

The Boke of Curtasye, c. 1475 (Sloane MS. 1986, British Museum)

1Book 1

<p>Qwo so wylle of curtasy lere, In this boke he may hit here! Yf thow be gentylmon, zomon, or knaue, The nedis nurture for to haue.</p> <p>When thou comes to a lordis zate, The porter þou shalle fynde ther-ate; Take hym thow shalt þy wepyn tho, And aske hym leue in to go</p> <p>To speke with lorde, lady, squyer, or grome. Ther-to the nedys to take the tome; For yf he be of loghe degre, Than hym falles to come to the; Yf he be gentylmon of kyn, The porter wille lede the to hym.</p> <p>When thow come tho halle dor to, Do of thy hode, thy gloues also; Yf þo halle be at the furst mete, This lessoun loke thow nozt for-zete:</p> <p>Be stuard, countroller, and tresurere, Sittand at de deshe, þou haylse in fere. Within þe halle sett on ayther side, Sitten other gentylmen as falles þat tyde;</p> <p>Enclyne þe fayre to hom also, First to the ryzht honde þou shalle go, If Sitthen to þo left honde þy neghe þou cast; To hom þou boghe withouten wrast;</p> <p>Take hede to zomon on þy ryght honde, And sithen byfore the screne þou stonde In myddys þe halle opon þe flore, Whille marshalle or vssher come fro þe dore, And bydde the sitte, or to borde the lede.</p> <p>Be stabulle of chere for menske, y rede; Yf he þe sette at gentilmonnes borde, Loke þou be hynde and lytulle of worde.</p> <p>Pare þy brede and kerue in two, Tho ouer crust þo nether fro; In fowre þou kutt þo ouer dole, Sett hom to-gedur as hit where hole; Sithen kutt þo nether crust in thre, And turne hit down, lerne þis at me.</p> <p>And lay thy trenchour þe be-fore, And sitt vp-ryzht for any sore. Spare brede or wyne, drynke or ale, To thy messe of kochyn be sett in sale; Lest men sayne þou art hongur beten, Or ellis a gloten þat alle men wyten,</p>	<p>He who would of courtesy learn, To this book he should turn! If you be gentleman yeoman or knave, This is an education you should save.</p> <p>When you come to a lord's gate, There porter you shall find there at. You should take him your weapon, And ask him to let you in.</p> <p>To speak with lord, lady, squire, or groom Take a moment to consider For if he be of low degree Then it falls to him to come to you. But if he is a gentleman of kin, The porter will lead you in to him.</p> <p>When you come to the hall door, Take off your hood and gloves; If the hall is seated at the first remove This lesson you should not forget:</p> <p>The steward, controller, and treasurer, Are on the dias, you should greet them together Within the hall set on either side Sit other gentlemen as falls that season (?)</p> <p>Bow in greeting to them also, First to the right hand, If men are seated there, then turn to the left side And bow without twisting your body.</p> <p>Take heed to the yeoman at your right hand And stay before the screen where you stand In the middle of the hall upon the floor While the marshal or usher comes And bids you sit or leads you to the table.</p> <p>Be sedate and well mannered If you sit at the gentleman's table Be careful that you are courteous and taciturn</p> <p>Trim your bread and cut it in two, The top from the bottom Cut the top crust in four Then set it back together as if it were whole Cut the bottom crust in three And turn it down(?), learn this from me.</p> <p>And put your trencher out before you And sit upright Do not eat your bread or wine, drink or ale Until your meal is brought from the kitchen and set out Lest any man thing you are beat by your hunger Or else a glutton, that all men reproach.</p>
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Loke þy naylys ben clene in blythe,
Lest þy felaghe lothe ther-wyth.

Byt not on thy brede and lay hit down, —
That is no curteyse to vse in town; —
But breke as myche as þou wylle ete,
The remelant to pore þou shalle lete.

In peese þou ete, and euer eschewe
To flyte at borde; þat may þe rewe.
Yf þou make mawes on any wyse,
A velany þou kacches or euer þou rise.

Let neuer þy cheke be Made to grete
With morselle of brede þat þou shalle ete;
An apys mow men sayne he makes,
Þat brede and flesshe in hys cheke bakes,

Yf any man speke þat tyme to the,
And þou schalle onsware, hit wille not be
But waloande, and a-byde þou most;
Þat is a schame for alle the host.

On bothe halfe þy mouthe, yf þat þou ete,
Mony a skorne shalle þou gete.
Þou shalle not lauzhe ne speke no þynge
Whille þi mouthe be fulle of mete or drynke;
Ne suppe not with grete sowndynge
Noþer potage ne oþer þynge.

Let not þi spone stond in þy dysche,
Wheþer þou be serued with fleshe or fische;
Ne lay hit not on thy dishe syde,
But clense hit honestly with-uten pride.

Loke no browynge on þy fyngur þore
Defoule þe clothe þe be-fore.

In þi dysche yf þou wete þy brede,
Loke þer-of þat nozt be lede
To cast agayne þy dysche in-to;
Þou art vn-hynde yf þou do so.

Drye þy mouthe ay wele and fynde
When þou schalle drynke oþer ale or wyne.

Ne calle þou nozt a dysche a-zayne,
Þat ys take fro þe borde in playne;

Zif þou sp[i]tt ouer the borde, or elles opon,
Þou schalle be holden an vncurtayse mon;

Yf þy nown dogge þou scrape or clawe,
Þat is holden a vyse emong men knawe.

Make sure your fingernails are very clean,
Lest your fellow dislike you on spec.

Do not take a bite of your bread then put it down,
That is no courtesy to use in town;
But break off as much as you will eat,
Give the rest to the poor.

Eat in peace and always eschew
Arguing at the table, you may regret that.
If you make faces in any fashion
You will suffer rebuke whenever you rise.

Do not stuff your cheeks,
With some bread that you will eat.
Men say that apes
Bake bread and meat in his cheeks.

If any man speaks to you when your cheeks are full
And you answer, it will not be,
But you will have to chew and wait to answer
And that is a shame for everyone.

If you eat on both sides of your mouth
Many will scorn you.
You shall not laugh nor speak a thing
While your mouth is full of meat or drink;
Do not eat while making a lot of sound
Neither pottage nor any other thing.

Let not your spoon stand in your dish,
Whether you are served with meat or fish.
Do not lay it on the dish's side either,
But clean it well without pride.

Make sure your fingers
Don't dirty the table cloth before you.

In your dish, if you dip your bread,
Be careful that you are not led
To double dip
You are unkind(?) if you do.

Dry our mouth well
When you would drink either ale or wine

Do not call out for a dish again
That has been taken from the table.

If you spit over the table or else upon it,
You shall be seen as an uncourteous man.

If you scratch or claw at a dog,
Know that it is seen as a vice among men.

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<p>Yf þy nose þou clense, as may be-falle, Loke þy honde þou clense, as wythe-alle, Priuely with skyrt do hit away, Oþer ellis thurghe thi tepet þat is so gay.</p>	<p>If you clean your nose, as may happen, Make sure you clean your hand as well Do it away from the table, privately with your skirt Or else on your nice tippet.</p>
<p>Clense not thi tethe at mete sittande, With knyfe ne stre, styk ne wande.</p>	<p>Don't clean your teeth while seated at the table, Neither with knife or straw, stick or wand.</p>
<p>While þou holdes mete in mouthe, be war To drynke, þat is an-honest char, And also fysike for-bedes hit, And sais þou may be choket at þat byt; Yf hit go þy wrang throte into, And stoppe þy wynde, þou art fordo.</p>	<p>While you have meat in your mouth, beware Of drinking, that is a dishonest thing to do, And also doctors forbid it And say you may be choked by that bite, If it goes down the wrong throat, And stops your breath, you are done.</p>
<p>Ne telle þou neuer at borde no tale To harme or shame þy felawe in sale; For if he then withholdes his methe, Eftsons he wylle forcast þi dethe.</p>	<p>To not tell a tale at the table That will harm or shame your fellow For if he then withholds self-control And after will forecast your death.</p>
<p>Where-sere þou sitt at mete in borde, Avoide þe cat at on bare worde, For yf þou stroke cat oþer dogge, Pou art lyke an ape teyzed with a clogge.</p>	<p>Wheresoever you sit at the table Avoid the cat on the bare wood For if you stroke the cat or dog, You are like an ape teased with a clog (?).</p>
<p>Also eschewe, with-outhe stryfe, To foule þe borde clothe with þi knyfe;</p>	<p>Also eschew, without arguing, To foul the tablecloth with your knife.</p>
<p>Ne blow not on þy drynke ne mete, Neþer for colde, neþer for hete; with mete ne bere þy knyfe to mowthe, Wheþer þou be sett be strong or couthe;</p>	<p>Do not blow on your drink or meat, Neither for cold or for heat, Don't put your knife in your mouth when it has food on No matter if you are sitting next to a strange or well-mannered man.</p>
<p>Ne with þo borde clothe þi tethe þou wype, Ne þy nyen þat rennen rede, as may betyde.</p>	<p>Do not wipe your teeth with the table cloth, Nor your eyes that run red, as may happen.</p>
<p>Yf þou sitt by a ryzht good man, þis lesson loke þou þenke apon: Vndur his thezghe þy kne not pit, þou ar fulle lewed yf þou dose hit.</p>	<p>If you sit by a right good man, This lesson be sure you think upon Don't put your knee under his thighs You are very lewd if you do this.</p>
<p>Ne bacwarde sittande gyf nozt þy cupe, Noþer to drynke, noþer to suppe; Bidde þi frende take cuppe and drynke, þat is holden an honest thyng.</p>	<p>Don't hand your cup to someone with your back to them, Neither to drink or to sup; Bid your friend to take the cup and drink, That is held an honest thing.</p>
<p>Lene not on elbowe at þy mete,</p>	<p>Don't lean your elbows on the table,</p>
<p>Noþer for colde ne for hete; Dip not þi thombe þy drynke into, þou art vncurtayse yf þou hit do;</p>	<p>To check for either cold nor heat, Don't dip your thumb in your drink You are uncouth if you do that.</p>
<p>In salt saler yf þat þou pit Oþer fisshe or flesshe þat men may wyt, þat is a vyce, as men me telles, And gret wonder hit most be elles.</p>	<p>If you dip into the salt cellar, With fish or meat that men may ascribe That is a vice, as people tell me, And great wonder it were anything else.</p>

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<p>After mete when þou shalt wasshe, Spitt not in basyn, ne water þou dasshe; Ne spit not lorely, for no kyn mede, Be-fore no mon of god for drede.</p> <p>Who so euer despise þis lessoun ryzt, At borde to sitt he hase no myzt. Here endys now oure fyrst talkyng, Crist graunt vs alle his dere blessing!</p> <p>Here endithe þe [first] boke of curtasye</p>	<p>After the meal, when you shall wash, Don't spit in the basin or water your dish, Do not spit rudely, for no kin will reward this Before any man, out of reverence to God. (?)</p> <p>Who so ever display this lesson right At the table he will have no needs. Here ends now our first talking Christ grant us all his dear blessing!</p> <p>Here ends the first book of courtesy.</p>
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Book 2

<p>Yf that þou be a zong enfaunt, And thenke þo scoles for to haunt, This lessoun schalle þy maistur þe merke, Cros Crist þe spede in alle þi werke; Sythten þy pater noster he wille þe teche, As cristes owne postles con preche; Aftur þy Aue maria and þi crede, þat shalle þe saue at dome of drede; Then aftur to blesse þe with þe trinité, In nomine patris teche he wille þe; þen with marke, mathew, luke, and Ion, With þe per crucis and the hegh name; To schryue þe in general þou schalle 1ere by Confiteor and misereatur in fere. To seche þe kyngdam of god, my chyld, þerto y rede þou be not wyld. Ther-fore worschip god, bothe olde and zong, To be in body and soule yliche stronge.</p> <p>When þou comes to þo chirche dore, Take þe haly water stondand on flore; Rede or syng or byd prayeris To crist, for alle þy crysten ferys;</p> <p>Be curtayse to god, and knele doun On bothe knees with grete deuocioun. To mon þou shalle knele opon þe ton, þe toþer to þy self þou halde alon.</p> <p>When þou ministers at þe heghe autere, With bothe bondes þou serue þo prest in fere, þe ton to stabulle þe toþer Lest þou fayle, my dere broþer.</p> <p>Anoþer curtayse y wylle þe teche, Thy fadur And modur, with mylde speche, In worschip and serue with alle þy myzt, þat þou dwelle þe lengur in erthely lyzt.</p> <p>To anoþer man do no more amys Then þou woldys be don of hym and hys; So crist þou pleses, and getes þe loue</p>	<p>If you are a young enfant And think to go to school This lesson shall your master teach you: Cross of Christ you do in all your work Then he will teach you the Pater Noster, As Christ's own apostles preached; Next the Ave Maria and the creed, That shall save you at doomsday; And next, to bless you with the trinity, He will teach you In Nomine Patris; Then with Mark, Matthew, Luke and John, With the Per Crucis and the high name; To make confession in general, you shall learn The Confiteor and Misereatur together. To seek the kingdom of God, my child, I encourage you, do that and don't be wild. Therefore worship God, both old and young, To be in body and soul very strong.</p> <p>When you come to the church door, Thake the holy water from the font on the floor, Read or sing or give your prayers To Christ for all Christian fellows;</p> <p>Be courteous to God and kneel down On both knees with great devotion. To men you shall kneel upon only one, And keep the other up.</p> <p>When you serve at the high alter, Use both hands together to serve the priest, The one to stabilize the other Lest you let things drop, my dear brother.</p> <p>Another courtesy, I will teach you, Speak to your mother and father with mild words, In worship and serve with all your might That you dwell longer in earthly light.</p> <p>To another man do no more wrong things Then you would have done by him and his. So please Christ and get the love</p>
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<p>Of men and god þat syttis aboue.</p> <p>Be not to meke, but in mene þe holde, For ellis a fole þou wylle be tolde.</p> <p>He þat to ryztwysnes wylle enclayne, As holy wryzt says vs wele and fyne, His sede schalle neuer go seche hor brede, Ne suffur of mon no shames dede.</p> <p>To for-gyf þou shalle þe hast; To veniaunce loke þou come on last; Draw þe to pese with alle þy strengþe; Fro stryf and bate draw þe on lengþe.</p> <p>Yf mon aske þe good for goddys sake, And þe wont thyng wher-of to take, Gyf hym boner wordys on fayre manere, With glad semblaunt and pure good cher.</p> <p>Also of seruice þou shalle be fre To euery mon in hys degré.</p> <p>Þou schalle neuer lose for to be kynde; That on forzetis anoper hase in mynde.</p> <p>Yf Any man haue part with þe in gyft, With hym þou make an euen skyft; Let hit not henge in honde for glose, Þou art vncurtayse yf þou hyt dose.</p> <p>To sayntis yf þou þy gate hase hyzt, Thou schalle fulfille hit with alle þy myzt, Lest god þe stryk with grete veniaunce, And pyt þe in-to sore penaunce.</p> <p>Leue not alle men that speke þe fayre, Wheþer þat hit ben comyns, burges, or mayre; In swete wordis þe nedder was closet, Disseyuauant euer and mysloset;</p> <p>Þer-fore þou art of adams blode, With wordis be ware, but þou be wode: A schort worde is comynly sothe Þat fyrst slydes fro monnes tothe.</p> <p>Loke lyzer neuer þat þou be-come, Kepe þys worde for alle and somme.</p> <p>Lawze not to off[t] for no solace, For no kyn myrthe þat any man mase; Who lawes alle þat men may se, A schrew or a fole hym semes to be.</p> <p>Thre enmys in þys worlde þer are, Þat coueyten alle men to for-fare,—</p>	<p>Of men and God, who sits above.</p> <p>Be not meek, but hold yourself in moderation, Or else you will be called a fool.</p> <p>He that inclines to righteousness, As Holy Writ says is well and fine, His children shall never beg for bread, Nor suffer of man no shameful death. (?)</p> <p>Forgiveness should always be your first choice; Look last to vengeance; Try with all your strength to see peace, Keep far away from strife and conflict.</p> <p>If men ask you to be good for God's sake, And you have nothing to give him, Give him good words and fair manner, With a glad face and pure good cheer.</p> <p>Be free with your service, To every man in his degree</p> <p>You shall never lose by being kind, That on forgetting another remembers.</p> <p>If any man parts with you in gift Make an even split with him; Do not put him under your control to flatter yourself, You are discourteous if you do.</p> <p>If you vow to the saints that you'll go on pilgrimage, Then you must try to fulfill your vow with all your might Lest God strike with great vengeance And make you undertake a sore penitence.</p> <p>Do not love all men who speak fair words, Whether they are common, burgher or mayor; For the serpent was dressed in sweet words, Ever deceitful and blame-worthy;</p> <p>Therefore you are of Adam's blood, Beware with words, unless you're mad: A short word is commonly truth That first slides from a man's tooth.</p> <p>Be careful that you never become a liar, Keep your word to everyone.</p> <p>Do not laugh to often, For any man damns too much mirth; The man who laughs too often, men will say A shrew or a fool he seems to be.</p> <p>There are three enemies in the world That desire all men to go astray, -</p>
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<p>The deuel, þe flesshe, þe worlde also, That wyrkyn mankynde ful mykyl wo: Yf þou may strye þes þre enmys, þou may be secur of heuen blys.</p> <p>Also, my chylde, a-gaynes þy lorde Loke þou stryfe with no kyn worde, Ne waiour non with hym þou lay, Ne at þe dyces with hym to play.</p> <p>Hym that þou knawes of gretter state, Be not hys felaw in rest ne bate.</p> <p>Zif þou be stad in strange contré, Enserche no fyr þen falles to the, Ne take no more to do on honde, þen þou may hafe menske of alle in londe.</p> <p>Zif þou se any mon fal by strete, Laweghe not þer-at in drye ne wete, But helpe hym vp with alle þy myzt, As seynt Ambrose þe teches ryzt; þou that stondys so sure on sete, Ware lest þy hede falle to þy fete.</p> <p>My chylde, yf þou stonde at þo masse, At vndur stondis bothe more and lasse, Yf þo prest rede not at þy wylle, Repreue hym nozt, but holde þe styлле.</p> <p>To any wyzt þy counselle yf þou schewe, Be war þat he be not a schrewe, Lest he disclaundyþ þe with tong Amonge alle men, bothe olde and zong.</p> <p>Bekenyng, fynguryng, non þou vse, And pryué rownyng loke þou refuse.</p> <p>Yf þou mete knyzt, zomon, or knaue, Haylys hym a-non, "syre, god zou saue."</p> <p>Yf he speke fyrst opon þe þore, Onsware hym gladly with-ouen more.</p> <p>Go not forthe as a dombe freke, Syn god hase laft the tonge to speke; Lest men sey be sibbe or couthe, "Zond is a mon with-ouen mouthe."</p> <p>Speke neuer vnhonestly of woman kynde, Ne let hit neuer renne in þy mynde; þe boke hym calles a chorle of chere, That vylany spekes be wemen sere: For alle we ben of wymmen born, And oure fadurs vs be-forne; þerfore hit is a vnhonest thyng</p>	<p>The devil, the flesh, and also the world, They work in mankind a deep woe If you destroy these three enemies You will secure heavenly bliss.</p> <p>Also, my child, against your lord Be careful not to strive with an unkind word, Also, do not make wagers with him Or play dice with him.</p> <p>If you know a man of greater estate than you, Do not try and be his fellow in peace or war.</p> <p>If you find yourself in a strange country, Don't be more inquisitive than you need to be, Or take any more to do in hand (?) (may be 'talk too much') Then you may have the praise of all in the land.</p> <p>If you see a man fall in the street, Don't laugh at him, dry or wet, But help him up, with all your might, As Saint Ambrose teaches is right; You that stands so sure on a chair, Beware that your head falls to your feet.</p> <p>My child, if you stand at Mass And understand it more or less If your priest does not read what you like Reproach him not, but keep your silence.</p> <p>If you tell your secrets to anyone, Be careful that he is not a shrew, Let he slander you with his tongue Among all men, both old and young.</p> <p>Do not beckon or point with a finger, And refuse to take part in whispering.</p> <p>If you meet a knight, yeoman, or knave, Greet him and say, "Sir, god save you!"</p> <p>If he speaks first, Answer him gladly but don't babble.</p> <p>Do not go about as a dumb freak, Since God has given you tongue to speak; Lest men say to relations or friends, "There is a man without a mouth."</p> <p>Do not speak dishonestly of women, Nor let it ever run in your mind; The book calls him a churlish oaf Who would speak villainously of women; For all of us are of women born And our fathers before us Therefore it is a dishonest thing</p>
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The Boke of Curtasye, c. 1475 (Sloane MS. 1986, British Museum)

<p>To speke of hem in any hethyng.</p> <p>Also a wyfe be, falle of ryzt To worschyp hyr husbonde bothe day and nyzt, To his byddyng be obediente, And hym to serue with-ouen offence.</p> <p>Yf two brether be at debate, Loke noþer þou forþer in hor hate, But helpe to staunche hom of malice; Pen þou art frende to bothe l-wys.</p> <p>Zif þou go with a-noþer at þo gate, And ze be bothe of on astate, Be curtasye and let hym haue þe way, That is no vylanye, as men me say; And he be comen of gret kynraden, Go no be-fore þawgh þou be beden; And yf þat he þy maystur be, Go not be-fore, for curtasé, Noþer in fylde, wode, noþer launde, Ne euen hym with, but he commaunde.</p> <p>Yf þou schalle on pilgrimage go, Be not þe thryd felaw for wele ne wo; Thre oxen in plowgh may neuer wel drawe, Noþer be craft, ryzt, ne lawe,</p> <p>Zif þou be profert to drynk of cup, Drynke not al of, ne no way sup; Drynk menskely and gyf agayne, þat is a curtasye, to speke in playne.</p> <p>In bedde yf þou falle herberet to be, With felawe, maystur, or her degré, þou schalt enquire be curtasye In what par[t] of þe bedde he wylle lye; Be honest and lye þou fer hym fro, þou art not wyse but þou do so.</p> <p>With woso men, boþe fer and negh, The falle to go, loke þou be slegh To aske his nome, and qweche he be, Whidur he wille: kepe welle þes thre.</p> <p>With freres on pilgrimage yf þat þou go, þat þei wille zyme, wilne þou also; Als on nyzt þou take þy rest, And byde þe day as tru mannes gest.</p> <p>In no kyn house þat rede mon is, Ne womon of þo same colour y-wys, Take neuer þy Innes for no kyn nede, For þose be folke þat ar to drede.</p> <p>Yf any thurgh sturnes þe oppose,</p>	<p>To speak of them with contempt.</p> <p>Also, a good wife should Worship her husband, both day and night And do his bidding and be obedient And serve him without offence.</p> <p>If two brothers are debating, Make sure you do not encourage them in their discord, But help relieve their malice; Then you will be friend to both.</p> <p>If you go on a journey with another man And you are both of the same degree Be courteously and let him have the way, That is no vilany, as men say; And if he comes from greater kindred, Do not go before though you are bidden; And if he is your master, Do not walk in front of him, for courtesy, Neither in field, wood, or on the land, Or even with him, unless he commands.</p> <p>If you shall go on pilgrimage, Do not be the third fellow, Three oxen cannot pull a plow, Neither by skill, right, or law.</p> <p>If you are offered a drink in a cup Don't drink it all, Drink a bit then give it back That is a courtesy, to speak plain.</p> <p>In bed, if you stay as a guest, With a fellow, master, or that degree You shall enquire, by courtesy, In which part of the bed he would sleep; Be honest and sleep far from him, You are not wise unless you do so.</p> <p>With any man, both far and near, If you go on a journey, try to be sly Ask his name, who he is, And were he's going: remember these three.</p> <p>If you go on pilgrimage with friars Watch what they do, and then do it yourself. In the night take your rest, And bide the day as a good guest.</p> <p>Don't stay in the house of a red man, Nor a woman of that color, And never stay in their inns, For those are folk you should dread.</p> <p>If anyone quarrels with you,</p>
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The Boke of Curtasye, c. 1475 (Sloane MS. 1986, British Museum)

<p>Onswere hym mekely and make hym glose: But glosand wordys þat falsed is, Forsake, and alle that is omys.</p>	<p>Answer him meekly and flatter him: But flattering words that are false Should be forsaken, and all that is erroneous.</p>
<p>Also yf þou haue a lorde, And stondes by-fore hym at þe borde, While þat þou speke, kepe welle þy honde, Thy fete also in pece let stonde, His curtasé nede he most breke,— Stirraunt fyngurs toos when he shalle speke. Be stabulle of chere and sumwhat lyzt, Ne ouer alle wayue þou not thy syzt; Gase not on walles with þy neghe, Fyr ne negh, logh ne heghe; Let not þe post be-cum þy staf, Lest þou be callet a dotet daf; Ne delf þou neuer nose thyrlle With thombe ne fyngur, as zong gyrlle; Rob not þy arme ne nozt hit claw, Ne bogh not down þy hede to law;</p>	<p>Also, if you have a lord, And stand before him at the table, While you speak, keep your hands still, And your feet at peace, Courtesy demands you keep still Moving fingers also, when he speaks. Be calm and somewhat light Don't cast your eyes around the room; Don't stare at the walls, For or near, low or high, Don't let the post become your staff Or you'll be called a dotet daf (a raving fool); Never pick your nose, With thumb or finger, like a young child; Don't rub your arm or scratch at it, Don't bow down your head to low;</p>
<p>Whil any man spekes with grete besenes, Herken his wordis with-ouen distresse.</p>	<p>While a man speaks of important business Listen to his words without making a fuss.</p>
<p>By strete or way yf þou schalle go, Fro þes two þynges þou kepe þe fro, Noper to harme chylde ne best, With castyng, turnyng west ne est; Ne change þou not in face coloure, For lyghtnes of worde in halle ne boure; Yf þy vysage change for nozt, Men say þe 'trespas þou hase wrozght.'</p>	<p>By street or way, if you should go, Keep in mind these two things First, do no harm to child or beast, With casting, turning west nor east (evil eye?) Second, don't change the color of your face (blush), Because of happy words in hall nor home; If your visage changes without reason, Men will say you have wrought trespass.</p>
<p>By-fore þy lorde, ne mawes þou make Zif þou wylle curtasie with þe take.</p>	<p>Before your lord, don't make faces, If you will be a courteous man.</p>
<p>With hondes vnwasshen take neuer þy mete; Fro alle þes vices loke þou þe kepe.</p>	<p>Never take your meal with unwashed hands, Make sure you keep away from all these vices.</p>
<p>Loke þou sytt—and make no stryf— Where þo est commaundys, or ellis þo wyf.</p>	<p>Be careful that you sit – and make no fuss – Go where you're told or are offered a seat.</p>
<p>Eschewe þe hezest place with wyn, But þou be beden to sitt þer-in.</p>	<p>Happily avoid the highest place, Unless you are told to sit there.</p>
<p>Of curtasie here endis þe secunde fyt, To heuen crist mot oure saules flyt!</p>	<p>Of courtesy, here ends my second piece, To heaven and Christ our praises go!</p>

Book of Curtasie That is Clepid Stans Puer ad Mensam, c. 1430 (Lambeth MS. 853)

Mi dere sone, first þi silf able
with al þin herte to vertuose discipline, —
A-fore þi souereyn stondege at þe table
Dispose þou þee aftir my doctryne —
To al nortur þi corage to encline.
First while þou spekist, be not richelees;
Kepe boþe fyngir and hond stille in pees.

Be symple in cheer; caste not þi looke a-side,
gase not about, turnynge þi sizt oueral.
azen þe post lete not þi bak abide,
neþer make þi myrrou also of þe wal.
Pike not þi nose; & moost in especial
be weel waar, sette her-on þi þouzt,
to-fore þi souereyn cratche ne picke þee nouzt.

Who-so speke to þee in ony maner place,
lumpischli caste not þin heed a-doun,
but with a sad cheer loke him in þe face.
walke demurely bi streetis in þe toun,
And take good hede bi wisdom & resoun
þat bi no wantowne lauzinge þou do noon offence
To-fore þi souereyne while he is in presence.

Pare clene þi nailis; þin hondis waische also
to-fore þi mete, [&] whanne þou doist arise.
sitte þou in þat place þat þou art a-signed to;
Prece not to hie in no maner wise;
And whanne þou seest afore þee þi seruice,
be not to hasti upon breed to bite
lest men þerof Do þee edwite.

Grennynge & mowyng at þi table eschewe;
Crie not to lowde: honestli kepe silence.
To enbrace þi iowis with breed, it is not dewe;
with ful mouþ speke not lest þou do offence;
Drinke not bridelid for haste ne negligence;
Kepe clene þi lippis from fleisch & fische;
Wipe faire þi spoon; leue it not in þi dische.

Of breed with þi teep no soppis þou make;
Lowde for to soupe is azen gentilnes:
With mouþ enbrowide þi cuppe þou not take,
In ale ne in wynn with hond leue no fatnes;
Depoule not þe naprie bi no richelesnes.
Be waar þat at þe mete þou bigynne no striif;
þi teep also at þe table picke with no knyf.

Of honest mirþe euere be þi daliaunce;
Swere noon oopis; speke no ribaudie.
þe beste morsels,—haue þis in remembraunce,—
Holli alwey þi silf to take do not applie.
Parte with þi felawis, for þat is curteisie.
Lete not þi trenchour be with many morsels;
And fro blaknes kepe weel þi nailis.

Of curtesie it is azen þe lawe,
With dishoneste, sone, for to do difence;
Of oolde forfetis vpbraide not þi felawe;

My dear son, first ready yourself
With all your heart and good discipline, -
When you stand before your lord at the table
Comport yourself after my lessons -
To all good manners encline your courage.
First when you speak, don't be reckless;
Keep your fingers and hands still.

Be of good cheer, and don't cast your eyes side to side
Or gaze about, turning your sight over everything.
Don't lean your back against the post
Or make the wall your mirror.
Don't pick your nose, and most especially
Be very careful, and set your thoughts,
To not scratch or pick at yourself in front of your lord.

When someone is speaking to you, no matter the place
Don't cast your head down like a lump,
But look him in the face with a somber look.
Walk demurely in the streets of the town,
And take heed of wisdom and reason,
So that, by wanton laziness, you cause no offence
To your sovereign, while he is present.

Please clean your nails; and wash your hands also
Before your meals and when you wake up.
Sit in the place you're assigned to;
Don't press to high in any manner (speak too loud?);
And when your meal is set before you,
Don't be hasty taking bread to eat
Unless you want men to criticize you.

Eschew grimacing and grinning at the table,
Don't talk to loud but honestly keep your silence.
Don't stuff your jaws with bread, it's not done;
Don't speak with a full mouth, or you'll cause offence;
Don't drink unbridled because of haste or negligence;
Keep your lips clean of meat and fish;
Wipe your spoon, don't leave it in the dish.

Don't make a mush of bread with your teeth;
Making a racket while you eat is against gentleness;
Don't take a cup while your mouth is stuffed
Don't put your fingers in ale or wine;
Don't despoil the napkin recklessly.
Beware that at the meal you begin no arguments;
Don't pick your teeth at the table with a knife.

Always be of honest mirth;
Don't swear; and don't speak ribaldly.
The best morsels, - keep this in mind, -
Let others take them, don't keep them for yourself.
Share things with your fellows, that is courteous.
Don't fill your plate with too much food;
And keep your nails free of black stuff.

For courtesy's sake, it is against the rules
With dishonesty, son, to defend yourself (or fight with smn.);
and upbraid your fellows for old disagreements;

Book of Curtasie That is Clepid Stans Puer ad Mensam, c. 1430 (Lambeth MS. 853)

Towarde þi souereyn do euere reuerence.
Pleie with no knif, take hede to my sentence;
At mete & at soper kepe þee stille & softe,
And eek to & fro meeue not þi feep to ofte.

Droppe not þi brest with seew & oper potage,
Bringe no þoule knyues vnto þe table;
Fille not þi spoon lest in þe cariage
It scheede bi side, it were not commendable.
Be quik & redi, meke & seruiable,
Weel awaitinge to fulfille anon
What þat þi souereyn commaundip to be doon.

And where-so-euere þou be to digne or to suppe,
Of gentilnes take salt with þi knyf,
And be weel waar þou blowe not in þe cuppe.
Reuerence þi felawis; bigynne with hem no strijf;
To þi power kepe pees al þi lijf.
Intrippe no man where so þat þou wende,
No man in his tale, til he haue maade an eende.

With þi fyngris marke not þi tale;
be weel avysid, & nameli in tendir age,
To drinke mesurabli boþe wiyn & ale.
Be not to copiose of langage;
As tyme requirip schewe out þi visage,
To glad, ne to sory, but kepe þee euene bitwene
For los, or lucre, or any case sodene.

Be soft in mesure, not hasti, but treteable;
Ouer soft is nouzt in no maner þing;
To children longip not to be vengeable,
Soone meued and soone fiztinge;
And as it is remembrid bi writyngge,
wrappe of children is ouercome soone,
With þe partis of an appil ben made at oon.

In children werre is now mirþe & now debate,
In her quarel is no violence,
now pleie, now wepinge, & seelde in oon state;
to her pleyntis zeue no credence:
A rodde reformeþ al her negligence;
in her corage no rancour doop abide,
who þat spariþ þe rodde all uertues settip a-side.

A ! litil balade, voide of eloquence,
I praie zou zonge children þat þis schal se & rede,
þouz ze be copious of sentence,
Zit to þese clausis for to take hede
Which al into vertues schal zoure zouþe lede.
In þis writyngge, þouz þer be no date,
Yf ouzt be mys in word, sillable, or dede,
I submitte me to correccioun withoute ony debate
Thus eendith þe book of curteisie þat is clepid
stans puer ad mensam.

Towards your sovereign do every reverence.
Take heed of what I say, don't play with your knife;
At meal and supper keep still and quiet,
And don't shuffle your feet to and fro too much.

Don't drop your broth or potage on your breast,
And don't bring dirty knives to the table;
Don't fill your spoon too full in lifting it
You'll spill the contents, which is not commendable.
Be quick and ready, meek and subservient,
Waiting politely to fulfill anon
What things your sovereign command you do.

Where ever you be to dine or sup
Out of politeness take salt with your knife
And be careful you don't blow in your cup.
Revenge your fellows, and start no trouble with them;
To your power, keep the peace all your life.
Interrupt no man wherever you are
If he is telling a story, until his is done.

Don't use your fingers to tell your story;
Be well advised, and especially at a tender age.
To drink moderate amounts of wine and ale.
Don't be loquacious;
As the time requires it, present a face
Neither too glad or too sorry, but keep it even between them
For loss or gain, or any sudden happening.

Be soft in measure, not hasty, but flexible;
Too soft is not good either;
Don't be vengeful towards children,
They are quickly stirred up and quickly start fighting;
It is remembered in writing,
The wrath of a child is quickly overcome
With some bits of apple given to them.

Childrens quarrels are first mirth and then arguments
There is no violence in them,
First playing then crying, rarely in one state;
To their complaints, give no credence:
A rod reforms their negligence;
In their courage there is no rancor,
Whoever spares the rod spoils the clid

Ah! Little ballad, void of eloquence,
I pray young children shall see and read you,
Though you're long,
And take heed of your clauses
Which shall lead them into all virtues.
In this writing, though there is no date,
If you find an error in word, syllable, or deed,
Submit it to me for correction, I won't argue
Thus ends the book of courtesy that is called stans puer ad
mensam.

How the Good Wife Taught Her Daughter, c. 1310-1350? (Codex Ashmole 61)

<p>Lyst and lythe a lytell space, I schall you telle a prety cace: How the gode wyfe taught hyr doughter To mend hyr lyfe and make her better.</p> <p>"Doughter, and thou wylle be a wyfe, Wysely to wyrch in all thi lyfe, Serve God and kepe thy chyrche, And myche the better thou schall wyrche.</p> <p>To go to the chyrch lette for no reyne, And that schall helpe thee in thy peyn. Gladly loke thou pay thy tythes, Also thy offeringys loke thou not mysse.</p> <p>Of pore men be thou not lothe, Bot gyff thou them both mete and clothe; And to pore folke be thou not herde, Bot be to them thyn owen stowarde; For wher that a gode stowerde is, Wantys seldom any ryches.</p> <p>When thou arte in the chyrch, my chyld, Loke that thou be bothe meke and myld, And bydde thi bedys aboven all thing.</p> <p>With sybbe ne fremde make no jangelyng; Laughe thou to scorn nother olde ne yonge; Be of gode beryng and of gode tonge.</p> <p>In thi god beryng begynnes thi worschype — My dere doughter, of this take kepe.</p> <p>If any man profer thee to wede, A curtas ansuer to hym be seyde, And schew hym to thy frendys alle. For anything that may befawle, Syt not by hym, ne stand thou nought In sych place ther synne may be wroght.</p> <p>What man that thee doth wedde with ryng, Loke thou hym love aboven all thinge.</p> <p>If that it forteyn thus with thee, That he be wroth and angery be, Loke thou mekly ansuer hym, And meve hym nother lyth ne lymme, And that schall sclake hym of hys mode; Than schall thou be hys derlyng gode.</p> <p>Fayre wordys wreth do slake; Fayre wordys wreth schall never make; Ne fayre wordys brake never bone, Ne never schall in no wone.</p> <p>Be fayre of semblant, my der doughter;</p>	<p>Rest awhile and listen I shall tell you a pretty story How the good wife taught her daughter To mend her life and make her better</p> <p>"Daughter, you will be a wife, Wisely to work in this life, Serve God and attend church, And you'll work even better.</p> <p>To go to church and don't be hindered by rain, And that will help you in your pain. Gladly ensure you pay your tithes, And don't miss any offerings.</p> <p>Don't loath poor men, But give them food and clothes/cloth; And don't be hard to poor folks, But be a steward to them; For where there is a good steward, Seldom is wanting any riches.</p> <p>When you are in church, my child, Be sure you are both meek and mild, And say your prayers before doing anything else.</p> <p>Don't make gossip with either relatives or friends; And don't laugh at old or young people; Be of good bearing and good tongue.</p> <p>If you are of good bearing, they will say nice things about you, my dear daughter, take heed of this.</p> <p>If any man asks to marry you, Give him a courteous answer, And introduce him to your friends. For anything that may befall, Don't sit by him, or stand In such a place where sin may happen.</p> <p>The man that you marry with a ring, Be sure to love him above all things.</p> <p>If it happens to you, That he is wroth and angry, Answer him meekly, And cause him to move neither body or limb, And this will slake his mood; Then you will be his darling.</p> <p>Fair words slake wrath; Fair words don't make wrath; Fair words don't break bones, And never will anywhere.</p> <p>Be of fair temper, my dear daughter,</p>
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How the Good Wife Taught Her Daughter, c. 1310-1350? (Codex Ashmole 61)

<p>Change not thi countenans with grete laughter, And wyse of maneres loke thou be gode.</p> <p>Ne for no tayle change thi mode, Ne fare not as thou a gyglot were, Ne laughe thou not lowd, be thou therof sore.</p> <p>Luke thou also gape not to wyde, For anything that may betyde.</p> <p>Suete of speche loke that thow be, Trow in worde and dede — lerne this of me.</p> <p>Loke thou fle synne, vilony, and blame, And se ther be no man that seys thee any schame.</p> <p>When thou goys in the gate, go not to faste, Ne hyderward ne thederward thi hede thou caste, No grete othes loke thou suere; Byware, my doughter, of syche a maner.</p> <p>Go not as it were a gase Fro house to house to seke the mase.</p> <p>Ne go thou not to no merket To sell thi thryft; bewer of itte.</p> <p>Ne go thou nought to the taverne, Thy godnes for to selle therinne.</p> <p>Forsake thou hym that taverne hanteth, And all the vices that therinne bethe.</p> <p>Wherever thou come at ale or wyne, Take not to myche, and leve be tyme, For mesure therinne, it is no herme, And drounke to be, it is thi schame.</p> <p>Ne go thou not to no wrastlyng, Ne yit to no coke schetyng, As it were a strumpet other a gyglote, Or as a woman that lyst to dote.</p> <p>Byde thou at home, my doughter dere, Thes poyntys at me I rede thou lere; And wyrke thi werke at nede, All the better thou may spede.</p> <p>I suere thee, doughter, be heven kyng, Mery it is of al thyng.</p> <p>Aqueynte thee not with every man That inne the strete thou metys than; Thof he wold be aqueynted with thee, Grete hym curtasly and late hym be. Loke by hym not longe thou stond,</p>	<p>Don't guffaw, Have nice manners and be good.</p> <p>Don't change your mood because of a story, Don't behave like a harlot, Don't laugh too loud, avoid this.</p> <p>Be careful you don't open your mouth too wide, For anything can happen.</p> <p>Be careful that you speak sweetly, True in word and deed – take this from me.</p> <p>Be careful you avoid sin, villainy, and blame, And see that no man says shameful things about you,</p> <p>When you go on the road, don't go too fast, Don't cast your head around, Don't swear any great oaths; Beware of behaving in such a manner.</p> <p>Don't go about as if a goose From house to house to seek amusement.</p> <p>Don't go to market To impoverish yourself; beware of this.</p> <p>Do not go to the tavern, Where you might lose your goodness.</p> <p>Forsake him that haunts the taverns, And the vices that can be found within.</p> <p>Whenever you drink ale or wine, Don't drink too much and leave promptly, There is no harm in being temperate, And it is shameful to be drunk.</p> <p>Don't go to the wrestling matches, Or to the cock-shooting, As if you were a strumpet or harlot, Or a woman who likes to be foolish.</p> <p>Spend your time at home, dear daughter, These points from me I advise you learn; And do your work as necessary, All the better that you may accomplish your purpose.</p> <p>I swear to you, daughter, be deserving of heaven, It will bring you happiness</p> <p>Don't acquaint yourself with every man That you meet in the street; Though he may want to be acquainted with you, Greet him courteously, then walk away. Be careful that you don't stand by him too long,</p>
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How the Good Wife Taught Her Daughter, c. 1310-1350? (Codex Ashmole 61)

<p>That thorow no vylony thi hert fond.</p> <p>All the men be not trew That fare speche to thee can schew.</p> <p>For no covetys no giftys thou take; Bot thou wyte why, some them forsake. For gode women with gyftys Men ther honour fro them lyftys, Thofe that thei were all trew As any stele that bereth hew; For with ther giftys men them overgone, Thof thei were trew as ony ston. Bounde thei be that giftys take; Therfor thes giftys thou forsake.</p> <p>In other mens houses make thou no maystry, For dred no vylony to thee be spye.</p> <p>Loke thou chyd no wordys bolde To myssey nother yonge ne olde; For and thou any chyder be, Thy neyghbors wyll speke thee vylony.</p> <p>Be thou not to envyos, For drede thi neyghbors wyll thee curse. Envyos hert hymselfe fretys, And of gode werkys hymselfe lettys.</p> <p>Houswyfely wyll thou gon On werkedeyes in thine awne wone.</p> <p>Pryde, rest, and ydelleschype: Fro these werkys, thou thee kepe.</p> <p>And kepe thou welle thy holy dey, And thy God worschype when thou may, More for worschype than for pride, And styfly in thy feyth thou byde.</p> <p>Loke thou were no ryche robys, Ne counterfyte thou no ladys; For myche schame do them betyde, That lese ther worschipe thorow ther pride.</p> <p>Be thou, doughter, a houswyfe gode, And ever more of myld mode.</p> <p>Wysely loke thi hous and meneyé; The beter to do thei schall be.</p> <p>Women that be of yvell name, Be ye not togeder in fame. Loke what most nede is to don, And sett thi men therto ryght sone.</p>	<p>Unless villainy tempt your heart.</p> <p>All the men are not true, Who speak fairly too you.</p> <p>Don't take gifts out of covetousness; Unless you know why they're being given to you. From good women who receive gifts Men take those ladies' honor, Would that they were all true, As any knife that bears an edge; For with their gifts, men go over board(?), As though they were as true as stone. You are bound by any gifts you take, Therefore you should forsake any gifts.</p> <p>Don't make yourself master in other men's homes, So that there is no shame upon you.</p> <p>Don't chide with any bold words To insult the young or old; For if you are know to be a chider, Your neighbors will speak villainy of you.</p> <p>Don't be envious, For fear that your neighbors will curse you. Envious people hurt themselves first And do little good for themselves.</p> <p>Go housewife-ly On workdays in your own home.</p> <p>Pride, rest, and idleness, Keep yourself on workdays.</p> <p>And keep yourself well on the holy day, And worship God when you may, More for worship's sake then for pride, And bide yourself firmly in your faith.</p> <p>Don't wear rich robes, Or imitate any noble ladies; For much shame will come to you, Who belie their worship through their pride.</p> <p>Be you, daughter, a good housewife, And always in a mild mood.</p> <p>Wisely look after your house and staff; The better they will work.</p> <p>Women that have an evil name (bad rep), Don't share their reputation. Be aware of what most needs to be done, And set your staff to take care of it.</p>
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How the Good Wife Taught Her Daughter, c. 1310-1350? (Codex Ashmole 61)

<p>That thing that is befor don dede, Redy it is when thou hast nede.</p> <p>And if thy lord be fro home, Lat not thy meneyé idell gone.</p> <p>And loke thou wele who do hys dede; Quyte hym thereafter to his mede.</p> <p>And thei that wyll bot lytell do, Therafter thou quite his mede also.</p> <p>A grete dede if thou have to done, At the tone ende thou be ryght sone.</p> <p>And if that thou fynd any fawte, Amend it sone and tarrye note.</p> <p>Mych thyng behoven them That gode housold schall kepyn.</p> <p>Amend thy hous or thou have nede, For better after thou schall spede.</p> <p>And if that thy nede be grete, And in the country corne be strypte, Make an houswyfe on thyselfe: Thy bred thou bake for houswyfys helthe.</p> <p>Amonge thi servantys if thou stondyn, Thy werke it schall be soner done.</p> <p>To helpe them sone thou sterte, For many handys make lyght werke.</p> <p>Bysyde thee if thy neghborys thryve, Therfor thou make no stryfte, Bot thanke God of all thi gode That he send thee to thy fode.</p> <p>And than thou schall lyve gode lyfe, And so to be a gode houswyfe.</p> <p>At es he lyves that awe no dette — It is no les, withouten lette.</p> <p>Syte not to longe uppe at even, For drede with ale thou be oversene.</p> <p>Loke thou go to bedde bytyme; Erly to ryse is fisyke fyne.</p> <p>And so thou schall be, my dere chyld, Be welle dysposed, both meke and myld.</p> <p>For all ther es may thei not have,</p>	<p>That thing that is accomplished, Is ready when you need it.</p> <p>And if thy lord is away from home, Don't let the staff be idle.</p> <p>And watch for the ones who do good work; Repay him afterwards according to his merits.</p> <p>And those that will only do a little, Thereafter repay him according to his merits also.</p> <p>If you have to do a large amount of work, Start at the beginning and do it quickly.</p> <p>And if you find any fault, Amend it soon and don't tarry.</p> <p>Many things behoove them, That keep a good house.</p> <p>Amend your house or you have need For better after your affairs are concluded (? IDFK)</p> <p>If your need is great, And the corn in the country is straight, Make a housewife of yourself, And bake your bread for housewife's health.</p> <p>If you stand among your servants, They'll do their work faster.</p> <p>Soon you should start to help them For many hands make light work.</p> <p>If your neighbors thrive beside you, Make no strife, And thank God for all the good That he sends you to eat.</p> <p>And then you shall live a good life, And so be a good housewife.</p> <p>He lives at ease who owes no debt — It is no lie, without fail.</p> <p>Don't stay up to late in the evening (like I'm doing now) For fear that with ale you'll be overcome.</p> <p>Be sure you go to bed on time, Early to rise is good medicine.</p> <p>So you shall be, my dear child, Well disposed, both meek and mild.</p> <p>For though all may not have there health, (?)</p>
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How the Good Wife Taught Her Daughter, c. 1310-1350? (Codex Ashmole 61)

<p>That wyll thryve and ther gode save.</p> <p>And if it thus thee betyde, That frendys falle thee fro on every syde, And God fro thee thi chyld take, Thy wreke onne God do thou not take; For thyselfe it wyll undo, And all thes that thee longys to.</p> <p>Many one for ther awne foly Spyllys themselve unthryftyly.</p> <p>Loke, doughter, no thing thou lese, Ne thi housbond thou not desples.</p> <p>And if thou have a doughter of age, Pute her sone to maryage; For meydens thei be lonely, And no thinge syker therby.</p> <p>Borow thou not, if that thou meye, For dred thi neybour wyll sey naye.</p> <p>Ne take thou nought to fyrst, Bot thou be inne more bryste.</p> <p>Make thee not ryche of other mens thyng, The bolder to spend be on ferthyng. Borowyd thing muste nedys go home, If that thou wyll to heven gone.</p> <p>When thi servantys have do thi werke, To pay ther hyre loke thou be smerte, Whether thei byde or thei do wende; Thus schall thou kepe them ever thi frende.</p> <p>And thus thi frendys wyll be glade That thou dispos thee wyslye and sade.</p> <p>Now I have taught thee, my dere doughter, The same techynge I hade of my modour.</p> <p>Thinke theron both nyght and dey, Forgette them not if that thou may.</p> <p>For a chyld unborne were better Than be untaught — thus seys the letter. Therfor, Allmyghty God inne trone Spede us all bothe even and morn, And bryng us to thy hyghe blysse, That never more fro us schall mysse.”</p>	<p>They will thrive and their God save them.</p> <p>And if you live thus, That your friends fall from you on every side, And God takes your child, Don't take your anger out on God, For this will undo you, And all the things that belong to you.</p> <p>Many people by their own folly, Ruin themselves with incompetence.</p> <p>Be careful, daughter, you spill nothing, And thus displease your husband.</p> <p>And if you have a daughter of age, Put her soon to marriage; For maidens are lonely And secure nothing by their estate.</p> <p>Do not borrow, if you can, For fear your neighbor will say no.</p> <p>Don't buy anything on credit, Because you will be more damaged by this.</p> <p>Don't make yourself rich on other men's things, It's better to spend your own coin. (?) Borrowed things must go home, If you want to go to heaven.</p> <p>When your servants have done their work, And it's time to pay them, be prompt; Whether they stay or leave' You shall keep them ever your friend.</p> <p>And thus your friends will be glad That you dispose yourself seriously.</p> <p>Now I have taught thee, my dear daughter, The same things I learned from my mother.</p> <p>Think on these things both night and day, And don't forget them.</p> <p>For a child unborn is better Than a child untaught – so says the book. Therefore, Almighty God, in his throne, Speed us all from evening to morning And bring us to your high blessing, That will never depart us.</p>
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How the Wise Man Taught His Son, c. 15th C. (Codex Ashmole 61)

Lordyngys, and ye wyll here
How a wyse man taught hys sone,
Take god hede to this mater,
And fynd to lerne it yf ye canne.
This songe for younge men was begon
To make them trew and stedfaste;
For yerne that is evyll spon,
Evyll it comes out at the laste.

It was a wyse man had a chyld
Was fully fiftene wynter of age,
Of maneres he was meke and myld,
Gentyll of body and of usage.
Bycause he was his faderes ayer,
His fader thus on this langage
Taught his sone wele and feyre,
Gentyll of kynd and of corage.

And seyde, "Son, have this worde in herte,
And thynke thereon when I am dede:
Every daye thi fyrst werke —
Loke it be don in every sted —
Go see thi God in form of bred,
And thanke thi God of his godnesse,
And afterward, sone, be my rede,
Go do thi werldys besynesse.

"Bot fyrst worschype God on the daye,
And thou wyll have to thi mede
Skylfully what thou wyll praye.
He wyll thee send withouten dred,
And send thee all that thou hast nede,
Als ferre as mesure wyll destreche.
Luke mesurly thy lyfe thou lede,
And of the remynant ther thee not reche.

"And, son, thi tonge thou kepe also,
And tell not all thyngys that thou maye,
For thi tonge may be thy fo.
Therefore, my son, thynke what I sey,
Where and when that thou schall praye,
And be whom that thou seyst owht;
For thou may say a word todaye,
That seven yere after may be forthought.

"With love and awe thi wyfe thou chastys,
And late feyre wordys be thi yerd;
For awe it is the best gyse
For to make thi wyfe aferd.

"Sone, thi wyfe thou schall not chyde,
Ne caule her by no vylons name;
For sche that schall ly by thy syde,
To calle hyr wykyd, it is thy schame.
When thou schall thy wyfe defame,
Welle may another man do so;

Gentlemen, if you will hear
How a wise man taught his son
Pay good heed to this matter.
And try to learn if you can.
This song for young men was begun
To make them true and strong;
For yarn that is evily spun
It comes out of the last evil.

It was that a wise man had a child
Who was a full fifteen years of age,
Of manners he was meek and mild,
Gentle of body and behavior.
Because he was his father's heir,
His father thus, in these words
Taught his son well and fair,
Gentle of nature and disposition.

And said, "Son, take this book to heart,
And think upon it when I am dead
Every day, your first duty —
Ensure it be done in every situation —
Go and take the eucharist.
And thank God, in his goodness,
And afterward, son, take my advice,
Go about your worldly business.

"But first worship God on the day,
And you will have your reward
Justly what you will pray.
Don't fear, he will send you
All you have need of,
As far as moderation will allow.
Be sure that you live a measured life,
And do not over reach.

"And, son, keep your tongue,
And don't talk about all the things you can,
For your tongue may be your enemy.
Therefore, my son, think on what I say,
Where and when you should pray,
And to whom you say anything;
For you may say a word today,
That in seven years you may regret.

"With love and reverence chastise your wife,
And let fair words be your measuring stick;
For reverence is the best way,
To make your wife afraid.

"Son, don't chide your wife,
Or call her by a villainous name;
For she that shall lie by your side,
To call her wicked is a shame
When you defame your wife,
Another man may do it also;

How the Wise Man Taught His Son, c. 15th C. (Codex Ashmole 61)

Bot sofer, and a man may tame
Hert and hynd and the wyld ro.

“Sone, be thou not gelos by no weye,
For if thou fall in gelosye,
Late not thi wyfe wyte be no weye;
For thou mayst do no more folye.
For if thi wyfe myght ons aspye
That thou to her wold not tryste,
In spyte of all thi fantysye,
To wreke hyr werst, that is herre lyste.

“Son, unto thi God pay welle thi tythe,
And pore men of thy gode thou dele.
Ageyn the devell be stronge and styfe,
And helpe thi soule fro peyne of helle.
Thys werld is bote fantesye fele,
And dey by dey it wylle apare.
Therfor beware the werldys wele:
It farys as a chery feyre.

“Many man here gederes gode
All hys lyfe tyme for odour men,
That he may not — be the rode —
Not have tyme to ete a hene.
When he is dolven in his den,
Another schall come at the last ende,
And have hys wyfe and catell than;
That he has sparyd another wylly spende.

“For all that ever a man doth here
With bysenes and travell bothe,
All this is, withouten were,
Not bot for mete and drynke and clothe;
More getys he not, withouten hothe.
Kyng ne prince whether he be,
Be he lefe or be he lothe,
A pore man schall have als mych as he.

“Therfor sone, be my counselle,
More than inowghe thou never covete.
Thou wotyst not when deth wylle thee asayll;
This werld is bot deth and debate.
Loke thou be not to hyghe of state.
By ryches here sette thou no price;
For this werld is full of deseyt;
Therfor purchasse paradyce.

“For deth, my chylde, is, as I trow,
The most ryght serteyn it is;
Nothing so unserteyn to unknow,
As is the tyme of deth, iwys.
And therfor sone, thinke onne thys,
And all that I have seyde before,
And Jhesu bryng us to his blysse,
The chyld that was in Bedlem borne.”

But be patient, and a man may tame
Hart and hind and the wild roe.

“Son, don't be jealous in any way,
But if you fall into jealousy,
Don't let your wife know it;
For you may do no more folly.
For if your wife might find this out,
That you would not trust her,
In spite of all your longing,
To do her worst will be her desire.

“Son, unto your God pay your tithe,
And share your goods with poor men.
Against the devil be strong and resolute,
And help your soul from pain of hell.
This world is only a nice fantasy,
And day by day it will diminish.
Therefore be weary of the world's riches:
It goes past like a cherry fair.

“Many men here gather goods
All his life for other men.
That he may not – by the cross –
Not have time to eat a hen.
When he is buried in his grave,
Another shall come after his death,
And take his wife and goods;
What he has saved another will spend.

“For all that a man does here
With business and travel both,
All this is, without doubt,
Not for food and drink and clothing,
He does not get more, without oath,
Whether he is king or prince,
Loved or loathed,
A poor man will have as much as him.

“Therefore son, take my counsel.
Never covet more than you need.
You know know when death will take you;
This world is both death and struggle.
Be careful you are not too proud.
Don't set any value by riches;
For this world is full of deceit;
So instead purchase paradise.

“For death, my child, is, as I trust,
The most certain thing there is;
There is nothing so uncertain and unknowable
As when your time of death is.
Therefore son, think on this,
And all that I have said before,
That Jesus brings us his blessing,
That child who was in Bethlehem born.”