

# THE BESTIARY OF GUILLAUME LE CLERC

Originally written in 1210–11

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH  
BY  
GEORGE CLARIDGE DRUCE, F.S.A.

*PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION*  
BY  
HEADLY BROTHERS  
INVICTA PRESS, ASHFORD, KENT  
1936

WITH PARALLEL NORMAN–FRENCH TEXT  
FROM THE EDITION OF 1892  
*(LE BESTIAIRE.*  
*DAS THIERBUCH DES NORMANNISCHEN DICHTERS*  
*GUILLAUME LE CLERC)*  
BY DR. ROBERT REINSCH  
LEIPZIG

## About this Text

The *Bestiary* of [Guillaume le Clerc](#) was written around 1210. It is in rhyming verse in the Norman-French language. It was translated into modern English by George Claridge Druce (1860-1948), a member of the [Society of Antiquaries of London](#). The book the English text is taken from was printed in 1936, but was not actually published. As it says on the cover, “Printed for Private Circulation”, meaning Druce had it printed and distributed it himself, presumably to other members of the Society of Antiquaries and other interested parties. There is no indication of how many copies were printed, but it cannot have been a large number; the book is now quite rare.

The book was digitized by David Badke in 2024 from one of the printed copies, which has a presentation from Druce written on the cover: “Capt. Herbert Procter with the translator’s kind regards, October 1936”. Scans were made of each non-blank page, including the seven pages of plates. The scans were then processed with Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software, and the resulting text proofread and reformatted.

Druce based his translation of the 1892 edition (*Le Bestiaire. Das Thierbuch des Normannischen Dichters Guillaume le Clerc*) by Dr. Robert Reinsch. The Norman-French text of the poem from that edition is presented here in parallel columns with Druce’s translation. The page numbering of this edition does not match the original books, though the line numbers in the poem do. The introductions and footnotes by Druce and Reinsch are not included, nor are the illustrations from Druce’s book. See the facsimile edition of each book for the supporting text.

The PDF edition of the book in three forms (including the facsimile) is available in the Digital Text library of the [Medieval Bestiary: Animals in the Middle Ages](#) web site.

<https://bestiary.ca/etexts/etext113694.htm>

A digital facsimile of the Reinsch edition is available from the Internet Archive.

<https://archive.org/details/lebestiaire00gui/page/n3/mode/2up>

## Copyright

The print edition of the text was printed in London in 1936; the digital facsimile was produced from a copy of the original book in 2024 by David Badke. The original print edition by George Claridge Druce is believed to be in the public domain.

The print edition of Reinsch’s book was published in Leipzig in 1892, and is in the public domain.

This digital text edition is released under a Creative Commons license, which allows for any non-commercial use without further permission, as long as this page or equivalent is included in all copies.



## The Bestiary of Guillaume le Clerc, Parallel Norman–French and English Text

*The Norman–French transcription by Reinsch appears on the left, with Druce's English translation on the right. The line numbers in the left column match those in both the Reinsch and Druce print editions. The first lines of major sections are shown in **bold***

	<b>Qui ben comence e ben define,</b>		<b>Whoso beginneth well and endeth well,—</b>
	Ceo est verite seine e fine,		It is a truth sound and excellent—
	En totes ovraignes en deit		Whoever he may be, in all his undertakings
	Estre loëz qui que il seit.		He ought to be praised for it.
5	Livre de bone eomençaille,		A book with a good beginning
	Qui avra bone definaille,		And which shall have a good ending
	E bon dit e bone matire		And good words and good matter
	Voelt Guillame en romanz escrire		Wills William to write in romance
	De bon latin, ou il le troeve.		From the good latin in which he finds it.
10	Ceste ovraigne fu fete noeve		This work was newly done
	El tens que Phelipe tint France,		At the time when Philip held France,
	El tens de la grant mesestance,		At the time of the great misfortune
	Qu'Engleterre fu entredite,		When England was under interdict,
	Si qu'il n'i aveit messe dite		So that there was no mass said
15	Ne cors mis en terre sacree.		Nor body laid in holy ground.
	De l'entredit ne lui agree,		Of the interdict he is not pleased
	Que a ceste feiz plus en die,		To say more at this time
	Por ceo que dreiture mendie		Because right goes a-begging
	E lealte est povre e basse.		And honesty is weak and low.
20	Tote ceste chose trespasse		All this thing William passes over
	Guillame qui forment s'en doelt,		Who concerning it bitterly laments
	Que n'ose dire ceo qu'il voelt		That he dare not say what he wills
	De la tricherie qui cort		Of the deceit which runs
	E en l'une e en Paître cort.		Both in the one and the other court.
25	Mais a plus hait dire se prent:		But he betakes himself to speak aloud,
	Car en cest livre nos aprent		For in this book he teaches us
	Natures de bestes e mors		The natures of beasts and their ways,
	Non de totes, mes de plusors,		Not of all but of a good many,
	Ou mult avra moralite		In which will be much moral teaching
30	E bon pas de divinite,		And a good share of theology.
	Ou l'em porra essample prendre		By this may a man example take
	De ben faire e de ben aprendre.		To do well and to learn well.
	Rimez ert par consonancie.		It will be done in rhyming verses.
	Li clers fu nez de Normandie,		The clerk was born in Normandy
35	Qui auctor est de cest romanz.		Who is the author of this story.
	Or oëz que dit li Normanz.		Now hear what the Norman saith.
	 Quant Deu primes le monde fist		 When God first made the world
	E homes e bestes i mist,		And put men and beasts therein,
	A trestotes ses creatures		In all his creatures he
40	Emposa diverses natures,		Implanted diverse natures,
	E de totes, c'en est la some,		And over all—this is the sum of it—
	Dona la seignorie a home.		He gave the lordship to man.
	A home dona tel franchise,		To man he gave such power

Qu'il sout conoistre la divise,  
 45 Qui esteit entre ben e mal,  
 Entre tricheor e leal,  
 Entre paraïs e enfer.  
 Mes par le pecche Lucifer,  
 Qui fu angele e puis malfez,  
 50 Fu home honiz e gabez  
 E chacez en fu el desert,  
 Dont nul qui damne Deu ne sert,  
 N'istra jamais por tot le monde,  
 Ainz chet en abisme parfonde,  
 55 Dont nul ne retournera ja.  
 De dire com Adam peccha  
 E coment il fu eissillez  
 E del seint paraïs chacez  
 E coment sa lignee crut  
 60 E qui nasqui e qui morut  
 E coment de ses eirs avint  
 E coment le deluge vint,  
 Conient l'arche fu compassee  
 E quel gent out dedenz salvee,  
 65 Comben Noë apres vesqui  
 E coment Abraham nasqui  
 E Ysaac e Ysmaël,  
 Com d'Ysaac vint Israël  
 E son jumel frere Esau  
 70 E coment Joseph fu vendu  
 E com il servi Pharaon,  
 Quant il fu hors de la prison,  
 Com Israël fu en servage  
 En Egypte mult lonc eage,  
 75 Coment Moÿses l'enjeta,  
 Qui tant sovent a Deu parla,  
 Qui fist l'arche e le tabernacle  
 E por qui Deu fist tant miracle  
 E a qui il don a la lei,  
 80 Quant li Jueu de maie fei,  
 Qui son mult mescreant uncor,  
 Aorerent un veel d'or,  
 Coment apres Moyses vint  
 Josuë, qui lor lei meintint,  
 85 E coment Gedeon le fist,  
 Qui la gent Madian occist,  
 Com li juge vindrent apres.  
 Qui jugerent le poeple engres  
 Jusqu'a Saul, le premer rei,  
 90 Coment il fu de grant desrei  
 Vers Davi, qui prodhome fu.  
 Coment Golie fu veneu,

That he should know the difference  
 There is betwixt good and evil,  
 Twixt treachery and loyalty,  
 Twixt paradise and hell.  
 But by the sin of Lucifer,  
 Who was angel and then devil,  
 Was man disgraced and mocked  
 And was driven out into the waste,  
 Whence none who serveth not the lord God  
 Shall ever come, despite the whole world;  
 But is cast into the deep abyss  
 Whence none shall ever return.  
 To tell how Adam sinned  
 And how he was exiled  
 And from holy paradise driven,  
 And how his line grew  
 And who was born and who died  
 And what happened to his heirs,  
 And how the flood came  
 How the ark was planned  
 And what folk were saved in it,  
 How Noah lived afterwards  
 And how Abraham was born  
 And Isaac and Ishmael;  
 How from Isaac sprang Israel  
 And his twin brother Esau  
 And how Joseph was sold  
 And how he served Pharaoh  
 When he was out of prison,  
 How Israel was in bondage  
 In Egypt many a long year,  
 How Moses brought them out  
 Who so often spake to God,  
 Who made the ark and the tabernacle  
 And for whom God did many miracles  
 And to whom he gave the law  
 When the Jews in disobedience—  
 Who are still base unbelievers—  
 Worshipped a golden calf.  
 How after Moses came  
 Joshua who upheld their law,  
 And how Gideon did it  
 Who slew the people of Midian.  
 How the judges came after,  
 Who judged the people harshly  
 Until Saul the first king;  
 How he was bitterly opposed  
 Towards David who was upright;  
 How Goliath was vanquished,

Com Salomon le temple fist  
 Qui pres de quarante anz i mist,  
 95 Com apres lui vint Roboam  
 E corne danz Jeroboam  
 Fu donc des dis lignees reis,  
 Coment donc changerent les leis,  
 Coment fu le temple Baal,  
 100 Coment donc comença le mal,  
 Qui al tens de tanz reis dura,  
 Coment li poeples meserra,  
 Com il fu en chaitiveison  
 En Babiloine, la prison,  
 105 Coment Jerusalem fu fraite,  
 Com ele fu apres refaite,  
 Coment li bon Macabe vindrent,  
 Qui la garderent e meintindrent,  
 Coment ele fu puis malmise,  
 110 Com el fu a Rome sozmise,  
 E coment Deu li dolz, li pis  
 Out puis pite de ses amis,  
 Coment il vint donques en terre,  
 Por sa centisme oeil le querre,  
 115 Coment il nasqui de Marie,  
 Coment e par quel tricherie  
 Furent occis li innocent  
 Plus de quarante mile e cent,  
 Coment Jesu Crist preecha,  
 120 Qui la novele lei dona,  
 Com il fu puis en croiz penéz  
 E des espines coronez,  
 Com il fu el sepulcre mis,  
 Com il pramist a ses amis,  
 125 Qu'ai terz jor levereit de mort,  
 Coment la nef vint donc a port,  
 Qui tant out este en torment,  
 De dire vos trestot, coment  
 Seinte eglise crut e flori,  
 130 Coment seint Pol se converti,  
 Coment li apostle le firent  
 E li martir, qui tant soffrirent,  
 Ceo me serreit fort a retraire.  
 Mes vos orreiz del bestiaire,  
 135 Si com vos ai en co venant,  
 Si comenceraï mein tenant.

**Dreiz est que primes vos diom**

De la nature del lion.  
 Lions est une beste fere  
 140 E hardie de grant manere.

How Solomon built the temple  
 And spent nearly forty years on it;  
 How after him came Rehoboam  
 And how the lord Jeroboam  
 Was then king of the ten tribes,  
 How then they changed the laws.  
 How there was the temple of Baal,  
 How then illdoing began  
 Which lasted the time of so many kings,  
 How the people went astray,  
 How they were in captivity  
 In Babylon in prison,  
 How Jerusalem was destroyed,  
 How it was afterwards rebuilt.  
 How the good Maccabees came  
 Who took care of and maintained it,  
 How it was then maltreated  
 How it was subject to Rome.  
 And how God all tender and kind  
 Then took pity on his friends,  
 How he came then on earth  
 To seek his hundredth sheep,  
 How he was born of Mary,  
 And how by what treachery  
 The innocents were slain  
 More than a hundred and forty thousand.  
 How Jesus Christ preached,  
 Who gave the new law,  
 How he was then martyred on the cross  
 And crowned with thorns,  
 How he was laid in the tomb  
 How he promised to his friends  
 That on the third day he should rise from the dead.  
 How the ship came then to port  
 Which had been so sorely in distress,  
 To tell you in full, how  
 Holy church grew and flourished,  
 How saint Paul was converted,  
 How the apostles bore themselves  
 And the martyrs who suffered so much,  
 That would be hard for me to relate.  
 But you shall hear about the bestiary,  
 As I have agreed with you;  
 So I shall begin at once.

**It is right that we first tell you**

Of the nature of the lion.  
 The lion is a wild beast  
 And bold in a great degree.

Treis natures a principals  
 Li lions, qui si est vassals.  
 Chescune vos serra ben dite.  
 La premere est que il habite  
 145 En granz montaignes par nature.  
 Quant ceo avent par aventure,  
 Que chacez est de veneor,  
 De son espeï a grant poor.  
 Se tant est que a lui ataigne,  
 150 De mult loing sent en la montaigne  
 L'odor del veneor, quil chace.  
 Donc coevre od sa eue sa trace,  
 Qu'il ne sache esnier ne ateindre  
 Le convers, ou il voelt remeindre.  
 155 De l'autre nature est merveille:  
 Car quant il se dort, sis oil veille.  
 En dormant a les elz overz  
 E clers e luisanz e aperz.  
 La terce nature ensemment  
 160 Est merveilleuse estrangement  
 E merveilleuse essample done:  
 Car quant la femele foone,  
 Li foons chet sor terre mort.  
 De vie n'avra ja confort,  
 165 Jusque li peres al terz jor  
 Le soefle e lecche par amor.  
 En tel manere le respire  
 Ne porreit avoir altre mire.  
 En tel guise revent a vie.  
 170 Or entendez que signefie.  
  
 Signefiance i a mult clere:  
 Quant Deu nostre souverain pere,  
 Qui est esperital lion,  
 Vint por nostre salvation  
 175 Ici en terre par sa grace,  
 Si sagement covri sa trace,  
 Que onc ne sout le veneor,  
 Que ceo fust nostre salveor,  
 E nature s'esmerveilla,  
 180 Coment il vint entre nos ça.  
 Del veneor devez entendre  
 Celui qui fet home mesprendre  
 E qui l'enchalce, por occire:  
 C'est li malfez, qui mal desire.  
 185 Quant cist lions fu en croiz mis  
 Par les Jueus, ses enemis,  
 Qui le jugerent a grant tort,  
 L'umanite i soffri mort.  
 Quant l'esperit del cors rendi,

Three principal natures has  
 The lion which is so brave.  
 Each one shall be fully told you:  
 The first is that by its nature  
 It frequents the great mountains.  
 When by chance it happens  
 That it is pursued by the hunter  
 Of his spear it has great dread  
 If so be that he gets near it,  
 From afar it smells on the mountain  
 The smell of the hunter who follows it.  
 Then it covers its tracks with its tail,  
 That he may not see them or reach  
 Its lair, where it will lie up.  
 Its other nature is wonderful  
 For when it sleeps its eyes are awake,  
 When sleeping it has its eyes open  
 Clear and brilliant and alert.  
 Its third nature likewise  
 Is marvellously strange  
 And affords a wonderful example.  
 For when the female gives birth,  
 The cub falls on the ground dead.  
 Of life it will have no consolation  
 Until on the third day the father  
 Breathes upon and licks it lovingly.  
 In such manner it gets its breath,  
 Nor could it have other physician.  
 In such way it comes to life.  
 Now hear what this meaneth.  
  
 There is a meaning very clear:  
 When God our sovereign father,  
 Who is the spiritual lion,  
 Came for our salvation  
 Here on earth by his grace,  
 So wisely he covered his track  
 That the hunter never knew  
 That he was our Saviour  
 And by nature was astonished  
 How he came among us here.  
 By the hunter ye must understand  
 Him who made man go astray  
 And who hunts him for to kill him.  
 He is the devil who plots evil.  
 When this lion was set upon the cross  
 By the Jews, his enemies,  
 Who judged him very wrongfully,  
 His humanity there suffered death.  
 When his spirit left his body

190 En la seinte croiz s'endormi,  
 Si que la la deïte veilla.  
 Autrement ne l'entendez ja,  
 Si vos volez resordre a vie:  
 Car la deïte ne pout, mie  
 195 Estre baillee ne sentue  
 Ne escopie ne batue.  
 L'umanite pout honi blescer,  
 Sanz la deïte empeirer,  
 Sil vos niustrerai par semblance,  
 200 Que n'en devez avoir dotance.  
 Trenchez un arbre halt e grant,  
 Quant le soleil serra raiant,  
 En l'osche del premier cospel  
 Verreiz le rai del soleil bel,  
 205 E com plus creissez l'osche avant  
 E le soleil partot s'espant,  
 Vos ne porreiz le rai ferir,  
 Blescer ne prendre ne tenir.  
 Trestot l'arbre poëz trencher,  
 210 Sanz le soleil point empeirer.  
 Altresi fu de Jesu Crist.  
 L'umanite, qu'il por nos prist,  
 Que por l'amor de nos vesti,  
 Peine e travail e mort senti;  
 215 La deïte ne senti ren.  
 Issi creez, si fereiz ben.  
 Quant Deu fu mis el monument,  
 Treis jors i fu tant sulement,  
 E al terz jor le respira  
 220 Li peres, quil resuscita,  
 Altresi come le lion  
 Respire son petit foom  
  
 Or vos avom del lion dit  
 La verite selonc l'escrit.  
 225 Li lions fet mult grant noblesce:  
 Car nul chaitif home ne blesce,  
 Si il l'encontre enmi sa veie,  
 Ne ja, si grant feim ne l'aspreie,  
 A nul home mal ne fera,  
 230 Si devant coroce ne l'a.  
 Li lions, qui si est hardiz,  
 Porte tote sa force el piz.  
 Quant ataint est de veneor,  
 De son espeï a grant poor.  
 235 Escroissement de roës creint,  
 Si m'esnierveil dont ceo li vent,  
 Que de blanc coc grant poor a,  
 Ja qu'il puist, ne l'ateindra.

On the holy cross he fell asleep,  
 But then his deity was there awake.  
 Do not understand it otherwise  
 If ye wish to rise again,  
 For the divine nature cannot  
 Be bent at all or made to feel  
 Or be scourged or struck.  
 Man can wound the human form  
 Without harming the divine nature.  
 I shall show you this by example,  
 So that ye have no doubt of it.  
 Cut into a tree tall and big,  
 When the sun shall be shining;  
 In the notch of the first cut  
 Ye shall see the sun's ray shining,  
 And as ye widen the notch in front  
 And the sun spreads through it  
 Ye will not be able to strike the ray,  
 Wound it or take it or hold it.  
 Ye can cut the tree right through  
 Without harming the sun at all.  
 So it was with Jesus Christ:  
 The humanity, which he took for us,  
 Which he donned for love of us,  
 The pain and woe and death felt,  
 The divine nature felt nothing.  
 Believe it so if ye will fare well.  
 When God was laid in the tomb,  
 Three days only was he there,  
 And on the third day the father  
 Breathed on him so that he revived,  
 Just as the lion  
 Breathes on his little cub.  
  
 Now we have told you the truth  
 About the lion according to the writing.  
 The lion acts in a very noble way,  
 For to no poor man does he do hurt  
 If he meet him in his path.  
 What's more, unless keen hunger drive him,  
 To no man will he do hurt,  
 Unless he has first provoked him.  
 The lion which is so bold  
 Bears all his strength in his breast.  
 When he is approached by the hunter  
 Of his spear he has great dread.  
 He fears the creaking of wheels;  
 It astonishes me how it comes about  
 That he is so afraid of a white cock,  
 Do what he will, he will not face it.

**Or vos dirrai d'une altre beste,**  
 240 Qui a deus cornes en la teste  
 Si trenchantes corn alemele.  
 Iceste beste est si ignele,  
 Que nul veneor ne l'ateint,  
 Si cele d'aler ne se feint,  
 245 E si vos puis ben aficher,  
 Que od ses cornes poet trencher  
 Un arbre gros e parcrëu;  
 C'est esprove e ben sëu.  
 Aptalos ceste beste a non,  
 250 Si habite en la region,  
 Ou cort le fluive d'Eufrates.  
 Quant sei la prent, si cort ades  
 A cel fluive e de l'ewe beït.  
 Quant bëu a; si vet tot dreit  
 255 Iloec pres a un boissonei  
 Si espes com un roncerei.  
 La sont les ramez si menuz,  
 Si espes, si bels e si druz,  
 Ou la beste se vet frotant.  
 260 Iloec s'enveise e jue tant  
 Des cornes aval e amont,  
 Que tot envolepees i sont.  
 Quant ses cornes sont atachees  
 Es vergettes, qui sont delgees,  
 265 E ele est prise el roncerei  
 Com un peisson en une rei,  
 Donc tire e sache a grant poeir.  
 Quant ses cornes ne poet aveir,  
 Mult s'esforce, mes ren ne valt.  
 270 Donc se coroce e crie halt  
 Que l'em la poet de loing oïr.  
 Donc vent li veneres d'aïr,  
 Qui la troeve illoec enserree,  
 Si la fert de lance ou d'espee  
 275 Ou d'autre glaive, si l'occit:  
 Car el ne poet grant ne petit  
 D'illoec fuir ne sei defendre;  
 La li covent la vie rendre.  
  
 Seignors, ceste beste par fei  
 280 Done grant essample de sei.  
 Iceste beste signifïe  
 Plusors homes, qui sont en vie,  
 Qui ont deus cornes finement,  
 C'est l'un e l'autre testament,  
 285 Qu'il ont apris e recorde  
 E l'un a l'autre concorde,  
 Si qu'il en sevent toz les pas;

**Now I shall tell you of another beast,**  
 Which has two horns on its head  
 As sharp as a blade.  
 This beast is so swift  
 That no hunter can overtake it  
 Unless it be too tired to run,  
 And I can well assure you  
 That with its horns it can cut through  
 A tree stout and full-grown.  
 This is proved and well-known.  
 Aptalos is the name of this beast;  
 It dwells in the region  
 Where the river Euphrates flows.  
 When it is thirsty it always runs  
 To that river and drinks of the water.  
 When it has drunk it goes straightway  
 Where there is a little bush  
 As thick as a bramble.  
 There the branches are so little,  
 So thick, so fine and so close,  
 Where the beast goes thrusting.  
 There it enjoys itself and plays so much  
 With its horns down and up,  
 That they are quite caught in.  
 When its horns are entangled  
 In the shoots, which are slender,  
 And it is taken in the bramble  
 Like a fish in a net,  
 Then it pulls and tugs as hard as it can.  
 When it cannot disengage its horns,  
 It struggles harder, but nothing avails;  
 Then it is angered and cries so loud,  
 That one can hear it from afar.  
 Then comes the hunter headlong,  
 And finds it there entrapped.  
 He strikes it with spear or sword  
 Or other weapon, and kills it.  
 For it cannot by any effort great or small  
 Escape from there or defend itself.  
 There it is fated to give up its life.  
  
 My masters, this beast in truth  
 Itself affords a great example.  
 This beast signifies  
 Many men who are living,  
 Who have indeed two horns.  
 They are the one and the other testament  
 Which they have learned and have by heart,  
 And compared one with the other  
 So that they know all parts of them;



Mes por ceo ne lessent il pas,  
 Qu'il n'algent el boisson juer  
 290 E les cornes enveloper.  
 E quel boisson porreit ceo estre  
 Fors cest malvais monde terrestre,  
 Qui si est fais e decevant,  
 Ou tant se juent li alquant,  
 295 Qu'il i sont pris e accrochez?  
 Li veneres, ben le sachez,  
 Est cil qui le fol home chace,  
 Tant qu'il l'ateint en cele place  
 Soz le boisson e la l'occit  
 300 Sanz defense e sanz contredit:  
 Car Deus l'en soeffre la baillie.  
 Por ceo fet cil mult grant folie,  
 Qui tant se delite e solace  
 El monde, que trop s'i enlace,  
 305 Qu'il ne poet ses cornes retraire,  
 Si me vent a mult grant contraire  
 Des clers, qui les deus cornes ont,  
 Que tot a costume le font.  
 Al boisson juent tote jor  
 310 E ben veient le veneor,  
 Qui les enchalce por occire.  
 Mes tot ades a sei les tire  
 La veine gloire e le delit  
 De cest monde, qui les occit  
 315 E qui les plus sages encombre.  
 Tant fet bel estre desoz l'ombre  
 Del boisson, ou tant se delitent,  
 Que trop volenters i habitent.  
 La les tenent les bels mangiers,  
 320 Les bons beivres, sues e chers,  
 Les beles femmes, les bels dras,  
 Les palefreiz amblanz e gras,  
 L'or e l'argent e la pecune,  
 Qui tant fet mal a qui l'äune.  
 325 Tant demorent soz cel boisson,  
 Que li veneres a larron  
 Vent sor els e la les acore,  
 Od son glaive plus ne demore.  
 Ha, por Deu, home, garde tei,  
 330 Qui en Deu as creance e fei,  
 Fui homicide, fui luxure,  
 Renie orgoil, guerpis usure,  
 Laisse avortire, fui ivresce  
 E envie, qui l'aime blesce!  
 335 Si tes cors ne poez desaerdre,  
 La vie t'en covendra perdre

But for all that they do not prevent them  
 From going to play in the bush  
 And entangle their horns.  
 And what bush could that be  
 But this wicked world on earth,  
 Which is so false and deceiving,  
 Where some folk play so much,  
 That they are taken and caught?  
 The hunter—mark it well—  
 Is he who hunts the foolish man  
 Until he catch him in that place  
 In the bush and kill him there  
 Without resistance and without question;  
 For God allows him the power.  
 And that man does most foolishly  
 Who takes such delight and pleasure  
 In the world, that he is entangled too much in it,  
 And cannot withdraw his horns.  
 I call to mind most unwillingly  
 Clerks who have the two horns,  
 Who do it all quite usually.  
 They play with the bush always,  
 And then the hunter comes along  
 Who pursues them to kill them.  
 But ever doth vain glory attract them  
 To itself and enjoyment  
 Of this world which kills them,  
 And which perplexes the wisest.  
 It is so pleasant to be under the shadow  
 Of the bush, wherein they so delight,  
 That they dwell there too willingly.  
 There rich foods engage them  
 And fine drinks, delicate and choice,  
 Beautiful women, beautiful clothes,  
 Palfreys ambling and fat,  
 Gold and silver and money,  
 Which does such harm to him amassing it.  
 So long they live beneath this bush  
 That the hunter as a thief  
 Comes on them and thrusts them thro'  
 With his sword straightway.  
 Ha! for God's sake, man, take heed to thyself,  
 Who in God hast belief and faith,  
 Flee homicide, flee wantonness,  
 Renounce pride, quit usury,  
 Let go adultery, fly from drunkenness  
 And envy which hurts the soul.  
 If thou canst not free thy horns  
 It shall be meet for thee to lose

Non pas del cors tant sulement,  
Mes cele de l'aime ensement.  
Ne semble pas la beste mue,  
340 Qui del boisson ne se remue,  
Devant qu'ele i est entreprise!  
Si ceste essample as ben aprise,  
E selonc ceo volez ovrer,  
Grant ben en porras recovrer.

345 Nostre matire est mult estrange:  
Car souvent se diverse e change  
E neporquant si est tote une:  
Car les essamples, qu'ele aune.  
Sont totes por l'amendement  
350 D'orne qui eire folement.

### **En Orient la sus amont**

A deus perres sor un halt mont,  
Qui mult sont d' estrange nature:  
Car el portent feu e ardure,  
355 Si sont corne madle e femele.  
En oïstes onques novele  
Plus merveillose ne plus veire?  
Car li livres nos fet acreire:  
Quant ces perres sont loing a loing,  
360 Feu n'en istreit por nul besoing.  
Mes quant par aventure avent,  
Que l'une pres de l'autre vent,  
Si espèrent e feus en ist,  
Qui andeus les perres bruist,  
365 E tant crest li feus e engraigne,  
Qu'il esprent tote la montaigne,  
E quanqu'a de chescune part  
De la montaigne esprent e art.

Ici deivent essample prendre  
370 Cil qui a Deu se voelent rendre  
E qui maignent en bone vie:  
Fuir deivent la conipaïgnie  
Des femmes ententivement  
E lor charnel apresment,  
375 Que cele flambe e cele ardor,  
Qui vent de la charnel amor,  
N'arde les bens, qui en els sont,  
Que Deu, qui est sires del mont,  
A en els par sa grace mis:  
380 Car en poi d'ore sont malmis  
Les bens, ou cele flambe cort,  
Qui de chalde femele sort.  
Por verite saveir devom

The life not only of the body,  
But that of the soul as well.  
Be not like this dumb beast  
Which from the bush does not stir  
Before it is caught there.  
If this lesson thou hast well learned,  
And wilt act according to it,  
Great good wilt thou gain from it.

Our matter is very curious,  
For often it varies and changes,  
And nevertheless it is all one;  
For the examples which it gathers  
Are all for the betterment  
Of the man who wanders foolishly.

### **In the East there far above**

Are two stones on a high mountain  
Which have a very strange nature,  
For they bear fire and heat,  
They are as male and female.  
Did you ever hear a story  
More wonderful or more true,  
For the books make us believe it?  
When these stones are far apart,  
Fire does not issue for any purpose  
But when by chance it happens,  
That the one comes near the other,  
They kindle and fire comes out  
Which burns up both the stones,  
And so greatly the fire waxes and grows  
That it kindles all the mountain  
And whatever there is on each side  
Of the mountain kindles and burns.

By this must those example take  
Who wish to give themselves to God  
And who spend their life worthily.  
They must shun the company  
Of women most carefully  
And their carnal approaches,  
That this flame and this heat  
Which springs from carnal love  
Burn not the virtues which are in them,  
Which God, who is lord of the world,  
Has put in them by his grace.  
For in a little time are turned to ill  
The virtues, where this flame runs,  
Which springs from lewd women.  
For in truth we ought to know

Que toz jors a l'angle felon  
 385 Son agait por faire peccher  
 Le chaste hom, le dreiturier  
 E la chaste femme ensemment.  
 Eve des le comencement  
 Peccha par inobedience.  
 390 De cel pecche remest semence,  
 Qui toz jors crest e multiplie:  
 Car diables pas ne s'oblie.  
 Par la flambe de cest pecche  
 A meint hom este engigne.  
 395 Joseph fu temptez e Samson:  
 L'un fu vencu e l'autre non,  
 L'un fu vencu, l'autre venqui,  
 One la flambe nel corrompi.

**Une beste est, qui a non serre**

400 E qui n'abite mie en terre,  
 Mes en cele grant mer abite;  
 Ceste beste n'est pas petite,  
 Ainz est durement corporue:  
 Granz eles a la beste mue.  
 405 Quant ele veit en cele mer  
 Les nes e les dromonz sigler,  
 En ses eles recoilt le vent,  
 Vers la nef sigle durement.  
 Le vent la porte sus les ondes,  
 410 Qui sont salees e parfondes.  
 Issi vet longuement siglant,  
 Tant qu'ele ne poet en avant.  
 Donc chet aval e se recreit  
 E la mer l'assorbist e beit  
 415 E la trait aval el parfont.  
 Li notiner, qui par mer vont,  
 Ne la querent ja encontre:  
 Car c'est un grant peril de mer,  
 Si fet souvent la nef perir,  
 420 A qui ele poet parvenir.  
 Iceste beste sanz dotance  
 Porte mult grant signefiance.  
 La mer, qui est grant e parfonde,  
 Signefie cest present monde,  
 425 Qui mult est malvais e amer  
 E perillos si com la mer.  
 Cil qui par la mer siglant vont,  
 Signefient les bons qui sont,  
 Qui vont par ccst monde nagant  
 430 E lor nef adreit conduiant  
 Par les ondes, par les tormenz

That always the felon angel has  
 His trap to make the chaste man  
 And upright man to sin,  
 And the chaste woman likewise.  
 Eve since the beginning  
 Sinned through disobedience.  
 From that sin is seed sown,  
 Which ever grows and multiplies,  
 For the devil never forgets.  
 By the flame of that sin  
 Has many a man been caught.  
 Joseph was tempted and Samson,  
 he one was overcome and the other not;  
 The one was overcome, the other overcame,  
 Nor did ever the flame corrupt him.

**There is a beast, which has the name sawfish**

And which does not live on land,  
 But in the great ocean dwells.  
 This beast is not little,  
 But is very big bodied;  
 Great wings has this dumb beast.  
 When it sees on that sea  
 Ships and swift vessels sailing,  
 With the wind it fills its wings,  
 Towards the ship it sails swiftly.  
 The wind carries it over the waves  
 Which are salt and very deep,  
 So it goes sailing far  
 Until it can go no farther.  
 Then it falls back and gives up  
 And the sea swallows it up  
 And draws it down to the depths.  
 The mariners who sail the sea  
 Are not wishful to meet it,  
 For it is a great peril of the sea,  
 It often brings the ship to grief  
 When it is able to reach it.

This beast without doubt  
 Bears a very great meaning.  
 The sea, which is vast and deep,  
 Signifies this present world,  
 Which is very bad and bitter  
 And perilous like the sea.  
 They who go sailing on the sea  
 Signify good folk who be,  
 Who go voyaging through this world  
 And steer their ship straight on  
 Through the waves, through the storms,

Contre les periz e les venz.  
 Ceo est a dire e a entendre:  
 Ceo sont li bon, que entreprendre  
 435 Ne poet cil ne faire neier  
 Qui nes fine de guerreier.  
 Parmi cest monde vont siglant  
 Li prodhome lor nef menant  
 Si dreit, que li fel adverser  
 440 Ne les poet faire periller.  
 La beste, dont jeo vos ai dit,  
 Que par la mer sigle petit,  
 Puis recreit e chet el parfont,  
 Signefie plusors, qui sont,  
 445 Qui comencent a ben ovrer,  
 A servir Deu e a amer,  
 E quant il venent es periz  
 Des granz aises e des deliz,  
 Des coveitises, qui granz sont,  
 450 E des boisdies de cest mont,  
 Donc recreient de dreit nager.  
 Idonc les estoet periller  
 E chaïr es adversitez,  
 Es pecchez, es iniquitez,  
 455 Qui les traient el fonz aval  
 Dreit en la maison enferral.

**Caladrius est uns oisels**

Sor toz altres corteis e bels,  
 Altresi blans come la neis.  
 460 Mult par est cist oisels corteis.  
 Alcune feiz le troeve l'em  
 El païs de Jerusalem.  
 Quant home est en grant maladie,  
 Que l'em despeire de sa vie,  
 465 Donc est cist oisels apportez.  
 Si cil deit estre confortez  
 E repasser de cel malage,  
 L'oisel li torne le visage  
 E tret a sei l'enfermete,  
 470 E s'il ne deit avoir sante,  
 L'oisel se torne d'autre part,  
 Ja ne fera vers lui regart.

Or est raison que jeo vos die,  
 Que cest blanc oisel signefie.  
 475 Il signefie sanz error  
 Jesu Crist, nostre salveor,  
 Qui onques neire plume n'out,  
 Ainz fu tot blanc si com li plout:  
 En lui nen out onques neirte.

Against the dangers and the winds.  
 This is the meaning to be understood:  
 They are the good folk, whom the beast  
 Cannot catch or cause to drown,  
 Who never cease to battle,  
 Through this world go sailing  
 The wise men, steering their ship  
 So straight that the fell adversary  
 Is not able to wreck them.  
 The beast, of which I have told you,  
 Which on the sea sails a short way,  
 Then gives up and sinks into the deep,  
 Signifies many who be  
 Who commence by doing well,  
 By serving God and loving him;  
 And when they come in danger  
 Of great comforts and of pleasures,  
 Of desires which are great,  
 And of the deceits of this world,  
 Then they give up steering straight;  
 Soon they suffer shipwreck  
 And fall into adversities,  
 Into sins, into wickedness  
 Which drag them down to the depths below,  
 Straight into the abode of hell.

**Caladrius is a bird**

Above all others courtly and pretty,  
 And as white as is snow.  
 Exceeding courtly is this bird.  
 At times one finds it in  
 The country of Jerusalem.  
 When a man is so deadly sick,  
 That they despair of his life,  
 Then is this bird brought in.  
 If he is to get better  
 And recover from that sickness,  
 The bird turns its face to him  
 And takes upon itself his infirmity;  
 And if he may not regain his health  
 The bird turns the other way  
 And will not have a look at him.

Now it is right that I tell you  
 What this white bird stands for.  
 It signifies without mistake  
 Jesus Christ our saviour,  
 Who never a black feather had  
 But was all white like the plover.  
 In him was never a black spot.

480 Il meïsmes, qui est verite,  
 Dist en l'evangile de sei:  
 Li princes, dist il, vint a mei  
 De cest mont, mes ren n'i trova  
 De tot iceo que il quida:  
 485 C'est a dire ren qui sen fust,  
 Ou pecche chalenger pëust,  
 Si s'en tint mult a engigne:  
 Car Deu ne fist onques pecche  
 N'en lui ne fu onques trovee  
 490 Nule tricherie provee.  
 Icist verais caladrius  
 Est nostre salveor Jesus,  
 Qui vint de sa grant majeste,  
 Por esgarder l'enfermete  
 495 Des Jueus, qu'il out tant amez  
 E garniz e amonestez,  
 Tantes feiz pëuz e gariz,  
 Tant honorez e encheriz,  
 E quant il vit que il morreient  
 500 En la nonfei, ou il esteient,  
 Vit lor malice e lor duresce  
 E lor mal quoyer e lor peresce,  
 De lor esgart torna sa face;  
 Par sa benigne e seinte grace  
 505 Se torna donc envers nos genz,  
 Qui esteiom las e dolenz  
 Sanz fei e sanz enseignement  
 En grant misere, en grant tonnent.  
 Noz enfermetez visita,  
 510 Noz pecchez en son cors porta  
 El seint fust de la croiz veraie,  
 Dont li diables mult s'esmaie.  
 Ensi faire le coveiteit.  
 Alsi com Moyses aveit  
 515 Halce la serpent el desert,  
 Alsi coveiteit en apert  
 Le fiz de home estre eshalce  
 E en la seinte croiz dresce,  
 (Por atraire toz les boens,  
 520 Qui sanz fin remaindront soens).

**Del pellican vos devom dire,**  
 Ou inult a raison e matire,  
 N'orreiz plus bele mes oan.  
 Damne Deu dist del pellican  
 525 Par la boche del bon Davi,  
 Qui de sa grace ert repleni,  
 Qu'il esteit fet a lui semblable.

He himself who is truth,  
 Saith in the gospel of himself:  
 The prince of this world, he saith,  
 Came to me, but found nothing in me  
 Of all that he imagined.  
 That is to say nothing was in him  
 To which he could attribute sin,  
 However much he held to trickery;  
 For God never committed sin  
 Nor was there ever found in him  
 Proof of any falsehood.  
 This caladrius in truth  
 Is our saviour Jesus,  
 Who came of his great majesty  
 To look upon the sickness  
 Of the Jews, whom he had greatly loved  
 And cared for and exhorted,  
 So often fed and healed,  
 So greatly honoured and favoured.  
 And when he saw that they would die  
 In the unbelief in which they were,  
 Saw their malice and their stubbornness,  
 And their evil heart and sloth,  
 From their gaze he turned his face.  
 By his benign and holy grace  
 He turned him then towards our race,  
 Which was weary and in pain,  
 Without faith and without teaching,  
 In great misery, in great torment.  
 He visited our infirmities,  
 And bore our sins in his body  
 On the sacred wood of the true cross,  
 Of which the devil is sore afraid.  
 Thus it behoved him to do.  
 Even as Moses had lifted up  
 The serpent in the wilderness,  
 So it behoved the son of man  
 Openly to be lifted up  
 And hung on the holy cross  
 (For to draw to him all the good,  
 Who shall remain his without end).

**About the pelican we must tell you,**  
 For there is much good sense and matter in it;  
 Ye will hear no better in many a year.  
 The Lord God speaks of the pelican  
 By the mouth of the good David,  
 Who with his grace was so filled,  
 That he was made like to him.

Pellican est oisel mirable,  
 Si habite en la region  
 530 D'un fluive, qui Nilus a non.  
 El rivage del Nil habite,  
 E ceo me dit l'estoire escrete,  
 Qu'il en i a de deus maneres:  
 Cil qui habitent es ri ver es  
 535 Ne manguënt se peisson non;  
 Cil qui ne manguënt peisson,  
 Habitent en la desertine  
 E ne manguënt fors vermine.  
 Del pellican est grant merveille:  
 540 Car onques nule mere oeille  
 N'ama tant son petit aignel  
 Com il fet son petit oisel.  
 Quant ses pulcinez a esclos,  
 En els norrir e char e os  
 545 Met tote sa peine e sa cure.  
 Mes mult fet male norreture:  
 Car quant il sont crëuz e granz  
 E alques sages e puissanz.  
 Si becchent lor peres el vis  
 550 E tant lor sont fels e eschis,  
 Que lor peres de fin coroz  
 Les occient e tuent toz.  
 Al terz jor vent li pere a els,  
 Si le commoet pitez e dels.  
 555 Tant les aime d'amor parfite,  
 Que donc revent, si les visite.  
 Od son bec perce son coste,  
 Tant qu'il en a del sanc oste.  
 De cel sanc, qui de lui ist fors,  
 560 Lors remeine la vie es cors  
 De ses pulcins, n'en dotez mie,  
 E en tel sens les vivifie.  
  
 Seignors, or oëz que ceo monte.  
 Ja entendriez vos un conte  
 565 D'Arthur ou de Charle ou d'Oger.  
 Ci a a beivre e a manger  
 A l'alme de chescun feeil,  
 Qui voelt avoir de Deu conseil.  
 Deus est le vrai pellican,  
 570 Qui por nos traist peine e ahan.  
 Oëz qu'il dist en prophecie  
 Par le bon prophete Ysaïe:  
 J'engendrai, fet damne Deu, fiz;  
 Quant les oi crëuz e norriz,  
 575 Il me despistrent e haïrent  
 E mes comandemenz desfurent.

The pelican is a wonderful bird,  
 It dwells in the region  
 Of a river which is named Nile.  
 It dwells on the shore of the Nile  
 And the written history tells me this:  
 That there are two kinds,  
 Those which dwell by rivers  
 And eat nothing but fish;  
 Those which do not eat fish  
 Dwell in the desert  
 And eat nothing but vermin.  
 About the pelican there's a wonderful thing:  
 For ne'er did any mother sheep  
 Love so much her little lamb  
 As does the pelican her little bird.  
 When she has hatched her young ones  
 She devotes all her pains and care  
 To feeding them both flesh and bones.  
 But her feeding is all ill-spent,  
 For when they are grown big  
 And are getting knowing and lusty  
 They peck their parents in the face,  
 And so knavish are they and rude to them,  
 That their parents at last get angry  
 And strike and kill them all.  
 On the third day the father comes to them,  
 He is overcome with pity and grief  
 So dearly he loves them with a perfect love,  
 That he returns and comes to them.  
 With his beak he strikes his side  
 Until he has drawn out blood from it.  
 With this blood, which flows from him,  
 He brings back life to the bodies  
 Of his young ones—doubt it not at all—  
 And in such way he brings them to life.  
  
 My masters, now hear what this denotes.  
 You may have heard a story  
 Of Arthur or of Charles or of Ogier.  
 But here is drink and meat indeed  
 For the soul of each of the faithful  
 Who wills to have counsel with God.  
 God is the true pelican,  
 Who for us bore toil and stress.  
 Hear what he saith in prophecy  
 By the good prophet Isaiah:  
 I have begotten children, saith the lord God;  
 When I brought them up and fed them,  
 They despised and hated me  
 And disobeyed my commandments.

Certes, seignors, c'est verite,  
 C'est la veraie auctorite:  
 Nos sonies ses fiz e pigons,  
 580 Qui come malvais e felons  
 Nostre seignor el vis ferimes,  
 Quant nos pardevant lui servîmes  
 A sa creature meint jor  
 E nent a lui com creator:  
 585 Plenerement le reniames,  
 Quant perres e fustz aorames. ^  
 Por ceo a nos se coroga,  
 Si nos guerpi e nos chaça  
 En la main al cruel felon.  
 590 Por noz pecchez mort esteiom.  
 Quant al pere pite en prist,  
 Nostre salveor Jesu Crist,  
 Son cher fiz enveia en terre,  
 Por faire pes de nostre guerre.  
 595 Deu devint hom por noz pecchez,  
 Circumcis fu e baptizez  
 E por nostre salvation  
 Soffri tonnent e passion:  
 Prendre se lessa e tenir,  
 600 Lier, bender e escopir  
 E en la seinte croiz pener  
 E od espines coroner  
 E cloficher en pez e meins.  
 Li salveres de pite pleins  
 605 Se lessa ferir el costé,  
 Si savom ben par verite,  
 Que sanc e ewe s'en issi.  
 Par cel sanc somes nos gari:  
 Cel seint sanc nos rechata vie  
 610 E nos osta de la baillie  
 Al felon, qui a non Sathan.  
 Deu, qui est verai pellican,  
 Nos raienst en ceste manere  
 Conie la gent, qu'il out mult chere.  
  
 615 **Or dirrom del niticorace,**  
 Un oisel de malvaise estrace,  
 Freseie a non en dreit romanz.  
 Cist oisels est orz e puanz;  
 De jor ne de soleil n'a cure.  
 620 Toz jors est tele sa nature.  
 Nuit e tenebres aime ades,  
 Ben est semblant qu'il est malves.  
  
 En cest oisel sont figure  
 Li fals Jueu malëure,

Indeed, my masters, it is truth,  
 It is the true testimony:  
 We are his children and little doves,  
 Who like bad and wicked men  
 Struck our lord in the face,  
 When we in his presence served  
 For many a day his created thing  
 And never him as creator.  
 Openly we denied him,  
 When we worshipped stones and wood.  
 Therefore was he angered towards us,  
 He forsook us and drove us  
 Into the hand of the cruel traitor.  
 For our sins were we dead.  
 When pity overcame the father for it  
 He sent his dear son on earth,  
 Our saviour Jesus Christ,  
 To make peace from our war.  
 God became man for our sins,  
 Was circumcised and baptised  
 And for our salvation  
 Suffered torture and death.  
 He let himself be taken and seized  
 Bound and tied and scourged  
 And on the holy cross martyred  
 And crowned with thorns  
 And nailed through feet and hands.  
 The saviour filled with pity  
 Let him in the side be pierced;  
 We know well and truly,  
 That blood and water issued from it.  
 By that blood are we healed;  
 That sacred blood ransomed our life  
 And took us out of the power  
 Of the traitor who is named Satan.  
 God who is the true pelican  
 Redeemed us in this way  
 As people whom he held full dear.  
  
**Now we shall tell of the night raven,**  
 A bird of evil race,  
 Fresaië is its name in good romance.  
 This bird is foul and stinking.  
 Day and sunlight alike it hates,  
 Always is its nature so.  
 It loves night and darkness ever,  
 It's quite plain that it is bad.  
  
 By this bird are figured  
 The false and wicked Jews

625 Qui ne voldrent Deu esgarder,  
 Quant il vint ça, por nos salver.  
 De Deu, qui est vrai soleil,  
 Ne voldrent creire le conseil,  
 Ainz le refuserent partot  
 630 E contre lui furent de bot  
 E tot plenerement diseient,  
 Que nul rei fors Cesar n'aveient.  
 Donc se mostra Deus a nos genz,  
 Qui esteiom las e dolenz,  
 635 En tenebrose region,  
 En l'ombre de mort seeiom,  
 Quant la lumere nos nasqui,  
 Qui de la seinte virgne eissi.  
 Idonc fumes enluminez,  
 640 Donc fu li termes afinez  
 De la peine, de la dolor,  
 Qui nos aveit tenu meint jor.  
 Devant ceo esteiom nos triste,  
 De nos dist Deu par le psalmistre  
 645 Davi, qui tant fu ben de lui:  
 Li poeples, que jo ne conui,  
 Fet nostre sires, me servi  
 E en oiance m'obeï,  
 E fiz estranges me mentirent  
 650 E clocherent e enveillirent.  
 Por ceo veillirent e clocherent,  
 Que mes comandemenz lesserent.  
 Li Jueu sont en obscurte  
 Ne veient pas la verite:  
 655 Les tenebres amerent plus  
 Que le vrai soleil la sus.

**Li aigles est reis des oisels.**

Quant velz est, si devient novels  
 Par mult merveillose nature.  
 660 Une fontaine clere e pure,  
 Ou l'ewe sort vive e boillant,  
 Quant li soleiz est cler raiant,  
 Cerche li aigles, quant est velz  
 E niult a obscurciz ses elz  
 665 E chescune ele greve e veine.  
 En l'air desus cele fontaine  
 Comence mult halt a monter  
 Contre le soleil raiant cler.  
 Quant la sus vent en la cholor,  
 670 Ses elz affiche en la luor  
 Del soleil e tant i esgarde,  
 Qu'avis li est que trestot arde.

Who would not look at God  
 When he came here for to save us.  
 Of God, who is the true sun,  
 They would not follow the advice,  
 But refused it everywhere  
 And rejected him at once  
 And said quite plainly  
 That they would have no king but Caesar.  
 Then God showed himself to our people,  
 Who were weary and in pain,  
 In a dark region.  
 In the shadow of death we sat.  
 When the light was born in us  
 Which from the holy virgin brake,  
 Then were we enlightened,  
 Then was the time finished,  
 The time of pain and grief,  
 Which had beset us many a day.  
 Before that were we sad,  
 Of us saith God by the psalmist  
 David, who was so favoured by him:  
 The people that I have not known  
 Saith our lord, served me  
 And with willingness obeyed me,  
 And strange children lied to me  
 And became halt and old.  
 They became old and halt  
 Because they followed not my commandments.  
 The Jews are in darkness  
 And see not the truth;  
 They loved the darkness more  
 Than the true sun above.

**The eagle is the king of birds.**

When it is old it is renewed again  
 Through its most wonderful nature.  
 A fountain clear and pure,  
 Where the water springs fresh and bubbling,  
 When the sun is shining bright  
 The eagle seeks, when it is old  
 And its eyes are very dim  
 And each wing heavy and feeble.  
 In the air above this fountain  
 It begins to mount very high  
 In the face of the sun shining bright.  
 When up there it meets the heat,  
 Its eyes it fastens on the glare  
 Of the sun and gazes so hard on it  
 That it reckons to be all on fire.



Iloec en cele ardor esprent  
 Ses elz, ses eles ensemment,  
 675 Puis descent jus en la fontaine,  
 La ou l'ewe est plus vive e saine,  
 Si se plonge e baigne treis feiz,  
 Tant que il est, ben le sachez,  
 Tot freis e tot renovelez  
 680 E de sa veillesce sanez.  
 Tant a l'aigle clere vëue:  
 S'il ert si halt com une nue  
 La desus en cel air roant,  
 Si veit il le peisson noant  
 685 Soz lui el nuive ou en la mer.  
 Donc descent por lui encombrer:  
 A lui se joint e tant estrive,  
 Que par force le trait a rive.  
  
 Une altre manere a estrange:  
 690 Car qui de ses oes fereit change  
 E en son ni autres meist,  
 Si qu'il nel sëust ne veïst,  
 Quant li pigeon serreient grant,  
 Ainceis qu'il fussent ben volant,  
 695 Les portereit la sus en l'air  
 Contre le rai, contre l'esclair  
 Del soleil, quant melz raierait.  
 Celui qui ben esgardereit  
 Le rai del soleil, sanz ciller,  
 700 Amereit il e tendreit cher,  
 E celui qui n'avreït vigor  
 D'esgarder contre la luor,  
 Com avoltre le guerpireit,  
 Ja puis ne s'en entremettreit.  
  
 705 .L'aigle, qui si se renovele,  
 Nos done essample bone e bele:  
 Car altresì devreit ovrer  
 Home, qui voelt renoveler  
 Son vel vestement, seit Paen  
 710 Ou seit Jueu ou Crestien.  
 Quant li oil de son quoer serreient  
 Si aombre, qu'il ne porreient  
 Veeir la salvete certeine,  
 Donc devreit querre la fonteine,  
 715 Qui est esperitable e vive:  
 C'est le baptesme, qui avive  
 Trestoz cels que il seintifie.  
 De ceo trai jeo a garantie  
 L'evangile, ou jeo truis escrit,  
 720 Que cil qui d'ewe e d'esperit

There in the heat it burns  
 Its eyes and its wings likewise;  
 Then it flies down into the fountain,  
 There where the water is most fresh and pure,  
 And dips and bathes three times,  
 Until it is—be well assured—  
 All fresh and all renewed  
 And from its old age healed.  
 So clear a vision has the eagle,  
 If it is as high up as a cloud  
 Up there in that air circling  
 And sees the fish swimming  
 Beneath it in river or sea,  
 Then it flies down to seize it;  
 It fastens on it and struggles so hard  
 That by force it draws it to the bank.

Another strange habit it has:  
 For whoever may change its eggs  
 And in its nest put others,  
 So that it neither knows nor sees;  
 When the little birds grow big,  
 Before they are able to fly well  
 It will carry them up in the air  
 Into the rays, into the glare  
 Of the sun, when shining its brightest.  
 That one which can well look into  
 The ray of the sun without blinking,  
 It will love and tend dearly;  
 And that which has no strength  
 To gaze against the glare,  
 As bastard it casts off  
 And cares for it no more.

The eagle which thus renews itself,  
 Gives us example good and excellent;  
 For thus should act  
 Man, who wishes to renew  
 His old garment, be he Pagan  
 Or be he Jew or Christian.  
 If the eyes of his heart should be  
 So darkened that they could not  
 See the sure salvation,  
 Then should he seek the fountain,  
 Which is spiritual and living:  
 It is baptism which revives  
 All those whom it sanctifies.  
 For this I bring for warranty  
 The gospel where I find written  
 That he who of water and the spirit

Ne serreit si seintifiez,  
 Qu'il ne fust renez e purgez,  
 Ne porreit en nule guise estre,  
 Qu'il entrast el regne celestre.  
 725 Qui en ceste fontaine clere  
 Est baptize el non del pere,  
 Del fiz e del seint esperit,  
 Seurement sanz contredit  
 Porra veeir e esgarder  
 730 Le veir soleil, qui raie cler:  
 C'est Jesu Crist, li dolz, li pis.  
 Qui en lui a son esgart mis,  
 En l' esgarder se renovele  
 Altresi come fet l'oisele  
 735 En l'autre soleil que cil fist,  
 Qui toz les elemenz assist  
 E qui crea trestot cest mont  
 E totes les choses qui sont.

**Un oisel, qui a non fenis,**  
 740 Habite en Ynde, ou est toz dis,  
 Aillors nel soelt l'em pas trover.  
 Cist oisels est toz dis sanz per:  
 Car ja nen ert fors un ensemble  
 Ne nul altre ne li resemble  
 745 De tel estat, de tel manere,  
 De tel semblant e de tel chere.  
 Quant cinc cenx anz sont acompli,  
 Donc li semble qu'il est veilli,  
 Si se charge d'espices cheres,  
 750 Bones e de plusors maneres;  
 De la desertine s'en vole  
 En la cite de Leopole.  
 A un prestre de la cite  
 Est acointe par verite  
 755 Par alcun signe ou autrement  
 De cest oisel l'avenement,  
 E quant il set qu'il deit venir,  
 Si fet reims de sarment cuillir  
 E lier en un fesselet  
 760 E sor un bel alter les met,  
 Qui a cel oes est adenti.  
 E li oisels, si com jeo di,  
 Chargez d'espices vent al leu.  
 Od son bec alume le feu:  
 765 Car tant fert sor la perre dure,  
 Que feus en sait par aventure,  
 Qui mult tost avive e esprent  
 Es espices e el sarment.

Should not be so sanctified  
 Would not be born again and cleansed  
 Nor could he in any sort of way  
 Enter into the heavenly kingdom.  
 Whoso in this fountain clear  
 Is baptized in the name of the father,  
 Of the son and of the holy spirit,  
 Quite certainly without gainsay  
 Shall be able to see and gaze upon  
 The true sun which shines so clear,  
 That is Jesus Christ so tender, so kind.  
 Whoso on him has fixed his gaze  
 In gazing on him renews himself  
 Just as did the little bird  
 On the other sun which he made,  
 Who established all the elements  
 And who created all this world  
 And all the things which are.

**A bird which has the name Phoenix,**  
 Dwells in India, where it always is;  
 Elsewhere one is not wont to find it.  
 This bird is always without a mate  
 For there is but one of the kind  
 Nor does any other resemble it  
 Of like mien, of like fashion,  
 Of like appearance or of like form.  
 When five hundred years are passed,  
 Then it seems to it that it is grown old;  
 It loads itself with spices rare,  
 Good and of divers kinds.  
 From the wilderness it flies  
 To the city of Heliopolis.  
 To a priest of the city  
 Is signified truthfully  
 By some sign or otherwise  
 The approach of this bird;  
 And when he knows that it must come,  
 He gets twigs of brushwood gathered  
 And tied in a bundle  
 And lays them on a fine altar,  
 Which for this bird is destined.  
 And the bird, as I have said,  
 Laden with spices comes to the place.  
 With its beak it lights the fire  
 For so briskly it strikes on the hard stone  
 That by good luck fire breaks out  
 Which sets all alight and burns  
 The spices and the twigs.

Quant li feus est cler e ardent,  
 770 Si se met enz demeintenant  
 E s'art tot en puldre e en cendre.  
 Donc vent li pres tres por aprendre,  
 coment la bosoigne est alee:  
 La cendre troeve amoncelee.  
 775 Donc la depart tot suavet,  
 Tant que dedenz troeve un vermet,  
 Qui done assez meillor odor  
 Que rose ne nule altre nor.  
 Li prestres l'endemain revent,  
 780 Por veoir, coment se content.  
 L' oisel, qui est ja figure,  
 Al terz jor est oisel forme,  
 Si a quanqu'il i' deit avoir.  
 Al prestre s'encline por veir,  
 785 Puis s'en torne lez e joianz  
 Ne revent devant cinc cenz anz.

En cest oisel devez entendre  
 Nostre seignor, qui volt descendre  
 Çajus por nostre salvement.  
 790 De bones odors finement  
 Fu chargez, quant en terre vint  
 Por les prisons, que enfer tint.  
 En l'alter de la croiz sacree,  
 Qui tant est dulce e savoree,  
 795 Fu sacrefiez cist oisels,  
 Qui al terz jor resorst novels.  
 Mes plusors ne voelent pas creire,  
 Que la chose seit issi veire,  
 Si ont grant tort, ceo m'est avis.  
 800 Quant l'oiseil, qui a non fenis,  
 Se demet e se mortefie  
 E al terz jor reprent sa vie,  
 Mult est a creire plus leger  
 De Deu, qui tot a a juger,  
 805 Ceo que il dist en son sermon,  
 Ou ren n'a si verite non.  
 Ceo dist cil qui est verite:  
 Jeo ai, dist il, la poëste  
 De poser m'aime e de reprendre.  
 810 Veir dist il, veir nos fist entendre,  
 Sil devom oïr e retraire:  
 Jeo ne vinc pas, dist il, desfaire  
 La lei, ainz la vinc acomplir  
 E assommer e aemplir.  
 815 Issi ert le sage escrivein  
 El regne del cel sovereign,  
 Qui de son tresor met avant

When the fire is bright and burning  
 It sets itself thereon at once  
 And burns all up to dust and ashes.  
 Then comes the priest for to learn  
 How the affair has gone:  
 The ashes in a heap he finds.  
 Then he opens them quite gently,  
 So that he finds there a little worm,  
 Which gives out a sweeter smell  
 Than rose or any other flower.  
 The priest returns next day  
 For to see how it fares;  
 The bird which has already taken shape  
 On the third day is a bird complete;  
 It has all that it ought to have.  
 To the priest it verily makes a bow,  
 Then turns away sprightly and gay;  
 Nor does it return for five hundred years.

By this bird you must understand  
 Our lord, who willed to come  
 Down for our salvation.  
 With good perfumes was he fitly  
 Laden when he came on earth  
 For the captives detained in hell.  
 On the altar of the holy cross  
 Which is so sweet and full of savour  
 Was sacrificed this bird,  
 Who on the third day rose anew.  
 But many would not believe  
 That the thing was really true;  
 They are very wrong—that is my opinion—  
 Since this bird which is called phoenix  
 Submits to undergo death  
 And on the third day renews its life,  
 How much more easily may we believe  
 About God, who hath to judge all,  
 What he says in his discourse,  
 Where there is nothing if not truth.  
 This saith he who is truth:  
 I have the power, he saith,  
 To lay down my soul and take it up again.  
 Verily he saith, verily he maketh us understand,  
 So ought we to hear him and reform:  
 I come not, saith he, to destroy  
 The law, but I come to accomplish it,  
 And to set a crown upon it and fulfill it.  
 Even so will the wise scribe  
 Be sovereign in the kingdom of heaven,  
 Who of his treasure sets before you

Come proz e corne savant  
Les velz choses e les noveles,  
820 Qui ensemble sont bones e beles.

**La hupe est un oisel vilein:**  
Son ni n'est pas corteis ne sein,  
Ainz est fet de tai e d'ordure.  
Mes mult sont de bone nature  
825 Li oiselet, qui de li issent:  
Car quant lor peres enveillissent,  
Qu'il ont perdu tot lor poeir  
E de voler e de veeir,  
Donques les socorent lor fiz.  
830 Quant les veient si enveilliz,  
Si lor esracent od lor bes  
Les veilles plumes tot ades.  
Puis les eschalfent dolcement  
E les coevrent tot ensement  
835 Come cil firent els ainceis,  
Tant que il sont gariz e freis  
E resclarcies lor vëues  
E lor penes ben revenues.  
Quant il les ont issi gariz,  
840 Ben lor poënt dire lor fiz:  
Bel pere, bele mere chere,  
Altresi e en tel manere  
Come vos meïstes grant cure  
En nos e nostre norreture,  
845 Por gueredon de tel servise  
La r'avom nos or en vos mise  
E rendu bonte por bonte,  
Si qu'il n'i a ren mesconte.  
  
Seignors, quant ceste creature,  
850 Qui sanz raison est par nature,  
Oevre en tel sens com dit vos ai,  
Mult poet hom estre en grant esmai,  
Qui tote la raison entent  
E de sei garde ne se prent.  
855 Allas, tant fu ne a male ore  
Qui pere e mere deshonore,  
Quant il les veit devant ses elz  
Malades e fredles e velz  
E si n'en prent garde ne cure!  
860 Mult est de malvaise nature  
Home, qui descretion set  
E son pere e sa mere het  
E les maldit mult a grant tort.  
Morir l'estoet de mal mort:  
865 Car Deu comanda en la lei,

As a clever and a learned man  
The old things and the new,  
Which alike are good and excellent.

**The hoopoe is a horrid bird,**  
Its nest is not nice and clean  
But is made of mud and filth.  
But of a very good nature are  
The little birds, which are born to it;  
For when their parents are grown so old  
That they have lost all their strength  
For flying and for seeing,  
Then their children succour them.  
When they see them grown so old  
They tear out with their beaks  
Their old feathers unceasingly.  
Then they warm them soothingly  
And cherish them in like manner  
As these had done to them before  
Until they are restored and fresh  
And their sight made clear again  
And their feathers well grown.  
When they have thus restored them  
Well may their children say:  
Good father, good mother dear,  
Just as in like manner  
You have bestowed great care  
On us and on our sustenance,  
As recompense for such service  
Now have we devoted ourselves to you  
And rendered kindness for kindness  
So that there is nothing misreckoned.  
  
My masters, since this creature,  
Which by nature has no reasoning power,  
Acts in the way which I have told you,  
In what parlous state a man must be,  
Who is fully possessed of reason  
And who takes no heed to his ways.  
Alas, in what evil hour was he born  
Who dishonours father and mother,  
When he sees them before his eyes  
Sick and feeble and old  
And yet has no care or thought for them!  
How evil a nature has a man  
Who has understanding  
And hates his father and his mother  
And slanders them quite wrongfully.  
It were fit that he die a violent death!  
For God commanded in the law,

Que nos devom tenir en fei,  
Qu'om pere e mere honorast  
E qu'om les servist e gardast  
E pramist que de mort morreït  
870 Qui pere ou mere maldireit.

**Salomon dist al perescos,**  
Que se il voelt estre rescos  
De malvaiste e de peresce,  
Qu'il prenge garde a la proësce  
875 Del formi, qui est si petiz.  
Sages e proz est li formiz,  
Qui se porveit el tens d'este,  
Si qu'en iver en a plente,  
E nule altre beste nel fet.  
880 Quant il issent de lor recet,  
Si vont mult ordeneenient  
L'un avant l'autre belement,  
Tant qu'il venent al ble mäur,  
La ou il est forme e dur,  
885 E quant il sont venuz al grein,  
De ceo seiez trestot certain,  
Par l'odor del chalme desoz  
Sevent conoistre, tant sont proz,  
Se c'est orge, segle ou furment.  
890 Se orge ou segle est finement,  
Le guerpissent e avant vont,  
Tant que al furment venu sont.  
Donc montent amont a l'espi.  
Quant s'en sont charge e garni,  
895 A lor recet tornent arrere  
Belement tote la charrere.  
Trestote jor venent e vont.  
E savez que li venant font,  
Quant il encontrent les chargez?  
900 Ne dient pas, ben le sachez:  
Donez nos de vostre furment,  
Ainceis tenent mult sagement  
La trace, que cil sont venu,  
Tant qu'a cel leu sontvenu,  
905 Ou li altre se sont trosse,  
Puis se retrossent de cel ble.  
Donc s'en revenent tot charge.  
Plus sont cointe e vezie  
Que les foies virgnes ne furent:  
910 Car quant as noeces entrer durent,  
Si furent lor vessel tot vui  
E ren n'orent en lor estui.  
Les cinc sages garnies erent,

Which we must keep faithfully,  
That a man should honour father and mother,  
And that he should serve and keep them;  
And promised that he shall die the death  
Who curseth his father or his mother.

**Solomon says about the sluggard**  
That if he will be brought back  
From illdoing and from idleness,  
He should regard the valour  
Of the ant, which is so little.  
Wise and prudent is the ant,  
Which makes provision in summer time  
So that it has plenty in winter;  
And none other beast does this.  
When they come forth from their home  
They proceed right orderly  
The one before the other straightly  
Until they come to the ripe wheat,  
There where it is full-grown and hard.  
And when they are come to the corn  
Of this you may be quite sure  
By the smell of the stalk below  
They are able to tell—so clever are they—  
If it is barley or rye or wheat-corn.  
If it is really barley or rye,  
They leave it and pass on  
Until they are come to the wheat.  
Then they climb up to the ear.  
When they are laden and supplied,  
To their home back they turn  
In order all the way.  
Every day they come and go.  
And do ye know what those approaching do,  
When they meet the others laden?  
They do not say—mark it well—  
Give us of your corn,  
But they keep quite wisely  
To the track the others had come,  
Until they reach that place  
Where these had loaded themselves up.  
Then they load up with the wheat  
And return well laden.  
More wise are they and clever  
Than the foolish virgins were;  
For when they should enter to the marriage,  
Were their lamps all empty  
And nothing had they in their vessels.  
The five wise were furnished;

Les cinc foies lor demanderent  
 915 De lor oille, mes point nen orent.  
 Onques tant prier nes en porent.  
 Ultreement lor en faillirent  
 E pleinement lor respondirent,  
 Que ja point ne lor en dorreient;  
 920 Alassent la ou el l'aveient  
 Achate, si en rechatassent  
 Ou autrement en porçaçassent.  
 Tandis com celes i alerent,  
 Les sages as noeces entrerent,  
 925 Qui esteient ben atornees.  
 Quant celes furent retornees,  
 Si fu la porte ben fermee:  
 Onques puis nen i out entree.

Seignors, pernom garde al formi,  
 930 Qui se travaille e porveit si,  
 Qu'en este a tant travaille,  
 Qu'en iver a tot a plente.  
 Uncor fet il altre cointise,  
 Qui ne deit estre en obli mise.  
 935 Quant son furment a ajuste,  
 Qui durement lui a custe,  
 Chescun son grein par mileu fent  
 E ensi le garde e defent,  
 Qu'il n'empire ne ne porrist  
 940 Ne que nul germe n'i norrist.

Tu crestiens, qui en Deu creiz  
 E l'escripture entenz e veiz;  
 Fent e devise sagement  
 La lettre del vel testament!  
 945 Ceo est a dire e a entendre,  
 Que tu ne deiz mie trop prendre  
 Tot quanque l'escripture dit  
 Selonc la lettre, qui occit,  
 Mes l'esperit, qui vivifie,  
 950 Ceo ne deiz tu oblir mie.  
 Li Jueu, qui ne voelent mettre  
 Ne sens ne figure en la lettre,  
 Sont decëu mult laidement  
 Ne veient pas profondement:  
 955 Le grein gardent trestot enter,  
 Tant qu'il porrist en lor gerner.  
 Mult a li formiz greignor sens,  
 Qui se porveit issi par tens,  
 Que de son grein a tot le preu,  
 960 Quant vent en saison e en leu.

The five foolish begged them  
 Of their oil, but none of it they got,  
 However much they prayed them for it.  
 Utterly did they fail them  
 And plainly answered them  
 That they would not give them any at all;  
 Let them go where they had  
 Bought it and buy again.  
 Or purchase some in another way.  
 While these had gone therefor  
 The wise who were well supplied,  
 Entered to the marriage.  
 When those others had returned,  
 So fast was the gate shut  
 That no one had entry there.

My masters, let us take heed to the ant,  
 Which so labours and provides  
 By having worked so hard in summer  
 That in winter it has full plenty.  
 Still another clever thing it does,  
 Which must not be left forgotten.  
 When it has stored its corn  
 Which has cost it so dear,  
 Each grain it has it splits in two,  
 And thus preserves and keeps it  
 That it neither sprouts nor rots,  
 Nor does any germ grow there.

Thou christian, who in God believest  
 And the scripture hearest and seest,  
 Split and divide wisely  
 The letter of the old testament.  
 That is to say and be understood,  
 That thou must by no means take  
 All what the scripture saith  
 According to the letter, which kills,  
 But according to the spirit, which gives life.  
 This must thou not forget.  
 The Jews who do not wish to find  
 Meaning or symbol in the letter,  
 Are deceived most foully;  
 They do not see deeply.  
 The corn they keep entirely whole,  
 Until it rots in their garner.  
 Much greater sense has the ant,  
 Which provides thus in time  
 That of its corn it has all the use  
 When the proper time comes round.

**Je ormiz d'altre manere sont**  
 En Ethiope la amont:  
 De chens ont tote la faiture  
 E sont ben de lor estature.  
 965 Icist sont d'estrane manere:  
 Car de la terre e de puldrere  
 Esgratent e traient or fin,  
 Tant que n'en sai dire la fin,  
 E qui cel or tolir lor voelt,  
 970 Tost s'en repent e si s'en doelt:  
 Car demaneis apres lui corent,  
 S'il l'ateignent, tost le devorent.  
 Les genz, qui d'iloec meinent pres,  
 Sevent qu'il sont fels e engres  
 975 E qu'il ont or a grant plente,  
 Si ont un engin apreste:  
 Jumenz pernent, qui puleins ont,  
 Quant joefnes e alaitanz sont,  
 Treis jors les ont fet jëuner;  
 980 Al quart jor les font enseler.  
 Es seles afferment escrins  
 Als luisanz com est or fins.  
 Entre els e la terre as formiz  
 Cort un fluive mult arabiz;  
 985 Od les jumenz al fluive venent,  
 Les puleins devers els retenent.  
 Puis chacent ultre les jumenz,  
 Qui ont feim as quoers e as denz.  
 De l'altre part est l'erbe drue  
 990 E ben espesse e parcrëue.  
 Iloec vont les jumenz pessant,  
 E les formiz demeintenant,  
 Qu'il veient les escrins pareir,  
 I quident bon recet avoir  
 995 A lor or muscer e repondre.  
 Donc nes estoet mie somondre  
 Des escrins emplir e charger  
 Del bon or precios e cher.  
 Issi vont tote jor portant,  
 1000 Desiqu'il vent vers l'anuitant,  
 Que les jumenz sont saolees  
 E ont les pances granz e lees.  
 Quant lor puleins oënt henir,  
 Donc se hastent de revenir.  
 1005 Le fluive meintenant repassent.  
 Cil pernent lor or e amassent  
 Qui riches en sont e mananz,  
 E les formîz en sont dolanz.

**There are ants of another kind**  
 In Ethiopia—far up there;  
 Of dogs they have all the form  
 And are just of their size.  
 These are of a strange sort  
 For out of the ground and from the dust  
 They scratch up and dig pure gold;  
 So much that I cannot tell the sum of it.  
 And whoso wills to take this gold from them  
 Rues it sore and is sorry for it.  
 For straightway they pursue him  
 And if they reach him eat him quickly.  
 The folk who live near there  
 Know how savage and hot they are,  
 And that they have of gold great plenty,  
 So have a device ready:  
 They take mares, which have foals,  
 When they are young and milk-fed;  
 Three days they keep them starving,  
 On the fourth day they saddle them,  
 And to the saddles fix small boxes  
 As shining as is fine gold.  
 Between them and the country of the ants  
 Runs a river very swift.  
 With the mares to the river they come,  
 Keeping back the foals behind them.  
 Then they drive the mares across  
 Which are hungry both in heart and tooth.  
 On the other side is grass, lush  
 And thick and well-grown.  
 There go the mares feeding;  
 And the ants at once  
 When they see the boxes shining  
 Think they have a good place there  
 For to stow and hide their gold.  
 Then is no need to bid them  
 Fill and charge the boxes  
 With the good gold precious and dear.  
 So they all day carrying go  
 Until it draws towards dusk,  
 When the mares are sated  
 And have their bellies big and round.  
 When they hear their foals hinny  
 Then they hasten to return;  
 The river now they cross again.  
 The people take their gold and heap it up.  
 Now are they rich and opulent,  
 And the ants are very sad.

**Uncor i a altre formi**

1010 Que nul de cels que jeo vos di,  
 Qui formicaleon a non.  
 Des formiz est cil le lion,  
 Si est li plus petiz de toz,  
 Li plus hardiz e li plus proz.  
 1015 Altres formiz het durement.  
 En la puldrere belement  
 Se musce, tant est veziez:  
 Quant les autres venent chargez,  
 Sor els de la puldrere sait,  
 1020 Si les occit, se les assalt.

Seignors, por Deu, qui ne menti,  
 Pernez garde al petit formi,  
 Qui si est porveanz e sage  
 De conoistre son avantage!  
 1025 Porveez vos e aprestez,  
 Tant com si bels est li estez,  
 C'est tant com vos avez leisir,  
 Que assëur puissez venir  
 Al fort iver, ceo est a dire  
 1030 A cel jor de dolor e d'ire,  
 Quant li bon s'en irront a destre  
 E li malvais devers senestre!  
 Seiez pensis e corios  
 D'entrer as noeces od l'espos,  
 1035 Si que voz lampes seient pleines  
 De bones oevres e certaines!  
 Car ja as noeces n'enteront  
 Qui lor lampes pleines n'avront  
 De bone oille por verite,  
 1040 C'est de l'oille de charite.  
 Cil enteront, jeol vos afi,  
 Od l'espos al riche convi,  
 Qui avront lor lampes emplies  
 De bones oevres en lor vies.  
 1045 Mes qui sa lampe vuide avra,  
 Sachez que ja n'i entera,  
 Einz remeindra por verite  
 En doel e en chaitivete,  
 El feu ardant, el grant torment,  
 1050 Qui durra pardurablement,  
 Dont damne Deu nos toz enjette  
 E en sa ioie od sei nos mette!

**De la sereine vos dirrom,**

Qui mult a estrange façon:  
 1055 Car de la ceinture en amont  
 Est la plus bele ren del mont

**There is still another ant**

Which is none of those I told you of;  
 It has the name ant-lion.  
 Of ants this is the lion.  
 It is the smallest of all,  
 The most bold and most clever.  
 Other ants it hates bitterly.  
 In the dust quite deftly  
 It buries itself, so cunning it is.  
 When the others come laden,  
 Out of the dust it jumps on them,  
 And attacks and kills them.

My masters, for God's sake—who lies not—  
 Give heed to the little ant,  
 Which is so provident and wise  
 In knowing where its well-being is.  
 Look well ahead and prepare,  
 So long as the summer is so fine  
 So long may you have your ease.  
 But assuredly you must come  
 To the hard winter, that is to say  
 To that day of pain and wrath,  
 When the good shall go to the right  
 And the evil to the left.  
 Be ye thoughtful and careful  
 To enter to the marriage with the bridegroom,  
 If so be that your lamps are full  
 Of good works and constant.  
 For into the marriage they shall not enter  
 Who have not their lamps indeed  
 Full of good oil,  
 That is the oil of charity.  
 They shall enter—I do assure you—  
 With the bridegroom to the rich feast  
 Who shall have their lamps full  
 Of good works in their lives.  
 But whoso shall have his lamp empty,  
 Be certain that he shall not enter there,  
 But will remain in good truth  
 In pain and in misery,  
 In burning fire and great torment  
 Which shall endure without end,  
 From which may the lord God deliver us all,  
 And set us with him in his joy.

**Of the syren we shall tell you,**

Which has a very strange form.  
 For from the waist upwards  
 She is the most beautiful thing in the world



A guise de femme formee.  
 L'autre partie est figuree  
 Come peisson ou oom oisel.  
 1060 Tant chante dolcement e bel,  
 Que cil qui vont par mer nagent,  
 Si tost com il oënt cel chant,  
 Ne se poënt mie tenir,  
 Que la nes covenge venir.  
 1065 Tant lor semble le chant suef,  
 Que il s'endorment en lor nef,  
 E quant trestuit sont endormiz,  
 Donc sont decëuz e traïz:  
 Car les sereines les occient,  
 1070 Que il ne braient ne ne crient.  
  
 La sereine, qui si ben chante,  
 Que par son chant les genz enchante,  
 Done essample a cel s chastier  
 Qui par cest mont doivent nager.  
 1075 Nos qui par cest monde passom,  
 Somes decëuz par tel son,  
 Par la gloire, par le delit  
 De cest monde, qui nos occit,  
 Quant le delit avom amors:  
 1080 La luxure, l'aise del cors,  
 E la glotonie e l'ivresce,  
 L'aise del lit e la richesce,  
 Les palefreiz, les chevaux gras,  
 La noblesce de riches dras.  
 1085 Toz jors nos treom cele part,  
 De l'avenir nos est mult tart.  
 Iloques tant nos delitom,  
 Que a force nos endormom.  
 Idonc nos occit la sereine:  
 1090 C'est li malfez, qui nos mal meine,  
 Qui tant nos fet plonger es vices,  
 Qu'il nos enclot dedenz ses lices.  
 Donc nos assalt, donc nos cort sore,  
 Donc nos occit. donc nos acore  
 1095 Als com les sereines font  
 Les mariners, qui par mer vont.  
  
 Mes il i a meint mariner,  
 Qui s'en set garder e gaiter.  
 Quant il vet siglant par la mer,  
 1100 Ses oreilles soelt estoper,  
 Qu'il n'oie le chant, quil deceit.  
 Tot ensement faire le deit  
 Li hom, qui passe par cest monde:  
 Chaste se deit tenir e monde

Fashioned in the form of woman.  
 The other part is shaped  
 Like a fish or like a bird.  
 So sweetly does she sing and well  
 That they who go sailing on the sea  
 As soon as they hear that song,  
 Cannot forbear  
 From letting their ship approach.  
 So soothing seems the song to them,  
 That in their ship they fall asleep,  
 And when they are so fast asleep,  
 Then are they deceived and trapped;  
 For the syrens kill them  
 Without their uttering shriek or cry.  
  
 The syren, who sings so sweetly  
 And enchants folk by her song  
 Affords example for instructing those  
 Who through this world must voyage.  
 We who through this world do pass  
 Are deceived by such a sound,  
 By the glamour, by the lusts  
 Of this world, which kill us  
 When we have tasted of such pleasures:  
 Wantonness and bodily ease,  
 And gluttony and drunkenness,  
 Slothfulness and riches,  
 Palfreys, fat horses,  
 The splendour of rich draperies.  
 Always we incline that way;  
 About the future we are slow to think.  
 So great is our delight in them  
 That perforce we fall asleep.  
 Thereupon the syren kills us,  
 It is the evil one who uses us so ill,  
 Who makes us plunge into vice so much,  
 That he entangles us in his snares.  
 Then he attacks us, then he falls upon us,  
 Then he kills us, then he does us to death,  
 Just as the syrens do  
 To the mariners who sail the seas.  
  
 But there is many a mariner  
 Who knows how to keep watch and ward.  
 When he goes sailing on the sea  
 He is wont to stop his ears  
 That he hear not the song which deceives.  
 Just the same must the man do,  
 Who passes through this world.  
 Chaste he must keep himself and pure

1105 E ses oreilles estoper,  
Qu'il n'oie dire ne parler  
Chose, qui en pecche le meint,  
E issi se defendent meint:  
Lor oreilles e lor elz gardent,  
1110 Que il n'oient ne qu'il n'esgardent  
Les deliz ne les vanitez,  
Par quei plusors sont enchantez.

**El bestiaire a mult a dire,**  
Bele essample e bone matire,  
1115 Bone sentence e grant raison.  
Or vos dirrom del heriçon,  
Qui est fet com un porcelet,  
Quant il alaite petitet.  
Mult par est richement arme:  
1120 Car de nature est espine,  
E quant il oit ou veit ou sent  
Pres de lui ou bestes ou gent,  
En ses armes s'enclot e serre,  
Puis ne dote gaires lor guerre.  
1125 De home ne se poet il defendre,  
Mes si beste le voleit prendre,  
Ne sai, coment le devorast,  
Que malement ne s'espinaist.  
Mult est comtes li heriçons,  
1130 Qui meint es bois e es boissons.  
Une mult grant cointise fait,  
Quant sa viande querre vait.  
Tote sa petite alëure  
S'en vait a la vigne mäure.  
1135 Tant fet qu'en la vigne est monte,  
Ou plus a de raisins plente,  
Si la crolle si durement,  
Que il cheent espesement.  
Quant a terre sont espandu  
1140 E il est aval descendu,  
Pardesus s'envoltre e enverse  
E al lonc e a la traverse,  
Tant que les raisins sont fchez  
Es bronçonez, qui sont delgez.  
1145 Quant se sent charge durement,  
Si s'en retorne belement  
A son recet, a ses foons,  
E tant com dure la saisons,  
De pomes fet il altres  
1150 Com des raisins, dont jeo vos di.  
  
Bon crestien, qui raison as,  
Ceste essample n'oblie pas,

And stop his ears,  
That he hear nothing said or spoken  
Which may lead him into sin.  
And so do many protect themselves:  
They shut their ears and their eyes,  
That they do not hear and do not see  
The evil pleasures and the vanities,  
By which many are seduced.

**The bestiary has much to say,**  
Fit examples and good matter.  
Good parables and great good sense.  
Now we shall tell you of the hedgehog,  
Which is like a little pig in shape  
When it is a tiny suckling.  
Very fully is it armed  
For by nature it has prickles;  
And when it hears or sees or feels  
Near itself either beast or folk,  
Within its armour it shuts and locks itself,  
Then fears their attack no whit.  
From man it cannot defend itself,  
But if a beast will seize it  
I know not how it could devour it  
So badly will it be pricked.  
Very knowing is the hedgehog  
Which frequents the woods and bushes.  
A very pretty trick it has  
When it goes to seek its food.  
As fast as its little footsteps can  
It goes away to the vine when ripe;  
When by its pains it has climbed the vine  
Where are grapes in great plenty,  
It shakes it so smartly  
That they fall thickly.  
When they are spread upon the ground,  
And it has got right down,  
On top of them it rolls its back  
And all along and all across  
Until the grapes are stuck  
On its prickles, which are slender.  
When it feels full laden,  
It makes its way straightly  
Back to its little ones at home.  
And as long as the season lasts,  
To the apples it does the same  
As to the grapes, of which I have told you.  
  
Good christian, thou who dost understand,  
Forget not this example,

Mes gai te tei del heriçon,  
 Del traïtor culvert larron!  
 1155 Garde ta vigne e ton pomer  
 Del suduiant larron fraiter,  
 Del malfe, qui toz jors engigne,  
 Com il ait le fruit de ta vigne!  
 Se nule bone ovraigne as faite,  
 1160 Li diables toz jors agaite,  
 Qu'il t'ait trahi e engigne  
 E bote en alcun pecche,  
 Tant qu'il puisse le fruit escorre,  
 Qui te deit aider e secorre,  
 1165 Desque li diables aprent,  
 Que la cure del mont te prent.  
 De ben boter tei enz se haste,  
 Tes fruiz espiritels degaste,  
 Ta vigne e ton pomer escot:  
 1170 Issi te guerreie il partot.

**Un oisel est, onc ne fu tex,**  
 Qui en latin a non ybex;  
 Son non en romanz ne sai mie.  
 Mes mult est de malvaise vie:  
 1175 Nul n'est plus ord ne plus malves.  
 Icest oisel habite ades  
 En rive d'estanc ou de mer,  
 Saveir, se il porreit trover  
 Ou caroigne ou peisson porri:  
 1180 Car de tel viande est norri.  
 La caroigne, que la mer gette,  
 Home ou beste, peisson ou glette,  
 Cele atent e cele mangue,  
 Quant est a la rive venue.  
 1185 En l'ewe n'ose pas entrer:  
 Car il ne set mie noër  
 Ne il ne s'en voelt entremettre  
 Ne a l'apprendre peine mettre.  
 A la rive atent fameillos:  
 1190 Tant est malves e perescos,  
 Qu'en la clere ewe n'entera  
 Ne bon peisson n'i ruangera,  
 Mes toz jors se prent a ordure;  
 De nettete n'a jamais cure.  
 1195 Bon ertestien, qui voelt apprendre,  
 Deit a ceste parole entendre,  
 E si orra que signefie  
 Cest oisel de malvese vie.  
 Il signefie veirement  
 1200 Le chaitif peccheor dolent,

But guard thee from the hedgehog,  
 From that treacherous rascal thief,  
 Guard thy vine and thine apple tree  
 From the deceiving thieving robber,  
 The evil one who ever plots  
 How he may take the fruit of thy vine.  
 If thou hast not done good work,  
 The devil always watches  
 Until he have betrayed and caught thee  
 And driven thee into sinning,  
 So that he may shake off the fruit  
 Which should help and support thee.  
 As soon as the devil learns,  
 That the cares of the world take thee  
 He hastes to drag thee fully in,  
 He wastes thy spiritual fruits,  
 He shakes thy vine and thine apple tree;  
 Thus he wars on thee all round.

**There is a bird—never was one like it—**  
 Which in latin has the name ibis.  
 Its name in romance I know not,  
 But it lives a very evil life.  
 None is more dirty or more bad.  
 This bird ever dwells  
 On the shore of pond or sea  
 To look if it can find  
 Either carrion or putrid fish,  
 For on such food it lives.  
 The carrion which the sea throws up,  
 Man or beast, shell or other fish,  
 This bird seizes and consumes  
 When it is cast upon the shore.  
 Into the water it dares not go,  
 For it knows not how to swim,  
 Nor does it wish to trouble  
 Or take pains to learn it.  
 On the shore it stays hungry,  
 So bad and lazy it is,  
 That into clear water it will not go,  
 Nor will it eat the good fish there;  
 But always feeds on rotten stuff,  
 And never cares for what is clean.

A good christian, who will learn,  
 Must to this story listen,  
 And he will hear what signifies  
 This bird of evil life.  
 It signifies in truth  
 The wretched suffering sinner

Qui en pecche se gist e meint  
 E a nule feiz ne ataint  
 As viandes espiritels,  
 Mes toz jors entent as charnels.  
 1205 E quels sont les charnels viandes?  
 Par fei, quant tu les me demandes,  
 Jeo te dirrai, que seint Pol dit,  
 E que jeo truis en son escrit;  
 Nul nel deit tenir a eschar:  
 1210 Les oevres, dit il, de la char  
 Sont apertes e mult malvaises,  
 A l'aime engendrent granz mesaises.  
 Coment ont ces oevres a non?  
 Orgoil e fornicacion,  
 1215 Coveitise, ivresce, avarice,  
 Envie, qui mult est mal vice.  
 Tels viandes use li las,  
 Qui n'ose ne qui ne voelt pas  
 En la bele clere ewe entrer  
 1220 Ne iloec aprendre a noër  
 As bons peissons, qu'il trovereit,  
 Si en la clere ewe veneit.

Bon crestien fet autrement,  
 Qui est baptizez seintement  
 1225 E renez d'ewe e d'esperit:  
 Cil entre sanz nul contredit  
 Es cleres ewes delitables,  
 C'est es mesters esperitables,  
 Ou les bones viandes sont,  
 1230 Qui raençon a l'aime font.  
 La vit Pem de viandes pures,  
 Bones e seines e sœurs.  
 Que l'apostre por verite  
 Apele joie e charite,  
 1235 Humilite e pacience,  
 Fei, chastete e continence.  
 Icestes viandes por veir  
 Font prodhome vivre e valeir.  
 Por cestes se deit l'em pener  
 1240 De ben nager, de halt noër.  
 Nos somes alsì en cest monde  
 Com en la halte mer parfonde,  
 Qui nos tormente e nos encombre:  
 Tant i a mals, qu'il n'i a nombre.  
 1245 Sagement estovreit noër  
 Qui toz les voldreit sormonter.  
 Porter li coveut une enseigne.  
 Qui el non Jesu Crist se seigne  
 E le prie devotement,

Who dwells and stays in sin  
 And attains at no time  
 To spiritual foods,  
 But is ever fixed on carnal.  
 And what are carnal foods?  
 Verily, when thou asketh me,  
 I will tell thee what saint Paul saith  
 And what I find in his writing;  
 None should hold it up to mockery.  
 The works of the flesh, saith he  
 Are manifest and very evil,  
 For the soul they create great ills.  
 How are these works called?  
 Pride and fornication,  
 Covetousness, drunkenness, greed,  
 Envy, which is a very evil vice.  
 Such foods the wretched man uses  
 Who dares not or wills not  
 Step into the fair clear water  
 Nor learn to swim in it  
 After the good fish which he would find  
 If he came into the clear water.  
  
 The good christian does otherwise  
 Who is baptized holy  
 And is renewed by water and the spirit.  
 This one enters without question  
 Into the clear and pleasant waters,  
 That is into the spiritual services  
 Where the good meats are,  
 Which bring deliverance to the soul.  
 There man lives on wholesome foods,  
 Good and clean and sure  
 Which the apostle in good truth  
 Calls joy and charity,  
 Humility and patience,  
 Faith, chastity, and temperance.  
 These foods in truth  
 Make the wise man live and flourish.  
 For them must man take pains  
 To swim strongly, to keep afloat.  
 Just so are we in this world,  
 As on the great and deep sea  
 Which plagues us and encumbers us.  
 So many ills there are, too many to number.  
 Wisely he should strive to swim  
 Who would overcome them all.  
 It behoves him to bear a mark,  
 Who in the name of Jesus Christ  
 Signs himself and prays to him devoutly.

1250	Cil noë ben e salvement. Devotement devom orer E noz meins vers le cel lever E dire a Deu od simple chere: Sire, ton volt e ta lumere	This man swims well and safely. Devoutly ought we to pray And raise our hands to heaven And say to God with simple mien: Lord, the light of thy countenance
1255	Est signee pardesus nos En ton seint signe glorios. Quant nos levom en hait noz meins, Signe de croiz i a al meins, E si nos de bon quoyer orom,	Is marked upon us In thy holy glorious sign. When we raise our hands on high The sign of the cross is there on them, And if we pray from a good heart,
1260	Tot dreit vers damne Deu noom Parmi cest monde perillos, Ou li plusors sont fameillos Des viandes espiritels N'il ne se voelent faire tels	Quite straight to the lord God we swim Through this perilous world Where the most part are hungry For lack of spiritual foods. They do not want to do so,
1265	Ne mettre peine ne entente, Que il sachent par la tormente De cest malves monde noër. Por ceo les covent enfondrer. Por Deu, seignors, car apenom,	Or to take trouble or thought How to know through the storms Of this wicked world to swim. Therefore it is meet that they founder. For God's sake, my masters, then let us learn
1270	En quel guise noër devom! A Deu, qui est dolz e humeins, Devom lever e quoyers e meins. C'est l'enseigne, que nos portom, Par quei vers damne Deu noom.	In what way we ought to swim. To God who is gentle and kind, We must lift both hearts and hands. That is the sign which we bear, By which to the lord God we swim.
1275	Si la nef ne dresçout sa veile, Quant el sigle al curs de l'esteile, El ne porreit mie sigler. L'oiseil ne porreit pas voler, Se il ses eles n'estendeit.	If the ship spread not its sail, When it sails a course by the star It would not be able to sail. The bird could not fly If it did not spread its wings.
1280	Si la lune ne descovreit Ses cors, orbe serreit toz dis. Quant li fiz d'Israel jadis Contre Amalech se combateient, A totes les hores venqueient,	If the moon displayed not Its horns, it would be always dark. When the children of Israel of old Fought against Amalek, At all times they conquered
1285	Que Moÿses ses meins levout, E si tost coin il les bessout, Li Jueu erent le peor. Por ceo fet mult riche labor Qui cest monde poet trespasser,	When Moses lifted up his hands. And as often as he lowered them Were the Jews worsted. And so there is abundant work for him Who can pass through this world
1290	Si que ne l'estoce enfondrer Es adversitez, qui granz sont, Qui traient home el val parfont. Mult est malves qui ci n'apprent A noër espiritement	Without being perforce engulfed In adversities which are great, Which drag man down to the deep vale. Very bad is he who fails to learn To swim spiritually
1295	E des charnels viandes vit: Od les morz nioert sanz contredit, Si come dit en l'evangire Jesu Crist, nostre verai sire:	And who lives on carnal foods. With the dead he dies most certainly. As Jesus Christ, our real master, Saith in the gospel:

1300 Lessez les morz les morz covrir,  
Enterrer e ensevelir.  
E Deu, qui toz les bons gouverne,  
Seit nostre veile e nostre verne,  
Que nos par cest monde present  
Puissem passer sèurement  
1305 A no, que nos ne perissom,  
Mes a dreit port venir puissem!

**Assez avez oï fabler,**  
Coment Renart soleit embler  
Des gelines Costeins de Noës.  
1310 Volenters fist trosser ses joës  
Li gopiz en totes saisons  
De gelines e de chapons.  
Tot ades vit de roberie,  
De larrecin, de tricherie;  
1315 Tant est malves e deputaire.  
Oëz qu'en dit le bestiaire:  
Li gopiz est mult artillos;  
Quant il est alques fameillos  
E il ne set, ou querre preie,  
1320 Por la feim, qui forment l'aspreie,  
S'en vet a une ruge terre.  
La s'envoltre e toeille e merre,  
Tant qu'il ressemble tot sanglent.  
Puis s'en vet cocher belement  
1325 En une place descoverte,  
Qui est a ces oisels aperte.  
Dedenz son cors retent s'aleine,  
Si a la pance dure e pleine.  
Li culverz, qui tant set de bule,  
1330 Met la langue hors de sa gule,  
Les elz clot, des denz reschigne  
E si feiterement engigne  
Les oisels, qui gesir le veient:  
Car certainement mort le creient.  
1335 Donc descendent, por lui beccher.  
Mes quant il les sent aprocher  
Pres de ses denz e il veit aise,  
Si felonessement les baise,  
Quant en sa gule sont enclos,  
1340 Que tot devore e char e os.  
  
Cest gopil, qui tant set de fart.  
Que nos apelom ci Renart,  
Signefie le mal gopil,  
Qui le poeple met en eissil.  
1345 C'est li malfez, qui nos guerreie,  
Chescun jor vent sor nos en preie.

Let the dead cover up their dead,  
Bury and entomb them.  
And God, who governs all the good,  
Knows our sail and our mast,  
How we through this present world  
Shall be able to pass safely  
By swimming, that we perish not,  
But may reach the right port.

**You have often heard the story**  
How Reynard is wont to steal  
The poultry of Constant de Nowes.  
Eagerly does he stuff his cheeks  
The fox—at all times—  
With fowls and with capons.  
At all times he lives by robbery,  
By thieving, by trickery;  
So wicked and evil-natured is he.  
Hear what the bestiary says about it:  
The fox is full of tricks;  
When he is getting hungry  
And does not know where to look for prey,  
Through the hunger which sore oppresses him  
He goes to where the earth is red;  
There he rolls and wallows and smears himself,  
Until he looks as if all bloody.  
Then he goes to lie down slyly  
In a place quite open  
And free to these birds.  
Within his body he holds his breath,  
So keeps his stomach firm and full.  
The rascal who knows so many tricks  
Puts out his tongue out of his mouth,  
Shuts his eyes and shows his teeth,  
And in such wise deceives  
The birds who see him lying;  
For certainly they think him dead.  
Then they come down for to peck him,  
But when he feels them coming near,  
Close to his teeth, and he sees his chance,  
Then shamelessly he snaps them up;  
When in his jaws they are entrapped  
All is devoured both flesh and bone.  
  
The fox who knows pretence so well,  
And which we here call Reynard  
Signifies the bad fox  
Who drives people to destruction.  
He is the evil one, who wars against us,  
Each day he comes to prey on us.

A cels qui vivent charnelment,  
 Se feint tot mort certainement.  
 Por ceo que plus pres les atraie.  
 1350 Mes il n'i a point de manaie:  
 Puisqu'il les tent en son goitron,  
 Tost les devore cel larron  
 Come li gopiz fet l'oisel,  
 Quant le sent pres de son musel.  
 1355 Mes il i a oisels plusors.  
 Qui les guisches e les trestors  
 Del gopil aparceivent ben,  
 Si n'i descendreient por ren.  
 Li jais i descent e la pie  
 1360 E meint, qui ne se sevent mie  
 De la grant traïson gaiter,  
 Leger sont mult a engigner.  
 De fole gent est altresì:  
 Tant sont apris e adenti  
 1365 A lecherie, a malvaiste,  
 Que ja n'en serront chastie,  
 Jusqu'il cheent es denz Renart.  
 Idonc vent le chastier tart.  
 Li sages, qui ben aparceit  
 1370 Le larron, qui les fols deceit,  
 Se tret ensus des lecheries,  
 Des ivresces, des beveries,  
 Dont les granz ordures norrissent,  
 Que le cors e l'aime i perissent.  
 1375 **Or vos dirrai de l'unicorne,**  
 Beste, qui n'a que une corne  
 Enz el mileu del front posee.  
 Iceste beste est si osee,  
 Si combatanz e si hardie,  
 1380 Qu'as olifanz prent aatie.  
 La plus egre beste est del mont  
 De totes celes qui i sont.  
 Ben se combat od l'olifant.  
 Tant a le pe dur e trenchant  
 1385 E l'ongle del pe si agu,  
 Que ren n'en poet estre feru,  
 Qu'ele ne perce e qu'ei ne fende,  
 N'a pas poeir que s'en defende  
 Li olifanz, quant le requert:  
 1390 Car desoz le centre le fert  
 Del pe trenchant coin alemele  
 Si forment, que tot l'esboële.  
 Ceste beste est de tel vigor,  
 Qu'ele ne creint nul veneor.

To those who live carnally,  
 He really feigns to be quite dead  
 So that he may draw them nearer;  
 But there is no mercy at all.  
 Once he has them in his jaws,  
 This thief devours them all  
 Like the fox does the bird  
 When he feels it close to his mouth.  
 But there are divers birds  
 Who the snares and the tricks  
 Of the fox perceive well;  
 They will not come down for anything.  
 The jay comes down there and the magpie  
 And many who know not how  
 To look for the great fraud.  
 Easy are many of them to ensnare.  
 With foolish people it is just the same,  
 So much are they accustomed to and given up  
 To lechery, to evil living,  
 That they will not be punished for it  
 Until they fall into Reynard's teeth;  
 Then there comes the punisher at last.  
 The wise man who well perceives  
 The thief who deceives the foolish,  
 Withdraws himself from lecheries,  
 From drunkenness, from drinking bouts,  
 On which most filthy habits feed,  
 So that body and soul perish together.

**Now I shall tell you of the unicorn,**  
 A beast which has but one horn  
 Set in the middle of its forehead.  
 This beast is so daring,  
 So pugnacious and so bold,  
 That it picks quarrels with the elephant.  
 It is the fiercest beast in the world  
 Of all those which are in it.  
 It fights with the elephant and wins.  
 Its weapon is so strong and piercing,  
 And the point of its weapon so sharp  
 That nothing can be struck  
 Without being pierced and ripped,  
 Nor can the elephant defend  
 Itself when it meets it.  
 For under its belly it strikes it  
 With its weapon sharp as a blade  
 So hard that it is ripped right open.  
 This beast has such strength  
 That it fears no hunter.

1395 Cil qui la voelent enlacer,  
 La vont primes por espier,  
 Quant ele est en deduit alee  
 Ou en montaigne ou en valee.  
 Quant il ont trove son convers  
 1400 E tresben avise ses mers,  
 Si vont por une dameisele,  
 Qu'il sevent ben que est pucele.  
 Puis la font seeir e attendre  
 Al recet, por la beste prendre.  
 1405 Quant l'unicorne est revenue  
 E a la pucele vëue,  
 Dreit a li vent demeintenant,  
 Si s'umilie en son devant,  
 E la dameisele la prent  
 1410 Come cil qui a li se rent.  
 Od la pucele jue tant,  
 Qu'endormie est en son devant.  
 Atant saillent cil qui l'espient:  
 Iloec la pernent, si la lient.  
 1415 Puis la meinent devant le rei  
 Tot a force e a grant desrei.  
  
 Iceste merveillose beste,  
 Qui une corne a en la teste,  
 Signefie nostre seignor,  
 1420 Jesu Crist, nostre salveor:  
 C'est l'unicorne espiritel,  
 Qui en la virgne prist ostel,  
 Qui tant est de grant dignite.  
 En ceste prist humanite,  
 1425 Par unt al monde s'aparut.  
 Son poeple mie ne le crut  
 Des Jueus, ainceis l'espierent,  
 Tant qu'il le pristrent e lierent.  
 Devant Pilate le menerent  
 1430 E illoec a mort le dampnerent.  
 Cele corne veraïement,  
 Que la beste a tant sulement  
 Signefie l'umanite,  
 Si com Deu dist par verite  
 1435 En l'evangile aperte e clere:  
 Nos somes un, jeo e mon pere.  
 E li bons prestres Zacharie,  
 Ainz que Deu nasquist de Marie,  
 Dist que en la meson Davi,  
 1440 Son bon enfant, son bon ami,  
 Drescereit damne Deu son cor.  
 E Deu meïsmes dist uncor  
 Par Davi, qui ceo crie e corne:

They that would ensnare it  
 Go there first to spy  
 When it is gone to disport itself  
 Either on mountain or in valley.  
 When they have found its haunt  
 And have well marked its footprints,  
 They go for a young girl,  
 Whom they know well to be virgin.  
 Then they make her sit and wait  
 At its lair, for to capture the beast.  
 When the unicorn is come back  
 And has seen the damsel,  
 Straight to her it comes at once;  
 In her lap it crouches down  
 And the girl clasps it  
 Like one submitting to her.  
 With the girl it sports so much,  
 That in her lap it falls asleep.  
 Those who are spying at once rush out:  
 There they take it and bind it.  
 Then they drive it before the king  
 By force and despite its struggles.  
  
 This wonderful beast,  
 Which has one horn on its head,  
 Signifies our lord,  
 Jesus Christ, our saviour,  
 He is the spiritual unicorn,  
 Who took up in the virgin his abode,  
 Who is so especially worthy.  
 In her he assumed his manhood,  
 In which he appeared to the world.  
 His people of the Jews  
 Believed him not, but spied on him,  
 And then took him and bound him.  
 Before Pilate they led him  
 And there condemned him to death.  
 That horn verily,  
 Which the beast has—the only one—  
 Signifies his manhood,  
 As God saith in truth  
 In the gospel plain and clear:  
 We are one—I and my father.  
 And the good priest Zacharias,  
 Before that God was born of Mary,  
 Saith that in the house of David,  
 His good child, his well-beloved,  
 The lord God should exalt his horn.  
 And God himself saith further  
 By David, who cries with trumpet voice:



Si com li cors de l'unicorne  
 1445 Serra li mens cors eslialce.  
 Si com Deu l'out covenance,  
 Fu ceste parole acomplie  
 E le dit en la prophecie,  
 Quant Jesu Crist fu corone  
 1450 E en la vraie croiz pene.  
 La grant egresce signefie,  
 Dont ceste beste est raemplie,  
 Ceo que onc ne porent saveir  
 Les Poëstz del cel por veir,  
 1455 Throne ne Dominacion  
 L'oeuvre de l'incarnacion.  
 Onques n'en sout veie ne sente  
 Li diables, qui grant entente  
 Mist al saveir e sotilla,  
 1460 Ainz ne sout, coment ceo ala.  
 Mult fist Deu grant humilite,  
 Quant por nos prist humanite,  
 Si com il meïsmes le dit  
 En l'evangile, ou est escrit:  
 1465 De mei, ceo dist Deus, apernez,  
 Que entre vos ici veez.  
 Come jeo sui suef e dolz,  
 Hoemble de quoe ne mie estolz.  
 Sul par la volente del pere  
 1470 Passa Deus par la virgne mere  
 E la parole fu char faite.  
 Que virginite n'i out fraite,  
 E habita en nos meïsmes,  
 Si que sa grant gloire veïsmes  
 1475 Come del verai engendre  
 Plein de grace e de verite.

**Une beste est, qui a non bevre,**  
 Un poi, ceo quit, greignor de levre,  
 Mult sueve e durement sage  
 1480 N'est pas privee, einz est salvage,  
 Si fet l'eni de ses genitaires  
 Mescines a plusors affaires.  
 Quant de veneor est chace  
 E de si tres pres enchalce,  
 1485 Qu'il veit qu'il ne poet eschaper,  
 Donc se haste de tost colper  
 Ices membres tot a un mors.  
 En tel guise raient son cors.  
 Tant li a Deu done de grace,  
 1490 Que ben set, porquoi l'ein le chace.  
 Issi se raient cherement

Like the horn of the unicorn  
 Shall my horn be exalted,  
 As God had covenanted  
 Was this saying fulfilled  
 And the word in the prophecy,  
 When Jesus Christ was crowned  
 And on the true cross suffered.  
 The savage nature signifies—  
 With which this beast is filled—  
 What the powers of heaven  
 Could never really know,  
 Neither thrones nor dominations  
 The work of the incarnation.  
 He never knew its course or path—  
 The devil—who took great pains  
 To know and schemed,  
 But he knew not how that went.  
 What great humility God showed,  
 When he took human form for us,  
 As he himself saith  
 In the gospel where it is written:  
 Learn of me, so saith God,  
 Whom you see among you here  
 How meek and gentle I am,  
 Humble of heart and free from pride.  
 Only by the will of the father  
 Was God born of a virgin mother  
 And the word was made flesh—  
 Without her virginity being broken—  
 And dwelt among us,  
 So that we beheld his great glory  
 As of the true begotten  
 Full of grace and truth.

**There is a beast which is named beaver,**  
 A little bigger than a hare, 'tis thought,  
 Very gentle and exceeding wise.  
 It is not domestic, but is wild,  
 And they make of its genitals  
 Medicines for many purposes.  
 When it is pursued by the hunter,  
 And he has so nearly reached it  
 That it sees that it cannot escape,  
 Then it hastens to cut right off  
 Those members all at one bite.  
 In such wise it ransoms its body.  
 So great favour has God given it,  
 That it knows well why man pursues it.  
 So it preserves itself full dearly

Par ses membres demeinement.  
 Devant le veneor les laisse,  
 E li veneres ne s'eslaises  
 1495 Ne vent avant, ainz le guerpist:  
 Car il a donc ceo que il quist.  
 En tel guise raient sa vie  
 E son cors par l'une partie.  
 E si altre feiz aveneit,  
 1500 Que il refust en tel destreit  
 E que veneor le chaçast,  
 Que ses membres i esperast,  
 Quant vendreit a l'estreit bosoing,  
 Qu'il ne porreit fuir plus loing,  
 1505 Trestot envers se tornereit  
 E al veneor mustereit,  
 Que ren n'i a de son espeir.  
 Issi le fereit remaneir.  
  
 Altresi oevrent finement  
 1510 Les sages homes sagement,  
 Quant les enchalce li veneres,  
 Li suduianz, li culverz leres,  
 Qui tot ades lor mal porchace.  
 Mes il li gettent en la face  
 1515 Ceo qui soen est, ceo est a dire:  
 Fornieacion e avoltire,  
 Tote manere de pecche.  
 Quant home a ceo de sei trenche  
 E gete al diable el vis,  
 1520 Cil le guerpist, jeol vos plevis.  
 Quant veit, qu'il n'i a ren del soen,  
 Si ne li semble mie boen.  
 Quant prodhom se veit enchalcer  
 Al diable, donc deit trancher  
 1525 De sei toz vices e toz mais.  
 Issi poet ben eschaper sais.  
  
 A l'essample de ceste beste  
 Li apostre nos amoneste,  
 Que servage e trëu rendom  
 1530 A celui a qui le devom  
 E la ou nos devom honor,  
 Rendom od creme e od amor.  
 Por verite devom entendre,  
 Que al diable devom rendre  
 1535 Primes ceo que nos li devom.  
 E quei? Que nos le reniom  
 E totes ses oevres a plein.  
 Issi serrom hors de sa mein.  
 Peccheor, qui sages serreit,

And fitly through its members.  
 In front of the hunter it leaves them,  
 And the hunter slackens speed  
 And comes no farther, but leaves it alone;  
 For he has got then what he sought.  
 In such wise it saves its life  
 And its body by the one part.  
 And if it chanced another time  
 That it found itself in such straits  
 And that a hunter pursued it  
 In the hope that its members were there,  
 When it is so hard pressed  
 That it cannot run farther,  
 Right round it would turn itself  
 And display to the hunter  
 That there is nothing there to hope for;  
 So will it make him desist.

Just the same do wise men do,  
 Wisely and prudently,  
 When the hunter follows them close,  
 The subtil cunning thief  
 Who ever seeks for their undoing.  
 But they throw in front of him  
 That which is his, that is to say:  
 Fornication and adultery,  
 All kinds of sin.  
 When man has cut that off from him  
 And thrown it in the devil's face,  
 Then he leaves him I do assure you.  
 When he sees there is nothing there of his,  
 He appears to him to be no good.  
 When the good man sees himself pursued  
 By the devil, then must he cut off  
 From himself all vices and all faults.  
 Thus can he escape quite safely.

By the example of this beast  
 The apostle admonishes us  
 That we should render service and tribute  
 To him to whom we owe it,  
 And there where we have honour to pay  
 Let us render it with fear and love.  
 Verily must we understand  
 That we must first give up  
 That which we owe to the devil.  
 And what is that? That we renounce him  
 And all his works completely;  
 So shall we be out of his clutches.  
 The sinner who would be wise

1540 En tel guise se gardereit  
 E se raiebreit vers celui  
 Qui toz jors brace son ennui.  
 Les oevres, qui la char delitent,  
 Ou toz mais creissent e habitent,  
 1545 Trenche de sei cil qui est sage.  
 Quant il lui a icel trevage  
 Rendu come ceo qui soen est,  
 Come sa preie e son conquest,  
 E lui gete enmi sa face,  
 1550 Cil remaint e en pert sa trace,  
 Que il ne sent ne ne veit mie,  
 Puisque il entre en seinte vie.  
 Idonc troeve il les fruiz itels  
 Com jeo dis einz, espiritels,  
 1555 Fei, patience, humilite,  
 Contenance e benigneite,  
 E charite e joie e pais,  
 Joie, qui ne faldra jamais.  
 Iceo troeve il enmi sa face,  
 1560 Par unt il a perdu sa trace.  
 De lui ne set ne vent ne voie  
 Ne dreiz n'est qu'il sache de joie.  
 E Deu, qui de joie est seignor,  
 Nos meint a la joie greignor,  
 1565 Qui ne fine ne n'est muable,  
 Ainz dure toz jors pardurable.

**Mult a a dire e a retraire**

Es essamples del bestiaire,  
 Qui sont de bestes e d'oisels.  
 1570 Profitables e bons e bels  
 Est li livres: car il enseigne.  
 En quel guise le mal remaigne,  
 E la veie, que deit tenir  
 Cil qui a Deu voelt revenir.  
 1575 Le bestiaire nos recorde  
 D'une beste malvaie e orde,  
 Qui a non hyaine en gregeis.  
 Son non ne sai pas en franceis.  
 Mes la lei devee e defent,  
 1580 Que l'em ne la manguce nent  
 Ne chose qui li seit semblable.  
 Car el n'est raie covenable,  
 Ainz est tote malvaie e orz:  
 Car ele manguë les morz  
 1585 E en lor sepulcres habite.  
 Trestoz cels devore e sobite  
 A qui ele poet avenir.

In such way should guard himself  
 And ransom himself from him  
 Who ever strives for his undoing.  
 The works which please the flesh,  
 In which all evils grow and dwell,  
 He who is wise cuts off from him.  
 When he has rendered to him  
 This tribute as that which is his,  
 As his prey and his booty,  
 And has thrown it in his face,  
 Then that one stops and loses his track,  
 Which he no longer marks nor sees,  
 Since he adopts the holy life.  
 There he finds such spiritual fruits  
 As I have told you about already,  
 Faith, patience, humility,  
 Abstinence and loving-kindness,  
 And charity and joy and peace,  
 Joy which shall never fail.  
 So he finds before his face  
 That whereby he has lost his track.  
 Of him he has no smell or trace,  
 And 'tis not right that he gets joy of it.  
 And God, who of joy is master,  
 Brings us to the greater joy,  
 Which has no end and is unchangeable,  
 But endures always and for aye.

**There is much to say and to relate**

About the examples of the bestiary,  
 Which are of beasts and of birds.  
 Profitable and good and excellent  
 Is the book; for it teaches  
 In what form evil still exists  
 And the way which he should go  
 Who wills to return to God.  
 The bestiary reminds us  
 Of a beast which is bad and filthy  
 And has the name hyena in greek.  
 Its name in french I do not know.  
 But the law prohibits and forbids  
 That man eat of it at all  
 Nor thing which is like it;  
 For it is not suitable,  
 But is all bad and foul.  
 For it feeds on the dead,  
 And dwells among the graves.  
 It devours and gobbles up  
 All those which it can get at,

Por ceo s'en deit l'em atener.  
 De ces te beste issi haïe  
 1590 Dist li prophetes Jeremie:  
 La fosse al hyaine salvage  
 Ceo est, dist il, mon heritage.  
 Une perre porte en son oil  
 Ceste beste, dont dire voil:  
 1595 Qui soz sa langue la tendreit,  
 L'em dit, que il devinereit  
 Les choses, qui a venir sont  
 Des aventures de cest mont.  
 Iceste beste a deus natures,  
 1600 Qui si habite es sepultures.  
 Ja de teles parler n'orreiz.  
 L'em dit, que vos la trovereiz  
 Une feiz madle, altre femele  
 E od traianz e od mamele.  
 1605 Grant merveille est estrangement,  
 Que si change son vestement.  
  
 Ceste beste, ne dotez mie,  
 Les fiz Israel signefie,  
 Qui ben crurent premerement  
 1610 El vrai pere omnipotent  
 E lealment a lui se tindrent,  
 Mes apres femeles devindrent.  
 Quant il furent suef norri  
 E as delices adenti,  
 1615 A la char e a la luxure,  
 Plus n'orent de damne Deu cure,  
 Ainz le guerpirent, si folerent,  
 Si que les idles aorerent.  
  
 Mult i a gent, si com mei semble,  
 1620 Qui a ceste beste resemble,  
 Si vos dirrai, quels genz ceo sont.  
 Trop grant plente en a el mont,  
 Qui ne sont madles ne femeles:  
 En dit, en oevre sont jumeles,  
 1625 Doubles e feinz e non creables  
 Ne en nul leu ne sont estables.  
 De cels parole Salomons,  
 Qui fist le livre des sermons:  
 Home doble, fais e feignant,  
 1630 Qui nule ore n'est parmainant  
 En ren qu'il face ne qu'il die,  
 Mult par est de malvaise vie;  
 Servir voelt a vos e a mei,  
 A nul de nos ne porte fei.  
 1635 Jesu Crist, nostre vrai sire,

Therefore must one keep away from it.  
 About this beast so hated  
 Saith the prophet Jeremiah:  
 The den of the hyena in the wood  
 This is, he saith, my heritage.  
 This beast carries in its eye  
 A stone of which I want to say:  
 Whoever under his tongue should keep it,  
 They say that he should foretell  
 Things which are to happen  
 In the events of this world.  
 This beast has two natures,  
 Which has its dwelling thus in graves.  
 But of this ye will not hear speak.  
 They say, that ye will find it  
 At one time male, at other female  
 With breasts and with teats,  
 A most strange and wonderful thing  
 So to change its externals.  
  
 This beast—doubt it not—  
 Denotes the children of Israel,  
 Who at first firmly believed  
 In the true father omnipotent  
 And held to him loyally,  
 But afterwards became as females.  
 When they partook of delicate foods  
 And gave themselves up to pleasures,  
 To the flesh and to luxury  
 No more did they regard the lord God,  
 But forsook him and were so foolish  
 That they worshipped idols.  
  
 Many are the folk, it seemeth to me,  
 Who are like to this beast;  
 I shall tell you what people they are.  
 Far too many there are in the world  
 Who are neither male nor female,  
 In a word, in practice they are twins,  
 Double-minded and weak and lying;  
 Nor in any way are they stable.  
 Of these is the word of Solomon,  
 Who made the book of sermons:  
 A double-minded man, false and dissembling,  
 Who at no time is constant  
 In anything which he does or says,  
 His is a very evil life.  
 He desires to serve both you and me  
 But will not keep faith with any.  
 Jesus Christ, our true master,

Dist tel parole en l'evangire:  
 Nuls hom a deus seignors servir  
 Ne poet suffire ne furnir;  
 L'un amera, l'autre harra.  
 1640 Ceo que Deu dist, ja ne faldra.  
 L'un voldra despise e haïr  
 E l'autre amer e sustenir.

**Une manere est de serpent,**  
 Qui en ewe a habitement:  
 1645 Idrus a non, si est mult sage:  
 Car mult set ben faire damage  
 Al cocadrille, qu'ele het;  
 Sagement engigner le set.  
 Ben vos dirrai avant, coment  
 1650 Ceste l'engigne cointement.  
 Le cocadrille est beste fere  
 E meint ades en la rivere  
 De cel fluive, qui Nil a non.  
 Boef ressemble alques de façon;  
 1655 Vint cutes a ben de lonc,  
 Si est si gros com fust d'un tronc.  
 Quatre pez a e ongles granz  
 E denz aguës e trenchanz.  
 De ceo est il mult ben arme.  
 1660 Tant a le quir dur e serre,  
 Que grant cols de perre cornue  
 Ne prise un ramet de ceguë.  
 Onques hom tel beste ne vit:  
 Car en terre e en ewe vit:  
 1665 La nuit se tent en ewe enclos  
 E a terre a le jor repos.  
 S'il home rencontre e il le veint,  
 Manguë le, ren n'en remeint;  
 Mes toz jors puis apres le plore,  
 1670 Tantdis coin en vie demore.  
 De ceste sule beste avent,  
 Que les gencives desoz tent  
 Tot en pes, quant ele manguë  
 E iceles desus remue.  
 1675 Ceste nature n'est donee  
 A autre creature nee.  
 De sa coane veirement  
 Soleit l'em faire un oignement.  
 Les velles femmes s'en oignent:  
 1680 Par cel oignement s'estendeient  
 Les fronces del vis e del front,  
 E plusors uncore le font.  
 Mes puisque la suor sorvent,

Speaks this word in the gospel:  
 No man can serve two masters  
 Nor fulfil their commands;  
 He will love the one, and hate the other.  
 What God says shall never fail:  
 The one he will despise and hate  
 And the other love and support.

**There is a kind of serpent**  
 Which has its abode in water.  
 Hydrus is its name, it is very wise,  
 For it knows full well how to do hurt  
 To the crocodile which it hates;  
 It knows how to entrap it cunningly.  
 I shall tell you first clearly  
 How this creature entraps it so cleverly.  
 The crocodile is a wild beast  
 And dwells ever on the bank  
 Of that river which is named Nile.  
 It is like an ox in some respects.  
 It is full twenty cubits long,  
 And is as stout as the trunk of a tree.  
 Four feet it has and great claws  
 And teeth sharp and cutting.  
 With these it is fully armed.  
 So hard and firm is its skin  
 That it cares not a sprig of hemlock  
 For the blows of big sharp stones.  
 No man ever saw such a beast!  
 For it lives on land and in water;  
 By night it keeps sunk in water  
 And by day rests on land.  
 If it meets a man and overcomes him  
 It eats him and nothing is left.  
 But always thereafter weeps for him  
 So long as it remains alive.  
 To this beast alone it happens  
 That it holds its lower jaw  
 All quite still when it eats  
 And moves the one above.  
 This nature is not given  
 To any other creature born.  
 Of its dung truly  
 They are wont to make an ointment.  
 Old women smear themselves with it;  
 With this ointment may be smoothed  
 Wrinkles on the face and forehead,  
 And many do it still.  
 But when the sweat runs down,

Sachez, que nul preu ne lor tent.  
 1685 L'autre beste, que vos ai dite,  
 Qui toz jors en ewe habite,  
 Het le cocadrille de mort  
 E il li, si n'a mie tort.  
 Mult s'entreheent de haïne,  
 1690 Mes cele set plus de trahine.  
 Quant a terre le veit dormir  
 E en dormant la gule ovrir,  
 En tai e en limon se moille  
 E iloec se devoltre e soille,  
 1695 Por estre plus escolurable.  
 Puis vet tot dreit a cel diable:  
 Tresparmi sa gule se lance  
 E cil la transglote en sa pance.  
 El n'i a mie este grant pece,  
 1700 Qu'ele li derompt e depece  
 Del ventre totes les entrailles  
 E les boëls e les corailles.  
 Issue quert delivrenient,  
 Si s'en ist hors tot salvement  
 1705 E cil moert: car morir l'estoet,  
 Que des plaies garir ne poet.  
  
 Ici poet l'em essample prendre  
 E grant signefiance aprendre.  
 Li cocadrilles signefie  
 1710 Mort e enfer, n'en dotez mie.  
 Altresi come la serpent,  
 Dont jeo vos dis premerement,  
 Occit le cocadrille e tue  
 E salvement porchace issue,  
 1715 Fist nostre seignor Jesu Crist:  
 Car en la char, qu'il por nos prist,  
 Si sagement s'envolupa,  
 Que mort e enfer estrangla.  
 D'iloec osta ses bons amis,  
 1720 Qui renies i erent chaitis,  
 Si come li prophetes dist,  
 Quant il prophetiza de Crist:  
 tu mort, jeo serraï ta mort.  
 Deu, qui est nostre bon confort,  
 1725 Destruist nostre mort en morant,  
 Dont toz jors ert enfer plorant.  
 En resordant rapareilla  
 Nostre vie, qui ne faldra.

**Bestes sont mult foles e sages:**

1730 Des privees e des salvages  
 Vos tenez por coart le levre

Know that it is no more use to them.  
 The other beast of which I told you,  
 Which lives always in the water,  
 Hates the crocodile with deadly hate,  
 And it the other and no mistake.  
 Much is it filled with hatred,  
 But the other is much more cunning.  
 When on land it sees it sleeping  
 And when sleeping to open its jaws,  
 In mud and slime it bathes,  
 And rolls in it and smears itself  
 For to be more slippery.  
 Then it goes straight for that devil,  
 Down its throat it darts and is  
 Swallowed by it into its belly.  
 And there is no great time passed  
 Before it bursts it open and tears  
 All the entrails of its belly  
 And its bowels and intestines.  
 It seeks a way out quickly,  
 And so gets out quite safely.  
 And the other dies; for die it must,  
 For of its wounds it cannot recover.

Here may we a lesson take  
 And a great meaning learn.  
 The crocodile signifies  
 Death and hell; doubt it not at all.  
 Just as the serpent  
 Of which I told you at first  
 Attacks and kills the crocodile  
 And finds a way out safely,  
 So did our lord Jesus Christ;  
 For in the flesh which he took for us,  
 So wisely he wrapped himself,  
 That he choked death and hell.  
 Thence he brought forth his good friends,  
 Who were held captive there,  
 As the prophet said  
 When he prophesied of Christ:  
 O death, I shall be thy death.  
 God who is our great consolation,  
 Destroyed death for us when dying  
 For which is hell ever lamenting.  
 By his resurrection he restored  
 Life to us which shall not fail.

**Beasts there are very foolish and wise;**

Some are domestic and some wild.  
 Ye hold the hare for timid

E por fole tenez la chevre.  
 Mes de la chevre neporquant  
 Avom essample conoissant.  
 1735 Buc a non le madle en romanz.  
 Barbes ont longues e pendanz  
 E cornes longues e aguës  
 E les pels durement velues.  
 En granz nionz meinent volenters,  
 1740 Es plus halz e es plus pleners;  
 Es valees d'entor se paissent  
 E se norrissent e engraissent.  
 Mult de clere vëue sont:  
 Quant sont la sus en som le mont,  
 1745 Mult veient loing e halt e cler.  
 Quant il veient gent trespasser,  
 Demeintenant por veir savront,  
 Se veneor ou errant sont.  
 Ceste beste, qui si cler veit  
 1750 E qui de si loing aparceit  
 Son enemî, qui mal li quert,  
 A l'essample de Deu afert:  
 Car Deu, qui est sires del mont,  
 Qui meint la sus el plus hait mont,  
 1755 De loing esgarde e veit e sent  
 Quantque font ça e la la gent.  
 Tot veit e sent come veir sire,  
 Quantque l'em poet penser e dire:  
 Ainz que el quœr seit concœu,  
 1760 Le penser a il conœu.  
 Es eglises, qui suef sont  
 Establies parmi cest mont,  
 Est Deu pœuz e abevrez  
 Des alruosnes, des charitez,  
 1765 Que font li crestien feeil,  
 Qui ont sa grace e son conseil.  
 Quant nos por l'amor Deu paissom  
 Un povre ou quant le revestom,  
 Quant en chartre le visitom,  
 1770 En maladie ou en prison,  
 Quant le pelerin herbergom,  
 Qui n'a ne bordel ne maison,  
 A Deu le fesom purement,  
 Qui le receit benignement:  
 1775 Car si com il meïsmes dit  
 En l'evangile, ou est escrit:  
 Quant tot le mont juger vendra,  
 A cels de destre part dirra:  
 Venez, les benurez mon pere,  
 1780 En sa meson e halte e clere,

And ye hold the goat for foolish.  
 But in the goat notwithstanding  
 We have an example to be noted.  
 Buc the male is named in romance.  
 Beards they have long and hanging  
 And horns long and sharp,  
 And their skins exceeding hairy.  
 In the high mountains they love to stay  
 In the highest and steepest;  
 In the valleys near they feed  
 And eat their fill and grow fat.  
 Very keen-sighted are they;  
 When they are up on the mountain top,  
 Very far they see and high and clear.  
 When they see folk moving,  
 At once they can recognize  
 Whether they are hunters or wayfarers.  
 This beast which sees so clearly  
 And which from so far perceives  
 Its enemy who seeks its hurt,  
 Has provided a symbol of God;  
 For God, who is lord of the world  
 And dwells above the highest mountains,  
 From far regards, perceives, and feels  
 Whatever here and there folk do.  
 As true lord he sees and feels  
 All whatever man may think and say.  
 Before that the heart has conceived,  
 The thought has he known.  
 In the churches which are happily  
 Established throughout this world  
 Is God fed and watered  
 By the alms and acts of charity  
 Which faithful christians do,  
 Who have his grace and counsel.  
 When we for love of God  
 Feed a poor man or when we clothe him,  
 When we visit him in prison,  
 In sickness or confinement,  
 When we harbour the pilgrim  
 Who has neither shelter nor house,  
 For God we do it simply,  
 Who receives it with his blessing;  
 For as he saith himself  
 In the gospel, where it is written:  
 When he shall come to judge all people,  
 To those on his right hand he will say:  
 Come ye blessed of my father,  
 In this mansion high and light,

Qui apareillee vos fu,  
 Ainz que home fust concëu.  
 Quant nu e povre me veïstes,  
 Donc me pëustes e vestistes.  
 1785 Quant jeo oi sei, vos m'enbevrastes  
 E en chartre me visitastes.  
 Por ceo en avez deservie  
 Joie de pardurable vie.  
 Ceste bone parole orront  
 1790 Cil qui de destre part serront.  
 Cil de la senestre partie  
 Itel pramesse n'orront mie,  
 Ainceis orront tot le contraire:  
 Deu lor dirra: Gent demalaire,  
 1795 Alez el feu, qui ne faldra,  
 Mes pardurablement durra!  
 One n'ëustes pite de mei,  
 Quant jeo aveie feim e sei,  
 Ne me volsistes herberger  
 1800 Ne doner beivre ne manger.  
 Visiter ne ensevelir  
 Ne mei chalcer ne revestir.  
 Donc dirront cil: Sire, merci,  
 Quant vos veïsmes nos issi?  
 1805 Deu respondra a la parsome:  
 Quant vos veïstes le povre home  
 Ou povre femme ou orphanin  
 Ou le mesaise pelerin,  
 Qui por m'amor quereit del ben,  
 1810 E vos ne lui feïstes ren,  
 Donc me veïstes pain querant  
 E povre pelerin errant.  
 Por ceo irreiz el val parfont,  
 Ou Sathan e ses angles sont.  
 1815 Cel leu vos est apareille,  
 Desque le mont fu comence.  
 Por Deu, seignors, entendez ci,  
 Que tantes feiz avez oï,  
 Que l'almosne esteint le pecche.  
 1820 Fetes donc ben al mesaise,  
 Quant il por Deu vos requerra.  
 Oëz, comben ceo vos valdra.  
 Deu vos en metra a sa destre  
 Amont en la gloire celestre,  
 1825 A la joie, qui ne faldra,  
 Mes tot ad es sanz fin durra.  
 E Deu nos dont issi ovrer,  
 Que la puissom sanz fin regner.  
 Hors de la peine e del pecche

Which was prepared for you  
 Before that man was conceived.  
 When ye saw me naked and poor  
 Then ye fed and clothed me.  
 When I was thirsty ye gave me drink,  
 And in prison ye visited me.  
 For that ye have deserved  
 The joy of life eternal.  
 This good word shall they hear  
 Who shall be on the right hand.  
 Those on the left hand  
 This promise shall not hear,  
 But shall hear quite the contrary.  
 God shall say to them: Ye evil doers,  
 Go ye into the fire which shall not fail,  
 But shall endure for ever.  
 Once ye had no pity on me,  
 When I was hungry and thirsty,  
 Ye did not want to shelter me  
 Nor give me to drink or eat.  
 Nor visit or bury me  
 Nor warm or clothe me.  
 Then shall these say: Lord, have mercy,  
 When did we see thee in such plight?  
 God shall answer at the end:  
 When ye saw the poor man  
 Or poor woman or orphan  
 Or the pilgrim in need,  
 Who for love of me begged for help  
 And ye did nothing for him,  
 Then ye saw me begging bread  
 And as a poor pilgrim wandering.  
 Therefore shall ye go to the deep valley  
 Where Satan and his angels are;  
 That place is prepared for you  
 Since the beginning of the world.  
 For God's sake, my masters, listen to this,  
 Which ye have heard so many times,  
 That good works extinguish sin.  
 Do good then to the needy,  
 When he in God's name shall beg you,  
 Hear how this will reward you.  
 God will place you for it on his right  
 In the celestial glory above,  
 In the joy which shall never fail  
 But will endure for ever and ever.  
 And may God grant us so to work  
 That we may be able to reign there for ever.  
 Out from pain and from sin



Nos mette Deus a salvete.

May God bring us to safety.

1830 **De l'asne sauvage dirrom**

Le veir, que ja ne mentirom,  
Si com li livres nos aprent,  
Qui pas ne fait ne ne niesprent  
1835 De mustrer essamples resnables  
E veraies e delitables.  
Li livres n'est mie d'oisoses,  
Essamples i a delitoses,  
Ou il a mult riche mistere,  
1840 Dont nos fesom la lettre clere,  
Que l'em porra en descovert  
Veeir le mistere en apert.  
Es deserz d'Alfriue la grant  
Troeve l'em qui les vait querant  
1845 Ices asnes, dont jeo vos cont,  
Si n'a si granz en tot le mont  
E si ne sont mie dantez.  
Es deserz e es bois ramez,  
Es valees e es montaignes  
1850 Sont les haraz a granz compaignes.  
En chescun haraz finement  
N'a fors un madle sulement,  
E cil les femeles mestreie  
E en la plaine e en l'erbeie.  
1855 El haraz n'a qu'un estalon.  
Quant la femele a un foon,  
Si femele est, femele seit,  
Mes si li peres aparceit,  
Qu'il seit madles, ne targe gaires,  
1860 Qu'il ne colpe ses genitaires  
Od ses denz: car il ne voelt mie, —  
Jeo quit, que ceo seit gelosie,  
Que od ses membres tant crëust,  
Que le haraz saillir pëust.  
  
1865 Quant le meis de marz est entre  
E vint e cinc jors sont passe,  
Donc rechane l'asne sauvage  
Ou en la plaine ou el boscage.  
Le jor rechane doze feiz  
1870 E la nuit doze, ceo sachez.  
Donc sevent ben li païsant,  
Qui pres d'iloques sont manant,  
Que donc sont la nuit e le jor  
D'un estat e d'une longor.  
1875 Por ceo que doze feiz s'escrie  
Des l'enj ornant desqu'a complie,  
Doze feiz la nuit ensement,

**About the wild ass we shall tell**

The truth—which we shall never gainsay—  
As the book teaches us  
Which does not fail nor err  
In showing examples sensible  
And true and pleasure-giving.  
The book is not full of idle talk,  
Examples it has most pleasing  
With a wealth of mystery behind,  
Which we put clearly in writing,  
That one shall be able openly  
To see the mystery laid bare.  
In the desert of Africa the great  
The man who goes seeking them  
Finds these asses, of which I tell you,  
There are none so big in all the world  
And so they are not tamed.  
In the deserts and the leafy woods,  
In the valleys and the mountains,  
Are herds of great numbers.  
In each herd moreover  
There is no more than one male  
And he lords it over the females  
Both in the plain and pastures.  
The herd has but one stallion.  
When the female has a foal,  
If it is female, a female let it be,  
But if the father perceives  
That it is male, he loses no time  
But cuts off its organs  
With his teeth, for he does not wish—  
I believe it is due to jealousy—  
That with its members when full grown  
It may be able to cover the herd.  
  
When the month of March has come  
And twenty and five days have passed,  
Then the wild ass brays  
Either in the plain or in the woods.  
In the day it brays twelve times  
And in the night twelve—know that—  
Then do the country folk know well,  
Who in the neighbourhood are settled,  
That then are the night and the day  
In a like state and of equal length.  
Because it brays twelve times  
From daybreak until evening  
And twelve times likewise in the night,

	Conoissent il veraienient, Que donc est l'equinocte dreit	They recognize without fail That then is the equinox exactly
1880	En tel ternie e en tel endroit.	At that time and at that place.
	Iceste beste par dreiture Porte del malfe la figure. Job reconte, qui ne ment mie, Que l'asne sauvage ne crie	This beast quite rightly Bears the image of the evil one. Job relates, who does not lie, That the wild ass does not bray
1885	Nule feiz, si feim ne l'aspreie. Altresi cil qui nos guerreie, Nostre enemì, nostre adversaire, Qui ne fine de nos mal faire.	At any time, save hunger oppress it. Just so is he who makes war on us, Our enemy, our adversary, Who never stops from doing us ill,
1890	Por qui seint Perre nos chastie, Que nos ne nos endormom mie, Mes que nos en veillant orom: Car toz jors nos vet environ Come lion por devorer, Si sanz garde nos poet trover.	Wherefore saint Peter commands us, That we do not fall asleep, But that we watch and pray; For he ever goes about us Like a lion to devour us, If he can find us off our guard.
1895	Quant il vit le poeple venir En la lei Deu e convertir, Qui seeit en l'ombre de mort E en tenebres sanz confort, Donc out doel e si rechana,	When he saw the people come Under God's law and be converted, Who sat in the shadow of death And in darkness and comfortless, Then was he pained and brayed
1900	E uncor plus rechanera, Quant il verra tote la gent Venir a Deu comunement. Quant il verra les Sarrazins E les Jueus, qui sont frarins,	And will go on braying more When he shall see all people Coming to God in a body. When he shall see the Saracens And the Jews who are wretched,
1905	En la lei Deu realier, Donc porra de feim baailler: Car sa viande avra perdue, Qu'il a si longuement ëue. Quant il les verra en la fei,	Gather together within God's law, Then can he gape with hunger For he will have lost his meat, Which he has had so long. When he shall see them in the faith,
1910	Donc avra il e feim e sei. Aisi com li asnes reehane A mienuit e meriane, A vint e quatre ores, qui sont. Qui une nuit e un jor font,	Then shall he feel hunger and thirst. Just as the ass brays At midnight and midday, At the twenty and four hours which are And which make a night and a day,
1915	Avra le Sathan doel e ire, S Quant verra del mont tot l'empire Venir en creance e en fei A Jesu Crist, le vrai rei. Qui tot deit salver e juger.	Satan shall have pain and anger when He shall see the whole kingdom of the world Coming in belief and in faith To Jesus Christ, the true king, Who must save and judge all.
1920	Donc avra grant doel l'adverser, E cil doel ne faldra james. Donc porra rechaner ades Com cil qui toz jors remeindra En la dolor, qui ne faldra.	Then shall the adversary have great grief, And this grief shall never cease. Then must he bray continually Like one who shall remain for ever In pain which shall never cease.
1925	De tel dolor Deu nos defende E de noz trespas nos amende.	From such pain may God preserve us And from our sins correct us.

**Une altre beste est mult vileine**  
 De laidure e d'ordure pleine.  
 C'est le singe, que vos veez,  
 1930 Dont li halz homes font chertez.  
 Le singe est laid e malostru,  
 Soventes feiz l'avez vëu.  
 Ja seit ceo qu'il seit laid devant,  
 Derere est trop mesavenant.  
 1935 Chef a, mes de cue n'a mie.  
 Tot ades pense felonie.  
 Quant la mere ses foons a,  
 Cel que plus aime, portera  
 Entre ses braz par devant sei.  
 1940 L'autre, dont el ne prent conrei,  
 Par derere s'aert a li  
 E ambedeus les porte issi.

Ceste beste, si com mei semble,  
 Al diable afert e ressemble.  
 1945 Li diables premerement  
 Out chef: car al comencement  
 Fu angle el cel, mes par envie,  
 Par orgoil e par presumeie  
 Perdi le chef, ceo est le veir,  
 1950 Si chaï en enfer le neir,  
 Dont il jamais ne resordra,  
 Mes sanz fin en dolor meindra.  
 Al singe de ren ne m'acort:  
 Car il est tot malvais e ort.  
 1955 Plus de treis maneres en sont:  
 Tels i a qui granz eues ont  
 E plusors teste coine chen.  
 Des autres singes savom ben,  
 Qui habitent ci entre nos,  
 1960 Qu'il sont mult melancolios.  
 Tant corne dure le creissant,  
 Sont il mult heite e joiant;  
 Mes puisque al decurs atorne,  
 Si sont dolenz, tristes e morne.

1965 **Or vos conterom d'une oisele,**  
 Qui mult par est corteise e bele  
 E mult sage e ben entend able;  
 Toz jors est en ewe manable.  
 En ces estans ades sojorne,  
 1970 Enmi l'ewe son ni atorne  
 Ou entre perres en la mer,  
 Ou nul hom ne poet habiter.  
 Toz jors meint assiduelment  
 En une place sulement;

**There is another beast quite horrible**  
 Wholly ugly and foul.  
 It is the ape, which ye see,  
 Of which great folk make pets.  
 The ape is ugly and misshapen,  
 Many times ye have seen it.  
 However ugly it is in front,  
 Behind it is too indecent.  
 A head it has, but tail has not.  
 At all times it plans robbery.  
 When the mother has young ones  
 That which she loves most, she will carry  
 In her arms in front of her.  
 The other which she cares not for  
 Clings on behind her,  
 And thus she carries the pair of them.

This beast—so it seems to me—  
 Stands for and resembles the devil.  
 The devil at first had a head,  
 For in the beginning he was  
 An angel in heaven, but through envy,  
 Through pride and through presumption  
 He lost his head—that is the truth—  
 And fell into the blackness of hell,  
 From which he never shall get out,  
 But shall stay there for ever in pain.  
 There is nothing I can liken to the ape  
 For it is all bad and dirty.  
 More than three kinds there are;  
 Some such as have great tails  
 And several with head like a dog.  
 About other apes we know well  
 Which live here among us,  
 That they are full melancholy.  
 So long as the moon is waxing  
 They are quite gay and joyful;  
 But when it starts to wane  
 They are sad and miserable.

**Now we shall describe to you a bird**  
 Which is extremely courtly and pretty,  
 And very wise and understanding.  
 Always it lives in water;  
 In the pools it ever stays  
 Right in the water it builds its nest  
 Or among rocks in the sea,  
 Where no man can dwell.  
 Always it stays continually  
 In one place only,

1975	Nule feiz ne s'en quert moveir: Car tot i a son estoveir, E neporquant quant ele sent, Que estre deit alcun torment, Donc s'en vet a un gue baigner	At no time does it want to stir, For all is there which it needs; And nevertheless when it feels That there must be a storm coming, Then it goes to a shallow to dip And to sport and enjoy itself. Then it returns to its abode. Always it eats good fish, And never lives on carrion, And ye may know how the writing says That its flesh is very much like That of a heather hare.
1980	E deduire e esbaneier. Puis s'en revent a sa maison. Toz jors mangue bon peisson: De nule caroigne ne vit, E sachez, que la lettre dit,	
1985	Que sa char est de tel manere Come d'un levre de bruere.	
	lcest oisel, c'en est la some, Signefie le bon prodhome, Qui en seinte eglise demore	This bird—to sum it up— Signifies the wise and upright man Who in holy church spends his time And there watches and prays and worships, And lives on daily bread In the manner of a good christian, That is on the word of God, Which he keeps and makes use of. He eats his body and drinks his blood, Worthily he keeps and receives it. In well doing he stays right to the end Like a good and true christian. He does not go fooling up and down Nor hankering after meats, Which cause the soul to perish in pain, For to minister to the body's ease. In holy church he ever stays In joy, in love and in peace. That is the good meat and pure, Which guards and keeps safe the soul, And is sweeter and more savoury Than any honey or honeycomb. Hear what the psalmist David Saith, who wrote the psalms: Sweeter are thy words to me In my cheeks and in my teeth, Good lord God, who dwelleth in heaven, Than is the honeycomb or honey. My masters, for God's sake, the king of glory, Put to use and keep in mind These examples which ye hear. In holy church make your abode In good faith and in belief, In charity, in hope. If ye will persevere in good, The gospel really promises you That ye will be saved at the end
1990	E iloc veille e prie e ore E vit del pain cotidien A guise de bon crestien: Ceo est de la parole Deu, Que il retent e met en leu.	
1995	Son cors mangue e son sanc beit, Dignement le garde e receit. En ben maint desiqu'en la lin Corne bon crestien e fin Ne vet pas sus e jus folant	
2000	Ne as viandes aerdant, Qui font l'alme a dolor perir, Por le cors a aise servir. En seinte eglise maint ades En joie, en amor e en pes:	
2005	C'est la bone viande e pure, Qui l'alme garde e assëure E plus est dolce e savoree Que n'est nul mel ne nule ree. Oëz que le psalmistre dit,	
2010	Davi, qui le psalter escrit: Plus me sont dolz tes parlemeniz A mes joës e a mes denz, Bels sire Deus, qui mainz el cel, Que n'est la ree ne le mel.	
2015	Seignors, por Deu, le rei de gloire, Mettez en oes e en memoire Ces essamples, que vos oëz! Eu seinte eglise demorez En bone fei e en creance,	
2020	En charite, en esperance! Si vos perseverez en ben, L'evangile vos pramet ben, Que vos serreiz a la fin sals	

Come bon crestien leals.  
 2025 N'avez mere fors seinte eglise,  
 Qui par amor e par franchise  
 Vos amoneste e vos chastie,  
 Que vos maignez en bone vie.

**La beste, qui a non panthere,**  
 2030 En dreit romanz love cervere,  
 Deit ben ci estre amentëue:  
 Onques sa per ne fu vëue  
 Ne plus dolce ne plus sueve:  
 Car ele est blanche e ynde e bleve  
 2035 E jalne e verte e russe e bise  
 E coloree en meinte guise.  
 Totes bestes comunement  
 Fors le dragon tant sulement  
 Aiment toz dis sa compaignie,  
 2040 Mes cil la het tote sa vie.  
 Quant ceste beste est saolee  
 Ou en montaigne ou en valee  
 De bones viandes plusors,  
 Nule beste ne quert meillors,  
 2045 En sa fosse s'en entre e se pose:  
 Desqu'al terz jor dort e repose.  
 Al terz jor, quant ele est levee  
 E de sa fosse fors alee,  
 Donc jette un grant mugissement,  
 2050 Qu'oem la poet oïr clerement  
 Par trestot le païs entor.  
 Donc ist une si bone odor  
 De sa boche por verite,  
 Qu'en tote la veisineté  
 2055 N'a nule beste, qui se tenge,  
 Que demaneis a li ne venge.  
 A li venent totes ensemble  
 Por l'odor, qui bone lor semble,  
 E totes sivent la panthere.  
 2060 Mes li dragons se tret arere:  
 Si tost com il la voiz entent  
 E la dolçor de l'odor sent,  
 Ne la poet longuement soffrir,  
 Ainz l'estoet a terre flatir  
 2065 E enfuir sei el parfont,  
 Qu'il ne s'en poet por tot le mont  
 En nule guise plus moveir.  
 Iloec le covent remaneir.

En ceste beste sanz dotance  
 2070 A mult bele signefiance.  
 Panthere dit, qui dreit l'entent,

As good and true christians.  
 Ye have no mother except holy church  
 Who in love and sincerity  
 Admonishes you and teaches you  
 That ye live a good life ever.

**The beast which has the name panther,**  
 In romance strictly love cervere  
 Must certainly be mentioned here.  
 Never was its fellow seen  
 More good-tempered or more gentle  
 For it is white and light blue and dark  
 And yellow and green and russet-brown  
 And coloured in many a way.  
 All beasts alike  
 Except the dragon quite alone  
 Love its company always;  
 But this hates it with a life-long hate.  
 When this beast is well-filled  
 Whether in mountain or in valley  
 With good food of all kinds—  
 No beast ever seeks better—  
 Into its den it goes and lies.  
 Until the third day it sleeps and rests;  
 On the third day, when it has risen  
 And from its den gone out,  
 Then it utters a great roaring,  
 Which can be heard clearly  
 Throughout the whole country.  
 Then from its mouth there issues  
 A smell in truth so sweet  
 That in the whole neighbourhood  
 There is no beast can help  
 But come to it at once.  
 To it come all together  
 For the smell which seems to them so sweet  
 And all follow the panther.  
 But the dragon holds back;  
 So soon as he hears the sound  
 And marks the sweetness of the smell,  
 He cannot endure it long  
 But is obliged to go to earth  
 And bury himself deep,  
 So that he cannot for all the world  
 In no way stir any more;  
 There must he remain.

In this beast without doubt  
 There is a beautiful meaning.  
 Panther means, who understands it rightly,

Tant come “beste qui tot prent”  
 E signefie sanz error  
 Jesu Crist, nostre salveor,  
 2075 Qui par sa grant humilite  
 Vesti nostre charnalite  
 E traist tot le secle a sei.  
 Por nos soffri e feim e sei  
 E mort en croiz fu al derein  
 2080 Com verais Deus e sovereign.  
 Al terz jor de mort releva  
 E tot le monde gaaigna.  
 Il meïsmes out dit avant,  
 Quant el mont alout preechant:  
 2085 Quant de terre eshalce serrai,  
 Totes choses a mei trarrai.  
 Àillors reedit la lettre tant.  
 Que Jesu Crist en halt montant  
 Mena nostre chaitivete  
 2090 E as homes a dons done.  
 E uns altres prophetes dist  
 De nostre seignor Jesu Crist:  
 Jeo sui en la Judas maison  
 La seignorie e le lion,  
 2095 En la maison Efrem panthere.  
 Issi est en meinte manere  
 Nostre salveor figure:  
 Car il a a sei apele  
 Gent paene e gent judaïsme,  
 2100 Qui creient une lei meïсме.  
 Salomon dit en sa sentence,  
 Que Crist est de Deu sapience,  
 Un esperit multipliable,  
 Sotil, movant e enteudable,  
 2105 Certains, verais sor tote ren,  
 Suf e net e amant ben,  
 Plein de pite e amiable,  
 Assëur e ferm e estable,  
 Qui nul ben ne destorbe a faire,  
 2110 Dolz e leals e debonaire,  
 Qui tot esgarde e qui tot veit,  
 E par qui toz li monz esteit.  
 Seint Pol nos reedit en un leu:  
 Crist est la sapience Deu.  
 2115 Por la panthere, qui est bele,  
 Redist Davi altre novele,  
 Quant de la belte Crist parla  
 El vers “speciosus forma”  
 De la beste, qui suf est,  
 2120 Ravom nos l’essample tot prest.

Just “beast which takes all”,  
 And signifies without mistake  
 Jesus Christ our saviour,  
 Who by his great humility  
 Donned our mortal flesh  
 And drew the whole world to himself.  
 For us he suffered hunger and thirst  
 And death upon the cross at the end  
 As true and sovereign God.  
 The third day he rose from the dead  
 And gained all the world.  
 He himself had said before,  
 When he went preaching in the world:  
 When from earth I be lifted up  
 All things will I draw unto me.  
 Elsewhere the scripture repeats as well  
 How Jesus Christ mounting on high  
 Bore our pains  
 And gave gifts unto men.  
 And another prophet saith  
 About our lord Jesus Christ:  
 I am in the house of Judah  
 As the lordship and the lion,  
 In the house of Ephraim the panther.  
 Thus is in many a way  
 Our saviour figured;  
 For he has called unto himself  
 The pagan and the jewish peoples  
 Who believe a law only.  
 Solomon says in his parable  
 That Christ is the wisdom of God,  
 A many-sided spirit,  
 Subtil, moving, and understanding,  
 Sure, true in everything,  
 Gentle and pure and loving well,  
 Full of pity and loving-kindness,  
 Sure and firm and stable,  
 That no one hinders in well-doing,  
 Sweet and true and kindly,  
 Who regards all and who sees all,  
 And through whom everyone had being.  
 Saint Paul repeats to us in a sentence:  
 Christ is the wisdom of God.  
 About the panther, which is beautiful,  
 David repeats yet other news,  
 When of the beauty of Christ he spake  
 In the verse “speciosus forma”.  
 Of the beast which is so sweet  
 We have again a lesson ready:

Sor Deu fert la suavite.  
 Ysaïas por verite  
 Dist la prophecie: Porquei,  
 Fille Syon, esjoïs tei?  
 2125 Ton rei vendra suef e dolz,  
 Qui n'est mie fels ne estolz  
 La beste, qui est replenie  
 E puis repose, signefie  
 Jesu Crist, nostre salveor,  
 2130 Qui a Judas le beiseor  
 Se laissa e livrer e vendre  
 E as Jueus lier e prendre,  
 Batre, bender e escopir  
 E tormenter e escharnir.  
 2135 Quant il fu saols des laidures,  
 Des tormenz e des batëures,  
 En la seinte croiz s'endormi.  
 Puis demora tresqu'al terz di  
 El cher sepulcre glorios.  
 2140 Donc ala briser a estros  
 Enfer e lia le dragon,  
 Qui teneit sa gent en prison.  
 E quant il fu de mort resors,  
 Tant issirent bones odors  
 2145 De sa parole e de son non,  
 E tant en ala loing le son,  
 Tant s'espandi sa bone odor,  
 Que toz li monz en fu meillor.  
 L'odor del resuscitement  
 2150 Odora si tres dolcement,  
 Que toz li monz esteit gariz,  
 Qui devant ceo esteit periz.  
 L'odor de l'incarnacion,  
 De sa mort, de sa passion,  
 2155 Si le resordement ne fust,  
 Ja nul mester ne nos ëust.  
 Tot fu el resuscitement  
 Acomplï nostre salvement.  
 Donc dist nostre seignor Jesu,  
 2160 Qu'il aveit le monde veincu,  
 E que grant joie en feïssom,  
 E dist, si come nos lisom:  
 Bel pere, jeo ai ben garde  
 Ceo que tu m'aveies livre,  
 2165 Si qu'onques nul sul n'en perdi  
 Fors celui qui par dreit peri.  
 Ces moz dist il, ne dotez pas,  
 Por le malëure Judas.  
 A ses desciples s'aparut,

For sweetness is an attribute of God.  
 Isaiah in very truth  
 Utters the prophecy: Wherefore,  
 Daughter of Sion, dost thou rejoice?  
 Thy king shall come gentle and mild,  
 He is not wicked or proud.  
 The beast which is sated  
 And then reposes denotes  
 Jesus Christ our saviour,  
 Who to Judas the betrayer  
 Let himself be given up and sold,  
 And to the Jews to be bound and taken  
 And beaten, and bound and scourged  
 And tormented and mocked.  
 When he was covered with insults,  
 With pains and with blows,  
 On the holy cross he fell asleep.  
 Then he dwelt until the third day  
 In the dear and glorious tomb.  
 Then he went straightway  
 To harrow hell, and bound the dragon  
 Who held his people in prison.  
 And when he was risen from death,  
 So strong went forth the sweet odours  
 Of his words and of his name  
 And so far abroad went the sound of it,  
 So far spread out his sweet smell,  
 That all the world was the better for it.  
 The odour of the resurrection  
 Smelled so very sweet  
 That all the world was healed,  
 Which before that was perished.  
 The odour of the incarnation  
 Of his death, of his passion,  
 If the resurrection had not been,  
 Would have been no use to us.  
 Completely by the resurrection  
 Was our salvation accomplished.  
 Then said our master Jesus  
 That he had overcome the world,  
 And that we should much rejoice in it;  
 And said, as we read:  
 Holy father, I have well cared for  
 That which thou hast entrusted to me,  
 So that not one of them is lost  
 Save him who has rightly perished.  
 These words he spake—doubt it not—  
 Of the miscreant Judas.  
 To his disciples he appeared,

2170 E a Thomas, qui le mescrut,  
 Mostra les leus, ceo dit la lettre,  
 Es li fiot uner son dei mettre,  
 Ou les clous aveient este.  
 Puis dist, quant furent ajuste  
 2175 Trestuit ensemble li apostre:  
 Jeo vois a mon pere e al vostre,  
 E quant a lui venu serraï,  
 L'esperite vos enverrai,  
 Qui vos enseignera trestot,  
 2180 Que vos devez faire de bot.  
 Icestes paroles lor dist;  
 Ben averra ceo qu'il pramist.  
  
 Seignors, por Deu, le verai rei,  
 Car pensom e pernom conrei,  
 2185 coment nos e en quel manere  
 Sivrom la veraie panthere.  
 Por Deu e por la vraie croiz,  
 Oiom sa parole e sa voiz:  
 Car de sa boche ist une odor,  
 2190 Onques hom ne senti meillor.  
 Plus sont dolz ses comandemenz  
 Qu'aromates ne oignemenz.  
 Si ses comandemenz fesom,  
 Riche en serra le gueredon.  
 2195 Deu nos merra en son pales,  
 En la bele cite de pes,  
 En Jerusalem la celestre,  
 El halt m ont, ou tant fet bel estre,  
 Ou james nul ne serra triste.  
 2200 Donc porrom dire od le psalmiste:  
 Cite de Deu, glorios diz  
 Sont de tei contez e escriz.  
 Issi com nos oï l'avom,  
 En tel manere le veom.  
 2205 En tel guise l'avom vëu  
 En la cit al rei de vertu.  
  
 Seignors, entendez cest sermon  
 Ne semblez mie le dragon,  
 Qui ne poet la dolçor soffrir  
 2210 Ne la parole Deu oïr.  
 C'est le malves home por veir,  
 Qui ne poet mie remaneir  
 En place, ou l'en espant l'odor  
 De la parole al salveor,  
 2215 En muster ou en cimetire,  
 Ou il oie bon sermon dire,  
 N'i poet arester ne attendre,

And to Thomas, who disbelieved him,  
 Showed the places, as the scripture saith,  
 And made him place his finger in  
 Where the nails had been.  
 Then he said, when were gathered  
 The apostles all together:  
 I go to my father and to yours  
 And when I shall have come to him  
 I will send to you the spirit  
 Which shall teach you all things  
 Which ye ought to do at once.  
 These words he spake to them;  
 Well has he accomplished what he promised.  
  
 My masters, for God the true king's sake,  
 Then let us think and be concerned  
 How we and in what manner  
 Will follow the true panther.  
 For God's sake and the true cross,  
 Let us hear his word and his voice,  
 For from his mouth issues a smell,  
 Than which no man ever smelled a better.  
 More sweet are his commandments  
 Than sweet spices and ointments.  
 If we do his commandments  
 Rich will be the reward.  
 God will set us in his palace  
 In the beautiful city of peace,  
 In the heavenly Jerusalem,  
 On the high hill, where it is so good to be,  
 Where no one will be sad.  
 Then may we say with the psalmist:  
 Thou city of God, glorious words  
 Are spoken and written of thee.  
 In such fashion have we heard it;  
 In such manner we see it.  
 In such form have we seen it  
 In the city of the mighty king.  
  
 My masters, listen to this moral,  
 Do not be like the dragon,  
 Who cannot suffer the sweetness  
 Nor hear the word of God.  
 It is the wicked man indeed  
 Who cannot remain  
 In the place where spreads the odour  
 Of the word of the saviour  
 Be it in minster or in graveyard  
 Where he may hear good sermon preached;  
 He cannot stop and wait there,



Einz dit, qu'il va aillors entendre.  
 La bone odor est fes e some  
 2220 Al dragon e al malves home.

**Mes dreiz est, que nos vos diom**  
 De la faiture del dragon.  
 De totes les bestes rampanz  
 Est li dragons tot li plus granz.  
 2225 Le dreit dragon si est trove  
 En Ethiope le regne.  
 Boche a petite e grant le cors,  
 En l'air reluist corne fins ors.  
 Longue a la eue e creste grant,  
 2230 Grant ennui fet a l'olifant:  
 Car od sa eue le debat  
 Par les jambes, si qu'il l'abat,  
 Ne porte pas venim de mort,  
 Mes durement est grant e fort  
 2235 E od sa eue discipline  
 Tot ceo qu'il a en sa saisine  
 Ne fet mie grant nuisement  
 Fors od sa eue sulement.

**Hui mes vos volom raconter**  
 2240 D'une grant merveille de mer.  
 En mer sont li peisson divers  
 Com en la terre sont les vers  
 E li oisel amont en l'air.  
 Li un sont blanc, li altre vair,  
 2245 Li un neir e li altre bis.  
 Als en mer, jeol vos plevis,  
 Sont li peisson diversement,  
 Mes Fern ne poet mie ensement e  
 De cels les natures saveir  
 2250 Com l'em poet des bestes por veir.  
 En la mer, qui est grant e pleine,  
 Est l'esturgon e la baleine  
 E le turbot e le porpeis  
 E un grant, qui a non graspeis.  
 2255 Mes un mustre i a merveilllos,  
 Trop culvert e trop perillos:  
 Cetus a non selonc latin.  
 As mariners est mal veisin.  
 Altretel est corne sablon  
 2260 La creste de son dos en som.  
 Quant il se leve en cele mer,  
 Cil qui par la soelent sigler,  
 Quiden ben, que une isle seit,  
 Mes esperance les deceit.  
 2265 Por la grandor, qui est en lui,

But in a word he goes elsewhere to hear.  
 The good smell is a load and burden  
 To the dragon and the wicked man.

**Now it is right that we tell you**  
 Of the form of the dragon.  
 Of all the beasts which creep  
 Is the dragon far the biggest.  
 The real dragon—it is found  
 In the kingdom of Ethiopia.  
 It has a little mouth and a big body;  
 In the air it glows like fine gold.  
 It has a long tail and great crest.  
 Great trouble it makes for the elephant,  
 For with its tail it strikes it  
 In the legs so that it throws it down;  
 It bears no deadly poison,  
 But is vastly big and strong,  
 And with its tail it scourges  
 Everything within its reach;  
 Nor does it do great hurt  
 Save with its tail only.

**Next we wish to tell you**  
 About a great marvel of the sea.  
 In the sea are divers fish  
 As in the earth are worms  
 And birds up in the air.  
 Some are white, others parti-coloured,  
 One is black, another brown.  
 So in the sea, I do assure you,  
 Are fish of different kinds.  
 But one cannot in the same way  
 Know the natures of these  
 As one really can of beasts.  
 In the sea which is big and full  
 Is the sturgeon and the whale  
 And the turbot and the porpoise,  
 And a big one called the graspeis.  
 But there is a wonderful monster,  
 All too cunning and dangerous.  
 Cetus is its name in latin.  
 To mariners it is a bad neighbour.  
 Just like unto sand  
 Is the crest on top of its back.  
 When it rises to the surface in the sea,  
 They who are wont to sail that way  
 Quite believe it is an island,  
 But hope deceives them.  
 Because of his great size

Iloeques venent a refui:  
 Por la tormente, qui les chace,  
 Estre quident en bone place,  
 Lor ancrs gettent e lor pont,  
 2270 Lor manger quisent, lor feu font,  
 E por lor nef ben atacher,  
 Font granz pels el sablon ficher,  
 Qui semble terre a lor avis.  
 Puis font lor feu, jeol vos plevis.  
 2275 Quant le mustre la cholor sent  
 Del feu, qui desus lui s'esprent,  
 Donc se plonge par grant rador  
 Aval en la grant parfondor  
 E fet od sei la nef plonger  
 2280 E tote la gent periller.  
  
 Tot altresi sont decëuz  
 Les chaitis dolenz mescreüz,  
 Qui el diable ont lor fiance  
 E font delai e demorance  
 2285 Es ovraignes, que pecche voelt,  
 Dont la chaitive aime se doelt.  
 La ou il meins se donent garde,  
 Vent li leres, que mais feus arde.  
 Quant ben les sent a sei aers,  
 2290 Od els se plonge tot envers  
 Dreit en enfer el plus parfont:  
 Cil sont periz, qui la enz vont.  
  
 Icest peisson, quant feim le prent,  
 Bee la gule durement.  
 2295 Donc ist de sa boche une odor,  
 Qui mult est de bone savor.  
 Cele part venent de randon  
 Maintenant li petit peisson,  
 Si se lancent a mult grant fule  
 2300 Trestuit ensemble enmi sa gule  
 Por l'odor, qui bone lor semble,  
 E cil clot ses joës ensemble.  
 Quant il sent ben sa gule pleine,  
 Toz les transglote a une aleine  
 2305 En sa pance, qui est si lee  
 Come serreit une valee.  
  
 Li diables fet ensemment:  
 Sa gule bee durement  
 Vers la gent de petite fei,  
 2310 Tant qu'il les a atret a sei:  
 Car cil qui petite fei ont  
 E de feble creance sont,

There they come for safety  
 From the storm which drives them.  
 They think to be in a safe place,  
 They throw out their anchors and gangway,  
 Cook their food, light their fire,  
 And for to make their ship fast  
 Drive great stakes into the sand  
 Which is like land in their opinion.  
 Then they light their fire, I do assure you.  
 When the monster feels the heat  
 Of the fire which burns on top of him,  
 Then he makes a sudden plunge  
 Down into the great deep  
 And drags the ship along with him,  
 And all the crew perish.  
  
 Just the same are deceived  
 The wretched miserable unbelievers  
 Who in the devil put their trust  
 And make delay and postponement  
 Of their works, as sin wills it,  
 For which the wretched soul suffers.  
 Then when they take least care,  
 Comes the thief who burns with evil fire;  
 When he feels them fast tied up to him  
 With them right down he plunges,  
 Down to hell's greatest depth;  
 They are lost who go in there.  
  
 This fish when hunger takes him  
 Opens his mouth wide;  
 Then there issues from his mouth a smell,  
 Which has an excellent savour.  
 This way come now  
 The little fish pell-mell.  
 They hurry in a mighty shoal  
 All together into his jaws  
 For the smell which seems so good to them,  
 And he shuts his jaws up tight  
 When he feels his mouth quite full;  
 All he swallows at a gulp  
 Into his belly, which is as wide  
 As a valley would be.  
  
 The devil does likewise;  
 His mouth is open wide  
 For the people of little faith  
 Until he has drawn them to him.  
 For those who have but little faith  
 And are such weak believers

Sont mult leger a acrocher  
 De celui qui les set ascher.  
 2315 Il lor fet un aaschement,  
 Qui primes oelt mult dolcement,  
 Com est d'alcun charnel delit  
 De bele femme avoir en lit,  
 De ben beivre, de ben manger  
 2320 Ou de richesce coveiter,  
 Qui primes oelt mult dolcement,  
 Mes puis define amerement.  
 Quant de ceo les a aaschez,  
 Tant qu'il les sent ben acrochez,  
 2325 Bee la gule, sis transglot,  
 Ja n'ert saol, tant par est glot.  
 Li grant peisson se gardent ben,  
 Que il ne lor mesfet de ren.  
 E savez vos, qui li granz sont?  
 2330 Les bons, qui bone creance ont,  
 Qui ades sont ferm e estable  
 En Deu le pere esperitable.  
 En cels qui lui ont en memoire,  
 N'avra ja diable victoire.  
 2335 Mes li dolent, li mescreant,  
 Qui vont en la fei Deu dotant  
 E sont en creance petiz,  
 Cist corent apres les deliz,  
 E li diables, quis deceit,  
 2340 Bee la gule, sis receit.  
 Mes damne Deu l'omnipotent  
 Nos mette en le soen salvement  
 E en sa grant joie nos meine  
 Grariz de pecche e de peine.  
  
 2345 **Plaist mei, que des hui mes vos die**  
 D'un oisel, ou mult a boisdie.  
 C'est la perdriz, que nos veom,  
 Que nos si volenters mangom,  
 Si n'est pas nette neporquant,  
 2350 Ainz est e orde e mesfesant  
 E si a un mult malvais point:  
 Car madles od madle se joint.  
 Itant est ardant lor luxure,  
 Qu'il oblient dreite nature.  
 2355 La perdriz est mult traïtesse:  
 Car a guise de larronesse  
 Emble e cove les altrui oes,  
 Mes li pulcin ne li ont oes  
 Por le larrecin, qu'ele en fait.  
 2360 Or entendez, coment ceo vait.

Are most easy to catch on the hook  
 Of him who knows how to allure them.  
 He sets a bait for them,  
 Which at first smells very sweet,  
 As is some carnal pleasure like  
 Having a fair woman in bed,  
 Good drinking, good eating,  
 Or the greed of riches,  
 Which at first smells very sweet  
 But then ends in bitterness.  
 When he has set them such a bait  
 And feels that they are well hooked,  
 He opens his jaws and swallows them,  
 Nor is he sated, however many are in.  
 The big fish take good care  
 That he does them no harm.  
 And do ye know who the big ones are?  
 The good folk who have firm belief,  
 Who are ever strong and steadfast  
 In God the spiritual father.  
 Over them who have him in their mind  
 The devil shall have no victory.  
 But they suffer—the unbelievers,  
 Who go doubting in the faith of God,  
 And are little in their faith;  
 These run after pleasures,  
 And the devil who deceives them  
 Opens wide his mouth and takes them in.  
 But may the Lord God omnipotent  
 Put us in his own safe keeping  
 And into his great joy bring us,  
 Healed from sin and from suffering.

**It pleases me to tell you now**  
 About a bird of a very deceiving nature.  
 It is the partridge which we see,  
 Which we eat so willingly.  
 All the same it is not clean  
 But is both dirty and mischievous,  
 And has a very bad habit,  
 For male mates with male;  
 So hot is their desire  
 That they forget the law of nature.  
 The partridge is very treacherous,  
 For in the way of a thief  
 She steals and sits on the eggs of others.  
 But the young birds are no good to her  
 By the theft which she committed.  
 Now you must hear how that is.

Quant les altrui oes a covez  
 E les pulcinez alevez,  
 Tantost eom il veient e vont  
 E que aparçëuz se sont,  
 2365 Quant il oënt crier lor mere  
 Od sa voiz, qui n'est mie clere,  
 De cele part aler s'angoissent:  
 Car par nature la conoissent  
 E ben l'entendent par le cri.  
 2370 Cele lessent qui les norri:  
 A lor dreite mere s'en venent  
 E tot ades a li se tenent.  
 La false mere remeint sule,  
 Par son tripot e par sa bule  
 2375 Pert la meite de son eage,  
 Si ne se tent mie por sage  
 De sa peine, que ele a mise  
 Longuement en altrui servise:  
 Car donc veit, que tot son travail  
 2380 Ne li a pas valu un ail.  
  
 Seignors, ci a essample bele,  
 Qui tot le quoer me renovele.  
 Altresi come la perdriz,  
 Qui altrui enfanz a norriz,  
 2385 E puis al daerrein les pert,  
 Avent il trestot en apert  
 Al diable, ben est raison:  
 Quant il la generacion  
 De Deu, nostre sovereign pere,  
 2390 Emble e norrist come fel lere  
 En malvestez, en leccheries,  
 En luxures, en beveries,  
 Si en quide faire ses fiz.  
 Quant longuement les a norriz  
 2395 E il oënt la voiz lor pere  
 En l'eglise, lor dreite mere,  
 Donc sevent, que traï les a:  
 Car a lor pere les embla.  
 Mes puisque sa parole entendent,  
 2400 A lui venent, a lui se rendent,  
 E il les receit e norrist,  
 Soz ses eles les garantist.  
 Seignors, par fei, ceo n'est pas dote,  
 Ja n'ert en si malvaise rote  
 2405 Nul peccheor dolent chaitif,  
 Se tant com il est sein e vif,  
 Se voelt retraire e repentir,  
 Qu'il ne puist a Deu venir.  
 Seinte eglise le recevra,

When she has hatched the strange eggs  
 And has reared the little birds,  
 So soon as they come and go  
 And have noticed  
 When they hear their mother call  
 By her voice which is not clear,  
 From that place they hasten to go;  
 For by nature they know  
 And recognize her by her note.  
 They leave her who fed them,  
 To their real mother they go off  
 And evermore they cling to her.  
 The false mother is left alone;  
 By her trickery and her deceit  
 She loses the half of her lifetime,  
 She does not hold herself as clever  
 For the trouble she has taken  
 So long in the service of another;  
 For now she sees that all her pains  
 Were not worth to her a bit of garlic.  
  
 My masters, here is a pretty lesson,  
 Which stirs my heart anew.  
 Just as the partridge  
 Which has fed the children of another  
 And then in the end loses them,  
 So it happens quite plainly  
 To the devil—and quite rightly too—  
 When he steals the people  
 Of God our sovereign father,  
 And feeds them as a wicked thief  
 On wickedness and lechery,  
 On wantonness and drunkenness;  
 He thinks to make them his children.  
 When he has long fed them  
 And they hear the voice of their father  
 In the church, their real mother,  
 Then they know that he has betrayed them;  
 For from their father he stole them.  
 But as soon as they hear his word  
 They come and give themselves to him,  
 And he receives and feeds them,  
 Beneath his wings protects them.  
 My masters, in faith—there is no doubt—  
 There is not in any company, however bad it be,  
 No miserable wretched sinner  
 Who, so long as he be alive and well  
 And wishes to retract and repent,  
 Cannot come to God.  
 Holy church will receive him,

2410 Soz ses eles le defendra,  
 Quant a li vendra a garant.  
 E li angle sont plus joiant  
 D'un peccheor, qui merci crie  
 E se repent de sa folie,  
 2415 Si com testimonie l'escriz  
 Que de nonante noef esliz,  
 Qui n'ont mester de penitance.  
 Ceo dit la lettre sanz dotance.

**Ue la belette est grant merveille:**

2420 Car ele enfante par l'oreille  
 E parmi la boche receit  
 La semence, dont el conceit.  
 Del madle, quant il li aproche,  
 Prent la semence par la boche,  
 2425 Qui dedenz son ventre norrist  
 E parmi l'oreille s'en ist.  
 Ceste petite beste mue  
 Porte ses chaels e remue  
 Soventes feiz de leu en leu  
 2430 Ne tent mie une place en feu.  
 Les serpenz e les sorriz het,  
 De la les chace, ou el les set.  
 Sont cil fols, qui vont affermant,  
 Que ele receit e espant  
 2435 La semence parmi l'oïe?  
 Sëurement ceo n'i a mie.

A ceste sont aparagez  
 Plusors, qui sont acoragez  
 De ben ovrer, de Deu servir,  
 2440 De la parole Deu oïr.  
 Corios sont, mult i entendent,  
 En lor corage a Deu se rendent  
 E comencent a ben ovrer,  
 A Deu servir e a amer;  
 2445 Mes en petit d'ore recreient  
 E ceo qu'il ont oï, mescreient,  
 Si ne sont mie obedienz  
 A faire ses comandemenz,  
 Com il aveient einz pramis.  
 2450 Al serpent, qui a non aspis,  
 Resont a comparer tels i a,  
 Si vos dirrai, quel costume a  
 Cele serpent, dont jeo vos di,  
 Neporquant onques ne la vi.  
 2455 Mes ceo est verite provee:  
 Quant el creint estre enchantee  
 Par l'enchanteor, qu'ele creint,

Under its wings it will protect him,  
 When he comes to her for safety.  
 And the angels are more joyful  
 Over a sinner who cries for pardon  
 And repents of his folly  
 As the scripture testifies  
 Than over the ninety and nine elect  
 Who have no need of repentance;  
 So says the scripture without doubt.

**About the weasel is a great marvel,**

For she brings forth by the ear  
 And by the mouth receives  
 The seed whereby she conceives.  
 From the male when he comes to her,  
 She takes the seed by the mouth,  
 And within her belly feeds it  
 And by the ear it issues forth.  
 This little dumb beast  
 Carries its young and shifts  
 Oft-times from place to place,  
 And holds no place in fee.  
 Serpents and mice it hates,  
 It drives them away where it knows them to be.  
 Are they fools, who go affirming  
 That she receives and discharges  
 The seed through the hearing?  
 Surely this is not the case.

With this (creature) are compared  
 Sundry (folk) who are zealous  
 To behave well, to serve God,  
 And to hear the word of God.  
 Eager they are, much they hear it,  
 In their zeal they surrender to God,  
 And begin by doing well  
 By serving God and loving him;  
 But in a little while they fall away  
 And what they have heard they disbelieve;  
 They are not obedient  
 To do his commandments,  
 As they have promised before.  
 To the serpent, which is named asp  
 May such again be likened.  
 I will tell you of the habit  
 This serpent has of which I speak,  
 Nevertheless I have never seen it,  
 But the truth of it is proved.  
 When it is afraid of being enchanted  
 By the enchanter whom it fears,

L'une de ses oreilles preint  
 A la terre mult durement  
 2460 E od sa eue finement  
 Estope l'autre oreille si,  
 Que de li ne poet estre oï  
 L'enchanteor en nule guise.  
 De tel manere est sa cointise.  
  
 2465 D'altretele manere sont  
 Les riches homes de cest mont.  
 Tot sont encombrez e chargez  
 De richescs e de pecchez.  
 Quant il oient de Deu parler,  
 2470 L'oreille n'i poënt torner.  
 Par richescs sont assordez  
 E par coveitise assorbez,  
 Qu'il n'oient ne ne veient gote,  
 Toz jors tenent malvaie rote.  
 2475 L'evangile meïsme afiche:  
 Plus gref chose est a home riche  
 En la gloire del cel entrer  
 Que de faire un cameil passer  
 Par le chaas d'une aguilette,  
 2480 Qui seit estreite e petitette.  
 Maldite seit cele richescs,  
 Qui l'alme meine en tel destresce,  
 En la peine, qui toz jors dure  
 En la fournaise e en l'ardure  
 2485 De la puor, qui toz jors art.  
 Richescs sont de male part:  
 Car a grant travail sont conquises  
 E a grant poor sont porsises  
 E a grant dolor sont guerpies  
 2490 E perdues e departies.  
 Por ceo fist ben jadis un sage,  
 Qui mult avait tot son eage  
 A ses richescs entendu,  
 Tant que la memoire out perdu  
 2495 De Deu servir e honorer.  
 Un jor se prist a porpenser;  
 Esgarrez fu, que il fereit,  
 Se il a ses vignes irreit  
 Ou a ses falceors as prez.  
 2500 Durement esteit esgarrez  
 De ses bestes, qui se moreient,  
 De ses nes, qui par mer eoreient.  
 De ses molins ert en porpens,  
 Qu'il eussent ewe toz tens.  
 2505 Donc lui veneient messenger,  
 Que la porreit tant gaaigner.

One of its ears it presses  
 On the ground quite firmly  
 And with its tail deftly  
 Stops the other ear so  
 That with it the enchanter  
 Cannot be heard in no wise.  
 Of such sort is its cunning.  
  
 Just of such kind are  
 The rich men of this world.  
 All are encumbered and laden  
 With riches and with sins.  
 When they hear speak of God  
 They cannot turn their ear that way.  
 By riches are they deafened  
 And by covetousness absorbed,  
 That they neither hear nor see at all;  
 Ever hold they on their evil way.  
 The very gospel proclaims:  
 A harder thing it is for a rich man  
 To enter into the glory of heaven  
 Than to make a camel pass  
 Through the eye of a needle  
 Which is narrow and very little.  
 Cursed be these riches  
 Which bring the soul to such distress,  
 Into pain which endures always  
 Into the furnace and the heat  
 Of the stench which burns for ever.  
 Riches are an evil portion.  
 For with great labour are they gained,  
 And with great fear are preserved,  
 And with great grief are left behind,  
 And lost and parted with.  
 See how well a wise man once did,  
 Who had greatly all his life  
 Paid attention to his riches  
 So that he had lost all memory  
 Of serving God and honouring him.  
 One day he betook himself to think;  
 He was undecided what to do:  
 Whether to visit his vines  
 Or his reapers in the meadows.  
 Completely was he in doubt  
 About his beasts which were dying,  
 About his ships which sailed the seas;  
 About his mills did he ponder  
 Whether they always had water.  
 Then there came to him messengers  
 That he could gain so much.

Autres messagers reveineient,  
 Qui autres no veles diseient  
 De ceo que tant perdu aveit,  
 2510 Que nuls le nombre n'en saveit.  
 La ou il ert en tel destresce,  
 Regarde amont e les elz dresce  
 Vers Deu, qui tot le mont forma,  
 E de sa richescence pensa,  
 2515 Qui lui aveit fet oblier  
 Ceo que il dëust plus amer,  
 E tant i aveit mis son quoyer.  
 Qu'il ne s'en poeit a nul foer  
 Desvoluper ne departir  
 2520 Ne honoreement eissir.  
 Donc se porpensa mult estreit.  
 Que tot ensemble guerpireit.  
 Ses pecunes e son tresor  
 Vendit tot, si achata or.  
 2525 Quantqu'il out, en or ajusta:  
 En une masse l'assembla  
 Com une moeule de molin.  
 Quant il out tot vendu enfin,  
 Que ren n'i out renies a vendre,  
 2530 Dont l'em pëust un denier prendre,  
 Toz ses dras vendit a devise  
 Fors ses braies e sa chemise,  
 Que plus a vendre n'i laissa.  
 Son or devant sei rëulla.  
 2535 Quant il out trestot assemble  
 E il l'out issi atorne,  
 Qu'od une chaene le tint,  
 One ne fina, desiqu'il vint  
 Sor une roche lez la mer.  
 2540 Lors comença floz a monter.  
 Quant il fu tot rasez e pleins,  
 Cil empeinst od pez e od meins  
 Son or es greignors parfondesces,  
 Puis si a dit: Alez, richescences,  
 2545 A mil e cinquante diables!  
 Ne serreiz mes od mei manables:  
 Car vos me quidastes neier,  
 Mes jeo vos neierai premer.  
 Maldit seit tot le vostre acost!  
 2550 Qui en vos a son quoyer repost,  
 Ne poet bone veie tenir  
 N'a la halte joie venir.  
  
 Seignors, por Deu l'omnipotent,  
 Ne semblez mie la serpent,  
 2555 Qui ses oreilles clot e serre

Other messengers came after  
 Who brought different news  
 Of how he had lost so much  
 That none knew the sum of it.  
 Then when he was in such distress,  
 He looked up and raised his eyes  
 Towards God who fashioned all the world,  
 And thought of his riches  
 Which had made him forget  
 What he ought to love more.  
 And so much he had his heart in them,  
 That he could not in any way  
 Detach himself nor give them up,  
 Nor honourably escape from them.  
 Then he reflected very deeply,  
 How he might get rid of all together.  
 His possessions and his treasure  
 All he sold, and purchased gold.  
 Whatever he had into gold he changed it;  
 In one lump he gathered it  
 Like to a millstone of a mill.  
 When he had sold all at last,  
 So that there was nothing left to sell  
 For which one could get a farthing,  
 All his clothes he sold piecemeal  
 Except his hose and his shirt,  
 Which left nothing else to sell.  
 His gold he rolled before him,  
 And when he had gathered it all  
 And had so prepared it  
 That he held it with a chain,  
 Yet he did not finish till he came  
 On to a rock near to the sea.  
 Then began the tide to flow.  
 When it was all smooth and full,  
 This man pushed with feet and hands  
 His gold into the greatest depths.  
 Then he exclaimed, "Go, ye riches,  
 To a thousand and fifty devils!  
 No more shall ye be along with me  
 For ye thought to drown me;  
 But I shall drown thee first.  
 Cursed be all thy life with me!  
 He who has set his heart on thee  
 Cannot keep on a good course  
 Nor attain to the fulness of joy!"  
  
 My masters, for God almighty's sake,  
 Be not like the serpent  
 Which stops its ear with its tail

Od sa eue encontre la terre,  
 Qu'ele n'oie l'enchanteor.  
 Quant la parole al salveor  
 Orreiz, ne vos estopez mie  
 2560 Ne la vëue ne l'oïe.  
 Aspis creint mult l'enchantement.  
 De son lignage i a grantment.  
 Dipsas en est la felonesse,  
 Qui mult est maïe traïtesse:  
 2565 Si tost com a un home mors,  
 D'angoisse de sei moert le cors.  
 Une altre en i a prialis,  
 Qui est de la lignee aspis,  
 Qui en dormant la gent occit,  
 2570 Si com le bestiaire dit.  
 La reïne Cleopatras,  
 Qui tant cremeit de mort le pas,  
 En mist od sei une poignant,  
 Si morut si com en dormant.  
 2575 Altre en i a, qui mult est fere  
 E de perillouse manere:  
 Comne dreit sanc est sa color,  
 Si point de si fere vigor  
 Home ou femme e tant li greve,  
 2580 Que chescune veine li creve,  
 Si seigne tant com seigner poet:  
 Apres le sanc morir l'estoet.  
 Uncor i a une plus male,  
 Qui mult a venim en sa male;  
 2585 Ceo qu'ele point, ja ne garist:  
 Car le cors maintenant porrist  
 E chet tot en puldre e en cendre.  
 L'alme li covent tantost rendre.

**De l'ostrice ne larrai mie,**  
 2590 Que sa nature ne vos die.  
 C'est une oisele merveilleuse,  
 Qui par nature est obliose.  
 Assida l'apelent Ebreu  
 E camelon a non en greu.  
 2595 Itels peiz a come cameil.  
 De sa nature m'esmerveil:  
 Car plumes a e eles granz  
 E si n'est nule feiz volanz.  
 En la saison, que ele pont,  
 2600 Enz el sablon ses oes repont,  
 E la les guerpist e oblie,  
 E sachez, qu'ele ne pont mie  
 Fors entor join el tens d'este.

And presses it against the earth,  
 That it hear not the enchanter.  
 When ye shall hear the word of the saviour,  
 Do not stop up  
 Either sight or hearing.  
 The asp much fears enchantment.  
 Of its race there are many;  
 The dipsas of them is the villain  
 And altogether bad and treacherous.  
 So soon as it has bitten a man  
 His body dies from agony of thirst;  
 Another there is of them—the prialis—  
 Which is of the family of asps  
 And kills people when asleep  
 As the bestiary says:  
 The queen Cleopatra  
 Who so feared the footstep of death,  
 Took in with her an asp  
 And died as if sleeping.  
 Another there is so very fierce  
 And of a dangerous kind,  
 Like pure blood is its colour,  
 It strikes with such savage force  
 Man or woman and hurts him so  
 That each vein bursts in him.  
 He bleeds as much as he can bleed,  
 And after the bleeding he must die.  
 There is still another worse,  
 Which has much venom in its mouth.  
 Whomever it strikes, he never recovers,  
 For the body putrifies at once  
 And falls in dust and ashes,  
 And must render up its soul forthwith.

**I shall not refrain from telling you**  
 Of the nature of the ostrich.  
 It is a wonderful bird  
 Which by nature is forgetful.  
 They call it assida in hebrew  
 And camelos is its name in greek.  
 It has feet like a camel.  
 Its nature astonishes me,  
 For it has feathers and great wings,  
 And yet at no time flies.  
 At the season when it lays,  
 It lays its eggs in the sand  
 And leaves them there and forgets,  
 And mark that it does not lay  
 Except about June in summer time.



Quant el son terme a esgarde  
 2605 E ele veit el cel lever  
 Une esteile, qui raie cler,  
 Quel esteile Vigille a non,  
 Donques pont en cele saison  
 E el sablon ses oes enfue,  
 2610 Que plus nes cove ne remue.  
 A ses oes ne retorne mes,  
 Dreit a l'esteile muse ades  
 E ses oes oblie e guerpist.  
 Mes Deus, qui tot le monde fist,  
 2615 Li aïde par tel devise.  
 Que el sablon e en la lise  
 Par l'air, qui est dolz e serein  
 E le tens al seir e al mein  
 Suf e de bone manere,  
 2620 Dedenz la moiste sablonere  
 Germent li oef e pulcins font:  
 C'est un des miracles del mont.

Iceste oisele signefie  
 Le prodhome de seinte vie,  
 2625 Qui lest les choses terrienes  
 E se prent as celestienes.  
 De ceste qui ses oes oblie,  
 Dist le prophete Jeremie,  
 Que ele esteit de si grant sens,  
 2630 Que conoisseeit el cel son tens.  
 Quant li oisel guerpist arere  
 S'engendrëure en la puldrere,  
 Por ceo que al cel apartent,  
 Sire Deus, porquoi ne sovent  
 2635 A home, que Deu fist resnable  
 E conoissant e entendable,  
 D'oblier les choses terrestres  
 Por avoir les joies celestres?  
 Ne poet mie a Deu parvenir  
 2640 Qui ne voelt lesser e guerpir  
 Les fales joies de cest mont;  
 Ja n'ateindra al cel amont.  
 Nostre sire meïsmes dit  
 E en l'evangile est escrit:  
 2645 Qui plus de mei aime son pere,  
 Son nz ou sa soer ou sa mere,  
 N'est pas digne de mei avoir.  
 Issi dist Deus, issi est veir.

**Or vos dirrom d'un altre oisel,**  
 2650 Qui mult par est corteis e bel  
 E mult aime e mult est ame,

When it has gazed its due time  
 And sees rising in the sky  
 A star which shines brightly,  
 Which star has the name Virgilia,  
 Then it lays at that time  
 And buries its eggs in the sand  
 And neither hatches nor disturbs them more.  
 To its eggs it never returns.  
 Right on the star its attention is,  
 And it forgets and leaves its eggs.  
 But God, who made all the world,  
 Helps them in such a way  
 That in the sand and drift-sand,  
 By the air which is soft and mild  
 And at evening and morning time  
 Is serene and favourable,  
 In the sand and in the dust  
 The eggs grow and make little birds;  
 It is one of the miracles of the world.

This bird signifies  
 The man of sound and holy life  
 Who abandons earthly things  
 And betakes himself to those of heaven.  
 Of that (bird) which forgets its eggs,  
 Says the prophet Jeremy,  
 That it is possessed of so great sense  
 That it knows in the sky its time.  
 When the bird leaves behind  
 Its offspring in the dust  
 For that which pertains to heaven,  
 O lord God, why is it not in the mind of man,  
 Whom God made with reasoning power  
 And knowing and understanding,  
 To forget the things of earth  
 For to gain the joys of heaven?  
 He cannot attain to God  
 Who will not leave and let go  
 The false joys of this world.  
 Nay! he will not attain to heaven above.  
 Our lord himself saith,  
 And in the gospel it is written:  
 He who loves his father more than me,  
 His son or his sister or his mother,  
 Is not worthy to have part with me.  
 Thus said God and thus it's true.

**Now we shall tell you of another bird**  
 Which is altogether courtly and fair,  
 And is very loving and beloved.

Le plus sojorne en bois rame.  
 C'est la turtre, dont nos parlom.  
 Qui tant aime son compaignon.  
 2655 La femele al madle s'assemble,  
 Toz jors sont dui e dui ensemble  
 Ou en montaigne ou en desert,  
 E si par aventure pert  
 La femele son conipaigon,  
 2660 James puis en nule saison  
 N'ert ore, qu'ele ne s'en doille,  
 James sor verdor ne sor foille,  
 Qu'el puisse, ne s'asserra.  
 Toz jors son pareil atendra,  
 2665 Saveir, se il retornereit.  
 A altre ne s'ajustereit  
 Por ren qui pëust avenir:  
 Tant lui voelt lealte tenir.  
 Quant ceste meintent chastete  
 2670 E se garde tot son ae  
 En lealte vers son pareil,  
 D'ome e de femme m'esmerveil,  
 Qui chastete a Deu pramet  
 E puis apres son vou malmet.  
 2675 Mult i a de la gent vileine,  
 Qui n'aiment pas d'amor certeine,  
 Si come fet la turturele,  
 Qui ses amors ne renovele  
 Aillors qu'a son premer ami,  
 2680 James nel mettra en obli,  
 E se cil moert, d'autre n'a cure.  
 No sont mie de tel nature  
 Plusors genz, qui el secle sont:  
 Car ja a un ne se tendront  
 2685 Espos ne espose a son per.  
 Quant l'un vent de l'autre enterrer,  
 Ainz que mange ait deus repaz,  
 Voelt altre avoir entre ses braz.  
 La turtre ne fet mie issi:  
 2690 Toz jors esgarde a son ami,  
 Toz jors atent, que il revenge  
 E que compaignie li tenge.  
  
 La turtre, qui ben i esgarde,  
 Que chaste e nette ades se garde,  
 2695 Nos signefie seinte eglise,  
 Si vos dirrai par quel devise.  
 Quant seinte eglise vit lier,  
 Batre e pendre e crucifier  
 Jesu Crist, son leal espos,  
 2700 Mult en out le quoyer angoissos.

It mostly dwells in leafy woods.  
 It is the turtle dove of which we speak  
 Which loves its mate so dearly.  
 The female with the male keeps company,  
 Always are they two and two together  
 Whether on mountain or in desert;  
 And if by chance the female  
 Loses her companion  
 Then never at any time or hour  
 Does she cease lamenting him.  
 Never o'er green field or leafy tree,  
 Although she may, will she settle.  
 Always will she await her mate,  
 To know if he will return.  
 To another will she not join  
 For aught that may happen,  
 So much to him she wishes to keep loyal.  
 As this bird stays chaste  
 And keeps all her life  
 Loyal to her mate,  
 I am astonished at a man or woman  
 Who promises to God to keep chaste  
 And then later breaks his vow.  
 Many wicked folk there are  
 Who love not with a constant love  
 As does the turtle-dove  
 Which renews not her affection  
 To other than her first love.  
 Never will she let him out of mind  
 And if he dies, has no care for other.  
 There are not many people  
 Of such nature in this world,  
 For they will not keep to one  
 Husband or wife for their mate.  
 When one has just buried the other,  
 Before he has eaten two meals  
 He wants to have another in his arms.  
 The turtle-dove does not do thus.  
 Always she looks for her love,  
 Always she waits for his return,  
 And for him to keep company with her.  
  
 The turtle-dove which so looks out,  
 Which ever keeps so chaste and clean,  
 Denotes holy church for us;  
 I will tell you in what way.  
 When holy church saw Jesus Christ,  
 Her loyal spouse, bound and struck,  
 And hanged and crucified,  
 Much was her heart distressed.

Toz jors s'est puis a lui tenue  
 Ne se volt faire a altre drue  
 Ne joindre ne acoinpaigner.  
 A lui est tot son desirer.  
 2705 Toz jors se tent a son pareil,  
 Jesu Crist, son leal feeil.  
 Quant l'auctor, qui rima cest livre,  
 Deveit ici entor escrivre,  
 Mult esteit tristes e dolanz:  
 2710 Car ja aveit este deus anz  
 Seinte eglise si dolerose  
 E si mate e si poorose,  
 Que meint quidouent par folie,  
 Que son espos l'eust guerpie:  
 2715 Car el n'osout le chef lever;  
 Poi i entrount gent por orer  
 En tote l'isle d'Engleterre.  
 Mult ert la dame en dure guerre  
 Par tot le reaime a cel jor  
 2720 E en peril e en dolor:  
 Car si enfant demeinement  
 Li moveient torneiement.  
 Li plus de la chevalerie  
 Plus qu'en une mahomerie  
 2725 N'i entrassent a cel termine.  
 Mult esteit en grant discipline  
 E tornee en chaitiveison  
 N'aveit mes gent si petit non  
 En tote Bretagne la grant,  
 2730 Qui ne fust fais e mescreant.  
 Por l'aveir, que il gaaignouent  
 De l'eglise, que il gardouent,  
 Erent li plus hait a devise  
 Contre la pais de seinte eglise  
 2735 Par roistie e par rnanace  
 Guerreiant e Deu e sa grace.

#### **Ne devom mettre en obliance**

Le dit ne la signefiance  
 Del cerf, qui estrangement oevre,  
 2740 Quant il manguë la coloevre,  
 Ceo est, quant il est enveilliz.  
 Puis est tot seins e refreschiz.  
 Quant vel e endeble se sent,  
 Si vet querre tot belement  
 2745 La fosse, ou la coloevre dort,  
 Qui mult le creint e het de mort.  
 La lettre nos testimonie,  
 Qu'il a d'ewe la boche emplie.

Always since has she held to him,  
 Nor does she wish to be the loved one of another  
 Nor to join him nor go with him.  
 Towards him is all her desire.  
 Always she keeps to her mate,  
 Jesus Christ, her true and faithful one.  
 When the author, who made this book in rhyme,  
 Was constrained to write on this  
 Much was he sad and grieving;  
 For for two years had holy church  
 Been so mournful,  
 So cast down, so fearful,  
 That many a one foolishly imagined  
 That her spouse had forsaken her;  
 For she dared not raise her head.  
 Few folk entered there to pray  
 In the whole of England's isle.  
 Much was the dame in harsh warfare  
 Throughout the realm in that time,  
 And in danger and in grief,  
 For her children in particular  
 Entered the lists against her.  
 The more part of knighthood  
 Would not enter there at that time,  
 No more than into a heathen temple.  
 Many a man suffered from stripes  
 And was thrown into prison.  
 Never were folk so few in number  
 In the whole of great Britain  
 Who were not false and wicked.  
 For the goods which they obtained  
 From the church, which they guarded,  
 Were the highest divided in dispute  
 Against the peace of holy church.  
 By deeds of force and by threats  
 They warred against God and his grace.

#### **We must not leave forgotten**

The story and the meaning  
 Of the stag, which acts so strangely  
 When it eats the serpent,  
 That is, when it has grown old;  
 Then it is quite healthy and restored.  
 When it feels old and feeble,  
 It goes quite carefully to seek  
 The hole where the serpent sleeps,  
 Which fears it much and hates it with a deadly hate.  
 The writing testifies to us,  
 When it has filled its mouth with water,

A l'entree del croes l'espant,  
 2750 E la coloevre maintenant  
 S'en ist, que remaindre n'i poet:  
 Car des narilles al cerf moët  
 E de sa boche ist une aleine,  
 Que par force hors l'en ameine.  
 2755 Tot hors s'en ist beant la gule,  
 E li cers l'occit e defule.

Altresi fist nostre seignor  
 Jesu Crist, nostre salveor,  
 Quant les portes d'enfer brisa  
 2760 E le diable defula.  
 En lui sorst la clere fontaine,  
 Qui est de sapience pleine,  
 Dont diables ne poet soffrir  
 La parole ne sustenir.  
 2765 Quant par terre alout preechant  
 E come verais Deus ovrant,  
 Un diable en un home entrout,  
 Qui durement le tormentout,  
 E quant nostre sire vint la,  
 2770 Li diables li demanda:  
 Fiz Deu, porquoi venis si tost,  
 2772 Por tormenter nos e nostre ost?  
 Ceste parole en oiant dist,  
 E nostre sire li enquist,  
 2775 Non pas por ceo qu'il ne sëust,  
 Quel non cil diables ëust,  
 E cil respondi: Legion,  
 Mil somes, qui de ceo servom.  
 Donc prierent Jesu meïsme,  
 2780 Qu'il nes enveïast en abisme,  
 Mes s'il d'ïloeques les getast,  
 Que en un foie les enveïast  
 De pors, qui pres d'ïloec esteient  
 En un plesseiz, ou il pesseient.  
 2785 Nostre sire lor dist: Alez!  
 Atant sont cil es pors entrez.  
 Deus millers en i aveit ben,  
 Qui puis n'orent mester a ren,  
 Mes dreit a la mer s'avancerent  
 2790 E en milieu se trebucherent.  
 Seignors, de ceo n'estoet doter:  
 Diables ne poet escoter  
 La parole nostre seignor,  
 Qu'il nen ait torment e dolor.  
 2795 L'apostre dit veraïement,  
 Que nostre sire al finement  
 Le felon diable occira

Into the mouth of the hole it spues it,  
 And the serpent at once  
 Comes out, and cannot stay there;  
 For from the nostrils of the stag comes forth  
 And from its mouth issues a blast  
 Which fetches it out perforce.  
 Right out it comes with jaws agape  
 And the stag kills and destroys it.

Just the same did our lord  
 Jesus Christ, our saviour,  
 When he burst the gates of hell  
 And destroyed the devil.  
 In him wells up the clear fountain,  
 Which is full of wisdom,  
 Of which the devil cannot endure  
 The word nor abide it.  
 When on earth he went preaching  
 And like the true God working,  
 A devil entered into a man  
 And tormented him sorely,  
 And when our lord came there  
 The devil demanded of him:  
 Son of God, why art thou come so soon  
 To torment us and our host?  
 On hearing these words he spake  
 And our Lord asked him—  
 Not that he did not know—  
 What name this devil had;  
 And he replied: Legion.  
 A thousand we are, who serve this one.  
 Then they prayed Jesus himself  
 That he would not send them into the pit,  
 But if he would cast them out thence  
 That into a herd of swine he would  
 Send them, which was near by  
 In a pound, where they fed.  
 Our Lord said to them: Go!  
 At once are they entered into the swine.  
 Two thousand there were of them quite,  
 Which then were good for nothing;  
 But straight to the sea they made their way  
 And plunged into the midst.  
 My masters, of this be not in doubt,  
 The devil cannot hear  
 The words of our lord  
 Without suffering pain and grief.  
 The apostle says truly  
 That our lord at the end  
 Will slay that scoundrel devil

Par la parole, qui istra  
 De sa boche benëuree.  
 2800 Ceo est ben chose assëuree.  
  
 Li cers, si com jeo vos ai dit,  
 Se reforme e longuement vit.  
 Del son del frestel s'esmerveille.  
 Quant il a susleve l'oreille,  
 2805 Si oit cler, e quant il l'abesse,  
 Si vos di, que l'oïe cesse.  
 Al bosoing poet ben trespasser  
 Un grant fluive ou braz de mer.  
 Es montaignes meint volenters:  
 2810 Ceo sont les leus, qu'il a plus chers.  
 Par les monz entendre devom  
 Les prophetes de grant renom,  
 Qui l'avenement Deu conurent,  
 E les apostles, qui od lui furent;  
 2815 E par le cerf devom entendre  
 Cels qui a Deu se voelent rendre:  
 Car il troevent en la montaigne  
 Qui salvacion lor enseigne,  
 Si corne le psalmistre dit  
 2820 En un psalme, qui est petit:  
 Es monz, fet il, levai mes elz,  
 Aïe en oi, si m'en fu melz.

**La salamandre est une beste,**  
 Qui de la eue e de la teste  
 2825 E del cors ressemble lesarde,  
 Si n'a poor, que nul feu l'arde:  
 Del feu ne dote la cholor.  
 Mult est de diverse color.  
 Si en feu vent par aventure,  
 2830 Li feus esteindra a dreiture;  
 Ja ne serra si alumez,  
 Qu'il ne seit tost tot aquassez.  
 Venim porte de tel vertu,  
 Que mult tost a home abatu  
 2835 E si fereit grant destorber,  
 S'ele montout en un pomer.  
 Les pomes envenime issi,  
 Qui en manguë, il est fini.  
 E si en un grant puiz chaeit,  
 2840 Tote l'ewe envenimereit,  
 Que nul liom n'en bevreit sanz mort.  
 Taut est le venim de li fort.

lceste beste signefie  
 Le prodhonie de seinte vie,

By the word which shall issue  
 From his blessed mouth;  
 That is a very certain thing.  
  
 The stag, as I have told you,  
 Rejuvenates and lives long after.  
 At the sound of the pipe it is startled.  
 When it has cocked its ear  
 It hears clearly, and when it lowers it  
 I tell you that its hearing stops.  
 At need it is quite able to cross  
 A great river or arm of the sea.  
 It dwells in the mountains willingly,  
 Those are its haunts which it loves most.  
 By the mountains we must understand  
 The prophets of great renown  
 Who were aware of the coming of God,  
 And the apostles who were with him;  
 And by the stag, we must understand  
 Those who will to give themselves to God;  
 For they find in the mountain  
 Him who teaches the way of salvation,  
 As the psalmist says  
 In a psalm which is a little one,  
 To the hills, he saith, I lifted up mine eyes,  
 Whence I had help and I was the better for it.

**The salamander is a beast,**  
 Which in tail and in head  
 And in body is like a lizard.  
 It has no fear that any fire burn it,  
 For of fire, it does not fear the heat.  
 Many diverse colours it has.  
 If in fire by chance it gets  
 The fire it will put out straightway;  
 No matter how big a blaze there is,  
 It is all put out at once.  
 It carries poison of such strength  
 That it has struck down a man at once,  
 And it would do great damage  
 If it climbed up an apple tree.  
 The apples it so poisons that  
 Whoever eats them, he is done for.  
 And if it fall into a great well  
 It will poison all the water,  
 So that none can drink it and survive;  
 So powerful is its venom.

This beast signifies  
 The man of sense and holy life,

2845 Qui tant est de parfite fei,  
 Que il esteint environ sei  
 Le feu e l'ardor de luxure  
 E des vices la grant ardure.  
 Ne quidez pas, que jeo vos mente.  
 2850 Le feu, qui les almes tormente,  
 Ne poet avoir vers cels vigor,  
 Qui ben servent nostre seignor  
 De bone fei parfitement  
 Ne crement nul embrasement,  
 2855 Que diable lor puisse faire,  
 Qui tant est fel e deputaire.  
 En feu furent Ananias,  
 Misael e Azarias:  
 Onques de ren malmis n'i furent,  
 2860 Por eeo qu'en bone fei esturent.  
 Seignors, ceo n'est nule dotance:  
 Par fei e par bone creance  
 Poet l'em veintre sèurement  
 Tote manere de torment.  
 2865 La lettre nos testimonie,  
 Si est escrit en Ysaïe,  
 Que par fei ont trestuit li seint  
 Pecche vencu e feu esteint.  
 Qui si bone creance avreit  
 2870 E ferme fei com il devreit,  
 Les monz fereit par comander  
 De leus en altres remuer.  
 Certes, qui est leel en fei,  
 Mult a riche vertu en sei.  
 2875 Totes veies al desus vent  
 Qui fei e charite meintent.  
 Mes si il charite n'aveit,  
 Nule vertu ne li valdreit.  
 Seint Pol nos dit, que ne valt ren  
 2880 Almosne ne nul altre ben  
 Ne creance ne lealte,  
 Si ovoeqes n'est charite.

#### **Entre toz les autres oisels**

Est li coloms corteis e bels  
 2885 E en bone signefiance.  
 Seinz espiriz en sa semblance  
 Descendi al baptizement  
 De Jesu Crist veraïement,  
 E meinte feiz est avenu,  
 2890 Que en sa semblance est venu  
 Seint esprit, por conforter  
 Cels que oem soleit tormenter,

Who is so filled with perfect faith  
 That he puts out around him  
 The fire and heat of lust  
 And the burning heat of vices.  
 Pray don't think I lie to you.  
 The fire which torments souls  
 Can have no strength for those  
 Who serve our lord well  
 In good and perfect faith.  
 They fear no burning  
 Which the devil may prepare for them,  
 Who is so wicked and scheming.  
 In fire were Ananias,  
 Misael and Azarias;  
 In no way were they hurt there,  
 Because they were sustained by faith.  
 My masters, there is no doubt of it,  
 By faith and by good belief  
 May man surely overcome  
 All kinds of torment.  
 The scripture testifies to us,  
 It is written in Isaiah,  
 That by faith the saints completely have  
 Overcome sin and put out fire.  
 Whoso should have so strong belief  
 And firm faith as he ought,  
 Could cause the mountains by his word  
 To remove from one place to another.  
 Surely whoso is loyal in the faith  
 Is himself rich in strength.  
 In all ways he comes to the top  
 Who lives in faith and charity.  
 But if he had not charity  
 No strength would avail him.  
 Saint Paul tells us they avail nothing:  
 Alms nor any other good  
 Nor belief nor loyalty  
 If there be not charity with them.

#### **Among all the other birds**

Is the dove a courtly and pretty one  
 And has a good meaning.  
 The holy spirit in the likeness of it  
 Descended at the baptizing  
 Of Jesus Christ without doubt,  
 And many a time it has happened  
 That in its likeness has come  
 The holy spirit for to comfort  
 Those whom man is wont to persecute,

Por faire lor cel Deu guerpir,  
 Qui tot poet salver e garir.  
 2895 Jadis chescun an soleit l'em  
 En la cit de Jerusalem  
 La veille de pasche veoir  
 Un colom blanc venir por veir,  
 Qui aportout le feu novel.  
 2900 En colom a mult dolz oisel  
 E sanz fel e sanz amertume,  
 Si a une bele costume:  
 Car en baisant s'entracompaignent,  
 Que en baisant d'amor espraignent.  
 2905 Quant il sont enz el colomber  
 Deus cenz ou treis ou un miller,  
 Un en i a, qui mult est proz:  
 Quant il se moet, si moevent toz.  
 Cil les meine de totes parz  
 2910 Es montaignes e es essarz  
 E es pleins chams e es arez,  
 Es gaignages e es semez.  
 E quant il troeve les salvages,  
 Il est tant vezîez e sages,  
 2915 Qu'il les trait a son colomber.  
 Issi lor fet le bois lesser  
 E la salvagesce oblier  
 E od lui les fet converser.  
  
 Icest oisel nos signifie  
 2920 Jesu, qui tot a en baillie,  
 Qui tot gouverne e qui tot fait  
 E qui de totes parz atrait  
 Les coloms a son colomber  
 E le champestre e le ramer.  
 2925 Son colomber est seinte eglise,  
 Ou il atrait a son servise  
 Par bone predication  
 Nos qui salvages esteiom.  
 De Sarrazins e de Paens  
 2930 A fet sovent bons crestiens  
 E fera vers le finement  
 Tote la gent comunement  
 Assembler en la fei comune.  
 Donc vendront les deus leis a une:  
 2935 Car la lei, qui esteit sauvage,  
 Serra remise en dreit veiage.  
 Deus est esperitals coloms:  
 Bons est e bels e lez e Ions,  
 E ses eles si larges sont,  
 2940 Que acoevrent trestot le mont.  
 La veie, que il nos enseigne,

To make them forsake that God  
 Who is quite able to save and heal them.  
 Formerly each year was one used  
 In the city of Jerusalem  
 To see on the eve of Easter  
 A white dove really come,  
 Which brought the new fire.  
 In the dove you have a very sweet bird  
 Without guile and without bitterness;  
 It has a pretty habit,  
 For in billing they are so associated,  
 That when billing they are inflamed with love.  
 When they are within the dovecote—  
 Two or three hundred or a thousand—  
 One there is which is very bold.  
 When he moves, they move all of them.  
 He leads them from all sides  
 To the mountains and forest glades,  
 To the open fields and ploughlands,  
 And to the fields of sown corn.  
 And when he finds the wild pigeons,  
 He is so clever and wise,  
 That he brings them to his dovecote.  
 In such way he makes them leave the wood  
 And forget their wild nature,  
 And makes them consort with him.  
  
 This bird signifies to us  
 Jesus, who in his charge has all,  
 Who governs all and who does all.  
 And who from all parts brings  
 The pigeons to his pigeon-cote,  
 Both field and wood pigeons.  
 His pigeon-cote is holy church,  
 Where he brings to his service  
 By good preaching  
 Us who were wild.  
 Out of Saracens and of Pagans  
 He has often made good christians,  
 And will cause toward the end  
 All people to gather together  
 In one common faith.  
 Then shall come the two laws into one;  
 For the law which was wild  
 Will be brought into the right course.  
 God is the spiritual dove;  
 Good is he and fair, and broad and tall,  
 And his wings are so wide  
 That they cover all the world.  
 The way which he teaches us

Devom aler, nuls ne s'en feigne!  
 Si ceo fesom s'ëurement,  
 Toz nos merra a salvement.  
 2945 Vos ne devez esperer mie,  
 Que Moÿses ne Ysaïe  
 Ne prophete ne messenger,  
 Que onques Deus ëust tant cher,  
 Nos meïst a salvacion.  
 2950 Mes cil par s'incarnacion,  
 Qui del halt pere descendi,  
 Salu e vie nos rendi.  
 Deu, qui voleit humein lignage  
 Raeindre e oster de servage  
 2955 E assembler en seinte eglise,  
 Enveia ainz en meinte guise  
 Çajus en terre preecher  
 Meint prophete, meint messenger,  
 Ou li seinz esperiz parlout  
 2960 E en meinte guise prechout,  
 Coment nostre sire vendreit  
 Salver le mont, qui perisseit.  
 Uncor avom assez a dire  
 Des coloms e de lor matire.

2965 **Un arbre a en Ynde la grant**  
 Bel e foillu e ombreiant.  
 Fruit porte bon e dolz e cher,  
 E si vos os ben aficher,  
 Si com la lettre le m'aprent,  
 2970 Que grant est l'ombre, que il rent.  
 Bels est dedenz e environ,  
 E si dient, que il a non  
 Paradixion en gregeis:  
 Ceo sone altretant en franceis  
 2975 Come dire "environ la destre".  
 Soz cel arbre fet mult bel estre.  
 La dedenz maignent e habitent  
 Coloms, qui forment se delitent:  
 Car il sont del fruit saolez  
 2980 E desoz l'ombre reposez.  
 Ja d'iloee nes estoet moveir,  
 Por avoir tot lor estoveir.  
 Un dragon a en cel païs,  
 Qui as coloms est enemis:  
 2985 Car il les manguë e devore.  
 Mes cil qui soz l'arbre demore  
 E desoz l'ombre ades se tent,  
 De ren nel dote ne nel creint.  
 Li colom, qui conoissent ben,

We must go—let no one neglect it.  
 If we surely do that  
 He will lead us all to safety.  
 You ought not to hope,  
 That Moses or Isaiah  
 Or prophet or messenger  
 That God had ever held so dear  
 May lead us to salvation,  
 But he by his incarnation,  
 Who came down from the father on high,  
 Gave us healing and life.  
 God, who willed to redeem the human race,  
 And to bring it out of bondage  
 And gather it in holy church,  
 Sent formerly in many a guise  
 Down on earth to preach  
 Many a prophet, many a messenger,  
 By whom the holy spirit spake  
 And in many a way preached  
 How our lord should come  
 To save the world which was perishing.  
 We have something more to say  
 About the doves and their story.

**A tree there is in India the great**  
 Beautiful and full of leaf and shady,  
 Fruit it bears good and sweet and choice,  
 And I can well assure you  
 As the writing apprises me,  
 That great is the shade which it gives.  
 Beautiful it is within and around  
 And they say it has the name  
 Paradixion in greek.  
 That sounds the equivalent in french  
 Of saying "environ la destre".  
 Beneath this tree 'tis very nice to be;  
 In it there stay and dwell  
 Doves in great enjoyment,  
 For they are sated with the fruit  
 And rest beneath the shadow.  
 From there indeed they need not stir,  
 For they have all that they need.  
 There is a dragon in that country  
 Which to the doves is enemy,  
 For he eats and devours them.  
 But that which dwells under the tree  
 And within the shadow continually stays  
 Has nothing to doubt or fear.  
 The doves who know quite well



2990 Que cil les het sor tote ren,  
 Se tenent soz l'arbre toz dis,  
 Si n'est alcuns fols e jolis.  
 Qui d'iloques ist folement,  
 Quant il s'en ist, tost s'en repent.  
 2995 Le dragon crement les coloms,  
 E altretant creint li dragons  
 D'aprismer a l'arbre e a l'ombre.  
 Nule feiz les coloms n'encombre,  
 S'il nes troeve de l'ombre eissuz;  
 3000 Se il les troeve, si sont perduz:  
 Car il est toz dis en agait.  
 Quant cel arbre son ombre fait  
 En la partie devers destre,  
 Donc est li dragons a senestre.  
 3005 Quant l'ombre vers senestre torne,  
 Li dragons a destre retorne:  
 Il ne porreit l'ombre soffrir,  
 Qu'errant ne l'esteüst morir.  
 Les coloms, qui sont proz e sage,  
 3010 Se tenent ades soz l'ombrage  
 De l'arbre, que lor adversaire  
 Ne lor puist nul ennui faire;  
 Mes s'alcuns folement s'esmoet,  
 Icil le prent, qui faire le poet.  
 3015 Ignelement l'a devore:  
 Car mult li semble savore.  
  
 Nos crestiens, qui ben savom.  
 Qui est cel arbre e com a non.  
 Nos devriom toz jors tenir  
 3020 Desoz l'ombre e a lui venir:  
 Car d'iloec moet tot nostre ben.  
 De male chose n'i a ren.  
 C'est nostre pere omnipotent,  
 Qui son ombre e ses reims estent  
 3025 Sor toz cels qui venent a lui,  
 Por avoir garant e refui.  
 Le fruit de l'arbre signefie  
 Jesu, le fiz seinte Marie.  
 Ceo est le fruit, qui nos gari,  
 3030 Quant esteiom mort e peri.  
 Par le fruit, que Adam gusta,  
 De joie nos deserita;  
 Le fiz Deu, qui gusta le fel,  
 Nos rendi la joie del cel.  
 3035 Li fruiz de l'arbre nos trahi,  
 Li fiz Deu nos reinst e gari.  
 Qui el fust pendre se lessa,  
 L'aisil but e le fel manga.

That he hates them above all things,  
 Keep ever under the tree,  
 Unless there be one foolish and silly.  
 Which of them stupidly goes out,  
 When it has gone, it repents fully.  
 The doves fear the dragon,  
 And contrariwise the dragon fears  
 To approach the tree and its shadow.  
 At no time does he hurt the doves  
 If he does not find them outside the shadow;  
 If he so finds them, they are lost.  
 For he is always on the watch.  
 When this tree casts its shadow  
 On the side towards the right  
 Then is the dragon on the left.  
 When the shadow turns toward the left  
 The dragon returns to the right.  
 He could not endure the shadow,  
 Which in its course is never doomed to die.  
 The doves which are knowing and wise,  
 Keep ever beneath the shadow  
 Of the tree so that their enemy  
 Cannot do them any harm;  
 But if any one foolishly goes out,  
 He catches it as he can do.  
 At once he has devoured it,  
 For he finds it very savoury.  
  
 We christians who know well  
 What is this tree and how 'tis named,  
 Ought always to stay  
 Beneath the shadow and to come to it;  
 For thence springs all our good;  
 Of evil thing there is nothing.  
 It is our almighty father  
 Who spreads his shadow and his branches  
 Over all those who come to him  
 For to get protection and refuge.  
 The fruit of the tree signifies  
 Jesus, the son of saint Mary.  
 That is the fruit which healed us,  
 When we were dead and perished.  
 By the fruit which Adam tasted  
 He deprived us of joy;  
 The son of God who tasted gall,  
 Restored to us the joy of heaven.  
 The fruit of the tree betrayed us,  
 The son of God redeemed and healed us,  
 Who on the tree-stem let himself be hung,  
 Drank the vinegar and ate the gall.

Or devom ben entendre tuit,  
 3040 Quel est l'arbre, quel est le fruit.  
 L'arbre est pere, le fruit est fiz,  
 E l'ombre est li seinz esperiz,  
 Si com l'angle dist a Marie,  
 La seinte reïne florie:  
 3045 Li seinz esperiz survendra  
 En tei, en qui s'aombera  
 La vertu del treshalt seignor;  
 De tei nestra le salveor.  
 En l'arbre devom sanz mesprendre  
 3050 La persone ciel pere entendre,  
 El fruit la persone del fiz,  
 La terce est li seinz esperiz,  
 Qui de l'un e de l'autre veut.  
 Issi creire le nos covent,  
 3055 Si nos almes volom salver.  
 Si hors de ceo nos poet trover  
 Li mals dragons, qui nos delie.  
 Maintenant nos toldra la vie.

Seignors, de ceo nos porpensom.  
 3060 Desoz cest arbre nos tenom:  
 Car nos somes del fruit peuz  
 E de l'ombre ben defeuduz,  
 Que ja n'aprismera a nos  
 Le felon dragon envios.  
 3065 Tenom nos dedenz seinte eglise  
 En bone fei, en Deu servise.  
 Si hors de la creance issom,  
 Nos serrom livrez al dragon,  
 Qui n'atent fors, que hors s'en isse  
 3070 Le fol dolent, qu'il le saisisse.  
 De ceo seiom sœurs e liz:  
 Si el non del pere e del fiz  
 E ciel seint espir nos tenoin  
 En la seinte religion,  
 3075 Que seinte eglise nos enseigne,  
 E al dolz cri e a l'enseigne  
 De la seinte croiz aoree,  
 Nostre vie ert benëuree.  
 E sachez ben, qui ceo ne creit,  
 3080 Qu'uns Deus en treis persones seit,  
 Qui tot crea e qui tot fist,  
 Il est de la gent antecrist.  
 Nos somes li colom feeil,  
 Qui de la grace e del conseil  
 3085 Nostre seignor vivre porrom,  
 Tant com soz l'arbre nos tendrom.  
 Jesus meïsmes, nostre sire,

Now must we clearly understand  
 What is the tree, what is the fruit.  
 The tree is father, the fruit is son,  
 And the shadow is the holy spirit,  
 As the angel said to Mary,  
 The holy flower-crowned queen:  
 The holy spirit shall come upon thee  
 And the power of the lord most high  
 Shall overshadow thee;  
 Of thee shall be born the saviour.  
 By the tree must we without mistake  
 The person of the father understand,  
 By the fruit the person of the son,  
 The third is the holy spirit  
 Which from the one and the other springs.  
 So it behoves us to believe  
 If we wish to save our souls.  
 If outside it he can find us—  
 The wicked dragon who betrays us—  
 At once he will of life deprive us.

My masters, on this let us ponder,  
 Let us keep beneath this tree;  
 For we are fed with the fruit  
 And so well defended by the shadow  
 That the wicked jealous dragon  
 Shall not come nigh us.  
 Let us keep within holy church  
 In good faith, in God's service.  
 If outside the faith we stray  
 We shall be delivered to the dragon,  
 Who waits without that he may catch  
 The silly fool who goes outside.  
 Of this let us be certain and sure:  
 If in the name of the father and of the son  
 And of the holy spirit we keep  
 In the holy religion  
 Which holy church teaches us,  
 And to the sweet appeal and sign  
 Of the sacred cross adored,  
 Will our life be blessed.  
 And know well, he who disbelieves  
 That one God is in three persons,  
 Who created all and who made all,  
 He is of the anti-christian race.  
 We are the faithful doves  
 Who on the grace and counsel  
 Of our lord shall be able to live,  
 As long as we keep under the tree.  
 Jesus himself, our lord,

Nos amoneste en l'evangire,  
 Dont nos ben creire le devom:  
 3090 Seiom simples come colom  
 E si sages come serpent!  
 E quels est or l'entendement  
 De ceste parole coverte?  
 Jeo la vos mosterai aperte.  
 3095 C'est a dire, que nos seiom  
 Si simples, que nos n'engignom  
 Vers nostre proisme felonie,  
 E si sages, que la boisdie  
 Ne l'agait de nostre adversaire  
 3100 Ne nos puist en nul leu mal faire.  
 Seignors, por le haltisme rei,  
 A seinte eglise e a la fei  
 Demorom e parseverom:  
 Car en la fin salf en serrom.  
  
 3105 Uncor m'estoet que vos devis  
 Des coloms, qui sont blans e bis.  
 Li un ont color aerine  
 E li altre l'ont stephanine.  
 Li un sont vair, li autre ros,  
 3110 Li un vermail, li un cendros,  
 E des coloms i a plusors,  
 Qui ont trestotes ces colors.  
 Cil qui est en color divers,  
 Ceo me dit ma lettre e mon vers,  
 3115 Demostre la diversete  
 Des prophetes por verite,  
 Des doze, qui diversement  
 Anoncerent l'avenement  
 Nostre seignor, mes neporquant  
 3120 Trestuit sont a un acordant,  
 Qui de chescun savreit entendre  
 Les paroles e raison rendre.  
 Mes il covendreit en la lettre  
 Dreite interpretacion mettre.  
 3125 El colom, qui ressemble cendre,  
 Devom certainement entendre  
 Le corteis prophete Jonas,  
 Ceo ne devez mescreire pas,  
 Qui en haire e en cendre ala  
 3130 As Ninivens e preecha  
 Nostre seignor come leals  
 Al poeple mescreant e fais.  
 E Deu l'en rendi gueredon,  
 Quant il el ventre del peisson  
 3135 Le salva e gari de mort  
 E puis le mena a bon port.

Exhorts us in the gospel,  
 Whereby we ought to believe him:  
 Let us be simple as doves  
 And as wise as serpents!  
 And what then is the meaning  
 Of this hidden saying?  
 I will show it to you plainly.  
 It is to say that we should be  
 So simple, that we do not plot  
 Ill schemes against our neighbour;  
 And so wise, that the deceit  
 And lying in wait of our enemy  
 Can nowhere do us harm.  
 My masters, for the most high king's sake,  
 In holy church and in the faith  
 Let us dwell and ever stay,  
 For at the end we shall be safe in it.  
  
 It is still needful that I distinguish for you  
 Some doves which are light and dark.  
 The one sort has the colour of the air  
 And the other has it greenish.  
 Some are parti-coloured, others russet,  
 Some bright red, others of ashy tint.  
 And of the doves there are several  
 Which have all these colours.  
 That which is in varied colours  
 Gives me my theme and my verse.  
 It shows forth the diversity  
 Of the prophets verily;  
 Of the twelve, who in different ways  
 Announced the coming  
 Of our lord, but nevertheless  
 All are completely in accord,  
 Which should enable us to understand  
 The words of each and interpret them aright.  
 But it will be convenient in my text  
 To give a right interpretation.  
 In the dove which is like to ash  
 We must certainly understand  
 The good prophet Jonah,—  
 This you must not misbelieve,—  
 Who in sackcloth and ashes  
 Went to the Ninevites  
 And preached our lord as true  
 To people misbelieving and false.  
 And God rewarded him for it,  
 When he in the belly of the fish  
 Saved and preserved him from death  
 And then brought him safe to land.

Li coloms, qui a l'air resemble,  
 Signefie, si com mei semble,  
 Le prophete, qui fu ravi:  
 3140 C'est Elias, dont jeo vos di,  
 Que nos quidom uncor en vie.  
 E li blans coloms signefie  
 Seint Johan, qui premerement  
 Comença le baptizement  
 3145 El non de celui qui veneit,  
 Qui uncor a venir esteit.  
 El baptesme, ben le sachez.  
 Est home lavez de pecchez.  
 Le prophete Ysaïes dist,  
 3150 Lonc tens einz que Johan venist:  
 Lavez vos e seiez mondez!  
 Mals pensers de vos quoers otez!  
 Car si devant esteiez neir,  
 Trestuit serreiz donc blanc por veir.  
 3155 Li roges coloms par raison  
 Signefie la passion,  
 Ou Jesu son sanc expandi,  
 Qui vie e veie nos rendi.  
 Autrement fussom mort sanz fin.  
 3160 Li coloms, qui est stephanin,  
 Nos deit seint Estefne noter,  
 Qui por Deu se laissa pener  
 E premerement deservi  
 Par le martire, qu'il soffri,  
 3165 Veeir le fil Deu a sa destre  
 Estant en la joie celestre.  
 Or avez oï des coloms  
 Le chapitre, qui ben est lons,  
 E si ben l'avez retenu,  
 3170 Mult vos en est melz avenu:  
 Car bone essample i poëz prendre,  
 Si la raison volez entendre,  
 E en apres voilliez ovrer:  
 Grant ben i porreiz recovrer.  
 3175 **De l'olifant ne devom pas**  
 La parole tenir a gas.  
 C'est la greignor beste qui seit  
 E qui greignor fes portereit,  
 Si est ben sage e entendable.  
 3180 En bataille est mult covenable:  
 Iloeques a mester mult grant.  
 Li Yndien e li Persant,  
 Quant il venent en granz estors,  
 Soelent desus charger granz tors

The dove which is like the air  
 Signifies as it seems to me  
 The prophet who was taken up.  
 He is Elijah of whom I tell you,  
 Who, we believe, is still alive.  
 And the white dove signifies  
 Saint John, who first  
 Began baptizing  
 In the name of him who was coming,  
 Who was yet to come.  
 By baptism—know it well—  
 Is man washed from sin.  
 The prophet Isaiah said  
 Long time before John came:  
 Wash ye and be ye clean!  
 Remove ill thoughts from your hearts!  
 For if ye were black before  
 Verily ye shall be all white.  
 The red dove rightly  
 Signifies the passion,  
 When Jesus shed his blood,  
 Which gave us life and joy,  
 Otherwise were we dead everlastingly.  
 The dove which is dark green  
 Should mark for us saint Stephen,  
 Who for God's sake let himself be tortured,  
 And was the first rewarded  
 Through martyrdom, which he suffered,  
 By seeing the son of God standing  
 At his right in heavenly joy.  
 Now ye have heard the chapter  
 Of the doves, which is full long;  
 And if ye have grasped it well,  
 Great benefit have ye got from it.  
 For a good lesson ye can get from it.  
 If ye wish to understand aright  
 And will act on it in future,  
 Great good can ye obtain therefrom.

**We ought not to hold the story**  
 Of the elephant to ridicule.  
 It is the biggest beast there is  
 And can carry the biggest loads.  
 It is full wise and understanding.  
 In battle it is very useful;  
 There it plays a great part.  
 The Indians and the Persians  
 When they engage in great combats  
 Are wont to load great towers on it

3185 De fustz dolez ben quernelees.  
 Quant il venent en granz mellees,  
 Iloeqes montent li archer,  
 Li sergant e li chevaler,  
 Por lancer a lor enemis.  
 3190 La femele, ceo m'est avis,  
 Porte deus anz, quant ele est preinz.  
 Idonques foone e nent einz,  
 Ne jamais nule, ceo sachez,  
 N'enfantera que une feiz  
 3195 Ne donc n'avra que un foon.  
 Si grant poor a d'un dragon,  
 Qu'en une ewe vet fooner,  
 Por son foon de mort garder,  
 E li madles dehors atent,  
 3200 Qui andeus les garde e defent.  
 La lettre dit des olifanz,  
 Qu'il vivent ben deus cenx anz.  
 En Ynde, en Alfrique est lor estre,  
 En ces terres soleient nestre;  
 3205 En Alfrique ne naissent mes,  
 Mes en Ynde maignent ades.  
 Quant li madles voelt engendrer  
 En sa compaignie e en sa per,  
 Vers orient andui s'en vont  
 3210 Juste parais a un mont,  
 Iloec ou creist la mandragoire,  
 Dont nos ferom apres memoire.  
 La femele de l'olifant  
 Aprisme a l'erbe maintenant,  
 3215 Si manguë de l'erbe einceis,  
 E li madles sanz nul gabeis  
 En mangue, quant il ceo veit:  
 Car la femele le deceit.  
 Quant ambedui en ont mange  
 3220 E ont deduit e enveise  
 E assemble a lor affaire,  
 Si come bestes doivent faire,  
 La femele tantost conceit,  
 E le foon, qu'ele receit,  
 3225 Porte deus anz, com dit vos ai.  
 Vers son terme est en grant esmai  
 Por le dragon, qui les espie.  
 En une ewe grant replenie  
 Vet fooner por le dragon,  
 3230 Qu'il ne li toille son foon:  
 Car si dehors l'ewe l'aveit,  
 Le dragon le devoërreit.  
  
 En ces bestes par verite

Of worked wood well embattled.  
 When they come into a great fight  
 There mount up the archers,  
 The squires and the knights,  
 For to shoot at their enemies.  
 The female I am told  
 Carries two years when pregnant,  
 Then gives birth and not before;  
 Nor will she ever—know this—  
 Give birth more than once  
 And then she will have but one calf.  
 She fears so much a dragon,  
 That in a pond she goes to calve  
 For to keep her young from death;  
 And the male keeps watch outside  
 To guard and defend them both.  
 The writing says of the elephants  
 That they live quite two hundred years.  
 In India and in Africa is their abode;  
 In these countries they used to be born,  
 In Africa they are born no more,  
 But in India they still remain.  
 When the male will beget young  
 By his companion and mate  
 To the east together they go  
 To a mountain hard by paradise  
 There where the mandrake grows,  
 Of which we shall make mention later.  
 The female of the elephant  
 Goes to the plant at once,  
 She eats of the plant first,  
 And the male without ado  
 Eats of it too when he sees that,  
 For the female beguiles him.  
 When both have eaten of it  
 And have played and frolicked  
 And come together to their business  
 As beasts should do,  
 The female at once conceives,  
 And the calf which she gets  
 She bears two years, as I have told you.  
 Near her time she is in great fear  
 Of the dragon which spies on them.  
 In a pond very deep she goes  
 To give birth because of the dragon,  
 That he may not steal away her calf;  
 For if she had it out of the water  
 The dragon would devour it.  
  
 In these beasts verily

Sont Eve e Adam figure.  
 3235 Quant il furent en paraïs  
 En plente e en joie assis.  
 Ne saveient que mal esteit  
 Ne dont charnel delit veneit.  
 Mes quant Eve le fruit gusta  
 3240 E son seignor amonesta,  
 Qu'il en mangast sor le defens,  
 Si furent eissillez par tens  
 E getez en l'estanc parfont  
 E es granz ewes de cest mont,  
 3245 Es granz periz e es tormenz,  
 Qui neier i font meintes genz.  
 Dont li prophete Davi dist  
 En un psalme, que il escrist:  
 Salve mei, Deu, par ta merci,  
 3250 Des granz periz, ou jeo sui ci:  
 Car desqu'a m'alme sont entrees  
 Mult granz ewes e derivees.  
 E en un vers redist aillors,  
 Que damne Deu li fist socors:  
 3255 J'atendi, fet il, mon seignor,  
 E il m'oï par sa dolçor  
 E m'osta del lac de misere,  
 Del tai e del fens, ou jeo ere.  
 Quant Adam fu deserite  
 3260 E hors de paraïs gete,  
 En peine e en perdicion  
 Fist donc sa generacion.  
 Mes nostre sire en out pite:  
 Por raançon de cel pecche  
 3265 Espira le novel Adam,  
 Qui por nos traist peine e ahan  
 E toz nos mist a raançon.  
 C'est totes veies ma chançon,  
 Que ades vos chant e recort:  
 3270 Par lui somes gari de mort.  
 Cil qui del sein al pere vint,  
 Prist char humeine, hom devint.  
 Sor ferme perre mist noz pez.  
 En nostre boche, ceo sachez,  
 3275 Mist novels chanz e nos aprist  
 La seinte oraison, que il fist,  
 Que "pater noster" apelom.  
 Tot ades dire la devom.  
 De l'olifant dire vos os:  
 3280 Bone est la pel, bons sont li os,  
 E qui en feu les bruillereit,  
 Sachez, que l'odor chacereit

Are Eve and Adam figured  
 When they were in paradise  
 Set in plenty and in joy.  
 They did not know what evil was  
 Nor whence came carnal pleasure.  
 But when Eve tasted of the fruit  
 And persuaded her lord  
 That he should eat of it against command,  
 They were driven out forthwith  
 And cast into the deep pool  
 And great waters of this world,  
 Into great dangers and torments  
 Which cause many folk to drown,  
 Of which the prophet David said  
 In a psalm which he wrote:  
 Save me, O God, by thy mercy  
 From the great perils in which I am,  
 For down within my soul are entered  
 Many great waters and floods.  
 And in a verse elsewhere repeated  
 How the lord God succoured him.  
 I waited for my lord, he saith,  
 And he heard me by his goodness  
 And drew me out of the lake of misery,  
 From the mire and dirt in which I was.  
 When Adam was disinherited  
 And cast out of paradise,  
 In pain and in corruption  
 He then begat his race.  
 But our lord pitied him;  
 For a ransom for that sin  
 He inspired the new Adam  
 Who for us bore pain and toil  
 And put us all to ransom.  
 That is always my song  
 Which I ever sing and repeat to you:  
 By him are we saved from death.  
 He who came from the bosom of the father,  
 Took human flesh, became man.  
 On a firm rock he set our feet,  
 In our mouth—know this—  
 He put a new song and taught us  
 The holy prayer, which he uttered,  
 Which we call "pater noster",  
 Without ceasing must we say it.  
 Of the elephant I dare tell you:  
 Good is the skin, good are the bones,  
 And who would burn them in fire,  
 Know that the smell would drive away

Toz les serpenz, qui pres serreient  
 E qui venim en els avreient.  
 3285 Nul venim ne soelt habiter  
 La ou l'eni fet les os bruiller.  
 Des os fet hom yvoire chere,  
 Dont l'em oeuvre en meinte manere.  
 L'olifant est mult corporu.  
 3290 Quant il vent en un pre herbu,  
 Hors de sa boche ist un boël,  
 Od quei il se pest el prael.  
 Autrement n'avendreit il pas,  
 Sanz sei agenoiller si bas,  
 3295 E si a genoillons esteit,  
 Ja par sei ne relevereit.

**Mandragoire est une erbe fere,**  
 Nule altre n'est de sa manere,  
 E vos di, que de sa racine  
 3300 Poet l'em faire meinte mescine.  
 Si la racine esgardiez,  
 Une forme i troveriez  
 A la forme d'ome semblable  
 L'escorce en est mult profitable.  
 3305 Quant est ben en ewe boillie,  
 Mult valt a meinte maladie.  
 Ceste erbe, quant ele est d'ee,  
 Cuillent cil mire vezie,  
 Si dit l'en, quant ele est cuillie,  
 3310 Qu'ele se pleint e brait e crie,  
 E si alcuns oeit le cri,  
 Mort en serreit e malbailli.  
 Mes cil qui la cuillent, le font  
 Si sagement, que mal nen ont.  
 3315 Quant de la terre est mise hors,  
 A meinte chose valt le cors.  
 Si hom eüst mal en son chef  
 Ou en son cors, qui li fust gref,  
 Ou en son pe ou en sa mein,  
 3320 Par cele erbe serreit tot sein.  
 La ou home mal sentireit,  
 Si prendreit l'en iloec enclreit  
 De l'erbe, qui serreit batue,  
 E quant l'ome l'avreit bëue,  
 3325 Mult dolcement s'endormireit,  
 Ja puis nul mal ne sentirait.  
 De ceste erbe, qui si est fere,  
 I a toz jors doble manere:  
 L'une madle, l'aître femele;  
 3330 La foille d'ambedeus est bele.

All serpents which might be near  
 And which had venom in them.  
 No venom may dwell there  
 Where man burns the bones.  
 Of the bones they make precious ivory,  
 Which they fashion in many a way.  
 The elephant has a very big body;  
 When it comes to a rich meadow,  
 Out of its mouth issues a pipe  
 With which it feeds itself in the pasture,  
 Else it would not reach its food  
 Without kneeling down so low.  
 And if it were on its knees,  
 Indeed it could not get up by itself.

**The mandrake is a wild plant,**  
 None other of its kind there is,  
 And I tell you that from its root  
 One can make many a medicine.  
 If you would observe the root  
 You would find it has a form  
 Like to the form of a man.  
 The rind is most valuable;  
 When it is well boiled in water,  
 It availeth much for many a malady.  
 This plant when it is full-grown  
 Is plucked by those skilled in medicine,  
 And they say when it is plucked,  
 That it moans and shrieks and cries,  
 And if anyone hear its cry,  
 Dead would he be and done to death.  
 But they that pluck it, do so  
 So wisely that they take no hurt.  
 When from the earth it is taken out  
 For many a thing is the body good.  
 Should a man suffer in his head,  
 Or in his body, which was paining him,  
 Or in his foot or in his hand,  
 By this plant would he be cured.  
 There where the man might feel the pain  
 He should take for that very spot  
 Some of the plant which should be bruised;  
 And when the man had drunk of it  
 Quite gently would he fall asleep,  
 And feel the pain no more.  
 Of this plant which is so potent  
 There are always two kinds,  
 The one male, the other female.  
 The leaf of both is beautiful;

La femele a la foille drue  
Tel corne salvage laitue.

**La sus amont en Orient**

- A un halt mont, qui loing s'estent,  
3335 Ou l'em troeve une perre dure,  
Quant l'en la quert par nuit obscure.  
Mes el ne luist mie de jor:  
Car idonc pert sa resplendor.  
Li soleiz clers por verite  
3340 Li reboche sa grant clarte.  
C'est diamanz, dont jeo vos cont,  
Si dure perre n'a el mont.  
Nule altre perre ne la freint  
Ne fer ne feu ne la destreint.  
3345 Mes cil qui depecer la voelent,  
Od mail de fer briser la soelent.  
Quant en sanc de buc est tempree,  
En tele guise est engroignee.  
Mes il covent, que le sanc seit  
3350 Tot freis e ne seit mie freit.  
Des peces poet l'em entailler  
E gemmes e fer e ascer.  
Tant vos aprenge de l'aïmant,  
Que la perre n'est mie grant.  
3355 A fer ressemble sa color  
E a cristal sa resplendor.

- Alcuns dient de l'aïmant,  
Qu'il est contre venim puissant  
E qu'il chace veines poors  
3360 Ne que l'art des enchanteors  
Ne devreit celui enchanter.  
Qui ceste perre soelt porter.

- L'aïmant, qui a tel vertu,  
Signefie le rei Jesu,  
3365 Si com li prophete record e,  
Qui a ceste lettre s'acorde:  
Jeo vi sor un mont d'aïmant,  
Fet le prophete, un home estant  
Enmi le poeple d'Israel.  
3370 Cel home fu corteis e bel.  
Li monz, ou la perre est trovee,  
Qui tant est dure e esprovee,  
Signefie Deu, nostre pere.  
La perre, qui par nuit est clere,  
3375 Deit signefier Jesu Crist,  
Qui por nos humanite prist.  
En tenebres nos visita,

The female has a thick leaf  
Just like the wild lettuce.

**Far away up in the East**

There is a high mountain stretching far,  
Where one finds a hard stone  
When one looks for it on a dark night.  
It does not shine at all by day  
For then it loses its brightness.  
The brilliance of the sun in truth  
Robs it of its own strong light.  
It is the diamond of which I tell you,  
There is no stone in the world so hard.  
No other stone can break it  
Nor iron nor fire destroy it.  
But they who wish to split it  
Are used to break it with an iron hammer  
When it has been steeped in he-goat's blood.  
In this way is it fractured.  
But it is needful that the blood  
Be quite fresh and not be cold.  
With the pieces may one cut  
Gems and iron and steel.  
And moreover I teach you of the diamond  
That the stone is not big at all.  
Its colour is like to iron  
And its lustre to crystal.

Some say of the diamond  
That it is potent against poison,  
And that it drives away vain fears,  
So that the wiles of enchanters  
Cannot enchant him  
Who is wont to carry this stone.

The diamond which has such virtue  
Denotes Jesus the king,  
As the prophet records  
In accordance with this writing:  
I saw upon a mountain of diamonds  
Saith the prophet, a man standing  
In the midst of the people of Israel.  
This man was well favoured.  
The mountain where the stone is found,  
Which is so hard and tried  
Signifies God our father;  
The stone which shines by night  
Must signify Jesus Christ,  
Who for us took human flesh.  
He visited us in darkness,



De clarte nos enlumina.  
 En la seinte lettre trovom,  
 3380 Cele qu'evangile apelom,  
 Que li salveres dist de sei:  
 Jeo sui el pere e il en mei,  
 E qui me veit, il veit mon pere.  
 Cil qui nasqui de virgne mere,  
 3385 Jesu Crist, nostre salveor,  
 Nos visita en tenebror.  
 Mult par dust hom estre joiant,  
 Quant il trova tel aïmant,  
 Qui de tenebres l'a hors trait.  
 3390 Ceo est li salveres, qui vait  
 Sor les perres fermes e dures,  
 Qui por cols ne por hurtëures  
 Ne lui faillent ne ne faldront,  
 Mes toz dis fermes se tendront.  
 3395 En cestes perres entendez  
 Les apostres benëurez,  
 Les prophetes e les bons seinz,  
 Qui onc ne furent fais ne feinz.  
 Onques por torment ne flechirent,  
 3400 Mes por Deu martire soffrirent  
 E tel travail e si grant peine,  
 Que or en ont joie certeine.  
 Ceo que home la perre troeve,  
 Signefie par bele proeve,  
 3405 Que nostre sires se cela,  
 Quant çajus en terre avala.  
 Les compaignes del halt repaire  
 Ne sorent, que çajus vint faire,  
 Ne coment il prist char humeine.  
 3410 Mes quant il out soffert la peine  
 E fu de mort resuscite  
 E la sus el cel remonte  
 Verai hom enter e parfait,  
 Donc en demenerent grant plait  
 3415 La celestial compaignie  
 E demanderent sanz envie:  
 Dont vent, qui est cest rei de gloire,  
 Qui tant a honor e victoire?  
 Qui ceo est? C'est leger a dire:  
 3420 C'est li sires de tot l'empire,  
 C'est cil qui tot tent a sa destre,  
 C'est le glorios rei celestre,  
 Ceo est li sires de vertuz,  
 Cil qui por nos s'est combatuz;  
 3425 En bataille est puissant e fort:  
 Car il a occise la mort.

With light he enlightened us.  
 In the holy writing we find,  
 Which we call the gospel,  
 What the saviour said of himself  
 I am in the father and he in me,  
 And whoso sees me, he sees my father.  
 He who was born of the virgin mother,  
 Jesus Christ our saviour,  
 Visited us in darkness.  
 Very much should a man rejoice  
 When he found such a diamond  
 Which from darkness has brought him out.  
 That is the saviour who moves  
 Over the stones firm and hard,  
 Which in spite of blows and knocks  
 Do not fail him nor will fail,  
 But will keep themselves ever firm.  
 In these stones ye understand  
 The blessed apostles,  
 The prophets and the good saints,  
 Who were never false nor faint.  
 Never when tormented did they flinch,  
 But for God's sake suffered martyrdom  
 And such toil and so great pain,  
 That now they have a certain joy.  
 As to the man who finds the stone  
 This signifies by ample proof  
 That our lord hid himself  
 When he came down here on earth.  
 The hosts which dwell on high  
 Knew not what he came down to do,  
 Nor how he took human flesh.  
 But when he had suffered the pain  
 Of death and was risen,  
 And ascended to heaven above,  
 True man whole and perfect,  
 Then the heavenly host  
 Held great conference about it  
 And without jealousy demanded:  
 Whence comes he, who is this king of glory,  
 Who has so great honour and victory?  
 Who is this? It is easy to say:  
 It is the lord of all the realm,  
 He it is who holds all at his right hand,  
 He is the glorious king of heaven,  
 He is the lord of all might,  
 It is he who fought for us,  
 In battle he is powerful and strong,  
 For he hath slain death.

Seignors e dames, gent nobire,  
 Boche d'ome ne porreit dire  
 La some de l'umilite  
 3430 Ne la dolçor ne la pite,  
 Que nostre sire fist por nos,  
 Quant de son cher sanc precios  
 Nos raienst e nos rachata  
 En la bataille, que faite a,  
 3435 Ou il a enfer despoille  
 E confondu e eissille.  
  
 Bone gent, que Deu ben vos face  
 E vos dont s'amor e sa grace,  
 Or oëz e si m'entendez  
 3440 E voz corages amendez.  
 Pene me sui mult de retraire  
 Les essamples del bestiaire  
 Selonc la lettre desque ci.  
 Or vos criom por Deu merci,  
 3445 Si nos i avom chose dite,  
 Qui deive estre a bonte escrite,  
 Que vos i prengez essamplaire  
 E de ben dire e de ben faire,  
 E si dite i avom faillance  
 3450 Par nonsens ou par obliance,  
 Por amor Deu vos demandom  
 De la nonsavance pardon  
 E de l' obliance altresí.  
 De tot ceo vos cri jeo merci.  
 3455 Si mesdit ai ren el traite  
 E par alcun seit afaite,  
 Qui plus seit sage e qui melz vaille,  
 Nule envie ne m'en travaille.  
 Jeo vos dis al comencement  
 3460 E pramis, que bon finement  
 Avreit cest livre, e Deu l'otreit!  
 Deu nos comande e si a dreit,  
 Que ses besanz multipliom  
 E nostre travail empleiom,  
 3465 Por acreistre sa grant richesce,  
 E si ceo lessom par peresce,  
 Mult en serrom achaisonez  
 E de nostre seignor blasmez.  
  
 Or oëz, que il nos en dit  
 3470 En l'evangile, ou est escrit,  
 Qu'il parla d'un prodhome sage,  
 Qui ala en pelerinage.  
 L'evangire nos fet acreire,  
 Que einz qu'il se meist en l'eire,

My lords and ladies and noble folk,  
 The mouth of man cannot tell  
 The sum of the humility  
 Nor the sweetness nor the pity  
 Which our Lord showed for us,  
 When of his dear and precious blood  
 He ransomed us and redeemed us  
 In the battle which he waged,  
 When he despoiled hell  
 And confounded and banished it.  
  
 Good people, may God treat you well  
 And give you of his love and grace.  
 Now listen and so hear me  
 And take better heart.  
 I have taken much trouble to recount  
 These lessons of the bestiary  
 According to the writing until now.  
 Now we pray you by God's mercy,  
 If we have there said anything  
 Which may be written down as good  
 That ye take example by it  
 Both to speak well and to do well;  
 And if we have there spoken amiss,  
 Foolishly or through forgetfulness,  
 For the love of God we ask of you  
 Pardon for our ignorance,  
 And for our forgetfulness as well.  
 For all that I pray your forgiveness.  
 If I have mis-stated aught in my work  
 And it could be bettered by anyone  
 Who may be wiser and of greater worth,  
 No jealousy therefor afflicts me.  
 I told you at the beginning  
 And promised that this book should have  
 A good ending, and God would grant it.  
 God commands us and he is right  
 That we multiply his talents  
 And carry out our work  
 For to increase his great riches  
 And if we neglect this through idleness  
 Much shall we be censured for it  
 And by our master blamed.  
  
 Now hear what he tells us of it  
 In the gospel, where it is written  
 How he spake of a wise and prudent man,  
 Who went on a far journey.  
 The gospel bids us to believe  
 That before he set out on his way

3475 Apela treis de ses serganz,  
 Si bailla a l'un cinc besanz,  
 A l'autre deus e al terz un.  
 Selonc ceo bailla a chescun,  
 Que sa vertu sout e conut.  
 3480 Puis s'en ala la ou il dut.  
 Maintenant que il fu mëuz,  
 Li serganz, qui out recëuz  
 Les cinc besanz, espleita tant,  
 Qu'il en gaaigna altretant,  
 3485 E li seconz fist ensement.  
 Mes li terz ovra folement:  
 Car une fosse en terre fist,  
 Le besant son seignor i mist.  
 E quant li sires retorna,  
 3490 Ses treis serganz araisona,  
 Qu'il orent fet de son avoir.  
 Li premereins li conta veir.  
 Sire, fet il, tu me baillas  
 Cinc besanz, quant tu t'en alas,  
 3495 E jeo en ai puis tant ovre,  
 Qu'altres cinc en ai recovre.  
 Tu as ben fait, fet il, amis,  
 De mon gaaing t'es entremis.  
 Or serras por ta fealte  
 3500 Seignor de mult bele plente,  
 Si te baldrai avoir greignor;  
 Entre en la joie ton seignor!  
 Li seconz li redist: Bel sire,  
 De meie part vos puis ben dire:  
 3505 De vos deus besanz ai fet quatre.  
 Donc ne te dei jeo mie batre,  
 Fet li sires, por ton servise.  
 Le men avras a ta devise,  
 Issi le te pramet e veu.  
 3510 Li terz, qui n'aveit fet nul preu,  
 Vint al seignor, si li dist tant:  
 Sire, veez ci ton besant,  
 Trestot enter ben l'ai garde.  
 E li sires respont: Par De,  
 3515 Tu n'es bon sergant ne feeil  
 Ne tu ne serras mon conseil  
 Ne ma joie ne partiras,  
 Hors de ma meson t'en irras  
 E de tote ma compaignie:  
 3520 Car laisse as par felonie  
 A multiplier mes chatels.  
 Seignors, li escriz est itels.  
  
 Mes grant signefiance i a:

He called three of his servants;  
 To one he gave five talents,  
 To another two and to the third one.  
 In this way he delivered to each  
 As he knew and recognized his power.  
 Then he departed where he had to go.  
 So soon as he was gone  
 The servant who had received  
 The five talents made such use  
 That he gained of them as much again,  
 And the second did likewise.  
 But the third did foolishly  
 For he made a hole in the earth  
 And put in the talent of his lord.  
 And when the lord returned,  
 He questioned his three servants  
 How they had done with his property.  
 The first told him with truth:  
 Sir, said he, thou deliveredst to me  
 Five talents, when thou wentest away,  
 And I have made such use of them,  
 That I have made another five.  
 Thou hast done well, my friend, said he,  
 Of my profits thou hast taken care.  
 Now shalt thou be for thy devotion  
 Lord of many good things;  
 I will give thee greater possessions,  
 Enter into the joy of thy lord!  
 The second addressed him: Good sir,  
 Of my share I can give a good account,  
 Of your two talents I have made four.  
 Then must I not punish thee,  
 Saith the lord, for thy service  
 My part shalt thou have for thy share,  
 For so I promised and vowed it thee.  
 The third who had made no use  
 Came to the master and spake just this:  
 Lord, see, here is thy talent,  
 Quite whole have I preserved it.  
 And the lord replied—By God,  
 Thou art not a good or faithful servant,  
 Thou shalt not be in my counsels  
 Nor shalt thou partake of my joy;  
 Out of my house shalt thou go  
 And from all my company.  
 For thou hast failed by thine illdoing  
 To multiply my goods.  
 My masters, such is the scripture.  
  
 But there is a great meaning;

Nostre sire, qui tot crea,  
 3525 Deit estre entendu el prodhome.  
 Li deus serganz, ceo est la some,  
 Sont tuit cil qui son non eshalcent  
 E sa lei meintenent e halcent,  
 E cil en sa joie enterront,  
 3530 Quant totes choses fineront,  
 Mes cil n'i mettra ja le pe,  
 Qui son tresor avra musce  
 Alsì corne tels i a font.  
 Mult par est fols qui le repont  
 3535 E le laisse en terre porrir,  
 Mes qui del creistre e del norrir  
 E del multiplier se peine,  
 Cil avra la joie certaine.  
 Uncore baille chescun jor  
 3540 A ses serganz nostre seignor  
 Ses besanz a multiplier,  
 Quant il fet un bon chevaler  
 Ou un bon clerc ou un sage ome,  
 Qui a tot l'empire de Rome  
 3545 Porreit par son sens conseiller,  
 E cil ne s'en voelt travailler.  
 Mes trestote sa vie muse,  
 Que ren de sa bonte nen use  
 El servise nostre seignor.  
 3550 Quant vendra al daerein jor,  
 Quidez, que Deu ne li demant,  
 Qu'il avra fet de son besant?  
 Oïl, jeol sai veraïement.  
 Damne Deu done largement  
 3555 A l'un proësce, a l'un poeir,  
 A l'un vertu, a l'un saveir,  
 A l'un raison ou eloquence,  
 E qui de ceo ne fet semence  
 Tant dementers come il poet,  
 3560 Le besant son seignor enfoet.  
 Donc pruis jeo par ceste evangire:  
 Quant Deu m'a done de bel dire  
 La grace, ne m'en dei targer,  
 Mes son besant creistre e charger.  
 3565 De faconde m'a fet Deu riche,  
 Ne fust fortune, que m'en triche.  
 Grant mester me pëust avoir,  
 Mes ne science ne saveir  
 Ne cortisie ne valor  
 3570 Ne afeitement ne honor  
 Ne poënt vers li estriver.  
 One ne me lascia ariver

Our lord, who created all,  
 Must be understood as the prudent man;  
 The two servants—this is the gist of it—  
 Are all those who exalt his name  
 And maintain and extol his law.  
 And these shall enter into his joy  
 When all things shall end.  
 But he shall have no footing there,  
 Who shall have hidden his treasure  
 Just as many people do.  
 Very foolish is he who buries it  
 And leaves it in the earth to rot,  
 But he who toils to make it grow  
 And to increase and multiply it,  
 He shall certainly have joy.  
 Still each day does our master  
 Deliver to his servants  
 His talents to be multiplied  
 When he makes a good knight  
 Or a good clerk or a wise man,  
 Who may be able by his understanding  
 To counsel all the realm of Rome;  
 And the other has no will to work,  
 But all his life idly waits  
 And uses no one of his gifts  
 In the service of our master.  
 When he shall come in the last day  
 Think ye that God will not ask him  
 What he has done with his talent?  
 Yea, I know quite well.  
 Lord God giveth largely  
 To one prowess, to one power,  
 To one strength, to one knowledge,  
 To one understanding or eloquence,  
 And whoso getteth no seed from them  
 All the time that he can  
 Buries the talent of his master.  
 Then I proved it by this gospel.  
 When God granted me his grace  
 To speak out, I was not to tarry,  
 But to take up his talent and increase it.  
 With eloquence has God made me rich.  
 It was not fortune unless I am mistaken.  
 Of great use it could be to me,  
 But neither science nor knowledge  
 Nor manners nor bravery  
 Nor adornment nor honour  
 Avail to fight against her.  
 At one time she never let me reach

Uncor a port, einz me demeine  
 Totes hores par mer halteine  
 3575 Pleine de torment e d'orage,  
 Tant a vers mei felon corage.  
 Mes al seignor, qui trestot veit  
 E qui set, comben jeo coveit,  
 Pri jeo, que il de li m'acort,  
 3580 Si qu'une feiz me mette a port:  
 Car ben en fust saison e hore.  
 Ci ne ferai altre demore.  
 Le besant Deu mettrai a gable,  
 Por desconfire le diable.  
 3585 Divisions de graces sont,  
 Si les deivent cil qui les ont  
 Mettre a gaaing e a usure.  
 Por ceo vos di, que jeo n'ai cure,  
 Quant Deu m'a son besant livre,  
 3590 Qu'il seit musce ne enterre.  
 Icele science est perdue,  
 Qui n'est departie e s'ue.  
 Sens est riche possessions,  
 Ceo dit un livre de sermons.  
 3595 Mes qui n'a cure de seignor,  
 Ja od lui ne fera sojour.  
 Od celui maint qui la depart  
 E l'abandone e tost e tart,  
 Si li vent de mult grant noblesce:  
 3600 Car ele tant aime largesce  
 E aver home tant desdeigne,  
 Que od lui remaneir ne deigne.  
  
 Bone gent, dolce e debonaire,  
 Des essamples del bestiaire  
 3605 Vos sovenge que beles sont.  
 Veez la malice del mont,  
 Come toz jors creist e avive,  
 Veez, corne tence e estrive  
 Tricherie contre dreiture,  
 3610 Veez, com a chere veiture  
 L'em trespasse parmi cest monde,  
 Veez, com grant mal i abonde,  
 Veez, com home est decëuz,  
 Veez, com il est concëuz,  
 3615 Veez, com est envoluepez,  
 Veez, a quel doel il est nez,  
 Veez, coment il est enfant,  
 Com il est fol e nonsavant,  
 Veez, quant il vent en eage,  
 3620 Com il s'orgoille de corage,  
 Quant il devreit celui loër,

Port, before that she drove me  
 Long hours on the high sea  
 Full of tempest and of storms,  
 So evil-hearted was she toward me.  
 But to the master, who sees all  
 And who knows how greatly I desire,  
 Do I pray that he grant me so  
 That at some time he bring me into port;  
 For surely there be hour and season for it.  
 Here shall I delay no more,  
 God's talent will I put out to profit  
 For to defeat the devil.  
 There are diversities of gifts,  
 And they who have them ought  
 To put them to gain and to usury.  
 And so I tell you I had no thought,  
 When God delivered his talent to me,  
 That it be hidden or buried.  
 That science is lost  
 Which is not shared and known.  
 Understanding is a rich possession,  
 As a book of sermons says:  
 But he who has no care for the master  
 Will indeed not make his abode with him.  
 With him there's many a one who leaves  
 And abandons it sooner or later,  
 If there comes to him noble rank,  
 For it loves munificence so much,  
 And to hold man in so little esteem,  
 That with him it does not deign to stay.  
  
 Good people, kind and well-disposed,  
 You remember how beautiful  
 Are the lessons of the bestiary.  
 See the wickedness of the world  
 How it ever grows and thrives;  
 See how contends and strives  
 Treachery against right;  
 See in what a costly carriage  
 Man passes through this world;  
 See how great evil abounds there,  
 See how man is deceived,  
 See how he is conceived,  
 See how he is covered,  
 See to what trouble he is born,  
 See what a child he is,  
 How foolish and ignorant;  
 See when he comes of age,  
 How proud he is of heart,  
 When he ought to praise him

Qui l'a fet aler e parler,  
 Sentir e veeir e oïr.  
 Donques ne li voelt obeïr.  
 3625 Quant il est bel e riche e fort  
 E il n'est tels, qu'il se recort  
 De son seignor, qui tel l'a fet  
 E hors de chaitiveison tret,  
 Tot le monde ne prise maille  
 3630 Ne quide, que james li faille  
 Son grant poeir ne sa richesse.  
 Mes quant la mort vers lui s'adresce,  
 Qui le gaite gule baee,  
 Donc est remese sa podnee:  
 3635 Le cors est en terre enhulez,  
 De vers mangez e defolez.  
 Donc l'aime s'en part esgaree,  
 Qui ne poet mie avoir denree  
 De quanqu'il onques gaaigna.  
 3640 Un novel eir son avoir a.  
 Qui ja por lui ne fera ren  
 Ne lui n'en chalt plus que d'un chen.  
 Por ceo, par De, fet que dolent.  
 Qui en ceste vie est trop lent  
 3645 De Deu servir e aorer.  
 A ceo ne deit nul demorer.  
 Quanque hom fet en ceste vie,  
 Tenc a oidivesce e folie  
 Fors que de cel seignor servir,  
 3650 Qui done vie apres morir.  
 En sa vigne fet bon ovrer:  
 Car puisqu'il vent a l'avesprer,  
 I poet l'em gaaigner son pain,  
 Ja nul n'i o verra envein.  
 3655 Or oëz, que dit l'evangire:  
 El me conte, que nostre sire  
 Dist a ses disciples un jor  
 Une essample de grant dolçor:  
 Car il lor dist, que un prodhom  
 3660 Eissi un jor de sa meson  
 Matin, por ovrers aloër,  
 Qu'en sa vigne pëussent ovrer.  
 Cels que il trova maintenant,  
 Loa par itel covenant,  
 3665 Qu'a chescun dorreit un dener.  
 Cil n'en firent mie danger.  
 Tost furent en la vigne entre,  
 Si ont foï e labore.  
 Quant vint avers terce apres prime,  
 3670 Estes vos le sire meïsme,

Who has made him to walk and speak,  
 To feel and see and hear.  
 Then he is not willing to obey,  
 When he is handsome, rich and strong  
 And not so minded to remember  
 His master who has made him so  
 And from a mean state brought him.  
 No one cares a brass farthing  
 Or believes that his great power  
 Or riches will ever fail him.  
 But when death turns toward him,  
 Who watches him with open jaws,  
 Then is his pride surrendered,  
 His body is buried in the earth,  
 Eaten and destroyed of worms;  
 Then his soul departs wandering,  
 Which cannot have a scrap  
 Of whatever he once gained.  
 A new heir has his goods,  
 Which indeed will do nothing for him,  
 Nor are worth to him more than a dog.  
 For this reason, by God, he does but grieve  
 Who in this life is too slack  
 In serving God and worshipping;  
 In this ought no one to delay.  
 How many a man in this life  
 Does so and stays in idleness and folly  
 Instead of serving that master  
 Who gives life after death.  
 In his vineyard works the good labourer,  
 For as soon as it comes to eventide  
 Then can man earn his bread;  
 Yea! None shall work there in vain.  
 Now hear what the gospel says:  
 It relates to me that our lord  
 Told his disciples one day  
 A lesson of great sweetness:  
 For he told them that a goodman  
 From his house went forth one day,  
 In the morning for to hire labourers,  
 Who should work in his vineyard.  
 Those which he found at first  
 He hired and agreed with them  
 That to each he should give a penny.  
 These made no demur; soon  
 Were they entered into the vineyard,  
 And dug and worked.  
 When it came to the third hour after prime,  
 Lo! There is the lord himself,

Qui encontra al tres ovrers,  
 Sis enveia od les premiers  
 E lor pramist, qu'il lor dorreit  
 Del soen tant eom raison serreit.  
 3675 Endreit midi en retrova  
 Genz oidis, si les aloa.  
 Vers none en retrova d'ocios,  
 Si lor a dit: Que fetes vos?  
 Alez, si ovrez en ma vigne!  
 3680 Cil ne firent altre barguigne,  
 Ainz i alerent demaneis.  
 Mes li jor torna en descreis  
 E la relevee aprisma,  
 E li prodhom s'en devala  
 3685 Dreit el marche de la cite.  
 Sor les estals a regarde,  
 Si vit ovrers oidis assez,  
 Qui la esteient amassez.  
 Qu'avez, fet il, tote jor fait?  
 3690 Sire, font il, mal nos or vait;  
 Nos ne pëumes hui trover  
 Home, qui nos volsist loër.  
 Donc vos est, dist il, malement.  
 Alez la sus delivrement  
 3695 En ma vigne as autres ovrers!  
 E jeo vos dorrai volenters  
 Del men tant com serra raison  
 Selonc le jor e la saison.  
 Cil saillent sus e vont ovrer,  
 3700 Mes onc nes i covint suer:  
 Car tost fu tens d'oevre lesser.  
 Lors apela son despenser  
 Li prodhom e dist: Bels amis,  
 Or va, si com jeo ai pramis,  
 3705 Si paieiz trestoz mes ovrers  
 E comencez as dereners,  
 Si t'en va jesqu'al premerein  
 E met a chescun eu sa mein  
 Un denier, sis lesez aler.  
 3710 Donc les comence a apeler  
 Li serganz, sis fist arenger  
 E baille a chescun un denier.  
 Cil qui matin venuz esteient,  
 Quiderent ben, quant il veeient  
 3715 A chescun son denier avoir,  
 Qu'il dëussent plus recevoir,  
 Si grondirent e murmurerent  
 E od le seignor en parlerent.  
 Sire, font il, ceo coment vait?

Who met other labourers,  
 And sent them with the first  
 And promised that he would give them  
 Of his means as much as would be right.  
 Near midday he found more  
 Idle folk, and hired them.  
 Towards the ninth hour he found others idle,  
 And said to them: What do ye?  
 Go and work in my vineyard.  
 They too did not bargain  
 But went there straightway.  
 But the day wore on  
 And the afternoon approached  
 And the goodman went down  
 Straight to the market of the city;  
 Over the stations he looked,  
 And saw other idle labourers  
 Who were there assembled.  
 What have ye done all day? said he.  
 Sir, said they, it goes ill with us now,  
 We could not find to-day  
 A man who would hire us.  
 Then ye are unfortunate, he said.  
 Go up there at once  
 Into my vineyard to the other labourers.  
 And I shall give you willingly  
 Of my means so much as shall be right,  
 According to the day and season.  
 These sprang up and went to work,  
 But never did they need to sweat,  
 For soon it was time to leave off work.  
 Then did the goodman call  
 His steward and said: Good friend,  
 Now go, as I have promised,  
 And pay all my labourers,  
 And begin with the last  
 And so on up to the first,  
 And put into the hand of each  
 A penny, and let them go.  
 Then began the steward  
 To call them and set them in order  
 And gave to each a penny.  
 They who were come in the morning  
 Thought, when they saw  
 Each one get his penny,  
 That they ought to receive more,  
 And grumbled and murmured  
 And parleyed with the master thereon.  
 Sir, said they, what means this?

3720 Des hui matin avom nos trait  
 La peine e le travail pesant.  
 Or n'a chescun que un besant,  
 E cil qui orendreit i vindrent,  
 Qui del travail ren ne sustindrent,  
 3725 Ont altretant com nos avom.  
 Seignors, ceo respont li prodhom,  
 Ne vos faz nul tort, ceo savez,  
 Quant vostre covenant avez.  
 Peise vos, que jeo faz ma grace?  
 3730 Ne me list il, que del men face  
 Ma largesce, ou il me plect?  
 A icest mot chescun se test.  
 Quant Deus out ceste essample dite,  
 Si lor a overte e descrite  
 3735 Une sentence assez legere.  
 Issi, fet il, serront arere  
 Cil qui sont venu premerein  
 E devant els li daerein.  
 Des apelez i a grantment,  
 3740 Mes li eslit sont elerement.

Or avez l'evangile oïe,  
 Mes ne savez, que signeïe,  
 Plusors de vos, si clers ne sont  
 Ou si de clers apris ne l'ont.  
 3745 Mes jeo vos dirrai endreit mei  
 Iceo que jeo entent e vei.  
 Li prodhom, qui primes le jor  
 Mist ses ovrers en son labor,  
 Signefie le rei de gloire,  
 3750 Qui done a ses ovrers victoire.  
 Puisque Deus out el grant deluge  
 Salve Noë dedenz sa huge  
 E sa mesnee e ses enfanz,  
 Sempres en fu li mondes granz  
 3755 E restorez e recrëuz.  
 Donc est nostre sires eissuz  
 De sa ineson e si vint querre  
 Ovrers, por laborer sa terre.  
 Donc aloa Deu ses ovrers.  
 3760 Abraham fu tot li premiers,  
 Qui fu prince des prodeshomes,  
 De la qui semence nos somes.  
 Endreit la terce s'en revint,  
 Si corne venir le covint,  
 3765 Aloër le proz Moÿses,  
 Qui out de la vigne grant fes.  
 Puis revint, si com jeo vos di,  
 Nostre seignor endreit midi,

Since the morning have we borne  
 The toil and burden of heavy labour.  
 Now has each but one coin,  
 And they who have come just now  
 Who have borne no toil of labour,  
 Have just as much as we have.  
 Sirs, replied the goodman,  
 I have done you no wrong, be sure,  
 Since you have your agreement  
 Does it vex you how I do my favour?  
 Is it not allowed me to bestow  
 My own gifts where it pleases me?  
 At these words each kept silence.  
 When God had told this story,  
 He had opened and described to them  
 A parable quite simple.  
 So, saith he, they shall be last  
 Who are come first,  
 And before them those behind.  
 Of those who are called there are many,  
 But the chosen are few.

Now ye have heard the gospel,  
 But ye know not what it means  
 Several of you, if they are not clerks  
 Or if they have not learned from clerks.  
 But I shall tell you on my part  
 What I hear and see.  
 The goodman who in the day  
 First set his labourers to his work,  
 Signifies the king of glory  
 Who gives victory to his labourers.  
 When God had in the great flood  
 Saved Noah within his ark,  
 And his household and his children,  
 Forthwith was the great world by it  
 Restored and once more increased.  
 Then is our lord gone forth  
 From his house and gone to seek  
 Labourers for to labour on his land.  
 Then God hired his labourers.  
 Abraham was of all the first,  
 Who was prince of wise and prudent men,  
 Of whose seed we are.  
 About the third hour he returned,  
 As it was meet for him to come,  
 To hire the valiant Moses,  
 Who at the vineyard had a hard task.  
 Then did our lord, as I told you,  
 Return towards midday;



Si aloa le bon Davi,  
 3770 Qui de sa grace ert repleni.  
 Endreit none prist Daniel  
 E Jeremies e Johel  
 E les altres, qui devinerent  
 Les choses, qui a venir erent.  
 3775 Vers le vespre est Deu devale  
 Dreit el marche de la cite:  
 Car il vint en la fin del monde  
 E prist en la reïne monde  
 Son ostel e son habitacle  
 3780 Par deïte e par miracle  
 E covri, c'est chose certaine,  
 Sa deïte en char humeine  
 E vint el monde preecher  
 E veie de vie enseigner.  
 3785 Donc trova gent, qui ne creeient,  
 Si lor demanda, qu'il feseient,  
 E cil li respondirent donques,  
 Que il n'aveient trove onques  
 Qui lor eüst dit ne mostre  
 3790 La veie de lor salvete.  
 Donc lor enseigna Deu la lei,  
 Donques apela il a sei  
 Perre, Pol, Johan e Andreu:  
 Cil furent en la vigne Deu  
 3795 Ovrer si leal e si fort.  
 Onques por dotance de mort  
 Ne faillirent a lor seignor,  
 E il lor fist si grant honor,  
 Qu'il lor dona le dener d'or  
 3800 E qu'il lor bailla son tresor  
 A departir e a despendre,  
 E cil si firent sanz mesprendre.  
  
 Uncor est dreit, que vos esponde,  
 Porquei li termine del monde  
 3805 Sont assigne a cels del jor,  
 Si vos avrai gete d'error.  
 Tant com li jors a plus dure  
 A l'ore, qu'il est avespre,  
 Envers ceo qui est a venir,  
 3810 Altresi poëz vos tenir,  
 Que li monz aveit dure plus,  
 Quant Deu vint en terre çajus,  
 Avers ceo que plus en i a.  
 Issi le me signefia  
 3815 Li bons evesques de Paris,  
 Morice, de qui jeo l'apris,  
 E uncor en altre latin.

He hired the good David,  
 Who was filled with his grace.  
 At the ninth hour he took Daniel  
 And Jeremiah and Joel  
 And the others who foretold  
 The things which were to come.  
 Towards even God went down  
 Straight to the market of the city;  
 For he came at the end of the world  
 And took up his abode  
 And dwelling in the pure queen  
 By his deity and by a miracle,  
 And hid—it is a certain thing—  
 His deity in human flesh  
 And came into the world to preach  
 And teach the way of life.  
 Then found he people, unbelievers,  
 And asked of them what they did,  
 And these then answered him  
 That they had never found any  
 Who might tell or show them  
 The way for their salvation.  
 Then God taught them the law;  
 Then he called to him  
 Peter, Paul, John and Andrew;  
 These were to work in the vineyard  
 Of God so loyally and so hard.  
 Never through fear of death  
 Did they fail their master,  
 And he paid them so great honour,  
 That he gave them the penny of gold  
 And delivered to them his treasure  
 To divide and expend;  
 And they did it so without mistake.  
  
 Moreover it is right that I set out for you  
 Why the periods of the world  
 Are compared with those of the day  
 And thus have you freed from error.  
 Just as the day has lasted longest  
 At the hour when it is evening  
 Compared with that which is to come,  
 So can ye grasp it  
 That the world had lasted longest  
 When God came down on earth  
 Compared with that which was to come.  
 So it was explained to me  
 By the good bishop of Paris  
 Maurice, from whom I learned it,  
 And from other latin sources too.

Deus aloë ovrers al matin,  
 Quant il prent homes en enfance  
 3820 En bone fei e en creance.  
 A terce aloë les asquanz,  
 Quant il les prent endreit trente anz  
 En sa lei e en son servise.  
 E li midis nos redevise  
 3825 Cels qu'endreit quarante anz visite  
 La grace del seint esperite.  
 Endreit none reloë Deus  
 Ovrers, quant il en prent de tels  
 A faire son comandement  
 3830 Qui eage ont passe grantment.  
 Vers le vespre redescient il  
 Come dolz e come gentil:  
 Car il les prent en lor feblesce  
 E en la fin de lor veillesce,  
 3835 E quant vent al point de la mort,  
 L'em troeve alcun qui se remort  
 E se repent e merci crie  
 E regeïst sa tricherie  
 E par mult grant devocion  
 3840 Requert a Deu confession  
 E une horette el champ labore.  
 Avent que donc la mort l'acore  
 Ben repentant e ben confes,  
 Il n'a pas sustenu tel fes  
 3845 Veirement come li premer,  
 Mes il avra tot le dener.  
 Tant par est Deus larges e dolz.  
 Or seit pose, qu'alcuns estolz  
 Parolt a Deu e si li die:  
 3850 Deus, ja ai jeo tote ma vie  
 Ci en ta vigne labore  
 E soffert la pluie e l'ore,  
 E tu faiz celui per a mei  
 Qui n'a labore endreit sei  
 3855 Ne mais une horette petite.  
 E Deu respont: Jeo sui tot quite  
 Vers tei par raison, bels amis,  
 Tu as quanque jeo te pramis:  
 Tu as le regne pardurable.  
 3860 Ne me list il estre merciabile  
 Vers cestui qui vint orendreit?  
 Ma seignorie que valdreit,  
 Si del men doner ne poeie  
 Tot por nent, si jeo le voleie?  
 3865 Or poëz entendre, seignors,  
 Que mult est pres li Deu socors

God hires labourers in the morning  
 When he takes men in infancy  
 In good faith and in belief.  
 At the third hour he hires some  
 When he takes them thirty years old  
 In his law and in his service.  
 And midday again shows us  
 Those whom at forty years the grace  
 Of the holy spirit visits.  
 At the ninth hour God hires again  
 Labourers when he takes of them  
 Such as have spent their life  
 In doing his commandments.  
 Toward evening he comes down again  
 So sweet and so noble;  
 For he takes them in their weakness  
 And at the end of their old age.  
 And when they come to the point of death,  
 Man may find one who is chastened  
 And repents and cries for mercy,  
 And acknowledges his falseness,  
 And with very great devoutness  
 Beseeches God in confession  
 And labours in the field a short spell,  
 Before that death attacks him  
 Now quite repentant and confessed.  
 He has not borne the burden  
 Really like the first;  
 But he shall have the whole penny,  
 So bountiful is God and tender-hearted.  
 Now suppose that someone who is proud  
 Addresses God and thus says to him:  
 God, now have I all my life  
 Here in thy vineyard laboured  
 And suffered rain and storm,  
 And thou makest this man equal me  
 Who has not laboured at eventide  
 Not even a short spell.  
 And God replies: I am all quits  
 With thee by right, good friend,  
 Thou hast all that I promised thee,  
 Thou hast the eternal kingdom.  
 Is it not allowed me to be merciful  
 Toward those who came just now?  
 What would avail my authority  
 If of my means I might not give  
 All for nothing, if I willed it?  
 Now you may hear, my masters,  
 How very near is God's help to him

A qui l'apele de bon quoyer.  
 Mes nul ne se deit a nul foer  
 Por ceste esperance targer  
 3870 D'estre en la vigne Deu ovrer.  
 Meint fol pense en sa conscience:  
 Deu, jeo puis ben avoir licence,  
 Fet il, de faire cest pecche,  
 Tant que veillesce m'ait merche  
 3875 E gete hors de ma jovente.  
 Ceste pensee est mult dolente  
 E mult pesnie e mult decevable  
 E vent par engin del diable:  
 Car nul n'a terme de sa fin.  
 3880 Tels est morz puis jehui matin,  
 Que l'em pëust trover er seir  
 Plein de sante e de poeir.  
  
 Seignors, por Deu, pernez i garde,  
 Que li leres, que mal feu arde,  
 3885 N'atent fors qu'endormi vos truisse,  
 Si fort que desrober vos puisse.  
 Fetes com li chevaler font  
 Es herberges, quant poor ont,  
 Que la nuit assailli ne seient:  
 3890 Lor enemis sevent e veient,  
 Que vendront entor els la nuit.  
 Donc verreiz, qu'il s'armeront tirit,  
 Que des armez surpris ne seient.  
 Alsì font cil qui en Deu creient:  
 3895 Car d'almosne e de charite  
 E d'amer Deu en verite  
 E son proisme alsì corne sei  
 En lealte, en bone fei  
 Font entor els un si bon mur  
 3900 E si espes e si sœur,  
 Que il n'i a pertuis ne fraite  
 Ne li leres, qui toz agaite,  
 Qui mult volenters i entrast,  
 Ne poet trover, par unt il past.  
 3905 Or nos armom en tel manere,  
 Que ja a la nostre banere  
 Li traîtres medler ne s'ost  
 Ne qu'onques par trestot son ost  
 Ne seiom demi pe ruse.  
 3910 Nos qui tant ainz avom muse,  
 Qu'atendom nos a laborer,  
 S'il comence a avesprer  
 Que la nuit nos truisse en oïse,  
 Qui tant est neire e tenebrose?  
 3915 Ceo est la mort, qui ren n'esparne.

Who calls on him from a full heart.  
 But no one should in any way  
 Delay through this hope  
 To be a labourer in God's vineyard.  
 Many a fool thinks in his heart:  
 God, surely I may have leave,  
 Says he, to commit this sin,  
 Until old age has set its mark on me  
 And forced me out of youth.  
 This thought is very painful,  
 Very wicked and dishonest,  
 And comes through the devil's wiles,  
 For no one knows the time of his end.  
 Such a one is dead since this morning,  
 Whom one had found yester eve  
 Full of health and strength.  
  
 My masters, for God's sake take heed  
 How the thief, whom evil fire inflames,  
 Lies in wait to find you asleep  
 So fast that he may despoil you.  
 Do as the knights do  
 To their quarters, when they are afraid  
 They may be attacked in the night.  
 Their enemies they know and see  
 That they will surround them in the night.  
 Then you will see they will be fully armed,  
 That they be not surprised by armed opponents.  
 Likewise do they who believe in God;  
 For with alms and with charity  
 And with real love of God  
 And of his neighbour as himself,  
 In loyalty, in good faith  
 They build around them a wall so strong  
 And so thick and so sound  
 That there is no hole or breach,  
 And that the thief, who watches all  
 And is very anxious to get in,  
 Cannot find a way to pass.  
 Now let us arm in such manner  
 That at sight of our banner  
 The traitor dare not meddle with us.  
 And that we may never be beaten back  
 Even a half-foot by all his host.  
 We who have wasted time so long,  
 How do we expect to labour  
 If it begins to get dusk  
 And the night find us idle,  
 Which is so black and gloomy?  
 That is death, which spares nothing.

Jamais jor del regne superne  
 Ne verrom clarte ne lumere,  
 Jamais de la basse fumere  
 N'istrom por nule destinee,  
 3920 Si nos en ceste matinee  
 Ou einz la nuit ne nos armom.  
 Fols somes, que i atendom.  
 Grant peril est e grant dotance  
 De trop attendre en esperance.  
 3925 Meint home en attendant merci  
 Est engigne, jeol vos afi:  
 Car endementers qu'il atent,  
 L'estoet chaïr en jugement,  
 En jugement e en justise,  
 3930 Si l'estoet venir a jüise.  
  
 Por Deu, seignors, e por ses seinz,  
 Ne seiom perescos ne feinz.  
 Trop atendom de jor en jor  
 De venir a nostre salveor.  
 3935 Qui aise atent, aise le fuit.  
 Mal ait l'arbre, qui ne fet fruit!  
 Trenche deit estre e el feu mis.  
 Trop somes longuement jolis,  
 Trop somes as vices amors.  
 3940 Comben garderom nos les pors  
 Al citezein, que nos servom?  
 Grant feim en son servise avom  
 E grant sei e mult grant mesaise,  
 E ben savom, que a grant aise  
 3945 Est tot li daerein garçon  
 Ches nostre pere en sa maison.  
 E si nos torniom arere  
 Merci criant od simple chere,  
 Nos savom ben, que il vendreit  
 3950 Encontre nos, si nos fereit  
 De noef revestir e chalcer  
 E fereit por nos grant manger  
 E granz noeces e grant convi.  
 Onques si fole ren ne vi  
 3955 Com nos somes, si Deu me veie,  
 Qui conoissom la dreite veie  
 E tot de gre alom la torte.  
 En noz cols laçom la rohorte,  
 Qui nos destruit e qui nos pent.  
 3960 Mult est fols, qui ne se repent,  
 Tant com il a tens e espace.  
 Seignors, que Deu merci vos face,  
 Alez merci querre e rover,  
 Tant com vos la poëz trover;

Never the day when we shall see  
 The clear light of the kingdom above,  
 Never from the smoke below  
 Shall we be fated to come forth,  
 If we on that morning or before night  
 Fail to arm ourselves.  
 Fools we are there to wait;  
 Great danger and great fear there is  
 Of waiting too long in hope.  
 Many a man in awaiting pardon  
 Is deceived, I do assure you;  
 For while he is waiting,  
 He must fall into condemnation,  
 Into condemnation and into judgment,  
 And be fated to come before the judge.  
  
 For God's sake, my masters, and for his saints,  
 Let us not be idle or remiss;  
 Too long we wait from day to day  
 To come to our saviour.  
 Who looks for ease, ease evades him.  
 Woe to the tree which bears no fruit!  
 It must be cut down and cast into the fire.  
 Too much are we given to pleasure.  
 Too much are we allured by vices.  
 How long shall we guard the gates  
 For the citizen whom we serve?  
 Great hunger in his service we have  
 And great thirst and very great misery,  
 And well we know that in great comfort  
 Are all the last-come fellows  
 With our father in his mansion.  
 And if we turned back  
 Beseeching pardon with humble face  
 We know well that he would come  
 To meet us and would provide  
 Wherewith to clothe anew and warm us  
 And would bring us much to eat  
 And great entertainment and feasting.  
 Never did I see anything so foolish  
 As we are, as surely as God sees me,  
 We who recognize the right road  
 And yet willingly go the wrong.  
 On our necks we bind the noose  
 Which destroys and which hangs us.  
 Very foolish is he who does not repent,  
 While he has time and opportunity.  
 My masters, may God grant you pardon;  
 Go to seek pardon and beg for it  
 While ye can find it;

3965	Altrement ne l'avreiz james. Apelez, tant com il est pres, Nostre seignor, si vos orra. Ja sanz merci ne vos lerra, Si vos la requerez a hore.	Otherwise ye may never have it. Call whilst he is near To our master and he will hear you. Yea, without pardon he will not leave you If ye will ask for it in time.
3970	Mes si vos i fetes demore, Tant que vos ne puissiez parler Ne li prier ne apeler, Donc vos ert il si esloigne, Qu'a peine i trovereiz pite.	But if ye make delay in that, So long that ye cannot speak Or pray or call to him Then will he be so far from you That hardly will ye find pity there.
3975	Aprismez vos par repentance, Par confesse e par penitance. Ben avez oï recorder, Qu'em se poet a lui acorder Par fei e par confession,	Draw near by repentance By confession and by penitence. Plainly have ye heard it stated That a man may be reconciled to him Through faith and through confession,
3980	Par almosne e par oraison. Quant ceste mescine savez, Tant come leisir en avez, Entremettez vos de garir Ne laissez voz plaies porrir:	Through alms and through prayer. When ye know this remedy, And what peace of mind ye have of it, Take pains to heal your sores And do not let them fester,
3985	Car si eles sont sorsanees, A peine serront puis curees. Entendez le sens de l'escrit De l'evangile, qui nos dit: Freres, orez e si veillez,	For if they are grown hard, Scarcely can they then be cured. Regard the meaning of the word Of the gospel, which says to us: Brethren, pray and so watch
3990	Seiez prestz e aparaillez: Car vos ne savez, quant vendra Li baners, qui vos somondra E criera: Levez sus, levez, Od l'espos as noeces entrez!	That ye be ready and prepared, For ye know not when will come The flag-bearer who will summon you And will cry: Get up, arise, Enter with the bridegroom to the marriage!
3995	Si donc avez vostre oille a querre, Li porters, qui la porte serre, Vos forsclorra, n'en dotez mie, Hors de la bele compaignie, De la joie, qui toz dis dure.	If then ye have to get your oil, The porter who shuts the door, Will shut you out—make no mistake— Out from the grand company, From the joy which ever endures.
4000	James de la valee obscure N'istreiz, mes toz dis sanz fin Meindreiz el pullent sozterrinn, En la jaole pardurable Dedenz la maison al diable.	Never from the dark valley Will ye go forth, but everlastingly Will ye remain in the stinking hole, In the eternal prison Within the devil's abode.
4005	De la aler Deu nos defende! Car puis n'i a mester amende, Merci crier ne altre chose. Mes einz que la porte seit close, Seiom prestz, si ferom que sages:	From going there may God defend us! For then there is no use for amendment, For crying for mercy or any other thing; But before that the door is shut, Let us be ready and behave wisely;
4010	Car ja est mëüz li messages E mult grant alëure vent, Qui uncor a nuit, si devent, Nos somondra ou le matin.	For that message is indeed gone out And comes with very great speed, And will summon us either at nightfall Or the morning as it may happen.

Toz jors s'aprisme nostre fin.  
 4015 Nos savom ben, que nos morrom,  
 Nule ren plus certe n'avom.  
 De ren ne somes meins certain,  
 Quant ceo serra, hui ou demein,  
 E quant cert somes de morir  
 4020 E ne savom, quant deit venir,  
 Ben nos dëussom porveeir  
 E jor e nuit, matin e seir,  
 Que si aparaille fussom,  
 Qu'as noeces entrer pëussom,  
 4025 Desque nos serriom somons.  
 Seignors, por Deu e por ses nons,  
 Gardez, que jeo n'aie seme  
 Ne ma semence ne mon ble  
 Entre espines n'en terre veine  
 4030 Ne sor perres ne en l'areine,  
 Mes en terre, qui face fruit.  
 Seiez si garni e estruit  
 Des essamples del bestiaire,  
 Que vos en lessez mal a faire  
 4035 E al ben ovrer mettez peine,  
 Por avoir la joie certaine:  
 Car ceste joie ci terrestre  
 Ne poet mie longuement estre  
 Ne poet tenir ne poet durer.  
 4040 Nuls ne se deit assëurer:  
 Car avis m'est selonc mon sens,  
 Que nos somes el peior tens,  
 Qui fust puis l'incarnacion  
 En nule generation,  
 4045 Qui tenist crestiene lei.  
 Ou est hiu lealte e fei?  
 Ou est almosne e charite?  
 Ou est dreiture e verite,  
 Chastete e religion?  
 4050 Ou est merci, ou est pardon?  
 Ou est honor, ou est largesce?  
 Ou est amor, ou est simplesce?  
 Ou est dolçor e cortesisie?  
 Ou est pite, ou est aïe?  
 4055 Ou est veirdit ne jugement,  
 Qui vers le loier ne se prent?  
 Ou est concorde e bone pes?  
 Cestes vertuz ne regnent mes,  
 E si els regnent en alcun,  
 4060 Entre mil n'en trovereiz un.  
 Li monz est hui si desleals  
 E si traîtres e si fals,

Always our end approaches,  
 We know well that we shall die,  
 Of nothing are we more certain.  
 Of nothing are we less certain  
 When that will be, to-day or to-morrow,  
 And since we are certain of dying  
 And do not know when it must come,  
 Surely we ought to look out  
 Both day and night, morning and evening,  
 That we be so prepared  
 That we can enter into the marriage,  
 So soon as we be summoned.  
 My masters, for God and his name's sake,  
 Take heed that I have not sown  
 Neither my seed nor my wheat  
 Among thorns or in barren ground  
 Or on stones or in sand,  
 But in earth which produces fruit.  
 Be ye so provided and instructed  
 By the lessons of the bestiary  
 That ye leave off to do ill  
 And take pains to labour for good  
 For to obtain the certain joy;  
 For the joy here on earth  
 Cannot be for long  
 Nor be maintained or be lasting.  
 No one should rely on it,  
 For it is my opinion as I imagine,  
 That we are in the worst times  
 Which have been since the incarnation  
 In any generation which  
 Has practised the christian law.  
 Where is to-day loyalty and faith?  
 Where is almsgiving and charity?  
 Where is honesty and truth,  
 Chastity and religion?  
 Where is mercy, where is pardon?  
 Where is honour, where is generosity?  
 Where is love, where is simplicity?  
 Where is tenderness and courtesy?  
 Where is pity, where is help?  
 Where is telling truth and justice?  
 Who does not lay him out for bribes?  
 Where is agreement and true peace?  
 These virtues do not prevail.  
 And if they prevail in any one  
 Ye will not find him in a thousand.  
 The world to-day is so disloyal  
 And so treacherous and so false,

Si culvert, si de male part,  
 Si torcenos e si gaignart  
 4065 Si envios, si mesdisant,  
 Si menteor, si enquisant,  
 Si vilein e si garçonner,  
 Si malvais e si paltoner,  
 Si gaiteant, si plaideor,  
 4070 Si aver, si fals jugeor,  
 Si orgoillos e si tyrant,  
 Si eschif e si guerreiant,  
 Si coveitos en tote guise,  
 Si oblios de bon servise,  
 4075 Si traître, si engignant  
 Si usurer e si marchand  
 Si blandissant, si losenger,  
 Si glot de beivre e de manger.  
 Si plein de vices e d'ordure,  
 4080 Que c'est merveille, que tant dure.  
 Quant li monz est si desleals,  
 Donc di jeo, que mult est vassals  
 Qui parmi trespasser s'en poet.  
 Si que chaïr ne li estoet  
 4085 Ne n'est recreant ne veincu  
 E del baston e de l'escu.  
 Lui estoet saveir a plente  
 Qui Deu done del poëste.  
 Ceste bataille est a meschef  
 4090 E dure e perillouse e gref:  
 Car desque home est el champ mis,  
 Si l'estoet a treis enemis  
 Combatre sei e nuit e jor,  
 Qui mult li rendent dur estor.  
 4095 Trop par est li estors pesanz:  
 Car si il viveit cinc vinz anz,  
 Si l'estoet il ades combatre  
 Contre cels quil voelent abatre.  
 De ces treis li covent defendre  
 4100 Ou la recreantise rendre.  
  
 Diable est l'enemi premer,  
 Qui l'agaite a faire peccher.  
 Cest mont est l'enemi secont,  
 Qui li gette meint colp parfont.  
 4105 Li terz, ceo est sa char demeine,  
 Qui plus l'assalt e le demeine  
 Que nul des autres deus ne fait.  
 C'est li pire enemi, qu'il ait.  
 Mult deit estre tenu a ber,  
 4110 Qui de ces treis se poet garder.  
 Li prodhome s'en defent ben,

So cunning, so evil-minded,  
 So unjust, so greedy for gain,  
 So envious, so given to slander,  
 So untruthful, so carping,  
 So vile and so knavish,  
 So bad and so vagabond,  
 So deceitful, so quarrelsome,  
 So avaricious, so false in judgment,  
 So proud and so tyrannical,  
 So shiftty and so combative,  
 So covetous in every way,  
 So forgetful of good service,  
 So treacherous, so scheming,  
 So grasping and calculating,  
 So smooth-tongued, so flattering,  
 So greedy for drink and food,  
 So full of vices and filthy ways,  
 That it is wonderful that it lasts so long.  
 When the world is so disloyal  
 Then I say how very brave  
 Is he who is able to pass through it  
 Without meeting with a fall  
 And is not cowardly or vanquished  
 By quarter staff and buckler.  
 It is granted him to know full well  
 To whom God gives the power.  
 This battle is calamitous  
 And hard and dangerous and grave,  
 For as soon as man is on the field  
 He has to fight three enemies  
 Evening and night and day,  
 Which engage him in great combat.  
 All too heavy is the fight,  
 For if he live a hundred years  
 He must fight without ceasing  
 Against those who would strike him down.  
 From these three he must defend himself,  
 Or acknowledge himself beaten.  
  
 The devil is the first enemy,  
 Who lies in wait to make him sin.  
 This world is the second enemy,  
 Who casts him down with many a blow.  
 The third, it is his own flesh  
 Which assails and overcomes him  
 More than do the other two;  
 It is the worst enemy that he has.  
 He must be held for a valiant knight,  
 Who from these three can keep himself.  
 The wise man guards himself therefrom,

Qu'il ne conquerent sor lui ren:  
 Car armes a por sei covrir  
 E por defendre e por garir.  
 4115 Ces armes sont por verite  
 Fei, esperance e charite.  
 Qui de cestes est ben covert,  
 En la bataille ren ne pert,  
 Ainz veint les treis ultreement,  
 4120 Qui ci l'assaillent durement.  
  
 Or priom Deu, qui nos crea,  
 Qui nos fist nestre e qui nos a  
 Mis el champ e en la bataille,  
 Qu'il nos conseil e qu'il nos vaille  
 4125 E qu'il nos dont par sa merci  
 Si ben combatre e passer ci  
 Par entre les bens temporals,  
 Que nos les bens espiritals  
 Ne perdom en nule manere.  
 4130 Tels deit estre nostre priere.  
 E Deus par sa seintisme grace  
 Si nos conseil e tels nos face  
 E nos dont tel repentement,  
 Que nos al jor del jugement  
 4135 Seiom a sa destre partie.  
 Amen, amen chescun en die.  
  
 Guillame, qui cest livre fist,  
 En la definaille tant dist  
 De sire Raül, son seignor,  
 4140 Por qui il fu en cest labor,  
 Qu'il li a ben guerdone,  
 Pramis li a e ben done.  
 Ben li a covenant tenu.  
 A Raül est ben avenu:  
 4145 Car il a son non aempli  
 Ne l'a mie mis en obli.  
 Tels est come son non devise,  
 E jeo m'en lo de son servise.  
 Cest non Raül sone grant chose.  
 4150 Ore vos aprendrom la glose:  
 Treis sillabes i a ajustees,  
 Qui de treis nons sont recolpees.  
 Treis sillabes i a sanz plus:  
 Le ra e le dul e le fus.  
 4155 Le ra est pris de ratio  
 E le dul vent de dulcedo,  
 E la terce sillabe fus  
 Dit altretant come fultus.  
 Si le non est adreit glose,

That he be not overcome at all;  
 For he has armour to put on  
 To protect him and save him.  
 This armour is in truth  
 Faith, hope and charity.  
 Who is well endowed with these  
 In the battle loses nothing,  
 But the three completely conquers  
 Who attack him with such force.  
  
 Now let us pray God who created us,  
 Who caused our birth and who  
 Has set us on the field of battle,  
 That he counsel us and make us strong  
 And that he grant us by his mercy  
 To fight so hard, and to pass here  
 Through things temporal,  
 That we in no wise lose  
 The things spiritual.  
 Such should be our prayer.  
 And may God by his sanctifying grace  
 So counsel us and do to us so,  
 And grant us such repentance,  
 That we on the day of judgment  
 May sit on his right hand.  
 Amen, Amen may each one say to that.  
  
 William, who wrote this book,  
 In conclusion says so much  
 About Sire Ralph, his lord,  
 For whom he undertook this work,  
 That he has well rewarded him,  
 Has promised and freely given;  
 Well has he kept his word with him.  
 For Ralph has it turned out well,  
 For he has had his name published  
 And not had it left forgotten.  
 This is how his name divides,  
 And I am proud of the way I make use of it.  
 This name Ralph sounds very fine,  
 And now we shall teach you its meaning:  
 Three syllables there are conjoined  
 Which from three names are cut off.  
 Three syllables there are, no more:  
 The ra and the dul and the fus.  
 The ra is derived from "ratio"  
 And the dul comes from "dulcedo"  
 And the third syllable fus  
 Is the equivalent of "fultus".  
 If the name is explained exactly,



4160 Fultus ert en mileu pose.  
"Tunc erit fultus undique  
Ratione dulcedine."  
Cest non Raül est apuie  
E de raison e de pite:  
4165 Pite e dolçor e raison  
Ont en son quoer fait maison.  
E Deus li otreit par sa grace,  
Que il si bon ostel lui face  
E tant le serve e itant aïmt,  
4170 Qu'en la halte joie, ou Deu maint,  
Puist monter a icel jor,  
Ou li juste e li peccheor  
Devant le juge trembleront  
E lor jugement atendront.  
  
Amen.

"Fultus" is placed in the middle.  
"Tunc erit fultus undique  
Ratione dulcedine."  
It is that the name Ralph is supported  
Both by reason and by pity;  
Pity and sweetness and reason  
Have in his heart made their abode.  
And God vouchsafes him by his grace  
That he prepare for him so good a dwelling  
And serve him well and love him so much,  
That to the joy on high where God dwells  
He may be able to rise in that day  
When the upright and the sinner  
Before the judge shall tremble  
And shall await their sentence.  
  
Amen.