

ARCTOS  
ACTA PHILOLOGICA FENNICA  
NOVA SERIES · VOL. I.

---

COMMENTATIONES IN HONOREM

EDWIN  
LINKOMIES

SEXAGENARII

A. D. MCMLIV

EDITAE



HELSINKI  
KUSTANNUSOSAKEYHTIÖ OTAVA

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LATIN AND FRENCH PROVERBS IN THE  
FOURTEENTH-CENTURY MS. A. 2. 12.  
OF SIDNEY SUSSEX COLLEGE,  
CAMBRIDGE

Tauno F. Mustanoja

*Wlgariter quidem loquitur secundum  
ea que geruntur in mundo, propheta  
vero secundum ea que fiunt in celo*  
(fol. 109 b).

The interest in ancient proverbs shown by the »onlie begetter« of the present congratulatory volume<sup>1</sup> has encouraged me to publish, in the following, a number of medieval proverbs scattered through a fourteenth-century manuscript which contains sermons in Latin. There are eleven proverbs in Latin and sixty in French. The manuscript also contains some phrases of non-proverbial character in French. I have not included these because I hope to discuss some of them on a later occasion.

Vernacular proverbs are not an unusual feature in medieval sermons. In point of fact, many an ancient proverb owes its survival merely to the fact that it was included in a Latin sermon of the period. Like *exempla*, they gave additional pungency to the message of the preacher. And it is interesting to find that just as there were collections of *exempla* made especially for this purpose, there were also collections of proverbs for this purpose. It is probable that most of the proverbs in the Sidney Sussex College manuscript were taken from a collection or from several collections of this kind.<sup>2</sup>

MS. Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, A. 2. 12 is a vellum manuscript of the fourteenth century containing 244 leaves of approximately 22 by 16 cm.<sup>3</sup> The original numbering of the leaves can be followed down to fol. 112. Since

<sup>1</sup> EDWIN LINKOMIES, Ein weitverbreitetes antikes Sprichwort, *Arctos* I, 1930, pp. 104–6.

<sup>2</sup> For bibliographical information on studies dealing with the proverbial element in medieval sermons, see, for example, G. R. OWST, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England*, Cambridge 1933, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed description, see M. R. JAMES, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge*, Cambridge 1895.

three leaves have been lost at the beginning, the modern numbering differs from the original one, fol. 110 corresponding to fol. 113 of the original numbering. The folio references accompanying the proverbs here printed follow the modern numbering.

From marginal scribbles, etc., Dr. JAMES concluded that in the sixteenth century the manuscript had belonged to Thomas and Robert Lyell, apparently of Endworth in Yorkshire.

The manuscript consists of anonymous Latin sermons *de sanctis et de tempore*. The proverbs and popular sayings quoted in them are usually introduced by the words *vulgariter dicitur*. The fact that not only proverbs and other popular locutions, but even whole passages are occasionally given in French, as on fols. 179 and 180, suggests that the sermons were originally preached in that language. The French shows a few features which might, perhaps, be interpreted as Anglo-Normanisms; on the other hand, however, there is a strong continental (central French) colouring in many places.

In the following list the proverbs are printed in the alphabetical order. Those in Latin are given first. Reference is made to MORAWSKI'S collection<sup>1</sup> whenever this is possible. Most of the French proverbs printed in the following are identical with those in Morawski. Several of them provide an interesting variant to the reading given by him, while a few are not to be found in his list at all.

The proverbs are printed by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Sidney Sussex College.

#### Proverbs in Latin

1. Melius valent poma nove arboris quam veteris<sup>2</sup> (fol. 5 b).
2. Multum est pauper qui non videt (fol. 125).
3. Non est forum stabile nisi bibatur de eo (fol. 37 b).
4. Non est vallis sine colle, nec collis sine valle (fol. 230).

Cf. Morawski, No. 112: *Après grant val grant mont*.

<sup>1</sup> JOSEPH MORAWSKI, *Proverbes français antérieures au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Les Classiques français du Moyen Age 47, Paris 1925.

<sup>2</sup> Immediately following this proverb in the MS. are the words *en recordel*. Does this phrase belong to the proverb or not? Obviously it does not. What is the meaning of the word *recordel*, which does not occur in OF. dictionaries? Is it to be associated with *recordellus*, entered by Du Cange, VII, 55<sup>a</sup>, and assumed to stand for a keeper of records in a monastery or some other institution?

5. Opus amittit qui pravo magistro committit (fol. 113).

6. Qui longe est a sua scutella propinquus est suo dampno (fol. 184).

Cf. Morawski, No. 2140: *Qui s'esloigne de s'escuele si aproiche de son doumaige*; cf. also his *Variantes et notes*, p. 128.

7. Qui mane non ambulat dietam amittit (fol. 3 b).

Repeated on fol. 113, where *surgit* is replaced for *ambulat*. In the MS., this proverb is immediately followed by its vernacular counterpart *au main lever . . .* and *li main lever* (q.v.).

8. Qui me amat et amem eum (fol. 8).

It is just possible that this is originally a corrupt reading for *Qui me amat amat et canem meum*. Cf. *Qui aim moi . . .* below and Morawski, No. 1974.

9. Qui non dat quod amat non accipit ille quod optat (fol. 61 b).

For this proverb in hexameter, cf. *Ki ne done qu'il eime . . .* below.

10. Qui non facit quando potest non faciet quando vult (fol. 61 b).

Also on fol. 137 b, which reads . . . *non facit quando vult*. Cf. Morawski, No. 2026: *Qui ne fait quant il puet ne fait quant il veult*.

11. Qui solem non videt non calescit (fol. 11 b).

Cf. Morawski, No. 1775: *Que soleyl ne veyt ne eschauffe*.  
Cf. also Renclus de Moliens, *Miserere* (ed. VAN HAMEL), CXXXVI,3.

*Sepe accidit quod cacheor . . .* See under *Proverbs in French*.

### Proverbs in French

12. A segnors totes honors (fol. 4 b).

Also fol. 118: *A segnur totes boneurs*.  
Morawski, No. 127. The variant in *bCPRSU'X* (p. 95) reads *A tous s*.

13. Au bosoining voit l'en qui amis est (fol. 191).

Also fol. 22 b (*l'em* for *l'en*).  
Morawski, No. 171.

14. Au coulou saous, etc. (fol. 178).

This is the beginning of a well-known proverb: *A colon saoul serizes ameres* (Morawski, No. 19).

15. Au matin est chancié li vanz (fol. 4 b).

»The wind changes in the morning».

16. Au main lever est la jornee (fol. 113).

See also *Li main lever . . .* and *Qui mane non ambulat . . .*  
Morawski, No. 181.

17. Au samblant congnoit on l'omme (fol. 115).  
Morawski, No. 192.
18. Autant vaut un bon garders ke un bon gainers (fol. 52).  
Cf. Morawski, No. 1251: *Meaux vaut bons garderres que bons gaaignierres.*
19. Avant la feste le fome (fol. 219).  
The passage in which this proverb occurs runs thus: — *Et immo Dominus volens facere avant la feste le fome facit bodie in deserto esurientibus turbis sicut in die jejunii convivium.* There seems, thus, to be some reason for assuming that *fome* (three minims between *o* and *e*) is an error for some variant of *jeune* »a fast«. (Godefroy records variants like *jeunie*, *junie*, *junes*, *jusne*, *jeusne*.) The proverb would in that case mean »before a feast a fast«.
20. Bien atent qui paratent (fol. 112).  
Morawski, No. 248.  
Cf. *Mal atent* . . .
21. Bonté autre requert (fol. 242).  
Morawski, No. 298.  
Cf. also *L'une bunté* . . .
22. Ce que (*MS.* que ce) euz remire cors i tire (fol. 181 b).  
Cf. *Che que euz ne voit* . . . Cf. also Morawski, No. 1767: *Que oyl ne voyt quer ne desyre.*
23. Che que euz ne voit au quer ne deut (fol. 228).  
Morawski, No. 1766, variants in *ABLZHQ* (p. 122).
24. Compaignie Deu la fit et debles le defit (fol. 130 b).  
Fol. 188: *Compaignie Deu la fist in nativitate, et dyabolus la defist in passione, et Deus la refist in resurrectione.*  
Morawski, No. 406: *Compaignie Diens la fit et dyaubles la deffit.*
25. Conseil de prodome doit l'em crere (fol. 234 b).  
Morawski, No. 414.
26. Cuntre mort nul resort (fol. 237).  
Morawski, No. 417.  
Godefroy (VII, 103<sup>c</sup>—104<sup>a</sup>, s.v. *resort*) gives numerous parallels to this proverb.
27. Deus est en donnailles (fol. 196 b).
28. Fous ne crient jusque il pent (fol. 212).  
Cf. Morawski, No. 788: *Fous ne crient devant qu'il prent*, and No. 789: *Fous ne doute tant que il prent.*  
Cf. also *Fous ne garde* . . .
29. Fous ne garde jusque il prent (fol. 164 b).  
Cf. Morawski, Nos. 788—9.  
Cf. also *Fous ne crient* . . .

30. Il avent sovent a cort: ki n'en peche si encort (fol. 178).

Morawski, No. 859. Cf. also No. 2034.

For discussions of this proverb, Tobler-Lommatzsch, III, col. 252, refers to G. TILANDER, *Remarques sur le Roman de Renart*, Gothenburg 1923, p. 97, and O. SCHULTZ-GORA, *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*, 146, p. 263.

In the MS., the proverb is followed by *Quia et si non consueverit accidere in curia Dei, contingit tamen in curia Pilati ut injuste agente homine et juste Deo permittente condemnatus est innocens et impius absolvitur homo.*

31. Il ne put issire du sac se ce non qu'il i a (fol. 52 b).

Cf. Morawski, No. 905: *Il ne puet issir dou vaissel fors que ce que on i a mis.* The variant in *R* (p. 107) reads: . . . *du sac fors ce qu'il y a.*

32. Il n'est pas aseür de sa meson qui voit la sun voisin ardoir (fol. 2).

Cf. Morawski, No. 1367, particularly the variant in *V(FA)*, p. 115.

Cf. also *Nam tua res agitur paries cum proximus ardet* (Horace, *Epistles*, Book I, *Epistle XVIII*, 84).

33. Ja chetis n'aura bone escuele (*MS.* sescuele) qu'il ne l'espande ne bone aventure qu'il ne la perde (fol. 240 b).

Morawski, No. 963, gives only the first part of this proverb.

34. Ja ne mangera (*corrected from* mengera) qui dort (fol. 121 b).

Cf. Morawski, No. 2212: *Riens ne mengue qui ne labore.*

Ki . . . , see *Qui* . . .

35. La bele chere vaut touz mes (fol. 4 b).

Cf. Morawski, No. 220: *Bele chiere vaut un més*, and No. 992: *La belle chiere amande moult l'ostel* (see also p. 108).

36. La pire roe du char bret toz jorz (fol. 203 b).

Morawski, No. 1031, variants in *bCLPRTU'VH*, p. 109.

37. L'en ne puet voler devant que on a eles (fol. 53).

Morawski, No. 1435, variant in *Q* (p. 116).

38. Li darein pae l'escot (fol. 110 b).

Cf. *Li plus fols paiera l'escot* (Baudouin de Condé), quoted in Tobler-Lommatzsch, III, col. 983.

39. Li main (*altered into* matin) lever fait la jornee (fol. 3 b).

Cf. *Au main lever* . . .

40. Li mains sieut le plus (fol. 235 b).

Morawski, No. 1091.

41. L'une bunté le autre requiert (fol. 5 b).

Morawski, No. 1146.

Cf. *Bonté autre requert.*



42. Mal atent qui par n'atent (fol. 112 b).

Cf. Morawski, No. 1189: *Mar atant qui ne paratant.*

Cf. also *Bien atent* . . .

43. Meuz vaut amis en voie ke dener en curoie (fol. 53).

»On a journey, a friend is worth more than money in one's belt (purse).» Also on fol. 225 b (*deners* for *dener*).

Morawski, No. 1241.

44. Mult greve qui atent (fol. 110).

Cf. Morawski, No. 1310: *Mout ennuie qui atant.*

45. Ne deit estre contredite parole pus ke rois l'a dite (fol. 117 b).

Cf. Morawski, No. 1593, variant in *Ba* (p. 118).

46. Ou rendre ou pendre (fol. 243).

Morawski, No. 1571.

47. Por nent s'argue cui Deus n'aiue (*MS.* na aiue) (fol. 218 b).

Cf. Morawski, No. 1680: *Por nient argue cui Deu n'aiue.*

48. Puis ke prodrom est trepassez est il loés et remembrez (fol. 5).

Cf. Morawski, No. 47: *A la fin voit on le prendomme.*

49. Quant les dames sunt parees, en sunt ja les crois alees (fol. 241 b).

»When the women are ready, the divine service is all over.»

Cf. Morawski, No. 1746.

GASTON PARIS writes in *Mélanges de littérature française du moyen âge* (Paris, 1912), p. 624: — »C'est un de ceux-là, sans doute (i.e., des moralistes), qui, lassé d'entendre si souvent chanter comment Aaliz se lève, se vêt, se lave et se pare, et songeant en outre à toutes les femmes qu'il voyait arriver le dimanche à la messe en retard à cause du temps qu'elles perdaient à s'attifer, improvisa cette boutade, que Jacques de Vitry a recueillie dans un de ses sermons, et où l'on a vu, à tort, une nouvelle variante de la chanson de *Bele Aaliz*:

Quant Aeliz fu levee,  
Et quant ele fu lavee,  
Quant ele se fu miree,  
Bel vestie et mieuz paree,  
S'en furent les croiz alees,  
Et la messe fu chantee,  
Et diable l'en ont portee.»

50. Qu'aprent polainz en danture si volt (*MS.* voit) tenir tant cum il dure (fol. 4 b).

Morawski, No. 1765.

Godefroy, II, 748b, s.v. *donteüre*, and Tobler-Lommatzsch, II, col. 2027, give several variants to this proverb.

51. Qui a eure veut manger ainz eure doit aparailer (fol. 241 b).

Morawski, No. 1789.

52. Qui aim moi aim mon chein (fol. 6).

Morawski, No. 1974.

53. Ki ben lie ben delie (fol. 47 b).

54. Ki en jeu entre en jeu consente (fol. 163).

Morawski, No. 1914 (variants, p. 124).

55. Qui est garniz, il n'est suspris (fol. 117).

Also fol. 120 b: *Qui est garniz n'est pas suspris.*

Morawski, No. 1923, variant in *E* (p. 125).

56. Ki ne done qu'il eime ne pregne que desire (fol. 216).

Morawski, No. 2023. Cf. also *Qui non dat...*

57. Qui se quite ne s'encombre (fol. 242).

Morawski, No. 2121, especially the variant in *L* (p. 128). (The variant in *Ca* reads *ne se mecompte.*)

58. (Ki) tout (*MS.* tant) trepasse fors bien fait (fol. 5).

Cf. Morawski, No. 2407: *Tout passera fors que biens faiz.*

59. Qui te fait, fai lui (fol. 6).

Also fol. 223 (*fai li*).

Morawski, No. 2156.

60. Saint Michel n'a vache ne veel (fol. 230 b).

Morawski, No. 2232.

For the occurrence of this proverb, cf. Morawski, p. 130. Cf. also *Miracles de Gautier de Coinci*, ed. LÅNGFORS (*Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae*, B 34), p. 102 (D.65, lines 188—94). Cf. further *Romania* 43, p. 155 and 605—6.

The origin of this proverb is illustrated by the following lines from the *Dit des anelès* (ed. JUBINAL, *Nouv. recueil*, I, 4 (quoted in *Romania* 43, 1914, p. 606): —

..... on va d'un bon homme contant  
 Qui en la mer estoit en grant peril mortel:  
 A saint Michiel promist sa vache et son veel;  
 Mes des ce qu'il perçut qu'il fu en son hostel,  
 Il dist a saint Michiel: »Ne vache ne veel.»

61. Seef trait mal qui apris l'a (fol. 4 b).

Morawski, No. 2266.

Cf. also: — *Qui t'a donné une philosophie aussi gaie? — L'habitude du malheur* (Beau-marchais).

62. Selon segnor (*MS.* segnor cors) est meinie duite (fol. 215).

Morawski, No. 2249: *Selonc le seignor mesnie duite*; cf. also No. 165: *A tel seignor tele mesnie.*

Possibly from *Ecclus.* x. 2.

63. Sepe accidit quod cacheor muerent de faim (fol. 196).  
Morawski, No. 860: *Il avient souvent que chaceour muert de faim.*
64. Taunt as, taunt vaus, et taunt te pris (fol. 13).  
Morawski, No. 2283, variant in *EGQ* (p. 131).
65. Tant cum l'en prie le vilein, tant ne fra il ja ben (fol. 220 b).  
Morawski, No. 2290, in which the second *tant* is missing.
66. Taunt vaut li hom, tant vaut sa terre (fol. 132).  
Morawski, No. 2304.
67. Touz jorz sent la poche le hareng (fol. 5).  
»A barrel of herrings always smells of herrings.«  
Morawski, No. 2416; cf. also No. 1032.
68. Une maaille part a cent mars (fol. 215).
69. Un vout pendre par compaignie (fol. 4).  
Also fol. 85 b; *Sic ille qui ala pendre par compaignie.*  
Cf. Morawski, No. 1582: *Par compaignie se fait l'en pendre.*
70. Viel chien est mal a mettre en lien (fol. 4 b).  
Morawski, No. 2472.  
In the MS., Nos. 71 and 70 (in this order) are given as one proverb.
71. Vielle hart ne puet tordre (fol. 4 b).  
Morawski, No. 2475.  
See comment on No. 70, above.

## Glossary

## Latin

- dietam 7, *the day*.  
forum 3, *bargain*.  
magistro 5. *The exact meaning of this noun in proverb 5 is not certain, though it is just possible that it stands for »a master-workman«, »a master-builder«, or »a building contractor«. Cf. opus, below.*  
opus 5. *It is just possible, from the words Immo non debemus re-edificare domos corporum nostrorum, which follow proverb 5 in the MS., that the preacher is thinking of building. But it is also possible that the nouns opus and magister (see preceding*

*entry) are here used in a rather indefinite sense: we lose if we entrust anything to a person who is not trustworthy.*

scutella 6, *cup, dish*. Cf. *escuele*.

## French

- aiue 47, *helps*.  
aparailer 51, *prepare*.  
aprent 50, *learns*; apris 61, *become accustomed to*.  
argue (s'—) 47, *busies oneself*.  
aseür 32, *sure*.  
avent 30, *happens*.  
aventure (bone —) 33, *opportunity*.

- bret 36, *creaks*.
- cacheor 63, *hunters*.
- chancié 15, *changed*.
- chein 52, *chien (dog)*.
- chetis 33, *wretch*.
- cors 22, *heart*.
- crois 49, *crosses (carried in religious processions)*.
- curoie 43, *belt (of leather or cloth) with pockets for money*.
- danture 50, *the act of breaking a horse*.
- defit 24, *annulled, destroyed*.
- delie 53, *unties*.
- deut (*inf. doloir*) 23, *regrets, misses*.
- donnailles 27. *Godefroy, II, 743<sup>a</sup>, records two instances of this noun, one in the meaning »don», the other in the meaning »fiançailles». A clue to the meaning of the plural donnailles in proverb 27 is given by the Latin context: Quando ad patriam suam fuit revocatus, a patre fecit donacionem suam qui ascendit in altum... Unde tempus illorum est tempus donacionis. Ut vulgariter dicitur: Deus est en donnailles.*
- duite (est —) 62, *acts according to*.
- eles 37, *wings*.
- encombre (s' —) 57, *has trouble*.
- encort 30, *suffers damage*.
- escot 38, *(bill for) the table*.
- escuele 33, *dish, cup (cf. scutella, above)*.
- espanse 33, *spills food from*.
- eure (a —) 51, *at a given time*.
- euz 22, 23, *eye*.
- feste 19, *feast*.
- fome 19; *see comment on this proverb*.
- fors 58, *except*.
- gainers 18, *one who gains*.
- garde 29, *takes care, is careful*.
- garders 18, *one who keeps or saves*.
- garniz 55, *prepared*.
- greve 44, *grieves*.
- hareng 67, *herring*.
- hart 71, *willow; branch of a willow*.
- issire 31, *get out*.
- ja 49, *already*.
- maaille 68, *a small coin of slight value*.
- main (*adv.*) 16, 39, *early in the morning*.
- mains 40, *(the) less*.
- mal 61, *adversity, calamity*.
- meinie 62, *household; household servants, attendants*.
- mes 35, *dish (of food)*.
- pae 38, *pays*.
- par n'atent; *see following entry*.
- paratent 20, *waits to the end; par n'atent 42*.
- parees 49, *ready*.
- part 68, *is part of*.
- pent 28, *hangs*.
- poche 67, *barrel*.
- polainz 50, *foal*.
- pris 64, *I estimate*.
- prodome 25, *prodom 48, good man*.
- quer 23, *heart*.
- quite (se —) 57, *pays one's debts*.
- recordel 1. *See footnote 2 on p. 124*.
- remire 22, *looks at*.
- rendre 46, *pay back*.
- resort 26, *help, remedy*.
- roe 36, *wheel*.
- samblant 17, *face, appearance*.
- saous 14, *satiated*.
- seef 61, *easily*.
- sieut (*inf. sivre*) 40, *follows*.
- suspris 55, *deceived*.
- tordre 71, *twist, twine*.
- trait (*inf. traire*) 61, *endures*.
- trepasse 58, *passes away; est trepassez 48, is dead*.
- un (*indef.pron.*) 69, *one (L. homo)*.
- vanz 15, *wind*.