

The Canterbury Tales: Fifteenth-Century Continuations and Additions

John Lydgate's Prologue to the Siege of Thebes
(BL Arundel 119)

The Ploughman's Tale
(Christ Church Oxford MS 152)

The Cook's Tale
(Bodley MS 686)

Spurious Links
(BL Lansdowne 851 and BL Royal 18.C.ii)

The Canterbury Interlude and Merchant's Tale of Beryn
(Northumberland MS 455)

Edited by
John M. Bowers

Published for TEAMS
(The Consortium for the Teaching of the Middle Ages)
in Association with the University of Rochester

by

Medieval Institute Publications

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Kalamazoo, Michigan — 1992

General Introduction

When Geoffrey Chaucer died in 1400 at his residence in the precincts of the Benedictine monastery at Westminster and his body was buried in that part of the Abbey's south transept later known as "Poet's Corner," the body of his poetry remained to take on a life of its own. Since not a single manuscript of his works can confidently be dated prior to 1400, it seems likely that Chaucer invested little energy in publishing during his lifetime. Courtly masterpieces like *The Book of the Duchess* and *Troilus and Criseyde* seem to have had limited circulation, whereas unfinished pieces like *The House of Fame* and *The Legend of Good Women* were probably never released. In all likelihood *The Canterbury Tales*, his last major poetic project, falls into this category of unfinished, unpublished works.

The task of sorting through the hoard of literary materials — which may have included many stages of rough drafts, working drafts, fair-copies, and fair-copies rendered "foul papers" by Chaucer's further retouching of details — and arranging the ten disconnected fragments of *The Canterbury Tales* in a presentable order fell to a shadowy group of individuals, most likely the poet's son Thomas Chaucer (c. 1370–1434) in concert with the remnants of his literary circle and various professional scribes, maybe even younger poets and admirers such as Thomas Hoccleve and John Lydgate (Strohm). Their efforts in the first two decades of the fifteenth century produced the landmark manuscripts, notably Ellesmere, upon which Chaucer's reputation was established for an ever-widening reading public. The success of their project is reflected in the fact that eighty-two manuscripts survive, whole or partial, from the century following the poet's death.

The enterprise of these medieval "editors" reveals their considerable dissatisfaction with the unfinished state of *The Canterbury Tales*. Scribes took great pains to search for missing materials, leaving room in their manuscripts for continuations to incomplete pieces like The Cook's Tale and The Squire's Tale. In the long run, they exercised their ingenuity in concealing these gaps when no additional poetry was forthcoming. Business is business: if a scribe were producing a copy for some aristocratic patron, he would want to deliver a volume that at least had the appearance of completeness.

Efforts at supplementing Chaucer's work can be divided into four types. (1) The pilgrimage narrative was expanded to allow the pilgrims to reach Canterbury, then begin their return trip toward Southwark, in Lydgate's Prologue to the *Siege of*

General Introduction

Thebes and in the anonymous *Canterbury Interlude* and *Merchant's Tale* of Beryn. (2) The intermediate frame-narrative was patched together with "spurious links" for tales lacking authentic prologues. (3) Tales without endings were provided with make-do conclusions, most fully in the version of *The Cook's Tale* printed here. And (4) a pilgrim who never told a tale, the *Plowman*, was given a chance to make his contribution.

Besides commercial considerations, the production of Chaucerian manuscripts during the early fifteenth century, along with these supplements to *The Canterbury Tales*, may also have been underwritten by various political motives. The Lancastrian dynasty was not securely installed following the deposition of Richard II and his suspicious death in 1400, and Thomas Chaucer was one of the mainstays of this shaky regime as courtier, diplomat, and leader of the parliament (Ruud; McFarlane) — particularly under Henry V, the first English monarch since 1066 to conduct his correspondences in English instead of French. The promotion of Chaucer's poetry coincides with the promotion of the English language as part of a burgeoning nationalism during the headier days of the Hundred Years War, centering on the victory at Agincourt in 1415. A deliberate program to engage the support of parliament and the citizenry was mobilized by Henry V while still Prince of Wales, with the assistance of his uncles Henry and Thomas Beaufort (sons of John of Gaunt by Katherine Swynford) and his cousin Thomas Chaucer (son of Katherine's sister Philippa).

The Lancastrians also had a domestic agenda. The first two decades of the fifteenth century witnessed ever-increasing anxiety over the growth and strength of the Lollards, the reforming followers of John Wyclif (d. 1384). The enactment of *De Heretico Comburendo* in 1401 introduced the death penalty for adherents to this heresy, and the precise terms of violation were spelled out by Archbishop Arundel's *Constitutions* in 1407 and 1409. Though the targeting of a religious minority was as useful for justifying repressive tactics during the early fifteenth century as it would become in Hitler's Germany during the 1930s, the threat was not entirely invented by royal propagandists. In 1414 Sir John Oldcastle (the model for Shakespeare's Falstaff) actually staged an abortive London coup, the failure of which deprived Lollardy of all social and academic respectability, driving its believers into a virtual underground society (Hudson 120–73). Since the use of homely English instead of elitist Latin had become an essential feature of the entire Wycliffite project — with an English translation of the Bible, English sermon cycles, and appropriation of English religious works such as Langland's *Piers Plowman* — the Lancastrian establishment was placed in the position of responding by sponsoring the production of its own courtly texts, in English, committed to social stability and religious orthodoxy. To these ends, the poems of Geoffrey Chaucer were ideally suited — especially

General Introduction

since his personal affiliation with John of Gaunt, the patriarch of the Lancastrians, can be traced back to *The Book of the Duchess* commemorating the death of Blanche of Lancaster, Henry IV's mother. And since the Lollards fiercely criticized the custom of pilgrimage, particularly the cult of St. Thomas à Becket, *The Canterbury Tales* provided a ready-made retort.

Thus the unfinished state of *The Canterbury Tales* was more than an aesthetic embarrassment and commercial drawback. It was also a grave liability in respect to the various roles the book was called upon to play in this arena of cultural contests. Efforts by medieval scribe-editors to close gaps and conceal signs of incompleteness by including apocryphal tales, spurious links, and large-scale continuations can be read as a commentary on larger dynastic imperatives in which Thomas Chaucer and his Lancastrian kinsmen were thoroughly implicated. Social anxiety is reflected, for example, in the reworking of the Host as the undisputed master of ceremonies throughout these later continuations. In keeping with a more authoritarian age, Harry Bailly holds center stage as the object of universal reverence and obedience, the policeman who regulates the smooth flow of traffic from one tale to the next, the voice of order and harmony to which all members of the pilgrim-community give their immediate assent.

These supplemental writings are also marked, rather surprisingly, by their ties to Benedictine monasticism. John Lydgate was a monk-priest belonging to the great Benedictine foundation of Bury St. Edmunds. The Christ Church MS 152 Ploughman's Tale celebrates the piety of a young monk rewarded by the Virgin Mary with elevation to the rank of abbot. And The Canterbury Interlude and Merchant's Tale of Beryn were quite possibly written by a Christ Church monk attached to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket in Canterbury Cathedral. Since the fortunes of the monasteries were inextricably linked to the fortunes of the kingdom — and the King — it would not be surprising to find Benedictine writers lending their support to the stability of the Lancastrian regime, especially against Lollards who had targeted the "private religion" of the monasteries for especially savage criticism, to the point of advocating disendowment (Hudson 347–51; Brown 158–60). We are perhaps witnessing in these texts the solidarity between the ancient institutions of monarchy and monasticism to safeguard the status quo.

In this complex network of cultural negotiations, Thomas Chaucer emerges as the agent primarily responsible for producing copies of his father's works for aristocratic families forming the cobbled support for the Lancastrian dynasty, as well as affording patronage to the next generation of writers, particularly Lydgate, for developing a well-defined Chaucerian poetic committed to social stability and religious orthodoxy. By helping to establish an official succession of named poets — Geoffrey Chaucer, John Gower, John Lydgate — as a counterpart to the orderly

General Introduction

succession of monarchs to which his political career was so energetically directed — Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI — Thomas was a true entrepreneur in the business of what today we call "canon-formation," a project as politically freighted then as now (Harris 1991). The primacy of Geoffrey Chaucer in this line-up was proclaimed by Hoccleve and Lydgate, then echoed by those like William Caxton and John Skelton who came later. Thus was Geoffrey installed as the patriarch of English letters by Thomas, a father very much created by his own son, to fill for the first time in English history the role, later imposed upon Shakespeare, of the officially named National Poet.

Editorial Approaches

There are as many editorial methods operative in this volume as there are texts, because the circumstances of manuscript survival differ considerably from one work to another. My general goal has been to represent each text in a state closer to its author's original than the state of the literary work preserved in any scribally transmitted copy. I have therefore not settled for a diplomatic transcription retaining all the substantive and accidental features of a single document. Nor have I sought to retrieve the archetype of surviving texts by means of recension, much less to restore by means of conjectural emendation what the author might have originally intended in every detail.

This reluctance to go beyond documentary testimony to reconstitute the author's lost original is grounded in a skepticism about the ideal nature of the text even in the finished form in which the author might have presented it to his habitual audience. My work with Thomas Hoccleve's autograph manuscripts (Bowers 1989) has demonstrated that the author himself in his own fair copies could leave lines unfinished, produce faulty meter, vary his spelling practices, mis-rhyme, and even mis-write. In short, even an accomplished poet and professional copyist like Hoccleve could commit all the faults usually assessed as "scribalisms," thereby authorizing a text far less ideal than the one which an editor might seek to restore. I have therefore been conservative in my efforts, undertaking only the degree of alteration in my copy-texts that can be supported by documentary evidence subjected to the most reliable textual analysis to correct obvious substantive errors (whatever their source along the lines of transmission) and to repair accidentals of spelling and grammar that are demonstrably the copyist's. Thus I have followed Vinaver's principles (19-39), refined by Kane in his edition of Langland's *Piers Plowman* (1960, 115-72), for detecting scribal errors, and I have regarded them as "textual blemishes," a term used by Zeller (1975) for describing those obvious linguistic faults requiring common-sense corrections.

Select Bibliography

In keeping with the guidelines of this series, I have expanded abbreviations and adopted modern paragraphing, punctuation, capitalization, and word-division. Modern conventions have also been applied to the uses of ij and u/v; thorns have been transcribed as th, and yoghs as y, g, or gh. Where a noun's -e ending represents -ee, it is indicated with the acute accent -é. All substantive alterations in my copy-texts have been recorded in the Notes. All citations from *The Canterbury Tales* (CT) and other Chaucer works come from the third edition of *The Riverside Chaucer* (1987).

My overall goal has been the delicate balance of three concerns — to do justice to what these Chaucerian imitators originally wrote, to respect the limits of documentary evidence, and to serve the practical needs of student readers.

Select Bibliography

Editions

John Lydgate's Prologue to the Siege of Thebes

Lydgate's Siege of Thebes. Ed. Axel Erdmann and Eiler Ekwall. 2 vols. EETS o.s. 108 and 125. 1911 and 1930.

The Ploughman's Tale

A New Ploughman's Tale: Thomas Hoccleve's Legend of the Virgin and her Sleeveless Garment, with a Spurious Link. Ed. Arthur Beatty. London: The Chaucer Society, second series no. 34. 1902.

The Middle English Miracles of the Virgin. Ed. Beverly Boyd. San Marino, California: Huntington Library. 1964. Thomas Hoccleve, "The Monk and Our Lady's Sleeve," pp. 50-55, notes pp. 119-22.

Hoccleve's Works: The Minor Poems. Ed. Frederick J. Furnivall and L. Gollancz. EETS o.s. 61 and 73. 1892 and 1925. Rev. ed. Jerome Mitchell and A. I. Doyle. 1970. "Item de Beata Virgine," pp. 289-93.

Spurious Links

The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer. Ed. John Matthews Manly. New York: Holt, 1928, pp. 82-86.

Lois Elizabeth Norem. *The Spurious Links of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales": Texts and Contexts*. Ph.D. Diss. University of Minnesota, 1991.

General Introduction

The Canterbury Interlude and Merchant's Tale of Beryn

The Tale of Beryn with a Prologue of the Merry Adventure of the Pardoner with a Tapster at Canterbury. Ed. F. J. Furnivall and W. G. Stone. Notes F. J. Vipan. EETS o.s. 105, 1909.

Mary E. Mulqueen Tamanini. *The Tale of Beryn: An Edition with Introduction, Notes, and Glossary.* Ph.D. Diss. New York University, 1969.

Bibliography

Peck, Russell A. *Chaucer's Romaunt of the Rose and Boece, Treatise on the Astrolabe, Equatorie of the Planetis, Lost Works and Chaucerian Apocrypha: An Annotated Bibliography 1900-1985.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.

Robbins, Rossell Hope. "XI. The Chaucerian Apocrypha." In *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, vol. 4. New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1973. Pp. 1061-1101; 1285-1306.

Criticism — Textual, Historical, Literary

Allen, Rosamund S. "The Siege of Thebes: Lydgate's Canterbury Tale." *Chaucer and Fifteenth-Century Poetry*. Ed. Julia Boffey and Janet Cowen. London: King's College London Medieval Studies, no. 5, 1991. Pp. 122-42.

Bashe, E. J. "The Prologue of *The Tale of Beryn*." *Philological Quarterly* 12 (1933), 1-16.

Black, Henry Campbell. *Black's Law Dictionary*. 4th ed. St. Paul: West Publishing, 1951.

Bossuat, Robert. *Bérinu: Roman en prose du XIV^e siècle*. 2 vols. Paris: Société des anciens textes français, 1931-33.

Bowers, John M. "The Tale of Beryn and The Siege of Thebes: Alternative Ideas of The Canterbury Tales." *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 7 (1985), 23-50.

———. "Hoccleve's Two Copies of *Leme to Dye*: Implications for Textual Critics." *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 83 (1989), 437-72.

———. "'Dronkesesse Is Ful of Stryvng': Alcoholism and Ritual Violence in Chaucer's *Pardoners Tale*." *ELH* 57 (1990), 757-84.

———. "The House of Chaucer & Son: The Business of Lancastrian Canon-Formation." *Medieval Perspectives* 6 (1991), 135-43.

Select Bibliography

- . "Controversy and Criticism: Lydgate's *Thebes* and the Prologue to *Beryn*." *Chaucer Yearbook* 5 (1998), 91–115.
- Brown, Peter. "Journey's End: The Prologue to *The Tale of Beryn*." *Chaucer and Fifteenth-Century Poetry*. Ed. Julia Boffey and Janet Cowen. London: King's College London Medieval Studies, no. 5, 1991. Pp. 143–74.
- Burrow, J. A. *The Ages of Man*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1988.
- [Chaucer, Geoffrey.] *The Riverside Chaucer*. Gen. ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987.
- Coghill, Nevill. "Two Notes on *Piers Plowman*: I. The Abbot of Abingdon and the Date of the C Text; II. Chaucer's Debt to Langland." *Medium Aevum* 4 (1935), 83–94.
- Cooper, Helen. *Oxford Guides to Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1989.
- Curry, Walter Clyde. *Chaucer and the Medieval Sciences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926.
- Daniel, Neil. *The Tale of Gamelyn: A New Edition*. Ph.D. Diss. Indiana University, 1967.
- Darjes, Bradley, and Thomas Rendall. "A Fabliau in the Prologue to the *Tale of Beryn*." *Mediaeval Studies* 47 (1985), 416–31.
- Dempster, Germaine. "A Chapter of the Manuscript History of the *Canterbury Tales*: The Ancestor of Group d; the Origin of Its Texts, Tale-order, and Spurious Links." *PMLA* 63 (1948), 456–84.
- Dobson, R. B. *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381*. 2nd. ed. London: Macmillan, 1983.
- Ganim, John M. "Mannerism and Moralism in Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes*." *Style and Consciousness in Middle English Narrative*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983. Pp. 103–22.
- Green, Richard Firth. "Legal Satire in *The Tale of Beryn*." *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 11 (1989), 43–62.
- Greetham, D. C. "Normalisation of Accidentals in Middle English Texts: The Paradox of Thomas Hoccleve." *Studies in Bibliography* 38 (1985), 121–50.
- Greg, W. W. "The Rationale of Copy-Text." *Studies in Bibliography* 3 (1950), 19–36.

General Introduction

- Hanna, Ralph, III. "Problems of 'Best Text' Editing and the Hengwrt Manuscript of *The Canterbury Tales*." *Manuscripts and Text: Editorial Problems in Later Middle English Literature*. Ed. Derek Pearsall. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987. Pp. 87-94.
- Harris, Wendell V. "Canonicity." *PMLA* 106 (1991), 110-21.
- Heffernan, Thomas J. "Aspects of the Chaucerian Apocrypha: Animadversions on William Thynne's Edition of the *Plowman's Tale*." *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer*. Ed. Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Pp. 155-67.
- Henry, Robert L. *Contracts in the Local Courts of Medieval England*. London: Longmans Green, 1926.
- Hornsby, Joseph Allen. *Chaucer and the Law*. Norman: Pilgrim, 1988.
- Hudson, Anne. *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1988.
- Jonassen, Frederick B. "Cathedral, Inn, and Pardoner in the Prologue to the *Tale of Beryn*." *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 18 (1991), 109-32.
- Jost, Jean E. "From Southwark's Tabard Inn to Canterbury's Cheker-of-the-Hope: The UnChaucerian *Tale of Beryn*." *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 21 (1994), 133-48.
- Kane, George. "The Text of *The Legend of Good Women* in CUL MS Gg4.27," 1983; rpt. *Chaucer and Langland: Historical and Textual Approaches*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989. Pp. 162-77.
- Kieckhefer, Richard. *Magic in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Kohl, Stephan. "Chaucer's Pilgrims in Fifteenth-Century Literature." *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 7 (1983), 221-36.
- Kolve, V. A. *Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative: The First Five Canterbury Tales*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984.
- [Langland, William.] *Piers Plowman: The A Version*. Ed. George Kane. London: Athlone, 1960.
- [———] *Piers Plowman: The B Version*. Ed. George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson. London: Athlone, 1975.

Select Bibliography

- McAlpine, Monica E. "The Pardoner's Homosexuality and How It Matters." *PMLA* 95 (1980), 8-22.
- McFarlane, K. B. "Henry V, Bishop Beaufort and the Red Hat, 1417-1421." 1945; rpt. *England in the Fifteenth Century*. London: Hambledon, 1981. Pp. 79-113.
- Manly, John M., and Edith Rickert. *The Text of the Canterbury Tales Studied on the Basis of All Known Manuscripts*. 8 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940. Volume I: Descriptions of the Manuscripts.
- Medcalf, Stephen. "Motives for Pilgrimage: *The Tale of Beryn*." *England in the Fourteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1991 Harlaxton Symposium*. Stamford, CT: Paul Watkins, 1993. Pp. 97-108.
- Mum and the Sothsegger*. Ed. Mabel Day and Robert Steele. *EETS o.s.* 199, 1936.
- Olson, Glendening. "The Misreadings of the *Beryn* Prologue." *Mediaevalia* 17 (1994 for 1991), 201-19.
- Onions, C. T. "An Experiment in Textual Reconstruction." *Essays and Studies* 22 (1936), 86-102.
- Pantin, William Abel. *Documents Illustrating the Activities of the General and Provincial Chapters of the English Black Monks, 1215-1540*. Vol. 2. London: Camden 3rd series, no. 47, 1933.
- Patience*. Ed. J. J. Anderson. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969.
- Patterson, Lee. "Making Identities in Fifteenth-Century England: Henry V and John Lydgate." *New Historical Literary Study*. Ed. Jeffrey N. Cox and Larry J. Reynolds. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. Pp. 69-107.
- Pearsall, Derek. *John Lydgate*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1970.
- . *Old English and Middle English Poetry*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977.
- . *John Lydgate (1371-1449): A Bio-bibliography*. English Literary Studies, no. 71. Victoria: University of Victoria Press, 1997.
- Pollock, Frederick, and Frederic William Maitland. *The History of English Law*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899.

General Introduction

- Ruud, Martin B. *Thomas Chaucer*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Studies in Language and Literature, no. 9, 1926.
- Schirmer, Walter F. *John Lydgate: A Study in the Culture of the XVth Century*. Trans. Ann E. Keay. London: Methuen, 1961.
- Seymour, M. C. *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts: Volume II: The Canterbury Tales*. Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1997.
- Simpson, A. W. B. *A History of the Common Law of Contract*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1975.
- Simpson, James. "'Dysemol Dales and Fatal Houres': Lydgate's *Destruction of Thebes* and Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*." In *The Long Fifteenth Century: Essays for Douglas Gray*. Ed. Helen Cooper and Sally Mapstone. Oxford: Clarendon, 1997. Pp. 15-34.
- Spearing, A. C. *Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Strohm, Paul. "Chaucer's Fifteenth-Century Audience and the Narrowing of the 'Chaucer Tradition'." *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 4 (1982), 3-32.
- Tanselle, G. Thomas. "Classical, Biblical, and Medieval Textual Criticism and Modern Editing." *Studies in Bibliography* 36 (1983), 21-68.
- [Trevisa, John.] *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's Translation of "Bartholomeus Anglicus De Proprietatibus Rerum."* Gen. ed. M. C. Seymour. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1975.
- Vinaver, Eugene. "Principles of Textual Emendation." *Studies in French Language and Medieval Literature Presented to Professor Mildred K. Pope*. Manchester, 1939. Pp. 351-69.
- Wawn, Andrew N. "Chaucer, *The Flouman's Tale* and Reformation Propaganda: The Testimonies of Thomas Godfray and *I Playne Piers*." *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 56 (1973), 174-92.
- Winstead, Karen A. "The Berry-Writer as a Reader of Chaucer." *Chaucer Review* 22 (1988), 225-33.
- Zeller, Hans. "A New Approach to the Critical Constitution of Literary Texts." *Studies in Bibliography* 28 (1975), 231-64.

John Lydgate's Prologue to the Siege of Thebes

Introduction

John Lydgate was born c. 1370 when Chaucer was completing *The Book of the Duchess*; he was admitted to the monastery at Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, in 1385 when Chaucer was finishing *Troilus and Criseyde*; and he was ordained a priest in 1397 when Chaucer was in the final phase of *The Canterbury Tales*. Probably while studying at Oxford in the late 1390s, he made contact with Thomas Chaucer, who resided at Ewelme in the neighboring Oxfordshire countryside (Schirmer 59–65). The conjunction of these two rising stars, the one with political ambitions and the other with poetic aspirations, led to a great outpouring of Chaucerian versifications spanning the entire first half of the fifteenth century, until Lydgate's death c. 1450 (Pearsall 1970, 49–82).

The *Siege of Thebes* falls about midway in Lydgate's career. An allusion near the end of the poem to the Treaty of Troyes means it was concluded after May 1420; its general address to Henry V indicates it was completed before the monarch's premature death in August 1422. The Prologue's portrayal of Lydgate as a monk adhering to the strict regulations of his order seems to be a direct, almost point-by-point reply to the king's formal list of complaints against laxness among the Benedictines, leading to a special convocation of Black Monks at Westminster in May 1421 (Pantin 98–134). It is possible that Lydgate wrote the *Siege* first, then backed up to compose the Prologue.

The work's chief interest has been its relationship to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, whose decasyllabic or "heroic" couplets were adapted by Lydgate with mixed success. Based on some version of the French *Roman de Thèbes* (c. 1175) and entitled in several manuscripts "The Destruction of Thebes," the main body of the work is a sprawling 4540-line exemplum chronicling the disastrous careers of a series of deeply flawed kings: Edippus, his sons Ethyocles and Polymyte, and finally Creon (Spearing 66–88; Allen). The end of the three-part Theban tragedy is extended to those episodes treated by Chaucer at the beginning of The Knight's Tale. Indeed, Lydgate drew material directly from his master in ten specific passages, intent on making the two histories dovetail with one another, using narrative congruence and

John Lydgate's Prologue to the Siege of Thebes

verbal echoes to knit up the end of his tale with the beginning of Chaucer's (Bowers 1985, 45–49).

The Prologue, printed here, offers even greater interest because it attempts to revive and extend the frame-narrative of *The Canterbury Tales* left vexingly incomplete by Chaucer. Here we are offered a springtime setting reckoned by the Zodiac, the arrival of the pilgrims at their sacred destination, the robust figure of the Host, the beginning of the journey back to Southwark, and a continuation of the tale-telling. With Chaucer dead for two decades, Lydgate replaces him by projecting himself into the story as the new pilgrim-narrator. Though he says he had come to Canterbury on the devout mission of giving thanks to St. Thomas for helping him recover from a recent illness, he is drawn into the company by the Host — here descending into vulgar caricature in his references to haggis-eating and farting — and persuaded to offer the first tale for the homeward journey. For better or worse, Lydgate chose not to include a close-frame episode bringing the pilgrims back to the Tabard Inn.

The work was popular enough to survive in twenty-nine manuscripts, mostly quality texts produced for aristocratic patrons. The organizers of at least five manuscripts interpreted Lydgate's intentions very literally, including the *Siege* in the same volume with Chaucer's original collection of *Tales*. In 1561 the editor John Stow printed the work in his edition of Chaucer, as did Thomas Speght in 1598 — and for the most part it lingered as a ghost-presence in the Chaucer canon until the nineteenth century.

The Text

The edition of *Siege of Thebes* prepared for the Early English Text Society (EETS) by Erdmann affords a critical apparatus with full corpus of variants indicating a textual stability that accords with what we know about Lydgate as a poet who wrote on commission and supervised presentation copies for his patrons. It is therefore not surprising that British Library [BL] Arundel 119, the manuscript selected by Erdmann as his copy-text, bears the coat-of-arms of William de la Pole (d. 1450), Duke of Suffolk and husband of Alice Chaucer, Thomas's daughter and Geoffrey's only known grandchild. Since this ownership bestows a social authority that complements the textual authority established by the editors, I too have used Arundel 119 (fol. 1a–4a) as copy-text for the opening section of the poem printed here, granting it the status of "best text" for its substantive readings as well as its accidentals of spelling and grammar (see Hanna).

John Lydgate's Prologue to the Siege of Thebes

(BL Arundel 119, fol. 1a-4a)

	Whan brighte Phebus passed was the Ram Myd of Aprille and into Bole cam, And Satourn old with his frosty face In Virgyne taken had his place,	<i>i.e., sun; Aries</i> <i>In middle; Taurus</i>
5	Malencolik and slowgh of mocoun, And was also in thoposicion Of Lucina, the mone moyst and pale, That many shour fro hevene made avale;	<i>Virgo</i> <i>slow; motion</i> <i>the opposition</i> <i>Diana; moon</i>
10	Whan Aurora was in the morowe red, And Jupiter in the Crabbes hed Hath take his paleys and his mansioun, The lusty tyme and joly fressh sesoun	<i>many a shower; fall</i> <i>Down; morning</i> <i>Jupiter; Cancer's</i> <i>palace</i>
15	Whan that Flora, the noble myghty quene, The soyl hath clad in newe tendre grene With her floures craftly y-meynt, Braunch and bough with red and whit depeynt,	<i>artfully combined</i> <i>decorated</i>
20	Fletinge the bawme on hilles and on valys — The tyme in sooth whan Canterbury talys Complet and told at many sondry stage Of estatis in the pilgrimage.	<i>Suffusing; balm-scent</i> <i>indeed; tales</i> <i>Are performed</i> <i>ranks</i>
25	Everich man lik to his degré, Some of despōt, some of moralité, Some of knyghthode, love and gentillesse, And some also of perfit holynesse,	<i>Every; social estate</i> <i>amusement</i> <i>nobility</i> <i>perfect</i>
30	And some also in sooth of ribaudye To make laughter in the compayne — Ech admitted, for non wold other greve — Lich as the Cook, the Millere and the Reve	<i>coarseness</i> <i>included; insult</i> <i>Such</i> <i>Conducted themselves</i>
	Aquytte hemself, shortly to conclude, Boystously in her teermes rude, Whan thei hadde wel dronken of the bole;	<i>their expressions</i> <i>bowl</i>
	And ek also with his pylled nolle,	<i>balding scalp</i>

John Lydgate's Prologue to the Siege of Thebes

	The Pardowner, beardlees al his chyn, Glasy-eyed, and face of Cherubyn,	<i>beardless</i>
35	Tellyng a tale to angre with the Frere, As opynly the storie can yow lere, Word for word with every circumstaunce, Echon y-write and put in remembraunce By hym that was, yif I shal not feyne,	<i>against</i> <i>teach</i> <i>if; falsify</i>
40	Floore of poetes thorghost al Breteyne, Which soothly hadde most of excellencye In rethorike and in eloquence — Rede his making, who list the trouthe fyade! —	<i>poetry; whoever desires</i> <i>fade</i>
45	Which never shal appallen in my mynde, But alwey fressh ben in my memoyre, To who be gove pris, honure, and gloyre Of wel seyng, first in oure language, Chief register of this pilgrimage,	<i>memory</i> <i>given praise</i>
50	Al that was tolde, forgetting nocht at al Feyned talis nor thing historial, With many proverbe divers and unkouth, Be rehersaille of his sugrid mouth, Of eche thyng keping in substance	<i>recorder</i> <i>Fictional</i> <i>little-known</i> <i>By narration</i>
55	The sentence hool withoutte variance, Voyding the chaf, soothly for to seyn, Enlumysyng the trewe piked greyn Be crafty writings of his sawes swete, Fro the tyme that thei ded mete	<i>meaning whole</i> <i>Eliminating; say</i> <i>selected kernels</i> <i>By artful; expressions</i> <i>did</i>
60	First the pylgrimes, soothly everichon, At the Tabbard assembled, on be on, And fro Suthwerk, shortly forto saye, To Canterbury ridyng on her weie, Tellynge a tale, as I reherce can,	<i>one by one</i>
65	Lich as the Hoste assigned every man, None so hardy his biddynge disobeye. And this whil that the pylgrymes leye At Canterbury, wel louged on and all, I not in sooth what I may it call —	<i>their way</i> <i>repeat</i> <i>Such</i> <i>courageous</i> <i>resided</i>
70	Hap or Fortune — in conclusioun That me byfill to entren into toun, The holy seynt pleynly to visite	<i>lodged one</i> <i>don't know</i> <i>happened</i> <i>(St. Thomas à Becket) sincerely</i>

John Lydgate's Prologue to the Siege of Thebes

	Aftere siknesse, my vowedes to aquyse,	vows to fulfil
	In a cope of blak and not of grene,	cloak
	On a palfrey slender, long and lene,	riding-horse
75	With rusty brydel mad nat for the sale,	not worth selling
	My man toforn with a voide male	servant in front; empty purse
	Which of Fortune took myn inne anon	Who by chance arranged my lodging
	Where the pylgrymes were logged everichon.	every one
	The same tyme her governour, the Host,	their; (Harry Baillif)
80	Stoonding in hall, ful of wynde and bost,	boastful speech
	Lich to a man wonder sterne and fers,	Like; fierce
	Which spake to me and seide anon, "Daun Pers,	Who; Don
	Daun Domynyk, Daun Godfrey or Clement,	
	Ye be welcom newly into Kent,	
85	Thogh youre bridel have neither boos ne belle.	ornament
	Besechinge you that ye wil me telle	
	First youre name, and of what costre —	
	Without mor, shortly that ye be —	concisely
	That loke so pale, al devoyde of blood,	
90	Upon youre hede a wonder thred-bare hood,	amazingly
	Wel araid for to ride late."	outfitted
	I answerde my name was Lydgate,	
	Monk of Bery, nygh fyfty yere of age —	(Bury St. Edmunds); nearly
	"Come to this toane to do my pylgrimage,	
95	As I have hight, I ha therof no shame!"	vowed; have
	"Daun John," quod he, "wel broke ye youre name!	broached
	Thogh ye be soul, beth right glad and light,	alone; happy
	Preiying you soupe with us toayght,	dine
	And ye shal han made at youre devis	have; desire
100	A gret puddyn or a rounde hagys,	haggis
	A Franch-mole, a tansey, or a froyse.	French-cake; omelette; pancake
	To ben a monk, sclender is youre koyse!	slender; body
	Ye han be seke, I dar myn hode assure,	sick; guarantee
	Or late fed in a feyat pasture.	sparse
105	Lift up youre hed, be glad, tak no sorowe!	
	And ye shal hom ride with us tomorowe,	
	I seye, whan ye rested han your fille.	
	Aftere soper, slepe wol do non ille.	
	Wrappe wel youre hede clothes rounde about.	
110	Strong notty ale wol mak you route.	natty; more

John Lydgate's Prologue to the Siege of Thebes

- Tak a pylow that ye lye not lowe;
Yif nede be, spar not to blowe! If; farr
by
- To holde wynde, be myn opynyon,
Wil engendre collis passioun colic's
- 115 And make men to greven on her roppys in their guts
Whan thei han filled her mawes and her croppys.
But toward nyght, ete some fenel rede,
Annys, comyn, or coriandre sede, red fennel
anise; cumin
And lik as I power have and myght,
120 I charge yow rise not at mydnyght, power
Thogh it so be the moone shyne cler.
I wol myself be youre orloger clock
Tomorow erly, whan I se my tyme,
For we wol forth parcel afore pryme; as a group; 6 a.m.
- 125 A company, parde, shal do you good!
What? Look up, monk! For by kokkis blood,
Thow shalt be mery, whoso that sey nay.
For to morowe, anoon as it is day, certainly
i.e., God's blood
130 And that it gynne in the est to dawe,
Thow shalt be bound to a newe lawe at noon at
east; dawn
All goyng oute of Canterbury tounce,
And leyn aside thy professioun. lay
- 135 Thow shalt not chese nor thisilf withdrawe,
Yif eny myrth be founden in thy mawe, have no choice
If; stomach
Lyk the custom of this compenyc.
For non so proude that dar me denye, canon; priest
- 140 Knight nor knave, chanon, prest ne nonne,
To telle a tale pleynly as thei komme, fully; know how
Whan I assigne and se tyme opportune.
And for that we our purpoos wil contuse, continue
- 145 We wil homward the same custome use,
And thow shalt not platly the excuse. flatly yourself
Be now wel war; stody wel tonyght! alert; study
But for al this, be of herte light;
Thy wit shal be the sharper and the bet! better
- And we anon were to soper set
And served wel unto oure plesaunce; soon; by
And sone after, be good governaunce,
Unto bed goth every maner wight. person

John Lydgate's Prologue to the Siege of Thebes

150	And towarde morowe anon as it was light, Every pilgryme both bet and wors, As bad our Hoste, toke anon his hors Whan the sonne roos in the est ful clyere, Fully in purpos to come to dynere Unto Osspryng and breke there oure faste.	<i>morning</i>
155	And whan we weren from Canterbury paste Noght the space of a bowe draught, Our Hoost in hast hath my bridel raught And to me seide, as it were in game:	<i>passed</i> <i>draw (arrow's flight)</i> <i>seized</i>
160	"Come forth, Daun John, be your Cristene name, And lat us make some manere myrrh or play! Shet youre portoos, a twenty devel way! Is no disport so to patere and seie. It wol make youre lippes wonder dreyc.	<i>by</i> <i>Shut; breviary</i> <i>[It] is; say paternosters</i> <i>dry</i>
165	Tel some tale, and make therof jape, For be my rounchy, thow shalt not eskafe, But prech not of non holynesse; Ginne some tale of myrrh or of gladnesse, And nodde not with thyn hevy bekke.	<i>jest</i> <i>by; horse</i>
170	Telle us somethyng that draweth to effekke Only of joye. Make no lenger leste!" And whan I saugh it wolde be no bette, I obeye unto his biddynge, So as the lawe me bonde in al thinge,	<i>begin</i> <i>beak (nose)</i> <i>effect</i> <i>delay</i> <i>better</i>
175	And as I coude with a pale cheere, My tale I gan anow, as ye shal here.	<i>expression</i> <i>hear</i>

EXPLICIT PROLOGUS
INCIPIT PARS PRIMA

180	"Sirs," quod I, "sith of your curteseyse I entred am into your compayne And admitted, a tale for to telle, By hym that hath pouer to compelle — I mene our Host, governour and guyde — Of yow echon ridyng her beside, Thogh that my wit barayn be and dull, I wol reherce a story wonderful	<i>since</i> <i>each; here</i> <i>sterile</i> <i>relate</i>
-----	---	--

John Lydgate's Prologue to the Siege of Thebes

- 185 Towchinge the siege and destruccioun
Of worthy Thebees, the myghty royal towne,
Byt and begonne of olde antiquité
Upon the tyme of worthy Jossué
Be dyligence of Kyng Amphioun,
190 Chief cause first of his fundacioun,
For which his fame which nevere shal away,
In honure floureth yit unto this day,
And in story remembred is and preised . . .
- Pertaining to*
founded
Joshua (see note)
By
its

Notes

- 1-17 The opening is an elaborate imitation of Chaucer's *CT* I, 1-11 with its description of springtime based on astrology and planetary positions in the Zodiac; yet the first sixty-five lines can scarcely be punctuated, since this wayward sentence never quite manages to yield a main clause. The Middle English encyclopedia *On the Properties of Things* provides traditional lore concerning the Sun (pp. 484-89), Saturn (pp. 479-80), the Moon (pp. 489-97), and Jupiter (p. 480) as well as the workings of the *zodiacus* (pp. 460-73). An exact date of April 27, 1421, has been calculated by Johnstone Parr, "Astronomical Dating for Some of Lydgate's Poems," *PMLA* 67 (1952), 253-56. "Olde colde Saturnus" is mentioned in Chaucer's *Boece* (IV, m 1), though more fully described in The Knight's Tale (*CT* I, 2443-69) as a destructive force, here befitting Lydgate's Theban tragedy that will follow.
- 18-37 Lydgate recalls the mixed company of Chaucer's original pilgrims and the variety of their tales, some courtly, some religious, and some bawdy, told at various stages in their journey from Southwark to Canterbury.
- 28 The Miller, the Reeve, and the Cook offered a trio of low-brow fabliaux following the Knight's account of Thebes's defeat at the hands of Duke Theseus, an account which Lydgate will supplement in his own tale for the homeward journey.
- 32-36 Lydgate conflates the Pardoner with his traveling companion, the Summoner. The Pardoner was beardless and glassy-eyed from drinking (*CT* I, 684-90) — see Bowers (1990) — but it was the Summoner who had a "piled berd" and "a fyr-reed cherubynnes face" (*CT* I, 624-27) symptomatic of venereal leprosy. It was also the Summoner who told a tale to anger the Friar (*CT* III, 1665-2294).
- 40-57 Chaucer, who died in 1400, is absent from the pilgrim company in this continuation. Granting him instead a memorial presence, Lydgate praises Chaucer as the first great national poet of Britain, one chiefly admired in the early fifteenth century for his elegant style and sententious materials. See Lois Ebin,

John Lydgate's Prologue to the Siege of Thebes

"Lydgate's Views on Poetry," *Annales Mediaevalis* 18 (1977), 76–105. That Chaucer could avoid "the chaf" and offer "the trewe piked greyn" recalls the Nun's Priest's advice at the end of his tale: "Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille" (*CT* VII, 3443).

- 58–65 The pilgrims originally convened at the Tabard Inn in Southwark (*CT* I, 19–27) where the Host, Harry Bailly, initiated a tale-telling competition to enliven the journey to Canterbury, offering himself as the guide and judge (*CT* I, 788–809).
- 67 Chaucer's pilgrims never actually arrived in Canterbury; the last recognizable place-name was "Bobbe-up-and-down" or Harbledown, two miles outside of town (*CT* IX, 2).
- 71–72 Lydgate indicates he undertook this pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket in fulfillment of a vow to do so if he recovered from an illness, perhaps by medicating himself with Canterbury Water, also known as "Becket Water," a bizarre medicinal concoction of well-water and minute traces of St. Thomas's blood and brains sponged from the cathedral floor after his murder. See *CT* I, 17–18: "The hooly blisful martir for to seke / That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke."
- 73–76 In contrast to Chaucer's Monk, who had rich clothes and a fine horse sporting a bridle outfitted with jingling bells (*CT* VII, 2794–95), Lydgate's exaggeration of his scant means (also lines 85–91 and 102–04) may form a plea for more generous patronage, but is more likely a response to contemporary criticism of monastic luxury, particularly Henry V's efforts at reforming the Benedictines in 1421; see Pantin (1933), pp. 111–15, and E. F. Jacob, *The Fifteenth Century, 1399–1485* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), pp. 196–97. Lydgate is habited in the black of the Benedictine order.
- 79 This characterization of the Host as "her governour" is picked up from the General Prologue where Harry Bailly offered "that he wolde been oure governour" (*CT* I, 813).
- 82–84 The Host had originally addressed Chaucer's Monk: "Wher shal I calle yow my lord daun John / Or daun Thomas, or elles daun Albon?" (*CT* VII, 1929–30). "Daun" or Don was a title appropriate to a monk who had earned the university degree of Master of Arts (*Dominus*). It is generally believed Lydgate stud-

Notes

ied at Oxford during the 1390s and again about 1406, most likely at Gloucester College, the Benedictine institution with close ties to his home monastery. Since Bury St. Edmunds was located in Suffolk, the Host makes the point of welcoming the monk into Kent.

- 90-91 Wearing a thread-bare hood as does the Clerk of Oxford (*CT* I, 290), Lydgate can travel after dark without fear of being robbed by highwaymen, as Chaucer himself was robbed along the Canterbury road in 1390. Harry Bailly had warned stragglers to beware of thieves (*CT* IX, 6-8).
- 92-95 Lydgate gives his actual name and identifies himself as a monk of Bury. If he is also truthful about being nearly fifty, and if the poem was composed between 1420 and 1422, then we have better internal evidence for dating his birth than we have for Chaucer himself. Lydgate is quick to add he is not ashamed to be on pilgrimage, a ritual criticized only by heretic Lollards; see Hudson, pp. 301-09.
- 98-104 Gluttonous monks were much criticized for indulgence in rich cuisine; for example, Chaucer's Monk, *CT* I, 200-06. Here the Host urges these delicacies upon Lydgate, who seems to have fed in a "feynt pasture" (line 104), whereas originally the Host chided the Monk for grazing in a "gentil pasture" (*CT* VII, 1933).
- 109-18 The Host's crude remarks on diet and sleep recall his brusque personality throughout Chaucer's *Tales* and, also, Perseolote's comments on the causes of Chauntecleer's dream (*CT* VII, 2923-69). *Hede* clothes that wrap around (line 109) suggest scarves worn turban-like around the head, much the fashion for slumber-attire in Lydgate's day; see plate A (BL Royal MS 15.D.1) in Dorothy Hartley, *Medieval Costume and Life* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1931), p. 130.
- 114-18 On "colic's passion" as intestinal blockage, see *On the Properties of Things*, p. 252: "And in this gut [the colon] is bred a wel gret sikeness that hatte colica passio, and cometh of grete streitnes of that gut oþir of gadrenge of grete and of coolde humours, and so of stoppinge of that gut withinne." The encyclopedia also describes the medicinal values of spices including fennel (pp. 959-60), anise (p. 909), and coriander (p. 933).
- 120-25 The Host's orders that Lydgate not rise at midnight for Matins and that he observe Prime by departing with the other pilgrims indicate the tale-telling

John Lydgate's Prologue to the Siege of Thebes

project is taking precedence over the monk's Divine Office. Thus the Host insists that Lydgate lay aside his profession (line 132). The *orloge* was a mechanical clock which chimed the hours so that monks would know when to rise to sing their offices at night.

- 128-45 The Host insists they continue the tale-telling game when they proceed the next morning out of Canterbury, as they had agreed in Southwark (*CT* I, 794-95). Now subject to a new rule and a "newe lawe" (line 130), Lydgate is informed that he must prepare to offer a tale.
- 150-55 Setting out at dawn, the pilgrims intend to break their fast with an early dinner around noon at Ospringe, which was approximately ten miles along the road toward London, less than midway between Boughton-under-Blean (*CT* VIII, 556) and Sittingbourne (*CT* III, 847), a standard stopping-place for meals.
- 165-68 Harry Bailly had told the Clerk "precheth nat, as freres doon in Lente" (*CT* IV, 12) and had asked Chaucer the pilgrim for "a tale of myrthe" (*CT* VII, 706). Here the Host will be granted only half of his request; while Lydgate does not tell a religious tale, the destruction of Thebes hardly qualifies as a "tale of myrthe."
- 169 Lydgate apparently had a big nose.
- 183 The poet's admission of unworthiness forms a gesture of humility typical of other pilgrim-narrators; see the Franklin, *CT* V, 716-28.
- 188-90 The Theban events are given parallel dating with the Old Testament career of Joshua, in a manner avoided by Chaucer in his Greek narratives, The Knight's Tale and *Troilus and Criseyde*; David Anderson, "Theban History in Chaucer's *Troilus*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 4 (1982), 109-33. King Amphion was said to have raised the walls of the city through the powerful music of his lyre; see *CT* I, 1545-49 and IV, 1716.

The Ploughman's Tale

Introduction

Of the thirty pilgrims introduced in the General Prologue, the Plowman, the Knight's Yeoman, and the Five Guildsmen drop from sight and never reappear to tell their tales. This exclusion does not necessarily mean that Chaucer lacked world enough and time, since late in the compositional process, toward the end of the trip to Canterbury, he chose to include the tale of the Canon's Yeoman, a new arrival not earlier present at the Tabard Inn. Of the seven original pilgrims left out, it is noteworthy that only the Plowman was later provided with two apocryphal tales (Cooper 415-18).

The plowman-figure had become the focus of considerable controversy beginning in the fourteenth century, accused by some preachers of opportunism during the labor shortage in the wake of the Black Death, praised by Wycliffite writers as the image of the ideal Christian. The title-character of Langland's *Piers Plowman* had become the most famous of these literary representations by the early 1380s, and the resemblance between Piers and Chaucer's Plowman has long been recognized (Coghill 89-94). During the English Rising of 1381, the rebel priest John Ball invoked the name of "Peres Ploughman" in his seditious letters, and since Ball was later accused of being an agent of John Wyclif, the literary plowman was to some extent tarred with the same brush of revolution and heresy (Dobson 372-83). One chronicle actually listed "Per Plowman" alongside John Ball and Jack Straw as leaders of the revolt (Hudson 399-400). Since the Host jokingly accuses the Plowman's brother, the Parson, of being a "Lollere" in the Man of Law's Endlink (*CT* II, 1163-90) — a section prudently canceled by Chaucer when in the 1390s jokes about Lollards were no longer funny, or even safe — the same sense of prudence in all likelihood persuaded the poet to render his Plowman silent.

By the mid-fifteenth century, the agents responsible for organizing the Christ Church manuscript of *The Canterbury Tales* apparently felt that even a mute Plowman was not altogether desirable. This collection, which also includes the *Siege of Thebes*, gave the Plowman a tale and positioned it fourth from the end, between the Squire and the Second Nun. Provided with a makeshift prologue fitting the work into the pilgrimage narrative, this rhyme-royal Miracle of the Virgin originally

The Ploughman's Tale

written by Thomas Hoccleve (d. c. 1426) was placed in the mouth of the Plowman as a story of unimpeachable orthodoxy. In fact, the exemplum of a young monk rewarded by the Virgin for praying his Latin *Pater Noster* was implicitly anti-Lollard, since Wycliffites had insisted that it was better to say the prayer "Our Father" in English without Mary's mediation (Hudson 310–13).

The subversive potential of the Plowman as a spokesman for radical change was fully realized during the Protestant Reformation of the next century. An anti-fraternal work, most of which was composed about 1400 and kept alive in the Lollard literary underground throughout the fifteenth century, surfaced to be printed with official sanction about 1536. The piece was then inserted as The Plowman's Tale immediately after The Parson's Tale, the two brothers side by side as they had been in the General Prologue, in William Thynne's 1542 edition of *The Canterbury Tales* dedicated to Henry VIII (Wawn; Heffernan). Since this Wyclifite Plowman's Tale, a vituperative debate between a Pelican and a Griffin, has already been published in the Middle English Text Series (James Dean, ed., *Six Ecclesiastical Satires* [Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1991], pp. 51–114), I have chosen not to include a separate edition in this volume. No fifteenth-century manuscript of the poem survives.

The Text

The complete text of The Ploughman's Tale exists only in Christ Church Oxford MS 152 (fols. 228b–231a), dated c. 1460–70, on pages originally left blank at the end of the quire after the unfinished Squire's Tale. Apparently the primary scribe had hoped that the missing Part III of Chaucer's Oriental romance would turn up, but when time passed and no conclusion was found, this Marian tale assigned to the Plowman was inserted by a second scribe, who also corrected the Canterbury text throughout. Following an augmented prologue, the body of the tale itself is a version of Hoccleve's eighteen-stanza poem entitled "Item de Beata Virgine" in the autograph manuscript Huntington Library HM 744. Another scribal version is preserved in Trinity College, Cambridge, MS R.3.21, bringing to three the total number of surviving copies (Boyd 119–22).

Because the variant readings shared by Christ Church and Trinity suggest that these two manuscripts represent a slightly different version of the text probably stemming from the poet himself — as is demonstrably the case with Hoccleve's two autograph fair-copies of *Leerne to Dye* in HM 744 and Durham Cosin V.III.9 (Bowers 1989) — I have not used the Huntington text as a basis for emending Christ Church, except in eight cases where it serves as a control for correcting mechanical errors; significant variants are nonetheless recorded in the Notes. Out of respect for

Introduction

the originality of the first two stanzas of the prologue, which provides a context of "recomposition" for the source material, I have also retained the scribe's accidentals rather than regularizing to Hoccleve's well-documented orthographic practice (see Greetham). Because the scribe corrected his text by inserting words carelessly omitted from this new two-stanza section of the prologue, he was apparently copying from some exemplar in which the narrative had already been adapted as a supplementary Canterbury tale.

The Ploughman's Tale

(Christ Church Oxford MS 152, fol. 228b-231a)

The Prologue of the Ploughman

	As the pylgrymys forth ded ryde,	did
	Owr Host began to loke aboute	
	And seyd, "Felawys, we most provyde	must determine
	Hoo that best of alle thys route	Who; company
5	Kan telle hys tale, as lot comyth aboute.	
	Ploughman Tyler, drawe the nere	Tiller; yourself
	And telle thy tale, and we wyl here."	
	"Syr," he seyde, "I shalle telle, as I can,	
	A tale of Crystys modyr dere,	Christ's mother
10	Mary that bare bothe God and man,	bore
	How to a monk she ded aperie,	
	That every day seyde here sautere,	Who; her psalter
	And hevene blysse had to his mede.	reward
	Hoo servyth owr Lady, the better shalle spedre.	Who; prosper
15	"Whoso desyryth to gete and conquerre	
	The blysse of hevene, holsom ys a guyde	healthy
	Hym to coadue and hym to bryngre there;	conduct
	And so good knowe Y noon for manrys syde,	I; man's part
	As the rote of humblesse and fo to pridy —	root; enemy
20	That Lady of whos tetys virginalle	breasts
	Sook owr redemptour, the maker of alle.	Suckled
	"Betwixt God and man ys she meadiatrice	intermediary
	For owr offences, mercy to purchace;	
	She owr sheld ys agayns the malyce	
25	Of the Fende, that owr soulys wold embrace	Devil
	And cary hem unto that horrable place	
	Whereas peyne ay-duryng ys and turment,	ever-lasting

The Ploughman's Tale

	More than may be spoken of or meat.	conceived
30	"Now syn that Lady noble and gloryous To alle mankysde hath so grete cheerté That in thys slypyr lyf and peryllous Staff of comfort and help to man ys she, Convenyent ys that to that Lady fre We do servyce, honoar, and plesaunce — 35 And to that ende, here ys a remembraunce."	since charity slippery <i>Appropriate; generous pleasure reminder</i>
	HERE BEGYNNYTH THE PLOUGHMANNYS TALE OF OWR LADY	
40	There was whilom, as that seyth the scripture, In Fraunce a ryche man and a worthy That, God and Holy Churche to honoure And plese, enforced hym ful bysyly; And unto Crystys modyr specyally, That noble Lady, that blesyd virgyn, For to worchyp he dyde hys myght and pyne,	once; written source exerted himself pain
45	Hyt shap so that thys man had a yonge sone Unto whyche he yaf informacioun Every day to have in custome and wone For to sey, at hys excitacioun, The angelyk salutacioun Fifty sythys in worchyp and honoure Of Cristys modyr, of vertu myroure.	<i>It happened</i> gave habit spiritual exercise <i>i.e., Ave Maria (see note)</i> times
50	By hys faderys wyl, a monk afterward In the abbey of Seint Gyle made was hee, Whereas he in penaunce sharp and hard Observyd wel hys ordres doute, Lyvynge in virtuous religiousté; 55 And on a tyme, hym to play and solace, Hys fadry made hym come home to hys place.	father's <i>Giles (St. Aegidius)</i> duty relax
60	Now was there at oure Ladyes reverence A chapel in hyt made and edefyed. In the whyche the monk, when convenyence Of tyme he had awayted and espyed,	it; established

The Ploughman's Tale

- Hys fadrys lore to fulfylle hym hied,
And fifty sythys wyt devoute corage
Seyd Ave Mary, as was hys usage.
- 65 And when he had y-endyd hys prayere,
Owr Lady clothyd in a garnement
Sleveles byfor hym he sey appere,
Whereof the monk toke goode avysement,
Mervaylyng hym what that thys myght have meint,
And seyde, "Good Lady, by yowr leve,
70 What garnement hys thys and hath no sleeve?"
- She answerd and seyd, "Thys clothying
Thow hast me gevyn, for thow every day
Fifty sithe Ave Mary seying
Honouryd hast me. Hensforth, Y the pray,
75 Use to treble that by any way;
To every tenth Ave joyne also
A Pater Noster, do ryght evene so.
- "The first fifty wil Y that seyd be
In the memory of the joy and honoure
80 That I had when the aungel gret me,
Which was ryght a wondyrful comfortoare
To me when he seyd the redemptoure
Of alle mankynd Y conceyve sholde:
Grete was my joy when he so me tolde.
- 85 "Thow shalt eke seyan the secund fyfti
In honour and in mynd of the gladnesse
That Y had when Y bare of my body
God and man withowtyn woo or duresse.
The thirde fyfti in thyne hert empresse,
90 And sey it eek with good devocioun
In the memorey of myne assumpcioun,
- "When Y was crownyd Quene of Heven
In whyche my sone regnyth and shal aye."
Al thys was doon that I speke of and neven,

instruction; hurried
times; spirit

ended
garment

Without sleeves; saw
notice

is; that has

given

I thee

Try to triple

(Gabriel) greeted

also say

without woe
imprint

forever
name

The Ploughman's Tale

- 95 As the book seyth, upon an halydaye;
And then scyd owr Lady, that gloryous maye,
"The neste halyday wyl I resorte
To thys place, the to glade and conforte."
*holiday
maid
shee to gladden*
- 100 And therwithalle fro thens departyd she,
The monk in hys devociouns dwellyng.
And every day suyng, her psalter he
Seyde aftyr here doctryne and esformyng.
And the next halyday aftyr folwyng,
Owr Lady, freshly arrayd and welle,
105 To the monk cam, beyng in the chapelle,
- And to hym seyde shee, "Beholde nowe
Howe good clothynge and how good apparayle
That, thys wyke, to me yevyn hast thowe:
Sleves to my clothynge now not faylle —
110 The thank I, and ful welle, for thy travaylle;
Shalt thou be qwyte here in thys lyf present,
And in that other whan thou hens art went.
- "Walk now and goo hom to the abbey.
When thou comyst, abbot chosyn shalt thou be.
115 And to the covent tecche thou for to sey
My psalter, as byfore taught have I the.
The peple also thou shalt in generalte
The same lessoun unto myne honoure preche,
And of here hurtys wil I ben here leche.
*week; given
Thee; efforts
rewarded
i.e., when you die*
- 120 "Seven yere lyfe shalt thou for to doo
Thys charge, and when the yerys be agoon,
Thow passe shalt hens, and me come untoo,
And hereof dowte have thow ryght soon.
By my psalter shal there be many oon
125 Saved and had up to eternall blysse
That, yef that nere, sholdyn therof mysse."
- When she had seyd what her lyked to sey,
She up to heven ascendyd and stye,
*it pleased her
climbed*

The Ploughman's Tale

- 130 And some after, abbot of that abbey soon
He maad was, as that hym told owr Ladie.
The covent and the peple devoutlye
Thys monk enformyd and taughtie her psalter,
For to be seyd after that seven yere.
- 135 Thoo yerys past, hys soule was betaught Those; entrusted
To God — he Heven had unto hys mede. reward
Who servyth owr Lady, lesyth ryght naughtie; loses
She sufficiently qwyteth every dede, repays
And now hereaftyr the bettyr to spedē,
And in her grace cherly for to stonde, joyously
140 Her psalter for to sey let us fonde. Amen. strive

HERE ENDYTH THE PLOUGHMANNYS TALE

Notes

Note on spelling. The scribe of this manuscript was prone to use *-y-* where Chaucer was likely to use *-e-* in the plural and possessive *-es*, the third-person *-eth*, and the past tense *-ed*. Examples in the first two stanzas include *pylgrymys* for "pilgrims," *felowys* for "fellows," *comyth* for "come," and *Cristys modyr* for "Christ's mother."

- 5 The Host's reference to the "lot" recalls the method for determining the order of tale-tellers initiated in the General Prologue (*CT* I, 835-45).
- 6 Chaucer gave the Plowman no name in the General Prologue (*CT* I, 529-41). Perhaps he is given the name *Tyler* to avoid confusion with the more famous literary tiller, Piers Plowman.
- 16 *holsom*. HM (Huntington HM 744): *seedful*.
- 24 *owr sheld*. HM: *our seur sheeld*.
- 27 *peyne ay-duryng*. HM: *eternal peyne*.
- 47 Gabriel's angelic salutation is recorded in Luke 1:28: *Et ingressus angelus ad eam dixit: "Ave gratia plena: Dominus tecum: benedicta tu in mulieribus!"* [And the angel being come in, said unto her: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women!" — Douay translation.]
- 49 *Of Cristys modyr, of vertu myroure*. HM: *Of goddes modir / of vertu the flour*.
- 63 Known as the Rosary in modern times, Our Lady's Psalter was the prayerful recitation of Ave Marias, usually in multiples of 150, the number of psalms in the Psalter. Originating in the monasteries as a devotion for illiterate brothers who could not otherwise participate in the Divine Office, the practice spread beyond the monastic communities and became a popular form of lay piety. See Beverly Boyd, "Hoccleve's Miracle of the Virgin," *Texas Studies in English* 35 (1956), 116-22. Hoccleve's note in HM 744 (fol. 36a) that "Ce feust faite a linstance de T. Marleburgh" — the London stationer Thomas Marleburgh being master of the guild of Limners and Textwriters in 1423 — indicates his poem was intended for a lay readership.

The Ploughman's Tale

- 76 *Ave*, as in HM; omitted in Ch.
- 85 *Thow*, as in HM; Ch: *Though*.
- 90 *with*, as in HM; Ch: *which*.
- 94 *doon*, as in HM; Ch *doo*. Note that Ch: *and never* makes a better rhyme than HM: *and meene*, suggesting this text derives from a different version by Hoccleve himself.
- 101 *suyng her psalter*. HM: *Aue Maria*.
- 103 *fowyng*. HM: *suyng*; this substitution to avoid repetition of the word *suyng* in line 101 again suggests authorial revision in Ch.
- 107 *good apparsyile*. HM: *fresh apparaille*.
- 114 *chayses shal thow be*. HM: *shalt thou chosen be*.
- 123 *And hereof*. HM: *And of this*. HM: *thow*, omitted in Ch.
- 128 HM: *up*, omitted in Ch.
- 130 HM: *ther*, omitted in Ch.
- 135 *unto*, as in HM; Ch: *to*.

The Cook's Tale

Introduction

Breaking off abruptly after only fifty-seven lines, *The Cook's Tale* offers the first instance of a "loose end" in Chaucer's grand scheme. In the Hengwrt manuscript, probably the earliest attempt at organizing the fragments of the *Tales*, the scribe left room to fill in the missing conclusion, apparently with the hope that stray pages might turn up among the author's papers. When it was clear that no additional poetry would be delivered, the copyist made a note in the blank: "Of this cokes tale maked Chaucer na moore." Medieval scribes — and modern critics (Kolve 257–96) — have been struggling with this unhappy circumstance ever since.

Twenty-five manuscripts, including the landmark collections Harley 7334 and Corpus Christi 198, remedied the problem by continuing with the 902-line romance *Gamelyn* (dating probably from the middle of the fourteenth century) sometimes with a brief bridge such as the couplet in Royal 18.C.ii: "But here-of I will passe as now / And of yong Gamelyne I wil telle yow." Since all texts of *Gamelyn* derive from a single written source (Daniel 34–35) and all of them except one eccentric, mutilated collection place the apocryphal tale in the same position after the Cook's fragment, and since the work survives nowhere else independent of a Canterbury collection, it is possible that Chaucer's literary executors found the work inserted at this point in the poet's final drafts of *The Canterbury Tales*, put there by him as a potential source for a tale, never written, to replace the abandoned account of Perkyn Revelour. The early scribe who executed both the Harley and Corpus manuscripts elected to include the source-text as a substitute tale, with later derivative manuscripts following his lead.

Manuscripts without *Gamelyn* were left to manage as best they could. Some scribes pretended *The Cook's Tale* was complete as it stood, then went on to the next pilgrim, usually the Man of Law, in a few instances the Wife of Bath. The enterprising scribe of Rawlinson Poetry 141 (fol. 29a) patched together a four-line conclusion:

And thus with horedom and bryberye
Togeder thei used till thei honged bye.

The Cook's Tale

For whoso evet byeth shal make a sorie sale;
And thus I make an ende of my tale.

In ten manuscripts, the Cook's fragment has simply disappeared altogether.

Only in Bodley 686 has the tale been subjected to a thorough revision to add forty-five new lines padding out Chaucer's narrative, then bringing the story to an apt, if predictable, conclusion almost identical in nature to the four-line outcome printed above. The Bodley manuscript is a deliberately constructed poetic anthology, omitting the prose tales of Melibee and The Parson's Tale, but continuing with eleven moral and religious poems by John Lydgate. The supplemental sections of The Cook's Tale accord with these pious inclinations, although the verses themselves seem to owe less to Chaucer (or even Lydgate) and more to Langland, with longer four-stress lines, heavy alliteration, and the introduction of allegorical personifications such as Light-hand, Lecherous-mouth, and Drink-more. The reviser's delicacy is revealed in other smaller changes, notably in the character of the friend's wife: in this version she *played* rather than *swyved* for her sustenance.

The Text

This padded-out version of The Cook's Tale survives only in Bodley MS 686 (folis. 54b-55b). Since this manuscript, dated c. 1430-40, might preserve the text in the anonymous reviser's autograph, I have emended only three substantive errors and have otherwise preserved the accidentals of the scribe's personal dialect rather than normalizing to standard Chaucerian. The entire text of the Bodley Cook's Tale is printed with the supplemental lines and phrases in boldface.

The Cook's Tale

(Bodley 686, fols. 54b-55b)

HERE BEGYNNETH THE COOKES TALE

A prentys whilom dwelled in oure sitee,	apprentice once; city
And of a crafte of vitellers was he.	food-sellers
Gaylerd he was as gyldfynch in the shawe,	Merry; thicket
Broun as a bery, a propre short folowe	well-proportioned; fellow
5 With lokkys blake y-kembed ful fetisly.	locks; combed; neatly
Dauncen he kowde so wel and jolyly	knew how
That he was cleped Perkyn Reveloure.	Peter (dim.)
He was as ful of love and paramoure	womanizing
As is the hyve ful of hony swete.	
10 Wel was the wench that hym myght mete,	wedding party
And at every bridle wolde he syng and hoppe.	better; did
He loved bet the taverne than he dede the shoppe,	horse display; Cheapside
For when ther was eny ryding in Chepe,	thither
Out of the shoppe theder wolde he lepe,	
15 Til that he hedde al the sight y-seyn,	
And daunced wel — he nold not come agayn —	wouldn't
And gadered hym a mayny of his sort	company
To hoppe and syng and make such disport.	sport
With Rech-never and Recheles this lessoun he lerys ¹	
20 With Waste and with Wrangler, his owne pley-ferys.	playmates
With Lyght-honde and with Likorouse-mouth, with Unschemfast;	Shameless
With Drynke-more and with Drawe-abak, her thryst is y-past,	their thirst
With Malaperte and with Mysseavysed — such meyny they hight, ²	
That wolle do but a lytull tylle her dyner be dyght.	their; prepared
25 Thus they steyn whan they myght mete	arranged
To pley at the dyse in suche a prevey strete,	dice; secret
For in Londoun ther was none apprentyse	

¹ With Care-never and Reckless thir lesson he learns

² With Impudent and with Ill-advised — such a gang were they named

The Cook's Tale

	That feirer couth caste a seharpe peir of dyse	could; tricky
	Than couthe Perkyn, and thereto he was free,	generous
30	Large of his dispence in place of prevytee With Magot and with Mysent, whan that he mette.	spending; private places
	The bagge with the powder anon was unknette.	opened up
	His purs was imperfit, he couthe not welle kepe:	could
	"Yet let us be mery, while oure sire is aslepe!"	i.e., the master
35	With pyes and with pykrels, with wynes moste swete, With loche and with lamprey the childe myght not ete.	young pikes
	The tapster, the taverner, the koke was ned.	loach; eel-like fish
	Wolde clepe on Perkyn, for his purs was so redy —	cook
	And that fownde his Maister welle in his chaffare,	call; since
40	For every other day his bose was lefte bare.	business
	An unthryfyt begynnnyng, for yong or for olde,	money-coffer
	A prentise to be a reveloure and paramours to holde.	profligate
	That bargeyn no man so sore schalle abyne	pay for
	As his Maister that hath no parte of his melodye.	who; entertainment
45	For theft and ryot, they beth inconvernyble,	interchangeable
	Alle-thogh he can pley on getern and rybible;	guitar; fiddle
	Ravelle and trouthe as in a lowe degree.	Revelry; honesty
	They mow not acorde; al day men it see.	
	When thy purs is penyless, where schalt thou have more,	
50	Thou that wylt not the occupie no thyng therfore?	yourself
	Revell ys ordeyned to hem that mow pay,	them who may
	But prentise ne pore man, they mowe not away;	don't move on
	Evelle-sponne woole at the laste wolle come oute,	Baddy spun; unravel
	Though thou kepe it never so prevey in a lytelle cloute.	securely; rag
55	Thus the joly prentise with his maister abode,	remained
	Tyll he was mye oute of his presteshode,	apprenticeship
	Alle-thogh he were saybyd both erly and late.	scolded
	Yet sometyme he was ladde with revell to Newgate.	Iled; Newgate Prison
	But at the laste as his Maister hym bethought	thought to himself
60	To over-se his papire and hym thorow sought	indenture contract; presently
	Upon a proverbe that seith this same worde:	
	"Better ys rotten appulle out of an hurde	barrel
	Than for to let hem rote alle the remenaunte."	
	And ryght so it fareth by a ryotes seruaunte;	awfully
	It is lasse harme for to let hym pace	go away
65	Then for to schende al the seruaunts in the place.	corrupt

The Cook's Tale

	Even as a scabbed schepe in the folde Alle a flocke wolle defyle, both yonge and olde,	skin-diseased infect
	Ryght even so a febel servaunt may	
70	Distruye fourty of his felaws in a day. Therfore his Maister gaffe hym acquytaunce And bade hym goe with sorowe and meschaunce:	gave; document of discharge misfortune
	"Better ys betyme to voyde suche a clerke; The lenger he abydeth, the woes is his werke.	speedily
75	He that his maister no profite wolle wynne, Y holde hym better out of the hous than withynne."	within
	And thus the joly prentys had leve;	permission to leave
	Now let hym revell alle the nyght, or leve.	leave off
	Ther ys no thiffe without a lowke	thief; accomplice
80	That helpeth hym to waste and to sowke, Or that he brybe can or oght borowc may.	Who; suck
	Anon he sent his bedde and alle his araye	steal
	Unto a compere of his owne sorte	baggage
	That loved welle the dysc, ryot and disperte.	companion
85	A wife he hadde that helde her contenaunce	for appearance
	A schoppe, and ever sche pleyed for his sustenaunce.	
	What thorowe hymselfe and his felawe that sought,	Whatever presently
	Unto a myscheife bothe they were broght.	
	The tone y-dampned to presoun perpetually,	<i>The one condemned</i>
90	The tother to deth for he couthe not of clergye.	<i>The other; could not read</i>
	And therfore, yonge men, lerne while ye may	
	That with mony dyvers thoughtes beth pryked al the day.	Who; agitated
	Remembre you what myscheife cometh of mysgovernaunce.	
	Thus mowe ye lerne woreschep and come to substauence.	wealth
95	Thenke how grace and governaunce hath broght hem a boune,	<i>them a reward</i>
	Many pore manrys sonn, chefe state of the towne.	<i>man's; highest office</i>
	Ever rewle the after the beste man of name,	<i>model yourself; reputation</i>
	And God may grace the to come to the same.	<i>thee</i>

HERE ENDETH THE COKE'S TALE

HERE FOLOWEN THE WORDES OF THE HOOST
UNTO THE MAN OF LAW

Oure Host saugh wel that the bryght sonne
The arke of his artificial day hath y-ronne . . .

Notes

- 3 Goldfinches are lively, happy creatures. See *Canterbury Interlude*, line 476 (note).
- 13 Cheapside was a busy London thoroughfare that served as a favorite site for processions and festivals, including the notorious "lords of misrule."
- 19-24 This interpolation with its alliteration and moralized personifications is reminiscent of Langland's *Piers Plowman* (e.g., B.4.16-21, 5.566-93, and 6.69-82). The playmate "Drawe-abak," as a companion to "Drynke-more," embodies the habit of drawing ale from a barrel.
- 31 The alliterative duo of Margot and Millicent might be taken as typical names for loose women.
- 32 When a powder-bag was untied, its contents were quickly dispersed.
- 36 Presumably a child, then as now, was not allowed to eat fish because of the small bones.
- 41-44 The anonymous reviser has thoroughly rewritten these boldface lines based on *CT I*, 4391-95.
- 48 *mow not*. MS: *mow mow not*.
- 53 *woole*. MS: *wolle*.
- 54 *Though*. MS: *They*.
- 58 When disorderly persons were conducted to the celebrated prison at Newgate, they were sometimes preceded by minstrels attracting more spectators to complete the criminal's disgrace.

Notes

- 85-86 The moralizing intentions of the reviser are clearly exposed in this couplet, which concluded Chaucer's fragment with the authentic reading: "And hadde a wif that heeld for contenance / A shoppe, and swyved for hir sustenanc."*
- 90 Originally, a member of a religious order could plead "benefit of clergy" to be tried by an ecclesiastical rather than a secular court; later, a felon could plead exemption from his first conviction merely by virtue of the fact he could read. Since Perkyn Revele had neglected his education, he could not escape execution.

Spurious Links

Introduction

A large number of manuscripts of the *Tales* contain what Manly (1928, 82–86) dubbed "spurious links," which are really non-authorial prologues — Chaucer's own preferred term (see *CT* III, 1708) — created to conceal gaps in the sequence by supplying obvious deficiencies, either where the poet never wrote prologues or where they were lost early in the transmission of the text, usually through rearrangement of the tales (Dempster 466–84). For example, whereas Chaucer provided no clear connection between the tales of the Nun's Priest and the Second Nun, the Cardigan MS (fol. 194a) smoothed over this break by rewriting the final line of Fragment VII — "Seide unto another, as ye shuln heere" becomes "Sayd unto the Nonne as y[e] shall here" — and prefacing Fragment VIII with a brief conversation initiated by the Host:

"Madame, and Y durst, Y wold you pray,
To tell us a tale y[n] furtheryng of oure way.
Then myght ye do unto us gret ease."
"Gladly," quod she, "so that Y myght you please,
You and this worthy company!" —
And began here tale ryght thus full sobyrlly.

There are twenty-two such passages that can be divided into three basic types: (1) altered authorial texts in which usually the pilgrim's name has been changed; (2) non-authorial lines added to authentic Chaucerian materials; (3) entirely new sections. I have selected two fairly complete series and printed them, in boldface type, within context of Chaucer's authentic lines.

The term link, while supported nowhere in the manuscripts, does justly describe the common narrative strategy throughout these later bridge-passages. Though some of Chaucer's own prologues, such as those for the Man of Law and the Wife of Bath, start abruptly without giving any indication of a previous pilgrim, the apocryphal prologues were more thoroughly influenced by those sections of the frame-narrative that served as transitions from one tale-teller to the next, as when the

Spurious Links

Host decides that the Prioress's sobering "miracle" of the murdered student ought to be followed with something jollier from Chaucer the pilgrim. Thus the fifteenth-century scribes seemed intent upon tying together and unifying, invariably through the strong guiding presence of the Host, fragments that had been left maddeningly disconnected by the poet himself for reasons that can only be guessed at: intention, disinterest, physical or mental disability, or sudden death.

The Text

Series 1. The earliest introduction of four links is found uniquely in BL Lansdowne 851 (c. 1400–25), a landmark manuscript roughly contemporary with Ellesmere. Because its text seems to have been subject to a minimum of scribal corruption, I have represented the substantives as well as the spellings as they appear in the manuscript.

Series 2. Four other non-authorial prologues are preserved in three closely related manuscripts: BL Royal 18.C.ii (c. 1425–1440), Bodleian Barlow 20 (c. 1450–80), and Bodleian Laud Misc. 739 (c. 1450–75). Petworth 7 (c. 1420–30) is also related, containing three of these prologues, but not in the same order. I have used the Royal manuscript as the copy-text, granting it "best text" status because it is early and generally agrees with Laud against Barlow in offering acceptable readings.

While the Merchant-Wife of Bath link survives only in these three manuscripts, other individual links appear in a large number of copies. For example, the spurious Shipman's prologue occurs in thirteen manuscripts as a link between the Pardoner and the Shipman; in four manuscripts it connects Gamelyn with The Shipman's Tale; and in Bodleian Hatton Donat. I it links the Clerk and the Shipman. The full collation of manuscript readings undertaken by Norem (123–49) indicates few significant variants, probably because the pedestrian quality of the language offered few challenges to the copyists.

Spurious Links

Series I: BL Lansdowne 851

Cook-Gamelyn Link (fols. 54a-54b)

Anone he sent his bedde and his arae
Unto a couper of his owen sorte
That loved dis and revel and disperte,
And had a wife that helde for countinance
5 A schoppe, and swyved for his sustenance.
Fye therone, it is so foule! I wil nowe tell no fortherre
For shame of the harlotrie that seweth after.
A velany it were thareof more to spell,
Bot of a knyghte and his sonnes, my tale I wil forthe tell.
10 And therefore listeneth and herkeneth this tale arith,
And ye schullen here of a doughtē knyght,
Sir Johan of Boundys was his name;
He couthe of nortur and muchel of game.

companion

dice

fornicated

sheron

misbehavior; follows

thereof; tell

hear; valiant

Squire-Wife of Bath Link (fol. 87a)

First wil I tell yowe of Cambyuskan
That in his time mony a citē wan;
And after wil I speke of Algarsif,
 Howe that he wanne Theodora to his wif,
5 For whan ful oft in grete perile he was
Ne had he ben holpen by the hors of bras;
And after wil I speke of Camballo
That faught in listes with the bretherne tuo
For Canace are that he myht hir wynne,
10 And there I left, I thenke ageine begynne.
Bot I wil here nowe maake a knotte
To the time it come next to my lotte.

(king in the tale)

won

(son of Cambyuskan)

(another son)

fought; two

(heroine); before

where

but; stopping-point

Till

Spurious Links

For here be felawes behinde, an hepe treulye,
That wolden talke ful besilye
15 And have her spore as wele as I.
And the daie passeth fast, certanly.
Therfore, Hoste, taketh nowe goode heed
Who schall next tell, and late him speede.

their

let

EXPLICIT FABULA ARMIGERI INCIPIT PROLOGUS UXORIS DE BATH

Than schoorty answarde the Wife of Bath
20 And swore a wonder grete hathe,
"Be Goddes bones, I wil tel next!
I will nouht glose, bot saye the text:
Experiment, thouhe none auctorite
Were in this werlde, is riht ynowhe for me
25 To speke of woo that is in mariage.
For, lordeinges, sen I twelve yere was of age,
Thonked be God that eterne alyve,
Hosbondes att the cherche dor I have hadde five.

oath

By

not

Experience
enough

woe

since

Canon's Yeoman-Physician Link (fol. 169a-b)

For whoso maketh God his adversarie,
As for to worche any thinge in contrarye
Unto His wil, certes never schal he thrive,
Thouhe that he multiplie terme of his live;
5 And there a pointe, for endid is my tale.
God sende every trew man botc of his bale.

surely

Though; life
period

relief for his pain

PROLOGUS MAGISTRI PHYSICI

"Nowe trewly," quod oure Hoste, "this is a prati tale.
For litel merveille it is that thou lokest so pale,
Sethen thou hast medeled with so mony thinges,
10 With blowinge att the cole to melte bothe brochez and ringes
And oþere many jewels, dar I undertake.
And that thi lorde couthe us tel, if we myht him overtake.
Bot lat him go, a devel waye; the compaigny is never the wers,
And al suche fals harlotes I sette not be hem a kers.

cunning

Since

coals

(the Canon)

scoundrels; by them; curse

Spurious Links

15	Bot latt pas overe nowe al thes subtilitees, And sume worthi man tel us summe veritees, As ye, worshipful Maister of Phisike. Telleth us somme tale that is a cronyke That we may of yowe leren sum witte."	<i>craftinesses</i> <i>truth</i> <i>history</i> <i>wisdom</i> <i>written</i>
20	Quod the Maister of Phisik, "A tale that I finde writte In cronyke passed of olde tyme Herkeneth, for I wil tel it yow in rime."	
EXPLICIT PROLOGUS / INCIPIT FABULA		
Ther was as telleth us Titus Liveus, A knyght that cleped was Virgincus, Fulfilled of honour and worthinesse, And stronge of frendes and of richesse. A doughter he hadd be his wyf, And never hadde he mo in al his lif.		
25		<i>by</i>

Pardoner-Shipman Link (fol. 180b)

5	Whan that he sawhe that al the peple lauhe, "No more of this, for it is riht ynwhe. Sire Pardoner, be meri and glad of chere, And ye, Sire Hoste, that bene to me so dere. I pray yowe that ye kisse the Pardonere. And Pardoner, I prae the that thou drau the nere, And as we dide, now late us lauhe and pleie!"	<i>(the Knight); laughed</i> <i>enough</i> <i>shee; draw near</i>
EXPLICIT FABULA QUESTORIS / INCIPIT PROLOGUS		
Bot than spak oure Hoste unto Maister Schipman. "Maister," quod he, "to us summe tale tel ye can, Wherewithe ye myht glad al this company, If it were youre plesinge, I wote wele sekurlye." "Sertes," quod this Schipman, "a tale I can tell, And therfore, herkeneth hyderward how that I wil spell."		
10		<i>amuse</i> <i>certainly</i> <i>Surely</i> <i>narrate</i>
EXPLICIT PROLOGUS / INCIPIT FABULA NAUTE		

Spurious Links

- 15 A marchant whilom dwelled att Sein Denys,
That riche was, for which men helde him wys.
A wif he hadde of excellent beaute,
And compinable and reverent was sche,
Which is a thinge that causeth more dispence
20 Then worthe is al the chier and reverence.

Series 2: BL Royal 18.C.ii

Merchant-Wife of Bath Link (fol. 105a)

- "Beth war, I pray yow, for by Hevene Kyng
Ful many man wenyth for to see a thing believes
And it is all another than it semeth.
He that myconceyveth mysdemeth."
5 And with that word, sche leep doun fro the tree. misjudges
This Januare, who is glad but he?
He kisseth her and clippeth her ful ofte, i.e., Maye
And on hir wombe he stroketh her ful softe,
And to his paleys hoom he hath hir lad.
10 Now, good men, I pray yow to be glad.
Thus endeth here my tale of Januarie.
God blesse us and his moder Seynt Marie. Amen.

THE PROLOG OF THE WYF OF BATHE

- Oure Hoost gan tho to loke up anon. then
"Gode men," quod he, "herkeneth everichon. every one
15 As evere mote I drynke wyn or ale,
This Marchande hath i-tolde a mery tale,
How Januarie hadde a lither jape; cruel joke
His wyf put in his hood an ape.
But hereof I wil leve off as now.
20 Dame Wyf of Bathe," quod he, "I pray yow,
Telle us a tale now next after this."

Sporious Links

- "Sire Hoost," quod she, "so God my soule blis,
As I fully therto wil consente
And also it is myn hole entente
To done yow alle disporte, as that I can.
But holde me excused — I am a woman;
I can not reberse as these clerkes kune."
And right anon she hath hir tale bygune.
- HERE ENDITH THE PROLOG AND BEGYNNE THETALE
- Experiance, though noon auctorite
Were in this world, is right inowgh for me
To speke of woo that is in mariage.
For, lordynges, sethen I twelue yere hadde of age,
Thanked be God that is eterne alyve,
Housbondes at chirche dore I have had fyve.

Clerk-Franklin Link (fols. 145b-146a)

- "Ye arche-wyfcs standeth at youre defence,
Sith ye ben stronge as is a grete camayle
Ne suffreth not that man don you offence,
And scelendre wylfes fible as in bataile
5 Beth egre as a tygre yonde in Ynde;
Ay clappeth as a mylle, I yow counsaile."
- HERE ENDITH THE CLERKE OF OXFORD
AND HERE BEGYNNE THETPROLOG OF THE FRANKELEYN
- This worthi Clerk, whan endid was his tale,
Oure Host seide and swor, "By Goddes bones,
Me weere levere than a barrel ale
10 My wyf at home hadde herd this legend once!
This is a gentil tale for the nonce.
As to my purpos, wiste ye my wylle;
But thing that will not be, lat it be stille.
- I have a wyf, though she pore be,
15 Yit she hath an heape of vyces, lo,

Spurious Links

- For of hire tonge a moche shrewe is she,
And to my wylle the contrarye wil she do.
Therof no force! Lete alle suche thinges go.
But wyt ye what? In consaile be it saide,
20 Me rewyth sore that I am to hire taide.
- Sire Frankeleyn, cometh nere, yif hit youre wil be,
And telle us a tale, as ye are a worthi man."
"Hit schal be do, truly, Hoost," quod he.
"I wil yow telle as hertely as I can.
25 Holdeth me excused, though I unworthi am
To telle you a tale, for I wole not rebelle
Agens youre wille — a tale wole I telle.
- HERE ENDITH THE PROLOG AND BEGYNNETH THE TALE
- These olde gentil Bretouns in here dayes,
Of divers aventures maden layes,
30 Remayed in here first Briton tonge,
Which layes with here instrumentz they songe,
Or elles reddem hem for here plesaunce,
And oon of hem have in remembraunce,
Which I shal sayn with good wille, as I can."

Canon's Yeoman-Physician Link (fol. 174a)

- For whoso maketh God his adversarie,
As for to worche enything in contrarye
Unto his wille, certes, nevere schal he thryse,
Thogh that he multiplie terme of his lyfe.
5 And there a poynct, for endid is my tale.
God sende every trewe man bote of his bale.
- THE PROLOG OF THE DOCTOR OF PHECYK
- When that this Yoman his tale endid hadde
Of this fals chanon whiche that was so badde,
Oure Hoost gan seie, "Truly and certayn,
10 This preest was begyled sothely forto sayn;

Spurious Links

- He wenynge for to be a philosophre
Til he right no gold lefte in his cofre.
And sothely this prest had a lyther jape.
This cursed chanon put in his hood an ape.
15 But all this passe I over as now.
Sire Doctour of Phisik, I pray yow,
Telle us a tale of som honest matere."
"It schall be done, yif that ye wole hit here,"
Saide this Doctor, and his tale bygan anon.
20 "Now, gode men," quod he, "herkeneth everychon."
- HERE ENDITH THE PROLOG / AND BEGYNNETH THE TALE
- Ther was, as telleth us Tytus Lyveus,
A knyght that cleped was Virgineus,
Fulfilled of honoures and worthinesse,
And strong of frendes and of richesse.
25 A douther he hadde by his wyf,
And nevere had he mo in al his lyf.

Pardoner-Shipman Link (fol. 185a)

- But right anone the worthi Knyght bygan,
Whan that he sawh that alle the peple lowhe,
"No more of this, for it is right inowhe.
Sire Pardoner, be mery and glad of chere,
5 And ye, Sire Hoost, that ben to me so dere,
I pray yow that ye kysse the Pardonere.
And, Pardoner, I pray you draw you nere,
And as we did, lete us lawh and play."
And anoon thei kissed and ridden forth her way.

THE PROLOG OF THE SHIPMAN

- 10 "Now frendes," saide oure Hoost so dere,
"How lyketh you, by John, the Pardoner?
For he hath unbokeled wel the male;
He hath us told right a thrifty tale
As touching of mygovernaunce.

Spurious Links

- 15 I pray to God, geve hym good chaunce.
As ye have herde of thise riotoures thre,
Now gentil Maryner, hertly I pray the, *ther*
Telle us a good tale and that right anone."
"Hit schal be don, by God and by Seynt John," *It*
20 Seide this Maryner, "as wel as ever I can."
And right anone his tale he bygan.
- HERE ENDITH [THE PROLOG] AND BEGYNETH THE TALE
- A [marchant w]hilom duelled at Seynt Denys,
That [riche was], for whiche men held him wys.
A wyf [he] had of excellent beaulté,
25 And compaynable and reverent was she. *sociable*

Notes

Series I: BL Lansdowne 851

Cook's Tale-Gamelyn Link

- 6-7 Heavy alliteration marks this expression of moral repugnance at the wife's work as a whore. Note that the reviser alleges there was more to the tale, only he chose not to relay it.
- 8 The word *spell* is used only once by Chaucer, appropriately in his parody of popular verse romances, *Sir Thopas* (*CT* VII, 893).

Squire-Wife of Bath Link

- 11-12 Not interrupted in this version, the Squire makes his own stopping-point (*knotte*) until his turn comes around once more, according to their drawing of lots. A similar sense of turn-taking is expressed in the Summoner's threat to the Friar: "whan it comth to my lot, / By God, I shal hym quiten every grot" (*CT* III, 1291-92).
- 13-15 In the Lansdowne MS, the Squire comes early in the sequence, directly after the Man of Law, with seventeen other pilgrims after him telling their tales.
- 19-21 Not waiting for the Host's decision, the Wife of Bath insists on being next. *Hathe* is a Northern spelling of the Chaucerian *oth*. Though sexually daring, the Wife is not normally given to oaths like "By God's bones," which is more characteristic of the Host (*CT* II, 1166; IV, 1212b; VII, 1897).
- 22 Chaucer's Wife is well aware of the difference between text and gloss. See Carolyn Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), pp. 113-31 — "Glose/bele chose': The Wife of Bath and Her Glossators."

Spurious Links

Canon's Yeoman-Physician Link

- 7-11 The Host has a vivid recollection of the previous tale, picking up the term *medel* (*CT* VIII, 1184 and 1424) and recalling the Yeoman's duty to blow on the fire (*CT* VIII, 753 and 923).
- 12-14 The Host recalls the hasty departure of the Canon, afraid of being exposed as a scoundrel (*CT* VIII, 700-02).
- 15 Chaucer had associated the term *subtilitee* with the Canon's alchemical skills (*CT* VIII, 620-27).
- 18 The term *cronyke* (also line 21) is more archaic than the Chaucerian *cronycle* (*CT* VII, 3208).

Pardonner-Shipman Link

- 9-10 "Maister" is the form of address used by the Host to the Shipman at the end of his tale (*CT* VII, 437).
- 11 The phrase "glad al this company" is picked up from *CT* VIII, 598.

Series 2: BL Royal 18.C.ii

Merchant-Wife of Bath Link

- 13-14 This couplet echoes the opening of the Man of Law's Epilogue: "Owre Hoost upon his stropes stood anon / And seyd, "Goode men, herkeneth everych on!" (*CT* II, 1163-64).
- 15 The Host speaks this same line in the General Prologue (*CT* I, 832).
- 17-18 Chaucer uses the *jape/lape* couplet four times in *CT*: I, 705-06; I, 3389-90; I, 4201-02; VIII, 1312-13.

Notes

- 26-27 The Wife's apology, echoing the Squire and the Franklin (*CT* V, 7-8 and 716-18), is framed to be disingenuous in light of the barrage of scriptural references that follow in her tale.

Clerk-Franklin Link

- 14-20 The murderous fury and blistering tongue of the Host's wife, ironically named Goodbelif, are more fully described in *CT* VII, 1891-1923.

Canon's Yeoman-Physician Link

- 10 "This preest" refers back to the London chantry priest (*CT* VIII, 1012-21) who served as the dupe of the Yeoman's master, the alchemist canon.
11 The word *philosophre* had become synonymous with alchemist and magician.

Pardoner-Shipman Link

- 11 It is unclear whether the phrase *by John* is an oath by St. John, such as the Shipman swears below (line 19), or a reference to the Pardoner by way of the generic cant name for a priest or cleric (see *CT* VII, 1929 and 2810).
12-13 This phrase, also rhyming *male/tale*, is used in *CT* I, 3115-16.
16 The Host's reference to "thise riotoures thre" alludes back to the three nameless drunkards of the Pardoner's Tale. The term *riotoures* is used nowhere else in Chaucer's writings.

The Canterbury Interlude and Merchant's Tale of Beryn

Introduction

The Northumberland manuscript, executed after the middle of the fifteenth century, offers a specialized arrangement of *The Canterbury Tales* in which a lengthy Interlude has been inserted describing the pilgrims' arrival in the city of Canterbury, their visit to the shrine of St. Thomas in the cathedral, their overnight stay at a local inn, the Pardoner's misadventures with a cunning tapster, and the party's departure the next morning for the return to London. At this point the Host invites the Merchant to tell The Tale of Beryn (his second offering in this collection) as the initial tale for the homeward journey, to be followed by Chaucer the pilgrim with *Melibee* (his second offering, separate from *Sir Thopas*), the Monk, the Nun's Priest, the Manciple, and finally the Parson. The entire arrangement, that is, has been altered and enlarged to fulfill the design of the round trip projected in the General Prologue (Bowers 1985, 27-38). Unfortunately, the manuscript itself is missing pages at the end, so we do not know whether this enterprising collection might also have included a return to the Tabard Inn for the Host's verdict on the tale of "best sentence and moost solas."

The anonymous author of the Interlude reveals a knowledge of *The Canterbury Tales* more intimate and wide-ranging than even Lydgate's. He was familiar with the General Prologue and the fabliau tales of Fragment I as well as the later performances of the Friar, the Summoner, the Merchant, the Canon's Yeoman, and the Pardoner (Bashe; Kohn; Winstead). Chaucer's pilgrims have been revived with considerable ingenuity and charm, behaving much as we would expect, or veering in directions we find comically inappropriate. Who would have expected the Wife of Bath to prefer sitting in a kitchen garden with the Prioress to exploring the town?

Episodes tracking the Pardoner's overnight escapade with Kit the Tapster are offered in cross-cut fashion to form a fabliau adventure, somewhat like the one told by the Reeve (Darjes and Rendall). Chaucer's Pardoner, that magnificent grotesque, seems to have been the one pilgrim who lingered most strongly in the memory of the fifteenth-century audience. Here, however, he possesses both a sexual potency and a heterosexual inclination, as well as a temperance in drinking ale, at odds with what modern readers have been led to expect (Curry 54-70; McAlpine; Bowers

The Canterbury Interlude and Merchant's Tale of Beryn

1990). Throughout the Pardoner's failed attempts to romance and rob the tapster, when he ends up instead beaten, bloodied, and shivering all night in the dog's kennel, we may be so distracted that we fail to notice what else the continuator has totally omitted from his portrayal. Nowhere is there the slightest reference to the Pardoner as a self-enriching purveyor of indulgences and exploiter of sham relics. It is as if such crooked practices do not even merit mentioning in the holy city of Canterbury, where a visit to the authentic relics of St. Thomas earned a plenary indulgence for the pilgrim — and where the corrupt Pardoner justly deserved to be swindled, beaten, and sexually humiliated.

The Tale of Beryn is absolutely appropriate as an offering from the Merchant — more so, really, than the tale given him by Chaucer — since its hero is a young nobleman who chooses to be a merchant instead of a knight, only to encounter a series of storms and legal entrapments that would have been the real-life nightmare of any medieval merchant. In Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), the citizens of the ideal nation puzzled over exactly the hazards encountered by Beryn: "when the merchants of one country are subjected to unjust persecution in another country under the pretense of justice, either under cover of iniquitous law or the manipulation of good laws." The French source-work *Bérenger* (ed. Bossuet) has been reduced and crafted in such a way as to emphasize these legal abuses, so much so that Green (1989) has proposed that the work was primarily a satire on contemporary problems with "law merchant," while Tamanini (40–48) suggested the author might have been a lawyer writing for an audience at one of the Inns of Court.

The larger and more significant an anonymous literary work, the more pressing becomes the question of authorship. A Latin couplet at the end of The Tale of Beryn says the work was translated by a "son of the church of St. Thomas" (*Filius ecclesie Thome*), evidence that would seem to contradict Tamanini's claims for a lawyer. Judging from the Southeastern dialect and the precision of local references, Furnivall (p. viii) long ago decided that the author was most likely a Canterbury monk. Despite the enticing suggestion from Green (61–62) that the author might have been Thomas Astell — rector of St. Thomas the Martyr in Winchelsea, a student of civil law at Oxford, and a kinsman of Henry Chichele, archbishop of Canterbury — the evidence marshaled by Brown (148–60), particularly the author's detailed knowledge of pilgrim rituals at Canterbury, points more persuasively to a Christ Church monk charged with custodial responsibilities for the cathedral's shrine of St. Thomas. If so, this monk had a much wider scope and keener eye than Lydgate for the pilgrims' high jinks before and after their visits to the shrine. Nonetheless, the special bias of his order would account for his aggressive hostility toward the Pardoners, whose sale of indulgences would have represented a serious

Introduction

threat to those Benedictines responsible for promulgating and sustaining the cult of St. Thomas.

The work's date offers a further problem. Since the Northumberland manuscript is much later than the Beryn text that it alone preserves, internal evidence must be used as the basis for speculation. A reference to the recent devastation of Winchelsea and Rye led Tamanini (73–76) to suggest a date as early as the 1390s, clearly too early for the author to have known Chaucer's final work as well as he did. Since the poetry shares a certain amount of vocabulary with *Mum and the Sothegeger*, completed between 1403 and 1406, Pearsall (1977, 298) proposed c. 1410 as the date of composition for Beryn. The Canterbury Interlude itself — which may have been written later than the tale it prefaces — has been plausibly connected by Brown (152–53) with the year 1420, which was the most recent Canterbury jubilee celebrated every half-century since the martyrdom of St. Thomas in 1170. This was a great money-making "tourist" event as well as a prime occasion to reassert the validity of pilgrimage rituals against the Lollards. It is therefore tempting to believe that the 1420 jubilee provided this monastic author, as well as John Lydgate, with the religious occasion for reviving Chaucer's literary pilgrimage to Canterbury.

The Text

Though preserved only in Northumberland MS 455 (fols. 180a–235a), dated c. 1450–70, this 4022-line section appears to have been composed considerably earlier. Removed from its original by as much as half a century, this transcription of a text by an otherwise unknown author offers a number of editorial challenges.

Furnivall in his edition for the Chaucer Society (1887), later reissued by EETS (1909), undertook a radical restoration of the text with the aim of improving the verse by supplying "missing" syllables, words, and phrases; where lines appear to have been omitted by the scribe, the editor even undertook to compose his own speculative replacements. I have rejected the aims of such a reconstruction, since it is not clear that the Beryn poet originally executed verses with the strict regularity assumed by Furnivall or adhered to grammatical practices deemed correct according to familiar Chaucerian standards. I have therefore been very conservative in emending only those readings that seem to be the results of scribal mistakes, many of them already detected by Furnivall and Vipan (1909) and Tamanini (1969). For example, the Northumberland scribe was particularly given to *c/t* confusion and error by anticipation of copy.

In respect to the accidentals, my approach has been informed by Tanselle's discussion (1983) of single-manuscript editing of medieval texts when a unique copy is accorded the status of copy-text. The term *copy-text* normally refers to the physical

The Canterbury Interlude and Merchant's Tale of Beryn

copy chosen by an editor from among several candidates because it most faithfully represents the author's practice in regard to spelling, punctuation, capitalization and other such features classed as accidentals. According to Greg's influential "rationale" (1950), the editor then establishes the substantives by separate methods, letting the readings of the copy-text stand whenever there is no compelling reason to alter them. The case of Beryn is all too common in the annals of medieval literature, since the unique surviving text of the poem in the Northumberland manuscript, so much later than the original, offers no authority in representing the original in regard to accidentals. Thus it does not qualify as a copy-text, although an editor might perforce treat it as such simply because there is no other candidate. Working with Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes*, Greetham (1985) has proposed ways in which the editor of a medieval text can free himself from this "tyranny of the copy-text" in regard to accidentals when means are available for establishing practices closer to the author's original.

Because The Tale of Beryn survives within the larger context of the Northumberland *Canterbury Tales* copied by the same scribe, it is possible to analyze the neighboring texts, specifically The Canon's Yeoman's Tale and The Summoner's Tale, to identify spellings and other orthographic practices which consistently deviate from Chaucer's usages and are therefore likely the copyist's. Kane (1989) has used a similar method to form a "profile" of the immediate scribe of the G Prologue to Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* by examining the unique unoriginal variants of Cambridge University Library [CUL] MS Gg.4.27 in that part of the poem where revision is not presumed, namely the *Legend* itself which survives in a superior line of transmission represented by the family of manuscripts designated as F (after Bodley MS Fairfax 16). Kane then uses this scribal profile to identify non-authorial features which might be removed from a subsequent edition of the G Prologue.

Proceeding on this distinction between the author's and the copyist's *usus scribendi* or "writing practice," I have implemented such alterations in spelling only when they have been confirmed by a secondary control, namely, the rhymes in the Interlude and Beryn couplets. The copyist often retained in the rhyme position a spelling that he altered to personal practice elsewhere in the text. Guided by the dual constraints of (1) the scribal profile in the surrounding Chaucer texts and (2) preservations of authorial usages in the rhyme-words, I have proceeded in a very conservative manner, for example, altering the ending -ir/-yr to -er/-re, the plural -is/-ys to -es, the past tense -id/-yd to -ed, and the third-person singular -ith/-yth to -eth. In accord with the classic concept of the copy-text, I have retained the Northumberland scribe's usages when a substitution cannot be supported by my twin criteria. For example, the rhymes *lottinot* (703-04) and *notisnot* (3465-66) argue for normalizing the negative *nor* > *not* throughout the text, but since the surrounding

Introduction

Canterbury text with the Chaucerian spelling *nat* does not confirm this change, I have retained the manuscript's use of *nat*. In short, I have not undertaken a wholesale restoration of the text, one that might otherwise have included retrieving forms belonging to the poem's original Southeastern dialect, as was proposed by Onions (1936) for the *Owl and the Nightingale*. However, I have taken liberties in normalizing proper names, which vary widely and sometimes erratically in the copyist's practice.

The Canterbury Interlude and Merchant's Tale of Beryn

(Northumberland MS 455, fols. 180a-235a)

	When all this fresh feleship were com to Canterbury,	<i>lively</i>
	As ye have herd tofore, with tales glad and mery,	<i>before</i>
	Som of sotill centene, of vertu and of lore,	<i>lofty meaning</i>
5	And som of other myrthes for hem that hold no store	<i>them; put no stock in</i>
	Of wisdom, ne of holynes, ne of chivalry,	
	Nether of vertuous matere, but to foly	<i>Nor</i>
	Leyd wit and lustes all, to such japes	<i>Applied; tricks</i>
	As Hurlewaynes meynē in every hegg that capes	<i>company; gaper</i>
	Thurh unstabill mynde, ryght as the loves grene	
10	Stonden ageyn the weder, ryght so by hem I messe.	<i>weather; them</i>
	Butt no more hereof nowe at this ilch tyme,	<i>same</i>
	In saving of my centence, my prolog and my ryme.	<i>In keeping with my theme</i>
	They toke hir in and logged hem at mydmorowe, I trowe,	<i>their inn; mid-morning</i>
	Atte Cheker of the Hope, that many a man doth knowe.	
15	Hir Hoost of Southwork that with hem went, as ye have herd tofore,	<i>Their</i>
	That was rewier of hem al, of las and eke of more,	<i>ruler; less</i>
	Ordeyned hir dyner wisely or they to chirch went	<i>Ordered; lunch; before</i>
	Such vitailles as he fond in town and for noon other sent.	<i>food</i>
	The Pardonere beheld the besynes, howe states were i-served. ¹	
20	Diskennyngh hym al pryvely and asyde swerved.	<i>Withdrawng; secretly</i>
	The hostelere was so halowed from o plase to another,	<i>innkeeper; shamed at; one</i>
	He toke his staff to the tapstere. — "Welcom, myne owne brother," ²	
	Quod she with a frendly look, al redy for to kys.	<i>Said</i>
	And he, as a man i-lerned of such kyndnes,	
25	Braced hir by the myddill and made hir gladly chere,	<i>Embraced; wait; expression</i>
	As though he had i-knowe hir al the rather yeer.	<i>previous</i>
	She haled hym into the tapstry, there hir bed was maked.	<i>hauled; uproot; where</i>
	"Lo, here I ligg," quod she, "myselff al nyght al naked,	<i>lie</i>

¹ *The Pardonere beheld the activity, how various people (social ranks) behaved (see note)*

² *He (the Pardoner) gave his staff to the barmaid. "Welcome, my dear brother."*

The Canterbury Interlude

Without mannes company, syn my love was dede —	since; lover
30 Jenkyn Harpour, yf ye hym know. From fete to the hede,	feet
Was nat a lustier persone to daunce ne to lepe	liveller; leap
Then he was, though I it sey." — And therewith she to wepe	Than
She made, and with hir napron feir and white i-wassh,	starred; apron
She wyped softt hir eyen, for teres that she out lassh	eyes; poured
35 As grete as eny mylstone, upward gon they stert	millstone
For love of hir swetyng that sat so myghe hir hert.	sweetheart; near
She wept and wayled and wrong hir hondes, and made much to done,	ado
For they that loven so passyngly, such trowes they have echon. ¹	
She snyffeth, sigheth, and shooke hire hede, and made rouful chere.	sad expression
40 "Benedicize!" quod the Pardonere, and toke hir by the swere.	Bless us; neck
"Ye make sorowe inowgh," quod he, "your lyff though ye shuld lese." ² enough; lose	
"It is no wonder," quod she than, and therewith she gan to fnese.	sneeze
"Aha! Al hole!" quod the Pardoner. "Your penaunce is somewhat passed." ³	
"God forbede it els," quod she; "but it were somewhat lassed."	unless; lessened
45 I myght nat lyve els, thowc wotest, and it shuld long endure."	otherwise; know, if
"Now blessed be God of mendement, of hele and eke of cure,"	recovery; health
Quod the Pardoner tho anoon and toke hir by the chynne,	then
And seyd to hir these wordes tho: "Allas, that love ys syn!	then
So kynde a lover as ye be oon, and so trew of hert,	faithful
50 For by my trewe conscience, yit for yewe I smert	feel pain
And shall this eschent hereafter for your soden disease.	acute distress
Now wele were hym ye loved, so he coude yewe plesse.	
I durst swere oppon a book that trewe he shuld yewe fynd.	Bible
For he that is so yore dede is green in your mynde.	long dead; fresh
55 Ye made me a sory man; I dred ye wold have sterveyd."	sorrowful; died
"Graunt mercy, gentil sir," quod she, "that ye unaserved."	
Ye be a nobill man, i-blessed must ye be.	must
Sit down, ye shul drynk." — "Nay, iwis!" quod he;	surely
"I am fastyng yit, myne own heretes note." ⁴	root
60 "Fasting yit? Allas!" quod she. "Therof I can good bote."	know; remedy
She stert into the town and fet a py al hote	hurried; fetched; pie

¹ For those who love so surprisingly such fancies they each one have

² "Aha! Al hole (Good health)," said the Pardoner. "Your penaunce (mourning for your dead husband) is just about over."

³ "Many thanks, gentle sir," she said. "Pain on my behalf you didn't deserve."

The Canterbury Interlude

	And set tofore the Pardoner. "Jenken, I weea? I note.	guess; don't know
	Is that your name, I yow prey?" — "Yee, iwis, myne own suster,	indeed
	So was I enformed of hem that me did foster.	by them
65	And what is years?" — "Kit, iwis, so cleped me my dame."	called; mother
	"And Goddes blessing have thow, Kit, now broke we thy name,"	do credit to
	And pravelich unlased his both eyen-liddes	furtively opened; eyelids
	And loket hir in the visage paramour amyddes,	face amorously direct
	And sighed therewith a litol tyme, that she it here myghte,	hear
70	And gan to trown and feyn this song, "Now love, thou do me righte!"	croon; sing
	"Ete and be mery," quod she. "Why breke ye nat your fast?	
	To waite more feleshipp it were but work in wast.	await; vain
	Why make ye so dull chere? For your love at home?"	sad looks
	"Nay foresoth, myne own hert, it is for yewe aloon."	
75	"For me? Alas, what sey ye? That were a sympill prey."	say; trick
	"Trewlich yit," quod the Pardoner, "it is as I yewe sey."	
	"Ye eseth and beth mery. We woll speke thereof sone.	soon
	Brenned cat dredeth feir; it is mery to be aloon.	Burned; dreads fire
	For, by Our Lady Mary that bare Ihess on hir arm,	who bore
80	I coude never love yit, but it did me harm,	unless
	For ever my maner hath be to love over-much."	excessively
	"Now, Cristes blessing," quod the Pardoner, "go with al such.	do away
	Lo, howe the clowdes wochten eche man to mete his mach.	Heavens cause; match
	For trewly, gentil Cristian, I use the same tach	well-born; practice; habit
85	And have i-do many a yere. I may it nat forber,	done; resist
	For Kynde woll have his cours, though men the contrary swer."	Nature; swear
	And therewith he stert up smerty and cast down a grote.	groan (coin)
	"What shal this do, gentill sir? Nay, sir! For my cote,	surcoat
	I nold ye payde a peny here and so sone pas."	would not; soon leave
90	The Pardoner swore his gretter othe; he wold pay no las.	oath; less
	"Iwis, sir, it is over-do. But sith it is your will,	excessive; since
	I woll put it in my purs, lest ye it take in ill	
	To refuse your certesy!" — and therewith she gan to bowe.	
	"Now trewly," quod the Pardoner, "your maners been too alowe.	humble
95	For had ye counted streytly and nothing lefft behynde,	strictly
	I myghte have wele i-demded that ye be unkynde	judged
	And eke untrewe of hert and sonner me forgesse,	unfaithful; sooner
	But ye list be my tresorer, for we shall offter mete."	wish; more often
	"Now certien," quod the Tapster, "ye have ared ful even.	explained completely
100	As wold to God ye couthe as wele undo my sveven,	could; interpret; dream

The Canterbury Interlude

	That I myself did mete this nyght that is i-passed —	<i>dream</i>
	How I was in a chirch when it was al i-massed	<i>mass was said</i>
	And was in my devocioune tyl service was al doon,	
	Tyll the preest and the clerk boystly bad me goon	<i>nadely ordered</i>
105	And put me out of the chirch with an eger mode."	<i>angily</i>
	"Now Seynt Danyel," quod the Pardoner, "yeur sweven turne to good!"	<i>drawn</i>
	And I woll halbow it to the best, have it in your mynd,	<i>explain</i>
	For comenly of these sweenes the contrary men shal fynde.	<i>often; dreams</i>
	Ye have be a lover glad, and litil joy i-had.	<i>been; eager</i>
110	Pluk up a lusty hert and be mery and glad,	<i>cheerful</i>
	For ye shal have a husband that shal yewe wed to wyve	<i>as wife</i>
	That shal love yewe as heartly as his own lyve.	<i>heartly; life</i>
	The preest that put yewe out of chirch shal lede yew in ageyn	
	And help to your mariage with al his myghtie and mayn.	<i>power</i>
115	This is the sweven, al and som. Kit, how liketh theo?"	<i>sue; does it please you?</i>
	"By my irowth, wonder wele! Blessed mat thou be!"	<i>may</i>
	Then toke he leve at that tyme, tyll he com effsonne,	<i>returned again</i>
	And went to his feleshipp, as it was to doon.	
	Thoughe it be no grete holynes to preach this ilk matere	<i>particular event</i>
120	And that som list nat to here it, yit sirs, ner-the-latter,	<i>nevertheless</i>
	Endureth for a while and suffreth hem that woll,	<i>allow; want to</i>
	And ye shull here howe the Tapster made the Pardoner pull	<i>peel</i>
	Garlik al the long nyghte, til it was nerend day.	<i>Garlic; nearly</i>
	For the more cher she made of love, the falshir was hir lay.	<i>look; father; talk</i>
125	Bat litil charge gaff she therof, though she aquyt his while,	<i>gave; repaid; efforts</i>
	For etheres thought and tent was other to begile,	<i>each one's; intention</i>
	As ye shull here herafter, when tyme cometh and spase	<i>hear; opportunity</i>
	To meve such mater. But nowe a litill spase	<i>To bring up</i>
	I woll retourn me ageyn to the company.	
130	The Knyght and al the feleshipp, and nothing for to ly,	<i>lie</i>
	When they were all i-logged, as skill wold and reson,	<i>lodged</i>
	Everich after his degré, to chirch then was seson	<i>social rank; time</i>
	To pas and to wend, to make hir offringes,	<i>go</i>
	Righte as hir devocioune was, of sylver broch and rynges.	<i>broaches</i>
135	Then atte chirch dorr the courtes gan to ryse,	<i>at the; social custom</i>
	Tyl the Knyght of gentilnes that knewe righte wele the guyse	<i>who; proper form</i>
	Put forth the prelates, the Person and his fere.	<i>clergesmen; companion (Plowman)</i>
	A monk that toke the spryngill with a manly cher	<i>sprinkler</i>
	And did as the maner is, moilled al hir pates,	<i>wetted all their heads</i>

The Canterbury Interlude

140	Everich after other, righte as they were of states. The Frere feynded fetiously the spryngil for to hold To spryng oppon the remnaunt, that for his cope he sold Have lafft that occupaciounse in that holy place, So longed his holy conscience to se the Nonnes face!	<i>Every; ranks acted wisely sprinkle; cloak; wouldn't left face</i>
145	The Knyghte went with his compars toward the holy shryne To do that they were com fore, and after for to dyne. The Pardoner and the Miller and other lewde sotes Sought hemself in the chyrch, right as lewd gotes, Pyred fast and poured highe oppon the glase,	<i>companions what low-born fools Placed; goats Looked intently; peered; stained-glass</i>
150	Counterfeting gentilmen, the armes for to blase, Diskyveryng fast the peyntour, and for the story mourned ¹ And ared also — right as rammes horned! "He bereith a balstaff," quod the toos, "and els a rakes ende." ²	<i>Posing at; heraldic arms; identify interpreted; straight are wrong</i>
155	It is a spere, yf thowe canst se, with a peik tofore To bussh adown his enmy and thurh the sholdier bore. "Pese!" quod the Hoost of Southwork. "Let stand the wyndow glazed. Goth up and doth your offerynge. Ye semeth half amased.	<i>point on top push; enemy; pierce glazed dazed</i>
160	Sith ye be in company of honest men and good, Worcheteth somewhat after, and let the kynd of brode ³ Pas for a tyme. I hold it for the best, For who doth after company may lyve the bet in rest."	<i>Since Since does so in public boisterously; ogling</i>
165	Then passed they forth boystly, goglyng with hir bedes, Kneled adown tofore the shryne, and hertlich hir bedes They preyd to Seynt Thomas, in such wise as they couthe, And sith the holy reliques ech man with his mowth	<i>devoutly; rosaries manner; knew how then; mouth</i>
170	Kissed, as a goodly monke the names told and taugh. And sith to other places of holynes they raughte And were in hir devocions tyl service were al doone, And sith they drough to dyneward, as it drew to noon.	<i>while then; reached shot; went to lunch</i>
	Then, as manere and custom is, signes there they boughte, For men of contre shuld know whom they had soughte. Ech man set his sylver in such thing as they liked.	<i>souvenir tokens So that neighbors purchased with his money</i>

¹ Explicating swiftly the depiction, and upon the story meditated

² "That one bears a stout stick," said the one, "just like a roke handle."

³ Behave with more reserve, and hide your native (*gauche*) manner

The Canterbury Interlude

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 175 | And in the meanwhile, the Miller had i-piked
His bosom ful of signes of Caunterbury broches, | stuffed
tokens |
| | Huch the Pardonner and he pryvely in his pouches
They put hem afterward, that noon of hem it wist, | Whiche; secretly; pockets
them; knew |
| | Save the Sompnour seid somewhat and seyd to hem, "List,
Halff part!" quod he pryvely, rownsyng on his ere. | Except; saw; Listen
Give half; whispering in |
| 180 | "Hussit! Pees!" quod the Miller, "Seist thowe nat the Frere,
Howe he lowreth under his hood with a doggish ey?
Hit shuld be a pryy thing that he coude nat aspy.
Of every crafft he can somewhat, Our Lady gyve hym sorowe!" | Don't you see
lowers; greedy eye
<i>It</i>
trick; know |
| 185 | "Amen," tho quod the Sompnour, "on eve and eke on morowe!
So cursed a tale he told of me, the devil of hell hym spede —
And me! — but yf I pay hym wele and quyte wele his mede,
Yf it hap homward that ech man tell his tale, | treat |
| | As we did hideward, though I shuld set at sale
Al the shrewdnes that I can, I wol hym nothing spare | on display
knavery |
| 190 | That I nol touch his taberd somewhat of his care."
They set his signes oppos his hedes, and som oppos his capp, | wouldn't; garment; sorrow
their badges |
| | And sith to the dynerward they gan for to stapp.
Every man in his degré wiss and toke his sete, | there; walk
washed; seat |
| | As they were wont to doon at soper and at mete, | do; meal |
| 195 | And were in scilence for a tyme, till girdill gon arise.
But then as Nature axeth, as these old wise
Knownen wele, when veynes been somewhat replete,
The sprites wol stere, and also metes swete | silence; waist-nash
wise men
veins; full
sir; foods |
| | Causen offt myrthes for to be i-meved. | amusement; motivated |
| 200 | And eke it was no tyme tho for to be i-grevet;
Every man in his wise made herly chere,
Talyng his felowe of sportes and of chere,
And of other myrthes that fyllen by the wey. | also; gloomy
manner |
| | As custom is of pilgryms — and hath been many a day. | Telling; jolliness
befell |
| 205 | The Hoost leyd to his ere, of Southwork as ye knowe,
And thanked al the company, both highe and lowe,
So wele kepeing the covenant in Southwork that was made, | listened carefully
thanked
agreement |
| | That every man shuld by the wey with a tale glade
Al the hole company in shorting of the wey: | gladden |
| 210 | "And al is wele perfourmed, but than nowe thus I sey
That we must so homward, ecche man tel another.
Thus we were accorded, and I shuld be a rother, | whole; shortening; journey
agreed; rudder |

The Canterbury Interlude

- To set yewe in governaunce by rightful jugement." proper
"Trewly, Hoost," quod the Frere, "that was al our assent
215 With a litill more that I shal sey thereto.
Ye graunted of your courtesy that we shuld also,
Al the hole company, sope with yewe at nyghte. done
Thus I trow that it was. What sey ye, Sir Knyght?" believe
"It shal nat nede," quod the Hoost, "to axe no witnes. be necessary; ask
220 Your record is good inowe, and of your gentilnes recollection; good manners
Yit I prey yewe offt ageyn, for by Seynt Thomas shryne, once again
And ye woll hold covenauant, I wol hold myne." if; your agreement
"Now trewly, Hoost," quod the Knyght, "ye have right wel i-sayd. spoken
And as towching my persone, I hold me payde. pertaining to; satisfied
225 And so I trowe that al doth, Sirs, what sey ye?" believe
The Moske and eke the Marchaunte and al seid "Yee!" also
"Then al this aftermeie I hold it for the best afternoon
To sport and pley us," quod the Hoost, "eche man as hym list, pleases
And go bytyme to soper and to bed also. promptly
230 So mowe we erly rySEN our journey for to do." may
The Knyght arose therwithal and cast on a fressher gown, put
And his sone another, to walk in the town.
And so did al the remaunt that were of that array company
That had hir chaunges with hem; they made hem fressh and gay, extra clothes
235 Sorted hem togider righte as hir lustes lay, Grouped; pleasures accustomed to
As they were more used traveling by the wey. company defences
The Knyght with his meyné went to se the wall Describing attentively
And the wardes of the town, as to a knyght befall,
Devising esentiflich the strengthes al about,
240 And apoynted to his sone the perell and the dout pointed out; peril; risk
For shot of arblast and of bowe, and eke for shot of gonne,
Unto the wardes of the town, and howe it myght be wone.
And al defence therageyn, after his entent,
245 He declared compendiously. And al that ever he ment, against that
His sone perseyved every poyst, as he was ful abill exhaustively; meant
To armes and to travail, and persone covenabill. struggle; accomplished
He was of al factur after fourm of Kynde,
And for to deme his governaunce, it seemed that his mynde feature; Nature
Was much in his lady that he loved best,
250 That made hym offt to wake when he shuld have his rest. judge; composure whom
The Clerk that was of Oxford onto the Somnoure seyd. Oxford; unto

The Canterbury Interlude

	"Me semeth of grete clerge that thou art a mayde, For thou puttest on the Frere in maner of repreff That he knoweth falshede, vice, and eke a theff. And I it hold vertuous and right commendabill, To have very knowlech of thinges reprovabill. For whoso hath may eschew it and let it pas by. And els he myghte fall thereon, unaware and sodenly. And thoughte the Frere told a tale of a sompsoun, Thowe oughtest for to take it for no dishonour, For of all craftes and of eche degré They be nat al perfite, but som nyce be."	education; innocent accuse; reproof true avoid Otherwise; unaware Thou professions; social rank perfect; foolish
255	"Lo, what is worthy," seyd the Knyght, "for to be a clerk! To sommon among us hem, this mocioun was ful derk." ¹	
260	I comend his wittes and eke his clerge For of ether parte he saveth honesté."	intelligence; learning preserves reputation
265	The Monke toke the Person then and the Grey Frere, And preyd hem ful curteysly for to go in fere: "I have there a queynauant that al this yeres thre	
270	Hath preyd me by his lettres that I hym wold se, And ye, my brother in habit and in possessioune. And now I am here, me thinketh it is to doon To preve it in dede what cher he wold me make, And to yewe, my frendes, also for my sake."	begged; together acquaintance; these implorèd attire; endowment fixing test; welcome
275	They went forth togider, talking of holy matere, But woot ye welc in certeyn, they had no mynd on water To drynk at that tyme, when they were met in fere, For of the best that myght be found, and therwith mery cher They had, it is no doute, for spyces and eke wyne	subjects know; for certain together entertainment
280	Went round about, the Gascoyn and eke the Ruyne.	Gascon (red); Rhine (white)
285	The Wyff of Bath was so wery, she had no will to walk. She toke the Prioress by the hond: "Madam, wol ye stalk Pryvely into the garden to se the herbes growe, And after with our hostes wyff in hir parlour rowe? I woll gyve yewe the wyne, and ye shull me also, For tyll we go to soper, we have naught elles to do."	desire (see note) stroll plants afterwards; innkeeper's; rest supper; nothing

¹ "Lo, how worthwhile," said the Knight, "it is to be a scholar! / To summon such scholars among us, this motive was quite obscure."

The Canterbury Interlude

- The Priores, as womman taught of gentil blood and head,
Assented to hir counsell, and forth gon they wend,
Passyng forth softly into the herbery,
290 For many a herbe grewe for sew and surgery,
And al the aleyes feir i-pared, i-rayled and i-maked,
The sauge and the isope i-frethed and i-staked,
And other beddes by and by fresh i-dight,
For comers to the hoost righte a sportful sight.
- nurtured; courteous
plan; depart
herb-garden
soop; medicine
pash; trimmed; fenced; made
sage; hyssop enclosed; staked
side by side newly cultivated
visiore; houseby; enteraining
- 295 The Marchaunt and the Mancipill, the Miller and the Reve,
And the Clerk of Oxenforth to towward gon they meve,
And al the other meyné, and lafft noon at home —
Save the Pardoner that pravelich, when al they were goon,
300 Stalked into the tapstry, for nothing wold he leve
To make his covenante in certen that same eve:
He wold be logged with hir — that was his hole entencioune.
But hap and eke fortune and al the constellacioune
Was clene hym agayns, as ye shull after here.
For hym had better be i-logged al nyght in a myere
305 Then he was the same nyghte or the sonne was up.
For such was his fortune, he drank without the cupp!
But thereof wist he no dele, ne no man of us all
May have that highe connyng to know what shal befall.
He stapp'd into the tapstry wonder pravelich,
310 And fond hir liggyng lirylong, with half sclepy eye —
Poured fellich under hir hood and saw al his comyng.
And lay ay still, as naught she knewe, but feyned hir scleping.
He put his hond to hir brest. "Awake," quod he, "Awake!"
- toward town; move
company; left
Except; who secretly
Crepe; taproom
agreement
lodged; whole
chance; astrological forces
hear
swamp
Than; before
i.e., had difficulty
knew; part
knowledge
stepped; taproom
lying full-length; sleepy
(She) peered slyly
as if sleeping
- "A, Benedicite! Sir, who wist yewe here? Out! Thus I myght be take
315 Prisoner," quod the tapstere, "being al aloon!" —
And therwith breyd up in a frighe and began to groan.
"Nowe sith ye be my prisoner, yeld yewe now," quod he.
"I must nedes," quod she. "I may nothing fle,
And eke I have no strength and am but yong of age,
320 And also it is no mastry to each a mouse in a cage
That may nowhere stert out, but closed woder fast.
And eke, sir, I tell yewe, though ye had grete hast,
Ye shuld have coughed when ye com. Where lern ye courtesy?
Now trewlich I must chide, for of righte pryyte
325 Wommen been som tyme of day when they be aloon.
- Knows
alone
(she) started
since; surrender
victory
enclosed

The Canterbury Interlude

	Where coud I, I yewe prey, when ye com cliffone?"	return so soon
	"Nowe mercy, dere sweting, I wol do so no more.	sweetheart
	I thank yew an hundred sithes, and also by your lore	times; instruction
	I woll do hereafter in what place that I com.	whatever
330	But lovers, Kit, been evill avised ful offt and too lom.	poorly advised; frequently
	Wherfor, I prey yew hertlich, hold me excused.	Therefore
	And I behote yew tredly, it shal no more be used.	promise
	But nowe to our purpose: how have ye fare	
	Sith I was with yew last? That is my most care,	Since; prime concern
335	For yf ye eyled eny thing otherwise then good,	suffered
	Tredly it wold chawge my cher and my blood."	complication
	"I have i-fared the wers for yew," quod Kit. "Do ye no dredc	on account of
	God that is above? And eke ye had no nede	
	For to conger me, God woot, with your nygromancy	conjure; necromancy
340	That have no more to vaunce me but oonly my body;	Who (Kit); advance
	And yf it were disteyned, then were I ondo.	dishonored; undone
	Iwys I trowe, Jenken, ye be nat to trust to,	Surely I believe
	For evermore ye clerkes con so much in book,	know
	Ye woll wyn a womman atte first look."	at the
345	Thought the Pardoner, "This goth wele!" and made hir better cher	
	And axed of hir softilly, "Lord! Who shall ligge here	asked; lie
	This nyghe that is to comyng? I prey yew tell me."	
	"Iwys, it is grete nede to tell yew," quod she;	
	"Make it nat over queynt, though ye be a clerk.	overly subtle
350	Ye know wel inowgh iwys by loke, by word, by work."	enough surely
	"Shal I com then, Cristian, and fese awey the cat?"	drive
	"Shul ye com, sir? Benedicte! What question is that?	
	Wherfore I prey yew hertly, do by my counsall.	Therefore; follow my advice
	Cometh somwhat late, and for nothing fail.	
355	The dorr shall stand char up. Put it from yew softi,	ajar; Push
	But be wel avised ye wake nat hem on lofft."	careful; them upstairs
	"Care ye nat," quod Jenken. "I can thereon atte best;	Don't worry; know
	Shall no man for my stering be waked of his rest."	stirring
	Anoon they dronk the beverage and were of oon accord,	agreement
360	As it semed by hir cher and also by hir word,	expression
	And al ascaunce she loved hym wele, she toke hym by the swere,	all as if; neck
	As though she had lerned cury favel of som old frere.	[so] carry favor
	The Pardoner plukked out of his purs, I trow, the dowry	funds
	And toke it Kit in hir hond, and bad hir pryvely	gave

The Canterbury Interlude

- And toke it Kit in his hond, and bad his prively
To oeden a rere soper for hem both to: *gave*
 "A cawdell i-made with swete wyne and with suger also;
For trewly I have no talent to ete in your absence,
So longeth my hert toward yewe to be in your presence."
 He toke his leve and went his wey, as thoughte nothing were.
 And met with al the feleshipp. But in what plase ne where, *i.e., where he'd been*
 He spak no word therof but held hym close and still, *silent*
 As he that hoped sikerlich to have had al his will,
And thought many a mery thought by hymself aloon:
 "I am i-logged," thought he, "best, howesoever it gone!" *lodged*
 And thoughte it have costed me, yit wol I do my peyn
For to pike his purs tomyghte and wyn my cost ageyn." *take pains*
 Now leve I the Pardoner till that it be eve,
 And woll retourne me ageyn right there as I did leve.
 When al were com togider in his herbegage, *their lodgings*
 The Hoost of Southwork, as ye knowe, that had no spece of rage *speck of rashness*
 But al thing wrought prudenciall, as sober man and wise:
 "Nowe woll we to the souper? Sir Knyght, seith your avyse," *speak; advice*
 Quod the Hoost ful curteysly. And in the same wise *manner*
 The Knyght answerd hym ageyn, "Sir, as ye devise,
 I must obey, ye woot wele, but yf I faill witt." *in reply; decide*
 Then taketh these prelates to yewe and wassheth and go sit,
 For I woll be your marchall and serve yewe echone, *clergymen*
 And then the officers and I to soper shull we goon.
 They wiss and sett righte as he bad, ech man with his fere, *washed*
 And begonne to talk of sportes and of chere *gamer; entertainment*
 That they had the aftermete whils they were out; *afternoon*
 For other occupacions til they were served about,
 They had nat at that tyme, but eny man kitt a loff. *unless; cut a loaf*
 But the Pardoner kept hym close and told nothing of *quiet*
 The myrr and hope that he had, but kept it for hymself. *to*
 And thoughte he did, it is no fers, for he had nede to solve *sing a different tune*
 Long or it were mydayght, as ye shul here sone, *before; hear soon*
 For he met with his love in crokking of the moon. *crescent (i.e., unlucky phase)*
 They were i-served honestly, and ech man held hym payde, *felt satisfied*
 For of o maner of service his soper was arайд,
 As skill wold and reson, sith the less of all *one; their; presented*
 Payed illich much, for growing of the gall. *since; least*
 equally; to avert ill-humor

The Canterbury Interlude

405	The states that were above had of the feyrest endreyte. Wherfor they did hir gentilnes ageyn to al the rout; They droken wyne at hir cost ones round aboute.	estates; seating at table <i>Therefore; in return; company their; once</i>
	Nowe pass I lightly over: When they souped had, Tho that were of governaunce, as wise men and sad, Went to hir rest and made no more to doon.	<i>quickly; dined</i>
410	Butte Miller and the Coke droken by the moon Twyes to ech other in the repenyng, And when the Pardonner hem aspied, anoon he gan to syng "Doubil me this bourdon," chokelyng in his throte,	<i>But the; Cook; drank</i> <i>Twice; still of the night</i> <i>there; at once</i> <i>Accompany; duet; yodeling</i>
	For the tapster shuld here of his mery note.	<i>So that; hear; now</i>
415	He cleped to hym the Sompnore, that was his own discipill, The Yeman and the Reve and the Mauncipill, And stoden so holowing, for nothing wold they leve Tyl the tyme that it was wel within eve.	<i>called; Summoner, who</i> <i>Yeoman</i> <i>stood; hollering; stop</i>
	The Hoost of Southwork herd hem wele, and the Marchaunt both,	
420	As they were at acountes and wesen somewhat wroth, But yit they preyd hem curtesyly to rest for to wend. And so they did, al the route, they dronk and made an ende, And ech man droughe to cusky to sclepe and take his rest — ¹	<i>record-keeping; grew; angry</i> <i>travel</i> <i>group</i>
	Save the Pardonner that dresw apart and weyted hym a trest,	<i>Except; spottid; nook</i>
425	For to hyde hymself till the candill were out.	
	And in the meanwhile — have ye no doute —	
	The tapster and hir paramour and the hosteler of the house Sit togider pravelich, and of the best gouse	<i>lover; innkeeper</i> <i>goose</i>
	That was i-found in town and i-set at sale	
430	They had thercof sufficiantz, and dronk but litill ale, And sit and ete the cawdell for the Pardonner that was made With suger and with swete wyne, right as hymself bade. So he that payd for all in feir had nat a twynt.	<i>hot toddy</i> <i>ordered</i> <i>all together; but</i> <i>stamped than minted</i>
	For offt is more better i-merked then i-mynt,	
435	And so fared there, ful righte as ye have i-herd.	<i>heard</i>
	But who is that a womman couid nat make his berd And she were thereabout and set hir wit thereto?	<i>i.e., cheat him</i> <i>If; mind</i>
	Ye woot wele I ly nat, and where I do or no, I well nat here termyn it, lest ladies stand in place,	<i>know; lie; whether</i> <i>determine; be present</i>

¹ And each person withdrew to settle down to sleep and take his rest

The Canterbury Interlude

440	Or els gentil women, for lesing of my grace Of daliaunce and of sportes and of goodly chere. Therefor, anerast hir estates I woll in no manere Deme ne determyne, but of lewd Kittes	lesing; privilege sociability; entertainment against their Judge; uncouth barmaids
445	To pik mennes purses and eke to blen hir eye; So wele they make seme soth when they fairessest ly, Now of Kit Tapster and of hir paramour And the hosteler of the house that sit in Kittes boun,	i.e., deceive them seem truth hostkeeper; bedroom
450	When they had ete and dronk, right in the same place, Kit began to render out al thing as it was, The wowing of the Pardonner and his cost also,	explain wooing; payment lie
455	And howe he hoped for to lygg al nyght with hir also — But therof he shall be siker as of Goddes cope! — And sodenly kissed hir paramour and seyd, "We shul sclope Togider hul by hul as we have many a nyghte,	as certain; garment sleep side by side
460	And yf he com and make noyse, I prey yow dab hym knyght." "Yis, dame," quod hir paramour, "be thou nat agast. This is his own staff, thou seyst; thereof he shal atast." "Now trewly," quod the hosteler, "and he com by my lot,	i.e., beat him afraid you say; taste if way
465	He shall drynk for Kittes love without cup or pot, And he be so hardy to wake eny glist, I make a vowe to the pocok, there shal wake a foul myst!" — And arose up therwithal and soke his leve anoon.	i.e., have trouble if; rash; guest be made a stink
470	It was a shrewed company; they had served so many oon. With such maner of feleshipp ne kepe I never to dele, ¹ Ne no man that loveth his worshipp and his hele. Quod Kit to hir paramour, "Ye must wake a while,	masty; treated honor; health stay awake
475	For trewlich I am siker that within this myle The Pardonner wol be comyng, his hete to aswage. But loke ye pay hym redelich to kele his corage. And therfor, love, dischauce yewe nat til this chek be do."	i.e., time it takes to go a mile passion to quench immediately; cool; ardor distract; fear is done
	"No, for God! Kit, that woll I no!" Then Kit went to bed and blew out al the lighte, And by that tyme it was nerhond quarter nyght. When al was still, the Pardonner gan to walk,	not nearly 9:00 p.m.

¹ Nor, with such sort of people, would I care ever to deal again

The Canterbury Interlude

- As glad as eny goldlynch that he herd no man talk,
And drowghe to Kittes dorward to herkes and to list,
And went to have fond the dor up, but the hasp and eke the twist¹
Held hym out a whils, and the lok also.
- 480 Yit trowed he no gylc, but went nere to
And scraped the dorr welplich and wyned with his mowth
After a dogges lyden, as nere as he couthe.
"Away, dogg, with evil deth!" quod he that was within,
And made hym al redy the dorr to unpyn.
- 485 "A!" thought the Pardoner tho. "I trow my berd be made!
The tapster hath a paramour and hath made him glade
With the cawdell that I ordeyned for me, as I ges.
Now the devill hir spode, such oon as she is!
She said I had i-congered hir. Our Lady gyve hir sorow!
- 490 Now wold to God she were in stokkes til I shuld hir borowe,
For she is the falsessest that ever yit I knewe,
To pik the mony out of my pars! Lord, she made hir trew!"
And therewith he caught a cardiall and a cold sot.
For who hath love-longing and is of corage hote,
- 495 He hath ful many a mery thought tofore his delyte,
And right so had the Pardoner and was in evil plighe.
For fayling of his purpose he was nothing in ese.
Wherfor he fill sodenlich into a wood rese,
Entryng wonder fast into a frensy
- 500 For pure verry anger and for gelousy.
For when he herd a man within, he was almost wood.
And because the cost was his, no mervel though his mood
Were turned into vesgaunce, yf it myght be.
But this was the myscheff: al so strong as he,
- 505 Was he that was within, and lightier man also,
As preved wel the batell betwene hem both to.
The Pardoner scraped esft ageyn, for nothing wold he blyn,
So feyn he wold have herd more of hym that was within.
"What dogg is that?" quod the paramour. "Kit, wost thou cre?"
- 510 "Have God my trowth," quod she, "it is the Pardoner."
"The Pardoner with myscheff, God gyve hym evill preff!"
- drew; to the door; knees
lock
believed; near
dog-like; whined
Like; manner
unlock
i.e., I am wicked
tally; ordered; guess
help; a one
enchanted
stocks; make bail
acted as if she were
heart-ache; sweat
whoever; passion
before
situation
ease
Therefore; insane rage
frenzy
true; jealousy
insane
difficulty; just as
quicker
proved; two
knocked; cease
eagerly
hear
misfortune; outcome

¹ And expected to have found the door open, but the latch and also the hinge

The Canterbury Interlude

	"Sir," she said, "by my troth, he is the same theff."	<i>thief</i>
	"Thereof thou liest," quod the Pardoner, and myght nat long forbere.	<i>hold back</i>
	"A! Thy fals body!" quod he. "The devill of hell thee terf!"	<i>treacherous; tear</i>
515	For by my troth, a falshir sawe I never noon!" —	<i>falsir</i>
	And sempnsed his names, many mo then oon,	<i>(he) called; more than</i>
	Huch to rech here were noon honesté	<i>Which; self; decency</i>
	Among men of good, of worship and degré.	<i>substance; rank</i>
	But shortly to conclude, when he had chid inow,	<i>chided enough</i>
520	He axed his staff spitouslich with wordes sharp and rowe.	<i>asked for; spitefully; rough</i>
	"Go to bed," quod he within, "No more noyse thou make."	
	Thy staff shall be redy tomorrow, I undertake."	<i>declare</i>
	"In sooth," quod he, "I woll nat fro the doer wend	<i>go</i>
	Tyll I have my staff, thou bribour!" — "Then have the toder end!"	<i>chief; the other</i>
525	Quod he that was within, and leyd it on his bak,	<i>applied</i>
	Right in the same place as chapmen bereth hir pak.	<i>salesmen; their</i>
	And so he did too mo, as he coude arede,	<i>two more; reckon</i>
	Graspyng after with the staff in length and eke in brede,	<i>Reaching; breadth</i>
	And fond hym otherwhile redlich inowghe	<i>sometimes ready enough</i>
530	With the stafles ende highe oppon his browe.	
	The hosteler lay oppon his bedd and herd of this affray,	<i>disturbance</i>
	And stert hym up lightlich and thought he wold assay.	<i>quickly; investigate</i>
	He toke a staff in his hand and higched wonder blyve,	<i>hurried; fast</i>
	Tyll he were with the feleshipp that shuld never thryve.	
535	"What be ye?" quod the hosteler, and knew hem both wel.	<i>there; well</i>
	"Huyst! Pese!" quod the paramour. "Jak, thou must be fele.	<i>thash; careful</i>
	There is a theff, I tell thee, within this hall dorr."	
	"A theff!" quod Jak. "This is a nobill chere	<i>lucky break</i>
	That thou hym hast i-found, yf we hym myghtie cache."	<i>capture</i>
540	"Yis, yis! Care thee naught! With hym we shal mache	<i>Don't worry; contend</i>
	Wel inowghe or he be go, yf so we had lighte,	<i>enough before; gone</i>
	For we too be strong inowgh with o man for to fighte."	<i>two; one</i>
	"The devill of hell," quod Jak, "breeke this theves bones!	<i>thief's</i>
	The key of the kychen, as it were for the nones,	<i>so happens</i>
545	Is above with our dame, and she hath such usage	<i>tendency</i>
	And she be wake of hir sclepe, she failleth in such a rage	<i>If</i>
	That al the week after there may no man hir plesse,	<i>week</i>
	So she stereth aboute this house in a wood rese.	<i>sirs; mad rage</i>
	But now I am avised bet how we shull have lyghte:	<i>have a better idea</i>
550	I have too gistes aryn that this same nyghte	<i>two gueste herein</i>

The Canterbury Interlude

	Soped in the hall and had a litill feir.	Dived; fire
	Go up," quod Jak, "and loke and in the ashes pire,	search
	And I woll kepe the dorr. He shal nat stert out!"	escape
	"Nay, for God, that wol I nat, lest I catch a clouse,"	blow
555	Seid the toder to Jak. "For thou knowest better then I At the estres of this house. Go up thyselff and spy."	other room; look
	"Nay, for soth!" quod Jak. "That were grete unryghte To aventur oppon a man that with hym did nat fighte. Sithens thow hast hym bete and with thy staff i-pilt,	mistake happen
560	Me thinketh it were no reson that I shuld bere the gilt. For by the blysing of the cole, he myght se myne hede And lightly leve me such a stroke nybond to be dede."	Since; hit gilt glowing swifly; nearly act; seek
	"Then woll we do by comon assent sech hym al aboute. Who that meteith hym first, pay hym on the snoute.	Whoever; strike
565	For me thought I herd hym here last among the pannes. Kepe thow the toder syde, but ware the water cannes! And yf he be herein, right sone we shul hym fynd, And we to be strong inowghe o theff for to bynd."	watch out for
	"Aha-ha!" thought the Pardoner; "beth there pannes arya?"	two; one herein scheme
570	And droughe oppon that side and thought oppon a gynne. So atte last he fonde oon and set it on his hede, For as the case was fall, thereto he had grete nede. But yit he grasped ferthermore to have somewhat in honde,	bolt; going bolt out; two
	And fonde a grete ladill right as he was gonde, And thought for to stert out betwen hem both to;	Bet [he] spied
575	And wayted wele the paramour that had doon hym wo, And set hym with the ladill on the grustill on the nose That al the wook after he had such a pose That both his eyen watered erlich by the moewe.	grate (i.e., bridge) week; nasal problem eyes; early; morning
580	But she that cause was of al had therof no sorowe.	who
	But nowe to the Pardoner: as he wold stert awey, The hosteler met with hym, but nothing to his pay. The Pardoner ran so swith, the pan fil hym fro, And Jak Hosteler after hym as blyve as he myght go,	escape profit
	And stapped oppon a bronde, al unaware,	swifly; fell
585	That hym had been better to have goon more aware, For the egge of the panne met with his shyn And karff a-soo a veyn and the next syn. But whils that it was grene, he thought litil on.	stepped; cinder aside edge cut in two; nearest sinew fresh

The Canterbury Interlude

590	But when the oepnas was apast, the greff sat nere the boon. ¹	sir
	Yet Jak leyd to his hond to grope where to sete,	
	And when he fonda he was i-hurt, the Pardoner he gan to thrett	threatens
	And swore by Seynt Thomas that he shuld abigg	pay for it
	With strokes hard and soec even oppon the rigg;	back
595	Yiff he hym myghte fynde, he nothing wold hym spare.	If
	That herd the Pardoner welc and held hym better asquare	aside
	And thought that he had strokes ryghte inowghe,	enough
	Witnes on his armes, his bak, and his browe.	
	"Jak," then quod the paramour, "where is this theff ago?"	gone
600	"Inote," quod tho Jak, "right now he lept me fro,	don't know; then
	That Cristes curs go with hym, for I have harm and spide."	injury
	"By my trouth, and I also, and he goth nat al quyte!"	(f: repaid)
	But and we myght hym fynd, we wold aray hym so.	(f: treat
	That he shuld have legg ne foot tomorrow on to go!"	walk
605	"But howe shull we hym fynd? The moon is adown."	
	As grace was for the Pardoner, and eke when they did roun,	luck; whisper
	He herd hem ever wel inowghe and went the more aside,	
	And droughe hym ever bakward and lete the strokes glyde.	withdraw; miss
	"Jak," quod the paramour, "I hold it for the best,	
610	Sith the moon is down, for to go to rest.	Since
	And make the gates fast; he may nat them astert.	secure; escape
	And eke of his own staff he bereft a rody mark	
	Whereby thou maist hym know among al the route,	group
	And thou bereft a rody ey and weyt wele aboute	(f: eye; look
615	Tomorowe when they shull wend. This is the best rede.	leave; plan
	Jak, what seyst thou thereto? Is this wel i-seyd?"	spoken
	"Thy wit is clere," quod Jak. "Thy wit mut nedes stonde."	must necessarily
	He made the gates fast. There is no moer to doon.	
	The Pardoner stood asyde, his chekes ron on bleed,	ran with blood
620	And was right evil at ese al nyght in his bede.	
	He must of force lige lyke a Colyn swerd,	perforce lie; Cologne sword
	Yit it greved hym wonder sore for makeing of his berd.	i.e., being tricked
	He paid atte ful therefore thurh a womman art	in full; woman's
	For wyne and eke for cawdill, and had therof no part.	hot toddy
625	He therfor preyd Seynt Julian, as ye mowe understande,	(see note)

¹ But when eight days had passed, the infection was located nearer the bone

The Canterbury Interlude

	That the devill hir shuld spede on water and on londe,	deceive; lodging
	So to disseyc a traveling man of his herbegage,	except to curse; lessen
	And coude nat els save curs, his anger to asswage,	despair
	And was distract of his wit and in grete dispeyr.	
630	For after his hete, he caughte a cold thurh the nyghtes eyr	heated exercis; air
	That he was nere aloued and coude noon other help.	nearly exhausted; knew
	But as he sought his logging, he apped oppon a whelp	happened
	That lay under a steyir, a grete Walssh dogg	stair; Welsh
	That bare aboute his nek a grete huge clogg.	wood-block
635	Because that he was spetouse and wold sone bite.	ferocious
	The clogg was honged about his nek for men shuld nat wite	blame
	Nothing the dogges master yf he did eny harm;	In no way
	So for to excuse hem both, it was a wyly charm.	them; clever device
	The Pardoner wold have logged hym there and lay somewhat ny.	close
640	The warrok was awaked and caughte hym by the thy	monster; digh
	And bothe hym wonder spetously, defendyng wele his couch,	bit; fiercely
	That the Pardoner myght nat nere hym nethere touch,	approach; nor
	But held hym asquare by that other syde	stayed away
	As holsum was, at that tyme, for sereing of his hyde.	healthy; to avert; skin
645	He coude noon other help, but leyd adown his hode	knew; remedy
	In the dogges litter, and wissched after brede	bread
	Many a tyme and offt, the dogg for to plesse,	
	To have i-ley more nere for his own ese.	
	But wisswh what he wold, his Fortune seyd nay.	whatever
650	So trewly for the Pardoner, it was a dismol day.	unlucky
	The dogg lay ever grownyng, redy for to snache;	growling; bite
	Wherfor the Pardoner durst nat with hym mache,	Therefore; struggle
	But lay as styll as eny stone, remembryng his foly.	
	That he wold trust a tapster of a comon hostry.	public inn
655	For comealy for the most part, they been wyly echon.	usually; each one
	But nowe to all the company: amorow when they shuld goon,	in the morning
	Was noon of al the feleshipp half so sone i-dighte	prepared
	As was the geastil Pardoner, for al tyme of the nyghte	
	He was aredy in his aray and had nothing to doon	already
660	Saff shake a lite his eres, and trus and be goon.	Except; little; pack
	Yet or he cam in company, he wisswh away the blood,	before; washed
	And bond the sores to his hode with the tybet of his hood,	bound; wounds; upper
	And made lightsom chere for men shuld nat spy	merry
	Nothing of his turment ne of his luxury.	suffering; hat

The Canterbury Interlude

- 665 And the hosteler of the house, for nothing he coude pey,
He coude nat knowe the Pardoner among the company
Assorewe when they shuld wend, for aught that he coude pour,
So wisely went the Pardonner out of the dogges bouri,
And blynched from the hosteler and turned offt aboue.
670 And evermore he held hym amyward the route
And was ever synging to make al thing good,
But yit his notes were somewhat lowe, for akyng of his hede.
So at that tyme he had no more grame,
But held hym to his harmes to scape shame.
- 675 The Knyght and al the feleship, forward gon they wende,
Passing forth merely to the townes ende.
And by that tyme they were there, the day began to type,
And the sonne merely upward gan she pipe,
Pleying under the egge of the firmament.
- 680 "Now," quod the Hoost of Southwork, and to the feleshipp bent,
"Who sawe ever so feir or so glad a day?
And how soote this seson is entring into May!
[.]
The thrystoles and the thrusshes in this glad mornynge,
685 The ruddok and the goldfynch, but the myghtyngale
His amerous notes, lo, how he twyneth smale!
Lo, how the trees greneth that naked were and nothing
Barre this month afore, but now hir somer clothing.
Lo, how Nature maketh for hem everichone,
- 690 And as many as there been, he forgeteth noon.
Lo, howe the seson of the yere and Averell shoures
Doth the busshes burgyn out blosoms and floures!
Lo, the prymroses, how fresh they been to seen!
And many other floures among the grases green,
- 695 Lo, howe they spryng and spred of divers hewe!
Beholdeth and seeth both rede, white and blewe,
That lusty been and confortabill for mannes sighte,
For I sey for myself it maketh my hert to lighte.
- Now sith Almyghty Sovereyn hath sent so feir a day,
700 Let se nowe, as covenant is, in shorting of the way,
Who shall be the first that shall unlace his male
In confort of us all, and gyn som mery tale?
For and we shuld now begyn to draw lott,
- innkeeper; march
Next day; peer
cleverly; bed
avoided
amidst the group
soft; aching
grief
kept to himself; avoid
depart
merrily
dawn
cheerfully; peep
horizon
inclosed
sweet
song-thrushes
robin
spins gracefully
Bore; before; their
provides
she
April
burgeon with
primroses
colors
pleasant
to quicken
prior agreement
bag
begin
For if; lots

The Tale of Beryn

	Peraventur it myght fall there it ought not	Perhaps; where
705	On som unlysty persone that were nat wele awaked,	cranky; wide awake
	Or semy-bousy over eve, and had i-song and craked	half-drunk last night; crooked
	Somwhat over much. Howe shuld he than do?	then
	For who shuld tell a tale, he must have good will thereto.	
	And eke som men fasting beth nothing jocounde,	(without breakfast?); jolly
710	And som hir tungen fasting beth glewed and i-bound	stuck
	To the palet of the mowth as offt as they mete.	roof; meet
	So yf the lott fell on such, no thonk shuld they gete.	gratitude
	And som in the mornyng, hir mouthes beth adoun;	frowning
	Till that they be charmed, hir wordis woll nat soun.	enchanted; sound
715	So this is my conclusyoun and my last knot:	point
	It were grete gentilnes to tell without lott."	discretion; drawing lots
	"By the Rood of Bromholm," quod the Marchaunse tho,	Cross; then
	"As fer as I have sayled, riden and i-go,	walked
	Sawe I never man yit tofore this ilch day	same
720	So well coude rewle a company as our Hoost in fay.	faith
	His wordes been so comfortabill and cometh so in seson	proper time
	That my wit is overcom to make eas reson	argument
	Contrary to his counsaill at myne ymagineacioun.	
	Wherfor I woll tell a tale to your consolacioun.	
725	In ensaumpill to yewe that when that I have do,	As an example; done
	Another be all redy then for to tell right so	
	To fulfill our Hoostes will and his ordinaunce.	plan
	There shall no fawte be found in me; good will shal be my chaunce.	fault; occasion
	With this I be excused of my rudines,	ignorance
730	Allthoughe I cannat peynt my tale but tell as it is,	embroider
	Lepyng over no sentence, as ferforth as I may,	essential point, to the extent
	But tell yewe the yolke and put the white away."	(of an egg)

The Tale of Beryn

	Whilom, yeres passed in the old dawes,	Once; days
	When rightfullich by reson governed were the lawes,	
735	And principally in the ceté of Rome that was so rich,	city
	And worthiest in his dayes and noon to hym ilch	like
	Of worshipp ne of wele, ne of governaunce,	honor; wealth
	For all loades Cristened therof had dotaunce,	reverence
	And all other nacionis, of what feith they were.	whatever

The Tale of Beryn

- 740 Whils the Emperour was hole and in his paleyse there,
I-mayntained in honour and in popes se,
Rome was then obeyed in all Cristienté.
But it fareth thereby as it doth by other thinges,
For burh nether oþer, regiounce ne kynges
Beth nat nowe so worthy as were by old tyme,
As we fynde in romances, in gestes and in ryme.
For all thing doth wast, and eke mannes lyfie
Ys more shorter then it was, and our wittes fyve
Mow nat comprehendre nowe in our dietes
As somtyme myghte these old wise poetes.
But sith that terrene things been nat perdurabill,
No mervell is thoughte Rome be somewhat variabill
Fro honour and fro wele, sith his frendes passed,
As many another town is payred and i-lassed
Within these fewe yeris, as we mowe se at eyc:
Lo, sirs, here fast by Wynchelse and Ry.
But yit the name is ever oon of Rome, as it was grounded
After Romus and Romulus that first that oþer founded,
That brithern weren both to, as old bookeis writhen.
But of hir lyff and governaunce I wol nat nowe enditen,
But of other mater that falleth to my mynde.
Wherfor, gentill sirs, ye that beth behynde,
Draweth somewhat nere, thikker to a route,
That my wordes mowe sounre to ech man aboute.
After these too bretheren, Romulus and Romus,
Julius Cezar was Emperour, that rightfull was of domus.
This oþer he governed nobilich wele
And conquerd many a regiounce, as cronicul doth us tell.
For shortly to conclude, al tho were adversaries
To Rome in his dayes, he made hem tributaries;
So had he in subjeccioune both frende and foond,
Of whch I tell yew trewly, Englaund was oon.
Yet after Julius Cezar, and sith that Criste was bore,
Rome was governed as wele as it was tofore,
And namelich in that tyme and in tho same yeris
When it was governed by the Doseperes.
As semeth wele by reson, whoso can entendre,
That o mannes will ne will may nat comprehend
- healhy
territory
- town nor city
- heroic tales
decay
- five senses
- Might; lifestyles
- earthly; permanent
altered
- wealth; its supporters
ruined; degraded
- singular
- Romus; city
- brothers; two
- relate
- i.e., other pilgrims
closer in a group
- sound
- two
- Caesar; judgment
- city
- history
- those who
- foes
- since
- particularly; those
- Twelve Peers
understand

The Tale of Beryn

- 780 The bonchiff and the myschiff as mowe many hedes.
Therfor hir operacions, hir domes and hir deedes
Were so egallich i-doos, for in al Cristen londes
Was noon that they spared for to mend wronges.
Then Constantyne the Third, after these Doseperes,
Was Emperour of Rome and regnod many yeris.
- 785 So shortly to pas over, after Constantynes dayes
Philippus Augustinus, as songea is in layes,
That Constantynes sone and of plener age
Was emperour i-chose, as fil by heritage,
In whose tyme sikerlich the Seven Sages were
790 In Rome dwelling dessantly. And yf ye lust to lere
Howe they were i-cleped or 1 ferther goon,
I woll tell yewe the names of hem everychoon,
And declare yewe the cause why they hir names berc.
The first was i-cleped Sother Legifeer:
- 795 This is thus much for to sey as "man bereing the lawe";
And so he did trewly, for lever he had be sclawe
Then do or sey enything that sowned out of reson,
So cleen was his conscience i-set in trouth and reson.
Marcus Stoycus, the second, so pepill him highte:
800 That is to mene in our conseit "a keper of the righte";
And so he did ful trewe, for the record and the plees,
He wrote hem ever trewly and took noon other fees,
But such as was ordeyned to take by the yere.
Now, Lord God, in Cristendon I wold it were so cleane!
- 805 The third, Crassus Asulus, among men cleped was
"An hous of rest and ese and counsell in every case;"
For to understand, that was his name ful righte,
For evermore the counsalles he helped with all his myghte.
Antonyus Judeus the ferth was i-cleped,
810 That was as much to meen, as welc men might have cleped:
As enything purposed of al the long yeer
That myght have made hym soy or chonged ones chere,¹
But evermore rejoysing what-ever betid,
For his hert was ever mery right as the somer bridd.
- good fortune
judgements
justly
- Who *fas*; manner
fell by inheritance
certainly
permanently; desire
called before
bore
- rather; slain
scoured
- called
interpretation
legal actions
i.e., bribes
- clean
- defenseless
fourth
- happened
bird

¹ *That might have made him sorrowful or ever once have altered his cheerfulness*

The Tale of Beryn

- 815 Sumus Philopater was the fiftes name,
That thoughte men wold sclee hym or do hym al the shame,
Anger or disese, as evill as men couthe,
Yit wold he love hem never the wers in hert me in mouth.
His will was cleen under his foot and nothing hym above;
820 Therfor he was cleped "fader of perfite love."
The sixt and the seventh of these Seven Sages
Was Scipio and Sichero, as the word "Astrolages"
Was surname to hem both after hir sciences,
For of astronomy sikerlich, the cours and al the fences,
825 Both they knowe hit wele inowghe and were righte sotil of art.
But nowe to other purpose, for here I woll departe
As lightly as I can and drawe to my matere.
In that same tyme that these sages were
Dwellyng thus in Rome, a litill without the walles
830 In the subbarbes of the town, of chambres and of halles
And al other howsing that to a lord belonged
Was noon within the cesté, ne noon so wele behonged
With docers of highe prysse, ne walled so aboute
As was a senatours hous, within and eke without;
835 Faunus was his name, a worthy man and riche,
And for to sey shortlych, in Rome was soon hym lych.
His sportes and his estres were ful evenaunte
Of tresour and of lordshipp; also the most vaillant
He was and eke i-com of highe lynage.
840 And atte last he toke a wyff like to his parage,
For noriture and connyng, bewté and parentynge
Were tho counted more with then gold or sylver fyne.
But nowe it is al other in many mannes thought,
For muk is nowe i-maried and vertu set at nouȝt.
845 Faunus and his worthy wyff were togider aloon
Fiftene wynter fullich, and issu had they noon.
Wherfor hir joyes were nat halff perfite,
For utterlich to have a child was al hir detite,
That myghte enjoy hir heritage and weld hir honour.
850 And eke when they were febill, to be hir trew socoure.
Hir fasting and hir preyer and al that ever they wroughte,
As pilgrimage and almes-ded, ever they besoughte
That God wold of his goodnes som fruyte betwene hem send.

The Tale of Beryn

855	For gynnyng of hir spousaill, the myddil and the ende, This was hir most besynes, and al other delites And eke this worlodes riches they set at litil pris. So atte last, as God wold, it fell oppon a day As this lady fro chirchward went in the way, A child gan stere in hir wombe, as Goddes will was,	beginning; wedlock chief concern; delights value fell
860	Wherof she gan to mervill and made shorter pas, With colour pale and eke wanne, and fyll in hevynes, For she had never tofore that day such manere seknes. The wymmen that with hir were gon to behold The lady and hir chere, but nothing they told,	stir took smaller steps fell; illness
865	But feir and softt with ese homward they hir led, For hir soden seknes ful sore they were adred. For she was inlich gentil, kinde and amyabill, And eke trewe of hert and nothing variabill. She loved God above al thyng, and dred syn and shame —	who; began expression; said afraid thoroughly in no way fickle feared
870	And Agea sikerly was hir rightful name. And after, in breff tyme, when it was perseyved That she had done a wommans dede and had a child conseyved, The joy that she made, there may no tung tell. And also much or more, yf I ne ly shell,	<Agatha, "the Good" afterwards conceived tongue <i>but as; shall nor be</i>
875	Faunus made in his behalf for this glad tyding, That I trow I leve the Emperour ne the Kyng Made no better chere to wyff ne no more myrrh Then Faunus to Agea. And when the tyme of birth Nyghed nere and nere, after cours of kynde,	new believe treatment Than <i>Drew nearer; nature</i>
880	Weteth wele in certen that al the wit and mynde Of Faunus was continuell of feir delyveraunce Betwene Agea and his child, and made grete ordenaunce Ageyn the tyme it shuld be bore, as it was for to doon. So as God wold, when tyme cam, Agea had a son.	Know delivery preparation <i>In advance of</i>
885	Butte joy that Faunus made was dobil tho tofore, When that he knewe in certen she had a sone i-bore, And sent anoon for nurses, four and no les, To reale this child afterward as yeres did pas. The child was kept so tenderly that it throff wel the bitt,	double than
890	For what the norisshes axed, anoon it was i-fett. In his chamber it norished was; to town it mut nat go. Faunus loved it so cherely, hit myght nat part hym fro.	nurture thrived; better whatever; nurses; fetched he dearly; it (<i>the baby</i>)

The Tale of Beryn

	It was so feir a creature as myght be on lyve Of lymes and of fetour, and growe wonder blyve.	alive limbs; figure; quickly
895	This child that I of tell — Berinus was his name — Was over-mygh chershed, wiche turned hym into grame, As ye shull here after when tyme cometh and spase. For after swete the soure cometh ful offt in many a plase; For as sone as he coude go and also speke,	pampered; grief later sweet walk
900	All that he set his eye on or after list to keke, Anoon he shuld it have, for no man hym werned. But it had be wel better he had be wele i-lerned Noriture and gentilnes, and had i-had som hey. For it fill so after with what child he did pley,	wanted; look upon admonished beer; iff he; taught restraint later; whatever
905	Yf the pleyn ne liked hym, he wold breke his hede Or with a kryff hym hurt, right nighhond to be dede. For there nas knyght ne squyer in his faders house That thought his own persone most coraiouse That did or said enything Berinus to dispiese,	nearly won't courageous
910	That he nold spetously anoon oppon hym rese. Wherof his fader had joy and his moder also, Yit it semeth to many a man it was nat wisely do.	wouldn't angrily; attack done
	When Beryn passed was seven yeer and grewe in more age, He wrought ful many an evill chek, for such was his corage	
915	That there he wist or myghte do eny evill dede, He wold never seze for aught that men hym seyde. Wherfor many a pore man ful offt was agreved, But Faunus and Agea ful lite theron believed.	deed; inclination wherever he knew cease; said to him
920	And thoughe men wold pleyne, ful short it shuld avail, For Faunus was so myghty and cheff of all counsaill With Augustyn the Emperour that al men hym dradd And lete pas over mischeff and harmes that they had.	complain; fail chief dreaded injuries
	Berinus ferthermore loved wele the dice And for to pley at hazard, and held therof grete peysic,	dice
925	And al other games that losery was in, And evermore he lost and never myghte wyne. Berinus atte hazard many a nyghte he waked, And offt tyme it fill so that he cam home al naked.	gambling; esteem risk of loss
	And that was al his joy, for ryghte wele he knewe That Agea his moder wold cloth hym newe.	befell; i.e., lost his shirt
930	Thus Berinus lyvod, as I have told tofore,	anew

The Tale of Beryn

	Tyll he was of the age of eightene yeor or more.	
	But other whils amonges for pleyntes that were grete,	<i>over and over again</i>
	Faunus made amendes and pat hem in quyete.	
935	So was the fader cause the sone was so wild,	<i>the cause [that]</i>
	And so have many mo such of his own child	<i>more</i>
	Because of his undoing, as we mowe se al day.	<i>every day</i>
	For thing i-take in is hard to put away.	<i>internalized</i>
	As hores that ever trotted, trewlich I yew tell,	
940	It were hard to make hym after to ambill well;	<i>afterwards</i>
	Right so by Beryn when he had his lust and will when he was lite,	<i>little</i>
	It shuld be hevy afterward to reve his old delite,	<i>deprive</i>
	Save the whelle of Fortune that no man may withstande,	<i>Except that</i>
	For every man on lyve thereon he is gead;	<i>alive; going</i>
945	O spoke she turned bakward right atte highe noon	<i>One spoke [of the wheel]</i>
	All ageyn Berinus, as ye shull here sone.	<i>against</i>
	Agea his moder fil in grete sakenes	<i>fell; sickness</i>
	And sent after husband with wordes hir to lis,	<i>comfort</i>
	And for she wold tell hym hir hole heries will,	<i>whole</i>
950	Er she out of the world parted, as it was righte and skill.	<i>Before; reasonable</i>
	When Faunus was i-come and sawe so rodylesse	<i>colorless</i>
	His wyff that was so dere, that for love he chese,	<i>whore; chose</i>
	No mervell though he his hert were in grete mournyng,	
	For he perseyved fullich she drewe to hir ending.	
955	Yit made he other chere then in his hert was,	<i>expression than</i>
	To put away discomforde, dissimiliyng with his fase	<i>disguising</i>
	The hevynes of his hert, with chere he did it close.	<i>conceal</i>
	For such a maner crafft there is with hem can glose,	<i>[who] can cover over</i>
	Save that tourseth al to cautele — but Faunus did nat so,	<i>deception</i>
960	For weteth wele in certeyn, his hert was ful of woo	<i>know; woe</i>
	For his wyff, Agea, and yit for crafft he couthe,	<i>despite the skill</i>
	The teres fro his eyen ran down by his mouth;	
	When he sawe the panges of deth comyng so fast	
	Oppon his wyff, Agea, almost his hert tobrast.	<i>Upon; burst</i>
965	Agea lyft up hir eyen and beheld the chere	<i>lifted; eyes</i>
	Of hir husband, Faunus, that was so trewe a fere,	<i>who; companion</i>
	And seyd, "Sir, why do ye thus? This is an elyng fare.	<i>ailing manner</i>
	In comfort of us both, yf ye myghte spare	
	And put away this hevenes whils that ye and I	<i>gloom</i>
970	Myghte speke of other thinges, for Deth me sygheth nyghe.	<i>approaches near</i>

The Tale of Beryn

	For so body ne to soule, this vayleth nat a krase."	matter; cross-leaf
	"Now telleth on," quod Faunus, "and I wol lete it pase For the tyme of talkyng, as wele as I may. But out of my remembraunce onto my endyng day	
975	Yeur deth wol never, I woot it wele, but ever be in mynde."	know
	"Then, good sir," quod Agea, "beth to my soule kynde, When my body is out of sighte, for thereto have I nede, For truer make then ye be, in word ne in dede,	make than
	Had never womman, ne more kyndnes	
980	Hath shewed onto his make, I knowe right wele iwis.	shown; mate
	Now wold ye so hereafter in hert be as trewe To lyve without make and on your sone rewe	spouse; take pity
	That litill hath i-lerned sithens he was bore.	Who; since
	Let hym have no stepmoder, for children had tofore	i.e., from a previous marriage
985	Comelech they loveth nat. Wherfore with hert I prey,	Usually; i.e., stepmothers
	Have chere onto your sone after my endyng day.	Be kind
	For so God me help, and yew lafft me behynde, Shuld never man on lyve bryng it in my mynde,	if you left
	To be no more i-wedded but lyve soule aloon.	alive
990	Nowe ye knowe al my will. Good sir, think thereon."	i.e., unmarried
	"Cerdes," quod Faunus, "whils I have wittes fyve, I thynk never after yewe to have another wyff."	
	The preest was com therewithal for to do hir rightes.	last rites
	Faunus toke his leve, and all the other knyghtes;	
995	Hir kyn and all hir frendes kissed hir echone.	family; each one
	It is no nede to axe where there was dole or noon.	ask whether; sorrow
	Agea cast hir eye up and loked al aboute,	
	And wold have kissed Beryn, but then was he withoute,	away
	Pleying to the hazard as he was wont to doon,	Gambing
1000	For as sone as he had ete, he wold ren out anon.	run
	And when she sawe he was nat there, that she thought most on,	whom
	Hire sekenes and hir mournyng berst hir hert anon.	broke
	A damesell tofore that was ronne into the town	maid-servant earlier
	For to seche Beryn, that pleyd for his gown	seek; who
1005	And had almost i-lost it right as the damesel cam,	just as
	And swore and stared as he was wood, as longed to the game.	mad; was befitting
	The damesell seyd to Beryn, "Sir, ye must com home,	
	For but ye highe blyve that ye were i-come,	unless; hurry fast
	Yeur moder woll be dede. She is yit on live;	alive

The Tale of Beryn

1010	Yf ye woll speke with hir, ye must highe blyve!" "Who bad so, lewd Kit?" — "Yeour fader, sir," quod she. "Go home, lewde visc-nag, that evil mut thowe the!" Quod Beryn to the damesell and gan hir fray and foer, And bad the devill of Hell hir shuld totere.	make haste low-born vice-scold; thrive frighten; scare tear apart
1015	"Hast thowe ought els to do but let me of my game? Now, by God in heven, by Peter and by Jame!" Quod Beryn in grete anger and swore by book and bell, Rehersing many names mo then me list to tell. "Nere thow my faders messenger, thow shuldest never etc brede!"	Repeating Were not <i>I'd prefer</i> Than; lose
1020	I had lever my moder and also thowe were dede Then I shuld lese the game that I am now in!" — And smote the damesell under the ere; the weet gon upward spyn. ¹ The deth of Agea he set at litil prise.	value boldly
1025	So in that wrath frelich Beryn threwe the disc And lost with that same cast al was leyde adown, And stert up in a wood rage and balled on his crown, And so he did the remaunte, as many as wold abide; But for dred of Faunus, his felawes gan to hide	roll off [that] mad frenzy; hammered did [strike]
1030	And never had will ne lust with Beryn for to fighte, But ever ready to pley and wyn what they myghtie. The deth of Agea sprang about the town, And every man that herd the bell for hir sown Bemened hir ful sore, saff Beryn toke noon hede,	spread [as news] toll Lamented; except
1035	But sought another feleshipp and quylklich to hem yede, To such maner company as shuld never thryve, For such he loved better then his moders lyve. And evermore it shuld be nyghte or he wold home drawe, For of his fader in certen he had no maner awe.	went life before respect
1040	For ever in his yowthe he had al his will And was i-passed chastising, but men wold hym kill. Faunus for Agea, as it was wele sitting, Made grete ordenaunce for hir burying, Of prelates and of prestes and of al other thing.	unless befiting preparation
1045	As though he had be a wyff of a worthy kyng. It myght nat have be mended, such was his gentilnes,	improved

¹ And he struck the damsel under her ear; the blood spouted upward.

The Tale of Beryn

	For at hir enteryng was many a worthy messe. For four wookes full, or he did hir entere, She lay in lede within his house. But Beryn cam nat there, Namelich onto the place there his moder lay,	interring; mass weeks; before; bury lead [coffin] where
1050	Ne ones wold he a pater-noster for hir soule say. His thought was al in unthryfft, lechery and dyse, And drawing al to foly, for yowth is recheles But there it is refreynd and hath som maner eye.	once; Lord's Prayer extravagance; dice reckless
	And therfor me thinketh that I may wele sey:	Except where; i.e., supervision what
1055	A man i-passed yowth and is without lore May be wele i-likened to a tre without more That may nat bowe ne bere fruyte, but root and ever wast; Right so every youthe fareth that no man list to chast.	instruction roots grow branches; nor desires to discipline
	This mowe we know verely by experience	truly
1060	That yerd maketh vertu and benevolence In childhode for to growe, as preveth imaginacioun; A plant whils it is grene, or it have dominacioun, A man may with his fyngers ply it where hym list	beating-rod proves before; strength bend; pleases
	And make thereof a shakill, a withey or a twist,	shackle; wreath; hinge
1065	But let the plant stond, and yeres overgrowe, Men shall nat with both his hondes unnethes make it bowe. No more myght Faunes make his sone Beryn, When he growe in age, to his lere enclyne.	grow thicker hardly; bend advice
	For every day when Beryn rose, unwassh he wold dyne	unbashed
1070	And drawe hym to his feleshipp as even as a lyne, And then com home, and etc and soop, and sclepe at nyghte. This was al his besynes, but yf that he did fighte. Wherfor his faders hert, Faunes, gan for to bledie,	directly up; sleep occupation; unless
	That of his moder that lay at home he took no more hede.	who
1075	And so did all the pepill that dwelled in the town Of Beryns wildnes gon speke and eke rounce.	whisper
	Faunes oppon a day, when Beryn cam at eve, Was set oppon a purpose to make his sone leve	forsake
	All his shrewd tacches, with goodnes yf he myghte,	wicked habits
1080	And taughte hym feir and soft. But Beryn toke it light And counted at litill price al his faders tale. Faunes saw it wold nat; with colour wan and pale He parted from his sone, and with a sorowful hert.	slightly words wouldn't (succeed)
	I can ne write halffyndele howe sore he did smert	half-part; suffer from

The Tale of Beryn

- 1085 The disobeying of his sone and his wyffes deth,
That, as the book telleteth, he wissched that his breth
Had i-been above the serkill celestync.
So fervent was his sorowe, his anger and his pyne.
So, shortly to conclude, Agea was entered,
And Faunus lyved wylles — thre yeer were wered —
Wherof there was grete spech for his highe honour.
Tyll atte last, word cam onto the Emperour
That Faunus was without wyff, and sole was jocounde,
But mournyng for Agea that he was to i-bounde,
And lyved as an hermyte, soule and destitute,
Without consolacioun, pensyff offt and mut.
Wherfor Augustinus, of Rome the Emperour,
Was inwardlich sory and in grete dolour.
When the Seven Sages and Senatoures all
Were assembled to discryve what shuld therof fall,
The wch seyd shortly: for a molestacioun
There was noon other remedy but a consolacioun.
For whoso were in enything displeased or agreed
Must by a like thing egall be remeved.
1105 And when the Emperour knewe al hir determinacioun,
Quiklich in his mynde he had imaginacioun
That Faunus for Agea was in highe distres
And must be i-cured with passing gentilnes
Of som lusty lady that of pulcritude
1110 Were excellent al other. So, shortly to conclude,
The Emperour had a loue tofore he had a wyff
That he loved as hertlich as his own lyff,
As was as feir a creature as sone myghte beshyne,
So excellent of bewte that she myght be shryne
1115 To all other wymmen that were tho livand.
But for the Emperour had a wyff, ye shul wele understand,
He cam nat in hir company to have his delite,
For Cristendom and conscience was tho more perfite
Then it is nowe-a-days, yf I durst tell.
1120 But I woll leve at this tyme. Than Faunus also snell
Was after sent in hast of sekenes to be cured.
So, what for drede and elles, they were both ensured
In presesnce of the Emperour, so Faunus myght nat flee.
- spirit
heavenly circle (primum mobile)
pain
interned
wifeless; elapsed
report
seldom
to whom; wedded
unmarried; desolate
muse
set forth; befall
in short; annoyance
equal; removed
their advice
understanding
delightful; beauty
surpassing
whole; whole-heartedly
creation; man
beauty
then living
because
then; correct
Than
Then; quickly
sickness
so forth; betrothed

The Tale of Beryn

- It was the Emperours will; it myght noon other be.
1125 So within a tyme Agea was forgorde. *forgotten*
For Faunus thought litill on that he hir behighte.
what; promised to her
For as the Seven Sages had afore declared,
It cam al to purpos, for Faunus litill cared
For enything at all save his wyff to plesse,
except
1130 That Rame was i-cleped. For rest nether ese
Who; was called; nor ease
Faunus never had out of hir presence,
So was his hert on hir i-set that he coude no defensse,
know
Save evermore be with hir and stare on hir visage,
Except; face
That the most parte of Rome held it for dotage,
considered; infatuation
1135 And had much mervell of his variaunce.
fickleness
But what is that Fortune cannat put in chaunce?
at risk
For there nas man on lyve on womman more bedoted
wasn't; alive; obsessed
Then Faunus was in Rame, ne halff so much i-sotel.
Than; stupefied
When that Rame had knowloch that Faunus was i-smyt
smitten
1140 With the dart of Love, ye mowe right welc it wyt
understand
That all that ever she coude cast or bythynch
plot; devise
Was al ageyn Berinus. For many a sotill wrench
against; scheme
She thought and wrought day by day, as meny wommen doon
Tyll they have of hir desire the full conclusyouse.
1145 For the more that Faunus of Rame made,
aloof; sad expression
The more daungerous was Rame and of chere sade,
secrecy
And kept well hir purpose under coverture.
less
She was the las to blame — it grew of Nature —
But thoughte that Rame wrought so, God forbede that all
1150 Were of that condicioune! Yet touch no man the gall,
sore spot
It is my pllyn counsell, but doth as other doth:
Take yeur part as it cometh, of rougue and eke of smoth.
Yit noritur, wit and gentilnes, reson and perfite mynde,
Yet; correct
Doth al thes worthy wommen to woch ageyns kynde,
work; nature
1155 That thoughte they be agreved, they suffer and endure
annoyed
And passeth over, for the best, and foloweth nothing nature.
in no way
But nowe to Rames purpose and what was hir desire:
Shortly to conclude, to make debate and ire
conflict
Betwene the fader and the sone, as it was likly tho.
then
1160 What for his condicioune and what for love also
That Faunus owt to his wyff, the rather he muste hir leve
owed; more readily; believe
And graunt for to mend, yf ought hir did greve.
remedy; anything

The Tale of Beryn

	Berinus ever wrought ryght as he did tofore,	behaved exactly
	And Rame made hym chere of love, there myght no womman more,	semblance
1165	And gaff hym gold and clothing ever as he did lese,	gave; lose
	Of the best that he couthe oaghwhere in tows chese,	anywhere; chose
	And spak ful feir with hym to make al thing dede.	spoke; secret
	Yit wold she have i-eate his hert without salt or brede!	eaten
	She hid so hir felonys and spak so in covert	stealth
1170	That Beryn myght nat spy it but lite of Rames hert.	little
	So, shortly to pas over, it fill oppon a nyghte	befell
	When Faunus and his freshh wyff were to bedd i-dighte,	now; prepared
	He toke hir on his armes and made hir hertly chere,	companion
	There myght no man better make to his fere,	good fortune
1175	And seyd, "Myne erthly joy, myne hertes ful plesaunce,	Since
	My wele, my woo, my paradise, my lyves sustenaunce,	anything troubles you
	Why ne be ye mery? Why be ye so dull.	For if: performed
	Sith ye knowe I am your own, right as your hert wolt?	sorrow
	Now tell on, love, myne own hert, yf ye eyleth ought.	wheel [of Fortune]/happernisse; fate
1180	For and it be in my power, anoon it shal be wrought."	fire
	Rame with that gan sighe, and with a wepeing chere	burning what
	Undid the bagg of trechery, and seid in this manere:	wholly; repeat
	"No mervell thought myne hert be sore and full of dele,	express; pierce
	For when that I to yew wedded was, wrong went my whelle.	Faunus's
1185	But who may be ageyns hap and aventure?	painful; woe
	Therefor, as wele as I may, myne I mut endure."	Than; struck
	With many sharp wordes, she set his hert on feir	blubbered; shrill; distraught
	To purchase with hir practik that she did desire.	hardly; except
	But hoolich al hir wordes I cannat wele reberoc.	wrong
1190	Ne write ne endite howe she did perce	refrain; opportunity
	Thurh Faunes hert and his scull also.	yes; knows
	For more petouse compleynt of sorow and of woo,	
	Made never woman, ne more petously.	
	Then Rame made to Faunus; she smote ful bitterly	
1195	Into the veyn and thurh his hert blood.	
	She blodered so and wept, and was so highe and mode,	
	That uneth she myght speke but otherwhile among	
	Wordes of discomfort, and hir hondes wrong.	
	For "Alas!" — and woo the tyme that she wedded was! —	
1200	Was evermore the refret when she myght have spase;	
	"I am i-wedded (yee, God woot best) in what maner and howel!	

The Tale of Beryn

- For if it were so fall I had a child by yewe,
 Lord, how shuld he lyve? Howe shuld he com away? —
 Sith Beryn is your first sone and heir after your day.
- 1205 But yf that he had grace to scole for to goo,
 To have som maner connynge that he myghtie trust to.
 For as it now stondeth, it were the best rede,
 For (so God me help) I had lever he were dede
 Than were of such condicioune or of such lore
- 1210 As Beryn your sone is. It were better he were unbore!
 For he doth nat elles save atte hazard pley
 And cometh home al naked ech other day.
 For within this month that I have with yew be,
 Fifteene sithes, for verray grete peté,
- 1215 I have i-clothed hym al newe when he was totore,
 For evermore he seyde the old were i-lore.
 Now and he were my sone, I had lever he were i-sod.
 For and he pley so long, halff our lylode
 Wold scarsly suffise hymself oon.
- 1220 And nere ye wold be greved, I swere by Seynt John!"
 "He shuld after this day be clothed no more for me,
 But he wold kepe hem better and drawe fro nycte.
 Nowe, gentill wyff, gromercy of your wise tale!"
 "I thynk wel the more that I sey no fale,
- 1225 For towching my grevaunce, that Beryn goth al naked,
 Treutlich that grevaunce is somewhat asclaked."
 "Let hym aloon, I prey yew, and I wol con yew thanke,
 For in such losery he hath lost many a frank.
 The devill hym spedeth that reche yf he be totore,
- 1230 And he use it hereaffter as he hath doon tofore!"
 Beryn arose amorowe and cried wonder fast,
 And axed after clothes, but it was al in wast.
 There was no man-tendant for hym in al the house.
 The whelle was i-changched into another cours.
- 1235 Fauns herd his sone welc, how he began to cry,
 And rose up anoon and to hym did highe,
 And had forgeset nothing that Rame had i-seyde.
 For he boilled so his hert, he was nat wel apayde.
 He went onto the chamber there his sone lay
- 1240 And set hym doun in a chair, and thus he gan to sey:
- to belfall that
 Unless; school
 education
 plan
 would prefer
 training
 never born
i.e., Beryn; gambling
 been
 times; truly; compassion
 ripped to shreds
 old [clothes]; lost
 if; buried
 if; livelihood
 alone
 never
 Unless; folly
 thank-you; words
 not many /words/
 considering
 decreased
 be grateful to you
 gambling; franc
 who cares; torn apart
 if; behaves
 in the morning; immediately
 in rain
 man-servant
 wheel [of Fortune]
 hurry
 forgotten
 toughened; (Beryn); converted
 where

The Tale of Beryn

	"My gentil sone, Beryn, now feir I woll thee teach. Rew oppon thyselff and be thyn own leche.	<i>Have physic; physician</i>
	Manhode is i-com nowe, myne own dere sone.	
	It is tyme thou be aweyned of thyne old wone,	<i>weaned; habits</i>
1245	And thou art twenty wynter and saught hast of doctryne.	<i>education</i>
	Yit woldest thoue drawe to profite, the worshipp wold be thyne,	<i>honor</i>
	To moriter and goodshipp and al honest thing;	<i>virtue</i>
	There myght com to myne hert no more glad tyding.	
	Love now al thy foly and thy rebawdry,	<i>vice</i>
1250	As tables and merelles and the hazardry,	<i>backgammon; morris; dice</i>
	And draw thee to the company of honest men and good.	
	Els leve thewe me, as wele as Criste died on the rode	<i>believe you; cross</i>
	And for al mekynde His gost pas lete.	<i>spirit let pass</i>
	Thow shalt for me hereafter stond on thyn own fete!	<i>fee</i>
1255	For I woll no longer suffer this aray	<i>conduct</i>
	To clothe thee al new ech other day.	
	Yff thou wolt drawe thee to wit and rebawdry withdrawe,	<i>reason</i>
	Of such good as God have sent, thy part shalt thou have.	
	And yf thou wolt nat, my sone, do as I thee tell,	<i>won't</i>
1260	Of me shalt thou naught have. Trust me right well!	<i>nothing</i>
	Wenest thou with thy disc-pleying bold mine honoure	<i>Expect; social station</i>
	After my deth-day?" — Then Beryn gan to loure	<i>scowl</i>
	And seid, "Is this a sermon or a prechement?	
	Ye were nat wont hereto. How is this i-went?	
1265	Sendeth for som clothing that I were a-go.	<i>accustomed; come about</i>
	My felawes loketh after me; I woot wele they do so.	<i>gone</i>
	I woll nat leve my feleshipp ne my rekelages,	<i>expect; know</i>
	Ne my disc-pleying for all your hostages.	<i>quit; wild ways</i>
	Doth your best with hem by your lyff-day,	<i>properties</i>
1270	For when they fall to me, I wol do as I may.	<i>during your lifetime</i>
	Benedicite, Fader! Who hath ensoumed yewe	
	And set yewe into ire to make me chere rowe?	<i>rough</i>
	But I know well inowgh whens this counsaill cam,	<i>whence</i>
	Trewlich of your own wyfe, that evil dame.	
1275	Curs com oppon hir body, that fals putaigne!	<i>Dissimulation; whore</i>
	For trewlich, Fader, ye dote on hir, and so al men seyn.	
	Allas that ever a man shuld, that is of highe counsaill,	<i>who</i>
	Set al his wisdom on his wyves tayl!	<i>foolish</i>
	Ye loveth hir so much, she hath benome your will,	<i>destroyed your reason</i>

The Tale of Beryn

- 1280 And I may curs the tyme that ever ye were i-knyt.
For now I am in certen I have a stepmoder. *wedded*
They been shrewes som — there been but few other —
Wel filil flaptail, such oon as she ys. *Very; sha
mistakenly*
For al my pleying atte disc, yit do ye more amys:
1285 Ye have i-lost your name, your worshipp and your feith,
So dote ye on hir and levest al she sayeth!" *believe
gave; shone
mashed
real fury*
Faunus with the same word gaff the chayir a but,
And lepe out of the chamber, as who seyd "Cut!"
And swore in verry woodnes, by God omnipotent,
1290 That Beryn of his woes shuld sore repent.
Beryn set nought thereof with a proude hert,
Answerd his fader, and axed a new shert. *demanded
searched*
He groped al aboute to have found oon,
As he was wont tofore, but there was noon. *accustomed previously
rag-clothes*
1295 Then toke he such willokes as he fond there
And beheld hymself, what man he were.
For when he was arrayde, then gan he first be wrothe.
For his wombe loked and his rigg both. *angry
belly showed; backside
hurted*
He stert after his fader and began to cry:
1300 "For seeth myne aray! For thy vilany
Ys as wele years as it is myne!" *dishonor*
Faunus lete hym claster, and cry wel and fyne,
And passed forth still and spak nat a word.
Then Beryn gan to think it was nat al boed
1305 That his fader seyde when he with hym was,
And gan to think al about, and therwith seyd "Alias!
Now know I wele forsooth that my moder is dede!" *What
indeed*
For tho gan he to glow first a sory mannes hede.
Now kepe thy cut, Beryn, for thou shalt have a fit
1310 Somwhat of the world to lern better witt.
For and thou wist silerly what is for to com,
Thow woldest wissh after thy deth ful offt and ilome. *then; close (see note)
if; i.e., future events
frequently*
For there nys beting half so sore with staff nether swerd
As man to be bete with his own yerd. *isn't beating; nor
rod*
1315 The pyry is i-blowe — hop, Beryn, hop! — *pear-tree is in bloom*
That ripe wol hereafter and on thy hede dropp.
Thow tokest noon hede whils it shoon hoot;
Therfor wynter thee nygheth. Asay by thy cose! *ripen
paid no attention; (the sun)
approaches; You can tell*

The Tale of Beryn

- Beryn for shame to town durst he nat go.
1320 He toke his way to chirchward; his frend was made his foo. for
For anger, sorow and shame, and hevynes that he had,
Unneth he myghte speke, but stode halff as mad.
"O, alias!" quod Beryn, "what wit had I
That coude nat, tofore this day, knowe sikerly,
1325 That my moder dede was? But nowe I knowe to sore
And drede more that eche day herafter, more and more,
I shall knowe and fele that my moder is dede.
Allas, I smote the messangere and toke of hir soon hede!
Allas, I am right pore! Allas, that I am naked!
1330 Allas, I slep to fast till sorowe nowe hath me waked!
Allas, I hunger sore! Allas, for dole and peyn!
For eche man me seeth hath me in disdeyn!"
This was al his myrrh to the chirchward,
That of his moder, Agea, he toke so litill reward.
1335 When Beryn was within the chirch, then gan he wers fray;
As sone he sawe the tombe where his moder lay,
His coloures gan to chaunge into a dedely hewe.
"Allas, gentill Moder, so kynd thou were and trewe!
It is no mervell for thy deth, thoughte, I sore smert!"
1340 And therewithall the sorowe so fervent smote in his hert
That sodenly he fel down stan-dede in swoone.
That he had part of soerowe, me thinketh that myght avowe.
Beryn lay so longe or he myghte awake,
For al his fyve wittes had clene hym forsake.
1345 Wel myghte he by hymselff, when reson i-com were,
Understand that Fortune had a sharp spere
And eke grete power among highe and lowe,
Som to avaunce and som to overthow.
So atte last, when Beryn a litill waked were,
1350 He tramped fast with his feet, and al totare his ere
And his visage both, ryght as a wood man,
With many a bitter tere that from his eyen ran,
And sighed many a sore sigh and had much hevynes.
And evermore he cursed his grete unkyndnes
1355 To foregit his moder whils she was alyve,
And lened to hir tombe opon his tote schyl,
And wished a thowsand sithes he had i-be hir by.
- Hardly; almost
Who; certainly
too sorely
realize
struck; no
too soundly
sorrow
(who) sees me holds
for he went
regard
shudder
As soon as
then; suffer
fell; stone-dead; swoon
his share; often
before
senses
spear
stamp; tore; hair
face; insure
eyes
unnaturalness
neglect
torn sleeve
times; been

The Tale of Beryn

	And beheld hir tombe with a petouse eye.	<i>pisful</i>
	"Now, glorious God," quod Beryn, "that al thing madest of nought,	
1360	Heven and erth, man and best, sith I am myswrought,	<i>beast; since; guilty</i>
	Of yewe I axe mercy, socour and help and grace,	
	For my mysdede and foly, unthryffit and trespass.	<i>misconduct</i>
	Set my sorowe and peyn somewhat in mesur,	
	Fro dispeir and myscheff, as I may endure.	
1365	Lord of all lordes, though Fortune be my foo,	<i>foe</i>
	Yit is thy myghte above to turn hym to and fro.	<i>(a man)</i>
	First my moders lyff Fortune hath me bereved,	<i>deprived</i>
	And sith my faders love, and naked also me leved.	<i>then; left</i>
	What may he do more? Yis, take awey my lyff!	<i>she (Fortune)</i>
1370	But for that were myne ese and end of al stryff,	<i>she; worse [fase]</i>
	Therfor he doth me lyve for my wers, I say,	<i>die</i>
	That I shuld evermore lyve and never for to dey."	
	Now leue I Beryn with his moder tyl I com aye,	<i>again</i>
	And wol retourne me to Rame that of hir solilté	<i>craftiness</i>
1375	Bethought hir al aboute, when Beryn was agoon,	<i>gone</i>
	That it shuld be wittid hir. Wherfor she asoon	<i>blamed on</i>
	In this wise seyd to Faunus, "Sir, what have ye do?	<i>done</i>
	Althoughe I speke a mery word to suffer your sone go	<i>facetious; allow</i>
	Naked into the town, it was nat my counsall.	
1380	What wol be seyd therof? Siker without faill,	<i>Surely</i>
	For I am his stepmoder, that I am cause of all;	<i>Because</i>
	The violence, the wrath, the anger and the gall	<i>pain</i>
	That is betwene yewe both, it wol be wittid me.	<i>blamed on</i>
	Wherfor I prey yew herfly, doth hym com home aye."	<i>make; again</i>
1385	"Nay, by my trouth!" quod Faunus, "for me cometh he nat yit.	<i>because of</i>
	Sith he of my wordes so littil prise set,	<i>Since; value</i>
	As littill shall I charge his estate also.	<i>increase</i>
	Sorowe have that reccheth, though he naked go!	<i>take the troubled one</i>
	For every man knoweth that he is nat wise;	
1390	Wherfor may be supposed his pleying atte disc	<i>[ragged] attire</i>
	Is cause of his aray, and nothing ye, my wyff."	
	"Yis, iwis," quod Rame, "the tale wol be ryff	<i>widespread</i>
	Of me and of noon other, I knowe righte wel a fyne.	<i>in full</i>
1395	Wherfor I prey yewe, gentil sir, and for love myne,	
	That he were i-set home, and that in grete hast,	<i>fetched</i>
	And let asay esft ageyn with feirnes hym to chasit,	<i>try; to correct</i>

The Tale of Beryn

	And send Beryn clothes and a newe shert." —	shirt
	And made al wele in ech side, and kept close hir hert.	/shej; secret
	"Now sith it is your will," quod Faunus tho asoon,	sinc; thin
1400	"That Beryn shall home come, for your sake aloon I wold be the message, to put your hert in ese.	message
	And els, so God me help, were it nat yewe to plesse, The gras shuld growe on pavement or I hym home bryng!	pavement before
	Yit, netherles, forth he went with too or thre ryding	two
1405	From o strete to another, esquyng to and fro, After Beryn in every place where he was wont to go,	one
	Sheching every halk, howres to or thre,	Searching corner, hours two
	With hazardours and other such, there as he was wont to be,	gamblers; where
	And fond hym nat there. But to chirch went echone,	found; each one
1410	And atte dorr they stode awhile and herd Beryn made his moan; They herd all his compleynat, that petouse was to here.	at the; moan pitiful; hear
	Faunus into the chirch prydelych gan pire, But also sone as he beheld where Agea lay,	discreetly; peer
	His teres ran down by his chekkes, and thus he gan to say:	just as soon
1415	"A, Agea, myne old love, and my newe also! Allas, that ever our hertes shuld depart a-tee,	Ah
	For in your graciouse dayes, of hertes trobilnes	in two
	I had never knowlech, but of al gladnes!" —	disturbance
	Remembryng in his hert, and ever gan renewe	
1420	The goodnes betwene hem both and hir hert trewe, And drewe hym nere to Beryn with an hevy mode.	sad heart
	But as sone as Beryn knew and understood	
	That it was his fader, he wold no lenger abide,	longer
	But anoon he voided by the toder syde.	left; other
1425	And Faunus hym encountered and seyd, "We have thee soughte Thurh the town, my gentill sone, and therfor void thee soughte.	intercepted
	Thoughe I seyd a word or to, as me thought for the best	don't leave
	For thyne erudicioone to drawe thee to lyff honest.	two
	Thow shuldest nat so fervently have take it to thyn hert.	education; decent
1430	But sith I knowe my wordes doth thee so sore smert, I shall no more hereafter, and ech day our dictie	lifestyle
	Shall be mery and solase, and this shal be forgete.	pleasant
	For wel I woot that for thy moder thow art tofore;	torn apart
	Also thow hast grete sorow, but ones nedeth and no more.	once [it is] required
1435	And therefor, sone, on my blessing to put sorow away,	

The Tale of Beryn

- Drawe thee nowe herafter to honest myrrh and pley.
Lo, there is clothing for yewe, and your hors i-dighe
With harneyse al fresh newe. And yf ye list be knyght,
I shall yit or eve that bergeyn undertake
- 1440 That the Emperour for my love a knyght shall yew make.
And what-that-ever ye nede, anoon it shall be bought,
For whils that I have eything, ye shall lak naughte."
"Graunte mercy," quod Beryn with an hevy chere,
"Of your worshipful profer that ye have profered me here,
- 1445 But order of knyghthode to take is nat my likeing.
And sith your will is for to do somewhat my plesing,
Ye have a wyff ye love wele and so tenderlich
That, and she have children, I knowe right sikerlich
Al that she can devise, both by nyghte and day,
- 1450 Shall be to make hir childryn heirs, yf that she may,
And eke sowe sedes of infelicité
- Wherof wold growe devisioun betwene yewe and me.
For yf ye spend on me your good, and thus risalich,
Leveth well in certen, your wyff woll sikerliche
- 1455 Eche day for anger hir tuskes whet,
And to smye with hir tungfe your hert in wrath to set
Toward me from day to day. But ye wold aply
Somwhat to hir purpose and after hir yewe guy,
She wold weye so overtward and of so lither tach,
- 1460 And ever lour under hir hood arey for to snache;
She wold be shortyng of your lyff, and that desire I naught.
Wherfor to please al aboute, my purpose and my thought
Is for to be a marchaunte and leve myne heritage,
And relese it forever, for shippes fyve of stage
- 1465 Ful of marchandise, the best of al this londe.
And yff ye wol so, Fader, quyk let make the bonde."
- Faunus was ryghte wele apayde that ilk word ousterd,
But yit he seid to Beryn, "I mervell in myne hert
Where haddest thou this counsell to leve thyne honoure
- 1470 And lyve in grete aventure and in grete labour?" —
And rid so forth talking a sofft esy pase
Homward to his plase, there that Rame was.
And as sone as Faunus was i-lighte adown
And highe fast to his wyff, and with hir gan to rown
- decent
arrayed
want to
before nightfall; bargain
- Thank you
offer
- if
- seds
- substance; royalty
Believe; surely
fangs sharpen
- Unless; comply
conduct yourself
perverse; wicked intent
scowl; ever-ready
i.e., plotting your death
- Therefore
inheritance
renounce; with decks
land
- let fax]; contract
pleased; came forth
- social position
uncertainty
(he) rode
household; where
dismayed
hurried; whisper

The Tale of Beryn

- 1475 And told hir al the purpose, she made Faunes chere.
 She did hym nat halff so much the tyme she was his fere: *durin*g the time; mate
 She hulled hym and molled hym and toke hym aboute the nekk. *hugged; caressed*
 And went lowe for the kite and made many a bekke. *his belly; bow*
 And seyd, "Sir, by your spech, nowe right wel I here *hear*
 1480 That yf ye list, ye mowe do thing that I most desire, *wish*
 And that is this: your heritage, there yewe best liked, *legacy, wherever*
 That ye myght gyve." And ever among the brussh awey she piked *list; picked*
 From hir clothes, here and there, and sighed therewithall.
- Faunes, of his gentilnes, by hir myddil small
- 1485 Hertlich hir braced and seyd, "I wol nat leve, *embraced*
 I sayt yew my trouth, that ones or it be eve *pledge; once before*
 That I shall do my devoir without feare *duty; devoir*
 For to plesse your hert fullich in al wise."
- "Graunt mercy, myne own sovereigne," quod Rame tho mekerly, *more meekly*
- 1490 And made protestacione that she wold sikerly
 All the dayes of hir lyf be to hym as ende *gracious*
 As ever woman was to man, as ferforth as hir mynde *fully*
 And wit hir wold serve, and made grete othe. *oath*
 Faunes bood no lenger, but forth therewith he goth. *sayed*
- 1495 A, precius God in heven, Kyng of magesit,
 So plentivouse this world is of iniquite!
 Why is it i-suffred that trouth is brought adown
 With treachery and falsehoode, in feld and eke in town?
- But now to Faunes and his entent. When he his sone met,
- 1500 He toke hym sofft by the hond; his tung he gan to whet. *plan*
 Sotilly to engyne hym, first he gan to preche: *sharpen*
 "Leve thy foly, my dere sone, and do as I thee teche.
 Sith thou hast wit and reson, and art of mannes age,
 What nedeth thee be merchant and shal have heritage?" *Craftily; manipulate*
 if [you] shall; inheritance
- 1505 For and thy good were i-lost, the sorow wold be mync,
 To tell the sooth, right syghe peregall to thyne. *For if merchandise*
 And yf that I were dode whils thou were oute,
 Lond and rest and all my good, have thou no doute,
 It wold be plukked from thee; thy parte wold be lost. *truth; nearly equal*
 away
- 1510 And also, ferthermore, I make oon behest,
 That I trowe my mobles wol nat suffice *lost*
 personal property
 To charge fyve shippes ful of marchandise,
 But yf I leyde in morgage my lond and eke my rest. *one request*
 load
 Unless

The Tale of Beryn

	And that, I leve, be nat thy will ne thyne entent.	believe; intention
1515	Yit netherles, yf thy hert be so iily set For to be a marchant, for nothing woll I let That I nyl do thy plesaunce, as ferforth as I may, To go ryghte nyghe mync own estate. But lever I had say!"	thoroughly <i>Kinder</i> won't; fully rather; not <i>Their; advice</i>
1520	Hir wordes se hir redes, ne maters hem betwene, I wol nat tary now thereon my parchement to spene. But fynallich, to the ende of hir acordement, Faunus had so goon about, i-turned and i-went, That he had brought his sone tofore the Emperour To relese his heritage and al his honour	<i>parchment to use up</i> <i>finally; agreement</i> <i>social position</i>
1525	That he shuld have, after his day, for shippes fyve and full I-led of marchandise, of lynns and of woll, And of other things that were i-used tho. Engrosed was the covaunte betwen hem to,	<i>Linen; wool</i> <i>then</i> Concluded; contract; two <i>i.e., no secrecy</i>
1530	In presence of the Emperour, in opyn and no roun, Tofore the grettest senaours and eldest of the town. So when the relese seled was with a syde boorde, They were i-leyde both in a meen hoode	<i>In front of</i> <i>sealed</i> <i>intermediary's custody</i>
1535	Into the tyme that Beryn fullich sesed were In the five shippes, that I yew tolde ere. But who was glad but Faunus, and to his wyff went And seyd, "Nowe, my heries swete, al thyne hole entent	<i>Until; in possession</i> <i>previously</i> <i>except</i>
1540	Is umerlich perfourmed. Us laketh nowe no more But marchandise and shippes, as I told tofore." "That shall nat fail," quod Rame, and began to daunce; And afterward they speken of the purveaunce.	 <i>supplies</i>
1545	Allas, this fals world, so ful of trechery! In whom shuld the sone have trust and feith sikerly If his fader fayled hym? Whether myght he go For to fynde a siker frend that he myght trist to?	 <i>To whom</i> <i>steadfast; trust in</i> <i>outfaced; ready</i>
1550	So when these fyve shippes were rayed and dighite, Faunus and his sone to the Emperour ful righte They went, and many a grete man for the same case, To see both in possesioun as hir covaunte was: Beryn first was sesed in the shippes fyve, And Faunus had the relese and bare it to his wyff. And ech held hem payde, and Rame best of all, For she had conquerd thing that caused most hir gall.	 <i>took possession of</i> <i>himself paid (pleased)</i> <i>irritation</i>

The Tale of Beryn

- Now leve I Faunes and his wyff, and of the governaunce
Of Beryn I woll speke, and also of his chaunce.
- 1555 Whem lodesmen and maryneres in al thing redy was,
This Beryn into Alisaunder, yf God wold send hym grace
That wynde hym wold serve. He wold so on a day
The wynde was good, and they seyld on hir wey.
Too dayes fullich and a nyght therewithall
- 1560 And had weder at will, till atte last gan fall
Such a myst among hem that no man myght se other,
That wele was hym that had there the blessing of his moder.
For thre dayes dessantly the derknes among hem was
That no shipp myghte se other; wherfor ful offt "Alas!"
- 1565 They seyd, and to the highe God they made hir preyeire
That He wold of His grace hem govern and stere,
So that hir lyves myghte i-saved be.
For they were cleen in dispeyr because they myght nat se
The loder, wherby these shipmen her cours toke echon.
- 1570 So atte last, the firth day, makeing thus hir moon,
The day gan clere, and then such wynde arose
That blew hir shippes elswere then was hir first purpose.
The tempest was so huge and so strong also
That wel was hym that coade bynd or ondo
- 1575 Any rope within the shipp that longed to the craft.
Every man shewed his connyng sofore the shipp and baift.
The wynd awook, the see tobraft, it blew so gresly sore
That Beryn and all his company, of synnes las and more,
Eche man round aboute shroff hymselff to other.
- 1580 And put in Goddes governaunce lyff, shipp and strother.
For there nas shippes meyné, for aught they coade hale,
That myghte abate of the shipp the thiknes of a skale.
The weder was so fervent, of wynd and eke of thunder,
That every shipp from other was blowe of sighte asonder.
- 1585 And dured so al day and myghte tyl on the morowe.
I trow it was no questioun whether they had joy or sorowe.
So afterward, as God wold, the wynd was somewhat softt.
Beryn cleped a maryner and bad hym, "Sty on lofft,
And weyte after our four shippes that after us doth dryve,
- 1590 For it is batte grace of God yf they be alive."
A marynere asoon with that, ryght as Beryn bad,
- adventure
pilots; navigators
unto Alexandria (Egypt)
(God) willed
favorable
Two
weather to their liking
fog; sea
constantly
guide
entirely
loadstar; their
their moon
than
antic
belonged
in front of; astern
burst forth; horribly
less
confessed; one another
steering-rudder
wasn't; crew; had
strike sail; scale
violent
out of
lasted; next morning
Climb aloft
look for
only by the grace
ordained

The Tale of Beryn

	Stayed into the topcastell and brought hym tydinges glad: "Sir," he seith, "beth mery! Your shippes cometh echone, Saff and sound, sayling as ye shul se asoon. And eke, sir, ferthermore, lond also I sigh! Let draw our corse estward. This tyde wol bryng us ny." "Blessed be God!" quod Beryn, "Then were our shippes com. [.]	Climbed; crow's nest each one see sigh direct; near
1595		
1600	We have no nede to dout werr ne molestacioun, For these nys within our shippes nothing of spoliacion, But all trewe marchandise. Wherfor, sir lodesman, Stere ones into the costes as wel as thowe can. When our shippes been i-com, that we now pas in fere, Lace on a bonet or tweyn, that we mowe saill nere."	suspect war isn't; plunder legitimate; helmsman at once unto the coast as a company auxiliary sail or two
1605	And when they were the costes nyghe, was noon of hem all That wist what lond it was. Then Beryn gan to call Out of every shipp anoon a marynere or tweyne For to take counsell, and thus he gan to seyne: "The frountes of this sch town been wonder feir withall.	Who knew say appearance; same plan
1610	Me thinketh it is the best rede, what that ever befall, That I myself aloon walk into the town And here and se both here and there, upward and doun, And enquire fullich of hir governaunce. What sey ye, sirs? Wol ye sent to this ordenaunce?"	hear and see enquire consent; plan agreed may
1615	All they accorded wel thereto and held it for the best: "For thus yf it be profitabill, we mowe abide and rest; And yf it be otherwise, the rather shall we go. For after that ye sped, we wol worch and do." But nowe mowe ye here right a wonder thing —	succeed; work hear
1620	In al the world wyde, so fals of hir lyving Was no pepill under sonne, ne noon so desseyvabill As was the pepill of this town, ne more unstabill, And had a cursed usage of sotill ymaginacioun: That yff so were the shippes of any straunge nacioun	treacherous; their deceptive untrustworthy custom; crafty scheming foreign
1625	Were come into the porte, anoon they wold hem hyde Within hir own howses, and no man go ne ryde In no strete of al the town, ascaunce that they were lewde And coude no skill of marchandise. A skilful it was, a shrewde, As ye shull here after of hir wrong and falshede.	walk as if ignorant trick; wicked one hear later fell; deserving
1630	But yit it fill, as worthy was, oppon hir own hede.	

The Tale of Beryn

	Beryn arayd hym freshly, as to a marchand longed,	was befitting
	And set hym on a palfrey wel besey and honged;	equipped; adorned
	And a page rennyng by his hors feet,	running: horse's
	He rode endlong the town, but no man coud he mete.	end to end
1635	The dorres were i-closed in both too sides,	on both two
	Wherof he had mervell, yit furthermore he rides	further
	And wayted on his ryght-hond a manciples place,	observed; manciple's home
	All fresh and newe, and thider gan he pase.	thicker
	The gates were wyde up, and thider gan he go,	
1640	For thurhout the long town he fonde so no mo.	found
	Therein dwelled a Burgeyse, the most scliper man	devious
	Of al the town thurhout, and what so he wan	won
	With trechery and gile — as doth soem freres —	fiars
	Right so must he part with his compereis.	divide; accomplices
1645	Beryn light down on his hors, and inward gan he dres,	alighted from; move
	And fonde the good man of the house pleying atte ches	found; chess
	With his neyghbour, as trewe as he, that dwelled hym fast by.	honest; who
	But as sone as this Burgeyse on Beryn cast his eye,	soon
	Sodenly he stert up and put the ches hym fro,	chessboard
1650	And toke Beryn by the hond and seyd these wordes tho:	
	"Benedicite! What manere wynd hath i-brought yewe here?	
	Now wold to God I had wherof I coude make yew chere,	anything
	But ye shall lowe my good will, and take such as there is,	allow
	And of your gentill paciens suffer that is amys."	accept what
1655	For well he wist, by his aray and by his contenaunce,	knew; (Beryn's)
	That of the shippes that were i-com he had som governaunce.	
	Wherfor he made hym chere, semeyng amyabill,	deception; treacherous
	I-colored all with cawteles, and wonder desseyvabill.	embraced
	He braced hym by the middil and preyd hym sit adown,	prepared his cushion
1660	And lowly with much worshipp dressed his cosshoun.	
	"Lord God," seyd this Burgeyse, "I thank this ilk day	whole
	That I shuld see yewe hole and sounde here in my contray.	wish
	And yff ye list to tell the cause of your comyng,	
	And yff ye have nede to emy maner thing,	
1665	And it be in my power, and though I shuld it seche,	If seek
	It shuld go right wonder streyte, I sey yew sikerlich,	strict; assuredly
	But ye it had in hast, therewith yewe to plese.	Unless
	For nowe I se yewe in my house, my hert is in grete ese."	
	The toder burgeyse rose hym up for to make rouse,	other; mirth

The Tale of Beryn

1670	And axed of his felawe, that lord was of the houſe: "Whens is this worshipful man?" — with wordes end and lowe —	who pleasant; humble
	"For it semeth by the manere that ye hym shuld knowe And have sey hym tofore this tyme." "I have seen hym," quod the toder, <i>seen; other</i>	
	"Yee, iwis, an hundred sithes? And right as to my brother	<i>Yes; times</i>
1675	I wold do hym plesaunce in al that ever I can, For trewlich in his contray he is a worshipful man."	
	"Forsoth, sir, and for your love, a thousand in this town Wold do hym worshipp and be righte feyne and bown	glad; obedient
	To plese hym and avail, to have thonk of yewe,	assist
1680	I woot wele, God hem yeld, so have they oft or nowe!" And arose up therewithall and with his felaw spak	know; pay; before <i>[he]; spoke</i>
	Of such maner mater that fayled never of lakk.	<i>defect</i>
	So when hir counsell was i-do, this Burgeyse preyd his fere To sit adown by Beryn and do hym sporte and chere:	companion
1685	"And in the while, I wold se to his hors; For every gentill hert, afore his own cors,	meantime well-born; body
	Desireth that his ryding best be served and i-dighte Rather then hymself. Wherfor with al my myghte	beast; tended
	I wold have an ey thereto, and sith perce wyne.	<i>then purple wine</i>
1690	Wich tonne or pipe is best and most fyne."	cask
	Beryn was al abashed of his soden chere. But netherlic the Burgeyse sat hym somewhat nere	amazed by; unexpected
	And preyd hym, of his gentilnes, his name for to tell, His contrey and his lynage. And he answerd snell:	i.e., for sake of manners immediately
1695	"Berinus I am i-named, and in Rome i-bore, And have fyve shippes of myne own, las and more,	born
	Ful of marchandise, ligging tofore the town.	less
	But much mervail have I the goodman is so boune To serve me and plese, and how it myghte be."	anchored householder; ready
1700	"Sir," seyd the burgeyse, "no mervell it is to me, For many a tyme and oft — I cannat sey how lome —	i.e., the neighbor often; frequently
	He hath be in your marches, and as I trowe, in Rome	territories; believe
	Also he was i-bore, yf I ne ly shall."	lie
	"Yf it be so," quod Beryn, "no mervell it is at all	
1705	Thoughe he me have i-sey, and eke his gentill chere Preveth it al ogyptly. But by Hym that bought me dere,	seen <i>i.e., Christ; dearly</i>
	I have thereof no knowloch, as I am nowe avised."	aware
	With that cam in the goodman with contenaunce disguised,	householder

The Tale of Beryn

- 1710 And had enquired of the child that with Beryn cam,
From gynnyng to the ending, and told his mastres name
And of Agea, his moder, and al thing as it was,
Wherethurh he was ful perfite to answere to every cas.
So entryng into the hall, the Burgeyse spak anoon:
 "A, my gentill Beryn! Alias, that under stone
1715 Myne own bert, Agea, thy moder leff and dere!
Now God assayll hir soule, for never better chere
Had I of fremd womman, ne never halff so good.
Benedicite, a marchaunt comyng over flood!
Who brought yewe in this purpose, and beth your faders heir?
1720 Now, by my trewe conscience, ryght nyghe in dispayr
I waxe for your sake, for now friendlesse
Ye mowc wel sey that ye been. But yit, sir, netherles,
Ye mut endure Fortune and hevynes put away.
There is noon other wisdom. Also, your shippes gay
1725 That been i-com in savete ought to amend your mode,
The wiche when we have dyned, I swere, sir, by the rood,
We woll se hem trewly, within and eke withoute,
And have wyne with us and drynk al aboute."
They set and wissh and feld hem, and had wherof plentē.
1730 The Burgeyse was a stufed man; there lakked noon deyntē.
So when they had i-dyned, the cloth was up i-take.
A ches there was i-brought forth — but tho gan sorow to wake!
The ches was al of yvery, the meynē fresh and newe,
1735 I-pulissched and i-piked of white, asure and blewe.
Beryn beheld the chekker; it semed passing feir.
 "Sir," quod the Burgeyse, "ye shall fynd here a peyr
That woll mate yew trewly in las then half a myle!" —
And was i-sayd of sotilnē, Beryn to begile.
 "Now in soth," quod Beryn, "it myghte wel hap nay,
1740 And nere I must my shippes se, else I wold assay."
 "What nedeth that?" quod the Burgeyse. "Trewlich, I wol nat glose.
They been nat yit i-seteled ne fixed in the wose,
For I have sent thries, sith ye hidre cam,
To waite oppon hir governaunce. Wherfor lete set o game,
1745 And I shall be the first that shall yewe atast."
 The meynē were i-set up, and gon to pley fast.
Beryn was the first, the second, and the third,
- i.e., the pageboy*
[the page] told
expert
gravestone
beloved
absolve
foreign
God bless
[you who] be
friendless
safety; attinade
cross
sat; washed; plenty
prosperous; delicacy
tablecloth
ches-set
ivory; pieces
polished; carved; azure
chessboard
opponent
checkmate; less
fit] was; trickery
happen otherwise
never; unless; by
waste words
nark; shack; mud
hisher
test
chess-pieces; [they] began
won

The Tale of Beryn

	And ate fourth game in the ches amyd, The Burgeyse was i-mated — bat that lust hym wele.	at the; in mid-board pleased
1750	And al was doon to bryng hym in, as ye shul here scl. "Sir," then seyd Beryn, "ye woot wele howe it is. Me list no more to pley, for ye know this: Where is noon comparisoun, of what thing so it be, Lust and likeing faileth there, as it semeth me;	i.e., Beryn; hear at once <i>I prefer</i> competition <i>Pleasure</i> <i>one-sided</i>
1755	Ne myrrh is nat commendabill that ay is by o syde, But it rebound to the toder. Wherfor tyme is to ryde, And as many thonkes as I can or may Of my sport and chere, and also of your play."	<i>Unless; other</i>
	"Nay, twis, gentill Beryn, I woot ye wol nat go.	
1760	For noritur wol it nat for to part so. And eke my condicione, but I ley somthing, Is no more to pley then whoso shoke a ryngc There no man is within, the rynging to answer.	<i>good breeding; depart</i> <i>unless I lie somewhat</i> <i>door-bell</i> <i>Where</i>
1765	To shete a fetherles bolt, almost as good me were. But and ye wold this next game som manere wager legg, And let the trouth on both sides be morgage and i-plegg That whoso be i-mated graunt and assent	<i>shoot; arrow without a quill</i> <i>But if; place</i> <i>security; pledged</i>
	To do the soders bidding, and whoso do repente, Drink al the water that salt is of the see."	<i>other's; reneg</i> <i>sea</i>
1770	Beryn believed that he coude pley better then he, And sodenly assented with hond in hond assured. Men that stode besides, i-capped and i-hured, Wist wele that Beryn shuld have the wers mes,	<i>immediately; pledged</i> <i>wearing caps and head-gear</i> <i>Knew; portion</i>
1775	For the Burgeyse was the best pleyer atte ches Of all the wyde marches or many a myle aboute.	<i>territories</i>
	But that ne wist Beryn of, ne cast thereof no doute. He set the meysé efft ageyn, and toke better hede	
	Then he did sofore, and so he had sede.	<i>Than</i>
	The Burgeyse toke avisement long on every draughte,	<i>deliberation; move</i>
1780	So with an hourc or so, Beryn he had i-caughte Somewhat oppon the hipp, that Beryn had the wers. And albeit his mynde and will was for to curs, Yit must he dure his fortune when he was so fer i-go.	<i>within; two</i> <i>i.e., had the upper hand</i> <i>(Beryn's)</i> <i>endure; far gone</i>
	For who is that that Fortune may alwey undo?	<i>whom; eventually</i>
1785	And namelich stont even in ech side Of peo and contra, but God help, down wol he glide.	<i>[he who] stands</i> <i>unless; down [the wheel]</i>

The Tale of Beryn

	But nowe a word of Philosophy that falleth to my mynde:	
	Who take hede of the begynnyng what ful shal of the end,	<i>[He]</i> who; at the end
	He leyeth a bussh tofore the gap ther Fortune wold in ryde;	i.e., sett a trap
1790	But comynlich yowth forgeteth that, thurhout the world wide.	
	Right so be Beryn, I may wele sey, that counsailles in naked,	ill-advised nashed in
	Likly to lese his marchandise and go hymself al naked.	lose
	Beryn studied on the ches, althoughe it naught availed.	
	The Burgeyse, in the menewhile, with other men counsailled	<i>coupired</i>
1795	To fech the sergauntes in the town for thing he had ado.	law officers
	So when they com were, they walked to and fro,	
	Up and down in the hall as skaunce they knewe naughte,	as if
	And yit of all the purpose, wit and mynde and thought	
	Of this untrewe Burgeyse, by his messengers	deceitful
1800	They were ful enfourmed. Wherfor with ey and eres,	ears
	They lay awaite ful doggedly Beryn to arrest,	
	For therefor they were affter seat, and was hir charge and hest.	command
	Lord, howe shuld o sely lombe among wolves weld	<i>one innocent; fare</i>
	And scape un-i-harmēd? It hath be seyn sed.	escape; seldom seen
1805	Kepe thy cut nose, Beryn, for thou art in the case!	position
	The hall was ful of pepill; the serjauntes shewed hir mase.	<i>staff of authority</i>
	Beryn kast up his hede and was ful sore amayed,	afraid
	For then he was in certen the Burgeyse had hym betrayde.	
	"Draw on," seyd the Burgeyse, "Beryn, ye have the wers!"	Go
1810	And every man to other the covenant gan rehers.	agreement; repeat
	The Burgeyse, whils that Beryn was in hevy thought,	deep concentration
	The next draught after, he toke a roke for naughte.	move; rook
	Beryn swat for anger and was in hevy plighte,	sweated; serious condition
	And dred ful sore in hert, for wele he wist al quyte,	know; repaid
1815	He shuld nat escape, and was in highe distres.	
	And pryylich in his hert, that ever he saw the ches,	
	He cursed the day and tyme. But what avayled that?	
	For wele he wist then that he shuld be mate.	
	He gan to chaunge his coloure both pale and wan.	checkmated
1820	The Burgeyse seid, "Cometh nere. Ye shul se this man,	
	How he shall be mated with what man me list."	<i>whatever cheapie</i>
	He droughe and seyd, "Chek mate!" The sergauntes were ful prest	<i>moved; eager</i>
	And sesed Beryn by the scieve. — "Sirs, what thynk ye for to do,"	<i>seized; sleeve</i>
	Quod Beryn to the sergauntes, "that ye me handeth so?"	arrest
1825	Or what have I offended? Or what have I seyde?"	

The Tale of Beryn

	"Trewlich," quod the serjauntes, "it vayleth nat to breyde. With us ye must a while, where ye woll or no, Tofore the Steward of this towne. Arise and trus and go! And there it shall be opened howe wisely thou hast wroughte.	avail; resist whether; will get ready disclosed difficult
1830	This is the ende of our tale. Make it never so toughtie." "Sirs, fareth feir! Ye have no nede to hale!" "Pas forth!" quod the serjauntes. "We woll nat here thy tale." "Yis, sirs, of your courtesy, I prey yewe of o word.	puff hear; excuse
	Althoughe my gentil hoost hath pleyd with me in bordre And i-wonne a wager, ye have saught to doon.	on the chessboard
1835	That is betwene hym and me. Ye have nothing to doon!" The hoost made an hidouse cry in gesolrest the haut And set his hond in kenebowe. He lakked never a faute: "Wenest thowe," seid he to Beryn, "for to scorn me?	at the top of his voice skinbow; didn't miss a beat Expect; defraud
1840	Whatever thow speke or stroute, certes it wol nat be. Of me shalt thow have no wrong. Pas forth a better pase. In presence of our Steward I wol tell my case."	quarrel, certainly
	"Why, hoost, sey ye this in ernest or in game? Ye know my contray and my moder, my lynage and my name,	
1845	And thus ye have i-seyd me ten sith on this day."	to me ten times
	"Yee, what thoughte I seyd so? I know wele it is nay. There lieth no more thereto, but another tyme, Leve me so much the les when thow comest by me. For al that ever I seyd was to bryng thee in care,	Yes; otherwise next time Believe; less crisis
1850	And now I have my purpose, I wol nothyng thee spaze."	now (that)
	Thus jangelyng to ech other, endenting every pase, They entred both into the hall there the Steward was. Evander was his name, that sotill was, and so fell He must be wel avised tofore hym shuld tell. ¹	bickering; zigzagging where
1855	Another burgeyse with hym was, provost of the cité, That Hanybald was i-cleped, but of sotilité He passed many another, as ye shul here sone. Beryns hoost gan to tell al thing as it was doon,	city deceitfulness surpassed; hear
	Fro gynnyng to the ending, the wordes with the dode,	

¹ His name was Evander, who was so devious and cruel / That a man must be well counseled who would speak before him

The Tale of Beryn

1860	And howe they made hir covenante, and wager howe they leyde. "Now, Beryn," quod the Steward, "thow hast i-herd this tale, How and in what maner thow art i-brought in bale. Thow must do his bidding — thow maist in no wise flee — Or drynke al the water that salt is in the see.	placed report misfortune see
1865	Of these too thinges, thow must chese the toon. Now be wel avised, and sey thy will anoon. To do ye both lawe, I may no better sey, For thow shalt have no wrong, as ferforth as I may. Chese thyselff righte as thee list, and wit thow nothing me,	two; one speak render; justice so far Choose; please; blame
1870	Thoughte thow chese the wers and let the better be." Beryn stood astoned, and no mervaill was, And preyd the Steward of a day to answer to the case: "For I myght lightlich in som word be i-caughte, And eke it is righte hard to chese of to that beth righte naught.	shapified for carelessly two But if
1875	But and it were your likyng to graunt me day til tomorrow, I wold answerre thurh Goddes help." — "Then must thow fynde a borow," Seyd the Steward to Beryn, "and yit it is of grace." "Now hereth me," quod Hanybald, "I prey a litol space.	security leniency time
1880	He hath fyve shippes under the town, liggyng on the strand, The wch been sufficient, i-sesed in our honde, By me that am your provost, to execute the lawe."	anchored; shore seized
1885	"He must assent," quod Evander; "let us ones here his saw." "I graunt wele," quod Beryn, "sith it may be noon other." Then Hanybald arose hym up to sese both shipp and stroder, And toke Beryn with hym, so talking on the wey:	at once; story since; other [way] seize; rudder thus
1890	"Beryn," quod Hanybald, "I suyr thee, by my fey, That thow art much i-bound to me this ilk day. So is thy plé amended by me, and eke of such a way I am avised in thy cause, yf thow wolt do by rede.	assure; faith very remedied
1895	That lite or naught, by my counsaill, ought thee to drede. Ye knowe wele tomorrow the day of plec is set That ye mut nedes answer, or els without lett I must yeld hem your shippes. I may in no wise blyn, So have I undertake; but the marchandise within Is nat in my charge — ye know as wele as I — To make therof no lyvery. Wherfor now wisely Worch and do after rede: let al your marchandise Be voided of your shippes, and atte hiest prise	little delay desir delivery Work; advice unloaded off; at the

The Tale of Beryn

- I wol have it everydele in covenant, yf ye list.
1900 To se myne house here ones tofore, I hold it for the best, once
Wher ye shul se, of divers loades, houses to or thre two
Full of marchandise, that thurh this grete cetē, city
Is no such in preve, I may right wel avowe. proof
- [.]
- 1905 So when ye have all seyn, and I have your vowe also, bargane; two
Let som bargin be i-made between us both to." Thanks; offer
"Graunt mercy, sir," quod Beryn. "Your profer is feir and good. Gladly
Feyn wold I do therafter, yf I understood [That]
I myght without blame of breking of arrest."
- 1910 "Yis," quod Hanybald, "at my perell me trest!" risk; trust
So to Hanybaldes house togider both they rode
And fonde as Hanybald had i-seyd: an houge house, long and brode, huge
Full of marchandise as riche as it may be,
Passing al the marchantes that dwelled in that cetē. city
- 1915 Thus when al was shewed, they dronk and toke hir leve. *i.e., sealed the agreement*
To see Beryns shippes in hast they goa to meve. move
And when that Hanybald was avised what charg the shippes bere, cargo; bore
He gan to speke in high voice, ascaunce he sought nere loud; as if cared nothing
Whether he bargeyned or no, and seyd thus: "Beryn, frend,
- 1920 Your marchandise is feir and good. Now let us make an ende.
If ye list, I can no more. Ye knoweth how it is.
Com of short, let tuk le meyn; me thinketh I sey nat mys.¹ crew
And then your meynē and ye and I, to my house shall we go. deviate
And of the marchandise ye saw — I wol nat part therfro — Choose
1925 Chese of the best of that ye fynd there, where; injure
Thurhout the long house, there shal no man yew dere,
And therwith shall your shippes be filled al fyve.
I can sey no better. If ye list to dryve
- This bargeyn to the ende, counselleth with your men. consult
1930 I may nat long tary. I must nodes hen." go hence
Beryn cleped his meynē, counsell for to take, summoned; crew
But his first mocion was of the woo and wrake, woe; injury
And al the tribulacioun for pleying atte ches,
That he had everydele his shame and his dures. entirely; suffering

¹ In brief, let's shake hands on it; it seems to me I say nothing amiss.

The Tale of Beryn

1935	Fro poynt to poynt, and how it stode, he told how it was. And then he axed counsell, what best was in the cas, To chaunge with the Burgeyse or els for to leve. Ech man seyd his avise, but al that they did meve, It were to long a tale for to tell it here.	situation exchange advice; recommend too; account agreed unanimously exchange
1940	But fynally atte end, they corded al in fere. That the chaunge shuld stand; for as the case was fall, They held it clerly for the best, and went forth withall The next wey that they couth to Hanybaldes plase.	most direct; household hear; found to another
1945	But nowe shull ye here the most stotil fallace That ever man wrought till other, and highest treachery, Wich Hanybald had wrought hymself to this company: "Go in," quod Hanybald, "and chese as thy covenant is."	contract stipulates Romans
1950	In goon these Romeyns echoon, and fond amys, For there was nothing that eny man myghte se Saff the wall and tyle-stones and tymber made of tre, For Hanybald had do void it of al thing that was ther;	Except for emptied bare empty lost
	Whils he was atte shippes, his men away it bere. When Beryn saw the house lere, that ful was thertofoore Of riche marchandise, "Alas," thought he, "I am lose!"	<i>shef</i> knew rush innocent man; bir bacon cargo
1955	I am in this world!" — and wistek wel his herst Was nat al in likeing, and outward gan he stert Like half a wood man, and bole both his lippes, And gan to hast fast toward his own shippes	truly just
1960	To kepe his good within, with al that ever he myghte, That it were nat discharged, as hym thought verry ryghte. But al for naught was his hast, for thre hundred men, As fast as they myghte the, bere the good then,	drive; cargo thence command; who plotted; determined /what/ swift trip; prevent
	Thurh ordenaunce of Hanybald that privelich tofore Had purposed and i-cast shuld be out i-bore.	want fully impounded; cargo
1965	Beryn made a swyff pase, there myght no man hym let. But Hanybald was ware inowgh and with Beryn met: "Al for nougat, Beryn, thou knowest wel and fyne Thy shippes been arrested and the good is myne.	desire
	What woldest thou do there? Thou hast there naught to do.	
1970	I wol hold thy covenante, and thou shalt myne also. For yit sawe I never man that was of thy manere: Sometime thou wolt avaunte, and somymte arete; Now thou wolt, and now thou nolt. Where shull men thee fynde?	advance; retreat will; won't

The Tale of Beryn

	Now sey oon and sith another, so variant of mynde;	<i>[you] say; then; unstable</i>
1975	Saw I never tofore this day man so variabill.	
	Sith I thee fynde in suche plite, our bargin for to stabill,	<i>condition; confirm</i>
	We woll tofore the Steward, there we both shull have righte."	<i>where; justice</i>
	"Nay, forsooth!" quod Beryn. — "Yis, trulich thee tite,"	<i>you are obliged</i>
	Quod Hanybald, "where thowe wolt or no, and so I thee charge	<i>whether</i>
1980	As provost. Knowe that yff me list, my warant is so large,	<i>authority; extensive</i>
	And thowe make eny diffence, to bynym thy lyff.	<i>If; resistance; destroy</i>
	Take thyng hoes! It gayneth nat for to make stryffle."	
	So with sorowfull hert, Beryn toke his hors	
	And softilly seyd to his men, "Of me," quod he, "no fors;	<i>no manner</i>
1985	But wend to your shippes. I wol com when I may.	<i>go</i>
	Ye seth wele, everichone, I may no bet away."	<i>see; better</i>
	Now here by this same tale, both fre and boade	<i>hear; bondsmen</i>
	Mow fele in hir wittes and eke understande	<i>Might; sense</i>
	That litil vailleth wisdom or els governaunce	
1990	There Fortune ever werreth, and eke hap and chaunce.	<i>Where; opposes; accident</i>
	Of what availeth bounde, beute or riches?	
	Frendship or sotilte, or els hardines?	<i>cleverness; courage</i>
	Gold, good or catell, wit or hy lynage?	<i>possessions</i>
	Lond or lordes service, or els highe parage?	<i>birth</i>
1995	What may al this availi, there Fortune is a foo?	<i>where; enemy</i>
	Iwis, righte litill or never a dele, ful offt it falleth so.	<i>not a bit</i>
	So shortly to pas over, they fill to such an end	<i>fell; conclusion</i>
	That Beryn shuld have day ageyn amorow, and so to wend,	<i>his day for court; go</i>
	He set hym in ful purpose to his shippes ward.	<i>toward his ships</i>
2000	But yit or he cam there, he fond the passage hard.	<i>before; found</i>
	For how he was begiled, thurhout al the town,	
	Here and ther a coupill gon to speke and to roun,	<i>couple; whisper</i>
	And every man his purpose was to have parte	<i>man's; a share</i>
	With falsnes and with soteltees; they coad soon other art.	<i>knew; profession</i>
2005	Beryn rode forth in his wey, his page ran hym by,	
	Ful sore adred in hert, and cast about his eye,	<i>afraid</i>
	Up and down even long the stret, and for anger swet.	<i>straight along; sweat</i>
	And er he had ridden a stones cast, a blynd man with hym met	<i>threw</i>
	And spak no word, but sesed hym fast by the lap,	<i>seized; garment-flap</i>
2010	And cried "Out!" and "Harowe!" and nere hym gan to stap.	<i>nearer to him stepped</i>
	"Al for sought!" quod this Blynd. "What, wenest thou for to skape?"	<i>escape</i>
	Beryn had thought to prik forth and thought it had be jape.	<i>spur [his horse]</i>

The Tale of Beryn

	The Blynd Man cast awey his staff and set on both his hondes:	
	"Nay, thou shalt nat void," quod he, "for al thy rich loades,	<i>leave</i>
2015	Tyll I of thee have reson, lawe and eke righte.	<i>justice</i>
	For trewlich I may wit it thee that I have lost my sighte!"	<i>blame</i>
	So for aught that Beryn coude other speke or prey,	<i>either</i>
	He myght in no wise pas. Ful soore he gan to may,	<i>escape; be dismayed</i>
	And namelich for the pepill throngh hym so abouste,	<i>particularly because</i>
2020	And ech man gan hym hond, and seyd without doute:	<i>grab; hesitation</i>
	"Ye must nedes stond and rest and bide the lawe,	<i>endure</i>
	Be ye never so grete a man!" — "So wold I wonder fawe,"	<i>gladly</i>
	Quod Beryn, "yf ye had cause, but I know noon."	
	"No? Thou shalt knowe or thou go! Thou hast nat al i-doone,"	<i>before</i>
2025	The Blynd Man seyd to Beryn. "Tel on, then," quod he.	
	"Here is no place to plete," the Blynd Man seid aye.	<i>plead; in reply</i>
	"Also, we have no juge here of autoeite,	<i>authority</i>
	But Evander the Steward shall deme both thee and me.	<i>judge</i>
	When I my tale have told, and thou hast made answere,	
2030	By that tyme men shal know how thou canst thee clere.	<i>clear yourself [of blame]</i>
	Nowe, soveren God, I thank Thee of this ilk day!	
	Then I may preve thee, by my lyve, of word and eke of fay,	<i>life; good faith</i>
	Fals and eke untrewe of covenant thow hast i-maked.	<i>unfaithful; [which] thou</i>
	But litill is thy charge now, though that I go naked,	<i>concern</i>
2035	That somtyme were parinere and rekenedest never yit.	<i>partner; reckoned</i>
	But thou shalt here, or we depart, therof a litill witt,	<i>hear, before; bit of wisdom</i>
	For after comyn seying, 'Ever atte ende	<i>common proverb</i>
	The trouth woll be preved, how so men ever trend'."	<i>are</i>
	Thus they talked to ech other till they com into the place	<i>i.e., courthouse</i>
2040	And were i-entered in the hall there the Steward was.	<i>where</i>
	The Blynd Man first gan to speke: "Sir Steward, for Goddes sake,	
	Hereth me a litill while, for here I have i-take	<i>apprehended</i>
	He that hath do me wrong, most of man of mold.	<i>mortal men</i>
	Be my help, as law woll, for Hym that Judas sold.	<i>i.e., Christ</i>
2045	Ye know wele that off-tyme I have to yew i-peyned	
	How I was betrayed and how I was i-peyned,	<i>injured</i>
	And how a man somtyme and I our yen did chaunge.	<i>eyes; exchange</i>
	This is the same persone, though that he make it straunge.	<i>denies it</i>
	I toke hem hym but for a tyme and leved trewly,	
2050	Myne to have i-had ageyn, and so both he and I	<i>gave them; believed</i>
	Were ensured utterlich, and was our both will.	<i>pledged</i>

The Tale of Beryn

	But for myne the better were, wrongfullich and ill He hath hem kept hiderto, with much sorow and pync To me, as ye wele knoweth. Because I have nat myne,	because misery
2055	I may nat se with his; wherfor me is ful woo. And evermore ye seyd that ye myght nothing do Without preesence of the man that wrought me this unquert.	woeful said annoyance
	Nowe sith he is tofore yew, now let hym nat astert, For many tyme and offt ye behete me,	escape promised
2060	And he myght be take, he shuld do me gre. Sith ye of hym be sesed, however so ye tave, Let hym never pas til I myne eyen have."	If; arrested; favor in custody; strain leave until; eyes
	"Beryn," quod Evander, "herest thou nat thyselfe How sotilly he pleteth?" — And ware by eche halve,	pleads; wary on all sides
2065	Beryn stood al mewet, and no word he spak.	mote
	And that was tho his grace: ful sone he had be take And he had misseyd ones or els i-seyd nay,	good luck; arrested
	For then he had been negatyff and undo for ay.	If; misspoken
	For they were grete seviliouns and used probat law,	the defendant; rained
2070	Wher evermore affirmatyff shuld preve his own sawe.	civil-law experts
	Wherfor they were so querelouse of al myght com in mynde;	plaintiff; case
	Thoughe it were never in dode i-do, such mater they wold fynde.	litigious; all [who] / evidence
	To benym a man his good tharh som maner gile.	deprive; possessions; gale
2075	For the Blynd Man wist right welc he shuld have lost his while	wasted his time
	To make his pleynst on Beryn and sued oppon his good,	
	For shippes and eke marchandise in a balaunce stode.	
	Therfor he made his chalenge his eyen for to have,	allegation; eyes
	Or els he shuld for hem fyne, yf he wold hem have,	pay a fine
	And ligg for hem in hostage til the fynaunce cam.	security; settlement
2080	This was al the sotilte of the Blynd Man.	
	Beryn stood al mewet, and no word he spak.	mote
	"Beryn," quod Evander, "lest thou be i-take In defaute of answer, thou myghtest be condempned.	
	Be right welc avised, sith thou art examened."	
2085	"Sir," seyd Beryn, "it wold littill availl To answer thus aloon without good consall.	i.e., legal counsel
	And also, fethermore, ful littill I shuld be leved,	believed
	Whatever I answerd, thus stoned and repeaved.	astonished
	And eke my wit doth fail, and so wonder is.	
2090	Wherfor I wold prey yew of your gentilnes	Therefore

The Tale of Beryn

	To graunte me day til tomorrow. I myght be avised To answereth forth with other that on me been surmysed."	advised [how] what; charged
	"Depardeux," quod the Steward, "I graunt wel it be so."	By God
	Beryn toke his leve and hoped to pas and go.	
2095	But as sone as Beryn was on his hoes ryding, He met a womman and a child with sad chere comyng, That toke hym by the reyn and held hym wonder fast, And seyd, "Sir, voideth nat! Hit vaillith nat to hast. Ye mow in no wise scape; ye must nedes abide.	expression Who; securely depart; It; hasten escape lain often
2100	For thoughte ye list to knowe me nat, yit lien by your side I have ful many a tyme, I cannat tell yewe howe lone. Come tofore the Steward, there shull ye here your done Of thing that I shal put on yew, and no word for to ly; To leve me thus alone, it is your vylany.	where; judgment
2105	Alas, the day and tyme that ever I was your make! Much have I endured this too yer for your sake, But now it shall be know who is in the wronge."	abandon spouse these two known
	Beryn was al abashed. The pepil so thik thronge Aboute hym in eche syde; for ought that he couth peyn,	densely crowded on each; endeavor
2110	He must to the Steward of fyne force ageyn. Now shull ye here how sotillich this Womman gan hir tale In presence of the Steward. With colour wan and pale, Petously she gan to tell and seyd, "Sir, to yewe	sheer necessity hear; craftily
	Ful offt I have compleyned in what manere and howe	Pitifully
2115	My childe fader lefft me by myselfe alone, Without help or conforto, as grete as I myght goon, With my sone here and his, that shame it is to tell The penury that I have i-had, that aforce sell	great [with child] his [son] perforce
	I must nedes myne array, where me list or lothe,	wardrobe, whether
2120	Or els I must have begged for to fynd us both. For there was never woman i-leve, as I ges, For lak of hede of lyvode that lyved in more distres Then I myselff, for offt-time for lak of mete and drynk.	to provide for deserted; gain provision for
	And yit I truw no creatur was feynier for to swynke	Than; food
2125	My lyff to sustene, but as I mut nede, Above al other things to his child take hede, That wonder is and mervail that I am alyve. For the sokeyng of his child, ryght as it were a knyve,	believe; more eager; work
	It ran into my hert, so lowe I was of mode;	nursing; knife spirit

The Tale of Beryn

- 2130 That wel I woot in certer, with parcell of my blood
His child I have i-norished, and that is by me seen,
For my rede colour is turned into grene.
And he that cause is of all, here he standeth by me.
To pay for the fosteryng, me thinketh it is tyme.
2135 And sith he is my husband and hath on me no rowth,
Let hym make amendes in saving of his trouth.
And yf he to any word ones can sey nay,
Lo, here my gage al redy to preve al that I say."
The Steward toke the gage and spak in sofft wise:
2140 "Of this petouse compleynst a mannes hert may grise,
For I know in parcell hir tale is nat al lese,
For many a tyme and offi this Womman that here is
Hath i-be tofore me and pleyned of hir grefe,
But without a party, hir cause myght nat peff.
2145 Now thow art here present that she pleyneth on.
Make thy defence now, Beryn, as wele as thowe can."
Beryn stood al swet, and no word he spak.
"Beryn," quod the Steward, "doest thou slepe or wake?
Sey ones oon or other: ys it soth or nay
2150 As she hath declareth? Tell on saunce delay!"
"Lord God!" quod Beryn. "What shuld it me avale
Among so many wise, without right good counsail,
To tell eny tale? Ful littill, as I ges!
Wherfor, I wold prey yew of your gentilnes,
2155 Graunt me day till tomorrow to answer forth with other."
"I graunt wele," quod the Steward, "but for fader and moder, for /the sake of/
Thow getest no lenger term, pleynly I thee tell."
Beryn toke his leve. His hert gan to swell
For pure verry anguyssh, and no mervel was.
2160 And who is that that nold and he were in such case?
For al his trist and hope in eny worldlich thing
Was cleen from hym passed, save sorow and myslikyng.
For body, good and catell and lyff, he set at nougat,
So was his hert i-wounded for anger and for thought.
2165 Beryn passed softilly and to his hors gan go,
And when he was without the gates, he loket to and fro
And coude noon other contenaunce, but to his page he seyd:
"Preciousse God in heven, howe falsly am I betrayde!"
- beside
pity
bond
once
pledge; prove
mild manner
pathetic; be horrified
part; falsehood

complained; grief
litigant; prove
whom

muse
sleep
at once; true
without

clever (people)
guess

sheer authentic anguish
that who wouldn't if
trust
except
property

walk
outside

The Tale of Beryn

	I trowe no man alive stoot in wors pligte,	believe; minds
2170	And all is for my synne and for my yong delite,	youngful
	And pryncipally, above al thing, for grete unkyndnes	unnaturalness
	That I did to my moder, for litill hede twis	
	I toke of hir — this know I wele — whils she was alive.	
	Therfor, al this turment is sent to me so ryve.	abundantly
2175	For there was never womman kynder to hir child	
	Then she was, and thereageyns never thing so wild	in return
	Ne so evill-thewed as I was myself.	ill-mannered
	Therfor, sorrow and happous eniron me by echel heve	mishaps surround; side
	That I note whider ryde nether up ne down.	don't know whither [to]
2180	There been so many devilles dwelling in this town,	
	And so ful of gile and trechery also.	deceit
	That wele I woot in cerseyn they woll me ondo.	destroy
	Now wold to God in heven what is my best rede?"	<i>If knew</i> what plan
	He took his hors to his page, and thus to hym he seyd:	gave
2185	"Lede my hors to shipward, and take it to som man,	give
	And I woll go on foot as pryyly as I can,	inconspicuously
	And assay yf I may in eny maner wise	endeavor
	Ascape unarested more in such maner wise."	Escape
	The child toke his mastres hors and lafft hym there alone,	page; left
2190	Walking forth on foot, makeing offt his moan.	moan
	And in his most musing — I cannat sey how lone —	often
	He wosshed naked as he was bore he had be in Rome.	wished; been
	And no mervall was it, as the case stode,	
	For he drad more to lese his eyen than he did his shippes or his good.	dreaded
2195	Now ye that listeth to dwell and here of aventure,	wish; hear
	How petously Dame Fortune, Beryn to amure,	pitiably; ruin
	Turneth her whelk about in the wers syde,	wheel; worse
	With hap of sorow and anguyssh she gynneth for to ride.	
	Beryn passed toward the strande there his shippes were,	shore where
2200	But ye now understand his hert was ful of fere,	
	Yit netherles he sat hym down softilly on a stall,	bench
	Semy-vif for sorow, and lened to the wall.	Half-dead
	For turment that he had, so wery he was and feynt,	
	And to God above thus he made his pleyn:	
2205	"Glorious God in heven, that al thing madest of nought,	who
	Why sufferest thou these cursed men to stroyn me for nought,	permit; destroy
	And knowest wel myne innocent, that I have no gilt	innocence

The Tale of Beryn

	Of al that they pursu me or on me is pilt?"	pushed
	And in the meenwhils that Beryn thus gan plodyn,	complain
2210	A cachepoll stode besides — his name was Macaign — And herd all the wordes and knew also tofore	(see note)
	How Beryn was turmented, both with las and more;	less
	It was i-spong thurh the toun. So was he ful ensensed	fully informed
	How he hym wold engyne, as he had purpensed,	con; prepared
2215	And had araid hym sotillich as man of contemplacion,	disguised himself
	In a mantell with the lyte, with fals dissimilacioun,	border
	And a staff in his bond, as though he febill were,	
	And drow hym toward Beryn and seid in this manere:	approached
	"The hight God of heven, that al thing made of sought,	who
2220	Bles yew, gentil sir, for many an hevy thought, Me thinketh that ye have, and no wonder is.	
	But, good sir, dismay yew nat, but leveth your hevynes.	sadness
	And yff ye list to tell me somewhat of your distres,	choose
	I hope to God almyghty in party it redres	partially
2225	Thurh my pore counsall, and so I have many oon. For I have peté on yew, by God and by Seyst Jon,	pay
	And eke priyy hevynes doth ech man appeir,	inward sorrow; impair
	Sodenly or he be ware, and fall in dispeir.	before
	And who be in that plague, that man is incurabill,	plague
2230	For consequent cometh after sekenes abominabill.	effects
	And therfor, sir, diskeverereth yewe and be nothing adrad."	disclose yourself
	"Graunt mercy, sir," quod Beryn. "Ye seme trewe and sad,	Thank you; sober
	But o thing lieth in my hert: I note to whom to trust,	don't know
	For tho that dyned me today ordeyned me to arrest."	those who hosted
2235	"A, sir, be ye that man? Of yew I have i-herd. Gentil sir, douteth nat, se be nothing afred	Ah
	Of me, for I shall counsell yewe as wel as I can,	afraid
	For trulich in the ceté dwelleth many a fals man,	city
	And usen litill els but falshode, wrong and while,	(Who); gale
2240	And how they myght straungours with trechery begile.	foreigners
	But ye shall do ryght wisely somewhat by my counsayll.	who
	Speke with the Steward, that may yewe most avail,	common
	For there is a comyn byword, yf ye it herd haveth,	invest; penny (i.e., a bribe)
	"Wele setteth he his peny that the pound saveth."	who
2245	The Steward is a covetouse man that long hath desired A knyff I have in kepeing, wherewith his hert I wired,	knyff; worried

The Tale of Beryn

	Shall be yewe to help, in covenante that ye Shall gyve me fyv mark year trew frend to be.	{Which}; agreement five
2250	The knyff is feir, I tell yew, yit never tofore this day Myght the Steward have it, for aught he coud prey. The wiche ye shall gyve hym, the better for to sped. And behote hym twenty pounds to help yewe in your nede. And yf he graunteth, trusteth wele, ye stond in good plighe, For better is then lese all, the las the more quyt.	profit promise
2255	And I woll go with yewe streyc to his place, And knele doun and speke first to amend your case. And sey ye be my cosyn, the better shull ye sped. And when that I have all i-told, the knyff to hym ye bode."	lose; less; repay household
	Beryn thanked hym hertlich and on hym gan trust,	proper offer heartily
2260	With hond in hond ensured, and al for the best. Beryn thought noon other, al that it other was. Macaign hym comforted, talking of hir case; And passed forth stylly toward the Steward blyve Beryn and Macaign. But Beryn bare the knyff,	although
2265	And trust much in his felaw to have som help. But or they departed were, he had no cause to yelp Of no maner comfort, as ye shull here anoon. For as sone as Macaign tofore the Steward come, He fill plat to the erth; a grevous pleyat and an huge	quietly; at once But before; boast hear
2270	He made, and seyd, "Sir Steward, nowe be a trew juge Ageyns this fals treytour that sondeth me besyde. Let take of hym good hede, els he wol nat abyde. Now mercy, good Steward, for ye have herd me yore For my fader, Melan, pleyn to yew ful sore	fall face-down; complaint who
2275	That with seven dromodaries, as I have told yewe lome, With marchandise charged went toward Rome. And it is seven yeor ago, and a litil more, Of hym or of his goodes that I herd les or more. And yit I have enquerid as bysely as I couthe,	cargo ships; often long ago complain diligently
2280	And met never man yit that me coude tell with mouth Any tyding of hym, onto this same day. But now I know to much, alias! I may wel say!"	cast
	When Beryn herd these wordes, he kist doun his hede.	too
	"Alias!" he thought in hert; "alias, what is my rede?" —	plan
2285	And wold feyn have voided and outward gan to stapp.	/het; departed; stop

The Tale of Beryn

- But Macaign arose and sesed hym by the lapp:
"Nay, thou shalt nat void," he said, "My tale is nat i-do.
For by trowth of my body, yf thou scapedest so,
I shuld never have mery whils I were on lyve!" —
2290 And set hond fast on Beryns other scieve,
And seyd, "Good Sir Steward, my tale to the ende
I prey ye wold here, for wend how men wend,
There may no man hele murder that it woll out atie last.
The same knyff my fader bere when he of contré past,
2295 Let serch wele this felon, and here ye shull hym fynde.
I know the knyff wel inowgh; it is nat out of my mynde.
The coselere dwelleth in this town that made the same knyff,
And for to preve the trowth, he shall be here as blyve."
Beryn swat for anger; his hert was ful of fere.
2300 He toke the knyff to the Steward or he serched were.
The Steward onto Beryn: "My frend, lo!" quod he.
"And thou think thee wel about, this is a foule plic.
I can know soon other but thou must, or thou go,
Yeld the body of Melan and his good also.
2305 Now be wel avised ageyn tomorrow day;
Then shalt thou have thy jugement. There is no more to say."
When Beryn fro the Steward thus departed was
And was without the gate, he lokod oppon the plase,
And cursed it wonder bitterly in a fervent ire,
2310 And wissed many tymes it had been afeir.
"For I trow that man of lyve was never wors betrayed
Then I am, and therewithall my hert is cleen dismayed,
For here I have no frendship, but am al counselles,
And they been falsher then Judas, and eke mercyles.
2315 A, Lord God in hevyn, that my hert is woo!
And yit suyrly I mervell nat, though that it be so,
For yit in al my lyve sith I ought understande,
Had I never will for to lern good.
Foly — I haunted it ever, there myght no man me let;
2320 And now he hath i-paid me; he is cleen out of my dett.
For whils I had tyme, wisdom I myght have lersed,
But I drough me to Foly and wold nat be governed,
But had al myne own will and of no man a-ferd.
For I was never chastised, but nowe myne own yerd
- grabbed; garment-flap
leave; done
escaped
enjoyment; alive
{he}
- hear; fare
conceal
bore; from; passed
it
- memory
cudler; who
immediately
sweated
gave; before
- If; accusation
before
property
in anticipation of
- outside
- on fire
believe; alive
entirely
without legal advice
falser
- Ah; woeifd
surely
- practiced
she (Folly)
- drew
was respectful
stick

The Tale of Beryn

2325	Beteth me to sore, the strokes been to hard. For these devilles of this town taketh but litill reward To sclee my body to have my good; the day is set tomorrow. Now wold to God I were in grave, for it were end of sorow!	too regard kill; possessions
2330	I was iwis to much a foole, for hate I had to Rame, I wold forsake myne heritage; therfor sorow and shame Is oppon me fall, and right wele deserved, For I tooke noon maner hede when my moder sterved, And disobeyed my fader and set hym at naught also. What wonder is it than though that I have woo?	fool; (his stepmother) befallen died valued then
2335	Fortune and eke Wisdom have werrred with me ever, And I with hem in al my lyff, for Fortune was me lever Then esy Wit or Governaunce, for hem too I did hate. And thoughte I wold be at oon, now it is to late. O myghtfull God in heven, where was ever man	fought to me preferable Discipline; those two in harmony; too
2340	That wrought hymself more foly then I myself did than? Acursed be the tyme that I out of Rome went, That was my faders righte heir of lyvode and of rest, And al the riall lordshipp that he hath in the town. Had I had wit and grace, and hold me lowe and boune,	than; then Who; rightful; income royal obedient
2345	It were my kynd now among my baronage To hauke and to hunt, and eke to pley and rage With feir fresh ladies, and daunce when me lyst. But nowe it is to late to speke of 'Had I wist!' But I fare like the man that for to swelle his vlyes,	custom; peers fist <i>it pleased me</i> too late; known exterminate; flies
2350	He stert into the bern and after stre he hies, And goth about the walles with a brennyng wase, Tyll it was, atte last, that the leem and blase Entred into the chynes where the whete was, And kissed so the evese that brent was al the place;	rushes; straw; harries burning torch flame chinks eaves; burned
2355	But first in the begynning, till feir smote in the raftres, He toke no maner kepe and thought of nothing after, What perell there myghtie fall — ne more did I, iwis, That wold forsake myne honour for the unkyndnes Of Rame that was my stepmoder, for yf I shal nat ly.	befall; indeed because of who
2360	They beth soure. Wherfor, the more wisely I shuld have wrought, had I had wit and suffred for a tyme, And after com to purpose wel isowghe of myne. But evil avenged be his deol that, for a litill mode	(i.e., stepmothers; bitter endured later; an outcome sorrow who; petty outburst

The Tale of Beryn

- 2365 And anger, to his neyghbour selleth awy his good
And goth hymself abegging after in bresf tyme.
He must be counted a lewd man in al maaser ryse.
So have I wrought, and wers, for I dout of my lyve
How that it shall stond, for plukking of my scleve,
The knyffe that was me take!" — as ye have herd tofore —
2370 "And yit it greveth myne hert also much more
Of myne own pepill that no disese aserved.
I wote wele after plodding right nought wol be reserved
To sustene hir lyves; I trow ryght nought or lyse,
And paraventur lightly stond in woes plyghte.
2375 Of me it is no force, though I be thus arayed,
But it is dole and peté that they shul be betrayed
That hath nought aserved, but for my gilt aloon."
- And when that Beryn in this wise had i-made his mone,
A crepil he saw comyng with grete sped and hast.
2380 Oppon a stilt under his kne bound wonder fast,
And a crouch under his armes, with bondes al forskramed.
 "Allas!" quod this Beryn, "shall I be more examened?" —
And gan to turn aside onto the see-stronde,
And the Cripill after, and wan oppon hym londe.
2385 Tho began Beryn to dredre inwaedlich sore,
And thought thus in his hert: "Shal I be combered more?
And it were Goddes will my sorowe for to cese,
Me thinketh I have inowen." The Cripill began to prece
And had i-caught aerehond Beryn by the scleve.
- 2390 Beryn turned as an hare and gan to ren blyve,
But the Cripill knew better the pathes smale and grete
Then Beryn, so tofore hym he was and gan hym mete.
When Beryn saw it vayled nought to renne ne to lepe,
What for dole and anguyssh no woed myght he speke,
2395 But stode still amased and stared fast aboute.
- The Cripill began to speke: "Sir, to dredre or to dout
Of me wold ye righte light, and ye knewe myne hert.
So where ye like evil or il, fro me shull ye nat parte
Tyll I have treted with yew, and ye with me also,
2400 Of all your soden happenes, your myscheff and your woo.
For by the tyme that I have knowlech of your case,
Your rennyng and your trotting into any esy pase
- property
afterwards; brief
i.e., satiric verses
- begging at
given
- cwe; adversity deserved
being sued; left over
their; little or nothing
- perhaps quickly
- no master; treated
- sorrow; pity
- Who; deserved
- manner; complaint
- crippled man
- peg-leg; tightly
- cratch; contorted
- [he]: seashore
- gained distance upon him
- Then
- encumbered
- If; cause
- enough; press
- seized nearly
- not fast
- There; intercept
- availed; run
- little, if you
- whether
- negotiated
- recent mishaps
- running

The Tale of Beryn

	I shall turn, or that we twyn, so ye after my scole Wol do, and as I rede yew. For ye were a folc	before; separate; school advise
2405	When ye cam first a londe. Wolde ye had met with me. For I wold have ensensed yewe al the iniquite Of these fals marchandes that dwellen in this town, And cuted all your chaffare without gruch or groun.	on shore informed displayed; wares; complaint
	For had ye dwelled within your shippes and nat go hem among,	among them
2410	Then had ye been undaungered and quyt of al hir wrong On yewe that been surmised thurh fals suggestioun." Beryn gan to sigh; uneth he myght soun Saff o word or tweyn, and "Mercy!" was the first, Preying with all his hert that he myght have his rest	safe from charged; allegations hardly; speak Except one
2415	And be no more enpled, but pas from hym quyte. "Good sir," quod Beryn, "doth me no more dispise, And suffer me to pas, and have on me routhe, And I suyr yew feithfully, have here my trouth,	sued; i.e., the Cripple resistance permit; pity assure; pledge
	Tomorowe when I have pleded, and anything be lafft	if; left
2420	Of shipp or merchandise, afore the ship or baflit, I woll shewe yew al i-fere and opyn every chest, And put it in your grace to do what ye list."	in front of; astern together; open power; please shore
	And in the meanwhile that Beryn gan to clapp, The Cripill nyghed hym nere and nere, and hent hym by the lap,	approached; caught
2425	And as sone as Beryn knew that he was in honde, He unlaced his mantell for drede of som comand, And praveliche over his shuldres lete hym down glyde, And had lever lese his mantell then abyde.	something coming stealthily; it rather lose grabbed
	The Cripill all perceyved and hent hym by the scleve	outer-coat; snapple
2430	Of his nether surcote. — "Alas, nowe mut Y strye," Thoughte Beryn by hymself; "nowe I am i-hent, There helpeþ naughte save strength!" — Therewith the scleve sorent;	caught tore
	Beryn gan to scappe, he spared for no cost.	escape
	"Alas!" thought this Cripill. "This man woll be lost	
2435	And be undo forever, but he counsell have. Iwis, thought he be lewde, my contreman to save Yit will my besynes do and peyn that I may Sith he is of Rome, for that is my contray."	ruined; unless unshooled; companion diligence; action Since
	This Cripill was an hundred yere ful of age	
2440	With a long thik berd, and a trewe visage He had and a manly, and july was he —	honest face gallant

The Tale of Beryn

- And Geffrey was his name i-knowe in that contré.
"Alas!" thought this Geffrey, "this man hath grete drede
Of me that by my power wold help hym in his nede.
Iwis, thoughte he be nyce, untaught and unwise,
I woll nat for his foly leve myne emprysse!"
- 2445 And leapt after Beryn, and that in right good spedē.
Beryn was so sore agast, he toke no maner hede
To look ones bakward till he to the water cam;
Then loked he behynd and saw Sir Clekam
Comand wonder fast with staff and with his stilt.
- 2450 "Alas!" thought Beryn, "I nowe am i-spilt,
For I may no ferther without I wold me drouste —
I note wch were the better! — or go ageyna to tounse."
- 2455 Geffrey was so my com that Beryn myght nat fle.
"Good sir," quod this Geffrey, "why do ye void me?
For, by Heven Quene that bare Criste in hir barme,
But righte as to myself I woll yewe no more harm.
Sitteth down here by me oppon this see-stronde,
- 2460 And yff ye drede anything, clepe your men to loade
And let hem be here with us all our speche-tyme,
For I woll nat feyn oon woord, as makers doon to ryse,
But counsell yewe as prudently as God woll send me grace.
Take comforte to yewe, and herk a litill spase."
- 2465 And when that Beryn had i-herd his tale to the ende,
And how goodly Geffrey spak as he were his frende,
Nonobstant his drede, yet part of sapience
Suremed into his hert for his eloquence,
And seyd, "God me counsayll for His highe mercy!
- 2470 For I have herd, this same day, men as sotilly
Speke, and of your semblant and in such manere,
And byhese me frendshipp outward by hir chere,
But inward it was contrary hir intelleccioone.
Wherfor the blame is les, thoughte I suspicioone
- 2475 Have of your wordes, lest other be your entent.
For I note in whom to trust, by God omnipotent!
Yit netherles, yf your will is to come into the shipp with me,
I woll somewhat do by your rede, how so it ever be."
- 2480 Then quod Geffrey: "yf it be so that I in your power
Enter into your shippes, and yewe help in your mystere,
- foolish
enterprise
Jhes
frightened
- i.e.*, Sir Crampleg (see note)
Coming
doomed
unless; drown
don't know
- free
i.e., Virgin Mary; womb
seashore
call
poet
know
- as if
Notwithstanding
on account of
- cleverly
appearance
promised; expression
intention
- For which reason
otherwise
don't know
- advice
profession

The Tale of Beryn

	That ye ageyn your adversaries shull have the better syde, And gyve yewe such counsell to bate downe hir pride, And that ye wyn in every pleynt, also much or more As they purpose to have of yewe; yf they be doun i-bore	against beat; their suit, just as much overthrown
2485	And ye have amendes for hir iniquite — And I yewe bryng to this end — what shall my guerdon be?"	reward
	"In very sooth," quod Beryn, "yf I yewe may trust, I woll quyte yewe trewly, I make yewe behest."	repay; promise
	"In feith then," quod Geffrey, "I woll with yewe wende."	go
2490	"What is your name," said Beryn tho, "my frend?"	then
	"Geffrey," he seyd; "but in this marches I was nat bore, But I have dwelled in this ceté yeeres heretofore	these territories; born
	Ful many, and turmented wors then were ye,	city
	And endured for my trowth much adversite, <td>that</td>	that
2495	For I wold in no wise suffer hir falsoedes.	honesty
	For in all the world, so corrupt of hir dedes	endorse their crimes
	Been noon men alive, I may ryghte wele avowe, <td></td>	
	For they set all hir wittes in wrong, al that they mowen.	
	Wherfor ful many a tyme, the grettest of hem and I	
2500	Have stonden in altercacioun for hir trechery,	because of
	For I had in valowc in trewe marchandise	value
	A thousand pound — al have they take in such maner wise.	takens
	So ferforth to save my blood, no longer myght I dare.	To such an extent; endure
	For dredc of wors, thus thought I myself to disfigure,	i.e., pose as cripple
2505	And have amouge hem twelve yeer go right in this pligte,	
	And ever have had in memory howe I myght hem quyne.	repay
	And so I hope nowghe, as sotill as they be,	now; crafty
	With my wit engyne hem and help yewe and me.	outward
	My lymes been both hole and sound; me nedeth stilt ne crouch."	limbs; healthy
2510	He cast asyde hem both and lepe oppon an huche,	chest
	And adown ageynes, and walked too and fro,	again
	Up and down within the shipp, and shewed his hondes tho,	then
	Strecching forth his fyngers in sight over al aboute,	
	Without knot or knor or eny signe of goute,	swelling
2515	And clyghse hem esft ageyns right disfeterly,	clenched; misshapenly
	Som to ride eche other and som awewayrd wry.	knot; twist
	Geffrey was right myghty and wele his age did bere,	strong
	For natur was more substancial when tho dayes were	murdy
	Then nowe in our tyme, for al thing doth wast	decay

The Tale of Beryn

2520	Saffe vise and cursed lyving, that growtheth al to wast. What shuld I tell more? But Geffrey sat hym down And Beryn hym besydes. The Romeyns gan to rown And mervelled much in Geffrey of his disgisenes.	Except vice; to destroy all whisper disguise
2525	And Beryn had another thought and spak of his distres: "Now, Geffrey," said this Beryn, "and I durst trust in yewe, That and ye knewe eny man that is alyve anowre That had of discrecioune so much influence	if; dare That if sound judgment
	To make my party good tomorrow in my defence And delyver me of sorowe, as ye behote have,	mit successful promised
2530	I wold becom his legeman — as God my soule save!" "That were to much," quod Geffrey, "that woll I yew relese, But I desire of other thing to have your promes: That and I bryng your enmyes into such a traunce	follower too promise That (f. confusion
	To make for your wrongs to yew righte highe fenaunce, And so declare for yewe that with yew pas such dome,	reparation judgment
2535	That ye oppon your feith bryng me at Rome, Yf God woll send yew weder and grace to repase."	weather; return
	Quod Beryn: "But I graunt yewe, I were lewder then an ass! ¹ But or I fullich trust yewe, holdeth me excused;	But before consult
2540	I woll go counsell with my men, lest they it refused." Beryn drewe asyde and spak with his meyné, And expressed every word in what plight and degré That he stood, from poynt to poynt, and of his fals arrestes.	crew situation
	His meyné were astoned and stared forth as bestes.	bestes
2545	"Speketh som word," quod Beryn, "sith I am betrayd; Ye have i-herd what Geffrey to me hath sayd." These Romeyns stood all still; o word ne cowd they move,	since
	And eke it passed hir wittes. Then Beryn gan releve, And to Geffrey esft ageyn and mercy hym besought.	overwhelmed; arise favor
2550	"Help me, sir," quod Beryn, "for His love that us bought, Dying on the rood!" — and wept ful tenderly. "For but ye help," quod Beryn, "there is no remedy, For comfort nether counsall of my men have I noon.	i.e., Christ's cross; [be] unless nor
	Help me, as God yew help, and els I am undoon!"	
2555	When Geffrey sawe this Beryn so distract and wept,	reduced to weeping

¹ Beryn replied: "Were I not to grant you that, I would be more stupid than an ass!"

The Tale of Beryn

	Pitē into eche veyn of his hert crept.	Pity
	"Alas," quod Geffrey, "I myght nat do a more synfull dede, I leve by my trowth, then fayll yew in this nede. Fail me, God in heven, yf that I yewe faill	
2560	That I shall do my besines, my peyn and my travail To help yew by my power, I may no ferther goo!"	effort
	"Yis, ye behete me more," seyd Beryn tho,	promise
	"That ye wold help me at all, that I shuld stond clere."	clear [of all charges]
	Beryn gan to wepe and make wers chere.	
2565	"Stilleth yewe," quod Geffrey, "for howesover ye tire, More then my power ye ought nat desire. For thurh the grace of God, ye shall be holp wele, I have thereof no doute. But trewlich I yewe tell	Quiet yourself; strain
	That ye woll hold me covaunte, and I woll yew also,	helped
2570	To bryng me at Rome when it is al i-do. In signe of trowth of both sides of our acordement, Ech of us his other of our comyn assent."	in agreement completed contract mutual done
	And all was do, and afterward Beryn comaunded sync.	
	They droak, and then Geffrey seyd: "Sir Beryn,	
2575	Ye mut declare your maters to myne intelligence That I may the bet persevye al inconveniencie, Dout, pro, contra and ambiguité Thurh your declaracioun, and enfaormed be.	affairs better; obstacles questions; uncertainties testimony
	And with the help of our soveren Lord celestiall,	
2580	They shull be behynd, and we shul have the ball! For nowe the tyme approacheth for hir cursenes, To be somewhat rewarded, and cause of your distres Hath my hert i-sealed and fixed hem anye,	i.e., be on the offensive their redressed sickened; harm on them
	As trowth woll and reson, for hir trecherie.	
2585	For many a man, sofore this day, they have do out of daw, Distroid and turmented thurh hir fals lawe.	put to death
	For they think littill elles, and all hir witties fyve,	
	Save to have a mannes good and to benym his lyve,	Except; take away
	And hath a cursed custom, al ageyns reson,	
2590	That what man they enpeche, they have noon encheson, Thoughe it be as fals a thing as God hymself is trewe. And it touch a straunger that is com of newe, Atte first mocionme that he begynneth to meve,	whatever; accuse; grounds <i>If; foreigner; recently</i>
	There stondeth up an hundred hym to repreve.	condemn

The Tale of Beryn

2595	The lawes of the ceſte ſtont in probacy; They uſen noon eſqueſtes the wronges for to try, And yf thou haddest eny wrong and wolded pleyn thee, And were as trewe a cauſe as eny myghte be, Thou ſhuldest nat fynd o man to bere thee witnes,	affirmative proof (see note) official investigation <i>file a complaint</i>
2600	Though every man in the town knew it, more or les. So burreth they togider and holdeth with ech other That as to counterpleide hem, though ye were my brother, I wold gyve yewē no counſell ne hir enpechement In no word to deny, for that were comberment.	cling argue against them accusation disaster <i>i.e., the plaintiff</i> <i>i.e., the defendant</i> <i>against</i>
2605	For then were they in the affirmatyff and wold preve anoon, And to yew that were negatyff the lawe woll graunie noon. So for to pleide ageyn hem, it woll littill availe. And yit to every mannes wit it ought be grete mervail, For hir lawes been so streyt, and peynous ordinaunce	strict; severe decree fine; punishment forfeit; perjury, if royal; subordinate wicked one unanimously
2610	Is stalled for hir falſhode; for this is hir fynauſe, To leſe hir lyff for leſing, and Iſope it may knowe, That lord is riall of the town and holdeth hem so lowe. Wherfor they have a custom, a shrewed for the nones, If eny of hem ſey a thing, they cry all attonces	ſtand; punishment forfeit; perjury, if royal; subordinate wicked one unanimously
2615	And ferm it for a ſoth, and it bere any charge. Thus of the daunger of Iſope, they kepe hem ever at large. And therfore wiſdom were, whoso myght eſchewe, Never to dele with hem, for were it wrong or trewe, It ſhuld littill availl ageyns hir falſhedes,	affirm; truth; sustain threat; free escape
2620	For they been accuſed and ſo been hir dedes. Wherfor we muſt with al our wit ſenſibiliſt Such anſwers us purvey that they been iſolabil, Tomorrow at our apparaunce, and ſhull be responsaill. For of wele and elles, it is thy day fyſall!"	irrefutable responsible or otherwise; decisive
2625	"Nowe, ſoveren Lord celeſtiall!" with many ſoewful ſighes Seyd Beryn to Geffrey, ymmemorat of lyes, "Graunt me grace tomorrow, ſo that God be plesed, Make ſo myne anſwer and I ſomewhat i-eſed By thee that art my counſaill, for other help is noon."	unmindful helped
2630	"Reherce me then," quod Geffrey, "the cauſes of thy foon. Fro poyn to poyn, al in fere on thee is ſumyſed, Wherthurh I myght tomorrow the better be avized." "Now in ſoth," quod Beryn, "thoughe I ſhuld dy,	Repear for; foes in sum; charged Through which; informed

The Tale of Beryn

- I cannat tell the tenth part of hir trechery,
What for sorow and anger that they to me have wrought.
So stond I clese desperat, but ye con help ought." *hopeless; unless*
 "Despardeux," seid Geffrey, "and I thee wol nat fail,
Sith I have ensured thee to be of thy counsaill, *By God*
And so much the more that thow art nat wise *contracted with*
- 2640 And canst nat me enfourn of no maner avise. *advice*
Here therfor a while, and tend wel to my lore: *Listen; attend; instructions*
The lord that dwelleth in this town, whose name I told tofore,
Isope efft rehersed, is so inly wise *mentioned; thoroughly*
That no man alvye can pas his devise, *sorpass; judgment*
- 2645 And is so grow in yeres that sixty yeer ago
He saw nat for age, and yit it stondeth so *i.e., went blind*
That thurh his witt and wisdom and his governaunce,
Who maketh a fray or striveth aught or mel to much or peauance¹ *isn't arrested*
- 2650 Within the same cyte, that he mys take anoon *penalty*
And hath his penaunce forthwith, for pardon useth he noon.
For there mys pore ne riche, ne what state he be,
That he mys underfote for his iniquite. *isn't; whatever*
 isn't subdued
And it be preved on hym, there shal no gold hym quyte,
Right as the forfeit axeth, moch or lite. *If; absolve*
2655 For geys his comauendement is noon so hardy quek,
So hard setteth he his fote in every mannes nek.
For under sky and sterres, this day is noon alvye
That coude amend hym in o poynt, al thing to discryve. *penalty demand; fide*
 against; courageous alive
 on
2660 They shuld be insufficient to make his answer.
For he can al langages: Grew, Ebewe and Latyne,
Caldey, Frenssh and Lombard, ye knowe wel fyne,
And all maner that men in bokes write.
- In poysé and philosophé also he can endite,
2665 Sevile and casoun and al maner lawes,
Seseca and Sydrak and Salamones sawes,
And the seven sciences and cke lawe of armes,
Experimentes and pompery and al maner charmes,
As ye shall here after, er that I depart,
- knows; Greek; Hebrew*
 Chaldean; fully
 all manner [of things]
 poetry; expound
 Civil; canon
 proverbs
 (see note)
 display; magic spells
 later; before

¹ Whoever creates a disturbance or causes strife or mingles too much or swagger.

The Tale of Beryn

- 2670 Of his imaginacions and of his sotill art.
 For he is of age thre hundred yeer and more;
 Wherfor of all sciences he hath the more lere.
 In Denmark he was gotten and i-bore also,
 And in Grece i-nourisched til he coud speke and go.
- 2675 There was he put to scole and lerned wonder fast,
 For such was his grace that al other he past.
 But fliest in his begyanyng, litil good he had,
 But lerned ever passyngly and was wise and sad.
 Of stature and of feture, there was noon hym like
- 2680 Thurh the londe of Grece, though men wold hym seke.
 A kyng there was in tho yeres that had noon heir male.
 Saff a daughter that he loved as his own saal.
 Isope was his seruaunt and did hym such plesaunce
 That he made hym his heir, and did hym so avaunce
- 2685 To wedd his daughter and after hym to bere crown,
 Thurh prowes and his port, so low he was and boun.
 So as Fortune wold, that was Isopes frend,
 This worthy kyng that same yere made his carnel ende.
 That seven score yeer is passed that Isope thus hath regned,
- 2690 And yit was there never for wrong on hym compleyned
 For no jugement that he gaff. Yit som ageyn hym wylod,
 A grete part of his pepill, and wold have hym exiled,
 But his grete wisdom and his manfulnes,
 His governaunce, with his bounte and his rightfulnes,
- 2695 Hath ever yit meyntened hym unto this ilch day —
 And woll whils that he lyveth, for aught that men can say.
 For who hath eny quarell or cause for to wondre,
 Within this same ceté quiklich woll he fonde,
 And it be sotil mater, to Isope for to fare.
- 2700 Fro gynnyng to the end his quarel to declare,
 And eve afore, as custom is, the plee shal be on the morowe. *If the night; morning*
 But whoso ly, he scapeth nat without shame or sorow.
 Beryn, thow must go thider where thyne enpechement
 Shull be i-meved, and therfor pas nat thes.
- 2705 Tyll thow have herd hem all, and report hem wele
 To me that am thy counsell, and reper snele.
 But so riall mancioune as Isope dwelleth in,
 There is noon in the world, ne so quacynt of gyn.

knowledge
conceived; born
nurtured; walk

talent; surpassed
few possessions
surpassingly; sober
feature

Throughout
those
Except; soul

advance (in rank)

ability; manner; obedient
who
bodily
i.e., 140

give; against; plotted

benevolence
same
fear
city; disclose
If; complicated

moved
i.e., the charges
return quickly
royal a palace
ingenuous of design

The Tale of Beryn

- Wherfor, be wel avised how I enfourm thee
 2710 Of the wonder weyes, and of the pryytē
 That been within his paleyse, that thou must pas by.
 And when thou approchest and art the castell nygh,
 Blench fro the brode gate and enter thou nat there,
 For there been men to kepe it. Yit have thou no fere.
 2715 Pas doun on the right hond by the castell wall
 Tyll thou fynd a wyndowe, and whatso thee byfall,
 Enter there, yf thou may, and be nothing agast,
 But walk forth in that entré. Then shalt thou see in hast
 A port-colyse thee tofore. Pas in boldly
 2720 Tyll thou com to an hall, the feyrest under sky.
 The walles been of marbill i-joyned and i-closed,
 And the pilours cristall, grete and wele purposed.
 The keveryng above is of selondyn,
 And the pavement beneath of gold and asure fyne.
 2725 But whoso passeth thurh this hall hath nede to ren blyve,
 Or els he myght be disware of his own lyve,
 For there within lieth a stoon that is so hote of kynde
 That what thing com forby, anoon it woll atend,
 As bryght as any candel leem, and consume anoon.
 2730 And so wold the hall also, nere coldnes of a stoon
 That is i-cleped dyonyse, that set is hym ageyn.
 So and thou lepe lightly, thou shalt have no peyn,
 For ether stone in kynde proporcionald they be
 Of hete and eke of coldnes, of oon equalit.
 2735 Thou must pas thurh the hall, bat tary nat, I rede,
 For thou shalt fynd a dur up right afore thyne hede.
 When thou art entred there and the dor apest,
 Whatso thou se ligg or stond, be thou nat agast,
 And yf thou drede anything, do no more save blowe,
 2740 But yit I rede thee beware that it be somewhat lowe.
 There been to libardes loos and untyed.
 If that thy blowing of that other in enything be spyd,
 Anoon he raketh on thee to sese thee by thy pate,
 For there mys thing in erth that he so much doth hate
 2745 As breth of mannes mowth. Wherfor refreyn thee,
 And blowe but fair and soft, and when that nede be.
 When thou art passed this hall, anoon then shalt thowe com
- wondrous; secret
 Turn
guard; fear
 happens
afraid
passage; at once
drop-grate
 constructed; enclosed
designed
ceiling; celidory
pavement; lapis lazuli
 run fast
careless; life
by nature
nearby; catch fire
flame
were it not [for the]
in opposition
if; quickly
by nature
 linger; advise
door open
 lie; afraid
except breathe
quietly
two leopards; unleashed
breathing; detected
nashes; seize; head
isn't anything
 breathe

The Tale of Beryn

- Into the fayrest gardyn that is in Cristendom,
The wicch thurh his clergy is made of such devise
That a man shall ween he is in paradise
At his first comyng in, for melody and song
And other glorious thinges and delectabill among,
The wicch Tholomeus, that somtyme paynym was,
That of astronomy knew every poynt and case,
Did it so devise thurh his highe connynge
That there nys best in erth ne bird that doth syng
That he nys there in figur, in gold and sylver fyne,
And move as they were quyk. Knewe the sotil engyne!¹
In mydward of this gardyn stant a feir tre,
Of all maner leves that under sky be
I-forged and i-fourmed, eche in his degré,
Of sylver and of gold fyne, that lusty been to see.
This gardyn is ever green and ful of May floures
Of rede, white and blewe, and other fresh coloures,
The wicch been so redolent and sentyn so abouste,
That he must be ryghte lewd therin shuld route.
These monstrefull thinges I devise to thee
Because thou shuldest nat of hem abashed be;
When that thowe comest there, so thow be strong in thought
And do by my counsell, drede thee right nougat.
For there beth eight tregetours that this gardyn kepeth —
Four of hem doth waak whils the four sclepeth —
The wicch been so perfite of nygramancé,
And the arte of apparence and of tregetrie,
That they make semen as to a mannes sight
Abominabill wormes, that sore ought be afrighte
The hertiest man on erth, but he warned were
Of the grisly sightes that he shuld see there.
Among al other ther is a lyon white,
That and he se a straunger, he raumpeth for to bite
And hath, sofore this tyme, five hundred men and mo
Devoured and i-eate, that therforth have i-gon.
Yit shalt thowe pas suyrly, so thow do as I tell.
- leamedness
think
Ptolemy; pagan
intelligence
isn't beast
it; replica; refined
the mid; stands
shaped
delightful
scented
low-born; misbehave
marvelous; describe
astonished
so that
act
conjurers
stay awake
expert; necromancy
illusion; magic
serpents; afraid
bravest; unless
apparitions
Which if; rises up
eaten; who
safely; if

¹ *And they move as if they were alive. Acknowledge the subtle engineering!*

The Tale of Beryn

2785	The tre I told tofore, that round as any bell, Bereth bowe and braunce traylyng to the ground; And thow touch oon of hem, thow art saff and sound. The tre hath such vertu, there shall nothing thee dere. Loke that be the first when thow comest there.	mentioned branches
2790	Then shalt thowe se an entré by the ferther syde; Thoughe it be streyt tofore, inner large and wyde It groweth more and more, and as a dentour wrieth, Yit well that wey thee beyng there that Isope lieth, Into the feyst chamber that ever man sawe with eye. When thow art therewithin, govern thee wisely,	<i>If</i> power; injure your priority
2795	For there shalt thowe here al thyen enpechement Ogynly declared in Isopes present. Report hem wele, and kepe hem in thy mynde, And after thy relacioun, we shall so turn and wend, Thurh help of God above, such help for to make	narrow up front, on the inside indenture zigzags where
2800	That they shull be acombred, and we ryght wel to scape." "Now in sooth," quod Beryn, "a mannes herie may grise Of such wonder weyes! For al my marchandise I had lever lese then oppon me take	defeated; escape be terrified
2805	Such a wey to pas!" — "Then, sir, for your sake I woll myself," quod Geffrey; "sith I am ensured To help thee with my power, thowe shalt be amyred As ferforth as I may, that I woll do my peyn To bryng yewe plesaunt tyding and retourn ageyn	rather less than will [go]; pledged cheered so far as
2810	Yit or the cok crowe. And therfor let me se, Whils I am out, how mery ye can be."	before cheerful then
	Geffrey tok his leve. But who was soray tho But Beryn and his company? For when he was go, They had no maner joy, but dout and hevynes, For of his reporyng they had no sikernes.	<i>i.e.</i> , Geffrey was gone
2815	So every man to other made his compleynat And wisshed that of felony they had been atteynt, And so hem thought better to end hevynes Then every day to lak brede ate first mes:	remove; certainty
	"For when our good is go, what shall fal of us?	convicted <i>i.e.</i> , be executed
2820	Ever to be hir thralles, and paraventure wers — To lese our lyff after, yf we displese hem ought!"	meal cargo; happen to slaves later
	After Geffrey went, this was al hir thought	

The Tale of Beryn

	Thurhout all the long nyghte, till cokkes gan to syng.	crow
2825	But then encresed anguyssh, hir hondes gan to wryng, And cursed wynd and water that hem brought there, And wisched many tymes that they had been in bere, And were apassed hope and entred into dispeyr.	/hey/
	In as much as Geffrey did nat repeir, Eche man seyd to other, it myght nat be i-sayed	coffin
2830	But Geffrey had utterlich falsly hem betrayd. Tho went they to counsell a litill tofore the day	return
	And were all accorded for to sayll away,	denied
	And so hem thought better, and leve hir good there	
	Then abyde threoppon and have more fere.	
2835	They made hir takelyng redy and wend the saill acros For to save hir lyves, and set nat of hir los,	Then; daybreak
	So sore they were adrad to be in servitute,	agreed
	And hoped God above wold send hem som refuse	merchandise
	By som other costes, there wynd hem wold bryng	Than wait; fear
2840	And therewithall cam Geffrey on his stilt lepeing And cried wonder fast by the wader-syde.	equipment; deployed
	When Beryn herd Geffrey, he bad his men abyde,	cared
	And to launch out a bote and bryng Geffrey in:	slavery
	"For he may more avall me now then al my kyn,	refuge
2845	And he be trewe and trasty, as myne hope is."	wherever
	But yit thereeof had Beryn no ful sikernes.	crutch
	These Romeyns fet in Geffrey with an hevy chere,	remain
	For they had never saill forth then put hem in were,	boat
	Both lyve and goodes. And evill suspicioone	
2850	They had of this Geffery, wherfor they gon roun,	
	Talking to eche other, "This man woll us betray!"	
	Geffrey wist wel knowghe he was nat to hir pay,	if
	And for very anger he threw into the see	certainty
	Both stilt and eke his cruch, that made were of tre,	fetched
2855	And gan hem to comfort and seid in this manere:	rather; jeopardy
	"Benedicite, Beryn! Why make ye such chere?	life
	For and ye were hevy, what shall your men do	murmur
	But take ensaumpill of yewe, and have no cause to?	their satisfaction
	For yit or it be eve, your adversaries all	real; sea
2860	I shall make hem spurn and have a sore fall,	wood
	And ye go quyte and al your good, and have of hirs too,	

The Tale of Beryn

	And they to be ryght feyn for to scape so,	glad
	Without more daunger, and your will be.	if
	For of the lawes here, such is the equyté	justice
2865	That who pursa other and his pleynt be wrong,	false
	He shall make amendes, be he never so strong,	
	Right as shuld the toder yf he condempned were;	
	Right so shall the pleyntyff, right as I yew lere.	
	And that shall preve by hem, have ye no doute,	
2870	Yit or it be eve, right low to yew to louite	
	And submit hem to yew and put hem in your grace,	
	By that tyme I have i-made al my wanlase.	
	And in hope to spedre wele, let shape us for to dyne."	
	Geffrey axed water, and sith brede and wyne,	
2875	And seid, "It is holsoom to breke our fast betyme,	
	For the Steward wol to the court atte hour of pryme."	
	The sonne gan to shyne and shope a feir day,	
	But for aught that Geffrey coud do or say,	
	These Romeyns speken fast al the dyner while	
2880	That Geffrey with his sotill wordes wold hem begile.	
	So when they had i-dyned, they rysen up echoon	
	And drew hem to counsell what was best to doon.	
	Som seyd, "The best rede that we do may,	
	To throwe Geffrey over the boord and seyll forth our way."	
2885	But for drede of Beryn, som wold nat so,	
	Yit the more party assented wele thereto.	
	Geffrey and Beryn and worthy Romeyns tweyn	
	Stood apart within the shipp, tyll Geffrey gan to seyn:	
	"Beryn, beth avised! Your men beth in distaunce.	
2890	Sith ye been her soveren, put hem in governaunce.	
	For me thinketh they holdeth contrary opymyoun,	
	And grace fayleth comynlych where is dyvisioune."	
	In the meenwhile that they gan thus to strye,	
	Hanybald was up and i-com as blyve	
2895	To the brigg of the town, there the shippes rood,	
	And herd much noyse. But litil while he bood,	
	For when he sawe the sayles stond al acros,	
	"Alas!" quod Hanybald, "here groweth a smert los	
	To me that am provost, and have in charge and hest	
2900	All these fyve shippes under myne arrest!" —	

The Tale of Beryn

	And ran into the town and made an hidouse cry, And charged al the cetezins to armes for to hy, From o stree till another, and rered up al the town, And made the trompes blowe up and the belles soun,	<i>/hef; terrible hasten to; rallied trumpets; sound</i>
2905	And seyd that the Romeyns were in poynt to pas, Til there were a thowsand, rather mo thena les, Men i-armed cleen, walking to the strand.	<i>ready</i>
	When Beryn hem aspied, "Now, Geffrey, in thy honde Stont lyff and goodes! Doth with us what thee list,	<i>completely; shore</i>
2910	For all our hope is on thee, comfort, help and trist. For we must bide aventur such as God woll shape, For nowe I am in certen we mow no wise scape."	<i>sounds; it pleases trust fortune in no way escape</i>
	"Have no dout," quod Geffrey, "beth mery, let me aloon. Geteth a peir sisours, shereith my beed anoon,	
2915	And afterward lete top my hede hastlych and blyve." Som went to with sesours, som with a knyfe, So what for sorowe and hast, and for lewd tole, There was no man alvye bet like to a fole	<i>pair of scissors, clip crop; quickly razor crude instruments more; lunatic</i>
	Then Geffrey was, by that tyme they had al i-do.	
2920	Hanybald cleped out Beryn to mottchall for to go, And stood oppon the brigg with an huge route. Geffrey was the first to Hanybald gan to loute,	<i>summoned; courthouse pier; mob bow</i>
	And loked out aforeshipp: "God bles yew, sir," quod he. "Where art thou now, Beryn? Com nere, behold and se!	
2925	Here is an huge pepill i-rayd and i-dight. All these been my children that been in armes bryghtie.	<i>outfitted</i>
	Yesterday I gate hem! Is nat mervail That they been bider i-com to be of our counsaill	<i>furthered higher</i>
	And to stand by us and help us in our plé?	<i>i.e., as compurgators</i>
2930	Al myne own childryn, blessed mat yc be!"	
	Quod Geffrey with an highe voise, and had a nyce visage, And gan to daunce for joy in the forestage.	<i>idiotic expression forecastle</i>
	Hanybald loked on Geffrey as he were amased,	<i>lunatic</i>
	And beheld his contenaunce and howe he was i-rased,	<i>shaved</i>
2935	But evermore he thought that he was a fole, Naturell of kynde, and had noon other tool, As semed by his wordes and his visage both.	<i>lunatic</i>
	And thought it had been foly to wex with hym wroth, And gan to bord ageyn and axed hym in game:	<i>Simplicon by birth; means useless; angry</i>

The Tale of Beryn

2940	"Sith thou art our fader, who is then our dame? And howe and in what place were we begote?"	mother begotten
	"Yesterdai," quod Geffrey, "pleyng in the strete Atte gentill game that cleped is the quack,	upper-class
	A long peny-halter was cast about my nekk	noose
2945	And i-knet fast with a ryding knot And cast over a perche and haled along my throte."	ties tightly peg; haled
	"Was that a game," quod Hanybald, "for to hang thyself?"	
	"So they seyd about me, a thousand ech by hymself!"	
	"How scapeddest thou," quod Hanybald, "that thou were nat dode?"	
2950	"Thereto can I answere without eny rede. I bare thre dice in myne own purs,	prompting carry; dice
	For I go never without, fare I better or wors.	
	I kist hem forth al thre and too fil amys-ase.	cast; two; "snake eyes"
	But here now what fell after, right a mervolouse case!	hear; befall
2955	There cam a mows lepe forth and ete the third boon, That puffed out hir skyn as grete as she myght goon,	mouse; bone (die)
	And in this maner wise, of the mouse and me, All ye be i-com my children fair and fre.	
	And yit, or it be eve, fall wol such a chaunce,	before
2960	To stand in my power yew all to avaunce, For and we plede wele today, we shull be riche inowghet!"	profit if
	Hanybald of his wordes herlich loughe,	laughed
	And so did al that herd hym, as they myghte wele,	
	And had grete joy with hym for to tell,	chat
2965	For they knewe hym noon other bat a sole of kynde.	from birth
	And al was his discrecioone, and that preved the ende!	dreadness; outcome
	Thus whils Geffrey japed to make hir hertes lighte,	jested
	Beryn and his company were rayed and i-dighte,	dressed; prepared
	And londed hem in boates, ferefull how to spedre,	anxious; succeed
2970	For all hir thoughtes in balance stode betwene hope and drede.	equally
	But yit they did hir peyn to make lightsom chere,	
	As Geffrey hem had enfourmed, of port and al manere	instructed; behavior
	Of hir governaunce, al the long day	
	Tyll hir plee were ended. So went they forth hir wey	their plea
2975	To the court with Hanybald. Then Beryn gan to sey, "What nedeth this, Sir Hanybald, to make such array, Sith we been pese-marchantes and use no spoliacione?"	peaceful traders; plunder
	"Forsoth, sir," quod Hanybald, "to me was made relacions	report

The Tale of Beryn

- 2980 Ye were in poynt to void, and yf ye had do so,
Ye had lost your lyves without wordes mo." on the verge; depart
Beryn held hym still. Geffrey spak anon:
- "No les wed then lyves? Why so, good Sir John?
That were somewhat to much, as it semeth me!
But ye be over-wise that dwell in this ceid.
- 2985 For ye have begonne a thing maketh yewe righte bold,
And yit, or it be eve, as folcs shal ye be hold.
And eke ye devyne sor in shipmannes craft
And woteth littill what longeth to afore the shipp and baft,
And namelich in the dawnyng, when shipmen first arise."
- 2990 "My good frend," quod Hanybald in a scornynge wise,
"Ye must ones enfourn me thurh your discrecion,
But first ye must answer to a questioun:
Why make men cros-saill in myddes of the mast?" the middle
"For to talowe the shipp and fech more last."
2995 "Why goon the yemen to bote — ankers to hale?" grease the bottom of; ballast
"For to make hem ready to walk to the ale."
"Why hale they up stones by the crane-lyne?" yeomen; anchors; haul up
"To make the tempest sese and the sonne shyne."
"Why close they the port with the see bord?" themselves; ale-house
3000 "For the master shuld awake atte first word."
"Thow art a ready reve," quod Hanybald, "in fay!" hoist
"Yee, sir, trewly, for sothe is that ye say?" cease
Geffrey ever clapped as doth a watermyll,
And made Hanybald to lauge at his hert fell. porthole; cover
- 3005 "Beryn," quod this Geffrey, "retourn thy men ageyn.
What shull they do with thee at court? No man on hem pleyn.
Plede thy case thyselfe, ryght as thou hast i-wrought.
To bide with the shippes, my purpos is and thought." [For the men] to stay
"Nay, forsooth," quod Hanybald, "thow shalt abyde on lond.
- 3010 We have no folcs but thee!" — and toke hym by the hond — jesters; him (Geffrey)
"For thow art wise in lawe to plede al the case."
"That can I better," quod Geffrey, "then eny man in this place.
What seyst thou thereto, Beryn? Shall I tell thy tale?"
- Hanybald liked his wordes wele and forward gan hym hale. lead
3015 Beryn made hym angry, and sighed wonder sore,
For Geffrey hym had enfourned of every poynt tofore pretended to be sad
How he hym shuld govern all the long day. instructed
he himself

The Tale of Beryn

- Geffrey chasted hym ageyn: "Sey me yee or nay! reprov'd; Tell; you
Maystowe nat i-here speke som maner word?" Maybe you didn't hear me
3020 "Leve thy blab, lewd sole! Me liketh nat thy bord!" jest
I have another thought," quod Beryn, "wherof thou carest lite."
"Clepest thou me a sole?" quod Geffrey. "Al that I may thee wite! Call; Name
But first, when we out of Rome saill'd both in fere, together
Tho I was thy felawe and thy partynere; Then
3025 For tho the marchandise was more then halif myne,
And sith that thou com hidre, thou takest al for thyse. since
But yit or it be eve, I woll make oon behest: before; promise
But thou have my help, thy part shal be lest." Unless; least
"Thyn help!" quod Beryn. "Lewde sole, thou art more then mased! crooked
3030 Dres thee to the shippesward with thy crown i-rased, Renow; shaved head
For I myght never spare thee bet! Trus, and be ago!" better; Get ready
"I wol go with thee," quod Geffrey, "where thou wolt or so, whether
And lern to plede lawe to wyn both house and londe."
"So thou shalt!" quod Hanybald, and led hym by the honde,
3035 And leyd his hond oppon his nek. But and he had i-knowe But if
Whom he had led, in sikernes he had wel lever in snowe certainty; preferred
Have walked forty myle, and rather then faill more.
For he wissched that Geffrey had i-be unbore never been born
Ful offft-tyme in that day or the plé were do, before; done
3040 And so did al that wrought Beryn shame and woo. who; woe
Now ye that list abide and here of sotilié, wish to; hear; craftiness
Mow knowe how that Beryn sped in his plé, Might
And in what aray to the court he went,
And howe Hanybald led Geffrey, disware of his entent. unaware
3045 But yit he axed of Geffrey, "What is thy name, I prey?"
"Gilhocet," quod Geffrey, "men cleped me yesterdai." (see note)
"And where weert thou i-bore?" — "I note, I make avowe," were; don't know
Seyd Geffrey to this Hanybald; "I axe that of yewe,
For I can tell no more but here I stond nowe." except here
3050 Hanybald of his weedes hertlich lowghe laughed
And held hym for a passing sole to serve emy lord.
Thus they romed janglyng into the court ward.
But or they com there, the Steward was i-set
3055 And the grettest of the town in company i-met,
And gon to stryve fast who shuld have the good,
That com was with Beryn over the salt flood. cargo sea

The Tale of Beryn

	Som seyd oon, and som seyde another;	
	Som wold have the shippes, the parell and the rother;	rigging; rudder
	Som his eyen, som his lyff wold have, and no les,	eyes
3060	Or els he shuld for hem fyne or he did pas.	pay a fine before
	And in the menewhils they were in this afrai,	commotion
	Beryn and these Romeyns were com in good aray,	wardrobe
	As myght be made of woll and of colour greyned.	wool; dyed
	They toke a syde bench that for hem was ordeyned.	designated
3065	When all was busst and still, Beryn rose anon	hushed
	And stode in the myddes of the hal tofore hem everychon,	midst
	And seyd, "Sir Steward, in me shall be no let.	delay
	I am i-com to answer as my day is set.	
	Do me ryghte and reson — I axe yewe no more!"	justice
3070	"So shall I," quod the Steward, "for therto I am swore."	
	"He shall have ryght," quod Gefrey, "where thow wolt or no,	whether
	For and thow mys ones thy judgement ondo.	For if; badly
	I woll to the Emperour of Rome, my cosyn.	
	For of o cup he and I ful offt have dronk the wyne,	from one cup
3075	And yit we shull hereafter, as offt as we mese,	
	For he is long the gladder when I send hym to grete."	greet
	Thus Gefrey stode oppos a fourm, for he wold be sey	bench; seen
	Above all other, the shuldres and the cry,	armful
	And staerd al aboute, with his lewd berd,	vaular
3080	And was i-hold a verry foile of ech man hym herd.	real hanful; <i>/who/ heard</i>
	The Steward and the officers and the burgeyses all	
	Laughed at hym hertlich. The criour gan to call	crier
	The Burgeysse that had pleyd with Beryn atte ches,	
	And he aros quiklich and gan hym for to dres	approach
3085	Afore the Steward atte barr, as the maner is.	custom
	He gan to tell his tale with grese redynes:	
	"Here me, Sir Steward! This day is me set,	Hear me
	To have ryght and reson — I axe yewe no bet —	justice; better
	Of Beryn that here stondeth, that with me yesterday	Beryn who
3090	Made a certen covesaunt, and atte ches we did pley,	as at chess
	That whoso were i-mated of us both too	two
	Shuld do the toders bydding; and yf he wold nat so,	other's
	He must drynske al the water that salt were in the se.	
	Thus I to hym sured, and he also to me.	pledged
3095	To preve my tale trewe, I am nat al aloon."	testimony

The Tale of Beryn

- Up rose ten burgeses quyllich anoon,
And affermed every word of his tale sooth,
And made hem al redy for to do hit othe.
Evander the Steward: "Beryn, now," quod he,
3100 "Thow must answerne nede, it wol noon other be.
Take thy counsell to thee. Spede on! Have i-doone?"
Beryn held hym still. Geffrey spak anoon:
"Now, by my troth," quod Geffrey, "I merrell much of yewe,
To bid us go to counsell and knoweth me wise inowgh
3105 And ever ful avised, in twynkelyng of an eye,
To make a short answer, but yf my mouth be dry.
Shuld we go to counsell for o word or tweyn?
By my troth we nyll! Let se mo that pleyn!
And but he be i-awerd, and that right anoon,
3110 I geve yewc leve to rise and walk out, everychoon,
And aspy redely yf ye fynd me there.
In the meenwhils, I wol abide here.
Nay, I tell truely, I am wiser then ye ween.
For there nys noon of yewe woot redely what I meen."
3115 Every man gan lawghe al his hert fill
Of Geffrey and his wordes, but Beryn held hym still
And was cleen astoned. But yit nere-the-latter
He held it nat al foly that Geffrey did clater,
But wisely hym governed, as Geffrey hym taughte,
3120 For parcell of his wisdom before he had smaught.
"Sir Steward," quod Beryn, "I understande wele
The tale of this Burgeye. Now let another tel
That I may take counsell and answer al attones."
"I graunt," quod the Steward, "thyn axing, for the zones,
3125 Sith thow wolt be rewled by thy foiles rode,
For he is ryghte a wise man to help thee in thy nede."
Up arose the accusours queyntlich anoon.
Hanybald was the first of hem everichon,
And gan to tell his tale with a proud chere:
3130 "Yesterdai, soverens, when I was here,
Beryn and this Burgeye gon to plede fast
For pleying ase ches. So ferforth ase last,
Thurh vertu of myne office, that I had in charge
Beryns fyve shippes, for to go at large
- (see note)
as much
their oath

himself silent

fully advised
unless
two
we won't; complain
And unless

will remain
think
in't / who / know precisely
heart's fill
himself silent
totally snarred
chatter

part; tasted

testimony
So that; at once

guided; fool's advice

distrainfully

expression

So much to
power; custody
for / him / to go freely

The Tale of Beryn

- 3135 And to be in awysere here this same day.
 So walkyng to the strandward, we bargeyned by the wey *shoreline*
 That I shuld have the marchandise that Beryn with hym broughte,
 Wherof I am sesed as ful sold and boughte, *I am in possession*
 In covaunt that I shuld his shippes fill ageyn
 3140 Of my marchandise, such as he tofore had seyn *seen*
 In myne own plase, howses to or thre, *houses two*
 Ful of marchandise as they myght be.
 And I am ever redy, whensoever he woll,
 Let hym go or sende, and charge his shippes full
 3145 Of such marchandise as he fyndeth there.
 For in such wordes, we accorded were." *agreed*
 Up rose ten burgeyses — not tho that rose tofore, *those who*
 But other — and made hem redy to have swore
 That every word of Hanybald, from the begynnnyng to the ende,
 3150 Was soth and eke trewe, and with all hir mende, *mind*
 Ful prest they were to preve, and seyd they were present *Fully concentrated*
 Ate covenauante makeing, by God omnipotent.
 "It shall nat nede," quod Geffrey, "whils that I here stonde, *be unnecessary*
 For I woll preve it myself with my right hande.
 3155 For I have been in four batelles heretofore,
 And this shall be the fift, and therfor I am swore.
 Beholdeth and seeth!" — and turned hym aboute. *[he] twirled himself*
 The Steward and the Burgeye gamed al aboute. *made merry*
 The Romeyas held hem still and lawghed but a lise.
 3160 With that cam the Blynd Man, his tale to ente. *declare*
 That God hym graunte wyanyng, righte as he hath aserved. *deserved*
 Beryn and his company stood al astryved *torn*
 Betwene hope and drede, righte in highe distres,
 For of wele or of woo they had no sikernes. *certainity*
 3165 "Beryn," quod the Blynd, "thoughe I may nat se,
 Stond nere yit the barr. My comyng is for thee,
 That wrongfullich thowe withholdest my both to eyen, *two eyes*
 The wch I tolke thee for a tyme, and quyllich to me hyen *lost; hurry*
 And take hem me ageyn, as our covenant was. *give*
 3170 Beryn, I take no reward of other mennes case
 But oonlich of myne own, that stont me most on hond. *But only*
 Nowe blessed be God in heven that brought thee to this lond,
 For sith our last parting, many bitter teres *For since*

The Tale of Beryn

- 3175 Have I lete for thy love, that somtyme parteneres
Of wynnynge and of lesing were, yeres fele.
And ever I fonde thee trewe, til at the last thou diddest stede
Awey with my too eyen that I toke to thee
To se the tregitours pley, and hir sotilté,
As yesterday here in this same place
3180 Tofore yewe, Sir Steward, rehersed as it was.
Ful trewe is that byword, 'a man to servesabill
Ledeth off Beyard from his own stabill.'
Beryn, by thee I meen, thoughte thowe make it straunge.
For thou knowest trewly that I made no chaunge,
3185 Of my good eyen for thyne that hadde were."
Therewith stood up bergeys four, witnes to bere.
Beryn held hym still, and Geffrey spak anoon:
"Nowe of thy leude compleynt and thy mased moon,
By my trowth," quod Geffrey, "I have grese mervall.
3190 For thoughte thou haddest eyen-sight, yit shuld it titil avail.
Thow shuldest never fare the bet, but the wots in say,
For al thing may be stil nowe for thee in house and way,
And yf thou haddest thyn eyen, thowe woldest no counsell hele.
I knowe wele by thy fisnamy thy kynd were to stede.
3195 And eke it is thy profite and thyne ese als
To be blynd as thowe art, for nowe whereso thow go,
Thow hast thy lyviode whils thow art alyve,
And yf thowe myghtest see, thow shuldest never thryve."
Al the house thurhout, save Beryn and his feres,
3200 Lawghed of Geffrey that water on hir leres
Ran down from hir eyen for his mased wit.
With that cam the Womman — hir tung was nat schitt —
With fistene burgeses and wommen also fele,
Hir querell for to peeve and Beryn to apele,
3205 With a feir knave child i-loke within hir armes,
And gan to tell hir tale of wronges and of harmes
And eke of unkyndnes, untrowth and falshedē,
That Beryn had i-wrought to hir, that queyntlich from hir yede
Anoon oppon hir wedding, when he his will had doon
3210 And brought hir with child, and lete hir sit aloon
Without help and comfort from that day: "And nowegh
He profered me nat to kis ones with his mowth!"
- expended; who
for many years
trustworthy
two; *lent*
conjurers; illusions
- too accommodating
- frign ignorance
exchange
none
- foolish; bewildered moon
- faith
the same now
conceal
- physiognomy; nature
leisure
- livelihood
- except; companions
so that tears; cheeks
because of his crazy
not slit
just as many
accuse
- boy; clutched
- who cruelly; left
but
- now
once

The Tale of Beryn

- As yesteray, Sir Steward, afore yewe ecche word
Was rehersed here, my pleynst is of record,
3215 And this day is me set for to have reson. justice
Let hym make amendes, or els tell encheson grounds
Why hym ought nat fynd me as man ought his wyfle." provide for
These fiffene burgeses quyllich also blyve, immediately; eagerly
And as fele wymmen as stode by hir there, many women
3220 Seyd that they were present when they wedded were
And that every word that the Womman seyde
Was trewe, and eke Beryn had hir so betrayd.
"Benedicite!" quod Geffrey, "Beryn, hast thowe a wyff?" blessings?
Now, have God my trouth, the dayes of my lyf
3225 I shall trust thee the last. Thow toldest me nat tofore less; previously
As wele of thy wedding and of thy sone i-bore.
Go to and kis hem both, thy wyff and eke thyne heir.
Be thow nat ashamed, for they both be feyr.
This wedding was right pryy, but I shal make it couthe.
3230 Behold, thy sone (it semeth) crope out of thy mouth,
And eke of thy condicioun both sofft and some.
Now am I glad thyne heir shall with us to Rome,
And I shall tech hym as I can, whils that he is young.
Every day by the strete to gader houndes doung.
3235 Tyll it be abill of prentysse to craft of tanry,
And after I shall teche hym for to cache a fly,
And to mend mytens when they been toonee
And after to cloute shoon, when he is elder more.
Yit for his parentynge, to pipe as doth a mowse
3240 I woll hym tech, and for to pike a snayll out of his house,
And to berke as doth an hound and sey "Baw-baw!"
And turn round about as a cat doth with a strawe,
And to blete as doth a shope, and ney as doth an hors,
And to lowe as doth a cowe. And as myne own corps
3245 I woll cherissh hym every day, for his moders sake! — body
And gan to stapp nere the child to have i-take,
As semed by his contenaunce, althoughe he thought nat so.
Butie moder was ever ware, and blenchid to and fro,
3250 And leyd hir hand betwene and lokid somewhat wroth.
And Geffrey in pure wrath besherewed hem al bothe:
"For by my trouth," quod Geffrey, "wel mased is thy pan.

The Tale of Beryn

	For I woll teche thy sone the craftes that I can That he in tyme to com myght wyn his lyvlood. To wex therfor angry, thou art verry wood!	care; livelihood truly mad
3255	Of husband, wyff and sone — by the Trynayte — I note whiche is the wisest of hem al thre!" "No, soothly," quod the Steward, "it lieth al in thy noll, Both wit and wisdom, and preveth by thy poll!" For al be that Geffrey worded sotilly,	Holy Trinity don't know skull (shaved) head albeit; cleverly
3260	The Steward and the burgeses held it for foly Al that ever he seyd, and toke it for good game, And had ful litill knowlech he was Geffrey the lame. Beryn and his company stode still as stone, Betwene hope and drede, disware how it shuld goon.	uncertain trusted partially boast pit
3265	Saff Beryn trist in party that Geffrey wold hym help, But yit into that hour he had no cause to yelpe. Wherfor they made much sorow, that dole was and pete. Geffrey herd hym sigh soore. "What devill is yewe?" quod he. "What node yew be soy whils I stonde here?"	sorrowful instructed trap sorry silly bubble; in reply said
3270	Have I nat enfourmed yewe how and in what manere That I yew wold help and bryng hem in the snare? Yf ye coude plede as wele as I, ful litill wold ye care. Phuke up thy hert," quod Geffrey. "Beryn, I speke to thee!" "Leve thy blaþ leude!" quod Beryn to hym aye.	trap
3275	"It doth nothing avall that sorowe com on thy hede. It is nat worth a fly, al that thowe hast seyde. Have we nat els nowe for to thynk oppon Saff here to jangilli?" Macaign rose anoon, And went to the barr and gan to tell his tale.	chaser
3280	He was as fatis as Judas, that set Criste at sale. "Sir Steward," quod this Macaign, "and the burgeses all, Knoweth wele how Melan, with purpill and with pall And other marchandise, seven yere ago Went toward Rome, and howe that I also	who set nobes
3285	Have enquired sith, as reson woll and kynde, Syth he was my fader, to knowe of his ende. For yit sith his departing til it was yesterday, Met I never creature that me coude wissh or say Reedynes of my fader, dede other alyve.	ever since; nature Since
3290	But blessed be God in heven, in this theves sclyve	Knowledge; or chief's sleeve

The Tale of Beryn

	The knyff I gaff my fader was yesterdai i-found.	gave
	Sith I hym apele, let hym be fast i-bound.	accuse
	The knyff I knowe wel inowc; also the man stant here	enough; stands
	And dwelleth in this town and is a cotelere,	coteler
3295	That made the same knyff with his too hondes,	Who made; two hands
	That weic I woot there is noon like, to sech al Cristen londes.	search
	For thre preciouze stones been within the haft.	hit
	Perfitlych i-coached and sotillich by craft	inlaid
	Eadended in the haft, and that right coriously:	Mounted; skillfully
3300	A saphir and a salidone and a rich ruby."	celidory
	The coteler cam lepeing forth with a bold chere,	expression
	And seyd to the Steward, "That Macaign sold now here,	What Macaign
	Every word is trew; so beth the stones seit.	
	I made the knyff myself — who myght know it bet? —	better
3305	And toke the knyff to Macaign, and he me payd weic.	gave
	So is this felon gilty. There is no more to tell."	
	Up arose burgeyses by too, by thre, by four,	by two
	And seyd they were present the same tyme and hour	
	When Macaign wept sore and brought his faders gownd	gown
3310	And gaff hym the same knyff oppon the see-stronde.	gave; seashore
	"Bethe there eny mo pleysses of record?"	complaints
	Quod Geffrey to the Steward. And he ageynward,	he (Evander) in reply
	"How semeth thee, Gilhochet? Beth there nat inowghe?	does [it] seem to you
	Make thyne answer, Beryn, case that thow mowe.	[whatever] case
3315	For oon or other thow must sey, althoughe it nat avail.	
	And but thowe lese or thowe go, me thinketh grete mervail."	But unless; lose
	Beryn goth to counsell and his company,	
	And Geffrey bode behynde to here more and se,	remained; hear
	And to shewe the Burgeyse somwhat of his hert,	
3320	And seyd, "But I make the pleyntys for to smert,	Unless; suffer
	And al that hem meynieseth for aught that is i-seyd,	said
	I woll graunite yewe to kut the eres fro my hede.	cut the ears
	My master is at counsell, but counsell hath he noon,	
	For but I hym help, he is cleen usdoon.	
3325	But I woll help hym al that I can, and meynien hym also	unless; totally
	By my power and connyng, so I am bound thereto.	cleverness
	For I durst wage batell with yewe, thoughe ye be stronge,	judicial duel
	That my master is in the trowth and ye be in the wrong,	right
	For and we have lawe, I ne hold yew but destroyed	For if; justice

The Tale of Beryn

- 3330 In your own falshede, so be ye now aspied.
 Wherfor, yit or eve, I shall abate your pride
 That som of yew shall be right feyn to sclynk awey and hyde." *discovered
before; shatter
glad to sneak*
- The burgeyses gon to lawghe and scorned hym thereto.
- "Gilhochet," quod Evander, "and thow cowdest so *if thou*
 3335 Bryng it thus about, it were a rody way!"
 "He is a good fool," quod Hanybald, "in fay,
 To put hymself aloon in strength and eke in witt
 Ageyns al the burgeyses that on this bench sit."
 "What clater is this," quod Macaign, "al day with a sole?" *chatter*
- 3340 Tyme is nowe to worch with som other sole,
 For I am certeyn of his answer that they woll fail.
 And lyf for lyf of my fader, what may that avail?
 Wherfor beth avised, for I am in no doute,
 The goodes been sufficient to part al aboute,
 3345 So may every party pleyntyff have his part." *advised
cargo; divide
his share
reasonable*
- "That is reason," quod the Blynd; "a trew man thow art!
 And eke it were unsworth, and eke grete syn,
 But ech of us that pleyneth myght somewhat wyn." *Unless
bir*
- Hanybald bote his lyppes and herd hem both wele:
 3350 "Towching the marchandise, o tale I shall yew tell,
 And eke make a vowe and hold my behest,
 That of the marchandise your part shall be lost.
 For I have made a bargeyn that may nat be undo.
 I woll hold his covenant, and he shall myne also." *Regarding: one account
promise
least
undone*
- 3355 Up roos quyklich the burgeyse Syrophanes
 "Hanybald," quod he, "the lawe goth by no lanes
 But hold forth the streyt wey, even as doth a lyne,
 For yesterday, when Beryn with me did dyne,
 I was the first persone that put hym in arrest.
- 3360 And for he wold go large, thow haddest in charge and hest
 To sese both shipp and goodes till I were answered.
 Then must I first be served. This knoweth al men i-lered." *free; command
To take custody of
educated*
- The Womman stode besides and cried wonder fast:
 "Ful sooth is that byword, 'to pot who cometh last,
 3365 He worst is served!' And so it fareth by me.
 Yit netherles, Sir Steward, I trist to your leuté,
 That knoweth best my cause and my trew entent.
 I ax yewe no more but rightfull jugement." *(see note)
true; good faith
Who*

The Tale of Beryn

- Let me have part with other, sith he my husband is.
Good sirs, beth avised, I axe yew nat amys." amys
i.e., emotions ran high
- Thus they gon to stryve and were of highe mode
For to depart among hem other mennes good,
Where they tofore had never properte divide; possessions
- Ne never shuld thereafter, by doom of equyté;
But they had other cause then they had tho. judgment
than they had then
- Beryn was at counsell, his hert was ful woo,
And his meyny sory, distract and al amayede,
For tho they leved noon other but Geffrey had hem trayde,
Because he was so long, they coude no manere rede — woeful
crew sad; afraid
- But everich by hymself wissed he had be dede. believed; betrayed
been dead
- "O myghtfull God!" they seyd, "we trow tofore this day
Was never gretter treason, fere ne affray believe
sproar
- I-wrought onto mankynde then now is to us here,
And namelich by this Geffrey with his soril chere. Enacted; than now
crafty appearance
- So feithfull he made it he wold us help ochone,
And nowe we be i-myred. He leseth us sit alook! pretended [that] he
bagged down
- "Of Geffrey," quod Beryn, "be as it be may;
We mut answer nede, there is noon other way.
And therfor let me know your wit and your counsaill." must answer
reason
- They wept and wrong hir hondes, and gan to wall
The tyme that they were bore, and shortly of the lyve wrong; bewail
soon dead
- They wissed that they were. With that cam Geffrey blyve,
Passing hem towards, and began to smyle. suddenly
- Beryn axed Geffrey where he had be al the while:
"Have mercy oppon us, and help us as thowe highte!" promised
- "I woll help yew right wele thurh grace of Goddes myghte,
And I can tell yew tyding of hir governaunce. on the verge
- They stond in alteracioun and stryff, in poynt to prause,
To depart your goodes, and leveth verrily divide; believe truly
- That it were impossibill yewe to remedy.
But hir highe pryd and hir presumpcioun their
- Shal be, yit or eve, hir confusione,
And to make amendes ech man for his pleyn. before nightfall
accusation
- Let se, therfor, your good avise howe they myght be aseynt." brought to justice
- The Romeyns stode still, as who had shore hir bed.
"In feith," quod Beryn, "we con no manere rede,
But in God and yewe we submit us all, like (men); shaved
know; strategy

The Tale of Beryn

	Body, lyfle and goodes, to stond or to fall, And never for to travers o word that thou seyst.	contradict one word
3410	Help us, good Geffrey, as wele as thou maist!" "Depardeux," quod Geffrey, "and I wol do me peyn To help yewe, as my connyng wol strech and ateyn."	By God; exert myself skill; achieve
	The Romeyns went to barr, and Geffrey al tofore With a nyce contenaunce, bare-fote and totore,	the courtroom idiotic; ragged
3415	Pleyng with a yerd he bare in his honde And was ever whistlyng att every pase comand. The Steward and the burgeyses had game inowghe Of Geffreyes nyce comyng, and hertlich lowghe, And ech man seyd, "Gilhochet, com nere."	Playing; staff [which] whistling; successive step entertainment foolish; laughed nearer
3420	Thowe art ryght welcom, for thowe makest us chere." "The same welcom," quod Geffrey, "that ye wol us, Fall oppon your hedes, I prey to God — and wers!" They held hym for a verry sole, but he held hem wel more,	true madman
	And so he made hem in breff tyme, although they were nat shone.	brief; shorn
3425	"Stynteth nowe," quod Geffrey, "and let make pese. Of myrthes and of japes, tyme is now to cese And speke of other mater that we have to doon. For and we hewe amys eny maner spone,	Stop joker; cease
	We knowe wele in certeyn what pardon we shull have;	For if; cut; splinter
3430	The more is our nede us to defend and save. My master hath bee at counsell and ful avised is That I shall have the wordes, speke I wele or nys. Wherfor, Sir Steward, and ye burgeyses all,	i.e., Beryn badly
	Sitteth upryght and writh nat for auntres that may fall.	naw; events; befall
3435	For and ye deme untrewly or do us eny wrong, Ye shall be refourmed, be ye never so strong. Of every poynyt and injury, and that in grete hast, For he is nat unknowe to us that may yewe chast.	For if; judge corrected
	Hold forthe the right wey and by no side lanes!	i.e., hope; chastise
3440	And as towching the first pleyntyle, Syrophanes, That pleyde with my master yesterdai atte ches And made a certen covenante, who that had the wers In the last game (aloughue I were nat there)	regarding
	Should do the toders bidding, whatsoever it were,	other's
3445	Or drynk al the water that salt were in the see; Thus I trowe, Sir Steward, ye woll record the plé,	sea believe; write down

The Tale of Beryn

- And yf I have i-myssed in letter or in word
The lawe, wol I be rewlied after your record.
For we be ful avised in this wise to answer." *misled
guided; transcript
manner*
- 3450 Evander the Steward and al men that were there
Had mervill much of Geffrey that spak so redely,
Whose wordes thereto semed al foly,
And were astonyed cleen and gan for to drede. *wisely
illness
[the men] were stunned; worry
to other inclined*
- 3455 And every man til other lened with his hede
And seyd, "He reported the tale right formally.
He was no fool in certen, but wise, ware and scly,
For he hath but i-japed us and scorned heretofore,
And we have hold hym a fole, but we be wel more!" *astate; sly
jesting with
rusted
then
[that] they
troubled
joined
since
mistaken
contradict*
- 3460 Thus they stodid on Geffrey and laughed tho right naught.
When Geffrey had aspied they were in such thought
And hir hertes trobelid, pensyff and anoyed,
Hym list to dryv in bet the nayll til they were fully cloyed.
- "Soveren sirs," he seyd, "Sith that it so is
That in reportyng of our plé ye fynd nothing amys,
As preveth wele your scilence, eke ye withseyd not
O word of our tale, but fynde it clene without spot,
Then to our answer I prey yewe take hede,
For we wol sey al the trouth, right as it is in dede.
For this is soth and certeyn, it may nat be withseyd,
3470 That Beryn that here stondeth was thus overpleid
In the last game when wager was opon.
But that was his sufferaunce, as ye shal here anoon,
For in al this ceté there nys no maner man
Can pley better atte ches then my master can;
3475 Ne bet then I, thoughte I it sey, cannat half so much.
Nowe how he lost it by his will, the cause I wol teche,
For ye went — and ween — that ye had hym engyned,
But ye shul fele in every veyn that ye be undermyned
And i-brought at ground and eke overmused.
- 3480 And agenst the first that Beryn is acused,
Hereth nowe entyntyflich. When we were on the see,
Such a tempest on us fell that noon myght other se.
Of thunder, wynd and lightenyng, and stormes there among,
Fiftene dayes duryng, the tempest was so strong *lasting*
- 3485 That ech man til other began hym for to shryve, *to other; make confession*

The Tale of Beryn

	And made hir avowes yf they myghte have the lyve — Som to seche the Sepulker, and som to other plase To sech holy seyntes for help and for grace, Som to fast and do penaunce, and som do almes-dede —	vows; survive seek; <i>Holy Sepulcher</i>
3490	Tyl atic last, as God wold, a voise to us seyde In our most turment, and desperate of mynde, That yf we wold be saved, my master must hym bynde By feith and eke by vowe, when he cam to londe,	spoke
	To drynke al the salt water within the se-stronde	seashore
3495	Without drynkyng any sope of the fresh water; And taught hym al the sotilte, how and in what manere That he shuld wrych by engyne and by a sotill charm To drynk al the salt water and have hymself no harm,	sip <i>(the voice)</i> work; trickery
	But stop the fresh ryvers by every cost-side,	Providing he; coastline
3500	That they enter nat in the se thurh the world wyde. The voyse we herd, but naught we sawe, so were our wittes raved.	throughout ravished
	For this was the end fyally, yf we lust be saved.	conclusion; wished to
	Wherfor my master Beryn, when he cam to this port,	
	To his avowe and promys he made his first resort,	recoorse
3505	Ere that he wold bergeyn any marchandise.	Before; negotiate
	And right so doth these marchandes in the same wise	
	That maken hir avowes in saving of hir lyves;	
	They completen hir pilgremages or they se hir wyves.	before
	So mowe ye understand that my master Beryn	myght
3510	Of fre will was i-mated, as he that was a pilgrym, And myght nat perfourm by many thowsand part	checkmated
	His avowe and his hest without right sotil art,	<i>i.e., by the smallest fraction</i>
	Without help and strength of many mennes myghte.	
	Sir Steward and Sir Burgeyse, yf we shul have righte,	justice
3515	Syrophanes must do cost and aventure	undertake
	To stopp al the fresh ryvers into the see that enter.	
	For Beryn is redy in al thing hym to quyte,	repay
	So ho be in defaute must pay for the wite.	<i>whoever; at fault; guilt</i>
	Sith ye been wise all, what nede is much clater?	<i>Since; chaster</i>
3520	There was no covenante hem betwen to drynk fresh water."	
	When Syrophanes had i-herd al Geffreyes tale,	
	He stode al abasshed with colour wan and pale,	
	And loked oppon the Steward with a rewful chere	pisiful expression
	And on other frendshipp and neyghbours he had there,	

The Tale of Beryn

- 3525 And preyd hem of counsell the answere to reply.
"These Romcyns," quod the Steward, "been wonder sly,
And eke right ynmagtyff and of sotill art,
That I am in grete dowte howe ye shull depart
Without harm in oon side. Our lawes — wel thowc wost —
3530 Is to pay damages and eke also the cost
Of every party plentyff that faileth in his pleyn.
Let hym go quyte, I counsell, yf it may so be queynt."
"I merveill," quod Syrophanes, "of hir sotilte,
But sith that it so stondeth and may noon other be,
3535 I do woll by counsell!" — and graunted Beryn quyte.
But Geffrey thought another, and without respite:
"Sirs," he seyd, "we weteth wele that ye wol do us righte.
And so ye must nedes, and so ye have us highte.
And therfor, Sir Steward, ye occupy our place,
3540 And ye knowe wele what law woll in this case.
My master is redy to perfourm his avowe."
"Geffrey," quod the Steward, "I cannat wete howe
To stop all the fresh water were possibilite."
"Yis, in sooth," quod Geffrey, "who had of gold plente
3545 As man coude wish, and it myght wel be do.
But that is nat our defaute he hath no tresour to.
Let hym go to in hast, or fynd us suerte
To make amendes to Beryn for his inquide:
Wrong and harm and trespass and undewe vexacioun,
3550 Lost of sale of marchandise, diseise and tribulacioun,
That we have sustened thrath his inquide.
What vaylesh it to tary us? For though ye sotil prey,
We shall have reson, where ye woll or no.
So wol we that ye knowe what that we wol do:
3555 In certen, ful avised, to lsope for to pose
And declare every poynt, the more and eke the lase,
That of your opyn errours hath pleyn correccioun,
And ageyns his jugement is noon proteccione.
He is your lord riall, and soveren jugg and lele,
3560 That and ye work in ey poynt, to hym lieth our apele."
So when the Steward had i-herd, and the burgeses all,
Howe Geffrey had i-stered that went so syghe the gall,
What for shame and drede of more harm and repelef,

The Tale of Beryn

3565	They made Syrophanes — weer hym looth or leffe — To take Beryn gage and plegg fynd also, To byde the ward and judgement of that he had mysdo. “Nowe ferthermore,” quod Geffrey, “sith that it so is That of the first pleynyff we have sikernes, Nowe to the merchant we must nedes answere,	<i>if he liked it or not</i> <i>give; guarantee</i> <i>endure; award; injured</i>
	That bargayned with Beryn al that his shippes bere, In covenante that he shuld his shippes fill ageyn Of other marchandise that he tofore had seyn In Hanybaldes place, bowses too or thre, Ful of marchandise as they myght be.	<i>security</i>
3570	Let us pas thider yf anything be there As our lust and likeing, as they accoed were.”	<i>Who</i>
	“I graunt wele,” quod Hanybald; “thow axest but righte.” Up arose these burgeyses: “Thowe axest but righte.”	<i>seen</i>
	The Steward and his comperes entred first the house	<i>two</i>
3575	And sawe nothing within, strawe ne leffe ne mowsie, Save tymber and the tyle-stones and the walles white. “I trowe,” quod the Steward, “the wynnyng woll be but lite	<i>proceed thider [to see] if</i> <i>pleasure</i>
	That Beryn wol nowe gete in Hanybaldes pleynyte, For I can se noon other but he wol be atteynt!” —	<i>colleagues</i>
3580	And cleped hem in, echone, and went out hymself. As soon as they were entred, they sawe no maner selve	<i>leaf</i>
	For sores of hir hert, but as tofore is seyd, The house was cleen i-swept. Then Geffrey feir they preyde	<i>Except</i>
	To help yf he coude. — “Let me aloon,” quod he;	<i>believe; little</i>
3585	“Yit shull they have the wers, as sotill as they bee!”	<i>suit</i>
	Evander the Steward in the menewhile	<i>convicted</i>
	Spak to the burgeysse and began to smyle:	<i>[he] summoned</i>
	“Thoughe Syrophanes be i-hold these Romeyns for to curs,	<i>remedy</i>
	Yit I trow that Hanybald woll put hem to the wers.	<i>their hearts</i>
3590	For I am suyr and certeyn within they shul nat fynde.”	
	“What sey ye by my pleynyt, sirs?” quod the Blynd.	
	“For I make a vowe I wol never cese,	<i>committed</i>
	Tyl Syrophanes have of Beryn a pleyn relese	
	And to make hym quyte of his submyssione;	<i>desir</i>
3595	Els woll I have ne peté of his contricione	<i>complete</i>
	But folow hym also fersly as I can or may,	<i>free; claim</i>
	Tyl I have his eyen both to away.”	<i>pay</i>
		<i>just as fiercely as</i>
		<i>two</i>

The Tale of Beryn

- "Now in feith," quod Macaign, "and I wol have his lyffe.
For thoughte he scape yewe all, with me wol he nat stryffie,
3605 But be right feyn in hert al his good forsake,
For to scape with his lyff and to me it take."
Beryn and his feleshipp were within the house,
And speken of hir answer and made but litill rouse,
But ever preyd Geffrey to help yf he coade ought.
3610 "I woll nat fail," quod Geffrey, and was tofore bethought
Of too boterflies as white as eny snowe.
He lete hem flee within the house, that after on the wowe
They cleved wonder fast, as hir kynde woll,
After they had flowe to rest another pull.
3615 When Geffrey sawe the boterflies cleving on the wall,
The Steward and the Burgeye in he gan call:
"Lo, sirs!" he seyde, "whosoever repente,
We have chose marchandise most to our talent,
That we fynd herein. Behold, Sir Hanyball,
3620 The yester boterflyes that cleveth on the wall.
Of such ye must fill our shippes al fyve!
Pik up thy hert, Beryn, for thou must nodes thryve,
For when we out of Rome in marchant-fare went,
To purchase boterflies was our most esent.
3625 Yit woll I tell the cause especial and why:
There is a leche in Rome that hath i-made a cry,
To make an oyntement to cure al tho been blynde
And all maner infirmytees that groweth in mankynde.
The day is short, the work is long — Sir Hanyball, ye mut hy!"
3630 When Hanybald herd this tale, he seyd peyvly
In counsell to the Steward: "In sooth I have the woes,
For I am siker by this pleynt that I shal litil pury."
"So me semeth," quod the Steward, "for in the world rounde
So many boterflies wold nat be founde,
3635 I trowe, o ship to charge. Wherfor me thinketh best,
Let hym have his good ageyn, and be in pese and rest.
And yit it is an auenter and thowe scape so,
Thy covenaunt to relese without more ado."
The burgeyses, evertichon that were of that ceté,
3640 Were anoyed sore when they herd of this pleynt.
Geffrey with his wisdom held hem hard and streyne
- escape; contend
[to] renounce
give
mish
observer
two butterflies
wall
clung; firmly; nature
down; period
cling
on business
prime objective
physician; announcement
those [who]
must hurry
Tidy
profit
believe; load
cargo
miracle if
commotion

The Tale of Beryn

	That they were accombrod in hir own disceyte.	<i>defeated; deception</i>
	When Hanybald with his frendes had spoke of this mater,	
3645	They drowe hem toward Beryn and seid in this maner:	<i>approached</i>
	"Oonly for boterflyes ye com fro your contrey;	
	And we yewe tell, in sikernes and opon our fey,	<i>certainty; faith</i>
	That so many boterflyes we shul never gote.	
	Wherfor we be avised otherwise to treste:	
	That Hanybald shall relese his covenant that is maked,	<i>bargain</i>
3650	And deliuer the good ageyn that from yewe was ransakod,	<i>contract; made</i>
	And vese yewe no more, but let yew go in pese."	<i>cargo; plundered</i>
	"Nay, forsoth," quod Geffrey, "us nedeth no relese!	
	Ye shull hold our covenant and we shul years also,	
	For we shall have reson, where ye wol or no.	<i>justice; whether</i>
3655	Whils hope is alyve, I am nothing aferd,	
	For I can wipe al this plé cleen from your herd,	<i>i.e., win my case</i>
	And ye blench ones out of the hy wey."	<i>If; soon once</i>
	They proffered hym plegg and gage without more deley.	<i>guarantees</i>
	"Now furthermore," quod Geffrey, "us ought to procede.	
3660	For to the Blynd Mannes poynt we must answer node,	
	That for to tel trouth, he lyveth al so long.	<i>entirely too long</i>
	For his own fawte and his own wrong	<i>crime</i>
	On Beryn he hath sumysed, as preveth by his plé,	<i>charged</i>
	And that ye shull opynlich knowe welc and sc.	
3665	For as I understod hym, he seyd that fele yeres	<i>for many years</i>
	Beryn, that here stondeth, and he were pertynieres	<i>who; partners</i>
	Of wynnyng and of lesyng, as men it use and doth,	<i>profit and loss</i>
	And that they chaunged eyen — and yit this is sothe.	<i>exchanged; true</i>
	But the cause of chaunging yit is to yewe oaknow;	<i>unknown</i>
3670	Wherfor I wol declare it both to highe and lowe.	
	In that same tyme that this burgeyse blynde	
	And my master Beryn, as fast as feith myght bynde,	<i>securely</i>
	Were marchaundes in comyn of al that they myght wyn,	<i>earn</i>
	Saff of lyffe and lym and of dedely synne,	<i>Except; limb</i>
3675	There fill in tho marches of al thing such a derth	<i>those territories; famine</i>
	That joy, comfort and solas, and al maner myrrh	
	Was exiled cleen, saff oonly molestacioun.	<i>violence</i>
	That abood contenuell, and also dispiracioun.	<i>remained; despair</i>
	So when that the pepill were in most myscheff,	<i>misfortune</i>
3680	God that is above, that al thing doth relieve,	<i>who</i>

The Tale of Beryn

- Sent hem such plente of mosy, fruyte and corn,
Wich turned al to joy hir mournyng al toforn.
Then gaff they hem to myrrh, revel, pley and song.
And thanked God above evermore among
3685 Of hir relevacoun from woo into gladnes.
For after sour, when swete is com, it is a plesant mes.
So in the meenwhile of this prosperite,
There cam such a pleyn into the same contré
That never theretofore was seyn such another,
3690 That wele was the creature that born was of his moder
That myght se the myrthes of this jogelour.
For of the world wyde tho dayes he bare the floure.
For there nas man ne womman in that regiouse
3695 That set of hymselff the store of a boton
Yf he had nat sey his myrthes and his game.
So oppon a tyme, this pleyn did proclaim
That all maner of pepill his pleyes wold se
Shuld com oppon a certen day to the gret cete.
Then among other my master here, Beryn,
3700 And this same Blynd that piedeth now with hym
Made a certes covenaunt, that they wold see
The meruelles of this pleyn and his sotilte.
So what for hete of somer, age and febiltes,
And eke also the long way, this Blynd for werynes
3705 Fil flat adowa to the erth, o foot ne myght se go.
Wherfor my master Beryn in hert was ful woo,
And seyd, 'My frend, how nowe? Mowe ye no ferther pas?'
'No,' he seyd, 'by Hym that first made mas!
And yit I had lever, as God my soule save,
3710 Se these wonder pleyes then al the good I have.'
'I cannat els,' quod Beryn, 'but yf it may nat be,
But that ye and I mut retourn aye
After ye be refreshed of your werynes.
For to leve yewe in this pleyte, it were no gentilnes.'
3715 Then seyd this Blynd, 'I am avised bet.
Beryn, ye shull wend thider without eny let,
And have myne eyen with yewe that they the pley mowe se,
And I woll have yours tyll ye com aye.'
Thus was hir covenaunt made, as I to yewe report,
- they give themselves
repeatedly
their relief
meal

performer
seen

Who; entertainer
(in) those; i.e., was supreme
wasn't
value; button
seen

people [who]

craftiness
heat
fatigue
Fell
woeful
Might
Eucharistic Mass

possessions

again
fatigue
good breeding
have a better idea
delay

come again

The Tale of Beryn

- 3720 For ese of this Blynd and most for his comfort,
But woteth wele, the hole science of al surgery
Was used or the chaunge was made of both eye,
With many sotill enchauntours and eke sygramancers,
That sent were for the sones, mastres and scoleres.
3725 So when al was complete, my master went his way
With this mannes eyen and sawe al the pley,
And hasty retourned into that plase aye,
And sond this Blynd seching on hondes and on knc,
Grasping al aboute to fynd that he had lore:
3730 Beryn his both eyen that he had tofore!
But as sone as Beryn had pleyn knowleche
That his eyen were i-lost, unneth he myght areche
O word for pure anguyssh that he toke sodenly.
Asd from that day till nowghe, ne myght he never spy
3735 This man in no plase there lawe was i-meved;
But nowe in his presence the soth is ful i-preved,
That he shall make amendes or he hens pas,
Righte as the lawe wol deme, ether more or les.
For my mastres eyen were better and more clere
3740 Then these that he hath nowe, to se both fer and nere.
So wold he have his own, that proper were of kynde,
For he is ever redy to take to the Blynd
The eyen that he had of hym, as covenant was,
So he woll do the same. Nowe, soverens, in this cas
3745 Ye mut take hede for to deme righte,
For it were no reson my master shuld lese his sighte
For his trew hert and his gentilnes."
- "Beryn," quod the Blynd tho, "I woll thee relese,
My quarell and my cause, and fal fro my pleyn."
- 3750 "Thow mut nede," quod Geffrey, "for thow art atteynt.
So mut thow profer gage, and borowes fynd also,
For to make amendes, as other have i-do.
Sir Steward, do us lawe, sith we desire but righte.
As we been pese-marchandes, us longeth nat to fighte,
3755 But pleyn us to the lawe yf so we be agreved."
- Anoon oppos that Geffrey these wordes had i-meved,
The Blynd Man sond borowes for al his maletalent,
And were i-entered in the court to byde the judgement.
- know; whole
united before; exchange
necromancers
occasion; students

again
searching
what; lost
Beryn's
full
hardly; after
sheer; suffered
until now
where; pleaded

before; hence
judge

Than; for
correct; by nature
give
from him
lords
must take; to judge
not just [that]; lose
Because of; courtesy
then
desist
convicted
offer surety; guarantees
done
justice, since
peaceful traders
injured
As soon as
sorries; malevolence
endure; verdict

The Tale of Beryn

- For thought that he blid were, yit had he good plentē — abundance
3760 And more wold have wonne thurh his iniquitē
- "Nowe hereth, sirs," quod Geffrey, "thre pleynlys been assured. pledged
And as anenst the ferth, this Womman hath arered regards; fourth; risen
That pleyneth her on Beryn and seyeth she is his wyff, Who
And that she hath many a day led peynous lyff painful
3765 And much sorowe endured, his child to sustene;
And al is soth and trewe. Nowe rightfullich to deme
Whether of hem both shal other obey,
And folow wil and lustes, Sir Steward, ye mut sey." to the side
3770 And therewith Geffrey loket asyde on this Woman, you must
Howe she chaunged colours, pale and eke wan.
"Al for nought!" quod Geffrey; "for ye mut with us go,
And endur with your husband both wele and woo!" —
And wold have take hir by the hond, but she awey did breyde, /he/ would; jump
And with a grete sighing these wordes she seyd,
3775 That ageyns Beryn she wold pleide no more,
But gaged with too borowes, as other had do tofore. two noses
The Steward sat as still as who had shore his hode,
And specially the pleynlys were in much drede.
Geffrey set his wordes in such manere wise
3780 That wele they wist they myght nat scape in no wise,
Without los of goodes for damage and for cost.
For such were hir lawes where pleynlys were i-lost. when
Geffrey had ful perseye of hir encomberment,
And eke he was in certen that the jugement perception; penalties
3785 Shuld pas with his master; wherfor he anoon: in favor of
"Soveren sirs," he seyd, "yit must we ferther goon,
And answer to this Macaign that seith the knyff is his proceed
That found was on Beryn. Thereof he seith nat amys.
And for more pryvy, he seith in this manere proof
3790 That here stondeth present the same cotelere cuader
That the knyff made; and the precious stones thre
Within the haft been couched that in Christyanystē,
Thoughe men wold of purpose make serch and siche,
Men shuld nat fynd in al thing a knyff that were it lich.
3795 And more opyn pryve than mannes own knowlech,
Men of lawe ne clerkes con nat tell ne teche.
Now sith we be in this manere thus ferforth ago,

The Tale of Beryn

	Then were spedful for to knowe howe Beryn cam first tho To have possessioun of the knyff that Macaign seith is his.	profitable; then
3800	To yewe unknowe, I shall enfourm the trouth as it is. Nowe seven yeer i-passed oppon a Tuesday In the Passion Woke, when men leuen pley And use more devosioun, fastyng and preyer Then in other tyme or seson of the yeer,	unknown years ago Week Then early
3805	This Beryns fader erlich wold arise And barefote go to chirch to Goddes service, And lay hymselff aloon from his own wyff In reverence of the tyme and mending of his lyff So on the same Tuesday that I tofore nempt,	i.e., abstain from sex amending mentioned dressed himself
3810	This Beryn rose and rayd hym and to the chirch west, And merveled in his hert his fader was nat there, And homward went ageyn with drede and eke fere. Inso his faders chamber sodenlich he raked, And foad hym ligg stan-dede oppon the strawe, al naked,	fear instantly; raked lying stone-dead covers pulled
3815	And the clothes haled from the bed away. 'Out! Alas,' quod Beryn, 'that ever I sawe this day!' The meyné herd the noysse, how Beryn cried 'Alas!' And cam into the chamber, al that therein was, But the dole and the sorowe and anguyssh that was there,	household stuff
3820	It vayleth nat at this tyme to declare it here. But Beryn had most of all, have ye no doute. And anoon they serched the body al aboute, And foad this same knyff, the poyst right at his hert Of Beryns fader, whose teres gan outstert	found (Beryn's) tears
3825	When he drowgh out the knyff of his faders wound. Then stan-dede I sawe hym fal doun to the ground In sighte of the most part that beth with hym nowe here." And they affermed it for sothe, as Geffrey did hem lere. "And yit had I never suspicioone from that day til nowth	drew; from (Beryn) as if stone-dead majority instruct now
3830	Who did that cused dede, till Macaign with his mouth Afore yewe hath knowleched that the knyff is his. So mut he nedes answer for his deth, iwis." When Macaign had i-herd al Geffreys tale,	acknowledged (Beryn's father's) death
3835	He rose of bench sodynly with colour wan and pale, And seyd onto Beryn, "Sir, ageyn thee I woll pleite no more, for it were gret pete	from the against plaint; pay

The Tale of Beryn

	To comber yewe with actions, that beth of nobill kynde."	encumber; lawns
	"Graunte mercy, sir," quod Geffrey, "but yit ye shull fynde Borowes or ye pas, amendes for to make	Thank you Satisfies before
3840	For our undewe vexacion, and gage also us take In signe of submissioune for your injury, As lawe woll and reson. For we woll utterly Procede tyll we have jugement finall.	pledge; give taken vigorously
	And therfor, Sir Steward, what that ever fall,	happens
3845	Delay us no lenger, but gyve us judgement.	render
	For tristieth ye noon other, but we be fullich beat	trust; resolved
	To Isope for to wend and in his highe presence Reherce all our plees and have his sentence.	to go verdict
	Then shul ye make fynes and highlich be agreed."	greatly
3850	And as sone as the Steward herd these wordes meved, "Reson, ryghte and lawe," seyd the Steward tho, "Ye mut needes have, where I woll or no, And to preve my full will or we ferther goon."	moved justice; then whether before
	Quiklich he comauaded, and spared never oon,	
3855	Twenty-four burgeses in lawe best i-lered, Rehersyng hem the plees and how Geffrey answered, And on lyffe and lym and forfeitour of good —	educated Reviewing limb; merchandise
	And as they wold nat lese the ball within hir hood —	i.e., not lose advantage
3860	To drawe apart togider and by hir al assent, Spare no man on lyve to gyve trewe judgement.	unanimous alive
	And when these twenty-four burgeses had i-herd	
	The charge of the Steward, right sore they were afred	
	To lese hir own lyves, but they demed trowth.	unless
	And eke of hir neyghbours they had grete rowth,	pity
3865	For they perseyyed clerelich in the plé thurhoute Hir frendes had the wors side — therof they had no doute!	
	"And yff we deme trewly, they wol be sore annoyed;	than
	Yit it is better then we be shamed and distroyed."	agreed; ridid
	And anoon they were accorded, and seyd with Beryn,	decided
3870	And demed every pleyntyff to make a grete fyne With Beryn, and hym submyt hoolich to his grace —	wholly; mercy
	Body, good and catell — for wrong and hir trespass,	property
	So ferforth till atte last it was so boutie i-bore	So much so; concluded
	That Beryn had the dobill good that he had tofore.	twice as much
3875	And with joy and myrrh, with al his company,	

The Tale of Beryn

	He droughe hym to his shippesward with song and melody.	soward his ships
	The Steward and the Burgeys from the court bent Into his own places, and ever as they went,	bentened
	They talked of the Romeyns, howe sotil they were,	crafy
3880	To aray hym like a fole that for hem shuld answer. "What vayleth it," quod Hasybald, "to anger or to curs?"	i.e., Geffrey availit
	And yit I am in certen I shall fare the wers All the dayes of my lyff, for this dayes pleding;	on account of
	And so shall al the remnaunt, and hir hondes wryng,	
3885	Both Syrophanes and the Blynd, the Womman and Macaign, And be bet avised er they effsones pleyn;	before; afterwards
	And all other persones within this ceté Mell the les with Romeyns whils they here be.	Mingle
	For such another fole was never yit i-born,	i.e., Geffrey
3890	For he did naught elles but ever with us scorn, Tyl he had us caught even by the shyn With his sotill wittes in our own gren."	i.e., tripped us up scheme
	Nowe woll I retourn to Beryn ageyn, That of his grete luker in hert was righte feyn,	profit; glad
3895	And so was all his meyne, as hem oughte wele, That they were so delyvered from torment like to hell,	crew
	And graciously relieved out of hir grete myscheff,	misfortune
	And i-set above in conforte and boncheff.	good fortune
	"Now in soth," quod Beryn, "it may nat be denied,	
3900	Nad Geffrey and his wit be, we had be destroyed. I-thanked be almyghty God omnipotent	Had not
	That for our consolacione Geffrey to us sent?	
	And in protest opynly here among yewe all,	proclamation publicly
	Halif my good whils that I lyve, whatever me befall,	possessions
3905	I graunt it here to Geffrey to gyve or to sell, And never to part from me, yf it were his will,	
	And fare as wele as I, amorowe and eke on eve,	in the morning
	And never for man on lyve his company for to leve."	alive
	"Graunt mercy, sir," quod Geffrey, "your profer is feir and grete.	Thank you
3910	But I desir no more but as ye me behete — To bryng me at Rome — for this is covenante."	promised
	"It shall be do," quod Beryn, "and al the remnaunte."	the contract
	"Depardeux," quod Geffrey, "therof we shull wele do!"	the rest
	He rayed hym otherwise, and without wordes mo	God bless changed clothes

The Tale of Beryn

- 3915 They went to the dyner, the hole company,
With pipes and with trompes and other melody.
And in the myddes of hir mete, gentil wommen fyve,
Maydyns fresh attired as myght be on lyve,
Com from the Duke Isope, lord of that regioune,
3920 Everich with a present and that of grete renoun,
The first bare a cup of gold and of asure fyne,
So coroune and so nobill that I cannat devyne.
The second brought a swerd i-shethed with scynture,
I-freted all with perelis, orient and pure.
3925 The third had a mantell of lusty fresh coloure,
The witer part of purpille, i-furred with pelour.
The firth a cloth of gold, a worthy and a riche,
That never man tofore sawe cloth it liche.
The fift bare a palme that stode tofore the deyse
3930 In tokyn and of signe of trouth and pese,
For that was the custom thurh al the contray.
The message was the lever and more pleasant to pay.
The cup was uncovered, the swerd was out i-brayed,
The mantell was unfold, the cloth along aleyded.
3935 They knaled adown eche oon, right tofore Beryn.
The first did the message that taught was wel afyne:
"Isope," she seyd, "Sir Beryn, that is our lord riall,
And greteth yewe and sendeth yewe these presences all,
And joy hath of your wisdom and of your governaunce,
3940 And preyd yewe to com and have with hym plesaunce
Tomorowe, and se his paleys and to sport yewe there,
Ye and all your company." Beryn made noon answer,
But sat still and beheld the wommen and the sondes.
And afterward avisely the swerd first he hondes,
3945 And comaunded therewithall the wymmen wassh and sitt
And pravelich charged officers that with al hir witt
To serve hem of the best and make hem herly chere,
Resseyving al the presences in worshipfull manere.
I cannat wele expres the joy that they had,
3950 But I suppose tofore that day that they were nat so glad
That they were so ascaped Fortune and myscheff;
And thanked God above, that al thing doth releff.
For after mysty cloudes, there cometh a clere sonne,

The Tale of Beryn

3955	So after bale cometh bote, whoso byde conne, The joy and nobley that they had whils they were at mete, It vayleth nat at this tyme thereof long to trete. But Geffrey sat with Beryn, as he had served wele.	harm; relief; endure pomp; at the banquet describe
3960	Hir hedes they leyd togider and begon to tell In what maner the wymmen shuld be answered. Geffrey ever avised Beryn thereof he lerod, And of other thinges, howe he hym shuld govern.	discuss
3965	Beryn sauered wele thereon, and fast he gan to lern. When all were up, the wymmen cam to take hir leve. Beryn, as sat hym wele of blode, hem toward gan releve And preyd hem herthly hym to recomende:	taught understood
3970	"Unto the worthy lordshipp of Isole, that yewe sende To me that am unworthy, save of his grete nobley; And thank hym of his gyftes, as ye can best, and sey Tomorrow I wolle be redy his best to fulfill.	breeding; arise requested; command who sends you except; nobility for his gifts command
3975	With this I have save-condit I may com hym till, For me and al my feleshipp saff to com and go, Trustyng in his discrecioone that thoughte I ax so, He wol nat be displeased. For in my contray	safe-conduct; to him secure judgment; ask
3980	It hath ever be the custom, and is into this day, That yf a lord riall desireth for to see Eny maner persone that is of las degré, Ere he approche his presence, he wolle have in his bonde	lower rank Before safe-conduct officially sealed
3985	A saff-condit ensealed, or els som other bonde That he may com and pas without disturbance. Thurhoute all our marches, it is the observaunce." Thes wymmen toke hir leve without wordes mo,	territories; custom
3990	Repeyng onto Isole, and al as it was do, They rehersed redely and fayled never a word To Isole with his baronage, there he sat at his borde, Talkyng fast of Romayns and of hir highe prudence, That in so many daungers made so wise defence. But as sone as Isole had pleynlich i-herd Of Beryns governaunce, that first sesed the swerd Afore all other presentes, he demed in his mynde That Beryn was i-com of som nobill kynde. The nyght was past, the morowe cam, Isole had nat forgete, He charged barons twelf with Beryn for to mete,	Retaining unto repeated wisely; omitted where; table intend completely conduct; who seized first Before; decided

The Tale of Beryn

	To coad him saff, and his meynē — and al performed was.	conduct; followers
	Thre dayes there they sported hym in myrrh and solas,	entertained; comfort
3995	That thurh the wise instruccioone of Geffrey nyght and day, Beryn plesed Isole with wordes al to pay, And had hym so in port and in governaunce Of all honest myrthes and witty daliaunce	So that satisfaction behavior respectable
	That Isole cast his chere to Beryn so groundly	favor; so completely
4000	That atte last there was no man with Isole so pryyv. Resorting to his shippes, comyng to and fro, Thurh the wit of Geffrey, it fil so	intimate
	That Isole coude no chere when Beryn was absent.	wisdom; befall
	So Beryn must nedes ech day be after sent,	happiness
4005	And chefe he was of counsell within the first yere — Thurh the wit of Geffrey, that ech day did hym lere. This Isole had a daughter betwen hym and his wyfle,	summoned head who; instruct
	That was as feir a creature as myght bere lyff,	Who
	Wise and eke bountevouse and besyng withall,	virtuous; goodly
4010	That heir shuld be after his day of his lordshippes all. So shortly to conclude, the mariage was made	Who
	Betwene hir and Beryn, many a man to glade —	please
	Saff the burgesyes of the town, of fashede that were rote.	Except; who were root
	But they were ever hold so lowe under foot	
4015	That they myghte nat regne, but atte last were fawne To leve hir condicione and hir fals lawe.	glad
	Beryn and Geffrey made hem so tame	
	That they amended ech day and gate a better name.	earned; reputation
	Thus Geffrey made Beryn his enmyes to overcom,	
4020	And brought hym to worshipp thurh his wisdom.	Honor
	Now God us graunt grace to fynde such a frende	
	When we have nede — and thus I make an ende.	

Nomen Autoris presentis Cronica Rome
Et translatoris Filius ecclesie Thome

Notes

- 6-10 "but applied all their intellect and desires to foolishness, to such trickery as Harlequin's company, with their wild minds, (performs) behind every hedge that opens up when the green leaves withstand the weather — in this way I refer to them." Chaucer's fabliau characters are compared to the goblin-like spirit Harlequin and his legendary band of demonic (or dead) spirits pursuing wild hunts in the woods. See the criticism of Richard II's council in *Mum and the Sorkegger* (I, 90-91), p. 6: "Other hobbis ye hadden of Hurlewaynis kynne / Reffusyng the reule of realles kynde." For studies of Chaucer's revived characters, see Basé (1933), Kohl (1983), and Winstead (1988).
- 14 Brown (1991), p. 151, explains that the "Checker of the Hoop" was an inn built for the pilgrimage trade by Prior Chillenden between 1392 and 1395; its sign was a checkerboard enclosed in a metal or wooden hoop. Portions of the structure survive in Canterbury today at the west corner of Mercury Lane and High Street. Its preeminence as a pilgrim hostel went unchallenged until 1437-38, when "The Sun" was erected even closer to the cathedral.
- 15-18 The Host of Southwark is Harry Bailly, proprietor of the Tabard Inn, who proposed the tale-telling competition, accompanied Chaucer's pilgrims at his own expense, and offered to act as judge to select a winner (*CT* I, 747-818). If the phrase *in town* (18) means "at hand," the line indicates the Host settled for food served in the inn and did not send out for provisions.
- 19-22 The Pardoner had been described by Chaucer as a conniving con-artist (*CT* I, 669-714 and VI, 320-968). His misfortunes with Kit the Tapster figured as part of a contemporary stereotype. In 1407 the Lollard William Thorpe admitted to Archbishop Arundel that he had warned against the foolishness of pilgrims "spendyng these goodis upon vicious hosteleris which ben ofte unclene wymmen of her bodies" (*The Oxford Book of Late Medieval Verse and Prose*, ed. Douglas Gray [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988], p. 15). Much ironic symbolism is involved with the Pardoner's staff, since the pilgrimage staff was suggestive of a tumescent phallus, for example, at the conclusion of *Le Roman de la Rose* (lines 21,552-88).

The Canterbury Interlude

- 30 *Jenkyn* is a fairly generic man's name (see line 62), for instance, the Wife of Bath's apprentice and later her fifth husband (*CT* III, 303 and 628). "Jenkyn Harpour" may recall Perkyn Revelour of the Cook's Tale (*CT* I, 4371).
- 43 The opening phrase, like *Gesundheir!*, is a response to the barmaid's sneeze. *On the Properties of Things*, p. 355, notes that "fnesinge" is sometimes caused by the brain's "superfluytees of smokes that beth cause of yvel oþer of breding of som vice."
- 59 It was customary for pilgrims to fast until they had visited the shrine; see lines 145–46.
- 65 Kit is not a name for a respectable woman, as indicated by Beryn's nasty reference to his father's maid-servant as "lewd Kit" (line 1011). See Tauno F. Mustanoja, "The Suggestive Use of Christian Names in Middle English Poetry," in *Medieval Literary and Folklore Studies: Essays in Honor of Francis Lee Utley*, ed. Jerome Mandel and Bruce A. Rosenberg (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970), pp. 51–76, at pp. 72–74.
- 66 This expression is also used by the Host in the Prologue to the *Siege of Thebes* (line 96): "Daun John," quod he, "wel broke ye youre name!"
- 71 *nat.* MS: *nowe*.
- 78 This proverb is equivalent to "Once burned, twice shy."
- 98 For the Pardoner to designate Kit as his treasurer is ironic, since a pardoner's ultimate treasurer was the Pope who drew upon the *thesaurus* or "treasury of merit" for dispensations; see John M. Steadman, "Chaucer's Pardoner and the *Thesaurus Meritorium*," *English Language Notes* 3 (1965), 4–7.
- 99–100 Chaucer used the same vocabulary of dream-interpretation in *The Book of the Duchess* when claiming even Macrobius could scarcely "arede myn dremes even" (284–89).
- 106 The prophet Daniel was reckoned to be expert at dream-interpretation, as cited in *The Nun's Priest's Tale* (*CT* VII, 3127–29), particularly for unravelling Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 4).

Notes

- 120 *list nat.* MS: *list, yit sirs.* MS: *yit sir ne yit sirs.* This line recalls Chaucer's warnings for those "whoso list it nat yheere" in the Prologue to The Miller's Tale (*CT* I, 3170-85).
- 122-23 To "peel garlic" means to engage in a long, frustrating activity with an unhappy outcome.
- 133-34 Pilgrims typically made gifts of silver brooches and rings to the shrine, though such practices were criticized with increasing vehemence; see J. F. Davis, "Lollards, Reformers and St. Thomas of Canterbury," *University of Birmingham Historical Journal* 9 (1963), 1-15.
- 138 Chaucer described his Monk as "a manly man" (*CT* I, 167), though here the mildly flattering phrase "with a manly cher" is applied to a Canterbury monk, perhaps a confrere of the author. The Friar's attempt to usurp the office of sprinkler attests to the ongoing conflict between mendicants and monks (see lines 362 and 1643).
- 141-44 The Friar is depicted as a man of many appetites, including lechery (*CT* I, 208-69). The nun is probably the Second Nun, since the Prioress is named separately in line 287. Huberd's longing to see the Second Nun's face may be shared by many of Chaucer's readers, since this faceless pilgrim is given no real portrait in the General Prologue (*CT* I, 163-64).
- 145 The knight's *compers* or companions are the Squire (his son) and their Yeoman.
- 147-57 It would be appropriate if the image causing such confusion in interpretation — a man with a staff? or rake? or spear? — were the panel originally in the north window, opposite the main southwest entrance, showing Adam delving the earth, since the Miller and his friends so clearly belong to the unregenerated class of the Old Adam. See Madeline Harrison Caviness, *Early Stained Glass of Canterbury Cathedral, circa 1175-1220* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 113 and pl. 6 for Adam and his digging implement; the scene tends to confirm her statement (p. 104) that many of these windows, rather than betokening "a book to the lewyd peple" as commonly claimed by defenses of church art such as *Dives and Pauper* (ed. Priscilla Heath Barnum, EETS o.s. 275, 1976, p. 82), instead offered challenging, even esoteric images directed primarily at the monks of the cathe-

The Canterbury Interlude

dral. The expression "straight as a ram's horn" means crooked; that is, the low-born pilgrims have incorrectly interpreted the images. The line "And redith as right as the Ram is hornd" carries much the same force in *Mum and the Sothsegger* (M 1725), p. 77. There was much heated controversy over church images at this time; see G. R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1961), pp. 126-48, and W. R. Jones, "Lollards and Images: The Defense of Religious Art in Later Medieval England," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34 (1973), 27-50.

- 158-67 The culmination of the pilgrimage was the ascent on one's knees to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket in the Trinity Chapel behind the main altar, a gold-covered chest encrusted with jewels and supported on pink marble columns standing on a stepped plinth. See Daniel Knapp, "The Relyk of a Seint: A Gloss on Chaucer's Pilgrimage," *ELH* 39 (1972), 1-26.
- 168-69 The other holy sites would include the *corona* with a severed piece of St. Thomas's scalp, the place of martyrdom, and the altar of the sword's point broken off when Richard le Breton attacked the archbishop. The six major stations of the church, visited as a sort of pilgrimage within a pilgrimage, have been described by W. A. Scott Robertson, "The Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral," *Archæologia Cantiana* 13 (1880), 500-51, at 518-19.
- 171-72 These tokens stamped with the image of St. Thomas or a Canterbury bell — as well as lead phials containing a portion of his "blood" — were sold as souvenirs of the pilgrimage. The Palmer is laden with such tokens in *Piers Plowman* (B.5.515-31). For discussion of the iconography of badges and other pilgrim lore, see John V. Fleming, "Chaucer and Erasmus on the Pilgrimage to Canterbury: An Iconographical Speculation," in *The Popular Literature of Medieval England*, ed. Thomas J. Heffernan (Knoxville: Tennessee Studies in Literature, vol. 28, 1985), pp. 148-66.
- 184-90 The Summoner refers to The Friar's Tale in which "the devil of hell" conveyed a fellow summoner to damnation. In the Northumberland manuscript the Friar has told his tale prior to the Canterbury Interlude; as a unique feature of this collection, the final section of The Summoner's Tale (III, 2159-2294) with its account of the fart's division has been re-positioned immediately after The Tale of Beryn (fols. 235b-236+b) to fulfil the Summoner's threat here to "quyte wele his mede" by telling a retaliatory tale against the Friar on the homeward trip.

Notes

- 188 *J. MS: wee.* "although I would reveal publicly all the maliciousness I know, I will not spare him in attacking his character, to do him harm."
- 195 "Till their stomachs began to bulge." Chaucer used a similar image in The Man of Law's Tale: "He drank, and wel his girdel underpighte" (*CT* II, 789).
- 196-99 Glending Olson, *Literature as Recreation in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 40-55, reviews medieval commentaries on "nonnaturals" such as food and drink in promoting glad spirits, as background to his argument that mirthful tales, like Chaucer's, have a hygienic justification.
- 207-11 The General Prologue (*CT* I, 790-94) stipulates that each pilgrim should tell two tales going to Canterbury, another two tales on the return trip, whereas the Parson's Prologue (*CT* X, 25) suggests the plan had been reduced to one tale from each pilgrim. Here, in yet another revision, the Host implies one tale per pilgrim has already been told and another, a second per pilgrim, should be offered on the journey back to Southwark.
- 214-22 The Friar's statement implies that the Host had agreed to pay for the meal back at the Tabard Inn, whereas originally the Host proposed that the winner alone "shal have a soper at oure aller cost" (*CT* I, 799), that is, purchased by all the others. The theme of "covenant" or contractual agreement will become central to The Tale of Beryn that follows.
- 231 Chaucer's General Prologue noted that the Knight wore a tunic stained by the rust from his coat of mail (*CT* I, 75-78); here he finally changes to a "fressher gown."
- 237-44 The Knight's company (*meynd*) would have included the Squire and the Yeoman, the latter not mentioned here. In response to the French threat, Canterbury's defenses were extensively rebuilt between 1378 and 1409 under supervision of Henry Yevele, the architectural genius also responsible for the cathedral's nave. It is noteworthy that the Knight mentions attack by gunfire ("shot of gonne"), since the West Gate, reconstructed at the expense of Archbishop Simon Sudbury, is the earliest surviving English fortification designed for defense with guns; see Brown, "Journey's End," p. 151. For the Knight to have "declared compendiously" is not surprising, as he offered by far the longest tale (*CT* I, 859-3108).

The Canterbury Interlude

- 245 *His. MS: He.*
- 245-50 Description of the Squire is very faithful to the General Prologue (*CT I*, 79-100), down to the insomnia he suffers on account of his lady-love.
- 251-54 This abrupt transition led Vipan (p. 179) to suggest lines have been lost after 250. The Clerk's reference to the Summoner's criticism of the Friar as a vicious thief recalls the wholesale indictment of mendicants in The Summoner's Prologue and Tale (*CT III*, 1665-2294). The Clerk's comment that the Summoner lacks higher education reflects the General Prologue's portrait of him as a man, when drunk, parroting Latin phrases he does not understand (*CT I*, 637-46).
- 257 *whoso hath.* MS: *who so.*
- 268 *ful curteysly for.* MS: *for curteysly for.* See line 383 *ful curteysly.*
- 270 *me.* MS: *hym.*
- 271 The Monk's "brother in habit" might be another Benedictine confrere of the author — perhaps a witty reference to the author himself! — whose conviviality extends to the Parson and even the Friar, here designated a Gray Friar or Franciscan, though Chaucer is not so specific about his order.
- 274 *frendes.* MS: *frende.*
- 281 It is ironic that the Wife of Bath, who now has "no will to walk," was the great globe-trotter who previously boasted of knowing "muchel of wanyng by the weye" (*CT I*, 467).
- 287 The Prioress, here described as "taught (nurtured? affected?) of gentil blood," was portrayed as a lady of great courtly pretensions in the General Prologue (*CT I*, 118-62). Enthusiasm for a kitchen garden would therefore be as comically inappropriate for her as for the Wife of Bath. *On the Properties of Thingr*, pp. 882-1091, describes the medicinal powers of herbs; for example, hyssop "clensith and purgith alle maner yveles that cometh of colde if it is y-sode in wyn with drye figes and the wyn y-give to the pacient to drynke, and doth awaye ache of the stomak and of the guttes" (p. 975).

Notes

- 306 The Franklin used a similar expression: "Withouten coppe he drank al his penaunce" (*CT* V, 942).
- 322 *ye.* MS: *I.*
- 326 *I yewe prey.* MS: *yewe prey.* "How could I know, I ask you, that you would return so soon?"
- 362 This unflattering comment on friars reflects an anti-mendicant sentiment typical of the age, as does line 1643 with its reference to the treachery and guile of friars. We should not be surprised by such snide references from a monk-poet with institutional bias against the mendicant orders.
- 370 *feleshipp.* MS: *felshipp.*
- 386-88 These lines are spoken by the Host. The "marchall" was the chief officer of a hall; Chaucer described the Host as worthy "to been a marchal in an halle" (*CT* I, 752). The other "officers" are the butler, pantry-keeper, and others who ate at the second-sitting.
- 396 He must sing the notes *sof fa*, that is, "go whistle."
- 410 Chaucer had cast both the Miller and the Cook as drunkards (*CT* I, 3120-50; IX, 15-93).
- 412-15 Chaucer's General Prologue remarked upon the Pardoner's singing skills (*CT* I, 672 and 710-14). The Summoner, here called the Pardoner's disciple, had a more suspicious role as "his freend and his compeer" in the General Prologue (*CT* I, 670).
- 422 *the.* MS: *they.*
- 434-35 People, like coins stamped at greater value than their worth, are not always what they seem.
- 453 This hyperbole relies upon the fabled elusiveness of Christ's garments as a holy relic for which even the Roman soldiers at the Crucifixion cast lots (Matthew 27:35). The Pardoner was a great purveyor of dubious relics (*CT* I, 694-704; VI, 347-84).

The Canterbury Interlude

- 462 To vow to the peacock at table was part of a chivalric ceremony involving love or knightly service.
- 471 The verb *dischance* can mean to remove one's shoes or one's hose (leggings); the root word is immortalized in the family trade-name Chaucer. Kit's order "dischance yewe nat" instructs her lover not to undress fully for bed till dealing with the Pardoner.
- 474 The last line on fol. 186a is repeated as the first line on fol. 186b: "And by that tyme it was mere quarter nyghte." The variant *merhond/here* is perhaps suggestive of the copyist's free handling of his text.
- 476 Here meaning a merry creature, the goldfinch in the visual arts had a wide range of interpretations; see Herbert Friedmann, *The Symbolic Goldfinch: Its History and Significance in European Devotional Art* (Washington, DC: Pantheon, Bollingen Series, no. 7, 1946).
- 478 *but.* MS: *by.*
- 480ff. The Pardoner's disappointment and anger at discovering Kit in bed with her lover is reminiscent of Absolon's response to finding Alison in bed with Nicholas in The Miller's Tale (*CT* I, 3687-3810). Likened to a dog as a creature of greed, the Pardoner will be beaten like a dog and end up spending the night in a dog's litter.
- 502 *his.* MS: *he.*
- 517 *here.* MS: *hire.*
- 520 The Pardoner, notoriously described by Chaucer as "a geldyng or a mare" (*CT* I, 691), here has been deprived of his phallic staff.
- 524ff. This fight in the dark bedroom, so typical of fabliau slapstick, recalls the chaotic brawl at the end of The Reeve's Tale (*CT* I, 4268-4310).
- 536 The half-line *Jok, thow must be fele* may be a warning preserved in the nursery rhyme "Jack, be nimble! Jack, be quick!"

Notes

- 538 Vipan (p. 183) observed that if *chere* is given the American pronunciation *chore*, it then rhymes with *dorr* in the preceding line.
- 545-48 The wife's foul temper may have been a popular commonplace in respect to the wives of innkeepers; Harry Bailly's wife Goodelief could be roused to murderous fury (*CT* VII, 1893-1922).
- 563-68 These lines are spoken by Kit's lover.
- 580 Like young Alison in The Miller's Tale, Kit escapes unscathed from the violence involving the three men.
- 593 *Seynt Thomas*. MS: *Seynt Amyas*. The mysterious St. Amyas is not satisfactorily explained by the nearest candidates — St. Aimo, St. Aime, St. Amatus, St. Hamo, or St. Amos — and is more likely a thorough corruption of St. Thomas. On the controversies surrounding St. Thomas of Canterbury and pilgrimage to his shrine, see Bowers (1998), pp. 101-12.
- 621 *Iyke*. MS: *lyle*. Cologne was famous for producing solid, heavy weapons.
- 622 Symkyn uses such an expression for outwitting John and Aleyn in the Reeve's Tale: "Yet kan a millere make a clerkes berd" (*CT* I, 4096).
- 625-29 According to legend, St. Julian built a hospice beside a river where he and his wife tended the sick and poor, rowing travelers across the river, hence becoming the patron saint of travelers, innkeepers, and boatmen. The Pardoner's stifled, frustrated anger was previously seen at the end of his Tale when he was insulted by the Host (*CT* VI, 956-57).
- 640 The word *warruk* referring to a bound creature (see *Piers Plowman* B.4.21 and *Patience* 80) combines with *warlock* as a devilish monster. Mum and the Sothsegger (M. 1703), p. 76, uses the word in an expression meaning "let sleeping dogs lie."
- 642 *nere*. MS: *ne*.
- 660 The scribe's spelling *ever* makes it unclear whether the Pardoner shook his "ears" or his "hairs," the former more likely, in keeping with the scoun-

The Canterbury Interlude

drel's canine character. See Maria to Malvolio in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (2.3.125): "Go shake your ears!"

667 *he.* MS: *they.*

675-79 This passage reverses the Parson's Prologue, where Chaucer had left his pilgrims "at a thropes ende" in the late afternoon when "the sonne wole adoun" (*CT* X, 12, 70).

678 *pipe.* MS: *pike.* Rhyme with *rype.*

680 *Southwork.* MS: *Southword.*

682 Though modern scholars usually reckon Chaucer's time-setting around April 17-19, when "the yonge sonne / Hath in the Ram his half course yronne" (*CT* I, 7-8), here the dating at the end of the month, "entring into May," agrees with Lydgate's Prologue to the *Siege of Thebes* (1-17) where the astrological description suggests that the poem opens on April 27, with the homeward trip the next morning, April 28.

683 The break in rhyme suggests that a line may be missing.

685 *ruddok.* MS: *oudduk.*

686 The phrase *nayneth smale* may mean to intertwine neatly or to cry with a small, high-pitched voice.

689-90 Since Nature is usually feminine, the pronoun *he* may be understood as *heo*, "she" (see line 86). The same pronoun ambiguity arises with Fortune (lines 1365-69; see also 943-45) and Folly (lines 2319-20). The poet specifically refers to "Dame Fortune" at line 2196.

703-16 In the General Prologue, a drawing of lots determined the Knight as the first tale-teller on the outward journey (*CT* I, 835-55).

717 The Holy Cross of Bromholm Priory, a supposed relic of the true cross, was brought to Norfolk from Constantinople in the early thirteenth century following the Fourth Crusade. Famed for its miraculous powers, it became

Notes

- a popular destination for pilgrims — and figured as a common oath; see *CT* I, 4286.
- 725–27 In the Northumberland manuscript, the Merchant's Tale of Beryn is in fact followed by contributions from the Summoner, Chaucer the pilgrim, the Monk, the Nun's Priest, the Manciple, and the Parson.
- 729–32 The Merchant's apology for ignorance and inability to "peynt" his tale is reminiscent of the Franklin's modest disclaimers (*CT* V, 716–28).
- 756 Two of the Cinque Ports towns, Winchelsea and Rye on the Sussex coast, were victims of naval raids by the French and their allies, notably the vicious attack of 1360 that included plunder and massacre of citizens in a useless attempt to free King Jean. Rye was again sacked and burned in 1377, Winchelsea in 1380; see Tamanini, pp. 73–74. The phrase "here fast by" further suggests that The Tale of Beryn was composed in the southeast, as does the poet's dialect and the Canterbury associations. Green, "Legal Satire in *The Tale of Beryn*," pp. 61–62, suggests that the two port cities declined because their economies had been depressed by a drop in foreign trade as a result of legal abuses of the sort described in the tale that follows.
- 758–59 The twins Romulus and Remus were the legendary founders of Rome according to "old booke" such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (14.771–851).
- 762–64 The narrator maintains the pretense that he is speaking to an audience of pilgrims on horseback.
- 772 Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (1.2) recounts Julius Caesar's campaign to conquer Britain in 55–54 B.C.
- 776 The poet's sense of Roman history becomes confused. Here he equates the Senate with the Douzepers, the twelve peers of Charlemagne.
- 783–86 This account of imperial succession has no basis in Roman history; see Tamanini, pp. 296–97. Constantine the Great was emperor in 324–37; Constantine III was a Byzantine emperor who ruled briefly in 641. Philippos was emperor in Rome in 243–49, while Philippicus was a Byzantine usurper reigning 711–13.

The Tale of Beryn

- 789 The Seven Sages, or advisors to the Roman emperor, appear in the romance tradition of *The Seven Sages of Rome*, ed. Karl Brunner, EETS o.s. 191, 1933; see Killis Campbell, "A Study of the Romance of the Seven Sages," *PMLA* 14 (1899), 1-107.
- 810 *men*. MS: *me*.
- 812 *myght*. MS: *mygth*.
- 822 *the*. MS: *ther*. Scribal confusion of *t* for *c* has led to the spellings *Stylio* for Scipio and *Sithero* for Sichero (Cicero); see Kane (1960), p. 120. Their common surname was Astrologie after their shared profession of astrology or "astronomy" (line 824); see *On the Properties of Things*, Book VIII, "De Mundo et Corporibus Supracelestibus," pp. 441-515.
- 837 *Sportes* may have been miswritten for *pentes*, doorways.
- 850 *to be*. MS: *to*.
- 913 Seven was considered the first year of childhood, the transition from *infantia* (the "age of innocence") to *pueritia* (the "age of accountability"); see *On the Properties of Things*, pp. 291-93 and 298-301, and Burrow, *The Ages of Man*, p. 74.
- 922 *over mischeff*. MS: *ovir*. Supply of this missing word "mischeff" is suggested by the French source.
- 938 *in is hard*. MS: *in hard*.
- 943-46 The wheel of Fortune is a traditional image of life's ups and downs; see Howard R. Patch, *The Goddess Fortuna in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927).
- 971 *krase*. MS: *karse*. Rhyme with *pase*.
- 984 *had*. MS: *have*.
- 987 *yew lafft me*. MS: *I lafft yew*.

Notes

- 998 *kissed Beryn, bur.* MS: *kissid bur.*
- 1011 The Canterbury Interlude made clear that Kit was not a name befitting a respectable woman.
- 1015 *ought.* MS: *ough.*
- 1017 Beryn swore by the mass book and the church bell.
- 1019 *thow.* MS: *were thow.* Beryn threatens to knock out her teeth.
- 1021 *now.* MS: *nough.*
- 1058 *every.* MS: *by.* The scribe was probably confused by the contracted form of *every.*
- 1064 *withey.* MS: *with.*
- 1065 *overgrowe.* MS: *ovir grove.*
- 1066 *bowe.* MS: *growe.*
- 1084 *ne write.* MS: *write, halffyndele.* MS: *halifyndele.*
- 1085 "[as a result of] his son's disobedience and his wife's death."
- 1090 *And Faunus.* MS: *A ffawnus.*
- 1099 *Whan.* MS: *With.*
- 1114-15 See the opening line of Chaucer's "To Rosemounde": "Madame, ye ben of al beaute shryne."
- 1120 *swell.* MS: *swell.*
- 1137 *was.* MS: *was.*
- 1139 *Whan.* MS: *With.*

The Tale of Beryn

- 1140 For the medieval imagery of Love with his arrows, see Erwin Panofsky, "Blind Cupid," in *Studies in Iconology*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 95-128, plates 69-106.
- 1145 *made*. MS: *did make*. Rhyme with *sade*; the word *make* is crossed out in the manuscript.
- 1148-56 The assumption that women are by nature treacherous is embedded in the clerical ideology that a monastic poet would share with the Wife of Bath's fifth husband, Jankyn, whose chief reading was his "book of wikked wyves" containing such "olde Romayn geestes" as Beryn (see *CT* III, 642-787).
- 1150 *condicoune*. MS: *condicoune*.
- 1167 *spak*. MS: *spal*. This emendation resists the difficult *lectio* or "harder reading" of the manuscript, where *spal* could be the preterite of *spell*, meaning to cast a spell or speak bewitchingly.
- 1175 *erly*. MS: *erly*.
- 1179 *own*. MS: *hown*.
- 1200 *refreit*. MS: *frefreit*.
- 1221-23 These lines are spoken by Faunus.
- 1229 *spede*. MS: *spech*. Anticipation of *reche*.
- 1249 *rebawdry*. MS: *rebawdy*. The rhyme is with *hazardry*; see line 1257.
- 1250 The two-man game *merelles* or morris is played on a board with an equal number of pebbles, pegs, pins, or disks.
- 1275 *Curs com*. MS: *Com*. Some noun has been omitted at the head of the line; Tamanini astutely emended to *Curse com*. See line 1280 for the spelling *curs*.
- 1300 *thy*. MS: *thi*.

Notes

- 1308 "To claw a sorry man's head" means to realize one's own miserable condition.
- 1318 This reference to Beryn's coat is mocking, since lines 1295–98 indicate his makeshift wardrobe does not cover his nakedness.
- 1340 *And.* MS: *Ant.*
- 1342 "I think that (his fainting) might prove he had his share of sorrow."
- 1346 Dame Fortune typically carries a sceptre rather than a spear; for a survey of the iconographic tradition, see Kolve (1984), pp. 327–30 and 490–91. The poet may have been thinking of the spear carried by Death; see *CT* VI, 675–78.
- 1350 *toreare his ere:* The spelling makes it unclear whether Beryn tore his ear or his hair; the latter is more likely.
- 1365–69 The copyist was confused by the pronoun *he* for *heo* ("she") in reference to Fortune; the gender of the goddess is later clarified by the phrase "Dame Fortune" (line 2196).
- 1383 *witted.* MS: *wit.* Emended on the basis of line 1376.
- 1422 *as sone as.* MS: *as sone a.*
- 1423 *Ienger.* MS: *legir.*
- 1425–42 Vipan (p. 190) observed that Faunus, warming to his repentant son, switches from the formal *thow* to the familiar *yewe*.
- 1431 *I shall.* MS: *Shall.*
- 1433 *that for thy moder.* MS: *for thy modir that.*
- 1463 In this tale told by the Merchant, it is apt that the protagonist prefers the life of a merchant to that of a knight.
- 1475 *the made.* MS: *& made.*

The Tale of Beryn

- 1478 Besides "belly," the word *kite* can also mean "bird of prey" or "rapacious person." Thus the odd phrase *went lowe for the kite* might otherwise mean to dive like a bird avoiding a kite's attack, or to swoop down as a kite does upon its prey. *On the Properties of Thingr*, p. 634, describes the cowardice and treachery of the kite: "And he is a ravysshinge foul and hardy among smale briddes and coward and fereful among grete briddes; . . . and lighth ofte in waite to take tame briddes and lith ofte in waite to take chekenes and to slee ham that he fyndith unwaar."
- 1489 *mekerly*. MS: *mekely*. Rhyme with *sikerly*.
- 1531 A side bond, here a sealed document executed in the presence of witnesses, was given to the new owner when the release or conveyance of property was handed over to him. For such "conditional bonds," see Simpson (1975), pp. 90-92.
- 1555-99 Whereas the French source does not describe the voyage or tempest in any detail, the English version expands the account with so much nautical terminology that Vipan (p. 191) speculated the author might have been a seafaring man earlier in life. Such fascination with nautical detail is in fact typical of English poets, as in *Pacienc* (97-244) and Chaucer's Legend of Cleopatra (*LGW* 628-55).
- 1565 *They*. MS: *The*.
- 1581 *was*. MS: *war*.
- 1582 The expression *the thiknes of a skale* means "in the least bit."
- 1589 *shippes that*. MS: *shippir*.
- 1598 The break in rhyme suggests a line may be missing.
- 1631 *longed*. MS: *longek*. Correct verb-tense, rhyming with *honged*.
- 1637 A *manciple* was a subordinate official who arranged provisions for some corporate institution, like Chaucer's pilgrim who managed supplies for one of the *inns* of court, to his own advantage (*CT I*, 567-86).

Notes

- 1641 A burgess was a freeman or citizen of a town, a term often used to describe a merchant.
- 1643-44 A friar's obligation to divide his ill-gotten gain with the other members of his convent became the topic of Chaucer's Summoner's Tale, whose last section with the solution for dividing Thomas's donation (a fart) immediately follows Beryn in the Northumberland manuscript.
- 1646 *ches.* MS: *dise*. The rhyme with *dres* confirms this substitution for sense.
- 1652 *I.* MS: *or*.
- 1717 *frend.* MS: *frend*.
- 1737 Distances such as a mile or a furlong are used to express durations of time, that is, how long it would take to walk a mile or a quarter-mile.
- 1754 *failereh.* MS: *failinh*.
- 1765-78 Beryn has rashly entered into a contractual agreement ("covenant") sealed with a handshake ("hond in hond") in front of witnesses. As opposed to the modern contract, the medieval covenant is best understood as a transaction promising reciprocal gifts; it was by definition an agreement to perform something in the future, so that failure to perform might result in "assump-sit," an action for the recovery of damages for the non-performance of a parol or unsealed contract. See William M. McGovern, "The Enforcement of Informal Contracts in the Later Middle Ages," *California Law Review* 59 (1971), 1145-93, and Simpson (1975), "Covenants," pp. 9-52 and 146-53.
- 1787-90 Dame Philosophy's advice on avoiding the snares of Fortune occupies Book II of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*.
- 1790 *world wide.* MS: *world*. Adjective supplied for rhyme with *ryde*.
- 1795 The "sergauntes" were not policemen in the modern sense but rather officers of the court, in the later Middle Ages a generic name for lawyers. See Chaucer's Sergeant of the Lawe (CT I, 309). The evolution of the term is outlined by Pollock and Maitland, *The History of English Law*, 1:282-90.

The Tale of Beryn

- 1823 *selev.* — "Sirs. MS: *selev and seyd sirs.*
- 1837 The word *gesolreut* refers to the three musical pitches G (ge-sol), D (re) and high C (ut). In the medieval scale there were two gesolreuts, the lower and the upper, *the haut*. To cry "in gesolreut the haut" means to shout in the uppermost register or at an extremely high pitch.
- 1843 Chaucer makes this careful distinction, for example, in his warning about the vulgarity of the Miller: "And eek men shal nat maken ernest of game" (*CT I*, 3186). On the invalidity of Dorigen's contract made "in pley" with Aurelius in *The Franklin's Tale*, see Hornsby (1988), pp. 52-54.
- 1851 For the zigzag of an indenture, see *Black's Law Dictionary*, p. 911: "if a deed was made by more parties than one, it was usual to make as many copies of it as there were parties, and each was cut or indented (either in acute angles, like the teeth of a saw, or in a wavering line) at the top or side, to tally or correspond with the others, and the deed so made was called an 'indenture'."
- 1858-60 The Burgeyse, as plaintiff, enters an oral plea before the court to describe the contract. The author invokes the same ancient dichotomy between words (*verba*) and deeds (*res*) that Chaucer uses in statements like "The word moot nede accorde with the dede" (*CT IX*, 208), which he derived from the Platonic philosophy of the *Boece* (III, prose 12.205-07).
- 1873 Beryn correctly understands that he can lose the case merely because his account of events is inaccurate or deficient in some small detail ("in som word"). See Pollock and Maitland, 2:602-05.
- 1876-81 Beryn's "borow" was a piece of valuable property that served to secure a promise. The surety was forfeited if the contract were not fulfilled, that is, if Beryn were unable to drink all of the salt water in the sea. See Henry, *Contracts*, pp. 179-201. For the provost to have seized Beryn's five ships ("i-sesed in our honde") means that he has assumed legal possession of them while acting as Beryn's custodian; see Pollock and Maitland, 2:29-80. For uses of the term *sesed* elsewhere in Middle English literature, see John A. Alford, "Literature and Law in Medieval England," *PMLA* 92 (1977), 941-51, at 945-47. Beryn's ineptitude as a merchant is reflected in his

Notes

persistent failure to obtain a sealed covenant, an indenture, or a tally as evidence of his transactions.

- 1881 As provost or chief magistrate of the town, Hanybald can overrule Evander who, as steward, exercises less judicial authority.
- 1884-85 Besides seizing the ships, Hanybald undertakes the obligation of maimpernor to ensure the arrested defendant's appearance in court.
- 1891 *is.* MS: *it.*
- 1897ff. Hanybald appears to offer a scheme by which Beryn's cargo might be safeguarded against seizure by transfer of possession secured with merchandise stored in his own house, merchandise liable to forfeiture if Hanybald fails in his agreement. He solicits Beryn's "vowe" (line 1905). They signal good faith by drinking on the terms (line 1915), then Hanybald pushes for a handshake contract (line 1922). The subsequent emptying of the house is a breech of good faith, which could have served Beryn as the pretext for nullifying the contract. Hanybald preempts this tact by accusing Beryn himself of wavering (lines 1971-77).
- 1904 The break in rhyme suggests a missing line.
- 1905 *yeur vowe also.* MS: *yeur alto.*
- 1909 Here "arrest" refers to the seizure of Beryn's ships as well as his own personal detention.
- 1918 *high.* MS: *his.* The copyist mistook the yogh for an *z*.
- 1924 *ye.* MS: *I.*
- 2002 *Here.* MS: *Ther.*
- 2010 The words "Out!" and "Harrowe!" were shouted to raise the hue and cry for neighbors to pursue and arrest a criminal. Chaucer uses these cries in the Miller's Tale (*CT* I, 3824-29) and The Nun's Priest's Tale (*CT* VII, 3375-82).

The Tale of Beryn

- 2035 *never yit.* MS: *nevir.*
- 2063 *Evander.* MS: *Edwandir.*
- 2065-70 Probate proceedings involve establishing proof in civil law. Since the Blind Man alleges that his complaint has a history and he can produce witnesses or compurgators, including Evander himself, to establish his grievance, he has the advantage as plaintiff. Sir John Fortescue (1394?-1476?) in his *De Laudibus Legum Anglie* (XXI), ed. and trans. S. B. Chrimes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1942), pp. 44-45, criticized this procedure: "By the civil law, the party who has taken the affirmative in the joinder of issue ought to produce the witnesses, whom he shall name at his pleasure. But a negative cannot be proven, that is, directly, though it may be indirectly. Feeble indeed . . . who cannot find, out of all the men he knows, two who are so lacking in conscience . . . they will contradict every truth. . . . And since their statements are in the affirmative, they are not easily disproved by circumstantial or other indirect evidence."
- 2083-84 Vipan (pp. 192-93) notes *condempnyd/examined* would make a bad rhyme, but I have not judged this failing sufficient to emend to *examined*.
- 2098 *Hir.* MS: *Yir.*
- 2101 *howe lome.* MS: *lome.*
- 2128 *of his child.* MS: *of his.*
- 2130 *with.* MS: *without.*
- 2135-39 If Beryn were really her husband, his spousal bond ("trowth") would oblige him to a marital debt comparable to commercial indebtedness; see Hornsby, pp. 100-03. The Woman apparently has a "gage" or pledge that she offers as security to be forfeited upon failure of her case (which should actually be tried in ecclesiastical court).
- 2139 *Steward.* MS: *Swarge.*
- 2161 *wordlich.* MS: *wordlich.*

Notes

- 2179 *ne down*. MS: *the down*.
- 2182 *they woll*. MS: *the woll*.
- 2194 Vipan (p. 193) suggests this hypermetric line be shortened by deleting *he did*.
- 2208 *they pursu*. MS: *the pursu*.
- 2210 A catchpoll, like a sergeant, was a constable or deputy officer whose duty it was to arrest persons. To detain and control prisoners he would place a yoke with pikes around the prisoner's neck. The yoke was attached to a pole which enabled the officer to direct the prisoner as he wished. If the prisoner struggled, the pikes would impale his throat.
- 2227 *eche man*. MS: *eke man*.
- 2260 Again Beryn enters into a rash handshake agreement.
- 2266 *he had*. MS: *they had*.
- 2273 *good*. MS: *God*. See line 2291.
- 2275 There appears to be some confusion between *dromodaries* meaning "camels" and *dromondes* meaning "large ships." Camels are called *dromondaries* in *Morte Arthure* (line 2286), ed. Edmund Brock, EETS o.s. 8, 1871, p. 68.
- 2286 *sesed hym*. MS: *sesid*.
- 2293-98 Beryn, who has previously been accused only of violating various contracts, is now charged with the felony of murder. Distinct from homicide (which may have been man-slaughter with extenuating circumstances) the term *murder* designated those slayings committed in secret, at night, or by devious or clandestine means. Murder was a capital offense punishable by death. The wording *murder woll out* perhaps echoes Chaucer's Prioress (*CT* VII, 576) or the Nun's Priest's echoing of her phrase (*CT* VII, 3052).
- 2300 *were*. MS: *where*.

The Tale of Beryn

- 2335-38 Beryn imagines himself in a morality play with Fortune, Wisdom, Wit, and Governance.
- 2340 *wrought hymselff*. MS: *wrought myselff*.
- 2357 *I, iwis*. MS: *I wis*
- 2363 *hir*. MS: *is*.
- 2386 An incumbrance is a claim, charge, or liability attaching property as part of a writ or judgment. Beryn fears he is going to be sued by the Crippled Man, no doubt for causing his physical disability.
- 2388 *prece*. MS: *preche*. Rhyme with *cese*.
- 2394 *no word*. MS: *o word*.
- 2405 *Wolde ye had*. MS: *yee had*.
- 2408 Phrases like *outed all your chaffare* are used by the Wife of Bath (*CT* III, 521) and the Host (*CT* IV, 2438).
- 2436 *contreman*. MS: *contremen*.
- 2450 Vipan (p. 195) says the *cleikr* was a leg-cramp afflicting horses, hence the mocking name for the crippled-looking Geffrey. Since *cleek* was a verb meaning to catch with a crook, here the lame man's crutch, the name might otherwise be understood as "Sir Snatch 'em."
- 2460-61 Geffrey invites the crew to be summoned as witnesses to the conversation. One of Beryn's major legal problems has been his inability to produce witnesses to testify in his favor against his accusers and their array of witnesses.
- 2466 *how goodly Geffrey spak*. MS: *how goodly as Geffrey spak*.
- 2476 *in whom*. MS: *I whom*.

Notes

- 2488 A "behest" is a legal promise creating an obligation. The Man of Law's statement "Bihest is dette" (*CT* II, 41) reflects the fundamental idea behind the secular law of contracts that agreements must be kept.
- 2503 *I dure*. MS: *I dryve dare*.
- 2518-20 Looking back upon the longevity of the Old Testament patriarchs, readers in the Middle Ages believed that in ancient times men lived longer, with life-expectancy becoming shorter as the world itself became more corrupt. See Burrow, *The Ages of Man*, esp. pp. 79-92, for the ages of the world.
- 2530 Beryn offers to become the lawyer's liegeman or sworn follower rendering service in exchange for protections, another rash promise which Geffrey wisely refuses. For the legal workings of feudal service, see F. W. Maitland, *The Constitutional History of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908), pp. 141-64.
- 2569-74 The contract between Geffrey and Beryn is sealed "in signe of trowth" not with a handshake, but a kiss followed by wine.
- 2583 Vipan (p. 195) suggests *i-recled* (sickened) may be the victim of another *cit* confusion, hence *i-setted* for the doublet "settled and fixed" as in line 1742.
- 2595-2600 Green, "Legal Satire," p. 57, notes that this prohibition of inquest (preferred by merchants) in favor of the old customary compurgation proof of witnesses (preferred by local burgesses) was practiced at this time by England's Cinque Ports, much to the chagrin of foreign traders and, ultimately, the ports themselves when trade declined; see note for line 756.
- 2601 *togider*. MS: *togid*.
- 2602 *though ye were*. MS: *they ye were*.
- 2603 *wold give yewe*. MS: *wold give yeve yewe*.
- 2605-07 *Black's Law Dictionary*, p. 82, gives this definition of *affirmative*: "The party who, upon the allegations of pleadings joining issue, is under the obligation of making proof, in the first instance, of matters alleged." Thus the citizens sustain the burden of proof, which they accomplish by lining up witnesses

The Tale of Beryn

willing to perjure themselves. Beryn sustains the burden of negative proof, that is, he must produce evidence or witnesses to prove the contrary — which he cannot do. Green, p. 53, describes Beryn's procedural bind: "In this legal catch-22, the defendant is guilty until proved innocent, but as soon as he denies his guilt, he forfeits the right to prove anything at all."

- 2616 *daunger*. MS: *daunser*.
- 2645 *that*. MS: *tha*.
- 2660 *They shuld*. MS: *The shuld*.
- 2666 Seneca (c. 4 B.C. - A.D. 65) was the Roman stoic philosopher and dramatist frequently cited by Chaucer. Sydrak was a philosopher to whom was attributed a medieval book of popular wisdom, *The Book of Sydrach*. "Salamones sawes" refers to the Proverbs of Solomon. This alliterative trio also appears in *Mum and the Sothsegger* (M 1212), p. 62.
- 2667 The seven sciences are the seven liberal arts of the Trivium (grammar, rhetoric, logic) and the Quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music). The conduct of war was the subject of Vegetius's foundational *De Re Militari* (fourth century A.D.) and later Honoré Bonet's *Arbre des Batailles* (c. 1387), principal sources for Christine de Pizan's *Book of Fayntes of Armes and of Chyualye* (c. 1408-10), translated in 1489 by William Caxton (ed. A. T. T. Byles, EETS o.s. 189, 1932).
- 2673 The French source joins with several texts from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in which Denmark is cited as the birthplace of great men, saints as well as villains, whose origins are otherwise obscure.
- 2689 *That seven score*. MS: *Tha viii xx*.
- 2695 *this ilch day*. MS: *his ilch day*.
- 2702 *But whoso ly*. MS: *Both who so ly*.
- 2703 The correct reading may be *espechement* to rhyme with *thens*.

Notes

- 2723 *keveryng above*. MS: *keveryng of bove*. Celidony was a fabulous stone of two kinds, red or black, that was said to be found in the stomach of a swallow. *On the Properties of Things*, p. 841, describes how celidony "helpeth ageins the passion lunatik and ageins woodnes and ageins old sorwe and maketh a man kynde and plesyng." Since it is "a litel stoon and precious," an entire ceiling of celidony would have been very impressive.
- 2731 *On the Properties of Thingz*, p. 843, says nothing about the coldness of the stone *dionizias*, only its power to prevent drunkenness.
- 2741-46 *On the Properties of Things*, pp. 1219-20, says much about the leopard's violence and aggressiveness, but nothing about the animal's irritation at human breathing.
- 2753-58 Ptolemy, originally known as Claudius Ptolomaios (c. A.D. 100-170), was a Greek astronomer best known for his treatise *Almagest*. His renown as a scientist was so great that here he is credited with inventing robotic animals. On medieval automata, see William Eamon, "Technology as Magic in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance," *Janus* 70 (1983), 171-212. See also Rosemary Ascherl, "The Technology of Chivalry in Reality and Romance," in *The Study of Chivalry: Resources and Approaches*, ed. Howell Chickering and Thomas H. Seiler (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1988), pp. 263-311, esp. 285-87 and bibliographies on pp. 310-11.
- 2758 *move*. MS: *mowe*.
- 2771-78 Chaucer showed great respect for the illusionist powers of "tregetours" in *The House of Fame* (1259-81) and *The Franklin's Tale* (CT VII, 1138-51). See Laura Hibbard Loomis, "Secular Dramatics in the Royal Palace, Paris, 1378, 1389, and Chaucer's 'Tregetoures,'" *Speculum* 33 (1958), 242-55.
- 2774 *apparence*. MS: *apparene*.
- 2791 *wrieth*. MS: *wrighe*. On indenture ("dencour"), see note for line 1851.
- 2801 *herte*. MS: *herix*.
- 2813 *They had*. MS: *The had*.

The Tale of Beryn

- 2815-18 In desperation, the crew wishes to be convicted of a felony, which would carry the death penalty, rather than to be reduced to slavery through forfeiture of all their property in civil suits.
- 2823 *Thurhout all the long nyghte, till cokkes gan to syng.* MS: *Thurhout the nyghte till Cokkis gan to syng.* A fuller version of the first half-line is copied following line 2830 — *Thurh out all the long nyghte* — which I have conflated with line 2823, but which Furnivall (p. 86) reconstructed as a full couplet based on lines 2815-16: *Thurh-out all the long nyghte [this was hir compleynt], / They wisthid that of felony they had been atteynt* (2831-32).
- 2825 *wynd.* MS: *wyne.*
- 2826 *they had been.* MS: *he had been.*
- 2827 *apassed hope.* MS: *a passid.*
- 2872 Here meaning a crafty plot, *wanlise* was the circuit made in hunting to intercept game, especially deer.
- 2888 *tyll Geffrey gan.* MS: *to Geffrey gan.*
- 2925 *i-dight.* MS: *in dight.* See line 2968.
- 2943 Geffrey will describe a nonsense game instead of the well-known board game called "quek." *Quek* as a dialect variant for "beek" may account for the abrupt transition between images.
- 2946 *haled.* MS: *hale.*
- 2977 Beryn makes a point which he ought to have pressed harder, namely, that he is a merchant who should be accorded his rights under "law merchant" (*lex mercatoria*), a special legal code which extended to mercantile transactions and was internationally recognized by the fifteenth century. Though *ley marchaunt* normally differed from common law only in expeditious procedure, the merchants themselves could act as judges; if a civil case such as Beryn's was tried by jury, half of the jury might consist of foreigners like the defendant himself. Beryn is placed at a decided disadvantage because law merchant denied wager of law (lining up of witnesses) as a means of

Notes

establishing the negative and enabled plaintiffs to prove informal contracts by suit ("pleynt"); see note for lines 2605-07. See Frederic Rockwell Sanborn, *Origins of the Early English Maritime and Commercial Law* (New York: Century, 1930), pp. 324-401, and J. H. Baker, "The Law Merchant and the Common Law Before 1700," *Cambridge Law Journal* 38 (1979), 295-322. Green, pp. 54-62, makes the case that Beryn is entangled in law-merchant proceedings throughout.

- 2979 *yf.* MS: *yef.*
- 2982 A "wed" was an object or even hostages given as security to guarantee a party's intention to perform a promise in good faith. See Henry, *Contracts*, pp. 202-06. The address *Sir John* is used mockingly for "silly man."
- 2987 *sor.* MS: *for.*
- 3003 Geffrey's ceaseless chatter is compared, proverbially, to the clatter of a waterwheel.
- 3018 *chasted.* MS: *chased.*
- 3046 Gilhochet, the name that Geffrey assumes, appears in the French original as Guinchoches, formed from *guignol* for "hand-puppet clown" and *hocher* for "toy rattle," according to Tamanini, p. 309.
- 3054 *in company.* MS: *a company.* The phrase "the grettest of the town" may mean the majority of the citizens or the most distinguished men of the town.
- 3070 *So shall I.* MS: *So shall.*
- 3074 A guest at a medieval banquet would often have a dinner companion, someone of equal social rank with whom to share servings of food and even the same wine cup, as Geffrey claims in asserting intimacy with the Emperor of Rome.
- 3096-98 In law merchant, these ten witnesses who are neighbors (unlike Beryn who is a foreigner) have the double function of affirming the truth of the Burgeysse's testimony and acting as compurgators or "oath-helpers" who swear

The Tale of Beryn

that the plaintiff can be believed. The irregularity of the procedure is underscored by the fact that eleven oath-helpers were normally required for wager of law. Green, pp. 54-56, details Beryn's disadvantages as a non-citizen defendant barred from jury inquest.

- 3097 *every word*. MS: *cvir word*.
- 3131 *this*. MS: *thes*.
- 3153 *shall not nede*. MS: *shall nede*.
- 3154-57 Geffrey offers to prove the justice of Beryn's cause by ordeal of judicial combat, absurdly boasting a record of four previous victories as if he were the sort of professional champion sometimes in the employ of a prince for deciding such cases. See Henry C. Lea, *Superstition and Force: Essays on the Wager of Law, the Wager of Battle, the Ordeal, Torture*, 2nd ed. rev. (1870; rpt. New York: Greenwood, 1968), pp. 85-199, and M. J. Russell, "I. Trial by Battle and the Writ of Right" and "II. Trial by Battle and the Appeals of Felony," *Journal of Legal History* 1 (1981), 111-34 and 135-64.
- 3171 *on hond*. MS: *an hond*.
- 3176 *til at the last*. MS: *til al the last*.
- 3178 For "tregitours," see note for lines 2771-78; also Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, pp. 95-100.
- 3182 Bayard is used as a typical name for a horse in Langland's *Piers Plowman* (B.4.53) and in a famous simile in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (I, 218-24).
- 3190 *yit shuld it*. MS: *it shold it*.
- 3202 Besides making it difficult for the Woman to talk, a slit tongue would have indicated punishment for some previous conviction of false accusation; Pollock and Maitland, 2:453.
- 3206 *harmes*. MS: *Armeys*.
- 3221 *Womman*. MS: *wommen*.

Notes

- 3229 Secret marriages formed a suspicious practice in the period; see Henry Ansgar Kelly, "Clandestine Marriage and Chaucer's *Troilus*," *Viator* 4 (1973), 435-57, and Hornsby, pp. 56-68.
- 3230 Geffrey alludes to the proverb "The child is as much like the father as if he had been spit out of his mouth."
- 3235 *tanry*. MS: *tavener* crossed out and corrected to *tanry*. The line means "until he is old enough to be apprenticed to the tanner's trade."
- 3239-40 Geffrey refers back to the insane notion that all the townspeople have a mouse for their mother (lines 2955-58).
- 3247 *he thought nat so*. MS: *he thought nat nat so*.
- 3287 *yit sith his departyng*. MS: *gift* crossed out after *sith*.
- 3300 On celidony, see note for line 2723; *On The Properties of Thingz* discusses the lore of rubies (pp. 839-40) and sapphires (pp. 869-71).
- 3327-28 On Geffrey's offer of "wager of battle," see note for line 3153.
- 3350 This line is recopied by mistake after line 3356. The first time the scribe wrote *a tale I shall yew tell*, the second time *a tale I shall yewe tell*; the difference in spelling *yew/yewe* suggests the copyist's flexible attitude toward final -e.
- 3364-65 The proverb runs something like "He who arrives last to dinner (the cook-pot) is served the worst."
- 3381 *we*. MS: *I*.
- 3392 *They wissched*. MS: *The wisshid*.
- 3416 *comand*. MS: *comyng*. Rhyme with *honde*.
- 3423 *hem*. MS: *hym*.

The Tale of Beryn

- 3425ff. By playing the fool, Geffrey has avoided entering any plea until he has heard all five complaints. He then pleads additional matter, a tactic known as confession and avoidance (*Black's Law Dictionary*, p. 369), which gives his client the advantage of being in the affirmative position.
- 3452 *therfor*. MS: *therfor*. See line 3457 for *heresofore*.
- 3462 The expression "drive the nail to the head" refers to increasing a victim's agony.
- 3466 *but fynde it cleane*. MS: *but cleane*.
- 3475 This compressed line might be expanded thus: "Nor can anyone play chess better than I, though I myself say so, who knows not half so much as my master."
- 3476 *Nowe how he lost*. MS: *Ne how he lost*.
- 3477 *went*. MS: *wend*.
- 3487 *to secke the Sepulker*. MS: *to se the the sepulkir*. Another *c/t* confusion.
- 3502 *this was the end*. MS: *this was end*.
- 3531 *failleth*. MS: *fallith*.
- 3552 *though ye sonil pry*. MS: *thought sonil pry*. Vipan (p. 199) suggested emending *pry* > *be* for the sake of the rhyme with *inquire*.
- 3565 The gage was a pawn given as security against the future delivery of a debt, while the pledge was usually a glove given as public acknowledgement of the debt.
- 3584 *he*. MS: *they*.
- 3594 *hem*. MS: *hym*.
- 3629 This proverbial expression is not as close to the Latin *Ars longa, vita brevis* as it is to the opening line of Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*: "The lyf so

Notes

short, the craft so long to lerne." Geffrey's altered form of the name "Sir Hanyball," here and in line 3619, seems to be mocking.

- 3637 *yit it is.* MS: *yit is.*
- 3656 The line combines two proverbial expressions, "wipe a man's nose" and "shave a man's beard," both implying the party has been bested.
- 3658 *They profered.* MS: *The proferd.* For pledge and gage, see note for line 3565 above.
- 3723 For the practice of necromancy, see Kickhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, pp. 151-75; and see line 339.
- 3751 For "borowes" or sureties, see note for lines 1876-81 above.
- 3761 *thre.* MS: *the.*
- 3769 *asyde.* MS: *a seyd.*
- 3777 The shaved head was the sign of a fool or lunatic.
- 3780 *they myght.* MS: *the myght.*
- 3795 *than.* MS: *that.*
- 3798-99 *first tho / To have.* MS: *first to / To have.*
- 3801 *i-passid.* MS: *& passid.*
- 3816 Beryn shouts "Out!" to raise the hue and cry; see note for line 2010 above.
- 3830-32 Customary law established that a weapon's owner was responsible for any injury inflicted with it; Pollock and Maitland, 1:54.
- 3855 Normally composed of twelve men, a jury might be doubled in size to twenty-four to decide cases of unusual importance, hence literally a "grand jury." Green, pp. 59-60, compares this to a "jury of attaint."
- 3866 *therof.* MS: *therof therof.*

The Tale of Beryn

- 3879 *they were.* MS: *the were.*
- 3912 *quod Beryn.* MS: *Beryn.*
- 3928 *cloth.* MS: *clooth.*
- 3930 *In tokyn.* MS: *I tokyn.*
- 3957 *with Beryn.* MS: *wit B.*
- 3981 *Ther wymmen.* MS: *This wymmen.*
- 3982 *as it was do.* MS: *at it was do.*
- 3987-90 Isope interprets Beryn's instinctive choice of the sword as a sign of well-bred nobility.
- 3993 *To cond him saff.* MS: *To cond his saff.* performed. MS: *perfomyd.*
- 4002 *Thurh the wit of Geffrey, it fil so.* MS: *Thurh the wit of Geffrey that ech day did hym lere it fil so.* The phrase *that ech day did hym lere* has been imported from line 4006, by mistake, though the corruption probably runs deeper.
- 4013 "Except the town's citizens, who were the source of falsehood." Furnivall (p. 120) ignored the mid-line caesura and lack of capitalization in the manuscript to take *the town of falsehood* as a proper noun; hence "Falsetown" figures in his commentary as the name of the port city where Beryn encounters so much fraud.
- 4015 *were fawne.* MS: *fawne.* The word *were* is added in the manuscript's right margin.

The Latin colophon forming a couplet at the bottom of the last page of *The Tale of Beryn* can be translated "The name of the author presaging the chronicle of Rome, and of the translator, is a son of the Church of St. Thomas." Brown, "Journey's End," pp. 148-50, proposes that the author might have been a monk charged with the care of the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket in the cathedral's Trinity Chapel, which was almost universally called the St. Thomas Chapel, hence "*Filius ecclesie Thomae.*" The wording suggests that the clerical poet's name may also have been Thomas. Therefore worth noting is Green's suggestion, pp. 61-62 n. 49, that the author was Thomas Astell, rector of St. Thomas the Martyr in Winchelsea.

Glossary

Ah	cut lot, portion, toss
afore before	
after afterwards	degre(e) social station
agayns, ageyns against	deme judge
anon at once	drad feared; dreaded
arlyht correctly	droughe withdrawn
atte at the	dyght prepared
awised advised; observed	
axe(d) ask(ed)	ech each
ay forever	echom(e) each one, everyone
aye again	efft again
be by	efft ageyn once again
Benedicite Bless you, Bless us	eke also, too
bet(t) better	emy any
beth be	ere ear
bot but	estates social ranks
but unless	everich every
butte bur the, only by the	ey(en) eye(s)
certes certainly, surely	fende devil
cher(e) cheer	fer far
cherher (e) look, expression	fere companion; in fere together
chese choose	forsoth indeed, truly
cleped called, named; clepest call	fre generous
clergye education	fro from
clerk clergymen	ful very
comenly usually	gaf(fe) gave
con(ne) can, know	gan began, did
coud(e) could, knew how	gentillesse nobility
couth knew how, understood	go walk
craftyly artfully	gon began

Glossary

good	goods, cargo, merchandise	list	like, please, prefer, desire
grannt(e)	mercy	load	land
gynne	begin	lore	learning
hed	head	lyk	like
hele	health	maryner(e)	sailor, seaman
hem	them, themselves	meve	move
hemself	themselves	meyne	company, crew
her	here; their	mo	more
here	hear; their	moder	mother
hight(e)	said, named	morowe	morning
hir	her; their	mow(e)	may, can
hit	it	mut	must
hole	health	myght	might
hond(e)	hand	mynd	memory
honestly	courteously, decently	nas	was not
hosteler	innkeeper	nat	nor
huch	which	naught	nothing
hyt	it	ne	not, nor
ilch,	ilk	nere	near; were not
inowe,	inowgh(e)	ner(e)-the-latter	nevertheless
iwis	indeed, certainly	no	not
jape	joke	nol(d)	would not
komne	can, know	noon	no, none
kynde	nature; natural	not(e)	don't know
lap	garment-flap, lapel	nye	nearly
las	less	nygh(e)	near
lat	let	nys	isn't
lere	teach	o	one
lese	lose	of	off, from
leve	believe	ones	once, at once
lever(e)	rather	onto	unto
lewde	low-born, ignorant	op(p)on	upon
lich	like	or	before
lightly	quickly	parde	by God
		plase	place

Glossary

pleyne complain	then than
pleynt(e) complaint	thens thence
prevy, privy secret, secure	there where
prively privately, secretly	thewe thou
	tho then; those
quod said	thogh although
quyte repay	thurh through
rede plan, scheme	thurhout(e) throughout
	thyn(e) your
sad sober, sincere	to too; two
saff save, except	toder (the) other
save except	tofore, toforn before, previously
schal shall	togider together
sche she	toke gave
sech(e) seek	tone (the) one
se(e) sea; see	too two
seide said	toom (the) one
sey saw	trew honest
shul shall, should	trouthe, trouth honesty
siker certain, sure	trow(e) believe
sikerlich(e) certainly	tydinge(s) news
sith since, then	usage habit
sithens since	vailleth avail
sithes times	vertu virtue
sone soon	wanne won
sore sorely	war aware
soth truth	wele well
sotill subtle	wend(e) go
spake spoke	weren were
sweven dream	wers worse
syn since	whan when
	whatso whatever
take give	where whether
tale account, words, testimony	wherfor therefore
than then	whilom once
that what	wich which
the you; v. thrive	
thel they	

Glossary

wight person
wist(e) know, knew
wit(te) reason, wisdom
wol will
wold would
wo(e) woe
wood insane
worche work
wote know

yaf gave
ye you
yee yes
yen eyes
yeurs yours
yeven given
yew(e) you
yewre your
yf(f) if
yif if
yis yes
yit yet
ynouhe enough
yowe you