influence, perhaps, than anything else in giving students false notions of Lydgate's metre and incidentally has shown how little real knowledge of his style there has been up to within comparatively recent times, is the attribution to him of works he did not write, such, for example, as "The

Assembly of Gods," and shorter poems, like the admirable but metrically corrupt "London Lickpenny."¹ Nor has the reissue of texts, which, like the *Secreta Secretorum*, exist only in a few late manuscripts and are naturally far from correct, tended to improve matters.

Unfortunately the question of Lydgate's metre is made very complicated by difficulties of the language; for unless we have a fair idea of the pronunciation of his time and class and a working knowledge of Chaucer's metrical practice, especially his use of the final *e*, for the analysis of which we are so largely indebted to Bernhard ten Brink, we cannot expect to get very far. To read Lydgate as if his language were present-day English, as I have actually heard some people do, or even to try to pronounce his lines as if they were written in French (which is somewhat closer to the mark), is impossible and absurd. At the best our attempts to reproduce his pronunciation and that of his contemporaries amount to no more than a very rough approximation. We are certain to do a large amount of misrepresenting and to make a good many mistakes; and I have often wondered, were Lydgate now alive and for once inclined to do a little correcting on his own account, what he would think of our efforts at criticism and interpretation and of the various opinions that have been expressed at different times by scholars in regard to his metre.

We have in the "Fall of Princes" numerous examples of all the "types" or "forms" of the decasyllabic line used by Lydgate except the somewhat doubtful type with a trisyllabic first measure. There are the normal type of ten or eleven syllables (A), the line with an extra syllable before the *cæsura* (B), lines with a syllable missing directly after the *cæsura* (C), with the first syllable missing (D), and with both the first syllable and the syllable after the *cæsura* missing (a combination of C and D). There are very few examples of the combination of B and D described in the "Troy Book" under the heading 5, for most of these lines can be read as normal; and I can find no absolutely certain examples of lines with a

¹ See "The Lydgate Canon" by H. N. MacCracken, Miss Hammond's parallel text reprint in *Anglia*, xx., p. 400, and the text of the eight-line version in Sir Frederick Bridge's "The Old Cryes of London," Novello & Co., London, 1921.

trisyllabic first measure: it is questionable whether there are any such in the "Fall of Princes."

The majority of the lines are of the ordinary type A, with ten or eleven syllables:

- I. 2. The book of Bochas in Frensh to translate
- I. 3. Out of Latyn, he callid was Laurence, etc., etc.

Of type B there are also many examples:

- I. 29. Afforn prouydid that no presumpcioun
- II. 3361. Alas I was nat auysid weel befor
- II. 3458. Besouhte Bachus sum remedi to shape
- III. 1660. The temple off Iupiter to robbe it be rauyne (syncope of *i* in *Iupiter*)
- III. 3088. This litil tragedie doth shortli heer deuise (apocope of *il* in *litil*)
- III. 3355. Wente into exil nat ferr fro that cuntre
- III. 3553. Cam out to meete hym upon a wol fair pley
- III. 3612. A thyng most odious to eueri comounte (synzesis of *io* in *odious*)
- VII. 206. An hundrid fourti four thousand as I reede
- IX. 2081. A thousand thre hundred acountid was the yeer (apocope of *ed* in *hundred*)

Other examples are: I. 5306, II. 1018, 1848, III. 1946, 2000, 2011, 3014, 3618, IV. 3127, 3961, V. 514, 2933, VI. 2353, 2953, 3347, VIII. 130, 1022, 1965, 2191, 2291, IX. 3050, 3067, 3386.

Type D is of frequent occurrence:

- I. 1. He that whilom dede his dilligence
- I. 9. Artificeres hauyng exercise
- I. 11. Shappis formys and newli hem deuise (read "forrms")
- I. 27. With ther colours agreable of hewe
- III. 2235. Had also in cronycles as I reede (syncope of *y* in *cronycles*)
- III. 3617. How in manhod he was pereles
- V. 2857. To the Romeyns any wise tobeye

Lines in which the first syllable is missing and an extra syllable added before the cæsure are comparatively rare and difficult to identify with certainty, for most of them can be read very well as normal. The following are probably examples:

- II. 557. Stant the weelfare off eueri regeoun
- II. 728. In Ioséphus his story ye may reede
- II. 933. Wher Porcéna sat in his roial see
- VI. 3070. Alle assentid & sworn to Catallyne

In regard to type C, the so-called broken-backed line, it can be said with no less certainty that it was frequently used by Lydgate in the "Fall of Princes"—I cannot agree with Professor Kaluza's apparent rejection of it—than that properly

read and not lifted out of its context it is usually, although not always, admirable, and on the whole quite as "good" as any other line. In many cases it is a practical impossibility for us to say whether we have to deal with it or with the normal type (A), into which it can always be transformed by the addition of a syllable at the cæsura; and although I doubt that there was ever any question in Lydgate's mind as to what sort of line he was writing or how he intended his lines to be scanned, we are to-day greatly handicapped by the neglect of copyists in matters of detail (the presence or absence of a final *e* in a manuscript usually meaning nothing at all) as well as by our ignorance of Lydgate's pronunciation. In saying that the use of the final *e* as a metrical syllable was wholly artificial in Lydgate's time, for the reason that it had long disappeared from the spoken language, and that consequently it is not impossible that, for the sake of the metre, Lydgate sometimes added an *e* to words to which it did not belong etymologically,¹ Professor Kaluza was no doubt in the main correct. Only in the case of Lydgate, who although quite conscious of his inferiority always had Chaucer's metrical practice in mind and apparently never varied his method, the idea of time hardly comes into consideration. As a metrist he looked upon himself as one of his master's contemporaries. Final *e*'s had crept in through false analogy long before the fifteenth century, and it cannot be assumed that Lydgate knew very much about etymology; nevertheless, I believe that a careful examination of the metre will show nothing more than an inclination on Lydgate's part to make a somewhat fuller use of the final *e* than Chaucer did, especially in the dative case, more rarely in the accusative, and very seldom in the nominative, of nouns of the strong declension with consonant endings. There is no evidence whatever of an indiscriminate adding of silent *e*'s.

The following examples of type C are to my mind very good lines. Properly read, with a marked pause at the cæsura, there is no unpleasant clashing together of accented syllables. One could as well say that the syllables clash together unpleasantly in "That stretches and swings to the slow passionate pulse of the sea"; or "I know a bank where the wild thyme blows."

¹ *Literaturblatt für germ. Phil.*, 1899, pp. 373-375; 1900, p. 408.

- I. 5120. Nor alle men may nat been iliche
 I. 5671. And fynali as poetis telle
 II. 2795. Senacherib off Assirie kyng
 III. 1480. Ther woful fall Guido dede endite
 III. 1758. And heerupon to be certefed
 III. 2430. Foure thousand men Xerses thedir sente
 III. 2497. Fledde in a boot lik a coward knyht
 III. 2698. Bi gret auys weies he hath souht
 III. 2815. This was theeffect pleyntli in substaunce
 III. 2883. Nor fader non by his gret errour
 III. 2972. On hors[e]-bak thoruh ther gret swiftnesse
 III. 3219. Amyd the se ferr out fro the stronde
 III. 3522. Strong was the fiht or that thei wer take
 III. 3527. And aftir that whan he cam to londe
 III. 3555. Bothe old & yong with ful glad visages
 III. 3598. Banyshed ageyn out of his cite
 III. 3614. Which suffred nat them to lyue in pes
 III. 4372. Is seelde glad as for his partie
 III. 4459. Is onli this thei do non excesse
 V. 424. Tween man and man or of wilful rage
 V. 2204. Al desolat cried for almesse

Other good examples are: I. 4629, 5469, 5582, III. 2034, 2836, IV. 149, 1629, 1756, 2445, 3052, 3156, 3564, 3634, 3751, 3852, V. 63, 256, 588, 742, 813, 1110, 1923, 2019, 2878, 3085, VI. 1215, 1220, 1380, 1885, 2261, 65, 2351, 2782, 3049, VII. 315, 1495, VIII. 817, 1296, 1852, 2052, 2129, 2944, 3312, IX. 2020, 24, 2998, 3254.

In the following lines both the first syllable and a syllable at the cæsura are wanting:

- I. 906. Than a man for to haue delit
 I. 1004. Which that God took with Noes Flood
 IV. 860. Whereupon whan he caste his look
 V. 2063. Hanybal gan his purpos holde
 V. 2455. Set him up in his roiall stall
 VI. 792. Spartharchus was ther cheef capteyn
 VI. 914. Vnto which whan thei wer repered
 VI. 1335. Aftir that for hir gret fairnesse
 VI. 1796. Thei to hym yold[e] up the toun
 VIII. 53. Lik a man hangyng in ballaunce
 VIII. 515. Smet out oon of his eyen tweyne
 VIII. 2723. Orcadois, Denmark and Houland
 IX. 2303. Chewed it al on pecis smale
 IX. 2857. Day be day caried vitaile

On the other hand, there are many doubtful and difficult examples of lines of the above types. Some of them, as Professor Kaluza and Dr. MacCracken have stated, can be easily mended, or, as I should prefer to say, transformed, into type A or D. It would be most undesirable to amend Lydgate with a view to smoothing his lines for the benefit of present-

day readers; and whenever textual alterations are undertaken it should naturally be done with the sole object of restoring, so far as we are able, the text to its original state. This we are often able to do successfully on the basis of the manuscripts; but when there is no manuscript authority for a change, it is best to leave things as they are unless the suggested emendation is a very simple and obvious one, as is sometimes the case; for often manuscript authority may represent nothing more, especially if in a late text, than the very questionable conjecture of a copyist. The presence or absence of a final *e* in a manuscript, as I have already said, usually means nothing: we are glad enough to take advantage of it when it is there; but the copyists apparently did not trouble themselves about it one way or the other, and the readers in Lydgate's day were presumably able to sound it for themselves where it was needed.

Lines like the following can easily be altered into the regular type; and in many such cases it is quite possible that Lydgate did originally write them in the more expanded form; yet the majority of these lines are wholly characteristic and require no emendation.

- III. 2336. But off assent cast in your passage (casteth)
- III. 2755. A myhti duc callid Palantus (y-callid)
- III. 3192. He callid was god of marchaundise (the god)
- IV. 2367. Another thyng bookis specife (as bookis)
- IV. 3654. For thei wer set Bochas doth deuise (as Bochas)
- IX. 2998. And in caas verray resemblable (verrailly)

Compare also III. 4787, V. 850, VI. 1362, etc.

Sometimes it is hard to say whether a line ought to be scanned as type C or type D; for here the type depends entirely upon whether the first syllable is emphasized or not, a matter which the taste of the modern reader must decide in the absence of all knowledge of the niceties of speech-accent of the fifteenth century:

- I. 682. And in ther trust for they wer nat stable
- II. 1616. The and thi kyn no man may socoure
- II. 1617. Flessh skyn and bon houndis shal deuoure
- IV. 529. He shal be set of gold bornid briht (gold probably disyllabic)
- IV. 3727. To his ences which that myhte auaille
- V. 519. And wher that he in his tendre age

In many other cases where at first sight there might appear

need for another syllable, there is actually no need for it; the syllable is already there. And although we certainly do not know just how Lydgate read his lines and pronounced his words, the conjecture at any rate lies near at hand that there was, in addition to diæresis (as in *Piroides*, II. 2502; *circuit*, VII. 654; *deer* [O. E. *diðr*], I. 5125; *boy*, V. 2588; *day* (?) II. 3396, V. 2019; *weel*, IV. 1564; *heeld*, III. 2131; *clees*, VI. 2481; *dees*, V. 2700; *trees*, I. 540, II. 2619), an occasional resolution of one syllable into two, either by lengthening or by the quasi-insertion of an extra vowel-sound, especially before an *r* and *l* and *n*. This is wholly consistent with the thicker and more broken utterance which, in view of the analogous mode of speech preserved to-day, apparently independently of dialect, by country people in parts of England and especially of Ireland, we may assume was prevalent in Lydgate's time and among his class. Examples of such lengthening or vowel-insertion are: *Saul* (*Sauël*), II. 167, etc.; *foul* (O. E. *fugol*), IV. 1742; *tail* (O. E. *taegl*), I. 854, IX. 1467; *soil*, I. 746; *gold*, II. 3452, etc. (see *infra*); *poynt*, VI. 2440; *reyn* (O. E. *regn*), I. 713; *Minotaur*, I. 864; *tour*, I. 1098, II. 1738; *repeir*, VI. 3201; *dispeir*, VI. 2433; *hair* (*heir*), I. 5140; *boor*, I. 4918; *boord*, IV. 1332; *fir* (*fire*), I. 1417, II. 2111 (comp. *feer-brond*, I. 6388).

The consonant combinations *lk* and *lf* seem to have formed a syllable by themselves in *folk* (*follek*), I. 148, III. 148, 4051, 4425, IV. 2442, IX. 1819, 2970 (but *folk*, monosyllable, I. 806, IV. 3630, V. 12), *calff*, I. 6380, *halff*, I. 6378, *mylk*, IV. 1131, and on occasion in *self* (*him. her-self*). The letter *r* was evidently strongly rolled, or pronounced with a distinct burr, producing a disyllabic effect in such words as *world*¹ (*fem. i stem*), which, however, has an organic silent *r* in the dative and accusative, I. 793, 822, 6179, 6253, II. 2081, III. 3165, IV. 83; in the strong masculines and neuters, *hors*, III. 1842, 52, 2556, 2979;² *arm*, II. 952, 1521; *clerk*, IV. 2663, IX. 113; *werk*, I. 1125, 29, 39; *turn*, IV. 2863, VI. 584; in the French words *cours*, III. 2802; *court*, II. 2251, III. 4785, VIII. 2945, 76, IX. 2103; and *sort*, I. 2725; and in *first*, *erst*, *-forn* and *thoruh*.

In *kyng*, the *g* may have been pronounced separately as

¹ Comp. VI. 201, 2515, 2893 *wor-eldli*.

² In VI. 1369, "Vpon an hors wildere than a leoun," the *a* is omitted in MSS. B and H, showing that the copyist probably said "hor-es," if he pronounced the word at all.

a guttural following the *n* (see ten Brink, §120, β), thereby producing an additional syllable that could be sounded or slurred at will. It is not at all probable that Lydgate added an *e*; yet the word is used in so many lines where two syllables are unquestionably required that it is difficult to believe that it was not indeed disyllabic:

- II. 1625. Off this warnyng the kyng took non heed
- II. 2937. The woful fal off kyng Amazie
- IV. 1800. And whan kyng Alisaundre hadde
- IV. 2390. And of the kyng of Epirothes
- VI. 1345. Which weddido was to kyng Tholome
- VI. 1681. So that the kyng Mitridate alas
- VIII. 3257. Of Gepidois how kyng Trusimounde
- IX. 903. This kyng caste the damages to redresse (apocope of the *s* in damages)
- IX. 2792. With kyng Iohn this Gaulteer lik a kniht

Other examples are: I. 5227, 5986, II. 1516, 24, 78, 2122, 2248, 2714, 3207, III. 2319, 74 2650, 2714, IV. 1552, 1863, 2340, V. 2968, VI. 1025, IX. 708, 924, 1287. Yet several of these are doubtful; we do not know but that Lydgate may have had the "broken-backed" line in his mind more often than is perhaps apparent to us now, and the following lines can be read very well with kyng as a monosyllable: II. 1665, 4107, III. 869, 4808, IV. 1461, 1944, 2981, V. 2409, IX. 865, 2956. On the other hand, kyng is certainly a monosyllable in lines III. 1705, 08, 39, 43, 2662, IV. 1315, 17, 78, VI. 1352, VIII. 2364, IX. 1285; and when it occurs at the end of a line it rhymes with the present participle (III. 1724, 4104, V. 2438, 3028, etc.).

To deth, str. masc., an *e* was probably added in the dative on occasion (pronounced *dédë*); and examples of its dative use are comparatively numerous: I. 761, 5739, II. 2325, III. 2752, 4733, 54, IV. 722, 1083, 2062, 2133, 58, 3060, 3976, V. 2124, 2251, VI. 1163, 2550, 3618, VII. 56, VIII. 1044, 1434, 64, 1864, 2587, IX. 254. Of these lines, IV. 1083, "For of his deth no man list compleyne," and VIII. 1044, "Of whos deth Lycynus was glad," can be read as type D; and IV. 2062, "That for his deth tempred the poisoun," is a fine example of type C as it stands. Lines VI. 2087, 2504, and VIII. 1457 are of the normal type, requiring no *e* in the dative. The word occurs but seldom in the accusative case; but in lines IV. 1957, "Tauenge my

deth wrouht bi gret outrage," IX. 1515, "Tauenge the deth[e] of Andronicus," and IX. 2031, "His lyff his deth[e] put in iupartie," it may be considered to require two syllables.

In regard to *feeld*, str. masc., the indication is that it either took an *e*, when required, in both the dative and accusative, or was lengthened into *fe-eld*. There are many examples of its use: II. 2300, 09, 2648, 4358, III. 2103, 4914, IV. 222, 3652, 85, V. 324, 31, 2036, VI. 1871.

Wheel, str. neuter, was certainly disyllabic (Middle English spellings: *hweol*, *wheel*, *huezel*, etc.); compare nominative case, "Troy Book," II. 8561, and accusative, "Fall of Princes," V. 1145. An *e* may have been added to the dative, I. 2170, V. 2293, VI. 308, and in the "Troy Book," II. 2021; but I am inclined to doubt it, although in my indecision I added one in VI. 308. In lines VI. 703, 11, 2538 (dative), and IV. 2858 (accusative) it is all right as it stands.

Although *lord* is one of the masculines of the strong declension that sometimes takes an *e* in the dative in Chaucer (ten Brink, § 201), it is probable that it was also pronounced disyllabically *lau-erd*. It usually occurs in the accusative and nominative:

- I. 814. Was bi the Lord as hym list ordeyne
- I. 2790. Made hir lord at hir to disdeyne
- II. 1006. Also my lord bad I sholde abide
- II. 1936. Hadde slayn hir lord for his gret richesse
- II. 3426. Whan that his lord was be tresoun slayn
- II. 4542. And to that Lord bowwe doun thi chyne
- III. 1984. Ful lik a lord and a knyhtli man
- VI. 1641. Was to his lord[e] fals & eek vnkynde
- VIII. 1879. Of his lord[e] be ful cruel hate

Compare also I. 6619, II. 196, VII. 1203, VIII. 881, 1674. In line II. 1930, *lord* is evidently monosyllabic; in IV. 1326, "Ageyn his lord bi an horrible cryme," the pronunciation of *lord* depends upon whether "bi an horrible" is elided or not: if we read "banorrible," *lord* is disyllabic.

In *kniht*, the *k* and the *n* were probably sounded separately, and the word was disyllabic (IV. 1924, VIII. 2845, 3231, IX. 642). *Hed*, str. neuter, was more likely pronounced *heved* than *hed[e]* when two syllables are needed; and although I have added an *e* in a few instances, it is rather to indicate that the word is disyllabic than to imply that Lydgate thought of

it otherwise than as heved. It occurs as a rule in the nominative and accusative:

- II. 3626. The speris hed roof hym thoruh the herte
- III. 1762. Gropyng his hed[e] as he lai slepyng
- IV. 3892. His hed smet off in the same place
- VI. 1159. Lost his hed[e] & his lyff in deede
- VI. 2453. Took up the hed[e] of that prince alas

The str. neuters gold and child were also in all probability disyllabic, go-eld and chi-eld:

- II. 3452. He thouhte gold myhte hym most auaille
- II. 3474. Though he of gold hadde so gret plente
- II. 3790. Riche of gold perle and precious stonys
- IV. 529. He shal be set of gold bornid briht
- IV. 889. Of most fyn gold shon so cleer & briht
- VIII. 1269. Al of gold fret with perles fyne

IV. 3684, "Armed al in gold and with gret violence," is of type A, with gold a monosyllable. I prefer to read VIII. 3160, "Al is nat gold that is cleer shynyng," as type A rather than type D. In IV. 506, "Bies of gold crownes of laureer," we have the alternative choice of a disyllabic "gold" or a trisyllabic "c[o]rownes." There are numerous examples of child, which may have sometimes taken an *e* in the dative; we meet with it, however, most frequently in the nominative and accusative cases:

- I. 2104. She and hir child fill into the se
 - I. 3290. Hath maad this child now so fortunat
 - I. 3407. Is first a child which may nat suffice
 - I. 7037. Bad that the child sholde anon be take
 - II. 1582. Whethir the child sholde lyue or deye
 - II. 1808. Kepte this child in ful secre wise
 - II. 3100. To keepe the child was nat rekeles
 - II. 3103. How that this child greene & tendre off age
 - II. 3139. The yonge child took in ther depos
 - II. 3588. Because this child tendre yong & fair
 - IX. 2874. Sold hym a child which was born in Ynde
- Dative:
- II. 3624. And on the child which that stood beside
 - II. 3627. But off this child whan the deth was kouth
 - VI. 1351. Was with hir child[e]? seruid that was slayn

In other cases the word is to be read as a monosyllable in lines of types A and D (I. 3192, 99, 3213, 19, 27, 31, 45, II. 1624, 3108).

Blood, birth, land, and swerd (which may have been otherwise disyllabic, swe-erd, O. E. sword) occasionally take an *e*

in the dative; good (possessions) apparently requires an *e* in the accusative, III. 3853. To the str. masc. gilt an *e* was probably added, I. 6925, but not elsewhere (III. 2034, IV. 427, 3751); hill also seems to have required an *e* in the dative (II. 4122, III. 2973, V. 2601, VI. 1612, VII. 1054). Wal, I. 2479, II. 3510, certainly was pronounced wal[le] in the dative and accusative, VI. 1108 and IV. 339. To knyff, II. 1305, 84, III. 1147; doom, V. 875, VI. 2926; crafft, I. 6523, 41; drem (perhaps disyllabic, O. E.* dréam), II. 3222, 3585, III. 1666, apparently no *e* was added. The consonant-stem noun book, however, seems to have been sometimes disyllabic through the addition of an inorganic *e* to the dative, I. 4076, V. 366, 804, VI. 2871, IX. 177, 3070 (acc., I. 258, 423, VI. 224), although some of these lines can be read as type D.

The French words estat, III. 534, VI. 2865, VIII. 2786; chaung, I. 2064; assent, III. 2336, IV. 3787, V. 2000, IX. 1349, 3232; feith, IX. 1223, 28; and accord, I. 3706, II. 4117, IX. 2218, also seem to have required an *e* in some instances.

So far we have been dealing with lines that require more syllables than they apparently possess; but there are many other lines that at first sight might be considered to have too many syllables. It is therefore necessary to examine shortly Lydgate's usage in slurring over and eliding syllables and otherwise contracting his words.

There is very frequent use of elision and apocope. Of the former the following are characteristic examples:

Lat us (Lat's), I. 938; it wer ('twere), II. 3648; Fortune is (Fortune's), IX. 3526; There is (there's), I. 2581, 4611, II. 3639, III. 3932; He enfectith, I. 4624; He abod, III. 816; He is, I. 6986, III. 1365; Heere is, I. 2596; She is, I. 6185; Wil is, III. 3980; and in (=nin), VI. 2825; bi his, VI. 2633; be Amilius, II. 3992; Bi Eneas, II. 987; be interpretacioun, VIII. 1940; be influent, IX. 3222; be exacciouns, VIII. 2638; be occasioun, IX. 350; Be Honorius, VIII. 2281; Bamaner, VI. 944; bagredi, VI. 1005; birfadres, IV. 3324; bextorsioun, III. 3231, this (= that is) II. 4040; so infortunat, I. 3470; so onable, III. 49; elision of the *e* in *the* before vowels and *b*, I. 1370, 2388, 5848, III. 2352, V. 373, VI. 2303, 04, 3428, VII. 1120, 1400, VIII. 3261; of the *o* in *to*, I. 5719, II. 684, 2289,

IV. 3996, VI. 3267, VIII. 2056, 2205, 2394, IX. 2030; glorie and, I. 1118, II. 1073, 2108, III. 3343; miserie and, I. 968; sclaudre and, III. 3017; childre and, III. 2007; wynter and, III. 2204; fadir and, I. 900; childre in, VIII. 2363; fadir in, I. 194; rekne in, VI. 1745; other in, I. 2860; lettir in, I. 6344; rancour in, II. 785; thastlabre in, I. 295; peeple in, I. 996; Brothir of, VII. 1044; double of, VIII. 3152; double Apostata VIII. 1483; title of, VI. 3647; slauhtre of, VIII. 223; temple off, III. 3315; sobre of, I. 6208; enlumyned off, III. 666; chartre is, V. 1873; mekil is, III. 555; writen is, V. 1476; lauhtrre on, I. 1528; Phebus on, VI. 2472; Capue he, V. 2049; leuer he, III. 3918; togidre he, III. 4568; peeple he, II. 215; ordre as, VIII. 2598; sugre eek, I. 4001; title had, VI. 732; Vttre hem, VI. 298; merci or, II. 1699; gredi excesse, VI. 1425; foure elementis, VI. 3398; walkyn appeere, V. 1000; peeple onhappi, I. 3864; furie unrestreynable, III. 4027.

Apocope is quite frequent of the endings *el* or *le*, *er* (*ir*, *re*), *w*, *we*, *ub*, in *narw*, *naruh*, *sorwe*, etc., *ed* in hundred and the past participle,¹ and of the *es*, *is* in plurals, especially of French words. Examples are: *bridle*, III. 4608; *litol*, III. 3088, IV. 2345, VIII. 421; *stable*, III. 1878; *nouther*, IV. 1035; *sobre*, I. 3449; *remembre*, I. 3102; *fostre*, I. 3255; *hunger*, VII. 1353; *mooder*, I. 4811, 6185, III. 3980, IV. 151, V. 2940; *moordre*, VIII. 3372; *whethir*, I. 4653, 4658, 59, 61; *somer*, III. 2204, *mysdramer*, I. 3998; *holuh*, V. 2105; *sorwe*, I. 3532; *a-morwe*, III. 1524, 3825; *naruh*, III. 208; *folwe*, III. 1488; *hundred*, VIII. 2296, IX. 2081; *fadid*, VIII. 194; *weddid*, IV. 3968; *disclaudrid*, IX. 2445; *delyuered*, III. 3314; *corages*, I. 999, 2931, (rhymes "corages: language: visage," I. 5154); *offices*, I. 614; *deluges*, I. 1081; *pillages*, I. 6139, IV. 836, VIII. 2638; *pryncessis*, I. 1829, 3125, II. 4230, *trespacis*, I. 2911, II. 4582, V. 3109; *sciences*, I. 4246; *facis*, VIII. 3142; *ymages*, II. 834, 4497, V. 1440; *damages*, III. 2483, IV. 639, IX. 3023; *euidencis*, I. 3105; *toknes*, IX. 117; *prouynces*, III. 4867, VII. 1564, VIII. 698; *richessis*, III. 4240, 45, 4932, IV. 3924, VIII. 2596 (rhymes with apocopated "falsnessis, witnessis," V. 1661); *goddessis*, VII. 837, IX. 277, (rhymes with apocopated "witnessis, brihtnessis," IX. 282, with "heuynessis," IX. 293); *liknessis*, IV. 17; *paleisis*, VI. 1296.

¹ See V. 3021, where "exercised" rhymes with "deuise" and "guise."

Syncope also is frequent and often indicated by contractions. It occurs in the third and second person singular endings of many verbs, in the participle, in the plural of nouns ending in *es* (*is*), and otherwise in a very large number of words. Examples are: *appallith*, III. 1629; *causeth*, III. 4046; *gynneth*, III. 4547; *komth*, III. 1036; *lakketh*, III. 2275; *makith*, I. 1015, *makth* III. 70, *maketh*, III. 1628, 3235, 4209, VI. 1282; *taketh*, III. 533, 1235, 1625; *tarageth*, IV. 2930; *yeueth*, III. 397; *holdeth*, II. 531; *preueth*, III. 4035; *declareth*, II. 3462; *bryngith*, I. 1414; *reuersith*, III. 1462; *setteth*, VI. 495; *recurid*, III. 1400; *astonid*, IV. 939; *comaunded*, IV. 427; *namyd*, I. 574; *lokkid*, VIII. 42.

In the plural of nouns: *goddis*, II. 4256, III. 3564, IV. 3708, 23, 37; *innocentis*, II. 4421; *personys*, III. 3607; *myscheuys*, VIII. 2626.

Other examples are: *adaumaunt*, IV. 66; *aduertiseth*, I. 806; *aduersite*, VI. 1262, 1687, VIII. 3259, IX. 1845; *antiquite*, IX. 916; *appetit*, VI. 1319, *appetites*, VIII. 2404; *auctorite*, VI. 2242, VIII. 971, 2054, 2216, IX. 2171, 99, 2645; *ausili*, VI. 3356; *bestialite*, IV. 2687; *cardynales*, IX. 1087, *cardynal*, IX. 2100 (but *cardinales*, IX. 1077); *cathedral*, VIII. 2035; *chapitle*, I. 4499, VI. 1282; *charite*, VII. 1172, IX. 2400; *cherisse*, I. 997, 3840, II. 3146, IV. 1372, VIII. 2366, *cheryshyng*, II. 1096 (but *cherissid*, III. 4794); *chronycle*, I. 2607; *citeseyns*, IV. 3916; *confederat*, VIII. 2256; *consuleris*, V. 1956; *contemplatyff*, IX. 3413; *corrupt*, III. 967 (but *córupt*, VIII. 990); *countirfet*, VII. 1207; *countirpeis*, VI. 2893; *couenable*, III. 4006, VI. 618; *delicat*, VI. 1424; *dilligentli*, VII. 1324; *disconfited*, I. 5291, III. 2520, VI. 2132, VIII. 1055, 2511; *disseuraunce*, III. 2814; *disherited*, I. 2563; *dissymulyng*, IV. 1306; *enheritour*, IX. 1252; *enlumined*, III. 666; *emperour*, VIII. 754, 1041, *emperours*, II. 4467, VII. 1264; *felicite*, I. 1834, III. 1153, *infelicite*, I. 3168; *fauourable* (slurred), IV. 990; *felashipe*, VII. 8; *flaterers*, III. 3164, IX. 2712; *floryshynges*, IX. 3446; *gentillesse*, IV. 2702; *gouernaunce*, V. 1770; *gouernour*, V. 1758, IX. 49; *humylyte*, IX. 2393; *imagynatyff*, VIII. 521; *importable*, VIII. 1579; *impossible*, I. 3835, VI. 1717; *indigent*, III. 4324; *infirmytes*, VII. 1256, IX. 1087; *infortunat*, IV. 3987; *innocent*, IX. 1493; *ipocras*, VII. 1282; *laboreer*, VII. 1198, *liberalite*, IV. 3994, *libertes*, IX. 2608;

mageste, IV. 3127; magnificence, IX. 3602; malencolie, III. 4026; malencolik, VI. 3442; martirloge, IX. 42; mellodie, VI. 344; merciful, VIII. 1204; meryly, I. 4795; modëfie, IX. 2615; mutabilite, V. 1823, VI. 399; myneral, VII. 1216; myracle, VIII. 1503, 1623; nakëd, VII. 1062; necessite, I. 4981, VII. 548; norice, III. 4278; notable, I. 1460, VI. 513, 891, 3630, VII. 84; ocupied, VIII. 299; onchaungable, I. 1207; ordenaunce, VIII. 933; origynal, IV. 1137; perished, IV. 22; pestilence, VII. 1353; philosophie, IV. 1139, VI. 345; philisophre, VI. 1303, 3120, VII. 1223; politik, VI. 347; polyshing, III. 1040; possible, VI. 3199; predecessours, I. 3910; prerogatif, VI. 3377; prerogatyues, VI. 3080; promyses, III. 4252; prosperite, I. 124, IV. 1052, 68, VIII. 2550, 2671; punyshe, II. 1241, 1327, 4380, III. 1457 (but punyshe, III. 304, 1129, 1684, etc.); rethorik, VIII. 193; reuerence, II. 1966, IX. 2101; reuolucioun, VI. 189; salaři, II. 3167; senatours, VI. 3104, 3226, VII. 543, VIII. 2539 (but senatours VIII. 223); sensualite, V. 1503, VI. 3381, VIII. 2350; seuen, III. 2530, 2651, 2702, 37, 4550, IV. 113; skarmysshes, IV. 292; souereyne, V. 1172; subtilite, V. 1609; syngulerte, III. 1280, 2258; synguler, I. 409, II. 4305, III. 2136, IV. 133, VI. 2209, 3004, 3140 (but synguler, IV. 3623); tragedie, I. 5519, 44; trynyte, IX. 2404; venymous, III. 4595; werreyours, VII. 1036.

Synizesis, the combination into one syllable of two vowels that can not make a diphthong, is frequent and often accompanied by slurring. Marriage is as a rule of two syllables = marage (I. 1988, 3483, 3752, II. 2121, III. 4112, 16, IV. 184, 3973, VIII. 3273, IX. 257, 63, 73, 83, 88, etc.); but we also have mariage in three syllables (I. 3500, 5462). Other examples are: cariage, V. 1931; alliaunce, V. 2450 (alliaunce, IX. 259); daliaunce, VI. 214, 3467; embassiat, V. 1545; meriere, I. 5813; permiable, VI. 2168; rhetoricien, VI. 3454; superfluite, VI. 2689, 3332, VII. 1307; tarieng, VI. 2737; variaunce, VI. 2893, 3399; vertuous, III. 4383, VIII. 127, IX. 1153, 2027, 3046 (but vertuous, VII. 399, IX. 2034).

There is synizesis of the *i* and *o* in the following adjectives: compendious, VI. 3630; contrarious, IX. 529; furious, I. 2388; gracious, IX. 3349; ungracious, VIII. 3273; victorious, II. 204, VI. 1209, IX. 2417.

The same applies to many nouns ending in *ioun*: accusacioun,

V. 1658; affecciou, III. 821; champiouns, IX. 2426; collu-
sion, II. 4240, III. 1713; compassioun, III. 4812, VI. 276,
2996; composicioun, II. 766; condicioun, VI. 281; confec-
ciouns, III. 2574, IX. 2907; coniuracioun, VI. 3052; conspir-
acioun, VII. 447, VIII. 3127; constellacioun, III. 3628;
contencioun, IV. 436; desolacioun, VI. 362; deuocioun, IX.
2140; digressioun, III. 3228, V. 1776, VI. 2000 (but not in
VI. 3330); dilacioun, I. 7053; discencioun, IV. 677; discre-
cioun, I. 503, III. 4627, IV. 2329, 4032, V. 1783; divisioun,
III. 5122, VI. 2310, 2535 (but not so in lines I. 4611, VI. 358,
3329, and perhaps in IX. 511); dominacioun, VIII. 229, IX.
1507; ellocucioun, VI. 3334; entencioun, IV. 1365; execu-
cioun, IX. 2982; extorsioun, III. 3231; exacciouns, IX. 2615;
facioun, I. 5051; fundacioun, IX. 2427; generaciouns, VI.
3400; intrusioun, VIII. 2316; lamentaciouns, VI. 2384; men-
cioun, III. 4941, VIII. 1174; obligacioun, IV. 1978; occa-
siouns, I. 4736, in sing., IV. 1013; oppressioun, VIII. 1306;
perfeccioun, IX. 798; pecessioun, VIII. 2891; presumpcioun,
IX. 939 (but four syllables, VI. 3628); professioun, VIII. 1480,
2250; pronunciacioun, VI. 3140, 3340; refecciouns, VII. 904;
religioun, IX. 2129; reuolucioun, VI. 189; subieccioun, V.
582; successioun, I. 4273, III. 2964; supplantacioun, IX.
3039; suspeccioun, III. 2728.

Synzesis also occurs in proper nouns, such as Albioun,
VI. 2882; Amphiou, VI. 3491; Scipioun, V. 1249, etc.

Hiatus is comparatively rare, but nevertheless there are a
number of cases where the final *e* is evidently sounded before
a succeeding vowel, as in VI. 2461, "Bi fals rauyne and extor-
sion"; VII. 268, "The firste also who list take heede;" VII.
380, "And saide also mor for assuraunce;" VIII. 2395,
"Brothir to force auctours seyn echon"; IX. 1044, "In such
disioynt the sayd[e] Arnold stood." There are other ex-
amples in which the words "hoost" and "steel" with dative
ending are followed by the word "armed."

In proper nouns the accent is often shifted from one syl-
lable to another; sometimes a name is shortened by apocope,
or, as we have seen above, by synzesis. Thus, Ypolitus reads
Ypolitus, I. 4488; Róboam, II. 772, Róboám, II. 792; Ierusá-
lem, II. 755, 1825, 2656, 83, but Ierusalém, II. 707, 1491,
2891, VII. 1458, IX. 1859, 1917, 57; Abithómārus, V. 957,

Abithomárus, V. 981, Abithómarus, V. 946; Lacedémóyn and Lacedémoyne, III. 3362, 77, 3439, 64, etc.; Pelopia, I. 4151; Odóacer, VIII. 2510, Odóacer, VIII. 2501; Anthjochus, V. 1523, 48, 2781, Anthíochus, V. 1590, etc.; Nabugodonosor, II. 3531; Artābanus, III. 2669, Artabanus, III. 2647, 92; Fanatīcus, VI. 662; Tantałus, III. 3730; Diogenes, III. 4392; Macēdoyne, V. 282; Laodīces, V. 1473; Aristobolus, VI. 2742, 52; Constantynople, VIII. 2222; Alcibiádes and Alcibiades, III. 3375, etc.; Tholome and Tholome, VI. 2627, 48, 52; Artaxerxes, III. 5022, but usually Artaxerxes; Iubīter and Iubiter, III. 1660, VI. 3206, VII. 385, 551, VIII. 1001, 1004; Radagasus and Radāgasus, VIII. 2143, 60, 62; Cesārea, VIII. 1733, Cesarea, VIII. 1747; Phebus, VI. 2472; Aljsaundre, IV. 1428, etc.; Cleopātra, VI. 2648, Cleopatra, VI. 2643; Calligula, VII. 411, 86, Calligula, VII. 323; Antigonus, IV. 2264, Antigonus, IV. 2282; Galerius, VIII. 980, Galerius, VIII. 981.

It is exceedingly doubtful whether there are any lines with a trisyllabic first measure in the "Fall of Princes." Personally I am inclined to believe that there are none. Lines having the word "seven" in the second measure will hardly do, for seven, with the second *e* syncopated, was a monosyllable (I. 4255, IV. 1166, 1232). "Philisophre" was disyllabic through syncope of the second *i*, which puts IV. 1303 and VI. 3120 out of court (comp. also VII. 1223 and philosophie in IV. 1139 and VI. 345). In VIII. 1005, "In the capitoile set sothli as he saide," the first *i* in "capitoile" is syncopated; the line is regular. In the line, I. 4169, "Off the noble worthi kyng Agamenoun," "noble" loses its second syllable through apocope. The first *i* in "countirpeis," VI. 2893, is syncopated and the *r* slurred (comp. countirfet, VII. 1207); and in the only remaining questionable line of this sort that I have noted, VI. 3104, "In the Romeyn court affor the senatours," there is syncope of the *e* in "senatours" (for further references see senatour in list of words illustrating syncope).

There are several irregular lines, but whether the irregularity is due to the author or to the copyists is often impossible to say. Line 3480, Book III., "This was the mene that he mente," has only four beats as it stands, and may have been, but was probably not, so written by Lydgate. "Natwithstanding mor boldli that tyme atte leste" (VII. 962) has

evidently been garbled; VI. 991, "Sone of a carpenteer the stori tellith thus," has a beat too many unless the *er* in "carpenteer" is syncopated; and VII. 356, "With certeyn drynkis to cast hym in a rerage" (rhyming with age), apparently has one syllable too many as it appears in the MSS. There are many lines in which the accent is thrown on the definite article; but whether the practice was considered objectionable I cannot say. It is at any rate very easy to read such lines by slurring over the arsis, a practice not unknown in the poetry of the present day. The following are examples:

- I. 2172. To conside the successiouns
- I. 5663. Sterte into the welle and hymseluen dreynt
- II. 2924. Off mortal man the condicioun
- III. 1611. It is in erthe oon the moste pereilous thyng
- IV. 513. The straunge salaire and the famous guerdoun
- IV. 2846. And eclipsed the liht of his glorie
- VI. 94. Othir vndir the pool Antartik
- VI. 2307. Gan among Romeyns and the contagious fiht
- VIII. 179. That labour may of slouthe haue the victorie

In the following lines the accent falls on the indefinite article:

- I. 959. Suffred on a crosse deth and passioun
- I. 2332. The fir brast out a ful large space
- VI. 3187. In a desert and a gret wildirnesse

Finally, in some cases it is preferable to read a word in a shorter, but alternative, form to that which occurs in the text. Thus, Lydgate probably wrote "vauntage" rather than "auauntage" in III. 499, "It were to me no worshepe nor auauntage"; and in several lines, "geyn" is preferable to "ageyn." In VI. 2307 above, Lydgate may have written "mong." The copyists did not seem to care which form they used.

I have made the following emendations to the text without manuscript authority; but all except one (VI. 2459) are obvious and simple corrections of copyists' blunders and omissions:

- II. 423. Natwithstanding [that] the Palestynes
- II. 1732. Till al his blood be bledyng dede raile * (The MSS. and prints have "fayle" instead of "raile" a blunder evidently of an early copyist.)
- III. 2906. Thei heeld hemsilff[e] verrai[ly] ashamed (The MSS. and prints have "verrai.")
- IV. 1627. And [he] hadde toward thoxident

- IV. 1972. Hir * fatal wheel most dyuers & chaungable (The MSS. have "Ther" instead of "Hir," but the wheel is Fortuna's wheel.)
- IV. 2744. With al the vicis * of pride & lecherie (The reading in the MSS. is "spicis," "spices," "spyces," and "spises" in Tottel.)
- IV. 2791. Callid [him] hom ageyn into ther toun
- V. 992. And of thes [noble] worthi princis tweyne
- V. 3141. Off this moordre[r] the hatful tirannye
- VI. 2459. Which thoruh the * world yiueth so gret a soun (The MSS. have "thoruh al the world"; and it is possible that Lydgate so wrote the line, although he uses "al" in the preceding line.)
- VII. 1610. Of plate and maile [ther] armure was so fair
- VIII. 408. To this emperour I nil * resorte ageyn (The MSS. have "wil" instead of "nil.")

De Casibus Virorum Illustrium

BOCCACCIO'S PREFACE TO HIS FIRST VERSION ¹

Exquirenti mihi quid ex labore studiorum meorum possem reipublicae vtilitatis adferre, mores hominum illustrium maxime obtulere sese obuiam: quos dum illecebres turpique libidine fœdos intuerer: effraenesque non aliter quam si fortunam in sopnum perpetuum soporassent hærbis aut cantato carmine: suosque principatus ferreis vncis adamantino in scopulo firmassent: aduerterem: Nec ob id solum cæteros pro viribus premere: quinimmo et in ipsum rerum omnium opificem stulta quadam temeritate consurgere cernerem: obstupui. Et dum damnarem dementia: longam quepii patris patientiam admirarer: Ecce in mentem incidit quod quærebam. Quid enim hac charitate auiditati mortalium et saluti perpetuæ vtilius: quam oberrantes si possis / in rectum tramitem reuocare? In quod & si hactenus eloquentissimi & sacra pietate conspicui viri persæpe conatu maximo elaborauerunt: Non inofficiosum existimo: si vt ipse (quamuis per viribus non sim) eos a sopore letifero inuitarem: vigiliam excussisse tentauerim. Sane quum tales oscenis voluptatibus adsueti difficiles animos demonstrationibus præstare consueuerint: & lepiditate historiarum capi nonnunquam: exemplis agendum ratus sum. Et quid deus siue (vt eorum more loquar) fortuna in elatos possit describere: Et (ne in tempus aut sexum cadat obiectio) a mundi primordio in nostrum vsque æuum consternatos duces: illustresque alios tam viros quam mulieres passim disiectos: in medium succincte deducere mens est. Absit tamen vt omnes dixerim. Quis enim mortalium tanti foret vt infinito posset labori sufficere? Set ex claris quosdam clarissimos excerptis sat erit, vt dum senes fluxosque principes et dei iudicio quasatos in solum reges viderint: dei potentiam: fragilitatem suam: & fortunæ lubricum noscant: & lætis modum ponere discant: Et sic aliorum periculo suæ possint vtilitati consulere. Porro ne continua historiarum series legenti possit esse fasti dio: morsus in vitia: & ad virtutem suasiones inseruisse quandoque tam delectabile quam vtile arbitratus: adnectam. Cui tam sublimi cæpto ac successui is quem penes potestas est omnis / supplex precor / sauens adsit: & in sui nominis gloriam quod scripsisse dederit ipse conseruet.

¹ From Jean Petit's edition [n.d., but after 1507].

BOCCACCIO'S PREFACE TO HIS SECOND VERSION ¹

IN CASVS VIRORVM ILLVSTRIVM IOANNIS BOCATII DE CERTALDO HISTORIOGRAPHI CLARISSIMI PRÆFATIO

Exquirenti mihi, quid ex labore studiorum meorum possem forsitan Reipub. utilitatis addere, occurreré præter creditum multa, maiori tamen ornatu in mentem sese ingessere principum, atque præsentium quorum cunquæ obscœnæ libidines, violentiæ truces, perdita otia, auaritia inexplebilis, cruenta odia, vltiones armatæ, præcipitesque, & longe plura scelestafacina. Quæ cum ductu cælestium viderem in illo coercito freno euolantia undique, inde honestatem omnem fœdari publicam, iustitiæ sacratissimas leges solui, labefactari uirtutes omnes, & quod infandum est, detestandis exemplis, in mores impios ignaræ multitudinis ingenia trahi. Ratus eo me à fortuna deductum, quo appetebat intentio: festinus arripui calamum scripturus in tales. Nam quid satius est, quam uires omnes exponere, ut in frugem melioris uitæ retrahantur errantes, à desidibus sopitis letalis somnus excutiat, uitia reprimantur, & extollantur virtutes. Nec me terruit maiorum nostrorum in hos ingentia vidisse volumina, & illa nouisse styli suauitate, & pondere sententiarum meis literulis præponenda: plurimum eum meminerim, nonnunquæ rudem notulam excitasse nonnullos, quos tonitrua mouisse non poterant. Bona igitur pace talium, quo impellit dicendi impetus tendam: si forsitan saxea hæc corda, tenui spiritu oris mei, in salutem meam mollire saltem paululum queam. Sanè cum tales obstant, sueti voluptatibus animos difficiles demonstrationibus præstare consuerint, & lepiditate Historiarum capi nonnunquæ, exemplis agendum ratus sum eis, quid Deus omnipotens, seu, ut eorum loquar more, fortuna in elatos possit, & fecerit. Et ne in tempus, aut sexum cadat abiectio, à mundi primordio, in nostrum usque æuum consternatos duces, illustresque alios, tam uiros, quam mulieres passim deiectos, in medium succincte deducere mens est. Absit tamen ut omnes dixerim. Quis enim mortalium tanti foret? ut infinito labori possit sufficere? Sed ex claris quosdam clariores excerpisse satis erit. Vt dum segnes, fluxosque principes, & Dei iudicio quasatos in solum, reges viderint, Dei potentiam, fragilitatem suam, & fortunæ lubricum noscant: & lætis modum ponere discant, ut aliorum periculo suæ possint vtilitati consulere. Porrò ne continua historiarum series legenti possit fastidium aliquod inferre, morsus in vitia, et ad virtutem suasiones inseruisse quandoque, tam delectabile, quàm utile arbitratus annectam. Cui tam audaci ceptui, & successui, eum quem penes maiestas est omnis supplicor, fauens adsit, & in sui nominis gloriam, quod scripsisse dederit, ipse conseruet.

¹ From Ziegler's edition, Augsburg, 1544.

BOCCACCIO'S LETTER TO MAINARDO¹

IOANNES BOCATIVS DE CERTALDO HISTORIOGRAPHUS,
MACHINARDO EX CLARA CAUALCANTIUM
FAMILIA VIRO CLARISSIMO

Div strenve miles emvinctum ex ingenio meo opusculum, in quo virorum Illustrium tractantur casus, & ut plurimum infelices exitus, me penes ociosum fuit. Non enim satis *mecum* conueniebam, cui nam primo illud mittere uellem, ut nomini suo aliquid adferret ornatus: & eiusdem adiutus subsidijs, melioribus quam meis auspicijs prodiret in medium. Cupimus enim omnes, quadam vmbratili impulsi gloria, quibus auxilijs possumus, fragiles labores nostros nobilitare, & diuturniores facere: & scriptores potissime. Et inter alia, quasi multum illis splendoris consequuturum sit, Pontifici, seu Cæsari, aut Regi, uel alicui principi maximo titulamus eosdem. Quamobrem longa indagine mentis quæsiui, quem ex multis unum eligerem: & ante alios præpollentes *mecum* euoluere cæpi Pontifices, quorum vetus sanctitas, iamdudum plures, pia affectione, libellos claros reddiderat. Sane dum modernos, ex veteribus exorbitantes, (qui lachrymis, & orationibus in aduersantes deuotioni eorum, uirtutes cælorum mouere consueuerant) vidi ex sacerdotalibus infulis galeas, ex pastoralibus baculis lanceas, ex sacris uestibus loricas, in quietem, et libertatem innocentium conflare: ambire Martialia castra, incendijs, violentijs, Christiano sanguine fuso lætari: satagentesque aduersus veritatis verbum dicentis, Regnum meum non est de hoc mundo, orbis imperium occupare, horruui, retraxique pedem: ratus apud huiusmodi ludibrium potius opusculum meum futurum, quam ob aliquod eius meritum preciosum: & ab ijs frustratus, in hodiernum Cæsarem aciem mentis deflexi. Sed confestim reuocaui consilium, sentiens eum magnalium suorum immemorem, præponentemque Thebani Bacchi uina colentis gloriam, splendoribus Martis Italici, nec non torpentem sub Circio in extremo orbis angulo, inter niues, & pocula. Sed quid tandem? subiere pectus anxium, qui notis insigniti regijs, reges haberi uolunt, cum phalerati sint onagri: & ij potissime, qui hac tempestate præsidet regnis. Occurritque primus Gallus Sicamber, qui se temerario ausu genere, & moribus præferre cæteris audet: & cui primates monstrauere sui, nedum philosophari turpissimum fore Regi, uerem literarum nouisse characteres, detrimentum Regiæ Maiestatis permaximum signari. Qui sic sapiunt, damnantes in Regibus, quod bellicosos reddit egregios. Inde Hispani, seu Barbari, & efferaces hoies affuere. Post & Seuerus Britannus, elatus nouis successibus. Sic et Pannonius Bilinguis populi multi-

¹ From Ziegler's edition.

tudine potius quam virtute valens. Postremo mollis, & effœminatus Siculus. Quorum omnium dum mores, & vitam segregatim intueor, ne per eorum discurram luxum, & inertiam, rectius regum simulachra, quàm reges uisi sunt, Quadpropter nausea quadam vexatus (ne in fabulam deducerem, quod cupiebam extollere) ab indagine destiti: & quasi decreueram illud fortunæ manibus committere, et ferè iam emissurus eram, dum illi misertus Deus, in laudabile consilium incidi. Nemini scilicet quantumcumque eminenti, atque præfulgido principi posse quiddam fidentius quàm amico committi: etiamsi extremæ fortis homo sit. Quod iampridem persæpe legimus illustres fecisse uiros. Et cum tali gratularer animaduertentiae, & ecce quasi tu missus in mentem uenisti. Tum ego mecum, quid inter syluestres beluas rugientes potius quàm loquentes, magistrae rerum philosophiæ hostes quæris, quod in sinu tuo optatissimum tenes, quod in oculis tuis assidue est, quod te coram semper obambulat? Nonne uides Machinardum tuum? tua iamdiu approbatum sententia: cuius fidem, dilectionem, cuius munificentiam sæpe expertus es. Quem ergo alium quæris? Nonne insuper huic sacra affinitate iunctus es? Secum si meminit, vnici filij eius communis pater es. Illi enim dedit ipse naturali lege ut esset, cum paraclito operante spiritu, ut bene esset dedisti, dum illum ex sacri fontis lauacro suscepisti. Praeterea is, esto, plene philosophicis eruditus non sit, amantissimus tamen studiorum est, & probatorum hominum præcipuus cultor, atque eorum operum solertissimus indagator. Nec est, quod tu summopere uitare uidebaris, vnus ex mercenaria plebe, aut inglorius, & degener homo, regia enim militia insignitus est, & egregie splendido titulo: & ex Caualcantibus clara ciuitatis nostræ familia genitus. Ab auorum fulgore non deuiat, quinimo singulare decus, & pricæ virtutis specimen, nomen suum, & patriam laudabili fulgore reddit illustrem. Quid multa dixerim? a deo in sententiam hanc uenisse placuit, ut quanto magis mecum ista reuoluerem, tanto arctius roboraretur consilium, et firmiter infigeretur animo. Tuo igitur, amantissime mi, dummodo pauperis amici munusculum non renuas, honorando semper nomini dico, quod paulo ante Regali insigniri cupiebam. Suscipe illud liberali animo, si quid sanctum amicitiae nomen, iamdiu inter te, & me æquo firmatum animo meretur. Quæso susceptum, dum per honestum ocium poteris legas, non equidem legisse penitebit, si satis ingenium tuum noui. Et inter legendum non pigeat minus decenter se habentia emendasse. Et dum uidebitur, post hoc, inter amicos communes, & postremo tuo nomine emittas in publicum, ut ipse pro uiribus celebre nomen tuum, meumque aliquali fulgore, per ora uirorum discurrans, illustres. Vale.

Des Cas Des Nobles Hommes et Femmes

LAURENCE'S TRANSLATION OF BOCCACCIO'S
PREFACE ¹

[*This was retained in Laurence's second version.*]

Cest la translacion du prologue Iehan boccace ou liure des cas des nobles hommes & femmes maleureux, commençant en latin: Exquirenti michi quid ex labore, & cetera. [¶ Et enuoie son liure a vng sien compere cheualier appelle messire maguard des cheualchans de florence Senechal de Scicile ainsi comme Il appart par vne epistre surce faicte par le dit Boccace en la quele Il blasme et reprnt ouuertement et a cause tous les princes crestiens.]²

Quant le enqueroye quel prouffit le puisse faire a la chose publique par le labour de mon estude, le tournay mon engin a considerer les maintiens & les meurs des nobles hommes & femmes qui principalement se presenterent deuant les yuelx de mon entendement, & quant le les aperceu ordoyez en vains delictz & en plaisirs deshonnestes, le consideray Iceulx estre desroyes & sans fraing, ainsy comme se [ilz eussent endormie fortune par herbes ou par enchantemens ou ainsi comme se]³ Ilz eussent fermees leurs seignouries a croz de fer a roche daymant. Et pource que ilz cuydoient leurs seignouries estre fermes & perdurables, Ilz par leurs forces submarchoient non pas seullement les autres moindres hommes, mais le les regardoye enorgueillir & rebeller comme folz & oultrageux⁴ contre dieu, le faiseur de toutes choses, dont le me esmerueillay; & quant le condamnoie lenragee folie de ces nobles hommes & femmes, & le comme esbahy consideroye la longue patience de dieu, le pere debonnaire, celle chose me vint en courage que le querroie. Certes le dis en mon cuer aucune chose nest pas plus prouffitabile ne plus charitable a la comunaulte des hommes & au salut pardurable, que de rappeler au droit chemin ceulx qui sont desuoyez se le puis, auquel rauoyement combien que aucuns hommes bien enlangagiez⁵ & nobles

¹ From du Pré's edition, 1483, with corrections and additions from MSS. Royal 18. D. VII. and Royal 20. C. IV.

² From MS. Royal 18. D. VII.

³ From the two Royal MSS.

⁴ oultrageux] orgueilleux, du Pré.

⁵ enlangagiez] alangagez, du Pré.

par aucunes saintes & doulces parolles y ayent traueille Iusques cy, toutesfois le pense que cest chose prouffitable se le me essaye oster telz hommes du somme qui est semblable a la mort & a les reueillier pour vitement ouurer, combien que le ne soye mie pareil aux anciens historiens. Et certain est que comme telz hommes desuoiez soient accoustumez de ensuiuir ordes delectacions, Ilz acoustumeront a grant peine leurs couraiges a ouyr les clers enseignemens de vertu, mais puis que Ilz ont acoustume de volentiers ouyr la doulceur des histoires Iay pense en mon cueur de demener mon present liure aulcunesfois par exemples, & de escrire quelle puissance ait dieu contre les orgueilleux qui appellent dieu fortune. Et affin que len ne doute de quel temps ou de quelles personnes nous traictons en ce liure, nous respondons que des le commencement du monde Iusques a nostre temps nous voulons briefment demener & descrire en apert les fortunes & les cas daulcuns roys, ducz & [de] autres nobles hommes & femmes lesquelz fortune communement a abbaissiez¹ de leurs haultains esta[t]s, & si ne dis pas que le escriue de tous roys, ducz & autres nobles [hommes], car Il nest aucun engin si grant qui souffisist a si grant labeur & peine, mais des nobles hommes & femmes Il me souffist prendre aulcuns des plus nobles affin que quant les hommes verront par escript les princes du monde estre febles & vains, & les roys ferus & quotis Iusques a [la] terre par le Iugement de dieu, Ilz ayent congnoissance de la puissance diuine & de la feblesse et muablete de lestat de fortune, & que Ilz ayent mesure & attemprance² entre les bieneuretez mondaines. Et affin que par le peril Ia adueni aux autres Ilz puissent pourueoir a leur mesme prouffit, & aussy affin que par continuel racomptement des histoires le ne face ennuy a celuy que ce liure lira: Iay determine tant pour prouffit comme pour delectacion de reprendre & blasmer les vices des personnes & de semer³ & mettre en aulcuns chapitres admonestemens pour viure selon vertu, auquel hault commencement & pour suite le prie humblement celuy enuers qui est toute puissance quil me vueille estre fauorable & que Il garde & deffende ce que Il me ottoiera escrire a la gloire de son nom.

LAURENCE'S PROLOGUE⁴

Le prologue du translateur.

Selon raison et bonnes meurs lomme soy exercant en aulcune science speculatiue ou aultre, peut honnestement muer son conseil [ou propos] de bien en mieulx attendue la mutacion des choses, des temps, & des lieux, & aussi peut vng potier

¹ abbaissiez] abessez, du Prê. ² attemprance, du Prê. ³ finer, du Prê.

⁴ From du Prê's edition. This is the preface to the second version.

casser & rompre aucun sien vaissel combien quil soit bien fait, pour lui donner autre forme qui luy semble meilleure. Et ceste licence de muer la chose en mieulx nest pas donnee a lomme pour seullement amender ou corrugier sa propre oeuvre, ains mesmement est a chascun donnee pour ce faire en la besongne dautruy, mais que on le face par bonte de couraige & par mouuement de pure¹ charite qui en soy ne contient enuye ne arrogance. Comme doncques Ia pieca Ie laurens de premier fait a lenhortement & requeste daulcuns euz translate de latin en francois le moins mal que Ie peuz vng tresnotable & exquis liure de Iehan boccace, des cas des nobles hommes & femmes, en la translation du quel Iay ensuyui precisement & au luste les sentences prinses du propre langaige de lacteur, qui est moult subtil & artificiel, & Il soit vray que mesmes aucuns de ceulx qui se dient clers & hommes lettrez seuffrent en eulx tresgrant dommage dignorance qui leur aduient par defaulte de trois sciences, qui enseignent droictement, vrayement, & bellement parler, cestassauvoir grammaire, logique, & rethorique, parquoy Il aduient que les liures latins ditez & escritz par les philosophes, poetes, & historiens bien enseignez en toutes sciences humaines sont moult loing & desseruez de lentendement que dame nature donne communement aux hommes, [et] pource doncques [secourir a ce tres grant default il] conuient se me semble, que les liures latins en leurs translacions soient muez & conuertis en tel lengaige que les liseurs & escouteurs diceulx puissent comprendre leffect de la sentence sans trop grant & trop long trauail de entendement. Ie doncques selon le Iugement² commun en amendant, se Ie puis, la premiere translation du dit liure vueil sans riens condamner autre³ fois translater le dit liure. Affin cest assauoir que de tant quil sera plus cler & plus ouuert en sentences & en parolles, de tant Il delectera a lire & a escouter plusieurs hommes & femmes. Et par ce moyen avec laide de la grace diuine apres quilz congnoistront plus a plain la miserable condicion & le tourment & le muable estat des choses de fortune, Ilz les reputeront moins, ains les despriseront de tant plus & estimeront les choses diuines & celestes qui ont vraye seurete & Ioye pardurable. Et certain est que entre tous autres volumes escriptz par a[u]cteurs historiens, ce present liure parlant des doulces & ameres fortunes des nobles hommes & femmes est de tressingulier prix & de noble exemple de vertus, car Il fait presque mencion ou en long ou en brief des histoires de tous ceulx & celles qui depuis le commencement du monde

¹ de pure charite, Royal 18. D. VII. and Royal 20. C. IV. Du Pré has "de oeuvre de charite."

² le Iugement] lentendement, du Pré.

³ autre] vne autre, du Pré.

Iusques a Iehan roy de france, mort prisonnier en angleterre, ont eu puissances, richesses, dignitez, honneurs, & delectacions mondaines, car fortune a de coustume de abatre Ius & de froisser presque tous ceulx quelle a esleue au plus hault degre de sa roe; & par ainsy ce liure moult estroit & brief en parolles est entre tous [les] autres liures le plus ample & le plus long a le droit expliquer par sentences ramenables aux histoires, en faisant donc ceste beso[i]ngne longue, & espandue & recueillie de diuers historiens par le moyen de la grace diuine. Je vueil [principalement moy ficher] en deux choses cest assauoir mettre en cler langaige les sentences du liure, & les histoires qui par lacteur¹ sont si briefment toucheez que Il nen met fors seulement les noms. Je les assouuiray selon la verite des vieilz² historiens qui au long les escriurent. Et si ne vueil pas dire que Iehan boccace, a[u]cteur de ce liure, qui en son temps fut tresgrant & renomme historien, ait delaisse les dictes histoires par Ignorance de les non auoir sceues, ou par orgueil de les non daignier escrire, car Il les auoit si propices a la main & si ficheez en memoire, que Il les reputa communes & cogneues aux autres comme a soy. Affin doncques que le liure ait toutes ses parties et soit complet en soy, Je les mettray briefment sans delaisser que trespou le texte de lacteur. Si prie dieu³ que a ceste oeuure commencer, moyenner & finer, me vueille donner faueur & ayde. Et si requier les hommes que benignement me suportent & excusent en moy donnant pardon des choses moins bien faictes ou dictes.

LAURENCE'S DEDICATION TO THE DUKE OF BERRY⁴

[*This appears only in Laurence's second version.*]

A Puissant noble et excellent prince Iehan filz de Roy de france, duc de berry et dauguerne, Conte de poitou, destampes de boulongne & dauuergne, Laurens de premierfait, clerck et vostre mains digne secretaire et serf de bonne foy, toute obediencie et subieccion deue comme a mon tresredoubte seigneur et bienfaicteur, et agreablement recepuoir le labour de mon estude et benignement excuser la petitesse de mon engin au resgart de la grant besoigne de vostre commandement par moy ia pieca entreprise et nouuelement finee. ¶ Combien que par vostre espicial mandement Je aye soubz la confiance de vostre naturele benignite et en espoir de vostre gracieux aide

¹ lacteur] les acteurs, du Pré.

² vieilz] haulx, du Pré.

³ dieu] a dieu, du Pré.

⁴ From MS. Royal 18. D. VII. (R), fol. 2, ff., with a few corrections from MSS. Royal 20. C. IV. (R 2) and Add. 18,750 (Add.)

et confort entrepris le dongereux et long trauail de la translation de vng tresexquis et singulier volume, des cas des nobles hommes et femmes escript et compile par Iehan bocacce de Certald, Iadis homme moult excellent et expert en anciannes hystoires et toutes aultres sciences humaines et diuines. Neantmoins pour lexcellence de celle ancienne Royale lignie dont vous prenes naissance, et aussi de la noblesse de voz meurs et uertus qui a bon droit desseruent pardurable beneurete enuers dieu, et enuers les hommes louenge et renomnee. ¶ La long temps a que en obeissant a voz commandemens le tournai mon couraige, a Iceulx acomplir ainsi comme le doy. Cest asauoir a translater en langaige francoys le volume dessus dit, contenant en latin neuf liures particuliers racomptans ou en long ou en brief les malheureux cas des nobles hommes et femmes qui depuis adam et eue, les premiers de tous hommes monterent ou hault degre de la Roe de fortune, iusques au temps de tres excellent et noble prince Iehan, le premier de ce nom, vostre tres loyal pere, Iadiz Roy des francoys, du quel le cas tresbriefment raconte, fait la fin de ce present volume. Et pource donques que ce present liure est intitule des cas des nobles hommes et femmes, et que les cas semblent auoir dependance et cause efficient de par fortune, ie veuil premierement et en brief selon mon aduiz yci dire la cause pour quoi toutes les dignites et honneurs, richesses, puissances et glo[i]re mondaines¹ samblent estre et soient subiectes a fortune, qui tousdiz tourne sa Roe en transmuant les choses de ce monde. Et apres ie diray vne prouuable maniere par quoy chascuin homme et femme puissent eulx affranchir et exempter des cas et des trebuschetz de fortune.

¶ Pour quoy choses mondaines sont subiectes a fortune.

¶ Pour declarer donques la premiere de ces deulx choses: Sauoir affiert que au commencement homme et femme furent de dieu creez auecques entiere beneurete et telement parfaiz tant en corps comme en ame, que neiz les sages croient que adam et eue, parens de tout humain lignaige, estoient immortelz et impassibles se il[z] eussent bien gardee celle saincte et seule loy que dieu leur ot donnee ou paradis de delices. Maiz pour ce que contre eulx maismes esquelz estoit toute humaine nature. Ilz getterent vng hazart par lequel ilz perdirent les principaulx doarres² tant de corps comme de ame. ¶ Lenfrainte et le comptent³ de celle seule loy entre les innumerables mauix et infinis dogmages en engendra vng tres grief, par quoi toute hu[m]aine creature⁴ deuint subiecte a fortune et a sa moquerie. Car deslors dieu souffri que les choses du monde qui atous estoient pareillement communes de uindrent propres selonc

¹ mondaine Add., R 2.

² douaires R 2, Add.

³ contempt R 2.

⁴ nature R 2, Add.

la couuoitise de celui qui par violence et force les occupoit pour soy. Et pource que tous les couraiges des hommes au regart de leur premier commencement sont tous semblables, lun couuoita celle mesme chose que lautre occupoit. Maiz pource que deulx ne peuent ensemble possider vne mesme chose, Il a couuenu que lun dechiee de son desir. Et celui qui obtient ce que il desiroit semble estre iuchiez¹ ou hault degre de la roe de fortune, qui comme chamberiere de dieu pour la punicion de leurs pechies, vne foiz haulse et autre foiz abaisse hommes et femmes sans discreccion ne aduiz et non pas selon la quantite des merites des hommes. Maiz par vne confuse maniere dont les causes sont euidens a dieu. Maiz les hommes comme ignorans de lordrenance diuine ne peuent congnoistre telles causes. Quant donquez lomme par quelconque moien monte du bas estat ou hault on lappelle beneureux, Et le descendement on le appelle ou cas ou malheurte puis que celui qui descent sefforce au contraire et que cest maulgre soy. Par quoy cestui liure est apelle des cas des nobles hommes et fenmes. ¶ Et comme donques iuste punicion ait este cause par quoi les hommes et les biens de ce monde furent et sont soubzmiz a fortune et a sa moquerie, en tant que les estatz de toutes choses mondaines sont enfermes et soubdainement muables, et en espicial des haultes choses trop plus que des moyennes. En la punicion des deulx premiers parens qui orgueilleusement enfreingnirent la loy a eulx donnee, la iustice de dieu fut estroitement et droictement gardee parce que tous participent la moquerie de fortune qui se loue en esleuant et en trebuchant les hommes. Car puis² que adam & eue mistrent en raffe toute la bienheurte humaine en cuidant icelle agrandir et en desobeissant Il[z] perdirent leur chance, Ilz deslierent a tous le malheur que auoit atachie dieu a vne forte coulompne et soubmistrent eulx et toute leur succession aus tournoiemens de la roe de fortune et a ses trebuchetz. Il[z] ouurirent les portes a tous pechies. Il[z] dechacierent de ce monde les uertus et geterent en terre la semence de tous vices que Iamais neussent este nommez ne congneuz entre hommes. Et ainsi comme toute nature humaine estoit a donc en deux, adam et eue, qui par leur franc arbitre hazarderent toute leur beneinete,³ aussi nous tous descendus deulx sommes par droit compaignons de celle perte. Car se il[z] eussent gaigne et actaint la chose aquoy il[z] tendoient, chascun en voulsist estre compaignon et parsonnier. Aulcuns par aduenture sebahissent pour quoy tant de nobles hommes et femmes cy apres racontes chayrent si miserablement du tres hault au tres bas. Et mesmement alain le pouete se complaint, pource que les iniustes et mauues hommes sont tres souuent esleues

¹ enchiez Add.² depuis Add., R 2.³ bienheurte R 2.

aux tres haulx estatz du monde. Et a ces deulx pointz, Alain respont vraiment et embrief, Cest assauoir, que fortune les esleua en hault afin quil[z] descendissent par plus grief trebuchet qui les desrompe & froisse selon la pesanteur de leurs iniquites; puis donquez que iay briefment monstre que les cinq dons de fortune qui contiennent tous les biens mondains et transsitoires sont droittement par ordrenance diuine soubzmis a fortune et a sa moquerie. Le ueil monstre cleres voyes et manieres par les queles tant hommes comme femmes puissent eulx et leurs choses exempter et affranchir des cas et de trebuchetz de fortune.

Comment lomme affranchist soy et ses choses de fortune.

Et pource que ceste matere est dongereuse et obscure enuers aulcuns, premierement ie suppose pour uray que se les biens de aulcun homme ne lui semblent tres grans et tres larges il est meschant et poure combien que il feust seigneur de tout le monde. Et celui est homme malheureux et poure qui selon sa droicte conscience ne iuge soy estre bienheureux, Ia soit ce que tout le monde feust soubz sa seignorie. Et cellui nest beneureux ne parfait qui par son propre Iugement ne le cuide estre, Et riens ne vault se aulcun repoute soy beneureux qui est plain de richesses, se il vit et ait uescu deshonestement et mal, et celui na en soy aulcune felicite qui est seigneur de maintes choses, Maiz il est serf de plusieurs. ¶ Ces cinq choses dessus dictes ne cheent Iamaiz en homme sage. Se donques homme veult soy affrancher et exempter de malheur Il lui conuient auoir la uertu de sapience qui en soy seule contient tous biens sans commixcion de mal. ¶ Le sage homme est en soy si parfait et si bienheureux que neiz pour bien viure Il na besoing Iamy.¹ Le sage nest point subget a fortune, comme Seneque le preuue par vne exemple de demetrius ancian Roy de Surie, qui par tirannie occupa main[t]s pays et ardi maintes Cites de parthie et de oriant. En lune des cites de parthie estoit adonc vng moult sage philo[so]phe nomme Stilbon, qui auoit femme, enfans, possessions et aultres Richesses temporelles. Toutes ses choses furent arses, perdues & degastees par le tirant Demetrius et ses gens. Maiz Stilbon tout seul eschapa bienheureux. Or aduint que demetrius lui demanda sil auoit perdu aulcunes siennes choses, et il vraiment et sagement respondi, quil nauoit riens perdu, aincois dist: tous mes biens sont auesques moy. La responce de Stilbon fist douteux le tirant en tant que Il cuida que stilbon leust vaincu, pour ce que il dist toutes mes choses demeurent auecques moy; et uerite disoit, car auecques lui estoient les uertus Iustice, prudence, magnanimite, attemprance² et la douce memoire de ses uertueuses oeures continuees sans les queles aucun ne

¹ Iamy] damy R.

² attemprance] attrempance R.

puet iuger soy estre beneureux. Car homme indigne et mauuaiz ne puest auoir sentement de iuger soy estre beneureux. Ains conuient que tous iours et nom pas en pou de temp quil ait bien uestu selon le droit iugement de soy mesmes. ¶ Et aussi Il nest homme aqui ces choses ne desplaisent fors que au sage. Car toute folie et aussi chascun fol engendre souuent a soy mesmes desplaisir et ennuy.

Comment lacteur parle du cas de leglise presente et des prestres.

Helas, las, et troys foys las, par faulte de ceste sapience, mere et nourrice de toutes vertus diuines et humaines cheirent Adam et eue, et par eulx est toute leur succession habandonnee au cas & trebuschetz de fortune. Quelz cuers tant soient durs pourroient soy abstenir de douleur? Quelz yelx tant soient secz se porroient soi abstenir de larmes quant les hommes voient clerement et congnoissent les cas ia aduenus des troys estatz du monde? Cest assauoir, des prestres, des nobles hommes, aussi des laboureurs de cestui temps. ¶ Car quant aux prestres qui par crasse ignorance ne congnoissent eulx estre chez de leur ancianne beneurete. Le di, sauue la paix, des bons que ainsi comme dame chastete qui est la singuliere et souueraine beaulte des femmes apres le temps du iuste roy Saturnus. Chai et tomba ou temps de son filz Iupiter Roy de Crete par les excès et superfluites qui suruindrent en delicieuses viandes en a tours orgueilleux et sumptueux baptissemens de maisons et en aultres adminicules seruans a seule deshonneste delectacion. Aussi lancianne sanctite des prestres est cheue et versee par la trop grant habondance de Richesses mondaines qui soubz vmbre de la saintite de *iesus crist* et de aulcuns siens disciples ont este donnees aux prestres par aulcuns princes mondains qui a aulcuns les tollirent pour les donner aux prestres ausquelx il vaulsist mielx selon lancienne saintite viure des saints decimes qui sont deuz par droit diuin que eulx vouldrer et pourrir de dens orgueilleux palays ou fiens des pechies auecques leurs grans et dommageuses richesses. ¶ Helas, noble et excellent prince, ne doit len bien gemir, douler et plourer le cas et le tombement des prestres de cestui temps, qui en tout ou *en* partie forslignent et desuoient de la sante des anciens, qui par leurs larmes et oracions soloient mouuoir dieu et les uertus des cieulx contre les aduersaires de la foy catholique. ¶ Les sains prestres anciens sont en leurs successeurs telment dessaintiz que maintenant len forge heulmes de mittres, len fait lances des croces, len fait des uestemens sacerdotalz haubergons, plattes et aultres pieces darmes baitailleresses pour traualier et asseruir les hommes simples et innocens. Les prestres de cestui temps poursuiuent armes et paueillons, il font [l]arsins et violences publiques; Ilz ont plaisir et Ioye despendre sang humain; Ilz sefforcent de occuper

la seignorie du monde contre la sentence du vray *iesus*, filz de dieu, disant en leuungile, que son Roiaulme nest pas de cestui monde. ¶ Les prestres en cestui temps emplient les sales des roys, les palays et les tables en delaisand leurs eglises, dont ilz se nomnent espoux. Ilz delaisent les choses saintes et poursuiuent les prophanes; Ilz sont pastours sans paistre ne congnoistre les brebis: Eulx que leglise fist nobles excercent vilz offices; Ilz desseruent par *procureurs* et vicaires qui deux foys tendent les simples brebiettes: La premiere tonture est aux vicaires, et la seconde est au pastour surnomme. ¶ Par le bannissement de celle ancianne saintcite, Cent malheureux cas sont aduenus, car le deable qui par les merites de la mort du bon *iesus* et de ses victorieux martirs et glorieux confesseurs auoit este loies en labisme denfer par les nouueulx pechies des nouueaux prestres, et du simple peuple qui est adheurtes en leur oeuvres, est ia pieca des loie et sa[i]lli hors denfer. Et ia defait comme loup violent et forsene atraict a soy, las moy tresgrant partie des brebis commises en la garde du bon pastour S. Pierre, par quoy le bon *iesus*, vray espoux et pastour de sainte eglise, a retiree sa main du gouuernement de elle. Et est ia en vostre temps la chose atant venue, par le pechie principalement des prestres, et secondement du peuple que par eulx la loy *christienne* est presque perie maintenant. La Robe de *iesus* sans piece et sans cousture, a este, par xxxij ans trenchee en deulx, puis en troys pieces. ¶ Et ou saint et noble corps deglise dont *iesus* est le seul chief sont seurcreus troys testes a maniere de ung monstre. Et ne remain que a trespou, que la nef de saint pierre ne ait este absorbie et noiee es flocz de lamer de ce monde par le uice des nantonniers qui la deuoient tenir ou port de repos et de seurte. En brief, content le cas de leglise militant, excellent, noble et puissant prince, Je prie humblement vous et tous aultres que uous me excuses benignement. Car le entens dire sobrement les choses que vous et Cent Mil hommes aues veues et vncores voyez: et le assez le voy se lay sentement ne memoire. Et pource ie ne allegue aucuns autteurs ne liures, car ces paroles ont fontaine et naissance de vne familiere epistre escripte par Iehan Boccace, premier aucteur de ce liure. En celle epistre Il pleure & regrecte le cas de mondaine noblesse.

L'auteur parle du cas de noblesse mondaine.

O dist il, bon dieu de sapience qui tout sces et congnoys, enseigne moy, le te prie, en quele partie du monde soit reposte noblesse dont les empereurs & roys portent les tiltres principaulx? car le layquise en lostel de Cesar Roy des Rommains, de qui les ancesseurs par longs labours et par exquisis diligences et par nobles oeuvres de victorieuses armes Iadis conquerent la monarchie du monde. ¶ Maiz las moy, Iai trouue que l'empereur de ce temps a oublie, ou au moins il dissimule,

les proesses et loanges et les magnifiques besoingnes de ses predecesseurs. Il a laissie le glorieux estude de Mars¹ le dieu des batailles et sest du tout adonne a bachus le dieu du vin; Il a delaissie la riche, ancianne et notable Italie es mains de mil tirans, et sest ale repondre & dormir entre les naiges et grans hanaps de vin en celle part dallemaigne qui gist au coste destre deuers soleil couchant ou derrain anelet du monde. ¶ O las, bon dieu, com poure miroer de noblesse, quel exemple de cheualerie pour les roys et aultres princes du monde quant il[z] voient fetardie, peresse, oysiuete et entonnrisseur en celui qui deust a lexample de soy en horter, esmouuoir, semondre et esueiller les autres princes a maintenir et deffendre les conquestz de leurs noblez ancestrez et a Iceulx amplier² et accroistre. Du corps de lempereur ainsi comme ou soleil soloient liure et resplendir toutes uertus qui appartement se monstroient par nobles euures dehors les vertus soient de corps ou de courage, qui ne monstrent au dehors leurs propres oeuvres ne rendent homme plus noble ne que la lune enlumine le monde quant la terre sest mise entre le soleil & la face de la lune. ¶ O noblesse mondaine, fille des nobles meurs & nourrie du lait des saintes vertuz qui est celui qui ta vanny des hostelz voiaux, & aussi des aultres princes? Tu respons que longuement tu habitas nomme comme hostesse en lostel des roys francoys, et que illenc volentiers demouroies, maiz que icelle erreur cessast parquoy aucuns folement cuiderent & encore dient que seulement ce nest pas laide chose a vng roy congnoistre les figures des lettres, maiz il cuident et dient que cest tresgrant empirement de maieste Royale. Maiz telz hommes sont folz qui ainsi dient et qui condempnent telle chose es Roys, parquoy les hommes ignobles sont droittement anoblis; car droit office de Roy et daultres princes est chacun iour seoir en siege iudicatur, ouir paciemment et sagement examiner les merites des causes sur les controuersies de leurs hommes subgetz, et rendre droit aux parties selon balance de iustice. ¶ Deffendre les Innocens et punir les mauuaiz, procurer princilpalmment le puplique proufit, et apres le bien priue que len appelle demaine pource que il vient des mains et du labour du peuple en la main du prince, qui de sa puissant main doit garder et deffendre le peuple Impotent. Et certes clere chose est, que office royal ne puest homme sans science et sans art droictement [conduire et] excercer, Ainsi comme vng patron de nauire ne puet bonnement condu[i]re en mer tempestueuse et vndoiant vne grant nef sans gouuernail, sans voile, ne sans remmes. ¶ Et auoir en tour soy hommes lettres et nobles commis en offices publiques, ne monstre pas asses plainement la sapience ne la noblesse du roy, ou daultre prince, se il mesme nest lettres et expert en

¹ de Mars] maiz R.² amplier] employer R.

oeuvre de sapience et en discipline darmes, cest vng corbiau vestu de plumes de paon. Et prince sans lettres se assort a lasne qui coronne porte, Et sil nest aulcun homme bon iuge fors que es choses que il congnoist Iamaiz archier ne tire droit sa flesche, se il na aulcun signe deuant soy. ¶ O dieu, quel grant louenge et beneurete seroit a vng roy ou aultre prince congnoistre les causes de toutes choses auec celle noblesse se aulcune soit que viengne aux enfans de par leurs peres. Car ainsi comme vng iardin con plante de diuerses especes darbres & herbes flories et oudourans est plus noble et plus precieulx, aussi sont enfans de nobles hommes qui sont nourris entre les fleurs des sciences & oudeurs des vertus, et qui ont longuement este repeuz des fruitz. Attendu que noblesse nest pas hereditaire; car elle prent naiscence de vertuz et bonnes oeures; Et combien que en punicion du pechie des premiers parens Adam & Eue seruitute par souffrence de dieu soit introduicte entre les hommes, en tant que les aulcuns seruent et les aultres seignorient nompas selon droit naturel ne ciuil, maiz par le droit des gens qui contient douze choses, dont seruitute est lune, neantmoins aulcuns nobles de ce temps sont si descheus de lestat de uraye noblesse que follement Ilz cuident eulz et non aultres estre hommes et que ilz puissent faire pareillement toutes choses permises et deffendues sans encourir ne diffame ne peine combien que il soit autrement. ¶ Car tout vice de courage est plus griefment a punir de tant comme le pecheur est en plus grant degre. Et se dieu sage et iuste seuffre et veult que les roys et princes et aultres nobles aient espee de puissance sur leurs subgetz Il toute uoies ne veult quilz exercent fureur ne cruaulte, car aux nobles principalement affiert auoir clemence qui met equitte deuant rigueur et veult plus encliner a merci que a uengence sans faillir hors des termes de iustice, sans laquelle Roys ne sont roys ne royaulmes. Ains sont tirans cruelz et tirannies. ¶ Par ainsi donques appert que le plus grief cas et le plus dampnable trebuschetz de noblesse cest forsbanir et dechassier sciences et vertus de hostel des roys, et aultres princes ainsi comme il aperra clerement par le compte des cas des nobles malheureux descriptz en ce present volume.

Ci parle lacteur du cas des laboureaux champestres.

Or vienge a dire le cas des saintz laboureaux et tresbien fortunes, Maiz que ilz aient congnoissance de la quantite des biens que fortune leur donne. Et certes, puissant, noble et excellant prince, es choses dessus dictes en ce present prologue Iusquez yci len me doit tenir pour racompteur des paroles de Iehan Boccace en vne sienne familiere epistre: et chacun aussi congnoist la verite des deux cas de prestrise et de mondaine noblesse. ¶ Maiz quant au tiers cas present parquoy ie vueil monstrier le tresbuchet des laboureaux, et de la chose rustique.

Je prens uirgile pour mon auteur et maistre. Aulcun donc ne se merueille se le dy que lestat des laboureurs et de leurs choses ait este et soit sujet au cas de fortune: Combien que commun prouerbe soit que aulcun homme ne chiet, fors celui que siet en hault. Car en toutes choses sur quoy enuie gete ses yeulx dame fortune y entreprennent seignourie, la soit ce aussi que l'endieque laboureurs sont de si bas estat que fortune ne les pourroit abaisser. Maiz sauue la paix de ceulx qui ainsi dient car se les laboureurs et leurs choses rustiques feussent ou [en]corez souz celle beneurete et franchise en quoy iadiz il furent et oncorez deussent estre selon les loyx anciennes approuuees diuines et humaines, Il nest aulcun aultre estat qui ait en soy teles excellances en profis en delitz et en honnestetes publiques et priues comme la vie et lestat des laboureurs, par qui les hommes sont soustenus et nouris en necessite de corps et les sacrifices diuins sont admenistres selon la religion publique. ¶ O bon dieu, quant iadiz les cites tamboissoient par discensions, riotes et batailles cruelles, quant chastiaux et chastelains guerroient les vngs contre les aultres. Adonc les laboureurs contens de leurs propres biens viuoient et delectable et continuelle paix en mutuelle amour sanz souffrir aulcun dommage, rapine ou violence, ne en corps ne en biens: On laissoit iadiz cites murees et chasteaux assiz sur roches pour eschapper mesaises et perilz qui illenques souruenoient, Et venoit len aux villaiges ouuers et bas assiz pour y trouuer aisances et seurtes, Et pour auoir mon dit en labourages terrestres sont prouffilz et delectacions Innumerables si haultement descriptz et racomptes par tulle, noble orateur rommain, en son liure de vaillesse lequel vous auez comme ie croy oy diligemment et entendu, que ie nen vueil presentement escrire, Maiz ie vueil neantmoins auec vostre bon plaisir plourer apres vous les cas des saintz laboureurs de la chose rustique pource que la chose ¹ publique et la religion de vostre noble couraige se doit moult encliner a secourir aux choses tres dommageuses aux hommes detestables enuers dieu. ¶ Las moy bon dieu, quele moquerie, quel monstre en bonnes meurs, quel abuz de justice est ce maintenant veoir les hommes laboureurs, simples innocens sans cruaulte et sans armes, qui nuit et iour demeurent en pures maisonettes si sobrement, repeuz et vestuz de leurs propres labours que a paines Il appaisent la faim, et de vilz palestreaux Il cueuurcent leurs membres recourbes et frossiez par continuel labour, Ilz qui purement nourrissent leurs femmes et enfans afin de les endurcir aux saints labours de la terre, Il[z] departent tout le temps de leur vie en trois pars: Premierement a dieu seruir en prieres et sacrifices, a tirer par continuel labour des boyaulx de la terre toutes choses

¹ chose] pitie Add., R.

necessaires a la vie, Et a multiplier par leurs saintz mariages succession de lignie. Certes en ces iij choses na riens qui ne soit accordant a la loy diuine et humaine. La vie des laboureurs champestres droittement examinee et congneue sambla tele aux ancians nobles hommes, philosophes et princes quilz instituerent par editz et par loix que ce lui seroit repute et pugny comme sacrilege qui offendroit et rauiroit leurs labours ou leurs biens feust en champ ou en ville. Et pource furent ilz et oncores sont appellez saintz. ¶ Mais, puissant, noble et excellent prince, escoutez sil vous plaist le miserable cas de ces laboureurs et de leur chose rustique aux quelz se par vous ou aultre aiant puissance, volente et sagesse nest briefment secouru et pourueu en vostre temps, de remede couuenable. Dieu, qui ne het ¹ aucun et qui de tous a merci et en espial des bons simples laboureurs et aultres hommes iustes, Il retirera sa main a sa beniuolance des prestres et des nobles qui ne gardent misericorde, ne Iustice enuers eulx, ne enuers les aultres. Ains les soubz marchent et foulent. Il aduenra que dieu leur osterá, Raison dentendement, honneur de ancian estat et les vestira de confusion. Il espressira les tenebres de leurs yeulx; Il mettra trebuschetz a leurs piez afin quilz cheent du tres hault au tres bas. ¶ Il ramenra a neant ou transporterá en aultres mains leurs orgueilleuses richesses, honneurs, gloires, dignites et puissances. Ie ne vous persuade ne admoneste pas car vous aduisez asses par les yeulx de vostre pensee & ceulx de vostre corps, quele et com grant iniquite, seu[e]r[i]te et austerite ce soit voir les simples laboureurs proufitables a tous et nuisans a nul homme estre par apperte violence [opressez et] dechasses de leurs propres ² maisons, mutiles, batus, Iniuries de fait et de paroles; leurs famas a hontages, leurs filles corrompuees, et leur aultres choses transglouties et gastees ou mises a rampson par les nobles hommes darmes de ce temps, ausquelz les roys et princes deputent ou au moins doiuent commettre la garde et la deffense des saintz laboureurs et de leur chose rustique. ¶ De leurs gaings et labours sont comblees et esplendies les tables des Roys, des princes et daultres quel[z]conques nompas seulement hommes mayz bestes et oyseaulx soient priuees ou sauuaiges. Et en eulx est tele frugalite et sobresse que pour aisier et secourir les aultres Ilz seuffrent volontairement disettes et me-saises: Ilz portent sanz Reclam le Iou de seruitute et le grief faiz de truage, Ilz regrettent seulement que ilz ne possident mie en seurte et en paix ce pou qui leur demeure apres dame sainte eglise et leurs aultres seigneurs satisfaitz de leurs rentes, demaines et subsidies. ¶ Entre les trois griefz tresbuchetz de tele beneurte comme laboureurs ont linquite et malice

¹ het] hait, Add.

² propres] poures, R 2.

des ministres des deulx iuridicions, eccliaſtique et ſeculiere cest la plus mortele plaie qui plus dedens les naure et le diluge qui plus les ſangloutist. Car a hommes corrupus de tous vices en ce temps est commise ladministracion et lespee de Iustice a Iuger les simples et Innocens laboureurs. ¶ Es cours iudicatoires¹ sont aduocatz et procureurs bien instruitz en baratz et cauteles conseilans, a mouuoir et nourrir plaiz et controuersies soit a bon droit et² a tort, afin de tirer ou gouffre de leur couuoitise les deniers des parties plaidoians soubz faulse couleor de auoir loyaulment conseil et deffendu les causes. Las moy, ne souffisoit Il assez selon les saintz droitz canons que les prelatz aians les premieres dignitez en sainte eglise eussent comment³ il ont leurs diligens Archediacles pour aduiser et enquerir par les Cites et dioceses les crimes et excès parpetres par les hommes et iceulx rapporter aux oreilles des prelatz des lieux, afin de iceulx punir et corriger selon iustice. Certes il souffisoit a dieu, maiz non pas au deable ne aux siens, car afin que soubz fardee Iustice toute la substance des simples laboureurs viengne a saouler la faim de la mauldite couuoitise des Euesques et autres hommes deglise. Ilz mettent officiers en leurs cours, hommes barbares et sans pitie, sans bonnes meurs, sans uertus et sans sciences qui nuit et Iour espient par queles voiez Ilz puissent accuser et traire en Iugement simples et Innocens hommes plus dignes destre absolz que comdempnes. ¶ Pource, excellent, noble et puissant prince, ce que le scay vostre singulier plaisir et toute vostre estude tournes en la partie de commune bonte et que aux malheureux cas dessus dicts vous comme puissant et sage, poues et sauez pourueoir et secourir. Et que vos salutaires commandemens attendue lauctorite de vostre noble et commandable vieillesse, peuent souuerainement reparer les choses deformees et confermer les bonnes, le au surcroys de tout ce liure ay mis fiablement ce prologue a fin que chacun congnoisse que vous nestes pas seulement nez pour vous, Maiz pour profiter a tous en ourant la voye deschaper les cas de fortune muable et au[e]uglesse parce que vous abandonnez a tous le plain entendement du volume dessus dit, du quel par vostre commandement Iay entrepris la charge de le translater de latin en langage francoys. ¶ Si vueillez donques excellent, noble et puissant prince, mon tres singulier bien-facteur et redoubte seigneur, deffendre ma cause comme la vostre propre contre les enuieux, qui sans iuste cause voudront malicieusement contrestre a ceste vostre oeuvre qui par moy est ourdie et terue au moins mal selon mon pouoir. Et pour leident n[e]cessite et pour le iuste desir que Iay dauoir bon

¹ iudicatoires] Iudiciares, R 2.

² et] ou, Add., R 2.

³ comment] comme, Add., R 2.

commancement et de meilleur moyen et de tres bonne fin en ceste besoigne qui ne peuent daultre venir fors de celui qui sans en auoir moins donne a tous ces dons de grace. ¶ Je prie, appelle et requier dieu a qui fortune obeit, qui trebuche et drece les hommes selon leurs pechiez et uertus que par sa surhabundant grace Il enrichisse mon ame de science sans errer, et ma bouche de paroles accordans a verite et me donne bonnes meurs sanz desroguer a la diuine loy: Et quil conduie ma plume diligemnt escriuant sanz langoureuse paresse au commun prouffit de touz et a la loange diuine.

THE FALL OF PRINCES

BOOK I.

PROLOGUE.

[Here begynneth the book callyd I. Bochas descriuyng the falle of Pryncys pryncessys and othir nobles translaticid in to Inglissh bi Iohn Ludgate Monke of the Monastery of seynt Edmundes Bury atte commaundement of the worthi prynce Humfrey duk of Gloucestre begynnyng at Adam & endyng with kyng Iohne take prisonere in Fraunce bi Prynce Edward.]¹

H E that whilom dede his dilligence	[p. 1]	Lydgate says that Laurence de Premierfait began his translation in the year that King Iohn of France was brought prisoner to England.
The book of Bochas in Frensh to translate		
Out of Latyn, he callid was Laurence;		
The tyme trewli remembrid and the date,	4	
The yere* whan kyng Iohn thoruh his mortal fate		
Was prisoner brouht to this regioun,		
Whan he first gan on this translacioun.		
In his prologe affermyng off resoun,	8	As craftsmen use their powers of invention,
Artificeres hauyng exercise		
May chaunge and turne bi good discrecioun		
Shappis, formys, and newli hem deuyse,	12	
Make and vnmake in many sondry wyse,		
As potteres, which to that craft entende,		
Breke and renewe ther vesselis to a-mende.		
Thus men off crafft may off due riht,		
That been inuentiff & han experience,	16	so may skilled clerks amend and improve their originals,
Fantasien in ther inward siht		
Deuises newe thoruh ther excellence;		
Expert maistres han therto licence		
Fro good to bettir for to chaunge a thyng,	20	
And semblabli these clerkis in writyng,		
Thyng that was maad of auctours hem befor,		
Thei may off newe fynde and fantasie,		

3. he] *erased in H.*
16. han] have H.

5. The yere] Yeer B, R, H, There J.

¹ MS. J. leaf 1 a.

- Out of old chaff trie out ful cleene corn, 24
 Make it more fressh and lusti to the eie,
 Ther subtil witt and ther labour applie,
 With ther colours agreable off hewe,
 Make olde thynges for to seeme newe. 28
- if they are
 modest and
 free from
 envy,
 Afforn prouydid that no presumpcioun
 In ther chaungyng haue noon auctorite,
 And that meeknesse haue dominacioun,
 Fals Envie that she not present be; 32
 But that ther ground with parfit charite
 Conueied be to ther auantage,
 Trewli rootid a-myd of ther corage.
- as was
 Laurence.
 Thus Laurence fro hym envie excludid, 36
 Thouh toforn hym translatid was this book,
 Withynne hymself he fulli hath concludid,
 Vpon that labour whan he caste his look,
 He wolde amende it; but first he forsook 40
 Presumpcioun, and took to hym meeknesse,
 In his prologe as he doth expresse.
- He excelled
 as a writer
 of French,
 In which processe, lik as I am lerid,
 He in his tyme off cunningyng dede excelle 44
 In ther language, therfore he was requerid
 Off estatis, which gan hym eek compelle,
 A-mong hem holde off rethorik the welle,
 To vndirfonge this labour they hym preie, 48
 And* ther request he lowli dede obeie.
- but felt it
 to be a great
 task to write
 the Fall of
 Princes.
 Ful weel he felte the labour was notable,
 The fall of nobles, with eueri circumstaunce,
 From ther lordshipes, dreedful and vnstable, 52
 How that thei fill to putte in remembraunce,
 Therin to shewe Fortunys variaunce,
 That othre myhte as in a merour see
 In worldly worshepe may be no surete. 56
- No rose is
 without a
 thorn,
 no man so
 high in his
 estate that
 he may not
 fall.
 Bi exauple, as there is no rose
 Spryngyng in gardeyns, but ther be sum thorn,
 Nor fairer blosme than Nature list dispose,
 Than may ther beute, as men ha[ue] seyn toforn, 60
 With bittir wyndes be fro ther braunchis born,
24. ful] wol H, well R 3, wel P — out] om. H 5. 46. gan] can R.
 49. And] And he B — he] om. R — lowly he dide J.
 58. gardeyns] gardyn H. 61. fro] frome H.

Nor noon so hih in his estat contune
Fre fro thawaityng & daunger of Fortune.

Wherfore Bochas for a memoriall,
Consid[e]ryng the grete dignitees
Off worldli pryncis in ther power roiall,
Grete emperours, estatis and degrees,
How Fortune hath cast hem from ther sees;
(Namly such as koude hemsilff nat knowe,
Ful sodenly to make hem lyn ful lowe.

64 Bochas was
the original
compiler

68

This said auctour, auise and riht sad,
Hath gadred out, with rethoriques sueete,
In dyuers bookes which that he hath rad,
Off philisophres and many an old poete,
Besied hym bothe in cold and hete*
Out to compile and writen as he fond
The fall of nobles in many dyuers lond.

of the Fall
of Princes.

72

Vpon whos book in his translacioun
This seid Laurence rehersith in certeyn,
And holdith this in his opynyoun,
Such language as open is and pleyn
(Is more acceptid, as it is offte seyn,
Than straunge termys which be nat vndirstande,
Namly to folkis that duellyn vp-on lande.

Laurence
held that it
is good to
write simply
and clearly,

80

And* he seith eek, that his entencioun
Is to a-menden, correcten and declare;
Nat to condempne off no presumpcioun,
But to supporte, pleynli, and to spare
Thyng touchid shortly off the story bare,
Vndir a stile breeff and compendious,
Hem to prolonge whan thei be vertuous:

[p. 2] and he said
that he would
amplify the
story wherever
necessary;

88

For a story which is nat pleynli told,
But constreynynd vndir woordes fewe
For lak off trouthe, wher thei be newe or old,
Men bi report kan nat the mater shewe;
These ookis grete be nat doun ihewe
First at a strok[e], but bi long processe,
(Nor longe stories a woord may not expresse.

92 for a narrative
must not be
too condensed.

96

63. fro] frome H — of dawnger & H. 63. from] fro R.

75. and] and in B, H, & eke in R 3.

85. And] As B, R, — eek] also J. 94. newe] yong H.

95. report] reptot R.

- He wrote For which, pleynli, this noble translatur
 Caste off purpos these stories for to write, 100
 And for to doon his dilligent labour
 As thei fill in ordre to endite,
 That men afftir myhte hemsilff delite,
 Auentures, so as thei fill in deede, 104
 Off sundry pryncis to beholde & reede,
- that men may see that all things are transitory. And haue a maner contemplacioun,
 That thynges all, wher Fortune may atteyne,
 Be transitory of condicioun; 108
 For she off kynde is hasti & sodeyne,
 Contrarious hir cours for to restreyne,
 Off wilfulnesse she is so variable, 111
 Whan men most truste, than is she most chaungable.
- Since Fortune is deceitful, we must set our hearts on diuine and permanent things. And for hir chaung and for hir doubilnesse,
 This Bochas biddith* that men sholde enclyne
 Sette ther hertis, void off vnstabilnesse,
 Vpon thynges which that been deuyne, 116
 Where-as ioie perpetueli doth shyne
 Withoute eclipsyng in that heuenli see,
 Void off all cloudis off mutabilite.
- Bochas wrote both of joy and sorrow and of Fortune's mutability. Among, this Bochas writith off suetnesse 120
 And off materes that lusti been and glade,
 And sumwhile he writt off wrechidnesse,
 And how Fortune kan floure & afftir fade —
 Ioie vndir cloude, prosperite in the shade, 124
 Entirchaungyng off euery maner thyng,
 Which that men feele, heer in this world lvyng.
- He told the story of all estates, And in his processe, who-so list beholde,
 Off alle estatis, off hih and louh degre, 128
 And off pryncis bothe yong and olde,
 Fro the begynnyng, which in this world ha be,
 Lyuyng in ioie or in aduersite,
 Fro the firste he descendith doun 131
 Off ther fortune be pleyn descripcioun.
- beginning with Adam and ending with King John of France. Off the most noble he ne spareth noon,
 But settith hem in ordre ceriously,
 Gynnyth at Adam & endith at kyng Iohn, 136

114. biddith] bitt B, but R, bydde H 5. 120. writith] writ H.

126. heer in this world lvyng] in this world her lvyng H.

129. yong] of yong H.

- Ther auentures rehersyng by and by,
 Off this kyng Iohn concludyng fynaly,
 How that he was, for al his gret puissance,
 Off prynce Edward take prisoner in France. 140
- This seid[e] Bochas, auctour off this book,
 Which off stories hadde gret intelligence,
 Summe he leffte [and] summe also he took, —
 Such as he leffte was off no necligence, 144
 Supposyng and demyng off credence,
 Alle the stories which that comoun be,
 Other knew hem also weel as he.
- And lest that folk wolde haue had disdeyn, 148
 Thynges comoun to put in memorie,*
 Therefore Bochas thouhte it was but veyn,
 To his name noon ences off glorie,
 To remembre no cronycle nor historie, 152
 But tho that wern for ther merit notable,
 Auctorised, famous and comendable.
- In his labour hauyng a delit,
 That the mater gretli myhte auaille, 156
 Do plesance to the comon profit,
 Off noble stories to make rehersaile,
 Shewyng a merour how al the world shal faile,
 And how Fortune, for al ther hih renoun, 160
 Hath vpon pryncis iurediccioun.
- The which[e] thyng, in ful sobre wise,
 He considred in his inward entent,
 In his resoun gan to aduertise, 164
 Seyng off princis the blynd entendement,
 With worldli worshep how that thei be blent,
 As thei sholde euer ther estatis keepe,
 And as Fortune were I-leid to sleepe. 168
- As thei hadde off Fortune the maistry, [p. 3]
 Here enchauntid with ther pocious
 Bi sum craft off newe sorcery,
 Or bi power off incantaciouns, 172
 To make stable ther domynaciouns
 With iren cheynys for to laste longe,
 Lokkid to rokkis off adamantis stronge.

What he left
 out is of small
 consequence.

for he included
 all the best
 and most
 famous
 histories,

showing as in
 a mirror how
 Fortune is
 supreme

over Princes,
 who

believe, in
 their pride,
 that they are
 her masters.

137. rehersyng] rehersith H. 148. folk] folkes R 3.

149, etc. memoire, gloire, histoire B.

163. considred] considrith H.

But Fortune
often casts
them down.

Supposyng[e] in ther surquedie 176

Ther estatys sholde be durable;
But Fortune kan frowardli denye,
Pleyntly preue that thei be chaungable,
And to pryncis, for thei be nat stable, 180

Fortune ful offte, for al ther gret estat,
Vnwarli chaungith & seith to hem chekmat. *same usage*

Some Princes
even set God
at nought,

For lordis summe in ther magnificence
Off roial power sette off God riht nouht, 184

Thei nat considre his long pacience,
Nor aduertise his power in ther thouht,
But in ther hertis, yiff it were weel souht,
How he is meek and pacient to a-bide, 188
Thei wolde off resoun ther pompe leyn a-side.

but He
punishes
them:

But for ther tarieng and ther necligence,
That thei to hym wil nat resorte a-geyn,
Yit off his mercy and benyuolence, 192

Withoute vengeance, rigour or disdeyn,
As a meek fadir, in alle his werkis pleynt,
Assaieth his yerde off castigacioun,
So for to bryng hem to correccioun. 196

some with
sickness, others
with adversity.

Summe he can ful fadirli chastise,
Where he loueth, be punshyng off siknesse,
And off his mercy in many a-nother wise
Baduersite* off sum worldli distresse; 200

And he nat askith, for his kynd[e]nesse,
Off hih nor low, who-so can aduerte,
Noon othir tresor but a mannis herte.

Bochas
believed that
it is right to
hold before
the vicious
notable
examples of
those who fell;

And as myn auctour list to comprehende, — 204

This Iohn Bochas, bi gret auctorite, —
It is almesse to correct* and a-mende
The vicious folk off euery comounte,
And bi examplis which that notable be 208
Off pryncis olde, that whilom dede fall,
The lowere people from ther errour call.

Bi smale whelpis, as summe clerkis write,
Chastised is the myhti fers leoun, 212
And whan the suerd off vengauunce eek doth bite

184. rihtnouht B, R. 186. auertise R.

198. ponysshing H, punysshing R 3, punishyng H 5.

200. Baduersite] Bathuersite B, Bi aduersite R.

201. his] om. R. 206. correct] correctyn B.

- Vpon pryncis for ther transgressioun,
 The comon peepel in ther opynyoun,
 For verray dreed[e] tremble don* & quake, 216
 And bi such mene ther vices thei forsake.
 And such also as ha be defoulid
 In ther vicis bi long contynuaunce,
 Or in ther synnys rustid and Imowlid, 220
 Bi good example may come to repentaunce:
 Who hym repentith, the Lord will hym auauunce,
 And hym accepte, in hih and louh estat, —
 The meek preserue, punyshe the obstynat. 224
- This said[e] mater, touchyng such[e] thyngis,
 Myn auctour Bochas heerafftir shal declare
 Bexaample off pryncis & off myhti kyngis,
 What was ther fyn, & nat the trouthe spare; 228
 And theih my stile nakid be and bare,
 In rethorik myn auctour for to sue,
 Yit fro the trouthe shal I nat remue,
 But on the substance bi good leiser abide, 232
 Afftir myn auctour lik as I may atteyne,
 And for my part sette eloquence aside,
 And in this book bewepen and compleyne
 Thassaut off Fortune, froward and sodeyne, 236
 How she on pryncis hath kid her variaunce
 And off her malice the dedli mortal chauce.
- But, o allas! who shal be my muse,
 Or onto whom shal I for helpe calle? 240
 Calliope my callyng will refuse,
 And on Pernaso here worthi sustren alle;
 Thei will ther sugre tempere with no galle,
 For ther suetnesse & lusti fressh syngyng 244
 Ful ferr discordith fro materis compleynyng.
- My maistir Chaucer, with his fresh comedies,
 Is ded, allas, cheeff poete off Breteyne,
 That whilom made ful pitous tragedies; 248
 The fall of pryncis he dede also compleyne,
 As he that was of makyng souereyne,
 Whom al this land sholde off riht preferre,
 Sirthe off oure language he was the lodesterre. 252

for if Princes
 are chastised,
 so much the
 more ought
 the commons
 to dread a
 like fate.

Even hardened
 sinners may be
 brought to
 repentance by
 good example.

My style is
 bare of
 rhetoric,

but I will
 deal faithfully
 with my
 author.

I have no
 Muse; my
 subject is too
 doleful for
 the Sisters of
 Mt. Parnassus,

and Chaucer,
 alas, is dead,
 the lodestar
 of our
 language.

216. don] douȝ B, R, a douȝ J. 217. mene] menys H.

229. nakid] nake H.

251. sholde off riht] of right ouȝt J.

- Other men,
too, wrote
tragedies:
Seneca, Tully,
and Francis
Petrouch, who
- Senek in Rome, thoruh his hih prudence,
Wrot tragedies of gret moralite;
And Tullius, cheeff welle off eloquence,
Maad in his tyme many fressh dite; 256
Franceis Petrak, off Florence the cite,
Made a book, as I can reherce,
Off too Fortunys, welful and peruerse.
- made a book
of Two
Fortunes.
- And ageyn bothe wrot the remedies, 260
In bookis tweyne made a divisioun,
A-mong rehersyng many fressh stories.
The firste book is thus conueied doun,
A dialoge twen Gladnesse and Resoun; 264
The seconde can ber me weel witesse,
Maad atwen Resoun & Worldli Heuynesse.
- John Bochas
told how
Princes fell
into distresse.
- The mater is wondirful delectable,
Thouh wo with ioie haue an interesse; 268
And Iohn Bochas wrot maters lamentable,
The fall of pryncis, where he doth expresse
How fro ther ioie thei fill in gret distresse;
And all these writers, thoruh ther famous renoun, 272
Gret worshipec dede vnto ther nacioun.
- All praise to
my master
Chaucer, who
refined our
language.
- And semblabli as I ha[ue] told tofor[n],
My maistir Chaucer dede his besynesse,
And in his daies hath so weel hym born, 276
Out off our tunge tauoiden al reudnesse,
And to reforme it with colours of suetnesse;
Wherfore lat us yiue hym laude & glory
And putte his name with poetis in memory. 280
- He wrote
Troilus,
- Off whos labour to make menciu[n],
Wherthoruh off riht he sholde comendid be,
In youthe he made a translacioun
Off a book which callid is Trophe 284
In Lumbard tunge, as men may reede & see,
And in our vulgar, longe or that * he deide,
Gaff it the name off Troilus & Cresseide.
- and
translated
Bocce.
- Which for to reede louers hem delite, 288
Thei ha[ue] theryn so gret deuocioun.
And this poete, hymself also to quite,

263. thus] thus first H. 267. wondirful] riht wondir H.

268. an interesse] intresse R.

284. callid is] is callid R. 286. that] than B, R.

- Off Boeces book, The Consolacioun,
Maad in his tyme an hool translacioun. 292 He made a
And to his sone, that callid was Lowis, treatise on
He made a tretis, ful noble & off gret pris, the Astrolabe
for his son
Lewis,
- Vpon thastlabre in ful notable fourme,
Sette hem in ordre with ther dyuysiouns, 296
Mennys wittis tapplien and confourme,
To vndirstonde be ful expert resouns
Be domefieng off sundry mansiouns,
The roote out-souht at the ascendent, 300
Toforn or he gaff any iugement.
- He wrot also ful many day agone,
Dante in Inglissh, hymself so doth expresse,
The pitous story off Ceix and Alcione, 304
And the deth eek of Blaunche the Duchesse,
And notabli dede his bisynesse,
Bi gret auys his wittis to dispose,
To translate the Romaunce off the Rose. 308
- Thus in vertu he sette al his entent,
Idilnesse and vicis for to fle;
Off Foulis also he wrot the Parlement,
Theryn remembryng of roial Eglis thre, 312
How in ther chois thei felte aduersite,
Tofor Nature profred the bataile,
Ech for his parti, yiff it wolde auaile.
- He dede also his dilligence & peyne 316
In our vulgar to translate and endite
Origen vpon the Maudeleyne,
And off the Leoun a book he dede write;
Off Anneleyda* and of fals Arcite 320
He made a compleynt, doolful & pitous,
And off the broche which that Vulcanus
wrought,
- At Thebes wrouhte, ful dyuers of nature,
Ouide writith, who theroff hadde a siht, 324
For hih desir he shulde nat endure
But he it hadde, neuer be glad nor liht;
And yiff he hadde it onys in his myht,

292. an] & R. 294. *The last two letters of pris torn off H.*

303. Dante] Dant H. 305. eek] also H.

312. remembryng] memebryng R. 318. mawgdeleyne H.

320. Anneleyda] Anneloyda B, H 5, Anneleida R, H, P,
annelida J. 328. writ] wrott R.

- Lich as my maistir seith and writ in deede,
It to conserue he sholde ay lyue in dreede. 328
- The Legende
of Good
Women,
This poete wrot, at request off the queen,
A legende off parfit hoolynesse,
Off Goode Women to fynde out nynteen 332
That dede excelle in bounte and fairnesse;
But* for his labour and [his] bisynesse
Was inportable his wittis to encoumbre,
In al this world to fynde so gret a noumbre. 336
- The
Canterbury
Tales,
He made the book off Cantirburi Talis, [p. 5]
Whan the pilgrymis rood on pilgrymage
Thoruhout Kent bi hillis and bi valis,
And alle the stories told in ther passage, 340
Enditid hem ful weel in our language:
Summe off knythod, summe off gentillesse,
And summe off loue & summe off parfitnesse,
- including
the stories of
Melibeus in
prose,
Griselda,
and The
Monk's Tale,
And summe also off gret moralite, 344
Summe off disport, includynge gret sentence.
In prose he wrot the Tale off Melibe,
And off his wiff, that callid was Prudence,
And off Grisildis* parfit pacience, 348
And how the Monk off stories newe & olde
Pitous tragedies be the weie tolde.
- and many
complaints,
roundels,
ballades
and songs.
This said poete, my maistir in his daies,
Maad and compiled ful many a fressh dite, 352
Compleyntis, baladis, roundelis, virelaies
Ful delectable to heryn and to see,
For which men sholde, off riht and equite,
Sithe he off Inglissh in makynge was the beste, 356
Preie onto God to yiue his soule good reste.
- Poets used
to be the
favourites
of kings.
And these poetis I make off mencion,
Were bi old tyme had in gret deynte,
With kyngis, pryncis in euery regioun, 360
Gretli preferrid afftir ther degre;
For lordis hadde plesance for to see,
To studie a-mong, and to caste ther lookis
At good[e] leiser vpon wise bookis. 364

334. But] And B. 342. 2nd summe] & summe R.

345. encludynge R. 348. Gresildes B.

352. a] om. H. 357. good] om. R.

For in the tyme off Cesar Iulius,
 Whan the tryumphe he wan in Rome town,
 He entre wolde the scoole off Tullius
 And heere his lecture off gret affecciuun; 368
 And natwithstandyng his conquest & renoun,
 Vnto bookis he gaff gret attendaunce
 And hadde in stories ioie and gret pleasunce.

 Eek in this land, I dar afferme a thyng: 372
 There is a prynce ful myhti off puissaunce,
 A kyngis sone and vncler to the kyng
 Henry the Sexte, which is now in Fraunce,
 And is lieftenant, and hath the gouernaunce 376
 Off our Breteyne, thoruh whos discrecioun
 He hath conserued in this regioun,

 Duryng his tyme, off ful hih prudence,
 Pes and quiete and sustened riht, 380
 Yit natwithstandyng his noble prouidence,
 He is in deede proued a good[e] knyht,
 Eied as Argus with resoun and forsiht;
 Off hih lettrure, I dar eek off hym telle, 384
 And treuli deeme that he doth excelle

 In vndirstondyng alle othir off his age,
 And hath gret ioie with clerkis to comune:
 And no man is mor expert off language, 388
 Stable in study alwey he doth contune,
 Settyng a-side alle chaungis of Fortune;
 And wher he loueth, yiff I shal nat tarie,
 Withoute cause ful loth he is to varie. 392

 Duc off Gloucestre men this prynce calle,
 And natwithstandyng his staat & dignite,
 His corage neuer doth appalle
 To studie in bookis off antiquite, 396
 Therin he hath so gret felicite
 Vertuously hymself to ocupie,
 Off vicious slouthe to haue the maistrie.

 And with his prudence and with his manheed, 400
 Trouthe to susteene he fauour set a-side,
 And hooli chirch[e] meyntenyng in deed,

Cesar
himself
listened to
Tully's
teaching.

In this
country
there is a
Prince, a
good knight,

who excels
all in
understanding

and loves to
be with
scholars and
read their
books.

He is the
Duke of
Gloucester,

a man who
upholds the
church and
tolerates no
Lollard,

369. renoun] gret Renoun H. 374. to] vn to H.
 375. Henry] Herry H, Henri J. 376. lefftenaunt H.
 382. goode] riht good H.
 384. lettrure] lectrure B, R, lettur R 3, lecture P.
 400. 2nd with] wit R.

That in this land no Lollard dar abide —
 As verray support, vpholdere and eek guide 404
 Sparith noon, but maketh hymsiluen strong
 To punysshē all tho that do the chirch[e] wrong.

manly and
 wise, he is a
 foe to all
 heretics.

Thus is he bothe manli and eek wis,
 Chose off God to been his owyn knyht, 408
 And off o thyng he hath a synguler pris,
 That heretik dar noon come* in his siht,
 In Cristis feith he stant so hool vpriht,
 Off hooli chirche diffence and champioun, 412
 To chastise alle that do therto tresoun.

And to do plesaunce to our lord Iesu,
 He studieth euere to haue intelligence;
 Reedyng off bookis bryngith in vertu, 416
 Vices excludyng, slouthe and necligence,
 Makith a prynce to haue experience,
 To knowe hymsilff, in many sundri wise,
 Wher he trespasiþ his errour to chastise. 420

He knew the
 book of
 Bochas,

And a-mong bookis, pleynli this the cas, [p. 6]
 This said[e] prynce considred off resoun,
 The noble book off this Iohn Bochas
 Was, accordyng in his opynyoun, 424
 Off gret noblesse and reputacioun,
 And onto pryncis gretli necessarie
 To yiue exaunple how this world doth varie.

and bade me
 translate it
 into English,

And for this cause, as in his entent, 428
 To shewe thuntrust off al worldli thyng,
 He gaff to me in comaundement,
 As hym sempte it was riht weel sittyng,
 That I shulde, afftir my cunnyng, 432
 This book translate, hym to do plesaunce,
 To shewe the chaung off worldli variaunce.

which I will
 do, although
 I lack
 eloquence.

And with support off his magnificence,
 Vndir the wyngis off his correccioun, 436
 Thouh that I haue lak off eloquence,
 I shal procede in this translacioun,
 Fro me auoidyng al presumpcioun,
 Lowli submyttyng eueri hour & space 440
 Mi reud language to my lordis grace.

409. o] oon H. 410. come] comen B, R.
 415. studieth] studieht R. 421. this] this is R, J.
 428. this cause] þise causes J, these causes P.

- And as I haue o thying weel in mynde,
 He bad me I sholde in especiall,
 Folwyng myn auctour, written as I fynde, 444
 And for no fauour be nat parciall —
 Thus I meene to speke in generall,
 And noon estat syngulerly depraue,
 But the sentence off myn auctour saue. 448
- Al this conceuyd, I gan my stile dresse,
 Thouhte I wolde in my mater procede;
 And for the mater abraid on heuynesse,
 Off fressh colours I took no maner heede, 452
 But my processe pleynli for to leede,
 As me sempte it was to me most meete
 To sette apart all rethoriques suete.
- Dites of murning and off compleynynge 456
 Nat appertene onto Calliope,
 Nor to the Muses, that on Parnaso syng,
 Which be remembrid in noumbre thries thre;
 And onto materes off aduersite, 460
 With ther sugred aureat licour
 Thei be nat willi for to doon fauour;
- But off disdeyn me setting ferr a-bak
 To hyndre me* off that I wolde endite, 464
 Hauyng no colours but onli whit & blak,
 To the tragedies which that I shal write.
 And for I can my-silff no bet acquite, 468
 Vndir support off all that shal it reede,
 Vpon Bochas riht thus I will procede.

I will follow
 my author
 and shew
 no bias,

and, as my
 matter is
 serious, I
 shall omit all
 flourishes.

Calliope and
 her Sisters
 cannot help
 me write of
 adversity,

so I will do
 my best in
 simple black
 and white.

Explicit prologus.

Incipit Liber Primus.

[How adam and Eue for their inobedience were
 putout of paradys lyued in sorowe and
 woo/thei and their of spryng.]¹

Whan Iohn Bochas considred hadde & souht [p.8]
 The woful fall off myhti conquerours,
 A remembraunce entrid in his thouht, 472
 Reknyng the noumbre off our predecessours,
 And first to mynde cam the progenitours

Adam and
 Eve first
 appear before
 Bochas,

463. ferr] fast H. 464. me] men B, R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 3 b.

trembling with
weakness and
old age.

Off al mankynde, ferre Ironne in age,
And toward hym holdyng the passage, 476

As hym thouhte in his inward siht,
In ther comyng ful pitousli tremblyng,
Quakyng for age and for lak off myht,
Ther gret feeblesse be signes out shewyng; 480
And oon off hem, first at his comyng —
Our fadir Adam — sodenli abraide,
And to myn auctour euene thus he saide:

[How Adam & Eue stondyng/naked before Bochas
desired him to put their woful fall first in
remembraunce.]¹

Adam said,
"It is right
that you
should begin
with us.

"Cosyn Bochas, I will weel that thou lere, 484
Thou that art besi to serche ouer all
Off infortune the maner to enquere,
Hir sodeyn chaung, turnyng as a ball,
Off erthli pryncis from ther estat roiall — 488
It is most sittyng, or we assundir twynne,
At vs tweyne thi processe to be-gynne.

"The Serpent
caused our
exile from
Paradise."

Considre first, the Lord in his auis,
Whan he us made onto his liknesse, 492
He putte vs bothe into Paradis,
There talyued in parfit stabilnesse —
Til the Serpent dede his besynesse
Off fals envie to make us lese our grace, 496
Perpetueli texile us fro that place."

Fairest of
all creatures
were they;

And whan Iohn Bochas nakid hem beheeld,
Withoute the hand fourmyd off Nature, —
Off slym off therthe in Damascene the feeld 500
God made hem fairest a-boue ech creature;
And for thei sholde perpetueli endure,
Bi discrecioun for a prerogatiff
He endued hem with a soule off lifff. 504

God gave
them the
Garden of
Eden,

Parfit off age as man off thretti yeer,
Putte hem afftir in possessioun
Off Paradis, a place most enteer,

485] That art so besi to serche oueral J — serche] serch out
H, P, R 3.

486. maner] mateer H — Inquere H. 504. He] om. H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 3 c. in margin.

And off delicis a chose mansioun, 508
 Where Adam made an imposicioun
 To fissh and foul, and to thes beestis all,
 Off verray resoun what men sholde hem call.

Out off a rib, whil that Adam sleep, 512 and for
 Eue was drawe, ful fair off hir visage, Adam's
 Al sodenly or that* he took keep, advantage
 Afftir to hym ioynyd in mariage, Eve was
 For his disport and his auantage, created, and
 So as the Lord first wyues dede ordeyne became
 Outher for helpe or for ences off peyne. his wife.

God onto hem gaff the souereynte
 Off Paradis and dominacioun, 520 All fruits in
 A place fulfellid off al felicite, that beautiful
 The frutis all in ther subieccioun, garden
 Sauff that off oon was maad excepcioun, were theirs
 Which God forbad, the Bible can deuise, save one,
 That thei sholde touche it in no wise. 524

All delices off that heuenli place
 God gaff to hem and put in her kepyng, and all the
 To vsen hem eueri hour and space delights of
 To ther most ese, as was to hem likyng — that heavenly
 Bloomys, blosmys, ther fairnesse ay hauyng, place were
 And the frutis alway off o fresshnesse, given into
 For wyntir stormys myht do hem no duresse. 528 their keeping.

The soil enbroudid ful off somer floures,
 Wher weedis wikke hadde noon interesse;
 For God and Kynde with fresshnesse off colourz
 And with ther tapitis & motles off gladnesse 536
 Had maad that place habounde in al suetnesse;
 And fressh[e] Flora, which is off floures queene,
 Hir lyuere made off a perpetuel greene.

The trees rauhten almost to the heuene, 540 and the trees
 Which cast a-boute a ful plesant shade, grew up
 That storm nor reyn, thundir, wynd nor leuene almost to
 No power hadde ther leuys for to fade: the sky.

508. delicis] delites H, delitis J, delittes R 3, delites H 5, P.

509. an] om. R. 514. that] than B, H.

516. and] and for H.

521. fulfillid H, fulfild J.

526. delices] delites H, H 5, delittes R 3, delicis J, delices P.

538. which] whilk H. 541. abouten R, H.

- For euer thei wern Ilich[e] fressh and glade; 544
 And whan thei list, ther thei myhte see
 Mid off that gardyn off liff the holsum tre,
- But they foolishly ate the fruit of the Tree of Life,
 Which vertu hadde ageyn al maladie
 Folk to preserue off youthe in ther fresshnesse, 548
 Who eet theroff sholde neuer deie,
 But lyuen euere in ioie and in gladnesse,
 And nouthur feele trouble nor siknesse,
 But in that place haue alwey hertis ese 552
 And suffisaunce off al that myht hym plese,
- against God's commandment,
 Euer endure and neuer falle in age, [p. 9]
 For which it was callid the tre off liff.
 But whan Adam was fallyn in dotage 556
 And ageyn[es] God gan holdyn striff,
 Thoruh excityng off hir that was his wiff,
 And wilfulli gaff to hir assent
 To breke the precept & comandement 560
- Off God the Lord, thoruh wilful negligence,
 Taproche the tre, which that bar the name,
 The tre off cunnyng and also off science:
 For off the frut who that dede attame, 564
 He sothli sholde, the Bible seith the same,
 Off good & euell haue cunnyng in his thouht,
 Where-as tofforn off euyl he knew riht nouht.
- and brought evil into the world.
 Thus hadde thei first off euyl experience, 568
 Where-as toforn thei knew no wikkidnesse;
 Presumpcioun and inobediencie
 Brouht hem fro ioie into wrechidnesse:
 For afor-tyme, myn auctour berth witnessse, 572
 Helthe and goodnesse wer callid verray liff,
 Euyl namyd siknesse, first roote of al our striff.
- There were three rivers in Paradise,
 In Paradis, myn auctour seith certeyn,
 Thre ryuers wern, so orient and fyne, 576
 Lich quyksiluyr vpboilyng on the pleyn,
 And in ther rennyng verray cristallyne,
 Which from a welle heuenli and deuyne

550. 2nd in] *om.* H. 553. hym] hem R.557. ageynes God gan holdyn] ageyn God began to holden J,
 ayenst God gan to holden P.

558. excityng] encityng R. 559. gaff] he yaued P.

562. bar] bere R. 574. Euyl] Ill R 3 — namyd] namy R.

- In ther vpspryngyng and ther aualyng down 580
 Off al plesance gaff so soote a soun,*
- That it wolde rauysshe a corage, — wholesome
 Whos bawmy licour endued al the place, air, all manner
 And with the fressshnesse & cours off his passage 584 of herbs and
 The holsum hair hertis dede embrace, — spices, and
 Ther was such plente off plesance & off grace, the sound
 That eueri spice, herbe, greyn and roote of birds
 Wer founde growyng in that gardeyn soote. 588 singing.
- Ther was also a delectable soun
 Off song off birdis in ther armonyne,
 The hair was cleene from al corrupcioun,
 For ther engendrid was no maladie; 592
 Ther was al merthe, ther was al melodie,
 Off ioie and blisse souereyn suffisance,
 With al that may to hertis do plesance.
- And off clerkis lik as it is told 596
 In ther bookis, as thei determyne,
 How in his speer the sonne manyfold
 Was off mor vertu & mor cleer dede shyne
 Than it doth now in his mydday lyne, 600
 The moone whittere with hir* bemys cleer,
 And euery sterre brihtere dede appeer.
- Euery thyng was there more vertuous
 Than thei be now, who can beholde and see; 604
 For in that place ther was nothyng noious,
 But parfit gladnesse knet onto surete,
 Perpetuel pes, ioie and prosperite,
 And in that blisse to makyn hem mor strong, 608
 To ther confort God spak with hem a-mong.
- Off his goodnesse he bar hem cumpanye,
 Shewed onto hem his gracious presence,
 Angelis also ther staat to magnefie 612
 A-mong to serue hem dede ther dilligence
 In dyuers offices with humble reuerence,
 And Nature wrouhte for the nonys
 Off roial purpill and off riche stonys 616
 Tissues off gold and othir ornamentis
 For tenvirowne ther bodili beute,

581. so soote a soun] a soote soun B, R. 585. embrace H.

601. hir] his B, R, R 3. 603. vertuous R.

617. ornamentis] precious stonys R (in another hand).

- Shapyng to hem such maner garnementis
As angelis vsen in ther felicite — 620
Nakid thei wer[e]n fairest on to see;
For whil thei stood in staat off innocence,
Thei hadde off clothyng noon experience.
- They could
have lived
there always
in celestial
joy,
And off ther blisse to make menciou[n], 624
And off ther ioies that were celestiall,
Ther may be maad[e] no comparisoun
Off no ioie which is temporall,
Which sholde ha been lastyng & inmortall, 628
Euer talyued in merthe and in gladnesse,
Sauf ageyn resoun, off verray wilfulnesse
- had not Adam
given credence
to a Snake.
Thei banshid hemsilff out of that blisful liff,
Whan Adam gaff credence to a snake 632
And wrechidli gan trustyn on his wiff,
Which gan thappill off the Serpent take,
And plesantli dede a present make
Onto Adam, as she that ferst began 636
Deth to deuyse and poisoun onto man.
- Their fall
was the more
bitter,
But as ther ioie was incomparable, [p. 10]
Grettest ther lordship aboue al ertheli thyng,
So ther fall was to he[m] importable; 640
For he that was all other surmountyng,
In Paradis regnyng as a kyng —
Was it nat a dedli mortal peyne
Fro thilke place to haue* a fall sodeyne! 644
- for it followed
felicity.
For thilke sorwe surmountith euery sorwe,
Which next folwith afftir felicite;
No wo mor greuou at eue nor at morwe,
As is in deede sodeyn aduersite 648
Which cometh onwarli afftir prosperite,
Nor nothyng more may hertis disauaunce
Than off old ioie newe remembraunce.
- Take example
of Adam
and Eve,
Takith exaumpil off Adam and off Eue, 652
Makith off hem a merour in your mynde,
Wher of resoun it dede hem gretli greue
For to be put, allas, so ferre behynde

619. maner] *om.* R.

621. weren] wern H 5, P, were J, R 3.

628. immortall R. 629. 2nd in] *om.* H, J, H 5.

631. banshid] banyssht H, banysshid J. 633. on] to R.

644. thilke] that H 5 — to haue] taue B.

- Out off that blisse, thei and al ther kynde, 656 who became
 Chaungyng thestat off immortalite subject to
 And becam subiect to deth and pouerte. poverty and
 death.
- Ther sodeyn chaung & ther onwar myscheeff
 And ther onhappi transmutacioun, — 660 It was hard
 It was to hem ful vnkouth and vnleeff for them to
 For to departe fro thilke mansioun leave the
 That was so full off delectacioun, Garden of
 Fro such delicias sodenli to goo Edens and its
 Into this world which is so full off woo. delights. 664
- There is delit, and heer is sorwe [&] care,
 There is ioie, and heer is heynesse,
 There is plente, and heer is euel fare, 668
 There is helthe, and heer is gret siknesse,
 Heer trouble ay meynt with onseur gladnesse,
 Ther is ay blisse and eternal glorie,*
 And heere no merthe but fals & transitorie. 672
- Allas, how thei wer blyndid in ther siht
 Thoruh veynglorie* and fals ambicioun!
 Thei wente wrong, thei lokid nat a-riht,
 Fals couetise was ther confusioun, 676
 Wherthoruh thei loste the dominacioun
 Off Paradis, and wex bothe poore & thrall,
 Ther fredam leffte and becam mortall.
- Onto God thei wolde ha be semblable, 680 and brought
 Lik onto hym good and euel to* knowe, low.
 And in ther trust for thei wer nat stable,
 From ther estat thei were brouht ful lowe:
 And thus, alas, the seed was first isowe, 684
 The roote plantid off disobeissaunce,
 Which brouht our lynage to sorwe & myschaunce.
- Thus cam in first thoruh inobediencie,
 As bi a gate, pouerte and neede; 688
 And at ther bak folwed indigence,
 Sorwe, siknesse, maladie and dreede,
 Exil, banshyng and seruitute, in deede,
 Which causid man longe to contune 692
 Vndir the lordshipe & daunger off Fortune.

657. immortalite R.

664. delites H, R 3.

668. euefare B. 669. gret] om. H. 670. Heer] Heere is R.

671. 2. gloire, transitoire B, transitoyre H. 674. veyngloire B.

681. to] ta B. 683. brouht] I brouht H.

- Thus cam in eek maladie and deth
 To dispoile mankynde off his beute,
 Long siknesse and pestilence that sleth 696
 Bi sodeyn strok which no man may fle; *
 For onto Adam and his posterite
 Deth was annexid bi successioun
 For his offence, and so conueied doun 700
- and the infirmities of old age.
 Fro man to man in eueri maner age.
 For who list knowe, synne brouht in shame,
 Man to be feeble and feynt in his passage,
 And be processe to wexen halt and lame — 704
 Onto Adam this was an vnkouth game,
 To be constreynyd from riche apparaile
 In bareyn erthe to sekyn his vitaile.
- Adam had to toil for his living
 In hungir [and] thrust heere he ladde his liff,
 With soot, with labour and tribulaciouns,
 Endured also many mortal striff,
 Off hot and cold riht straunge passiouns,
 Off elementis sodeyn mutaciouns, 712
 Wynd, hail and reyn feerfulli fallyng,
 And onwar strokis off thundir & lihtnyng.
- in the dread of cruel beasts, dragons and scorpions.
 Thei stood also in daunger and in dreed
 Off cruel beestis, tiges and leouns, 716
 Off tusshi booris, who-so taketh heed,
 And in gret feer off these fell dragouns,
 Thassaut off serpentis and off scoriouns;
 For thilke beestis that toforn were mylde, 720
 Afftir ther synnyng ful rage wex and wilde.
- Wher thei stood[e] first in sekirnesse, [p. 11]
 Off ioie and blisse euer in oon lastyng,
 Out off ther reste thei fill in onseurnesse, 724
 In sorwe and sihhyng, & dolorous pleynyng;
 And fro ther eyen contynueli wepyng,
 The bittir teris day be day distille,
 In this desert for wantyng off ther wille. 728
- He and Eve shed bitter tears.
 And whethir wer thei sorweful or* fayn,
 Long tyme afftir ther desolacioun,
 Whan thei fond Abel ther owyn sone slayn
- Afterwards Cain slew Abel,

697. which] which that H 5 — fle] see B, R.

699. annexid] anveded R. 708. and] om. H.

709. soot] soot R, swete H, swett R 3, swet P — 2nd with] and J, H 5.

713. feerfulli] feerdfulli J.

725. dolorous] dolours R. 729. or] outhter B.

- Be cruel Caym to his confusioun, 732
 The same Caym, as maad is mencioun,
 Afftir that tyme wilde and vacabounde
 Til blynde Lamech gaff hym his dethis wounde.
- Adam nor Eue affor that ilke tyme 736 which gave
occasion for
the first
funeral.
 Hadde neuer seyn no feste funeral,
 Off chaung it was* to hem a newe pryme,
 For to beholde a thyng disnaturall,
 Brethre off o wombe be hatred fraternall, 740
 The toon off herte* so feer hymselff deuyde,
 Off fals malis to been an homicide.
- And was it nat a peyne whan thei stood,
 For to beholde ther sone pale and ded 744
 Ligge on the ground[e], bathid in his blood,
 And al the soil where he lay was red,
 That whan Adam and Eue tooken heed,
 It was to hem ful gret aduersite 748
 The newe slauhtre to beholde and see.
- And euer a-mong ther sihhes harde and sore, Their beauty
faded,
 Ther bittir wepyng and sorwes to auauce,
 Or thei wer war, ther heris wexyn hore, 752
 And age gan ther beute disauaunce;
 Ther youthe also be ful gret displesaunce
 Gan tappalle, or thei it coude espie,
 Be cruel constreynt and force of maladie. 756
- And whan off youthe fallyn was the flour they became
dull and
uncomely
with years.
 Bi the processe of many hundrid yeris,
 And bi the duresse off many gret labour
 Thei wex onlusti and ougli off ther cheris — 760
 Off age and deth, these be the daungeris,
 To seyn chekmat, in nature it is kouth,
 Onto beute and greene lusty youth.
- For whan the yeris fulli passid be 764
 Off flouryng age, lastyng a sesoun,
 Be processe, at eie men may see,
 Beute declynyth, his blosmys falle doun;
 And lite and litil be successioun 768

732. Caym R, H, J, R 3, Cayme H 5, Cayn P.

735. Lameth, as written in B, R, H.

738. Off chaung it was] It was off chaung B — it was to hem]
to hem it was R 3.

741. herte] hate B, R.

752. thei] the R. 759. labour] labours R.

Cometh coked elde onwarli in crepyng,
With his potent ful poorli manasyng.

Thus Adam,
once the
fairest of
men, grev
old and died.

Thus to our fadir, that callid was Adam,
Off creatures fairest off alle faire,
Afftir gret age, bi processe deth in cam,
And gan onwarli ascende vpon the staire
With his potent, and caste hym to repaire
With Antropos, which affor shal goon
For tuntwyne his lyuys threed anoon.

772

776

He was
buried in
Hebron.

And in Ebron was maad his sepulture,
Ther afftir bilt a myhti gret cite,
Bi whos story and record off nature

780

His dis-
obedience
made all
men subject
to death.

I may conclude, who-so list to see,
That neuer man hadde liberte,
Sithen that Adam our Lord gan disobeye,
Ageyn[e]s deth, but that he muste deye.

784

The compleynt off Bochas vpon the fall off Adam.

Bochas
laments the
fate of Adam,

IN compleynyng, myn auctour Iohn Bochas
Ful pitousli in his aduertence
Bewepith, wailith, & offte seith allas,
In an appel ther was so gret offence,
That for a tast off inobedience,
Adam, allas, sholde ha[ue] so gret a fall,
So sodenli to deie and be mortall!

788

whose
example
teaches us
the sorrow
of the world.

Which exaumpil ouhte I-nouh suffise,
In al this world[e] thouh there were no mo,
Texemplefe to folkis that be wise,
How this world is a thoruhfare ful off woo,
Lich fals Fortune, which turnyth to and fro
To make folkis, whan thei most cleerli shyne,
In ther estatis onwarli to declyne.

792

796

For all their
pride, men
must die.

For thouh that thei her hedis leffte a-loffte [p. 12]
Hih as Phebus shynyth in his speer, 800
Thynke them-silff[e], as it fallith offte,
Ther renoun rechith aboue the sterris cleer,
And how ther fame surmountith euery speer —

775. and] *om.* H.

797. cleerli] clery R. 799. lifft H. 800. Hih] lich R.

801. Thynke] tenke R.

- Ther trust corrupt hath a ful sodeyn fall, 804
 For to declare how thei be mortall.
- O worldli folk, aduertisith off entent, 808
 What vengauce and what punycioun
 God shal taken in his iugement
 For your trespas and your transgressioun,
 Which breke his preceptis a-geyn al resoun!
 Ye han forgotten, how with his precious blood
 You for to saue he starff vpon the rood. 812
- For yiff Adam for his disobeissaunce
 Was bi the Lord, as hym list ordeyne,
 Maad first & formyd with euery circumstaunce
 Off creatures to be most souereyne, 816
 Yiff that he was enbraced in the cheyne
 Off seruitute, with thraldam ouerseyn,
 What shal I thanne off othir folkis seyn,
 That lyuyn heer in this desert off sorwe,
 In this exil off plesance desolat, 820
 And in this world[e], both at eue &* morwe,
 Off hertili ioie stonde disconsolat,
 Al destitut and eek infortunat, 824
 And forpossid with wo off worldli trouble,
 Ay variable and ful off chaungis double?
- Ye nat entende but to fals couetise,
 To fraude, baret and extorsioun, 828
 Geyn God and trouthe in many dyuers wise,
 Geyn your neihbour be fals collusioun
 To doon [him] wrong and oppressioun,
 And werst off all, ye rechch[e] nat be synne 832
 To sle your soule, worldli good to wynne.
 And yiff it falle your power be but small
 Taccomplisshe your auarice in deede,
 Your synful will assentith ouerall 836
 Thyng to desire off which ye* may nat speede;
 And thus fals lust doth your bridil leede,
 Thrust off hauyng so sore you doth assaile,
 Falsli afferd the world you sholde faile. 840

O worldly
 people, know
 that God will
 punish you

as he did
 Adam, most
 sovereign
 of men!

You draw
 only to
 covetousness
 and fraud,
 you oppress
 your fellow
 men and
 slay your
 own souls
 for gain. If
 too weak to
 sin in deed,
 you sin in
 thought.

822. &] & at B, R, H, J, R 3.

826. ful] om. R.

831. him] om. R, H. 832. ye] the R. 834. falle] hap R3.

837. ye] thei B, om. R. 839. Thurst R, H.

840. Falsli] Fals R.

If God
chastises you
lightly, you
complain.

And yiff that God, benigne and debonaire,
With his yerde off castigacioun
Chastise you but esili and faire,
Ye grucch ageyn[es] his correccioun, 844
Nothyng aduerting in your discrècioun,
How God nat bad us, who can taken heed,
Nat for to stryue nor to wrastle in deed,

God does not
bid us prove
our might
on the
Chimæra,

Nouther our strengthe nor our myht tapplie 848
Vpon the beeste monstuous and sauage,
Which callid is the Chymere off Licie —
Speciali whan he is in his rage,
Which monstre hadde to his auantage 852
Hed off a leoun, as bookis determyne,
Wombe off goot, and tail serpentyne,

or conquer
the Golden
Fleece, or
slay the
Minotaur or
do anything
that is
impossible.

Which was outraied off Bellofforon,
As olde poetis make menciouñ. 856

Nor God bad nat that men sholde gon
Into Colchos to conquere with Iason
The Flees off Gold, which in that regioun
With firi bolis off metal maad and bras, 860
And bi a dragoun ful streihtli kepid was.

God bad us nat our cuntrees for to lete
To vndirfonge thynges inpossible,
The Minotaur for to slen in Crete, 864
Half man, halff bole, yiff it be credible,
Which was a monstre hatful and odible,
Whilom brouht forth, in bookis ye may see,
Bi Minos wiff, callid Pasiphe, 868

Whos story techith, yiff ye list to lere,
This ougli beeste cruel and monstuous,
Thoruh Adriane, the kyngis douhter deere,
Was whilom slay[e]n be duc Theseus 872
Withynne a caue maad be Dedalus.
God bit us nat, pleyñli, for his sake,
So gret emprises for to vndirtake.

He does not
tell us to risk
our lives in
adventure as
did Hercules.

He bit us nat to been so rek[e]les 876
In pereilou deedis that been marciall
Vs to iupartè as dede Hercules,

847. to wrastle] for to wrastile R, for to wrastle H, for to wrastill R 3.

850. callid] clepid H. 855. Bellofforon] belliferoun J.

862. bad] gaff R. 869. lere] heer H. 872. be] the R.

- Which bi the bidding in especial
 Off Euristeus, the myhti kyng roiall, 880
 Lord off Athenys, to make his honour shyne,
 Lernyd off armys the famous disciplyne.
- Off his preceptis yiff we han a siht [p. 13] He asks us
 And remembre off his hih bounte, 884 only to exclude
 He vs comaundith thyngis that been liht vanity and
 For taccomplissh with al humilite, idleness from
 From our corage tauoide al vanite, our hearts.
 And from our hertis texcludyn idilnesse 888
 And the fals chaung off al worldli gladnesse.
- For on-taman that parfit is and stable, Nothing
 Bi good resoun myn auctour doth well preue, pleases a good
 There is no thyng mor fair nor agreable 892 man more
 Than fynali his vicious liff to leue, than to do
 On verray God rihtfully beleue, riht and
 Hym loue and worshepe a-boue al ertheli thinges; love God.
 This passith victory off emperours and kynges. 896
- The Lord bit eek, who* that can discerne,
 Off enter loue to doon our labour
 In this liff heer so oursilff * gouerne,
 To fadir & moodir that we do dieu honour, 900
 And in ther neede to doon to hem socour,
 And in al vertu our frendis to conforte,
 And to our power in myscheeff hem supporte.
- For in this world is no thyng mor parfit, 904 A man should
 Nor taccomplissh thyng off mor plesance, be content
 Than a man for to haue delit with little
 In lital good to hauen suffisance, wealth, do no
 And be content in his gouernance, 908 wrong to his
 Voide auarice and thynkyn euer a-mong, neighbour,
 To his neihbour that he do no wrong.
- Nat to coueite his goodis in no wise,
 Hymself gouerne lik to his estat, 912
 Nat excede, but fleen and eek despise

880. Euristius R.

890. on-taman] vnto a man H, J, R 3, P, H 5.

895. ertheli] om. R.

897. bit] biddith R 3, H 5 — who] we B, R.

899. oursilff] our liff B, R. 902. conforte H.

907. hauen] haue H, R, R 3.

912. excede] to excede J, H 5 — an I precedes eke in H (slip of pen).

and live in
continnence
and peace.

Al maner loue which is disordynat,
Hym silff preseruyng from kontek & debat,
And speciali teschewen, it is good, 916
Slauhtre, moordre & shedyng eek off blood.

He should
avoid scorn
and follow the
example of
Our Lord,

Fleen from his synne and hatyn for to lie,
Off olde offencis a-mong ha[ue] repentance,
And teschewe al scorn and moquerie, 920
Ageyn vicis doon almesse and penance,
And to haue most souere[y]nli plesance
To sue the pathes* of our Lord Iesu,
Trewe examplaire off grace and al vertu. 924

who asked
nothing more
than that we
do as he
bade us.

Which for our sake and our redempcioun
And for our loue was nailid to a tre,
Suffrid peyne and cruel passioun,
And nothyng axeth, off hih nor low degre 928
Recompensid ageynward for to be,
But that we sette al hooli our ententis
For to fulfille his comaundementis.

Let us be
better than
beasts, and
remember
that all
worldly
wealth shall
fade as a
rose,

And off his grace heer in this mortal liff, 932
As we precelle in wisdom and resoun,
And off his giffte han a prerogatiff
Toform all beestis bi discrecioun,
Therefore lat us off hool entencioun, 936
As we off resoun beestis ferr exceede,
Lat us forn* hem be, be woord, exaample and deede.

Grounde us first vpon humilite,
Our pompous eien meekli to vnclose, 940
Enclyne our hedis, and to conceyue and see
Al worldli welthe shal fadyn as a rose,
And off meek herte lat us oursilff dispose,
Bi this tragedie to ha[ue] knowlechyng 944
Off our myscheeff how roote and eek gynnyng

and that
pride and
disobediencie
were the
beginning
of sorrow.

Was the vice off inobediencie,
Surquedie and fals disobeissaunce,
As myn auctour hath shewid in sentence, 948
Enprentith it weel in your remembraunce,
Be-war* the serpent with his disseyuauunce,

920. mokrye H. 923. pathes] paththes B, R, pathis H.

932. his] om. R. 933. in] of J — and] of J.

934. han] and R. 936. hool] hoolde R.

938. forn] aform MSS. — 1st be] om. J — 2nd be] in H 5 —
by example word & dede R 3.

944. to haue] ta H. 950. Be-war] Beth war B, J.

The flessch, the world, your enmies, alle thre,
 Thoruh ther treynys ye nat deceyued be. 952

Your beste sheeld to make resistence
 Ageyn ther power sothli is meeknesse,
 Your haberiou*n* most myhti off diffence,
 The feendis myht to venquysshe and oppresse, 956
 Is to remembre deuoutli with lownesse,
 How meekli Crist to paien our ransoun
 Suffred on a crosse deth and passioun.

Wherbi men may, that prudent been & wis, 960
 The ioies cleyme which been eternall,
 And entre ageyn into Paradis,
 Fro when[ne]s whilom Adam hadde a fall;
 To which[e] place a-boue celestially, 964
 O Crist Iesu, so brynge us to that glory,
 Which be thi deth hadde the victory!

¶ The lenvoye off this tragedie.

SODEYN departyng out off felicite [p. 14]
 Into miserie and mortal heuynesse, 968
 Vnwar depriuuyng of our prosperite,
 Chaung off gladnesse into wrechchidnesse,
 Long langwisshyng in wo and bittirnesse,
 Contynuel sorwe, dreed, dool and pestilence 972
 Were first brouht in bi inobediencie.

Adam and Eue losten ther liberte,
 Ther fraunchise and ther blissidnesse,
 Put into exil and captyuyte 976
 To lyue in labour, in wo and pensifnesse,
 Thoruh fals desirs off pompous wilfulnesse,
 To the Serpent whan thei gaff credence,
 The Lord mistrustyng thoruh inobediencie. 980

But, o allas, where-as thei were fre,
 Off ioie eternal stood in sekirnesse,
 Thei were to blynde — allas, it was pite! —
 To leue ther reste and lyue in werynesse, 984
 Al ther offspryng to bryngyn in distresse,
 Drawyng fro God his due reuerence
 Thoruh fals consentyng to inobediencie.

959. a] *om.* J, H 5.

962. entre ageyn] ageyn entre H, R, R 3. 966. the] *om.* H.

972. pestilence] offence H. 980. mystrustyng H.

Princes,
beware of
insolence
and pride,

Wherefore, ye Pryncis, ausili doth see, 988
As this tragedie in maner berth wisse,
Where-as wantith in any comounte
Subieccioun, for lakkyng off meeknesse,
And with pouert pride hath an interesse, 992
Ther folwith afftir thoruh froward insolence
Among the people fals inobedienc.

remember
that your
subjects will
deal with
you as you
deal with
them.

And, noble Pryncis, which han the souereynte
To gouerne the people in rihtwisnesse, 996
Lik as ye cherisse hem in pes and vnyte,
Or frowardli destroie hem or oppresse,
So ageynward ther corages thei will dresse
Lowli tobeie to your magnyficence, 1000
Or disobeie bi inobedienc.

[How Nembroth bilt the toure of babilone to saue
him from noyous flodis which for his pride was
put fro his magnificence and his toure with
sodeyne levene smyten down.]¹

Only eight
people were
saved from
the Deluge,

MYN auctour Bochas, as he that vndirstood
The vengauces & myscheuis huge
Which that God took with Noes Flood, 1004
Whan he sente an vniuersel deluge,
Ageyn[e]s which there was no refuge,
Sauf eihte personis in that mortal wo
Withynne a ship were sauyd and no mo. 1008

therefore my
author passes
over to
Nimrod.

Wherefore myn auctour lihtli ouergoth,
Makith off that age no special remembraunce,
But passeth ouer from Adam to Nembroth,
Consid[e]ryng how in that dedli chaunce 1012
The Lord for synne took so gret vengauce,
That be writyng off cronique nor historie,*
Off hih nor low was lefft[e] no memorie.

During the
Flood all
books were
destroyed,

For ther was lefft cronicle noon nor book 1016
Afftir the Flood, that made menciou[n]
Off noon auctour, who-so list to look;

991. lakkyng] lak H. 994, 6. poeple R. 1007. eihte] viij B.
1014. cronique nor historie] story nor victoire B, H, R 3,
P, stories nor victorie J; story nor victoire is altered to
cronique nor histoire in R. 1015. memoire B.

¹ MS J. leaf 6 recto.

- For al was brouht to destruccioun
 Bi a deluge, withoute excepcioun, 1020
 For which myn auctour transportid hath his stile,
 And off that tyme list nothyng compile.
- He fond no mater wheron he myht founde
 Nor sette his foot, bi noon auctorite, 1024
 Nor no trouthe his purpos on to grounde
 Off old[e] writyng that he coude see;
 For which hym thouhte, off necessite
 The surplusage off al that tyme lete, 1028
 And afftir Adam with Nembroth for to meete.
- And certis, lich as Bochas in this book
 Remembrith first off Adam the storye,
 So next in ordre he the story took 1032
 To speke off Nembroth and his surquedie,
 Which heere in erthe, as bookis specefie,
 Afftir the Flood his wawes gan asswage,
 Was maad a lord to gouerne in that age. 1036
- For whan the floodis begonne* to discrese,
 And God his vengauce gan to modefie,
 Withdrouh his hand, the watir tho gan cese,
 Vpon the mounteyns hie off Armenye 1040
 The shipp gan reste, the Bible can nat lye;
 And in that age, callid the secounde,
 Lynage off man be-gan a-geyn tabounde.
- Tenrese ageyn and to multeplie,
 And bi discent, in bookis ye may see 1044
 Specefied the genealogie,
 How that oon Chiris, cosyn to Noe,
 A man that tyme off gret auctorite, 1048
 Onto this Nembroth, the story doth assure,
 The fadir was, as bi engendrure.
- This Nembroth wex myhti, large and long, [p. 15]
 Excellyng othre as off his stature, 1052
 Surquedous, hardi and riht strong,
 And in his tyme gret labour myht endure,
 And in his force so moche he dede assure,

1024. foot] feet R.

1026. altered into: Of Olde writyng eke coude he nothing se, R.

1035. his] is R.

1037. begonne] began B, R, H. 1055. he] om. R.

- That ther was noon on watir nor on lond 1056
Which durste presume his power to withstond.
- called Prince
of Hunting,
And his noblesse mor to magnefie
In worldli worshepe, bi report off his glorie,*
He was callid cheeff prynce off venerie, 1060
Desirous euer for to han victorie
Off beestis wilde, to be put in memorie
And haue a pris amongis these champiouns,
Tigres to daunte, bores and leouns. 1064
- feared by
man and
beast.
Ther was no beeste in wodes so sauage
That durste ageyn hym make resistance;
His furious ire so mortal was and rage,
The erthe quook for feer off his presence, 1068
Til atte laste in his aduertence,
As a prynce deuoidid off al grace,
Ageyn[e]s God he gan for to compace.
- He began
to conspire
against God,
He made a maner coniuracioun, 1072
This froward geant, and a conspiracie,
Took his counseil bi fals collusioun,
His myht, his power for to magnefye,*
And his estat for to glorefie, 1076
Thouhte he wolde off his entent nat faile
God and the heuene proudli to assaile.
- and thought
he would
secure him-
self against
another
Deluge
That maugre God, which [that] gouernyth all,
He thouhte he wolde proudli take on honde, 1080
Ageyn deluges, yiff any falle shall,
Off prouidence pleyntly hem withstonde,
Hymself tassure & make a place on londe
That sholde hym keepe & been to hym diffence 1084
Bothe a-geyn God and watris violence.
- And that thei myhte acomplissh the entent
Lich ther desir, thei dedyn ther labour,
Took ther counseil al be oon assent, 1088
Chose Nembroth ther duc, ther gouernour
Hem to conueie and doon to hem socour,
To been ther guide, afforn as thei were war,
Toward a contre which callid is Sennar, 1092

1058. his] *om.* R.

1059, 61, 62. gloire, victoire, memoire B, R, J.

1075. magnefye] *multeplie* B, J, H 5, R.1079. which [pat H; R, R 3, H 5, P *agree with* B.

- In compas wise round a-boute closid by building
a high tower.
 With a gret flood namyd Eufrates.
 Ther straunge foli which thei han purposid,
 For to fulfille thei wer nat rek[e]les: 1096
 This to seyne, thei put hemsilff in pres,
 So hih a tour for to edefie,
 Which that sholde surmounte a-boue the skie,
 That thei sholde greued be no more, 1100
 With no deluge brouht to destruccioun,
 Nor that watres may nat greue hem sore,
 This was the fyn off ther entencioun.
 And off that tour & myhti strong dongoun, 1104
 Geyn God and floodis hemsiluen to assure,
 The heihte and largesse were off o mesure.
 Thus off Nembroth encresen gan the name;
 And in the peepelis reputacioun, 1108
 Off gold and richesse he hadde so gret a fame,
 Thei callid hym god in ther opynyoun,
 Most eurous, most myhti off renoun,
 The world al hool vndir his obeissaunce, 1112
 As god and lord he took the gouernaunce.
 Vndir whos myht the peeples gan procede,
 He as a lord hauyng inspeccioun,
 Pershyng the bowell[s] off the erthe in deede 1116
 To make myhti ther fundacioun;
 And off fals glory and veyn ambicioun,
 This proude Nembroth in his appetit,
 To sen hem werke hadde ful gret delit. 1120
 His ioie was and his inward gladnesse
 To beholde so gret a cumpanye
 Percen the erthe bi so gret depnesse,
 To make the ground[e] strong bi masounrye, 1124
 The werk vpward for to fortifie,
 With many a ston, huge & large off weihte,
 Thei han it reysid vp in the heir off heihte.
 And fynali bi mediacioun 1128
 Off this gret werk Nembroth wex famous,
 Takyng in herte gret consolacioun, and in his
riches and
fame.

1099. that] om. H.

1116. bowell R 3, H, bouel R, bowels J, bowelles H 5, bowels P.

1123. Persyng H.

- That be report he was so glorious,
 Off so gret myht & off port so pompous, 1132
 That he was so myhti, riche and strong
 To reise a tour, so wid, so large, so long.
- The tower was called Babel, but now it is the lair of serpents and the air about it is infected.
- For to this day touchyng the grete myht [p. 16]
 Off this tour, which Babel yit men call, 1136
 Men fro ful ferr may han therof a syht,
 For it surmountith othir touris all.
 Off which[e] werk thus it is befall,
 Off serpentis and many a gret dragoun 1140
 It is now callid cheeff habitacioun,
 That no man dar, as ferr as thei it see,
 For wikkid heir and for corrupcioun,
 Bi a gret space and bi a gret contre 1144
 Approche no neer that merueilous dongoun,
 So venymous is that mansioun
 And so horrible, no man dar approche,
 Lik to a mounteyn bilt off a craggi roche. 1148
- Yet it rises to the stars
- And as men seyn that haue had ther repair,
 This tour atteynyth onto the sterris cleer,
 And transcendith the regioun off the hair.
 The ston, the syment wer maad off such mateer, 1152
 And the ioynyng so stedfast and enteer,
 Thouh fir and watir bothe it dede assaile,
 Ful lite or nouht ther power sholde auaille.
- so mightily that no living creature ever saw another like it.
- It was maad so myhti to endure, 1156
 So weel assurid be disposicioun,
 That in this world no lyuyng creature
 Sauh neuer noon lik in comparisoun;
 Whos reryng up was cheeff occasioun, 1160
 And the richesse off the masounrye,
 Wherthoruh Nembroth off pride and surquedie
- Nimrod grew proud and thought himself the equal of God,
- Dempte proudli, as in his auys,
 He transcendid all othre in noblesse, 1164
 Thouhte hymself most myhti & most wis,
 Felawe to God, as be liklynesse.
 But God, that can al worldli pride oppresse,
 And make pryncis eclipsen in ther glory, 1168
 Such as truste in thyngis transitory —
- who thereupon knocked down a great part of his tower and killed his workmen.
- The same Lord off his eternal myht,
 This tour which Nembroth list to edefie,
 He made with thondir & with leuene liht 1172

Theroff to falle a ful gret partie;
 The boistous wyndis and the rage skie,
 And Goddis power on the tother side,
 Gan thus a-bate a parcel off his pride. 1176

And in disceunce and fallyng off the stonys,
 Off the werkmen ful many a man was ded,
 And oppressid, ther bak Ibroke and bonys,
 The masounry with ther blood was red: 1180
 Yit proude Nembroth, that of this werk was hed,
 With al these signes his Lord ne list nat knowe,
 For which his pompe was afftir brouht ful lowe.

But in his errour procedith forth off newe, 1184
 Thouhte he wolde gete hymselff a name,
 Off malencolie gan change look and hewe,
 And gan also attempten and attame,
 For to encrece and magnefie his fame, 1188
 A newe tour to edefie a-geyn,
 Lik as God hadde be blynd & nothyng seyn.

He wolde haue rauht up to the sterris seuene
 Bassent off hem that gan hym first counsaile,
 Robbid God, & from hym rauht the heuene; 1192
 But who presumeth the Lord aboue tassaile,
 It were no resoun that he sholde auaille:
 Pryncis may weel ageyn hym crie loude, 1196
 But his power may clipse with no cloude.

For in the middis off his grete emprises,
 This proude Nembroth making his masouns
 For to compasse and castyn there deuises, 1200
 Gemetriens in ther dyuysiouns, —
 But God that hath his inspecciouns,
 Seyng thentent off eueri ertheli man,
 As he that is most myhti and best can 1204

Ageyn ther malis make resistence,
 Ther worldli power, ther domynacioun
 Off his onchaungable & most magnificence

1174. rage] Ragous H, ragious R 3, P.

1188. fame] name H.

1197. clipse] clippe R.

1199. masouns] mansiouns H.

1201. Gemetriens] Geometryens R, Geometries H 5, Gemetries J, Gemetriciens R 3, Gemetriens H, P.

and can
punish the
pride of
princes.

He can chastise and ouerwhelme doun — 1208
The pride off pryncis in eueri regioun,
Bexauple off Nembroth, a-noon as ye shal heer,
Whos pompe rauhte a-boue the sterris cleer.

God made a
confusion of
tongues

For whan his werkmen stood at auauntage, 1212
And most were besi to his entencioun,
And to-fortyme spak al o language,
Al sodenli be transmudacioun
Ther was off tunges maad a dyuysioun, 1216
That in ther werkyng as thei gan abraide,
No man wiste what that othir saide.

and divided
the hearts of
the work-
men.

And it is likli accordyng with resoun, [p. 17]
So as the chaung was maad off ther languages, 1220
So off ther hertis was maad dyuysioun,
Bothe off ther will, and off ther corages;
And in descendyng off ther werkyng stages,
Ther was such chaung off brother onto brother, 1224
Lik straungers noon knew thentent off other.

Myn auctour trowith that this dyuersite
Was for ther gilt causid be vengauce,
And ellis God off riht and equite 1228
Disposid hath in his ordenauce
To been a-mong hem so gret a variaunce,
That thoruh the world thei sholde hemself deuyde,
And from Nembroth disseuere & nat a-bide. 1232

They quar-
relled with
one another
and forsook
the land of
Shinar.

Thei gan a-noon a-mong hemsilff disdeyne
To accepte this Nembroth for ther kyng;
Yit a-mong hem, in soth ther wer nat tweyne
Oon off a-nother that hadde cleer knowyng, 1236
Nor off ther speche that knew the pleyn menyng:
For which the contre off Sennar thei forsook,
And ech off hem a sondri contre took.

Nimrod's
efforts were
in vain.

Thei departid, made no lengere spacis, 1240
Folwyng the fortune off ther dyuysioun,
And gan to chese hem newe duellyng placis
In the parties off many a regioun;
And thus Nembroth was pryued & put doun, 1244
And off Babel, the myhti famous tour,
He was no lengere callid possessour:

- For a-geyn the pride off this Nembroth
 Froward Fortune gan hir cours to varie, 1248 He grew old
and feeble,
 And God also was in maner wroth,
 Off surquedie that he was so contrarie;
 And for the place was wilde and solitarie
 Off this Sennar, furious and sauage, 1252
 Nembroth gan feeble & falle into gret age.
- And yit summe bookis off hym specefie,
 He wix froward off his condicioun,
 And was first ground off ydolatrie 1256 and some
books say
he was the
founder of
idolatory.
 And fyndere up off fals relegioun,
 Causyng peeplis to haue openyoun
 Goddis to worshepe in paganysme wise,
 Foundour off rihtis and off fals sacrefise. 1260
- Toward Perce he ches his duellyng-place,
 Which contre is in the orient;
 That his lordship sholde strecch a gret[e] space,
 He bounded hym into the occident: 1264 He went to
live in Persia
 For Perce-lond haueth his extent
 Toward the parties of the Rede Se;
 And this land Perce, who-so list [to] see,
- As bookis olde remembre and put in mynde — 1268 and ruled
from Media
to Germany.
 How that Perce costeieþ enviroun
 Septemtrion and the grettere Inde
 And many a-nothir myhti regioun,
 Wher Nembroth first hadde domynacioun, 1272
 Which extendith, as bookis specefie,
 Out off Mede into Germanye.
- But in lordshipes, as myn auctour seith,
 Withoute that vertu be ther trewe guide, 1276 There is no
security in a
lordship
without
goodness.
 In hem ther is suraunce noon nor feith —
 Thyng that passith, which may no while abide;
 Wherefore Bochas, in despit off pride
 And in rebukyng off all folkis proude, 1280
 Makyng his compleynt crieth to hem ful loude:

1255. wix B, R, wexe J, wexe H 5, P, wex R 3.

1265. haueth] hath H. J.

1267. this] his this R.

1280. in] om. H.

1281. Makyng] Maketh R.

¶ The mater ageyn þe pride of princis.

[An exclamacioun of Bochas ageyn al proude men/
shewyng how god may them and their pride
whan him best list by many dyuers menes and
wayes punysshē & chastise.]¹

You who
are proud,
who trust to
reign long,

YE all proude, most royall in *your* flouris,
Which that most truste for to regne longe,
Dressith up *your* rochis & *your* touris, 1284
And ageyn God make *your*-siluen stronge,
And lat *your* power proudli vndirfonge
Your-silff with pride for to magnefie,
Ageyns the heuene to holden chaumpartie. 1288

build your
huge castles,
let your men-
at-arms keep
watch,

Beeldith *your* castellis, reiseth hem vp on heihte
Off adamantis [with iren] stronge Ibounde,
With squar[e] stonys, large & huge off weihte,
Reise up *your* wallis, most myhti and profounde, 1292
And shet *your* dongouns with myhti cheynys rounde,
Let men off armys, who-euer wake or sleepe,
Nyht & day *your* wacch so streihtli keepe,

as if God
were unable
to take
vengeance
on you!

As God nor man, in *your* opynyouns, [p. 18] 1296
Your forterressis ne myhte nat assaile,
Your castellis nor *your* stronge dongouns
Stuffid with men and plente off vitaile,
Lik to stonde euere and neuere for to faile, 1300
As God nat myhte a-geyn *your* fals puissaunce
Whan-euer hym list off riht to do vengauce!

Set before
your blind
eyes the
pride of
Nimrod.

Settith afforn *your* eyen that be blynde
The monstuous werk off grete Babiloun; 1304
The pride off Nembroth ther was put behynde,
Maugre his myht, and his tour smet doun:
For al the crafft off werkman or masoun
Destroied was with a sodeyn leuene, 1308
Tauenge his pride sent a-doun fro heuene.

Though *your*
power be
great, God
will con-
found *you*.

For thow *your* strengthes so assurid be,
That noon engyn may therto atteyne,
Gunne nor bumbard bi no subtilite, 1312

1290. with iren] *om.* B, R, H, R 3, P; with Irons stronge
bounde H. 5.

1293. myhti cheynys] cheynes myhti R.

1289, 98. Castell H.

1312. Bombard H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 7 verso.

- Shot off arblast nor touch off dundeyne;
 Yit God that is lord and souereyne,
 Which lich desertis can bothe spille and saue,
 Mai al confounde with an erthe-quaue. 1316
- Myn auctour axith, what castel or what tour
 May be so strong[e] maad in any wise,
 But that be mene off sum fals tretour,
 Or be sum weie that he can deuse, 1320
 It may be lost or sold for couetise
 And delyuered, for al ther stronge bondis,
 Into the power off enmyes hondis.
- Or bi sum other sodeyn auenture, 1324
 Castellis, citees and many a riche toun
 Han been lost; thei myhte hem nat assure
 For to resiste a-geyn[e]s fals tresoun:
 Summe ha be lost eek bi rebellioun; 1328
 And alle these menys, the trouthe to be-gynne,
 Ys but punshyng which God sent for synne.
- God hath a thousand handis to chastise,
 A thousand dartis off punycioun, 1332
 A thousand bowes maad in vnkouth wise,
 A thousand arblastis bent in his dongoun,
 Ordeyned echon for castigacioun;
 But where he fynt meeknesse & repentaunce, 1336
 Mercy is maistresse off his ordynaunce.
- Ye that be wise, considreth how the roote
 Off viciis alle is pride, ye may weel see;
 Pullith hym doun and put hym vndir foote 1340
 And tak your counseil off humilite:
 And yff ye list [to] stonde in surete,
 Beeldith in herte for mor sekirnesse
 A tour off vertues groundid on meeknesse, 1344
- Whos masonrie is off no costage,
 Off vertues ground and souereyne,
 Blast off wyndis and off wedris rage,
 Nor no tempest hasti nor sodeyne, 1348
 Pompe nor bost, thouth thei doon her peyne,
 It will stand forever.

1313. arowebblast J, arrowblast H 5 — dundeyne] dundeyne R,
 Dondeyn H, donzdeyne J, doudeyn R 3, dundayn H 5,
 dondine P. 1325. Castell H.

1335. echon ordeyned H. 1342. to] om. H, R.

This vertu meeknesse for to vndirmyne, —
Thei be to feeble to make hire for tenclyne.

Meekness
conquers all
worldly
trouble.

For wher meeknesse is groundid verrailly, 1352

Thouh he sumwhile feele aduersite,
He passith ouer and suffreth patiently
And venguissith al maner enmite,
Thassaut also and the contrariouste 1356
Off infortune, and off worldli trouble,
And off victory conquereth a palme double.

And thouh meeknesse a-myd the flodis flowe
Off worldli myscheeff and persecucioun, 1360
Whil Pacience in hir boot doth rowe,
Thouh froward waves posse hir up & doun,
A calm shal folwe off consolacioun,
Whan sterne wyndis ther blastis ha[ue] leid lowe, 1364
The name off meeknesse shal shewe & be knowe.

She may be
sorely tried,
but she will
win in the
end.

She may be troublid, but ouercome neuere;
But for a tyme she may suffer werre,
But atte eende she venquissith euere, 1368
On londe and se, wher she be nyh or ferre:
To the hauene off lyff she was our lodesterre,
I take record on the humylite
Off Mary, so blissid mut she be. 1372

The roote off meeknesse flourith up so faire,
Whos beute dredith no tribulaciouns;
In somer, wyntir his flouris nat appaire,
And hir frut last in al maner sesouns: 1376
Pride may assaile with his bostful souns,
But fynaly for hir ences off glorie,
With humblesse she wynnith the victorie.

[Lenvoy.]

You who
have read
this tragedy,
take heed to
Meekness,

O FOLKIS all that this tragedie reede, [p. 19] 1380
Haueth to meeknesse a-mong your aduertence,
Off proude Nembroth also takith heede,
How that he fill from his magnificence,
Onli for he be sturdi violence 1384
List off malis the myhti Lord assaile,
But in such caas what myht his pride auaille?

1351. for tenclyne] to inclyne H, *the entire line is written in a later hand.*
1370. our] þe J, the H 5.
1371. on] off R. 1381. Haueth] hath H.

Noble Pryncis, which that this world posseede,*
 Ye that be famous off wisdam and prudence, 1388 and, Princes,
 And han so many subiectis, that you dreede, let not your
 In gouernaunce vndir your excellence, pride oppress
 Lat your power with meeknesse so dispence, the poor.
 That fals[e] pride oppresse nat the poraile, 1392
 Which to your noblesse so moche may auaille.
 Pride of Nembroth dede the bridil leede,
 Which hym conueied to gret insolence;
 Pride apperteneth nothyng to manheede, 1396 Remember
 Sauf in armys to shewen his presence — the pride of
 Wherfore honour, laude and reuerence Nimrod.
 Be to meeknesse, that hath the gouernaile
 Off alle vertues man may most auaille. 1400

[How many yeres was betwixt Adam and Nembroth
 and betwixt Nembroth and Cadmus and of other
 kynges.]¹

THESE olde poetis with ther sawes swete
 Ful couertli in ther vers do feyne,
 How olde Saturne was whilom kyng of Crete,
 And off custum dede his besy peyne, 1404 Saturn was
 Off his godhed list for to ordeyne once king of
 That he sholde, as off his nature, Crete. He
 Echon deuoure as by his engendrure. devoured his
 children as
 they were
 born.
 In this mateer shortli to soiourne, 1408 His name
 To vndirstonde off poetis the processe, means time,
 Thei meene pley[n]li that this woord Saturne which brings
 Doth in it-silff nothyng but tyme expresse; all things to
 And philisophres bere also witnessse, 1412 nought,
 That as in tyme, forth euery thyng is brouht,
 So tyme ageynward bryngith euery thing to nouht.
 Clerkis recorde eek in ther writyng,
 Vndir support as I dar reherse, 1416 and is more
 How that fir wastith euery thyng, powerful
 And iren hard doth nesshe thynges perse; than iron
 Yiff auht a-bitt that they may nat transuerse, or fire.
 Yit comyth tyme, and bi contynuaunce, 1420
 And al consumeth with his sharp[e] launce.

1387. posseede] doþ posseede B, R, do possede J, H 5 — that
 om. J, H 5. 1403. was] om. H. 1407. engendrure] engendure R.
 1411. it-silff] þe silff H. 1416. I is misplaced after reherse R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 8 recto.

- His sharp[e] toth of consumpcioun
 In stille wise doth his besi cure
 For to anentise, in conclusioun, 1424
 Alle thyng that is brouht foorth bi Nature,
 Bi long abidyng thei may hem nat assure;
 For olde thyngis deuourid men may see,
 Fer out off mynde, as thei neuer had be. 1428
- The passing
 of years
 causes the
 greatness of
 men to fade.
 Who can or may remembre in any wise
 The glorious prowesse off these pryncis olde,
 Or the noblesse of philisophres wise,
 Or off poetis the feynyng to onfolde: 1432
 Processe off yeris, alas! as I you tolde,
 Deuoured hath ther fame and ther noblesse,
 Derkid ther renoun bi foryetilnesse.
- Their names
 are forgotten.
 Thus off ther namys is lefft no memory, 1436
 Tyme* with his rasour hath doon so gret vengeance,
 Shauen a-wey the honour and the glory
 Off many a noble, ful myhti off puissance,
 That there is lefft now no remembrance 1440
 Off pryncis, poetis, nor off philisophres;
 For whan that deth nailed hem in ther cofres,
 Kam tyme vpon, and bi processe off yeeris
 Ther memory hath duskid and ther mynde, 1444
 And reuolucioun off the heuenli speeris,
 Bi ofte turnyng ther glory hath lefft behynde:
 Thus euery thyng which subiect is to Kynde,
 Is* in this liff withoute mor auantage 1448
 Wastid with tyme and processe off long age.
- In the
 earliest age
 Fortuna was
 steadfast.
 In the firste age from Adam to Noe,
 Prudent listres, which list in bookis reede,
 Fynde off Fortune no mutabilite, 1452
 Nor off hir chaungis took[e] tho noon hede;
 But from Adam ther reknyd been in deede
 Onto Nembroth, bi turnyng off the heuene,
 A thousand yeer, seuene hundrid and elleuene. 1456
- From the
 time of
 Adam to
 Nimrod noth-
 ing notable
 happened.
 In which[e] space, who that considreth weel,
 Ther be no thyngis write in special,*
 Digne off memorie nor spoke off neueradeel,

1424. auentisshe J, anentisshe H 5. 1432. feynyng] feyng R.
 1437. Tyme] Tymes B, R. 1443. and] om. R.
 1445. And] And the R — the] om. R.
 1448. Is] As B, R. 1450. to] vn to H. 1457. considere H.
 1458. write] writen R — special] especial B.

- Which that be notable nor historial; 1460
 But fro the tyme Nembroth hadde a fal,
 Onto Cadmus the yeeris to contene,
 Thei were a thousand, foure hundrid & fourtene.
 Touchyng [this] Cadmus, as Bochas list
 tendite, [p. 20] 1464 Vixoses was
the first king
of Egypt.
- It is rehercid bi rethoriciens,
 How oon Vixoses, in bookis as thei write,
 Was maad first kyng off the Egipcien*,
 Where philisophres & nygromancien 1468
 Gan first tabounde ther renoun to auauance,
 Nachor that tyme hauyng the gouernaunce
 Off the Hebreus, as maad is mencioune — and Nabor
 Afftir Nembroth, bi trewe rehersaile, 1472 then ruled
the Jews.
- Thre hundred yeer bi computacioun.
 Four score & tuelue, which tyme, it is no faile,
 That Vixorses gan to werre & eek bataile
 Off volunte geyn straunge naciouns, 1476 Vixoses won
all Egypt by
might of
arms, but
his name
has been
forgotten.
- And to conquere citees, burwes [&] touns.
 Bi force onli, withoute title off riht,
 He wan al Egipt to encrece his name;
 But for al that, who list to haue a siht, 1480
 There is now lefft no report off his fame,
 Sauf Bochas writ, how he first dede attame
 His myhti conquest off entencioun
 That the glory and the hih renoun 1484
 Ascryued were onto his worthynesse,
 And the residue and the surplusage
 Off gold, off tresor, off good & off richesse
 Turne sholde to comoun auauntage 1488
 Off al his people, that euery maner age
 Reporte myhte, it was to hym mor nerre
 Boue syngulerte his comoun to preferre.
- ¶ Eek Thanaus off Cithie first kyng, 1492 Thanaus
conquered
Scythia.
 Whan Saruch was duk & souereyne
 Ouer* the Iewes, be record off writyng, —
1463. foure] iiij B. 1464. this] om. R, H.
 1467. The gipcien B. 1470. Nakor H. 1474. twelue] xij B.
 1475. Vixorses B, R, Vixoses J, H, H 5, P, vixoses R 3 —
 werre] werrey H.
 1479. to encrece] tencres of H, to encrease of P, to thencrece
 R 3. 1481. fame] name R. 1491. syngulert R.
 1492. Thanaus] tanaus R, Thonans J, Thomvs H, Thomas
 H 5, P, thanas R. 3. 1494. Ouer] Euer B, R.

- Too hundred yeer, sexti and eek tweyne
 Afftir Nembroth, this Tanaus gan ordeyne 1496
 A myhti power and a strong bataile
 Hem off Cithie proudli to assaile,
 Conqueryng fro thens onto the ile
 Callid Ponto, in ful cruel wise: 1500
 And thouh his lordship last nat but a while,
 Al that he wan, it was for couetise;
 And as Bochas doth off these folk deuise,
 Processe off yeris, for al ther gret puissaunce, 1504
 Hath put ther namys out off remembraunce.
- ¶ Zorastres eek, for al his grete myht,
 Off Bactrians kyng and possessour,
 Lord off Trace and a ful manli knyht, 1508
 Off all his dedis and off his gret labour,
 Off his conquest nor off his gret honour
 Is nothyng lefft, off writyng us befor,
 Sauf that he louh the hour whan he was born. 1512
 He began ful soone to be merie,
 With sodeyn lauhtir at his natyuyte;
 And worthy Nynus, that was kyng off Assirie,
 Expowned his lauhtre to gret felicite, 1516
 The which[e] Nynus wan many a straunge cuntre,
 And day be day his power gan encrease,
 For which he wolde off his conquest nat cese.
- For this the maner off these conqueroures: 1520
 Whan thei haue had in armis o victorie,
 Thei do ther myht, ther peyne & ther laboures
 With newe emprises to be put in memorie;
 For ther corages, supprisid with veynglorie, 1524
 Can nat be stille content in ther estat
 Til her parodie sey to hem chek-maat.
 Fortune off armys, in bookis ye may reede,
 With a fals lauhtre on folkis thouh she smyle, 1528
 She froward euere, or thei can takyn heede,
 Off hir nature will falsly hem be-gyle;
 Conquest bi werre lastith but a whyle,

His name too
is forgotten.

Of Zoroaster
we know
nothing, ex-
cept that he
laughed the
hour he was
born.

Ninus was
another
conqueror.

Such men
are never
satisfied until
finally
Fortune
casts them
down.

1496. Tanaus] thauance P, Thomvs H, Thomas H 5.
 1499. onto] In to H. 1500. Ponto] Ponte J.
 1506. Zorastres] Zorastes R 3, Zoroastres P, Zorastees R.
 1511. toforH. 1513. ful] wol R.
 1520. maner] mateer R.
 1528. a] om. R — folkis] bookis H.

- For who bi deth doth sturdi violense, 1532
 God will bi deth his vengauce recompense.
- ¶ This worthy Nynus gan myhtili preuaile
 A-geyn Zorastres, off whom I spak tofore;
 For he with hym fauht last in bataile, 1536
 In which Nynus hath hym so weel Ibore,
 That Zorastres hath the feeld Illore.
 And he was auctour, as bookis specefie,
 Off fals magik and off nygromancie. 1540
- He fond the nature off euery element,
 Ther kyndeli werkynge & ther mutaciouns,
 The cours off sterris & off the firmament,
 Ther influencis, ther disposiciouns, 1544
 Ther aspectis and ther coniuncciouns,
 Wrot in peleris deuised off metall
 The seuene sciencis callid liberall.
- Eek in pilers off brik ful harde Ibake, [p. 21] 1548
 Which were up set, longe, large & huge,
 He gan eek write hem & to vndirtake
 To make hem seur, as for ther refuge,
 That thei sholde be flood nor [no] deluge 1552
 Diffacid been, as off ther scripture,
 But in ther grauyng perpetueli endure.
- But thowh Zorastres this crafft first out fond,
 Ful lite or nouht to hym it myhte auaille; 1556
 And thowh he were a good knyht off his hond,
 He was off Nynus slay[e]n in bataile,
 Loste his rewme and royal apparaile;
 And Nynus deide withynne a litil throwe, 1560
 But in what wise the story is nat knowe.
- ¶ Eek Moideis kyng off Sodomee,
 I fynde off hym no memory be writyng,
 Sauff in a story, as men may reede and see, 1564
 He and his people were fre in ther luyng;
 But he that was off Assiriens kyng,
 Thoruh fals Fortune, that can so offte varie,
 To Babiloyne made hem tributarie. 1568

Ninus de-
 feated
 Zoroaster,
 who wrote
 books of
 magic,

and caused
 the seven
 sciences to
 be inscribed
 on strong
 pillars, that
 they might
 endure
 forever.

But Ninus
 slew him
 in battle,
 and soon
 after he
 also died.

The people of
 Sodom were
 free in their
 living.

1535. A-geyn] geyn H — to fornē H. 1537. borne H.

1548. brik] breke H.

1552. no] om. R, H 5.

1554. endure] to endure R.

1567. offten H.

Pharaoh and
his men were
drowned in
the Red Sea,

¶ We han eek sey[e]n and rad also
The vengauces and the pestilence
Doon in Egipt to kyng Pharao,
For that he made a maner resistence 1572
Ageyn[e]s God, off wilful necligence;
Therefore his peepel vpon a day and he
Were dreynt echon amynd the Rede Se.

but Moses
and the Jews
passed safely.

The peepelis off God lad be Moyses, 1576
Withoute trouble off any maner wawe,
Wente echon sauf in quiete & in pes;
And Pharao, as he gan afftir drawe
Hem to pursue, bi a ful mortal lawe, 1580
In his pursut froward and atteynt,
A-mong the wawes with his host was dreynt.

In Exodus
we read
about the
Twelve
Plagues,

In Exodo ben the mencions
Ceriousli put in remembraunce, 1584
The twelue plages and persecuciouns
In Egipt doon, bi ful gret vengauce;
And off ther tresor & ther gret substaunce
Thei were despoilid bi Hebreus, it is told, 1588
Off ther vesselis off siluer & off gold.

and how the
Jews robbed
the Egyptians.

And out off Egipt ful gret tresor thei ladde,
Such as thei thouhte myhte hem most auaille;
And Pharao, I fynde that he hadde 1592
Too hundrid charis enarmyd for bataile,
Hem to pursue and proudli to assaile,
And fifti thousand, in whom ther was no lak,
Off men off armys folwyng on horsbak. 1596

Pharaoh pur-
sued them,
but lost his
life because
he was
proud and
obstinate.

Too hundred thousand off footmen hym aboute,
And off Egipt al this cheualrie;
And Pharao with al [t]his gret[e] route 1600
Gan Israel pursuen off envie,
But for his pride and fals surquedie,
He and his peepel wer drownyd euerichon,
Off al his noumbre ther was lefft nat oon.

His froward herte a-geyn God indurat, 1604
Fulfillid off malis and obstynacie,
And [in] his purpos proud and obstynat:

1569. eek] *om.* J, H 5.

1576. peepelis] *peepel* H. 1579. gan] *can* R.

1583. exodi J, Exody P, H 5.

1585. twelue] *xij* B.

1606. in] *om.* R.

These foule vicis, or he koude hem espie,
 From his glory and his regalie 1608
 He was cast down, thoh he tofforn was crownyd,
 A-myd the se a-mong his peeple drownyd.

[Off Oggigus, kyng of Thebes.]¹

¶ A-nothir prynce callid Oggigus,
 Kyng off Thebes, as bookis determyne, 1612 Ogygus
founded
Eleusis in
Greece,
 And foundour was, thus Bochas tellith us,
 Off a cite callid Eleusyne,
 Which stant in Grece, whos power to declyne
 Ther fill a flood in that regioun, 1616
 Which ouerflowed ful many a royal toun.
 And in Achaia it dede most damage,
 Tyme off Iacob, the patriark notable;
 And this deluge with his wawes rage 1620 where there
was a great
flood in the
time of
Jacob.
 Slouh lordis manye, & pryncis honorable:
 For dame Fortune is so deceyuable,
 That she sumwhile, whan she list disdeyne,
 Can folk assaile with a flood sodeyne. 1624
 This flood also, where it dede assaile,
 Wastid cornys bothe crop and roote,
 Causid also scarsete off vetaile,
 That many a man felte ful vnsoote; 1628
 The pore nat wiste wher to fynde boote,
 For ther pryncis supprisid were with dreed,
 Thoruh lak off vitaile in that grete need.

[Off a grete Flood in Tessalie.]²

¶ Anothir flood there was in Thessalie, [p. 22] 1632 There was
another flood
in Thessaly,
 In the tyme whan kyng Amphioun
 Heeld the sceptre and the regalie
 Vpon Thebes the myhti stronge toun,
 Beside the kyngdam off Semalioun, 1636
 This same tyme, this flood, ful dout[e]les,
 Whan Goddis people was lad be Moises.
 With this flood the land hadde be deuourid
 Off Thessalie, and al that regioun, 1640 but the
people found
refuge on
the hills of
Parnassus.
 But on Pernaso the peeple was socourid,

1639. the] this H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 9 recto.

² MS. J. leaf 9 verso.

- And on the rochis that stoden enviroun
 Fond ther refut, to ther sauacioun,
 And gret socour, til the flodis rage 1644
 Gan disencrece, withdrawn & asswage.
- During
Cecrops'
reign in
Athens, there
was a plague
of heat ¶ In olde stories ye may also see,
 Whan Cicraps hadde first possessioun
 Off Athenes the myhti strong cite, 1648
 An heete ther fill in that regeoun,
 Be influence that descendid doun
 From all the bodies aboue celestially,
 Which likli was for to deuouren all. 1652
- called the
Embracing
of Phaeton. And this hete engendrid off the sunne,
 In dyuers cuntrees, bothe in lengthe & breede,
 Hath his cours so myhtili begunne
 That many folkis fillyn in gret dreede — 1656
 Ryuers, wellis, who that list taken heede,
 Consumed were and dreied up echon,
 The hete callid thenbracyng off Pheton.
- [Off goodly Isis, Wiff to Apys kyng of Argyue slayn
 bi his broper Tyffeus.]¹
- Isis, daughter
of Prometheus,
married Apis,
king of
Argos. ¶ We haue eek rad in stories heer-tofforn, 1660
 How that Ysis to Egipt took hir fliht
 Out off Grece, the trewe douhter born
 Off Promotheus, a ful manly knyht;
 And this Ysis in euery mannys siht 1664
 So fressh, so goodli, weddid bi hir lyue
 To worthi Apis, that was kyng off Argyue.
- She was very
beautiful
and a ward
of her uncle
Epimetheus. The which Ysis, excellyng off beute,
 Afftyr tyme hir fadir was Igraue, 1668
 She was Iput for mor surete
 With hir vncl, that sholde keepe & saue
 This seid[e] maide, that no man sholde hir haue;
 And hir vncl, in Ouyde ye may see, 1672
 Lik as he writ, was callid Epymethe.
- Jupiter fell
in love with
her And flouryng up in hir tendir age,
 This seid Ysis so plesant was & meete,
 Off semlynesse, off look & off visage, 1676

1644. til] to H.

1646. also may H, R 3, all so 3e may H 5, also ye may P.

1651. scelestially H. 1653. off] first of H.

1657. list taken] listen tak R. 1668. tyme] om. R.

1669. put R, R 3, putte H 5. 1671. This] þe H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 9 verso.

- That Iubiter, the myhti kyng off Creete,
Was enamerid with hir for to meete;
And she, excitid off femynyte,
Enclynyd hir herte onto his deite. 1680
- And for she was off hir entent so cleene,
Obeieng hym in most lowli wise,
Off Argyuois he maad hir to be queene.
Because that she was smet in couetise, 1684
Ageyn Argus a werre she gan deuise,
And for he was vnweeldi off his age,
Hir to withstonde he fond non auauntage.
- But yit Fortune gan vp[on] hir frowne, 1688
And kyng Argus thuruh his subtilite,
With his counseil so prudentli gan rowne,
That she was take bi ful gret cruelte,
And hir soudeours were eek made* to fle; 1692
And bi Argus, ther geyned no ransoun,
She fetrid was & put in strong presoun.
- But hir sone, the god Mercurius,
Riht fressh, riht lusti & ful off hardynesse, 1696
And off his herte inli coraious,
Ageyn[es] Argus gan his power dresse,
And so entierli dede his besynesse
That he was slay[e]n, in conclusioun, 1700
And Ysis afftir delyuerid fro prisoun.
- Off hir sleihtis afftirward nat feynt,
She took a ship and into Egypt wente,
In which[e] ship ther was a cow depeynt; 1704
And Mercury,* whom Iupiter eek sent,
Is gon with hir, bothe off oon entent,
To make a mariage afftir a-noon riht
Twen hir and Apis, a prynce off ful gret myht. 1708
- She was riht wis boue* othir creatures,
Secret off cunnyng, weel expert in science,
She tauhte first lettres and figures
To Gipcians be pleyn experience, 1712
Gaff hem cunnyng and intelligence

1680. deite] darte R. 1688. vpon] vp R.

1692. made] fayn B, R — eek] also J, H 5.

1705. Mercury] Cheurie R, B, Cheury H, thouris J, thoures
H 5, Mercury P.

1709. boue] aboute B, R, H, J, P, H 5.

To tile ther land, tauhte ther laboreris
To sowe ther greyn & multeplic bi yeris.

and was
worshiped
as a goddess.

And in Egipt hir fame and hir renoun [p. 23] 1716
Gan day be day wexe and hir worthynesse,
Holde off cunnyng and reputacioun
Be signes shewed, nat onli a prynesse,
But she was holde a-mong hem a goddess, 1720
And with worshepis which that were dyuayne
And sacrefises, to hir thei dede enclnye.

Apis, her
husband, son
of Jupiter
and Niobe,

But to declare pleynli at a woord,
A-myd[des] al hir gret prosperite, 1724
Myhti Apis, hir husbonde and hir lord,
Prynce off Egipt and duk off that cuntre,
Sone off Iubiter and off Nyobe,
Which Nyobe, bi lynage descendyng, 1728
The douhter was off Phoroneus the kyng —

was cruelly
slain by his
brother
Typhon,

¶ And Phoroneus first the lawes fond
To which al Grece stant vndir obeissaunce,
And the statutis off that myhti lond 1732
Were establisshid bi his ordynaunce —
But for to write the vnhappi chaunce
Off kyng Apis, as it is remembrid,
He slay[e]n was and pitousli dismembrid 1736

Bi his brother callid Tiffeus,
Sumwhat off hatrede, but mor for couetise;
For Tiffeus was inli desirous
To reioishe in ful mortal wise 1740
The myhti kyngdam, as ye han herd deuse,
Off Argyuoyis to haue possessioun,
Preferrid be moordre & fals successioun.

and after-
wards be-
came the
god Serapis.

And whan that Ysis fond hir lord so ded, 1744
Off entent that he were magnefied,
First off wisdam she gan takyn heed,
Ordeyned a mene that he were deified,
Hih a-mong goddis to be stelled, 1748
In Egipt templis maad hym to be stallid,
And god Serapis afftir he was callid.

1718. and] & off R.
1720. a-mong hem] ther R.
1738. off] for H.
1743. fals] bi R.

[[O]ff Grisiton þat hes membres ete for hunger.]¹

- ¶ What shal I write off the cas horrible
 Off Erisiton, with hungir so constreynyd, 1752 Erysichthon
 That his liff was to hymselff odible, sold his
 In Thesalie with indigence peynyd; daughter
 And pitousli his fame was disteynyd, for hunger.
 Whan he solde his douhter in seruage, 1756
 Liriope, which was but yong off age,
 Beschauung off gold to purueie hym vitaille,
 Off verray neede he was so wo-begon;
 He hadde no thyng that myhte his thrust auaille, 1760 and after-
 Nor staunche his hungir with gnawyng on a bon, wards, alas,
 Wherefore he eet his membris oon bi oon. ate his
 A prynce, allas, was it nat pite members.
 To seen hym deie in such aduersite! 1764
- ¶ We han eek rad, ful many a day tofor,
 The grete baneshyng and proscricpion,
 Off Argyuois how kyng Gelanor
 Was crueli put from his regeoun; 1768 Danaus,
 And his lieges, off indignacioun, founder of
 In his place thei sette oon Danaus, Argos,
 Sone and eek heir onto the god Belus.
- The peple off malis dede hym so encoumbre, 1772 had fifty
 Tencrece his sorwe and his aduersite, daughters,
 And fifti douhtren he hadde also in noumbre, who married
 And Egistus his brother, eek parde the fifty sons
 Hadde fifti sones, the story ye may see, of Egyptus.
 Atween the which bi surete off hond 1776
 In mariage there was maad a bond,
 Vndir which compassid was tresoun,
 Couertli thouh thei dede it hide. 1780 You will find
 But yiff ye list han cleer inspeccioun their story in
 Off this story vpon eueri side, Chaucer,
 Redith the legende of martirs off Cupide,
 Which that Chaucer, in ordre as thei stood, 1784
 Compiled off women that were callid good.

1752. Erisiton] Grisiton J, P, Grisitou H 5, Herisiten R 3.

1755. fame] name R.

1771. the] om. R.

1783. Redith] Reed R —off] & R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 10 recto.

who also
told the
tale of
Philomela
and Procne.

¶ Touchyng the story off kyng Pandioun,
And off his goodli faire douhtren tweyne,
How Thereus, fals off condicioun, 1788
Hem to deceyue dede his besi peyne,
Thei bothe namyd, off beute souereyne,
Goodli Progne and yong[e] Philomene,
Bothe innocentis and off entent ful cleene. 1792

It were pre-
sumption for
me to tell it
again.

Ther pitous fate in open to expresse,
It were to me but a presumpcioun,
Sithe that Chaucer dede his besynesse
In his legende, as maad is mencion, 1796
Ther martirdam and ther passioun,
For to reherse* hem dede his besy peyne,
As cheef poete callid off Breteyne.

I will go on
to Cadmus;

Off goode women a book he dede write, [p. 24] 1800
The noumbre compleet* fully off nynteene;
And there the story he pley[n]li dede endite
Off Tereus, off Progne &* Philomeene,
Where ye may seen ther legende, thus I meene, 1804
Doth hem worshepe & foorth ther liff doth shewe
For a cleer merour, because ther be so fewe.

but I am
sorry that
there are so
few good
women to
write about.

I will passe ouer and speke off hem no more,
And onto Cadmus foorth my stile dresse — 1808
Yit in my writyng it greueth me sore,
Touchyng off women off feith or stabilnesse,—
Blessid be God, — I fynde noon excesse;
And for ther been so fewe, as thynkith me, 1812
The goode sholde been had in mor deynte.

¶ Lenvoy.

This tragedy
told about
Saturn,

THIS tragedie bereth to you witsnesse,
How Saturnus bi disposicioun,
Maliciousli of his frowardnesse 1816
Causith in Iune ful gret infeccioun,
She off nature conveith the venym doun,
The hair infect, which no man may socoure,
Kometh deth a-noon, & all thyng[e] doth deuoure. 1820

1787. And] *om.* H. 1798. reherse] reheresen B, R.

1801. compleet] vncompleet B, J, vncomplet H 5.

1802. pley[n]ly he did H.

1803. Tereus] Terence H, Therence R 3, P, Theseus J, H 5 —
&] & off B, R, H. 1804. ther] þe H.

- Tyme from Adam, myn auctour doth expresse,
 Doun to Nembroth bi successioun,
 His stile conueied bi gret auysynesse,
 From Zorastres to kyng Pharaoun; 1824
 Off too deluges he maketh menciou, n
 In Thesalie the vengauce gan labour, n
 And in Achaia Thebes to deuoure.
- Ye haue off hetis herd the gret excesse, 1828
 Off pryncis, pryncessis ful gret destruccioun, and the
 Off Egistus the gret[e] wrechidnesse, destruction
 The furie off Tereus, the wo off Pandioun, of princes
 Off the too sustren the confusioun, and princesses
 And how ther fate gan vpon hem loure, 1832
 Ther felicite vnwarli to deuoure.
- Pryncis, Pryncessis, your eyen doth up dresse —
 I meene the eyen off your discrecioun — 1836
 Seeth off this world the chaung, the doubilnesse, Princes, re-
 The gret onseurnesse, the variacioun, member that
 And aduertisith, for al your hih renoun, Fortuna is
 Fortunes dewes, whan thei most suetli shoure, 1840 deceitful.
 Than is she falsest, your glorie* to deuoure.

[How Iubiter rauissed Europe, and how Cadmus
 was sent/to seke hir in diuers Regiouns.]¹

- B**E rehersaile off many an old poete,
 Be discent the lyne conueied doun, Jupiter
 Next Saturnus, the myhti kyng off Crete, 1844 succeeded
 Ioue was crownyd bi successioun, Saturn,
 As next heir bi procreacioun,
 Afftir his fadir the lond to enherite,*
 Regned in Crete, as poetis list to write. 1848
- Sone off the lynage, as I you tolde afforn,
 Off the goddis most souereyn and enteere, and chose
 Yit thouh he was off blood so hih I-born, Europa to be
 He ches Europa for to been his feere, 1852 his wife.
 And doun descendid from his heuenli speere,
 As he that was, for al his deite,
 Supprisid in herte with hir gret beute.

1831. Tereus] Thereus R, H, R 3, P, J, H 5 — furie] furies H.

1832. 2nd the] off R.

1835. *The second line of this stanza misplaced at end,* H.

1841. gloire B. 1847. tenherite B.

¹ MS. J. leaf 10 verso.

She was a
daughter of
Agenor.

And she was douhter to the myhti kyng 1856
Callid Agenor, by lyneal discent,
Whos myhti kyngdam & roial fair duellyng
Was in Phenice toward the orient;
And to Arabie his land was adiacent, 1860
Ferre* be south, as ye may reede and see,
Toward the parties of the Rede Se.

Jupiter took
her by force
from her
father,

But Iubiter, whan he dede aduerte
Off Europa the gret[e] semlynesse, 1864
Hym thouhte he was woundid thoruh the herte
Onto the deth, beholdyng hir fairnesse,
And for his constreynt, & his mortal distresse,
Seyng she was so fair founde* in his siht, 1868
He rauesshid hire off veray force & myht.

But Agenor, hir owyn fadir deere,
Gan on this cas ful pitously compleyne,
Whan she, allas, most goodli and enteere, 1872
Was hym berafft, which doublid al his peyne;
Recur was noon, thouh he dede pleyne,
Til he, remembrynge in his regalie,
Thouhte he wolde senden to espie 1876

who told his
son Cadmus
to bring her
back or him-
self never to
return home
again.

His sone Cadmus hir to recure ageyn,
For to serche hire in many a regeoun,
Wherso his labour were fructuous or in veyn.
His fadir sette hym a fell condicioun, 1880
Nat to retourne bi noon occasioun, —
And therupon maad hym to be bounde, —
Til that he hadde the kyngis douhter founde.

Cadmus set
out

He took his shippis bi gret auysynesse, [p. 25] 1884
And gan to saile be many a straunge se,
Dede his labour and his besynesse,
With many a worthi that were with hym preue;
But whan that he off resoun dede see, 1888
Ther was no mene for which that he was sent,
For tacomplisshe the fyn off his entent,

bravely
towards
Greece

With glad[e] herte, deuoid off al gruchyng,
Seyng the cas froward and contraire, 1892
Humble off [his] cheer[e] took his exilyng,

1861. Ferre be south] For be south B, For be sothe R, for to be South P, For to be sought R 3.

1868. founde] foundyn B, founden R, H.

1871. Gan] Can R. 1873. berauht H. 1874. And recur R 3.

1877. recure] espie H. 1878. a] om. H.

- And off manhod list nat hymself dispaire,
 But with his meyne knyhtli gan repaire
 Toward Grece, & proudli ther to londe, 1896
 Off Appollo for to vndirstonde,
 To what parti that he myhte drawe. and asked
 He praied the god to wissyn hym & reede, Appollo to
 Sum tokne shewe or sum maner lawe, 1900 tell him
 Onto what ile that he myhte hym speede; where
 Or that he wolde graciously hym leede
 Where-as he myhte bilden a cite,
 That were accordyng for hym & his meyne. 1904
- And to Appollo he dede sacrefise,
 And maad to hym his oblacioun,
 The god requeryng goodli to deuisse,
 To what lond or to what regeoun 1908
 For his duellyng and habitacioun
 He sholde drawe, withoute mor obstacle,
 For hym and hise to make his habitacle.
- And Cadmus thus tofforn Appollo stood, 1912
 Knelyng a-mong with ful gret reuerence,
 And in the temple off Delphos stille a-bod,
 With humble attendaunce & deuout dilligence
 Meekli besekyng,* bi woord or sum* sentence, 1916
 That Appollo to hym wolde onclose,
 To what parti he sholde hymself dispose.
- This was his answeere in conclusioun,
 As the statue to hym dede expresse: 1920
 To goon and serche contrees envirooun,
 And til he fond, doon his besynesse,
 A bole that were excellyng of fairnesse,
 Which, bi precept off Appollos lawe, 1924
 Hadde neuer afforn in no yok Idrawe.
- And where that euer sekyng that he fond
 A bole stonde stille in his pasture,
 Appollo bad vpon the same lond, 1928
 Where-as he sauh this sihte off auenture,
 That he sholde doon his besi cure
 To bilde a cite, he and his folkis all,
 And Boecia, afftir the bole, it call. 1932

1899. &] or H. 1916. besekyng] abidyng B, R, H — sum]
 bi sum B, R, J. 1917. onclose] enclose R.
 1920. As] And R. 1926. 1st that] om. H.

- which he did, And whan that Cadmus the precept vnderstood,
 And in serchyng dede his besynesse,
 He fond a place where-as a bole stood
 Fedyng hymselff, which as bi liklynesse 1936
 Was a place ful plesant off largesse,
 Wher-as he stynte and gan a cite reise,
 Which that poetis gretli comende & preise.
- And that his bildyng myhte the more auaille, 1940
 Alle tho foreyns that dede a-boute hym duelle,
 Ful lik a knyht, be force and be bataile
 Out off that cuntre he dede hem expelle,
 Reisyng a cite which that dede excelle, 1944
 And as Ouide recordeth eek the same,
 Into this day off Thebes berith the name.
- Cadmus was a great and wise man
 And he was nat onli glorefied
 For reryng up off this grete cite, 1948
 But he was also gretli magnefied
 For his manhod and magnanymyte,
 And most comendid, yiff ye list to see,
 For the surmountyng famous excellence 1952
 Which that he hadde in wisdam & science.
- and invented laws and an alphabet.
 For as myn auctour list off hym endite,
 Thoruh his noble prudent purueiance
 He tauhte figures & lettris for to write, 1956
 And made lawes off ful gret ordynance
 A-mong the Grekis, and sette gouernance
 Ther vicious liff bi vertu to restreyne;
 And who outraied was punshid with the peyne. 1960
- He married Hermione
 And off entent tencrecen his lynage,
 And his cite also to multeplie,
 He took a wiff, that was but yong off age,
 And she was callid, as bookis specefie, 1964
 Hermyone; and touchyng hir allie,
 Thouh that she were born off roial blood,
 She was also bothe inly fair and good.
- at about the time of the death of Joshua,
 And this was doon, as writith myn
 auctour, [p. 26] 1968
 Afftir the deth of worthi Iosue,
 Gothonyel beyng his successour,

1934. serchyng] sechyng H.
 1941. tho] þe J, the R 3, H 5.

- Hauyng the ledyng and the souereynte
 Off Israel whan Thebes the cite 1972
 Was foundid first in tho daies olde
 Bi kyng Cadmus, tofforn as I you tolde.
- Foure douhtren he hadde be his lyue, and had four daughters,
 Ful faire echon and goodli on to see; 1976
 And ther names to rehersen blyue,
 Semele was eldest, and next Authonoe,
 The thridde in ordre was callid Ynoe,
 And Agaue was yongest off hem all, 1980
 Off which[e] douhtres thus [it] is be-fall:
- Thei were echon off port & off maneer who were very beautiful
 Ful weel fauoured in euery manys siht, 1984
 Riht womanli and heuenli of ther cheer;
 And for ther beute, ther fadir anoon riht,
 As it was sitting, with al his ful[le] myht,
 Lik ther estatis, ther berthe & eek ther age,
 Maad hem be weddid & ioyned in mariage 1988
- To worthi pryncis, his lynage to auauce.
 And thei encreced bi procreacioun,
 Wheroff the kyng hadde ful gret plesaunce
 And gret reioishyng in his opynoun 1992
 To seen his lyne bi generacioun,
 With his newewes & cosyns off allie,
 Fro day to day so wexe and multeplie.
- And this encreced his felicite, 1996 Cadmus prospered.
 Whan he considred verrali in deede
 The riche bilydng off his roial cite,
 And how Fortune dede his bridil leede
 To gret richesse, in bookis as I reede, 2000
 To gret noblesse, hauyng residence
 In his cite off most magnificence.
- His douhter Semele, record off myn auctour,
 Thouh she descendid were off the blood roiall, 2004 His daughter Semele had a son, Bacchus, by Jupiter,
 To Iubiter she was paramour,
 And bi his power aboue celestiall,
 She conceyued in especiall,
 As poetis list off hire tendite, 2008
 Hym that is god off grapis rede & white,

1971. 2nd the] *om.* R. 1973. foundid] *founden* R.1981. it] *om.* R.2000. *the t in gret stuck in scribe's pen* H.

- Callid Bachus, which hath the gouernaunce
 Off wynis alle and the regalie.
 Wheroff afftir ther fill ful gret vengauce: 2012
 [For] whan Iuno dede first espie
 Off Iubiter the grete auoutrie,
 Off gret hatrede and envious desir,
 She made Semeles be brent with sodeyn fir, 2016
- but Juno in
 her anger
 caused Semele
 to be burnt
 up together
 with her
 palace.
 Bi descendyng off a sodeyn leuene,
 Wherthoruh hir paleis was into ashes brent —
 The vnwar strook cam down fro [the] heuene,
 And on Semeles the vengauce is down went; 2020
 And or the flawme consumed was & spent,
 Ther was off hir lefft no remembraunce,
 But off hir eende the woful mortal chaunce.
- Actæon, son
 of Autonoe
 and Aristæus,
 was deuoured
 by hounds.
 ¶ Eek Antheon, sone off Authonoe, 2024
 To gret[e] myscheff and infortune born,
 Whos fadir was callid Eristee,
 Come off the kynrede that I you tolde afforn;
 With cruel houndis, allas, he was to-torn, 2028
 For that he sauh, as bookis off hym tell,
 Diane nakid bathe hire in a well.
 And as poetis remembryn atte leste,
 Whan the ladies off Thebes the cite 2032
 Heeld off Bachus solempneli the feste,
 The yongest suster, callid Agaue,
 Douhter to Cadmus, — allas, it was pite! —
 Ageyn Pantheus, hir* owyn sone deere, 2036
 She wex so wood & mortal off hir cheere,
- Agave, the
 youngest
 sister,
 Moordryng hym in ful cruel wise,
 In hir rage she was so furious:
 For he louh[e] at the sacrefise 2040
 In Thebes doon bi women to Bachus;
 The which[e] sone was callid Pantheus,
 Whom that she slouh with a ful sharp[e] dart,
 In hir woodnesse, as she hym fond a-part. 2044
- murdered her
 son Pentheus
 because he
 laughed at
 the women
 of Thebes
 when they
 sacrificed to
 Bacchus.
 Thus Cadmus
 fell into
 great trouble.
 These grete myscheuys fellyn in the lyne
 Off kyng Cadmus thoruh his onhappi chaunce;
 Fortune his noblesse gan to vndirmyne,

2010. hath the] that hath R.

2013. For] *om.* H, R. 2018, 19] *om.* J.2019. 2nd the] *om.* H, R. P. 2030. in] at H.2036. hir] his B, R — Pantheus] *om.* J.

- And thouhte she wolde his glory disauaunce. 2048 Fortune, the
Al worldli gladnesse is medlid with greuauunce, false
Experience in Cadmus ye may see, enchantress,
So importable was his aduersite, undermined
his prosperity.
- For whil he sat most hiest in his glory, [p. 27] 2052
No parti clipped off his prosperite,
His briht renoun and his roial memory
In rewmis sprad and many ferr cuntre,
And he most welful in his kyngli see 2056
Sat with his lynage, most hih in his noblesse,
Than cam Fortune, the fals enchaunteresse,
Off wilfulnesse, and fond occasioun
A-geyn this Cadmus, & maad his renoun dulle, 2060
And off his kynrede, bi fals collusioun,
She gan a-vey the brihthest fethres pulle;
And whan his shynyng was waxe up to the fulle,
Afftir the chaung off Fortunys lawe, 2064
His glory gan discreen and withdrawe.
- It was mor greuous to his dignite, It was the
A sodeyn fall from his hih noblesse, more grievous
Than yiff that he neuer hadde be because of
Set in thestat off [so] gret worthynesse; his high
For the furious mortal heuynesse estate.
Off his kynreede, withoutyn any more, 2068
Wolde haue greued a poore man ful sore. 2072
- And a-mong his sorwes euerichon, His greatest
To reherse pleynli as it was, sorrow was
I dar afferme how that there was oon, caused by his
Most horrible & dreedful in such cas; son-in-law,
For Cadmus sone, callid Athamas, Athamas,
His sone-in-lawe, thoruh fals malencolie 2076
Fill sodenli into a frenesie.
- Off whom the wiff was callid Ynoe, 2080 who thought,
Cadmus douhter, as ye han herd expresse, his wife a
Which thoruh the constreynt off his infirmite, lioness and
In his rage and furious woodnesse his sons lions,
Thouhte that his wiff was a leonesse, 2084
And in his wilde ymagynaciouns,
That his too childre were also too leouns.

2052. his glory] hiest R. 2062. brihthest] briht H.
2069. thestat] the staat J, the state P — so] om. R.
2085. wilde] wood R — ymaginacion R.

- and slew his
son Learchus. And vpon hem ful loude he gan to crie,
Toward his wiff in haste he ran anon, 2088
And from hir armys, ther was no remedie,
The child he rente, and on a craggi ston
He gan* to brose it and breke it eueri bon.
The which[e] child, Bochas writith thus, 2092
Ful tendir and yong, was callid Learchus.
- Ino fled with
her other
son. And off this woful sodeyn auenture
Off his rage, whan that [s]he took heed,
As most sorweful off any creature, 2096
Hir othir child she hente anoon for dreed;
For off socour she knew no betir speed,
So as she myhte gan haste out off his siht.
But wellaway, as she took hir to fliht, 2100
- They fell
into the sea
and were
drowned. Hir husbonde cam afftir pursuyng
Lich a wood leoun in his cruelte;
Doun from a mownteyn, which was dependyng,
She and hir child fill into the se. 2104
Was it nat routhe, was it nat pite,
A kyngis douhter, hir lord in Thebes crownyd,
He to be wood and she for feer so drownyd!
- Thus the joy of
Cadmus was
tempered
with sorrow. Loo, heer the fyn off Cadmus euerideel, 2108
His childre slayn and his allies all,
And he hymself[e] fro Fortunys wheel,
Whan he lest wende, ful sodenli is fall,
His litil sugir temprid with moch gall: 2112
For a-mong[es] all his mortal peynes,
His liege-men, off Thebes citeseynes,
- Finally he
and his
wife were
exiled. Made ageyn hym a conspiracioun,
Put hym in exil and his wiff also, 2116
His sonys, his douhtris brouht to destruccioun;
And to thencrecyng off his dedli wo,
He and his wiff compellid bothe too
For verray pouert and verray indigence 2120
In ther last age to purchase ther dispence.
- and died in
poverty. Thus [of] Cadmus the sorwes to descryue
And his myscheeff to putte in remembraunce,
He banshid was twies bi his lyue, 2124
2089. hir] ther R. 2090. craggi] cragge R.
2091. He gan] Began B, R— brose] briste J, bris R 3, bruise P.
2095. she] he H, R. 2096. As] Was H. 2109. children R.
2109. all] om. R. 2120. verray] varrei R.
2122. of] om. R.

- First bi his fadrис cruel ordynaunce
 Off his suster to maken enqueraunce,
 And althirlast in his vnweeldi age
 He was compellid to holden his passage 2128
- Out off Thebes, his wiff and he allone,
 In sorwe & wepyng taccomplissh up ther daies.
 Into Illirie to-gidre thei be gone,
 Ther pacience put at fell assaies, 2132
 Whos bittirnesse felte noon allaies.
 Eek off ther eende nor ther vnhappi fate,
 Nor off ther deth I fynde noon other date,
- Sauff that Ouide maketh mencion, [p. 28] 2136
 And Iohn Bochas the poete excellent
 Seith that the* brethre, Zeto & Amphioun,
 Out off Thebes, bothe bi oon assent,
 Haue* this Cadmus into exil sent, 2140
 His wiff also, afftir ther hih noblesse,
 To eende her liff in sorwe and wrechidnesse.
- But the goddis, off merci and pite,
 Whan thei hem sauh bi Fortune so cast doune 2144
 From ther estatis into pouerte,
 Hauyng off hem ful gret compassioun,
 Thei made a-noon a transformacioun
 Off bothe tweyne, hem yeuyng the liknesse 2148
 Off serpentis, to lyue in wildirnesse.

¶ *Lenvoye.*

- O** WHAT estat may hymself assure
 For to conserue his liff in sekirnesse? 2152
 What worldli ioie may heer long endure,
 Or wher shal men now fynde stabilnesse,
 Sithe kyngis, pryncis from ther hih noblesse —
 Record off Cadmus — been sodenli brouht lowe
 And from the wheel off Fortune ouerthrowe? 2156
- Who may sustene the pitous auenture
 Off this tragedie be writyng to expresse?
 Is it nat lik onto the chaunteplure,
 Gynnyng with ioie, eendyng in wrechidnesse? — 2160
 Al worldli blisse is meynt with bittirnesse,

2126. Inqueraunce H.

2138. the] thee B, thre H, R, two P.

2140. Haue] Hath B, han H, J. 2143. and] & off R.

What estate
 may live in
 security?

All worldly
 happiness is
 mingled with
 sorrow,

The sodeyn chaung no man theroff may knowe;
For who sit hiest is sonest ouerthrowe.

therefore, O
Lords, be-
ware the
fate of those
whom
Fortune cast
from her
wheel.

Was in this world yit neuer creature, 2164
Rekne up pryncis, for al ther hih noblesse
Fortune koude recleyme hem to hir lure
And emporisshe thoruh hir frowardnesse.
Wherfore, ye Lordis, for* al your gret richesse, 2168
Beth war afforn or ye daunce on the rowe
Off such as Fortune hath from hir wheel throwe.

[A processe of Oetes kyng of Colchos, Iason, Medee,
Theseus, Scilla Nisus, and other moo.]¹

WHAN Iohn Bochas was most dilligent 2172
To considre the successiouns
Off lynages, with all his hool entent,
In his writyng and descripciouns
To compile the generaciouns
Of many noble, famous off estat — 2176
I meene off such as were infortunat, —

Æetes, king
of Colchos,

In his serchyng he fond nat a fewe
That were vnhappi founde in ther luyng;
To his presence a-noon ther gan hem* shewe 2180
A multitude ful pitousli wepyng,
A-mongis which, ful doolfully pleynyng,
Cam first Oetes, and hath his compleynt gunne,
Kyng off Colchos and sone onto the sunne. 2184

son of Apollo,

For off Phebus, which is so briht & cleer,
Poetis write that he was sone and heir,
Because he was so myhti off poweer,
So fressh, so lusti, so manli [and] so feir; 2188
But off Fortune he fill in gret dispeir,
Cursyng his fate and his destyne,
Whan Iason first entrid his cuntre,
Be Pelleus sent fro Thesalie, 2192
Ther for taccomplisshe be dilligent labour
The grete emprises thoruh his cheualrie,

2166. recleyme] recline R. 2168. for] with B, R, J, H 5.
2170. as Fortune] fortune as R — as] om. J — throwe] ouer-
browe J, H 5. 2180. hem] hym B, R, H 5, him J, them P.
2183. compleynt] playnte R.
2188. lusti manli and ri3t faier J, H 5 — and] om. H, R, R 3.
2191. Iason] Iosan R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 12 recto.

- Yiff God and Fortune list doon to hym fauour,
That he myhte wynnen the tresour: 2196
This is to meene, that he were so bold
The ram tassaile which bar the Flees of Gold.
- This said Iason thoruh* counseil off Mede,
Bi sorcery and incantacioun 2200
The boolis slouh, horrible for to see,
And venquysshid the venymous dragoun,
The kyng despoilid off his possessioun,
Accomplisshid with carectis & figures 2204
Off Colchos the dreedful auentures.
- And afftirward, whan he his purpos hadde,
He lefte Oetes in ful gret despair,
And Medea foorth with hym he ladde 2208
And hir brother, which was the kyngis hair.
But as I fynde, how in his repair,
Out off Colchos whan thei gan remue,
Kyng Oetes afftir hem gan sue. 2212
- Vpon Iason auenged for to be,
Withoute tarieng, he folwid hem proudly;
The which[e] thyng whan Iason dede see,
This Medea gan shape a remedy: 2116
She took hir brothir & slouh hym cruely,
And hym dismembrid, as bookis make mynde,
And pecemeel in a feeld behynde
- She gan hym caste, al bespreynt with
blood. [p. 29] 2220
Wheroff his fader whan he hadde a siht,
Ful pale off cheer, stille in the feeld he stood,
Whil she and Iason took hem onto fliht —
I trowe that tyme the moste woful wiht 2224
That was a-lyue, whan he dede knowe
His child dismembrid and abroad Isowe!
- Which cause was, allas and wellaway!
That he so stynte, as man disconsolat, 2228
Whil that Iason fro Colchos went a-way.
And Medea, most infortunat,
Was ground and roote off this mortal debat:

2195. to] *om.* R. 2197. is] *om.* R.2199. This] The H — saide] *om.* J, H 5 — thoruh] thoruh
the B, H, R, R 3.

2204. carectis] carecters R3, charactes P.

- For who sauh euer or radde off such a-nothir, 2232
 To saue a straunger list to slen hir brothir?
- Her love of Jason was the cause of it all.
- Forsook hir fader, hir contre & kynreede,
 The lond enporished thoruh hir robberie;
 Off hir worshep she took noon othir heed, 2236
 Loue had hir brouht in such a fantasie.
 And whil that she a-bood in Thesalie
 And with Iason dede ther soiourne,
 She made Eson to youthe to retourne. 2240
- Afterwards Medea re-stored Jason to youth
- A yerde she took, that was drie and old,
 And in hir herbis and commixciouns*
 She made it boile, in Ouide it is told,
 And bi carectis and incantaciouns, 2244
 And with the craft off hir coniuirious
 The yerde be-gan [to] budde & blosme newe
 And to bere frut and leuys fresh off hewe.
 And semblabli with hir confeccious 2248
 His olde humours she hath depurid cleene,
 And with hir lusti fresh[e] pociouns
 His empti skyn, trembling & riht leene,
 Pale and wan, that no blood was seene, 2252
 But as it were a dedli creature —
 Al this hath she transformyd bi nature.
 Made hym lusti and fressh off his corage,
 Glad off herte, liffli off cheer and siht, 2256
 Riht weel hewed and cleer off his visage,
 Wonder delyuer bothe off force & myht,
 In all his membris as weeldi & as lyht
 As euer he was, and in the same estat, 2260
 Bi craft off Mede he was so alterat.
- and caused the death of Pelias, Jason's uncle,
- Afftir al this, a-geyn kyng Pelleus
 She gan maligne, vnclé onto Iason;
 And off envie she procedith thus: 2264
 The kyngis douhtren* she drow to hir anoon,
 Hem counsailid that thei sholde goon
 Onto ther fadir & pleynli to hym seyn,
 Yiff he desirid to be yong a-geyn. 2268

2234. 2nd hir] *om.* H. 2238. that] *om.* R.2242. in] wip J — *in commixciouns the 2nd c is formed like t in*
 B, H, J. 2244. carectis] charactes P. 2246. to] *om.* R, H.

2249. humours] humorus R. 2250. hir] his H.

2265. douhtren] douhter B, douhtir R, douhtren H, daughters
 P, R 3, H 5 — drow] drawip J.

Ful restored his force to recure
 And therwithal in lusti age floure,
 She behihte to doon hir besi cure
 Lik his desir to helpyn and socoure, 2272
 And in this mateer so crafft[i]lli laboure,
 Fynali stonde in the same caas
 To be maad yong, lik as his brothir was.

Touchyng which thyng, for mor euydence 2276
 This Medea hath to the douhtren told,
 Off entent to yeue the mor credence,
 She bad hem take a ram that wer riht old,
 And with a knyff for to be so bold 2280
 To sleen this beeste afforn hem ther he stood,
 And in a vessel drawe out his olde blood,

Fulli affermyng lik as it wer trewe,
 That he sholde been a lamb a-geyn. 2284
 For she be crafft wolde his blood renewe
 In such wise be euidence pleyn
 That off elde no tokne shal be seyn —
 In al his membris as lusti and enteer 2288
 As was a lamb euyd off o yeer.

And therupon in ful sleihti wise
 She gan a processe off ful fals tresoun,
 The sustre made vpon this ram practise, 2292
 Drouh out his blood lik her entencioun;
 And she bi crafft off fals illusioun
 Blent her eyen bi apperence in veyn
 The olde ram to seeme a lamb a-geyn. 2296

Thus Medea be sleihte compassyng,
 Off envie and venymous hatreede,
 Excitid hath the sustre in werkyng,
 A-geyn ther fadir mortali to proceede. 2300
 With sharp[e] knyuis thei made her fader bleede,
 Mid the herte thoruhout euery veyne,
 Supposyng, the celi sustren tweyne,

That Pelleus renewed sholde be [p. 30] 2304
 To youthe a-geyn off force & off substaunce.
 But fynali bi tresoun off Mede

by promising
 his daughters
 to make him
 young like
 his brother,

persuading
 them

to kill their
 father.

2272. his] hir H. 2275. his] hir H. 2285. For] & H.
 2289. euyd] yewide R 3, yened P, eyned J, H 5.
 2299. sustre] sustren H, sustres H 5, sisters P.
 2300. to] om. H, R 3. 2305. youht geyn R.

- He lost* his liff, such was his woful chaunce;
 For she it wrouhte onli off vengauce, 2308
 As roote & ground off this cruel deede,
 A-geyn the* nature off al* womanheede.
- Medea
 thought this
 would please
 Jason, but
 it did not.
 Supposyng in hir opynyoun,
 How that the deth gretli sholde plesse 2312
 Off Pelleus onto hir lord Iasoun,
 Thoruh gret encres sette his herte at ese;
 But it rebounded into his disese,
 That fynali Iason hir forsook 2316
 For hir offence, and he his weye took
- He left her
 and went to
 Corinth,
 where he
 married
 Creusa,
 whom Medea
 burnt up
 in revenge.
 Into Corynthe, toward the kyng Creon,
 Whos douhter Creusa, for hir gret beute,
 Was afftirward iweddid to Iason. 2320
 But whan this weddyng was knowe to Mede,
 Caste she wolde theron auengid be,
 Gan to conspire off malis and envie,
 And thoruh hir magik and [hir] sorcerie, 2324
- In ful gret haste gan [for] to ordeyne
 A litil coffre, onli off entent;
 And bi hir yonge faire sonys tweyne,
 With othre iewelis, she hath the coffre sent, 2328
 Onto Creusa makyng a present,
 Which off malis she list so dispose,
 That whan Creusa the coffre dede onclose,
 The fir brast out a ful large space, 2332
 Brent Creusa bi ful gret violence,
 Set a-fire pleynli al the place
 Benchauntement; ther* was no resistance —
 Al wente affire that was in hir presence, 2336
 Bi vengauce dede ful gret damage.
 But whan Iason the fir sauh in his rage,
- Jason wanted
 to punish
 her,
 And considered the malis off Mede,
 Thouhte he wolde doon execucioun 2340
 For to punshe the gret iniquite
 A-geyn[e]s hym compassid off tresoun;
 For she off vengauce, a-geyn[es] al resoun,

2307. lost] leffte B, R. 2309. &] off R.

2310. the] om. B — al] al good B, R.

2312. that] at R. 2314. encres] encres R — at] in R.

2322. theron] om. R. 2324. hir] om. R, H.

2325. for] om. J, R. 2335. ther] pleynli ther B, R.

- Afftir that Creusa consumed was & brent, 2344
 Hir owne sonys, which she hadde sent,
 Withoute routhe or womanli pite,
 She falsli moordred — the childre that she bar — especially as
 Lik a stepmooder auenged for to be, 2348 she murdered
 Cutte ther throtis or that thei wer war, her two sons
 A-geyn nature, ther was noon othir spaar, out of hatred
 But for hatreede she hadde onto Iason. to him.
- Afftir this moordre she fledde hir way a-noon, 2352
 So escapyng his indignacioun.
 Be crafft off magik she wente at liberte
 To Athenys, and in that regioun
 She weddid was onto the kyng Egee. 2356
 Nat longe afftir bi hym a sone had she,
 The which[e] child, myn auctour tellith thus,
 Afftir Medea callid was Medus.
- Afftir whos name the famous regioun 2360
 I-named was, which is callid Meede.
 But folwyng ay hir olde condicioun,
 This Medea, void off shame & dreede,
 Compassid hath off wilful fals hatreede, 2364
 That Theseus, the sone off kyng Egee,
 With newe poisoun shal deuoured be.
- But Theseus, ful lik a manli knyht,
 In reparyng hom to his contre, 2368
 Off hih prudence espied a-noon ryht
 The mortal vengance, the gret[e] cruelte
 Off his stepmooder, which off enmite
 Concludid* hath in hir entencioun 2372
 Hym to destroie onwarli with poisoun.
- Hir herte off malis, cruel & horrible,
 As she that was with tresoun euer allied,
 Whan that she sauh hir purpos most odible 2376
 Be kyng Egeus fulli was espied,
 She hath hir herte & wittis newe applied,
 As in ther bookis poetis han compiled,
 A-geyn to Iason to be reconciled. 2380
- She fledde away for dreed off Theseus,
 List he hadde doon on hir vengauce,
 And fynali, as writ Ouidius,

2352. hir way] away H. 2361. callid is J, called is P.

2372. Concludid] Concludyng B, R.

- And moral Senec concludith in substaunce, 2384
 In his tragedies makyng remembraunce,
 How Medea, lik as poetis seyn,
 Onto Iason restored was a-geyn.
- Poets do not tell how it was that they were reconciled. Touchyng the eende off ther furious discord, [p. 31] 2388
 Poetis make theroff no menciou
 Nor telle no mene how thei fill at accord,
 But yiff it were bi incantacioun,
 Which so weel koude turne up-so-doun 2392
 Sundry thyngis off loue & off hatreede.
 And in Bochas off hir no mor I reede,
 Sauff whan she hadde fulfillid hir purpos,
 Myn auctour tellith, that Iason & Mede 2396
 Resorted han a-geyn onto Colchos
 Hir fadir Oetes, & from his pouerte
 Brouht hym a-geyn into his roial see,
 And to his crowne bi force thei hym restore: 2400
 Touchyng his eende, off hym I fynde* no more.
- At any rate, they restored Æetes to his throne. Thus his fortune hath turnyd to and fro,
 First lik a kyng hauyng ful gret richesse,
 Afftir lyuyng in pouert and in wo, 2404
 Sithen restorid to his worthynesse:
 Thus ay is sorwe medlid with gladnesse,
 Who can aduerte, in al worldli thyng,
 Record off Mynos, the noble worthi kyng. 2408
- Now I shall turn to Minos, son of Jupiter and Europa. **T**O whom I muste now my stile dresse,
 Folwen the traxis off Bochacius,
 The which[e] Mynos, as Ouide doth expresse,
 Touchyng his birthe writ[eth] pley[n]li thus, 2412
 That he was manli, wis and vertuous,
 Sone bi discent off Iubiter the grete,
 And off Europa born to been heir in Crete.
 Off his persone wonder delectable, 2416
 Ful renommed off wisdam and science,
 Bi dyuers titles off laude comendable
 Off birthe, off blood, off knyhtod & prudence;
 For bi his study and enteer dilligence 2420
 He fond first lawes groundid on resoun,
 Werbi off Crete the grete regioun
- He was king of Crete and

2390. at] om. R. 2401. I fynde] fynde I B, R, J.
 2412. writeth] writ R. 2419. &] of H.

Gouernyd was and set in stabilnesse.		
Alle iniuries and wrongis to refourme,	2424	governed his subjects well.
Made statutis extorsiouns to repressse,		
Off rihtwisesse thei took ther firste fourme,		
And that ech man sholde hymself confourme		
Lik ther degrees, subiect and souerayne,	2428	
That no man hadde no mater to complayne.		
He made his liges to lyuen in quiete,		
Cleer shynyng in his roial noblesse,		
With suerd and sceptre sittyng in his seete;	2432	His wife's name was Pasiphae,
And whil he floured in his worthynesse		
He took a wiff off excellent fairnesse,		
Douhter to Phebus, in Bochas ye may see,		
And she was callid faire Pasiphe.	2436	
And hir fadir, bi record off writyng,		
In his tyme was holden ful famous;		
Off thile off Rodis he was crownyd kyng,		
And in his daies off port ful glorious,	2440	
Riht proud in armis and victorious,		
Takyng witnesse Methamorphoseos.		by whom he had three children.
His douhter hadde thre childre be Mynos,		
The firste a sone callid Androgee,	2444	
And afftirward ful faire douhtren tweyne,		
Riht womanli and goodli on to see;		
But, as Fortune for hem dede ordeyne,		
Thei felte her lyue gret trouble & [gret] peyne —	2448	
Callid Adriana, and Phedra was the tothir,		
Folwyng ther fate, it myhte be noon othir.		
Androgeus bi kyng Mynos was sent,		
For he sholde profityn in clergie,	2452	
To Athenys off vertuuous entent		
There to stodien in philosophie;		
And for he gan tenrece & multeplie		
And passe all othir bi studi in lernyng	2456	Their son Androgeus was maliciously slain in Athens,
And to excelle his felawes in cunnyng,		
Thei off envie and fals malis, allas,		
Made a-geyn hym a conspiracioun,		
And from a pynacle sacrid to Pallas,	2460	

2425. repressse] oppresse R. 2439. thile] the yile R.

2441. riht victorious H. 2445. douhtre R.

2448. 2nd gret] om. R. 2449. that othir R.

2450. ther] the H. 2452. sholde] wold R.

Off ful gret heihte, made hym tumble doun.
 For which iniurie, Bochas maketh mencioun,
 His fadir Mynos auengid for to be,
 Leide a gret power a-boute the cite. 2464

for which
 Minos took
 revenge.

He caste hym fulli that no man sholde hym lette,
 But that he wolde doon crueli vengauunce;
 And round a-boute so sore he hem besette
 With men off armys & with his ordynaunce, 2468
 That fynali he brouht hem to vttraunce,
 And them constreynyd, withynne a litil space,
 Ther liff, ther deth submyttyng to his grace.

Nisus, king
 of Megara,
 helped the
 Athenians,

But whil thei made ageyn hym resistence, [p. 32] 2472
 Supposyng his power to withstonde,
 Nisus, that was kyng off Megarence,
 A-geyn Mynos ther parti took on honde:
 And ofte tymes, as ye shal vndirstonde, 2476
 Whan kyng Mynos the cite dede assaile,
 Nisus withynne, with myhti apparaile

but his
 daughter
 Scylla fell
 in love with
 Minos

Vpon the wal stood in his diffence —
 Whan that Mynos, ful lik a manli knyht, 2480
 Fauht withoute with sturdi violence,
 Lich Mars hymself in steel armyd briht.
 Wheroff whan Scilla onys hadde a siht,
 Douhtir to Nisus, aduerting his prowesse, 2484
 A-noon for loue she fill in gret distresse.

She was supprised with his hih noblesse;
 His manli force, expert many-fold,
 Set[te] Scilla in gret heynesse: 2488
 For loue off Mynos, off poetis it is told,
 Made hir herte presumen and be bold,
 First hir-silff to putte in iupartie,
 Hir fadris liff, the cite, the clergie. 2492

and conspired
 her father's
 death,

From hir herte loue hath set a-side,
 A-geyn nature, hir blood & hir kynreede;
 And al frenshipe from hire she gan deuyde,
 And off hir worship took no maner heede: 2496
 Loue maad hir cruel, a-geyn al womanheede,
 First hir herte so sore sette affire,
 Hir fadres deth falsli to conspire.

2469. vttraunce] variaunce R. 2471. Ther] The H.
 2474. Magarence H. 2489. 2nd off] in H.
 2491. iupartie] parti R.

- For kyng Mynos beyng a straunger 2500 a strange
Was so enprentid in hir opynyoun, thing for a
Off creatures ther stood noon so neer; young
And for his sake, bi ful fals tresoun, woman to
She compassid the destruccioun do,
2504
First off hir fadir and off the cite —
So straunge a thyng, allas, how myhte it be,
That a woman off yeris yong and tendre (but often
Koude ymagyne so merueilous a thyng! 2508 the most
But offte it fallith, that creatures splendre, angelic ap-
Vnder a face off angelik loking, appearing
Been verrai wolues outward in werkyng. creatures
Eek vnder colour off ther port femynyne, 2512
Summe be founde verray serpentyne,
Lambis in shewyng, shadwid with meeknesse, are as cruel
Cruel as tiges, who doth to hem offence, as tigers).
Off humble cheer pretending a liknesse. 2516
But, o allas! what harm doth apparence,
What damage doth countirifet innocence,
Vndir a mantil shrowdid off womanheed,
Whan feyned falsnesse doth ther bridil leed! 2520
For this Scilla, the kyngis douhter deere, Like a
In whom he sette hool his affeccioun, sorceress
His hertis ioie, his plesaunce most enteere,
His worldli blisse, his consolacioun, — 2524
But she al turned to his confusioun,
Nat lich a douhter, but lik a sorceresse
His deth compassid, the story berth witnessse.
Hir fadir hadde a fatal her that shon 2528
Brihtere than gold, in which he dede assure
Manli to fihte* a-geyn his mortal fon;
For on his hed[e] whil it dede endure,
He sholde venquysshē bi manhod, & recure, 2532
And thoruh his knythod, to his ences off glory,
In euery quarell wynnē the victory.
But whil hir fadir kyng Nisus lay & sleep,
Vpon a nyht, parcel affor day, 2536 she cut
Ful secreli, or that he took keep, away the
The her off gold this Scilla kit away; fatal hair
And onto Mynos, armyd wher he lay, of gold from
Nisus' head,

2530. fihte] fihten B.

2538. kit] did H.

- She it presentid thoruh hir ordynaunce, 2540
 Off fals entent hym for to do plesaunce.
- and, as Ovid
 tells, took a
 sharp knife
 and killed
 him. But in this mateer, lik as writ Ouide,
 Methamorphoseos, who-so taketh heed,
 Hir fadir slepyng, she knelyng bi his side, 2544
 Took a sharp knyff withoute feer or dreed,
 Whil he lay nakid, she karff a-too his hed,
 Stal hir way[e] off ful fals entent,
 And to kyng Mynos the hed she doth present. 2548
- She presented
 her father's
 head to
 Minos And in hir comyng onto his presence,
 Hir fadris hed whan she afforn hym laide,
 No-thing a-shamed off hir gret offence,
 Onto Mynos thus she dede abraide, 2552
 And with bold cheer[e] euene thus she saide:
 "Mi lord," quod she, "with support off your grace,
 Yeueth to my tale leiser tyme and space;
- and declared
 that her
 love for him
 had Certis, my lord, loue hath excitid me [p. 33] 2556
 And constreynyd to this cruel deede,
 To slen my fader, destroien my cite,
 Forgete my worshep, forsaken womanheede,
 And maad me hardi to make my fader bleede — 2560
 Thynges horrible thus I haue vndertake
 For tacomplisshe onli for your sake.
- constrained
 her to do
 this horrible
 deed. Mi-silff disheritid for loue off your persone,
 Callid in my contre a fals traitouresse, 2564
 Disconsolat stole a-wey a-lone,
 Off newe diffamed, named a maistresse
 Off fals moordre, I brynge a gret wisse,
 Mi fadres hed and his dedli visage, 2568
 A-geyn nature to forthren your viage.
- 'Wherefore,
 I pray, consider,
 like a gentle
 knight, Wherefore, I praie that ye list aduertise,
 And considreth lich a gentil knyht
 How I, for loue toward your gret emprise, 2572
 And to gret fortheryng also off your ryht,
 Haue first my fader depryued off his myht,
 Rafft hym his liff, dispoiled his richesse
 To do plesaunce to your hih noblesse. 2576
- and accept
 my love. And no-thing axe onto my guerdoun
 Nor to my reward that myhte me auaille,
 But that I myhte haue ful possessioun

- Off your *persone*, most worthi in bataile; 2580
 For ther is no tresor that myhte countiruaile
 To my desir, as that ye wolde in deede
 Goodli accepte me and my maidenheede.
- Ye may me saue & spille with a woord, 2584 "I have left
 Make most glad and most dolerous; all behind
 I nat requere off you, my souereyn lord, for your
 But that ye wolde be to me gracious: sake."
 For blood and kyn, and my fadres hous 2588
 Al lefft behynde, yiff ye list aduerte,
 And vndepartid youe to you myn herte.
- Which to your hihnesse auhte inouh suffice,
 All thyng considred, in your roial estat, 2592
 Conceyued also in how vnkouth wise
 For your loue I stonde desolat,
 Sauff off your mercy fulli disconsolat.
 Heere is al and sum, your loue I beie to sore, 2596
 But ye do grace; I can sey you no more."
- And whan she hadde hir tale told knelyng, Minos was
 horrified.
 With a maner pretense off womanheed, 2600
 Off al hir tresoun a poynt nat concelyng,
 The kyng astonyd off hir horrible deed,
 Bi gret auys peised and took heed,
 It was not sitting to prynce nor to no kyng
 To do fauour to so froward a thyng. 2604
- With troublid herte and with a face pale,
 His look vpcast, [he] seide, "God forbeede,
 That euer in cronycle, in story or in tale,
 That any man sholde off Mynos reede, 2608
 How he supported so venymous a deede —
 Fauoure a woman, alas and wellaway!
 Which slouh hir fader whan he a-bedde lay.
- But for your hatful and vnkyndli rage, 2612 "May the
 I pray the goddis echon and Saturne gods take
 To take vengauce on your fals outrage: vengeance
 For euery-wher, wher ye do returne, on you!
 And eueri place wher-as ye soiourne, 2616

2585. dolorous H.

2589. Al] And R.

2593. Conceyued] And conceyve H.

2603. no] om. H.

2606. he] om. R, J, P, H 5.

2608. That] Tat R.

Lond and se, shortli to expresse,
Thei been infect with your cursidnesse.

" Begone from
my court!

Your owne mouth your outrage doth accuse;
And your accus is so abhomynable, 2620

That your giffis I fulli do refuse, —
Thei be so froward and repreuable.

And your persone, disnaturel & vnstable,
Withynne my court, it were a thyng nat fayr, 2624
That ye sholde a-bide or haue repair.

"May Tellus
and Neptune
refuse you
an abiding-
place!"

Ye be so hatful vpon eueri side
And contrarious off condicioun,
I prairie Tellus, which off the erthe is guide, 2628

And to Neptunus I make this orisoun:
As ferr as strecchith ther domynacioun
Vnder the boundis off ther regalie,
A duellyng-place that thei to you denye!" 2632

Whan Mynos hadde his answer thus deuised,
On resoun groundid and on equite,
And Scilla sauh how she was despised,
Knew no parti, passage nor contre 2636

To fynde socour whedir she myhte fle,
But disspeired as a traitouresse,
Toward the se a-noon she gan hir dresse

The gods
turned
Scylla into
a quail
and her
father into
a sparrow-
hawk. That
was their
end.

Tentre the water pleynli yiff she myhte, [p. 34] 2640
For verrai shame hirseluene for to shrowde;

And whan the goddis theroff hadde a syhte,
Thei turned hire, as thei that myhte & kowde,
In-ta quaile for to syng lowde. 2644

Hir fader Nisus thei dede also transmue
In ta sperhawk, the quaile to pursue.

This was the eende off Nisus & off Scille.
And afftirward off Athenes the toun 2648

Was yolden vp to stonden at the wille
Off kyng Mynos, withoute condicioun;
Euery thre yeer bi reuolucioun

Thei off the cite sholde nat dellaie
Nyne off ther childre for a tribut paie. 2652

2640. *The second hand begins here R.*

2643. that] *om.* R.

2645. transmue] *remewe R.*

2646. sperhawk] *sparow R, sparhawke H.*

2647. 2nd off] *om.* R.

2651. thre] *om.* R.

- This was bi Mynos thymposicioun
 Vpon Athenys; and off verrai dreed
 Thei obeied, as maad is mencionn,
 And ther childre yeer bi yeer thei leed
 Into Crete the Mynotaur to feed,
 Onto this monstre ordeyned for repast,
 Which at ther comyng deuoured wer in hast. 2656
- Minos,
 victorious
 over the
 Athenians,
 compelled
 them to
 send 9 chil-
 dren every
 3 years to
 the Minotaur.
- But or that I ferthere do proceede
 In this mater, I will do my cure
 To declare, yiff ye list take heede,
 Off this monstre to telle the engendrure,*
 Vnkouth to heere and a-geyn nature;
 For bi the writyng off Ouidius,
 This ougli beeste was engendrid thus, 2664
- Methamorphoseos, the maner ye may see:
 Mynos hadde a bole off gret fairnesse,
 Whit as mylk; and the queen Pasiphe
 Loued hym so hote, the story berth witnessse,
 And Dedalus dede his besynesse
 [Bi sotil craft, & made his gynnys so,
 That ayenst kynde with hir he had to do, 2668
- The Minotaur
 was the off-
 spring of
 Pasiphae and
 a white bull.
- And conceyued a beest[e] monstruous,
 That was departid, halfe bole, half man;
 And as the poete bi wrytyng techith vs,
 Off Mynotaurus thus the name began.
 And Dedalus, not long aftir whan]
 That this monstre was bi the queen forth
 brouht,
 This subtil werkman hath an hous Iwrouht 2672
- And conceyued a beest[e] monstruous,
 That was departid, halfe bole, half man;
 And as the poete bi wrytyng techith vs,
 Off Mynotaurus thus the name began.
 And Dedalus, not long aftir whan]
 That this monstre was bi the queen forth
 brouht,
 This subtil werkman hath an hous Iwrouht 2676
- Callid Laboryntus,* dyuers and vnkouth,
 Ful off wrynkles and off straungenesse,
 Ougli to knowe which is north or* south,
 Or to what part a man sholde hym dresse;
 Folk were ther blent with furious derknesse,
 Who that entred, his retourn was in veyn,
 Withoute a clue for to resorte a-geyn. 2680
- The bull
 lived in
 the Labyrinth
 made by
 Daedalus,

2654. bi] of H, R 3.

2657. children R.

2658. Mynatour R. 2659. this] the R. 2662. will] wold R.

2664. telle the engendrure] tellen thengendrure B, H.

2670. Posiphee R. 2673-9 are supplied from R, om. in B, H.

2676. halfe a bull P. 2677. bi] om. P.

2678. Mynataurus J, Mynotouris H. 2682. Loboryntus B.

2684. or] & B.

a place like
a prison,
where it
devoured
human flesh.

Off Mynotaurus this was the habitacle,
Lik a prisoun maad for tormentrie,
For dampnyd folk a peynful tabernacle;
For all that lay ther in iupartie, 2692
The monstre muste deuoure hem & defie:
And speciali was ordeyned this torment
For all that wern doun from Athenys sent.

Some books,
however, say
that Pasiphae
had a child by

But in this mater summe bookis varie, 2696
And afferme how queen Pasiphe
Off kyng Mynos loued a secretarie
Callid Taurus, in Bochas ye may see;
And thus the kyng, for al his rialte, 2700
Deceyued was, for who may any while
Hymself preserue wher women list begile?

Taurus, a
secretary, —
which would
explain the
matter of
the bull.

For bi this Taurus, Bochas berth witnessse,
Queen Pasiphe hadde a child ful fair, 2704
Mynos nat knowyng bi no liklynesse
But that the child was born to been his hair.
His trust was good, he fill in no dispair;
For some husbondis, as poetis han compiled, 2708
Which most assure [hem] rathest been begiled.

Wives are a
bad lot, but
we do not
discard a
falcon for
one fault.

Innocentis can nat deeme a-mysse,
Namli off wyues that be founde trewe;
Clerkis may write, but doutles thus it isse, 2712
Off ther nature thei loue no thynges newe:
Stedfast off hertè, thei chaunge nat her hewe;
Hawkes best preued, sumwhile a chek can make,
Yit for o faute the foul is nat forsake. 2716

To return to
the Athenians,
they paid
their tribute;

Off these materes write I will no more.
But ay the tribut & seruage off the toun
Procedith forth, thei constreyned wer so sore,
Lich as ther lott turned up and doun; 2720
For ther was maad[e] non excepcioun
Off hih nor louh, nothir for sour nor swete,
But as it fill, thei were sent into Crete.

2695. from Atthenes doun sent R.

2696. bookis] folk R. 2697. Posiphe R.

2704. Posiphe R. 2705. liklynesse] liknesse R.

2706. that at R.

2709. hem] om. J, R. 2715. sumwhile] sume tyme R —
can] gan R.

2716. o] a R — fouyl R.

2717. these materes] this mateer R — will I R.

2719. wer constreynyd R. 2721. made was R.

- The* statut was so inli rigerous, 2724
 Thei took ther sort as it cam a-boute,
 Til atte laste it fill on Theseus, and Theseus,
 That he mut gon foorth a-mong the route,
 Kyng Eges sone, beyng in gret doute 2728
 Touchyng his liff, which myht nat be socoured,
 But that he muste with othre be deuoured.
- Which Theseus, for his worthynesse, [p. 35]
 And off his knythod for the gret ences 2732
 Thoruh manly force, & for his hih prowesse
 Whilom was callid the seconde Hercules, who
 Mong Amazones put hymself in pres, afterwards
 Weddid Ypolita, as bookis specefie, Hippolyte,
 The hardi queen [callid] off Femynye. 2736 queen of the
 Amazons,
- And afftirward to Thebes he is gon, and helped
 Halp there the ladies in especiall, the ladies of
 Which that compleyned vpon the kyng Creon, 2740 Thebes
 Which hem destourbed, lik ther estat roiall against the
 To holde and halwe the festis funerall tyranny of
 Off ther lordis, as queenys & pryncessis, Creon,
 Off wifli trouthe to shewe ther kyndenesis. 2744
- For whan this Duk the maner hadde seyn, was
 And off Creon the grete iniquite, sent to
 To the ladies he made delyuere a-geyn Minos,
 Ther lordis bonys, off routhe & off pite. 2748
 Yit in his youthe out off his cite
 He was delyuered, bi statut ful odible,
 To be deuoured off this beeste horrible.
- He goth to prisson, for al his semlynesse, 2752
 As the statut felli dede ordeyne; whose
 But off routhe and off gentilesse, daughters re-
 Hym to preserue from that dedli peyne, solved to
 Off kyng Mynos the goodli douhtren tweyne, save him
 Adriane shoop off a remedie, 2756 from the
 And faire Phedra, that he shal nat die. Minotaur,
- Thoruh ther helpe he hath the monstre slayn, which he slew.
 That was so dreedful & ougli for to see; He falsly de-
 Bi hem he scapid, wheroff he was ful fayn, 2760 serted
 Ariadne for
 Phædra,

2724. The] Ther B.

2735. Among Amozones he put R. 2736. Ipolito R.

2741. disturblid R. 2748. Ther] The R. 2757. off]om R.

2758. shal] shuld R. 2760. so] om. R. 2761. wheroff] wherfor R.

- Lad hem with hym, toward his contre.
 And bi the weie, deuoid off al pite,
 Adriane he falsli hath forsake 2764
 A-geyn his surance, & Phædra he hath take.
 Amyd the se [he] lefft hir in an ile,
 Toward no parti she knew no declyn;
 She crieth, wepith, allas, the harde while! 2768
 For off hir fate this was the mortal fyn,
 That for pite Bachus, the god off wyn,
 Took hir to wyue, whos crowne of stonys fyne
 Doth now in heuene with the sterris shyne. 2772
 Thus off Theseus ye may beholde and see
 To Adryane the gret onstedfastnesse,
 The grete ontrouthe, the mutabilite,
 The broke assurance and newfangilnesse; 2776
 But celi women keepe ther stedfastnesse
 Ay ondefouled, sauff, sumwhile off ther kynde,
 Thei must hem purueie, whan men be* founde
 onkynde.
 Off Theseus I can no more now seyn 2780
 In this mater to make off hym memorie,
 But to kyng Mynos I will resorte a-geyn
 To tell how Fortune, ay fals & transitorie,
 In what poyntis diffacid hath his glorie. 2784
 First off echon Bochas doth speciefie
 Off Pasiphe the foule aduout[e]rie,
 Which was his wiff, and stood weel in his grace,
 To his plesance she was most souerayne; 2788
 But a cloude off [a] smal trespace
 Made hir lord at hir to disdeyne:
 But he off wisdam bar preuyli his peyne,
 For in this cas, this is my sentence, 2792
 Lat prudent husbandis take hem to pacience.
 On* other thyngis Mynos gan compleyne,
 Hauyng in herte theroff ful gret greuauunce,
 That he so loste his faire douhtren tweyne, 2796
2764. full falsly he hath R. 2765. Ayenste R — assurance R.
 2766. Amyd] In myddis R, J, H 5 — he] om. H.
 2768. She wepith she crieth R. 2772. the] ix. R.
 2776. and] & the R. 2778. Ay] But euere R — sumwhile]
 sum tyme R. 2779. be] been B — founde] om. H.
 2781. In] of H. 2783. ay] euere R. 2786. Posiphe R,
 H 5, Pasipha P. 2789. 2nd a] om. R, H, R 3, P.
 2792. in this] such R. 2793. hem] hede R.
 2794. On] And on B, H — Mynos] om. H — gan] gan also R, J.

and Ariadne
 became the
 wife of
 Bacchus.

Unlike men,
 women are
 constant, un-
 less their
 husbands be-
 have badly
 to them.

Fortune was
 unkind to
 Minos:

Pasiphae com-
 mitted
 adultery
 (husbands
 should bear
 such things
 in patience),
 his daughters
 ran away,
 the Minotaur
 was killed,
 Theseus es-
 caped, Athens
 was freed from
 its tribute, and
 Theseus for-
 sook Ariadne
 and married
 Phædra.

- And Mynotaurus slay[e]n with myschaunce.
 Eek onto hym it was a gret penaunce
 That Theseus was gon at liberte,
 And from al tribut delyuered his cite. 2800
- It greued hym eek in contenance & cheer,
 That Theseus Adriane forsook,
 It liked hym nat also the maneer
 Onto his wiff that he Phedra took; 2804
 And yit this Phedra, lich as seith my book,
 Hadde too sonys bi this Theseus,
 First Demophon & next Anthilocus.
- Eek Theseus afftir gan hym drawe 2808
 Toward Cecile, in steel armyd cleene,
 With Pirotheus, in armys his felawe,
 For to rauysshe Proserpyna the queene.
 But off entent Phedra ful oncleene, 2812
 Loued hir stepsone callid Ypolitus.
 But for he was to hire daungerous,
- And to hir lust froward and contrarie, [p. 36]
 In his apport nat goodli nor benigne, 2816
 Off fals entent anon she gan to varie,
 And a-geyn hym ful felli to maligne,
 With a pretence off many tokne & signe
 Off womanhed, she gan hym accuse, 2820
 Hire auoutry falsli to excuse.
- Who seith that women can nat ymagyne
 In ther diffence talis ful vntrewe,
 To ther desir yiff men list nat enclyne 2824
 Nor on ther feyned fals[e] wo to rewe,
 Anon thei can compasse[n] thynges newe,
 Fisse and fynde out in ther entencioun
 A couert cloude to shadwe ther tresoun. 2828
- She hath accusid yonge Ypolitus
 Off fals auoutri in his tendre age,
 Tolde & affermed to duk Theseus,
 With ful bold cheer[e] & a pleyn visage, 2832
 How he purposed in his furious rage
- 2798, 2801, 2808. Eek] Also R. 2803. nat] nouth R.
 2804. he] sche R. 2807. Demophon R.
 2816. nor] ne R. 2818. ayens his R. 2819. many a H.
 2823. ful] om. R.
 2825. Nor] Neithir R — fals feyned R. 2826. compassh R.
 2832. a] om. R.
- Theseus then went to Sicilly, and Phædra fell in love with her step-son Hippolytus.
- When he repulsed her, she turned on him (women are well able to lie in their own interest)
- and accused him to Theseus of improper conduct toward her.

- Onli bi force hir beute to oppresse,
 Hir lord besechyng to reforme & redresse
- (Women are sometimes very untruthful;
- The grete iniurie doon onto his wiff 2836
 Whil he was absent for thyngis that bar charge.
 Wyues off talis been sumwhile inuentiff
 To suffre ther tungen falsli fleen at large;
 But folk that list off daunger hem discharge, 2840
 Off such accusyng ne take thei noon heed
 Til the trouthe be tried out in deed.
- of course I don't mean good and innocent ones, but there are very few of that sort.)
- I meene nothyng off wyues that been goode,
 Nor off women that floure in innocence; 2844
 For God forbeede, and the Hooli Roode,
 But men sholde do deu reuerence
 To ther noblesse and ther excellence,
 Declare ther bounte and ther vertu shewe, 2848
 And more them cherisse be-cause ther be so fewe.
- Hippolytus was frightened and fled.
- Touchyng thaccusyng ageyn Ypolitus,
 Thouh it so were that it was fals in deede,
 Yit he for shame and* feer off Theseus, 2852
 As in the story ye may beholde and reede,
 In his herte he cauhte a maner dreede,
 That he, allas! this cely yonge knyht,
 Fledde & withdrouh hym out off his fadris siht, 2856
- His horses ran away and he and his chariot were overwhelmed by a landslide;
- His indignacioun pleynli to eschewe,
 Thouh bi desert in hym ther was no lak.
 Off hasti dreed as he gan remewe
 Other in a chaar or vpon hors[e]bak, 2860
 His hors affraied, ther fill a sodeyn wrak
 Doun from a roche pendant, as ye shal lere —
 He and his chaar wer drownyd bothe Ifeere.
- and Phædra, fearing the vengeance of Theseus, slew herself.
- Thus ongilti, in his most lusti youthe 2864
 He was conueied to his destruccioun;
 The sclandre conspired, as it is weel kouthe,
 Bi fals[e] Phædra: but in conclusioun
 The sclandre turned to hir confusioun; 2868
 For whan she wiste Ypolitus was ded
 Thoruh hir defaute, anon for shame & dreed

2834. oppresse] presse R. 2835. redresse] dresse R.

2836. iniurie] iniquyte R — onto] to R.

2838. sumtyme been R.

2840. folkis R — daunger] damage R.

2850. thaccusyng] this accusyng R.

2851. 2nd it] he R — was] wer H. 2852. and] and for B.

She took a* swerd, ful sharp[e] whet & grounde,
 And therewithall she rooff hir herte on tweyne. 2872
 Loo, how that vengauce will euer* a-geyn rebounde
 On hem that falsli doon ther bisi peyne
 To scandre folk; for lik as thei ordeyne
 With ther defaultis othir folkis tattwite, 2876
 God atte laste ther malice can acquite!

Yit summe bookis off Phædra do recorde
 That she, a-shamyd & confus off this deede,
 Heeng hirsilff up ful hi[h]e with a corde. 2880
 Loo, how fals scandre can quite folk ther meede!
 Wherefore, I counseile eueri man tak heede,
 In such materis as stonde in noun certeyn,
 From hasti doomys his tunge to restreyn. 2884

Such things
happen to
people who
slander others.

And it would
also be well
for men not
to draw
hasty con-
clusions, as
Theseus seems
to have done.

AMONG these stories woful for to reede,
 Al bespreynt with teris in his face,
 Ful sodenli, Iohn Bochas gan take* heede,
 A-myd the pres Zizara cam in place — 2888
 And how that Fortune gan eek to manace
 This proude duk, ful myhti & notable,
 Off kyng Iabyn callid the grete constable.

Off his hoost ledere and gouernour, 2892
 To Israel verray mortall fo;
 With peephe he rood lich a conquerour,
 And wher that euer his meyne dede go,
 The erthe quook, peeplis drad hym so, 2896
 Fledde from his face wher-as he cam a-ferre.
 Nyne hundred waynes he hadde for the werre,
 Strongli enarmed with hookes made lyk*sithes, [p. 37]
 Whothat approched to mayme*hym & to wounde. 2900
 For this tirant off custum offte sithes

Sisera,
Jabin's
general,

mortal foe
to the Jews,

2871. a] his B, hir H — sherp I whet & groun R.
 2872. rooff] raff R — on tweyne] atweyne R.
 2873. that] om. H — euer] ay B, H, R 3, om. P.
 2876. defaultis] diffamys — to atwyte R.
 2877. malice] mateeres H — can] gan R.
 2880. ful] wol H. 2881. folk quyte for þer mede R.
 2884. hasti] om. H — hasti doomys] his hasty language R.
 2887. take] taken B.
 2888. A-myd] In middes R — in] to R.
 2889. eek] also R. 2896. peple R.
 2899. made lyk] & with B, H.
 2900. mayme] mayne B, H, H 5 — hym] om. R, J.

- Hadde gret delit the Iewes to confounde;
 And alle tho that his swerd hath founde,
 Kyng Iabyn bad, the prynce off Canaan, 2904
 In Israel to spare child nor man.
- was suffered
 by God to
 chastise their
 sins. This Zizara was sent to been ther scourge,
 Bi Goddis suffrance ther synnes to chastise,
 Ther olde offences to punshen & to pourge, 2908
 As a flagelle, in many sundry wise;
 But whan off resoun thei gan hem bet deuyse,
 And for ther trespassis to falle in repentaunce,
 God gan withdrawe the hand off his vengauce. 2912
- But when
 they repented, For in ther myscheef thei gan the * Lord to knowe,
 Felyng the prikke off his punycioun;
 And mercy thanne hath vnben the bowe
 Off his fell ire and castigacioun: 2916
 To God thei made ther inuocacioun,
 And he hem herde in ther mortal dreede.
 In Iudicum the story ye may reede,
- God sent
 Deborah in
 their defence, How in the while that this Zizara 2920
 Shoop hym off newe Iewes to oppresse,
 In ther diffence God sent hem Delbora,
 A prophetesse, the story berth witnessse,
 To yeue hem counsail ther harmys to redresse, 2924
 And bi the sperit off hir prophecye
 For to withstonde the grete tirannye
 Off Zizara, which was descendid doun
 With a gret hoost into the feeld repeired. 2928
 But Delbora, of hih discrecioun,
 Whan that she sauh the Iewes disespeired,
 And for to fihte ther corages sore appeired,
 She made hem first deuoutli in ther dreed 2932
 To crie to God to helpe hem in ther need.
- who became
 their leader
 and judge. She was ther iuge and ther gouerneresse,
 Cheeff off ther counsail; & off custom she,
 Causis dependyng, bi gret avisynesse, 2936
 That stood in doute, bi doom off equite
 She tried hem out vnder a palme tre,

2904. the] *om.* R. 2905. nor] ne J, R 3, H 5, P.

2910. bet] better R. 2911. ther] the R.

2912. gan] can R. 2913. the] ther B, H.

2919. *Marginal note in R:* "Nota Iudicum iiii Ca°."

2921. the Iewis R.

2928. hoost] coste R. 2932. ther] þat R. 2936. bi] of R.

- And was nat hasty* no mater to termyne
Til she the parties affor dede examyne. 2940
- And whan she knew & herde off the komyng
Off Zizara with ful gret puissaunce,
That was constable off the myhti kyng
Callid Iabyn, with al his ordenaunce, 2944
Vpon Iewes for to doon vengauce,
This Delbora gan prudentli entende
The Iewes parti bi wisdam to diffende.
- She bad Barach, hir husbonde, anon riht 2948 she bade
Off Neptalym ten thousand with hym take, Barak, her
Geyn Zizara to fihten for ther riht, husband, lead
And that he sholde a gret enarme make, a host against
But he for dreed this iourne gan forsake, him. But as
And durste nat a-geyn hym tho werreye Barak was
But she were present, and list hym to conveye. afraid,
- “Weel weel,” quod she, “sithe it stondith so,
That off wantrust ye haue a maner dreed, 2956
I will my-silff[e] gladli with you go,
You to supporte in this grete need;
But tristith fulli, as ye shal fynde in deed,
That a woman, with laude, honour & glorye, 2960
Shal fro you wynne the pris off this victorye.”
- It folwid afftir sothli as she saide.
Auysili she made hir ordynaunce,
And the cheeff charge on hirsilff she laide, 2964 Sisera fled
As pryncesse off Iewes gouernaunce,
And prudentli gan hirsilff auauce,
With God conueied & support off his grace,
With Zizara to meetyn in the face. 2968
- And speciali touchyng this viage,
God took a-way the sperit and the myht
Fro Zizara, his force and his corage,
That he was ferfull tentren into fyht, 2972
Kepte his chaar & took hym onto flyht,
Knowyng no place seurli in tabide,
Til that Iahel, a woman, dede hym hide

2939. hasty] hardi B, hardy H.

2940. afforne H. 2941. herd & knew R.

2948. Barish H.

2950. Geyn] A3ens R.

2956. That] Than H. 2972. feerdful R.

2973. onto] into R. 2975. Iael R.

- Withynne hir tente, almost ded for dreed, 2976
 Vnder a mantell desirous for to drynke.
 She gaff hym mylk; the slep fill in his hed,
 And whil that he for heuynesse gan wynke
 And sadli slepte, she gan hir to be-thynke; 2980
 Thouhte she wolde for Zizara so shape,
 That with the liff he shulde nat escape.
- She took a nail that was sharp & long, [p. 38]
 And couertli gan hirsilff auaunce; 2984
 With an hamer myhti, round & strong
 She droff the nail — loo, this was hir vengauce! —
 Thoruhout his hed: seeth heer þe sodeyn chaunce
 Off tirantis that trusten on Fortune, 2988
 Which wil nat suffre hem longe to contune
- In ther fals vsurped tirannye
 To holde peeplis in long subieccioun.
 She can hem blandissh* with hir flat[e]rye 2992
 Vnder a colour off fals collusioun,
 And with a sodeyn transmutacioun
 Fortune hem can, that pore folkis trouble,
 Reuerse ther pride with hir face double. 2996
- What sholde I lengere in this mater tarye?
 Thouh that lordshap be myhti & famous,
 Lat Zizara been your exaumpyarye,
 It nat endureth but it be vertuous. 3000
 Conquest, victory, thouh thei be glorious,
 Onto the world, yiff vertu be behynde,
 Men nat reioise to haue ther name in mynde.
- For Fortune thoruh hir frowardnesse 3004
 Hath kyngis put out off ther regiouns,
 And she hath also thoruh hir doubilnesse
 Destroied lynages, with ther successiouns:
 Made she nat whilom hir translaciouns 3008
 Off the kyngdam callid Argyuois,
 To be transportid to Lacedemonois?
- The same tyme whan Zizara the proude
 Gan Goddis peeples to putte vnder foote, 3012
 Famys trumpe bleuh his name up loude

who
drove a nail
into his
head while
he slept.

Such is the
fate of
tyrants!

Let Sisera be
an example
to you. No
lordship en-
dures with-
out virtue.

Sisera's pride
was humbled,
when he stood
at the height
of his glory.

2986. this was hir] heer H. 2988. Off] On R.
 2992. blandisshen B. 2995. folk R. 2996. hir] the R.
 3008. whilom] sume tyme R. 3010. Lacidomonis R, J.
 3013. Famys] Fame his R.

With sugred sownys semyng wonder soote;
 But al his pride was rent up bi the roote,
 Whan that his glori was outward most shewyng; 3016
 But who may truste on any worldli thyng!

FOLK han afforn seyn the fundacioun,
 Bi remembraunce off old antiquite,
 Off myhti Troye and* off Ylioun, 3020
 Afftir destroyed bi Grekis that cite,
 To vs declaryng the mutabilite
 Off fals Fortune, whos fauour last no while,
 Shewyng ay trewest whan she will begile. 3024

Fortune's
 fauour does
 not last
 long.

So variable she is in hir delites,
 Hir wheel vntrusti & frowardli meuyng,
 Record I take off the Madianytes,
 Ther vnwar fall ful doolfully pleynyng, 3028
 Which shewed hemsilff [ful] pitousli wepyng
 To Iohn Bochas, as he in writyng souhte
 How that Fortune a-geyn ther princis wrouhte,

Think of the
 Midianites,
 who came
 weeping to
 Bochas.

Which that gouerned the lond off Madian, 3032
 Trustyng off pride in ther gret puissaunce;
 And a-geyn Iewes a werre thei be-gan,
 Purposyng to brynge hem to vttraunce:
 But God that holdeth off werre the balaunce, 3036
 And can off pryncis oppresse the veynglory,
 Yeueth wher hym list conquest & victory,

They began
 a war on
 the Jews,

Nat to gret noumbre nor to gret multitude,
 But to that parti where he seeth the riht; 3040
 His dreedful hand, shortli to conclude,
 So halt up bi grace and yeueth liht*
 The hier hand, where he caste his siht;
 List his power and his fauour shewe, 3044
 Be it to many or be it onto fewe.

but God
 gives victory
 not to num-
 bers but to
 riht.

The wrong[e] parti gladli hath a fall,
 Thouh ther be mylliouns many mo than oon:
 I take wisse off Ieroboall, 3048

3014. sugred] sacrid R.

3018. fimyacioun J. 3020. and] and eek B.

3024. ay trewest] euer trust R. 3030. writyng] bokys H.

3039. nor] ne R.

3042. halt] holdith H 5 — So haldith vp his grace P — liht]
 to euery wiht B, H, euery wight P.

3046. in R: nota Ca° vj & Ca° vij Iudicum.

- Which is also callid Gedeon,
 That with thre hundrid fauht a-geyn the foon
 Off Israell, the Bible can deuyse,
 Whan he to God hadde doon his sacrefise. 3052
- Shewyng to hym a signe merueilous,
 Whan the flees with siluer deuh ful sheene
 Was spreynt and wet, the story tellith thus,
 And round a-boute the soil and al the greene 3056
 Was founde drie, and no drope seene,
 In tokne onli, this duk, this knyhtli man,
 Shold ha[ue] victory off al Madian.
- Thus Gedeon took with hym but a fewe, 3060
 Thre hundred chose, which laped* the ryuer,
 God onto hym such toknys dede shewe
 And euydencis afforn that wer ful cleer, 3064
 That he sholde been off riht good cheer
 And on no parti his aduersaries dreede,
 For no* prowesse nouthir* [for] manheede.
- Where God a-boue holdith* chaumpartie, [p. 39]
 There may a-geyn hym be makid no diffence; 3068
 Force, strengthe, wisdam nor cheualrie
 A-geyns his myht ar feeble off resistance.
 This was weel preued in experience,
 Whan thre hundred with Gedeon in noubre 3072
 So many thousandis bi grace dede encoumbre.
- This said[e] peeple, deuyded into thre,
 With ther trumpis, vpon the dirk[e] nyht,
 Bi Gedeon, that hadde the souereynthe, 3076
 With void[e] pottis & laumpis therynne lyht;
 And thus arraied thei entred into fyht.
 But onto hem this tokne was first knowe:
 Whan Gedeon his trumpe dede blowe, 3080
 Thei bleuh echon & loude gan to crie,
 Brak ther pottis and shewed anon riht,
 As the story pleyntli doth specefie,

Gideon de-
 feated the
 Midianites
 with 300 men.

Although he
 was weak in
 numbers,

God gave
 him victory.

They ter-
 rified their
 enemies by
 blowing their
 trumpets,
 breaking
 empty pots
 and suddenly
 shewing the
 light of their
 lamps.

3050. thre] iij B.

3061. laped] scaped B, P, H 5, scapid H, J, scapide R 3 —
 which] with R. 3064.] om. R.

3066. For no] ne for noo R 3, — no] nouht B, nouzt J, nought
 H 5 — nouthir] nor B, neithir R, neyht J, neyther P.

3067. holdith] halt B, H. 3069. nor] nethir R.

3070. ar] or R. 3075. trumpis] triumphis R.

3083. doth pleyntly R.

- Ther laumpis shewed with a ful sodeyn liht,
 Wheroff ther enmyes, astonyd in ther siht,
 Were so troublid vpon euery side,
 That in the feeld thei durst[e] nat a-bide. 3084 Whereupon the
Midianites
fed.
- The cri was this off hem euerichon: 3088
 "Thank to the Lord most noble & glorious,
 Pris to the suerd off myhti Gedeon,
 Which vs hath causid to be victorious,
 Maad our enmyes, most malicious, 3092
 Thoruh influence onli off his grace,
 For verray feer to fleen afforn our face!"
- Thus can the Lord off his magnificence
 The meeke exalte & the proude oppresse, 3096 Thus the
Lord can
exalt the
meek and
humble the
proud.
 Lich as he fyndeth in hertis difference,
 So off his power he can his domys dresse,
 Merci ay meynt with his rihtwisnesse,
 His iugementis with long delay differrid; 3100
 And or he punshe, pite is ay preferrid.

¶ *Lenvoye.*

- M**IHTI Princis, remembre that *your* power
 Is transitory & no while a-bidyng,
 As this tragedie hath rehersed heer 3104 Princes, re-
member, your
power is not
lasting.
 Bi evidencis ful notable in shewyng,
 And bexamples, in substau[n]ce witnessyng,
 That all tirantis, platli to termyne,
 Mut from ther staat sodenli declyne. 3108
- Phebus is fresshest in his mydday speer,
 His bemys brihtest & hattest out spredyng;
 But cloudi skies ful offte approche neer
 Teclipse his liht with ther vnwar comyng: 3112 Phœbus is
brightest at
midday, but
his light is
often dimmed
by clouds.
 Noon ertheli ioie is longe heer abidyng,
 Record off Titan, which stound[e]meel doth shyne,
 Yit toward nyht his stremys doun declyne.
- Whan that Fortune is fairest off hir cheer 3116 When
Fortune seems
fairest, then
is she most
ready to
change.
 Bi apparence, and most blandisshyng,
 Thanne is [she] falsest ech sesoun off the yeer,
 Hir sodeyn chaungis now vp now doun turnyng;
 The nyhtyngale in May doth fresshli syng, 3120
3089. Thank] than H.
 3109. Phebus is fresshest] Phebus shen freish R.
 3110. out spredyng] out shewyng R. 3119. chaunge R.

But a bakwynter can somer vndermyne
And al his fresshnesse sodenli declyne.

Remember
the un-
certainty of
all earthly
happiness.

Al ertheli blisse dependith in a weer,
In a ballaunce oneuēli hangyng, — 3124
O Pryncis, Pryncessis most souereyn & enteer,
In this tragedie conceyueth be redyng,
How that estatis bi ful vnwar chaungyng,
Whilom ful worthi, ther lyues dede fyne, 3128
Whan fro ther noblesse thei wer maad to declyne.

[Of mighty Iabyn Kyng of Canane, of queene Iocasta/
and how Thebes was destroyed.]¹

Now I will
write about
the fall of
Jabin, rebel
to God,

NOW must I write the grete sodeyn fall
Off myhti Iabyn for his inquite,
Which onto Iewes was enemy ful mortall, 3132
With sceptre & crowne regnyng in Canane,
And vpon Affrik hadde the souereynte,
Rebel to God, and list hym nat obeye,
But euer redi his peple to werreye. 3136

who long
forbore to
punish him,

The Lord a-boue, seyng the tirannye,
Forbar his hand with ful long suffraunce,
And was nat hasti on his obstynacye,
Lich his desert, for to do vengauce; 3140
But ay this Iabyn bi contynuaunce
Endured foorth in his cursidnesse,
Til that the suerd off Goddis rihtwisnesse

but finally
threw him
down in the
midst of his
pride.

Was whet ageyn hym, this tirant to chastise. 3144
And to repress his rebellioun,
From his kyngdam, the story doth deuise,
Mid off his pride he was pullid down,
Texemplefie wher domynacioun 3148
Is founde wilfull trouthe to ouercaste,*
God wil nat suffre ther power longe laste.

For this Iabyn, founde alway froward, [p. 40]
Off hih disdeyn list nat the Lord to knowe, 3152
Therefore his power drouh alway bakward,

3121. abak wynter H 5, aback winter P.

3127. ful] om. R. 3128. Whilom] Sumtyme R.

3133. Chanane R. 3136. redi] redy is R. 3137. the] this R.

3141. ay] euer R. 3147. Mid] In myddis R.

3148. wher] the R.

3149. to ouercaste] touercaste B.

And his empire was I-brouht ful lowe;
 His roial fame Fortune hath ouerthrowe,
 His name eclipsid, that whilom shon so cleer 3156
 Off grete Cison beside the ryueer.

OFF queen Iocasta Bochas doth eek endite,
 Pryncesse off Thebes, a myhti gret cite,
 Off hir vnhappis he doolfulli doth write, 3160
 Ymagynyng how he dede hir see
 To hym appeere in gret aduersite,
 Lich a woman that wolde in teres reyne,
 For that Fortune gan at hir so disdeyne. 3164

Bochas also
 tells the story
 of Queen
 Jocasta,

Thouh she were diffacid off figure,
 Ther shewed in hir a maner maieste
 Off queenli honour, pleynli to discure
 Hir infortunys and hir infelicite, 3168
 And to declare pleynli how that she
 Off all pryncessis which euer stood in staat,
 She was hirself the moste infortunat.

who appeared
 before him
 proudly declar-
 ing her misfor-
 tunes.

Which gaff to Bochas ful gret occasioun,
 Whan he sauh hir pitous apparaile,
 For to make a lamentacioun 3172
 Off vnkouth sorwe which dede hir assaile,
 With a tragedie to wepyn and bewaile
 Hir inportable & straunge dedli striff, 3176
 Which that she hadde duryng al hir liff.

He wrot off hir a story large & pleyn,
 And off hir birthe first he doth diffyne, 3180
 And affermeth in his book certeyn,
 She was descendid off a noble lyne;
 In flouryng age eek whan she dede shyne,
 She weddid was, for hir gret beute, 3184
 Onto the kyng off Thebes the cite,

She came of a
 noble line and
 married Laius,
 king of Thebes,

Which in his tyme was callid Layus.
 And whan hir wombe bi processe gan arise,
 The kyng was glad and also desirous 3188

3154] And his empire was aftir þat brouht ful lowe R.

3156. whilom] some R. 3157. Cisoun J.

3158. eek] also R. 3168. hir felicittee R.

3170. stoden in estate R. 3171. the] om. R.

3173. sauh] seeth R. 3175. sorowis R.

3176. bewaile] to waile R.

3179. wrot] writ R, H, P, write H 5, writte J — a] om. R.

3183. eek] also R — she] þat she R. 3187. arise] to rise H.

The childe fate to knowe[n] in sum wise,
 And thouhte he wolde go do sacrefise
 Onto Appollo, to haue* knowyng afor[n]*
 Touchyng this child whan that it were born. 3192

who, when she
 became
 pregnant,
 asked Apollo
 what would be
 the destiny
 of the child.

What sholde folwen in conclusioun,
 He was desirous and hasti for to see,
 First bi the heuenli disposicioun,
 And bi the fauour, yiff it wolde be, 3196
 Off Appollos myhti deite
 To haue answeere, a-mong his rihtis all,
 Off his child what fate ther sholde fall.

Apollo said it
 was fated to
 kill its father.

His answeere, thouth it were contrarie 3200
 To his desir, yit was it thus* in deede:
 Appollo told hym, & list no lenger tarie,
 That this child sholde verraili in deede
 Slen his fader, & make his sides bleede, 3204
 And with his handis; ther was noon othir weie,
 But on his swerd he muste needis deie.

When his son
 was born, the
 king bade men
 put him to
 death in a
 forest.

The kyng was heuy and trist off this sentence,
 Sorful in herte, God wot, and no thyng fayn, 3208
 And caste afforn thoruh his prouidence,
 That his sone in al haste sholde be slayn,
 And that he wolde nat oon hour delayn
 Afftir his berthe, but bad his men to goon 3212
 Into a forest and sle the child a-noon.

Lik his biddyng the mynystres wrouhte in deede,
 Takyng the child, tendre and yong off age;
 And in-tafforest with hem thei gan it leede, 3216
 To be deuoured off beestis most sauage:
 The mooder, allas, fill almost in a rage,
 Seyng hir child, so inli fair off face,
 Shal thus be ded, and dede no trespace. 3220

His mother al-
 most went mad
 for grief,

Lital wonder thouth she felte smerte!
 To all women I reporte me,
 And onto moodres that be tendre off herte,

3189. fate] state R, staat J. 3191. to haue] ta B —
 knowlychyng afforn R — afor[n] befor[n] H, tofforn B.
 3192. were] was R. 3193. What] That R.
 3196. yiff] om. R. 3198. rihtis] wittis R.
 3199. ther sholde fall] schuld befall R.
 3201. thus] this B. 3205. noon othir] noþer R.
 3208. sorowfull H — in] off R. 3209. thoruh] om. R.
 3211. delayn] delay R. 3215. yong & tendre H.
 3216. into a forest R — it] hym R. 3218. almost fill into R.

- In this mater iuges for to be. 3224 which was not
 Was it nat routhe, was it nat pite, astonishing
 That a pryncesse and a queen, allas, in the
 Sholde knowyn hir child deuoured in such cas! circumstances.
- Afftir his berthe Layus took good keep, 3228
 Withoute mercy, respit or delay,
 That onto oon, which that kepte his sheep,
 This yonge child vpon a certeyn day
 Shal be delyuered in al the haste he may, 3232
 To this entent, it myht nat be socourid,
 But that he sholde off beestis be deuourid.
- This seid[e] shepperde goth foorth a-noon riht, [p.41] But the shep-
 The child beholdyng, benygne off look & face, 3236 herd who was
 Thouhte in his herte & in his inward siht, commanded
 He sholde doon to God a gret trespace to slay the
 To slen this child; wherfore he dede hym grace, — child had
 Took first a knyff, & dede his besi peyne 3240 compassion,
 Thoruhout his feet to make holis tweyne. and, piercing
 his feet, hung
 him up in a
 tree,
- Took a smal* rod off a yong* oseer,
 Perced the feet, allas, it was pite! —
 Bond hym faste, and bi good leiseer 3244
 The yonge child he heeng vpon a tre,
 Off entent that he ne sholde be
 Thoruh wilde beestis, cruel & sauage,
 Been sodenli deuoured in ther rage. 3248
- Vpon the tre whil he heeng thus bounde,
 Off auenture bi sum occasioun,
 A straunge shepperde hath the child I-founde, where he was
 Which that off routhe & pite* took hym down, 3252 found by an-
 Bar it with hym hoom onto his toun, other shep-
 Made his wiff for to doon hir peyne herd, who
 To fostre the child with hir brestis tweyne. cared for him,
- And whan he was brouht foorth & recurid, 3256
 And ful maad hool off his woundis sore,
 The yonge child, which al this hath endureid,
 When he in age gan to wexe more,
 And that nature gan hym to restore, 3260 and called him
 The said[e] shepperde, that loued hym best off all, Œdipus,
 Afftir his hurtis Edippus dede hym call.

3230. which] *om.* R.3241. feet] *hert* R.3242. *smal and yong are transposed in B* — *osier* R, P, H 5.3252. *pite & routhe* B, P. 3253. *onto*] *in to* R.3258. *The*] *This* R. 3259. *began* R.

- For Edippus is no more to seyne,
 Who that conceyueth the xposicioun,
 But feet Ipershid throuhout bothe tweyne, 3264
 In that language, as maad is menciouun,
 And to Meropa, wyff off kyng Poliboun,
 The shepperde, off ful humble entente, 3268
 Gan the child ful lowli to presente.
- And for she was bareyn off nature,
 She and the kyng off oon affecciouun
 Took Edippus bothe into ther cure, 3272
 As sone and heir bi adopcioun,
 To regne in Corynthe bi successiouun;
 The kyng, the queen off Corynthe the contre
 Haddyn the child in so gret cheerte. 3276
- Let men considre in ther discrecioun
 Sodeyn chaung off euery maner thyng:
 This child sent out for his destruccioun,
 And now prouydid for to been a kyng; 3280
 And thoruh Fortune, ay double in hir werkyng,
 He that was refus to beestis most sauage,
 Is now receyued to kyngli heritage.
- Destitut he was off his kenreede, 3284
 Forsake and abiect off blood & off allie,
 In tendre youthe his feet wer maad to bleede,
 Heeng on a tre and gan for helpe crie;
 But God that can in myscheeff magnefie 3288
 And reconforte folk disconsolat,
 Hath maad this child now so fortunat,
- And prouyded to been a kyngis heir,
 Off hym that stood off deth in auenture. 3292
 Fortune can shewe hir-selff bothe foul & fair,
 Folkis brouht lowe ful weel a-geyn recure;
 And such as can pacientli endure,
 And list nat gruchch a-geyn ther chastisyng, 3296
 God out off myscheeff can sodenli hem bryng.
- But whan Edippus was growe vp to good age,
 Lich a yong prynce encresyng in noblesse,
 Lusti and strong, and fresh off his corage, 3300
3269. Be gan R, J.
 3286. youthe] yough R.
 3287. on] vp on R — bigan for to crie R — helpe] to H.
 3295. such as can] sich (siche) as paaently can R, J.
 3299. encresshyng R.

and presented
 him to Queen
 Merope, wife
 of Polybus.

Thus Ædipus
 became the
 adopted son
 and heir of the
 king of
 Corinth.

How sudden
 are the
 changes of
 Fortune!

People who
 are brought
 low should not
 complain.
 God can as
 quickly raise
 them up
 again.

- Off auenture it fill so in sothnesse,
 Other be striff or be sum frowardnesse,
 Or be sum contek, he hadde knowlechyng
 How he was nat sone onto the kyng 3304
- As be discent, but a ferr foreyn.
 Wherupon ful sore he gan to muse,
 And for to knowe and be put in certeyn,
 Thouhte he wolde sum maner practik vse; 3308
 And to the kyng he gan hymself excuse,
 For a tyme withdrawyn his presence,
 Til that he knew bi sum experience
- Or bi sum signe how the mateer stood. 3312
 Thouhte he wolde doon his dilligence
 To knowe his fader, and also off what blood
 He was descendid, and haue sum euidence
 Touchyng trouthe, how it stood in sentence. 3316
 And heerupon to be certefied,
 Toward Appollo faste he hath hym hied,
 Which in Cirra worsheped was that tyme, [p. 42]
 And yaff answeris thoruh his deite 3320
 To folk that cam, at euen and at pryme,
 Off eueri doute and ambiguite.
 And there Edippus, fallyng on his kne,
 Afftir his offryng hadde answeere anoon, 3324
 Toward Greece that he sholde goon
- Onto a mownteyn that Phocis bar the name;
 And there he sholde off his kenrede heere.
 Eek lik his fate the answeere was the same: 3328
 He sholde slen his owne fader deere,
 And afftir that to Thebes drawe hym neere,
 Wedde his mooder, off verray ignoraunce,
 Callid Iocasta, thoruh his vnhappi chaunce. 3332
- He list no lengere tarien nor abide,
 This said Edippus, but foorth in haste goth he,
 And on his weye he gan [anon] to ride,
 Til he the mownteyn off Phocis dede see, 3336
 Vnder the which stood a gret contre

Œdipus soon
 learned that he
 was not the
 real son of
 King Polybus.

and consulting
 the oracle of
 Apollo,

was told that
 he would hear
 of his kindred
 if he went to
 Mt. Phocis,

which he did,

3304. How] *om.* H.

3306. bigan R. 3308. practik] practiff R. 3309. began R.

3320. answeere R. 3325. that] *om.* R. 3326. Onto] In to R.

3328. Eek] Also R. 3333. nor] ner R.

3335. he gan anon] gan H, R 3, he began anoon J, he biganne
 anon H 5, he gan anone P, began anone R.

- Callid Citoiens, which that tyme in certeyn
Werreied hem that were on the mownteyn.
- and there by
chance killed
his father,
Laius, His fader Layus, throuh his cheualrie, 3340
With Citoiens is entrid in bataile;
And Edippus cam with the partie
Off the hillis, armed in plate & maile.
And as thei gan ech other to assaile, 3344
Among the pres at ther encount[e]ryng,
Off auenture Edippus slouh the kyng.
- without knowing
him. Onknowe to hym that he his fader was,
Hauyng theroff no suspeciou; 3348
Passid his way, platli this the cas,
And eek onknowe he cam onto the toun
Off myhti Thebes, where for his hih renoun
He was receyued with ful gret reuerence, 3352
Because that he slouh in ther diffence
- At Thebes he
was received
with great
honour because
he slew the
Sphinx, a ser-
pent that pro-
pounded a rid-
dle to be solved
on pain of
death. Spynx the serpent, horrible for to see,
Whilom ordeyned bi incantaciouns
For to destroie the toun and the contre 3356
Bi his compassid slehti questiouns.
Slouh man and child in all the regiouns,
Such as nat koude bi wisdam or resoun
Make off his problem pleyn expositioun. 3360
- Who passid bi, he koude hym nat excuse,
But the serpent hym felly wolde assaile,
With a problem make hym for to muse,
Callid off summe an vnkouth dyuynaile, 3364
Which for texpowne, who that dede faile,
Ther was noon helpe nor other remedie,
Bi the statut but that he muste deie.
- Since all people
do not know
this riddle, I
will tell it to
you. And for alle folk ha[ue] nat knowlechyng 3368
Off this demaunde what it was in deede,
I will reherse it heer in my writyng
Compendiousli, that men may it reede.
First this serpent, who that list take heede, 3372
Was monstuous & spak a-geyn nature,
And yiff it fill that any creature,

3338. in] *om.* R. 3343. hil R. 3344. began R.
3347. Onknowe] Vnknowen R. 3349. this is R, J, H 5.
3350. eek] also R — onto] to R. 3356. destrie R.
3362. wolde hym felly R. 3364. summe an] sum men R.
3366. nor] nethir R. 3373. ayenst R.

- Man or woman sholde forbi pace,
 Hih or low, off al that regioun, 3376
 As I seide erst, ther was noon othir grace,
 But yiff he made an exposicioun
 Off this serpentis froward questioun,
 He muste deie and make no diffence. 3380
 Which demaunde was this in sentence:
 The serpent askid, what thyng may that be,
 Beeste or foul, whan it is foorth brouht,
 That hath no power to stonde, go nor fle; 3384
 And aftirward, yiff it be weel souht,
 Goth first on foure, & ellis goth he nouht:
 Aftir bi processe, on thre, & thanne on tweyne;
 And efft ageyn, as nature doth ordeyne, 3388
 He goth on thre and efft on foure ageyn,
 Off kyndly riht nature disposith it so.
 And in a while it folwith in certeyn,
 To the mateer which that he cam fro, 3392
 He muste off keende resorte ageyn therto.
 And who cannat the menyng cleerli see,
 He off this serpent shal deuoured be.
 Which Edippus, ful so[b]re in his entent, 3396
 Nat to rakell nor hasti off language,
 But in his herte with gret auisement,
 And ful demur off look & [of] visage,
 Considred* ferst this pereilous fell passage, 3400
 Sauh weel tofor*n* that it was no iape,
 And ful prouyded that no woord escape,
 At good leiser with hool mynde & memory, [p. 43]
 Seyng the ernest off this mortal emprise, 3404
 His lif dependyng a-twen deth and victory,
 "This beeste," quod he, "pleynli to deuisse,
 Is first a child, which may nat suffise,
 Whan it is born, the trouthe is alday seene, 3408
 Withouten helpe hymseluen to susteene.

What creature
 is it that cannot
 stand when
 born, and goes
 first on four,
 then on three,
 and finally on
 two, and after-
 wards on three
 and four again?

Œdipus
 answered
 with great dis-
 cretion,

"This animal
 is a child.

3375. forbi] furth bi R.

3377. erst] arst R.

3386. &] or R — he] it R.

3389. efft] aftir R.

3390. Off] Also R — riht] rith R.

3397. nor] orto R.

3400. Considred] Considreth B, R 3.

3401. Sauh] Seeth R, size J — tofor*n] befor*n B, R 3.

3405. bitwene R.

- Afftir on foure he naturali doth kreepe,
 For inpotence and greene tendirnesse,
 Norices can telle that* doon hem keepe. 3412
 But afftirward, vp he doth hym dresse
 With his too feet; the thridde to expresse,
 Is hand or bench or support off sum wall
 To holde hym vp, list he cachche a fall. 3416
 And afftirward encresyng off his myht,
 To gretter age whan he doth atteyne,
 Off his nature thanne he goth vpriht,
 Mihtili vpon his leggis tweyne. 3420
 Thanne kometh age his power to restreyne,
 Crokid and lame, lik as men may see,
 With staff or potent to make up leggis thre.
 But whan feeblesse or siknesse doon assaile, 3424
 On feet and handis he must bowe & loute;
 For crossid potentis may nat thanne auaille,
 Whan lusti age is bashed & shet oute.
 Thanne efft ageyn, heeroff may be no doute, 3428
 With foure feet terthe he doth retourne
 Fro whens he cam, ther stille to soiourne.”
 Al cam from erthe, and [al] to erthe shall;
 Ageyn nature is no proteccioun; 3432
 Worldli estatis echon thei be mortall,
 Ther may no tresor make redempcioun.
 Who clymbeth hiest, his fal is lowest doun;
 A mene estat is best, who koude it knowe, 3436
 Tween hih presumyng & bowyng doun to lowe.
 For who sit hiest, stant in iupartie,
 Vndir daunger off Fortune lik to fall:
 Myscheeff and pouert as for ther partie, 3440
 Be lowest brouht among these peeplis all.
 Summe folk han sugir, summe taste gall;
 Salamon therfore, merour off sapience,
 Tween gret richesse and atween indigence 3444
3412. that] which that B. 3418. gretter] gret R.
 3420. Mihtili] Mihtly R. 3423. a staff R.
 3424. feblenesse R. 3425. hondis & feet R.
 3426. crossid] crossis R, J. 3429. foure] faire R.
 3431. 2nd al] om. H. 3432. is] may be R, J.
 3435. lowest] ferthest H, farthest R 3, fardest P — his] is R.
 3437. Tween] Betwene R. 3438. For] Or R.
 3439. of Fortune is repeated in R. 3442. folkes R.
 3443. therfore] ther of H. 3444. Tween] Bitwene R —
 richesse] richnessis R — atween] bitwene R.

who grows to
be a man.

When age
comes he uses
a staff

and finally re-
turns with four
feet to the
earth from
which he
came.”

There is no
defence against
nature. Who
climbs highest
has the lowest
fall.

- Axed a mene callid suffisaunce,
 To holde hym content off competent dispençe,
 Nat to reioishe off to gret habundaunce,
 And ay in pouert to sende hym paciẽce, 3448
 Sobre with his plente, in scarsete noon offence
 As off gruchchyng, but atwen ioie and smert
 Thanke God off all, and euer be glad off hert.
- Erthe is the eende off eueri maner man; 3452
 For the riche with gret possessioun
 Deieth as soone, as I reherse can,
 As doth the poore in tribulacioun:
 For deth ne maketh no dyuisioun 3456
 Bi synguler fauour, but twen bothe iliche,
 Off the porest and hym that is most riche.
- This seid problem concludith in this cas,
 Which the serpent gan sleihtili purpose, 3460
 That whan a child is first born, allas,
 Kynde to his dethward anon doth hym dispose;
 Ech day a iourne; ther is noon other glose;
 Experience can teche in eueri age, 3464
 How this world heer is but a pilgrymage.
- This said Edippus, first in Thebes born,
 Sent to a forest deuoured for to be,
 Founde & brouht foorth, as ye han herd toforn, 3468
 And afftir*, drawyng hom to his contre,
 Slouh his fader, so infortunat was he
 Off froward happis folwyng al his lyue,
 As this tragedie his fortune shal descryue. 3472
- But for that he thoruh his hih prudence
 Onto the serpent declared euerideel,
 He slouh hym afftir be myhti violence,
 Mor bi wisdam than armure maad off steel, — 3476
 Stace off Thebes can telle you ful weel, —

Therefore, as Solomon said, it is best to be neither too poor nor too rich,

for the end of all is earth, and Death shews favour to no man.

The moment a child is born he sets forth on a pilgrimage towards death.

Ædipus was unfortunate during all his life.

After he slew the Sphinx,

3446. dispençe] expence R.

3449. scarsete] scarsnesse R, J, scarcenes P, scarsenes H 5 — in] om. H 5.

3450. but atwen] both betwene R.

3457. twen] betwene R. 3458. and] & off R.

3459. concludid R.

3460. began R — sleihtili] sleihty to R. 3463. glose] chose R.

3464. can] gan R. 3466. said] om. H.

3469. afftir] afftirward B, H, R 3.

3472. shal] doth H, can R 3. 3475. myhti] knyhtly R.

3476. than armure, etc.] than of armure & of steele R.

- Which was o cause, yiff ye list to seen,
 Wherthoruh Edippus weddid hath the queen
- he took his
 mother, Jocasta,
 to wife. Callid Iocasta, pryncesse off that cite, 3480
 His owne mooder, onknowe to hem bothe.
 And thouh she were riht fair vpon to see,
 With this mariage the goddis were ful wrothe;
 For ther alliaunce nature gan to lothe, 3484
 That a mooder, as ye shal vndirstonde,
 Sholde take hir sone to been hir husbonde.
- Some evil influ-
 ence of the stars
 must have been
 the cause of
 this unnatural
 marriage. There was theryn no conveyence, [p. 44]
 To be supportid be kynde nor be resoun, 3488
 But yiff so be the heuenli influence
 Disposid it be thyclynacioun
 Off sum fals froward constellacioun,
 Causid bi Saturne, or Mars the froward sterre, 3492
 Tengendre debat or sum mortal werre.
- In this mateer, pleyn[li] thus I deeme
 Off no cunnyng but off opynyoun:
 Thouh he wer crownyd with sceptre & diademe 3496
 To regne in Thebes the stronge myhti toun,
 That sum aspect cam from heuene doun,
 Infortunat, froward and ful off rage,
 Which ageyn kynde deyned this mariage. 3500
- Two sons were
 born to them,
 Eteocles and
 Polynices, and
 two daughters,
 Antigone and
 Ismene. He crownyd was bassent off al the toun,
 Flouryng a seson be souereynte off pes;
 And whil he heeld[e] theer possessioun,
 Sones & douhtres he hadde dout[e]les: 3504
 The firste sone callid Ethiocles,
 Pollynyces callid was the tothir,
 As seith Bochas, the seconde brothir.
- Also he hadde goodli douhtren tweyne, 3508
 The eldest callid was Antigone,
 And the seconde named was Ymeyne;
 Bothe thei wern riht fair vpon to see:
 The queen Iocasta myhte no gladdere be, 3512
3481. vnkawen R. 3483. this] his H.
 3487. no] none R. 3488. nor] no R.
 3489. so] it so R — the] that R. 3490. Dispose R.
 3494. pleyn R. 3500. deyned] denyed H 5, disposid P.
 3503. theer] the R.
 3506. Pollicynes R, Polymyces H — was callid H.
 3510. And] om. R.
 3511. Bothe] And both R — riht fair] om. R — vpon] on R.

Than to remembre, whan thei wex in age,
How goddis hadde encreced her lynage.

It was hir ioie and hir felicite
To seen hir childre, that were so inli faire: 3516
But ofte in ioie ther cometh aduersite,
And hope onsured whan hope doth ofte appaire;
Contrarious trust will gladli ther repaire
Wher fals[e] wenyng in hertis is conceyued 3520
Thoruh ignoraunce, which fele folk* hath deceyued.

Jocasta
rejoiced
in her
children;

What thyng in erthe is more deceyuable,
Than whan a man supposith verrailly
In prosperite for to stonde stable, 3524
And from his ioie is remeued sodenly?
For wher Fortune is founde to hasty
To trise folk, is greuous to endure,
For sodeyn chaungis been hatful to nature. 3528

but what
thing is more
deceitful
than
Fortune?

Vnwar wo that cometh on gladnesse,
Is onto hertis riht passyng encombrous;
And who hath felt his part off welfulnesse,
Sorwe suyng oon is to hym odious. 3532
And werst off all and most contrarious,
Is whan estatis, hiest off renoun,
Been from ther noblesse sodenli put down.

The greatest
sorrow is
that which
comes
unawares
after joy.

There is no glory which that shyneth heer, 3536
That fals Fortune can so magnefie;
But whan his laude brihstest is and cleer,
She can eclipse it with sum cloudy skie
Off vnwar sorwe, onli off envie. 3540
Seeth off Edippus an open euydence,
Which bi his lyue hadde experience

There is
no glory
that Fortune
cannot eclipse.

Off hih noblesse, and therwith also
Part inportable off gret aduersite. 3544
Is ioie ay meynt with ful mortal wo:
For whil he regned in Thebes his cite,

3514. How] Heer R.

3516. children R.

3518. whan hope, *separated into two words* in J, R 3, P; whan in
whan hope is *corrected to wan*, R, whanne H 5 — doth] *om.* J.

3519. will] wol H. 3520. hert R. 3521. folk fele B.

3527. trise] tryuse H. 3531. wilfulnesse R.

3535. put] brouht R. 3542. Which] Whilk H.

3545. ay] euer R. 3546. his] the R.

- The land was visited by a pestilence, And Iocasta, with ful gret royalte,
Withynne the contre ther fill a pestilence, 3548
The people infectyng with his violence
- Thoruh al the land and al the regioun
In eueri age; but most greuouusli
On hem echon that were[n] off the toun 3552
Thenfeccioun spradde most speciali.
And off vengauunce the suerd most rigerousli
Day be day [be]gan to bite and kerue,
Off ech estat causyng folk to sterue. 3556
- which brought the people in despair. Thus gan encrece the mortalite,
That eueri man stood in iupartie
Off ther lyues thoruhout the contre,
So inportable was ther maladie. 3560
Men myhte heer the peepel clepe & crie,
Dispeired so were thei off ther lyues.
Void off al socour and off preseruatyues,
- They asked the gods and their diviners why they were so punished. Thei souhte out herbes & spices in ther coffres, 3564
And gan to seeke for helpe and for socours,
The cause enqueryng off prudent philisophres
And off ther moste expert dyuynours, —
Whi that the goddis with so sharpe shours 3568
Off pestilence, and in so cruel wise,
List hem, allas, so mortali chastise?
- None could answer save Tiresias, But among alle, in soth this is* the cas, [p. 45]
Ther was founde oon ful prudent and riht wis, 3572
A prophete callid Tiresias,
Off prophesie hauyng a souereyn pris,
Which that affermed and seide in his auys, —
As onto hym was shewid be myracle, 3576
Phebus hymselff declaryng the oracle, —
- who told them that the pestilence would increase until a king, who slew his father and married his own mother, should be deposed. Cause off this siknesse and these maladies,
As the goddis pleyntli han disposid,
And Senek writ eek in his tragedies, 3580
Thouh the cause be secre and iclosid,
Onto the tyme ther be a kyng deposid,
3549. infectyng R.
3555. began] gan H, R. 3557. bigan to encrece R.
3561. That men myhten R. 3562. Dispeired R.
3563. 2nd off] off ther R. 3565. bi gan R.
3571. in soth this is] sothli this B, H. 3572. riht] om. R.
3578. these] of this R. 3580. eek] also R. 3581. secret R.

- Which slouh his fader & reffte hym off his liff,
 And hath eek take his mooder to his wiff, 3584
 Til this be doon and execut in deede,
 Ther may be maad[e] no redempcioun;
 But pestilence shal multeplie & sprede
 Ay mor and mor thoruhout that regioun, 3588
 Til onto tyme that he be put doun
 From his crowne, — which nat longe a-noon
 His fader slouh among his mortal foon,
 And hath his mooder weddid eek also, 3592
 A-geyn[e]s lawe and a-geyn al riht.
 Til that vengauunce vpon this crym be do,
 Ther shal be werre, pestilence and fiht,
 Sorwe and* gret striff, and euery maner wiht 3596
 Off vengauunce his neyh[e]bour shal hate;
 Brother with brother, & blood with blood debate.
 This al and sum; ther may be no socour.
 Which brouht the people in ful gret heuynesse, 3600
 For Tiresia the grete dyuynour,
 Bi prophecie tolde hem thus expresse.
 And atte laste, bi toknys and witnesse,
 Men vndirstood be signes out shewyng, 3604
 This pestilence was brouht in bi the kyng.
 And thouh the people [ne] gaff no credence
 To Tiresia, nor to his prophesie,
 The queen Iocasta cauhte an euidence, 3608
 And in hir herte a ful gret fantasie,
 Speciali whan she dede espie
 Off kyng Edippus the feet whan she sauh woundid,
 How this rumour was vpon trouthe [I]groundid: 3612
 Because also there was a dyuynour
 Which tolde afforn Edippus sholde be
 To Layus in Thebes successour.
 Werbi the kyng, the queen, and the cite 3616
 Fill in gret trouble and gret aduersite, —
 Weel more than I be wrytyng can reporte,
 For ther was nothyng that myhte hem reconforte.
3588. Ay] Euer R, J. 3589. onto] vnto the R.
 3592. eek] om. R, J. 3594. this] that R.
 3596. 1st and is crossed out B. 3600. ful] om. R.
 3604. be] and R. 3606. ne] om. H, P, R 3. 3607. nor] no R.
 3611. sauh] se R, sey H. 3612. groundid H, R.
 3614. afforn] to forn R. 3615. Thebes] thes R.
 3617. and] and in R. 3619. reconforte] comfort H.
- The people did not believe that Tiresias meant Œdipus, but
 Jocasta suspected the truth.
 She and Œdipus were greatly troubled.

Ful ofte a-day Iocasta gan to swowne, 3620
 Kyng Edippus sobbe, crie and weepe,
 In salt[e] teris as they wolde hem drowne,
 Deth craumpisshyng into ther brest gan creepe,
 A-day compleynyng, a-nyht they may nat sleepe, 3624
 Cursyng the hour off ther natyuyte,
 That thei sholde a-bide for to see

Ther mortal chauns, ther dedli auenture,
 Ther fortune also*, which gan on hem frowne, 3628
 Impacient and doolful to endure,
 Ther froward fate with hir lookis browne.
 The kyng for ire cast a-vey his crowne,
 And gan tarace, for constreynt off his peyne, 3632
 Out off his hed his woful eyen tweyne.

The king
 cast away
 his crown
 and tore out his
 eyes and cried
 day and night
 for death.

Day and nyht he cried afftir deth,
 Hatful to come* in any manys siht,
 Most desirous to yelden vp the breth, 3636
 Woful in herte to come in any liht,
 Croked for sorwe, feeble to stonde vpriht;
 And speciali in his dedli distresse,
 For dreed & shame he dared in derknesse. 3640

The cruel constreynt off his most greuauunce
 Was that his sonys hadde hym in despiht,
 Which gan his sorwe gretli to auauunce,
 For hym to scorne was set al ther deliht; 3644
 Was neuer [man] that stood in a wers pliht.
 For thus liggyng and destitut off cheer,
 Onto the goddis he made this praier,

What grieved
 him most was
 that his sons
 hated him,

Besechyng hem with a ful doolful herte 3648
 Vpon his wo to haue* compassioun,
 And that thei wolde, for tauenge his smerte,
 Atween his sonys make a dyuysioun,
 Ech to brynge other to destruccioun: 3652
 This was his praier pleynli in substaunce,
 That ech on other take may vengauunce

so he prayed
 the gods that
 Polynices and
 Eteocles might
 bring one an-
 other to de-
 struction.

3620. a-day] in the day R. 3623. brest] hert R.
 3624. nat] noth R. 3625. Cursyng] Outraynge R.
 3628. also] eek B, H — gan] did R. 3630. lookis] lokkis R.
 3632. be gan R. 3635. come] comen B, J, comon R.
 3638. Croked] Corbide R. 3640. &] of H.
 3642. hadden hem R.
 3645. man is written between the columns in a later hand R.
 3646. thus] om. H, P.
 3649. to haue] ha sum B, haue sum J, haue some P.
 3653. pleynli] om. R. 3654. may take R.

- In yeeris fewe for ther onkynd[e]nesse. [p. 46]
 Thei herd his praier, as ye han herd deuyses; 3656 His prayer was answered.
 The brethre too, thoruh ther cursidnesse,
 Euerich gan other mortali despise,
 For lak off grace and for fals couetise,
 Ech for his parti desirous in deede 3660
 Toform other to regne and [to] succede.
- And thus this brethre* most infortunat,
 A-tween hemsilff fill at discencioun;
 And fynali this vnkynde[ly] debat 3664
 Brouht al Thebes onto destruccioun:
 Yit was ther first maad a convencioun,
 Bi entirchaungyng* that ech sholde regne a yeer,
 The tother absent, go pleie & come no neer. 3668 —
- This was concludid bi ther bothe assent
 And bi accord off al the regioun.
 Polynices rod foorth and was absent,
 Ethyocles took first possessioun. 3672
 But whan the yeer bi reuolucioun
 Was come a-boute, he, fals off his entent,
 Onto thaccord denyed to consent.
- This was o cause off ther bothe stryues, 3676 Adrastus, king of Argos, sent Tydeus to Thebes to help Polynices,
 Polynices thus put out off his riht.
 Til Adrastus, that kyng was* off Argyues,
 Which thoruh al Grece grettest was off myht, 3680
 Sente onto Thebes Tideus a knyht,
 His sone-in-lawe, to trete off this mateere,
 And the cause fynali to lere,
- Whethir the kyng callid Ethiocles
 Wolde condescende off trouthe and off resoun 3684 but without avail.
 To stynte werre and to cherisse pes,
 Affter thaccord and composicioun,
 Vp to delyuere Thebes the myhti touen

3657. brethern R.

3662. brethre] breed B, brethern R, H 5, Brethir H.

3663. Betwene R. 3664. thus vnkinde P.

3666. made first R.

3667. Bentirchaungyng B — a yeer] eir R.

3668. go] to R, J, P, H 5.

3670. the] that R. 3673. But] & H.

3675. consent] assent R. 3678. was kyng B.

3681. off] for H.

3683. Whethir] Wher thoruh R — callid] om. R.

3687. Vp] for H, om. P — the] that P.

Onto his brother, which absent was withoute, 3688
Now that his yeer was fully come a-boute.

But he was fals, & frowardli gan varie,
Ethiocles, from his conuencioun.

Then Adrastus
began a war on
Eteocles in aid
of Polynices,
who had be-
come his son-
in-law.

For which Adrastus no lenger wolde tarie, 3692
Whan Tideus hadde maad relacioun;
But callid anoon throuhout his regioun
Alle worthi, bothe nyh and ferre,
A-geyn[es] Thebes for to gynne a werre. 3696

For this cause, lich as ye shal lere,
Polynices, to forsen his partie,
I-weddid hadde the kyngis douhter deere,
I meene Adrastus, flour of cheualrie, 3700
Whan Tideus dede hym certefie
Touchyng the answer off Ethiocles,
And off his trouthe how he was rech[e]les,

You will find
the whole story
in the Siege of
Thebes.

Fals off his promys & cursidli forsworn; 3704
For to his trouthe noon aduertence had he,
Nor to thaccord that was maad befor
Touchyng delyueraunce off Thebes the cite.
But who that list this story cleerli see 3708
Off these too brethre & ther discencioun,
And how Adrastus lay tofor the toun,

And Tideus, thoruh his hih prowesse,
Fauht bi the way[e] goyng on message, 3712
And how off Grece al the worthynesse
With kyng Adrastus wente in this viage,
And off the myscheff that fill in ther passage
For lak of water, til that Ysiphile, 3716
Norice of Ligurgus, so fair vpon to see,

Tauhte Tideus to fynde out a ryueer,
(She that dede in fairnesse so excell,)
Nor how the serpent, most ougli off his cheer, 3720
Off kyng Ligurgus the child slow at a well,
Nor how Amphiorax fill a-doun to hell, —

3695. Alle] All the R. 3696. begynne R.
3698. Pollycynes R. 3706. befor] to forne H.
3707. the delyueraunce R. 3709. brethern R.
3714. this] his R.
3720. Nor] Neyer R. 3721. a] the R.
3722. Nor] Neithir R.

- Al to declare, me semeth it is no neede,
 [For] in the siege of Thebes ye may it reede, 3724
- The stori hool, and maad ther menciou
 Off other parti, ther puissaunce & ther myht, So there is no
 And how Adrastus lay toforn the toun, need of my
 And how thei metten eueri day in fih, telling it here.
 And Tideus, the noble famous knyht 3728
- So renommed in actis marciall,
 Was slayn, allas, as he fauht on the wall. Tydeus was
 And how the brethre mette a-mong the pres, slain,
 Lich too tigres or leouns that were wood, 3732
 With sharp[e] speris; this is dout[e]les,
 Euerich off hem shadde other[s] herte* blood:
 This was ther fyn, & thus with hem it stood, the two
 Sauf at ther festis callid funerall, brothers killed
 Ther fill a merueile which reherse I shall. one another.
- Whan thei were brent into asshes dede, [p. 47] and on their
 Off ther envie there fill a [ful] gret wonder: 3740 the smokes
 A-mong the brondes and the coles rede, parted in
 Hih in the hair the smokes wente assonder, twain.
 The ton [to] oo parti and the tother yonder,
 To declare, the story list nat feyne, 3744
- The grete hatrede that was atwen hem tweyne.
- Thus for ther ire and fals discencioun,
 Alle the lordis and al the cheualrie
 Were slayn off Grece and also off the toun. 3748
 And roote off all, myn auctour list nat lie,
 Was fals alliaunce and fraternal envie;
 And cheeff ground, with al the surplusage,
 Who serche a-riht, was onkyndli mariage. 3752
- The queen Iocasta felte hir part off peyne
 To seen hir childre ech off hem slen other,
 Hir sone hir lord, blynd on his eyen tweyne,
 Which to his sonys was fader & eek brother: 3756
 Fortune wolde it sholde be noon other,

3723. semeth it is] sempte it was R.

3724. For] om. H, R 3 — the] thes R — it] om. R.

3726. other] eithir R — pouyschaunce R.

3732. brethern mettn R. 3735. herte] hertis B.

3740. ful] om. H. 3743. to] om. H, on R 3.

3745. betwene R. 3746. ther] om. R — fals] for fals H.

3752. serche] seche H — serche a-riht] sekith right R 3.

3753. part] peyne R. 3754. children R.

3756. eek] also R.

Eek Parkas sustre, which been in noumbre thre,
Span so the threed at ther natyuyte.

Eek whan Iocasta stood thus disconsolat, 3760
And sauh off Thebes the subuersioun,
The contre stroied, wast and desolat,
The gentil blood shad off that regioun,
Withoute confort or consolacioun, 3764
Thouhte she myhte be no mor appeired;
But off al hope fulli disespeired,

slew herself
with Ædipus'
sword.

Trist and heuy, pensiff & spak no woord,
Hir sorwes olde & newe she gan aduerte, 3768
Took the swerd off hym that was hir lord,
With which Edippus smot Layus to the herte,
She to fynisshe all hir peynes smerte,
And fro the bodi hir soule to deuyde, 3772
Roff hir-selff[e] thoruhout eueri side.

She weri was off hir woful liff,
Seyng off Fortune the gret[e] frowardnesse,
How hir diffame & sclandre was so riff, 3776
And off Edippus the gret[e] wrechidnesse,
Eek off hir sones the gret onkynd[e]nesse:
Alle these thyngis weied on hir so sore,
For distresse that she list lyue no more. 3780

Sorrow caused
her beauty to
fade.

Bochas writith, the flour off hir fairnesse,
Constreint off sorwe causid it to fade;
The famous liht also* off hir noblesse
And al the cleernesse off hir daies glade 3784
With vnwar harmys was so ouerlade,
Off verrai angwisch, that she hirselff dede hate,
So inli contrari [disposid] was hir fate.

Death takes no
heed of high
or low estate.

Thus deth devoureth with his bittir gall 3788
Ioie and sorwe, deuoid off al mercy;
And with his darte he maketh down to fall

3758. Eek] Also R — sustren H.

3759. the]ther H. 3760. Eek] Also R.

3761. sauh] sihe R. 3762. stroied] distried R.

3764. comfort H.

3768. Hir] His R — newe] ner R. 3773. eueri] eithir R.

3778. Eek] Also R. 3783. also] eek B, eke R 3, P, H.

3784. hir] his R. 3785. sche was R.

3787. disposid] om. H — hir] to hir H. 3788. his] hir H.

3789. deuoid] auoyde R. 3790. his] hir H — he] she H.

- Riche and poore, hem markyng sodenly:
 His vnwar strook smyt[eth] indifferently, 3792
 From hym refusyng fauour & al meede,
 Off all estatis he takith so litil heede.
- Bet is to deie than lyue in wrechidnesse,
 Bet is to deie than euer endure peyne, 3796 But it is better
to die than live
in misery.
 Bet is an eende than dedli heuynesse,
 Bet is to deie than euer in wo compleyne;
 And where-as myscheeff doth at folk disdeyne
 Bi woful constreynt off long contynuaunce, 3800
 Bet is to deie than lyue in such greuaunce.
- Taketh exauple heeroff and a preeff
 Off kyng Edippus, that was so longe a-go,
 Off queen Iocasta, that felte so gret myscheeff, 3804
 And off ther childre remembrith eek also,
 Which euer lyued in envie, sorwe* & wo:
 Fortune, allas, duryng al ther daies
 Was founde so froward to hem at all assaies. 3808
- Touchyng Edippus processe fynde I noon
 What eende he made in conclusioun,
 Sauf Bochas writith, how the kyng Creon,
 Cosyn and heir bi successioun, 3812
 Exilid hym cheyned ferr out off the toun,
 Where he endured in myscheeff, sorwe & dreed,
 Till Antropos ontwynid his lyuis threed. Creon exiled
Œdipus, and I
cannot say how
he died.

¶ Lenvoye.

- I**N this tragedie foure thinges ye may see, 3816 Kingdoms dis-
tracted by in-
ternal strife
cannot endure.
 The pride off Iabyn & fals *presumpcioun*,
 Off queen Iocasta the gret aduersite,
 Off kyng Edippus thynclynacioun
 To vices all, and the deuysioun 3820
 Off the too brethre, pleykli vs tassure,
 Kyngdamys deuyded may no while endure.

3791. markyng] makyng R. 3792. His] hir H — smyteth]
 smyt MSS. *except* P, H 5. 3793. hym] hir H. 3794. he]
 she H.

3795-8, 3801, R, P, H 5 *write* Bettir or Better *instead of* Bet.
 3796. endure] tendure H, to liff (liue) in R, P, H 5, lyue in J,
 to suffre R 3. 3799. at] al R.

3805. remembrith eek] remembre R.

3806. lyued in envie sorwe] lyueden in sorwe envie B, H —
 lyuede euer R 3.

3813. hym] om. H 3814. in] om. R. 3816. foure] thre R.

[*Omne Regnum
in se diuisum
desolabitur.*]¹

There must
be peace and
justice,

as is shewn
by the example
of Thebes.

Princes and
Princesses,
cherish your
subjects if you
would reign
long.

For who sauh euer kyngdam or contre [p. 48]
Stonde in quyeet off ther possessioun, 3824
But yiff ther wer pes, riht and equyte
And iust accord, withoute discencioun,
Void off ontrouthe and fals collusioun,
Pleynli declaryng bexauple & bi scripture, 3828
Kyngdamys deuyded may no while endure.
Seeth heer exauple off Thebes the cite,
And how that noble myhti regioun,
Thoruh ther* froward [fals] duplicite 3832
With werre brouht to ther destruuccioun;
Ther promys brokyn, and ther couert tresoun,
Shewed bi the[r] harmys, impossible to recure,
Kyngdamys deuyded may no while endure. 3836
Pryncis, Prynccissis, which han the souereynte
Ouer the people and domynacioun,
Yiff ye list lyue longe in felice,
Cherissith *your* subiectis, doth noon extorsioun, 3840
And aduertisith off wisdam and resoun,
As this tragedie doth to you discure,
Kyngdamys deuyded may no while endure.

[How Atreus Kyng of Messene wrou3t ayenst his
brothir Thiestes / slouh his iij. childre dis-
membrid hem in pecys made Thiestes to ete of
ther flessch and drynke of ther blood.]¹

Bochas was
preparing to
write the story
of Duke Theseus,

BOCHAS the poete, auctour off this book, 3844
Hym purposyng to-gidre to compile
Dyuers stories, anon his penne he took,
Hym remembryng withynne a litil while,
In this chapitle gan direct* his stile 3848
To write the story, and be compendious,
Afforn all othre off Duk Theseus,
Lord off Athenys, a famous gret cite,
Ryht strong and myhti vpon eueri side, — 3852
But at his bak Bochas dede oon see,

3825. pes riht] rith pees R. 3828. bi ensauple R.
3830. ensauple R. 3832. ther] ther most B, H — fals]om. H.
3833. brouht] weren brouht R. 3835. ther] the H.
3837. han] had R.
3839. long lyue J — felice] prosperite H. 3842. As] al H.
3848. gan] bigan R — directen B. 3851. Athenys] Asye H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 20 verso.

- Which cried loude & bad he sholde a-bide:
 "Bochas," quod he, "fro the me list nat hide
 My woful cas, nor in no wise spare 3856
 My pitous compleynt to the to declare!
- I am Thiestes, be-spreynt al with wepyng,
 Drownyd in teris, as thou maist weel see,
 Whilom sone off the myhti kyng 3860
 Philistynes, and born also parde
 Off queen Pellopia, excellyng off beute;
 And for thou art desirous for tendite
 Off peepie onhappi, & ther wo to write, 3864
- My will is this, that thou anon procede
 To turne thi stile, and tak thi penne blyue,
 Leue* Theseus, tak now off hym non heede,
 But my tragedie first that thou descryue. 3868
 For I suppose that in al thi lyue,
 That thou sauh neuer a thyng mor dolerous,
 Mor onhappi, mor froward nor pitous
- Than is, allas, my mortal auenture, 3872
 Incomparable, the sorwe surmountyng
 Off queen Iocasta, most woful creature,
 Or off Edippus, his fate ay compleynyng:
 For my compleynt haueth non endyng, 3876
 But lastith euere, & bereth me witesse,
 No wo rassemblith onto myn heuynesse."
- And with that woord John Bochas stille stood,
 Ful sobirly to yiue hym audience; 3880
 And in the place demeurli he a-bod
 To heere the substauce off his mortal offence,
 Which thus began to shewen his sentence.
 "O Iohn," quod he, "I pray the take good heed 3884
 My wo to write that men may it reed.
- Allas! my brother, roote off onkynd[e]nesse,
 Attreus callid, off tresoun sours & well,
 And fyndere out off tresoun & falsnesse, 3888

when suddenly
Thyestes, son
of Pelops, ap-
peared before
him and said.

"Leave
Theseus and tel:
my tragedy
first. Never
was there one
more terrible."

So Bochas
paused to
listen.

"John," said
Thyestes, "my
brother Atreus
was a great
scoundrel,

3860. Whilom] Sumtyme R — sone] þe sone H.

3863. for] *om.* R.

3865. that thou anon] anone at thou do R.

3867. Leue] Leff B — now] *om.* R.

3868. that] at R. 3870. sih R. 3871. nor] neithir R.

3875. ay] euer R. 3876. haueth] hath R, H.

3877. euere] *om.* H.

3883. his] the R.

And all other in fraude doth precell,
Whos couert hate is more than I can tell —
I supposyng, off verray innocence,
In hym no malice, deceit, nor offence, 3892

but I trusted
him as a
brother should.

But as a brother sholde his brother triste,
I trusted hym off herte, will & thouht;
Bi apparence non othir cause I wiste,
For in his persone I supposid nouht 3896
That euer he koude so fals a thyng ha wrouht.
But who may soner a-nother man deceyue,
Than he in whom no malice men conceyue?

I knew no
wrong in him.

I dempte off hym as off my trewe brother, 3900
Wenyng he hadde feithful been to me;
I sauh no signe, nor I kneuh non other,
In hym supposyng no duplicite. 3904
But, o allas, how myhte it euer be,
Or who dede euer in any story fynde
Blood onto blood to be so onkynde!

There is no
need of my
telling you
about the great
worth and nob-
ility of our
ancestors.

I will passe ouer to telle the worthynesse, [p. 49]
Touchyng thestatis off our progenytours, 3908
Off our kynreede, and the gret noblesse,
I telle no thyng, nor off our predecessours,
Nor off my youthe how passid been the flours—
I leue al this, and onto mynde call 3912
The wrechidnesse that I am in fall.

My brother
falsely accused
me of corrupt-
ing his wife's
virtue, exiled
me from our
country and
tried to kill
me

My brothir fond a fals occasioun
A-geyn[e]s me, and gan a cause feyne 3916
To ban[y]she me out off our regioun,
And gan at me off hatrede so disdeyne,
Vpon me affermyng in certeyne,
In our kyngdam, which callid is Missene,
I sholde haue ley[e]n bi his wiff the queene. 3920

This he compassid ful falsli off malis,
Hymself weel knowyng that it was nat so,
Ay founde onkynde, and in his auy

3889. doth] he dothe H 5, P — precell] excelle R.
3892. nor] ne non R, nor noon H 5, J. 3893. his]a R.
3895. Bi] For by H.
3902.] I see nothyng neithir I knowe non othir R.
3910. nor] nethir R, neither P, H 5. 3912. onto] to R.
3915. began R. 3917. bi gan R.
3920. I sholde] In shuld R. 3922. nat] no R.
3923. Ay] Euere R.

- Nat lik my brother, but my dedli fo; 3924
 And to encrece gret parcell off my wo,
 Bi long processe in his entencioun
 He ymagined my destruccioun.
- And his cheeff cause was fals[e] couetise, 3928
 Touchyng this thyng which he dede on me feyne;
 And yit this kyngdam, treuli to deuise,
 Shold haue be partid of riht atwen vs tweyne:
 But a-geyn trouthe he dede so ordeyne 3932
 Me to exile* out off that regioun,
 Hymself allone to haue possessioun.
- Yit in his herte he caste a-nother wile
 To myn ondoying and desolacioun: 3936
 To the place where he me dede exile,
 Vnder a shadwe off fals collusioun
 To make a maner reuocacioun,
 Off brethirheed shewyng a pretense, 3940
 Me to resorte a-geyn to his presence,
 To be accepted, as a brother sholde,
 With ful accord stille with hym tabide,
 All iniuries, off which afforn I tolde, 3944
 On outhar part forgete & set a-side,
 That nothyng afftir sholde our loue deuyde;
 But of oon will and oon entencioun
 Leede al our liff withoute dyuysioun. 3948
- Wheroff the people was fui glad and liht
 Thoruhout Missene the myhti regioun,
 At my resortyng fyndyng euery wiht
 Redi off herte and hool affeccoun 3952
 Me to receyue into that noble toun;
 And noon so redy, bi signes out shewyng,
 To make me cheer, in soth, as was the kyng.
- There is no damage in comparisoun, 3956
 That may be likned, bi no rassemblaunce,
 To feyned trouthe and symulacioun,

*
 because he
 wanted the en-
 tire kingdom
 for himself.

Afterwards he
 pretended re-
 pentance,

and we made up
 our differences,

which pleased
 our subjects,
 who received
 me back gladly.

There is noth-
 ing worse than
 fraud hid under
 an honest face,

3924. but] bud lik R.

3928. *This and the next two stanzas are transposed with the following four in R.*

3931. departid R — of riht] trewly H.

3933. exile] besile B, R, J, besyle H 5 (exile H, P, R 3).

3937. did me R. 3940. he shewyng H. 3944. toforme H.

3945. partye R — forgot H. 3947. all off oo will R.

3949. was] were R — J, P *om. the four following stanzas.*

3950. the] that R. 3953. receyue] resorte R.

Whan fraude is hid with a fair contenance,
 Pretendyng trouthe outward bi disseyuauunce, 3960
 And vndernethe, off most fals entent,
 Off doubilnesse darith the serpent.

As vnder floures is shroudid the dragoun,
 For to betraisshe bi sodeyn violence 3964

like a snake
 beneath flowers.

Such folk as haue no suspeciou, n,
 But treuli meene in ther peur innocence,
 Til thei be cauht dispurueied off diffence,
 As is a fissh with bait off fals plesauunce, 3968
 The hook nat seyn, to brynge hym to myschaunce.

Thus semblabli, at myn hom comyng
 I was receyued with eueri circumstaunce,
 Lich as halff heir and brother to the kyng; 3972
 And he, pretendyng, as bi contenance,

Thus I came
 home. My
 brother acted
 as if he were
 overwhelmed
 with joy,

That he hadde so inli gret plesauunce
 Off my repair, off* trouthe he tolde so,
 For, reioisshyng, saide he wolde go 3976

Onto his goddis to doon sum obseruauunce
 For this accord, and humble sacrefise,
 Made his mynystris with feithful attendaunce
 Tawaite on me in al ther beste wise; 3980
 It nedith nat to tellyn nor deuse,
 Nor in wrytyng in bookis for to sette
 Halff the ioie he made whan we mette.

and we em-
 braced one an-
 other weeping.

First how freendli he dede me embrace 3984
 Off hertli gladnesse withynne his armis tweyne,

And how for ioie the teris on his face
 Ful entierli gan down distill & reyne,
 That, for my part, I koude me nat restreyne, 3988

But that I muste off frenshipe fraternall
 Weepe as dede he in his estat roiall.

Innocent lambs
 are easily
 tricked.

The wili wolff that cast hym to deuoure [p. 50]
 The celi lamb, which can no diffence, 3992
 Nor non helpe hymselfen to socoure,
 So feeble he is to make resistance,
 Which demeth trouthe off fals apparence —
 What wonder ist the fraude nat conceyued, 3996
 Thouh such lambes onwarli be deceyued?

3964. be trousse R. 3975. off] & off B, H.

3980. Tawaite] To wate R. 3981. nor] ne R.

3982. Nor] Neithir R — in] bi R.

3984. embrace H. 3988. partie R.

3992. no] non R, noon J. 3993. Nor] Ne R — hym silff R.

- Thouh that roses at mydsomer be ful soote,
 Yit vndirnethe is hid a ful sharp spyne;
 Summe fressh[e] floures han a ful bittir roote, 4000
 And lothsum gall can sugre eek vndermyne;
 In dreedful stormys the sonne among doth shyne,
 And vnder a shadwe off feyned freendliheed,
 Ther is no frenship so pereilous for to dreed. 4004
 Thus remembryng the feithful woordis stable
 Off my brother shewed onto me,
 At our meetyng the kyssyng amyable,
 Thassurid couenantis off our fraternite — 4008
 But ofte tyme men may beholde and see
 That lelies growe among these netlis thikke,
 And flourdelis amynd these weedie wikke.
 Thus whil I restid in the kyngis hous,
 Nothyng aduertying his dedli cruelte,
 His olde hatreed was so venymous
 And so odible to destroie me,
 Hymself tauenge he took my childe thre, 4012
 And secreli — is it nat a wonder? — 4016
 He kutte her throtes with a knyf assonder.
 For he thouhte that it dede hym good
 Hem to dismembre into pecis smale, 4020
 And in a vessel for to gadre ther blood,
 Whil thei lay still & loked on hym* ful pale.
 This was his deede in a desert vale,
 Withynne a kaue, that no man sholde espie 4024
 Tresoun conspired off his fals tyrannye.
 This was the substaunce off his sacrefise,
 To sle my childe & do ther throtis bleede!
 I trowe the goddis theroff dede agrise, 4028
 Off his fals offryng whan thei token heede.
 He dede ther membris afftir roste & seede,
 And with this viaunde most abhomynable
 He made me be serued at the table. 4032

Midsummer roses are fragrant, but there are sharp thorns beneath.

No friendship is more dangerous than one that is feigned.

While I dwelt in my brother's house, suspecting nothing, he cut the throats of my three children, dismembered them,

and had them roasted and served up to me at table.

3998. Thofe þe Roos R 3 — that] the P.

4001. sugre eek] al so suger R, J.

4011. amynd] in myddis R, J, H 5, among H, amonge R 3 — weedis] wides J.

4017. secreli] sikyrly R — it is not R.

4022. &] om. H — hym] hem B — ful] om. R, J, P, H 5.

4027. do ther throtis] make ther hertis R, J, H 5.

4032. me be serued] be seruyd me H.

- In couert cruses, also thus it stood,
 To staunche my thrust, thoruh his cruel vengauce
 He made me vnknowe to drynke ther blood.
 Was nat this thyng to goddis displeaunce? 4036
 Yis, I dar sey[e]n; for bi demonstraunce,
 Vpon this deede, withoute mor obstacle,
 The sonne in heuene shewed a myracle.
 Which sore agrisid* myht[e] nat beholde 4040
 With his bemys theron to caste his siht,
 For displeaunce his clernesse gan withholde,
 And for vengauce to withdrawe his liht,
 The day turnyng for horroure onto nyht, 4044
 Whan he shon brihdest in his mydday speer,
 Shrowded his face and wolde nat appeer.
- Unwittingly I
 ate my children
 and drank
 their blood,
 which grieues
 me so that I
 can hardly
 speak of it.
- But I, allas, vpon this cas horrible,
 That koude nat ymagyne nouthur thynke 4048
 On ony mater that was so odible,
 Eet off ther flessch & off ther blood dede drynke,
 Which so sore doth in myn herte synke,
 That I may nat, touchyng this auenture, 4052
 The circumstaunces for constreynt to discure.
- It nedith me nat to make rehersaile
 Touchyng myn exil, off alle maner thynges,
 Off dyuers sorwes that me dede assaile, 4056
 My woful sihhes, nor my greuouse wepynges,
 Nor vpon nyhtes my dolorous wakynges,
 My pouert[e], nor how I stood in dreed
 To lese my lif; wheroff, Bochas, tak heed, 4060
- Bochas, did
 you ever hear
 of a more un-
 happy man?
- And remembre alle [the] circumstaunces:
 Yiff euer thou sauh, off hih or low degre,
 Mor contrari or mor onhappi chaunces,
 Than thou herd remembrid heer off me. 4064
 Weie in ballaunce my sorwes, and lat see
 Yiff any sorwe or myscheuys onrecurid
 May countirpeise to that I haue endurid!
4035. to] *om.* R.
 4037. demonstracion R.
 4040. sore agrisid] for agrisid B, H, R 3 — myhtnat B.
 4042. bi gan R. 4048. nethir R.
 4050. &] *om.* R — dede] also did I R. 4051. in] too R.
 4053. circumstaunce R — to] *om.* R. 4057. nor] ne R.
 4058, 9. Nor] Neithir R.
 4061. the] *om.* H, R 3 — circumstaunce H 5, syrcumstaunce P.
 4063. chaunce P, H 5. 4066. mischeeff R.

Myn infortunyes, I fond hem ay so fell, 4068
 Withoute fauour & socour dispurueied,
 My brother euer on me so cruell,
 That I ful offte desired to haue deied;
 For to this day my sperit hath be conueid 4072
 With sorwe and wo, deuoid off al refuge,
 Wherefore I pray, O Bochas be my iuge,
 And in thi writyng leff me nat behynde, [p. 51] You must not
 Nor in thi book[e] that thou nat disdeyne 4076 leave me out
 Among tho folk that thou ha[ue] me in mynde, of your book,
 Which that for sorwe weepe, waile & pleyne." of tragedies."
 And thus Thiestes, rehersyng al his peyne,
 Lich as he wolde hymself on pecis reende, 4080
 Maad onto Bochas off his tale an eende.

[How Atreus accusid himsilf of mordre and his
 brothir vpon auoutry don with Europa the
 quene.]¹

ATREUS afftir, with a ful pale cheer,
 And off envie ful ded in his visage,
 Onto Iohn Bochas gan* approche neer, 4084
 Lich as he hadde be fallen in a rage,
 And furiousli abraid in his langage,
 "How may this be, that lik a man wer wood,
 Thiestes hath his venym sowe a-brod, 4088
 And lik a rebaude falsli me accusid,
 Nat-withstandyng that I ful cleerli see
 Myn infortunyes, which may nat be refusid,
 So sore, allas, thei werke ageyn[e]s me! 4092
 And thouh Thiestes fals & ontrewre be,
 And to the, Bochas, with a face pale
 Ageyn[e]s me hath forged heer a tale
 Which in effect shal be founde ontrewre, 4096
 Yiff I ha[ue] space my compleynt to declare.
 For I purpose to telle a tale newe
 Fro poynt to poynt, & for no man to spare,

4076. Nor] Neithir R.

4084. gan] he gan B, H, P, R 3, began J, byganne H 5 — he
 began to proche R — approche] to approche H 5.

4087. wer] most R 3.

4091. which þat R. 4094. to] vnto R.

¹MS. J. leaf 22 recto.

The truth is,
that Thyestes
was the cause
of all my mis-
fortunes.

How he was roote & ground off al my care,
And euene lik as it is befall
Reherse the gynnyng off my sorwes all. 4100

Whilom whan I regned in Messene,
Off age lusti, flouryng in my fresshnesse,
With my wyff Europa, that was queene,
Most renommed that tyme off hir fairnesse,
Thiestes thanne, ground off al falsnesse,
As a traitour his tyme dede espie,
Thoruh his fals fraude & his flat[e]rie 4104
4108

He corrupted
Europa my
wife by his
fraud and flat-
tery, an intoler-
able thing to
do, and an
abomination
to the gods,

Compassid a mene withynne my cite
Bi slehti wilis that were incomparable,
To corrupte my wyuys chastite,
Mi bed defoulyng, a thyng intollerable,
And to the goddis verray abhomynable —
Vsyng the queen to his flesskli plesaunce,
Til onto tyme that bi continuaunce 4112
4116

and had two
or three sons
by her, which
I thought my
own. After-
wards this swine
had a son,
Egisthus, by
his own
daughter.

She bi hym hadde sonys too or thre,
Echon brouht forth in fals auout[e]rye.
Deemyng euer that thei hadde be
Myn owne childre, til that I dede espie,
How that this swyn thoruh his fals lecherie,*
This Thiestes, afftir Europa,
Lay bi his douhter callid Pellopia. 4120

And bi processe foorth a child she brouhte,
Callid Egistus, which whan he cam to age,
As seith Bochas, ful gret tresoun he wrouhte;
For bi his malice and his gret outrage
Destroied was al hooli the lynage
Off Tantalus, which bi his luyyng
In Frigia regned as lord and kyng. 4124
4128

They cast
Egisthus out
to wild beasts,
to prevent
scandal;

But this Egistus, off whom I spak afforn,
Falsli begote, myn auctour writ the same,
Off Pelopia, anon as he was born,
To hide the sclauandre & also the diffame
Off Thiestes, and for to saue his name, 4132

4102. begynnyng R.

4103. Whilom] Summe tyme R — Misseene H.

4104. my] om. H. 4106. hir] om. R. 4107. as grounde R.

4108. dede espie] asprie R. 4115. to] om. R.

4119. euer] om. R, H. 4120. children R.

4121. lecherie] trecherie B. 4125. he] þat he R.

4131. to forn R. 4132. wryteth R.

- Whan that he was but a day off age, 4136
 He was out cast to beestis ful sauage
- To be deuoured, the story is weel kouth. but he was
 A mylch[e] goot God list for hym prouyde, fostered by a
 To fostren hym in his tendre youth, 4140 goat and grew
 He day & nyht liggyng bi hir side. up and came
 Withynne the forest thus he dede abide where he
 Onto tyme that he gan growe in age; learned who his
 Thanne to the court he holdeth his passage, 4144 parents were.
- As onknowe to eueri maner wiht,
 Wher he herde, abidyng in houshold,
 Off his kenreede, & how, ageyn al riht,
 Thiestes was presumptuous and bold, 4148
 Bi his deceytis* compassid manyfold,
 With Europa my wiff to haue a-do,
 And on Pelopia begat a child also,
- Which was hymself, as he dede vndirstonde 4152
 Bi euydencis many mo than on.
 Wherfore off malice he took on honde,
 On me, his vncl, tauengid been anon.
 For Thiestes, cheuest off all my fon, 4156
 Myn owne brothir, made Egistus blyue
 To make a suerd thoruhout myn herte ryue.
- Thus bi this moordre, conspired bi tresoun, [p. 52]
 On me Atrous, liggyng pale and ded, 4160
 Cam Thiestes to haue* possessioun,
 And sette a crowne oniustli on his hed.
 He nouthur hadde conscience nor dreed,
 Routheles to see my woundis bleede, 4164
 With this that he myhte in my land succede.
- This same Egistus, ful falsli in his liff,
 As a yong braunche spronge out off tresoun,
 Lay bi Clymestra, which that was the wiff 4168
 Off the noble worthi kyng Agamenoun,
 Liggyng a-siege toffor Troie toun.
 And this Egistus, which is a thyng nat fair,
 Moordred hym also in Grece at his repair. 4172

Incited by
 Thyestes, he
 ran a sword
 through my
 heart.

Thus Thyestes
 became king.

Egisthus after-
 wards was the
 paramour of
 Clytemnestra,
 and murdered
 Agamemnon.

4139. mylke H, R 3 — prouyde] purueie R.

4141. He] by H — nyht & day R.

4145. *This and the next three stanzas are om. in R, J.*

4149. deceytes] desertis B. 4156. cheuest] cheff H, chefe R 3.

4158. ryue] arrive H. 4161. han B.

- Wherfore, O Bochas, off herte I pray[e] the,
 Which off these stories is now most terrible? —
 Off Edippus, Iocasta, or off me?
 Telle on anon, yiff it be possible, 4176
 Which off ther* sorwes is founde most penyble,
 Off Theban brethre, most ful off wo & teene,
 Or off vs tweyne brethern off Missene?
- I admit I roasted Thyestes' children,
 but he begot them on Europa,
 my wife; and although murder
 and treason are hateful, he
 wronged me first.
- I am a-knowe, as for my partie, 4180
 Off vengauce I dede a cruel deede:
 I slouh his childre off malice & envie
 And rosted hem, whan that thei wer dede,
 Onli because, yiff thou list take heede, 4184
 That he begat hem, as roote off al this striff,
 Vpon Europa, which that was my wiff.
- Such hatful thyngis echman sholde lothe,
 Which appertene to moordre and to tresoun: 4188
 Thus may I seyn, we been vnhappi bothe,
 He first bi trespass off fornyacioun
 Doon bi the queen withynne my regioun,
 And I, disclaundrid, on the tothir side, 4192
 Off hasti vengauce to been an homycide.
- My bed he fouled bi his auoutrie,
 To God & man a thyng most detestable;
 And I off malice and fals malencolie 4196
 Slouh his childre & serued hem atte table.
 Thus entirchaungyng, yiff it be comendable,
 Ech was desirous, thoruh our vnhappi chaunce,
 Vpon other for to do vengauce. 4200
- Our gret hatreede, most odious founde att all,
 Our cruel deedis wrouht on outhir side,
 Senech rehersith hem in especiall
 In his tragedies; and ther he doth deuyde 4204
 Our compleyntis, our malice & our pride,
 Our fatal eende in sorwe & myscheff fyned,
 Whan Antropos our lyuys threed hath twyned."

4174. now] *om.* R, J.4177. ther] these B — founde] *om.* J, R, H 5 — sorwes] stories R 3.4178. brethern R. 4179. Mycene P. 4180. for] *om.* R.

4182. &] & of R. 4184. bi cause repeated in R.

4188. 2nd to] *om.* R. 4190. He] The R.

4194. he fouled] defoulid R.

4206. fyned] feyned R.

Whan Iohn Bochas fulli hadde espied 4208 After hearing
 Off these too brethre thaccusaciouns, the stories of
 And how thei hadde maliciousli replied these two
 Ech ageyn other in ther discenciouns, brothers,
 He gan dulle to heere ther mocious, Bochas put
 Put vp his penne, & wrot nat mor a woord away
 Off the[r] furie nor off ther fals discord. 4212 his pen and
 refused to write
 another word
 about them.

[Lenvoy.]

THIS tragedie sheweth a figure,
 A maner ymage & also a liknesse, 4216 This tragedy
 How contrari it is onto nature, shews how
 Blood onto blood to shewe onkynd[e]nesse. hateful
 This woful story can ber [ful] weel witenesse, brotherly
 All such debatis been, as ye shal fynde, strife is to
 Hatful to God and contrary onto kynde. 4220 God and
 Nature.

For there is non mor dreedful auenture,
 Than in kynredis to fynde frowardnesse,
 Nor no damage mor pereilous to endure, 4224 Nothing is
 Than in frenshepes whan there is straungenesse more dreadful
 A maner parti; bexauple I dar expresse, than enmity
 To seen the tre debate ageyn the rynde, between
 To God were hatful and contrary onto kynde. 4228 relations.

Eueri beeste and eueri creature
 Loueth his semblable, off kyndli riht, I gesse;
 And whan on trouthe* tweyne hertis assure,
 Vndepartid, off verray parfitnesse, 4232 Every living
 It were a vicious froward cursidnesse, creature loves
 Ther loue so knet, to losne it or onbynde, his fellow of
 Hatful to God and contrari onto kynde. natural right.
 It were a vicious deed to
 make them
 quarrel.

Pryncis, Prynnessis, doth your besi cure 4236 Princes and
 Fro you tauoide striff, fraude & doubilnesse, Princesses, try
 Remembrith you vpon thunhappi eure to avoid
 Off these too brethre & off ther wrechidnesse, strife, fraud,
 And off ther bothe malicious wilfulnesse, and deceit;
 And how ther stryues — hath this weel in mynde — 4240 such things
 To God was hatful and contrary onto kynde. are very
 hateful
 to God.

4208. had fully H. 4212. began R — ther] the R.
 4213. nat] no R, H, R 3.
 4214. nor] neithir R.
 4219. ful weel] om. P. 4220. as] om. H.
 4225. Frenshippe R. 4227. ayenst R.
 4231. ontrithe B. 4234. losne it] louse R.
 4238. Remembre R — eure] cure R. 4241. haveth R.

[Off Duk Theseus and Adriane pat saued his liff
in the Caue/ and how he lik a forsworn man
forsook hir and weddid faire Phedra/ whiche
aftirward slouh hirsilf.]¹

Athens was
once called the
nurse of phi-
losophers and
sun of all
sciences.

ATHENES whilom, whan it was in his
floures, [p. 53]
Was callid notice of philisophres wise, 4244
Princesse off poetis & expert oratoures,
Sonne off all sciences, as clerkis can deuise,
Whens al cunnyng most cleerli dede arise,
Named off Grece the lanterne and the liht, 4248
Which thoruh al erthe shadde his beemys briht.

Its renown
shone in every
land,

With noble titles, which been out off noumbre,
In eueri coast his renoun dede shyne,
The fame theroff was clipsed with non ousmbre, 4252
All other scooles it dede so enlumyne;
For in that cite, pleynli to termyne,
Off the seuene artis, as down from on* hedspryng,
Ther ran out ryuers and stremys off al cunnyng. 4256

and only free
men of good
family could
study there.

These sciences were callid liberall,
Onli off fredam, fraunchise and liberte;
For off a stok that were preued thrall,
Ther sholde no braunche studie in that cite, 4260
But thilke blood that were founde fre,
Bothe be discent & lyneal hih noblesse,
Ther to scoleie sholde haue interesse.

The city was
sacred to
Minerva

This cite was sacrid to Mynerue, 4264
For ther wisdam and ther sapience;
Off Mercurie the feestis thei obserue,
For rethorik and for eloquence;
And myhti Mars gaff hem influence 4268
With glade aspectis, ther parti to a-mende,
Noblesse off knythod ther clergie to diffende.

and was famous
for its dukes
and kings,
among whom
Theseus, son of
Ægeus,

This toun was nobleied be title of other thynges,
And most glorious reknyd in that age 4272
Be successioun off dukes and off kynges,

4246. Sunne] Some H. 4248. Name R.
4253. scooles] om. R. 4254. determyne R.
4255. on] an B, H. 4256. stremys & Ryvers H.
4260. Ther] The R. 4266. thei] om. R.
4270. ther] the R. 4273. 2nd off] om. R.

¹MS. J. leaf 22 verso.

- A-mong[es] which duk Theseus bi lynage,
 Sone off Egistus, ful fressh off his corage,
 Excelling* alle of prudence & manheede 4276
 That euer dede the crowne ther posseede.
- For to that cite, thoruh his hih noblesse,
 In ther diffencis such trust, such [af]hiance
 He gaff to hem bi his expert prowesse, 4280
 Off his triumphes so gret habundaunce,
 And speciali ther renoun to auauce,
 He made hem fre ther truage for to lete
 Ageyn Mynos the myhti kyng off Crete. 4284
- For bi his force, the story is weel kouth,
 Them to fraunchise and al that regioun,
 The Mynotaur he slouh in tendre youth;
 And afftirward he off deuocioun, 4288
 Taquite hymself[e] lik a champioun,
 Theroff made solempne sacrefise
 To Iubiter in most humble wise;
- And in a theatre callid Maratoun, 4292
 Duk Theseus hadde this victorie.
 Afftir he wente to Colchos with Iasoun,
 Cheeff off counseil, as makid is memorie,
 And bi processe to augmente his glorie, 4296
 With Hercules his brother to conueie,
 Geyn Amazones he wente to werreie, —
- Conquered hem, his manhod was weel seene,
 His force, his noblesse in that mortal stryff. 4300
 And afftir that, Ypolita the queene
 This Theseus took onto his wiff. where he mar-
ried Hippolyte.
- And for his brother he list iupartre his liff,
 Duk Pirotheus, whan he dede vndirtake 4304
 The centaures to outraie for his sake.
- This centaures poetis specefie,
 And Seruyus maketh mencioun,
 How thei were whilom engendrid on a skie, 4308
 Whan first ther fadir, callid Yrion,
 Was enamourid, ful many day agon,
4275. off] in R. 4276. Excelling] Excelsyng B.
 4279. fiance] H, R 3. 4284. Ageynst R.
 4292. theatre] tiatre R. 4293. this] the R.
 4295. made R, H. 4296. bi] om. R. 4298. Ayens R.
 4303. list iupartre] leyde in iupardie R.
 4308. on] of H, P, R 3. 4310. many a R.

who slew the
Minotaur and
freed the
Athenians from
their tribute,
was the most
excellent.

Afterwards
Theseus went
to Colchos
with Jason and
to Femenye
with Hercules,

where he mar-
ried Hippolyte.

He also con-
quered the cen-
taurs, creatures
begotten on a
cloud by Ixion,
Juno's
secretary,

Vpon Iuno, because she was so fair,
Gouerneresse and goddesse off the hair. 4312

This Yrion was hir secretarie,
And for hir fairnesse & excellent beute,
Loued hir ful hote, al-be she was contrarie
To his desir, in Bochas ye may see. 4316
Hym to delude, he writith, how that she
Hirsilff transfourmyd, as she [that] myhte & koude,
Into the liknesse off an heuenli cloude,

who fell in
love with his
mistress, and
she, disdainig
him, took the
likeness of a
cloud,

This Yrion pleynli supposyng 4320
It was hirsilff, and euene thus he wrouhte,
The cloude enbracyng, withoute mor tarieng, —
Off his foli the goddesse there he souhte;
And with ther medlyng atwen hem foorth thei
brouhte 4324

which in his
folly he be-
lieved to be
her.

The centauris, these beestis merueilous,
Which off nature be founde monstuous.*

The centaurs
were half man,
half horse.
They tried to
carry away
Pirithous' wife
Hippodamia,

Halff man, halff hors, [de]partid thus on
tweyne, [p. 54]
And wonderful bi ther descripcioun, 4328
Off fals[e] malice dede hemselff ordeyne
On Pirotheus to make invasioun,
And hym to putte out off possessioun
Off his wiff, callid Ypodamen, 4332
And hir to rauysshe, maugre all his men.

Ther were off hem an hundred [as] in noumbre,
Swift as the wynd in ther cours rennyng,
Which off malice cast hem to encoumbre 4336
Duk Pirotheus the day off his weddyng,
And to rauysshe his wiff at ther comyng,
Yiff for his parti ther were no diffence
Ageyn ther power to make resistence. 4340

but Theseus
subdued them.

But Theseus list nat to delaie
Pirotheus his brother to diffende.
First the centaures he knyhtli dede outraie
So mortalli, thei durste hym nat offende; 4344
Afftir this conquest to helle thei descende,

4312. Gouernesse R, P, H 5.

4315. al be it R. 4320-4515.] *om.* H, *fol. missing.*

4326. monstuous] contrarious B, R 3, P — ther nature R.

4327. on] in R, J. 4328. And] A R.

4330. invasioun] inuocacion R.

4343. knyhtly he did R, J. 4345. this] the R, þe J.

Duk Pirothe and worthi Theseus,
Maugre the daunger off cruel Cerberus.

There thei rauysshe in ther mortal teene,
Thoruh ther knythod, yiff ye list to lere,
Despiht off Pluto, Proserpyna the queene,
Which off Iubiter was the douhter deere.

4348 Afterwards he
and Piritheus
descended into
hell, where
they made
off with
Proserpina.

And Pirotheus fond first the manere
Off wilful force, thoruh his hih renoun,
Rewmys to conquere and holde possessioun.

4352

But bi writyng sothli off Ouyde,
He pleynli tellith how duk Theseus
Arested was in hell, and muste abide,
Bi the force off cruel Cerberus;
And Pluto was to hym contrarious,
Til Pirotheus, to fynden a reles,
The cas declared onto Hercules.

4356 But Ovid says
that Theseus
was arrested in
hell and kept
there by Cer-
berus, and
subsequently
rescued by
Hercules,

4360

Which off his knythod a remedi fond,
To helpe his frend [he] dede his besi peyne;
First bi his prowesse Cerberus he bond
At helle gatis with a treble cheyne,
And off his manhod he dede so ordeyne,
Duk Theseus from daunger to discharge,
Maugre Pluto for to gon at large.

4364 who bound
Cerberus with
a triple chain.

4368

Thei were in armys brethre bothe tweyne,
Louede as brethre bothe* in werre and pes,
That nouthur koude onto other feyne,
Ther liff to iupart & putte hemsilf in pres.
And bothe as brethre wer callid Hercules,
To signefie, poetis can weel tell,
This name in conquest all other doth excell.

4372

Theseus and
Piritheus were
brothers in
arms, and
called
Hercules,

Bi old[e] tyme thei that were pereles
For ther noblesse in dyuers regions,
All thei for manhod wer namyd Hercules,
Such as were noised for famous champiouns,
Tigres to daunte, boores and leouns,
And renommed among hem euerichon,
Bookis afferme, that Theseus was on.

4376

a name given
to peerless
knights in old
times.

4380

4350. Preserpyna R.

4363. he] om. J.

4370. bothe] togidre B, R 3, P (both R, J, H 5).

4371. neithir R, J. 4372. Iupardie R, J.

4382. Bookis] Bochas P, H 5 — afferme] affermeth R, J, P,
H 5.

- Theseus brought peace to Athens, restored exiles, 4384
 First, as I saide, bi his knyhtli trauaile,
 Whan Athenes stood in dyuysioun
 A-mong hemsilff bi werre and bi bataile,
 Bi* his wisdam and his* discrecioun,
 He sette accord withynne that noble toun:
 Them that were exilid & stood in nouncerteyn, 4388
 He off his knythod made hem resorte ageyn;
- made laws and governed wisely, 4392
 He gaff hem lawes wherbi thei sholde hem gie,
 Noble statutis foundid on resoun,
 Sette among hem so prudent policie,
 In ther lyuyng that no discencioun
 Sholde arise bi non occasioun
 A-mong hemsilff, in hih or low estat,
 Prouydyng euere that there were no debat. 4396
- so that the city prospered and became the first centre of knighthood and philosophy. 4400
 Thus gan the cite encrece and multeplie,
 To wexe famous off wisdam and richesse;
 Ther sprang the welle first off philosophie;
 Ther first off knythod ros the hih noblesse,
 Bi Theseus, Bochas bereth witnessse:
 Thus thynges too, lik as it is founde,
 Clergie and knythod dede there habounde.
- He compelled Creon to return the remains of lords slain at Thebes to their ladies. 4404
 And for to sette the cite in quieete,
 He made pes thoruh al that regioun;
 And off knythod he manli dede meete
 The cruel tiraunt that callid was Creoun,
 Mauge hym made restitucioun 4408
 Off lordis bonys, that were at Thebes slayn,
 To the ladies, wheroff thei were ful fayn.
- Theseus lived long in honour and joy, but at last Fortune turned her face away from him and threw him down from her wheel. 4412
 Thus thoruh Grece abrod his renoun spradde; [p. 55]
 His knyhtli fame gan gretli multeplie,
 And longe in ioie thus his liff he ladde,
 Whil that Fortune list hym magnefie:
 But ay hir gladnesse is meynt with sum envie,
 For she, froward, list no mor soiourne 4416
 With Theseus, but gan hir face tourne

4386, 7 are transposed in B. 4386. 2nd his] bi his B.

4387. He] To R.

4388. stouden R.

4391. founde R — on] of J.

4397. bigan R, J. 4403. knythod] lawe J, H 5, lowe R.

4404. And] om. R, J. 4412. began R, bigan J.

4417. began R, J, H 5.

Away from hym, wex peruers and froward,
 Off his glorie* ongoodli gan to dulle,
 Doun from hir wheel she made [him] go bakward, 4420
 Off his good fame she gan the fethres pulle;
 Whan his noblesse was hiest at the fulle —
 I meene the fulle off his felicite —
 Ther folwed an ebbe off gret aduersite. 4424

And, morouer, hir frowardli to quite, After he had
slain the
Minotaur
 His onhappis rehersyng on bi on,
 On the firste, as Bochas list endite, 4428
 Was whan he lay in Crete among his fon,
 And out off prisoun sholde into Grece gon,
 Repeiryng homward & hymself withdrawe,
 The Mynotaur whan he hadde slawe.

The firste emprise that he vndirtook, 4432
 Was whan he scaped thymportable peyne
 Off Mynotaurus, lik as seith my book, and deserted
Ariadne, who
saved his life.
 And with hym ladde the kyngis douhtren tweyne,
 That he off malice falsli list disdeyne 4436
 Geyn Adriane, which that dede hym saue
 From the deth, whan he lay in the caue.

Sholde ha be slayn, hadde nat hir socour be, —
 In his repair he took theroff non heed; 4440 and married
Phædra,
 He lefte hir sool* in gret aduersite
 Withynne an yle, in myscheeff, sorwe & dreed.
 And fair[e] Phedra with hym he dede leed,
 Weddid hir, lik a forswore man: 4444
 Thus with ontrouthe his myscheeff first began.

How Phedra quit hir, — the story is weel knowe — Phædra fell in
love with Hip-
polytus, who
 In his absence, Bochas writith thus, 4448
 Whan that she, withynne a litil throwe,
 Loued ageyn kynde his sone Ypolitus;
 But he to hire was contrarious,

4419. gloire B — gan to dulle] be gan to double R, gan to double J.

4420. him] *om.* R, J, P, R 3, H 5.

4421. fame she gan] name she bigan R, J. 4422. the] *om.* J.

4425. to aquyte R, J. 4427. to endite R, J.

4433. escapid R, J. 4435. ladde] hadde R, had J.

4437. Geyn] Ayens R, Ayenst J.

4441. sool] soul B, alone H 5.

4446. hir] *om.* R — knowe] *om.* R, coupe J.

4449. his] hir J, P, H 5.

- Nolde [not] assente to so foul a deede;
 For shame he fledde, & parcel eek for dreede, 4452
- was killed, as
 you have al-
 ready seen. To his fader for she hym dede* accuse,
 As ye toforn ha[ue] the story sayn.
 And for he dede hir cumpany refuse,
 He wente his way & cam neuer agayn; 4456
 For ye haue herd[e] how that he was slayn
 Withynne a char, thoruh his vnhappi chaunce,
 And how Phedra throuh myscheeff & vengauunce
- She then slew
 herself; and all
 this Theseus
 believed to be
 a punishment
 for his deserting
 Ariadne. Slouh hirsself, ageyn al womanheed — * 4460
 Heer in this book toforn as I you tolde.
 Of which[e] thyng, whan Theseus took heed,
 Thouhte it was vengauunce for his offencis olde;
 For he nat quit hym lik as he was holde 4464
 To Adriane, which sholde ha been his wiff,
 Bi whos socour he scaped with the liff.
- This infortune* and this vnhappi chaunce
 Was to his noblesse ful contrarious. 4468
 The deth also was to hym* a vengauunce
 Off his sone callid Ypolitus,
 For sorwe off whom, this duk Theseus
 With salte teris sore gan compleyne 4472
 At the exequies off these ilke tweyne.
- He wept bitter
 tears at their
 funeral and
 was sorely
 grieved when
 Pirithous was
 slain by Cer-
 berus. I trowe also it dede hym sore greue,
 Duk Pirotheus whan he sauh li ded,
 Slayn with a beeste, & myht[e] nat releue, — 4476
 Kyng Orchus hound, which hadde a treble hed,
 Whos teth horrible off his blood were red.
 Which infortunye, whan he gan beholde,
 Onto the deth he felte his herte colde. 4480
- His greatest
 sorrow was that
 he gave cred-
 ence to Phædra, And for to rekne the grete wrechidnessis,
 Thunhappi chaunces that fill hym in his liff,
 Amongis alle his other gret distressis,
 Was non so mortal nor so ful off striff 4484
 As whan that he gaff credence to his wiff,
4451. not] *om.* R 3. 4452. eek] also R.
 4453. hym dede] dede hym B.
 4456. his way] away R, J, P, H 5.
 4464. holde] beholde R, J. 4466. the] his R.
 4467. infortune] Infortunye B. 4469. to hym was also B.
 4472. bigan R, bigan to pleyne J.
 4473. At] And R, J — these] the R,]e J.
 4475. sauh li] sih be R, si3e be J. 4479. infortune R, J.
 4484. nor] ne J.

- Phedra callid, which off entencioun
Compassid ontreuili an accusacioun
- Vpon Ypolitus, off hatreed and envie, 4488 and for this
Because he nolde do so gret offence reason Bochas
As for tassente to hir lecherie; forbids hus-
Therefore off deth he felte the violence. bands to be-
And for his fader to soone gaff credence, 4492 lieve what
Bochas forbit husbondis al ther lyues, their wives tell
Withoute preeff, nat leeu to soone her wyues, there be proof,
- Nor be [to] hasti talis for to leeu [p. 56] and advises us
Off flaterers in chaumbre nor at table; 4496 not to be
Forgers of lesyngis, myn auctour doth weel preuee, hasty to be-
Tabide with lordis that thei be nat able. lieve tales of
Heeron he maketh a chapitle ful notable, any sort.
- And off his wrytyng, this was the cause whi: 4500
- That pryncis sholde examyne ech parti,
- Off wisdam also and off discrecioun,
Withoute a preeff nat be parciall;
For to a prynce it is confusioun, 4504
Yiff atween parties he be nat founde egall,
Causid many on for to haue a fall;
God suffred such nat longe to contune,*
Withdrouh ther grace & hyndred ther fortune. 4508
- Thus Theseus for his hastynesse,
His happ, his grace discrecid day be day,
The fame appallid off his worthynesse,
And froward Fortune in a-wait eek lay, 4512
For his diffautis to hyndre hym yiff she may;
Caste she wolde his noblesse disauaunce.
And thanne his kyngdam bi disobeisauce
- From hym withdrouh honour and reuerence, 4516 whose subjects
Ful frowardli thoruh al his regioun. rebelled and
Thei off Athenys, bi cruel violence, finally drove
Fill ageyn hym in* rebellioun, him out of
That he was fayn to fleen out off the toun: 4520 his kingdom.

4485. whan that] was whan R, J — he] *om.* J.4486. off] an R, J. 4489. he] *om.* J.4490. to assente J — vnto R. 4494. her] *om.* J.

4495. leeu] heere R, here J, H 5. 4496. nor] ne J.

4505. betwene R, J. 4507. continue B, contynue H 5.

4509. hastifnesse J. 4510. discrecid] distressid J.

4512. in a-wait eek] also in a wayte R, J.

4516. H *begins again.* 4519. in] in a B, R 3.

Thus hath Fortune dirked the brihtnesse
Off al his noble, and cast hym in distresse.

This was the eende bi gret contrariouste
Off Theseus, afftir his daies glade, 4524
Whan the fressh floures off old felicite,
Fortune aduerse made hem for to fade;
Ech thyng mut bowwe whan it is ouer-lade,
Worshepis & honouris, whan thei brihtest shyne, 4528
With vnwar chaunges than rather doun declayne.

[Lenvoy.]

The prosperity
of princes is
subject to
sudden change;

THE onseur gladnesse, the ioie transitorie,*
Thunstable seurnesse, the* transmuciouns,
The cloudi brihtnesse, the fals eclipsid glorie 4532
Off ertly pryncis which han possessiouns,
Monarchies and dominaciouns —
Ther sodeyn chaung declareth to vs all,
Ther pompous sugre is meynt with bittir gall. 4536

Fortuna can
take from them
their crowns
and sceptres,

This blynde goddessse in hir consistorie,*
With hir plesaunce medlith discenciouns,
Afftir tryumphes, conquest and victorie,
Reueth fro pryncis ther sceptres & ther crouns, 4540
Troubleth the peple with fals rebellious:
Seeth bi these dukis, which from her wheel be fall,
Al worldli sugre is meynt with bittir gall.

as this tragedie
shews.

This tragedie maketh a memorie * 4544
Off dukis tweyne, & off ther hih renouns;
And off ther loue writ a gret historie,
And how thei conquered dyuers regiouns,
Gouerned cites, contres and eek touns, 4548
Til Fortune ther prowessse dede appall,
To shewe ther sugre was* meynt with bittir gall.

4525. flour R.

4529. doun] doth R. 4530, 32. transitoire, gloire B.

4531. the] ther B. 4534. Monarchies] & monarchies H.

4537, 39. consistoire, victoire B.

4540. fro pryncis] from kyngis R — 2nd ther] the R.

4541. Troubleth] & troublith H.

4542. her] per R.

4543. bittir] sum R.

4544, 46. memoire, histoire B.

4544. a] om. R. 4548. eek] also R.

4550. was] is B — mended R 3 — bittir] sum R, J, H 5.

Pryncis, Pryncessis, seeth how deceptorie *
 Been alle these worldli reuoluciouns, 4552
 And how Fortune in hir reclynatorie,
 With hir triacle tempreth fals poisouns:
 So merueilous been hir confeccions,
 Off frowardnesse she will, what-so be-fall, 4556
 Ay with hir sugre off custum tempre gall.

Princes, Princesses, remember that Fortune always tempers her sugar with gall.

¶ Here Bochas repreuyth all thunstablines of
 Princis & oþir persones þat zeve hasti credence
 to euery report with-out preef.¹

ALTHOUGH so be, in eueri maner age
 Folkis be dyuers off condiciouns,
 To turne, plie & chaunge in ther corage, 4560
 On outhr parti with sodeyn mocions,
 And for to bowe* bi transmudaciouns
 With eueri wynd, as doon thunstable leuys,
 Which hange on trees in forestis and in greuys. 4564

People are constantly changing in their hearts.

But off alle chaungis, that chaung is most to dreede,
 And most feerful is that variaunce,
 Whan that pryncis, which may the peple leede,
 Be founde vnstable in ther gouernaunce: 4568
 For ther noblesse and ther hih puissaunce
 Assureth hem, bi a maner [of] fourme,
 What-euer hem list taccomplishe and parfourme.

but the worst change is when princes are unstable;

To comoun profit thei may most auaille, [p. 57] 4572
 Whan thei be reulid bi wisdam and resoun;
 And to the peple thei may most disauaille,
 Whan thei lakke wit and discrecioun:
 Thus atwen tweyne, in eueri region, 4576

for their subjects are apt to follow their example.

4551, 53. deceptoire, reclynatoire B. 4556. wole so what R.

4557. Ay] Euere R. ¹ *The heading in J is as follows:* "Here Bochas writeth ayenst hem that yeueth hasty credence to liers and flaterers," MS. J. leaf 24 recto. *The following heading is in R:* "In this capitle Bochas repreueth | And blameth nat oonly princis | All hem that ouerlyghtly yeueth credence | To euery tale & fable which is." *In J, written as an ordinary stanza:* "In this Chapitle Bochas in sentence | Repreueþ and blameþ not oonly princes | But all hem þat ouerlyghtly [g]eueþ credence | To euery tale and fable whiche is | Reported vn to hem [break in handwriting] for sothfastnesse | And list nothyng do as it were dewe | To prove the trouth where it be fals or trewe."

4562. bowve B. 4565. *This stanza is marked as in approval R 3.*

4570. of] om. R 3.

4576. betwene R.

The people draweth, who that can discerne,
To good or badde, as pryncis hem gouerne.

Princes must
not be hasty of
judgment

Thei may nat be to hasti nor sodeyne,
But doon all thyng bi good auysement, 4580
Keepe hem from tunges that parted been on tweyne,
Nat be to rakill to yiue no iugement,
And off no folkis, whan thei been absent,
Leue no talis nor yiue no credence, 4584
Till that the parti may come to audience.

or listen to
tales too
readily. Hasty
credence is far
worse than
slowness of
belief.

Sumwhile hath happid, how that slouh credence
Hath in sum cas be founde ful noious;
But hasti credence, I dar sey in sentence, 4588
A thousand fold is more pereilous;
For onauysid al haste is odious:
For haste ful offte, for lakkyng off resoun,
Off moch[e] people hath be destruccioun. 4592

Nothing indeed
is more to
be dreaded.

There is no damage that men can purpose,
Mor to be drad nor mor lamentable,
Than a prynce his eris to onclose 4596
To eueri tale and to eueri fable;
It is a tokne ther hertis be nat stable,
Whan thei to flatereris ther eris do* applie,
Namli to such that can weel forge and lie.

Some people
are false, some
are honourable;

Folkis be dyuers, summe fals and summe trewe, 4600
In dyuers studies doon ther besynesse;
Summe can studie to fynde out talis newe,
And summe for lucre can meyntene weel falsnesse
And holde up quarelis ageyn[e]s rihtwisnesse, 4604
Pretendyng trouthe vnder a fals entent
To hyndre folkis which that been innocent.

it were folly
to think they
should all be
alike;

Men to suppose it were a gret foli,
That folkis sholde in ther oppynyoun 4608
Speke or pronounce alle on o parti,
Or holde o weie in ther entencioun;
For semblabli as there is dyuysioun

4579. nor] ne to R.

4584. nor] neithir R.

4586. Sumwhile] Sumtyme R.

4587. cas] om. R.

4594. nor] ne R. 4596. 2nd to] om. R.

4598. ther] thei R — do] so B, done R. 4599. forge] om. R.

4600. and] om. R. 4607. to] doe P.

4611. a dyuysioun R, J, H 5, P.

- Off* corages, off hih or low degre, 4612
 So is ther treuli a gret dyuersite
- In rehersaile or report off a thyng,
 For to his parti ech man is faourable: therefore a
 Sum man can sey weel in his rehersyng, 4616 prince ought to
 Sum man is double, & sum man deceyuable, examine well
 Sum men sey trouthe, and summe be variable; before he de-
 Wherefore a prynce off riht, as it doth seeme, livers his
 Sholde weel examyne afforn or that he deeme. 4620 judgment.
- For there is noon mor dreedful pestilence
 Than a tunge that can flatre and fage;
 For with his cursid crabbid violence
 He enfectith folk* off eueri maner age. 4624 Woe to
 Wo to tunges froward off ther language, flattering,
 And wo to tunges fals, furious and wood, lying,
 Which off no persone neuer can sey good. slanderous
 tongues!
- Bochas rehersith, it is riht weel sittingyng 4628 Bochas says
 That eueri man other do comende, we should
 And sey the beste alwey in reportyng; always speak
 For in weel-seieng may no man offende. well of one
 Where men sey weel, God will his grace sende; 4632 another,
 Afftir men been, men mut the pris vpreise,
 Lich ther meritis allowe hem or dispreise.
- But wher a thyng is vttilri onknowe,
 Lat no man ther been hasti off sentence; 4636 and where we
 For rihtful iuges sittingyng on a rowe, have no knowl-
 Off ther wisdam and off ther hih prudence edge, we
 Will of trouthe haue first sum euydence — should be
 I meene such as gouerned be bi grace — 4640 slow to
 Or any doom forbi ther lippis pace. judge.
- A prynce sholde assemble thyngis tweyne
 Withynne hymself: [afforn] ful prudently
 Shet up his doomys betwixe lokkis tweyne, 4644 A prince should
 On off the soule, resoun for that party, always decide
 Prudence chose out, and riht for the body; according to
 reason and
 right, and take
 truth and conse-
 science to
 counsel.

4612. Off] In B — off] in H.

4615. to] om. H. 4616. in] in all R. 4618. seyth R.

4622. flatre] flaterie R — in red in margin, MS. J. 24 c: nota.
de falsis linguis.

4624. infectith R — folkis B, folkes R 3 — maner] om. J.

4626. furious] froward H.

4628. it is riht weel] as it is wele R. 4629. eueri] euzre R.

4631. no man may R, J. 4641. forth bi R — ther] the H.

4643. afforn] om. H. 4644. betwixt R. 4645. soule] sone R.

And atween bothe, or he yiue a sentence,
To counseil calle trouthe and good conscience. 4648

He should first
find out
whether the
accuser proceeds
honestly,

First to considre with eueri circumstance,
Dilligentli doon theron his labour,
Off discrecioun to take the ballaunce,
And first weie out who is thaccusour, 4652
And whethir that he for falsnesse or fauour
In his processe list for to proceede;
Heroff a prynce must off riht take heede.

and if he is a
friend or enemy
of the accused
and a man of
good or bad
report.

He muste also considre bi and bi, [p. 58] 4656
What that he is, which is to hym accusid,
And whethir thaccusour be freend or enmy,
Or whethir he shal been accepte* or refusid
In his accus — this muste affor be musid — 4660
And whethir he be, bi report off his name,
A man weel noised or sclaunderid bi diffame.

If Theseus had
done this, he
would not have
caused his son's
death;

Yiff Theseus hadde be thus auysed,
And considred off resoun the maner, 4664
He hadde nat so hastili deuysed
His sonys deth, lich as ye shal ler:
For yiff ther hadde assemblid been I-feer
In his persone prudence and resoun, 4668
He sholde ha[ue] seyn in his discrecioun,

for, as Bochas
says, women are
born liars and
sometimes talk
too much.

Be knowlechyng off long experience,
Off his wiff the gret onstedfastnesse,
Which thoruh hir froward compassid eloquence 4672
Was redi euere to brynge folk in distresse,
As in his writyng Bochas berth witnessse,
Off ther nature women can flatre and fage,
And been sumwhile to copious off language. 4676

Also off wisdam, this duk Theseus
Shold ha[u]e considred afforn in his entent,
How that his sone, callid Ypolitus,

4647. bitwene hem both R.

4650. And diligently R — theron] ther R. 4654. for] om. R.

4659. he] that he R — accept] acceptid B and other MSS.
except H 5 which has accepte.

4660. accus] actis J, H 5 — this] he P, thus H 5.

4663. thus had been J, R, H 5.

4672. hir] his R. 4673. in] to R.

4676. sum tyme R — to copious off] copious of ther R.

4677. this] om. R.

- Off al onclennesse was founde ay innocent; 4680 Theseus should
 And how that he off custum made his went have remem-
 Into forestis duryng his yong age, bered that his
 To hunte at beestis which that were sauage. son was a
 hunter
- Rennyng on foote, as ye shal vndirstonde, 4684
 On hillis, valis teschewen idilnesse,
 Mooder off vicis, with his bowe in honde,
 Diane to serue off huntyng cheeff goddessse. 4688
 Sumtyme to hauke he dede his besynesse;
 Eek onto fisshyng he gretly was applied,
 So that his youthe was neuer onocupied.
- Thus he lyued in wodis solitarie,
 And off Venus despised the seruyse; 4692 who despised
 A-mong[es] women he wolde neuer tarie, the society of
 Ther felshipp he dede alwey despise: women
 For he dempte, be sentence off the wise, 4696
 Who touchith pich, bassay men may see,*
 It failith nat he shal defouled be.
- Ypolitus sauh weel this thyng afforn,
 Kept hym at large from such contrariouste;
 His greene youthe he wolde nat haue it lorn, 4700 and always re-
 To be diffoulid for lak off chastite: mained chaste.
 For he lyued euer in virgynyte,
 And neuer dede, Bochas wil nat varie, 4704
 Nothyng that was onto God contrarie.
- Thus off entent he kepte his bodi cleene
 Duryng his liff, bothe in thouht & deede, His mother
 Whos mooder was Ypolita the queene was Hippolyte;
 Off Amazones, in Ouyde ye may reede. 4708
 But, o allas, that Theseus took heede,
 For a tale off Phedra ful off gile,
 Withoute gilt his sone to exile.
- Aftir whos deth[e], summe poetis seyn, 4712 and after his
 How that Diana, for his chastite, death Diana
 Restorid hym onto lyue ageyn restored him
 Bi Esculapius, and gaff hym liberte to life and
 In hir forestis to hunten and go fre. 4716 gave him leave
 to hunt in her
 forests forever.
4680. ay] euer R. 4686. in] on H, J, H 5.
 4689. Eek] Also R — gretly he was R. 4692. dispised R.
 4694. alwey] euer H, euer P, euer R 3.
 4696. Who] Who so R, J — see] weel see B — *In MS. J. in red
 in margin: Qui tangit picem &c.*
 4698. seeh R — before H. 4707. was] om H.

For which restoryng, as writ Ouidius,
As twies a man, men callid hym Virbius.

Bochas here makes a great outcry against women and says that they are deceitful by nature and like insatiable beasts.

¶ Heer Bochas makith an exclamacion a-geyn the pride of vommen And thonseurnes of princes.

BUT Bochas heer, I not what he doth meene,
Maketh in his book an exclamacioun 4720
Ageyn[e]s women, that pite is to seene —
Seith how ther lync, ther generacioun
Been off nature double off condicioun,
And callith hem eek dyuers and onstable, 4724
Beestis rassemblyng that been insaciabile.

Of course he means only the women of Crete, for the women of this country are very different.

He meneth off women that be born in Crete,
Nothyng off hem that duelle in this contre:
For women heer, al doubilnesse thei lete, 4728
And ha[ue] no tech off mutabilite,
Thei loue no chaungis nor no duplicite;
For ther husbandis, in causis smal or grete,
What-euer thei seyn, thei can nat countirplete. 4732

Blessed be God, who made them so humble and patient. I don't mean one, but all, as their husbands can testify;

Blessid be God, that hath hem maad so meek, [p. 59]
So humble and feithful off ther condiciouns;
For thouth men wolde cause* and mater seek
Ageyn ther pacience to fynde occasiouns, 4736
Thei han refusid al contradicciouns,
And hem submittid thoruh ther gouernaunce,
Onli to meeknesse and womanli suffraunce.

I speke off alle, I speke nat off on, 4740
That be professid onto lowlynesse;
Thei may ha[ue] mouthes, but language ha[ue] thei non:
Alle trewe husbandis can bern heroff witnesse;
For weddid men, I dar riht weel expresse, 4744
That haue assaied and had experience,
Best can recorde off wifli pacience.

4718. callid] call R — *between this line and the next the following note in red*, MS J. 25 a: "Nota de transformatis i bis vii."

4722. Seith] Seeth H — 2nd ther] the H. 4724. eek] also R.

4726. women] them H. 4727. hem that is muddled in R.

4729. tech] tache R. 4734. feithful] feerdful R.

4735. cause] causes B, R 3 P, H — mateers H.

4743. heroff] per of R.

4744. riht] ful R.

- For as it longeth to men to be sturdy,
 And sumwhat froward as off ther nature, 4748
 Riht so can women suffre paciently,
 And alle wrongis humbl[el]i endure.
 Men sholde attempte no maner creature,
 A[nd] namli women, ther meeknesse for to preue, 4752
 Which may weel suffre whil no man doth hem greue.
- Eueri thyng resortith to his kynde,
 As Bochas writith, *sum* tyme off the yeer;
 And yit, who serchith, bi processe he shal fynde 4756
 That trouthe and vertu may neuer fade off cheer:
 For rihtwisnesse will alwey shyne cleer;
 Trouthe & falsnesse, in what thei ha[ue] to doone,
 Thei may no while assemble in o persone. 4760
- Feith and flatrie, thei be so contrarie,
 Thei may togidre holde no soiour;
 Nor symplesse, which that *can* nat varie,
 May neuer accorde with a baratour, 4764
 Nor innocence with a losengour,
 Nor chastite *can* nat hirsilff applie
 Hir to confourme onto [no] ribaudie.
- Crafft and nature sue the professioun 4768
 Bi thordynaunce set in ther courage;
 And ech man folweth his condicioun,
 As off the stok the frut hath his tarage:
 Pilgrymes may gon ful ferr in ther passage, 4772
 But I dar seyn, how ferr that euer thei go,
 Ther bit sum tarage off that that thei *cam* fro.
- Bochas maketh an introduccioun
 In this chapitle, off the hih noblesse 4776
 That pryncis han in ther possessioun;
 And bi a maner lawhhyng doth expresse,
 How for to sette hem in gret sekirnesse,

for, unlike
 men, they
 suffer all
 wrongs in
 humility.

Truth and
 falseness are
 never found
 together in one
 person.

or good faith
 and flattery,
 simplicity in a
 boaster or
 chastity in a
 ribald.

Each man lives
 according to
 his character.

Bochas laughs
 at those
 princes who
 have sergeants
 waiting upon
 them and
 soldiers

4747. it] *om.* R. 4750. humbyleth R.

4753. doth] do P, H 5.

4755. as write Boch. H.

4759. &] *om.* R. 4761. so] *om.* R.

4762. may not R — no] *om.* R. 4763, 65. Nor] Neithir R.

4768. MS. J. 25 b *in red between the lines*: "Ars mutat naturam."

4771. his] the R. 4774. 2nd that] *om.* R.

4775. Bochas maketh] Makith here bochas R.

4776. the] *om.* R.

4778. lawhhyng] louthyng R — doth] *om.* H.

- Thei han sergauntis vpon hem abidyng, 4780
 And men off armys day and nyht waityng.
- to keep people
 from approach-
 ing them. That no man entre, but yiff he ha[ue] licence,
 The froward porteris stondyng at the gate
 Putte men a-bak be sturdi violence; 4784
 It were ful hard ageyn hem to debate,
 Ther wachchis kept erli and eek late;
 And hem tassure a-nyhtis whil thei slepe,
 The chaumberleyens ther dorys streihtli keepe. 4788
- They are
 watched
 over day and
 night by serv-
 ants, their
 food and drink
 are tasted for
 them, they live
 in suspicion and
 fear. Men assigned ther metis to assaie,
 To taste ther wynes, list ther were tresoun;
 Such mortal dreed these lordis doth affraie;
 So is ther seurnesse meynt with suspeciou[n]: 4792
 Who fedith hym gladli, that ferith hym off poisoun?
 But pore folk fraunchised from such dreed,
 [With] such as God sent meryly* thei hem feed.
- Poor people are
 free from such
 dread. The
 highest estates
 have least peace
 of mind. But poetis that write tragedies, 4796
 Ther compleynyng is al off hih estatis,
 Rehersyng euer ther pitous iuparties,
 Ther sodeyn chaungis & ther woful fatis,
 Ther dyuysious and ther mortal debatis, 4800
 And ay conclude ther dites, who can reede,
 Hiest estatis stonde ay most in dreede.
- Of all this
 liars and flat-
 terers are the
 cause, and worst
 of all is when
 princes believe
 what they say. And ground & roote off al this mortal trouble,
 As writ Bochas and pleynli berth witnessse, 4804
 Been these lieres with ther tungen double,
 Themsilff afforcyng ay trouthe to oppresse;
 With whom flatrie is a cheeff maistresse:
 And, werst off all, to ther dreedful sentence, 4808
 Is whan pryncis been hasti off credence.
- Hasty credence
 is the source of
 great sorrow. Hasti credence is roote off al errour,
 A froward stepmooder off al good counsail,
 Ground off gret hyndryng, a dreedful deceyuour, 4812
4780. sergauntis] *seruauntis* R, J, H 5.
 4781. waityng] *awaityng* H, R, P, H 5.
 4782. entre] *may entre* R. 4786. eek] *also* R.
 4787. a-nyhtis] *on nyhtis* R — *whil*] *whan* R.
 4790. wynes *is altered into wyffes* R.
 4795. With] *om.* R, J, H 5 — sent] *hem sent* R, J, *them sent*
 H 5 — *meryly*] *with merthe (mirthe)* B, J, R, H 5.
 4798. Rehersyng] *Rewerdyng* R.
 4800. 2nd ther] *om.* H. 4801. ay] *euer* R.
 4806. afforcyng] *ay forshyng* R.

Fair offte off face, with a ful pereilous tail,
 Gladli concludyng with ful gret disauail,
 Next neyh[e]bour onto repentaunce
 To all that truste & haue in hir plesaunce. 4816

¶ Lenvoye.

PRYNCIS, considreth, how in eueri age [p. 60] Princes, the most dreadful thing you can do is to deliver a hasty judgment.
 Folkis be dyuers off ther condicioun
 To plie & turne & chaunge in ther corage;
 Yit is ther non, to myn opynyoun, 4820
 So dreedful chaung nor transmudacioun,
 As chaung off pryncis to yiuue a iugement,
 Or hasti credence, withoute auisement.

It is weel founde a passyng gret damage, 4824 A story may look well, yet be wholly false.
 Knowe and expert in eueri regioun,
 Thouh a tale haue a fair visage,
 It may include ful gret decepcioun:
 Hid vndir sugre, galle and fell poisoun, 4828
 With a fresh face off double entendement —
 Yit yiueth no credence withoute auisement.

Let folkis alle be war off ther language,
 Keep ther tunges from oblocucioun, 4832 Beware of speaking ill of others,
 To hyndre or hurte bi no maner outrage,
 Preserue ther lippis from al detraccioun,
 Fro chaumpartie and contradiccioun;
 For list that fraude wer founde in ther entent, 4836
 Ne yiueth no credence withoute auisement.

Pryncis, Pryncessis, off noble and hih parage,
 Which ha[ue] lordshipe and domynacioun,
 Voide hem a-side, that can flatre and fage; 4840 and above all avoid liars and flatterers.
 Fro tunges that haue a tarage off tresoun,
 Stoppith your eris from ther bittir soun;
 Beth circumspect, nat hasti but prudent,
 And yiueth no credence withoute auisement. 4844

4813. offte] om. R — ful] om. R. 4814. disseivaille R.

4817. Pryncessis considre R.

4819. & chaunge in ther] in ther & chaunge R.

4821. nor] ne R. 4822. a] om. R. 4829. entendent R.

4830. yiueth] yeue R.

4832. allocucion R. 4833. maner of R.

4838. parage] Corage H.

[Off Quene Althea, and how Hercules by women
was brouht to confusioun.]¹

Bochas, turning
again to those
who had been
cast down by
Fortune,

WHAN *Bochas* hadde shewed his sentence,
And declared his opynyoun
Geyn hem that wer[e]n hasti off credence,
He gan anon make a digressioun 4848
Fro that mater, and off entencioun
To serche out mo, his purpos to contune,*
That were doun cast & hyndred bi Fortune.

saw among a
large company
of worthies
Queen Althæa
weeping, with
torn and dis-
ordered hair,

And, as he thouhte, he sauh a cumpanye 4852
Off many worthi, which to hym dede appeere;
And a-mong alle first he dede espie
Queen Althea, as she gan neihhe hym neere,
Al bedewed hir face and eek hir cheere 4856
With salt[e] teris, that pite was to seene,
Which whilom was off Calidoyne* the queene.

and clad in a
ragged black
gown.

She was the douhter off kyng Testius,
Weddid to Oene off Calidoyne* kyng, 4860
Off cheer and face apperyng ful pitous,
Hir her to-torn and frowardli liggynge;
And in tokne also off compleynyng,
As writ *Bochas*, wheroff he took [good] heed, 4864
Blak was hir habite, and al to-rent hir weed.

She had a son
called Meleager,
and at his
birth the Fates
cast a brand
into the fire,
and said that
when it was
consumed the
child would die.

A sone she hadde, Mell[e]ager he hihte;
In erthe was ther non fairere for to see,
Riht weel fauoured in eueri manys sihte; 4868
And, as I fynde, at his natyuite
Present wern the Fatal Sustren thre
With ther rokke, and gan to spyne faste,
And took a brond and into fir it caste. 4872

And in that hour this was her language:
"Touchyng this child, we ful accorded be,
And han disposid the terme eek off his age,

4847. Geyn] Ayens R. 4850. contune] contynue B.

4852. he sauh] hym seeh R.

4856. bedewed] be wepid R — eek] also R.

4857. was] is H.

4858. whilom] sum tyme R — Calidoyne] Calcidonye B, H 5,
Calydonye J, Calcidon R 3 — the] om. H.

4859. Thestius P.

4860. Calidoyne] Calcidoyne B, Calcydonye J, Calcidonye H 5.

4864. he] I H. 4866. Melliger R, Mellager H, R 3.

4871. rokke and gan] rokkis and bigan R.

4873. in] into R.

4875. the terme eek] also the terme R.

¹MS. J. leaf 25 verso.

- The space concludid off his destyne, 4876
 As long[e] tyme, who-so list to see,
 Til this brond among the coles rede
 Be ful consumed into asshes dede.”
- But whan Althea espied ther entente, 4880
 And conseyued the fyn off ther sentence,
 She ros hire up, and the brond she hente
 Out off the fir with gret dilligence,
 Queynt anon the fires violence; 4884
 The doom off Parcas she gan thus disobeie,
 The brond reseruyng vnder lok and keie.
- Touchyng the fader off this Mell[e]ager,
 Oeneus, off hym thus I reede, 4888
 How he wente and souhte nyh and fer
 Goddis and goddessis, who-so list take heede,
 In hope onli for to ha[ue] gret meede;
 For to hem alle, poetis thus deuise, 4892
 Sauf to Diana, he dede sacrefise.
- Wheroff she cauhte an indignacioun;
 Caste she wolde on hym auengid be;
 Sente a boor into his regioun, 4896
 Ful sauage and ful off cruelte,
 Which deuoured the frut off many a tre
 And destroyed his cornys and his vynes,
 That such scarsete off vitaille and off wynes 4900
- Was in his land vpon euery side, [p. 61]
 That the people off necessite
 Compellid wern a-mong hem to prouide
 Sum mene weie to saue ther contre. 4904
 And at the laste thei condescendid be,
 That Mell[e]ager, lusti off his corage,
 Shold chese with hym folk fresh & yong off age,
 This dreedful boor myhtili tenchace. 4908
 And fourth thei wente, echon deuoid off dreed,
 With rounde speris thei gan hym to manace,
 But Mell[e]ager made first his sides red,
 And with a suerd[e] thanne smet off his hed; 4912

But Althæa extinguished the flame and put the brand away underlock and key.

Meleager's father, Ceneus, in hope of reward made offerings to all the gods and goddesses except Diana, who in anger sent a boar to devastate his land.

which was killed by Meleager.

4879. aspiede R.

4882. hire] *om.* R, J, H 5.

4888. Oeneus H. 4889] How that he souht nyh & fer R.

4899. distried R. 4900. vitailles R. 4903. hem] *om.* R.

4905. thei] the R. 4906. his] *om.* R. 4907. fressh folkis R.

4910. began R. 4911. red] bleede H.

Wheroff the contre was ful glad & fayn,
And in this wise the tusshi boor was slayn.

Some books
say that Atal-
anta wounded
the boar first,
with an arrow,

Summe bookis telle off this huntyng,
That a ladi, which was born in Arge, 4916
Callid Athalanta, douhter to the kyng,
To sle this boor took on hire the charge,
And with an arwe made his wounde large.
Eek in Ouide lik as it is founde, 4920
Because that she gaff the firste wounde,

and Meleager,
her chosen
knight, gave
her its head,
and when his
two uncles took
it from her by
force, he slew
them.

Mell[e]ager anon for a memorie,
As he that was hir owne chose knyht,
Gaff hir the hed in tokne off this victorie. 4924
But his tweyne vncles, ageyn al skile & riht,
Rafft hir the hed, off verray force & myht,
Hauyng despiht that she, in ther auys,
Off this victorie sholde bere away the prys. 4928

With which iniurie Mell[e]ager was wroth,
And ageyn hem proudli gan disdeyne;
Pullith out a suerd and vpon hem he goth,
And thoruh his manhod slouh his vncles tweyne, 4932
And afftir that dede his besi peyne
To take the hed, and with ful humble entente,
To Athalante ageyn it to presente.

When Althæa
heard of this
she grew pale

On off his vncles was callid Flexippus, 4936
A manli knyht, and but yong off age;
The tother brother named Thesyus.
But whan ther suster herde off this outrage,
How thei were slayn, she gan in hir visage 4940
Wexe ded [&] pale, allas, for lak off blood,
Whan she espied the cause how it stood.

and began to
consider the
love she bore
her brothers and
her son's hasty
deed.

She hadde no mater, God wot, to be fayn,
Queen Althea, to stonden and beholde 4944
Hir brethre tweyne off hir sone slayn
At the huntyng, off which toforn I tolde.
First thyingis too she gan peise & onfolde:

4914. tusshi] tuskye R, tuskyy J.

4915. Summe] And some H, P, And som R 3.

4919. woundis R. 4920. Eek] Also R.

4926. Rafft] berauht H. 4927. ther] his R.

4930. bigan R. 4931. Pullid R. 4932. he slouh R.

4936. callid] namyd H. 4937. and] om. R.

4938. Theseus H, R. 4942. aspied R.

4944. to] sto R (blunder of scribe). 4947. too] tweyne R.

- Off hir brethre the loue and nyh kenrede, 4948
 And off hir sone the hasti cruel deede.
- And remembryng, she castith in ballaunce,
 Off hertli wo that she dede endure,
 Thouhte yiff she dede vpon ther deth vengauunce, 4952
 To slen hir sone it were ageyn nature. It were against nature to slay her son;
 Thus in a weer longe [time] she dede endure,
 Hir dedli sorwe peisyng euerideel,
 Whethir she* shal be tendre or cruel. 4956
- Thus tendre, I meene, hir sone for to spare, yet the murder of his uncles must be avenged.
 Or punshe the deth off hir brethre tweyne.
 Thus counfortles, al destitut and bare, 4960
 In langwisshyng shendureth foorth hir peyne;
 And remedie can she non ordeyne,
 Sauf fayn she wolde auenge hir, yiff she may,
 But thanne cam nature foorth and seide nay.
- It was hir sone, a-geyn al kyndli riht 4964 Without comfort she remained undecided;
 On whom she caste auenged for to be:
 To women alle an ougli straunge siht,
 That a mooder, deuoid off al pite, 4968
 Sholde slen hir child so merciles parde.
 Nay nay, nat so, nature wil nat assente;
 For yiff she dede, ful sore she shal repente.
- But O allas, al fatal purueiaunce but Fate must take its course
 Kepith his cours, as summe clerkis seyn; 4972
 But the writyng off doctours, in substaunce,
 And these dyuynes replie ther ageyn,
 And afferme thoppynyoun is in veyn
 Off hem that truste on fate or destyne: 4976
 For God about hath the souereynthe,
- And off Fortune the power may restreyne, (although not against God's will),
 To saue and spille lik as folk disserue;
 Ageyn his will thei may nothyng ordeyne 4980
 Off necessite, what cours that thei conserue.
 But this mateer al hooli I reserue

4951. indure H.

4954. she dyd long while endure R (*in later band*) — time]
 om. R 3.

4956. she] that she B, R 3. 4960. foorth] for R.

4961. non] noon othir H, none other P.

4963. forth nature R — foorth] ageyn H. 4970. shal] did R.

4975. And] om. H. 4976. on] of H — destanye R.

4981. that] om. R.

- Onto deuyngs to termyne and conclude,
Which apperteneth to* no folkis rude. 4984
- and Althæa,
suddenly moved
to wrath,
But Althea, off Calidoyne* queen, [p. 62]
Gan sore muse, and heeng in a ballaunce:
Hir brethre ded, whan she dede hem seen,
Thanne was she meued anon to do vengauce 4988
Vpon hir sone bi ful gret displesaunce;
But as poetis list for to compile,
Nature made hire withdrawe hir hand a while.
- Thus atwen ire and twen affecciuon 4992
She heeld hir longe, on nouthur parti stable,
Till that she cauhte in hir opynyoun
A sodeyn rancour, which made hire be vengable;
And hasti wrathe,* which is nat comendable, 4996
Ageyn hir sone, maad hire with hir hond
Out off hire chest to take the fatal brond.
- cast the brand
into the fire.
And sodenli she cast it in the fir,
And wex cruel, ageyn al womanheede, 5000
To execute hir venymous desir.
The fatal brond among the flawmys rede
Consumed was into asshes dede;
And furiously in hir malencolie, 5004
The vengauce doon, thus she gan to crie:
- Vengeance
thus taken,
she cried
aloud to the
Parcæ, Clotho,
Lachesis, and
Atropos,
“O ye Parchas, froward sustre thre,
Which off Ioue keepe the librarie,
And off childre at ther natyuyte 5008
Waite his sentence, which [that] may nat varie,
Wherso it be welful or contrarie,
Vpon his doomys takyng alway heed,
How that ye shal dispose the fatal threed. 5012
Thou Cloto first takest* thi rokke on honde,
And Lachesis* afftir doth begynne,
4983. determyne R.
4984. apperteneth] nat parteneth B, R, J, H 5 — to] onto B,
R, H 5 — no] om. R, J, H 5.
4985. Calidoyne] Calcidoyne B, Calidoyne R.
4986. Bigan R — a] om. R. 4987. seen] se H.
4992. atwen] bitwene R — twen] betwene R.
4996. wrathe B — is nat] ne is R.
5002. flawmys] colis R. 5006. sustren R, H.
5008. children R. 5009. Waite his] Awayten the R.
5013. first] om. R, J, H 5 — takest] cast B, H (*scribal blunder
for tast*), take R, takith R 3 — on] in R.
5014. Lachesis] Lathesis B, R, J (*a slip of pen merely, c and
are often scarcely distinguishable*).

Bi gret auys, who can vndirstonde,
The threed on lengthe to drawn & to spynne; 5016
But whan the sperit shal fro the bodi twynne,
Thou Attropos doost thi cruel peyne
Ful frowardli to parte the threed on tweyne.

I may weel pleyne on such departisoun, 5020
Nat for a day, but, o allas, for euer!
Ye han ontwynynd and maad dyuysioun
Off my too brethre, [and] causid hem disseuere,
That heer a-lyue I shal seen hem neuere. 5024
And I off haste, allas, whi dede I so!
Tauenge ther deth ha[ue] slayn my sone also.

O ye thre douhtren off Herberus the felle,
Whos ougli mooder was the blake nyht, 5028
Al your kynreede and lynage lith in helle;
And for tauenge the wrong and gret onriht
Which that I haue accomplisshid in your siht,
I will with you perpetueli compleyne, 5032
Lich my desert endure sorwe & peyne!"

Whereupon she thrust a sword through her heart.

And whil she gan thus with herself[e] stryue
Vpon hir sorwes, that were eend[e]les,
She made a suerd thoruhout hir herte ryue, 5036
Off hir liff heer she was to rech[e]les.

AND Bochas affter, amonges al the pres,
Sauh, as hym thouhte, with a ful hidous cheer,
Ded off visage, Hercules appeere, 5040

Whos fader was Iubiter the grete,
His mooder douhter off kyng Amphitrion,
Callid Alcumena, whilom born in Crete.
And as poetis rehersyn oon bi oon, 5044
So excellent was ther neuer noon,

Hercules, son of Jupiter and Alcmena, most famous of men, next appeared before Bochas.

5015. who so R. 5016. on] of R.

5018. Antropos R, J, H 5, Antrapos R 3. 5019. on] or R.

5020. on] in R, J, of R 3 — departicioun H, H 5, departicion R, P.

5023. brethern J — and] om. H.

5024. heer] he R — on lyue R.

5027. Cerebus R, J, H 5, Herebus H, Erebus P — thre] om. J.

5029. Al] And R — & al your lynage hih R.

5034. Large capital in B — she gan] be gan J — with hirsilff
but streyue R, J.

5036. to ryue R, arive H.

5037. heer] om. H, R, R 3 — liff] silff R, silf J, H 5 — to] om.

R, so H, R 3, P.

5038. B has no initial here. 5042. kyng] om. R.

5043. sumtyme R.

To speke off conquest, [of] victorie* and [of] fame,
Heer in this world that hadde so gret a name.

He was terrible
to look upon,
black-bearded,
with bristly hair
and dressed in
a lion's skin,
Dreedful of look he was, and riht terrible, 5048
His berd eek blak, which heeng ful lowe doun,
And al his her as bristlis wer horrible,
His robe also, ful merueilous off facioun,
Was off the skyn off a fers leoun, 5052
Which [from his bake] of verray force he rente,
With-in a forest* alone whan he wente.

and he held
a mace
of steel in his
hand.
In his hand he bar a maas off steel,
Which to beholde was wonder large & huge 5056
Bi apperence, as Bochas felte weel;
Dempte off resoun, as a rihtful iuge,
That Hercules hadde to his refuge
Wisdam with force, for tencrece his fame, 5060
Alle beestis wilde for to make hem tame.

"Take heed,
Bochas," he
said, "my
merits are
more com-
mendable than
any tongue can
tell.
And onto Bochas he gan loude crie,
"Tak riht good heed[e], for it is no fable,
I for my merits, to speke off cheualrie 5064
And noble triumphes, am most comendable,
To be preferrid most worthi and most hable,
Which haue accomplisshid al that may excelle
Thoruh hih prowessse, that any tunge* can telle. 5068

"Before my
birth, Jove
said to Juno,
that Hercules,
noblest of the
noble, would
be born on
such a day.
Eek off my berthe, in heuene ful yore ago [p. 63]
Fulli conceyued my constellacioun,
Mihti Ioue saide onto Iuno,
On such a day, in such a regioun, 5072
Oon shal be born, most myhti off renoun,
Noblest off nobles bothe in werre and pes,
Off whom the name shal be Hercules.

5046. victoire B.

5049. eek] also R.

5053. from his bake] *om.* H, R 3.

5054. With-in a forest] From his bak B, H, R 3 — whan] as R 3, H 5.

5055. mas J, mase H 5, mace R, R 3, P.

5058. Demede R.

5060. With force wisdom R — for] *om.* R — fame] name H, R 3.

5061. Alle] As R.

5065. nobles R — triumphes *is muddled in* R.

5068. hih] his R 3, his hih R — tunge] mouth B, H, man R 3.

5069. Eek] Also R.

- The which[e] doom whan Iuno vndirstood,
 Off Iubiter conceuyng the entente,
 And knew my fate sholde be so good,
 To Lucynya hir messenger she sente." . . .
 But summe seyn, how doun hirself she wente
 To this goddesse, goddesse off chilyng,
 And hir besouhte to graunte hire hir askyng:
 That she wolde from Hercules translate
 The influence off his natyuyte,
 Helpe to reurse his fame and eek his fate,
 And graunte it hooli to yong Euristee;
 And that Lucynya present wolde be
 The same hour bi Iubiter prouyded,
 It to posseede al hool and ondeuyded.
 Thus to the mooder off [this] Euristee,
 Iuno the goddesse grauntid hir fauour,
 Therbi disposyng that he sholde be
 Mihti off puissaunce lik an emperour;
 But off his noblesse the conquest & labour,
 And off his manhod the prowesse and pursut
 Bi Hercules was fully execut.
 Thus Hercules hadde the trauaile,
 And Euristeus bar away the name;
 Eek Hercules fauht in plate & maile,
 And hih emprises proudli dede attame:
 But the report off his noble fame
 To Euristeus was fynali ascryued;
 Thus off his thank was Hercules depyued.
 Ful offte in armys *sum* man doth riht weel,
 And offte causith that the feeld is wonne;
 And off a-nother that dede neueradeel,
 The price out-spredith lich a sheene sonne.
 And offte it happith, that he that best hath ronne
 Doth nat the spere lich his desert posseede,
 Wher fals fauour yeueth eueri man his meede.

5076

"But Juno
 contrived that
 my good for-
 tune should be
 translated to
 young Eury-
 theus."

5080

5084

5088

5092

5096

5100

So it was
 Hercules who
 achieved the
 conquests and
 had all the
 labour, while
 Eurystheus
 bore away the
 name.

5104

It often hap-
 pens that the
 man who wins
 the victory
 does not get
 the credit for
 it. Fame has
 more than one
 trumpet.

5108

5083. wolde] sholde H.

5085. reurse] *reserue* R, J, H 5 — fame] name R, J, H 5 —
 eek] *om.* R, J, H 5.5090. this] *om.* H. 5097. Thus] This J.

5099. Eek] Thus R, Also J, H 5. 5100. hih] his R.

5102. was fynali] fully was R.

5107. lich a] as shyneth þe R, as shineþ þe J, H 5, P.

5108. 2nd that] which R.

Fame in hir paleis hath trumpes mo than oon,
 Summe off gold that yeuen a ful fressh soun; 5112
 Sum man hath laude, that deserueth non,
 And summe ha[ue] been ful worthi off renoun,
 Nothyng preferrid bi comendacioun,
 As bi report off statis hih and lowe, 5116
 So frowardli Famys trumpe hath blowe.

Touchyng armys, the poore nor the riche
 Be nat echon off herte coragous;
 Nor alle men may nat been iliche, 5120
 Nor off ther name egal nor gracious.
 And thouh the poore ha[ue] be victorious,
 Off auenture to do ful weel sum day,
 Other ha[ue] pynchid to take his thank away. 5124

It does not follow that he who slays the deer always eats the venison, and although one

Oon sleth the deer with an hokid arwe,
 Whos part is non yit off the venysoun;
 Oon bet the bussh, another hath the sparwe,
 And alle the birdis in his possessioun; 5128
 Oon draweth his nettis in ryuers vp & doun,
 With sundri baitis* cast out lyne and hook,
 And hath no part off al that euer he took.

man may beat the bush, it may be another who gets the birds.

An euidence heeroff ye may see, 5132
 Ful notable to be put in memorie,*
 Off Hercules and [of] Euristee;
 For Hercules gat ay the victorie,
 And Euristeus receyued hath the glorie. 5136
 Thus ther palme partid was on tweyne;
 The ton reioisshid, the tother bar the peyne.

Hercules and Eurystheus are an example of this.

Euristeus was a prynce off Athene,
 Sone and hair be discent off lyne 5140
 Onto the kyng that callid was Stillene,
 Vnder whos myht, as Bochas doth termyne,
 Hercules thoruh knyhtli disciplyne
 Profitid so, most manli and most wis, 5144
 That from all othre he bar away the pris.

Eurystheus was a prince of Athens, son of king Sthenelus; but it was Hercules who won the prize of victory.

5112. yeueth H.

5117. Famys] fame his R, J, P, H 5. 5118. nor] ne R, J, P.

5119. hertis R. 5120, 21. Nor] Neithir R.

5122. poore man R. 5127. betith R. 5129. &] om. R.

5130. baitis] battis B — out] om. R 3. 5132. An] In R.

5133, 35, 36. memoire, victoire, gloire B. 5134. 2nd of] om. H.

5137. departid was in R.

5139. a] om. R, H 5. 5142. determyne R.

5144. Profitid] Prouided J, Prouisid R, Prouidid P.

But O allas, that euer it sholde fall,
 So noble a knyht, so manli, so notable,
 That any spotte sholde his pris appall
 5148 Or cause his corage for to been onstable,
 Which is a thyng doolful and lamentable,
 From his knyhtthod, which is a thyng to straunge,
 That euer a woman sholde his herte change! 5152

Alas that so noble a man should be drawn from his knighthood by a woman!

I will excuse hem, because ther nature [p. 64] I will
 Ys to chaungen hertis and corages; excuse them,
 A-geyn ther power no force may endure, for it is their
 For ther flatrie and sugrid fair language, nature to cause
 5156 Lich Sirenes, fressh off ther visage, hearts to
 For tenchange off pryncis the noblesse, change.
 Mo than Hercules can bern heeroff witsesse.

Thus Hercules, astoned and ashamed, 5160 But Hercules
 Onto Bochas shewed his presence, stood ashamed
 Seide, "allas! my knyhtthod is diffamed before Bochas
 Bi a ful fals amerous pestilence, and said, "Alas,
 So sore constreyned bi mortal violence, my knighthood
 5164 Wherbi, allas, my manhod was applied, was tarnished,
 Be sleihte off women oppressid & maistried, for I shaved my
 beard and wore
 woman's dress
 for love of
 Iole,

To take ther habite & clothe me in ther weede,
 To shaue my berd and farse my visage 5168
 With oynementis, ageyn[es] al manheede,
 To make it souple, & chaungid my language;
 And to compleyne mor off myn outrage,
 Vpon my fyngris, fyue twies told, 5172
 I hadde ryngis richeli wrouht off gold.

Thus was my corage chaungid femynyne
 For loue off oon callid Yole,
 Off condiciouns thouh she were serpentyne, 5176 though she
 Me thouhte she was so fair vpon to see, were of a ser-
 That al my ioie was with hire to be; pentine
 And that non sholde apparceyue my trespae, disposition.
 I chaungid bothe habite, look and face, 5180

5152. his herte] heroff bere R. 5155. power] nature R.
 5156. languages R. 5157. visages R.
 5158. tenchange] to eschange R.
 5160. astonyed R.
 5168. shaue] shere R — farse] force R.
 5170. change R.
 5177. so fair] fayrest R.

- "I did this that I might approach her freely; but it has ruined my good name. And was a woman outward in apparence,
Off entent to haue mor liberte
To vse my lustis, and haue experience
Off appetitis which that onleefful be. 5184
Wheroff the sclaundre reboundeth onto me,
That I dar seyn, myn outrageous trespase
Doth al my knyhtod & my prowesse difface.
- "Wherefore, Bochas, tell my misfortunes as they were in deed, so that others, hearing of them, may amend their vicious lives. Even wise men may profit by the example of fools." Wherefore, O Bochas, I pray the tak good heede 5188
For to descryue in termys pleyn and cleer
Myn infortunye, riht as it was in deede,
That whan other conceyue the maneer
Off myn onhappis, contagious for to heer, 5192
Thei may bexauple off me doon ther peyne,
From vicious liff ther hertis to restreyne.
For these foolis that al wisdam despise,
And be contrarie* to vertuous disciplyne, 5196
May yiue exauple to folkis that be wise,
And been to hem a lanterne off doctryne,
Vices teschewe and prudentli declyne
Fro flessfli lustis; for it is tauht in scoolis, 5200
That wise men been alday war be foolis."
- Bochas thought it would be wrong to speak of his vices alone Whan Bochas hadde conceyued the compleynt
Off Hercules in his appeeryng,
And how his noblesse bi women was atteynt 5204
Thoruh his pitous disordynat lyuyng,
He thouhte anon, hymselfe remembryng,
It hadde be routhe for taput in mynde
His vicis alle, and vertues lefft behynde. 5208
- or in any way to cast a slur on his good name. Considred also it was inpertynent,
Outher bi language to write, ageyn al riht,
Any* thyng that sholde in sentement
The fame amenuse off so noble a knyht, 5212
Or to discrece in ony manys siht
His glorious prowesse, sith poetes for his werris
Reisen his renoun so hih aboute the sterris.

5181. R omits to 5348, leaf lost between 32 and 33.

5188. Wherefore] wher of H, P, H 5.

5191. maneer] mateere H, matter R 3, P.

5196. contraire B.

5201. been alday war] al dai ben tauzt J, H 5.

5207. taput] ta be put H, to put J, H 5, to have put P.

5209. impertinent P.

5211. Any] And B, H, P, A R 3.

- For he was bothe knyght and philisopre, 5216 Hercules was
 And for his strengthe callid a geant; both a philoso-
 For comoun profit he proudli gan eek profre, pher and a
 Off manli corage yaff therto ful graunt, knight.
 Tentre in Egipt &* slen ther the tiraunt 5220
 Callid Busiris, which off ful fals entente
 Slouh all straungers that thoruh his kyngdam wente.
- For vnder a colour off liberalite, He slew
 To his paleis he gladli wolde calle 5224 Busiris in
 Straungers echon that cam thoruh his contre, Egypt, who
 And sollempneli receyue hem oon and alle, treacherously
 And lich a kyng, bothe in chaumbre and halle murdered his
 Make hem such cheer in alle maner thyng, 5228 guests
 As appertened onto a worthi kyng.
- But whil his gestis lay a-nyht and sleep, and offered up
 This fals[e] tiraunt, in ful cruel wise, their blood to
 Moordred hem echon or thei toke* keep; 5232 Jove, that he
 And afftir that — this was eek his gise — might send rain
 With ther blood to make a sacrefise to his kingdom.
 To Iubiter, god off that contre,
 Off hool entent to plesse his deite, 5236
- That in his kyngdam, on frutis & on greyn [p. 65]
 The land tencrece bi gret[e] habundaunce,
 Doun from heuene he wolde sende hem reyn.
 This mene he made and this fals cheysaunce, 5240
 To moordre and slen he hadde so gret plesaunce;
 For off alle thynges hym* thouhte it dede him* good
 To slayen* straungers and to sheede ther blood.
- But whan this moordre off Busiris was kouth, 5244 But Hercules
 That no straunger myht passe his lond in pes, went to his
 This manli knyght, yit flouryng in his youth, palace
 This noble famous, this worthi Hercules,
 Amonges other put hym silff in pres, 5248
 And lich a gest outward in shewyng
 Cam to the paleis off Busiris the kyng,

5220. &] to B, J — in] in to J — ther the tiraunt] þe geant
 J, H 5.

5232. token B. 5236. hool] om. H.

5238. tencrece] encreased H 5, P.

5242. off] om. P — hym] he B — him] hem B.

5243. slayen] slen B — slayen straungers and to sheede] mur-
 pere his gestis and shede J, H 5.

and after rebuk-
ing him, killed
him and set
Egypt in ease.

Rebukes hym off his gret outrage
Doon to his gestis bi cruel violence. 5252

And for to make pesible that passage,
And for to auenge his inportable offence,
And off his moordre to make recompence,
This Hercules slouh Busiris* in deede, 5256
And took the blood which he dede bleede,

Offrid it vp Iubiter to plese,
For this victorie hym to magnefie;
And al Egipt thus was set in ese: 5260

Ther lond, ther frutis gan also multeplie,
Ther greyn encrece a-boute on ech partie
And to habounde bi influence off reyn,
Which affortyme off vitaile was bareyn. 5264

He also slew
Antæus, who
renewed his
strength each
time he touched
the earth.

¶ Another geaunt callid Antheus,
Kyng off Libie, and gouerned al that lond,
Whom Hercules, most strong & coraious,
Whilom outraied [&] slouh hym with his hond; 5268
For as thei wrastlid, bexperience he fond,
Touchyng therthe this geaunt, it is trewe,
His force, his myht dede alwey renewe.

But whan Hercules the maner dede espie, 5272
How his strengthe renewed ageyn so offte,
Ther ageyns he shoop a remedie:

Hie in the hair he reised hym vp a-loffte;
And with his armys, hard & nothyng soffte, 5276
Bak and bonys so sore he dede embrace,
That he fill ded toforn hym in the place.

Some books
say that An-
tæus was in-
vincible in his
own kingdom,

But summe bookis off this geaunt telle,
Withynne his kyngdam who dede hym assaile, 5280

He wolde off newe his cheualrie compelle
Efft ageyn to meete hym in bataile;
And in this wise ful seelde he dede faile
Tafforce off newe, as folk shal vndirstonde, 5284
His strengthe, his myht all enmyes to withstonde.

and that Her-
cules enticed
him away from
its borders and
thus defeated
him.

But Hercules off hih discreioum,
The feeld on hym manli to recure,
Hadde hym be sleihte out off his regioun; 5288
And as thei mette theer off auenture,
The said Antheus myht[e] nat endure,

5253. that] the H. 5256. Bisiris B. 5267. &] & most H.
5269. he] om. H. 5276. his] om. H.

- But was disconfited bi Hercules anon,
 Maugre his myht, he and his men echon. 5292
- ¶ Afftir this conquest Hercules is gon,
 For exercise his prowesse for to vse,
 Ageyn the myhti stronge* Gerion,
 Kyng off Spaigne, off Malliagre & Ebuse, 5296
 The which[e] tirant myhte hym nat excuse,
 That al his labour, as poetis do compile,
 Was fro these rewmys his peep^{le}* to exile.
- His tyrannye ne myht nat longe endure; 5300
 For Hercules, the noble worthi knyht,
 Made vpon hym a gret disconfiture,
 And slouh the tirant as thei mette in fht.
 And afftir that, he, thoruh his grete myht, 5304
 Off his prowesse and magnanymyte
 Slouh Cerberus with his hedis thre.
 and afterwards
 he killed
 Cerberus.
- ¶ The famous boole off the lond off Crete,
 Which that destroyed al that regioun,
 He slouh also whan thei dede meete; 5308
 And in Nemea he slouh a fers leoun,
 And for a record off his hih renoun,
 Off manli force his skyn away he took, 5312
 And to his bodi a coote theroff he shoop:
- To all his enmyes to shewe hym mor dreedful,
 Therefore he werid that hidous garnement.
 And for in armys he neuer was founde dull, 5316
 But euer ilich[e] fressh in his entent,
 Into a mownteyn he made anon his went,
 Callid Erimantus; and ther in his passage
 He slouh a boor, most wilde & most sauage. 5320
 the Eryman-
 thian Boar.
- Beside a ryuer callid Stiphalus, [p. 66]
 Off furious birdis he slouh a gret[e] noumbre; the
 Stymphalian
 Birds,
 Withynne the kyngdam off kyng Fyneus
 Al the contre for thei dede encoumbre: 5324
 For with ther shadwe & outraious ombre,
 On seed or frutis whereuer thei aliht,
 Al was deuoured in eueri manys siht.
- ¶ Vpon the mownteyn callid Auentyne, 5328
 Which is nat ferr fro Rome the cite,
 Ther is a wode, as cronycles determyne,

5295. stronge] strange B, strange H. 5296. Malliagre] Baleares P.
 5299. peep^{le}] peep^{lis} B, H. 5315. garment H. 5326. or frutis] on frute H.

- Riht fressh off siht and goodli on to see.
 And Hercules passyng bi that contre, 5332
 Fro Spayneward goyng be Ytaile,
 Cachus the geaunt dede hym ther assaile.
- Whil Hercules among the leues greene
 Leide hym to slepe, off sodeyn auenture, 5336
 And his beestis ageyn the sonne sheene,
 Whil that he slepte, wente in ther pasture,
 Cam Cachus foorth, ful hidous off stature,
 Thouhte he wolde these beestis with hym haue, 5340
 Stal hem echon and hid hem in a caue.
- dragging them
backwards by
the tail, like a
thief. And lik a theeff he made hem go bakward,
 That no man sholde the tracis off hem knowe,
 Nor off ther passage haue no reward; 5344
 For bi ther tailis he ladde hem on a rowe
 Into his caue, which that stood ful lowe.
 And for thei wern off excellent fairnesse,
 To keepe hem cloos he dede his besynesse. 5348
- Hercules heard
their lowing Out off his slep whan Hercules awook
 And aparceyued his oxes were away,
 He roos hym up, and caste aboute his look,
 Gan tespie in al the haste he may 5352
 To what parti the tracis off hem lay.
 And whil he stood thus musyng in the shade,
 [He] herde lowyng that his oxes made.
- and, finding the
cave, overcame
Cacus and slew
him. And bi ther lowyng he gan anon approche 5356
 Toward the parti wher thei were kept ful cloos,
 Fond the caue vndir a myhti roche;
 And proude Cachus, which hadde hem in depoos,
 Geyn Hercules he sturdili aroos: 5360
 But for al that, he myht hymself nat* saue,
 For he hym slouh at thentre off the caue.
- He then cleared
Mt. Aventine of
brigands. And thus his beestis he hath ageyn recurid,
 That sempte afforn irrecuperable. 5364
 Afftir the mownteyn be force he hath assurid,

5332. that] the H. 5333. be] fro H.

5346. ful] so H.

5350. parceyued R, perceived J — oxen H, P.

5351. hym] om. R. 5352. Bigan to espie R.

5355. He] om. H — the lowyng P, H 5. — oxen P.

5360. Ayens R. 5361. myhtnat himsilff B.

5364. inrecuperable R. 5365. hath] hast H.

- Which for brigantis aforne was ful doutable;
 But bi his manhod it was maad habitable,
 That men myhte, for dred off any fo, 5368
 Whan euer thei wolde freli come or go.
- ¶ Touchyng his conquest vpon Femynye,
 Geyn Amazones with Theseus he wente,
 The queen Ypolita thoruh his cheualrie, 5372
 For his parti anon to hym he hente.
 And Ypolita off ful trewe entente
 Gaff onto hym in tokne off victorie
 Off gold a girdil to haue hir in memorie. 5376
- ¶ Afftir to Affrik he wente a ful gret pas,
 Onli off purpos the gardeyn for to see,
 Which appertened to [the] kyng Athlas,
 That brothir was to kyng Promothe, 5380
 In astrologie ful weel expert was he.
 And in this gardeyn, off which I ha[ue] you told,
 The riche braunchis and applis were off gold,
 Thoruh magik maad bi gret auisement, 5384
 Ful streihtly* kept and closid enviroyn,
 And Iwachchid with a fell serpent,
 That no man entred that riche mansioun.
 But Hercules, most myhti off renoun, 5388
 The serpent slouh throuh his manli pursuit,
 And fro that gardeyn he bar away the fruit.
- This seid Athlas, as bookis specefie,
 And poetis eek off hym endite, 5392
 He was ful cunnyng in astronomie
 And theryn dede ful gretli hym* delite;
 And many a book he made & dede write
 With gret labour and gret[e] dilligence 5396
 In his tyme vpon that science,
 The which[e] wern mor precious than gold,
 And mor riche in his opynyoun.
 But Hercules, in soth as it is told, 5400

When he went to Femynye, Hippolyte presented him with her golden girdle.

Afterwards, in Africa, he slew a serpent in King Atlas' garden and fetched away the Golden Apples of the Hesperides.

Atlas was a learned astronomer who wrote many valuable books,

which Hercules seized and brought to Greece.

5367. manhod] knythode R.

5371. Ayens R.

5373. parti] pray R. 5376. hir] om. R.

5380. the kyng R, H, J.

5385. streihtly] streihthe B, R, streiet J, streite P. 5389. The] Ther H.

5392. eek off hym] of hym also R. 5393. ful] om. R.

5394. hym ful gretli B. 5398. than] that R.

Gat alle the bookis thoruh his hih renoun,
 Bar hem bi force out off that regioun;
 And into Grece, lich a conquerour,
 With hym he brouhte for a gret tresour. 5404

In Thrace he
 slew Diomedes,
 who fed his
 horses with
 human flesh.

Off Trace he slouh the tirant outraious [p. 67]
 That whilom was callid Diomede,
 Which moordred al that cam in[to] his hous,
 And with ther flessh his hors he dede feede. 5408
 And thoruh his witt, labour and manheede,
 Off Achelaus, which was a gret[e] wonder,
 He made the stremys for to parte assonder;

He parted the
 Achelous,
 which before
 that time had
 done great
 damage.

And bi his wisdam dede hem so deuide, 5412
 In too parties disseueryng his passage:
 For tofortyme no man myhte abide
 Off his cours the* furious fell outrage;
 For in contrees it dede so gret damage, 5416
 Turnyng vpward, ther was noon othir boote,
 Where it flowed, off trees cropp and roote.

He next slew
 all but one of
 the horrible
 serpents of
 Lake Lerna.

A gret emprise he dede eek vndirtake,
 Whan that the [wor]mees, hidous & horrible, 5420
 Aryued up off Archadie in the lake
 Callid Lerne, the beestis ful odible,
 Which with ther teeth & mouthes ful terrible
 Frut, greyn and corn dede mortali deuoure; 5424
 But Hercules, the contre to socoure,

Cam lik a knyht ther malice for to lette;
 And bi his prudence destroyed hem euerichon.
 Withynne the lake the wermys up he shette, 5428
 Sauff among alle behynde was lefft on;
 And ageyn hym this Hercules anon
 Off knythod cauhte so gret auantage,
 That to the contre he dede no mor damage. 5432

No one ever
 had more fame
 or excellence in
 arms;

Thus al that euere may rehersed be
 Touchyng knythod, prowessse or prudence,
 Glorious fame or long felicite,
 This knyhtli man hadde most excellence, 5436
 And in armys lengest experience.

5405. tirant] Geaunt R. 5406. whilom] sumtyme R.

5411. departe R. 5415. the] and the B.

5420. wormees] mees B, H, P, mes R, J, H 5, wormees R 3.

5435. Glorious] by glorious H.

- For his tryumphes and actis marciall
Sette up pilers for a memoriall,
Which remembrid his conquestis most notable, 5440 and as a mem-
And his deedis bi grauyng dede expresse —
Beyonde which no lond is habitable,
So ferr abrod spradde his hih noblesse.
But as the sonne lesith his brihtnesse 5444
Sumwhile whan he is fresshest in his speer,
With onwar cloudis that sodenli appeer,
Semblabli the noblesse and the glory
Off Hercules in this onstable liff 5448 Yet the glory
Eclipsid was and shadwid his memory
Bi Deianira, that whilom was his wiff:
For bi hir fraude cam in the mortal striff,
As ye shal heere the maner and the cas, 5452
Wherbi that he loste his liff, allas.
Yit for hir sake, this most manli man*
Fauht, as I fynde, a synguler bataile
With Achelous, sone off the occian, 5456 although he
Lik as poetis make rehersaile.
And as ech other proudli dede assaile,
This Hercules, off knythod souereyne,
Rente from his hed oon off his hornys tweyne. 5460
Off kyng Oene she was the douhter deere,
To Hercules ioyned in mariage;
And as thei cam to a gret ryuere
With sturdi wawes, wher was no passage, 5464 She was daugh-
Nessus, the geaunt, ougli off visage,
To Hercules profred his seruise,
And ful falsli ageyn hym gan deuisse.
Made his promys to Hercules in deede, 5468 but when they
To putte his liff in gret auenture,
Ouer the strem Deianire to leede,
Because he was large off his stature.
And for she was a riht fair creature, 5472
Whan thei were passid and Icome to londe,
Nessus falsli wolde vpon the stronde

5443. his hih] is his H, his J, H 5.

5449. shadowde R. 5450. whilom] sumtyme R.

5451. the] om. H, P, R 3. 5453. that] om. H.

5454. This stanza is transposed with the next B, H.

5458. other] om. R. 5460. Rente] Sent R — hornys] armys R.

5461. Oeme R, J. 5462. in]bi R. 5467. ayens R.

Ha[ue] knowe hir flessfli, lik as writ Ouide,
 Hercules hauyng theroff a siht, 5476
 As he abood vpon the tother side.
 And for tauenge hym off his grete onriht,
 Took his bowe and bente it anon riht,
 And with an arwe, flid sharp & gronde, 5480
 Gaff to Nessus his dedli fatal wounde.

His last request was that Deianeira give his blood-stained shirt to Hercules,

Lich a conduit gushed out the blood,
 And whan he sauh that he muste deie,
 To Deianeira afforn hym ther she stood, 5484
 With al his herte hire he gan to preie,
 That in o thyng his lust she wolde obeie,
 To take his sherte, and be nat rech[e]les,
 With blood disteyned, and sende it Hercules, 5488

so that he and she might be reconciled. But when Hercules put it on it burnt him so terribly

Therwith to hym to be reconcilid. [p. 68]
 And she the sherte to hym anon hath sent,
 Thoruh whos venym, allas, he was begilid!
 For what be touchyng, & what benchauntement, 5492
 His flessch, his bonys furiousli were brent,
 And among his dedli peynes alle,
 Into a rage he sodenli is falle.

that he ran about like a madman, uprooted trees, broke the horns of cattle and gnawed their bones, and thus came to his end.

[And] as a beeste furiousli he ran 5496
 On valis, hillis among the craggi stonys,
 Semblabli as doth a wood[e] man,
 Pullid up trees & rootis al attonys,
 Brak beestis hornys, & al tognew ther bonys. 5500
 Was it nat pite that a knyht so good
 Sholde among beestis renne sauagyne & wood!

It was all because he trusted in women. Alas, that courage, wisdom, discretion, learning and philosophy should have been darkened by their sleight!

Thus ouerwhelmyd was al his worthynesse,
 And to declyn wente his prosperite. 5504
 And cause & roote off al his wrechidnesse,
 Was for that he sette his felicite
 To truste so moche the mutabilite
 Off these women, which erli, late & soone 5508
 Off ther nature braide vpon the moone.

5475. lik] *om.* H. 5481. fatall dedly H. 5482. guysshed R.
 5483. sauh] size J. 5484. to forn R.
 5485. gan] began R, bigan J, biganne H 5 — to] *om.* J.
 5493. were] was R, H. 5496. And] *om.* H.
 5497. On] In H — valeis R, valeys P, valeies H 5.
 5502. sauagyne] sauage R, J, R 3, P, H 5.
 5503. was] as R. 5505. al] *om.* R. 5506. his] al his R.
 5508. late] *om.* R.

Allas, alas! al noblesse & prudence,
 Prowesse off armys, force & cheualrie,
 Forsihte off wisdam, discrecioun & science, 5512
 Vertuous studie, profityng in clergie,
 And the cleer shynyng off philosophie,
 Hath thoruh fals lustis been heerafor manacid,
 Be sleihte off women dirkid and diffacid! 5516

O Hercules, my penne I feele quake,
 Myn ynke fulfillid off bittir teris salte,
 Thi[s] pitous tragedie to write for thi sake,
 Whom alle poetis glorefie and exalte; 5520
 But fraude off women made thi renoun halte,
 And froward muses thi tryumphes al toreende,
 For to descryue, alas, thi fatal eende.

Hercules, my
 pen trembles,
 my ink is
 filled with
 bitter tears
 when I write
 your history.

[Lenvoye.]

THE soote venym, the sauouri fals poisoun, 5524
 The dreedful ioie, the dolerous plesauce,
 The woful gladnesse, *with* furious resoun,
 Feith disespiered, ay stable in variaunce,
 Vertu exilyng, where lust hath gouernaunce, 5528
 Thoruh fals luxurie diffacen al noblesse,
 As this tragedie can bere ful weel witenesse.
 Wher froward Venus hath dominacioun,
 And blynde Cupide his subiectis doth auauce, 5532
 And wilful lust thoruh indiscrecioun
 Is chose iuge to holden the ballaunce,
 Ther chois onlefful hath thoruh onhappi chaunce
 Dirked off pryncis the famous hih prowesse, 5536
 As this tragedie can bere ful weel witenesse.
 O thou Hercules, for al thyn hih renoun,
 For al thi conquest and knyhtli suffisaunce,
 Thou* were thoruh women brouht to confusioun 5540
 And thoruh ther fraude thi renommed puissaunce
 Disclaundred was and brouht onto myschaunce.

Where Venus
 and Cupid rule,
 the fame of
 princes is dark-
 ened.

Hercules, I am
 ashamed to say
 that, for all
 your high re-
 nown, you were
 brought to
 confusion by
 women.

5511. armys] nature R.

5514. off] of al R. 5515. lust H — her afor be R.

5517. O] om. R. 5518. off] with R. 5519. This] Thi H.

5521. But] by H.

5526. The] om. R — with] the R, J, H 5 — resoun] tresoun H.

5527. dispeired R.

5535. chois] chose R. 5536. prowesse] noblesse R.

5538. thyn] thy H.

5540. Thou were] Though thou were B, Thoruh werre R.

I were ashamed to write it or expresse,
Except this tragedie can bere me weel witesse. 5544

Princes, let no
false sorceress
lead you into
temptation.

Pryncis, Pryncessis, off hih discrecioun
This thyng enprentith in your remembraunce;
Off othres fallyng make your proteccioun,
You to preserue thoruh prudent purueiaunce; 5548
Afforn prouyded, that your perseueraunce
Be nat perturbid bi no fals sorceresse,
As this tragedie off other berth witesse.

[A processe, of Narcisus, Biblis, Mirra and of othir
ther onfortunys to Bochas compleynyng.]¹

Narcissus,
Byblis and
Myrrha declare
their unhappi-
ness to Bochas.

NARCISUS, Biblis & Mirra, alle thre 5552
Tofor Bochas dede pitousli appeere,
Ther infortunyes, ther infelicite
To hym compleynyng with a dedli cheere.
And off ther comyng to telle the manere, 5556
Narcisus first, with sorwe & dool atteynt,
Gan first off alle declaren his compleynt.

Narcissus, son
of Cepheusus
and Liriope,
was born of
gentle blood
and the fairest
of creatures.

He was [the] sone off Cepheusus* the flood,
And his mooder callid Liriope, 5560
And bi discent born off gentil blood,
Off creatures fairest on to see;
And, as I fynde, at his natyuite
Tiresias,* be sperit off prophesie, 5564
Touchyng his fate thus gan specefie:

Tiresias fore-
told that his
life would end
when he first
beheld his own
face, and that
many a girl
would love him
in vain, for no
woman was
beautiful
enough to please
him.

The goddis han prouydid hym a space
To lyue in erthe, and so longe endure
Til that he knowe & see his owne face; 5568
And for his sake ful many creature,
Bi ordynaunce off God and off Nature,
Whan thei hym seen shal feelyn ful gret peyne,
Yiff thei in loue his grace may nat atteyne. 5572

5543. it] *om.* R — to expresse R. 5544. me] full H.

5546. enprinted R. 5550. socreresse R.

5551. berth] beris H. 5553. Iohn Bochas H. 5558. Bigan R.

5559. 1st the] *om.* H — Cepheusus] Thephesus B, H, R 3 —
off] to H.

5560. lynope R. 5564. Thiresias B.

5565. MSS. R, J, H 5 transpose lines 5846-73 and the Envoy
(5873-5901) with lines 5566-5845.

5566. Opposite this stanza the following rubric in MS. J: Ouidius
X^o. et XI^o. de transformatis. 5566. for hym R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 29 recto.

- But he shal be contrarie* & daungerous, [p. 69]
 And off his port ful off straungenesse,
 And in his herte [riht] inli surquedous,
 Bi thoccasioun off his natif fairnesse; 5576
 And, presумыng off his semlynesse,
 Shal thynke no woman so fresh nor fair of face,
 That able were to stonden in his grace.
- And for the excellence off his gret beute, 5580
 He hym purposid in his tendre age,
 Neuer in his liff weddid for to be —
 He thouhte hymself so fair off his visage.
 For which he cast hym, throuh his gret outrage, 5584
 Ageyn all lustis off loue to disdeyne,
 To hunte at beestis alone and be soleyne.
- And in this while that he kepte hym so
 In forestis and in wildirnesse, 5588
 A water goddesse, that callid was Echcho,
 Loued hym ful hote for his gret fairnesse;
 And secreli dede hir besynesse
 To folwe his steppis riht as any lyne, 5592
 To hir desirs to make hym to enclyne.
- He herde hir weel, but he sauh hir nouht,
 Wheroff astonyd, he gan anon tenquere,
 As he that was amerueilid in his thouht, 5596
 Saide euene thus, “is any wiht now heere?”
 And she ansuerde the same, in hir manere,
 What-euer he saide, as longeth to Echcho,
 Withoute abod she seide the same also. 5600
- “Come neer,” quod he, and began to calle.
 “Come ner,” quod she, “my ioie & my plesaunce.”
 He lokid aboute [among] the rokkis alle
 And sauh nohyng beside nor in distaunce; 5604
 But she abraide, declaryng hir greuaunce,
 And to hym seide, “myn owyn herte deere,
 Ne be nat straunge, but late us duelle ifeere.”

And so it
 turned out.
 Early in life
 he thought
 himself
 too handsome
 to marry and
 became a
 hunter.
 But a water-
 nymph named
 Echo, attracted
 by his great
 beauty,
 followed
 him, calling.

Yet he saw no
 one; and
 whatever he
 said, she
 answered
 in the same
 words.

“My own dear
 heart, let us
 dwell
 together.”

5573. contraire B.
 5577. semblenesse R. 5578. Shal thynke] *om.* R.
 5581. purposid *hym* R. 5582. for] *om.* H.
 5583. his] *om.* R. 5586. soleyne] slayne R.
 5591. secreli] sikyrly R. 5593. Inclyne R.
 5595. began R. 5600. also] *hym* to R.
 5603. the] thes R.
 5605. & declaryng R. 5607. but] *om.* H.

- "No," he replied, "I'd rather die, go away and don't speak to me any more."
- "Nay, nay," quod he, "I will nothyng obeie 5608
 To your desirs, for short conclusioun;
 For leuere I hadde pleynli for to deie,
 Than ye sholde haue off me possessioun;
 We be nothyng off on opynyoun, 5612
 I heere you weel, thouh I no figure see,
 Goth fourth your way & spek no mor to me!"
- Ashamed, she hid herself in a cave. Since that time men have heard her voice, but she has never been seen.
- And she ashamed fledde hir way anon,
 As she that myhte off hym no socour haue. 5616
 But disespeired, this Echcho is fourth gon
 And hidde hirsilff in an ougli caue
 Among the rokkis, as beried in hir graue.
 And thouh so be that men hir vois may heere, 5620
 Afftir that tyme she neuer dede appeere.
- And thus Narcisus thoruh daunger and disdeyn
 Vpon this lady dede crueli vengauce.
- The gods were angry with Narcissus for his cruelty to Echo,
- But whan the goddis his cruelte han seyn, 5624
 Towardis hym thei fill in gret greuauce,
 Off his vnmerci thei hadden displeaunce;
 And riht as he merciles was founde,
 So with onmerci he cauhte his dedli wounde. 5628
- For al daunger displesith to Venus,
 And al disdeyn is lothsum to Cupide:
 For who to loue is contrarious,
 The God of Loue will quite hym on sum side, 5632
 His dreedful arwis so mortali deuyde
 To hurte & mayme alle that* be rech[e]les,
 And in his seruise founde* merciles.
- and as he was so disdainful they resolved to punish him.
- And for Narcisus was nat merciabile 5636
 Toward Echcho, for his gret beute,
 But in his port was founden ontretable,
 Cupide thouhte he wolde auengid be,
 As he that herde hir praier off pite, 5640
 Causyng Narcisus to feele & haue his part
 Off Venus brond and off hir firi dart.

5614. &] ye R — to] with R.

5617. dispeired R. 5619. as] and R.

5621. dede] durst R

5622. *Rubric in J, leaf 29 d: "How Narcisus, Biblis, and Mirra, deied atte mischeff." Misplaced owing to transposition of stanzas.*

5623. this] the R. 5624. had R. 5634. that] tho B.

5635. be founde B.

- And on a day whan he in wildirnesse
 Hadde afftir beestis ronne on huntyng, 5644
 And for long labour gan falle in werynesse,
 He was desirous to ha[ue] sum refresshyng;
 And wonder thrustleuh afftir trauailyng,
 Miht nat endure lengere ther to duelle; 5648
 And atte laste he fond a cristal welle,
 Riht fressh spryngyng & wonder agreable,
 The watir lusti and delectable off siht:
 And for his thrust was to hym inportable, 5652
 Vpon the brynkis he fill down anon riht,
 And be reflexioun, myd off the watir briht
 Hym thouhte he sauh a passyng fair ymage
 To hym appeere, most aungelik off visage. 5656
- He was enamoured with the semlynesse, [p. 70]
 And desirous theroff to stonde* in grace;
 And yit it was nat but a likenesse,*
 And but a shadwe reflectyng off his face, 5660
 The which off feruence amerousli tenbrace,
 This Narcissus with a pitous compleynt
 Sterte into the welle & hymselfen dreynt.
- And thus his beute, allas, was leid ful lowe, 5664
 His semlynesse put ful ferre a-bak;
 Thus whan that he gan first hymself to knowe
 And seen his visage, in which ther was no lak,
 Presumptuous pride causid al to gon to wrak: 5668
 For who to moch doth off hymself presume,
 His owne vsurpyng will sonest hym consume.
- And fynali, as poetis telle,
 This Narcissus, withoute mor socour, 5672
 Afftir that he was drowned atte welle,
 The heuenli goddis dede hym this fauour,
 Thei turned hym into a fressh[e] flour,
5644. ronne on] runen in R. 5646. sum] om. R.
 5647. wonder] om. P, R 3 — thrustleuh] theugh seluth R 3.
 5651. delitable R. 5652. inportable R, H.
 5654. myd] in myddis R.
 5657. with] for H, R 3 — semblynesse R.
 5658. to stonde theroff B. 5659. likenesse] liklynesse B.
 5663. hymselfen dreynt] hym silff he dreynt R, hym silff
 dreynt H, so himsilff he dreynt J. 5664. ful] om. H.
 5668. to gon] go R.
 5671. as] as thes olde R, as þese oolde H, as these P, as theis
 olde H 5.
 5675. a] a ful R.
- One day, wearied by the chase and very thirsty, he found a spring, and seeing a most angelic image reflected in the still water
- tried to embrace it in his arms and fell in and was drowned.
- That was the end of Narcissus's beauty. Presumptuous pride caused his fall.
- After his death the gods turned him into a water lily; and books say that it is a good remedy for sudden fevers.

A watir-lilie, which doth remedie 5676
In hote accessis, as bookis specefie.

Byblis appeared
next, together
with her brother
Caunus

AFFTIR Narcisus was at the well[e] dreynt,
And to Iohn Bochas declared hadd his wo,
Biblis appered, with teris al bespreynt, 5680
And toward hym a gret pas she gan go;
And hir brother Caunus* cam also,
And off o wombe as gemellis tweyne;
But she toforn hir fate gan compleyne. 5684

whom she loved
against nature
and law.

She in hir loue was nat vertuuous,
For ageyn God and Kyndis ordynaunce,
She loued hir brother that callid was Caunus;* 5688
And whan he sauh hir froward gouernaunce,
He onto hire gaff non attendaunce,
Thouh she off sleihte tacomplisshe hir entent,
In secre wise a pistil to hym sent.

He would not
listen to her,

although she
wrote him a
letter saying
that she would
die unless he
assented.

She seide it was an impossible thyng 5692
Withoute his grace hirseluene for to saue,
[And] but he were to hire assentyng,
She ellis pleynli may non helthe haue
But onli deth, and afftirward hir graue. 5696
Thus in hir writyng, to hym she dede attame;
And to be couert she ne wrot no name.

He paid no
attention to it,
and Byblis
wept so per-
sistently that
the gods
finally turned
her into a
fountain.

But whan this pistil cam to his presence,
Vertuuousli therat he gan disdeyne, 5700
And gaff therto no maner aduertence,
Nor took non heed off hir furious peyne,
But suffred hir eternali to pleyne
Til that she was, as Ouide can weel telle, 5704
With offte wepyngis transformed to a welle.

Myrrha un-
naturally loved
her father
Cinyras, and

NEXT cam Mirra with face ful pitous,
Which that whilom loued ageyn nature
Hir owne fadir callid Cinarus, 5708

5676. *lie*] like R (*corrected in later hand to lile*).

5678. *Afftir* þat H. 5679. *hadd*] *om.* R.

5682. *Cannus* B, *Canus* R, *Cammus* H, *Cannus* J, *Caunus* P.

5687. *Cannus* B — *callid was*] *om.* J.

5688. *he*] *she* R — *gouernaunce*] *greuauance* R.

5691. *secre*] *sikir* R. 5700. *therat he gan*] *began ther at* R.

5702. *Nor*] *Neither* R, J, *om.* H — *non*] *nouthir noon* H.

5705. *wepyng* R. 5707. *whilom*] *sum tyme* R.

- For whos sake gret peyne she dede endure.
 But she ne durste hir sorwe nat discure,
 Til hir norice be signes dede espie
 The hertli constreynt off hir maladie. 5712
- For hir norice, off which that I ha[ue] told,
 Conceyued hath, bi open euidence,
 As she that koude bothe off newe and old
 In such materis al hool thexperience, 5716
 That thoruh long labour & slehti diligence,
 Dyuers meenes & weies out she souhte,
 To hir fadres bed that she Mirra brouhte.
- With whom she hadde hir lust & hir plesaunce; 5720
 For she onknowe lay with hym al nyht:
 He was deceyued bi drunkeleuh ignoraunce,
 And on the morwe, longe or any liht,
 She stal away and went out off his siht. 5724
 With hir norice kepte hir longe cloos,
 Til onto tyme that hir wombe aroos.
- But hir fadir, that was off Cypre kyng,
 Which, as I tolde, was callid Cinarus, 5728
 Whan he the trouthe espied off this thyng:
 That bi his douhter he was deceyued thus,
 She wex to hym lothsum and odious,
 Fledde from his face, so sore she was afferd, 5732
 And he pursued afftir with his suerd.
- In Arabie, the hoothe myhti lond,
 Kyng Cinarus hath his douhter founde,
 And crueli he gan enhause his hond, 5736
 With his suerd tayouen hir a wounde;
 But the goddis, off merci most habounde,
 Han fro the deth[e] maad hire [to] go fre,
 And thoruh ther power transfourmed to a tre. 5740
- Whiche afftir hire berith yit the name, [p. 71]
 Callid Mirra, as she was in hir liff.
 Out off which, as auctours sey the same,
 Distillith a gomme, a gret preseruatif, 5744
 And off nature a ful good defensiff,

her nurse so
 contrived that
 she accom-
 plished her
 desire,

deceiving him
 when drunk.

But as she
 became preg-
 nant, her
 father found it
 out and was so
 angry that he
 chased her all
 the way to

Arabia, and
 would have
 slain her had
 not the gods
 transformed
 her into a tree,

from which we
 obtain myrrh,
 that is very
 useful for keep-
 ing dead bodies
 from cor-
 rupting.

5710. But] For R. 5711. hir] his R.
 5718. weyes and meenes R. 5722. dronklee R 3.
 5725. hir longe] hir silff H. 5726. the tyme R, H.
 5734. Arabia H. 5736. he gan] bigan R.
 5737. tayouen] to yiffen R — his] hir H.
 5738. off] om. R. 5743. as] om. R.

To keepe bodies from putrefaccioun
And hem fraunchise from al corrupcioun.

Myrrh is engendered by the sunbeams.

Bi influence off the sonne-bemys 5748
Mirre is engendrid, distillyng off his kynde
With rounde dropis ageyn[es] Phebus stremys,
And doun descendith thoruh the harde rynde.
And thoruh the riffis, also as I fynde, 5752
The said[e] Mirra hath a child foorth brouht,
In al this world, that yiff it be weel souht,

Myrrha's child was called Adonis, and Venus fell in love with him,

Was non so fair[e] fourmed bi nature;
For off his beute he was pereles. 5756
And as poetis recorden bi scripture,
He callid was the faire Adonydes;
And to his worshep and his gret ences —
For he off fairnesse bar awei the flour — 5760
Venus hym ches to been hir paramour.

and told him not to hunt beasts that were savage. But he paid no attention to her, and was killed by a wild boar,

The which[e] goddesse gaff to hym in charge,
That he sholde in his tendre age,
In forestis whil he wente at large, 5764
Hunte at no beestis which that were sauage;
But he contrary, to his disauauntage,
Thoruh wilfulnessse — I can sey you* no mor —
Was slayn onwarli off a tusshi bor, 5768

whereupon Venus turned him into a crimson flower.

At the whiche he felli dede enchace,
But off foli in veyn was his labour;
For he lay slayn, ful pale off cheer & face,
Whom Venus turned to a ful fressh[e] flour 5772
Which was as blood, lich purpil off colour,
A budde off gold with goodli leuys glade
Set in the myddis, whos beute may nat fade.

After Myrrha had withdrawn herself, Orpheus, an ugly man, appeared.

AND whan [that] Mirra fro Bochas was
withdrawe, 5776
And hadde declarid hir gret aduersite,
And off hir fate told the mortal lawe,
Cam Orpheus, ful ougli on to see,
Sone off Appollo and off Calliope, 5780

5764. at large] alarge R. 5767. you sey B.

5768. tusshi] tuskye R.

5773. as] a R — lich] of R, J — off] the R, þe J.

5778. hir] his R.

And appered with a ful doolful face,
Whilom brouht foorth and iborn in Trace.

Ful renommed in armys and science,
Famous in musik and in melodie,
And ful notable also in eloquence.

5784 He was famous
for his music
and eloquence.
Even the rivers
ceased to flow
when he sang.

And for his soote sugred armonie,
Beestis, foulis, poetis specefie,
Wodes, flodes off ther cours most strong,
Stynt of* ther cours to herkne his soote song.

5788

An harpe he hadde off Mercurius,
With the which Erudice he wan;
And to Bachus*, as writ Ouidius,
Sacrifises ful solempne he began,
And onto helle for his wiff he ran,
Hir to recure with soote touchis sharpe
Which that he made vpon his heuenli harpe.

5796

5792 Mercury gave
him a harp,
with which he
won Eurydice
back from hell

But whan that he this labour on hym took,
A lawe was maad[e] which that bond hym sore,
That yiff that he bakward caste his look,
He sholde hire lese & seen his wiff no more:
But it is seid[e] sithen gon ful yore,
Ther may no lawe louers weel constreyne,
So inportable is ther dedli peyne.

5800

He was not to
look behind,
else he would
lose her.

Yiff summe husbandis hadde stonden in the cas
Ta* lost her wyues for a look so deyne,
Thei wolde ha[ue] suffred and nat seid allas,
But pacientli endured al ther peyne,
And thanked God, that broken was the cheyne
Which hath so longe hem* in prisoun bounde,
That thei be grace han such a fredam founde.

5804

5808

5804 But I think
there are some
husbands who,
if a sudden
look had lost
them their
wives,
5808 would have
put up with it
very patiently
and thanked
God.

To lyn in prisoun, it is a ful gret charge,
And to be stokked vndir keie and lok;
It were weel meriere a man to gon at large,

5812

It is much
more pleasant
to be free
than nailed to
a block.

5781. appered] appeere H — ful] *om.* R.

5782. Whilom] Some tyme R. 5783. and] & in R, J, H 5.

5789. Synt of] Styntid B — ther] *om.* H 5. 5790. herpe H.

5792. Bachus] bochas B, R 3.

5793. ful solempne] solenne R.

5799. bakkard R. 5803. Importable H.

5805. Ta] To ha B — *in.* MS. J. *opposite this stanza in a later band: "a trew saying."*

5807. ther] the R. 5809. hem so longe B.

5811. lyn] ligge R, liue P. 5812. be] ly H.

5813. meriere] myrie R, merie J, mery H 5.

Than with irenes be nailed to a blok:
 And there is o bond, which callid is wedlok,
 Fretyng husbondis so sore, that it is wonder, 5816
 Which with no file may nat be broke assonder.

However, Orpheus loved Eurydice, and, after all, lost her,

But Orpheus, fadir off armonye,
 Thouhte Erudice, which was his wiff, so fair,
 For hir sake he felte he muste deie, 5820
 Because that he, whan* he made his repair,
 Off hir [in] trouthe enbracid nothyng but hair.
 Thus he lost hire, there is no mor to seyne;
 And for the constreynt off his greuouse peyne, 5824

and never married again. He got off very easily. A man who once escapes the snare isn't apt to go back to it.

At his herte hir partyng sat so sore, [p. 72]
 The greene memorie*, the tendre remembraunce,
 That he neuer wolde wyuen more,
 So faire he was escapid his penaunce; 5828
 For wedlok is a liff off most plesaunce.
 But who hath onys infernal peynys seyn,
 Will neuer his thankis come in the snare ageyn.¹

Orpheus gave very important advice to husbands; he said that if one hell is bad, two are worse.

This Orpheus gaff counseil ful notable 5832
 To husbondis that han endurid peyne,
 To such as been prudent and trefable:
 Oon hell is dreedful, mor pereilous be tweyne;
 And who is onys boundyn in a cheyne, 5836
 And may escapen out off daunger blyue —
 Yiff he resorte, God let hym neuer thryue!

But women were not edified by these words, and so they slew him at the festival of Bacchus.

On this sentence women wer vengable,
 And to his writyng ful contrarious, 5840
 Seide his counseil was nat comendable.
 At the feste thei halwed to Bachus,
 Thei fill echon vpon this Orpheus;
 And, for alle his rethoriques suete, 5844
 Thei slouh, allas, this laureat poete.

5814. Irnes R — to] *om.* R. 5815. And] But R, J, H 5.

5816. Fretyng] Fetteryng R.

5817. no] a R, J, H 5, P — nat] *om.* R 3.

5820. he felte] felte that R.

5821. that he whan] whan that B.

5822. in] *om.* R — no thyng enbracid R.

5826. memoire B. 5830. peyn R.

5835. mor] & more R.

5839. On] Vpon R. 5844. rethorik R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 30 verso, *in red in margin*: "Ob quam cām secundas spreuit nupcias."

And off his harpe yiff ye list to lere,
 The god Appollo maad a translacioun
 Among the ymages off the sterris cleere,
 5848 Wheroff men* may haue yit inspeccioun.
 But Fortune, to his confusioun,
 Denyed hym, froward off hir nature,
 Whan he was slayn fredam off sepulture. 5852

You can see
 his harp in the
 sky, for Apollo
 translated it to
 the stars.

NEXT Orpheus, ther dede appeere also
 Off Amazones worthi queenys tweyne,
 Marpesia and hir suster Lampedo,
 Which in conquest dede ther besi peyne,
 5856 And gret worship in armys dede atteyne,
 Namyng hemsilff, be wrytyng nyh and ferr,
 Douhtren to Mars, which is the God off Werr.

Two queens of
 the Amazons
 followed Or-
 pheus.

Marpesia rood out in regiouns
 5860 And conquered ful many a gret cite,
 For couetise off gret possessiouns,
 Tencrece hir lordshepe, yiff it wolde be.
 And hir suster kepte surli ther contre
 5864 From alle enmyes, that ther was no doute,
 Whil Marpesia rood with hir host aboute.

Marpessa and
 Lampedo.

But whil she was in conquest most famous
 And hir enmyes proudli dede assaile,
 5868 Fortune anon wex contrarious,
 And causid she was slay[e]n in bataile.
 Loo, what conquest or victory may auaille,
 Whan that Fortune doth at hem disdeyne;
 5872 Seeth heer example bi these queenys tweyne.

Marpessa was
 slain in battle,
 a common fate
 of conquerors.

¶ Lenvoye.

THIS tragedie remembrith thynges fyue:
 Off Narcisus the excellent beute,
 And off Biblis doth also descryue
 5876 The grete luxur[y]e and dishoneste,
 Mirra diffamed, turned to a tre,

These
 tragedies shew
 that licentious-
 ness and pride
 are very far
 removed from
 virtue.

5846. *Opposite this stanza the following rubric in MS. J. leaf 29 b. margin: "Ouidius X^o. et XI^o. de transformitis."*

5846. lere] here R, J. 5847. god] god of R.

5849. men] man B, H — yit] clere J, H 5 — haue yit] yitte
 haue cleer R.

5863. lordshippis H. 5865. From] Off R — that] so þat R.

5871. what] om. R. 5876. doth] deth R.

5877. luxurye] luxuride R.

Texemplefie that lecherie and pride
Been from al vertu set ful ferr a-side. 5880

Orpheus' life
was of mingled
joy and ad-
versity.

How Orpheus endured in his lyue
Ioie entirmedlid with aduersite;
In his youthe whan he dede wyue
He felte in wedlok ful gret felicite, 5884
His worldli blisse meynt with duplicite,
As Fortune hir chaungis gan deuyde,
Which from al vertu be set ful ferr a-side.

Marpessa made
war wantonly
and came to a
sudden end.

Marpesia, for hir list to stryue 5888
With wilful werris tencrecen hir contre,
But hir pompe was ouerturned blyue,
Whan in bataile vnwarli slayn was she:
For off al werre deth is the fyn parde, 5892
So furious Mars can for his folk prouide,
Which from al vertu is set ful ferr a-side.

Princes, flee
pride and lust,
and do not be
guided by
avarice. Such
things are set
far aside
from virtue.

Ye myhti Pryncis, lat wit and resoun dryue
Your hih noblesse to considre and see 5896
How Fortune estatis can depyue
And plunge hem down from ther prosperite.
Pride and luxure, I counsaile, that ye fle,
Fals auarice ne lat nat be your guide, 5900
Which from al vertu is set ful ferr a-side.

[Off Priamus kyng of Troye, and how the monke of
Bury translatur of this booke wroot a boke of
the sieg of Troye callid Troye booke.]¹

After this,
Bochas began
to think of
Priam,

AFFTIR these compleyntis & lamentaciouns,
Which [that] Bochas dede in his booke compile,
Medlid among with transformaciouns 5904
Set in Ouide be ful souereyn stile,
Whan he on hem hadde musid a long while,
Seyn the* maner bothe off ther sorwe & ioie,
He gan remembre on Priamus off Troie. 5908

5889. hir] his H.

5894. vertues R.

5895. *This stanza is omitted in R.* 5899. luxurye H.

5904. transmutaciouns R.

5907. the] ther B — of ther] the R, H.

5908. to remembre R — on] of R, H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 31 recto.

- First off his berthe and off his kenreede, [p. 73] who was a
 How among kynges he was most famous; descendant of
 And as poetis recorde off hym in deede, Dardanus
 He descendid of worthi Dardanus, and Jupiter
 Which, as his lyne declareth onto vs, through his
 5912 From Iubiter was lyneali come doun father
 Onto his fader callid kyng Lamedoun. Laomedon.
- Off olde Troie this Lamedoun was kyng; 5916
 Destroied bi Grekis he and his contre.
 Afftir whom, [this] Priamus regnyng,
 Made there ageyn a myhti strong cite, 5920
 Where he ful longe in ful gret rialte,
 With wiff and childre, most worthi of renoun,
 With sceptre & crowne heeld possessioun.
- Gouerned his cite in pes and rihtwisesse, 5924 He ruled in
 And Fortune was to hym fauourable; peace and
 For off al Asie the tresour and richesse righteousnesse
 He dede assemble, this kyng most honourable.
 And in armys he was so comendable,
 That thoruh the world as ferr as men may gon, 5928
 Off hih noblesse the renoun off hym shon.
- This Priamus hadde childre many on, and had many
 Worthi pryncis, & off ful gret myht; children, of
 But Ector was among hem euerichon whom Hector
 5932 Callid off prowesse the lanterne & the lyht; and Troilus
 For ther was neuer born a bettir knyht. were the best
 Troilus in knyhtod so manli eek was founde, knights.
 That he was named Ector the secounde. 5936
- But yiff I shulde reherse the manheede
 Off kyng Priam & off his sonys all, 5940 But there is no
 And how his cite besieged* was in deede, need of my
 And al the story to remembraunce call, telling you his
 Tween hym & Grekis how it is befall, story here,
 The circumstaunces rehersyng vp & doun,
 To sette in ordre the firste occasioun
- Off the siege, whi it was first laid 5944 for I have
 Bi Hercules and also bi Iason, — already told it
 The maner hool in Troie Book is said, as well as I
 Troy Book,

5912. Dardanus] Dacianus R, Darnamus J, H 5.

5918. this] om. H, R 3.

5921. wiff] his wiff R. 5922. heeld] heeld the R.

5924. hym] om. R. 5925. all of R. 5933. & the] of R.

5935. eek] om. R. 5939. besegied B. 5941. Betwene R.

- Reudli endited off my translacioun,
 Folwyng vpon the destruccioun 5948
 Callid the seconde, which, bi acountis cleer,
 Fulli endured the space off ten yeer,—
 For, as me semeth, the labour were in veyn.
 Treuli also I not to what entent, 5952
 That I shold[e] write it newe ageyn;
 For I hadde onys in comaundement,
 Bi hym that was most noble & excellent
 Off kynges all[e], for to vndirtake 5956
 It to translate and write it for his sake.
- And yiff ye list to wetyn whom I meene,
 Henry the Fiffte, most myhti off puissaunce,
 Gaff me the charge off entent most cleene, 5960
 Thyng off old tyme to putte in remembraunce,
 The same Henry, for knyhtli suffisaunce,
 Worthi for* manhod, reknyd kynges all,
 With nyne worthi for to haue a stall. 5964
- To hooli chirch he was chieff defensour;
 In alle such causes Cristes chosen knyht.
 To stroie Lollardis he sette al his labour,
 Loued alle vertues, and to sustene riht, 5968
 Thoruh his noblesse, his manhod & his myht,
 Was dilligent & dede his besi peyne
 To ha[ue] set pes atween[e] rewmys tweyne,—
- I meene, in sooth, twen Ing[e]land & Fraunce, 5972
 His purpos was taue had a pes fynall,
 Souhte out menys with many circumstaunce,
 As weel be trete as actis marciall,
 Theron iupartid goodis, liff and all. 5976
 But, o allas, ageyn deth is no boone!
 This lond may seyn he deied al to soone.
- For a-mong kynges he was oon the beste,
 So alle his deedis conueied were with grace. 5980
 I pray to God, so yiue his soule good reste,
 With hooli seyntis in heuene a duellyng-place.
 For heere with vs to lital was the space

5954. MS. J: "the monke of Bury," *rubricated in margin*, leaf 31 b.

5959, 62. Henry R, H.

5963. for] off B — reknyd] rekene R, J, reken H 5, P.

5967. stroie Lollardis] destrye heritykes R. 5975. be] *om.* R.

5976. liff goodis R. 5981. so] to R, R 3, *om.* H.

which I translated

for King Henry the Fifth, who was a very great man,

chief defender of the church, an enemy of the Lollards, and diligent to bring

peace to England and France.

Alas, he died too soon!

May God give his soul good rest with holy saints in heaven!

- That he abood; off whom the remembraunce 5984
Shal neuer deie in Ingland nor in Fraunce.
- This worthi kyng gaff to me in charge,
In Inglissh tunge make a translacioun
Out off Latyn, withynne a volum large, 5988
How longe the Grekis lay afor the toun,
And how that Paris first at Citheroun
In Venus temple slili dede his peyne
Ther to rauesshe the faire queen Heleyne. 5992
- In which[e] book the processe ye may see: [p. 74]
To hym how she was weddid in the toun,
And off the siege leid to the cite
Be Menelay and* kyng Agamenoun,* 5996
And many another ful worthi off renoun
On outhr party, which that in bataile
Fro day to day ech other dede assaile.
- What sholde I telle, or wherto sholde I write 6000
The deth off Ector or off Achilles?
Or wherto sholde I now off newe* endite
How worthi Troilus was slayn among the pres? —
The eende off Paris or off Pallamydes, 6004
Or the slauhtre off manli Deiphebus,
Or how his brother, callid Helenus,
Told afforn how it was gret folie
That Paris sholde wedde the queen Heleyne; 6008
And how Cassandra in hir prophecie
On this weddyng sore gan compleyne,
And for the constreynt off hir hertly peyne,
How she wex mad and ran aboute the toun 6012
Til she was cauth and shet up in prison.
- Alle these materis ye may beholde in deede
Set bi and bi withynne Troie Book,
And how Cressaide loued Diomeede, 6016

He bade me translate the whole story from Latin into English. It tells how Paris carried off Helen and married her, how Menelaus and Agamemnon besieged Troy,

how Hector, Achilles, Paris and others died,

how Cassandra foretold the evil that would follow if Paris wedded Helen, and how they shut her up in prison for her noise, and how Cressida forsook Troilus for Diomedes.

5986. to] *om.* R.

5989. to fore R. 5992. rauesshe] reioissh R.

5995. to] *vnto* R.

5996. Menelay] Meneldy R, H 5, meneldi J — and] and be B — Agamenoun] Lamedoun B, R, H, J, H 5, R 3.

5998. eithir R.

6002. now off newe] off newe now B, R — now] *om.* J.

6008. the] this R. 6010. this] the R — bi gan R.

6014. these materis] this mateer R, this matter P.

6016. how] *om.* R. — Crisseide H.

Whan worthi Troilus she wilfulli forsook:
 Off hir nature a quarel thus she took,
 Tassaie bothe, yiff neede eek wer, to feyne
 To take the thridde, & leue hem bothe tweyne. 6020

Nor will I tell
 how the
 Greeks finally
 won the town,
 and of their
 misfortunes
 in their home-
 ward journey,
 and of Ulysses
 and Penelope.

I [wil] passe ouer and telle off hir no more;
 Nor bi what menys Grekis wan the toun —
 How Eneas, nor how that Anthenore
 Ageyn kyng Priam conspired fals tresoun, 6024
 Nor how Vlixes gat Palladioun —
 The deth off Priam nor Heccuba the queene,
 Nor how that Pirrus slouh yonge Polliceene.

You must read
 the Troy Book.

Nor heer to write, it is nat myn entent, 6028
 Repair off Grekis hom to ther contre,
 Afftir the cite and Ylioun was brent,
 Nor off ther myscheuys thei hadde in the se,
 Nor how Vlixes fond Penolope 6032
 A trewe wiff, thouh he were longe hir fro; —
 Thoruhout al Grece I can reede off no mo.

Off these materes thus I make an eende:
 What fell off Grekis afftir ther viage, 6036
 To Troie Book the folk echon I sende,
 Which haue desir to seen the surplusage,
 How Grekis first maden ther passage
 Towardis Troie, besegyng the cite — 6040
 Redith the story; — ye gete no mor off me.

¶ **Bochas ageyn þe surquedous pride of hem that
 trusten in her riches.**¹

O ye proud
 people who
 trust in
 strength, beauty,
 nobility, wealth,
 remember
 Priam's fate!

YE proude folkis that sette* *your* affiaunce
 In strengthe, beute or in hih noblesse,
 Yff ye considre Fortunys variaunce, 6044
 And coude a merour affor *your* eyen dresse

6019. eek wer] wer al so R, were also J, H 5.

6021. wil] *om.* R, R 3, P, H 5 — hir] it J.

6022. Nor] Neithir R, J.

6023. nor] neithir R, J, H 5, P — that] *om.* H, J, P, H 5.

6025, 26. Nor] Neithir R. 6026. of Heccuba R.

6029. to] in to R.

6031. Nor] Neithir R — myscheuys] myscheffe R, myschef J,
 mischief P, myschiffe H 5 — hadden H.

6032. Nor] Neithir R.

6637. the folk echon] tho folke R. 6041. Redith] Rede R.

6042. sette] setten B. 6043. in beute R.

¹“Here spekith Bochas the Auctour of this book/ a-yenst the surquedous pride of hem that trust/ in richesse seying thise wordys vnto hem.” MS. J. leaf 31 verso.

- Off kyng Priam and off his gret richesse,
To seen how he and [how] his children all
From ther noblesse so sodenli be fall! 6048
- Ector off knythod callid sours and well,
Sad and demur & famous off prudence,
Paris also in beute dede excell,
And Helenus in parfit prouidence; 6052
Troilus in armys hadde gret experience,
Eek Deiphobus preued manli on his fon:
Yit in the werre thei wer slayn euerichon.
- Hadde nat this kyng, eek as I can deuise, 6056
Noble Eccuba, which that was the queene,
A douhter callid Cassandra the wise,
Hir yonge suster faire Polliceene? —
Allas, allas! what may such pride meene! 6060
For al-be-it ther renoun sprang ful ferre,
Yit were these women deuoured in the werre.
- Was he nat myhti & strong in all[e] thynges,
And hadde also off his alliaunce 6064
Riht worthi princis, & many riche kynges,
And nyh al Asie vndir obeisaunce? —
Holde in his tyme most famous off puissaunce,
Most renommed off richesse and tresours, 6068
Til that Fortune with hir sharp[e] shours,
- Whan that he sat hiest on hir wheel, [p. 75] 6072
This blynde goddesse gan hym to assaile.
Hir froward malice, he felte it ful weel:
His gold, his tresour first thei gan to faile,
And dirke gan his roial apparaile.
Be which exauple all proude men may see
The onseur trust, the mutabilite, 6076
- Which in this world is seyn & found* alday.
Mid off estatis in ther magnyficence,
Ebbe afftir flowe maketh no delay, 6078

Hector, Paris,
Deiphobus,
Helenus, — all
were slain.

Hecuba, Cas-
sandra, and
fair Polyxena,
— they too
were deuoured
in the war.

Was not
Priam mighty?
Had he not
worthy allies
and almost
all Asia under
his rule?

When he sat
highest on her
wheel, Fortune
cast him down.

Each man must
take his turn
as it comes
about.

6047. 2nd how] *om.* R, J, H 5, P.

6054. Eek] Also R — on] *in* R.

6055. euerichon] *echone* H.

6056. eek] also R. 6059. faire] *yong* H.

6060. such] *al sich* R. 6063. Was] *What* R.

6066. vndir] *vndir his* R. 6071. began R.

6073. thei] *it* R. 6074. *derken* R.

6077. found] *founden* B. 6078. *In myddis of statis* R.

But halt hir cours; there is no resistence: 6080
 The tide abit nat for no violence;
 Ech man that standith off chaunges heer in doute
 Mut take his turn as it cometh a-boute.

Let Priam be a clear mirror to you, proud people, who put your trust in vain glory, that fades as a flower. Let Priam been to you a cleer merour, 6084
 Ye proude folkis, that sette *your* affiaunce
 In such veyn glorie,* which fadith as a flour,
 And hath off beute heer noon attendaunce.
 The world to you cast a ful bittir chaunce: 6088
 For whan ye wene* sitte hiest atte fulle,
 Than will she rathest *your* briht[e] fethres pulle.

You have had warnings enough of how worldly joy is mingled with dread. Ye han warnyngis for to taken heed 6092
 Bexauple off other, cleer & riht visible,
 How worldli blisse is medlid ay with dreed.
 And yiff your resouns and wittis be sensible,
 Thyng seyn at eye is nat incredible;
 And al this doctryn is to you in veyn, 6096
 Yiff in your tyme ye ha[ue] no chaunges seyn.

Bochas' advice is to leave your vices and have faith in Him who can best help in time of need. Wherefore Bochas onto your auail
 Ful prudentli put you at this issu:
 First of all he yeueth you this counsail, 6100
 To leue your vices & take you to vertu,
 And sette your trust al hooli on *Iesu*;
 For he may best in myscheeff helpe, & neede,
 Off worldli chaunges that ye thar nat dreede. 6104

¶ The preis of Bochas & suerte that stonddith in pouert.¹

When great lords and dignitaries sit highest on their thrones, the hour of their decline approaches. THESE grete lordshipes, these hih[e] dignites,
 Cheeff thyng annexid onto ther regalie,
 Whan thei sitten hiest in ther sees,
 And round aboute stant ther cheualrie, 6108
 Dreed entreth in, pereil and envie,
 And onwar chaung[e], which no man may knowe,
 The hour whan Fortune will make hem loute lowe.

6081. abyde R.

6086. gloire B. 6089. wenen B, R.

6094. wittis & resouns R. 6099. Ful] & H.

6104. chaunges] thynges H — dare not R.

6106, 8. ther] the R. 6111. loute] om. H.

¹“Here also, Iohn Bochas put a grete preisying and a commendacioun of suerte bat stonddith in pouerte / vnder thise wordis in sentence.” MS. J. leaf 32 recto.

- Thei may weel holden a statli gret houshold, 6112 The more im-
 With a veyn trust ther power sholde ay laste, posing their
 Clad in ther mantles off purpil, perle & gold, household and
 And on the wheel off Fortune clymbe up faste — the greater
 Lich as she myhte neuer doun hem caste; 6116 their state, the
 But ay the hierre ther clymbyng is att all, more unhappy
 Allas, the sorere is ther onhappi fall. their fall.
- The fal off Priam and kyng Agamenoun
 Ouhte off riht mor to be compleynyd, 6120 It were better
 Whan Fortune hadde hem pullid doun had Priam and
 And off hir malice hath at hem disdeynyd, Agamemnon
 Than yiff thei neuer to worshepe hadde atteynyd; never been
 But ther fallyng was the more greuou 6124 kings.
 Because thei wern toforn so glorious.
- O thou Pouert, meek, humble and debonaire, Poverty is free
 Which that kepest the lawes off Nature, from the
 For sodeyn chaunges thou wilt nat disespaire, 6128 assaults of
 So art thou fraunchised fro Fortunys lure; Fortuna.
 Alle hir assautis thou lowli doost endure,
 That she may haue no iurediccion
 To interupte thi possessioun. 6132
- Thou settist litil bi al worldli richesse,
 Nor be his tresours which be transitorie;
 Thou scornest hem that ther sheltrouns dresse
 Toward batailles for conquest and victorie; 6136
 Thou despisist al shynyng off veynglorie,
 Laude off tryumphes which conquerours ha[ue] souht,
 With all ther pillages, thou settist hem at nouht.
- Thou dispreisist al superfluite; 6140 and all super-
 Non infortunye may chaunge thi corage: fluity. He does
 And the shippis that saile bi the se not risk his life
 With marchaundise among the floodis rage, at sea for the
 Ther auentures and ther pereilous passage — 6144 sake of riches
 Lyff, bodi, good, al put in auenture
 Onli for lucre, gret richesse to recure —

6114. mantell R — perle] perre H. 6118. ther] the R.

6119. kyng] of R. 6122. hir] om. R.

6125. to fore thei wer R. 6127. lawe H.

6128. dispaire R. 6131. iurisdiccion R.

6134. Nor] Neithir R. 6136. bataile R — and] or R.

6137. dispisith R — off] or R.

6138. tryumphe H — souht] wrouht H.

6140. dispreisist] despisest H.

6141. Non] nor noon H. 6144. 2nd ther] om. R.

- or quarrel over money and rewards, which men win only to leave forever. Off al such thyng thou takest litil heede, [p. 76]
Nor off that peple that maneres do purchase, 6148
Nor off plederis, which for lucre & meede
Meyntene quarelis & questis doon enbrace,
Thou hem beholdest with a ful stille face,
Ther sotil werkyng souht out for the nonys, 6152
And sodenli departe from al attonys.
- His wealth is patience. Thou canst in litil also haue suffisaunce,
And art content with ful smal dispence;
For thi richesse and thyn habundaunce 6156
Withoute gruchchyng is humble pacience.
Yiff any man do to the offence,
Thou foryetist and lihtli canst foryiuie;
To the suffisith so [that] thou maist lyue. 6160
- In summer the starry sky and the green leaves are his shelter. The sterrid heuene is thi couerture
In somer sesoun; vnder the leuys greene
Thou makest thi duellyng & doost thiselff assure
Ageyn gret heetis off the sunne sheene: 6164
Content with frutis & watir cristal cleene
To staunche thyn hunger & thi thrustis sore,
Afftir the sesouns, & carest for no more.
- and in winter he lies on straw without complaining, and sings merrily before thieves; for he can journey from land to land without fear. Pouert eek liggith the colde wynteris nyht 6168
Wrappid in strauh, withoute compleynyng;
Withoute dreed he go[eth] glad and liht,
And tofor theuys he merili doth syng:
He* goth also withoute paryschyng* 6172
Fro lond to lond among[es] poore & riche;
For freend and fo to hym be bothe aliche.
- Seneca says that Glad Poverty is the richest of all things, content in joy and in adversity. Moral Senec recordeth be writyng,
Richest off thynges is Glad Pouerte, 6176
Euer off o cheer[e], void off al gruchchyng,
Bothe in ioie and in aduersite:
Thoruh al the world[e] last hir liberte,
And hir fraunchise stant in so gret ese, 6180
That off hir fredam no man will hir displese.

6148. Nor] Or R.

6149. Nor] Neithir R — pletours R, pleters H.

6159. canst] dost H.

6161. thi] the H. 6166. thi] thyne R. 6168. eek] also R.

6172. He] She B, J, H, H 5, R 3, P — paryschyng] patisyng
B, patisyng J, H 5, patisshyng H, patisyng R 3, paryschyng R.

6174. hym] her P — be both to hym H — I-lyche R.

6179. lastith R. 6180. hir] his H.

- She is norice off studie & off doctryne,
In vertuou labour doth hir dilligence;
And off sciences, which that be dyuyne, 6184
She is callid mooder be clerkis, in sentence.
Off philisophres most had in reuerence,
Fortune and she so ferr assonder varie,
That ech to other off custum is contrarie. 6188
- Hir hertili ioie is for to lyue in pes,
Hateth tumulte, noise and disturbaunce;
For hir disciple, callid Zenocrates,
In wilful pouert set hooli his plesauce, 6192
Sobre off his port, thoruh whose attemp[e]raunce
Ful many a man bexauple off his techyng
Wer brouht to vertu fro vicious lyuyng.
- His diete was so mesurable 6196
And deuoid off superfluite,
That his corage he kepte ferme & stable,
Fro flessfli lustis he was so attempre:
Resoun maistred his sensualite, 6200
Desirs onleefful for to sette a-side;
Duryng his liff Pouert was his guide.
- His abidyng and conuersacioun
Was in placis that were solitarie; 6204
Mong trees & wellis he bilt hym a donioun,
With multitude he hated for to tarie:
For Pouerte was his secretarie,
Sobre off his cheer & stable off his entent, 6208
And in Athenes first to scoole he went.
- He was so myhti off auctorite,
Rihtwisnesse & iustice to obserue,
That rihtful iuges his sentence took at gre: 6212
He coude his mouth & tunge so weel preserue,
That in the temple onys off Mynerue,
Withoutyn oth, onto his sentence,
To that he saide the iuges gaff credence. 6216

nurse
of study,
mother of
sciences.

Poverty hates
noise and
tumult.
Zenocrates was
her disciple.

Moderate in all
things, guided
only by reason,

he loved soli-
tary places and
built him a
retreat amidst
trees and flow-
ing water.

He was known
to be so up-
right, that
judges accepted
his word with-
out oath.

6182. 2nd off] *om.* R. 6184. that] *om.* H.

6185. is] *om.* R.

6190. disturbaunce] *perturbaunce* H. 6194. a] *om.* R.

6199. so attempred was he H.

6200. Pat Resoun H — manstried R. 6205. Amonge R.

6206. hated] hate hym R. 6209. to scole first R.

6213. so] ful R.

- Asked why he was taciturn, he answered that silence had never done him harm. He axed was among gret audience,
Whi he was soleyn off his daliaunce:
His answeere was, that neuer for silence
Thoruh litil spekyng he felte no greuaunce. 6220
Spech onavised causeth repentaunce;
And rakil tungen, for lak off refreynyng,
To many a man hath be ful gret hyndryng.
- Diogenes also was a true heir of Poverty. He lived in a litte tun which he turned about against the sun's rays. Diogenes, trewe heir and next allied 6224
To wilful pouert be iust enheritaunce, —
For al richesse he pleynli hath diffied,
It was to hym so gret[e] encumbrance
With worldli tresour to haue* alliaunce. 6228
His duellyng made withynne a litil tunne,
Which turned a-boute with concours off the sunne,
Hymself refresshyng with hete off Phebus
bemys; [p.77]
- When king Alexander visited him, For he was content, God wot, with ful lite. 6232
Kyng Alisaundre, that conquered rewmys,
Cam ridyng doun, & gan hymself delite
This philisophre to seen and visite,
Hymself sequestred sool from al the pres, 6236
And cam alone to seen Diogenes.
- and offered him great treasure, he said, "pray don't take from me that which you cannot give." Proffred to* hym gret richesse & tresour,
Bad hym aske what thyng that he wolde,
That myhte hym plese or doon to hym socour; 6240
But off al that, he nothyng ne tolde,
But praied hym ful lowli, that he sholde
Nat drawe from hym þat thyng, ageyn al riht,
Which for to yiue lay nat in his myht. 6244
- "You have no lordship over the sun, and your shadow keeps his rays from me." "What thyng is that?" quod Alisaundre ageyn,
"I ha[ue] be conquest al ertheli tresour wonne."
The philisophre seide he spak in veyn,
"Thou hast," quod he, "no lordshap off the sonne. 6248
Thi shadwe lettith his bemys fro my tonne;

6224. next] *om.* R.

6227. To him it was J, P, H 5 — an encombrance R.

6228. haue] hauen B.

6231. hete] the heete H — hete off Phebus bemys] *with* the sunne beemys R.

6235. to visite R. 6236. sequestred] requestrid R.

6238. to] vnto B, R, J, P, H 5. 6241. ne] no R.

6242. sholde] wolde H.

6248. off] on R. 6249. lettist R.

And sithe thou hast no power off his liht,
I pray the freendli, forbarre me nat his siht."

Thouh Alisaundre was myhti off puissaunce, 6252 Although
And al the world[e] hadde in his demeyne, Alexander was
Yit was his resoun vnder thobeisaunce mighty, his
Off flesskli lustis fetrid in a cheyne; reason was
For in his persone will was souereyne, fettered by
His resoun bridled be sensualite, sensuality,
Troublyng the fredam off riht & equite. 6256

For where that will hath dominacioun
In a prynce, which sholde sustene riht, 6260 and where will
And parcial fauour oppressith his resoun, has domina-
And trouthes title is bor doun with myht, tion over truth,
And egall doom hath lost his cleer[e] lyht: fame shall
Thouh for a sesoun thei sitte in hih[e] chaieres, 6264 fade.
Ther fame shal fade withynne a fewe yeres.

In this mater mak a comparisoun
Twen Alisaundre and Diogenes: Alexander
The ton endured but a short sesoun, lasted but a
For that he loued werre more than pes; 6268 short season
And for the tother was nat rech[e]les,
But heeld hym content with gifftis off Nature,
Onto gret age his pouert dede endure. 6272

Alisaundre was slay[e]n with poisoun, and died by
In his triumphes whan he dede excell; poison.
But in a tonne that lay ful lowe doun Diogenes lived
Diogenes drank watir off the well. to old age in
And off ther eende the difference to tell, his tun.
Alisaundre with couetise was blent; 6276
The philisophre with lital was content.

Blessid be pouert, that may endure longe, 6280 Blessed be
Maugre the fraude & daunger off Fortune, poverty, a
Where-as kynges & emperour[e]s stronge mean between
In ther estat no while may contune. indigence and
And off all vertues rekned in comune, great wealth.
Tween indigence and gret habundaunce, 6284
Is a good mene content with suffisaunce.

6250. his] the R.

6251. his] my R. 6258. Troublede R.

6264. charis R.

6267. Bitwene R. 6272. a gret R.

6285. Bitwene R — gret] om. R.

There is no assurance in riches; lords do not have everything to please them.

For with gret plente men be nat assurid,
Afftir ther lust alway to lyue in ese; 6288
And thouth that men gret tresour han recurid,
With ther richesse thei feele many disese:
Lordis ha[ue] nat all thyng that may hem plese;
But hertili ioie, philisophres expresse, 6292
Is grettest tresour tween pouert & richesse.

Diogenes lived longer than Priam,

For this chapitle sheweth a figure,
A maner liknesse and demonstracioun,
How Diogenes lengere dede endure 6296
Than myhti Priam or kyng Lamedoun:
Texemplefie, in conclusioun,
Ther is mor trust in vertuous symplesse,
Than in presumyng off vicious fals richesse. 6300

and Paris' and Helen's misconduct brought all Troy to destruction.

For thauoutrie off Paris and Heleyne
Brouhte al Troye to destruccioun;
Pride & luxure were also menys tweyne
Whi Grekis leide a siege to the toun, 6304
And fynal cause off ther confusioun,
To outhter parti losse off many a man,
The ground conceyued whi first the werre gan.

¶ Lenvoye.

Priam fell from riches to poverty, from kingly honour to wretchedness,

THIS tragedie pitous & lamentable 6308
And dolerous to writen & expresse,
That worthi Priam, of kynges most notable,
Was falle in pouert from* his gret richesse,
Fro kyngli honour into wrechidnesse, 6312
Fro sceptre & crowne, & from his regalie
To myschieff brouht thoruh fals auoutrie.

Hector was slain,

Was nat Fortune froward and deceyuable [p. 78]
For to suffre bi her doubilnesse, 6316
And bi hir cours, which euer is variable,
That worthi Ector, flour off hih prowesse,
Sholde onwarli, most famous off noblesse,
Be slayn allas, cheeff stok off cheualrie, 6320
For a quarell off fals auoutrie?

6288. ther lust] lust of hem R.

6292. doth expresse R. 6293. bi twene R.

6301. thauoutrie] the Auarice R. 6304. to] to fore R.

6306. a] om. R. 6307. began R. 6309. &] or R.

6311. from] for B, for al H, J, H 5.

6312. kyngli] knyhtly R. 6316. suffre] suffre hir R.

Agamenoun coumptid incomparable
 Among Grekis for trouthe & rihtwisnesse,
 To gouerne most glorious and hable, — 6324
 Withynne his paleis, the story berth wisesse,
 His wiff Clymestra thoruh hir cursidnesse
 Assentid was to moordre hym off envie,
 For thoccasioun off fals auoutrie. 6328
 Ye noble pryncis, conceyueth how chaungable
 Is worldli honour thoruh onstedfastnesse!
 Seeth off kyng Pryam the glori was onstable;
 Fix in your mynde this mateer doth inpresse, 6332
 And your corages knyhtli doth vp dresse,
 Ageyn all titles holdeth chaumpartie
 Which appertene to fals auoutrie.

Agamemnon
 murdered, and
 all through
 adultery.

Princes, resist
 all things that
 appertain to
 adultery.

[Off mighty Sampson whiche tolde his counsaile
 to Dalida wherby he was deceived.]¹

WHO was mor myhti or strong than Samp-
 son? 6336
 Non mor delyuer, þe Bible berth wisesse:
 Withoute wepne he slouh a fers leoun,
 And for his enmyes to hym dede expresse
 His vnkouth problem, anon he gan hym dresse 6340
 Geyn Philistes, and slouh off hem thretti,
 To paie his promys spoiled hem bi and bi.
 His problem was, the text thus rehersyng,
 Afftir the lettir in veray sothfastnesse: 6344
 “ Ther cam out mete off a thyng etyng,
 And fro the stronge ther wente out suetnesse.”
 But his wiff, off froward doubilnesse,
 Which euer wrouhte to his disauail, 6348
 Off worthi Sampson tolde the counsaile:
 “ What is mor strong than is a leoun,
 Or mor soote than hony in tastyng?” —
 But women haue* this condicioun, 6352
 Off secre thynges whan thei haue knowlechyng,
 Thei bollyn inward, ther hertis ay fretyng:
 Outher thei musten deien or discure,
 So brotil is off custum ther nature. 6356

Samson un-
 armed slew a
 lion and made
 a riddle on his
 exploit:

“Out of the
 eater came
 meat, sweet-
 ness out of the
 strong.”

But his wife
 disclosed the
 answer,
 (women must
 die if they
 cannot tell
 secrets).

6322. counted R. 6337. Non] Nor H — Bible] story H.
 6341. Ayens R. 6352. haue] han B, R.
 6354. boyllyng inwardis R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 33 recto.

It was, that
bees made
honey in the
head of the
dead lion.

This was the cas: the leoun that was ded,
Ageyn the sonne gapyng lay vpriht;
A swarm off been entred in his hed,
Off whom ther cam hony anon riht. 6360
And whan Sampson theroff hadde a siht,
He fantasied in his opynyoun
Ful secreli this proposicioun,

Samson's wife
whedded it out
of him,

As ye han herd, and gan it fourth purpose, 6364
That Philistes to hym it sholde expowne,
Vnder a peyne the trouthe to hym onclose.
But with his wiff thei preueli gan rowne;
And she on Sampson gan compleyne & frowne, 6368
And feynyngli so longe vpon hym weepe,
That he nat coude his counsail from hir keepe.

and then told
the Philistines.
A plague on
weeping wives
who cannot
hold their
tongues!

Which whan she kneuh, she made no tarieng,
But pleyn and hool she gan it to declare. 6372
Such double trust is in ther wepyng;
To keepe ther tunges wommen can nat spare.
Such wepyng wyues, euel mut thei fare!
And all husbondis, I pray God yiue hem sorwe, 6376
That to hem tell ther counseil eue or morwe.

"My calf told
you," said
Samson. Al-
though Samson
was very
strong, he was
rather afraid of
his wife.

She told hem hool, she tolde it hem nat halff;
And Sampson thanne gan vpon hem smyle,
" Yiff ye nat hadde herd it in my calff, 6380
Ye sholde nat a founde it a gret while."
Who may be seur, wher women list begile! —
Thouh bookis Sampson off strengthe so comende,
Yit durste he nat ageyn his wiff offende. 6384

He tied the
tails of foxes
to firebrands,
and set them
running in the
Philistines'
vineyards.

This myhti Sampson dede also his peyne,
Thre hundred foxis onys that he fond,
He took her tailes, knet hem tweyne & tweyne, 6388
And amyd euerich he sette a feer-brond;
And as thei ran in Philistes lond,
So furiousli vp and doun thei wente,
That thei her frutis & ther vynes brente.

He killed a
thousand men
with the jaw-
bone of an ass,

Eek be tresoun whan he was onys bounde 6392
With newe cordis as he lay and sleep,
Ther cam thre thousand, which that Sampson founde,

6363. secreli] sikirly R. 6368. on] in R.

6377. eue] euen R, even H — or] & H.

6380. ye] she R — it] om. R, H, P.

6389. ran] ronne H. 6391. frute H. 6392. Eek] Also R.

Tamoordred hym, or that he took keep:
 He brak his bondis, and vp anon he leep, 6396
 Off an asse [he] cauhte a chaule-bon,
 And a thousand he slouh off hem anon.
 He gan to feynthe & hadde a sodeyn lust [p. 79] from which he
 For to drynke, fadid face and cheer; 6400 afterwards
 And God sente hym to staunche with his thrust drank clear
 From thassis toth watir cristal cleer, water.
 Which that sprang out large as a ryuer,
 Refresshid his sperit, which afforn gan dull, 6404
 Til that he hadde off watir drunke his full.
 Afttir he wente to Gazam the cite,
 Mong all his enmyes, that were off gret myht,
 To his plesaunce where he dede see 6408 And he went
 A ful fair woman, lay with hire al nyht, he visited a
 And on the morwe, longe or it was lyht, harlot and
 Mauge the wach, vpon his shuldres squar carried off the
 The gatis stronge vp to an hill he bar. 6412 town gates.
 And in a vale* which callid was Soret Delilah lived in
 Ful hoote he loued Dalida the faire, the vale of
 On whom his herte was ful sore set, Sorek.
 She koude hir feyne so meek & debonaire, 6416
 Make hym such cheer whan that hym list repaire.
 But I dar calle hir Dalida the double,
 Cheeff roote & cause off al his mortal trouble.
 He neuer drank wynes whiht nor red, 6420 Samson never
 Off Nazarees such is the goueraunce; drank wine or
 Rasour nor sheer touchid neuer his hed, cut his hair.
 For in long growyng stondeth ther plesaunce.
 And this Sampson, most myhti off substaunce, 6424
 Hadde al his force be influence off heuene,
 B[y] heris wexyng, that were in noumbre seuene.
 It was ful secre in euery manys siht,
 Among peepel told for an vnkouth thyng, 6428 But Delilah
 Wheroff Sampson hadde so gret myht, found out the
 Outward shewed bi force off his werkyng, secret of his
 But Dalida with hir flateryng strength.

6395. To amoordre R. 6399. began R. 6403. that] *om.* R.
 6405. Gazon R. 6407. Amonge R. 6408. that he R.
 6409. ful] *om.* H. 6410. or] er H. 6411. wach] wachis R.
 6412. vp to] vpon H. 6413. vale] valei B — was] is R.
 6415. On] In R. 6421. such] which R.
 6424. substaunce] puyssaunce H. 6427. ful] *om.* R.
 6430. werkyng] wrytyng R.

- Wolde neuer stynte, enqueryng euer among, 6432
 Til that she kneuh wherbi he was so strong.
- Although fair of face, she
 was like a snake hiding
 under flowers. She lich a serpent daryng vnder flourés,
 Or lik a werm that wrotith on a tre,
 Or lich an addere off manyfold colourés, 6436
 Riht fressh apperyng and fair vpon to see:
 For shrowdid was hir mutabilite
 With lowliheed[e] and a fair pretense
 Off trewe menyng vnder fals apparence. 6440
- He was honest and faithful;
 she was otherwise, and wore
 many colours, He mente trouthe, & she was variable,
 He was feithful, and she was ontrewé,
 He was stedfast, and she was onstable,
 His trust ay oon; she loued thynges newe: 6444
 She wered colourés off many dyuers hewe,
 In stede off bleu, which stedfast is and cleene;
 She loued chaunges off many dyuers greene.
- But to the purpos for to condescende, 6448
 Whan she off Sampson kneuh al the preuite,
 Hir falsheed shortli for to comprehende,
 She made hym slepe ful sofftli on hir kne;
 And a sharp rasour afftir that took she, 6452
 Shoof off his her, large and off gret lengthe,
 Wherbi, allas, he loste al his strengthe.
- and shaved off his hair. Damage is erthe is non so greuouus,
 As an enemy which that is secre, 6456
 Nor pestilence non so pereilous
 As falsnesse where he is preue,
 And speciali in femynyte;
 For yiff wyues be founden variable, 6460
 Wher shal husbondis fynden other stable?
- Nothing is worse than a
 secret enemy, especially if it
 be onc's own wife. Thus Sampson was be Dalida deceyued,
 She coude so weel flatre, forge and feyne, —
 Which Philistes, whan thei ha[ue] conceyued, 6464
 Onwarli bond hym in a myhti cheyne,
 Cast hym in prisoun, put out his eyen tweyne,
 And off despiht, afftir, as I fynde,
 At ther queernys maad hym for to grynde. 6468
6436. eddre R.
 6438. shrowdid] froward R.
 6454. his] his gret R. 6457. Nor] Ne R. 6458. he] it R.
 6464. whan] whan þat H.
 6467. off despiht afftir] aftir of despite wryten R.
 6468. ther] the R — maad] thei made R.

Thei made a feste statli and solempne,
 Whan thei hadde al this tresoun wrouht;
 And to rebuke hym, scorne hym & coudempne,
 Blynde Sampson was afor hem brouht: 6472
 Which thyng ful sore greued hym in his thouht,
 Caste he wolde in his preue mynde
 Tauenge his blyndnesse sum maner weie fynde.
 And whan he hadde thus bethouht hym longe, 6476
 He made a child hym preueli to leede
 To tweyne postis, large, squar and stronge,
 Enbraced hem, or any man took heede,
 And gan to shake hem, withoute feer or dreede, 6480
 So sturdili among his fomen all,
 That the temple is vpon hem fall.
 Thus he was auengid on his foon, [p. 80]
 Which that falsli dede ageyn hym stryue, 6484
 Slouh in his deieng, God wot, many on
 Mo than he dede euer afforn his lyue.
 And he was also, the date to descryue,
 In Israel, the Bible is myn auctour, 6488
 Twenti yeer ther iuge and gouernour.

Afterwards
they made
mock of
him at a
festival in
their temple,

but he upset
the pillars and
brought the
temple down
on their heads.

Thus dying he
slew more men
than he ever
did before in
his life.

[Lenvoy.]

THIS tragedie yeueth in euidence
 To whom men shal ther counseil out discure;
 For rakell tunges, for lak off prouidence, 6492
 Ha[ue] do gret harm to many a creature:
 Whan harm is doon, ful hard is to recure.
 Beth war be Sampson, *your* counsail weel to keepe,
 Thouh Dalida compleyne, crie and weepe. 6496
 Whilom Sampson, for manhod & prudence,
 Hadde Israel in gouernaunce and cure,
 Daunted leouns thoruh his magnyficence,
 Made on a thousand a disconfiture; 6500
 But his moste pereilous auenture,
 Was whan he lay with Dalida to slepe,
 Which falsli coude compleyne, crie and weepe.
 Ye noble Pryncis, conceyueth the sentence 6504
 Off this story, remembrid in scripture,
 How that Sampson off wilful negligence

This tragedy
shews that men
ought not to
tell their
secrets.

Beware of
Delilahs.

Princes, keep
your secrets;
let Delilah
complain and
weep if she
must.

6476. Whan] *om.* H. 6477. to] *om.* R. 6480. bi gan R.

6485. ful many R. 6486. euer he did R.

6490. in] an R. 6497. Whilom] *Sumtyme* R.

Was shaue & shorn, diffacid his figure;
 Keep your conceitis vnder couerture, 6508
 Suffre no nyhtwerm withynne your counsail kreepe,
 Thouh Dalida compleyne, crie and weepe!

A chapitle of Bochas discryuyng þe malis of wom-
 men.¹

My author
 Bochas was
 pleased to de-
 scribe the
 malice of
 women, and I
 don't know
 whether it was
 commendable
 of him or not.

MYN auctour Bochas reioished in his lyue,
 (I dar nat seyn, wher it was comendable) 6512
 Off these women the malice to descryue
 Generali, and writ — it is no fable —
 Off ther nature how thei be variable,
 And how ther malice best be euidence 6516
 Is knowe to hem that haue experience.

He said that
 they always
 try to keep
 men in subjec-
 tion and seek
 to replace by
 art what nature
 has denied
 them.

Thei can afforce hem, alday men may see,
 Be synguler fredam and dominacioun
 Ouer men to ha[ue]n souereynte, 6520
 And keepe hem lowe vnder subieccioun.
 Ful* sore laboure in ther opynyoun,
 Bi sotil crafft that thyng to recure,
 Which is to hem denyed off Nature. 6524

They massage
 their yellow,
 wrinkled faces

Bochas affermeth, & halt it for no tale,
 Yiff thei wante fresshnesse off colour,
 And han ther face iawne, swart & pale,
 Anon thei doon ther dilligent labour 6528
 In such a neede to helpe and do socour,
 Ther reuelid skyn abrod to drawe & streyne,
 Froward frounces to make hem smothe & pleyne.

and apply oint-
 ments to make
 their cheeks look
 red, although
 there is no rose.

Yiff no rednesse in ther chekis be, 6532
 Nor no lelies delectable and white,
 Than thei take, tencrece ther beute,
 Such oynementis as may most delite;
 Wher Kynde faileth the surplusage tacquite, 6536
 Thei can be crafft so for hemsilff dispose,
 Shewe rednesse thouh ther be no rose.

They use hot
 spices and roots
 to clear their
 complexion, and
 if their bosoms
 are too flat or
 too full,

And for to shewe ther face cleer and briht,
 With hooite spices and oynementis soote 6540
 Thei can be crafft countirfete a-riht,

6510. Thouh that R. 6516. best] kest R.
 6522. Ful] And B, J, H 5. 6527. face] faces R, H, P, R 3.
 6529. do] to R. 6533. delytable R.

¹ vommen B — Same heading in J, leaf 34 b.

Take in such cas many an holsum roote:
 Wher Kynde faileth, cunnyng can do boote, —
 Yiff ther brestis vp to hie hem dresse, 6544
 Thei can ful weel thenbosyng doun repress.

And yiff thei been to soffte or to tendre, they fashion them to their liking. They reduce their flesh by swallowing strong drugs, and whatever is crooked they cause to appear straight.
 Thei ha[ue] cunnyng to make hem hard & rounde.
 Ther corsifnesse thei can eek make sclendre 6548
 With poynant sausis that been in phesik founde;
 Ther sotil wittis in sleihtis so habounde,
 Thyng that is courbid or wrong in mennys siht
 To make it seeme as it wente vpriht. 6552

Thei han strictories to make ther skyn to shyne, They use glair to make their skin shine, alkalis to bleach their hair, fumigations for disagreeable exhalations.
 Wrouht subtili off gomes & off glaire;
 Crafftli lies to die ther her citryne,
 Distillid watres, to make hem seeme faire, 6556
 Fumygaciouns to rectefie the aiere,
 Stomachers and fressh confecciouns
 To repress fals exallaciouns.

Off alle these thynges Bochas hath most despiht, [p. 81] 6560
 Whan these vekkes, ferre Ironne in age,
 Withynne hemsilff han veynglori and deliht
 For to farce and poppe ther visage,
 Lich a[s] peyntour[s] on an old ymage 6564
 Leyn ther* colourës, riche and fressh off hewe,
 Wermfrete stokkes to make hem seeme newe.

Ther slak[ke] skyn be craft abrod is streynyd, They stretch their loose skin till it resembles an orange, hang their necks with gold and gems, use citrinade when their faces are flushed,
 Lik an orange fro the galei brouht; 6568
 Riche relikes aboute ther neckkis* cheynyd,
 Gold vpon gold, with perle & stonys wrouht.
 And that ther colour outward appeire nouht
 With wynd or sonne, which sholde hem steyne or
 fade, 6572
 For onkynde heetis thei vse citrynade.

6543. can] may R. 6546. And] om. R — been] om. R.

6548. corsiousnesse R — eek] also R.

6549. punyaunt sawis R.

6550, 51 are transposed in R. 6553. 2nd to] om. R.

6555. die] diht R. 6556. watir R.

6564. as peyntours] a peyntour R, J, H 5.

6565. Leyn ther] Leith his B, R, J, H 5, They lein P, Thei lay R 3.

6569. nekkis] necke is B, nekke is J, H 5, necke is P.

6570. perlys R. 6571. appeire] appereth R.

and are always
wanting new
devices to
make them-
selves look like
Venus.

What sholde I write al ther vnkouth desires,
Sumtyme froward, sumtyme debonaire;
Ymagynyng sundry fressh attires, 6576
Contreued off newe many thousand paire;
Dyuers deuyses to make hem seeme faire
In ther apport, be countirfet liknesse
For to rassemble Venus the goddessse. 6580

They must
have a new
gown every day,
and their hearts
bleed if one is
better dressed
than another.
Each considers
herself fairest
as she pries in
her mirror.

Off on deuys thei holde hem nat appaied,
Thei mut ech day han a straunge weede;
Yiff any be than othir bet* arraied,
Off froward gruchchyng thei feele ther herte
bleede: 6584
For euerich thynkith veraili in deede,
Amorwe prieng withynne a merour briht,
For to be fairest in hir owen siht.

They either
make eyes at
men or pretend
shyness, and
always get
what they want.

Thei can ther eyen and ther lookis dresse 6588
To drawe folk be sleihtis to ther lure;
And sumwhile bi ther frowardnesse
And feyned daunger, thei can off men recure
What-euer thei list, such is ther auenture. 6592
Ageyn whos sleihtis force nor prudence
May nat auaille to make resistance.

Tears, flattery
and feigned ill-
ness bring many
a man in their
snare.

With constreynt wepyng & forgid flaterie,
Subtil spech[e] farcid with plesaunce, 6596
And many fals dissemelid maladie —
Thouh in ther hertis thei feele no greuauce —
And with ther couert sobre daliaunce,
Thouh vndirnethe the double serpent dare, 6600
Ful many a man thei ha[ue] brouht in ther snare.

Their sweetness
is full of mor-
tality, their
privilege is to
daunt and opp-
ress whatever
they choose.

O suet[e]nesse ful off mortalite!
Serpentyne with a plesaunt visage!
Onstable ioie ful off aduersite; 6604
O most chaungable off herte & off corage!
In thi desirs hauyng this auauntage,
What-euer thou list to daunten and oppresse, —
Such is thi fraunchise, Bochas berth wittenesse. 6608

6577. many a R. 6580. to Venus R.

6583. bet than othir B, R, J.

6589. folkis R.

6590. sumtyme R. 6593. nor] ne R.

6594. to] forto R. 6597. many a R.

- Off nature thei can in many wise
 Off myhti geautis the power weel aslake:
 What wit off man can compass* or devise,
 Ther slehti wilis dar it vndertake, 6612
 And, yiff hem list, theroff an eende make.
 Fro this conceit, who-so that discorde,
 A thousand stories the reuers can recorde.*
- Remembre first, how Hercules most strong 6616
 Was brouht be women to his destruccioun;
 The queen Clymestra dede also gret wrong
 To moordre hir lord kyng Agamenoun.
 Dalida betraished also Sampsoun; 6620
 Amphiorax sanc doun deepe into hell,
 Because his wiff his counsail dede out tell.
- It nedith nat to make mencioun,
 Thouh Phillis deide thoruh inpacience 6624
 Off longe abidyng off hir Demephoun,
 Nor how that Nisus, kyng off Magarence,
 Was bi his douhtres cursid violence
 Onwarli moordred, in Ouide it is told, 6628
 Whan from his hed she stal the her off gold.
- Bochas rehersith off wyues many on,
 Which in ther werkyng wer ful contrarious;
 But among all, he writith ther was on, 6632
 Queen off Assirie and wiff to kyng Nynus,
 And be discent douhter to Neptunus,
 Semiramis callid in hir daies,
 Which off all men wolde make assaies. 6636
- She nouthur spared straunger nor kynreede;
 Hir owne sone was nat set a-side,
 But with hym hadde knowlechyng in deede,
 Off which the sclauandre wente abrod ful wide. 6640
 For with on man she koude nat a-bide,
 Such a fals lust was vpon hir fall,
 In hir corage to haue a-do with all.

To all that
 the wit of man
 can devise they
 are ready to
 apply their
 wiles.

Remember
 how Hercules,
 Agamemnon,
 Samson, and
 many more
 men were
 brought to
 destruction
 by women.

Nor is the
 scale turned
 by Phyllis's
 constancy;
 think of
 Scylla, who
 murdered
 her father,

and
 Semiramis,
 Ninus's
 scandalous
 wife.

who had to do
 with all men,
 even with her
 own son.

6610. the] ther R. 6611. compassen B.
 6613. an ende ther of make R. 6615. recorde] accorde B, J.
 6616. first] om. R. 6618. Chymestra R.
 6621. deepe] om H— depe down to R. 6624. Impacience H.
 6625. Off] For R. 6626. Nor] Nethir R— Margarence R.
 6630. rehersith] writith H. 6636. make] take R.
 6637. nor] no R. 6641. koude] myht H.
 4642. vpon] on R.

But it wearies
me to rehearse
these things.
It is not right
to condemn all
women because
one or two
were at fault.

And treu[e]li it doth my witt appall [p. 82] 6644
Off this mateer to make rehersaile;
It is no resoun tatwiten women all,
Thouh on or too whilom dede faile.
It sittith nat, nor it may nat auaille, 6648
Hem to rebuke that parfit been & goode,
Ferr out off ioynt thouh sum other stoode.

Rubies and
sapphires are
not the less
beautiful be-
cause there are
counterfeits,

The riche rube nor the saphir ynde 6652
Be nat appeired off ther fressh beute,
Thouh among stonys men countirfetis fynde;
And semblabli, thouh summe women be
Nat weel gouerned afftir ther degre,
It nat diffaceth nor doth no violence 6656
To hem that neuer dede in ther liff offence.

nor are lilies
and roses the
less sweet
though briars
and crooked
sticks grow
among them.

The white lelie nor the holsum rose,
Nor violettis spred on bankis thikke,
Ther suet[e]nesse, which outward thei onclose, 6660
Is nat appeired with no weedis wikke;
And thouh that breris, and many crokid stykke
Grove in gardyns among the floures faire,
Thei may the vertu off herbis nat appaire. 6664

We should
prize virtuous
women the
more because
there are also
vicious ones.

And I dar seyn, that women vertuous
Been in the[r] vertu off price mor comendable,
That ther be summe reknyd vicious,
And off ther lyuyng founde also onstable. 6668
Goode women auhte nat be partable
Off ther trespas nor ther wikked deede,
But mor comendid for ther womanheede.

What was
Scylla to Esther
or Clytemnestra
to Alceste?

What is appeired off Hester the meeknesse, 6672
Thouh that Scilla was sturdi & vengable?
Nor off Alceste the parfit stedfastnesse
Is nat eclipsed, but mor acceptable,
Thouh Clymestra was founde variable; — 6676
Lik as whan cloudis ther blaknesse doun declyne,
Phebus mor cleer doth with his bemys shyne.

6646. tatwiten] to edwiten R — women] *om.* R.

6653. among] ageyn H.

6660. ou ward thei] thei vnward R, thei outward H.

6661. Is] It is R. 6662. many a R.

6666. Been] Seen R.

6670. nor] ne of R. 6674. Alciste R.

6676. Thouh] Thowh that R — Clytemestra H, Clitemnestra P.

6678. with his beemys doth R.

- Ful many on ha[ue] cleene been al ther lyue,
 Ondefouled kept ther virgynyte; 6680 Many have lived all their lives in chastity: what if others have trespassed?
- And summe coude ageyn alle vices stryue
 Hem to conserue in parfit chastite,
 Deuoid off chaung and mutabilite:
 Thouh sum other ha[ue] therageyn trespacid, 6684
 The laude off hem is therwith nat diffacid.
- And who that euer off malice list accuse
 These celi women touchyng variaunce,
 Lat hem remembre, and in ther wittis muse, 6688
 Men be nat ay stable in ther constaunce.
 In this world heer is no perseueraunce;
 Chaung is ay founde in men & women bothe,
 On outhar parti, be thei neuer so wrothe. 6692
- No man sholde the vertuous atwite
 In stede off hym that dede the trespac;e;
 Nor for a theeff a trewe man endite,
 Nor for the gilti an innocent manace. 6696
 Goode and wikked abide in eueri place;
 Ther price, ther lak, lat hem be reseruyd
 To outhar parti as thei han disseruyd.
- Thouh Iohn Bochas in his opynyoun 6700
 Ageyn[es] women list a processe make,
 Thei that be goode off condicioun
 Sholde ageyn hym no maner quarel take,
 But lihtli passe, and ther sleuys shake; 6704
 For ageyn goode myn auctour* nothyng made,
 Who can conceyue theeffect off this balade.

¶ **Thexcus of Bochas for his vriting ageyn mys-
 govern[ed] vommen in stede of lenvoye.¹**

- Y**E women all, that shal beholde & see
 This chapitle and the processe reede, — 6708
 Ye that be goode founde in your degre,
 And vertuous bothe in thouht and deede,
 What Bochas sei[e]th, tak[e] ye noon heede;

6679. cleene] cleer H. 6683. and] & of R. 6688. in] om. R.

6691. in] on H. 6698. lat hem be] lete be R.

6705. myn auctour] he B, H, J, R, P, H 5.

6708. the] this R. 6709. founde] stonde R.

6710. bothe] beeth R — in dede R. 6711. ye] ther of R.

¹ *The same heading in J.* "This balad declareth that no goode woman ouhte off riht to take A quarell ayens Iohn Bochas þowh he write a processe ayens hem þat he mys gouerned." MS. R. leaf 41 recto.

For his writyng, yiff it be discernyd, 6712
Is nat ageyn hem that be weel gouernyd.

this chapter
does not con-
cern well-be-
haved women
at all.

For thouh it fall that oon, or too, or three
Ha[ue] doon amyse, as therfore God forbeede
That other women which stable & feithful be 6716
Sholde be atwited off ther ongoodliheede,
But mor comendid for ther womanheede:
For this scripture, yiff it be concernyd,
Is ageyn hem that be nat weel gouernyd. 6720

A galled jade
winces at a
touch, but good
women have no
need to be
sensitive.

A gallid hors, the* sooth yff ye list see, [p. 83]
Who touchith hym, boweth his bak for dreede;
And who is knowe ontrewre in his cuntre,
Shrynkith his hornis whan men speke of falsheede. 6724
But goode women ha[ue] ful litil neede
To gruchch or frowne whan the trouthe is lernyd,
T[h]ouh ther be summe which be nat weel gouernyd.

It is the bad
ones who are
scolded.

Off Dalida and queen Pasiphe, 6728
Thouh doubilnesse dede ther bridil leede,
Yit off Lucrece and Penelope
The noble fame abrood doth shyne and spreede:
Out off good corn men may sum darnel weede, 6732
Women rebuke, in ther diffautis wernyd,*
And nat touche hem that be weel gouernyd.

[Off mighti pirrus that slouh pollicene which for his
pride and auoutrye deied in pouerte/ slayn atte
last bi Horestes.]¹

Among a com-
pany of weep-
ing princes,

BOCHAS musyng in his remembraunce,
And considred in his fantasie 6736
The onseur trust off worldli variaunce,
Off men & women the chaung and the folie,
The same tyme he sauh a cumpanye

6713. ayens R. 6716. which] which þat R — feithfull & stable H.

6720. ayens R.

6721. the] this veray B — the sooth yff ye list see] this verrey soth in deede H, þis is verrey sothe in R.

6724. his] om. R. 6727. which] þat H. 6728. and] & of R. 6733. rebuke] rebukid H, rebuked R 3 — in] of H — diffautis] defaute R — wernyd] quernyd B, J, quernyde R, wernyd H.

6737. off] & R.

¹MS. J. leaf 35 recto.

- Off myhti pryncis, ful pitousli wepyng, 6740
 To hym appeere ther fortune compleynyng.
- Among other that put hemsilff in pres,
 Off myhti Pirrus first he hadde a siht,
 That was the sone off worthi Achilles, 6744
 Among Grekis the moste famous knyht,
 Most comendid off manhod & off myht,
 Sone and next heir, [as] bookis specefie,
 Off Pelleus kyng off Thesalie. 6748
- This Achilles, ful manli off his herte,
 Hurt off Ector, and his wounde greene,
 Slouh Ector afftir or he dede aduerte.
 The which Achilles, for loue off Polliceene, 6752
 Bi compassyng off Eccuba the queene,
 Vnder trete this Grekis champeoun
 Was slayn off Paris withynne Troie toun.
- Whos deth tauenge Pirrus in his teene, 6756
 Furiousli, with face ded and pale,
 Slouh afftirward the said[e] Polliceene,
 And djsmembrid al on pecis smale,
 Which for to heere is a pitous tale, 6760
 That a knyht so vengable was in deede
 To slen a maide, quakyng in hir dreede.
- He koude for ire on hir no merci haue;
 But with his suerd, most furious & wood, 6764
 Merciles vpon his fadres graue,
 Lik a tirant he shadde hir chast[e] blood.
 The deede horrible diffacid his knythod,
 That to this day the sclaudre & the diffame 6768
 Be newe report reboundeth on his name.
- Poetis seyn, and speciali Ouide
 Writ, whan Grekis fro Troie sholde saile,
 How ther shippis ban anker* dede ride, 6772
 Off ther purpos which longe made hem faile.
 But in this while, he maketh rehersaile,
 Out off therthe, manacyng off cheerε,
 Off Achilles an ymage dede appeereε. 6776

Pyrrhus, son
 of Achilles,
 appeared to
 Bochas.

Achilles slew
 Hector, and
 Paris Achilles,
 when he came
 to Troy for
 love of Polyx-
 ena, whom
 Pyrrhus after-
 wards dismem-
 bered

on his father's
 grave, a hor-
 rible deed.

Poets say that
 Achilles ap-
 peared to the
 Greeks before
 they sailed
 from Troy,

6741. appeere] appered R. 6742. in] om. R.

6747. as] om. H. 6759. al] hir R.

6763. for ire] om. R. 6767. The] þat H.

6768. diffame] fame R.

6772. ban anker] bananker B, an hankre R, bi an anker J,
 P, H 5.

- demanding
that they make
a sacrifice of
Polyxena to
atone for his
murder.
- To Grekis saide with a dedli face,
"I feele weel myn honour & my glorie,*
And my noblesse ful lihtli foorth dooth pace,
Onkynde peeple, out of your memorie, 6780
Which bi me hadde your conquest & victorie.
Your deuer doth Polliceene to take,
And on my graue a sacrefise to make.
- How she died
is told in Ovid.
- With hir blood looke ye spare nouht 6784
To sprynge it round aboute my sepulture;
Thus blood for blood with vengauunce shal be bouht,
And for my deth, the deth she mut endure."
And hool the maner off this auenture, 6788
And how she deied in hir maydenheed,
Methamorphoseos, the processe ye may reed.
- Pyrrhus was
always blood-
thirsty; he slew
Priam and
carried off
Andromache.
- In hasti vengauunce set was al his ioie,
With thrust onstaunchid Troian blood to sheede; 6792
He slouh Priam, the worthi kyng off Troie,
And into Grece with hym he dede leede
Andromecha* — the story ye may reede —
Weddid hir, and afftir in certeyne 6796
Be hym she hadde worthi sonys tweyne.
- He also became
a pirate, for-
sook Androm-
ache and took
Hermione,
- But in repariung hom to his cuntre,
As Eolus dede his shippis dryue,
I fynde he was a pirat off the se; 6800
And into Grece whan he dede aryue,
Fortune onwarli gan ageyn hym stryue:
Forsook his wiff, leet hir lyue alone,
Took a-nother callid Hermyone. 6804
- Orestes' wife,
by force. The
reward of
adultery is
always sudden
death or mis-
fortune.
- Which was that tyme ioyned in mariage [p. 84]
To Horestes, sone off Agamenoun;
And he, alas, off wilful louys rage,
Took hir be force to his possessioun. 6808
But off auoutrie folwith this guerdoun,
Sodeyn deth, pouerte or shame,
Open disclaundre, gret myscheeff or diffame.

6778, 80, 81. gloire, memoire, victoire B.

6779. dooth] do H.

6781. your conquest had H. 6787. she] ye R.

6795. Andromecha] Andromada B, J.

6799. Eolus] solus R. 6802. began R.

6809. auoutrie] Aventure R — this] his R.

6811. disclaundre] Sclaundre R.

- Eek in his tyme this Pirrus, as I reede,
 Fill into myscheeff and gret pouerte;
 And with such meyne as he dede leede,
 He was a rouere, and robbed on the se.
 6812 Pyrrhus fell into poverty before he died, and the word pirates derived from his name.
- And as poetis reherse, ye may see,
 Off such robberyng be sclaunder &* diffame
 This woord Pirat off Pirrus took the name.
 6816
- And as the story afftir doth deuise,
 The said Horestes gan secreli espie
 Wher that Pirrus dede sacrefise
 To forn Apollo, that god to magnefie.
 6820 Finally he was slain by Orestes before the altar of Apollo.
- Ful onwarli Horestes off enuie
 Took a sharp suerd or Pirrus coude aduerte
 Wher that he stood, & roof hym thoruh the herte.
 6824
- This was the fyn off Pirrus in substaunce,
 For al his pride and gret presumpcioun.
 Off fals auoutrie folwith this vengauce:
 6828 That was his deserved end; for he was an adulterer.
- Losse off sum membre, pouert or prisoun,
 Or hatful sclaunder bi sum occasioun,
 Or sodeyn deth, shortli in sentence,
 Compleet in Pirrus be ful cleer euidence.
 6832

[Off Machaire and his suster Canace.]¹

- A**FFTIR this Pirrus cam Canace the faire,
 With teres* distillyng from hir eyen tweyne,
 And hir brother, that callid was Machaire;
 And bothe thei gan ful pitousli compleyne,
 6836 After Pyrrhus, Canace and her brother Macareus appeared to Bochas complaining piteously.
- That Fortune gan at hem so disdeyne,
 Hyndryng ther fate be woful auenture
 Touchyng ther loue, which was ageyn nature.
- He was hir brother and hir loue also,
 6840 They loved one another against nature,
 As the story pleynli doth declare;
 And in a bed thei lay eek bothe too,
 Resoun was non whi thei sholde spare:
 But loue that causith wo and eek weelfare,
 6844
 Gan ageyn kynde so straungeli deuise,
 That he hir wombe made sodenli tarise.

6812. Eek] Also R.

6817. &] & be B, R.

6832. MS. R omits lines I. 6833 to II. 749. — Compleet] Complaynt H.

6834. With teres] Teris B (With teres H, R 3, with teares P).

6836. ful] om. J.

¹MS. J. leaf 35 verso.

and she had a
child by him,
which excelled
in beauty.

And fynali, myn auctour berth witnesse,
A child she hadde bi hir owne brother, 6848
Which excellid in fauour and fairnesse;
For lik to hym off beute was non other.
But off ther loue so guyed was the rother,
That Karibdis, tween wyndis ful contraire, 6852
Hath Canace destroied and Machaire.

But when
Eolus, their
father, heard
of it, he almost
went mad for
rage,

For whan ther fadir the maner dede espie
Off ther werkyng, which was so horrible,
For ire almost he fill* in frenesie, 6856
Which for tappese was an impossible;
For the mater was froward & odible:
For which, pleynli, deuoid off al pite,
Vpon ther trespas he wolde auenged be. 6860

and sought to
kill them both.
Macareus fled.
His sister had
no means of

The cause knowe, the fadir anon riht
Caste for ther deth off rigour to prouide;
For which Machaire fledde out off his siht,
And from his face his presence gan to hide. 6864
But, o alas! his suster muste abide,
Merciles, for ther hatful trespace
Suffre deth; ther was non other grace.

escape, and
Eolus sent her
a sharp sword
in token of
death.

First hir fader a sharp suerd to hir sente 6868
In tokne off deth for a remembraunce,
And whan she wiste pleynli what he mente
And conceyued his rigerous ordenaunce,
With hool purpos tobeien his plesaunce, 6872
She gruchchith nat, but lowli off entente
Lich a meek douhter to his desir assente.

Like a meek
daughter she
agreed to die,
but first wrote
a little letter to
her brother.

But or she died she caste for to write
A litil lettre to hir brother deere, 6876
A dedli compleynt compleyne & endite
With pale face and a mortal cheere,
The salt[e] teris from hir eyen cleere,
With pitous sobbyng, fet from hir hertis brynke, 6880
Distillyng douz to tempre with hir ynke.

**The lettre of compleynt of Canace to hir brothir
Macharie.¹**

"You are the
cause of my
sorrow, once
chief source of
my joy.

OUT off hir swouh[e] whan she dede abraide, [p.85]
Knowyng no mene but deth in hir distresse,
To hir brother ful pitousli she saide: 6884

6852, 53. Contrarye, Macharye H. 6856. he fill almost B.
¹ The same heading in MS. J. leaf 36 recto.

"Cause off my sorwe, roote off myn heuynesse,
That whilom were cheeff sours off my gladnesse,
Whan bothe our ioies be will were so disposid,
Vnder o keie our hertis to be enclosid.*

6888

Whilom thou were support and sekirnesse,
Cheeff reioisshyng off my worldli plesaunce;
But now thou art the ground off my siknesse,
Welle off wanhope, off my dedli penaunce,
Which haue off sorwe grettest habundaunce
That euer yit hadde any creature,
Which mut for loue the deth alas endure!

6892

"Alas, I must
endure death
for love!

Thou were whilom my blisse & al my trust,
Souereyn confort my sorwes to appese,
Spryng and well off al myn hertis lust;
And now, alas, cheeff roote off my dise. —
But yiff my deth myht do the any ese,
O brother myn, in remembraunce off tweyne,
Deth shal to me be plesaunce & no peyne.

6896

"But if my
death be of
avail to you,
my brother, it
will be a
pleasure and
no pain.

6900

Mi cruel fader, most onmerciablen,
Ordeyned hath, it needis mut be soo,
In his rigour he is so ontretablen,
Al merciles he will that it be doo, —
That we algate shal deie bothe too.
But I am glad, sithe it may been noon other,
Thou art escapid, my best beloued brother.

6904

"My cruel
father has or-
dained that
both of us
must die, and
I am glad you
escaped.

6908

This is myn eende, I may it nat asterte,
O brother myn, there is no mor to seye,
Lowli besechyng with al myn hool[e] herte
For to remembre speciali I preie,
Yiff it befall my litil sone deie,
That thou maist afftir sum mynde vpon us haue,
Suffre us bothe be buried in o graue.

6912

"And if my
little son also
die, I beg you
not to forget
us.

6916

I holde hym streihtli atwen myn armys tweyne,
Thou and Nature leide on me this charge;
He gilt[e]les with me mut suffre peyne.
And sithe thou art at fredam and at large,
Lat kynd[e]nesse our loue nat so discharge,
But haue a mynde, where-euer that thou be,
Onys a day vpon my child and me.

6920

"Let us both
be buried in
one grave, and
wherever you
may be have a
mind on us
once a year.

6888. enclosid] onclosid B.

6895. allas þe deth H, R 3. 6901. off] of us R 3.

- "It is not just that our young child should suffer; On the and me dependith the trespace 6924
 Touchyng our gilte* and our gret offence;
 But, wellaway, most angelik off face,
 Our yonge child in his pur innocence
 Shal ageyn riht suffre dethis violence, 6928
 Tendre off lymes, God wot, ful gilt[e]les,
 The goodli faire that lith heere specheles.
- he lies still as a lamb, only a heart of steel could do him injury. A mouth he hath, but woordis hath he noone,
 Cannat compleyne, alas, for non outrage, 6932
 Nor* gruchith nat, but lith heer al a-loone,
 Stille as a lamb, most meek off his visage.
 What herte off steel coude doon to hym damage,
 Or suffre hym deie, beholdyng the maneer 6936
 And look benygne off his tweyne eyen cleer?
- "My father, your revenge is too cruel! O thou, my fader, to cruel is thi wreche,
 Hardere off herte than tigre* or leoun,
 To slen a child that lith withoute speche, 6940
 Void off al mercy and remissioun.
 And on his mooder hast no compassioun,
 His youthe considred, with lippis softe as silk,
 Which at my brest lith still & souketh mylk. 6944
- "Was there ever creature who felt more dole than I? Ys any sorwe remembrid be writyng,
 Onto my sorweful sihhes comparable? *
 Or was ther euer creature lyuyng
 That felte off dool a thyng mor lamentable? 6948
 For counfortles and onrecuperable
 Ar thilke hepid sorwes, ful off rage,
 Which han with wo oppressid my corage.
- "My father is a mortal enemy, who seeks our destruction. Rekne all myscheuys in especiall, 6952
 And on my myscheeff remembre & ha[ue] good mynde:
 Mi lord my fadir, is myn enny mortall,
 Experience inouh theroff I fynde;
 For in his pursuit he hath lefft behynde, 6956
 In destruccioun off the, my child and me,
 Routhe and al mercy and fadirli pite.
- "Alas, my brother, that vengeance should come before mercy. And the, my brother, auoidid from his siht,
 Which in no wise his grace maist atteyne, 6960
 Alas that rigour, vengauce & cruel riht

6924. me & the H. 6925. gilte] gile B, J, H.
 6930. that] which H, R 3. 6933. Nor] Nar B.
 6939. tigre] any tigre B, H, J, R 3, H 5, P.
 6946. comparable] incomparable B, J, H 5.
 6952. my myschevis J. 6956. his] this H.
 6961. vengauce Rigour H.

- Sholde a-boue merci be lord &* souereyne!
 But cruelte doth at me so disdeyne,
 That thou, my brother, my child & also I 6964
 Shal deie alas exiled* from al mercy.
- Mi fader whilom, be many sundri signe, [p. 86] "Our father
 Was my socour, my supportacioun, was once be-
 To the and me most gracieux & benygne, 6968 nign and
 Our worldli gladnesse, our consolacioun. gracious to us,
 But loue and Fortune ha[ue] turned up-so-doun but now our
 Our grace, alas, our welfare & our fame, name is spotted
 Hard to recure, so sclaudrid is our name. 6972 with slander,
 which is hard
 to wash away.
- Spot off diffamyng is hard to wasshe away,
 Whan noise and rumour abroad do folk manace;
 To hyndre a man ther may be no delay:
 For hatful fame fleeth ferr in ful short space. 6976
 But off vs tweyne ther is non othir grace
 Sauff onli deth, and afftir deth, alas,
 Eternal sclaudre off vs; thus stant the cas.
- Whom shal we blame, or whom shal we atwite 6980 "Whom shall
 Our gret offence, sithe we may it nat hide? we blame but
 For our excus reportis to respite the god Cupid,
 Mene is ther non, except the god Cupide.
 And thouh that he wolde for vs prouide, 6984
 In this mateer to been our cheeff refuge,
 Poetis seyn he is blynd to been a iuge.
- He is depeynt[e] lich a blynd archer,
 To marke ariht failyng discrecioun, 6988 who is blind
 Holdyng no meseur, noutherr ferr nor neer; where his
 But lik Fortunys disposicioun, arrows strike.
 Al upon happ, void off al resoun,
 As a blynd archer with arwes sharp[e] grounde 6992
 Off auenture yeueth many a mortal wounde.
- At the and me he wrongli dede marke,
 Felli to hyndre our fatal auentures, "He did wrong
 As ferr as Phebus shynyth in his arke, 6996 to aim at us.
 To make us refus to alle creatures,
 Callid us tweyne onto the woful lures
 Off diffame, which will departe neuere,
 Be newe report the noise encresyng euere. 7000

6962. lorde &] ladi B, J, P, H 5, R 3.

6965. exiled alas B, J, H 5, P. 6968. gracious J, P, R 3, H 5.

6992. I grownde H. 6997. us] om. H.

- "Evil report
flies with swift
wings, and
good fame is
hindered by
envy. No
man complains
of his own
faults.
- Odious fame with swift wengis fleeth,
 But al good fame envie doth restreyne;
 Ech man off other the diffautis seeth,
 Yit on his owne no man will compleyne. 7004
 But al the world out crieth on vs t̄weyne,
 Whos hatful ire bi us may nat be queemyd;
 For I mut deie, my fader hath so deemyd.
- "Now I must
take leave of
you for ever.
- Now farweel, brother, to me it doth suffise 7008
 To deie allone for our bothe sake.
 And in my moste feithful humble wise,
 Onto my dethward thouh I tremble & quake,
 Off the for euere now my leue I take. 7012
 And onys a yeer, forget nat, but take heed,
 Mi fatal day this lettre for to reed.
- "Have mind on
me once a
year, wear
black that day
and do not
disdain to let
fall some tears
on my grave."
- So shaltow han on me sum remembraunce,
 Mi name enprentid in thi kalender, 7016
 Bi rehersaile off my dedli greuauance;
 Were blak that day, & mak a doolful cheer.
 And whan thou comest & shalt approche neer
 Mi sepulture, I pray the nat disdeyne 7020
 Vpon my graue summe teris for to reyne."
- Her sorrow was
more for her
child than for
herself, and
- ¶ Wrytyng hir lettir, awappid al* in dreede,
 In hir riht hand hir penne gan to quake;
 And a sharp suerd to make hir herte bleede 7024
 In his lefft hand, hir fader hath hir take.
 And most hir sorwe was for hir childes sake,
 Vpon whos face in hir barm slepyng
 Ful many a teer she wepte in compleynyng. 7028
- with a sword
that her father
placed in her
hand she
pierced her
heart.
- Afftir al this, so as she stood and quook,
 Hir child beholdyng, myd off hir peynes smerte,
 Withoute abood the sharp[e] suerd she took
 And rooff hirselff euene to the herte. 7032
 Hir child fill down, which myht[e] nat asterte,
 Hauyng non helpe to socoure hym nor saue,
 But in hir blood the silff began to bathe.
- Eolus then
commanded
that the child
should be de-
uoured by dogs.
- And thanne hir fader, most cruel off entent, 7036
 Bad that the child sholde anon be take,
 Off cruel houndis in haste for to be rent
 And be deuoured for his mooder sake.
 Off this tragedie thus an eende I make, 7040

7019. shalt] shal H. 7022. al] and B, J. 7024. a] om. H
7025. his] hir H. 7035. But] om. H, R 3.

Processe off which, men may reede and see,
Concludith on myscheeff & furious cruelte.

Remembryng first, as maad is menciouⁿ,
How that Pirrus delited hym in deede, 7044
Whan Troie was brouht to destruccioun,
With cruel suerd[e] Troian blood to sheede,
But of such slauhtr^e, seeth heer the cruel meede,
As riht requereth, bi vnwar violence, 7048
Blood shad for blood is fynal recompence.

This tragedy
tells of mis-
fortune and
furious cruelty,
which is pun-
ished in the
end.

Lenvoye.

WHAN surquedie oppressid hath pite, [p. 87] When pride
And meeknesse is with tirannie bor douⁿ oppresses pity
Ageyn al riht, &* hasti cruelte 7052 against right,
To be vengable maketh no dilacioun, and rigour
What folweth theroff? — be cleer in speccioun, grants no
Seeth an example how Pirrus in his teene delay,
Off hatful ire slouh yonge Polliceene. 7056 misfortune
Kyng Eolus to rigerous was, parde, follows.
And to vengable in his entencioun King Eolus
Ageyn his childre Machaire & Canace, was even
So inportable was his punycioun, 7060 worse in his
Off haste procedyng to ther destruccioun; rage than
Wers in his ire, as it was weel seene, Pyrrhus.
Than cruel Pirrus, which slouh Polliceene.
Noble Pryncis, prudent and attempre, 7064 Noble Princes,
Differrith vengauce, off hih discrecioun; always defer
Til your ire sumwhat asuagid be, vengeance
Doth neuer off doom non execucioun: until the heat
For hate and rancour perturben the resoun 7068 of your anger
Off hasti iuges, mor off entent oncleene is gone.
Than cruel Pirrus which slouh Polliceene. 7070

¶ Explicit liber primus.

¶ Incipit prologus libri secundi.¹

7047. slauhtr^e seeth] *om.* H.

7052. Ageyn al riht &] And ageyn riht B, H.

7061. haste] hasty H. 7062. his] *om.* H. 7067. non] *om.*
H, R 3.

¹ *The same rubric in MS. J. leaf 38 recto.*

BOOK II

[Prologue.]

Some people
may think that
I have told
enough trage-
dies,

TO summe folk, parcas, it wolde seeme, [p. 87*b*]
Touchyng the chaunges & mutabilites
Bi me rehersed, that thei myhte deeme,

Off Fortunes straunge aduersites 4
To pryncis shewed, doun pullid from ther sees,
The tragedies auhte inouh suffise
In compleynyng, which ye han herd deuse.

for it is de-
pressing when
no joy is
mingled with
pain,

The stori pitous, the processe lamentable, 8
Void off ioie, al gladnesse and* plesaunce,
A thyng to greuous and to inportable,
Where-as no merthe is medlid with greuaunce,
Al upon compleynt standith thalliaunce, 12
Most whan Fortune, who that hir cours weel knewe,
Chaugith old ioie into sorwes newe.

and worst of all
when former
gladness is
turned into
new sorrow.

For onto hym that neuer wiste off wo,
Remembraunce off his old gladnesse, 16
Whan his weelfare & plesaunce is ago,
And neuer aforn knew off non heuynesse, —
Such vnwar chaung, such vnkouth wrechidnesse
Causith in pryncis, thoruh newe dedli trouble, 20
Afftir ther fallyng ther sorwes to be double.

But old exam-
ples of princes
who have fallen
teach all estates
how to avoid
vices.

Olde exammples off pryncis that ha[ue] fall,
Ther remembraunce off newe brouht to mynde,
May been a merour to estatis all, 24
How thei in vertu shal remedies fynde
Teschewe vices, off such as wer maad blynde,
Fro sodeyn fallyng hemsiluen to preserue,
Longe to contune and thank off God disserue.* 28

The fall of one
is a bright
lantern to an-
other, for as
men deserve, so
are they re-
warded.

The fall off on is a cleer lanterne
To teche a-nother what he shal eschewe;
Pereil off on, is, who can discerne,
Scoole and doctryn from pereil to remewe. 32
As men disserue such guerdoun ther mut sewe;

9. and] and al B, J, H 5.

14. chaungyng H — Ioies J, ioies H 5, P.

20. Causid H. 24. to] of H, R 3.

28. disserue] to disserue B, J, P, H 5.

33. ther] om. J, H 5 — ther mut] mvt thei H.

- In vice nor vertu no man may God deceyue,
Lik ther desertis ther meede thei [shal] receyue.
- Who folweth vertu lengest doth perseuere, 36 Those who fol-
Be it in richesse, be it in pouerte; low virtue
Liht off trouthe his cleernesse kepith euere endure longest,
Ageyn thassautis off al aduersite. for virtue is
Vertu is cause off long prosperite; 40 the source of
And whan pryncis fro vertu doun declyne, prosperity.
Ther fame is shroudid vndir the cliptik lyne.
- For fals Fortune, which turneth as a ball, [p. 88] It is not
Off vnwar chaunges thouh men hir wheel atwite, 44 Fortuna who
It is nat she that pryncis gaff the fall, causes princes
But vicious luyung, pleyntli to endite: to fall, but
Thouh God aboue ful offte hem doth respite, vicious living,
Longe abidith, and doth his grace sende 48
To this entent, thei sholde ther liff amende.
- For ther weelfare and ther abidyng longe, and Fortuna
Who aduertisith, dependith nat on chaunce. has no
Good liff and vertu maketh hem to be stronge, 52 power over
And hem assureth in long perseueraunce; princes who
Vertu on Fortune maketh a diffiaunce, are governed
That Fortune hath no domynacioun by reason.
Wher noble pryncis be gouerned be resoun. 56
- But such as list[e] nat correctid be Those who will
Bexauple off othre fro vicious gouernaunce, not learn to
And fro ther vices list nat for to fle: abandon their
Yiff thei be troubled in ther hih puissaunce, 60 evil ways by
Thei arette it Fortunys variaunce, the example
Touchyng the giltes that thei deden vse, wrongly
Ther demerites ful falsli to excuse. ascribe their
fall to
Fortune's
variance,
- Vertu conserueth pryncis in ther glorie * 64 and know no
And confermeth ther dominaciouns; better than to
And viciis put ther price out off memorie, make an
For ther trespacis and ther transgressiouns. outcry against
And in alle such sodeyn mutaciouns, her deceitful-
Thei can no refut nor no bet socour, 68 ness, as if
But ageyn Fortune to maken ther clamour. they them-
selves were
innocent.

35. shal] *om.* J, H 5.

44. vnwar] soden H — wheel] will H.

49. thei] þat thei H.

63. ful] *om.* H — to] *om.* J, H 5. 64, 66, gloire, memoire B.67. 2nd ther] *om.* H.

Make an outcri on hir doubilnesse,
 As no gilt were in ther owne deede; 72
 Thus ontreuli thei calle hir a goddesse,
 Which lite or nouht may helpe at such a neede.
 But yiff thei hadde God in loue & dreede,
 Trustid his lordshep in herte, will & thouht, 76
 Thei sholde Fortune pleyntli sette at nouht.

Many stories
 have already
 been told, which
 shew princes
 how they may
 profit by others'
 falling.

Euidencis ful expert and palpable,
 Tofofn rehersid, told off dyuers ages,
 Worldli glorie* veyn and ful onstable, 80
 With deceites double off ther visages,
 Shewyng to pryncis ferme off ther corages,
 Be these exaumples, how and in what wise
 By othris* fallyng thei shal hemsilff chastise. 84

Comets, strange
 constellations,
 lightning and
 thunder and
 rumbling of the
 earth are all
 signs bidding
 mighty princes
 beware and
 amend their
 lives before it
 is too late.

Signes shewed and toknes in the heuene,
 Dyuers cometis and constellaciouns,
 Dreedful thundryng, feerful firi leuene,
 Rumour in erthe and gret discenciouns, 88
 Disobeisauce in sondry regiouns,
 Shewen exaumples, ful weel afferme I dar,
 To myhti pryncis, hem bidding to be war,
 Ther liff tamende or the Lord do smyte, 92
 Thoruh necligence or it be to late;
 And or the suerd off vengauce kerue & bite,
 Into vertues ther vicious liff translate,
 Cherisshe rihtwisnesse, ageyn al wrong debate, 96
 With dreed off God make hemsiluen stronge:
 Than is no doubtte thei shal enduren longe.

Indurate the
 heart that cannot
 profit by the fate
 of other men.

Who is nat war bi othres chastisyng,
 Othre bi hym shal chastised be: 100
 Hard is is that herte, which for no writyng,
 For no dottryn nor non auctorite,
 For non exaumples will from his vices flee;
 To indurat is his froward entent, 104
 Which wil nat suffre his hardnesse to relent.

Soft raindrops
 pierce hard
 stones,

The rounde dropis off the smothe reyn,
 Which that discende & falle from aloffte

80. gloire B — veyn] full veyn H.

83. how and in what wise] full wele afferme I dare H (*but corrected later*).

84. By othris] Bothris B — To myhti pryncis hem bidding to be war H.

94. &] or H. 100. shal chastised] chastised shal H.

- On stonys harde, at eye as it is seyn, 108
 Perceth ther hardnesse with ther fallyng offte,
 Al-be in touchyng, water is but soffte;
 The Percyng causid be force nor puissaunce,
 But off fallyng be long contynuaunce. 112
- Semblabli, off riht I dar reherse,
 Offte reedyng on bookis fructuous
 The hertis sholde off prudent pryncis perse,
 Synke in ther mynde & make hem vertuuous 116
 Teschewe all thyng that is vicious:
 For what auaieth thexamples that thei reede,
 To ther reedyng yiff contraire be the deede?
- Cunnyng and deede, who can comprehende, 120
 In cleer conceites thei be thynges tweyne;
 And yiff cunnyng doth the deede amende,
 Than atwen hem is maad a myhti cheyne,
 A noble thyng, and riht souereyne: 124
 For thanne off cunnyng the labour is weel spent,
 Whan deede folweth, & bothe been off assent.
- Thus Iohn Bochas procedyng in his book, [p. 89]
 Which in noumbre is callid the secounde, 128
 Gan for to write, and his purpos took
 To sette in stories such as he hadde founde,
 Off entent alle vices to confounde
 Be thexamples which he dede expresse. 132
 And at the gynnyng off his besynesse,
- Myhti Saul to hym dede appeere,
 Kyng off Israel, pitousli wepyng,
 Dedli off face, and with an hidous cheere, 136
 His vois Ibroke be manyfold sobbyng;
 And to myn auctour his sorwe compleynyng,
 Requeryng hym, togidre whan thei mette,
 First in his book his woful fate to sette. 140
- Anon afftir, I off entencioun,
 With penne in hande faste gan me speede,
 As I koude, in my translacioun,
 In this labour ferthere to proceede, 144
 My lord cam forbi, and gan to taken heede;

and the frequent reading of good books ought to make princes virtuous.

If actions are governed by true knowledge one's labour is well spent.

[p. 89] Thus John Bochas begins his Second Book.

First Saul appeared, begging him, in a voice broken by sobs, to write his story.

And whilst I continued in my translation, my lord, Duke Humphrey, came by and bade me set an envoy at the end of each

126. off] at H, R 3. 127. Thus] This H. 129. and] In H.
 130. hadde] hath H.
 136. an hidous] a pitouse H, a pitous R 3.
 140. to] om. H, R 3.

This myhti prynce, riht manli & riht wis,
 Gaff me charge in his prudent auys,
 That I sholde in eueri tragedie, 148
 Afftir the processe made mencionn,
 At the eende sette a remedie,
 With a lenvoie conueied be resoun,
 And afftir that, with humble affeccionn, 152
 To noble pryncis lowli it directe,
 Bi othres fallyng [thei myht] themsilff correcte.*
 And I obeyed his bidding and plesaunce,
 Vnder support off his magnificence. 156
 As I coude, I gan my penne auauunce,
 Al-be I was bareyn off eloquence,
 Folwyng myn auctour in substaunce & sentence:
 For it suffised, pleynli, onto me, 160
 So that my lord my making took at gre.

¶ Finis prologi libri secundi.

¶ Sequitur liber secundus.

[How Saul, Kyng of Ierusalem born of low degre as long as he dred god was obedient to him/ and rewliid by good counsaile had many grete disconfitures/ but atte last/ for his pride presumpcion and grete disobysaunce/ he lost his crowne and was slayn by Philestees.]¹

Saul was born of the line of Benjamin. Once, when seeking his father's asses,

THIS said[e] Saul, of whom I spak tofor[n], [p. 91]
 Ful weel compact & large of his stature,
 Off the lyne of Beniamyn eek born, 164
 His fader Ceis was callid in Scripture,
 Whos assis whilom leffte* ther pasture; —
 Space off thre daies Saul hadde hem souht,
 Loste his labour and ne fond hem nouht. 168

a child counselled him to leave off and repair to Samuel,

For thei were gon out so ferr a-stray,
 So disseuered he ne koude hem meete,
 Til that a child hym suyng al the way
 Gaff hym conseil his labour for to lete, 172
 And that he sholde gon to the prophete,
 Which was ful famous holde in Israel,
 Off whom the name was callid Samuel.

154. correcte] to correcte B.

166. leffte] lefften B, leften J, lost H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 38 recto. as long] aslong J.

- Which Saul made in his hous to dyne,
 Receyued hym off gret affecciuon;
 And be precept & ordenaunce deuyne,
 Samuel made no prolongacioun,
 But shadde the hooli sacred vnccioun
 Vpon the hed off Saul, down knelyng,
 And ful deuoutli off Israel made hym kyng,
 Off goddis peple to ha[ue] the gouernaunce,
 With sceptre & crowne, and hool the regalie.
 And his noblesse mor myhtili tauaunce,
 With meek[e]nesse to reule his monarchie,
 God gaff to hym a sperit off prophecie,
 Which was gret glorie* to his magnyficence,
 Off futur thynges to haue prescience.
- And whil that he was meek & humble in deede,
 Void off pride and fals presumpcioun,
 And prudent counsail with hym dede leede,
 Hym to gouerne bi good discrecioun,
 He fond quiete thoruh al his regeoun;
 No foreyn enemy durst hym tho werreye,
 Whil he the Lord meekli dede obeie.
- Non enemy myhte ageyn[e]s hym recure
 Thoruh non enprises, but sore dede hym dreede; —
 Made many gret disconfiture
 Thoruh his force, knythod & manheede
 On Philistes, and dauntid eek in deede
 Too myhti kynges, the ton off Ammonytes,
 And a-nother, that gouerned Moabites.
- He was founde eek strong and victorious,
 The Palestynes bryngyng to myschaunce;
 Geyn Ydumes, so myhti and famous,
 Thoruh his knyhtli prudent gouernaunce,
 That he ther pride brouhte onto vttraunce,
 Outraied hem off wisdam and manheede, —
 Primo Regum, as ye may pleynli reede.
- He was a sone callid off o yeer,
 In Israel whan his regne began,
 Stable off herte and benygne off cheer,
 Froward nor sturdi to no maner man.
 Al that while loue off the peple he wan,

176 who received
 him with affec-
 tion and
 anointed him:
 King of Israel.

180

184 God gave Saul
 a spirit of
 prophecy,

188

and he ruled
 with wisdom
 and prospered

192

196

and was suc-
 cessful against
 his enemies.

200

204

and defeated
 among others
 the Idumeans,
 as you may
 read in the
 First Book of
 Kings.

208

212

So long as he
 remained kind
 and stable of
 heart, he kept
 the love of his
 people;

179. no] no long H, noo longe R 3. 188. gloire B.
 195. tho] to H, J, P, H 5. 204. founde] om. H, R 3.

- The tyme, I meene, whil he was iust & stable, 216
 And in his werkis nat founde* variable.
- but when he grew proud and wilful and no longer obeyed God,
 But whan that pride gan his herte enhance,
 Wilfulness and fals malencolie
 Outraied resoun, to ha[ue] the gouernaunce 220
 Off his olde famous policie,
 And hadde forgetyn in his fantasie
 To knowe the Lord & meekli sue his lawe,
 God from his crowne his grace gan withdrawe. 224
- God withdrew his grace from him.
 Thonkynde werm off foryetilnesse
 In his herte hadde myned thoruh the wall,
 Whan he to God, for his kynd[e]nesse,
 Gaff no laude nor no thank attall, 228
 Which hadde hym reised onto estat royall
 Fro pore degre, mong al his kyn alone,
 Be synguler fauour to sette hym in his throne.
- What is more froward than the presumption of a boor suddenly raised to power?
 What thyng in herte mor froward mai be thouht 232
 Than is the sodeyn fals presumpcioun
 Off a wrechche that cam vp off nouht,
 To yeue hym lordshepe and dominacioun?
 And for to make a pleyn comparisoun, 236
 Men sholde off resoun dreede a leoun lasse
 Than the reudnesse off a crownyd asse.
- A lion is less to be feared than a crowned ass.
 What thyng to God is mor abhomynable
 Than pride upreised out off pouerte? 240
 And nothyng gladli is founde mor vengable
 Than ar wrechchis set in hih degre:
 For from his stok kynde may nat fle;
 Ech thyng resortith, how ferr euer it go, 244
 To the nature which that it cam fro.
- What is more revengeful than a wretch set in high degree? Every creature follows his inherited nature.
 Frut and apples taken ther tarage [p. 92]
 Wher thei first greuh off the same tre,
 And semblabli ech kynreede & lynage — 248
 Onys a yeer it will non othir be —
 Be tokne or signe, at eye as men may see,
 Draweth comounli in eueri creature
 Sum tech to folwen afftir his nature. 252

217. founde] founden B.

230. mong] among H, R 3. 238. "marke thys," in a later band, and a line drawn in margin opposite the following four and a half stanzas in J.

239. is more to god H. 242. ar] er H. 245. the] ther H.

- I write nat this in rebuk off pouert;
 But for suche onli as that it disserue:
 God off his myht, as men be weel expert,
 May hem in vertu encrese and conserue, 256
 From al myscheeff a poore man preserue,
 Reise hem on heihte to dominaciouns
 Thoruh hih noblesse off ther condiciouns.
 Be influence God may his grace sheede 260
 Wher he fynt cause onli be meeknesse,
 A poore man to reise hym vp in deede
 Onto thestat off vertuous noblesse;
 For out off vertu cometh al gentillesse, 264
 In poore and riche mak non excepcioun,
 But hem comende lik ther condicioun.
 A poore man which that is vertuous
 And dredith God in his pouerte, 268
 Ech thyng eschewyng that is vicious,
 And to his power doth trouthe & equite, —
 I dar riht weel, what-euer that he be,
 Puttyng no rebuk onto his kynreede, 272
 But calle hym gentil veraili in deede.
 But kyng Saul was contrarious,
 Disobeisaut founde in his werkyng,
 Whan God made hym to be victorious 276
 On Amalech, where Agag was kyng,
 Hym comaundyng* to spare no maner thyng,
 Man nor woman, beeste nor child socoure,
 But that his suerd sholde al quyk thyng deuoure. 280
 But Saul wrouhte al in other wise,
 Ech thyng reseruyng that was fair to siht;
 And off entent to make a sacrefise,
 Afftir his victorie* he shoop hym anon riht, 284
 Fattest beestis he ches, & hath hem diht
 Toward the fir to maken his offryng,
 And fro deth he spared Agag the kyng.
 He was repreued afftir of Samuel, 288
 To Godis bidding for he was contraire,
 As abiect to regne in Israel,

I cast no slur
 on poverty: I
 blame those
 only who de-
 serve reproof.

God may raise
 a poor man to
 nobility, for
 all gentility
 comes from
 virtue,

and a poor
 man who is
 upright and
 fears God can
 only be called
 gentle.

But Saul was
 disobedient
 when God bade
 him massacre
 the Amalekites
 and destroy
 all their
 possessions.

He even spared
 the life of
 Agag their
 king.

Reproved by
 Samuel, his
 power of fore-
 seeing failed,

257. do preserve H. 258. on] of H.

261. fyndith R 3, findeth P. 262. to] om. H.

271. I dar riht weel] I dar say H, R 3, P.

278. comaundyng] comaundid B, J. 284. victoire B, J.

- and he was
tormented by
an evil spirit. That al good hope in hym gan disespaire;
His grace, his myht gan pallen & appaire, 292
His prophecie afftir hath hym failed,
And with a feend he was also trauailed.
- Thus Fortune
cast him down,
and God trans-
lated his crown
to David. Thus from hir wheel Fortune cast hym down,
Aualed hym from his roial see; 296
And God also took away the crown,
Bothe from hym and his posterite,
And set up Daudid for his humilite.
Loo, how the Lord his doomys can deuyde 300
Tenhaunce meeknesse and tabate pryde!
- Saul was
jealous of David
because he slew
Goliath with
only a staff-
sling, Saul endured in his frenesie,
A wikked sperit so sore hym dede assaile;
Onto Daudid euer he hadde envie, 304
That he was hardi tentren in bataile, —
With a stafslynge, void off plate & maile,
Slouh Goliath, withoute feer or dreed,
Pulled out his suerd[e] & smet off his hed. 308
- and when
young girls sang
David's praises, At ther repairyng hom out off the feeld,
Whan Daudid hadde slay[e]n this Golie,
Yonge maidnes whan [that] thei beheeld
The grete victory, thei in ther armonye 312
In laude off Daudid thus gan syng & crie:
"Saul hath slayn a thousand thoruh his myht,
Daudid ten thousand, the lusty yonge knyht!"
- Saul felt angry
and sighted,
and conspired
David's death. Saul disdeyned and seide frowardli, 316
"Thei grauntid han a thousand to my name,
And to the sone heer off Ysai
Youe ten thousand to encrece* his fame,
Which is to me a rebeuk and a shame." 320
Wherupon this Saul, fret with ire,
Off yonge Daudid gan the deth conspire.
- He knew in his
heart that the
singing was
prophetic. In his herte he hadde a fantasie
Off ther syngyng whan that he took heedε, 324
Dempte it was a maner prophecie,
That Daudid sholde preferrid be in deede
And to the crowne afftir hym succeedε.
Thouhte his childre, as he gan dyuyne, 328
Sholde be depruyed off the roial lyne.

294. also] *om.* H.

317. han] have H. 319. to encrece] tencrece B, H, J.

319, 20 are transposed in R 3.

- Thus day be day Saul weies souhte [p. 93] David had no
 To sle[en] Daid, pleynli yiff he myhte, envy of Saul,
 Al-be-it so that he no malice thouhte, 332
 But euer kept hym lowli in his sihte.
 Therefore good eure & grace on hym alihte;
 For ay the Lord off his magnyficence
 Ageyn tirantis preserueth innocence. 336
- And as the Bible pleynli doth us lere,
 This Daid hadde in his tendre age and was
 For his noblesse the kyngis douhter deere, married to his
 Callid Michol, ioyned be mariage. Michal;
 340
 And whan that Saul fill in any rage,
 Daid anon, tasswagen his woodnesse,
 Touchid his harpe & brouht him in gladnesse.
- Saul ful offte gan Daid to enchace 344 but Saul
 And werreie thoruhout all his londis, constantly
 Thoruh desertis hym pursue & manace, pursued
 Off entent tashet hym up in bondis him,
 Or taslaie hym, yiff he com in his hondis. 348
 But fynali God thoruh his ordynaunce
 Preserueth his knyht from al maner myschaunce.
- Saul ful offte was brouht to myscheeff,
 Yit ay fro deth[e] Daid dede hym saue; 352 although
 And heeroff this was a special preeff, David often
 Whan Daid kitte his garnement in the caue. spared his
 And mo toknys yiff ye list to haue, life,
 Another tyme Daid also kepte 356
 The liff off Saul, whan he lay & slepte.
- The cas was this: as thei lay hosteieng
 Nat ferr assonder, and Saul lay and sleepɛ, and once
 Al his people aboute[n] hym slepyng, entered his
 And onpurueied lik a flok off sheepɛ; unguarded
 Off which[e] thyng Daid took good keepɛ, tent
 Doun descendid, and made no delay, 360
 Cam to the tente wher kyng Saul lay. 364
- The spere off Saul stondyng at his hed,
 Daid took it and wente his way anon; and carried
 Off his comyng ther was no man took heed, off his spear,
 while Saul
 and his men
 slept.

334. alihte] hath liht H.

345. thoruhout] thoruh H, R 3.

348. tasslayn H, to haue sleyn R 3. 354. garment H, P.

359. and] om. H. 361. lik] lik as H.

366. his way] away H.

- For Saul slepte and his men echon. 368
 And whan that he vp to the hill was gon,
 Toward Saul ageyn he cast his look,
 Made a noise that all his knyhtes wook.
- David then
 woke them and
 told Abner
 that he had First to Abnor, prynce off his cheualrie, 372
 Daid seide these woordis in sentence:
 "Abnor," quod he, "thou hast doon gret folie,
 This day shewed a gret negligence,
 To suffre off Saul the magnyficence 376
 In pereil stonde, and non heed [to] take,
 Aboute his persone to make his knyhtis wake.
- been reckless of
 the king's life
 and deserved
 death and tort-
 ure for his
 carelessness. Thou art to blame for thi reklesnesse,
 To leue the kyng stonde in so gret a dreed ϵ , 380
 In slep to haue mor sauour & suetnesse
 Than off his liff [for] to taken heed ϵ .
 Such negligence requereth for his meed ϵ
 Deth and torment, be rihtful iuggement, 384
 Aboute a prynce whan folk be negligent.
- "See, here is
 his spear, and
 now believe
 how unready
 you were! And yiff thou list to seen an euidence,
 How that his liff stood in iupartie,
 See heer his spere, & yiff therto credence, 388
 How onprouyded ye were on your partie, —
 Saul nor thou, ye may it nat denye,
 Your liff, your deth, *your* power, *your* puissaunce
 This day God put hool in my gouernaunce. 392
- "But I have
 never offended
 against him, as
 God knows." But me taquiten off pur innocence,
 As eueri man sholde onto his kyng,
 And to declare in me was non offence 396
 Ageyn his noblesse in will nor in werkyng,
 As God weel wot, that knoweth euery thyng,
 That I neuer be no conspiracie
 Wrouhte nor compassid ageyn his regalie."
- Thus David
 returned good
 for evil, Loo, heer example off parfit pacience 400
 Ageyn malice to shewe kynd[e]nesse!
 Wher Saul shewed his mortal violence,
 Daid aquit hym with suffraunce & goodnesse,
 The tirant venquysshid bi his prudent meeknesse. 404
 Men ageyn trouthe may weel a werre gynne,
 But at the eende the palme he doth ay wyne.

382. for] *om.* P, R 3.391. power *your* puissaunce] *puyssaunce your power* H.392. governeer H. 394. onto] *to* H.

- For off this story yiff that ye take heed,
Saul is falle for his frowardnesse
408 and Saul,
Into myscheeff and into sodeyn dreed;
For Philistees, the Bible berth witnessse,
With a gret power gan ther wardis dresse
Vpon kyng Saul auenged for to be,
412 finally attacked
Ther tentis pihte beside Gelboe,
Gelboe,
- Wheroff kyng Saul, astonyd in his herte,
Hadde lost his sperit off knyhtli hardynesse,
And speciali whan he dede aduerte
416 [p. 94] became afraid;
Prophete was non his harmys to redresse,
Off futur thynges trouthe to expresse
In Israel, which cast hym in gret dreed,
420 and as he had
Because that tyme Samuel was ded.
exiled all the
prophets and
diviners, and
Samuel was
dead,
- For Saul hadde cast out alle dyuynes
From Israel and ech dyuyneresse,
Nat-witstanding [that] the Palestynes
Were rise ageyn, his power to oppresse;
424 he went to a
woman
called in
Israel a
pythonesse,
And he ne knew no maner sorceresse
Off whom he myhte any counseil take,
And he off God that tyme was forsake.
- In this wise he stood disconsolat,
428
Counseil off God nor prophete kneuh he non,
But lik a man most infortunat,
Ongraciousli he spedde hym foorth anon,
And secreli this Saul is foorth gon
432
To a woman that sholde hym reede and wisse,
In Israel callid a phetonyse.
- Which is a name, as clerkis writen all,
And office, who that takith heede,
436 who could call
the souls of
dead men back
to earth, which
is a very
strange thing,
Soulis off men ageyn to clepe & call —
I meene such[e] that toforn wer dede —
Which is a thyng straunge for to reede,
That any woman sholde, who list to lere,
440
Make soulis of dede men appeere.

407. yiff that ye take] who that takith H.

413. Ther] The H.

423. that] *om.* H, J, P, H 5, R 3.430. lik] *om.* J.

433. that] which H.

434. Phitonesse H.

438. that] as H.

441. appeere] tappeere H, to apper R 3, to appere P.

- and, as it seems
to me, not
according to
reason, that an
invisible thing
should appear
to bodily eyes.
- Vnkouth & straunge is ther opynyoun,
And to my witt a maner impossible,
Nat accordyng, me semeth, to resoun, 444
Nor lik a thyng which that is credible,
That a soule, off nature inuisible,
Mihte appeere or shewe visibly
Onto eyen which that be bodily. 448
- But I shall let
scholars and
divines
- But or that I any ferthere flitte,
List I were holde to presumptuous,
To dyuynys this mater I commytte
And wise clerkis that be vertuous, 452
In ther wittis subtil and corious
To conclude, as it doth hem seeme,
In this mater a trouthe for to deeme,
- decide whether
it was the soul
of Samuel or
some other
spirit who told
- Whethir it was the soule off Samuel, 456
Or other sperit, that she dede call,
Which that tolde the kyng off Israel
Off the bataile that sholde afttir fall,
His auenturis and his myscheuys all. 460
And off his deth he tolde also in deede,
And how Dauid sholde afttir hym succede,
- Saul, that for
his disobedience
he should die in
battle with the
Philistines and
be succeeded
by David.
- Because onli off his disobeisaunce,
As it is write, and for his reclesnesse, 464
On Amalech for he took nat vengauce.
Thus the sperit bar to hym witenesse.
Whereoff Saul fell in gret heuynesse,
Knowyng no mene tescape out off this doute, 468
But take his fortune as it cometh aboute.
- Tolde hym also his enmyes were so wroth,
The Philistees beside Gelboe,
In that bataile he and his childre both 472
Sholde deie that day, off necessite;
His cheualrie shal sconfited be,
Off his regne there is no lengere date,
For God from hym his kyngdam will translate. 476
- After his defeat,
Saul bade his
squire run him
through the
heart,
- And thus Saul retourned is agayn,
His meyne afttir brouht to disconfiture.
And whan he sauh al his peeples slayn,
And how ther was no mene to recure 480
In that dedli woful auenture,

443. Impossible H. 447. or] & H, nor J.

449. or] er H. 455] For in this mater I can nat deeme H.

He bad his squier take his suerd as blyue,
And thoruh the herte that he sholde hym ryue,

That his enmyes, which were oncircumsised, 484 so that he
Sholde ha[ue] no power, in story it is founde, should not fall
To falle vpon hym as thei han deuised, into the hands
To yeuen hym his laste fatal wounde, of his foes; but
His hih noblesse at myscheeff to confounde. 488 the squire
But his squyer, for feer of God and dreed, dared
Wold nat assente to doon so foul a deed;

To slen his lord he gretli was afferd, not kill him,
A thyng hatful in eueri manys siht. 492 and Saul had
But Saul took the pomel off his suerd, to fall on his
And in the ground ful deepe anon it piht; own sword,
And in al hast possible that he myht,
Made the poynt, in his furious peyne, 496
To perce his herte & parte euene on tweyne.

The Philistees, anon as he was ded, [p. 95] and was des-
Spoiled hym off his roial armure, spoiled and
Dismembrid hym and smet off his hed, 500 dismembered
And in tokne off ther disconfiture by the
Took the spoiles with al ther besi cure Philistines.
And theroff made, in al ther beste entent, 504
To Astaroth* off pride a gret present.

Thus was Saul slay[e]n in sentence
Off Philistees vpon Gelboe,
Forsake off God for inobediencie,
Abiect also down from his roial see: 508 Thus Saul, for-
And thus for lakkyng off humylite, saken by God
Off God he was for euere set a-side. for disobedi-
Loo, heer the eende off surquedie & pride! throne and
slain.

¶ Lenvoye.

HATH mynde on Saul, which to estat roiall 512 Remember the
Fro louh degre was callid for meeknesse; fate of Saul,
But *presumpcioun* made hym haue a fall, who rose from
Off God abiect for his frowardnesse, low degre and
Loste his crowne, the Bible berth witnesse. 516 lost his crown
And cause was, for his disobeisaunce; for disobedi-
To Godis biddyng he gaff non attendaunce.

483. that] *om.* H.

495 al] the H.

499. off] & of H.

504. Astraoth B, J.

514. to have H.

God asks of us only an honest heart, but he punishes all who disobey him.

God nat axeth no mor off man att all
 But hool[e] herte withoute doubilnesse, 520
 For alle the gifftes, which in especiall
 He gaff to man off his hih goodnesse;
 But he chastisith al onkynd[e]nesse,
 Such as be rebel for to do plesaunce, 524
 And to his bidding ne yeue non attendaunce.

Noble Princes, if you would keep your crowns, be just and obey God.

Noble Pryncis, vertu most pryncypall
 You to conserue in your hih noblesse,
 Is to enprente in your memoriall 528
 Feith, equite, alle wrongis to redresse,
 To susteene trouthe and rihtwisnesse,
 And tofor God holdeth euenli the balaunce,
 And to his bidding yeueth hool your attendaunce. 532

¶ The comendacion of Bochas oppon the vertu of obedience.¹

Virtue of Virtues is true obedience. Without it all worldly policy were destroyed.

VERTU off vertues, most off excellence,
 Which that hath most souereyn suffisaunce,
 Is the vertu off trewe obedience,
 Which set all thynge in rihtful gouernaunce: 536
 For ne wer nat this prudent ordenaunce,
 Summe tobeie and summe aboute to guie,
 Destroyed were al worldli policie.

Where discretion rules without wilfulness, the people should obey their princes.

Where that vertu and hih discrecioun 540
 Auoided han from hem al wilfulness,
 Be title onli off domynacioun,
 Trewli lyuyng vpon rihtwisnesse,
 Wrong and errors iustli to redresse, 544
 Off trouthe I may riht weel afferme & seie,
 The peepel meekli ther bidding sholde obeie.

Obedience brings welfare, joy and prosperity to all lands;

This noble vertu off feithful obeisaunce,
 Establisshid vpon humylite, 548
 Which includith no double variaunce,
 In all regeouns and in ech contre
 Causeth weelfare, ioie and prosperite;
 And as vertu, cheff and souereyne, 552
 Al vicious riot it pleynli doth restreyne.

519. of man no more H. This stanza is transposed with the next in R 3. 526. vertu] of vertu H.

528. Is to] it is (Emprent) H. 531. holdeth] hold P.
 541. have H. 546. sholde] did H. 553. riot] root H.

¹ "A commendacioun," etc., MS. J. leaf 40 a, otherwise agreeing with B.

- Obedience eek, as men may see,
 Falsnesse exilith and al rebellious;
 For bi atemprance,* riht and equite 556
 Stant the weelfare off eueri regeoun:
 For the meeknesse and low subieccioun
 Off comountes halt up the regalies
 Off lordshepes & off all monarchies. 560
- And, no doubt, whan lordshepes off entent
 Besi been the souereyn Lord to queeme,
 To ther subiectis do rihtful iugement,
 In conscience as riht and resoun deeme, 564
 Than shal ther crowne and [ther] diadeeme
 Vpon ther hed perseuere & fresshly shyne,
 And make subiectis to her bidding enclyne.
- Thus obeisaunce pleyntli at a woord, 568
 In such as han lordshepe and souereynte,
 Doon off entent to ther souereyn Lord,
 Shal cause hem regne in long prosperite,
 And ther subiectis off humylite, 572
 For ther noble famous gouernaunce,
 Ay to be redy vnder ther obeisaunce.
- For who that serueth the Lord off Lordis all, [p. 96]
 And hath the people in his subieccioun, 96
 God will keepe hym that he shal nat fall,
 Longe preserue his domynacioun;
 But ageynward, whan wisdam and resoun 580
 Been ouermaistried with sensualite,
 Farweel the floures off ther felicite!
- Obedience bluntith the sharpnesse
 Off cruel suerdis in tirantis bondis,
 And meeknesse appesith the felnesse
 Off hasti vengauce, brekith atoo the bondis; 584
 Eek pacience set quyete in londis:
 And where these thre contune in comountes,
 Long pes perseuereth in kyngdames & cites. 588
- Obedience doth also restreyne
 Conspiracies and fals collusiouns;
 Whan she stant onpartid, nat on tweyne,
 and restrain
 conspiracies.

556. batemprance B.

565. 2nd ther] om. J, H 5, P. 567. enclyne] declyne H.

568. Thus] This H. 569. han] have H.

576. peepis H. 586. settith R 3, setteth P.

588. in] om. H, R 3, P.

- There is no dreed off no discenciouns: 592
 For she combyneth the trewe opynyouns
 In peeplis hertis, ful weel aforprouyded,
 Vnder pryncis to stonde hool ondeuyded.
- Subjects are not rebellious to princes who honour God. Wher pryncis be meek, humble & debonaire 596
 Towardis God off hool affeccion,
 Ther subiectis be gladli nat contraire
 In ther seruise be no rebelloun;
 For ther is founde no deuysioun, 600
 But hed & membris, ech for his partie,
 Be so gouerned be prudent policie.
- But Saul was put down for his obstinacy. Contrariousli Saul was put down, 604
 Abiect off God for his obstynacie,
 Put from his sceptre, his crowne, his regeoun,
 Off Israel loste al the monarchie,
 For he list nat make off his alie, 608
 Off frowardnesse and wilful necligence,
 This noble vertu callid obedience.
- As it is incumbent on kings to rule benevolently, so do obedience and reverence appertain to their subjects, and For as it longith in kyngdamys & citees, 612
 Vnder a keye off on benyuolence,
 Pryncis, kynges to gouerne [in] ther sees,
 So apperteneth deu[e] reuerence
 To ther subiectis bi obedience,
 Tobeie ther lordis, as thei been off degre, 616
 Be title off riht in eueri comounte.
- there is neither obedience nor unity when subjects presume against their princes. For obeisaunce, iff it be discernyd 620
 With Argus eyen, who that taketh heed,
 As riht requereth is nat weel gouernyd,
 Whan the membris presume ageyn the hed,
 Off gouernaunce ther is no parfit speed;
 From vnyte thei gon a froward weie,
 Whan subiectis ther pryncis disobeie.
- [How kyng Roboam for gevyng feith to yonge counsaile lost the beneuolence of his peple and deied a fool.]¹
- The young King Rehoboam, son of Solomon, ONTO Iohn Bochas in ordre next ther cam, 624
 With ful gret dool and lamentacioun,
 The yonge kyng callid Roboam,

605. 3rd his] & his H. 610. in] to H.

617. obeisaunce] obedience H — discernyd] descreved H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 40 recto.

- Sone and next heir to Salamoun,
 Entryng be title off iust successioun,
 Besouhte myn auctour to make off his folie
 And off his fallyng a pitous tragedie. 628
- besought my
 author to tell
 the tragedy
 of his fall.
- First whan he entred into his regeoun,
 Twelue tribus gouernyng in deede,
 Rewlid hymself be will and no resoun,
 Kepte his subiectis pleynli, as I reede,
 Nat vnder loue but vnder froward dreede;
 Off olde wise, to his gret disauail,
 He despised the doctryn and counsail. 632
- Even when he
 first came to
 the throne he
 despised the
 counsel of
 wise men
- He demened, as it is weel kouth,
 His sceptre, his crowne and his regalie
 Be such folk as floured in her youth,
 Coude off custum ther wittis weel applie
 To bleende hym falsli with ther flat[e]rie,
 Which is a stepmooder callid in substau[n]ce
 To al vertu and al* good gouernaunce. 640
- and followed
 the advice of
 youthful flat-
 terers,
- Alas, it is gret dool and gret pite,
 That flat[e]rie sholde haue so gret fauour,
 Which bleendith princis that they may nat see,
 Mistith the eyen off eueri gouernour,
 That thei can nat knowe her owne errour,
 Fals hony shad ay on ther sentence.
 A fool is he that yeueth to hem credence. 648
- to whom only
 fools give
 credence;
- Thei may be callid the deuelis taboureris,
 With froward sownys eris to fulfille;
 Or off Circes the pereilous boteleris,
 Which galle and hony [togedir] doun distille,
 Whos drynkes been bothe amerous & ille,
 And, as clerkis weel deuise cunne,
 Wers than the drynkes off Cirenes tunne. 652
- for such may
 be called the
 devil's tam-
 bourneurs,
 who din evil
 into men's
 ears:
- Eris off pryncis ful weel thei can enoynte [p. 97]
 With the soffte oile off adulacioun,
 And ther termys most subtili appoynte,
 Ech thyng concludyng with fals decepcioun,
 Ay blandisshyng with amerous poisoun; 660
- subtle of
 speech, and
 always ending
 with
 deception,

640. her] *om.* H. 644. 2nd al] to al B, H, R 3, H 5.

652. tabourneris H, taberoures R 3, tabourers P.

654. butlers P. 655. togedir] *om.* J.

659. Anoynte H.

- And fynali, as the poete seith, 664
 Ther feith off custum concludith with onfeith.
- they flower in
 words without
 fruit and are
 empty of
 truth, Flouryng in woordis, thouth ther be no frut,
 Double off herte, plesaunt off language,
 Off trewe menyng void and destitut, 668
 In mustryng outward pretende a fair visage:
 Who trusteth hem fyndeth * smal auauntage,
 Be apparence & glorious fressh shewyng
 Pryncis deceyuyng & many a worthi kyng. 672
- as Reboam
 can well bear
 witness. Roboam * can bere ful weel witesse,
 From hym auoidyng folkis that were trewe,
 How he was hyndred be flatrie & falsnesse
 Be hem that coude forge out talis newe; 676
 Whos counseil afftir sore dede hym rewe,
 And with ther feyned fals suggestioun
 Gretli abreggid his dominacioun.
- Of fooly youth
 and presump-
 tion he believed
 himself wiser
 than his father, He dempte hymself off more auctorite, 680
 Off foli youthe and off presumpcioun,
 Than was his fader in al his * rialte.
 And this pompous fals opynyoun
 Cam into his conceit bi adulacioun; 684
 For flatereris bar to hym witesse,
 How he excellid his fadres hih noblesse.
- and oppressed
 his subjects.
 And when they
 begged for
 relief from
 their tributes, He dede gret rigour and oppressioun
 Vpon his peeple, as it was weel preued; 688
 And thei to fynde sum mytigacioun
 In materis which that han hem greued,
 Off ther tributis for to be releued,
 Besouhte he wolde recece hem in ther neede: 692
 But al for nouht; he took theroff non heede.
- he set aside
 all good coun-
 sel and paid
 no attention to
 them. Al old counsail from hym he sette a-side
 And refusid ther doctryn and ther lore;
 And be fals counsail off folkis ful off pride, 696
 His poore liges he oppressid sore.
 And ten kynredis anon, withoute more,
 For tiranye and for mys gouernaunce
 From hym withdrouh ther trouthe & legeaunce. 700

670. fyndeth] fynt B, J, H.

673. Roboam] Roboan B, J (Roboam H, R 3, H 5, P).

682. al his] his gret B, gret J. 684. into] to H.

686. fadres hih noblesse] fadir in fairnesse H. 690. have H.

694. he] to H, R 3.

- Thus off the kyng conceyued the rigour,
 The peple anon off indignacioun
 Stooned Adoram, which was collectour
 Off the tributis in al his regeoun;
 From hym departyng bi rebellioun.
 Wheroff astonyd, tauenge his gret onriht,
 Into Iherusalem took anon his fiht.
- 704 So ten tribes
 arose, stoned a
 tax collector
 named Adoram
 and renounced
 their
 allegiance.
- And whan thei were partid from Roboam,
 The ten kynredis be dyuysioun
 Ches hem a kyng callid Ieroboam.
 And Roboam, withynne his roial toun,
 To been auengid on ther rebellioun
 And for to doon on hem cruel iustise,
 An hundred thousand he made anon tarise.
- 708 Rehoboam fled
 to Jerusalem.
 The ten tribes
 chose
 Jeroboam
 king.
- With Ieroboam he caste hym for to meete,
 And al attonys sette in iupartie;
 But Semeias* the prophete bad hym lete,
 And from the werre withdrawen his partie.
 And mor the quarel for to iustefie,
 Off his peeplis froward departyng,
 It was Godis will doon for a pun[y]shyng.
- 712
- 716 Rehoboam
 raised an army
 of 100,000,
 but Shemaiah
 advised him
 to withdraw.
- Touchyng the surplus off his gouernaunce,
 His roial beeldyng off many fair cite,
 His grete riche famous suffisaunce,
 Off wyn and oile hauyng gret plente,
 And how his empire encrecid yeres thre,
 Eek how that tyme he rihtful was in deede,
 In Iosephus his story ye may reede.
- 720
- 724 For the rest,
 his story is
 told in
 Iosephus.
- Off his childre born in the riht[e] lyne,
 Eihene wyues, as maad is menciou[n],
 I fynde he hadde, and many concubyne,
 Sonys and douhtris be procreacioun;
 And how his richesse and gret pecessioun
 That tyme encreced, as it is weel knowe,
 To God a-boue whil that he bar hym lowe.
- 728
- 732 He had
 eighteen
 wives and
 many concu-
 bines and a
 profusion
 of children,
- But, as this auctour maketh rehersaile,
 In his ences and augmentacioun,
 Meeknesse off herte in hym gan waste & faile,
- 736 but lost his
 meekness of
 heart and be-
 came vicious;

706. gret] herte H. 707. took anon] he tooke H.

708. departid H. 714. to rise H.

717. Semeias] Rameus B, H, J, R 3 H 5.

737. Aumentacioun H. 738. waste &] om. H.

- And pride entrid with fals presumpcioun,
 Vertu dispisyng and al relegeoun; 740
 Affter whos vices, as seith the same book,
 Wikkid example off hym the peeple took.
 and the people, as always happens, followed his bad example. Affter the maneres, wher thei be good or ille, [p. 98]
 Vsid off pryncis in dyuers regeouns, 744
 The peeple is redy to vsen and fulfille
 Fulli the traces off ther condiciouns:
 For lordis may in ther subiecciouns,
 So as hem list, who-so can taken heede, 748
 To vice or vertu ther subiectis leede.
 So he was chastised by God, Thus Roboam for his transgressiouns,
 In Iosephus as it is deuised,
 And for his froward fals opynyouns, 752
 Onli for he al vertu hath despised,
 Off God he was rihtfully chastised:
 In Ierusalem his cheeff roial toun
 Off his enmyes besegid enviroun. 756
 besieged in his capital by the king of Egypt, The kyng off Egypt a sege aboute hym laide
 With so gret peeple, that socour was ther non,
 Al-be-it so that Roboam abraide
 And preied God delyuere hym from his fon, 760
 Tauoide off merci his enmies euerichon.
 But God list nat to granten his praiere,
 But hym chastised, lik as ye shal heere.
 and finally losing it to him together with all the treasure of the temple. First his cite and his noble toun 764
 Delyuered was, he knew no bet socour,
 Vnder a feyned fals composicioun;
 For at ther entryng, void off al fauour,
 Kepyng no couenant, took al the tresour, 768
 Withynne the temple hauyng no pite,
 But ladde it hom to Egypt ther contre.
 Rehoboam was proud and a fool, and I'll let him live and die in his folly. And to reherse, it is a gret[e] dool,
 How Roboam, as Iosephus doth declare, 772
 Was inli proud and therwithal a fool,
 And off al wisdam destitut and bare,
 Onmerciabie his peeple for to spare,
 Hatyng good counsail, and so in his folie 776
 Regnyng a fool; and so I lete hym deie.

750. R begins again here. 758. With] And R.

761. Tauoide] Avoide R.

766. fals] om. R. 770. it] hym R — ther] that R.

771. a grete] to gret a H, R 3, so gret a H 5.

[Lenvoye.]

PHILISOPHRES concluden and deuise
 In ther bookis off old* experience,
 That counseilour[e]s sad, expert & wise, 780
 Trewe off ther woord, stable off ther sentence,
 Hasti nor rakel for no violence,
 Keepe & preserue, the trouthe I dar attame,
 Noblesse off pryncis fro myscheeff & diffame. 784

Hasty* youthe and rancour in contrari wise,
 Which han to will[e] al ther aduertence,
 Except hemsilff all othir men despise
 Thoruh ther onbridled furious insolence, 788
 Nothyng aqueyntid with wisdam nor prudence,
 Brynge ageynward, wheroff thei be to blame,
 Noblesse of princis* in myscheeff & diffame.

Kyng Roboam, ageyn riht and iustise, 792
 To yonge foolis gaff feith & most credence,
 Crueli his subjectis to chastise;
 Which put his peeple from his benyuolence,
 Drouh* ten kynredis from his obedience, 796
 Which was to hym, be record, ful gret shame,
 Puttyng his noblesse in myscheeff & diffame.

Noble Pryncis, doth wisli aduertise,
 In preseruyng* off your magnificence, 800
 Off olde expert nat blent with couetise
 Taketh your counseil and doth hem reuerence,
 Eyd as Argus in ther hih prouidence,
 Which conserue be report off good name 804
 Noblesse off pryncis from myscheeff & diffame.

Wise counsellors
 preserve princes
 from mischief,

but hasty
 youth and ran-
 cour bring them
 to destruction.

King Reho-
 boam, advised
 by young fools,
 treated his
 subjects badly
 and drove
 them to re-
 bellion.

Noble Princes,
 take your
 counsel of
 old and expert
 advisers, who
 are not blinded
 by covetous-
 ness.

[A Chapitle/ descryuyng how prynces beyng hedis of
 ther comountees sholde haue noble cheualrie true
 Iuges &c^a ther commounte to gouerne &c^a.]¹

WHAT ertheli thyng is mor deceyuable,
 Than off pryncis the pompe & veynglorie,*

What is more
 deceptive than
 the pomp and
 vain glory of
 princes?

779. old] good B. 782. nor] ne R. 785. Hasty] Haste B, J, R 3.

786. have H. 787. all] & H. 789. nor] & H. 790 Brynge] benyngne H.

791. Noblesse of princis] Puttyng his noblesse B, P, J, H 5,

Puttyng ther noblesse H, Puttyng her noblesse R 3.

796. Drouh] Thoruh B, through P, Thruh R 3, H 5.

800. preseruyng] perseueryng B. 801. expert] expertis R.

802. Take P. 803. as] of H — hih] om. H, R 3.

807, 9, 10. veyngloire, victoire, memoire B.

¹ MS. J. leaf 41 recto.

- Suddenly they disappear, their fame clouded with a dark shadow of oblivion. Which weene [to] stonde in ther estatis stable, 808
 As thei the world hadde conquered be victorie —
 And sodenli be put out off memorie,
 Ther fame clouddid, allas, and ther noblesse
 With a dirk shadwe off foryetilnesse! 812
- Where would be the glory of emperours were it not for scholars who write their histories? Wheroff kom[e]th the famous cleer shynyng
 Off emperoures in ther consistories? —
 Or wheroff komth ther laude in reportyng,
 Sauff that clerkis han wreten ther histories? 816
 Or where were now conquestis transitories,
 Or ther tryumphes — wher sholde men hem fynde,
 Ne had* writeris ther prowesse put in mynde?
- Even the fame of the Nine Worthies rested on the labour of the people. Rekne up all, and first the worthy nyne, 820
 In hih noblesse which hadde neuer peeris:
 Ther marcial actis, which cleerli dede shyne,
 Ther fame vpborn aboue the* nyne speeris
 With loude sownys off Famys clariouneris, 824
 Ther glorious palmes, yiff thei be weel peised,*
 Be low labour off comouns was first reised.
- As a statue cannot stand without feet and legs, no prince may prosper without subjects. Mak a liknesse off thes gret ymages [p. 99]
 Coriousli corue out be entaile, — 828
 Hed, armys, bodi, and ther fressh visages,
 Withoute feet or leggis may nat vaile
 To stonde vpriht; for needis thei mut faile.
 And semblabli subiectis in comountees 832
 Reise up the noblesse off pryncis in ther sees.
- The head is set highest, as we know, As hed and membres in ymages been o ston,
 Outher o stok, be cumpas ondeuyded,
 And be proporcioun ther feturis euerichon 836
 Set in trewe ordre, as Nature hath prouided,
 So that all errours thoruh crafft be circumcided:
 The hed set hiest be custom, as men knowe,
 The bodi amyd, the feet benethe lowe. 840

808. to]om. J, H 5, þei R 3 — ay in þer statis R.

812. forgetfulness R.

819. Ne had] Nadde B.

823. the] all the B, J.

825. peised] preised B.

826. vpreisid H.

827. thes] the H. 830. avale R.

834. o] of R, H.

835. o] of R, H, R 3, P.

838. thoruh] bi R, H, by R 3 — circumcided] circumcised R, circumscised R 3.

840. amyd] in myddis R.

- Mihti pryncis for ther hih renoun,
 As most worthi shal occupie the hed,
 With wit, memorie* and eyen off resoun
 To keepe ther membris fro myscheeff & dreed, 844
 Lik ther degrees take off hem good heed,
 With cleer[e] forsiht off a prudent thouht
 Ther feet preserue that thei erre nouht.
- Ther mut been handis & armys off diffence, 848
 Which shal this ymage manli keepe & guie
 From alle assautis off foreyn violence,
 Which shal be named noblesse off cheualrie —
 Ther trewe office iustli to magnefie, 852
 Sustene the chirch & make hemsiluen strong
 To see that widwes nor maidnes ha[ue] no wrong.
- Prudent iuges, as it is skele and riht,
 To punshe wrong and surfetis to redresse, 856
 In this ymage shal occupie the siht:
 For loue or hate, bi doom off rihtwisesse,
 For freend or fo his iugementis dresse,
 So egali the lawes to susteene, 860
 In ther werkis that noon errour be seene.
- Mid this ymage there is a bodi set,
 An agregat off peeplis and degrees,
 Be parfit pes and vnyte I-knet 864
 Bi thestatis that gouerne comountees, —
 As meires, prouostes & burgeis in citees,
 Marchauntis also, which seeke sundri londis,
 With othir craftis which lyuen bi ther hondis. 868
- And as a bodi which that stant in helthe
 Feelith no greeff off no froward humours,
 So eueri comoun contynueth in gret welthe,
 Which is demened with prudent gouernours,
 That can appese debatis and errours, 872
 The peple keepe from al contrauersie,
 Causing the[r] weelfare tencrece & multeplie.

and by its
 foresight must
 keep the other
 members from
 harm.

848 There must also
 be hands and
 arms of defence,

856 prudent judges,
 who are as
 eyes,

864 a torso made
 of officials,
 burgesses and
 merchants;

872 and as a body
 in health
 knows no dis-
 comfort, so is a
 country rich
 when governed
 by prudent
 men who keep
 the people in
 peace.

842. hed] stede H.

843. memoire B. 844. ther] the R.

848. armys & hondis R, H.

853. hemsiluen] hem ful R.

854. nor] & R. 862. In myddis R.

864. I-knet] knett R.

866. Mayores P, mayrys H 5, Mairis H — prouestes R.

872. demened] demyd R. 874. to kepe R — countrouersye R.

- This body must also have a soul of contemplative folk, This bodi must haue a soule off liff 876
 To quyke the membris with gostli mocious,
 Which shal be maad off folk contemplatiff,
 The cherche committed to ther pecessiouns,
 Which bi ther hooli conuersaciouns 880
 And good example[s] sholde as sterris shyne,
 Be grace and vertu the peple [t]enlumyne.
- to whose care the church is committed, and who should tell the truth to all men and reprove vices; Vpon the liht off ther condiciouns,
 Off this bodi dependith the weelfare; 884
 For in ther techyng and predicaciouns
 Thei sholde trouthe to hih & low declare,
 And in ther office for no dreed ne spare
 Vices correcte, lich as thei ar holde, 888
 Sithe thei been heerdis off Cristes folde.
- and there must be labourers to hold up and sustain the body as feet and legs; for honest labour is wholly justified. Folwyng vpon, off entent ful cleene,
 Laboreris, as ye han herd deuised,
 Shal this bodi bern up and susteene 892
 As feet and leggis, which may nat be despised;
 For trewe labour is iustli auctorised,
 And ner the plouh vpholden be trauaile,
 Off kynges, pryncis farweel al gouernaile. 896
- Thus, if princes, knights, judges, burgesses, clerics and labourers do their duty, then it may be said that this image is well wrought. Thus first yiff pryncis gouerned been be riht,
 And knythod suffre the peple to ha[ue] no wrong,
 And trouthe in iuges shewe out his cleer liht,
 And feith in cites with loue be drawe a-long, 900
 And hooli cherche in vertu be maad strong,
 And in his labour the plouh ne feyne nouht, —
 Thanne be proporcioun this ymage is weel wrouht.
- With King Rehoboam as an example, princes must remember that God created people for the advantage of rulers, not to be oppressed. This mateer hool for texemplefie, 904
 Kyng Roboam for fals* oppressioun
 And for his wilful froward tirannye
 Loste a gret parti off his regeoun;
 Wherefore, let pryncis considren off resoun, 908
 God sette the peple for lordis auantage,
 And nat to been oppressid with seruage.

877. quykene R.

879. commyttith H.

881. sholde] holde R. 888. ar] er H.

889. owne folde R.

896. princis kyngis R, R 3 — al] the H.

898. to] om. R.

905. fals] a fals B, H, J, R 3, H 5, P — oppressioun] pre-
sumpcioun H.

Vpon summe pryncis Bochas doth compleyne, [p. 100] Bochas dis-
 Such as haue a custum and maneer 912 proves of
 Ageyn ther subiectis ongoodli to disdeyne, princes who are
 And off pride to shewe hem froward cheer; disdainful to
 Counseileth hem to remembre & ler, and counsels their subjects,
 As this chapitle doth fynali deuise, them to remem-
 First out off labour al lordshepe dede arise. 916 ber that all
 lordship first
 arose out of
 labour.

[How Mucius Sceuola slouh an Innocent in stede of
 Kyng Porcenna that leide siege to Rome.]¹

WHAN kyng Porcenna with his cheualrie
 Ageyn Romeyns a werre first began,
 The toun besegyng vpon ech partie
 With gret puissaunce brouht out off Tuskan, 920
 In the cite ther was a knyhtli man,
 Mucius Sceuola, which caste in ther distresse
 To breke the siege thoruh his hih prowesse. 924
 Leet arme hymself[e] cleene in plate & maile,
 For comoun profit, tauauncen his corage
 Kyng Porcenna proudli to assaile; 928
 A tyme prouyded to his auantage,
 Thoruh the siege to maken his passage,
 And fynali at his in-comyng
 Iupartre his persone for to sle the kyng.
 But lik as tellith Titus Lyuyus, 932
 Wher Porcenna sat in his roial see,
 This senatour, this manli Mucius,
 Sauh a prynce off gret auctorite,
 The kyng rasemblyng, clad [both] in o lyuere, 936
 Atween discernyng no maner variaunce;
 Slouh that prynce off veray ignoraunce.
 But whan he knew[e] that he dede faile
 To slen Porcenna, enemy to the toun, 940
 And sauh he hadde lost al his trauaile,
 He made a pitous lamentacioun,
 Because he dede execucioun
 Off ignoraunce, ageyn his owne entent, 944
 To spare a tirant and slen an innocent.

When the
 Etruscans once
 besieged Rome,
 Mucius Scæv-
 ola determined
 to pass through
 the hostile

lines and slay
 King Porcenna.

Unfortunately
 he mistook
 another prince
 for the king,
 and killed him,

But when he
 saw his blunder,
 he cried out in
 grief at having
 slain an inno-
 cent man

916. As] And H, R.

920. toun] ton H. 931. Iupartre] Iupardie R.

933. his] om. R. 935. Sauh] Sith R. 941. sauh] sith R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 41 verso.

and going up
to a fire, he
held his hand
in the flames
until it was
consumed.

For which he was with hymself ful wroth,
That he was founde so negligent in deede,
And with his hand onto a fir he goth, 948
Made it brenne briht as any gleede,
Bothe nerff & bon and his flessch to sheede,
His hand consumyng on pecis heer & yonder,
And from his arm made it parte assonder. 952

For this deed
the Romans
ever afterward
called him
Scævola,

And as the story declareth onto vs,
This manli man, this noble senatour,
Afor tyme was callid Mucius,
Which for the comoun dede many gret labour; 956
And for the vnkouth hasti fell rigour
Doon [vn]to hymself, the Romeyns all,
Sceuola thei dede hym afftir call.

which is to
say, a man
without a hand.

As moche to seyne be language off that lond — 960
Who take ariht the exposicioun —
As a man which is withoute an hond.
And afftir hym bi successioun
Al his offspryng, that wer bor in the toun, 964
In remembraunce for tencrece his fame,
Off Sceuola bar afftir hym the name.

Such examples
shew what
perils and suf-
fering men
have endured
for common ad-
vantage, as
once when
Brutus chased
Tarquin and all
kings from
Rome.

Be this example and many a-nother mo,
Yiff men list her corages to awake, 968
Thei sholde seen what perail & what wo
For comoun profit men haue* vndirtake,
As whilom Brutus for Lucrecis sake
Chaced Tarquyn for his transgressioun 972
And kynges alle out off Rome toun.

Lucrece's story
is related by
Chaucer, who

Touchyng Lucrece, exaample off wifli trouthe,
How yonge Tarquyn hir falsli dede oppresse, 976
And afftir that, which was to gret a routhe,
How she hirsilff[e] slouh for heuynesse,
It nedith nat rehersyn the processe,
Sithe that Chaucer, cheeff poete off Bretayne,
Wrot off hir liff a legende souerayne. 980

told why the
Romans exiled
their kings and
how Æneas de-
serted Dido,

Rehersyng ther among[es] other thynges
Ech circumstaunce and ech occasioun:
Whi Romeyns exilid first ther kynges,

948. And] An R. 950. and] om. R. 957. hasti] om. R.
958. vnto] to H, J, R 3, H 5, P. 959. afftir did hym R.
960. As meche to seye R. 968. Corage H.
970. haue] han B. 979. Sithe] Which R.

- Neuer to regnen afftir in ther toun, 984
 As olde cronycles make menciou[n],
 Remembryng also thunkyndli gret outrage
 Bi Eneas* doon to Dido off Cartage.
- Eek othir stories which he wrot his lyue 988 as well as other
 Ful notabli with eueri circumstaunce, tales, notabli
 And ther fatis dede pitousli descryue, written. It
 Lik as thei fill put hem in remembraunce, were presump-
 tion for me to
 Wherfore yiff I sholde my penne auau[n]ce, 992 tell them again,
 Afftir his makyng to putte hem in memorie,*
 Men wolde deeme it presumpcioun & veynglorie.
- For as a sterre in presence off the sunne [p. 101] for as a star
 Lesith his fresshnesse and his cleer[e] liht, 996 pales before
 So my reudnesse vnder skies dunne the sun, so
 Dareth ful lowe and hath lost his siht, my unpolished
 To be compared ageyn the bemys briht, language can
 Off this poete; wherfore it were but veyn stand no com-
 1000 Thyng seid be hym to write it newe ageyn. parison to the
 bright beams of
 this poet.

[How Lucrece/ oppressid bi Tarquin slouh hirsilf.]¹

- B**UT at Lucrece stynte I will a while, Yet, after all, I
 It were pite hir story for to hide, will pause at
 Or slouthe the penne of my reud[e] stile, Lucrece. It
 But for hir sake alle materis set a-side. 1004 would be a
 Also my lord bad I sholde abide, pity not to tell
 By good auys at leiser to translate her story, and,
 The doolful processe off hir pitous fate. besides, my
 1008 lord bade me
 do it.
- Folwyng the traxis off Collucyus, So, following
 Which wrot off hir a declamacioun Collucius, I'll
 Most lamentable, most doolful, most pitous, describe how
 Wher he descryueth the dolerous tresoun she was taken
 1012 unawares and
 outraged.
- Off hir constreyned fals oppressioun,
 Wrouht & compassid bi vnwar violence,
 The liht ontroublid off hir cleer conscience.

986. Remembre R. 987. Eneas] encres B, encrece J,
 Encrece H, Encres H 5, encros R 3, Eneas R, Aenee P.
 988. his] in his H. 991. fill] ful R. 992. Wheroff R.
 993, 94. memoire, veyngloire B.
 999. compared] compacid R. 1001. be hym] befor N.
 1003. for] om. H.
 1007. at] bi H. 1008. hir] his R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 42 recto.

- Her father was Spurius, her husband Collatine; Sextus Tarquin was the cause of her death.
- Hir fader whilom callid Spurius, 1016
 Hir worthi husbonde named Collatyn,
 Which bi the luxure & tresoun odious
 And vicious outrage of Sextus, proud Tarquin,
 Oppressid was & brouht onto hir fyn. 1020
 Whos dedli sorwe in Inglissh for to make,
 Off pitous routhe my penne I feele quake.
- Tarquin came upon her like a thief in the night with a naked sword in his hand,
- This said Tarquyn, this euel aused knyht,
 This sclaunderid man, most hatful for his deede, 1024
 Cam lich a theeff, alas, vpon a nyht
 With naked suerd, whan no man took non heede,
 Vpon Lucrece, she quakyng in hir dreede,
 Liggyng abedde ferr from hir folkes all, 1028
 And knew no refuge for helpe for to call.
- and said that if she would not yield to him, he would find means to destroy her good name forever.
- He manacyng in his froward entent,
 On hir beholdyng with a furious cheer,
 That with his suerd[e], but she wolde assent, 1032
 Hire and a boy he wolde prente ifeer,
 Such on as was most ougli off maner,
 Most onlikli off persone and off fame:
 Thus he hir thratte for to sclaunder hir name. 1036
- So there was no help for it. Next morning she told her husband all, and, requesting him to do vengeance, said
- But his entent[e] whan she dede feele,
 And sauh no mene ageyn hir woful chaunce,
 The morwen afftir she list nothyng concele,
 Tolde hir husbonde hooli the gouernaunce, 1040
 Hym requeryng for to vengauce
 Vpon this crym, saide lik a trewe wiff,
 She wolde hir herte percen with a knyff.
- In this mater this was hir fantasie: 1044
- that she would take her own life, as the lesser evil.
- Bet was to deie than to lyue in shame,
 And lasse wikke, to putte in iupartie
 Hir mortal bodi than hir good[e] fame.
 Whan honour deieth, farweel a manys name! 1048
 Bet it were out off this liff disseuere,
 Than sclaunderous fame to slen a man for euere.

1017. Cellatyne R.

1018. luxurie R, P, luxury H, R 3.

1033. prente] present R, R 3.

1039. morwen] morowe R, morow R 3, P, morn H, J, morwyn H 5.

1042. this] his H.

1045. Bettir R. 1046. wikke] wikkid was R.

1049. Bettir R.

- But to that purpos hir husbonde seide nay,
 Hir fader also was therto contrarie,*
 1052 Makyng a promys, withoute mor delay,
 To do vengauce how thei wil nat tarie.
 To hir declaryng with resouns debonarie,
 Vnder these wordis trouthe & riht conserued,
 1056 To slen hirsilff she hath nothyng disserued:
- [“My dere Lucrece, tempeste the nat at al,
 We knowe thy menyng and thy clene entent,
 Thy vertu prevyd in especial,
 1060 Which yevith to vs a ful pleyn argument,
 Vn-to thavoutour thow gaff nevir* assent,
 And for a more singuleer evydence,
 Cryest eue^{re} to punyssh^e his greet offence. 1064
- Lyst nat cese, but eue^{re} theron abydest,
 And al counfort doost fro thy-sylff refuse;
 Thyng that was secre, in covert thow nat hydest,
 1068 But rygerously thavoutour doost accuse,
 Wheer expert vertu thy renoun doth* excuse.
 Thy wyffly trouthe can bern also wnesse
 By cleer repoot to vs of thy clenness.
- For in the eyen of folkys ferre and neer,
 1072 The glorye and honour of wyffly chastite
 Hath to this day with bryghte beemys cleer
 In thy persone enlvmyned this cyte.
 For bothe in opyn and also in secre 1076
 The fame hath flouryd of thy chaast[e] name,
 Fre fro thatwytyng of ony spot of blame.
- We can our-sylff recordyn and expresse,
 How thy delyght and thyn hertly plesaunce
 Was to worshepe wyffly sobirnesse, 1080
 And to werreye al change and varyaunce,
 Lyk a lanterne set vp of constaunce,
 Or lyk a merour, in eue^{ry} mannys syght,
 1084 Off good exauple to yive al othir lyght.
- But Collatine
 and her father
 said no, prom-
 ising to do
 vengauce at
 once.
- “My dear
 Lucrece, do not
 be troubled, we
 know your
 virtue.
- “You cry out
 on this offence
 without com-
 fort, you conceal
 nothing from
 us, you have
 always been a
 model of wifely
- propriety, we
 know ourselves
 that you are a
- lantern, a
 mirror of con-
 stancy.

1052, 54, 55. contraire, taire, debonaire B.

1055. resoun H. 1056. these] ther H.

1058. *The following six stanzas are omitted in B, H, J, H 5, P.**The text is supplied from Harley 1766, fol. 102 recto.*

1058. the] om. R.

1062. nevir] nevir thyn Harley 1766.

1069. doth] doost Harley 1766.

1077. hath] om. R.

1078. thatwytyng] the awaytyng R.

- "Don't you remember how Tarquin and I found you not long ago virtuously occupied amidst your maidens,
 My trewe Lucrece, hastow nat in mynde,
 Nat yoore agoon, in verray sekirnesse,
 How thavoutour and I the did[e] fynde 1088
 Amyd thy women in vertuous besynesse
 Occupied, — a tokne of stedfastnesse,
 Therby concludyng of trouthe and of resoun,
 Modir of vertu is occupacyoun. 1092
- making them embroider in soft wooll, without thought of evil?
 I fond the thanne, as I haue do ful offte,
 Among thy maydenys besily sittyng,
 To make hem werke vpon wollys soffte,
 In ther werkyng hem womanly cherysshyng. 1096
 On vicious lust ful smal was thy thynkyng;
 Wherefore, thow shuldyst of resoun advertyse,
 Tatempre thy dool in more tendir wyse:]
- "You were trapped like a fowl in a snare, and you think your good name is lost.
 For sodenli and also onauised, 1100
 As a fowl is trappid in a snare,
 Be onwar fraude vpon the practised,
 Thou were deceyued, pleyntli to declare,
 Hauyng this conceit, hard is to repare 1104
 The name off hem which falsli be diffamed,
 Whan wrong report the[r] hih renoun hath shamed.
- "But this is impossible.
 Touchyng thi persone, I dar afferme & seyn,
 That it were a maner impossible, 1108
 And lik a thyng which neuer yit was seyn,
 That thi worshepe was founde coruptible,
 But stedfast ay and indyuysible,
 Ondepartid in vertu and maad strong, 1112
 And now desirous tauenge thi pitous wrong.
- "We will be avenged on your wrong.
 On thyn iniurie we shal auengid be,
 Considred first the dedli heuynesse
 Which thou suffredist bi gret aduersite, 1116
 Whan thauoutour thi* beute dede oppresse,
 And reioishyng bi a fals gladnesse,
 Maugre thi will[e], as a theeff be nyht
 The encoumbred off veray force & myht. 1120

1091. 2nd of] *om.* R.

1092. of] and Harley 1766.

1096. hem womanly] womanly hem R.

1100. also] al H. 1104. is] it is R.

1106. ther] the J, H, R 3, H 5, P.

1113. now] not H.

1114. shal] shullen R.

1117. thi] thei B.

- But yiff thou woldist leue al thi moornyng [p. 102] "Only restrain
 And restreyne thyn inportable wo, your sorrow
 Thou sholdist seen so egal a punshyng and you will
 Vpon thi moste froward mortal fo, see exemplary
 To warne alle othre, thei shal no mor do so, 1124 punishment
 In chastisyng off fals auoutrie, dealt to your
 The and thi renoun off riht to magnefie. enemy, as a
 "His unbridled
 1128 youth did not
 Thouh his youthe onbridled wente at large, prejudice your
 So for tafforce a celi innocent? honesty;
- Whos wikkednesse ouhte to bere the charge, 1132
 And we off riht thi conscience discharge.
 The ioie onleefful off his fals plesaunce,
 With double palme thyn honour doth auauunce.
- Conceyue and see, o thou my Lucrece,
 How that resoun and good discrecioun
 1136 Sholde thi trouble & thi mournyng cese,
 Off riht restreyne thyn opynyoun, reason and dis-
 So reklesli to do punycioun, cretion both
 With knyf on honde to slen thisilff, alas! demand that
 1140 For othres gilt, and dedist no trespas. you should not
 Lat be, Lucrece, lat been al thi dool, sacrifice your
 Cese thi compleynt & thi wo restreyne. life for an-
 Sholde I fro the lyue alone al sool, other's gilt.
 And thi deth perpetuelli compleyne?
 To putte thi fader in inportable peyne, —
 Off our weelfare be nat so rek[e]les, 1144
 To deie and leue our childre moodirles. "Lay aside
 Off prudence eek thou ouhtest for to see your sorrow,
 And aduertise onli off resoun, Lucrece, and do
 Thouh off force thi bodi corrupt be, not be so reck-
 1148 Thi soule inward and thyn entencioun. less of our
 Fraunchised been from al corrupcioun. welfare!
 Offens is noon, considre in thyn entent,
 But will and herte yiue therto ful consent.
 Thou were nakid in thi bed liggynge,
 1152 Alone, onwar, slepyng and void off myht, "Your soul is
 Suspecioules al off his comyng, free from all
 1156 it is not sur- corruption;
 prising that a
 weak woman
 should be over-
 come by a
 strong man.

1122. Importable H.

1131. ouhte to] of riht ouht R. 1132. off riht] also R.

1133. fals] hertly R. 1140. on] in R.

1142. thi] this R. 1144. al] and R. 1146. importable H.

1151. corruptid H. 1158. al] as H, H 5, R 3—Suspiciousles P.

That tyme namli, because that it was nyht.
 A feerful woman, and he an hardi knyht, 1160
 Al-be-it so onknyhtli was his deede,
 With nakid suerd tassaile thi womanheede.

"Yet I know
 that for all his
 strength he
 never could
 compel your
 heart to yield.

He myhte thi bodi be force weel oppresse
 Be sleiht weies that he hadde souht; 1164
 But weel wot I, for al his sturdynesse,
 He myhte neuer ha[ue] maistri off thi thouht.
 The bodi yolde, the herte yald hym nouht.
 Ye wer[en] tweyne, thou feeble & he riht strong, 1168
 Thi trouthe afforced, he werkere off the wrong.

"What is more
 praiseworthy
 than the con-
 trast between
 his fraud and
 your constancy?

Where myhtistou ha[ue] grettere price or laude,
 Al riht considred, trouthe and equite:
 First countirpeised his force & sleiht fraude, 1172
 Thanne to perseuere in femynyte
 With thouht onchaungid, & in fragilite
 Off womanheed to haue an herte stable, —
 What thyng in the myht be mor comendable? 1176

"We know well
 that the tyrant
 found you more
 like an image
 of stone than a
 being of flesh
 and blood.

It is weel knowe thou were off herte ay oon,
 To all fals lustis contraire in gouernaunce,
 Mor lik an ymage korue out off a ston,
 Than lik a woman flessfli off plesaunce 1180
 The tirant fond the in cheer & contenaunce,
 Which euer afftir be womanli victorie*
 Shal be ascryued to thyn ences off glorie.

"Your father
 and I have
 both excused
 you, so do not
 think of killing
 yourself.

Thi fadir Brutus hath the weel excusid, 1184
 Misilff also, thi blood & thi kynreede, —
 On this mater lat no mor be musid.
 To sle thisilff or do thi sidis bleede,
 Certis, Lucrece, thou hast ful litil neede; 1188
 It were gret wrong be al our iugement
 To spare a tirant and slen an innocent.

"If you do, it
 will seem to
 some that you
 were guilty;

Thi-silff to moordre, to summe it wolde seeme
 Thou were gilti, wher-as thou art cleene. 1192
 Dyuers wittis dyuersli wolde* deeme,
 Reporte thyng thou neuer* dedist meene.
 For which thou shalt pacientli susteene,

1160. feerdful R. 1164. out souht R.

1165. sturdynesse] worthynesse H.

1169. Thi] The R — he] of R.

1174. &] om. R — fragilige R. 1182, 83. victoire, gloire B.

1186. this] thi H — mor] man H.

1193. wolde] will B, R 3, wil J, P, wyl H 5.

1194. And reporte R — thou neuer] that thou neuer R —
 neuer] non B, J, none P (which thou noon did meen R 3).

- Till thi chast[e] wifflī innocence 1196
 May seen hym punished for his violence.
- Folk wil nat deeme a persone innocent, 1200
 Which wilfulli, whan he is nat coupable, for folk will not hold a person innocent who wilfully yields himself to death;
 Yildith hymself to deth be iugement,
 And neuer afforn was off no gilt partable.
 His owne doom, vpon hymself vengable,
 Causeth the people, thowh ther report be nouht,
 To deeme a thyng that neuer was doon nor thouht. 1204
- To been auengid vpon thyn owne liff, [p. 103] and if you did this you would be greatly to blame."
 In excusyng off thi dedli diffame,
 To shewe thou art a trewe parfit wiff,
 Wenying be deth to gete the a name, — 1208
 In this deuyth thou art gretli to blame,
 Wher thou yit knowest thyn honour cleerli shyne,
 To yiue the people mater to deuyne."
- ¶ And with that woord Lucrece dede abraide, 1212 With that word Lucrece answered, "Let be, my husband and my father.
 Ful dedli pale bothe off look and cheer,
 To them ageyn, euene thus she saide:
 "Lat be, husbonde, lat be, my fader deer,
 Spekith no mor to me off this mateer, 1216
 List men dempte, in hyndryng off my name,
 I dradde deth mor than fals diffame.
- Your counsail is, I shal my liff conserue 1220 "Your counsel is that I shall live in sorrow; but it is less wrong to die than ever to languish in woe.
 To sorwe and sclaudre, but to no gladnesse;
 But lasse wikke is at an hour to sterue
 Than euer langwisshe in sorwe & heuynesse.
 Deth maketh an eende off al worldli distresse;
 And it was said sithe[n] ful yore ago, 1224
 Bet is to deie than euer to lyue in wo.
- Whan that worshepe in any creature 1228 "When honour is slain, it is better to endure death.
 Is slayn and ded be sclaud[e]rous report,
 Bet is off deth the dreedful peyne endure,
 Than be fals noise ay luye in disconfort,
 Wher newe & newe diffame hath his resort,

1204. nor] no R.

1218. deth mor] more deth R. 1219. my liff I shal H.

1221. wikkyd R.

1224. said] om. R — sithen] sithe J, P, sythen H 5 — yore] longe R 3, yeere H 5.

1225, 28. Bettir R. 1229. disconfort H.

1230. diffame] fame R, H.

- Neuer deieth, but quekith be thoutrage
Off hatful tungen & venymous language. 1232
- "Do your best to protect wifely chastity by taking vengeance on the adulterer. Doth your deuer to halwe & make stable
The chast[e] chaumbres off wifli gouernaunce;
For in this cas yiff ye be variable
On fals auoutri for to do vengauce, 1236
Ther shal folwe euerlastyng remembraunce,
How trewe spousaile, as ye han herd deuysed,
In your cite was broke and nat chastised.
- "If you are found negligent, licentiousness will run unbridled at large. Yiff ye be founde in such cas necligent 1240
To punyssh e auoutours, off riht as is *your* charge,
Thoruh your slouthe, as ye were off assent,
Luxure onbridled shal renne abrod at large.
Who shal thanne your conscience discharge, 1244
Or what woman stonde in sekirnesse,
Off Lucrece afforced the clenness?
- "What joy would you have, dear husband, in loving me after Tarquin's horrid crime?" O deere husbonde, what ioie sholde it be
To thyn estat, in ony maner place, 1248
Lich as thi wiff [for] to cherisshe me,
Or in thyn armys me goodli to enbrace,
The gilt horrible considred and trespace
Be Tarquyn doon — alas and welaway! — 1252
Which in my persone may neuer be wasshe away?
- "And, my father, how can you call me daughter after this day?" And fader myn, how sholdestou me calle,
Afftir this day, thyn owne douhter deere,
Which am, alas, refus off women alle, 1256
That to thi plesaunce was whilom most enteere,
Withynne thi hous when I dede lere,
Bi cleer exauple off manyfold doctryne,
Al that partened to vertuous disciplyne? 1260
- "Having lost my virtue, I dare not even behold my own children!" Which I haue lost now in my daies olde,
Dispeired it to recure ageyn.
Myn owne childre, I dar hem nat beholde,
Because the wombe in which that thei ha[ue] leyn 1264
Diffouled is and pollut in certeyn,
Which was toforn in chastite conserued.
Chastisith thauoutour, as he hath disserued!

1241. avoutrers R.

1243. Luxury H, R 3, Luxurie P — renne abrod] goone aboute R, ryn about R 3.

1245. schall stonde R. 1249. for] om. J.

1258. thi] thyne R, thyn H, R 3, H 5. 1262. Dispeired R.

1264. the] that the R — haue] om. R. 1265. pollutid H.

- And for my part to speke in woordes fewe, 1268 "Nor have I
Lenger to lyue I ha[ue] no fantasie; the desire to
For wher sholde I out my face shewe, live longer:
Or dore appeere in any cumpanye, defouled, I dare
Sithe a dirk spotte off fals auoutrie not appear in
Shal euer encrece*, wher it be fals or trewe, any company.
- 1272
Into myn hyndryng the sclaudre to renewe?
- Lust afforcid hath a fals appetit,
Of freelte includid* in Nature; 1276 "Lust afforcid
Maugre the will, ther folweth a delit, has a false ap-
As summe folk seyn, in eueri creature. petite, delight
Good fame lost, ful hard is to recure; follows, even
And sithe I may myn harmys nat redresse, though it be
To you in open my gilt I will confesse. 1280 against the
will;
- Al-be I was ageyn my will oppressid, and as such
Ther was a maner constreyned lust in deede, was my experi-
Which for noun power myht nat be redressid, 1284 ence, I would
For febilnesse I stood in so gret dreede. rather kill my-
For which offence deth shal be my meede, self with some
Sith leuer I haue with sum egge tool edged weapon
To sle mysilff, than lyue in sclaudre & dool. 1288 than live in
disgrace.
- O fader myn, spare and ha[ue] pite! [p. 104] "The gods and
And deere husbonde, rewe on myn offence! goddesses of
Goddis & goddessis callid off chastite, chastity grant
To my trespace graunteth an indulgence; this indulgence,
For off my gilt to make a recompence, that death may
Wher that Venus gat in me auantage, redress my
Deth shal redresse & chastise myn outrage. 1292 wrong-doing.
- For yiff I sholde make a delay 1296 "If I delay,
To perce my brest bi sharpnesse off a knyff, men will think
Men wolde deeme and sey fro day to day, that I loved
To make my sclaudre mor open & mor ryff, life more than
How that I was mor tendir off my lyff 1300 my good name.
- Than off my worshep, which wer to gret a shame, —
To loue my liff mor than my good[e] name!

1270. out my face] my face out R.

1273. euer encrece] euermore B, euermore J — wher] whedir H.

1274. renewe] remewe H.

1276. includid] includyng R, concludid hoolly H, encludid hoolly R 3, *the word includid is repeated in B, J, H 5.*

1281. my gilt in open R. 1282. Al-be] Also R.

1283. Ther] the H. 1284. noun] no R.

1287. Sith] And R. 1290. deere] trew H.

1291. callid] om. R. 1297. a] om. H.

- "No witness is
so good as
blood shed with
a knife. In this mateer no witsesse is so good,
To putte a-way al fals suspecioun, 1304
As with a knyff to sheede myn herte blood:
I myht nat make a bet purgacioun
To alle folk that ha[ue] discrecioun,
Than fynali be my deth texcuse 1308
The gilt horrible, off which men me accuse.
- "Go forth, my
soul, before the
judges infernal,
who will decide
that my con-
science was
pure; Go foorth my soule, peur & inmortal,
Cheeff[e] witsesse off myn innocence,
Tofor tho iuges which be infernal: 1312
First Mynos, kyng, to deeme my conscience,
With Radamanthus to yeuen a sentence
Lik my desert, that it may be seene,
In wifli trouthe how that I was cleene. 1316
- and let my
blood stir and
excite the
people to exile
all kings for
Tarquin's sake. Thou ertheli body, which thoruh thi fairnesse
Were to auoutri ful gret occasioun,
Off thi blood sheede out the red[e]nesse, 1320
And be thi sides late it raile down;
Stere and excite the peeple off this toun
To doon ther deuer, withynne a litil while,
For loue off Tarquyn, alle kynges to exile.
- "Do not delay
your ven-
geance." And first I praie, myn husbonde most enteere, 1324
Off this vengauce to make no delay;
With helpe & socour off my fader deere
To punysshe thauoutour, in al the haste ye may;
Let hym take his wages and his pay, 1328
Lik as ye seen, and pleynli now conceyue,
For his offence the deth I do receyue."
- And suddenly,
before they
knew what she
was doing, she
took a knife and
pierced her
heart and
fell down dead
at their feet. And sodenli, or thei myhte aduerte,
She took a knyff, and with gret violence, 1332
Thoruh the brest, euene onto the herte
She made it glide, — ther was no resistance.
Ful pale and ded fill down in ther presence.
And bi occasioun* off this pitous deede, 1336
Tarquyn exilid, and hooli his kenreede.

1306. myht] may R — bet] bettir R.

1308. Than] & H — texcuse] excuse R.

1309. accuse] excuse R.

1310. peur] pore R — &] & and R — Immortall H.

1312. tho] the R, H, R 3. 1319. thi] the H.

1326. &] om. R.

1328. pay] play R, pray H.

1330. do] now R.

1336. bi occasioun] boccasoun B, bi the occasion R.

For which[e] cause, be record off writyng,
 Was ther neuer in Rome the cite,
 Afftir that day no man crownyd kyng, 1340
 As in cronycles ye may beholde and see.
 Thus for luxury[ye] and ther cruelte,
 Ther tyrannye and fals extorsioun,
 Thei wer exilid out off Rome toun. 1344

For this reason
 there was never
 after a king in
 Rome.

[How Rome afftir was gouerned and virginea bi hir
 fadir slayn.]¹

GOUERNED afftir bi other officeres,
 As is remembred in Titus Lyuyus,
 Callid decemvir of dyuers cronycleres;
 Among[es] which ther was on Appius, 1348
 A iuge ontrew, proud and luxurious,
 Which thuruh the cite, the story berth witesse,
 Behatid was for his gret falsnesse.
 And onys it fill, as he caste his look 1352
 Vpon a maide most inli fair off siht,
 A fals desir withynne his herte he took
 Hir to disuse, ageyn al skele and riht.
 And she was douhter to a worthi knyht, 1356
 Ful manli founde in his deedis all,
 And Virginius the Romeyns dede hym call.
 Whos goodli douhter, the story doth us lere,
 Was afftir hym for his noble fame 1360
 Virginia callid, most goodli & enteere;
 And for this cause she bar the same name.
 But Appius ful gretli was to blame,
 Which hath conspired thuruh his gret falsnesse, 1364
 Yiff that he myhte hir beute to oppresse.
 This iuge ontrew bothe in thouht and deede,
 Off lawe onrihtful souhte out occasioun;
 Made a sergeante off his to procede, 1368
 Ageyn this maide to take an accioun,
 Cleymed hir his seruante bi fals collusioun.
 And this was doon be Appius off entent
 That he on hir myht yiue a iugement. 1372

Rome was
 afterwards
 governed by
 decemvirs,
 among whom
 was Appius,
 hated for his
 dishonesty.

He once saw a
 young girl,
 daughter of
 Virginius, of
 whom he
 wished to have
 possession.

Her name was
 Virginia.

This dishonest
 judge caused a
 sergeant-at-law
 to proceed
 against her on a
 false charge.

1346. in] bi H, by R 3.

1366. and] in R. 1368. to] go R.

1369. maide] mateer R. 1370. Cleymed] Cleym H.

1372. on] of H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 43 verso.

so that he might find opportunity to accomplish his desire.

And be this mene, in his fals delit,
Thouhte he myhte hir beute best disuse,
So for taccomplishe his flesshli appetit,
She beyng feeble thaccioun to refuse.

[p. 105]

1376

Wherupn hir fader gan to muse,
Fulli conceyued off Appius the maner,
In hir diffence wrouhte as ye shal heer.

After Appius had decided against her, her father took her to one side and stabbed her to the heart.

Whan Appius hadde youe his iugement
Ageyn this maide, which aforn hym stood,
Hir manli fadir, most knyhtli off entent,
Took hir appart, as he thouhte it good,
And with a knyff shadde hir herte blood:
Dempte it better to slen hir in clenness,
Than the tirant hir beute sholde oppresse.

1380

1384

Her chastity was preserved.

Thus hool conserued was hir chastite*
And ondefoulid was hir maydenheede;
For Virginius to keepe hir honeste
Spared no thyng to make hir sides bleede.
But Appius for this horrible deede,
And decemvir, thoruh this onhappi chaunce,
Hadde in that cite neuer afttir gouernaunce.

1388

1392

Appius went to prison and there slew himself.

¶ As the story maketh also menciuon,
Appius, ashamed off this deede,
Slouh hymself[e] fetrid in prisoun:
Off a fals iuge, loo heer the fynal meede!
And tho tribuni in Rome gan succeede,
Twen riht & wrong treuli to discerne,
And Romayn lawes iustli to gouerne.

1396

1400

Thus princes may be overthrown by poor men, who are sometimes ordained by God to chastise the proud.

Men may heer seen as in a merour cleer,
Estatis chaungid for ther gret offensis;
And be sum poore persone synguleer
Pryncis put down from ther magnyficencis,
Which nat considre in ther gret excellencis,
How God ordeyneth his yerde [in] sundri wise,
The poore sumwhile the pompous to chastise.

1404

1379. hir] his H.

1383. it] it was R. 1384. shadde] he shad H.

1387. chastite] virgynyte B, J, R.

1389. honeste] virgynyte H. 1391. this] his R, thi H.

1392. thoruh this] for his H. 1395. this] his R.

1398. Tribunes H — began to R. 1399. Betwene R.

1402. offence R. 1404. magnyficence R.

1405. excellence R.

1406. ordeynyd H, ordeyned R 3 — in] om. H, H 5.

1407. sumwhile] sumtyme R

- ¶ Heeron to shewe exauple anon riht, 1408 as was Pausanias, who slew Philip of Macedon,
 Markid in story for a notable thyng,
 Pausanias, off Grece a manli knyht,
 Off Macedonye slouh Phelipp the kyng
 At a table where he was sitting 1412
 Tween Alisandre and Olimpiades,
 His wrong tauengen, amyddis al the pres.
- ¶ Eek Salmator, a knyht off low degre, and Salmator, who killed
 For wronges doon in especial, 1416 Hasdrubal of Carthage at the River Metaurus.
 Off manli force groundid on equite
 Slouh off Cartage the prynce Hastruball,
 Which brother was onto Duc Hanyball,
 Beside a ryuer, as thei mette in bataile, 1420
 Callid Metaure, which renneth in Ytaile.
- Wherefore, ye Pryncis, yiff ye list longe endure,
 Beth riht weel war, be ye neuer so strong,
 In your lordshepis nat to moche assure 1424
 Off surquedie the poraile to do wrong,
 In your discrecioun conceyuyng euer a-mong,
 Grettest dreed is, that may your staat assaile,
 Whan subieccioun doth in the peple faile. 1428

¶ Lenvoy.

- THIS tragedie declareth in partie,
 What myscheef folweth of extorsioun,
 Eek off spousbrech and of auoutrie
 Be Tarquyn doon thoruh fals oppressioun 1432
 Onto Lucrece withynne Rome toune:
 Kynges exiled for such mys gouernaile
 And fals outrages doon to the poraile.
- Eek Appius, off wilful tirannye, 1436 tyranny and false lust,
 Ageyn Virginia took an accioun,
 Thoruh a fals lust off froward lecherie,
 Blent and fordirked his memorie* & resoun,
 Which was cheeff cause and occasioun 1440
 Whi thestat off dishomme dede faile,
 Thoruh fals outrages doon to the poraile.

1410. Pausamyas R — a] a ful R — manli] notable H.
 1413. Betwene R. 1414. in myddis R. 1422. ye] om. R.
 1427. statis R. 1428. doth] don H. 1432. thoruh] bi R.
 1439. memoire B.
 1441. dishomme] dishome R, H, thi Name (Na in later band)
 H 5, decemvir R 3, Decemuir P.

and especially
outrages done
to the poor.

Kyng Phelipp loste sceptre and regalie
Off Macedonye the famous regeoun, 1444
Onwarli slay[e]n, myd his cheualrie
Sittyng at mete withynne his cheeff dongoun.
And grettest cause off his fallyng down,
Was whan Fortune his pride dede assaile 1448
For fals outrages doon to the poraile.

Even Duke
Hasdrubal, for
all his renown,
was slain by a
servant.

Duk Hastrubal, whom bokis magnefie
Vp to the heuene for his hih renoun,
Whos tryumphes rauht up to the skie, 1452
And hadde al Cartage in his subieccioun, —
Yit was he slayn onwarli be tresoun,
Be a seruant; loo, what doth* disauaile
Treson purposid afor in the poraile! 1456

Noble Princes,
govern your
people pru-
dently; for
nothing can
avail you more
than the re-
spect of the
poor.

Noble Pryncis, your resoun doth applie, [p. 106]
Whiche ouer the peepel ha[ue] dominacioun,
So prudentli to gouerne hem and guie,
That loue and dreed be trewe affeccioun 1460
Preserue ther hertis from fals rebellioun,
Sithe to your hihnesse nothyng may mor preuaile
Than trewe subieccioun expert in the poraile.

[How Ieroboam Kyng of Israel for Idolatrie and
disobediencie cam to mischeues ende.]¹

Of six kings
who next ap-
peered to
Bochas, Jero-
boam spoke first,

NEXT these stories, in Bochas as I fynde, 1464
Ther dede appeere onto his presence
Kynges sexe, hym praieng to ha[ue] mynde
Vpon ther fall be onwar violence
From ther estatis off roial excellence. 1468
And tofor alle, I fynde, that ther cam
Off al Israel kyng Ieroboam.

declaring his
fall with a pale
face.

Onto myn auctour he began* declare
His dedli compleynt with a pale face, 1472
His gret myscheuys and his euel fare,
And how he fill down from his kyngli place
Thoruh gret onhappis, which dede his herte embrace,

1448. Was] om. R.

1449. outrage R. 1451, 52. Vp to] ynto R.

1455. doth] it doth B, H, J, R 3, H 5, P — auaile P.

1461. ther] your R — fals] al R. 1462. nothyng may]
may no thyng R.

1471. began] began to B, H, J, R 3, H 5, P.

1472. fale] ful pale R. 1475. happis R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 44 recto.

- And, as this story pleynli hath deuysed, 1476
 For his offencis how he was chastised.
- An ydolatre* he was, as it is told, 1480
 Reised up auteres, off veray force & myht,
 Set therupon too calueren of peur gold,
 Dede hem worshepe, ageyn al skele & riht,
 Gaff euel exauple in the peeplis siht,
 Whan he dede with fumys and encens
 To fals ydoles ondeu reuerens. 1484
- Fro the temple he made the peeple gon,
 Preestis ordeyned afftir his owne guise,
 Forsook the tribe off Leuy and Aaron,
 And vpon Bethel his offryng gan deuisse. 1488
 And whil he dede onleefful sacrefise,
 God, that weel knew off hym the fals entent,
 Fro Ierusalem a prophete to hym sent.
- Which hym rebuked off his mysgouernaunce, 1492
 And gan the pereiles to hym specefie;
 Told hym afor[n]e, for to do vengau[n]ce
 Off Daid[s] kyn ther sholde come on Iosie,
 Which sholde his preestis, that falsli coude lie, 1496
 Manli destroie, and slen hem alle attonys
 And into asshes brenne hem flessch and bonys.
- And in tokne off ther destruccioun,
 The prophete told among hem all, 1500
 How his auteris sholde bowe down,
 And his ydoles from ther stage fall,
 Whom that foolis ther goddis falsli call,
 Which ha[ue] no power to helpe in no manere, 1504
 For thei may nouter feele, see nor heere.
- Afftir this prophete, Iadan, hadde told
 These said[e] signes pleynli to the kyng,
 His auter fill on pecis manyfold, 1508
1476. this] his R. 1477. offence H. 1478. ydolastre B.
 1479. auteres] Aueteres H.
 1480. Ther vpon sett R — too] om. H — caluys R, calves R 3,
 calues P — peur] cleen H.
 1483. he] that he H. 1489. whil] whan R.
 1493. bi gan R. 1495. Dauyd H, R 3, H 5.
 1502. stages R.
 1505. nouter feele see nor] neither se feele ne heer R — feele
 see] see fele H, P, R 3 — nouter] not R 3.
 1506. Afftir] Afftir þat H. 1508. auteris fylle[n] R.

He was an
 idolater, who
 set up two
 golden calves,

and ordained
 priests in his
 own fashion.

God sent a
 prophet,
 Jadan, to re-
 buke him, say-
 ing that his
 priests would
 be destroyed by
 Joshua,

and that his
 idols, called
 gods by fools,
 would be over-
 thrown.

After Jadan
 had finished
 speaking, the
 altar fell to
 pieces.

And ouerturned bakward his offryng;
 For which the kyng, furiousli lokyng,
 Put foorth his hand, the story maketh mynde,
 Bad his men the prophete take and bynde. 1512

The king was furious, and, stretching out his arm, ordered Jadan to be seized and bound. But suddenly his arm dried up,

And as he his arm rauht out on lengthe,
 Hadde no power it to withdrawe ageyn,
 Wex onweeldi, contract and lost his strengthe.
 And whan the kyng hath these toknys seyn, 1516
 And how the prophete spak no woord in veyn,
 Gretli astonyd, koude sey no more,
 But prai[e]de Iadan his arm for to restore.

and only by Jadan's prayer was it restored.

And be his praier and mediacioun, 1520
 Off his arm, afftir this vengau[n]ce,
 Ther was anon maad restitucioun,
 And off his peyne feelith alegau[n]ce.
 For which the kyng, with ful gret instaunce, 1524
 Requered hym to be so gracious,
 That day tabide and dynen in his hous.

The king then invited Jadan to dine with him, but Jadan refused and went away.

But the prophete wolde nat assente,
 Nouthur with hym to ete nor to drynke; 1528
 Took his asse, and foorth anon he wente,
 On whose departyng the kyng gan sore thynke,
 And fantasies gan in his herte synke,
 Speciali whan he taketh heede 1532
 Off all his toknys, how thei were trewe in deede.

God had commanded him neither to eat nor drink in that city.

God bad Iadan in this gret emprise
 To Ieroboam first whan he was sent,
 Ete nor drynke, in no maner wise, 1536
 In that cite whil he was present;
 But a-nother prophete off entent,
 Ful old and slyh, on the tother side,
 Compellid hath this Iadan to abide. 1540

But one of Jeroboam's false prophets persuaded him to disobey God's commandment,

Hym afforcyng be fals collusioun [p. 107]
 To resorte ageyn to* the cite,
 And to make no contradiccoun
 With hym to dyne off fraternitye, 1544
 To hym affermyng, it may non other be:

1519. for] *om.* R. 1524. ful] *om.* H. 1525. Requeryng H.
 1528. nor to drynke] neithir drynke R.
 1534. Iadan] Iason R. 1535. Ieroboam] Ierusalem R.
 1536. nor] neithir R. 1537. while that R.
 1538. But yit R. 1539. on the tother] vpon that oþer R.
 1542. to] onto B, J — the] that R.

For God sent hym as to his freend and brother,
Tabide with hym & pleynli with non other,

Off freendliheed and trewe affeccoun 1548 and while they
sat at meat
Withynne his hous to shewen his presence,
For a repast and a refeccioun: together, God
said to Jadan,

This Godis will and fulli his sentence.
To whos woordis the prophete gaff credence. 1552
And as thei sat at dyner bothe ifeere,
God onto Iadan seide in this manere:

“For the brekyng off my comaundement,
Thi grete offence and transgressioun, 1556 “For breaking
my command-
ment, thou
That thou hast been so wilful negligent,
Thou shalt endure this punycioun,
Been* al to-torn and rent off a leoun,
And in thi cuntre thou shalt nat recure, 1560
With prophetis to haue thi sepulture.”
thy country.”

Off which[e] tithyng, this Iadan nothyng fayn,
Gan to departe with a ful heuy thouht: Jadan was not
pleased to hear
this, but never-
theless it came
to pass,

Off a leoun myd off the weye slayn; 1564
But his asse harmyd was riht nouht.
A ful gret merueile, yiff it be weel souht,
The leoun sittynge as in ther diffence,
And kept hem bothe from al violence. 1568

Alle these toknys myht[e] nat conuerte
Ieroboam from* his iniquite; and Jeroboam
continued in
his iniquity.
Godis warnyng hym list nat to aduerte,
Nor be his prophete correctid for to be. 1572
Werfore, God wolde that he sholde see
Vengauce folwe, as it fill in deede,
Bothe vpon hym and [on] his kynreede.

A sone he hadde, which fill in gret siknesse, 1576 His son Abijah
fell ill, and he
bade the queen
go disguised to
the prophet
Abijah for ad-
vice.
Callid Abimen, the book doth specefie;
For which the kyng bad the queen hir dresse,
To gon disguised, withoute cumpanye,
Onto a prophete* which callid was Achye, 1580
Hym to requere, treuli for to seye
Whethir the child sholde lyue or deye.

1551. This is R. 1554. in] on H. 1559. Been] Bien B.

1562. tydyngis R. 1563. Began R — ful] om. R.

1564. myd] in the myddis R. 1570. from] for B.

1574. as] riht as R.

1575. on] also on R, om. H, J, R 3, H 5, P.

1580. a] the H — On taprophete B — was] is H — Achye P.

But God
shewed Ahijah
that it was
Jeroboam's
wife, who came
to him,

And in his inward sihte contemplatiff,
God shewed hym bi cleer inspeccioun, 1584
Off Ieroboam how she was the wiff,
For al hir slehti transformacioun.
For nouter fallas nor fals decepcioun
May be to God, but it be parceyued; 1588
For he nys prophetis may nat be deceyued.

and he told her
to inform
Jeroboam, that
since God had
raised him
from a servant
to a king,

She cam to hym in a straunge weede;
At thentryng he callid hir bi hir name:
"Com foorth," quod he, "for it is no neede 1592
To hide thi-silff[e], as it were for shame;
For the trouthe treuli to attame,*
God hath youe me fulli knowlechyng
What thou shalt answeere & seyn onto the kyng. 1596

and as he was
ungrateful and
an idolater,

Sey pley[n]li to hym, & marke it in thi thouht,
In thi repair these woordis rehersyng,
'Sith God hath maad the, & reised the up off nouht,
From a seruau[n]t to regnen as a kyng, 1600
Fro Daudis kyn, most worthi[ly] regnyng,
Partid the kyngdam & youen it onto the,
And thou onkynde theroff canst nothyng see, —

and had for-
gotten God's
goodness to
him,

His grete goodnesse is out off remembraunce, 1604
Fulli forgetyn off thi froward pride;
In fals[e] goddis put thyn affiaunce,
God aboue falsli set a-side,
Wherefore from the anon he shal deuyde 1608
Thy kyngdam hool, withoute mor delay,
And fro thi lyne the crowne take away.

God would take
the kingdom
from him and
his line and let
dogs eat their
carcasses.

And for thou hast to thi confusioun
Thi feith, onfeithful, to false goddis take, 1612
Wrongli refused thi relegeoun
Off God aboue, & pley[n]li hym forsake,
This thende which that thou shalt make:
The and thi kyn no man may socoure; 1616
Fleisch, skyn and bon houndis shal deuoure.

1583. his] hir H. 1587. neithir R.

1589. nys] ne his R, J, P, nor his H, R 3 — he nys] henys H 5.

1591. hir callid R. 1592. for] for certis R.

1594. tattame B. 1596. answeere & seyn] make answeere R.

1597. pley[n] R. 1598. these] ther H. 1601. worthi J.

1603. theroff] om. R.

1607. God] And god R — settist R.

1609. Thy] this H, The R. 1610. schal take R.

1615. This is the eende R — that] om. R.

And at then tryng hom to thi cite,
 Thi sone and his, thou shalt fynde hym ded,
 Off al his kyn thouh ther was non but he 1620
 Founde veray good[e]; tak heeroff good heed.' ”
 Off which answer the queen fill in gret dreed,
 Entryng the cite in especiall,
 Hir child was ded, & lay cold be the wall. 1624

Off this warnyng the kyng took non heed, [p. 108] The king
 But made hym redi with ful gret apparaile, — didn't care, and
 Fourti thousand with hym he dede leed set out to fight
 Off manli men armed in plate & maile, 1628 his soldiers that
 With kyng Abias to haue a gret bataile. God would not
 The which Abias, that was off Iuda kyng, allow an idola-
 Onto his people saide at ther meetyng: ter to defeat
 them,

“O noble knyhtis, hath o thyng in memorie,* 1632
 No man venquysshith, platli to conclude,
 With gret people, nor getith hym victorie
 With nombres hepid nor gret multitude;
 Fals ydolatres, God will hem dillude, 1636
 Nat suffre his seruauntis that be trewe & sad
 Off mescreantis to been ouerlad.

Tryumphe is non founde off newe or old
 In these ydoles off ston nor siluer sheene, 1640
 Nor in caluere off metal maad or gold,
 Youe to that parti which ontreuili meene.
 And sithe that God knoweth our quarel cleene,
 Ther is non hope, force non nor myht 1644
 With hem that grounde hem a cause ageyn[e]s ryht.

Hope off victorie* stant on rihtwisnesse,
 Off them that caste ther synful liff tamende,
 And list forsake wrong and al falsnesse, 1648
 And with hool herte onto the Lord entende;
 Which shal this day his grace to you sende,

1622. queen] kyng R.

1624. Hir] His R — wall] way R.

1626. ful] om. R.

1629. kyng] om. H, R 3 — to haue a gret bataile] to haven
in bataile R.

1632. hath] haue R. 1632, 34. memoire, victoire B.

1634. nor] neithir R, om. H — hym] om. R, J, P.

1636. ydolatreris R. 1639. Tryumpfes R — or] nor R.

1640. nor] & R. 1641. caluere] caluys R, calues P, R 3.

1644. nor] ne R. 1646. victoire B.

1649. hool] the hool R. 1650. his] om. H.

Our trewe cause iustly* to termyne.”
And thus Abias gan his tale fyne. 1652

Fifty thousand
of Jeroboam's
men were slain,

His preestis gan ther trumpes for to blowe;
And kyng Abias thoruh his hih renoun
Gaff to his peepel, bothe to hih & lowe,
Ful manli confort and consolacioun. 1656
And fifti thousand be computacioun
Wer slayn that day, which ful proudli cam
Vpon the parti off kyng Ieroboam.

and Jeroboam
and all his line
were eaten by
dogs.

And al the parti off Ieroboam, 1660
And al that wer[e]n off his lyne born,
Afftir this bataile onto myscheeff cam,
Whan thei were slayn, with houndis al to-torn,
As the prophete hadde hem told befor. 1664
But for the kyng took theroff non heed,
With sodeyn vengauce God quit hym his meed.

[How Zareas Kyng of Ethiope was slayn in bataile.] ¹

After Jeroboam,
Zerah, king of
Ethiopia and
India, appeared,
almost blind for
weeping, for he
had been de-
spoiled of his
wealth and
slain in battle
by King Asa.

AFFTIR hym to Bochas dede appeere,
Next in ordre pleyntli, as I fynde, 1668
On Zareas, with a sorweful cheere.
And he was kyng off Ethiope and Ynde,
Whos eyen wern almost with wepyng blynde,
Praieng myn auctour, his onhappi chaunce 1672
With othre woful to putte in remembraunce,
And that he wolde recorden be scripture
His sodeyn fall and dolorous distresse,
And his diffamous hatful disconfiture, 1676
With the dispoilyng off his gret richesse,
And how kyng Asaph, thoruh his hih noblesse,
Myd* his peepel, as he dede hym assaile,
Hath hym venquysshid & slay[e]n in bataile. 1680

1651. iustly] treuli B, truly J, P, trewly H 5.

1652. his tale] take his R. 1656. manli] many H.

1659. kyng] om. R.

1669. 30reas H.

1671. with wepyng almost R.

1672. his] that his H.

1676. diffamous] famous R — scomfiture H.

1678. hih] om. H — Asaph] Asa P.

1679. Myd] And B, J, H 5, P, Amyd R 3 In myddis R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 45 recto.

[How Adab kyng of Ierusalem lost sceptre & crowne.]¹

OFF Israel than cam the woful kyng
 Callid Adab, ful pitousli wepyng,
 Onto Bochas his compleynt rehersyng,
 How kyng Basa, be subtil fals werkyng,
 With sodeyn slauhtre caused his fallyng,
 Whan Fortune gan falsli [on hym] frowne,
 And took oniustli from hym sceptre & crowne.

Next, King Adab came to complain of his sudden slaughter by King Baasha.

1684

[How the vengeable prince Zambrias set a toure on fire and brent himsilf.]¹

NEXT cam Zambrias, a prince [ful] vengable, 1688
 Which slouh kyng Helam be fals tresoun,
 That fond also Fortune ful onstable;
 For this Zambrias off entencioun
 Hath moordrid hym withynne the cheeff dongoun 1692
 Off his castell, with a ful gret[e] route,
 As he onwarli laide a siege aboute.

Zimri, a revengeful prince, who slew Elah,

But Amaryn, a prynce off ful gret myht,
 Cam into Tharse, a famous strong cite,
 And cast hym pleynli, lik a worthi knyht,
 On this Zambrias auenged for to be,
 Hym to destroie withoute merci or pite.
 But into a* tour as Zambrias wente,
 Set it affire, and so hymsilff he brente.

burnt himself up in a tower to escape punishment at the hands of Omri.

1696

1700

[Off Kyng Achab & Iezabel his wiff.]²

WYTH sihhes sore & wepyng inportable,
 Cam kyng Achab onto Iohn Bochas,
 Whos hertli sorwe was incomparable.
 And, compleynyng, ful offte [he] seide, alas!
 Besechyng hym to write his woful cas,

King Ahab, with importable weeping, besought Bochas to write his and his daughter Athaliah's story.

1704

1681. woful] woful R.
 1682. Adas R, Nadab P. 1688. ful] om. H, J.
 1689. fals] ful fals H, R 3, H 5. 1695. Amri P.
 1696. into] to H — Tharsa P. 1697. worthi] manly R.
 1699] om. R. 1700. inta B, in a R.
 1701. he] om. R, R 3.
 1704. hertli] erthly H. 1705. ful] of R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 45 recto.² MS. J. leaf 45 verso.

- Compile his fallyng and the fate ifeere
 Off Athalia his owne douhter deere. 1708
- He was a wicked man and had a cruel and lustful wife called Jezebel.
 To God about most contrarious [p. 109]
 This Achab was in al his gouernaunce,
 And hadde a wiff cruel and lecherous
 Callid Iezabel, which set al hir plesaunce 1712
 On Godis prophetis for to do vengauce:
 In the Bible ther malice men may see,
 And ydolatres* thei were, bothe he and she.
- Both were idolaters, and God first punished them with three years of drouth.
 God for ther trespassis, as it was weel seyn, 1716
 Afforshewed be trewe prophesie,
 Sente thre yeer nouthen deuh nor reyn
 Vpon the erthe ther greyn to multeplie;
 Till eftt ageyn, bi praier off Helie, 1720
 Holsum watres from heuene gan descende,
 Which gaff hem cause ther cursid liff tamende.
- But Jezebel, an accursed woman, slew 300 prophets, besides Naboth for his vineyard.
 But his wiff, that cursid Iezabel,
 To ech thyng hatful which that was dyuyne, 1724
 An hundred prophetis she slouh in Israel,
 Onto Baal for thei ne* wolde enclyne;
 And she also slouh Naboth for his vyne,
 Thoruh whos outrage & fals oppressioun 1728
 Achab was brouht to his confusioun.
- Not long after this, Ahab, fatally wounded in his chariot, was devoured by dogs as Elijah prophesied,
 Off his enmyes outraied in bataile,
 With a sharp arwe cauh his fatal wounde,
 Till al his blood be bledyng dede raile* 1732
 Aboute his chaar, with many dropis rounde;
 That the wordis wer ful trewe founde
 Off Helias, which told hym, as it stood,
 That hungri houndis sholde likke his blood. 1736
- and Jezebel fell out of a tower. Beware, Princes, of false counsel given by your wives.
 In a cite, than callid Iezrael,
 Doun from a tour ioynyng to the wall,
 The said[e] queen, callid Iezabel,
 Was ouercast & hadde a dedli fall. 1740
 Touchyng these myscheuys, for she was cause of all,

1707. his] þe H — the] his R.

1710. al] om. R. 1714. may men R.

1715. ydolastres B, ydolatreres R. 1716. ther] his H.

1718. neithir dewe ne R. 1723. that] this R.

1726. ne] nat B, H 5 — wold not R, wolde nat J, would not P.

1731. With] Off R. 1732. raile] fayle B, H, R, J, H 5, R 3,

P, & other MSS. and prints.

1737. In] And in R — than] om. R — þat was callid Iezael H.

1738. the] a R.

Bewar ye Pryncis, remembryng al *your* lyues,
Teschewen fals counsail youen by your wyues.

[Off queene Gatholia for hir tyrannye slayn.]¹

NEXT to Achab in ordre dede sue 1744 Athaliah, who
Gatholia, with doolful contenance followed Ahab,
Bochas besechyng, as she thouht it due,*
Hir sodeyn fall to putte in remembraunce,
Sours and cheff roote off sorwe and myschaunce, 1748
Vsurpacioun and off fals couetise,
Lik as hir story heeraftir shal deuse.

She was vpreised be fauour in thre thynges;
For fader, brother, and also hir husbonde 1752
Wer in that tyme echon crownyd kynges,
With sceptre and suerd, as ye shal vnderstonde,
Many emprises ther daies took on honde,
And how Fortune ther hihnesse dede assaile, 1756
I caste shortli to make rehersaile.

She fill off Fortune in thunhappi boundis,
First whan hir fader was with an arwe ded,
His blood vplikked with cruel hungri houndis, 1760
A-boute his chaar[e] rennyng down ful red.
His bodi pale lay, who that took heed,
Lik a careyn, naked and dispoiled,
With foul blak erthe myd the feeld isoiled. 1764

Cause of a-nother onhappi heuynesse
And off hir dedli desolacioun,
Was, the people felli dede hem dresse
Off Arabie in ther rebelloun 1768
Ageyn hir husbonde, off entencioun
To robbe his tresour to ther auauntage,
And his richesse be outraious pillage.

1741. this myscheeff R. 1742. al] of R.

1744. dede] ther did R.

1745. Athalia P — ful doolful R.

1746. she thouht it due] hym thouhte due B.

1748. sorwe and myschaunce] myscheeff & sorowe R.

1752. hir] om. R. 1757. caste] purpose R.

1762. good heed R. 1763. careyn] bareyn R.

1764. foul] ful R, H, full R 3 — myd] in myddis R, amyd

H, R 3, P — isoiled] yspoiled R.

1766. off] om. H. 1767. Was] Was whan R — did felly R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 45 verso.

- and robbed and
slew his sub-
jects. Her
husband was
infected by the
plague and
died,
- Summe off his meyne thei puttyn in prisoun — 1772
Ther was ageyn hem maked no diffence, —
Spared nouthur cite, boruh nor toun,
Slouh man and child be sturdi violence.
Hir lord infect with sodeyn pestilence, 1776
Conceyued fulli bi his maladie,
There was no geyn but he muste [nedis] deie.
- and the
stench of his
body was so
awful that no-
body would
carry him to
his sepulchre.
- Afftir his deth, most wrechchid and odible,
His body corrupt, his bowelis fell down; 1780
Off his careyn the stench was so horrible,
Their infect aboute hym envircoun
With so gret horroure and putrefaccioun,
That no man myhte abiden nor endure 1784
To brynge his bodi onto sepulture.
- Her third mis-
fortune was the
death of her
uncle, King
Joram, after
which she
slew all the
blood of David
so as to be
sole ruler of
Judea.
- Hir thridde onhapp, wheroff she was ful fayn
That Fortune list hir efft assaile,
Made hir vncle, kyng Ioram, to be slayn 1788
With an arwe, as he fledde in bataile.
She supposyng it gretli sholde auaille,
Lik a woman most furious and wood,
She off kyng Dauid slouh al the roial blood. 1792
- Hir purpos was to gouerne al the rewm, [p. 110]
Alone hirsilff ta dominacioun,
To regne in Iuda and Ierusalem,
This Gatholia be vsurpacioun. 1796
And for that cause in hir entencioun,
With mortal suerd she made all tho to fyne
That were descendid from Dauid down be lyne.
- Except Joash,
aged one year,
none of David's
kin were left
alive, and
Joash's life
was saved by
Jehosheba,
- Except on Ioas ther leffte non alyue, 1800
Child off a yeer, sone off kyng Ochosie,
Whom Iosaketh, the story doth descryue,
Off verai pite cauhte a fantasie
The child to saue, that he shal nat deie, 1804
From the malice off Gatholia.
And she was wiff to bisshop Ioiada.

1773. made R. 1774. nouthur] neithir R — nor] neithir R.
1776. infect] enfectid H, effect R — sodeyn] contagious R.
1778. nedis] om. R, J, H 5. 1780. fell] fall H.
1783. gret] gre H. 1784. nor] ne R.
1786. onhapp] vnhappy R.
1794. ta] to haue R.
1796. Gatholia R, Gathalia H, Athalia P. 1798. to] om. R.
1802. Iosabeth R, P. 1804. shal] shuld R.
1806. And] As R.

- She and this bisshop, with hool herte & enteer,
 Kepte this child in ful secre wise
 Withynne the temple the space off seuene yeer,
 And in the seunte, the story doth deuise,
 Ioiada took on hym this emprise:
 Yonge Ioas withynne a certeyn day
 Be iust[e] title to crowne hym yiff he* may.
- 1808 wife of Bishop Jehoiada. For seven years they kept young Joash in the temple. Then Jehoiada called a council and proposed to crown Joash king.
- His massageris he sendith out anon,
 Off pryncis, tribunes gan a counseil call,
 Off preestis eek, and leuytes euerichon.
 And whan he hadde discured to hem all
 Hool his entent, thus it is befall:
 Sworn and assentid, as it was sittyng,
 That yonge Ioas shal be crownyd kyng.
- 1816
- 1820
- “For be promys, which that is dyuynne,”
 Quod Ioiada, “yiff ye taken heede,
 God hath behestid to Dauid and his lyne,
 And assurid onto his kynreede,
 In Ierusalem how thei shal succede;
 And thouth Ioas be yong & tendre off myht,
 He to the crowne hath neuer-the-lesse ryht.
- 1824 as God had promised that David's line should rule in Jerusalem.
- In this mateer I wil nat that ye slepe,
 But to shewe your trewe deligence,
 On foure parties the temple for to keepe,
 That no man entre be no violence;
 And in the myddis, be roial excellence,”
 Quod this bisshop, “no man shal us lette,
 On Ioas hed a crowne for to sette.”
- 1828 “No man shall prevent our setting a crown on his head.”
- 1832
- And whan ech thyng was brouht onto the poynt,
 His hih estat tencrece and magnefie,
 The peepel anon, whan he was enoynt,
 “*Viuat rex!*” thei began to crie.
 And whan Gatholia gan this thyng espie,
 For veray ire and the sodeyn wonder,
 Off malencoli hir clothes kitte assonder.
- 1836 When Joash was anointed, the people cried, “Long live the King!”
- 1840 Athaliah ran to the temple in a fury and bade her men slay the young king.
- Ran to the temple and gan make affray
 With hir meyne, and to crie loude,
 Bad hem go slen, and make no delay,
- 1844

1808. secret H. 1813. he] she B, J, R 3, H.
 1823. and] & to R. 1824. onto] to H. 1830. On] of H.
 1838. to] for to H. 1839. tespye H.
 1841. kutte R, cutte H. 1844. go] to H.

The yonge kyng, in al the haste thei coude:
 Hir venym hid vnder a couert cloude,
 Al attonys hir purpos to recure,
 Be sodeyn malice she gan that day discure. 1848

The temple
 however was
 well guarded,
 and she was
 seized by the
 centurions and
 soon afterwards
 put to death.

The temple kept, entre had she non,
 Peeple ordeyned awaityng for the nonys;
 And or* she myhte any ferthere gon,
 Clenli armed, the centurionys 1852
 The cruel queen assailed al attonys.
 And off hir malice to writen a short tale,
 Thei slouh hir afftir off Cedron in the vale.

Lo, this is the
 end of murder
 and tyranny!
 Noble Princes,
 beware of doing
 wrong to right-
 ful heirs.

Loo, heer the eende off moordre and tyrannye; 1856
 Loo, heer the eende off vsurpacioun;
 Loo, heer the eende off fals conspiracye;
 Loo, heer the eende off fals presumpcioun!
 Born rihtful heires, wrongli to put hem doun. 1860
 O noble Pryncis, thouh God hath maad you strong,
 To rihtful heires be war ye do no wrong!

¶ Lenvoye.

These tragedies
 are of princes,
 warned by God,
 yet failing to
 rise from their
 sins.

THESSE tragedies testatis & degrees,
 Fulli declareth the decepciouns 1864
 Off Fortunys fals mutabilitees
 Shewed in provyncis, citees and eek touns.
 Pryncis onwarli lost ther possessiouns,
 Which from ther synnes, in no maner wise, — 1868
 Hadde off God warnyng, and list nat for to rise.

Mighty kings
 were cast down
 unawares from
 their felicity:
 Jeroboam for
 his idolatry and
 oppression;

Mihti kynges cast doun from ther sees,
 Loste ther lyues and ther regeouns,
 Onwarli throwe from ther felicitees: 1872
 Jeroboam for his oppressiouns
 And for his froward fals oblaciouns
 Doon to ydoles, his story doth deuise,
 Had off God warnyng, & list nat for to rise. 1876

1846] *om.* R. 1851. or] ar B.

1855. Thei] The R — off] *corrected to on or at H.*

1860. to] *om.* H, R 3.

1863. These tragedies testatis] This tragedie the astatys R —
 testatis] to estates P.

1865. Fortunys] fortune R.

1869. aryse R.

- Achab also hadde gret aduersitees [p. 111] Achab for his
 Thoruh fals counsail and exortaciouns his abominable
 Off Iezabel, roote off iniquitees; wife Jezebel,
 Dede to his peeple gret extorsiouns: 1880 who slew all
 She slouh prophetis, Godis champiouns. the prophets;
 Bothe he and she, most cursid in ther guise,
 Had off God warnyng, & list nat for to rise.
- Gathalia with hir duplicitees 1884 Athaliah
 And conspired fals intrusiouns for murdering
 Slouh Dauides seed, tentre ther dignitees, David's de-
 And to possede ther domynaciouns; scendants.
 But for hir hatful fals collusiouns 1888
 Onwarly slayn, for hir gret couetise,
 Had off God warnyng, & list nat for to rise.
- Pryncis remembreth in your prosperitees, Princes, remem-
 And seeth afor in your discreciouns, 1892 ber in your
 Wrong clymyng up of statis or degrees, prosperity that
 Outher be moordre or be fals tresouns, wrongful usur-
 Axeth a fall for ther fynal guerdouns; pation either by
 Namli off them that the Lord despise, 1896 murder or
 And for his warnyng list nat for to rise. treason invites
 a fall.

[How Dido queen of Cartage slouh hirsilf for con-
 seruacion of hir chastite.]¹

- N**OW must I putte my reud[e] stile in pres, Dido, queen of
 To queen Dido make my passage: Carthage, was
 Hir lord Siche was preest to Hercules, 1900 the wife of
 Hir fadir Belus, falle into gret age, Sychæus; her
 Kyng off Tیره, and she queen off Cartage. father, Belus,
 And it is rad in bookis that be trewe, king of Tyre,
 How first in Tیره was founde purpil hewe. 1904 invented purple.

1877. *This stanza is omitted in R.* 1878. counseiles H.
 1880. his] hir H. 1884. Athalia R, H, P, Athalya H 5.
 1885. intrusiouns] entenciouns H.
 1886. Dauythis R, H — tentre] tencres H.
 1890. aryse R.
 1891. in] om. H. 1893. statis or] estatis & R.
 1894. moordre] word R. 1895. ther] the H.
 1897. his] no R.
 1900. Siche] Sicheus H, P.
 1901. Belus] Bolas R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 46 verso.

- Cadmus invented the alphabet, and his brother discovered the red of vermilion. Cadmus fond first lettres for to write,
Gaff hem to Grekis, as maad is mencioun,
Whos brother Fenix, as clerkis eek endite,
Fond first the colour off vermelioun. 1908
And off Cartage, the famous myhti toun,
This said[e] Dido, hir story doth expresse,
How she was bothe queen and founderesse;
- Dido's husband, Sychæus, was slain for his riches by her brother Pygmalion, But hir husbonde was cheeff lord and sire, 1912
Callid Sicheus, ful famous off renoun,
Off this noble cite named Tire,
Hadde gret tresour & gret possessioun.
And for envie kyng Pigmalion, 1916
Brother to Dido, this Siche slouh in deede,
Off fals entent his richesse to posseede.
- and Dido in her grief fled from Tyre with her husband's treasure. Dido this slauhtre took greuouli at herte,
Sore compleynyng this onhappi chaunce, 1920
Caste she wolde, yiff she myhte asterte,
Fleen out off Tire and hirsilff auaunce,
With al the tresour and the habundaunce
Behynde lefft whan hir lord was ded, 1924
Hir shippis entryng, went away for dreed.
- Knowing the avarice of Pygmalion, She knew & dradde the gredi auarice
Off hir brother, kyng Pigmalion,
And how that hatful onstaunchable vice 1928
Was ground and roote & cheeff occasioun
Whi that hir lord was slay[e]n in that toun.
For whom ful offte she cried welaway,
Whos deth was cause whi she fledde away. 1932
- she felt certain that if she remained he would try to injure her. She hadde also this opynyoun,
Which caused most hir hertli heuynesse,
That sithe hir brothir, kyng Pigmalion,
Hadde slayn hir lord for his gret richesse, 1936
Yiff she abod, that he wolde hym dresse,
Parcel for malice, parcel for couetise,
To haue hir tresour sum tresoun to practise.

1910. hir] the R.

1914. named] callid J, was callid H.

1919. greuouli] gretly R. 1920. this] his R.

1923. and] & al R. 1924. whan] whanne whan R.

1928. onstaunchable] vnstable R, vnchaungeable H.

1932. whi] whi] at R.

1935. sithe] sih R.

- And for teschewe his malice and tresoun,
 For hir nauye she maketh ordenaunce
 Bauys off them, in whom, as be resoun,
 She sholde off riht sette hir affiaunce.
 And thei ful redy hir to do plesaunce,
 Be on assent, for nothyng wolde faile,
 With faire Dido out off that lond to saile.
- In Cypre first was hir arryuaile;
 And ther she fond[e] be a ryuer side,
 Off yong[e] maidnes, with ful riche apparaile,
 Sexti and ten in the same tide,
 Which in the temple off Venus dede abide,
 Afftir the custom, as I can reporte,
 Off Cipriens straungeris to disporte.
- And in ther moste feithful humble wise,
 Afftir the rihtis off Cypre the cuntre,
 Onto Venus ech day do sacrefise,
 Them to conserue in ther virgenyte,
 Duryng ther liff to lyue in chastite,
 Neuer to been ioyned in mariage;
 And with queen Dido thei went* to Cartage.
- In ther passage fill a gret meracle,
 As Seruyus maketh menciou[n];
 For Dido took off Iuno this oracle,
 Outher baperyng or bi auisioun,*
 Off Cartage to beelde that myhti toun.
 And at reuerence off that gret goddessse,
 She to tho parties faste gan hir dresse,
- The said[e] cite statli for to founde.
 And hir werkmens, as thei therthe souhte,
 An oxes hed off auenture thei founde;
 And to queen Dido anon the hed thei brouhte,
 Menyng wheroff to serchyn out she* thouhte.
 And hir clerkis in ther dyuynaile,
 Tolde it was tokne off seruage & trauaile.
- 1940 So on the ad-
 vice of her
 nobles she
 sailed away
 from Tyre,
- 1944
- 1948 and first ar-
 rived in Cy-
 prius, where she
 found seventy
 maidens, priest-
 esses of the
 temple
- 1952
- 1956 of Venus,
 vowed to
 chastity, who
 accompanied
 her to Car-
 thage.
- 1960
- [p. 112] When Carthage
 was founded
 a great miracle
 occurred, as
 Servius tells:
- 1964
- 1968 Dido's work-
 men unearthed
 the head of
 an ox while
 digging, and
 her wise men
 told her that
 it was a token
 of servitude.
- 1972
1942. Bauys] Be a devis R. 1944. hir] for R.
 1954. in ther] the H. 1958. ther] the R.
 1960. went] wenten B, R, J — to] vn to H.
 1962. maketh] make R.
 1964. bi apperyng J, R, H, P, R 3, H 5 — or] outhir H, H 5 —
 auisioun] dyuysion R, aduisioun J, P, a vision R 3 — or bi
 auisioun] outhir bauysioun B.
 1971. anon the hed] the hed anon R, H, H 5.
 1972. Menyng] Meryng R — she] thei B, J.

- For which she leffte to beeldyn [in] that place,
 And gan remeue, as she ouhte off riht; 1976
 And fro then[ne]s but a litil space
 A soil she fond ful delectable off siht;
 And as hir werkmēn with ther ful[le] myht
 The ground gan serche, anon, or thei took heed, 1980
 The stori tellith, thei fond an horsis hed.
- So she began to dig elsewhere and found a horse's head, which was a good omen. And there she built Carthage.
 And bi expownyng off hir dyuynours,
 Fond [that] this beeste gretli myhte auaille
 Onto pryncis & myhti conquerours, 1984
 Necessarie* in werre and in bataile.
 And for no wiht hir noblesse sholde assaile,
 Cartage she bilte, off so gret excellence,
 Geyn all enmyes to stonden at diffence. 1988
- Some books say that she purchased as much land as could be surrounded by an ox's skin.
 Summe bookis declare and specefe,
 Dido dede as moche lond purchase
 As a skyn in round myhte occupie
 Off an oxe, theron to beelde a place; 1992
 The ground cumpasid took a large space,
 Which strongli bilt, thus it is befall,
 Afftir the skyn men dede it Birsa call.
- and when the city was walled it took the names Carthage and Birsa after the skin.
 And whan this cite myhtili was wallid, 1996
 Afftir a skyn, wrouht be good curray,
 The name take, Carta it was callid, —
 Lethir off Birsa, pleynli this no nay,
 Took eek his name duryng many a day,— 2000
 Carta and Birsa knet in ther language,
 As moch to seyne as this woord Cartage.
- It stands in Africa and was built in honour of Juno, in the time of David.
 And in Affrik stant the teritorie
 Wher she bilte this cite delectable, 2004
 Founded it in laude and in memorie
 Off myhti Iuno, the goddessse honourable,
 The cite wallid, with tour[e]s strong & stable,

1975. in] *om.* H, R 3, J, H 5.1977. but] *om.* H. 1978. delitable R.

1981. horsis] horse H, R 3, P, hors J, H 5.

1983. that] *om.* J, H, P, H 5, R3 — Fond] & H.

1985. Necessaire B. 1988. Ageyn R.

1993. ful large R. 1994. bilt] belte R 3, bylded P.

1997. curray] coraie R, Corray H.

1999. pleynli this no nay] this is no way R.

2000. a] *om.* R. 2004. delitable R.2005. 2nd in] *om.* H.

2007. The] This R.

- Tyme off kyng Daudid myd the fourte age, 2003
 As I seide erst, callid it Cartage.
- With gret worshepe she regned in that toun,
 Euer off purpos to lyue in chastite;
 And round aboute floured the renoun 2012
 Off hir prudence and hir honeste.
 Til the report off hir famous beute
 Cam to the eris, which gladli wil nat hide,
 Off a kyng that duellid ther beside. 2016
- Off Musitan[e]s he was lord and sire,
 As poetis pleynli list descryue,
 Which in his herte gretli gan desire
 The queen Dido bi hir assent to wyue, 2020
 Onto hir grace yiff he myhte aryue.
 But for she hadde auowed chastite,
 She neuer caste married for to be.
- The kyng surprised with loue in his corage 2024
 For hir wisdam and hir gret beute,
 Sent[e] for the pryncis off Cartage,
 On this mater to han a gret trete,
 To condescende, yiff it myhte be, 2028
 Lich his desir, in al ther beste entent,
 Doon ther deuer to make hir to consent.
- With his request he gan hem eek manace,
 Yiff he failed off his entencioun,
 Lik his desir to stonden in hir grace,
 Saide he wolde been enemy to ther toun,
 Tordeyne be force for ther destruccioun.
 Nat fulli sobre, nor fulli in a rage, 2036
 This was to hem pleynli his language.
- But for thei knew hir gret[e] stedfastnesse,
 And hir herte veray immutable,
 Thei were affer[e]d any woord texpresse,
 Lest ther answer wer nat acceptable 2040
 To his hihnesse, for he was nat tretable.
 Eek in ther conceit thei gan also recorde,
 To his desir the queen wold nat accorde. 2044

Dido reigned in great prosperity until a neighbouring king heard of her beauty

and wanted to have her for his wife, although she had vowed never again to marry.

He sent for the princes of Carthage to treat of a marriage

and threatened to use force if he failed in his purpose.

The princes of Carthage knew that Dido would never break her vow.

2009. it] is R, H.

2017. Musicans H, R 3. 2020. The] To R.

2026. off] of al R. 2031. eek] om. R.

2033. stoden R. 2034. he] that he R — ther] the R.

2035. be force] repeated in R — for] to H, R 3.

2039. immutable R, H. 2042. he was] thei wern R.

so they tem-
porised.
Dido remained
fixed in her
purpose

With good auys an answeire thei purueie [p. 113]
To his purpos in parti faorable,
Afferd he wolde ther noble toun werreie,
Or off disdeyn vpon hem be vengable. 2048
But queen Dido, in hir entent ay stable,
Caste she wolde, what-euer thei hir tolde,
Hir chast auow feithfulli to holde.

and told her
princes

She set a-side off this cruel kyng 2052
His fell manacis & his woordis grete;
And to hir pryncis for ther consentyng,
Which stood in feer off that he dede hem threte,
She onto hem gaff a maner hete, 2056
For thei wer bold tattempten or tattame
To trete off mater reboundyng to hir shame.

that she would
rather die than
grant the king's
demand.

“Nay, rather deie,” quod she, “than tassente
To his desirs, which thyng God forbeede, 2060
Or fro the centre off my chast entente
For to remeue, outhur in thouht or deede, —
Which were disclaundre to al womanheede,
To condescende for any manacyng 2064
To breke my vow for plesauce off a kyng.

“Be sure, he
will fail in
spite of his
threats.

Touchyng manacis maad to this cite,
For to destroie it with his gret[e] myht,
Withoute cause or tittle off equite 2068
To grounden hym a quarell ageyn riht,
Onli for he is blyndid in his siht
With froward lust my chast auow tassaile,
Beth riht weel seur how he theroff shal faile. 2072

“If you were
men, you
would not con-
descend to treat
with him.

Yiff ye wer bold and manli off corage,
For comoun profit your cite to defende,
And to withstonde his vicious outrage,
To trete with hym ye wold nat condescende. 2076
But myn entent, platli to comprehende,
Wher* it to you be ioie or displesauce,
In my promys shal be no variaunce.

2057. tattame] attame H. 2058. rebowndith H.

2060. his] hir R.

2061. centre] contre H, tentre J, P; *in B the c in centre is very much like a t.*

2066. manacyng R. 2067. with] thoruh R — gret] om. R.

2070. blynde R. 2072. how] om. R.

2075. his] your R.

2078. Wher] Whethir B, H, J, P, R 3 — it] it be J, P — be] om. R.

- My lord Sicheus, the which, alas, is ded 2080 "For my part,
Onto the world[e], who[-so] list aduerte; I will keep my
Trustith riht weel, for manacyng nor dreed, it please you or
That he shal neuer deien in myn herte, not, so long as
Nor ye shal neuer myn auow peruerte, I am Queen of
Thus auysed, whil that I stonde fre, Carthage.
Queen off Cartage to gouerne this cite. 2084
- Myn hasti answere, I pray you nat disdeyne, "Give me three
But that ye list to gyue me liberte, months in
With your support that I may atteyne 2088 which to exe-
To haue a space graunted onto me: cute my hus-
This to meene, the space off monthes thre, band's testa-
Mi lordis will taccomplissh* off entent, ment."
Which he whilom made in his testament." 2092
- Vnder colour to hir auauntage In the mean-
She took this space, bookis specefie, time she for-
That she myhte hir cite off Cartage tified her city.
The mene while strongli fortefie 2096
Ageyn hir enmyes, that for no slogardrie
Off them that wolde hir hih estat confounde,
Onpurueied hir cite nat be* founde. 2100
- Whan thre monthes passed were & gon, After the three
She afftir wolde, for hir hertli plesaunce, months had
With sundri rihtes, many mo than on, passed, she did
To all hir goddis doon sum obseruaunce, observance to
For a special synguler remembraunce the gods
Off hym that was, as folk shal vnderstonde, 2104
Whilom hir lord & best beloued husbonde.
- And mor texalte his glorie* & his honour, 2108 and held the
Heeld his exequies, be due reuerence, funeral rites of
Off al Cartage in the hiest tour, her husband
With brennyng fir, fumys and encence, with fire and in-
Hir pryncis all beyng in presence; cense in the high-
To which she gan declare in compleynyng, est tower and
Hir dedli sorwe, doun from hir tour lokyng. 2112 bade farewell to
her friends,
praying them to
report after her
death, that Dido
was married but
once.

2080. the] *om.* R. 2081. who so] who H, J, P, H 5, R 3.
2084. myn auow] my vowe R. 2088. list] lust R.
2092. taccomplisshen B. 2093. whilom] sumtyme R.
2098. that] *om.* R — slugardie R, slugardye H.
2099. hih] *om.* R. 2100. be] ne B, H, R, H 5.
2101. thre] the R. 2107. Whilom] Sumtyme R.
2108. 1st his] hir B, P and MSS. except H 5 — gloire B —
2nd his] *om.* R, R 3, hir H, her P.

“Farweel my freendis, farweel for euermore!
 Onto my lord myn husbonde I mut gon, 2116
 To hym, I meene, that was my lord off yore:
 For off husbondis, God wot, I ha[ue] but on;
 Praieng you to reporte euerichon
 Afttir my deth, [how] Dido off Cartage 2120
 I-ioyned was but onys in mariage.

“Go tell the
 king that I am
 dead; his
 threats are in
 vain.

Seith to the kyng, which hath* you manacid,
 Mi chast[e] beute that he wolde assaile, —
 Go, tellith hym how that I am pacid, 2124
 And off his purpos how that he shal faile.
 His manacyng shal hym nat auaille.
 And seith how Dido deied for the nonys,
 For she nat wolde be weddid mor than onys. 2128

“Let him go
 elsewhere
 and choose
 another.”

Leuere I haue my liff as now to lese, [p. 114]
 Rathere than soile my widwes chastite.
 Lat hym go ferthere, sum other for to chese; ,
 For in such cas he shal nat speede off me. 2132
 And with the tresour off myn honeste,
 Which I ha[ue] treuli obserued al my lyue,
 I will departe out off this world now blyue.”

And with that
 she plunged a
 knife into her
 heart and ran
 into the fire.

And into fir, that brente cleer and briht, 2136
 She ran in haste, there is no mor to seyne,
 Sauff with a knyff in euery manys siht
 Ful sodenli she roff hir herte on tweyne.
 Whos pitous deth the cite gan compleyne, 2140
 Sore wepyng for wonder and for routhe,
 In a woman to fynde so gret a trouthe.

After her death
 they worshipped
 her as a god-
 dess of chastity,
 and all widows
 wept for her
 sake.

Afttir hir deth thei dede ther besynesse
 To holde and halwe a feste funeral; 2144
 Worsheped hir lik a chast goddesse,
 And hir comendyn[g] in especial
 To heuenli goddis, & goddis infernall.
 And widwes all[e], in ther clothes blake, 2148
 At this feste weptyn for hir sake.

2120. how] *om.* J, P, R 3, H 5.

2122. hath] that B, *om.* J. 2124. Go] And R.

2131. ferthere] forth R.

2132. Speede] be spedd H.

2135. will] wolde R — out departe R.

2136. fir] þe fire H.

2139. on] in R. 2142. a] *om.* R.

2147. infernall] fernall R.

- Touchyng Dido lat ther be no striff:
 Thouh that she be accusid off Ouide,
 Afftir Bochas I wrot hir chast[e] liff,
 And the contrary I ha[ue] set a-side;
 For me thouhte it was bet tabide
 On hir goodnesse, than thyng reherse in deede,
 Which myhte resowne ageyn hir womanheede. 2156
- To Eneas thouh she was faourable,
 To Ytaile makyng his passage,
 Al that she dede, [it] was comendable,
 Hym to receyue comyng be Cartage;
 Thouh sum folk wern large off ther language,
 Amysse texpowne be report, or texpresse
 Thyng doon to hym onli off gentillesse. 2160
- Ther shal for me be maad no rehersaile
 But as I fynde wretyn in Bochas;
 For to sey weel may moch[e] more auaile
 Than froward speche, in many dyuers cas.
 But al Cartage ofte seide alas,
 Hir deth compleynyng thoruhout ther cite,
 Which slouh hirsself tobserue hir chastite. 2164

[¶ Lenvoy.]

- O** FAIR[E] Dido, most stable in thi constau[n]ce,
 Queen of Cartage, merour off hih noblesse,
 Regnyng in glorie* & vertuou habundaunce,
 Callid in thi tyme cheeff sours off gentillesse,
 In whom was neuer founde doubilnesse,
 Ay off on herte; and so thou dedest fyne,
 With liht off trouthe alle widwes tenlumyne. 2176
- Chast and onchaungid in thi perseueraunce,
 And immutable founde in thi goodnesse,
 Which neuer thouhtest vpon variaunce,
 Force and prudence wardeyns off thi fairnesse,
 I ha[ue] no language thi vertues to expresse,
 Be newe report so cleerli thei [do] shyne;
 With liht off trouthe alle widwes tenlumyne. 2180

2151. that] om. H. 2152. wryte R, write H.

2159. it] om. J. 2162. report] record H. 2173. gloire B.

2179. immutable R, H, J.

2183. thei] to H — do] om. J, P, H 5, R 3.

Lode-star of
good behaviour,
bridling your
youth with
soberness,

O lode-sterre off al good gouernaunce,
All vicious lustis be wisdam to repressse;
Thi grene youth flouryng with al plesaunce,
Thou di[d]st it bridle with vertuouss sobirnesse. 2188
Diane demened so chastli thi clennessse,
Whil thou wer soul[e], pleynli to termyne,
With liht off trouthe alle widwes tenlumyne.

and finally
dying out of
innocent purity
lest your
sureness were
jeopardised!

Thi famous bounte to put in remembraunce, 2192
Thou slouh thiselff off innocent peurnesse,
Lest thi seurnesse wer hangid in ballaunce,
Off such as cast them thi chastite toppresse —
Deth was inouh to bere theroff witesse — 2196
Causyng thi beute to al* clennessse tenclyne,
With liht off vertu alle widwes tenlumyne.

¶ Lenvoye direct to wydowis of the translatur.¹

Noble matrons,
be sure that no
such folly as
that of Dido
enter your
hearts.

NOBLE matrones, which han al suffisaunce
Off womanhed, your wittis doth vp dresse, 2200
How that Fortune list to turne hir chaunce,
Beth nat to rakell off sodeyn hastynesse,
But ay prouideth* in your stabilnesse,
That no such foly entre your corage 2204
To folwe Dido, that was queen off Cartage.

To slay your-
selves were too
great a penance!
May God bless
and preserve
your frailty!

With hir maneris hath non aqueyntaunce, [p. 115]
Put out off mynde such foltissh wilfulnessse:
To slen yoursilff[e] wer a gret penaunce! 2208
God off his grace defende you and blesse,
And preserue your variant brotilnesse,
That your trouthe falle in non outrage,
To folwe Dido, that was queen off Cartage! 2212

Pretend all
things that
make for stead-
fastness, but
don't follow
Dido's example.

With couert colour and sobre contaunce,
Off feithful menyng pretendith a liknesse,
Countirfetith in speche and daliaunce
Alle thyng that sowneth unto* stedfastnesse; 2216

2188. Thou] Thi R — didst] dist J, did R 3, dost P.

2189. demened] demede R. 2193. peurnesse H.

2197. to al] tal B. 2198. vertu] trewth R.

2201. to] om. H.

2203. preuideth B, J, provyd R 3, prouide P.

2206. non] nouht R. 2210. brotilnesse] Doublesse R.

2213. *The first line of the following stanza is misplaced before*

2213 in H.

2216. unto] into B, R, J, P, H 5.

¹ *The same heading is in MS. J. leaf 47 d.*

Off prudence be gret auisenesse*

Yoursilff restreyneth, yong & old off age,
To folwe Dido, that was queen off Cartage.

Lat al your port be void off displesaunce;

2220 Never be un-
provided with
lovers; there is
no certainty in
one alone.

To gete freendis doth your besynesse,

And beth neuer withoute purueiaunce:

So shal ye best encresen in richesse, —

In on alone may be no sekirnesse;

2224

To your herte beth dyuers off language,

Contraire to Dido, that was queen off Cartage.

Hold your seruauentis vnder obeisaunce,

Lat hem nouter ha[ue] fredam nor largesse,

2228 Hold a tight
rein and bridle
them with hu-
mility, and
when the ser-
pent of incon-
stancy assails
you, be very
different from
Dido, who
was queen of
Carthage.

But vnder daunger doon ther obseruaunce.

Dauntith ther pride, them bridlyng with lownesse,

And whan the serpent off newfangilnesse

Assailith you, doth your auauantage, —

2232

Contraire to Dido, that was queen off Cartage.

[How vicious Sardanapalle kyng of Assirie brent
himsilff and his tresour.]¹

OFF Assirie to rekne kynges alle

Which hadde that lond vnder subieccioun,

Last off echon was Sardanapalle,

2236

Most femynyne off condicioun,

Wherfore Fortune hath hym throwe doun:

And compleynyng, most ougli off maneere,

Next afftir Dido to Bochas dede appeere.

2240

To vicious lust his liff he dede enclyne;

Mong Assiriens, whan he his regne gan,

Off fals vsage he was so femynyne,

That among women vpon the rokke he span,

2244

In ther habite disguisid from a man.

And off froward fleshli insolence,

Off alle men he fledde the presence.

He was vicious
all his life, and
so effeminate
that he span
amongst women
and fled
the presence of
all men.

First this kyng ches to been his guide

2248

Moodir off vices, callid idilnesse,

Which off custum ech vertu set aside

His guide was
idleness, the
mother of vices,
and that is
why he fell.

2217. auesinesse B.

2221. gete] get yow R.

2225. hertis R.

2227. Holdith R.

2232. doth] do H.

2234. rekne] regne R.

2242. Amonge R — beganne R.

2250. ech] his R — set] settith H, R 3.

¹MS. J. leaf 48 recto.

- In ech acourt wher she is maistresse.
 Off sorwe & myscheeff the firste founderesse, 2252
 Which causid onli this Sardanapall,
 That to al goodnesse his wittis dede appall.
- He invented drunkenness and riot and feather beds, and was a libertine and glutton.
 He fond up first ryot and drunk[e]nesse,
 Callid a fadir off lust and lecherie; 2256
 Hatful off herte he was to sobirnesse,
 Cherishyng surfetis, wach and glotonye,
 Callid in his tyme a prynce off baudrie,
 Fond rere soperis* and fether beddis soffte, 2260
 Drynke late, and chaunge his wynes offte.
- He loved the odour of food and of dirty cooks, of spits, ladies, and meat hooks, and kept company with drunken folk.
 The air off metis and off baudi cookis,
 Which off custum alday roste and seede,
 Sauour off spetis, laddis & flesshookis 2264
 He loued weel, and took off hem gret heede.
 And folk that drank[e] mor than it was neede,
 Smellyng off wyn for ther gret excesse,
 With hem tabide was hooli his gladnesse. 2268
- He liked to have butchers and fishermen about him, their coats powdered with silver-bright scales,
 He thouhte also that it dede hym good
 To haue aboute hym, ageyn* skele and riht,
 Boistous bocheris, al bespreynt with blood,
 And watry fissheris abood euer in his siht, 2272
 Ther kootis poudrid with scales siluer-briht:
 Dempte ther odour, duryng al his liff,
 Was to his corage best preseruatif.
- and nothing was so pleasant to him as a bawdy house and lustful, foul-mouthed people, who could flatter him.
 For ther nas herbe, spice, gras ne roote 2276
 To hym so lusti, as was the bordelhou, s
 Nor gardeyn non so holsum nor so soote
 To his plesauce nor so delicious,
 As the presence off folkis lecherous; 2280
 And euer glad to speke off ribaudie,
 And folk cherisshe that koude flatre & lie.
- Finally God became displeasid with his scandalous behaviur,
 Til at the laste God off veray riht
 Displeasid was with his condiciouns, 2284
 Because he was in euery manys siht

2252. firste] cheff H, *om.* R 3. 2254. That] *om.* H, R 3.
 2260. reresoperis B, reresopirs R, reresopers J, rersuppers R 3,
 reresowpers P.
 2263. alday] ech day H.
 2264. spitis laddil & Fleishokes R. 2265. gret] goode R.
 2267. ther] the H. 2269. R *omits lines* 2269-4102.
 2270. ageyn] with B, J.
 2276. herbe] eke H — ne] nor H. 2277. as] a H.

- So femynyne in his affeccious,
 And hooli gaff his inclynaciouns
 Duryng his liff to eueri vicious thyng, 2288
 Terrible to heere, a[nd] namli off a kyng.
- But, as Bochas list to putte in mynde, [p. 116] and, as Bochas
 Whan Arbachus, a prynce off gret renoun, says, Arbaces,
 Sauh off this kyng the flessli lustis blynde, 2292 who saw his
 Made with the people off that regeoun blind sensuality,
 Ageyn[e]s hym a coniuracioun, conspired
 And to hym sente, for his mysgouernaunce, against him,
 Off hih disdeyn a ful pleyn diffiaunce. 2296
- Bad hym be war, & proudli to hym tolde,
 That he hym caste his vicious liff tassaile,
 And in al haste, also, that he wolde
 Withynne a feeld[e] meete hym in bataile. 2300
 Wheroff astonyd, his herte gan to faile,
 Wher among women he sat & made gaudes,
 No wiht aboute but flatereres and baudes.
- And vp he ros, & gan hym silff auauunce, 2304 Sardanapalus,
 No stuff aboute hym but sergauntis riotous; surrounded by
 Took the feeld withoute gouernaunce, women and
 No men off armys but folkis* vicious, flatterers, lost
 Whos aduersarie,* callid Arbachus, 2308 made a show of
 Made hym proudli the feeld to forsake, resistance and
 That lik a coward his castell he hath take. then, like a
 coward, fled
 to his castle,
- And for his herte frowardli gan faile,
 Nat* lik a knyght, but lik a losengour, 2312 where he bade
 His riche perre, his roial apparaile, all his jewels
 His gold, his ieweles, vesseles & tresour and gold and
 Was brouht afor[n] hym down [out] off a tour, royal garments
 Mid off his paleis, & gaff his men in charge be brought
 Off cole and fagot to make a fir ful large. 2316 to him, and,
- In which he caste his tresour and ieweles,
 Mor bestial than lik a manli man;
 And myd his riche stonys and vesseles, 2320 having a large
 Into the fir furiousli he ran. fire kindled,
 This tryumphe Sardanapallus wan, cast everything
 With fir consumyd for his fynal meede, into it, and
 Brent al to asshes among the coles rede. 2324 running
 furiously into
 the flames, was
 himself burnt
 to ashes.

2303. aboute] about hym H. 2305. sargeauntes H.

2307. folkis] off folkis B, J, H, P, R 3, H 5.

2308. aduersaire B.

2312. Nat] I nat B, H 5. 2315. out] om. J, H, H 5, P.

Before his death he wrote his epitaph: "My idleness and vicious life brought me to my end."

Tofor[n] his deth[e] bad men sholde write
Vpon his graue, the book doth certefie,
With lettres large, this resoun for tendite:
"Mi cursid liff, my froward glotenyne, 2328
Myn idilnesse, myn hatful lecherye,
Han causid me, with many fals desir,
My laste daies to be consumpt with fir."

From this, Princes, you may see that vengeance always follows vices.

This epitaffe on his graue he sette, 2332
To shewe how he was in al his lyue
Besi euer to hyndren and to lette
Al maner vertu, & therageyn to stryue.
Who folweth his tras is neuer lik to thryue, 2336
For which, ye Pryncis, seeth for your auail,
Vengauce ay folweth vices at the tail.

¶ A comendacion of Bochas of vertuous besines
rehering names fondours of diuers sciencis &
cunnynge in represe of Idilnes.¹

There were others also who delighted to live in bestial fashion,

THER wer eek other, þat list falsli prouide 2340
Fals flesshli lustis & dissoluciouns,
Riot, outrage, froward disdeyn & pride,
Vices tenhaunce in ther affeccious
With many onlefful croked condiciouns,
Resoun auoidyng, as I reherse shall, 2344
Themsilff delityng for to be bestiall.

for people may be divided into two kinds: the virtuous and the vicious, and the reputation of both is such as they deserve.

Tweyne maner folkis to putte in remembraunce,
Off vice and vertu, and sette a difference:
The goode alway han set ther plesaunce 2348
In vertuous labour to doon ther deligence;
And vicious people in slouthe & negligence.
And the report off bothen is reserued,
With laude or lak, as thei han disserued. 2352

One must praise the industrious and censure the idle. So I will call to mind some virtuous folk and compare them with Sardanapalus.

Men muste off riht the vertuous preferre,
And treuli preise labour and besynesse;
And ageynward, dispreisen folk that erre,
Which ha[ue] no ioie but in idilnesse. 2356
And to compare bamaner off witnesse,
Vertuous folk I will to mynde call
In rebukyng off kyng Sardanapall.

2330. Han] have H. 2332. Epitaphye H, Epitaphie P.

2335. ther ageyn to] therageyns H.

2352. have H. 2353. preferre] preserue H.

¹ The same heading is in MS. J. leaf 48 verso.

- The olde wise, callid Pictagoras, 2360 Pythagoras or
 Be soun off hameris, auctours certefie,
 Exaample took[e], and cheeff maister was
 That fond out first musik and melodie.
 Yit off Tubal summe bookis specefie, 2364
 That he be strok of smethis where thei stood,
 Fond first out musik tofor Noes flood.
- And Iosephus remembreth be scripture, [p. 117] Tubal first in-
 That this Tubal koude forge weel, 2368 vented forged
 First ymagyned making off armure armour and
 With instrumentis off iren and off steel, Lucius Tarquin
 And ther temprures he fond out euerideel. chains.
 Lucyus Tarquyn, in stori as I fynde, 2372
 Fond cheynes first, folk to fetryn & bynde.
- The childre off Seth, in story ye mai see, The children of
 Flouryng in vertu be long successiouns, Seth were the
 For to profite to ther posterite, 2376 first astron-
 Fond first the crafft off heuenli mocious, omers,
 Off sondri sterris the reuoluciouns;
 Bequath ther cunnyng, off gret auantage, 2380
 To them that afftir cam off ther lynage.
- For ther vertu God gaff hem gret cunnyng, seven genera-
 Touchyng natures bothe off erthe & heuene, tions of them,
 And it remembrid sothli be writyng, who laboured in
 To lasten ay for water or for leuene. 2384 peace all their
 Generaciouns ther wer off hem seuene, lives.
 Which for vertu, withoute werre or striff,
 Trauailed in cunnyng duryng al ther liff.
- And for that Adam dede prophesie, 2388 And they made
 Twies the world destroyed sholde be, two pillars, one
 With water onys stonde in iupartie, of tiles, the
 Next with fir, which no man myht[e] fle: other of hard
 But Sethis childre, as thei* dede see, 2392 marble, upon
 Made too peleris wher men myhte graue, which letters
 Fro fir & watir the carectis for to saue. were engraved
 to save them
 from destruction
 by water and
 fire.
- The ton was maad off tilis hard ibake, 2396
 Fro touch off fir to saue the scripture;
 Off hard marbil thei dede a-nother make,
 Ageyn[es] water strongli to endure,

2371. temprures] themprures H. 2373. fette H.

2379. off] so H, for H 5, or P. 2383. it] it is H.

2392. as thei] al this B, J, P, R 3. 2393. graue] save H.

- They thought
that their
knowledge
would be in
vain were it
not passed on
to other men.
- To saue off letris the preent & the figure:
For ther cunnyng afforn gan so prouide, 2400
Geyn fir & watir perpetueli tabide.
Thei dempte ther cunnyng hadde be in veyn,
But folk with them hadde be partable;
And for ther labour sholde afftirward be seyn, 2404
Thei it remembrid be writyng ful notable:
Onto-for God a thyng ful comendable,
To them that folwe, be scripture or writyng
Or that men deie departe ther cunnyng. 2408
- In old times
various crafts
were found for
the encourage-
ment of virtue
and the avoid-
ance of idleness.
- For be old tyme folk dyuers craftis founde
In sundri wise for ocupacioun;
Vertu to cherisse, vices to confounde,
Ther witt thei sette & ther entencioun 2412
To putte ther labour in execucioun,
And to outrage, this is veray trouthe,
Fro manys liff necligence & slouthe.
- Enoch invented
the Hebrew
alphabet, and
after Noah's
Flood, Cam
invented
it again,
- Olde Ennok, ful famous off vertu, 2416
Duryng that age fond first off euerichon
Thoruh his prudence lettres off Hebreu;
And in a piler thei wer kept off ston,
Til that the flood off Noe was agon. 2420
And afftir hym, Cam was the secounde
Bi whom off Hebreu lettres wer first founde.
- and so did
Catacrismus.
But the letters
written by
God's hand and
given to Moses
were different.
- And Catacrismus the firste was that fond
Lettres also, as off that language. 2424
But lettres wreten with Godis owne hond
Moyses first took, most briht off his visage,
Vpon Syna as he heeld his passage,
Which off carectis & namys in sentence 2428
From other writyng hadde a difference.
- Afterwards
Ezra became
the fourth dis-
coverer of He-
brew letters,
and Abraham
invented those
of Syria and
Chaldæa.
- Eek afftirward, as other bookis tell,
And Seyn[t] Ierom rehersith in his stile,
Vnder thempire off Zorobabell, 2432
Esdras off Hebreu gan lettres first compile;
And Abraham, gon sithen* a gret while,
The firste was, in bookis men may see,
That fond lettres off Cire & off Caldee. 2436

2399. 2nd the] *om.* H. 2413. in] & H. 2415. Fro] For J.
2421. Caame H, Cam J, R 3, P. 2431. seyn J.
2433. first] *om.* H, R 3.
2434. gon] gan J — gon sithen] gan sithe B.

- Ysis in Egipt fond dyuersite
 Off sundri lettres, parted into tweyne:
 First for preestis, and for the comounte
 Vulgar lettres he dede also ordeyne.
 And Fenyces dede ther besy peyne
 Lettres off Greek to fynde in ther entent,
 Which that Cadmus first into Grece sent,
 Which in noumbre fulli wer seunteene;
 Whan off Troye was endid the bataile,
 Pallamydes, ther language to susteene,
 Put thre therto, which gretli dede auaille.
 Pidagorus, for prudent gouernaile,
 Fond first out Y, a figur to discerne
 The liff heer short and liff that is eterne.
- First Latyn lettres off our A. B. C.,
 Carmentis fond, off ful hih prudence.
 Grete Omerus, in Isidre ye may see,
 Fond among Grekis crafft off eloquence.
 First in Rome, be souereyn excellence,
 Off rethorik Tullius fond the flours,
 Ple and diffence off subtil oratours.
- Callicrates, a grauer most notable,
 Off whiht yuor dede his besynesse,
 His hand, his eye so iust wer & so stable,
 Off an ampte to graue* out the liknesse,
 Vpon the ground as Nature doth hym dresse.
 This crafft he fond, as Sardanapall
 Fond idilnesse mooder to vices all.
- Off a screueyn Bochas maketh mencioun,
 How in a scrowe off litil quantite
 Wrot off al Troie the destruccioun,
 Folwyng Omerus be gret subtilite:
 Which among Grekis is had in gret deynte,
 Because he was founde in his writyng,
 So compendious the story rehersyng.

2440
 Isis made a two-fold alphabet in Egypt, and the Phœnicians discovered Greek letters numbering seventeen, which Cadmus sent to Greece.

2444

2448

[p. 118]
 2452 Latin letters were invented by Carmentis, Greek eloquence by Homer, Roman oratory by Tully.

2456

2460

Callicrates carved a life-sized ant out of ivory,

2464

2468

and Bochas mentions a scrivener who wrote the entire Iliad on a little scroll.

2438. sundri] sondris H.

2440. also did H.

2450. 2nd liff] þe liff H, þe life R 3, the life P.

2453. ysodre H.

2457. off] & H.

2461. grauen B.

- Mirmecides
made a chariot
and a ship so
small that a
bee might cover
them both with
his wings.
- Mirmecides* made a char also 2472
And a smal shipp, with al the apparaile,
So that a bee myhte close hem bothe too
Vnder his weengis, which is a gret meruaile —
And nothyng seyn off al the hool entaile: 2476
This crafft he fond off vertuoues besynesse
Teschewe the vice off froward idilnesse.
- Pan, the god of
nature, first
composed tunes
on the flageolet,
Mercury on the
harp, and Bac-
chus discovered
wine, the best
of liquors.
- Pan, god off Kynde, with his pipes seuene,
Off recorderis fond first the melodies. 2480
And Mercurie, that sit so hih in heuene,
First in his harpe fond sugred armonyes.
Holsum wynes thoruhfyned from ther lyes
Bachus fond first, of* vynes heuy lade, 2484
Licour off licours corages for to glade.
- Perdix and
Euclid invented
geometry,
Phœbus medi-
cine, Albumasar
astronomy,
Minerva char-
iots, Jason sea-
faring,
- Perdix be cumpas fond triangle and lyne,
And Euclid first fond geometrie, 2488
And Phebus fond the crafft off medicyne.
Albumasar [first] fond astronomye;
And Mynerua gan charis first to guye.
Iason first sailed, in story it is told,
Toward Colchos to wynne the Flees off Gold. 2492
- Ceres agriculture,
Dionysus and
Bellona warfare,
and Mars' son
Etholus sharp
spears.
- Ceres the goddesse fond first tilthe off lond;
Dionisius tryumphes transitorie.*
And Bellona be force first out fond
Conquest be knyhtod, & in the feeld victorie. 2496
And Martis sone, as put is in memorie,
Callid Etholus, fond speris sharp & keene,
To renne a werre in platis briht and sheene.
- Aristæus first
used milk and
curds and
honey, Piroides
smote fire from
flints, Pallas
invented weav-
ing
- Eek Aristeus fond out the vsage 2500
Off mylk & cruddis, & off hony soote.
Piroides, for gret auantage,
Fro flyntes smet fir daryng in the roote.
And Pallas, which that may to cold do boote, 2504
Fond out weuyng, this is veray soth,
Thoruh hir prudence, off al maner cloth.

2472. Mirmecides] Marmychides B, Mirmychides H, Mir-
michiades R 3, Myrnychydes H 5, Mirmecides P.
2473. al the apparaile] a trapparaille H. 2474. a bee] A B H.
2475. a] om. H. 2480. the] om. H, R 3. 2481. sittith H.
2484. of] on B, J, R 3. 2487. gemetrye H.
2494. 96. transitoire, victoire B.
2496. he] of H — &] om. H. 2497. put is repeated in H.
2502. Purides H. 2505. weyvying H. 2506. hir] his H.

- And Fido first fond out the science
 Off mesours and off proporcious, and Fido
weights and
2508 measures.
 And for marchantis dede his deligence
 To fynde ballaunces be iust dyuysiouns,
 Tauoide al fraude in citees & in touns
 On outh^r* parti, pleyntli to compile, 2512
 Off trewe weihte that ther wer no gile.
- Compare in ordre cleerli all these thynges
 Founde off old tyme be deligent trauaile, Compare these
old inventions
with the worth-
2516 lessness of Sar-
danapalus, who
only discovered
that idleness is
the mother of
all vices.
 To the plesaunce off pryncis & off kynges,
 To shewe how moch[e] cunning may auaille,
 And weie ageynward the froward aquitaile,
 Contrariousli how Sardanapalle
 Fond idilnesse mooder off vices alle. 2520
- Lat pryncis alle heeroff taken heed,
 What auailleth vertuous besynesse,
 And what damage the reuers doth in deed,
 Vicious liff, slouthe and idilnesse; 2524
 And these exaumples lat hem eek inpresse
 Amyd ther herte, and how Sardanapalle
 Fond idilnesse mooder off vices alle.

[¶ Lenvoy.]

- N**OBLE Pryncis, heer ye may weel see 2528 Noble Princes,
 As in a merour, off ful cleer euydence, see as in a
mirror the
harm that
comes from
sloth and
neglect.
 Be many example mo than too or thre,
 What harm folweth off slouthe & negligence,
 Deepe enprentyng in your aduertence, 2532
 How gret hyndryng doth wilful frowardnesse
 To your estat thoruh vicious idilnesse.
- Whan resoun faileth, and sensualite [p. 119] When reason
 Holdeth the bridel off lecherous insolence, 2536 fail's and vice
 And sobirnesse hath lost his liberte, takes on an
appearance of
virtue, princes
recklessly fall
into idleness,
 And to fals lust is doon the reuerence,
 And vice off vertu hath an apparence, —
 Misedith pryncis off wilful reklesnesse 2540
 To gret errorr off froward idilnesse.

2507. Sido H. 2508. mesure H.

2512. outh^r] nouth^r B. 2514. Compare] Compas H, R 3.

2516. & off] om. H.

2528. heer] om. H. 2532. empyntyng H.

which has no
other reward
than sorrow
and adversity.

Ther may to slouthe non other guerdoun be,
Nor non other condigne recompense,
But sorwe, myscheeff and aduersite, 2544
Sodeyn vengauce and onwar violence,
Whan ye be froward in your magnyficence
To knowe the Lord and bowe be meeknesse
Tobeie his preceptis and eschewe idilnesse. 2548

[How Amazias in Iuda kyng for pride and presump-
cion was venquysshed in bataile & aftir slayn.]¹

As Bochas sat
musing in his
study, Amaziah
and his son
Uzziah appeared
first of a number
of mighty
kings;

IN his studi as Bochas sat musyng,
With many vnkouth soley n fantasie,
To hym appered many a myhti kyng;
And toforn alle cam worthi Amazie, 2552
His sone also, that callid was Iosie,
Off Daudis blood descendyng, as I reede,
Ech afftir othir in Iuda to succede.

and Amaziah
began to com-
plain on For-
tune, who cast
both him and
his son from
their thrones.

First Amazias compleyned on Fortune, 2556
Causyng his greuous gret aduersites,
The traitouresse callid in comune,
These kynges tweyne castyng from ther sees;
Whos ouerturning from ther dignites, 2560
Onwar fallyng, dreedful and terible,
Been ceriously remembrid in the Bible.

Men may read
about their sad
end in the
Bible, so I shall
only glean out
the chief facts.

Ther pitous eende men may ther reede & see,
How Fortune ther fatis dede entrete. 2564
Wherfore teschewe & fleen prolixite,
Al tedious thyng in this processe to lete,
And in substauce to glenen out the grete,
Off ther fallyng I purpose nat to spare 2568
Compendiously the causes to declare.

Amaziah held
the sceptre over
Judah and grew
proud

This Amazias hauyng gouernaunce
Be ful iust title off successioun,
The sceptre off Iuda, with al the hool puissaunce, 2572

2542. to] no H, P. — *This stanza is omitted in J.*

2556. First] For H.

2565. teschewe] to shewen H, to shew R 3.

2566. Al] Off J — tedious thyng] tediousste H, tediousste R 3,
tediously P.

2569. causes] cause H. 2571. off] hauyng H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 49 verso.

- Ful pesibli in his possessioun,
 Til that pride and fals presumpcioun
 Most frowardli dede his herte embrace,
 Which al attonys made hym lose his grace. 2576
- In herte he hadde a maner* veynglorie,
 Because that God made hym to preuaile
 In his conquest and to have* victorie,
 Amalechitis to venquysshe in bataile, 2580
 Eek Gabanytis, as he them dede assaile,
 Purposyng[e] afftir, yiff he myhte,
 With Israelitis off pride for to fyhte.
- Onto kyng Ioas off Israel he sente, 2584
 Hym comaundyng to obeien his biddyng,
 And be lik subiect, as wern in ther entente,
 His predecessours in al maner thyng, 2588
 Whilom to Daud, the noble worthi kyng.
 This was his sonde to Ioas, plat and pleyn,
 Which bi a problem thus wrot to hym ageyn:
- “The ougli thistil off the valis lowe,
 Proudli presumyng aboue[n] his degre, 2592
 To make his pride openli be knowe,
 Sent his message to the cedre tre,
 That his sone myhte weddid be
 To his douhter; al-thouh in substaunce 2596
 Atwen hem too was a gret discordaunce.
- But off the forest the beestis sauagyne
 In ther corages hadde theroff disdeyne.
 Alle off assent fersli dede enclyne 2600
 The thistel leuys abrod vpon the pleyn,
 That ther was nouthur leff nor prikke seyn.”
 This was the problem, which Ioas be writyng
 Sent in a pistil to Amazie the kyng. 2604
- ¶ But Iosephus in his origynal,
 The said epistil, as he doth expresse,
 Seith off the vale how the pouder smal
 Off pride sente to the hih cipresse, 2608
 That his douhter, off excellent fairnesse,
 Onto his sone, pleynli to descryue,
 Myhte be delyuered & hauen hir to wyue.

and vainglorious because God helped him defeat the Amalekites and Edomites.

He wanted to fight Israel and commanded King Jehoash to be subject to him.

Jehoash answered, “The ugly thistle of the vale sent to the cedar-tree, saying, ‘give thy daughter to my son in marriage.’ But the wild beasts of the forest trod down the thistle. Not a leaf or even a prick was left.”

Josephus substitutes the puff-ball and cypress;

2577. maner] maner off B. 2579. have] han B.

2581. them dede] did them H.

2600. fersli] freshly H. 2611. &] to H.

- and, according to him, the puff-ball was cast abroad. But a fell beeste, which that beside stood, 2612
 Off cruel ire and indignacioun,
 With feet disdeynyng the pouder caste abrod
 Hih in the air aboute hym enviroun.
 The which exa^mple conceyued off resoun, 2616
 Who that attempteth to clymben hih aloffte,
 With onwar chaung his fall is ful onsoffte.
- There is no congruity between a thistle and a cedar or a cypress and a puff-ball. Royalty should not be married to persons of low birth. Atwen the cedre, off tre[e]s most roiall, [p. 120]
 And a sharp thistil is no conveyence, 2620
 Nor twen a cipresse, statli* founde att all,
 And lothsum pouder is a gret difference:
 For roial blood sholde ha[ue] non assistance
 To be ioyned nor knet in mariage 2624
 With such as been brouht foorth off low parage.
- The thistle, although it has some good qualities, also has pricks as sharp as a spine. The cedre is strong & myhti off substaunce,
 In his vpgrowyng riht as any lyne;
 And thouth the thistil ha[ue] spottis off plesaunce, 2628
 He hath eek prikkis, sharp as any spyne.
 And bothe naturis, pleynli to termyne,
 The cedre off kynde, who looke[th] weel aboute,
 To no thistil* sholde his braunchis loute. 2632
- The cypress is fragrant, but a puff-ball troubles the air with dust and gets in people's eyes. Holsum off odour is the fair cipresse,
 As bookis telle, and vertuouss off kynde;
 Dust & pouder, pleynli to expresse,
 Troubleth the air & maketh folkis blynde: 2636
 For which in spousaile conveyence to fynde,
 Lat estatis off ther berthe honourable,
 Voide al raskail & wedde ther semblable.
- Honourable estates should avoid rabble. Amaziah lost his temper, and made war on Jehoash; but his men ran away. But Amazias wolde nat be war 2640
 For no warnyng, nor for no prophecie,
 But stille in herte gret hatrede [he] bar
 Ageyn kyng Ioas, off malice & envie;
 Into a* feld brouht al his cheualrie, 2644
 Gadred them out, bothe nyh and ferre,
 Geyn Godis will on hym to gynne a werre.

2621. twen] atween H — statli] estatli B, estatly J.

2623. For] Full H — sholde] shal H.

2629. He] & H.

2632. thistil] thouthistil B, H, thouththistil J, thouthystyl H 5,
 thistill R 3, thistle P.

2636. air] day H.

2639. al] of H.

2642. he] om. J.

2644. a] the B. 2646. on] geyn H.

- And kyng Ioas, ful lik a worthi knyht,
 Into the feeld[e] faste gan hym speede; 2648 and Jehoash captured him
- And alle the knyhtis off Iuda anon riht
 Wer smet off vengauce with a sodeyn dreede —
 To bidde hem fle, God wot, it was no neede,
 And Amazias, for al his gret[e] pride, 2652
 Stood destitute and no man be his side.
- With hym was non lefft off al his meyne,
 So God and Ioas ageyn hym wrouhte.
 Off Ierusalem entred the cite, 2656 and took all the treasure of the temple to Samaria.
- And Amazie off force with hym he brouhte;
 And in the temple the tresour out he souhte,
 Gold and siluer, and hooli ther richesse;
 And to Samarie hom he gan hym dresse. 2660
- And Amazias he leet out off prisoun,
 Afftir al this, and suffred hym go fre.
 To his myscheeff and his confusioun,
 He was delyuered from his captiuite; 2664 Afterwards he set Amaziah free, and Amaziah was soon afterwards slain in Lachish.
- For slayn he was in Lachis the cite,
 Among his freendis be simulacioun,
 His deth conspired vnder ful fals tresoun.

[How god vpon Iosias succedyng kyng next in Iuda
 toke vengauce/ smot him with lepre.]¹

- A**FFTIR in Iuda, the myhti regioun, 2668 After Amaziah, Uzziab succeeded, manly and famous.
- Next Amazias, Iosias gan succede,
 Wonder manli & famous of renoun,
 In alle his werkis ful prouident in deede.
 And off his knyhtod venquisshid, as I reede, 2672
- The Palestynes, for al ther gret puissaunce,
 With al Arabie he brouht onto vttraunce.
- Bilte touns and many strong cite,
 And onto Egypt he his boundis sette; 2676 He defeated the Palestines, conquered Arabia and built towns and castles.
- Made castelis beside the Rede Se,
 And in his conquest, whom that euer he mette,
 Off manli pride he ne wolde lette —
 I meene alle tho that were his aduersaires — 2680
 To his lordshepe to make hem tributaires.

2658. 2nd the] om. H.

2674. vttraunce] myschaunce H.

2681. his] his gret H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 50 recto.

- He also rebuilt
Jerusalem,
strengthening
its defences,
- He dede his labour also to repare
Ierusalem afftir his ruynes;
The wallis rered, which on the soil lay bare, 2684
Made newe tour[e]s, riht as any lyne,
Fany's off gold ther torettis tenlumyne,
And tafforce hem, leet werkmen vndertake
Squar bastiles & bolwerkis to make. 2688
- and planted
gardens and
vineyards and
grafted trees.
- He delited to make fressh gardynes,
Dyuers greynes & herbis for to knowe,
Reioisshid to plante sundri vynes,
To griffe trees and seedis for to sowe, 2692
And straunge frutis [to] make hem growe arowe.
And with hym hadde, his enmyes to encoumbre,
Thre hundrid thousand manli men in noumbre.
- He became very
much dreaded
for his bravery,
and finally
grew proud
- His noble fame gan to sprede wide, 2696
And gret[e]li drad for his hih prowesse,
Wherthoruh his herte corrupt was with pride,
Because onli off his gret richesse;
And frowardli he dede his besynesse 2700
For to maligne in his estat roial
Ageyn the Lord, the which is inmortal.
- and obstinate
to God.
- To God aboute he gan wexe obstynat, [p. 121]
That be processe ful smal he dede wyne; 2704
And sauour cauhte in his roial estat
To folwe his fader in onthrift & synne,
That grace and vertu from hym dede twynne.
In most shynyng off his magnyficence, 2708
Fortune proudli assailed his excellence.
- So Fortune de-
cided to assail
him, especially
when he
dressed up like
a bishop out of
pure wanton-
ness and
started to
sacrifice in the
temple, which
vexed
- Caste she wolde withynne a litil while
His surquedie & froward pride assaile, 2712
And ful onwarli deceyue hym and begile,
To make his power tappallyn & to faile,
Whan that this kyng took on thapparaille
Off a bisshop, off veray frowardnesse,
And into temple proudli gan hym dresse, 2716
Be yng in purpos, on a solempne day,
To take his way up to the hih auter,
Falsli vsurpyng, who-euer seide nay,

2692. griffe] grift H, grift R 3, graffe P — seede H.

2693. to] om. P.

2697. hih] om. J. 2702. 2nd the] om. H.

2706. &] & in H, R 3. 2714. that] om. H, R 3.

- To sacrefie, holdyng the censer, 2720
 Tofor the auter, that shon of gold ful cleer.
 For which offence, the Bible seith the same,
 Azarias the bisshop dede hym blame.
- Gan withstonde hym in the face anon, 2724
 Four score preestis beyng in presence, Bishop Azariah
 Off the kynrede descendid off Aaron, who, with his
 Which forbad hym & made resistance, eighty priests
 That with his hand he sholde putte incence behind him,
 Vpon the auter, ageyn[es] Godis lawe, ordered Uzziab
 Hym charging boldli his presence to withdrawe. off the premises.
- But off despiht he made them holde ther pes, 2732
 In peyne off deth began hem to manace; But Uzziab
 And sodenli among[es] al the pres, told them to
 An erthequaue fill in the same place. hold their
 And therwithal in the kynges face, tongues, and
 Off the sonne ther smet a bem so briht, suddenly there
 That al his visage was scorkid with the liht. 2736 was an earth-
 He wex a lepre, ful foul and riht horrible quake, and the
 For his offence, as God list ordeyne; king's face was
 To euery man off look he was terrible, scorched by a
 And but fewe his myscheff gan compleyne. 2740 ray of the sun
 And a gret hill the same hour karff on tweyne, and he became
 Nat ferr a-side from the toun withoute, a leper, and a
 Cites destroieng that stood round aboute. 2744 hill split in
 On kyng Iosie God took his vengauce, two and de-
 For al his lordshepe & his magnyficence, stroyed cities.
 To punyshe his pride & his froward puissaunce, Thus God took
 And brouht hym lowe for his gret offence: 2748 his vengauce.
 For his persone was put out off presence
 Perpetueli, as Hooli Writ can telle,
 Fer from al peple with lepres for to duelle.
- His flesh was troubled with dyuers passiouns, 2752
 For his siknesse auoided the cite;
 In cri and sorwe and lamentaciouns
 His liff he ladde, in gret aduersite.
 And so he deied in sorwe and pouerte, 2756
 Sympli buried, for al his grete myht,
 Withynne an iland that stood ferr out of siht.

2720. sacrefie] sacrificse H, sacrifice R 3, P. 2721. shon] om. H.

2722. þe which H. 2730. boldli] proudly H.

2732. he be gan H. 2737. visage] face P — scorched P.

2742. the] þat H. 2758. stood ferr] ferrt was H.

¶ An exortacion to Princis to be auisid to do ageyn
goddis Preceptes.¹

Let princes be
careful not to
offend God;
for unless they
repent they will
suffer for it.

LAT pryncis all[e] in ther prouidence
Be riht weel war any thyng tattame, 2760
Which onto God sholde been offence,
List that the fyn conclude to ther shame.
Lat them thynke, for al ther noble fame,
But thei repente, God off his iustise 2764
Ther froward pride onwarli will chastise.

And let them
not meddle
with the affairs
of the church.
God will not
permit that.

Lat hem be war off malice to presume
Ageyn his cherche to doon offenscioun;
For God off riht all tirantis will consume 2768
In ful short tyme for ther presumpcioun.
Which wil nat suffre ther dominacioun
To interupte, for al ther grete myht,
Nor breke the fraunchise off hooli cherches ryht. 2772

Let Uzziab's
example teach
prudent princes
to do due
reverence to
holy church.

To prudent pryncis, which that can discerne,
Lat kyng Iosias, considred his offence,
Been in ther mynde a merour & lanterne,
To hooli cherche to do due reuerence; 2776
And conceyue in ther magnificence,
God will off riht, be thei neuer so stronge,
Chastise ther malice, thouh he abide longe.

[How kyng Ozie was taken bi kyng Salmanazar
and deied in prisoun.]²

Another king,
called Hoshea,
was taken by
Shalmaneser
and led captive
into Assyria.

THER was a-nother, that callid was
Ozie, [p. 122] 2780
Which whilom regned, as I afferme dar,
In Israel, whom Fortune be envie
Made hym be take or that he was war,
Besegid aboute off kyng Salmanazar; 2784
And in Tassirie vnder his daunger,
The Bible tellith, he was prisoner.

His towns were
destroyed, his
people enslaved,
and Hoshea
died of grief.

His cites, touns brouht to destruccioun,
And al his people vnder long seruage 2788
Wer take and kept in strong[e] Babiloun,

2772. chirch H. 2783. that] om. H.

2785. vn to Assyrye H, in to Assirie J, R, 3, into Assirie P,
in Tassrye H 5.

¹ The same beading in MS. J. leaf 50 verso.

² MS. J. leaf 50 verso.

Suffred ther gret peyne & gret damage.
 And in a presoun, be furious outrage,
 This said Ozias, in cheynes bounde sore, 2792
 For sorwe deide: off hym write I no more.

[How Senacheryb kyng of Assirie was slayne.]¹

WITH these forsaid woful kynges thre,
 Senacherib, off Assirie kyng,
 Cam to Iohn Bochas, most ougli on to see, 2796
 Ful pitousli his fate compleynyng.
 And speciali his onwar chaungyng
 He gan bewaile, oppressid in his thouht,
 From hih noblesse how he was brouht to nouht. 2800

His renoun spradde thoruh many dyuers rewm,
 And peeplis all[e] gan hym magnefie;
 A siege he laide onto Ierusalem,
 In the tyme off kyng Sedechie. 2804
 But in his most froward surquedie,
 Godis aungel tofor the cite
 An hundrid thousand slouh off his meyne.

And the mor to maken hym afferd, 2808
 Mid off his peeple, the silue same nyht,
 Godis aungel shooff away his berd
 With a sharp suerd that shon cleer & bryht.
 Leffte his siege & took hym onto flyht; 2812
 And in a temple, his goddis worshepyng,
 His sons slouh hym as he sat knelyng.

Sennacherib,
 ugly to look
 upon, com-
 plained how he
 was brought to
 nought.

His renown
 was great, and
 he laid siege to
 Jerusalem,
 but God's
 angel slew his
 men

and shaved
 his beard, which
 so terrified him
 that he ran
 away and was
 afterward slain
 by his sons.

[How kyng Sedechie/ for fals forsweryng was slayn
 and made blynde in prisoun.]²

TOUCHYNG the compleynt of kyng Sedechie,
 And off his sorwes to shewe the maner, 2816
 Hooli Writ dooth cleerli specefie,
 Wherefore it were but veyn to telle hem heer.
 For ther men may the processe pleynli ler,
 How Ioachym, kyng off Ierusalem, 2820
 His owne brother, was lad out off his rewm.

Zedekiah's story
 is told in the
 Bible.
 His brother
 Jehoiachin and
 his wife and
 children were
 taken captive
 by

2794. With] And with H, R 3, H 5.

2802. peeple H, peple R 3, pepyll H 5 — peeplis all] all people
 P. 2812. onto] to þe H.

2819. men] ye H — may] om. J.

¹ MS. J. leaf 50 verso.

² MS. J. leaf 51 recto.

- Nebuchad-
nezzar, which
grieved
Zedekiah.
- Wheroff in herte he felte ful gret sor,
This Sedechias, as it is ther founde,
Because the kyng Nabugodonosor
His brother heeld, strong in prisoun bounde,
Fulli in purpos the Jewes to confounde;
For this tirant hadde in that mortal striff
His brethre, childre in prisoun, & his wiff.
- 2824
2828
- But when
Nebuchad-
nezzar restored
him to his throne
on condition
of paying a
yearly tribute
to the
Babylonians,
he became
so elated
that he
- And yit this tirant in his tyrannye
This fauour dede in al his fell[e] rage
Onto this moste woful Sedechie,
To suffre hym regne in his gret[e] age,
Fro yeer to yeer to paie hym a truage,
Be feith and oth and composicioun,
Reised off his peple & brouht to Babiloun.
- 2832
- forgot his
brother and
his friends,
- Yit Sedechias in especial,
Be a maner off fals felicite,
Hymselff reioished in his see roiall
To ocupie that noble dignite,
And so forgat the gret aduersite
Off his brother and other freendis all,
Touchyng the myscheeff that thei wer in fall.
- 2836
2840
- and soon
decided that he
would not pay
his tribute any
longer.
- Off pride he fill into presumpcioun,
Whan he remembrid his brethre & his lynage,
Considred how fro kyng Salamoun
He was descendid be title off heritage,
Gan disdeyne to paien his truage,
And to maligne, in herte he was so wroth,
And falsli brak his suraunce and his oth.
- 2844
2848
- He thought to
himself,
"Solomon paid
no tribute;
tribute was paid
to him: why
should I do it?"
- He hadde a maner indignacioun,
Which he cauhte off old remembrance,
How tyme passid, to kyng Salamoun,
Be his manli prudent gouernaunce,
Kynges aboute for a recognisaunce
Paied tribut, and durst it nat withseie
Fro yeer to yeer his noblesse to obeie.
- 2852
2856
- So he rebelled
against the king
of Babylon,
- Which thyng remembrid off kyng Sedechie,
As he wex gret and strong in his puissaunce,
Off hih disdeyn his tribut gan denye,

2828. brethre] brothir H, brother H 5, brethern P — children P.

2830. his] this H. 2832. hym] hem H.

2838. reioysshyng H. 2844. 2nd his] om. H.

- Sette a-side his feith and assuraunce, 2860
 So that his oth stood in no substaunce;
 For he ageyn the kyng off Babiloun
 Presumptuousli fill in rebelloun.
- And his kyngdam to strengthe & fortefie, [p. 123] 2864
 Thouhte he wolde to his auantage
 The kyng off Egipt haue on his partie,
 Off pride he fill into so gret outrage,
 That he no mor wolde paien his truage; 2868
 But fynali such weies he hath souht,
 That off his oth litil he rouhte or nouht.
- But O alas, it is a doolful thyng
 To be remembred, in hih or low degre, 2872
 That any prynce or any worthi kyng
 Sholde false his oth or ontrewre be;
 Or that men sholde such variaunce see
 In ther corages, which been so hih[e] born, 2876
 For any cause falsli to be forsworn.
- Be report it doth ther fame trouble,
 Infortuneth and clipseth ther noblesse,
 Whan a prynce is off his heste double, 2880
 And chargith nat, off wilful reclesnesse,
 Al-be his promys conclude on doubilnesse.
 Thouh God a while suffre hem and respite,
 At onset hour ther falsnesse he will quite. 2884
- His warnyng offte he sent to them affor,
 Because thei lacke prudent policie,
 Record I take off Nabugodonor,
 Which cam onwarli on kyng Sedechie, 2888
 For he his tribut gan falsli hym denye;
 With al his power, as he dede abraide,
 To Ierusalem a myhti siege he laide.
- Thei withynne constreyned were off neede,
 The kyng hymself, ther was no bett diffence, 2892
 With manys flesh his peple for to feede,
 Whil the Caldeies be myhti violence,
 Off verai force, withoute resistance, 2896
 On fals forsweryng for to taken wrake,
 Ther myhti tour[e]s and ther wallis brake.

and, allying himself with the king of Egypt, went back on his promised word,

which is a shameful thing for any prince or king to do.

It injures their good name and eclipses their noblesse, and God is sure to punish them for it.

The result was, that Nebuchadnezzar suddenly descended on Zedekiah,

laid siege to Jerusalem, starved the Jews into eating one another, destroyed the city and killed most of the people.

2879. Infortunatith R 3 — eclipsith H, R 3.

2888. on] vpon H. 2894. peeplis H.

- Zedekiah was
put in chains,
his children slain,
his wives
handed over to
strangers and
his eyes rent out.
- To slen and kille thei list non for to spare,
Whom-euer thei mette or cam in ther siht; 2900
Sedechias leffte the toun al bare,
But take he was, as he hym took to fliht,
In cheynys bounde and fetrid anon riht,
In whose presence, tenrece his peynes anon, 2904
His yonge childre were slay[e]n euerichon.
His wyues all, most woful off ther cheres,
Which in ther tyme most goodli were and fair,
Delyuered wern in handis off straungeres; 2908
And mor, alas, to putte hym in despair,
Into his kyngdam neuer to ha[ue] repair,
With sharp[e] tonges, it was to gret a peyne,
Out off his hed wer rent his eien tweyne. 2912
- His city
Jerusalem was
burnt to the
ground, his
treasure sent to
Babylon, and he
died miserably
in prison.
- Off Ierusalem his cite was ibrent
Pleyn to* the ground into asshes dede.
His gret richesse, his tresour hooli sent
To Babiloun, with stonys bleu and rede; 2916
Vesselis off gold, which richest wer in deede,
Withoute merci or remissioun,
Caldeies took to ther possessioun.
- That is what
perjury leads to.
- And thus in sorwe and in wrechidnesse 2920
He deied, alas, fetred in prisoun.
Loo, heer the eende off periurie & falsnesse!
Loo, how Fortune can turnen vp-so-doun
Off mortal men the condicioun: 2924
Now richest shynyng in* prosperite,
With onwar chaung to hatful pouerte.
- What do royal
thrones avail
people who are
not secure in
them?
- Now men lefft up to roial dignites,
Now hih aloffte be fulsum habundaunce: 2928
But what auailleth to sitte in roial sees
To folk that han therin non assuraunce,
Namli whan Fortune holdeth the balaunce,
Which ay off custum onto hih estatis 2932
Hath a fals ioie to shewen hir chekmatis.
- Amaziah fell,
Uzziah became
a leper, Zedekiah
died in prison.
- Record I take off pryncis mo than on,
Ther woful fatis hanging in iupartie,
Remembrid late, and among echon 2936

2904. peyn H.

2913. ibrent] brent J.

2914. to] into B, J, H, P, H 5 — the] om. H 5.

2925. in] in hih B, J, in hygh H 5. 2930. have H.

2935. hangyng] havyng H.

The woful fal off kyng Amazie,
 His sone eek lepre, which callid was Iosie,
 And last off all[e], how in Babiloun,
 Kyng Sedechias deied in prisoun. 2940

¶ *Lenvoye.*

NOBLE Pryncis, considreth the fallas
 Off Fortunys froward flat[e]rie;
 Seeth hir deceites in many dyuers cas,
 How she first mokkid manli Amazie, 2944
 Which slay[e]n was for his surquedie
 To yeue you warnyng, bexauple as ye may reede,
 Whan ye sit hiest, your fal is most to dreede.

Noble Princes,
 when you sit
 highest, then is
 your fall most to
 be dreaded.

And as it is remembred* in Bochas, [p. 124] 2948
 Eek in the Bible off the kyng Iosie,
 In his tyme how famous that he was
 Bothe off richesse and off cheualrie,
 Punshed with lepre, bookis specefie, 2952
 For his presumyng: remembrith this in deede,
 Whan ye sit hiest, your fal is most to dreede.

Remember how
 Uzziah was pun-
 ished for his
 presumption,

Al worldli glorie* fleeth hens a gret[e] pas,
 I take wisse off kyng Sedechie; 2956
 For fals forsweryng he slay[e]n was, alas!
 Maad blynd in prisoun; this story cannat lie.
 Thus sheweth Fortune, thoruh hir froward envie,
 To you, Pryncis, yif ye list taken heede, 2960
 Whan ye sit hiest, your fal is most to dreede.

and how King
 Zedekiah was
 slain for
 forswearing.

[How kyng Astriages labored to disherite Cirus/ but
 god suffrid his malice not to preuaile.]¹

AFFTIR these kynges, on folwed in the pres,
 And gan to Bochas his compleynt discure;
 And he was callid the grete Astriages, 2964
 Which tolde in ordre his vnkouth auenture,
 Lord off Asie, as bookis us assure,
 And hadde off tresour duryng al his liff
 A-boue alle kynges a prerogatiff. 2968

After these
 kings followed
 Astyages, the
 richest prince of
 his time.

2948. is remembred] remembreth B, remembrith J, H 5.
 2949. 2nd the] om. H. 2955. gloire B. 2958. this] his H.
 2963. to discure H. 2964. Astiages P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 51 verso.

- He lacked
nothing but a
male heir,
- Most fortunat in al his gouernaile,
Felte off Fortune non aduersite,
Sauf an heir male, nothyng dede hym faile;
For he most glorios sat in his roial see: 2972
Off worldli welthe he lacked no plente,
Except onli, as clerkis off hym write,
He hadde no sone his kyngdam tenherite,
- and once dreamt
of a vine that
grew, and a
stream of water,
clear as beryl,
that arose, in his
daughter
Mandane's
womb, both
spreading over
all Asia,
- Which to his welthe was gret disencres, 2976
Lest successioun failed in his lyne.
A douhter had he callid Mundanes,
Out off whos wombe, as bookis determyne,
He drempte a-nyht[e] how he sauh a vyne 2980
In his auesioun, with hym so it stood,
Ouer al Asie his braunchis sprede abrod.
He hadde also a reuelacioun,
Slepyng a-nyht[e] afftir his souper, 2984
Thouh he nat knew thexposicioun,
He thouhte he sauh a cristallyn ryuer,
With lusti watris, as any berell cleer,
Out off hir wombe, with his stremys fressh 2988
The soil of Asie make tendre and nessh.
- and could not
understand what
it meant,
- Touchyng this reuer and this lusty vyne
To hym shewed in his auisioun,
Withynne hymself he coud[e] nat termyne, 2992
Theroff to fynde no cleer conclusioun
Withoute sum maner expositioun
To hym declared be folkis in sentence,
Which off such dremys hadde experience. 2996
- until his
philosophers and
diviners
- To hym he callid his astronomeris,
His philisophres and his dyuynours,
That knew the meuyng off the nyne speeris,
Ymages off sterris, ther houses & ther tours; 3000
And such as wern expert expositours.
And whan thei wern assemblid euerichon,
Touchyng his drem thei corded all in on.
- told him that his
daughter would
have a son, by
whom one day
he would be put
out of his king-
dom. This was
to be his fate.
- To telle hym trouth thei wer nat rec[e]les, — 3004
Saide his douhter, fro whom ther cam a vyne,
She that be name was callid Mundanes,
Sholde haue a sone descendyng from his lyne,
Whos noble fame thoruh Asia sholde shyne, 3008
Which sholde [hym] putte, thoruh his hih renoun,
Be* force off armys out off his regioun.

3009. hym] om. J — hym putte] pull hym H.
3110. Be] Hym be B, J — armys] hys armes P.

- This was his fate; he myhte it nat refuse,
 The heuenli cours but it dede faile. 3012 Whereupon he thought he would try to avoid it,
- Wherupon he sore gan to muse,
 Such fantasies dede his herte assaile;
 Fill in gret doubte off ther dyuynaile,
 Thouhte he wolde make purueiaunce 3016
 For to withstonde Godis ordenaunce.
- Ful hard it is to make resistence
 Geyn thyng ordeyned, whan God will that it be;
 And namli ther, wher as influence 3020
 Off heuene aboue hath shape a destyne:
 Sum men recorde that no man may it fle.
 The doom off this, wher that it holde or flitte,
 Tastronomeris al hooli I committe. 3024
- This said[e] kyng, off whom I spak but late,
 Caste he wolde, for his auauntage,
 The ordenaunce reuersen and the fate
 Off the heuene, with al the surplusage, 3028
 And yeue his douhter as in mariage
 To sum onworthi poore infortunat
 That neuer were likli to rise to hih estat.
- And in this wise, kyng Astriages [p. 125] 3032
 Married his douhter, as in his entent,
 To on onworthi callid Cambises,
 Deemyng therbi, be short auysement,
 Withynne hymselff that he was riht prudent, 3036
 Wenying that noblesse cam be discent off blood,
 And nat be grace, nor as the heuene stood.
- In his resoun was nat comprehendid,
 How Socrates, maistir off Platoun, 3040
 Off ful low bed bi berthe was descendid,
 And nat tenherite kyngdam nor regioun,
 But for to haue fulli possessioun
 Off moral vertu and philosophie, 3044
 Duryng his liff his witt he dede applie.
- He souhte contrees for wisdam and science,
 And secre cunnynges to serch[e] dede his peyne;
 And he fond out thoruh his deligence, 3048 discovered that the soul was immortal,

3012. faile] falle H.

3022. men] om. H. 3025. saide] same H.

3031. likli] like H. 3041. bi berthe] om. H.

- This philisophre, as bookis acerteine,
 To ioie reserued outhere onto peyne,
 Be grace off God, which is eternall,
 How meny soules be founde ay inmortal. 3052
- and was judged
 by Apollo to be
 the wisest
 philosopher of
 his time, The grete Appollo, in bookis it is founde,
 Gaff iugement off equite and riht,
 That Socrates in vertu most habounde,
 And most preferrid in eueri manys siht, 3056
 Was callid off wisdam the lanterne & the liht,
 And wisest named, at evyn and at pryme,
 Off philisophres that wer in his tyme.
- and Euripides,
 who was called
 most honourable
 (although his
 mother was
 vicious) and
 wrote many
 tragedies and
 told the truth
 to all. The poete also callid Euripides, 3060
 Most honourable callid in that age,
 Al-be his mooder off liff was rec[e]les
 And contagious thoruh vicious outrage:
 Yit was this poete, for al his vil lynage, 3064
 Most vertuous founden at assaies,
 Off alle poetis that wer in his daies.
- Callid in his tyme a gret tragician,
 Because he wrot many tragedies, 3068
 And wolde off trouthe spare no maner man,
 But hem rebuken in his poetries,
 Touchyng the vices off flesshli fantasies,
 Compleyne in pryncis ther deedis most horrible, 3072
 And ech thyng punshe that was to God odible.
- Demosthenes,
 greatest of
 rhetoricians,
 was born a poor
 man, yet he was
 the most
 eloquent. A-nother clerk callid Demostenes,
 The moste subtil rethorician,
 And most inuentiff among al the pres, 3076
 That euer was sithe[n] the world began,
 Al-be off berthe he was a poore man,
 Yit hadde he most souereyn excellence
 Mong philisophres off speche & eloquence. 3080
- So it would seem
 that royal blood
 and high lineage
 are of but small
 advantage with-
 out the grace of
 God. Be which exaample, me semeth dout[e]les,
 That roial blood, nouthere hih lynage
 To meny berthe yeueth but smal encrens,
 Nor onto vertu but lital auantage: 3084
 For hih noblesse taketh nat his corage
 Off riche nor poore, nor stais souereyne,
 But off his grace, as God list to ordeyne.

3056. eueri] any H.

3073. punysh H, punnysch R 3, punysshed H 5, punishe P.

3074. Domestenes J. 3082. nouthere] nor J, P.

Wherefore, off foli kyng Astriages,
 Contrariouſli ageyn al gent[e]rie,
 Bad that his douhter callid Mundanes,
 First whan folk with childe hir dede espie,
 For tacompliſhe his froward fantasie,
 Whan it wer born, charging aboue all thyng,
 Off Archanye to bern it to the kyng.

3088 Astyages was foolish and not a gentleman, for he commanded Mandane's new-born child to be taken to Harpagus to be cast out to wild beasts.

Which in that tyme was callid Arpagus;
 And, as I fynde, he dede in vertu floure,
 And pite* hadde, the story tellith thus,
 That beestis sholde the litil child deuoure.
 But God that may in myscheff best socoure,
 To keepe the child was nat rek[e]les,
 Ageyn the malice off kyng Astriages,

3096

Which hadde comaundid off malice & hatreede,
 How that this child, greene & tendre off age,
 Bi Arpagus sholde be cast in deede
 To be deuoured off beestis most sauage.
 But for he dradde to doon so gret outrage,
 To his shepperde, hymself to stonde at large,
 The child to slen he fulli gaff the charge.

3100

But Harpagus was afraid to put the child to death and told his shepherd to do it.

3104

3108

[How yong Cirus was in to the Forest/ cast with
 bestys to be deuoured.]¹

THIS heerdeman, albe that he was loth
 To execute this woful auenture,
 Inta forest forth with the child he goth,
 And gaff to beestis that litil creature;
 Whom to fostre, be grace ageyn nature,
 A wilde bichche hir whelpis ther forsook,
 And to hir pappis the litil child she took.

The shepherd, although unwilling, took the child into a forest, where it was suckled by a wild bitch.

3112

And with hir mylk she made hym suppe &
 dyne,

[p. 126]

Behold how God can preserve innocents from injury!

3116

And bisi was fro* hym to enchace
 Wilde foulis and beestis sauagyne,

3091. did hir H.

3094. Hircanye P. 3095. Harpagus P.

3097. pite] spiht B, J, spyte P.

3102. hadde] om. H. 3108. 2nd the] in H.

3111. Inta] In to a H, J, R 3, H 5, P.

3117. fro] for B, H, H 5. 3118. beestis & foulis H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 52 recto, in margin.

That non ne durste neihhen to that place.
 Loo, how that God disposen can his grace, 3120
 Innocentis fro myscheeff to preserue
 Geyn fals envie, which wolde make hem sterue!

O unkind blood,
 unnatural and
 full of hatred, to
 murder a child
 on whom even
 beasts have
 pity!

O blood onkynde, founden in kynreede,
 For couetise, O blood disnaturall 3124
 Off fals malice, O blood ful off hatreede! —
 To moordre a child born off the stok roiall!
 Wher manys resoun is turned bestiall,
 Falsli transfourmed onto cruelte, 3128
 To slen a child wher beestis han pite!

The simple
 herdsman told
 his wife about
 the child, and
 she went with
 him to the forest
 to see it, and
 took it in her
 arms

The celi heerde hath told his wiff the cas;
 And she anon off pite dede arise,
 With hir husbonde wente a ful gret pas 3132
 Into the forest, beholdyng al the guise,
 As heer-tofor[e]n ye han herd deuyse,
 Seyng the child, with lippis tendre & soffte,
 The bichchis pappis how he sok ful offte. 3136

The said[e] heerde callid Sparagos,
 His wiff also, off whom tofor[n] I tolde,
 This yonge child took in ther depos;
 And in hir armys she sofftli gan it folde. 3140
 And he ful goodli hir face gan beholde,
 And on his maner in the same while,
 In childli wise on hir gan to smyle.

and fed it,
 although the
 wild bitch stood
 angrily at bay

The childes laughtre whan she dede aduerte, 3144
 With al hir hool[e] feithful dilligence
 She gan to cherishe it, and with al hir herte
 She gaff it souk, with ful gret reuerence,
 Albe the bichche made resistance, 3148
 Compleynyng stood felli at abay,
 The litil child whan she sauh lad away.

and howled
 when she carried
 it home with her.

Ful pitousli she gan to houle and crie,
 At ther departyng doolfully compleyne, 3152
 And afftir them ful faste gan to hie,
 The child to lete she felte so gret a peyne.
 Loo, how that God off merci can ordeyne
 A cruel beeste such sorwe for to make, 3156
 And so to mourne for a childes sake!

- But eueri thyng that God will ha[ue] preserued,
 Ne may nat faile to stonde in sekirnesse.
 His secre doomys been to hymself reserued;
 3160 Ther can no man expowne hem, as I gesse.
 For he shoop first that this shepperdesse,
 Off Sparagos the trewe poore wiff,
 For to be mene to saue the childes liff. 3164
- Hom to hir hous the child she ladde anon,
 And it to fostre dede hir besynesse:
 Off othir salari, God wot, knew she non,
 Sauff that hir herte therto dede hir dresse. 3168
 And mor enterli, the story berth witnessse,
 She tendrid hym, and with mor besi cure,
 Than hym that was hir child born off nature.
- And as the story pleynli doth expresse,
 3172 This yonge child, as he wex in age,
 Fro day to day encreced in noblesse,
 Lik for to been riht manli off corage.
 Cirus callid he was in that language, 3176
 To seyne in Latyn pleynli in substauce,
 A man iborn to gret enheritaunce.
- And whan the renoun off his excellence
 Bi long processe, and off his gret ences
 3180 Cam be report onto the audience
 Off his aiel, the grete Astriages,
 And how the kyng was founde rech[e]les,
 Callid Arpagus, for to do vengauce 3184
 On yonge Cirus, he fill in displesaunce.
- This is to meene Astriages was wroth,
 That Arpagus was founde mercioble
 Cirus to saue, and for that he was loth 3188
 Ageyn[es] al riht for to be vengable
 To slen a child, a thyng nat comendable, —
 Demyng off trouthe in his conscience,
 God was nat paied, to moordre innocence. 3192
- Astriages caste hym to be wreke
 On Arpagus be fals collusioun,
 Because that he his biddyng dede breke,
 And was contraire to his entencioun 3196
 Cirus to slen, ageyn[es] al resoun.
 And for that cause Astriages, I reede,
 Off Arpagus leet slen the child in deede.

What God wishes preserved is safe. God saw to it that the shepherdess rescued the child out of the goodness of her heart.

She cared for him better than if he had been her own.

They named him Cyrus, which means in Latin a man born to great inheritance.

When Astyages heard of all this, he was furious with Harpagus

because he did not kill Cyrus;

so he slew Harpagus' son out of revenge,

- and had him roasted and served up to his father at table, a most lamentable thing to do. This to seyne, be ful fals compassyng [p. 127] 3200
 And couert moordre, wrouht bi Astriages,
 The sone was slayn off Arpagus the kyng,
 And afftir rosted, allas, ful causeles,
 And sithe presentid, amongis al the pres, 3204
 Toform his fader, a thyng most lamentable,
 With Astriages as he sat at* table.
- When Harpagus found out this horrible murder, he went home in a rage But whan this kyng callid Arpagus
 Conceyued hath this moordre most terrible, 3208
 And how his sone & heir was slay[e]n thus,
 In his ire most furious and odible,
 In al the haste that it was possible,
 He is repaired hom to his houshold, 3212
 And al the cas to Cirus he hath told.
- and told Cyrus what had happened, urging him to take vengeance and telling him that he was the lawful heir to Astyages' kingdom, and how his grandfather had cast him out to be eaten by wild beasts. And how his sone was slay[e]n for his sake,
 In the most hatful odious cruelte,
 Excityng hym with hym to vndirtake 3216
 On this fals moordre auengid for to be,
 To hym declaryng off trouthe & equite,
 How he was bor[e]n be discent in deede,
 As riht[e] heir to regne in Perse & Mede. 3220
 To hym declaryng the stori bi and bi,
 First off the drem off Astriages,
 And how that he be fraude ful falsli
 Made his douhter, callid Mundanes, 3224
 Poorli be weddid onto Cambises,
 Which was his mooder, & how in tendre age
 He was out cast to beestis ful sauage.
- All things that God disposes must come to pass; and Cyrus was preordained to become the ruler of all Asia. Be a shepperde and a shepperdesse 3228
 Fostred he was in gret[e] pouerte,
 And brouht fro beestis out off wildirnesse,
 Because God wolde he sholde saued be:
 For thilke Lord, which euery-tyng may see, 3232
 Whan that he hath a thyng aform disposid,
 Nedis it mut fall & may nat be deposid.
 This said[e] Cirus, at his natyuyte,
 Ordeyned was be reuolucioun 3236
 Off the heuenli speeris, in noumbre thries thre,
 (So stood that tyme his constellacioun,)

3206. at] at the B, H 5, P.

3215. odious hatefull H. 3119. -How] om. R 3, P.

3233. aform] be for H.

- That he sholde haue the domynacioun
 Ouer al Asie, be influence dyuyne, 3240
 Aforn figured be spredyng off the vyne.
- What may the fraude off slehti folk auaille,
 Innocentis to putte out off ther riht? What can the
 Thouh trouthe be hid amongis the poraile, 3244 fraud of men
 Hard brouht foorth, & dar nat shewe his liht, avail to rob
 Yit God will ordeyne that the bemys briht innocents of
 Shal sum o day shewe out his cleernesse, their rights?
 Maugre all tho that wolde his title oppresse. 3248
- For this Cirus, as clerkis off hym write,
 Was bi the title off his mooder side
 Born to be kyng al Asie tenherite,
 Al-be his aiel from hym wolde it deuide; 3252
 But God, that can for trouthe best prouide,
 Hath for Cirus be processe so ordeyned,
 That he off Asie the lordshep hath atteyned.
- Cirus that tyme was growe up weel on lengthe, 3256
 Weel proporciownyd off membris & stature, Cyrus grew up
 Wonder delyuer, & passyng off gret strengthe, into a strong,
 Straunge emprises proudli to endure, well-built man
 And to iupartē & putte in auenture 3260
 His owne persone, the fame was off hym so,
 Was non mor likli wher men sholde haue a-do.
- And bi the counsail off kyng Arpagus,
 Whan this Cirus was weel waxe in age, 3264
 With Perciens proude & surquedous, and by Har-
 And Archanytes cruel off corage, pagus' advice
 For to recure his rihtful heritage set out to give
 Be go with Cirus, armed in plate & maile, 3268 battle to Asty-
 With Astriages to holden [a] bataile. ages.
- And he ageynward gan to taken heede,
 And with hym took[e] many worthi knyht,
 With al the puissaunce off the lond off Mede 3272
 Hath take the feeld the same dai foorth-ryht, Astyages took
 To disherite Cirus off his ryht. the field the
 But God and trouthe was atwen hem tweyne same day, with
 Egal iuge ther quarel to dareyne. 3276 all the power of
 Media,

3241. spredyng] spryngyng H.

3256. up weel on] wele vpon H.

3259. Straunge] Strong H.

3269. a] om. J, P.

but Cyrus won, The feeld ordeyned, & splaid ther baneris,
 On outhr parti ful proudli on thei sette,
 At thassemblyng lik liouns off ther cheris,
 In the face as thei fersli mette 3280
 With rounde speris, ful sharp[e] grounde & whette,
 Til that Cirus, off grace mor than noumbre,
 Off his aiel the parti dede encoumbre.

and, pursuing his
 foes, took Asty-
 ages prisoner. This myhti Cirus, this yonge champioun, [p. 128] 3284
 Thoruhout the feeld gan such a slauhtre make,
 With his knyhtis as he wente up and down,
 That as the deth his fomen hym forsake.
 Astriages vnder his baner take, 3288
 The feeld venquysshid, for al his fals veynglorie,
 To shewe that riht hath alwey the victorie.

A man may
 purpose a thing
 of malice, but
 it is God who
 disposes, and
 truth always
 wins in the end. A man off malice may a thyng purpose
 Bi a maner froward prouydence; 3292
 But God a-boue can graciousli dispose
 Ageyn such malice to make resistence:
 Men for a while may suffre violence
 And wronges grete, wher-so that thei weende, 3296
 But trouthe alway venquysshith at the eende.

Astyages found
 that his dream
 came true: the
 sleight of man
 is no match for
 God's power. Astriages fond ful sooth his drem;
 Thoug he ageyn it made purueiance
 To haue* depryued Cirus off his rem, 3300
 He was deceyued in his ordynance:
 For wher that God thoruh his myhti puissance
 List for heires iustli to prouide,
 Sleichte in such cas off man, is leid a-side. 3304

So Cyrus re-
 covered the land
 of Media, and
 all Asia rejoiced
 in peace. Maugre the myht[e] off Astriages,
 Cirus on hym made a disconfiture;
 And al Asie reioisshed eek in pes,
 Off verai riht, as was his auenture. 3308
 And be iust tittle he dede also recure
 The lond off Mede, lik as was his fate,
 And into Perse he dede it hool translate.

He was not re-
 vengeful, and
 gave his grand-
 father the fourth
 part of Archania, Ageyn his aiel he was nat vengable, 3312
 Which hadde wrouht to his destruccioun,
 But was to hym benygne and merciabile,
 And grauntid hym, off hool affeccioun,
 The fourte part off the regioun 3316

Off Archanye, off which afor I tolde,
Hym to sustenyn in his daies olde.

For kyng Cirus wold[e] nat his lyue
Suffre his aiel, off veray gentillesse,
That men sholde hym fynali depryue
Off kyngli honour, for non onkynd[e]nesse, —
To yeue exauple to pryncis in sothnesse,
Thouh God ha[ue] youe hem power in erthe &
myht,
Thei sholde ay merci medle with the ryht.

3320 nor did he wish
him to be de-
prived of kingly
honour. Princes
should always
temper their
justice with
mercy.

3324

[¶ **Lenvoye.**]

NOBLE Princis, *your* eris doth enclyne,
And considreth in *your* discreciouns,
How dremys shewed binfluence dyuyne
Be nat lik sweuenys, but lik auysiouns,
Or resemblable to reuelaciouns,*
Which thouh men wolde distourbe & make faile,
God wil nat suffre ther malice to preuaile.

3328 Noble Princes,
consider how
dreams shewn
by divine influ-
ence are like
revelations,
which God will
not allow men
to frustrate.

3332

Astriages drempte he sauh a vyne,
Shewed off trouthe and non illusiouns,
From his douhter wombe, riht as lyne,
Spred in Asie ouer the regiouns;
But to disherite be fals collusiouns
Yonge Cirus, the kyng dede his trauaile,
But God nat suffred his malice to preuaile.

3336 Astyages' dream
came true in
spite of all his
efforts to
disinherit
Cyrus.

Pryncis remembreth, ye that in honour shyne,
Vpon this stori in your entenciouns,
And beth weelwillid, wher God list forthre a lyne
Outher to richesse or dominaciouns,
To fauour them to ther promociouns, —
Be nat contrarie in your acquitaile,
Sithe God will suffre no malice to preuaile.

3340 Princes, remem-
ber this story;
and when God is
pleased to ad-
vance a line to
wealth or power
do not oppose
his will.

3344

3317. afor] tofor H.

3327. considre H.

3330. reuelaciouns] reuoluciouns B, J, P, R 3, reuolucyons H 5.

3331. distourbe] distroble H, distrouble R 3.

3335. lyne] any lyne H.

3344. promyciouns H.

[How Candalus kyng of Lide was made Cokewold /
and aftir slayn.]¹

As Bochas sat
writing in his
study, Candaules,
king of
Lydia, came
weeping into his
presence and be-
sought him to
tell the story of
how he was de-
ceived and made
a cuckold by
Gyges, a knight
of his household.

WHIL Iohn Bochas caste his look a-side,
In his studie as he sat writyng, 3348
To his presence cam the kyng off Lide
Callid Candalus, ful pitousli pleynyng,
With salte teris ful lowli besechyng,
That he wolde, tasswagen his greuauunce, 3352
His dedli sorwe to putte in remembraunce.
His compleynt was most off onkynd[e]nesse,
For fals deceit, ageyn al skile and riht,
That wher his trust was most off gentilesse, 3356
He morkid was, for al his gret[e] myht;
For off his hous ther was a certeyn knyht,
Giges callid, thyng shamful to be told,
To speke pleyng Inglissh, made hym a cokold. 3360

But I should not
have used such
a coarse word!
I ought to have
said he had a
horn or that he
was called Cor-
nuto.

Alas, I was nat auysid weel befor,
Oncunnyngli to speke such language;
I sholde ha said, how that he hadde an horn,
Or souht sum tee[r]me with a fair visage 3364
Texcuse my rudnesse off this gret outrage,
As in sum land Cornodo men them call,
And summe afferme how such folk ha[ue] no gall.

It happened
thus: One sum-
mer day the
queen lay
naked on her
bed,

This was the cas: whan Phebus shon [ful]
sheene [p. 129] 3368
The somer sesoun in his ascencioun,
Whan soote braunchis wer clad in newe greene,
Heete inportable hadde domynacioun,
Whan that the queen for recreacioun, 3372
Onprouyded that no man dede hir keepe,
Vpon hir bed lay naked for to sleepe.

and, as scholars
say, there was
no fairer
creature alive;

And, as clerkis off hir beute write,
Ther was a-lyue no fairere creature, 3376
Nor mor excellyng, lik as thei endite,
Off semlynesse, hir stori doth assure:

3350. Candaules P.

3356. That] Til H. 3359. be told] beholde' H.

3364. teerme] teeme J, P, term H, terme H 5, tym R 3.

3369. The] This H.

3377. lik] of looke H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 53 verso.

- Callid for beute cosyn to Nature,
 And worthi eek, yiff I shal nat feyne, 3380
 To be comparid to Griselde* or Eleyne.
- Kynde in hir forge list nothyng to erre, for nature
 Whan she hir wrouhte, bi gret auysynesse, did not blunder
 To make off beute the veray lode-sterre, 3384 when she
 And yeue hir fauour, beute & semlynesse; wrought her,
 But for Nature hadde so gret besynesse except that she
 To fourme a woman that was so fressh of hewe, forgot to make
 She hadde forgete for to make hir trewe. 3388 her true.
- Hir eyen wer verai celestially,
 Hir her ontressid, lik Phebus in his speer, —
 A thyng rassemblyng that were inmortal, She had
 So angelik she was off look and cheer, 3392 heavenly eyes,
 An examplaire off port & off maneer, — golden hair, an
 Ther was no lak, sauf Nature, thoruh hir slouthe, angelic face and
 Hadde lefft behynde to yeue hir feith & trouthe. unexampled
 manners: only
 nature neglected
 to give her
 constancy.
- And on a day, as she lay slepyng 3396
 Naked a-bedde, most goodli on to siht, That day Can-
 Ful onwarli cam Candalus the kyng daules shewed
 Into the chaumbre, wher Titan shon ful bryht, her to Gyges,
 And shewed hir beute onto his owne knyht, 3400 so that he
 Off entent he sholde ber wisse could see that
 How she excellid all othir in fairnesse. she was more
 beautiful than
 all other women.
- And whan Gyges gan in ordre see
 Off this queen the gret[e] excellence, 3404
 He was enamoured vpon hir beute
 Al the while he stood ther in presence,
 Gan ymagyne a tresoun in silence,
 To slen his lord, withoute long tarieng, 3408
 Wynne the queen, and afftir regne as kyng.
- This was the eende, doolful and pitous,
 To be remembrid hatful and terrible,
 Off this noble worthi Candalus; 3412
 For off his trust to moche he was credible
 Onto Gyges, the traitour most odible.
 And yit mor foltissh, wherbi he lost his liff,
 Outward to shewe the beute off his wiff. 3416

3381. Grisilde B, Grisilde J, P, Grisilde H, Grysilde R 3,
 Gresylde H 5.

3385. beute fauour J — beute] om. P. 3391. Immortal H.

3396. day] bedde H. 3400. his] hir H.

Alas that a queen or princess should do such a thing! Their only excuse is that Nature makes them double.

Though she were fair & goodli on to see,
 Ther was no trust nor no sekirnesse,
 For other hadde as good[e] part as he, —
 Giges koude bere theroff wittenesse. 3420
 Alas, a queen, or any gret pryncesse
 Assente sholde hir fame for to trouble,
 But yiff Nature excuse hem to be double.

[How what thing kyng Midas touched was golde/
 yitt deied he in misery and wrecchidnesse.]¹

Gyges was soon afterwards crowned king of Lydia.

BUT who-so-euer was therwith loth or fayn, 3424
 Giges was afftir crownyd kyng off Lide,
 Whan that his lord was be tresoun slayn.
 Off hym the surplus Bochas set a-side.

Midas next appeared, and, weeping, told Bochas his complaint.

And in his studi, as he dede abide, 3428
 Ther cam off Frige, Midas the riche kyng,
 Told myn auctour his compleynt with wepyng.

Never was there a richer king. When he was born, ants laid grains of wheat about his cradle,

For ther was neuer, be conquest nor labour,
 No kyng afor that hadde mor richesse, 3432
 Nor mor plente off gold nor off tresour.
 At whose berthe poetis thus expresse:
 A-boute his cradel amptis gan hem* dresse,
 Whil he slepte, and gan a-boute hym leyn 3436
 A ful gret noumbre off purid whete greyn.

and diviners came to the conclusion that he would excel all men in wealth.

Wherupon, most expert dyuynours,
 As thei took heed in ther attendaunce,
 Such as wer[e]n best expositours, 3440
 Saide it was a tokne off habundaunce,
 To haue off richesse al maner suffisaunce,
 And concludyng, pleyntli gan to tell,
 How he alle other in tresour sholde excell. 3444

It was also said that Bacchus granted his request, that whatever he touched would turn to gold.

Poetis off hym wrot that were ful olde,
 How Bachus gaff hym — the myhti God of wyn, —
 What he toucheth shal turnen into golde
 As good as that which cam out off the myn, 3448
 At all assaies to been as pur and fyn.
 This request, as writ Ouidius,
 Was onto Midas grauntid off Bachus.

3435. hem] hym B. 3437. A] om. H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 53 verso.

He thouhte gold myhte hym most auaille: [p. 130] 3452 But as he could
 What he handlid was gold with touchyng,
 But whan hunger his stomak gan assaile,
 His bred, his mete was cleer gold in shewyng;
 And whan he gan to faile off his fedyng, 3456
 And fond in gold no recour to escape,
 Besouhte Bachus sum remedi to shape.

Bachus bad hym go bathe in a ryuer
 To wasshe a-way the colour aureat, 3460
 Wher yit is shewed the goldi grauel cleer.
 Which exauple declareth to ech estat,
 That gold alone maketh men nat fortunat:
 For what may gold or tresour ther auaille, 3464
 Wher men in hunger fynde no vitaille?

Or what is worth* gold, perle or stonys red,
 Grene emeraudis or saphir[e]s ynde,
 Whan men enfamyned ha[ue] no[u]ther greyn nor
 bred, 3468
 Nor in such myscheeff vitaille may non fynde
 For to fostre ther nature and ther kynde, —
 A barli loff in such a distresse
 Mor myhte auaille than al worldli richesse! 3472

This knew Midas, & was expert in deede,
 Thouh he off gold hadde so gret plente,
 That with metall he myhte hymselff nat feede.
 Which caused hym off necessite 3476
 To considre and cleerli for to see,
 That bred mor vailith for fostryng off nature,
 Than al [the] richesse that men may heer recure.

For which this kyng gan haten al richesse; 3480
 Gold and tresour he hadde eek in disdeyn,
 Leftte his crowne and his roial noblesse,
 And ches to keepe sheep vpon a pleyn.
 Al worldli worshepe was to hym but veyn. 3484
 Off malencolie & froward pouerte,
 Endid his liff in gret aduersite.

3454. gan] did H.

3458. shape] make H.

3461. yit] it P.

3466. worth] worthi B, J, worthy H, H 5.

3478. availith H.

3479. the] om. J, P, H 5 — heer] om. H.

3484. was] is H.

and, following
 Bacchus's
 advice,
 bathed in a
 river. The
 gravel still
 shines golden
 there.

This only proves
 that a barley
 loaf is some-
 times worth
 more than
 all worldly
 riches,

as Midas learned
 by experience.

As a result he
 began to hate
 all wealth, leit
 his throne and
 became a
 shepherd.

His end was
very terrible, for
in his great need
he drank the
blood of a mad-
dened bull, and
became mad
himself and died.

For off ire and inpacience,
Fynally thus with hym it stood: 3488
Furiousli in his gret indigence,
As writ Bochas, how he drank the blood
Off a bole, sauagyne and wood,
With loue enchaufid,* made no delaies, 3492
Most bestiali eendid thus his daies.

[Off Balthasar kyng of Babilone and how Danyel
expowned, Mane, Techel, Phares.]¹

Belshazzar mis-
used the sacred
vessels of the
temple in Jeru-
salem,

NEXT to Bochas, or that he was war,
As he sat writyng with ful gret labour,
Off Babilon cam grete Baltazar 3496
To declare his sorwe and his langour.
Which had mysusid ful falsli the tresour
And the vesseles brouht fro Ierusalem,
In Babilon cheeff cite off his rew. 3500

drinking
wine out of them
at a supper, sur-
rounded by his
concubines and
magicians,

For at a souper with his lordis all,
Whan off the vesselis he drank myhti wynes,
And solempli sat in his roial stall,
And round a-boute all his concubynes, 3504
Philisophres, magiciens and dyuynes,
Ther cam an hand, the Bible doth assure,
And on the wall gan writen this scripture:

when suddenly
a hand wrote
Mane, Techel,
Phares in bright
letters on the
wall.

Mane techel phares wreten in his siht, 3508
Thouh he the menyng conceyued neueradeel,
Which on the wall shewed cleer & briht,
Fro whos sentence auailed non appel.
But the prophete, hooli Danyel, 3512
Fulli expownd to Baltazar the kyng
The mysterie off this derk writyng.

3487. Impacience H.

3488. with hym thus H.

3492. enchaufid] eschaufid B, eschaufed J, R 3.

3501. a] om. H.

3503. solempnely H, R 3, solemnely P.

3510. cleer] fayre P.

¹ MS. J leaf 54 recto.

“ This woord **Mane**, pleynli and nat tarie,
 In Latyn tunge betokneth in substauce,
 The daies countid & rekned the noumbrarie
 Off thi regnyng & off thi gret substauce.
 And **Techel** sowneth a weieng in ballaunce,
 In tokne thi power & kyngdam be mesure,
 God hath hem peised, thei shal no while endure.

3516 The prophet Daniel explained to him that *Mane* meant in Latin, “thy days are numbered,” *Techel*, “thy power and kingdom are weighed in the balance.”

Phares also betokneth a brekyng,
 In Romayn tunge, into pecis smale;
 For thi power & froward rebelyng
 Shal from an hih be brouht into the vale,
 This Hooli Writ & no feyned tale:
 For whan pryncis wil nat ther liff redresse,
 God will onwarli ther surquedie represse.

3524 “*Phares* means a breaking into small pieces; for thy power shall be brought low. This is Holy Writ and no tale. You were warned long ago by the fall of Nebuchadnezzar and you took no heed. Now it is your turn to be brought low.”

Thou wer be toknys warned longe affor,
 Be many example, the story ye may reede,
 Bi the fallyng off Nabugodonosor,
 And thou theroff took ful litil heede,
 The Lord to thanke & haue his name in dreede.
 For which thou shalt withynne a litil throwe
 Lese sceptre & crowne, & be brouht ful lowe.”

3532

[**Lenvoye.**] ¹

¶ Lat pryncis all this story haue in mynde, [p. 131] 3536
 And for themsilff[e] notabli prouide,
 A[nd] namli thei that be to God onkynde,
 Ther concubynes for to sette a-side,
 And make vertu for to been ther guide,
 Voide lecheri and fals presumpcioun,
 Which haue* so many brouht to destruccioun.

3540 Let all princes remember this story and put away their concubines and follow virtue.

Nabugodonosor hadde repentaunce,
 And was restorid to his possessiouns;
 But God off riht took sodenli vengauce
 On Balthasar for his transgressiouns.
 Wherefore, ye Pryncis, disposith your resouns,

3544 Nebuchadnezzar repented, and was restored to his throne; but God took vengeance on Belshazzar.

3517. & rekned] *om.* H, R 3, P.

3519. a weieng] a weyen H. 3520. kyngdam & power H.

3525. hih] hiht H — an hih] the hye P.

3526. This is J, R 3, P. 3529. before H.

3542. haue] han B.

¹ No heading in MSS. or P. The Envoy is indicated by an initial.

Afftir your meritis to ha[ue] God merciabe,
For your demeritis to fynden hym vengable. 3548

Wherefore, Prin-
ces, do not quar-
rel with the
church as Bel-
shazzar did, who
drank wine out
of the holy ves-
sels and lost
both his lordship
and his life.

Geyn hooli chirch[e] taketh no quarelis,
But aduertisith in your inward siht;
For Balthasar drank off tho vesselis 3552
Stole fro the temple off verrai force & myht:
He loste lordshepe and liff vpon a nyht,
So that the kyngdam off Assiriens
Translatid was to Mede & Persiens. 3556

[How* Cresus & balthasar were venquissed bi
Cirus and the son of Cresus slayn at huntynge of
a boor.]¹

Bochas next saw
Cræsus, who
besought him to
tell the story of
his fall.

NEXT to Iohn Bochas, withynne a litil throwe,
Wrytyng off princis many pitous fate,
He sauh kyng Cræsus, with other on þe rowe,
Lowli besechyng his fallyng to translate; 3560
And how Fortune ageyn hym gan debate,
And off his myscheeff, doolful for to reede,
For to descryue anon he gan proceede.

He was king of
Lydia and of
many other
kingdoms, and
called the flower
of all chivalry.

For as it is remembrid in wrytyng, 3564
As God and Kynde list for hym ordeyne,
Off Lide he was gouernour & kyng,
And lordshep hadde, the story cannat feyne,
Off many kyngdam mo than oon or tweyne; 3568
Fame in that tyme so dede hym magnefie,
That he was callid flour off al cheualrie.

Warlike and
abounding in
riches, with
plenty of
soldiers and
many children,

And he was also in his tyme founde
The most expert in werre & in bataile, 3572
And off richesse was the most habounde,
And most excellyng in conquest to preuaile —
Plente off people, with roial apparaile,
And with al this, to his gret auantage, 3576
Noumbre off childre tenbelishe his lynage.

nothing failed
him, until he
dreamt that his
son Atys was
slain,

In the most hiest off his roial see,
And al was weel & nothyng stood amys,
Yit tamenuse his felicite, 3580
A drem he hadde; & trewli that was thys,

3564. in] by H.
3567, 68 are transposed in H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 54 verso. How] Lo J.

How that his sone, which callid was Athys,
Was take fro hym, & be mortal outrage
Slayn sodenli in his tendre age. 3584

This woful drem dede hym gret distresse
And putte his herte in ful gret disespeir,
Stondyng in feer & in gret heuynesse
Because his child, tendre, yong & fair, 3588
Which that was bor[e]n for to been his hair,
Sholde causeles in such[e] myscheeff die,
So as his drem afforn dede specefie.

Off this processe to declare moor,
How Cresus drem fulfellid was in deede:
From Olympus ther cam a wilde boor,
Most furious & sauagyne off dreede,
With fomy tussches, which faste gan hym speede, 3596
Doun descendyng, & nowher list abide
Til that he cam into the land off Lide,

And gan destroie ther fruitis & ther vynes,
Wher-euer he cam in any maner place, 3600
Brak the nettis and the stronge lynes
Off the hunteris, that dede at hym enchace;
But vnder support off the kynges grace,
His sone and heir, off whom I spak tofor, 3604
Gat hym licence to hunten at this boor.

His fader Cresus deemyng off this cas,
Ther was no cause off dreed in no maner,
Thouh his sone wer present at the chas 3608
With other hunteris such game for to ler:
But ay Fortune with hir double cheer
Is reedi euere bi sum fatal treyne
At such disportis sum myscheef to ordeyne. 3612

For oon ther was which hadde gouernaunce
Vpon this child tawaiten and to see,
Chacyng the boor, to saue hym fro myschaunce,
From al damage and aduersite, — 3616
Which many lusti folk off that contre,
With hornys, houndis & sharp speris grounde,
Sekyng the boor til thei han hym founde.

3587. ful gret H.

3615. Chacyng] causyng H.

3618. speris] swerdes H.

threw his spear
so wildly that it
missed the boar
and struck Atys,
piercing his
heart.

And as thei gan fersli this boor enchace, [p. 132] 3620
He that was chargid to been the childis guide,
As with his spere he gan the boor manace,
The hed nat entred, but forbi gan to glide,
And on the child, which that stood beside, 3624
The strook alihte, & or he dede aduerte,
The speris hed rooff hym thoruh the herte.

When Cræsus
heard about it,
his face looked
like that of a
dead image for
grief.

But off this child, whan the deth was kouth,
Told & reportid hooli the manere 3628
How he was slay[e]n in his tendre youth,
Born to been heir onto his fader deere,
Cresus for sorwe chaunged* look & cheere,
And for constreynt off dool, in his visage 3632
He resemblede a verrai ded ymage.

But in time all
sorrows assuage;

But eueri sorwe, be long continuaunce,
At the laste it sumwhat must aswage;
For ther is noon so furious greuaunce, 3636
Nor so mortal importable rage,
But long processe yeueth hym auantage:
I meene as thus, ther is noon so gret a sorwe,
But it muste cese, outhere eue or morwe. 3640

for, as philoso-
phers know,
things that are
violent may not
be eternal;

Philisophres concluden & discernen,
And bi ther resouns recorden in scripture,
Thyng violent may nat been eterne;
Nat in o poynt a-bit noon auenture, 3644
Nor a sorwe alway may nat endure:
For stound[e]meel thoruh Fortunys variaunce
Ther folweth ioie afftir gret greuaunce.

and, as there
was no means of
remedyng the
cause of Cræsus
grief, Bochas
wrote no more
about it and
proceeded to tell
of his fall,

The sorwe off Cresus, thouh it wer intollerable, 3648
And at his herte the greuaunce sat ful sore,
Sith that his dool was irrecuperable,
And mene was non his harmys to restore,
Myn auctour Bochas writ off his wo no more, 3652
But off his fall, how that it fill in deede,
To telle the maner forth he doth procede.

saying that first
Belshazzar, who
had been joined
by Cræsus, and
then Cræsus
himself was
overcome by
Cyrus,

And for a while he set his stile a-side,
And his processe in parti he forbar 3656
To speke off Cresus, that was kyng off Lide,
And gan resorte to write off Balthazar,
Ageyn rehersyng: or that he was war,

3626. thoruh] to H, P. 3631. he chaunged B.
3645. may nat alwey H.

How myhti Cirus, off fatal auenture, 3660
Made on hym proudli a disconfiture.

And as it is put in remembraunce, in spite of
Cræsus'
bravery.
Cræsus was
put in prison
Off Balthazar to holde up the partie, 3664
Cresus with hym had maad an alliaunce
With al his puissaunce & al his cheualrie,
His liff, his tresour to putte in iupartie,
Sworn in armis as brother onto brother,
Be Cirus venquysshed, the ton afftir the tother. 3668

Ther bothe myscheeff no lenger was delaied,
Al-be that Cresus fauht longe in his diffence,
He fynali be Cirus was outraied
And depryued be knyhtli violence, — 3672
Take in the feeld, ther was no resistance,
And rigorousli, to his confusioun,
With myhti fetris cast in a derk prisoun.

And mor tencrece his gret aduersite, 3676 together with
one of his sons
who was dumb.
Cyrus com-
manded a
knight to cut off
Cræsus' head;
but, as he raised
his sword, the
dumb child
spoke and told
him not to slay
a helpless king.
A sone off his, tendre & yong off age,
That was doumb from his natyuyte
And neuer spak woord in no maner language —
Cirus comaundyng be furious outrage, 3680
That Cresus sholde, be vengable cruelte,
Ba knyht of Perse in prisoun heuedid be, —

And with his suerd as he gan manace,
Cresus taslayn withoute al reuerence, 3684
The doumb[e] child, ther present in the place,
Which neuer had spoke, thus saide in audience:
“Withdrauh thi strok and do no violence
Onto my lord, thi fame for to confounde, 3688
To slen a kyng that lith in prisoun bounde.”

The knyht astonyd, hath his strok forborn,
Gretli abaued in that derk habitacle,
Which herd a child that neuer spak tofor
A-geyn his suerd to maken an obstacle: 3692 At this the
knight was so
abashed that he
ran and told
Cyrus.
Ran & tolde this merueilous myracle
To myhti Cirus, with eueri circumstaunce,
Hopyng therbi tatterprid his greuaunce. 3696

3660. fatal] hatefull H.

3677. yong & tendre H. 3686. thus] & H.

3691. abaued] abasshid H, abashede R 3, abashed P.

But it is very
hard to appease
the malice of a
tyrant,

But wher-as tirantis be set on cruelte,
Ther crokid malice ful hard is to appese,
So indurat is ther inquite,
That al in vengauce is set ther hertis ese, 3700
Themsilff reioisshyng to seen folk in disese,
Lich as thei wer, in ther froward daunger
Clenli fraunchised fro God and his power.

and cruel Cyrus
had a fire made
and commanded
his men to throw
Cræsus into it.

This cruel Cirus, most vengable off desir,[p. 133] 3704
Texecute his fel entent in deede,
Leet make in haste off faget a gret fir,
And gan them kyndle with many colis rede,
And made Cresus, quakyng in his dreede, 3708
For to be take wher-as he lay ful lowe,
And bad men sholde into the fir hym throwe.

However,
Jupiter saw what
was happening
and sent a storm
of rain, which
extinguished the
fire, and Cræsus
escaped with
his life.

But Iubiter, which hath this vengauce seyn,
How cruel Cirus with malice was atteynt, 3712
From heuene sente a tempest & a reyn,
That sodenli the horrible fir was queynt;
[And] woful Cresus, with dreedful fir maad feynt,
Escapid is his furious mortal peyne — 3716
God and Fortune for hym list so ordeyne.

Cyrus then be-
gan to have pity
and allowed
Cræsus to go
back to Lydia,
but no longer to
be called king.

This auenture, in maner merueilous,
The herte off Cirus gan *sum*what to embrace,
And caused hym for to been pitous 3720
Ageyn Cresus, & grauntid hym this grace,
To ocupie, whil he hath liff and space,
The lond off Lide; except onli this thyng,
He sholde nat afftir no mor be callid kyng. 3724

Thus the king-
dom of Lydia
came to an end.
Now I will pass
on to Cyrus.

And thus off Lide the kyngdam dede fyne,
Which took his gynnyng off oon Ardisius,
And endured the space off kynges nyne, —
Look who will, the bookis telle thus. 3728
Heroff no mor, but forth onto Cirus
I will procede, with al my wise* cure
For to translate his woful auenture.

3697. as] *om.* H. 3706. fagott H.

3715. And] *om.* J.

3730. wise] *vise* B.

[How the cruel tiraunt Cirus delited euer in slauhtre
& shedyng of blood and so ended.]¹

- H** EIR be discent to gret Astriages, 3732 Unfortunate in
Poorli brouht forth, as maad is mencionn, his youth, he
And hadde al Asie to his gret encres, subsequently
Holdyng that regne be iust successioun held all Asia
In long quiete withoute rebellioun, 3736 under his do-
Til tyme he thouhte, in ful froward wise, minion;
The world was smal to staunche his couetise.
- He hadde an etik most contagious but he suffered
Fretyng vpon hym for desir off good, 3740 from a fever of
A dropesie, hatful and furious, bloodthirstines
Off froward rage, that made his herte wood, that turned his
A woluysh thrust to sheede manys blood, royalty into
Which ouerthwertid, be fals malencolie, 3744 tyranny.
- But whan he gan presumptuousli entende And when he
To robbe and reue folk thoruh his pillage, began to rob
God & Fortune made hym to descende 3748 and pillage,
Ful sodenli from his roial stage, thinking in
Demyng off pride it was a gret vantage his pride that
To wynne londis, off verray force & myht, might was above
Thouh in his conquest ther wer no tittle off ryht. 3752 right, God made
him descend
very suddenly
from his throne.
- To will he gaff hooli the souerynte, He gave free
And aduertisid nothyng to resoun, rein to his will
But preferrid his sensualite and preferred
To haue lordshep & domynacioun worldly success
A-boue sad trouthe and discrecioun. 3756 to discretion.
- Which causith pryncis from ther estat roiall,
Or thei be war, to haue a sodeyn fall.
- For the lordshepe off al Asia 3760 The lordship of
Miht nat suffise to Cirus gredynesse, all Asia was not
But thouhte he wolde conquere Cithia, enough for him,
And ther werreie tenrece his gret richesse, so he thought
Thouh he no tittle hadde off rihtwinesse, 3764 he would con-
Sauf a fals lust; wheroff men sholde ha[ue] routh, quer Scythia.
That will in pryncis sholde oppresse trouthe.

3733. forth] vp H. 3735. that] þe H.

3741. hatful] ful hatful H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 55 recto.

- Excelling all other princes in conquest and treasure, he was cruel and avaricious,
- First this Cirus all pryncis dede excell
Bothe in conquest, victorie and bataile, 3768
Off gold & tresour, as bookis off hym tell:
Kyngdamys to wynne he dede most preuaile;
And yit too vicis dede his herte assaile,
First couetise euere tencrece in good, 3772
With a desir to sheede mennys blood.
- and, carried away by these vices, he marched on the kingdom of Queen Tomyris, which lies between the Caspian and the Black Sea, and where the peasants have only fruits of the soil to eat.
- With these too vices he brenneth euer in oon,
That neuer myhte from his herte twynne,
Made a gret arme toward Sceptemtrion, 3776
And cast hym proudli to sette on & begynne,
Scithia, the myhti lond, to wynne,
Queen Thamaris ther regnyng, as I fynde,
Whos kyngdam ioyneth to Ethiope and* Inde. 3780
- Toward the parti which is orientall,
The Se off Surrie floweth ful plenteuous
Doun to the Se callid Occidentall,
And southward renneth toward Coucasus. 3784
And folk off Cithie that been laborious,
Which tile the lond, hanat to ther lyuynge
But onli fruitis which from the erthe sprynge.
- But the land is rich in grain and gold and precious stones, although part of it is not inhabited for fear of griffons.
- The lond off Cithie is riche for the nonys, [p. 134] 3788
For greyn and fruit a lond ful couenable,
Riche off gold, perle and precious stonys,
Riht comodious & wonder delectable;
But a gret parti is nat habitable, 3792
The peple dreedful to beelde ther mansiouns,
For feer off deth, because off the griffouns.
- Tomyris was not very famous before Cyrus began his invasion,
- The noble fame nor the hih renoun
Was nat ferr knowe nor Isprad a-boute 3796
Off Thamaris, queen off that regioun,
Nor off hir noblesse, withynne nor withoute,
Till that kyng Cirus, with a ful gret route,
Into Scithia gan hym proudli dresse, 3800
The hardi queen to spoile off hir richesse.
- but she started at once to prepare to resist him and entrusted one third of her forces to her son,
- But she, hir fame mor to magnefie,
Gan in gret haste with ful riche appaiaile
Ful prudentli assemble hir cheualrie, 3804
And took a feeld, yiff he hir wolde assaile,

3780. kyngdam] contre H — and] in B, J, R 3, P.
3784. Coucasus J, H, cancasus R 3, Caucasus P.
3790. perle] perell R 3. 3791. delitable H.

Redi with hym to haue[n] a bataile.
 And off hir meyne, lich as seith my book,
 Onto hir sone the thridde part she took. 3808

And gaff hym charge in the same place,
 Hymself tacquite that day lik a knyht,
 And for to meete Cirus in the face,
 And nothyng dreede with hym for to fyht. 3812
 But whan kyng Cirus off hym hadde a syht,
 Cast hym that day the yong[e] prynce [t]opresse,
 Rather be wilis than manhod or prowesse.

telling him to have no fear. Cyrus however laid a trap for him, leaving his tents filled with food and drink and apparently fleeing with his army.

First he leet stuffe his large pauillouns 3816
 With gret plente off drynkis delectable,
 Duyers metis and confeciouns
 Round aboute vpon eueri table;
 And in his menyng passyng deceyuable, 3820
 Lich as he hadde in maner dreedful be,
 Took al his hoost & gan anon to fle.

This yonge prynce, off menyng innocent,
 Nothyng demyng as be supposaile, 3824
 But that Cirus was with his me[y]ne went
 And fledde for feer, he durste hym nat assaile.
 And whan he fond such plente off vittaile,
 He & his knyhtis thoruh mysgouernaunce, 3828
 To ete & drynke set al ther plesaunce.

The young prince and his knights thought that Cyrus was afraid, and stuffed themselves and guzzled until they were drunk and incapable,

Thei hadde off knyhthod lost al the disciplyne,
 Forsook[e] Mars and put hym out off siht,
 And to Bachus ther hedis gan enclyne, 3832
 Gorge vpon gorge till it drouh to nyht.
 And proude Cirus cam on hem anon riht
 With al his hoost, thei out off ther armure,
 On bestial folk made a disconfiture. 3836

at which Cyrus came down on them and killed them all: for, as wise men say, there is no resistance in drunken folk.

Cruel Cirus lefte non a-lyue,
 Off hih nor low made non excepcioun,
 Thei wer to feeble ageyn his myht to stryue:
 For cheeff cause off ther destruccioun 3840
 Was dronkenesse, which voideth al resoun;
 And wise men rehersen in sentence,
 Wher folk be dronke ther is no resistance.

3814. toppresse] oppresse J.

3834. on] vpon H.

When this
massacre was
reported to
Tomyris, she
almost went mad
with rage,

And whan this slauhtre be relacioun
Reported was and brouht to the presence 3844

Off Thamaris, queen off that regioun,
Onto hir herte it dede ful gret offence.
But off ire and gret inpacience, 3848
Seyng hir sone slayn in tendre age,
For sorwe almost she fill into a rage.

but showing no
sign of womanly
weakness
resolved to be
revenged on
Cyrus.

But for al hir woful dedli peyne,
She shewed no tokne off femynyte, 3852

But off prudence hir wepyng gan restreyne,
And caste hir pleynli auengid for to be
Vpon kyng Cirus & on his cruelte.
Sente out meyne tesprien his passage, 3856
Yiff she hym myhte fynde at a-vauntage.

So she feigned
a flight with
her army into
the mountains,
Cyrus pursuing
to take her
among the rocks;

And with hir meyne gan feyne a maner fliht
Vp to the mounteyns, dreedful & terrible;

And Cirus afftir gan haste hym anon riht, 3860
In hope to take hir, yiff it wer possible.

Among which hilles, mor than it is credible,
Been craggi roches, most hidous off entaile,
Pereilous off passage & void off al vitaile. 3864

but having no
guide or drag-
oman and no
supplies, his men
fell into disorder
and all were
slain.

And Cirus ther fill in gret daunger,
Al onpurueied off drogeman or guide;
To fostre his peepel vitaile was non ther,
Erryng as beestis vpon eueri side. 3868

And thei off Scithie gan for hym so prouide,
Wheroff ther queen[e], God wot, was ful fayn,
At gret myscheeff that al his men wer slayn.

His torn and
pierced body was
brought to the
queen,

Non off alle was take to ransoun, [p. 135] 3872

Nor he hymself escapid nat ther boundis,
Such wait was leid to his destruccioun.

And he thoruh perced with many mortal woundis,
On pecis rent, as beris been with houndis, 3876

The queen comaundyng, whan he lay thus totorn,
To hir presence his* bodi to be born.

who first had his
head cut off and
then threw it
into a bath-tub
full of blood
and said:

First she hath chargid to smyte off his hed,
Whan she thus hath the victorie off hym wonne. 3880
And in a bath, that was off blood al red,

3845. to] vn to H.

3866. drougeman H — or] or of J. P.

3869. so for hym H, so for hem R 3 — so] om. P.

3870. ther] the H. 3874. Such] om. H.

3878. his] this B and MSS. except Add. which has his.

- She gan it throwe, withynne a litil tonne.
 And off despiht riht thus she hath begonne,
 Most tirantli in hir woful rage, 3884
 To dede Cirus to hauen this language:
- “O thou Cirus, that whilom wer so wood
 And so thrustleuh in thi tirannye,
 Ageyn Nature to sheede manys blood, 3888
 So woluyssh was thyn hatful dropisie,
 That merci non myhte it modiefie,
 Thyn etik ioyned, gredi and onstable,
 With thrust off slauhtre ay to be vengable!” 3892
- It is an horroure in maner for to thynke
 So gret a prynce rebuked for to be
 Off a woman, manys blood to drynke,
 For to disclaundre his roiall maieste. 3896
 But gladli euer vengable cruelte
 Off riht requereth, with onwar violence
 Blood shad for blood iustli to recompence.
- ¶ Off myhti Cirus thymperial noblesse 3900
 Was bi a woman venquysshid & bor doun;
 God made hir chastise his furious woodnesse,
 And for toppresse his famous hih renoun:
 For wher vengauce hath dominacioun 3904
 In worldli pryncis, pleyntli to deuyse,
 With onwar strok God can hem weel chastise.
- The eende off Cirus can ber ful weel record,
 How God withstondith folk that be vengable; 3908
 Lordshepe & mercy, whan thei been at discord,
 Riht wil nat suffre ther staat to stonde stable.
 And for this Cirus was so onmerciabe,
 He with onmerci punished was in deede: 3912
 Deth quit for deth; loo, heer his fynal meede!
- In slauhtre & blood he dede hym most delite;
 For in tho tweyne was his repast in deede.
 He fond no mercy his vengauce to respite 3916
 Wher he fond mater any blood to sheede,
 Such ioie he hadde be deth to see folk bleede;
 And for the siht dede hym so mekil good,
 His fatal eende was for to swymme in blood. 3920

“O thou Cyrus,
 once so eager
 in thy tyranny
 to shed men’s
 blood, so wolfish
 in thy hateful
 craving that
 was tempered by
 no mercy.”

It is horrible to
 think that such
 a great prince
 was rebuked by
 a woman and
 compelled to
 drink blood; but
 it was neverthe-
 less a woman
 who brought
 him to his end.

When lordship
 and mercy are
 at discord in
 princes, God
 will punish
 them.

Cyrus delighted
 in slaughter; he
 knew no mercy,
 but at the end
 he himself swam
 in blood.

3888. to] so to J — manys] mennys H.
 3912. punysshid H.

There were no
funerall fires at
his burial, no
golden tomb
was ordained
for his shrine;

Loo, heer thexequies off this myhti kyng!
Loo, heer the eende off his estat roiall! —
Ther wer no flawmys nor brondis cleer shynyng
To brenne his bodi with fires funerall, 3924
Nor obseruaunces nor offrynges marciall,
Nor tumbel off gold with stonys riche & fyne
Was non ordeyned that day to make his shryne!

he had no
epitaph, no bells
were rung; no
weepers sobbed
out tragedies;
no one was there
but his enemies,
who threw his
carrion out to
wild beasts.

Epitaphie ther was non rad nor sunge 3928
Be no poete with ther poetries,
Nor off his tryumphes ther was* no belle runge,
Nor no weperis with sobbyng tragedies,—
Non attendaunce, but off his ennyes, 3932
Which off hatrede in ther cruel rage
Cast out his kareyn to beestis most sauage.

Thus end
tyrants.

Loo, heer off Cirus the fynal auenture,
Which off al Asie was whilom emperour! 3936
Now lith he abiect, withoute sepulture,
Off hih ne low he fond no bet fauour.
Loo, heer the fyn off al worldli labour,
Namli off tirantis, which list nat God to dreede, 3940
But set ther lust in slauhtre, & blood to sheede!

¶ Lenvoye.

Noble Princes,
consider the
lamentable
death of Cyrus.

RYHT noble Princis, considreth in *your* siht
The fyn off Cirus, pitous & lamentable,
How God punsheth off equite & riht 3944
Tirantis echon, cruel and vengable:
For in his siht it is abhomynable,
That a prynce, as philisophres write,
In slauhtre off men sholde hymself delite. 3948

He was a
manly knight
until tyranny
entered his
heart and he
began to delight
in slaughter.

This said[e] Cirus was a ful manli knyht,
In his begynnyng riht famous & notable,
Nature gaff hym semlynesse & myht;
For in conquest was non seyn mor hable, 3952
Till tyrannye, the serpent deceyuable,
Merciles his corage dede atwite,
In slauhtre off men whan he hym gan delite.

3927. ordeyned] redy H. 3930. was] nas B, J.

3935. fynal] fattal H.

3944. punysshith H, punyshith R 3, punisheth P, punshith I.

Wherefore, ye Princis, remembreth day &
 nyht [p. 136] 3956
 Tafforce your noblesse & make it perdurable,
 To gete you fauour & loue off euery wyht,
 Which shal your statis conserue & keepe stable:
 For ther is conquest non so honourable 3960
 In gouernaunce, as vengauce to respite,
 Merci preferryng, in slauhtre nat delite.

Wherefore.
 Princes, re-
 member that non
 conquest is
 so honourable as
 that which pre-
 fers mercy to
 vengeance.

[How Amilius for couetise slouh his brothir and
 Remus and Romulus norisshed by a woluesse.]¹

AFFTIR kyng Cirus, Bochas dede espie
 Too worthi brethre, with facis [ful] pitous, 3964
 Born be discent to regne in Albanye,
 Bothe off o fadir, the story tellith vs.
 The ton off hem callid Amylius,
 And to remembre the name [eek] off the tother, 3968
 Muniter Icallid was his brother.
 Thei hadde a fader, which named was Prochas,
 Kyng off that lond, the story doth deuyse.
 Afftir whos deth[e], pleyntli this the cas, 3972
 Amilius for fals[e] couetise
 His brother slouh in ful cruel wise,
 That he oniustli, be fals[e] tirannye,
 Miht ha[ue] the kyngdam alone off Albanye. 3976
 This Albania be descripcioun,
 Lik as Bochas affermeth in certeyn,
 Ys a cite nat ferr fro Rome toun,
 Set on an hill beside a large pleyn, 3980
 The beeldyng statli, riche and weel beseyn,
 Stronge Iwallid, with many riche tour,
 And Ascanius was first theroff foundour.
 Which callid was in his fundacioun 3984
 Albania, for the gret whihtnesse;
 Ther kynges afftir be successioun
 Named Albanoyis, princis off gret noblesse.
 And be discent, the story berth witnesse, 3988
 Fro kyng Prochas, record on bookis olde,
 Cam these too brethre, & Rea, ther suster, tolde.

After Cyrus,
 two brothers,
 .Emilius and
 Numitor,
 appeared to
 Bochas.

Their father was
 called Procas,
 and on his
 death .Emilius
 slew his brother,
 that he
 might be sole
 possessor of the
 kingdom

of Alba Longa,
 a city not far
 from Rome,
 which had been
 founded by
 Ascanius and
 was named after
 its whiteness.

3964. ful] om. J, P.

3969. Numitor P — his brother] the tothir H.

3970. Procas P. 3977. Albanye H, Albany R 3, P.

3982. wallid H. 3985. Albany H, Albania J, R 3.

¹ MS. J. leaf 56 verso.

Æmilius had a sister, Rhea, whom he compelled, when very young, to become a nun in the Temple of Vesta,

Muniter slayn, as maad is menciouⁿ,
The kyngdam ocupied be Amilius; 3992
And Rea entred into relegioun,
For to be wympled in that hooli hous
Sacred to Vesta, with virgynys glorious,
Ther for tabide and be contemplaff, 3996
With othre maidnes, duryng al hir liff.

so that neither she nor her descendants should have any claim to the kingdom.

And this was doon whil she was yong off age
Bi hir brother, off fals entencioun,
That she sholde ha[ue] no maner heritage, 4000
Nor cleyme no title in that regioun
Off hir kynreede be non occasioun,
But stonde professid to virgynyte
Tofor Vesta, and lyue in chastite. 4004

Yet in spite of her virginal chastity, a miracle came to pass, and she conceived against Nature (who is helpless in such cases), and bore two sons.

Yit natwithstandyng hir virgynal clenness,
She hath conceyued be natural miracle;
Gan to encrece in hir hoolynesse,
Whos wombe aroos, in Kynde was noon obstacle: 4008
Ageyn such bollyng auaieth no triacle;
But the goddesse for hir so dede ordeyne,
That she attonys hadde sonys tweyne.

Although she was high priestess, her brother cast the two infants out to wild beasts.

The temple off Vesta stood in wildirnesse, 4012
Wher Rea hadde hooli the gouernaunce
Off preestli honour doon to the goddesse,
With many straunge vnkouth obseruaunce.
But bi hir brothris mortal ordenaunce, 4016
Hir yonge sonys myhte nat be socourid,
But cast out to beestis to* be deuourid.

They were rescued and fostered by a she-wolf, for, as Holy Writ says, God can keep children from all harm.

But a she-wolff, which whelpid hadde late,
To yeue hem souke dede hir besynesse, 4020
Be God ordeyned, or be sum heuenli fate,
Them to conserue fro deth in ther distresse.
For Hooli Writ pleynli ber[i]th witnessse,
God can diffende, as it is weel kouth, 4024
Childre fro myscheeff in ther tendre youth.

Æmilius was furious with his sister and shut her up in a prison, where she died of grief.

But in this while this said Amilius,
That was ther vncle, as maad is menciouⁿ,
Ageyn his suster froward & furious, 4028
Made hir be shet in a ful derk presoun;

4009. bollyng] bolnyng H, P, R 3. 4013. hooli] hool H.
4018. to] for to B, H, J, P, H 5; for is omitted in MS. R 3.

And ther compleynyng the destruccioun
Off hir too childre born to hir repreeff,
For veray sorwe deied at gret myscheeff.

4032

These said[e] childre, deuoid off al refut,
Beside a ryuer lay pitousli crieng,
From al socour naked & destitut,
Except a woluesse vpon hem awaityng,
At whos wombe ful stille thei lay sowkyng,
Onto Nature a thyng contrarious,
Childre to souke off beestis rauynous.

4036

The children
lay crying beside
a river, with no
one but the
wolves to take
care of them;

But he, this Lord off eueri creature, [p. 137]
Riht as hym list[e] can bothe saue & spille;
And beestis which be rage off ther nature,
He can adaunt* & make hem li ful stille, —
Tigres, leouns obeien at his wille.

4040

but God, who
can save or
destroy as he
wills and is
obeyed even
by lions and
tigers, saw
that they
came to no
harm,

4044

The same Lord hath maad a fell woluesse
Onto twei childre hir bigges for to dresse.

And whil this woluesse hadde hem in depos,
Ther cam an heerde callid Faustulus,
Beheeld ther sowkyng & sauh hem lyn ful clos,
Which shepperde was off kyng Amilius,
Cauht up these childre, the story tellith thus,
And brouht hem hom with ful gret dilligence
Onto his wiff, that callid was Laurence.

4048

and they were
found by a shep-
herd, who took
them home to
his wife.

4052

And she for loue dede hir besi peyne
Them to fostre till thei cam to age,
Gaff them sowken off hir brestis tweyne
Fro day to day, off herte and hool corage.
And thei wer callid as in that language,
Afftir the story, the ton off hem Remus,
And the seconde was named Romulus.

4056

Laurence was
her name, and
she cared for
them until they
grew up. One
was called
Remus and the
other Romulus.

4060

Off which[e] brethre, breffi to termyne,
The toun off Rome took his origynall.
Off fals disclaundre first began that lyne,
The roote out souht, ful vicious founde att all,
Cleerli remembred for a memoriall,
Ther gynnyng greuh off such incontinence
As clerkis call *incestus* in sentence.

4064

They were the
founders of
Rome, and their
line began with
scandal and
incest,

4040. this] bat is R 3, that P.

4043. adaunt] aduerte B, J, aduert P.

4046. Onto twei] To too H — twei] tweyn H 5, tweine P —
bigges] pappes R 3.

4052. hom] vp H, forth J — ful] om. J.

which is not
a good thing,
and means
trespassing with
one's kin or a
nun. And Rome
started with
slaughter,
murder and
theft, for

Incestus is a thyng nat fair nor good,
Afftir that bookis weel deuise kunne, 4068
As trespassyng with kyn or with blood,
Or froward medlyng with hir that is a nunne.
And thus the lyne off Rome was begunne: 4072
For slauhtre, moordre & fals robberie
Was cheeff gynnyng off al ther auncetrie.

Romulus and
Remus became
highway robbers,
who slew mer-
chants and
oppressed
women by
violence.

Off couetise thei took ther auantage,
Liggeris off weies & robbours openli, 4076
Moorders also off ther owne lynage,
And strengest theuys gat to ther cumpany,
Spoilyng all tho that passed hem forby;
Vnder shadwe off keypyng ther beestaile, 4080
Al maner peple thei proudli dede assaile.

They also in-
vented sharp
spears,

To slen marchantis, thei had* no conscience,
And for to moordre folk off eueri age,
Women toppresse off force and violence, 4084
In al that cuntre this was ther vsage:
Wher thei abood ther was no seur passage;
And these too brethre, lik as it is founde,
Fond first the maner off speris sharp Igrounde. 4088

called *quiris* in
Greek, for which
reason Romulus
was afterwards
named Quirinus.

A spere in Greek[e] callid is *quiris*,
And for that cause, the said[e] Romulus,
As bookis seyn, and sothli so it is,
He afftirward was callid Quirinus. 4092
Which with his brother, that namyd* was Remus,
Was in alle thyng confederat & partable,
That tofor God was vicious & dampnable.

But both he and
his brother
lacked virtue and
were confederate
in all damnable
things.

And as it was accordyng to ther liff, 4096
For lak off vertu thei fill in gret diffame;
And atwen hem ther was an vnkouth striff,
Which off bothe sholde yeue the name
Onto the cite, atwen earnest & game, 4100
Afftir ther namys Rome to be callid.
Thus fill the cas afforn or it was wallid.

They quarrelled
over which
should name the
town and be
king,

And therupon ful longe last ther stryues,
Which sholde off hem ha[ue] dominacioun, 4104
Shewyng ther titles & prerogatyues,

4070. kyn] kynde H, kynd R 3. 4080. beestaile] vitaille
H, vitaille R 3.
4082. had] hadden B. 4085. that] ther H.
4093. namyd] callid B, J. 4103. R begins again here.
4105. titles] title H.

- Who sholde off hem yeue name to the toun
 And regne as kyng in that regioun.
 Ther was no resoun who sholde go befor, 4108
 Because thei wer[e]n bothe attonys born.
- But to fynysse ther fraternal discord, and to settle the
 Thei han prouyded atwen hem anon riht; matter agreed
 Thus condescyng to put hem at accord that the one
 4112 Nouthur be force, oppressioun nor myht, who first saw
 That which off hem first sauh grettest fliht the largest flock
 Off briddes fleen hie vpon an hill, of birds fly over
 Sholde name the cite at his owne will. 4116 a hill should be
 chosen.
- Off this accord for to ber witness, They ascended
 Thei with hem ladde a ful gret multitude, Mt. Auentine
 Theron to yeue a doom off rihtwisenesse, with a multitude
 Bothe off wise and off peeplis rude, 4120 of witnesses.
- All attonys this mateer to conclude.
 And vp tan hill[e] callid Auentyne,
 Thei been ascendid this mateer for to fyne.
- And birdis sexe to Remus dede appeere, [p. 138] 4124 and, as Remus
 Bi augurie as thei gan procede, saw only six
 Callid vultures, ful fers in ther manere, birds and
 But the noumbre in double dede exceede, Romulus more
 That Romulus sauh, whan he took good heede. 4128 than twice as
 Wheroff ther fill a gret contrauersie, many,
 Which off hem sholde preuaile on his partie.
- Thus first off all[e] Remus hadde a siht
 Off sexe birdis callid vultures, 4132 Romulus won,
 And for tauaunce and preferre his riht, and after a
 He ful proudli put hymself in pres. long dispute (for
 But Romulus was nat rek[e]les, his brother
 His brothres cleym pleynli to entrouble, wouldn't give in
 4136 Afforced his title with the noumbre double. and both could
 not be victori-
 ous) named the
 town Rome,
 after himself.
- Yit off his purpos on off hem mut faile,
 Thouh it so be that thei euer stryue;
 But Romulus gan fynali preuaile, 4140
 And to the cite fourth he wente blyue.
 And, as auctours list echon descryue,

4115. birdis fleeng H. 4117. ber] be P.
 4125. gan] dede R. 4128. That] Whan R.
 4133. tauaunce] auaunte R.
 4138. his] this R.

- And in ther bookis as thei rehersen all,
Afftir his name Rome he dede it call. 4144
- He then built a wall about the city, and made a law forbidding any one on pain of death to climb over it.
And all foreyn[e]s for texcluden oute,
And ageyn hem to make strong diffence,
First he began to walle it round aboute,
And made a lawe ful dreedful in sentence: 4148
Who clamb the wall be any violence,
Outward or inward, there is no mor to seie,
Be statut maad, he muste* needis deie.
- Remus, who had not been told of the law, went over and was slain by a knight with a pickaxe.
This was enact be ful pleyn ordynaunce, 4152
In peyne off deth, which no man breke shall.
But so befill, Remus off ignoraunce,
Which off the statut kneuh nothyng att all,
Off auenture wente ouer the wall. 4156
For which a knyht ordeyned in certayn,
The said[e] Remus with a pekeis slayn.
- His brother was not sorry, as he saw that with Remus out of the way he would be sole ruler of Rome.
His brother list nat in no maner wise
Ageyn the lawe to be fauourable, 4160
But assentid, parcel for couetise,
Vpon Remus to be mor vengable,
Off this entent, to make his regne stable,
That he alone myhte gouerne & non other, 4164
Be no claym founde nor brouht in bi his brother.
- To make the town populous he devised a territory called Asylum,
And that the people sholde hem mor delite,
Ther tabide and ha[ue] possessioun,
As olde auctours off Romulus do write, 4168
Withynne the boundis off the same* toun,
That he deuysed, bi gret prouisioun,
In cumpas round, so cronycles compile,
A teritorie that callid was Asile. 4172
- to be a place of refuge for all foreign thieves and murderers;
This Asilum be Romulus deuised,
Was a place off refuge and socours,
Lik a theatre, with libertes fraunchised,
For to resseyue all foreyn trespassours, 4176
Theuys, moordreris, weiliggeris & robbours,
Be gret resort, withynne the wallis wide,
To fostre all bribours that nowher durste abide.

4149. clamb] clam R. 4151. mut B.

4152. pleyn] om. R.

4158. pikeis R, J, pikoys H, pikeys, P, pikais R 3.

4163. this] his R — regne] Rewme H.

4169. same] said B. 4170. prouisioun] possession R.

- And with fled peple fro dyuers regiouns,
 The cite gan tencece & multeplie;
 And bashed folk off straunge naciouns
 To fynde refuge thedir gan hem hie.
 And thus be processe gan ther cheualrie
 First thoruh tirantis, rekles off werkyng,
 Till al the world obeied ther bidding.
- Off wilfull force withoute title off riht
 Thei brouht al peple vnder subieccioun.
 A cley m thei made be violence & myht,
 And took non heed off trouthe nor resoun.
 And the first auctour off ther fundacioun
 Was Romulus, that gadred al this route
 Withynne the cite, & wallid it round aboute.
- And many day, as maad is menciou n,
 He hadde that cite in his gouernaunce;
 And was the firste kyng crownyd in that toun,
 And regned ther be contynuaunce
 Ful many yeris, till the variaunce
 Off Fortune, thoruh hir* fals envie,
 In Campania made hym for to die
- Vpon a day whan it gan thundre loude,
 His name for euere to be mor magnified.
 Summe bookis seyn, he was rapt in a cloude,
 Hih up in heuene to be stelled, fied,
 With othre goddis estatli deified,
 Ther to be stallid be Iubiteris side,
 Lik for his knyhtis as Mars list prouide.
- Loo, heer off paynymys a fals opynyoun, [p. 139]
 To Cristes lawe contrarie and odious,
 That tirantis sholde for fals oppressioun
 Be callid goddis or named glorious,
 Which bi ther lyue wer founde vicious:
 For this pleyn trouthe, I dar it riht weel tell,
 Thei rathere be feendis ful deepe in hell.
- For but in ertthe ther dominacioun
 Conveied be bi vertuous noblesse,
 And that ther power & ther hi h renoun

4180 and with such
 people as these,
 and fugitives
 from neigh-
 bouring coun-
 tries, the town
 grew very
 rapidly

4184

and finally
 brought all
 nations under
 its subjection by
 force, without
 any title of
 right.

4188

4192

Romulus reigned
 many years,

4196

4200

until, it is said,
 he was carried
 up in a cloud to
 heaven and
 deified with
 the gods. —

4204

4208

an erroneous
 and odious
 opinion of
 pagans: as if
 vicious tyrants
 should be called
 gods for their
 oppression.

4212

More likely they
 are devils in hell.
 Unless they are
 virtuous on
 earth, they are
 bound to suffer
 for it.

4216

4180. with] *om.* H, which R. 4188. al] *om.* H.4196. firste] *om.* R. 4199. hir] his B. 4203. in] vp in H.

4205. estatli] statly H, statly R, statly P.

4207. list] wil R. 4213. this is H. 4214. ful] *om.* H, R 3.

Be set on trouthe and on rihtwisnesse,
 Lich ther estatis, in prynce or in pryncesse,
 I dar afferme off them bothe tweyne, 4220
 For vicious Iyuyng thei mut endure peyne.

But when they
 are just and
 faithful,
 and help
 poor folk, then
 they certainly
 deserve to reign
 in heaven.

But whan thei been feithful off entent,
 Riht and trouthe iustli to meynteene,
 And in ther roial power be nat blent, 4224
 Wrongis redressyng & poore folk susteene,
 And so contynue, with conscience most cleene,
 Such liff, mor rathe than pompe of worldli werris,
 Shal make hem regne in heuene aboue the steris. 4228

So it is well for
 princes and
 princesses to
 understand that
 charity and
 meekness are
 more likely than
 their crowns to
 win a place for
 them above.

For which lat pryncis vndirstonde attonys,
 And worldli princesses, with al ther gret richesse,
 That ther hih hornys, fret with riche stonys,
 Toward heuene ther passage doth nat dresse. 4232
 But vertuous liff, charite and meeknesse,
 Whan thei list pride out off ther herte arace,
 That causeth hem in heuene to wynne a place.

No abuse is
 worse than for
 princes to deify
 people:

Ther is no mor straunge abusioun, 4236
 Nor tofor God gettere ydolatrie,
 Than whan pryncis list cachche affecciou
 Creaturis falsli to deifie,
 Be collusioun brouht in be sorcerie. 4240
 Now God diffende alle princis weel disposid,
 With such fals crafft neuer to been enosid!

God forbid that
 they become so
 blind as not to
 see through their
 outward richnes
 into the foul
 carrion within.

And that ther eyen bi non illusiouns
 Be nat englued nouter with hook nor lyne, 4244
 Nor be no baites off fresh inspecciouns,
 Wrouht bi Cirenes, be drynk or medicyne,
 Which off ther nature resemble to a shryne,
 Thoruh richesse outward & beute souereyne, — 4248
 And, who looke inward, be lik a foul kareyne.

May God defend
 them from such
 error!

God off his grace amende al such outrage
 In noble pryncis, & saue hem fro such werre,

4218. on] in R. 4219. princis R.

4225. folk] men R — to susteene H, to susten R 3.

4227. rathe] rather H. 4230. princisise R.

4231. riche] precious H. 4234. Whan] And R.

4235. hem] om. R — wynne] have H.

4236. no mor straunge] noon mor strong H.

4242. enoisid H, enoyseid P, enosed R, ennosyd H 5, be noysed
 R 3.

4247. a] om. H. 4248. outward richesse R.

And hem enlumyne, disposyng ther corage 4252
 In such fals worshepe that thei no mor ne erre;
 Lik to Argus that thei mai seen a-ferre,
 That no fals fagyng cause hem to be blynde,
 Goddis nor goddessis to worshepe ageyn kynde. 4256

And thouh that Romeyns dede worshepe & honour
 To Romulus, bi a constreynt[e] dreede,
 Lat no man take example off ther errour,
 But to that Lord whos sides were maad rede 4260
 To saue mankynde, and on a crosse was dede, —
 Lat men to hym in cheeff ther loue obserue,
 Which can hem quite bet than thei can disserue.

And although
the Romans
worshipped
Romulus in fear,
let no men
follow their
example, but
give their hearts
to the Lord who
died on a cross
to save them.

[How Mecyus kyng of Albanoy's beyng fals of his
 othe and assuraunce/ was drawn in to pecys.]¹

NEXT Romulus, with teris al bespreynt 4264
 Onto Iohn Bochas appered Mecius,
 Off cheer & look, & off his port ful feynt,
 His fall declaryng, froward and despitous.
 And he was callid eek Suffecius, 4268
 Louh off birthe, and symple in vpgrowyng,
 Off Albanoy's till Fortune made hym kyng.
 Ageyn whos pride the Romainys gan werreie,
 Ful myhtilli oppressyng his cuntre; 4272
 And for kyng Mecius list hem nat obeie,
 Thei caste hem fulli auengid for to be, —
 Because his berthe was but off low degre,
 And was rise up onto estat roiall, 4276
 Thei hem purpose yeue hym a sodeyn fall.
 Hasti clymyng off pouert set on heihte,
 Whan wrong[e] title maketh hym to ascende,
 With onwar peis off his owne weihte, 4280
 A sodeyn fall maketh hym to descende,
 Whan he list nat off surquedie entende
 Fro whens he cam, nor hymself to knowe,
 Till God & Fortune his pompe hath ouerthrowe. 4284

After Romulus,
Bochas saw
Metius Suf-
fetius, who
declared to him
his fall.

Of low birth,
Fortuna made
him king of the
Albans; and he
was warred on
by the Romans,

who determined
to give him a
sudden fall.

4252. illumyne R. 4256. *is misplaced at foot of column* R.

4263. 2nd can] *om.* H.

4265. Metius P. 4273. hem] *om.* H—tobeye H.

4278. clymmyng R.

4282. tentende H, to entende R 3.

¹ MS. J. leaf 58 recto.

- For he presumed
to rebel against
Rome
- For this Mecius off presumpcioun
Thouhte ageyn Romeyns his pride myhte auaile,
Gan werre ageyn hem be rebelloun,
Was nat feerful ther noblesse to assaile, 4288
Till on a day was signed a bataile,
Bothe ther hoostis withynne a feeld to meete,
To take ther part, were it off sour or sueete.
- in the time of
Hostilius, with
whom he agreed
to decide the
issue in single
combat.
- That tyme in Rome regned Hostilius, [p. 140] 4292
A manli man and a ful worthi knyht;
Tween hym concludid and kyng Mecius,
Thei tweyne to meete in steel armed bryht,
For bothe batailes to trien out the ryht 4296
Be iust accord, and therfro nat varie,
The parti venquysshid to be tributarie,
- Hostilius won,
- And hooli put hym in subieccioun,
Withoute entretyng or any mor delay. 4300
And fynali, for short conclusioun,
Kyng Hostilius the tryumphe wan that day,
That Albenoys ne koude nat sey nay,
But that Romeyns, as put is in memorie,* 4304
Be synguler bataile hadde wonne the victorie.
- and thus the
Romans gained
possession of
Alba Longa, and
Metius swore
never to rebel
again.
- Thus hadde Romayns first possessioun
Off Albanoy's tobeie hem & to dreede,
Mecius yolde, and sworn onto the toun 4308
Neuer to rebell, for fauour nor for meede.
But for he was double founde in deede
Off his assuraunce, & fals to ther cite,
He was chastised, anon as ye shal see. 4312
- But he broke his
promise when
Hostilius asked
his aid against
the Fidenae,
- Geyn Fidenates, a cuntre off Itaile,
Kyng Hostilius, for ther rebelloun,
Caste he wolde meete hem in bataile 4316
For comoun profit and for diffencioun
Bothe off his cite & off his roial toun.
And for tafforce his parti in werkyng,
Off Albanois he sente onto the kyng,
- and, bringing his
army with him,
- To come in hast with his hool cheualrie, 4320
And tarie nat in no maner wise,
But make hym strong to sustene his partie
Lich his behestes, as ye han herd deuse.

4291. part] *om.* R. 4297. to varie H, R 3.

4304. 5. memoire, victoire B.

4310. for] when R. 4317. 2nd his] this R.

- But kyng Mecius ful falsli gan practise 4324
 A sleihti tresoun and a couert wile,
 Ageyn his promis the Romeyns to begile.
- Yit he, outward pretending to be trewe,
 Cam to the feeld with a ful gret meyne, 4328
 Lyuyng in hope to see sum chaungis newe,
 That he on Rome myhte auengid be,
 And speciali that he myhte see
 Kyng Hostilius, off froward [fals] envie, 4332
 That day outraied with al his cheualrie.
- First whan he sauh the Romeyns enbatailed,
 And Fidynates on that other side,
 Ther wardis redi for to haue assailed, 4336
 He couertli dede on an hill abide,
 And to nor fro list nat go nor ride,
 Nor his persone putte in iupartie,
 But who was strengest, to holde on that partie. 4340
- Wheroff the Romayns fill in suspecioun
 Off kyng Mecius whan thei token heed,
 Till Hostilius off hih discrecioun,
 Thoruh his knythod put hem out off dreed, 4344
 And gan dissymyle off Mecius the falsheed;
 And to conforte his knyhtis off entent,
 Seide what he dede was doon bi his assent.
- He was ful loth that his cheualrie 4348
 Sholde knowe theeffect off Mecius tresoun,
 Which cause myhte, in al or in partie,
 Ful gret hyndryng be sum occasioun,
 To deeme in hym falsnesse or tresoun; 4352
 Yit off trouthe, the story berth witesse,
 Al that he mente was ontrouthe & falsnesse.
- Thus off manhod and off hih prudence
 He to his knyhtis gaff herte & hardynesse, 4356
 Made hem sette on be so gret violence,
 That he the feeld[e] gat off heih prowesse,
 On Fidynates brouht in so gret distresse,
 And so outraied off force on eueri side, 4360
 Tofor Romayns that thei ne durste abide.

4325, 26. *are transposed* H. 4332. fals] *om.* J
 4342. taken H. 4345. dissymule H, dissemble R 3.
 4355. hih] his R.

Metius was apparently delighted with the Roman success,

And whan Mecius sauh hem thus outraied,
 Bi a maner off feyned fals gladnesse,
 Lik as he hadde in herte be weel [a]paied, 4364
 To Hostilius anon he gan hym dresse,
 Hymself reioisshyng bacountirfet liknesse:
 And for his menyng pleynli was conceyued,
 So as he cam, riht so he was receyued. 4368

shadowing his deceit under a pretence of faith.

Thus whan Mecius stood in his presence
 With a pretense off feithful stabilnesse,
 And al thapport off trouthe in apparence,
 He shadwed hath his expert doubilnesse — 4372
 Under soote hony, couert bittirnesse,
 Freendli visage, with woordis smothe & pleyne,
 Thouth mouth & herte departed wer on tweyne.

But Hostilius, knowing that his heart was divided, resolved to punish him with a double torment, and binding his feet and arms to two chariots let them drive off in opposite directions, tearing his body in pieces.

But Hostilius hath al his fraude espied [p. 141] 4376
 And his compassed falsnesse and tresoun,
 And therupon hath iustli fantasied
 A peyne accordyng, Ipeised off resoun,
 Hym to pun[y]she badouble passioun; 4380
 This to meene, lik as he was deuyded,
 A double torment for hym he hath prouyded.

This was his doom and his fatal peyne,
 Be Hostilius contryued off iustise: 4384
 His feet, his armys tween chariettis tweyne,
 Naked and bare, the story doth devise,
 To be bounde and knet in trauers wise,
 Contrariouly the hors to drawe & hale 4388
 Till al his bodi wer rent on pecis smale.

Thus his punishment was in a manner twofold, like his own doubleness.

And riht as he was cause off ful gret trouble,
 Founde ay in deede most ful off variaunce,
 Therfor his peyne was maad in maner double, 4392
 Riht as hymself was double in gouernaunce:
 Fals off his oth, off heste and assuraunce,
 And double in menyng as he hath perseuerid,
 So at his eende his membris wer disseuered. 4396

4364. in herte be] be in hert R — paied J, payed P, H 5.

4368. riht] om. R.

4373. buttirnesse R.

4375. on] in R.

4381. This] Thus H. 4385. His] Hus R.

4390. ful] riht H.

4394. 2nd off] & H, his R — and] & his R.

His feet wer drawe from the hed assonder,
 Ther was no ioynt with other for tabide:
 Heer was a legg, and an arm lay yonder;
 Thus ech membre from other gan deuide.
 And for he koude holde on outhere side,
 Be fals pretense to outhere parti trewe,
 Hym to chastise was founde a peyne newe.

His feet were
 drawn asunder
 from his head:
 here lay a leg,
 there an arm,
 just as he him-
 self had divided
 his allegiance.

¶ **Bochas ageyn doubilnes and fals symulacion.**¹

LO, heer the eende off double fals menyng, 4404
 Whan woord & herte be contrarious,
 Oth & beheste fals founden in a kyng,
 Off Albanoy as was this Mecius!
 O noble Pryncis, prudent and vertuuous, 4408
 Lat neuer story afftir mor recorde,
 That woord & deede sholde in you discorde.
 For kyng Mecius variaunt off corage,
 Whos inward menyng was euer on tresoun set, 4412
 Treynes contreuyng with a fair visage,
 His thouht, his herte with double corde fret,
 Be Bochas called deceit and fals baret,
 Which vice descryuyng, concludeth off resoun, 4416
 Fraude off all fraudes is fals decepcioun.
 For with a face flatryng and pesible,
 Pretendyng trouthe vnder fals plesaunce,
 With his panteris pereilous & terrible 4420
 Trappeth innocentis with granys off myschaunce, —
 I meene deceit, that with hir c[o]ntenaunce
 Folkis englueth, symple and rek[e]les,
 And them werreith vnder a face off pes. 4424
 Puissaunce off pryncis famous & honourable
 Hath be deceyued bi this traitouresse,
 And folk most prudent in ther estat notable
 Ha[ue] be distroubled be such fals doubilnesse; 4428

Such is the
 punishment of
 deceit, as suffer-
 ed by this
 false Metius.
 Princes, never
 let it be said of
 you that your
 words are con-
 trary to your
 deeds.

With a face of
 flattery, Deceit
 entraps the un-
 wary in his
 perilous noose.

The puissaunce of
 princes has been
 imposed upon
 by this
 traitoress and
 many a knight
 entricked for all
 his renown.

4399. Heer] Wheer R.

4406. founden] foundyng R.

4414. corde] cordis H. 4416. vice] om. H — off] on H.

4417. fraudes] fraude H.

4421. granys] grevis H, gravis R 3. 4422. hir] his H.

4426. Hath] ha H.

4428. distroublid J, H, distroubled R, P, distrowblede R 3,
 dystourbed H 5; — Haue] Hath R, P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 58 verso in margin, has the following heading:

A chapitle how pryncys sholde of ther othes and promises
 be true /avoidyng all doubilnesse & decepcoun.

And many a knyht victorious off prowesse
Hath been entriked, for al his hih renoun,
Be treynes founde off deceit and tresoun.

Deceit shall
itself be deceived,
for to him who
is double, his
deceit returns:
his fraud is quit
with fraud.

Deceit deceyueth and shal be deceyued, 4432
For be deceit[e] who is deceyuable,
Thouh his deceitis be nat out parceyued,
To a deceyuour deceit is retournable;
Fraude quit with fraude is guerdoun couenable: 4436
For who with fraude fraudulent is founde,
To a diffraudere fraude will ay rebounde.

[Off kyng Hostilius that first wered purpill hewe
consumpt with firy Levene.]¹

Now I shall
write the fall of
Hostilius, who
was the first
Roman king to
wear purple.

WHAT sholde I mor off deceit endite,
Touchyng the fraude of kyng Mecius? 4440
For I me caste now fynali to write
The fatal eende off kyng Hostilius,
Which was the firste, as seith Valerius,
In Rome cite that auctour[e]s knewe, 4444
Among kynges, that wered purpil hewe.

After all his
victories, his
fame began to
darken; he
neglected to
sacrifice to
Jupiter, who
consumed him
by lightning.

But afftir al his tryumphal noblesse
And many vnkouth knyhtli hih emprise, 4448
Fortune tappalle the pris off his prowesse,
Made hym to be, in ful froward wise,
Rekles and slouh[e] to do sacrificse
To Iubiter; for which, sent from heuene,
He was consumpt with sodeyn firi leuene. 4452

I send him
this envoy in
rebuke.

Heer men mai seen the reuoluciouns [p. 142]
Off Fortunys double purueiaunce:
How the most myhti off Romayn champiouns
Haue sodenli be brouht onto myschaunce; 4456
And ther outrages to put in remembraunce,
Grete conquestis turned to wo fro ioie,
For a rebuk I sende hem this lenuoie.

4444. auctoures] auctour H.

4450. slouhe] sleuth R 3.

4452. firi] fier R.

4455. the] he R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 58 verso.

[¶ Lenuoie.]

- R**OME, remembre off thi fundacioun, 4460 Rome, remem-
 And off what peep[le] thou took[e] thi gynnyng: 4460 ber thy founda-
 Thi bildyng gan off fals discencioun, tion of robbery
 Off slaughtre, moordre & outraious robyng, and murder, and
 Yevyng to vs a maner knowlechyng, — 4464 know that a
 A fals begynnyng, auctours determyne, wrong beginning
 Shal be processe come onto ruyne. shall end in
 ruin.
- Wher be thyn Emperours, most souereyn off renoun? 4468 Where are thy
 Kynges exiled for outraious luyng? renowned em-
 Thi senatours, with worthi Scipioun? perors and exiled
 Poetis olde thi tryumphes rehersyng, kings? Thy
 Thi laureat knyhtis, most statli ther ridyng, senators and
 Thyn aureat glorie, thy* noblesse tenlumyne, 4472 stately knights,
 Is be long processe brouht onto ruyne. thine aureate
 glory?
- Wher is now Cesar, that took possessioun
 First off thempire, the tryvmpe vsurpyng?
 Or wher is Lucan, that maketh mencioune 4476 Where is the
 Off al his conquest be cerious writyng? lordship of
 Octovian most solempneli regnyng? Octavian?
 Wher is become ther lordshepe or ther lyne?
 Processe off yeris hath brouht it to ruyne. 4480
- [Where is the palace or royall mancion,
 With a statue clere of golde shining
 By Romulus wrought & set on that dongeon?
 Where is thy temple of cristal bright shewing, 4484 Where the
 Made half of gold, most rich[e]ly moustryng palace with a
 Pe heauenly spheres, by compasse wrought & line, statue of bright
 Which that long processe hath brought vnto ruine?]
- Wher is Tullius cheeff lanterne off thi toun, 4488 Where are
 In rethorik all other surmountyng? Tullius and
 Moral Senek or* prudent sad Catoun, Seneca, Cato
 Thi comoun proffit alwei preferring, and just
 Trajan, who
 shewed
 preference to
 none?

4460. off] on H. 4462. bildyng] billyng R.
 4471. statli] statly in R. 4472. gloire B — thy] thyn B.
 4480. it] om. H, R — to] onto R.
 4481. Stanza om. MSS. Supplied from Tottel's print, leaf lxvi
 verso, collated with Garrett MS.
 4482. statue] stature G. 4483. on] in G.
 4484. shewing] shynynge G. 4485. (monstryng Tot.)
 4487. that] om. G — vnto] to G. 4488. thi] the H.
 4490. or] off B, R.

- Or rihtful Traian, most iust* in his demyng, 4492
 Which on no parti list nat to declyne?
 But long processe hath brouht al to ruyne.
- Where the temple of thy protection made by Virgil, and its images and small bells that rang out war?
 Wher is the temple off thi proteccioun
 Maad be Virgile, most corious off beeldyng? 4496
 Ymages erect for eueri region, —
 Whan any land was founde rebellyng,
 Toward that part a smal belle herd ryngyng,
 To that prouynce thymage dede enclyne, — 4500
 Which bi long processe was brouht onto ruyne.
- Where the extortion of consuls and prefects, the collusion of dictators, the frauds of decemvirs and tribunes?
 Wher is also the grete extorsioun
 Off consuleris and prefectis oppressyng?
 Off dictatours the fals collusioun? 4504
 Off decemvir the froward deceuyng?
 And off tribunys the fraudulent werkyng?
 Off alle echon the odious rauyne
 Hath be processe the brouht onto ruyne. 4508
- What has become of the tributes paid by the whole world under menace of thy sword?
 Wher is become thi dominacioun?
 The grete tributis [enrichyng] thi tresours?
 The world al hool in thi subieccioun,
 The suerd off vengauce all peeplis manacyng, 4512
 Euer gredi tencrece in thi getyng,
 Nothyng be grace, which that is dyuyne,
 Which hath the brouht be processe to ruyne.
- In thy highest exaltation, contrary to God and idolatrous, thou climbed up above the stars, until vengauce
 In thi most hiest exaltacioun, 4516
 Thi proude tirantis provyncis conqueryng,
 To God contraire be long rebelloun,
 Goddis, goddessis falsli obeiyng,
 About the sterris bi surquedous clymyng, 4520
 Till [olde] vengauce thi noblesse dede ontwyne
 With newe compleyntis to shewe thi ruyne.
- brought thee to ruin. Lay down thy pride and presumption, cast out thy false gods and lift up thy heart to Jesus!
 Ley down thi pride and thi presumpcioun,
 Thi pompous boost, thi lordshepis encresyng, 4524
 Confesse thyn outrage, & lei thi boost a-down,
 Alle false goddis pleynli diffieng!
 Leftt up thyn herte onto that heuenli kyng,

4492. iust] iustli B, J, iustly R.

4493. nat] om. R.

4499. part] parti R. 4510. The] Thi R — enrichyng] om. R.

4515. the brouht] brouht the H.

4520. clymyng R.

4521. vengauce and noblesse are transposed H.

- Which with his blood, thi sorwes for to fyne, 4528
 Hath maad thi ransoun to saue the fro ruyne!
- From olde Saturne drauh thyn affeccion,
 His goldene world[e] fulli despiysing;
 And fro Iubiter make a digressioun, 4532
 His siluerene tyme hertili dispreysing.
 Resorte ageyn with will and hool menyng
 To hym that is Lord off thordres nyne,
 Which meekli deide to saue the fro ruyne. 4536
- Thouh Mars be myhti in his ascencioun,
 Be influence victories disposyng,
 And brihte Phebus yeueth consolacioun
 To worldli pryncis, ther noblesse auauensyng, — 4540
 Forsake ther rihtis and thi fals offryng,
 And to that Lord bowwe doun thi chyne,
 Which shadde his blood to saue the fro ruyne!
- Wynged Mercurie, cheeff lord and patroun [p. 143] 4544
 Off eloquence and off fair spekyng,
 Forsak his seruise in thyn opynyoun,
 And serue the Lord that gouerneth all thyng —
 The sterriid heuene, the speeris eek meuyng, 4548
 Which for thi sake was crownyd with a spyne,
 His herte eek perced to saue the fro ruyne!
- Cast up off Venus the fals derisioun,
 Hir firi brond, hir flatries renewyng, 4552
 Off Diana the transmudacioun,
 Now briht, now pale, now cleer[e], now drepyng,
 Off blynde Cupide the fraudulent mokkyng,
 Off Iuno, Bachus, Proserpina, Lucyne: 4556
 For non but Crist may saue the fro ruyne!
- Voide off Circes* the bestiall poisoun,
 Off Cirenas the furious chauntyng;
 Lat nat Medusa do the no tresoun, 4560
 And fro Gorgones turne thi lookyng;
 And lat Sinderesis ha[ue] the in kepyng,

Return from Saturn and Jupiter and their golden and silver worlds to Him who died to save thee from ruin.

Though Mars be mighty and Phoebus encourage the worldly, forsake their rites and bow down to the Lord who shed His blood for thee.

Leave winged Mercury, and serve the Lord who rules the stary heavens and for thy sake was crowned with thorns.

Leave Venus and Diana who is forever changing, and blind Cupid. None but Christ can save thee!

Avoid the poison of Circe, the mad singing of the Sirens; turn thy look from the Gorgons and all such common trash!

4538. victories] victorie R. 4541. thi] her H, R 3.

4542. bowwe] bew R. 4550. saue] serve H.

4552. fire R.

4558. *This stanza is transposed with the next* R — Cirses B, J.

4559. chauntyng] enchauntyng H, R 3, enchanting P.

4560. nat] na R.

4562. haue the in] hathe in H.

- That Crist Iesu may be thi medicyne
Geyn such raskaile to saue the fro ruyne! 4564
- Abjure thy false
idols: the Passion
may redress
thine errors
if thou
obey Christ's
discipline. Off fals ydoles mak abiuracioun,
To Simulacres do no worshepyng;
Mak thi resort to Cristes passioun,
Which may be merci redresse thyn erryng, 4568
And be his grace repare thi fallyng,
So thou obeie his vertuous disciplyne,
Truste that he shal restore thi ruyne.
- His mercy
increases always
and never
wanes. His merci is surmountyng off foisoun, 4572
Euer encreceth withoute amenusyng,
Ay at the fulle ech tyme and ech sesoun,
And neuer waneth be non eclipsyng.
Whan men list make deuoutli ther rekyng, 4576
To leue ther synne & kome to his doctryne,
He redi is to keepe hem fro ruyne.
- O Rome, cry
mercy to God
and repent, that
he may saue
thee from
eternal ruin! O Rome, Rome, al old abusioun
Off cerimonies falsli disusyng, 4580
Ley hem a-side, and in conclusioun,
Cri God merci, thi trespacis repentyng!
Truste he wil nat refuse thyn axyng, 4584
The to receyue to laboure in his vyne,
Eternali to saue the fro ruyne.
- O noble Princes,
nothing in this
world is lasting:
ye bear hence
with you only
your deserts.
Remember of
Rome how all
goes to ruin! O noble Pryncis, off hih discrecioun
Seeth in this world ther is non abidyng,
Peiseth conscience atwen will and resoun 4588
Whil ye ha[ue] leiser, off herte ymagynyng,
Ye ber nat hen[ne]s but your disseruyng:
Lat this conceit ay in your thouhtis myne,
Bexauple off Rome how al goth to ruyne! 4592

¶ Explicit liber Secundus.

¶ Sequitur prologus libri tercij.

4565. abiuracioun] obiuracioun H. 4577. his] this R.
4578. hem] men R.
4580. difusyng R. 4589. off] in H.
4591. thouhtis] hertis H, hertes R 3, heartes P.
4592. how] om. H.

LYDGATE'S FALL OF PRINCES

EDITED BY
HENRY BERGEN

PART II.
(Books III-V.)



THE CARNEGIE INSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON
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3:42

LYDGATE'S FALL OF PRINCES

PART II.

BOOKS III.-V.

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THE FALL OF PRINCES

BOOK III.

[Prologue.]

LIK a pilgrym which that goth on foote, [p.144] Like a pilgrim
 And hath non hors to releue his trauaile, who goes wearily
 Hot, drie [&] wery, & fynde may no boote on foot and finds
 Off welle cold, whan thrust hym doth assaile, no spring to still
 Wyn nor licour, that may to hym auaille, I, knowing no his thirst, so fare
 Riht so fare I, which in my besynesse 4 help for my
 No socour fynde my rudnesse to redresse. rudeness.

I meene as thus: I ha[ue] no fresch licour 8 I have no fresh
 Out off the conduitis off Calliope, water from the
 Nor thoruh Clio in rethorik no flour fountain of
 In my labour for to refreshe me, Calliope, no
 Nor off the sustren, in noubre thries thre, flower of speech
 Which with Cithera on Pernaso duell, — from Clio to
 Thei neuer me gaff drynk onys off ther well! refresh my
 labour. Not
 12 once have I
 drunk of the
 well on
 Parnassus.

Nor off ther sprynges cleer & cristallyne, The blindness of
 That sprang be touchyng off the Pegase, Polyphemus has
 The fauour lakkith my making tenlumyne, 16 darkened my
 I fynde ther bawme off so gret scarsete, eyes.
 To tame ther tunnys with sum drope of plente; 20
 For Poliphemus thoruh his gret blyndnesse
 Hath in me dirked off Argus the brihtnesse.

Our liff heer short, off wit the gret dulnesse, Our life here is
 The heuy soule troublid with trauaile, short: wit is
 And off memorie* the glacyng brotilnesse, — dull and memory
 Dreed & onkunnyng ha[ue] maad a strong bataile 24 untrustworthy.
 With werynesse my sperit to assaile, Dread and
 And with ther subtil crepyng in most queynte Ignorance have
 Ha[ue] maad my sperit in making for to feynte. 28 crept in to
 weaken my will
 to write,

4. welle] wellis H.

7. No] None R.

9. conduitis] conductis R.

17. The] Ther R — making] fauour H.

24. off] om. R — memoire B.

- and my step-
mother Oblivion
has made a
bastille off forget-
fulness to shadow
my reason and
cause me to lose
my way.
- And ouermor, the feerful frowardnesse
Off my stepmooder callid oblyuyoun,
Hath maad a bastile off foryetilnesse,
To stoppe the passage & shadwe my resoun, 32
That I myht haue no cleer direccioun
In translatyng off newe to quikke me,
Stories to write off old antiquite.
- Thus I stood
in double doubt,
between the
desire to con-
tinue my work
of translating
and Ignorance,
who halted my
pen.
- Thus was I set, and stood in double werre 36
At the meetyng off feerful weies tweyne.
The ton was this: who-euer list to lere,
Where-as good[e] will gan me constreyne,
Bochas taccomplisshe for to do my peyne, 40
Cam Ignoraunce with a maas off dreede
Mi penne tarreste; I durst[e] nat proceede.
- When I con-
sidered what I
had undertaken,
my pen quaked
at the thought
that I had almost
abandoned my
task;
- Thus be my-selff remembryng on this book,
It to translate how I hadde vndirtake, 44
Ful pale off cheer, astonyd in my look,
Myn hand gan tremble; my penne I felte quake,
That disespeired, I hadde almost forsake
So gret a labour, dreedful & inportable, 48
It to parfourme I fond my-silff so onable.
- and when I saw
how little I had
accomplished, I
stood checkmate
for fear, like a
wayfarer over-
taken by night,
- Twen the residue off this gret iourne
And litil part theroff that was begunne,
I stood chekmaat for feer whan I gan see 52
In my weie how litil I hadde runne;
Lik taman that failed day & sunne,
And hadde no liht taccomplisshe his viage,
So ferr I stood a-bak in my passage. 56
- which came on,
darkened by
ignorance.
I found no one
to help me but
the Pierides and
Medusa, hard
as ston.
- The nyht cam on, dirked with ignoraunce,
Mi witt was dull be cleernesse to discerne
In rethorik for lak off suffisaunce,
The torchis out, & queynt was the lanterne. 60
And in this caas my stile to gouerne,
Me to forthre I fond non other muse
But, hard as ston, Pierides and Meduse.
- Poverty ap-
proached and
old age: my
purse was
empty, and
Bacchus
far away.
- Support was non my dulnesse for to guie; 64
Pouert approachid; in stal crokid age:
Mercurie absent and Philologie;
Mi purs ay liht and void off al coignage.

29. ferdful R. 31. bastile] bataile H, batell R 3.

35. antiquite] auctorite H. 39. gan] can H.

66. Philologie] philosophye H.

- Bachus ferr off to glade my corage; 68
 An ebbe off plente; scarsete atte fulle,
 Which of an old man makth the sperit dulle.
- But hope & trust to putte away despair
 Into my mynde off newe gan hem dresse; 72
 And cheeff off all to make the wethir fair,
 Mi lordis fredam and bounteous largesse
 Into myn herte brouht in such gladnesse,
 That thoruh releuyng off his benygne grace, 76
 Fals Indigence list me no mor manace.
- A, how it is an hertli reioishyng
 To serue a prynce that list to aduertise
 Off ther seruauantis the feithful iust menyng, 80
 And list considre to guerdone ther seruise.
 And at a neede list hem nat despise,
 But from al daunger that sholde hem noye or greue
 Been euer redi to helpe hem and releue. 84
- And thus releued be the goodliheed, [p. 145]
 And thoruh the noblesse off this most knyhtli man,
 Alle mystis cleerid off disespeir & dreed, 88
 Trust, hope and feith into myn herte ran;
 And on my labour anon forthwith I gan:
 For be cleer support off my lordis grace,
 Al foreyn lettyng fro me I dede enchace.
- ¶ Folkis that vse to make grete viages, 92
 Which vndirfonge long trauaile & labour,
 Whan thei ha[ue] doon gret part off ther passages,
 Off werynesse tasswagen ther rigour,
 Ageyn feyntise to fynde sum faour, 96
 Looke ofte ageyn, parcell to be releued,
 To seen how moch ther iourne is a-cheued.
- Cause whi thei so ofte looke ageyn,
 Bakward turne look and eek visage, 100
 Is onli this: that it may be seyn
 To them how moch is doon off ther viage.
 Eek weri folk that gon on pilgrymage
 Reste hem sumwhile a ful large space, 104
 Laborious soot to wipen from ther face.

But hope rose again and the weather brightened, when my lord's generosity brought me gladness and relief.

Ah, it is a pleasure to serve a prince who is ready to reward and help those who are dependent upon him!

The mists of despair and dread vanished, and I forthwith began my labour.

People who make long journeys or undertake laborious tasks, often look back to see how much they have accomplished,

and weary folk who go on pilgrimages sometimes stop to take a long rest,

69. An] And R.

105. soot] swot H, swet R 3, swete P.

- casting down
their heavy
burdens and
drinking at cool
springs and
reckoning up the
miles they have
travelled.
- Ther heuy fardell among thei caste doun
At certeyn boundis to do ther bakkis ese,
At wellis colde eek off entencioun 108
Drynke fressh wattris ther greuou thrust tapese,
Or holsum wynes ther appetit to plesse,
Reknynge the miles be computaciouns,
Which thei ha[ue] passid, off castellis & off touns. 112
- It comforts them
to know how
much of their
journey is over;
- It doth hem ese the noumbre for to knowe
Sithe thei began off many gret iournees,
Off hih[e] mounteyns and off valis lowe,
And straunge sihtes passyng be cuntrees, 116
Thynkouth bildyng off burwes & citees,
Countyng the distaunce fro toun[e]s & the spacis:
This ther talkyng at ther restyng placis.
- and they also
look forward to
see what still lies
before them.
- The residue and the surplusege 120
Thei rekne also off ther labour komyng,
Thynke it is a maner auantage
To haue & seen a cleer[e] knowlechyng
Off thynges passid & thynges eek folwyng; 124
For to ther hertis it doth ful gret plesaunce,
Whan al such thyng is put in remembraunce.
- Thus did John
Bochas, and he
was astonished
when he con-
sidered the Fall
of Princes from
Fortune's wheel,
- And semblabli Iohn Bochas, as I fynde,
Gan turne his bak, look and c[o]untenaunce, 128
And to remembre, apoyntyng in his mynde
To the stories rehersed in substaunce
In his too bookis off sorwe & displesaunce,
Hymself astonyd, merueilyng a gret deel 132
The fall off pryncis fro Fortunys wheel.
- knowing that
they had brought
their misfor-
tunes upon
themselves
through excessive
ambition and
covetousness.
- Off ther onhapp, as he doth reherce,
Toward hemsilff the cause doth rebounde;
Ther clymyng up the heuenes for to perce, 136
In worldli richesse tencrecen and habounde,
Ther gredi etik doth hemsilff confounde;
And ther thrust off hauyng onstaunchable
Causeth ther noblesse to be so variable. 140
- High climbing up
blunts the sight
and causes men
to fall; and those
who covet too
much shall lose
everything.
- Hih clymyng up, off resoun who can see,
Dulleth off braynes the memoriall,
Blunteth the sihte, in hih & lowe degre,
Which from a-loffte makith hem haue a fall. 144

112. 2nd off] *om.* H.

116. be] the R. 117. burwes] Bourhes R.

118. distauncis H.

143. &] or H.

Men seyn off old, who that coueitith all,
At onset hour suchon shal nat chese,
But al his gadryng attonys he shal lese.

For worldli folk which so hih arise
With the gret peis off worldli habundaunce,
And with the weihte off froward couetise, —
Namli wher Fortune holdeth the ballaunce, —
With onwar turn off sum onhappi chaunce,
This stormy queen, this double fals goddesse,
Plungeth hem down from al ther gret richesse.

148 Fortune is
always ready
to plunge
worldly folk
down from
their riches.

152

Wherefore Bochas heeroff to make a preeff
Sheweth to purpos a sentence ful notable,
A cleer exauple off onwar such myscheeff,
Write off an auctour be maner off a fable,
Al-be the menyng be ful comendable,
And weel accordyng in conclusioun
To the cleer purpos off this entencioun.

156 Therefore
Bochas tells a
fable to shew
how such un-
expected mis-
chief comes.

160

¶ Finis Prologi.

[Incipit liber Tercius]

[How Andalus doctor of Astronomie concludith/
how princys sholdenot atwite constellacions nor
fortune of there vnhappy fallyng but there owne
demeritys and vicious lyuyng.]¹

AT Naples whilom, as he doth specife,
In his youthe whan he to scoole went,
Ther was a doctour off astronomie,
Famous off cunnyng & riht excellent.
Off hym rehersyng, shortli in sentement,
His ioie was most to studyen and to wake;
And he was callid Andalus the blake.
He radde in schoolis the meuyng off the heuene,
The kynde off sterris and constellaciouns,
The cours also off the planetis seuene,
Ther influencis and ther mociouns,
And heeld also in his opynyouns,
The fall off pryncis, the cause weel out souht,
Cam off themsilff & off Fortune nouht.

164 When Bochas
went to school
in Naples there
was a doctor of
astronomy called
Andalus the
Black, who
understood the
course of the
stars and be-
lieved that the
Fall of Princes
was caused by
themselves alone
and not by
Fortuna.

168

172

154. gret] *om.* R. 156. ful] most H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 60 verso.

He held that
neither the stars
nor heaven are
to blame for
earthly misfor-
tunes,
Nor the sterris wer nothyng to wite, 176
Be ther meuyng nor be ther influence,
Nor that men sholde off riht the heuene atwite
For no froward worldli violence:
For this clerk ther concluded in sentence, 180
How men be vertu longe may contune
From hurt off sterris outhur off Fortune.

of which the chief
occasion is the
viciousness of
men, who have
free choice to
behave either
well or ill.
Ther owne desert is cheeff occasioun
Off the onhap, who-so taketh heede, 184
And ther demeritis onwarli put hem down,
Whan vicious liff doth ther bridil leede.
Cours off Fortune nor off the sterris rede
Hyndrith nothyng geyn ther felicite, 188
Sithe off fre chois thei ha[ue] ful liberte.

God punishes
sin in many
ways; evil-doing
always calls for
retribution.
God punsheth synne in many maner wise;
Summe he chastisith for ther owne auail:
Men may off resoun in such cas deuse, 192
Synne ay requereth vengauce at his tail.
God off Fortune taketh no counsail,
Nor from hir meuyng no man is mor fre,
As clerkis write,* than is Glad Pouerte. 196

As for Fortune,
no one is more
independent of
her than Glad
Poverty, as
Andalus used
to say,
relating to his
pupils this fable.
And onto purpos, this auctour ful notable,
To his scoleris ther beyng in presence,
Ful demurli gan reherse a fable, 200
With many a colour off sugred eloquence;
Theron concludyng the summe off his sentence
Touchyng a striff, which he dede expresse,
Atwen Glad Pouert & this blynd goddesse.

[A disputacion between fortune & glad pouert.]¹

Once Glad
Poverty, who
looked like a
dishevelled,
tattered woman,
sat where three
roads met.
Q VOD Andalus: "Whilom off fortune 204
In a streiht place ther sat Glad Pouerte,
Which resemblid off look & figure
A rekles woman, most ougli on to see,
At a naruh meetyng off hih-weies thre, 208
Al totorn, to-raggid and to-rent,
A thousand pachchis vpon hir garnement.

178. atwite] awyte R. 180. concludyng H.

188. Hyndryng R — ther] the R.

196. writen B. 203. this] his H.

209. to-raggid] & raggid H.

210. garment R, garmente P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 60 verso.

She was hidous bothe off cheer and face,
 And in semyng void off sorwe and dreed.
 And bi that way as Fortune dede pace,
 And off Glad Pouert sodenli took heed,
 She gan to smyle & lauhhe at hir in deed,
 Bi a maner scornynge in certeyn,
 Off hir array she hadde so gret disdeyn.

212 She was very unattractive, but without sorrow or fear; and when Fortune happened to come along and caught sight of her, Fortune
 216 began to laugh at her ragged clothes.

Whos froward lauhre, whan Pouert dede espie
 How she off hir hadde indignacioun,
 She roos hire up off hih malencolie,
 Pleynli to shewe hire entencioun,
 Withoute good day or salutacioun,
 Doyng to Fortune no maner reuerence,
 Vnder these woordis declaryng hir sentence:

220 At this Poverty arose indignantly, and without bidding Fortune good-day said:

¶ 'O thou Fortune, most fool off foolis all,
 What cause hastow for to lauhhe at me,
 Or what disdeyn is in thyn herte fall?
 Spare neueradeel, tell on, lat me see,
 For I ful litil haue a-do with the;
 Off old nor newe I ha[ue] noon aqueyntaunce
 Nouthur with the nor with thi gouernaunce.'

224
 228 "O Fortune, greatest of all fools, why do you laugh at me? We have very small acquaintance with one another."

And whan Fortune beholdeth the maner
 Off Glad Pouert in hir totorn[e] weede,
 And kneuh also be contenaunce & cheer,
 How she off hire took but litil heede,
 Lik as she hadde to hir no maner neede, —
 The which[e] thynges conceyued and Isey[n],
 To Pouerte she anserde thus ageyn:

232 Fortune saw that Glad Poverty had little respect for her and answered:

¶ 'Mi scornful* lauhre pley[n]li was for the,
 Whan I the sauh so megre, pale and leene,
 Nakid and cold, in gret aduersite,
 Scabbid, scuruy, scallid and oncleene
 On bak and body, as it is weel seene.
 Many a beeste walke in ther pasture,
 Which day be day off newe thou doost recure.

240 "I laughed when I saw you so thin and pale and cold, so scurvy and unclean. You dwell in the fields

244

211. She] Scho R.

228. neueradeel] not adeel J, not a dele P.

234. know R.

236. hadde] om. R.

239. scornful] soruhful B.

243. and] om. R.

- and have nothing to wrap your head in but a piece of old matting. Children run when they see you, and many a dog has gnawed on your staff. Hauyng nothyng to wrappyn in thyn hed [p. 148]
 Sauff a brod hat, rent out off nattis olde,
 Ful offten hungri for defaute off bred, 248
 Slepynge on straw[e] in the frostis colde.
 And wher thou comest, as men may weel beholde,
 For feer off the, childre them withdrawe,
 And many a dogge hath on thi staff ignawe. 252
- "You are odious to all men; everybody flees your presence." To alle estatis thou art most odious,
 Men with the will ha[ue] no daliaunce,
 Thi felaship is so contrarious,
 Wher thou abidest ther may be no plesaunce. 256
 Folk hate so dedli thi froward aqueyntaunce,
 That fynali, I dar conclude off the,
 Wher-euer thou comest thi felaship men fle!
- When Glad Poverty saw how rude Fortune was to her, she replied: Whan Glad Pouert gan pleynli vndirstonde 260
 These rebukes rehersed off Fortune,
 The rud[e] resouns that she took on honde,
 Which frowardli to hire she dede entune, 264
 As Pouert were a refus in comune,
 Bi the repreuis that Fortune on hir laide;
 For which Pouert replied ageyn & saide:
- "Fortune, be well certain that I have renounced your favour of my own free will. I would rather be poor and happy than possess great wealth and have no peace of mind. ¶ 'Fortune,' quod she, 'touchyng this debat, 268
 Which off malice thou doost ageyn me take,
 Be weel certeyn, touchyng my poore estat,
 I off fre will thi fauour ha[ue] forsake.
 And thouh folk seyn thou maist men riche make,
 Yit I ha[ue] leuere be poore with gladnesse, 272
 Than with trouble possede gret richesse.
- "Although you make a fine appearance and look fat and well fed For thouh thou seeme benygne & debonaire
 Bi a maner countirfet apparence, 276
 Fat & weel fed, with rounde chekis faire,
 With many colours off trouthe as in pretence,
 As ther off feith wer werrai existence, —
 But vnder all thi floures off fresshnesse
 The serpent glidith, off chaung & doubilnesse. 280
- and wear purple clothes and have many servants and jewels, nevertheless I am quite ready to fight you." And thouh thi clothyng be of purpil hewe,
 With gret awaityng off many chaumbereris,
 Off gold & perle ech dai chaunges newe,
 Clothes off gold & sondry fressh atiris, 284
 And in thyn houshold ful many officeris, —

Yit I dar weel putte in iupartie,
With the to plete and holde chaumpartie.'

Thus Glad Pouert gan wexen inportune,
Off cheer contraire, off look & off language,
Ageyn this ladi which callid is Fortune,
That off disdeyn she fill into a rage:
¶ 'Behold,' quod she, 'off Pouert the corage,
In wrechidnesse standyng disconsolat,
How ageyn me she is now obstynat!

288 Fortune then
lost her temper
and said:
"Behold the
presumption of
this wretched
creature, she
cannot

292

She cannat see, how she stant outraied,
Fer from the fauour off my felicite,
Yit off pride she is nat disamaied,
Nor* list nat bowwe for tobeie me,
Thouh she be cast in mendicite,
Ferthest a-bak, I do you weel assure,
In myscheeff set off any creature.

see how misera-
ble she is with-
out my favour,
and yet she is
full of pride!

296

300

But treuli, Pouert, for al thi truaundise,
Maugre thi pride and thi gret outrage,
I shal the pun[y]she in ful cruel wise,
To make the loute vnder my seruage.
Which resemblest a dedli pale ymage,
That were off newe rise out off his graue,
And yit off pride darst ageyn me raue.'

"Truly, Poverty,
for all your
outrageous conceit,
I'll punish
you and make
you bow down
in my service.
You look as if
you had just
risen from the
grave!"

304

308

But whan Fortune hadde these woordis said,
Glad Pouert gan falle in gret gladnesse,
And ageyn Fortune with a sodeyn braid,
She gan hir conceit out shewe & expresse:
¶ 'Fortune,' quod she, 'thouh thou be a goddesse
Callid off foolis, yit lerne this off me,
From thi seruage I stonde at liberte.

On hearing this
Glad Poverty re-
joiced and said:
"Fortune, if
fools call you a
goddess, I, at
any rate, am free
from your sub-
jection; and
since we are
going to fight,
it is comforting
to know that
you have no
firmness of
heart.

312

316

But yiff I shal algatis haue a-doo
With the in armis, most cruel & vengable,
Touchyng the quarel that is atwen vs too,
Ther is o thyng to me riht comfortable,
That thi corage is flekeryng & onstable;
And wher an herte is in hymself deuyded,
Victorie in armys for hym is nat prouyded.

320

288. Importune R, H. 289. contrary H.

298. Nor] Nar B — for] om. H.

303. gret] om. J.

318. that] which H — atwen] tween J.

- "I won't flatter
 you, although
 flattery is appro-
 priate to your
 kind: I have
 freely forsaken
 worldly wealth,
- Me list[e] nouthre flatre the nor fage,
 Nor the tenoynte be adulacioun,
 Thouh flat[e]rie & feyned fals language
 Approprid be to thi condicioun;
 And in despit off thi presumpcioun,
 I ha[ue] forsake off my fre volunte
 All the tresours off worldli vanite.
- and if once
 your servant, I
 am now emanci-
 pated from your
 power.
- Whilom I was, as thou hast deuised, [p. 149]
 Seruant to the, and onto thi tresours;
 But fro thi daunger now that I am fraunchised,
 Sekyng off the nouthre helpe nor socours,
 Manace kynges & myhti emperours:
 For Glad Pouert, late nouthre soone,
 With thi richessis hath nothyng to doone.
- "You may hold
 worldly princes
 and rich
 merchants in
 subjection,
 Glad Poverty
 has wholly
 escaped your
 lure.
- For thouh thou haue enbracid in thi cheyne
 Worldli pryncis & goodes transitorie,*
 And riche marchantis vndir thi demeyne,
 Yeuest to knythod conquest and victorie,*
 The fadyng palme off laude & veynglorie,* —
 But whan echon thi fauour han recurid,
 Than is Glad Pouert fre fro thi lure assurid.
- "All your
 servants stand
 in fear of your
 deceit;
 Glad Poverty
 alone is free.
- All thi seruantis standen vnder dreede,
 Quakyng for feer[e] off thi doubilnesse;
 For nouthre wisdam, force nor manheede,
 Fredam, bounte, loue nor ientillesse
 Mai in thi fauour ha[ue] no sekirnesse;
 Thei be so possid with wyndis in thi barge,
 Wher-as Glad Pouert goth freli at his large.
- "Desiring
 nothing, I am
 not afraid of
 your menaces.
- Thi manacyng doth me no duresse,
 Which worldli pryncis dredyn euerichon.
 Thei may weel quake for losse off gret richesse;
 But I, Glad Pouert, theroff desire non,
 As flowe & ebbe al worldli thyng mut gon;
 For afftir flodis off Fortunys tyde,
 The ebbe folweth, & will no man abide.

324. tonoynte R.

331. onto] to R.

338. transitoires B, R, J, transytoryes H 5, transitories P.

340. victoires B, R, J, victories P, victoryes H 5.

341. veyngloires B, R, J, vainglories P, veyngloryes H 5.

347. gentillesse R, H, gentlenes P. 348. Mai] Man R.

349. wynde R.

355. worldli] erthly H.

- Flowe and ebbe be to me bothe aliche;
 I dreede nothyng thi mutabilite,
 Mak whom thou list[e] outhere poore or riche; 360
 For I nothyng will requere off the,
 Nouthere lordshepe nor gret prosperite:
 For with thi gifftes who that hath to doone,
 Off chaunges braideth offer than the moone. 364
- Out off pouert cam first these emperours
 That were in Rome crownd with laurer;
 Fredam & largesse made hem first victours,
 Causyng ther fame to shyne briht and cleer, 368
 Till couetise brouht hem in daunger,
 Whan thei off foli, in ther most excellence,
 To thi doubilnesse dede reuerence.
- For whan fredam a prynce doth forsake, 372
 And couetise put awey largesse,
 And streitnesse is into houshold take,
 And negardship exilith ientillesse,
 Than is withdrawe from ther hih noblesse 376
 The peepelis herte; and, pleyntli to deuisse,
 Off ther seruauntis farweel al good seruisse.
- Al such sodeyn chaungis in comune
 In this world vsid now fro day to day,
 Echon thei come be fraude off fals Fortune;
 Experience hath put it at assay,
 Loue, trouthe & feith be gon [so] ferr away.
 And yiff that trust with pryncis wil nat tarie, 384
 Lital merueile thouh the peple varie.
- For thoruh thi chaungis off fraudulent fairnesse,
 Ther is now vsid in eueri regioun
 Glad cheer out shewed with couert doubilnesse, 388
 Vnder the courtyn off symulacioun.
 So secre now is adulacioun,
 That in this world may be no sur[e]te,
 But yiff it reste in Glad Pouerte. 392
- Yit off thi pereilous froward variaunce
 I sette no stor, treuli as for me;
 For al thi frenship concludeth with myschaunce,
 With sodeyn myscheeff off mutabilite, 396
 Which yeueth me herte to haue a-do with the:

"Flow and ebb of fortune are alike to me. Do as you will with others; I ask nothing of you.

"The emperors of Rome first arose out of poverty, nor did they fall until they became covetous and worshiped you.

"When a prince becomes avaricious he loses the love of his people;

376

and sudden changes are to be expected when the honour of princes has departed.

380

384

"Owing to you, people everywhere dissemble; there is no surety except in Glad Poverty.

388

392

"I have no fear of your froward inconsistency: my poor estate is quite safe from your vicissitudes."

396

358. be] om. R. 375. gentliness H.
 383. so] om. J, R. 390. secret H. 397. me] my R.

For suffisaunce in my poore estaat
Shal to thi chaunges seyn sodenli chekmaat.'

When she heard
this Fortune
was furious.
"Poverty" she
said, "if I did
not show you
my power men
would think but
little of me.

Fortune almost with anger disespiered, 400
Off these woordis took ful gret greuauance.
¶ 'Pouert,' quod she, 'which maist nat been apeired!
But I now shewe ageyn the my puissaunce,
Men wolde litil accounte my substaunce, 404
O myhti Pouert! O stronge Hercules!
Which ageyn[s] me putttest thi-silff in pres!

"Do you
suppose
that you can
overcome me, O
strong Hercules?
I, who am called
Princess of
Conquest and
Arms!"

Supposest thou it sholde the auaille,
Outher be force or be hardynesse 408
To haue a-do with me in bataile,
Which am off conquest & off hih prowesse
In armys callid ladi and pryncesse?
For ther is non so myhti conquerour, 412
That may preuaille withoute my fauour.'

Poverty replied:
"Although I
have neither
weapons nor
armour, let us
see if you dare
wrestle with me,

¶ Off these woordis Pouert nothyng afferd, [p. 150]
Ansuerde ageyn, thus pleynli in sentence:
'Thouh heer I ne* haue spere, sheeld nor suerd, 416
Nor chosen armour to stonden at diffence,
Pollex nor dagger to make resistence,
But bare and naked, anon it shal be seyn,
Wher thou with me darst wrastlen on this pleyn. 420

under the con-
dition that
neither of us
shall withdraw,
and that the
victor may bind
the other to
obey his will."

Which shal be doon vnder condicioun
That non off vs shal hymself withdrawe,
But stille abide off entencioun,
Till he that venquysshe ordeyned hath a lawe, 424
Such as hym likith, ageyn[e]s his felawe.
The which[e] lawe shal nat be delaied
To be acomplissid on hym that is outraied.'

At this Fortune
began to smile:
"Who shall be
judge between
us?"

Off whos woordes Fortune ageyn gan smyle, 428
That Pouert proffred so proudli to assaile.
And vpon this she stynte a litil while,
And to Pouert she putte this opposaile:
¶ 'Who shal,' quod she, 'be iuge off this bataile, 432
Or yeue a doom iustli atwen vs tweyne
Off this quarell which we shal darreyne?

416. heer I ne] I heer B, R, P. 417. stonde in at R.
420. Wher] Whether H — on] in R.
424. venquysshith H — haue H.
434. Off] on H, R 3.

- I axe also a-nother questioun
 Touchyng thi profre off furious outrage:
 Wher-as thou putttest a condicioun
 And a lawe with ful proud language, —
 Wher shaltow fynden pleggis or hostage
 To keepe the promys which thou doost ordeyne, 440
 Theroff tabide the guerdoun or the peyne?
- I meene as thus: yiff ther be set a lawe
 Atween vs too or a condicioun
 Be sur[e]te, which may nat be withdrawe,
 As vnder bond or obligacioun;
 But there is nouthur lawe nor resoun
 May bynde a beggere, yiff it be weel souht,
 Whan it is preued that he hath riht nouht. 448
- This sect off pouert hath a proteccioun
 From all statutis to gon at liberte,,
 And from al lawe a pleyn exempcioun:
 Than folweth it, yiff thou bounde the
 To any lawe that may contreuid be,
 It wer fraude, pleynli to endite,
 Which hast riht nouht thi parti to aquite.
- Thou art so feeble, yiff it cam therto,
 That thou were brouht onto vttraunce,
 For noun power, whan al that wer do,
 Thou sholdist faile to make thi fynaunce,
 Bothe destitut off good and off substaunce;
 And sithe no lawe thi persone may coarte,
 It wer foli with suchon to iupart. 456
- Yiff I wolde compulse the to wrak,
 Taxe off the the tresour off kyng Darie,
 On that parti thou stondest ferr abak,
 Mi paiement so longe sholde tarie,
 Indigence wolde make the to varie. 464
- And yiff I wolde thi persone eek compare
 To Alisandre, — thi sides been ful bare! 468
- And fynali thou stondest in such caas
 Off miserie, wrechidnesse and neede,
 That thou myhtest off resoun seyn* allas,
 Bothe forsake off frenshipe & kenreede,
 And ther is non dar plegge the for dreede: 472

"And if I win,
 where will you
 find surety to
 keep your
 promise?"

"If a condition
 be set between
 us, how can
 a beggar, who
 has nothing, be
 bound to keep
 it?"

"Your sect of
 Poverty goes
 free of all law; it
 would be a
 fraud for you
 to bind your-
 self without
 having any
 security."

"And as you are
 destitute, and
 exempt from
 all penalties, it
 were folly to
 have ado with
 you."

"I should have
 to wait a long
 time before I
 got anything out
 of you!"

"Miserable and
 without friends
 or kin, no one
 would stand
 surety for
 you; yet, like a
 vainglorious
 fool, you expect
 to win."

449. Thi] The P — sect] feet R.

472. seyn] syngen B, syng R, syng J, sing P, say R 3.

473. &] & of H.

Yit lik a fool supprisid with veynglorie,
 Hopest off me to wynne the victorie.' 476

Said Glad Poverty, "I have no doubt whatever that I shall win. Nor do I ask any pledge of you, except that you will promise to fight to a finish.

¶ Quod Glad Pouert, 'I doute neueradeel
 That the victorie* shal passen on my side.
 Plegge & hostages, lat hem go farweel!
 I axe no mor off al thi grete pride, 480
 But to the eende that thou wilt abide.
 Plegge thi feith, al-be that sum men* seith,
 To truste in Fortune ther is ful litil feith.

"And as I have no security to offer except my body, you can take that and keep it in prison for ever if you have the victory.

And for my part, in this hih emprise, 484
 Sithe I ha[ue] pleggis nouthor on nor tweyne,
 Mor sur hostage can I nat devise,
 But yiff so be the victorie* thou atteyne,
 Than yelde my bodi bounden in a cheyne, 488
 Perpetueli, lik the condicioun,
 With the tabide fettrid in prisoun.'

Fortune laughed more than ever. "It is contrary to nature for a beggar to have such a bold heart!

Than Fortune louh mor than she dede afforn,
 Whan she sauh Pouert so presumptuous; 492
 In hir* arrai al ruggid and totorn,
 And hadde nouthor rente, lond nor hous.
 'It is,' quod she, 'a thyng contrarious
 Onto nature, who that can aduerte, 496
 To a beggere to haue a sturdi herte.

"And if I conquer you, of what use would it be to me to keep your empty belly full in prison?

And yiff that I the venquissid in bataile, [p.151]
 It were to me no worshepe nor auantage,—
 What sholde thi bodi onto me auaile, 500
 The tenprisowne streihtli in a cage?
 It sholde been a charge and a costage,
 Thyn empti wombe ech day to fulfill,
 Yiff thou myhtest haue* vitaile at thi will! 504

"If I were to lead you in triumph behind my chariot, men would say, 'Look at that fool, who has conquered a beggar!'

And yiff I wolde my-silff to magnefic,
 Tokne off tryumphe afftir my char the leede,
 Men wolde deeme it a maner moquerie,
 And seyn in scorn: 'tak off that fool good heede, 508
 How he a beggere hath ouercome in deede,
 Fauht with hym for to encrece his name,
 Which conquest turneth to his disclandre & shame!'

478. victoire B. 482. summen B.

483. litil] om. R.

487. victoire B. 493. hir] his B, R, J—ruggid] ragged

R 3, H 5, to ragged P, rogged R.

504. han B.

511. sclandre & diffame R 3.

Yit whan I haue brouht the to vttraunce,
 Mi power shewed and my grete myht,
 And thyn outrage oppressid bi vengauce, —
 Afftir al this, as it is skile and riht,
 It shal be kouth in eueri manys siht,
 Out declarid the gret[e] difference
 Twen thi feblesse* & my gret excellence.

512 "At any rate,
 after I have
 beaten you
 everybody will
 see the great
 difference be-
 tween us, and
 then I'll let
 516 Orcus tear you
 in pieces to shew
 my power."

Than to repressse thi surquedie attonys,
 Cruel Orchus, the teidogge infernall,
 Shal reende thi skyn assonder fro thi bonys,
 To shewe my power, which is imperiall,
 And to declare in especiall,
 Pouert recleymed onto Pridis lure,
 With me to plete may no while endure.'

520

524

And sodenli, or Glad Pouert took heed,
 Fortune proudli first began tassaile;
 And onwarli hent hire bi the hed,
 Demyng off pride, that she may nat faile
 Thoruh hir power to venquysshe this bataile.
 But it may falle a dwery in his riht
 Toutraie a geaunt, for al his grete myht.

528

532

With that,
 Fortune sud-
 denly seized
 Glad Poverty by
 the head,

God taketh non heed to power nor to strengthe,
 To hih estaat[e] nor to hih noblesse,
 To squar[e] lemys, forged on breede or lengthe,
 But to quarelis groundid on rihtwisesse;
 For out off wrong may growe no prowesse.
 For wher that trouthe holdeth chaumpartie,
 God will his cause be grace magnefie.

536

thinking it
 would be easy to
 overcome her.
 But God always
 defends the
 right,

Wherfor Pouert, strong in hir entent,
 Liht and delyu[e]re, auoid off al fatnesse,
 Riht weel brethed, & nothyng corpulent,
 Smal off dieete surfetis to repressse,
 Ageyn Fortune proudli gan hir dresse,
 And with an ougli, sterne cruel face,
 Gan in armys hir proudli to embrace.

540

544

and Poverty,
 thin and active,
 with an ugly
 expression on
 her face,

518. febilnesse B, feebilnesse H, feblenesse R.
 520. tei dogge R, Teydogge H, tidogge J, tye dogge P, tey-
 dogges R 3.

528. hent] tooke H. 531. dwery] dowri R.

539. God] Gog (*blunder*) R. 543. Dietis H.

545. with] *om.* R.

546. embrace R, H.

- grasped Fortune
around her
corpulent, short-
breathed body,
- Pouert was scendre & myhte weel endure;
Fortune was round[e], short off wynd and breth. 548
And wombes grete oppressid with armure,
For lak off wynd the grete stuff hem sleth;
And many a man bryngeth to his deth:
For ouermekil off any maner thyng 552
Hath many on brouht to his ondoyng.
- (for it is much
better to be
neither too fat
nor too lean, and
sufficiency is
better than
superfluity)
- A mene is best, with good[e] gouernaunce;
To mekil is nouht, nor ouer-gret plente:
Gretter richesse is founde in suffisaunce 556
Than in the flodis off superfluYTE.
And who is content in his pouerte
And gruchchith nat, for bittir nor for soote,
What-euer he be, hath Fortune vndir foote, 560
- and lifted her up
in the air,
- Coueitise put hym in no dispeir, —
Wherfor Pouert, off herte glad and liht,
Lefte Fortune ful hih up in the heir,
And hir constreyned off verai force & myht. 564
For Glad Pouert off custum and off riht,
Whan any trouble ageyn hir doth begynne,
Ay off Fortune the laurer she doth wynne.
- and, throwing
her down, gave
her such a blow
over the heart
with her sharp
knee,
- ¶ Maugre Fortune, in the hair aloffte 568
Constreyned she was be Wilful Pouerte,
That to the erthe hir fal was ful onsoffte:
For off Pouert the bony sharp[e] kne,
Scendre and long & leene vpon to see, 572
Hitte Fortune with so gret a myht
Ageyn the herte, she myht nat stande vpriht:
- that she could
not rise.
(Poverty in con-
tentment always
holds Fortune in
subjection;
- To signefie that Pouert with gladnesse,
Which is content with smal possessioun 576
And geueth no fors off tresour nor richesse,
Hath ouer Fortune the dominacioun,
And kepith hir euer vnder subieccioun,
Wher worldli folk, with ther riche apparaile, 580
Lyue euer in dreed Fortune wolde faile.
- poor men can
sing before
thieves; it is the
rich man who is
afraid.)
- The poore man affor the theeff doth synge [p. 152]
Vnder the wodis with fresh notis shrille;
The riche man, ful feerful off robberyng, 584

553. ondoyng] endyng R, R 3.

568. aloffte] of lofte R. 570. hir] his R.

583. woode H.

Quakyng for dreed[e], rideth foorth ful stille.
 The poore at large goth wher hym list at wille,
 Strongli fraunchised from al debat and striff;
 The riche afferd alwei to lese his liff.

588

Thus Glad Pouert hath the palme Iwonne, —
 Fortune outraied, for al hir doubilnesse.
 Vpon whom Pouert in haste is ronne,
 And streyned hir with so gret duresse,
 Till she confessid & pleynli dede expresse
 With feith & hand, in al hir gret[e] peyne,
 Tabide what lawe Pouert list ordeyne.

592

Thus Glad
 Poverty won
 the battle and
 punished
 Fortune so
 severely, that
 she promised

And in haste afftir this disconfiture,
 Fortune began to compleyne sore.
 But Glad Pouert, which all thyng myhte endure,
 Charged Fortune scornen hire no more.
 For it was said[e] sithen go ful yore,
 He that reioishith to scorne folk in veyn,
 Whan he wer lothest shal scorned been ageyn.

596

to submit to
 whatever
 penalty Poverty
 imposed on her.

'Yit,' quod Pouert, 'thouh thou were despitous,
 Woordis rehersyng which wer nat faire,
 Straunge rebukis ful contrarious,
 And repreuys many thousand paire,
 Thou shalt me fynde ageynward debonaire:
 For thouh a tunge be sclandrous & vengable,
 To sclandre ageyn is nothyng comendable.

600

604

"You must not
 scorn me any
 more," said
 Poverty, "but
 even if you
 did, I would be
 pleasant to you,
 and, in con-
 formity with our
 agreement,

Thou must considre, touchyng our bataile
 The ordynance and imposicioun,
 That which off vs in conquest do preuaile
 To brynge his felawe to subieccioun,
 He shal obeie the statut off resoun,
 And acomplisshe, off verai due dette,
 What lawe the victour list vpon hym sette.

612

616

For which thou shalt the said[e] lawe obeie,
 With circumstaunces off the condicioun
 Bi me ordeyned, and nothyng ageyn seie, —
 Make no gruchchyng nor replicacioun.
 Considred first the fals opynyoun
 Off hem that seyn, al worldli auenture
 Off good and badde abide vnder thi cure, —

620

you must do
 what I com-
 mand with-
 out grumbling.

598. all thyng] *om.* R.

616. vpon] on H — to sette H.

- "So, considering
 the erroneous
 idea that all
 worldly chance is
 under your
 control, I shall
 take Unhappy
 Adventure from
 your power.
- Summe poetis and philisophres also 624
 Wolde in this caas make the a goddesse,
 Which be deceyued, I dar seyn, bothe too;
 And ther errour and foli to redresse,
 I shal withdrawe in verai sekirnesse 628
 Onhappi Auenture away fro thi power,
 That she no mor shal stonde in thi daunger.
- "You will have
 to bind her to a
 stake where
 everybody can
 see her and
 know that only
 those who want
 her need take
 her with them.
- This lawe off newe vpon the I make,
 That first thou shalt, al open in sum pleyn, 632
 Euel Auenture bynden to a stake,
 Or to sum peler wher she mai be seyn,
 To shewe exauple to folkis in certeyn,
 That no man shal loosne hire nor discharge, 636
 But such as list with hire to gon at large.
- "And you shall
 harm no men
 but the fools
 who trust in
 you."
- Heeroff to make a declaracioun,
 Touchyng thi myht off Euel Auenture,
 Thou shalt forgon thi dominacioun 640
 To hyndre or harme any creature,
 But onli foolis, which in thi myht assure.
 Thei off ther foli may feele gret damage,
 Nat off thi power, but off ther owne outrage.' 644
- Such wilful
 wretches who
 unbind Unhappy
 Adventure and
 call her a
 goddess
- For thilke foolis, which that list onbynde
 This wrechche callid Onhappi Auenture,
 Off witt & resoun thei make hemseluen blynde, 648
 Lich as the world stood in Fortunys cure,
 As thouh she myhte assure hem & onsure,
 And hem dispose to welthe or wrechchidnesse, —
 In ther errour hir calling a goddesse!
- are blind
 to God's
 having given us
 free choice of
 good and evil.
- Such wilful wrechchis that hemsilff betake 652
 To putte ther fredam in hir subieccioun,
 Off God aboute the power thei forsake,
 And hem submitte, ageyn[e]s al resoun,
 Vnder Fortunis transmutacioun, 656
 Ther liberte ful falsli for to thrall,
 Namli whan thei a goddesse list hir call.
- With a dirk myst off variacioun
 Fortune hath cloudid ther cleer natural liht, 660
 And ouershadwed ther discrecioun,
 That thei be blent in ther inward siht
 For to considre and to beholde ariht,

- How God aboue put vnder mannys cure 664
 Fre chois off good, his resoun to assure.
- The Lord enlumyned off his bounteuos largesse [p. 153]
 With mynde and witt his memoriall, 668
 Toward al vertu his steppis for to dresse,
 Endued his resoun for to be naturall,
 Off frowardnesse till he wex bestiall,
 To bynde hymself contrariousli in deede
 To serue Fortune, atwixen hope and dreede. 672
- Thus bestiall folk made hire a goddesse,
 Falsli wenyng she myhte hem most auaille
 With hir plentes off habundant richesse; .
 And summe demen in ther supposaille, 676
 With onwar chaung she dar the grete assaile,
 Whos trust[e] alwei medlid is with trouble,
 And hir plesaunce includith menyng double.
- And summe afferme that she mai auaunce 680
 Conquestis grete and disconfitures,
 And how [it] lith also in hir puissaunce
 To forthre & hyndre all maner creatures,
 And calle hir pryncesse off fatal auentures, 684
 The riche tenhaunce be roial apparaile,
 And be disdeyn to hyndre the poraile.
- Whan she maketh most fulsumli hir profres,
 Hir blaundisshyng is farsid with falsheed; 688
 Whan hir richessis be stuffid up in coffres,
 Thei been ay shet vnder a lok off dreed.
 Wherefore, ye riche, off o thyng takith heed,
 As your gadryng cam in with plesaunce, 692
 Riht so your losse departeth with myschaunce.
- Your gredi thrust tresour to multeplie
 Causith an etik off nounsuffisaunce,
 In you engendryng a fals ydropisie, 696
 With a sharp hunger off worldli habundaunce,
 Making off you a maner resemblaunce

God gave man Reason as a guide for his footsteps towards virtue; but he became irrational out of frowardness, and bound himself to Fortune,

making her a goddess in the false belief that she could help him.

Some people claim that she can give victory and further or hinder all creatures.

When she promises most, her flattery is stuffed with lies; when her wealth is piled up in chests, they are closed with a lock of dread.

Therefore, you rich, fearing loss, your greed only engenders a fever for more wealth, and you are very much like Tantalus.

666. his] *om.* P — illumyned R.

669. *is transposed with 670 and 671, and blunder indicated by letters a and b R.* 672. *is misplaced at foot of column R.*

678. *is medlid H.* 682. *how] om. R.*

684. *fatal] al maner R.* 691. *ye] the R.*

With Tantalus, — whan ye deppest synke,
Than is *your nature* most thrustleuh for to drynke. 700

Whoever climbs highest on Fortuna's wheel falls when he least expects it; but the poor are exempt from such changes.

Who clymbeth hiest on Fortunys wheel
And sodenli to richesse* doth ascende,
An onwar turn, afforn seyn neueradeel,
Whan he leest wenyth makith hym descende. 704
Fro such chaungis, who may hymself defende,
But thei that be with Pouert nat dismaied,
And can with litil holde hemsilff appaied."

[How kyng hostilius worshipping fals goddis/ was
consumpt with fyre Levene.]¹

While Bochas was thinking over this matter, princes who were once famous in Italy came to him bewailing their fall.

AND whil Bochas gan muse in this mateer, 708
Considred first al worldli thyng mut faile,
With wepyng eien [to hym] ther dede appeer
Pryncis that whilom wer famous in Itaile,
Which gan ther fall ful pitousli bewaile: 712
For mor contrarie* was ther fallyng lowe,
That thei toforn hadde [of] no myscheff knowe.

Adversity is harder for a prince to bear than a poor wretch who has always lived in discomfort.

For mor vnkouth is thilke aduersite,
Namli to pryncis, whan it is sodeyne, 716
Which euer ha lyued in prosperite,
Hauyng on Fortune no mater to compleyne,
Than off a wrechche, that lyueth ay in peyne, —
Off custom causeth, conceyued the sentence, 720
Off ioie and sorwe a ful gret difference.

The remembrance of past joy troubles their pain;

Off ioie passid the newe remembraunce,
Whan folk be falle from ther felicite,
In treble wise it doth hem gret greuaunce; 724
Thonwar turn from ther tranquillite,
Thonsur trust and mutabilite
In worldli power, which that thei ha[ue] founde,
Onto ther hertis yeueth a greuous wounde. 728

but a man who has always known want is proof against misfortune.

But a wrechche, which in wrechchidnesse
Hath euer lyued, and neuer was partable
Off no weelfare nor off welfulnesse,

700. your nature is R — for] *om.* R.

702. richesces B, richessis J.

708. in] on H — mateer] maner R.

710. to hym] *om.* J, R. 713. contraire B. 714. of] *om.* J, R.

731. 2nd off] of no H — wealthfulnes P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 63 recto.

- Nor neuer fo[u]nd[e] Fortune faouurable, — 732
 His sorwe, his myscheeff been so custumable,
 That off his peynys long contynuaunce
 Doth to his greuys a maner allegaunce.
- But to pryncis, which sat so hih aloffte, 736
 A sodeyn fall is most contrarious,
 And ther descendyng weel the more onsoffte,
 In ther tryumphes that thei wer glorious.
 Record I take off kyng Hostilius, 740
 Which in Rome from his roial stalle,
 Whan he sat crownyd, most sodenli is falle.
- It is remembrid off old and nat off newe,
 Off al Rome that he was lord and sire; 744
 The firste off kynges that wered purpil hewe,
 And off that cite gouerned the empire,
 Hadde off Fortune al that hym list desire, 748
 Till that he fill, in all his regalie,
 Into a froward dedli maladie.
- And off his peynes to fynden allegaunce, [p. 154]
 To the temples he wente on pilgrymage,
 His offryng made with deuout obeisaunce, 752
 Wherbi sumdeel his peynes gan asswage;
 And when he was restored off corage,
 Felt hymself[e] that he dede amende,
 To comoun proffit ageyn he gan entende. 756
- Vpon Thalbanys, regnyng in his glorie,*
 To gret auail off Rome the cite,
 Thoruh his knyhtod he hadde a gret victorie,
 Afftir the which, be ful gret cruelte, 760
 He beraffte hem fraunchise and liberte,
 And made hem afftir, thoruh his hih renoun,
 To been to Rome vnder subieccioun.
- Afftir this conquest, the stori doth deuyse, 764
 In his noblesse ful staatli and roial,
 He gan make a riche sacrifice
 To queeme and plese for a memorial,
 Affter the rihtes cerymonyal, 768

That princes suffer greatly is shewn by the fall of King Hostilius of Rome,

the first king who wore purple, and who had everything he desired until he became ill.

He grew better after he had made a devout pilgrimage to the temples of his country,

and was victorious over the Albans.

After this victory he made a rich sacrifice to Jupiter,

746. the empire] he thempire R.

757. Talbanys R — gloire B.

759. victoire B.

764. this] his R.

To Iubiter, be ful gret reuerence,
Afor his auteres with fires & encence.

but unfortunately did something wrong, and so enraged the gods that they consumed him with lightning.

But for that he in his inward entent,
Be circumstaunces off his oblacioun, 772
Was rechles founde and also necligent,
Be sum froward fals affecciou,
The goddis kauhte an indignacioun;
And sodenli descendyng from the heuene, 776
He was consumpt with a firi leuene, —

His false gods, Jupiter, Saturn and Venus, were unable to help him. All Christians should defy such ruffraff

His false goddis myhte hym nat auaille,
Iubiter, Saturnus nor Venus.
Lat al *Christene* defie such rascaile; 780
For to our feith thei be contrarious.

And among goddis, a thyng most outraious,
Ys, whan that pryncis, blent in ther folie,
List ertheli thynges falsli deifie. 784

and never worship earthly things, for it is odious to God.

For onto God is hatful and odible
A withdrawyng off his reuerence,
To magnefie thynges coruptible
With ondue honour, be fals concupiscence. 788
Wherfor, ye Pryncis, beth war, off hih prudence,
List God onwarli pun[y]she your noblesse,
Maak you in erthe no fals god nor goddesse.

[How Anchus kyng of Rome was moordred by
Lucynyo, bi thassent of his wiff.]¹

Ancus Marcius succeeded to Hostilius, and was murdered with the consent of his wife,

THYNKITH on Anchus, kyng off Rome toun, 792
Which was so noble shynyng in his glorie,
Wered a crowne, ful famous off renoun,
Next Hostilius, as put is in memorie,
Wan the palme off many gret victorie; 796
But for al that, with a ful sharp[e] knyff
He moordred was bassentyng off his wyff.

whom he greatly loved, blind to her falseness; for she coveted his riches.

He loued hir best aboute ech creature,
Considred nat hir flatric nor falsnesse, 800
Hir double menyng vnder couerture
Falsli blent this pryncis worthynesse.
To robbe and reue hym off his gret richesse

770.] Afore his auctirs with fiere & ensence R.

777. firi] fiere R.

783. Ys] Ye R. 785. is] it is H. 788. be] with R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 63 verso.

- Was hir labour, with countirfet plesauce, 804
 In hir entent to brynge hym to myschaunce.
- This Anchus hadde a gret affeccioun,
 Onto his goddis to make sacrifices,
 And to augmente the religioun 808
 Off paganysme, maad in sundri wises.
 Thoruh his manhod and circumspect deuyses,
 Vpon Latynes, rebel to his cite,
 For comoun profit he made a gret arme. 812
- Oon off ther cites, callid Politorie,
 He knyhtli wan, maugre al ther myht;
 And whan he hadde off hem ful victorie,
 He abod no lenger, but anon foorth ryht 816
 Made al the peepel, in eueri mannys siht,
 As prisoneris, this Romayn champioun,
 Be brouht aforn hym bounde into the toun.
- Eek, as I fynde, this Anchus nolde cese, 820
 For comoun proffit in his affeccioun,
 Ther teritories taugmenten and encrese
 In all the cuntres abouten enviroun
 Toward the ryuer wher Tibre renneth doun; 824
 At which[e] place he leet[e] edefie
 A ful strong cite, which callid is Ostie.
- But natwithstandyng al his worthynesse,
 He was depryued, the story tellith so,
 Off his kyngdam and his gret richesse 828
 Bi a foreyn callid Lucynyo.
 His wiff Tarquild assentid was therto,
 Bi whos outrage and gredi couetise 832
 Anchus was moordred in ful cruel wise.

[How Lucynyo that mordred Anchus was affir
 mordred.]¹

THUS fro the wheel of Fortune he is fall; [p. 155] Lucinio obtained the crown through his fraud and eloquence 836
 Lucynio in Rome is crownyd kyng,
 And the Romayns afftir dede hym call
 Tarquyn the olde, be record off wrytyng.

813. ther] the R — pylitorie R. 821. his] this R.

822. encrese] crese R. 824. wher] om. H.

830. Lucimyo H. 831. Tanquild R.

833. in ful cruel wise] as ye have herd devise H, R 3, H 5.

¹ MS. J. leaf 64 recto.

Which hath atteyned, be fraudulent werkyng,
 And bi his subtil forged eloquence
 Onto thestat off roial excellence. 840

and entertained
 the people with
 jousts and was
 the first king to
 institute
 taverns.

He first ordeyned in his estat roial
 Turneis, iustes in castell[s] and cites,
 And other pleies callid marcial,
 With many famous gret solempnites, 844
 Sessiouns for stais and degrees.
 This Tarquyn eek, was first that dede his peyne
 In open stretis tauernys to ordeyne.

He was also the
 first to wall
 Rome and to
 build towers for
 defence. He
 conquered the
 Sabines and
 married
 Tanaquil.

Eek to preserue his cite out off doubtte, 848
 Yiff ther enmyes list them to assaile,
 He was the first that wallid Rome aboute
 With myhti tours, onlikli for to faile,
 And hadde also many strong bataile 852
 With the Sabyne in ther rebelloun,
 And made hem subiect onto Rome toun.

But for he was assentid to depryue
 Worthi Anchus from his estat roial, 856
 And afftir that took Tarquyld [on]to wyue,
 Which slouh hir lord be tresoun ful mortal,
 God wolde off riht that he sholde haue a fal:
 The Lord wil nat, which euery thyng may see, 860
 Suffre moordre longe to be secre.

God would not
 allow such a man
 to prosper, so he
 was elain by
 two shepherds

For Lucynio, for his gret offence,
 Touchyng the moordre off the kyng Anchus,
 Islay[e]n was be sodeyn violence 864
 Off too shepperdis, the stori tellith thus,
 Which off entent[e] wer contrarious
 Atwen hemsilff[e] be a feyned striff,
 To fynde a weie to reue hym off his liff. 868

who came before
 him on the
 pretence of a
 quarrel and then
 fell on him with
 an axe.

For whil the kyng sat in iugement
 Upon ther quarel for to do iustise,
 Ful sodenli, thei beyng off assent,
 Fill vpon hym in ful cruel wise, 872
 And with an ax, the story doth deuise,
 Oon off hem, or any man took heed,
 On too parties roff the kynges hed.

854. subiect] sogettis H.

857. tanquyld J, Tanaquil P, Tanquile H 5.

860. euery] euere R.

870. quarellis H.

- This thyng was doon bi the procuryng
 Off too childre, sonys to Anchus,
 Which were exilid be fals compassyng
 Off Lucinio, ageyn hem most irous, —
 To hym ther presence was so odious. 876
 But thei hem shoop, thouth thei were out off siht,
 Ther fadres deth tauengen yiff thei myht. 880
- For off nature blood will vengid be,
 To recompense the wrong off his kynreede, 884
 In this chapitle, lik as ye may see,
 Blood shad for blood: thus bothe dede bleede.
 Be which exa^mple, lat pryncis taken heede,
 How moordre doon for supplantacioun* 888
 Requereth vengauce for his fynal guerdoun.

This was done by the instigation of Ancus' children, whom Lucinio had exiled.

Blood will be avenged, as you may see in this chapter. Let princes remember this.

[Lenvoye.]

- T**HIS tragedie be cleer inspeccioun
 Openli declareth in substauce,
 How slauhtre of princis causith subuersioun 892
 Off rewmys, cites put out off ordynaunce,
 Off mortal werre long contynuaunce.
 Blood be supplantyng* shad off kynges tweyne,
 Bexa^mple heer shewed, fals moordre to restreyne, 896
- The fyn declaryng off moordre & fals tresoun:
 The deede horrible crieth ay vengauce
 To God aboue to caste his eien doun,
 To punshe this synne thoruh his myhti puissaunce; 900
 For it is mooder off myscheeff & myschaunce.
 Wherfor, ye Pryncis, doth sum lawe ordeyne,
 Withynne your boundis thre vices to restreyne:
- The vice off sclauandre, moordre and poisoun. 904
 Wher-euer these thre hauen aqueyntaunce,
 Thei brynge in sorwe and desolacioun,
 Put at a preeff be newe remembraunce
 Off falsheed vsed vnder fair cuntenaunce. 908
 Wherfor, ye Pryncis, doth your besi peyne,
 Withynne your boundis these vices to restreyne.

This tragedy plainly declares that the slaughter of princes causes war and subversion and cries always vengeance.

Wherefore, Princes, see that the evils of slander, murder and poison, and the sorrow and desolation they bring are restrained in your realms.

888. subplantacioun B.

895. subplantyng B.

900. thoruh] by H.

God defend
England from
slander, that
slays good fame,
and from murder
and poison: no
punishment is
too severe for
them.

God diffende this noble region
With these thre vices to haue* alliaunce: 912
For sclaudre first deuoureth hih renoun,
And sleth good fame thoruh fals dalliaunce.
Harm doon, to late folweth repentaunce,
Wherfor, ye Pryncis, doth a lawe ordeyne 916
To punshe ther malice, fals tunges to restreyne.

God hath off moordre abhominacioun, [p. 156]
And fals poisoun doth to hym displeaunce;
Ther is no peyen* in comparisoun 920
Condigne to moordre, peised in ballaunce.
Wherfor, ye Pryncis, makith an ordynaunce,
Withynne your boundis off sum dedli peyne
Bi du[e] punshyng fals moordre to restreyne. 924

Princes, let
death be the
final reward of
these vices.

O noble Pryncis, prouydeth off resoun
Ageyn these vices to make purueiaunce,
Off rigour sheweth due execucioun
With al your labour & your hertli instance. 928
Lat deth be guerdoun for ther fynal penaunce,
To warne all othre, be constreynt off ther peyne,
Fro these thre vices ther corages to restreyne.

[How for the offence don to Lucrece by Tarquyn
was never aftir crowned kyng in Rome.]¹

Tarquyn the Old
and his family
long dominated
Rome, until the
time of the Rape
of Lucrece.
Then the name
of king came to
an end.

TOUCHING this Tarquyn, of whom I now[e] 932
tolde,
As myn auctour maketh mencion,
He callid was Tarquinius the olde,
Which longe in Rome hadde dominacioun,
Till his kynreede and generacioun, 936
For thoffence doon onto Lucrece,
Caused off kynges the name [for] to cese.

Old Tarquin's
son was called
Tarquin the
Proud for his evil
life.

For his sone, which afftir gan succede,
For his outrages and his extorsiouns, 940
And for many a-nother cruel deede,

911. this] the R. 912. thre vices] regions R — haue]
hauen B.

913-15 are replaced by 904-6 R. 917. ther] the R.

920. peyne B. 924. punishyng P.

932. I nowe] riht now I H.

933. *There is a contraction sign for ur over the u in auctour B.*

934. Tarquinius R. 936. Till] Al H. 937. onto] to H.

938. for] om. R, J, P — names P. 939. sone] sony R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 64 verso.

- For his haatful vsurpaciouns,
 His froward liff and fals condiciouns,
 Among the peeple, bothe stille and loude, 944
 He callid was Tarquinius the proude.
- Ful obstynat he was in his entent,
 Ambicious tacroche gret richesse,
 Till that Fortune wex impacient 948
 Ageyn[e]s hym, in al his gret noblesse.
 Gan hir snares and hir crokes dresse,
 Thouhte she wolde, but he kept hym weel,
 Al sodenli cast hym from hir wheel. 952
- A sone he hadde, ful vicious, as I fynde,
 To all vertu most contrarious —
 To be froward it cam to hym off kynde —
 And off nature proud and despitous, 956
 Ageyn the peeple fell and malicious,
 Nat louyd but drad; for tyrannye off riht
 Is thyng most hatid in the peeplis siht.
- This proude Tarquyn, the story is weel kouth, 960
 Ageyn Lucrece dede a gret outrage,
 Oppressid hir beute in his onbridled youth,
 Hir trouthe assaileng in a furious rage.
 For which his fader, he, and his lynage 964
 Exilid wern, and for this hatful thyng
 Ther was neuer afftir in Rome crownyd kyng.
- Hir bodi corrupt, she cleene off herte & thouht,
 Be force assailed was hir innocence, 968
 Oppressid hir beute, but hir sperit nouht,
 Hir chaast[e] will dede non offence;
 But entred is into hir conscience
 A gret remors, for al hir wifli trouthe, 972
 To slen hirsilff, which was to gret a routhe.
- And for that Bochas remembreth pitousli
 Hir dedli sorwe and lamentacioun,
 Writ hir compleynt in ordre ceriousli, 976
 Which that she made for hir oppressioun,
 I folwe muste and make mencioun,
 Afftir myn auctour parcel rehersyng,
 Touchyng hir wordis said in hir deieng. 980

945. Terquinius R.

948. Impacient R, H. 959. peeple R. 963. Hir] His R.

980. 1st hir] þe H.

even if I have
already told
something
of it by
bidding of my
lord.

Al-be-it so, be bidding off my lord,
Rehersed haue in my translacioun
Afftir Pierius heer and ther a woord
Off a ful doolful declamacioun 984
Be hym remembred off entencioun,
For hir sake men myhte seen and rede
What wifli trouthe was in hir womanheede.

I cannot follow
John Bochas'
eloquence, but I
will give you the
substance of his
writing.

And Iohn Bochas list nat sette a-side, 988
But that he wolde rehersen in sentence
Hir woful compleynt, & therupon abide,
Off wrongis doon onto hir innocence.
And thouh I cannot folwe his eloquence, 992
I shal sue the trouthe off rehersyng
As in substauce theeffect off his writyng.

The morning
after the foul
deed, Lucrece
arose, and with a
deadly pale face
dressed herself
in funereal black

¶ The morwe next afftir this foule deede,
Lucrece vproos with a ful dedli cheer. 996
Out off hir face gon was al the rede,
And dirked wern hir heuenli eien cleer,
Al clad in blak[e] afftir the maneer
Off thilke folk which in especiall 1000
Ar wont to gon to feestis funerall.

and said to her
husband, father
and assembled
friends,

All hir freendis beyng in presence, [p. 157]
Husbonde, fader, with other eek also,
Bi and bi rehersyng in sentence 1004
The circumstaunces off hir hertli wo.
And or that I any ferther go,
Vnder hope my lord will me supporte,
What that she saide I will to you reporte. 1008

[The greuous compleynt of Lucrece vpon hir oppres-
sioun.]¹

"My lord, since
I, Lucrece, am
joined to you in
marriage as your
humble subject,

"FOR-ASMOCHE," quod she, "as I Lucrece
Am be the lawe ioyned in mariage
To the, my lord, whos loue shal ay encrece
Towardis the, with al the surplusage 1012
Off wifli trouthe tenduren al myn age,
As humble subiect with feithful obeisaunce
Vnder thi lordshipe and thi gouernaunce,

983. Piernis R, Pieryns H, Pierins J, pyernus R 3, pyrrus H 5,
Pierius P. 986. hir] his H.

991. onto] to R. 996. dedli] dooleful H. 997. hir] his R.

999. Al] And R. 1000. folk] om. R. 1006. any] may R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 64 verso.

- O Colatyn, my lord and trewe husbonde,
 Best beloued off hool affecciuon,
 I will no mor no quarell take on honde
 Nor in no wise make non accioun,
 Withoute that thou list encline doun
 Goodli thyn eris to yiue me audience
 To that I shall reherse in thi presence.
- 1016 O best beloved
 Collatine, I will
 take no action
 until you have
 heard my story.
- 1020
- Iniurie doon or any maner wrong
 Ageyn my worshepe or myn honeste,
 Bi the lawe my sentence is maad strong,
 It touchet[h] you also weel as me,
 I am so hooli yolden onto the, —
 Thou art myn hed, who cleerli can discerne,
 Lord and husbonde my bodi to gouerne.
- 1024 "Injury done to
 my honesty
 touches you as
 well as me.
- 1028
- Parcial causes in sooth ther may non be
 Atwen vs tweyne nor no disseueraunce:
 For soote and bittir, ioie and aduersite,
 We must hem weie bothe in o balauce,
 Countirpeise our sorwes [&] our plesaunce,
 Entirmedle all thyng that is in doubtte,
 Receyue our fortune as it komth aboute.
- 1032 There may be
 no sundering of
 our joy and
 aduersity: we
 must weigh
 them both in one
 balance;
- 1036
- Ther may atwen vs be no menyng double,
 But oon herte, o will and o corage.
 And as [a] woman that stondesth now in trouble,
 Withoute polishyng off any fair language,
 I mut disclose to you the gret outrage
 Doon onto me, and pleykli it discure,
 Which to redresse lith hooli in your cure.
- 1040 and as no deceit
 can be between
 us, I must
 frankly disclose
 to you my
 outrage, which
 it lies in your
 power to
 redress.
- For the mater, to speke in wordes pleyne,
 A-riht out serchid and the trouthe out founde,
 As a iust cause, ondiferent to tweyne
 Toward vs bothe the quarell doth rebounde.
 And mor strongli our mater for to gronde,
 Reherse I will, so that ye sauff it vouche,
 A mortall wrong which the & me doth touche.
- 1044 "It is a mortal
 wrong, which
 you must clearly
 understand.
- 1048

1018. no] none R.

1022. reherse in thi presence] rehersen in sentence H.

1024. or] & R. 1027. hooli] om. R.

1034. &] om. J, H 5, R 3.

1037. menyng] mevyng R.

1038. o will o hert H — 2nd o] one R.

1045. A-riht] at riht H.

- "I was in a castle called Col-
 lace, when young Tarquin
 appeared without
 warning.
- In a castell which callid is Collace,
 Off which my lord heer hath the gouernaunce, 1052
 Tarquyn the yonge cam into that place.
 I, full diswarre to make purueiaunce
 Ageyn his comyng or any ordenaunce,
 Toforn nat warnyd off his officeris, 1056
 Sat onpurueied among my chambereris.
- "To avoid idleness I and
 my women sat spinning soft
 wools.
- Off entent teschewen idilnesse,
 We sat and span vpon wolles soffte;
 For she off vices is a cheeff maistresse 1060
 Wher she is cherisshid & iset aloffte:
 But off custum as I haue do ful offte,
 I and my women duli as we ouhte,
 Tauoide slouthe ful bisili we wrouhte. 1064
- "He came in very respectfully
 and deceived me with words that
 were contrary to his heart.
- His ent[e]ryng was meek and debonaire,
 Benygne off port, off look & off visage,
 With a pretence off many woordes faire,
 In whos menyng was ful gret outrage, 1068
 His cheer contrarie* onto his corage.
 In this wise ther he was receuyed,
 Wherbi, alas, I falsli was deceyued!
- "I received him courteously, as
 became a man of his position:
 yet all the while he intended to
 betray me.
- At pryme face, as me thouhte it due, 1072
 I hym receuyed at his in comyng:
 Roos up meekli and gan hym to salue,
 As appertened in alle maner thyng
 Onto the sone off a worthi kyng. 1076
 And treuli Tarquyn, for which I seie alas,
 Me to be-traisshe stood in the same caas.
- The son of a king should be
 a protector of women and play
 the part of a knight.
- A kynges sone sholde off du[e]te¹
 Been to wommen wall and proteccioun, 1080
 Preserue and keepe hem in al surete,
 That no man sholde, off no presumpcioun,
 Doon hem no wrong nor oppressioun,

1058. teschewen] to shew B. 1064. we] om. R.

1067. many] may R. 1069. contraire B. 1074. to] om. R.

¹ The following five lines, to which are appended the two last of the preceding stanza, are inserted before line 1079 as a complete stanza in the Phillipps-Garrett MS., section 10, leaf 6 a:

I trusted well his riall noblesse
 Be any sing þat y kouþ a pic
 He no þing ment but trouþ & gentilnesse
 But oft falleth as clerkes specefe
 Vndre fair speche men may treson wrye.

- Rather deie than seen hem suffre onriht, 1084
 Aduertisyng thoffice off a knyht.
- But in contraire off knyhtod he hath wrouht, [p.158] "But Tarquin
 Be fals outrage doon ageyn[e]s me. only sought
 Wrong[e] weies and crokid menys souht 1088 means to break
 Off lawes tweyne to breke the liberte, both civil and
 And difface the auctorite natural law in
 Off lawe ciuyle & natural also, my person.
 In my persone offenyng bothe too. 1092
- First be his fals[e] subtil compassyng "First he spied
 He gan espie thestris off the place; out the inner
 And whan a-bedde alone I lay slepyng, rooms, and then,
 Lik a leoun, ful sterne off look and face, when I lay
 With his lefft hand my throte he dede embrace, asleep in bed,
 And in his other heeld ageyn al lawe he came on me
 Me for toppresse a naked suerd idrawe. like a lion, 1096
- Thus afforcyng my wifli chastite, 1100 and, seizing me
 Ageyn knyhtod he dede this gret offence, by the throat,
 Mi liff, my worshepe put in perplexite, threatened my
 Hauyng no myht to make resistence, — life with a naked
 Me manacyng be dedli violence, sword if I would
 The ton off tweyne: to deie in his entente, not consent to
 Or to auoutri* falsli to consente. commit
 adultery. 1104
- Thus I stood sool atwen deth & diffame, "Thus I stood
 Mi bodi corrupt, my sperit abood[e] cleene; 1108 between death
 Mi spousaile broke, & my good[e] name and dishonour,
 For euer disclaundred, that whilom shon ful sheene. my body cor-
 Euel fame off custum will alwei wexe greene, rupt, my spirit
 Neuer deie, the people so hem disporte pure; but my
 The werste off thynges gladli to reporte. good name
 destroyed for
 ever. 1112
- Alas, alas! among my sorwes all, "Alas, the most
 This oon the moste that doth myn herte agrise; — terrible of my
 I am nat worthi that men me sholde call, sorrows is that I
 Or haue the name in no maner wise, am no longer
 For thoffence which ye han herd deuise, worthy to be
 To be callid, in this wrecchid liff, called your wife!
 Off Collatyn from hen[ne]sfoorth the wiff. 1116 1120

1106. tauoutri B.

1108. my] in H.

1112. hem so H.

1113. thynges] al H.

1115. the] om. R.

- "My eyes are
 blinded with
 shame: never
 may I be
 reckoned as an
 honest matron!
- Myn eien also be blyndid with derknesse,
 Onli for shame to lefften vp ther siht,
 Outher ther stremys or bemys vp to dresse,
 Off the cleer heuene to looke vpon the liht. 1124
 Nor I mai neuer been off the nombre off riht,
 Off trewe matrones, among hem ferr nor neer,
 For to be rekned in ther kalendeer.
- "Let my injury
 be so punished
 that it may
 become a lasting
 example to
 adulterers.
- Lat myn Iniurie and this mortal cryme 1128
 Be so pun[y]shed off riht and equite,
 Withoute delay off any lenger tyme,
 That euer afftir it may exa[m]ple be
 Thoruh al the world and eek in this cite, — 1132
 With such a peyne therupon deuised,
 That all auoutours may be therbi chastised.
- "And if it seems
 to you that I too
 am culpable, I
 will patiently
 accept my
 punishment."
- And yiff it seeme in your opynyoun,
 In this caas I sholde been onpure, 1136
 I will receyue iust punycioun
 And the peyne pacientli endure,
 Yiff it so stonde that parauenture
 Ye deeme off resoun, that be so iust & stable, 1140
 In this mateer that I be coupable."
- After she had
 told her story
 and they had
 absolved her of
 all blame and
 promised to
 avenge her
 wrong, she took
 a sharp knife and
 pierced herself
 to the heart.
- Hir tale told. Whan thei longe hadde musid
 On this compleynt in ther inward siht,
 Off trouthe echon thei heeld hir ful excusid, 1144
 Made all beheste, with al ther ful[le] myht
 Tauenge hir wrong; and Lucrece anon riht
 Took a sharp knyff, or thei myhte aduerte,
 And rooff hirsilff euene thoruh the herte. 1148

¶ The Compleynt of Bochas Oppon þe luxurie of
 Princis by examplis of diuers myschevis.¹

Bochas in hot
 indignation
 wrote a com-
 plaint against
 those princes,

- B**OCHAS in herte brennyng hoot as fir
 Off verai ire and indignacioun
 Ageyn tho princis, which in ther desir
 Han fulli set ther delectacioun, 1152
 Ther felicite and ther affeccioun
 To folwe ther lustis off fals lecherie,
 Froward spousbreche and off auoutrie.

1125. neuer] *om.* R. 1126. nor] or R.
 1140. be] it be H. 1141. coulpatible R.
 1148. thoruh] to H. 1149. hoot] as hooete H.

¹ The same heading in J and R. by] as by J — many dyuers J — myschevis] myschaunces R, J.

- He writ ageyn hem that seeke occasiouns, 1156 who, following their evil desires, commit adultery, and afterwards publicly boast of their folly.
- Places off lust to han ther libertees
 For to fulfille ther delectaciouns;
 And for tacomplisshe ther gret dishonesteas,
 Deuyse out tauernes in burwes & citeas, 1160
 And sittynge ther among ther cumpanye,
 Afftir the deede thei booste off ther folye.
- Yiff any man pynche at ther outrage, [p. 159]
 Or them rebuke for ther tran[s]gressiouns, 1164 If any man rebuke them, they will tell him that it is a law of nature to do such things in one's youth,
- Thei will ansuere with froward fals language,
 And for ther parti allegge gret resouns:
 First how it longeth to ther condiciouns
 Be riht off Nature, as it is weel kouth, 1168
 Frelly to vse lecheri in youth;
- Afferme also, how lawe of Kynde is fre,
 And so afforce hem to sustene ther partie
 Bexauple off Daid, which that took Bersabe, 1172 and allege David and Bathsheba and Samson and Delilah in their defence,
- And for hir sake how he slouh Vrie,
 Dede manslauhtre and fals auoutrie, —
 For hem aleggyng, ageyn riht and resoun,
 For Dalida the luxure off Sampson. 1176
- The stori also thei frowardli applie,
 How for a woman prudent Salamoun,
 The Lord offendyng, dede ydolatrie.
 And in diffence off ther opynyoun,
 Reherse these storyes for excusacioun 1180 and tell also how Solomon became an idolater for the love of a woman; — as if harlotry were no sin before God!
- Off ther errour, therbi a pris to wynne,
 As tofor God lecheri wer no synne.
- Thei nat considre in ther entencioun 1184 They never consider David's remorse or God's vengeance on Samson,
 Off these stories eueri circumstaunce:
 First off kyng Daid the gret contricioun,
 Nor vpon Sampson how God took gret vengeance;
 First how he loste his force & his puissaunce 1188
 For his offence — thei ha[ue] nat this in mynde,
 Nor how that bothe his eien wer maad blynde.
- Nor ther resouns thei list nat to encline
 For to conceyue in ther discrecioun,
 The sperit off wisdam, heuenli & dyuynne,
 Was take away fro prudent Salamoun
 In chastisyng for his transgressioun. 1192 or how Solomon was deprived of his spirit of wisdom for his offence, and, as some doctors affirm, sorely repented afterwards.

1157. lust] lustes R.

1171. so afforce] tafforce H.

- And summe doctours affermen ouermore, 1196
 How Salamon repentid hym ful sore.
- People say that the licentiousness of youth is natural to all healthy animals; they think only of vicious pleasures and lie and boast and now-a-days hold horrible oaths, flattery and ribald speech courtesy.
- The play off youthe folk calle it lecherie,
 Seyn that it is a gamen off Nature,
 And to sustene and bern vp ther partie, 1200
 How it sit weel, be record off scripture,
 Onto euerich liffli creature
 That stant in helthe and is coraious,
 Off verrai kynde for to be lecherous. 1204
- Vicious report thei han in remembraunce,
 But vertuous thyng is ferr out off mynde;
 Flesshli lustis and lecherous plesaunce
 In ther desirs be nat lefft behynde. 1208
 Auauntyng, lieng thei can off newe out fynde;
 And now-adaies thei holde curtesie
 Othes horrible, flatryng and ribaudie.
- They never think of noble Scipio and of his advice to Masinissa either to leave Sophonisba alone or else marry her.
- In ther auys thei taken litil heede 1212
 Onto the doctryn off noble Scipioun,
 Which comaundid, in story as I reede,
 To Masmissa, ful famous off renoun,
 Nat to touche be no condicioun 1216
 Sophonisba, fairest off visage,
 But yiff it were be weie off mariage.
- Although of royal blood, she was virtuous and wedded to King Syphax, who reigned in Numidia.
- Thouh she wer born off the blood roiall,
 Hir youthe was set to al honeste, 1220
 Douhter and hair to noble Hastruball,
 Duc off Cartage, the story ye may see;
 And for hir vertues off femynyte,
 She weddid was, off berthē as she was lik, 1224
 To kyng Siphax, which regned in Affrik.
- To prove the liberty of virtue and the thraldom of vice, Cato shewed that the former is never subject to Fortuna.
- And for to preue the grete liberte
 Which is in vertu conveied be resoun,
 And the fals thraldam off dishoneste, — 1228
 Off bothe to make a pleyn comparisoun,
 Afftir the doctryn off Censoryn Catoun,
 Shewid be hym to folkis in comune,
 That vertu neuer is subiect to Fortune: 1232

1196. evir more H. 1199. a game H.

1210. holde it curtasye H. 1215. Mascinissa' P.

1223. vertues] vertuous R.

1224. was weddyd R.

- Vertu conserueth mesour and resoun,
 Considreth thynges afor or thei befall,
 Takith non enprises but off discrecioun,
 And on prudence foundeth hir werkes all; 1236
 Ay to hir counsail attempraunce she doth call,
 Warli prouydyng in hirsilff withynne
 The eende off thynges tofor or she begynne.
- This was the doctryn tauht foorth off Catoun, 1240
 Lecherous lustis to put hem vndir foote,
 Grauntyng to vertu the domynacioun,
 Plukke up vices, braunche, cropp & roote.
 Frut off goodnesse groweth up so soote, 1244
 Whan it is plauntid off youthe in a corage,
 It neuer appalleth in helthe off his tarage.
- Catoun with vertu was a cheeff officer, [p. 160]
 Preferryng euer comoun commodites 1248
 Tofor profites that wer synguler;
 Tenhaunce the comoun in kyngdames & citees,
 Ther wittis peised and ther habilitees,
 Personys promotyng, in whom it was supposid, 1252
 That thei in vertu wer natureli disposid.
- Manli off herte he was ay to susteene
 Indifferentli trouthe and al iustise;
 Flesshli delites off folk that wer oncleene 1256
 He was ay redi be rigour to chastise,
 And sette lawes in ful prudent wise
 For to punshe flaterers and lechours
 And such as wern openli auoutours. 1260
- He hadde off wommen non opynyoun
 With hem to dele for lust nor for beute,
 But yiff it were for procreacioun, —
 So stable he was founde in his degre, 1264
 The book reedyng off inmortalite
 Which Plato made, the trouthe weel out souht,
 Therin concludyng, how soulis deie nouht,
 But lyueth euer outhere in ioie or peyne. 1268
 Thus wrot Plato in his orygnall:
 Men may the body be deth ful weel constreyne,

Virtue has foresight and undertakes nothing without discretion,

which was Cato's doctrine.

Cato always preferred the welfare of the people to individual advantage,

and supported justice and truth, and was ever ready to punish unclean folk.

He had no desire to have ado with women except for procreation,

and read Plato's book on the immortality of the soul.

1235. Emprises H. 1237. she] he R.

1239. tofor or she] or they R. 1245. a] om. R.

1246. in helthe off] of helth in H, in hegh of R 3, in heyth of P.

1265. Inmortalite H. 1268. lyueth] lyven H.

1269. Thus] this H.

- But the soule abit ay inmortal.
- For which this Catoun, stedfast as a wall, 1272
 For comoun profit to deie was nat afferd,
 Whan he hymself slouh with a naked suerd.
- Cato was not afraid to die for the common weal, saying to
- But to Fortune aforn his deth he saide,
 "O thou pryncesse off worldli goodes veyne, 1276
 To thi flatereris I neuer dede abraide,
 Thi fauour is so fals and oncerteyne
 That neuer I fauht no fraunchise to atteyne
 As for my-silff, nor parcial syngulerte, 1280
 But al for profit touchyng the comounte.
- Fortune, "I never yielded to thy flattery nor sought gain for myself. I resisted Cesar for freedom's sake and forsook life, despising the world."
- A-geyn Cesar I made resistance,
 To conquere fredam to me & to the toun,
 Freli teschewe his mortal violence, 1284
 This world despisyng in myn opynoun, —
 Our fraunchise thrallid vnder subieccioun,
 Iustli forsakyng the variaunce off this liff,
 Mi soule conueid to be contemplatiff." 1288
- Before his death this prudent old Cato wrote beseeching immoral princes to follow the example of Drusus,
- This philisophre, this prudent old Catoun,
 Tendryng in herte comoun comoditees,
 Toforn his deth wrot off compassioun
 To them that sat in roial dignitees, 1292
 Which hadde off vertu lost the libertees,
 Pryncis besechyng, that wer luxurious,
 To take example and folwe kyng Drusus.
- who loved virtue and was always faithful to his wife.
- ¶ The which[e] Drusus, be successioun 1296
 Heir to Augustus, was next hym emperour,
 Sett al in vertu his affeccioun,
 And it to cherishe dede hooli his labour.
 To lust onleefful he neuer gaff fauour; 1300
 And touchyng loue, duryng all his liff,
 He neuer hadde lust but onli to his wiff.
- Once when asked with incredulous impertinence what sort of attraction could his wife have for him,
- And in his paleis, myd off his roiall see,
 Off noble pryncis duellyng in Rome toun 1304
 He axed was, for al his dignite,
 What maner corage or temptacioun,
 Or what feruence or delectacioun

1271. Immortal H, R.

1277. flaterers H. 1279. fauht] auht H. 1280. nor] no R.

1286. Our] or H. 1287. this] his H. 1293. the] ther H.

1302. to] til H.

- Withynne hymself he hadde off louys play, 1308
 Sool bi his wiff whan he a-bedde lay.
- And lik a prynce fulfillid off hih noblesse, he answered
 Ansuerde ageyn with sobre cuntenaunce, simply, that he
 "Touchyng such lust as folweth fleshhynesse, 1312 had never
 Lik as Nature me put in gouernaunce, known another.
- In oon alone is set al my plesaunce:
 For with non other for no concupiscence,
 Sauff with my wiff I neuer dede offence." 1316
- Pryncis echon folwe nat the traas All princes
 Off noble Drusus, as ye shal vndirstonde; have not
 For summe ha[ue] stonde* al in a-nother caas, — followed in
 Such as can holde too or thre on honde, 1320 Drusus' foot-
 Now heer, now ther, as botis home to londe, steps.
 Nat considryng ther cres nor disauail,
 Whan newfanglignesse bloweth in ther sail.
- ¶ Eek Bochas writith, sum princis ha[ue] be Some even go so
 founde, 1324 far as to seduce
 Which viciousli ha[ue] do ther besy peyne, virtuous women
 Vertuous wommen be flatrie to confounde, by flattery and
 And tendre maidnes to bryngen in a treyne, young girls with
 Such manacis & tormentis to ordeyne, 1328 brutal threats
 Them to transfourme from ther perseueraunce and torments.
 And interrupte ther virgynal constaunce.
- But off such folk that yeue no fors off shame, [p. 161] Of all such
 Nor dreede God such treynes to deuse, 1332 shameless
 Husbondmen in soth ar most to blame people married
 With foreyn women to trespase in such wise: men are the
 I trowe ther wyues may hem inouh suffise; worst: I'm
 For many ar feeble ther dettis for to quyte, 1336 sure their wives
 Thouh thei in chaung themsilff falsli delite. are quite
 sufficient for
 most of them,
 although they
 delight in
 change,
- Summe afferme, for themsilff alleggyng, and say that
 To such outrage that thei ha[ue] licence Nature gives
 Freeli off Nature to vse ther owne thyng, 1340 them permission
 And in such caas to no wiht doon offence. to do as they
 But froward is ther errour in sentence, please with their
 Fro bond off wedlok, whan thei be so onstable, own bodies.
 And tofor God most hatful and dampnable. 1344 But they are
 very hateful to
 God.

1311. Ageyn answerd R. 1317. traas] trac is H.
 1319. stonden B. 1323. blowen H.
 1333. ar] be R, er H. 1337. falsely hem silff H.
 1338. ther silff H. 1343. Fro] For H.

- Reason distinguishes the life of man from that of animals. She has given him the knowledge of right and wrong and the power to resist vice,
- For she that is thoruh hir hih noblesse
 Namyd off clerkis, which cleerli can concerne,
 Douhter off God, ladi and pryncesse,
 Resoun callid, to guye man and gouerne, 1348
 Tween good and euel iustli to discerne, —
 She hath departid, pleyntli to conclude,
 The liff off man fro liff off beestis rude.
- and shewn him that once she has fled away, he becomes a beast rather
- This ladi Resoun, sithen go ful yore, 1352
 Gaff onto man witt and discrecioun,
 Tauhte hym also bi hir souereyn lore
 Twen vice and vertu a gret dyuysioun,
 And that he sholde in his eleccioun 1356
 Onto al vertu naturali obeie,
 And in contraire al vicious liff werreie, —
- than a human being.
- And to enprente in his memorial,
 How off luxure the gret dishoneste 1360
 Difforme a man & make hym bestial,
 And disfigure, off what estaat he be:
 For whan that resoun, in hih or low degre,
 Is fled away, folk may afferme than, 1364
 He is lik a beeste rather than a man.
- Therefore let princes amend their lives and punish all those who would destroy the honest fame of women.
- Wherfor lat pryncis that ha[ue] be defectiff
 To folwe ther lustis off sensualite,
 Shape hem be resoun for tamende ther liff 1368
 And to conserue and keepe ther chastite,
 Bothe off virgines* and wiffli honeste,
 And to pun[y]she all tho that list laboure
 The honest fame off wommen to deuoure. 1372
- For who can give back a good name once it is lost?
- For whan a lechour be force or be maistrie
 Defoulid hath off virgynes the clennesses,
 Widwes oppressid, and be auoutrie
 Assailed wyues that stood in stabilnesse, 1376
 Who mai thanne ther sclaunderous harm redresse,
 Whan ther good name is hurt be such report? —
 For fame lost onys can neuer haue his resort.

1348. man] folk R.

1360. luxurie R.

1362. he] thei H.

1368. for] for to R.

1370. virgines] wyuys B.

- A theeff may robbe a man off his richesse
 And be sum mene make restitucioun;
 And sum man may disherite & oppresse
 A poore man from his possessioun,
 And afftir[ward] make satisfaccioun;
 But no man may restore in no degre
 A maide robbid off hir virgynyte.
- 1380 Thieves and oppressors of the poor can make restitution; but no man can restore to a maid her lost chastity.
- 1384
- A man mai also bete a castell down,
 And beelde it afftir mor fresshli to the siht,
 Exile a man out off a regioun
 And hym reuoke, wher it be wrong or riht;
 But no man hath the poweer nor the myht
 For to restore the paleis virgynal
 Off chastite, whan broken is the wal.
- 1388 A castle can be pulled down and afterwards rebuilt; an exile may be recalled;
- 1392
- Men mai also put out off seruise,
 And officeres remeue from ther place,
 And at a day, whan Fortune list deuise,
 Thei mai ageyn restored been to grace;
 But ther is nouthur tyme set nor space,
 Nor neuer in story nouthur rad nor seyn,
 That maidenhed lost recurid was ageyn.
- 1396 officials and menials can be discharged and again taken into service; but it has never been told that maidenhood once lost was ever again recovered.
- 1400 For this reason men should have conscience and not take what they cannot return.
- For which men sholde haue a conscience,
 Rewe in ther herte and repente sore,
 And ha[ue] remors off ther gret offence,
 To rauysshe thyng which thei may nat restore.
 For it is said and hath be said ful yore,
 The emeraud greene off parfit chastite,
 Stole onys away may nat recurid be.
- 1404
- And hard it is to rauysshe a tresour
 Which off nature is nat recuperable;
 Lordshipe may nat, off kyng nor emperour,
 Refourme a thyng which is nat reformable:
 Rust off diffame is inseparable,
 And maidenheed[e] lost off newe or yore,
 No man alvue mai it ageyn restore.
- 1408 Even the lordship of kings cannot repair that which is irrevocably ruined.
- 1412

1381. sum mene] forme men H.

1384. afftirward] afftir J, P, H 5 — afftirward make] afftir make dew R 3.

1389. 2nd a] his H. 1390. wher] whedir R.

1398. tyme nouthir H. 1404. thei may] maist H.

1413. maydenhoode H.

1414. on lyve H.

- The old Romans
patiently put up
with tyrants and
robbers, but they
were careful to
punish adul-
terers,
- Romeyns olde thoruh ther pacience [p. 162]
Suffrede tirantis in ther tyrannies, 1416
And in ther cite to do gret violence,
The peple toppresse with ther robberies;
But to pun[y]she thei sette streiht espies
On fals auoutours, at it is weel kouth, 1420
Widwes to rauysshe & maidnes in ther youth.
- as is shewn by
the exile of King
Tarquin and the
death of Appius
Claudius.
- Vpon this mateer the stori berth witnesse,
Touchyng thexil off kyng Tarquynus,
Afforn rehersed be wrytyng ful expresse 1424
The hatful deth off Appius Claudius
For his trespas doon to Virgynyus,
The iugementis rehersed and the peyne;
And fro ther office de pryued bothe tweyne. 1428
- Was not the city
of the Shechem-
ites laid
desolate for
the crime of
Shechem against
Dinah?
- Was nat the cite whilom desolat
Off Synachites for the* ribaudie
Off oon Sychem, which gan a gret debat
To haue* acomplished his foul lecherie, 1432
Whan yonge Dyna, as bookis specefie,
Wente rek[e]lesli walkyng vp and doun
To seen the maidnes off that roial toun?
- He saw her
walking alone
and assaulted
her, for she had
no chance to run
away;
- But whan Sichem this Dyna dede espie 1436
Sool bi hirself[e] walke in the cite,
He gan anon assaile hir be maistrie,
And for tafforcen hir virgynyte,
Because she hadde no leiser for to fle. 1440
Whos gret offence and transgressioun
The cite brouhte onto destruccioun.
- but her father
Jacob and her
brothers Simeon
and Levi and all
her kin
- Hir fadir Iacob & hooli hir kynreede
Ageyn this Sichem gan inwardli disdeyne; 1444
Whan the furie off Mars was most to dreede,
To be vengid thei dede ther besy peyne.
And speciali hir worthi brethren tweyne
Fill on the cite, Symeon and Leuy, 1448
Tauenge ther suster & stroie it fynaly.

1417. citees R.

1418. The] with H.

1422. the] ther R.

1428. ther] the R.

1430. the] ther B, J, H, R, the H 1, H 5, Sloane, R 3.

1431. sichen R. 1432. Taue B.

1433. bookis] bochas R.

- So mortalli thei gan with hem stryue,
 With ther suerdis grounde sharp & keene,
 Off male childre thei leffte non alyue,
 Thei wer so vengable in ther furious teene.
 The Sichanytes myhte nat susteene
 That dai ageyn hem to stonden at diffence,
 So importable was ther violence.
- For wher that God list punshe a man off riht
 Bi mortal suerd, farweel al resistance:
 Whan grace faileth, away goth force & myht,
 Feblith off pryncis the magnyficence,
 Chaungeth ther* power into inpotence,
 Reuersith the kynges ther statli regalie,
 Exauple in Sichem, for his fals ribaudie.
- It was an hard dreedful punycioun,
 That, O Pryncis, trespas in lecherie
 Caused afor God that al a regioun
 Destroied was withoute remedie.
 This story told[e] for texemplefie,
 Whan noble pryncis to wommen them submitte,
 Grace and al fauour anon doth fro them flitte.
- Off this stori what sholde I write mor?
 In Genesis the residue ye may reede,
 The deth off Sichem and off kyng Emor,
 And how ther kyngdam destroied was in deede.
 Off Sichanites, loo, heer the fynal meede,
 Off lecherie and off his fals plesaunce,
 Which many a rew m hath brouht onto myschaunce!
- ¶ What sholde I efft reherse ageyn or write
 The fals auoutri off Paris and Heleyne?
 Ther woful fall Guido dede endite;
 Poetis echon dede eek ther besi peyne
 To declare, how onli bi these tweyne
 The worthi blood, for short conclusioun,
 Off Troie and Grece cam to destruccioun.
- fell on that city
 and left no male
 child alive.
- 1452
- 1456
- For where grace
 is lacking and
 God punishes,
 there can be no
 resistance.
- 1460
- It was a hard
 punishment, the
 destruction of
 an entire region;
 yet such things
 happen when
 princes become
 uxorious.
- 1464
- 1468
- I shall not tell
 you any more of
 this story; you
 can read it
 in Genesis.
- 1472
- 1476
- And why should
 I write again
 about Paris and
 Helen? Guido
 and other poets
 have declared
 how all the
 noble blood of
 Troy and
 Greece came
 to an end on
 their account.
- 1480
- 1484
1451. sharp] & sharp H. 1455. stonden] stoden R.
 1458. al] & R. 1461. ther] the B — Impotence H, R.
 1463. fals] om. R.
 1468. This] be H.
 1471. stori] mateer R.
 1475. Sychamytes H.
 1478. ageyne reherce R.

But ofte it fallith that mekil habundaunce
 Off worldli good, with gret ese and richesse,
 In folkis that sette al hooli ther plesaunce
 To folwe ther lustis off froward wilfulnesse, 1488
 Hath caused in londes gret myscheeff & distresse,
 Whan vicious liff ther corages dede encoumbre,
 Destroied kyngdames & peeplis out off noumbre.

When people
 will not turn
 from their
 licentiousness,
 they are in-
 evitably brought
 to confusion, like
 the Gibeonites,

For whan the people thoruh fals obstynacie 1492
 Is indurat tamende hem and correcte,
 And wil nat turne hem from ther lecherie,
 But ay ar redi ther soules to infecte, —
 And onto purpos my stile I will directe, 1496
 Texemplefie how Gabaa the toun
 Was for his synne brouht to confusioun.

Whilom this people callid Gabanytes, [p. 163]
 From Beniamyn descendid in ther lyne, 1500
 Wer ai disposid to folwe ther delites,
 And off custum ther wittis dede enclyne
 In worldli plente to flouren & to shyne,
 And dempte alwai, to them it was most due 1504
 Off wilfulnesse ther lustis for to sue.

who outraged
 the Levite's wife

In lecherie was set al ther plesaunce,
 And in that vice thei ladde most ther liff,
 Werbi thei wer[e]n brouht onto myschaunce, 1508
 And many on slayn be ful mortal striff,
 Whan the Leuite cam forbi with his wiff,
 Ful excellent off fetures and beute,
 And took his loggyng withynne that gret cite. 1512

and caused her
 death,

He was ful old, and she was inli fair,
 He inpotent and she but tendre off age,
 Thoruh Gabaa makyng ther repair.
 The citeseysn off inportune rage, 1516
 Shewing the furie off ther gret outrage,
 So longe that nyht hir beute dede assaile,
 Till liff and breth attonys dede faile.

1485. it] *om.* H.

1490. corage R.

1498. his] this H — to] *om.* R.

1507. vice] wyse R.

1514. impotent R, H.

1516. importune R, H.

- Contagious was the sclaudre & diffame,* 1520 and brought
 In Iudicum the story ye mai reede, great slander
 Which to reherse is a maner shame, and defame on
 To heere thabusioun off that foule deede; themselves, as
 And how the Leuite amorwe gan take* heede 1524 is told in
 With pitous cheer, & sauh his yonge wiff Judges.
 Tofor the gate depryued off hir liff.
- He hente hir up & leid hir on his asse; The Leuite
 To noise this crym vpon eueri side, 1528 divided her
 Thouhte in such caas he myhte do no lasse, — body into 12
 Took a sharp suerd, & list no lenger bide, one to each of
 On twelue parties he gan hir to deuide, the Twelue
 And to ech Tribe off Jacob he hath sent 1532 Tribes,
 A certeyn parti, to seen ther iugement.
- Which thyng to hem was hatful & terrible, who resolved to
 And in ther siht ful abhomynable. take vengeance
 And in al haste likli and possible, 1536 on the
 Alle off o will and o corage stable, Gibeonites,
 On Gabonites for to be vengable
 Thei gadred han, shortli to conclude,
 Tassaile that tou[n] a ful gret multitude. 1540
- Whan thei first mette, atwen hem thus it stood: and fought a
 The twelue Tribus wer twies put to fliht, battle with
 On outhar parti gret quantite off blood them in which
 Was shad among hem in that mortal fiht; 1544 sixty thousand
 For sexti thousand, who that counte ariht, men were slain
 Wer slay[e]n ther, the stori wil nat lie, and their city
 Tauenge the sclaudre off fals avoutrie. destroyed and
 the line of
 Benjamin
 almost brought
 to ruin for ever.
- Loo, heer the guerdoun off the froward firis 1548
 In lecherous folk, that wil nat staunchid be,
 That brente so hoothe thoruh bestial desiris
 In Gabaa the myhti strong cite,
 Which was destroyed for his iniquite, 1552
 And almost brouht off Beniamyn the lyne
 Thoruh this offence to eternal ruyne.

1520. was] *om.* J, P — &] & the B, R, H, J, H 5.
 1524. on morwe R — taken B.
 1527. hente] sent H — on] vpon H. 1530. abide H.
 1531. hir] hir hede R. 1532. to] *om.* R.
 1537. 2nd o] of o R. 1540. that] the R.
 1542. Tribus] tribis H. 1546. ther] *om.* R.
 1553. off] to H.

Holofernes too
was decapitated
by Judith for
his drunken lust,

¶ Eek for his feruent dronken lecherie
Oloffernes be Iudith loste his hed; 1556
And al his host and al his cheualrie
Lefte the feeld & fledde awei for dreed,
And he lai bathed in his blood al red.
Thus thoruh this vice, yiff it be weel souht, 1560
Ful many a prynce hath be brouht to nouht.

and many a
prince has come
to his end for
this vice.

These said[e] stories ouhte inouh suffise,
Yiff men wolde considre & taken heede, 1564
The grete vengauces in many sundri wise
Which God hath take for this synne in deede,
As in ther bookis thei may beholde & reede
Warnynges afforn, ful offte put at preeff,
How thei hemsilff shal saue fro myscheef. 1568

Lenvoye.

This tragedy
warns us that
many princes,
together with
their regions,
have been
destroyed
because of their
dissolute habits.

THIS tragedie yeueth vs a gret warnyng,
Be cleer exaumples of manyfold resoun,
How many a prince for ther mysleuyng,
And many riche, roial, myhti toun, 1572
Many a cite and many a regioun
Ha[ue] been euersid, ful notable & famous,
For synne off pryncis that wer lecherous.

David, who slew
Uriah that he
might possess
Bathsheba, was
well punished
for it,

The chose off God, Daudid the worthi kyng, 1576
Prophete off prophetis, most souereyn off renoun,
On Bersabe for a sodeyn lokyng
To slen Vrie cauhte occasioun,
For which he suffred gret punycioun, 1580
Chastised off God, he and al his hous,
For cause onli that he was lecherous.

and repented
sorely, writing
psalms of
contrition to
make amends
for his
transgression.

Gret repentaunce he hadde & gret sorwyng, [p. 164]
And made psalmis off gret contricioun, 1584
With woful teris & manyfold wepyng
To make a-seeth for his transgressioun,
Yeuyng to pryncis ful cleer direccioun
For to eschewe* the flatri odious 1588
And the fals fraude off women lecherous.

1569. a] *om.* H.
1573. 2nd a] *om.* R.
1588. *teschewe* B.

- Wher was ther euere off science or cunnyng
 So renommed as was kyng Salamoun?
 Yit wommen made hym, thoruh [ther] fals flateryng, 1592
 To foreyn goddis doon oblacioun,
 Which clipsid his honour & brouht his fame doun,
 That was in wisdam whilom most vertuuous,
 Til he thoruh wommen fill to be lecherous. 1596
- Is it nat eek remembrid be writyng,
 Off Israel how the cheeff[e] champioun,
 Which goddis peepel hadde in his ledyng,
 I meene the famous, myhti, strong Sampson, 1600
 That thoruh his force to-rente the lyoun, —
 But Dalida with teres plenteuous
 His grace berafft hym & made hym lecherous.
- Sichem was slayn eek for the rauasshyng 1604
 Off yong Dyna, as maad is menciou[n];
 His fader Emor brouh[t] to his eendyng,
 Lost his richesse in that discencioun,
 And his kyngdam brouht to destruccioun. 1608
 Loo, heer the fyn off pryncis vicious,
 Which them dispose for to be lecherous!
- It is in erthe oon the moste pereilous thyng,
 A prynce to been off his condicioun 1612
 Effemynat, his wittis enclynyng,
 Be fals desirs off flesskli mocioun,
 To put hymself vnder subieccioun,
 And thralle his resoun, tresour most precious, 1616
 To onleeful* lustis, hatful & lecherous.
- This is the sentence ful pleynli in menyng:
 Wher women haue the dominacioun
 To holde the reyne, ther hookis out castyng, 1620
 That sensualite ha[ue] iurediccioun
 To entre on resoun bi fals intrusioun,
 Werre ageyn vertu most contagious,
 To be venquysshid off lustis lecherous, — 1624
- It taketh fro men ther cleernesse off seyng,
 Causeth gret siknessis and corrupcioun,
 And to al vertu it is grettest hyndryng,

Who was there
 ever more
 famous for his
 wisdom than
 King Solomon?
 Yet his honour
 was darkened
 by women.

Samson yielded
 to the tears of
 Delilah,

and Shechem
 was slain for
 seducing Dinah.

It is perilous
 for a prince to
 be effeminate
 and to allow
 his reason to
 become thrall
 to unlawful
 desires;

for where
 women have
 domination and
 sensuality con-
 quers virtue,

men become
 corrupt in body
 and grow old
 before their
 time.

1590. or] & R. 1591. Renowned H.

1592. ther] om. J, R. 1597. Is it] It is R. 1605. Off] As R.

1617. onleeful] thonleeful B, H, R, J.

1626. and] of H.

Maketh men seeme old, as be inspeccioun, 1628
 Appallith ther mynde and disposicioun,
 Shorteth ther daies, thyng dreedful & pitous,
 Whan thei dispose hem for to be lecherous.

Noble Princes,
 beware the
 deception of
 women,
 especially
 such as love
 only for gain,
 who like Sirens,
 anoint your ears
 with sugared
 flattery.

Noble Pryncis, in your ymagynyng 1632
 Conceyueth off women the fals decepcioun,
 Namli off them that loue but for wynnyng,
 And laboure ay for your possessioun,
 Whos sugred flatrie is fals collusioun, 1636
 Lik to Sirenes with vois melodious
 Enoynte your eres to make you lecherous.

[How Cambises assentyng to the moordre of his
 brothir Mergus at last slouh himsilf.]¹

After Cyrus, his
 son and heir
 Cambyse came
 complaining to
 Bochas, that the
 Egyptians were
 idolaters and
 worshiped Apis,
 who was called
 god of gods by
 fools and slain
 by his brother.

AFFTIR the deth of myhti kyng Cirus, 1640
 Next cam his sone callid Cambises,
 Heir be successioun ful victorious,
 Which tofor Bochas put hymselff in pres
 And gan his compleynt — this is dout[e]lles, —
 That thei off Egipt, in many vnkouth wise, 1644
 To sundri goddis dede sacrificse.

First onto Apis thei dede reuerence,
 Callid Serapis, ther grettest god off all,
 Regnyng in Egipt off most excellence, 1648
 And god of goddis foolis dede hym call.
 And off his noblesse thus it is befall,
 Slayn bi his brother, which is a gret wonder,
 Seuered on pecis & ful ferr cast assonder. 1652

As the Egyptians
 held Apis
 in such honour,
 Cambyse
 resolved to
 throw down
 all their temples;

And thei off Egipt made ther ordynaunces,
 Vp peyne off deth in ther statutis olde,
 A god to calle hym, & doon ther obseruaunces
 Withynne his templis, lik as thei wer holde. 1656
 Wheroff Cambises, tofor as I you tolde,
 Alle the templis off that regioun
 Cast hym be force for to throwe down.

1629. and] and ther R.

1647. ther] the R.

1659. throwe] throw hem H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 68 recto.

The temple off Iubiter to robbe it be rauyne, 1660 and when he
 Callid Amon, withoute excepcioun, sent his knights
 His knyhtis sente to brynge it to ruyne. to rob Jupiter
 But thei echon for ther presumpcioun, Ammon, they
 With sodeyn leuene wer smet & bete down. 1664 were suddenly
 Wheroff Cambises, in Asie tho regnyng, struck by
 Hadde this drem as he lai slepyng. a thunderbolt.

He drempte his brother, that called was
 Mergus, [p. 165] Cambyes
 Sholde in the kyngdam afftir hym succede. 1668 dremt that he
 Wheroff in herte he wex so envious, succeeded by
 That he purposed, off rancour and hatreede, his brother
 Bi sum mene to make his sides bleede; Smerdis and
 And that his purpos sholde take auail, consequently
 A magicien he took to his counsail. 1672 resolved to kill
 him.

And he was holde a ful gret philisophre,
 Callid Cometes, ful slehti and cunnyng,
 To whom Cambises made a large proffre 1676 He took counsel
 Off gold and tresour to make hym assentyng of a magician
 To execute this horrible thyng; and offered him
 And that he wolde in most cruel wise great treasure
 The moordre off Mergus compassen & deuise. 1680 for Smerdis'
 life.

And whil Cambises ordeyned this tresoun,
 To slen Mergus, his owne brother deere,
 God from aboue caste his eien down,
 Hym to pun[y]she in ful cruel manere: 1684 But God, who
 For he wex wood[e], who-so list to lere, saw what was
 Cauht a sharp suerd, & roff his thih on tweyne; going on,
 And sodenli he deied for the peyne. punished
 Cambyes with
 death,

For too causes God took on hym vengauce, 1688 for two reasons:
 As myn auctour Bochas doth expresse: because he
 For his presumptuous fals disobeisaunce, presumptuously
 Spoilyng the goddis off her gret richesse, despoiled
 And for the froward gret onkynd[e]nesse the gods of their
 To yeue assent to the contagious caas, 1692 great wealth,
 Whan that Mergus his brother moordred was. and because of
 his unkindness
 to his brother
 Smerdis.

1662. it] om. H.

1675. Comeres P — and] of H.

1686. thih] teth H.

War followed,
and Persia stood
disconsolate
without an heir
to the throne,
although
Gometes substi-
tuted his brother
Oropastes
(Smerdis the
Magian) for the
murdered
Smerdis.

The deth off whom was cheeff occasioun
Off ful gret werre, stryues and debat, 1696
Eek fynal cause whi al the regioun
Off myhti Perse stood disconsolat:
For heir was non, off hih nor low estat,
Be title off riht, thoruh this onhappi chaunce, 1700
To been ther kyng and ha[ue] the gouernaunce.
For the magicien callid Cometes,
Which slouh Mergus, as ye haue herd expresse,
Took his brother callid Oropastes, 1704
And made hym kyng, the stori berth witnessse,
Because that he resembled in liknesse
Onto Mergus off face and off stature,
To crowne hym kyng therfore he dede his cure. 1708

The death of
Smerdis was not
publicly known
at first,

THE deth off Mergus outward was nat knowe
Nor pleynli publisht in that regioun;
His bodi buried and cast in erthe lowe.
Off whom the moordre and fraudulent tresoun, 1712
The pitous slauhtre wrouht be collusioun,
And al the maner, bi processe was espied
So openli it myhte nat be denyed.
And in what wise the noise gan out spreede 1716
Touchyng this moordre odious for to heere:
Whan that Orapastes ocupied in deede
The crowne off Perse, the stori doth vs lere,
Ther was a prynce ful notable & enteere, 1720
Callid Hostanes, that gan his witt applie,
Off hih prudence this moordre out tespie.
Whil that Orapastes, vnder a fals pretence,
Off Perciens was resseyued as for kyng, 1724
The said[e] prynce dede his deligence,
Bi inquisicioun to ha[ue] knowlechyng,
Be what engyn or be what slehti thyng
The said Orapastes cauhte occasioun 1728
In stede off Mergus to ocupie the crown.

but later on a
prince named
Otanés sought
to find out all the
circumstances
of the case,

believing that
Oropastes had
no just right to
the crown.

1696. striffe R. 1697. whi] whi that R.
1698. disconsolat] consolate R. 1700. this] his R.
1701. kyng] heir R. 1702. Comares P.
1711. erthe] therth H. 1717. for] om. H.
1718. Oropastes J, R 3, P. 1721. Otanes P.
1723. Oropastes J. 1724. receyued was H.
1726. to haue] ta full H. 1728. Oropastes J.

- On this mateer he hadde a coniecture,
That his title was nouthur hool nor cleer.
The trouthe to trie he dede his besi cure, 1732
And to serche out hooli the maneer,
He souht[e] so ferr that he cam riht neer,
And in this caas lettid for no slouthe,
Till that he hadde founden out the trouthe. 1736
- The cas was this, pleynli to termyne:
He hadde a douhter, ful fair off hir visage,
Which off the kyng was cheuest concubyne,
Bi whom he thouhte to cachchen auantage. 1740
And onto hir he hath sent his massage,
Secreli tenqueren how it stood,
Wher that the kyng wer come off Cirus blood.
- And bad she sholde secreli taken heed, 1744
Whil that he slepte to doon hir besi peyne
With hir handis for to feele his hed,
And to grope afftir bothe his eris tweyne.
And yiff it fill — ther is no mor to seyne — 1748
Vpon his hed that she non eris founde,
To telle hir fadir, off trouthe as she was bounde.
- This myhti prynce Hostanes knew[e] weel, [p. 166] for Otanes
Riht as it is recorded be scripture, 1752 Oropastes had
Touchyng this caas how it stood euerideel, forfeited his ears
How kyng Cambises off sodeyn auenture, as a punishment
Bi his lyue for a forfeiture, during Cam-
Made off Orapastes, the stori seith nat nay, 1756 byses' reign.
- And heerupon to be certefied, It turned out
He was desirous ta[ue] ful knowlechyng. that the king
Which be his douhter whan it was espied, 1760 had no ears.
- Vpon a nyht liggyn bi the kyng,
Gropyng his hed[e] as he lai slepyng,
Ful subtili felte and took good heed,
How he non eris hadde vpon his hed. 1764
- And to hir fadir anon she hath declarid
The secrenesse off this auenture.
And for no feer nor dreed he hath nat sparid,

1731. nor] ne H. 1733. serche] seche R. 1738. hir] om. R.
1759. taful B. 1766. this] his R.

How that it stood[e] pleynli to discure. 1768
 And first off all he dede his besi cure,
 Alle the pryncis off Perse-lond ifeere
 To counseil calle tentrete off this mateere.

at which he told
 them about the
 murder of
 Smerdis.

And whan thei wern assemblid euerichon, 1772
 Off Oropastes he told hem al the chaunce,
 And how that Mergus was moordred yore agon,
 As heer-toforn is put in remembraunce.

Wherupon to sette an ordynaunce 1776
 And to redresse these wronges doon toforn,
 Off Perse-lond wer seune pryncis sworn.

Seven princes
 were sworn to
 dethrone
 Oropastes.

Off oon assent in ther entencioun,
 Bi bond off oth thei made ther assuraunce, 1780
 And a ful secre coniuracioun

To putte Oropastes from his roial puissaunce,
 Which hadde al Perse vnder his gouernaunce
 Bi a ful fals pretens off heritage, 1784
 For he was lik to Mergus off visage.

They took their
 swords with
 them, and,
 forcing their
 way into the
 palace, attacked
 the king, but
 were at first
 held off by his
 brother, who
 slew two of them.

These seune pryncis, off which toforn I tolde,
 Alle off oon herte, & bi ther oth ibounde,
 Prudent and manli and off yeris olde, 1788
 Han souht a tyme Oropastes to confounde.

And with ther suerdis sharp[e] whet & grounde,
 Wonder couert in ther appaile,
 Cam off entent Oropastes to assaile. 1792

And in the paleis whom-euer that thei mette
 Or ageyn hem made resistence,
 Alle off accord thei fersli on hym sette.

But the magicien, that was ther in presence, 1796
 Cam ageyn hem be sturdi violence,
 And at thencountre gan hem so constreyne,
 That off the pryncis thei haue islay[e]n tweyne.

[Oropastes occupyeng the crowne of Perce bi iniust
 title was moordred.]¹

At last they
 prevailed and
 killed Oropastes
 and all who were
 in the palace.

But fynali the tother pryncis fyue, 1800
 Whan that thei sauh ther tweyne feeris bleede,
 In al the paleis thei leffte non alyue.

1772. assemblid] assembled to gedre R. 1777. to] om. H.

1781. secre] sette R. 1786. These] The H.

1790. sharp whet swerdis & grounde R — I grownde H.

1791. Wonder] Vndir H. 1792. for tassaile H.

1793. the] that H. 1798. thencountre] thentre H.

¹ MS. J. inner margin 68 verso.

And kyng Orapastes, quakyng in his dreede,
 Ful onwarli, or that he took heede, 1804
 Was slay[e]n ther, guerdoned for al his myht, —
 Off pretens kynges which regne & ha[ue] no riht.

[How Dary obteynng the kyngdam of perce be
 sleiht ended with shame.]¹

AFFTIR the deth of this magiciens
 Was lefft no kyng to ha[ue] the gouernaunce, 1808
 Nor for to reule the lond off Perciens,
 Sauff pryncis fyue, ful famous off puissaunce,
 Which made a statut and an ordynaunce
 Off oon accord, be record off wrytyng, 1812
 Theron concludyng who sholde be chose kyng.

After the death
 of these magians
 there was no one
 to be king in
 Persia save five
 princes,

Ther sort, ther happē and al ther auenture
 Was youe to Fortune off this eleccioun,
 As thus: that prynce the crowne shal recure 1816
 Among these fyue, be ther convenioun
 For to gouerne the myhti regioun
 And in that lond to regne & contune,
 Lik as the fauour list ordeyne off Fortune. 1820

who agreed
 to choose one
 of themselves,

This was the statut: vpon a morwenyng,
 Alle attonys erli for to ride
 Atwen Aurora and Phebus vprisyng,
 Vp to an hill to hou[e]n] and abide, 1824
 Al rancour & discord set a-side,
 Whos hors among hem was first herd neieng,
 Withoute gruchchyng sholde be crownyd kyng.

in the following
 manner: to ride
 out early in the
 morning up a
 hillside and to
 elect him king
 whose horse
 neighed first.

Vpon this mateer what sholde I lenger tarie? — 1828
 Heeron was maad an oth in sekirnesse.
 Among these pryncis ther was on callid Darie,
 A prynce off Perse excellyng off noblesse,
 Which hadde a seruau[n]t, the stori berth witenesse, 1832
 That kept his hors, & thouhte in verrai deede
 He wolde his lord preferre at such a neede.

One of the
 princes, whose
 name was
 Darius, had a
 servant who
 thought he
 would help his
 master win.

1810. fyue princis R.

1812. Off] And H. 1814. happis H. 1816. As] And R.

1821. mornyng H. 1824. houen] hove H, P — abide] ta-
 bide H.

1825. discorde & rancour H. 1834. a] om. R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 68 verso.

So on the day before the contest he let his master's horse come together with a mare on the same hill-side, and when they rode there the next day, nature caused the horse to neigh loudly.

The said seruant, ful slehti in werkyng,
His deligence list nothyng to spare. [p. 167]
The dai toforn[e] set off ther meetyng, 1836
At a place smothe, pleyn and bare,
His lordis hors he made lepe a mare.
And on the morwe whan the pryncis mette 1840
On hors[e]bak, there his lord he sette.

And whan the hors thedir cam ageyn,
Nature anon afforced his corage
To neie loude vpon the same pleyn, 1844
Wher-as the mare had vsid hir passage.
Kynde in such caas hadde gret auantage.
Be which[e] sleihte, pleynli to reherse,
The said[e] Dary was crownyd kyng off Perse. 1848

The princes made no contradiction, and, dismounting from their horses, said to Darius, "Long live the King!"

The pryncis alle, lik ther convencioun,
Or Phebus shewed his firi bemys briht,
Withoute striff or contradiccoun
From ther hors sodenli aliht; 1852
And onto Dari, as lowli as thei myht,
Saide in Greek[e] or thei vp aros,
"Policronitudo Basileos!"

Which is in Latyn, to speke in wordes pleyn, 1856
And in Inglissh, bexpownyng off scripture,
Afftir the Greek, as moche for to seyn
As, "long[e] tyme mote the kyng endure," —
And lyue in helthe with good auenture, 1860
Bi the grace and fauour off Fortune
Vpon al Perse to regnen and contune.

It is remarkable that a man should rise to be king by such means; but when Fortune favours, no one can say nay.

Who list considren eueri circumstaunce,
It is a merueil nat groundid on prudence, 1864
Bi such a sleihte a kyng tagouernaunce,
Thoruh title or cleym as off iust euidence,
So to be reised to kyngli excellence.
But whan Fortune fauoureth such assay, 1868
Till that she chaunge, ther can no man sei nay.

1835. slehti] sleuhty R. 1836. nothyng] nat R.
1837. by forn H. 1841. lord] horse H.
1850. his] hir H — fire R.
1855. Polycromitudo P.
1856. in] om. R.
1866. or] of R.

- Thus was kyng Darie, born off louh lynage,
 Set up be sleihte in estaat honourable.
 Thouhte that he wolde for his auantage,
 To make his kyngdam & his regne stable,
 Wedde such a wiff as to hym was most hable,
 Demyng off trouthe his cley m wer weel amendid,
 Off Cirus lyne yiff she were descendid.
- To wedde suchon was al his couetise,
 Stable for to regne vpon the Persiens.
 And, as I fynde, in ful cruel wise,
 Bi the counseil off fals magiciens
 A werre he gan vpon the Egipcien.
 Eek folili he gan for to werreie
 Them off Athenys, which list hym nat obeie.
- And, as myn auctour maketh rehersaile,
 He for his pride and fals presumpcioun
 Was disconfited twies in bataile,
 And neuer aftir, as maad is menciouⁿ,
 He was nat had in reputacioun,
 Mong Persiens so gan his honour fade.
 With sleihte he gan; with shame an eende he made.

As Darius was
 not of high
 lineage, he
 married a
 descendant of
 Cyrus to
 strengthen his
 position.

and foolishly
 made war on the
 Egyptians and
 the Greeks.

He was beaten
 twice in battie
 and never
 afterwards held
 in respect by
 the Persians.
 He began with
 deception and
 ended with
 shame.

[How Corolian bi Romayns exilid gan werre ayenst
 hem and how aftir thei sent out his moder with
 othir for pees, which had, thei eft him exilid &
 aftir was slayn.]¹

- A FFTIR this Darie, as I reherse can,
 And myn auctour likith to conclude,
 To Iohn Bochas cam Corolian,
 The moste woful off al that multitude.
 Which gan compleyne vpon thyngatitude
 Off the Romeyns, how thei whilom in deede
 Exilid his persone, off rancour & hatreede.
- Which in his tyme wolde neuer cese,
 Thoruh his noblesse and his hih renoun,
 Ther comoun profit tawmente and encrese,
 And for to brynge to ther subieccioun
 Many a cite and many a noble toun.

After Darius,
 Coriolanus
 appeared, com-
 plaining how
 the Romans had
 exiled him,
 although he had
 never ceased to
 labour for the
 common profit.

1876. she] he R.

1893. Coriolan P. 1894. al] om. H.

1902. 2nd a] om. H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 69 recto.

- Yit thei ageynward, for al his cheualrie,
Han hym exilid off malice and envie. 1904
- When he saw how unkind the Romans were, he went to the Tuscans and persuaded them to begin a war on Rome with his help.
But whan this Marcus, callid Corolian,
Sauh off Romeyns the gret onkynd[e]nesse,
Toward a cuntre that callid was Tuskan
Off hih disdeyn anon he gan hym dresse, 1908
And hem entretid, off manli fell prowesse
To gynne a werre, sithe thei so manli be,
Thoruh his conveiang geyn Rome the cite.
- He told them that the Romans were torn by dissension and that they would win easily.
And for to put hem mor in assuraunce, 1912
To ha[ue] victorie thoruh ther hih renoun,
He tolde hem pleyntli off a gret distaunce,
Off a fals striff and a discencioun
That was off newe falle in Rome toun; 1916
Wherfor thei shulde, yiff it be prouided,
Conquere hem lihtli, because thei were deuided.
- He assembled a great Tuscan army, and when it arrived before the city the Romans were overcome with fear, which is always the case when a kingdom is divided.
Bi ther assent he made a gret arme, [p. 168]
With stuff for werre richeli apparailed, 1920
Pihte his tentis tofor that strong cite,
And in the feeld stood proudli [en]batailed.
But the hertis off Romeyns han hem failed,
And durst nat passe the gatiss off ther toun, 1924
Ther was among hem so gret deuysioun.
Ther cite stood that tyme destitut,
With feer supprised for lak off gouernaunce.
Them to diffende thei fond[e] no refut, 1928
So ferr enfeeblisshid was ther old puissaunce.
For euer gladli, wher striff & variaunce
In any kyngdam haue an interesse,
Touchyng diffence,* a-dieu al hardynesse! 1932
- There can be no wise counsel where there is discord.
Withynne hemsilff[e] thei stood at debat;
Afforn ther enmyes redi for tassaile;
Confort was non in hih nor low estat:
For wher discord is, what counsail mai auaille? 1936
Ther foon withoute, withynne hemsilff bataile,
Brouht in, alas, to ther confusioun,
Bi the fals serpent off discencioun.

1906. Sauh] Sauff R.

1909. fell] hih R, hygh H 5.

1921. afforne H — strong] gret R. 1922. batailed J.

1932. diffence] a diffence B, R, J.

1935. louh nor hih H.

- But at the laste afforced and constreyned,
 They were coact[e] afftir pes to seeke. 1940 So there was
 The caas stood so: off nede thei wer peyned, nothing to be
 Maugre ther myht, ther hertis for to meeke. done but sue for
 And ther myscheff mor tencece and eeke, 1944 peace.
- In awmentyng off ther cruel fatis,
 They sauh ther enmyes briht armed at ther gatis.
 They sent out first preestis off the toune
 With ther enmyes for tentrete off pes, 1948 The Romans
 With humble proffres & low subieccioun; out priests, but
 But Corolian, this is dout[e]les, Coriolanus
 Ageyn the Romeyns was so merciles, refused to listen
 That grace non myht in his herte myne 1952 to them.
- To ther request his eris to enclyne.
 Thanne the Romeyns, the stori telle can,
 To Venturia made ther praier,
 Which was the mooder off Corolian, 1956 Then his
 And to Volumia, his feithful wiff enteer, mother, and
 That thei sholde bothe gon ifeer Volumnia, his
 Onto that prynce, besechyng at the leste, wife, went to
 Benygneli to heryn ther requeste. 1960 him and begged
 His mooder first ful prudentli abraide, him to hear
 Onto hir sone makyng this questioun, their request.
- At ther meetyng to hym thus she saide:
 "Shal I," quod she, "for short conclusioun,
 Off feithful herte and trewe affeccioun,
 To thi presence declare fynali,
 Be now receyued as mooder or enmy?
 Afftir thyn answere I mut myselff dispose 1964 Said his mother,
 And my wittis speciali applie, "Am I to be
 Cause off my komyng cleerli to onclose, received as
 And telle theeffect of myn ambassiatric, mother or
 And my speche so gouerne and guie, 1972 enemy?"
- Afftir I am receyued to thi grace,
 Mi-silff declaryng, yiff I ha[ue] tyme and space.
 For lik thi mooder yiff thou receyue me
 And me accepte onto thi presence,
 I mut therafftir so gouerned be 1976 "My action
 To telle my tale pleynli, in sentence,— must depend
 So that thou yiff me freendli audience. upon your
 And yiff I be nat receyued in such wise, 1980 answer.
- Mor straung[e]li my tale I mut deuisse."
 1980. be nat] om. R.

- Coriolanus embraced his mother and said, "Madam, I receive you as my dear mother, but I intend nevertheless to chastise the Romans for their ingratitude."
- This noble prynce, this Corolian,
Whan that he herde his mooder thus compleyne,
Ful lik a lord and a knyhtli man 1984
Gan hir enbracen in his armis tweyne
In lowli wise, ther is no mor to seyne, —
Sauf lik a sone, off due and off riht,
To hire he saide ful lik a ientil knyht: 1988
"Madame," quod he, "be it to your plesauunce
To heere my conceit as in this mater.
With feithful herte and humble attendaunce
I you receyue as for my mooder deer; 1992
But, & ye like benygneli to heer,
Thyngratitude, doon in most cruel wise
To me off Romayns, I purpose to chastise."
- "Ah son," said she, "their offence can be atoned for: you are of their lineage; let mercy modify your rigour."
- "A sone," quod she, "touchyng ther offence 1996
Doon to thi noblesse and ther gret outrage,
Thei shal be menys ther trespas recompence.
And thynk[e] thou art born off ther lynage,
And suffre that merci thi rigour mai asswage, 2000
And thynk off nature thou maist nat weel withseie
Thyng for the which thi mooder doth now preie.
- "Do not begin a war against your country and destroy your own line in mortal strife!"
- Thou shalt nat close thyn entrailes off pite [p. 169]
To the requestis off me and off thi wiff, 2004
Nor gynne a werre ageyn[e]s thi cuntre,
To stroie thi lyne bi newe mortal striff,
Thi childre and me to make vs lose our liff.
Weie in ballaunce to Romayns thyn hatreede 2008
Ageyns the loue off me and* thi kenreede.
- "Send your strange soldiers away, who are so ready to shed Roman blood. I will be hostage."
- Send hom ageyn thi straunge soudiours,
Which be so redi the Romain blood to sheede;
Lat stonde in pes our wallis and our tours; 2012
Suffre thi grace thi rancour to exceede,
So that thi pite mai putte awai al dreede,
And condescende to receyue for hostage
Me to be plegge for ther gret outrage. 2016
- "Do not forget how I fed you at my breast when you were an infant,
- Behold* the wombe in which that thou wer born,
And see also my naked brestes* tweyne,
Bi which thou were fostred heer-toforn:

1982. Coriolan P.

1989. to] om. R — your] yow H, R 3, you H 5.

2002. Thyng] Thynk R.

2008. in] in a H. 2009. and] and off B, H, R, J.

2017. Beheld B. 2018. brestes] sides B, R.

- Yiff ther was lak, thou woldest crie & pleyne. 2020
 Remembre theron, and at me nat disdeyne,
 But onto merci receyue this cite
 At the request heer off thi wiff & me.
- Whilom my mylk thi cherisshyng was &* foode 2024 and how often I
 To stynte thi cri whan thou dedist weepe, woke to make
 Ther soote dropis ful holsum wer & goode, you sleep.
 Thi tendre youthe for to preserue and keepe. "Have mind on
 And lik a mooder to brynge the a-sleepe, 2028 my request."
 I wook ful offte, to the I was so kynde, —
 Wherfor, deere sone, on my request ha[ue] mynde.
- Yiff that thou list this cite now tormente, "If you must
 Ther demerites be rigour recompense, 2032 repay the faults
 Pun[y]she me for them, and I will assente of this city
 To ber the gilt off ther gret offence. with severity,
 But, deere soone, lat thi magnyfidence punish me, who
 Suffre off knyhtthod that merci mai in deede 2036 am willing to
 Attempre thi riht, or thou to doom procede. bear the guilt."
- Suffre Romayns to lyuen in quiete, "Grant peace to
 Graunt hem pes ageyn ther gret outrage, 2040 the Romans,
 Sum drope off pite lat in thyn herte fleete, have pity on
 And thynk[e] thou art born off ther lynage. your kindred
 Looke vpon hem with merciful visage, who offer to
 Which offre hemsilff[e], as thei shal fulfille, submit to you.
 Ther liff, ther deth, al hooli at thi wille. 2044
- Remembre off nature how that the leoun "Remember
 Set a-side his rage and his woodnesse how the lion
 To them that meekli afor[n] hym falle down; refuses to harm
 His roial kynde will doon hem no duresse. 2048 those who fall
 Texemplefie to thi knyhtli noblesse, down meekly
 With rigerous suerd thou shalt no mor manace before him."
 Them that be lowli, yolde onto thi grace."
- And whan this prynce, this Corolian, 2052 Coriolanus
 Had herd al that his mooder list to seyne, embraced his
 He goth to hire in al the haste he can, mother weeping
 Bespreynt with teris that on his chekis reyne, and at once
 And hire embracid in his armis tweyne, 2056 granted her
 request.

2021. at] lat R.

2024. &] & thi B, H, R.

2036. merci] om. R.

And saide, "mooder, ther mai be no lettyng,
Me off hool* herte to graunte your axyng."

He raised the
siege, sent his
Tuscans home
and was received
back into Rome
with joy.

The siege he made for tauoide awai,
And to repaire hom to ther cuntre; 2060
And with his mooder & wiff he was that dai
With gret[e] gladnesse and solempnite
Anon receuyed into that cite,
Lik as Fortune wolde hym neuer haue failed.* 2064
But she soone afftir off newe hath hym assailed.

But afterwards
the fickle
Romans
banished him
again, and he
was then slain
by the disap-
pointed Tuscans.

The geri Romayns, stormy and onstable,
Which neuer in oon stille koude abide, 2068
Ageyn this prynce, most knyhtli and notable,
For to conspire off newe thei gan prouyde,
And ban[y]shed hym to Tuskan ther beside,
Wher he was slayn withynne a litil space,
For he the Romayns took affor* to grace. 2072

[How Melciades duk of Athenys with smal noubre
venquysshed vj^c M^l perciens, and aftir bi his
comonte that ay of custum desireth a change
of princes newe he was cheyned in prisoun and
so deied.]¹

Duke Miltiades
of Athens

AMONG other that put hemsilff in pres
For to bewaile ther greuous heuynesse,
Cam off Athenys duc Meltiades,*
Which thoruh his manhod & famous hih prowessse, 2076
And thoruh his knyhtli renommed noblesse,
Lich as auctours his tryumphes list comende,
Fauht many a bataile his cite to diffende.

fought many
a battle in de-
fence of his city.

And off [his] victories,* as it is compiled, 2080
For comoun profit off that noble toun,
Fauht with a tirant that was toforn exiled,
Callid Hippias, which be fals tresoun

2058. off hool] hool off B, J, R.

2064. haue failed] assailed B. 2070. banyssh H — to] in H.

2072. took affor] affor took B, H, R, J.

2075. Melciades in B and other MSS., the common blunder of
the copyists, c for t and vice versa.

2076. famous] om. R. 2077. renouned H.

2080. his] om. R — victoires B. 2082. afforne H, afor R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 69 recto.

- Hadde to kyng Darie maad a suggestioun, 2084
 Vpon Athenys, in al the haste he myhte,
 To reise al Perse ageyn that toun to fihte.
- Sexe hundred thousand acountid was the noum- and with ten
 bre [p.170] defeated thousand men
 Off Persiens, armed in plate and maile, 2088 Hippias, an
 Them off Athenys be force to encoumbre, exiled tyrant
 Echon assemblid them proudli to assaile. who led an
 But this duc for nothyng wolde faile, army of sixty
 Meltiades, but knyhtli took his place: 2092 thousand
 With ten thousand he met hem in the face. Persians.
- For bothe he was riht manli and riht wis, Miltiades put
 And off his handis proued a good knyht. them to fight
 Set vpon them with so prudent auys, 2096 four times,
 That thei off Perce, for al ther grete myht,
 Wer foure tymes put onto the flyht
 Bi thilke duc, yiff I shal nat feyne,
 And bi the noblesse off other knyhtis tweyne. 2100
- Themystodes icallid was the ton, and with the
 Which off his hand, as auctours list descryue, help of Themis-
 Was in a feeld[e] prouyd on his fon tocles and a
 The manli[est] knyht in his tyme alyue. knight called
 Which thilke dai so proudli dede stryue 2104 Cynaegirus,
 Geyn them off Perse, & such a slauhter make, finally defeated
 That fynali the feeld thei ha[ue] forsake. them.
- Cynegirus, a knyht eek off ther toun, 2108
 The same dai thoruh his cheualrie,
 With bloodi suerd, as he wente vp & doun,
 Withoute noumbre in his malencolie,
 Slouh Persiens, [as] bookis specefie, 2112
 That for the tyme thei no refut cunne,
 Sauff to ther shippis for dreed off deth thei runne.
2091. faile] falle H. 2092. but] om. R. 2093. he] om. H.
 2094. For] om. R.
 2095. knyht stuck in scribe's pen R.
 2096. Set] Sep R.
 2101. Themistocles P, as no doubt Lydgate wrote. The copyists
 have perpetuated an early blunder of d for cl.
 2102. handis H — auctours] bookes H.
 2103. on] of H.
 2104. manliest] manli J, R.
 2106. Ageyn H.
 2112. as] om. B, H, J, R, H 5, P.

- Cynaegirus held
fast the largest
Persian ship
with his right
hand,
- And ther he wrouhte a straunge gret mervail,
As writ Bochas, affermyng in certeyne, 2116
The* grettest shipp that bar [the] largest sail,
With his riht hand he gan it so restreyne,
Lik as it hadde be fastned with a cheyne,
Maugre Perciens, which dede hem sore greue, 2120
That be no crafft thei koud nat make it meue.
- and when the
Persians cut
off his right
hand he held the
ship with his
left hand, and
- But whan that thei non other refut wiste,
Freli tescape[n] out off his daungeer,
Till thei his riht hand heuh off bi the wriste. 2124
But with his lefft hand he gan approche neer,
And heeld it stille, an vnkouth thyng to heer,
That he hadde force so gret a shipp to lette.
But than, alas, his lefft hand off thei smette! 2128
- after they had
cut off his left
hand, he held
the ship fast
with his teeth,
while the Greeks
slew 200,000
Persians.
- Yit maugre them, whan he ther malice seeth,
Al-were-it so that he hadde lost ech hand,
The shipp he heeld stille with his teeth,
That thei ne myhte departe fro the land, 2132
Lik as ther vessel hadde falle vpon a sand, —
Causere that day, myn auctour doth reherse,
Too hundred thousand wer slayn off them off Perse.
- Cynaegirus
then went mad,
and Bochas
tells no more
about him.
- And whan this synguler myhti champioun, 2136
Cynegirus, most vnkouth off corage,
Had doon this meruail, as maad is mencioun,
Off verrai angwissh he fill into a rage:
Lik a beeste furious and sauage 2140
Ran a-boute, alas, for lak off mynde! —
In Bochas book no mor off hym I fynde.
- Miltiades'
subjects con-
spired against
him in spite of
his victory
- But in this processe afftir I beheeld
Ay how that Fortune can hir freendis faile: 2144
For Meltiades, ledere off that feeld
And gouvernour off al that gret bataile,
Causyng victoire, as maad is rehersaile, —
Yit his peepel off malice and off ire 2148
Ageyn his noblesse falsli gan conspire.
- and put him in
prison.
- Thei off Athenys set hym in prisoun,
And in cheynys myhtili hym bounde,
Onkynd[e]li thei gaff hym this guerdoun, 2152

2117. 1st The] Ther B, H 5 — 2nd the] om. R, J, P.
2119. as] om. R. 2128. thei] the R.
2132. parte frome H. 2133. a] om. R.

For al the knythod [that] thei in hym founde.
 Yit had he suffred many mortal wounde
 In ther diffence and for ther libertees,
 To saue ther lyues, ther toun & ther cuntrees. 2156

This was the eende off duc Meltiades,
 Thoruh the constreynt off his stronge bondis.
 Eek thei exilid the knyht Themystodes
 Out off ther toun to lyue in straunge londis, 2160
 That was so worthi preued off his hondis:
 To shewe the chaung and mutabilite
 Founde in Fortune and eueri comounte!

This was his end; and Themistocles was banished. Such is the change of Fortune!

[Lenvoye.]

THE stormy trust off eueri comounte, 2164
 Ther geri corages & troublid constaunce,
 In this tragedie men mai beholde & see,
 Now vp, now down, as Fortune cast hir chaunce.
 For thei off custum ha[ue] ioie & most plesaunce, 2168
 In ther desirs onstedfast and ontrewē,
 To seen ech day a chaung off pryncis newe.

Here men may see how little trust there is in the people. They are forever wanting a change of princes.

Corolian off Rome, a cheeff cite, [p. 171]
 Was ther protectour thoruh his myhti puissaunce: 2172
 Venquissid ther enmies, set hem in surte,
 Brouht in rebellis to ther obeisaunce.
 But thei ageynward, off wilful variaunce
 Ban[y]shed hym twies, & no cause knewe, 2176
 Sauff for to seen a chaung off pryncis newe.

Coriolanus, the protector of Rome, was twice banished;

The knyhtli noblesse, the magnanymyte,
 The policie, the prudent gouernaunce
 Off Meltiades, duc off the cuntre, 2180
 Wher that Athenys is cheeff toun in substaunce, —
 Whan he ther comoun gan most to auaunce,
 The mor onkyndli, in honour that thei grewe,
 Most thei wer besi to change hym for a newe. 2184

Miltiades, a very great man, was set aside for another;

2153. that] om. J, R, H, P, H 5.

2165. Ther] the H — &] & ther H. 2166. this] his R.

2171. Coriolan P.

2178. *The first four words of 6th stanza preceding are written above this line* H.

2180. the] that R. 2182. most] om. R.

2183. The] Ther R.

Themistocles,
the sovereign
knight of his
time, was exiled.

Themystodes, hauyng the souereynte
Off knyhtis alle that bar spere or launce,
Duryng his tyme, — I tak no mor on me,
For comparisouns doon offte gret greuauunce, — 2188
Sexe hundred thousand he putte to vttraunce,
Onto Athenys neuer founde ontrewē;
Yit thei conspired his exil for a newe.

Nothing is
stable, and
especially the
tenure of
kings.

What thyng mai heer floure in felice, 2192
Or stonde stable be long contynuaunce
In hih estatis outhur in low degre? —
Now flowe, now ebbe, now ioie, now myschaunce,
Afttir Fortune holdeth the ballaunce. 2196
And speciali, fals, feynyng and ontrewē,
Comouns desir a chaung off pryncis newe.

Noble Princes,
do not forget
this in your
prosperity.

Noble Pryncis, in your prosperite,
On sodeyn chaungis set your remembraunce, 2200
Fresshnesse off floures, off braunchis the beute
Haue ai on chaung a trembylyng attendaunce,
In trust off comouns is no perseueraunce:
As wynter [&] somer be dyuers off ther hewe, 2204
So be thei dyuers in chaung off pryncis newe.

[Ho[w] xerxes kyng of Perce, for his ravyne and
couetise was dismembrid in smale pecys.]¹

Next Xerxes
came before
Bochas,
weeping
piteously.

UN-TOFOR* Bochas, ful pitousli wepyng,
For to declare his dedli heuynesse,
Cam Xerxes next, that was of Perse kyng, 2208
And gan compleyne his dool and his distresse.
Which in thre thynges, his stori berth witnessse,
And as the cronycle cleerli can vs telle,
All othir pryncis in erthe he dede excelle: 2212

None other was
of such high
estate, so rich,
or of so great
dignity.

In hih estat was non so gret as he,
Nouthur in richesse nor worldli habundaunce,
Nor non that tyme off so gret dignite;
For as it is iput in remembraunce, 2216
He hadde al Perse vnder his obeisaunce,
Nor neuer prynce, as auctours do conlude,
Hosteied attonys with such a multitude.

2186. or] & H. 2189. vttraunce] variaunce R.

2202. Haue ai] havyng H.

2203 is repeated after 2200 H. 2204. &] om. H.

2206. Un-tofor] And tofor B, R, J. P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 70 verso.

- Space off fyue yeer he made his ordenaunce, 2220 His army
Seuene hundred thousand people he dede reise; numbered
Dempte off fals pride ageyn his gret puissaunce 700,000. He
Non ertheli power myhte countirpeise. thought no
But summe auctours alowe hym nat nor preise, 2224 earthly power
Because that he, peeplis to encoumbre, could resist him.
Set al his trust to conquere with gret noumbre.
- But manli pryncis han this opynyoun: But manly
In multitude stondest nat victorie; 2228 princes know
For knyhtli prowesse off eueri champioun, that victory
Which manli cast hem in armys to ha[ue] glorie, does not depend
Enprentid hath fix in his memorie, on numbers.
Marcial tryumphes God ne doth nat shewe 2232
In noumbres grete no rather than in fewe.
- This said[e] Xerxes, be record off auctours, Xerxes also
Had also, in cronycles as I reede, had 300,000
Thre hundred thousand straunge soudiours, alien
Withoutyn othir, that wern off Perse & Mede. 2236 mercenaries.
Which gan the erthe for to cure and sprede, His armies
Dried ryuers wher thei dede atteyne, covered the
Karff down hillis and made valis pleyne. 2240 earth and
levelled the hills
and plains.
- This was cheeff conceit off his fantasies, He desired to
To haue al erthe vnder subieccioun; have all the
Thouhte his power rauhte aboue the skies, world subject
Off surquedie and fals presumpcioun: 2244 to him: he
For as he dempte in his opynyoun, even believed
How in his power pleynli that it lai, that he could
Fro God aboue the heuene to take awai. rob God of the
heavens; but
the Lord will
not suffer
tyrants to reign
long.
- But thilke Lord that can the meeke enhaunse, 2248
And from ther sees the proude putte down,
A[nd] namli them that ha[ue] no remembraunse
To aduertise off wisdam and resoun,
To knowe the Lord, most myhti off renoun, — 2252
The Lord off Lordis, which, pleynli to compile,
Will suffre tirantis to regne but a while.
- And oon the merueile that euer I dede reede, [p. 172] Xerxes made a
Grettest and vnkouth pleynli onto me, 2256 great bridge
Is how Xerxes, kyng off Perse and Mede, from Asia to
For to shewe a special syngulerte, Europe —

2222. gret] fals R.

2236. straunge] strong H. 2250. And namli] Anamly R.

2251. aduertise] aduersit H. 2252. renoun] resoun R.

Out off Asie, ouer the Grete Se,
As seith myn auctour, whom I dar alegge, 2260
Into Europe made a myhti bregge.

a marvel that some men perhaps will not believe —but things that seem impossible can nevertheless be accomplished; Sum men paraunter will therat disdeyne,
And seyn it is a merueile nat credible;
Yit crafft in cas to such thyng mai atteyne, 2264
Which bi nature semeth an impossible:
And, as to me, it is a thyng odible,
Thynges tenpugne, awtentik and olde,
Which notable clerkis in ther daies tolde. 2268

and it is not nice to doubt the words of notable scholars. These newe men that han but lital seyn,
Nouther expert in crafft nor in nature,
For lak off resoun holde al such thyng veyn,
Thouh that it be remembred in scripture. 2272
For eueri meruail and eueri auenture
Is* straunge to hym, as I reherse can,
That lakketh the cause wherof the ground began.

Xerxes also had possession of Egypt and prepared to make war on the Spartans, This said[e] Xerxes hadde eek possessioun, 2276
Be the title off his fader Darie,
Off al Egipt, as maad is menciou[n];
But thei off Grece were to hym contrarie:
Wherfor he caste no lenger for to tarie, 2280
This proude prynce, but myhtili werreie
Lacedemonoys, which wolde hym nat obeie.

whom Demaratus warned and supplied with information written on tablets beneath a smooth surface of wax. But oon that was callid Demaratus,
Which off that cuntre hadde aforn be kyng 2284
And was exilid, the stori tellith thus,
That tyme with Xerxes in houshold abidyng,
Which loued that lond, for al his exilyng,
Gaff them warnyng, to saue hem fro myschaunce, 2288
Off Xerxes power and al his ordenaunce.

He wrot hem lettres grauen in a table,
All themprises* off Xerxes, out off doute,
Off al his stuff and people incomparable, 2292
And off his noumbre and his gret[e] route.

2260. alegge] wele legge H. 2261. a] om. R, H.

2262. ther at parawntir wil H.

2265. an] om. R — impossible R. 2272. that] om. R.

2274. Is] Is to B, J, R.

2284. afore hadde R. 2285. And] he H — thus] vs R.

2291. themprises] thenterprises B, R, J, H 5.

2292. Off] & H. 2293. 2nd and] & of H, R 3.

- The which[e] table curid was withoute
 Ful* subtili with wex iplanyd pleyne,
 That off his sonde ther was no lettre seyn. 2296
- Thus was thentent off Xerses first discourid
 Onto the Grekis, and al his fel* werkyng. The Greeks
 were captained
 by Leonidas,
 But in o thyng thei gretli wer assurid,
 Off trust thei hadde bi expert knowlechyng 2300
 In Leonidas, ther noble famous kyng,
 Which among Grekis, off prowesse & forsiht,
 Was in tho daies holde on the beste knyht.
- Off cheualrie callid the lode-sterre, 2304 their best
 knight,
 The sunne off knyhtod, that shon so briht & sheene,
 The berere up, bothe in pes and werre,
 And strengest piler his parti to meyntheene,
 The Grekis riht hand ther noblesse to susteene, 2308
 Charboncle off armys, merour off policie,
 And surest capteyn a feeld to reule & guie.
- And as myn auctour remembreth in his book,
 How in this cas he was nat rech[e]les, 2312 who led four
 thousand men
 to Thermopylæ,
 But in al haste foure thousand men he took,
 To lette the weies and comyng off Xerses.
 And bi an hill callid Termophiles,
 Wher Persiens began first ther viage, 2316
 He knyhtli caste to stoppe ther* passage.
- And secreli espieng the comyng
 Off kyng Xerses with strong apparaile,
 He, lik a knyht, made no tarieng, 2320 where he chose
 six hundred of
 the strongest,
 Ches out sexe hundred, armed in plate & maile,
 Which in such cas myhte most auaille,
 And in diffence and helpe off ther cuntre
 Wolde rather deie than from the feeld to fle. 2324
- And couertli thei took[e] ther loggyng,
 And kept hem cloos, till it drouh to nyht.
 And at ther dyner themsilff refresshyng,
 So as thei sat, in steel armed briht, 2328
 The kyng abraide lik a manli knyht,

2294. curid] coverid H.

2295. Ful] For B — pleynded R. 2298. fel] fals B, J, R.

2303. Was hoolde in tho daies R.

2310. surest] fairest H.

2313. al] al þe H. 2316. viage] visage R.

2317. ther] the B, H.

Into the feeld aforñ thei shulde gon,
Riht thus he saide among hem euerichon:

“Sirs, dine well,
and like good
warriors be pre-
pared to sup at
night with the
gods of the
nether world,
“Sires,” quod he, “now dyneth merili, 2332
And with good wyn afforceth your corage,
Lik goode knyhtis in purpos fynali,
For liff nor deth nat turnyng your visage,
But off assent, cast in your passage, 2336
As ye heer dyne now in especiall,
To suppe at nyht with goddis infernall.

holding together
without fear,
This is to meene, ye shul your liff iupartē, [p. 173]
As hardi knyhtis, proudli to prouide 2340
Withynne the feeld assonder nat departe,
But keep you cloos, & for no dreed deuide.
Desir off worshepe make to be your guide,
Your expert noblesse eternali tauaunce 2344
Be quyk report off newe remembraunce.

and having in
your hearts only
hope and good
trust of victory.
And hath this dai nothyng in memori[e],
Nouthē your richesse, your blood nor your kenreede,
Sauff onli hope and good trust off victorie, 2348
And hardi prowesse you to conducte and leede.
And thynkith knyhtli what shal be your meede,
With marcial palmys your renoun & your name
In the hiest place set in the Hous off Fame. 2352

“Though you
are but few in
number,
remember that
so long as you
stand united you
are invincible.”
And thowh ye been but a fewe in noumbre,
Lat in your hertis o thyng be fantasied:
Whil dyuysioun doth you nat encoumbre,
Victorie in armys mai you nat be denied; 2356
For nothyng is to conquest mor applied
Than trewe accord among your-silff to shewe,
Thowh ye in noumbre be [founde] but a fewe.”

Comforted by
these words,
they fell on the
Persians in their
tents at eve,
By* this counseil syngulerli notable, 2360
And be this kynges knyhtli* good language,
Thei reconforted heeld themsiluen* able
Ageyn ther fomen to holden ther passage.
And first off all, off hertli proud corage, 2364

2339. is] *om.* H.

2342. you] *om.* R — you cloos] to gedir H.

2347. nor] *ne* R. 2349. conduct] conduyt H.

2359. founde] *om.* R, J — a] *om.* J.

2360. By] But B, But bi R, J.

2361. kynges knyhtli] knyhtis kyngli B, R, J.

2362. themsiluen] themsilff B.

The Perciens mor mortali to greue,
Withynne ther tentis thei fill on hem at eue.

Thei off Perce idrownyd were with wyn:
This to seyen,* thoruh ther gret excesse
Thei lai and slepte lik as dronke swyn,
Ther wach nat kept: loo, how that dronkenesse
Causeth offte, off verrai reklesnesse,
Ful many a man, that wil nat take keep,
For to be moordred anyhtis in ther sleep.

2368 when, drowned
in wine, they lay
unguarded and
sleeping.

And as this kyng dede his knyhtis leede,
The Percien tentis assailyng sodenli,
Or thei wer war or token any heede,
Them for taffraie thei made an hidous cri.
Diffence was noon vpon ther parti;
For men mai knowe bi olde experience,
In folkis dronke mai be no resistence.

2376 With a hideous
cry they rushed
on

Out off noumbre thei slown off ther foon,
And cesed nat off al the longe nyht,
Till on the morwe that the sunne shoon,
That to beholde it was an ougli siht.
And proude Xerxes put anon to fliht —
Euer the laste that wolde his foon assaile,
And ay the firste that fledde in bataile!

2384 and slew
without ceasing
all the long
night.

In his fliht so faste awei he ran,
For theryn was hooli al his trust! —
And off gret trauaile anon this Xerxes gan
Off coward dreed to han so gret a thrust,
So drie he was, off salt sond and off dust.
And bi the weie serchyng ferr nor neer,
He nouter fond welle nor reuer.

2388 Proud Xerxes
fled as fast as he
could, and,
overcome by
thirst,

Off auenture a meri ground he fond,
The water trouble and bloodi off colour;
And Xerxes ther drank water with his hond,
Hym to refresshe in his dedli labour.
And, as he thouhte, he neuer drank licour
To hym mor holsom, so streiht[e] stood the caas, 2400
Confect with spices, pyment nor yprocas.

2396 drank blood-
stained water
from a marsh.

2368. þis is H — seyne B. 2370. Ther] The R.

2385. proude] *om.* H — to] to the H.

2393. nor] or H, and P, R 3. 2394. nor] ne H, R 3.

2395. meri] myry H, R 3, miry P, mery J, R, H. 5.

2401. nor] or H.

This was his first defeat, from which men may see that Fortune has no respect for the great possessions and might of princes who refuse to know God.

This was the firste myscheeff and the dreed
 In which that Xerses, the myhti prynce, stood.
 Heer men mai see, such as list take heed, 2404
 How geri Fortune, furious and wood,
 Wil nat spare, for richesse nor for good,
 Mihti pryncis, which list nat God to knowe,
 From ther estatis to brynge hem down ful lowe. 2408

With new presumption Xerxes proposed to rob the temples of the gods,

¶ O hatful serpent of hih presumpcioun,
 Ay onstaunchable with gredi vsurpyng,
 Be newe trouble, off fals sedicioun,
 Which list off pride receyue no warnyng: 2412
 For now Xerses, off Perse & Mede kyng,
 Purposid hath with odious apparaile
 The temple off goddis contagiousli tassaile.
 For as hym thouhte, it myhte nat suffise, 2416
 To gret exaumples off his outraious pride,
 How heer-toforn God dede hym chastise
 Bi manys hand, to sette his pompe a-side.
 But now off newe he gan ageyn prouide, 2420
 Bi sacrilege his myhti hand to dresse,
 To spoile Appollo and reue hym his richesse.

and sent four thousand men

Ther was in Delos a temple thilk[e] dai, [p. 174]
 Most statli bilt and set up be masouns, 2424
 Gret ymages, reliques, riche arai
 Off gold and stonys in sundri mansiouns;
 And ther Appollo to sundri questiouns
 Gaff redi answer, the stori tellith thus, 2428
 And he was callid Appollo Delphicus.

to pillage the shrine of the Delian Appollo.

Four thousand men Xerses thedir sente,
 Bi his auys chose out for the nonys,
 Ful clenli armed; & as thei thedir wente 2432
 To spoile the temple off gold and riche stonys,
 With sodeyn leuene thei wer brent, flessh & bonys,
 With tempest, thunder, hail & hidous reyn
 Consumpt echon and neuer afftir seyn. 2436

But great Appollo in his indignation consumed them with lightning.

The grete Appollo, which shyneth briht in heuene,
 Hadde off this Xerses gret indignacioun,
 Which made his peple be consumpt with leuene,

2406. nor] ne R. 2408. to] om. H.
 2417. outraious] contrarious R.
 2428. answers R. 2434. thei] the R.
 2435. tempest] om. H. 2439. be] to be H.

- In cruel punshyng off his presumpcioun. 2440
 Yit he purposed, to his confusioun,
 Sithe on the lond he nothyng myhte wynne,
 Vpon the se a werre to begynne.
- Gan to make so gret an ordenaunce, 2444
 That his nauie couered al the se:
 Yit Neptunus thouhte hym nat tenhaunce,
 Withynne his* boundis to ha[ue] no liberte;
 For Themystodes with a smal meyne, 2448
 Beside a cite callid Salamyne,
 Hym & his shippis brouhte onto ruyne.
- Yit, as I fynde, this proude kyng Xerxes
 Hadde on his parti Themydora, the queene 2452
 Off Halcarnois, which put hirself in pres,
 Armed in platis that shon ful briht and sheene.
 And thenarme off Xerxes to susteene,
 This womman fauht[e] lik a fell woluesse, 2456
 And many Greek that dai she dede oppresse.
- It was a straunge merueil for to heere,
 To seen a woman so sturdi off visage;
 Yit men expert aldai may seen and lere, 2460
 Thei be bi nature ful cruel off corage,
 And no cowardis founde off ther language.
 Sett at assai, and thanne it shal be seene,
 Wher thei be feerful ther quarel to susteene! 2464
- Thei mai off meeknesse shewe a fair pretense, —
 Sum serpent is off colour siluer sheene,
 And summe floures, ful fressh off apparence,
 Growe on thistles rouh[e], sharp and keene, 2468
 And summe that been angelic to seene,
 And verai heuenli, with ther golden tressis,
 Been at a preeff[e] verrai leonessis.
- To seyn the sothe, a poore man mai be shent, — 2472
 I dar no mor[e] speke off this mateere. . . .
 But kyng Xerxes, for al his proude entent,
 Al his nauie and his peple ifeere
 Wer put to fliht & outraied off ther cheere. 2476

Xerxes next began a war on the sea, but his ships were scattered by Themistocles at Salamis,

although he was aided by the queen of Halicarnassus, who fought like a she-wolf.

It was a strange thing: yet every day men may see that women are no cowards,— at least, of their words.

Some serpents gleam like silver, bright flowers grow on thistles, and some women who look like angels are on occasion veritable lionesses.

But as a poor man may be ruined for telling the truth, I'll say no more. King Xerxes himself was badly wounded.

2445. nauie] name R.

2447. his] hir B, H, J, hyr H 5, her R. 2448. Themistocles P.

2455. And thenarme] The army P.

2461. Thei be bi] Thai beene of H, bei be of R 3.

2462. off] at H. 2464. quarellis H.

Ther shippis drownyd among the wawes rude,
That non abod off al that multitude.

but again he
summoned his
forces against
the Greeks.

Kyng Xerses hurt and woundid mortali,
Onnethe he myhte the grete peyne endure; 2480
His quakyng herte quit hym so cowardli, —
On se and lond such was his auenture.
And yit ageyn his damages to recure,
Thre hundred thousand off fihteres he gan call, 2484
Vpon Grekis off newe for to fall.

Themistocles,
knowing what
a coward he
was, informed
him that his
bridge was
broken,

A myhti duc callid Mardonyus
Was capteyn maad his peple for to leede;
But Themystodes, myn auctour tellith thus, 2488
Knowing off Xerses the cowardise & dreede,
A letre made for to be sent in deede,
Enfourmyng hym, bi Grekis gret outrage
How off his bregge was broken the passage. 2492

and Xerxes fled
in a boat with
one servant,

Off which[e] merueil whan ther cam tidyng
To kyng Xerses, he afftir anon riht,
As he that was aferd[e] off ech thyng, 2496
Ful lik a coward took hym to the fliht.
Fledde in a boot, lik a coward knyht,
Off al his peple ther wer no mo iseyn
Tawaite vpon hym, sauff a chaumberleyn.

his army
dispersed and
dying of
privations.

Al his peple departed heer and yonder, 2500
Stondyng in myscheeff and gret indigence;
To many a coost thei wente and rood asonder,
Pyned with hunger, lakked ther dispence,
Punshed also with onwar pestilence, 2504
Feeble off trauaile myhte nat endure
For impotence to karien ther armure.

The roads were
full of dead
bodies, the soil
stained with
blood and the air
polluted.
Ravenous fowls
fed upon the
corpses.

Alas ech wai[e] lai ful off careynes; [p. 175]
The soil with blood[e] steyned & the greene; 2508
The hair terrible off pathes & off pleynes,
That no man myhte endure it nor susteene,
The sauour was so odious and oncleene.

2485. off] *om.* R. 2488. thus] vs R. 2490. be] *om.* H.

2498. wer] was H. 2499. sauff] but H.

2502. rode & went R. 2503. payned H.

2508. steyned] soiled H.

2510. That no man myht] *þat men myht nat H — myht
endure it] myht it endure R.*

2511. The] ther H — sauour] fauour R — and] & so R.

- Raueynous foulis, ful homli in ther siht, 2512
 Themsilff to feede vpon the corps aliht.
- Thre hundred thousand off Perciens wer slayn, 2516
 Which Mardonyus aforñ ful proudli ladde.
 Off which[e] tidyng kyng Xerses was nat fayn,
 But for distresse and sorwe gan to madde.
 An[d] oon the laste myscheeff that he hadde,
 Was whan Thymon, a noble Grekissh knyht,
 Xerses disconfited & put his men to fliht. 2520
- This Thymon was sone to Meltiades, 2524
 His fadir whilom off Athenes kyng,
 Which last off all outraied hath Xerses, —
 Sauff off his eende ther fill a-nother thyng:
 Artabanus, ful sleihty in werkyng,
 Which to Xerses was nat suspect in deede,
 Compassid his deth, in Bochas as I reede.
- This Artaban was prouost off his hous 2528
 And an officer most especial, —
 With his seuene sonys strong & despitous,
 Vpon a nyht furious and fatal,
 Fill vpon Xerses in his paleis roial. 2532
 And in his stori as it is remembrid,
 On pecis smale thei han hym al dismembrid.
- This was off Xerses the laste fynal meede, 2536
 Off his hih pride the funeral guerdoun;
 From his too kyngdamys off Perse & [eek] Mede
 Froward Fortune hath hym plukked down.
 What mai auaille the dominacioun
 Off such pryncis as holde hemseluen evene 2540
 For to been egal with goddis hih in hevene?
- Men list nat knowe such chaunges for no preeff,
 A[nd] namli pryncis in ther gret puissaunces:
 Geyn ertheli pereiles & al worldli myscheeff 2544
 Thei can prouide hem & set* ordynaunces,
 As thei that dreede Fortunis variaunces;
 But to Godward thei take litil heede,
 For the gret richesse which thei do possede. 2548

Three hundred thousand Persians were slain,

and Timon, son of Miltiades, completed their discomfiture.

Not long after, Artabanus and his seven sons fell upon Xerxes in his palace and slew him.

Thus ends the lordship of princes who consider themselves equal to the gods in heaven.

They take little heed to God, although careful enough to guard themselves against worldly mischance.

2513. aliht] lihte H. 2517. to] forto R.
 2519. Cymon P — grekis R. 2521. Cymon P.
 2523. hath] om. R. 2529. speciall H.
 2537. eek] om. J, R 3, eke of P, eek of H 5.
 2543. And] A R — gret] om. R, J.
 2545. set] settyñ B. 2548. richesse] myscheeff H.

- If they hear
of an earth-
quake they flee,
and if a
- Yiff thei mai heren off an erthe-quaue
To forn it falle, or any tokne see,
Than will thei gon anon themsilff to saue
Out off ther houses, & from ther toun[e]s flee, 2552
To putte ther liff the mor in surete,
List ther beeldyng, maad off gret costage,
Fill vpon hem in that mortal rage.
- horse run away
they will put
him under a
padlock, but
small care do
they take of
their own souls.
- Or yiff an hors ronne out off his stable, 2556
Breke his coleer thikke, double & long,
Men will ordeyne a lok off iren able
To keepe hym in, be he neuer so strong.
And thus men can redressyn eueri wrong 2560
Touchyng the bodi, bi gret avisynesse;
Sauff for the soule thei will nothyng redresse.
- If a river
overflows its
banks they
endeavour to
change its
course,
- Whan a ryuer passeth ferr his boundis,
Boilith vpward, fynt no resistance, 2564
Wynneth land & ouerfloweth groundis,
Drowneth toun[e]s with his violence, —
Yit men will trauaile to fynden a diffence;
To turne his cours sum weie shal be souht, 2568
But toward God men thynke lite or nouht.
- and against
illness they use
all manner of
medicines, but
to God they look
for no remedy.
- Ageyn siknesse men seeke medicynes,
Letuaries and dyuers pociouns,
Serche in phesik sundri disciplynes 2572
Them to diete in ther transgressiouns,
Restoratyves and eek confeccious,
But onto Godward, in this present liff,
Men nat trauaile for no confortatiff. 2576
- They will
undergo the
utmost fatigue
and hardship to
win treasure and
put their lives
in peril for
things that are
transitory,
- Men ther bodies will putten in distresse
Off fals desir and coueitous feruence,
Onli tacroche and wynne gret richesse,
Suffre cold, labour and violence, 2580
And nouth spare for gold nor for dispence
To vndirfonge pereilles* off veynglorie,
Onli for thynges that be transitorie.
- sailing by
unknown seas
and fighting
many a battle;
- Thei passe mownteyns & many hidous roche, 2584
In hope it sholde to ther entent auaile,
To many mortal monstre thei approche,

2549. an] one R. 2550. toknes H. 2552. housen H.
2562. redresse] dresse H.
2575. this] his R. 2581. 2nd for] om. H.
2582. pereilles] peynes B.

And be many vnkouth se thei saile,
Iupartē ther liff in werre and in bataile, 2588
Be many daunger & many streiht thei ride
For worldli tresour, which shal no while abide.

But toward goodis that be perdurable, [p. 176] but towards
Ful lite or nouht ther hertis thei enclayne; 2592 eternal pos-
Nor to the heuenli cuntre most notable, sessions they
Thei wil nat lefft up nouter hed nor chyne, — never look.
Toward the speeris off Phebus & Lucyne,
Castyng ther stremys to vs fro so ferre, 2596
Which to considre all worldli men doon erre.

What myhte auaille the grete couetise Of what avail
Off kyng Xerxes in [his] estaat roial? was the
Or the gret people, which ye han herd deuise, — 2600 ambition of
Ten hundred thousand; — the people was nat smal. Xerxes! What
But, for al that, he hadde an hidous fal, did his million
Whan that he was, as is toforn remembrid, men ac-
On pecis smale pitousli dismembrid. 2604 complish?

¶ Lenvoye.

THIS tragedie put vs in remembraunce
Off thonsekir flatryng & blyndnesse
Bothe off Fortune & off hir variaunce,
And off hir ougli froward doubilnesse, 2608
In Xerxes shewed, for al his gret richesse, —
To vs declaryng, pleynli in figure,
A raueynous prynce mai no while endure.

Kyng Xerxes hadde vnder his obeisaunce 2612
Al Perse & Mede, the stori berth witnessse;
Thouhte al erthe to litil in substauunce
To staunche the etik off his gredynesse,
A frett off hauyng put hym in such distresse. 2616
Whos fyn declarid, bi record off scripture,
A raueynous prynce mai no while endure.

He made also an odious ordenaunce,
Off surquedie his power for to dresse, 2620
To robbe the goddis, maugre ther puissaunce,
And spoile ther templis, off froward wilfulnesse,

2593. cuntre] company R. 2596. fro] frome H — so] om. R.
2600. ye] om. R. 2603. is] om. R. 2609. grete] om. R.
2621. the] ther R.

Take ther tresours ageyn al rihtwisnesse.
 But thei hym shewed, off sodeyn auenture, 2624
 A raueynous prynce mai no while endure.

but great Apollo took vengeance, and God will not suffer such men to last long. Grete Appollo took on his men vengauce
 With onwar tempest, for al ther sturdynesse,
 Leuene and thunder brouht hem to myschaunce, 2628
 Guerdoun most hable ageyn ther gret falsnesse, —
 In pryncis hertis, pleyntli to expresse.
 Who be raueyne richessis will recure,
 God wil nat suffre hym longe to endure. 2632

Noble Princes, think often of the fall of proud Xerxes; avoid robbery and ravin, and you shall endure. Noble Pryncis, stable in your constaunce,
 Ye that desire to stonde in sekirnesse,
 Remembreth offte vpon the fatal chaunce
 Off proude Xerxes and his cursidnesse, 2636
 Your-silff disposyng in your hih noblesse,
 Yiff that ye list your statis to assure,
 Escheweth raueyne & ye shal longe endure!

[How Artabanus moordred kyng xerxes and how
 aftir himsilf was moordred.]¹

Bochas would have put aside his pen, had not Artabanus, the murderer of Xerxes, appeared before him. **N**EXT these tragedies, wepyng & dolerous, 2640
 Whil Bochas stynte, & wolde ha been in pes,
 A knyht appered callid Artabanus,
 Which hadde afor[n]e moordred kyng Xerxes;
 And gan his compleynt for to putte in pres, 2644
 Ful concludyng, to speke in wordes pley[n],
 Who vseth moordre, bi moordre he shal be slayn.

Artabanus, Xerxes' provost, This Artabanus, be record off writyng,
 With Xerxes prouost whilom, as I reede, 2648
 Falsli conspired be sleihte off his werkyng,
 For to be kyng bothe off Perse & Mede,
 Hauyng seuene sonys, which that wer in deede
 Worthi knyhtis, manli and riht strong, 2652
 Al-be ther fader was set to do gret wrong.

presumed to usurp the throne of Persia, and after Xerxes' death For he presumed bi vsurpacioun,
 In Perse and Mede to quenche the cleer[e] liht,
 And trouble the lyne off iust successioun: 2656

2629. hable] *om.* H — ageyn] *geyn* J, *gein* P.

2631. richesse R. 2636. his] of his R.

2640. dolorous H.

2641. Whil] Whan R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 73 recto.

- For so as he off force and nat off riht,
 Nothyng rasemblyng to a trewe knyht,
 The moordre off Xerses falsli dede ordeyne,
 Riht so he caste to moordre his sonys tweyne. 2660
- And to concludre pleynli and nat tarie,
 The said[e] kyng that callid was Xerses,
 Hadde too sonys, the yongest callid Darie,
 And the tother named Artaxerses, 2664
 Which, as the stori reherseth dout[e]les,
 Wer be discent bor[e]n for to succede,
 Afftir ther fader to regne in Perse & Mede.
- The moordre off Xerses outward was nat knowe, 2668
 Nor how Artabanus hadde the tresoun wrouht,
 Till afftirward withynne a litil throwe
 He hadde off newe forged out & souht
 Fals odious treynes that wer neuer thouht: 2672
 Tolde Artaxerses, as he gan with hym rowne,
 How Darie caste to ocupie the crowne,
 And how the deth off Xerses was ordeyned [p. 177]
 Onli be Darie and be noon othir wiht. 2676
 Wherupon, which auhte be compleyned,
 Artaxerses prouyded anon riht
 The slauhtre off Darie; & so, ageyn al riht,
 This yonger brother in his innocence 2680
 Was falsli slayn, and dede non offence.
- Ye wete, be whom this tresoun was compassid,
 Twen brethre tweyne to make dyuysioun,
 The yonger slayn, & nothyng hath* trespasid, 2684
 Most redi were to the destruccioun
 Off Artaxerses; for in conclusioun,
 Whan the brethre moordred wer in deede,
 Artabanus thouhte to succede. 2688
- But Artaxerses, be pleyn instruccioun
 Off oon that callid was* Baccar[i]us,
 Be toknys kneuh the couert fals tresoun

sought to
 kill his two sons.
 Darius and
 Artaxerxes.

He told Artaxerxes that
 Darius had set
 his mind on
 occupying the
 throne,

and that he
 had been the
 cause of his
 father's death
 and was also
 plotting to kill
 his brother.

As a result,
 Darius was
 slain in his
 innocence.

Artaxerxes
 was informed of
 Artabanus'
 treason,

2668. Xerse H. 2672. neuer wer R. 2673. Artaxarses H.
 2677. auhte] ouht to H. 2680. yonger] yonge R.
 2682. wite R, wote H.
 2684. yonger] younger brothir R — hath nothyng B — hath]
 had R.
 2688. for to H.
 2690. was callid B, R — Baccaryus H 5, Baccabassus P.
 2691. kneuh] know R.

- Off this forsaid double Artabanus, 2692
 And how that he be treynes outraious
 Hadde Xerses slayn, as ye han herd toforn,
 And Darie appechid, wherbi that he was lorn.
- and sought to bring him to reckoning. But as he was not powerful enough to do this alone, But off this vnkouth straunge tresoun wrouht, 2696
 Whan Artaxerses hadde knowlechyng,
 Bi gret auys weies he hath souht,
 Artabanus to brynge to rek[e]nyng.
 But speciali he dradde hym off o thyng: 2700
 He feeble was to brynge this thyng aboute,
 Off his seuene sonys he stood in so gret doute.
- he commanded all the worthies of Persia to come in haste, But for tacomplisshe fulli his entent 2704
 Ful secreli, this was his ordenaunce:
 To all the worthi he hath his lettres sent,
 Duellyng in Perse vnder his obeisaunce,
 Withoute excus or lenger attendaunce,
 Armed echon, and in especial 2708
 To come in haste onto his court roial.
- armed to his court. No one knew his purpose. Cause off ther komyng was to hem nat knowe, 2712
 The kynges purpos was holden so secre
 And kept so cloos, bothe from hih & lowe,
 That to his menyng no man was pryve,
 Except the kyng saide he wolde see
 What noubre off men, yiff it cam to neede,
 In his diffence he myht[e] gadre* and leede. 2716
- Among others, Artabanus came, armed only in mail. And among other cam Artabanus 2720
 Onto the court, and list nat for to faile, —
 A man that was cruel and coraious,
 Ful off sleihtis in al his gouernaile,
 Which thilke tyme armyd was in maile;
 For he with hym non other armour ladde,
 Sauff on his bak an haberioun he hadde.
- To him Artaxeres said, "My coat of mail is too short, I should like to exchange habergeons with you." Thanne Artaxerses, beyng in his strengthe, 2724
 To hym abraide off fals affeccioun:
 "For that my maile wantith off his lengthe,
 I wolde with the change myn haberioun."
 The tother hauyng noon euel suspeccioun, 2728
 Ongirt hymself[e], wolde no lenger bide,
 Bothe suerd & dagger cast hem ferr a-side.

2702. stood in] hadde R, J, had P.

2711. so] om. R. 2712. frome both H. 2716. gadrede B.

2717. And] om. R. 2724. beyng] kyng R — his] om. H.

- And whil that he threuh off his haberioun,
 And with the maile stoppid was his siht,
 He beyng naked, for short conclusioun,
 The kyng out pullith a suerd[e] keene & briht;
 And thoruh the herte he rooff hym anon riht.
 And afftir that, off indignacioun
 Took his seuene sonys & cast hem in prisoun.
- Off ther eende what sholde I mor endite,
 Nor off ther deth make a digressioun?
 God mai his vengauce a while weel respite,
 But moordre will out, & al such fals tresoun.
 And for Artaban hadde a condicioun,
 Falsli to moordre, as ye toforn ha[ue] seyn,
 With onwar moordre he guerdonyd was ageyn.
- Thus euer moordre requereth for his wages
 Sclaundre inportable, odious for to heere, —
 A woord diffamous, most foul in al languages,
 The soun horrible bi report to appeere,
 A clips duryng, whos dirknesse may nat cleere;
 For this woord moordre, most ougli & onfair,
 Bi a rehersyng infectith al the hair.

2732 And as
 Artabanus drew
 his habergeon
 off over his
 head, Artaxerxes
 stabbed him to
 the heart with
 his sword.

2736

Thus murder is
 punished with
 murder,

2740

2744

and there is no
 word more foul
 in any language;
 its spoken sound
 infects all the
 air.

2748

[Off duk Palantus, and Spartenois werred them of
 Missene for rauyssing their maidenens.]¹

- A FFTIR the deth[e] and [the] fatal cas
 And pitous moordre off Artabanus,
 Next in ordre appered to Bochas
 A myhti duc, callid Palantus,
 Sone off a knyht Inamed Arathus.
 Which was exiled, thowh he no tresoun mente,
 Out off his cite, that callid was Tarente.
- Vpon his exil he sore gan compleyne,
 Besechyng Bochas to getyn hym a space
 Withynne his book, to write his greuous peyne,
 Al-be that he whilom stood in grace

2752 Next in order
 appeared
 Phalanthus, son
 of Aracus, who
 was exiled from
 Tarentum.

2756

[p. 178] Fortune raised
 him from a poor
 knight to the
 estate of duke

2760

2732. his] be H. 2734. pullith] plukkith H.
 2738. Off] And of H. 2739. a] om. H. 2740. weel] om. R.
 2741. fals] om. R. 2746. Importable H — for] om. H.
 2752. the] om, H, R, J, R 3, H 1, H 5, H 4, H 3, R 2, Sloane;
 Add. has the.
 2755. Phalantus P. 2756. Inamed] named R — Aratus P.
 2758. Tharente H.

¹ MS. J leaf 73 verso.

Be glad aspectis off Fortunys face;
 For she hym reised be fauour off hir myht 2764
 To dukis estat from a ful poore knyht.

at the time when the Spartans made war on the Messenians, who had ravished their maidens during a religious festival.

But ceriousli this mater to conveie,
 How he was maad[e] duk & gouernour,
 Whan Sparteyns gan mortali werreie 2768
 Geyn Messeniens, as seith myn auctour,
 With gret costage and deligent labour.
 And cause was this; for thei with myhti hond
 Rauesshid be force all maidenys off that lond. 2772

For this peple, now named Spartenoyis,
 As the stori cleerli can deuise,
 Wer callid afor[n]e Lacedemonoyis,
 In armis preued, manli and riht wise. 2776
 And whil thei dede a solempne sacrefise
 Onto ther goddis, the peple off Messenye
 Rauesshid ther maidenys, or thei it koude espie.

So the Spartans laid siege to Messenia and vowed never to depart until the town was won.

On which[e] wrong for to do vengauce, 2780
 The Spartenois kauhte indignacioun;
 And off assent, with al ther hool puissaunce,
 Thei leide a siege round aboute the toun.
 And off o will and oon affeccoun 2784
 Thei made a vow* the siege whan thei begunne,
 Neuer to departe til the toun wer wonne.

**[[H]ow Spartenois lay ten yere atte sege and how
 their wyves displesid with their longe absence
 sent hem a message vt infra.]¹**

They lay before it ten years, until their wives at home grew impatient at their absence and sent a message, telling them that they were tired of living alone,

Afor the toun fulli ten yeer thei lai,
 And fro the siege, as thei hadde maad ther oth, 2788
 Thei nat departed nouter nyht nor dai,
 But stille abood and nat assonder goth.
 Theroff ther wyues beyng at hom wer wroth;
 To ther husbandis a massager thei sente, 2792
 Vnder these woordis declaryng ther entente.

2764. off] in H. 2765. ful] om. R, J.

2775. toforne H.

2785. a vow] avow B.

2787. Afforne H. 2789. nor] ne H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 73 verso, inner margin.

Saide it was nat accordyng with resoun,
 Thei lik widwes to lyue disconsolat,
 Withoute confort or consolacioun, 2796
 Ferr from ther husbandis to stonde al desolat,
 Myscheuys considred, that fall in ech estat
 Be long absence, which ech man sholde dreede,
 Thoruh duyers siknesse that fall in womanheede. 2800

“The tid abit nat for no maner man,
 Nor stynt his cours for no creature;
 And hard it is, as we reherse can,
 Thyng to withstonde that kom[e]th off nature. 2804
 Harm doon be kynde is froward to recure;
 And ther is founde ful litil sekirnesse,
 Wher-as nature afforceth brotilnesse.

and that if their husbands didn't look out, they might find that others had taken their places;

This litil sonde auhte inouh suffise, 2808
 To declare damage that mai fall
 Be long absence, folkis that be wise.
 Sumtyme departed, ageyn men may nat call;

for there is little security where nature affores frailty.

That seelde is seyn, in loue doth appall; 2812
 And nothyng mor maketh wyues erre,
 Than disseueraunce off folk that be in werre.”

This was theeffect, pleyntli in substaunce,
 Sent to ther husbandis, which at the siege lai, 2816
 Compleynyng thei hadde had no plesaunce
 Space off ten yeer, as in louys plai;
 But desolat, in sorwe and gret affrai.
 Ther liff thei ladde, affermyng in sentence, 2820
 Cause off ther constreynt was ther long absence.

And whan the lettres wer at the siege rad
 To forn the cite in al ther mortal stryues,
 Thei wer astonyd and gan to wexe sad, 2824
 And verrai veri almost off ther lyues,
 For to considre the compleynt off ther wyues.

When the message was read at the siege, there was great consternation,

Till ther capteyn a* remedie out souht,
 Be whos counsail euene thus thei wrouht: 2828
 First olde knyhtis that hadde the siege sworn
 It for tacomplishe, and cast hem to be trewe,
 His counsail was, as thei hadde hiht befor,
 To holde ther promys & theroff nothyng rewe; 2832
 But yonge knyhtis, that wer come off newe,

and Phalantbus suggested that the old knights should keep their vow and remain, but that the younger ones could return home if they wished.

2797. al] *om.* R. 2812. seldom P. 2814. folkis R.

2816. the] *om.* R, H. 2818. Spaces R.

2821. 1st ther] *om.* R. 2827. a] and B.

Mihte as thei list[e], freli at ther will,
Chese wher thei wolde go or bide still.

And heerupon for ther most auail, 2836

In haste ther capteyn, as maad is remembraunce,
Off hih prudence gaff hem this counsail:

That knyhtis olde, lich ther assuraunce,
Sholde off the siege haue the gouernaunce, 2840

And yonge knyhtis, most fressh & weel beseyn,
Sholde from the siege hom be sent ageyn.

This they did;
and when they
reached home
they decided
to exchange
wives and each
to take the first
one that came
to hand.

Thei made among hem a ful straunge
ordenaunce [p. 179]

At ther hom comyng: withoute difference 2844

To entirchaunge ther wuyes for plesaunce,
And take hir first that cam to ther presence.

This was thaccord among hem in sentence,
Most redi weie, to ther opynyoun, 2848

To engendrure and procreacioun.

So, without
quarreling, they
misused one
another's wives;
and the children
born to them
were called
Partheniæ,
which means
engendered in
adultery.

Ther was among hem quarel nouthur striff
In this mateer, nor no variaunce;
For eueri man mysused othres wiff 2852

To ther desirs as was to hem plesaunce.

And thus childre thoruh this ordenaunce
That wer engendrid, the cas is thus befall,
Parthenois men dede hem afftir call. 2856

Which in our tunge, to speke in woordes pleyne,

Afftir the Greek, who list considre and see,
Is no mor[e], platli for to seyne,
Than thilke childre which engendrid be 2860

In auoutrie: wherfor, in that cuntre,
Parthenois off custum thei wer namyd,
Born off wombes which that wer diffamyd.

The result was,
that no one had
a just claim to
his inheritance,

The fals occasioun off this auoutrie 2864
Caused afftir gret myscheeff & damage,

That no man koude, as for his partie,
Be successioun, whan he cam to age,
Be title off riht cleyme his heritage; 2868

For wher a lyne falsli doth proceede,
Hard is to knowe be riht who shal succede.

2835. abyde R.

2836. heerupon] therupon R.

2840. 1st the] om. H. 2842] om. R.

2849. and] and mak R. 2850. nouthur] nor H.

The disturbaunce off fals successioun
 And titles cleymed, afforced with gret myht, 2872 as always
happens where
there is
adultery.
 Wher that auoutrie hath domynacioun
 And is supportid off will & nat off riht,
 And cleym off trouthe hath lost his cleer[e] liht, —
 Thouh ther parties myhti been and stronge, 2876
 God wil nat suffre thei shal endure longe.

And Spartennois peisying all these thynges,
 How fals assurance was in ther lynage,
 The ientil blood troublid first off kynges; 2880 No one knew
who his father
was; no father
was sure of his
own son;
 For no man knew, off hih nor low parage,
 His owne fader be liknesse off visage, —
 Nor fader non, bi his gret errour,
 Koude yeue no tittle to his successour. 2884

Wherupon folwed a gret myschaunce,
 Hatful to heere: thoruhout the cuntre
 Ech man troubled in his cuntenance,
 Who sholde cleyme be any liberte 2888 and as no one
was able to
establish a
valid claim to
his own land,
 To entre his lond or to stonde fre,
 Such doubte thei hadde, ech man for his partie;
 So importable was the[r] auoutrie!

This grete myscheeff, who-so taketh heed, 2892 they feared that
they would fall
into poverty,
and decided
to flee their
country and try
to win another.
 Be long processe made hem to knowe & see
 How thei wer able, as be likliheed,
 For ther outrages to* fall in pouerte.
 And off assent thei cast hem for to fle, 2896
 Vnder a capteyn, be strong & myhti hond,
 Fro* that cuntre to wynne sum other lond.

And, as I reede, thei ches duk Palantus,
 Off whom I spak, to gouerne ther passage, 2900 Duke
Phalanthus was
chosen captain;
and they left
without taking
leave,
 Takyng no leue, the stori tellith thus,
 At ther departyng, begynnyng ther viage,
 Thei wer so confus off cheer & off visage:
 For ther was noon off al that grete route, 2904
 To chese his fader but that stood in doute.

2878. Spartennois] Partennoys R, Parthenois J, P.

2881. lough nor hih H.

2895. to] forto B.

2898. Fro] For B, R, J.

2902. At] And R.

confused and overcome with shame, and arrived at Tarentum, a city in Naples.

Thei heeld hemsilff[e] verrai[ly] ashamed,
 And for shame out off that lond thei wente,
 Lik a people disclaundred & diffamed 2908
 Thoruh thauoutrie, to which thei dede assente.
 And to a cite that callid was Tharente,
 Which stant in Poile, a myhti strong cuntre,
 This duk Palantus cam with his meyne. 2912

There Duke Phalanthus expelled the citizens and long governed the country in prosperity,

And ther he putte, thoruh his gret[e] myht,
 The citeseyn[e]s out off that cite,
 And gat Tharente ful lik a manli knyht,
 And ther abood in long prosperite 2916
 As governour & duk off that cuntre,
 Till that his peepel be fals collusioun
 Hym to depryue souht out occasioun.

until he was exiled by his subjects in his old age. Men cannot put their trust in the commons.

Thei hym exilid whan he was fall in age. 2920
 Loo, what it is in comouns to assure!
 Stormy off herte, onseur off ther corage,
 That seelde or neuer ther frenship doth endure. 2924
 Men mai to-dai ther fauour weel recure,
 And tomorwe lat set it at a preeff:
 Thei rathest hyndre whan men stonde at myscheeff.

[Off Ceson Quincius exiled and Graccus take prisonere.]¹

Ceso Quintius and Gracchus, prince of the Æqui, next began to complain with one voice to Bochas.

I CAN no mor reherse off Palantus, [p. 180]
 Duk & ledere off Parthennois; 2928
 But I will tell how Ceson Quincius
 Cam tofor Bochas, with a ful pitous vois
 His tale gan, and* Graccus prince off Equois, —
 Bothe attonys gan ther song entune, 2932
 Most doolfulli to pleyne vpon Fortune.

Ceso was banished Rome, although a dictator.

This myhti prince Ceson Quincius
 Compleyned first, as maad is mencionn,
 How thei off Rome wer contrarious 2936
 And felli wrouhte to his destruccioun,
 And ful oniustli bashed hym the toun,

2906. verraily] verrai MSS., very P.

2929. Ceso Quintius P.

2930. ful] om. H.

2931. and] how B, J, and how P, H 5, R 3.

¹ MS. J. leaf 74 recto.

- And natwithstandyng he was a dictatour,
Hym to confounde thei dede ther labour. 2940
- Cause off his exil compassid, as I reede,
That he was slouh, thei saide, & necligent
Hym to defende touchyng apel in deede,
[Which] that ageyn hym was wrouht off fals
entent. 2944
- Yit Cincinnatus, his fader, be assent
Paide for amendis, as seyn cronycleris,
Met out off lond drauht off thre arblasteris.
- Yit his enmyes wolde nat be content, 2948
But proceded that he was exiled,
Dede execucioun off his iugement,
As in his story ful pleyntli is compiled,
He afftir neuer myht be reconciled, 2952
Which I ha[ue] pite to put in remembraunce, —
So litel offence sholde ha[ue] so gret vengauce!
- Gracchus off Rome, callid Cloellius,
Prynce off Equoys, myn auctour seith the same, 2956
Was in his tyme notable and glorious,
And a gret duk, ful renommed off fame.
But how the peple of Equois first took name,
Vnder support, that no man ha[ue] disdeyn, 2960
I will the processe declare heer in certeyn.
- John Bochas seith, ther is a nacioun
Which that first[e] wer callid Hunois,
And secondli also bi successioun 2964
Off ful long tyme named Anathois;
And aldirlast men callid hem Equois,
Lich as I trowe myn auctour seith the same,
Off hors most swiff thei took[e] first the name. 2968
- And as it is remembred in sentence,
Bi ther manheed and famous hardynesse,
Geyn Alisandre thei made a strong diffence
On hors[e]bak thoruh ther gret swiftnesse. 2972

The Romans
said he
neglected to
defend himself
in a suit,
although his
father Cincin-
natus made
amends for him.

But his enemies
were unfor-
giving and he
was never after
recalled.

Clælius
Gracchus was
prince of the
Æqui,

who were first
called Hunois
and afterwards
Anathois,

and fought
bravely against
Alexander in
the Caucasus,

2943. apel] the apple P, thappell R 3.

2944. that] om. J, P. 2949. proceede R.

2950. execucioun] extorcioun J.

2951. As] & H — his] om. R.

2959. Aequoys P — first took] took first ther R, J, P — name]
be name H, per name R 3, ther name H 5.

2960. haue] will H. 2961. heer] om H.

2970. manhode R, manhod H.

- Beside the hill[e], pleyntli to expresse,
Which in cronycles is callid Caucasus,
This peple off Equois were victorious.
- and were great
horsemen,
conquering
Ethiopia and
India and all
Egypt.
- To ther noblesse, pleyntli as I fynde, 2976
Nothyng in erthe was mor expedient
In ther conquest off Ethiopie and Inde,
As hors most swiff, seruyng ther entent,
Therbi conqueryng al the orient. 2980
So gret prowesse was in ther passage,
That Equois brouhte al Egipt in seruage.
- Wherever they
rode they got
plunder; but
when Gracchus
incited them
against the
Romans, he
was beaten by
Cincinnatus,
a poor but
worthy knight.
- Thus wher-euer Equois dede ride,
Thei gat gret good to ther possessioun. 2984
And Gracchus was ther gouvernour & guide,
Which bi his steryng and fals suggestioun
Ageyn the Romeyns fill in rebellioun;
But to withstonde hym thei sent out anon riht 2988
Cyncynatus, preued a ful good knyht.
- He was weel trusted and knowe in the toun,
And for his prudence chose a dictatour.
His lifode smal and his possessioun, 2992
Al-be he was a worthi werreieur,
Which hath venquysshid be his knyhtli labour
The said[e] Gracchus, for al his gret poweer,
And hom to Rome brouht hym prisoneer. 2996
- Cincinnatus
was granted
a triumph,
and Gracchus
died in prison,
- Cyncynatus in [his] char was set,
Callid Quincius, for this gret victorie,
And most solempneli with senatours met,
Which gaff to hym, for tencrece his glorie, 3000
Laude off tryumphe, to putte hym in memorie.
And Gracchus afftir, for his rebellioun,
With cheynys bounde, cast in a derk prisoun.
- which is an
evidence to us
that Fortune is
always false and
deceitful.
- And ther he deide in ful gret myscheeff, 3004
Afftir his conquestis first famous & notable.
An evidence to vs and a gret preeff,
How that Fortune is ai fals & onstable,
Euer double, froward and deceyuable, 3008
The fall off Gracchus declare can ful weel,
That whilom sat so hih vpon hir wheel.

2974. callid is H.

2980. Therbi] gretly H.

2983. ride] abyde R. 2988. out] om. H. 2993. was he R.

[Here Bochas rehercith the tyrannye of Apius and falsnesse of Iuges.]¹

NATWITHSTANDYNG Bochas aforne hath
told

[p. 181]

Off Appius the falsnesse importable,
And his outrages & surfetis manyfold,
To be remembred hatful and repreuable,
Yit as hym thouhte, it was heer couenable,
To mor rebuk and spottyng off his name,
Newe to reherse his sclaudre & his diffame.

3012 Notwithstand-
ing that Bochas
had already told
about the dis-
honesty of
Appius, he
thought it
would be well to
reherse it once
again, the more
to rebuke his
name.

The grete offencis off this Appius
And oppressiouns that he vpon hym took,
Made hym to growe so inli coueitous,
Thoruh his rauyne that al the peepke quook,
As ye mai seen in the seconde book,
Wher myn auctour doth cleerli specefe
His fraude in doomys, & his fals lecherie.

3020 A lustful,
infamous
tyrant,

Eek off this tirant remembred ye mai reede
Cheeff iuge he was, with other officeris,
Callid decemvir; & thoruh his pride in deede,
Ageyn the custum of them that wern his feeris,
He made be born standardis & baneris
In other wise, off hih presumpcioun,
Than vsid was aforne in Rome toun.

3024

chief judge and
decemvir, he
went about
Rome with
standards and
banners borne
before him in a
manner quite
different from
that of earlier
days; and
whereas
formerly there
had been

These iuges hadde a custum & maneer,
Lik ther estatis in ther gouernaunce,
Ech afftir other to ha[ue] born a baner
Wher thei wente, such was thordynaunce,
Be twelue sergauntis noumbred in substaunce.
But Appius off pride and gret outrage
I-chaungid hath that custum and vsage.

3032

twelve
sergeants, this
Appius ordained
that there
should be 120
men of arms, to
overawe the
people.

He ferst ordeyned ech sholde in his place
Off decemvir haue a baner born,
In ther walkyng, the peepke to manace,
An hundred men off armys them toforne,
And twenti ouer, bi a statut sworn.

3036

3040

3011. to-forne R, toforne H.

3020. to] om. R — so] for R. 3024. fals] om. R.

3025. off] om. R. 3031. vsid was] vsis were R.

3034. to haue born] ta borne H, to ha born J, R 3.

¹ MS. J. leaf 74 verso.

- Wherbi the cite bar gret cost in deede, 3044
 And al the peple wer put in feer & dreede.
- They thought
 it remarkable
 for judges to go
 about in this
 fashion; but all
 that Appius
 wanted was
 power to do as
 he pleased and
 to oppress the
 people at his
 will.
- To seen the sergantis walke in plate & maile,
 Thei thoulte it was a merueilous werkyng,
 Iuges to gon with such[e] apparaile 3048
 In ther procedyng, as ech had been a kyng.
 And hool thentent off Appius menyng,
 Was that he sholde, off power & off myht,
 Doon what hym list, wher it wer wrong or ryht, 3052
- The rihtful pun[y]she and the gilti spare,
 Fauoure wrong for bribes & for meede.
 The peple oppressid stood in sorwe & care,
 Fond no socour to help hem in ther neede; 3056
 Lawe was ther non, for resoun lai be dreede,
 Will was iuge and plesaunce equite,
 And thus be maistri was gouerned the cite.
- After the death
 of Virginia
- And as it is remembred be Bochas, 3060
 Appius was lecherous off nature,
 And cauht a quarel, as ye han herd the caas,
 Ageyn Virgynea, a maide cleene & pure.
 And for he sholde in hir nothyng recure 3064
 Touchyng his lust, hir fader in that striff
 With a sharp suerd made hir lose hir liff.
- he was put in
 chains and died
 in prison,
- And for this tiraunt be fals ribaudie
 Caused hir deth be hasti violence, 3068
 And for he sholde hir beute nat maistrie,
 Deieng a maide in hir chast innocence,
 Therfor he was demed in sentence,
 As is toforn maad cleer[e] mencion, 3072
 For to be cheyned and deien in prisoun.
- and the
 decemvirs were
 abolished and
 succeeded by
 tribunes.
- Eek decemvir losten ther power,
 And neuer in Rome afftir bar no name,
 Nor off that sect was maad non officer; 3076
 And among all Appius bar the blame,
 Whos crym reboundeth to his eternal shame,
 As ye han herd[e], who that can discerne, —
 And thanne tribunys wer chose for to gouerne. 3080

3047. werkyng] walkyng R.

3050. menyng] meeuyng R.

3064. no thyng in hir H.

3071. demed] demyng H.

3074. decemvir] decemviri P.

And in Bochas lik as it is founde,
 The said[e] iuges in myscheeff dede fyne;
 Whil Appius lay in prisoun bounde,
 Exiled wer[e]n all the tother nyne.
 The good, the tresour off them & off ther lyne
 Achetid was, for short conclusioun,
 To comoun profit & ences off the toun.

3084 While Appius
 lay in prison,
 the other judges
 were exiled and
 their goods and
 treasure
 escheated for
 the common
 profit.

¶ Lenvoye.

THIS litil tragedie doth shortli heer deuse,
 What myschef folweth for the grete onriht
 Vsid be iuges in many sundri wise:
 For whan that fauour bleendid hath ther siht,
 And innocence is bor doun with myht,
 And in his quarel pouert may nat proceede,
 Because that trouthe oppressid is with meede.

3088 This little
 tragedy shews
 what mischief
 can be done by
 venal judges, to
 whom might is
 right.

A iuge sholde off equite despise
 To take giffes off any maner wiht,
 And redi been all wrongis to chastise,
 From all giffes turne awei his siht,
 His handis close, his eris stoppe ariht,
 And been ai war, for frenshipe, hate or dreede,
 That trouthe be nat oppressid with no meede.

[p. 182] A judge ought
 to despise gifts,
 3096 chastise all
 wrongs and not
 allow truth to
 be overcome by
 rewards.

The noble doctryn and vertuous emprise
 Off philisophres, that hadde so gret insiht,
 Was this to iuges, that prudent wer & wise:
 For freend or fo ther doomys so be diht,
 Off rihtwisnesse that the sunne briht
 Eclipsed neuer, list men for ther falsheede
 Reporte that riht was put a-bak for meede.

3104 Such was the
 noble doctrine
 of philosophers,
 who said that
 judges should
 never allow the
 sun of righteous-
 ness to be
 eclipsed.

Noble Pryncis, supportours off iustise,
 Callid lodesterris to yeue the peepel liht,
 On Appius lat iuges nat* practise,
 That trouthes laumpe be cleer bothe dai & nyht.
 Your office peised, that longeth to a knyht,
 Hold up the balaunce off doom in your manheede,
 That lawe in iuges be nat corupt with meede!

3112 Noble princes,
 do not let judges
 follow the
 example of
 Appius and
 corrupt the
 law through
 bribery.

3085. lynes H. 3088. heer] om. J. 3091. that] the R.
 3094. trouthe] trouhe R.
 3106. that] of R. 3108. a-bak] away H.
 3111. lat nat iuges B.

¶ **Bochas ageyn thontrowith of Iugis.**

After rebuking Appius, Bochas wrote somewhat angrily, that judges should be of mature age and virtuous in their lives.

SVYNG vpon the deth off Appius 3116
 And his rebukes for his gret outrage,
 Bochas be writyng wex sumwhat irous
 Geyn iuges false, & thouht in his corage
 Thei shulde be sad & demeur off age, 3120
 And that ther liff be vertu sholde drawe,
 To keepe the preceptis & statutis off the lawe.

They ought to have knowledge of philosophy and devote their time to civil and canon law.

Thei ouhte off resoun themseluen to habile,
 To haue science off philosophie, 3124
 And knowe ther textis off canoun & cyuyle,
 And therupon her wittis hool applie;
 For cunnyng iuges be prudent policie
 Cause ordenaunces, in lawe comprehendid, 3128
 Thoruh rihtful doom gretli to be comendid.

Justice is a very important thing to all realms,

Iustise off lawe doth rewmys enlumyne,
 Susteneth trouthe, supporteth innocence,
 Off rauelynour[e]s boweth doun the chyne, 3132
 Punsheth robbours for ther gret offence,
 Sluggi truantis for ther negligence,
 And feyned beggeris, that gretli disauaile,
 Constreyneth them to labour & trauaile. 3136

and in old time the founders of law took care that princes went no further in their triumphs than the law of God and Nature permitted.

Foundours off lawe bi antiquite,
 Caused in londis was suffred non errour,
 And made off pryncis the roial maieste
 To shyne in worshepe, be deligent labour, 3140
 Wrestid corages off many conquerour,
 That ther tryumphes no ferther sholde atteyne
 Than lawe off God & nature dede ordeyne.

Will was then subject to righteousness and sensuality to reason.

Will was that tyme vnder subieccioun 3144
 Off rihtwisnesse, be trouthe ful weel conveied,
 Sensualite was seruant to resoun,
 And froward lust was vnder lok weel keied;
 Sentence off statutis was nat disobeied, 3148
 The riche dede riht thoruhout eueri lond,
 Poore folk lyued be labour off ther hond.

3123. themseluen] ther silff H.

3124. þe science H.

3128. Cause] Cause of R.

3130. illumyne R.

3134. Slouggi R.

- Lordshipe that tyme auoided meyntenauce,
 Hoolichirch lyued in parfitnesse;
 Knythod tho daies for trouthe whet his launce,
 And fals extorsioun hadde non interesse;
 Marchantis wynnyng cam al off rihtwisnesse,
 Artificers the werkday wer nat idill,
 And bisynesse off labour heeld the bridill.
- Women that age farsid wer nor hornyd,
 Nor ther tailes wer nat serpentyne;
 Wis men off foli, nor clerkis wer nat scornyd,
 Which in science most fresshli dede shyne.
 Lawe disherited non heires from ther lyne,
 Lesyngmongers fond that tyme no socours,
 And flaterers thanne wer maad no confessours.
- This goldene world[e], flouryng in vertu,
 Born vp be loue groundid on stabilnesse,
 Off auoutri ther sprang out non issu,
 Pryncis be doctryne establishid ther noblesse,
 Preesthod in praier, knythod in worthynesse,
 Ech thyng be lawe stood vnder gouernaunce,
 Marchantis be mesour & iust peis off balauce.
- First Phoroneus be dilligent labour [p. 183]
 Fond out lawes, that kyng was off Argyues;
 The Grekis studie he gilte with gret honour.
 This poletik prynce, tauoide hem fro stryues,
 His statutis kept[e] duryng al ther lyues,
 Fond first the maner, Bochas doth deuyse,
 How to Iubiter was maad sacrefise.
- Eek myhti Mynos, whilom kyng off Crete,
 Ordeyned lawes ageyn transgressiouns,
 To fere bi rigour foolis that were onmeete,
 And staunche off surfetis all occasiouns,
 Make for robbours myhti strong prisouns;
 And Dedalus, his cheeff artificer,
 Made Laberintus be deligence entier.
- And eek Mercurie, born be the flood of Nyle,
 As writ Lactance, was off Egipt kyng,
 Onto marchantis dede lawes first compile
 Off weihte and mesour, to vs[e] in chaffaryng.

The lords
 avoided main-
 tenance, and the
 3152 clergy led lives
 of perfection;
 merchants did
 not cheat;
 knights sup-
 ported truth,

3156

nor did women
 paint their faces
 or wear horned
 headdresses and
 3160 long trains.
 Wise men and
 scholars were
 not looked down
 upon and
 flatterers were
 never made
 confessors.

3164

It was a golden
 world borne up
 by love and
 just law.

3168

Phoroneus,
 king of Argos,
 3172 invented laws
 and sacrifices
 to Jupiter.

3176

Minos, king of
 Crete,
 3180 ordained laws
 against fools
 and robbers,

3184

and Mercury,
 king of Egypt,
 legislated for
 merchants and
 3188 standardized
 their weights
 and measures.

3153. for trouthe whet] quet H. 3168. be] with R.
 3172. First by H. 3175. tauoide] auoyde R.
 3182. al] be H. 3183. Make] Made H.
 3187. As] And R — Lactance] Bochas H.

- And for his wisdam & excellent kunnyng,
Off olde poetis, that whilom wer so wise,
He callid was god off marchaundise. 3192
- Solon established excellent laws for the Athenians and hated tyrants. Solon also the beste lawes made,
As writ Valeri, hymself to magnefie:
Athenye[n]ses theroff wer ful glade,
His gret[e] wisdam whan thei dede espie; 3196
Thei fond theryn so moch[e] policie.
And he was redi euer to debate
Ageyn tirantis, so sore he dede hem hate.
- Lycurgus made his people swear to keep the law while he was away on a pilgrimage, Kyng Ligurgus eek whilom dede his cure 3200
To make lawes to comoun auauntage,
And that thei sholde perpetueli endure,
He made his people be sworn, off eueri age,
Whil that he wente out on pilgrymage, 3204
Fro poynt to poynt to keepe hem in certeyn,
Onto tyme that he cam hom ageyn.
- and since his laws were so useful and important, he preferred not to return home again, so that his statutes might never be broken. And for his lawes wer off gret substaunce
And profitable to eueri comounte, 3208
He ches to lyue in exil and penaunce,
Neuer to resorte ageyn to his contre,*
That his statutis be eternyte
Sholde nat be broke, as ye han herd tofor, 3212
Bi the convencioun to which that thei wer sworn.
- Before he died he commanded that his bones should be cast far out into the sea, To comoun profit had he such tendirnesse,
That he forsook his kyngdam & kenreede
[To] lyue in exill, his story berth witesse. 3216
But or he deied, as he lay bedreede,
He bad his bonys sholde be cast in deede
Amyd the se, ferr out fro the stronde,
That his statutis myhte in ther strengthe stonde. 3220
- that there might be no occasion for his subjects to be false to their vow. He eschewed euerich occasioun,
As [a] thyng hatful which was nat fair,
That his forsaid[e] roial myhti toun
Sholde breke ther oth because off his repair. 3224
But touchyng that, he put hem in despair,
Cast hym neuer resorten in ther dawes,
List thei wolde breke the sentence off his lawes.

3194. Valeri writ R. 3195. Athemeses R.

3198. euer he was redy for to R.

3200. Kyng] om. H — Licurgus P.

3210. his] this H — contre] cite B, J, R, cite H 5, cite P.

3219. from R, J, R 3, P, frome H.

¶ An exclamacioun of Bochas ageyn thextorsions
& oppressions of þe poraill of Rome.¹

IOHAN BOCHAS heer makith a digressioun, 3228 John Bochas digresses here, rebuking the dishonest officials and judges of Italy and Rome, who oppressed the poor

And bi rebukyng cast hym for tassaile
Thilke officeres that wer in Rome toun,
Which bextorsioun oppressid the poraile, —
And ageyn iuges also off Itaile, 3232
A[nd] namli them, that for lucre & meede
Sett trouthe aside & took off it noon heede.

He maketh ageyn hem an exclamacioun,
Such as to vertu wer contrarious, 3236 and took advantage of their position to be licentious, like Appius, false in their decisions and foul in their lives.

And vnder colour and occasioun
Off ther office list to be lecherous,
Lik condiciowned onto Appius, 3240
And fynali, as it was afftir seene,
Fals in ther domys & off ther liff oncleene.

O, quod Bochas, O trouthe, O thou Iustise,
Which in your noblesse whilom dede excell,
Wher in effect is now your exercise? 3244 "Where are Truth and Justice now," he exclaimed, "Where do they dwell? Few men can tell of their practise.

Wher is your wonyng? alas, wher do ye duell?
Off your practik ful fewe men can tell,
So ferr put bak is now your disciplyne,
Your kyn exiled and your noble lyne! 3248

Aduocatis that now doon occupie [p. 184] "Advocates apply their wits only to falsehood, and judgments are wholly dependent on will. 3252

Your olde sees & placis ful roiall,
Al to falsheed ther wittis thei applie, —
Such couetise now regneth ouer all!
Causes off cyuyle & causes cremynall
Ther doomys take, wher thei be fals or trewe,
Al afftir will be statutis chaungid newe.

Ther been eek other callid accessours, 3256 "Assessors, who give counsel to judges, might better be called raviners; their labour is all for their own profit.

Sittyng be iuges to yeuen hem counsaill,
Which may ful weel be callid rauelynours;
For thei nat laboure but for ther owne auail.
A nombre off robbours folwe at ther tail, 3260
To pile the people, as ye han herd toforn,
Bare as a sheep that is but newe shorn.

3233. &] or H, R.

3249. doon] doth R. 3253. &] or R. 3259. for] om. R.

3260. ther] the R.

¹ "Here Bochas makith an exclamacioun of the extorcoun of the officers of Rome," MS. J, leaf 75 verso.

"No more is to be said than that Truth stands desolate, and righteousness dare not complain.

Ther is no mor in this mateer to seyne,
 Sauff onli this: trouthe stant desolat, 3264
 [And] rihtwisnesse to no wiht dar compleyne,
 With wrong oppressid, wepyng disconsolat.*
 Wherfor, ye Pryncis, that sit in hih estat,
 Such thyng tamende but ye bet heed list take, 3268
 God shal with you a ful hard reknyng make.

"Princes, if you do not reform these things, God will make a hard reckoning with you.

Your office is in your magnyficence
 Twen man and man all wronges to redresse,
 And wher a mateer is ageyn conscience, 3272
 It to refourme onli off rihtwisnesse;
 To stonde be trouthe, meyntene no falsnesse,
 And lete wis counseil such materes examyne
 Or ye off haste theron* determyne. 3276

"He will reward you as you deserve!"

Hath such thynges in your mynde among;
 Think God will quite lik as ye disserue.
 Ye spotte your noblesse iff that ye do wrong,
 His suerd off punshyng dredith or it kerue. 3280
 Lat your resoun & conscience conserue
 Your noble estatis, & thynk, lik your werkyng,
 The Lord off you will axen a reknyng.

[Off Alcibiades exiled and aftir brent in his bedde.]¹

After this, Alcibiades, fairest of men, appeared to Bochas. He was strong, wise and discreet, born of high lineage, popular, brave, and a great orator.

AFFTIR other þat put hemsilf in pres, 3284
 Tofor Bochas ther compleyntis to discure,
 Cam off Athenys Alcibiades,
 That tyme a-lyue the fairest creature.
 And as it is remembred be scripture, 3288
 He was discreet and wis at all assaies,
 And oon the strengest & manli in his daies.
 He was first born off riht hih lynage,
 Aboue all other off most semlynesse, 3292
 Weel proporciowned and hardi off corage,
 Loued & weel faouered for his gret fairnesse,
 Famous in knythod for his worthynesse,
 Sotil wittid, and koude bi eloquence 3296
 Moche comprehende vnder short sentence.

3265. to no wiht dar] dare nouth R.

3266. disconsolat] desolate R, & disconsolat B.

3275. such mateers wise cownsaile H, R 3.

3276. theron] the trouthe B.

3290. And] om. R. 3292. semblynesse R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 77 recto.

- His witt enclnyed to manyfold sciences,
 Hadde off kunnyng a passyng retentiff,
 Loued clerkis, & fond hem ther despencis,
 Such as in practik he sauh most inuentiff. 3300
 To reede in bokis reioished al his liff,
 Kepte what he radde in his memoriall,
 And off wis counseil was noon to hym egall. 3304
- An* vncl he hadde Icallid Pericles,*
 Which stood in daunger, off excessiff spendyng;
 Yit in his youthe this Alcibiades,
 Seyng his vncl pensiff in lokyng, 3308
 Caste off wisdam to remedie that thyng;
 And for tasswage his hertis heuynesse,
 Gaff hym this counseil bi gret avisynesse:
- First to reherse how the mateer stood, 3312
 And off his vncl's woful hih distresse.
 Ther was to hym delyuered a summe off good,
 To repare the temple off a goddesse
 Callid Mynerua; but for the gret excesse 3316
 Off his dispendyng*, he stood sumwhat in dreede
 Touchyng thacounte, which he mut yilde in deede.
- Alcibiades heerupon musyng,
 To his vncl gaff counseil in sentence. 3320
 "Vncl," quod he, "lat be al your thynkyng,
 And for yoursilff[e] shapeth this diffence,
 Nat for tacounte — be mene off your prudence,
 Aforn prouyded, with face & cheer onfeyned, 3324
 To such duresse that ye be nat constreyned."
- And whan Pericles* his counseil aduertisith,
 Fond to his worshep it was resonable;
 And bi good leiser hymself ful weel auysith, 3328
 And bi prouysioun, prudent and notable,
 Saued his estat from ech thyng repreuable,
 So that he stood[e], touchyng this mateer,
 As for acomptis out off al daunger. 3332

His retentive mind turned to many branches of learning; a patron of scholars and great reader, no one could equal him in wise counsel.

His uncle Pericles once stood in danger of indictment for exceeding the amount allowed him in repairing the temple of Minerva; but Alcibiades, seeing him downcast, said,

"Do not render any account unless you are compelled."

And Pericles, following this advice, took care so to arrange his affairs that he finally escaped all danger of reproof.

3305. An] And B — called R — Perioles B, R, H.

3312. the] this R.

3317. dispendyng] dispense B, dispensis R, dispencis J, dispenses P.

3321. al] om. R.

3326. whan] om. H — Perioles B, H, R.

3332. accowntis H.

- Alcibiades ruled the Athenians both in war and peace, and was admiral of their navy. Alcibiades, off Athene cheeff capteyn, [p. 185]
 Fro day to day wex up to gret ences,
 Such another was ther nowher seyn,
 Them to gouerne bothe in werre and pes. 3336
 And al the cite bi assent hym ches,
 Off ther nauye in especial,
 Vpon the se to been ther amyral.
- As governor of the Catanæans he made war on Syracuse, For his knythod thei sent hym out a-ferre, 3340
 Off Cathenois to be ther gouernour,
 Geyn Siracusanes for to gynne a werre.
 First ther receyued with glorie* & gret honour,
 But in the eende off his gret labour, 3344
 Fortune that is ay variant & onstable,
 Was to this duc nat founde fauourable.
- but was recalled on a charge of treason and divested of all his offices. He was accusid to them off the toun,
 Which in Athenys hadde gouernaunce, 3348
 That he was gilty in parti off tresoun.
 Bi them reuoked, for al his gret puissaunce
 Off capteynship, and bi ther ordynaunce
 And Fortunys fals mutabilite, 3352
 Onwarli pryued from al dignyte.
- He then went into voluntary exile to save his life; for the Athenians desired to offer up his head to their gods. But for hymself[e] thus he gan prouide,
 Wente into exil nat ferr fro that cuntre
 Into a* cite that callid was Elide, 3356
 Ther for to ha[ue] fredam and liberte,
 And off his liff to stonde in surete;
 For in Athen thei wolde haue hym ded,
 Onto ther goddis to offren vp his hed. 3360
- Soon afterwards he went to Sparta, and there heard that through the misadventure of three captains But whan he was off ther entent certeyn,
 To Lacedemoyne he took the riht[e] way,
 And be relacioun ther he herde seyn,
 How Thathenyenses wer put at affray 3364
 In a bataile vpon a certyen day,
 Which that thei heeld, to ther aduersite,
 Geyn Cathenois, as thei fault on the se.
- the Athenians had been defeated at sea by the Catanæans. But the cause off this disconfiture, 3368
 As was told to Alcibiades,
 Was bi thre capteyns, thuruh ther mysauenture,
 Which in ther ledyng wer founde rech[e]les.

3333. Alcibiades of Athenes H.

3334. to gret is repeated in R. 3343. gloire B.

3355. nat] and R. 3356. Into a] In ta B.

- The cheeff off them named Demostenes, 3372
 The tother callid, the stori tellith* vs,
 The ton Niceas, the tother Eurilocus.
- Alcibiades, hauyng heeroff tidyng,
 Tauenge his wrong put hymself in pres; 3376
 Off Lacedemoyne he goth first to the kyng,
 Which off trouthe was callid Agides,
 Besechyng hym to graunte to his encres
 Certeyn soudiours out off his cuntre, 3380
 For to werreie Athenes* the cite.
- Thus he wex strong, off noble prouidence,
 Hadde gret peple vnder his gouernaunce,
 And lik a duk, maad strong in his diffence 3384
 Be peple gadred to his obeisaunce,
 That other pryncis, which wer off hih puissaunce,
 Gan haue envie, off wilful frowardnesse,
 And to maligne ageyn his hih noblesse. 3388
- For seelde or neuer in any regioun,
 Prowesse off armys, noblesse off cheualrie,
 Encres in richesse, report off hih renoun,
 Fame off kunnyng in crafft or in clergie 3392
 May nowher duelle withoute sum envie,
 From whos malice, as folk expert mai see,
 Sauf onli wrechis no man hath liberte.
- For which this prynce, as put is in memorie, 3396
 Escapid nat, for al his hih parage,
 But that summe envied at his glorie;
 For in this liff no man hath auantage
 Ageyn tungen nor odious fals language. 3400
 To stoppe such venym, this the beste obstacle,
 That men with suffraunce tempere ther triacle.
- The cleer prowesse off Alcibiades
 Steyned the noblesse off other pryncis all; 3404
 His eure hym reised up to so gret encres,
 To the hiest throne off Fortunys hall.
 Such fatal grace is onto hym fall,

So, in order to
 avenge his
 wrong, Alci-
 biades besought
 Agis, king of
 Sparta, to lend
 him an army
 to make war
 on Athens.

Thus he grew
 strong, and was
 envied because
 of his bravery
 and high re-
 nown, as always
 happens; for no
 man is free
 from the slander
 of venomous
 tongues.

His clear
 prowess shad-
 owed the
 nobility of all
 other princes;
 no one equalled
 him in knight-
 hood.

3372. Domestenes R.

3373. tellith] techith B.

3374. Eurilocus] Lamachus P.

3377. he] om. H.

3381. Athenes] Athenos B, Athenois R.

3385. Be] The R.

3389. This stanza is marked with a scrawl of approval in margin, J.

- That in tho daies, pleyntli this no fable, 3408
 Ther was in knyththod noon to hym resemblable.
- Yet the Spartans sought to eclipse his worthiness by false report
 In his exil so cleer his renoun shon,
 And thoruh Grece gaff as gret brihtnesse
 As doth a rubi aboue ech other ston: 3412
 Yit for teclipse & shadwe his worthynesse,
 Lacedemonois dede ther besynesse,
 Such as myhte nat* to his noblesse atteyne,
 Bi fals report his renoun to restreyne. 3416
- and laid traps to take him unawares and bring him to ruin; but he always managed to escape,
 Await was leid to take* hym at myscheff, [p. 186]
 And many treynys wer serchid out & souht,
 Off entent taput hym at repreeff.
 But al that euer ageyn hym thei ha[ue] wrouht, 3420
 At the eende ther purpos cam to nouht;
 For God prouydeth off his magnyficence
 Ageyn such malice to sauen innocence.
- although his life was constantly in danger.
 He was likli tafalle in gret daunger, 3424
 Lacedemonois gan at hym so disdeyne
 Because his honour & noblesse shon so cleer,
 That to his fon it was a dedli peyne.
 And thus his liff stood in noun certeyne; 3428
 For al-be-it he manli was and wis,
 He knew nothyng ther purpos nor malice.
- To his misfortune he had a love affair with the queen, who warned him of his enemies and advised him to flee to Athens. There he took no revenge,
 He hadde almost iwarned be* to late,
 And lik tastonde in gret perplexite. 3432
 And mor his grace & fortune to abate,
 Bi thoccasioun off his gret beute,
 He with the queen was wexen ful pryue;
 For in hir grace so weel stood ther non, 3436
 Which gaff hym warnyng off them that wer his fon.
 And bi the counsail onli off the queen,
 Fro Lacedemoynt he wisli took his filht
 Toward Athenys, & thouhte he wolde seen 3440
 His owne cuntre, ful lik a manli knyht.
 And thouh thei hadde nat gouerned hem a-riht
3408. this is R. 3409. in knyththod was noon H
 3415. nat myhte B, R, J.
 3417. to take] tatak B. 3418. wer] om. R.
 3420. ageyn] geyn R. 3421. ther] the R.
 3424. tafalle] to fall R, H, J, R 3, P.
 3425. is misplaced at end of stanza; correction indicated, H.
 3428. no certeyn R 3, no certaine P. 3430. nor] & H.
 3431. be] bien B, ben H 5. 3437. them] other R.
 3440. thouhte] thouh R. 3442. thouh] thought R.

- Towardis hym, beyng in distresse,
 Tauenge his wrong he dede hem no duresse. 3444
- For he thouhte it was ageyn nature,
 To be vengable or shewe his cruelte
 Bi thoccasioun off any auenture,
 Or gynne a werre vpon his cuntre; 3448
 His natiff blood meued hym to pite,
 And off verrai natural ientillesse
 Was debonaire geyn ther onkynd[e]nesse.
- The cas was this, for short conclusioun,
 How kyng Darie with gret apparaile 3452
 Thouhte to werreie, off indignacioun,
 Them off Athenys and ther touⁿ tassaile.
 And in his purpos proudli to preuaile, 3456
 Thesiffernes, a prynce off gret puissaunce,
 Off Daries* power hadde al the gouernaunce.
- Fynal cause and ground off al this werre,
 That Darius gan on hem so hastili, 3460
 And that he sente his puissaunce fro so ferre
 For to destroie Athenys vtirli,
 Was to hold up and sustene the parti
 Off Lacedemoyⁿ, which off old hatreede 3464
 Wer euer envious them for toppresse in deede.
- But be mene off Alcibiades,
 And bi his trete foundid on prudence,
 Thesiffernes enclayed to the pes, 3468
 Therbi in parti tappese his violence.
 And al was doon off noble prouidence,
 And fro the place to which he was exilid,
 He to Athenys sholde be reconciled. 3472
- Onto the cite he dede signefie
 How Darius hadde maad his ordenaunce,
 And bi his lettris he gan them specifie,
 Yiff thei wolde stonde at his gouernaunce, 3476
 To condescende, pleyⁿli in substaunce,
 He wolde laboure, and no lenger tarie,
 To make accord atwen hem & kyng Darie.

for he did not
believe it right
to make war on
his own country.

At that time
Darius was
preparing to
attack the
Athenians

in aid of
Sparta;

but with the
help of Alci-
biades, peace
was promised
by the Persian
general Tissa-
phernes, on
condition that
the Athenians
would do as
Alcibiades told
them.

3443. beyng] stoondyng R. 3444. duresse] distresse R.
 3451. geyn] ageyn R, H, H 5, again P.
 3455. tassaile] assaile H. 3456. his] om. R.
 3458. Daries] Darius B, Daryus H 5. 3461. frome H.
 3467. his] this R. 3469. tappese in party R.
 3473. the] this R. 3479. atwen] tween R.

- In the city the senators were to have full control, This was the mene that he mente: 3480
 Withynne Athenys that the senatours
 Sholde off the cite, afftir ther entente,
 Ha[ue] fulli lordshipe, and be ther gouernours.
 But as cleer wethir troublid is with shours, 3484
 Riht so vnwarli, withynne that roial toun,
 Thoruh this trete fill a discencioun.
- but the commons, disdainng such thraldom, recalled Alcibiades to restore order. The comowneris gan sodenli disdeyne
 To be so thrallid vnder subieccioun; 3488
 And so bassete the comouns dede ordeyne,
 Onli tappese al fals discencioun,
 For to reuoke ageyn into ther toun
 Alcibiades, as thei thouhte it meete, 3492
 Thoruh his prudence to sette hem in quyete.
- He was made duke again and supported the commons. The senate fled, First in his komyng, myn auctour doth reporte,
 He was maad duk ageyn off that cite, 3496
 And gan the parti off comouns to supporte,
 And them restore to ther old liberte.
 Wherthuruh the senat, dredyng the comounte,
 Fledde into exil ful ferr out off al pres,
 Onli for dreded off Alcibiades. 3500
- and the people were brought to the point of yielding the town to the Spartans. Thei stood that tyme in so gret disioynt, [p. 187]
 Ther toun deuided and out of gouernaunce,
 That thei wer brouht euene onto the poynt
 To yolde the cite vnto thobeissance 3504
 Of Lacedemoyne, thoruh ther vnhappi chaunce,
 Withynne hemsilff[e] whan thei gan debate,
 Vnto ther duk the senat bar such hate.
- But Alcibiades, chosen by the commons as their defender, attacked the Spartans on the sea. But the comouns ches in ther diffence 3508
 Alcibiades to gouerne that viage.
 And to the se, with cost & gret dispence,
 Withoute abood he holdeth his passage
 In myhti shippis maad for auauntage, 3512
 Weel enarmyd, & caste, yif he myhte,
 With Lacedemonios proudli for to fihte.

3486. this] his R — a] at R.

3490. al] as R.

3496. the] that R.

3499. into] in H — ful] om. H.

3503. onto] to R.

3504. To] Ta H — the] ther H.

3507. Vnto] Vndir R.

3510. dispence] expence R.

3513. enarmyd] armed R — &] om. H.

- Thre myhti capteyns wern on the tother side,
 The first[e] Zestro, Bochas tellith thus, 3516
 And the second that was ther lord & guide
 Callid Midare, the thridde Pharbanasus,
 On se and lond in armys ful pompous,
 But of his kniethod and magnanymyte 3520
 Alcibiades took hem all[e] thre.
- Strong was the fiht or that thei wer[e] take,
 Of al ther meyne away ther scaped non;
 The duk that day gan swich a slauhtre make 3524
 Of hih prowesse vpon his mortal foon,
 Cast ouerboord almost euerichon,
 And aftir that, whan he cam to londe,
 A newe bataille met hym on the stronde, 3528
- Swich wait was leid aboute hym enviroun
 Of his enmyes be sodeyn auenture.
 But of Athenys this myhti champioun,
 Which myhte in armys most souereynli endure, 3532
 Made on his foon a [newe] disconfiture.
 Thus in short tyme this prince in his estaat
 On lond and se was twies laureat.
- And aftir that, he list nat for to cesse 3536
 Nor tabide the space off halff a day:
 The comoun proffit of his toun tenresse,
 Toward Asie he took the riht[e] way,
 And touns, castellis that wer take away, 3540
 Which apertened to Athenys of riht,
 He gat ageyn, ful lik a manli kniht.
- Maugre all that to hym wer contrarye,
 Or wrouhte ageyn hym be rebelloun,
 Thoruhout [al] Asie in the land of Darie
 He knihtli brouht hem to subieccioun,
 Ageyn whos swerd halp no proteccioun.
 And fynal labour was off his entente, 3544
 The comoun proffit off his toun taugmente. 3548

3515. Thre] The H.

3517. ther] be H.

3518. Midarus P, Pharbanazus P.

3520. and] and of his R.

3523. non] nat oon H.

3532. myhte] myhty R.

3535. se] watir R, H, J, R 3, watyr H 5, water P.

3541. to] of R.

3546. to] in R.

- Returning to Athens, he was received with joy and great honour. And with this glorie and with this hih noblesse He to Athenys repered is ageyn;
 And al the cite, with ioie & gret gladnesse, 3552
 Cam out to meete hym upon a wol fair pleyn.
 And that his triumphes sholde openli be seyn,
 Bothe old & yong, with ful glad visages,
 Of ther goddis brouht out the images. 3556
- The people cried, "Welcome, victorious prince, our protector and shield against all violence." This was the[r] cry & noise of al the pres:
 "Victorious prince, whos triumphes marciall
 Shal euer be songe with loude and newe encres
 Tofor the goddis, which been inmortal, 3560
 Wolkome, wolkome! our protectour, our wall,
 Sheeld of our weelfare ageyn al violence,
 Phebus of knihthod, & swerd of our diffence!"
- By their strange praise they made him an equal of the gods, Thus with ther goddis thei maden hym egall 3564
 Bi vnkouth praisyng of paganysme rihtis,
 Lik as he hadde be verray inmortal,
 And sang refrerites to comende his merites.
 Tenhaunce his glorie* thei sette al ther delites, 3568
 And with the liht[e] of eternal fame,
 Sette up torchis tenlumyne with his name.
- and hallowed certain days in honour of his prowess, until Fortune blinded his eyes with prosperity. Thus certeyn daies thei halwed of entent,
 Thoruh [al] the cite for his hih prowessse, 3572
 Til Fortune hath his eyen blent
 With newe fauour of worldli fals suetnesse.
 For al hir* sugir is meynt with bittirnesse, —
 A bait of hony, shad out at pryme face, 3576
 With mortall venym hid vndir to manace.
- When he thought he stood highest in her favour she brought misfortune on his people. For in his hiest clymyng up alofte,
 And in thascence of Fortunys wheel,
 Aftir hir custum, as she hath ful ofte, 3580
 Whan he best wende for tastonde weel,
 She drouh hir fauour from hym euerideel,
 Made the people vndir his obeissaunce
 To falle in myscheeff for lak of gouernaunce. 3584

3557. the] ther R.

3560, 66. Immortal H.

3565. paganismes R.

3567. refrectis H.

3568. And tenhaunce R, P — gloire B — sette] om. H.

3575. hir] ther B.

3576. at] of R.

3581. for to astonde R.

- Thus fro this* duk Fortune gan to varie, [p. 188] Made reckless
 And his noblesse go bak & eek faille, by vainglory,
 Whan kyng Cirus, successour to Darie, he was
 Ful vnwarli fill on hym in bataille, defeated by
 And gan his knihtis proudli to assaille, King Cyrus,
 Whan he dispurveied, void of prouidence, 3588
 Was ouerleid to make resistance.
- For fynalli this Alcibiades
 At myscheeff take, which he myhte nat recure, 3592 and again
 Whan thoruh veynglori he was maad rek[e]les banished from
 His noble estat testablisshē & assure. Athens.
 Lak of forsicht caused his disconfiture; 3596
 And to ences of mor aduersite,
 Ban[y]shed ageyn out of his cite.
- Thus diffacid and clipped was his glorie,
 His cite put in straunge gouernaunce 3600 He fled for
 Be Lacedemonoys aftir ther victorie, refuge to the
 So that he knew no maner cheuisaunce king of Persia.
 To refourme his vnhappi chaunce, 3604
 Sauf for refut, myn auctour doth reherse,
 How that he fledde onto the kyng of Perse.
- From Athenys of newe he was exilled;
 And thretti personys, furious & vengable,
 Chose in that cite, as Bochas hath compiled, 3608 and Athens was
 The toun gouerned, al-be thei wer nat able, then governed
 Vsyng a maner hatful and repreuable, by the Thirty
 Thoruh ther rauyne temporisshe ther cite, Tyrants, who
 A thyng most odious to eueri comounte. 3612 impoverished
 the city through
 their greed.
- A worm of dreed was bred up in ther herte,
 Which suffred nat them to lyue in pes,
 Among themsilff[e] whan thei dide aduerte
 The grete prudence of Alcibiades, 3616 They began to
 How in manhod he was pereles, fear Alcibiades,
 List he wold aftir, for al ther multitude, lest afterwards
 Knihlti aquite ther ingratitude. he should
 repay their
 ingratitude in
 kind,
- And of assent tabreggen his lyff daies. 3620 and conspired to
 Thei ageyn hym of malis han conspired, murder him
 Afttir his exil, to maken no dellaies after his exile.

3585. this] the B. 3591. ouer ladde R.

3596. disconfiture H. 3604. for] to R.

3608. that] ther R. 3611. ther] þe H.

3619. aquite] aquiete R.

3606. of] om. H.

- For tacomplisshē that thei long han desired,
 With brennyng hate ther hertis falsli fired, 3624
 To moordre benvie, causeles ageyn [al] riht,
 Alcibiades, the noble worthi kniht.
- Thus the tyme approachid and the date,
 Term afforn set be constellacioun 3628
 Of his parodie and his lyuys fate,
 Which was concludid, as maad is menciuon,
 Bi cruel moordre to his destruccioun.
 Alas, what prince, with gold or soudiours, 3632
 May hym prouide geyn fals conspiratours!
- Fortune of newe gan at hym enchace;
 From hir treyns that he nat scape myhte,
 Daili pursuede fro place ay onto place, 3636
 Thoruh Perse and Mede, though he wer out of siht.
 Til that his enmyes fill on hym be nihte,
 Slepynge, alas, to soone thei wer sped:
 Whan thei hym fond, thei brente hym in his bed. 3640
- Thus be moordre ther purpos* was acheuyd, —
 Alas, it was to horrible a deede,
 So good a kniht, so weel in armys preuyd,
 So renommede, so famous in manheede, 3644
 For to be brent among the coles rede!
 First vnwarli in his bed Itake,
 And so consumyd among the smokes blake.
- This was the eende of Alcibiades, 3648
 Which in kniethod was most souereyne;
 In werre a leoun, and a lamb in pes,
 As Mars victorious, his fate so dide ordeyne.
 To famys paleis he flew with wynges tweyne, 3652
 Sone to Mynerva, to speke of hih prudence,
 And lik Mercurie be notable elloquence.

¶ An exclamacion of þe deth of Alcibiades.¹

O Fates, why
 did you allow
 him to burn on
 the red coals?
 He who had
 lived so short
 a term!

O FATAL sustren, which span the lyues threede
 So short a terme; whi dide ye determyne 3656
 To suffre hym brenne among the coles rede?
 Ye wer to hasti to breken and ontwyne

3624. ther] the H — falsli] fully R.

3629. and] and of R, H. 3635. From] For R — nat] na R.

3641. purpos ther moordre, correction indicated B.

3647. smokes] coles R. 3652. fleih R.

¹ "Here Bochas makith an exclamacioun vpon the deth of Alcibiades," MS. J. leaf 78 recto.

His web of knihtehod, that thoruh the world* dide
shyne,

And caste of noblesse his bemys out most cleer; 3660
Alas, that euer he fill in your daungeer!

O, out on Stix, and out on Attropos, [p. 189] Out on Styx
That han of malis slayn so good a kniht! and out on
Out on you thre, that keepe your-silff so cloos, 3664 Atropos!
Douhtres Icallid of the dirke niht! Out on you,
And thou, Letum, that queyntest eek the liht three daughters
Of Alcibiades, merour & lanterne, of the dark
To speke in knihthod how men sholde gouerne, 3668 Night! Out on
you, Lethe!

Ye slen the worthi, & wrechchis ye doon spare! You slay the
Torcites lyueth, Ector is slayn in deede, spare wretches.
Your funeral smokis makþ rewmys now so bare, Your funereal
To race vp* cedris, ther braunchis may nat sprede, 3672 smokes lay
Ye palle the laurer, ye make the firses seede. realms desolate,
Ful litil thank in kyngdamys ye disserue, fostering
Kaitiffs to fostre, and do the worthi sterue! caitiffs and
letting the
worthy die.

Alicibiades is passed into fate, 3676 Alicibiades has
Liht of knihthod lith clipped in the shade; passed into
The Parchas sustren to soone sette his date, fate; the Parcae
Of hih noblesse to make the laurer fade. allowed him to
die too soon;
but the Spar-
tans were glad.

Lacedemonoys* of his deth wer glade, 3680
Funeral fyr his bodi hath deffied,
For hih prowesse his soule stelledied.

[¶] **Lenvoye.**

ALAS, this tragedie doth myn herte bleede, Alas, my
Mi penne quake of routhe & of pite, 3684 heart bleeds
In my wrytyng whan that I tak heede, when I see
To seen the straunge feerful dyuersite how insecure is
the world's
felicity.

Of al worldli vnseur felicite, 3688
How from ther sees, shortli to comprehende,
Froward Fortune doth princis doun descende.

Alcibiades, of corage & of manheede, Alcibiades,
As is rehersid in bookis ye* may see, most famous of
goodness and
beauty, bounty,
prudence and
magnanimity,
3692
Of gentillesse and of goodliheede,

3659. thoruh the world] the word thoruh B.

3660. bemys] om. H (*space left*).

3662. O] om. R, P — 2nd out] om. R — Antropos H, Atrapos
P, Attrapos J.

3666. Lethum P. 3667. Of] And H. 3672. vp] out B.

3677. lith] lyht R. 3680. Lacedemoyoys B.

3681. diffied H, R. 3691. ye] as ye B, H.

Of semlynesse, of fredam & bounte,
 Of hih prudence and magnanymyte
 Was most famous, as auctours hym comende,
 Yit from his seete Fortune made hym descende. 3696

governing
 Athens and
 dreaded by
 all the enemies
 of the city —
 yet when at
 the height of
 his glory
 Fortune made
 him descend
 from his throne.

Al the peple, bothe of Perse and Mede,
 Whil he governid Athenys the cite,
 Stood in his daunger & gan his suerd to dreede;
 And al that wern rebel to his contre, 3700
 He chastised hem in ther most cruelte.
 But whan his fame gan hiest up tascende,
 Doun from hir* wheel Fortune made hym descende.

Moordre and tresoun with pretence freendliheed, 3704
 Outward fair cheer, couert iniquite,
 Plesauce in speche, & vndir that falsheed,
 Hony shad out, sharp tailed lik a bee,
 Song of Syrenes to drowne men in the se, 3708
 In oon combyned, ther malis can extende
 To cause princis doun from ther sees descende.

Noble Princes,
 secure your-
 selves against
 treason, and
 remember in
 your prosperity
 that he who
 sits highest
 is most ready to
 descend.

Noble Pryncis, that seen so moche and reede,
 Remembryng stories of antiquite, 3712
 Afforn prouidyng that tresoun nat procede,
 Beth ay most dreedful in [hih] prosperite,
 Lat othis fallyng a merour to you bee.
 The tourn of Fortune al auctours reprehende, 3716
 Wher who sit hiest is rediest to descende.

¶ A Chapitle of wordly folk wich desire to be magnified.¹

Worldly folk
 desire above
 all other things
 to have power
 and to climb
 up to the
 highest place in
 wealth and
 reputation.

AFFT[ER] this processe, yif ye list to lere,
 Lich as Iohn Bochas maketh mencion,
 That worldli folk most souereynli desire 3720
 To haue in lordshipe gret exaltacioun,
 And up to clymbe in ther entencioun
 Of worldli worshepe* to the hiest place,
 Al erthli tresour attonys to embrace. 3724

3703. hir] his B.

3704. pretence] pretence of H, pretensed P. In MS. J, margin (78 recto) opposite this stanza, "a notable ver[ity]," written in a seventeenth century hand.

3721. lordshipe] worshipp H.

3723. worshepe] worshepes B, R 3, princis H.

¹ "Here Bochas writeth ageyn the desires of the people," MS. J. leaf 78 recto.

The feruent flawme of ther gredi desir[e]s
 In mekil gadryng fynt no suffisance;
 Ther hungri etik kyndelethe so the fires
 Of auarice be long contynuaunce, 3728
 That her thrust of worldli habundaunce
 On Tantalus ryuer abraideth euer in oon,
 Drownid in drynkyng, & deeme ther part is non.
 Ther may no tresour ther dropesie weel staunche; 3732
 The mor thei drynke the mor thei thruste in deede.
 In Thagus floodis the depper that thei launche,
 The gretter drynesse doth in ther brestes* breede.
 The hier water, an ebbe most thei dreede; 3736
 Fals indigence ther herte hath so confoundid,
 At fullest sees thei seeme ther barge is groundid.
 Thus ech man wolde to gret richesse atteyne; [p. 190]
 With suffisaunce but fewe hold hem content; 3740
 Who most haboundeth, now rathest wil compleyne
 For lak of good — alas, how thei be blent!
 Wher shal ther gadryng, wher shal ther good be spent?
 Sum oon par cas* shal hem therof discharge, 3744
 Whom thei most hate, & spende it out at large.
 Withynne a bodi, but* litil of stature,
 Corages growe up to gret magnificence,
 Which up tascende do ther besi cure, 3748
 And in ther clymbyng & transitorie assence,
 Hauyng an hope of worldli apparence,
 Lich as nothyng ther puissaunce myht trouble,
 Nothyng aduerting how that Fortune is double. 3752
 Summe set ther ioie in conquest and in werris,
 Tenbrace al erthe vndir ther puissaunce,
 Lik as thei myhte reche aboue the sterris,
 To brynge doun heuene vnto ther obeissaunce. 3756
 But yif ther power wer peised in ballaunce,
 And countirweied a-riht in ther memorye,
 Thei sholde weel fynde that al is but veynglorie.
 What may auaille hem ther fethirbeddis softe, 3760
 Shetis of Reynys, longe, large & wide,

The hot
 flame of their
 greedy desire
 for riches is
 like the thirst
 of Tantalus:
 the more they
 drink the
 fiercer their
 craving; the
 higher the
 water the
 greater their
 fear of an ebb.

Few men are
 content with
 enough. The
 richest com-
 plain most
 of poverty,
 and yet it may
 be that their
 money will be
 taken from
 them and spent
 by some one
 whom they
 most hate.

It seems to
 them as if noth-
 ing could impair
 their worldly
 power; they
 forget that
 Fortune is
 double.

Some are for
 wars and
 conquest,—as if
 they could
 reach above
 the stars; but
 if their power
 were rightly
 weighed they
 would find it
 only vainglory.
 What do their
 luxuries and
 vicious compan-
 ions avail
 them?

3727. hungri] gredy H. 3735. brestes] hertis B — breede] bleede H.

3740. hold them but fewe R. 3744. par cas] parchas B.

3746. but] ful B, J. 3753. ioie] loyes H.

3756. vnto] to R. 3761. reynes R, Reyns H.

Duyers deuises or clothes chaunged ofte,
Or vicious mene walking be ther side, —
Void of vertu, ambitious in ther pride, 3764
Which causeth princis, be report of swich fame,
For ther mysleuyng to han an heuy name.

For their idleness and lust and their support of vice and sustaining of liars, God will not suffer them to last long.

And thus for lak of vertuous dilligence,
Thoruh fals luxure and froward idilnesse, 3768
And upon flatereris thoutragous expence,
Support of wrong oppressing rihtwisnesse,
Wher lesyngmongeres haue an interesse,
Whom to susteene whan princis do *per* cure, 3772
God wil nat suffre that thei shal long endure.

The office of princes is to maintain right, to relieve and not oppresse the poor and to temper vengeance with mercy.

Offise of princis is to supporte riht,
His suerd of knihtod fro wrongis to restreyne,
The poore releuyng, toppresse hem nat with myht, 3776
His olde seruantes weel preved nat disdeyne,
His hasti rigour and his vengauce sodeyne
Lat merci tempre, to doom or he proceede,
And God shal quite hym whan he hath most neede. 3780

¶ **A Chapitle of men doing Such thing as þey be dispo[s]ed to.¹**

Bochas tells us that nothing may avail more to virtue than industry. Each man is glad to do that for which he has most talent.

MYN auctour Bochas makth a *rehersaile*,
In eschewyng of froward idilnesse,
That onto vertu may [no thyng] mor auaille
Than* dilligent labour and honest bisynesse; 3784
And so concludyng, ful pleynli doth expresse,
Ech man reioyssbeth (this sentence is nat glosid)
To doon swich thyng to whiche he [is] disposid.

Some work in astronomy or prove themselves in warlike deeds, and others rejoice in eloquence or study philosophy and poetry.

Summe ha[ue] ioie be heuenli influence 3788
To knowe the cours aboue celestiall;
And summe of knihtod do ther dilligence
To preue themsilff in* actis marciall.
And summe reioisshe, in ther entent fynall, 3792
In elloquence, summe in philosophie,
Summe, aboue all, to stodie in poetrie.

3763. mene] meyny P.

3768. luxury H. 3774. Thoffice H. 3779. he] ye H.

3783. no thyng] om. R, J, H 5 — may no thyng] nought may P.

3784. Than] Good B, R, J, H 5. 3787. to whiche] as R.

3790. do] to do R. 3791. in] be B. 3793. 2nd in] & in H.

¹ "Here Iohn Bochas spekith ageyn Idelnesse rehercyng how sum men haue Ioie in o science and sum in anothir," MS. J. leaf 78 verso.

- The hardi kniht is seruaunt to Seynt George,
 Meuyng of planetis sercheth thastronomeer, 3796 The knight
 Martis smyth laboureth in his forge, serves St.
 Harneis of steel mak[e]th tharmoreer; George; the
 But the deuisour, be dilligence entieer, astronomer
 Be fressh contreuynge, out of the old entaille 3800 searches the
 Fynt newe deuises of plate & eek of maille. moving of the
 planets, the
 armourer con-
 trives harnesses
 of steel.
- The laboreer set hooli his plesaunce
 To tilthe of lond in tyme to sowe his greyn,
 Tencrese his seed be yeerli habundaunce, 3804 The labourer
 And that his plouh labore nat in veyn, has joy in
 Castyng his sesouns of drouht & eek of reyn; tilling the land,
 And poetis to sitte in ther librarie and poets
 Desire of nature, and to be solitarie. 3808 of their nature
 desire to be
 solitary.
- Swich as men loue, such thyng þei vndirtake:
 Fissch or foule or hunte with ther houndis;
 Summe of wolfe sondri clothes make;
 Be philisophre[s] was founde out first þe groundis, 3812 What men love,
 And of al studie thei sette out first þe boundis, they undertake,
 Caused poetes, pleyntli to conclude, — to fish or
 Out of al pres to lyue in solitude. fowl or hunt,
 to be tailors
 or philosophers;
 but poets must
 live in solitude.
- Logiciens delite* in argumentis, [p. 191] 3816 Logicians
 Philisophres in vertuous lyuyng, delight in argu-
 And legistris, folwyng the[r] ententis, ment, philo-
 Gretli reioisshe in lucre and* wynnyng. sopher's in
 Phececiens trauaile for getyng;* 3820 virtuous life,
 And of poetis, this the sotil fourme, legists and
 Be newe invencioun thynges to transfourme. physicians in
 lucre and gain,
 and poets in
 transforming
 things by new
 invention.
- Poetis sholde esche[w] al idilnesse,
 Walke be ryuers and wellis cristallyne, 3824 Poets should
 To hih mounteyns a-morwe ther cours up dresse, walk by crystal
 The mist deffied whan Phebus first doth shyne, springs and
 Studie in bookis of moral disciplyne, climb high
 Nothyng coueite, but sette ther entent, 3828 mountains at
 With moderat foode for to be content. sunrise; they
 should study
 hard and be
 content with
 moderate food.

3797. Marcis R.

3798. Harneis] hands H. 3808. and] om. H.

3809. Swich] Suche R, H.

3810. hunte] huntyng H, to honten R, to hunten J.

3816. delite] delite hem B.

3818. folwyng] folwen H — ther] the J, H 5, R.

3819. and] and in B, H, R 3, H 5.

3820. getyng] wynnyng B. 3825. up] om. R.

Their chief labour is to reprove vices, not to be rudely offensive or to injure men, but always to conclude with virtue.

Ther cheeff labour is vicis to reprove
 With a maner couert symylitude,
 And non estat with ther langage greeve 3832
 Bi no rebukying of termys dul and rude;
 What-euer thei write, on vertu ay conclude,
 Appeire no man in no maner wise:
 This thoffise of poetis that be wise. 3836

¶ A chapitle of þe gouernance of Poetis.

Poets should be secluded from the tumult of the world and live according to their means and by the support of princely patrons.

TO descryue the disposicioun
 Of al poetis be old ordynauce, —
 Thei shold be quiett fro worldli mocioun,
 And it sequestre out of ther remembraunce, 3840
 Fare compotent vnto ther sustenaunce,
 Drynk wyn among* to quike ther dilligence,
 Support of princis to fynde hem ther dispence.

They have neither land nor wealth; and when their purses are empty they fail in countenance. The support of princes is the best recompense of their sorrows.

For thei that lakke lond & pocessioun, 3844
 And can of lucre no maner cheuisaunce,
 Ther coffres void, ther purs turnid up-so-doun,
 And wante vitaille to fynde hem in substaunce,
 Ther corage dullith, thei faile contenaunce, — 3848
 What mihte beste ther sorwes recompence?
 Support of princis to fynde hem ther dispence.

Lords have power, churchmen gold, knights and merchants are well able to look out for themselves, but poor poets now-a-days may go begging.

Lordis in erthe ha[ue] domynacioun;
 Men of the cherche of gold haue habundaunce; 3852
 The kniht get good[e] thoruh his hih renoun;
 Marchauntis with wynnyng ha[ue] souereyn aqueyn-
 taunce:
 But [poor] poetis (God sheeld hem fro myschaunce!)
 May now-adaies for ther impotence, 3856
 For lakke of support go begge ther dispence.

Dante, Virgil, Petrarch, Chaucer, — all prospered; for they had the support of princes.

Daunt in Itaille, Virgile in Rome toun,
 Petrak in Florence hadde al his plesaunce,
 And prudent Chaucer in Brutis Albioun 3860
 Lik his desir fond vertuous suffisance,
 Fredam of lordshepe weied in ther ballaunce,
 Because thei flourede in wisdam and science,
 Support of princis fond hem ther dispence. 3864

3831. a] om. R.

3837. This chapter (lines 3837-3871) is omitted in H, R, J, H 5, R 3.

3842. among] competent B.

3855. poor is supplied from MSS. R 2, H 3, H 4.

O welle of fredam, enclyne thyn eris doun,
 And of thi bounte yiue sum attendaunce,
 To heere of merci my supplicacioun,
 In releuyng of myn hertis greuaunce;
 Oppressid with pouert, & kan no purueiaunce,
 Sauff to resorte to thi magnificence,
 Onli be support to fynde me my dispence!

O well of
 generosity,
 incline thine
 ears to hear
 my suppli-
 cation;
 3868 oppressed with
 poverty,
 through thy
 magnificence
 only can I find
 my means of
 support.

[How Malleus Duk of Cartage for oppressioun
 tyrannye was hewen in to pecys.]¹

WHAN Bochas hadde rehersed of poetis,
 Ther straunge studie & ther soley[n] writyngis,
 And ther desirs of solitarie seetis,
 In plesaunt placis to make ther duellyngis,
 Beside ryuers & holsum welle spryngis,
 Which acomplished, he gan his penne auau[n]ce,
 Pryn[cis] off Affrik to putte in remembraunce.

3872 After John
 Bochas (and
 John Lydgate)
 had told of
 poets and their
 desire to live
 alone in pleas-
 ant sur-
 roundings, he
 began to write
 about princes of
 Africa,
 3876

And whil he dede his besi dilligence
 Ther pitous fallis to putte in memorie,
 First ther cam tweyne vnto his presence,
 Ther old noblesse appallid & ther glorie,
 Which, as hym sempte, withyne a teritorie
 O[f] Affrik boundis, longyng to Cartage,
 Dide first appeere, most dedli of visage.

3880 two of whom,
 Machæus, duke
 of Carthage,
 and Cartalus,
 his son,
 appeared in his
 presence.

The ton of hem was named Malleus,
 Duk of Cartage, of Affrik lord and sire.
 His sone also callid Cartalus,
 Whilom cheef prince & bisshop eek of Tire.
 But Malleus, which heeld the gret empire
 Of al Affrik, for his pompous outrage
 Exilled was for euere out of Cartage.

3888 Machæus was
 exiled for his
 outrageous con-
 duct and sought
 revenge.

Which caused hym in herte he was nat murye, [p. 192]
 But ay remembrid upon his fel banshyng,
 Gadred his people withynne the lond of Surrye,
 And in the feeld, whil he lay hosteieng,
 Cast hym fulli to make no tarieng,
 But in al haste, of knihtli fel corage,
 Maugre his enmyes resorte onto Cartage.

3892 Raising an army
 in Syria, he
 resolved to
 return to
 Carthage in
 spite of his
 enemies.
 3896

3879. his] this R.

3882. ther] the H. 3886, 90. Manlyus H, Macheus P.

3894. upon] on H. 3898. al] al þe H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 79 recto.

- He sent for his son, who was prince and bishop of Tyre, to come and help him with all the chivalry of his town; but as it was then the time for sacrifice to Hercules, Cartalus preferred to offend his father rather than neglect the gods.
- Tauenge his exil his herte was set affire, 3900
 And his entent[e] mor to fortiefe,
 He sente in haste his lettres doun to Tire,
 To Cartalus, that he sholde hym hie,
 And brynge with hym al the cheualrie 3904
 Of his cite, in steel armyd cleene,
 His fadres parti to holde up and susteene.
 But whan this bisshop knew hooli the maneer
 Of this purpos, which ye han herd deuise, 3908
 He considred how that tyme of the yeer
 Ordeyned was to do sacrefise,
 Aftir the rihtis of ther paynym wise,
 To Hercules, which in that cite 3912
 Aboue al goddis hadde the souereynte.
 Whos feeste was holde space of certeyn daies,
 Which for to halwe he needis must entende, 3916
 And bi the custum make no dellaies,
 But that he muste therto condescende.
 And leuer he hadde his fader to offende,
 As in swich caas, than thoruh neccligence 3920
 Vnto his goddis for to doon offence.
 Wherof his fader hadde indignacioun,
 The caas arettyng to vnkyndenesse,
 And therof kauhte a gret occasioun
 Ageyn his sone, of froward wilfulness: 3924
 For princis ofte, of furious hastynesse,
 Wil cachche a qu[a]rel, causeles in sentence,
 Ageyn folk absent, thouth ther be non offence.
 And summe tunges venymous of nature, 3928
 Whan thei parceyue that a prince is mevid,
 Tagregge his* ire do ther besi cure,
 With fals langage to maken hym mor grevid.
 But ther is no poisoun so weel expert nor preuid 3932
 As is of tunges the hatful violence,
 Namli whan princis list* yiue hem audience.
 The feeste acomplished of myhti Hercules,
 Al innocent of double or fals meenyng, 3936
 The said[e] bisshop, of wil nat rek[e]les,

His father was very angry.

and venomous tongues made matters worse, for no poison is more baneful than the hateful violence of slander.

The festival over, the bishop went at once to his father. He did not even stop to change his clothes.

3903. Tartalus J. 3908. Of] & H. 3911. wise] guyse H.
 3914. was] wast R. 3917. therto] for to H.
 3925. of] in H. 3930. his] ther B. 3934. list] wil B.
 3936. Al] An R.

Kam to his fader withoute mor tarieng,
 Chaungid nouthur habit nor clothyng,
 With al thensignes, & in the same wise 3940
 As he tofor hadde doon his sacrefise.

Anon his fader made no delay,
 Withoute excus, it wolde be no bet,
 Of hasti rancour, the silue same day 3944
 Maad hym been hangid upon an hih gibet.
 Lawe an[d] iustise wer bothe aside set,
 And tiranye, most furious & wood,
 To do vengauce in trouthis place stood. 3948

Who can or may tirauntes wil descryue,
 Whos marcial suerdis be whet ay for vengauce?
 Ther bloodi thrustis doth thoruh ther hertes ryue,
 Ther eris ay open to heere of sum myschaunce, 3952
 Ther furious merthe, ther mortal wood plesaunce,
 Ther pale smylyng, ther lauhtr of fals hatreede,
 Concludeth euere upon sum cruel deede.

Thei been mynistris to Parchas sustren thre, 3956
 Tuntwyne the threedis of folkis heer mortall,
 And verray cosyns, thoruh hasti cruelte,
 Vnto the woode Furies infernall,
 Children to Pluto, of vengauce marciall, 3960
 Which for ther vices, but thei bere hem weel,
 Shal tourne in helle on Ixiones wheel.

Thus Malleus, fader most vnkynde,
 Lik swich a tirant shad out his cruelte, 3964
 As ye han herd; and aftir, as I fynde,
 Of furious herte and of old enmyte,
 Be force is entrid Cartage the cite,
 And slouh al tho in his hatful ire, 3968
 That hym afforn had exiled into Tire.

Wrouhte aftir wil and nothyng aftir riht,
 Gan robbe and spoille that noble famous toun,
 Which made hym hatid in the peeplis siht 3972
 For his outrage and gret extorsioun,
 Hauyng no ioie nor consolacioun

But on the
 same day his
 father had him
 hangid on a
 gibbet.

Who can
 describe the
 will of tyrants,
 — their furious
 mirth, their pale
 smiling and
 laughter of false
 hatred!

Ministers of the
 Parcae, cousins
 of the Furies,
 children of
 Pluto, they will
 turn in hell on
 Ixion's wheel
 for their vices.

Thus
 Machæus first
 slew his son,
 and then
 entering Car-
 thage murdered
 all those who
 had caused his
 exile.

He robbed and
 spoiled until
 he was hated
 by the people,
 whom it was his
 joy to oppress.

3941. his] *om.* R. 3949. wil] weel R.
 3951. thrustis] thyrst P, trustys H 5, thristis R 3.
 3960. Childre R, H. 3963. Manleus H, Macheus P.
 3966. 2nd of] *om.* R. 3967. of Cartage R.
 3969. afforn] *om.* H. 3972. peeple R. 3973. For] for by
 H.

- Withynne his herte, pleynli, nor gladnesse,
Sauf lik a tiraunt the peep[le] to oppresse. 3976
- They bewailed their misfortune; and Bochas says, that the lordship of princes who climb up fast to riches through pillage will not last long. The peep[le] of Cartage sore gan to pleyne [p. 193]
Vpon ther mischeeff and desolacioun.
And Bochas writ, rehersyng in certeyne,
Wil is a stepmooder of witt & of resoun; 3980
And wher that princis ha[ue] domynacioun,
And bi fals pillage to richesse clymbe up faste, —
Trusteth riht weel, ther lordshipe may nat laste.
- Their wealth and worldly dignity are of no help to them if they are tyrants; for lordship is the love of a well-ordered people. Ther grete power of worldli excellence, 3984
Nor ther acrochyng of temporal richesse,
Whan thei be tirauntes, may stonde in no diffence,
And froward wil[le] reuleth ther hihnesse.
For what is lordshipe, pleynli to expresse, 3988
In this world* heer, yif it be discernid? —
Loue of the peep[le] whan thei be weel gouernid.
- Tyranny and oppression engender hatred; and when the people cease to fear him, a prince is but a man alone. For tirannye and fals oppressioun
Causeth princis to stonde in gret hatreede. 3992
And what is worth ther domynacioun,
Withoute loue lat preue it at a neede?
Men for a tyme may suffre hem weel & dreede;
But whan that dreed constreyned is & goone, 3996
Than is a prince but a man allone.
- Machæus is a good example; for finally the people rose and tore him in pieces. Seeth an example how Malleus of Cartage,
For al his castellis & tour[e]s maad of stonis,
For his oppressioun, vengauce and outrage, 4000
The peep[le] of Affrik ros on hym al attonys,
And hew assonder his flessch & eek his bonys,
Caste hem pleynli, on hym thei wer so wood,
Vnto ther goddis to offren up his blood. 4004
- His subjects thought that no offering was more acceptable to their gods than the blood of tyrants. The peep[le] dempte, of mortal cruelte,*
Ther was non offryng so plesaunt nor couenable
Vnto ther goddis to plesse ther deite,
As blood of tirantes, which that be vengable. 4008
Thus cruel princis make the peep[le] vnstable
Of necessite, which ouhte be compleyned,
To wreke ther wrongis that thei be constreyned.

3977. pleyne] compleyn R. 3983. riht] om. H.

3984. Ther] The H. 3985. Nor] To R. 3989. world]
word B.3994. it] om. H. 3997. a man but R. 3998. Manlyus H.
4005. cruelte] equite B.

Loo, heer the eende of Malleus the tiraunt, 4012 The fate of
 Which doth to princis ful weel exemplefie, Machæus
 To God about how it is nat plesaunt shews that God
 Them to delite in no swich robberie, is not pleased
 Nor pile the peepel be no fals tirannye, 4016 with kings
 Nor for no talis be hasti of vengauunce; who rob and
 For al swich thyng to God is displeaunce. oppress their
 people.

¶ Lenvoye.

READ and considred, this saide tragedie
 Sheweth to princis a merour ful notable, 4020 This tragedie
 How thei ther rigour shal tempere & modifie teaches that
 Or thei procedde for to be vengable: princes should
 For in a prince it is riht comendable, temper their
 Rancour of herte, of cheer & of corage 4024 rigour.

Ther hasti* ire, [ther] sodeyn malencolie, In their hasty
 The[r] colerik fumys, ther furie vnrestreynable, anger and un-
 Ther vnqueynt fires with flawme of tirannye, 4028 restrained fury
 Ther fretyng etik of hate incomparable, and hate they
 Lik bestial tigris, lik leouns vntretable, are like tigers.
 Ne wil nat suffre ther infernal rage
 Differre ther doomys til ther ire asswage. 4032

The roial leoun, of mortal gent[e]rie, The lion does
 Among beestis of force incomparable, not prove his
 Preueth nat his poweer nor his regalie might on de-
 Geyn beestis prostrat, which be nat defensable. 4036 fenceless
 And myhti princis sholde, in caas semblable, creatures.
 For innocentes take merci in morgage, Princes should
 Respityng rigour til ther ire asswage. follow his
 example.

Ther sparle of vengauunce is quiked in partie 4040 Detraction,
 Be wyndis foure, fell and abhomynable: flattery, deceit,
 Blast of detraccioun, & blast of flaterie, and extortion
 Blast of fals rowneris, that forge many a fable, fan the flame
 And blast of bribours, most vicious & coupable, 4044 of their rage.

4012. Manlyus H. 4016. fals] om. H.

4026. hasti and sodeyn are transposed B — 1st Ther] The H.

4027. 1st Ther] The H, R 3 — 2nd ther] the J, þe H.

4029. etik] fretyk R. 4030. intretable R.

4031. ther] that R.

4034. beestis] al beestis H. 4038. Innocence H.

4044. blast] bast R — coupable R, H.

With smoki sclaundris & felenous fals visage,
Causeth ire of pryncis that it may neuer aswage.

Let princes
beware of lying,
slanderous
tongues.

For which lat princis, of noble policie
Bewar of tungis double and deceyuable, 4048
Which with ther venym infect ech companye,
Ther poynaunt poisoun is so penetrable;
To folk absent it is myscheuable,
So deepe fretith ther serpentyn langage, 4052
Causyng in princis ther ire may neuer asswage.

Let virtue,
noble Princes,
magnify your
high estates
and make you
merciful.

Noble Pryncis, lat vertu magnefie
Your hih estatis to make you merciabile;
For moral Senec doth clerli specefie, 4056
The throne of princis be clemence is maad stable.
Vengauunce delaied, to God is agreable;
And hasti rigour doth outrageous damage,
Whan humble requestis your ire may nat aswage. 4060

[How the substauce of the host of himilcho duke
of Cartage goyng to conquere Cicile died of
pestilens & aftir himsilf slayn.]¹

Himilco, duke
of Carthage, was
sent to conquer
Sicily.

AFFTIR these noble myhti princis tweyne, [p.194]
Next in ordre, with pale & ded visage,
Toforn Iohn Bochas Himilcho gan compleyne
Thunhappi fall of his fatal passage, 4064
Whan he was sent bauctorite of Cartage
To conquere, thoruh his myhti puissaunce,
The lond of Cecile vnto ther obeissance.

The Carthaginians
believed
that such high-
handed pro-
ceedings were
lawful;

Thei of Cartage hadde an oppynyoun, 4068
That it was leeful, aftir ther entente,
Withoute title of riht or of resoun,
Ther teritories & boundis to aumente.
And for that cause Hymylco thei* sent, 4072
The mihti duk, ther noblesse to auauunce,
Which off Cartage hadde hool the gouernaunce.

so their duke set
out over the sea
with a great
army.

And for he muste passen bi the se
Toward Cecile, this noble worthi kniht, 4076
With hym he lad[d]e a ful gret enarme

4045. felenous] felons J. 4053. ther] þat H.
4063. hymiliche R, Amilco P. 4071. taugment R.
4072. cause] cas H — thei] forth was B.
4076. this] the R — worthy noble H.

¹MS. J. leaf 79 verso.

Chose out of Cartage, in steel armyd briht,
 Ther foon to conquere of verray force & myht.
 But Fortune gan at hym so disdeyne, 4080
 That to his purpos he neuer myht atteyne.

Ground & gynnyng of his destruccioun,
 To be remembrid shortli in sentence, —
 Ther fil of thair a gret corupcioun, 4084
 Which that caused a ful gret pestilence
 Among his meyne, be vnwar violence,
 And sodeyn myscheef that is upon hym fall, —
 He loste almost his worthi knihtis all. 4088

Nih al his peple was slayn in that moreyn,
 That with a fewe beleft of his meyne,
 Infortunat he turnede is ageyn
 Hom to Cartage; and thei of the cite, 4092
 Al causeles, of hasti cruele,
 Hath slayn ther duk, as Bochas doth compile.
 Loo, who may truste Fortune any while!

But Fortune
 so corrupted the
 air that almost
 all his soldiers
 died from
 pestilence,

and, returning
 home to
 Carthage,
 Himilco was
 slain by his
 subjects.

[How heynon duc of Cartage was dismembrid.]¹

A FFTIR whos deth anon þer gan succede 4096
 A mihti duk þat callid was Haynoun,
 Which purposed for to chaunge in deede
 His name of duk, bi fals ambicioun,
 And to be callid thoruhout the myhti toun, 4100
 Kyng of Cartage; and therupon of pride
 To fynde out weies he felli gan prouyde.

He was nat content a duk men sholde hym calle,
 But of Cartage for to be namyd kyng, 4104
 And lik his purpos that it sholde falle,
 Fro day to day the menys compassyng,
 How he myht fulfille this vnkout[h] thyng,
 For to be crownid an[d] regnen in that lond. 4108
 And atte laste this mene weie he fond:

and day
 by day sought
 means to fulfil
 his ambition.

4085. that] *om.* R.

4091. turnede] turny H.

4094. ther] this R.

4097. Hannon P.

4100. the] that R.

4108. crownid] crowned kyng R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 80 recto

He had a young daughter whom he intended to give in marriage to the son of a senator,

He hadde a douhtir yonge & tendir of age,
Which of the peeple stood in gret fauour;
And he hym caste to yiue hir in mariage 4112
To a yong kniht,* sone of a senatour,
Which in the cite was a gret gouernour.
And that his purpos myhte been atteyned,
Day of the mariage & tyme was ordeyned. 4116

and arranged for the occasion a royal banquet,

And in his paleis, cheeff and princepal,
This saide duk leet make his ordenaunce
To holde a feeste ful solempne & roial, 4120
And with gret costis made his purueiaunce
Of sondry deyntes, which that in substaunce
Wer necessarie in alle maner thyng
Vnto the feeste of a worthi kyng.

to which he invited all the senators,

He gaf in charge vnto his purueiours, 4124
That al wer redi ageyn a certeyn day;
And to his feeste cam al the senatours
Duellyng in Cartage; ther durste no man* sey nay.
And of his purpos to make no delay, 4128
Thouh his fraude was nat apparceyued,
He caste that day summe sholde be deceyued.

meaning to poison them; for he knew that they would never consent to make him king.

He conceyued in his inward entent,
He to be kyng and regnen in Cartage; 4132
The senatour[e]s wolde neuer assente
To chaunge ther custum nor ther old vsage.
He durste theroff vttre no langage,
Kepte hym secre withoute noise or soun, 4136
And fulli caste hym to procede bi tresoun.

The nexte weie, he knew no bettir reed
To his desir, than pleyntly to ordeyne
That of Cartage the senatours wer ded; 4140
Than wer he likli his purpos to atteyne
For to be crownid lord and souereyne,
So tacomplysshe his luste in alle thyng,
And in Cartage to regne as lord & kyng. 4144

4113. kniht] a kniht B. 4114. gret] om. R.

4119. holde] helde R.

4121. Of] & H. 4124. in] a R.

4126. feeste] festis H.

4127. no man] non B, R, J, H 5, R 3.

4130. that day that R.

4133. neuer nat H.

4139. þan to his desire pleyntly H.

4142. For] om. H.

- For yif the senat wer uttirli destroyed, [p. 195] Once they were destroyed, there
 He sholde fynde no maner resistance, would be no
 Wherbi his purpos sholde been encloied, one left in
 Nor dur sei nay to his magnificence; authority to
 For in the poraille ther was no diffence.* 4148 oppose his
 And at this feeste he caste hym to proceede wishes.
 Al his entent[e] to conclude in deede.
- His officeris he made to be sworn 4152 He informed
 To helpe destroie falsli be poisoun his servants of
 The senatours, of whom I spak toforn, his intention
 And that ther vitaille & deyntes in foisoun, and instructed
 And eek ther wynes, for short conclusioun, them to put
 Sholde with venym been intoxicat, 4156 poison in the
 Thoruh al the paleis, & spare non estat. food and wine;
- These officeres hadde a conscience but their con-
 For tacomplisshe so horrible a thyng; 4160 science forbade
 And secreli vnder gret providence them to do
 To the senat thei gaff therof warnyng. such a horrible
 And whan thei knew this mortal compassyng thing, and they
 Off duk Haynoun, teschewen al affray, 4164 warned the
 Thei putte the wedding of prudence in delay. senators,
- Wherof this duk gan haue suspeciouñ, who caused the
 And of this mateer fill in a maner dreede; wedding to be
 Thouhte he wolde bi sum collusioun 4168 delayed.
 Ageyn Cartage mor mortalli proceede, Hanno became
 And gan calle to helpe hym in his neede suspiciouñ and
 Of Maurityne a kyng of gret renoun, allied himself
 With hym bi force to falle upon the toun. 4172 with the king of
 Made hym promys, to his auantage,* Mauretania,
 For to make free destrubioun promising him
 Of [the] richessis, tresour and pillage,* a share of the
 Which that he myht fynde* in the toun. 4176 pillage of the
 For vtir fyn of his entencioun town,
 Was to destroie, of wilfu[l] cruelte,
 The famous Cartage, the myhti strong cite.

4148. dare H.

4149. diffence] difference B.

4150. this] the R.

4155. that] om. H — in foisoun] infuson R, bi foisoun H.

4161. secretly H.

4173. auantages B, R, H, H 5.

4175. richesse H — pillage] pillages B, J, P, H 5, H, R, R 3.

4176. myht fynde] fyndeb B.

- and strengthen-
ing his forces
with the rirraff
of Carthage, re-
tired to his
castle.
- Of al the thrallis in the toun duellyng, 4180
And swich as wer[e] born of louh lynage,
To strengthe his parti, this was his werkyng:
He made hem alle, bi mortal fals outrage,
Withynne the myhti castell of Cartage 4184
To keepe hem cloos, of malis & envie
Ageyn the cite hymself to fortiefie.
- But it was all in
vain: the
senate held the
king of Maure-
tania in check,
and, overcoming
Hanno and his
churls,
- But al for nouht: the myhti senatours
Therof wer ware,* and of hih prudence 4188
Ageyn* his malis and al his fals robbours
Thei made hem strong, and thoruh ther prouidence,
In especial tordeyne a diffence,
First on ther parti to lette the komying 4192
Of Mauritayne the stronge cruel kyng.
And of assent thei list[e] nat dellaye,
But roos attonys, and bi gret ordenaunce
Ther false duk to venquisshe and outraie, 4196
Hym and his cherlis thei brouhte to vttraunce,
Fill upon hym with a gret puissaunce,
And fynalli, procedyng off resoun,
This was his doom, baufs of al the toun: 4200
- stripped him of
his garments and
hewed him in
pieces.
- First, of this duk as it is remembrid,
He was dispoilled, his doublet eek vnlacid,
Ioynnt fro ioynnt hewen and dismembrid,
And from his hed his eyen out arraced. 4204
And riht as he hadde afforn compassid
To haue destroyed his owne myhti toun,
As ye han herd, [he] reseceyued his guerdoun.

¶ Lenvoye.

- Thus these two
rich and mighty
princes of
Carthage were
slain. The one
without cause,
- T**HIS tragedie doth pitousli compleyne, 4208
And maketh a maner lamentacioun
Of thes riche myhti princis tweyne,
Slayn in Cartage, as maad is mencionn.
Causeles the ton,* sauf bi thoccasioun, 4212
That pestilence in his froward viage
Slouh al his peeple, that wer born in Cartage.

4188. wer ware] war B, R, J.

4189. Ageyns B, Geyn J. 4197. chorlis R, Chorlis H.

4205. afforn as he had H. 4210. myhti riche R.

4212. ton] toun B, J, townne (om. the) R.

- Fortune also gan frowardli disdeyne
 Ageyn this riche mihti duk Haynoun, 4216 the other for
 his malice and
 deceit.
- Whan he of malis gan mortalli ordeyne
 The senatours to moordren of his toun,
 At his feeste bi craft of fals poisoun,
 As ye han herd rehersid his outrage. 4220
- He was ageynward dismembrid in Cartage.
 Who doth vengauce, vengauce shal atteyne,
 In ech estaat, withoute excepcioun,
 And who of pite vengauce doth restreyne, 4224 He who does
 vengeance shall
 reap vengeance,
 and he who
 restrains his
 hand for mercy
 shall receive
 mercy's reward.
- He shal of merci resceyue the guerdoun:
 For riht requereth, of trouthe & of resoun,
 Cruel princis shal haue for ther wage
 Deth, lik this duk, dismembrid in Cartage. 4228
- Noble Princis, doth your besi peyne [p. 196] Noble Princes,
 For to preserue fro rebelloun do your best
 The comoun peple, which stant in noun certeyne, to keep the
 fickle common
 people from
 rebellion. 4232
- With eueri wynd turnyng up-so-doun.
 Afftir Fortune thei chaunge affecciou, 4232
 Turnyng ther hertis with trist or glad visage,
 Lik as the peple dide whilom in Cartage.

¶ Thautour a-geyn couetous Peple.¹

- N**ATURE þat is content *with* litil thyng, 4236 The wise
 Goddess of
 Nature, empress
 of the world
 and mother of
 wealth, first laid
 up treasures in
 mines.
- The wise, war, þe circumspect goddess, 4240
 Which vnder God in heuen aboue regnyng,
 This world to gouerne is callid themperesse,
 Mooder of richessis, the first founderesse,
 Which cerchid out bi hir artificeres
 The straunge tresours hid in the myneres.
- This noble ladi, this princesse most famous,
 Knowyng of man thunkouth condiciouns, 4244 She knew the
 evils of
 covetousness
- Sauh bexperience richessis wer noious, —
 In hym teclipse the disposiciouns,
 And conveie his inclynaciouns
 Bi a wrong weie vertu to sette aside, 4248
 How couetise was a ful pereilous guide.

4221. He] And H.

4234. or] & R.

4238. above in hevene H. 4239. This] The R.

4247. conveie] conveyne R. 4249. perlious R.

¹ The same heading in J, 80 verso.

and avarice,
by which men
are incited to
delve in the
earth for treas-
ure.

For auarise, to al vertu contraire,
The gredi werm, the serpent vnstaunchable,
Man to be-traisshe with promyses debonaire, 4252
At prime face soote and agreable,
Tauht hym of nature bi craft most deceyuable,
Thoruh sotil serchyng, as it wer for the nonys,
First out of erthe to delue precieus stonis. 4256

Rich metals are
sought for and
ships with their
broad sails con-
trived out of
desire for gain.

Of riche myneris thei serche the entrailles,
To fynde out metallis for worldli auantages,
Contryued shippis with ther brode sailles
Bi dyuers sees to make ther passages. 4260
And couetise ordeyned first viages,
Caused princis ride in londis ferre,
Ech ageyn other for to gynne a werre.

Wars are
begun for
avarice; robbery,
murder, and
extortion

Off auarice gan first thes robberies, 4264
Await of brigautis and al extort pillages,
Moordre, slaughtre & couert briberies,
Of old contreuid, furious fel damages,
Wrouht and acheuid in al maner ages. 4268
Now in thes daies, lat set it at a preeff,
Fals couetise caused al swich myscheeff.

spring from
covetousness,

She was first roote of fals extorsioun,
To spoile the people, mooder of rauyne, 4272
And sterere up* of oppressioun:
To take bi force, this was hir doctrine.
And as myn auctour doth pleyntli determyne
And concludeth in ful pitous wise, 4276
Roote of al euil is fals couetise.

the nurse
of strife,
mistress of
wilful violence,
rebellion and
the subversion
of realms.

She was eek notice of kontek & of striff,
Maistresse of moordre and wilful violence,
Maad men to iupartre boodi, good & lyff, 4280
Caused discencioun and disobedience,
Gruchchyng of comouns, withdrauht of reuerence,
Bi rigerous constreynt sodeyn rebellious,
Rumour in rewmys, unwar subuersiouns. 4284

4250. to] is to.

4252. promyses] promysse R.

4257. myneris] mines P — serche] serche out H, R, J.

4264. thes] the R. 4265. pillagies R.

4273. up] first B, H 5, R 3, H. (*The reading in R, R 2, and Sloane is up.*)

4278. was] is R, J.

This froward dragoun ful of idropesie,
Whos fretyng etik ther may no plente feede,
To staunche his thrust ther is no remedie:
The mor he drynketh, the mor he hath ay neede; 4288
And the mor tresour, the mor he stant in dreede,
With Tantalus thouth he swymme in the floodis,
In Migdas well pleyneth for lak of goodis.

There is no
remedy for its
thirst, though it
swim in the
floods with
Tantalus or live
in Midas' well.

This werm eek causeth that men in ther richesse 4292
Haue dreed of theuys a-nyht in ther wakyng;
And yif thei heere on coffre, bed or presse,
Cat, rat or mous, or any werm meuyng,
He weneth anon, withynne hymself deemyng, 4296
That ther wer kome, with gret apparaille,
Sum vnkouth pilour his tresour to assaille.

It causes men
to fear thieves
and to start at
the noise of
small creatures
at night, and
to stand ever
in despair and
dread lest their
possessions fail
them,—most
greedy when
they most
abound in
wealth!

The woful soule stondest euere in dreede,
And ay abideth in labour & trauaille, 4300
And of the goodis, which he doth posseede,
Fallith* in dispeir list thei wolde hym faille.
Tween hope and dreed ther is swich a bataille,
Thoruh entermyning* ech other to confounde, 4304
To be most gredi whan thei most habounde.

Hope vnassurid with dreed[e] disspeired [p. 197]
Meetyng in hertes make a ful mortal werre.
Whan hope presumeth, with dreed he is appeired, 4308
And lik a coward makith hym stonde aferre,
Dul of his cheer as is a cloudi sterre,
Which dar nat shewe the liht of his tresour,
But euer tencrece set hooli his labour. 4312

Hope and
Dread meeting
in hearts make
mortal war, and
Hope becomes
a coward,

He thar nat touche thyng that he loueth most,*
His cofres cloos be shet so vndir keye,
Thouth he hath mekil, he makth therof no bost,
Lest for his tresour men wolde hym werreie, — 4316
Pleyneth for neede, lik as he wolde deie,

not daring to
touch the
wealth he loves
above all other
things, and
complaining of
poverty lest he
be robbed.

4285. dropesye R, hidropsie P.

4287. his thrust] his thrust this thrust R.

4291. Migdas] Midas P — well] wellis H, welth P.

4293. wakyng] walkyng R.

4302. Fallith] Falle B.

4303. a] om. R, P.

4304. entermyning] vndirmynyng B, (entermynyng J, entyrmenyng H 5, entremynyng R, entirmynyng H, R 3, intermyning P).

4306. dispeired R.

4307. Meetyng] meevyng H.

4313. thar] dar R, H —most] best B. 4315. have H.

- Feyneth fals pouert to sparen his dispence,
Oppressing plente with froward indigence.
- Though his chests are heaped with gold, scarcity rules his household.
And thouh his chestis happid be with gold, 4320
With iren barris faste shet & closid,
Fals scarsete governeth his household,
That be non excesse he is nat vndisposid,
His indigent herte so streihtli is enosid 4324
To Herebus heir; and yit weel wers in deede,
In grettest richesse to compleyne vpon neede.
- His heart is bound to Erebus, in whose iron city turns Ixion's wheel, under the guard of Tisiphone; where Sisyphus labours ever with his stone.
This Herebus hath of iren, nat of ston,
For auarice bilt a foul cite, 4328
Wher-as the wheel tourneth off Ixion
Vndir the boundis of Thesiphone,
Wher Zeziphus may neuer a day go fre,
But with his ston contynuelli trauaileth, 4332
And the mor besi, his labour lest auaileth.
- Thus auarice, to ve[r]tu most contrarie,
Founde among vices ful contagious,
Euer bisi the restles ston to karie, 4336
Now up, now down, with weri Zeziphus,
Whos endles labour braideth on Theseus,
Which heeld the bridel of frutles bisynesse,
Condemned in helle to lyue in idilnesse. 4340
- Charon is the cruel boatman of covetousness, who sails the flood of Acheron.
Off couetise the cruel maryner
Is callid C[h]aron, whiche with Flegonte,
Bi many a streiht & many fel daungeer
Sailleth in the floodis of furious Acheronte, 4344
Vnder that dirked and cloudi orizonte,
Wher auarice ches whilom nigardshipe
For tresoureer his cofres for to keepe.
- The labour of covetous men in gathering wealth, their fear for its safety, and their sorrow when they must leave it forever, are the three heads of Cerberus.
First to declare the labour in gadryng 4348
Of coueitous men, as it is in deede,
And countirpeise how ther streiht keepyng
Is euer meynt with importable dreede,
Sorwe at departyng, for ther mortal meede, 4352
Which may be callid, of trouthe & equite,
Of Cerberus the wakir hedis thre.

4320. happid] hepid H, happed R, J, heped P.
4324. enosid R, enoisid H. 4325. Erebus P.
4330. theophone R. 4331. Sisiphus P.
4334. Thus] This H. 4337. up] vp and R.
4342. Phlegonte P. 4343. fel] a fell H.

- The firste hed is vnstaunchable desir
 Off worldli goodis gret richessis to atteyne, 4356
 The mor ences, the hatter is the fyr;
 The seconde hed is the dreedful peyne,
 Which in keepyng, his herte doth constreyne;
 Vnwar departyng, that sodenli doth falle, 4360
 Is the thridde hed, that greueth most of all.
- This waker werm, that berth these hedis thre,
 Is callid the werm of gredi couetise,
 Whos bisi constreynt, restles perplexite 4364
 Troubleþ the soule in ful furious wise.
 Which froward monstre, pleyntli to deuise,
 Braideth on Idra, of whom poetis seyn,
 On hed kit of, ther growe thre ageyn. 4368
- Euere at the tail of plente and richesse
 Of custum folweth gruchchyng & envie;
 For he that hath of tresour gret richesse
 Is seelde glad, as for his partie. 4372
 Thus bothe tweyne stonde in iupartie:
 The riche with plente halt hym nat appaied,
 And the nedi with pouert is affraied.
- And yit in pouert is ful gret sekirnesse, 4376
 Which is a tresour that no man wil assaille.
 And as myn auctour Bochas berth witnessse,
 Amyclates among[es] the poraille
 Leued in pes, seur from al bataille, 4380
 Heeld hym content with swich as God hym sente,
 Whan riche wer armyd & to the werre wente.
- Vertuous pouert stant euer in sekir caas,
 To wach his hous [he] hath ful litil neede;
 But proude Pompeie assegid in Duras, 4384
 For feer of Iulius stood in gret[e] dreede.
 But peeplis rude take heerof non heede,—
 Swich as reioysshe hem for to sheede blood, 4388
 In straunge werris wrongli to gete good.
- Stories olde ful weel reherse kunne [p. 198]
 Diuers studies of folkis heer mortal,
 First how Diogenes was content in his tonne, 4392
 In which he made his loggyng pryncepal,

And the
 serpent that
 bears these
 three heads is
 the monster of
 greedy
 covetousness,
 who troubles
 the soul and is
 like the Hydra.

Behind wealth
 follows envy.
 The rich man
 is seldom glad.

And yet, in
 poverty is great
 security.
 Amyclas lived
 in peace among
 the poor, while
 the rich were
 armed and
 went forth to
 war.

Proud Pompey,
 besieged by
 Caesar, lived
 in great fear;
 but rude folk
 have
 little dread
 of such
 adventures.

Diogenes was
 more content
 in his tun
 than Croesus
 with his over-
 flowing coffers;

4356. richesse R. 4379. Amiclas P.
 4383. sekir] secre R. 4384. ful] but R 3, P.
 4391. folk R, folke P.

- And sauh the cours aboue celestial,
 Lyued gladdere amonges philisophres,
 Than kyng Cresus, with al his stuffed coffres. 4396
- and, for all his treasure,
 Sardanapalus came to an evil end. Sophodius, who had but a garden of leeks, was always glad and without fear of robbers.
- And yiff men wolde onto mynde call
 The grete myscheuys folwyng on habundance,
 And thynk[e] also how Sardanapall,
 For al his tresour, kam [un]to myschaunce, 4400
 And how Sophodius, porest in substauce,
 Hadde but a gardyn ful of leekis greene,
 And riht nouht ellis hymseluen to susteene.
 This philisophre was euer glad & liht; 4404
 Ther was no wach maad aboute his tour[e]s.
 Ful seurli slept he al the longe niht,
 Hauyng no dreed of theuys ne robbour[e]s.
 In somer walkyng among the fressh[e] flour[e]s, 4408
 And in cold wyntir, ful myrili & ofte
 On drye strauh he lay and slepte softe.
- Cincinnatus cleared ditches for a living: content with little, nature was his guide.
- Cyncynatus, a poore laboreer,
 Fowede dikes to gete his sustenaunce, 4412
 Withoute gruchchyng, euere glad of cheer
 Bothe in his port & in his contenaunce,
 Dempte he hadde as moche suffisance
 To his plesaunce, as Cresus kyng of Lide; 4416
 Content with litil; Nature was his* guyde.
- Assured in his poverty, his heart was at ease. He did not care to live beyond his means.
- This poore man, in his pouert assurid,
 With litil foode, & clothes but a fewe,
 Hadde hertis ese & gladsum pes recurid; 4420
 It liked hym nat ouer his hed to hewe.
 Which thyng conceyued cleerli doth us shewe,
 That ioious pouert conueied with gladnesse,
 Gruchchyng auoided, surmounteth al richesse. 4424
- And if people considered what they endure for wealth, they would also realize how transitory is all earthly power.
- And yif that folk koude considre a-riht
 Ther pitous sihhes, ther thouhtful bisynnesses,
 Ther woful labours, ther litil slep aniht,
 Which thei endure for worldli fals richchessis, 4428
 And of thabidyng, the dreedful sekirnessis, —

4399. Sardnapalle R.

4400. unto] to R.

4410. softe] full soffte R, ful softe J, H 5, ful soft P.

4412. Fowede] Made P — his] om. H. 4417. his] hir B.

4424. auoided] avoyed R — surmountyng H.

4426. thouhtful] rouhtfull R.

4428. fals worldly R.

- Which thynges peised and callid to memorie:
Al erthli poweer is double & transitorie.
And bi stories, which that be credible,
To preue ther poweer is nat abidyng,
But, at a poynt, slydyng and fallible:
Whilom Masmysa of Mynydie kyng,
That was so mihti, bi record of wrytyng,
For feer of Siphax, onli his liff to saue,
Fledde into mounteyns & hidde hym in a caue.
And ther* he fond[e] but ful smal vitaille,
Constreynd narwe of indigence & neede, 4432
Whan other deyntes, in myscheeff, gan hym faille,
He gadred rootis and eet hem in his dreede;
Eek proude Xerses kyng of Perse and Mede
Drank blood and water to staunche his gredi
thrust, 4436
Dreed and trauaille gaff hym so gret a lust.
Yit summe men wolde seyn, of auenture
Thei wer compellid ageyn ther volunte,
Thes kynges tweyne, swich myscheeff to endure, 4440
Maugre ther wil[le], of necessite;
For casuel chauns rafft hem ther liberte,
So that the rigour off this* sodeyn rage
Cam in be constreynt, and of no corage. 4444
But for al that, folk in ther pouerte
On grete metis that hemseluene feede
Ben also strong, as hool and fair to see,
And also lusti preuid at a neede, 4448
Vpriht of lymes ther iournes for to speede,
As long lyued, the cause to expresse,
Is onli this: thei do non excesse.
To* poore men the beste medecyne 4452
Is due labour with moderat abstynence,
Good hair in feeldis whan Phebus list to* shyne,
Voidyng dirke mystis that cause pestilence;
Of heuy stomak thei feele no violence, 4456
4430. thyng R.
4435. Masinissa P — Munedy H, Numydye R 3, Numidy P.
4439. ther] thus B.
4446. men] om. H — seyn] fayne R.
4448. myscheeff] om. R. 4451. this] ther B.
4455. as] om. R, J. 4458. the] to R.
4460. To] The B — the] bi R.
4462. list to] doth B — to] om. H.

4432 No worldly power is abiding; Masinissa, king of Numidia, fled and hid himself in a cave for fear of Siphax and ate roots, while Xerxes drank blood and muddy water to staunch his thirst.

4440

4444

4448 Although, as some men may say, their poverty was forced upon them by chance,

4452

4456 nevertheless poor folk, who live on coarse food, are as strong and long lived as one could wish, for they commit no excesses.

4460

4460 Labour is their best medicine and the fresh air of the fields. They need no physicians or apothecaries.

4464

Thei nat enriche lechis nor poticaries,*
Themsilff to saue with vnkouth letuaries.

The rich are
subject to all
sorts of diseases;
they eat between
meals and live
unhealthy lives.

But folkis riche werkyn the contrarie,
Which in hem causeth malladies stronge; 4468

For ther diet[e] eueri day thei varie
With dyuers metis, and ther sittynge longe.
And with al this, ther appetitis wronge,
Take out of tyme, which thei may nat endure, 4472
Which bi custum oppressith ther nature.

Thus Bochas
says that pov-
erty borne with
contentment is
most secure, and
that covetous-
ness with
extorted wealth
is the root of
all evil.

And thus myn auctour, shortli to deuise, [p. 199]
Seith how glad pouert stant most in sekirnesse.

And of al euel, he seith, how couetise 4476

Is roote & ground, with fals extort richesse,
Riot annexid, engendryng gret siknesse,
Theron concludynge, how moderat diete
Set soule and bodi in temporat quiete. 4480

[How Enagora kyng of Cypre was bi Artaxerses
outraied/ and put from his kyngdam.]¹

Evagoras, king
of Cyprus,
came before
Bochas with
eyes blinded by
weeping;

FOLWYNG in ordre the processe of Bochas,
As he remembreth next in his writyng,

To hym appeerede, rehersyng *bus* þe cas,
Enagora, that was of Cypre kyng, 4484
His eyen derkid be manyfold weepyng,
Because he hadde loste that riche lond,
Which he tofor hadde conquered with his hond.

for he had lost
his rich kingdom,
which abounds
in metals and
lies far to the
south.

This lond of Cypre, as maad is mencion, 4488
Of dyuers metallis is passynge habounde,
Hath of richesse gret plente and foisoun;

And of his siht[e], lik as it is founde,
It stant fer south, with many hilles rounde, 4492
And hath also many commodites
Withynne his boundis off toun[e]s & cites.

4465. poticaries] apoticaries B.

4468. hem] hem silf R.

4474. to] *om.* R. 4475. how that R.

4478. gret] long R.

4480. temporat] moderat R.

4484. Cypre] Egypt H — Euagoras P. 4485. be] *with* H.

4487. he tofor hadde] to for he H.

4491. site J, R 3.

¹ MS. J. leaf 82 recto.

Touchyng this Cipre I can no mor seie,
 Of which[e] lond Enagora was kyng, 4496
 Til he gan proudli for to werreie
 With Lacedemonoys, ther parti sustenyng,
 Geyn Artaxerses; & at ther meetyng
 The said Enagora was brouht to outraunce, 4500
 Put from his kyngdam & from al gouernaunce.

I can say no
 more about it;
 but Evagoras
 was conquered
 by Artaxerxes
 and put from
 his realm.

[How Theo kyng of Egipt bi Artaxerses was dryven
 from his kyngdam and fledde in to Arabie.]¹

¶ Next Enagora kam the kyng Theo,
 Of al Egipt long tyme pecessour;
 And to Iohn Bochas he gan* declare his wo, 4504
 How Fortuna dide hir froward labour,
 And from hym drouh hir frenshepe and fauour,
 And sodenli thoruh hir iniquite
 She cast this kyng down from his roial see. 4508
 She list hir malis from hym nat differre,
 Ne wolde nat suffre hym to lyue in pes,
 But caused hym to gynne a froward werre
 Ageyn the said myhti Artaxerses, 4512
 Wenying therbi taue had a gret encres, —
 Gadred shippes and made a gret arme
 In his entent tamette hym on the se.
 To Lacedemonois he was fauourable, 4516
 Sent hem vessellis stuffid with vitaille,
 Dempte of pride that hymselff was able
 With Artaxerses to holden a bataille.
 But hasti trust doth foolis ofte faille, 4520
 For this Theo was aftir anon riht
 Dryue out of Egipt and Iput to fliht.
 Artaxerses pursuede hym so sore,
 Toform his face he durste nat appeere, — 4524
 Fledde in Tarabie, myn auctour seith no more;
 Ban[y]shed fro Egipt, dedli of face & cheere.
 And of his fate who-so list to lere,
 He was depryued fro kyngli dignite 4528
 And bi Fortune cast from his roial see.

Theo, who once
 ruled all Egypt,
 declared to Iohn
 Bochas, that
 Fortuna
 wickedly cast
 him down
 from his throne,
 inciting him to
 make war on
 Artaxerxes

in aid of the
 Spartans.
 But fools often
 fail in their
 hasty con-
 fidence;

and, beaten, he
 fled into
 Arabia.

4496. Euagoras P.

4502. Euagoras P. 4504. gan] gan to B — wo] om. R.

4508. kyng] thyng R — his] hir H.

4515. tamette] to mete H. 4520. often R.

4525. in to Arabye H, J, into Araby R 3, P — no more] nat
 nomore R. 4528. kyngli] knyhtly H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 82 recto. No break in text B.

[How Amynta of Macedoyne kyng had by Erudice
his wif, Alisaundre, Perdica, & Philip, that were
slayn.]¹

Amyntas,
king of Mace-
don, grandfather
of Alexander,
had four
children, Alex-
ander,

AND among other, ther fatis compleynng,
Thoruh Fortunis dreedful violence,
Ther cam Amynta, of Macedoyne kyng, 4532
And to Iohn Bochas shewed his sentence.
And to declare his magnificence,
To Alisaundre graunfader in his liff,
Hauyng foure childre be Erudice his wiff. 4536

Perdiccas and
Philip, by his
wife Eurydice.

The firste of hem was Alisandre Icallid,
And Perdica namyd the seconde,
The thridde Phelipp, in Macedoyne stallid,
Kynge of Grece, lik as it is founde, 4540
Which in richessis gretli dide habounde,
And was eek fader, this noble werreieur,
To Alisaundre the myhti conquerour.

Macedon is
the chief
of the seven
provinces of
Greece

And or myn auctour ferther doth proceede, 4544
He makth in maner a digressioun
From his mateer, lik as ye may reede,
And gynneth in ordre a descripcioun
Of Macedoyne, the famous regioun, 4548
Among Greekis writ in especiall,
Of seuene provynces it is the princepall.

and stretches
from the Ægean
Sea to
Dalmatia.

And so procedyng, he seith how that contre
Strechchith his boundis aboute hym envircoun 4552
Toward the se which callid is Egee,
Foorth be Achaia toward septemptryoun.
And to Messie westward it goth down;
And who that can bi crafte the coostis caste, 4556
To Dalmacia the name therof doth laste.

Mt. Olympus
is in Macedon,
and it is so
high that
neither the wind
blows nor do
rains fall on its
summit.

In Macedoyne, he doth us also lere, [p. 200]
Of Olympus stant the gret mounteyn;
And in that kyngdam is many gret mynere 4560
Of gold and siluer, lik as bookis seyn.
And on that hill is neuer wynd nor reyn;

4532. Amintas P.

4536. Euridice P. 4538. Perdiccas P.

4541. Richesse H, Riches R 3, P. 4544. doth] do H.

4547, 48 are transposed in B, correction indicated.

4554. septentrioun R. 4557. Dalmatia P.

4562. neuer] nouthir R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 82 recto.

- For thilke mounteyn so hih[e] doth atteyne,
That it may nouthur blowe ther nor reyne. 4564
- The kyng Amynta, of whom I spak toforn,
Hadde in Grece many gret bataille:
Olympiens in Macedoyne born
And Illiriens, togidre he dide assaille. 4568
Thoruh his wisdam he dide alway preuail;
But with his enmys whil he stood most in striff,
His deth was shapen bi Erudice his wiff.
- Myn auctour Bochas of hir doth diffyne, 4572
She imagynede his destruccioun,
Because she hadde another concubyne
On whom she sette al hir affeccioun.
Day set and tyme to his confusioun, 4576
Fulli ordeyned, at a mariage
He to be slayn bi oon of his lynage.
- He hadde a suster callid Vrione,
Which prudentli espied the maneere 4580
Of Erudice, and secreli allone
Goth to the kyng & told hym al ifeere.
And as the story in ordre tellith heere,
Thouh she faillede that day of hir emprise, 4584
She thouhte fulfille it in a-nother wise.
- This to meene, of hir iniquite,
Of hir fraude and fals imagynyng,
She was in cause thoruh hir contrariouste 4588
Of the destruccioun of this* mihti kyng.
For the conclusioun of hir fals werkyng
Was to ha slayn the kyng & al his lyne,
She to haue regnede with hir concubyne. 4592
- But whan she sauh she myht[e] nat achievee
Hir furious purpos bi non auenture,
Hir venymous malis upon hir lord to preeve,
On other parties she dide hir besi cure 4596
Enmytes & myscheuys to procure
Ageyn the kyng, bi mortal fel assaies,
With sorwe and trouble for to shorte his daies.

Amyntas fought many victorious battles against the Olympians and the Illyrians; but his destruction was plotted by Eurydice for the sake of a lover she had.

Amyntas' sister Urione, who heard of Eurydice's intention, told Amyntas, and although her plan failed, Eurydice succeeded in stirring up so much enmity and strife that Amyntas' days were shortened.

4565. Amyntas P. 4566. gret] strong H.
4579. suster] daughter P — Eurione P.
4580. maneere] mateere H, mateer R 3.
4581. Euridice P — secretly H. 4582. ifeere] in feere R.
4583. is misplaced at foot of column R. 4584. day] om. R.
4587. hir] his H. 4589. this] ther B, R, J, P.
4591. to slayne H. 4593. ascheve R.

- For who can
escape
the malice of
subtile women?
- Niht and day his lyff stood euere in dreed, 4600
Hym to be-tra[i]sshe she cast out hook & lyne.
And who is he that can or may take heed,
Frelit escape, teschewen or declyne
Malis of wommen, whan thei be serpentyne? 4604
Seeth an exauple in this queen Erudice,
Void of al vertu and ful of eueri vice.
- No prince, alas,
can learn by
the experience
of others not to
trust himself to
Sirens.
- Alas, no prince can be war be other, 4608
To bridle ther noblesse *with* reynes of resoun,
Swich as commytte, alas, bothe ship & rother
Vnto Syrenes to rowe hem up and doun
Thoruhout Caribdis to ther destruccioun.
Bi craft of Circes, alas, thei wer maad nyce, 4612
Blynd to remembre upon this Erudice!
- Amyntas
lived in sorrow
and dreed; and
when he grew
old he called
his eldest son
Alexander to
the throne, who
made peace
with Athens
- Which made Amynta to lyue in sorwe & dreede,
To reste in pes suffred hym ha[ue] no space. 4616
In thouht and trouble his lyff he gan to leede,
Til be long processe deth hym gan manace;
Yit or he deide Fortune gaff hym grace,
His eldest sone bi wisdam to ordeyne,
Callid Alisandre, his crowne to atteyne. 4620
Thus Alisandre was his successour;
For Thath[e]nienses gan ther rancour lete
Ageyn[e]s hym, for [he] with gret labour
Bi ther suffraunce cam to his roial seete. 4624
And for to sette his rew in ful quiete,
First with Athenys, the stronge myhti* toun,
Prouided a pes, of hih discrecioun.
- and sent his
young son
Philip thither
as a hostage.
- And for tauoide al ambiguite 4628
Of old debatis and of old outrage,
First he sente into that strong cite
His sone Phelipp, yong and tendir of age,
On pes assurid to lyn ther for hostage. 4632
And in that cite, the story berth witesse,
He gan to growe vnto ful hih noblesse.
- Philip was
given into the
care of
Epaminondas,
one of the
most excellent
princes of his
time.
- He was commytted to the disciplyne
Of a gret duk callid Epamynedoun, 4636
Which to al vertu his youthe made enclyne.
For of this duk Iustyn maketh menciuon
4616. he] *om.* R. 4625. his] this R.
4626. stronge myhti] myhti stronge B, R, J, P.
4627. provide H. 4633. that] þe H.
4636. Epaminondon P. 4637. youthe] *om.* R.

- Bi a maner recomendacioun,
 Tofor nor aftir, as be his auys, 4640
 Was neuer no prince mor excellent nor wis.
- First he comendith his vertuous corage, [p. 201] Justin says that
 His hih noblesse, his knihtli excellence, he was the
 And be discent he born of hih lynage; 4644 equal of Mars
 And in too thynges concludeth his sentence, in chivalry and
 Seith that he was of most magnifisence, a son of Apollo
 Egal to Mars be famous cheualrie, through his
 And sone to Phebus thoruh hih philosophie. 4648 high
 philosophy.
- And Bochas heer doth his stile auauunce
 Ful notabli with excellent langage,
 And seith no tresour atteyneth in substaunce
 To thilke richesse, auoidyng al outrage, 4652 And Bochas
 As whan ther is be bond of mariage himself records
 Knette up a knotte atween theexcellence that no treasure
 Of famous kniethod and of Dame Prudence. is so great as a
 bond between
 knight hood and
 Dame
 Prudence.
- This knotte auaieth mor than gold in coffre, 4656 It avails far
 And is mor glorious perpetuelli tabide, more than gold.
 A myhti prince to been a philisophre,
 Which can be prudence alle vices set aside, —
 For whan to manhod prouydence is guide, 4660
 And vertuous force is capteyn in the werre,
 Lat men weel truste, that parti may nat erre!
- This Epamynoda, of kniethod sustenour,
 Charboncle of vertu, as bookis telle konne, 4664 Epaminondas,
 Of gentil maneres callid the famous flour, flower of gentle
 And of hih noblesse a verray worldli sonne, manners and
 Whos knihtli tryumphes be so hih up ronne, sun of high
 To Martis paleis, with the blissid souns 4668 noblesse,
 Of Famis trompetis and goldene clariouns.
- For he was callid the briht[e] cleer merour
 Of rihtful quarellis the parti [to] susteene,
 Of extort wrongis most iust reformatour, 4672 sustained just
 Ay egal iuge, of entent most cleene, causes and
 Whiche neuer koude nothyng but trouthe meene, put wrongs to
 Wolde of custum for hate nor alliaunce right. He was
 On nouter parti declyne the ballaunce. 4676 an equitable
 judge and a
 victorious
 general who
 laboured always
 for the good of
 the common-
 weal.
4641. nor wis] of price H, of pryce P. 4643. knihtli]
 vertuous R. 4648. hih] his H. 4649. heer] ther R.
 4654. a] the R — theexcellence] excellence R.
 4663. Epaminondas P. 4669. Famis] famous R, P.
 4671. to] om. H. 4673. entent] ente R.

And to comende his vertuous prowesse,
 His preuyd tryumphes, his magnanymyte,
 His marcial actis, his knihtli bisynesse
 In the getyng of many a strong cite, — 4680
 And al his labour was for the comounte,
 Which to augmente he wolde neuer cesse,
 Swich ioie he hadde the comoun good tencrece.

Whatever
 wealth he
 obtained he
 distributed
 among his
 followers
 and set but
 little store on
 gold, always
 ready to
 assist his
 soldiers and
 leaving no
 treasure behind
 him when he
 died.

This was also his vsaunce ouermor: 4684
 What-euer he gat to parte it in largesse;
 Of gold nor coign he sette but litil stoor,
 For al his herte was sette on gentilesse
 Bi manli fredam, and, pleynli to expresse, 4688
 He spared no good, it shewed weel in deede,
 His trewe seruauantis to helpe hem in her neede.

He kepte nat in coffres his tresour,
 Of his nature he was so liberall 4692
 For to releue ech manli soudeour,
 Swich as wer preued in actis marciall.
 And for to holde his feeste funerall,
 Aftir his deth, his story maketh mynde, 4696
 Thoruh fre departyng ther left no gold behynde.

He extended the
 liberties of the
 Greek cities
 and augmented
 their territories,
 seeking nothing
 for himself, and
 was throughout
 his life a
 student of the
 sciences.

Alle his offises & famous dignites
 And gret emprises in his tyme wrouht,
 Encresid fraunchises thoruh Grece in his cities 4700
 With libertes bi his prudence out souht
 For comoun proffit, and for hymself riht nouht,
 With gret aumentyng of straunge teritories:
 Al this cam in bi mene of his victories. 4704

And among alle his knihtli excellences,
 Bi dyuers auctours vnto mynde is brouht,
 How al his liff he studied in sciences
 And upon konyng set hooli his thouht. 4708
 Bi manli prowesse of deth he rouhte nouht:
 That was shewed, as it is weel founde,
 The day whan he resceyuede his dethis wounde.

4683. comouns H.

4684. ouermor] euermore R, evirmore H, euermore P.

4698. famous] knyhtly H.

4710. is] was H.

- He was hom born vnto his pauyllioun,
 Al his armure with blood steyned red,
 And on a couch[e] bi his men leid doun,
 And gan abraide as he lay half ded:
 "Sires," quod he, "of o thyng taketh heed,
 Hath any enmy this day in the feeld,
 Whan I was woundid, taken up my sheeld?"
- And whan his knihtis hadde told hym nay,
 Bi a maner of knihtli reioysshing
 He hem comaunded, withoute mor delay
 To his presence that thei sholde it bryng.
 And therupon ful pitousli lookyng,
 Ful lik a kniht, & with a mortal cheere
 He kissid it, and seide as ye shal heere:
- "Thou wer my felawe in armys [and] my
 brother,
 That neuer woldest my felaship forsake,
 Seur and abidyng, ther was nat swich a-nother,
 In eueri iourne that I did vndirtake.
 To me wolcome, an eende I mut now make.
 Aftir my deth my soule shal ha[ue] plesaunce,
 The to be kept yet for a remembraunce."
- Afforn his deth[e], it is put in mynde,
 The same hour, it cam to his memorie
 To enquere, he lefft nat behynde,
 "Ha[ue] we," quod he, "this day hadde* victorie?
 Or in the feeld who hath the palme of glorie?"
 He praied his knihtis that day he sholde deie,
 The pleyn[e] trouthe that thei wolde hym seie.
- And thei hym tolde platli al the cas,
 How his parti hadde wonne the feeld of myht;
 And with that woord he so reioysshed was,
 That he his sperit yolde anon vpriht.
 And so he deide lik a worthi kniht,
 In whom is shewed what vailleth, in sentence,
 Noblesse of kniethod ioyned with prudence.

4712 Without fear
 of death, on the
 day he received
 his last wound
 and was borne
 with blood-
 stained armour
 to his tent, his
 only question
 was, "Did my
 shield fall into
 the hands of
 the enemy?"

4720 And when his
 knights assured
 him that it had
 not, he com-
 manded it to be
 brought to his
 presence, and
 said,

4724

[p. 202] "Thou wert my
 comrade in
 arms: after my
 death it will
 please my soul
 to know that
 thou art
 kept for a
 remembrance."

4728

4732

His last
 question was,
 "Have we
 had victory this
 day?"

4736

4740

And when told
 that his army
 had won the
 field, he died
 like a worthy
 knight.

4744

4714. leid] lay H.

4730. welcom R, H.

4736. this day hadde] hadde this day B, H 5 — this day quod
 he hadde þe victorie H, R 3 (om. þe) — hadde] had the R.

4737. who hath] had R.

4738. that] the H, P.

4743. vp anoon riht H, anon vpriht B, H 5, R 3, R, J, anone
 vpright P.

- Through his teaching, Philip (whose father was slain by his mother) grew in knighthood and virtue.
- And bi the mene of his wis doctryne,
Phelipp, that lay with hym in hostage, 4748
Gan encrece in knihtli disciplyne,
Wex in vertu riht as he wex in age.
Whos fader was be furious outrage
(Callid Alisandre, as maad is mencioune,) 4752
Slayn bi his mooder be couert fals tresoun.
- After Alexander's death, Perdiccas, his younger brother, came to the throne, and he too was slain.
- Aftir whos deth[e], Perdica in deede,
The yonger brother, the story doth deuisse,
To the crowne gan lynealli succede; 4756
Anon slayn aftir in ful cruel wise.
Swich fals[e] moordre ech man sholde agrise,
As ye han rad[de], first of Amynta,
Of Alisaundre and of kyng Perdica. 4760

[Ho[w] the proude tirant Aman was honged and
the Innocent preserued.]¹

- Haman, a false tyrant and an Assyrian by birth, was chief governor under Ahasuerus.
- T**HE horrible fall furious for to reede,
That folweth after of þe gret Aman,
A ful fals tiraunt found in thouht & deede,
And was of berthe an Assyrian,* 4764
Which, as the Bible ful weel reherse kan,
Was cheeff maister, as men may ther* conserne,
With Assuerus his peeples to gouerne.
- His heart was swollen with pride, and it was his purpose to destroy the Jews and their law.
- His herte was exaltid hih in pride, 4768
To goddis people most contrarious,
His hatful venym he list nat for to hide,
But lik a tiraunt most malicious,
Of wilful rancour, fell and despitous, 4772
Fulli purposed, and koude hym nat withdrawe,
To destroye the Iewes and ther lawe.
- Granted authority, he sent out letters commanding all the people of Persia to kneel down to him;
- To his entent he gat auctorite
Bi his fals[e] sotil compassyng: 4776
Sent out lettres into ech contre
Thoruhout al Perse be bidding of the kyng,
That hih and low, withynne that lond duellyng, —
No wiht except, — that peeplis al aboute 4780
Sholde vnto Aman obeie, kneele and loute.

4754. Perdicas P.

4764. an Assyrian] a Macedonyan B, H, R, J, R 3, H 5.

4766. as men may ther] who can weel B, R, J.

4768. exaltid was H. 4773. purposed] disposid R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 83 verso.

- This was the bidding of kyng Assuer,
 Whan queen Vasti was uoided for hir pride,
 And Hester chose, a maide most enteer,
 Was brouht to court with the kyng tabide,
 Which hadde in youthe for to been hir guyde
 A worthi Iew callid Mardoche,
 Withynne Susis a large fair cite,
 Bi whos counsail eueri thyng she wrouhte,
 Passyng fair and of gret meeknesse.
 And whan the eunukis to the kyng hir brouhte,
 She was accepted for hir gret fairnesse
 Vnto his grace, hir story berth witnessse,
 And ther cherished in especiall
 Boue al the maidenen in the court roiall.
 And of al Perse she was Icrownid queen,
 A pes comaundid thoruh al tho regiouns
 Duryng the feeste, that men myhte seen
 The kynges nobley in cites and in touns.
 And of this feeste the riche roial souns
 Cam to the eris of symple Mardoche,
 Which cam with othir the maner for to see.
 Tofor the paleis as he dide abide
 With othir Iewes in his companye,
 Of happ as he caste his ere aside,
 He of too porteris the counsail dide espie,
 How thei hem caste, bi fals conspiracie,
 To slen the kyng som day of that yeer,
 Lik ther entent whan thei fond best leiseer.
 Whan Mardocheus prudentli gan feele
 The secre malis of ther compassyng,
 Of compassioun he wolde it nat concele,
 But made Hester discure it to the kyng.
 Wherof convict, thei wer lad to hangyng,
 As me semeth, a competent guerdoun
 For al that falsli imagyne swich tresoun.

and this was
 by the bidding
 of King
 Ahasuerus, at
 the time he
 divorced Vashti
 and chose
 Esther, who
 in her youth
 had always
 followed
 the counsel of
 Mordecai of
 Shushan.

4784

4788

4792

4796

4800

4804

4808

[p. 203] 4812

4816

and was now
 crowned
 queen of
 Persia.
 Mordecai heard
 of the wedding
 festivities and
 went with
 others to see
 the sights,

and as he
 stopped before
 the palace he
 became aware
 of two porters,
 who were
 conspiring to
 slay the king.

Out of com-
 passion he
 caused Esther
 to inform
 Ahasuerus;
 and the two
 porters were
 convicted and
 hanged.

4783. uoided] weddid H.
 4787. Iew] Youhe R.
 4791. eunukis] *om.* H, *muddled in R.*
 4795. Boue] above H.
 4796. crownyd H.
 4799. 2nd in] *om.* R.
 4809. best] *om.* H.
 4814. Wherof] Wherfore H.
 4816. swich] such als H.

Thus Mordecai came into the favour of the king and stood free of the power of Haman,

Bi which[e] mene the said[e] Mardoche
Was weel accepted to kyng Assuer,
Likli also to stonde at liberte
Out of the malis and the fell daungeer 4820
Of cursid Aman, which list make hym no cheer,
But compassede in ful fel manere
Hym to destroie & Iewes all ifeere.

to whom he did no reverence as the statute commanded. In his malice Haman had a gibbet erected for him before the palace — as if God were blind and unable to see tyrants;

This Mardocheus, the Bible telle can, 4824
Withdrouh hymself for to do reuerence
Vnto this tirant, the froward prince Aman,
Lik as the statut comaundid in sentence.
Which thyng tauenge be hasty* violence, 4828
This Aman made of hatrede to be set
Affor the paleis a myhti strong gibet.

But who that caste hym for to do vengauce,
And innocentis for toppresse of myht, 4832
Bi wilful malis tagreggen ther greuauce,
As God wer blynde and hadde of hem no siht, —
But at the laste he wil of verray riht
Pun[y]she the proude for furious violence, 4836
The poore supportyng for ther long pacience.

but as Mordecai had in the meantime re-established the law of the Jews, Haman was hanged high upon a gallows for his pains.

As Mardocheus bi innocent lyuyng,
Be mene of Hester and hir gret meeknesse
Accepted was to Assuer the kyng, 4840
The lawe of Iewes set in mor seurnesse,
Froward Aman for his cursidnesse,
Vengable of pride, the Bible ye may see,
Was hih enhangid upon a galwe tre. 4844

Mardocheus, of prudence & resoun,
The furious daunger of Aman set aside,
Preserued his peepel fro destruccioun,
The tiraunt hangid for his froward pride. 4848
Thus kan the Lord his iugementis deuide,
Whan he seeth tyme, most myhti and puissaunt,
Supporte the symple and punshe the tiraunt.

4824. the] this R.

4828. hasty] froward B, J, R.

4838. bi] for H.

4842. his] hir R.

[Off the ii. brethre, Artaxerses and Cirus/ and
Artaxerses slouh his childre and concubynes/
and how thei ended.]¹

AFFTIR the fal of Aman, dout[e]les
4852 After the death
of Haman,
Artaxerxes, in
his time the
most renowned
of conquerors

Whan he beste wende ha regned in his flouris,
Tofor Iohn Bochas cam Artaxerses,
Most renommede his tyme of conquerours,
Which gan declare the* sodeyn sharpe shours, 4856
With al the parcellis of his mortal peyne
Which that Fortune ageyn hym gan ordeyne.

This Artaxerses, as put is in memorie,
Al othir pryncis excelled in richesse,
4860 and the richest
of princes,
appeared before
Bochas. It was
a strange thing
that he should
fall!

Which in his chaier, famous of worldli glorie,
And with his throne of worldli hih noblesse
Sat in his tyme, the story berth witnessse,
Hiest exaltid that was off eny kyng, — 4864
That he sholde fall, was it an vnkouth thyng!

Kynges he hadde vndir his obeissaunce,
An hundred prouynces, twenti & eek seuene,
Sone onto Darie, prynce of most puissaunce, 4868
His fame drad[de] mor than fry leuene.
Non so myhti vndir the sterred heuene
Acountid was that tyme, in werre & pes,
As was thys kyng callid Artaxerses. 4872

He hadde a brother that namyd was Cirus;
Out of o stok cam ther bothe lynes.
But Artaxerses, the story tellith thus,
Was lord of greynes, of oilles & of vynes, 4876
And hadde also bi dyuers concubynes
An hundred children, lik as it is told,
And fiftene ouer, tofor or he wex old.

Of bothe brethre the power laste ferre, 4880
Duryng ther tyme stood in ful hih estat,
Yet atween hem ther was ful mortal werre,
Ageyn nature an vnkyndli debat;
For thilke werris be most infortunat, 4884
Whan blood with blood, lat no man deemen othir,
List [to] werreie, as brother ageyn brother.

4880 Between Cyrus
and Artaxerxes
there was
mortal enmity,
blood against
blood;

4856. the] his B, R, J, P. 4857. the] om. H.

4864. was] evir was H.

4869. fry] fire R. 4878. childre H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 83 verso.

and its cause
was a quarrel
as to which of
them should
succeed King
Darius.

And fynal cause whi this werre gan
Atween these brethre, as maad is menciouⁿ, 4888
Thoruh which debat ther deied many a man, —
The ground of al and first occasioun
Was onli this: for successioun, —
Aftir kyng Darie, regnyng in Perse & Mede, 4892
Which of them tweyne sholde next succede.

Artaxerxes put
his brother
secretly in
prison and
fettered him
with gold,

But Artaxerxes bamaner prouydence [p.204]
Put pryueli his brother in prisoun,
That he ne sholde make no diffence 4896
Nor gadre peple to his destruccioun.
This yonge Cirus, as maad is menciouⁿ,
Was faste stokkid, and eek as it is told,
That his stokkis and fetris wer of gold. 4900

but he escaped
and, collecting
an army, met
Artaxerxes in
battle, and,
after wounding
him, forced him
to retire from
the field.

And thouh it be nat remembred in Bochas,
How that Cirus escaped fro prisoun,
Yit also soone as he delyuered was, 4904
Throuh Perse and Mede ridyng up and down,
Gadred peple off entencioun
Thoruh old hatreede his brother to assaile.
The feeld assignede, thei metten in bataile,
Wher Cirus proudli put hymself in pres, 4908
To shewe his manhod in especiall,
Souhte his brother, callid Artaxerxes,
And gaf to hym a wounde ful mortall,
Withoute frenshepe or faouour fraternall, 4912
That Artaxerxes, his wounde gan so ake,
Constreyned was the feeld[e] to forsake.

Cyrus then
began to
slaughter his
foes; but
Fortuna, ever
deceitful, caused
him to be
wounded and
taken prisoner,

And Cirus thanne, furious as leoun,
His aduersaries gan mortalli to wake;* 4916
But fals Fortune, ful of collusioun,
Vnder feynt smylyng a mowe gan hym make,
Which caused, alas, that day that he was take,
Afforn Iwoundid, it wolde be non othir, 4920
And than presentid to his vnkynde brothir.

and shortly
afterwards he
died.

And thouh this Cirus hadde affor be founde
Yong, fressh and lusti, & manli of his hond,
Bi the constreynt of his mortal wounde 4924
He died anon; for he no socour fonde.

4887. fynal] fynalli J — whi] whi þat H — this] these R.

4896. ne] na R. 4915. Cirus] Cirus was J — a leoun J, R 3.

4916. tawake B, H 5. 4919. 2nd that] om. H.

Thanne the two kyngdamys withynne Perse-lond
 Fill to the hondis of Artaxerxes,
 In which aftir he lyued longe in pes. 4928

Thus a gret space, lik a myhti kyng
 Al Perse he heeld vnder his obeissaunce,
 Be famous noblesse gloriousli shynyng,
 Hauyng of richessis most fulsum habundaunce. 4932
 And as it is Iput in remembrance,
 To mor ences of his prosperite,
 In trewe wedlok he hadde sonys thre.

Artaxerxes then
 became sole
 ruler of Persia.

The firste of hem callid Darius; 4936
 Arabratus namyd the secounde;
 And the thridde namyd was Othus,
 Manli* pryncis, lik as it is founde.
 And of nature as the kyng was bounde, 4940
 Vnto Darie, as it is maad menciouen,
 Aboue echon he hadde affecciouen.

His three sons
 were Darius,
 Arabratus and
 Othus, but he
 loved Darius
 above the
 others, and
 deeming him-
 self too feeble
 to rule alone,
 set up
 Darius as king
 beside him,

And for he dempte hym able to the werre,
 Be likliheed, of yeeris yonge and greene, 4944
 He caste fulli his noblesse to preferre;
 Of hih prudence thus he dide meene,
 His inpotence to supporte and susteene,
 For he was feeble in Perse to regne allone, 4948
 He sette up Darie with hym in his throne.

Which was a thyng straunge and contrarious,
 Ageyn the custum of Persiens and vsance;
 But he supposed his sone Darius 4952
 Sholde in such caas encrese & avauunce
 His fadres parti, of natural attendaunce,
 And shewe onto hym trouthe & kyndenesse,
 His impotence to cherisshes of gentillesse. 4956

which was
 contrary to the
 custum of the
 Persians.

But in estatis ofte it doth thus fall,
 Whan that princis be donne ferr in age,
 Ther childres loue ageyn hem doth appall,
 Shewyng no frenshipe sauf for auauntage, 4960
 How that thei may reioise ther heritage,
 And in swich cas whan thei wexe stronge,
 Thynken ther fadris lyuen al tō longe.

But as it
 often happens,
 when princes
 grow old, their
 children's love
 for them dies,
 and they begin
 to think only
 of their inheri-
 tance.

4932. fulsum] holsom H. 4936. hem] all H.
 4939. Manli] Namli B. 4943. to] for R, vn to H.
 4944. liklihoode H. 4947. Impotence H.

- This was what happened to Artaxerxes. Darius grew false and unkind
- And Artaxerses stood in the same caas, 4964
 As in his stori pleynli ye shal fynde
 Be rehersaile and wrytyng of Bochas,
 How this Darie was fals & eek vnkynde,
 Foryetifful, & hadde nothyng in mynde, 4968
 How his fader, the trouthe to reherse,
 Hath maad hym egal with hym to regne in Perse.
- and rebelled against his father.
- And to declare the firste occasioun,
 To his fader how the said[e] Darie, 4972
 Bi a fals maner of rebellioun,
 Gan in his werkyng for to be contrarie,
 Which to discure I wil no lenger tarie,
 But with my penne in al haste proceede 4976
 Heer to descryue how it fill in deede.
- There was a fair concubine named Artusia, who belonged to Artaxerxes;
- Artaxerses, among his concubynes, [p. 205]
 It is remembrid how that he hadde oon
 Which, for to rekne wyues and virgynes, 4980
 Was fairest holde of them euerichon,
 Callid Artasia, of ful yore agon,
 And was that tyme, hir beaute to descryue,
 Among Persiens the fairest holde a-lyue. 4984
- and although she was well on in years, having once been in Cyrus' harem, her beauty had not faded.
- And thouth she were Ironne ferr in age,
 Lik as bookis list of hire expresse,
 Bothe of colour and also of visage
 She kept hir beaute & hir natiff fresshnesse. 4988
 Which was afor[n]e] for hir semlynesse,
 To said[e] Cirus, breeffli to termyne,
 Chose long afforn to been his concubyne.
- When Cyrus died she fell to Artaxerxes,
- But whan this Cirus was passid into fate, 4992
 Which for his brother myht nat lyue in pes,
 Anon upon, withoute lenger date,
 She was take up for kyng Artaxerses,
 Because she was of beute pereles. 4996
 Aftir long tyme, whan he fill in age,
 She cleymed was bi title of heritage
- and after he became of age Darius claimed her as a part of his inheritance.
- Of kyng Darie bi his fader lyue,
 Feynyng his cleym[e] bi successioun, 5000
 Al-thouh his fadir ageyn it dide stryve.

4966. rehersyng H. 4968. Foryetfull R, Foryetful P.
 4972. the] this R. 4982. Artusia P. 4985. ronne R.
 4986. bookis] bochas R. 4989. hir] hir saide H.
 4990. To] To þe H — saide] the forsaid P.
 4999. fadres R.

And thus began, as maad is menciouⁿ,
 Of ther debat the firste occasioun;
 For Darie caste, al-be he bar it still, 5004
 Hir to reioysshe ageyn his fadris will.

And tacomplisshe falsli his entent
 Of hir to haue ful pocessioun,
 Taforce his parti he made this argument: 5008
 "Cirus," quod he, as maad is menciouⁿ,
 Regnyng in Perse the myhti regioun,
 And this story doth pleykli determyne,
 "For hir beute made hir his concvbyne." 5012

And aftir tyme, whan Cirus was ded,
 Artaxerses, his fader, ye may see,
 Next hym succeeding in Perse, it is no dreed,
 List hir to cleyme eek for hir gret beaute. 5016
 "And so," quod Darie, "she longeth now to me,
 Because she is so plesaunt to my siht,
 Bi successioun I wil hir cleyme of riht."

Thus kyng Darie to his fader saide 5020
 He wolde haue Artasia the faire.
 And therwithal Artaxerses gan abraide,
 And ansuerde with face debonaire,
 "My sone," quod he, "I wil nat be contraire 5024
 To thi desir, but of affecciouⁿ
 Delyueren hir to thi pocessioun."

Of his promys he aftir gan repente,
 Cast hym to make another cheuisaunce; 5028
 And secreli his concubyn he sente,
 Callid Artasia, as maad is remembraunce,
 And thoruh his sleihti vnkouþ purueiaunce,
 Vnto the temple, swich menys he hath souht, 5032
 Of gret Appollo that she in haste was brouht.

Wher she was veilled & maad a preesteresse
 Aftir the rihtis, pleykli, and the guise
 Of old paynemes bamaner hoolynesse, 5036
 And ther professid for to doon seruise,
 As ther statutis constreyne and deuise.

It was in
 this manner
 that his quarrel
 with his father
 began. His
 argument was,
 that she had
 been Cyrus'
 concubine, that
 when Cyrus
 died Artaxerxes
 took her, and
 that now she
 belonged of
 right to him.
 Darius, by in-
 heritance.

Artaxerxes
 agreed to give
 her to Darius;
 out of affection;

but he soon
 repented of his
 promise and

contrived to
 send her to the
 temple of
 Apollo, where
 she was made
 a priestess and
 vowed to
 chastity.

5007. Of hir is repeated R.

5008. this] his H.

5011. playnly doth termyne H.

5015. hym] om. H.

5016. gret] om. H.

5017. now to] vn to H. 5021. Arthusia P.

- Duryng hir liff, it myhte non other be,
She bounde was to lyue in chastite. 5040
- At this Darius went almost mad for rage. This thyng was wrouhte bi the compassyng
Of Artaxerses, be froward ialousie.
Wherof Darie, the yonge lusti kyng,
Wex almost wood whan he it dide espie, 5044
And gan compassen of malencolie,
Furious rancour & hasti cruelte
Vpon his fader auengid for to be.
- and, seeking revenge, allied himself with his 115 natural brothers, who agreed that their father should die. And his parti of force to susteene, 5048
With hym he hadde, the story maketh mynde,
His brethre in bast, an hundred & fifteene,
Which to ther fader wer fals & vnkynde.
Of al this noumbre ther lefft non behynde 5052
That fro this purpos onys list dissente,
His deth of o will all did* assente.
- But Artaxerxes was informed of their intentions and collected an army. Yit of this straunge fals conspiracie
Artaxerses hadde a knowlechyng, 5056
Al-thouh the stori doth nat specefie
How, ne be whom, he hadde therof wetyng.
For which in haste, he made no tarieng
To gadre meyne & make hym silue strong, 5060
Hym silff tauenge of this disnaturel wrong.
- and resolved to take vengeance on them. For Artaxerses, lik as the caas tho stood, [p. 206]
Thouhte it sat weel to his hih noblesse,
To be venged upon vnkynde blood; 5064
For lawe, nature decrees rihtwisnesse,
And alle statutis dampne vnkyndenesse,
Wherbi this kyng occasioun dide fynde
Ageyn his childre, because thei wer vnkynde. 5068
- Some men say that a multitude of children make a father strong, but this is true only if they are virtuous. Somme men deeme how gret[e] multitude
Of many childre maketh a fader strong;
But therupon, pleynli to conclude,
Vertu is cause, yif she duelle hem among. 5072
But yif ther corage enclyneth onto wrong,
And vicious lyff do ther bridil leede,
The gretter noumbre, the wers thei must[e] speede.
- The offspring of a wicked line may corrupt an entire region; A progenie born of a cursid lyne 5076
May thoruh his froward fals infeccioun,
5042. ialousie] Ieulosie R. 5044. it] om. H.
5054. all did] thei B, R, J, R 3, H 5, P. 5058. ne] nor H.
5067. kyng] thyng R. 5077. fals froward R.

- Outward be colour of trouthe thouth he shyne,
 Vnder apparence and symulacioun
 Infecte and corupte al a regeoun; 5080
 For, it is seid of ful old langage,
 Frut of sour trees takè a sour tarage.
- This was weel shewed in Artaxerses,
 That suffred his brother deien at myscheeff, 5084
 Bledyng his wounde, left hym help[e]les,
 Which to his name shal euer been repreeff.
 Thus blood vnkynde vnkyndli makth his preeff;
 For al the childre fro his stok descendid 5088
 Wer cursid echon, as heer is comprehendid.
- Ther stock was first contagious of nature,
 The griffes froward, thouth thei wer gret in noubre, 5092
 Which of assent dide ther besi cure
 Bi fals tresoun ther fader to encoumbre.
 But ther is no shade nor no couert outhre
 So closli kept, namli of fals[e] guile,
 But the venym wil shewen oute sum while. 5096
- And thus the deth contagiousli conspired
 Of Artaxerses sithe go ful yore,
 Wheron tauenge, hys herte was so fired
 Of furious ire & Ibrent so sore, 5100
 That he nat koude differre it ferthermore,
 But with his meyne fill on hem anon
 Or thei wer war, and slouh hem euerichon.
- He slouh also al his concubynes,
 That wer ther moodres, of whom I told toforn, 5104
 Suffred non to lyue of [al] ther lynes;
 So of that lynage he hath the weed upshorn,
 Fond among alle no greyn of good[e] corn: 5108
 Convict bi doom, whan thei wer presentid,
 How to his deth echon thei wer assentid.
- His clothes spreynt with the vnkynde blood
 Of his childre, which he dide sheede, 5112
 Aftir whos deth in gret myscheeff he stood;
 And so in sorwe his lyff he dide leede, —
 Deied aftir in myscheef & in dreede.
 Deth quit with deth, & rage with rage: 5116
 Loo, heer the fyn of his vnweeldi age!
5078. he] they R, she H. 5095. namli] oonly H.
 5099. was] om. R. 5101. nat] ne H.
 5106. al] om. R, J, R 3, P. 5116. 1st deth] Seth R.

for the fruit
of sour trees
has a sour
flavour.

This was well
proven by
Artaxerxes,
who let his
brother die
helpless, and
whose children
were cursed.

The stock was
noxious and the
grafts and
branches
froward,
although large
in number.

Artaxerxes fell
on them with
his soldiers
unawares and
slew every one.

He also killed
his concubines,
their mothers,

and after living
the rest of his
life in sorrow,
he himself died

¶ [Lenvoye.]

This tragedy describes the enmity between two brothers, which led to war and the destruction of their kindred.

THIS tragedie afforn declareth heere
 The grete outrage of vnkyndenesse,
 Atween too brethre regnyng bothe ifeere 5120
 In Perse-lond, as ye han herd expresse,
 Til dyuisioun, of al myscheef maistresse,
 Gan entren in thoruh fraternal hatreede,
 Which ageyn kynde destroyed ther kynreede. 5124
 The werre aroos, contagious for to lere,
 Thoruhout al Perse of mortal frowardnesse,
 Of Cirus deth rehersyng the maneere,
 How help[e]les he deied in distresse, 5128
 And how the noumbre of brethre dide hem dresse
 To slen ther fader — the story ye may reede, —
 Causyng an eende of al ther hool kynreede.

Artaxerxes slew his children together with their mothers and soon afterwards died.

Kyng Artaxerxes, with a froward cheere, 5132
 His iniuries & wronges to redresse,
 Slouh his childre, ther moodres eek ifeere,
 Spared nat oon, of cruel hastynesse.*
 Bi which occasioun took a gret siknesse, 5136
 Aftir deied in myscheef & in dreede,
 Causyng an eende of al his hool kynreede.

The abomination of fraternal strife spread all over Persia, infecting the air with foul, slanderous blackness.

Loo, heer a sorwe nat particuleer;
 For thoruh al Perse ran the cursidnesse, 5140
 The crokid fame sprad bothe ferr & neer
 Of this vengable, hasti, fel woodnesse,
 The hair infectyng *with* sclaudrous foul blaknesse,
 To shewe be vengauce the contrarious meede 5144
 Of blood vnkynde boorn of oon kynreede.

Noble Princes, avoid rancour, remember the mischief that follows blood unkind, born of one kindred.

Noble Princis, left up your eyen cleere [p. 207]
 And considreth, bi gret auisynesse,
 The woful stryues, the odious fel daungeere 5148
 Sowe in kynreedis of wilful straungenesse.
 Of al rancour your corages doth represe,
 Peisyng the myscheeuys folwyng on in deede
 Of blood vnkynde born of o kynreede. 5152

¶ Explicit liber tercius.

5126. Thoruhout] Thoruh R.

5132. *This stanza and the next are transposed R.*

5135. cruel hastynesse] froward cursednesse B, J, R, P.

5143. foul] *om.* R. 5148. fel] fals H, R 3, H 5.

BOOK IV

¶ Incipit prohemium libri quarti.

- F**RU^T of writyng set in cronicles olde,
 Most delectable of fressshnesse in tastyng,
 And most goodli & glorious to beholde,
 In cold and heete lengest abidyng,
 Chaung of cesouns may doon it non hyndryng;
 And wher-so be that men dyne or faste,
 The mor men taste, the lenger it wil laste.
- It doth corages renewe ageyn & glade,
 Which may be callid frut of the tre of lyff,
 So parmanable that it wil neuer fade.
 To the fyue wittis grettest restoratiff,
 And to ther plesance most cheef confortatiff;
 For of nature whan thei be quik & goode,
 Thei of this frut tak ther natural foode.
- Auctours heeron conclude and eek assente,
 How that writyng of his kyndeli riht
 Doth loud personis & liknessis represente
 Of freendis absent, seuered fer from siht;
 Dirknese of absence is clerid with the liht,—
 Thus frut of writyng hath his auantages,
 Of folk ferr off to presente the images.
- Lawe hadde perished, nadde be writyng;
 Our feith appalled, ner vertu of scripture;
 For al religioun and ordre of good lyuyng
 Takth ther example be doctryn of letrture.
 For writyng causeth, with helpe of portraiture,
 That thynges dirked, of old that wer begonne,
 To be remembred with this celestial sonne.

The fruit of old writings remains fresh always; it is harmed by no change of season, and the more men taste of it, the longer it lasts.

It gives us new heart, as if it were the fruit of the tree of life,

12

and clears away the darkness of absence and brings the images of loved ones, who may be far away, near to us.

20

Were it not for writing, law had perished and our faith grown dim and faint.

28

5. non] no H. 10. permanble R, *permanable* H, R 3.
 15. conclude herzon H.
 20. Thus] This H — wrytynges R.
 22. nadde be] had be H.
 25. Takth] Tak R.
 26. portrateur R.

- God ordained writing to offset the dulness of our nature, to illumine the world by eloquence, to assual covenants and make agreements sure.
- God sette writyng & lettres in sentence,
Ageyn the dulnesse of our infirmyte,
This world tenlumyne be crafft of elloquence;
Canoun, cyuile, philosophie — these thre
Confermed fraunchises of many strong cite,
Couenauntis asselid, trouthis of old assured,
Nadde writyng been, myht nat haue endurid. 32
- Diligence, triumphant over sloth, has by its labour brought things long passed into fresh remembrance.
- Dilligence, cheef triumphatrice 36
Of slogardie, necligence & slouthe,
Eek of memorye upholdere and norice
And registreer to suppowaile trouthe,
Hath of old labour (& ellis wer gret routhe) 40
Brouhte thynges passid, notable in substaunce,
Onli be writyng to newe remembrance.
- It is through writing that we know the lives of old patriarchs and prophets and the martyrs who upheld the banner of Christ.
- Writyng is cause that herto is remembrid 44
Lyf of prophetis & patriarches olde,
How thapostlis and martirs wer dismembrid
For Cristis feith, his baner up to holde.
And writyng sheweth, toforn as I you tolde, 48
Of confessours the grete stedfastnesse,
And of virgynes the virgynal clenness.
- The diligence of writers is like a beautiful tree that blossoms and bears fruit every year.
- Lik to a tre which euery yeer berth frut, [p. 208]
Shewyng his beute with blomys & *witb* flours,
Riht so the foode of our inward reffut, 52
Be dilligence of these olde doctours
And daili frut of ther feithful labours
Han our corages fostred & pasturid
Be writyng onli, which hath so longe endurid. 56
- The Epigrams of Prosper, Seneca's Tragedies, the Stratagemys of Vegetius and the Satires of Persius had all vanished, but for writing, that vouchsafes to poets their eternal name. Take record of Virgil, the Mantuan, who, sovereign of his style, wrote of Æneas and Dido.
- The Epigrames whilom *perished* hadde
Of prudent Prosper, that was so vertuous,
And of Senec the tragedies sadde,
The Stratagemys of Vigecius, 60
Rebuk in vicis of noble Percivs, —
Yif in olde writyng hadde be founde a lak,
These said[e] thynges hadde fer be put abak.
Writyng caused poetis to recure 64
A name eternal, the laurer whan thei wan,
In adamaunt graue perpetuelli tendure.
Record I take of Virgile Mantuan,

29. lettris & writyng H.

31. to elumyne R.

39. Registeer H. 51. shewith H.

- That wrot the armys & prowesse of the man 68
 Callid Eneas, whan he of hih corage
 Cam to Itail from Dido of Cartage.
- The famous bookis this auctour list compile,
 Eneidoys first; which that dide excell 72
 In rethorik be souereynte of stile.
 He drank swich plente, this poete, as men tell,
 Of the stremys that ran down fro the well
 Wrouhte bi tho sustres that be in noumbre nyne, 76
 Prowesse of knihthod most cleerli to termyne.
- For in that book he cast[e] nat to fail,
 With vois mellodious for to descryue ariht
 The grete conquest of Rome & of Itail 80
 Wrouht bi Enee, the manli Troian kniht.
 Whos vers notable yif so cleer a liht
 Thoruh al the world[e], as in rethorik,
 That among poetis was non onto hym lik. 84
- He wrot also, this poete with his hond
 Bi humble stile othir bookis tweyne,
 Oon of pasture, the nexte of tilthe of lond,
 The vers conveied with feet of metris pleyne. 88
 Bi which thre labours a palme he dide atteyne,
 To make his name throuh dites delitable
 Aboue poetis to be most comendable.
- Wrytng of poetis hath set withynne his cloos 92
 Conquest of knihthod, ther tryumphes & renouns.
 Reed of Ouide Methamorphoseos,
 The grete wondres, the transmuciouns,
 The moral menyng, [th]vnkouth conclusiouns, 96
 His book de Ponto, & with gret dilligence
 Ful many a pistil compleynyng for absence.
- Of craft of loue a book he hath compiled,
 Wheroff Cesar hadde ful gret disdeyn, 100
 Which was cause that he was exilled
 Tabide in Ponto, and neuer come ageyn.
 And yit he dide his labour in certeyn,
 In hope of grace, his wittis to applie 104
 To write a book of lous remedie.

69. whan he] which H.

72. Eneidos R, Enoydos H.

79. vois] wise R. 87. Oon] And R. 90. delectable R.

96. thvnkouth] vnkouth R, J, P, R 3. J omits lines 99-288.

102. come] to cum H.

- And remember
Petrarch,
laureate in
Rome, and his
Book of Two
Fortunes, his
Eclogues and
Cosmography,
his Psalms of
Repentance,
his Epic of
Africa, *De Vita
solitaria* and
his Book of
Ignorance, who
got himself a
perpetual name
by his writing.
Read his Letters
Without a Title
and his Book
of Famous
Women.
- Wrytynge of old, with lettres aureat,
Labour of poetis doth hihli magnefie,
Record on Petrak, in Rome laureat, 108
Which of too Fortunys wrot the remedie,
Certeyn Ecloogis and his Cosmographie,
And a gret conflict, which men may reede & see,
Of his querellis withynne hymselff secre. 112
- He wrot seuene Psalmys of gret repentaunce,
And in his Affrik comendid Scipioun,
And wrot a book of his ignoraunce
Bi a maner of excusacioun, 116
And sette a notable compilacioun
Vpon the lyff[e] callid solitarye,
To which this world is froward and contrarie.
- And thus be wrytynge he gat hymselff a name 120
Perpetuelli to been in remembraunce,
Set and registred in the Hous of Fame,
And made Epistles of ful hih substaunce
Callid Sine Titulo; & mor hymselff tauaunce, 124
Of famous women he wrot the excellence,
Gresilde preferring for hir gret pacience.
- It is also
remembered in
writing how
Troy was
destroyed, the
slaughter of
Hector and
Homer's ex-
clusive praise of
Achilles, who
wrought all by
fraud.
- Wrytynge also remembrid hath how Troye 128
Destroied was, sith[en] go many a yeer,
The slauhtre of Ector, cheef piler of ther ioie.
And for the parti of Grekis wrot Omer,
Which in his wrytynge was particuleer;
For Tachille, that wrouhte al be fraude, 132
Aboue Ector he gaf a synguler laude.
- Writing makes
green the
chaplets of
Æsop and
Juvenal, and on
Dante it bestows
celestial fame.
- Wrytynge causeth the chaplet to be greene [p. 209]
Bothe of Esope and of Iuuenal;
Dantis labour it doth also meyntheene 136
Bi a report verray celestial,
Sunge among Lumbardis in especial,
Whos thre bookis the grete wondres tell
Of heuene aboue, of purgatorie & hell. 140
- Through writing
men learn of
the miracles and
holiness of the
blessed saints,
of medicines and
salves and
staunches for
mortal wounds.
- Men be wrytynge knowe the meracles
Of blissid seyntes & of ther hoolynesse,
Medecyne[s], salue & eek obstacles
Geyn mortal woundis and eueri gret seeknesse, 144
Recreacioun and solace in distresse,

113. Psalmys] palmys R. 114. his] om. R.
132. Tachille] to Achilles H, tachilles R 3, P.
140. hell] of hell H. 144. Geyn] ageyn H.

Quiete in labour, in pouert pacience,
And in richesse riht, trouthe and conscience.

¶ Shortnesse of lyff and foryetilnesse,
The wit of man dul & ay slidyng,
Necligence and froward idilnesse, —
Echon stepmooder to science and konnyng,
That I dar sey[e]n, nadde be writyng
Onli ordeyned for our auantages,
Ded wer memorie & mynde of passid ages.

148 Shortness of
life and lack
of memory,
negligence and
idleness, would
have destroyed
the mind of past
ages, had it not
152 been for writing.

And thus in cheef thes causes affor told
Meued the herte of Bochas to writyng,
And to remembre be many story old
Thestat of pryncis, in chaieres hih sittyng,
And for vices ther vnwar fallyng,
Yiuyng exauple, as I afferme dar,
Of fals Fortune how thei shal be war.

For these
reasons Bochas
156 was moved to
tell the tale of
princes, who
sat on high
thrones and
fell because
of their vices.

His firste thre bookis be ful cleer merours,
Fulli acomplished, as Bochas vndirtook,
The cause of fallyng of many conquerours,
Onli for trouthe and vertu thei forsook.
For which myn auctour toward his fourte book
Gan sharpe his penne, to his eternal fame,
Onli be writyng to geten hym a name.

His first three
books com-
164 pleted, he
sharpened his
pen

Myn auctour Bochas, that so moche koude,
Begynneth heer to make a processe
Ageyn thoutrage of pryncis that wer proude,
Which wer brouht lowe for ther frowardnesse,
And notabli remembreth how* meeknesse,
Which stondest hool in oon & doth contune,
Is ay fraunchised fro daunger of Fortune.

and began
a process
against the
outrages of
proud princes,
172 who were
brought low
for their
perversity.

But he in maner doth recapitle ageyn
The fal of many that sat on hih[e] stages,
How thei for vicis stood ay in noun certeyn,
Cam to myscheef for ther gret outrages.

176 He recapitu-
lated the fall of
Priam, who
sustained
adultery,

148. H has large initial.

151. Echon] om. H.

153. avantage H. 154. Age H.

155. cheef] myscheef (but mys crossed out) B — thes] ther R
— to fore R.

158. chaires R, chaires H.

162. be] bi R. 169. moche gode koude R.

170. Begynnyng R. 173. how] the B.

176. recapitle] a Chapitle H.

- Remembryng first of Priam the damages, 180
 And how he loste sceptre and regalie
 For sustenyng of fals auoutrye.
- and of Astyages, who married his daughter to Cambyses, a man of low birth,
 The fal rehersyng of Astriages,
 That gaf his douhtir whilom in mariage 184
 To oon that was Icallid Cambises,
 A poore man bor[e]n of lough lynage,
 For he shold[e] ha[ue] non auantage
 In no maner, nouthur in riht nor wrong, 188
 Bi rebelloun ageyn hym to be strong.
- so that there should be no male born of his line who could put him from his throne. Yet, after all, Fortune overthrew him.
 For he tofforn hadde had aveseoun,
 How ther shold oon procedyn of his lyne,
 Which sholde hym putte out of his regeoun 192
 And cause hym in myscheef for to fyne.
 But yit Fortune koude hym vndermyne,
 That al his wisdam stood in non auail;
 For ageyn God preuaileth no counsail. 196
- I need not tell his story here, or the story of Cyrus or King Tarquin.
 It needeth nat his story to reherse,
 Nor the maner of his vnhappi chaunce,
 Nor the fallyng of Cirus kyng of Perse, 200
 Nor of kyng Tarquyn for his mys-gouernaunce,
 Thouh Bochas heer put hem in remembraunce.
 For as me semeth, it wer a thyng in veyn,
 Thyng onys told to telle it newe ageyn.
- Nor did Bochas again rehearse the tale of Artaxerxes. It has already been told, and Bochas begins here with Marcus Manlius.
 And he list nat now to be rek[e]les,
 Newe ageyn to make rehersaile 204
 Of the kyng callid Artaxerxes;
 Sithe it is told, what sholde it mor auaille?
 But he procedith streiht onto Itaille 208
 To telle ther stories, and begynneth heer
 At Marchus Manlius, a Romeyn consuleer.

¶ Finis Prologi.

181. loste] lefft H.

183. fal] fals H.

185. callid R.

190. a vision R, P, a visioun H, avision R 3, avycioun H 5 — had] om. R.

202. as] om. H.

208. onto] in to H.

210. At] Of H — Marcus Manlius H, Mallius R.

¶ Incipit liber quartus.

[Howe marchus manlius wrought and dyd for Rome
toun/ And at the laste he was by the comons
caste into* Tibre and there drowned.]¹

WHILOM in Rome ther was a gret lynage [p.211] The Manlius
Callid Manliois, of renommed noblesse, 212 gens was
And of that stok, riht fair in his yong age, celebrated in
Cam this Marchus, his stori berth witnessse. Rome, and
Which bi processe for his worthynesse Marcus, thrice
Was thre tymes be iust eleccioun 216 consul, was one
Maad consuleer of that worthi toun. of its
descendants.

Which to the comoun ful gretli dide auaille, He often fought
He dyuers times for the toun[e]s riht for the town,
Fauht in his daies many strong bataile, and after he
And ay preuailede thoruh his grete myht, had won a rich
And in the feeld[e] bi a synguler fih 220 arm-ring of gold
Outraied his enmy, lik as it is told, from an enemy
And took from hym a riche bie of gold. in single
combat, he

Torques in Latin, in Inglissh is a bie, was called
A cercle of gold, which that Marchus wan. Marcus
Brouht[e] it hom thoruh his cheualrie; Torquatus; for
And of torques, he was callid than 228 *Torques* in Latin
Marchus Torquatus; & thus the name gan, means a ring.

He to be callid, the stori tellith vs, 232 He also won
Among Romeyns Torquatus Manlius. many crowns of
gold; and in
And he wolde ofte iupart good & liff, those days
For the cite entre the feeld allone, crowns were the
And ther conquered for a prerogatiff reward of great
Sondri crownes, with many riche stone, emprises
Wan* tunicles of gold ful many one; 236
For thilke tyme, for dyuers hih emprises
Wer crownis maad in many sondri wises.

212. Malliois R, Manlyoys H, Manlioys R 3, P.

214. Marcus H, P — his] þe H. 218. ful] om. H.

222. fih] siht R.

229. began R.

230. vs] thus H.

231. Mallius R.

235. many a H.

236. Wan] Whan B, R — ful] om. H, R 3, P.

¹ Supplied from P1, n. 6 recto (below cut and Incipit). For into read nito.

- and, as Aulus Gellius says, were given to men who, after they had fought and risked their lives for the town, were called champions.
- For as Agellius maketh menciuon,
 Ther wer in Rome deuised straunge crouns 240
 For such as hadden fouhten for the toun,
 And* for ther labour reseceyued ther guerdouns,
 Bi a prerogatiff callid champiouns,
 Which sondry tymes of manhood & of myht 244
 Iuparted ther lyff* for the toun[e]s riht.
- There were Triumphal, Obsidional, Mural, and Naval crowns, and a crown called Castrence.
- Lik ther desertis thes croun[e]s took ther names;
 For summe of them wer callid Tryumphal,
 Youe onto knihtes for ther noble fames. 248
 Othir also callid Obsidional
 In Romeyn tunge; & summe ther wer Mural, —
 Eek other tweyne, Naual and Castrence,
 And alle thei wern of ful gret excellence. 252
- Triumphal crowns were given to emperours and mighty conquerours.
- The Tryumphal maked wer of gold,
 Offred in tryumphes to worthi emperours,
 Set with saphirs and rubies manyfold
 Vpon the hedis of myhti conquerours. 256
 And whan that Rome was shynyng in his flours,
 That crowne callid, *witb* braunchis boornid faire,
 In ther vulgar Thaireat Coronaire.
- Obsidional crowns were wrought like grain or corn and presented to those who relieved besieged cities.
- Thobsydyonal, of which I spak tofforn, 260
 Deuised wern, the book doth specefie,
 Croun[e]s notable wrouht lik greyn or corn,
 Youe onto princis which thoruh ther cheualrie
 Reskewed seeges and saued the partie 264
 Of hem that wer[e] closed streiht withynne,
 Thoruh hih prowesse a crowne for to wynne.
- The Mural crown of laurel was granted to him who first ascended the wall of an assaulted stronghold,
- Another crowne, that callid was Mural,
 Was youe and grauntid bi the emperour 268
 To hym that firste wan vpon the wal
 At any seege, and ther abood the shour
 Fihtyng allone, in hope of sum socour.
 And he that myht[e] such a brunt susteene, 272
 Sholde of laurer were a crowne greene.
- and Naval crowns, carved like rudders, were ordained for those who first entered the ship of an enemy.
- Naual crownes whilom wer ordeyned
 For them that fauht[e] manli on the se,
 Whan ther shippis wer togidre cheyned, — 276
 He that of manhod & marcial surete
 Vpon his enmyes made first entre

239. Aulus Gellius P. 242. And] As B — labours R.
 243. callid] maade R. 245. lyff] lyues B. 246. thes] the H.
 252. excellence] reverence H, R 3. 253. The] This R.

- Resceyue sholde, in al the peeplis siht,
Korue lich a rother, a crowne cleer & briht. 280
- The nexte crowne, which callid is* Castrence,
Was youe of custum to that manli kniht
That list auauunce hym thoruh his magnificence,
Hostes assemblede, iupartre wolde of myht 284
Tofforn al other [t]entren into fiht,
Sholde eek resceyue, his noblesse for to queeme, *
A sterred crowne maad lik a diadeeme.
- The crowne also which callid was Oual 288
Took first name of ioie and gladnesse,
Which kynges, princis in actis marcial
Vsid somtyme in ther ioious noblesse
At sodeyn skarmysshes of casuel hastynesse, 292
As whan thei venquysshed proudli in bataille
Such as ther hihnesse vnwarli wolde assaille.
- And for thei wern of poweer invyncible, [p. 212]
Ther noble crownis coriousli wer wrouht 296
Of mirtis branchis, which been inputrible,
Enduryng euere and corrupte nouht.
For this woord Oual, yif it be weel souht,
Is seid of gladnesse, as put is in memorie, 300
Ordeyned for pryncis after ther victorie.
- Another crowne callid Cyuyca,
Of oken bowes was maad[e] round & pleyn,
Ordeyned for them which *pro Re Publica*
Koude in bataile reskewe a citeseyn 304
And slen his enmy that was a foreyn.
Of myhti ok he sholde for manheed
Cleyme to were a crowne upon his hed. 308
- And lik as knihtis in marcial delites,
For comoun proffit dede hemsilf auauunce,
So for ther noble victorious merites
The Romeyn people hadde a gret plesance, 312
With sundri crownis marcial in substaunce,

The starred
crown called
Castrence was
received by
that knight who
entered into
battle before all
other men,

and the Oval
crown by the
victor in a
sudden
skirmish.

It was wrought
of myrtle
branches, which
never corrupt.

The Civic
crown, made
of oak boughs,
was the reward
for rescuing a
citizen in battle
and slaying his
enemy.

As Aulus
Gellius records,
the Romans
took great
pleasure in thus
rewarding their
famous knights.

281. is callid B, R.

285. tentren] entren R.

291. ther] the R.

296. wer] was R.

297. mirtis] Marcus H, Martys H 5, mirthis R 3 — inputrible
J, R, H, P.

308. a] þat H.

312. Romeyn people] Romayns H.

For to guerdone ther knihtis most famous,
Myn auctour record callid Agellius.

Marcus Manlius
often risked his
life, and won
many crowns,

Among other that dede ther besi peyne 316
Such[e] crownis manli to recure,
Marcus Manlius, in manhod souereyne,
Put ofte his lyff in mortal auenture;
For in his force so moche he dide assure, 320
That he deserued ful yore agon
Of these said crownes many mo than oon.

and was given
the surname
Capitolinus

And to [the] ences of his noble fame 324
He dede a thyng bothe manli & dyuyne,
Wherbi that he gat hym a surname
To be callid Marchus Capitolyne,
Which aboue alle his namis dide shyne, —
Whan he allone, wherbi he is comendid, 328
The Capitoile from enmyes hath defendid.

at the time
that the
French captured
the city and
tried to take
the Capitol

Whan thei of Fraunce hadde taken the cite,
Put al Rome at myscheef onto fliht,
And leid await[e] with a gret meyne 332
The Capitoile for to take at niht,
Bi a passage that lay ferr out of siht
Vnder a roche callid Carmentoun;
Ther taue entred into the cheef dongoun. 336

by climbing
along a dark
valley at mid-
night and
scaling the wall
in a surprise
attack.

Thei wer ther shrowdid vndir a dirk[e] vale,
With ordynaunce and myhti violence
Toward mydnyht the wal[le] for to scale,
Most couertli them keepyng in scilence; 340
Dempte pleynli, for lak* of resistence,
That thei sholde, maugre tho withyne,
Ther hour assigned, the Capitoile wynne.

But the brave
geese beat their
wings and made
such a com-
motion that
Marcus awoke,

But the ges that wer wit[h]ynne cloos, 344
The waker foules be noise of ther komyng
Gan bete ther weenges, & up anon aros,
Wherthoruh this Marcus in his bed liggyng
Gan tabraide, & made no tarieng, 348
Took his harnais, most furious & wroth,
And to the wallis in al haste he goth.

315. A. Gellius P.

318. Mallius R.

325. that] *om.* H — gat] gaff R.

333. to] *om.* R.

337. Thei] Ther R. 341. lak] lakkyng B, J.

343. the] ther H. 346. aros] thei aros R.

- And hym that cam first upon the wall,
 Of verray force, withoute mor tarieng,
 Doun into Tibre he made hem haue a fall;
 And all his felawes bisy in scalyng,
 With sheeld or pauys, or ladderes up reisyng,
 This manli Mark, shortli to comprehende,
 Into the flood he made hem to descende.
- Vnto the deth, of hym thei wer abauyd;
 For bi his kniethod & his hih renoun,
 Mauge them, the Capitoile sauid
 And aftirward rescued al the toun.
 [And] for the fortune, in conclusioun,
 Which that tyme dide vnto hym fall,
 Capitolinus men dede hym aftir call.
- And for he was so victorious,
 Hymself allone be this hih victorye,
 This name he gat to hym & al his hous,
 Perpetueli to been in memorye
 And registred in the consistorie,
 In ther cronicles his name determyned,
 With goldene lettres to been enlumyned.
- And the gees, of whom I spak also,
 That so weel kepte wach upon the niht,
 Itake wern and offired to Iuno
 Solempneli with gret[e] torchis liht,
 To whom also it grauntid was of riht,
 Whan a famyne maad her stoor to faile,
 Thei spared wern & take for no vitaille.
- And thus was Marcus lik a* conquerour [p. 213]
 Worsheped in Rome, alle beyng of assent.
 But whan summe folk be set in gret honour,
 Sumtyme it happeth thei holde hem nat content,
 With couetise ther hertis be so blent,
 Fro suffisaunce, aboue ther degrees
 To surmounte to hier dignites.
- This Manlius was fret in his corage
 To gretter worshepis sodenli tascende,
 Deemyng so to haue had auantage,

352 and, rushing to the wall, threw the enemy one after another into the Tiber.

356

360 They were cast down by him to their death, and thus the Capitol was saved.

364

368 For this deed the name Capitolinus was given to him and his family in perpetuity.

372

And the geese were made sacred to Juno and never eaten in time of famine.

376

380 [p. 213] Marcus received all the worship of a conqueror; but, like many other men set in high honour, he was not content,

384

but wanted to transcend his equals,

388

353. hem] hym H. 362. And] om. R. 374. to] onto R.
 379. Marcus lik a] Mark a mihti B, R, J, Marc lik a H, R 3, P,
 H 5.
 383. so be H.

- And in hymself gan frowardli pretende
 In that cite al othir to transcende,
 Beside tryumphes, which wer to hym reserued,
 Hiere to clymbe than he hath disserued. 392
- and became
 jealous of a
 lord named
 Camillus, the
 greatest man in
 Rome, governor
 of the city,
 But ther was oon, as maad is mencioun,
 Callid Camyllus, a lord of gret substaunce,
 Which in the cite & in that myhti toun
 Aboue al othir hadde gouernaunce. 396
 And as it is Iput in remembraunce,
 To his gretnesse non othir myht atteyne,
 At whos noblesse Marchus gan disdeyne.
- and rebelled
 against him.
 In his herte he hadde a gret envie, 400
 Which caused hym bi outrage for to erre
 Ageyn Camyllus, which for his cheualrie
 The toun gouerned bothe in pes and werre.
 And for Marchus wolde hymself preferre 404
 Aboue that prynce in worshepe and honour,
 First of the people he gat hym gret fauour.
- And as he was
 popular he drew
 many of the
 people to his
 side
 And bi a maner of conspiracie
 He gadred hertis of the comounte, 408
 And drouh also onto his partie
 Gret multitude thoruhout the cite.
 And thus roos first the dreedful enmyte
 Withynne Rome, the story tellith thus, 412
 Atween these pryncis, Camyll & Manlius.
- and caused
 great dissension.
 Thus first the venym atween hem two was sowe
 Of hasti hatreede bi fals occasiouns,
 Which in the cite atween hih & lowe 416
 Caused of newe dyuers discenciouns,
 Aftir the[r] vnkouth straunge oppynyons;
 For eueri wiht drouh to his partie,
 As thei wer meued in ther fantasie. 420
- To put a stop
 to the strife a
 dictator named
 Cornelius Cassius
 came from
 Tuscany and
 put Marcus in
 gaol,
 But for to stynte this outrageous errour
 And thes hasti stryues furious,
 Ageyn fro Tuscan kam a dictatour,
 That tyme callid Cornelius Cassus, 424
 Which of wisdam blamed Manlius;

395. Which] *with* in R — that] *þe* H.396. hadde] *om.* R. 397. Iput] *put* R.398. non othir] *nomayn* R.410. thoruhout] *thoruh* R.418. ther vnkouth straunge] *ther straunge vncouth* H.

For he caused such rumour in the town,
And for his guilt comaunded hym to prisoun.

Which was in maner hyndryng to his name,
And appalled in parti his noblesse;
For a tyme gan teclipse his fame,
But aftirward the cloude of that derknesse
Bi comoun fauour was turned to cleernesse:
For as it hadde be riht for the nonys,
In his diffence the comouns roos attonis.

428 which for
a time eclipsed
his fame; but
the commons
soon rose in his
defence,

432

First whan thei hadde among ther gret rumours,
Mid of ther fell [&] hatful contencioun
Shortli rebuked the worthi senatours,
Because Marcus was sette in prisoun,
Which hadde been so helplich to the town.
Whom to delyuere thei dyuers menys souhte,
And, as I fynde, euene thus thei wrouhte:

436 rebuking the
Senate because
it had allowed
him to be so
humiliated,

440

First thei cladde hem in moornyng clothes blake,
Pale of ther facis, pitousli weepyng,
Ther berd vnshauē, ther her to-reende & shake,
Lik furious men up and down rennyng
Tofor the prisoun, al the niht wakyng.
And on his harmes pleyntly to be wreke,
Thei gan manace the prisoun for to breke.

444 and, dressing
themselves in
black, set up
such a wailing
and tumult
before the
prison,

448

And for to stynte ther outraious clamour
The senatour[e]s made anon ordeyne
To delyuere hym out of his soiour,
Losne his feteres and to breke his cheyne.
And whan he was delyuered out of peyne,
His list nat stynte, of hasti cruelte
Of proude corage auengid for to be.

452 that the
Senators
ordered
Marcus to be
freed.
But no sooner
was he released
than he wanted
to be revenged.

And in his furious fel presumpcioun,
Maugre the senat and tribunys euerichon,
Saide he wolde gouerne Rome town.
At whos outrage thei gan disdeyne anon;
The peeplis hertis from hym wer agon,
And for his pride thei bausement
Assigned hym to come to iugement.

456 and presump-
tuously said
that he would
gouern Rome
himself. This
lost him his
popularity,

460

Forsake he was thoruhout the cite,
Ther cam nat oon with hym of his kynreede,
He fond non helpe in his aduersite,

[p. 214] and, forsaken by
the commons,
464 he was brought
to judgment.

Sauff a fewe cam with hym in deede
Of the comouns, ful feeble at such a neede.
And thus, alas, he fond no resistance 468
Was vailable onto his diffence.

Knowing no
other help, he
took off his
clothes and
shewed the
wounds he had
received in
defending the
city

But for socour constreynd and in dreede,
Awey he putte his clothyng & vesture,
And naked stood[e], veraili in deede, 472
Shewyng his woundis, which he dede endure
At many scarmysssh and disconfiture.
And for reskus, to speke in woordes fewe,
The Capitoile to them he dide shewe. 476

and cried in a
loud voice to his
gods for aid.
At this the
people began to
weep, and the
judges were so
put out of
countenance
that,

And in supportyng eek of his quarell,
Meeuyng the people to rewe on his compleynt,
First to his goddis loude he dide appell 480
To preserue hym of that he was atteynt.
The people aboute hym with teris al bespreynt,
That the iuges astoned wer in deede,
Wher-as thei sat ageyn hym to procede.

fearing another
rebellion, they
had him led out
secretly and
thrown from the
Capitol into the
Tiber.

But secreli he was lad out of pres 484
To a place callid Frowmentyne,
And ther, alas, thei wer [so] merciles
His doom bi rigour fulli to termyne,
Spared nouter noblesse nor lyne: 488
Fro the Capitoile, out of the cheef donioun,
Lowe into Tibre for to be cast down.

No man can
describe by
writing the
insecurity of
those who labor
for any
community.

This was his eende, void of al fauour,
Which no man wolde redressen nor amende, 492
Bi cruelte cast out of that tour,
Which he whilom most knihtli gan diffende.
But what man can be writyng comprehende
Thunseur socour founde in necessite 496
To them that laboure for any comounte?

Let proud men
who trust in
worldly things
consider the
fate of Marcus.

Lat men beholde, that truste on worldli thynges,
And namli them that be proude and hauteyn,
Opne ther eyen, cast up ther lookynges 500
To considre & see weel in certeyn,

475. reskew H.

479. loude] low R. 86. so] om. 4J, R.

488. nor] ne H. 490. a doun H.

498. on] & R.

499. them] thay H, thei R 3, they P — a horizontal line is drawn
over the u in hauteyn, B.

500. Opne] Opon R.

Who trusteth Fortune, his truste is but in veyn!
 And yif ye list a cleer exauple fynde,
 Among remembreth on Marcus in your mynde. 504

What myhte auaille his noblesse in bataile?
 Bies of gold, crownes of laureer?
 His riche platis or his vnkouth maile,
 His myhti sheeldis, that shon so briht & cleer? 508
 Or his tryumphe, songe ferr & neer,
 Or his victories for the cite wrouht? —
 In his gret myscheeff auailed hym riht nouht.

What did his
 prowess, his
 crowns of gold
 and laurel,
 his strong
 armour and
 triumphs avail?

[Here Bochas writeth in part ayenst / suche as
 cannot be content with suffisaunce / but vsurpe
 to hihe dignitees.]¹

HEEER Iohn Bochas callith to memorye 512
 The straunge salaire [and] þe famous guerdoun
 Of them þat gat bi conquest & victorye
 Honour of tryumphe withynne Rome toun;
 How it was vsid, he maketh mencioun, 516
 Ceriousli reherseth the manere,
 Which I shal write, yif ye list to heere.

Here John
 Bochas tells of
 the rewards
 received by
 those who won
 victories for
 Rome.

Auis was take first of estatiss thre:
 Of men of armys, which that wer present, 520
 That sauh in deede the magnanymyte
 Of hym that shal haue it be iugement;
 Of the clergie thei muste haue eek assent,
 And of the senat and peepel most notable, 524
 Be preef souht out that he wer founde able.

A triumph was
 granted with
 the assent of
 the three
 estates,

This prynce also, outhere the capteyn,
 Which shal the tryumphe resceyue of verray riht,
 Withyne a chaar, ful richeli beseyn 528
 He shal be set, of gold bornid briht,
 Fret with stonis, which shal yiue a liht

and the
 triumphator
 rode through
 the city in a
 chariot of gold
 adorned with
 gems

506. laureer] Laureate H.

509 &] or H.

511. mischeffs R — *In inner margins*: "Hic deficit rubrica"
 R, "deficit Rubrica" B.

513. salary H — and] om. R, J, P.

523. the] ther R.

525. preef] trowth H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 87 recto.

- As Phebus doth in his midday speere,
That no dirknesse aboute hym shal appeere. 532
- drawn by
four white
horses. This heuenli chaar shal for mor delit,
To shewe then cres of his knihtli glorie,
Be lad and drawe with foure steedis whiht
Thoruh the cite in tokne of his victorie. 536
And he shal han, for a synguler memorye,
In his riht hand a palme of gold ful sheene,
And on his hed a crowne of laureer greene.
- He bore a palm
of gold in his
right hand and
was crowned
with laurel. He shal eek haue aboue al his armure, [p. 215] 540
Poudrid with palmys a cote of purpil red,
In his left hand, his quarellis for tassure,
Over his
armour he wore
a garment of
purple powdered
with palms, and
in his left hand
he held a
crimson standard
decorated with
the arms of his
prince. He was
escorted to the
Capitol like a
conqueror, A standard round declaryng his manhed,
And al aboue set upon the hed 544
The pryncis armys, ful riche of apparaille,
In whos quarell he accomplisshed the* bataille.
And of custum the said[e] standard shall
Be richeli depeynt with red colour. 548
And so this kniht, this man most marciall,
Shal be conueied lik a conquerour.
And yit for mor ences of his honour,
Vpon ther feet his prisoneres echon, 552
Take bi his manhod, aboute his chaar shal gon,
- his prisoneres
going on foot at
his side, and
was attended
by musicians
and poets who
sang his praise. The moste worthi faste bi his side,
Al the remnant aftir on hym lokyng.
Echon the poetes which in the toun abide 556
Shal on hym waite at his hom komyng,
Dites deuse and of his conquest syng;
And streng menstrallis, to bern also record,
Ther instrumentis shal touchyn of accord, 560
- But to abate
his pride
the most
miserable wretch
in all
Rome stood
behind him, Alle of entent to yiue hym mor corage.
To the Capitoile so he shal be brouht,
And list of pride he falle in non outrage,
Nor surquedie withynne his owne thouht, 564
The moste wrech shal of the toun be souht,
Which of custum shal haue a staf in* honde,
And in the chaar behynde his bak up stonde.

545. of] in H.

546. the] in B, R, J.

556. 1st the] of R, of the J, P.

559. bern] been R.

560. of] at R.

566. in] on B, R, J, P

- Gnotos Eolitos* in Greek he sholde seyn,
 Which in our tunge pleynli doth expresse,
 "Knowe thi-silff," remembryng in certeyn
 Vpon Fortunys froward doubilnesse,
 On whom to triste may be no sekirnesse. 568
 And who that douteth wher that it be thus,
 Lat hym remembre the eende of Manlius.
 What auailed his triumphes or his bies?
 Crownys of gold & perlid fressh tuncycles? 576
 His hih prowesse, or al his cheualries,
 Synguler fihytyng or marcial particules,
 Newli remembred or rad in old cronicles?
 Peise his merites, & see how at the laste, 580
 How into Tibre ther champioun thei caste!
 To his excus auailed neueradeel
 Fauour of comouns, carectes of his woundis,
 Nor to the goddis his lamentable appel, 584
 Nor remembraunce of ther fraunchised boundis,
 Teritories, nor wyning of the groundis,
 Which that he wan with spendyng of his blood, —
 Al knet in on, to hym no sted thei stood. 588
 Heer may ye see how Fortune sodenli
 Cleernesse of fame can chaunge to dirknesse,
 Glorie* to reproche, worshepe to velany,
 And ioie passid to mortal heuynesse, 592
 Swetnesse of sauour* into bittirnesse,
 And sobirnesse into furious rage,
 And old fraunchise to thraldam & seruage.
 For ther was nouter request nor praier 596
 That auailed to his delyueraunce.
 In cheynys fetrid, dedli of look & cheer,
 Abod the sentence of his fynal greuaunce, —
 Pale of face, with tremblyng contenaunce, 600
 Whan he, alas, gan mortalli aproche
 Of Tarpeia to the hidous roche.

saying, "Know thyself and remember the doubleness of Fortune, in whom there is no trust."

For what availed the triumphs of Marcus?

He was thrown into the Tiber, and the favour of the commons, his appeal to the gods, and the remembrance of his past services were as nothing.

Thus can Fortune suddenly change the brightness of fame to darkness, and glory to reproach.

Fettered in chains, he awaited his sentence, and was led pale and trembling to the Tarpeian Rock.

568. Gnothy seanton P — sholde] shal H, R 3.

573. douterh] douteh R.

576. &] or H, R 3, H 5, P.

577. prowesse] prow R.

578. particles R, J, P, particlis H, R 3, particules H 5.

579. new H. 589. may ye] men may H. 591. Gloire B, J, R.

593. sauour] fauour B, H, R, R 3, H 5.

594. forious R.

595. hraldam R.

- This rock was named after a lady called Tarpeia, who, guilty of treason, was buried under it.
- Of Tarpeia this roche bar the name
 Aftir a ladi, as maad is mencion, 604
 Callid Tarpeia, which fill in gret diffame
 Because she was assentid to tresoun,
 Taue brouht enmyes into Rome toun.
 Wherof convict, hir stori is weel knowe, 608
 Vnder that roche she was Idolue lowe.
- And it was also called Carmenton, after Carmentis, a woman of great influence, who built the Capitol and invented our alphabet.
- This roche also was callid Carmentoun
 Aftir a woman of gret auctorite
 Callid Carmentis, which thoruh hir hih renoun 612
 The Capitoile made in that cite.
 And she fond lettres first of our A. B. C.,
 And kunyng hadde, among hir werkes all,
 Declare afforn[e] thyng that sholde befall. 616
- Marcus found neither favour nor friendship.
- And on this harde sturdi roche of ston,
 Fro the Capitoile Marcus was cast down.
 Othir fauour nor frenshepe fond he non,
 For alle his batailes fouhten for the toun. 620
 The comouns hertis wer turnid up-so-doun,
 Whos loue is lik, preued at assay,
 A blase of fyr, now briht & now away. 623
- The common people may make promises, but when the need comes they do not keep them,
- The comoun peepel may hote and crie faste, [p. 216]
 As ther hertis stedfast were & stable;
 But at a neede ther promys wil nat laste,
 Of ther corages thei be so remeuable.*
 To folwe resoun geriss and vntretable, 628
 Lihtli declynyng, and that is ful gret routhe,
 Aftir oppynyouns, & nothyng aftir trouthe.
- and so Marcus was deceived and left to his fate.
- This Manlius was of his trust deceyued,
 Whos lust vnleeful departed was on tweyne, 632
 First whan of pride he wolde ha be resceyued
 To hih estat, which he myht nat atteyne,
 Wherthoruh the senat gan at hym disdeyne,
 And the comouns, ay fals at such a neede, 636
 Leftt hym in myscheeff, & took of hym non heede.

609. Idolue lowe] I don throwe H.

616. fall H.

627. remeuable] remuable B.

631. This] Thus H.

¶ *Lenvoye.*

IN this tragedie men may beholde & see
 The pereilous damages of fals ambicioun,
 Of them that benat content with þer degre,
 But wolde up clymbe, lik ther oppynyoun,
 To hih estat be vsurpacioun, —
 Which nat considre the sentence of scripture,
 In a good mene men lengest may endure.

This tragedy tells us of the peril that lies in the false ambition of those who, not contented with their degre, wish to climb to higher estate by usurpation.

644

Who that vsurpeth to hier dignite
 Than apperteneth to his condicioun,
 In roial chaires for to make his see,
 And hath no title of lyne nor resoun,
 Thoruh froward pride ful ofte he is put down;
 For lak he seethnat how eueri creature
 In a good mene lengest may endure.

Such people are often put down; they cannot see that all creatures best endure when they live in a happy mean.

648

Whan Dedalus tauhte his sone [to] flee,
 He bad hym first, of hih disrescioun,
 Fro Phebus heete keepe his wynges fre,
 And fro Neptunvs cold congellacioun,
 Menyng herbi, for short conclusioun,
 That who that list with ioie his staat assure,
 In a good mene he lengest shal endure.

Dædalus told his son to fly neither too high nor too low,

652

Remembre the manhod & magnanymyte
 Of Marcus Manlius, which be presumpcioun
 Wolde haue gouerned Rome the cite,
 Maugre the senat reulid that myhti toun,
 Which turnid aftir to his confusioun,
 For he sauh nat, such was his auenture,
 In a good mene men lengest may endure.

but Marcus Manlius, content with no moderation,

660

Sume in ther grettest hih prosperite,
 Of froward corage and furious mocioun,
 In ther gret wele, bi fals duplicite
 Han a maner straunge condicioun,
 Nat to be content with plente nor foisoun,
 Bi a fals etik, which of ther nature
 In a good mene ne cannot long endure.

was like many others who in their highest prosperity are most dissatisfied.

668

672

But in this erthe grettest felicite
 Is hertis ese, richest pecessioun,

Heart's ease is the greatest joy on earth,

652. to] *om.* R, J, H, R 3.

659. &] & the R.

674. richesse H.

With suffisaunce content for to be,
 Of worldli trouble teschewe thoccasioun, 676
 Meuyng no quarellis, causyng no discencioun,
 Nor cleyme nothyng which hard is to recure,
 Sithe in good mene men lengest may endure.

and this,
 Princes, you
 should re-
 member; for
 the envy of
 high climbing
 causes only
 strife, and no
 community is
 to be trusted.

Pryncis, remembreth in your most mageste, 680
 Envie of clymbyng causith diuisioun.
 Beth of accord, trustith* no comounte,
 Which, at a poynt, is but decepcioun,
 And specialli fleeth symulacioun. 684
 Ye may in Marcus seen a pleyñ figure,
 Which for ambicioun myhte no while endure.

[How Neptanabus kyng of Egipt / was by xerses
 constreyned to fle his kyngdam.]¹

Bochas next
 began to tell
 briefly the story
 of Nectanebes,
 king of Egypt,

AFFTIR the fall of Marcus Manlius,
 Bochas anon gan his stile dresse 688
 Breeffli to telle of Neptanabus,
 Kyng of Egipt, and of his gret richesse,
 Seyng afforn[e], in al his noblesse
 Bi vnkouth craft, how he ne myhte chese, 692
 That in al haste his crowne he sholde lese.

who foresaw by
 astrology that
 he should lose
 his kingdom.

For he was kunnyng in especial,
 And riht expert, as maad is menciuñ,
 In alle the sciences callid liberal, 696
 And knew afforn bi calculacioun
 How God wolde make a transmygracioun
 Of his kyngdam, & pleyñli to reporte,
 The lond of Perse to Grekis ful transporte. 700

Forced to flee by
 Xerxes, he
 went to Grece
 as a magician

For bi kyng Zerses out of his cuntre,
 Maugre his tresor, his cunyng & his miht,
 This Neptanabus constreyned was to flee,
 Durste nat abide to haue of hym a siht. 704
 And into Grece he drouh hym anon riht,
 Nat lik a kyng, but aftir old writyngis,
 Lik a magicien he wrouhte wonder thynges.

677. quarell H — 2nd no] om. H, R 3, H 5, P.

682. trustith] trust on B, R 3, trust in H 5, P.

693. lese] om. R.

704. of hym to have H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 88 recto.

- Vpon fortune ferther to proceede, [p. 217] 708 and there became so intimate with Olympias, that men said Alexander was his son.
- Bi his kunyng he gretli forthered was,
 And bi his slehti werkyng eek in deede
 He was aqueynted with queen Olympias,
 And so secre, pleynli this the caas, 712
 That upon hir, men seide be deemyng,
 Gat Alisaundre, the grete myhti kyng.
- But how he fledde out of his regioun,
 Of his images nor his illusiouns 716
 Bochas mak[e]th no maner mencion,
 Nor how he wrouhte be incantaciouns,
 Nor of his sotil operaciouns,
 Nor how that he, lik a man, be nihte 720
 Whilom appeered in the queenys sihte.
- Sauf of his deth[e], Bochas writ riht nouht,
 Remembryng nouthur the tyme nor the date,
 How Alisaundre and he* togidre han souht 724
 The cours of sterris toward eue late,
 And how his sone, lik as was his fate,
 Doun from a bregge bi ful mortal wrak
 Cast hym bakward, & so his nekke brak. 728
- He wrote only of his death, and how Alexander threw him off a bridge and broke his neck.

[How Pausonoy Duk of Lacedemoyne was exiled
 by them of Athenys.]¹

- T**HIS was his ende, & aftir this Bochas Pausanias, duke of Sparta,
 Gan in al haste his stile [to] auauunce
 Of Pausonyos to tell the pitous caas,
 And al the maner of his woful chaunce. 732
 Which was a duk, & hadde in goueraunce
 Lacedemoyne, ther foundyng a cite
 Which of old tyme was callid Bisante.
- Thei of Athenys that cite gat with myht 736
 And it conquered bi ther cheualrie;
 And aftirward, wher it wer wrong or riht,
 Thei exiled the same Pausanye.
- was exiled by the Athenians and ended his life in poverty and sorrow.

716. nor] nor of H. 720. nihte] myht R.

724. Alisaundre and he] he and Alisaundre B, R, J, P.

725. euen R.

730. to] om. J, R, H, R 3, H 5, P, tavaunce Add.

731. Pausanyos H, R 3, Pausonois R, J, Pausonyos H 5, Pausanias P.

736. gat] gret R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 88 recto.

And thus Fortune thoruh hir fals envie 740
 Caused that duk, withoute mor delaies,
 In sorwe and pouert for to eende his daies.

[How Heliarchus the tirant for extorcion and oppres-
 sion, was slayn, by the knight Leonydes.]¹

Because Heli-
 archus troubled
 all Persia with
 his tyranny,

A FFTIR the fal[le] sothli of thes tweyne,
 Iohn Bochas was meued of corage 744
 For to reherse *witb* al his bisi peyne
 The grete furie & thodious rage
 Of Heliarchus, which bi gret outrage,
 Thouh he nat was famous in cheualrie, 748
 He noied al Perse *witb* his tirannye.

Bochas became
 angry and
 resolved to
 write against
 tyrants in
 general,

Wherfor Bochas gan at hym disdeyne,
 Caste he wolde, onli for his sake,
 Touche of tirauntes mo than on or tweyne, 752
 And bi writyng geyn* hem a werre make.
 And in his hande he gan a penne take,
 Tolde in ordre the perelous pestilence
 Which thei wrouhte bi mortal violence. 756

declaring
 that Fortune
 had good cause
 to shew her
 power against
 them.

First he declareth how Fortune of riht,
 Ageyn tirantis furious & wood,
 Hath ful [good] cause for to shewe hir myht,
 Tappalle ther dignites in which* thei stood, — 760
 Such as reioysshe for to sheede blood,
 Do nat ellis but laboure & deuisse
 To spoille the people in many sondri wise.

Heliarchus was
 mortal enemy
 of a city called
 Heracliea, and
 brought the
 entire country
 to mischief

And Heliarchus thoruh his cruelte, 764
 And his contryued fals extorsiouns
 Was mortal enmy to a fair cite
 Callid Heraclie, & many othir touns.
 And bi [his] extort fals oppressiouns, 768
 As the deede concluded, at a preeff,
 Al that contre* he brouhte to myscheeff.

740. hir] his R.

743. falle] fallis H. 745. For] & for H.

753. ageyn B. 759. good] om. J, R, P.

760. which] which that] B, R, J, H 5, P.

760. which] which that] B, R, J, H 5, P.

764. Elearchus P. 767. Heraclie] heliarchie H

770. contre] countee B — to] vn to H, H 5.

¹ MS. J. leaf 88 recto.

- Turnyng his grace & fauour to hatreede,
 Merci & pite onto cruelte, 772 by oppressing
the people and
revoking their
liberties, until
he was hated
by everyone.
 Fraunchise of peeplis to seruitute & dreede,
 Oppressid ther fredam & ther old liberte.
 And all ther statutis, bi which thei wer maad fre,
 He interupted of force & nat of riht, 776
 Which made hym odious in eueri mannys siht.
 But to restreyne his grete extorsiouns
 Fortune this while was nat rek[e]les:
 For his horrible abhomynaciouns 780 But Fortune
punished his
abominable
conduct
through a good
knight,
Leonides, who
with a comrade
took vengeance
and slew him.
 She gan tauale hym, this goddesse merciles,
 Bi a good kniht callid Leonides,
 Which with a felawe born of that contre
 Cast on this tiraunt auengid for to bee. 784
 Thei dempte it was an almesse dede,
 To sette ther lond in quiete & in ese,
 Of a tirant the furious blood to sheede,
 His inportable malis for tappese, 788
 Which to ther cite dede so gret disese.
 And of assent, with ther suerdis keene
 Thei slouh the tiraunt in ther mortal teene.
 Of whos deth many a man was fayn, [p. 218] 792 Many a man
was glad of his
death.
 And specialli of Heracle the cite,
 Dempte it was meedful that he was so slayn,
 To sette in quiete al a comounte.
 Loo, heer men may the rihtful guerdoun see 796
 Of tirauntis, which bi ther violence
 Toppresse the people ha[ue] no conscience!

[How the vicious Denys kyng of Cicile slouh his
 brethre and kynrede, and aftir exiled deied at
 mischeff.]¹

- A**FFTIR this tiraunt, with a ful heuy cheere
 And contenance pitous and lamentable, 800 After this
tyrant,
Dionysius,
tyrant of
Syracuse,
appeared:
 Onto Bochas Denys dede appeere,
 Which in tyrannye was most inportable,
 Thoruh [al] his land hatful and repreuable.
 But, for al that, he gan myn auctour preie 804
 Of his maneres sumwhat to write & seie.

785. elmesse R.

801. Dionise P.

but Bochas
would not
take the trouble
to mention his
lineage, because
he was so full
of all vices.

Bochas list nat rehersen his lynage
Nor make no processe of his genealogie,
Because he was, with al his gret outrage, 808
Ful of alle vices, pride and lecherie,
Of auarice, of ire and of envie.
In Cecile he heeld his roial see
At Siracusic, a myhti strong cite. 812

Cursed and
malicious of
nature, he slew
all his relations
that he might
rule alone
undisturbed.

This Denys was cursed of nature,
Most malicious bothe of thouht & deede;
For, as it is remembrid in scripture,
He slouh his brethre, his cosyns & kynreede, 816
That he allone myhte in pes posseede
Withoute trouble or interupcioun
Of al Cecile the myhti regioun.

He was
idle, licentious
and a drunkard.

Among his* vices, Bochas doth specefie, 820
He gan drawn onto idilnesse,
Folwede his lustis of foul lecherie,
And ofte of custum he fill in dronkenesse,
And thouhte it was most souereyn blissidnesse, 824
Lik as he hadde be maister of Fortune,
To folwe his lustis & ay theryn contune.

and became
blind and fat,
and with the
help of robbars
and aliens
unjustly slew
nearly all the
inhabitants of
his city.

He wex riht fat & wonder corciuous,
And his eien gan derken of ther siht, 828
That vnnethe this man most vicious
Ne miht nat weel beholde the daies liht.
And of malis this tiraunt ageyn riht,
With helpe of robbours & of fals foreyns, 832
Slouh of his cite nih al the citeseyns.

Although it is
unpleasant
to hear or
tell about his
vicious life,
I shall
briefly relate
how he made
his men despoil
a large number
of women of
their garments
in the temple
at Cythera,

His vicious lyff in ordre to reherse
Wer contagious to the audience;
His extort pillages wrouhte in Grece & Perse, — 836
For to write or telle hem in sentence
Wolde infecte the heir with pestilence.
But I wil breefli remembryn & descryue
The sacrileges which he dede his lyue. 840
In Venus temple beside Citheroun
A gret[e] noubre of wommen he leet call,
Ful weel beseyn; and be oppressioun
He made his meyne vnwarli on hem fall. 844

806. his] this R. 816. 2nd his] om. H.

820. his] all B, R, J, P. 826. theryn] ther H.

833. the] his H.

Dispoiled them, so that on and all
 Bi his outrage and froward violence,
 Thei naked stood echon in his presence.

And whan he sauh ther shap & ther fetures, 848 and after he
 And ches such out as wer to his plesaunce, looked them
 Robbyng the remnaunt, took from them *per* vestures over and
 And leet hem goon withoutyn ordenaunce. chose such as
 And for this vnkouth abhomynable chaunce pleased him,
 Ther cite Locrois aros with myhti hond, sent the rest
 For his outrage banshyng *hym* ther lond. away naked.

Another tyme he dide also soiourne
 Withyne the temple, lik as it is told, 856 Once when he
 Of Iubiter, sone onto Saturne. temple of
 Ther beholdyng his reliques manyfold, Jupiter a mantle
 Sauh among other a mantel large of gold, of gold among
 Wherupon whan he caste his look, the god's
 That riche iewel onto his eus he took. possessions,

And thus he saide, hymselfen to excuse, —
 “It was to heuy and to comerous
 In somer sesoun that mantel for to vse, 864 he said that it
 Because it was to large & ponderous.” was too heavy
 And ouermor he aleggid for *hym* thus: for summer and
 “Sithe the garnement forgid was of gold, not warm
 For wynter sesoun how it was to cold.” 868 enough for
 himself,

And whan he gan away the mantel pulle,
 Than riht anon this tiraunt deceyuable
 Gaff *hym* another sengle maad of wolle,
 Affermede, sothli it was mor couenable, —
 To other sesoun mor meete and agreable, 872 leaving in
 Concludyng thus: “for somer it was liht,* exchange a
 And warm for wyntir to were the frosti niht.” singlet made of
 wool, which he
 affirmed was
 light enough
 for summer and
 warm for
 winter.

Another tyme, this tiraunt eek also, [p. 219] 876 Another time
 Which was of herte most auaricious, he saw a
 Entrid onys the temple of Appollo statue of
 And of his sone Esculapius. Apollo with a
 And whan this tiraunt fel & contrarious smooth chin and
 Beheld Appollo berdles, that was old, an Esculapius
 And Esculapius with a berd* of gold, wearing a
 beard of gold;

854. banysshying H.

861. vse H.

869. mantel] matil H.

874. liht] to liht B, R, J.

876. R omits to line 2212 inclusive. 882. long berd B, J.

- and, saying that it was strange that the father should be beardless, pulled away Æsculapius' golden beard and made off with it.
- Quod Denys thanne, "as seemeth onto me,
Heer is a straunge froward conveyence, 884
That the fader berdles sholde be,
The sone berdid stonde in his presence."
Made anon bi sturdi violence
To take away the berd, which in his siht 888
Of most fyn gold shon so cleer & briht.
- Wherever he went he robbed the temples, and lived like a thief,
- Thoruh Grece and Perse wher-euer he dede gon,
In al the templis this was his vsaunce:
The statli reliques with many riche ston 892
And massiff tablis of myhti gret substaunce,
To take them alle that wer to his plesaunce.
He spared non; thus lyuyng lik a theef
Til he be vengauce was brouht [vn]to myscheeff. 896
- until the Syracusans had enough of his evil habits and banished him, and he died a fugitive.
- Syracusans, wher he was crowned kyng,
Alle of assent, ther is no mor to seyne,
For his outragis & vicious lyuyng,
Thei ban[y]shed hym neuer to kome ageyn. 900
And so this tiraunt, vacaunt, wente in veyn
Aboute the world as a fals fugityff;
And so at myscheeff this Denys loste his lyff.

[Lenvoy.]

- This tragedy gives a warning to all rulers not to be pillagers and tyrants.
- T**HIS tragedie yiueth a warnyng 904
To all[e] tho that haue domynacioun
Ouer the peepel, prince, duk or kyng,
Teschewe rauyne and fals extorsioun.
Bit them considre, how bi thoccasioun 908
Of foul pillage & froward tirannye
This said Denys at myscheef muste die.
- Dionysius slew indiscriminately and rejoiced in robbery and murder;
- First he compassed, falsli imagynyng,
To slen the citeseyns of his roial toun, 912
His brethre, his cosyns, his kynrede nat sparyng,
Brouht al his blood onto destruccioun,
In slauhtre he hadde such delectacioun,
Reioisshyng euere in moordre & robberie, 916
Which caused hym at myscheef for to die.

884. froward conveyence] disconvenyence H.

905. tho] om. H.

911. *This stanza is misplaced next to the last one of the Envoy H*
— First he] He also H.

- To spoille templis was most his reioysshynge,
 Took al ther tresours to his pöcessioun,
 Tablis of gold with stonys fressh shynyng;
 920 Eek fro the* goddis the reliques he took down
 Wher-euer he rod in any regioun.
 Whos sacrilege & compassed felonie
 Caused hym vnwarli in myscheeff for to die. 924
- In Venus temple, be record of writyng,
 He dede a foul froward abusioun,
 Al gentil-women that cam ther to offryng,
 Them he dispoiled, as maad is mencioung,
 928 Leet hem go naked, withoute excepcioun.
 For which diffame & gret vngent[e]rie
 He bashed was & dede in myscheef die.
- Noble Pryncis, remembreth on this thyng:
 932 Compassed malis & fals collusioun
 Mut haue euel eende* & come to rek[e]nyng,
 Fraude ay with fraude resceyueth his guerdoun.
 Hath this in mynde, concludyng on resoun, 936
 That all tirauntis, pleyntli to specefie,
 Hadde heer short lyff or dede at myscheeff die.

sacrilegious, he delighted most in spoiling temples and the gods of their relics.

920

924

928

932

936

In the temple of Venus he foully stripped gentlewomen of their clothes and let them go naked. Finally he was banished, and died in mischief. Noble Princes, remember that such behaviour has no good end.

¶ Thauctour ageyn presumpcious [peple and] Princis
 halding þem-self goddis.

- YE folk that been astonid in your auys
 To seen tirauntes þat wer* incorrigible 940
 Left from ther sees, þat held hemsilf* so wis,
 Thouhte ther poweer was verray inuyncible,
 Thouh tofor God nothyng is impossible;
 Wherfor remembreth, & doth nothyng meruaile, 944
 With vnwar fallis thouh Fortune hem assaile.
- For whan tirauntis been sette on hih[e] stages
 Off dignites, regnyng lik wood leouns,
 Ful harde it is to wresten ther corages 948
 Outher to tempre ther disposiciouns.
 Worldli felicite so blyndeth ther resouns,

940

944

948

Ye who are astonished to see incorrigible tyrants, who deemed themselves invincible, lifted from their thrones, should

know that nothing is impossible to God.

921. the] ther B, J.

934. eende] eendyng B, endyng J, ending P.

939. *The omission in the heading is supplied from J, leaf 89 recto.*

940. wer] been B.

941. held hemsilf] hemsilf held B, hem helde J.

As thei to God wer egal of poweer,
And hadde Fortune vnder ther daungeer. 952

One need only
think of
Dionysius.

Record of Denys, that ofte was affraied [p. 220]
Bassaut of Fortune, lik as was his fate,
For vicious lyuyng thre tymes disamaied,
As his stori remembreth of old date. 956

[¶] Next on the ryng now kometh Pollicrate
With oon Victurbius, tirauntis of Itaille,
Regnyng lik wolues toppressen the poraille.

Polycrates and
Victurbius were
tyrants of
Italy, who
reigned like
wolves; and
when such men
believe in their
pride that God
cannot put them
down,

For whan tirauntis in dyuers regiouns 960
Of surquedie cachche an oppynyoun,
That ther estatis & domynaciouns
Sholde euere endure bi long successioun,
As Godde nor Fortune myhte nat putte hem down, 964
But as thei wern in ther estat roiall
This world to reule, to bothe too egall.

and, having lost
all shame and
dread, laugh
at Fortune,

[First] toward God thei ha[ue] lost shame & dreed
Touchyng his guerdouns outhur of ioie or peyne, 968
Indifferent atween trouthe or falsheed, —
Ther lust Iserued; no fors who lauhhe or pleyne.
God is forgetyn; at Fortune thei disdeyne,
As bothe wern recleymed to ther lure, 972
Falsli transcendyng the boundis of mesure.

sometimes God
allows her to
favour them for
a time, as if
she really were
willing to
accomplish their
desires.

For which sumtyme, as bookes speciefe,
God list suffre, as maad is mencion, 976
That Fortune bi a maner moquerie
Fauoureth summe folk, lik ther oppynyoun
Tenhaunce ther poweer bi fals decepcioun,
As she wer set, pleynli for to seie,
To serue ther lust & durst nat disobeie. 980

[How kyng Pollicrate for extorcion and tirannye
was honged til euery ioynt went from othir.]¹

This was the
case with
Polycrates,
tyrant of
Samos,

RECORD I take on proude Pollicrate,
Tiraunt of Sammois, beside þe se Egge,
Which sore laboured erli & eek late,
Ageyn conscience, of furious cruelte, 984

953. Dionise P. 957. No indication of new ¶ in MSS.

967. First] om. J.

971. forgotten P — Fortune] om. J.

975. list] list nat H.

982. Samos P.

Tabounde in richesse & for to ha[ue] plente
Of worldli tresours, deemyng that Fortune ay
To his desirs ne durste nat sey nay.

Fortune to hym bi many dyuers signe
Shewed outward gret toknis of plesaunce,
Was to hym eek riht fauourable & benigne
In al hir port bamaner attendaunce,
As she hadde been vnder his obeissaunce
To stufte his coffres *with* tresours lokked faste,
Of fals entent to mokke hym atte laste.

988 to whom
Fortune shewed
so many
favours that it
appeared almost
as if she were
in his power.

992

Alle worldli richesse his lustis dede obeie;
And whan he fond she was so fauourable,
For a sesoun, as she that list to pleie,
This blynde goddess, vnseur & euere* vnstable,
Set hym so hih[e] up at Famys table,
Of fals entent, in his estat roiall
Whan he sat hiest to make hym haue a fall.

And so he
believed. But
when he was
seated highest
at the table of
fame, she
decided to give
him a fall.

1000

For in hymself of pride he gan to deeme
How that he stood most in prosperite
Of them that wered crowne or diadeeme,
Aboue al other in most felicite.
And thus enhaunsed in his roial see,
Thouhte hym egal with goddis in comvne,
Fer from al daunger of Fate or of Fortune.

He thought in
his pride that he
was an equal
of the gods.

1004

And for tatempte of goddis the power,
And of Fortune the variaunt doubilnesse,
He took a ryng of gold ful briht & cleer,
Theryn a rubi of excellent richesse,*
Sekyng occasioun of sum newe heuynesse,
Which neuer afforn hadde knowe of no such thyng, —
Into the se anon he cast his ryng,

and to tempt
their power
and the
doubleness of
Fortuna, he
cast a rich ring
into the sea.

1012

Dise[s]peired ageyn [it] to recure,
For he dempte it was an impossible.
But rihte anon fissheres of auenture,
Lik a meruaile verray incredible,
Among the wawes hidous & horrible
Caste in ther nettis, yiff it wolde auaille,
Takyng a fissh, the ryng in his entraille.

1016 not hoping ever
to see it again.

Yet a fish
swallowed it and
soon afterwards
was caught and
presented to
him at a feast,
and his carver
found the ring
in its inside.

1020

998. & euere] euere & B.

999. so hihe up at] hih upon H. 1004. or] of H.

1008. al] al þe H — 2nd of] om. J — or] & H.

1012. richesse] rednesse B, J.

Which was presented at a solempnite
 To Pollicrate with ful gret reuerence, 1024
 Whan he sat crowned in his most dignite
 At a feeste of famous excellence.
 The fissh vndon anon in his presence,
 Mid thentrailles his keruere fond the ryng 1028
 Of auenture, & took it to the kyng.

which made
 Polycrates
 believe that
 Neptune, not
 daring to offend
 his majesty,
 had restored to
 him his ring.

Which dempte of pride and hih presumpcioun,
 That Neptunvs, god of the salte se,
 Hadde of his ryng maad restitucioun, 1032
 And durste nat offende his mageste.
 Wherupon a fantasie kauht he,
 Nouthur heuenli goddis no[r] Fortune blynde of siht
 Wer bothe vnhardy tatempte ageyn his myht. 1036

But God and
 Fortune were
 aware of his
 presumption and
 threw him down
 when he least
 expected it.

His gret outrage to God was nat vnknowe; [p. 221]
 And his presumpcioun Fortune hath weel espied,
 For which she maad aduersite been[de] hir bowe,
 And of hir wheel the spokes she hath so guyed, 1040
 Wheron he sat most richeli magnefied,
 That he vnwarli doun from his hih noblesse
 Was brouht ful lowe in sorwe & wrechchidnesse.

Fortune is
 never more to
 be feared than
 when she is
 most smiling.

In worldly* glorie nothyng is mor to dreede, 1044
 Than whan Fortune is most blandisshyng,
 And that hir flatri is fret with worldli meede,
 Hih on hir wheel to make foolis synge;
 Than of hir nature sorwe she doth [in] brynge, — 1048
 Witnessse of princis, of olde or newe date,
 And record also of proude Pollicrate.

Her temple is
 made of glass,
 not steel, and
 her crystal ice
 is unsafe to
 stand upon.

Sumtyme he sat hih on Fortunys wheel,
 Of prosperite with bemys cleer shynyng, 1052
 Whos temple is maad of glas & nat off steel;
 Hir* cristal yys vnwarli dissoluyng,
 Thouh it be fressh outward in shewyng,
 Vnseur to stonde on, & brotil for tabide, 1056
 Who trusteth most, most likli is to slide.

Orontes, Darius'
 constable, began
 a war on Samos,

This gerissh queen, of cheer & face double,
 Withdrouh hir fauour & began to varie
 Fro Pollicrates, sette hym in sorwe & trouble, 1060
 Wex ageyn hym maliciousli contrarie,

1028. þe Entraile H, the entrail R 3.

1040. hir wheel] his queele H.

1044. worldly] wordlis B, J — glorie] ioy P. 1054. Hir] His B.

- Causyng Orontes, constable *with* kyng Darie,
 Maugre this tiraunt in his most cruelte,
 To gynne a werre on Sammoys his cite. 1064
- And whan his glorie was most cleer of liht,
 And his noblesse shon hiest atte fulle,
 Fortune gan thoruh hir chaungable myht
 Of his prosperite the fethris for to pull. 1068
 And thanne at erst his corage gan to dull,
 And alle his pride vnwarli for tappalle,
 Whan he was spoiled of his richessis alle.
- First whan Orontes his contre gan assaill,
 This Pollicrate of sodeyn auenture 1072
 Outraied was & taken in bataill
 Bi a full pereilous mortal disconfiture.
 Thus koude Fortune bryngen him* to lure 1076
 Thoruh hir vnwar, ougli, fals disdeynes,
 Lad into* prisoun & bounde in stronge cheynis.
- The peep[le] [that] duelte withynne his regeoun
 Reioissed in herte to seen hym suffre peyne. 1080
 His tyrannye, his fals extorsioun
 Caused that thei dede at hym disdeyne;
 For of his deth[e] no man list compleyne.
 Men thoruh the wor[l]d be glad & ha[ue] plesau[n]ce 1084
 To seen a tiraunt brouht onto myschaunce.
- Foure thynges his tormentes dede aumente:
 Sodeyn departyng from his old richesse,
 And that he sauh ech man in his entente 1088
 Of his myscheef ha[ue] so gret gladnesse;
 Hanged he was, myn auctour berth witesse,
 And heeng so long in tempest, reyn & thonder,
 Til eueri ioynt from other went assonder. 1092
- To beestis wilde & foulis* rauynous,
 Naked he heeng; such was his auenture:
 To alle folk he was so odious,
 Had in despiht off euery creature, 1096
 At his departyng denied sepulture, —

and when Poly-
 crates' glory
 shone brightest,
 Fortune began
 to pull the
 feathers of
 his prosperity.

He was taken
 in battle and
 chained in
 prison;

and because he
 was a tyrant,
 his subjects
 were glad to
 see him suffer.

He lost his
 great posses-
 sions and saw
 that men
 rejoiced at
 his fall; and
 after that, he
 was hanged.

So odious he
 was to all
 folk, that they
 even denied
 him a decent
 burial.

1065. liht] siht H.

1068. for] om. H.

1071. richesse H.

1076. fortune koude bryngen hir B, fortune coude bringen him J.

1078. onto B. 1079. that] om. J.

1086. his tormentes] this Tiraunt H.

1093. foulis] folkis B, J.

Guerdoun for tirauntis vengable & rekles,
That kannat suffre the peepel to lyue in pes.

Thus may tyrants, who resemble cruel wolves, find their reward in hell with Polycrates.

Thus may tirauntis excedyn[g] ferr þer boundis 1100
Bi fals outrage, ful weel resembled be
To cruel woluyes or to furious houndis,
Fret with an etik of gredi cruelte.
To staunche ther hunger auailleth no plente. 1104
Which for ther surfetis, froward for to reede,
With Pollicrates in helle shal ha[ue] ther meede.

[How the tiraunt Alisaundre/ slouh his philosopre
Calistenes with othir for seyng trouthe.]¹

Bochas next heard the sad story of Callisthenes, dismembered for his fidelity,

AMONG alle stories to tell þe pitous caas
Of woful pleyntiffs þat put hemsilf in pres 1108
Witþ weepyng eyen, myn auctour Iohn Bochas
Was meued in herte nat to be rek[e]les
To write the falle of Calistenes,
[The] which, alas, as it is remembred, 1112
Was for his trouthe on pecis al dismembred.

and thought that even a man with a heart of stone would be moved by it to tears.

For whan Bochas his story gan aduerte,
He dempte anon in his fantasie,
No man hadde so harde a stonen herte, 1116
That mihte of riht his eyen keepen drie,
To seen the processe of his tormentrie.
Yit gan myn auctour his woful penne proffre
To write the wrong don to this philisopre. 1120

Callisthenes, virtuous in youth, devoted his best years to philosophy,

This Calistenes, in youthe riht weel thewed,
His greene age promotid to doctryne,
Bi influence of heuenli fate adewed,
Gretli to proffite in moral disciplyne, 1124
Disposid of nature bi grace, which is dyuynne,
To conquere, as bookis specefie,
The noble surname of philosophie.

at whose breasts he was fed, and to whose milk no earthly balm may be compared.

Of his merites, famous & notable, 1128
Philosophie dede hir besi peyne
To yiuē hym souke, because that he was able,
The soote mylk of hir brestis tweyne,
Most precious licour, who myhte therto atteyne: 1132

1100. exceden J.

1111. Calisthenes P.

1112. The] om. J.

¹ MS. J. leaf 90 recto.

For bawme is non, the vertu weel declared,
Of worldli richesse may be therto compared.

This precious pyment is youe vnto no foolis,
Aboue all licours it doth so ferre excell,
Whos origynal sprang in the hooli scoolis
Of Athenys, as famous bookis tell;
For of philosophie ther sprang out first þe well,
Wher Calistenes, the experience is kouth,
With fulsum plente was fostred in his youth.

1136 It is never
given to
dunces, and first
sprang from the
schools of
Athens, where
Callisthenes
was fostered.

1140

Thouh he was bor[e]n of a good lynage,
Vertu maad hym mor hih up for tascende,
To been enhaunsed for noblesse of corage
Moor than for blood[e], who can comprehende:
For philisophres & clerkis mor commende
The moral vertues entresoured be writyngis,
Than al the tresours of worldli crowned kynges.

1144 Though born
of good family,
virtue saw that
he ascended
even higher:

1148

Of gentil stokkes rekne out the issues,
That be descendid doun from a roial lyne:
Yif þei be vicious & void of al vertues
And ha[ue] no tarage of vertuous disciplyne,
With temporal tresour thouh thei florshe & shyne,
As for a tyme sittyng on hih[e] stages,
Withoute vertu thei ar but ded images.

for moral worth
is greater than
descent from
royal line.

1152

For thouh princis ha[ue] conquered be bataillē
This world in roundnesse bi ther cheualrie,
What may ther tryumphes or noblesse auaille,
Withoute that vertu be riht ther titles guye,
To be compared vnto philosophie?
For philisophres applie al ther ententis
To knowe heuene & cours of elementis.

1156 Though princes
conquer the
world by battle,
their triumphs
avail little
unless they are
guided by
virtue.

1160

Thei sette no stoor of thynges transitorie,
Nor of Fortunys expert doubilnesse;
To heuenli thynges is set al ther memorie,
How the seuene planetes in ther cours hem dresse,
Meuyng of steris, sparklyng in ther brihtnesse,
With reuolucious of the speeris nyne,
Moodres of musik, as auctours determyne.

1164 Philosophers do
not care for
transitory
things, but turn
to the seven
planets, the
mothers of
music.

1168

And in the noble tweyne famous housis
Flouryng in Grece, richest of euerichon,
Cald bi old date the faire trewe spousis

1172 Athens and its
Academy were
the bright
lanterns of the
world.

- Of philisophres, many mo than oon,
 In Achademye & in Athenys shon
 The briht lanternis of most reuerencis,
 This world tenlumyne bi liberall sciences. 1176
- Callisthenes
 studied in the
 schools of
 Socrates and
 Plato, who held
 the key of
 secret mysteries
 and of the
 divine idea,
 And among other this Calistenes
 Was in his youthe put for to scoleie
 In the too scooles of prudent Socrates
 And of Plato, which that bar the keie 1180
 Of secre mysteries & of dyvyn Ideie.
 In which too scooles of gret habilité
 Was non proffited halff so moch as he.
- and had
 all sciences
 hidden within
 their breasts.
 These olde clerkis, these too philisophres 1184
 Wer in tho daies for doctrine souereyne
 Callid in this world the riche *precious* coffres
 And tresoreris, that kepte the chestis tweyne 1188
 Amyd ther brestis, wheryn God ded ordeyne,
 Most cleer pecessioun put in ther depos,
 Of alle sciences vnder a keye cloos.
- He was
 also a pupil of
 Aristotle, who
 chose him to
 attend
 Alexander,
 This Calistenes, scoleer & auditour
 Of Aristotiles, bi kunnyng conqueryng 1192
 The noble gemme & the most *precious* flour
 Of philosophie, al flour[e]s surmountyng,
 Wherthoruh he was chose in his luyyng,
 As his maister list for hym prouide, 1196
 On Alisandre tawaiten & abide.
- when Alexander
 asked him to
 send him a
 philosopher to
 magnify his
 conquests by
 good counsel,
 to record his
 triumphs,
 For Alisaundre, of kynges most enteere
 And most worthi, to speke of hih prowessse,
 Dede Aristotiles humbeli requere, 1200
 To prouide & doon his bisynesse
 Bi expert knowyng & auysynesse
 To sende hym oon, which of philosophie
 Mihte bi good counsail his conquest magnefie. 1204
- and to direct
 him in moral
 virtue.
 To write also his tryumphes digne of glorie [p. 223]
 And to remembre his actis marciall,
 Put his palmys of knihthod in memorie,
 And to directen in especiall 1208
 His roial noblesse in vertu morall,
 That non error be sey[e]n heer nor there
 In hym that sholde al the world conquere.

1178. for] forth H, R 3 — scoleys H. 1180. keys H.

1181. Ideies H.

1210. be] wer H. 1211. the] this H.

- But it fill so of knihtli auenture,
That of Fortunis hih promocioun,
That he bi armys proudli gan recure
Of Perse and Mede the myhti regioun,
Brouhte kyng Darie onto subieccioun,
Gat hool his tresour, that no man myhte expresse
Tacounte the noumbre of his gret richesse.
- Which vnseur tresour & slidyng habundaunce,
With wastyng shadwes of godis transitorie,
In surquedous pride gan so his herte auauunce
Bi fals ambicioun & outraious veynglorie,
That made hym lese mynde & eek memorie,
To knowe of nature he was no man mortall,
But lik to goddis that wer celestiall.
- Above the palme of old[e] conquerours,
Knihtli tryumphes, conquestis marcial,
He vsurped be title of his labours
To heuenli goddis for to been egal.
And thoruh his merites most imperiall,
He gan presume be lyne he was allied
With the seuene goddis for to be deified.
- Thoruh al his paleis & his roial halle
A lawe he sette, upon peyne of lyff,
That men of custum sholde hym name & calle
This worldis* monarke, nat mortal nor passiff,
Sone to Iubiter for a prerogatyff,
Which hadde the erthe, as god most of puissaunce,
Conquered bi swerd onto his obeissaunce.
- Bi ful auys purposed for the nonys,
Of pompous outrage & surquedous entente,
Ful gret tresor of gold & precious stonis
Vnto the temple of Iubiter he sente,
That the bisshoppis & preestis sholde assente
Hym to resceyue at his hom komyng
Lik as a god, & lik no mortal kyng.
- Thus bextort dreed & bi vsurpid myht
Was first brouht in foul idolatrie,
Causyng pryncis to resceyue ageyn riht
Godli reuerence of froward maumetrie.
But whan Calistenes this errour dede espie

1212 But after his conquest of the Medes and Persians,

1216

1220 Alexander grew proud, and, no longer considering himself a mortal man,

1224

1228 aspired to be an equal of the seven gods of heaven and presumed to be deified.

1232

He ordained that men should call him the son of Jupiter,

1236

1240 and bribed the priests to receive him as a god.

1244

1248 Thus idolatry originated. But when Callisthenes saw Alexander's error, he endeavored to correct it.

1221. auauunce] enhance H, enhance R 3, H 5.

1222. outraious] contagious H.

1236. Thes wordis H — wordlis B. 1246. kyng] thyng H, P.

- In Alisaundre, he bisili dide entende 1252
 This fals oppynyoun to correcte & amende.
- Five proofs he gave him that he was only a mortal man:
 Bi fyue causes, notable to reherse,
 This Calistenes in especial,
 Thouh he was kyng of Egipt, Mede & Perse, 1256
 He preued of resoun he was a man mortall,
 His berthe eek erthli & nat celestiall,
 Fader, mooder as of ther natures
 Born for to deie lik other creatures. 1260
- His father and mother were worldly folk and in no respect celestial, and both of them had died.
 His fader Phelipp, of Macedoyne kyng,
 His mooder callid Olympiades,
 Worldli folk & heuenli [in] no thyng,
 With kyngis, queenis upset bi hih ences. 1264
 Yit ageyn deth thei koude ha[ue] no reles,
 Lawes of nature maugre ther will tobeie,
 Nat lik goddis, but onli born to deie.
- They were subject to various passions and infirmities, and nothing deified them on earth but flattery and dread.
 Kynde made hem subiect to sundri passiouns 1268
 And many vnkouth dyuers infirmytes,
 Now glad, now heuy of condiciouns,
 Folwyng the fourme of ther humanytes.
 But of ther false vsurpede dietes, 1272
 I can nat seyn, sauff dreed & flat[e]rie
 Wrongli in erthe dede hem deifie.
- Alexander himself, for all his power, suffered the passions of health and sickness.
 Eek Alisaundre folwyng euere his lust,
 For al his lordshepe & his gret[e] myht, 1276
 He suffred passiouns of hunger & of thrust,
 Now hool, now sik, now heuy and now liht.
 Whos entrechaungyng in euery manⁿys siht
 Cleerli shewed, cleerkis reherse kan, 1280
 He was no god, but lik a mortal man.
- Once he became very ill from bathing in the Nile when overheated and nearly died,
 It fill onys, myn auctour doth compile,
 In a gret heete, long or he was old,
 He bathed hymself[e] in the flood of Nile, 1284
 Wher of fortune he sodenli took cold:
 His pooris opnede on parties manyfold,
 Lay long aftir, his story berth witnessse,
 Or he was curid of that gret seeknesse. 1288
- and when finally he recovered, it was through medicine and not divine power.
 But at the laste, bi crafft of medecyne [p. 224]
 Delyuered he was of that infirmyte,
 Nothyng amendid bi his power dyuynne,
 Bi myht of Iuno nor Iubiteres pouste, 1292

Nor bi his owne vsurpid deite:
 For bi the passious which he dede endure,
 It shewed he was a dedli creature.

Off hym also it is maad mencioun,
 He hadde in custum to falle in dronkenesse,
 Thoruh vinolence loste ofte his resoun;
 Than of ire and furious hastynesse
 He wolde smyte & hurte in his woodnesse.
 Which toknys wern, pleyntli to termyne,
 In his persone nat heuenli nor dyuyn.

1296 He also had a habit of getting drunk and acting like a madman, which was hardly a proof of divinity.

1300

Whan the philisophre callid Calistenes
 Gan first considere al thes condiciouns
 In Alisandre, he put hymself in pres,
 Void of dissymulyng or long* dilaciouns,
 For to reffourme such fals ambiciouns
 Of godly honours,* which men dede on hym feyne,¹³⁰⁸
 And from all vices his corage to restreyne.

1304 Callisthenes told Alexander all these things without fear or dissembling.

In this purpos as eny centre stable,
 He cast hym fulli of trewe entencioun
 To correcte al that was repreuable
 Vsid in his persone or in his regeoun.
 Trouthe gaff hym herte lik a champion,
 To telle the kyng in his estat roial,
 He was no god, but as a man mortal.

Truth gave him the heart of a champion.

1312

For which* the kyng of indignacioun
 Kauhte a quarel ageyn Calistenes,
 Put upon hym vniustli fals tresoun,
 Onli to slen his maister causeles.
 And for tateynte hym, affor[n] al the pres
 Saide how he hadde of his iniquite
 Conspired ageyn his roial mageste.

1320 But the king became so angry, that he openly accused Callisthenes of conspiring to slay him,

And feyned also, the silue same tyme,
 How he had maad a conspiracioun
 Ageyn his lord, bi an horrible cryme
 Interuptyng the relegioun
 Of his dyuyn institucioun;
 That in such caas, ther was no bettir reed,
 But Calistenes bi lawe mut be ded.

1324 and also said very untruthfully that Callisthenes had interfered with the religion which he had divinely instituted, and therefore must die.

1328

1298. vinolence] violence H — ofte] offtene H.

1306. or long] & B.

1308. godly honours] goodli honour B, J, godly honour P.

1316. as] om. H, P, H 5.

1321. for] om. H. 1324. And] om. H.

- They hewed off
his hands and
feet and tore out
his eyes
- And to prolonge of his deth the peyne,
Vpon a boord he was leid along, 1332
His feet smet of & his hondes tweyne,
His eyen rent out: wer nat his peynes strong?
Thus kan tirauntes, whan them list do wrong,
Slen philisophres withoutyn any routhe, 1336
Which spared nat for to seyn hem trouthe.
- and cut off his
lips and nostrils,
and exhibited
his mutilated
body to the
army.
- This cruel vengauce mihte nat suffise;
But Alisaundre, mor tencrece his wo,
Dede kutte his lippis in ful cruel wise, 1340
His nose-thrillis, his eres eek also.
And with the bodi he badde men sholde go
Toform his host[e], as it is remembrid,
To shewe the trunke, how it was dismembrid. 1344
- After that, he
was thrown into
a dark cave
filled with
madly barking
dogs.
- In a caue, deep & wonder lowe,
Solitarie, dirked al the boundis,
Aftir the[s] peynes he made hym to be throwe,
The place stuffid with wood berkyng houndis, 1348
Of fals entent to reende his bloodi woundis.
Til Lisymachus, of gret compassioun,
To shorte his torment gaf [to] hym poison.
- Finally
Lysimachus
compassionately
gave him poison
to shorten his
agony.
Alexander, you
ought to be
ashamed of
yourself!
- Who radde euer of tormentis more* terrible! 1352
O Alisaundre, thou ouhtest been ashamed
To slen thi clerk with peynes so horrible,
For thi vicis because he hath the blamyd!
Thi roial name therbi is diffamyd. 1356
But euer tirauntes, whan them list be wood,
Of innocentes reioisshe to sheede [the] blood.
- But far from
being ashamed,
he was so
furious with
Lysimachus that
he shut him
up with a fierce
lion.
- Ageyn this kniht, gentil Lisymachus,
Because he hadde of hym compassioun, 1360
Kyng Alisaundre was malencolious.
Withoute cause, title or offensioun
Leet shet[e] hym up with a fers leoun,
Void of al helpe for to be socourid, 1364
Of entencioun he sholde be deuoured.
- However,
Lysimachus
ran at the lion
like a knight
and rent out
his tongue,
which brave
deed restored
him to
Alexander's
favour.
- But Lysymachus quit hym lik a kniht
Ageyn this leoun in the same place.
Ran fersli on hym, & of his marcial myht 1368
Out of his hed his* tunge he dede arace.
Reconciled to the kynges grace,
1331. to] om. H. 1351. to] om. J, P — to hym gaf H.
1352. more] most B. 1362. offensioun] affeccioun H.
1369. his] the B.

- Because that he so knihtli hath hym born,
Bettir cherished than euer he was beforne. 1372
- Another kniht, that callid was Clitus, [p. 225] Another knight
Famous in armys for his cheualrie, named Clytus,
On the grettest of the kyngis hous, who was a great
And most comendid of prudent policie, friend of the
Most famyler, as bookis specefie, 1376 king,
Aboute the kyng, as it was ofte preued,
To tempre his corage whan he was agreed, —
- The kyng & he walkyng hond be hond 1380
Withynne the paleis, beyng in presence once praised
Princis, dukis of many dyuers lond, Philip so
Wher thei began be notable elloquence highly in
Remembre of armys the marciall* excellence 1384 Alexander's
Of conquerours & worthi knihtis olde; presence, that
And eueri man aboute his tale tolde. Alexander, in
his envy,
- Among[e] which Clitus, that gentil kniht,
Gan to comende & gretli magnefie 1388
Phelipp Macedoyne, as hym ouhte of riht,
Bothe of [his] wisdam & his cheualrie.
Til Alisaundre hadde therat envie,
Gan disdeyne of furious cruelte 1392
That any sholde be comendid mor than he.
- Cauhte occasioun of ire & fals hatreede
Ageyn [t]his kniht, that was to hym most trewe,
With a sharp swerd vnwarli made hym bleede, 1396
His herte blood, hoot & red of hewe,
Bi his sides railyng doun of newe, —
Therbi to preue, this stori telle can,
He was no god nor resonable man. 1400
cut him down
with his sword
and killed him,
which proved
that, far from
being a god, he
was not even
a reasonable
man.
- Thus in pryncis furious & cruell
Men may cleerli an euidence see,
How ther lordshipe is nat perpetuell,
But ful of chaung & mutabilite: 1404
Of cheer now freendli, now sodeyn enmyte;
Record on Clitus, most in the kyngis grace,
Vnwarli slayn, & dede no trespase.

1372. beforne] ageyn toforne H.

1375. On] oon of H.

1378. as] om. H.

1384. marciall] notable B, J.

1393. That] ban H.

1399. this] his H, R 3.

- Alexander, who slew his friends in outrageous fits of anger, was certainly not worthy to be deified. Was he worthi to be deified, 1408
 This Alisandre, most double of his corage?
 Or was he worthi to be stelled,ified,
 This furious prince for his fel outrage,
 That slouh his freendis in his mortal rage? 1412
 Thus far[e]n tirauntis whan them list be wood,
 To seeke occasioun for to sheede blood.
- He who trusts tyrants shall soonest be deceived. Calisten slayn for moral disciplyne,
 And Lysymachus for his compassioun! 1416
 Eek this tiraunt of fals gredi rauyne
 Slouh gentil Clitus ageyn trouthe & resoun,
 As ye han herd, for comendacioun
 Of kyng Phelipp, this stori weel conceyued, — 1420
 Who trusteth tirauntis shal sonnest be deceyued!

Lenvoye.

- This tragedy tells about Callisthenes, who was slain by Alexander
THIS tragedie off Calistenes
 Declareth vs be notable remembraunce,
 He was *with* Plato & old Socrates 1424
 In his youthe put vnder gouernaunce,
 Drank of the mylk bi plenteuous habundaunce
 Of ther too scooles, euer deuoid of slouthe,
 Last bi Alisaundre dismembrid for his trouthe. 1428
- because he said the truth. First he was sent bi Aristotiles
 For tawaite bi prudent purueyaunce
 On Alisandre, list he wer rek[e]les,
 Bi presumpcioun in his roial puissaunce 1432
 To take upon hym godly* attendaunce,
 Which he withstood; alas, it was gret routhe,
 To be so slayn because he seide trouthe!
- Those who live with tyrants must be able to flatter and lie and be deceitful of heart. Who with tirauntis list put hysilff in pres, 1436
 To haue ther fauour & stormy aqueyntaunce,
 He mut kunne* flatre & fage dout[e]les,
 Be double of herte, with feyned contaunce,
 With cheer contreued doon his obseruaunce: 1440
 For feithful menyng slayn, & þat was routhe,
 Is* Calistenes because he seide trouthe.

1433. goodli B, J, goodly R 3, P.

1436. list] *om.* H.

1438. kunne] kum B, come H, P.

1442. Is] In B.

Noble Pryncis, your subiectis keepe in pes,
 Beth nat to hasti for to do vengauce;
 For to tirauntes that be merciles
 God sent short lyff & sodenli myschaunce.
 Who seith [you] trouthe, hath no displesaunce,
 Preente in your herte, how it was gret routhe
 That Calistenes was slay[e]n for his trouthe.

Noble Princes, be not too
 1444 hasty to do vengauce, for God grants short life to tyrants.

1448

[How Alisaundre kyng of Pirothe auenturyng to
 passe the flood of Acheronte, there at his bak/
 bi his most trusty was dedly wounded.]¹

AFFTIR the compleynt of Calistenes,
 Slayn tirauntli & dede no trespas,
 Cam Alisaundre kyng of Pirothes,
 His woundis bleedyng, onto Iohn Bochas,
 To hym declaryng* how he drowned was
 In Acheronte, a ryuer of gret fame,
 Beside a toun, Pandosia was the name.

Alexander, king of Epirus, next appeared before Bochas, telling him how he was drowned in the Acheron,

1452

1456

And as it is remembred & Itold
 Of this notable myhti strong cite,
 It was in Grece bilt be daies olde,
 And aftir Pirrus callid Pirothe,

[p. 226] near the city of Pandosia, that was built long ago.

1460

Wher-as the kyng heeld his roial see.
 And as Bochas also doth* determyne,
 This Alisaundre cam of the same lyne.

Of whos kynreede is maad pleyn mencion,
 Sone to Achilles was this knyht* Pirrus;
 And next in ordre bi successioun,
 Fader to Alisaundre was Neptolomius,
 Which hadde also, myn auctour tellith thus,
 A ful fair douhtir, the story ye may seen,
 Olympiades, of Macedoyne queen.

1464 Pyrrhus was son of Achilles; and Neoptolemus, next in order, was the father of this Alexander and of Olympias, queen of Macedon,

1468

And she was weddid to Phelipp Macedo,
 Whilom mooder, this queen of most renoun,
 To Alisaundre, the stori tellith so,

1472 who married Philip and became mother of Alexander the Great.

1446. sodenli] sodeyn J, R 3, H 5, sodeine P. 1447. you] om. J.

1454. declaryng] declared B, J, P.

1460. callid] cam H.

1462. as] om. H, R 3, H 5 — Bochas also doth] bookis also B, J, P.

1465. this] the J — knyht] kyng B.

¹ MS. J. leaf 91 verso.

- Which al the world brouht in subieccioun.
Whos fader Phelipp, of gret affeccioun,
Leet crowne the brother of Olympiades, 1476
Callid Alisaundre, to regne in Pirothes.
- Alexander of Epirus was made king by Philip, who used him against nature,
To whom [kyng] Phelipp, for his gret beute,
Because he was so fair a creature,
Hadde such affeccioun & specialte, 1480
As it is remembred in scripture,
Of fals foul lust ageyn[e]s [al] nature,
As seith Bochas, I can hym nat excuse,
Vnleeffulli he dede his beute vse. 1484
- which was a horrible deed, and too foul to write about.
And bi mene of that horrible deede,
Which to reherse is to foul a thyng,
This said[e] Phelipp, in Bochas thus I reede,
In Epirothes he made hym to be kyng; 1488
And of extorsioun, be record of writyng,
Causeles fro thens he dede enchace
The kyng Arabba, tho regnyng in that place.
- Afterwards Alexander invaded Italy,
And it fill aftir, the stori tellith so, 1492
Of this Alisaundre, be cerious rehersaille,
Vpon the deth of Phelipp Macedo,
With a gret host [he] cam into Itaille,
Supposyng gretli for to auaille 1496
To occupie, aftir his proude entent,
Hooli the boundis of al the occident.
- where Fortuna deceived him by first giving him victory over the people of Lucca.
And thouh so be that Fortune be chaungable,
Double also, bi cours of hir nature, 1500
At his gynnyng he fond hir fauourable:
Made hym twies proudli to recure
Geyn them of Luk, to ther disconfiture
To haue the feeld, & maugre al ther myht 1504
Of verray force to putte hem vnto fliht.
- When he began this war in Italy,
Ageyn Itaille whan he gan this werre,
Fulli in purpos the Romeyns to assaille,
Of hih presumpcioun proceede he gan so ferre, 1508
With many prince that was in his bataille,
To knowe afforn bi certeyn dyuynaille,
Of his conquest the boundis for to caste,
And of his lyff how longe it sholde laste. 1512

1478. kyng] *om.* J. 1482. al] *om.* P, J.

1488. Epirus P. 1491. Arribba H.

1493. cerious] Curious H. 1495. he] *om.* J, P.1504. &] *om.* H.

And in the temple of Iubiter the grete,
 Bi dyuynours that wer expert & old,
 Seruyng this god withynne the lond of Creete,
 This was the ansuere which thei haue hym told, 1516
 And it affermyd bi toknis manyfold,
 How that he nat sholde eschewe þe dreedful date
 Ouer the day assigned to his last fate.

he inquired his
 fate of diviners,
 who said that
 he should

And thei also assigned[e] a place,
 Therbi to haue knowlechyng mor cleer,
 Vnder a cite, longe & large of space,
 Callid Pandosia; & for to go mor neer,
 Bi Acheronte, a famous gret ryueer;
 Told hym pleynli, & koude no ferther seie,
 Of necessite ther he muste [nedis] deie.

1520 die near a city
 called Pandosia,
 on the Acheron.

And thouth it wer an ernest & no iape,
 Of God ordeyned nat to be set a-side,
 He thouhte of wisdam his destyne tescape
 And othirwise for hymselff prouide.
 Cast in Grece no lenger to abide,
 Wenying this ryuer nor that fair cite,
 Sauf in Grece sholde nowher ellis be.

1528 He thought to
 escape his
 destiny by
 leaving Greece,
 where there
 was such a
 town and
 river.

And for to sette hymselff in assuraunce
 Of entent teschewe his destyne,
 In-to thre batailes departyng his puissaunce,
 Cam to Itaille tofor Luk the cite.
 Thei with helpe of Sammoys the contre,
 With a gret power cam out anon riht,
 Slouh al his knihtis & put hym vnto fliht.

1532

1536 Later on he
 was defeated
 by the Luccans,
 and his knights
 slain; and,

At the bak thei pursued hym so neer,
 That his enmyes almost wer on hym fall,
 Vn-tabregge, broke with the ryuer,
 And ouerturnid with his plankis all.
 And Acheronte men that ryuer call,
 As was told hym bi a certeyn kniht
 Which rood befor hym, the ryuer in his siht.

[p. 227¹] closely pursued
 by his
 enemies, he
 came to a
 broken bridge
 over a river;

1540

1544

1516. the] his H.

1518. nat sholde] shuld not R 3, H 3.

1522. large & long H.

1526. ther] þat H — nedis] om. H 5.

1539. out] om. H.

1542. wer almost H.

¹ In B, upper corner of leaf, later hand: "my Fate butt mene | and yett contentt | k k t."

and when a certain knight told him that the river was the Acheron, and the town on its bank Pandosia,

For bi a reyn that fill that same niht, 1548
 The ryuer wex[e] to a dreedful flood,
 And nat fer then[ne]s, in the kyngis siht,
 Vpon the water a litil toun ther stood,
 Which made the kyng chaunge face & blood; 1552
 And speciali his pride gan attame,
 Whan he wiste Pandosia was the name.

he remembered the divinal of the priests and trembled in every joint for fear.

And thanne he gan most dreedfulli remembre,
 Callyng to mynde the preestis dyuynaille, 1556
 Which made hym quake in eueri ioynt & membre
 For verray feer[e], & his breth to faille.
 No man koude hym wisse* nor counsaile,
 On eueri parti he stood so on the wrak: 1560
 The flood toforn hym, his enmyes at his* bak.

He did not know which way to turn, with his foes close behind him, and the river before him,

To take the ryuer he stood in mortal dreed;
 And yif that he his enmyes dede abide,
 He wiste weel that he was but ded, 1564
 Passage was non for to turne aside.

Thus desolat he stood withoute guide,
 Thouhte it bett to iupart the ryuer
 Than with enmyes that folwed hym so neer. 1568

and finally choosing the river as the lesser evil,

Thre mortal dreedis his herte gan constreyne;
 Dreed of the flood[e] for to ha[ue] passage,
 Behynde his enmyes, that gan at hym disdeyne,
 List he wer slay[e]n in that mortal rage: 1572
 His fate approchyng, he but yong of age,
 The toun Pandosia the toknys ded expresse,
 With Acheronte that bar therof witesse.

he was about to throw himself into its waters, when his most trusted man plunged a great spear into his back and killed him.

And whan that he putte in auenture 1576
 To passe the flood or ellis to be ded,
 Whom he most truste of any creature,
 Took a gret spere, squar & sharp the hed,
 And at his bak, he quakyng in his dreed, 1580
 Traitourli thoruhout[e] plate & maile
 Perced his herte; the blood abrod gan raile.

The Luccans cut his body into pieces, and afterwards an old lady begged that

And as it is also of hym remembred,
 The Lucaynois be vengable violence, 1584
 Thei han his careyn on pecis al dismembred, —

1551. water] Riveer H. 1559. hym wisse] wissh hym B,
 wisse hym H, R 3. 1561. 2nd his] the B — at his] atte J.
 1568. with] with his H. 1569. dreedis] Deedis H.
 1578. trustid H. 1581. Trayterously P.
 1582. the blood abrod] about þe bloode H, R 3.

Til an old ladi beyng in presence
 Requered them of humble pacience,
 That she of grace gadre myhte anon 1588
 His membris alle & ioyne hem into oon,
 Afftir to sende hem onto his suster deere, she might
 Olympiades, the statli grete queen; send what
 That of affecciuon & loue most enteere, 1592 sister remained of
 Whan it befell that she dede hem seen, Olympias him to his dear
 Sholde of nature, as it mut needis been, for burial.
 Weepe, & prouide in his estat roiall
 To burie the bodi with feeste funerall. 1596

Seeth heer exauple of this proude kyng
 Which wolde ha scaped his fatal destyne;
 Chaung of placis auailed hym nothyng:
 Parodie of pryncis may nat chaunged be, 1600
 The terme sette, fro which thei may nat flee. Thus this
 For whan heuene of deth hath set a date, proud king
 No mortal man eschewe may* his fate. thought to
 avoid his
 destiny; but
 change of places
 auailed him
 nothing, for no
 man can escape
 his fate.

[How Darye kyng of Perce and Mede was outraied
 by Alisaundre kyng of Macedoyne.]¹

ON Alisaundre callid Epirothes 1604 King Darius III
 Me list as now no lenger for to tarye, —
 Slayn at myscheef, for he was rek[e]les,
 Double of corage, koude chaunge & varie.
 For turne I will my penne to kyng Darie, 1608
 Which that whilom, who-so list take heede,
 Most myhti regned in Perse & Mede.

And among other notable werreious,
 Lik as I deeme, bi heuenli influence, 1612
 Onli be title of his predecessours
 And thoruh his prudent roial excellence,
 To gret ences of his magnificence
 He had al Asie, as maad is menciuon, 1616
 Vnder his lordshepe & domynacioun.

And as myn auctour Bochas doth diffyne,
 He was descendid fro the imperial blood
 Of Artaxerses, & born eek of that lyne. 1620
 and, as Bochas
 says, was super-
 latively rich
 and descended
 from the
 imperial line
 of Artaxerxes.

1589. into] in till H. 1595. his] hir H, R 3.
 1603. may eschewe B, J, P. 1604. On] In H, R 3, J.
 1608. to] vn to H, R 3. 1618. Bochas] om. H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 92 verso.

Passed al princis of tresour & of good;
 In Perse & Mede his gret empire stood.
 An hundred prouynces, tencrece his* puissaunce,
 And seuene & thretti he hadde in gouernaunce. 1624

He had power over Egypt and the Red Sea, and deemed himself lord of all earthly wealth. Ouer al Asie towar[d] the orient [p. 228]
 His lordshipe laste, bookis make mynde,
 And [he] hadde toward thoxident,
 Ouer Egipt poweer, as I fynde, 1628
 The Rede Se was nat left behynde,
 Deemyng hymself, of al erthli treso[ur],
 Was non but he lord nor gouernour.

His dominions extended over India, Parthia and Armenia, and worldly folk thought him the equal of God. Toward Septemprion, vnder the mydday speere 1632
 His poweer rauhte & his regalie,
 Ouer Ynde, in cronicles ye may lere,
 And to the boundis of gret Armenye;
 Lord of the kyngdam that callid is Parthie. 1636
 Worldli folk dempte hym with God egall,
 Maister to Fortune, & she nat but his thrall.

But for all his wealth and ambition, Fortune assailed him through Alexander the Great, But in his hiest exaltacioun
 Of worldli glorie, he coude nat preuaille; 1640
 For al his richesse & veyn ambicioun,
 But Fortune durste hym weel assaille.
 In his most riche roial apparaille,
 Cast in hir chaungis to yiue hym a sharp shour 1644
 Bi Alisaundre, of Grece enheritour.

and cast him down from his throne. Vnto purpos I will my penne dresse
 For to declare & make mencion,
 How proud[e] Darie in his most noblesse 1648
 Was bi Fortune from his see cast down.
 For anon aftir the coronacioun
 Of Alisaundre in Macedoyne kyng,
 This was the processe anon of his werkyng: 1652

Alexander made no delay, but set out at once to conquer Persia and Media, He nat delaied nor maad no longe date,
 In purpos fulli of ire to procede
 Off Perse & Mede the scepttris to translate,
 Al ther richessis to conquere & posseede, 1656
 Perpetueli for tabide in deede
 Vndir Grekis myhti obeissaunce,
 In Macedoyne to haue gouernaunce.

1623. his] of B.

1627. he] om. H, R 3, J, P, H 5. 1635. Armonyne H

1643. riche] om. H. 1655. sceptre H.

- And as myn auctour weel rehearse kan, 1660 and establishing
 He sette in Grece the myhti strong cite, his seat in
 Of Corynthe the metropolitan, Corinth
 Ther testablisshē his imperial see,
In regalibus whan he list crowned bee, 1664
 As man whom God list of his myht to marke
 The world to conquere, & be therof monarke.
- At the gynnynge of his conquest famous,
 Throuhout Grece in euey regeoun 1668 and choosung
 First he ches out of his fadres hous out the most
 Knihtis that wern most souereyn of renoun, renowned and
 Notable in armys, & of condicioun loyal knights of
 Feithful, trewe, which had of hih prudence Greece,
 Forsiht in armys of marcial prouidence. 1672
- To them he dede ful notabli assigne,
 As men expert in knihtli apparailles, 1676 gave them full
 To make his stuff with many riche signe, charge of his
 And forge of steel his plate & his mailles. military
 Gaff hem the reule to gouerne his* batailles; preparations.
 For prouidence, of yore it hath be told, 1676
 Ful myche auailleth of knihtes wis & old. 1680
- Al this acomplisshed, he list no lenger tarie,
 This worthi kyng, but with his ordenaunce
 Purposed to begynne on kyng Darie. 1684 When all was
 And, as it is put in remembraunce, ready, he set
 In most proud wise he gan hysilff auauance, out against
 First in his weie to brenne & bete down Darius, destroy-
 Of hasti ire Thebes the myhti toun. ing Thebes on
 his way
- Aftir, he gat too mihti regeouns, 1688 and conquering
 The ton of Frige, the tothir callid Lide, — Phrygia and
 Set bi old tyme wer ther fundaciouns Lydia.
 Vpon too ryuers rennyng ther beside, 1691
 Whos goldene grauell ther brihtnesse may nat hide.
 Paceolus & Eryne men them call,
 Richest off stremys, thouh men rekne hem all.

1667. Atte begynnynge H.

1675. appaiaile H.

1676. many a H.

1677. of] be H — maile H.

1678. his] the B — bataile H.

1683. kyng] om. H, R 3.

1692. grauelis J, grauels P — may] myht H.

1693. Pactolus P.

- After win-
ning Isauria and
Pamphilia, And of his conquest fether to termyne,
He wan Isaurea, a prouynce wonder strong, 1696
In Asia oon cheuest off the nyne.
And Pamphile, a kyngdam large and long,
He gat also, wher it wer riht or wrong.
For wher that conquest haue any title of riht, 1700
It passeth my resoun, my kunnyng & my myht.
- he hastened to
Persia. I took no parti nor me list nat tarie
In this mateer, but for[th] I wil proceede,
How Alisaundre hastid toward Darie 1704
Tacheue his conquest of Perse & eek of Mede.
But first he cam to Frigia, I reede,
Into a* cite, the name to specefie,
Thilke daies it callid was Gordie. 1708
- Arriving at
Gordium in
Phrygia, he
found a rich
cart bound
with ropes in
the temple of
Jupiter; Aftir myn auctour afferme weel I dar, [p. 229]
Ther was a temple in Frigia, thus seith he,
Of Iubiter, in which ther stood a chaar
With ropis bounde, of stonis & perre;* 1712
Among[es] which men myhte behold & see
A fatal knotte, be craff[t] maad so sotile,
That no man koude ondon it be no wile.
- and it was
said that
whoever could
untie the knot
should be
crowned king
over Asia. For who that hadde science or kunnyng 1716
That corious knotte to losne or vntwyne,
Ouer Asie he sholde be crownid kyng.
And Alisaundre, as bookis determyne,
Seyng this char knet with many [a] lyne, 1720
And how it sempte a maner impossible
To seueren it, which was indyuysible, —
- Alexander saw
that the cords
were so inter-
laced that no
man could
loosen them, so
he pulled out
his sword The chaar with coordis was so enterlacid,
That richeli stood in Iouys tabernacle, 1724
Which be his wit koude nat be vnbracid,
Nother be crafft nor no soleyn myracle:
Til Alisaundre, bi a dyuyn oracle,
Drouh out his suerd, wherof men hadde wonder, 1728
Carf the knotte & cordis alle assonder,
- and cut the knot
through, and
rode forth on
his conquest. Wherbi he wiste that he was ordeyned
Ouer al Asie to be lord & kyng.
Which to reioisshe (this stori is nat feyned) 1732

1698. Pamphilia P. 1699. wer] was H. 1705. to cheve H.
1707. In ta B, J, R 3. 1708. callid] namyd H.
1712. of perre B. 1720. a] om. J, H 5, P.
1729. Carf] korve H. 1730. he] thei H, H 5, R 3.

He rood lik Mars his batailes conueyng,
 Thoruh Perse & Mede his standardis displaieng,
 Toward his conquest, wher I leue hym duelle,
 And of this chaar & knottes I wil telle.

1736

Prudent Iustinus, an olde cronicleer,
 In his cronicles reherseth this storye:
 How [oon] Gordius, a poore laborer,
 Beside the cite that callid is Gordie,
 Eryng his lond dede his oxis guie,
 Al maner foul that hath weengis fliht
 Hih in the hair apperede in his siht.

Justin tells us
 that Gordius, a
 poor agricul-
 turist, once saw
 all manner of
 birds flying
 high in the air.

1740

Vnknowe to hym the tokne what it mente,
 With dyuynour[es] cast hym to counsaile,
 Callid augures, which hooli ther entente,
 Knowyng the processe of such dyuynaille,
 Wher it shal proffite or disauaille.

1744

As he did not
 know what the
 token meant,
 he went to
 Gordium to
 consult the
 augurs, and met

And at the gate of Gordie the cite
 He mette a maide excellyng of beute,

1748

at the city gate
 a beautiful
 girl, who
 had fore-
 knowledge of
 events, and told
 him that he
 was to be
 lord of all
 Asia, and,
 hoping to
 become queen,
 married him.

Which from aboue, bi heuenli influence,
 Hadde of hir birthe a maner know[le]chyng,
 In such augurie gret practik and science, —
 Which to Gordius expowned eueri thyng,
 Saide of Asia he sholde be lord & kyng,
 And regne ther duryng al his lyff.
 In hope wherof she becam his wyff.

1752

1756

Aftir his weddyng he wex fortunat,
 The cronicle can ber me weel record:
 Ther fill in Frige a sodeyn gret debat
 Among the comouns & a mortal discord,
 Knowyng no mene to bryng hem at accord,
 Til ther goddis bi notable prouidence
 Tauht hem a weie tappese ther violence,

1760

1764

After the
 wedding a
 dispute arose in
 Phrygia, and
 the people were
 told that it
 would continue
 until they had
 chosen a king;
 and it was
 shewn to them
 by miracle

How that debat sholde among hem laste
 Vnto the tyme thei hadde chose a kyng.
 And thei gan crie & preye ther goddis faste,
 Bi sum signe or myracle out shewyng,
 To yiue to them a maner knowlechyng,
 That thei myhte, to ther notable encres,
 Chese such on that sholde hem sette in pes.

1768

1733. bataile H.

1738. this] his H.

1758. his] this H.

1739. oon] om. J.

1769. to] om. H.

1746. ther] þe H.

- that they must crown a man whom they should meet riding in a cart to the temple of Jupiter. Thei hadde answer, tawaite & be weel war, 1772
 To sette espies bi besi attendaunce,
 On whom thei mette ridyng in a chaar
 To Iouis temple to doon his obseruaunce,
 And hym resceyue, bi goddis ordenaunce, 1776
 Vpon his hed, withoute mor tariyng,
 To sette a crowne in Frige to regne as kyng.
- This man was Gordius, who after he became king ruled wisely and set his people in peace. And Gordius in his chaar ridyng
 Toward þe temple, thei on the weye hym mette; 1780
 And awaityng ches hym to ther kyng,
 And solempneli hom thei dede hym fette;
 Vpon his hed a riche crowne thei sette.
 And he to them so egal was & meete, 1784
 That [he] hem brouhte in reste & in quiete.
- He suggested that the cart be given as an offering to Jupiter; Thus to the crowne Gordius dede atteyne,
 Be toknis shewed onto his gret auaill.
 And ther discordes & stryues to restreyne, 1788
 He to his lieges gaff notabli counsaill,
 That thei sholde with roial apparaill
 [Go] take his char, as he dede hem deuise,
 And offre it up in most lowli wise 1792
- and to make it the more auspicious, it was placed in the temple before the goddess Grace. In the temple, that was consecrat [p. 230]
 To Iubiter, a ful solempne place.
 And mor to make ther offryng fortunat,
 Thei sholde it sette, withoute lenger space,* 1796
 Tofor the goddesse that was callid Grace,
 Which bi myracles ther hertis to appese,
 Sett al the people in quiet & in ese.
- After Alexander had cut the knot and seen all the mysteries of Gordius' cart, he grew presumptuous. And whan the kyng Alisaundre hadde 1800
 Loosnid the knotte, of which I haue you told,
 And of the chaar[e] which Gordius ladde,
 The secrees seyn & mysteries manyfold,
 Worldli presumpcioun gan make his herte bold, 1804
 Withoute title of any rihtwisnesse,
 The cite Gordie to spoille of his richesse.
- and robbed Gordium and all Phrygia up to Mt. Taurus, which is also called Caucasus. And al Frigie he robbed eek also
 Vp to the mountayn that callid was Taurus. 1808
 The which[e] hill hath famous names too;
 For it is also named Caucasus,

1778. to regne in Frige H.

1791. his] this H. 1796. space] date B.

- Wher this prynce most victorious
 Ordeyned first proudli with spere & sheeld 1812
 Ageyn kyng Darie for to holde a feeld.
- Vpon a mounteyn thei togidre mette;
 The marcial pleyn [was] named Horestes, 1816
 And most proudli ther wardis ther thei sette
 Al for the werre & nothyng for the pes.
 Wher Alisandre, in kniethod pereles,
 Al the Persiens batailed in his siht
 On Daries partie put vnto [the] fliht. 1820
- Kyng Alisaundre, shortli to conclude,
 In his most statli roial magnificence,
 Set nat his trust in no gret multitude,
 But in his knihtis, which longe in his presence 1824
 Hadde had in armis longe experience,
 Wer weel preued in marcial disciplyne
 Tenhaunce his conquest bi ther prudent doctrine.
- Which in that iourne han hem so weel born, 1828
 That in ther noblesse founde was no lak:
 For sexti thousand of footmen hem befor
 Thei slouh of Perse, & men on hors[e]bak
 Other ten thousand, so mortal was the wrak; 1832
 And fourti thousand, as maad is mencionn,
 Wer prisoneres [take] & put to ther raunsoun.
- On Grekis parti, the stori doth weel shewe,
 Macedonoyis on Alisandris side, 1836
 In comparisoun wer slay[e]n but a fewe;
 For of footmen & men that dede ride,
 Thoruh the feeldis, that wer so large & wide,
 Ther wer that day in al ther mortal stryues 1840
 Nat ful thre hundred which that lost ther lyues.
- Darie koude non other rescus make,
 Fledde at myscheeff in ful gret distresse.
 His wiff, his douhtre lad awei & take; 1844
 His tentis spoiled; his stori berth witesse.
 Grekis made glad with ful gret richesse,
 His coffres spoiled, he fond no bet socour,
 And he enporissed of al his hool tresour. 1848

And there he
 fought Darius
 on the Plain of
 Orestes and put
 him to flight.

Alexander
 trusted in
 warlike
 efficiency rather
 than in
 numbers,

and his knights
 slew and
 captured
 thousands of
 Persians.

Less than three
 hundred Greeks
 were slain.

Darius fled in
 distress, his
 wife and
 daughter taken
 captive, his
 tents despoiled
 of all his
 treasure.

1812. proudli] *om.* H.

1815. was] *om.* J, P — named] *namy* H — Horestes] *Adrasties*
 P.

1816. wardis] *werker* H. 1820. Daryus H.

1824. his] *om.* H.

Taking refuge
in Babylon, he
knew not what
to do,

Whan Darie sauh his dedli auenture,
Ful pitousli in herte he dede mourne,
And anon aftir this disconfiture
To Babilon in haste he gan retourne, 1852
And whil that he dede ther sojourne,
Knowyng no recure to hym that myhte auayle
With Alisaundre to holde mor bataile.

and sent
letters and
rich gifts as a
peace offering
to Alexander,
upon whom
they had no
effect.

Than of purpos to sette hymself in ese 1856
And for tallege his dedli fel greuauce,
In his entent kyng Alisaundre to plesse,
Cast for to sende hym lettres of plesaunce,
Yiue hym giftes in ful gret habundaunce. 1860
But al the sleihtis which Darius hath wrouht,
Kyng Alisaundre set hem echon at nouht.

Proceeding in
his conquest,
Alexander visited
the temple of
Jupiter in
Libya,

This manli kyng kept his conceit cloos,
List nat shewe what he ment in deede, 1864
But caste fulli aftir his purpos
Vpon his conquest ferther to proceede.
Aftir the getyng of Perse & eek of Mede
To wynne Surrie, Egipt & Libie-lond, 1868
Deemyng Fortune reedi to his hond.

and said that he
was descended
from the god,

And of his conquest ferther to endite,
Whan his glorie gan most fresshli shyne,
The temple of Iubiter cast hym to vesite, 1872
Which stood in Libie, auctours determyne.
Saide how he was descendid fro the lyne
Of thilke god, bor[e]n to been his hair,
As lord of heuene, fir, water, erthe & hair. 1876

and bribed the
priests to
deify him,
forgetting that
he was but a
mortal man.

And that the preestis fulli sholde assente [p. 231]
With heuenli goddis to maken hym egall,
Gret richesse & tresour he hem sente:
Thus dreed and mede made hym celestiaall. 1880
Falsli forgete* that he was mortall,
And of ambicioun, be marcial apparaille,
Cast with Darie ageyn to ha[ue] bataille.

1857. tallege] tabrige H, ta legge J, tallege H 5, R 3,
taledge P.

1868. Siria P — lyby & Egipt lond H.

1869. of Fortune H.

1876. fir water] watir fyer H — &] om. J, H, R 3, H 5, P.

1881. forgat B, J, R 3.

1882. marcial] mortall H.

- And, as I fynde, how thei dede mete,
 The[s] too pryncis *with* peepel innumerable
 In the confrount of the lond of Crete;
 And kyng Darye of folkes deffensable
 Brouht into feeld a peepel incomparable,
 Foure hundred thousand of fotmen fet fro ferre,
 With Alisaundre that day* to holde werre. 1884
- In the mean-
 time Darius
 collected a great
 army and met
 Alexander on
 the boundaries
 of Crete,
- An hundred thousand ther cam with hym also,
 On hors[e]bak in steel[e] armyd briht.
 And alle this peepel, whan thei hadde ado,
 Al-be that day ful longe laste the fiht,
 Wer slayn & take & Iput to fliht.
 Wher Alisaundre to his ences of glorie
 Hadde of kyng Darie that day the victorie. 1888
- but again
 Alexander
 was victorious.
- And Persiens to ther fynal myscheeff,
 Withoute merci or payeng of raunsoun,
 With kyng Darie wer put to gret repreeff,
 Void of al hope & consolacioun,
 Fledde, as I fynde, into the regeoun
 Callid Partie, wher, as it is told,
 He of that peepel was take & put in hold. 1892
- The Persians
 fled into
 Parthia, where
 Darius was
 captured
- And thowh his feteres wern of gold maad riche,
 He hadde therof, God wot, no plesaunce.
 Fortunys gifftis be nat ay iliche,
 In hir fals wheel ther is such variaunce.
 Dyuers of cheer, straunge of hir contenance,
 Made Alisaundre with a litil noubre
 The multitude of Darie to encoumbre. 1900
- and fettered
 with gold.
- Withyne a toun [called] Tharsa he was take,
 In [a] chariet, with cheynis stronge bounde,
 Of al his freendis pitousli forsake,
 Lad & thuruh percid *with* many mortal wounde.
 And this moordre contryued was and founde
 Bi oon Bessus, a froward rekles knyht,
 Which stood afforn most forthred in his siht. 1912
- Forsaken by
 his friends, he
 was murdered
 by a froward
 knight called
 Bessus,

1888. þe felde H.

1890. that day] for B, J, P.

1893. this] his H.

1903. Parthye H.

1910. Alisaundre] of Alisaundre H.

1912. called] *om.* H, J, R 3, H 5 — Tharsa] Tanca P.1913. a] *om.* J, P — I bounde J, ybounde P. 1915. many a H.

- who had sworn to be loyal to him. Yet before he died, Darius sent an old knight to Alexander, requesting him to have mercy on his wife and children,
- And was assured be feith of his legiaunce
 To kyng Darie to be trewe in deede. 1920
 But this fals traitour (God sende hym a myschaunce!)
 Caused his woundis mortalli to bleede.
 Yit or he deied he sente in al his dreede
 A Percien kniht, sad & off gret age, 1924
 To Alisaundre to telle hym his message:
 "Go thanke that prince of his hih noblesse,
 Which of* his grace & merci most habounde,
 Hym list to shewe so gret gentillesse 1928
 Vnto my wiff & childe, as it is founde.
 For which to hym I am so moche bounde,
 That he myn enemy, of his benignite,
 In ther distresse list haue of them pite. 1932
- and to condescend to have him buried as a king,
- And sithe I see that needis I mut deie
 Thoruh bloodi woundis, which I may nat recure,
 Sei Alisaundre, of grace that I preie,
 For to ha[ue] routhe on* myn auenture, 1936
 Next to ordeyne for my sepulture,
 And condescende to graunte myn axyng,
 For to be buried as longeth to* a kyng.
 Praiying the goddis which been inmortal, 1940
 Whan he hath do to quiten hym his meede,
 That of his merci most imperiall
 Hym list of grace for to taken heede,
 To burie me, kyng of Perse & Mede; 1944
 For yif this fauour be in his herte founde,
 To his noblesse the fame shal ay rebounde.
- and to avenge his foul murder.
- Requeryng hym of his imperial myht
 Of myn foul moordre to seen ech circumstaunce; 1948
 For moordre alway calleth to God of riht,
 Neuer cesyng, but bi contynuaunce,
 Vp to the heuene to crie for vengauce, —
 Namli on moordre compassed & forthouht, 1952
 Which bi auisement is execut & wrouht.
- After he had given this message to the knight, he died;
- And sithe I haue leid on the this bond,
 To Alisaundre to do my message,
 And hym coniuered heer with my riht hond 1956
 Tauenge my deth, wrouht bi gret outrage,

1921. sende] sent H. 1927. of] to B.

1936. on] of B. 1939. to] onto B. 1940. Immortal H.

1952. Namli] Namely whan H.

My blood out shad, *with* pale & ded visage,
 Heer bounde in stokkis, to goddis most benigne
 With riht hool herte my sperit I resigne." 1960

Thus he lay stark, [for] ther was lefft no blood, [p.232] and Alexander
 Lik as a-nother mortal creature. buried him
 with kingly
 honours.

Whan Alisaundre the moordre vndirstood,
 As ye han herd remembrid be scripture, 1964
 He dede ordeyne for his sepulture
 The funeral feeste holde in al[le] thynges
 As bi old tyme longed onto kynges.

¶ Lenvoye.

THIS tragedie pitous for tó heere 1968 This piteous
 Sheweth of Fortune þe chaunges lamentable, the lamentable
 Of roial tronis of gold & stonis cleere, changes of
 Fortuna and
 the instability
 of worldly
 princes.
 In worldli princis how thei be euer vnstable.
 Hir* fatal wheel most dyuers & chaungable, 1972
 With vnwar turn list nat hir cours to tarie
 To throwe hem doun; record upon kyng Darie.

Who can or may be ful assured heere
 To make Fortune to be so tretable, 1976 No one on earth
 can be certain
 of Fortuna.

To fynde a weie or serche out the maneere
 Bi obligacioun to fynde hir vnmutable?
 Hir double face, the world ay deceyuable, 1980
 Shewe us ech day how falsli thei can varie
 Bi couert fraude; record upon kyng Darie.

Exaample how Phebus *with* his bemys cleer
 Sheweth sum morwe his liht most agreable,
 But longe or eue dirknesse ther doth appeere 1984 Like Phœbus,
 who often
 shows his clear
 beams in the
 morning and
 is clouded
 before night,
 so are the
 dignities of
 this world now
 flourishing and
 now contrary.

Can change ther tides; record [up]on kyng Darie. 1988
 Thoruh all Asie, Perse, & Mede ifeere
 His lordshipe last, a thyng incomparable.
 To Ethiope vnder the mydday speere,
 Ful of tresour with gold innumerable, 1992 Darius ruled
 all Asia, his
 possessions
 were without
 number, until
 Fortune proved
 her might on
 him.
 His boundis rauhte; Fortune eek seruisable

1970. tronis] throwis H.

1972. Hir] Ther B, J, R 3, H, H 5, Their P.

1975. heere] ay heer H.

1988. Can change ther tides] By covert fraude H.

1992. tresour] all tresour H.

Tobeie his lustis, til she gan falsli varie,
Bi expert fraude to preue hir myht in Darie.

Noble Princes,
though you sit
on high thrones,
remember that
no lordship
on earth is
lasting.

Noble Princis, with hool hert & enteer 1996
Lefft up your corages, holdeth this no fable:
Thouh ye sit hih, conceyueth with good cheer
No worldli lordshipe in erthe is perdurable;
And sithe ye been of nature resonable, 2000
Among remembreth, as thyng most necessarie,
Al stant on chaung; record upon kyng Darie.

[Here Bochas remembreth the batailes and losse of
Rewmys of antiquyte/ with the fallyng of diuers
nobles.]¹

Bochas here
reminds us of
the great
sorrows, the loss
of realms, and
the blood
vainly shed in
wars since the
days of the
Greeks and
Trojans.

HEER gynneth Bochas remembre in certeyn
The grete sorwes, the mortal disauailes, 2004
The losse of reumys, þe blood eek shad in veyn,
Begunne of werris & marcial apparailles.
Cald to mynde of olde the fell batailles
Gunne of antiquite, as maad is mencionn, 2008
First atween Greekis & them of Troie toun.

It would make
a compassionate
heart bleed
to have all in
memory.

A pitous herte it wolde make bleede
To haue in memoire the dreedful gret outrage,
As ye han herd[e], wrouht in Perse and Mede 2012
Atween Darie and Alisaundre in ther age.
Eek atween Romeyns & them of Cartage
The woful troublis of werris first begunne,
Cause al the myscheuys that been vnder sonne. 2016

Kingdoms have
been brought to
ruin and laid
desolate by
dissension,

On outhr parti, who can remembre ariht,
Now losse, now lucre komth of dyuisioun,
Now disencres, now heuy & now liht,
Now lyff, now deth, for short conclusioun; 2020
For Bochas seith, such fals discencioun
Hath many kyngdam, that stood in good estat,
Turnid to ruyne & maad them desolat.

Troy and many
a strong city
in Greece and
Persia, Rome
and Carthage
destroyed by
the cruel rage
of Mars.

Remembre of Troye the wallis broke doun, 2024
In Grece destroyed many strong cite,
In Perse & Mede gret desolacioun,
Rome dispurueied of marcial surete,
Castellis, tours of old antiquite 2028

2001. necessarie] transitory H.

2004, 6, 7. disavaile, apparaile, batailis H. 2011. memorye H.

2015. troublis] trouble H.

2017. ariht] riht H. 2024. of] on H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 94 verso.

Maad ruynous in Affrik & Cartage,
Caused be werris & Martis cruel rage.

Who list considren, wrouht bi daies olde
The cours of conquest of thes werreours,
In Alisaundre he cleerli may beholde
Bi remembraunce of his progenitours
And of his blood, how al the successours
Hadde fatalli, or thei dede hen[ne]s wende,
A sodeyn deth or a shamful eende.

2032 Think of Alexander, his progenitors and his successors, how all came to a sudden or shameful death.

2036

Ful many reknid that wer of hys lynage
For to succede in his pecessiouns,
To sexe & thretti partyng his heritage,
To ech assigned ther roial porciouns.
[And] first, as he made his dyuisiouns,
He gaf of Frige the prefecture off riht
To Leonatus, that was so good a kniht.

2040 His estate was divided amongst thirty-six heirs. Phrygia fell to the share of Leonnatus,

2044

But litil* while last his pecessioun;
For the contres list hym nat obeie.
Thei of Athenys hadde indignacioun
With Antipater, for he dede hem werreye;
Yit in that werre, pleynli for to seie,
Leostenes ther duk, ther gouvernour
Was slayn that day; he fond no bet socour.

[p. 233] but he soon lost his kingdom,

2048

And Leonatus, that was his aduersarie,
Of Antipater the parti to susteene,
Fond Fortune that day to hym contrarie;
For in the feeld thowh he rod armed cleene,
With a sharp spere his wound was maad[e] greene,
At myscheef slayn, myn auctour doth compile.
Thus his lordship last nat but a while.

2052 and died fighting against the Athenians.

2056

Antipater, another successour
Of Alisaundre, as maad is menciou[n],
Was be record the* same fals traitour
That for his deth[e] tempred the poisoun.
His sone Cassander acomplished the tresoun,
Bar the cuppe which that made hym sterue,
With that strong venym whan he dede hym serue.

2060 Antipater, another heir, was the traitor who mixed the poison for Alexander.

2064

2032. thes] þe H.

2037. or] or els H, or ellys H 5. 2038. wer] was H.

2042. And] om. J.

2045. litil] a litil B, J, P. 2061. the] of the B, J.

He desired to slay all who might be suspicious of his treason.

Antipater, of this crym coupable,
Gretli desired in his oppenioun
Vpon al tho [for] to be vengable, 2068
That likli wern tesprien his tresoun.
Drad hym sore, hauyng suspecioun
List he wer accusid to the statis
Of crym callid *Illese magestatis*. 2072

His son presented the fatal cup to Alexander, and yet Alexander had made him prefect of Caria.

His sone assentid to that horrible deede,
Which to Alisaundre, beyng in Babiloun,
Most traitourli, withoute shame or dreede,
As ye han herd, presentid the poisoun. 2076
And yit the kyng, as maad is menciouun,
Thouh he to hym fals was & contrarie,
He made hym prefect, lord of the lond of Carie.

There were many notable warriors among the heirs; some slew one another in battle;

And among other notable werreious, 2080
Ther wer thre mo, ful worthi & famous,
Set in the noumbre of his enheritours,
Policarpus & Neptolonius.
And ech of them to other envious, 2084
Withynne a feeld, the stori doth us lere,
Euerich slouh other as thei mette ifeere.

Perdiccas, perhaps the best knight of all, was given Macedonia when Alexander lay dying;

Of Perdiccas* what sholde I write or seyn? —
Which amonge alle was oon the beste kniht, 2088
That whan Alisaundre lay deieng in certeyn,
And gan to feeble of his force & myht,
Dempte afforn that it sat weel of riht,
How this Perdiccas, for wisdam & manheede, 2092
In Macedoyne sholde aftir hym succede.
And onto hym with cheer & look benigne,
Vpon his hed for seeknesse compleynyng,
With ful hool herte for a notable signe, 2096
Of successioun he gaff to hym a ryng,
Aftir his day to be crowned kyng
Of Macedoyne, sithe he myhte most* auaile,
Thoruh al his empire to haue the gouernaile. 2100

and yet, although he surpassed all his comrades in prudence and strength, vicious pride so turned his head,

And yit seith Bochas breeffli in sentence,
Thouh he of kniithod & [of] hih prowessse,
Of manli force & also of prudence
Passed al other, the stori berth witnessse, 2104

2068. for to] that J.

2080. notable] nat al H. 2087. Prediccas B.

2099. most myhte B.

2102. 2nd of] om. P.

Bi vicious pride & froward boistousnesse
 He was mor hyndred, thoruh his owne outrage,
 Than al his enemyes myhte doon to hym damage.

For thoruh his pride & gret extorsiouns,
 Fro Macedoyne the peepel of that contre
 Fledde into other straunge regeouns.
 And of presumpcioun, the stori seith, how he
 Began a werre ageyn kyng Tholome,
 Wher he was slayn in alle mennys sihtis,
 Nat of his enemyes but of his owne knihtis.

2108 that
 he drove all
 his peepel
 away through
 his extorsiouns,
 and, pre-
 sumptuously
 beginning a war
 against
 2112 Ptolemy, was
 slayn by his
 own knyghts.

Eek Anaxarchus of Capadoce kyng,
 Which provynce ioyneth to Surrie,
 Touchyng the boundis, be record of writyng,
 Toward thorient the lond of Armenye,
 Hauyng too contres, Scilice & Ysaurie
 Toward Cipre, & a gret ryueer
 Rennyng amyddes with stremes fressh & cleer.

Ariarathes, king
 of Cappadocia,
 2116

This Anaxarchus, wher he was loth or fayn,
 In daies fewe hath his kyngdam lorn;
 For bi Perdicas* proudli he was slayn,
 Off whom that I haue you told befor.
 Thus worldli princis, thouth thei hadde it sworn,
 For al ther lordshipe & domynacioun,
 Bi fraude of Fortune vnwarli be put down.

lost his kingdom
 in a fewe days,
 for he was
 slayn by
 2124 Perdiccas.

Amongis othir princis of that age,
 Vpon Alisaundre duely abidyng,
 Bochas reherseth, Amulchar of Cartage,
 Duk of that cite, bi record of writyng,
 Aftir the deth[e] of that worthi kyng,
 As ye han herd, Imoordred be poisoun,
 This saide Amulchar, reparyng to his toun.

[p. 234] Hamilcar, duke
 of Carthage,
 one of
 Alexander's
 captains,

Was slayn in Cartage, shortli to conclude,
 Of cruel malis & conspiracioun
 Withyne that cite, of fals ingratitude,
 Whan he of knihthod fraunchised had the* toun,—
 And natwithstandyng al his hih renoun,
 Whan he stood hiest in his felicite,
 He bi the comouns was slayn of that cite.

2136 was slayn by the
 commons of his
 city.

2110. regeouns] naciouns H.

2115. Anaxarchus] of Ariarathes P. 2118. lond] lorde H.

2122. Ariarathes P. 2124. Predicas B.

2126. worldli] worthy H.

2134. be] witb H. 2139. the] that B.

[How Eumenides was twies outraied by Antigonus/
and atte last / deied in prisoun.]¹

After Alexander
had completed
his conquests,
he claimed that
he was son and
heir of Jupiter,

WHAN Alisaundre in his roial estat 2143
Hadde al conquered, toforn as ye ha[ue] herd,
He lik a god, most pompous & elat,
As souereyn prince of al this myddelerd,
To take upon hym was nothyng afferd
To cleyme in contres, a thyng that was nat fair, 2148
Of Iubiter to be bothe sone & hair.

and this was
one of the chief
causes of
idolatory.

On of the prynciples, who-so taketh heede,
That first brouht in fals ydolatrie,
Was thilke tyme that preestis for fals drede 2152
His name with goddis gan to magnefie,
And so to calle hym of feyned flaterie.
And myd ther temples in Libie on a stage
Of his liknesse thei sette up an image. 2156

It availed him
nothing, for he
died of poison.

But lite or nouht to hym it mihte auaille
Ageyn his deth[e] for to doon socour,
Whan the fell poisoun dede his herte* assaille,
Which made hym fade as doth a somer flour. 2160
Of whos empire was non enheritour,
Sauf in his deiyng, thus stood the woful caas,
Tween sexe & thretti his lond deuided was.

Before his
death he lay
on a couch of
gold and named
his successors.

And in his story ful pleynli it is told, 2164
This departis[i]oun, to make it ferme & stable,
He was leid forth upon a couch of gold,
To reherse be toknis ful notable
Whom he dempte of verray soth most hable 2168
Of al his princis, pleynli to discerne,
Whan he wer ded his kyngdam to gouerne.

The first among
them was
Eumenes, and
to him
Alexander gave
Cappadocia and
Paphlagonia.

First ther was oon amongis al that pres,
Next Alisandre the knihtliest[e] man, 2172
The worthi duc* callid Eumenydes,
Whos hih renoun ful weel reherse can
Prudent Iustinus, the grete historian.
Ordeyned afforn to gouerne reumys too, 2176
Al Capadoce & Pafflogonie also.

2155. myddes H.

2159. his herte dede B, J, P. 2171. that] þe H.

2173. duc] knyht B, J, knight P — Eumenes P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 95 recto.

- His hih noblesse, as maad is menciouun,
 In especial mor to magnefie,
 Hym lakked nouht of comendacioun
 That appartened onto cheualrie,
 To hih prudence or noble policie,
 Except thre thyngis, myn auctour seip the same,
 A crowne, a sceptre & a kynges name. 2180
- But for that he al othir dede excell
 Bothe of prudence & famous cheualrie,
 It is remembrid, as summe bookis tell,
 That ther wer summe [that] hadde therat envie; 2188
 For whan Fortune list to sette up hie
 Any persone alofft upon hir wheel,
 Summe ar beside that like it neueradeel.
- Who halt hym euer upon hih mounteyns 2192
 Fynt gret experience of blastis & of shours,
 Offt is troubled with storm & wyndi reyns;
 So of Alisaundre the proude successours,
 Whan thei sat hiest shynyng in ther flours, 2196
 Wynd of envie, Fortune heeld so the rother,
 That ech was besi to destroien othir.
- On hillis hih it is an inpossible
 A man tabide withoute wynd or reyn; 2200
 A thyng expert & verra[il]ly visible,
 Hih clymyng up is medlid with disdeyn:
 Pres hath envie, as it is ofte seyn,
 And thoruh preferring of Fortune in estatis 2204
 Is euer caused gret werre & gret debatis.
- This same thyng was weel expert & preevide
 Among thes saide roial enheritours
 Of Alisandre; for ech of hem was greeuid 2208
 To seen his felawe regnen in his flours.
 And thus atween these myhti successours,
 Of fals envie ther gan so gret a striff,
 That ech made other for to lese his lyff. 2212
- And as it is afforn maad menciouun, 2216
 Policarpus & Neptoloniun
 Bi a maner fals conspiracioun
 Ageyn Eumenides wer inli envious.

He was a knightly man, and until that time had lacked only a crown, a sceptre and the name of king.

Since he excelled all men in chivalry, some envied him,

and as most people who live on high mountains are exposed to winds and storms, so it was with the successors of Alexander: each did his best to destroy the others.

Not one of them could bear to see his fellow reign in peace.

[p. 235] Polyperchon and Neoptolemus conspired against Eumenes, who slew them both in battle;

2188. that] om. J. 2199. hillis] hihtis H.

2201. verraily] verray J, P. 2203. often H.

2213. R begins again.

2214] Poliperchon and Neptolemus P. 2216. Eumenes P.

- Of whos falsnesse he was suspecious,
 Til on a day, ther is no mor to seyne,
 Meetyng in bataille he slouh hem bothe tweyne.
- and this angered
 Antigonus,
 prefect of
 Macedon, so
 greatly
- For which[e] slauhtre proude Antigonus, 2220
 Of Macedoyne prefect & gouernour,
 Wex in his herte so fel & despitous —
 And was with-al a noble werreieur —
 With his knihtis dede hooli his labour 2224
 Ageyn Eumenides bi marcial apparaille,
 A feeld assigned, to holde a gret bataille.
- that he set
 out against
 Eumenes and
 forced him
 to take refuge
 in a castle,
- Made upon hym a proud disconfiture 2228
 As thei metten armed briht in steel,
 And thus Eumenides, of mortal auenture,
 Fledde at myscheeff into a strong castel,
 Wherof his knihtis liked nothyng weel;
 For as the stori pleynli maketh mynde, 2232
 That day he fledde & lefft his men behynde.
- where he stood
 destitute, and
 finally fled to
 Argyria,
- In which castel for he stood destitut,
 Fro thens he caste in al haste to flee;
 In his gret myscheeff to fynde sum refut 2236
 That tyme he drouh hym in-tastrong contre
 Sum socour gete auengid for to be,
 Callid Argire bi Greekis of entent,
 The Latyn corupt of this woord Argent. 2240
- a country rich in
 silver, and after
 which the
 Argyraspides
 were named,
- Of Archiraspedes, a peepel that ther duelle,
 Ther name thei took afftir that regeoun.
 The which[e] lond, as olde bookes telle,
 Hath of siluer plente & foisoun; 2244
 For which[e] cause, bi old descripcioun,
 It took his name of nature & of riht,
 Because the soil lik syluer shyneth briht.
- a manly and
 prudent peepel,
 who had been
 of great help
 to Alexander.
- And of this ile, which hath so gret a pris, 2248
 As myn auctour maketh rehersaile,
 How the peepel be proudent & wis,
 Prudent in armys & manli in bataille,
 Bothe to diffende & proudli to assaile. 2252
 Which bi ther wisdam & circumspect counsail
 To kyng Alisaundre stood in gret auail.

2217. whos] was R. 2225. bi] with H — Eumenes P.

2227. upon] on R. 2228. briht armed R.

2230. into a] in ta H. 2232. makith playnly H.

2238. Sum] So R — gete] to get R, to gete H, J, to gett R 3, to
 geat P. 2241. Argyraspides P.

- And Eumenes, oon of his successours,
 As ye han herd[e], drouh to that contre,
 Ther to fynde refut & socours
 In his myscheeff & gret aduersite.
 And with his woordes of gret auctorite,
 His noble langage & his fair eloquence,
 The peele had hym in ful gret reuerence.
- And for thei wern manli & coraious,
 Able tassemble bothe in plate & maile,
 He made hem rise ageyn Antigonus,
 Bi ther prowesse with hym to ha[ue] bataille.
 But of fortune his parti gan to faille,
 Wher thilke peele, the stori tellith thus,
 Hadde euer afforn[e] been victorious.
- Antigonus hath the feeld recurid,
 That day his knihtis fauht lik wood leouns,
 In furious teene, of corage assurid,
 Brak ther tentis & ther paelouns,
 Spoilled ther castellis, robbed ther dongouns, —
 Wher that contre, vnwarli thus affraied,
 Hadde neuer afforn in bataile been outraied.
- And of despiht this peele rek[e]les,
 Cauht in ther herte gret indignacioun
 Ageyn ther prince, this said Eumenydes,
 Which hadde hem brouht to ther destruccioun.
 And al that peele, of oon oppynioun,
 Presentid hym, it was nat aftir longe,
 To Antigonus, bounde in cheynys stronge.
- In this processe breefli to proceede,
 At gret myscheef he deied in prisoun;
 He fond no mercy, pleyntli, as I reede,
 For al his noblesse nor his hih renoun.
 Yit of his manhod it is maad mencioniun,
 Who that his stori list to looke ariht,
 With Alisaundre ther was no bettir kniht.
- In his conquest eueri hour & space
 He most cherished for his hih noblesse;
 About al othir stood most in his grace,
 To helpe & releue folk in ther distresse,
- There Eumenes was well received,
 2256
- and persuaded the people to aid him against Antigonus; but unfortunately the Argyraspides were defeated for the first time in their history, and robbed of their possessions,
 2264
- 2268
- 2272
- 2276 which enraged them so that they delivered Eumenes up to Antigonus in chains,
- 2280
- 2284 and he perished miserably in prison,—
- 2288
- 2292 he who had before been most cherished by Alexander.

2255. And] *om.* H — Eumenes P.2270. day] *om.* H. 2273. castell H.

Al-be that he deied in wrechidnesse:
To vs declaryng the grete variaunces
That al-day falle in Fortunys chauncis. 2296

[¶ Lenvoye.]

Duke Eumenes' tragedy again shews the froward doubleness of Fortuna. **T**HIS tragedie of Duk Eumenydes [p. 236]
Sheweth of Fortune þe froward doubilnesse,

How worldli princis þat be rek[e]les,
With vnwar chaungis fallen in distresse; 2300
And ther may been no gretter heuynesse,
Afftir prosperite, nor no gretter peyne,
Than aduersite which that is sodeyne.

There is no greater sorrow than sudden adversity after prosperity. Grettest envie, wher is grettest p[r]les; 2304
Grettest await, wher is most richesse;
And grettest ese wher is rest & pes:
Wher most discord, most is heuynesse.

And of al sorwe, sorwefullest excesse 2308
Is thilke sorwe that doth a man constreyne,
Afftir prosperite aduersite sodeyne.

Where there is rest and peace is greatest ease, and where there is most discord, is greatest heaviness. Pryncis in erthe, of power pereles,
Which excelled al other in noblesse, 2312
Hadde in this world bi conquest most encre,
As Alisaundre his stori berth witnessse.
Remembre the* fyn of al ther hih prowesse
And the tryumphes to which thei dide atteyne: 2316
Afftir prosperite aduersite sodeyne.

These powerful heirs of Alexander ended in sudden adversity, six and thirty of them, all of whom had great possessions. The stronge enheritour[s] which þat he out ches,
Sixe & thretti, the noumbre to expresse,
Which hadde pecessioun of kyngdamys dout[e]les, 2320
Ech thyng obeyeng to ther worthynesse,
Til Fortune thoruh hir doubilnesse
Shewed hir myht, vnwarli to ordeyne
Afftir prosperite aduersite sodeyne. 2324

Noble Princes, avoid discord, envy and causeless anger; do nothing of hasty wilfulness, lest there be sudden adversity. Noble Princis, tauoide al disencres,
Among your-silff discordes doth represe.
Beth nat envious nor irous causeles;
Werkith no thyng of hasti wilfulness; 2328
Lat discrecioun been your gouerneresse:

2297. Eumenes P. 2300. chaunge H. 2301. ther] thei R.

2304. pres] pes J, peace P.

2308. sorwe] om. H — sorwefullest] sorowfull H.

2309. doth] om. R. 2315. the] ther B.

2318. enheritour R — he] be R, H. 2320. possessions R.

2327. nor] ne H.

For ther mut folwe, iff ye parte on tweyne,
Aftir prosperite aduersite sodeyne.

[How queene Olimpiades for she delited in vices
moordre and vengeaunce deied atte mischeeff.]¹

NEXT in ordre to Bochas dede appeere, 2332 After Eumenes,
Olympias
Afftir the myscheef of Eumenides, appeared before
Bochas.
The grete queen, with a ful pitous cheer, She excelled all
Moodir of Alisaundre, Olympiades, other queens in
Born of the lyne of Eacides;* 2336 beauty and
wealth.

Among queenys, hir stori berth witnessse,
Excellid al other of beute & richesse.
She was douhtir to Neptolonius, and was
The myhti kyng of Epirothes, 2340 daughter of
Neoptolemus.
And hadde suspect how Neptanabus It was
Bi enchaument put hymself in pres suspected that
Of wifli trouthe to make hir rek[e]les. Nectanebes had
But Bochas heer, for to saue hir name, been her lover,
Writ but a litil of hir sclaudrous diffame. 2344 but Bochas
wrote litte of
it.

This said[e] queen, riht fair of hir visage,
Was firste brouht foorth in thilke regiouns,
Wher all the worthi of blood & of lynage 2348
Heeld ther sceptris & ther riche crouns,
Thoruhout al Grece with ful pocessiouns;
So that this queen that tyme nih & ferre
Was of beute callid the lode-sterre. 2352

But among al hir gret prosperite,
Hir youthe flouryng in most souereyn noblesse,
Hir ioie was medlid with gret aduersite, 2356
Whan Phelipp Macedo, to hir gret heuynesse,
Was mortalli woundid in distresse,
In Cithia bacerteyn nacioun
Callid Tribalois, as maad is mencioun.

For in that contre upon a certeyn day, 2360
Wher-as he fauht & dede his besi peyne
To gete a cite, & at the sieg lay,
lost one of his
eyes at
a sieg in
Scythia;

2330. ther] that R — ye parte] the party R.

2333. Eumenes P.

2336. Eacides] Gacides B, R, Gaades J.

2339. to] of R — Neoptolemus P. 2341. Nectanabus P.

2343. hir] hym R.

2361. fauht] fauh H. 2362. lay] late H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 96 recto.

And for thassaut dede his stuff ordeyne,
 He lost vnwarli oon of his eien tweyne, 2364
 That whan the queen beheeld his sodeyn wounde,
 She fill for sorwe * euene plat to grounde.

and her good
 name was in-
 jured by the
 suspicion of her
 adultery with
 Nectanebes.

Another thyng, bookis specefie,
 Troubled hir fame bi gret heuynesse: 2368
 The suspect sclauandre of auout[e]rie
 Wrouht bi Neptanabus enchauntyng hir fairnesse,
 The liht eclipsyng of hir hih noblesse
 Be swift[e] report for to hyndre hir name, — 2372
 What fleeth mor swift than doth wikked fame?

What flies more
 swiftly than
 evil report?
 What avails
 royal blood
 against it?

In womanheede, as auctours alle write,
 Most thyng comendid is ther chast honeste;
 Thyng most sclaundrous ther noblesse tatwite, 2376
 Is whan princessis of hasti freelte
 Exceede the boundis of wifli chastite:
 For what auaieth lynage or roial blood,
 Whan of ther lyuyng the report is nat good? 2380

The voice of
 slander once
 raised is not
 easily put down.

The hooli bed diffouled of mariage, [p. 237]
 Or onis soiled may nat recurid be;
 The vois goth forth & the froward langage
 Bi many rewm & many gret cite. 2384
 Sclauandre hath a* custum, & that is gret pite,
 Trewe outhers fals, bi contagious soun
 Onis reised [up] it goth nat lihtli doun.

To make
 matters still
 worse for
 Olympias, Philip
 took Cleopatra,
 wife of
 Alexander of
 Epirus, as his
 concubine.

And to mor hyndryng of Olympiades, 2388
 Phelipp from hir dede away* declyne;
 And of the kyng of Epirothes
 The wif he took[e] to his concubyne,
 Callid Cleopatra, pleynli to termyne. 2392
 And thus in myscheeff to encrece hir trouble,
 Ther fals auoutry gan to wexe double.

2363. ordeyne] ordey H.

2366. For sorwe she fill B, R — to] to the R.

2373. doth] om. J, P. 2377. freelte] cruelte H.

2381. diffouled] defoyled P.

2382. nat] om. H.

2383. MS. J, "nota de scandalo," in scribe's hand in red,
 margin of leaf 96 verso.

2385. a] of B, J, R — &] om. H — gret] om. J, H 5.

2386. outhers] or H — contagious] a contagious R 3, H 5.

2387. up] om. R, J, R 3, H 5.

2389. away dede from hir B, J, R.

- Off this processe write I will no more,
Cause the mateer is abhominable;
For kyng Phelipp the bargeyn bouhte sore,
As is remembred be cronicles ful notable,
Slayn on a day sitting at his table,
Ful sodenli or he took any heede; —
Pausanias dede that cruel deede.
- Of which[e] slauhtre folwed a straunge cas,
As ye han herd, bi Pausanias wrouht:
Olympiades ful glad & murie was,
Heuy outward, hir herte void of thouht;
Yit feynynгли she hath out weies souht
For hym to holde solempne & roiall
Lik Greekis rihtis a feeste funerall.
- Aftir whos deth, wrouht of gret cruelte,
Kyng Alisaundre maad no lenger let,
Made Pausanias taken for to bee
And to been hangid upon an hih gibet,
Vpon whos hed ther was a crowne set
Of gold & perle & riche stonis Inde
Be Olympiades, in story as I fynde.
- For he stood gretli in the queenis grace;
And as folke dempte of suspeciouⁿ,
Thei mette togidre in many preve place,
Which gretli turned to hir confusiouⁿ;
For noise aroos thoruh al that regeouⁿ,
That be thoccasiouⁿ of ther misleuyng,
How Pausanias slouh Phelipp the kyng.
- But she anon in hir malis feruent
Fro the gebet made hym be take down,
Made his bodi solempneli be brent;
Kept his exequies with gret oblaciouⁿ*
Aftir the rihtis of that regeouⁿ,
Nat left behynde in parti nor in all
That appartened to feestis funerall.
- Vpon kyng Phelipp, as it wer for the nonys
To doon hir lord a shame & [a] despiht,
Solempneli she made brenze the bonis

2396 Thus there was adultery on both sides, until Philip was slain at his table by Pausanias.

2400

2404 Olympias' sorrow was feigned;

2408

2412 and when her son Alexander hanged Pausanias, she set a rich crown on his head,

2416 for he had been her lover and stood high in her favour. This caused still more scandal.

2420

2424 She then had him taken down from the gallows, and his body was burnt with royal ceremonies

2428

2432 on that of King Philip, to do her lord a shame and a desquite.

2396. is] is so H.

2417. as] om. R. 2420. thoruh] thoruhout H.

2424. be] to be R. 2425. be] to be R.

2426. exequias R — oblaciouⁿ B. 2431. a] om. R.

- Of Pausanias, for a fals appetit, —
 Vnto no man she hadde so gret delite;*
 For which this feste was lik in alle thynges
 To thexequies of princis & of kynges. 2436
- She also made
 an offering to
 Apollo of the
 sword with
 which he killed
 Philip.
 She made his suerd[e] also to be take,
 With which he slouh Phelipp the grete kyng,
 Offrid it up onli for his sake
 Toforn Appollo, be record of writyng. 2440
 Which to hir was sclauandre & gret hyndryng,
 Caused folk deeme in ther entent,
 To slen kyng Phelipp how she was of assent.
- All her
 pleasure was
 set on cruelty.
 She caused
 Cleopatra to
 hang herself
 and murdered
 her daughter.
 To been cruel was set al hir plesaunce: 2444
 For merciles, void of al pite,
 On Cleopatre causyng this vengauce,
 That she hirsilff[e] heeng upon a tre;
 Moordrid hir douhtir, the stori ye may see. 2448
 What malis may, yif it be declared,
 Vnto the malis of wommen be compared?
- No malice can
 be compared to
 the malice of
 women. One
 in a thousand
 may be
 virtuous, one in
 two thousand
 merciful; and
 when enraged,
 no tiger is
 more cruel.
 I speke of them that be malicious
 And list of custum for to be vengable: 2452
 Among a thousand oon may be vertuuous,
 And in too thousand sum oon is merciable;
 But whan thei been of rancour vntretable,
 Ther is no tigre mor cruel dout[e]les, 2456
 Record I take off Olympiades.
- Olympias
 thought herself
 strong because
 Alexander had
 conquered
 Persia;
 And she of malis was mor set affire
 Texecute boldli hir vengauce,
 Bi thoccasioun of the gret empire 2460
 Of Perse & Mede, ful famous in substaunce,
 Which stood be conquest vnder the gouernauce
 Of Alisaundre, wherbi she thouhte hir strong
 Tacheve ech thyng, wher it wer* riht or wrong. 2464
- but Alexander
 was poisoned in
 Babylon.
 Dempte hir poweer sholde ay contune [p. 238]
 Bi the mene of his hih mageste.
 God is strengre than the queen Fortune,
 Which suffred hir sone in his most dignite 2468
 In Babilyne poisoned for to bee,
 As is remembered in many old histories,
 Aftir his tryumphes & [al] his gret victories.
2434. delite] despiht B, R, J, P. 2436. To] of H.
 2454. is] may be H. 2459. Texecute] Execute R.
 2464. wher] whether P — wer] be B, R, J, P, H 5.
 2465. ay] ay wey R. 2471. al] om. P — gret] om. R, J, hih H.

But for to passe breeffi by* writyng,
 Touchyng this queen, as maad is mencioniun,
 Whan ded was Phelipp, the famous myhti kyng,
 She hadde off Macedoyne ful pociessioun,
 And gouerned that myhti regioun,
 Wher lik a woluesse, as auctours of hir write,
 To shede blood she gan hirsilff delite.

2472 She governed
 Macedonia
 like a wolvens.

2476

In hir tirannye most feruent & irous,
 Reioisskede in slauhtre & to see men bleede;
 For serpent non was mor malicious
 Than was this queen, in bookis ye may reede.
 Yit afftir al this she reseceyued hir meede;
 For thouth Fortune faouered hir a while,
 Yit with hir treynes she koude hir weel begile.

2480 No serpent
 was more
 malicious.

2484

The eende of tirauntis & eek of tiraunessis,
 And of moorderis, be thei neuer so wood,
 Of poisounmongeris & enchaunteressis,
 Of fals supplantours, contrarie to all good,
 And of conspireres & them that thriste blood, —
 Alle thes muste han bi Goddis purueyaunce
 Heer short liff or sodenli vengauce.

2488 Tyrants and
 tyrannesses.
 poisonmongers
 and enchan-
 tresses have
 short lives.

2492

In Macedoyne this queen was most behatid
 For hir vengable mortal oppressioun;
 And Cassander ageyn hir hath debatid
 And gunne a werre upon hir regeoun,
 Which Talisaundre mynystrid the poisoun,
 As ye han herd, afforn of hym deuised,
 Bi Antipater most mortalli practised.

2496 She was
 hated in
 Macedon,
 and when
 Cassander
 made war
 on her.

She fond no reffut, but took hir to the fliht,
 This cruel queen, this Olympiades,
 Into a mounteyn that stood ferr out of siht;
 And of hir kyn ther folwed hir gret pres,
 Supposyng talyued ther in pes.

2500 she fled to
 a mountain
 stronghold

2504

For on that hill stood a gret dongoun,
 Strongli walled abouten enviroun,

Which that marchid to a gret cite
 Callid Epidna, stondyng in gret doute,
 Because Cassander of old enmyte

2508 near Epidna,
 where she was
 besieged by
 Cassander and
 captured by
 treachery.

2472. by] the B, R, to the J.

2492. Heer] Outhir her H — or sodenli] on sodeyn R.

2496. hir] his R, a H. 2504. talyued] ta lyven H.

- Hadde for hir leide a seege [al] aboute.
 And non was hardi for to issen oute,
 Til Cassander, of fals compassed tresoun, 2512
 Made with them a composicioun.
- Cassander
 assured her
 that she might
 live in peace,
 His feith was leid that tyme for hostage,
 Bi oth assurid to Olympiades,
 Bi couert fraude vnder fair langage, 2516
 To suffren hir with hym to lyue in pes.
 But of his promys, he fals & rek[e]les,
 For vnder trete, as maad is menciou[n],
 The queen he took & cast hir in prisoun. 2520
- but broke his
 promise.
 Removed from
 prison, she faced
 her enemies
 with imperial
 courage,
 But wil ye seen a roial hih corage,
 How boldeli, delyuered fro prisoun,
 She descendid, imperial of visage,
 With al hir maidnes aboute hir enviroun, 2524
 Hir enmyes present, wodere than leoun,
 Seyng hir stonde so statli of hir face,
 Whan thei wer proudest tareste hir & manace.
- attired for the
 occasion like an
 empress in rich
 purple and gold.
 She was arraied of purpos for the nonys, 2528
 As seith Bochas, in most statli wise;
 In riche purpil, gold & precious stonis,
 Lik an emperesse in the Grekissh guise.
 Hir list nat fleen, the stori doth deuisse, 2532
 With cry nor noise passed nat hir boundis,
 Whan that hir blood down railed from hir woundis.
- She did not
 try to escape,
 even when the
 blood flowed
 from her
 wounds.
 She nat affraied in al hir mortal shour[e]s;
 Void of al feer[e] list nat bowe hir chyne, 2536
 Make no praieer to hir tormentour[e]s,
 Nor no tokne of corage femynyne.
 Vpriht she stood[e], list nat doun declyne,
 Gaff evidence*, as it is comprehendid, 2540
 Of what lyne & blood she was descendid.
- She stood erect
 and shewed of
 what line she
 was descended.
 Never did a
 prince or
 princess die
 more proudly.
 For vnto tyme that she gaf up the breth,
 Was neuer sey[e]n prince nor princesse 2544
 That mor proudli took ther fatal deth.
 For as I deeme, hir marcial hardynesse
 Cam from Bellona, of armys cheef goddessse;
 Outher she hadde it bynfluence of corage
 Youe bi the goddis to hire & hir lynage. 2548
2511. issen] isshu H. 2516. fair] fals H.
 2531. the] ther H — Grekis R. 2533. nor] & H.
 2536. cheyne R, cheyn H.
 2540. evidence] Euidencis B, R, J, R 3, H 5, P. 2546. fro R.

Force is a vertu, bookis spesefie,
 Ageyn al vices to make resistance;
 But froward rancour & wood* malencolie
 Gaff hir a spirit of feyned pacience,
 A fals pretence of hih* magnificence,
 Ascauns* she hadde been in vertu strong,
 For trouthe to haue endurid eueri wrong.

[p. 239] Power is a
 virtue to resist
 vice; but it
 was perverse
 rancour and
 mad rage that
 2552 gave her a
 false pretence
 of magnificence.

Contrarious force made hir despitous,
 Strong in hir error to endure peyne;
 Of obstynat herte she was fell & irous,
 In dethis constreynt list nat to compleyne.
 Countirfet suffraunce made hir for to feyne;
 Nothyng of vertu, pleynli to termynne,
 Nor of no manerys* that be femynyne.

2550 Obstynacy kept
 her from
 complaining;
 there was
 neither virtue
 nor womanli-
 ness in her.

In hir entrailles al malis was enclosed
 And al contagious venym serpentyne,
 Nat lik a woman, but as a feend disposid,
 Able to destroie al vertuous disciplyne:
 Thus she began; thus she dede fyne.
 In vicious moordre she dede hir ay delite,
 Wherfor of hire me list no mor tendite.

2560

2564 Her nature was
 like that of a
 feend.

2568

¶ Lenvoye.

ALLE ye that shal this tragedie see,
 Of routhe & merci hath *compassioun*,
 To seen a *princesse* from hir imperial see
 So vnwarli by Fortune throwe down.
 Of whos myscheeff this was thoccasioun,
 That in thre thynges was set most hir plesauce:
 In vicious lust*, in moordre & in vengauce.

2572 Have com-
 passion on this
 princess, so
 suddenly
 thrown down
 by Fortune.

Alas, that euer the mortal cruelte
 Of bloodi suerd bi executioun
 Sholde been approprid to femynyte,
 Ageyn the nature of ther condicioun!
 Causing the fynal sclaudrous confusioun

2576

2580 Alas, that
 women should
 be so
 unnatural as to
 draw the
 sword!

2551. wood] proud B, R, J. 2553. hih] his B, hir R.

2554. Ascauns] As scauns B, J, As skawns R 3.

2559. constreynt] compleynt H.

2562. manerys] mannys B, R, J, R 3, H, mannes H 5.

2563. And in hir entraille H. 2565. as] like H.

2569. tendite] endite H. 2575. thynges] kynges R.

2576. lust] lyff B, R, J, life P — 3rd in] om. H, J, H 5, P, fals

R 3. 2580. the] om. H.

- Of Olympiades, heer put in remembraunce,
For vicious lust, moordre & fals vengauce.
- The serpent hides under
fresh flowers,
and deep pits
lie beneath
crystal waters.
- Vnder fressh flours, riht soote & fair to see, 2584
The serpent dareth with his couert poison.
In cristal watres that calm & smothe* bee
Arn pereillous pettis ful of decepcioun.
Men seen alday bi cleer inspeccioun 2588
In feynyng facis angelik suffisaunce;
Hid vndir-nethe rancour & gret vengauce.
- Though she
excellid all
in beauty,
no princess was
ever more
savage and
revengeful.
- Thouh she excellid of hir natiff beute
Al othir princ[ess]is of that regeoun, 2592
Was neuer sey[e]n feller non than she,
To execute lik hir oppenyoun
The pereilous treynys contreued of tresoun,
And specialli in hir pompous greuauce, 2596
Wher she hated, for to do vengauce.
- Noble Prin-
cesses, be
merciful and
forgiving,
temper your
indignation with
pity.
- Noble Princessis, set hih in dignite,
Doth aduertise of discrecioun,
In your most poweer & largest liberte 2600
Beth merciable & doth remyssion,
Sugreb with pite your indignacioun,
Lat grace & merci tempre your hih puissaunce,
Of Olympiades eschewyng the vengau[n]ce. 2604
- Cankered
rancour does not
belong to
womanhood;
and where
mercy reigns
grace abounds.
- Exilith rigour ferr out of contre,
Yiue hym with you no iurediccioun.
To womanheede longeth nat, parde,
Of cancred rancour newe execucioun. 2608
Wher mercy regneth, of grace ther is foisoun,
Hath this in mynde bi long contynvaunce,
Of Olympiades forgetyng the vengauce.
- Let patience
dwell in your
hearts;
- Lat pacience bi vertuous plente 2612
Withynne your hertis purchase a mansioun;
Lat your compassioun attempren equite,
That riht exceede nat the boundis of resoun,
So that your femynyn humble entencioun 2616
Be alway bridled be prouident suffraunce,
Voidyng al excessis of rigour & vengauce.

2584. faire & soote H.

2586. smothe] soote B, R, soot J.

2589. feynyng] femynyne H, H 5, femynyn R 3, feminine P.

2597. for] om. R. 2600. largest] lagest R.

2602. your pite with H.

- For it is said of old auctorite,
 To wommen longeth bi disposicioun 2620
 Meeknesse in langage, in port humylite,
 In al vertu humble subieccioun,
 Void of manacis, striff & contencioun,
 So that no man in your attendaunce 2624
 Espie no tokne of rancour nor vengauce.
- The especial mene, the parcialite
 Sholde of al merci be descripsioun
 Rebounde to women; for of antiquite 2628
 The lamb nat vsed to pleie the leoun,
 Nor no meek dowue envied the faucoun.
 Nor to your sect, bi natural accordaunce,
 Sitt nouter rigour nor hasti fel vengauce. 2632
- This symple Lenvoie, reseceyueth it at gre [p. 240]
 And hath therof non indignacioun,
 Lowli direct to your benignite
 Onli of meeknesse & no presumpcioun, 2636
 Knowyng of kynde your inclynacioun
 Disposed is bi natural purueiaunce
 Vnto al merci, & nothyng onto vengauce.
- for it is said
 of old, that
 meekness and
 humility are
 appropriated
 to womankind.
- The lamb is
 not accustomed
 to play
 the lion, nor
 does the dove
 envy the
 falcon.
- Let this simple
 envoy not
 offend you, for
 it is lowly
 directed to
 your benignity
 by one who
 knows that your
 nature is dis-
 posed to mercy.

[How Agathodes of lowe birthe born atteyned to
 roial dignite/ ended in pouerte and wrecchid-
 nesse.]¹

- I** HAUE herd seid of ful yore agon, 2640
 A whirle-wynd[e], blowing nothing softe,
 Was in old Inglissh callid a rodion,*
 That reiseth duste & strauh ful hih alofte.
 And in thascendyng (it falleth so ful ofte), 2644
 Thouh it be bor[e]n almost to the skie,
 Wher it becomth ther can no man espie.
- A whirlwind
 used to be
 called a rodjon;
 and when it
 rises, no man
 can say what
 becomes of it.

2629. 2nd the] with be H.

2630. dowue] down (?) H — Facoun H.

2633. *This stanza is omitted in H.*

2636. no] none R.

2640. *The Explicit to Book IV and Incipit to the Prologue of Book V are misplaced here in H.*

2641. whorle wynde H, whyrwynd H 5.

2642. rodian B, other MSS. and P, rodion. 2643. That] And H.

2644. it] is H. 2645. to] in to H, R 3.

¹ MS. J. leaf 97 verso.

- Smoke often ascends mountain high; but just as often, when a sudden rain comes, it descends again.
- Out of forgis bi fire þat smethis make,
Bi cleer experience it is ful ofte seyn, 2648
That thes infernal ougli smokes blake
Transcende the coppe of many gret mounteyn;
But ofte sithe bi a ful sodeyn reyn
Al such ascenciouns, bi rage of wynd up blowe, 2652
With vnwar tourn be reuersed & brouht lowe.
- One of the greatest of misfortunes is when a low-born wretch is lifted to high estate.
- And semblably to putte it at a preeff
And execute it bi cleer experience,
On the moste contrarious myscheeff 2656
Founde in this erthe, bi notable euidence,
Is onli this: bi fortunat violence
Whan that a wrech[e], cherlish of nature,
Thestat of princis vnwarli doth recure. 2660
- A crowne of gold is not suitable for the head of a knave, nor should a stupid clerk wear a ring.
- A crowne of gold is nothyng accordyng
For to be set upon a knauis hed;
A foltissh clerk for to were a ryng
Accordeth nothyng, who that kan take heed. 2664
And in this world ther is no gretter dreed
Than power youe, yif it be weel souht,
Vnto such on that first roos up of nouht.
- We do not set precious stones in copper; and the estate of political power is lost when knaves have governance.
- Ther is no maner iust convenience, 2668
A roial charboncle, rubie or garnet,
Nor a chast emeraud of vertuous excellence,
Nor ynde saphirs in coper to be set, —
Ther kyndli power in foul metal is let; 2672
And so thestat of politik puissaunce
Is lost wher-euer knaues haue gouernaunce.
- They rise up like windy smokes; and a crowned ass is more to be dreaded than a lion.
- For a tyme thei may weel up ascende,
Lik wyndi smokes ther boistous fumys spreede. 2676
A crownid asse, pleyntli to comprehende,
Void of discrecioun is mor for to dreede
Than is a leoun: for the ton in deede
Of his nature is myhti & roiall; 2680
Void of discrecioun, the tothir bestiall.
- The lion is merciful to those who lie prostrate before him; the crowned ass is always cruel.
- The gentil nature of a strong leoun
To prostrat peepl[e] of kynde is merciabile;
For vnto all that falle afforn hym down 2684
His roiall puissaunce cannat be vengable.

2648. often H.

2654. semblable R. 2659. a wrech] wrecches J.

2679. a] om. H. 2682. The] This R.

- But cherlissh wolues, bi rigour.vntretable,
 And foltissh assis, eek of bestialite,
 Failyng resoun, braide euer on cruelte. 2688
- Non is so proud as he that can no good,
 The leudere hed, the mor presumpcioun,
 Most cruelte & vengauce in louh blood,
 Wher malepertnesse, ther indiscrecioun. 2692
 Of cheryl & gentil make this dyuisioun:
 Of outhere of them I dar riht weel reporte,
 The stok thei cam fro, therto thei wil resorte.
- The rose knowe be colour & suetnesse, 2696
 And violettis for ther fressh tarage,
 The netle rouh[e] for his fel sharpnesse,
 Thistlis, breeris prikyng bi gret outrage:
 And thus considred the rote of ech lynage, 2700
 Froward techchis been euer in cherlis founde,
 Wher vnto gentillesse ay vertu doth rebounde.
- Lat men bewar in special of o thyng,
 How gret decepcioun is in fals coignage:
 The plate may be briht in his shewyng, 2704
 The metal fals & shewe a fair visage.
 Al is nat gold, to speke in pleyn langage,
 That shynith briht; concludyng of* resoun, 2708
 Vnder fair cheer is ofte hid fals poison.
- For as a skie or an ougli cloude
 Which that ascendith lowe out of the se,
 And with his blaknesse doth the sunne shroude, 2712
 That men may nat his gret[e] brihtnesse see
 Nor haue no counfort of his cleer beute,
 So vicious techchis, I do you weel assure,
 Difface ful ofte the giftes of nature. 2716
- God onto summe hath youen bi nature [p. 241]
 For to excellen another in fairnesse;
 Yit in vicis, be record of scripture,
 Thei wer disclaundred, Bochas berth witnessse: 2720
 Outward sugre, inward bittirnesse.
 Bi which exauple, to purpos I may call
 Agathodes, fulfilled of vices all.

2692. Wher] With P — malapertnesse R, J, R 3, malapertnesse H, malapertnes P

2703. bewar] ware R. 2708. of] on B, J, H 5, R.

2709. often H — hid] om. R.

2717. hath] as R. 2723. Agathocles P.

No one is so proud as a good-for-nothing; ignorance and presumption, impudence and indiscretion, go hand in hand.

The rose and the violet and nettles and briars are always true to their stock, and rudeness is invariably found in the line of churls.

We must remember that all is not gold that shines bright;

for vicious traits deface the gifts of nature no less than ugly black clouds obscure the sun.

God has made some men fair yet vicious, as was Agathocles.

- If I were to describe his outrageous life, it would ruin the paper I write on. In this stori he kometh now on the ryng, 2724
 Which of beute hadde passyng excellence;
 But to declare his vicious lyuyng
 And to descryue his outraious offence, —
 Yif I sholde writen in sentence 2728
 Lik his demerites hooli the maneer,
 It wolde thoruh perse & blotte my paper.
- He was the son of a potter and too proud to follow his father's trade. Touchyng his berthe, of louh[e] bed descendid, 2732
 Sone of a pottere, the story ye may see,
 In no vertu I fynde hym nat comendid,
 Except nature gaff hym gret beute.
 Fostrid in myscheeff & in gret pouerte, 2736
 Hadde eek disdeyn, I can hym nat excuse,
 Of hatful pride his fadris craft to vse.
- Through his great beauty he rose to high estate, and although he was soiled by pride and unnatural vice, Bi the mene of his gret fairnesse
 To hih estat he cam fro louh degre;
 Yit in a vice which I wil nat expresse 2740
 He disusid cursidli his beute
 Ageyn nature, that euel mut he* the.
 And soiled he was, shortli to specefie,
 With al the vici* of pride & lecherie. 2744
- God allowed him for a time to be fortunate and govern nations. Yit natwithstandyng his fals condiciouns,
 God suffred hym to come to hih estat,
 And to gouerne dyuers naciouns,
 I fynde a while how he was fortunat, 2748
 In his lecherie ay pompous & elat;
 And in a cite callid Ciracuse
 The said[e] vices he frowardli* gan vse.
- In Syracuse he had the command of one hundred knights And for he hadde beute & gret myht, 2752
 To alle vices his youthe he dede enlyne,
 And koude also foorthre hymself ariht,
 Of elloquence expert in the doctryne.
 And, as is said, thouh he cam of low lyne, 2756
 Yit, as it is put in remembraunce,
 An hundred knihtis he hadde in gouernaunce.
- and purchased the office of centurion. Afterwards he was chosen a tribune and finally he was elected duke. Off centurien he purchacid an offis,
 And that tyme he took the ordre of kniht; 2760
 Aftir chose a tribun of gret pris,
 And gat gret fauour in the peeplis siht.

2727. offence] diffence H. 2742. he] thei B, R, J.

2744. vici] spicis B, R, H, spices J, R 3, spyces H 5, spises P.

2751. he frowardli] frowardli he B, R, J. 2756. as] as it H.

- And in this while, it fill so anon riht,
 Of Siracusic he was maad duk & hed 2764
 Bi eleccioun, because ther lord was ded.
 Which with Siciliens heeld a mortal striff;
 But Agathodes made hem* victorious,
 Took ther duchesse aftir to his wiff, 2768
 Bi mene wheroff he wex ful glorious.
 And in his glorie he greuh riht despitous,
 Forgat hymself, thus growyng in estat,
 Wherthoruh his cite & he wer at debat. 2772
- His condicioun whan thei gan espie,
 And sauh hym werke al of presumpcioun,
 The peepel anon, knowyng his tirannye,
 Exilid hym out of ther regioun. 2776
 In his exil, as maad is menciou, n,
 He coude fynde no bettir cheuisaunce,
 But cam tacite that callid was Murgauce.
- Wher bi his sleiht sotil fals auis,
 He so demened hym in the peeplis siht,
 That of a pretor thei gaff hym an offis,
 He meuyng them in al that euer he miht
 Geyn Siracusic to make hem stronge & fiht, 2780
 Of entent on them tauenged bee, 2784
 Cause for his exil out of that cite.
- But in [his] exil, the stori seith non othir,
 It was so wrouht bi mediacioun 2788
 Of duk Amulchar, that was his sworn brother,
 Siracusanis off oon entencioun
 Callid [him] hom ageyn into ther toun;
 And ther he was restored to his place 2792
 And reconciled to the peeplis* grace.
- And vnto hym thei gaf be gret auis,
 Bassent of lordis & al the comounte,
 Of a pretor newli an offis. 2796
 For pretores of custom callid be
 Officers that duelle in a* cite,
 And han ful charge bi doom & iugementis
 To putte al gilty to peyne & to tormentis. 2800

He defeated the Sicilians and married their duchess, and, increasing in magnificence and power,

grew proud and quarrelled with his city.

His people exiled him to Murgantia, where he became a pretor and tried to stir up strife against Syracuse in revenge.

Duke Hamilcar persuaded the Siracusans to restore him; and after the reconciliation they also made him a pretor.

2767. Agathocles P — hem] hym B.
 2773. condiciouns H — gan] did H.
 2775. knowyng his] all of R.
 2791. him] om. H, R, J, R 3, H 5, P.
 2793. peeplis] kyngis B, R, J. 2798. a] the B, R, J.

- Armed with
new authority,
he caused all
the senators to
be slain, Than of newe this Agathodes, [p. 242]
Because he hadde mor auctorite,
Caste for to trouble the quiete & the pes
Of Siracusic; & out of that cite 2804
Alle the senatours grettest of dignite,
Of mortal vengauce this tiraunt made anon
Withoute excepcioun be slayn euerichon.
- and not content
with that,
pillaged the
whole of Sicily
and claimed the
title of king. This hasti slauhtre wrouht bi tirannye 2808
Miht nat assuage nor staunche his fel corage,
Til he ther tresours took bi robberie,
And al Sicile he spoiled be pillage.
Cast of pride upon an hier stage 2812
For tascende bi slehti fals werkyng,
Of al that regeoun he to be crowned kyng.
- Put to flight
by the duke of
Cartage, Made his subgettis, maugre them, hym dreedyng,
To calle hym kyng, and in especiall, 2816
Oon the most worthi prince tho lyuyng
That sat in chaier of mageste roiall,—
Til Fortune shoop he muste haue* a fall;
For of Cartage the duk, a worthi kniht, 2820
Fauht with hym twies & put hym to the fliht.
- he returned home
in disgrace, Wherthoruh he stood in myscheef disespeired,
And of al people he was had in disdeyn;
To Siracuse in haste he is repeired 2824
And to his cite retourned hom ageyn,
Ther abidyng in dreed & noun certeyn, —
For whan Fortune gan ageyn hym take,
His freendis olde of newe han hym forsake. 2828
- and, collecting
a new army,
defeated the
Carthaginians In that myscheeff he abood nat long,
As the processe maketh rehersaille,
Gadred peele & made hymseluen strong,
Onli in purpos al Affrik to assaille, 2832
With them of Cartage hadde a gret bataille,
Them discourtfited, as Fortune list ordeyne,
Bi hih prowessse of his sonis tweyne.
- with the help
of his two
sons,
Archagathus
and Heraclida. Artagathus Icallid was the ton, 2836
Wonder delyuer, a man of gret[e] myht,
The seconde brother, most worthi of echon,

2818. chaer R. 2819. haue] han B.

2831, 32 are transposed in R, but correction indicated.

2832. for tassaile H, R 3, H 5. 2834. discourtforted R.

2836. Archagathus P. 2837. a] & a B, H, R, H 5, R 3.

- Callid Eraclida, which in that mortal fih
 Preued hymself that day a manli kniht; 2840
 For bi ther manhod, in which ther was no lak,
 Thei of Cartage wer felli put abak.
- For thouh so were bi fortune of the werre
 Agathodes hadde that day victorie, 2844
 Fals couetise made hym for to erre
 And eclipsed the liht of his glorie.
 For as it is remembred in historie,
 Lik as his berth, as it toform termyned, 2848
 To al falsnesse his corage was enclined.
- Cruel of custum, of herte merciles,
 His will was lawe, wher it were* wrong or riht;
 Contrarie taccord, frowar[d] vnto pes, 2852
 Proud & surquedous in his owne siht
 Wher his poweer stretchid & his myht,
 Lik a tiraunt natureli disposed
 Texecute vengauunce afforn purposed. 2856
- He thouhte he hadde poweer for to bynde
 Fortunis wheel for to abide* stable,
 Which is a thyng contrarie to hir kynde,
 Whos propirte is to be variable: 2860
 His pride, alas, was to abhomynable;
 For mortal prynce is non that may restreyne
 Hir vnwar tourn nor hir cours sodeyne.
- Bi influence of the heuenli sterris, 2864
 The vnkouth cours aboue celestiall,
 Bi Fortune, & fauour of the werris,
 This Agothodes, of berthe but* rurall,
 Promooted was vnto estat roiall. 2868
 Til pride, outrage & froward engendrure
 Caused in his lordship he myht nat long endure.
- Fortune of kynde is so flaskisable,
 A monstuous beeste departed manyfold, 2872
 A slidyng serpent, turnyng & vnstable,
 Slepir to gripe; on whom ther is non hold,
2839. Heraclida P — which] with R. 2843. the] that R.
 2848. 1st as] *om.* H, R 3, H 5, P — it toform] it toform is H,
 R 3, it is toform H 5. 2851. were] was B, *om.* J.
 2858. tabide B. 2864. enfluence R.
 2867. Agathocles P — but] ful B, R, J, P, H 5.
 2869. engendrure] *aventure* H, *engendur* R 3.
 2870. nat] *om.* H.
 2874. Slepir] Slipir H, R 3, Sliper J, P, Slyper H 5 — non] no R.

Although he was victorious, covetousness made him err,

and, true to his low origin, he became a revengeful tyrant.

He thought he had power to bind fast Fortune's wheel, the nature of which is to be unstable;

but pride, outrageous behaviour and low birth caused him to fall.

Fortune is like a serpent, slippery to the grasp. There is no hold on her.

- As in this book declared is & told,
 Hir poweer preeued on princis rek[e]les: 2876
 Record with other on Agathodes.
- Agathocles was
 born in poverty
 and rose to
 royal estate;
 his fall was
 the more
 grievous because
 sudden. As ye han herd rehersed in sentence,
 Symple & bare was his natyuite,
 Brouht up & fostred in gret indigence, 2880
 Out of a stok spryngyng of pouerte,
 Roos to thestat of roial dignite.
 The* risyng vnkouth, merueilous tatteyne,
 The fal mor greuou because it was sodeyne. 2884
 From Siracuse he was exiled twies; [p. 243]
 Vengable* of herte wher he hadde myht.
 Of Affrican[e]s disconfited thries;
 Euer in bataile of custum put to fliht. 2888
 Hadde an vsaunce to robbe day & niht,
 And lik a tiraunt, ageyn conscience,
 To spoile his subiectis bi raunynous violence.
- His two
 sons were slain
 in Africa; and
 he became weak
 in his limbs and
 was stricken by
 pestilence. Hyndred bi Fortune, wherof he was nat fayn, 2892
 Hir strook ageyn hym sodeyn & violent:
 His sonis two in Affrik were* first slayn,
 He of his lymys wex feeble & impotent.
 With a consumpcioun his entrailles brent, 2896
 And bi an agu, contynuel of feruence,
 He was surprised bi strook of pestilence.
- He lost his
 wealth, his kin,
 his wife and
 friends; his
 victories were
 forgotten, his
 name eclipsed,
 and he died
 in misery. Al his tresour [Fortune] hath fro hym take,
 His proude port & his worldli glorie; 2900
 His kyn, his freendis & wif hath hym forsake,
 His conquest dirk & put out of memorie:
 His name clipseed of al his old victorie.
 And as he gan in pouert & distresse, 2904
 So he made an eende in wrechidnesse.
- Men expect to
 see a sudden
 fall after a
 rapid and
 dishonest
 ascent. Hasti risyng, & thrifft that is sodeyne,
 And surmountyng bi violent rauyne,
 And extort poweer, may for a tyme atteyne 2908
 In riche chaier of lordshipe for to shyne.
 Sodeyn ascendyng doth sodenli declayne;
 And bi vntrouthe, wher-euer ther be encres,
 Men waite of custum a sodeyn disencres. 2912
2876. Hir] His R. 2883. The] Ther B, R, J, P.
 2886. Vengable] Vengabli B, R, J, P. 2894. were] was B.
 2895. Inpotent R. 2897. Agwe R. 2899. Fortune] om. R, J.
 2901. &] his H. 2903. His] þe H. 2904. &] & in H.
 2907. rauyne] Rapyne H, R 3, H 5.
 2909. chaier] chaar H — for] om. H. 2911. ther] om. R.

Of Agathodes men may example take,
 What is the eende of eueri fals tiraunt.
 Wrong clymbyng up doþ a foul eende make:
 For a sesoun thouh tirauntis be puissant,
 Fortune to them yeueth no lenger graunt;
 But whan thei sitte on hir wheel most roiall,
 Bi vnwar chaung to haue a sodeyn fall.

Agathocles
 is a good
 example.

2916

Agathodes was firste a symple man,
 Brouht forth in myscheeff and in pouerte,
 Sone of a pottere, his stori telle can,
 Bi vicious luyng cam to gret dignite,
 Of alle folk hatid for his cruelte,
 Clamb fro pouert up to gret richesse,
 Maad poore ageyn, deied in wrechidnesse.

2920

The son of a
 potter, he rose
 to great wealth
 and dignity
 through vicious
 living, and died
 in wretched-
 ness.

2924

[Lenvoye]

THIS tragedie sheweth a figure
 Bothe bi stori & bi auctorite,
 How man and beeste & euery creature
 Tarageth the stok of his natyuite:
 Herbe of the roote, & ech frut of his tree,
 For bothe of vertu & also of outrage
 Folweth sum tech or tast of the lynage.

2928

This tragedie
 shews how
 every creature
 takes after his
 parent's stock
 for better or
 for worse.

2932

Agathodes, bi record of scripture,
 Born of lough bed, brouht foorth in pouerte,
 Yit Fortune made hym to recure
 Vp to hih estat from ful lough degre.
 His resoun blent with sensualite,
 Forgat hymselff, to speke in pleyng langage,
 Thoruh a fals tech that cam from his lynage.

2936

Agathocles,
 born of low
 bed, rose
 to high estate
 and forgot
 himself
 in consequence
 of his base
 lineage.

2940

Ther is a difference of colours in peynture,*
 On table or wal, as men alday may see;
 Tween gold & gold, atween bis & asure:
 Al is nat gold that shyneth briht, parde;
 Sum noble is fals that hath ful gret beute, —
 Lat men bewar of countirfet coignage,
 Techchis eschewyng of cherlish low lynage.

2944

There is a
 difference
 between gold
 and gold and
 smalt and
 azure. All is
 not gold that
 glitters,

2913. Agathocles P. 2918. most] *om.* H, R 3, P.

2922. his] the R. 2930. his] *om.* H.

2941. peynture] picture B, J, R, P.

2943. atween] tween R.

nor may a kite
fly with royal
eagles. Sum man forthred of sodeyn auenture, 2948
Set in a chaier of roial dignite,
Wenyng his empire euer sholde endure,
Neuer to be troubled with non aduersite:
With roial egles a kite may nat flee, 2952
A iay may chatre in a goldene cage,
Yit euer sum tech mut folwe of his lynage.

Gentle blood is
merciful, but
boors are
always cruel,
following the
nature of their
churlish birth. Gentil blood of his roial nature
Is euer enclyned to merci & pite, 2956
Wher of custum thes vileyns do ther cure,
Bi ther vsurpid & extort fals pouste
To be vengable bi mortal cruelte,
Thoruh hasti fumys of furious corage, 2960
Folwyng the techchis of ther vileyn lynage.*

O mighty
Princes, let
Agathocles be
your worldly
mirror; avoid
his example, as
your royal blood
requires of you. O myhti Princis, your noblesse doth assure,
Your passiouns resteth with tranquillite,
Seeth how ther is no mene nor mesure, 2964
Wher a tiraunt cachcheth the souereynte!
Let Agathodes your worldli merour bee,
Teschewe the tracis of his froward passage,
As roiall blood requereth of your lynage. 2968

[How Cassander slouh the wif of Alisaundre &
hercules hir sone/ and Antipater slouh his moder
& of other moordres.]¹

After the death
of Agathocles,
twelve men
and women
appeared before
Bochas; and the
first **T**HE grete myschevys* of Fortunys miht, [p. 244]
The woful fallis from hir wheel in deede
Of princis, princessis, who-so looke ariht,
Been lamentable & doolful for to reede. 2972
But for al that, Bochas doth proceede
In his rehersaile, remembryng thus hym-selue,
To hym appeered of men & women twelue.

was Bersane,
wife of
Alexander the
Great. Aftir the deth of kyng Agathodes, 2976
Ther cam toforn hym worthi queenis tweyne:
The firste of them was callid Bersanes,
And of hir myscheef gan to hym compleyne,
Wiff to Alisaundre, the stori list nat feyne, 2980

2950. his] hir H. 2954. tech] om. H. 2960. forious R.

2961. lynage] langage B.

2963. resteth] wrestith H, R 3, H 5, rest P.

2969. myschevys] myscheeff B, J, R, P — miht] aventure R.

2974. thus remembryng H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 99 verso.

The myhti kyng, grettest vnder sunne,
Which bi conquest al this world hath wonne.

Wiff unto hym* was this Bersanes,*
Bi his lyue, as maad is menciuon,
Which with hir sone, named Hercules,
Wer bi Cassander brouht to destruccioun.
And of ther* deth this was thoccasioun,
Cassander dradde that Bersanes the queen
Wolde with hir sone on hym auengid been

2984 She and her
son Hercules
were slain by
Cassander, who
feared their
vengeance

2988

For his tresouns, which he toforh hath wrouht
On Alisaundre & on his lynage;
And speciali, yiff that she were* brouht
To Macedoine for hir auantage,
With hir sone, that was but yong of age,
Cassander thouhte & dradde, as I haue told,
Thei wolde auenge his tresouns wrouhte of old.

for his treason
to Alexander,

2992

2996

He caste afforn* of malis causeles,
This Cassander, most fals in his werkyng,
That yif this kniht, this yonge Hercules,
Sone of Alisaundre, bi record of writyng,
In Macedoyne wer take & crownid kyng,
How that he wolde of equite & riht
His fadris deth auengen lik a kniht.

Cassander did
not want
Hercules to
become king
of Macedon,

3000

Which thyng teschewe Cassander gan prouide,
And bi fals fraude was nat rek[e]les;
But on a day (he list nat longe abide)
Slouh first the queen, this said[e] Bersanes,
And thanne hir sone Icallid Hercules.

3004 so he first
murdered
Bersane and
then her son,

3008

Thus bi Cassander, of moordre cropp & roote,
Thei moordred wern; ther was non othir boote.

This cruelte myht[e] nat suffise
Vnto Cassander, be record of scripture;
But lik a tiraunt in vengable wise
He dede hem burie, bi froward auenture,
Wher no man sholde knowe ther sepulture.
And thus, alas, which pite is to reede,
He moordred foure out of oon kynreede.

3012 and, like a
tyrant,
ordained that
they should
be buried in
unknown
graves.

3016

2981. sunne] þe sonne H.

2983. unto hym] to Alisaundre B, R, J, P — Bersanes] Bersabes B.

2987. ther] hir B, J, R, P. 2992. were] was B.

2997. afforn] of afforn B. 2998. fals in his] falsli B, J.

3011. cruelte] om. H — nat] nat enuh H.

- He gave Alexander poison and slew Olympias. Bersane and Hercules. To Alisaundre he mynistrid the poisoun,
 Slouh the queen callid Olympiades,
 And of hatreede bi ful fals tresoun, 3020
 As I haue tolde, he slouh queen Bersanes,
 Wif to Alisaundre, mooder to Hercules,
 Which in youthe, bi Bochas rehersyng,
 In Macedoyne was lik to haue been kyng. 3024
- Afterwards he killed Queen Roxana, another wife of Alexander, and her two young sons. Afftir al this he koude nat lyue in pes,
 But euer redi sum tresoun for to do,
 Slouh eek the queen[e] callid Roxanes
 Vpon a day, & hire yonge sone[s] too. 3028
 And she was wiff to Alisaundre also,
 Cassander dreedyng, in his oppenyoun,
 List thei wolde venge [hem] upon his fals tresoun.
- His wife was called Thessalonica, and she had a son, Antipater, Thus euer he lyued in moordre, sorwe & striff; 3032
 Bi weie of fraude cam al his encrees,
 And, as I fynde, how he hadde a wiff,
 And she was callid Thesalonices.
 And as this stori remembreth dout[e]les, 3036
 A sone thei hadde born atween hem tweyne,
 To slen his mooder which aftir dede his peyne.
- who compassed her death because she loved his brother better than she loved him. Shortly [to] passe, myn auctour writ non othir,
 Antipater was hir sones name; 3040
 And because that she loued his brother
 Bettir than hym, he, to his gret diffame,
 Compassed hir deth, the stori seith the same,
 Natwithstondyng tappese his cruelte 3044
 She axed merci knelyng on hir kne.
- With disordered garments and face bedewed with tears, she begged in vain for mercy. Hir brestes open, white & softe as silk,
 Al bedewed with teres hir visage,
 Requered meekli at reuerence of the milk 3048
 With which he was fostred in yong[e] age,
 For taue merci & tappese his rage,
 And taccepte godli hir praicere,
 To saue the lyff of his mooder deere. 3052
- He was as revengeful and cruel as his father. No good branch springs from cruel blood. But al for nouht; he herde hir neueradeel: [p. 245]
 He was to hire, surmountyng al mesure,
 Lik his fadir vengable & cruel.
 I trowe it was youe hym of nature; 3056

3025. nat] na H. 3027. Roanes H, R 3.

3036. as] om. J — this] the R, H 5. 3046. sofft & white H.

3047. hir] off hir R. 3048. at] at the R.

For bi record of kynde & eek scripture,
Seeld or neuer no braunche that is good
Spryngeth of custum out of cruel blood.

Of hir deth[e] cause ther was non other,
That Antipater slouh his mooder deere,
But for she loued Alisaundre his* brother
Bettir than hym, the cronicle doth us lere.
Which Alisaundre, yif ye list to heere,
Hadde in his socour, I fynde be writyng,
Demetrius, that was of Asie kyng.

3060 Alexander,
Antipater's
brother, was
rescued by
Demetrius, an
Asian king;
and after
Lysimachus,

3064

Thesalonices was in this while ded
Bi Antipater, [s]he most infortunat,
Bathed in hir blood, hir sides wer maad red,
Withoute compassioun of hir hih estat.
And hir too sonis lyuyng at debat,
Til Lysymachus, that prefect was of Trace,
Them reconsiled ech to othirs grace.

3068 prefect of
Thrace, had
reconciled the
two brothers,

3072

Whan Demetrius knew of ther accord, —
God wot the sothe, he nothyng was fayn;
But bi his fraude, the stori berth record,
That Alisaundre maliciousli was slayn,
This while Antipater stondyng in noun certeyn,
Til he be sleihte of Lysymachus
Was moordred aftir, the stori tellith thus.

3076 Demetrius by
his fraud caused
Alexander to be
slain, and
afterwards
Antipater was
murdered by
Lysimachus.

3080

To write the processe and the maner howh
That Lysimachus bi fraudulent werkyng
His sone in lawe Antipater thus slouh, —
Fals couetise was cause of al this thyng;
And Demetrius took on hym to be kyng
Of Macedoyne, remembrid tyme & date,
Whan bothe brethre wer passed into fate.

3084 Demetrius then
became king of
Macedonia.

Duryng this moordre & al this mortal striff,
In this processe lik as it is founde,
Of Antipater Erudice the wiff,
Douhtir of Seleuchus, was in cheynys bounde,
Cast in prisoun dirk, hidous & profounde;
And for a while I leue hir ther soiourne,
And to Demetrius I will ageyn retourne.

3088 During this
time Eurydice,
Antipater's
wife, was in
prison, where
I'll let her
remain, and
return to
Demetrius,

3092

3058. Seelden R. 3062. his] hir B. 3068. she] he J, R, H.

3078. This] That R — no certeyn R 3, P.

3086. Macedonye R. 3087. into] onto R.

Which made hymself[e] to be crownid kyng
 Of Macedoyne, thoruh his gret puissaunce. 3096
 But to destroie his purpos in werkyng,
 Ther wer thre princis notable in substaunce,
 Confederat & of oon alliaunce,
 Echon assentid, for short conclusioun, 3100
 To brynge Demetrius to destruccioun.

against whom
 Ptolemy,
 Seleucus,
 Lysimachus and
 King Pyrrhus
 of Epirus
 formed a league.

Oon the firste was worthi Tholome,
 Kyng of Egipt, in armis ful famous.
 Othir tweyne, the stori ye may see, 3104
 Callid Seleuchus, & next Lysymachus,
 And of Cipre kam the kyng Pirthus,
 Lord of [the] prouynce; & as it is eek founde,
 Thei made hem strong Demetry to confounde. 3108

They deprived
 him of his
 kingdom and
 put him in
 prison, and, so
 far as I know,
 he never
 appeared again.

Shortli to telle, with ther apparailles,
 Of Macedoyne thei dede hym first depriue;
 Cam upon hym with foure strong batailles,
 That he was neuer so ouer-set his lyue: 3112
 Take of Lisymachus, the stori doth descryue,
 Cheyned in prisoun, of his liff in doute,
 For I nat fynde that euer he issued oute.

[Off the too prefectys/ Penestes and Amantas.]¹

Peucestas of
 Babylon and
 Amyntas of
 Bactria

NEXT in ordre Penestes dede appeere, 3116
 Whilom prefect of grete Babiloun;
 And *with* hym cam Amyntas* eek ifeere,
 Another prefect, as maad is menciou[n],
 Which Bactrie* hadde in his possessioun,* 3120
 A gret prouynce youe hym bi iugement,
 Mid of Asia toward the occident.

were assigned for
 their worthiness
 to watch over
 the safety of
 Alexander the
 Great.

Thes said[e] tweyne, for ther worthynesse
 And for ther manhod in actis marcial, 3124
 Assigned wern bi dilligent bisynesse
 To waite and keepe in especiall

3101. Demetry H.

3106. Cipre] Epirus P — the] *om.* H — Pirthus P.

3107. &] *om.* J, P. 3108. Demetrius P.

3116. Peucestes P.

3118. Amyntas] Amantas B, R, J.

3120. Bactrie *is spelled* Battrie in B, R, H, J, *the c formed like t.*
 — possessioun] suspecioun B, R, J — Bactrie] the Bactrians P.

3123. ther] the R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 100 recto.

Vpon the mageste in his estat roiall
Of Alisaundre, for trust as chaumbirleyns, 3128
Ageyn thassaut & dreed of al foreyns.

Afftir whos deth, for synguler guerdoun
Made prefectis bothe thei wer in deede,
As ye han herd; the ton in Babilon, 3132
The tother of Bactrie, the stori ye may reede.
Yit in quiete thei myhte hem nat posseede,
For Seleuchus gan a werre ageyn [hem] make,
That thei wer fayn ther lordshipis to forsake. 3136

Made prefects
after his death,
they were
warred on by
Seleucus and
lost their
provinces.

[How Sandrodoctus born of lowe degre cherished
robbours & theuys.]¹

O THER prefectis ther wern also I fynde, [p. 246] Which heeld the people in ful gret seruage,
In Macedoyne & in outhere Ynde,
Til Sandrodoctus, a man of lough lynage, 3140
Caste he wolde redressen ther outrage,

There were
other prefects
who oppressed
the people, and
Sandrocottus,
a man of low
birth, who
became

Of entent poore people to restore
To ther fraunchises, that pleyned on hem sore.*

Sandrodoctus, auctour of this werkyng, 3144
Behihte the people thoruhout al contres,
Whan he be sleihte was c[ro]wnid kyng,
Them to restore to ther libertes.

king by craft,
promised to
restore them
their freedom.
But he did
not keep his
word.

But whan he hadde resceyued thes dignites, 3148
Al his behestis, maad with a fair visage,
Turned, as thei fond, to thraldam & seruage.

Thus whan a wrech is set in hih estat,
Or a begger brouht up to dignite, 3152
Ther is non so proud[e], pompous nor elat,

No one is so
proud and full
of cruelty as a
beggar set in
high estate.

Non so vengable nor ful of cruelte,
Void of discrecioun, mercy & pite;
For cherlish blood seelde doth recure 3156
To be gentil be weie of his nature.

3133. of] in P.

3135. a] om. H, R 3, P, H 5. 3136. lordshipp H.

3137. wer ther also R.

3140. Sandrocottus P. 3143. on he so sore B.

3145. thoruhout] thoruh R — al] þe H, of al P.

3146. corownid] crownid MSS. except H 5 corownyd.

3152. up] om. H, R 3. 3156. shurlych H 5.

¹ MS. J. leaf 100 verso.

- For a time a churl may feign gentility, but like a serpent under flowers he will sting in the end.
- He may dissymule & for a tyme feyne,
 Countirfete with a fair visage,
 Out of oon hood[e] shewe facis tweyne, 3160
 Contrari of herte, double of his langage,
 Stille of his port, smothe of his passage,
 Vnder flour[e]s lik a serpent dare,
 Til he may styng; & than he wil nat spare. 3164
- Sandrocottus harassed his neighbours and created all manner of disturbances.
- And euer lik of his condiciouns
 Was Sandrodoctus, set up in hih estat;
 Vexed peeples, troubled regeouns,
 Set cites & touns at gret debat: 3168
 Whos gouernaunce was infortunat,
 As it was seyn & founde at al[le] preues,
 Cherished no man but robbours & fals theuys.
- He came to be king through a marvel.
- And to declare how he cauhte hardynesse 3172
 And occasioun peeplis to gouerne,
 Bi a pronostik, which I shal expresse,
 Riht merueilous & vnkouth to discerne,
 Which was this, as I shal telle as yerne, 3176
 Riht wonderful & vnkouth for to heere;
 And it was this, yif ye list to lere:
- A poor man of India called Pracatales trespassed against King Venandrus, who sought to put him to death.
- Ther was a man callid Procatales,
 Born in Ynde, which of his lyuyng 3180
 Was wonder poore, cam but seelde in pres,
 Because he hadde trespacid in o thyng
 Ageyn Venandrus, that was that tyme kyng,
 Comaundyng to sleen* hym anon riht; 3184
 But he escaped, the stori seith be fliht.
- But his swift feet helped him to escape, and while he slept in his weariness beside a well, a lion came and licked the sweat from his face.
- God hadde youe hym of [his] feet suyftnesse,
 Bi mene wherof he saued hym fro daungeer,
 Thoruh long trauaile fill in werynesse, 3188
 And [to] refresshe hym, beside a welle cleer
 He lay slepyng, that face & al his cheer
 Dropped of soot; a leoun cam forbi,
 Likked his face, as seith the stori. 3192
- When he awoke, the lion went his way to the forest without doing him any harm.
- With which affray the man anon awook,
 And sodenli left up his visage;
 The leoun ros, sofftli his weie took
 Toward the forest, dede hym no damage, 3196

3165. euer] even H. 3170. at] in R. 3171. fals] om. R.
 3179. Pracatales P. 3180. of] in H.
 3184. sleen] fleen B, R, flen J. 3185. fliht] sleiht R.
 3186. his]om. R. 3189. to]om. R. 3193. awook] he woke R.

Forgat his felnesse and his cruel rage.
Of which pronostik gan thoccasioun
Wherof Sandrodoctus took an oppynyoun,

Caste and thouhte in his fantasie,
Sithe that the leoun is beeste most roiall,
Which nat disdeyned hymselff[e] to applie
To likke the face of a man rurall,
In his nature to shewe hym bestiall,—
He dempte as weel that it was sitting
To take on hym thestat to be a kyng.

3200 Sandrocottus heard this story and thought that since a royal lion could lick the face of a rustic,

3204

His oppynyoun of resoun was riht nouht;
For wher the leoun lefft his cruelte,
He in contrary wex proud in hert & thouht,
Void of merci, bareyn of pite.
For whan that he was set in dignite,
Brouht from a wrech to domynacioun,
Ageyn nature he pleyed the leoun.

3208 there was no reason why he, another poor man, should not become king. Only instead of being merciful and gentle, he was proud and cruel.

3212

Sumwhile* a leoun forgeteth his* felnesse,
Wher-as the wolff wil natureli deuoure;
So roial blood hath routhe, of gentillesse,
On poore pleyntiffs to helpe hem & socoure,
Wher-as a tiraunt of nature doth labour,
Whan he hath poweer, cachchyng auantage
To robbe [his] subiectis & spoille hem be pillage. 3220

3216 Sometimes a lion forgets to be fierce, but wolves and tyrants are always ravenous.

Sandrodoctus, thus born of low kynreede, [p. 247]
In hih estat bi Fortune whan he stood,
Gan make hym strong & vengable in deede:
With noubre of robbours, furious and wood,
Cast hym destroie al the gentil blood
That was in Ynde, & bi his ordynaunce
Slen al ther prefectis that hadde gouernaunce.

3224 Sandrocottus became strong with the help of robbers and the common people,

And with the comouns whan he was maad strong, 3228
And gan the maner of ther deth deuise,
Lik a fals tiraunt, al-thouh he dede wrong
Ageyn his lordis whan he gan arise,
An olifaunt cam in ful unkouth wise,
Hym obeiede, which was a gret[e] wonder,
Whan ther batailes wer nat ferre assonder.

3232 and, riding on a wild elephant, that, strange to say, obeyed him like a tame beast,

3198. began H. 3205. as] om. J.

3210. & bareyn H, R 3.

3214. Sumwhile] Sumtyme B, R — his] al B, J, P, as R.

3216. of] on R, J, H, P, & R 3. 3223. vengeably H.

3231. gan] did H. 3232. unkouth] humble H.

slew all the
prefects and
gentle blood
of India.

Thouh he was wilde, the stori seith the same,
Sandrodoctus leep upon his side, 3236
And on his bak, as on a beeste tame,
Toward the bataile anon he gan to ride,
Was ther capteyn that day & ther guide,
With his robbours, as it is maad[e] mynde, 3240
Slouh al the prefectis & gentil blood of Ynde.

[How Seleuchus the mighty prince was slayn bi
the grete Tholome kyng of Egipt.]¹

After
Sandrocottus,
Seleucus, son
of Antiochus,
appeared
complaining to
Bochas. He
was a favourite
of Alexander
and son of
Queen Laodice,

THAN cam Seleuchus to Bochas compleinyng,
A mihti prince & a ful manli kniht,
Sone of Antiochus, the grete famous kyng. 3244
Which* Seleucus, for wisdam & for myht,
Was most faouered in Alisaundris siht,
Born of a princesse, the cronicle ye may seen,
Cald Laoudice the grete famous queen. 3248

who dreamt
the night she
conceived that
Apollo gave her
a ring

The berthē of hym straunge & merueillous:
For his mooder upon the same niht
That she conceyued drempte & thouhte thus,
As it semed pleynli in hir siht, 3252
Of gret Appollo, the heuenli god most briht,
How she the tyme of hir conceyuyng
Resceyued that niht of gold a riche ryng.

in which
a precious stone
with an anchor
engraved on it
was set. Apollo
commanded her
to give the
ring to the
child;

In which[e] ryng was set a precious stoon, 3256
Youe vnto hir for a gret guerdoun,
Graue with an ankir, hir comaundyng anon,
Afftir the berthē withoute dilacioun,
To yiue the ryng, of hool affecciou, 3260
To Seleuchus, wherbi in especiall
He sholde excelle in actis marciall.

and next
morning, after
her son
was born,
the ring was
found in her
bed, and she
put it away for
safe keeping.

The same morwe afftir the child was born,
Withynne hir bed was founde a riche ryng, 3264
With al the toknys rehersed heer-toforn,
The anker graue, lik in eueri thyng.
Which that the queen[e] took in hir keepyng,
And of entent[e] for his* auauntage, 3268
Kept it secre til he cam to age.

3236. upon] on H.

3238. anon he gan] he proudly gan H, R 3, H 5.

3245, 46 are transposed in B and R.

3245. Which] With B, J, For R.

3263. the] this H. 3268. his] hir B, H, J, R 3, H 5, her P.

3269. to] till H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 100 recto.

- Anothir merueile befill also withall:
 This [childe] Seleuchus (which was a wonder thyng)
 Hadde enprentid eek in especial 3272
 Vpon his thih an anker & a ryng;
 So hadde all, bi record of writyng,
 Such carectis, the stori doth termyne,*
 That aftir hym wer bor[e]n of that lyne. 3276
- Whan Seleuchus, as maad is menciouⁿ,
 The tendre yeeres hadde of his age ron^{ne},
 And cam to yeeris of discreciouⁿ,
 He bi this ryng ful many lond hath won^{ne}. 3280
 Whos knihtli fame shon sheene as [a] son^{ne},
 He weel auised, hardi [&] of gret myht,
 Tyme of Alisandre holde oon the beste kniht.
- In werre and armes he his tyme hath spent; 3284
 Brouht al Ynde [on]to subieciouⁿ,
 Gat al the kyngdames nih of the orient,
 Heeld hem longe in his pociouⁿ.
 But heer, alas, Bochas makth menciouⁿ, 3288
 Al his victories, that dede in honour shyne,
 With sodeyn chaung wer turned to ruyne.
- For whan Seleuchus was most victorious,
 Hadde al Inde conquered in substaunce, 3292
 Atween hym & kyng Lysymachus,
 Of whom toforn is maad[e] remembraunce,
 Began a werre & a gret distaunce.
 And as thei mette with ther apparailles, 3296
 In a gret feeld ordeyned ther batailles,
- On Lisymachus fill the disconfiture.
 Wheroff Seleuchus, glad in especiall,
 Dempte his wynnyng cam nat of nature, 3300
 But bynfluence verrey celestiaall,—
 Gan wexe proud in his estat roiall,
 Nat supposyng in his victorious stall,
 Of his myscheeuys that sholde aftir fall. 3304

Another marvel was that an anchor and a ring were imprinted on Seleucus' thigh.

When he became of age he won many lands with the help of this ring

and conquered India and many kingdoms of the Orient.

But a sudden change turned all to ruin, when he went to war against Lysimachus.

He was victorious at first, and thought in his pride that no one could defeat him,

3271. childe] *om.* R, P.

3275. termyne] *determyne* B, R, P.

3278. age ron^{ne}] *yers Ironne* H.

3281. a] *om.* R, J, P, be R 3.

3282. &] *om.* R, J, P, R 3. 3285. unto] to R, P.

3289. that] be H. 3290. to] onto R.

3300. nature] *aventure* H, *auenture* P, H 5, *auentur* R 3.

and yet he was soon afterwards slain by Ptolemy, Lysimachus' brother-in-law.

For as the processe declareth onto vs, [p. 248]
 How of Egipt the grete Tholome,
 Brother-in-lawe to Lysymachus,
 Fill on Seleuchus bi ful gret cruelte, 3308
 Slouh hym at myscheeff, the stori ye may see.
 Loste his liff, as maad is mencionn,
 In Macedoyne, the myhti regioun.

Ptolemy was one of the heirs of Alexander and the founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty.

And it is knowe of antiquite 3312
 Bi rehersaile of these olde auctours,
 That this forseid gret[e] Tholome
 Was Talisaundre oon of thenheritours,
 Kyng of Egipt, ther regnyng in his flours. 3316
 Afftir whos name, descendyng doun be grees,
 Wer alle the kynges callid Tholomes.

He had three children, Ceraunus, Philadelphus and Arsinoe.

As I fynde, touchyng his lynage,
 Bi procreacioun he hadde childe thre: 3320
 The firste of hem, to speke in pleyn langage,
 Inamed was Ceramyus Tholome,
 Next Philadelphus, a douhtir Arcynoe,
 That weddid was birfadres consentyng 3324
 To Lysymachus of Macedoyne kyng.

[How the too sonys of queen Arcynoe were bi ther moders brother traitoursly slayn and she exiled.]¹

Arsinoe then came before Bochas, her face wet with tears, complaining her sorrows.

AND thus remembred in bookes [that been] olde,
 Deth of Seleuchus wrouht bi Tholome,
 Vnwarli slayn, toforn as I haue told, 3328
 Next in ordre cam Arsynoe
 To Iohn Bochas bi gret aduersite,
 Al with teres bedewed hir visage,
 And gan compleyne the constreynt of hir rage. 3332

She had two sons, Lysimachus and Philip,

This mihti queen, this said Arsynoe,
 Hadde sonis tweyne ful famous of renoun:
 The ton Lysymachus, excellyng of beute,
 The tothir Phelipp, as maad is mencionn. 3336
 And al hir ioie and delectacioun,
 Hir worldli blisse — ther is no mor to seyne —
 Was hooli set upon thes childe tweyne.

3320. children R. 3322. Cytomyus H.

3326. thus] om. H, R 3 — in] bi R — that been] om. R, J, P, H 5.

MS. J. leaf 101 recto.

- For bi thoccasioun of ther gret fairnesse,
Men delited gretli them to see,
Namli women, the stori doth expresse;
And ther mooder, this queen Arsynoe,
Stood in gret hope that thei sholde bee
Mihti kyngis bi iust successioun,
In Macedoyne the myhti regioun,
- Onli be title of ther fadres riht.
Which to hir herte gaf ful gret gladnesse,
For she dempte that non other wiht
To succede sholde ha[ue] non interesse;
But Fortune, the blynde fals goddesse,
Disposed so for thes* childre tweyne,
That non of them ther purpos sholde atteyne.
- For whan ther fader Lisymachus was slayn,
The saide queen callid Arsynoe,
To saue hir lyff koude non othir gayn,
But with hir sonis feerfulli to flee
Into Cassandre, a myhti strong cite,
Onli for dreed of oon Antigonus
Which them pursued, the stori tellith us.*
- But the brother of queen Arsynoe,
Callid Ceramius rescued hir partie
Geyn Antigonus, ye may the stori see;
Yit in his herte he hadde gret envie,
Al-be that thei wer nih of his allie,
That hire too sonis sholde kyngis bee
Of Macedoyne, & regne in that contre.
- For he was set onli of couetise
To be crowned in Macedoyne kyng;
And of fals* tresoun, the stori doth deuise,
Them to deceyue, this was his werkyng:
First to the queen ful humbeli knelyng
He made promys vnder gret surete,
In Macedoyne she sholde crownid be.
- And hir childre, so fair of ther visage,
Sholde be keped* vndir gouernaunce
Vnto tyme that thei kam to age.
- 3340 whom she hoped would succeed to the throne of Macedonia,
3344
3348 taking great pleasure in the thought.
3352
3356 But when their father was killed, Arsinoe fled with her two sons from one Antigonus, who pursued them to Cassandreia,
3360
3364 where they were rescued by Ceraunus,
3368 who resolved to be king of Macedon himself, and slyly promised Arsinoe that she should be crowned queen,
3372
3376 advising her to keep her children in tutelage until they became of age.

3346. the] þat H. 3350. enteresse R. 3351. the] þat H.
3352. thes] ther B, R. 3357. ferfull H. 3358. Cassandria P.
3360. us] thus B, R, J, R 3. 3362. Ceraunus P — hir] his H.
3363. þe story ye may H. 3370. fals] his fals B, R, J.
3374. she] he R. 3376. keped] kept B.

And for to put hir in mor assuraunce,
 Ceramyus swoor (God yiue hym sori chaunce!)
 He purposed, for al his fals werkyngis, 3380
 To crowne hir queen & make hir sonnes kynges.

He swore before
 all the gods
 that he would
 marry her and
 make her his
 queen,

Took alle the goddis ther onto wisse
 And swoor ageyn[e], with a pleyn visage,
 Onto the quen, of fraude & doubilnesse, 3384
 His purpos was to haue hir in mariage,
 Crowne hir queen to hir gret auauntage.
 Thus was he* sworn, althouh he was hir brother;
 Yit in herte God wot he thouhte another. 3388

and thus assured,
 she allowed
 him to enter
 the city, and
 met him with
 great ceremony.

Vnder colour of this assuraunce [p. 249]
 She leet hym entre Cassandre the cite,
 Cam ageyn hym to doon hym mor plesaunce
 With al hir lordis of hih & louh degre, 3392
 Made the streetis hangid for to bee
 With clothes of gold, & in solempne wise
 To alle ther godis dede sacrefise.

Her two sons
 wore royal
 crowns and
 went before
 her down the
 principal street
 to receive their
 uncle;

And thus he was resceyued solempneli; 3396
 The day was halwed & holde festyual:
 The queen for ioie ordeyned richeli
 Hir too sonis, that were so faire in al,
 To be crownid with crownes ful roiall, 3400
 Goon afforn hire in the maister streete
 Gloriousli ther vnkle for to meete.

and with
 a friendly face
 he embraced
 them, although
 purposing their
 destruction.

With felenous herte vnder a freendli face
 This Ceramyus, roote of al tresoun, 3404
 Gan his cosyns benigneli embrace,
 Hym purposyng bi fals collusioun
 To procede to ther destruccioun.
 And fynali, firste he dide his peyne 3408
 The queen texile and slen hir childre tweyne.

He ordered the
 queen to be
 exiled, meaning
 to murder her
 sons; but she
 saw what he
 intended and
 begged him
 to be
 merciful,

But or this tresoun was brouht to a preeff,
 Whan the queen apparceyued his falsnesse
 And sauh hir sonis brouht to such myscheeff, 3412
 She coniured hym in hir mortal distresse
 To haue pite of natural gentillesse,
 Spare his cosyns, afforn hym wher thei stood,
 Of roial merci, so nih born of his blood. 3416

3387. was he] he was B, R, J, R 3, H 5, P.

3396. solely R. 3411. apparceyued] parceyued H.

- And with a cri passyng lamentable
 She fill afforn hym swownyng onto grounde,
 Lik as she hadde be verraili coupable,
 Seyng hir sonis bleedyng *with* many wounde. 3420
 But al for nouht; ther was no merci founde.
 For with* ther blood (this stori is nat feyned)
 Hir garnement was doolfulli disteyned.
- Hir faire face was soiled with ordure,
 Hir goldene her was al to-torn & rent,
 And lik a thrall this woful creature
 With mortal weepyng hadde hir sihte blent.
 And aftir that, I fynde how she was sent 3424
 To burie hir childre, for ther was no space,
 Into an ile callid *Sammotrace*.
 3428
- Is any stori, whiche maketh mencion
 That a *princesse* of so hih degre
 Fond so gret cause of lamentacioun?
 She beyng douhtir to gret *Tholome*, —
 Hir childre slayn be vengable cruelte,
 And to beholde the deth most dolerous 3432
 Of hir husbonde callid *Lysymachus*.
 3436
- She aftir bashed in exil made hir eende,
With soreful *compleynt* hir lyff thus drawe along,
 Til into fate hir sperit dede weende,
 It is no dreed hir peynes wer ful strong. 3440
 And yif I sholde rehersen al the wrong
 That she suffred, it sholde greeue sore,
 Therfor of hir now I write no more. 3444
- and fell to the ground in a swoon before him.
- But all without avail. The blood of her sons stained her garments, her golden hair was torn, and she went blind for weeping.
- She buried her sons in Samothrace. Is there any story of a princess of such high degree who suffered so much?
- Afterwards she died in exile. It would be too painful to rehearse all her wrongs.

Lenvoye.

- T**HIS tragedie sheweth an apparence
 And a liknesse of feithful assuravnce,
 Textite men to yiue fals credence
 Vnto Fortunys froward variaunce. 3448
 Which cast hir baitis & anglis of plesaunce,
 An hook hid vndir of vengable cruelte,
 As this chapitle [hath] put in remembraunce
 Of *Lysymachus* & of *Arsynoe*. 3452
- This tragedy has to do with the variance of Fortune.

3420. many a H. 3422. with] which B. 3423. garment H.

3431. whiche] which bat H, R 3. 3437. callid] om. R.

3438. bansshed H, R.

3447. Textite] execute H. 3451. hath] om. R.

- There is no greater evidence of worldly vicissitudes than to see princes suddenly brought to ruin.
- Is ther any gretter euidence
Of worldli trouble of worldli constauce,
Than seen princis from ther magnificence
And from ther myhti roial [hih] puissaunce 3456
Vnwarli brouht bi Fortune to myschaunce,
And ouerwhelmyd from ther tranquillite?
Seep heer a merour ful notable in substaunce
Of Lysymachus & queen Arsynoe. 3460
- The ring and anchor given to Seleucus by Apollo were of small assurance; and think of Lysimachus and Arsynoe!
- The ryng, the anker of gret excellence
Youe to Seleuchus for marcial suffisaunce,
Whan Appollo be heuenli influence
List with his mooder make his alliaunce, 3464
Sent hym thes reliques of synguler aqueyntaunce,
To sette his manhod in mor surete;
But in al such quaueryng perseueraunce,*
Thynk on Lysymachus & on Arsynoe! 3468
- Neither the vast treasures nor the subjects nor the regions of those who govern this world render them secure against Fortune.
- The vnkout[h] tresours, the gold nor the dis-
pence [p. 250]
Of hem that han this world in gouernaunce,
Nor al the subiectes, up rekned in sentence,
Nor al the regiouns vnder ther obeissaunce, 3472
Princis, princessis, with al ther attendaunce,
May ageyn Fortune yiue hem no liberte;
Who nat knoweth hir vnseur geri chaunce,
Thynk on Lysymachus & on Arsynoe. 3476
- Arsynoe and her children were slain by Ceraunus (bad luck to him!) who pretended friendship for them.
- Hir childre and she slayn bi violence
Of Ceramyus (God yiue hym sori chaunce!)
That bi fals colour dide hir reuerence
And pretendid a maner obseruaunce, 3480
The tresoun cloos of venymous purueiaunce,
Purposed afforn toutraie hem all[e] thre:
The childre slayn, which knewe no cheuisaunce,
The mooder exiled, callid Arsynoe. 3484
- Noble Princes, do not become estranged from one another or hide your rancour under a curtain of duplicity. Remember this chapter of Lysimachus and Arsynoe.
- Noble Princis, beeth war of hih prudence,
Among your-silf that ther be no distaunce,
Hideth no rancour of hatful violence
Vndir a courtyng of double daliaunce; 3488
Lik your herte shewe out your contenaunce,
Void of dissymulyng &* duplicite,

3456. hih] *om.* R. 3460. queen] of R. 3464. make his] maken H. 3467. perseueraunce] aqueyntaunce B, R, J. 3468. 2nd on] off R, *om.* J. 3472. ther] *om.* R. 3476. 2nd on] *om.* J, P. 3490. &] & of B.

Wisly weieth this chapitle in balaunce,
Off Lisymachus and queen Arsynoe.

3492

¶ **Explicit.**

[How Ceramius of Macedony kyng that moordred
his cosyns was slayn in bataile bi them [of
Fraunce.]¹

THE noble poete Iohn Bochas, in his book
Procedyng foorth, compleyneth of pite,
With quaky[n]g hand whan he his penne took
And gan to write the woful destyne,
As ye han herd, of queen Arsynoe,
And how Ceramius, the stori maketh mynde,
Was to hir fals, traitour & vnkynde.

As John
Bochas
proceeded forth
in his book,
his hand
trembled
3496 when he
wrote the sad
story of Queen
Arsinoe.

Of whos tresoun is maad a gret processe,
And how he aftir was slayn in bataille,
Punshed bi vengauce for his gret falsnesse,
Lik as his stori maketh rehersaille.
Which to remembre I cast me nat to faille,
Folwyng myn auctour & procede in writyng,
How Ceramyus was slayn whan he was kyng.

3500 Ceraunus was
afterwards
slain in battle

For whil that he bi his fals werkyng,
In Macedoyne hadde gouernaile,
Thre hundred thousand acountid be reknyng*
Wente out of Fraunce to conquere in Itaille;
The hoost, departed in many strong bataille,
Gat bi conquest thoruh ther hih renoun
Ful many prouynce & many regioun.

3508 by the Gauls,
after they had
conquered
Italy

And as thei rood thoruh many gret contre, —
This people of Gaule in steel armyd cleen,* —
Thei foundid castellis & many strong cite:
Toward Rome thei bilt Milan & Sene,
Vpon T[h]alpies ther armour shon ful sheene;
And sum of them up to Rome wente
Be verray force, and the cite brente.

3516 and built
Milan and
Sienna.
Their armour
gleamed on
the Alps; and
some of them
burnt Rome,
and others
went up the
Ægean Sea to
Pavonia.
3520

3509. reknyng] writyng B, R, J, P.

3510. in] om. R. 3514. contrees H.

3515. cleen] briht B, sheene R, J.

3516. Citees H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 102 recto.

Summe partid up to the Grekissh Se,
 Hadde a custum to chese ther duellyng place
 Bi augurie, as briddes dede flee;
 Folwyng ther fliht[e], thei gan aftir trace, 3524
 Holdyng ther way, *witbynne* a litil space,
 With myhti hand, the book doth specefie,
 Thei cam tacontre callid Pauonye.

They were a
 people of great
 courage, and,
 following
 Hercules'
 example,

This folk of Gaule, which is callid France, 3528
 To conquere londis put hemsilff in pres,
 As most notable peeple of puissaunce,
 Folwyng thexample of ther knihtli ences
 In ther ridyng, of worthi Hercules, 3532
 Which was worsheped in actis marcial
 Lik as a god, and callid inmortal.

they conquered
 many countries.
 When they
 came to
 Macedonia,

Thoruh grace of Fortune in ther cheualries
 Conquered contres, alway foorth ridyng, 3536
 Themsilff departyng in dyuers cumpanyes, —
 Who them withstood thei consumed be brennyng.
 Cam to Macedoyne wher Cerawm was kyng;
 Of presumpcioun weenyng it sholde auaile, 3540
 Out of ordynauce he mette hem in bataile.

Ceraunus
 fought them
 in his pride,
 although they
 offered to treat
 with him for
 peace.

This Ceramius of outrage & of pride
 Dempte hym able to meete *witb* hem of France;
 But for he was thoruh moordre an homycide, 3544
 He lakked grace & poweer in substaunce.
 Yit thei off Gaule, bi prudent *gouernaunce*,
 Offred onto hym, thoh he was rek[e]les,
 With Macedonoyes for to trete of pes. 3548

Defeated for
 his presumption,
 his head was
 cut off and
 set on a stake.

But of* presumpcioun & malencolie [p. 251]
 Ageyn his enmyes he the feeld hath take,
 And disconfited anon was his partie:
 His men gan fleen, & ha[ue] ther lord forsake; 3552
 His hed smet off and set upon a stake.
 But al his myscheeff was to lite in deede
 To recompense his fraude & his falsheede.

But there is no
 punishment
 adequate for
 murder.

Ther is no peyne ageyn so gret offense 3556
 Mai be deuised in no book that men reede,
 Equiualent moordre to recompence,

3521. to] thoruh H, R 3, through H 5.

3523, 24 are transposed in B; correction indicated by scribe.

3534. Immortal H. 3538. thei] the R — be] *witb* H, H 5.

3539. Ceraunus P. 3544. an] & R.

3549. of] for B, J, R. 3558. Equyualence R.

Duli to punshe so outraious a deede,
 Of hym that made yonge childre bleede, 3560
 As dede Ceraum, which of fals couetise
 His cosyns slouh, as ye han herd deuise.

To thynke on moordre, it is to foul a thyng,
 To God and man hatful & terrible: 3564
 The infernal fraude, the deuellissh compassyng
 To ech creature of nature is odible,
 Which to redresse is an impossible.
 O cursid Ceram, I leue thi stori heere, 3568
 Thi name no more shal blotte my papeere!

It is too
 foul a thing,
 hateful and
 terrible to God
 and man.
 Cursed
 Ceraunus,
 your name shall
 no longer blot
 my paper!

[How the prynce Belgius was disconfited and
 brouht vnto nought.]¹

AFFTIR this tiraunt, as ye ha[ue] herd þe cas,
 Slayn in bataile, this traitour odious,
 Anon in ordre cam to Iohn Bochas 3572
 A myhti prince callid Belgius,
 Dedli pale, with face furious,
 Which compleynyd, among this woful pres,
 His disconfiture doon be duk* Sostenes. 3576

After
 Ceraunus, a
 prince called
 Belgius
 appeared,
 complaining
 with a furious
 and distorted
 face his
 disconfiture
 by Duke
 Sosthenes.

This sodeyn myscheef greued his herte sore;
 For al the folk that wer in his bataille
 Wer put to fliht[e]. Bochas writ no more
 Of his knihtod nor of his apparaille, 3580
 Sauf onli this; he maketh rehearsaille,
 Of the Frensshe host, he tellith in certeyn,
 How he was chose for a cheeff capteyn,

His sudden
 misfortune
 grieved him
 sorely. Bochas
 says no more
 about him
 than that
 he was chosen
 a chief captain
 of the French
 army; nor do
 I find any other
 notice of
 Sosthenes,
 save that he
 was conquered
 by Brennus.

And how he cam into the riche lond 3584
 Of Macedoyne with his peepel of Fraunce,
 Til Sostenes the duk, with myhti hond,
 Discounfited hym, brouht hym to myschaunce.
 Of whom I fynde non other remembraunce, 3588
 Saue whan he wende ta be* most glorious,
 He was outraied bi force of Brennyus.

3562. han] *om.* R. 3567. Impossible R.

3576. duk] queen B, R — Sosthenes P.

3585. his] this H, R 3.

3589. ta be] taue be B, R 3, H 5, tauethe R, to haue ben P, taue
 ben J.

3590. Brennus P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 102 verso.

[How Duk Brennyus delityng to robbe & spoile ended.]¹

Brennus, king of Sens, was a conqueror who spared neither peoples nor gods, robbing all.

THIS Brennyus, ful knihtli in werkyng,
Which bi conquest gat many gret cite, 3592
And, as I reede, of Sens he was kyng,
Dispoilled regiouns & many gret contre,
Robbed peeples of hih & low degre,
Spared no goddis, but be violence 3596
Took ther tresours; dede hem no reuerence.

The Greeks used to go to the temple of Apollo at Delphi to consult the oracle,

Ther was a temple gret and merueilous
Bilt on a roche and on an hill off ston,
Sacred Tappollo callid Delphicus, — 3600
In al Grece so gret a god was non.
And offte sithe the people wolde gon
Vp to a theatre which that stood withoute,
To haue ansuere of that thei stood in doute. 3604

where they had answer given them by a spirit of false deception.

Ther trust, ther hope was to that god applied,
Hauyng to hym synguler affecciouun,
As thoh he myhte haue holpe & magnefied
And doon to hem gret consolacioun; 3608
For bi a sperit of fals decepcioun
He gaff ansuere of sondri questiouns
To folk that cam fro dyuers regiouns.

Brennus had no desire to worship the gods of Greece; he only wanted to rob them of their treasures.

Kyng Brennyus hadde no fantasie, 3612
In ther templis aftir ther paynym guise
Nouthur to worshepe nor to magnefie
Ther Grekissh goddis, to doon hem sacrefise;
For in his herte he gan hem to despise, 3616
Cauhte a ioie with al his fals robbours
Them to despoile & robbe of ther tresours.

He promised to share the pillage with his men

Behihte his men, & seid in pleyne langage,
That his desir and his entencioun 3620
Was to be boti with them of such pillage
As goddis hadde in ther pecessioun,
And parte with hem for synguler guerdoun

3592. cite] cure R.

3593. Sens] Dens R, dens J — of Sens] since P — was] made H, P.

3594, 95 are transposed in H. 3595. peeple J, people P.

3596. be] om. R

3618. ther] the R.

3621. boti] bootyng R 3, botyng H 5, boting P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 102 verso.

- For ther labour & ther gret trauailles 3624
That thei had hadde with hym in his batailles.
- He gaff his peeples a maner hardynesse,
Made hem truste in gret multitude,
Hauyng despiht of thynnocent symplesse 3628
Of his enmyes, because thei wer but rude.
I meene tho folk, shortli to concluden,
Which hadde in keepyng the ieweles precious
Of gret Appollo callid Delphicus. 3632
- The people also which was *with* Brennyus [p. 252] Brennus' soldiers
Hadde al the day dronke myhti wyne — were drunk,
To fille ther paunchis thei wer so desirous, — and feeble to
That thei forgat ther marcial doctrynes. 3636 climb the hill
Tascende the mownteyn feeble wer ther chynes, and assault the
Ther hedis toltir & ther brayn gan faille, temple;
The temple aloffte to spoille it or tassaille.
- In ther ascendyng be weies that thei ches, 3640 and the priests,
Vpon the roche thei wer bete down; clad in
Preestis of the temple put hemsilff in pres — chasubles,
Oon bar a standard, a-nother a gret penoun — fought them
Clad in chesiples for hih deuocioun, 3644 bravely
- Bothe on the roche & lowe in ther batailles.
- The people of Brennyus* was incomparable,
Spradde al the feeldis, the stori berth witnessse; 3648 in spite of their
But it is said of old & is no fable, great numbers;
- That no diffence is [in] dronk[e]nesse.
And wisdam failleth wher is gret excesse;
And in a feeld[e], pleynli to concluden, 3652
Victori alway stant nat in multitude.
- For thei wer set, Bochas doth deuse,
Nat to knihthod but to fals outrage,
To spoile and robbe be gredi couetise, 3656 for they were
And stufte ther someres *with* outraious pillage; set not on
Furious rauyne hath brouht hem in a rage, — knightly deeds
And farweel knihthod & marcial noblesse but on robbery.
- Wher couetise is ladi & maistresse! 3660

3637. wer] was H.

3638. toltir J, R, tolyr H 5, toltir (*the r misformed*) H — brayns
H, braynes R 3 — ganto R.

3643. another] ano H. 3647. Brennyus B.

3651. wher] ther H. 3652. feeld] freende R.

3657. someres] om. R.

Besides
Brennus the
Gauls had
two other
leaders, Dukes
Euridanus and
Thessalonus.

Too myhti dukis wer with Brennyus,
Which that wer[en] cheeff of his counsail.
Manus* the ton, the tothir Thesalorus,
Which, as thei thouhte to ther gret auail, 3664
Began a purpos, and it was disauail,
To robbe the temple, the contre & ech toun,
Which turnid aftir to ther confusioun.

Avarice
strangles
the prowess of
many a worthy
knight and
turns nobility
of heart into
cowardice.

Thus avarice with stomak vnstaunchable 3668
Hath stranglid the prowess* of many worthi kniht;
And couetise, hir sustir vntretable,
Hath of hih noblesse ful ofte queynt the liht.
Wher Tantalus regneth, a leoun hath no myht: 3672
This to meene, hunger & couetise
Turneþ al noblesse into cowardise.

For bi the counsail of these dukes tweyne,
Brennyus sette al his oppynyoun; 3676
To spoille & robbe dede his besi peyne,
To pile the cites of al that regeoun.
But in this while, as maad is menciouñ,
Mid ther batailles, Bochas doth me lere, 3680
The god Appollo & Pallas dede appeere.

In the midst
of the fight
Appollo appeared,
young and
lusty, armed
all in gold, and
Diana, with
her keen
arrows, and
Minerva in a
glittering
habergeon.

Appollo first shewed his presence,
Fressh, yong and lusti as any sonne sheene,
Armed al in gold, and with gret violence 3684
Entred the feild[e], as it was weel seene.
And Diana kam with hir arwes keene,
And Mynerua in a briht haberioun,
Which in ther komyng made a terrible soun. 3688

The noise of
their bright
armour terrified
the Gauls, and
there was a
hideous earth-
quake and hail
storm.

The noise was herd[e] of ther briht armure,
Which made ther enmyes for feer almost to raue,
That thei myht afforn hem nat endure,
Fledde the feild for dreed, themsilf to saue. 3692
And ther was herd an hidous erthe-quaue;
And fro heuene in this mortal bataille,
Of cold constreynyng gret stonys gan doun haille.

Brennus,
mortally
wounded, drove
a dagger into
his heart,

Ther aduersaries bete doun & groundid, 3696
And afforn hem durste nat abide.
And Brennyus so mortalli was woundid,

3663. Manus] EManus B, Emanvs R, Euridanus P — Thessa-
lonus P.

3669. prowess] poweer B, R. 3673. &] of H.

3688. Which] The which R.

3694. from H. 3695. doun] to H.

Bothe brest & hed, & hurt thoruh outhur side, —
 Loo, heer the eende of couetise & pride: 3700
 For Brennyus for constreynt of his smerte
 Rooff with a dagger hymseluen to the herte.

This was his eende, vengable & merueilous; and both his
 And his dukis slay[e]n bothe tweyne, 3704 slain. The
 Callid Emanus & Thesalorus, gods of the
 The Grekissh goddis gan at hym so disdeyne. Greeks would
 Of sacrilege seeth heer the greuouous peyne: allow no
 For who to goddis list do non obseruance, 3708 sacrilege.

Shal vnwarli be punished with vengauce.

It is nat holsum with goddis [for] to pleie, It is not
 Nor ther puissaunce presumptuousli tattame; wise to trifle
 For wher-as thei be vengauce list werreie, 3712 with the gods.

Who list assay shal fynde it no game.
 For his presumpcioun Brennyus fond the same;
 For Appollo, Diane and Mynerue
 For his outrage vnwarli made hym sterue. 3716

Lenvoye.

THIS tragedie declareth, who list heere, [p. 253] This tragedie
 Of duk Brennyus many gret bataile, tells of battles
 His extort conquest, & hooli the maneere fought by
 How [he] bi force rood thoruh al Itaille. 3720 Brennus, and
 Afftir how he the Romeyns dede assaille; because he
 His fall in Grece bi vengable violence, had no respect
 For he to goddis list do no reuerence. for the gods.

Took al the tresours & ieweles most enteere 3724 He robbed
 Out of ther templis, & richest appaillle, the temples of
 Gold and perle, & al that stuff ifeere, and all men;
 To his encres which that myhte auaille.
 The riche he robbed, oppressid the poraille, 3728
 Of verrai pompe & froward insolence,
 And list to goddis do no reuerence.

This myhti tiraunt most surquedous of cheere, and no measure
 With couetise brent in his entraille, 3732 could restrain
 Whos gredi fret ther myht no mesure steere, his greed, until
 Til that Fortune at myscheff dede hym faille; Fortune threw
 He lacked myht hir variaunt wheel to naille. him from her
 wheel.

3703. his] the R.

3705. Emanvs H, Euridanus P — Thesaleus H, Thessalonus P.

3710. for] om. R, J, P. 3720. he] om. J.

Ageyns whos fall ther was no resistance, 3736
 For he [to] goddis list do no reuerence.
 Noble Princes, Noble Princis, conceyueth & dooth lere
 stronger than The fall of Brennyus for mys gouernaille,
 plate and mail; And prudentli peisyng this mateere, 3740
 and the chief protection
 of your magnificence is
 to do due reverence to
 God. Vertu is strenger than outhere plate or maille.
 Afforn considred what Salamon* doth counsaile,
 Cheef preseruatiuff of your magnificence,
 Is first to God to do due reuerence. 3744

[How Pirrus kyng of pirothe listnat lyue in pees but
 of pride and presumpcioun in werre, cam to
 myschaunce.]¹

Next appeared
 young Pyrrhus, son
 of Eacides, born
 to reign in
 Epirus.

IN Bochas book next folwyng on þe ryng
 Cam yong[e] Pirrus, sone of Eacides,
 Born be discent to regnen & be kyng
 And tenherite the lond of Pirothes. 3748
 Yit in his youthe & in his tendre encres,
 The froward people duellyng in that place,
 Withoute his gilt, gan his deth purchase.

To preserue
 him from his
 hostile subjects
 he was sent
 to Glaucus,
 king of Illyria,
 whose wife was
 Berenice,

But to preserue hym, as maad is mencionn,
 He was commyttid & taken in keepyng 3752
 Certeyn yeeris for his sauacioun
 To oon Glaucus of Illirie kyng,
 Whos wiff was cosyn, be record of writyng, 3756
 To the seid[e] famous Eacides,
 And she in stori callid Beronices.

born of his own
 line.

He nih of blood[e] to this noble queen,
 Bothe tweyne born of o lynage, 3760
 Wonder gracious to alle that dede hym seen
 And weel faouered of fetures & visage.
 And in the while of his tendre age,
 Oon Cassander, off Macedoyne kyng, 3764
 Compassid his deth bi sotil fals werkyng.

Yet while he
 was still young,
 Cassander
 plotted his
 death and
 sent for him,
 threatening
 Glaucus that
 unless Pyrrhus
 came he would
 begin a mortal
 war.

And his purpos for to brynge aboute,
 He sente for hym bi fals collusioun,
 Puttyng Glauchus pleynli out of doute, 3768
 But yiff he cam lich his entencioun,
 He wolde werke to his destruccioun,
 Gadre people bothe nih & ferre
 And on Glauchus gynne a mortal werre. 3772

3737. to] om. R. 3742. Salamon] Brennyus B, J, R.
 3757. the is repeated in H. 3766. his] this H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 103 verso.

- But king Glaucus took therof* non heede,
 Hauyng to Pirrus so gret affeccion:
 Of hym reseceyued verraili in deede
 To been his sone bi adopcion,
 Purposyng of hool entencion
 To make Pirrus, pleynli yiff he may,
 To been his heir & regne aftir his day.
- Pirrus alway up growyng bi ences,
 Ful amyable bothe of cheer & face;
 And in this while the people of Pirothes,
 Knowyng that he stood in Glaucus grace,
 Chaunged ther hertis, cast hem in short space
 For to restore, alle of o corage,
 The said[e] Pirrus to his heritage.
- Thus bi assent he was crowned kyng,
 Yong, fressh & lusti, & semli therwithal,
 Wonder weel thewed in his upgrowyng,
 Lik his lynage of corage wex roiall.
 The which was cause in especiall,
 He was beloued of freendis al aboute,
 And of his enmyes gretli had in doute.
- The name of hym gan to spreede ferre
 Thoruh al Grece aboute in ech contre.
 The lond of Tarente gan in [t]his tyme a werre
 Ageyn[es] the Romeyns, as ye may see,
 Requeryng Pirrus that he wolde bee
 Fauourable & helpyng of entente
 To the parti of them of Tharente.
- To ther request he gan condescende,
 And of purpos cast hym nat to faile,
 Yif that Fortune wolde hym grace sende,
 With myhti hand & marciall appaile
 For to be lord & conquere al Itaille,
 As dide his vncler whilom, dout[e]les,
 Callid Alisaundre kyng of Epirothes.

3776 But Glaucus
 paid no atten-
 tion to him,
 and purposed
 to make
 Pyrrhus his
 heir;

3780 and when
 the people of
 Epirus heard
 that he stood
 in Glaucus'
 favour, they
 restored him
 to his heritage

3784

3788 and crowned
 him king.

3792

3796 He was
 beloved of
 his friends and
 feared by his
 enemies; his
 name spread far
 and wide, and
 the Tarentines
 asked him to
 help them
 against Rome.

3800

[p. 254] This he did,
 and aspired to
 the conquest of
 all Italy.

3804

3773. therof] heerof B, R, J, H 5.
 3784. Chaunged] changyng H, R 3, H 5.
 3792. al] om. R.
 3795. ech] his R.
 3796. this] his J, H 5, P — a] om. R, J, P.
 3800. the] be H — 1st of] witb H.

- First he had
a battle with
a Roman consul
at Heraclia,
- First he began his conquest in Itaille
Toward Heraclie, a myhti gret cite,
Wher with Brennyus he hadde a gret bataille,
Consul of Rome & lord of that contre.
And to thencre of his felicite,
As [it] is remembred in historie,
Vpon Romeyns he gat that victorie.
- 3808
- and won by
means of his
elephants with
castles on their
backs.
- The olifauntis with castelis on ther bak
Caused Pirrus, the yonge manli knyht,
With his wisdam, in which ther was no lak,
To putte his enmyes that day to the fliht.
And in this while it happed foorth riht,
The Secilians, Bochas berth record,
Among hemsilff[e] wer at gret discord.
- 3812
- 3816
- 3820
- At that time
the Sicilians
were at discord
among them-
selves and
asked Pyrrhus
to be their
king.
- Ther was atween hem gret dyuisioun,
Ech to other contrarie in werkyng;
But to refourme ther fals discencioun,
Thei preied Pirrus to come & be ther kyng.
To whos request he fulli assentyng,
Bi them maad strong, list nat to differre,
Ageyn the Romeyns to begynne a werre.
- 3824
- 3828
- He assented,
and,
strengthened by
them, attacked
the Romans at
Naples, where
he was defeated
and ran away.
- Beside a castell callid Esculus,
Withynne Poile, his baneres he gan splaie.
The same day, nat happi nor vrous,
Contrarious Fortune his power gan affraie,
Wounded to the deth gan gretli hym dismaye,*
Be which occasioun this Pirrus anon riht
Leep on his courseer & took hym to the fliht.
- 3832
- He made his
son Helenus
king of Sicily
- A sone he hadde callid Helenus,
Born of the douhtir of kyng Agothodes,
Whom he ordeyned, myn auctour tellith thus,
For to be crowned, to his gret encre,
On Sicilians to regne ther in pes,
Weenyng therbi tauē had auountage.
And in this while cam to hym a massage
- 3836
- 3840

3808. gan R.

3809. Heraclie] om. H.

3810. Brennyus] Leuinus P — gret] strong H.

3813. it] om. R, J, H, P. 3815. bak] bakkis H.

3818. to the] vn to H. 3820. berth] bers H.

3827. strong] om. R.

3829. Asculus P. 3833. dismaye] disamaie B.

3837. Agathocles P. 3840. ther to regne H, R 3.

- Out of Tharente, which stood in auenture
 For his absence out of that regeoun, — 3844
 Yif he nat cam, thei myhte nat endure
 Ageyn the power of them of Rome toun,
 Which of assent* wer descendid doun
 Ageyn[e]s hem, thei stondyng in dispa[i]re, 3848
 Sauff in abidyng upon his repair.
- Pirrus this while stood in ful hard[e] poynt,
 Wex abasshed & dul in his corage,
 Atwix[e] too hangyng in disioynt: 3852
 Werreied of Romeyns, hatid in Cartage;
 Hadde a bataille to his fynal damage
 Withynne a feeld callid Arusius,
 Ther put to fliht bi oon Fabricius. 3856
- Destitut bi fortune & appeired,
 Void of socour, bareyn of richesse,
 Lik a man of hope disespeired,
 Toward Epire in haste he gan hym dresse, 3860
 Wher he was first, his stori doth expresse,
 As ye han herd rehersed be writyng,
 Bi successioun whilom lord & kyng.
- But whan he cam to Epire his cite,
 He gan of newe ageyn Antigonus, 3864
 Kyng of Macedoyne, a ful strong contre,
 Hym to werreie he was so desirous.
 And bi conquest, the stori tellith thus, 3868
 Withynne a while, ther was no gret lettyng,
 Bi helpe of Fortune he was crownid kyng.
- Nat seuene monethes regnyng in quiete,
 Bi Lysymachus, maugre al his myht, 3872
 He was put doun & remeued from his seete.
 Yit of presumpcioun, thouth ther was no riht,
 He took on hym to gynne a newe fiht
 Geyn Lacedemoyns, & felli them werreie, 3876
 Onli because thei wolde hym nat obeie.
- Whos presumpcioun whan that thei beheeld,
 Bothe of prudence & of policie
 Women wer armed to make a large feeld, 3880
 With multitude toppressen his partie,

and went to
Tarentum,
where the
people were
hard pressed
by the Romans.

Harassed by
the Romans
and hated in
Carthage, he
was again
defeated,

and, returning
to Epirus in evil
plight,

nevertheless
began a
successful war
against
Antigonus of
Macedon and
was crowned
king in his
stead.

Seven months
later he was
dethroned by
Lysimachus and
presumptuously
attacked the
Spartans.

Even the
women took
the field against
him, and his
son was slain.

3846. the] ther R. 3847. assent] ascent B.

3851. abaisst R. 3855. Arusius] Tarentinus P.

3859. despeired R, J, disepeirid H.

For comoun proffit put hem in iupartie;
 And fynalli such was ther ordenaunce,
 That seid[e] Pirrus was brouht to myschaunce. 3884

Afterwards
 he fought
 the Argives and
 was killed by
 a stone as he
 came to the
 city wall.

His sone ther slayn, callid Tholome, [p. 255]
 And many other loste ther her lyues;
 Yit for al that, of pride and cruelte,
 He gan a werre ageyn[e]s the Argyues. 3888
 And at the eende of al his mortal striues,
 For conclusioun, this was his laste fall,
 Slayn with a ston as he cam to ther wall.

His head was
 cut off and
 sent to Antig-
 onus.

His hed smet off in the same place, 3892
 And therof made an oblacioun
 To Antigonus for a gret solace.
 Thus list Fortune quite his presumpcioun,
 Afftir his werris with many regioun. 3896
 Loo, heer the eende of folkis rek[e]les
 That folwed werre & list nat lyue in pes!

[How the tiraunt Aristotyn/ bi trecherous werkyng
 sette a-side the right lyne/ was crowned kyng
 of Epirothes & aftir slayn.]¹

Aristotimus, a
 tyrant, set
 aside the two
 heirs to the
 throne of
 Epirus,

FORTH procedyng, folwyng Iohn Bochas 3900
 I will reherse in ful pley[n] langage
 How Aristotyn, a tiraunt, this the cas,
 Caste & compassed bi ful gret outrage,
 Hauyng no tittle of riht nor heritage,
 Of Epirothes bi trecherous werkyng 3904
 Voidyng the lyne, ther to be crowned kyng.

Pyrrhus and
 Ptolemy, and
 became king
 himself.

Lyuyng too childre, the stori tellith thus,
 Born bi discent to regne in that cite,
 Theldest of them callid was Pirrus 3908
 And the second named Tholome;
 And bothe tweyne bi the cruelte
 Of Aristotyn wer falsli set aside,
 He maad[e] kyng, this tiraunt, thoruh his pride. 3912

Like a tyrant
 he slew and
 exiled all the
 notables

And whil that he thus gan occupie,
 Lik a tiraunt cruel & vengable,
 Of fals[e] rancour and malencolie

3885. R omits to line 484 of Book V. 3886. loste] lefft H.

3896. many a H.

3901. Aristotimus P. 3910. the] om. H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 104 recto.

- Slouh al the citeseyns that wer most notable, 3916
 And exilid, this stori is no fable,
 Onli of malis withynne his herte cloos,
 Al that wer contrary vnto his purpos.
- Vnto the women bi fraudulent sentence 3920
 He made ordeyne, aftir that anon,
 Of feyned pite gaff to them licence
 To ther freendis freeli for to gon
 With ther richessis; but thei wer euerichon 3924
 Bi his bidding & bi his fals tresoun
 Take bi the weie & fetrid in prisoun, —
- Or thei wer war was set on them arest.
 And aftir that, of vengable cruelte 3928
 The[r] childre slay[e]n, sovkyng at ther brest,
 Maidnes oppressid of ther virgynyte.
 But in this while, at Epire* the cite
 Ther was a kniht passyng of gret age, 3932
 Which caste of purpos tauenge [t]his outrage.
- This same kniht, myn auctour tellith thus,
 In the stori pleynli as I reede,
 Was in Greek tunge callid Bellanicus, 3936
 Riht wis & manli bothe in werk & deede.
 And thynge tweyne put hym out of dreede
 Texecute his purpos in certeyn,
 Maugre alle tho that wolde been hym ageyn. 3940
- For comoun proffit he drad nat to* be ded;
 A cause was this: for he was falle in age;
 And a-nother, that put hym out of dreed,
 For he no childre hadde of his lynage. 3944
 His quarell rihtfull gaf hym auantage,
 And heerupon gadred hym of newe
 Such as he knew that manli wer & trewe.
- This purpos holde with circumspect auis, 3948
 And theron maad ful prudent ordenaunce,
 This Bellanicus, old, hardi & riht wis,
 Afforn prouided bi knihtli purueiaunce,
 The said[e] tiraunt brouht onto myschaunce 3952
 Bi help of them that wer to hym assentid,
 Vnwarli slayn, whos deth was nat repentid.

3920 and told the women they could go to their friends and take their possessions with them.

3928 But after they had started on their journey he waylaid them and put them in prison, slew their children and oppressed the maidens.

3936 An old knight named Hellicanus resolved to punish this outrage.

3944 Childless, and too old to fear death, he collected a body of supporters

3948 and slew the tyrant.

3916. most] full H. 3925. 2nd bi] *om.* H.

3929. children H. 3931. at] in H, R 3, H 5, P — Epire] Cipse B.

3934. This] The H. 3936. Helematus P.

3941. to] for to B.

[How quene Arcynoe for the auoutrie don with
Demetrius husbond of hir douhtir Beronices/
ended in sorow.]¹

Bochas next
turned his pen
to the perverse
licentiousness
of Arsinoe, who
was very
beautiful.

AFFTIR this stori Bochas gan applie
To turne his penne, lik as ye shal heere, 3956
To write & tell the froward lecherie
Of Arsynoe, plesaunt of look & cheere,
Which of hir port & eek of hir maneere
Was in hir daies, lik as it is founde, 3960
For crafft & beute callid Venus the secounde.

She was the
wife of Magas,
king of Cyrene,
and they had
a daughter
Berenice, who
was by her
father's bidding
to marry the
son of Ptolemy;

For hir fairnesse youen in mariage
To noble Agas of Cirenes kyng,
And atween hem, whil thei wer yong of age, 3964
Thei hadde a douhtir, bi record of wrytyng,
Callid Beronices; the kyng at his eendyng
In his testament bad she sholde be
Weddid to the sone of kyng Tholome. 3968

And this was doon of entencioun
To cese the werris, that hadde endured longe
Atween Egipt, as maad is menciuon,
And the Cirenes, bothe rewmys stronge: 3972
Bi this mariage that he myhte vndirfonge
In his deyng to sette a fynal pes
Tween these too rewmys for ther bothe ences.

but after Magas'
death, Arsinoe
married Berenice

After whos deth[e], thus the mateer stood: 3976
Queen Arsynoe, most subtil in werkyng,
Ageyn this mateer so cruel was & wood,
Maried hir douhtir, withoute mor lettyng,
Callid Beronices, ageyn[e]s the biddyng 3980
Of hir fadir, that callid was Agas,
As heer-toforn rehersid is the caas.

to Demetrius,
brother of
Antigonus, king
of Macedon.

She maried hire to oon Demetrivs
That brother was, bi Bochas rehersyng, 3984
Onto the myhti grete Antigonvs,
Beyng in Grece of Macedoyne kyng.
But infortunat was afftir hir weddyng,
As in this stori suyng ye shal see, 3988
Bi the fals werkyng of queen Arsynoe.

3977. most subtil in werkyng] made sotle werkyng H.

3984. bi] om. H. 3987. was afftir hir] he was afftir this H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 104 verso.

- And to conclud shortli this mateere,
 Whan this queen, this double Arsynoe,
 Sauh of Demetrius the visage & the cheere,
 His look, his colour, his langage & beute,
 His manli port & his liberalite,
 She was enamoured, of flesshli fals plesaunce,
 Lik hir desir taue his aqueyntaunce. 3992
- Of hir nature she was most lecherous;
 And of hir froward inclynacioun
 She brouhte aboute that Demetrius
 Assentid was bi hir suggestioun 3996
 For tacomplishe, lik hir oppynyoun,
 Al hir desirs of flesshli appetit:
 Thus of accord thei folwed ther delit.
- Lefft his wiff callid Beronices,
 The queenys douhtir, & ageyn al riht
 In a place secre, out of pres,
 Thei lay togidre almost euery nyht,
 Takyng non heed of God nor of no wiht, 4004
 Til of fortune the cas is so befall,
 That he was hatid of his knihtis all,
- Despiht thei hadde of Arsynoe,
 The deede horrible whan thei dide espie. 4012
 His wiff Beronices eek whan she dede see
 Hooli the maner of ther ribaudie,
 In herte she kauhte a gret malencolie,
 Ordeyned knihtis in steel armid briht 4016
 In ther auoutry to take* hem on a niht.
- Liggyng a-bedde, slepte & took no keepe
 Afttir fals lustis which thei hadden vsid,
 Thei fill upon hem euene whil* thei sleepe. 4020
 The deede open myht nat been excusid,
 To al the world[e] thus thei wern accusid.
 With suerdis drawe the knihtis thilke niht
 To slen hem bothe wer purposed anon riht. 4024
- Out on Beronices! crieth Iohn Bochas,
 Because she bad spare Arsynoe,
 Ground, roote & gynyng of this horrible caas,
 Seide hir merci was verray cruelte, — 4028

When Arsinoe saw Demetrius, who was very handsome, she fell in love with him

and so managed that she became his mistress.

He forsook Berenice and was hated by his knights for his behaviour.

In her wrath, Berenice ordered armed men to take Arsinoe and Demetrius in their adultery.

Falling upon them in their sleep with drawn swords, they were about to put them both to death;

but Berenice bade them spare Arsinoe's life, which Bochas says was a very foolish thing to do,

3993. &] his H, R 3, H 5. 4009. is] om. H.

4017. take] taken B.

4020. whil] whan B, J, R 3, when P.

- To saue suchon it was a fals pite,
 As seith myn auctour, a thyng contrarious,
 Hir to preserue & slen Demetrius!
- for she was
 the cause of all
 the trouble. O Beronices, smal is thi discreiou[n], 4032
 To saue the queen that hath thi[s] tresoun founde.
 First to Demetrius she gaff occasioun,
 For which she sholde haue had the firste wounde
 Take for them bothe, and in cheynis bounde; 4036
 And aftir that, this fals Arsynoe
 Texauple of other sholde haue punished bee.
- Arsinoe shielded
 Demetrius with
 her naked body And whil thei wer[e]n thus taken in cloos,
 The said Arsynoe made no delay, 4040
 But from hir bed anon she up aroos,
 Withoute clothes, naked as she lay,
 Ran to ther suerdis in al ther gret affray,
 Wente atween hem, did hir besi peyne 4044
 To bere of strokis with hir armys tweyne.
- and begged the
 knights to spare
 him and kill
 her instead. To saue Demetrius, naked as she stood,
 Void of al dreed[e] dede hir besi cure,
 Hir white bodi al bespreynt with blood, 4048
 Gan to crien out on eueri creature,—
 “Alas,” quod she, “lat me allone endure
 Deth be my-silff! ye been to despitous,
 To save my lyff and slen Demetrius!” 4052
- But it was of
 no avail:
 both died. To the erthe anon she fill adoun, [p. 257]
 To stonde upriht she myht[e] nat susteene,
 Ded, pale & wan, with many pitous soun
 Deth of Demetrius gan wofulli bemeene, 4056
 Enbracyng hym with al his woundis greene,
 And in hir armys, al-be that he lay ded,
 She kissid his mouth, cold, blew & nothyng red.
- Berenice
 afterwards
 married
 Ptolemy. In sorwe & compleynt thus she made an eende. 4060
 I write no mor of this Arsynoe,
 But to Beronices ageyn I wil now weende;
 For Bochas seith, the stori ye may see,
 She aftir was weddid to Tholome,* 4064
 Lik as it was hir fadris first entent,
 Whan he deied & made his testament. 4066

¶ *Finis libri quarti.*

4033. this] thi J, thy P. 4041. roos H.

4064. Tholome] worthi Tholome B, J, woorthy Ptholome P.

BOOK V

¶ Incipit Liber Quintus.

[Here Bochas writeth ayenst hem þat delite in beute & semlynesse, calling to purpos how, A man, born in Tuscan which excellid in beute and fairenesse, and for his beute sholdenot* geve othir occasioun to synne he disfigured his visage with many a grete wounde and spotte.]¹

HEEER Iohn Bochas scorneth & hath
disdeyn
Of thre maner folk he dide see
Heer in þis world[e], which þat in certeyn
Set al ther ioie and ther felicite
For texelle in fairnesse & beute,
Natwithstandyng, as he* weel telle can,
It hath vndoon ful many worthi man.

Record he taketh of Demetrius,
Which in his tyme was fairest in certeyn,
Which caused hym to be contrarious
To al vertu; his stori ye haue* seyn.
But of tho folk Bochas hath most disdeyn,
That besi been to conquere & recure
Beute bi craft, which kometh nat of nature.

The thridde is he that gruchcheth ageyn Kynde
For lak of stature or* of semlynesse:
And alle thes thre be ignoraunt & blynde,
And ageyn resoun ther corages thei up dresse.
Yit aboute beute vertu is maistresse;
And litil worth is fairnesse in certeyn
In a persone wher no vertu is seyn.

[p. 259] John Bochas here expresses his contempt for three sorts of people: those who set all their joy to excel in beauty and are contrary to virtue,

8 those who seek to obtain beauty by art which comes not from nature, and those who complain of their lack of stature or good looks.

16

20 Virtue is above beauty.

6. he] ye B, J. 7. many a H.
11. haue] han B.
13. to conquere] by conquest to H.
16. or] & B, J, P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 105 recto — sholdenot] sloddenot J.

- Bochas tells the story of a Tuscan called Spurina, whose fairness brought women into dotage;
- Vnto purpos he tellith of a man
That excelled al other in fairnesse,
Callid Spurnya, & born was in Tuscan. 24
And folkis hadde ioie and gret gladnesse
To beholde hym for his semlynesse,
Whos beute brouht[e] women in dotage,
Whan thei caste ther look on his visage. 28
- Wyues, maydnes duellyng in that contre
Presed faste on hym to beholde,
Bi thoccasioun of his gret beute,
Nat onli yonge, but summe that wer olde. 32
With lous accesse now wer thei hoot, now colde:
Thus was his beute to many creature
Founde in effect a [ful] pereilous lure.
- and as their husbands were jealous, he prudently resolved to avoid all evil occasion,
- Husbondis olde kauhte a fantasie 36
And hadde in maner a suspecion,
Stered bi the serpent of fals ielousie,
Toward Spurnya, as maad is mencion;
But for tauoide al euel occasioun 40
Of any peepel that such malis thouhte,
Ye shal heere how wisli that he wrouhte.
- by defacing his countenance with so many cuts and gashes, that he lost all his attraction.
- To put a-wey fals delectacioun 44
And alle occasiouns of Cupidis rage,
He of prudence and discrecioun
With many wounde diffaced his visage;
For he dempte it was a gret damage,
That bi thenchesoun of excellent beute 48
Any creature hyndred sholde be.
- Wise philosophers and poets commended him greatly for this notable deed.
- Philosophres & poetis that wer wise
Gaff vnto hym gret comendacioun,
That he koude so notabli deuise, 52
To fynde a weie withynne his resoun,
To sette aside al occasioun
Of such vnleefful fless[h]li fantasie,
That myhte stere women to lecherie. 56
- He saw that all beauty fades like summer flowers
- He knew afforn & sauh bexperience,
That al beute shal waste a-wey & fade
Lik somer flours in ther most excellence,
That growe on hillis & lowe down in the shade: 60
The rose, the lilie, whan thei be most glade,

Vpon ther stalkis — ther preef is alday seyn —
 Been beten doun with a stormy reyn.

And semblabli in eueri creature
 Of lough degre or of hih estat,
 Beute abit nat, nor lenger doth endure
 Than youthes sesoun; with age is ful chekmaat.
 Who thynketh heron, I holde hym fortunat,
 And can afforn[e] in his resoun caste,
 No worldli beute in erthe may alway laste.

64 and lasts no longer than youth. I hold all men fortunate who are aware of this.

68

¶ Lenvoye.

YE worldli folk that reio[i]she in beute,
 Seeth with the eien of your aduertence
 How with a smal sodeyn infirmyte,
 Whan deth & age list shewen ther presence,
 Disteyne al fresshnesse with vnwar violence,
 Ageyn whos myht ther is non other grace:
 Processe of yeeris al beute doth difface.

72 Ye worldly folk, who reioice in beauty, remember that its freshness is dimmed by age and death.

76

Thouh Demetrius was fair vpon to see,
 As ye han herd rehersid in sentence,
 Geyn lawe & riht he loued Arsynoe,
 Thoccasioun founde bi hir fals insolence,
 Because resoun made no resistence,
 Nat aduerting how eueri hour & space
 Processe of yeeris al beute doth difface.

80 Although Demetrius was fair, he loved Arsynoe against law and right.

84

Ful horrible was ther iniquite,
 And tofor God hatful ther offence.
 For thoruh fals lust of sensualite,
 Lost was the bridil of inward prouidence.
 Sharp mortal suerd made the recompence,
 Drownid in teres, whan she dide hym embrace,
 With bloodi woundis disfigured al his face.

[p. 260] Their sin was horrible and hateful to God, and their recompense was death.

88

O noble Princis, lat this stori bee
 A cleer merour to your magnificence,
 Theryn considerid the fals fragilite
 Of worldli fairnesse, which is but apparence
 And transitorie, but so be that prudence
 Gouverne the passage vicious lust tenchace:
 Processe of yeeris al beute doth difface!

92 O noble Princes, remember the fragility of worldly beauty, which is but appearance unless prudence banish all vicious desires.

96

75. vnwar] sodeyn H. 80. ageyn H.
 91. disfiguryng H.

[How the too brethern, Seleuchus and Anthiochus
eche desirous to excellen other fel at discord
ended in mischeff.]¹

No quarrel is worse than one between kindred, especially when they are persons of high estate.

THER is no man þat can in stori reede
Of mor myscheef nor of mor debat, 100

Than of debat þat is atween kynreede,
Tween blood & blood, geyn kynde infortunat;
Namli in personys which been of hih estat,
As it fill onys, the stori berþ record, 104
Atween to brethre that wer at discord.

Seleucus and Antiochus, two brothers, blinded by worldly covetousness, were bitter rivals.

The ton Seleuchus, Antiochus the tothir,
As the stori heeraftir shal devise:
Ech desirous for texcellen othir 108
In worldli worshep; & wonderli thei wer wise.

And bothe blent bi worldli couetise
For to clymben up to hih estat,
Which caused hem to been at debat. 112

Both were mighty kings and both were destroyed by the war that arose between them.

Bothe mihti kyngis, Bochas makth mencionn,
And of o wombe sothli thei wer born,
Vndir a cursid fell constellacioun:
Of froward seed may growe no good[e] corn. 116
And thuruh couetise bothe thei wer lorn
And destroyed bi the mortal werre
That was atween hem, in Asie nih & ferre.

It is grievous to read of their battles and broken promises.

It is to me verray contagious 120
To reede the batailles & the discenciouns,
The false promyses of Antiochus,

With his* deceitis & conspiraciouns.
Brethre of berthe & off condiciouns, 124
Contrarious weies euer thei dede weende,
Froward ther gynnyng [&] froward was ther eende.

Their mother was Laodice; Seleucus was king in Asia, Antiochus in Syria. They lived among robbers and always fled when they fought.

Ther mooder was callid Laodices,
And in Asia Seleuchus was regnyng, 128
Euer at werre, koude nat lyue in pes;
And in Surrie Antiochus was kyng.

And among robbours thei made þer eendyng:
Wher-euer thei fauht, outhir in wrong or riht, 132
Thei neuer abod but took hem to the fliht.

102. geyn] ageyn H. 107. the] their H.

123. his] the B.

133. Never thei bood J, P — to the] vn to H — the] om. J, P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 105 verso.

- Thouh Seleuchus was at his gynnyng
 Shynyng in glorie & in hih prowesse,
 And of Asie he was lord & kyng,
 With gret diffame was dirked his noblesse,
 Because that he of gret vnkyndenesse
 Ful falsli slouh, withoute iugement,
 His yonger brother, that was innocent. 136
- And bi the bidding of Laodices,
 Which was his mooder, of hatful cruelte
 Falsli to moordre the queen Beronices,
 Wiff to the kyng callid Tholome,
 Regnyng in Egipt; but it stood that he,
 For al his poweer, failed of his pray,
 Because that she was war & fledde a-way. 144
- Yit aftirward, of old hate & envie,
 This Seleuchus, bi ful fals tresoun,
 Moordred Beronices bi conspiracie,
 Hir sone also, as maad is menciouⁿ. 148
- The sclaudre aros thoruh many a regioun
 And was reportid onto his diffame,
 Wherthoruh he loste his worshep & his name. 152
- And on this moordre auengid for to bee,
 For horrible gret abusiouⁿ,
 The kyng of Egipt, the said[e] Tholome,
 Gan make hym strong, & cam with peep^le doun.
 But for ther was so gret discenciouⁿ
 Thoruh al his lond, the stori seith certeyn,
 He was constreyned to retourne hom ageyn. 160
- Seleuchus thanne maad a strong arme,
 Gadred shippis, stuffed hem with vitaille,
 Toward Asie he taken hath the se,
 But such tempest gan his peep^le assaile,
 That ther hertis and poweer gan to faile,
 With thundryng, lihtnyng vengabli distreyned,
 To take the lond of neede he was constreyned. 164
- The peep^le of Asie seyng this myscheeff, [p. 261]
 Hadde of Seleuchus gret compassiouⁿ;
 And ther socour to setten at a preeff,
 Thei hym resceyued into that regeoun, 172

150. fals conspiracie H.

167. lihtnyng] levenyng — distreyned] disteynyd H.

169. The] This H.

Thouh it [so] stood, as maad is menciouⁿ,
That affor-tyme for his cruel deede
Thei hadde his persone in ful gret hatreede.

He began a
war against
Ptolemy and
was defeated.

And for he fond Fortune fauourable, 176

Nat considryng hir mutabilite,

He cast of rancour for to be vengable,

And gynne a werre ageyn[es] Tholome.

His men outraied, he was maad to flee; 180

Knew no refuge nor socour of non othir,

But for gret myscheeff sente to his brothir, —

Promising his
brother to
crown him king
of Asia, he
asked his aid,
but in the
meanwhile made
a ten years'
truce with
Ptolemy;

I meene his brothir callid Antiochus,

Behestyng hym for to crowne hym kyng 184

Of al Asie, his stori tellith thus,—

Took treus this while, be sotil fals werkyng,

With Tholome for ten yeer enduryng;

And whan his brother cam with his poweer, 188

Falsid his promys, double of herte & cheer.

and when his
brother came
to help him
failed to keep
his promise;
so they
fell out again
and fought, and
Seleucus fled,
as was his wont.

Thus of newe thei fillen at debat;

Euerich gan other myhtili werreie.

Fals couetise tencrecen ther estat 192

Caused that nouthur list other to obeie.

Mette in a feeld, ther is no mor to seie,

Fauht hand of hand ther hostis bothe too;

Seleuchus fledde, as he was wont to doo. 196

Thus a fals werre of hatreede fraternall

Ageyn nature set hem at discord,

Ech bisi was in especiall,

As ther stori remembreth be record, 200

Neuer ther lyue to been of oon accord.

But whan Seleuchus was thus put to fliht,

The peple off Surrie gan deemen anon riht,

When he fled,
the Syrians and
Galatiaps
thought he had
been killed, and
started to
pillage Asia,

That he that day was outhur taken or ded; 204

And Gallocrecs, a peple of gret pouste,

Of couetise gan haste hem ful gret speed

Tentre Asie, & spoille al that contre.

To Antiochus thei hadde eek enmyte, 208

That he was fayn for his sauacioun

To paie to them a ful gret raunsoun.

173. maad is] is made H. 195. of] for H.

205. Gallogreies H, Gallogreecs R 3, Gallocreis J, Gallogres H 5.

- Ther herte was youe onli to pillage,
 Takyng of hym of gold gret quantite,
 And he, seyng of robberyng the outrage,
 Drouh to the pillours; & oon of them was he.
 And thoruh al Asie thei robbed ech contre;
 For Seleuchus thei gan so purchase,
 That he nat durste abiden in no place.
- Than Antiochus drouh to Tholome,
 Void of sauffconduit or any assurance,
 Thouh that atween hem was gret enmyte
 For a sesoun, as maad is remembraunce,
 Tafounde socour in his gret greuance.
 But al for nouht; for in conclusioun
 Tholome hym took & cast in derk prisoun.
- Ther constreynd of necessite,
 Knowyng no mene to make[n] his raunsoun,
 Bi a woman that lyued in pouerte
 He was help out of that merk prisoun.
 Loo, heer of Fortune a fals condicioun,
 That koude make a kyng withoute peere
 Of a woman to stonden in daungeere!
- To proude folk this may be a merour,
 To seen a prince thus sodeynli brouht lowe,
 That shon in richesse lik an emperour,
 Which of disdeyn[e] list no man to knowe.
 Now is he cast; now is he ouerthrowe;
 Now hath he cause to pleyne, weepe & mourne,
 Knowyng no freend for socour hym to tourne.
- He was afferd to holden his passage
 Bi hih-weies, or for to kome in siht;
 Fill among theues; & thei be gret outrage
 Al merciles thei* slouh hym anon riht.
 And his brother, for al his gret[e] myht,
 Callid Seleuchus, which was a gret[e] wonder,
 Fill from his courseer & brak his nek assonder.
- and were joined
 by Antiochus,
 212 who paid them
 a large ransom.
- 216
- Seleucus was
 pursued from
 place to place;
 and Antiochus
 220 went to
 Ptolemy
 without a safe
 conduct and
 was put in
 prison.
- 224
- A poor woman
 helped him
 escape, although
 he was one of
 the greatest of
 kings!
- 228
- 232 This should be
 an example to
 all proud
 people.
- 236
- 240 Afraid to travel
 on the highway,
 he was captured
 and slain by
 robbers. His
 brother
 Seleucus fell
 off his horse
 and broke his
 neck.
- 244

211. hertes H.

213. robberyng] robbery H, R 3, robbery H 5.

222. To haue founde J, P.

224. in derk] hym in H, R 3, H 5.

228. merk] dirke H, R 3, dyrke H 5, darke P.

242. thei] ther B.

[How the noble quene Leodomia was in the temple
slayn, and vengeance taken/ vpon him that
slouh hir.]¹

- SIXE of estatis, princis & princessis,
Shewed hem to Bochas pitousli pleynnyng,
To hym declaryng ther mortal heuynessis; 248
And first of alle ther cam to hym weeping
The noble queen, hir sorwes rehersyng,
Cald Laodomya, which with ful heuy cheere
Compleyned the myscheef of hir sustir deere, 252
- Callid Nereis, yong & tendre of age, [p. 262]
That weddid was of Cicile to the kyng.
And on the day of that gret mariage,
Ther fill a stryff & a gret meuyng 256
Among the comouns bamaner of risyng;
That whan the queen[e] therof hadde a siht,
To Dians* temple anon she took hir fliht.
- The peple was parti, & roos ageyn the kyng; 260
For which[e] rumour & the sodeyn striff,
Laodomya, ful feerfulli quakyng,
Ran to the temple for to saue hir lyff,
Supposyng in hyr ymagynatiff, 264
That for the templis chast[e] reuerence
Men wolde spare to do ther violence.
- But ther was oon bi whom the striff began,
And was first ground of this gret mocioun, 268
Callid Milo, a fals Cicilian,
Void of al reuerence & deuocioun.
Ran to the temple fersere than leoun,
And wher the queen the auter dede embrace, 272
With a sharp suerd[e] slouh hir in the place.
- This sacrilege was punished be vengeance;
Goddis wer wroth with this gret offence.
And Diana bi ful gret displeaunce 276
Made in the contre a sodeyn pestilence;
And Milo was bi vnwar violence
Turnid bestial, maad wood in that affray,
And slouh hym[sylf] suyng the tuelfte day. 280

247. compleynnyng H. 249. to hym ther cam H, R 3, H 5.
259. Dians] Dianis B, dyanys R 3, Dianas P. 260. peeple H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 106 recto.

[How* Cleomens ky[ng] of Macedoyne was slayn
with his wif and childre.]¹

A FFTIR this vengauce taken on Milo,
Cam Cleomenes of Macedoyne kyng;
And to Bochas gan shewe* his dedli wo,
His gret iniuries of enmyes assailyn,
His hih emprises, his kyngdam defendyng,
And aldirlast how he in his cite
Was bi the sone slayn off Tholome.

Cleomenes, king
of Macedonia,
who was slain
by the son
of Ptolemy, next
appeared to
Bochas.

284

First in his contre, the stori doth deuisse,
Ageyn his enmyes he hadde a gret bataile,
Of his peeple deffendyng the fraunchise
Of knihtli prowesse, as he that list nat faile
For his riht to fiht in plate & maile,
His lieges echon beyng of assent
To lyue and deie with hym in ther entent.

288 He defended
his country
against its
enemies

292

Men and women, & childre yong of age
Wern of oon herte as in this mateere,
Which made hem strong & gaff* gret auantage,
That vndeuided thei stood echon ifeere
Off o corage, off o will & o cheere,
Gretli assurid in ther oppynyoun,
Because among hem was no dyuysioun.

296 and had the
support of all
his people,
for there was
no division
among them.

300

Ther comoun proffit thei dede mor preferre
Than thei dede tresour, lyff or good;
For ther fredam ay redi to the werre,
Nat afferd* to spende ther owne blood.
And fynali togidre so* thei stood,
That of o thouht ech gan hym redi make,
To lyue and deie for his brothres sake.

304 They preferred
their common
good to all
other things
and were not
afraid to shed
their blood for
their country.

308

Thei* hadde an enmy born of that regeoun,
The name of whom was Antigonus;
And he had weddid, the book makth mencioniun,
The olde queen of kyng Demetrius,

312 Their enemy
was Antigonus,
who had
married the old
queen of king
Demetrius and
usurped the

283. to shewe B. 285. kyndam H.

297. gaff] gat B, J, gate P.

299. 2nd off] om. H.

305. offerd B.

306. so togidre B, J, P, H, H 5.

308. brothis H.

309. Thei] That B, J, H 5, Than R 3.

¹ MS. J. leaf 106 verso — How] His J.

- crown of Sparta
 in behalf of her
 son Philip;
- And hadde hir sone, the stori tellith thus,
 Callid Phelipp, for youthe in his keepyng,
 Therbi pretendyng a title to be kyng.
- but he was
 put out of
 the kingdom
 for all his
 presumption.
- Off Lacedemonois cleymed ageyn riht 316
 Ther to regne & take pocessioun,
 Lik a tiraunt vsurpyng of gret myht,
 For to be crowned in that regeoun.
 But for al his fals presumpcioun 320
 He was put of and Iset a-ferre,
 Thouh he with hem heeld a [ful] mortal werre.
- Cleomenes
 was in the
 battlefield
 every day,
 hardy as a lion.
- And Cleomenes that was rihtful kyng
 Was in the feeld[e] armyd eueri day, 324
 Hardi as leoun, dradde hym [in] nothyng,
 Geyn his enmyes he stood so at a-bay,
 That from the feeld he maad hem fleen away:
 His dreedful suerd grounden was so keene, 328
 That tabide hym [thei] myhte nat susteene.
- Finally he
 wearied of
 the constant
 warfare and
 thought it
 would be best
 to have peace
- And on a day diffendyng his cite,
 Heeld in the feeld[e] a ful strong bataille;
 With litil peple made his foon to flee, 332
 Retournyng hom ful weri of trauaille,
 Thouhte in his herte that it sholde auaille
 To stynte the werre hangyng in noun certeyn,
 Til that his peple refresshid wer ageyn. 336
- until his people
 had recovered.
 Leaving his
 country well
 guarded, he
 went to Egypt
 with his wife
 and children
 and lived there
 until Ptolemy's
 death.
- Set ordenaunce thoruh al the contre [p. 263]
 Geyn al enmyes to make resistence;
 And into Egipt he goth to Tholome,
 With wiff & childre withdrawyng his presence. 340
 Ther resecyued with gret benyuolence
 Lich his estat, out of care & dreed,
 And ther abood til Tholome was* ded.
- But afterwards
 Ptolemy's son
 slew him and
 all his family,
 a strange and
 cruel thing to
 do.
- But the sone of kyng Tholome, 344
 Which regnid aftir bi successioun,
 Of fals envie & vengable cruelte
 Slouh Cleomenes in that regeoun,
 His wiff & childre, void of compassioun. 348
 Alas, it was to straunge a cruel thyng,
 Withynne his* kyngdam to moordre so a kyng.

326. ageyn H.

329. That] For H. R 3, H 5—thei] om. R 3.

338. ageyn H.

343. was] wer B, J. 350. his] a B, J, P.

[Of kyng Yero*, Cornelie, and Hanybal.]¹

- A**FFTIR whos deth þus wrouht bi violence,
 [As] the stori remembreth procedyng, 352
 Foorth cam Yero & shewed his presence,
 Of Siracuse the myhti stronge kyng,
 Tofor Bochas ful pitousli pleynyng,
 Besechyng hym with a ful pitous cheere 356
 Of his myscheef to writen the maneere.
 The which Yero, wilful & furious,
 List to presume of fals rebellioun
 For to debate with Appius Claudius, 360
 And to maligne ageyn[es] Rome toun.
 But he anon for his presumpcioun
 Constreynd was, in al his moste pride,
 Lik a coward to fleen & nat abide. 364
 No mor of hym myn auctour writeth heer,
 But in his book[e] as he doth procede,
 ¶ Ther cam Cornelie, of Rome a consuleer,
 Hymself compleynyng of the gret falsheede 368
 Which onto hym acomplished was in deede,
 Bassuraunce broke, of olde Hanybal,
 Which of Cartage was cheeff admyral.
 To this Cornelie Hanybal was sworn 372
 With the Affricanes bamaner flaterie,
 To socoure hym, as I* ha[ue] tolde tofor,
 With the Romeyns to holde up his partie.
 But whan thei mette, the book doth specefie, 376
 Corneli take & fetrid in prisoun,
 At myscheeff deied; ther geyned no ransoun.
 Than Hanybal entred of entent
 With his knihtis inta gret cite 380
 Of Cicile callid Agrigent,
 Wher Iulius Silua, of old enmyte,
 Leid a siege with a gret meyne,
 That he constreynd the saide Hanybal
 For verray hunger to lepe ouer the wal. 384
 Bi a posterne he took hym to the fliht,
 Gadred shippis & took the Large Se.
 And Iulius Silua, lik a manli kniht, 388

Hiero of
Syracuse
besought
Bochas to write
the manner of
his misfortune.

He rebelled
against Rome
and fought with
Appius
Claudius,
and was com-
pelled to flee
like a coward.
Bochas wrote
no more about
him.

Cornelius, a
Roman consul,
came next and
complained
of the deceit of
Hannibal,
admiral of
Carthage, who
swore to sup-
port him
against Rome,
and then let
him die in
prison.

Hannibal was
afterwards
besieged by
Julius Silva in
Agrigentum,
whence taking
flight, he
escaped by sea
and was finally
stoned to death
by his knights.

368. of] on H. 371. Amyrall H. 374. I] we B, J.
MS J. leaf 107 recto. Yero] Nero J.

Fauht with hym, & made hym for to flee,
 Vpon the watir; [&] anon aftir he
 Was of his knihtes stoned to the deth,
 And so constreynd he yald up the breth. 392

[Off the Duk zantipus/ cast in to see.]¹

After Hannibal
 was slain, Duke
 Xanthippus of
 Sparta appeared.

AFFTIR that Hanybal was slay[e]n thus
 And put to fih[t], as maad is mencionn,
 Tofor Bochas *cam* worthi Zantipus,
 A famous duk, ful notable off renoun. 396
 And he was lord of the strong regioun
 Lacedemoyne, & was com from a-ferre
 Into Cartage to help hem in the werre.

He helped
 Carthage against
 Rome and
 captured
 Marcus Regulus.

Bi whos prowesse, to his ences of glorie,
 The proud[e] Romeyns wer put to the fliht;
 Cartagynensis hadde of them victorie. 400
 And ther was take the wise manli kniht
 Marchus Regulus, & brouht anon riht 404
 Into Cartage, & lad as prisoneer
 Bi Zantipus, as Bochas writeth heer.

But for all his
 high prowess,
 the
 Carthaginians
 envied him and
 cast him into
 the sea when
 he sailed home
 in one of their
 ships.

This noble duk, for al his hih prowessis
 Doon in Cartage & shewed to ther toun, 408
 And for al his notable kyndenesis,
 Thei most vnkyndeli quit hym his guerdoun;
 For sailyng hom toward his regioun,
 In a shipp stuffid of ther contre, 412
 Of fals envie thei cast hym in the se.

Yet his name
 will remain in
 the House of
 Fame always.

To his noblesse and famous cheualrie,
 Whan he of kniethod sat hiest in his flours,
 Thei of Cartage of* hatreede & envie 416
 Maligned ageyn hym, cheff sonne of ther socours,
 Taclipsed his lih[t]: but therageyn auctours
 Han be writyng perpetueli set his name
 And it registred in the Hous of Fame. 420

393. slayen] I slayn R 3, yslain P, Islayn H 5.

394. And] First H.

398. com] comen H.

413. thei] that H — the] om. H.

416. of] be B, H 5, bi J, R 3, by P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 107 recto.

[How Marchus Regulus, of his fre wil deied for
the comon wele.]¹

- WHO can reherse or telle* the ground of
werris, [p. 264] Who can tell
The firste cause of such mortal outrage* — why wars first
Wher it began bynfluence of sterris began? Was it
Tween man and man, or of wilful rage, by the influence
As atween Romeyns & folkis of Cartage, of the stars or
To gret hyndryng, considered the maneere, the wilful rage
Of bothe parties, as bookis doth us lere. of man?
- Italiens therwith wer greued ofte, 428 Both the
Namli whan Fortune was ther aduersarie. Italians and the
And Affrican[e]s felte ful vnsofte, Africans
Whan she to them list to be contrarie, — suffered from
Whos cours of custum stoundemeel doth varie, 432 the variance of
Bexperience it hath be preued weel, Fortune,
In the ouerwhelmyng of hir vntrusti wheel.
- The moste worthi & the moste famous, to-day
Afforn remembrid upon ech partie, 436 victorious,
Fortune to-day made hem victorious, to-morrow
And to-morwe she dede ther myht deffie. vanquished.
Now up, now down; al stood in iupartie,
Lik as she list them fauoure, nih or ferre, 440
Ther losse, ther wynnyng callid fortune of werre.
- To summe weelwillid, happi & eurous, Marcus
To summe also ful straunge of aqueyntaunce; Regulus, a
Rekne among othir Marcus Regulus, great Roman
On Romeyn parti a prince of gret substaunce, 444 prince,
To be preferrid & put in remembraunce,
Oon the most worthi & trewe founde in deede
Of knihtli policie that I can of reede. 448
- To comoun proffit was ay his aduertence, was one of
Tween loue & hate stondyng so vpriht, the most just
To nouthur side declyned the ballaunce and upright
Of his doomys, for fauour of no wiht, 452 of men.
Til that the eie off his inward siht
Conceyued hadde wher the trouthe stood:
Than gaff he sentence; & theron he abood.

421. reherse or telle] telle or Reherse B. 422. outrages B.

427. doth] don H, R 3.

¹ MS. J. leaf 107 recto.

- In al this world ther was no bettir kniht, 456
 Bettir named & born of good lynage,
 A semli persone, delyuer & of gret myht,
 Hardi as leoun, riht manli off visage,
 Wal of the Romeyns, sharp yerd to Cartage, 460
 Demure, nat hasti, seyng al thying toforn;
 And in Papynia I fynde that he was born.
- For his discrecion he was chosen consul,
 And for he hadde so gret discrecioun,
 This worthi kniht, this Marcus Regulus, 464
 Chosen he was a consul of the toun,
 And hadde a felawe callid Manlius,
 In armys manli, wis and vertuouus.
 Which for ther expert notable* hih constauce 468
 Of Romeyn werris hadde the gouernaunce.
- and together with Manlius he defeated the Sicilians and Hamilcar, constable of Carthage,
 Ther shippis stuffed, maad a gret arme,
 Ful prudentli with knihtli apparaille
 Thes princis tweyne taken han the se; 472
 First with Sicilians hadde a gret bataille,
 Discounfited hem, & at ther arryuaille
 Outraied Amulchar, the stori is no fable,
 That was of Affrik capteyn & constable. 476
- and sent great plunder and many prisoners to Rome.
 Gat in that contre castellis many on,
 Took prisoneres, stuff & gret richesse;
 And al that pray* to Roome he sente anon
 Bi Manlius, the stori berth witnessse. 480
 And the Romeyns for his worthynesse,
 Alle of assent, because he was so wis,
 Prolongid han the terme off his offis.
- No one was equal to him in knighthood; and he became governor of Africa and Carthage.
 Off knihtli noblesse was non onto hym lik, 484
 Nouthir in armys nor politik ordenaunce;
 And for the conquest off Cartage & Affrik,
 To hym thei gaff of bothe the gouernaunce.
 Brouht citees, toun[e]s to the obeissaunce* 488
 Of the Romeyns, this noble worthi kniht,
 Wher-euer he rood, maugre ther foos myht.
- He conquered all the neighbouring countries,
 Be his feithful laborious dilligence
 Gat al the contres to Cartage toun, 492

456. al] *om.* H. 468. notable expert B, J, R 3, P.
 477. that] *þe* H. 479. pray] *parti* B, *partie* J.
 484. R *begins again here.* 487. the] *om.* H.
 488. the obeissaunce] his obeissaunce B, R, J.
 493. vnto] to H.

Til tidyngis cam vnto his presence,
 Beside a ryuer ther was a gret dragoun,
 So horrible, as maad is mencionn,
 That al the contre of hym stood in such doute, 496
 No man durste neihhe hym ferre aboute.
 An hundred feet & tueyne was his lengthe,
 Lik as writeth Titus Lyuyus. that was one hundred and two feet long.
 Was non so hardi, nor no man* of such strengthe 500
 That durste approche; he was so venymous.
 But bi the manhod of Marchus Regulus
 Islay[e]n was this monstuous serpent,
 And for a merueil the skyn to Rome sent. 504
 Thus in conquest whil he dede his peyne [p. 265] He also defeated the two Hasdrubals
 To gete castellis & myhti stronge touns,
 Geyn hym wer sent Astruballis tweyne, 508
 Callid of Affrik the hardi champiouns,
 With al the power of ther regionns.
 But as the stori maketh rehersaile,
 Thei wer discourntifed bothen in bataile.
 Amulchar aftir cam with spere & sheeld 512 and Hamilcar.
 In diffence of Affrik & Cartage;
 And he was also distrussed in the feeld
 With al his host[e], maugre his visage.
 Thus Marchus hadde alway thauauntage, 516
 Makyng the Romeyns, this kniht most vertuuous,
 Thoruh hih* prowesse to be victorious.
 And wher that he in his tendre age
 List to labour & tile his owne lond, 520 In his youth he had tilled his own land, but now he rode through Africa armed in bright steel.
 For exercise & vertuuous auauntage
 To holde the plouh & leede it with his hond,
 Auoidyng slouthe, as ye shal vndirstond, —
 Now thoruh al Affrik with many worthi kniht 524
 He rideth armed in steel & mailles briht.

496. stood] *om.* R.
 498. hundrith H.
 500. so] *om.* H, R — nor no man] man nor B, R, J.
 503. was] as R.
 506. gete] gret R.
 507. hastruballis H.
 510. the] ther H.
 512. Amilchar P.
 514. distrussed] distressid J, distressed P.
 518. hih] his B, R, J, P. 522. leede] losne H.
 525] In steel and mailles he rideth armed bright J, P — maile H.

- And whenever he fought he was victorious. A golden crown of laurel and a robe of victory were kept for him in Rome. The laurel, which never fades, is granted to conquerors;
- This noble Mark, what-euer he hadde ado,
He was in armys soueryn synguleer;
And in the temple at Rome of Appollo 528
For hym was kept a crowne of fressh laureer,
Forgid of gold, fret ful of stonis cleer:
And in the temple of Iouis was reserued
A robe of victorie, which he hath disserued. 532
- To these goddis, who *can* considre weel,
Of old custum ther rihtis to meynteene,
As for a thyng beyng perpetuel,
Which fadeth neuere of nature, thus I meene, 536
Isacid is the fressh[e] laureer greene:
For causis tweyne grauntid to conquerours,
In marcial actis bi conquest maad victours.
- for it betokens wisdom, long perseverance in virtue, and foresight.
- For the noblesse of this tre dyuyne 540
Sheweth [bi] his odour in wisdam excellence;
Bi the grennesse, which neuer doth declyne,
Long abidyng of vertuous prudence;
The rounde crowne betokneth prouidence, 544
In signe onli, al knihtli gouernaunce
Taketh his guerdoun of long contynuaunce.
- Their strength alone does not entitle them to a crown, nor does a proud beginning establish their glory.
- Ther strengthe onli graunteth hem nat the crowne,
Nor a proud gynnyng stablissbeth nat *per* glorie, 548
But perseueraunce, who list muse or* rowne,
Graunteth to them & putteth in memorie
The triumphe & palme of ther victorie,
The crowne of laureer, in stori it is told, 552
And of Iubiter the riche robe of gold.
- Thus Regulus was honoured by the Romans,
- Who can disserne, of alle thes giftes thre,
Most apparteneth onto cheualrie,
Manli prowesse, wisdam, anon lat see, 556
Strengthe, hardynesse, conquest, policie? —
For the Romeyns kauhte a fantasie,
For his merit is notable & glorious
To magnefie this Marcus Regulus. 560

526. ado] to do R.

532. robe] robbe H.

541. bi] *om.* J — excellence] & excellence R, J.

548. begynnyng H.

549. or] & B, R.

554. disserne] discern H, discern J, R 3, descerne P.

- For this Marcus duryng his lusti yeeris
 Prynce of the werris geyn Affrik & Cartage,
 Took alle ther yonge knihtis prisoneeris,
 Sent hem to Rome for comoun auantage. 564
 But O, alas! whan he was falle in age,
 The geri goddesse, among hir chaunges alle,
 Ageyn this prince hir fauour made appalle.
- For to withstonde the prowesse of this kniht, 568
 In helpe of Affrik, as maad is mencion,
 Cam Zantipus, of whom I spak now riht,
 A myhti duk, the which[e] was sent doun
 Fro Lacedemoyne; which thoru his hih renoun, 572
 Whan the power of Marchus gan to faille,
 His mene slay[e]n, took hym in bataille,—
- Into Cartage sent hym prisoner;
 And ther he lay in stronge cheynys bounde. 576
 Loo, how Fortune chaunge can hir cheer,
 Falsest of trust whan she is most iocounde;
 First fauourable, aftir froward founde:
 This hir maner with hir double face, 580
 Folk that sit hiest to chaunge hem fro ther place.
- For he that whilom hadde in subieccioun
 Almost al Affrik, & Cartage the cite,
 Now lith he bounde & fetrid in prisoun, 584
 Whilom in glorie, now in aduersite,
 Cast in miserie from hih prosperite.
 Fortunis fauours be maad, who looke weel,
 Of brotel glas rather than of steel. 588
- This manli kniht, al-be that he lay cheyned, [p. 266]
 Which had brouht Rome to so hih encres,
 That thei of Affrik & Cartage wer constreyned
 Vnto the Romeyns to pursue for a pes; 592
 And for tacomplissh this mateer dout[e]les,
 Vndir assuraunce made in Cartage toun,
 Thei took[e] Marcus anon out of prisoun.
- Bounde bi his oth, ther is no mor to seyn,
 He to be chaungid for Affrik prisoneris; 596
 Ther for tabide, & thei to come ageyn,
 The yonge knihtis, fressh lusti of ther cheeris.

and during the
 years of his
 prime he took
 all the young
 knights of
 Carthage
 prisoner.

568 But when he
 grew old,
 Xanthippus
 captured him
 in battle

576 and sent him in
 chains to Car-
 thage. Such is
 the manner of
 Fortune:

her favours are
 of brittle glass
 rather than of
 steel.

Although
 Regulus was
 in prison, the
 Carthaginians
 were con-
 strained to ask
 the Romans for
 a peace;

596 and they sent
 him to
 Rome under
 oath, to be
 exchanged for
 their young
 knights.

563. ther] the R. 580. 1st hir] his R.
 590. to] vp to H, R 3.

So that Marchus, feeble & old of yeeris, 600
 Bi Affrican[e]s was to Rome sent,
 Bi oth assured, tacomplisshe ther entent.

The Romans
 valued him more
 than all their
 prisoners of
 Carthage,

For the Romeyns hadde in such deynte
 This noble Mark for manhod & prudence, 604
 And for the foorthryng of ther comounte,
 Thei hadde his persone for wisdam in reuerence,
 Cald of that toun ther wal & ther diffence,
 Hadde in mor cheerte for knythod in that age 608
 Than al ther prisoneris of Affrik & Cartage.

and rejoiced at
 his deliverance.

Romeyns gretli reioissed of his comyng,
 And specialli for his delyueraunce;
 Alle attonis, of herte & trewe menyng, 612
 Saide, "wolcom hom, our ioie, our* suffisaunce,
 Wolcome, merour of knihtli gouernaunce!"
 This was ther vois & this was ther langage
 At his repair from Affrik & Cartage. 616

Received with
 cries of welcome,
 and presented
 to the Senate,
 he said:

And thus reseceyued lik to his estat
 And conveied thoruh al the cite,
 Nobli presentid up to the senat,
 Began his tale, anon as ye shal see, 620
 As he that hadde mor in cheer[i]te
 The comoun proffit than his delyueraunce,
 Saide onto them these woordes in substaunce:

"Sirs, I was
 sent as prince
 and consul to
 Africa. Seven
 years have I
 been there
 chastising the
 rebels of that
 country.

"Sires, be thauys of you echon present, 624
 First bi thestatis, next bi the comounte,
 As prince & consul to Affrik I was sent;
 And, as ye knowe, seune yeer I haue ther be
 To chastise rebellis of that contre, 628
 And bi the fauour & helpe of Goddis myht,
 To your cite aquit me lik a kniht.

"I am now
 grown old.
 Fortune is no
 longer favour-
 able to me;
 and the people
 of Carthage wish
 me to be sold
 in exchange for
 your prisoners.

In this mateer it needeth nat to tarie,
 Ye knowe yoursilff I am now wexen old, 632
 And Fortune is to me contrarie,
 Werbi your enmyes in Affrik be maad bold.
 And thei desire me for to be sold
 In eschaung, bi short conclusioun, 636
 For prisoneres which ye* haue in the toun.

609. ther] be H.

612. trewe] of H, R 3, H 5. 613. our] & our B, R, J.

627. And] om. H — I haue ther] there I haue J, P.

637. ye] thei B, H, R, J, R 3 — the] bis H, this R 3, P.

- And bi the fauour of goddis hih in heuene,
 And bi my felawes wis mediacioun,
 Contrees, provynces, mo than sixe or seuene 640
 I haue in Affrik maad subiect to this toun,
 Mauge ther myht & ther rebelloun,
 And them constreyned, lik as ye desire,
 For tobeie vnto your empire. 644
- To make your lordship* mor statli glorious,
 And tencece the boundis of your cite,
 Whilom bi grace I was victorious,
 Venquished your enmyes wher-euer I dede hem
 see; 648
- Now thoruh Fortunis mutabilite
 Maad vnhappi & desolat of cheer, —
 Sumtyme a prince & now a prisoner.
- Afforn, my poweer bi Fortune was fraunchised, 652
 Now am I thrall & fetrid in prisoun;
 Myn olde triumphes be neweli now disguised,
 And [my] victories oppressid & bor doun.
 With this considered the transmutacioun 656
 Of youthe passid & myn vnweeldi age,
 Lital wonder thouh dul be my corage.
- Yit ther is a thyng that draweth along my lyff,
 Which in myn herte hath sette gret gladnesse: 660
 To your encres how in this mortal striff
 Bi my labour & knihtli bisynesse
 The marcial princis, famous in worthynesse,
 With al the knihtis most soueryn of renoun 664
 Souht thoruh Affrik, be now in your prisoun.
- Bi whos absence feebliid is Cartage;
 The contre porissed, brouht to disencres.
 Seyng that I am dul and falle in age 668
 Geyn Affricans to put my-silff in pres,
 Causyng your enmyes [to] pursue for the pes
 Beschauing of me, that may but smal auaille,
 For Affrik knihtis most expert in bataille. 672

"Once I was
 a prince and
 victorious; but
 now I am a
 prisoner of war.

"My former
 triumphs are
 transformed,
 my victories
 borne down, my
 youth passed.

"Yet it cheers
 me to know
 that through
 my labour you
 have the best
 knights of
 Africa in your
 prison,

which weakens
 your enemies.
 They now
 ask to have
 them back again
 in exchange for
 me,

641. this] his R.

645. lordship] Empire B, R, J.

655. &] an R.

659. a thyng] a nothir H, R 3 — that] om. J — along] a length P.

671. of] for H, R 3.

672. Affrik] be Affrik H, þaffrike R 3, the Auffryk H 5.

- so that they
may begin
a new war
on your city. Thei stonde in hope of ther delyueraunce [p. 267]
Beschauung of me, now sent out of prisoun,
Of entent tencrecen ther puissaunce,
Of newe to gynne a werre upon your toun. 676
Now taketh good heed, & of discrecioun
Peiseth of prudence this thyng that I haue told,
Ther youthe considred, & I am feeble & old.
- "I am feeble
and old, they
lusty and fresh; I am consumyd & wered in the werris; 680
Fortune contrarie, I feeble to bere armure:
Thei lusti fressh, ther name spredde ful ferr is,
And in the feeld thei able to endure.
I vnweldi, & lik a creature 684
Mor sembl[abl]e to drawe hom to my graue,
Than to be armyd this cite for to saue.
- and I am more
anxious for the
profit of your
commonwealth
than for my
own deliverance. And in effect, I haue mor cheer[i]te,
Of verray feith withoute variaunce, 688
Vnto the proffit of your comounte
Than to the mateer of my delyueraunce;
Too thynges peised & weied in ballaunce:
Of Affrik knyhtis thexpert worthynesse, 692
In me the constreynt off agis feebilnesse.
- "I cannot do
better than die
for the
community." And to conclude upon this mateer,
I myhte neuere, as semeth onto me,
As of knihthod disseruen the laureer 696
Nor the tryumphe in this famous cite,
Bet than deie tencrece the comounte,
And thus auised, of herte & hool corage
Yeld up the sperit of myn vnweeldi age." 700
- Persevering in
this intention, In this purpos, he, stedfast as a wall,
Of o will and oon perseueraunce,
Hymself comendyng to goddis inmortal,
Ches for to deie off politik constaunce, 704
And to preferre bi notable purueyaunce
The comoun proffit: this was his motiff, —
Set aside good, tresour and his lyff.
- he returned to
Carthage a
prisoner. Riht weel cheerid, stable of his visage, 708
Of parfit loue he hadde onto the toun,
He is repaired ageyn onto Cartage,

676. newe] now R. 677. taketh] take H.

682. name] fame H, R 3, H 5.

685. semblable] seembly R.

702. oon] o H. 710. onto] in to H.

- Tharticles kept and the condicioun
 At the departyng from Affrik regioun: 712
 This to seyne, texpleite ther lust certeyne,
 Or prisoneer he to resorte ageyn.
 At his departyng the Romeyn senatours
 Gan wexe pale off compassioun, 716
 To seen the pauys of al ther old socours
 As prisoneer departe out of the toun.
 Princessis, ladies fill a-swowne doun;
 Childre wepte & cried for pite, 720
 "Farweel upholdere, cheeff wal of our* cite!"
 Was euer founde any trewer kniht? Never was there
 Which of his owne feithful mocioun, a truer kniht.
 Wher he was free, & poweer hadde & myht, 724
 Taue stonde at large bi his eleccioun,
 To keepe his promis repaired to prisoun!
 What shal I write of his noblesse or shewe? —
 To fynde oon lik hym, I reede but of a fewe! 728
 And whan he cam ageyn with his massage,
 Knowyng thentent of this worthi knyht,
 Most furiousli the people of Cartage,
 In the presence of euery maner wiht, 732
 Ordeyned han a torment anon riht.
 First the liddis of his eien tweyne,
 Thei kutte hem of to encrece his peyne,
 That he nat sholde slepen in prisoun, 736
 But euer wachche with peyne intollerable,
 And for the constreynt of his passioun
 Crie & compleyne with sihhis lamentable.
 And aftir this, thei token a pleyⁿ table, 740
 Fret ful of nailles sharp[e] whet & grounde,*
 And therupon naked thei hym bounde.
 Another table thei leide on hym aloffte,
 Nailed also; and atween thes tweyne 744
 Thei couchid hym; his* bed was ful vnsoffte,
 Most importable, so hidous was the peyne;
 The blood ran out of eueri senew & veyne.
 This was his torment, alas, a cruel deth! — 748
 Of worthi Marchus til he yald up the breth.

711. tharticle H. 712. At] And R. 721. our] ther B, J, R.

728. reede but of] fynde but P — of] om. P.

729. his] this H. 741. grounde] Igrounde B, R, J.

745. his] this B, R, J, R 3, P.

- Who ever read
of such a
steadfast prince? Who radde in bookes or euer dede see
Of any princis so stedfast & so stable
As whilom wern in Rome the cite, 752
Or in ther conquest so longe perdurable,
On vertu foundid, of corage vnchaungable!
Rekne up alle that euer wer in that toun,
And to this Marchus mak no comparisoun. 756
- Regulus
eclipses the glory
of the Camilli,
Papirii, Scipios,
of Curtius and
Fabricius, Rekne Kamylls, Papires, Scipiouns, [p. 268]
Notable worthi for many gret victorie;
Rekne up alle ther othir* champiouns,
Cursius, Fabricus famous of memorie. 760
But this Regulus eclipseth al ther glorie
And surmounteth, bi report of renoun,
Al thes forsaidē in comparisoun.
- of the rich
Lucius, Scaurus,
Caius Delius,
Æmilius, Rekne up the foure that whilom wer so riche, 764
The firste of them callid Lucius,
Other tweyne of condicioun liche,
As was Scavrus & Gayus Delius;
And forget nat the grete Emelius, — 768
But for al ther gret pecessioun,
Make to Marchus no comparisoun.
- and Crassus,
whose throat
the Assyrians
poured full of
molten gold. Remembre on Crassus, of whom it is told,
The Assiriens to staunche his couetise 772
Pored in his throte, strangled hym with gold;
So he deide, the stori doth deuise.
And thouh thes foure wendyn ha be wise,
Gretli comendid thoruh fals oppynyoun, 776
Of them to Marchus mak no comparisoun.
- He left his
freedom and
wealth behind
him and died
for the welfare
of his country. Touchyng this Mark, lat men beholde & see:
He lefte his tresour, his fredam & richesse,
And for the proffit of the comounte 780
Forsook his freendis, Bochas berth witnessse;
To foorthre his toun deied in distresse,
To keepe his feith resorted to prisoun, —
Mak of non othir to hym comparisoun. 784

752. in] in the R.

759. othir] worthi B, R, J.

762. of] & H, R 3, H 5.

766. condiciouns H.

771, 72 are transposed in R.

771. on] of R.

Myn auctour heer put in remembraunce
 Summe that hadde gold, stonis & perre,
 Summe that hadde of richesse habundaunce,
 And of othir that stood in dignite,
 And summe that hadde worldli prosperite, —
 Set al aside, & conclude on resoun,
 Tween them & Marchus is no comparisoun.

788 Some men had
 great riches;
 others stood in
 high dignity, or
 in worldly
 prosperity.
 Make no
 comparison
 between them
 and Marcus.

Princis may lyue aftir ther ententis,
 Aftir ther lustis, after ther delices,
 Of gold & purpore were riche garnementis,
 Aftir ther poweer frowardli in vices,
 Graunte ther mynistris in cites gret offices, —
 Tween al ther pompe & veyn ambicioun
 And atween Mark mak no comparisoun.

792 Princes may live
 according to
 their desires and
 wear rich
 garments of
 gold and purple;
 but between all
 their pomp and
 vain ambition
 and Marcus
 make no
 comparison.

Alle these thynges remembred in certeyn,
 Weel considred & Iput in mynde,
 Ther wer* in Rome but fewe such[e] seyn,
 To comoun proffit that founde wer* so kynde.
 And, til I may such another fynde
 In al this book[e], turnyng up-so-doun,
 I will to hym make no comparisoun.

800 Nor will I do
 so until I find
 another such.

804

[Lenvoye.]

THIS tragedie, who þat can take heede,
 Is entermedlid *with* wo & gladnesse:
 Ioie for [the] worshep & synguler manhede
 That was in Mark bi excellent noblesse;
 To reede his fall it is gret heuynesse,
 Which ches to deie, wher-as he stood[e] fre,
 Onli for proffit of the comounte.

808 In this tragedy
 are mingled joy
 for the manhood
 of Marcus and
 sorrow for
 his fall.

812

To keepe his oth, pleynli, as I reede,
 Maad in Cartage, ther beyng in distresse,
 This noble prince constreyned off no neede,
 But of fre will, myn auctour doth expresse,
 Fro Rome ageyn[e] thidir gan hym dresse
 To suffre torment, off his free volunte,
 Onli for proffit of the comounte.

816 Of his own free
 will he chose to
 die for the
 profit of the
 community.

786. perre] peerle H. 789. And] of H, R 3.
 790. aside] on side H. 801. wer] was B, R, J, P.
 802. wer] was, B, R, J. 808. the] om. R.

- His story should
be crowned with
golden letters,
- This stori sholde crowned been in deede 820
With golden lettres, for to bern witness,
How [the] seid Mark, hauyng of deth no dreede,
To sette Rome fro werre in sekirnesse, —
Whos hih renoun, most souereyn of prowesse, 824
May neuer eclipse bi non antiquite,
Which ches to deie to foorthre the comounte.
- and he deserved
the reward of
triumph, the
garment of
purple fret with
precious stones
and the laureate
wreath of
victors.
- He disserued for to han the meede,
Of tryumphe and marcial worthynesse, 828
And of Iubiter to were the purpil weede,
Fret ful of stonis, most heuenli of brihtnesse,
The laureat crown conseruyng his grennesse,
Graunted to victours, who list considre & see, — 832
Which ches to deie to foorthre the comounte.
- Noble Princes,
who govern the
people of this
world, take heed
to this story,
and let Marcus
be to you a
mirror.
- Noble Princis, which that gouerne & leede
Al worldli people, taketh heed in your hyhnesse
To this stori, trewe as is the creede, 836
Takyng exauple, doth your bisynesse
Ay to supporte & meynteene rihtwisnesse,
And lat Marchus to you a merour be,
Which ches to deie to foorthre the comounte. 840

[How Tholome kyng of Egipt callid Philopater slouh
fader & moder & his wif in lechery spende his
lif & mischeuesly ended.]¹

- Next in order,
Ptolemy
Philopator, who
slew his father,
mother and
sister, appeared
complaining to
Bochas.
- N**EXT to Bochas in ordre compleynyng, [p. 269]
Vicious of lyff, ther cam Tholome
Cald Philopater, & was of Egipt kyng.
In tendre age borrible cruelte 844
Slouh fader, mooder & suster, ye may see,
He to be crownid, it is maad mencion,
To regne allone in that regeoun.
- He was inclined
to every vice,
and murdered his
wife and spent
his youth in
riot and outrage.
- He was disposed onto eueri vice, 848
Froward to vertu & to al doctryne,
Slouh his wiff callid Erudice,
Lefft his spouse, took a concubyne,
Wasted his lyff, gan hymself enclyne 852
To al riot, surfet & outrage;
And in this wise he spent his yonge age.

822. the] *om.* J.

841. in ordre to Bochas R 3, P. 843. &] that P, H 5.

844. borrible] horrible H, J, R 3, be horryble,
H 5, by horrible P. 848. onto] to H. 850. Euridice P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 109 recto.

- Thus was disclaundred his roial mageste,
 In lecherous lustis wached al [the] niht,
 A-bedde til noon, ageyn al honeste,
 Of fals excesse shoop hym anon riht,
 Whan he aroos, to drynke* ageyn[e]s myht
 Gorge upon gorge tafforce his lecherie.
 The longe day he spente in glotonye.
- I wexe veri the processe for to write
 Of this tiraunt, vicious and wood.
 It is contagious the processe to endite,
 Because thexample doth harm & no good.
 And of vengauce thus with hym it stood:
 Of sodeyn myscheeff I reede he dide fyne,
 Enbracid in armys of his concubyne.
- Agothodia pleynli was hir name,
 And hadde a sone callid Agathodes,
 Vicious bothe & sclaunderid bi diffame,
 Noised by report, thei wer so rek[e]les.
 Bothe attonis take in a sodeyn pres,
 With ther allies alle attonis fett,
 And bi iust doom lad to the gibett.

856 Against all decency he lay abed till noon, and stuffed and drank until night to fortify his lust.

860

864 It is tiresome and odious to write about this tyrant. His example does harm and no good. He died suddenly in the arms of his concubine, Agathoclea; and she and her son and all their kin were afterwards hanged.

868

872

[How Abithomarus & viridomarus dukis of Fraunce,
 affir grete batailes bi Romayns were slayn.]¹

- N**EXT Philopater, callid Tholome,
 Per cam in ordre a worthi duk of Fraunce,
 Abitomarus; & out of that contre
 Rood into Grece with a gret puissaunce.
 And first he gan to make his ordenaunce
 Ageyn Romeyn[e]s, al-be thei wer ferre,
 Proudli with them for to gynne a werre.
- But thei of Rome to ther confusioun,
 Bi ther bisshoppis & preestis gan deuise
 To vse a cursid fals superstitioun:
 Vnto ther goddis in ful cruel wise
 To offre up men banewe sacrefise,

876 After Ptolemy Philopator came Britomaris, who rode from France into Greece and made war on Rome.

880

884 The Romans had a cursed custom of burying people alive as an offering to their gods,

856. the] *om.* R.

859. drynken B. 868. Enbracyng in þe Armys H.
 869. Agathodia J, Agathoclea P. 874. alle] both H.

878. Britomarus P.

885. fals cursid H, R 3. 887. banewe] bi newe R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 109 verso.

- And* burie hem quyk, in Bochas thus I reede, 888
 Bi a fals hope thei better for to speede.
- and now they took ten of the French and Greeks, five men and five women, and sacrificed them; but their gods were angry.
 Of Fraunse & Grece thei took[e] ten in noumbre,
 Halff men & women, togidre tweyne & tweyne;
 And bi fals moordre thei dede hem encoumbre, 892
 Buried hem quik — ther deth was ful sodeyne.
 At this sacrefise the goddis gan disdeyne,
 And to the Romeyns wex contrarious
 For ther fals rihtis supersticious. 896
- In this year, 521 after the foundation, Rome was governed by three consuls,
 And bi record of olde cronicleres,
 The yeer fyue hundred fro ther fundacioun
 And on & twenti, tho beyng consuleris
 Thre in noumbre, as maad is mencionn,
 Which gouernyd & reuled al the toun. 900
 The firste callid Lucius Emylius,
 And the secounde Catulus Gaius,
- who were assigned by the Senate to defend the city.
 Attilius Regulus the thridde consuleer. 904
 Bi al the senat ordeyned wer thes thre,
 As I haue told, the silue same yeer
 For to gouerne & reule ther cite,
 And to preserue hem from al aduersite 908
 Ageyn too peepelis, of Gaule & Lumbardie,
 Which than werreied of malis & envie.
- But there were so many Lombards and other fell foreigners,
 Of which[e] werre the Romeyns stood in doute,
 The senatours & alle the citeseyns, 912
 Because ageyn them ther cam so gret a route
 Of Lumbardis bi this halff the mounteyns,
 Ioynd togidre with many fell foreyns,
 Which stood departid, as maad is remembraunce, 916
 Fro them of Rome & fro ther obeissaunce.
- barbarous and savage, and unreasonable in their fury,
 The peepel rud[e], bestial & vnstable,
 Togidre assemblid, wood & furious,
 Of multitude verray innumerable, 920
 Vengable of herte, of corage despitous,
 Void of al resoun, sodenli furious,
 As seith Bochas, I can no ferther gon; —
 Ther soudiours bar gisarmys euerichon. 924

888. And] To B, R, J, P — thus] as H, R 3.

889. thei] the R 3, H 5, P. 894. At] And R.

896. ther] the R.

903. Catalus Caius P. 907. reule] om. R. 908. fro H.

912. 2nd the] their H.

- And Gisarmes of Gisarme* thei wer callid, [p. 270] that the
Romans stood
in great dread.
Toward Rome them hastyng day be day,
Of gret labour the footmen sore appallid;
But al* ther trust on multitude lay. 928
Of whos komyng Roome stood in affray,
And specialli the consuleris thre,
That out wer sent to fihte for the cite.
- Foure score thousand, as writ the cronycleer, 932 Although each
consul had an
army of four
score thousand
men, they were
outnumbered by
their enemies.
Mihti [men] to stonden at diffence,
In his felashepe hadde ech consuleer.
And of the Gysarme3 noumbred in sentence, 936
Thre hundred thousand, bi sturdi violence
Goyng on foote, I fynde that thei hadde,
Eihte thousand ouer, that al the feeldis spradde.
- I rekne nat them that rood on hors[e]bak, who covered
the earth with
their shadow,
and were led by
Britomaris and
Viridomarus. 940
Which sexe & thretti thousand wer in noumbre,
Sixe hundred ouer, purposed for the wrak,
Fynalli the Romeyns to encoumbre.
The shadwe of them gaff so gret an ombre,
That on the soil, which afforn was greene, 944
Ther was vnnethe any sonne seene.*
- Ther capteyn was Abithomarus,
A manli man & aful worthi kniht. 948
And with hem wente Virydomarus,
A-nother capteyn, in steel armyd briht.
Tween them and Romeyns longe laste the fiht;
But on the parti of Rome the cite
Was slayn a consul that was oon of the thre. 952
- Aftir whos deth, of fortune anon riht,
On the parti of them of Rome toun
Eihte* hundred thousand took hem to the fiht.
And thus began the fame & the renoun 956
Of Abithomarus, as maad is mencioun,
Of which victorie his herte was maad fayn.
And on his parti wer thre thousand slayn.

925. Gisarme] Gisarmes B, R, J, P.

928. al] ay B, R, J, P.

933. men] *om.* MSS., P. 934. consuleer] a Consuler H.935. the] *om.* H, R 3 — number P. 941. hundreth R.

944. which] bat H. 945. seene] sheene B, R, J, shene P.

947. worthi] manly H. 952. the] *om.* R.

955. Eihte] viij B, One P. 957. Britomarus P.

- Then the
Romans rallied
and slew
40,000
Gisarmes.
- But the Romeyns resorted been ageyn; 960
And aftir that hadde a strong bataille.
And in the feeld so manli thei wer seyn,
And so proudli ther enmyes dide assaille,
That, as myn auctour mak[e]th rehersaille, 964
Of the Gisarmes, longe or it was niht,
Fourti thousand wer slayn in that fiht.
- They fought
once more
beside the
Po;
- The thridde tyme, with helpe of them of France
Ioyned to Lombardes & folk of Gaule also, 968
Thei fauht ageyn, al out off ordenaunce,
Beside the ryuer that callid is the Poo,
Wher bothe batailles togidre hadde adoo.
And, as I fynde, consuleris tweyne 972
The Romeyn sheltrouns knihtli did ordeyne.
- and the
Romans, led
by Manlius
Torquatus and
Flaminius
Flaccus, slew
49,000 of their
enemies.
- Manlius Torquat callid was the ton;
Flamynus Flakkus was *with hym* ifeere:
And with the Romeyns togidre forth* thei gon 976
Toward that ryuer with a ful manli cheere;
In which bataille, the stori doth vs lere,
Nyne and fourti thousand slayn on that day
Of ther enmyes, that non ne wente away. 980
- Britomaris was
made prisoner
and led to the
Capitol in
chains.
- Abithomarus was take prisoner,
In tokne of tryumphe brouht to Rome town,
To the Capitoile, with a ful pale cheer,
Lad bounde in cheynis, ther geyned no raunsoun: 984
Thus hath Fortune appallid his hih renoun.
And in tokne of his disconfiture,
Offrid to goddis was his cote armurè.
- Atropos broke
the thread of
his life.
Viridomarus was
slain in the
field.
- Thus Lachesis his lyues threed gan drawe 988
Til Antropos it brak with ful gret peyne.
Viridomarus, that was his fellawe,
Slayn in the feeld bi Romeyns in certeyne.
And of thes [noble] worthi princis tweyne, 992
This was the eende & the mortal fall,
The feeste accomplisshed callid funeral.

973. The] To R. 974. the] bat H.

975. Flamynus] Flamyn R, J.

976. togidre forth] forth togidre B, J, P — forth] forsooth R.

977. that] þe H — ful] om. H. 978. In] I H.

981. Britomarus P — taken H.

988. His lives threde thus Lachesis H, R 3, H 5.

989. ful] om. H. 992. noble] om. MSS., P.

- And in the tyme of thes mortal werris
 Atween thes dukes & them of Rome toun,
 Many toknis wer shewed in the sterris,
 Merueilous lihtnyngis fro the heuene doun,
 And many an vnkouth constellacioun;
 Sondri cometes dide in the walkyn appeere, —
 Who seeth ther stories may the trouthe lere.
- At the time of
 these mortal
 996 wars many
 strange tokens
 were shewn in
 the stars,
 marvelous
 lightnings,
 comets and
 uncouth
 1000 constellations.
- The water of Pitene, that renneth in Itaille,
 Which in that contre is a famous flood,
 The same hour & tyme of ther bataille,
 As seith the stori, was turnid into blood.
 Fires in the hair, most furious & wood,
 That mihti tours wer with the flawmes brent;
 Thre moonys appeeryng in the orient.
- The waters of
 a river were
 turned into
 1004 blood; fires
 burnt high in
 the air; and
 three moons
 were seen in the
 east.
- The peple for feer fledde into lowe kauis, [p. 271]
 For dreed wex pale & dedli of ther cheer;
 And in thre daies wer thre erthe-quauis.
 Duryng thes werris and in the same yeer,
 Of gret Appollo fill doun the pilleer
 Of marbil whit, large and of gret strengthe,
 That sexti cubitis acountid was the lengthe.
- The peple
 fled for fear
 into caves; for
 into three days
 there were
 1012 three earth-
 quakes, and
 the marble
 pillar of great
 Appollo fell
 doun.
- And in that tyme, the stori seith nat nay,
 Of Rome a consul with a gret puissaunce,
 Callid Claudius, slouh upon a day
 Thretti thousand, & brouht hem to myschaunce,
 Of the soudiours that cam out of Fraunce.
 And ther was slayn, with many a capteyn lorn,
 Viridomarus, of whom I spak tofor.
- 1016 Claudius, a
 consul, slew
 30,000 Gauls
 in battle;
- To his gret shame and confusioun,
 As it is remembred be scripture,
 The Romeyns made a gret oblacioun
 Vp to Iubiter of his cote armure.
 And in tokne of his disconfiture,
 Withynne that temple, of gold betyn cleer,
 To his despiht thei heng up his banee.
- and to the
 shame and
 1024 confusion of
 the dead
 Viridomarus, his
 coat armour and
 golden banner
 were offered as
 an oblation
 to Jove.
 1028

998. lihtenyng frome H.
 1000. walkyn] wakyn R.
 1001. ther] thes R — may] he may H, R 3.
 1020. the] ther H — cam] om. R.
 1021. was] om. R — with] & H.

[How Siphax of Munedie kyng was take & deied
in prisoun.]¹

Bochas next
speaks briefly
of the war
between
Hannibal and
worthy Scipio,

HEEER Bochas breeffi for a remembrance
Writeth of werris, debatis & batailes
That wer þat tyme in Itaille & France, 1032
In Spaigne, Chaumpayne, with marcial apparailles.
And among othir in his rehersailles,
He tellith in Affrik the gret[e] discencioun
Atween Hanybal & worthi Scipioun. 1036

and then turns
to Syphax, king
of Numidia,

He touchith ther namys & abit nat longe;
Vpon ther stories he bit nat but a while,
Heer nat rehersyng ther myhti werris stronge,
Nor of ther stryues he doth heer nat compile, 1040
But doun descendyng, directeth foorth his stile
For to rehearse & telle be writyng
The fall of Siphax in Munedie kyng.

who defeated
two kings in
two battles.
One of the kings,
Masinissa,
was obliged to
flee from his
country and
consort with
robbers and
wild beasts and
live on roots
and fruit.

This said[e] Siphax batailles hadde tweyne, 1044
Oon with kyng Gabba, [&] he of verray myht
Hadde eek another, in which he dede his peyne
To meete Masmysa afftir anon riht.
And bothe kynges he putte to the fliht. 1048
And of Messulie, I fynde be writyng,
How Masmysa was governour & kyng.

This said[e] Siphax thoruh his cheualrie
Maad Masmysa to fleen his regioun, 1052
Constreynyng hym to lyue be robberie,
To walke in forestis with beestis up & doun.
And for diffaute, as maad is menciouun,
To saue his liff he fond no bet reffut, 1056
But fedde hymself on rootes & on frut.

Even his name
was forgotten in
his own land.

Out of his reum Masmysa was enchaced,
And constreyned to fleen from his contre;
Fro mynde of folk his name was out raced, 1060
For no man wiste wher he sholde be.
His liegemen & folk of his cite,
Thoruh al Affrik knew no bettir reed
Off his persone, but dempte that he was ded. 1064

1031. of] *om.* J — bataill H.

1032. &] & in H, R 3. 1033. apparaile H, R 3, H 5.

1034. rehersaile H, rehersaill R 3. 1038. nat] *om.* R.

1040. heer nat] nat her H. 1043. Numedy P.

1045. Gabba] Galba H, R 3, Gala P, Gabla H 5 — &] *om.* R, J.

1047. Masinissa P. 1049. Massile P. 1053. be] in R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 110 recto.

- Thus of kyng Siphax encrece gan the glorie,
Which bi force too kynges hath outraied,
And upon them wonnen the victorie,
Put hem to fliht & the peeple affraied;
That Rome & Cartage wer of hym dismaied.
And ech of them dede ther labour
Of ther werris to make hym *gouernour*.
- Vnto [this] Siphax, out of Rome toun,
As it is write for a memoriall,
To Numedie was sent Scipioun
For this mateer in especiall.
Out of Cartage was sent Hastruball;
And at the castell wher Siphax lay,
Bothe tweyne arryued at o day.
- And be pleyn writyng as I haue conceyued,
And as the stori remembreth in sentence,
At ther comyng bothe wer resceyued
Of kyng Siphax with gret[e] reuerence.
And thoruh his notable manli dilligence,
As it is Iwrityn be record,*
He made thes capteyns hertili of accord,
That thei togidre lay the same niht,
Thei hadde of Siphax so gret surete,
Be promys maad, as he was trewe kniht,
That nouthor of them sholde deceyued be.
But ther was founde ful gret duplicite
Folwyng afftir, who-so can take heede,
Lik as this storie shal deuise in deede.
- For bi the fraude & falsnesse most mortall
Compassed befor[e]n, it is thus befalle,
That bi the sleihte of this Hastruball, —
As Affrican[e]s be nih double alle,
Vnder sugre can hide weel ther galle, —
So Hastruball bi fals decepcioun
Vnder fair cheer deceyued Scipioun.
- He brouht in Siphax bi fals sotilte,
And bi his sleihti peynted fair langage,
That he sholde with hym allied bee,
Be ful assent to hauen in mariage
- 1068 Thus the glory of Syphax increased; and both Rome and Carthage sought to make him their general.
- 1072 From Rome Scipio was sent to him, from Carthage Hasdrubal.
- 1076
- 1080 Both were received with great respect:
- 1084
- both were given the same promise.
- 1088
- 1092
- [p. 272] But by the duplicity of Hasdrubal,
- 1096
- 1100 Syphax was promised Sophonisba in marriage, and thereby induced to side with Carthage.

1066. hath] had R. 1072. this] *om.* R, J, P

1084. record] good record B, R, J, P.

1096. double nyh H, doubill nyh R 3.

1100. fals] his H, R 3, hys H 5.

- Sophonisba, a maiden of Cartage, 1104
 Which was douhtir, yong & fa[i]r withal,
 As seith Bochas, to this Hastrubal.
- Scipio was
 deceived. The which[e] thyng be crafft was brouht aboute 1108
 And acomplisshe[d] verraily in deede.
 And bi this mene, pleynli out of doute,
 Ther first began rancour & hatreede,
 Symulacioun, feynyng & falsheede, 1112
 That atween Siphax & Hastrubal, alas,
 Scipioun was deceyued in this caas.
- After his
 marriage,
 Syphax
 and Hasdrubal
 made war on
 the Romans; And aftir that doon was this mariage,
 Siphax ful enemy vnto* Sipioun,
 With Hastrubal rood into Cartage 1116
 And gan werreie ageyn[e]s Roome toun.
 And in this while, as maad is mencion,
 Kyng Masmyssa out of wildirnesse
 Toward Scipioun in al haste gan hym dresse. 1120
- and Masinissa,
 joining forces
 with Scipio, With his peple gan to make hym strong
 Thoruh help of Scipioun & of Bellius,
 Wente ageyn Siphax, & abood nat long,
 His herte ageyn hym was so envious. 1124
 And on a day, the stori tellith thus,
 With Affricanys & folkis of Cartage,
 Siphax the Romeyns mette in the visage.
- helped him take
 vengeance on
 Syphax, who
 was captured Of Masmyssa the peple wer so wood 1128
 Vpon Siphax auengid for to bee,
 Thoruh ther batailles cam to hym ther he stood,
 And maugre hym and [al] his cruelte,
 Of verray manhod — space was non to flee — 1132
 Thei brouhte hym hom thoruh ther hih renoun
 Into the handis of worthi Scipioun.
- and led
 prisoner to
 Rome. Siphax was take thus or he was war,
 Vndir his baneer, maugre al his myht, 1136
 And into Rome lad afforn the char
 Off Scipioun, the noble worthi kniht,
 That wan the tryumphe, grauntid hym of riht.
 And Sophonisba, afforn to Siphax wiff, 1140
 Weddid to Masmyssse at theende of al this striff.

1114. And] Anoon H, Anon R 3. 1115. vnto] to this B, R, J.

1116. into] in R.

1122. 2nd of] om. H. 1127. mett þe Romayns H.

1128. wer] was R, H. 1130. bataile H.

1131. al] om. R, J. 1141. Masmyssa H.

Loo, how Fortune chaunge can hir tides!
 To oon this day she can be fauourable,
 Make capteyns & thes grete guides,
 Which wende ha founde hir wheel ferme & stable. 1144
 But that she is ay froward & chaungable,
 Freendli to-day, to-morwe at discord, —
 Yiff this be trewe, Siphax can ber record. 1148

This Siphax was sent out of the toun
 In cheynys bounde withoute mor tarieng,
 And at Tiburny lay fetrid in prisoun,
 Deied at myscheeff, made ther his eendyng. 1152
 And for because that he was a kyng,
 The Romeyns made, of marcial pite,
 Hym to be buried withynne ther cite.

Sophonisba then
 married
 Masinissa.
 Lo, how
 Fortune can
 change, —
 friendly to-day,
 to-morrow at
 discord, as
 Syphax can
 testify,

for he died a
 prisoner and
 was buried in
 Rome.

[How Nabyn hauyng no title but bi tyrannye took
 on him to be kyng of Macedoyne was slayne.]¹

NEXT cam Nabyn, ful pitousli weepyng,
 Tofor Iohn Bochas, which be tyrannye 1156
 Off Macedoyne took on hym to be kyng,
 Hauyng no title sauff title of robberie,
 Onli bi force hymself to magnefie; 1160
 Which with strong hand took fals* pecessioun
 For to be crownyd in thilke regioun.

This Macedoyne, as be old writyngis,
 Whilom was had in ful gret reuerence, 1164
 Becausé onli it floured in too thynges,
 Bothe in kniethod & souereyn sapience;
 Mars ther bi manhod, Pallas be prudence:
 And whil thes tweyne hadde gouernaunce, 1168
 Of al weelfare thei hadde suffisaunce.

And whil the noblesse of thes thynges tweyne,
 That is to seyne, the flour of hih clergie,
 The hih renoun most famous & souereyne 1172
 Of marcial prowesse & of cheualrie,
 Gouerned that lond bi prudent* policie,
 Than stood that kyngdam, auctours reherse konne,
 Among the Greekis lik an heuenli sonne. 1176

a country that
 flowered in both
 knighthood and
 wisdom.

So long as
 these two
 things lasted,
 that kingdom
 was as a sun
 to Greece.

1144. thes] othir H. 1145. ferme] firme R —ferme &] om. J, P.

1156. Nabis P. 1158. to] om. R. 1146. that] om. R.

1161. fals] ful B, R, J. 1163. Lacedemoine P.

1167. Pallas] Pallas ther H.

1174. prudent] newe B, J, P, new R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 111 recto.

- But finally its light was darkened, when covetousness and tyranny entered, But at the laste eclipsed was the liht
Bothe of knihtod and philosophie, [p. 273]
Whan couetise gan entren ageyn riht
For to vsurpe upon the regalie, 1180
By* intrusioun of fals[e] tirannye,
And bextort force made ther entrynges,
Hauyng no tittle ther to* regne as kynges.
- chief cause why the noblesse of Greece was brought low. This was cheef cause, for short conclusioun, 1184
That the noblesse of Grece was brouht[e] bas,
And Macedoyne brouht to confusioun
Be couetise, that set hem in such caas,
Wherby* ther knihtod fulli translatid was 1188
And ther policie, in cronicle ye may see,
Out of Grece to Rome the cite.
- One of their tyrants was Nabis, hated by Rome And among other, bi cleer remembra[u]nce,
Of such tirauntis bi ordre rehersyng, 1192
Nabyn was oon, that hadde gouernaunce
In Macedoyne, & was ther crownyd kyng,
Withoute tittle falsli ther regnyng.
And for his froward contagious cruelte 1196
He was behatid of Rome the cite.
- as well as by his own subjects. He was first attacked by Titus Flaminius, The Romeyns sente a myhti consuleer,
Titus Flaminius, of ther werris guide;
To Macedoyne he gan approche neer, 1200
Toward Argos wher Nabyn dede abide,
Of entent[e] for tabate his pride.
But whil Nabyn stood hiest in estat,
Of Grece his lieges wer with hym at debat. 1204
- and in the end overthrown by Philopœmen and slain by Alexamenus. A duk Icallid P[h]ilopomones,
With the peepel that duellid in Grece-lond,
To stryue with Nabyn put hymself in pres,
Disconfited hym, fihytyng hond of hond; 1208
And at gret myscheeff, ye shal vndirstond,
Alexamenus, a kniht of that contre,
Slouh this Nabyn, the cronicle ye may see.

1177. 2nd the] ther H.

1181. By] But B, R, J.

1182. force] wrong H, R 3.

1183. to] for to B, R 3.

1184. cheef] om. H.

1188. Whereby] Therbi B, R, J.

1205. A] And R.

1209. at] a H 1211. cronicle] story H.

[Here Bochas reherceth the mortal werryys betwix
Romayns & Affricanys.]¹

¶ Afftir this Naby, Bochas doth proceede 1212 Bochas now
To telle the werris & the mortal stryues proceeds to tell
Tween Romeyns & Affricanys in deede, about the wars
Wherbi ful many loste ther her lyues. between Rome
Caused wydwes, maydnes & eek wyues 1216 and Carthage.
To weepe and waile, in such disioynt thei stood,
On outhr parti to seen the losse of blood.
For the parti of them off Roome toun
Wer maad capteyns & dyuers officeres, 1220 Among the
Which into Affrik with peepel wer sent doun. were Marcus
And specialli ther wer too consuleeris, Manlius, Lucius
Notable in armys and famous in tho yeeris: Censorinus and
Marcus Manlius, born of the Romeyn lyne; 1224 Scipio.
The tothir callid Lucyus Consoryne.
With them was sent a tribun ful notable,
Of whom tofforn I made mencion, 1228
For the werris most worthi & most hable,
I meene of Rome prudent Scipioun,
Which of ther cite was cheuest champioun,
Of hool entent thaffricanys tanoye, 1232
And specialli Cartage to destroye.
And nih be Cartage ther was a cite strong,
Mihtili bilt, & stood upon the se, 1236 Near by
The wallis thikke, round[e], squar & long, Carthage
Cheeff diffense callid of that contre, was a strong
To saue & keepe hem from al aduersite. city upon the
And fourti cubitis, with crestis marcial, sea, the chief
Lik as I fynde, of heihte was the wal. defence of
And in the frount, reised for the werre, that country.
Of stonis squar[e] was an hih dongoun 1240 In it was a
Callid Birsas; fro which wonder ferre high keep
Men myhte beholde the contres enviroun. called Byrsa.
And, as I reede, for ther sauacioun The Africans
Thaffricanys of purpos did ordeyne chose two
For ther capteyns Hastrubalis tweyne. 1244 Hasdrubals to
be their
captains.

1215. Wherbi] Therbi R.

1217. thei] the R. 1225. Censoryne P.

1231. the Affricans P.

1242. from R.

¹ MS. J. leaf III recto.

- Scipio laid
siege to Byrsa
and broke down
part of the wall,
- The said[e] dongoun, myhtili batailed,
Ageyn al sautis to stonden & endure: 1248
But worthi Scipioun, for al that, hath nat failed
For taproche & doon bi besi cure,
With his engynes myhti, strong & seure;
So that be force, this kniht most marciall, 1252
A gret quantite brak doun of the wall.
- while Lucius and
Marcus went
forth to give
battle to
one of the
Hasdrubals,
- And Lucyus, callid Sensoryne,
Departid is with Marcus Manlius,
And bi the counsail of Scipioun & doctryne, 1256
Bothe of assent, in armis vertuous,
Thei took ther way, myn auctour tellith thus,
With Hastrubal, sothli & thei myhte,
Wher as he lay that same day to fihte. 1260
- whom they
defeated and
slew together
with 40,000
Carthaginians
in Cirrha.
- Thes consuleris assailed the cite [p. 274]
Callid Cirie, & beet adoun the wall,
Slouh fourti thousand, the cronicle ye may see,
Of Affricannys be vengauunce ful mortall. 1264
And ther constable callid Hastruball
Was slayn that day bi them*, it is no doute,
That he most trustid & next wer hym aboute.
- In the mean-
while Scipio
entered Carthage
and took all
the inhabitants
prisoner,
- And in this while, most manli of corage, 1268
The worthi tribun, Publius Scipioun,
Bi verray force is entrid in Cartage;
And sixe daies, as maad is menciouun,
He and his knihtis constreyned so the toun, 1272
That disespeired, with ther dedli cheeris,
Thei of the toun yald[e] hem prisoneris,
- who begged that
they might be
allowed to live
in seruage and
pay the Romans
a tribute.
- Meekli requeryng vnto Scipioun,
To resceyue hem in this mortal rage; 1276
That men & wommen duellyng in that toun
With the citeseyns, yong & old of age,
Mihte abide & lyuen in seruage
Vnder the Romeyns, ther was no bet reffut, 1280
And yeer bi yeer paie hem a tribut.

1248. assautis H.

1251. engynes] Inmyes H. 1253. the] ther H.

1254. Censoryne H. 1259. Hasdruball P.

1262. Cyrra P.

1266. them] hym B, R, him J, P.

1273. dispeired R.

1278. the] om. H.

- And of Affrik the tothir Hastruball,
Which among hem afforn was crownid kyng,
Leftt his estat and his poweer roiall, 1284
Yald hym prisoneer, humbeli knelyng.
And his wiff most pitousli weepyng,
Whan that she sauh hir lord was take so,
Ran inta* fire & brent hirsilff for wo. 1288
- Sixe and twenti thousand, as I fynde,
Wer lad of wommen into captyuyte;
Thretti thousand of men cam behynde,
Take prisoneres in gret aduersite. 1292
And seunteene daies brente that cite,
That in ther wallis was non so harde ston,
But into powder it was brent anon.
- And this was doon, breefli to conclud, 1296
Bi the prowesse of Publius Scipioun.
Sold in seruage was a gret multitude;
Ther old[e] lordis lad fetrid to prisoun.
This was of Cartage fynal destruccion, — 1300
To write ther compleyntis Bochas abit no while,
But into Grece turneth ageyn his stile,

The other
Hasdrubal gave
himself up to
the Romans;
and his wife
ran into a fire
for sorrow and
burnt herself
up.

26,000 women
and 30,000 men
were captured,
and the city
destroyed.

It was by the
prowess of
Publius Scipio
that the fall
of Carthage
was accom-
plished.

[How kyng Perseus bi Romayns was outraied &
after taken.]¹

- I**N Lacedemoyne remembryng o[f] a kyng
Callid Perseus, a ful proud werreiour,
Cleymyng a title, upon hym vsurpyng 1304
For to succede as trewe enheritour
To grete Alisandre, most myhti conquerour,
Fulli affermyng, ageyn a certeyn day 1308
He wil be crowned maugre who seith nay.
- And his name to putte in memorie,
Caste in his persone renewe the prowesse
Of kyng Alisaundre, & tencece his glorie, 1312
To folwe his tracis in kniithod & noblesse.
And first of alle, of hasti wilfulnesse,
That his conquest myhte sprede ferre,
Gan of purpos with Romeyns to haue werre.* 1316

There was once
a king of
Sparta named
Perseus, who
usurped the
crown after the
death of
Alexander.

He first made
war on Rome,
for he was
ambitious to
follow in
Alexander's
footsteps;

1288. inta] in to the R, into B, P, in to J, into a R 3, in taffryk
H 5.

1289. twenti] thritty H. 1301. compleynt H.

1304. Parseus R. 1305. title] tithe H. 1309. seith] say H.

1316. werre] a werre B.

¹ MS. J. leaf III verso.

- but when he realized the power of the Romans he grew afraid and sent envoys to make peace. But aftir this he was bet auised,
Whan he parcéyued the marcial apparaille
Of the Romeyns, wheroff he was agrised,
Wex afferd ther noblesse to assaille, 1320
Which ay wer founde victorious in bataille.
And wher he had afforn* be rek[e]les,
Sent enbassatours with them to trete of pes.
- The Romans saw how presumptuous he was, and sent Sulpicius, who treated his embassy with contempt. Thei hadde apparceyued his presumpcioun, 1324
And how he was proud and surquedous.
Sent a consul with a gret poweer down,
The name of whom was Sulpicius,
Which dedli hatid the said[e] Perseus, 1328
Thoruh hertli rancour ageyn hym wex soleyn,
Of his ambassiat hauyng but disdeyn.
- Paulus Æmilius was also sent against him by Rome; and the night after his arrival the moon eclipsed, And ther parti for to fortefie
With the said consul Sulpicius, 1332
Thei sent another, expert in cheualrie,
A consul also, Paulus Emylius,
Among Romeyns notable & famous.
And folwyng aftir, the silue same niht, 1336
The moone eclipsed fulli of his liht.
- a token that Perseus should be vanquished. A cleer tokne, as maad is mencionn,
That kyng Perseus should haue a sharp[e] shour,
And that his lordshepe & his regeoun 1340
Sholde been oppressid, void of al socour,
And that Macedonoys shold haue no fauour
Ageyn the Romeyns togidre whan thei mette
With round[e] speris & suerdis sharpe whette. 1344
- Perseus was put to flight by a young knight called Cato; The day of bataille, to his ences of glorie, [p. 275]
For the parti of them off Rome toun,
Ther was a kniht that caused the victorie,
Yong, fressh and lusti, & callid was Catoun, 1348
Which brouht ther enmyes to confusioun;
For Macedonoys thoruh his gret[e] myht
Outraied wern, & Perseus put to fiht.
- and afterwards he and his two sons were made prisoners by a captain called Octavius. But Emylius, the noble consuleer, 1352
Sente a capteyn callid Octauyus
To pursue afftir in coostis ferr & neer
The proude kyng, this said[e] Perseus.

1322. he had afforn] afforn he hadde B, R, J, afore he had P.

1330. enbassat R, H, R 3, Ambassat J, embassade P.

1342. fauour] socour R.

1353. callid is repeated in H.

And he was take, for ther was no rescus, 1356
 With his sonis, that wer in noubre tweyne,
 Phelipp, Alisaundre, the stori is certeyne.

MYN auctour heer tellith of kynges manye, My author says
 Thretti in noubre: the firste Geramus, 1360 that thirty kings
 Which haue regned *witbyne* Macedonye;* reigned in
 And laste of alle was this Perseus. Macedonia, and
 the last of them.

The noubre of yeeris, Bochas writeth thus,
 Was nyne hundrid, as is remembred heer, 1364
 Space of ther regnyng, *witb* foure & tuenti yeer.

Aftir translatid was the regeoun,
 With al ther iles, vnto thobeissaunce
 Of them of Rome, withoute excepcioun; 1368
 The* grete lordis that wer of most puissaunce
 Abood[e] ther long vndir gouernaunce,
 And Perseus, disconsolat of cheer,
 Duryng his lyff abood ther prisoneer. 1372
 They reigned
 924 years, and
 afterwards their
 country was
 translated to
 Rome.

[How the peple of Achaia, with ther cheef Cite
 Corynthe by Romayns was destroyed.]¹

THUS the lordshepe wered out & spent
 Of Macedoyne, as maad is menciou[n].
 Ther wer too contres therto adiacent,
 The ton Achaia, a litil regeoun, 1376
 And Spartanoy[s]* goyng enviroun,
 Mihti of peple and of gret substaunce,
 In oon confederat & of oon alliaunce.

Thei wer conioyned & bothe maad al oon 1380
 Bi a maner feithful convencioun.
 And when the Romeyns knew hem for ther foon,
 Hauyng ther frenshiipe in suspecioun,
 Thei caste to make a disiunccioun 1384
 Atween thes londis, in breede & eek in lengthe;
 For thyng disseuered is menused of his strengthe.

Ordeyned cites and toun[e]s heer & yonder,
 Wheron the Romeyns gan make a decre, 1388
 That ther lordshepes sholde be sette assonder,
 but the peple
 threatened to
 rise against the
 Roman
 messengers,

1359. tellith heer R, J, telleth here P. 1361. Macedoyne B.

1369. The] To B, J, P.

1377. Spartanoy[s] Spathanoy[s] B, Spatanoy[s] R, H, R 3, Spatanoy[s] J.

¹ MS. J. leaf 112 recto.

Which made the peep in eueri gret cite,
 Whan thei knew ther fals subtilite,
 To rise attonys, most cruel of ther cheeris, 1392
 And wolde ha slayn the Romeyn massageris.

and finally the
 Romans, losing
 patience, sent
 down a consul
 called Mummius
 against Achaea.

And fynalli bi this occasioun
 Romeyns ageyn hem gan wexen furious,
 Took hardynesse off ther dyuisioun; 1396
 And a consul callid Munius,
 A manli kniht, in armis ful famous,
 Into Achaia was fro Roome sent
 It to destroye bi gret ausement. 1400

The Achaeans
 in their pride
 entered the
 field without
 preparation,
 and set their
 wives and
 women on a
 high mountan
 to see the battle.

Thei of Achaia bi ther negligence,
 And bi ther froward wilful reklesnesse,
 Of verry pride list make no diffence;
 Thouhte themsilff, withoute auisynesse, 1404
 Off power able, & strenger in sothnesse
 Than wer[e] Romeyns, veraili in deede:
 Thus wer thei stroied afforn or thei took heede.

Thei stood in hope in ther sturdynesse 1408
 Bi that bataille to haue had gret pillage,
 Of the Romeyns to ha[ue] won[n]e gret richesse.
 And for a pompe, of wilful fals dotage
 Thei took ther wyues and women yong off age, 1412
 And set hem up on an hih mounteyn,
 That ther manhod myhte in the feild be seyn.

But the Romans
 slew their
 troops like
 cattle and
 carried off the
 women and
 children to
 Rome.

Whan the Romeyns mette hem in bataille,
 Thei dispurueied and out off ordenaunce, 1416
 Slayn lik beestis, ther power gan to faille,
 Of froward pride & rekles gouernaunce,
 That Achaia was brouht to myschaunce;
 Women and childre, for sorwe almost mad, 1420
 To lyue in seruage wer to Rome lad.

Corinth was
 destroyed, chief
 market of its
 time;

Corynthe that tyme was ther cheef cite,
 Destroyed be Romeyns & brouht vnto ruyne,
 Which among citees, in Bochas ye may see, 1424
 Aboue alle othir dide in honour shyne;
 Of alle sciences ther floured the doctrine,
 And of crafftis artificeres most wise,
 Rekne al the world, ther was cheef marchaundise. 1428

- Thus vnwarli in ther most noblesse, [p. 276] and Bochas says
 Sittyng of Fortune on the [hihest] stage, that the flames
 Thei wer destroyed of tresor & richesse, rose high in
 Brouhte to nouht bi slauhtre & pillage, 1432 the sky.
- Ther wallis broke in that cruel rage.
 And in that brennyng, Bochas seith, the leuene
 Rauht a gret part upward to the heuene.
 Pleyn with the erthe the wallis broke down, 1436 The walls were
 The people slayn merciles, yong & old; levelled and the
 And ther was maad a gret dyuisioun: people
 Summe lad in seruage, & somme of them wer sold. mercilesly slain
 Images of coper, of syluer & of gold 1440 or sold into
 Wer sodenli, in al that violence, bondage.
 Togidre molte, so hoot was the feruence.
- Of which metal thus afftir it is fall, The statues of
 Gold, siluer, coper, medlid into oon, 1444 bronze and
 Coper of Corynthe men sothli dede it[~]call, the images of
 Thoruh al the world of custum euerichon. gold and silver
 Fame of which metal is so ferr Igon, melted and
 That the vessellis forgid of the same 1448 flowed together
 Corynthoise Icallid is by* name. into a mixture
 afterwards
 called Copper
 of Corinth.
- ¶ Afftir Corynthe was thus brent to nouht, After the
 A prynce callid Philipp Philermene destruction of
 To Iohn Bochas hath his compleynt brouht, 1452 Corinth,
 In whos face and cheer it was weel seene, Philip
 The woful constreynt of his mortal teene. Philermene
 And he was whilom, Bochas doth specefie, made his
 Lord of a cite callid Vallaquye. 1456 complaint to
 Bochas.
- Marcus Actilius took hym prisoneer, He was brought
 Brouht hym to Roome, list hym nat respite. prisoner to
 ¶ Next* to [Iohn] Bochas, with an heuy cheer, Rome by
 Appeerid a duc* callid Democrite. 1460 Marcus Atilius,
 Of Etholis, myn auctour doth so write, as was also
 He was cheeff lord; but he & his contre Duke
 Translatid wern to Roome the cite. Democritus
 of Etolia,
1430. of Fortune on the hihest] hihest of Fortune in the H, P,
 hihest of Fortune on the R 3, H 5 — on] in J, R — hihest]
 hi h R.
 1441. that] ther R. 1444. medlid] Ioyned H, R 3.
 1449. callid H, called P — by] the B, R, J.
 1459. *The paragraph mark is misplaced before the next line,* B —
 Iohn] om. R, J, P, H 5, R 3 — an] om. H, R 3, H 5.
 1460. duc] kniht B, R, J, P — Domocrite R, J, Damocrite P.
 1461. Elholoys H.

who escaped
once and,
retaken, went
mad and slew
himself.

This duk was cast and cheyned in prisoun, 1464
Escapid onys, in stori as I fynde,
Take ageyn, throwe in a derk dongoun,
Ther for sorwe wente out of his mynde,
Slouh hymselff at myscheeff ageyns kynde — 1468
Loo, hou thes princis proud & rek[e]les
Haue shamful eende, which cannat lyue in pes!

[How grete Anthiocus vsyng riot and viciuos lyu-
yng/ bi marchus Actilius was outraied & deied
soderly.]¹

The story of
Seleucus and
Antiochus,
of Laodicea and
the ring

TOUCHYNG þe stori in ordre heer folwyng
Of Seleuchus & gret Anthiocus, 1472
Off his mooder Laodices & þe ryng,
With other toknes & signes merueillous,
And how also the famous* Seleuchus
Hadde in his theih, as writen is heer-tofor, 1476
Preent of an anker the day whan he was born,

and the print of
the anchor,
which descended
to all the
children, was
told in the
Fourth Book.

And al the childre bi successioun
Hadde be discent, bor[e]n of his lynage,
Preent of an anker, as maad is menciou, 1480
The fourte book, with al the surplusage
Of othir toknis ther told in pleyn langage.
And of the seide same Seleuchus
Cam be discent the saide Antiochus. 1484

Another
Antiochus,
a descendant of
Seleucus,

Whos herte was set of hih[e] couetise
To folwe his lustis and delectacioun[s];
And specialli he caste gan & deuisse 1488
To wynne in Grece dyuers regiouns.
And of the people he cauhte occasiouns,
Bi ther fauour to conquere that* contre
And to rebelle ageyn Rome the cite.

rebelled against
the Romans and
conquered many
of their towns
in Greece;

With multitude & gret apparaille 1492
He gat in Grece castellis & eek touns
Longyng to Roome, conquered be bataille;
Took upon hym in his presumpciouns
Falsli to folwe the inclynaciouns 1496
Of his berth, whil he dede abide
In a cite that callid was Calcide.*

1475. famous] same B. 1480. an] om. R.

1483. same saide H. 1486. delectacioun R.

1490. that] ther B, R. 1498. Talcide B, R, J, Ealcide H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 112 verso.

- For cause of slouthe he leffte his cheualrie,
 Forsook[e] Mars & took hym to Cupide, 1500
 Restyng the wyntir, he spente in lecherie,
 In wach and riot, ches Venus to his guide:
 Sensualite maad resoun stonde aside;
 And bi thes menys, for short conclusioun, 1504
 He was conveied to his destruccioun.
- And whan that wyntir *with* his frostis colde
 Ipassid was and al his stormys keene,
 In riot spent and wastid, as I tolde, 1508
 And ver cam in *with* his newe greene,
 And fressh[e] Flora, which is of flouris queene,
 Off custum gynneth hir motles out to dresse, —
 In which[e] sesoun, as auctours alle expresse, 1512
- Kynges, princis, with marcial apparaille, [p. 277]
 Tyme whan Phebus in the Ram doth shyne,
 Thei hem dispose to gon out to bataille,
 For exercise of marcial disciplyne. 1516
 And down fro Roome, expert in that doctryne,
 Descendid is Marchus Actilius
 Ageyn this vicious proude Anthiochus.
- This noble Mark, preued in armis weel, 1520
 Which in his tyme was soo good a kniht,
 With al his hoost[e], armyd in briht steel,
 Ageyn Antiochus cam to the feeld down riht,
 Vpon a morwe whan Phebus shon ful briht. 1524
 Set his wardeyns be capteyns that he ches
 Vpon an hill callid Termophiles.
- Antiochus upon the tothir side,
 Whom glotonye & riot dede oppresse, 1528
 And dronke Bachus, which *with* hym dide abide,
 With Morpheus wiff, of slombre cheeff goddessse, —
 Which caused hym thoruh slouthe & idilnesse
 That prouidence out of his court was gon, 1532
 Causyng that day the slauhtre of many on.
- Whan the consul, Marchus, the worthi knyht,
 His aduersaries proudli gan assaille,
 Thei vnprueied, took hem to the fliht; 1536
 Disaraied thei myhte nat auaile.
 Thus Anthiochus fledde out of bataille;

but he soon
 grew slothful,
 and, forsaking
 Mars, betook
 himself to
 Cupid, and
 spent the winter
 in lechery.

When spring
 came with
 Flora and her
 fresh flowers,

and Phœbus
 shone in the
 Ram, Marcus
 Atilius
 descended
 down from
 Rome with his
 army,

and the
 gluttonous,
 riotous
 Antiochus was
 defeated and
 forced to flee

For ageyn Romeyns he myht nat endure:
Therefore on hym fill the disconfiture. 1540

to Ephesus.
He tried to
make peace, but
was rebuffed.

Thus rebukid fledde to Ephesie,
Ferr in Grece, and ther to duelle he ches,
Sente Romeyns a gret embassatrie
With said[e] Marchus for to trete of pes. 1544
But his* embassiat, this verray dout[e]les,
Whan thei atteyned of Marchus the presence,
Wer refusid & hadde non audience.

Greatly
mortified, he
then began a
war against
Rome on the
sea

Of which Antiochus gretli was a-shamed,
Caste ageyn Roome of hate & enmyte 1548
To reise a poweer, & hath of newe attamyd
To gadre shippis & make a gret arme,
Gynne a werre ageyn hem on the se, 1552
Hauyng an hope, vndir a coward dreede,
Bet on the watir than on the lond to speede.

and was
beaten three
times.

Made his shippis be stuffed *with* vitaille,
And his capteyns han the lond forsake; 1556
But whan the Romeyns gan hym of newe* assaille,
His shippis brent & al his stuff was take.
And lik *myn* auctour compendiousli doth make,
Thries on the se the Romeyns werreyng, 1560
He was outraied, the stori witnessyng.

Once more he
fought the
Romans on
land with
chariots set
with scythes,

Yit efft ageyn to his confusioun
Vpon the lond[e] he gan make* hym strong,
Mette with Cornelie callid Scipioun, 1564
With waynes, cartes maad for the werre long,
Shod with hard iren, sharp sithes set among
In trauers wise bi gret ordenaunce;
But for al that, he was brouht to myschaunce. 1568

and elephants,
and again he
was compelled
to flee and was
finally obliged
to pay a
tribute to
Rome.

With olyfauntis & castellis on the[r] bak
That day was slayn many a worthi kniht,
Vpon his host so cruel was the wrak,
That he constreyned took hym to the fiht, 1572
Forsook the contre, fledde out of mennys siht.
To the Romeyns, he coude it nat delaie,
Ech yeer constreyned a tribut for to paie.

1544. of] *om.* R. 1545. his] in this B, R, J, P.
1548. which] *pe* which H. 1551. the shippis R.
1554. *In reading* MS. H., *turn back to leaf* 105.
1557. gan hym of newe] of newe gan hym B, R, J, P.
1563. maken B. 1565. the] their H.
1569. their] the R, J. 1572. hym to] *vn* to H.
1573. the] his H.

But he of fraude, because of his tribut
 For couetise feyned sore pouerte, 1576 He then began
 Gadred robbours, & be fals pursut to rob mer-
 Oppressid marchautis, spoiled the contre, chants and
 Robbed templis, of hatful cruelte, 1580 temples,
 And fro Iubiter callid Dodonyan*
 Took alle the reliques, the story telle can.
 Dide sacrilege & entrid in that cloos
 Withoute reuerence or any obseruance, 1584 and at last
 For which the temple ageyn[es] hym aroos, in the act of
 And, as it is put in remembraunce, despoiling the
 Bi the goddis ther fill a gret vengauce temple of
 Vpon this tiraunt, quakyng in his dreed, — 1588 Jupiter of
 Al sodenli he fill to grounde ded. Dodona.

¶ *Lenvoye.*

THIS tragedie of Anthiochus, [p. 278] This froward
 Who list in ordre his froward stori see, tragedy of
 First to al vertu he was contrarious, Antiochus,
 And rebel euer to Roome the cite, 1592 who was justly
 Iustli accusid of vicious thynges thre: accused of
 Of pride, slouthe and of glotonye, pride, sloth,
 And of disordynat superfluite, 1596 gluttony, riot
 Of niht excesse, riot and lecherie. and excess,
 On hym the Romeyns wer victorious
 Twies on the lond [and] onis on the se, and everywhere
 Hē was nat hardi, but malicious; 1600 beaten by the
 In eueri bataile his custum was to flee. Romans and
 Wher vices regne ther may no grace bee; always forced
 To al surfetis his lust he dede applie, that where
 Noised and disclaundred thoruhout his contre 1604 vices reign
 Of niht excesse, riot and lecherie. there is no
 Among his lieges wood & despitous, grace.
 And for a coward knowe in the feeld was he; 1608
 The poore toppresse a wolff most furious, Cruel to
 And be deceit a fox for subtilite: his subjects
 No man mor froward, of hih nor louh degre, and a coward,
 Nor mor delityng in falsheed nor flatrie. 1608 no man was
 more perverse
 or fond of
 falsehood and
 flattery; and
 his end was
 sudden death.

1576. his] that R, om. H, this R 3.

1577. sore] om. H. 1581. Dodovian H, R 3, Dodavian R, Do-
 doncan P, Dodouyan, B, H 5.

1585. temple] peple H.

1598. *This and the next stanza are transposed in R.*

1605. riot] pride R.

What was his eende? a sodeyn deth, parde, 1612
For his outrages of pride & lecherie.

Noble Princes,
remember that
if you are
virtuous you
will prosper.
Antiochus was
cast down for
his pride, riot
and lechery.

Noble Princis, of prudence ful famous,
In al your grettest roial mageste,
Remembreth pleynli, yif ye be vertuous, 1616
Ye shal perseuere in long prosperite,
Wher the contrarie causeth aduersite,
As this stori afforn doth specesie
Of Anthiochus, cast from his dignite 1620
For his gret pride, riot & lecherie.

¶ **Explicit.**

[How Ieronimus of Ciracuse kyng was slayn, and
how Scipio Affrican that labored for common
wele of Romayns was exilid bi them and so
deied.]¹

After the death
of Antiochus,
came Hieron of
Syracuse, who
was innocently
slain together
with his three
dear sisters by
his hateful
subjects.

AFFTIR the deth of this Antiochus,
Ther cam a prince to Bochas compleynng,
Which that callid was* Ieronimus, 1624
Of Siracuse whilom lord & kyng.
Which of his lieges, he nothyng trespacyng,
Islay[e]n was with his thre sustren deere
Of hatrede, myn auctour writ so heere. 1628

The people of
Syracuse were
fickle and in
the habit of
killing their
kings on
occasion, so
that they
could have
a new one.

Siracusanyng hadde a condicioun,
Thoruh chaunges newe ay to been vnstable,
Of wilful malis void of al resoun 1632
On ther kynges for to be vengable;
Thei loued nat to han hem perdurable,
But eueri yeer of custum, this is trewe,
Them to gouerne to han a prince newe.

And since they
were forever
fighting and
unfruitful in
their lives, I
shall pass over
and speak of
the Scipios.

And for ther chaunges & ther vnkouth stryues, 1636
With variaunce of ther condiciouns,
Because no frut is founde in ther lyues,
Nor in ther stories nor ther* successiouns,
I will passe ouer & speke of Scipiouns, 1640
And first to write of the worthi man
Callid in his tyme Scipio Affrican.

1624. was callid B, R, J — Ieromyus H, Ieromynus R 3, Hieronimus P.

1627. thre] om. R. 1639. ther] in ther B, R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 113 recto.

- A famous kniht in al[le] naciouns
 For his conquest, shortli to concludē,
 Which hadde brouht ful many regiouns,
 Mor be wisdam than be multitude,
 Tobeie the Romeyns; but for ingratitude,
 Which that he fond in hem, as I reede,
 How he wrouhte to telle I wil procede.
- It is remembrid of his worthynesse,
 Whil that he was flouryng in yong age,
 How Roome was maad[e] ladi and maistresse
 Of many a lond[e], to ther auantage.
 And specialli al Affrik & Cartage
 Bi his prowesse, as maad is mencionn,
 Wer brouht of Romeyns vndir subieccioun.
- But thei ageynward wer to hym vnkynde,
 Bi accusacioun[s] founde out bi ther falsnessis,
 Saide ageyn hym, as it is put in mynde,
 Be record of many fals witnessis,
 That he shold haue besiled the richesis
 Of Cartage & Affrik the contre,
 Which appartened to Roome the cite.
- But ageynward this noble Affrican
 Proudli gaff ansuere to his accusours:
 He neuer withheeld fro tyme that he began
 Toward hymself no part of ther tresours,
 Sauf as the maner is of conquerours,
 For to conserue his worshep & his name,
 As most was proffit to the toun[e]s fame.
- This is to meene, pleynli & nat tarie,
 He neuer acrochid tresour nih nor ferre
 Toward hymself, but that was necessarie
 For ther worshep to meynteene *with* the werre.
 And yit that tyme he was ther lodesterre,
 Tencrece ther boundis, & fulli his delit
 Was al hool set to the comoun proffit.

Scipio Africanus was a wise and famous knight whom the Romans treated with great ingratitude,

although it was he who brought so many lands under their subjection.

They falsely accused him of misappropriating the wealth of Carthage and Africa.

But noble Africanus answered them proudly that he never took more than was necessary

[p. 279] for the maintenance of the war.

1651. yong] *om.* H.

1652. maistresse] *pryncesse* H, R 3.

1653. lond] *toun* & *londe* H.

1658. accusaciouns] *ocasiouns* H — *falsnessis*] *falsnesse* J, P, *falsnes* R 3.

1660. wytnes R 3. 1661. riches R 3. 1662. &] *in* R.

1674. the] *ther* H, R, J, P.

- Their malicious
 ingratitude
 drove him into
 voluntary exile,
- He took non heed of al the surplusage
 Of ther tresours nor ther gret richesse,
 The name reserued of Affrik & Cartage
 To his knyghthod and his hih noblesse. 1680
 But ther malicious expert vnkyndenesse
 Was in cause, breefli to compile,
 His bodi fro them perpetueli texile. 1684
- and resolving
 never again to
 appear in Rome
 he abode in
 a small village.
- Cast hym neuer withynne Roome toun
 Aftir that day among hem to be seyn,
 Vnkyndenesse gaff hym occasioun
 Tabsente his persone, & of hih disdeyn 1688
 Texile hymself & neuer come ageyn,
 But for tabide in a smal village
 Callid Lynterne, whan he was falle in age.
- He wrote his
 own epitaph,
 saying that
 neither his
 bones nor his
 ashes should
 ever repose
 within the walls
 of Rome.
- And for men sholde mynde vpon hym haue 1692
 Bi a maner of indignacioun,
 An epitaphie he sette upon his graue, —
 Which seide thus to them of Roome toun:
 “O peepel vnkynde, vnkynde ageyn resoun,
 My funerall asshes nor my bonis dede 1696
 In thi wallis thou neuer shalt posseede.
- “My bones
 shall not rest
 in thy froward
 ground, and the
 remembrance of
 thine ingrati-
 tude shall be
 known far and
 wide by this
 small inscrip-
 tion cut on
 my tomb.
- In thyn vnkynde froward teritorie
 My bonys shal nat resten nor abide; 1700
 But thyn vnkyndenesse to putten in memorie,
 The remembraunce shal be rad ful wide
 Of thes lettres graue, on eueri side,
 Be report onli of this smal scripture, 1704
 Which heer is set upon my sepulture.
- “That is why
 my funeral was
 held in exile,
 although I did
 so much for
 the community.”
- Loo, heer the cause, be brief descripcioun
 Set on my graue for a memoriall,
 Whi that my bonys out of Roome toun 1708
 Been buried heer lowe vndir this wall,
 In exil holde my feeste funerall, —
 Vnkyndenesse me droff from* that cite,
 That wrouhte so moche for the comounte.” 1712

1684. frome H.

1690. tabide] to dwell H.

1698. shalt] shall H, R 3.

1702. The] To R.

1711. from] out of B, R, J, P, out fro H 5, fro R 3.

[How Scipio Asian lord of Asie þat labored euer for
the comon wele was mordred.]¹

AFTIR the eende of this Affrican,
Callid in his tyme worthi Scipioun,
Cam next his brothir, Scipio Asian,
Which in Asie hadde domynacioun.
Geyn whom was made an accusacioun
To al the senat, that he vntreuli sholde
Certeyn tresours toward hymselff withholdde,

1716 His brother,
Scipio Asian,
was also
enviously
accused of
appropriating to
himself certain
treasures

Which that he in Asia hadde wonne
In his conquest be many strong bataille.
Which accusacioun falsli was begonne
Of old envie, causeles, this no faile;
Whos worthynesse ful mekil dede auaille
To comoun proffit, be thes too conquerours,
Bi gret richesse encresyng ther tresours.

1720 which he had
won in Asia,
together
with many
lands, for the
common profit.

The ton in Affrik, as ye haue herd me tell,
Bi his wisdam & his cheualrie,
The tothir in Asia, which dede excell
In hih prowessse, as bookes specefie.
Falsli hyndred of hatreede & envie,
Bi compassyng of oon Anthiochus,
Hym to destroye he was so desirous.

1724

1728 And this was
done by the
compassing of
one Antiochus,
who wished to
destroy him.

1732

Natwithstondyng thes tweyne Scipiouns
Hadde in ther tyme, be manyfold batailles,
Brouht into Roome so many regions
Tobeie ther cite, with marcial apparailles,
And euermor[e] to ther gret auailles
Brouht in tresours tencrece with ther toun,
Yit han thei wrouhte to ther destruccioun.

1736 Such was the
ingratitude with
which these
two able men
were treated.

1740

The ton in exil, as maad is mencionn,
Deied, alas, whan that he was old;
The second was moordred in prisoun:
Ther bothe stories remembrid heer & told
To yiu example to princis manyfold,
That who that laboureth for a comounte
Leseth ofte his thank, be Scipiouns ye may see.

1744 Scipio Asian
was murdered
in prison,
Africanus died
in exile; and
their stories
are remembered
here to shew
princes that
those who
labour for the
community
receive small
thanks.

1732. Antiochus H, R, J.

1735, 37, 38. bataille, apparaile, availe H, R 3. 1747. often H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 113 verso.

[How the Duk philopomones was take, put in prisoun,
aftir drank poison and so deied.]¹

Duke
Philopœmen,
who ruled
Messenia during
the war between
Achaea and
Ætolia,

AFFTIR the processe of thes too Scipiouns, 1748
Atween too peeplis* wilful & rekles
Began in Grece newe discenciouns,
Tween Acheois & Etholois dout[e]les.
And a gret duk Philopomones, 1752
A prince that tyme of ful gret puissaunce,
Hadde of Messoneys hooli the gouernaunce.

led his own army
into battle on a
fair plain,

This said[e] prince Philopomones, [p. 280]
Leedyng his host upon a ful fair pleyn, 1756
As he rood armed, & put hymself in pres
Mid his peeples as gouernour & wardeyn,
Folk out of reule for to calle ageyn,
Vpon his steede, as he gan hem fette, 1760
In deu ordre his wardes for to sette.

and was
taken captive
by his enemies
and put into
prisoun where he
died by drinking
poison.

And this prince*, of port most marcial,
In the pursut which that he gan make,
Among his enmyes he hadde a sodeyn fall, 1764
Void of al rescus vnwarli he was take,
Of al his freendis lik a man forsake,
Among his enmyes brouht into prisoun,
Ther maad an eende be drynkyng of poisoun. 1768

He was
succeeded by a
captain called
Lycortas.

Of Philopomones this was the fatal cas,
Out of gouernaunce, his peeples desolat,
Except a capteyn callid Ligorias,
Which in the werris was wonder fortunat, 1772
Of Acheois took on hym the estat,
Them to gouerne & the peeples leede,
Of hym no mor in Bochas I do reede.

[Off the thirde Scipion Nasica that euer wrouht
moche for the comonte.]²

The third
Scipio, Nasica,
surpassed all
other Romans
in wisdom and
courage.

MYN auctour heer maketh a digressioun, 1776
And reherseth for a memorial
Of the thridde worthi Scipioun,
Callid Nasica, which in especiall

1749. peeples B. 1751. Etholois] Messanians P.

1754. Messoneys] Messonoys H, Achaea P.

1758. myddes H. 1759. for] om. R. 1760. his] a H.

1762. this prince] thes princis B. 1763. he] thei H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 113 verso. ² MS. J. leaf 114 recto.

- Be disposicioun verrey naturall 1780
 Hold among Romeyns, bi report of langage,
 Passyng al othir in wisdam & corage,
- Old of discrecioun & but* yong of yeeris.
 For a myracle, myn auctour doth expresse, 1784
 Whan senatours sente massageris
 Into Frigia bi gret auisynesse
 For Berosynthia, most famous goddesse,
 Whan she was brouht bi them that ded hir guide, 1788
 In hous nor temple she wolde nat abide,
- Sauf in the paleis of this Scipioun,
 To putte his name mor in remembraunce.
 The which also, thoruh his hih renoun, 1792
 Gallobois he brouhte to vttraunce,
 A peeple off Grece, ferr out of gouernaunce;
 But Scipioun gan hem so werreie,
 Maugre ther malis the Romeyns for to obeye. 1796
- Wherbi his name was put in memorie,
 And ful gret thank in Roome he hath disserued,
 Because onli of this gret victorie,
 For which the tryumphe was to hym reserued. 1800
 But at the laste ful falsli he was serued
 Of the Romeyns aftir ther old maneer,
 In this tragedie anon as ye shal heer.
- Aftir he hadde aumentid ther tresours, 1804
 Conquered in Asie many regiouns,
 Caused of ther foon that thei wer victours,
 Appesid of Graccus the fals occasiouns,
 Compassed of malis be newe discenciouns 1808
 Atween the peeple & also the senat, —
 He of hih wisdam hath stynt al that debat.
- Trustyng the Romeyns, Scipioun was begiled,
 Loste ther fauour, & offendid nouht; 1812
 Be them vnwarli banshed & exiled,
 Cleene forgetyn; put out of ther thouht
 For comoun proffit al that he hath wrouht.
 The guerdoun lost, thoh princis canat see, 1816
 Of al that doon for any comounte.

When the Senate sent messengers to Phrygia for the goddess Berecynthia,

she would not abide anywhere except in Scipio's house, which was a miracle.

He also brought the Gallobois to uttrance, and deserved great thanks of Rome and was given a triumph;

but at the last he was treated with ingratitude.

He lost the favour of the Romans and was banished and forgotten — the usual reward of those who labour for the common weal.

1783. but] nat but B, R, J, P.

1799. this] his R, J, P — gret] om. H, R 3.

- Their popularity
 is like a wisp
 of flame or a
 momentary
 glimpse of the
 sun through
 clouds.
- Lik a blase for a w[h]ile liht,*
 Which sheweth [ful] cleer & is neuir aftir seyn,
 Or lik a sonne for a moment briht, 1820
 Vnwarli shroudid *with* a cloude of reyn,
 Riht so the wyndi fauour bloweth in veyn,
 May resemble for a mutabilite,
 Of them that doon for any comounte. 1824
- The people are
 as fickle in
 their opinions
 as so many
 Blind Bayards;
- The peeple folweth ther owne oppynyouns,
 In ther conceitis thei be so wonderful;
 Will halt the bridil of ther discreciouns:
 Ther hasti deemyng so bestial is & dull, 1828
 On blynde Baiard thei braiden at a pull,
 To quite the guerdouns of marcial bounte
 Of them that doon for any comounte.
- the fame of a
 prince is lifted
 to the stars
 to-day and
 obscured to-
 morrow.
- This day a prince stant in the peeplis grace, 1832
 Lik as thei wolde his name deifie
 Aboute the sterris in Iubiteris place,
 With Mars & Phebus his name to stellefie;
 But be to-morwe ther komth a sodeyn skie, 1836
 Shewyng ther is a ful feynt surete
 Of them that doon for any comounte.
- We need only
 remember the
 fate of the
 three Scipios.
- And for tafferme that it is treuli so, [p. 281]
 Calle thre Scipiouns [un]to remembraunce: 1840
 First of Affrik & Asie, bothe too;
 Note in cronicles ther knihtli gouernaunce,
 Ther restles labour Romeyns for tauaunce,
 Rekne ageynward how thes princis thre 1844
 Wer ful vngoodli quit bi the comounte.

¶ Lenvoy.

- This tragedie
 of these worthy
 notable men,
 who made so
 many regions
 subject to Rome
- T**HIS tragedie of thre Scipiouns,
 [That wer] so worthi in knythod &* notable,
 Made so many famous regions 1848
 Subject to Roome (this stori is no fable),
 Wher the Romeyns, double & deceyuable,
 Shewed ageynward to thes princis thre,

1818. liht] briht B, H, R, J. 1819. ful] *om.* R, J, P.

1820. a] þe H.

1832. *This stanza and the next are transposed in H.*1839. it] is H. 1840. unto] to J, P. 1845. quit] *om.* H.

1847. &] & eck B.

- The thank[e] lost & guerdoun couenable 1852
 Of hym that doth for any comounte.
- Rekne up in Affrik the cites & the touns, in both Africa
and Asia, with
vast revenues,
 Grete Cartage with castellis deffensable;
 Rekne in Asie the gret pocessiouns 1856
 With reuenus verray innumerable;
 Rekne ther tryumphes of pris incomparable,
 Which considred, ye may a merour see,
 How the guerdouns be fals & flaskisable 1860
 Of them that doon for any comounte.
- Thei wer whilom the Romeyn champiouns, and who,
once the
champions of
their nation,
were
finally thrown
down from
Fortune's wheel,
 Off senatours to sette the honour stable, 1864
 Tauoid discord & al discenciouns
 Atween the comouns & statis honourable;
 But she that is of custum ay chaungable,
 Fortune, in whom may be no surete,
 Sheweth in hir wheel the guerdouns most mutab^{le} 1868
 Of them that doon for any comounte.
- Noble Princis, peiseth in *your* resouns, shews, Noble
Princes, that all
earthly things
are unstable,
even your own
domination.
 Al worldli thyng in erthe is transmutable, 1872
 Feynt & vnseur *your* domynaciouns,
 Chartre* is ther non to make hem perdurable.
 Sorwe at departyng *your* bodies corumpable,
 A thyng rassemblyng that neuer hadde be,
 Record on Scipiouns be guerdouns rassemblable 1876
 Off them that doon for any comounte.
- Trusteth neuer in *your* oppynyouns, Know only that
your power is
transitory;
do not allow
yourselves to
be made blind
to the play
of Fortune.
 But that *your* power is ech day remeuable. 1880
 Beeth nat maad blynd in *your* discreciouns,
 But considreth bexaumples resonable
 The pley of Fortune lik hasard retourable
 With sodeyn chaung of fals felicite,
 Vnto the guerdouns daili comparable 1884
 Of them that doon for any comounte.

¶ **Explicit lenvoye.**

1858. ther] be H.

1859. ye] I, H.

1870. peiseth] remembrith H.

1873. Chartre] Charite B, R, H, Cherite J, Chartyr H 5, Chartre
R 3, P.

[How Duk Hanyball aftir many victorious dedes
moordred himsilf with poison.]¹

The famous
prince Hannibal,
who hated the
Romans and
daunted their
power, next
appeared before
Bochas.

NEXT [in ordre] to Bochas, as I reede,
Out of Affrik & Cartage, þerwithal
Ther cam a duk þat hadde most hatrede 1888
Ageyn the Romeyns in especiall,
This famous prince callid Hanyball,
Bi whos prowesse, as it is weel knowe,
The seid Romeyns wer dauntid & brouht lowe. 1892

Not only did
his horoscope
foretell his
inclinations,

And among othir worthi dukes alle,
As olde cronicles make mencioniun,
Of Hanybal the fate is so befallē,
At his berthe bi disposicioun, 1896
That of his natural constellacioun
Set in the heuene, that he sholde bee
Perpetueli enmy to Roome the cite.

but when a boy
he swore that he
would always
be an enemy
of Rome.

As the stori of hym doth deuise, 1900
Whil his fader, duk whilom of Cartage,
Callid Amulchar dede onys sacrificē
To his goddis, & he nyne yeer of age,
Swor & avowed, of herte & of corage, 1904
Duryng his lyff withoute excepcioun
Euer to been enmy vnto Roome toun.

He was the
mighty wall of
Carthage, who,
succeeding to
his father,
Hasdrubal,

This Martis child, this lusti yonge kniht
Was to Cartage the strong[e] myhti wall, 1908
Which succeedid in his fadris riht
Afftir the deth of worthi Hastruball.
First he made a werre ful mortall
Geyn Saguntynoyis, as it is specefied, 1912
Cause with Romeyns that thei wer allied.

dreamt that he
should conquer
Spain and
Italy.

A drem he hadde; & was thus in sentence: [p. 282]
That he sholde conquere in bataille, 1916
Maugre al tho that stoden at diffence,
Too myhti contrees, first Spaigne & than Itaille,
Doun descendyng with gret apparaille,
Passyng the famous ryueer Iberius,
And wher he rood alway victorious. 1920

1899. enmy] om. H.

1902. Amilchar P. 1904. avowed] avoied R.

1910. the] his R. 1912. Saguntines P.

1914. thus] this H, R 3, thys H 5.

1919. hiberus H, R 3, Iberous P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 114 recto.

- With hym of Affrik many cheuenteyns
 Rood thoruh Gaule, fond no resistence,
 Of Pirenes bi the hih mownteyns
 To shewe the rigour of his magnificence,
 1924 Ouer the Alpies be sturdi violence,
 Natwithstandyng the passage was ful wikke,
 Of slidyng frostis & of snowis thikke.
- A gret[e] parti of his men he* loste
 1928 Bi the constreynt of that fell passage,
 Hors, olefauntis, that many besaunt coste,
 Fond gret daunger off them in his cariage.
 Assaut of brigauntis, whan thei fond auantage; 1932
 And as Bochas put in remembraunce,
 Felte gret losse of al his ordenaunce.
- The Alpies passid with trauaile & gret wo,
 This Hanybal with al his cheualrie
 1936 Approched is the ryueer off the Poo,
 Cam to a toun that callid is Cursie,
 Which stant upon the cite of Pauye,
 Wher a consul named* Scipioun
 1940 Gaff hym bataille euene affor the toun.
- The same consul, Gneus Scipioun,
 Which bi prowess* of manli Hanyball
 Was disconfited, as maad is mencioun,
 1944 Tofor Pauye hadde a riht foul[e] fall:
 The first victorie in especiall
 That he hadde beyounde the mownteyns,
 Whan he purposed* tassaile the Romeyns.
 1948
- Sempronyus, a-nother consuleer,
 That was felawe to said[e] Scipioun,
 Sent eek fro Roome *witb* a ful proud cheer
 Geyn Hanyball; but in his comyng doun
 1952 Tofor Tresbie, a large myhti toun,
 Outraied was bi fatal auenture
 And aftir neuer myhte his fall recure.

He first subdued Spain, and, crossing the Pyrenees, rode through Gaul and down over the Alps into Italy,

losing many of his men and horses and elephants in the passage.

Approaching the River Po, he defeated Gneus Scipio at Pavia,

as well as Sempronius, who had been sent from Rome against him.

1922. Rood] And R.

1928. men he] peepel B, R, J, P. 1931. Fond] And R.

1938. toun] hil P — Cursie] Curye H, Curye R 3, Currye H 5, Ticinie P.

1939. upon] nighe P. 1940. named] callid B, J, R, P.

1943. prowess] processe B, R, J. 1945. foule] full R.

1948. purposed] pursued B, R, J. 1950. the seyd R.

1951. fro] to R.

- Off too consuleris this was the wooful fyn, 1956
 Sempronyus & Gneus Scipioun.
 Ouer the mounteyn callid Appenyn
 Wente Hanybal, thoruh his hih renoun,
 To gret damage & gret confusioun 1960
 Of his peple that passid the mounteyns,
 Destroied with cold, gret snowh & hidous reyns.
- He then crossed the Apennines, where many of his men died of accident and exposure. He himself escaped on an elephant, but lost one of his eyes. Loste his knihtis, his tresours & his goodis,
 Ther myht as tho be maad[e] no diffence; 1964
 His grete steedes drowned in the floodes
 Bi the watris myhti violence,
 Fond for the tyme no bettir resistence,
 Sauf he eskaped fro that sodeyn wrak, 1968
 Of an olyfaunt, he ridyng on the bak.
- So importable was his greuouse peyne,
 Onli born up of marcial corage,
 Yit ther he lost oon of his eyen tweyne, 1972
 Kept of kniethod o cheer & o visage.
 Thoruh Itaille heeld alwey his passage,
 Slouh a consul callid Flamynyus;
 Thus in thre batailles he was victorious. 1976
- Afterwards he defeated and slew Flaminius.
- Finally Quintus Fabius, seeing that no Roman captain could conquer him, invented a new method of fighting by ambush and constant harassing,
 But in this while, as seith myn auctour,
 Quyntus Fabius, subtil & deceyuable,
 Which was in Roome a famous dictatour,
 And he apparceyued* be toknes ful notable, 1980
 No Romeyn capteyn was in tho daies able,
 As it was shewed be experience,
 Geyn Hanybal to make resistence.
- Yit in his conceit he subtili gan serche; 1984
 To fynde a weie he dede his besi peyne,
 Day be day gan felli theron werche,
 Outher be fraude or sum compassid treyne
 To ligge await & secreli ordeyne 1988
 Enbusshmentis to his auantages,
 Of Hanybal to stoppe the passages.

1959. hih] gret R. 1961. passid] om. R.

1972. lost he H.

1980. And he] Which H, R 3, H 5, P — apparceyued] apper-
 teyned B.

1984. Yit] But H — his] this R.

1985. he] om. H.

- But al his treynys seruid hym of nouht;
 For Hanybal, this worthi Affrican,
 In his conquest so prudentli hath wrouht,
 So lik a prince & a knihtli man,
 Fro thilke tyme that he werris gan
 Ageyn the Romeyns, bothe on se & lond,
 That thei wer feeble his power to withstond.
- This Quintus Fabius kept hym alway cloos, [p. 283]
 Liggyng await to falle on Hanyball;
 And of assent eek to his purpos
 Ther was oon Varo, manli & wis withal.
 And so thes tweyne in especial,
 Withynne Poile, a large gret contre,
 Fauht with Hanybal at Kannes the cite.
- As the stori maketh rehersaile,
 The Romeyn parti, of worthi werreious
 Wer fourti thousand slay[e]n in bataille:
 Emylius Paulus, thretti senatours,
 Twenti in noubre that hadde be pretours,
 And thre hundred capteyns of estat,
 Slayn be Hanybal in that mortal debat.
- And bi the slauhtre of Emilius,
 The noble consul, Romeyns disespeired.
 And Hanybal, that day victorious,
 To his loggyng is ageyn repeired,
 His foon outraied & mortalli appeired,
 Knew no refut ageyn this manli kniht,
 But at myscheeff took hem to the fliht.
- The which[e] day, yiff that Hanybal
 Hadde hem folwed proudli to the toun,
 Bi the counseil of oon Marthabal,
 A manli kniht, a prince of hih renoun,
 He sholde haue had ful pecessioun
 That day of Roome, lik to his entente, —
 But I suppose Fortune list nat assente.
- In this processe, pleynli, as I reede,
 This Hanybal wex proud & riht pompous,
 Of foure victories dempte hymself in deede

1992 yet even he could accomplish little; and the Romans became less and less able to withstand Hannibal's power.

1996

[p. 283] Quintus Fabius, however, continued his campaign, assisted by Varro;

2000

2004

and they fought Hannibal at Cannæ

2008

2012 and were again defeated.

2016

2020 But Hannibal failed to press home his victory and lost his chance of entering Rome.

2024

He grew proud and indolent,

2028

1991. his] thes R.

1997. feblee R — poweer] prowess H, R 3, H 5.

2004. Cannas R, J, P, Cannes H 5, Cames H, Kannes R 3.

2011. be] with R. 2013. disespeired R.

2019. day] hanyball R. 2021. Mataball H. 2027. &] om. R.

- Aboue al othir to be most glorious,
Of his corage most inli surquedous.
But, o alas, a litil slouthe & pride,
For lak of pursut, his conquest set aside. 2032
- although during the course of the war he had slain so many Romans that three bushels filled with their gold rings were sent home to Carthage.
Yit in his conquest, of knihtis that lay ded,
Of consuleris old & yong of age,
With senatours, the processe who list reed,
Slayn in the feeld[e] in that mortal rage, 2036
Duk Hanybal sente to Cartage,
Of cleene gold, be record of writyngis,
Out of the feeld thre bussel ful of ryngis.
- Fortune now became unfavourable.
Aftir foure victories heer remembrid, 2040
Bi and bi the processe, who list see,
In which[e] many worthi was dismembrid,
Bothe of Affrik & Roome the cite,
Abate gan the gret prosperite 2044
Of Hanybal be froward auenture:
Set onys bak, hard fortune to recure.
- Wintering at Capua in great luxury,
Aftir the flouris of his felicite,
His noblesse drouh to declynacioun. 2048
To Capue he wente, a myhti strong cite,
Ther to soiourne, as maad is mencionn,
Al the tyme of wyntres cold sesoun,
Wher to his lust & bodili plesaunce, 2052
Off al vitaille fond gret habundaunce.
- his soldiers lost much of their martial power through over-indulgence;
Which made his knihtis slouh vnto the werre;
For wyn, wommen and plente of vitaille
Ful offte sithe cause men to erre, 2056
Make hem feeble ther enmyes to assaille:*
Gorges agroteied, enboced ther entraille,
Disposeth men rather to reste & slepe,
Than of ther enmyes for to taken keepē. 2060
- and in the spring, when Hannibal purposed to lay siege to Rome, he was hindered by the rains,
But whan wyntir with his frostis colde
Was ouergon in thilke regioun,
Hanybal gan his purpos holde,
To leyn a siege vnto Roome toun. 2064
But so gret reynys fill from heuen down,
So gret[e] tempest vpon eueri side,
For the constreynt he myht[e] nat abide.
2031. o] om. H. 2036. in] on H.
2047. his] hir H. 2049. Capua P.
2057. to assaille] tassaille B, for tassaille H, R 3, H 5.
2058. Egroteied H, engrosed R 3. 2066. vpon] om. R.

- To fortefe, the said[e] Hanybal, 2068 and failed of
Ageyn his enmyes wher he hadde a-doo, his reinforce-
Sente lettres vnto Hastrubal, ments, owing
In riht gret haste for to come hym too. and death of
But Fortune hir wheel hath turnid so, 2072 Hasdrubal.
- Of which[e] myscheeff & disconfiture 2076 This, together
Hanybal gan dulle in his corage, with the news
Compleyned sore of this mysaventure, that Scipio was
Knew no refut ageyn this mortal rage, attacking
Herd eek seyn that Affrik & Cartage Carthage and
Were of newe, to his confusioun, had taken
Strongli werreyed be worthi Scipioun. 2080 Syphax
prisoner,
dulled his
courage.
- Siphax also of Numedie kyng, [p. 284]
Which ageyn Romeyns gan a werre make,
Maugre his myht & al his fel werkyng 2084
Was bi force of Scipioun Itake,
Wherthoruh his corage gretli gan a-slake.
And how Cartage, cheeff of that regeoun,
Beseged was also be Scipioun. 2088
- Thus Hanybal constreyned was of neede
Hom to repeire for rescus off Cartage,
And was also, in bookis as I reede,
The same tyme falle ferre in age, 2092
And at myscheeff & gret disauantage
Ageyn Scipioun ful lite[l] myht auaille,
Bi whom he was sconfited in bataille.
- Cartage constreynid of necessite, 2096 and after
Them to submitte vnto Roome toun; Carthage had
And for ther mor hard aduersite, surrendered.
- Gneus Seruilius was fro Rome sent doun,
Onli of purpos for this conclusioun: 2100
For to procure in especiall
Fynal destruccioun & deth off Hanyball.
- Afftir al his marcial labours,
His old felicite wex froward & vnmeete, 2104 he hid his
In holuh images put al his tresours, wealth in hollow
images and
went to Crete,

2088. be] of H. 2095. sconfited H.

2099. Gneus] Cayus P — Seruilius] Geruilius R — fro rome was

H, R 3, H 5.

2103. And aftir R.

- Took his passage into the lond of Creete,
 Found* Fortune contrarie & vnsueete,
 Made officeeris keepyn his richesse 2108
 In the temple of Diane the goddesse.
- and afterwards
 to Prusias,
 king of
 Bithynia, who,
 threatened by
 the Romans,
 Sunwhat for trust & parcel eek for dreede,
 To fynde socour he wente [un]to the kyng
 Of Bithynye to helpe hym in his neede, 2112
 Callid Prusias; but of his komyng
 The sleihti Romeyns hadde knowlechyng:
 To Bithynye doun ther lettres sente,
 "Yif Hanybal scape, echon ye shal repente." 2116
- laid siege to the
 fortress in which
 Hannibal had
 taken refuge.
 The lettres radde, the kyng the same day
 Made his peeple besege the dongoun
 Wher duk Hanybal of truste allone lay.
 Al destitut whan he knew this tresoun, 2120
 Tescape his enmyes drank wilfulli poisoun,
 Ches rather so, sith othir escap was noon,
 Than in the handis to fallyn of his foon.
- Hannibal, seeing
 that his position
 was hopeless,
 drank poison,
 praying the
 gods to take
 vengeance on
 Prusias.
 To for his deth[e] saide this orisoun, 2124
 To alle the goddis deuoutli doun knelyng,
 That thei wolde of this fals tresoun
 Take vengauce on Prusias the kyng,
 Which was cause, bi his fals werkyng, 2128
 Of [the] destruccioun and the deth fynall
 Of this riht famous worthi Hanyball.

[Lenvoy.]

- My pen quaked
 and my heart
 bled when I
 wrote this
 tragedy of
 Hannibal,
THIS tragedie froward to write or reede
 Of this forseid manli Hanyball, 2132
 My penne quook, myn herte I felte bleede,
 For to beholde the woful pitous fall
 Of hym that was the diffensable wall
 Of Cartage, the stronge myhti toun, 2136
 Which slouh hymself be drynkyng of poisoun.

2107. Found] And B, R, J, P.

2111. unto] to R, J, P. 2112. his] this H, R 3.

2116. ye] thai H.

2117. The] Thes H.

2120. this] his R.

2129. 1st the] om. H, R, R 3, H 5 — 2nd the] om. J, P.

2130. hastruball H.

It was to hym, he thouhte, mor manheede
 To slen hymself be vengauce most mortall,
 Than his enmyes be constreynt sholde hym leede 2140
 In cheynys bounde, he to be [ther] thrall.
 So gret despiht he hadde of hem at all,
 That leuer he hadde, than bide in ther prisoun,
 To moordre hymself be drynkyng off poisoun. 2144

As me seemeth, in this horrible deede
 He rassembled the furies infernal;
 Of cruel Pluto I trowe he took his meede,
 Voide off resoun, [he] becam bestiall. 2148
 At whos terrible feste funerall,
 Goddesse Proserpyna cam with manes doun,
 The same tyme whan he drank poisoun.
 Noble Princis, considreth & take* heede, 2152
 Leuyng the surplus his deedis marciall,
 Knihtli remembreth, & hath in herte hatreede
 Of his empoisonyng in especiall,
 Abhomynable to God & man withal, 2156
 That a prince so famous of renoun
 Sholde moordre hymself be drynkyng of poisoun.

who thought it
 more manly
 to slay himself
 than to be
 thrall to his
 enemies.

It seems to me
 that he was like
 one of the
 Furies of the
 lower regions.
 He received his
 reward of Pluto.

Noble Princes,
 remember that
 a self-inflicted
 death by poison
 is abominable to
 God and man.

[How Prusias kyng of Bethenye betraied Hanybal
 and wolde haue disherite his sone & heir went a
 beggyng in straunge landys.]¹

FOLWYNG in ordre ther cam to Bochas
 Of Bithynye the grete myht[y] kyng, 2160
 Which in his tyme was call[li]d Prusias,
 Gretli slaundred & noised of o thyng,
 That he was fals & double in werkyng,
 Ageyn the noblesse of his estat roiall, 2164
 Because that he betraissed Hanyball.
 This defaute dirked the brihtnesse [p. 285] and thereby
 Of his fame & his knihtli renoun, darkened
 And eclipsed his passid old prowesse 2168 the brightness
 Bi report in many a regeoun. of his fame.
 Alas that
 Alas, that euer the condicioun treachery
 Of doubilnesse bi falsnesse or feynyng, should ever be
 Sholde be founde, a[nd] namli in a kyng! 2172 found in a
 king!

2141. their] *om.* R. 2148. he] *om.* R, J.
 2150. be goddesse H. 2152. take] taketh B, J.
 2155. enpoisonyng H.
 2162. slaundred] disclaundrid H, dyslandryd H 5.

¹ MS. J, leaf 116 recto.

- This Prusias had a son called Nicomedes, whom he purposed to deprive of his heritage
- Off this Prusias ferther to proceede,
Which geyn Hanybal wrouhte this tresoun,
A sone he hadde callid Nichomeede,
Born to* been heir be iust successioun. 2176
But his fader bi fals collusioun
Purposed hym, for he was yong of age,
To putte hym out of his heritage.
- because he had a younger son by a second wife.
- In this mateer ther greuh up a gret striff 2180
Bi Prusias [a]geyn this Nichomeede,
Cause that he bi his seconde wiff
Hadde a yong sone, in bookis thus I reede,
Whom he purposeth to preferre in deede, 2184
For which he caste, bi short conclusioun,
Off Nichomeede the destruccioun.
- And for tacomplisshe this froward fals mateer,
Bi ful gret deliberacioun 2188
Kyng Prusias gan shewen heuy cheer
Geyn Nichomeede, seekyng occasioun
To depryue hym off pocessioun,
Afftir his* day, bi sotil fals werkyng, 2192
In Bithynye he shal nat regne as kyng.
- The people saw what he was about and stood by Nicomedes,
- The peepel seyng this gret inquite
Wrouht bi the kyng geyn good[e] conscience,
Thoruh al the lond, of hih & louh degre, 2196
To Nichomeede, alle of o sentence,
Gaff ther good will and ther benivolence,
For eueri lord and eueri gret baroun
Stood hool with hym thoruh al the regioun. 2200
- who was crowned king by just title; and Prusias had to beg for his living in foreign lands. Such is the end of treason and deceit.
- Thus bi iust title he was crowned kyng.
Prusias for shame & heuynesse
In straunge contrees lyued be beggyng,
Al desolat cried for almesse. 2204
Loo, heer the eende of tresoun & falsnesse! —
Laft* at myscheeff, myn auctour seith the same,
Of pouerte forsook his owne name.
- Prusias suffered both for his injustice to Nicomedes and his treachery to Hannibal.
- Seeth heer too thynges, & taketh riht good heede, 2208
Of Prusias thunwar sodeyn myschaunce,
The disherityng doon to Nychomeede,

2176. to] be B. 2181. geyn J, R, H, R 3, H 5.

2187. for] om. H, R 3, P. 2192. his] this B, R, P.

2194. gret] om. H. 2199. 1st eueri] euere R.

2200. the] þat R. 2206. Laft] Last B. 2209. chaunce H.

Aftir folwyng on hym the grete vengauce,
 As the stori put in remembrance, 2212
 For tresoun doon odible & mortal
 Ageyn the forseid famous Hanybal.

[Ho[w] Persa of Macedoyne kyng that enpoisoned
 his* brothir/ was bi Emylyus outraied & deied
 in prisoun.]¹

BESPREYNT with teris, pitousli weping,
 As Bochas sat in his studie allone, 2216
 Next cam Persa, of Macedoyne kyng,
 And mortalli he gan sihhe & grone
 And furiousli for to make his mone,
 That he whilom was of so hih renoun, 2220
 Constreyned afttir to deien in prisoun.

Persa, king of Macedonia, appeared sighing and groaning before Bochas, for, in spite of his great renown, he died in prison.

This said[e] Persa of nature was froward,
 Euel disposed eek of condicioun.
 Thouh he of berthē was but a bastard, 2224
 He compassid bi fals collusioun
 Afttir his fader to haue pcessioun,
 As myn auctour remembreth be writyng,
 Of Macedoyne to be crowned kyng. 2228

He was evil-disposed and a bastard, and in order to become king

His fader Phelipp, the stori tellith thus,
 Hadde a sone which was yong of age,
 Wis & redi, callid Demetrius,
 Born & begete treuli in mariage. 2232
 But Persa caste bi furious outrage
 Hym to destroie & moordre be poisoun,
 He of that kyngdam to haue pcessioun,—

procured the death of his young brother Demetrius, the rightful heir.

Falsli compassed* to his auantage,
 In his entent Demetrius to deprive 2236
 Of Macedoyne, which was his heritage.
 And therupon he lettres gan contryue
 To preeue hym tre[i]tour whil he was alyue. 2240
 Wherof kyng Phelipp gretli was annoyed,
 That he & Persa sholde be destroyed

by telling Philip, his father, that he was a traitor.

2217. Persa] Persius P.

2219. foriously R. 2220. hih] gret R.

2222. Persius P. 2224. he of berthē] of birth he H.

2236. compassed] compasseth B.

2237. his] this H. 2240. on live H.

2241. annoyed] Enoid H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 116 recto; his is repeated.

- Philip then caused Demetrius to be slain by poison. Be Demetrius, that thouhte no damage,
Mente non harm in his oppynyoun; 2244
Yit his fader, suspecious of corage,
As* Persa gaff hym fals enformacioun,
Made hym be slayn be drynkyng of poisoun
Vpon a day, a thyng abhomynable, 2248
Sittyng at mete at his fadris table.
- Afterwards when he knew the truth he died of grief, and Persa usurped the crown, Kyng Phelipp aftir, whan he knew the trouthe, [p.286]
Hadde of his deth[e] gret compassioun,
But al to late; & that was ful gret routhe. 2252
Which caused aftir his owne destruccioun, —
For sorwe deide; and of presumpcioun,
Persa aftir, falsli vsurpyng,
In Macedoyne was c[ro]wnid kyng. 2256
- and, allyng himself with Grece and Thrace, began a war against Rome. With dyuers contrees made his alliaunce,
In Grece, &* Trace gat freendes nih & ferre,
And of pride & wilful gouernaunce
Caste with Romeyns for to holde werre. 2260
Vn grace & youthe made hym for to erre,
Til a consul sente fro Roome toun
Brouhte this Persa to destruccioun.
- Æmilius was sent against him, and before the battle, seeing his daughter weep, Callid Emilius was this consuleer, 2264
Sent ageyn Persa to haue a gret bataille.
Seyng his douhtir heuy of hir cheer,
Whan he wente oute his enmyes to assaille,
Made vnto hire this vnkouth apposaille: 2268
“Whi weepe ye so? What thyng doth you gréeue,
At my departyng takyng of me leue?”
- discovered that it was for her whelp called Persa, which had just died; and this her father felt sure was a good omen. “Fader,” quod she, “& ye taken heed,
A whelp I hadde that dede me gret plesaunce, 2272
Callid Persa, the which riht now is ded,
And this cheef cause onli of my greuaunce.”
Hir fader thanne gan chaungen contenaunce:
“This a tokne, to myn ences of glorie, 2276
That I of Persa shal hauen the victorie.”

2246. As] And B, R, J, P — Persius P.

2256. corownid] crownid H, R, J, R 3, P, corownyd H 5.

2258. &] in B, R, J, R 3, H 5 — frendis gat H.

2262. fro] to R.

2266. heuy] om. H. 2268. opposaile H.

2272. me] om. R, J.

2273. Persius P. 2274. this] thes R.

- In Macedoyne he & Persa mette,
 And quit hym ther lik a manli kniht,
 Conquereth the lond, non myht[e] hym *witbsette*, 2280
 And manli putte Persa to the fliht;
 Afftir to Trace he took the weie riht.
 Of which[e] conquest short processe to make,
 With his too sonys Persa was ther take. 2284
- Emelius aftir this victorie
 Axeth the *tryumphe* vnto his *guerdoun*;
 And as it is remembred in historie,
 Persa folweth his* char thoruh Rome *toun*, 2288
 Condempned aftir to deien in *prisoun*.
 The which[e] deth he dede weel disserue,
 For he be *poisoun* made his brother sterue.
- Thus can Fortune, erli & eek late,
 Doun from hir wheel & hir hih[e] stage
 Of proude *princis* the *surquedie* abate.
 Whan to hir lust she seeth most *auauntage*,
 She frowardli can turnen hir visage, 2292
 And sodenli thestat of hem consume,
 About ther offis that wrongli list presume. 2296
- ¶ Amongis which, a kyng of Israel,
 Ageyn the presept and lawe of Moises,
 Callid Ozias, the Bible kan weel tel,
 Of *presumpcioun* wilful & rek[e]les,
 To sacrefise put hymself in pres,
 Lik a bisshop in the temple arraied; 2300
 But or he passid he gretli was affraied,
 2304
- Lost his speche, [and] smet with meselrie
 Duryng his lyff: loo, heer a gret vengauce! —
 Off his crowne & his regalie 2308
 Inpotent to vse the *gouernaunce*,
 Parcel for pride & *disobeissaunce*;
 For he list nat meekli the lawe obeie,
 For which at *myscheef* he dede a lepre deie. 2312

Emilius put
 Persa to flight
 and took him
 prisoner

and received the
 triumph.
 Persa after-
 wards died in
 prison and
 richly deserved
 his fate, because
 he had poisoned
 his brother.

Fortune is
 always able
 to curb the
 pride of princes
 when they
 presume above
 their office,

as did Azariah,
 who went into
 the temple
 dressed as a
 bishop and
 demanded to be
 allowed to make
 sacrifice,

for which he
 lost his spech
 and died a leper.

2278. Persius P.
 2288. his] aftir his B, R.
 2292. can] cam R.
 2295. lust] lyst R.
 2299. Isrell H.
 2306. and] om. R, J, P, R 3, H 5.
 2309. Impotent H.

[How Amonyus a prince of Antioche delityng in pillage and robbery, with other vicious luyng, fledde in womannes wede aftir taken and slayn.]¹

Ammonius, a great warrior, prince of Antioch, robbed the rich and spoiled the poor,

NEXT in ordre, compleynyng his distresse,
Cam Amonyus, a notable werreiour,
To Iohn Bochas to shewe his heuynesse,
In Antioche prince & gouvernour. 2316
Of which contre whil he was pecessour,
Hadde in custum, & this was his trauaile,
To robbe the riche & spoille the poraile.

and spared neither young nor old. As he cared for nothing but women and drink,

Spared nouthr old nor yong off age, 2320
Took fro marchauntes tresour & richesse,
And in delites* of lecherous outrage*
Was al his lust, with wach & dronkenesse.
Will in his court of resoun was maistresse, 2324
Causyng the peepel thoruh al the regioun
To rise ageyn hym bi rebelloun.

his subjects rose against him, and he fled dressed as a woman, and when caught swore that he was one.

Contrarie he was to al good disciplyne;
The peepel aros ageyn hym on a day, 2328
And he for feer, in habite femynyne,
Lik a wrechch fledde cowardli away.
Take at myscheeff, was made no delay,
Falsli confessed*, heeryng many a man, 2332
Ageyn nature that he was a woman.

But the people found out the truth, and killed him. Fortune well knows how to punish those who will not follow virtue;

The trouthe knowe and the sclaudre riff, [p. 287]
Alle of assent the peepel Antiocheene
Ros attonys; and so he loste his lyff, 2336
Thei wer so woode ageyn hym in ther teene.
Thus of Fortune the change is alwey seene,
Fro bet to wers she can so weel transmue
Thestat of them that wil no vertu sue. 2340

[How Andriscus of lowe birth born hauyng no title of Macedoyne kyng was taken and deied in prisoun.]²

but she is to blame when she sets an unknown boy on a throne by error, as happened to Andriscus,

BVT of o thyng Fortune is to blame,
That she is so chaungable of corage,
To sette a boy, vnknowe of birthe & fame,
Bi fals errorr upon a roial stage: 2344

2314. Anonyus R. 2320. age] ages R, J.
2322. delices B, J — outrage] outrages B, J, R.
2332. confessed] confesyng B, R, J, P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 116 verso.

² MS. J. leaf 117 recto.

For oon Andriscus bi surquedous outrage,
 Withoute title, be subtil compassyng,
 Of Macedoyne took on hym to be kyng.

Colour was non his cleyrn to make stable, 2348
 Except that he of cheer & off visage
 Was to kyng Phelipp of fetures most semblable,
 Wherbi the peeple in ther furious rage
 Cauhte oppynyoun, of wilful fals dotage, 2352
 Ageyn resoun, [as] Bochas doth descryue,
 That kyng Phelipp was rise fro deth to lyue,

who had no other claim to Macedon than that he looked like King Philip, Persa's father.

Whilom fadir to Persa, as I tolde.
 And for Andriscus, brouht up in wrechchidnesse, 2356
 In presence both of yong & old
 Was bold to cleyrne be title of rihtwisnesse,
 Shewyng no ground but personel liknesse,
 Mokkyng the peeple, which bi ther fauour 2360
 Of roial dignite resceyueth the honour.

The people thought that Philip had risen from the dead; and as Andriscus was egged on by others, he took possession of the throne.

Thus he that was fostred as a wrech
 In miserie and eek in pouerte,
 Fro poore bed his hornis dede up strechche 2364
 To holde a sceptre of kyngli dignite.
 And bi the support of the comounte
 He gan wexe pompous and elat, —
 Brouht up of nouht, whan he stood in estat. 2368

Afterwards, as was to be expected, he became puffed up with pride;

Nothing mor cruel, nor nothyng more vengable,
 Nor mor hasti to execucioun,*
 Nor mor deynous, nor mor vntretable,
 Than whan a beggere hath domynacioun: 2372
 A curre mor froward than a strong leoun.
 And semblabli, non so gret cruelte
 As whan a wrech is set in dignite.

for nothing is more cruel and supercilious than a wretch set in dignity. A cur is more impudent than a lion.

This Andriscus in his roial chaieer, 2376
 Texecute his hatful cruelte
 Gadred peeple in contres ferr & neer
 In Macedoyne; & of old enmyte
 Began maligne geyn Roome the cite. 2380
 But to withsette his froward fals entent,
 Oon Iuuencius, a pretour, was down sent.

He began to malign against Rome.

2353. as] *om.* R.

2354. rise] *rysen* R. 2355. to] of R. 2358. be] his H.

2370. execucioun] *doe* *execucioun* B, *do* *execucioun* R, J, P.

2378. peeplis H. 2380. ageyn H. 2381. fals] *om.* R.

2382. Iuuentus P.

Juventus, a
praetor, was
sent against
him and
defeated,
because of his
vainglory.

But because that he was negligent,
And of despiht[e] took of hym non heede, 2384
He was outraied, & bi Andriscus shent,
With al the peeple that he dede leede.

But the Romeyns, of hope bet to speede,
Han sent Metellus, a ful manli kniht, 2388
To Macedoyne to meete [hym] anon riht.

Metellus then
set on him
and took him
prisoner to
Rome.

This worthi man list nat longe tarie,
Set proudli on in hope it sholde auaille,
Made Macedoyne to Roome tributarie, 2392

Took Andriscus manli in bataille,
Brouht hym to Roome *witb* myhti apparaille,
And made hym lyn fetrid in prisoun
For his outraious fals presumpcioun. 2396

Thus he was
chastised for
being proud and
disdainful in
his prosperity.

Thus for his froward vsurpacioun,
That he was hawteyn in his prosperite,
Knew nat hymself thoruh fals abusioun,
Blent with a myst of blynd felicite, 2400
List nat remembre of his first pouerte,
Whom to chastise Fortune brouht[e] lowe,*
Because he list nat hymselfen for to knowe.

[How Alisaundre ballas kyng of Surre for extor-
cioun pride and vnkyndenesse deied atte mis-
cheef.]¹

There was once
a kyng of
Syria called
Alexander
Balas.

THUS kan this ladi pleyen hir paient 2404
Bi a maner of deynous mokerie,
Hir entermes forth serue hem of entent,
To folk that truste hir onli of folie.

And to purpos, — whilom of Surrie 2408
Ther was a kyng, lik as writ Bochas,
Callid Alisaundre, whos surname was Ballas.

After Antiochus
Eupator was
set aside

Of which Ballas to telle the processe,
First of his risyng & aftir of his fall: 2412
Anthiochus, the stori berth witnesse,

2389. hym] *om.* R, P.

2396. fals] fell H. 2398. his] hih H.

2399. fals] his fals H. 2402. lowe] hym lowe B.

2404. pleyen R.

2408. of] in H, R 3, H 5 — Surrie] sutrie R. 2409. as] a H.

2410. was] is H. — whos surname was Ballas] but truly Prom-
palas P.

2411. Ballas] Prompalus P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 117 recto.

- Callid Eupater, which in especial
 Cleymed title to thestat roiall,
 Afftir his fader named Anthiochus 2416
 Epiphanes, the stori tellith thus.
- Afftir whos deth the kyngdam of Surrye [p. 288] by Demetrius, a
 Sholde longe be successioun brother of
 To Eupater; & eek for his partie Epiphanes,
 Demetrius, hostage in Roome toun, 2420
 Cleymed a title to* that regeoun
 Of Surrye, because Epiphanes
 Was brothir* to hym, this stori is no les. 2424
- Demetrius fro Roome is come doun Demetrius grew
 Into Surrye to cleyme his heritage, proud and
 Resceyueth the crowne [&] took pocessioun, presumptuous
 Gan wexe proud, presumptuous of corage. 2428
 Thus Eupater, that was but yong of age,
 Excludid was in Surrie to succede.
 Of Demetrius ferther thus I reede:
- Outraious he was aboue mesure, 2432 and behaved so
 Riht vengable & ful of cruelte, outrageously
 Hatful also to eueri creature, that all men
 And heuy born of worthi kynges thre; hated him.
- First in Egipt of worthi Tholome, 2436
 And off Attilius in Asie tho regnyng,
 And Arirarches in Capadoce kyng,—
- Alle of assent ageyn hym han conspired,
 Fond a weie Demetrius to depryue, 2440 Ptolemy,
 His vndoing so sore thei ha[ue] desired. and Ariarthes
 And ther entent texecute blyue, conspired
 Thei gan a fable of purpos to contryue, against him
 As ye shal heere, togidre as thei wente, and,
 To which al Surrye attonys dede assente. 2444
- Thei took a galaunt born of lough lynage,
 Callid Ballas, of ther aqueyntaunce, 2448 taking a low-
 And affermede, al of o corage, born youth
 How he was sone & iust heir in substaunce named Balas,
 To Epiphanes, & next heir in alliaunce, maintained
 To succede, bi toknis affermyng, that he was
 Next in Surrye to be crownid kyng. 2452 the son of
 Epiphanes and
 rightful heir to
 the throne.

2422. to] in B, R, J. 2424. brothir] brought B.

2427. &] om. R. 2436. worthi] gret H, R 3.

2437. Attilius] Actilius J, R 3, Attalus P.

2438. Ariarathes P. 2447. Ballas] Prompalus (troubout) P.

- They called
him Alexander
and made him
king in spite
of Demetrius.
First beaten by
Demetrius, he
afterwards
overcame him;
- Alisaundre of purpos thei hym calle,
Because thei thouhte of persone he was able;
Set hym up in his roiall stall,
Maugre Demetrius, cruel & vengable. 2456
And Fortune was to them fauourable,
Made ther purpos fynalli tauaille,
With whom Demetrius hadde a gret bataille.
- This Alisaundre, which namyd was Ballas, 2460
Be Demetrius, as put is in memorie,
First ouercome; but* aftir fill this caas,
He of Demetrie hadde the victorie,
An[d] to ences of his roiall glorie, 2464
Of fortune be sodeyn auenture
Ballas the feeld dede on hym recure.
- but as soon as
he was crowned
king he became
a tyrant and
was ungrateful
to his
benefactors.
- Thus be promocioun of thes kynges thre,
Whan he was crownid kyng of al Surrye, 2468
To fals extorsioun & hatful cruelte
This Alisaundre his wittis dede applie,
To robberyng, pillage and eek tyrannye,
And despised, shortli to conclude, 2472
The said[e] kynges of ingratitude.
- He no longer
knew himself,
and married
Cleopatra,
Ptolemy's
daughter,
- He hadde forget his staat of pouerte,
Knew nat hymself, of fals ambicioun
Weddid* the douhtir of myhti Tholome, 2476
Callid Cleopatra, as maad is menciou. n.
And al his labour in conclsion
Was onli this, in Bochas as I reede,
Al the kyngdam[ys] aboute hym to posseede. 2480
- and coveted all
the kingdoms
about him.
Finally he
made war on
the three
kings.
- Who al coueiteth, sumtyme al doth leese;
Oon ageyn alle hath seelde souereynte.
And for Ballas frowardli gan* cheese
To holde werre with kyng Tholome, 2484
And with the forseid worthi kynges thre,
Alle off assent[e] haue such weies souht,
That be ther werkyng he was brouht to nouht.
- Ptolemy took
his wife away
from him and
gave her to
one Demetrius,
- First Tholome from hym took his wiff, 2488
Cleopatra, & gaf hir in mariage
To oon Demetrie, causyng ful gret striff,

2461. Demetrius] Detryus H.

2462. ouercomen B, J — but] & B, R, J, and P.

2467. be] om. H.

2476. Weddid] Weddith B, R, J, R 3.

2480. kyngdam R. 2483. gan] can B.

For he that tyme was but yong of age;
 But Ballas aftir, be ful gret outrage, 2492
 With al his poweer, gadred nih & ferre,
 Geyn Demetrie gan to holde werre.

Togidre mette proudli in bataille,
 Ballas constreyned cowardli to flee; 2496
 And whan he sauh his poweer dide faile,
 In Arabie, a myhti strong contre,
 Zabidus, a prince of gret pouste,
 Took hym be force, he quakyng in his dreed, 2500
 To kyng Tholome sent anon his hed.

whom Balas
 attacked, but
 was forced to
 flee to Arabia,
 where he was
 slain and his
 head sent to
 Ptolemy.

Men may too thynges considren in this caas: [289]
 Pride pun[y]shed and vnkyndenesse,
 And presumpcioun, in this man Ballas, 2504
 Withoute title or cleym of rihtwisnesse
 Maad kyng of Surrie, set in gret worthynesse.
 What was his eende? ye get no mor of me, —
 His hed smet of & sente to Tholome. 2508

Lenvoye.

THIS tragedie doth naturalli compleyne
 Vpon this vice callid vnkyndenesse,
 Which to pun[y]she is torment non nor peine,
 Rigour condigne, flagelle nor duresse, 2512
 Enprisownyng nor non erthli distresse,
 That may suffise, breeffli to conclude,
 Ageyn the vice of ingratitude.

No punishment
 is too severe
 for ingratitude.

Alle creaturis on this vice compleyne, 2516
 Lawe, nature decrees rihtwisnesse;
 This monstre in kynde doth the liht desteyne,
 Of eueri vertu dirketh the brihtnesse.
 Alisaundre can bern herof witnessse, 2520
 Which to his foorthris, he of techchis rude
 Shewe[d] ageynward gret ingratitude.

It darkens the
 brightness of
 every virtue.

2498. contre] Cite H.

2500. *This line is replaced by the next to last of preceding stanza* H.

2521. forthereris R, H 5, forthereres H, J, furthers P — of] of his R, J.

The treble chain of Cerberus, the hunger and thirst of Tantalus, the torments of Ixion and Typhon, were insufficient to chastise those who are ungrateful to their old friends.
 Noble Princes, do not allow ungrateful folk to approach you; no vice is more hateful than theirs.

Of Herberus thynfernal treble cheyne,
 Nor of Tantalus hunger nor thrustnesse, 2524
 Of Ixion or Ticius, bothe tweyne,
 Rekne the[r] turment, remembre ther sharpnesse;
 Al wer to lital to chastise or redresse
 The hatful vice of them that can delude 2528
 Ther freendis olde bi fals ingratitude.
 Noble Princis, which in your demeyne
 Han gouernauunce of al worldli richesse,
 Geyn folk vnkynde looke that ye disdeyne, 2532
 Suffre* hem nat haue non interesse
 For taproche to your hih noblesse;
 For ther is no vice mor hatful to conclude,
 Than is the vice of ingratitude. 2536

[Here Bochas writeth of the rebellions and seditions in Rome, betwixt Tribunys and comouns.]¹

I must now write about Caius and Tiberius Gracchus, who were authors of great seditions in Rome.

FOLWYNG myn auctour in stories merveilous,
 I mut now write the strong rebellious
 Of Gaivs first & of Tiberius,
 And of ther grete hatful sediciouns 2540
 Meued in Roome tween tribunys & comouns;
 And bi ther stryues how thei gan conspire
 For tatteyne falsli to thempire.
 The yeer sixe hundred be computacioun, 2544
 Gayus Gracchus maad tribun in that age,
 Aftir the cites first fundacioun,
 Which turnyd aftir to ful gret damage
 Of comoun proffit; for bi the* mortal rage, 2548
 Tumulte & noise of comouns in the toun,
 Caused a gret part of ther destruccioun.
 For in departyng of chaumpayne heritages
 Atwen the worthi & poore of the cite 2552
 Bi egal porciouns, Gracchus with fair langages
 Hadde gretli meued al the* comounte.
 Bi which occasioun, in stori men may see,
 Anothir Gracchus, callid the secounde, 2556
 Was slayn in Roome & lowe leid on grounde.

Caius was made tribun in the Roman year 600,

and by his equal division of the public lands between rich and poor he caused dissensions among the people.

2523. Cerberus H. 2524. thrustynesse H.
 2526. 2nd ther] the R, J. 2533. Suffre] Suffreth B, J.
 2535. to] om. R.
 2540. ther] the R. 2548. the] ther B, R, J. 2551. This stanza is transposed with the next R. 2554. the] ther B, R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 118 recto.

- ¶ Aftir this deth of Graccus, as I reede,
Was chose a tribun callid Munycius,
Which fordede the lawes alle in deede
Of olde Graccus callid[e] Gayus. 2560
But he that was named Tiberius,
With help of Flaccus, tribuns of estat,
In the Capitoile began a gret debat. 2564
- Thei wer supported bi the comounte,
Bi vois of peple, the woord of no man knowe;
For Graccus parti hih upon a tre
A trompet stood & proudli gan to blowe, 2568
Which slay[e]n was, & fro the tre doun throwe,
Bi which[e] slauhtre, the book makth rehersaile,
Graccus* wex feeble; his parti gan to faille:
- For dred he fledde into the teritorie
Of Ianus temple, ran up to a tour. 2572
Whan Tiberius, as put is in memorie,
Sauh in the cite he hadde no fauour,
Disespeired knew no bet socour, 2576
Swerd set at brest [in] presence of Mynerue,
Fulli purposed afforn hir for to sterue.
- Ther stood on bi & drouh his hand abak;
Fro that purpos made hym to declyne. 2580
Thus Graccus parti goth day be day to wrak,
And Flakkus took the temple of Lucyne, —
His sone, his freendis [&] almost al his lyne, —
Thei kept them strong; but maugre þer diffence 2584
Thei wer ther slayn be sturdi violence.
- Whil Graccus freendis fauht for his partie, [p. 290]
And he hymself constreyned was for* dred
To preye a boy of his cumpanye, 2588
To take a suerd & smyte[n] of his hed.
Set on a spere with the blood maad red,
Sent it his mooder, compleynyng in hir teene,
Into hir castel that callid was Misseene. 2592
2559. Minucius P. 2560. lawes] lawe H, law R 3.
2566. vois] noise H, noyse R 3, H 5 — woord] voice H, vois R 3, voice P.
2569. tre] gree H.
2571. Graccus] Flaccus B, R, J, R 3, P. Flaccus is corrected to Graccus in H.
2577. brest] the brest R, H — in] om. R, H, J, H 5.
2582. temple] peple H.
2585. ther] om. H — sturdi] study R. 2587. for] of B, R, J.

After the death of the second Graccus, Caius' laws were repealed by Mancinus, and Tiberius and Flaccus revolted,

supported by the commons, but were forced to flee.

Tiberius took refuge in the temple of Minerva;

and Flaccus and his party be-took themselves to the temple of Lucina, where they were slain.

Gracchus prayed a boy among his followers to smite off his head, which he did.

Thus his
mother Cornelia
lost all her
children, and
their goods
were escheated
to the town.

Namyd Cornelia his moder was in deede,
Whilom douhtir to grete Scipioun.
Hir children alle slay[e]n, as I reede,
And Graccus goodis achetid to the toun. 2596
Therof afftir maad a dyuysiou
Bi iugement thoruhout[e] the cite,
Wher most was neede among the comounte.

502 of Grac-
chus' people
were slain and
2000 of Flaccus'
party, of whom
many were in-
nocent.

Of Graccus side fyue hundred slayn & twain* 2600
Vpon an hill[e] callid Auentyne.
And Oppynyus, a consul, dede his peyne
Of ther conspiryng the ground to serche & myne.
And Flaccus parti to brynge to ruyne, 2604
He slouh too thousand bi hasti iugement,
Amongis which was many an innocent.

[How the wif of Hastrubal brent hirsilf & hir
childre.]¹

John Bochas
again tells about
the destruction
of Carthage,

HEER Iohn Bochas in especial
List to remembre how Cartage newe ageyn 2608
Destroied was, & how [duc] Hasdruball
Cam to myscheeff; the trouthe was weel seyn.
Which to reherse of newe it wer but veyn,
Sith heer-toforn is maad cleer menciou
Bothe of ther brennyng & ther destruccioun. 2612

and says that
Hasdrubal's
wife preferred
death to servi-
tude and burnt
herself up to-
gether with her
young sons.

Sauff heer he tellith how Hastruballis wiff,
Onli teschewen to lyuen in seruage,
Ches with hir childre for to lese hir lyff, 2616
And wilfulli, of furious corage,
She and hir sonys, tendre & yong of age,
Among the flawmys & the colis rede
Consumyd were* into ashes dede. 2620

Dido, whom
Aeneas betrayed,
built the city,
and she too
burnt herself
up.

Dido the firste that bilte that cite
And made touris & the stronge wall,
Which was betrasshed falsly* of Enee,
Afforn remembred the fires funerall, — 2624
And aftir longe the wif of Hasdruball
Ches rather deie with hir childre tweyne,
Than among Romeyns for to lyue in peyne.

2600. twain] fyue B, R. 2605. too] too tho H.
2609. duc] om. R, J — Hasdruball] Hanyball H, R 3.
2615. to] & H. 2618. yong & tendre H.
2620. were] was B, R, J. 2621. 2nd that] þe H, R 3.
2623. falsly] also B, R, J.

¹ MS. J. leaf 118 verso.

[**Off Machabeus Ioathas taken bi the kyng of Surre.**]¹

- I**N order suyng, vnto Iohn Bochas
 Ther appeered an heuy man of siht,
 Machabeus the worthi Ioathas,
 Whiche ocupied for wisdam & for myht
 Offis of prynce, [of] preesthod & of kniht;
 Be title of Iuda of werris took themprise,
 Be cleyrn of Leuy, as preest dede sacrefise.
 2628 Jonathan Maccabeus, prince
 and high priest
 of Judea,
- The lawe of Iewes manli to diffende
 With al the Lond[e] of Promyssioun,
 This Ioathas ful knihtli dede entende
 Ageyn al enmyes aboute hem enviroun.
 Til of Surrye the fals[e] kyng Tryphoun
 Be treynys compassed & promys falsli holde
 Took Ioathas, of whom riht now I tolde.
 2632
- Machabeorum is rehersid all,
 Of his knihthod & his worthynesse,
 With al the tresouns in especiall
 Wrouht be Tryphon be many gret falsnesse:
 His subtil sleyhtis and his doubilnesse, —
 Them to reherse, ye gete no mor of me;
 For in the Bible the stori ye may see.
 2636 was taken
 prisoner by the
 deceit of Tryphoun,
 king of
 Syria.
- 2640
- 2644 As the whole
 story is told
 in the Book of
 I. Maccabees,
 you'll get no
 more of it
 from me.
- 2648

[**How Demetrius the secounde lost at last his hede.**]²

- B**VT I will turne to Demetrius
 That callid was Demetrius be secounde,
 Which bi descent cam from Anthiochus,
 And bi his manhod, as it was weel founde,
 Dede the pride of kyng Ballas confounde,
 Callid Alisaundre, which bi gret outrage
 Hadde putte his fader from his heritage.
 2652 Demetrius the
 Second, a de-
 scendant of An-
 tiochus, who
 confounded the
 pride of Balas,
- This Demetrius, famous & notable,
 Vpon Parthois hadde many gret victorie,
 Til kyng Arsacides, double and deceyuable,
 Hymself delityng gretli in veynglorie,
 2656 won many
 victories over
 the Parthians,
 but was finally
 captured by
 Arsaces.

2636. Promyssioun] punyssioun H. 2637, 41. Ionathas H.
 2659. veynglorie] victorye H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 118 verso.

² MS. leaf J. 118 verso.

- Bi his sleiht fraudis deceptorie, 2660
 Vndir a shadwe of feynyng & fals cheer
 Took Demetrius vnwarli prisoneer.
- Arsaces, to his
 shame, after
 leading him
 about Syria in
 poor array,
 made him
 marry his
 daughter against
 his will. And to gret sclandre & hyndryng* of his name,
 Arsacides bamaner moquerye 2664
 Made Demetrius, for despiht & shame,
 Poorli arraied, of hate & gret envie
 For to be lad thoruhout al Surrye;
 Made hym aftir, bi gret auisement, 2668
 To wedde his douhtir ageyn his owne entent.
- When Arsaces
 died, Demetrius
 tried to escape This Demetrius was kept out of pres, [p. 291]
 That but fewe hadde of hym [a] siht,
 Vnto tyme that Arsacides 2672
 Was ded & passed, for al his gret[e] myht.
 Than he caste tescape away be fliht;
 And secreli tacomplisshe his entent,
 He gat hym counsail that was of his assent. 2676
- in disguise, with
 the help of a
 knight called
 Callimandrus; Gallymandrus, a lord of that contre,
 Which that was of his assent in deede,
 In ther fliht to keepe hem mor secre
 Made Demetrius for to chaunge his weede, 2680
 And preuy weies foorth he dede hym leede.
 But al for nouht; his fliht was but in veyn,
 For bi strong pursut he was take ageyn.
- but he was
 caught and
 brought back
 to his wife. After their two
 children were
 born, his chain
 was again
 loosened, Afftir bi constreynt presentid to the kyng, 2684
 That he gan wexe weri of his lyff,
 Kept mor streihtli, folk on hym waityng,
 And maugre hym presentid to his wiff,
 With hir tabide ful heuy and pensyff. 2688
 But whan thei hadde childre atween hem tweyne,
 To go mor large loosnyd was his cheyne.
- and three times
 he endeavoured
 to escape. And thus he hadde space & fre licence
 To gon and comen at his auauantage; 2692
 For whil his wiff heeld with hym residence,
 Thei dempte his childre wer suffisaunt hostage.
 But he was euere vnstable of his corage,
 With Gallymandrus the forseid[e] kniht 2696
 Thre tyme take & brouht ageyn be fliht.

2663. hyndryng & sclandryng B, R, J.

2671. a] *om.* R, J. 2677. Callimandrus P.2679. mor] *om.* H. 2686. awaityng H. 2689. children R.

- And for he was so dyuers manyfold,
 Kyng Fraactes, in tokne he was vnstable,
 Sent hym thre dees forgid squar of gold,
 To pleye raket as a child chaungable, —
 His disposicioun was so variable.
 But for to restreyne his condicioun,
 He was efft take & fetrid in prisoun.
- But whan Fortune hadde youen hym a pull,
 Bi many dyuers stra[u]nge aduersite,
 To punshe hym mor Pharactes wexeth dull.
 And Demetrius of prisoun was maad free,
 Ful restored ageyn to his contre,
 Wex proud ageyn, of newe it is so fall,
 That he was hated of his lieges all.
- Cleopatra, his mooder, that was queen
 Of al Egipt & wiff to Tholome,
 Was with hir lord at striff, who list to seen,
 Which turnid aftir to gret aduersite.
 But to strengthe hir parti thus wrouht she,
 Made hir sone for to take on honde
 For hir to fihte ageyn[es] hir husbonde.
- But Tholomeus callid Euergetes,
 Geyn Demetrius diffendyng his contre,
 Made Zebenna to putte hymself in pres,
 Sone of a marchaunt, born of low degre,
 To make a cleym bi fals subtilite,
 Of al Surrye to haue pocioun,
 For hym aleggyng title of adopcioun.
- He to be sone to [old] Anthiochus,
 Clemyng therbi the kyngdam of Surrye,
 Onli texclude the said Demetrius.
- And Tholomeus, to susteene the partie
 Of Zebenna, with al his cheualrie
 Gadrid in Egipt & contrees enviroyn,
 Ageyn Demetrius proudli is come doun.
- And Fortune with hir double face
 Caused the cuntre bi rebelloun,
 That Demetrius stood cleene out of grace;
 Wherbi the people of al that regeoun

2700 King Phraates, seeing that he was as full of whims as a child, sent him three gold dice to play racket with and locked him up.

2704

But afterwards not wanting to punish him any more, he let him out, at which Demetrius became so insufferable that all his subjects hated him.

2712

Cleopatra, his mother, was at strife with her husband Euergetes, and induced

2716

Demetrius to take her side, whereupon Euergetes incited Zebina, son of a merchant, to lay claim to his kingdom, and, supporting him with an army,

2720

2724

2728

2732

drove out Demetrius and, the people willing, made Zebina king

2736

2699. Phrahartes P. 2700. dies R, dyes H. 2710. so] no H.
 2714. to] om. R. 2719. Euergetes H.
 2726. sone] om. H — old] om. R, J.

Wer hool ageyn hym in ther oppynyoun:
That be Tholomes wonderful werkynge
Zebenna ther reseuyed was as kyng.

of all Syria. Thus Zebenna, bi fals intrusioun, 2740

Of al Surrie was maad[e] lord & kyng;
Title was ther non, but collusioun,
Texclude Demetrius bi subtil compassyng.
Yit as I fynde, his parti defendyng, 2744
How Demetrius Zebenna gan assaille,
Ther quarel dareyned with a gret bataille.

Demetrius
fought him
again and was
again defeated,
and compelled
to flee to
Tyre.

Gret people slay[e]n vpon outhere side,
Demetrius put from his regeoun 2748
And ouercomen, for [al] his gret[e] pride,
At gret myscheff to his confusioun,
Hauyng no socour nor consolacioun;
But with a fewe chose of his meyne 2752
Fledde be watir to Tire the cite,

where his head
was smitten off.

Lik as he wolde haue luyed ther in pes, [p. 292]
Bi a feynt maner of perfeccioun,
Withynne the temple of myhti Hercules 2756
Vnder a shadwe of religioun.
But sodeynli at his comyng down

Of what
use to him
was his pride?

Into Tire & at his arryuaille,
His hed smet of; what myht* his pride [a]vaille! 2760

[How zebenna kyng of Surre bi intrusioun entryng
had mischeuys endyng.]¹

Zebina, born
of low lineage,
and hardly
more than a
beggar, came
weeping to
Bochas;

TOUCHYNG Zebenna, of whom I spak tofor,
Poorli brouht up & of louh lynage,
And of kynreede but a begger born,
Cam tofor Bochas trist off his visage, 2764
Sore weepyng, muet of langage,
Gan compleyne his woful auenture,
Vnwar & sodeyn, impossible to recure.

2739. as] a R.

2746. Ther] be H. 2749. al] om. R.

2752. But] om. H.

2753. be] by a H.

2760. His hed smet of] He lost his hede H, R 3, H 5 — myht] dede B.

2765. muet] Inuett H.

2767. & Impossible H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 119 recto.

- His condiciouns sumwhat dul & rude,
 First in pouert, proud & presumptuous,
 Appechid afftir of gret ingratitude
 Shewed in his* lyff to kyng Anthiochus,
 His firste forthere[r], the stori tellith thus:
 For which Anthiochus gretli was anoyed,
 Caste a mene bi whiche he was destroyed.
- Ther was a cosyn that callid was Grispus
 To Anthiochus, & of the same lyne,
 Which be title off Demetrius
 Cleymeth as heyr, be many vnkouth signe,
 To regne in Surrye, & proudli gan maligne
 Ageyn Zebenna, whos parti to supporte,
 Stood Anthiochus cheeff, as I can reporte.
- This said[e] Grispus, yong & tendre of age,
 Bi the foorthryng & supportacioun
 Off Anthiochus, hadde in mariage
 His owne douhtir, with gret pocioun,
 That Zebenna, for short conclusioun,
 Compellid was, for al his grete myht,
 To Anthioche for to take his fliht.
- And ther he fill in so gret pouerte,
 Failed moneye for to paie wages
 The soudiour[e]s, which in that contre
 Abide vpon hym of al maner ages,
 Straunge folk & sondry of langages,
 Theuys, moordrers, mansle[e]rs & pillours, —
 First off Iubiter assailynge the tresours
- To his disclaundre, perpetuel of memorye,
 The diffame aroos so manyfold.
 In Iouis temple the baner of victorie
 He took a-way, that was of massiff gold,
 With a gret ymage which stood ther of old,
 Of gold also, with othir mo tresours,
 With which pillage he paid his* soudiours.
- Of sacrilege hauyng no conscience,
 Tescape away he entrid is the se;
 But Eolus bi gret[e] violence
 With wynd & tempest as he dede flee
- 2768 for after his sudden rise to power he grew proud and was ungrateful to Antiochus,
- 2772
- 2776 who, greatly annoyed, turned round and supported the claim of his cousin Grypus to the Syrian throne.
- 2780
- 2784 Grypus had married Antiochus' daughter, and Zebina was forced to flee to Antioch,
- 2788
- 2792 where he became so poor that he turned robber
- 2796 and despoiled the temple of Jupiter to pay his men.
- 2800
- 2804 Little he cared for sacrilege; but Æolus blew so hard when he tried to sail away, that he was caught

2771. his] this B, R. 2775. Griphus P.
 2790. wages] his wages H. 2793. folkes R.
 2799. massy R. 2802. his] the B, R.

- Dede vnto hym ful gret aduersite.
 And al his meyne forsook hym of entent; 2808
 And he was take & to Grispus sent,
- and taken to Grypus, who sentenced him to death.
 Kyng of Surrye, to whom whan he was brouht,
 Gaff on hym be iuggement this sentence:
 For sacrilege that he hadde wrouht, 2812
 Spoillyng templis be gret violence,
 Doyng to goddis no maner reuerence, —
 For which Grispus comaundid hath as iuge
 That he be slayn; ther was no bet refuge. 2816
- Thus he ended a wretch, as he began.
 Of berthe a boy, clamb up to roial stage,
 Brouht up of nouht, & set in dignite,
 Knew nat hymself, wex cruel of corage,
 Aroos fro pouert to gret prosperite. 2822
 But thoruh Fortunys mutabilite,
 That blynde ladi so made hir power stretchche, —
 As he began, so ended* as a wrechche.
- Wilfulness, extorted power and covetousness have caused the destruction of many a king.
 Reknid thestatis of worldli regalie, 2824
 NOMBRE of men*, gold, tresour & richesse,
 Statli castelis, paleis on ech partie,
 Conquest bi Fortune clymyng to hih noblesse,
 Cruel suerd conveied be wilfulness, 2828
 Power extort wip couetise oppressyng,
 Cause destruccioun of many erthli kyng.*
- But those who know themselves, and although brought up in poverty rise to power through virtue, are worthy to be called sovereigns.
 But in contrarie, who list hymself to knowe,
 And is be grace enclyned to meeknesse, 2832
 Thouh he fro pouert in streihtnesse brouht up lowe
 And is be vertu reised to worthynesse,
 With sceptre of pes & suerd of rihtwisenesse
 Indifferentli his doomys demenyng, — 2836
 Such oon is able to be cleped a kyng.
- Envy, flattery, and deceit endanger the welfare of princes and have been the occasion of many a tragedy.
 What is cheef cause, grounde & occasioun [p. 293]
 That princis offte stonde in iupartie
 Of worldli chaungis in soch dyuysioun, 2840
 Regnyng among hem the serpent of envie,
 Symulacioun, feynyng, flaterie,
 The sooth out serched, who-so list to look,
 Be many tragedie expert in this book. 2844

2822. hir] his H.

2823. so ended] to eenden B, to enden R, J, R 3.

2825. men] meyne B, R, J, P, H 5, R 3. 2826. on] in H

2830. Cause] Causeth R, J, P — kyng] thyng B, R.

[How Bitynctus kyng of Auerngnatis bi the Romayns
was taken and deied in prisoun.]¹

BYTINCTUS next, of Auerngnatis kyng,
Cam tofor Bochas gynnyng his compleynt,
Of his distresse the ordre rehersyng,
And how that he was maad feeble & feynt, 2848
Ageyn the Romeyns myscheuousli atteynt,
Natwithstandyng, to meynteene his quarell
He cast of pride ageyn hem to rebell.
But it is first put in remembraunce, 2852 and despised
How Auerngnatis is a nacioun their lordship.
Hangyng on Gaule, longyng* vnto Fraunce,
Of which Bytynct stood in pecessioun,
Hauyng despiht in his oppynyoun 2856
To the Romeyns any wise tobeie,
But proudli caste ageyn hem to werreie.
His labour was to stonden in fraunchise
And been at large from ther subieccioun. 2860 A consul
Gan of pride ther lordshipe to despise, named Fabius
Gadred people of presumpcioun, was sent
Whom for to meete Fabius was sente doun, against him
A myhti consul, which knihtli took on honde 2864 with a small
For that parti Bituitus to withstonde. force,
Of whos comyng Bituitus took disdeyn, which Bituitus
Because the folk which Fabius dide leede scorned, saying
Wer but fewe; & whan he hath hem seyn, 2868 that there were
He seide of scorn: "this people, who taketh heede, not enough of
May nat suffise myn houndis for to feede them to feed
Whan thei be slayn; to fewe thei been in noumbre, his dogs.
With multitude that I shal hem encoumbre." 2872
An hundred thousand in his vaunwarde he hadde, However, the
That passe sholde of Auuerne* the ryueer; Romans won
And foure score thousand beside that he ladde.
The consul Fabius mette hym with good cheer 2876
Whan he was passid of Rodamus the daunger,
Fauht al the day til it drouh to niht;
The Romeyns wan; ther foon wer put to fliht.

2845. Bytinctus] Bituitus P (*ibroughout*).

2846. begynnyng H. 2854. longyng] longeth B, J, R.

2855. Bityntus H, Bityng R 3, Bytyng H 5.

2859. stonden] stoden H. 2873. vauntwarde H.

2874. Auuerne] Auuerne B, Auuerne R, J, awuerne H, R 3,
Auuerne P. 2877. Rhodamus P. 2879. wer] was H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 119 verso.

and killed
50,000 of his
men.
Bituitus was
taken prisoner
and died in
chains.

At the ryuer, lik as seith the book, 2880
Ther wer drownid & brouht to myschaunce
Fifti thousand, as thei the watir took,
Thoruh Fortunys froward variaunce.
And bi a treyne, tencres of his greuaunce, 2884
Bituitus take was of the Romeyns,
Dampnid to prysoun ther to deye in cheyns.

[How the tiraunt Euergetes weddid queen Cleopatras
slouh hir eldist son, exilid his wif, weddid hir
douhter.]¹

Queen Cleo-
patra, daughter
of Ptolemy
Epiphanes,
next came
before Bochas,
her white
cheeks stream-
ing with blood
and tears.

A FFTIR whos fall, pitous* to reede & seen, 2888
Off Epiphanes* the grete Tholome
Cam the douhtir, Cleopatras þe queen,
Gan compleyne hir gret aduersite.
Hir furious sorwe diffacid hir beute,
Hir cheekis white, of blood & teris meynt, 2892
Rent with hir handis, wer pitousli bespreynt.

She was the
wife of Philo-
meter and had
two sons, and
after the death
of her husband
married Euer-
getes,

To Philometer she weddid was afforn,
Whilom sone to Tholome the kyng;
And bi hir lord, in trewe wedlok born, 2896
Too sonys she hadde, as be olde wrytyng.
Afftir whos deth anon vp[on] suyng,
To Euergetes, a prince yong of age,
She was ageyn ioyned in mariage. 2900

who became
king by her
title and, like
a tiger, slew
her eldest son
on their wed-
ding day.

Be title of hir in Egipt lord & sire,
Kyng of that lond, cruel & despitous,
Whos stori sheweth no kyngdam nor empire
May of themsilff make no man vertuuous; 2904
For lik a tigre this tiraunt furious,
Hir eldest sone, day of ther mariage,
Born to been heir, he slouh of mortal rage.

Later on he
drove her from
Egypt and

Nat aftir longe this extort cruelte, 2908
Al-be thei hadde childre atween hem tweyne,
Out of Egipt he made hir for to flee,
And of malis gan at hir disdeyne.

2885. Bitinctus R, Bytyntus H, Bitinctus J, Bituitus P.

2887. pitous] pitousli B, pitously R, J.

2888. Epiphones B, J.

2898. anon vpon] anon vp R, J, R 3, P, vpon anoon H,
anoon vpon H 5.

2903. empire] Emperour R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 119 verso.

- I trowe she hadde mateer for to pleyne!
 He took hir douhtir whan that she was gon,
 Ageyn nature, & weddid hire anon.
- She callid was Cleopatras also;
 But Euergetes, to shewe hym mor vengable
 Ageyn hir mooder, that was fro Egipt go,
 The cite which was to hir fauourable
 The peepie exiled, he, wood & vntretable,
 In hir despiht[e] gaff that noble toun
 Of hatful malis to straunge nacioun.
- But whan he knew[e] thoruh his cruel deedis [p. 294] and when he realized how unpopular he had made himself, he went into voluntary exile with his new wife in order to be the more free to wreak his vengeance on Cleopatra.
- And gan conceyue how he was coupable,
 Sauh ageyn hym the manyfold hatreedis
 And conspiraciouns of statis honourable,
 He at large to be mor vengable,
 Geyn Cleopatras to gynne an vnkouth striff,
 Wente into exil with his newe wiff.
- Gadred peepie his olde wiff tassaille,
 On hir childre to shewe mor vengauce,
 A day assigned, heeld with hir bataille:
 But which of hem was dryuen to vttraunce,
 Myn auctour pleyntli put nat in remembraunce.
 But suyng after, thus of hym I reede,
 How of malis he wrouhte a cruel deede,
- Which to reherse is nouthur good nor fair
 But terrible & abhominable:
 He disembred hir sone & his heir
 On pecis smale, this tiraunt most vengable.
 And whan the moodir sat at hir roial table,
 With bodi & hed, at a solempnite,
 Leet hir be serued of froward cruelte.
- Wheroff al Egipt hadde indignacioun;
 And for tauenge this cruel gret outrage
 Thei took his platis, basnet, haberioun,
 And his cotearmour wrouht of gret costage,
 Fro ther templis rent out his image,
 In tokne he was a tiraunt most atteynt,
 Ech thyng diffacid that was of hym depeynt.
- 2912 married her daughter against nature.
- 2916 He also exiled the people of a city that was favourable to her,
- 2920
- 2924
- 2928
- 2932 I do not know which of them won when they joined battle;
- 2936 but Euergetes disembred her son and served him up to her at table.
- 2940
- 2944 At this the Egyptians rose in indignation and threw his armour and statues out of the temples.
- 2948

2915. Cleopatra P.

2929. olde] new H, R 3, newe H 5. 2938. his] hir H, R 3, H 5.

2942. froward] hatefull H, hateful R 3, H 5.

2944. this] his R — gret] om. R.

Bochas wrote
no more of his
hateful story,
nor of Cleo-
patra; for he
did not want
to disfigure his
book.

Whos hatful story, repleet of wrechchydesse,
Ful of vengauce & froward myscheeuys, —
Therefore I deeme Bochas list nat expresse 2952
Mor of his lyff, fulfilled of al repreuys;
Off Cleopatra writ nat the fynal greuys
In this chapitle, what fatal weie she took,
List the mateer sholde difface his book. 2956

[How Iugurta by* intrusioun of Munedy Kyng
slouh rightfull heires and aftir himsilf was
drowned.]¹

After Cleopatra,
Jugurtha, the
manly man,
told his tale
to Bochas. He
was subtile of
wit but took
his plighted
word lightly.

A FFTIR this woful dedli auenture
Off Cleopatras, whos stori is ful old,
Cam Iugurta, þe manli man, to lure,
And to Iohn Bochas hath his tale told 2960
Of his conquestis & deedis manyfold;
Subtil off wit, & as myn auctour seith,
Gaff litil force for to breke his feith.

Masinissa, his
uncle, had a
son called
Micipsa, who
was his heir;

But in ordre the stori to conveie 2964
Of Iugurta & of his kynreede, —
Masmyssa kyng of Munedie, soth to seie,
His vnkle was; & also, as I reede,
The seid[e] kyng hadde a sone in deede, 2968
Callid Misipsa, eldest be writyng,
Afttir his day born* to regne as kyng.

and after Masi-
nissa had de-
prived Jugurtha
of the right of
succession
because he was
a bastard, and
Micipsa became
king on his
father's death,
he was very
friendly to
Jugurtha.
Micipsa had
two sons, Ad-
herbal and
Hiempsal,

This Masmyssa ordeyned aftirward,
Toforn his deth, off hool entencioun, 2972
Because Iugurta was born a bastard,
To depruye [hym] off al successioun,
In his testament; but in conclusioun,
His sone Misipsa, aftirward maad kyng, 2976
Was to Iugurta freendli & louyng.
Misipsa hadde too sonys, as I fynde;
The ton of hem callid Herbales,
The seconde, the stori maketh mynde,* 2980
Was that tyme namyd Hiempsales.

2956. difface shulde H, R 3, H 5.

2958. Cleopatra P. 2959. Jugurtha P.

2966. Masinissa P — Numedye R 3, Numedy P.

2969. Micipsa H, P. 2970. born to] for to B, R, om. J, P.

2978. Micipsa H, R 3, P.

2979. Herbales] Harbales R, Adherbales P.

2980. mynde] menciou B, R, J.

2981. Hyempsales H, Hiempsales P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 120 recto; by] of by J.

- With whom Iugurta put hymself in pres,
 For tabide & duelle in speciall,
 Lik as ther cosyne in ther court roiall. 2984
- Cherished ful weel because that he was wis
 And riht likli of disposicioun,
 Chose afftirward for a synguler pris
 To gon to Spaigne to helpe Scipioun 2988
 Geyn Numentaynes, a famous myhti toun.
 And ther Iugurta so knihtli hath begonne,
 That bi his noblesse the toun anon was wonne.
- And to remembre his knihtthod of entent,
 His worthynesse & his hih renoun,
 To Micipsa lettres wer down sent
 Bi the forseid worthi Scipioun;
 Which gaff so gret a comendacioun 2996
 To Iugurta, hym callyng in that werre
 Of manli prowesse the yong[e] lodesterre.
- Off kyng Micipsa receyued notabli,
 Callid hym sone bi adopcioun; 3000
 The kyng ded soone, Iugurta traitourli
 Slouh Hiemsales, heir be successioun,
 He of that rewme to haue pcesseoun.
 This was his custum, how-euer his* title stood, 3004
 Bi slauhtre & moordre for to gete good.
- He list to goddis do no reuerence,
 Of his nature wilful & rekles, [p. 295]
 Hauyng nouthere remorse nor conscience 3008
 Touchyng the slauhtre of Hiemsales,
 Falsli practised for his owne encres.
 For which[e] moordre Romeyns han sent down
 A consuleer to doon correccioun, 3012
- Calipurnyus callid, that was sent
 Onli to pun[y]she that horrible deede;
 But with tresour his eien wer so blent,
 Of excusioun that he took non heede. 3016
 The Romeyn[e]s ouercome with meede

with whom
 Jugurtha
 dwelt.

Afterwards he
 went to Spain
 and won the
 town of
 Numantia

and was
 highly com-
 mended by
 Scipio.

Micipsa called
 him his adopted
 son; but when
 he died Jugur-
 tha slew Hiem-
 sales to get
 possession of
 the realm
 himself.

He was a reck-
 less, irreverent
 man without
 remorse or con-
 science.

As a result of
 this murder,
 Calpurnius
 was sent down
 to punish him,
 but Jugurtha
 bought him off,

2983. especiall H.

2989-91 are replaced by the three last lines of the next stanza, the rest of which is omitted H.

2989. Mumentaynes R, J, Namantines P.

2997. callyng] clepyng H. 3004. 2nd his] the B, R, J, P.

3006. He] who H. 3009. Hyempsales H.

3017. ouercome] touercome R.

- Gaff to Iugurta, bi collusioun,
Off this moordre a coloured fals pardoun.
- and next proceeded to the murder of Adherbal, Bi which he took a maner hardynesse 3020
Of tirannye in hym weel exercised,
Gadred peepel, of hatful cursidnesse,
And in hymself gan crueli deuise
Texecute the silue same guise 3024
Of fals[e] moordre, — I meene now non othir, —
To slen Herbales, the seconde brothir,
- causing great slander and defame. That he allone bi fals intrusioun
Of Numedie myhte be lord & kyng. 3028
Thus of his cruelte, moordre & fals tresoun
The noise was born by langage & wrytyng,
Of which the griffis, falsli abrod spreedynge,
Brouht[e] forth in hyndryng of his name 3032
Frut of disclaundre & report of diffame.
- Although he covered his treason under flowers and spent his treasure freely on the Senate, the commons rebelled, Mortal tresoun was curid vndir flours,
To saue hymself bi sum subtilite,
And specialli with his gret tresours 3036
Tappese the senat, yiff it wolde ha bee;
But ther ageyn[e]s al the comounte
Made ageyn hym a coniuracioun,
On his fals moordre to do correccioun. 3040
- and 4000 men were sent from Rome under Atilius, a praetor, who looked for a bribe, Foure thousand men of armys wer down sent
With a pretour Icallid Actilius;
The which[e] pretour sette al his entent
To gadre tresour; for he was coueitous: 3044
And couetise is contrarious
Vnto knihthod, as auctours alle expresse,
And stepmooder vnto worthynesse.
- and after laying siege to the tower in which Jugurtha kept his wealth and being defeated, came to terms, to his great shame. A siege he leide aboute a myhti tour, 3048
Wheryn Iugurta put al his richesse.
The siege was leid for loue of that tresour
Mor than for worshepe or for worthynesse;
Wherbi he loste his name & his noblesse. 3052
Ther discourfited, brouht vnto myschaunce,
Afftir for meede made his alliaunce

3023. gan] hath R 3 — crueli] cursidli J, R, cursedly P —
deuise] devised H, deusid R 3, deusede, H 3.

3026. Harbales R, Adherbal P. 3030. &] & bi R, J.

3042. callid R, called P — Attilius P, Aulyus H, R 3.

3049. Wheryn] wheron H.

- With Iugurta, to his ences of shame,
 Caused Affrik thoruh fals[e] cheuisaunce,
 Thei togidre disclaundrid be diffame,
 Them to withdrawe fro thobeissaunce
 Of the Romeyns; & mor themsilff tauaunce,
 To ther purpos, coruptid with tresour
 Many tribun & many senatour.
- Of newe ageyn, al the comounte
 Fro Roome sente Gayus Marrius,
 For the moordres & horrible cruelte
 Wrouht bi Iugurta, the tiraunt furious.
 Which to reforme the said Gayus,
 A consuler, of purpos was sent down,
 A manli knyht & famous of renoun.
- Ful notabli the werris he began,
 Wrouht euery thyng of hih[e] prouidence;
 And Fortune, which helpeth hardi man,
 Gaff hym gret fauour bi hir influence.
 And aldirfirst he dede his dilligence
 From hym tauoide al that wer vicious,
 Delicat people & folkis lecherous.
- A day was set & taken of bataille;
 But* Iugurta bi fals subtilite
 Proffreth gret good, which myht[e] nat auaille,
 To haue corupt, yif it wolde haue be,
 The said Marius; but euer in o degre
 He stood ay stable, vpriht as a wall,
 And took non heed to his proffre attall.
- Than Iugurta, in parti disespeired,
 Gretly astonid withynne hymself musyng,
 Ful* lik a man hyndred & appeired,
 He gan purpose anon a newe thyng:
 Of Mauritayne he wente to the kyng
 To gete helpe, which callid was Boccus,
 Hym to socoure ageyn[es] this Gayus.

3056 Allying himself
with Jugurtha,
he bribed
right and left,

3060

3064 until Gaius
Marius came
down from
Rome to
set matters
straight.

3068

3072 At first he was
virtuous and
succeeded, and
kept vicious
people away
from him.

3076 Jugurtha offered
him bribes in
vain,

3080

3084 and in despera-
tion allied him-
self with Boc-
chus, king of
Mauretania.

3088

3058. fro] for R.

3061. 2nd many] many a H.

3063. Caius P. 3067. Consull H. 3073. aldirlast H.

3074. hym] om. R. 3075. folkis] folkes þat wer H.

3077. But] Bi B.

3083. disespeired R.

3085. Ful] But B, R, J, P.

3089, 98, 104 Gayus] Marius P.

Bochus soon
repented,

Tween hem was maad of newe an alliaunce, [p. 296]
The whiche laste but a litil space;
For kyng Boccus gan falle in repentaunce, 3092
Caste he wolde resorte to the grace
Off the Romeyns & no mor trespase.
And to parfourme this entencioun,
He made to Gayus this mediacioun: 3096

and through
Sulla's
mediation be-
trayed Jugurtha
and sent him
prisoner to
Marius.

Ther was oon Scilla, callid a questour,
Of Gayus hoost[e] hadde gouernaunce;
For kyng Boccus he was mediatour,
That ther was new[e]lli accordaunce 3100
Tween hym & Gayus; & bi the purueiaunce
Off this Boccus Iugurta anon was hent,
Maugre his myht, & to Gayus sent.

His kingdom
again became
tributary to
Rome; the
people were
forgiven;

And al his kyngdam withoute resistance 3104
Geyn to Romeyns cam vnder obeissaunce.
And Marius forgaff them ther offence,
Resceyueth hem vndir assuraunce,
That he shal nat be doom do no vengauce, 3108
To punshe the trespacis which thei dede afforn,
The space acountid fro tyme thei wer born.

but Jugurtha
almost went
mad with
anger, and the
Romans threw
him into the
Tiber bound to
a stone for his
treason.

Iugurta taken, almost for anger mad,
Brouhte to Roome & fetrid in prisoun, 3112
To Tarpeia an hih hill he was lad,
Iugement youe for his fals tresoun,
Bounde to a ston & aftir throwe doun
Fro the place, ful hih[e] ther he stood, 3116
Withoute merci into Tibre flood.

[Lenuoye.]

This may well
be called a
tragedy, for it
began in joy
and ended in
adversity.

THIS may be weel callid a tragedie,
Be discripcioun takyng auctorite;
For tragedie, as poetes spesephie, 3120
Gynneth with ioie, eendith with aduersite:
From hih estat [men] cast in low degre,
Exaample taken, this story seyn ariht,
Of Iugurta, that was first a good kniht. 3124

Jugurtha was
at first a good
knight, but he
became covetous

At his gynnyng famous in cheualrie,
Gat Numentaigne, of Spaigne a gret cite;
But in repeiryng hom to that partie, —

3109. tofor[n] H. 3115. a doun H.

3122. men] om. R, J, P — men cast] castith men H, R 3, cast
men H 5. 3127. to that partie] to his Contre H.

- I meene whan he cam hom to his contre, — 3128
 He chaunged kniethod into cruelte,
 With couetise so bleendid was the* siht
 Of Iugurta, that was first a good kniht.
- His witte, his power he hooli dede applie 3132 and a murderer
 To hatful moordre, fraude & subtilite, who slew right-
 Bextort title hymself to magnefie ful heirs and
 Slouh rihtful heires, refft hem ther liberte, cared not
 Bi fals intrusioun clamb up to ther see, whether it were
 And gaff no fors, wher it wer wrong or riht, 3136 right or wrong.
 A thyng contrary to eueri worthi kniht.
- Noble Princis, lefft up your hertis eye,
 Withyne your-silff remembreth & doth see 3140 Noble Princes,
 Off this moordre[r] the hatful tirannye, remember that
 With oppressiouns doon to the comounte: murder cries
 His gynnyng good; a cursid eende had he. ever vengence
 Moordre crieth vengauce day & niht,— and leads to
 A thyng contrary to eueri worthi kniht. 3145 a cursed end.

¶ **Explicit liber quintus.**¶ **Incipit liber vj^{tus}.**3128 *is omitted in H.*

3130. the] his B, R, J. 3133. fraude mordre H.

3141. moorder] moorder P, J, R, R 2, H, H 4, moorder Sl, H 3,
moordyr H 5, morder Add.

3143. good] was good R.

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