

Blake, N.F. The Canterbury Tales (London: Edward Arnold, 1980)

The Squire's Tale

Section 4 (Fragment V, Group F)

Here bigynneth the squiers tale.

f.129

At Sarray in the land of Tartarye
Ther dwelte a kyng that werreyed Russye
Thurgh which ther deyde many a doghty man;
This noble kyng was clepid Kambyuskan
Which in his tyme was of so greet renoun
That ther nas nowher in no regioun
So excellent a lord in alle thyng.
Hym lakked noght that longed to a kyng.
As of the secte of which that he was born
He kepte his lay to which that he was sworn.
And therto he was hardy, wys and riche,

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[**The Squire's Tale**] The square brackets indicate that the allocation of this tale to the squire was almost certainly made by the editor of Hg rather than by Chaucer himself, for this tale introduces a group of four tales which share this feature.

These four may have been in process of writing when Chaucer died. Hence this tale is incomplete in a different way from MkT, for instance, which is interrupted by another pilgrim. Scribes did invent links to follow SqT, but these are spurious and were introduced to maintain the continuity of the poem as explained in the Introduction. Even if the allocation to the squire was made by the editor, we may feel that unlike the other three tales in this group the attribution is so happy that it may reflect what Chaucer would have done had he had time to link this tale with others. The tale itself is an example of the common romance with an Eastern setting which includes various sub-plots and innumerable marvels, see Braddy 1942. No one source has been found for the story, and it is believed that Chaucer amalgamated a variety of sources. It is consequently impossible to tell how long the tale would have been if completed. For the story of the magic horse Chaucer is indebted to *Li Roumans de Clémades* by Adenes li Rois; and the falcon episode has striking similarities with *Anelida and Arverit*. For the magical elements see Clouston 1890.

1. Sarray: New Sarai in what is now S. E. Russia not far from the Caspian Sea. It was a trading centre with a large Turkish population.

2. werreyed: fought against.

4. Kambyuskan: perhaps a corruption of Genghis Khan (Latin *Camius Khan*), though if so it is an anachronism as it was his grandson who fought against Russia.

9. secte: religion.

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Pietous and iust and eueremoore yliche
 Sooth of his word, benigne and honourable,
 Of his courage as any centre stable,
 Yong, fressh and strong; in armes desirous
 As any bachiler of al his hous.
 A fair persone he was and fortunat
 And kepte alwey so wel roial estat
 That ther nas nowher swich another man.
 This noble kyng, this Tartre Cambyuskan,
 Hadde two sones on Elfeta his wyf,
 Of whiche the eldeste highte Algarsyf,
 That oother sone was clepid Cambalo.
 A doghter hadde this worthy kyng also
 That yongest was and highte Canacee.
 But for to telle yow al hir beautee
 It lyth nat in my tonge n'yn my konnyng.
 I dar nat undertake so heigh a thyng.
 Myn Englyssh eek is insufficient.
 It moste been a rethor excellent
 That koude his colours longyng for that art
 If he sholde hir discryuen every part.
 I am noon swich; I moot speke as I kan.
 And so bifel that whan this Kambyuskan
 Hath xx wynter born his dyademe,
 As he was wont fro yeer to yeer I deme
 He leet the feste of his nativitee
 Don crien thurghout Sarray his citee
 The laste Idus of March. After the yeer
 Phebus the sonne ful iolyf was and cleer
 For he was ny his exaltacion
 In Martes face and his mansion
 In Aries, the coleryk, hote signe.

12. *eueremoore yliche*: consistently.
 14. *centre*: the fixed axis of a circle, particularly that of the planets' orbit.
 15. *desirous*: eager.
 17. *fortunat*: favoured by fortune.
 18. *estat*: ceremony.
 21-3. These names may have astrological significance, see North 1969 p. 257ff.
 30. *rethor*: rhetorician.
 31. 'Who was familiar with the embellishments that are part of rhetoric.'
 38. *don crien*: to be proclaimed.
 39. A longwinded way of saying 15 March; *after the yeer*: in accordance with the time of year.
 41. *exaltacion*: position of strongest planetary influence.
 42-3. Aries, the ram, was the exaltation of the sun (*Phebus*), but in its first third (*face*) it was also a mansion of Mars in which the influence of Mars would be especially potent. It is *coleryk* because it is fiery and favourable to those with a choleric humour. Each zodiacal sign has its own qualities.

Ful lusty was the weder and benygne
 For which the foweles agayn the sonne shene,
 What for the sesoun and the yonge grene,
 Ful loude songen hir affeccions;
 Hem semed han geten hem proteccions
 Agayn the swerd of wynter kene and cold.
 This Cambyuskan of which I haue yow told
 In roial vestymet sit on his deys
 With dyademe ful hye in his paleys
 And halt his feste solempne and so riche
 That in this world ne was ther noon it liche;
 Of which if I shal tellen al th'array
 Thanne wolde it ocupie a someres day.
 And eek it nedeth nat to deuyse
 At every cours the ordre of hir seruysse.
 I wol nat tellen of hir straunge sewes
 Ne of hir swannes ne of hir heron-sewes.
 Eek in that land as tellen knyghtes olde
 Ther is som mete that is ful deyntee holde
 That in this land men recche of it but smal;
 Ther nys no man that may reporten al.
 I wol nat tarien yow, for it is pryme
 And for it is no fruyt but los of tyme;
 Vnto my firste I wol haue my recours.
 And so bifel that after the thridde cours,
 Whil that this kyng sit thus in his nobleye
 Herknyng his mynstrals hir thynges pleye
 Biforn hym at the bord deliciously,
 In at the halle-dore al sodeynly
 Ther cam a knyght vpon a steede of bras
 And in his hand a brood mirour of glas.

45. *agayn the sonne shene*: i.e. in the brilliant sunshine.
 46. 'On account partly of the season and partly of the new green growth.'
 47. *songen hir affeccions*: expressed their feelings in song.
 51. *sit*: sits; *deys*: days.
 59. *sewes*: broths.
 60. *heron-sewes*: dishes of young herons.
 62. *holde*: considered.
 63. 'That in this country is considered of no value.'
 66-7. 'And because there would be no profit in pursuing this matter, only loss of time, I will return to my original topic.'
 71. *deliciously*: delightfully.
 72-3. The entrance of the knight on horseback usually indicates some marvellous story in romances.
 74. *brood*: broad.

Vpon his thombe he hadde of gold a ryng
 And by his syde a naked swerd hangyng.
 And vp he rydeth to the heighe bord.
 In al the halle ne was ther spoke a word
 For merueille of this knyght. Hym to biholde
 Ful bisily they wayten yonge and olde.
 This straunge knyght that cam thus sodeynly
 Al armed saue his heed ful richely
 Salueth kyng and queene and lordes alle
 By ordre as they seten in the halle
 With so heigh reuerence and obeisaunces
 As wel in his speche as in his contenaunces
 That Gawayn with his olde curteisye,
 Thogh he were come agayn out of fairye,
 Ne koude hym nat amende with a word.
 And after this biforn the hye bord
 He with a manly voys seyde his message
 After the forme vsed in his langage
 Withouten vice of silable or of lettre.
 And for his tale sholde seme the better,
 Accordant to his wordes was his cheere
 As techeth art of speche hem that it leere.
 Al be that I kan nat sowne his style
 Ne kan nat clymben ouer so heigh a style,
 Yet seye I this that as to commune entente
 Thus muche amounteth al that euer he mente,
 If it so be that I haue it in my mynde.
 He seyde: 'The kyng of Arabe and of Inde,
 My lige lord, on this solempne day
 Salueth yow as he best kan and may
 And sendeth yow in honour of youre feste
 By me that am al redy at youre heste

77. *heighe bord*: high table, placed on the dais in a hall.

85. *obeisaunces*: bows.

86. *contenaunces*: gestures.

87. For the courtesy of the Arthurian knight Sir Gawain cf. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Gawain is elsewhere contrasted with the churlish Sir Kay.

88. *fairye*: the land of the supernatural. The return from this land would fit Arthur better than Gawain.

92. *forme*: prescribed manner.

93. *vice*: fault.

96. 'As the art of speaking teaches those who learn that art.' Such manuals were familiar in medieval times.

97. *sowne his style*: imitate his lofty language.

99. *commune entente*: general purport.

102. *Arabe*: Arabia.

This steede of bras, that esily and weel
 Kan in the space of o day naturel
 (This is to seyn in xxiiij houres)
 Wherso yow list in droghte or ellis shoures
 Beren youre body into euery place
 To which youre herte wilneth for to pace
 Withouten wem of yow thurgh foul or fair.
 Or if yow list to flee as hye in the ayr
 As dooth an egle whan hym list to soore
 This same steede shal bere yow eueremoore
 Withouten harm til ye be ther yow leste,
 Though that ye slepen on his bak or reste,
 And turne agayn with writhyng of a pyn.
 He that it wroghte koude many a gyn.
 He wayted many a constellacioun
 Er he hadde doon this operacioun
 And knew ful many a seel and many a bond.
 'This mirour eek that I haue in myn hond
 Hath swich a myght that men may in it see
 Whan ther shal fallen any aduersitee
 Vnto youre regne or to yourself also
 And openly who is youre freend or fo.
 'And ouer al this if any lady bright
 Hath set hir herte on any maner wight,
 If he be fals she shal his trayson see,
 His newe loue, and al his subtiltee
 So openly that ther shal nothyng hyde.
 Wherefore agayn this lusty someres tyde
 This mirour and this ryng that ye may see
 He hath sent to my lady Canacee,
 Yourre excellentie doghter that is heere.
 'The vertu of the ryng, if ye wol heere,

127. yourself: yourself

108. A natural day was 24 hours as distinct from the artificial day from sunrise to sunset, see 3:2.

113. *wem*: injury.

119. *writhyng*: twisting; *pyn*: knob.

120. *gyn*: artifice.

121. *constellacioun*: favourable conjunction of planets.

123. Seals and bonds were often linked with magic.

124. The magic mirror was a folk-tale theme; a famous example is associated with Virgil, for which see *Confessio Amantis* 5:2031ff.

133. *hyde*: remain secret.

134. 'Wherefor in recognition of this lovely time of summer.'

135. Magic rings are frequent in romances.

Is this: that if hir list it for to were
 Vpon hir thombe or in hir purs it bere,
 Ther nys no fowel that fleeth vnder the heuene
 That she ne shal wel vnderstonde his steuene
 And knowe his menynge openly and pleyn
 And answere hym in his langage ageyn.
 And euery gras that groweth vpon roote
 She shal eek knowe and whom it wol doon boote
 Al be his woundes neuer so depe and wyde.
 'This naked swerd that hangeth by my syde
 Swich vertu hath that what man so ye smyte
 Thurghout his armure it wol kerue and byte
 Were it as thikke as is a braunched ook.
 And what man that is wounded with the strook
 Shal neuere be hool til that yow lust of grace
 To stroke hym with the platte in thilke place
 Ther he is hurt. This is as muche to seyn
 Ye moote with the platte swerd ageyn
 Stroke hym in the wounde and it wol close;
 This is a verray sooth withouten glose.
 It failleth nat whiles it is in youre hold.'
 And when this knyght hath thus his tale ytolde
 He rideth out of halle and doun he lighte.
 His steede which that shoon as sonne brighte
 Stant in the court stille as any stoon.
 This knyght is to his chambre lad anon
 And is vnarmed and to mete yset.
 The presentz been ful realliche yfet,
 This is to seyn the swerd and the mirour,
 And born anon into the heighe tour
 With certein officers ordeyned therfore.
 And vnto Canacee the ryng is bore
 Solempnely ther she sit at the table.
 But sikerly withouten any fable
 The hors of bras that may nat been remewed
 It stant as it were to the ground yglewed,

142. *steuene*: language.

143. *pleyn*: fully.

145. 'And every herb that grows with roots.'

146. *doon boote*: cure.

150. *kerue*: slice.

153. *yow lust*: it pleases you.

154. *platte*: flat side of blade.

158. *glose*: deceit.

169. 'By special officials appointed for that purpose.'

173. *remewed*: moved.

Ther may no man out of the place it dryue
 For noon engyn of wyndas or polyue –
 And cause why? For they kan nat the craft.
 And therfore in the place they han it laft
 Til that the knyght hath taught hem the manere
 To voyden hym, as ye shal after heere.
 Greet was the prees that swarmeth to and fro
 To gauren on this hors that stondeth so.
 For it so heigh was and so brood and long
 So wel proporcioned for to ben strong
 Right as it were a steede of Lombardy;
 Therwith so horsly and so quyk of eye
 As it a gentil Poyleys courser weere.
 For certes fro his tayl vnto his eere
 Nature ne art ne koude hym nat amende
 In no degree, as al the peple wende.
 But euermore hir mooste wonder was
 How that it koude goon and was of bras;
 It was a fairye as the peple semed.
 Dyurse folk dyuersely han demed:
 As many heuedes as many wittes ther been.
 They murmured as dooth a swarm of been
 And maden skiles after hir fantasies
 Rehersynge of thise olde poetries
 And seyden it was lyk the Pegasee,
 The hors that hadde wynges for to flee,
 Or ellis it was the Grekys hors Synoun
 That broghte Troye to destruccioun,
 As men in thise olde gestes rede.
 'Myn herte,' quod oon, 'is euermore in drede:
 I trowe som men-of-arms been therinne
 That shapen hem this citee for to wynne.

176. 'By no contrivance of windlass or pulley.'

180. *voyden*: move.

186. *horsly*: with all the qualities of a good horse.

187. *Poyleys*: Apulian; Apulia like Lombardy was renowned for its horses.

191. *mooste wonder*: greatest amazement.

192. *was of*: was made of.

193. *a fairye*: something supernatural.

195. 'There are as many different opinions as there are people,' see Whiting H230.

196. *been*: bees.

197. 'And they each made up explanations from their own imaginations.'

198. *poetries*: poems.

199–200. Pegasus, the winged horse of Bellerophon in Greek mythology.

201. 'Or else it was the horse of the Greek Sinon,' i.e. the Trojan horse. Sinon's treachery led to the horse being brought into Troy. There were armed Greeks inside, hence the fear expressed at 204–6.

It were right good that al swich thyng were knowe.
 Another rowned to his felawe lowe
 And seyde: 'He lyeth, for it is rather lyk
 An apparence ymaad by som magyk
 As iogelours pleyen at thise festes grete.'
 Of sondry doutes thus they iangle and trete,
 As lewed peple demeth comunly
 Of thynges that been moore maad subtilly
 Than they kan in hir lewednesse comprehende:
 They demen gladly to the badder ende.
 And somme of hem wondren on the mirour
 That born was vp vnto the maister-tour
 How men myghte in it swiche thynges se.
 Another answerde and seyde it myghte wel be
 Naturelly by composicions
 Of anglis and of sly reflexions.
 And seiden that in Rome was swich oon.
 They speke of Alocen and Vitulon,
 Of Aristotle, that writen in hir lyces
 Of queynte mirours and of perspectyues,
 As knowen they that han hir bookes herd.
 And oother folk han wondred on the swerd
 That wolde percen thurghout euery thyng;
 And fille in speche of Thelophus the kyng
 And of Achilles for his queynte spere,
 For he koude with it bothe heele and dere
 Right in swich wise as men may with the swerd
 Of which right now ye han yourseluen herd.
 They speeke of sondry hardyng of metal

207. *knowe*: made known.

208. *lowe*: quietly.

210. *apparence*: illusion.

211. *iogelours*: medieval entertainers, here in the guise of magicians; *pleyen*: perform.

212. *trete*: chatter.

216. 'They put the worst possible interpretation on it.'

218. *maister-tour*: principal tower, keep.

221-2. 'Combinations of angles and of ingenious reflections.'

223. Virgil was reputed to have set up a similar mirror at Rome.

224. Alhazen (*Alocen*) the Arab author of a treatise on optics translated into Latin by the Polish scientist Witelo (*Vitulon*).

225. *writen*: pret.pl.

230-2. Telephus of Mysia was wounded by Achilles at Troy and then cured by the rust of Achilles's spear. Chaucer probably took this allusion from Ovid.

235. *sondry hardyng*: methods of tempering.

(And speke of medicynes therewithal)
 And how and whanne it sholde yharded be,
 Which is vnknewe algates vnto me.
 Tho speeke they of Canacees ryng,
 And seyden alle that swich a wonder thyng
 Of craft of rynges herde they neuere non
 Saue that he Moyse and kyng Salomon
 Hadde a name of konnyng in swich art.
 Thus seyn the peple and drawen hem apart.
 But natheles somme seyden that it was
 Wonder to maken of fern-assen glas
 And yet is glas nat lyk assen of fern.
 But for they han knowen it so fern,
 Therefore cesseth hir ianglyng and hir wonder.
 As soore wondren somme on cause of thonder,
 On ebbe and flood, on gossamer and on myst,
 And alle thyng til that the cause is wist.
 Thus ianglen they and demen and deuyse
 Til that the kyng gan fro the bord aryse.
 Phebus hath laft the angle meridional
 And yet ascendyng is the beest roial,
 The gentil leon, with his Aldiran
 Whan that this Tartre kyng Cambyuskan
 Roos fro his bord ther as he sat ful hye.
 Biforn hym gooth the loude mynstralcy
 Til he cam to his chambre of parementz
 There as ther sownen diuerse instrumentz
 That it is lyk an heuene for to heere.
 Now dauncen lusty Venus children deere,
 For in the fissh hir lady sat ful hye
 And looketh on hem with a freendly eye.
 This noble kyng is set vpon his trone.

236. 'And they discuss medicines as well,' i.e. cures to be used for wounds inflicted by spears or swords.

242. In medieval tradition Moses had a ring of memory and another of oblivion; Solomon's ring enabled its wearer to understand the speech of birds.

246. 'A miraculous process to make glass out of ashes.'

248. *it*: i.e. the art of glass-making; *so fern*: for such a long time.

250. *as soore*: just as eagerly.

251. 'Of the ebb and flow of the tide, of gossamer and of mist.'

255-7. A rather complicated astrological way of saying it was two hours past noon, relying on the fact that the constellation Leo rises with the star Aldiran.

261. *chambre of parementz*: a richly decorated room, a state room.

264. *Venus children*: lovers.

265. Venus had the greatest influence when it was in the sign of Pisces, the fish; cf. 2:682.

This straunge knyght is fet to hym ful soone
And on the daunce he gooth with Canacee.
Here is the reuel and the iolitee

That is nat able a dul man to deuyse.

He moste han knowe loue and his seruyse
And been a festlich man as fresh as May
That sholde yow deuyens swich array.

Who koude telle yow the forme daunces
So vnkouth, and swiche fresshe contenaunces,
Swich subtil lookyng and dissimulynges
For drede of ialous mennes aperceyuynges?
No man but Launcelot and he is deed.

Therefore I passe of al this lustiheed;

I sey namoore; but in this iolynesse

I lete hem, til men to the souper dresse.

The styward byt spices for to hye

And eek the wyn in al this melodye.

The vschers and the squyers been ygon;

The spices and the wyn is come anon.

They ete and drynke and whan this hadde an ende
Vnto the temple, as reson was, they wende.

The seruyce doon they soupen al by day.

What nedeth yow rehercen hir array?

Ech man woot wel that at a kynges feste

Hath plente to the meeste and to the leeste

And deyntes mo than been in my knowyng.

At after-souper gooth this noble kyng

To seen this hors of bras with al a route

Of lordes and of ladyes hym aboute.

Swich wondryng was ther on this hors of bras

That syn the grete sege of Troye was,

272. *his*: its.

273. *festlich*: festive.

275. *forme daunces*: i.e. type of dances.

277. *dissimulynges*: dissimulations.

278. *aperceyuynges*: noticing.

279. Launcelot, the Arthurian knight, was a master of courtesy and the lover of Guinevere, but he is not known for his rhetorical accomplishments.

280. *passe of*: pass over, leave aside; *lustiheed*: gaiety.

281. *iolynesse*: entertainment.

283. *byt*: bids; *hye*: be brought in quickly.

285. *vschers*: waiters.

288. *reson*: i.e. fitting.

289. *the seruyce doon*: when the service was finished; *al by day*: the whole day.

292. *hath plente*: there is abundance.

297. *wondryng*: gazing in admiration.

Ther as men wondreden on an hors also,
Ne was ther swich a wondryng as was tho.

But finally the kyng axeth this knyght

The vertu of this courser and the myght,

And preyed hym to telle his gouernaunce.

This hors anon gan for to trippe and daunce

Whan that this knyght leyde hand vpon his reyne;

And seyde: 'Sire, ther nys namoore to seyne

But whan yow list to ryden anywhere

Ye moten trille a pyn stant in his ere,

Which I shal yow telle bitwixe vs two.

Ye mote nempne hym to what place also

Or to what contree that yow list to ryde.

And whan ye come ther as yow list abyde

Byd hym descende and tryl another pyn

For therinne lyth th'effect of al the gyn.

And he wol doun descende and doon youre wille

And in that place he wol abiden stille:

Theigh al the world the contrarie hadde yswore

He shal nat thennes be ydrawe nor ybore.

Or if yow list bidde hym thennes gon,

Trille this pyn and he wol vanysshe anon

Out of the sighte of euery maner wight

And come agayn be it day or nyght

Whan that yow list to clepen hym ageyn

In swich a gyse as I shal to yow seyn

Bitwixen yow and me, and that ful soone.

Ryd whan yow lust. Ther is namoore to doone.'

Enformed whan the kyng was of that knyght

And hath conceyued in his wit aright

The manere and the forme of al this thyng,

Ful glad and blythe this noble, doghty kyng

Repeireth to his reuel as biforn.

The brydel is vnto the tour yborn

And kept among his iewels lief and deere.

The hors vanysshed, I noot in which manere,

Out of hir sighte; ye gete namoore for me.

But thus I lete in lust and iolitee

303. *his gouernaunce*: i.e. how to control it.

308. 'You must turn a knob which is situated in his ear.'

314. 'For the operation of the device consists of that.'

318. *ydraue*: dragged; *ybore*: carried away.

327. *of*: by.

328. *conceyued*: understood.

This Cambyuskan his lordes festeynyng
Til wel neigh the day bigan to spryng

Explicit prima pars

Incipit pars secunda

The notice of digestion, the sleep,
Gan on hem wynke and bad hem take keep
That muche drynke and labour wol haue reste.
And with a galpyng mouth hem alle he keste
And seyde that it was tyme to lye adoun
For blood was in his domynacioun.

'Cheriseth blood, natures frend,' quod he.
They thanken hym galpyng by two, by thre.
And every wight gan drawe hym to his reste
As sleep hem bad; they take it for the beste.

Hir dremes shul nat now be toold for me;

Ful were hir heuedes of fumositee
That causeth dreem of which ther nys no charge.

They slepen til that it was pryme large,
The mooste part but it were Canacee.

She was ful mesurable as women be
For of hir fader hadde she take leue
To goon to reste soone after it was eue.

Hir liste nat apalled for to be

Nor on the morwe vnfestlich for to se.

And slepte hir firste sleep and awook,
For swich a ioye she in hir herte took
Bothe of hir queynte ryng and hir mirour
That xx tyme she chaunged hir colour.

And in hir sleep right for impressioun

Of hir mirour she hadde a visioun.

Wherefore er that the sonne gan vp glyde
She clepyd vpon hir maistresse hir bisyde

337. *festeynyng*: feasting.

342. *galpyng*: yawning; *keste*: kissed.

344. The humour of the blood dominates the body at night.

345. *he*: i.e. sleep.

350. *fumositee*: the fumes caused by drinking, cf. 9:565.

351. *ther nys no charge*: which is of no significance.

352. *pryme large*: late morning.

353. i.e. everyone except Canacee.

357. *apalled*: pallid.

358. *vnfestlich*: jaded; *se*: look.

363. *right for impressioun*: because of the vivid effect.

366. *maistresse*: governess.

And seyde that hir liste for to ryse.

Thise olde women that been gladly wyse,

As is hir maystresse, answerde hir anon

And seyde: 'Madame, whider wolde ye gon

Thus erly, for the folk been alle on reste?'

'I wol,' quod she, 'aryse, for me leste

No lenger for to slepe, and walke aboute.'

Hir maistresse clepith women a gret route,

And vp they rysen wel an x or xij.

Vp riseth fresshe Canacee hirselve

As rody and bright as dooth the yonge sonne

That in the ram is 4 degrees vp ronne;

Noon hyere was he whan she redy was.

And forth she walketh esily a pas

Arrayed after the lusty seson soote,

Lightly for to pleye and walke on foote

Nat but with v or vij of hir meynce.

And in a trench forth in the park goth she.

The vapour which that fro the erthe glood

Made the sonne to seme rody and brood.

But natheles it was so fair a sighte

That it made al hir hertes for to lighte,

What for the seson and the morwenyng

And for the fowles that she herde syng.

For right-anon she wiste what they mente

Right by hir song and knew al hir entente.

The knotte why that euery tale is told

If it be taryed til that lust be cold

Of hem that han it after herkned yoore,

368-9. The syntax is confused since the governess should reply, but the grammatical subject is the old women; *that been gladly wyse*: who would be thought wise.

377. *rody*: with fresh complexion. The sun is young because it started its annual progression on 12 March when it entered Aries, the first sign of the zodiac. As it is only 16 March the sun has run four degrees.

379. The sun was no higher than four degrees above the horizon, i.e. very early in the morning.

380. *esily a pas*: at a gentle walking pace.

381-3. 'Dressed appropriately for the happy and pleasant time of year, accompanied by only five or six of her household to enjoy recreations and to walk on foot in a lively manner.'

384. *trench*: wooded path.

385. *glood*: rose.

393. *knotte*: main point, gist of story; see Wenzel 1976.

394-7. 'If the main point be kept back till the interest of those who have been listening for it for a long time is dissipated, their pleasure diminishes the longer the main point is delayed on account of the tediousness of the narrative's length.' The syntax is clumsy.

The sauour passeth euer lenger the moore
 For fulsomnesse of his prolixitee.
 And by this same reson thynketh me
 I sholde to the knotte condescende
 And maken of hir walkyng soone an ende.
 Amydde a tree for drye as whit as chalk
 As Canacee was pleyynge in hir walk
 Ther sat a fawkon ouer hir heed ful hye
 And with a pitous voys so gan to crye
 That al the wode resowned of hir cry.
 Ybeten hadde she herself so pitously
 With bothe hir wynges til the rede blood
 Ran endelong the tree ther as she stood.
 And euere in oon she cryde alwey and shrighthe
 And with hir beek herseluen so she prighte
 That ther nys tygre ne so cruel beest
 That dwelleth outhir in wode or in forest
 That nolde han wept if that he wepe koude
 For sorwe of hire, she shrighthe alwey so loude.
 For ther nas neuere man yet on lyue,
 If that I koude a fawkon wel discryue,
 That herde of swich another of fairnesse
 As wel of plumage as of gentilnesse
 Of shap, of al that myghte yrekened be.
 A fawkon peregryn thanne semed she
 Of fremde land; and euermooore as she stood
 She swowned now and now for lakke of blood
 Til wel neigh is she fallen fro that tree.
 This faire kynges doghter Canacee,
 That on hir fynger baar the queynte ryng
 Thurgh which she vnderstood wel euery thyng
 That any fowl may in his ledne sayn
 And koude answer hym in his ledne agayn,
 Hath vnderstonden what this fawkon seyde:
 And wel neigh for the routhe almoost she deyde.

399. *condescende*: get down to.

401. *for drye*: on account of dryness.

408. *endelong*: along.

409. *shrighthe*: shrieked.

410. *prighte*: lacerated.

419. *of al that myghte yrekened be*: in respect of all those features which can be evaluated (for beauty).

420. The peregrine was used for hunting.

421. *fremde*: foreign.

422. *now and now*: from time to time.

427. *ledne*: language.

And to the tree she goth ful hastily
 And on this fawkon looketh pitously
 And heeld hir lappe abroad, for wel she wiste
 The fawkon moste fallen fro the twiste
 Whan that it swowneth next for lakke of blood.
 A long while to wayten hir she stood
 Til at the laste she spak in this manere
 Vnto the hawk, as ye shal after heere.
 'What is the cause, if it be for to telle,
 That ye been in this furial pyne of helle?'
 Quod Canacee vnto this hawk aboue.
 'Is this for sorwe of deeth or los of loue?
 For as I trowe thise been causes two
 That causen moost a gentil herte wo;
 Of oother harm it nedeth nat to speke.
 For ye yourself vpon yow self yow wreke,
 Which proeueth wel that outhir ire or drede
 Moot been encheson of youre cruel dede,
 Syn that I se noon oother wight yow chace.
 For loue of god as dooth yourselfen grace
 Or what may been youre help, for west nor est
 Ne saw I neuere er now no bryd ne beest
 That ferde with hymself so pitously?
 Ye sleen me with youre sorwe verrailly,
 I haue of yow so greet compassioun.
 For goddes loue com fro the tree adoun,
 And as I am a kynges doghter trewe
 If that I verrailly the cause knewe
 Of youre disese, if it laye in my myght
 I wolde amende it er that it were nyght
 As wisly help me grete god of kynde.
 And herbes shal I right ynowe fynde
 To heele with youre hurtes hastily.'
 Tho shrighthe this fawkon yet moore pitously
 Than euer she dide and fil to ground anon
 And lyth aswowne deed and lik a ston
 Til Canacee hath in hir lappe hir take
 Vnto that tyme she gan of swowne awake.
 And after that she of swow gan abreyde
 Right in hir haukes ledne thus she seyde:

433. *lappe abroad*: i.e. skirt out.

440. *furial*: fierce.

466. *aswowne deed*: in a dead faint.

469. *swow*: swoon.

'That pitee renneþ soone in gentil herte
 Feelynge his similitude in peynes smerte
 Is proued al day, as men may it see
 As wel by werk as by auctoritee.
 For gentil herte kitheth gentillesse.
 I se wel that ye han of my distresse
 Compassion, my faire Canacee,
 Of verray womanly benygntee
 That nature in youre principles hath set.
 But for noon hope for to fare the bet,
 But for to obeye vnto youre herte free
 And for to maken othere ywar by me
 (As by the whelp chaste is the leon),
 Right for that cause and for that conclusioun
 Whil that I haue a leyser and a space
 Myn harm I wol confessen er I pace.'
 And euere whil that oon hir sorwe tolde,
 That oother weep as she to water wolde
 Til that the faukon bad hir to be stille.
 And with a syk right thus she seyde hir wille.
 'Ther I was bred, allas that ilke day,
 And fostred in a roch of marbul gray
 So tendrely that nothyng eyled me;
 I nyste nat what was aduersitee
 Til I koude fle ful hye vnder the sky.
 'Tho dwelte a' tercelet me faste by
 That semed welle of alle gentillesse,
 Al were he ful of trayson and falsnesse.
 It was so wrapped vnder humble cheere
 And vnder hewe of trouthe in swich manere,

471. Cf. 1:1763.

472. 'Recognizing its counterpart in fierce pains.'

474. *by werk*: through deeds.

475. *kitheth*: makes known.

478. 'Springing from true womanly consideration.'

479. *principles*: innate disposition.

482. *by me*: through my example.

483. If a dog is whipped in front of and instead of a noble lion, it was believed the lion would be disciplined by watching; cf. *Othello* 2:3:272.

488. 'The other wept as though she would turn to water.'

493. *eyled*: troubled.

496. *tercelet*: male falcon.

497. *welle*: spring.

Vnder plesaunce and vnder bisy peyne
 That no wight wolde han wend he koude feyne,
 So depe in greyn he dyed his colours.
 Right as a serpent hit hym vnder floures
 Til he may se his tyme for to byte,
 Right so this god of loues ypocrite
 Dooth so his cerymonijs and obeysaunces
 And kepeth in semblant alle hise obseruaunces--
 That sownen into gentillesse of loue.
 As on a tombe is al the faire aboute
 And vnder is the cors, swich as ye woot,
 Swich was this ypocrite bothe cold and hoot.
 And in this wise he serued his entente
 That saue the feend noon wiste what he mente,
 Til he so longe hadde wopen and compleyned
 And many a yeer his seruice to me feyned
 Til that myn herte (to pitous and to nyce,
 Al innocent of his crowned malice,
 Forfered of his deeth, as thoughte me)
 Vpon his othes and his seuretee
 Graunted hym loue vpon this condicioun
 This eueremo myn honour and renoun
 Were saued bothe pryuee and apert.
 This is to seyn that after his desert
 I yaf hym al myn herte and my thought
 (God woot and he, that ootherwise noght)
 And took his herte in chaunge of myn for ay.
 But sooth is seyde, goon sihen many a day:
 A trewe wight and a thief thynketh nat oon.

501-2. Reversed in Hg but marked for correction

516. And: A

501. *bisy peyne*: attentiveness.

503. 'He dyed his clothes so fast in the very fibres.'

504. *hit*: hides.

507. *obeysaunces*: acts of service.

508. *kepeth in semblant*: performs in outward appearance.

510. *faire*: beauty, cf. Matthew 23:27.

512 *bothe cold and hoot*: under all circumstances.

515 *wopen*: wept, lamented.

518. *crowned*: i.e. consummate.

523. *pryuee and apert*: in private and in public, i.e. under all circumstances.

526. *ootherwise noght*: on no other terms (I gave him my heart).

527. *chaunge*: exchange.

529. *oon*: alike.

'And whanne he saw the thyng so fer ygon
 That I hadde graunted hym fully my loue
 In swich a gise as I haue seyde aboute
 And yeuen hym my trewe herte as fre
 As he swoor he yaf his herte to me,
 Anoon this tygre ful of doublenesse
 Fil on his knees with so deuout humblesse,
 With so heigh reuerence and as by his cheere
 So lyk a gentil louere of manere,
 So rauysshed as it semed for the ioye
 That neuere Iason ne Parys of Troye
 (Iason certes ne noon oother man
 Syn Lameth was that alderfirst bigan
 To louen two, as writen folk biforn)
 Ne neuere syn the firste man was born
 Ne koude man by twenty thousand part
 Countrefete the sophymes of his art
 Ne were worthy vnbokele his galoche,
 Ther doublenesse or feynyng sholde approche,
 Ne so koude thanke a wight as he did me.
 His manere was an heuene for to see
 Til any woman, were she neuer so wys,
 So peynted he and kembde at poynt-deuys
 As wel his wordes as his contenance.
 And I so loued hym for his obeisaunce
 And for the trouthe I demed in his herte
 That if so weere that any thyng hym smerte,
 Al were it neuer so litel and I it wiste,
 Me thoughte I felte deeth myn herte twiste.
 And shortly so ferforth this thyng is went
 That my wyl was his willes instrument,
 This is to seyn my wyl obeyed his wil

530. 'And when he realised that matters had progressed so far.'

533. *fre*: freely, without constraint.

535. *doublenesse*: duplicity.

538. *of manere*: in behaviour.

540. Jason deserted both Hypsipyle and Medea; Paris deserted Oenone.

540-6. 'So that neither Jason nor Paris (Jason indeed and nobody else was the very first after Lamech who loved two women, as is told by older writers) nor indeed any other man since the birth of the first man could imitate even the minutest part of the deceptions of his art.' On Lamech see 2:53-4.

547. *galoche*: shoe, cf. Mark 1:7.

548. *approche*: be involved.

552. *kembde*: combed, decked out; *at poynt-deuys*: carefully.

In alle thyng as fer as reson fil,
 Kepyng the boundes of my worship euere.
 Ne neuere hadde I thyng so lief ne leuere
 As hym, god woot, ne neuere shal namo.
 'This laste lenger than a yeer or two
 That I supposed of hym nat but good.
 But finally thus at the laste it stood
 That fortune wolde that he moste twynne
 Out of that place which that I was inne.
 Wher me was wo, that is no question:
 I kan nat make of it descripsioun.
 For o thyng dar I tellen boldly,
 I knowe what is the peyne of deeth therby.
 Swich harm I felte for he ne myghte bileue.
 So on a day of me he took his leue
 So sorwefully eek, that I wende verrailly
 That he hadde feelyd as muche harm as I
 Whan that I herde hym speke and saw his hewe.
 But natheles I thoughte he was so trewe
 And eek that he repeyre sholde agayn
 Withinne a litel while, sooth to sayn,
 And reson wolde eek that he moste go
 For his honour, as ofte happeth so,
 That I made vertu of necessitee
 And took it wel syn that it moste be.
 As I best myghte I hidde from hym my sorwe
 And took hym by the hand, seint Iohn to borwe,
 And seyde thus: 'Lo I am youre al.
 Beeth swich as I to yow haue been and shal."
 What he answerde it nedeth nat reherse:
 Who kan seyn bet than he? Who kan doon wese?
 Whan he hath al wel seyde, thanne hath he doon.
 Therfore bihoued hir a ful long spoon
 That shal ete with a feend, thus herde I seye.
 So at the laste he moste forth his weye;
 And forth he fleeth til he cam ther hym leste.
 Whan it cam hym to purpos for to reste,

568. at: a

563. 'Always preserving my honour.'

571. *wher*: whether.

588. *seint Iohn to borwe*: i.e. making a pledge by St John.

594-5. See Whiting S639.

I trowe he hadde thiike text in mynde
 That alle thyng reperyng to his kynde
 Gladeth hymself; thus seyn men as I gesse.
 Men louen of propre kynde newfangelnesse
 As bryddes doon that men in cages feede.
 For treigh thow nyght and day take of hem hede
 And strawe hir cages faire and softe as sylk
 And yeue hem sugre, hony, breed and milk,
 Yet right-anon as that his dore is yppe
 He with his feet wol sporne doun his cuppe
 And to the wode he wole and wormes etc.
 So newfangel been they of hir mete
 And louen nouelries of propre kynde,
 No gentillesse of blood may hem bynde.
 'So ferde this gentil tercelet, allas the day,
 Thogh he were gentil born and fressh and gay
 And goodlich for to seen and humble and free.
 He saw vpon a tyme a kyte flee,
 And sodeynly he loued this kyte so
 That al his loue is clene fro me ago
 And hath his trouthe falsed in this wise.
 Thus hath the kyte my loue in hir seruyse
 And I am lorn withouten remedye.'
 And with that word this faukon gan to crye
 And swowned eft in Canacees barm.
 Greet was the sorwe for the haukes harm
 That Canacee and alle hir women made.
 They nyste how that they myghte the faukon glade.
 But Canacee hom bereth hire in hir lappe
 And softly in plastres gan hir wrappe
 Ther as she with hir beek hadde hurt hirsclue.
 Now kan nat Canacee but herbes delue
 Out of the grownd and maken saues newe
 Of herbes precieuse and fyn of hewe

599. Cf. Boethius 3 met. 2.
 600. *reperyng to his kynde*: returning to its own nature.
 602. 'His very nature predisposes man to love novelty.'
 605. *strawe*: cover with straw.
 607. *yppe*: open.
 608. *sporne doun*: kick over.
 610. *new/angel*: loving novelty.
 611. *nouelries*: novelties.
 615. *goodlich for to seen*: handsome in appearance.
 619. *falsed*: perjured.
 630-1. 'Now Canacee sets to work to dig herbs from the ground and to make unusual medicines.' She had the ability through her ring, cf. 4:145-7.

To heelen with this hauk. Fro day to nyght
 She dooth hir bisynesse and al hir myght.
 And by hir beddes heed she made a muwe
 And couered it with veluettes blue
 In signe of trouthe that is in women sene.
 And al withoute the muwe is peynted grene
 In which were peynted alle these false fowles
 As been these tydues; terceletz and owles
 Right for despit were peynted hem bisyde.
 And pyes on hem for to crye and chyde.
 Thus lete I Canacee hir hauk kepyng;
 I wol namoore as now speke of hir ryng
 Til it come eft to purpos for to seyn
 How that this faukon gat hir loue ageyn
 Repentant, as the storie telleth vs
 By mediacion of Cambalus,
 The kynges sone of which I to yow tolde.
 But hennesfort I wol my proces holde
 To speke of auentures and of batailles
 That neuere yet was herd so greet meruailles.
 First wol I telle yow of Cambyuskan
 That in his tyme many a citee wan
 And after wol I speke of Algarsyf
 How that he wan Theodora to his wyf
 For whom ful ofte in gret peril he was
 Ne hadde he been holpen by the steede of bras.
 And after wol I speke of Cambalo
 That faught in lystes with the bretheren two
 For Canacee, er that he myghte hir wynne.
 And ther I lefte I wol ayein bigynne.

Explicit secunda pars

Incipit tertia pars

Appollo whirleth vp his char so hyc
 Til that the god Mercuries hous the slye.

635. *muwe*: cage.
 636-9. Blue symbolized fidelity and green infidelity.
 640. *tydues*: an unknown type of bird famed for its infidelity.
 642. Magpies were renowned for their quarrelsome nature.
 650. *my proces holde*: continue my narrative.
 663-4. Probably about the middle of May, see North 1969 p. 262. Chaucer did not complete the tale and there was no linking passage with any other tale. The link found in Hg at this point is spurious and is edited in Appendix A.

Appendix A

This appendix contains two links which are found in Hg but which appear to be later, as I have argued in the introduction. In Hg they appear as the Squire-Merchant and the Merchant-Franklin links respectively, but in later manuscripts with the new order they were adapted to act as the Squire-Franklin and the Merchant-Squire links. This was effected by changing the names and by altering an occasional line. The numbers given are those of the traditional Group/Fragment lineation, for no provision for these lines is made in the numbering sequences of the present edition.

(a) The Squire-Merchant Link

(Fragment V Group F)

The prologue of the marchauntes tale.

'In feith, squyer, thow hast thee wel yquyt
And gentilly; I preise wel thy wit,'
Quod the marchant, 'consideryng thy youthe.
So feelyngly thow spekest, sire, I allow the
As to my doom ther is noon that is heere
Of eloquence that shal be thy peere
If that thow lyue. God yeue thee good chaunce
And in vertu sende thee continuance
For of thy speche I haue gret deyntee.
I haue a sone and by the trinitee
I hadde leuere than xxⁱⁱ pound worth lond
Thogh it right now were fallen in myn hond
He were a man of swich discrecioun
As that ye ben. Fy on possessioun
But if a man be vertuous withal.
I haue my sone snybbed and yit shal
For he to vertu lusteth nat entende,
But for to pleye at dees and to despende
And lese al that he hath is his vsage.
And he hath leuere talken with a page
Than to commune with any gentil wight
Wher he myghte lerne gentillesse aright.'
'Straw for youre gentillesse,' quod oure hoost.
'What, marchaunt, pardee sire wel thow woost
That ech of yow moot tellen atte leeste
A tale or two or breken his biheste.'
'That knowe I wel, sire,' quod the marchant, 'certeyn.

f.137^v

675

680

685

690

695

I prey yow haueth me nat in desdeyn
 Thogh to this man I speke a word or two.'
 'Telle on thy tale withouten wordes mo.'
 'Gladly, sire hoost,' quod he, 'I wol obeye
 Vnto youre wyl. Now herkneth what I seye.
 I wole yow nat contrarien in no wise
 As fer as that my wittes wole suffice.
 I prey to god that it may plesen yow,
 Thanne woot I wel that it is good ynow.'

*Explicit***(b) The Merchant-Franklin Link***(Fragment IV Group E – Fragment V Group F)**Here folowen the wordes of the worthy hoost to the frankleyn.*

'Ey, goddes mercy,' seyde our hoost tho,
 'Now swich a wyf I prey god kepe me fro.
 Lo whiche sleightes and subtiltees
 In wommen ben, for ay as bisy as bees
 Ben they vs sely men for to deceyue
 And from a sooth euere wol they weyue.
 By this marchantes tale it preueth weel.
 But doutelees as trewe as any steel
 I haue a wyf thogh that she poore be,
 But of hir tonge a labbyng shrewe is she
 And yit she hath an heep of vices mo;
 Therof no fors, lat alle swiche thynges go.
 But wite ye what? In conseil be it seyde
 Me reweth soore I am vnto hire teyde,
 For and I sholde rekenen euery vice
 Which that she hath, ywis I were to nyce.
 And cause why? It sholde reported be
 And toold to hire of somme of this meynce.
 Of whom it nedeth nat for to declare,
 Syn wommen konnen oute swich chaffare
 And eek my wit suffiseth nat thereto
 To tellen al; wherfore my tale is do.
 'Sire frankleyn, com neer if it your wille be
 And sey vs a tale, for certes ye
 Konnen theron as muche as any man.'
 'Nay, sire,' quod he. 'But I wol seye as I kan
 With hertly wyl, for I wol nat rebelle
 Agayns youre wyl: a tale wol I telle.
 Haue me excused if that I speke amys,
 My wyl is good. And lo my tale is this.'

Explicit

700

705

f.153

E2420

2425

2430

2435

2440

Fr

f.153

6