

*þe Simonie / La Simonie*

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Dans un premier temps, apparaît la traduction française d'extraits du texte (40 %). Afin d'aider le lecteur à repérer plus rapidement les strophes traduites, celles-ci sont décalées par rapport au reste du texte en moyen anglais, laissé tel quel. Pour rappel, le texte moyen-anglais complet est ajouté à la fin, après la traduction.

Dans un souci de lisibilité, le traducteur a séparé les strophes. La traduction, assez littérale mais pas nécessairement mot-à-mot, suit de près l'ordre des vers. Seul le numéro de la pendeloque (le vers court) est donné, pour chaque strophe traduite, afin d'alléger la présentation visuelle, tout en permettant de localiser le passage en question dans l'original. Le poème est incomplet, un folio manquant au manuscrit ; il ne reste donc à la dernière strophe que les deux premiers vers.

Les notes linguistiques, limitées aux termes rares ou difficiles, sont placées immédiatement après la strophe en question. AF = ancien français. AM = anglais moderne. L = latin. MA = moyen anglais. MN = moyen néerlandais. VA = vieil anglais. VHN = vieux haut allemand. VN = vieux norrois.

## LA SIMONIE – TRADUCTION (extraits)

Pourquoi guerre, destruction et meurtre arrivent-ils au pays ? {fo. 328r}  
 Pourquoi la faim et la pénurie agricole affligent les pauvres ?  
 Pourquoi le bétail meurt ainsi, pourquoi le blé est devenu si cher,  
 Écoutez, vous qui voulez bien attendre, et vous allez en entendre  
 La rumeur ! 5  
 Je ne souhaite mentir à personne – attention donc qui veut !

5. *skile*. VN *skella* (verbe), « sonner » ; ici, « son, bruit, rumeur ».

Dieu pleure beaucoup sur le clergé, disant qu'ils font mal ;  
 Il leur fait comprendre que Vérité n'existe point là-dedans.  
 Car à la curie romaine, où Vérité devrait commencer,  
 Celle-ci est interdite au palais ; elle n'ose pas y pénétrer,  
 Par crainte. 11  
 Même si le pape l'appelle pour entrer, elle reste encore dehors.

10. *him*, « lui », pronom masculin. L'auteur moyen-anglais utilise les pronoms masculins pour les figures allégoriques, comme Vérité et Simonie ; en traduction française, le féminin s'impose. De même, au v. 18 ci-après, je transpose la « barbe » (attribut masculin) que Simonie secoue, en « signe de la tête ».

Tous les clercs de la curie se sont accordés sur le principe,  
 Que si Vérité arrive parmi eux, il faut la mettre à mort.  
 Elle n'ose donc pas s'y montrer, de crainte d'être tuée.  
 Même au milieu des cardinaux, elle n'ose pas se faire voir  
 Par peur. 17  
 Si la Simonie la rencontrait, elle ferait un signe négatif de la tête.

¶ Voiz of clerk is sielde iherd at þe court of Rome.  
 2000 Ne were he neuere swich a clerk, siluerles if he come  
 Þouh he were þe wiseste þat euere was iborn  
 But if he swete ar he go, al his weye is lorn  
 ¶ Isouht.

Or he shal singe *si dedero* or al geineþ him noht.

2500 ¶ For if þere be in countre an horeling, a shrewe,  
Lat him come to þe court hise nedes for to shewe  
And bringe wid him siluer and non oþer wed.  
Be he neuere so muchel a wrecche, hise nedes sholen be sped  
¶ Ful stille.

3000 For coueytise and symonie han þe world to wille.

L'archevêque et l'évêque, qui devraient enquêter  
Sur le mode de vie de tous les hommes de Sainte Église,  
Sont parfois idiots eux-mêmes, menant une vie lamentable.  
Par conséquent, ils n'osent pas parler, de peur de soulever un tollé général  
Chez le clergé,  
Et de voir chacun accuser l'autre de leurs œuvres misérables. {fo. 328v}

35

¶ But certes, holi church is muchel ibrouht þer doune  
Siþþen seint Thomas was slain and smiten of his croune.  
He was a piler ariht to holden vp holi church.  
4000 Þise oþere ben to slouwe and feinteliche kunnen worche,  
¶ Iwis.  
Þerfore in holi church, hit fareþ þe more amis.

¶ But eueri man may wel iwite, whoso take zeme,  
Þat no man may wel serue tweie lordes to queme.  
4500 Summe beþ in office wid þe king and gaderen tresor to hepe;  
And þe fraunchise of holi church hij laten ligge slepe  
¶ Ful stille.  
Al to manye þer beþ swiche, if hit were Godes wille.

Et ces archidiacres qu'on envoie faire des visitations paroissiales :  
Chacun d'eux cherche comment faire le plus malin.  
Il veut bien accepter un pot-de-vin de celui-ci et de celui-là,  
Permettant au curé d'avoir une femme, ainsi qu'au vicaire,  
Comme ils veulent.  
La convoitise leur ferme la trappe et fait qu'ils se tiennent tranquils.

53

En effet, dès qu'un curé est mort et enterré,  
On ne tardera pas de faire des cadeaux au patron disposant du bénéfice.  
Le clergé du pays se mettra rapidement à lui faire la cour,  
Par l'envoi de beaux cadeaux et de nombreux dons,  
Ainsi qu'à l'évêque.  
La Simonie sera portée là à son sommet !

59

52 *persoun* (> parson). AF *parson*, « personne ». Le mot français a donné deux sens en MA et en AM : « une personne » et « un *parson* », le second étant le curé, la personne qui dirige la paroisse. Dans l'administration ecclésiastique, il existe une différence entre *parson* et *priest*, comme ici. Le *parson* est le curé-en-chef, celui qui reçoit les revenus des fermages appartenant à la paroisse, alors que le *priest* est un simple prêtre, assistant ou vicaire du curé (L *vicarius*, représentant, qui prend la place de l'évêque ou d'un autre officier).

56 *þe patroun* (> patron). Le patron, le propriétaire ; celui qui détient le droit de patronage, lui permettant de nommer le prêtre de son choix au bénéfice de la cure. Il s'agit souvent d'un grand seigneur, propriétaire du terrain sur lequel est bâtie l'église paroissiale, avec les fermes qui servent à rémunérer le curé. Si le terrain appartient à l'évêché, c'est l'évêque le patron ; mais beaucoup de paroisses se trouvaient sous le contrôle du seigneur local. Ce système, qui donnait beaucoup de pouvoir aux riches laïcs, grands propriétaires terriens, a perduré dans l'Église d'Angleterre (anglicane) jusqu'au 19<sup>e</sup> siècle.

Il arrivera rapidement sur place, la Convoitise sur son cheval,  
 En apportant de l'argent à l'évêque et en lui murmurant à l'oreille,  
 De sorte que, quand les pauvres s'y rendent, leurs efforts seront futiles,  
 Car c'est à celui qui peut le plus donner qu'ira l'église,  
 Certainement. 65  
 Chacun peut maintenant voir, au grand jour, que c'est vraiment comme ça.

62 *rounen*, « murmurer ». VA *runian*, dire, chuchoter, murmurer.  
 66 *dawe* (> dawn, day), « aube ». VA *daʒien* (verbe), 'to dawn', faire jour. Ici, la corruption est claire  
 comme le jour, visible à tous.

Dès lors que le nouveau curé est installé dans sa paroisse,  
 Il se demande comment il pourrait être le plus malin.  
 Le blé dans sa grange ne sera mangé d'aucune souris,  
 Car il sera dépensé dans une maison dépravée,  
 Si ça se peut. 71  
 Tout le blé sera battu avant le jour de Noël. {fo. 329r}

And whan he haþ igadered markes and poundes,  
 He prikeþ out of toune, wid haukes and wid houndes  
 7500 Into a straunge contre and halt a wenche in cracche.  
 And wel is hire þat first may swich a persoun kacche  
 ¶ In londe.  
 And þus þeih seruen þe chapele and laten þe chirche stonde.

¶ He takeþ al þat he may and makeþ þe chirche pore  
 8000 And leueþ þare behinde a þeef and an hore -  
 A seriaunt and a deie, þat leden a sory lif;  
 Also faire hij gon to bedde as housebonde and wif,  
 ¶ Wid sorwe.  
 Shal þere no pore lif fare þe bet, nouþer on euen ne on morwe.

8500 ¶ And whan he haþ þe siluer of wolle and of lomb,  
 He put in his pautener an houue and a komb,  
 A myroure and a koeuerchef to binde wid his crok  
 And rat on þe rouwe bible and on oþer bok  
 ¶ No mo.  
 9000 But vnþank haue þe bishop þat lat hit so go.

¶ For þouh þe bishop hit wite þat hit bename kouþ,  
 He may wid a litel siluer stoppen his mouþ.  
 He medeþ wid þe clerkes and halt forþ þe wenche  
 And lat þe parish forworþe. Þe deuel him adrenche  
 9500 ¶ For his werk.  
 And sory may his fader ben þat euere made him clerk.

Si le curé a un prêtre-assistant de vie vertueuse,  
 Qui s'avère bon conseiller pour les vierges et les femmes mariées,  
 Il le fera remplacer par un idiot un peu moins coûteux,  
 Qui ne connaît pas deux sous de théologie, ni sait guère chanter la messe  
 Que très mal. 101  
 Ainsi toute la paroisse s'abaisse par manque de connaissance [de la foi].

99 *daffe* (> daffy, daft). D'origine inconnue, *daffe* (idiot, personne stupide) est peut-être une réduction  
 de VA *ge-dæft*, doux, gentil, avec une extension de sens vers « stupide ». Le curé-en-chef paie, de ses

propres deniers, le salaire du prêtre-assistant, qui, en l'occurrence, se révèle trop vertueux au goût du maître ; il le chasse donc, employant à sa place un prêtre ignare, qui accepte un salaire plus bas.

100 *ferþingworþ* (> farthing-worth). Le *penny* (denier) se divisait d'abord en deux (*half-penny*), puis en quatre (*farthing*, de *fourth*, « quatrième ») ; pièce de la moindre valeur possible, le *farthing* est littéralement « un quart de denier ».

102 *spille* (> *spill*, « chute »). VA *spillan*, chuter, perdre, tuer, se détruire.

¶ For riht me þinkeþ hit fareþ bi a prest þat is lewed  
As bi a iay in a kage þat (þat) himself haþ bishrewed:  
105 God Engeliþ he spekeþ, ac he wot neuere what;  
No more wot a lewed prest in boke what he rat {f.329v}

¶ Bi day.

Þanne is a lewed prest no betre þan a iay.

¶ But eueri man may wel iwite, bi þe swete rode,  
110 Þer beþ so manye prestes, hij ne muwe noht alle be gode.

And nabeles þise gode men fallen oft in fame  
For þise wantoune prestes þat pleien here nice game

¶ Bi nihte.

Hij gon wid swerd and bokeler as men þat wolde fihte.

1150 ¶ Summe bereþ croune of acolite for þe crumponde crok

And ben ashamed of þe merke þe bishop hem bitok.

At euen he set vpon a koife and kembeþ þe croket.

Adihteþ him a gay wenche of þe newe iet

¶ Sanȝ doute.

120 And þere hij clateren cumpelin whan þe candel is oute.

Ces abbés et prieurs reprennent donc leur anciens droits [de l'état laïc] :

Ils chassent au faucon et à la courre, imitant ainsi les chevaliers.

Ils devraient écarter un tel orgueil et vivre en tant que religieux.

Désormais l'Orgueil est maître dans tout couvent des ordres réguliers,

Je crois.

125

La vraie religion est peu considérée et va toujours plus mal.

¶ For if þere come to an abey to pore men or þre  
And aske of hem helpe par seinte charite,  
Vnneþe wole any don his ernde, oþer zong or old,  
130 But late him coure þer al day in hunger and in cold

¶ And sterue.

Loke what loue þer is to God whom þeih seien þat hij serue.

¶ But þere come anoþer and bringe a litel lettre  
In a box vpon his hepe, he shal spede þe betre;  
135 And if he be wid eny man þat may don þe abot harm,  
He shal be lad into þe halle and ben imad ful warm

¶ Aboute þe mawe.

And Godes man stant þeroute – sory is þat lawe.

C'est comme ça qu'est servi Dieu chez tous les religieux.

Trop rarement est-il béni là, quelle que soit la cérémonie. {fo. 330r}

Son serviteur est rejeté, qu'il arrive tôt ou tard ;

Le portier a reçu l'ordre de le tenir hors le portail,

Dans la brousse.

143

Comment peuvent-ils aimer le Seigneur et traiter ainsi ses envoyés ?

140 *sielde* (> *seld*, *seldom*). VA *seldan*, *seldon*, *seldum*, « rare, rarement ». La forme *sielde* montre l'influence du VN *sialdan* (même sens).

140 *isein* (> *sign*). VA *senian* > MA *seinian*, to sign, bless (faire le signe de la croix, bénir). Ici, bénir Dieu c'est louer le Seigneur ; les offices chantées sont jugées insincères.

141 *meyne*. AF *meynie*, ensemble de la maisonnée avec les serviteurs. Ici, c'est traité au singulier, donc c'est un seul serviteur de Dieu qui demande l'accueil au monastère.

143 *fen* (> *fen*). VA *fenn*, marécage, lande, brousse, terre pauvre non labourée. Les *Fens* sont une région marécageuse, en partie en-dessous du niveau de la mer, en Est-Anglie, autour de villes comme Peterborough et Ely (cette dernière, sortant des marais, se nommait autrefois « l'île d'Ely »).

1450 ¶ Bis is þe penaunce þat monekes don for vre lordes loue:

Hij weren sockes in here shon and felted botes aboue;

He haþ forsake for Godes loue boþe hunger and cold;

But if he haue hod and cappe fured, he nis noht itold

¶ In couent.

1500 Ac certes, wlaunknesse of wele hem haþ al ablent.

La vie religieuse, à l'origine, a été fondée pour souffrir l'austérité ;

Désormais la majeure partie est tombée en aise et gloutonie.

Où peut-on trouver le plus gros ou le plus peureux des inutiles,

Ou les gens le mieux portant que moines, chanoines et frères mendiants

Dans chaque ville ?

155

Je ne connais vie plus facile que celle des religieux.

151 *Religion*. Le sens ici n'est pas une abstraction, la religion en général, mais plutôt la vie religieuse consacrée, celle des moines et religieux qui ont prononcé les vœux monastiques.

151 *drie*. VA *dréogan* > MA *dreozen*, accomplir, réussir, souffrir, endurer.

152 *del* (> *deal*). VA *dæl*, une part, une partie.

153 *raddere*. VN *hræddr*, peureux, avoir peur. Ici, les moines sont paresseux, pas courageux.

153 *leres*, « inutiles ». L'idée péjorative vient sans doute du VN \**lære*, relevé en VHA *lære* avec le sens « vide, inutile ». On pourrait imaginer un rapport avec le verbe MA *lere*, *leren*, « apprendre, instruire », du VA *leornian* > AM *learn*, sauf qu'aucun sens négatif n'est trouvé en VA ni en MA.

Peut-on en conclure que les vikings, qui brûlaient les monastères des îles Britanniques, jugeaient inutile le savoir livresque des moines ?

¶ Religioun wot redi vch day what he shal don.

He ne care3 noht to mucche for his mete at non.

For hous-hire ne for cloþes, he ne care3 noht;

1600 But whan he comeþ to þe mete, he makeþ his mawe touht

¶ Off þe beste;

And anon þerafter he fondeþ to kacche reste.

Il existe d'autres ordres, mineurs [franciscains] et jacobins [dominicains],

Et les frères mendiants des carmes et des augustiniens,

Qui prêcheraient plutôt pour un boisseau de blé

Que pour faire sortir une âme du feu de l'enfer

Retrouver la paix.

167

Ainsi la Convoitise est seigneur partout, à l'est comme à l'ouest.

¶ If a pore man come to a frere for to aske shrifte,

1700 And þer come a ricchere and bringe him a 3ifte,

He shal into þe freitur and ben imad ful glad,

And þat oþer stant þeroute as a man þat were mad

¶ In sorwe.

3it shal his ernde ben vndon til þat oþer morwe. {f.330v}

1750 ¶ And if þere be a riche man þat euel haþ vndernome,  
 Þanne wolen þise freres al day þider come.  
 And if hit be a pore lyf in pouerte and in care,  
 Sorwe on þat o frere þat kepeþ come þare  
 ¶ Ful loþ.  
 1800 Alle wite 3e, gode men, hu þe gamen goþ.

¶ And if þe riche man deie þat was of eny mihte,  
 Þanne wolen þe freres for þe cors fihte.  
 Hit nis noht al for þe calf þat kow louweþ  
 Ac hit is for þe grene gras þat in þe medewe grouweþ  
 1850 ¶ So god.  
 Alle wite 3e what I mene, þat kunnen eny god.

¶ For als ich euere brouke min hod vnder min hat  
 Þe frere wole to þe direge if þe cors is fat.  
 Ac bi þe feiþ I owe to God, if þe cors is lene,  
 1900 He wole wagge aboute þe cloistre and kepen his fet clene  
 ¶ In house.  
 Hu mihte þeih faire forsake þat hij ne ben coueytouse?

Les officiers et les doyens, qui sont censés tenir les chapitres,  
 Devraient punir les gens, afin de les rendre plus forts [en moralité].  
 Fais un don au doyen du lieu où tu comptes résider,  
 Et tu auras droit, tant que tu veux, de servir le diable en enfer  
 À loisir.  
 Car tant qu'il a de l'argent, le péché ne lui fait aucun souci.

197

197 *queme*. VA *cweme*, adjectif formé à partir du participe passé *cumen* (venu) : bienvenu, commode, agréable, qui convient.  
 198. *3eme*. VA *gieme*, *gyne* : soin, attention, souci.

¶ If a man haue a wif, and he ne loue hire noht,  
 2000 Bringge hire to þe constorie, þer treuþe sholde be souht,  
 And bringge tweye false wid him and himself þe þridde,  
 And he shal ben toparted so faire as he wole bidde  
 ¶ From his wif.  
 He shal ben holpen wel inouh to lede a shrewede lyf.

2050 ¶ And whan he is þus ideled from his rihte spouse  
 He takeþ his neiheboures wif and bringeþ hire to his house,  
 And whiles he haþ eny siluer þe clerkes to sende  
 He may holde hire at his wille to his liues ende {f.331r}  
 ¶ Wid vnskile.  
 2100 And but þat be wel iloked, curs in here bile.

Puis il y a encore un autre métier qui touche au clergé :  
 Il s'agit de l'un de ces faux médecins qui aident les gens à mourir.  
 Il secoue l'urine [du patient] dans un flacon de verre  
 Et il jure que celui-ci est plus malade que jamais jusque-là,  
 En disant :  
 'Dame, par manque de soins, ton mari est au seuil de la mort'.

215

Ainsi il effraie toute la maisonnée  
 Et s'arrange pour gagner beaucoup d'argent malhonnête.  
 Mais ensuite, il cherche à reconforter la femme  
 En disant : 'Dame, pour l'amour des tiens, je vais lui sauver la vie'.

Quel mensonge ! 221  
 Alors qu'il ne sait pas plus qu'une oie si l'homme va vivre ou mourir.

¶ Anon he wole biginne to blere þe wiues eiȝe:  
 He wole aske half a pound to bien spicerie;  
 225 0 Þe viij shillinges sholen vp to þe win and þe ale,  
 And bringe rotes and rindes, bretful a male  
 ¶ Off noht.  
 Hit shal be dere on a lek whan hit is al iwrouht.

¶ He wole preisen hit inohw and sweren as he were wod:  
 230 0 'For þe king of þe lond, þe drink is riche and god.'  
 And ȝeue þe gode man drinke a god quantite  
 And make him worsse þan he was. Euele mote he þe,  
 ¶ Þat clerk,  
 Þat so geteþ þe siluer and can noht don his werk.

2350 ¶ He doþ þe wif seþe a chapoun and piece beof.  
 Ne tit þe gode man noht þerof, be him neuere so leof.  
 Þe beste he pikeþ vp himself and makeþ his mawe touht  
 And ȝeueþ þe gode man soupe þe lene broþ þat nis noht  
 ¶ For seke.  
 240 0 Þat so serueþ eny man, Godes curs in his cheke.

Et celui qui possède toute la richesse en forêts et en champs,  
 Autant un comte qu'un baron ou un chevalier attitré,  
 Tous ceux-là ont juré de maintenir les droits de la Sainte Église ; {fo. 331v}  
 C'est pour cela qu'on a établi l'ordre de chevalerie : défendre l'Église  
 Sans faille. 245  
 Désormais pourtant, ce sont eux les premiers à l'attaquer.

241 *frep*. VA *frip*, *firp*, forêt, terrain de chasse.

¶ Hij brewen strut and stuntise þereas sholde be pes.  
 Hij sholde gon to þe Holi Lond and maken þere her res  
 And fihte þere for þe croiȝ and shewe þe ordre of knihte  
 250 0 And awreke Ihesu Crist, wid launce and spere to fihte  
 ¶ And sheld.  
 And nu ben þeih liouns in halle and hares in þe feld.

Les chevaliers doivent s'habiller en accord avec leur rang,  
 Selon ce qu'exige leur ordre, tout comme pour un frère mendiant.  
 Aujourd'hui ils sont tellement déguisés et diversement appareillés,  
 Qu'on peut à peine distinguer un ménestrel d'un chevalier,  
 C'est si proche. 257  
 L'humilité est ainsi abaissée, alors que l'orgueil est monté en haut.

256 *gleman* (> glee-man, ménestrel). VA *gléow*, joie, sport > MA *glee*, jeu, sport, musique, ménelstrie  
 > AM *glee*, joie.

¶ Þus is þe ordre of kniht turned vp so doun.  
 260 0 Also wel can a kniht chide as any skolde of a toun.  
 Hij sholde ben also hende as eny leuedi in londe;  
 And for to speke alle vilainie nel nu no kniht wonde,  
 ¶ For shame.  
 And þus [is] knihtshipe acloied and waxen al fot-lame.

2650 ¶ Knihtshipe is acloied and deolfulliche idiht.  
 Kunne a boy nu breke a spere, he shal be mad a kniht.  
 And þus ben knihtes gadered of vnkinde blod,  
 And enuenimeþ þat ordre þat sholde be so god  
 ¶ And hende.  
 2700 Ac o shrewe in a court many man may shende.

Il n'y a plus aucun écuyer qui se respecte dans ce monde  
 Sauf s'il porte une marotte et une longue barbe ;  
 Il jure sur l'âme de Dieu, en faisant voeu et en appelant Dieu [à témoin].  
 Mais si, pour chaque faux juron, il devait perdre sa tunique ou sa cotte,  
 Je crois,  
 Il se retrouverait tout nu deux fois par jour avant le soir.

275

273 *vuwe* (> *vow*). AF *vou*, vouer, faire un vœu.  
 273 *hote*. VA *hátan*, appeler, promettre : ici au présent.

¶ Godes soule is al day sworn; þe knif stant astrout. {f.332r}  
 And þouh þe botes be torn, 3it wole he maken hit stout.  
 Þe hod hangeþ on his brest as he wolde spewe þerinne.  
 2800 Ac shortliche al þis contrefaiture is colour of sinne  
 ¶ And bost.  
 To wraþþe God and paien þe fend hit serueþ allermost.

¶ A newe taille of squierie is nu in eueri toun:  
 Þe raye is turned ouerþuert þat sholde stonde adoun.  
 2850 Hij ben degised as turmentours þat comen from clerkes plei.  
 Hij ben ilaft wid pride and cast nurture away  
 ¶ In diche.  
 Gentille men þat sholde ben ne beþ hij none iliche.

Les juges, shérifs, maires et baillis, si je comprends bien,  
 Ils savent transformer le plein jour en nuit obscure.  
 Ils agissent hors du droit chemin. Ils ne s'arrêtent pour aucune calomnie.  
 Ils font cour de justice chez eux, dans leur chambre,  
 Pour le mal.  
 Car si la main est blanchie [d'argent], ça ira assez bien.

293

291 *sklaundre* (> *slander*). AF *esclaundre*, calomnie, diffamation.  
 292 *móthalle* (> *moot-hall*). VA *mót*, réunion, assemblée + VA *heall*, salle.  
 293. *wouh*. VA *woh* (> *woe*), mal, malheur, tordu.

Si le roi, pendant sa guerre, envoie chercher des hommes forts  
 Pour qu'ils l'aident dans le besoin – de tel domaine, neuf ou dix [soldats] –  
 Les plus solides seront laissés chez eux contre dix ou douze sous.  
 On enverra plutôt un misérable qui ne pourra point sauver sa peau  
 Au moment crucial [en bataille].  
 C'est ainsi qu'on trompe le roi et qu'on écrase les pauvres contre paiement.

299

296 *toun* (> *town*). VA *tún*, domaine, propriété ; (par extension) village, ville.  
 300 *shent*. VA *scenden*, disgrâcier, insulter, confondre.  
 300 *mede* (> *meed*). VA *méd*, récompense, paiement.

Et si le roi décide de lever une taxe dans son royaume,  
 Tout homme devant être imposé à un certain taux d'évaluation,  
 Celle-ci sera tellement découpée, réduite et étriquée,



Que la moitié s'envolera [malhonnêtement] avec le diable  
 En enfer.  
 Il y a tant d'intéressés que personne ne peut les compter.

305

302 *raunçoun* (> ransom). AF *raençon, raenchon*, MA *ransun, rauncesun* < L *redemptio*, rachat, paiement. Ici, taux d'évaluation taxable.

306 *parteners* (> partners). AF *partener*, du verbe *parten*, partager, participer, avoir part.

¶ A man of .xl. poundes worþ god is leid to .xii. pans rounde;  
 And also muche paieþ anoþer þat pouerte haþ brouht to grounde  
 And haþ an hep of girles sittende aboute þe flet.

310 Godes curs moten hij haue, but þat be wel set {f.332v}

¶ And sworn:

þat þe pore is þus ipiled and þe riche forborn.

¶ Ac if þe king hit wiste, I trouwe he wolde be wroþ,  
 Hou þe pore beþ ipiled, and hu þe siluer goþ.

315 Hit is so deskatered, boþe hider and þidere,

þat haluendel shal ben stole ar hit come togidere

¶ And acounted.

And if a pore man speke a word, he shal be foule afrounted.

Mais si le roi était bien conseillé et travaillait avec plus d'habileté,  
 Il n'aurait que peu l'occasion de piller ces pauvres.  
 Qu'il n'ait soif de chercher si loin ! Il pourra trouver du trésor plus proche  
 Chez les juges, les shérifs, les baillis échéanciers et les chanceliers,  
 Tout en perte.  
 Chez ceux-là il peut en trouver assez, et laisser les pauvres en paix.

323

321 *cheiturs* (> escheators > cheators). AF *eschetour, chetour*, bailli échéancier ; officier chargé de saisir les biens arrivés à échéance d'un prêt ou d'une rente (comparer le verbe *échoir*, tomber).

Souvent perçu comme malhonnête, le métier subira une extension de sens au 15<sup>e</sup> siècle, pour devenir « tricheur, voleur », détournement du sens juridique originel.

3250 ¶ For whoso is in swich office, come he neuere so pore,

He fareþ in a while as þouh he hadde siluer ore.

Þeih bien londes and ledes; ne may hem non astonde.

What sholde pore men [ben] ipiled while swiche men beþ in londe

¶ So fele?

3300 Þeih pleien wid þe kinges siluer and brenden wod for wele.

Mais c'est avec fourberie, en vérité, qu'ils répondent à l'ordre du roi :  
 Quand chacun a pris sa part, le roi aura le peu qui reste.  
 Tout le monde s'affaire pour remplir sa propre bourse ;  
 Le roi reçoit la moindre part, mais il prend toute la malédiction,  
 Donc à tort.

335

Que Dieu envoie la vérité dans ce pays, car la tricherie dure depuis trop longtemps.

And baillifs and bedeles vnder þe shirreue,  
 Euerich fondeþ hu he may pore men most greue.

þe pore men beþ oueral somouned on assise,

340 And þe riche sholen sitte at hom, and þer wole siluer rise

¶ To shon.

Godes curs moten hij haue, but þat be wel don.

Les comptables à la banque qui se tiennent au guichet,  
 Ils enlèveront tout de ta main, si tu ne fais pas attention. {fo. 333r}

Rien que pour baisser sa capuche, ça te coûtera 40 deniers,  
 Puis dire un mot ou deux pour toi, ce qui ne t'apportera pas grand'chose,  
 J'en suis sûr.  
 Dès qu'il t'a renvoyé, il te fait la moue.

347

¶ Attourneis in cuntre, þeih geten siluer for noht.  
 3500 þeih maken men biginne þat þey neuere hadden þouht  
 And whan þeih comen to þe ring, hoppe if hij kunne.  
 Al þat þeih muwen so gete, al þinkeþ hem iwonne  
 ¶ Wid skile.  
 Ne triste no man to hem, so false þeih beþ in þe bile.

3550 And sumtime were chapmen þat troweliche bouhten and solde;  
 And nu is þilke assise broke, and nas noht 3ore holde.  
 Chaffare was woned to be meintened wid treuþe.  
 And nu is al turned to treccherie; and þat is muchel reuþe  
 ¶ To wite  
 3600 þat alle manere godnesse is þus adoun ismite.

¶ Vneþe is nu eny man þat can eny craft  
 þat he nis a party los in þe haft.  
 For falsnesse is so fer forþ ouer al þe lond isprunge,  
 þat wel neih nis no treuþe in hond, ne in tunge,  
 3650 ¶ Ne in herte.  
 And þefore nis no wonder þouh al þe world it smerte.

Un jeu il y avait en Angleterre qui a duré d'une année à l'autre :  
 Dès le lundi matin, chacun maudissait l'autre.  
 Cette pratique continue depuis si longtemps, chez les gens lettrés ou ignorants,  
 Qu'ils ne voudraient s'arrêter avant que le monde entier ne soit maudit,  
 J'imagine.  
 Par conséquent, tout ce qui devrait s'améliorer contribue davantage au mal.

371

Pour cause de cette malédiction qui règne au pays,  
 Je crains que Dieu nous ait abandonnés de sa main.  
 Car il a envoyé une série de mauvais temps, froids.  
 Pourtant, personne n'a une pensée de plus pour lui,  
 Comme il faudrait.  
 On craint d'ailleurs à peine la toute-puissance divine. {fo. 333v}

377

¶ God haþ ben wroþ wid þe world, and þat is wel isene:  
 3800 For al þat whilom was murye is turned to treie and tene.  
 He sente vs plente inouh, suffre whiles we wolde,  
 Off alle manere sustenaunce grouwende vpon molde  
 ¶ So þicke.  
 And euere azeines his godnesse we weren iliche wicke.

3850 ¶ Men sholde noht sumtime finde a boy for to bere a lettre  
 þat wolde eten eny mete, but it were þe betre:  
 For beof ne for bakoun ne for swich stor of house  
 Vneþe wolde eny don a char, so were þeih daungerouse  
 ¶ For wlaunke.  
 3900 And siþþen bicom ful reulich þat þanne weren so ranke.

Car Dieu vit, alors, que le monde était tellement arrogant,  
 Qu'il envoya une pénurie sur terre, qu'il fit bien souffrir.  
 Un boisseau de blé coûtait quatre shillings ou plus,

Et donc, on ne pouvait que difficilement en obtenir le quart  
Dantan.  
Dieu peut ainsi faire la misère là où il y avait plutôt la plénitude.

395

391 *ouergart* (> over-girt, over-girded). VA *ofer* + *girt*, participe passé de VA *gyrdan*, « ceindre ». Ici, surfait, excessif, arrogant.

393 *smart* (> smart, verbe), MA *smerten*, « avoir mal, souffrir ». Inconnu en VA et VN, mais relevé en VHA et MN.

394 *ȝore* (> yare, adverbe). VA *gearu*, *gearo*, *gearwe*, AM *yare* « prêt, aisé/aisément, facile à manipuler ».

395 *Igon* (> gone). VA *ȝe-gán*, participe passé de *gán* (> go), aller. Ici, « dantan, dans le temps, dans le passé ».

396 *won*. VA *wán*, « espoir, stocks, quantité », VA *wénen*, « espérer, supposer ».

¶ And þanne gan bleiken here ble, þat arst lowen so loude  
And to waxen al hand-tame, þat raþere weren so proude.  
A mannes herte mihte blede for to here þe crie  
400 Off pore men þat gradde ‘Allas, for hungger I die  
¶ Vpriht.’  
Þis auhte make men aferd of Godes muchele miht.

¶ And after þat ilke wante, com eft wele inouh  
And plente of alle gode grouwende on vch a bouh.  
405 Þo god ȝer was aȝein icome and god chep of corn,  
Þo were we also muchele shrewes as we were befor  
¶ Or more.  
Also swiþe we forȝeten his wreche and his lore

¶ Þo com þer anoþer sorwe þat spradde ouer al þe lond:  
410 A þusent winter þerbifore com neuere non so strong {f.334r}  
To binde alle þe mene men in mourning and in care.  
Þe orf deiede al bidene and maden þe lond al bare,  
¶ So faste.  
Com neuere wrecche into Engelond þat made men more agaste.

4150 ¶ And þo þat qualm was astin[t], of beste þat bar horn,  
Þo sente God on eorþe anoþer derþe of corn  
Þat spradde ouer al Engelond, boþe norþ and souþ,  
And made seli pore men aþingred in here mouþ  
¶ Ful sore.  
420 And ȝit vnneþe any man dredeþ God þe more.

Depuis cette dernière pénurie, il est arrivé une honte de plus,  
Qui devrait, à bonne raison, nous calmer tous un peu.  
Le démon, maître malin, souleva une rébellion,  
De sorte que chaque nobliau s'affairait à se sauver la vie  
Et les biens.  
Que Dieu y fasse remède par son sang béni !

425

423 *kidde* (preterit). VA *cunnan* (can, know), prétérit *cupe* (> AM couth, could). Littéralement, « le démon connaissait sa maîtrise, ou son pouvoir » [= son emprise sur l'esprit humain].

¶ Gret nede hit were to bidde þat þe pes were brouht  
For þe lordinges of þe lond þat swich wo han iwrouht  
Þat nolde spare for kin þat o kosin þat oþer;  
430 So þe fend hem prikede vch man to mourden oþer  
¶ Wid wille,

þat al Engelond, iwis, was in point to spille.

¶ Pride prikede hem so faste þat nolde þeih neuere haue pes  
 Ar þeih hadden in þis lond maked swich a res  
 435 0 þat þe beste blod of (of) þe lond shamliche was brouht to grounde.  
 If hit betre mihte a ben! Allas! þe harde stounde  
 ¶ Bitid,  
 þat of so gentille blod iborn, swich wreche was ikid.

¶ Allas, þat euere sholde hit bifalle þat in so litel a þrowe,  
 440 0 Swiche men sholde swich deþ þole and ben ileid so lowe.  
 Of eorles and of barouns, baldest hij were;  
 And nu hit is of hem bicome riht as þeih neuere ne were {f.334v}  
 ¶ Iborn.  
 God loke to þe soules þat hij ne be noht lorn.

Alors que ces grands nobliaux se font renverser en nombre,  
 Ces prélats de Sainte Église, qui dorment depuis trop longtemps,  
 Se réveillent bien trop tard, ce qui est grand dommage.  
 Ils étaient aveuglés par la convoitise et ne pouvaient voir la vérité  
 Dans le brouillard.  
 Ils craignaient plus de perdre leurs terres que d'aimer Jésus Christ.

449

445 *ihurled* (participe passé). MA *hurlen* (> hurl), MN *horrelen*, « lancer, jeter ». Ici, renversés, jetés  
 bas suite à la rébellion.

448 *ablent* (participe passé). VA *blendan*, MA *blenden* (> blind), « aveugler ».

¶ For hadde þe clergie harde holden togidere  
 And noht flecched aboute noþer hider ne þidere,  
 But loked where þe treuþe was and þere haue bileued,  
 Þanne were þe barnage hol þat nu is al todreued  
 455 0 ¶ So wide.  
 Ac certes, Engelond is shent þurw falsnesse and þurw pride.

¶ Pride haþ in his paunter kauht þe heie and þe lowe,  
 So þat vnneþe can eny man God almihti knowe.  
 Pride prikeþ aboute wid niþe and wid onde.  
 460 0 Pes and loue and charite hien hem out of londe  
 ¶ So faste.  
 þat God wole fordon þe world we muwe be sore agaste.

On le sait bien : nous sommes tous coupables du malheur actuel,  
 Mais personne ne reconnaît que c'est dû à son propre péché ;  
 Chacun rejette sur l'autre le désastre de ce malheur.  
 Si pourtant chacun examinait sa conscience, tout rentrerait bien  
 En ordre.  
 Mais chacun sait juger son voisin, jamais lui-même.

467

465 *ranc3ake* (> ransack). MA *ransaken* < VN *rannsaka*, examiner en profondeur (la maison), chercher  
 partout en créant le désordre. Ici, examiner sa conscience en profondeur.

Ces juges d'assises, qui arrivent dans le comté puis au district,  
 Condamnent les hommes pour de l'argent, ce qui n'est guère étonnant ;  
 Car quand le riche juge agit à tort pour une récompense,  
 Ils imaginent, alors, qu'il faut y aller plus fort car ils ont davantage besoin  
 De gagner.

473

Mais tout ce monde est si aveugle que personne ne reconnaît le péché.

Mais par saint Jacques de Galicie, que beaucoup ont cherché [en pèlerinage],  
Le pilori et la chaise aux cocus ont été fabriqués pour rien.

#### THE SIMONIE – Middle English Text (complete)

Whij werre and wrake in londe and manslauht is icome, {f.328r}

Whij hunger and derþe on eorþe þe pore haþ vndernome,  
Whij bestes ben þus storue, whij corn haþ ben so dere,  
3e þat wolen abide, listneþ, and 3e muwen here  
5000 ¶ Þe skile.

I nelle lizen for noman – herkne whoso wile.

¶ God greteþ wel þe clergie and seiþ þeih don amis,  
And doþ hem to vnderstonde þat litel treuþe þer is.  
For at þe court of Rome, þer treuþe sholde biginne,  
1000 Him is forboden þe paleis; dar he noht come þerinne

¶ For doute.

And þouh þe pope clepe him in, 3it shal he stonde þeroute.

¶ Alle þe popes clerkes han taken hem to red  
If treuþe come amonges hem, þat he shal be ded.  
1500 Þere dar he noht shewen him for doute to be slain.

Among none of þe cardinaus dar he noht be sein

¶ For feerd.

If symonie may mete wid him, he wole shaken his berd.

¶ Voi3 of clerk is sielde iherd at þe court of Rome.  
2000 Ne were he neuere swich a clerk, siluerles if he come  
Þouh he were þe wiseste þat euere was iborn  
But if he swete ar he go, al his weye is lorn

¶ Isouht.

Or he shal singe *si dedero* or al geineþ him noht.

2500 ¶ For if þere be in countre an horeling, a shrewe,  
Lat him come to þe court hise nedes for to shewe  
And bringe wid him siluer and non oþer wed.  
Be he neuere so muchel a wrecche, hise nedes sholen be sped

¶ Ful stille.

3000 For coueytise and symonie han þe world to wille.

And erchebishop and bishop, þat ouhte for to enquere  
Off alle men of holi churche of what lif þeih were,  
Summe beþ foles hemsself and leden a sory lif.  
Þerfore doren hij noht speke for rising of strif

3500 ¶ Þurw clerkes,

And þat euerich biwreied oþer of here wrecchede werkes. {f.328v}

¶ But certes, holi churche is muchel ibrouht þer doune  
Siþþen seint Thomas was slain and smiten of his croune.  
He was a piler ariht to holden vp holi churche.

4000 Þise oþere ben to slouwe and feinteliche kunnen worche,

¶ Iwis.

Þerfore in holi churche, hit fareþ þe more amis.

¶ But eueri man may wel iwite, whoso take zeme,  
 þat no man may wel serue tweie lordes to queme.  
 4500 Summe beþ in office wid þe king and gaderen tresor to hepe;  
 And þe fraunchise of holi churche hij laten ligge slepe  
 ¶ Ful stille.  
 Al to manye þer beþ swiche, if hit were Godes wille.

And þise ersedeknes þat ben set to uisite holi churche,  
 5000 Euerich fondeþ hu he may shrewedelichest worche.  
 He wole take mede of þat on and þat oþer  
 And late þe persoun haue a wyf and þe prest anoþer  
 ¶ At wille.  
 Coueytise shal stoppen here mouþ and maken hem al stille.

5500 ¶ For sone so a persoun is ded and in eorþe idon,  
 þanne shal þe patroun haue ziftes anon.  
 þe clerkes of þe cuntre wolen him faste wowe  
 And senden him faire ziftes and presentes inowe,  
 ¶ And þe bishop.  
 6000 And þere shal symonye ben taken bi þe top.

¶ Coveytise vpon his hors, he wole be sone þere  
 And bringe þe bishop siluer and rounen in his ere  
 þat alle þe pore þat þer comen, on ydel sholen þeih worche  
 For he þat allermost may ziue, he shal haue þe churche,  
 6500 ¶ Iwis.  
 Euerich man nou bi dawe may sen þat þus hit is.

¶ And whan þis newe persoun is institut in his churche  
 He biþenkeþ him hu he may shrewedelichest worche.  
 Ne shal þe corn in his berne ben eten wid no muis,  
 7000 But hit shal ben ispended in a shrewede huis,  
 ¶ If he may.  
 Al shal ben ibeten out or Cristemesse day. {f.329r}

And whan he haþ igadered markes and poundes,  
 He prikeþ out of toune, wid haukes and wid houndes  
 7500 Into a straunge contre and halt a wenche in cracche.  
 And wel is hire þat first may swich a persoun kacche  
 ¶ In londe.  
 And þus þeih seruen þe chapele and laten þe chirche stonde.

¶ He takeþ al þat he may and makeþ þe chirche pore  
 8000 And leueþ þare behinde a þeef and an hore -  
 A seriaunt and a deie, þat leden a sory lif;  
 Also faire hij gon to bedde as housebonde and wif,  
 ¶ Wid sorwe.  
 Shal þere no pore lif fare þe bet, nouþer on euen ne on morwe.

8500 ¶ And whan he haþ þe siluer of wolle and of lomb,  
 He put in his pautener an houue and a komb,  
 A myroure and a koeuerchef to binde wid his crok  
 And rat on þe rouwe bible and on oþer bok  
 ¶ No mo.  
 9000 But vnþank haue þe bishop þat lat hit so go.

¶ For þouh þe bishop hit wite þat hit bename kouþ,  
 He may wid a litel siluer stoppen his mouþ.  
 He medeþ wid þe clerkes and halt forþ þe wenche  
 And lat þe parish forworþe. Þe deuel him adrenche  
 9500 ¶ For his werk.  
 And sory may his fader ben þat euere made him clerk.

¶ And if þe persoun haue a prest of a clene lyf  
 Þat be a god consailler to maiden and to wif,  
 Shal comen a daffe and putte him out for a litel lasse,  
 1000 Þat can noht a ferþingworþ of God, vnneþe singe a masse  
 ¶ But ille.  
 And þus shal al þe parish for lac of lore spille.

¶ For riht me þinkeþ hit fareþ bi a prest þat is lewed  
 As bi a iay in a kage þat (þat) himself haþ bishrewed:  
 1050 God English he spekeþ, ac he wot neuere what;  
 No more wot a lewed prest in boke what he rat {f.329v}  
 ¶ Bi day.  
 Þanne is a lewed prest no betre þan a iay.

¶ But eueri man may wel iwite, bi þe swete rode,  
 1100 Þer beþ so manye prestes, hij ne muwe noht alle be gode.  
 And nabeles þise gode men fallen oft in fame  
 For þise wantoune prestes þat pleien here nice game  
 ¶ Bi nihte.  
 Hij gon wid swerd and bokeler as men þat wolde fihte.

1150 ¶ Summe bereþ croune of acolite for þe crumponde crok  
 And ben ashamed of þe merke þe bishop hem bitok.  
 At euen he set vpon a koife and kembeþ þe croket.  
 Adihþeþ him a gay wenche of þe newe iet  
 ¶ San3 doute.  
 1200 And þere hij clateren cumpelin whan þe candel is oute.

And þise abbotes and priours don a3ein here rihtes:  
 Hij riden wid hauk and hound and contrefeten knihtes.  
 Hij sholde leue swich pride and ben religiouus.  
 And nu is Pride maister in euerich ordred hous,  
 1250 ¶ Iwis.  
 Religioun is euele iholde and fareþ þe more [amis].

¶ For if þere come to an abey to pore men or þre  
 And aske of hem helpe par seinte charite,  
 Vnneþe wole any don his ernde, oþer zong or old,  
 1300 But late him coure þer al day in hunger and in cold  
 ¶ And sterue.  
 Loke what loue þer is to God whom þeih seien þat hij serue.

¶ But þere come anoþer and bringe a litel lettre  
 In a box vpon his hepe, he shal spede þe betre;  
 1350 And if he be wid eny man þat may don þe abot harm,  
 He shal be lad into þe halle and ben imad ful warm  
 ¶ Aboute þe mawe.  
 And Godes man stant þeroute – sory is þat lawe.

¶ Þus is God nu serued þurwout religioun.

1400 Þere is he al to sielde isein in eny deuocioun. {f.330r}  
 His meyne is vnwelcome, comen hij erliche or late:  
 Þe porter haþ comaundement to holde hem widoute þe gate  
 ¶ In þe fen.  
 Hu mihte þeih louen þat louerrd þat seruen þus his men?

1450 ¶ Þis is þe penaunce þat monekes don for vre lordes loue:  
 Hij weren sockes in here shon and felted botes aboue;  
 He haþ forsake for Godes loue boþe hunger and cold;  
 But if he haue hod and cappe fured, he nis noht itold  
 ¶ In couent.  
 1500 Ac certes, wlaunknesse of wele hem haþ al ablent.

¶ Religioun was first founded duresce for to drie;  
 And nu is þe moste del iwent to eise and glotonie.  
 Where shal men nu finde fattere or raddere of leres  
 Or betre farende folk þan monekes, chanons, and freres  
 1550 ¶ In vch toun?  
 I wot non eysiere lyf þan is religioun.

¶ Religioun wot redi vch day what he shal don.  
 He ne care3 noht to muche for his mete at non.  
 For hous-hire ne for cloþes, he ne care3 noht;  
 1600 But whan he comeþ to þe mete, he makeþ his mawe touht  
 ¶ Off þe beste;  
 And anon þerafter he fondeþ to kacche reste.

And 3it þer is anoþer ordre, Menour and Iacobin  
 And freres of þe Carme and of Seint Austin,  
 1650 þat wolde preche more for a busschel of whete  
 þan for to bringe a soule from helle out of þe hete  
 ¶ To rest.  
 And þus is coueytise louerd boþe est and west.

¶ If a pore man come to a frere for to aske shrifte,  
 1700 And þer come a ricchere and bringe him a 3ifte,  
 He shal into þe freitur and ben imad ful glad,  
 And þat oþer stant þeroute as a man þat were mad  
 ¶ In sorwe.  
 3it shal his ernde ben vndon til þat oþer morwe. {f.330v}

1750 ¶ And if þere be a riche man þat euel haþ vndernome,  
 þanne wolen þise freres al day þider come.  
 And if hit be a pore lyf in pouerte and in care,  
 Sorwe on þat o frere þat kepeþ come þare  
 ¶ Ful loþ.  
 1800 Alle wite 3e, gode men, hu þe gamen goþ.

¶ And if þe riche man deie þat was of eny mihte,  
 þanne wolen þe freres for þe cors fihte.  
 Hit nis noht al for þe calf þat kow louweþ  
 Ac hit is for þe grene gras þat in þe medewe grouweþ  
 1850 ¶ So god.  
 Alle wite 3e what I mene, þat kunnen eny god.

¶ For als ich euere brouke min hod vnder min hat  
 þe frere wole to þe direge if þe cors is fat.



Ac bi þe feiþ I owe to God, if þe cors is lene,  
 190 He wole wagge aboute þe cloistre and kepen his fet clene  
 ¶ In house.  
 Hu mihte þeih faire forsake þat hij ne ben coueytouse?

And officials and denes, þat chapitles sholden holde,  
 þeih sholde chastise þe folk, and þeih maken hem bolde.  
 195 Mak a present to þe den þer þu þenkest to dwelle,  
 And haue leue longe inouh to serue þe fend of helle  
 ¶ To queme.  
 For haue he siluer, of sinne takeþ he neuere zeme.

¶ If a man haue a wif, and he ne loue hire noht,  
 200 Bring hire to þe constorie, þer treuþe sholde be souht,  
 And bringge tweye false wid him and himself þe þridde,  
 And he shal ben toparted so faire as he wole bidde  
 ¶ From his wif.  
 He shal ben holpen wel inouh to lede a shrewede lyf.

2050 ¶ And whan he is þus ideled from his rihte spouse  
 He takeþ his neiheboures wif and bringeþ hire to his house,  
 And whiles he haþ eny siluer þe clerkes to sende  
 He may holde hire at his wille to his liues ende {f.331r}  
 ¶ Wid vnskile.  
 210 And but þat be wel iloked, curs in here bile.

And zit þer is anoþer craft þat toucheþ þe clergie  
 þat ben þise false fisiciens þat helpen men to die.  
 He wole wagge his vrine in a vessel of gla3  
 And swereþ þat he is sekere þan euere zit he was  
 215 ¶ And sein,  
 ‘Dame, for faute of helpe, þin housebonde is neih slain.’

¶ Pus he wole afraien al þat þer is inne  
 And make many a lesing siluer for to winne.  
 Ac afterward he fondeþ to conforte þe wif  
 220 And seiþ ‘Dame, for [loue] of þin, I wole holde his lyf’  
 ¶ A[n]d li3e,  
 Þouh he wite no more þan a gos wheiþer he wole liue or die.

¶ Anon he wole biginne to blere þe wiues ei3e:  
 He wole aske half a pound to bien spicerie;  
 225 Þe viij shillinges sholen vp to þe win and þe ale,  
 And bringe rotes and rindes, bretful a male  
 ¶ Off noht.  
 Hit shal be dere on a lek whan hit is al iwrouht.

¶ He wole preisen hit inohw and sweren as he were wod:  
 230 ‘For þe king of þe lond, þe drink is riche and god.’  
 And zeue þe gode man drinke a god quantite  
 And make him worsse þan he was. Euele mote he þe,  
 ¶ Þat clerk,  
 þat so geteþ þe siluer and can noht don his werk.

2350 ¶ He doþ þe wif seþe a chapoun and piece beof.  
 Ne tit þe gode man noht þerof, be him neuere so leof.  
 Þe beste he pikeþ vp himself and makeþ his mawe touht

And zeueþ þe gode man soupe þe lene broþ þat nis noht  
 ¶ For seke.  
 240) Þat so serueþ eny man, Godes curs in his cheke.

And þilke þat han al þe wele in freþ and in feld,  
 Bopen eorl and baroun and kniht of o sheld,  
 Alle þeih beþ isworne holi churche holde to rihte; {f.331v}  
 Þerfore was þe ordre mad, for holi churche to fihte  
 245) ¶ Sanȝ faille.  
 And nu ben þeih þe ferste þat hit sholen assaille.

¶ Hij brewen strut and stuntise þereas sholde be pes.  
 Hij sholde gon to þe Holi Lond and maken þere her res  
 And fihte þere for þe croiȝ and shewe þe ordre of knihte  
 250) And awreke Ihesu Crist, wid launce and spere to fihte  
 ¶ And sheld.  
 And nu ben þeih liouns in halle and hares in þe feld.

¶ Knihtes sholde weren weden in here manere  
 After þat þe ordre askeþ, also wel as a frere.  
 255) Nu ben þeih so degysed and diuerseliche idiht,  
 Vnneþe may men knowe a gleman from a kniht,  
 ¶ Wel neih.  
 So is mieknesse driuen adoun, and pride is risen on heih.

¶ Þus is þe ordre of kniht turned vp so doun.  
 260) Also wel can a kniht chide as any skolde of a toun.  
 Hij sholde ben also hende as eny leuedi in londe;  
 And for to speke alle vilainie nel nu no kniht wonde,  
 ¶ For shame.  
 And þus [is] knihtshipe acloied and waxen al fot-lame.

265) ¶ Knihtshipe is acloied and deolfulliche idiht.  
 Kunne a boy nu breke a spere, he shal be mad a kniht.  
 And þus ben knihtes gadered of vnkinde blod,  
 And enuenimeþ þat ordre þat sholde be so god  
 ¶ And hende.  
 270) Ac o shrewe in a court many man may shende.

And nu nis no squier of pris in þis middelerd,  
 But if þat he bere a babel and a long berd  
 And swere Godes soule and vuwe to God and hote.  
 But sholde he for eueri fals up (ms. *up*) lese kirtel or kote,  
 275) ¶ I leue,  
 He sholde stonde start naked twye o day or eue.

¶ Godes soule is al day sworn; þe knif stant astrout. {f.332r}  
 And þouh þe botes be torn, ȝit wole he maken hit stout.  
 Þe hod hangeþ on his brest as he wolde spewe þerinne.  
 280) Ac shortliche al þis contrefaiture is colour of sinne  
 ¶ And bost.  
 To wraþþe God and paien þe fend hit serueþ allermost.

¶ A newe taille of squierie is nu in eueri toun:  
 Þe raye is turned ouerþuert þat sholde stonde adoun.  
 285) Hij ben degised as turmentours þat comen from clerkes plei.  
 Hij ben ilaft wid pride and cast nurture away

¶ In diche.  
Gentille men þat sholde ben ne beþ hij none iliche.

And iustises, shirreues, meires, baillifs, if I shal rede ariht  
290 ¶ Hij kunnen of þe faire day make þe derke niht.  
Hij gon out of þe heie-vey. Ne leuen hij for no sklaundre  
And maken þe mothalle at hom in here chaumbre  
¶ Wid wouh.  
For be þe hond iwhted, it shal go god inouh.

2950 ¶ If þe king in his werre sent after mihti men  
To helpe him in his nede – of sum toun .ix. or .x. -  
þe stiffeste sholen bileue at hom for .x. shillinges or .xii.  
And sende forþ a wrecche þat may noht helpe him selue  
¶ At nede.  
3000 þus is þe king deceyued and pore men shent for mede.

¶ And if þe king in his lond makeþ a taxacioun,  
And eueri man is iset to a certein of raunczoun,  
Hit shal be so forpinched, totoilled, and totwiht  
þat haluendel shal gon in þe fendes fliht  
3050 ¶ Of helle.  
þer beþ so manye parteners may no tunge telle.

¶ A man of .xl. poundes worþ god is leid to .xii. pans rounde;  
And also muche paieþ anoþer þat pouerte haþ brouht to grounde  
And haþ an hep of girles sittende aboute þe flet.  
3100 Godes curs moten hij haue, but þat be wel set {f.332v}  
¶ And sworn:  
þat þe pore is þus ipiled and þe riche forborn.

¶ Ac if þe king hit wiste, I trouwe he wolde be wroþ,  
Hou þe pore beþ ipiled, and hu þe siluer goþ.  
3150 Hit is so deskatered, boþe hider and þidere,  
þat haluendel shal ben stole ar hit come togidere  
¶ And acounted.  
And if a pore man speke a word, he shal be foule afrounted.

¶ Ac were þe king wel auised and wolde worche bi skile,  
3200 Litel nede sholde he haue swiche pore to pile.  
þurste him noht seke tresor so fer, he mihte finde ner  
At iustises, at shirreues, cheiturs and chaunceler,  
¶ And at les.  
Swiche mihte finde him inouh and late pore men haue pes.

3250 ¶ For whoso is in swich office, come he neuere so pore,  
He fareþ in a while as þouh he hadde siluer ore.  
þeih bien londes and ledes; ne may hem non astonde.  
What sholde pore men [ben] ipiled while swiche men beþ in londe  
¶ So fele?  
3300 þeih pleien wid þe kinges siluer and brenden wod for wele.

¶ Ac shrewedeliche, for soþe, hij don þe kinges heste:  
Whan eueri man haþ his part, þe king haþ þe leste.  
Eueri man is aboute to fille his owen purs,  
And þe king haþ þe leste part, and he haþ al þe curs,  
3350 ¶ Wid wronge.

God sende treuþe into þis lond, for tricherie dureþ to longe.

And baillifs and bedeles vnder þe shirreue,  
 Euerich fondeþ hu he may pore men most greue.  
 Þe pore men beþ oueral somouned on assise,  
 340 And þe riche sholen sitte at hom, and þer wole siluer rise  
 ¶ To shon.  
 Godes curs moten hij haue, but þat be wel don.

¶ And countours in benche þat stondeþ at þe barre,  
 Þeih wolen bigile þe in þin hond, but if þu be þe warre. {f.333r}  
 345 He wole take xl pans for to do down his hod  
 And speke for þe a word or to and don þe litel god,  
 ¶ I trouwe.  
 And haue he turned þe bak, he makeþ þe a mouwe.

¶ Attourneis in cuntre, þeih geten siluer for noht.  
 350 Þeih maken men biginne þat þey neuere hadden þouht  
 And whan þeih comen to þe ring, hoppe if hij kunne.  
 Al þat þeih muwen so gete, al þinkeþ hem iwonne  
 ¶ Wid skile.  
 Ne triste no man to hem, so false þeih beþ in þe bile.

355 And sumtime were chapmen þat treweliche bouhten and solde;  
 And nu is þilke assise broke, and nas noht 3ore holde.  
 Chaffare was woned to be meintened wid treuþe.  
 And nu is al turned to treccherie; and þat is muchel reuþe  
 ¶ To wite  
 360 Þat alle manere godnesse is þus adoun ismite.

¶ Vnneþe is nu eny man þat can eny craft  
 Þat he nis a party los in þe haft.  
 For falsnesse is so fer forþ ouer al þe lond isprunge,  
 Þat wel neih nis no treuþe in hond, ne in tunge,  
 365 ¶ Ne in herte.  
 And þefore nis no wonder þouh al þe world it smerte.

¶ Per was a gamen in Engeland þat durede 3er and oþer:  
 Erliche vpon þe Monenday, vch man bishrewed oþer.  
 So longe lastede þat gamen among lered and lewed  
 370 Þat nolde þeih neuere stinten or al þe world were bishrewed,  
 ¶ Iwis.  
 And þefore al þat helpe sholde fareþ þe more amis.

¶ So þat for þat shrewedom þat regneþ in þe lond,  
 I drede me þat God us haþ forlaft out of his hond  
 375 Þurw wederes þat he haþ isent, cold and vnkinde.  
 And 3it ne haueþ no man of him þe more minde  
 ¶ Ariht.  
 Vnneþe is any man aferd of Godes muchele miht. {f.333v}

¶ God haþ ben wroþ wid þe world, and þat is wel isene:  
 380 For al þat whilom was murye is turned to treie and tene.  
 He sente vs plente inouh, suffre whiles we wolde,  
 Off alle manere sustenaunce grouwende vpon molde  
 ¶ So þicke.  
 And euere a3eines his godnesse we weren iliche wicke.

3850 ¶ Men sholde noht sumtime finde a boy for to bere a lettre  
 þat wolde eten eny mete, but it were þe betre:  
 For beof ne for bakoun ne for swich stor of house  
 Vnneþe wolde eny don a char, so were þeih daungerouse  
 ¶ For wlaunke.  
 3900 And siþþen bicom ful reulich þat þanne weren so ranke.

¶ For þo God seih þat þe world was so ouergart  
 He sente a derþe on eorþe and made hit ful smart.  
 A busshel of whete was at foure shillinges or more,  
 And so men mihte han ihad a quarter noht 3ore  
 3950 ¶ Igon.  
 So can God make wane þer raþere was won.

¶ And þanne gan bleiken here ble, þat arst lowen so loude  
 And to waxen al hand-tame, þat raþere weren so proude.  
 A mannes herte mihte blede for to here þe crie  
 4000 Off pore men þat gradden ‘Allas, for hungger I die  
 ¶ Vpriht.’  
 Þis auhte make men aferd of Godes muchele miht.

¶ And after þat ilke wante, com eft wele inouh  
 And plente of alle gode grouwende on vch a bouh.  
 4050 Þo god 3er was a3ein icome and god chep of corn,  
 Þo were we also muchele shrewes as we were befor  
 ¶ Or more.  
 Also swiþe we for3eten his wreche and his lore

¶ Þo com þer anoþer sorwe þat spradde ouer al þe lond:  
 4100 A þusent winter þerbifore com neuere non so strong {f.334r}  
 To binde alle þe mene men in mourning and in care.  
 Þe orf deiede al bidene and maden þe lond al bare,  
 ¶ So faste.  
 Com neuere wrecche into Engelond þat made men more agaste.

4150 ¶ And þo þat qualm was astin[t], of beste þat bar horn,  
 Þo sente God on eorþe anoþer derþe of corn  
 þat spradde ouer al Engelond, boþe norþ and souþ,  
 And made seli pore men afingred in here mouþ  
 ¶ Ful sore.  
 4200 And 3it vnneþe any man dredeþ God þe more.

¶ And wid þat laste derþe, com þer anoþer shame  
 þat ouhte be god skile maken us alle tame.  
 Þe fend kidde his maistri and arerede a strif  
 þat eueri lording was bisi to sauue his owen lyf  
 4250 ¶ And his god.  
 God do bote þeron for his blessedde blod.

¶ Gret nede hit were to bidde þat þe pes were brouht  
 For þe lordinges of þe lond þat swich wo han iwrouht  
 þat nolde spare for kin þat o kosin þat oþer;  
 4300 So þe fend hem prikede vch man to mourdren oþer  
 ¶ Wid wille,  
 þat al Engelond, iwis, was in point to spille.

¶ Pride prikede hem so faste þat nolde þeih neuere haue pes  
 Ar þeih hadden in þis lond maked swich a res  
 435 ¶ Þat þe beste blod of (of) þe lond shamliche was brouht to grounde.  
 If hit betre mihte a ben! Allas! þe harde stounde

¶ Bitid,  
 Þat of so gentille blod iborn, swich wreche was ikid.

¶ Allas, þat euere sholde hit bifalle þat in so litel a þrowe,  
 440 ¶ Swiche men sholde swich deþ þole and ben ileid so lowe.  
 Of eorles and of barouns, baldest hij were;  
 And nu hit is of hem bicom riht as þeih neuere ne were {f.334v}

¶ Iborn.  
 God loke to þe soules þat hij ne be noht lorn.

445 ¶ Ac whiles þise grete lordinges þus han ihurled to hepe,  
 Þise prelatz of holi churche, to longe þeih han islepe.  
 Al to late þeih wakeden, and þat was muchel reuþe.  
 Þeih weren ablent wid coueytise and mihte noht se þe treuþe  
 For mist.  
 450 ¶ Þeih dradden more here lond to lese þan loue of Ihesu Crist.

¶ For hadde þe clergie harde holden togidere  
 And noht flecched aboute noþer hider ne þidere,  
 But loked where þe treuþe was and þere haue bileued,  
 Þanne were þe barnage hol þat nu is al todreued  
 455 ¶ So wide.  
 Ac certes, Engellond is shent þurw falsnesse and þurw pride.

¶ Pride haþ in his paunter kauht þe heie and þe lowe,  
 So þat vnneþe can eny man God almihti knowe.  
 Pride prikeþ aboute wid niþe and wid onde.  
 460 ¶ Pes and loue and charite hien hem out of londe  
 ¶ So faste.  
 Þat God wole fordon þe world we muwe be sore agaste.

¶ Alle wite we wel it is oure gilt – þe wo þat we beþ inne -  
 But no man knoweþ þat hit is for his owen sinne.  
 465 ¶ Vch man put on oþer þe wreche of þe wouh,  
 But wolde vch man ranczake himself, þanne were al wel inouh  
 ¶ Iwrouht.  
 But nu can vch man demen oþer and himselue noht.

¶ And þise assisours þat comen to shire and to hundred  
 470 ¶ Damneþ men for siluer, and þat nis no wonder:  
 For whan þe riche iustise wole do wrong for mede,  
 Þanne þinkeþ hem þeih muwen þe bet for þeih han more nede  
 ¶ To winne.  
 Ac so is al þis world ablent þat no man douteþ sinne.

475 ¶ But bi Seint Jame of Galice, þat many man haþ souht,  
 Þe pilory and þe cucking-stol beþ imad for noht.