

<County: Lincolnshire>

<Code: L0210>

<MS reference: London, BL Egerton 657>

<Text: Prick of Conscience>

<fol. 1r>For yi alle yat haue skylle and mynde
 Suld thyng of ye wrechydnes of this kynde
 yat is foule and fule whalsome
 yat man <?>eys fro hys body come
 Fra a-bouen and fro be-nethe
 Alkyns stynk and alkyns breth
 For mare fylth es nane herd no nesshe
 yan ye fylth yat comes fro mans flesshe
 yat may a+man both se and fele
 yf he beholde hym-seluen wele
 how foule he is vnto mans syghte
 And yerfor says seint Bernard ryghte
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 he says yf yow besyly be se
 And behold . What comes fro ye
 What thurgh nese and mouth cominly
 And thurgh ouertours of his body
 A fouler myddyng saw yow neuer nane
 yan es mans body of flessch and bane
 Alletyme yat man here lyues
 Nan oyer frute his body gyues
 Wether he lyues lang or schort whyle
 Bot thyng yat es whatsome and vyle
 Als sthynk fylth and nothyng elles
 Als Innocent yus says and telles
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yus a grete klerk tells in a boke

Be-halde he says and graythely loke

Tylk herbes and tres y^t yow sees spryng

And whatkyns froyte y^t yai forth bryng

herbes brynges forth floures and sede

And trees froyte and braunches to sprede

<fol. 1v>And yow . bryngs forth of yi seluen here

Nites and lyse and oyer . wermyn sere

Of herbes and trees sprynges baume full gode

And oyle and wyne for mans fode

And of ye comes alle foule thyng .

Als fen and vryne and spyteyng .

Of herbes and trees comes suete flauoure

And of ye comes stynk and ille sauoure

Suylk as ye trees are wyth ye bowes .

Suylk es ye frute yat on yem growes

Jlk tree may no gode frute bere

and so says a gode gardinere

A man is a tre yat standys noght herd

Of wylk ye crope is torned downward

And ye rote toward ye firmament

Als says ye grete klerke Innocente

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He says a+man in schap is bot a tre

Turned is vppe yat doune suld be

of ye wylk ye rote yat on it springes

Js ye here yat on mans heued hynges

ye stoke next ye rote growande .

Js ye heued wyth ye neke . folowande

ye body of yat tre yer-by

Js ye brest wyth ye body

ye bowes are ye armes with the handes
 And ye legges with ye fete yat standes
 ye braunches may men kyndly kalle
 ye taas with ye fyngers alle
 yis is ye lefe yat is noght faste
 Blawen away with wyndys blaste
 And ye body all so of ye tre
 yat wych ye sonne may dried be
 A+man yat is 3onge and lyth
 Be he neuer so strong and wyghte
 And of face both bryth and fayre
 <fol. 2a>Angers and euels may sone hym payre
 And al hys strength and bente abate
 And make hym in full sympyll state
 And chaunge alle his faire colour
 and gars .^[him] fade als dos ye flour
 A . flour yat semes faire and bryght
 Wyth stormes fades and tynes ye myght
 Also euels and grete myscheues
 comes to a man yat here lyues
 as feuer dropsy and Jaundys
 Tysyk goute and oyer maledys
 yat garres hym force and strenght tyne
 as stormes garres ye floures dwyne
 for yi a+man may lykend be .
 To a floure yat is faire on to se
 yat seyen when it is forth broght
 Welkes and dwynes til it be noght
 yis suld be ensauple tille vs
 Als Jobe in a boke says yus
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 he says man als a floure bryght
 Comys fo3th fyrst vn-to his lyght
 And brekys sone and passes away
 als a schadowe on somerse day
 And neuer in ye same state duelles
 Bot ay passand als Jobe telles
 Of yis ye profete Wytenese beres



Jn ye sauter . be yis veres
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ye *profete* says and so it es
Arly a+man passes as dos ye grys
Arly at ye begynnyng / of the day
He florices and he passes a-way
Be it euen he es doune broght
And fades and failes & tornes to noght
Jn ye fyrst be-gynnyng of man
ix C wynter luyude yai yan
<fol. 2v>His clerks in bokes beres wyttenes
Bot sethen wex man lyuyng les
So wolde godde yat it suld be
For vn-to noe alle yus sayde he .
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My gaste he sayde salle noght ay duelle
Jn man for he hys flesshe and felle .
Hys dayes salle be for to duelle here .
A hundreth and twenty 3ere
Bot so grete elde may now . none bere
For why mans lyfe is comen schortere .
For ye compleccion of ilk man
Js febuller~ yan it was yan~
Nowe is it febuller to se .
For why mans lyfe schorter~ bus be
And ay ye lengar a man may lyue
ye more his lyfe salle now hym greue
And ye lesse salle hym thynke it swete
Als Jnne a psalme wyttenes ye *profete*
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Jffe in myghtnes foure score falle
Mare es yaire swynk & yair~ with alle
For seldome a+man of yat elde
Haues hele or may hym seluen welde
And now falles shorter mans dayes
Als Jobe . ye haly man says

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Now he says my fo dayes sere
 Salle ende wyth a schorte tyme here
 Fo may now fourty 3ere passe
 And fewar~ fyfty als same tyme wasse
 Bot als tyte als man waxes alde
 yan waxes hys kynd wayk and calde
 yan chaunges hys compleccioune
 hys maners and hys condicioune .
 hys hert waxes herd and heuy
 And hys heued febull and desy
 <fol. 3r>yan wexes his gaste seke and sare
 his face runkuls ay mare and mare
 hys mynde is schorte when he oght thynkes
 hys nese droppys his ande stynkys
 hys syghte waxes dyme yat he has
 hys bake crokys stoupand he gas
 hys fyngers hys tas fete and hande
 And alle hys touchis are trembelande
 hys werkys noght worth yat he begynnes
 his hare moutes his eghen rynnes
 his heres wex defe and herd to here
 his tonge failes his speche vnclere
 hys mouth slauers hys tethe rotes
 his wytte fayles and ofte he dotes
 he is lyghtly wrathe and waxes froward
 To turne hym fra wreth it es harde
 he shouthes and trowes sone a thyng
 And late he turnes fra yat trowyng
 He is couetous and herd haldande
 His chere is dredy and his semblande
 he is swyfte to speke on his manere
 And lath and slawe for to here
 And prayses alde men and lattes yem wysse
 And 3onge men lyste hym wele dyspys
 He louys alde men yat be-fore hauys bene
 And lakys ye men yat now are sene
 he es oft seke & ay gronande
 And oft angyrd and ay playnande

And yis kyndely to aldemen falles
 Propertes of elde klerks yaim calles
 3ytte are yere more yan . i . haue talde
 yat falles to man when he wexs alde
 yus may men se yat ken yem kane
 What ye maners are of an ald mane .
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 ye last ende of mans lyfe harde
 es when he drawes to dede warde
 <fol. 3v>Whene he is seke and alle doune lyse
 And so febyll he may noght ryse
 yan ere men als vncertayne
 Wether he salle dy or couere agayne
 Bot 3yt kan sum+men yat are slygh
 wyte yf he salle of yat euylle dy
 Be certayn tokyns als he salle here
 yat be-falles when dede is nere
 hys frount begynnes yan downward to falle .
 And his browys heldys doune with alle
 ye lefte hygh of hym yan semes lesse
 And narowere yan ye ryght egh es
 his nese at ye poynte is scharp and smalle .
 And yan begynnes his chyn to falle
 his pounce . ar~ stille with-uten steryng
 his fete wax calde his body clynges
 And yf nere dede be a 3onge man
 he wakys & may noght slepe yan
 And an alde man to dede drawand
 May noght wake bot is ay slepand
 Men says y^t alle yis takyns sere
 Ere of a man yat dede ys nere
 Whyles a man lyues he is lyke man
 When he is dede what is he yan
 yan may men yaire lykenes se
 chaunged als it hade neuer bene he
 when mans lyfe es broght to ende
 On ye same wysse salle he hethen wende
 Pore and nakyd als he came
 ye fyrst day Fro his modur wome

Nothyng he broght with hym yat day .
 Nor nothyng salle he bere a-way
 Bot a wyndyng cloth only
 yat salle be lappyde on his body
 And yus wrechydly endes ye lyfe of man
 And yf he be alde what es he yan
 When ye lyfe is passyd away
 yan is he noght bot erth and clay
 <fol. 4r>yat turnes to more corrupcioune
 yan any stynkande carioune
 for ye corrupcioune . of hys body
 Jf it sulde longe abouen erth ly
 it myght ye ayre so corumppede make
 yat men yer of yaire dede may take
 so is it vile . and violent
 yer-for ye gret klerk Jnnocent
 telles in a boke . yus openli
 of ye wrechydnes . of mans body
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 he sais what thyng may foulere be
 yan mans carioune it is to se
 Or what is more oribylle in stede
 Yan mans body when he is dede
 Also he says is noght so vgly
 als here is a+mans dede body
 And when it is in erth layd lawe
 wormes salle it alle to-gnawe
 To ye flessch be fro ye banys bytyn
 For yi in bokes yus fynde we wrytyn
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 ye boke says yat when a man
 dyes yere salle come to hym yan .
 Wormes and neddurs vgly in syght
 To whome mans flessch falles w^t ryth
 for yi in erth man salle slepe
 Among wormes yat on hym salle crepe
 And gnaw on yat stynkand karkays

Als is wryten in a boke yat says

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he sais in poudyr salle slepe ilk man

And wormes salle alle couere yem yan

for in yis werld es non so wytti

So wyght so fayre no so myghty

Emperoure duke no kaysere

non oyer yat beres gret state here

Ne lerede ne lewede bonde no fre

<fol. 4v>Ne rych ne pouere what so yai be

yat he ne salle turne at his last day

To erth and poudyr al away

And wormys salle ryue yem alle in sundyr

And yerfor haue J mykylle wondyr

yat vnnes any man ~~may~~ wille se

What he was is and salle be

Bot who so wolde in hert caste

What he was and salle be at ye laste

And what he is whyles he lyues here

he suld haue fulle lytill manere

for to make ioy to whyles he here duelles

Als a versifioure in metyre telles

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he says who so wolde fele and se

When he come and weyir~ sulde he

Suld he neuer~ be blyth bot ioy forsake

And euyr grete and sorow make

Wherto is man here so myry

And so tendur of his foule body

yat salle be gnawen wyth wormes kene

And so vgly is yan to be sene

Who so of hym yan hade a sythe

When yat wormes hym so hade dyghte

When he is bare vn-to ye bane

So grysly syght sawe he neuere nane

As he myght se on yat carcayse

For saint Bernard in yis metyr says



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aftur man he says wormy es ,
And aftir wermyn styng & vglynes
And swo salle ilk man turnede be yan
fro a man vn-to no man
yus may ilk man in yis party se
what he was and what he salle be
And what he es whiles he here lyues
And what kyns frute his kynde geues
Her may men se als wryten es
Mykylle of mans wrechydnes