Robert Henryson  
C. 1425 — C. 1505

Robert Henryson is primarily known for his long poem *The Testament of Cresseid*—inspired by Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*—but he was a versatile “makar” who composed a wide variety of Middle Scots verse, ranging from debate poetry to allegorical tragedy to beast fables. William Dunbar (b. c. 1460) famously characterizes him as a “Maister,” the common title for a schoolmaster, but Henryson’s works reflect interests that transcend the classroom, displaying their author’s capacious political, legal, and agricultural knowledge. Composed during and after James III’s turbulent reign, Henryson’s poetry invokes debates surrounding popular rebellion and the oppression of the poor. Also reflected in his work is the changing complexion of Scottish arts and culture—notably the rising stature of the Scots vernacular and the importation of humanist ideas from the continent. In the centuries following his death Henryson’s work was largely unrecognized, but it has in the twenty-first century experienced a considerable revival; Seamus Heaney, for example, was inspired to translate *The Testament of Cresseid* and selected fables into modern English (2009).

We know nothing of Henryson’s early life, but his admission to Glasgow University in 1462 records him as *venerabilis*, implying that he was an aging man, born around the end of the first quarter of the century. Henryson was admitted as a Master of Arts, indicating that he had already received a degree elsewhere, perhaps at nearby St. Andrews or on the continent at Paris or Bologna, where some of his contemporaries are known to have studied. His legal expertise suggests that he may have lectured on law at Glasgow, but other evidence shows that by 1477–78 he was a notary public at a Benedictine abbey in Dunfermline, where he achieved a reputation as a teacher at a local grammar school. In his c. 1505 poem “I that in heill wes,” Dunbar includes Henryson in a list of dead makars, which indicates that he did not live long into the sixteenth century.

Nearly five thousand lines of Henryson’s poetry survive, comprising three long poems and a diverse number of short lyrics. The most prominent is *The Testament of Cresseid* (c. 1492), a sequel to Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde* (c. 1385); Cresseid, who forsakes her lover Troilus in Chaucer’s poem, is in Henryson’s poem afflicted with leprosy, which is taken to be an extreme form of corporal punishment for blaspheming the gods. Henryson indulges a revenge narrative tradition in his punishment of Cresseid, but this misogynistic agenda is to some degree undermined through Cresseid’s complaint regarding the injustice of her impossible situation. *The Testament of Cresseid* is far from the derivative poem it is often claimed to be, even reviving a dead Troilus for an encore appearance; Henryson’s extension of the Chaucerian narrative exemplifies his use of his sources, which tend to serve as mere foundations for his often digressive elaborations. Another of his long poems, *Orpheus and Eurydice* (c. 1460–1500), takes as its foundation a brief account of the myth in Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy* (c. 520–26 CE), but also includes the commentary of Nicholas Trivet (c. 1265–c. 1334), as well as an expanded political allegory and defense of poetry.

Henryson’s accretive textuality is also showcased in his *Morall Fabillis* (c. 1485), which combines two genres of beast literature: the fables of Aesop (c. sixth century BCE) and the French *Roman de Renart* (c. thirteenth century CE). While the latter tradition, featuring the fox Reynard and his clever antics, provides material for five of the thirteen tales, in the rest Henryson builds upon tales from a

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1 “Makar” is a Scots term meaning “maker” of poetry. For work by other makars, see the section titled “The Scots Makars,” included in the online portion of this anthology.
work known as the elegiac Romulus (c. twelfth century). A collection of Aesop’s fables in Latin verse, the elegiac Romulus had become canonical by virtue of its prevalence in the classroom, where it was used to teach Latin grammar, rhetorical devices, allegorical interpretation, and even composition. By the time Henryson encountered these stories in his teaching, they had already been shaped by multiple fabular writers, glossators, and commentators and achieved a dynamic life of their own. Henryson embraces the fables in all their complexity and rewrites them into the Scots vernacular, accompanied by amplified *monilitates*—morals emulating the fabular commentaries so prevalent in medieval classrooms—which offer complex interpretations that arrive at unexpected conclusions. Throughout the *Morall Fabillis*, Henryson complicates the already vexed circumstances of fabular authorship, inserting a first person narrator into the tales and describing an encounter with an attractive, curly-haired Aesop (see “The Taill of the Lyoun and the Mous” below), all the while acknowledging that the fables had been collaboratively composed by Aesop, “clerkis” (“scholars”) and “uther ma” (“many others”). The result is a richly crafted series of fables that revisits familiar Aesopic morals of prudence and frugality, engages in political satire and social critique, interrogates the purposes of allegorical interpretation, and reflects on the accumulative process of poetic creation.

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from *Morall Fabillis of Esope the Phrygian*

“The Prolog”

Thocheit feinyeit fabils of ald poetre
Be not al grundit upon truth, yit than
Thair polite termes of sweit rhetore
Richt plesand ar unto the eir of man.
And als the caus that thay first began
Wes to reprei the hall misleving
Off man be figure of ane uther thing.

In lyke maner, as throw the bustious eird,
Swa it be labourit with grit diligence
Springis the flouris and the corne abreid,
Hailsum and gude to mannis sustenance;
Sa dois spring ane morall sweit sentence
Oute of the subtell dyte of poetry
To gude purpois, quha culd it weil apply.

The nuttis schell, thocht it be hard and teuch,
Haldis the kirl and is delectabill.
Sa lys thair ane doctrine wyse aneuich
And full of frute under ane feynit fabill.
And clerkis\textsuperscript{\textregistered} saies it is rycht profitabill scholars

And clerkis\textsuperscript{\textregistered} saies it is richt profitabill scholars

Amangis ernist to ming\textsuperscript{\textregistered} a nie mery sport mingle

Amangis ernist to ming\textsuperscript{\textregistered} a nie mery sport mingle

To light the spreit\textsuperscript{\textregistered} and gar\textsuperscript{\textregistered} the tyme be schort. spirit / make

To light the spreit\textsuperscript{\textregistered} and gar\textsuperscript{\textregistered} the tyme be schort. spirit / make

Forther mair, an bow that is ay\textsuperscript{\textregistered} bent always

Forther mair, an bow that is ay\textsuperscript{\textregistered} bent always

Worthis\textsuperscript{\textregistered} unsmart\textsuperscript{\textregistered} and dullis\textsuperscript{\textregistered} on the string. becomes / feebles / dulls

Worthis\textsuperscript{\textregistered} unsmart\textsuperscript{\textregistered} and dullis\textsuperscript{\textregistered} on the string. becomes / febbles / dulls

Sa dois the mynd that is ay diligent

Sa dois the mynd that is ay diligent

In ernistfull thochtis and in studying. serious

In ernistfull thochtis and in studying. serious

With sad\textsuperscript{\textregistered} materis sum merines to ming certain

With sad\textsuperscript{\textregistered} materis sum merines to ming certain

Accordis weill; thus Esope\textsuperscript{\textregistered} said, I wis:\textsuperscript{\textregistered} certainly

Accordis weill; thus Esope\textsuperscript{\textregistered} said, I wis:\textsuperscript{\textregistered} certainly

“Dulcius arrident seria picta iocis.”\textsuperscript{2}

“Dulcius arrident seria picta iocis.”\textsuperscript{2}

Of this authour, my maisteris, with your leif,\textsuperscript{\textregistered} permission

Of this authour, my maisteris, with your leif,\textsuperscript{\textregistered} permission

Submitting me in your correctioun, Latin / would / attempt

Submitting me in your correctioun, Latin / would / attempt

In mother toung of Latyng\textsuperscript{\textregistered} I wald\textsuperscript{\textregistered} pref\textsuperscript{\textregistered} Latin / would / attempt

In mother toung of Latyng\textsuperscript{\textregistered} I wald\textsuperscript{\textregistered} pref\textsuperscript{\textregistered} Latin / would / attempt

To mak ane maner of translatioun, Latin / would / attempt

To mak ane maner of translatioun, Latin / would / attempt

Nocht\textsuperscript{\textregistered} of my self for vane\textsuperscript{\textregistered} presumtioun, not / vain

Nocht\textsuperscript{\textregistered} of my self for vane\textsuperscript{\textregistered} presumtioun, not / vain

Bot\textsuperscript{\textregistered} be\textsuperscript{\textregistered} requist and precept of ane lord but / by

Bot\textsuperscript{\textregistered} be\textsuperscript{\textregistered} requist and precept of ane lord but / by

Of quhome\textsuperscript{\textregistered} the name it neidis\textsuperscript{\textregistered} not record. whom / needs

Of quhome\textsuperscript{\textregistered} the name it neidis\textsuperscript{\textregistered} not record. whom / needs

In hamelie\textsuperscript{\textregistered} language and in termes\textsuperscript{\textregistered} rude\textsuperscript{\textregistered} homely / words / unlearned

In hamelie\textsuperscript{\textregistered} language and in termes\textsuperscript{\textregistered} rude\textsuperscript{\textregistered} homely / words / unlearned

Me neidis wryte, for quhy\textsuperscript{\textregistered} of eloquence why

Me neidis wryte, for quhy\textsuperscript{\textregistered} of eloquence why

Nor rhethorike I never understude. why

Nor rhethorike I never understude. why

Thairfoir meiklie I pray your reverence, if

Thairfoir meiklie I pray your reverence, if

Gif\textsuperscript{\textregistered} that ye find it throw my negligence defective

Gif\textsuperscript{\textregistered} that ye find it throw my negligence defective

Be deminute\textsuperscript{\textregistered} or yit superfluous, wills / gracious

Be deminute\textsuperscript{\textregistered} or yit superfluous, wills / gracious

Correct it at your Willis\textsuperscript{\textregistered} gratious.\textsuperscript{\textregistered} wills / gracious

Correct it at your Willis\textsuperscript{\textregistered} gratious.\textsuperscript{\textregistered} wills / gracious

My author in his fabillis tellis how irrational / animals / spoke

My author in his fabillis tellis how irrational / animals / spoke

That brutal\textsuperscript{\textregistered} beistis\textsuperscript{\textregistered} spak\textsuperscript{\textregistered} and understude, irrational / animals / spoke

That brutal\textsuperscript{\textregistered} beistis\textsuperscript{\textregistered} spak\textsuperscript{\textregistered} and understude, irrational / animals / spoke

And to gude purpois dispute and argow,\textsuperscript{\textregistered} argue

And to gude purpois dispute and argow,\textsuperscript{\textregistered} argue

Ane sillogisme\textsuperscript{\textregistered} propone\textsuperscript{\textregistered} and eik\textsuperscript{\textregistered} conclude,\textsuperscript{\textregistered} syllogisms / put forward / also

Ane sillogisme\textsuperscript{\textregistered} propone\textsuperscript{\textregistered} and eik\textsuperscript{\textregistered} conclude,\textsuperscript{\textregistered} syllogisms / put forward / also

Putting exemplill and in similitude many

Putting exemplill and in similitude many

How mony\textsuperscript{\textregistered} men in operatioun many

How mony\textsuperscript{\textregistered} men in operatioun many

Ar like to beistis in conditioun. many

Ar like to beistis in conditioun. many

Na mervell is ane man be lyke ane beist, which / loves / bodily / delight

Na mervell is ane man be lyke ane beist, which / loves / bodily / delight

Quhilk\textsuperscript{\textregistered} lufis\textsuperscript{\textregistered} ay carnall\textsuperscript{\textregistered} and foull delyte\textsuperscript{\textregistered} which / loves / bodily / delight

Quhilk\textsuperscript{\textregistered} lufis\textsuperscript{\textregistered} ay carnall\textsuperscript{\textregistered} and foull delyte\textsuperscript{\textregistered} which / loves / bodily / delight

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\textsuperscript{1} Esope Aesop (c. 6th century BCE), ancient Greek author of fables.

\textsuperscript{2} Dulcius … iocis Latin: “Serious things appear more delightful when portrayed with jests.”

\textsuperscript{3} sillogisme propone and eik conclude Syllogisms, a form of argument in traditional logic consisting of two premises and a conclusion.
That scheme can not him renye nor arreist, 
Bot takis all the lust and appetite,
And that throw custum and daylie ryte. 

Syne in thair myndis sa fast is radicate
That thay in brutal beistis ar transformate.

This nobill clerk, Esope, as I haif tauld,
In gay metir and in facound purpurate,
Be figure wrait his buke, for he nocht wald
Tak the disdance off hie nor low estate.

And to begin, first of ane cok he wrate,
Seikand his meit, quhilk fand ane jolie stone,
Of quhome the fabill ye sall anone.

FINIS

"The Taille of the Cok and the Jasp"

A ne cok sum tyme with feddram fresch and gay,
Richt cant crouss, albeit he was bot pure,
Fleu furth upon ane dunghill sone be day;
To get his dennar set was al his cure.

Scraipand amang the as be aventure
He fand ane jolie jasp richt precious,
Wes castin furth in sweaping of the hous.

As damisellis wantoun and insolent,
That fane wald play and on the streit be sene,

To swoping of the hous thay tak na tent
Qhuat be thairin, swa that the flure be clene.
Jowellis ar tint, as ofymis hes bene sene,
Upon the flure, and swopit furth anone.
Peradventure, sa wes the samin stone.

Sa mervelland upon the stane, quod he: 
"O gentill jasp, o riche and nobill thing,
thocht I the find, thow ganis not for me.
Thow art ane jouell for ane lord or king.
It wer pietie thou suld in this mydding
Be buryit thus amang this muke and mold
And thow so fair, and worth sa mekill gold.
Morall Fabillis of Esope the Phrygian

It is pietie I suld the find, for quhy\(^5\) Thy grit\(^5\) vertew\(^5\) nor yit thy cullour\(^5\) cleir\(^5\)
I may nouther\(^5\) extoll, nor magnify, And thow to me may mak bot lyttill cheir.\(^5\)
To grit lordis thocht thow be leif\(^5\) and deir,\(^5\) I lufe\(^5\) fer\(^5\) better thing of les availl,\(^5\)
As draf\(^5\) or corne,\(^5\) to fill my tume\(^5\) intraill.\(^5\)

I had lever\(^5\) ga\(^5\) skraip\(^5\) heir with my naillis

Amangis this mow\(^5\) and luke\(^5\) my lifys\(^5\) fade,\(^5\)
As draf or corne, small wormis or snailis,
Or ony meit wald do my stomok gude,
Than of jaspis ane mekell multitude.
And thow agane upon the samin wyis,
May me as now for thyne availl dispyis."\(^5\)

Thow hes na corne and thairof I had neid.
Thy cullour dois bot confort\(^5\) to the sicht,\(^5\)
And that is not aneuch my wame\(^5\) to feid.
For wyfis\(^5\) sayis that lukand\(^5\) werk is licht.\(^5\)
I wald sum meit have get it geve\(^5\) I micht,\(^5\)

For houngrie men may not weill leve\(^5\) on lukis.\(^5\)
Had I dry breid\(^5\) I compt\(^5\) not for na cukis.\(^5\)

Quhar\(^5\) suld thow mak thy habitationun?
Quhar suld thow dwuell\(^5\) bot in ane royall tour?
Quhar suld thow sit bot on ane kings\(^5\) croun,
Exalt in worschip and in grit honour?
Rise gentill jasp, of all stanis\(^5\) the flour,
Out of this fen\(^5\) and pas\(^5\) quhar thow suld be.
Thow ganis not for me nor I for the."

Levand\(^5\) this jowell law\(^5\) upon the ground,
To seik\(^5\) his meit this cok his wayis\(^5\) went.
Bot quhen or how or quhome be it wes found,
As now I set to hald\(^5\) na argument,
Bot of the inward sentence and intent
Of this fabill as myne author dois write,
I sall reheirs\(^5\) in rude and hamelie dite."\(^5\)
“MORALITAS”

This jolie jasp hes properteis sevin:
The first, of cullour it is mervelous,
Part lyke the fyre and part lyke to the hevin.

It makis\(^{\circ}\) ane man stark\(^{\circ}\) and victorious,
Preservis\(^{\circ}\) als\(^{\circ}\) fra\(^{\circ}\) cacis\(^{\circ}\) perrillous.
Quha hæs this stane sall have gude hap\(^{\circ}\) to speid\(^{\circ}\)
Of fyre, nor fallis\(^{\circ}\) him neidis not to dreid.\(^{\circ}\)

This gentill jasp, richt different\(^{\circ}\) of hew,\(^{\circ}\)
Betakinnis\(^{\circ}\) perfite\(^{\circ}\) prudence and cunning.\(^{\circ}\)
Ornate with mony deidiss\(^{\circ}\) of vertew,
Mair excellent than ony eirthly thing,
Quhilk makis men in honour ay to ring\(^{\circ}\)
Happie and stark, to half\(^{\circ}\) the victorie

Of all vicis\(^{\circ}\) and spirituall enemie.

Quha may be hardie,\(^{\circ}\) riche, and gratious?
Quha can eschew perrell\(^{\circ}\) and aventure?
Quha can governe ane realme, cietie,\(^{\circ}\) or hous
Without science?\(^{\circ}\) No man, I yow assure.

It is riches that ever sall indure,\(^{\circ}\)
Quhilk maith,\(^{\circ}\) nor moist\(^{\circ}\) nor uther\(^{\circ}\) rust\(^{\circ}\) can freit.\(^{\circ}\)
To mannis saull\(^{\circ}\) it is eternall meit.

This cok, desyrand\(^{\circ}\) mair the sempill\(^{\circ}\) corne
Than ony jasp, may till\(^{\circ}\) ane fule\(^{\circ}\) be peir,\(^{\circ}\)
Quhilk at science makis bot ane moik\(^{\circ}\) and scorne,
And na gude can; als lytill will he leir.\(^{\circ}\)
His hart wammillis\(^{\circ}\) wyse argumentis to heir,
As dois ane sow to quhome men for the nanis\(^{\circ}\)
In hir draf troich\(^{\circ}\) wald saw\(^{\circ}\) the precious stanis.

Quha is enemie to science and cunning,
Bot ignorants that understandis nocht?
Quhilk is sa nobill, sa precious, and sa ding\(^{\circ}\)
That it may with na eirdlie\(^{\circ}\) thing be bocht?\(^{\circ}\)
Weill wer that man over all other that mocht\(^{\circ}\)
All his lyfe dayis in perfite studie wair\(^{\circ}\)
To get science, for him neidit\(^{\circ}\) na mair.\(^{\circ}\)
Bot now, allace,\(^o\) this jasp is tynt and hid. 
We seik it nocht nor preis\(^o\) it for to find. 
Haif we richis, na better lyfe we bid\(^o\). 
Of science, thocht the saull be bair\(^o\) and blind. 
Of this mater to speik it wer bot wind. 
Thairefore I ceis\(^o\) and will na forther say. 
Ga seik the jasp, quha will, for thair it lay.

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**“The Taill of the Uplanis Mous and the Burges Mous”**\(^1\)

E\(^o\)sope myne author makis mentioun, 
Of twa myis and thay wer sisteris deir, 
Of quham\(^o\) the eldest duelt in ane bourus toun,\(^o\) 
The uther wynnit uponland weill neir,\(^o\) 
Soliter,\(^o\) quhyle\(^o\) under busk\(^o\), quhyle under breir,\(^o\) 
Quhils in the corne, and uther mennis skaith;\(^2\) 
As outlawis dois and levis\(^o\) on thair waith.\(^o\)

This rurall mous into the wynter tyde,\(^o\) 
Had hunger, cauld, and tholit\(^o\) grit distres, 
The uther mous that in the burgh can byde,\(^o\) 
Was guddbrother\(^o\) and made ane fre burges,\(^o\) 
Toll fre als but\(^o\) custum\(^3\) mair or les, 
And fredome had to ga quhair ever scho list,\(^o\) 
Amang the cheis\(^o\) in ark,\(^o\) and meill\(^o\) in kist.\(^o\)

Ane tyme quhen\(^o\) scho wes full and unfutesair,\(^o\) 
Scho tuke in mynd\(^o\) hir sister uponland, 
And langit for to heir of hir weillfair, 
To se quhat lyfe scho had under the wand,\(^o\) 
Bairfute alone with pykestaf\(^o\) in hir hand, 
As pure\(^o\) pylgryme scho passit owt off town, 
To seik hir sister baithoure daill and down.\(^o\)

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\(^2\) *uther mennis skaith* “Skaith” refers to animal trespassing. The sense of the phrase may be “trespassing onto other men’s [land].”

\(^3\) *custum* Tax on imported and exported commodities.
Furth mony wilsum wayis\(^{o}\) can scho walk,
Over many dreary paths
Throw mosse\(^{o}\) and mure\(^{o}\) throw bankis\(^{o}\) busk and breir,
Bog / moor / riverbanks
crying / ridge
Scho ran cryand\(^{o}\) quhill scho come to a balk,\(^{o}\)
"Cum furth to me my awin sister deir,25
Cry peip anis!" With that the mous culd heir,
And knew hir voce\(^{o}\) as kinnisman will do,
Instinctually
Be verray kind,\(^{o}\) and furth scho come hir to.

The hartlie\(^{o}\) joy God geve ye had sene,\(^{o}\)
Heartfelt / if you had seen
Beis kith quhen that thir sisteris met,
That was displayed when these
And grit kyndnes wes schawin thame betuene,
Laughed / cried
For quhylis thay leuch,\(^{o}\) and quhylis for joy thay gret,\(^{o}\)
Embraced
Quhyle kisst sweit, quhilkis in armis plet,\(^{o}\)
Carried on until calm
And thus thay fure quhill soberit\(^{o}\) wes thair mude,
Then side by side / room they went
Syne ffute ffor ffute\(^{o}\) unto the chalmer yude.

As I hard say it was ane sober wane,\(^{o}\)
Modest home
Off fog\(^{o}\) and farne\(^{o}\) ffull febilie wes maid,
Winter grass / fern
Ane sillie scheill\(^{o}\) under ane steidfast stane,
Humble hut
Off quhilk\(^{o}\) the entres\(^{o}\) wes not hie nor braid,
Which / entry
And in the samin\(^{o}\) thay went but mair abaid,\(^{o}\)
Without fyre or candill birnad bricht,
Such pifferers
For comonly sic pykeris\(^{o}\) luftis not lycht.

Quhen thay wer lugit\(^{o}\) thus thir sely myse,
Lodged
The youngest sister into hir butterie glyde,\(^{o}\)
Went into her pantry
And brocht furth nuttis, and candill insteid off spyce,\(^{o}\)
Spiced (wine) / if I leave it to
Giff\(^{o}\) this wes gude ffair I do it on\(^{o}\) thame besyde.
Started
The burges mous prompit\(^{o}\) forth in pryde,
Food
And said "Sister, is this your dayly fude?"

"Quhy not?" quod scho, “Is not this meit\(^{o}\) rycht gude?”

“Na be my saull I think it bot ane scorne.”\(^{o}\)
Insult
“Madame,” quod scho, “ye be the mair to blame.
My mother sayd sister quhen we wer borne,
Womb
That I and ye lay baith within ane wame;\(^{o}\)
I keip the rate\(^{o}\) and custome off my dame,\(^{o}\)
Quantity / mother
And off my leving\(^{o}\) into povertie,
Living
For landis have we nane in propertie.”

“My fair sister,” quod scho, “have me excusit.”
Excuse me
This rude dyat\(^{o}\) and I can not accord.
Always
To tender meit my stomok is ay\(^{o}\) usit,
For quhylis™ I fair alsweill° as ony lord.  
Thir wydderit™ peis, and nuttis, or° thy be bord.°  
Wil brek my teith, and mak my wame° fful sklender,°  
Quhilk wes before usit to metis tender.”

“Weil, weil, sister,” quod the rurall mous,  
“Geve° it pleis yow sic thing as ye se heir,  
Baith meit and dreink, harberie° and hous,  
Salbe° your awin, will ye remane al yeir.  
Ye sall it have wyth blyth° and mery cheir,  
And that suld mak the maissis° that ar rude,  
Amang freindis richt tender and wonder gude.

“For all hir mery exhortatioun,  
This burges mous had littill will° to sing,  
Bot hevilie° scho kest hir browis doun,  
For° all the daynteis° that scho culd hir bring.  
Yit at the last scho said half in hething.°  
“Sister, this victuall° and your royall feist,  
May well suffice unto ane rurall beist.

“I grant,” quod scho, and on togidder thay yeid.”

1 °My Gude Friday … your Pace° “My Good Friday is better than your Easter.” Good Friday, the Christian holy day for the crucifixion of Jesus, is typically observed with fasting, whereas Easter, the Christian holy day for the resurrection of Jesus, is typically celebrated with feasting.
In stubbill array\(^1\) throw rankest gers\(^3\) and corne,
And under buskis previeie couth thay creip\(^5\),
The eldest wes the gyde and went beforne,
\[\text{thickest grass secretly did they creep ahead} \]

The younger to hir wayis tuke gude keip.\(^6\)
On nicht thay ran, and on the day can sleip,\(^8\)
Qhill in the morning or the laverok\(^9\) sang,
Thay fand the town, and in blythlie couth gang.\(^10\)

Not fer fra thyne\(^7\) unto ane worthie wane,\(^2\)
This burges brocht thame sone qhare\(^4\) thay suld\(^6\) be.
Without god speid thair herberie\(^8\) wes tanе,\(^9\)
Into ane spence\(^6\) with vittell\(^6\) grit plentie,
Baith cheis, and butter upon thair skelfis\(^6\) hie,
And flesche and fishe aneuch\(^6\) baith fresche and salt,\(^10\)
And sekkis\(^6\) full off meill\(^6\) and eik\(^6\) off malt.

Efter quhen thay disposit\(^6\) wer to dyne,
Withowtn grace thay wesche\(^6\) and went to meit.\(^6\)
With all coursis that cuisk bald devyne,\(^6\)
Muttoun and beif, strikin\(^6\) in tailyes\(^6\) greit.
Ane lordis fair\(^6\) thus couth thay counterfeit,
Except ane thing thay drank the watter cleir,
Instead off wyne bot yit thay maid gude cheir.

With blyth upcast\(^6\) and merie countenance,
The eldest sister sperit at hir gest\(^6\)
Giff that scho be ressone\(^6\) fand difference,
Betuix that chalmer and hir sarie nest,
“Ye, dame,” quod scho, “how lang will this lest?”
“For evermair, I wait,\(^6\) and langer to.”
“Giff it be swa, ye ar at eis,”\(^6\) quod scho.

Till eik\(^6\) thair cheir ane subcharge\(^6\) furth scho brocht,
Ane plait of grottis, and ane dish full off meill,
Thraf caikkis\(^6\) als I trow\(^6\) scho spairit nocht,
Aboundantlie about hir for to deill,\(^6\)
And manfully fyne\(^6\) scho brocht in steid off geill,\(^6\)
And ane quhyte\(^6\) candill owt off ane coffer stall,\(^6\)
Insteid off spye to gust\(^6\) thair mouth withall.

---

\(^1\) In stubbill array  “Stubbill” refers to stalks of grain that have already been reaped. The literal reading of “In stubbill array” may be better understood as “Dressed in stalks.”

\(^2\) manfully fyne  Some editors provide “mane full fyne,” which would mean “very fine bread.”
This maid thay merie quhill thay micht na mair
And “Haill, Yule,” hail!” cryit upon hie,
Yit efter joy ofymes cummis cair,¹
And troubill efter grit prosperitie,
Thus as thay sat in all thair jolitie,
The spenser² come with keyis in his hand,
Oppinnit the dure and thame at denner fand.

Thay taryit³ not to wesche as I suppose,
Bot on to ga⁴ quha that micht fformest win.⁵
The burges had ane hole, and in scho gois,
Hir sister had na hole, to hyde hir in,
To se that selie mous it wes grit sin.⁶
So desolate and will⁷ off ane gude reid,⁸
For verray dreid scho fell in swoun neir deid.¹⁰

Bot as God wald¹¹ it fell ane happie cace,¹²
The spenser had na laser¹³ for to byde,¹⁴
Nowther to seik nor serche, to sker nor chace,
Bot on he went, and left the dure up¹⁵ wyde.

This rurall mous, lay flatling¹⁶ on the ground,
And for the deith scho wes full sair dreadand,¹⁷
For till hir hart straik mony wofull stound,¹⁸
As in ane fever scho trimbillit fute and hand.

“Quhy ly ye thus? Ryse up my sister deir!
Cum to your meit, this perrell is overpast.”¹⁹
The uther answerit hir with hevie cheir,
“I may not eit, sa sair I am agast.
I had lever thir fourty dayis fast,²⁰
With watter caill,²¹ and to gnaw benis or peis,
Than all your feist in this dreid and diseis.”²²

With fair tretie²³ yit scho gart hir upryse,²⁴
And to the burde²⁵ thay went and togidder sat,
And scantlie had thay drunkin anis or twyce,
Quhen in come Gibhunter our jolie cat,  
And bad godspeid, the burges up\(^\text{a}\) with that,  
Bawdronis\(^1\) the uther be the bak hes hint.\(^\text{a}\)  
(got) up

Fra fute to fute he kest hir to and ffra,  
Quhylis up, quhylis doun, als cant\(^\text{b}\) as ony kid,  
Quhylis wald he lat hir rin under the stra,  
Thus to the selie mous grit pane he did.  
Quhill at the last throw fortune and gude hap,\(^\text{c}\)  
hide and seek

Betwixt ane burde and the wall scho crap.\(^\text{a}\)  
crept

And up in haist behind ane parraling,\(^\text{b}\)  
Scho clam so hie that Gilbert micht not get hir,  
Syne be the cluke\(^\text{c}\) their craftelie can hing,\(^\text{d}\)  
Till he wes gane hir cheir wes all the better.  
Syne doun scho lap quhen thair wes nane to let\(^\text{e}\) hir.  
prevent

“Thy mangerie\(^\text{c}\) is mingit\(^\text{c}\) all with cair,  
Thy guse is gude thy gansell\(^\text{c}\) sour as gall,  
The subcharge off thy service is bot fair,  
Sa sall thow find heir efterwart na ffal,\(^2\)  
banquet / mixed

I thank yone courtyne\(^\text{c}\) and yone perpall wall\(^\text{c}\)  
that curtain / that partition-wall  
Off my defence now ffra yone crewel beist.  
Almichtie God keip me fra sic ane feist.

“Wer I into the kith\(^\text{c}\) that I come ffra,  
For weill nor wo, suld I never cum again.”  
With that scho tuke hir leif and furth can ga,  
Quhylis throw the corne, and quhylis throw the plane,  
Quhen scho wes furth and fre scho wes full fane.\(^\text{c}\)  
delighted

And merilie markit\(^\text{c}\) unto the mure.\(^\text{c}\)  
headed / moor  
I can not tell how weill thairefter scho fure.\(^\text{c}\)  
fared

But I hard say scho passit to hir den,  
Als warne as woll suppose it wes not greit,

---

1 Gibhunter … Bawdronis  “Gib” (abbreviation for “Gilbert”) and “Bawdronis” (“Baldwin”) are traditional Scots names for cats.

2 heir efterwart na ffal  Other editors substitute “ma” or “may” for “na,” rendering the phrase “hereafter may come to pass.”
Morall Fabillis of Esope the Phrygian

Full bemly\(^1\) stuffit, baith but and ben,\(^2\) in the outer and inner (rooms)

Off beinis, and nuttis, peis, ry, and quheit.

Quhen ever scho list scho had aneuch to eit,
In quyet and eis withoutin ony dreid,
Bot to hir sisteris feist na mair scho yeid.

“MORALITAS”

Freindis ye may find and ye will tak heid,
In to this fabill ane gude moralitie.
As fitchis\(^3\) myngit ar with nobill seid,
Swa interminglit is adversitie,
With eirdlie\(^4\) joy, swa that na estate is frie.
Without trubill and sum vexatioun,
And namelie thay quhilk clymmis up maist hie,
That ar not content with small possessioun.

Blissed be sempill lyfe withoutin dreid.
Blissed be sober feist in quietie.
Quha hes aneuch of na mair hes he neid,
Thocht it be littill in quantatie,
Grit aboundance and blind prosperitie,
Oftymes makis ane evill conclusioun:
The sweitest lyfe thairfoir in this cuntrie,
Is sickernes\(^5\) with small possessioun.

O wantoun man that usis for to feid,
They wambe and makis it a God to be.
Lieke\(^6\) to thy self I warne the weill but dreid,\(^6\)
The cat, cunnis and to the mous, hes ec.\(^6\)
Quaht vaillis than\(^6\) thy feist and royltie,
With dreidfull hart, and tribulatioun.
Best thing in eird, thairfoir I say for me,
Is blyithnes in hart, with small possessioun.

Thy awin fyre my friend, sa it be bot ane gleid,\(^6\)
It warmis weill, and is worth gold to the.
And Solomon sayis gif that thou will reid,
Under the hevin thair can not better be,
Than ay be blyth and leif\(^6\) in honestie.

---

\(^1\) bemly As other editors attest, “bemly” may be “beinly,” meaning “comfortably.”
\(^2\) Lieke Other editors provide “Luke,” which means “Look.”
Quhairfoir I may conclude be this resoun,
Of eirthly joy it beiris maist degree.  
Blyithnes in hart with small possessioun.

FINIS

“The Taill how this foirsaid Tod, 1 maid his confessioun to Freir Wolf Waitskaith”

Leif we this wedow glaid I yow assure,
Off Chantecleir 2 mair blyith than I can tell.
And speik we off the subtell aventure.
And destenie that to this foxe befell,
Als lang as leme or licht wes off the day,
Bot bydand nicht full styl lurkand he lay.

Quhill that the Goddes off the flude,
Phebus3 had callit to the harbery.
And Hesperous4 put up his cluddie hude,
Schawand his lustie visage in the sky.
Than Lourence luikit up, quhair he couth ly,
And kest his hand upon his ee on hicht.

Merie and glade that cummit wes the nicht.

Out off the wod unto ane hill he went,
Quhair he micht se the tuinkling sternis cleir.
And all the planetis off the firmament,
Thair cours, and eik thair moving in the spheir.
Sum retrograde, and sum stationeir.
And off the zodiak in quhat degre,
Thay wer ilk ane, as Lawrence leirnit me.

---

1 foirsaid Tod The aforesaid “Tod,” a Scots word for “Fox,” refers to the fox Lawrence, who appears first in the previous fable, “The Taill of Schir Chantecleir and the Foxe” (not included in this edition), which is an adaptation of Geoffrey Chaucer’s Nun’s Priest’s Tale.

2 wedow … Chantecleir In the previous fable, Chaunticleer is the widow’s rooster, who escapes certain death in the jaws of the fox Lawrence by convincing him to open his mouth to speak to the widow’s pursuing hounds.

3 Goddes This likely refers to Thetis, nymph of the sea, frequently representative of the sea itself.

4 Phebus Name for Apollo, god of the sun.

5 Hesperous Hesperus, the evening star.
Than Saturne\(^1\) auld\(^9\) wes enterit in Capricorne.\(^2\)
And Juppiter\(^3\) movit in Sagittarie.\(^4\)
And Mars\(^5\) up in the Rammis\(^6\) heid wes borne.

And Phebus in the Lyoun\(^7\) furth can carie.\(^8\)
Venus\(^8\) the Crab,\(^9\) the Mone\(^10\) wes in Aquarie,\(^10\)
Mercurius\(^11\) the god off eloquence,
Into the Virgyn\(^12\) maid his residence.

But\(^{13}\) astrolab, quadrant, or almanak,\(^{13}\)
The moving off the hevin this tod can tak,\(^{13}\)
Quhat influence and constellatioun,
Wes lyk\(^{13}\) to fall upon the eirth adoun.
And to him self he said withoutin mair,\(^{13}\)
“Weill worth\(^{13}\) my ffather, that send me to the lair.\(^{9}\)
My destinie, and eik my weird\(^{10}\) I ken,\(^{10}\)
My aventure\(^{10}\) is cleirlie to me kend.\(^{10}\)
With mischeif myngit\(^{11}\) is my mortall men,\(^{11}\)
My misleving\(^{11}\) the soner bot gif I mend.
It is reward off sin ane schamefull end.
Thairfoir I will ga seik sum confessour,
And schryiff\(^{12}\) me clene off my sinnis to this hour.

“Allace,” quod he, “richt waryit\(^{10}\) ar we thevis.\(^{10}\)
Our lyfis set\(^{10}\) ilk nicht in aventure.\(^{10}\)

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1. Saturne  Saturn, planetary god and king of the Titans who was overthrown by his son Jupiter.
2. Capricorne  Capricorn, the “horned goat” astrological sign and constellation associated with Saturn.
3. Juppiter  Jupiter, planetary deity and king of the gods.
4. Sagittarie  Sagittarius, the “archer” constellation of the zodiac.
5. Mars  Planetary god of war.
6. Rammis  The Ram is the astrological sign associated with Mars.
7. Lyoun  The Lion or “Leo” is the astrological constellation the sun crosses from approximately 23 July to 22 August.
8. Venus  Planetary goddess of love.
9. Crab  The Crab or “Cancer” is the astrological constellation the sun crosses from approximately 21 June to 23 July.
10. Aquarie  Aquarius, the “water-carrier” constellation of the zodiac.
11. Mercurius  Mercury, planetary god of eloquence and messenger of the gods.
12. Virgyn  The Virgin or “Virgo” is the astrological constellation the sun crosses from approximately 24 August to 22 September.
13. astrolab … almanak  The astrolabe and quadrant are instruments that measure the angles of heavenly bodies for navigation and the almanac is a calendar for astrological prognostication.
Our cursit craft full mony man mischevis,\textsuperscript{a}
For ever we steill, and ever ar lyke pure.\textsuperscript{a}
In draid and scharme our dayis we indure.
Syne ’Widdinek,’\textsuperscript{b} and ‘Crakraip’\textsuperscript{b} callit als,
And till our hyre\textsuperscript{es} hangit up be the hals.’\textsuperscript{c}

Accusand\textsuperscript{d} thus his cankerit\textsuperscript{d} conscience,
In to ane craig\textsuperscript{e} he kest about his ee.
So saw hie cummand ane lyttill than frome hence,\textsuperscript{f}
Ane worthie doctour in divinitie,
Freir Wolff Waitskaith,\textsuperscript{e} in science wonder sle.\textsuperscript{e}
To preiche and pray wes new\textsuperscript{g} cummit ffra the closter,\textsuperscript{h}
With beidis\textsuperscript{e} in hand sayand his Pater Noster.\textsuperscript{i}

Seand\textsuperscript{f} this wolff this wylie tratour tod,
On kneis fell, with hude in to his nek.\textsuperscript{f}
“Welcome, my gostlie\textsuperscript{f} ffather under God,”
Quod he, with mony binge\textsuperscript{g} and mony bek.\textsuperscript{g}
“Ha,” quod the wolff,” schir Tod for quhat effek\textsuperscript{g}
Mak ye sic feir?\textsuperscript{g} Ryse up, put on your hude.”
“Father,” quod he, “I haif grit cause to dude.\textsuperscript{g}

“Ye ar mirrour, lanterne, and sicker\textsuperscript{g} way,
Suld\textsuperscript{g} gyde sic sempill folk as me to grace.
Your bair feit, and your russet coull\textsuperscript{h} off gray,
Your lene cheik, your paill and pietious face,
Schawis to me your perfite halines.
For weill wer him that anis\textsuperscript{h} is his lyve,
Had hap\textsuperscript{h} to yow his sinnis ffor to schryve.”\textsuperscript{h}

“Na, selie\textsuperscript{i} Lowrence,” quod the wolf and leuch,\textsuperscript{i}
“It plesis me that ye ar penitent.”
“Off reif” and stouth,” schir, I can tell aneuch,
That causis me full sair for to repent.
Bot ffather, byde\textsuperscript{i} still heir upon the bent,\textsuperscript{i}
I yow beseik, and heir me to declair,
My conscience, that prikkis\textsuperscript{i} me sa sair.”

“All, quod the wolff, “sit doun upon thy kne.”\textsuperscript{i}
And he doun bairheid\textsuperscript{i} sat full humilly.”
\textsuperscript{i}

\textsuperscript{a} Pater Noster Latin: Our Father; the Lord’s Prayer.
And syn began with “Benedicitie.”
Quhen I this saw, I drew ane lyttil by.
For it effeiris nouther to heir, nor spy,
Nor to reveill thing said under that seill.
Unto the tod this gait the wolf couth kneill.

“Art thow contrite, and sarie in thy spreit,
For thy trespass? “Na schir, I can not duid,
Me think that hennis ar sa honie sweit,
And lambe flesh that new ar lettin bluid,
For to repent my mynd can not concluid.
Bot of this thing, that I haif slane sa few.”

Sen thow can not forthink thy wicketnis,
Will thow forbeir in tyme to cum and mend?”
Haifand nane uther craft me to defend?
Neid causis me to steill quhair ever I wend.
I eschame to thig, I can not wirk, ye wait.
Yit wald I fane pretend to gentill stait.”

“Weill,” quod he, “thow wantis pointis twa,
Belangand to perfyte confessioun.
To the thrid part off penitence let us ga,
Will thow tak pane for thy transgressioun?”
“Na, schir, considder my complexioun,
Sele and waik, and off my nature tender,
Lo, will ye se, I am baith lene and sklernder.

“Yit nevertheless I wald, swa it wer licht,
Schort and not grevand to my tenderness,
Tak part off pane, fulfill it gif I micht,
To set my sele saull in way off grace.”

“Thow sall, quod he, “forbeir flesch until Pasche,
To tame this corps, that cursit carioun.
And heir I reik the full remissioun.”

“I grant thairto, swa ye will giff me leif,
To eit puddingis, or laip ane lyttil blude,
Or heid, or feit, or paynchis let me preif.”

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1 *Benedicitie* Latin: Bless you. In this context, it indicates the beginning of the rite of confession.
In case I fall, no flesh unto my fude."
“For grit mister I gif thee leif to dude,”
"Twaise in the oulk, for neid may haif na law.”
“God yeild yow, schir, for that text weill I knaw.”

Quhen this wes said, the wolf his wayis went,  
The foxe on fute he fure unto the flude.  
To fang him fich haillie wes his intent.  
Bot quhen he saw the watter, and wallis woude,  
Astonist all still in ane stair he stude.  
And said, “Better that I had biddin at hame,  
Nor bene ane ffischar in the Devillis name.

“Now man I scraip my meit out off the sand,”  
And I haif nouther boittis nor net bait.”  
As he wes thus ffor ffalt off meit murnand,  
Lukand about his leving ffor to lait.  
Under ane tre he saw ane trip off gait.  
Than wes he blyith, and in ane hewch him hid,  
And ffra the gait he stall ane lyttil kid.

Syne over the heuch unto the see he hyis,  
And tule the kid be the hornist twane,  
And in the watter outer twysis or thryis,  
He dowkit him, and till him he did sayne,  
“Ga doun schir Kid, cum up schir Salmond, agane.”  
Quhill he wes deid syne to the land him drewch,  
And off that new maid salmond eit anewch.

Thus fynelie fillit with young tender meit,  
Unto ane derne for dreid he him addrest,  
Under ane busk, quhair that the sone can beit,  
To beik” his breast and bellie he thoicht best.  
And rekleslie he said, quhair he did rest,  
Straikand his wame aganis the sonis heit,  
“Upon this wame set wer ane bolt full meit.”

Quhen this wes said the keipar off the gait,  
Cairfull in hart his kid wes stollen away,  
On everilk syde full warlie couth he wait,  
Quhill at the last, he saw quhair Lowrence lay,  
And bow he bent, ane flane with ffedderis gray.
He haillit° to the heid, and or he steird,°
The foxe he prikkit° fast unto the eird.°

155 “Now,” quod the foxe, “Allace and wellaway!
Gorrit° I am, and may na forther gang.°
Me think na man may speik ane word in play,
Bot now on dayis,° in ernist° it is tane.”°
He harlit° him, and out he drew his flane.

And for his kid, and uther violence,
He tuke his skyn, and maid ane recompence.

“MORALITAS”

This suddand deith, and unprovysit° end,
Of this fals tod, without provisioun,°
Exempill is exhortand folk to amend.°
165 For dreid of sic ane lyke confusioun,°
For mony now hes gude professioun,°
Yit not repentis, nor for thair sinnis greit,
Because thay think thair lustie lyfe sa sweit.

Sum bene also throw consuetude and ryte,°
Vincust° with carnall sensualitie.
Suppose° thay be as for the tyme contryte,
Can not forbeir, nor fra thair sinnis fle.
Use drawis nature swa in propertie,°
170 Of beist and man, that neidlingis° thay man° do,
As thay of lang tyme hes bene hantit to.°

Be war gude folke, and feir this suddane schoit,°
Quhilk smytis sair withoutin resistence.
Attend wyislie,° and in your hartis be noit.°
Aginis deith may na man mak defence,

180 Ceis of zour sin, remord° your conscience,
Obey unto your God and ye sall wend.°
Efter your deith, to blis withoutin end.

Editor Denton Fox suggests the following translation: “Nature is drawn (compelled) by custom in the character. …”
"The Táll of the Lyoun and the Mous"1

In middis of June, that sweit seasoun,
Quhen Phebus with his bemis bricht
Had dryit up the dew fra daill and doun,
And all the land maid with his bemis licht,

In ane mornyng betuix mid day and nicht
I rais and put all sleuth and sleip asyde,
And to ane wod I went allone but gyde.

Sweit wes the smell off flouris quhyte and reid,
The noyes off birdis richt delitious,
The bewis braid blomit abone my heid,
Off all plesance that place wes plenteous,
With sweit odouris and birdis harmony;
The morning myld, my mirth wes mair for thy.

The rosis reid arrayit on rone and ryce,
The prymeros, and the purpour violat bla.
Sic mirth the mavis and the merle couth ma.
The blossummis blythe brak up on bank and bra,
The smell off herbis and off fowlis cry,
Contending quha suld have the victory.

Me to conserve than fra the sonis heit,
Under the schaddow off ane hawthorne grene,
I lenit doun amang the flouris sweit,
Syne cleid my heid, and closit baith my ene.
On sleip I fell amang thir bewis bene.
And in my dreme, me thocht come throw the schaw
The fairest man that ever befoir I saw.

His gowne wes off ane claiith quhyte as milk,
His chemeis wes off chambelate purpour broun,
His hude off scarlet, bordowrit weill with silk,

---

1 The Táll … the Mous The present text, prepared by Alex Mueller, is based on a facsimile of Thomas Bassandyne’s 1571 print, with consultation of the editions of Denton Fox, The Poems of Robert Henryson (1981); Robert Kindrick, The Morall Fabillis (1997); and David Parkinson, The Complete Works (2010).

2 fairest man … I saw This description contrasts markedly with conventional illustrations of Aesop, including the frontispiece of the Bassandyne print, which features an Aesop who is grotesquely large, humpbacked, and meantly arrayed.
Morall Fabillis of Esope the Phrygian

On hekill withe ə untill his girdill doun,
His bonet ə round, and off the auld fassoun,
His heird wes quhyte, his ene wes grit ə and gray,
With lokker ə hair, quhilk over his schulderis lay.

Swan's-quill sticking behind his ear
gold pen-case
all that his belt can bear
well furnished / gear
auw-inspiring
right where

Ane roll off paper in his hand he bair,
Ane swannis pen stikand under his eir. ə
Ane inkhorne, with ane prettie gilt pennair, ə
Ane bag off silk, all at his belt can beir. ə

Thus wes he gudelie grathit ə in his geir, ə
Off stature large, and with ane feirfull ə face.
Evin quhair ə I lay he come ane sturdie pace,
And said, “God speid, my sone,” and I wes fane ə
Off that couth ə word, and off his cumpany.

“Welcome, father,” and he sat doun me by.
“Displeis yow not, my gude maister, thocht ə
Demand your birth, your facultye, ə and name,
Quhy ə ye come heir, or quhair ə ye dwell at hame?”

“My sone,” said he, “I am off gentill blude.
My native land is Rome, withoutin nay, ə
And in that towne first to the sculis I yude, ə
In civile law studyit full ə mony ane day,
And now my winning ə is in hevin for ay. ə

Esope I hecht; ə my writing and my werk
Is couth ə and kend ə to mony cunning ə clerk.”

“O Maister Esope, poet lawriate,
God wait ə ye ar full deir welcum to me.
Ar ye not he that all thir fabillis wrate,
Quhilk ə in effect, suppois ə thay fenyeit ə be,
Ar full off prudence and moralitie?”

“Fair sone,” said he, “I am the samin ə man.”
God wait gif ə that my hert wes merie than.

I said, “Esope, my maister venerabill,
I yow beseik hartlie for cheritie,
Ye wald not disdayne ə to tell ane prettie fabill
Conclud and with ane gude moralitie.”

Schaikand his heid, he said, “My sone, lat be,”
For quhat\textsuperscript{8} is it worth to tell ane fenyeit taill,
Quhen haly preiching may na thing availl?

"Now in this warld me think richt few\textsuperscript{8} or nane
To Goddis word that hes devotioun.
The eir is deif,\textsuperscript{8} the hart\textsuperscript{8} is hard as stane.
Now oppin sin without\textsuperscript{8} correctioun,
The hart inclynand\textsuperscript{8} to the eirth ay doun.
Sa roustit\textsuperscript{8} is the warld with canker klak\textsuperscript{8}
That now my taillis may lytill succour mak."

“Yis, gentill schir,” said I, “for my requeist,
Not to displeis your fatherheid, I pray,
Under the figure off ane brutall\textsuperscript{8} beist,
Ane morall fabill ye wald denye\textsuperscript{8} to say.
Quha wait nor I may leir\textsuperscript{8} and beir away
Sum thing thairby heirefter may availl?\textsuperscript{8}"
“I grant,” quod he, and thus begouth\textsuperscript{8} ane taill.

"THE END OF THE PROLOG AND BEGINIS THE TAILL"

Ane lyoun, at his pray war foirrun,\textsuperscript{8}
To recreat\textsuperscript{8} his limmis\textsuperscript{8} and to rest,
Beikand\textsuperscript{8} his breist and belly at the sun,
Under ane tre lay in the fair forest.
Swa\textsuperscript{8} come ane trip\textsuperscript{8} off myis\textsuperscript{8} out off thair nest,
Richt tait\textsuperscript{8} and trig,\textsuperscript{8} all dansand in ane gyis,\textsuperscript{8}
And over the lyoun lansit\textsuperscript{8} twyis or thrys.

He lay so still, the myis wes not effeird,
Bot to and fro out over him tuke thair trace.\textsuperscript{8}
Sum tirlit\textsuperscript{8} at the campis\textsuperscript{8} off his beird,
Sum spairit\textsuperscript{8} not to claw him on the face,
Merie and glaid, thus dansit thay ane space,
Till at the last the nobill lyoun woke,
And with his pow\textsuperscript{8} the maister mous he tuke.
Scho\textsuperscript{8} gave ane cry and all the laif\textsuperscript{8} agast,
Thair dansing left, and hid thame sone alquhair.\textsuperscript{8}
Scho that wes tane\textsuperscript{8} cryit and weipit fast,
And said “Allace” ofymes that scho come thair.
“Now am I tane ane wofull presonair,
And for my gilt traistis incontinent\textsuperscript{o} trust immediately

Off lyfe and deith\textsuperscript{o} to thoil\textsuperscript{o} the jugement.” death / suffer

Than spak the lyoun to that cairfull\textsuperscript{o} mous: distressed

“Thow cative\textsuperscript{o} wretche and vile unworthie thing, miserable

Over malapart\textsuperscript{o} and eik\textsuperscript{o} presumpteous too impudent / also

Thow wes, to mak out over me thy tripping.”

Knew thow not weill I wes baith lord and king
death / suffer

Off beistis all?” “Yes,” quod the mous, “I knaw, misunderstood / low

Bot I misknew, because ye lay so law.”

“Lord, I besieik\textsuperscript{o} thy kinglie royaltie, beseech

Heir\textsuperscript{o} quh I say, and tak in patience. hear

Consider first my simple povertie then

And syne\textsuperscript{o} thy mychtie hie magnyfycence. also

Se als\textsuperscript{o} how thingis done off negligence, thought

Nouther off malice nor of presumtioun,

The rather\textsuperscript{o} suld have grace and remissioun. sooner

“We wer repleit\textsuperscript{o} and had grit aboundance
d… full [of food]

Off alkin\textsuperscript{o} thingis, sic as to us efeird.\textsuperscript{o}
every kind / [is] proper

The sweit sesoun provokit us to dance taught

And mak sic mirth as nature to us leird.\textsuperscript{o}
earth

Ye lay so still and law upon the eird\textsuperscript{o}

That be my sawll we weind\textsuperscript{o} ye had bene deid. thought

Elles wald we not have dancit over your heid.”

“For thy trespas thow can mak na defence, bit / promise

My nobill persoun thus to vilipend.\textsuperscript{o} treat contemptuously

Off thy feiris,\textsuperscript{o} nor thy awin negligence, companions

For to excuse thow can na cause pretend.

Thairfoir thow suffer sall ane schamefull end

decreed

And deith, sic as to tressoun is decreit,\textsuperscript{o}
dragged

Upon the gallous harlit\textsuperscript{o} be the feit.”
“Na, mercie, lord, at thy gentrise I ase,
As thow art king off beistis coronate,
Sober thy wraith, and let it overpas,
And mak thy mynd to mercy inclynate.

I grant offence is done to thyne estate,
Quhairfoir worthie am to suffer deid,
Bot gif thy kinglie mercie reik remeid.

“In everie juge mercy and reuth suld be
As assessouris and collaterall.
Without mercie justice is crueltie,
As said is in the lawis speciall.
Quhen rigour sittis in the tribunall,
The equitie off law quha may sustene?
Richt few or nane but mercie gang betwene.

“Alswa ye knaw the honour triumphall
Off all victour upon the strenth dependis
Off his conqueist, quhill manlie in battell
Throw jeopardie of weir lang defendis.
Quhat pryce or loving quhen the battell endis,
Is said off him, that overcummis ane man,
Him to defend quhill nouther may nor can?

“Ane thousand myis to kill and eik devoir
Is lytill manheid to ane strang lyoun.
Full lytill worship have ye wyn theairfoir,
To quhais’ strenth is na comparisoun.
It will degraid sum part off your renoun
To sla ane mous, quhill may mak na defence,
Bot askand mercie at your excellence.

“Also it semis not your celsitude,
Quhilk usis daylie meittis delitious,
To fyle your teith or lippis with my blude,
Quhilk to your stomok is contagious.
Unhailsum meit is of ane sarie mous,
And that namelie untill ane strang lyoun,
Uont till be fed with gentill vennesoun.

“My lyfe is lytill worth, my deith is les.
Yit and I leif I may peradventure
Supple your hienes beand in distres.
For oft is sene, ane man off small stature

For oft is sene, ane man off small stature
Reskewit hes ane lord off hie honour,  
Keipit\(^a\) that wes in poynt\(^a\) to be overthrawin  
Throw misfortoun: sic cace may be your awin.”

Quhen this wes said, the lyoun his langage
Paissit,\(^o\) and thocht according to ressoun,
And gart\(^o\) merce his cruell ire asswage,
And to the mous grantit remissioun,
Oppinnit his pow, and scho on kneis fell doun,
And baith hir handis unto the hevin upheild,
Cryand, “Almichty God mot\(^o\) yow foryeild!”

Quhen scho wes gone, the lyoun held\(^o\) to hunt,
For he had nocht,\(^o\) bot levit\(^o\) on his pray,
And slew baith tayme and wyld, as he wes wont,
And in the cuntrie maid ane grit deray;
Till at the last the pepill fand the way
This cruell lyoun how that thay mycht tak.
Off hempyrn cordis strang nettis couth\(^o\) thay mak,
And in ane rod,\(^o\) quhair he wes wont to ryn,\(^o\)
With raipiis rude\(^o\) fra tre to tre it band.\(^o\)
Syne kest\(^e\) ane range on raw\(^e\) the wod within,
With hornis blast and kennentis\(^e\) fast calland.
The lyoun fled, and throw the ron\(^e\) rynndand,
Fell in the net and hankit\(^o\) fute and heid,
For all his strenth he couth mak na remeid,
Welterand\(^o\) about with hiddeous rummissing.\(^o\)
Quhyle\(^o\) to, quhyle fra,\(^o\) quhill\(^o\) he mycht succour get.
Bot all in vane, it vailyeit\(^e\) him na thing,
The mair he flang,\(^e\) the faster wes the net.
The raipiis rude wes sa about him plet\(^e\)
On everilk\(^e\) syde, that succour saw he nane,
Bot styll lyand,\(^e\) and murnand\(^e\) maid his mane.\(^e\)

“O lamit\(^e\) lyoun, liggand\(^e\) heir sa law,
Quhair is the mycht off thy magnyfycence,
Off quhome\(^o\) all brutall beist in eird stude aw,\(^o\)
And dred\(^o\) to luke upon thy excellence?
But hoip\(^o\) or help, but\(^o\) succour or defence,
In bandis strang heir man I ly, allace, must / lie, alas
Till I be slane; I se nane uther other grace.

“Thair is na wy man / avenge that will my harms wreik grace.
Nor creature do confort to my croun.
Quha sall me bute help? Quha sall my bandis breik?
Quha sall me put fra pane deliver me from the pain off this presoun?”
Be as soon as he had maid this lamentatioun,
Throw aventure, heard / noise the lytill mous come neir,
And off the lyoun hard heard / noise the pietuous beir;

And suddanlie it come in till hir into her mynd
That it suld be the lyoun did hir grace, [who] showed her mercy
And said, “Now wer I fals and richt unkynd return / courtesy
Bot gif I quit goes sumpart off thy gentrace return / courtesy
Thow did to me,” and on this way scho gais goes.
To hir fellowis, and on thame fast can to them hastily did cry,
“Cum help, cum help!” and thay come all in hy.

“Lo said the mous, “this is the samin lyoun
That grantit grace to me quhen I wes tane,
And now is fast heir bundin bound in presoun,
Brekind breaking / sore his hart with sair murning and mane;
Bot unless we him help, off succour wait he nane.
Cum help to quyte return / deed ane gude turne for ane uther.
Go, louys free him sone”; and thay said, “ye, gude brother.”

Thay tuke na knyfe, thair teith wes scharpe anewch: enough
To se that sicht, forsuiuth, it wes grit wouner
How that they ran amang the rapis tewch, in truth
Befoir, behind, sum yeid about, sum under,
And schuir cut / apart the raipis off the net in schunder.
Syne bad him ryse, and he start up anone,
And thankit thame; syne on his way is gone.

Now is the lyoun fre off all danger,
Lows free and delyverit to his libertie
Be by lytill beistis off ane small power,
As ye have hard, because he had pietie.
Quod I, “Maister, is thair ane moralitie

¹ brother Up to this point the mouse is referred to as a female, with the possible exceptions of the lion’s capture of the “maister mous” (l. 259) and the mouse’s self-identification with a “man off small stature” (l. 340).
In this fabill? “Yea, sone,” he said, “richt gude.”
“I pray yow, schir,” quod I, “ye wald conclude.”

“MORALITAS”

As I suppois, this mychtie gay lyoun
May signifie ane prince or empiour,
Ane potestate, or yit ane king with croun,
Of his pepill that takis na labour
To reule and steir the land, and justice keip,
Bot lyis still in lustis, sleuth, and sleip.

The fair forest with levis, lowne and le,
With foulis sang and flouris ferlie sweit,
Is bot the world and his prosperitie,
As fals plesance myngit with cair repleit.
Richt as the rois with froist and wynter weit
Faidis, swa dois the warld, and thame desavis
Quhilk in thair lustis maist confidence havis.

Thir lytill myis ar bot the commountie,
Wantoun, unwyse, without correctioun;
Thair lordis and princis quhen that thay se
Of justice mak nane executioun,
Thay dreid na thing to mak rebelliouin
And disobey, for quhy thay stand nane aw,
That garris thair soveranis misknaw.

Be this fabill, ye lordis of prudence
May considder the vertew of pietie,
And to remit sumtyme ane grit offence,
And mitigate with mercy crueltie.
Oftymis is sene ane man of small degre
Hes quit ane kinbute1 baith for gude and ill,
As lord hes done rigour or grace him till.

Quha wait how sone ane lord of grit renoun,
Rolland in wardlie lust and vane plesance,
May be overthrowin, destroyit, and put doun
Throw fals fortoun, quhilk of all variance

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1 *kinbute* Compensation for a homicide that the killer provides to the kin of the killed. Some editors prefer “quit ane kinbute” to “quit a commoun,” which means “repay a debt.”
Robert Henryson

Is haill maistres, of the dance
Till injust men, and blindis thame so soir
That thay na perrell can provyde befoir?
Their rural men, that stentit hes the net
In quhilk the lyoun sudderlie wes tane,
Waittit alway amendis for to get,
For hurt men wyritis in the marbull stane.
Mair till expound, as now, I lett allane,
Bot king and lord may weill wit quhat I mene:
Figure heirof of tymis hes bene sene.

Quhen this wes said, quod Esope, “My fair child,
I the beseik and all men for to pray
That tressoun of this cuntrie be exyld,
And justice regne, and lordis keip thair fay
Unto thair soverane king baith nycht and day.”
And with that word he vanist and I woke,
Syne throw the schaw my journey hamewart tuke.

FINIS

“THE PREICHING OF THE SWALLOW”

The hie prudence and wirking merveles,
The profound wit off God omnipotent,
Is sa perfty and sa ingenious,
Excellent far all mannis jugement.
For quhy to him all thing is ay prsent,
Ryacht as it is or ony tyme saull be,
Befoir the sicht off his divinitie.

Thairfoir our saull with sensualitie
So fetterit is in presoun corporall
We may not cleirlie understand nor se
God as He is, nor thingis celestiall,
Our mirk and deidlie corps naturall
Blindis the spiritaul operatioun
Lyke as ane man wer bundin in presoun.
In Metaphisik Aristotell\(^1\) sayis
That mannis saull is lyke ane bakkis ee,\(^5\)  
Quhilk lurkis still,\(^0\) als lang as licht off day is,  
And in the gloming\(^0\) cummis furth to fle.\(^0\)  
Hir ene ar waik,\(^0\) the sone scho may not se.  
Sa is our saull with fantasie opprest,  
To knaw the thingis in nature manifest.

For God is in his power infinite,  
And mannis saull is febill and over small,  
Off understanding waik\(^0\) and unperfite\(^0\)  
To comprehend him that contenis\(^0\) all.  
Nane suld presume be ressoun naturall  
To seirche\(^0\) the secreitis off the Trinitie,  
Bot trow fermelie  
And lat all ressoun be.

Yit nevertheles we may haif knawlegeing\(^0\)  
Off God almychtie be his creatouris,  
That he is gude, fair, wyis, and bening.\(^0\)  
Exempill tak be thir jolie flouris,  
Rycht sweit off smell and plesant off colouris,  
Sum grene, sum blew, sum purpour, quhyte, and reid,  
Thus distribute be\(^0\) gift off his Godheid.

The firmament payntit with sternis\(^0\) cleir  
From eist to west rolland in cirkill round,  
And everilk\(^0\) planet in his proper spheir,  
In moving makand harmonie and sound,  
The fyre, the air, the watter, and the ground.  
Till understand it is aneuch, I wis,\(^0\)  
That God in all his werkis wittie\(^0\) is.

Luke\(^0\) weill the fische that swimmis in the se.  
Luke weill in eirth all kynd off bestyall.\(^9\)  
The foulis fair, sa forcelie\(^0\) thay fle,  
Scheddand\(^0\) the air with pennis\(^0\) grit and small.  
Syne luke\(^0\) to man, that he maid last off all,  
Lyke\(^0\) to his image and his similitude.\(^0\)  
Be thir we knaw that God is fair and gude.

\(^1\) *Metaphisik Aristotell* Aristotle (384–322 BCE), an ancient Greek philosopher, wrote a treatise known as the *Metaphysics*. 
All creature he maid for the behufe
Off man, and to his supportatioun
In to this eirth, baith under and abufe,
In number, wecht, and dew proprotioun.
The difference off tyme, and ilk seasoun
Concordin till our opurtunitie,
As daylie be experience we may se.

The somer with his jolie mantill off grene,
With flouris fair furrit on everilk fent,
Quhilk Flora, goddes off the flouris, quene,
Hes to that lord as for his seasoun lent,
And Phebus, with his goldin bemis gent,
Hes purfellit and paynit plesandly,
With heit and moysture stilland from the sky.

Syne harvest hait quhen Ceres, that goddes,
Hir barnis benit hes with abundance,
And Bachus, god off wyne, renewit hes
The tume pyipis in Italie and France,
With wynis wicht and liquour off plesance,
And the plenty of the season
That never wes full off quheit nor uther corne.

Syne wynter wan, quhen austerne Eolus,
God off the wynd, with blastis boreall
The grene garment off somer glorious
Hes all to-rent and revin in pecis small.
Than flouris fair faidit with froist man fall,
And birdis blyth changit thair noitis sweit
In styll murning, neir slane with swan and sleit.

Thir dalis deip with dubbis drounit is,
Baith hill and holt heillit with frostis hair,
And bewis bene laithit bair off bliss
Be wickit windis off the winter wair.
All wyld beistis than from the bentis bair
Drawis for dreid unto thair dennis deip,
Coucheand for cauld in coifis to keip.

Syne cummis ver quhen winter is away,
The secretar off somer with his sell,
Quhen columbie up keikis throw the clay,
Quhilk fleit\textsuperscript{o} wes befoir with froistes fell.\textsuperscript{o}  
The mavis\textsuperscript{o} and the merle\textsuperscript{o} beginnis to mell,\textsuperscript{o}  
The lark on loft,\textsuperscript{o} with uthir birdis haiil.\textsuperscript{o}  
That drawis furth fra derne,\textsuperscript{o} over doun\textsuperscript{o} and daill.

90  
That samin seasoun, in to ane\textsuperscript{o} soft morning,  
Rycht blyth\textsuperscript{o} that bitter blastis wer ago,\textsuperscript{o}  
Unto the wod, to se the flouris spring,  
And heir the mavis sing and birdis mo,  
I passit furth, syne lukit to and fro  
To se the soill, that wes richt sessonabill,  
Sappie,\textsuperscript{o} and to resave\textsuperscript{o} all seidis abill.\textsuperscript{o}  
Moving thusgait,\textsuperscript{o} grit myrth\textsuperscript{o} I tuke in mynd,
And thairoff will yone churll his nettis mak,
Under the quhilk he thinkis us to tak. 

“Thairfoir I reid we pas quhen he is gone
At evin, and with our naillis scharp and small
Out off the eirth scraip we yone seid anone

And eit it up, for giff it growis we sall
Have cause to weip heirefter ane and all.
Se we remeid thairfoir furth-with, instante,
Nam levius laedit quicquid praevidimus ante. 

“For clerkis sayis it is nocht sufficient
To considder that is befoir thyne ee,
Bot prudence is ane inwart argument
That garris ane man provyde and foirse
Quhat gude, quhat evill, is liklie for to be
Off everilk thing behald the fynall end,
And swa fra perrell the better him defend.”

The lark, lauchand, the swallow thus couth scorne,
And said scho fischit lang befoir the net.
“The barne” is eith to busk that is unborne.
All growis nocht that in the ground is set.

The nek to stoup quhen it the straik sall get
Is sone aneuich; deith on the fayest fall.”
Thus scornit thay the swallow ane and all.

Despsyning thus hir helthsum document,
The foulis ferlie tike thair flicht anone,
Sum with ane bir thay braidit over the bent,
And sum agane ar to the grene wod gone.
Upon the land quhair I wes left allone
I tuke my club, and hamewart couth I carie,
Swa ferliand as I had sene ane farie.

Thus passit furth quhill June, that jolie tyde,
And seidis that wer sawin off beforne
Wer growin hie, that hairis mycht thame hyde,
And als the quailye craikand in the corne.
I movit furth betuix midday and morne

\[^1\text{Nam … ante} \text{ Latin: “For [s]he will suffer less who provides beforehand.”}\]
Unto the hedge under the hawthorne grene,
Quhair I befoir the said° birdis had sene.

And as I stude, be aventure° and cace,°
The samin birdis as I haif said yow air,°
I hoip° because it wes thair hanting° place,
Mair off succour,° or yit mair solitair,°
Thay lychtit° doun, and quhen thay lychtit wair,
The swallow swyth° put furth ane pietuous pyme,°
Said, “Wo is him can not bewar in tyme!

“O blind birdis, and full off negligence,
Unmyndfull off your awin prosperitie,
Lift up your sicht° and tak gude adverentence,°
Luke to the lint that growis on yone le!°
Yone is the thing I bad, forsuith,
Thay cryit all, and bad the swallow ceis,°
And said, “yone lint heirefter will do gude,
For linget is to lytill birdis fude.

“We think, quhen that yone lint bollis° ar ryip,°
To mak us feist and fill us off the seid,
Magre° yone churll, and on it sing and pyip,°”
“Weill,” quod the swallow, “freindes, hardilie beid.
Do as ye will, bot certane, sair I dreid
Heirefter ye sall find als sour as sweit,
Quhen ye ar speldit° on yone carlis speit.°

“The awner° off yone lint ane fouler° is,
Richt cautelous° and full off subteltie.
His pray full sendill° tymis will he mis,
Bot giff we birdis all the warrer° be.
Full mony off our kin he hes gart de,°
And thocht it bot ane sport to spill thair blude.
God keip me fra him, and the halie Rude!°”
Thir small birdis, haveand bot lytill thocht
Off perrell that mycht fall be aventure,
The counsell off the swallow set at nocht,
Bot tuke thair flicht and furth togidder fure.
Sum to the wode, sum markit to the mure.
I tuke my staff, quhen this wes said and done,
And walkit hame, for it drew neir the none.

The lynt ryipit, the carll pullit the lyne,
Rippillit the bollis, and in beitis set,
It steipit in the burne, and dryit syne,
And with ane bittill knokkit it and bet,
Syne swingillit it weill, and hekkillit in the flet.
His wyfe it span, and twynit it in to threid,
Off quhilk the fowlar nettis maid indeid.

The wynter come, the wickit wind can blaw,
The woddis grene wer wallowit with the weit,
Baith firth and fell with froistys wer maid faw,
Slonkis and slaik maid slidderie with the sleit.
The foulis fair, for falt thay fell off feit.
On bewis bair it wes na bute to byde,
Bot hyit unto housis thame to hyde.

Sum in the barn, sum in the stak off corne
Thair lugeing tuke and maid thair residence.
The fowlar saw, and grit aithis hes sworne,
Thay suld be tane trewlie for thair expence.
His nettis hes he set with diligence,
And in the snaw he schulit hes ane plane,
And heillit it all over with calf agane.

Thir small birdis, seand the calff, wes glaid,
Trowand it had bene corne thay lychtit doun,
Bot of the nettis na presume thay had,
Nor of the fowlaris fals intentioun.
To scraip and seik thair meit thay maid thame boun.

The swallow on ane lyytill branche neir by,
Dreiddand for gyle, thus loud on thame couth cry:

"Into that calf scraip quhill your naillis bleid.
Thair is na corne, ye laubour all in vane.
Trow ye yone churll for pietie will yow feid?"
Morall Fabillis of Esope the Phrygian

235 Na, na, he hes it heir layt for ane trane.\(^{o}\)  
Remov,\(^{o}\) I reid, or ellis ye will be slane.  
His nettis he hes set full prively,\(^{o}\)  
Reddie to draw, in tyme be war for thy!\(^{o}\)

“Grit fule is he that puttis in dangeir

240 His lyfe, his honour, for ane thing off nocht.\(^{o}\)  
Grit fule is he that will not glaidlie heir  
Counsall in tyme, quhill it availl him nocht.\(^{1}\)  
Grit fule is he that hes na thing in thocht\(^{o}\)  
Bot thing present, and efter quhat may fall\(^{o}\)  
Nor off the end hes na memoriall.\(^{o}\)”

Thir small birdis, for hunger famischit neir,  
Full besie scraipand for to seik thair fude,  
The counsall off the swallow wald not heir,  
Suppois thair labour dyd thame lytill gude.  
Quhen scho thair fulische\(^{o}\) hartis understude  
Sa indurate,\(^{o}\) up in ane tre scho flew.  
With that thus churll over thame his nettis drew.

Allace, it wes grit hart sair\(^{o}\) for to se  
That bludie bowcheour\(^{o}\) beit thay\(^{o}\) birds doun,  
And for till heir, quhen thay wist\(^{o}\) weill to de,  
Thair cairfull sang and lamentatioun.  
Sum with ane staf he straik to eirth on swoun,\(^{o}\)  
Off sum the heid he straik, off sum he brak the crag,\(^{o}\)  
Sum half on lyfe\(^{o}\) he stoppit in his bag.

And quhen the swallow saw that thay wer deid,  
“Lo,” quod scho, “thus it happinnis mony syis\(^{o}\)  
On thame that will not tak counsall nor Reid  
Off prudent men or clerkis that ar wyis.  
This grit perrell I tauld thame mair than thryis.  
Now ar thay deid, and wo is me thairfoir!”

Scho tuke hir flicht, bot I hir saw no moir.

“MORALITAS”

Lo, worthie folk, Esope, that nobill clerk,  
Ane poet worthie to be lawreate,

\(^{1}\) quhill it availl him nocht Some editors substitute “mocht” for “nocht.” The line then reads, “while it might (mocht) help him.”
Quhen that he waikit\textsuperscript{\textdegree} from mair autentik\textsuperscript{\textdegree} werk, was free / authoritative

With uther ma,\textsuperscript{\textdegree} this foirsaid fabill wrate,\textsuperscript{\textdegree} many others / wrote

Quhilk at this tyme may weill be applicate\textsuperscript{\textdegree} applied

To gude morall edificatioun, meaning

Haifand ane sentence\textsuperscript{\textdegree} according to ressoun.

This carll and bond,\textsuperscript{\textdegree} of gentrice spoliate,\textsuperscript{\textdegree} bondman / devoid of gentility

Sawand this calf, thir small birdis to sla, deceit

It is the feind,\textsuperscript{\textdegree} quhilk fra the angelike\textsuperscript{\textdegree} state devil / angelic

Exylit\textsuperscript{\textdegree} is, as fals apostata,\textsuperscript{\textdegree} exiled / apostate

Quhilk day and nycht weryis\textsuperscript{\textdegree} not for to ga, weary

Sawand poysoun in mony wickit thocht
dearli has bought

In mannis saull, quhilk Christ full deir hes bocht.\textsuperscript{\textdegree} dearly has bought

And quhen the saull, as seid in to the eird, delectatioun

Gevis consent in delectatioun,\textsuperscript{\textdegree} delight

The wickit thocht beginnis for to breird\textsuperscript{\textdegree} sprout

In deidlie sin, quhilk is dampnatioun.

Ressoun is blindit with affectioun, custom engaged

And carnall lust grouis full grene and gay, custom engaged

Throw consuetude hantit\textsuperscript{\textdegree} from day to day.

Proceding furth be use\textsuperscript{\textdegree} and consuetude, habit

The sin ryipis, and schame is set on syde.

The feynd plettis\textsuperscript{\textdegree} his nettis scharp\textsuperscript{\textdegree} and rude,\textsuperscript{\textdegree} weaves / merciless / strong

And under plesance previlie\textsuperscript{\textdegree} dois hyde. secretly

Syne on the feild he sawis calf full wyde, true

Quhilk is bot tume and verray\textsuperscript{\textdegree} vanitie

Of fleschlie lust and vaine prosperitie.

Thir hungrie birdis, wretchis we may call, greedy / gather goods

Ay scaiapand in this worldis vane plesance,

Greddie\textsuperscript{\textdegree} to gadder gudis\textsuperscript{\textdegree} temporall, vane

Quhilk as the calf ar tume without substance, value

Lytill of availl\textsuperscript{\textdegree} and full of variance,

Lyke to the mow\textsuperscript{\textdegree} befoir the face of wind

Quhiskis\textsuperscript{\textdegree} away and makis wretchis blind.

This swallow, quhilk eschaipit\textsuperscript{\textdegree} is the snair,\textsuperscript{\textdegree} escaped / snare

The halie preichour weill may signifie,

Exhortand folk to walk, and ay be wair\textsuperscript{\textdegree} beware

Fra nettis of our wickit enemie,

Quha sleipis not, bot ever is reddie,
Quhen wretchis in this warld calf dois scraip,
To draw his net, than thay may not eschaip.

Allace, quhat cair, quhat weiping is and wo,
Quhen saull and bodie departit ar in twane?
The bodie to the wormis keitching go,
The saull to fyre, to everlestand pane.
Quhat helpis than this calf, thir gudis vane,
Quhen thow art put in Luceferis bag,
And brocht to hell, and hangit be the crag?

Thir hid nettis for to persave and se,
This sarie calf wyislie to understand,
Best is bewar in maist prosperitie,
For in this warld thair is na thing lestand.
Is na man wait how lang his stait will stand,
His lyfe will lest, nor how that he sall end
After his deith, nor quhiddar he sall wend.

Pray we thairfoir quhill we ar in this lyfe
For four thingis: the first, fra sin remufe;
The secund is fra all weir and stryfe;
The thrid is perfite cheritie and lufe;
The seird thing is, and maist for our behufe,
That is in blis with angellis to be fallow.
And thus endis the preiching of the swallow.

FINIS

"The Taill of the Wolf, and the Wedder"

Quhylum thair wes, as Esope can report,
Ane scheipheird duelland be ane forest neir.
Quhilk had ane hound, that did him girt comfort.
Full war he wes to walk his fauld but weir,
That nouther wolff, nor wildcat durst appeir,
Nor foxe on feild, nor yit no uther beist,
Bot he thame slew, or schaissit at the leist.

Sa happinnet it (as everilk beist man de)
This hound off saddand seiknes to be deid.
Bot than, God wait, " the keipar off the fe,"
For verray wo woxe wanner nor the weid.
"Allace," quod he, "now se I na remeid,
To saif" the selie beistis" that I keip,  
For wit" the wolff, weryit beis" all my scheip."  

It wald have maid ane mannis hart sair to se,  
The selie scheiphirdis lamentatioun.  
"Now is my darling deid, allace," quod he.  
"For now to beg my breid  
I may be boun,  
With pyikstaff," and with scrip" to fair" off toun."  
For all the beistis befoir banonit bene,  
Will schute" upon my beistis with ire and tene.""  

With that ane wedder" wretchitlie1 wan" on fute:  
"Maister," quod he, "mak merie, and be blyth.  
To brek your hart flor bail," it is na bute.""  
For ane deid dog ye na cair" on yow kyith."  
Ga ffetche him hither," and fla" his skyn off swyth."  
Syne" sew it on me: and luke" that it be meit,"  
Baith" heid, and crag," bodie, taill, and feit.  

"Than will the wolff trow" that I am he."  
For I sall" follow him fast quhar ever he fair."  
All haill the cure" I tak it upon me.  
Your scheip to keip at midday, lait, and air."  
And he persew," be God, I sall not spair"  
To follow him as fast as did your doig.  
Swa" that I warrand, " ye sall not want ane hoig.""  

Than said the scheiphirerd, "This come of ane gude wit."  
Thy counsall is baith sicker,\(\text{a}\) leill," and trew."  
Quha" says ane scheip is daft, they lieit" of it.  
With that in hy" the doggis skyn off he blew,"  
And on the scheip rycht softlie2 couth it sew.  
Than worth" the wedder wantoun" off his weid."  
"Now off the wolff," quod he, "I have na dreed.""  

In all thingis he counterfait" the dog,  
For all the nycht he stude, and tuk na sleip.  
Swa that weill lang thair wantit not ane hog,"  
Swa war" he wes, and walkryfe" thame to keip,  
That Lowrence durst not luke upon ane scheip.  

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1 wretchitlie Other editors emend this to “wichtlie,” meaning “courageously.”
For and he did, he followit\(^\circ\) him sa fast,  
That off his lyfe he maid him all agast.\(^\circ\)

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Was nowther wolff, wildcat, nor yit tod,  
Durst cum within thay boundis\(^\circ\) all about,  
Bot he wald chase thame baith throw rouch\(^\circ\) and snod.\(^\circ\)  
Thay baillfull\(^\circ\) beistis had of\(^\circ\) thair lyvis sic dour,\(^\circ\)  
For he wes mekill,\(^\circ\) and semit\(^\circ\) to be stout.\(^\circ\)  
That everilk\(^\circ\) beist thay dreed him as the deid,\(^\circ\)  
Within that woid\(^\circ\) that nane durst hald\(^\circ\) thair heid.

Yit happinnit thair ane hungrie wolff to slyde\(^\circ\)  
Out throw his scheip, quhair thay lay on ane le,\(^\circ\)  
“I sall have ane,” quod he, “quhat ever betyde,\(^\circ\)  
Thocht I be werryit,\(^\circ\) for hunger or I de.”\(^\circ\)  
With than ane lamb in till thair cluke hint.\(^\circ\) he.  
The laif start\(^\circ\) up, ffor thay wer all agast.  
Bot God wait gif the wedder followit fast.

Went never hound mair haistelie fra the hand,  
Quhen he wes rynnand\(^\circ\) maist raklie\(^\circ\) at the ra,\(^\circ\)  
Nor went this wedder baith over mois\(^\circ\) and strand,\(^\circ\)  
And stoppit nouthar at bank, busk, nor bra.\(^\circ\)  
Bot followit ay sa ferslie on his fa,\(^\circ\)  
With sic ane drift,\(^\circ\) quhill dust and dirt over draif\(^\circ\) him.  
And maid ane vow to God that he suld have him.

With that the wolff let out his taill on lenth,\(^\circ\)  
For he wes hungrie, and it drew neir the ene.\(^\circ\)  
And schupe him\(^\circ\) for to ryn\(^\circ\) with all his strength,  
Fra\(^\circ\) he the wedder sa neir cummand had sene,  
He dreed his lyfe, and\(^\circ\) he overtane had bene.  
Thairfoir he spairit\(^\circ\) nowther busk, nor boig.  
For weill he kennit\(^\circ\) the kenenes\(^\circ\) off the doig.

To mak him lycht\(^\circ\), he kest\(^\circ\) the lamb him fra,  
Syne lap\(^\circ\) over leis,\(^\circ\) and draif throw dub\(^\circ\) and myre.  
“Na,” quod the wedder, “in faith we part not swa.  
It is not the lamb, bot the, that I desyre.  
I sall cum neir, ffor now I se the tyre.”\(^\circ\)  
The wolff ran still, quhill ane strand stude behind him,  
Bot ay\(^\circ\) the neirar the wedder he couth bind\(^\circ\) him.

if / the wether chased  
afraid  
territory  
rough / smooth (ground)  
those woeful / for / fear  
large / seemed / fierce  
every / feared him like death  
wood / mute  
a hungry wolf chanced to sneak there  
pasture  
happens  
attacked / or else I die  
grasped in his claws  
rest leapt  
running / rashly / roe deer  
bog / river bank  
slope  
fiercely after his foe  
driving force / drifted  
length  
was getting close to the evening  
prepared himself / ran  
as soon as / coming to near  
if  
avoided  
knew / ferocity  
himself light / cast  
then leapt / fields / puddles  
you tire  
always / could stick to
Sone efter that, he followit him sa neir,  
Quhill\(^o\) that the wolff ffor fleidnes fylit\(^o\) the feild.  
Syne left the gait, and ran throw busk, and breir.  
And schupe him ffra the schawis\(^o\) ffor to scheild.\(^o\)  
He ran restles,\(^o\) for he wist\(^o\) off na beild.\(^o\)  
The wedder followit him, baith out, and in,  
Quhill that ane breir busk raif rudelie\(^o\) off the skyn.  

The wolff wes wes,\(^o\) and blenkit\(^o\) him behind,  
And saw the wedder come thrawand\(^o\) throw the breir.  
Tyne\(^1\) saw the doggis skyn hingand\(^o\) on his lind.\(^o\)  
“Na,” quod he, “is this ye, that is sa neir?”  
Richt now\(^o\) ane hound, and now quhyte as ane freir.\(^o\)  
I fled over fer,\(^o\) and I had kennit\(^o\) the cais.\(^o\)  
To God I vow, that ye sall rew this rais.\(^o\)

“Qhut wes the cause ye gaif me sic ane katche?”\(^o\)  
With that in hy\(^o\) he hint\(^o\) him be the horne.  
“For all your mowis,” ye met anis\(^o\) with your matche,  
Suppois ye leuch\(^o\) me all this yeir to scorne.  
For qhut enchessoun\(^o\) this doggis skyn have ye borne?”  
“Maister,” quod he, “bot\(^o\) to have playit with yow,  
I yow require,\(^o\) that ye nane uther trow.”\(^o\)

“For all your mowis, ye met anis with your matche,  
Suppois ye leuch me all this yeir to scorne.  
“For quhat enchessoun this doggis skyn have ye borne?”  
“Maister,” quod he, “bot\(^o\) to have playit with yow,  
I yow require,\(^o\) that ye nane uther trow.”\(^o\)

“Is this your bourding in ernist\(^o\) than?” quod he,  
“For I am verray effeirit,\(^o\) and on flocht.\(^o\)  
Cum bak agane, and I sall let yow se.”  
Than quhar the gait\(^o\) wes grimmit\(^o\) he him brocht.\(^o\)  
“Qhether call ye this fair play, or nocht?”  
To set your maister in sa fell effray.\(^o\)  
Quhill\(^o\) he ffor feiritnes\(^o\) hes fylit\(^o\) up the way?

“Thryis,\(^o\) be my saull, ye gart me schute behind,\(^o\)  
Upon my hoichis\(^o\) the senyeis\(^o\) may be sene.  
For feiritnes full oft I ffylit\(^o\) the wind.  
Now is this ye? Na bot ane hound, I wene.\(^o\)  
Me think your teith over schort to be sa kene.\(^o\)  
Blissit be the busk, that ref\(^o\) yow your array.\(^o\)  
Ellis fleand,\(^o\) bursin\(^o\) had I bene this day.”

\(^1\) Tyne Only Bassandyne provides “Tyne.” All other editors prefer “Syne,” meaning “Then.”
“Morall Fabillis of Esope the Phrygian”

120 “Schir,” quod the wedder, “suppois I ran in hy,”
My mynd wes never to do your persoun ill.
Ane fleair getris ane follower commounly,
In play or ernist, preif quha sa ever will. 
Sen I bot playit, be gracious me till.
And I sall gar my freindis blis your banis. 
Ane full gude servand will crabb his maister anis.”

“I have bene oftymis set in grit effray,
Bot, be the rude, sa rad yit wes I never
As thow hes maid me with thy prettie play.
I schot behind quhen thow overtuke me ever.
Bot sikkerlie now sall we not dissever.”
Than be the crag bane smertlie he him tuke,
Or ever he ceissit, and it in schunder schuke.

“MORALITAS”

Esope that poet first father of this fabill,
Wrait this parabole quhilk is convenient.
Because the sentence wes fructuous and agreeabill,
In moralitie exemplative prudent.
Quhais problemes bene verray excellent,
Throw similitude of figuris to this day,
Gevis doctrine to the redaris of it ay.

Heir may thow se, that riches of array,
Will cause pure men presumptueus for to be.
Thay think thay hald of nane be thay als gay,
But counterfute ane lord in all degre.
Out of thair cais in pryde thay clym sa hie,
That thay forbeir thair better in na steid,
Quhill sum man tit thair heillis over thair heid.

Richt swa in service uther sum exceedis.
And thay haff withgang, welth, and cherising.
That thay will lychtlie lordis in thair deidis,
And lukis not to thair blude, nor thair ofspring.
Bot yit nane wait, how lang that reull will ring.
Bot he was wyse, that bad his sone considder.
Bewar in welth, for hall benkis ar rycht slidder.
Robert Henryson

Thairfoir I counsel men of everilk stait, \(^a\)
To knaw thame self, and quhome thay suld forbeir. \(^o\)
And fall\(^o\) not with thair better in debait,
Suppois thay be als galland\(^o\) in thair geir. \(^o\)
It settis\(^o\) na servand for to uphald weir, \(^s\)
Nor clym sa hie, quhill\(^s\) he fall of the ledder.
Bot think upon the wolf, and on the wedder.

FINIS

“The Tail of the Wolf, and the Lamb”

A ne cruell wolff, richt ravenous, and fell, \(^o\)
Upon ane tyme past\(^o\) to ane reveir
Descending from ane rotche, \(^o\) unto ane well. \(^o\)
To slak his thrist, drank of the watter cleir.
Swa upon cace, \(^o\) ane selie\(^e\) lamb come neir.
Bot of his fa, \(^o\) the wolff, na thing he wist. \(^a\)
And in the streme laipit\(^e\) to cule his thrist.

Thus drank thay baith, bot not of ane intent.
The wolffis thocht wes all on wickitnes.
The selie lamb wes meik, and innocent.
Upon ane reveir, in ane uther place,
Beneth\(^o\) the wolff, he drank ane lytill space, \(^o\)
Qhill he thocht gude, belevand thair nane ill. \(^o\)
The wolff him saw, and rampand\(^o\) come him till.

With girnand\(^o\) teith, and awfull angrie luke,
Said to the lamb, “Thow cative\(^e\) wretchit thing.
How durst thow be sa bald, to fyle\(^e\) and bruke\(^o\)
Qhhar I suld drink, with thy foull slavering\(^o\)
It wer almous the ffor to draw and hing.\(^1\)
That suld presume, with the foull lippis vyle,
To glar\(^o\) my drink, and this fair watter fyle.
The selie lamb quaikand\(^o\) for verray dredit, \(^o\)
On kneis fell, and said, “Schip, with yuor leif,\(^o\)
Suppois\(^o\) I dar not say, thairoff ye leid, \(^o\)
Bot be my saull, I wait ye can nocht preif,
That I did ony thing, that suld yow greif.\(^o\)

\(^1\) Fox offers the following translation for this line: “It would be a charitable deed to draw and hang you.”
Ye wait alswa⁰ that your accusatioun
Failyeis⁰ ffra treuth, and contrair is to ressoun.

“Thocht I can nocht,⁰ nature will me defend,
And off the deid perfyfe experience.⁰”
All hevie thing, man off the selff descend.
Bot giff sum thing on force mak resistance.¹
Than may the streme on na way mak ascence,⁰
Nor ryn bakwart; I drank beneth yow⁰ far.
Ergo,⁰ ffor me, your bruke⁰ wes never the war.

“Alsaw, my lippis sen⁰ that I wes ane lam,⁰
Tuitchit na thing that wes contagious.
Bot sowkit milk, ffrom pappis⁰ off my dam,⁰
Richt naturall, sweit, and als delitious.⁰”

“Weill,” quod the wolff, “thy language rigorus⁰
cummis the off kynd;” swa thy father before.
Held me an bait,⁰ baith with boist,⁰ and schore.⁰

“He wraithit⁰ me, and than I culd him warne,⁰
Within ane yeur, and I brukit my heid.⁰
I suld be wrokkin⁰ on him, or on his barne,⁰
For his exorbetant and frawart pleid.⁰
Thow sall doules ffor his deidis be deid.”

“Schir, it is wrang, that ffor the ffatheris gilt,
The saikles⁰ sone suld punist be or spilt.⁰”

“Haiff ye not hard, quhat Halie Scripture sayis,
Endytit with⁰ the mouth off God almycht?⁰
Off his awin deidis ilk man sall beir the prais,⁰
As pane ffor sin, reward ffor werkis rycht.⁰
For my trespas, quhy suld my sone have plycht?⁰

“Yaa!” quod the wolff. “Yit pleyis thow⁰ are you pleading (your case)?

“I let the wit,⁰ quhen that the ffather offendis,
I will refuse⁰ nane off his successioun.
And off his barnis, I may weill tak amendis,⁰
Unto the twentie⁰ degre descending doun.

Thy ffather thoche⁰ to mak ane strang poysoun,

¹ All hevie thing … force mak resistance  Fox suggests the following translation: “Every heavy thing must by its very nature descend, unless something forcibly makes resistance against it.”
And with his mouth in my watter did spew."

"Schir," quod the lamb, "thay twa ar nouther trew."

"The law says, and ye will understand,

Thair suld na man ffor wrang nor violence,

His adversar punis at his awin hand,

With out proces off law, and evidence.

Quhilk suld have leif to mak lawfull defence,

And thairupon summond peremptourly,

For to propone, contrarie, or reply.

"Set me ane lauchfull court, I sall compeir,

Befoir the lyoun, lord, and leill justice.

And be my hand I oblis me rycht heir

That I sall byde ane unsuspect assyis.

This is the law, this is the instant gyis,

Ye suld pretend thairfoir ane summondis mak,

Aginis that day, to gif ressoun, and tak."

"Na," quod the wolff, "thou wald intruse ressoun,

Quhair wrang, and reif suld duell in propertie.

That is ane poyn, and part of fals tressoun,

For to gar reuth remane with crueltie.

Be his woundis, fals tratour, thou sall de,

For thy trespas, and for thy fatheris als.

With that anone he hint him be the hals.

The selie lamb culd do na thing but bleit.

Sone wes he deid: the wolff wald do na grace.

Syne drank his blude, and off his flesch can eit,

Quhill he wes full, and went his way on pace.

Off his murther quhat sall we say allace?

Wes not this reuth, wes not this grit pietie,

To gar this selie lamb but gilt thus de.

"MORALITAS"

The pure pepill, this lamb may signifie,

As maill men, merchandis, and all lauboureris.

Of quhome the lyfe is half ane purgatorie,

The lion presides as judge in the earlier trial of the fox in "The Tail of the Sone and Air of the foirsaid Foxe, callit Father wer; Alswa the Parliament of fourfutit Beistis, haldin be the Lyoun" (not included in this edition).
95 To wyn with lautie leving as efferis. The wolf betakinnis fals extortioneris,
And oppressouris of pure men, as we se,
Be violence, or craft in facultie.

The kynd of wolfs, in this warld now rings.
The first ar fals perveteris of the lawis.
Quhilk under poete terms, falset mingis,
Lettand that all wer gospell, that he schwais.
Bot for ane bud the pure man he overthrawis,
Smoirand the richt, garrand the wrang proceid.
Of sic wolfs hellis fyre fall be thair meid.

O man of law, let be thy subteltie,
With nice gimpis, and fraudis intricait,
And think that God in his divinitie
The wrang, the richt, of all thy werkis wait.

For prayer, price, for hie, nor law estait,
Of fals querrelis se thow mak na defence.
Hald with the richt, hurt not thy conscience.

Ane uther kynd of wolfs ravenous
Ar mychtie men, haifand full grit plentie.

Quhilkis ar sa gredie, and sa covetous,
Thay will not thoill the pure in pece to be.
Suppois he, and his houshall baith suld de,
For falk of rude, thairof thay gif na rak,
Bot over his heid his mailling will thay tak.

O man but mercie, quhat is in thy thocht?
War than ane wolf, and thow culd understand!
Thow hes aneuch, the pure husband richt nocht,
Bot croip, and caff, upon ane clout of land.
For Goddis aw, how durst thow tak on hand.

And thow in barn, and byre, sa bene, and big.
To put him fra his tak, and gar him thig?

The thrid wolf, ar men of heritage,
As lordis, that hes land be Goddis lane.
And settis to the mailleris ane village,
And for ane tyme gressome payit and tane.
Syne vexis him, or half his terme be gane,
With pykit querrellis,\(^o\) for to mak him fane\(^o\)
To flit,\(^o\) or pay his gressome new\(^o\) agane.

His hors, his meir, he man len\(^o\) to the laird,\(^o\)
To drug, and draw,\(^o\) in court,\(^o\) or in cariage.
His servand, or his self may not be spaird\(^o\)
To swing,\(^o\) and sweet, withoutin meit, or wage.
Thus how he standis\(^o\) in labour, and bondage,
That scantlie\(^o\) may he purches by his maill,\(^o\)
To leve upon dry breid, and watter caill.\(^o\)

Hes thow not reuth, to gar thy tennentis sweit
In to thy laubour, with faynt,\(^o\) and hungrie wame?\(^o\)
And syne hes\(^o\) lytill gude to drink, or eit,
With his menye,\(^o\) at evin\(^o\) quhen he cummis hame.
Thow suld dreid,\(^o\) for richeous Goddis blame.\(^o\)
For it cryis ane vengeance\(^o\) unto the hevinnis hie,
To gar ane pure man wirk, but meit or fe.\(^o\)

O thow grit lord, that riches hes and rent,\(^o\)
Be nocht ane wolf, thus to devour\(^o\) the pure.
Think that na thing cruell, nor violent,
May in this warld perpetuallie in endure.
This sall thow trow,\(^o\) and sikkerlie assure,\(^o\)
For till oppres,\(^o\) thow sal haif als\(^o\) grit pane
As\(^o\) thow the pure had with thy awin hand had slain.\(^o\)

God keip\(^o\) the lamb, quhilk is the innocent,
From wolfs byit,\(^o\) and fell exortioneris.
God grant, that wrangous\(^o\) men of fals intent
Be manifestit,\(^o\) and punishit as effeiris.
And God, as\(^o\) thow all rychteous prayer heiris,
Mot\(^o\) saif our king, and gif him hart and hand,\(^o\)
All sic wolfs to banes\(^o\) out of the land.

—1485 (1571)