

Confessio Amantis

Book 7: The School of Aristotle

By John Gower (A.D. 1390)

Modern English version by Matthew Brennan (A.D. 2020)

[Preface]

Confessio Amantis (The Lover's Confession) is a Middle English poem, completed by John Gower in the year 1390. It is a dialogue between Amans ('the Lover') and Genius (a priest of the goddess Venus) in which the former confesses that he is guilty of each of the seven deadly sins, and the latter explains how each transgression is offensive to the ideal of love. After getting through six of the seven sins, Amans declares that he is too fatigued to go on and asks that Genius teach him something instead. What follows is Book 7, a very long monologue in which Genius summarizes the entirety of human wisdom, breaking it down into Theory (knowledge of the physical and metaphysical world), Rhetoric (reason and communication), and Practice (virtuous conduct). This is framed as an expansion of what Aristotle taught to his most famous pupil, Alexander the Great. Aristotle (or simply 'the Philosopher') was greatly revered in medieval Europe; the dominant philosophy of the age ('Scholasticism') was largely concerned with synthesizing his and Christian teachings. Book 7 is Gower's attempt to prove his worth to the Richard II (the King of England), who commissioned *Confessio Amantis*; it crosses over into the popular 'mirrors for princes' genre, which seeks to educate rulers in the behavior proper to their station. The section on Practice is largely concerned with convincing a presumably royal audience to behave wisely and virtuously even though they are beholden to no (earthly) power. In making his case Gower alludes to ethical ('reason is the source of virtue') and political ('rulers are indebted to their subjects') ideas that, while not exactly new, would become *very important* in the coming centuries.

Medievalists like to say that Middle English writing is easily intelligible to contemporary readers. This is a bit generous; most words are cognates of their modern equivalents, but the effort required to decipher each line often makes it hard to focus on the content itself. For example, here is the original version of lines 1299 and 1300:

And undertake hath thilke emprise/ To Alifaundre in his emprise

And my version:

who undertook the task/ of instructing Alexander

This project is probably best considered a companion to the original. I wanted to help myself read what Gower had to say, and to that end this 'translation' is intended to communicate meaning rather than to create a Modern English poem. I feel somewhat justified in this because Gower himself was not first-rate poet. While he was beloved in his day, contemporary opinion has him as a distant runner-up to his good friend Geoffrey Chaucer. Book 7 is particularly unloved, and indeed it is in parts superficial, boring, and formulaic. Gower tosses in some variation of "as the old books say" or "so I have read" literally dozens of times, often to save an imperiled rhyme. On the other hand, there is rhetorical intent behind Gower's directness, and some of his passages are movingly great.

In its original language, *Confessio Amantis* is written in octosyllabic rhyming couplets; I found it too difficult to preserve this style while still making it intelligible, so I dropped it. Also, I have added modern punctuation and formatting to improve readability. Also, I have rearranged a few lines where it was impossible to make the original order grammatical. *Also*, I can't read Latin, so I have not included the Latin marginalia. The Latin poems introducing each subsection are retained untranslated, but I have included a summary of the gist of each. Obviously, I don't really know what I'm doing.

Be aware that this work contains graphic depictions of violence, including sexual assault.

[Resources Used]

[Confessio Amantis \(Bell and Daldy\)](#)

[Confessio Amantis \(University of Rochester Middle English Texts Series\)](#)

[The Middle English Compendium \(University of Michigan\)](#)

[The Mediaeval Sciences in the Works of John Gower](#)

[Wiktionary](#)

[Introduction]

*Omnibus in causis sapiens doctrina salutem
Consequitur, nec habet quis nisi doctus opem.
Naturam superat doctrina, viro quod et ortus
Ingenii docilis non dedit, ipsa dabit.
Non ita discretus hominum per climata regnat,
Quin, magis vt sapiat, indiget ipse scole.*
(Even the wisest man needs teaching.)

GENIUS:

1 I am Genius, the priest of love.
2 My son, since you have begged
3 I shall describe to you the School
4 of Aristotle and the education
5 of Alexander, how he was taught.
6 Truly I am somewhat concerned,
7 for this has nothing to do
8 with love, of which you came
9 to confess, and so I do Venus wrong.
10 But nonetheless, it is good
11 for your education
12 to hear of such wisdom
13 while we pass the time.
14 As best I can, I shall inform.
15 After all, wisdom is always
16 the most valuable thing to know,
17 both in love and otherwise.
18 Therefore my son,
19 though it is the doctrine
20 of Callisthenes, not Venus,
21 what Aristotle once taught
22 to Alexander, I shall teach you.
23 But since the teachings are so diverse,
24 I think we must begin with
25 the nature of Philosophy,
26 of which Aristotle was
27 the master and the expert;
28 he determined that all learning
29 comprised three points.
30 The first science
31 is Theory, which is grounded
32 on God, the foundation of the world.
33 Theory comprehends all teachings.

34 Looking further,
35 the second science
36 is Rhetoric, whose purpose
37 above all is eloquence,
38 to speak more persuasively
39 than any other.

40 The last science of the three
41 is Practice, whose place
42 is to separate virtue from vice,
43 and teach this good lesson:
44 flee the company of scoundrels.
45 Practice is at the disposal
46 of Man's free will.
47 Practice also tells
48 how a good king should rule
49 his realm both in war and peace.

50 Thus Professor Aristotle
51 divided the three sciences
52 and laid out
53 the purpose of each.

54 The first, which contains
55 and watches over the others
56 is the most important
57 and so is chief of Philosophy;
58 I shall teach it
59 just as the Philosopher did.
60 Now listen, and make sure you remember...

[Theory]

Prima creatorem dat scire scientia summum:

Qui caput agnoscit, sufficit illud ei.

Plura viros quandoque iuuat nescire, set illud

Quod videt expediens, sobrius ille sapit.

(Only the fundamentals are essential, details come later.)

61 Theory's principles
62 were determined
63 by the Philosopher;
64 he was enlightened and
65 full of wisdom and high prudence
66 above all other scholars.
67 He divided Theory in three,

68 the first part of which
69 is called Philosophy
70 (the science of Theology),
71 another is named Physics,
72 and the third is Mathematics.

[Theology]

73 Theology is that science
74 which teaches men
75 of incorporeal things.
76 By it men know
77 the high almighty Trinity,
78 which is God in unity
79 without end or beginning,
80 the creator of all things,
81 of Heaven, of Earth, and also of Hell.
82 As old books tell,
83 the Philosopher's reason
84 lead him to conclude
85 (and so his writings say)
86 that God was 'the uncaused cause',
87 that which is good in and of itself
88 and without which there is no goodness,
89 that which gives everything
90 its being and its nature.
91 As for the nature of things
92 there are three forms of beings:
93 the things which began and shall end
94 (those are called temporal),
95 on the other hand are
96 things which began and shall not die,
97 spiritual things like souls
98 (those are perpetual beings).
99 But there is one above the Sun,
100 who has no beginning
101 and shall be endless forever;
102 that is God, whose majesty
103 all other things shall govern
104 (He is the eternal being).
105 To God all honor
106 belongs, He is the creator,
107 and all others are His creatures.

108 God commands
109 obedience from all things;
110 without Him,
111 there is no power, all power is His.
112 God always was and always shall be,
113 all things are begun by his approval;
114 all times are the present
115 to God, and all unknown things
116 are known to Him.
117 Both angels and men
118 (the chiefs of all created things)
119 must be obedient to God's might,
120 and stand upright forever.
121 Knowing this,
122 the scholars of divinity
123 preach to the people
124 and teach the faith of the holy Church.
125 Sometimes faith stands more upon belief
126 than what can be proved
127 by logical arguments;
128 nonetheless it is credible,
129 and a great good to any man
130 who wishes to save himself.
131 Theology is full
132 of high learning and high wisdom
133 and stands above all others
134 as the first branch of Theory.

[Physics]

135 Physics is the second part;
136 the Philosopher invented it
137 to teach knowledge
138 of the natural things:
139 of Man, of beast, of herb, of stone,
140 of fish, of bird, and everything
141 that has material substance.
142 Their natures and their properties
143 are taught by this science (alongside
144 whether they are useful or not).

[Mathematics]

145 The third point of Theory,
146 which is called Mathematics,
147 is divided in many parts
148 and requires a diverse education.
149 The first part is Arithmetic,
150 the second is Music,
151 the third is Geometry,
152 and the fourth is Astronomy.
153 Arithmetic's purpose
154 is to teach what is
155 the solution to a calculation
156 when a wise man computes
157 using the formal properties
158 of an algorithm's A,B,Cs.
159 How to multiply,
160 and how to divide,
161 and how to add is the purpose
162 of this art and of this science.
163 The second part of Mathematics,
164 is the science of Music,
165 which teaches composition
166 and the creation of melodies
167 by voice and sound of instrument
168 through notes and harmonies.
169 Thus a man can play aloft
170 some sharp notes and some soft,
171 some high notes and some low,
172 in all the scales that he may know
173 (which describe the beat
174 and arrangement of notes).
175 Mathematical learning
176 has yet a third component
177 full of wisdom and of scholarship
178 called Geometry.
179 Through this a man understands
180 lengths, and breadths, and depths, and heights
181 and knows their proportions
182 by various calculations.
183 In this way
184 the wise philosophers of old,
185 measured the whole Earth round,
186 found the size and thickness of the ground,

187 and determined by observation
188 the circle and the circumference
189 of everything up to the heavens.
190 They set their points and measured level.
191 Mathematics (above the Earth)
192 has yet a forth science
193 called Astronomy
194 which teaches of the high stars,
195 beginning upward from the Moon.
196 But first, as was necessary,
197 Aristotle taught some other things
198 to the worthy young Alexander:
199 every kind of element
200 found under the Firmament,
201 their properties and how they are made.
202 From point to point he began to explain...

[Matter]

*Quatuor omnipotens elementa creavit origo,
Quatuor et venti partibus ora dabat.
Nostraque quadruplici complexio sorte creatur.
Corpore sicque suo stat variatus homo.*
(The Universe is arranged in fours.)

203 Before the creation
204 of any world,
205 of Heaven, of Earth, or of Hell,
206 the old books tell that
207 (as noise before the song is set)
208 all matter was knit together.
209 This was the great supply
210 under God's command,
211 that great substance, that great matter,
212 from which He would
213 create all other things.
214 For as of yet formless
215 was that universal matter,
216 which was called Ylem.
217 Of Ylem, I have learned,
218 the elements were made and formed
219 and these elements are also named
220 in the School of Aristotle.

221 Now allow me to explain,
222 there are now four different elements...

[The Four Elements]

223 The first element men call earth,
224 which is the lowest of them all.
225 Its form is shaped round;
226 it is substantial, strong, steadfast, and sound
227 (as it needs to be
228 to hold up all the rest).
229 As a compass unerringly
230 points a single way, so too
231 earth is set and shall abide.
232 It shall not swerve to either side
233 for its center is fixed,
234 and to that center
235 every worldly thing would fall
236 if it was able.

237 Above the earth
238 comes water, which is the second
239 element, and all covers
240 the earth all around.
241 But as we know,
242 this subtle water is still powerful;
243 though it seems soft,
244 it often pierces through the strong earth.
245 As veins are full of blood
246 in men, likewise water flows
247 within the earth and carves channels
248 through the hills and plains.
249 It is plain to see
250 that even in the highest hills
251 many flowing springs may be found.
252 This proves that, by its nature,
253 water sits higher than the land.
254 Now understand that even higher
255 is air, the third element,
256 which gives breath
257 to every last creature
258 which lives upon the earth.
259 Just as the fish, if it dries,
260 must for lack of water die,

261 without the air
262 no man nor beast of flesh and bone
263 may ever thrive.
264 There are no exceptions.
265 In three layers
266 air is divided up:
267 one on the bottom, one in the middle
268 and the third above.
269 Within these divisions
270 there are many variations
271 of moisture and of dryness;
272 through both of these the Sun
273 is dragged up,
274 and makes clouds in the sky,
275 as can be seen
276 both day and night
277 and all through the year.
278 Many things fall from these
279 down to us here upon the earth.
280 Air's first layer
281 can create mists and
282 dews and hoarfrosts
283 depending on the conditions
284 in which they form.
285 From the second, as books say,
286 the moist drops of rain
287 descend to Middle Earth,
288 readying the seeds and ground
289 to spring forth grass and flowers.
290 Oftentimes, as these great showers
291 descend from their birthplace,
292 they forsake the form
293 of rain and instead turn to snow,
294 and besides this
295 some places up above
296 make the rain turn to hail.
297 The third layer of the air
298 contains the heights where
299 dryness is often drawn up
300 among the high clouds
301 and is unable to escape.
302 There it is blown about so strongly
303 that it generates fire and lightning,

304 which breaks through all the clouds,
305 and the great noise of this crack
306 makes the fearful thunder.
307 The thunderstroke falls before the lightning,
308 and yet men see the fire and lightning
309 before they ever hear the thunder.
310 This goes to show
311 that when perceiving far off things
312 a man's eye quicker to see
313 than his ear is to hear.
314 Nonetheless there is great danger
315 from both the noise and the fire,
316 and there is no saving
317 the spot where they strike,
318 except by the grace of God.
319 Even higher still
320 is the part of the air
321 where what appears to be fire
322 is often seen at night.
323 Sometimes it looks like a dragon
324 (and the commoners believe it to be so)
325 and sometimes it seems
326 just like a shooting star
327 but it is neither of these
328 according to the Philosopher.
329 He says that
330 various kinds of vapors
331 are the cause and the substance
332 of those many appearances
333 of fire, despite their many names.
334 These also explain the meteors
335 which are found all over
336 when they have fallen to the ground
337 having been annealed by fire
338 just like baked clay.
339 The same vapors
340 can kindle the same kind of fire
341 but in another form
342 which (if you can believe it)
343 looks just like
344 (so say the old scholars)
345 a skipping goat,
346 and for this appearance

347 it is called *capra saliens*.
348 Another astronomical
349 fire which by night
350 can be seen
351 is called *eges*, and it burns
352 like the electric fire that runs
353 up a cord (as you have seen)
354 when it is covered with powders
355 of sulfur and other substances.
356 There is another fire
357 visible to men which seems
358 at night as though there flies
359 a burning dragon in the sky,
360 and it is properly named
361 *daaly*, and when it is seen men say,
362 “Look! it is the fire drake
363 flying up in the air!” for so they believe.
364 But why these fires are seen
365 in so many different forms
366 the wise Philosopher told,
367 as you have just heard.
368 So, my son, now you know
369 all the properties of air
370 and all the ways it may appear,
371 and how under the heavens
372 it is the third element,
373 surrounding both
374 the water and the land.
375 But beyond this
376 is the fourth of the elements,
377 the realm of fire
378 which surrounds the other three
379 and is without moisture, all dry.
380 But hear now what scholars say:
381 upon the four elements
382 the Creator set and laid
383 the types and the humors
384 of all the nations of men.
385 There are four different elements,
386 and therefore
387 among men there are
388 four humors and no more.
389 The Philosopher teaches of them too.

390 Since he leaves nothing behind
391 he teaches all their properties,
392 and I shall rehearse them to you...

[The Four Humors]

393 He who shaped all of Nature
394 (the mighty God),
395 has given his creature, Man,
396 a nature divided into parts
397 that do not cooperate
398 and cause discord with each other;
399 this is why we fall ill
400 and have not an hour of certainty.

401 From earth, which is cold and dry,
402 the humor melancholy
403 comes, and it is the first,
404 the most unhealthy and the worst;
405 for it undoes love's work by night
406 and takes away both will and might.
407 No wonder then
408 when the healthy love is lost.
409 A man with this humor,
410 is full of imagination,
411 of dreads, and of wrathful thoughts,
412 and he frets himself all to naught.

413 The water, which is moist and cold,
414 makes phlegm, which makes one
415 forgetful, slow, and wearisome
416 of everything which must be done.
417 This kind is capable
418 of loving,
419 but lacks the needed appetite,
420 to desire such delight.

421 The man who resembles air,
422 he shall be lively, he shall be fair,
423 for his humor is blood.
424 Of all humors there is none so good,
425 for it grants both will and might
426 to please and pay love its due;
427 if he undertakes to love
428 he shall not forsake it.

429 The qualities of fire
430 imbue the humor
431 of hot choler,
432 whose properties are dryness and heat.
433 It makes a man cunning
434 and swift of foot and irate.
435 Conflict and foolhardiness
436 are his business,
437 and he thinks little of love.
438 Though he may vow by day,
439 at night when he must deliver
440 he will not pay his debt.

[The Human Body]

441 Each element
442 has a corresponding man
443 according to his humors,
444 but their properties
445 (dry and moist and chill and heat)
446 each have their own place
447 designated within each man.
448 First of all,
449 melancholy is assigned
450 the spleen for his housing.
451 The moist, cold phlegm
452 has been given a proper place
453 in the lungs,
454 and dwells there as required.
455 To the humor of blood
456 wise Nature has given
457 a proper house in the liver
458 for his dwelling.
459 The dry choler with his heat
460 is properly seated
461 in the gallbladder, and there he dwells
462 (or so the Philosopher says).
463 Now know this,
464 the physicians write that
465 the liver, the lungs, the gallbladder, the spleen,
466 all these are servants to the heart
467 and each in its own way
468 attempts to aid him;

469 he is their chief and lord.
470 The liver makes him love,
471 the lungs gift him with speech,
472 the gallbladder helps him fight,
473 and the spleen lets him laugh and play
474 (so long as he is not diseased).
475 Each has its own purpose
476 and to sustain and feed them
477 when their work is over
478 Nature has created
479 a common cook, the stomach
480 (so say the old books).
481 The stomach cooks for the body
482 and prepares food for them all;
483 they are only mighty servants of
484 the heart if they do not starve.
485 Just as a king in his empire
486 is lord and sire above all others,
487 so is the heart in command;
488 he alone knows Reason
489 and is able to govern.
490 Nature's prudence
491 suited Man to live on Earth,
492 but God, who loves the soul,
493 formed it for a different purpose
494 which no man can plainly tell.
495 But the scholars tell us that
496 God made the soul like Himself,
497 and through this similarity
498 the soul has many excellences
499 appropriate to her own kind.
500 Often though, her wits are blinded
501 for this single reason:
502 she must share her home
503 with the body which she fights.
504 One of them desires Hell,
505 and the other Heaven;
506 the two will never agree,
507 but if the flesh is overcome
508 then the soul becomes a holy
509 ruler (which rarely happens
510 while the flesh can still bewilder).
511 God made all earthly things

512 only to serve Man,
513 but He made the soul
514 to serve and please Himself.
515 All other creatures
516 serve only Nature
517 but the soul serves Reason,
518 with which Man may understand God's thoughts
519 and obtain with his good deeds
520 the food of eternal life.

[The World]

521 Regardless of its subject,
522 a tale is liked much
523 better if it is told plainly;
524 thus I think to change themes
525 and tell you plainly
526 of the earth (which earlier
527 I mentioned) and of the water too.
528 The old scholars spoke of this
529 and properly set the bounds
530 which form the map of the world.
531 The dry ground is divided
532 into three parts,
533 Asia, Africa, and Europe,
534 and these are covered by heavens
535 which (as far as any ground stretches)
536 grip the World all around.
537 During the Great Punishment
538 water was let out of its basin
539 to flood over the high hills;
540 it killed every creature
541 that stood upon Middle Earth
542 except Noah and his family;
543 his three sons and three daughters
544 were all safe, and so was he.
545 The sons' names are known to the wise:
546 Sem, Cam, and Japhet the brethren were called,
547 and when the almighty hand
548 withdrew the water from the land
549 and made it all drain away
550 so the earth was fit for men again

551 these three sons
552 decided amongst themselves
553 to begin dividing up the World.
554 Asia, which lays towards the Sun
555 in the East,
556 was granted by common assent
557 to Sem, who was the eldest son;
558 for that part was the best,
559 and twice as large as the other two.
560 It was bounded thusly:
561 where the river Nile
562 departs from its course and falls
563 into the sea near Alexandria,
564 there is Asia's border
565 in the West (along with
566 where the Tanais River
567 runs into the Mediterranean);
568 from there to the edge of the world
569 eastwards is entirely Asia
570 until you come to the gates
571 of Paradise, and there must stop.
572 To put it shortly:
573 the East in general
574 is all contained within the bounds of Asia.
575 And in the
576 West it was then decided
577 that the brother Cham
578 would take Africa for his part.
579 Japhet took Europe,
580 and thus they divided the world in three.
581 Yet there are many other lands,
582 which people have forsaken
583 (in the West because of the cold,
584 in the East because of the heat)
585 and left as deserted wasteland
586 since it is not habitable.
587 The waters also have many divisions
588 which are defined by the nearby lands.
589 Waters take the name of the land
590 whose shore they touch;
591 but the sea which has no boundaries
592 is called the Great Ocean,
593 out of which arise

594 all the waters and then some.
595 There is not one little spring,
596 which does not begin in the Ocean,
597 and the water on which men live
598 by natural law comes
599 out of the sea and eventually returns
600 as the books say.

601 All the properties of the elements
602 and their arrangements
603 I have told. Now you have heard,
604 my good son, all the matter
605 of earth, of water, air, and fire.
606 But since you say that you desire
607 to receive every part
608 Aristotle's teaching,
609 know that his wisdom names
610 yet another element
611 above the four; it is the fifth
612 of high God's gifts
613 and it surrounds the globe.
614 Of this element he says
615 that as the unbroken shell
616 surrounds and encloses
617 the contents of an egg,
618 so too this sphere holds
619 the elements and everything else
620 which I have spoken of one by one.

621 But keep listening
622 my son, for I will proceed
623 to speak of Mathematics,
624 which is grounded on Theory.
625 I think I will explain
626 the science of Astronomy,
627 without which, to be honest,
628 all other sciences are in vain
629 since they deal with earthly things.
630 As an eagle with his wings
631 flies above all that men know
632 so is Astronomy to its fellows.

[Astronomy]

Lege planetarum magis inferiora reguntur,

Ista set interdum regula fallit opus.

Vir mediante deo sapiens dominabitur astris,

Fata nec immerito quid nouitatis agunt.

(With God's help, the wise man is stronger than the stars.)

633 All things down here on Earth,
634 all of their matter
635 (as the learned men tell us)
636 is controlled by things above,
637 which is to say the planets.
638 The cold and the heat
639 and the chances of the world
640 (which we call fortune
641 among the nations of men),
642 everything is in the horoscope,
643 how some men have good fortune,
644 and some men feel only distress
645 in love as well as other things.
646 The fate of realms and of kings
647 in time of peace, in time of war
648 it is determined by the stars:
649 thus say the scientists
650 who call themselves astronomers.
651 But the theologians say otherwise:
652 that if men were good and wise
653 and pleasing to God
654 they would not need to fear the stars.
655 For a fortunate man
656 means no more than any other
657 to Him the ruler of everything.
658 But yet the original laws
659 which He has set in Nature
660 must affect all creatures
661 without any exceptions
662 (unless there is a miracle
663 through the prayers of some holy man).
664 And therefore I will continue
665 to speak of Astronomy;
666 the learned scholars
667 tell of all the planets,
668 some of this I will explain,
669 and you, my son, will listen.

670 Astronomy is the science
671 of wisdom and great skill
672 which teaches knowledge
673 of the stars in the Firmament;
674 the appearance, the circle, and the movement
675 of each of them in its own place,
676 and the spaces between them,
677 and how they move or stand still,
678 all this it teaches.

679 Alongside Astronomy
680 is its partner Astrology
681 which determines
682 the effect of every star
683 and how they cause many wonders
684 in the world below.

685 To speak more plainly,
686 the old philosophers say
687 that the sphere I mentioned earlier
688 is what we on Earth
689 behold and call the Firmament.

690 In it stand all the stars
691 among which are
692 the seven principal planets
693 visible to our sight
694 in the sky.

695 There are also twelve signs
696 which they have their places
697 in their own orbit
698 they comprise the Zodiac.
699 For each of these bodies
700 there is a larger or a smaller orbit
701 made according to the proportions
702 of the Earth, which
703 is set as the foundation
704 to hold up the Firmament.

705 And by Astronomy men know
706 that the lower the body,
707 the smaller the orbit,
708 which is why some pass overhead
709 more quickly than others.
710 But now, dear brother,
711 since you desire to learn
712 what I have found written in the books,

713 I will tell of the seven planets,
714 how they stand in the heavens
715 and in in what orbit.
716 Take heed, for I will begin
717 just as the Philosopher taught
718 Alexander and improved him
719 until he was fully educated
720 in the wisdom which he was given.

[The Planets]

721 Beneath all others is the Moon,
722 which controls the seas.
723 High floods and low tides
724 are caused by its changes
725 and every single fish
726 lives in his governance
727 and waxes and wanes along with
728 the Moon (as a man may see)
729 and all that lives upon the ground
730 has its moisture governed likewise.
731 All the stars that men can see
732 shine with their own light
733 except for the Moon,
734 which is itself not bright,
735 but takes its light from the Sun.
736 And yet he does not always have
737 this light, for he is sometimes dark.
738 As for the obstacle of that light,
739 in *Almagest* Ptolemy says this:
740 the Moon's orbit is so low,
741 that the Sun in his place
742 cannot see his full face,
743 since he is shadowed by the ground,
744 therefore the Moon is sometimes faded
745 and may not fully shine.
746 Men born under the Moon's power
747 move from place to place
748 and see many strange lands.
749 This condition
750 of the Moon's influence
751 is set upon the land of Germany
752 and also upon Britain

753 (which is now called England),
754 for those folk travel in every land.

755 The second planet
756 (which orbits above the Moon)
757 is Mercury, and his nature is
758 that a man born under his sign
759 in books shall be studious
760 and in writing curious,
761 but he shall be slow and unwilling to work
762 at things which might benefit him.
763 He shall love ease, he shall love rest,
764 and so is he not the worthiest,
765 but yet in some business
766 his heart will be set upon wealth.
767 And as for this condition,
768 the effect and disposition
769 of this planet are seen
770 most often in Burgundy and France.

771 After Mercury
772 stands that planet which men call
773 Venus, whose constellation
774 governs the nation of lovers,
775 whether they succeed or not
776 (and to which I trust you belong).
777 But whichever way things go,
778 this planet will triumph in the end
779 as it has done over many others,
780 some in happiness, some in woe.
781 Nevertheless, this planet
782 is most often soft and sweet,
783 a man born under its sign
784 shall desire joy and mirth,
785 and be refined, courteous, and debonair,
786 and speak words both soft and fair.
787 Such shall be his nature,
788 and wherever he finds
789 the satisfaction of love, his heart shall bow
790 and he shall woo with all his might.
791 He shall be so very amorous
792 that he shall not see the evil
793 that comes with love; the law
794 shall not restrain

795 one born under the venereal sign.
796 Because of her nature
797 Venus is called the goddess of love,
798 but also of wantonness;
799 the climate of her lechery
800 is most common in Lombardy.

801 Beyond the planet of love
802 the bright Sun stands above,
803 which is the enemy of the night
804 and bringer of daylight.
805 He is the World's eye;
806 by him the lively company
807 of birds sing in the morning,
808 the fresh flowers spread and spring,
809 the high tree shades the ground,
810 and every man's heart is gladdened.
811 He is the greatest of the planets;
812 how he sits in his seat,
813 and of his riches and his nobility,
814 these books tell, and thus they say...

815 Of glistening gold the spokes and wheels
816 of the Sun's chariot are made;
817 in it he sits crowned
818 with bright gemstones all around,
819 which I will describe in detail.
820 There are, first of all,
821 three stones in the front of his crown
822 that are unknown to us
823 who live on Earth: the first is
824 called *lychnis*
825 and the other two are called
826 *astrites* and *ceraunius*.
827 And in the back
828 the old books say that
829 there are three worthy stones
830 each set in their place
831 upon the crown:
832 a quartz is one,
833 the second is a diamond,
834 the third is noble and beautiful,
835 and called *hydatis*.
836 And besides these

837 upon the crown's sides
838 (according to the scholar)
839 there sit five more stones:
840 emerald is one,
841 along with jasper and heliotrope,
842 and agate and jacinth.
843 Thus the crown is bejeweled,
844 and shines all the better.
845 Thus spreading his light
846 and sitting with the diadem on his head
847 the Sun shines from his chariot.
848 To lead him swiftly
849 through all the bright day,
850 he and his chariot are drawn
851 by four horses,
852 the names of which I will tell.
853 The first is Erythreus,
854 who is red and shines with heat,
855 the second is Actaeon the bright,
856 Lampros is the third courser's name,
857 and Philogeus is the fourth
858 that brings light unto this Earth.
859 They go so swiftly through the heavens
860 that in only twenty four hours
861 the chariot of the bright Sun
862 has completed its high orbit
863 for they have drawn and overrun
864 all of Middle Earth in in their haste.
865 And thus the Sun is
866 the emperor of the planets,
867 with three above and three beneath.
868 Between them he reigns
869 from the middle orbit
870 of the seven, and his face
871 gladdens all earthly creatures
872 and naturally grants them
873 ease and health.
874 His constellation
875 makes those born under it
876 good willed and generous
877 whatever the situation,
878 and makes them high in the graces
879 of the lords who they serve,

880 earning them great profits and thanks.
881 And besides that, the sign also causes
882 a man to be skilled at
883 working in gold, and to be wise
884 in everything that has value.
885 But to say where
886 on all this Earth he reigns the most,
887 it is in Greece, the land of wisdom,
888 where his sign is most prevalent.

889 Mars, the planet of war,
890 stands above the glorious Sun
891 and works his wonders
892 upon the fortunes of battles.
893 The conquerors of ancient days
894 were followers of this planet.
895 He whose birth
896 gives him the properties
897 of a martial disposition
898 by way of Mars' constellation
899 shall be fierce and foolhardy
900 and shall desire war and strife.
901 And to tell
902 what region is most commonly
903 influenced by this planet,
904 it is said that Mars' sign
905 is cast upon the Holy Land,
906 so that there can be no lasting peace.

907 Above Mars in the heavens
908 the sixth planet of the seven
909 is Jupiter the delicate,
910 which brings peace and not debate.
911 For this planet
912 (the softest and sweetest of all)
913 tempers all that belongs to him.
914 Those taken by this planet
915 as part of his regiment
916 shall be meek and patient
917 and fortunate in commerce
918 and lovers of delicacy
919 in everything they do.
920 Jupiter is also the cause
921 of the science of light work,

922 and for this reason the scholars say
923 that he is the planet of delight.
924 In Egypt his powers
925 reign especially strong;
926 for they have extraordinary love
927 for all that this life has to offer;
928 there is no stormy weather there
929 which might trouble men or beasts,
930 and the land is so wonderful
931 that it is completely fruitful
932 with no uncultivated ground;
933 over such happiness
934 rules Jupiter.

935 Highest and above all others
936 stands that planet which men call
937 Saturn, whose nature
938 is cold, and whose sign
939 causes malice and cruelty
940 to he whose birth
941 sets him under it.
942 All his works are damaging,
943 he is the enemy of men's health
944 in everything he does.
945 His region is the East,
946 which is the most violent.

947 All the planets and how
948 they stand within the sky,
949 from point to point
950 Alexander was made to learn.
951 But beyond this there was more knowledge,
952 and more things were taught
953 in his school;
954 now hear this wisdom...

[The Zodiac]

955 He who separated day from night
956 made one dark and the other light,
957 made a week from seven days,
958 and from four weeks made a month,
959 He with His laws arranged

960 the twelve months
961 into the long year.
962 His power set
963 (in order to match the seven days)
964 seven planets in the heavens
965 (as you have just heard)
966 and to continue on this theme,
967 for the months He set
968 twelve signs in the heavens
969 and in His book He
970 assigned a month to each.
971 These, which I shall recite
972 vary the fortunes of the year,
973 but to simply summarize:
974 the signs are ordered
975 one after another,
976 their properties vary
977 and together they comprise
978 the orbit of the Zodiac.
979 The first sign
980 is called Aries,
981 which is embodied by a ram
982 and is represented by such a figure.
983 The *Almagest* says
984 that in this constellation twelve stars
985 are set, arranged like so:
986 the belly has two, the head has three,
987 the tail has seven, and these
988 (as you might hear me say),
989 make Aries, which itself is hot and dry.
990 As for his allegiance,
991 he is the refuge and the house
992 of mighty Mars the warlike.
993 And besides this, as I find,
994 the Creator of all
995 upon this sign first began
996 the World and made Man.
997 This constellation
998 has properties which
999 greatly aid if a man therein
1000 begins a project or some work,
1001 for then he is assured of
1002 good speed and great success.

1003 The twelve months of the year
1004 are assigned to the power
1005 of the twelve signs.
1006 Now understand
1007 that Aries (of the twelve)
1008 has claimed March for himself;
1009 then every bird shall choose his mate,
1010 and every adder and every snake,
1011 and every reptile which may move
1012 tests his might and tries to prove
1013 that he can creep out to the Sun
1014 once Spring's season has begun.
1015 Taurus is the second
1016 sign, which appears
1017 as a bull, is dry and cold,
1018 and (as books have told)
1019 is the house appointed
1020 to Venus, although they are dissimilar.
1021 This bull is set in the stars
1022 with his horns linked
1023 into the tail of Aries,
1024 so he is not starless there.
1025 Upon his breast are eighteen stars,
1026 and as it is seen,
1027 two more stand upon his tail.
1028 His assigned month
1029 is April, whose showers
1030 grow and nurture all the flowers.
1031 The third sign is Gemini,
1032 which appears
1033 like a pair of human twins
1034 standing naked.
1035 They are well provided with stars:
1036 they share the two
1037 that shine in the bull's tail
1038 (so that these are part of both signs),
1039 on Gemini's belly
1040 are five stars,
1041 and two more are on the feet,
1042 according to the old book
1043 that wise Ptolemy wrote.
1044 Gemini's proper month
1045 is the lively May,

1046 wherein every bird
1047 among the green leaves sings,
1048 and love with his thorns stings
1049 (by the law of Nature)
1050 every youthful creature.
1051 Cancer has his place
1052 fourth in the list of signs.
1053 As a crab he appears,
1054 and has in his entourage
1055 sixteen stars, ten of which,
1056 as these old wise men
1057 describe, are on his front,
1058 two are in his middle,
1059 and four are at his back.
1060 Thus he goes attired with stars,
1061 is moist and cold,
1062 and is the proper house
1063 assigned to the Moon,
1064 in which he does as he wishes.
1065 The month of June
1066 is assigned to this sign.
1067 The fifth sign is called Leo,
1068 whose nature is dryness and heat,
1069 and in whom the Sun is housed.
1070 The appearance of his constellation
1071 is a lion invested
1072 with his share of stars.
1073 The four which Cancer has
1074 on his back are taken by Leo
1075 upon his head, and then besides
1076 he has four more upon his breast,
1077 and one upon his tail behind,
1078 (as we read in old books).
1079 His proper month is July,
1080 in which men play many games.
1081 After Leo, Virgo is next;
1082 she is the sixth sign
1083 and has the appearance of a maiden.
1084 The Philosopher said that
1085 she is the wealth and the exaltation,
1086 the vigor, the joy, and the delight
1087 of Mercury, and truly
1088 she is well attired with stars:

1089 Leo has lent her one
1090 which sits upon her head,
1091 her stomach has five, and her feet
1092 have five more.
1093 In regards to her nature,
1094 this maiden is dry and cold
1095 despite her kindly disposition.
1096 And to conclude,
1097 her month comes
1098 when every field has corn in hand
1099 by the bending of many men's backs
1100 (that is to say this sign is applied to August).
1101 After Virgo
1102 Libra sits in the seventh place,
1103 his sign appears to be
1104 a man with a set of scales
1105 held in his hand for weighing.
1106 In books (and as may be seen)
1107 many stars belong to him:
1108 on his head he holds
1109 three, and his stomach has two,
1110 and down beneath he has eight more.
1111 This sign is hot and moist,
1112 properties which are not dissimilar
1113 to Venus, so that aloft
1114 she often rests in Libra's house.
1115 Saturn too often resides
1116 in this sign and is exalted.
1117 Libra's proper month is September,
1118 which gives men cause to remember
1119 if any lingering wounds remain
1120 from things which once caused them grief.
1121 Among the high signs
1122 the one numbered eighth
1123 is Scorpio, which as a treacherous
1124 scorpion appears.
1125 But despite that
1126 Scorpio is not starless;
1127 for Libra granted him
1128 eight stars to do with as he pleased,
1129 which he arranged on his head,
1130 and besides these
1131 there are three stars upon his belly,

1132 and eight upon his tail.
1133 His nature is moist and cold
1134 and disagreeable;
1135 he harms and stymies Venus,
1136 but Mars gladly visits his house
1137 and they stir up war together.
1138 His proper month, men say,
1139 is October, which heralds
1140 the winter following close behind.
1141 The ninth sign,
1142 which follows after Scorpio,
1143 is called Sagittarius,
1144 whose constellation
1145 is a monster with a bow in hand.
1146 He is made up of many stars:
1147 the eight I spoke of before
1148 (which are carried upon the tail
1149 of Scorpio), these cover
1150 the head of Sagittarius,
1151 eight others stand
1152 upon his stomach, and seven more
1153 stand upon his tail behind.
1154 He is hot and dry in nature;
1155 Jupiter has free reign of his house,
1156 but Mercury on the other hand
1157 is not of the same mind
1158 and does him great harm.
1159 This sign has possession of
1160 the month in which a man's duty
1161 (because of the changing season)
1162 is to bring his oxen into the barn,
1163 and a fire into his own house,
1164 and to make the drink which makes men sing,
1165 by fermenting his grapes to wine,
1166 and besides this butcher up his swine.
1167 It is November that I mean,
1168 when all the leaves have lost their green.
1169 The tenth sign, dry and cold,
1170 is called Capricorn,
1171 which resembles a goat.
1172 With love and friendship
1173 his house welcomes
1174 Saturn, whom he likes well,

1175 but the Moon he does not like,
1176 and cannot cooperate with.
1177 This sign has
1178 three stars upon his head,
1179 and two upon his belly,
1180 and two upon his tail as well.
1181 In December, when the year has gone
1182 (as the books tell us),
1183 when days are short and nights are long
1184 this sign has its dominance.
1185 Of those that sit in the heavens,
1186 the signs, the eleventh
1187 place belongs to Aquarius,
1188 who agrees with Saturn
1189 and welcomes him to his home,
1190 but despises the Sun.
1191 This sign appears
1192 as a man holding
1193 a water spout in each hand,
1194 from which streams pour out.
1195 He is by nature moist and hot,
1196 and as for his stars
1197 it is said that he has two
1198 upon his head, which are the same
1199 as those on Capricorn's tail,
1200 and as the old book
1201 (which Ptolemy wrote) says,
1202 he has twelve more upon his stomach,
1203 and two in his lower half.
1204 Now understand
1205 that the frosty cold January,
1206 when the new year has come,
1207 and Janus the double-faced
1208 sits upon his throne
1209 and looks to both sides,
1210 somewhat towards the wintertime,
1211 somewhat towards the coming spring,
1212 that is the month belonging
1213 to this sign, and from his store
1214 he gifts us the first flowers.
1215 The twelfth and last of
1216 the signs is called Pisces,
1217 which, the scholars say,

1218 is depicted as two fishes.
1219 He cold and moist in nature,
1220 and the stars
1221 cover him in this way:
1222 his two lower stars Aquarius
1223 has lent to Pisces' head and
1224 there are two of his own
1225 upon his womb, and additionally
1226 upon his back there are
1227 twenty bright stars,
1228 which are a wonder to behold.
1229 Into this sign's house
1230 comes Jupiter the glorious,
1231 and Venus too abides with him
1232 (as the books record).
1233 The month ordained to this sign
1234 is February, full of rains,
1235 when the raging floodwaters
1236 hinder passage of the rivers.
1237 Now you have heard the properties
1238 of the signs, but
1239 Abu Ma'shar goes beyond this
1240 and says that just as Earth is divided
1241 in four, so too are
1242 the twelve signs,
1243 and each of them
1244 has his own region to control.
1245 The first group rules
1246 the lands eastward
1247 of Antioch, that country
1248 is governed by three signs:
1249 Cancer, Virgo, and Leo.
1250 Westward from Armenia
1251 (as I have learned)
1252 is governed by Capricorn,
1253 Pisces, and Aquarius.
1254 Furthermore, I find that
1255 south of Alexandria
1256 the worthy signs
1257 which govern the land
1258 are Libra, and Sagittarius,
1259 and together with them
1260 stands Scorpio.

1261 From the city of Constantinople
1262 (as the books tell me),
1263 the last division
1264 extends northward,
1265 where by decree of providence
1266 Aries governs
1267 along with Taurus and Gemini.
1268 Thus are the signs properly
1269 divided, as I have said,
1270 through all the different lands.

[The Fixed Stars]

1271 You see, my son,
1272 Alexander had to learn
1273 about the planets for his education,
1274 but now we must look even higher,
1275 to the other stars.
1276 I shall teach you,
1277 just as was young King Alexander,
1278 when he was taught
1279 to see the high stars in the night sky
1280 with his own eyes.
1281 Upon each thing
1282 there are many influences,
1283 some do this, some do that;
1284 the fire is hot by nature
1285 and burns everything he can touch,
1286 water restrains fire,
1287 for it is cold and moist.
1288 This is the way it is
1289 for us down here on Earth;
1290 to speak of this further,
1291 up in the heavens men have found
1292 that there are many sorts of stars,
1293 and they do many sorts of things
1294 to us here below.
1295 Among the mortals,
1296 was Nectanebo,
1297 an astronomer
1298 and a great magician,
1299 who undertook the task

1300 of instructing Alexander
1301 in natural magic
1302 and teaching him
1303 the meanings of the most influential stars,
1304 of which, he said, there are fifteen.
1305 For each and every one
1306 there is a herb and a stone,
1307 with which men may work many wonders
1308 for better or for worse.
1309 To begin as he did,
1310 the first star is Aldebaran,
1311 the clearest and the most famous,
1312 known everywhere by its proper name.
1313 He shares the personality
1314 of Mars, and the substance
1315 of Venus, and therefore has
1316 carbuncle as his proper stone;
1317 his herb is called spurge,
1318 which is said to be very potent.
1319 The second is not powerless,
1320 Clota (or else Pleiades) he is called.
1321 He is akin to the Moon,
1322 but, as I have found,
1323 he has Mars' substance.
1324 On account of these properties,
1325 his stone is quartz crystal,
1326 and his special herb
1327 is the virtuous fennel.
1328 The third star after this
1329 is Algol, the clear and red.
1330 Of Saturn, I have heard,
1331 he takes his demeanor, and of Jove
1332 he takes his substance.
1333 His proper stone is diamond,
1334 which agrees with him best;
1335 the herb allotted to him
1336 is the black hellebores.
1337 As has been allotted,
1338 the fourth star is Capella,
1339 which as I said before
1340 from Saturn and of Jupiter
1341 takes his nature; therefore
1342 the sapphire is his proper stone,

1343 hoarhound is his herb,
1344 and both of these suit him very well.
1345 The Dog Star, Sirius,
1346 is the fifth star of magic,
1347 whose nature is venereal
1348 (as the astronomers say).
1349 His proper stone is beryl,
1350 but to work and to fulfill
1351 the magic of Sirius
1352 there is an herb called juniper
1353 which serves the needs of those
1354 who wish to enhance the star's effect.
1355 The sixth following after this
1356 is named Procyon;
1357 this is a Mercurial star
1358 by its nature, and besides this
1359 (as is written in the treatise),
1360 his substance is that of Mars.
1361 His stone and herb (so says Aristotle's School),
1362 are agate and primrose.
1363 The seventh star
1364 of this science is Regulus,
1365 which controls many earthly things.
1366 The stone which is properly his
1367 is called coral,
1368 and the herb he rules
1369 the workings of
1370 is celandine, the fresh and green.
1371 The star Algorab upon high
1372 takes his place at number eight.
1373 Of all the stars he most performs
1374 the will of Mars and of Saturn;
1375 his herb is burdock
1376 (but it has no uses),
1377 and his stone is called onyx,
1378 through which men work great mischief.
1379 The ninth star, lovely and fine,
1380 is named Spica;
1381 he takes on the properties
1382 of both Mercury and Venus.
1383 His stone is the green emerald,
1384 which is lauded far and wide.

1385 Sage is his appropriate herb
1386 far more than any other.
1387 The tenth star is Arcturus,
1388 which upon both life and death
1389 (by the powers of Jupiter and Mars)
1390 works his magic influence.
1391 His stone is jasper, and plantain
1392 is his sovereign herb.
1393 The eleventh star is Alkaid,
1394 whose nature takes after
1395 Venus and the Moon
1396 (in terms of the things he influences).
1397 Lodestone is the jewel
1398 in which his dominance is felt;
1399 the herb which belongs to him
1400 is called chicory in the book.
1401 Alphecca is numbered
1402 the twelfth star;
1403 from Scorpio he is controlled
1404 and takes his nature (as I have learned).
1405 His virtues are revealed in the stone
1406 which is called topaz;
1407 his proper herb is rosemary,
1408 which best fits his personality.
1409 Of these stars of which I speak,
1410 Antares is thirteenth;
1411 Mars and Jupiter
1412 govern his nature.
1413 His herb is pipevine,
1414 which corresponds with his astronomy.
1415 This star governs the stone called
1416 sard, which bows to him.
1417 The next-to-last star,
1418 was named by Nature,
1419 who called him Vega;
1420 he is obedient
1421 to Mercury and to Venus.
1422 His stone is called peridot
1423 and his herb is called savory,
1424 as the old books say.
1425 But now the last star of all
1426 men call the Tail of Scorpio,
1427 to Mercury and to Saturn

1428 its nature derives
1429 (according to
1430 the proper horoscopes).
1431 The chalcedony belongs to him
1432 for he has claimed it as his stone;
1433 grounded marjoram is his herb.
1434 Thus I have declared the nature
1435 of each star in particular,
1436 and the herb and stone of each,
1437 just as Thrice-great Hermes
1438 testified in his old book.

[The Great Astronomers]

1439 The science of Astronomy's
1440 purpose is to uncover
1441 how to distinguish between harmful and helpful
1442 among the natural things.
1443 The astronomers had a mighty task on their hands
1444 to reach this understanding
1445 but eventually
1446 their studies brought us knowledge;
1447 they were gracious and wise
1448 and worthy to receive our praise.
1449 And those responsible
1450 for developing this science:
1451 the first who wrote on it
1452 after Noah was Nimrod
1453 (the disciple of Ionitus);
1454 he wrote a book on the subject
1455 which was entitled *Megaster*.
1456 Another actor in this case
1457 is the notable Arzachel;
1458 his book is known as *Abbategnyh*.
1459 Lord Ptolemy is not the least,
1460 he wrote the book called *Almagest*;
1461 and Alfraganus did the same
1462 (his book is *Chatemuz* by name).
1463 Gebuz and Alpetragus
1464 described the planisphere
1465 in their books, and besides this
1466 there are many other worthy scholars
1467 who have written upon this science
1468 in books of altimetry

1469 and planar geometry
1470 which both belong
1471 to the natural philosophy
1472 of these astronomers.
1473 Men say that Abraham was one
1474 (but whether he was or not
1475 I cannot find cited), and Moses
1476 was another, but Thrice-great Hermes
1477 above all other scientists
1478 had great wisdom.
1479 He surveyed many stars
1480 which are still found in books today.
1481 I may not know all of them
1482 who have at various times written
1483 on this science, but I do find
1484 in their judgements
1485 that on one point they all agree:
1486 of all the stars recorded
1487 which men can see in the heavens,
1488 there are exactly
1489 one thousand and twenty-two visible
1490 that are bright enough
1491 that men may see what they are,
1492 their natures, and their properties.
1493 Now you have heard the way
1494 these noble, wise philosophers
1495 informed the young king
1496 and gave him the knowledge
1497 of the first part
1498 of Philosophy
1499 which is called Theory
1500 (as I defined for you before).
1501 But now we will speak of the second,
1502 which Aristotle also invented;
1503 it teaches how to speak well,
1504 which is quite necessary
1505 to tip the balance in your favor
1506 when other proof is lacking.

[Rhetoric]

Compositi pulcra sermonis verba placere

Principio poterunt, veraque fine placent.

Herba, lapis, sermo, tria sunt virtute repleta,

Vis tamen ex verbi pondere plura facit.

(Words are powerful, especially true ones.)

1507 Above all earthly creatures
1508 the high Maker of Nature
1509 gave words to Man alone
1510 so that by his speech
1511 (whether he may lose or win),
1512 the thoughts of his inner heart
1513 may be shown and expressed,
1514 and this is seen nowhere else
1515 in all the other beasts.
1516 Man should be more honorable
1517 with this great God-given gift,
1518 and take care that he does not
1519 shift his words to wicked uses,
1520 for language is the teacher of virtue
1521 (according to Philosophy).
1522 Concerning this point,
1523 Rhetoric is the science
1524 dedicated to the study
1525 of words that are reasonable.
1526 Since this art requires
1527 many fine words
1528 it has Grammar and Logic,
1529 which both aid speech.
1530 First, Grammar teaches
1531 how to speak correctly.
1532 Likewise, Logic helps discern
1533 between truth and falsehood,
1534 to parse what is spoken,
1535 so that no meaning is lost
1536 and decisions are made rightly.
1537 In this way many great debates
1538 may be resolved to good agreement;
1539 peace may be upheld
1540 with soft and easy words
1541 where strength would let it fall.
1542 The Philosopher (among others)

1543 praises this science
1544 for its eloquence.
1545 There is power in stones and herbs,
1546 but the books say this:
1547 that the word
1548 is powerful above all earthly things,
1549 for evil or for good.
1550 For if words seem good
1551 and are well spoken in men's ears,
1552 and there is no truth there,
1553 they can do great mischief.
1554 When the words and the mind
1555 differ in their intent,
1556 such Rhetoric is to be despised
1557 and dreaded in every place.
1558 Of Ulysses thus I read,
1559 (which is written in the book of Troy):
1560 his eloquence and his charm
1561 and the fair words which he spoke,
1562 persuaded Antenor to sell out
1563 the city, so that by treason it was won.
1564 Words have beguiled many a man;
1565 with words the wild beast is daunted,
1566 with words the serpent is enchanted,
1567 words among the men of arms
1568 may heal wounds with their charms
1569 where medicine has failed;
1570 words have under their purview
1571 all the spells of sorcery.
1572 Words are of many natures,
1573 some of evil, some of good:
1574 words make friends of foes,
1575 and foes of friends, and peace of war,
1576 and war of peace, and into confusion
1577 words throw this world's plans,
1578 and then repair them at a whim.
1579 Under the Firmament words
1580 decide what things are odd or even;
1581 with words we please high God;
1582 with words words may be appeased,
1583 a soft word makes a loud word still;
1584 where goods are lacking, words fulfill,
1585 and make amends for what went wrong;

1586 when words combine into a song,
1587 it pleases all the more.
1588 Let us begin by studying
1589 the Rhetoric composed by Cicero,
1590 from it a man may glean
1591 how he shall set his words,
1592 how to loosen, how to tie them together,
1593 and the way to speak
1594 his argument seamlessly.
1595 If you desire an example,
1596 take heed to what was spoken long ago
1597 by Caesar and by Cicero
1598 (who were consuls of Rome),
1599 and likewise Cato and Silanus.
1600 Behold the words that passed between them,
1601 when the treason of Catiline
1602 was discovered and the conspiracy
1603 of his faction
1604 was known and debated in the Senate,
1605 and it was asked how and in what way
1606 justice should be done.
1607 Silanus spoke first of all;
1608 in truth his duty
1609 was to serve the common good,
1610 he said that traitors deserve
1611 a cruel death, and thus argued
1612 Cato as well,
1613 saying that for such a crime
1614 there may be no pain too strong.
1615 But Caesar, with wise words
1616 spoke otherwise,
1617 for he wished to avoid this death.
1618 He resolved to persuade
1619 the judges by his eloquence,
1620 turn aside their death sentence,
1621 and set Pity in their hearts.
1622 First spoke they, then spoke he;
1623 they spoke plainly of the law,
1624 but Caesar with words of mercy
1625 nuanced the affair,
1626 and thus the two sides
1627 weighed upon this judgement,
1628 each made their argument.

1629 From this and other tales
1630 a man might learn the skill
1631 of eloquence in Rhetoric,
1632 which is the second science
1633 of Philosophy.
1634 By it a man may justify
1635 his words in debate,
1636 and build up a conclusion
1637 to his argument in such a way
1638 that the plain truth is revealed
1639 and subtle schemes dispelled;
1640 this is the duty of every honest man.

[Practice]

Practica quemque statum pars tertia Philosophie

Ad regimen recte ducit in orbe vie:

Set quanto maior Rex est, tanto magis ipsum

Hec scola concernit, qua sua regna regat.

(A good life requires good conduct, even for kings.)

1641 The first part, Theory,
1642 and the second, Rhetoric,
1643 are sciences of Philosophy;
1644 I have divided them
1645 just as Aristotle did
1646 for Alexander, and now I shall
1647 tell of the third part,
1648 which is called Practice.
1649 Practice has three parts
1650 which concern the governance of kings;
1651 the first is called Ethics,
1652 the purpose of which
1653 is to teach the virtuous way
1654 in which a king should rule himself:
1655 his moral condition,
1656 and the orderly conduct
1657 of personal good living;
1658 these are worth most of his crown.
1659 Through Practice king also learns
1660 how to govern his own body:
1661 how he shall wake, how he shall sleep,
1662 how he shall keep his health,
1663 in food, in drink, in clothing too;
1664 there is no wisdom

1665 concerning his own person,
1666 which this science
1667 does not teach,
1668 nothing is left behind.
1669 Another point which Practice
1670 includes is Economics,
1671 which honestly teaches
1672 the way a king
1673 shall rule and lead his wife and children,
1674 and so on with all the people
1675 of his own household,
1676 and his estate on every side,
1677 so that his leadership
1678 shall not do them harm.
1679 Practice has yet a third part,
1680 which teaches how
1681 though his farsighted decrees
1682 a king should govern
1683 his realm, and that is Policy.
1684 It serves royalty
1685 in times of war and times of peace
1686 to the honor and benefit
1687 of scribes, of knights, of merchants,
1688 and so on all the remnant
1689 of the common people all about,
1690 within the towns and without,
1691 including the smiths
1692 who make crafts and all
1693 who work with their hands.
1694 These people are all different,
1695 yet nonetheless there must be
1696 one set of laws to govern them all,
1697 or else they either loose or win
1698 merely by the class of their birth.
1699 Thus the young king
1700 was fully taught of everything
1701 which might grant judgement
1702 of good rulership and good living
1703 to such a worthy prince as he.
1704 But as was also necessary,
1705 the Philosopher described
1706 five points for Alexander
1707 to remember and obey

1708 to ensure the worthy governance
1709 appropriate to his rule,
1710 according to Policy.

[Truth]

*Moribus ornatus regit hic qui regna moderna,
Cercius expectat ceptra futura poli.
Et quia veridica virtus supereminet omnes,
Regis ab ore boni fabula nulla sonat.*
(Good kings never lie.)

1711 Learning benefits all men,
1712 but none need it more
1713 than a king; he has to lead
1714 his people, and his rulership
1715 may either save or slay them.
1716 Since much depends upon his will
1717 it suits him to be prudent,
1718 and to have the virtues
1719 well understood
1720 to be appropriate to kingship.
1721 To describe them all
1722 I shall now endeavor.
1723 Among the virtues one is chief,
1724 and that is Truth, which is beloved
1725 by God and men.
1726 It has forever been so,
1727 for Aristotle taught
1728 Alexander how in his youth
1729 he should revere Truth
1730 and embrace it with his whole heart
1731 so that his words would be true and plain;
1732 thus the world could be sure
1733 that there was no doubletalk from him.
1734 If men look for Truth
1735 and cannot find it within their king,
1736 that would be a great evil.
1737 Words are a token of what lies within,
1738 and which them a worthy king must begin
1739 (by minding his tongue and speaking truly)
1740 to earn the praise of others.
1741 He must be well advised
1742 and well warned before he swears,
1743 for afterwards it is too late

1744 for him to retract his word.
1745 Just as the king
1746 stands above all others
1747 in power, so should he likewise
1748 be the most virtuous;
1749 this will be signified
1750 and specified by his crown...
1751 The gold signifies excellence,
1752 it makes men revere
1753 their sovereign liege.
1754 The gems, as the books say,
1755 symbolize virtue in three ways:
1756 first, they are hard and thus
1757 represent a king's steadfastness
1758 (no variance may
1759 be found in him);
1760 furthermore,
1761 the magic inherent to the stones
1762 is a symbol that
1763 that the king shall be honest
1764 and truly stand by his word
1765 in royal affairs;
1766 finally, the bright colors
1767 which shine from the stones
1768 are symbols of
1769 the list of famous deeds
1770 (which testify the king's goodness).
1771 The ring of the crown itself
1772 signifies the lands of the kingdom
1773 which are under his dominion
1774 and which he must protect and guide.
1775 As for Truth itself,
1776 it is the king of the virtues
1777 and rules over all of them.
1778 This is seen in a tale
1779 of the value of Truth;
1780 for your education
1781 my son, I shall share
1782 the account of these matters....

[Darius' Disputation]

1783 The account goes like this:
1784 there was a sultan of Persia

1785 whose name was Darius, and Hystaspes
1786 was his father. It was
1787 through wisdom and high prudence
1788 (more than for any fame
1789 of his ancestral lineage)
1790 that he came to rule the empire.
1791 As he himself was wise
1792 he prized wise men
1793 and sought them out from every land,
1794 to come and advise him.
1795 Among these there were three
1796 who served him best,
1797 they would sit in his chamber
1798 and hear and weigh his counsels.
1799 These three had strange names:
1800 Arpaghes was the first,
1801 and Manachaz was the second,
1802 and Zorobabel (as it is says
1803 in the tale) was the third.
1804 This sultan, no matter what,
1805 trusted them most of all,
1806 and such was the case this time:
1807 a deep thought came to Darius
1808 one night as he slept,
1809 and he resolved
1810 to put a question to them.
1811 The king's question was this:
1812 which thing is strongest,
1813 wine, a woman, or a king?
1814 To ensure that they would
1815 be sure of their answers
1816 he gave them three full days,
1817 and gave them his word
1818 that he who answered best,
1819 would receive a worthy prize.
1820 They took up this challenge
1821 and stood in disputation,
1822 each with his own opinion
1823 and arguments to support it.
1824 Arpaghes spoke first,
1825 and said how the strength of kings
1826 is the mightiest of all things:
1827 "For kings have power over Man,

1828 and Man's Reason makes him
1829 naturally
1830 the most noble creature
1831 of all that God has made.
1832 That power makes it impossible
1833 that any earthly thing
1834 may be as mighty as a king.
1835 A king may slay, a king may save,
1836 a king may make lords into knaves,
1837 and lords of knaves as well.
1838 The power of a king is such
1839 that he is above the law;
1840 what he would make less, he lessens;
1841 what he would make more, he increases.
1842 As the noble falcon soars,
1843 do does he, and no man may claim him
1844 for he alone tames all others
1845 and stands unquestionable.”
1846 Thus a king's might, said he,
1847 as far as his reason could see,
1848 is strongest and of most value.
1849 But Manachaz said otherwise,
1850 that wine has the greater prowess,
1851 and he showed it this way:
1852 “Wine often takes away
1853 Reason from a man's heart;
1854 wine can make a cripple dance,
1855 and a nimble man clumsy;
1856 it gives a blind man sight,
1857 and the bright-eyed darkness;
1858 it makes simpletons into scribes,
1859 and scribes' learning
1860 it takes away; cowardice
1861 it turns into courage,
1862 and of greed it makes generosity.
1863 The wine makes the good blood,
1864 in which the virtuous soul
1865 makes her home
1866 while she lives.”
1867 And therefore Manachas
1868 answered the proposal,
1869 and said that wine by its nature

1870 binds the heart
1871 far more than royalty.
1872 Zorobabel for his part
1873 said, as he thought best,
1874 that women are the mightiest.
1875 The king and the winemaker
1876 both are born from women,
1877 and besides this he said how manhood
1878 shall always obey
1879 womanhood's strength of love,
1880 (whether he wishes to or not).
1881 To show the mastery of women,
1882 he told this tale
1883 as an example:
1884 "Apame (who was Bartacus'
1885 daughter) sat in the king's place
1886 upon the high throne
1887 even when he was enraged
1888 at the nobility of his empire.
1889 The tyrant king Cyrus she took,
1890 and with only her sweet glances
1891 she made him debonair and meek,
1892 and by the chin and by the cheek
1893 she dragged him this way and that;
1894 now she teased him, now she kissed him,
1895 and did whatever with him that she liked;
1896 when she glowered then he sighed,
1897 and when she was glad then he was glad;
1898 and thus this king was mastered
1899 by she who was his lover.
1900 Among men there is no solace,
1901 if there are no women,
1902 for their absence
1903 sends this world's joy away.
1904 Through them men find the way
1905 to knighthood and worldly fame,
1906 for they make a man dread shame,
1907 and desire honor.
1908 Beauty is fired
1909 by the darts that Cupid throws,
1910 from which grows the jolly pain
1911 that has the whole world underfoot.
1912 A woman is her man's wealth,

1913 his life, his death, his woe, his weal;
1914 and it may be shown
1915 that women are good and kind
1916 in this example that I find:
1917 “When the duke Admetus lay
1918 sick in his bed, every day
1919 men waited for him to die,
1920 but his wife Alcestis went to pray,
1921 so that she could win the favor
1922 of Minerva with sacrifices,
1923 and make the goddess reveal
1924 how her lord’s sickness
1925 (with which he was sorely besieged)
1926 might be restored to health.
1927 Thus she cried and thus she prayed
1928 until at last a voice told her
1929 that if she would for his sake
1930 take on and suffer the illness,
1931 and die herself, then he would live.
1932 For this answer Alcestis gave
1933 great thanks to Minerva,
1934 she chose with all her heart
1935 her death for Admetus’ life,
1936 and thus resolved she went home.
1937 When she came to her chamber,
1938 she took her husband
1939 in both her arms and kissed him,
1940 and told him what she had chosen;
1941 and within an instant
1942 this good wife was overthrown
1943 and died, while he was healed.
1944 So as Reason shows,
1945 next after God above,
1946 the trust and the love of women
1947 (in whom all grace is found),
1948 is mightiest upon the Earth
1949 and by far the most beneficial.”
1950 Thus Zorobabel told
1951 the tale of his opinion.
1952 But in his final conclusion
1953 on the strongest of earthly things
1954 (the wine, the women, or the king),
1955 he said that Truth, above them all

1956 is mightiest, no matter what.
1957 “Truth, howsoever it arrives
1958 may never be overcome;
1959 it may well suffer for a while,
1960 but in the end it shall be known.
1961 The proverbs say he that is true
1962 shall never despair his fortunes.
1963 For however the case shall go,
1964 Truth is unashamed at the end,
1965 but an untrue thing
1966 may well end up ashamed,
1967 and shame ruins every man.
1968 So it was proved that there is no might
1969 without Truth in some degree.”
1970 For the truth of his argument
1971 Zorobabel was most commended
1972 when the disputation had finished,
1973 and he received his reward;
1974 for Truth is most important overall
1975 to the needs of Man.
1976 Therefore Truth in particular
1977 was the first point considered
1978 which concerned the governance
1979 of Alexander. It is said
1980 that upon Truth rests the foundation
1981 of every king’s rule,
1982 and therefore it is needed
1983 to properly construct a king
1984 prepared for this world and for heaven.

[Generosity]

*Absit Avaricia, ne tangat regia corda,
Eius enim spoliis excoriatur humus.
Fama colit largum volitans per secula Regem,
Dona tamen licitis sunt moderanda modis.*

(greed ruins the fertile ground, and likewise the fame of kings.)

1985 After Truth the second part
1986 of Policy is that which
1987 produces worldly fame
1988 and praise for a king’s name.
1989 This is Generosity, whose honor
1990 greed cannot diminish.
1991 The world’s goods were once communal,

1992 but as fate would have it
1993 common ownership did not last,
1994 for when people became rich
1995 and their families became great,
1996 soon every man began to claim things
1997 for his own private gain.
1998 From these first envies arose
1999 great arguments and wars
2000 which lasted so long
2001 that no man knew who was who,
2002 nor who was friend and who was foe.
2003 At last the people of every land
2004 agreed amongst themselves
2005 that it was better to have a king
2006 who could settle everything
2007 and give justice to families
2008 by dividing their inheritances
2009 and all their other goods.
2010 And thus above them all stood
2011 the king in his royalty,
2012 and he protected
2013 the worldly goods from the greedy.
2014 Therefore it is good
2015 for a king to decide
2016 to set his heart on Generosity
2017 both towards himself and
2018 towards his people; if is not so
2019 (that is to say if that he
2020 spends on himself
2021 but steals from his people)
2022 he will not be called Generous,
2023 but rather a miser,
2024 which is a terrible vice in a king.
2025 A king is also wise to flee
2026 the vice of Prodigality;
2027 he should moderate his expenses
2028 so that he may be safe
2029 from poverty, for the needy
2030 are hindered in all they undertake.
2031 Aristotle then spoke of Chaldea
2032 (the perfect example
2033 to teach King Alexander),
2034 for those folk were enraged

2035 at their king for his robberies.
2036 And he set in Alexander's heart
2037 three considerations for
2038 spending his money...
2039 First, he must evaluate
2040 and ensure his own goods
2041 include the gifts he plans to give,
2042 so he might live more virtuously.
2043 Also he must take heed
2044 if there is an important cause
2045 which ought to be defended
2046 before his goods are spent.
2047 He must also
2048 (among his other duties)
2049 note the merits of his men,
2050 according to their family
2051 and standing and virtue;
2052 he shall bountifully give
2053 for war or for peace,
2054 thus he shall maintain his honor
2055 and not turn to infamy.
2056 He that shall keep his good name
2057 shall not be called unkind.
2058 And I have found a tale in the chronicles
2059 which relates to this matter,
2060 as you shall hear...
2061 Once, in Rome (as was his right),
2062 a worthy but impoverished knight,
2063 came along to plead
2064 his case in the court
2065 where Caesar was presiding.
2066 And because he lacked the funds
2067 there was no lawyer with him
2068 to make a plea for his estate.
2069 But though he lacked money
2070 he had plenty of manhood;
2071 he knew well that his purse was poor
2072 but he yearned to recover his property.
2073 Therefore, he openly declared his poverty
2074 to the emperor and said:
2075 "Oh Julius, lord of the law,
2076 behold, my counselor is absent
2077 for lack of gold. Do your duty

2078 according to the laws of Justice.
2079 Help me testify here
2080 upon the truth of my case.”
2081 Caesar, hearing this,
2082 appointed him a worthy lawyer
2083 but spoke not a word himself.
2084 This knight was angry and took offense
2085 to the emperor, saying this:
2086 “Oh unkind Julius
2087 when you fought in battle
2088 up in Africa, and I was there,
2089 it was my valor which rescued you
2090 as much as any man’s.
2091 You know how I was wounded there,
2092 but here I find you so wicked
2093 that you will not speak a word
2094 from your own mouth, nor from your treasure
2095 withdraw a coin to help me.
2096 Why should I boast
2097 ever again of your generosity,
2098 when such great unkindness
2099 I find in you now?”
2100 Now Caesar knew
2101 that all he said was true,
2102 and to avoid being called unkind
2103 he took this case on hand
2104 as if it were sent by God;
2105 he gave the knight enough to spend
2106 for the rest of his life.
2107 Thus should every worthy king
2108 aid his knights
2109 when he sees that they are in need,
2110 for every service deserves a reward.
2111 But another, who has not proven
2112 his virtue, but instead has been unfaithful,
2113 a king should give him nothing,
2114 no matter how high his rank.
2115 Every king must have
2116 discretion when men beseech him,
2117 so that he may give gifts wisely.
2118 A tale is written of this
2119 telling how Cinichus, a poor knight,
2120 asked for a mighty sum

2121 from King Antigonus.
2122 The king answered
2123 that such a gift exceeded
2124 his poor estate; therefor the knight reduced his request,
2125 and asked for just a single penny
2126 or nothing at all.

2127 The king now said that was too small
2128 a gift for a regal lord
2129 to give to any man,
2130 and was unbecoming of a king.

2131 By this example a king may learn
2132 to give in a thoughtful manner,
2133 for if a king gives away his treasure
2134 dishonorably and thoughtlessly,
2135 than he has been tricked;
2136 I do not know if anyone will take his side
2137 and help recover his rightful property.
2138 But nonetheless, I believe
2139 in order to help his own kingdom
2140 every man should lend a hand
2141 to provide the essentials;
2142 the regality of the king
2143 must be strengthened by all his subjects,
2144 and supported with goods and labor
2145 when his cause is reasonable.
2146 And any man who is not eager
2147 to keep his king's name honorable
2148 ought to be shunned.

2149 Of Policy
2150 the Philosopher
2151 furthermore said,
2152 that a ruling king is obliged
2153 to limit and to and to plan
2154 his generous gifts
2155 and not to be excessive.
2156 For if a king falls into poverty
2157 the effects are numerous
2158 and often disastrous.
2159 The people will not be prudent,
2160 if they see that prudence
2161 has been forsaken by their king;
2162 he who uses Prodigality
2163 (which is the mother of poverty)

2164 shall ruin his land.
2165 When this vice
2166 afflicts a ruling king
2167 he is robbed of his wealth
2168 by covetous flattery,
2169 which deceives many worthy kings
2170 if they cannot detect
2171 the deceitful flatterers.
2172 For those who please and cajole
2173 are nurses
2174 for the fostering of vice,
2175 the results of which
2176 are blamed upon the king.
2177 The Philosopher, as you shall hear,
2178 spoke to the king of this,
2179 and told him that flatterers
2180 were guilty of three crimes.
2181 One was towards the high gods,
2182 who are enraged to see
2183 the mischief which results
2184 from the lies the flatterer told.
2185 Another is towards the king,
2186 when they are tricked by the falsehood
2187 of lying words that make him dream
2188 that black is white and blue is green
2189 and so confuses his situation.
2190 For despite this extortion
2191 (and many other vices too)
2192 you will not find a man
2193 willing to grumble or speak out,
2194 for the flatterer will say
2195 that all is well whatsoever he does.
2196 And thus of falsehood they make truth,
2197 and blind the king's eyes
2198 so he does not see the true world.
2199 The third error is the general harm,
2200 for the people share in common
2201 of the wrongs that lies bring in.
2202 Thus a triple sin is done
2203 by those who flatter their king;
2204 there is no worse thing
2205 about kingly royalty
2206 than the vice of Flattery.

2207 But yet it often has been used
2208 and never once has been once refused
2209 when spoken in a royal court,
2210 for there it is most powerful
2211 and may not be resisted for long.
2212 But when this vice is born from those
2213 who should have brought forth virtue,
2214 truth is turned to lies,
2215 which is, it is said, against Nature
2216 as this old tale shows...

[Diogenes and Aristippus]

2217 From the stories of the wise
2218 philosophers I read
2219 how there were two men
2220 whose education took them
2221 out of Carthage and into Athens.
2222 These friends, when they were of age,
2223 were sent out and they stayed long,
2224 until they had gained such knowledge
2225 that they exceeded
2226 all other men, and their names
2227 were greatly famed.
2228 The first philosopher
2229 was called Diogenes;
2230 he caused no trouble.
2231 His friend Aristippus though,
2232 greatly could and greatly did.
2233 But at last
2234 both turned home again
2235 to Carthage and left their school.
2236 Diogenes cared not for property
2237 or for worldly goods
2238 nor to profit from his long learning,
2239 but went back just to dwell
2240 at home, and the books tell
2241 his house was on the riverbank
2242 beside a bridge.
2243 There he dwelt and took his rest,
2244 and he thought this way the best
2245 for studying his philosophy
2246 for he defied
2247 the extravagant world at every side.

2248 But Aristippus' laid aside
2249 his books and went to the court;
2250 there many tricks and many schemes
2251 with flattery and soft words
2252 he laid, and often planned
2253 how best to please his prince;
2254 in this way he easily won
2255 vain honors and worldly goods.
2256 The land's rulership depended on him;
2257 his king was wonderfully glad
2258 and would do whatever he advised,
2259 both in the court and elsewhere.
2260 With flattery he changed
2261 his business into worldly work;
2262 shirking the duties of a scholar
2263 he left philosophy behind
2264 and uplifted himself to riches.
2265 And thus Aristippus' wish was fulfilled.
2266 But Diogenes still dwelt
2267 at home and studied his books.
2268 He did not seek the world's lures
2269 of vain honors and riches;
2270 all his heart's business
2271 was set on virtue,
2272 and thus within his own house
2273 he lived content
2274 within his means. By chance,
2275 Diogenes one day
2276 (which was in the month of May),
2277 when his herbs were grown
2278 walked out to gather some
2279 from his garden, for he wished
2280 to make himself a soup.
2281 When he had gathered enough,
2282 he sat down to pare
2283 and wash them in the river
2284 upon which his garden stood
2285 (near the bridge, as I said earlier).
2286 As he sat there it happened
2287 that Aristippus came down the street
2288 with many horses and servants.
2289 Straight to the bridge he rode,
2290 when suddenly he stopped;

2291 as he looked about
2292 he had seen his friend Diogenes
2293 and what he was doing.
2294 Of this he said to him,
2295 “Oh Diogenes! God help you,
2296 there would be no need
2297 to sit there and pick roots
2298 if you could serve the prince,
2299 as I am able.”
2300 “Oh Aristippus!”, replied he,
2301 “If only you could pick roots
2302 as I am able, truly
2303 there would be little need
2304 for your worldly schemes
2305 and servile flattery.
2306 You think to obtain
2307 the prince’s gratitude, and perhaps
2308 how to stand in his favor,
2309 all for a few possessions.
2310 If you would take Reason into your mind
2311 you might reason that
2312 groveling for a prince
2313 is not reasonable,
2314 but rather that it is offensive
2315 to the School of Athens.”
2316 Thus answered Diogenes
2317 against the flatterer.
2318 But yet men say the example
2319 of Aristippus is preferable,
2320 and that of Diogenes is to be avoided.
2321 Rank in court and gold in coffer
2322 is now, men say, the philosophy
2323 which is honored above all.
2324 Flattery surpasses all else
2325 in court for gaining favor
2326 is the only way
2327 to be beloved nowadays.
2328 I do not know if that is true,
2329 but the common wisdom says
2330 that wherever Flattery dwells
2331 (in any land under the Sun)
2332 many things occur

2333 which would be better left undone,
2334 as is shown time after time.

[Roman Generosity]

2335 If a prince would rule
2336 following the example of the Romans
2337 (as in old times)
2338 vice should be refused,
2339 and princes would not be fools.
2340 Where the plain truth is known,
2341 a prince may understand well
2342 and not deceive himself
2343 concerning what he has heard,
2344 then he need not complain
2345 of being unwarned of forthcoming woes.
2346 This was fully proved
2347 when Rome ruled the world
2348 for their most beloved oracles
2349 were those who did not spare the truth,
2350 but with plain and bare words
2351 spoke their prophesies to the emperor.
2352 The chronicles have not yet spoken of this,
2353 but now you shall hear
2354 a tale of this matter...

2355 Concerning a role model
2356 for avoiding Flattery
2357 towards princes,
2358 what comes to mind,
2359 my son, I shall speak into your ear.
2360 While worthy princes
2361 ruled in Rome
2362 and chance so had it
2363 that any emperor
2364 had victory over his foes
2365 and came back to Rome again,
2366 he could be certain of a triple honor
2367 to glorify his deeds.
2368 The first honor was
2369 that when he arrived at the city
2370 the chariot in which he rode
2371 would be drawn by four white steeds,
2372 he would be permitted
2373 to wear Jupiter's robe,

2374 his prisoners would march
2375 along the chariot on either side,
2376 and all the nobles of the land
2377 would ride before and behind him
2378 to bring him into Rome
2379 in thanks for his chivalry
2380 (and not for Flattery).
2381 And the truth of this was shown,
2382 for as he sat in the royal chariot
2383 a fool sat beside him
2384 and pestered with words
2385 the emperor in all his glory
2386 saying, "Remember,
2387 in all this pomp and all this pride
2388 do not let Justice fall aside,
2389 and know yourself, whatever happens.
2390 Men have often seen things fall
2391 which they thought would securely stand.
2392 Though you now have victory on hand,
2393 Fortune may not always stand with you;
2394 the wheel, perchance, another day
2395 may turn and overthrow you;
2396 nothing lasts more than a moment."
2397 With these words
2398 the fool, sitting there,
2399 spoke to the emperor.
2400 Besides this, he said whatever he wished,
2401 no matter if it were evil or if it were good.
2402 As plainly as the truth stood,
2403 he spared nothing and spoke it out;
2404 likewise every man
2405 on the day of that triumph
2406 spoke his mind openly to the emperor
2407 just as the fool did.
2408 And the purpose of this was
2409 so that while he stood in nobility,
2410 he should repress his vanity
2411 by hearing such words.
2412 And look again how things were
2413 for such a high and worthy lord,
2414 for this too is written
2415 and attested in the chronicle...
2416 When the emperor was enthroned

2417 (on the first day of his crown
2418 and royal throne)
2419 he held a feast in the palace
2420 and sat upon his high dais
2421 with all the pleasures that he wished.
2422 When he was most pleased,
2423 and every minstrel had played,
2424 and every speech had said
2425 what was most pleasant to his ear,
2426 then at last came
2427 masons to ask
2428 where he would be buried,
2429 and from what stone his sepulcher
2430 should be made, and what carving
2431 they should engrave upon it.
2432 There was no Flattery then
2433 to deceive the worthy princes,
2434 things were arranged according to
2435 good counsel; besides this
2436 princes themselves were wise
2437 and understood well and knew
2438 that when soft winds blew
2439 Flattery into their ears,
2440 they should not set their hearts on it.
2441 When they heard false words
2442 they distained them
2443 and the crafty ones who spoke them.
2444 So the flatterers gained nothing
2445 from the prince;
2446 and proving this is so
2447 is another tale of deeds
2448 from the chronicle of Rome...
2449 Caesar sat upon his royal throne
2450 and was himself
2451 highest in all esteem.
2452 A man who thought himself wise
2453 fell down and kneeled in his presence
2454 and did him reverence
2455 as if he were the high God.
2456 Men greatly marveled
2457 at the worship that he did.
2458 Suddenly this man arose,
2459 and with the same speed

2460 went up to Caesar's side
2461 and sat down as if his peer,
2462 saying, "If you sitting here
2463 are God the almighty,
2464 than I have done worship
2465 appropriate to God. Otherwise,
2466 if you are not so great,
2467 but am a man like myself,
2468 than I might sit beside you,
2469 for we are both of the same kind.'
2470 Caesar answered, "Oh blind one,
2471 you are a fool, as we all can see.
2472 For if you thought
2473 I could be a god, you have done wrong
2474 to sit where you say God is,
2475 and if I am a man
2476 you have done a greater folly
2477 since to a mortal
2478 the worship of a god
2479 you have given unworthily.
2480 Thus I see readily
2481 that you are not wise." When people heard
2482 how wisely the king answered,
2483 it was a marvel to them
2484 and made them fear him even more,
2485 and bring nothing to his ear
2486 save for Truth and wisdom.
2487 There are many who in such a way
2488 feign words that seem wise,
2489 but this is all Flattery
2490 to those who see it clearly.
2491 The flatterer has no love
2492 save his own advancement;
2493 however his master might fare,
2494 as long as he himself is safe,
2495 he does not care; thus often
2496 soft words deceive
2497 innocent kings.
2498 To chastise these
2499 the wise Philosopher said
2500 that a king who gives treasure
2501 to such folk loses money
2502 and yet shows not Generosity,

2503 but rather with his own hand
2504 harms himself and his own land
2505 in many different ways.
2506 And so a man may see
2507 (generally speaking)
2508 how such things fare
2509 if any king misrules himself.
2510 The Philosopher's teaching
2511 specifically names
2512 that which always has impeded
2513 the governance of kings
2514 with its mischief,
2515 and that, he says, is Flattery.
2516 I have partially
2517 described this vice
2518 so that a wise man may beware
2519 and not believe a flatterer
2520 if he would achieve
2521 any good.
2522 There are many examples
2523 which prove this so,
2524 but if you would know just one
2525 it is best for you to hear
2526 what happened in this matter...

[Ahab's Folly]

2527 Among the biblical kings
2528 I find a tale (which is creditable)
2529 of he who was called Ahab
2530 and ruled over Israel.
2531 Those who spoke sweetly
2532 and flattered him were rewarded
2533 with great power and riches,
2534 but those who spoke words
2535 of truth and would not keep silent,
2536 they received nothing
2537 and the court ignored them.
2538 Until at last
2539 Ben-Hadad, King of Syria
2540 seized a large part of Israel
2541 called Ramoth-Gilead;
2542 for this offense
2543 Ahab asked advice of his counselors,

2544 but none of them were wise.
2545 But nonetheless
2546 his ally Jehoshaphat
2547 (who was the king of Judah)
2548 was sent for;
2549 they were bonded together
2550 through friendship and alliance
2551 for Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram
2552 had taken Ahab's daughter
2553 in holy marriage.
2554 Thus to Syria came
2555 King Jehoshaphat, and he met
2556 King Ahab. When they
2557 spoke together
2558 Jehoshaphat said
2559 that he wished to hear
2560 some true prophesy of their campaign,
2561 so that he might be advised
2562 to what end it would come.
2563 At that time it happened
2564 there was a prophet in Israel
2565 who was full of Flattery,
2566 and he was named Zedekiah.
2567 Ahab sent for him,
2568 and at the king's orders
2569 he came with a scheme;
2570 upon his head he wore
2571 two large horns of brass
2572 (as instruments of his Flattery);
2573 he raged about like a lion
2574 and waved his horns up and down
2575 to encourage the men,
2576 for as the horns pierced the air
2577 without any resistance,
2578 just as easily, he predicted,
2579 Ben-Hadad would be defeated.
2580 When Zedekiah had thus lied
2581 and flattered his king,
2582 suddenly there were
2583 many more false prophets
2584 speaking out, and all of them
2585 affirmed what he had said;
2586 therefore Ahab was very glad

2587 and gave them many gifts.
2588 But Jehoshaphat was in great doubt
2589 and called these predictions fantasies;
2590 he asked Ahab
2591 if there was any other man
2592 capable of prophesying,
2593 and if he could speak before they began.
2594 Said Ahab, "There is one
2595 degenerate named Micaiah,
2596 but he will not come into my sight,
2597 for he has laid long in prison.
2598 He has never once said
2599 a word that I approved of.
2600 Nonetheless if you insist
2601 he may come out, and then he may
2602 speak as he always has,
2603 for he never says anything good."
2604 Then Josaphat became somewhat
2605 hopeful of hearing the truth,
2606 and commanded without delay
2607 that he should be brought forth.
2608 The ones who went to fetch him,
2609 when they had come to where he was,
2610 spoke to Micaiah and told him
2611 the way that Zedekiah
2612 had spoken his prophesy
2613 and they begged him
2614 to agree,
2615 for that would please the king
2616 and every other man,
2617 and would even help himself.
2618 However, Micaiah's heart
2619 was set upon the truth; he spoke
2620 only according to his faith
2621 and not of false things.
2622 He would tell the king
2623 as much as God gave him grace to.
2624 Thus came the prophet to that place
2625 where he heard the king's question
2626 and spoke his answer
2627 in this way:
2628 "My liege, for my predictions,
2629 which have always yet been true,

2630 you have rewarded me with prison,
2631 but despite that I shall not hide
2632 the truth as far as I know
2633 concerning this battle.
2634 You shall not fail to hear the truth.
2635 For if you hear
2636 what I am instructed to say,
2637 you may soon understand
2638 what you must do.
2639 Listen well to what I see!
2640 I was near the throne of Heaven
2641 with all the world below me,
2642 and there I heard and understood
2643 the voice of God with clear words
2644 asking this:
2645 ‘In what way might I best thwart
2646 King Ahab?’ And for a while
2647 there was debate about this,
2648 until at last a spirit said,
2649 ‘I undertake this challenge.’
2650 God asked him, ‘In what way?’
2651 ‘I shall,’ said he, ‘deceive and lie
2652 with flattering prophesies
2653 from the mouths of those he believes.’
2654 And He who achieves all things
2655 sent him forth to do this.
2656 And besides this I saw
2657 the noble people of Israel
2658 dispersed as sheep in the hills,
2659 without a master to guide them.
2660 And as they wandered about,
2661 I heard a voice say to them,
2662 ‘Go home to your houses again,
2663 till I find a better shepherd for you.’”
2664 Then said Zedekiah, “You have
2665 invented this tale to upset the king.”
2666 Consumed with rage
2667 he struck Micaiah on the cheek;
2668 the king rebuked him,
2669 and every man scorned him.
2670 Thus Micaiah was shamed on every side
2671 and sent back to prison,
2672 as the king himself ordered.

2673 The truth may not have been believed
2674 but what happened afterward
2675 proved what had been said.
2676 Ahab went to battle,
2677 but despite his guards Ben-Hadad
2678 killed him, so that upon the battlefield
2679 his army was scattered away.
2680 But God, who can do all things,
2681 prevented a greater disaster;
2682 the king was dead but the people were saved,
2683 and home again they went
2684 in God's peace and disbelieved
2685 all that Zedekiah had said before.
2686 So it is wise for a king
2687 to love those who speak the truth;
2688 in the end it will be seen
2689 that Flattery is worth nothing.
2690 But now to other matters;
2691 to speak further
2692 of the Philosopher's teaching
2693 I would like to specify
2694 the third part of Policy.

[Justice]

*Propter transgressos leges statuuntur in orbe,
Vt viuant iusti Regis honore viri.
Lex sine iusticia populum sub principis vmbra
Deuiat, vt rectum nemo videbit iter.*

(Laws punish wrongdoers, but unjust laws create wrongdoers.)

2695 What is a kingdom without its people?
2696 What are men who are alone
2697 without a king's governance?
2698 What is a king's sovereignty
2699 when there are no laws in his land?
2700 Who will uphold the law
2701 if the judges are dishonest?
2702 Who will believe the evidence
2703 (of the old worlds and the new)
2704 and see the history
2705 of what a thing it is to keep the law,
2706 through which wrongs are righted,
2707 and righteousness is commented,
2708 and kingdoms are repaired?

2709 Where the law unites
2710 the lords with the common folk
2711 each has their proper duty
2712 and the king's royalty
2713 commands the respect of both,
2714 because of his high worthiness
2715 the king's purpose
2716 is to govern righteously;
2717 he must guide the law.
2718 And although in some cases
2719 his power stands above the law,
2720 (both to give and to withdraw
2721 the taking of a man's life)
2722 things which are excessively
2723 against the law he shall not do
2724 for love or for hate.
2725 A king's might is great,
2726 but yet a worthy king must avoid
2727 doing wrong with all his might;
2728 if he shall rule correctly
2729 it behooves his reign
2730 to first be justified
2731 in the eyes of God.
2732 A king's actions are free
2733 of responsibility to any person,
2734 save only God alone,
2735 who will chastise kings Himself
2736 if no one else is able.
2737 A king would do well to take heed
2738 and first consider his own deeds,
2739 the virtue and the vice,
2740 remedy them, and then with Justice
2741 set the balance even
2742 towards others with his governance;
2743 his laws shall stand alike
2744 for the poor and the rich
2745 exempting no person.
2746 Since he cannot personally
2747 do Justice everywhere
2748 he shall use his royal power
2749 (with wise consideration)
2750 to appoint and deputize
2751 educated judges,

2752 so that the people may be governed
2753 by those who are true and wise.
2754 For if the power of greed
2755 is set upon a judge's hand,
2756 woe to the people of that land
2757 who cannot hide themselves from wrongs!
2758 But else on the other side,
2759 if the law stands on the side of right,
2760 the people are glad and stand upright.
2761 Wherever the law is reasonable
2762 the common people are pleased,
2763 and if the law turns amiss,
2764 the people are likewise corrupted.

[Roman Justice]

2765 For an example of this matter
2766 a man may hear of Maximin,
2767 who once was Emperor of Rome.
2768 When he appointed a man
2769 to be the governor
2770 of a province or a region
2771 he would first ask their name,
2772 and have it openly proclaimed
2773 to inquire if he were evil or good.
2774 And depending on if that name stood
2775 inclined to virtue or to vice,
2776 he would set them in office
2777 or else put them away.
2778 Thus the law was kept rightly,
2779 not distorted by greed.
2780 The wise ruled the world back then,
2781 and their examples you may read
2782 and hold in your mind.
2783 In the chronicles I find
2784 written of Gaius Fabricius,
2785 who was a Consul of Rome,
2786 charged with making and revoking laws.
2787 Once, the Samnites brought him
2788 a sum of gold and asked that he
2789 would bend the law to their favor.
2790 To the gold he went,
2791 and in everyone's sight
2792 he picked up some,

2793 and put it to his mouth
2794 and tasted and smelled it,
2795 and put it to his eye and ear,
2796 but he found no comfort there.
2797 And then he began to mock it,
2798 saying to them,
2799 “Why should I want gold,
2800 when all of my five senses
2801 find neither savor nor delight?
2802 It is a foolish sin
2803 to be covetous of gold,
2804 but a man is rich and glorious
2805 when he has power over
2806 the men who are
2807 rich with gold.
2808 For then he may, at his discretion,
2809 whether they agree or not,
2810 do Justice to them either way.”
2811 Thus he said, and with that word
2812 he threw down the gold
2813 from his hands
2814 and rejected their request.
2815 And so he remained free
2816 to deliver Justice and equity
2817 without the temptation of riches.
2818 There are few like him now, I guess,
2819 but back in those times
2820 every judge was refused
2821 who was not a friend to the common good.
2822 Those who stood upright
2823 and truly wanted to do Justice
2824 were preferred in that office
2825 to weigh and judge the common law,
2826 which now, men say, is all atrophied.
2827 To set a law and not to keep it
2828 does not profit the people;
2829 above all else the law
2830 (which makes the peace)
2831 must be kept
2832 to set all men at ease.
2833 The rightful Emperor Conrad
2834 kept the peace with laws
2835 so that within the city

2836 disturbing the peace
2837 was more than anyone dared.
2838 For in his time, as you may hear,
2839 once the law was set
2840 it could not be changed for gold,
2841 no matter who wished it to be so.
2842 And this created a common fear
2843 so everyone dreaded the law,
2844 for it showed no preference.
2845 And as the old books say,
2846 I find a Roman
2847 who was a Prefect of the Pretorians
2848 named Carmidotirus.
2849 He set a law (to keep the peace)
2850 which said only if disarmed
2851 could anyone enter the council-house,
2852 else he should be condemned for malice
2853 and put to death.
2854 All who read that statute
2855 agreed that it should be so,
2856 and that it was a worthy cause.
2857 Now hear what happened though:
2858 This Prefect was away
2859 riding in the fields
2860 where he had long lived
2861 when the lords of the council,
2862 sent for him, and he came there
2863 still armed with his sword (forgetfully)
2864 until he was in the council-house.
2865 None of them spoke a word
2866 until he noticed it himself,
2867 and so found out his own error.
2868 Then he said to the twelve
2869 wise men of the Senate,
2870 “I deserve the punishment,
2871 do it without delay!”
2872 But they all said no,
2873 for they saw that it was no crime,
2874 for he had no thoughts of malice,
2875 but only a little Sloth.
2876 And thus they decided to judge
2877 and show mercy in his case,
2878 and that he should not be slain.

2879 When he saw that
2880 they would save him he vowed
2881 with manly heart, saying
2882 that Rome would never scorn
2883 his heirs when he was dead
2884 for having a criminal as an ancestor.
2885 And before anyone could act,
2886 with the same sword that he wore
2887 he executed the sentence of the law,
2888 and all of Rome wept for his death.
2889 In another place I read
2890 that when a judge will not
2891 enforce the sentence of the law,
2892 the king will do so personally.
2893 A great king, Cambises
2894 by name, found a lawless judge
2895 and to make him an example
2896 he took great vengeance on him.
2897 His skin was flayed off,
2898 and when they had killed him
2899 and his skin was taken
2900 and nailed to the same seat
2901 to which his son would be appointed.
2902 This warned that if he would bend
2903 the law out of greed,
2904 the son would share the same fate.
2905 Thus when other judges fail
2906 the king himself must judge
2907 and uphold the proper laws.
2908 And to speak of olden days,
2909 and find another example,
2910 I find a tale written about
2911 how a worthy prince is bound
2912 to uphold the laws of his land,
2913 first for high God's sake,
2914 and also the people who rely on him.
2915 To guide and lead them
2916 is the purpose of his kingship.

[Lycurgus]

2917 In a chronicle I read
2918 of the righteous Lycurgus
2919 (who was prince of Athens),

2920 and how the laws
2921 which he gave to rule his people
2922 were set up so well
2923 that in all this world no city
2924 was so well ruled
2925 and truly governed.
2926 There was no division among them,
2927 and every man prospered;
2928 without wars there was peace,
2929 without envy there was love,
2930 for the common good
2931 (not for individual wealth)
2932 riches were distributed, and the poor
2933 of the city were safe
2934 from violence,
2935 setting the heart
2936 of every man at peace.
2937 When this noble, righteous king
2938 saw how well it went
2939 and how the people were at ease,
2940 he (who always wished to please
2941 the high God and earn his thanks)
2942 had a wonderous thought,
2943 which would allow him to ensure
2944 that his laws for the city
2945 might last forevermore.
2946 Therefore, he racked his brain
2947 to come up with a deception
2948 which might serve this purpose.
2949 He called a parliament
2950 to teach his wisdom
2951 to an audience of the great and lowly,
2952 and there he told his tale:
2953 “God knows, and soon will you,
2954 what will happen in the future,
2955 but until now my will has been
2956 to do justice and equity
2957 in furthering the common good.
2958 This has been my only delight
2959 but there is another thing
2960 which I wish to tell you.
2961 The law which I have given
2962 was made entirely by God

2963 and not by my own wit.
2964 This is why it has endured,
2965 and it shall continue with your help.
2966 I will teach you how;
2967 the god Mercury, no mortal man,
2968 taught me all that I know
2969 and the laws I made for you
2970 which have brought you gladness.
2971 It was the god, not I,
2972 who did this, and now
2973 he has commanded me
2974 to go away to a place
2975 on a faraway island,
2976 where I must stay a while
2977 and hear what he commands.
2978 He tells me that there
2979 he shall teach me things
2980 that shall aid Athens
2981 until the end of the world.
2982 But first, before I go,
2983 I must ensure that my laws
2984 are not forgotten by you
2985 while I am gone.
2986 So to set doubts away
2987 for both you and I, this I pray,
2988 that you will promise me and say
2989 an oath to me,
2990 that each of you shall swear
2991 to keep and hold my laws.”
2992 They all agreed to this,
2993 and right away swore an oath
2994 that from the time he left them
2995 until he should come back again
2996 they should know his laws well and plain,
2997 keeping and fulfilling every point.
2998 Thus Lycurgus was satisfied,
2999 took his leave, and went forth.
3000 But see now the
3001 righteousness he accomplished!
3002 Once he left
3003 he was never seen again,
3004 therefore Athens’ oath
3005 could never be released,

3006 nor would the good laws cease
3007 to work for the common profit.
3008 Thus, once he had woven
3009 together the good of all,
3010 the king abandoned his own estate
3011 to aid the city.
3012 He exiled himself from his fortune
3013 and left his princely office
3014 only for love and for Justice;
3015 by doing this he might
3016 forever after his death
3017 continue to guide his city.
3018 Men should take this as an example
3019 of good stewardship
3020 to those governed
3021 by the laws which they keep.
3022 And as for those
3023 who made the first laws long ago,
3024 as long as their lands last
3025 their names are still known.
3026 If you wish to hear
3027 some of these names and what they did,
3028 listen well and you shall understand...

[The Great Lawgivers]

3029 Every good deed
3030 shall be rewarded by God Himself,
3031 but it often happens furthermore
3032 that the world rewards it too.
3033 These rewards are not the same,
3034 for God gives the Kingdom of Heaven,
3035 while the world gives only a name
3036 to commemorate the fame
3037 of he who has done the good deed.
3038 In this way a double reward
3039 is given to those who do well here;
3040 and if you listen
3041 to the fame which has been spoken,
3042 you may hear the truth
3043 of the honest business
3044 of those righteous ones who first
3045 made laws for men.

3046 Their fame will never fade from this Earth;
3047 wherever there is a tongue
3048 their names shall be read and sung
3049 and written in the chronicles
3050 so that men will know
3051 to speak well (as well they should)
3052 of they who with laws first
3053 brought forth worldly peace.
3054 Unto the Hebrews Moses came first,
3055 and Mercury to the Egyptians,
3056 and to the Trojans
3057 first was Numa Pompilius,
3058 to the Athenians Lycurgus
3059 first gave the law, and to Greeks
3060 Phoroneus had that voice,
3061 as did Romulus to the Romans.
3062 Against villainous men
3063 the law specified
3064 charges to be tried,
3065 so that as long as the judge was honest,
3066 rights should be upheld.
3067 And thus it happened
3068 that the law came to us all;
3069 God grant that it endure!
3070 Every king now is held
3071 to those kingly things,
3072 which kings must not be let flaunted.
3073 The king who does not keep the law,
3074 by the law may not keep his reign.
3075 What is a king without the law?
3076 Where are any rights
3077 if there are no laws in the land?
3078 A king must understand this
3079 (for he is sworn to the law):
3080 if the laws are forgotten
3081 and not enforced
3082 the whole land is turned upside-down
3083 and the king is shamefully disgraced.
3084 As for King Alexander,
3085 the wise Philosopher instructed
3086 that he lead himself first
3087 by law, and then to his people
3088 deliver common justice

3089 so that the whole wide land
3090 should be certain of his law,
3091 and therefore be at peace.
3092 For law is best by far
3093 (above all earthly things),
3094 to make a man fear his king.
3095 But how a king shall earn the love
3096 of the high God above,
3097 and also of the men on Earth,
3098 this next point (which is the fourth
3099 of Aristotle's wisdom) teaches.
3100 And if you desire to learn
3101 what policy that is
3102 the book records it after this...

[Pity]

*Nil rationis habens vbi velle tirannica regna
Stringit, amor populi transiet exul ibi.
Set Pietas, regnum que conseruabit in euum,
Non tantum populo, set placet illa deo.*

(Tyrants do not suspect how beloved mercy is to men and God.)

3103 No introduction is needed
3104 for that which is praised everywhere
3105 (and always has been and always shall),
3106 but to name it in particular
3107 it is the virtue of Pity.
3108 It moved the High Majesty
3109 when His Son descended
3110 with Pity to repair the world
3111 and from a maiden became flesh and blood.
3112 Pity was the cause of the good
3113 that has saved us all,
3114 therefore a man must have Pity
3115 and hold it highly in esteem
3116 since He Himself (who is infinitely wise)
3117 showed that it ought to be praised.
3118 Pity may not coexist
3119 with even the smallest bit of tyranny;
3120 for Pity makes a king chivalrous
3121 both in word and deed.
3122 It is good for men to fear
3123 their king and obey his commands,
3124 but it is just as good

3125 for a king to be piteous
3126 towards his people and gracious
3127 in his governance,
3128 so that he takes no vengeance
3129 which may be called cruelty.
3130 Impartial justice
3131 is dreadful, for it spares no one,
3132 but in the land where Pity lives
3133 the king will not fail to be loved,
3134 for Pity, though the grace above
3135 (as the Philosopher says),
3136 confirms the value of his reign.
3137 Thus said Constantine,
3138 “An emperor willing
3139 to be Pity’s servant,
3140 is worthier to be a lord
3141 than any other person.”
3142 In old books of tales
3143 I find this example written...
3144 Trajan, the worthy and courteous one
3145 who governed Rome,
3146 once spoke
3147 to his acquaintance.
3148 And he said to that counselor
3149 that as an emperor
3150 his wish was not for vain honor,
3151 nor even for rigor of Justice;
3152 rather, if he could by his office
3153 please his nobility and his people
3154 he thought it would be easier
3155 to draw their hearts to him in love
3156 than with the dread of any law.
3157 For when things are done in fear
3158 often the outcome is worse,
3159 but when a king is piteous,
3160 he is the more gracious
3161 and prosperity will come to him
3162 that would otherwise be turned aside.
3163 A property of Pity
3164 is that he who is well furnished with it
3165 will often suffer pain himself
3166 to keep others from pain;
3167 Charity is the mother

3168 of Pity, and it tolerates
3169 no wrong to remain unfix'd.
3170 It is good for every living man
3171 to be piteous, but none so much
3172 as a king, since the Wheel of Fortune
3173 has set him above all others.
3174 If a king happens to have
3175 Pity that is firm and stable,
3176 the whole land may benefit
3177 through the grace of only one man;
3178 his Pity alone
3179 may save all the realm.
3180 And so it suits a king to have
3181 Pity, and this Valerius told,
3182 saying how in the days of old
3183 Codrus (who was
3184 King of Athens) the city
3185 warred again with the Dorians.
3186 To get a prediction
3187 of what should happen in the battle,
3188 Codrus thought to consult
3189 with Apollo, in whom he trusted.
3190 From Apollo Codrus learned
3191 that were two paths he could choose:
3192 either he could lose his body
3193 and die in battle himself,
3194 or else otherwise
3195 see his people defeated.
3196 But he (who Pity had perfected
3197 in all his beliefs),
3198 thought only to save the people,
3199 and chose to die himself.
3200 Where now could you find such a head
3201 willing to die for the limbs?
3202 Furthermore, in some cases
3203 a king's heart should be stirred
3204 to restrain his followers.
3205 Even on enemies
3206 it is praiseworthy
3207 to take Pity
3208 instead of taking vengeance.
3209 When a king wins a victory
3210 but keeps in mind

3211 Pity instead of violence,
3212 he will be remembered
3213 and so will arise worldly fame
3214 to give the prince a famous name.
3215 I read that Pompey
3216 (whom Rome once obeyed)
3217 once waged a difficult war
3218 against the king of Armenia,
3219 whom he had an old grudge against.
3220 At last Pompey achieved
3221 the defeat of this king,
3222 and carried him back to Rome
3223 as a prisoner; there for many days
3224 he lay in sorry plight and poverty,
3225 his head deposed of a crown
3226 and enclosed in a prison,
3227 but with great humility
3228 he endured this adversity.
3229 Pompey saw this patience
3230 and his conscience took pity;
3231 upon the high dais
3232 of his palace, before all of Rome,
3233 he said that he would spare him,
3234 let him take back his crown,
3235 and his estate too,
3236 and restore his reign in full.
3237 And he said that it is better
3238 to make than to unmake a king
3239 (if there is a choice).
3240 Thus these men, long enemies,
3241 agreed to a final peace,
3242 and nonetheless Justice
3243 was kept without offence;
3244 and for this Pompey was praised.
3245 No king is excused
3246 from using Justice,
3247 but if he would shun cruelty
3248 he must use Pity too.

[Cruelty]

3249 Cruelty is the crime
3250 born of tyranny,
3251 and against it stands

3252 God Himself as champion,
3253 whose strength no one can withstand.
3254 Forever it has been true
3255 that God will overthrow a tyrant,
3256 but where Pity reigns
3257 no evil fortune will remain
3258 save for those at last
3259 put right by God Himself.
3260 Pity is the blessed virtue
3261 which never lets its master fall;
3262 but cruelty, though by chance
3263 it reigns for a moment,
3264 shall be overthrown by God.
3265 Many examples are known
3266 of tyrants who fell like chessmen.
3267 Of cruelty I read thus:
3268 when the tyrant Leontios
3269 seized the Roman Empire
3270 (which his strength had pried
3271 from merciful Justinian),
3272 since he was a cruel man
3273 he had Justinian's lips and nose
3274 cut off to make him loathsome
3275 to the people and unfit to rule.
3276 But the all-merciful
3277 high God, ordained it
3278 that so within a short time
3279 (when his wrath was at its height)
3280 Leontios was shoved out of his empire.
3281 Tiberius claimed the power
3282 and laid Rome under his will;
3283 and as for Leontios
3284 it was ordered that justice would take
3285 both his lips and nose,
3286 just as he had done to another
3287 far more worthy than himself.
3288 Thus, cruelty fell
3289 and Pity was set up again.
3290 For afterwards the books say
3291 that Tervel (King of Bulgaria)
3292 lent his chivalry
3293 to unimprison Justinian
3294 and to crown him again.

3295 I also find a chronicle
3296 Of King Siculus, who was known
3297 to be as cruel as the wind,
3298 and was unmoved by any Pity.
3299 He was the first (the books say)
3300 to set warships upon the sea
3301 and send them out to battle;
3302 he was unhinged
3303 from Pity and compassion
3304 and did not understand goodness;
3305 who he could slay, he slew,
3306 and that made him glad enough.
3307 He had many counselors,
3308 among whom was one
3309 named Berillus,
3310 who thought to
3311 gain favor with the tyrant.
3312 By his own imagination
3313 he forged a bull of brass,
3314 and on the side there was
3315 a door to fit a man inside
3316 so he could be tortured
3317 by a fire lit underneath.
3318 And all this was for amusement,
3319 for when the man cried in pain,
3320 from the brass bull's open mouth
3321 would seem come
3322 the bellowing of a bull
3323 and not the crying of a man.
3324 But the master of deceit,
3325 the Devil (who is imprisoned in Hell),
3326 destroyed the inventor Berillus.
3327 His evil scheme
3328 fell on himself instead,
3329 for Berillus himself was first
3330 to suffer that painful fate
3331 which he had planned for others,
3332 and no man mourned him.
3333 By this example kings may see
3334 (both for himself and his counselors)
3335 that tyranny and cruelty
3336 are loathsome to Mankind
3337 and abominable to God.

3338 Fitting examples
3339 I have found of other princes too,
3340 so you shall hear of times long past...
3341 The great tyrant Dionysius,
3342 who valued men as worthless,
3343 often would give his horses
3344 flesh instead of corn and hay,
3345 so the horses learned to
3346 devour men's blood.
3347 But at last his fortune
3348 was to be overcome by Hercules,
3349 who in the same way
3350 took Justice on this tyrant.
3351 He died the same death
3352 which had given to other men,
3353 for Pity never crossed his heart,
3354 until he was devoured by his horses.
3355 And of Lichaon I also find
3356 how, against the law of Nature
3357 he killed his guests, and made meat
3358 of their bodies to devour
3359 with the other men of his household.
3360 But Jupiter the glorious
3361 was enraged by this and took
3362 vengeance upon the cruel king;
3363 from a man's form
3364 Lichaon was transformed into a wolf,
3365 and thus his cruelty was revealed,
3366 which he long had hidden.
3367 A wolf he was now openly,
3368 where previously he
3369 had been wolfish in nature.
3370 I find many examples
3371 to support my conclusion
3372 that tyranny is to be despised.
3373 Especially common
3374 are they who Fortune favored
3375 to win their battles,
3376 but because they began the evil
3377 of tyranny, victory did not last.
3378 Rather, what they did to other men
3379 fell upon them at last,
3380 for standing against Pity calls down

3381 vengeance from God above.
3382 He who has no tender love
3383 for saving a man's life,
3384 he shall be found guilty
3385 and when he craves mercy
3386 in a time of need, he shall not have it.
3387 In books of Nature I find,
3388 how the fierce lion,
3389 when he goes hunting for prey,
3390 if he meets a man,
3391 will slay him if he fights.
3392 But if the man knows
3393 to fall down at once before his face
3394 in a sign of mercy and of grace
3395 the lion shall naturally
3396 restrain his violence
3397 as though it were a tame beast,
3398 and turn away half ashamed,
3399 leaving the man uninjured.
3400 How then should a prince achieve
3401 the world's favor if he
3402 destroys a man who has yielded
3403 and stands in his mercy?
3404 But to speak specifically,
3405 there have been and there are yet still
3406 tyrants in whose hearts Pity
3407 does not provoke mercy at all;
3408 they in their tyranny
3409 are gladdened by slaying men.
3410 As the raging sea
3411 is unpitying in a storm,
3412 just so Pity cannot stop
3413 the great outrages of cruelty,
3414 which these tyrants
3415 bring about. Of this
3416 a tale now comes to my mind...
3417 I read in old books
3418 how there once was a duke called Cyrus
3419 who was a warrior,
3420 a cruel man, and a conqueror
3421 by the strong power that he had.
3422 And his delight,
3423 when he had won a victory

3424 was what he considered most glorious,
3425 to slay and not to save.
3426 He would not take ransom
3427 to save another man's life,
3428 but sent all to the sword and knife,
3429 so dear to him was men's blood.
3430 And as it happened
3431 Fortune had it
3432 that he was the rightful heir
3433 of Persia, and was crowned king.
3434 But when that glory had lessened
3435 this new King of Persia
3436 (as if the tyrannies he had wrought before
3437 were not numerous enough)
3438 began to crave
3439 a thousand times more malice.
3440 God planned vengeance against
3441 this evil, which would come
3442 when he was highest in his pride
3443 and his rancor and his hate
3444 against the Queen of the Massagetae,
3445 (Tomyris was her name)
3446 against whom he warred with all his might.
3447 She, defending her land,
3448 sent her own son
3449 to undertake the defense,
3450 but he was defeated and captured
3451 and when Cyrus had him in hand,
3452 he showed no mercy,
3453 but had him slain in his presence.
3454 When news of this outrage
3455 came to his mother's ear,
3456 she summoned from far and wide
3457 all the friends she had,
3458 until she led a great power.
3459 She thought of many strategies
3460 to overcome the Persians,
3461 but at last decided
3462 that in a dangerous valley
3463 (through which the tyrant had to pass)
3464 she would surround him
3465 with enough men to ensure
3466 that he could not escape.

3467 And when she had given the orders,
3468 she disguised herself as if
3469 she planned to flee
3470 out of her land; when Cyrus
3471 heard that the queen had fled,
3472 he gave chase so quickly
3473 that his army fell to disorder.
3474 And soon thereafter,
3475 when he had come to the valley,
3476 the ambushers broke up
3477 and surrounded him on every side
3478 so that he could not flee away;
3479 the dead and captured
3480 numbered two hundred thousand
3481 from his host.
3482 Thus was destroyed the great pride
3483 of Cyrus and his tyranny.
3484 There was no use asking for mercy
3485 which he himself never gave;
3486 he was brought before the queen
3487 and when she saw him,
3488 she spoke thusly:
3489 “Oh man, who out of Man’s nature
3490 left Reason behind
3491 and lived worse than a beast!
3492 Pity could not move you
3493 to cease the shedding and spilling of blood,
3494 you never had your fill.
3495 But now at last the time has come
3496 that your malice is overthrown.
3497 As you before did to others,
3498 now shall be done to you.”
3499 And the lady bade that men should
3500 being a vessel for the instrument
3501 of the just vengeance
3502 which she had devised.
3503 She took the captured princes
3504 who had been Cyrus’ chief counselors,
3505 and while they yet breathed
3506 she had them bled to death
3507 into the vessel where it stood.
3508 When it was filled with blood,
3509 she cast the tyrant in,

3510 and said to him, "Thus may you sate
3511 the lusts of your appetite!
3512 In blood you delighted,
3513 now you shall drink your fill."

[Cowardice]

3514 Thus, if against God's will
3515 a man makes himself a stranger
3516 to Pity, and excuses himself from mercy,
3517 then he is graceless and lost.
3518 So it is shown
3519 that cruelty has no good end;
3520 but Pity, whatever happens,
3521 makes God merciful
3522 (if there is a reasonable cause
3523 a king should be piteous).
3524 However, if he is hesitant
3525 to slay for righteousness' sake,
3526 this is not piteousness,
3527 but rather cowardice,
3528 which every king should avoid.
3529 For if Pity is excessive,
3530 kingship will be unable
3531 to do Justice rightly;
3532 it is proper for a knight
3533 to fight as gladly as to rest
3534 when he may save his people
3535 from wars that fall upon them.
3536 For then he might
3537 be a lion in his knighthood
3538 and a champion to his people
3539 without false Pity.
3540 If manhood is restrained,
3541 either in peace or war,
3542 Justice is lost
3543 and knighthood is left behind.
3544 In Aristotle's teaching I find
3545 that a king shall keep a good face,
3546 so that all men know of his demeanor
3547 is honor and worthiness.
3548 For if a king shall thoughtlessly
3549 fear without good cause,
3550 he may be like this story;

3551 though it is a fable
3552 its message is good and reasonable...
3553 A long time ago,
3554 I read that a hill
3555 up in the land of Arcadia
3556 began to make a dreadful noise,
3557 for that was the day
3558 when he was to give birth.
3559 When the pains came upon him
3560 he made a noise like Doomsday,
3561 and men were afraid
3562 of what they could not see.
3563 They heard the noise all about
3564 and were cast into despair
3565 and thought that all was lost
3566 because of this unborn thing.
3567 The nearer this hill was
3568 to the time of delivery,
3569 the more violently he cried,
3570 and every man fled away
3571 in dread, leaving their own houses.
3572 But then, at last, a tiny mouse
3573 was born and given to the nurse,
3574 and men called themselves fools
3575 for having feared needlessly.
3576 Thus, if a king sets his heart
3577 on everything that he hears
3578 his face will often be downcast
3579 and full of fantastic dread
3580 when there is no cause for alarm.
3581 Horace told his prince
3582 that he would prefer
3583 to follow Achilles
3584 into war than not to fight,
3585 as Thersites did at Troy.
3586 Achilles' only joy
3587 was the fighting of armies;
3588 Thersites sought only
3589 to be unarmed and stand in rest,
3590 but of the two it was better
3591 that Achilles did his duty
3592 and for this his knighthood
3593 is still famed.

3594 King Solomon
3595 said that as there is a time for peace,
3596 so too is there a time
3597 for war, in which a prince certainly
3598 must fight for the common cause
3599 and for his own honor too.
3600 It is unacceptable
3601 to war only for fame,
3602 but for the right of his lordship
3603 (which he is sworn to defend)
3604 every worthy prince must strive.
3605 Between Pity's innocence
3606 and cruelty's foolishness
3607 stands the essence of bravery;
3608 there must a king set his heart
3609 when it is time to take
3610 (and when it is time to forsake)
3611 deadly wars upon hand;
3612 he shall not hesitate from dread
3613 if he is righteous.
3614 For God's mightiness
3615 will uphold every man's cause
3616 (unless his own sloth intervenes);
3617 the king's need especially
3618 it will not fail to aid,
3619 since the need of one then stands for all.
3620 The king's fortunes are greater
3621 and more favorable to God
3622 when he serves the common good.
3623 To see the truth in this
3624 behold the Bible, where you may read
3625 many great examples,
3626 some of which I shall tell...

[Gideon]

3627 Once upon a time,
3628 many kings came
3629 to Judea and Israel
3630 proposing to destroy
3631 the people of God.
3632 In those days
3633 Gideon (who would lead
3634 God's people) sent for aid

3635 to all of the lands nearby
3636 until he had assembled an army
3637 of thirty thousand to defend,
3638 to fight, and to resist
3639 against the attackers.
3640 And despite this, the army
3641 of his enemies
3642 was twice as numerous as his,
3643 and Gideon began to fear
3644 that he had too few.
3645 But He who assists wherever
3646 men have failed
3647 sent Gideon an angel,
3648 who said that before he went any further
3649 he should openly decree
3650 that every man in his army
3651 whose own will wished
3652 for the sweetness
3653 of home in any way,
3654 for profit or for covetousness,
3655 for love's longing or lack of heart,
3656 should not march
3657 but go home in peace.
3658 By the next morning he had lost
3659 twenty thousand men or more
3660 because of this decree.
3661 Thus he had left
3662 only a third of his army, and yet God
3663 sent his angel again,
3664 who said to Gideon, "If you
3665 desire my help
3666 you need even fewer people,
3667 for my will is that you succeed.
3668 Tomorrow, watch well
3669 when you come to the river:
3670 the men who cup the water
3671 in their hands to drink
3672 shall be chosen,
3673 and those who lie
3674 upon their bellies to drink
3675 shall be forsaken and sent away.
3676 For I am almighty

3677 and I desire to show my aid
3678 to only a few good men.”
3679 Thus Gideon watched well
3680 the next morning, and did everything
3681 that God had asked him to do.
3682 Left standing with him
3683 were three hundred and no more,
3684 the rest had all gone.
3685 Gideon was terrified,
3686 and spoke to God,
3687 pleading as much as he dared.
3688 God, who wished to warn him
3689 so that he would act rightly,
3690 bid him on that same night
3691 to take one man and hear
3692 what would be said
3693 among the heathen enemies
3694 so that he would be wiser
3695 concerning what would happen.
3696 Gideon took Purah
3697 (whom he trusted above all the others)
3698 towards the enemy host that night
3699 as they were camped in a valley
3700 to hear what they would say.
3701 As he walked through the army
3702 he heard two Saracens speaking.
3703 One said, “Interpret this dream
3704 that came to me as I slept:
3705 I thought I saw a barley cake
3706 come from the hill
3707 and start rolling down,
3708 in a moment
3709 as it ran its course
3710 the tents of the kings of Midian,
3711 of Amalek, of Amor,
3712 of Ammon, and of Jebus,
3713 and many more tents too
3714 were thrown to the ground and overcast,
3715 with a great noise.
3716 I was so afraid
3717 that I awoke from pure dread.”
3718 “I can read this dream easily,”
3719 said the other Saracen,

3720 “the barley cake is Gideon.
3721 From the hill
3722 he shall come down with such a cry
3723 upon us and our kings,
3724 that we will be struck with horror.
3725 He will bring such dread
3726 that if we only had wings
3727 we would despair to be on foot
3728 and take to the air,
3729 for nothing will withstand him.”
3730 When Gideon heard
3731 this tale he thanked God
3732 and silently crept away
3733 remaining unseen.
3734 Now he fully understood
3735 that he would triumph,
3736 so the following night he readied
3737 to attack the multitudes.
3738 Now you shall hear a great marvel
3739 of the cunning he performed.
3740 The few soldiers he had left
3741 were all given
3742 pots in which each took
3743 a light burning in a lantern,
3744 and each of them had a trumpet
3745 in his other hand besides.
3746 That night, once it was dark,
3747 Duke Gideon
3748 began his work.
3749 He divided his folk in three,
3750 made them swear not to flee,
3751 and taught them how to cry out
3752 all in one voice,
3753 and what word they should scream,
3754 and how they should break their pots
3755 all at once when they heard
3756 that Gideon had broken his.
3757 When they came to the spot
3758 they were to do as he did.
3759 And thus this noble duke
3760 stalked forward when it was time,
3761 broke his pot and cried aloud,
3762 and the others broke their pots as well.

3763 The trumpets were not forgotten;
3764 he blew, and so did they,
3765 with such a noise among them all
3766 that it was as if the sky was falling.
3767 The hill echoed their noise,
3768 and when the host in the valley heard it
3769 and saw the fires on the hill
3770 both their hearing and their sight
3771 gave them such a sudden fear
3772 as none had felt before.
3773 The tents were forgotten,
3774 no goods at all were taken,
3775 but only with their bare bodies
3776 they fled like wild hares.
3777 And still the soldiers blew,
3778 until such time as they saw
3779 that their foes had madly fled.
3780 When they understood their advantage,
3781 they began to pursue.
3782 Thus you see how God's grace
3783 came to the aid of the good men,
3784 whereas at other times it failed
3785 for those less virtuous.
3786 This tale should not be skipped,
3787 for it clearly shows
3788 that to the well-intentioned
3789 God gave and granted the victory.
3790 The example of this history
3791 is good for every king to hold;
3792 firstly he must see to it
3793 that he himself lives virtuously,
3794 and that to the people he brings
3795 goodness, for then he may
3796 be glad of many merry days,
3797 whatever needs to be done.
3798 For He who sits above the Moon
3799 and decides what fails and what prospers
3800 in every case, in every need,
3801 is so well disposed to a good king
3802 that he shall repress all his foes,
3803 so that no man can harm him.
3804 Conversely, He can just as well

3805 cause a wicked king to fall
3806 into the hands of his enemies.

[A King's Duty]

3807 Now furthermore
3808 I shall return to the matter at hand
3809 and speak of Justice and Pity
3810 as they pertain to royalty.
3811 A king must understand well
3812 that knighthood must be taken in hand
3813 when the need arises;
3814 he shall have no need for fear
3815 in either war or peace
3816 if his conscience is clean.
3817 A king may find cases
3818 where it is better to slay than to save,
3819 and examples of this can be found...
3820 The high Maker of Mankind
3821 through the prophet Samuel told Saul
3822 that he need not fear
3823 to fight against king Agag,
3824 for God promised
3825 that Agag would be overcome.
3826 After it transpired
3827 that Saul defeated Agag,
3828 God instructed that he give no respite,
3829 but should slay him at once.
3830 But Saul let the moment pass
3831 and did not do as God had asked,
3832 for Agag promised
3833 to pay him a great ransom;
3834 King Saul allowed him to live
3835 out of false pity.
3836 But He who sees and knows all,
3837 the high God, saw the deceit
3838 and complained to Samuel,
3839 sending word that if Saul
3840 would not take Agag's life
3841 he would not only die
3842 himself, but his royalty
3843 would be lost forevermore,
3844 from himself and all his heirs,
3845 and would never come again.

3846 See this plainly:
3847 that for 'too much' and 'too little'
3848 the prince is too blame.
3849 It has always been a king's duty
3850 to do the deeds of a knight;
3851 for in the hands of a king
3852 both death and life are
3853 part of the laws of justice.
3854 To kill is a deadly vice,
3855 but if a man deserves death
3856 and a king preserves his life
3857 when he ought to die
3858 then he disobeys the example
3859 which the Bible teaches...
3860 King David's will
3861 (when he was about to die)
3862 demanded that his son
3863 would slay Joab at once.
3864 When David had passed away,
3865 young Solomon the Wise
3866 did as his father asked
3867 and killed Joab in such a way
3868 that when this justice was heard
3869 the people feared him even more,
3870 and God was well pleased
3871 that Solomon would follow
3872 the laws of Justice.
3873 And yet he also kept
3874 Pity (as a prince should),
3875 he was not tyrannical
3876 (but only desired wisdom),
3877 and was so righteous,
3878 that he had peace all his life;
3879 he needed no deadly wars,
3880 for every man feared his wisdom.
3881 And since he himself was wise,
3882 he found worthy, praiseworthy men
3883 to be his counselors;
3884 every prince ought
3885 to make his retinue
3886 of wise men and to dismiss
3887 the fools. There is nothing
3888 better for a king

3889 than counsel, which is the substance
3890 of all the king's governance.
3891 In Solomon a man may see
3892 what things are most necessary
3893 and proper for a worthy king.
3894 When he took the throne,
3895 God asked him to wish
3896 and said that He would grant
3897 whatever one thing he asked.
3898 And he, the new king,
3899 prayed to God for a blessing,
3900 and this is what he said:
3901 "Oh King by whom I shall reign!
3902 Give me wisdom so that while
3903 I rule Your people I may
3904 keep them, and save them, and honor You."
3905 When Solomon had made his wish,
3906 God was so well pleased
3907 that he soon granted
3908 not only what he had asked
3909 but also riches,
3910 and health, and peace, and high nobility,
3911 besides the wisdom he wanted
3912 which stands above all other things.

[A King's Advisors]

3913 Whatever king hopes to save his reign
3914 must certainly have
3915 (after faith in God)
3916 faith that his counselors
3917 are full of truth and righteousness.
3918 Above all else
3919 a king shall decide fairly
3920 between severity and pity
3921 and keep the balance even,
3922 so that the high God in Heaven
3923 and all the people
3924 speak well of his name.
3925 A king's own goodness profits
3926 more than any earthly wares
3927 for otherwise
3928 (if a king falls into sin)
3929 it is often seen

3930 that the common people are afflicted
3931 and suffer dearly for the king's sin
3932 for no fault of their own.
3933 When the king offends God
3934 the people endure what he deserves
3935 here in this world, but elsewhere?
3936 I do not know how it shall be there.
3937 In goodness a king must trust
3938 in himself first, since he is sure
3939 of no other help but God's;
3940 thus shall his rule over himself
3941 accord with providence
3942 and be the better conscience.
3943 And to find an example of this,
3944 a tale I read, and so it follows...
3945 A chronicle says that
3946 the Roman King Lucius
3947 summoned to his chambers one night
3948 the steward of his house
3949 and his chamberlain
3950 to take counsel with them;
3951 standing by the fireplace
3952 the three spoke together.
3953 It happened that the king's fool
3954 sat by the fire on a stool
3955 playing with some baubles;
3956 although he heard all they said,
3957 they paid him no attention.
3958 The king asked them what news
3959 came from the word on the street,
3960 and they told him as best they could.
3961 When they had spoken
3962 the king eagerly
3963 asked them this:
3964 what did the people say of their king?
3965 When folk said his name
3966 was it with praise or with blame?
3967 What they had heard and seen
3968 he asked them to tell plainly,
3969 and to leave nothing out
3970 by their oaths of loyalty.
3971 The steward first
3972 gave his answer to the king

3973 hoping to smooth over this matter.
3974 He said that as far as he had heard
3975 the king's reputation was good and honorable.
3976 Thus the steward was commended,
3977 but he did not tell the truth.
3978 The king then asked
3979 the chamberlain for his recollection.
3980 He, who was subtle and wise
3981 (and cared somewhat for his oath),
3982 related that the people said
3983 that if the king's counsel was true,
3984 then they thought
3985 that the king would be
3986 more worthy in his office.
3987 Thus he blamed the counselors
3988 and excused the king's behavior.
3989 The fool, who had heard all
3990 of this (as God had willed),
3991 saw that they had not said enough;
3992 he laughed at them both,
3993 and said this to the king:
3994 "Sire, if only
3995 the wisdom of your own mind
3996 were any good,
3997 you would have not needed this report."
3998 The king marveled
3999 that a fool spoke so wisely,
4000 and realized what was lacking
4001 within his own conscience.
4002 And thus the fool's testimony
4003 (which God's grace had inspired),
4004 made him desire better advisors.
4005 He dismissed the vicious
4006 and appointed the virtuous;
4007 he amended the unjust laws,
4008 and distributed the land's goods well
4009 so that the people were not oppressed,
4010 and everything was improved.
4011 For when a king is properly wise
4012 and has other wise men
4013 as counselors, he will not fail
4014 to succeed in every way.
4015 The vices then disappear,

4016 and every virtue has its way,
4017 and high God is pleased,
4018 and the people can rest easy.
4019 If the common people cry out,
4020 and the kind does not stop
4021 to listen to their complaint,
4022 (or if he otherwise
4023 disdains to respect them),
4024 it has been often seen
4025 that great misfortunes arise;
4026 and here is one example...
4027 After the death of Solomon,
4028 when that wise king was gone
4029 and Rehoboam
4030 was to receive the crown,
4031 the people held a parliament
4032 for they were all of one mind,
4033 and they pleaded to the king
4034 with one voice saying:
4035 “Our lord, we beg you
4036 to hear our humble speech
4037 and grant our reasonable request,
4038 either by your grace or wisdom.
4039 When your father was alive
4040 he both imposed and relieved
4041 the work which is
4042 harshly laid upon the common people.
4043 When the temple was under construction
4044 he created a new
4045 and arbitrary royal tax
4046 in order to support
4047 the work which was underway.
4048 But now it happens
4049 that construction is finished,
4050 and he was rich when he died
4051 so the tax is no longer needed.
4052 Please take heed
4053 and take no more from the people
4054 who have been long burdened!
4055 For this we have come to you
4056 to pray with tender hearts
4057 that you release the debt
4058 which your father set upon us.

4059 If you do so
4060 we will be loyal to you forevermore
4061 and come and go at your bidding.”
4062 When the king heard this request
4063 he said that he needed advice
4064 and could not decide for some time.
4065 While he thought about this matter
4066 he sought out counsel.
4067 First, the wise old knights
4068 whom he had asked
4069 counseled him in this manner:
4070 he should (with love and good cheer)
4071 forgive and grant all that was asked
4072 of the people whom his father taxed,
4073 for then he would improve his reign
4074 at little cost to himself.
4075 The king heard and disregarded this,
4076 and instead his mind agreed
4077 with the young and foolish.
4078 They despised the old men
4079 and said, “Sire, it would forever
4080 shame your worthy name
4081 if you do not keep the tax
4082 while you are young and mighty
4083 which your old father got.
4084 You must plainly show the people
4085 that while your rule this land
4086 the little finger of your hand
4087 is stronger
4088 than your father’s whole body was.
4089 You must show
4090 that if he punished them with twigs
4091 you will smite them with scorpions,
4092 and where your father took a little
4093 you will take much more.
4094 Thus you will make them sorely fear
4095 the great heart of your courage,
4096 and this will keep them obedient.”
4097 This young king agreed
4098 to do as these advisors said,
4099 but this was his undoing.
4100 For when he spoke
4101 following the young counselors’ advice,

4102 he repeated their words
4103 to the people in attendance,
4104 and when they heard these words
4105 of malice and of menace,
4106 right there to his face
4107 they utterly rebuked him
4108 and shamed him with great reproach,
4109 raving that
4110 he thought only of himself.
4111 As the wild rage
4112 of wind makes the sea savage
4113 and brings waves out of calm,
4114 so too (for lack of laws and grace)
4115 the people stirred all at once
4116 and abandoned his lands,
4117 so that of the twelve tribes
4118 only two remained
4119 standing with him.
4120 So forevermore
4121 with no intention to return
4122 they departed their rightful home.
4123 All Israel with a common voice
4124 chose a new king
4125 among themselves,
4126 forsaking their young lord.
4127 The poor knight Jeroboam
4128 they took, and left Rehoboam,
4129 despite him being the rightful heir.
4130 Thus the young caused a great change;
4131 as a result of bad counsel
4132 the rightful blood and the rulership
4133 were divided ever after.
4134 It often proves that
4135 the counsel of the young is too passionate;
4136 lack of prudence causes harm.
4137 Old age is best for giving advice,
4138 but lively youth deserves thanks too
4139 for it performs the work.
4140 Truly both of these
4141 have their own uses;
4142 if he would retain his crown
4143 a king will need them every day.
4144 One understands, one does,

4145 and the king must rule both,
4146 or else trouble will result.
4147 And upon the matter
4148 of the dispute between the two
4149 I have found this in a book:
4150 “Would it be better for the land
4151 if the king was himself wise
4152 and himself praiseworthy,
4153 but have bad counselors,
4154 or on the other hand,
4155 for the king to be vicious,
4156 but with virtuous counselors?”
4157 The book answered
4158 that it is better for them to be wise
4159 who shall give the advice,
4160 for they are many while the king is one.
4161 It is easier for one man
4162 with false counsel
4163 to fall from wisdom,
4164 than for he alone
4165 to change many from vice to virtue,
4166 that would be strange indeed!
4167 The land will be glad
4168 if the king has good counselors
4169 which lead him to righteousness,
4170 so that his high nobility
4171 between punishment and Pity
4172 decides mercifully and fairly.
4173 A king is most beholden overall
4174 to Pity, but in particular
4175 there are some who
4176 should receive his Pity most of all,
4177 these are the people of his land,
4178 for under his hand
4179 by God’s will
4180 they are governed.
4181 Emperor Antonius
4182 once said (or so I read),
4183 that he would rather save
4184 one of his subjects than to have
4185 a thousand of his enemies slain.
4186 This he learned (or so I read)
4187 from Scipio, who had been

4188 Consul of Rome. And thus we have seen
4189 many examples of how
4190 in a king's hands is the duty
4191 to govern the common people;
4192 if he wishes, he may well learn.
4193 Nothing is so pleasing
4194 to God as is good governance
4195 and all governance is bound
4196 to Pity. Thus I argue
4197 that Pity is the foundation
4198 of every king's reign
4199 as long as Justice is mixed in.
4200 These two remove all vice,
4201 and help more than any other virtues
4202 to make a king's reign stable.
4203 Thus the four points
4204 of governance have been presented:
4205 Truth first, and then Generosity,
4206 and Pity along with Justice.
4207 I have told them all, but beyond them
4208 is a fifth point
4209 to create the rule of Policy;
4210 by it a king may moderate
4211 the natural loves of the flesh.
4212 Now I will tell of this measure,
4213 so that all points shall be served
4214 and the law of God observed.

[Chastity]

*Corporis et mentis regem decet omnis honestas,
Nominis vt famam nulla libido ruat.*

*Omne quod est hominis effeminat illa voluptas,
Sit nisi magnanimi cordis, vt obstet ei.*

(A king must be virtuous in every way.)

4215 The male is made for the female,
4216 but one desires many,
4217 exceeding all natural needs.
4218 When a man has already found
4219 a wife of his own, why should
4220 he seek elsewhere
4221 to borrow another man's plow?
4222 He has gear enough
4223 for himself

4224 which suits him better
4225 than other unknown things.
4226 Every good man should know this
4227 and think how marriage
4228 depends on his own true vow,
4229 breaking which would be deceitful
4230 and discordant to his manhood,
4231 especially if he is great
4232 (as the books all say).
4233 The Philosopher taught
4234 Alexander, who learned
4235 how he ought to moderate
4236 his body so that he
4237 should have no excess of fleshy lust.
4238 Along these lines,
4239 the fifth point I mentioned earlier
4240 is Chastity, which seldom
4241 is seen nowadays.
4242 Nonetheless, it is the grace
4243 (alone of all the others)
4244 that lets anyone be chaste at all.
4245 A king's high office
4246 (which the bishops
4247 have anointed and sanctified)
4248 must be more glorified
4249 by the dignity of his crown
4250 than some other person
4251 who has a lesser duty.
4252 Therefore, a prince should take caution
4253 before he falls into disorder,
4254 so that he does not foolishly
4255 relinquish to womanhood
4256 the worthiness of his manhood.
4257 I have read that Aristotle
4258 told Alexander
4259 that to gladden his heart
4260 he could look upon the faces
4261 of fair women.
4262 Yet he should also exemplify
4263 guidance and bodily reserve
4264 lest he lose control
4265 and betray himself.
4266 There is no duplicity in women,

4267 when a man is befuddled
4268 his own wits have fooled him;
4269 I excuse the woman entirely.
4270 When a man dwells upon
4271 the foolish impressions
4272 of his imagination
4273 he fans the fire within himself,
4274 while the woman knows nothing,
4275 and so she is blameless.
4276 If a man causes himself
4277 to drown, and does nothing to prevent it,
4278 the water is blameless.
4279 Is it gold's fault that that men covet it?
4280 If a man passionately loves
4281 a woman who owes him nothing
4282 and wounds his own heart
4283 she is not responsible for his folly.
4284 So bitterly he longs for company
4285 that he may try anything;
4286 a man makes first chase,
4287 the woman flees and he pursues.
4288 Therefore Reason says
4289 the man is the cause of whatever happens,
4290 and he often falls
4291 to where he may not arise again.
4292 Despite this, wise men
4293 have fooled themselves before,
4294 what happens nowadays
4295 has happened since the beginning;
4296 the strong one is feeble in this case.
4297 The law of Nature suits men
4298 to love, but it is not natural
4299 for a man to lose his wits for love.
4300 For if July shall freeze
4301 and December shall be hot,
4302 the year is disturbed (if I may say so).
4303 To see a man's
4304 foolishness make him effeminate,
4305 instead of how a man should be,
4306 this is like a sock outside the shoe,
4307 which none have ever heard of.
4308 But yet the world often accuses
4309 great princes of this deed,

4310 for they have misled themselves with love,
4311 and left their manhood behind,
4312 as in old examples which I find...

[Lecherous Kings]

4313 These old tales tell
4314 that Sardanapalus
4315 (who ruled over
4316 the great kingdom of Assyria)
4317 through his undisciplined heart
4318 fell into that raging fire
4319 of love which makes men fools.
4320 He was so debauched,
4321 and so womanish,
4322 and so unnatural that he was
4323 like a fish who wished to live on land.
4324 Such a desire he found for women
4325 that he remained in his chambers,
4326 and cared only for
4327 the women and what they wished;
4328 seldom did he do otherwise
4329 even to go outside
4330 and see what was going on.
4331 There he kissed and there he played,
4332 they taught him to braid a thread,
4333 and weave a purse, and string a pearl.
4334 All the while, Arbaces
4335 (the Prince of Media)
4336 saw this king's womanhood
4337 and fall from chivalry,
4338 and gathered help and warriors,
4339 and fought so that at last
4340 he cast this king from his reign.
4341 The kingdom was undone forevermore,
4342 and when men speak of him
4343 it is only to shame him further.
4344 Love is moderation.
4345 King David had many loves,
4346 but nonetheless all were secondary,
4347 and knighthood he kept always;
4348 no fleshy lust
4349 to lie in a lady's arms
4350 parted him from his lust for battle.

4351 For when a prince pursues desire
4352 rather than war
4353 (when it is time to take up arms)
4354 his country is often harmed
4355 and his enemies become bold
4356 when they behold no defense.
4357 Many lands were lost this way;
4358 men can read the stories
4359 of those that sought ease
4360 but bought it dearly.
4361 Too much ease is worthless,
4362 it brings forth every vice
4363 and sets virtue back,
4364 turning abundance into deficiency.
4365 In a chronicle I find
4366 how Cyrus, King of Persia,
4367 went to war
4368 against a people he feared
4369 from a country called Lydia.
4370 Try as he might,
4371 he was always bested by them
4372 in battles and in wars.
4373 When he saw and knew
4374 that he could not deal with them by strength
4375 he devised a scheme
4376 to beguile this worthy people;
4377 he offered them a peace treaty
4378 which would last for all time
4379 (so said his words
4380 but his thoughts were otherwise).
4381 What happened in this case
4382 was that once this people had peace
4383 they began seeking pleasure
4384 and worldly ease, which (as it is told)
4385 is the natural nurse
4386 of every desire which leads to vice.
4387 When they had fallen to their lusts
4388 they forgot all about wars,
4389 there were none who respected
4390 arms; in idleness
4391 they put business away
4392 and took instead to dancing and play.
4393 Above all other things

4394 they took a liking
4395 to fleshy lusts, so that Chastity
4396 was scorned
4397 and everyone did as they pleased.
4398 When the Persian king heard
4399 that they had entered into folly
4400 his power (when they least expected)
4401 came more suddenly than thunder
4402 and subjugated them forever.
4403 Thus lechery lost
4404 that land which had before
4405 been best of all.
4406 In the Bible I find another
4407 tale on this topic,
4408 of Amalek the pagan king,
4409 who found his might could not
4410 defend his land and put away
4411 the worthy people of Israel.
4412 This idolater, as it befell,
4413 took the advice of Balaam
4414 and gathered a group of fair women
4415 who were lively and young,
4416 and sent them out
4417 to the Hebrews. Forth they went
4418 with grey eyes and styled brows
4419 and all well-dressed;
4420 when they arrived
4421 among the Hebrews none could help
4422 but catch whom they could,
4423 each of them thinking of desires
4424 which they bought dearly afterwards.
4425 For virtue then began to fail,
4426 and when they came to battle
4427 afterwards in sorry plight
4428 they were taken and defeated,
4429 so that in a short time
4430 their might was overthrown
4431 though they had been strong before.
4432 But Phineas took the case
4433 into his own hands
4434 and ended this punishment
4435 by pleasing God with his deed.
4436 When he came upon

4437 a couple of adulterers,
4438 he impaled them both through,
4439 and left them there for men to see.
4440 And when others saw them
4441 they understood the example,
4442 and prayed to God
4443 to amend their old sins,
4444 and He sent his mercy
4445 and restored them to new grace.
4446 Thus it is shown in many places
4447 how the cleanliness of Chastity
4448 is needed for the worthiness
4449 of all fighting men,
4450 but most of all
4451 this virtue is needed in a king,
4452 for upon his fortunes hang
4453 the success or failure of his land.
4454 If a king does not
4455 forsake his flesh's desires,
4456 he sets a trap for himself
4457 which he may fall in
4458 when he should have done otherwise.
4459 Every man should understand
4460 that in every age
4461 lust has been a sorry thing to crave,
4462 for in the end it makes men sigh
4463 and turns joy into sorrow.
4464 The bright Sun shines in the morning,
4465 not in the dark night,
4466 and the lively youth of man's might
4467 (unless it remains virtuous)
4468 will someday mis-turn the wheel.
4469 Every worthy prince must
4470 within himself behold himself
4471 and see the state of his body,
4472 and remember how no joys
4473 of this world are made to last,
4474 and how the flesh will someday
4475 forsake the desires of this life.
4476 A great example of this
4477 was Solomon, whose appetite
4478 was wholly set upon delight
4479 and the pleasure of women.

4480 This ignorance of his
4481 still amazes the wide world,
4482 for he, whose wit
4483 had surpassed all other men,
4484 was so entangled in fleshy lusts
4485 that he, who decreed laws for
4486 God's people, withdrew himself
4487 from God to such a degree
4488 that he worshipped and sacrificed
4489 (for various loves in various places)
4490 unto false gods.
4491 This was the author of Ecclesiastes,
4492 the fame of whom shall last forever,
4493 but he forsook the mighty God
4494 and the law when he took
4495 wives and concubines
4496 from the pagans
4497 and did idolatry for them.
4498 And this I read of his foolishness...
4499 She of Sidonia had him
4500 kneel and raise his arms
4501 to Astarte with great humility,
4502 for she was the goddess of her land.
4503 She who was a Moabite
4504 so delighted him
4505 that his lust devoured his wit,
4506 and he honored the god Chemosh.
4507 Another, an Amonite,
4508 so stupefied him with love,
4509 that with incense to her god Moloch
4510 he sacrificed and revered
4511 just as she had asked.
4512 Thus was the wisest overcome
4513 with the blind desire that he sought
4514 but he rued it afterwards.
4515 The prophet Ahijah the Shilonite
4516 just before Solomon died
4517 (while he was amidst his lusts),
4518 predicted what would happen afterward.
4519 One day he met
4520 Jeroboam the knight, greeted him,
4521 and asked him to stay,
4522 and hear what would happen.

4523 Suddenly Ahijah cast
4524 off his cloak and in an instant
4525 cut it into twelve pieces;
4526 two parts for himself
4527 he kept and the remnant
4528 (as God had ordained)
4529 he gave to Jeroboam
4530 son of Nebat
4531 and knight of the king's court.
4532 He said, "Such is God's might,
4533 that as you have seen of
4534 my cloak, so shall it be
4535 after the death of Solomon.
4536 God hath commanded that
4537 the reign shall be divided,
4538 at which time you shall see
4539 that when the division comes
4540 power in proportion
4541 to your share of my cloak
4542 you shall receive.
4543 Thus Solomon's son will pay for
4544 the lusts and lechery
4545 of his father."
4546 Take heed that
4547 a king is suited to be chaste,
4548 for else he may foolishly waste
4549 both himself and his reign too,
4550 and that would make any king loathsome.
4551 Oh what a vile sin
4552 to destroy a king!
4553 But vengeance on himself
4554 was not enough,
4555 for after he died
4556 he ruined his heritage too
4557 (as I described before).
4558 Thus and therefore
4559 the Philosopher wrote
4560 in his advice for kings
4561 that excess of luxury
4562 they must tempered and moderated
4563 to be naturally sufficient
4564 and accordant to Reason.
4565 Then, ignorant lust

4566 shall not be able to misgovern
4567 and overthrow
4568 as it would an unreasonable man.
4569 Unless a man's wit swerves,
4570 when Nature is duly served
4571 what is reasonable suffices,
4572 but when his wit fails him
4573 he may sorely dread his lusts.
4574 Thus I read of Antonius
4575 son of Severus,
4576 that he in vulgar fashion
4577 gave in wholly to this vice.
4578 He was so foolish
4579 that Nature complained
4580 unto God, for it disdained
4581 what Antonius' lust had wrought.
4582 He direly paid for it,
4583 for God's punishment
4584 is still spoken of today.
4585 But to recount
4586 the particulars of misgovernance
4587 both greed and injustice
4588 along with the remaining sins
4589 (lechery included)
4590 I find them abundantly
4591 within a tale, which I shall tell
4592 as an example of this matter...

[Tarquin, Arruns, and the Gabii]

4593 Old verses say
4594 that the proud, tyrannous
4595 Tarquin, King of Rome,
4596 did many wrongful deeds.
4597 He had many sons,
4598 among whom Arruns was
4599 most similar to his father;
4600 within a few years
4601 (by treason and tyranny)
4602 they seized many lands
4603 taking no heed of the justice
4604 appropriate to their offices
4605 and the rule of governance.
4606 Their only pleasures

4607 were desires of the flesh.
4608 Eventually they undertook
4609 a war which failed
4610 and left them badly grieved
4611 against a folk called
4612 the Gabii. The night afterwards,
4613 Arruns, when he was at home
4614 in Rome, secretly entered
4615 into a chamber and beat himself,
4616 leaving ten or twelve wounds
4617 to be seen upon his back.
4618 With his wounds still fresh
4619 he hastily rode away
4620 and came the next day
4621 to the city of the Gabii
4622 and went inside. When he
4623 was seen, they shut the gates,
4624 and the lords set upon him
4625 with drawn swords in hand.
4626 Arruns did not fight them
4627 but said, "I am here at your will;
4628 it would be good if you slaughtered me,
4629 as my own father wishes."
4630 To explain this
4631 he asked them to look
4632 and told them that
4633 his father and his brothers
4634 (who he said were enraged)
4635 had beaten and reviled him
4636 and exiled him from Rome forever.
4637 Thus he made them believe,
4638 and said that if he could achieve
4639 his purpose, they would be rewarded
4640 for helping him.
4641 When the lords saw
4642 how woeful he was
4643 they took pity on his grief,
4644 but they were pleased nonetheless
4645 that Rome had exiled him.
4646 The Gabii took counsel
4647 and made him swear upon the gods
4648 that he would tell them the truth
4649 and support them with all his might;

4650 likewise, they promised him
4651 that they would help his cause.
4652 They set about healing him;
4653 he was bathed and anointed
4654 until he was lively again,
4655 and he was given his every wish
4656 so that he had the whole city
4657 just as he pleased.
4658 Then he thought of the best way
4659 to show his tyranny;
4660 he hired a scoundrel
4661 who went to his father
4662 with a message
4663 asking Tarquin
4664 to advise him to find a way
4665 to take over the city
4666 which he stood so well within.
4667 When the messenger had come
4668 to Rome and found
4669 the king, he was by chance
4670 walking in a garden,
4671 so the messenger spoke to him there.
4672 When the messenger had finished
4673 describing the situation
4674 and Tarquin understood
4675 what was going on
4676 he took a stick in hand
4677 and as they went through the garden
4678 one by one the lily flowers
4679 which were sprouting up
4680 he struck down where they stood.
4681 He said to the messenger,
4682 “See what I am doing? This will
4683 be your answer.
4684 This is the technique
4685 that you shall tell my son.”
4686 The messenger stayed no longer
4687 but took his leave and returned
4688 to his master, telling all
4689 that his father had done.
4690 When Arruns herd what he said,
4691 instantly he understood what it meant
4692 and so directed all his efforts

4693 until (through fraud and trickery)
4694 the Gabii princes' heads
4695 had been struck off, and all was won.
4696 Tarquin then came to his son
4697 and entered the town with Romans
4698 who took and massacred the citizens
4699 without Reason or Pity;
4700 he spared no one.
4701 For the speed of his conquest
4702 Tarquin organized a rich feast
4703 and solemn sacrifice
4704 in Phoebus' temple.
4705 When the Romans were assembled,
4706 in their presence
4707 upon the prepared altar
4708 where the fires were burning
4709 suddenly there appeared
4710 a hideous serpent
4711 who devoured up
4712 the sacrifice and
4713 quenched the fires;
4714 as quickly as he came
4715 he vanished deep into the ground again.
4716 Every man began to say,
4717 "Oh lord, what does this mean?"
4718 And they prayed and cried out
4719 to Phoebus to tell them
4720 the cause. At that moment
4721 all heard a ghastly voice
4722 answering the Romans,
4723 and saying how for the wickedness,
4724 pride, and unrighteousness
4725 of Tarquin and his son,
4726 the sacrifice was wasted,
4727 for it was unacceptable
4728 to celebrate abominable sin.
4729 Furthermore, he told them
4730 that he who next kissed
4731 his mother would avenge
4732 the crime. This speech
4733 made the listeners' hearts glad,
4734 though they were careful not to show it.

4735 There was a knight called Brutus,
4736 and he with all his haste
4737 fell and kissed the ground,
4738 though none understood why
4739 (they thought he had stumbled
4740 by chance and fallen down).
4741 But Brutus was of another mind
4742 for he knew well
4743 that Earth is every man's natural
4744 mother. But the people were blind,
4745 and did not see as shrewdly as he.
4746 When they had left that place
4747 and returned to Rome again,
4748 every Roman man
4749 hurried to his mother
4750 and kissed her, each of them hoping
4751 to be the first by chance
4752 and take vengeance on Tarquin,
4753 as Phoebus had said.

[Tarquin, Arruns, and Lucrece]

4754 But there is a time appointed for all things,
4755 and they must wait until then.
4756 Soon after these events
4757 Tarquin again recklessly
4758 warred against a nearby
4759 town with strong walls
4760 which was called Ardea;
4761 he set a siege around it
4762 so no man could pass out.
4763 Meanwhile, one night
4764 prince Arruns had supper,
4765 and some of the knights
4766 were asked to eat with him.
4767 When they had come
4768 and sat down to eat,
4769 among their banter
4770 Arruns put forth the question
4771 of who had the best wife
4772 in Rome. There began an argument,
4773 for Arruns said he had the best
4774 and the others argued without rest
4775 until at last Collatine

4776 (a worthy knight and cousin
4777 of Arruns) said this:
4778 “It is useless
4779 just to talk; the deed
4780 is what really counts.
4781 We should all
4782 take our horses and ride out
4783 so we may all know
4784 what our wives do when we are away,
4785 and that will be the true test.”
4786 Arruns agreed entirely
4787 so they leapt on horseback
4788 right away, and did not sleep
4789 until they had ridden forth
4790 and came secretly into Rome.
4791 In hidden places they doused their lights
4792 and took a room
4793 in which they disguised themselves
4794 so that no one would recognize them.
4795 First they crept to the palace
4796 to see the wife
4797 whom Arruns had bragged of.
4798 They found her in a happy mood,
4799 all full of mirth and jokes,
4800 but among all her words
4801 she said nothing of her husband.
4802 When they had seen
4803 all that they wished
4804 they went forth secretly
4805 to the gate of brass
4806 (which was called Collatia)
4807 near Collatine’s household.
4808 At his home they found
4809 his wife Lucrece surrounded
4810 by women, all intent
4811 on work, and she worked too
4812 and bade them hurry, saying, “These
4813 will be clothes for my husband,
4814 who with his sword and spear
4815 lies at the siege in great discomfort.
4816 If it wouldn’t trouble him,
4817 I wish to God that he were here.
4818 Until I hear for certain

4819 some good news from him
4820 my heart is greatly troubled.
4821 Of all men
4822 he is the most daring;
4823 he can't restrain himself,
4824 and that may do him harm
4825 when they attack the walls.
4826 If I had my wish
4827 that city would fall into a pit!
4828 Then the siege would be over
4829 and I could see my husband.”
4830 With that, her eyes teared up
4831 and she could not stop herself;
4832 as men see dewdrops cover
4833 the leaves and the flowers too,
4834 just so upon her cheeks
4835 fell the sad salt tears.
4836 When Collatine heard her say
4837 the feelings of her true heart
4838 he sprang up and ran to her
4839 and said, “Look my dear,
4840 he has come to you again
4841 who you love most, just as you said.”
4842 And she, suddenly cheerful again
4843 embraced him in her small arms,
4844 and her pale cheeks colored
4845 and her beauty was restored
4846 greater even than before.
4847 The king's son, who was nearby
4848 and heard the lady
4849 say these things
4850 lost his reason and his wits,
4851 for love came then
4852 and fired his dart
4853 and struck Arruns with such a wound,
4854 that suddenly he felt and knew
4855 the blind sickness
4856 which no doctor can cure.
4857 But nonetheless
4858 at that time he said nothing
4859 to reveal what he felt,
4860 but openly with glad words
4861 (so courteous in their manner!)

4862 he spoke and made friendly cheer
4863 until it was time to go.
4864 Collatine as well
4865 took his leave, and by night
4866 with all their haste
4867 they rode to the siege again.
4868 Arruns was so woefully beset
4869 with the thoughts which came upon him
4870 that while it was broad daylight
4871 he went to bed, not to rest,
4872 but to think of the noblest
4873 and fairest woman
4874 that he ever saw or ever would see.
4875 So he ruminated in his heart
4876 and pictured her image:
4877 first the features of her face,
4878 which the grace of Nature
4879 had given womanly beauty
4880 which could not be surpassed;
4881 and how her hair was tressed,
4882 and how her clothing was arranged,
4883 and how she spoke, and how she worked,
4884 and how she wept. All this he thought,
4885 for he had forgotten no detail,
4886 and he liked them all so well
4887 that amongst the living or the dead
4888 none compared to her womanhood.
4889 Thus this tyrannical knight
4890 was made weak, but not good,
4891 for he thought of nothing
4892 but how by some trick
4893 he could overcome her will
4894 and fulfill the desire of his flesh.
4895 This love disregards reason;
4896 he whose honor is weak,
4897 must be watched carefully.
4898 Arruns, who always obeyed his lusts,
4899 with mingled love and tyranny
4900 decided on a treacherous
4901 way to claim his prize.
4902 He said, "Fortune favors
4903 the plans of the bold,"
4904 and thus boasting to himself

4905 like a wild man
4906 he began his treason.
4907 Up he stood and forth he went
4908 on horseback, but his intentions
4909 were secret; he took
4910 the quickest route until he came
4911 to Collatia, the gate of Rome.
4912 It was somewhat late
4913 (right around sunset)
4914 as he shaped his net
4915 to ensnare her innocence.
4916 Careful of discovery,
4917 he rode as secretly as he could;
4918 he dismounted his horse
4919 beside Collatine's home
4920 and was welcomed with friendliness
4921 since he was a cousin of that family.
4922 When the good spouse Lucrece
4923 saw who it was
4924 she invited him in with good cheer,
4925 supposing it a great honor,
4926 and timidly asked him
4927 for news of her husband.
4928 He began to tell her
4929 many false stories
4930 (which he himself invented)
4931 in order to gladden her heart
4932 and put her in a better mood
4933 by hearing happy news
4934 how her husband fared.
4935 Thus the truth was deceived
4936 by sly treachery towards
4937 her who had only good intentions.
4938 Soon a feast was ready
4939 in his honor,
4940 but yet he had not dared
4941 to speak of love in any way;
4942 instead, with covert subtlety
4943 he shaped his friendly words,
4944 just as the tiger bides his time
4945 and hopes to catch his prey.
4946 When the tables had been cleared
4947 and their meal was finished,

4948 he said that he was tired
4949 and asked to go to bed.
4950 She sped with all haste
4951 to satisfy this request,
4952 and everything was soon ready.
4953 She brought him to the prepared room,
4954 took her leave, and went out
4955 into her own chamber nearby,
4956 but he who she thought
4957 was her friend was her foe,
4958 and much woe came of it.
4959 The tyrant, though he feigned sleep,
4960 soon arose from his bed
4961 and crept around
4962 until he heard that all
4963 had gone to bed and were fast asleep.
4964 Over his head he drew his hood,
4965 his unsheathed sword
4966 he took in hand, and she, still sleeping,
4967 lay in bed. What she dreamed
4968 God only knows, for he unlatched
4969 the door too quietly to hear,
4970 and softly crept up
4971 to the bed in which she slept.
4972 Suddenly,
4973 he grabbed her with both his arms.
4974 With that the worthy wife awoke;
4975 so tender was her womanhood
4976 that her voice left from pure dread,
4977 and she dared not to speak a word;
4978 besides, he warned her
4979 that if she made a noise or cry
4980 he had brought his sword
4981 to slay her and all her household.
4982 Thus her heart was quailed;
4983 a lamb seized
4984 in a wolf's mouth was no more dismayed
4985 than Lucrece, and no less naked;
4986 she fainted away in his hands
4987 overwhelmed.
4988 He, always obedient to lust,
4989 took what he wished
4990 then went on his way and came unseen

4991 to his own room again;
4992 he called up the chamberlain,
4993 and made ready to ride.
4994 In lecherous pride
4995 he leapt to his horse and rode away.
4996 She remained in bed
4997 even when she knew he had gone,
4998 and stayed there past sunrise,
4999 and did not stir until late in the day.
5000 She threw away her clothes
5001 and (as one who forsakes the world)
5002 took up black garments.
5003 Afterwards,
5004 like a wellspring
5005 her eyes filled up with woeful tears
5006 and her hair hung down before them.
5007 She wept, and no man knew why,
5008 but piteously
5009 she begged that they would hurry
5010 and fetch her husband
5011 and father too.
5012 Thus they came,
5013 and Brutus came with Collatine,
5014 for Lucrece was his cousin.
5015 All three went in
5016 and in the room they saw
5017 the most woeful sight on Earth,
5018 for she wept as if made of water.
5019 The chamber door was shut
5020 before they said a word to her;
5021 then, with her clothes in disorder
5022 (as one who hates herself)
5023 and with her hair unkempt and hanging,
5024 she began to kneel
5025 before her husband.
5026 He, who could not comprehend
5027 what had happened to her
5028 asked in a soft voice,
5029 “What happened, my good sweet?”
5030 She, who thought herself unclean
5031 and the most worthless of all women,
5032 hung her woeful head
5033 in shame, she could not bear to look up.

5034 They saw this and were startled,
5035 and begged her
5036 that she would not keep silent
5037 but tell her friends what ailed her,
5038 why she so bewailed herself,
5039 and how they could help.
5040 But her sorrows were still fresh,
5041 and though she tried to speak
5042 tender shame stifled her words;
5043 many times she tried to start
5044 but could not come to the point.
5045 They encouraged her on
5046 to tell what had happened, until
5047 she saw that there was no choice;
5048 her tale, with shame and dread
5049 she told, and not without pain.
5050 Hoping to restrain her woe,
5051 her husband (unlucky man!)
5052 comforted her as best he could,
5053 and swore (as did her father)
5054 that he was not upset
5055 at things done against her will;
5056 they begged her to be still
5057 and said she had all their forgiveness.
5058 But she would not think of living,
5059 and would accept no forgiveness.
5060 She said that wickedness
5061 was wrought on her body
5062 that would never go away,
5063 and that ever after the world would
5064 scorn her. Quickly then,
5065 before any man could move,
5066 the sword (which was
5067 hidden within her garments)
5068 she took in her hands
5069 and pierced her heart through.
5070 She fell,
5071 but even as she fell
5072 she adjusted her clothes
5073 so that she was covered
5074 even below her knees.
5075 Thus died this wife honorably,
5076 although woefully.

5077 They were consumed by sorrow.
5078 Her husband and her father
5079 both fainted over the body;
5080 no man's tongue can tell
5081 the anguish that they felt.
5082 But Brutus (who was with them)
5083 kept his courage;
5084 he leapt to Lucrece's body,
5085 pulled out the bloody sword,
5086 and swore to all the gods
5087 that he would have vengeance.
5088 She seemed to change her expression,
5089 her dead eyes looked up
5090 as if grateful for his vow.
5091 He noticed this,
5092 but had to be contented with that look.
5093 Brutus, with a manly heart,
5094 quickly roused up her husband
5095 and father too
5096 and said that they should
5097 send without delay
5098 for a bier to carry the body.
5099 They laid Lucrece, still bleeding,
5100 on it, and with a great cry
5101 went out into the marketplace
5102 of Rome; in an instant
5103 the people were summoned to assembly,
5104 and every man's heart trembled
5105 when he heard the truth of the case.
5106 Therefore counsel was taken
5107 by the great and the small;
5108 Brutus told them all the tale
5109 and bade them remember
5110 the long list of sins
5111 which Arruns had done before,
5112 and even before his birth
5113 what his father had done
5114 wrongfully in his reign.
5115 A great clamor arose
5116 with new shame for old sins,
5117 and all the town began to cry,
5118 "Away, away with tyranny
5119 and lechery and greed!"

5120 And at last in such a way
5121 the father they exiled
5122 and the son they killed,
5123 and set up a better government.
5124 But there is yet another tale
5125 to show that righteousness and lechery
5126 cannot coexist
5127 in he who makes the laws.
5128 If you will truly understand,
5129 you must know this tale,
5130 which was written long ago...

[Claudius and Livius]

5131 When Appius of Rome
5132 (whose other name was Claudius)
5133 was governor of the city,
5134 an incredible thing happened
5135 concerning a noble maiden
5136 who was the daughter
5137 of Livius Virginius and his wife.
5138 Men said that her fairness
5139 was unequalled in all the town.
5140 This fame went up and down
5141 until it came to Claudius' ear,
5142 then his thoughts were fixed on her
5143 and all his heart was set afire.
5144 He desired the flower
5145 which belonged to her maidenhood,
5146 and he inquired if he could fulfil
5147 the blind desires of his will.
5148 But he could not,
5149 for she was engaged to be married
5150 to a worthy knight of great lineage
5151 whose name was Ilicius,
5152 and her father was pleased
5153 for him to marry his daughter.
5154 But before they could be wed,
5155 her father (who was a Roman
5156 of leading chivalry)
5157 had to take command
5158 of a war which was underway;
5159 he went out with all his strength
5160 and all the men of arms,

5161 so the marriage was put aside
5162 (they agreed that it would come later).
5163 The king, when he had heard
5164 that this maiden had promised
5165 to marry, thought once more.
5166 He had a brother,
5167 Marcus Claudius by name,
5168 who was a man just as debased
5169 as was the king himself.
5170 The two of them together
5171 took counsel and found a way;
5172 Marcus Claudius would say
5173 that she was promised
5174 entirely to his service
5175 and to no other man;
5176 he said he would
5177 produce witnesses for his claim
5178 so that she could not escape.
5179 Their plan was set
5180 to be enforced by law
5181 while her father was absent;
5182 she was summoned
5183 into the presence of the king
5184 and stood constrained by this thing.
5185 Her friends knew well enough
5186 that it was entirely false;
5187 they came to the king
5188 and invoked the common law
5189 for the noble, worthy knight
5190 who was her father.
5191 He happened to be away
5192 (for the benefit of them all)
5193 at arms out upon the battlefield,
5194 and he should not be harmed
5195 nor shamed while away;
5196 thus they begged all around.
5197 Despite the clamor that he heard,
5198 the king's lust answered
5199 and gave her only two days
5200 of respite, for he knew
5201 that in so short a time
5202 her father could not appear.
5203 But he was deceived,

5204 for Livius had suspected
5205 the purpose of the king before,
5206 and therefore back to Rome again
5207 he came riding in all haste,
5208 leaving his army encamped
5209 until he would return.
5210 Thus, this worthy captain
5211 appeared within a day;
5212 reasonably and legally
5213 he made his case,
5214 and soon his daughter
5215 (whom Marcus had accused)
5216 was excused by the court.
5217 The king, seeing his plan fail,
5218 and that no trickery would work,
5219 became encumbered by blind lust
5220 and perverted the nature of the law.
5221 Halfway-wrathfully
5222 in the presence of everyone
5223 (he was deceived by concupiscence)
5224 he gave orders to his brother,
5225 bidding him to seize
5226 the maiden for himself.
5227 Within his own mind
5228 he saw truly
5229 that his brother had been rebuffed,
5230 but his own desire was at stake.
5231 Again this maiden was wronged,
5232 but this time by the king,
5233 and against him there was no appeal
5234 (as her father knew well).
5235 Seeing this great tyranny
5236 and lecherous lust
5237 claim his daughter,
5238 and from Ilicius
5239 falsely steal the marriage,
5240 Livius became like a raging lion,
5241 knowing neither fear
5242 nor the meaning of Pity.
5243 A naked sword he drew,
5244 and amidst the chaos
5245 he thrust it through his daughter's side
5246 and cried aloud,

5247 “Take her now you wrongful king!
5248 I rather choose
5249 to be the father of a maiden,
5250 though she be dead, than
5251 live to be shamed
5252 and given an evil name.”
5253 The king ordered his men to capture
5254 Livius, but this went as well
5255 and when the chased wild boar,
5256 feeling pain, throws off the hounds
5257 and goes forth as he pleases.
5258 In just such a way
5259 this this worthy knight, with sword in hand,
5260 carved a path and they fled before him,
5261 for none could withstand his slashes.
5262 He leapt upon his horse,
5263 and with his sword dripping the blood
5264 of his daughter
5265 he came to the army
5266 of Rome and told them what had happened.
5267 He said that he believed
5268 concerning this matter
5269 that it was better to address
5270 the great unrighteousness at home,
5271 than to war in foreign lands
5272 and lose what was left behind.
5273 It seemed that any man’s
5274 wife could be in jeopardy,
5275 and his daughters too, if they
5276 happened to be beautiful.
5277 They marveled to see
5278 that the king was unjust,
5279 but suddenly their eyes saw clearly
5280 and all together swore
5281 that they would stand for what was right.
5282 Thus, in one accord
5283 they turned back to Rome.
5284 Not long afterwards,
5285 news of what had happened spread
5286 and every man spoke it openly,
5287 so that the secret treachery
5288 (born of the king’s lechery)
5289 came openly to men’s ears

5290 and brought forth a general fear,
5291 so that every man began to dread
5292 he who ruled over them.
5293 Before anything worse could happen
5294 the common voice of the people
5295 demanded to depose the king.
5296 To this cause
5297 the Senate stood in agreement
5298 and made lawful the doom;
5299 the king received the punishment
5300 appropriate for his governance.
5301 Thus the unchaste was chastised,
5302 and always the mighty should be advised
5303 that they should govern
5304 by this evidence,
5305 and know that a good king should forsake
5306 the vice of lust and follow virtue.

[Sara]

5307 To make an end to this part,
5308 and our discussion of Policy,
5309 and Chastity in particular,
5310 my final conclusion
5311 is that every lust shall be eschewed,
5312 and by this great example I argue...
5313 In Ecbatana (a town in Media)
5314 there was a maiden
5315 whose name was Sara, and Raguel
5316 was her father, and it so happened
5317 that her body and her visage
5318 were fairer than any other
5319 that could be found among them.
5320 The rich men of the city
5321 (those who were lively and could love)
5322 were deranged for love of her
5323 and begged to marry her.
5324 One of these was successful at last,
5325 but it turned out that his proposal
5326 had more to do with lust than marriage,
5327 as he knew within his heart
5328 and eventually came to repent.
5329 Upon his wedding night,
5330 when he prepared to go to bed

5331 (caring nothing for God
5332 but rather his own lusts),
5333 before he was fully warm
5334 and would have taken her in his arms,
5335 Asmodeus, a fiend of Hell
5336 (who, as the books tell,
5337 tempts men in this way)
5338 was already there with a plan
5339 to serve his own delight.
5340 He punished the man
5341 by snapping his neck in two.
5342 The young wife was upset,
5343 but knew not what had happened,
5344 and so it went
5345 not only with this first man,
5346 but in the same way afterwards
5347 with six other husbands;
5348 they all fell victim to Asmodeus.
5349 All of them died in bed
5350 just as soon as they laid a hand on her,
5351 not for their lawful marriage
5352 but for their fiery sin
5353 (which exceeded what was proper).
5354 Any who take heed
5355 of what happened afterwards
5356 will hear a great truth.
5357 For Sara then married Tobit,
5358 who the angel Raphael
5359 had taught to be noble.
5360 Asmodeus won nothing in that marriage,
5361 and yet Tobit had his will;
5362 his well-ordered desires
5363 obeyed both law and Nature,
5364 and so he preserved his life
5365 and was not punished.
5366 This is open evidence
5367 and an example for men to see
5368 that if immoderate desire
5369 leads a man to misguided marriage,
5370 he should rather go another way
5371 and learn to control his lust.
5372 God created the laws
5373 both of Reason and of Nature;

5374 the beasts are bound
5375 only to the laws of Nature,
5376 but to the creature Man
5377 God gave Reason as well,
5378 by which his nature
5379 may sometimes be modified,
5380 so that he shall do no lechery,
5381 and yet achieve what he desires.
5382 Thus the good laws save
5383 everything from falsehood;
5384 and this was taught to king Alexander
5385 by the wise Philosopher
5386 in his first lesson.
5387 Not only Chastity,
5388 but all honor
5389 must be tested in a king,
5390 how honest, how generous, how just, how chaste
5391 has his Reason made him?
5392 Together with the virtue of Pity,
5393 these may help him win the approval
5394 of his God and thus preserve
5395 himself and his people in well-being,
5396 and peace, and riches, and honor, and health
5397 in this world and the next.

[Conclusion]

5398 My son, we started out
5399 speaking briefly, but then
5400 for your own comfort you begged me
5401 to relieve your love-pains.
5402 You asked if I would share
5403 all of Aristotle's wisdom.
5404 This I have done, and beyond this
5405 with my tales I have tried
5406 to ease your pains
5407 in all the ways I could think of.

AMANS:

5408 Enough father, please, I beg you!
5409 For what you have said
5410 I thank you a thousand times.
5411 These tales overwhelm my ears
5412 but yet my heart is elsewhere.

5413 I cannot help myself,
5414 I am always pained by love!
5415 No wisdom I could hear
5416 will make me forget
5417 unless it puts me to sleep.
5418 There is no time when I do not
5419 think of love and its law;
5420 I cannot withdraw my heart.
5421 Please dear father,
5422 stop this and return to the matter
5423 of love, as we began.
5424 If anything was glossed over,
5425 or forgotten, or left behind
5426 which pertains to love,
5427 and I need to confess,
5428 ask now! While I live
5429 I would like to fix what is amiss.

GENIUS:

5430 Of course my dear son.
5431 Your confession, truly
5432 is not yet done,
5433 there is much about love you still don't know.
5434 Be well advised however,
5435 that within this confession
5436 the next point concerning love
5437 is the last one of all.
5438 I will begin, and you tell me where to stop...

End of Book 7