



POEMA REGIUS
MANOSCRITTO HALLIWELL
"A Poem of Moral Duties"

INTRODUZIONE

Il documento in questione è considerato il più antico documento massonico, la cui datazione è stata convenzionalmente posta nel 1390,). È scritto nel cosiddetto *Middle English* (inglese antico), la lingua dell'epoca. Si pensa che fu trascritto, da un prete, probabilmente da un documento più antico, del quale si è persa ogni traccia. Viene detto **Poema**, non essendo una vera e propria costituzione, e ha inoltre l'aggettivo **Regius** in quanto inizialmente fu inserito nella Royal Library fondata dal Re Enrico VII Tudor (1457-1509) di Inghilterra e successivamente donata al British Museum da Re Giorgio II di Hannover (1683-1760). Molti studiosi hanno avanzato l'ipotesi che tale testo fosse stato scritto per personaggi che potevano definirsi gli antenati dei massoni speculativi e documento difficile e non applicabile per gli operativi. Tuttavia va osservato che nella creazione di una opera di questa portata hanno probabilmente partecipato personaggi di varia e diversa estrazione.

Non è un mistero che da ben mille anni prima editi come quello di Rotari (22 Novembre 643), avessero indicato il notevole prestigio conseguito le corporazioni dei muratori.

L'**editto di Rotari** fu la prima raccolta scritta delle leggi dei Longobardi, promulgato alla mezzanotte tra il 22 novembre e 23 novembre 643 da re Rotari. L'editto, scritto in latino con frequenti parole d'origine longobarda, è uno dei principali documenti per lo studio dell'evoluzione della lingua longobarda e raccoglie in modo organico le antiche leggi del popolo longobardo, pur con aspetti derivati direttamente dal diritto romano. Stando al principio della personalità della legge, l'editto fu valido solo per la popolazione italiana di origini longobarde; quella romana soggetta al

dominio longobardo rimase invece regolata dal diritto romano, codificato a quell'epoca nel *Digesto* promulgato dall'imperatore Giustiniano I nel 533. L'editto di Rotari, nel suo contenuto, è un insieme di codici atti a ricomporre le vertenze tra i cittadini sostituendo le faide con risarcimenti pecuniari (guidrigildo). Il principio del guidrigildo è un risarcimento di denaro che varia a seconda del valore e della dignità di chi commette il reato ed a seconda di chi lo subisce. Manifesta come la società longobarda fosse notevolmente stratificata. Particolarmente significativa la differenza di pena per l'uxoricidio: se commesso dalla consorte verso il marito, avrebbe portato alla condanna a morte o alla lapidazione della donna; viceversa era punito con una pena pecuniaria. Tuttavia la somma da pagare era al di fuori della portata dei più, e gli uxoricidi erano condannati dunque ai lavori forzati. Tra gli istituti contemplati dall'editto figuravano il mundio, cioè la potestà dell'uomo sulla donna la quale non aveva alcun diritto, e l'ordalia, consistente, nei casi dubbi, nella prova dei carboni ardenti per l'imputato. Secondo alcuni studiosi l'editto di Rotari sarebbe stato materialmente redatto nello *scriptorium* dell'abbazia di Bobbio sotto il terzo abate, san Bobuleno. L'unica copia esistente è conservata per intero nella collezione di manoscritti della Biblioteca Capitolare di Vercelli e non è esposta al pubblico.

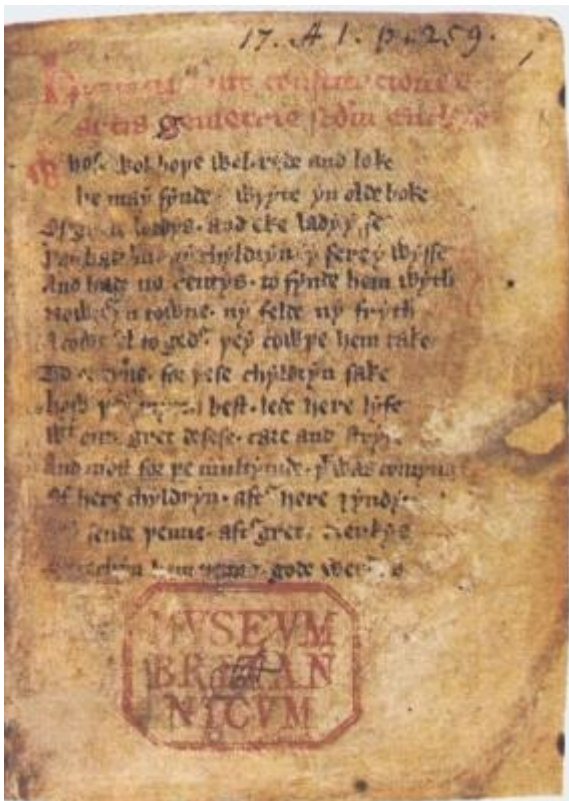
Il Poema Regius viene anche chiamato "*Manoscritto Halliwell*" dal nome del letterato James Halliwell-Philipp (1820-1889) che, attorno 1840, lo pubblicò, per la prima volta, riconoscendone il senso e se si vuole il carattere massonico. Il documento pur non essendo un atto costitutivo presenta più elementi costitutivi che poetici.

E' comunque evidente l'importanza assunta dal ritrovamento del Poema Regius che di fatto tende ad amplificare storicamente l'autorità degli "Old Charges" inseriti nelle Costituzioni di Anderson, che con discendono, come è banale verificare, proprio dai "quindici articoli" e dai "quindici punti" contenuti ed esposti nel Poema Regius.

Poema Regius

(in middle english)

Hic incipiunt constitutiones artis gemetriae secundum Eucyldem.
(Qui cominciano le costituzioni dell'arte della geometria secondo
Euclide).



Whose wol bothe wel rede and loke,
 He may fynde wryte yn olde boke
 Of grete lordys and eke ladyysse,
 That hade mony chyldryn y-fere, y-wisse;
 And hade no rentys to fynde hem wyth,
 Nowther yn towne, ny felde, ny fryth:
 A cownsel togeder they cowthe hem take;
 To ordeyne for these chyldryn sake,
 How they my[g]th best lede here lyfe
 Withoute gret desese, care and stryfe;
 And most for the multytude that was comynge
 Of here chyldryn after here [g]lyndyng.
 (They) sende thenne after grete clerkys,
 To techyn hem thenne gode werkys;

And pray we hem, for our Lordys sake,
 To oure chyldryn sum werke to make,
 That they my[g]th gete here lyvyng therby,
 Bothe wel and onestlyche, ful sycurly.
 Yn that tyme, thro[g]h good gemetry,
 Thys onest craft of good masonry
 Wes ordeynt and made yn thys manere,
 Y-cownterfetyd of thys clerkys y-fere;
 At these lordys prayers they cownterfetyd gemetry,
 And [g]af hyt the name of masonry,
 For the moste oneste craft of alle.
 These lordys chyldryn therto dede falle,
 To lurne of hym the craft of gemetry,
 The wheche he made ful curysly;

Thro[g]h fadrys prayers and modrys also,
Thys onest craft he putte hem to.
He that lerned best, and were of onesté,
And passud hys felows yn curysté;
[G]ef yn that craft he dede hym passe,
He schulde have more worschepe then the lasse.
Thys grete clerkys name was clept Euclyde,
Hys name hyt spradde ful wondur wyde.
Get thys grete clerke more ordeynt he
To hym that was herre yn thys degré,
That he schulde teche the synplyst of (wytte)
Yn that onest craft to be parfytte;
And so uchon schulle techyn othur,
And love togeder as syster and brothur.

Forthermore [g]et that ordeynt he,
Mayster y-called so schulde he be;
So that he were most y-worschepede,
Thenne sculde he be so y-clepede:
But mason schulde never won other calle,
Withynne the craft amongus hem alle,
Ny soget, ny servand, my dere brother,
Tha[g]ht he be not so perfyt as ys another;
Uchon sculle calle other felows by cuthe,
For cause they come of ladyes burthe.
On thys maner, thro[g] good wytte of gemetry,
Bygan furst the craft of masonry:
The clerk Euclyde on thys wyse hyt fonde,
Thys craft of gemetry yn Egypte londe.

Yn Egypte he taw[g]hte hyt ful wyde,
Yn dyvers londe on every syde;
Mony eryl afterwarde, y understonde,
[G]er that the craft com ynto thys londe,
Thys craft com ynto Englund, as y [g]ow say,
Yn tyme of good kynge Adelstonus day;
He made tho bothe halle and eke bowre,
And hie templus of gret honowre,
To sportyn hym yn bothe day and ny[g]th,
An to worschepe hys God with alle hys my[g]th.
Thys goode lorde loved thys craft ful wel,
And purposud to strenthyn hyt every del,
For dyvers defawtys that yn the craft he fonde;
He sende about ynto the londe

After alle the masonus of the crafte,
To come to hym ful evene stra[g]fte,
For to amende these defawtys alle
By good consel, [g]ef hyt myt[g]th falle.
A semblé thenne he cowthe let make
Of dyvers lordis, yn here state,

Dukys, erlys, and barnes also,
Kyn[g]thys, sqwyers, and mony mo,
And the grete burges of that syté,
They were ther alle yn here degré;
These were ther uchon algate,
To ordeyne for these masonus astate.
Ther they sow[g]ton by here wytte,
How they my[g]thyn governe hytte:

Fyftene artyculus they ther sow[g]ton
And fyftene poyntys they wro[g]ton.
Hic incipit articulus primus.

The furste artycul of thys gemetry:--
The mayster mason moste be ful securly
Bothe stedefast, trusty, and trwe,
Hyt schal hum never thenne arewe:
And pay thy felows after the coste,
As vytaylys goth thenne, wel thou woste;
And pay them trwly, apon thy fay,
What that they deserven may;
And to her hure take no more,
But what they mowe serve fore;
And spare, nowther for love ny drede,

Of nowther partys to take no mede;
Of lord ny fellow, whether he be,
Of hem thou take no maner of fe;
And as a jugge stonde upry[g]th,
And thenne thou dost to bothe good ry[g]th;
And trwly do thys whersever thou gost,
Thy worschep, thy profyt, hyt shcal be most.
Articulus secundus.

The secunde artycul of good masonry,
As [g]e mowe hyt here hyr specyaly,
That every mayster, that ys a mason,
Most ben at the generale congregacyon,
So that he hyt resonably y-tolde
Where that the semblé schal be holde;

And to that semblé he most nede gon,
But he have a resenabul skwsacyon,
Or but he be unbuxom to that craft,
Or with falsshed ys over-raft,
Or ellus sekenes hath hym so stronge,
That he may not com hem amonge;
That ys a skwsacyon, good and abulle,
To that semblé withoute fabulle.
Articulus tercius.

The thrydde artycul for sothe hyt ysse,
That the mayster take to no prentysse,
but he have good seuerans to dwelle
Seven [g]ler with hym, as y [g]low telle,
Hys craft to lurne, that ys profytable;

Withynne lasse he may not be able
To lordys profyt, ny to his owne,
As [g]le mowe knowe by good resowne.
Articulus quartus.

The fowrthe artycul thys moste be
That the mayster hym wel be-se,
That he no bondemon prentys make,
Ny for no covetyse do hym take;
For the lord that he ys bonde to,
May fache the prentes whersever he go.
Gef yn the logge he were y-take,
Muche desese hyt mygth ther make,
And suche case hyt mygth befalle,
That hyt mygth greve summe or alle.

For alle the masonus tht ben there
Wol stonde togedur hol y-fere
Gef suche won yn that craft schulde swelle,
Of dyvers desesys ge mygth telle:
For more gese thenne, and of honeste,
Take a prentes of herre degre.
By olde tyme wryten y fynde
That the prenes schulde be of gentyl kynde;
And so symtyme grete lordys blod
Toke thys gemetry, that ys ful good.
Articulus quintus.

The fyfthe artycul ys swythe good,
So that the prentes be of lawful blod;
The mayster schal not, for no vantage,

Make no prentes that ys outrage;
Hyt ys to mene, as [g]le mowe here,
That he have hys lymes hole alle y-fere;
To the craft hyt were gret schame,
To make an halt mon and a lame,
For an unperfyt mon of suche blod
Schulde do the craft but lytul good.
Thus [g]le mowe knowe everychon,
The craft wolde have a my[g]hty mon;
A maymed mon he hath no my[g]ht,
[G]le mowe hyt knowe long [g]ler ny[g]ht.
Articulus sextus.

The syxte artycul [g]le mowe not mysse,

That the mayster do the lord no pregedysse,
To take of the lord, for hyse prentyse,
Also muche as hys felows don, yn alle vyse.
For yn that craft they ben ful perfyt,
So ys not he, [g]le mowe sen hyt.
Also hyt were a[g]leynus good reson,
To take hys, hure as hys felows don.
Thys same artycul, yn thys casse,
Juggythe the prentes to take lasse
Thenne hys felows, that ben ful perfyt.
Yn dyvers maters, conne qwyte hyt,
The mayster may his prentes so enforme,
That hys hure may crese ful [g]urne,

And, ger hys terme come to an ende,
Hys hure may ful wel amende.
Articulus septimus.

The seventh artycul that ys now here,
Ful wel wol telle gow, alle y-fere,
That no mayster, for favour ny drede,
Schal no thef nowther clothe ny fede.
Theves he schal herberon never won,
Ny hym that hath y-quellude a mon,
Wy thylike that hath a febul name,
Lest hyt wolde turne the craft to schame.
Articulus octavus.

The eghte artycul schewt [g]low so,

That the mayster may hyt wel do,
[G]ef that he have any mon of crafte,
And be not also perfyt as he au[g]te,
He may hym change sone anon,
And take for hym a perfytur mon.
Suche a mon, thro[g]le rechelaschepe,
My[g]th do the craft schert worschepe.
Articulus nonus.

The nynthe artycul schewet ful welle,
That the mayster be both wyse and felle;
That no werke he undurtake,
But he conne bothe hyt ende and make;
And that hyt be to the lordes profyt also,

And to hys craft, whersever he go;
And that the grond be wel y-take,
That hyt nowther fle ny grake.
Articulus decimus.

The then the artycul ys for to knowe,
Amonge the craft, to hye and lowe,
There schal no mayster supplante other,
But be togeder as systur and brother,
Yn thys curyus craft, alle and som,
That longuth to a maystur mason.
Ny he schal not supplante non other mon,
That hath y-take a werke hym uppon,
Yn peyne therof that ys so stronge,

That peyseth no lasse thenne ten ponge,
But [g]ef that he be gulty y-fonde,
That toke furst the werke on honde;
For no mon yn masonry
Schal no supplante othur securly,
But [g]ef that hyt be so y-wro[g]th,
That hyt turne the werke to nogth;
Thenne may a mason that werk crave,
To the lordes profyt hyt for to save;
Yn suche a case but hyt do falle,
Ther schal no mason medul withalle.
Forsothe he that begynnyth the gronde,
And he be a mason goode and sonde,
For hath hyt sycurly yn hys mynde

To brynge the werke to ful good ende.
Articulus undecimus.

The eleventhe artycul y telle the,
That he ys bothe fayr and fre;
For he techyt, by hys my[g]th,
That no mason schulde worche be ny[g]th,
But [g]ef hyt be yn practesyng of wytte,
[G]ef that y cowthe amende hytte.
Articulus duodecimus.

The twelfth the artycul ys of hye honesté
To [g]every mason, whersever he be;
He schal not hys felows werk deprave,
[G]ef that he wol hys honesté save;
With honest wordes he hyt comende,

By the wytte that God the dede sende;
Buy hyt amende by al that thou may,
Bytwynne [g]low bothe withoute nay.
Articulus xiiijus.

The threttene artycul, so God me save,
Ys,[g]ef that the mayster a prentes have,
Enterlyche thenne that he hym teche,

And meserable poyntes that he hym reche,
That he the craft abelyche may conne,
Whersever he go undur the sonne.
Articulus xiiijus.

The fowrtene artycul, by good reson,
Scheweth the mayster how he schal don;
He schal no prentes to hym take,

Byt dyvers crys he have to make,
That he may, withynne hys terme,
Of hym dyvers poyntes may lurne.
Articulus quindecimus.

The fyftene artycul maketh an ende,
For to the mayster he ys a frende;
To lere hym so, that for no mon,
No fals mantenans he take hym apon,
Ny maynteine hys felows yn here synne,
For no good that he my[g]th wyne;
Ny no fals sware sofre hem to make,
For drede of here sowles sake;
Lest hyt wolde turne the craft to schame,
And hymself to mechul blame.
Plures Constituciones.

At thys semblé were poyntes y-ordeynt mo,
Of grete lordys and maystrys also,
That whose wol conne thys craft and com to astate,
He most love wel God, and holy churche algate,
And hys mayster also, that he ys wythe,
Whersever he go, yn fylde or frythe;
And thy felows thou love also,
For that they craft wol that thou do.
Secundus punctus.

The secunde poynt, as y [g]low say,
That the mason worche apon the werk day,
Also trwly, as he con or may,

To deserve hys huyre for the halyday,
And trwly to labrun on hys dede,
Wel deserve to have hys mede.
Tercius punctus.

The thrydde poynt most be severele,
With the prentes knowe hyt wele,
Hys mayster conwsel he kepe and close,
And hys felows by hys goode purpose;
The prevetyse of the chamber telle he no man,
Ny yn the logge whatsoever they done;

Whatsever thou heryst, or syste hem do,
Telle hyt no mon, whersever thou go;
The conwsel of halls, and [g]leke of bowre,

Kepe hyt wel to gret honowre,
Lest hyt wolde torne thyself to blame,
And brynge the craft ynto gret schame.
Quartus punctus.

The fowrthe poynt techyth us also,
That no mon to hys craft be false;
Errour he schal maynteine none
A[g]leynus the craft, but let hyt gone;
Ny no pregedysse he schal not do
To hys mayster, ny hys felows also;
And that[g]th the prentes be under awe,
[G]et he wolde have the same lawe.
Quintus punctus.

The fyfthe poynte ys, withoute nay,
That whenne the mason taketh hys pay
Of the mayster, y-ordent to hym,
Ful mekely y-take so most hyt byn;
[G]et most the mayster, by good resone,
Warne hem lawfully byfore none,
[G]ef he nulle okepye hem no more,
As he hath y-done ther byfore;
A[g]leynus thys ordyr he may not stryve,
[G]ef he thenke wel for to thryve.
Sextus punctus.

The syxte poynt ys ful [g]lef to knowe,
Bothe to hye and eke to lowe,

For suche case hyt my[g]th befalle,
Amonge the masonus, summe or alle,
Throwghe envye, or dedly hate,
Ofte aryseth ful gret debate.
Thenne owyth the mason, [g]lef that he may,
Putte hem bothe under a day;
But loveday [g]et schul they make none;
Tyl that the werke day be clene a-gone;
Apon the holyday [g]e mowe wel take
Leyser y-now[g]lth loveday to make,
Lest that hyt wolde the werke day
Latte here werke for suche afray;
To suche ende thenne that hem drawe,

That they stonde wel yn Goddes lawe.
Septimus punctus.

The seventhe poynt he may wel mene,
Of wel longe lyf that God us lene,
As hyt dyscryeth wel opunly,
Thou schal not by thy maysters wyf ly,
Ny by the felows, yn no maner wyse,
Lest the craft wolde the despyse;
Ny by the felows concubyne,
No more thou woldest he dede by thyne.
The peyne thereof let hyt be ser,
That he prentes ful seven [g]ler,
[G]lef he forfeite yn eny of hem,

So y-chasted thenne most he ben;
Ful mekele care my[g]th ther begynne,
For suche a fowle dedely synne.
Octavus punctus.

The eghte poynt, he may be sure,
[G]lef thou hast y-taken any cure,
Under thy mayster thou be trwe,
For that pynt thou schalt never arewe;
A trwe medyater thou most nede be
To thy mayster, and thy felows fre;
Do trwly al....that thou my[g]th,
To both partyes, and that ys good ry[g]th.
Nonus punctus.

The nynthe poynt we schul hym calle,
That he be stwarde of oure halle,
Gef that ge ben yn chambur y-fere,
Uchon serve other, with mylde chere;
Jentul felows, ge moste hyt knowe,
For to be stwardus alle o rowe,
Weke after weke withoute dowte,
Stwardus to ben so alle abowte,
Lovelyche to serven uchon othur,
As thawgh they were syster and brother;
Ther schal never won on other costage
Fre hymself to no vantage,
But every mon schal be lyche fre

Yn that costage, so moste hyt be;
Loke that thou pay wele every mon algate,
That thou hsat y-bow[g]ht any vytayles ate,
That no cravyng be y-mad to the,
Ny to thy felows, yn no degré,
To mon or to wommon, whether he be,
Pay hem wel and trwly, for that wol we;
Therof on thy fellow trwe record thou take,
For that good pay as thou dost make,
Lest hyt wolde thy felowe schame,

Any brynge thyself ynto gret blame.
[G]et good acowntes he most make
Of suche godes as he hath y-take,

Of thy felows goodes that thou hast spende,
Wher, and how, and to what ende;
Suche acowntes thou most come to,
Whenne thy felows wollen that thou do.
Decimus punctus.

The tenthe poynt presentyeth wel god lyf,
To lyven withoute care and stryf;
For and the mason lyve amysse,
And yn hys werk be false, y-wysse,
And thorw[g] suche a false skewysasyon
May sclawndren hys felows oute reson,
Throw[g] false sclawnder of suche fame

May make the craft kachone blame.
[G]ef he do the craft suche vylany,
Do hym no favour thenne securly.
Ny maynteine not hym yn wyked lyf,
Lest hyt wolde turne to care and stryf;
But get hym [g]le schul not delayme,
But that [g]le schullen hym constrayne,
For to apere whersevor [g]le wylle,
Whar that [g]le wolen, lowde, or styll;
To the nexte semblé [g]le schul hym calle,
To apere byfore hys felows alle,
And but [g]ef he wyl byfore hem pere,

The crafte he moste nede forswere;
He schal thenne be chasted after the lawe
That was y-fownded by olde dawe.
Punctus undecimus.

The eleventhe poynt ys of good dyscrecyoun,
As [g]le mowe knowe by good resoun;
A mason, and he thys craft wel con,
That sy[g]th hys fellow hewen on a ston,
And ys yn poynt to spylle that ston,
Amende hyt sone, [g]ef that thou con,
And teche hym thenne hyt to amende,
That the l(ordys) werke be not y-schende,
And teche hym esely hyt to amende,

With fayre wordes, that God the hath lende;
For hys sake that sytte above,
With swete wordes noresche hym love.
Punctus duodecimus.

The twelthe poynt of gret ryolté,
Ther as the semblé y-hole schal be,
Ther schul be maystrys and felows also,
And other grete lordes mony mo;
There schal be the scheref of that contré,
And also the meyr of that syté,
Kny[g]tes and sqwyers ther schul be,
And other aldermen, as [g]e schul se;
Suche ordynance as they maken there,

They schul maynté hyt hol y-fere
A[g]leynus that mon, whatsever he be,
That longuth to the craft bothe fayr and fre.
[G]ef he any stryf a[g]leynus hem make,
Ynto here warde he schal be take.
xiijus punctus.

The threnteth poynt ys to us ful luf.
He schal swere never to be no thef,
Ny soker hym yn hys fals craft,
For no good that he hath byraft,
And thou mowe hyt knowe or syn,
Nowther for hys good, ny for hys kyn.
xiiijus punctus.

The fowrtethe poynt ys ful good lawe
To hym that wold ben under awe;
A good trwe othe he most ther swere
To hys mayster and hys felows that ben there;
He most be stedefast and trwe also
To alle thys ordynance, whersever he go,
And to hys lyge lord the kynge,
To be trwe to hym, over alle thyng.
And alle these poyntes hyr before
To hem thou most nede by y-swore,
And alle schul swere the same ogth
Of the masonus, be they luf, ben they loght,
To alle these poyntes hyr byfore,

That hath ben ordeynt by ful good lore.
And they schul enquere every mon
On his party, as wyl as he con,
[G]ef any mon mowe be y-fownde gulty
Yn any of these poyntes spesyaly;
And whad he be, let hym be sow[g]ht,
And to the semblé let hym be brow[g]ht.
Quindecimus punctus.

The fiftethe poynt ys of ful good lore,
For hem that schul ben ther y-swore,
Suche ordynance at the semblé wes layd

Of grete lordes and maystres byforesayd;
For thelke that be unbuxom, y-wysse,

A[g]leynus the ordynance that ther ysse
Of these artyculus, that were y-meved there,
Of grete lordes and masonus al y-fere.
And [g]lef they ben y-preved opunly
Byfore that semblé, by an by,
And for here gultes no mendys wol make,
Thenne most they nede the crafty forsake;
And so masonus craft they schul refuse,
And swere hyt never more for to use.
But [g]lef that they wol mendys make,
A[g]layn to the craft they schul never take;
And [g]lef that they nul not do so,
The scheref schal come hem sone to,

And putte here bodyes yn duppe prison,
For the trespasse that they hav y-don,
And take here goodes and here cattelle
Ynto the kynges hond, everyt delle,
And lete hem dwelle ther full styлле,
Tyl hyt be oure lege kynges wylle.
Alia ordinacio artis gematriae.

They ordent ther a semblé to be y-holde
Every [g]ler, whersever they wolde,
To amende the defautes, [g]lef any where fonde
Amonge the craft withynne the londe;
Uche [g]ler or thrydde [g]ler hyt schuld be holde,

Yn every place whersever they wolde;
Tyme and place most be ordeynt also,
Yn what place they schul semble to.
Alle the men of craft tehr they most ben,
And other grete lordes, as [g]le mowe sen,
To mende the fautes that both ther y-spoke,
[G]lef that eny of hem ben thenne y-broke.
Ther they schullen ben alle y-swore,
That longuth to thys craftes lore,
To kepe these statutes everychon,
That ben y-ordeynt by kynge Aldelston;
These statutes that y have hyr y-fonde

Y chulle they ben holde thro[g]h my londe,
For the worsche of my ry[g]olté,
That y have by my dygnyté.
Also at every semblé that [g]le holde,
That ge come to [g]lowre lyge kyng bolde,
Bysechyng hym of hys hye grace,
To stonde with [g]low yn every place,

To conferme the statutes of kynge Adelston,
That he ordeyndt to thys craft by good reson,
Ars quatuor coronatorum.

Pray we now to God almy[g]ht,
And to hys moder Mary bry[g]ht,

That we mowe keepe these artyculus here,
And these poynts wel al y-fere,
As dede these holy martyres fowre,
That yn thys craft were of gret honoure;
They were as gode masonus as on erthe schul go,
Gravers and ymage-makers they were also.
For they were werkemen of the beste,
The emperour hade to hem gret luste;
He wylnd of hem a ymage to make,
That mow[g]h be worsched for his sake;
Suche mawmetys he hade yn hys dawe,
To turne the pepul from Crystus lawe.

But they were stedefast yn Crystes lay,
And to here craft, withouten nay;
They loved wel God and alle hys lore,
And weren yn hys serves ever more.
Trwe men they were yn that dawe,
And lyved wel y Goddus lawe;
They tho[g]ht no mawmetys for to make,
For no good that they my[g]th take,
To levyn on that mawmetys for here God,
They nolde do so thaw[g] he were wod;
For they nolde not forsake here trw fay,

An beyleve on hys falsse lay.
The emperour let take hem sone anone,
And putte hem ynto a dep presone;
The sarre he penest hem yn that plase,
The more yoye wes to hem of Cristus grace.
Thenne when he sye no nother won,
To dethe he lette hem thenne gon;
Whose wol of here lyf [g]let mor knowe,
By the bok he may kyt schowe,
In the legent of scanctorum,
The name of quatour coronatorum.

Here fest wol be, withoute nay,
After Alle Halwen the eyght day.
[G]e mow here as y do rede,
That mony [g]leres after, for gret drede
That Noees flod wes alle y-ronne,
The tower of Babyloyne was begonne,
Also playne werke of lyme and ston,

As any mon schulde loke uppon;
So long and brod hyt was begonne,
Seven myle the he[g]lghte schadweth the sonne.
King Nabogodonosor let hyt make,
To gret strenthe for monus sake,

Tha[g]lgh suche a flod a[g]layne schulde come,
Over the werke hyt schulde not nome;
For they hadde so hy pride, with stronge bost,
Alle that werke therfore was y-lost;
An angele smot hem so with dyveres speche,
That never won wyste what other schuld reche.
Mony eres after, the goode clerk Euclyde
Ta[g]lghte the craft of gemetré wonder wyde,
So he ded that tyme other also,
Of dyvers craftes mony mo.
Thro[g]lgh hye grace of Crist yn heven,
He commensed yn the syens seven;

Gramatica ys the furste syens y-wysse,
Dialectica the secunde, so have y blysse,
Rethorica the thrydde, withoute nay,
Musica ys the fowrth, as y [g]low say,
Astromia ys the v, by my snowte,
Arsmetica the vi, withoute dowte
Gemetria the seventh maketh an ende,
For he ys bothe make and hende,
Gramer forsothe ys the rote,
Whose wyl lurne on the boke;
But art passeth yn hys degré,
As the fryte doth the rote of the tre;

Rethoryk metryth with orne speche amonge,
And musyke hyt ys a swete song;
Astronomy nombreth, my dere brother,
Arsmetyk scheweth won thyng that ys another,
Gemetré the seventh syens hyt ysse,
That con deperte falshed from trewth the y-wys.
These bene the syens seven,
Whose useth hem wel, he may han heven.
Now dere chyl dren, by [g]lowre wytte,
Pride and covetyse that [g]le leven, hytte,
And taketh hede to goode dyscrecyon,
And to good norter, whersever [g]le com.
Now y pray [g]low take good hede,

For thys [g]le most kenne nede,
But much more [g]le moste wyten,
Thenne [g]le fynden hyr y-wryten.
[G]ef the fayle therto wytte,
Pray to God to send the hytte;

For Crist hymself, he techet ous
That holy churche ys Goddes hous,
That ys y-mad for nothyng ellus
but for to pray yn, as the bok tellus;
Ther the pepul schal gedur ynne,
To pray and wepe for here synne.
Loke thou come not to churche late,
For to speke harlotry by the gate;

Thenne to churche when thou dost fare,
Have yn thy mynde ever mare
To worschepe thy lord God bothe day and ny[g]th,
With all thy wyttes, and eke thy my[g]th.
To the churche dore when thou dost come,
Of that holy water ther sum thouw nome,
For every drope thou felust ther
Qwenchet a venyal synne, be thou ser.
But furst thou most do down thy hode,
For hyse love that dyed on the rode.
Into the churche when thou dost gon,
Pulle uppe thy herte to Crist, anon;

Uppon the rode thou loke uppe then,
And knele down fayre on bothe thy knen;
Then pray to hym so hyr to worche,
After the lawe of holy churche,
For to kepe the comandementes ten,
That God [g]af to alle men;
And pray to hym with mylde steven
To kepe the from the synnes seven,
That thou hyr mowe, yn thy lyve,
Kepe the wel from care and stryve,
Forthermore he grante the grace,
In heven blysse to hav a place.

In holy churche lef nyse wordes
Of lewed speche, and fowle bordes,
And putte away alle vanyté,
And say thy pater noster and thyn ave;
Loke also thou make no bere,
But ay to be yn thy prayere;
[G]lef thou wolt not thyselve pray,
Latte non other mon by no way.
In that place nowther sytte ny stonde,
But knele fayre down on the gronde,
And, when the Gospel me rede schal,

Fayre thou stonde up fro the wal,
And blesse the fayre, [g]lef that thou conne,
When gloria tibi is begonne;
And when the gospel ys y-done,

A[g]ayn thou my[g]th knele adown;
On bothe thy knen down thou falle,
For hyse love that bow[g]ht us alle;
And when thou herest the belle ryng
To that holy sakerynge,
Knele [g]e most, bothe [g]yn[g]e and olde,
And bothe [g]lor hondes fayr upholde,
And say thenne yn thys manere,

Fayr and softe, withoute bere;
"Jhesu Lord, welcom thou be,
Yn forme of bred, as y the se.
Now Jhesu, for thyn holy name,
Schulde me from synne and schame,
Schryff and hosel thou grant me bo,
[G]er that y schal hennus go,
And vey contrycyon of my synne,
Tath y never, Lord, dye thereynne;
And, as thou were of a mayde y-bore,
Sofre me never to be y-lore;
But when y schal hennus wende,

Grante me the blysse withoute ende;
Amen! amen! so mot hyt be!
Now, swete lady, pray for me."
Thus thou my[g]ht say, or sum other thyng,
When thou knelust at the sakerynge.
For covetyse after good, spare thou nought
To worschepe hym that alle hath wrought;
For glad may a mon that day ben,
That onus yn the day may hym sen;
Hyt ys so mucche worthe, withoute nay,
The vertu therof no mon telle may;
But so meche good doth that syht,

As seynt Austyn telluth ful ryht,
That day thou syst Goddus body,
Thou schalt have these, ful securly:-
Mete and drynke at thy nede,
Non that day schal the gneide;
Ydul othes, an wordes bo,
God for[g]eveth the also;
Soden deth, that ylke day,
The dar not drede by no way;
Also that day, y the plyht,
Thou schalt not lese thy eye syht;
And uche fote that thou gost then,

That holy syht for to sen,
They schul be told to stonde yn stede,
When thou hast therto gret nede;

That messongere, the angele Gabryelle,
Wol kepe hem to the ful welle.
From thys mater now y may passe,
To telle mo medys of the masse:
To churche come [g]let, [g]lef thou may,
And here thy masse uche day;
[G]lef thou mowe not come to churche,
Wher that ever thou doste worche,
When thou herest to masse knylle,

Pray to God with herte style,
To [g]leve the part of that servyse,
That yn churche ther don yse.
Forthermore [g]let, y wol [g]low preche
To [g]lowre felows, hyt for to teche,
When thou comest byfore a lorde,
Yn halle, yn bowre, or at the borde,
Hod or cappe that thou of do,
[G]ler thou come hym allynge to;
Twyes or thryes, without dowte,
To that lord thou moste lowte;
With thy ry[g]th kne let hyt be do,

Thyn owne worschepe tou save so.
Holde of thy cappe, and hod also,
Tyl thou have leve hyt on to do.
Al the whyle thou spekest with hym,
Fayre and lovelyche bere up thy chyn;
So, after the norter of the boke,
Yn hys face lovely thou loke.
Fot and hond, thou kepe ful style
From clawynge and trypynge, ys sckylle;
From spytynge and snyftyng kepe the also,
By privy avoydans let hyt go.
And [g]lef that thou be wyse and felle,

Thou hast gret nede to governe the welle.
Ynto the halle when thou dost wende,
Amonges the genteles, good and hende,
Presume not to hye for nothyng,
For thyn hye blod, ny thy connyng,
Nowther to sytte, ny to lene,
That ys norther good and clene.
Let not thy cowntenans therfore abate,
Forsothe, good norter wol save thy state.
Fader and moder, whatsoever they be,
Wel ys the chyld that wel may the,
Yn halle, yn chamber, wher thou dost gon;

Gode maneres maken a mon.
To the nexte degré loke wysly,

To do hem reverans by and by;
Do hem [g]let no reverans al o-rowe,
But [g]ef that thou do hem know.
To the mete when thou art y-sette,
Fayre and onestelyche thou ete hytte;
Fyrst loke that thyn honden be clene,
And that thy knyf be scharpe and kene;
And kette thy bred al at thy mete,
Ry[g]th as hyt may be ther y-ete.
[G]ef thou sytte by a worththyur mon.

Then thy selven thou art won,
Sofre hym fyrst to toyche the mete,
[G]er thyself to hyt reche.
To the fayrest mossel thou my[g]ht not strike,
Thaght that thou do hyt wel lyke;
Kepe thyn hondes, fayr and wel,
From fowle smogyng of thy towel;
Theron thou schalt not thy nese snyte,
Ny at the mete thy tothe thou pyke;
To depe yn the coppe thou my[g]ht not synke,
Thagh thou have good wyl to drynke,
Lest thyn enyn wolde wattryn therby_

Then were hyt no curtesy
Loke yn thy mowth ther be no mete,
When thou begynnyst to drynke or speke.
When thou syst any mon drynkyng,
That taketh hed to thy carpyng,
Sone anon thou sese thy tale,
Whether he drynke wyn other ale.
Loke also thou scorne no mon,
Yn what degré thou syst hym gon;
Ny thou schalt no mon deprave,
[G]ef thou wolt thy worschepe save;
For suche worde my[g]ht ther outberste,

That myg[h]t make the sytte yn evel reste,
Close thy honde yn thy fyste,
And kepe the wel from "had-y-wyste."
Yn chamber amonge the ladyes bryght,
Holde thy tonge and spende thy syght;
Law[g]e thou not with no gret cry,
Ny make no ragyng with rybody.
Play thou not buyt with thy peres,
Ny tel thou not al that thou heres;
Dyskever thou not thyn owne dede,
For no merthe, ny for no mede;
With fayr speche thou myght have thy wylle,
With hyt thou myght thy selven spylle.

When thou metyst a worthy mon,
Cappe and hod thou holle not on;
Yn church, yn chepyns, or yn the gate,
Do hym revera(n)s after hys state.
[G]yf thou gost with a worthy or mon
Then thyselfen thou art won,
Let thy forther schulder sewe hys backe,
For that ys norter withoute lacke;
When he doth speke, holte the styll,
When he hath don, sey for thy wylle;
Yn thy speche that thou be felle,
And what thou sayst avyse the welle;
But byref thou not hym hys tale,
Nowther at the wyn, ny at the ale.
Cryst then of hys hye grace,
[G]eve [g]low bothe wytte and space,
Wel thys boke to conne and rede,
Heven to have for [g]lowre mede.
Amen! amen! so mot hyt be!
Say we so all per charyté.