

Oresmes *Le Livre d'Yconomique*

1.Introduction

1 Introduction

Already in 1267 the economics of 'Aristotle', actually the one of Theophrastus, had been translated in Latin by Willem of Moerbeke.ⁱ This translation had been as difficult to understand as his rendering of the *Politics*. This time he had for instance crucial terms like οἰκονομος and οἰκονομια left untranslated. Willem had been aware of his shortcomings. He had sent his translation to Durandus of Alverniaⁱⁱ (fl. 1310) to correct it. This correction and comment Durandus only finishes by 1295.

This so called *Durandus Oeconomica* is generally acceptedⁱⁱⁱ by the late medieval scholars as a second work of Aristotle (!) on economics, the first one being *Politics*, I. It gets a substantial circulation in its own right. This original economics, however, does not only consist of the *Οικονομικός* of Theophrastus. It contains a second volume of about the same length, which is a book *On Marriage*, presumably from a Byzantine author of one millennium later. These two books are translated together by William and also jointly commented upon by Durandus. The original *On Marriage* in Greek has never been found back. It discusses matrimonial duties. The *Οικονομικός*- part contains also two chapters about the husband-wife relationship. Therefore the *Durandus Oeconomica* pushes original economics into the direction of practical science that first and foremost deals with marriage.

The Aristotelian practical philosophy with this economics becomes also read outside the universities. This at least is the case in France, when around 1370 the French king, Charles V, orders a translation of the complete practical philosophy of The Philosopher in French. The reason for this assignment is to make it possible for everybody, who can read, to learn this knowledge, not only the scholars: <Because the Aristotelian books on moral science were originally written in Greek and we have received them in very difficult to understand Latin, the king has desired for the common good to have them translated in French, so that he and his counsellors and others may understand them better.>^{iv} Charles V grants this job to Nicole Oresme (1320/25-1382), who around 1374^v delivers his *Le livre d'Yconomique*. (*The book of economics*)

From the early youth of Oresme we do not know much. He studied at the Artes-faculty and from 1348 at the theology faculty at the University of Paris. His Master of Theology he received in 1356. Around that year he wrote his *De mutatione monetarum* (*About the money changes*). He must have studied, written and taught for many years at that university. In 1362 he became a canon at the cathedral of Rouen and in 1363 also at the Holy Chapel, the prestigious palace chapel of the French Kings in Paris. This way he acquired two prebends with enough income to dedicate his life to science. The last canonship probably was granted to him because he had become the confidant of Charles (1337-1380), who was the regent of France from 1356-1360 and King of France as Charles V from 1364-1380. Oresme wrote quite some works on natural science and designed the first graphic representation. Finally he translated from 1370 onwards the three mentioned Aristotelian works of practical philosophy in French, together with an astronomical tract, which he finished in 1377. In 1378 King Charles rewarded Oresme with the bishopric of Lisieux. About his last years, as a bishop, again we do not know much

2. Summary of *Le livre de Yconomique* (*The book of economics*) by Nicolas Oresme

[The two books of *Le livre d'Yconomique* are handled differently. I have summarized book I in the familiar way. Book 2, however, I have translated completely, because the book will be new to most readers. Here I only have summarized the comments by Oresme. DN]

Book I

(p. 807→) *Here begins the book called Yconomique, which Aristotle wrote and in which he defines house government. And it contains two short, separate books. In the first one, he examines broadly all parts of a house and all associations in a house. And it contains seven chapters.*

1 The first chapter is the introduction, in which he states his intention and clarifies certain matters that are pertinent to his project.

Original: Economics and politics don't only differ as much as house and city^{vi}, which things are the subjects or matters of these sciences (--) but also they differ because politics deals with several rulers and economics is a monarchy.

Comment: For as demonstrated in Politics, III there are three types of good government. In one, the kingdom, one man holds sovereign power and is the monarch. In both others, aristocracy and democracy there are several rulers. But in every good government of the house one only is lord. And for this reason it is called a monarchy, from monos in Greek, which is one, and archos, which is ruler or lord en this is the person we call in Latin pater familias. To understand this book better, one should know that the moral science seeks to regulate voluntary human activities and to direct them towards the good and virtue. This science has three parts: One is called ethics, which (--). (p. 808) The second part is called economics, from Geek ycon, meaning image or sign; and from nomos, meaning rule or law; and from ycos, meaning science. For by means of her the leader of the house knows to make signs and rules or orders for governing his family and himself with respect to his family. The third part is politics, which (--).

Moreover, in order of teaching, ethics is the first moral science, economics the second, and politics the third. Therefore, after ethics, Aristotle discusses economics in the first book of Politics and after this he deals in the others with political association. But in order to present more fully this science [of yconomique DN], also this book exists after Politics, as a supplement and a clarification and perfection of what was discussed in Politics, I, although economics is sufficiently dealt with therein so far as it concerns politics. That this Book of economics belongs after the Politics will become clear by what is stated in the fifth chapter^{vii}. Thus we now have in the text two differences between economics and politics. He next points out a similarity between them.

Original: But it belongs to politics to form and make the city from its beginning and to use it properly, once it is made. And it appears also of economics, that it is an art by which one can acquire and establish a house and use it.

Comment: And thus Aristotle does not take here city or house as the buildings or the walls because politics and economics are no mechanical arts nor do they deal with such matters. He considers a city a civil community with the belongings as he stated in Politics III, I that a city is a multitude of citizens. And takes house to be a domestic community or (the community) of a dwelling with the belongings. And accordingly he investigates the order between economics and in politics.

{p. 808, end - 809, 5: Theophrastus (in his Oikonomica 43a10- 17) defines the city in terms of houses and determines which of the two, economics or politics, comes first. Oresmes explains what 'Aristotle' means.}

2. In the second chapter he brings forward the material elements of the house in general and particularly discusses the element called possession.

Original: Of a house make a part what has human understanding and also possession is part of a house (--) and because it is the case that the nature of everything is found by knowledge of its smallest parts, this also is the case with a house (--) And about this someone called Hesiod said that it is proper in a house that the lord comes

first and the wife and a ploughing ox. And this thing, that is to say the ox is first for having food and the other one, the wife, for children.

Comment: To give birth to them and feed them. As is pointed out in Politics, I, with poor people the ploughing ox replaces the ministerial or the slave. And thus these three parts are necessary in whatever house, small or large, that is to say the lord, his wife and who serves them. For the wife should not be a slave as appears from Politics, I. If one of the three is lacking the house is incomplete. Moreover, several other matters and parts are necessary or handy in a house (p. 810) but these three are the primary and principal ones.

Original: And therefore it is proper to take the right decisions and regulate the matters that there are with regard to the treatment of the wife or to the activities of the wife, that is to say how she should be made by good instruction and by lessons.

Comment: This will be done in the second book.

{ p. 810: Reproduction of and comment, based partly on Roman poets and the Bible book *Eccl.*, on 43a 25- 44b 1, in which Theophrastus explains that fruits of the soil are natural and that agriculture therefore is the most important way of acquisition, while it is just and natural. }

Original: Moreover, the care of the land contributes to and increases the worth of the virtue of bravery, because she is not like the mechanical cares or artes, like the blacksmith or such heavy trades which make the bodies unfit for bravery. But this care makes them strong for outdoor life (p. 811→) and for tilling the ground and stronger to resist dangers from the enemies and adversaries.

*Comment: There are three kinds of feeding and exercises or labour. Some people are fed too delicately and have too much leisure and become effeminate and useless in military life. Others are fed too substantially and work too hard. They become uncouth or bent and therefore are unable to use weapons well. But those who are fed and trained in a middle way are capable of the good. You meet them indeed in the countries where the fields are not too difficult to work by ploughing or spading. Accordingly Pliny^{viii} in his eighteenth book says that very strong men and very valiant knights are born from cultivators of the land, who think very seldom about the bad. This thought seems to be corroborated by Aristotle in his *Politics* VI, 2, where he says that such men are less scheming and more obedient than any other section of the population. And that is why Vergil in the second book of his *Georgica*, describes, praises, and recommends much the life and station of the cultivators of the land (--). Thus this care or acquisition stands first: she is honourable, she is natural and she disposes toward the good. (--).*

3. In the third chapter he offers determinations concerning the association of marriage.

Original: For men the first concern of everyone should be his woman or wife.

Comment : (--) He next points out that this concerns should be first, because of six conditions which are stronger present in the nuptial association of man and woman than in the other domestical associations: because it is (1) natural, (2) rational, (3) amicable, (4) yielding, (5) divine and (6) proper.

Original: For surely and in the first place the joint association of the female and the male is natural

Comment: It is natural, because like all animals the male and female of the human species cannot get children on their own and possess a natural appetite for sex to engender offspring. (--), (p. 812)

Original: Moreover, with the other animals this thing happens without ratio and without understanding and only thanks to the need to and for the purpose of creating offspring inasmuch as they are part of nature. But with man and with more prudent animals this thing is more ramified

*Comment: And thus, in the first place, this association exists by nature and by reason. And this way nature, because man and animal share it, and reason, because this is a characteristic of man, make man inclined to this. But it often happens that two young people, man and women, love each other in a special way by choice and pleasure in their hearts and with a love that is accompanied by the use of reason, even though it may sometimes not be with the right reason. Accordingly, Ovid wrote a book on the art of such of love, which does not exist between dumb animals. Sometimes this love is chaste and prepares for marriage or exists in marriage. And if there is sin in it, it is a human vice. But to approach anyone at all with no other love than to satisfy one's desire is a bestial vice. Moreover, this association is still in another way delimited because, according to natural reason, one should only have one (partner), as appears from *Politics* VII, 18. And they should be of the same status or condition or almost, and not of close lineage, as appears from the fourth chapter of *Politics*. And these*

matters don't exist between animals. Then, the text mentions 'prudent animals' but this should not be understood as the virtue of prudence because even turtle doves don't possess the true prudence.

Original: Moreover, in the association of male and female often cooperation and mutual assistance appears. (--) These matters show more in human nature. For the man and the woman perform their activities and are assisting each other not only in order to live but in order to be well and live well. (p. 813)

Comment: That is, according to virtue in marital friendship, which includes all the causes and kinds of friendships as appear from Ethics, VIII, 17, since this friendship comprises the good of usefulness as well as the good of pleasure and the good of virtue in double enjoyment – that is the carnal and the virtuous or the sensual and the intellectual^{ix}. Moreover, this friendship is exclusive for it exists between one male only and one female only, as said and is clear from the reasons touched in Ethics, VIII, 17. And if some men have more wives, this is to provide an increase in progeny or by divine dispensation or against natural law. Moreover, this friendship is permanent and stable and is not to be broken, as appears in Politics VII, 14. It conforms what Scripture says: <What God has joined, man should not separate.>. Moreover, it is very large, as the Bible indicates in Matt. 19: 6, I, I Sam.1: 26 and Eccl. 26: 24. Moreover, it is this love of which we are now speaking that Jacob served seven years for the love of Rachel and the time seemed short because of the greatness of his love (Gen. 29: 18) and of which the Bible says that a man will cleave to his wife (Gen. 2.28) and will love her as himself (Eph. 5:28). Moreover, this is also clear from the fact that nature granted carnal pleasures to the animals only because of and for procreation but accorded to human species this pleasure not only for the mentioned purpose but also to enhance and continue and maintain friendship between man and woman. This is indicated by Pliny with: <no female, after she has received and is pregnant, desires carnal union, except women.> Moreover, the larger the unity, the larger the love. That is why in Politics, II, 1 is said that two friends want to be one. (--) For this reason Scripture says that a married couple is two persons in one flesh. (--) Next he points out in what respect it is yielding. {p. 813,5- 814,5: Reproduction of and comment on 43b 20-26, in which Theophrastus states that the yield of a marriage are the children, because they will take care of their parents in their old day. He explains here also that this way the birth and death the individual disappears but the species continues its existence. (p. 814)}

Original: And in this manner the nature of the one and the other, that is to say of the male and the female was previously regulated or pre-regulated for association as a divine matter or by God.

Comment: And the same goes for human nature, for which God has a special concern and care. Thus, according to The Philosopher marriage is divinely ordained and is in accordance with what our Savior says, that God made this union: <What therefore God hath joined together, etc.> And also He was born from a marriage and was present at a marriage, where he made a beginning with his signs by a gracious and joyous miracle, changing water into wine. And by this he approved of marriage as a holy matter, which God blessed from the beginning of creation: <Male and female He created them and He blessed them.> Also marriage is a sacrament and is therefore a divine matter. Now he makes a comment that this is a proper matter.

Original: Moreover, it is proper that all goods taken or required for it have a virtue which brings output and is proper to it. But certain of these virtues or powers are opposites but nevertheless they are proper and are together leading to one thing. (--) For nature made the one more strong, that is the man; and the other more feeble, that is the woman; in order that the one by fear and timidity protects herself, that is the wife, and the other by his strength takes upon himself revenge or defence.

Comment: In this way the wife avoids doing evil and the husband protects himself and her from suffering evil. And this is one advantage. Next he states the other advantages (p. 815)

Original: And to look for and prepare the goods which are outside the dwelling there is the husband, and that the other protects and guards those goods which are inside the house. And it is convenient that the one, the husband, is powerful, strong and robust for cultivation, while the other is too frail for the activities outdoor. And the husband is less inclined to repose and more inclined to action or the heavier labour.

*Comment: And therefore the man is more warm, strong and active and the woman is more cold, weak and passive. And this opposition and variety has made them inclined to different activities, which are advantageous and suitable for living together. And when this opposition and dissimilarity exists naturally and is well balanced in the habits of both, it is pleasant and agreeable. In this regard The Sage (King Solomon) said that God and man appreciate this. It looks like music, where different sounds create harmony because they are properly proportioned. By chance the male and female voices are proportioned well too. Moreover, one may read in Ovid's book *The Art of Love* the passage where*

he compares the relationship between husband and wife with the vine and tree, where the vine cannot support itself or bear fruit by itself. *Thus this union is pleasurable and yielding and is very convenient.* That is why Scripture says: <A friend and a companion are convenient in time, more than either are a wife with her husband.> *Next he discusses the similarities between parents and children.*

Original: The engendering of children is characteristic and the use is common.

Comment: This he says because the parents help their children when young and the children help their parents, once they have grown old.

Original: For it's up to the ones to nurture and up to the others to educate

Comment: One comment takes this as that children should nurture their parents and parents should educate their children. Another comment explains that the mothers should nurture the children and the fathers should teach them good habits, like Scripture says: <If you have sons, educate them.> *We have then that the association of the male and female is a human example of the divine arrangement, not only because of procreation, as is the case with the other animals, but also because of mutual assistance. And this is in conformity with what God says at the beginning, that it was not good that man would be alone and that he would make something like him, that would help him: <It is not good than man should be alone let us make a helpmate for him, like him.>(p. 816)*

4. *In the fourth chapter he sets down instructions for the husband concerning his wife*

Original: *In the first place, the husband must establish and maintain laws and rules for his wife. (--) One rule is that he should not do her wrong. For this way he will achieve that there will not be done wrong to him by her. And this is in accordance with common law.*

Comment: (--) *One may say that it is a common law indeed, that a husband should not wrong his wife. And this law was established by Pythagoras. Aristotle speaks of two kinds of wrongs.*

Original: *For as is said by those who follow Pythagoras, it is not admissible to suppose that one should treat one's wife like a serving woman whom one has taken from a poor dwelling.*

Comment: *One who treats his wife as his slave or a as his slut does her wrong; for as stated in Politics, I wife and slave are different things by nature. And this is evil; for according to Holy Scripture and Aristotle also, the wife is a companion and not a slave.*

Original: Moreover, carnal relations of the man that he begins outside, that is to say with a different woman, are wrongs.

Comment: *And this is an evil, as Aristotle states expressly in the 36th chapter of Politics.*

Original: *Moreover, with respect to knowing his wife carnally, the husband should make that she has no lack of it; and he should not do it so often that that she cannot restrict herself, if it happens that the husband behaves as one of those who are absent...*

Comment: *If he for instance would be ill*

Original: *...but he should use her so that it is sufficient for the wife.*

Comment: *Because, if he is too abstinent, the wife could give away herself to another. And if in the beginning he does this thing too frequently, when afterwards he will be absent or quasi-absent, the wife who has been accustomed to such a thing will not be able to restrain herself. Next he brings forward the third precept.*

Original: *Moreover, what Hesiod said is right; namely that it is a proper and fitting for a man that he marries or takes a virgin woman, that is to say young of age so that he can teach her good habits. Because to have different habits is a thing which in nothing is lovable.*

Comment: *For friendship cannot exist between persons that have contrary wills. And that is the case with them of whom the habits are badly matched and discordant. And when the wife is young, the husband can better indoctrinate her than when she is older. Next he sets down the fourth precept.(p. 817)*

{p. 817, beginning: Oresme renders and explains with the help of two commentators 44a 18-22, the fourth instructions in which Theophrastus is supposed to warn both spouses against bodily adornment. }

In the fifth chapter he presents teachings with respect to slaves.

Original: *Of the possessions the first thing and the most necessary is the one which is very good and very prominent: man. (C) And therefore first has to be arranged that the slaves are virtuous and good. (C) And anyway, of slaves there are two kinds; the overseer and the workman.(p. 817)*

Comment: *From Politics, I, 2 and I, 5 it appears that some are slaves by nature, who have no prudence with which to observe and judge what should be done but they are coarse and strong and those are the workmen. And they perform the servile tasks and need somebody who manages and directs them and who tells them what they have to do. And this person is called the overseer or deputy. Because as is shown in Politics VII, 5 to direct slavish works is not honourable. That is why it appears in Politics I, 7 that powerful lords occupy themselves with honourable activities and have an overseer who commands the slaves. (--) This applies to a large house only, (p. 818) because in a small house the lord takes the place of the overseer. After this he puts forward seven precepts with respect to the slaves.*

Original: *And since we see that the teachings prepare the young men and make them such or so; it is necessary that one feeds with them the slave, who is going direct the others and that one shows him the most liberal activities, which he should understand.*

Comment: *It is useful that the overseer or deputy of the house, whom some call econome, is fed at the dwelling of the lord and that he is introduced to more liberal and more honourable tasks than those which are performed by those who are slaves by nature; and that he is prudent in order to produce the honour and the output of the dwelling and the good pleasure of the lord. And thus the family-good will be in good prosperity, in conformity with what The Sage says: <The deeds of the wise man shall prosper the slave >.*

{p. 818, 5 -819, 5: Oresme renders and explains 44a 29- 44b 4, in which Theophrastus states how one should treat the slaves. They should be rewarded with food. One should not give them wine or just a little of it. (p. 819) Government of slaves is matter of work, punishment and food.}

Original: *Just as other people, when one does not do good to the good ones and rewards goodness and punishes badness, are made worse, this in the same way happens with slaves.*

Comment: *All the more so, because slaves do not possess so much virtue or reason that is restrains them when one gives them the opportunity for evil doing. And of the others, who are righteous by nature, there are very few, who will not become bad or less good, when they see that one is not rewarded for good actions or punished for evil deeds. What is worse is that the good are oppressed and the evildoers advanced: <See the sinners, who live in the world, increase their riches.> The Prophet David said that he almost departed from the right way. Someone (p. 820) said of Thomas of Canterbury^x that he should be praised because he stayed good under a bad prince. Therefore the princes must sovereignly want that the bad are punished and the good are honoured, because herewith they can make the world good or bad. For it is shown in Ethics, III, 16, where is spoken of the virtue of fortitude in cities, that where frightened and cowardly people are without honor and are vituperated and where the strong and good fighters are honoured, there certainly will be found people of excellent fortitude. And so it is with respect to the other arts and virtues. Symmachus^{xi} in one of his letters wrote that nobody who became famous in war or of a distinguished house was brought to his actions because of monetary rewards. And that is why The Sage says that two matters displease him: a good fighter that is poor and a man who is wise to whom nobody listens. And in this line, one commentator, Bartholomew of Bruges^{xii}, says that the prelates of his time corrupted the Holy Church College, because they did not take care of the good students but promoted adulators, members of their family and others by wicked favours. After this he concludes his instruction.*

Original: *And thus it is proper to consider and apportion worthily and justly to slaves all these things, that is to say, food and clothing and leisure and punishment. And it is proper to do this by the spoken word and by deed.*

Comment: *For there are those who fear reprobation and are sufficiently punished with words.*

Another may be of a worse nature and cannot be taught by words alone. Of such The Sage says: <A slave cannot be taught by words and what he understands, he disdains to answer.> Therefore he must be corrected by deed, as The Sage says elsewhere: <For the bad-willing slave torture and shackles.> Thus both punishment and food and the things mentioned above must be apportioned to them according to their behavior and their condition.

Original: *And that one follows the virtue or manner of physicians in the virtue of medicine; for pharmacy, that is to say laxative medicine, is not flesh for the community*

Comment: *The commentators are not able to explain this text (p. 821 →)*

Original: *Moreover, among the varieties or kinds of slaves, those who are neither fearful nor very strong are very good. For the one as well as the other do badly, since those who are very fearful cannot endure or hold out hard work or punitive labour, and those who are full of anger and tough do not obey well. (C-) Moreover, it is proper to set a goal all for all. (C-) For it is a just and moderate thing that freedom is made their reward or by*

leasing them land or by setting them completely free; for then they want to work hard when the complete freedom is determined and the time period is determined.

Comment: In this regard there are three kinds of slaves. The first kind is the work-slave and slave by nature. For who would explain this part, for such a slave freedom has to be understood as rest and recreation. For such a slave should not have freedom in the proper sense but is it an expedient and a just thing that he is slave, as said in Politics I, 5. And about this The Sage says: <Labour tasks make the slave obedient>. He must be assiduously kept to humility and slavish tasks. The second kind is free by nature but (has become) work-slave from violence or poverty or some other misfortune. And to such a slave should be given his freedom after a fixed period of time as was commanded of the children of Israel in the Old Testament: <If your brother shall sell himself to you out of poverty, etc.> Moreover, if, as previously stated, some slave is overseer or foreman and if he is good, one gives him complete freedom after a certain length of time and such a reward that he may afterwards live as master of his own house. And therefore The Sage says: < Love a wise slave as your soul and do not withhold him his freedom nor let him go unrecompensed.> One should grant him his freedom and not tolerate that he is poor. And Aristotle touches on these teachings when he at the end of Politics, VII, xii, promises to speak about them later^{xiii} next to what he stated in the first chapter.^{xiv}

In the sixth chapter he presents the formal parts of the government of the house^{xv} and determines two of them [acquisition and preservation DN].

Original: The kinds which he who is governor of the house [Fr.: l'yconome DN] has to take into consideration are 4, which he should have towards the goods of the house. For (first) he has to be powerful as to or capable of getting or acquiring. Moreover, the goods have to be guarded, for if this would not be the case, the use of acquiring them would be zero. Moreover, that there is adornment or arrangement of them. Moreover: usage.

Comment: That is to say that one knows how to use the goods properly.

Original: For thanks to this and for this we have an occupation with them.

Comment: That is to know: in order to make proper use of them. Well then, we have thus four kinds of activities [Fr.: especes d'industrie DN], which are required for the government of the house: the acquisitive, the preserving, (p. 822) the arranging and using or distributive one. He now analyses each of these and first the acquisitive one.

Original: All possessions should be distinguished and taken into consideration. And the fruit bearing ones have to me more than those that do not bear fruits.

Comment: Certain goods bear fruits, like the earth itself and certain animals; others don't, such as golden and silver plates and dishes or jewellery. And thus one should give more attention to the acquisition of those goods that bear fruit or bring output than to the other ones. Those people who are experts in the acquisition of wealth know to do this well.

Original: And in this way or according to this the jobs have to be distributed.

Comment: Because the activities of the slaves should be more directed at acquiring goods that bear fruit or output than the others. And the ways of acquiring that are simple and composite are explained in Politics I, vii and viii. Next he discusses the preserving activity or guarding.

{p. 822, 5-823, 5: Oresme translates the dicta about protection and the protecting habits of different people which Theophrastus exposes in 44b 30-45a5, on which he meagrely comments.} (p. 823)

Original: And therefore it is proper that the goods are preserved.^{xvi} But the lord should preserved. other goods than the woman, in order that the jobs of the one and the other government, that is to say of the man and of the woman, are distinguished or divided.

Comment: For it appears from the third chapter that the husband should take more care of the outdoor matters and the woman of those inside. And it appears from Ethics, VIII, xiv that the husband should leave some matters to her, which are belonging to her.

Original: And this thing or division needs only a few times to be applied as far as small regulations are concerned (C-) but it should be applied to goods that are under care that is to say for which one should have care and concern. For if the tasks are not distinctly classified, the slaves cannot follow or fulfil the wishes of the husband and wife, neither as to the caring for or preserving the goods nor as to other tasks.

Comment: For everything is better done and better preserved when each one knows clearly what he has to do and preserve.

Original: Moreover, it is an impossible thing, that is to say, very difficult for the managers, that is to say the slaves who are called overseers and are placed over the others, to be interested and to have a good concern, if the lords are negligent.

Comment: And by this he gives to understand by this teaching that the lords should be diligent in good preserving the goods. And by lords I think that he means the husband and the wife.

Original: Moreover, because the things that follow from virtue are good and advantageous for a good government, (p. 824→) it is proper for the lords to rise first, before the slaves, and to be the last to go to sleep.

Comment: As said before, they must be constantly watchful and anxiety gives rise to short sleeping like The Sage says: < Anxiety banishes sleep.>

Original: Moreover, they must make sure that the house never is without a guard, just like the city. Moreover, that one never omits, postpones or forgets something, which is proper to be done, not at night and not at day.

Comment: For although the night is given for rest, sometimes it is proper to work at night. And this he now explains.

Original: Moreover it is commendable to rise before dawn, because this is a useful thing and beneficial to health, to a good government and to philosophy

Comment: Firstly, one has to understand that this is the case in climates and regions, where the nights are long. For in the winter, they are much longer in parts up north than in the south and in summer they are shorter in the parts up north. Moreover, getting up at night before digestion is completed does much damage and weakens the body; but sleeping after it is completed is also harmful. For the internal heat begins to consume the natural humour and dries up the body and leads to illness.

Moreover, from the wastes of the stomach it carries up the fumes, which cause indisposition in the head and disturb or hinder the natural senses and consequently the understanding, which depends on the senses for its operation. So, per contra, it follows that to rise with digestion completed is advantageous to the health, the proper state of the senses and the proper functioning of the understanding, that is to say, to study and philosophy. And with this the night is more tranquil than the day and the senses are less distracted; so that the understanding is more disposed to speculation and contemplation about divine matters. Just as Scripture says: < For while peaceful silence enveloped all things and Night in her own swift course was midway, etc.> Moreover, this [early rising DN] contributes much to the government of the dwelling. That is why The Sage says of the virtuous women that she rises early: < Who finds a strong women etc.> and <At night the pater familias arose, urges his slaves to work.> Therefore Aesop^{xvii} writes: <The great keep wake while the servants snore, etc.>.

In the seventh chapter he determines two more parts or pieces of economics. (usage and arranging [stowing away DN])

In small things the way of using the fruits^{xviii}, which practice those of the Attical language, is advantageous. But in large things, the fruits are consumed and spent while one divides them in parts which are sufficient for a year or a month.

Comment: Those of Attic speech were the people of the region around Athens. But it does not become clear from the text which manner they apply for the part of the government of the house which is called using or distributing for it is short and obscure and the commentators disagree and seem to guess. Perhaps the people in small things, that is to say in small house governments or small households kept close watch over the quantity they could spend and thus dealt out a daily portion to their family. But in rich dwellings the distribution was made out for a month's time or for a year. Because if the distribution in a poor dwelling was made on a monthly basis (p. 825→) and consumed within a week, the remedy could not so well be applied as in a rich dwelling. Yet, in any case, one should take into consideration one's income or output and according to this moderate the expenditure in such a way that one does not become poor, for this would be prodigality. And one should spend liberally, without avarice and without making a large treasure. For many have hoarded to their bad luck, as The Sage says: <There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the bad of their lord> Because riches are an instrument to help somebody to live well, as is shown in Ethics, X, xvi. And therefore, as one should use an instrument, and it is not good that it is too large, in the same way one should use his wealth and do too large riches hinder living good, as is made clear in Politics, VII,1. To moderate this instrument and use it as it should be used, requires great diligence and a special kind of prudence called using or distributive economics (Fr.: yconomique usual or dispensative), at which Aristotle stopped here only briefly, because of what he said in his Ethics, IV^{xix}, in which chapter he discusses liberality and magnificence and their opposite vices. Next he discusses the part that is called arranging, which deals with the arrangement and adornment of the house.

Original: Moreover^{xx}, as to the use and storage of implements (C-) both those in daily use as those that are not used often should be turned over to the overseers who have to watch over those goods and over the guard of them. And one should make it such that they have the guard over them for a certain period of time, so that at the set date becomes apparent what is save and what is missing

Comment: This means that that such overseer-slaves, who are under the lord and above the worker-slaves, should receive these instruments on inventory and should render an account of them after a fixed period so that the lord may see that everything is properly kept. Next he speaks of the arrangement of the buildings.

Original: The house should be made and constructed for the shelter of the goods and the health and safety of the people living in it. I say, goods, like food and clothing or robes; which place is adequate for the guarding of dry goods (C-) and of moist goods (C-). Moreover, which place is adequate for the goods that have life: slaves, and children, as well male as female, and for strangers and citizens.(C-) Moreover, for reasons of health, the place should be cool in summers and warm in winter.

Comment: That is why the doctors say that wise persons keep themselves warm in winter and cold in summer. In this line (p. 826) Holy Scripture mentions King Eglon, who in summer used to sit in his granary. And in other books tells how the kings of Jerusalem had a house for winter and one more for summer.

Original: And it is good that this house is big or open to the north and is not square.

Comment: North winds are healthier than south winds and have less moisture and heavy fumes. Therefore the rooms and chambers should be wider, that is to say more open and have more windows facing the north than the south, especially in regions that are not excessively cold.

Original: Moreover, at large governments of the house or in at large dwellings a doorman or porter, who is useless in other jobs, seems to help output. And who he is present for the welfare of those who enter into the dwelling and who leave it.

Comment: So that no one may enter for evil purposes, the porter should accost those leaving or entering and he should be expected to do no other work, because he should not leave his post at the gate. He ought to be an elderly man so that he may better recognize people and knows how to talk with them. And Holy Scripture mentions such a position several times and an order of the Holy Church is called this way: Hostiarius (Doorkeeper).

Original: Moreover, the way which one has in Attica is a proper one with regard to the good use of the vessels. For it fits that everyone is put in its own place and when it is done in this way, every vessel will be found fast and one will not have to look for it.

Comment: So we have the rules for the arrangement and adornment of the house as to implements, buildings, and places to store and also regarding the doorman or porter and the vessels.

In the first chapter he discusses how the wife should conduct herself with regard to the matters other than her husband.

It is appropriate that the wife has mastership and lordship^{xxi} over all matters in the house and this according to the written laws.

Moreover, she should not allow anyone to enter the house, if the husband does not command this.(p. 827) for she should fear the words of the women outside, which want to show the corruption of her soul and also in order that she only knows the things that happen in the house. Moreover, if something sinister or wrong is done by those who enter into the house, the husband has a case against his wife.

Moreover, it is good that she is the lady of expenses for the festivities and banquets, which the husband pays for and wants to be made

It is also good, that she makes costs and wears dresses and ornaments which are less than the laws of the city stipulate or allow. And she should consider that interest in the wish to wear apparel of excellent beauty to surpass other women nor a multitude of gold contribute as much to the female virtue as modesty and temperance and the desire for a honest or composed that is well ordered life. For every such adornment is haughtiness and pride and if she is on guard against it she will be much more certain that just praise will be given back to her in her old age, as well to her as to her children. (p. 828)

Thus it is appropriate that the wife takes the courage to have mastership over such matters orderly for it is something indecent and not becoming for the husband to know the activities that are done within the house. And (that it is appropriate) that in all other matters she wants to obey her husband and that she not wants to hear the political matters.

Moreover, that she does not desire to achieve any of the things which belong to the marriage contract of her children but when times desires this, gives away and receives in the house her own children or the girls and thus obeys her husband and has deliberation together with him.

Moreover, if he commands, it is appropriate that she obeys and that her opinion is that it is not as ugly for the man to do or achieve some of the jobs inside the house as it is for the wife to do jobs outside.

Summary of the comment by Oresme on *On Marriage* 1 :

Aristotle puts forward six rules in this chapter.

(On the responsibility of the wife inside) He gives us to understand that the wife is responsible for almost everything in the house except maybe the treasures of the husband. Neither is she free to sell and buy large goods. Such matters are usually laid down in the law. That is why the law is mentioned.

(On the defence of permitting someone to enter the house) *If strange men would enter the house and talk to her in side, her female neighbours would spread a scandal or maybe he means that they would corrupt her soul.* Moreover, strangers should not witness the most private affairs. .

(On her responsibility for the parties and banquets) As is often said *that she should guard and distribute the goods of the dwelling for the pleasure of her husband and his friends. Since a woman is parsimonious by nature, she spends more moderately and the husband is excused if the expenses are not larger.*

(On the modesty of apparel) Cities use to set such limitations, which a good wife does not want to exceed. Gold is mentioned because women's clothing is sometimes woven with gold as Scripture mentions. And thus by this moderation her husband will be less suspicious: < The heart of her husband does safely trust her.> *But this does not mean that she should dress or behave cheaply but honourably and on average, in conformity with her status. If she were too alluring, it would seem that she was not chaste and that she was spending to the detriment of her children's inheritance.*

(On the defence to interfere in the marriage arrangements) *Aristotle does not forbid consulting her about this, but the final arrangements are the prerogative of the husband, especially the choice of persons and the dowry and the final assent. She should receive her son's wives and keep and feed them until the sons are emancipated and she should hand her daughters over to their husbands in unblemished state.*

(On the marriage of her children) *She should receive her son's wives and keep and feed them until the sons are emancipated and she should hand her daughters over to their husbands in unblemished state.*

(On the acceptance of her husband's commands) Otherwise it would seem that she wanted to be the lord and the lady over the great things outside the dwelling. This would be a greater abuse than the intervention of the husband in his wife's affairs within the dwelling.

In the second chapter he shows how the wife should conduct herself with regard to her husband.

Certainly it is decent, captivating and becoming thing that a well composed, well ordered wife takes the customs of her husband and that she imposes them on her life as laws and rules and has an opinion that these customs and laws were imposed by God when her husband and she were joined together by marriage and fortune. (p. 829) And if she undergoes and bears (them) patiently and humbly, she will govern the house easily; if not she will have to make strong efforts

That is why it is becoming and appropriate that she has the same firmness as her husband and agrees with him and serves in conformity with his will, not only when he happens to become prosperous in goods and other glory but even in adversity. That is to say if he has a shortage of one of the external goods she should assist him, just like in case of illness of his body or of clear ignorance of the soul. And that she speaks kindly and renders him service and obedience with the captivating and becoming matters, but does not do anything ugly or villainous or which is unworthy and not becoming to her. And if he is sinning in whatever matter against her from passion or in a fit, she must not remember this or complain in any way that he acted thus; but she must take it and consider all these matters as if they are caused by his illness and ignorance and accidental sins. For the more someone will obey and serve another diligently in his adversity, so much the greater will one meet gratitude from the person who gets well again, when he will be recovered from his illness. (p. 830) Moreover, if the husband is not well disposed and the wife does not comply with what he commands her, then when he has cured from his illness, he will feel and know more what she did and that is why it is certainly appropriate that she fears such a thing. But in other things, that is to say in prosperity she should more diligently than if she had been bought and had come to the dwelling that way [as a slave or hired chambermaid DN]. For she was bought at a great price: a community for life and because of the procreation of children, which matters are such that nothing can be greater or more holy. Moreover, when a wife has spent her life with a blessed or fortunate and prosperous man,

her reputation is not as much spread and as much made public [as when she has spent her life with an unfortunate and poor man DN], for although it is not a small thing if one does use prosperity well and possesses riches humbly, it is still far more honourable to endure and face adversity with courage and rightly so. For not committing something base when one suffers many pains and injustice, comes from strong courage and virtue. And therefore it is becoming and appropriate that the wife prays and implores that her husband may not come upon or fall into adversity (p. 831) and if something bad befalls him, she should consider that in this lies the very good and very great praise for the moderate wife. She should realize that a certain Alcestis, [the wife of Admetus^{xxiii} DN] and a certain Penelope, [the wife of Ulysses DN] would never have obtained so much and so large praise, if they had lived with blessed or fortunate husbands. But the adversities suffered by their husbands Admetus and Ulysses made them famous and prepared an immortal and perpetual remembrance. For because they were loyal and just to their men in times of adversity, they have been honoured by the gods. And rightly so! For in truth, it is easy to find partners in prosperity, but [with men DN] in adversity women do not want to associate, except those who are very good. And for all these reasons it is appropriate and becoming that a wife honours her husband much more in such a case and that she feels no shame if, in her saintly chastity, don't follow riches and other goods, as Hercules said. And therefore it is appropriate that the wife keeps herself to laws and customs, as here is broadly outlined.

Summary of the comment by Oresme on *On Marriage*, II

(On the acceptance of the habits of the husband) This concerns only the good customs, like awakening and sleeping, drinking and eating soberly etc. For as to times and places and quantity and quality of goods and other circumstances she should conform herself to the will of the husband. In so doing she does what pleases God. For at that time marriages were performed in the temples by the priests, who commanded this obedience from the wife in the name of God. And as to what he says 'and by fortune', one has to know that nature inclines to marriage and it is solemnized by consent of the will; but who has whom is in part and commonly a matter of fortune.

(On to the necessity to serve him in all circumstances) She should help him in 3 adversities or infortunes: (shortages of) external goods, goods of the body and goods of the soul. By these [accidental DN] sins he means the pains, the angers and disturbances from the misfortunes and losses of material goods. However, the wife of Job and several others have not acted this way, and such virtuous wives are not often found. That is why The Sage says: <Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.>

(On the fame to be won by serving in adversity) That nothing could more great and sacred goes for government of the house or domestic association. For the marriage community, which exists for procreation and mutual help, is a holy and divine matter as it appears in Politics, I, 3^{xxiii}. And therefore the wife should obey better than the chambermaid in the becoming tasks but not in slavish labours. One needs virtue to withstand fortune as stated in Ethics, IV, 5 & Politics VII, 12 and Ethics I, 16 shows that one needs courage the midst of sorrow. For this reason Job and Tobit are recommended in Scripture.

(On that only the best woman are willing to associate in adversity) They are the women that are good and those who love their husbands with good love. For as Tullius says: <In adversity one discovers his true friend.> And according to Scripture one does not know one's friend in prosperity and who is an enemy becomes clear in adversity. After this he puts a conclusion.

(On for all that reasons) The text was badly translated or is corrupt at this place; because it differs in the books and does not make sense.--)

In the third chapter he shows that the husband must take care to achieve that his wife is very good. The husband must take care to find laws and rules which at his wife's home are in use and ask from her manners, which originate from similar customs. (p. 832)

For she came into the house as a companion for procreation of children or infants and to be a life partner in order to leave after her children or infants who will have the names of her husband and her, who have begotten them. And what more holy and divine thing could a man of healthy thinking do than to engender and beget children or infants of a very good and very precious wife, which children will be shepherds and also, being kind, chaste and loyal, protectors of the old age of the father and the mother and will be custodians or guardians of the whole house?

Moreover, for if the children are good and are rightly fed and introduced by the father and by the mother (so) that they use the children justly and piously or see to it that the children are used and behave themselves justly and piously (p. 833), then the result will be that they will also rightly or with cause be good. And if they do not

accomplish this, they will experience the consequences of their failure. For if the parents do not give their children an example of good living, they [the children DN] might have, that is to say take up, a pure and excusable cause against their parents and the parents must fear that in the end their children will despise them and be the cause of their destruction or death because they did not live well. Therefore it is the responsibility of the husband not to omit or forget anything which regards the teaching of his wife, so that, to the extent of their possibility, they also can procreate and engender children as very good parents. (p. 834)

Moreover, the tiller of the soil does not forget or omit anything that suits him in studying how to use up his seed and throw it in very good earth and also how it is very well cultivated. For he is expecting or anticipating that this way and by this for him a very good fruit will be produced and brought in. And he wants for that land that it cannot be devastated & such a death, if it is appropriate that he in this way and for this dies in a fight with the enemies, reflects large honour. And therefore, while such large study and diligence is applied for bodily nourishment, is it then a miracle if all understanding has to be employed and all study has to be made by the husband about the mother and nurse of his children in whom the seed of his soul is expended.

Moreover, that only by this every mortal thing participates in the fact of immortality or perpetuity.

All supplications and prayers, as much as there are, stay [to be done to the gods DN] of the father's side. (p. 835) And thus those who despise such things or have them in contempt and do not take them into account, seem not to take care of the gods.

Moreover, and for the sake of the gods in front of which the husband has offered and made offerings and married his wife and contractually promised her much more honor than anyone apart from his parents.....

Summary of the comment by Oresme on *On Marriage*, III

(On the introductory sentence) This is to say that the customs of the woman should be correspond to and be in harmony with the customs of the man, in line with was said in the preceding chapter and also in the third chapter of book I, for as The Sage says: <It is something approved by God and mankind that husband and wife should be of one mind and in complete agreement.> Next he proves his principal conclusion by six arguments.

(On the first argument that they begin a bond for the rest of their lives) For they are not to be separated save by death. And Scripture says that she sins, if she leaves her husband and that the husband must not leave her. That nothing is more divine than engendering children has to be understood as concerning the association of a house; because a contemplative activity is more sacred and more divine. Thus the husband should do his utmost best that the wife is good so that the children will be better. That children are meant to be the future protectors of the whole house is in accordance with Scripture, which says: <When the father is dead, it is as if he were not dead, because he leaves behind one like himself who defends and guards the house against enemies and shows himself grateful to the friends of his father.>

{p. 832, end - 835, end: The comment of Oresme on 2nd till the 5th argument is to a large extent a reproduction of the other commentators, who differ about what these sentences mean.}

(On the sixth incomplete argument) For at that time marriage was solemnized in temples before idols and the husband gave offerings and sacrificed and killed an animal and swore and promised to keep and protect the honor of his wife. And in this country even today, the man says to the woman when he marries her: `and I honor you with this ring, etc`. And it would seem that such things which have been considered good and in in this or similar forms have been held too in all laws and in all times are like natural laws too. Thus we assume that the husband should honor his wife and no one deserves honor if he is not good. Therefore the husband must do everything in his power so that his wife may be good.

In the fourth chapter he shows by what laws and how the husband should achieve that his wife is be good.

A moderate wife is greatly honoured if she sees that her husband preserves chastity for her and for no other woman takes more or as much care as for her, but has esteem and concern and treats her before all other women as own and befriended and loyal.

For if the woman knows and observes that her husband is friendly and active for her as well as that he behaves towards her loyally and justly, all the more she will try to be like that and be loyal and just towards him. And thus a prudent man should not ignore and know which honours are due to his parents, which ones to his wife

and which are appropriate and becoming for his children, so that he is made just and holy., because he allotted to everyone what is his

Moreover, for everybody suffers and even is heavily grieved when one deprives him from his honor. And even if somebody gives many other things, yielding his own goods to the person to whom he gives, he [the grieved person DN] will not take them gladly. And nothing is greater to a woman and more her right with regard to her husband than a honourable and loyal bond or companionship.

Moreover, for it is neither a becoming or an appropriate matter for a man of healthy thoughts that he puts his seed wherever he can nor that he puts his seed indifferently in every woman that he approaches, to prevent that badly begotten and iniquitous bastards are made similar to free and legitimate children (p. 837) and that the wife is robbed of her honor and that because of this the legitimate children will get or meet reproaches.

Summary of the comment by Oresmes on *On Marriage*, IV

{p. 835, end- 836, 5: His comments on the central tenet, on the first argument one which says that the wife will act honourably if the husband acts honourably as well as on the second argument that a honourable bond is important for a woman, are minimal.}

(On the third argument that the man should not spread around his seed) *With everybody are meant the Sodomites. He now gives iii causes for iii inconveniences that would follow:* the first one is the inconvenience that bastard are treated equally with legitimate children, *for these children have to called his children;* the wife being robbed of her honour, *would be the second inconvenience* and the third inconvenience are the reproaches being made to the legitimate children. Oresmes explains this: *It is a very great insult to a man when one can say of him that his mother was not chaste. And a man must be more virtuous than a woman. Perhaps, therefore, truly and understandably, it is still a greater reproach when people can say to a man that his father did not maintain belief in nor stayed loyal to his mother and that he was a profligate.*

In the fifth chapter he gives more precepts to make the wife a good woman.

- *It is decent, becoming and appropriate that the husband approaches his wife, when she is in good shape, with great decency and modesty or self-restraint and with timidity or shyness, speaking such words of carnal union as belong to a generative work, that is well mannered and permitted and honourable.*

- *Moreover, he should use towards her very great modesty or self-restraint and show much belief in her, while accepting and forgiving her the small and spontaneous sins.*

- *Moreover, if she makes a mistake through ignorance, he should admonish her in such a way that he does not make her have fear and the kind of awe which is without timidity and without sense of shame^{xxiv} (p. 838)*

- *Moreover, he must neither be negligent or irresolute nor severe. For such fear or awe which is devoid of timidity or reverence is passion and a style which the foul woman has towards her customer. But what the free woman should feel towards her own husband d is fondness^{xxv} and awe equally with timidity and chastity. For two kinds of awe or fear exist. The one comes with timidity or shyness or reverence, such as well-behaved children feel towards their parents and such as upright citizens of temperate habits feel for their benevolent rulers or governors. (p. 839) But another kind of awe comes with hatred and hostility, such as slaves feel for their masters and citizens towards despotic and evil tyrants*

- *Moreover, of all those things he should choose the best and make his wife prepared to agree and loyal and only available to him, so that she will not work less well, when he is absent but will always acts as if he is present. And so that he and she both are as overseers and guards of the common goods of the dwelling. And so that when the husband is absent, his wife feels and remarks, no other man is better to her or more temperate or more available than her husband. Let him show this concern from the beginning, looking always to the common good of the dwelling, no matter how much she is a novice and little knowing of such matters.*

- *If the husband indeed has mastership over himself, he will be a good leader or governor of the whole domestic life and teach the woman to apply such things. (p. 840)*

Summary of the comment by Oresme on *On Marriage*, V:

(On the recommendation of modest sexual intercourse) *If not, he would make her too undaunted and make her inclined to a lack of self-control and desiring another man. And this is not the way of chaste persons but of men, who are cannot control themselves and are focused on foul women.*

(On the recommendation not to be negligent or irresolute or severe) *If he is too lenient, she would desire to have the upper hand over him, as The Sage says: <If a wife supports her husband, it means anger and impudence and great disgrace.> and if he holds her in too great a subjection, she will*

become angry, as The Sage says: *<The wrath and disrespect of a wife is a sure confusion>*, because *<There is no anger greater than a woman's wrath.>* Therefore it is proper to hold the middle. But this middle is not the same for everyone. Every woman requires a different approach, depending on her characteristics. One might compare governing the wife with the straightening of sticks: each kind of wood requires its own procedure and still some won't become straight. *For some women – they are few- are so extremely good, that they not by harshness or blandishness can be brought to evil deeds. Others are so extremely wicked that they cannot be made good in any possible manner.* And the rest occupies a middle ground. *But the nature and situation of a woman are very difficult to know and sometimes she switches invisibly from one style to another: <Her footsteps are wandering and inscrutable>.* We cannot know the thinking process of a woman. Therefore, to govern his wife well and make her, if possible, a good woman requires very great zeal and good diligence of the husband. (One the two kinds of fear and awe) The first is the one with which the angel and saints fear God, as Scripture says *<The angels shall be afraid.>* (--) In the second one the devils fear our Lord: *<The demons believe and tremble.>* That is why the husband must do what he can to achieve that his wife reveres him with the first kind of fear and awe.

(As to the necessity to be a master over himself) *Because when the lord of the dwelling, who is master, governor and an example for all, is himself a good man, everyone, wife, and children and servants, must become more worthy by it. But according to another comment, which does not seem so correct, because it says <If the husband first of all learns to control himself,>, he means that the husband should be a good master of his wife. So we have now six teachings to make the wife good.*

In the sixth chapter he confirms certain of his earlier remarks by statements of other men of wisdom. For Homer the poet paid no honour either to friendship or to fear or awe which was not accompanied by timidity or shyness. Everywhere, whenever he speaks of these matters, he prescribes that one should love with modesty or restraint and with timidity.

Moreover, one should dread and fear after the manner which Helen^{xxvi} expressed. She said to King Priam: <Beloved father of my husband, you are worthy of my awe!> and <It is fitting that I should fear and revere you.> And in so saying, he [Homer DN] meant only that she should be fond of him with fear and timidity. Moreover, Ulysses said these word to Nausicaa^{xxvii}: < You, woman, I hold in very high admiration and I fear you greatly.> Homer is of the opinion and feels that the man and his wife should in this way have each other and believes that is well done for both , if they have or keep each other like that . For no one ever is fond of him who is worse or less good than himself and never holds him in admiration nor dreads or fears him with timidity and reverence. But these passions or situations occur between those, who each are better than the other (p. 841) and who are benign by nature and in any case are less malicious and consider others better than themselves. Ulysses had this line of conduct towards his wife Penelope and never sinned against her in any way during his absence. But Agamemnon sinned against his wife in the church, that is to say in the public assembly, for a woman named Chryseis. For he said that this woman Chryseis, who was taken captive in war and not good but a barbarian and a slave, was such that she did not miss anything of the virtues of Clytemnestra [his true wife DN]. And this was ill spoken, for Clytemnestra had legitimate children from him and he could not rightly cohabit or associate with Chryseis. For how could this be just, he who had taken again a woman with violence, before he knew what she was or how she would behave towards him. Moreover, the daughter of King Atlas^{xxviii} begged Ulysses to live and play with her and she promised to make him forever immortal p. 842) but Ulysses never intended to betray or deceive the affection and fondness and belief he had for and in his wife in order to be made immortal. And he feared or thought that it would mean very large trouble for him if he would win immortality by acting badly. Moreover, he never wanted to play with a woman called Circe^{xxix}, even for the welfare of his friends. But replied to her that nothing could appear more enjoyable than his country, however rough it might be. And Ulysses prayed and begged or wanted more to be mortal and to see his wife and son rather than to live [eternally DN]. (p. 843→) This is how Ulysses kept his belief in his wife and towards his wife, for which he received her loyalties in return.

Summary of the Comment by Oresme on On Marriage, VI

(On the introduction) (--) *To understand it better, one should know that upright and virtuous friendship as well as fear and filial awe and chastity never exist without timidity and reverence. But friendship for pleasure or for output's sake does not have such characteristics. Therefore neither such loves nor such awes are praised by Homer, who was a most excellent Greek poet who put in verses the siege of Troy, and Vergil follows him in part.*

(On Ulysses' refusal to sleep with other women in opposition with Agamemnon) *Because her husband showed such a large love with reverence, Penelope stayed chaste and honest during his long absence when he was engaged in the siege of Troy or at sea.* Her chastity is praised by the poets Mathieu de Vendome^{xxx} and Ovid and Job says: < Touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.>

(On his refusal to sleep with Circe, even if could save his comrades by doing this) *The text commonly reads: < For he did not wish to lie with Circe, except to save his companions.> (--) One commentator states that the text is corrupt, like in many places and I follow him for two reasons.* Why would Ulysses want to sleep with Circe for the mortal lives of his friends if he did not want to lie with her for his own immortal life? Moreover, according to Aristotle, one should never do evil in order that something good comes from it. So my own reading 'even if' is correct. To understand it better, one should now – as St Augustine writes in *The City of God* - that Circe was known for her magical powers. *And St Augustine mentions there several other transformations. But in very truth, the transformations were not such as related, but possibly some of his men may have been driven mad and became disturbed both mentally and bodily by black arts and enchantments to the point of imagining themselves to be wolves or swine or horses for a certain time and some perhaps were made thus by sickness, like those who are called werewolves.* Against the bewitchment of his comrades Ulysses was immune, because he had taken an herb against it. *And thus Circe promised him to restore his companions to their former state, if he would give himself to her.*

In the seventh chapter he shows that husband and wife should be of one heart and one will. That we should honor most highly and especially a chaste community and companionship or association of man and woman in marriage, appears by what the poet tells in the prayer of Ulysses to or on behalf of Nausicaa. For he prayed and besought the gods to grant to Nausicaa a husband and a house and unanimity or the wish for harmony with her husband, and not just unanimity, but a good one. For she [Nausicaa DN] said herself that no greater good among people exists then when a husband and wife have a harmonious will when they are governing the house.

Moreover, later it becomes clear in Homer, that he is not praising an unanimity or concord, shared by the husband and the woman, which is directed at bad services or bad activities, but rather the one which is rightly connected with courage and prudence. And this means that the married ones have to govern the house by their will powers.

Moreover, Homer said that when this fondness is a fact, many sorrows are caused to the enemies (p. 844) and in this harmony many pleasures are done to the friends.

Moreover, the friends gladly hear this author, Homer, say the truth, namely that when the husband and the woman are in harmony about matters that are very good, the friends necessarily are in concord together. Moreover, because this makes them strong they frighten their enemies and are useful to their friends. And if they [the couple DN] are in discord, the friends will differ and not be in concord. Moreover, with this comes that the married ones will be weak, that is too say feeble and little powerful. Moreover they will experience themselves the bad things that come from such a disagreement.

And the author, that is Homer, in these matters here prescribes clearly that the married ones have duties towards each other and defend each other and together avoid things that are bad and not chaste or base. And that they impartially and to the best of their power make possible and manage for each other deeds which are chaste and honourable and those that are just.

Summary of the comment by Oresme on *On Marriage*, VII:

(On the need to be of one will in the government of the house) (--) *Because that is what Tully (Cicero) says: The first law of friendship is to ask of our friends only very honourable things. And this [the opinion of Nausicaa DN] accords with Scripture, which says that 3 things are approved by God and by mankind: (1) harmony among brothers, (2) love of one's neighbours, and (3) husband and wife of one mind and of one will.*

(On the need to be specifically of one will as to the good) (--) *For harmony in the bad is not true and lasting concord and contrary to good government and to true friendship. It is neither permanent nor lasting as appears from Ethics, IX, 6. Next he brings forward the goods and the advantages which proceed from this unanimity.*

{p. 844: Oresme provides some short comments which repeat in other words the advantages of concord and the disadvantages of discord that Ps. Aristotle brings forward.}

In the eighth chapter he stresses especially certain matters in which the married couple should be of a single will and to what end.

First of all the married couple must strive to take all care for their parents. And the husband must care for his wife's parents no less than for his own and also the wife for her husband's parents (p. 845).

Moreover, they must accomplish that they have also as common the care and the concern for their children and for their friends and for the whole house.

Moreover, (they must accomplish) that each of the two exerts oneself and takes care and trouble to surpass the other in being the cause that more goods are made by him or her for the common output of the house, and that each tries to be the better and the most just one.

Moreover, (they must accomplish) that each forgets pride and governs the house lawfully and has a humble and good-natured way of acting, so that when they will reach old age and will be released from well doing and from much of the cares and desires and the carnal lusts which often are practiced in youth, they have to answer each other and their children or infants for who of the two has been the cause of several goods in the house, of which each of the two was made leader and governor. And that one may know how much and how the bad that has befallen them has been there by fortune and the good by virtue.

These things that he accomplished, he will report and he will win great merit from the gods, (p. 846) like Pindar^{xxx} said that such people have hearts kindly disposed to themselves (....). And the hope of mortal man dominates many aspects of his will. But the second good is that when they have come to their old age, they will be helped or fed benevolently by their children. (p. 847)

For these matters it is indeed appropriate that the man and his wife consider them individually and together righteously and with an eye on all, both gods and men. And it is the responsibility of the man, while he lives, to consider and think much about behaving himself righteously toward his wife, his sons and daughters and his parents.

Summary of the comment by Oresme on *On Marriage*, VIII.

*(On the common care for the parents) For as is stated in *Ethics*, VIII, 15 and 19 and *Ethics*, IX, 3 one is kept to his parents above all, except God. (--)*

(On the common care for children personnel, friends and house) For all great things are common to each, but more principally belong to the husband.

*(On getting great merit from the gods) (--) And by this it appears that Aristotle believed that those who do good get a large remuneration from God; for although he says 'from the gods', that is the common parlance that existed then. For he held strongly that there is only one god, as is appears in *Metaphysics* VIII. Pindar was a great sage, philosopher and poet. By this he meant to say that the recollection of the good life they had led affords them a gentle pleasure in their hearts free from bitter remorse in their consciences. Thus the good works of their youth are like a treasure providing joy and peace in old age. This accords with the Prophet's statement: <Watch integrity and look upon right, for there is a posterity for the for the man of peace.> In this way a man who has lived righteously with his good wife ends his days pleasantly with peace in his heart. And this agrees with the Scriptural statement: <A noble wife gladdens her husband and he lives out his years in peace.> And such a man is happy in this world as Maximian^{xxvii} says: Happy the man who has deserved to live his life in peace and to end his days happily. [(p. 846): Oresmes discusses two different translations of And the hope of mortal man dominates many aspects of his will. He takes this to be a saying of Pindar.] It seems from the above that Aristotle and Pindar thought that those who live righteously according to their best ability expect to receive from this a double reward or double recompense from God, one in the present time, namely a joyful heart and a peaceful conscience, and the other in future time, for which they live in hope. This is proven by Aristotle in *Ethics* IX, 5 and the Bible. This double benefit or goal concerns the soul. But he next mentions another purpose, involving the bodies of the married couple. [i.e. being fed when old by their children DN]*

Here ends the Book of Economics. And it is not part of the job to make a list of notes in such a small book but it suffices to have written them in the margin. And also all the unusual words in this book are explained in the glosses or they are explained in the table of difficult words of Politics.

ⁱ The story is told by Albert Douglas Menut in his *Maistre Nicole Oresme Le Livre de Yconomique De Aristote* in: Transactions of The American Philosophical Society, New series vol. 5, part 5. 1957, p. 784-806.

ⁱⁱ About Durandus of Alvernia is not much known. Obviously he comes from the Auvergne region in France. In 1295 he is the representative of the University of Paris at the Roman curia in Anagni (at that moment the seat of the Pope) and he works in 1329 at the University of Paris. Source: Alcuin in the Infothek der Scholastik (University of Regensburg).

ⁱⁱⁱ The history of Ps. Aristotelian original economics in the late Middle Ages is complicated. One reason is that two versions have circulated. The Durandus' version has been a popular one and contained the *Oikonomikos* of Theophrastus and the *On Marriage*. Another popular version, which also got printed in the Renaissance contained three books: *Economics I*, which is the *Oikonomikos* of Theophrastus, *Economics II*, which is actually a book on political economics and puts the many ways in which different states earned an income in Antiquity in a row, and finally *Economics III*, which is the *On Marriage*. Menut, o.c. p. 787/8.

^{iv} Menut o.c. p. 791

^v Menut o.c. p. 791

^{vi} Oresme resolutely changes the meaning of polis into city and drops the connotation of city-state.

^{vii} Oresme does not deliver any proof in Chapter V that the practical science of economics follows on politics. May be he deduces this from the fact that at the end of *Politics*, I Aristotle discusses the virtues of wife, children and slaves

^{viii} Pliny the Elder (AD 23-79) was a Roman naval and army commander, who spend most of his spare time, studying natural and geographic phenomena in the field. He wrote an encyclopedic work, *Naturalis Historia* (Natural History), that will become much read and cited in the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

^{ix} This double enjoyment – a preoccupation of the schoolmen, the scholastic philosophers and theologians - Oresmes adds here.

^x Thomas Becket (1119/1120-1170) became archbishop of Canterbury in 1162 and fought with King Henri II of England about Church rights. In 1170 he was murdered by followers of the king and in 1173 canonized. He has become known as St Thomas of Canterbury.

^{xi} Symmachus (ca. 345-402), was a rich Roman states man and intellectual who sought to preserve the ancient religion of Rome at a time when Christianity was advancing. He wrote many letters, which his son collected in book form. Oresme is referring to letter I, 37 according to A.D. Menut, o.c. p. 820.

^{xii} Bartholomew of Bruges (1282-1356) gets his master at the artes-faculty of the University of Paris in 1304 and keeps working there till 1309. Then, before 1315, he gets a master in Medicine at this university. In 1329 he is dean of the faculty of medicine of the university of Montpellier. From 1330-1342 he is physician of the count of Blois (Source: Alcuin. Infothek der Scholastik (University of Regensburg)).

^{xiii} This promise Aristotle does not fulfill.

^{xiv} Oresme here leaves three precepts of Theophrastus away: (1) 'Take them hostage' by permitting them to raise children; (2) Do not acquire many slaves from the same people (--) and (3) Arrange the ceremonies and the pleasures more because of the slaves than of the free persons (44b 17-21). Van Moerbeke had offered a translation of this fragment in Latin, which did not really elucidate the meaning of these recommendations.

^{xv} The heading of this chapter gives: *he presents the formal parts of economy* (Fr.: *Il met les parties formelles d' yconomie*), which is rather enigmatic. It should have been *economics* (Fr.: *Yconomique*) as in the heading of chapter 7.

^{xvi} This sentence is not given by Theophrastus of van Moerbeke but inserted by some other commentator or by Oresme himself. Or maybe it should be part of the commentary. The whole fragment that follows on guarding of goods deviates rather strongly from the original text of Theophrastus, partly because van Moerbeke had rendered it faultily in Latin.

^{xvii} Aesop (c. 620-564 BC) was a Greek storyteller, who is credited with a number of fables and as such has been famous from times on.

^{xviii} Theophrastus has 'In the small possessions' and 'bringing the harvest to the market (διαθεσις)'; van Moerbeke 'in the small things' and, 'the ordering (ordinatio) of the victuals'. Oresme comes with 'in the small things' and the 'the way of using the fruits'.

^{xix} NE IV, 1-3 and 13-17.

^{xx} Oresme divides the sentence about the harvest and the utensils in two: one about the harvest and one about the utensils. The first part in his eyes deals with the usage of goods, the second with the arrangement of them.

^{xxi} Oresme continues in Part II with rendering single terms of Theophrastus and van Moerbeke in double terms. Van Moerbeke here has 'being master' ('dominari'), and Oresme writes: 'has mastership and lordship' ('ait domination et seigneurie').

^{xxii} In Greek Mythology Admetus was king of Pherae in Thessaly. He asked his wife Alcestis to substitute her death for his, which she accepted. She became saved by Heracles, who wrestled with Thanatos, the God of death, till he released her.

^{xxiii} This reference cannot be found back in *Politics*, I. Aristotle sees marriage as something natural, not as something divine and holy.

^{xxiv} Oresmes translates *pudor* (*sense of shame*) in van Moerbeke with *respect and love!* (Fr.: *reverence oveques amour*).

^{xxv} Oresme translates *diligere* in van Moerbeke not with *to be fond of* but with *to love* (Fr. : *aimer*), this way making *diligere* and *amare* identical.

^{xxvi} Helen of Troy was married to king Menelaus of Sparta and went away with/was abducted by prince Paris of Troy, resulting in the Trojan War. King Priam was the father of Paris.

^{xxvii} Nausicaa was a decent princess on the island where Ulysses got shipwrecked. She introduced him to her father and mother and as a table guest Ulysses relates them his story. Eventually her father equips a ship for him, with which Ulysses comes home.

^{xxviii} This is Calypso, who kept Ulysses seven year in her power.

^{xxix} In Greek Mythology Circe was the goddess of magic. She tried to get Ulysses and his men in her power, which they could prevent by the help of the god Hermes.

^{xxx} Mathieu de Vendôme. (1100- c-1185) was a French poet, who amongst other texts wrote a poem 'Ajax and Ulysses'. This poem describes a fight between them after the death of their colleague Achilles about who will get his arms.

^{xxxi} Pindar (ca 522-443 BC) was an Ancient Greek lyric poet from Thebes. Quintilian in his *Institutio oratoria* calls him the greatest of the nine lyric poets.

^{xxxii} Maximian or Maximianus (6th century) was a poet about whom is not much known. His elegies were used in the twelfth and thirteenth century to teach children Latin.