

John Lydgate

The Siege of Thebes

Preface

This edition of *The Siege of Thebes*, like Lydgate's poem, is a companion piece, and follows directly on from Lydgate's *Troy Book*. In preparing the edition I have followed the same principles that I used in compiling the selections from *Troy Book*, published earlier in the Middle English Texts Series (1998). *The Siege* retells the tragic history dramatized and recounted so powerfully to the classical world by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Statius. My aim in editing the text is to make the medieval version of the story accessible to students and generalist readers of Middle English and Renaissance literature. The EETS edition of *The Siege of Thebes* by Axel Erdmann made a great contribution early in the last century by rescuing Lydgate's poem from its sixteenth-century printed version. I want to offer a text that represents not just the best early manuscript but the best extant historical witness from Lydgate's cultural milieu and poetic audience.

Support for preparing this edition has come from the Department of English and the Institute for the Arts and Humanistic Studies at The Pennsylvania State University. The College of the Liberal Arts at Penn State granted me a sabbatical leave for the 1997–98 academic year, and I had the good fortune to spend it as a Visiting Fellow at Clare Hall, Cambridge, whose welcome and collegiality are cherished memories. My sincere thanks go to all those institutions. In studying Lydgate's poem, I have profited enormously from conversations with Derek Pearsall, Derek Brewer, A. C. Spearing, Jill Mann, Carol M. Meale, James Simpson, Carole Newlands, Scott-Morgan Straker, and Patrick Cheney. Some of the critical ideas that have shaped my understanding of *The Siege* and its influence were explored in lectures given at the Medieval Centre at the University of Bristol, the Medieval Graduate Seminar at the University of Cambridge, Clare Hall, the Clare Hall Women's Group, and the 1998 summer seminar on "The Artist in the Age of Imperial Culture" organized by my Penn State colleagues Patrick Cheney and Frederick de Armas. Stephen R. Reimer has offered advice and made information available from his own extensive research on the Lydgate canon, and I remain indebted to his learning and generosity. Participants in the Summer Seminar for College and University teachers on "Chaucer Ancient and Modern," sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, kindly read over the text, and I am indebted to Michael Fukuchi, Matthew Boyd Goldie, and Salwa Khoddam for their suggestions. I thank Russell Peck for encouraging this edition of *The Siege* and for his direction of the METS project. Alan Lupack, Russell Peck, Mara Amster, and Dana Symons have prepared this text for publication, and I am grateful for their efforts. In trying to trace the allusiveness and resonance of Lydgate's poem, I have been aided by the Glossorial Database for Chaucer, Gower, and the Chaucer Apocrypha developed

The Siege of Thebes

by Larry D. Benson and Joseph Wittig. I thank Pattee Library and the Rare Book Room at Penn State and the University Library at Cambridge for permission to consult materials in their holdings, and I gratefully acknowledge permission from the British Library to quote from MS Arundel 119. The National Endowment for the Humanities has provided substantial support for the production of this volume.

My students were the first audience for this book, even as it took shape, and I thank them for their suggestions and responses to my work in progress. I owe a profound debt to my research assistants for this project — Colin Fewer, Patricia Nickinson, and Danielle Smith — whose dedication, intelligence, and hard work have made this book possible. I want to thank Don Bialostosky, Head of the English Department, for his commitment of research support. My wife, Emily Grosholz, and our children, Benjamin, Robert, William, and Mary-Frances, have graciously accommodated another project on old books in the midst of their lives.

The Siege of Thebes

Introduction

John Lydgate's *The Siege of Thebes* (c. 1421–22) commands our interest for both its story and its place in late-medieval English literary culture. It is the only Middle English poetic text to recount the disastrous fratricidal struggle between Oedipus' sons Eteocles and Polynices as they strive to retain lordship over ancient Thebes. Lydgate consciously presents this story as an added Canterbury tale. Writing himself into the frametale of the Canterbury pilgrimage, he purports to tell the first tale on the return journey from Canterbury to Southwark. His tale is thus the structural counterpart to *The Knight's Tale*, while he is the equivalent to Chaucer's narrative persona. In addition, Lydgate situates his poem in the literary and cultural project of the vernacular *romans antiques*. Like the earlier French redactors of the classical stories of Thebes, Troy, and Rome, he recreates antiquity in the framework of medieval historiography, social conventions, and moral example. In particular, he fashions the Theban story as a mirror for princes, expounding the virtues a ruler should possess and illustrating the catastrophe that follows from neglecting those virtues. Finally, *The Siege of Thebes* reflects the problem of poetic authority and the political and ethical themes of Lydgate's poetic career in the 1420s, when he is writing as a Lancastrian propagandist and unofficial royal poet.

The story of Thebes came to late-medieval writers like Lydgate in two literary versions. Statius' classical epic, the *Thebaid*, begins with Oedipus' curse on his sons for mocking his blindness, and it traces the bitter rivalry that follows from their agreement to alternate kingship year by year, with one brother on the throne while the other is in exile. By lot, Eteocles becomes king for the first year, and Polynices withdraws, arriving eventually before the palace of King Adrastus in Argos. Tydeus, exiled for the accidental killing of his brother, arrives there on the same stormy night. The two heroes battle, reconcile when Adrastus intervenes, and soon marry Adrastus' daughters. At the end of the year, Tydeus goes to Thebes on Polynices' behalf to claim the throne. Eteocles refuses the demand and sends fifty men to ambush Tydeus on his return. Tydeus slays all but one of the attackers. Adrastus subsequently mobilizes other Greek kings and heroes to depose Eteocles. Their advance on Thebes is delayed, however, by a drought; Hypsipyle comes to their rescue, but at the cost of the infant Opheltes, who is killed by a serpent while Hypsipyle shows the army to water. Hypsipyle's story and the funeral games for Opheltes are two of Statius' narrative set pieces. When he resumes the main story, Statius focuses on the savage combat between the Thebans and the Greeks, particularly the deaths of the Argive heroes. In the culmination of the battles, Eteocles and Polynices kill each other, and

The Siege of Thebes

Creon assumes the throne. Creon's edict against burying the bodies of the combatants precipitates the final crisis of the poem. The Argive women seek redress at the altar of Clemency in Athens and persuade Theseus, as he returns from conquering the Amazons, to take up their cause. Theseus leaves immediately for Thebes and slays Creon; the poem ends with the Argive women reclaiming the bodies of their husbands and sons.

The first words of the *Thebaid* — "Fraternas acies" ("brotherly battle") — establish its theme and its dark vision of heroism and human motives. Statius portrays the struggle as an absolute will to power, and he stresses its extremity by remarking on how little is actually at stake: "nuda potestas / armavit fratres; pugna est de paupere regno" ("naked power / armed the brothers; their fight is over a beggarly kingdom" [1.150–51]). In his stoic, desire itself is distorted to power — "regendi / saevus amor" ("the fierce love / of ruling" [1.127–28]). Complementing this focus is a conscious rewriting of Virgil and of the hard-won optimism that the *Aeneid* brings to the twin ideals of moral heroism and empire. Where Aeneas struggles against the limits of fate, Statius' characters repeatedly break boundaries and limits, and even Jupiter must avert his eyes from the uncontrolled fury they set loose. Some readers of the *Thebaid* see a redemptive, triumphal ending in Theseus' reestablishment of order at the end, but others emphasize the repetition of violence and the final image of a battlefield strewn with corpses. For medieval readers, Thebes is prominent on the list of fallen ancient cities, and it is the shadowy partner of heroic Troy.

A second, amplified version of the Theban story appears with the anonymous Old French poem *Le Roman de Thèbes* (c. 1150), written for the Plantagenet court of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine. This version adds the story of Oedipus to the Theban narrative. It thus answers the opening question of Statius' epic — where to begin in the cycles of Theban violence? (1.2–14) — by imposing a sense of natural order. Oedipus' birth, rescue, and childhood with King Polybus lead to his killing Laius, solving the Sphinx's riddle, and marrying Jocasta. Oedipus' discovery of his patricide and incest leads, in turn, to the struggle between Eteocles and Polynices, and their deaths introduce the final sequence of events, as Theseus intervenes to depose Creon and reestablish order. Besides amplifying the story, *Le Roman de Thèbes* relocates the narrative to a medieval chivalric framework by adding romance adventures, expanding the number of councils, and introducing the episode of Daire le Roux, which sets the claims of feudal law against those of courtly mercy. Prose redactions were made from *Le Roman de Thèbes* in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. As Léopold Constans observes, these redactions appear in universal histories that begin with the creation of the world and connect pagan, Jewish, and Christian history in a single time scheme.¹ The *Histoire ancienne*

¹ *La légende d'Œdipe: Étudiée dans l'antiquité au moyen âge et dans les temps modernes, en particulier dans le Roman de Thèbes, texte français du XIIe siècle* (1881; rpt. Geneva: Slatkine, 1974), p. 315.

Introduction

jusqu'à César (c. 1208–13), modeled on Orosius' *Historiarum adversariorum paganos libri VII*, contains the material of the vernacular *romans antiques* and carries the chronicle forward to Roman history. In the early fourteenth century, Ranulph Higden produces an Orosian universal history in his *Polychronicon*, which John Trevisa translates into English in the period 1385–87 and a second translator renders in approximately 1425. Lydgate acknowledges this tradition of universal history by connecting Amphion's building of Thebes to "the tyme of worthy Josué" (line 188) and dating Adrastus' burial at the end of the poem to four hundred years before the founding of Rome (lines 4623–25).

Lydgate's English predecessors encountered the Theban story in both its classical and vernacular forms, and used it for thematic effect in their own works. Chaucer sets *Anelida and Arcite* in the interim after Creon has taken power and before Theseus arrives to depose him. The "broche of Thebes" (line 245) is the symbol for desire, confusion, and catastrophe in Chaucer's "Complaint of Mars." In *Troilus and Criseyde*, Pandarus first approaches Criseyde as she and two other women listen to a reading of "the geste / Of the siege of Thebes" (2.83–84); and he asks, with more irony than he intends, whether the story is about love. Later in the poem, Cassandra rehearses the key events of the Theban story (5.1485–1512) in explicating Troilus' dream, and the *Troilus* manuscripts add a twelve-line Latin summary of Statius' *Thebaid*. In John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (1.1977–2020), Capaneus' challenge to divine power and his spectacular death before the city, one of Statius' most compelling episodes, serves to illustrate the sin of pride. In the fragmentary *Alisaunder* (c. 1340–70), Philip of Macedon, Alexander's father, destroys Thebes.

Lydgate knew Statius' version of the Theban story well before he began writing *The Siege of Thebes*. In his Prologue to the *Troy Book*, a poem begun in 1412 and completed in 1420, he names Statius and mentions notable episodes from the *Thebaid* such as the rivalry of Eteocles and Polynices, the death of Tydeus, Oedipus' weeping, and the struggling twin flames in the fire that burns the brothers' bodies (Prol. 225–44). In *The Siege of Thebes*, Lydgate even seems to translate the Statian phrase "de paupere regno" as "this litil pore regioun" (line 1992). Lydgate's source lies, however, not in Statius but in the vernacular tradition of redacting classical texts. For Lydgate's poem, the two most important prose redactions of *Le Roman de Thèbes* are the *Roman de Edipus* and the *Hystoire de Thebes*. Modern scholars regard the *Roman de Edipus*, perhaps in a version somewhat different from the extant text, as Lydgate's prime source. Narrative details and parallels in phrasing suggest that Lydgate worked directly from this version of the story and that, when he refers to "myn auctour," he has in mind the anonymous author of the *Roman de Edipus*.²

As in the *Troy Book*, Lydgate augments the story he inherited by adding moralizations, advice, and mythological information. The moralizations and advice are his independent

² See the explanatory note to line 199 for an exception.

The Siege of Thebes

additions, and they employ commonplaces on behavior, values, and governance that the story at times profoundly complicates. The mythological information in Lydgate's poem comes chiefly from Boccaccio's *Genealogiae deorum gentilium*. Boccaccio explains the origin of Thebes, the wedding of Oedipus and Jocasta, and the backgrounds behind Tydeus, Hypsipyle, and Lycurgus. For Oedipus, Lydgate also invokes Seneca's tragedy *Oedipus* and Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*. In line with the conventions of universal history, Lydgate alludes to the Old and New Testaments, both to add examples to the Theban story and to expound its meaning. Alan Renouf argues that Lydgate changed the *Roman de Edipus* in five principal ways: "he rectifies the often defective logic of the French; he presents classical antiquity in a much more appealing light; he formulates a lesson for the conduct of rulers; he turns the ancient legend into an English nationalistic narrative; and he creates in the person of Tydeus a hero for the story."¹ Later critics, particularly Derek Pearsall, dispute Renouf's claim that Lydgate approaches antiquity in a humanistic rather than medieval spirit.² Still, it remains clear that Lydgate engaged rather than reproduced his narrative source and that he sought to bring the Theban story into his own interpretive framework.

Chaucer's presence figures as large in *The Siege of Thebes* as the sources Lydgate transformed and added. Although the Prologue recreates the pilgrimage as a frametale, Lydgate confuses and conflates details about Chaucer's pilgrims.³ After the Prologue, as Pearsall notes, he makes a greater effort to maintain the fiction of a pilgrimage than Chaucer does in any comparable tale.⁴ At the end of the poem's action, as Theseus enters to challenge Creon's edict against burial, Lydgate explicitly links his poem to the beginning of The Knight's Tale (line 4524) and incorporates numerous textual allusions. The inspiration and approach of Lydgate's poem may also lie in Chaucer. In the scene between Pandarus and Criseyde at the beginning of Book 2 of *Troilus and Criseyde*, Chaucer distinguishes the vernacular and Latin versions of the Theban story. Criseyde knows the French romance version because she mentions the inclusion of the Oedipus story: "This romauence is of Thebes that we rede; / And we han herd how that kyng Layus deyde / Thorough Edippus his sone, and al that dede" (2.100–02). Pandarus, by contrast, knows Statius' classical epic because he mentions its disposition in twelve books, which does not occur in *Le Roman de Thèbes* or its prose redactions: "For herof ben ther maked booke twelve" (2.108). Lydgate presents Criseyde's rather than Pandarus' version of the story.

¹ *The Poetry of John Lydgate* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 119. See also Friedrich Brie, "Mittelalter und Antike bei Lydgate," *Englische Studien* 64 (1929), 261–301.

² Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1970), p. 154; and "Lydgate as Innovator," *Modern Language Quarterly* 53 (1992), 12.

³ See the explanatory notes for lines 28–35.

⁴ *John Lydgate*, p. 152.

Introduction

Apart from its fictional premise as a Canterbury tale, *The Siege of Thebes* directly engages The Knight's Tale as a literary precursor, and it continues Lydgate's ambivalent relation to Chaucer as a master and a rival. A. C. Spearing proposes that Lydgate may have thought that The Knight's Tale endorsed war and violence as means of resolving political and personal problems. Consequently, says Spearing, "Lydgate may well have persuaded himself that he was 'completing' his predecessor's 'truncated' work, not just by supplying the absent beginnings of the narrative of Thebes, but by making explicit a moral significance that was left implicit by Chaucer, and that demanded clarification."¹ Rosamund Allen, following a contemporary trend that interprets the theme of order in Chaucer's poem skeptically, proposes a more direct confrontation and a radical rewriting of The Knight's Tale: "What Lydgate does in the *Siege* is to untie the knots of Chaucer's narrative, where Theseus razes Thebes and contains its evil in the diplomatic union of Palamon and Emelye, by letting loose the corruption and depravity of Thebes so carefully contained and apparently eliminated at the opening of *The Canterbury Tales* in the Knight's tale of joy after woe."²

To engage The Knight's Tale as a poetic text is necessarily to engage Chaucerian authority. In his translation and adaptation of Boccaccio's *Teseida*, Chaucer introduced a new poetic form that synthesized classical and medieval, romance and epic genres. Chaucer's fourteenth- and fifteenth-century readers recognized the form as distinctly his own (Boccaccio was not identified as Chaucer's source until Thomas Tyrwhitt's late-eighteenth-century edition of *The Canterbury Tales*). Just as Lydgate's *Troy Book* has to position itself with respect to the formal and thematic innovations of *Troilus and Criseyde*, so *The Siege of Thebes* must deal with Chaucer's authorial imprint in The Knight's Tale. In both cases, Lydgate follows the same strategy of overt deference and silent correction. Lydgate's praise of Chaucer in the Prologue to *The Siege of Thebes* (lines 39–57), marked by the marginal gloss "Chaucer," follows the commonplaces he had established earlier in *Troy Book*: Chaucer is the flower of British poets, who has embellished and refined the rude native tongue, joining rhetoric and eloquence in a way that expresses the substance and not merely the deceptive surface of his historical topics. As in *Troy Book*, this homage is doubly inscribed, for the language that offers praise of Chaucer is strikingly rich in allusions to lines and phrases throughout the Chaucer canon — Lydgate praises Chaucer in the language of Chaucer's poetry.

¹ "Lydgate's Canterbury Tale: The *Siege of Thebes* and Fifteenth-Century Chaucerianism," in *Fifteenth-Century Studies: Recent Essays*, ed. Robert F. Yeager (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1984), p. 352; Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 84.

² "The *Siege of Thebes*: Lydgate's Canterbury Tale," in *Chaucer and Fifteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. Julia Boffey and Janet Cowen (London: King's College, Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 1991), pp. 129–30.

The Siege of Thebes

Behind the rhetoric and gestures of deference there remains, however, a dimension of poetic rivalry and assertion, which defines not only Lydgate's own poetic standing but much of Chaucer's reputation through the Renaissance. Lydgate's competition is expressed obliquely by the errors he makes in describing the pilgrims and directly by his supplying the master narrative of Thebes on which *The Knight's Tale* depends for its full meaning. *The Siege of Thebes* brings back the history that *The Knight's Tale* seeks to escape first by foreshortening the events that lead up to Theseus' attack on Thebes and then by asserting an overarching providence in the First Mover speech at the end of the story. In this context, it is perhaps not by chance that Lydgate praises Chaucer at the opening of the poem but does not actually name him until the end (line 4501). As Pearsall, Spearing, and other modern critics have pointed out, Lydgate's apparent subordination to Chaucer makes possible a kind of imitation notable for its self-confidence and assurance.

Most scholars place the date of composition for *The Siege of Thebes* immediately after *Troy Book*, the ambitious verse translation of Guido delle Colonne's *Historia destructionis Troiae* commissioned by Henry V to preserve the memory of chivalric virtues and to create an English counterpart to the authoritative Latin and French versions of the Troy story. Astronomical references in the Prologue to *The Siege of Thebes* suggest a date of 27 April 1421 for the fictional return pilgrimage, while a verbal echo of the Treaty of Troyes, Henry's great political achievement, gives an apparent *terminus ante quem* before Henry's death on 31 August 1422.⁹ It has long been held that *The Siege of Thebes* was written without patronage, though the suggestion has been made that the poem may have been written for Henry's brother, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester.¹⁰ As a mirror for princes, the poem carries out Lydgate's duties as a Lancastrian propagandist and unofficial court poet. At the same time, his strategy of narrative and moralization begins to reach beyond court and monastic circles.¹¹ The later manuscript and printing history of the poem shows its circulation among gentry and merchants.

Whatever its formal ties of patronage, *The Siege of Thebes* is a poem strongly rooted in contemporary politics. Pearsall notes that Lydgate is the first English poet to align his work directly with royal policy, and he argues that *The Siege of Thebes* is Lydgate's most political

⁹ See Explanatory Notes to lines 1–64 and 4703 for scholarship on dating the poem.

¹⁰ Selections from *Hoccleve*, ed. M. C. Seymour (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. xxix n20, argues that no fifteenth-century poet wrote a work of the scope of *The Siege of Thebes* without a patron in mind; he also points out that Lydgate's *Epithalamium for the Duke of Gloucester*, written at the same time as the presumed date of composition for *The Siege*, compares Gloucester to Tydeus (lines 138–40). Paul M. Clogan, "Lydgate and the Roman Antiqua," *Florilegium* 11 (1992), 12, accepts Seymour's argument.

¹¹ John Ganim, *Style and Consciousness in Middle English Narrative* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 108.

Introduction

poem.¹² Walter F. Schirmer holds that Lydgate expounds his position on two urgent issues — the relation of rulers to the people and the question of war and peace.¹³ Not only Lydgate's moralizations but also the narrative action address the need for good governance and a cohesive body politic. The scenes in which Adrastus seeks council are a pointed contrast, for instance, to the false deliberation over which Eteocles presides. Though the Greek kings can pledge their fortunes in common cause for abstract principles of truth and justice, Thebes is a city in which political tensions and divided loyalties are barely contained by a devious autocrat. Many readers find in the idealized portrayal of Tydeus an approximation, if not full identification, with Henry V, and some see the debate in Adrastus' camp between young and old over pursuing war as an allegory of English peace and war factions in the Hundred Years' War. At the end of *The Siege of Thebes*, as at the end of *Troy Book*, Lydgate extols the virtues of peace, but he goes beyond his earlier elegiac lament for the destruction of Greek and Trojan chivalry. War, he warns now, is a leveller of social estates and cultural institutions altogether: "in the werre is non excepcloun / Of heigh estat nor lowh condicoun" (lines 4645–46). The violent strife between brothers over succession is in some respects a figure for the political conflict between England and France. The rivalry between Henry's brothers, Humphrey and John, Duke of Bedford, after his death may explain the poem's continued popularity in the fifteenth century.¹⁴

Modern interpretations of *The Siege of Thebes* divide between those that stress the coherence of Lydgate's moral history and those that find contradictions within it. Robert Ayers establishes the dominant critical position, arguing that the "moral postulates" of love and truth are central to the poem, while the plot serves to illustrate these ethical principles. This focus in turn confers thematic and formal unity: "The unity of *The Siege of Thebes*, then, centers in the moral idea, and no episode, no characterization, and no tonal feature of the poem is extraneous to this essential moral purpose of the plot pattern; and despite the social tone which pervades the poem, this moral unity is facilitated by a teleological tendency, always present, but especially obvious and overt in the conclusion (4658–716)" (p. 474). Lydgate's philosophical grounding is, for Ayers, essentially Boethian. Love, in his view, "is indispensable to the social order and the art of government," truth is the moral ground of chivalric virtue

¹² "Lydgate as Innovator," p. 15.

¹³ *John Lydgate: A Study in the Culture of the XVth Century*, trans. Ann E. Kepp (London: Methuen; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), p. 64.

¹⁴ Robert W. Ayers, "Medieval History, Moral Purpose, and the Structure of Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes*," *PMLA* 73 (1958), 468; and Paul M. Clogan, "Imaging the City of Thebes in Fifteenth-Century England," in *Acta Commentar Neo-Latini Hofiensis: Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies*, ed. Rhoda Schnur (Tempe, AZ: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1994), p. 162.

The Siege of Thebes

and political deliberation, and the moral application of the poem is "social and civil rather than personal and religious."¹⁵ Ayers describes the chief characters of the poem as moral types. Amphion represents the ideal king, Adrastus "the practically good king," and Eteocles the bad king (p. 472). Polynices is "the inglorious knight of ungentle and mean character," while Tydeus is "a veritable catalogue of knightly virtues" and "the great exemplar of the power of truth."¹⁶

Subsequent critics have expanded a number of these points. Pearsall says, "Lydgate's prime interest in stories is thus in destroying them as imagined realities so as to reveal more clearly the hidden truth that is the justification for their existence."¹⁷ Renoir offers an idealistic view of the relations of kings, nobles, and commons bound by love.¹⁸ Lois Ebin finds the moral significance of the story in "the opposition of the word and the sword," and she takes the myth of Amphion's building the walls of Thebes by music as a model of kingship through art rather than force.¹⁹ Schirmer observes a correlation between the moral life of Lydgate's characters and proverbial expressions, and proposes that Tydeus is the real hero of the poem (p. 63). Hanspeter Schelp emphasizes the proximity of love and truth in chivalric values.²⁰ Though it may differ in emphases, this critical tradition consistently regards the poem's ideology as the source of its meaning.

Revisionist readings of *The Siege of Thebes* accept the claim that its ideology is paramount, but they find inconsistencies and profound contradictions in the principles expressed. Allen, for example, reads the poem as a negative exemplum of weak or evil kings, and she challenges the contention that the social and political spheres are the main areas of moral significance: "The moral theme of *The Siege of Thebes* is the responsibility of one individual to another, and the fragility of human security when it is based on such unreliable agents" (pp. 123, 137). Boethius' harmonizing of the physical, social, and individual levels, expressed consummately in Book 2, meter 8 of *The Consolation of Philosophy* (the rationale for Theseus' ending speech in *The Knight's Tale*), underwrites the theme of love as a cohesive political force. But Spearing challenges Ayers' description of the essentially Boethian character of the poem: "Boethius, so effective a mediator in *The Knight's Tale* between pagan story and Christian narrator, is absent from *The Siege of Thebes*, and there pagan and Christian grind jarringly

¹⁵ Ayers, pp. 466, 473.

¹⁶ Ayers, p. 473.

¹⁷ "Chaucer and Lydgate," in *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer*, ed. Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 48.

¹⁸ *The Poetry of John Lydgate*, p. 127.

¹⁹ *John Lydgate* (Boston: Twayne, 1985), p. 53.

²⁰ *Exemplarische Romane im Mittelenglischen* (Göttingen: Vandenboek & Ruprecht, 1967), p. 225.

Introduction

against each other."²¹ James Simpson reads the poem back through The Knight's Tale as "a powerful, prudential admonition concerning the treacherousness of history" and points out the recurrent disparity between the "bureaucratic" wisdom expressed in public deliberations over war and the intrinsic values of chivalry, which cannot abandon violence.²² In these terms, Lydgate's urging peace through the example of Thebes inevitably contradicts the values of the princes and aristocrats whom he addresses.

The tensions of *The Siege of Thebes* may lie beyond its moral and political vision. Though a significant portion of the poem is devoted to moralization and sententious proverbs, these pronouncements often stand at a significant distance from the narrative itself. One example is the moralization of the Oedipus story, which ends the First Part of the poem. Lydgate eschews the tragic theme of fate and human choice that interested classical writers, and he casts the story instead as an illustration of what follows from failing to honor one's father and mother. In this separation of story from moral sentence, he has important predecessors. In *The Canterbury Tales*, The Nun's Priest's Tale famously demonstrates the problems of interpretation. Closer to Lydgate perhaps in its didactic method, Gower's *Confessio Amantis* frequently offers moralizations that oddly suit the tales they presumably explain, and recent readers have begun to reevaluate Gower's practice as an ethical poet. In *Troy Book*, it is clear that Lydgate came to understand the complexities of his narrative as he wrote the story. Informing values such as prudence collapse under the weight of all they are supposed to signify, and in many respects the Trojan foundational myth discredits the chivalric values it ostensibly defines and celebrates.

In *The Siege of Thebes*, the key values of love and truth are challenged more often than exemplified by the narrative. Lydgate may extoll the "inward love" (line 280) of a people for their prince in ways thoroughly consistent with the political themes of Gower's Prologue to *Confessio Amantis*, and he may prophesy in the end that "love and pees in hertys shal awake" (line 4698), but love does not operate as either erotic desire or charity in his story. The scene in which Tydeus is nursed to health by Lycurgus' daughter in a garden offers the prospect of a sexual encounter, as in courtly romance, only to affirm Tydeus' allegiance to brotherhood and domesticity. Earlier, his sudden reversal from rivalry to solidarity with Polynices had followed Statius' example of depicting their friendship as a perverse brotherhood. Hypsipyle saves the parched Greek army out of pity, the great aristocratic virtue in Chaucer, but her gesture costs the life of Lycurgus' infant son. At the end of the poem, when Polynices is moved by "compassioun" (line 4281) and "love" (line 4287) to remove his spear from Eteocles' body,

²¹ "Lydgate's Canterbury Tale," p. 356.

²² "'Dysemol daies and fatal hours': 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 Press, 1997), p. 16.

The Siege of Thebes

his brother uses the opportunity to slay him treacherously: "His brother smoot unwarily to the herte" (line 4292). There is no equivalent to the scene in Statius where Argia and Antigone tell Creon how and why they have defied his injunction against burial: "'ego corpus,' 'ego ignes,' / 'me pietas,' 'me duxit amor'" ("I brought the body," "but I the fire," / "I was led by affection," "I by love" [12.458-59]).

Like love, truth proves an impossible value to maintain in Lydgate's narrative. Truth means not just an accurate report of facts and circumstances (such as Oedipus' real identity) but, more important, a pledge, agreement, or promise of fidelity. Lydgate holds that truth in the latter sense is the "chief pyler" (line 1726) sustaining a king: "Trouthe shulde longe to a kyng, / Of his word not be variable / But pleyn and hool as a centre stable" (lines 1722-24). Yet truth here and elsewhere in *The Siege of Thebes* refers to the agreement between Eteocles and Polynices to alternate kingship year by year. It is the betrayal of this pledge that persuades the Greek kings to join Adrastus and his sons-in-law to attack Thebes. But seen critically, the "trouthe" that the Greek heroes defend is in fact an impossible political arrangement. At the beginning of the *Thebaid* (1.123-43) Statius remarks that the plan is doomed, and he notes that it is the only bond (*pietas* 1.142) between the brothers. Alternating kingship does not guarantee stability or peace; it does not resolve the dispute between the claimants but only defers it. The deepest hope, in either Statian exile or the romance *aventure* that Lydgate and medieval writers accentuate, is that one of the royal claimants will die in his year of exile and thereby settle the question of succession.

Truth, as an ethical and political value, ignores and obscures the real crises of the poem, which are repetition and genealogical disruption from one generation to another. Oedipus' obdurate pride at Polybus' court ("so ynlly surquydows," line 471), for example, is the same quality that leads him to slay Laius and that he bequeathes to his sons — their "pompous surquedye" (line 1076), with its ultimate source in Lucifer (line 4661). The battle between Tydeus and Polynices over the wretched shelter of Adrastus' porch repeats in miniature the struggle for kingship in impoverished Thebes. Tydeus battles the fifty knights sent by Eteocles to ambush him in the same place where Oedipus defeats the Sphinx, thereby connecting intellectual and physical struggle, verbal and political treachery. Throughout Lydgate's poem, kingdoms are subject to the vicissitudes of succession. Laius is without issue at the beginning, and he chooses to have no heir rather than risk being slain by his son. Polybus adopts Oedipus because he has no heir. Adrastus resolves the quarrel between Tydeus and Polynices, and then divides his kingdom between them in order to assure orderly succession. Lycurgus loses his heir when his son dies in Hypsipyle's care. The deaths of Eteocles and Polynices leave Thebes without a ruler, so Creon, who "hadde no title by descent" (line 4389), assumes power in the destitute city only to die at Theseus' hands. The final event of Lydgate's poem is not the burial of the dead, as in Statius, but the death of Adrastus, sunken into age and despair at the loss of his companions.

Introduction

The narrative of *The Siege of Thebes* thus calls into question the principles that it is supposedly designed to illustrate. As in *Troy Book*, Lydgate finds that the informing values cannot contain the subversive power of his story. The poem whose action opens with Amphion constructing the walls of Thebes ends with two versions of how the walls are destroyed. If prudence fails to outwit fortune, chance, and fate in the Troy story, Thebes offers a tale in which the perverse fidelity of human motives produces disaster. Eteocles never wavers in his resolve to retain power. Polynices, for whom Tydeus and Adrastus come to speak, continues to press his claim. Though Amphiorax foresees his death and the destruction of the Greeks, he can neither avert his fate nor persuade his companions to change theirs. Tydeus remains unswerving in his devotion to Polynices' claims, from his embassy to Eteocles to his rejection of peace before the battle. Jocasta strives to find some ground of accommodation, but, as Simpson points out, "The space for rational, politically prudent action is, then, radically limited in Lydgate's poem" (p. 27). Chance intervenes in Jocasta's peace mission, as the tigers escape and are killed, to force the violent resolution. This last event, like Lamedon's courtesy to Jason in *Troy Book*, is the remote cause of enormous catastrophe. But it differs in that the main characters have already chosen their course of action. The "trouthe" at the center of Lydgate's narrative is, in the end, a perverse loyalty to a bad decision.

The Siege of Thebes is preserved in thirty-one manuscripts and several early printed editions (see Bibliography). In the colophons of some textual witnesses, the title *Siege* is replaced by *Destruction*, and Simpson argues for the latter as the poem's proper title (p. 14 n1). In the poem's literary tradition, however, *Destruction* is both a description of the action and an apparent title.²² Lydgate seems to use *Siege* as the title in his *Fall of Princes*: "For in the siege of Thebes ye may it reede" (1.3724). For consistency and convenience, *Siege* is retained in the present edition. Lydgate's autograph manuscript of the poem has not survived, but two early manuscripts (BL Arundel 119 and Bodley 776) date from a decade or so after the poem's supposed composition. *The Siege of Thebes* circulated in a number of literary contexts. The poem is found with *Troy Book* in three manuscripts (Cambridge, Trinity College MS O.5.2; Bodleian Digby 230; and BL Royal 18. D.ii, which has the only extant cycle of illuminations, added in the sixteenth century). It appears with *The Canterbury Tales* in five manuscripts (BL Additional 5140; Oxford, Christ Church MS 152; BL Egerton MS 2864; Longleat MS 257; University of Texas MS 143) and with Chaucer's shorter poems and the *Siege of Jerusalem* in another (Coventry, Corporate Record Office, MS Acc. 325/1). It also appears with Thomas Hoccleve's *De regimine principum* (BL Additional 18632) and with Vegetius' *De re militari* (Bodleian MS Laud misc. 416, dated 1459). It is the sole text in eleven manuscripts (BL Arundel 119; Bodleian MS 776; Bodleian Laud misc. 557; Boston Public Library MS

²² Constans (1974), p. 339.

The Siege of Thebes

f.med.94; Cambridge University Library, Additional MSS 2707, 3137, 6864; Lambeth Palace 742; Oxford, Saint John's College 266; Prince Duleep Singh's MS; and Yale University, Beinecke MS 661). The number of extant witnesses and the testimony of wills and letters indicate that the poem existed in many more copies than those that have survived.

The earliest manuscripts of *The Siege of Thebes* reflect its aristocratic audience. Arundel 119 has the coat of arms of William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, who married Alice Chaucer, Geoffrey Chaucer's granddaughter, in the early 1430s. Carol M. Meale proposes that this manuscript may have been copied at Bury St. Edmunds in a center organized by Lydgate's monastery to prepare and circulate his work, and she suggests that Alice Chaucer may have been responsible for commissioning it.²⁴ BL Royal 18.D.ii was written for Sir William Herbert and his second wife, Anne Devereux, as a gift either to Henry VI or Edward IV.²⁵ Bodley 776, dated 1430–40 and containing only *The Siege of Thebes*, once carried illumination on its opening folio.²⁶ Digby 230 is similarly illuminated. In the 1430s, Stephen Doddesham copied *The Siege of Thebes* three times (Beinecke MS 661, Boston Public Library MS f.med.94, and Cambridge Additional MS 3137), probably on private commission while he was in commercial book production before entering religious life as a Carthusian monk; each of these manuscripts had a different exemplar.²⁷ Coventry, Corporation Record Office, MS 325/1 is probably from the London booktrade as well.²⁸

By mid-century, *The Siege of Thebes* circulated widely among country gentry. In 1463 John Baret of Bury bequeathed a copy of his "boke with the Sege of Thebes in englysh."²⁹ John Paston III mentions his sister's copy of the poem in a letter from 1472. Cambridge, Trinity College MS O.5.2, produced in Norfolk, bears the coats of arms of the Knevet and Thwaites families.³⁰ Bodleian MS. Lat. misc. c.66, the commonplace book of Humphrey Newton of

²⁴ "Reading Women's Culture in Fifteenth-Century England: The Case of Alice Chaucer," in *Medievalitas: Reading the Middle Ages*, ed. Piero Boitani and Anna Torti (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 1996), pp. 92–93.

²⁵ Kathleen L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390–1490*, 2 vols., vol. 6 of *A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles* (London: Harvey Miller, 1996), 2:282, 284.

²⁶ Axel Erdmann and Eilert Ekwall, eds. *Lydgate's Siege of Thebes*, 2 vols., EETS o.s. 108, 125 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co.; Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society, 1911–30), 2:43.

²⁷ A. S. G. Edwards, "Beinecke MS 661 and Early Fifteenth-Century English Manuscript Production," *Yale University Library Gazette* 66 (1991), 187.

²⁸ A. I. Doyle and George Pace, "A New Chaucer Manuscript," *PMLA* 83 (1968), 25.

²⁹ Eleanor P. Hammond, "Lydgate's Prologue to the Story of Thebes," *Anglia* 36 (1912), 362.

³⁰ Gisela Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Middle English Romances* (Munich: W. Fink, 1976), p. 88.

Introduction

Pownall, Cheshire, records the opening lines of *The Siege of Thebes*.¹¹ Longleat MS 257 may have been written at Hempton Priory in Norfolk.¹² Notations in the manuscripts show its continued ownership and circulation in the sixteenth century. The owners include a priory of Benedictine nuns at Amesbury, Wiltshire (BL Additional 18632) and the Bridgettine House at Syon, Middlesex (Bodleian Laud Misc. 416).¹³ Lydgate's poem inspired a prose redaction around 1450 — the *Sege of Thebes* (Bodleian MS Rawl. misc. D.82) — which highlights the epic portions of the battle at the expense of chronicle and romance features. The Middle English author does to *The Siege of Thebes* what the author of the *Roman de Edipus* did to *Le Roman de Thèbes*, but he brings the story closer to Statius than to the *romans antiques*. In his Epilogue to *The Historie of Jason* (1477), William Caxton mentions "the siege of thebes" as well as "Stacius" and Boccaccio as sources of information for Jason's exploits.¹⁴

Wynkyn de Worde first printed *The Siege of Thebes* before 1500 (STC 17031), using Oxford, St. John's College 266, as his copy-text. The manuscript is dated 1476 and was owned by the London mercer Roger Thorney, who is also mentioned in verses appended to the end of *The Siege of Thebes* in Bodleian MS Laud. Misc. 557.¹⁵ John Stow, who copied the poem in 1558 (BL Additional MS 29729), printed *The Siege* in his 1561 edition of Chaucer's Works (STC 5075–76). Stow's edition relies on de Worde's for the first four hundred lines, then turns to a different branch of the manuscript tradition for the rest of the text. *The Siege* appears at the end of Stow's volume after a collection of Chaucer's shorter poems, Chaucer apocrypha, "Chaucers woordes vnto his owne Scrivener," and the colophon: "Thus endeth the workes of Geffray Chaucer." Stow's text was reprinted by Thomas Speght in his 1598 (STC 5077) edition of Chaucer's poetry and in the 1602 (STC 5080) and 1687 (STC C3736) reissues, with the same sequence of shorter poems, apocrypha, "Adam Scrivener," the colophon, and *The Siege of Thebes*. John Urry's 1721 edition of Chaucer follows the same general pattern at the end but omits Lydgate's poem.

Renaissance editions of *The Siege of Thebes* are notable in several respects. They show that printers had access to manuscripts held by prominent owners and that the two major formats for presenting Lydgate's poem in manuscript could be adapted to print. A. S. G. Edwards

¹¹ Julia Boffey, *Manuscripts of English Courtly Love Lyrics in the Later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 1985), p. 24.

¹² John M. Manly and Edith Rickert, eds., *The Text of the Canterbury Tales*, 8 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), 1:342.

¹³ A. S. G. Edwards (1985), p. 195 n32.

¹⁴ William Caxton, *Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton*, ed. W. J. B. Crotch, EETS o.s. 176 (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), p. 35.

¹⁵ Gavin Bone, "Extant Manuscripts Printed by Wynkyn de Worde, with Notes on the Owner Roger Thorney," *The Library*, 4th ser. 12 (1932), 295; Erdmann and Ekwall 2:49.

The Siege of Thebes

(1985) points out that only six manuscripts of *The Siege of Thebes* have marginal rubrics; the others locate rubrics and glosses within the frame of the text, as an accommodation to mass book production (p. 182). Wynkyn de Woede's edition places the rubrics within the frame of the text but retains English and Latin glosses in the margins. Stow's 1561 edition easily absorbs what became the more common ordinatio of Lydgate's poem in manuscript. The rubrics for the Prologue and First Part of the poem extend over the double columns of text, but the incipits, explicits, and glosses are printed within the borders of the text in different type faces to distinguish them from the text.

The text of the poem printed in the Renaissance served, as Eleanor Hammond points out, as the basis for excerpts from *The Siege of Thebes* printed in the nineteenth century. Hammond herself edited the Prologue, but the major critical edition of the poem is Axel Erdmann's edition for the Early English Text Society. Erdmann's text with apparatus and a temporary preface appeared in 1911; the second volume, with a full introduction, manuscript descriptions, notes, and glossary was produced posthumously by Eilert Ekwall in 1930 from Erdmann's draft and notes. Erdmann's edition is based on Arundel 119 and records the variants of the twenty-one manuscripts known to him (Ekwall adds another); a list of errata in the second volume includes some corrections for readings. The edition reproduces the textual features of the manuscript, including scribal flourishes for final -e and plural forms, suspension marks for doubled consonants, and virgules indicating the caesura in the middle of the line. Erdmann also prints diaeresis marks above sounded final syllables and especially final -e.

Arundel 119 is the base manuscript for the present edition. The manuscript was copied about 1430 by a scribe whose traits indicate an Essex dialect.²⁰ The same scribe copied Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (Cambridge, Pembroke College MS 307), the *South English Legendary* (Tokyo, Takamiya Collection, MS 54), and John Walton's translation of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* (Oslo & London, The Schøyen Collection, MS 615).²¹ *The Siege of Thebes* is the only work in Arundel 119, and the text is complete. Written in a single column on vellum leaves measuring 10 7/8 x 7 3/8 inches, the poem is decorated by historiated initials with leaf borders around the text at the beginning of the Prologue (fol. 1r) and First Part (fol. 4r); by ornamental initials at the beginning of Second Part (fol. 18r), Tydeus' speech to Eteocles (fol. 32r), and Third Part (fol. 43r); and by large initials, paraph signs, marginal rubrics, and glosses throughout. Arundel 119 formally divides the poem with rubrics for *Prologus*, *Prima pars*, *Secunda pars*, and *Tertia pars*, and marks all the parts by incipits and explicits. The script is an anglicana formata with double-lobed a and g, looped d, eight-shaped

²⁰ Angus McIntosh et al., *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English*, 4 vols. (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986), 1:105, 3:132.

²¹ Jeremy Griffiths, "Thomas Hyngham, Monk of Bury and the Macro Plays Manuscript," *English Manuscript Studies* 5 (1995), 214.

Introduction

s and long *r*, and *v*-form *r*, forked *r* and two-shaped *r*. Descriptions of the manuscript appear in Ward and Herbert's catalogue of British Museum romances and Erdmann's edition.

My text preserves manuscript spellings from Arundel 119 such as *dieu* and *diew* for *dwe*, *oþher* for *either*, and *knyttes* for *knyghtes*. The only exceptions are instances where the initial *h-* in the manuscript forms *heyr*, *herwym*, *harowes*, and *hamyng* is dropped and where MS *sounnes* (line 1000) and *sounes* (line 1445) are corrected; preserving the spellings here could cause undue confusion. The text also preserves grammatical features of Arundel 119, such as the use of *ha* for various forms of the verb *have* and *hymself* for the standard plural *hemself* (line 3329); confusions of *hym* and *hem* at lines 2864 and 3197 are treated as errors. The MS form *to* for *nil* is allowed to stand, and a marginal gloss is added (see line 3211 for one exception to the MS form). All these features are attested elsewhere in Lydgate and other Middle English writers. Substantive emendations have been made where the reading of the text is clearly wrong. The text presented here corrects Erdmann's errors in transcribing the base manuscript and in his apparatus; Erdmann lists some errata in vol. 2 of his edition, but other errors are not recorded. He is inconsistent in reading scribal flourishes for final -e and in expanding suspension marks over words like *wymen* and *comyng*. Though I tend to retain MS readings more often than does Erdmann, his suggestions for correcting substantive errors are frequently adopted. I have not printed the virgule that typically indicates a caesura in the line. In the variants listed in the Textual Notes, word breaks with the virgule and underdotting for scribal cancellations are not reported, nor are insignificant differences in spacing (e.g., MS: *a narowe* for *an aroewe* at line 3493).

Erdmann's edition intervenes much more than mine to establish regular meter. In his Temporary Preface, Erdmann presents his text as a corrective to the view, conveyed by older printed texts, that Lydgate's meter is often faulty: "The five-beat iambic lines of Thebes present the metrical traits peculiar to Lydgate's heroic verse" (1:vii–viii). Earlier generations of scholars applied metrical standards to medieval texts that were neither characteristic of the poets nor reflective of the manuscript tradition. In recent years, scholars have come to recognize greater metrical variability than before and to accept the authority of manuscript readings over modern improvements and silent emendations. The text as read by medieval audiences now makes as much a claim on our critical and historical imagination as the ideal work reconstructed according to a presumed authorial intention. In the case of Lydgate, "broken back" lines, which lack an unstressed syllable after the caesura, have long been regarded as evidence of his failed craftsmanship or scribal inattention or both. Erdmann regularly corrects them in *The Siege of Thebes*, but I have chosen to allow them to stand. Lydgate's basic metrical model is a five-stress line with a caesura. The first half of the line takes a number of forms, frequently dropping the initial syllable or reversing the iambic pattern of the second foot. The second half of the line frequently drops the first unstressed syllable but tends to end with an iambic pattern. Consequently, I have emended for final -e as needed and for medial vowels, such as *slayen* for *slayn* and *ageynes* for *ageyns*.

The Siege of Thebes

In accordance with the conventions of the Middle English Texts Series, the letters *i/j* and *u/v* have been normalized. Thorn has been transcribed as *th*, yogh as *y, g*, or *gh*, and the scribal ampersand as *and*. Accented final -*e* is printed as *é* (e.g., *contré, antiquitē*), if the ending does not otherwise end in *ee*. Where *the* is used as a second person pronoun instead of the definite article, I have spelled *thee* to clarify sense and pronunciation. Double consonants at the beginning of a line have been treated as capital letters, and those in the middle of lines have been regularized to lower-case letters. Suspension marks and common abbreviations have been silently expanded. The scribe of Arundel 119 is by no means consistent in using a flourish at the end of words as a final -*e* or an otiose mark. Capitalization and word division are editorial. The noun *nothing* is regularly distinguished from the adverbial form *no thing* (not at all). Punctuation is editorial, and it is designed to guide the reader through the additive clauses and phrases of Lydgate's sentences. A brief comparison with *Troy Book* will show that in *The Siege of Thebes*, Lydgate is less concerned to write periodic sentences with elaborate patterns of parallel clauses and phrases and more interested in the evolving sequence of his sentences. Some passages, such as the opening imitation of the General Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales*, fail grammatically, but most of the syntax builds cumulatively in elaborate, complex sentences. For the marginal glosses and rubrics from Arundel 119, which are reported in the Explanatory Notes, I have made several small corrections and supplied modern punctuation; Erdmann in several cases misreads the glosses. There are differences in the layout and content of the rubrics and glosses in other manuscripts of *The Siege of Thebes*, but these variations are not reported. The hand in the left margin of the text indicates that there is a Latin or English marginal gloss at this point in the manuscript. See Explanatory Notes for the gloss itself.

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The Siege of Thebes

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The Siege of Thebes

Incipit Prologus.

Whan brighte Phebus passed was the Ram	the sun; Aries
Myd of Apille and into Bole cam,	<i>In the middle; Taurus</i>
And Satourn old with his frosty face	
In Virgyne taken had his place,	Virgo
Malencolik and slowgh of mocion,	slow
And was also in th'oposiciooun	
Of Lucina the mone moyst and pale,	Diana; moon
That many shour fro heveste made avale;	shower; fall
Whan Aurora was in the morowe red,	Dawn; morning
And Jubiter in the Crabbes hed	Jupiter; Cancer's head
Hath take his paleys and his mansioun;	palace
The lusty tyme and joly freissh sesoun	
Whan that Floea the noble myghty quene	(the goddess of flowers)
The soyl hath clad in newe tendre grene,	
With her floures craftyly ymeynt,	artfully; combined
Braunsch and bough with red and whit depeynt,	painted
Fletinge the bawme on hillis and on valys;	The balm flowing
The tyme in soth whan Canterbury talys	indeed; tales
Complet and told at many sondry stage	various distances traveled
Of estatis in the pilgrimage,	social classes
Everich man lik to his degré,	Every; according to; social rank
Some of deport, some of moralité,	entertainment
Some of knyghthode, love, and gentillesse,	nobility
And some also of parfit holynesse,	perfect
And some also in soth of ribaudye	truly of ribaldry
To make laughtur in the companye	
(Ech admitted, for non wold other greve)	permitted, no one; insult
Lich as the Cook, the Millere, and the Reve	
Aquytte hemself, shortly to conclude,	Behave
Boystously in her teermes rude,	Rudely; their speech
Whan thei hadde wel dronken of the bolle,	bowl

The Siege of Thebes

	And ek also with his pylled nolle	too; bald head
60	The Pardowner beardedles al his chyn, Glasy-eyed and face of cherubyn,	beardless cherubic face
35	Tellyng a tale to angre with the frere, As opynly the storie kan yow lere	friar teach
	Word for word with every circumstaunce, Echon ywritte and put in remembraunce	
65	By hym that was, yif I shal not feyne, Floure of poetes thorghout al Breteyne,	<i>Every one written</i> <i>who; if; dissimile</i>
40	Which sothly hadde most of excellencie In rethorike and in eloquence	
	(Rede his making who list the trouthe fynde)	rhetoric
	Which never shal appallen in my mynde	poetry; wishes
45	But alwey freshh ben in my memoyre, To whom be gove pris, honure, and gloyre	<i>jade</i>
	Of wel seyng first in oure language,	
	Chief registrer of this pilgrimage,	given renown
	Al that was tolde forgetting noght at al,	
50	Feyned talis nor thing historial, With many proverbe divers and unkouth,	recorder
	Be rehersaille of his sugrid mouth,	
	Of eche thyng keping in substaunce	<i>Fictional; historical</i>
	The sentence hool withoute variance,	<i>curious</i>
55	Voyding the chaf sothly for to seyn,	<i>By narration; sugared (see note)</i>
	Enlumynyng the trewe piked greyn	<i>essentially</i>
	Be crafty writinge of his sawes swete,	<i>complete meaning</i>
	Fro the tyme that thei dieden mete	<i>Removing; huck truly (see note)</i>
60	First the pylgrimes sothly everichon,	<i>Revealing; selected kernel</i>
	At the Tabard assembled on be on,	<i>By artful; stories</i>
	And fro Suthwerk shortly forto seye	<i>did</i>
	To Canterbury ridyng on her weie,	<i>truly every one</i>
	Tellynge a tale as I reherce can,	<i>Tabard Inn; one by one</i>
	Lich as the hoste assigned every man,	<i>Southwerk</i>
65	None so hardy his biddyg disobeyle.	<i>their way</i>
	And this whil that the pylgrymes leye	<i>recount</i>
	At Canterbury wel logged on and all,	<i>Just as</i>
	I not in soth what I may it call —	<i>daring</i>
	Hap or fortune in conclusioun —	
70	That me byfil to entren into toun	
		<i>lodged one</i>
		<i>I do not know truly</i>
		<i>Chance; finally</i>
		<i>happened</i>

Prologus

	The holy seyt pleynly to visite	sickness, fulfill
68	After siknesse, my vowes to aquyte,	/monk's] cloak
	In a cope of blak and not of grene,	riding horse
75	On a palfrey slender, long, and lene,	asf for court (see note)
	With rusty brydel mad nat for the sale,	servant; before me; empty purse
80	My man toform with a voide male,	Who; arranged my lodging forthwith
	Which of fortune took myn inne anon	every one
85	Wher the pylgrymes were logged everichon,	their
	The same tyme her governour, the Host,	boast
90	Stonding in halle ful of wynde and bost,	Like; very
	Lich to a man wonder sterne and fers,	Who; immediately
95	Which spak to me and seide anon, "Daun Pers,	boss (ornamental stud)
	Daun Domynyk, Dan Godfrey, or Clement,	
	Ye be welcom newly into Kent,	
100	Thogh youre bridel have neither boos ne belle,	Who; lacking
	Besechinge you that ye wil me telle	very threadbare
	First youre name and of what contré	outfitted
	Without mor shortely that ye be,	
	That loke so pale al devoyde of blood,	
105	Upon youre hede a wonder thredbar hood,	
	Wel arayed for to ride late."	
110	I answerde my name was Lydgate,	Bury St. Edmunds; nearly
	"Monk of Bery, nygh fyfty yere of age,	
115	Come to this toun to do my pilgrimage,	promised; have
	As I have hight, I ha therof no shame."	do credit to
120	"Daun John," quod he, "wel beoke ye youre name.	alone
	Thogh ye be soul, beth right glad and light,	dine
	Prelyng you soupe with us tonyght,	have; wish
125	And ye shal han mad at youre devis	haggis
	A gret paddyg or a rounde hagys.	
130	A franchemole, a tansey, or a froyse;	meat or vegetable pie (see note); omelet; pancake
	To ben a monk, sclender is youre koyse;	slender; carcass
	Ye han be seke, I dar myn hede assure,	ill; guarantee
135	Or late fed in a feynt pasture.	recently; sparse
140	Lift up youre hed, be glad, tak no sorowe!	
	And ye shal hom ride with us to morowe,	
	I seye, whan ye rested han your fille.	
145	Aftere soper slepe wil do non illie.	
	Wrappe wel youre hede with clothes rounde aboute.	

The Siege of Thebes

- 110 Strong natty ale wol mak you to route.
Tak a pylow that ye lye not lowe;
Yif nede be, spare not to blowe!
To holde wynde, be myn opynyoun,
Wil engendre collik passioum
(see note)
- 115 And make men to greven on her roppys,
Whan thei han filled her mawes and her croppys.
But toward nyght ete some fenel rede,
Annys, comyn, or coriandre sede.
And lik as I power have and myght,
inwards
120 I charge yow rise not at mydnyght,
Thogh it so be the moone shyne cler.
I wol myself be youre celoger
Tomorrow erly, whan I se my tyme,
For we wol forth parcel afore pryme;
set out a little before 6 a.m.
- 125 A company, pardé, shal do you good.
What? Look up, monk! For by kokkis blood,
Thow shalt be mery who so that sey nay.
For tomorrowwe, anoon as it is day
by God
130 And that it gynne in the est to dawe,
Thow shalt be bound to a newe lawe
Att goyng oute of Canterbury toune
And leyn aside thy professioum.
God's blood
as soon as
when; east; down
- 135 Lyk the custom of this compenyne,
For non so proude that dar me denye,
Knyght nor knave, chanon, prest ne nonne,
To telle a tale pleynly as thei konne,
Whan I assigne and se tyme opportune.
lay
have a free choice
If; stomach
- 140 And for that we our purpoos wil contune,
We wil horward the same custome use,
And thow shalt not platly thee excuse.
canon
fully; know how
appoint
continue
- 145 Be now wel war — stody wel to nyght!
But for al this, be of herte light!
Thy wit shal be the sharper and the bet."
And we anon were to soper set,
And served wel unto oure plesaunce,
And sone after be good governaunce
plainly yourself
attentive
better
immediately

Prima Pars

- Unto bed goth every maner wight. *person*
- 150 And towarde morowe anon as it was light, *as soon*
 Every pilgryme bothe bet and wors, *better*
 As bad oure hoste toke anon his hors, *directed; soon*
 Whan the sonne roos in the est ful clyere,
 Fully in purposos to come to dynere
- 155 Unto Osspryng and breeke ther our faste.
 And whan we weren from Canterbury pastic
 Noght the space of a bowe draught, *passed*
 Our hoost in hast hath my bridel rauht *bowshot*
 And to me seide as it were in game, *haste; seized*
- 160 "Come forth, daun John, be your Cristene name,
 And lat us make some manere myrrh or play. *amusement*
 Shet youre portoos a twenty develway! *Close; breviary*
 It is no disport so to patere and seie. *recite the Paternoster*
- 165 It wol make youre lippes wonder dreye. *dry*
 Tel some tale, and make therof a jape. *joke*
 For be my rounchy, thow shalt not eskafe, *horse*
 But preche not of non holynesse.
 Gynne some tale of myrrh or of gladnesse,
 And nodde not with thyn hevy bekke. *nose*
- 170 Telle us some thyng that draweth to effecte
 Only of joye. Make no lenger lette." *produces*
 And whan I saugh it wolde be no bette,
 I obeyde unto his biddynge, *delay*
 So as the lawe me bonde in al thinge;
- 175 And as I coude with a pale cheere, *conveniance*
 My tale I gan anon as ye shal here. *began; directly; hear*

Explicit Prologus.
Incipit Pars Prima.

Prima Pars.

- "Sirs," quod I, "sith of your curtesye *since*
 I entred am into your compayne
 And admitted a tale for to telle
 180 By hym that hath power to compelle
 (I mene our hoste, governour, and guyde

The Siege of Thebes

- Of yow echon ridyng her beside).
Thogh that my wit barayn be and dul,
I wol reberce a story wonderful,
185 Towchinge the siege and destrucciou
Of worthy Thebees the myghty royal toun,
Bylt and begonne of olde antiquité,
Upon the tyme of worthy Jossué,
Be dyligence of kyng Amphion,
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.
But how the wallys weren on heghte reised,
195 It is wonder and merveil forso here.
But if ye list, I shal yow platly lere
The maner hool shortly in sentence,
Under support of youre pacience.
As writ myn auctour and Bochas bothe two.
200 Rede her bookes and ye shal fynde it so.
How this kyng, thys prudent Amphion,
With the swetnesse and melodious soun
And armonye of his swete song
The cyté bylt that whilom was so strong,
205 Be vertue only of the werbles sharpe
That he made in Mercuries harpe,
Of which the strenges were not touched softe,
Wherby the walles reised weren aloft,
Withoute craft of emy manrys hond,
210 Ful yoor agon myd of Grekes lond;
Which is a thing of poetes told,
208 Nevere yseyen neither of yong nor old.
But as Bochas list to specifie,
Cler expownyng this derke poysye,
215 Seith Mercurie, god of eloquence,
Gaf be the myght of heavenly influence
Unto this kyng at his nativité
Thorgh glade aspectes that he shulde be
Most excellent be craft of rethorik,
220 That in this world was non to hym lik;
- understanding; empty
- Founded
Joshua
- aloft
- wish; openly teach
whole
- author; Boccaccio
- sound
- once
tunes
- Mercury's
- Long ago, in the middle of
- seen
- Boccaccio wished; mention
interpreting
- Gave by
- in

Prima Pars

- Which signyfieþ to hem that ben prudent
 The musycal, the lusty instrument
 (I mene the harpe most melodious),
 Gove to this kynge be Mercurius;
 And his song, this auctour can yow teche,
 Was nothyng but the crafty speche
 Of this kyng ycalled Amphioun;
 Wherby he made the contrés envyroun
 To han such lust in his wordes swete
 That were so plesaunt, favourable, and mete
 In her eerys that shortly ther was noon
 Disobeysaunt with the kyng to goon,
 Whersoever that hym list assigne.
 His cheer, his port was outward so benygne
 That thorgþ his styring and exortacioun
 With hym they went to byld first this toun
 And forsook ecch man his contré
 Be on assent to make this cyté
 Royal and riche that lich was nowher noon.
 And thus the wallis made of lym and stoon
 Were reyzed first be syngyng of this kyng,
 Lich as poetys feyne in her writyng,
 Passyng rich and royal of entaille.
 Her may ye see how myche may avaylle
 The goodlihed and lownesse of a kyng,
 And specealy in cher and in spekyng
 To his lyges and to berm hym fayre
 In his apport and shewe hym debonayre
 And nat to bene to straunge ne soleyn
 In contenaunce outward be disdeyn;
 Which causethe ofte, who that can adverse,
 Grete hatred in the puples herte,
 And therupon peively wol rowne,
 Whan a pryncie doth upon hem frownie,
 Shortly deme for al his excellencie,
 Among hemself out of his presence,
 Everych conclude lich his fantasye.
 And thus ful ofte gendred is envye
 In folkes hertes of soleynþ and peyde,
- lively
*Given; by
author*
*all around
have; pleasure
suitable
their ears*
*direct
countenance; demeanor*
By one
*mortal
by*
Just; portray
Exceedingly; design
*Here
humility
appearance
conduct himself
comportment; gracious
too reserved nor sullen
external appearance
foresee
people's
*[they] will whisper**
- judge
imagination
hearts of haughtiness

The Siege of Thebes

- 260 For swich as list nat onys loke asyde
To reward hem whan they lowe loute.
And ageyn kynde it is, out of doute,
That eny hed be recorde of the wyse
Shuld the foot of disdeyn despysye
Which bereth hym up, who so can take hede,
And susteneth in his moste nede
As his pyler and his sowpowayle.
For fynaly ne wer the porayle
Her berer up and supportacioun,
Farwel lordshyp and domynacioun
Thorghoute the world of every hegh estat!
Wherfor me semeth mor is fortunat
Of Mercurye the soote sugred harpe
Than Mars swerd whetted kene and sharpe,
Mor accepted with aspectis goode
Than is this god with his lokes woode.
For humble speche with glad contenaunce
May a prynce sothly mor avaunce
Among his puple hertes forto wynne
Of inward love which that wol not twynne,
Than gold, rychesse, pride, or tyranye,
Oyther disdeyne, daunger, or surquedyne.
For of lordes — clerkes can reporte —
But that love her crowne do suporte,
The fyn ys sought in conclusioune.
I take record of kyng Amphyoun
That bylte Thebes be his eloquence
Mor than of pride or of violence,
Noble and riche that lik was nowher non,
And thus the walles mad of lym and stoon
Were reised first be synging of this kyng,
Lich as poetis feyn in her wryting.
But sothly yit some expositours,
Groundyng hem upon olde auctours,
Seyn that Cadmus the famous olde man
Ful longe afor this cité first began,
And the ground of the bieldyng sette,
And the boundes be compas out he mette
- such; wish not once to look
bow
against nature
evidence
- pillar; support
were not the poor people
Their
- sweet
sharpened
- mad
- pass away
- Or; resistance; pride
- Unless
end; nothing
witness
- Who
- mortar
- Just; describe
truly
authors
- Say
before
- measured

Prima Pars

- With thong outkorve of a booly's hyde,
300 Whych envyroun strecche myghte wyde
To get inne londe a ful large space
Wherupon to byld a dwellyng place,
BOR And called was the soyle thus geten inne
Whylom Boece of the bolys skynne.
305 The name after into Thebes turned.
But Cadmus ther hath longe not sojourned,
Lik in story as it is compyled;
For shortly he from thennys was exiled,
BOR Never after to dwelle in this toun,
310 Be the knyghthode of this Amphioun,
Which up parformeth riche for the noonys
The cité Thebes of myghty squar storys,
As I yow tolde a litil heretoform;
And Cadmus thus hath his kyngdam lorn,
315 Sceptre and crowne and his powere royal.
Now have I told unto you ground of al,
That ye wel knowe be informacioun
Clearly the pith and exposiciooun
Of this mater, as clerkes can you telle.
320 It were but veyn lenger for to dwelle,
To tary yow as in this matiere,
Sith my tale which that ye shal here
Upon oure wale wil lasten a longe while,
The space as I suppose of seven myle.
325 And now ye know first how Amphyoun
Bylt and began this cité and this toun,
Regnyng ther long after, as I rede.
Of hym no more, for I wil procede
To my purpos that I first began,
BOR Not tellyng here how the lyne ran
From kyng to kyng be successioun,
Conveying doun the stok of Amphyoun
Cereously be lyneal discent;
But leve al this, pleynly of entent,
335 To telle forth, in bookes as I rede,
How Layus be processe gan succede
To bere the croune in this myghty lond,
- cut out; bull's
around*
- Long ago Borotia because of; bull's
afterwards*
- gathered
thence*
- By
completed purposely*
- lost*
- the basis*
- substance*
- Since*
- line of descent
by
Transmitting; family
Successively*
- by the course of time did*

The Siege of Thebes

- Holdyng the sceptre of Thebes in his hond,
Manly and wys duryng al his liff.
- 340 And Jocasta called was his wyff,
Ful wommanly the story seith certeyn,
For a tyme thogh she were bareyn.
Tyl Layus in ful humble wise
To have a child did sacrifise
345 Fyrst t' Apollo in his char so bright
And Jubiter that hath so gret a myght,
Besechyngh hem with devout reverence
To graunt only thorgh her influence
That his request may excecuted be;
- 350 And specially to goddesses thre
He besoughte — Pallas and Juno
And Dyane — forto helpe also
That he be not defrauded of his bone.
And his preyere accepted was ful sone,
- 355 That fynaly thorgh his ryttys olde,
Evene lik as his herte wolde,
The queene Jocasta bath anon conceyved.
Which, whan the kyng fully hath perceyved,
He made in hast, hym lyst not to abide,
360 Thorgh hys kyngdom massageres ryde
Fro coost to coost the story can devyse,
For dyvynoures and phylosphres wise,
For such as weren famous physiciens
And wel expert astronomyens
365 To come in hast unto his presence
To fynde out shortly in sentence,
By craft only of calculacioun,
The chyldes fate and dispositioun
And therupon to geve a jugement,
370 The root ytake at the ascendent, *base of calculation (see note); first astrological house*
Trewly sought out be mynut and degré,
The silfe houre of his natyvité,
Not forgete the heavenly mansions
Clerly cerched be smale fracciouns,
375 First be secoundes, tiers, and eke quartes
On augrym stooones and on white caartes
- Very*
chariot
who
them
disappointed; prayer
rituals
Just as
haste; did not wish; delay
tell
soothsayers
haste
significance
astrology
child's; location of astral influences
very
forgotten; astrological houses
sought by; fractions
thirds; also
stones for calculation; treatises

Prima Pars

	Ypreved out be diligent labour, In tables correcte devoide of al error, Justly soght and founde out bothe twoo,	<i>Computed by</i>
380	The yeeres collecte and expanse also, Consydred ek be good inspeccioune Every hour and constellacioun	<i>also by</i>
	And eche aspecte and lookes ek dyvers, Which were good and which also pervers,	<i>astrological position (see note)</i>
388	Wher they were toward or ellys at debat,	<i>favorable; in conflict</i>
389	Happy, welful, or infortunat. And fynaly, in conclusyoun,	
	They founde Satourn in the Scoepioun, Hevy-chered, malencolik and loth,	<i>Saturn; house of Scorpio</i>
390	And woode Mars furious and wroth, Holdyng his sceptre in the Capricorn,	<i>Gloomy; hostile</i>
	The same hour whan this chyld was born,	<i>mad; angry</i>
398	Venus dejecte and contrarious	<i>without influence; adverse</i>
399	And depressed in Mercuryes hous;	<i>powerless</i>
395	That the dome and jugement fynal Of thies clerkes, to speke in special, Be fatal sort which may not be withdrawe, That with his swerd his fader shal be slawe:	<i>So that; opinion</i>
	Ther may no man helpe it nor excuse.	<i>[war] to; particular</i>
400	On whiche thyng the kyng gan sore muse, And cast he wolde on that other side Agayn her doom for hymself provide, Shape a way and remedy toforn,	<i>fated destiny; avoided</i>
	Biddyng the queene whan the chyld were born,	
405	Withoute mercy or moderly pyte, That he be ded; that may non other be, And in al hast lik as he hath sent, She obeyed his comaundement.	<i>did; ponder</i>
	With woeful herte and a pitous loke	<i>plan; in response</i>
410	And face pale, her yonge sone she toke, Tendre and grene both of flesssh and bonyss, To certeyn men ordeyned for the noonys From poynt to poynt in al maner thing	<i>Against their prophecy</i>
	To execute the biddyng of the kyng.	<i>beforehand</i>
415	They durste not delay it nor abide,	<i>motherly</i>
		<i>slain; it cannot be otherwise</i>
		<i>haste</i>
		<i>enraged</i>
		<i>young</i>
		<i>for the occasion</i>

The Siege of Thebes

- But to a forest that stood fer besyde,
They took her wey and faste gan hem spedē
The kyngges wille to parfome in dede.
Havyng therof passyng hevynesse.
- 420 But whan that they beheelden the fairesse
Of the chyld and excellent beauté,
In her herte they hadde grete pytē
And pleynly cast — among hem was no stryf —
- 425 That the child shulde han his lif.
And anon ful bygh upon a tre,
In a place that no man myght se,
They henge hym up, the story kan reherce.
- 430 But first his feet thorgh they gan to perce,
And on bowes tendre, tough, and smale,
They knet hym up shortly (this is no tale),
Hym to preserve from bestys wild and rage,
- 435 And after that token her viage
Toward Thebes in alle the hast they may.
But of fortune thilke same day
With her houndes serchyg up and doun,
- 440 The hentes went of kyng Poliboun
Thorgh the forest game foeto fynde,
Some aforne and some cam behynde,
And gan serch and seke wonder sore
- 445 Among the hilles and the haltes hore.
And as they reenge the trenchis by and by,
They herde a noyse and a pitous cry
Of thys chyld hangyng on the tre,
- 450 And all at onys drowe foeto se,
And lefte not to they han hym founde,
And toke hym doun and his fete unbounde,
And bare hym hom unto Polyboun,
- Kyng of Archadye, the famous regioun.
And whan that he first the chyld gan see,
Of his woundes he hadde grete pytē
To beholde his tender fete so bledē,
- 455 And called hym Edippus, as I rede,
Which is to seyn (platly this no phage)
Bored the feete, as in that langage.
- far
hastened themselves
exceeding
their
decided; disagreement
have
immediately
relate
through; pierce
brought
tied: *in short*
savage
journey
haste
by chance that very
their
huntsmen; Poliboun
sought very eagerly
grey woods
go along; forest paths
immediately approached
until
unbound
carried
Arcadia
sore
feet; to bleed
Oedipus
plainly: lie
Pierced

Prima Pars

- 455 And first the kyng in his royal halle
Made his men an norys forto calle,
This yonge chylde to foster and to kepe
With her milk that he nat ne wepe;
And his leches he charged ek also,
460 Til he were hool her never forto do:
Fully in purpos, for the child was fair,
After his day to maken hym his hayr
For cause only, who so taketh hede,
Sone hadde he noon be lyne to succede;
465 And wher that he had a wif or noon,
I fynde not and therfor lat it goon.
But by processe of dayes and of yeeris,
This Edyppus among his pleying feiris
Was in his port passyng ful of pride,
470 That non with hym myght in pees abide.
In hert he was so inly surquydows,
Malencolik, and contrarious,
Ful of despyt and of hegh disdeyn,
That no wight durst shortly hym withseyn;
475 Til on a day he gan with oon debate
To whom he hadde specyaly grete hate,
Which of rancour and of hasty tene,
As he that myght his pride not sustene,
Gan upon hym cruelly abrayde,
480 And unto hym felly thus he saide.
"Wherto," quod he, "artow so proude of port,
Contrarie also ever in oure dispot,
Froward and felle lastyng evere in oon,
As thow were lord of us everichon,
485 And presumest fully in wrychtyng,
Lik as thow were sone unto the kyng,
And descended of his royal blood?
But wher so be thow be wroth or wood,
Thow art no thing, and thow list take hede,
490 Appartenyng unto his kynrede
But in a forest founden and unknowe,
Whan thow were yonge. Therfor bere thee lowe!
And uttrely remembre, yif thee lyst,
- nurse
nourish

physicians
whole their duty
intending
on his death; heir
Because
by line of descent
whether

playmates
behavior exceedingly
tranquility
inwardly prideful
Morce; contentious
intense scorn
no one dare; contradict
argue

Who; anger
bear
Did; shout
fiercely
Why; are you; manner
Contentious; games
Perverse; cruel always
As if; each one
most presumptuous in your doings

whether; angry; mad
in no way; if; wish
Belonging; family
unknown
conduct yourself humbly
fully; if; wish

The Siege of Thebes

	Thy byrth and blood ar bothe two unwist.	unknown
495	This the fyne shortly of my tale."	end
	Wherwith Edippus gan to wexe pale,	grow
	And chaunge also cheer and contenaunce,	face; appearance
	And gan apoint in his remembraunce	arrange
	Word be word and feyned right nought,	
500	And felly mused in his owne thought,	eagerly pondered
	And cast he wold withoute more taryng	planned
	The trouth enquire of Poliboun the kyng.	seek
	And whan he saugh opportune space	
	And the kyng in a syeré place,	private
505	He hym bysoghte lowly on his kne	
	To his request benignely to se,	humbly; entertain
	And that he wolde pleynly, and not spare,	if; forbear
	Of his byrth the trewe ground declare,	
	And make hym sure of this thyng anon	immediately
510	Yif he were his verrey sone or non.	if; true
	And Polyboun only of gentilles,	out of kindness
	Whan he beheld the grete hevynesse	sorrow
	Of Edippus and the woeful peyne,	
	He gan dissimule and in manere feyne,	dissemble; falsify
515	Lik as he had be verrely his beyre.	As if: were truly: heir
	But mor and mor he falleth in dispeir	
	And doun on knees oft ageyn gan falle,	did
	Hym conjuring be the goddes alle	beseaching by
	To telle trouth and nothyng to hide,	
520	Affermynge ek he wold nat abide	Declaring also; remain
	Lenger with hym but ryden and enquire,	search out
	Til tyme he may the verrey sothe lere	real truth discover
	In eny part of hap or of fortune.	by chance
	And for that he was so importune	because; persistent
525	In his desire, the kyng without abood	delay
	Ceriously tolde how it stood,	In sequence
	In a forest first how he was founde	
	Upon a tre be the feet ybounde,	by
	And how he caste, in conclusoun,	planned
530	To make hym kyng of that regioun	
	Afttere his day shortly forso telle.	death
	But Edippus wil no longer dwelle	

Prima Pars

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| | But took lieve and in hast gan ryde | <i>haste did</i> |
| | To a temple faste ther besyde | <i>close</i> |
| 535 | Of Appollo, in storie as is tolde, | |
| | Whos statue stood in a char of golde | <i>chariot</i> |
| | Of wheles four boenyd bright and shene; | <i>With wheels; burnished; gleaming</i> |
| | And within a spirit ful unclene, | <i>inside; foul</i> |
| | Be fraude only and fals collusoun, | |
| 540 | Answeare gaf to every questioun, | <i>By</i> |
| | Bryngyng the puple in ful gret errour, | <i>gave</i> |
| | Such as to hym dyden fals honour | <i>people</i> |
| | Be ryfys used in the olde dawes | <i>By rituals observed; days</i> |
| | Afterre custome of paganysmes lawes. | <i>Following</i> |
| 545 | And Edyppus with ful humble chere | <i>very</i> |
| | To Appollo maked his preiere, | <i>prayer</i> |
| | Besechynge hym on his knees lowe | |
| | Be some signe that he myghte knowe, | |
| | Thorg evidence shortly comprehendyd, | |
| 550 | Of what kynrede that he was discendyd. | <i>family</i> |
| | And whan Edyppus be gret devocioun | |
| | Fynysshed bath fully his oeyson, | <i>prayer</i> |
| | The fend anon withinnen invisble | <i>fiend immediately inside</i> |
| | With a vois dredful and horrible | |
| 555 | Bad hym in hast taken his viage | <i>haste; journey</i> |
| | Toward Thebes wher of his lynage | <i>lineage</i> |
| | He heren shal and be certefied. | <i>informed</i> |
| | And on his way anon he hath hym hyed, | <i>hastened</i> |
| | By hasty journé so his hors constreyned | <i>urged onward</i> |
| 560 | Day be day til he hath atteyned | <i>reached</i> |
| | Unto a castel Pylotes ycalled, | |
| | Rich and strong and wel aboute walled, | |
| | Adjacent be syt of the contré | <i>by location</i> |
| | And perteynement to Thebes the cyté: | <i>belonging</i> |
| 565 | Kyng Layus beyng ther present | |
| | Forto holde a maner tornement | <i>tournament</i> |
| | With his knyghtes yong and coraious | <i>courageous</i> |
| | And other folkes that were desyrous | |
| | To preve hemself, shortly forto telle, | |
| 570 | Who by force oyther myght excelle | <i>themselves</i> |
| | Or gete a name thorgh his hegh prouesse. | <i>either</i> |

The Siege of Thebes

	Everich of hem dyd his bysynessee On horsbak and also ek en foote, Al be that some founde ful unsocote (Rather a pley of were than of pees), Wher Edyppus put hymself in prees, As he that was ay redy to debat, Enforsyng hym to entren at the gate, ^{ESSE} Maugré all tho that hym wolde lene, And in the pres of aventure he mette Kynge Layus and cruelly hym slogh, Thow the story writh not the maner howh, Ne no wight can of alle the compayne Be no signe verrely espye By whos hond that the kyng was slawe; For Edyppus in hast gan hym withdrawe And kept hym coy of entencioune. Gret was the noyse and the pitous soun In the castel for slaughter of the kyng.	<i>Each one; them; diligent endeavor</i> <i>Although; dreadful</i> <i>war</i> <i>the thick of the fight</i> <i>always; fight</i> <i>Striving</i> <i>Despite; those; hinder</i> <i>strong by chance</i> <i>slew</i> <i>Though; how</i> <i>person</i> <i>By; truly observe</i> <i>slain</i> <i>haste</i> <i>quiet on purpose</i> <i>painful sound</i>
575		
580		
585		
590		
595		
600		
605		
610		

Prima Pars

618	Thoegh a wylde and a waast contré, By a mounteyn that stood upon the see, Wher that monstres of many dyvers kynde Were conversaunt, in story as I fynde;	<i>desolate</i> <i>against; sea</i>
615	Amonges which sothly ther was on, So inly cruel that no man durst gon For dred of deth forby that passage. This monstre was so mortal in his rage,	<i>habitually dwelling</i> <i>truly; one</i> <i>dare go</i> <i>past</i> <i>terrible</i>
618	Which hadde also, be descripcoun, Body and feet of a fers lyoun; And lik a mayde in soth was hede and face, Fel of his look and cruel to manace,	<i>Who</i> <i>fierce lion</i> <i>woman</i> <i>savage</i>
620	And odyous of countenaunce and sight; And as I rede, Spynx this monstre hight, Wors than tygre, dragon, or serpent.	<i>Sphinx; was called</i>
625	And I suppose by enchauntement He was ordeyned on the hyl t'abyde, To sleen all tho that passeden besyde And specially all that diden fayle	<i>commanded</i> <i>slay; those who</i>
630	To expowne his mysty dyvyniale, His problem ek in wordes pleyn and bare Withoute avys opynly declare, Or with the lif he myghte not eskape:	<i>explain; obscure riddle</i>
635	This verryng soth platly and no jape. And yif that he, be declaracioun, Gaf therupon cleer exposicioun, He shuld in hast — there was non other mene —	<i>consultation</i>
	Sleen this monstre for al his cruel tene: Ther may of mercy be non other graunte.	<i>complete truth plainly; trick</i> <i>if</i> <i>in haste</i> <i>Slay; despite; hast</i> <i>allowance</i>
640	But of al this Edyppus ignoraunte, This dredful hill stondyng on a roche, Er he was war, gan ful nygh approche, More perilous platly than he wende.	<i>did; closely</i> <i>imagined</i> <i>did</i>
645	And sodeynly the monster can descende To stoppen his way and letten his passage, Thus abraydyng with a fel corage: "I have in herte inly gret dispoet	<i>block</i> <i>Shouting; bitter</i> <i>amusement</i> <i>power</i>
	That fortune hath broght thee to my soot To make a preef yif thou mayst endure	<i>test whether</i>

The Siege of Thebes

- 650 The fatal ende of this aventure,
Set at a fyn soothly be daies olde." deadly outcome
And by and by al the caas hym tolde, Established; truly
Charging hym to be wel war and wise, circumstances
Gete the palme and bere away the pryse Advising
655 Touchyng this thyng sette atwene us tweyn, triumph; prize
With lyf or deth which we shal dareyn. settle by combat
And this monstre with a despitous chere pitiless look
His problem gan thus, as ye shal here.
"Ther is a boest merveilous to se, power
660 The which in sooth at his nativyté Unless; carried
Is of his myght so tender and so grene
That he may hymsilve nat sustene
Upon his fete, thogh he hadde it sworn,
But yif that he be of his moder born. feet
665 And afterwardes be processe of age, Afterwards; be
On foure fete he maketh his passage; last of all
After on thre, if I shal not feyne,
And alderlast he goth upright on tweyne, Differing; behavior; strange; manner
Dyvers of port and wonderful of cherys,
670 Til, be length of many sondry yeeres, by
Naturely he goth ageyn on thre,
And sith on foure (it may non other be)
And fynaly (this the trouthe pleyn) goes
He retourneth kyndely ageyn naturally
675 To the matere which that he kam fro. from
Loo her is al my problem is ido. done
Muse herupon withoute werre or stryff Ponder; war
It to declare or ellis lese thy lyff." solve; else lose
And whan Edyppus gan this thing adverte, consider
680 Wel assured in his manly herte, mind to search
Gan in his wytt cerchen up and doun, considered
And of prudence cast in his resoun With much thought
Be grete avis what thyng this may be,
Seyng also that he may not flee,
685 And how ther was counsel noon ne rede, advice
But telle trouthe or ellis to be dede, else
And be ful good deliberacion
Thus he answerd in conclusioun. by

Prima Pars

	"Thowe Spynx," quod he, "fals and fraudulent,"	said
690	Thow vyle monstre, thow dragon, thow serpent, Which on this byl lich as I conceyve, Lyst in awaite folkes to deceyve, But truste wel, for al thy sleghty wit, Thy fals fraude shal anon be qwyte.	Who; understand <i>Lies; ambush</i> <i>sly</i> <i>immediately be repaid</i>
695	Me list not nowe whisper neither rowne, But thy problem I shal anon expowne	<i>I do not wish; nor speak quietly</i>
700	So opynly thow shalt not go therfro. Loo, this it is — tak good hede thereto. Thilke best thow spak of hertoform, Is every man in this world yborn, Which may not gon (his lymes be so sofe),	<i>riddle; explain</i> <i>from that</i> <i>The same; earlier</i> <i>born</i>
705	Bot as his moder bereth hym aforie In her armes, whan he doth crye and wepe, And after that he gynneth forto-crepe On fourre feet in his tendre youth,	<i>Except</i> <i>creep</i>
710	B'experience as it is ofte kouth, Aform yrekned his hondes bothe two.	<i>known</i> <i>His two hands stretched out in front of him</i>
715	And by processe, thow mayst consider also With his two fete, for al thy felle tene, He hath a staf hymselfen to sustene, And than he goth shortly upon thre.	<i>in time</i> <i>bitter hatred</i> <i>last of all</i>
720	And altherlast, as it most nedes be, Voyding his staf, he walketh upon tweyn, Til it so he thorgh age he atteyn, That lust of youthe wasted be and spent;	<i>Setting aside</i> <i>reaches</i> <i>vigor</i>
725	Than in his hond he taketh a potent, And on thre feet thus he goth ageyn — I dar afferme thow maist it not withseyne — And sone afere thorgh his unweldy myght,	<i>Then; staff</i> <i>contradict</i> <i>soon; impotent</i>
	By influence of Naturys right, B'experience as every man may knowe, Lich a child on fourre he crepeth lowe, And for he may no whyl here sojourne,	<i>Nature's</i> <i>because</i>
	To erth ageyn he most in hast retourne, Which he kam fro — he may it not remewe. For in this world no man may eschewe (This verray soth shortly and no doute)	<i>haste</i> <i>escape</i> <i>avoid</i> <i>complete; in short</i>

The Siege of Thebes

	Whan the wheel of kynde cometh aboute And naturely hath his cours yronne	<i>Nature</i>
730	Be circuete, as doth the shene sonne, That man and chyld of hegh and lowe estat, It geyneth nat to make mor debat, His tyme sette that he moste fyne,	<i>bright sun</i>
	Whan Antropos of malice doth untwyne	<i>struggle</i>
	His lyves thred by Cloto first compowned. Loo, her thy problem fully is expowned, At oure metynge as I took on honde, To the lawe that thou most nedes stonde	<i>die</i>
735	And in al hast of myn hondes deye, But of reson thou can it ought withseye."	<i>Atropos (one of the Three Fates); unwind</i>
	And so this Spynx, awapyd and amast, Stood dismayed and dysconsolaat	<i>life's; Clotho (another Fate); formed</i>
	With chier dounecast muet, pale, and ded.	<i>riddle; solved</i>
740	And Edippus anon smote of the hed Of this fende stynkyng and unswete,	<i>undertook</i>
	And the contré sette holy in quyete, Wherby he hath such a pris ywonne	<i>[According] to; condition; answer</i>
	That his fame is every cost yronne	<i>haste at my hands</i>
	Thorgh al the londe that he the monstre hath slawe.	<i>Unless; deny</i>
745	And lyneright to Thebes he gan drawe, Wel receyved for his worthynesse,	<i>amazed; overwhelmed</i>
	For his manhode and his grete peouesse.	<i>face; mate. livid; colorless</i>
	And for they segh he was a semly knyght,	<i>off; head</i>
	Wel favoured in every manrys sight,	<i>dreadful</i>
750	And sawh also Thebes the myghty toun,	<i>fully in tranquility</i>
	Not only they but al the regiouin,	<i>glory won</i>
	Weren destitut of a governour,	<i>everywhere spread widely</i>
	Ageynst her foon havyng no socour	<i>slain</i>
	Hem to defend but the quene allon,	<i>straightaway</i>
755	Among hemself makyn ful gret mon,	<i>because; saw; handsome</i>
	For heire was non, as bookes specifie,	
	The sceptre or crowne forto occupie,	
	For which the lordes all be on assent	
	Withinne the toun set a parlement,	
760	Shortly concludyng, if it myghte ben,	
	Prudently to trete with the quene,	
765		<i>their foes</i>
		<i>Them; queen</i>
		<i>themselves; complaint</i>
		<i>heir</i>
		<i>in agreement</i>
		<i>called</i>
		<i>negotiate</i>

Prima Pars

	Namely they that helde hemself most sage,	wisest
	To condescende be way of mariage	agree
	She to be joyned to this manly knyght,	
770	Passing prudent and famous ek of myght,	also
	Most likly man, as they can discerne,	suitable
	The worthy cytē to kepen and governe.	
	And thorgh counsayl of the lordes alle	
	To her desyre pleynly she is falle	<i>their; she accedes</i>
775	And accorded withoute moe taryng	<i>delay</i>
	That of Thebes Edippus shal be kyng	
	By ful assent — was non that seide nay.	<i>there was no one who</i>
	And tyme set ageyn a certeyn day	
	Among hemself and finaly devysed,	appointed
780	The weddyn was in Thebes solempnyzed	celebrated
	Ful ryally, which nedes most unthreyve,	<i>necessarily must fail</i>
	Only for he his moder toke to wyve,	<i>because</i>
	Uewist of both he was of her blode,	<i>Unbeknownst to either of them; blood</i>
	And ignoraunt, shortly, how it stode	
785	That he toforn hadde his fadere slawe,	<i>before; slain</i>
	For which this weddyn was ageyn the lawe.	
	And tofor God is neither feire ne good	<i>before</i>
	Nor acceptable blood to touche blood,	
	Which cause hath ben of gret confusoun	<i>misfortune</i>
790	In many londe and many regyoun,	
	Grounde and roote of unhappy and meschaunce,	<i>source; ill luck</i>
	The fyn concludyng alway with vengeaunce,	<i>end</i>
	As men han seie by cleer experience.	<i>seen</i>
	And holy writ recordeth in sentence	<i>opinion</i>
795	How Herodes falsly in his lyff	<i>Herod</i>
	By violence toke his brother wyf,	<i>brother's</i>
	For she was faire and plesaunt to his sight,	
	And kepte her stille be fors thorgh his myght,	<i>force</i>
	Al be to her he hadde title non;	<i>Although; right</i>
800	And for her sake the holy man Seynt John	
	For his trouth in prison lost his hede.	<i>advise</i>
	Therfor I rede every man take hede,	
	Wherso he be peynce, lorde, or kyng,	
	That he be war t'eschewe such weddyn,	<i>avoid</i>
805	Et that the swerde of vengeaunce hym manace,	<i>Before</i>

The Siege of Thebes

- Lest he lese hap, fortune, and grace,
Takyngh ensample in al manere thyng
Of Edyppus in Thebes crowned kyng.
Al be that he wrought of ignoraunce,
810 Ful desk and blynde of his woful chaunce.
And yif unwist he of innocence,
As ye han herde, fil in such offence,
For which he was punished and brought lowe,
What ar they worthy that her errorr knowe
815 And fro the knotte list not to abstene
Of such spousale, to God and man unclene?
I can not seyn nor mor therof devise.
Demeth yourself that prudent ben and wise
And Edippus hath among in mynde,
820 Of whom the weddynge, lik as ye may fynde,
Unhappy was and passing odious,
Infortuned and ungracious.
I am wery mor therof to write;
The hatful processe also to endyte
825 I passe over, fully of entent.
For Ymeneus was not ther present,
Nor Lucyna list not ther to shyne,
Ne ther was none of the Musys nyne
By on accord to make melodye
830 (For ther song not be heavenly armonye),
Neither Clyo nor Calyopé,
On of the sustren in nombre thries thre.
As they dyde whan Philolegye
Ascendid up hegh above the skye
835 To be weddid, this lady vertuous,
Unto hir lord the god Mercurius,
As Marcian ynamed de Capelle
In his book of weddynge can you telle,
Ther concludyng in this mariage
840 The poete that whilom was so sage
That this lady, called Sapience,
Iwedded was unto Eloquence,
As it sat wel, by heavenly purveaunce,
Hem to be joyned be knot of aliaunce.
- lose chance
*Although he acted out of
if unknowing; innocently
have
overthrown
deserving who their
with
marriage*
- Judge; who
keep in mind
- without grace
- purposely
Hymenaeus (god of marriage)
Diana (as goddess of childbirth) wished
- one
Clio (muse of history); Calliope (mother of Orpheus)
One; sisters; three times three
Philology
- Mercury
Martiana Capella (see note)
- who once
Wisdom
- Since it was proper
Them; bond

Prima Pars

845	But bothe two, sothly, of entent At the weddyng in Thebes were absent, That caused after grete adversit�.	truly, with purposeful intention
	For fynal eende of that solempnyt� Was sorowe and woo and destruccioun,	outcome
850	Utter ruyne of this royal toun. Ther may no man helpe it nor socoure, For a tyme in joye though they floure.	
855	But at this weddyng, platly forto tellle, Was Cerberus, chief porter of helle;	plainly gatekeeper
	And Herebus, fader to hatrede,	Erebus, father
	Was ther present with his hool kynrede, <td>whole family</td>	whole family
	His wiff also with her browes blake, <td></td>	
	And her doghtren sorow forto make, <td>daughters</td>	daughters
	Hydous-chered and uggly forto see,	Dreadful looking
860	Megeara and Thesiphonee, Alecto ek with Labour and Envie, Drede and Fraude and Fals Trecherie, Tresoun, Povert�, Indigence, and Nede, And cruel Deth in his rente wede,	Tisiphone
		torn clothes
865	Wrechednesse, Compleynt, and eke Rage, Ferful pale Derknesse, crooked Age, Cruel Mars as eny tygre wood, Brennyng ire of unkynde blood, Fraternal Hate depe sett the rote,	mad
870	Save only deth that ther nas no bote, Assuryd othes at the fyn untrewe: All thise folk weren at this weddyng newe, To make the towne desolat and bare, As the story after shal declare.	Burning: unnatural deeply rooted Except for; remedy Sworn; and
875	But ay in Thebes with his walles stronge Edyppus regneth many day and longe. And as myn autour writ in wordys pleyn, By Jocasta he had sones tweyn, Ethycles and also Polymyte.	explain
		author
		two
		Eteocles; Polynices
880	And, in bokes as sondry clerkes write, Doghtres two ful goodly on to se, Of which the ton hight Antygone, And that other called was Ymeyne.	various
		the one was named Antigone Ismene

The Siege of Thebes

- Of her beauté inly sovercyn.
885 Edyppus, ay devoyde of werre and strif,
With Jocasta ladde a mery lyf
Tyl fortune of her iniquyté
Hadde envie of his prosperité.
For whan he shon most riche in his renoun,
890 From her wheel she plonged hym adoun
Out of his joye into sodeyn wo,
As she is wonke frowardly to do,
And namely hem that setten her affiaunce
Of earthly trust in her variaunce.
895 For whan this kyng passing of gret myght,
Sat with the quene upon a certeyn nyght,
Casuelly whan his folk echon
Out of chambre sodeynly wer gon,
Or he was war Jocasta gan byholde
900 The carectys of his woundes olde,
Upon his fete enpeented wonder depe,
Turmyng her face brast out forto wepe
So secrely he myght it not espie.
And she anon fille into a fantasie,
905 Ay on thys thyng musyng mor and moee,
And in her bed gan to sighe sore.
And whan the kyng conceyveth her distresse,
He gan enquere of her hevynesse
Fully the cause and occasioune,
910 For he wil wite, in conclusioun,
What her eileth and why she ferde so.
"My lorde," quod she, "withoutte wordes mo,
Parcel cause of this sodeyn rage
Is for that I in my tender age
915 Had a lorde inamed Layus,
Kyng of this toune, a man right vertuous,
Be whom I hadde a sone wonder fair,
Likly tabene his successour and hair;
But by cause his dyvynours tolde
920 At his birthe soothly that he sholde,
Yif he have lyf, be fatal destanyé
Sleen his fader (it may non other be);
- plunged
adversely
them; their faith
her mutability
- By chance; each one*
- Before
sor
- burst
notice
- immediately; imagining*
Always; concentrating
- realized
inquire
- know
pains; feared
said; in brief
- A portion; illness*
- named
powerful
- By; exceedingly*
to be; heir
- soothsayers*
truly

Prima Pars

	For which the king his fate to eschewe	avoid
	Bad me in hast, as hym thoghte dewe,	Commanded; appropriate
925	To sle the childe and have therof no routh.	pity
	And I anon bad withoute slouth	delay
	To certeyn men, up peyne of jugemente,	on
	To execute the comaundemente	
	Of the king, as I gaf hem in charge.	
930	And forth they gon to a forest large	gave them
	Adjacent unto this contré,	went
	Percen his fete, and honge hym on a tre,	Belonging
	Nat parfoumyng th'execucion:	carrying out
	(On hym they hadde such compassioune),	such
935	Lefte hym ther, and hom resort ageyn,	returned
	Beyng in doute and in non certeyn	
	At theyre repeire, as they tolden alle,	return
	Of this childe what afterward is falle,	happened
	Save they saide huntys han hym founde,	huntmen have
940	Which lad hym forth and his feet unbounde	Who conveyed
	But to what coost they coude not declare.	region; say
	Which parcel is of myn evel fare,	state of mind
	Grounde and cause of myn hevy chere,	sad appearance
	Considered ek the woundes that appere	appear
945	Upon youre fete, and woot not what they mene.	do not know
	And on thyng ay is at myn herte grene,	one; fresh
	My lord, alias, but of newe date:	recent
	Kyng Layus slayen was but late	recently
	At a castel nygh by this contré,	close
950	Upon youre comyng into this cité,	At
	Al this yweied and reckned into on	weighed; taken together
	Maketh myn herte hevy as a ston,	
	So that I can counsel non nor rede."	I know; advice
	And with that word the kyng lift up his hede,	
955	And abrayd with sharpe sighes smerte,	cried out; bitter
	And al this thing be ordre gan adverte,	consider
	Ceriously be good avisement,	From beginning to end; deliberation
	And by signes cleer and evident	
	Conceyveth wel, and sore gan repente	Understood
960	It was hymself that Jocasta mente.	
	And whan the quene in manere segh hym pleyn,	sore; lament

The Siege of Thebes

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| | By her goddes she gan hym to constreyne
To shewen out the cause of his affray,
And it expowne, and make no delay, | <i>urge</i>
<i>disclose; consternation</i> |
| 965 | Crop and root shortly, why that he
Entred first into that contré,
Fro when he kam and fro what regioun. | <i>Branch and root (i.e., the whole thing)</i> |
| | But he hir put in dilusious,
As he had done it for the nonys, | <i>whence</i>
<i>false impression</i> |
| 970 | Til at laste he brak out atonys
Unto the queene and gan a processe make
First how he was in the forest take,
Wounded the feet and so forth everythyng. | <i>for the occasion</i>
<i>at once</i>
<i>narration</i> |
| | Of his cherishing with Polyboun the kyng,
And hool the cause why he hym forsoke, | <i>taken</i> |
| 975 | And in what wise he the weye toke
Toward Thebes as Appollo bad,
And of fortune how that he was lad
Wher that Spynx kepte the mounteyn; | <i>all</i> |
| 980 | And how that he slough also in certeyn
Kyng Layus at the castel gate,
Towardes nyght whan it was ful late;
And how to Thebes that he gan hym spede | <i>slew</i> |
| | To fynden oute the stok of his kynrede:
Which unto hym gan to wexe couth; | <i>family</i> |
| 985 | For by processe of his grene youth
He fonde out wel, be reknyng of his lif,
That she was both his moder and his wif. | <i>began to be known</i>
<i>the tale of</i> |
| | So that al nyght and suing on the morow | <i>following on until morning</i> |
| 990 | Atwene hem two gan a newe seeowe,
Which unto me were tedious to telle;
For therupon, yif I shulde dwelle, | <i>them</i> |
| | A long space it wolde occupie. | <i>if</i> |
| E3 | But ye may reden in a tragedye | |
| 995 | Of moral Senyk fully his endyng,
His dool, his meschief, and his compleysyng,
How with sorow and unweldy age | <i>Seneca (see note to line 994)</i> |
| | This Edippus fille into dotage, | <i>grief; sorrow; lamentation</i> |
| | Lost his wit and his worldly delit, | <i>decrepit</i> |
| 1000 | And how his sonnes had hym in despit, | <i>fell</i>
<i>pleasure</i>
<i>sons; contempt</i> |

Prima Pars

	And of disdeyn tok of hym no kepe, And booke seyn his eyen out he wepe. And as myn auctour liketh to devise, As his sones rebuke hym and dispise,	<i>out of scorn; care tell how; eyes author; tell mistrust</i>
1005	Upon a day in a certeyn place Out of his hede his eyen he gan race And cast at hem, he can non other bote; And of malice they trad hem under fote, Fully devoide both of love and drede.	<i>eyes; tear out them; knows; relief trod them; foot awe</i>
1010	And whan Edippus for meschief was thus dede, Withinne a pytte made in the erthe lowe Of cruelte his sones han hym throwe, Wers than serpent or eny tigre wood. Of cursid stok cometh unkynde blood,	<i>into; pit have mad unnatural</i>
1015	As in story ye may rede her toforn, Al be the roos grow out of a thorn. Thus of Edippus, whan he was blyd and old, The wrecched ende I ha you pleynly told. For which shortly to man and child I rede	<i>Although; rose have advise</i>
1020	To be wel war and to taken hede Of kyndely right and of conscience To do honor and dieu reverence To fader and moder of what estat thei be, Or certeyn ellis they shul nevere the.	<i>natural due father; mother; whatever social rank otherwise; thrive</i>
1025	For who that is not to hem debonayr In spech, in port for to trete hem fair, Hem to obeye in honeste and drede, And to cherissh of what they han nede, I dar afferme — exceptyng non astat —	<i>courteous behavior Them; with decorum and reverence care for social rank</i>
1030	That he shall first be infortunat In alle his werk both on see and lond, And of what thyng that he take on hond Fortune froward to hym and contrayre, Wayst of his good, pleynly and appaire.	<i>undertake adverse</i>
1035	Fynde plentie of contek, were, and striff, Unhappy ende and shortnesse of liff, And gracelees of what he hath at do, Hatred of God and of man also. Therfor no man be herof rekles.	<i>Destruction; property; weakened dissension ill-fortuned</i>

The Siege of Thebes

- 1040 But make youre myroue of Ethiocles
And his brother called Polomyte,
Which in such thynge gretlich were to wite,
As ye shal here of hem how it fil.
And whan we ben descendid doune this hil
1045 And ypassed her the lowe vale,
I shal begynne the remnant of my tale.

*Name
happened*

passed

Explicit Prima Pars istius codicilli.
Incipit Secunda Pars Eiusdem.

Secunda Pars.

- Passed the throp of Bowtoun on the Ble,
By my chilyndre I gan anon to se
Thorgh the sonne that ful cler gan shyne
1050 Of the clok that it drogh to nyne
And saugh also the silver dropes shene
Of the dewe, lich peerlys on the grene,
Vapoured up into the eire alofte,
Whan Zephyrus with his blowing softe
1055 The wedere made lusty, smoth, and feir,
And right atempre was the hoolsom eir —
The same hour all the hoole route
Of the pylgrymes ryding round aboute,
In my tale whan I gan precede,
1060 Rehercynge forth as it was in dede,
Whan Edippus buryed was and grave,
How his sones the kyngdom for to have
Among hemself be ful mortal hate
For the crowne gon to debate
1065 Which of hem justly shal succede
And the sceptre of the toun possede,
Adverting nought neither to right ne wronge
But ech of hem to make her partie stronge
And his querele proudly to sustene:
1070 From whoos hertes was devoyded clene
Of brotherhode the faithful alliance.
Fals covetise so made hem at distaunce,

*village: Boughton under Blean
portable sundial; immediately*

*approached
bright
pearls
air*

*pleasant
very mild; healthful air
whole group*

*Recounting
interred*

*themselves by murderous hatred
contend*

*possess
Neither taking heed of
them; their side
claim
fully lacking*

Secunda Pars

- Fully woryng into destrucciou
And ruyne of this noble toun.
- 1075 So hoote brente the hanred and envie
Of bothe two thorgh pompous surquedye
That nowther wold pleynly in a poynt
Other forber; they stod in such disjoynce
How as they hadde of berthe be foreyns,
arrogant pride
neither
tolerate; conflict
As though; from birth been strangers
- 1080 Tyl of the toune the noble citezeyns,
Knyghtes, barounes with many worthi lord,
Shope a way to mak hem of accord,
And to set hem in quyete and in pees.
But for his part this Ethiocles
Devised; them
- 1085 Allegge gan that he was first yborn,
For which he ought of resoun go toforn
In the cité to be crowned kyng.
Claimed
first
- 1090 Sith be lawe ther was no lettyng.
For unto hym longeth the herytage
Be dissent and be title of age.
But Polymyte of ful heigh disdeyn
Al opynly gan replie ageyn
Since; obstacle
belonged; inheritance
By; right
- 1095 Regaly and domynacioun
And the lordship hooly of the toun,
And he right sought, out of the cyté
But lyve in exile and in poveré,
Ful concludyng, withoute feir and dred,
Royal power; dominion
completely
nothing at all
- 1100 Rather than suffre that he wil be ded.
And thus, alias, thorgh her envious strif,
At the ende everich loste his lif,
At gret mischief as ye shal after here.
But thylke tyme the lordes al yfere
contentious
each one
sorrow; hear
same; together
- 1105 Ful bysily did her dyligence,
By gret avis and ful high prudence,
To settyn hem in quyete and in reste,
Conseylyng hem pleynly for the beste,
To leve her strif of wisdam and resoun
With much thought
them
- 1110 And condescende to some conclusioun
Which to both myghte most availe;
- set aside; out of*
resolution
benefit

The Siege of Thebes

- That fynaly thorgh her governaille,
The lordes alle beyng tho present,
They han hem broght to be of on assent,
1115 Of on hert as brother unto brother,
Everich of hem to regnen after other,
Yeer be yeer as it cam aboute,
So that the ton shal absent hym oute
1120 Fully that yeer and hymsilven guye
Be his manhode and his chyvalrye,
~~1120~~ Haunte hymself in dedys marcial,
Whil his brother in his see royal
Holdeth his sceptre the cité to governe;
And wham the yeer his cours hath ronne yeme
1125 And is come out, he shal ha repair
To regne in Thebes lik as lord and hair,
There to receyve fully his dignyté,
Whil the tother voideth the cité,
Paciently taking his aventure
1130 To he ageyn his honure may recure.
Thus entrechaunge every yere they shal:
The ton ascendeth; that other hath a fal.
They most obeye of hert and take it wel,
Lich as the tourn resorseth of the whel.
1135 For this was hool the composicioun
Atwene the bretheren and convencioune,
Ful knet up be gret avisement,
Tofor the goddys be oth of sacrament,
Never after to groche ne to varye
1140 But accomplisshen shortly and not tarye,
Lich as th'acord enrolled in the toune,
From poynt to poynt made mencioune.
But alderfirst be reson of his age,
Ethyocles hadde th'avantage
1145 To regne afoern and to were a croune,
Polomyte hym hastynge out of toune
Durynge that yeer (it may non other be),
Whil his brother sat in his royal see
Ful richely upon fortunes wheel;
1150 And rode hym forth armed bright in stede,
- then*
in agreement
Each one
the one; withdraw
guide
occupy; martial exploits
seat
it; quickly
return
heir
honor
the other leaves
until; recover
exchange (change places)
turning returns
whole; agreement
Between
concluded; deliberation
Before
afterwards to complain
written in a roll
first of all
before; wear
hastening
Fortune's

Secunda Pars

- This Polymyte, sothly as I rede,
Hymsilf allone on a ryal stede,
Withoute guyde al the longe day,
Beyng aferd to kepe the heghe way,
In his herte havynge suspiciooun
To his brother of malice and tresoun,
Lest he pursued thorgh fals unkynd blood
To have hym ded for covetise of good,
That he alion myght ha possessioun
Duryng his lif fully of the toun.
For which in hast, havynge no felawe,
Polymyte aside gan hym drawe
By a foest joynyng to the see,
Knowyng right nought the syt of the contré,
Ful of hilles and of hegh mounteyns,
Craggy roches and but fewe playns,
Wonder dredful and lothsom of passage,
And therwithal ful of beestis rage,
Holdyng his way of herte no thyng light,
Maast and wery to it drowe to nyght.
And al the day beholdyng enviroun,
He neyther saugh castel, toure, ne toun,
The whiche thing greved hym ful sore.
And sodeynly the se began to rore,
Wynde and tempest hidously t'arise.
The reyn doune bete in ful grisly wise,
That man and beest therof were adrad
And negh for fer gan to wexe mad,
As it sempte by the woeful sownes
Of tygres, beres, boores and lyounes,
Which for refut hemself foeto save
Everich in hast drogh unto his cave.
But Polymyte in this tempest huge,
Allas the whil, fyndeth no refuge,
Nor hym to schrowde saugh nowher no socour
Til it was passed almost mydnyght hour
A large space that the sterres clere,
The clowdes voyde, in hevene did appere,
So that this knyght out of the forest large
- truly
royal stallion
take; main road
acted; unnatural
companion
approach
region
unpleasant
savage
Continuing on; not at all cheerful
Tired; until
SEE; FEAR
best; ghastly manner
terrified
grew insane
seemed; sounds
refuge
Every one; drew
shelter
having left

The Siege of Thebes

1188	Gan approchen to the londe of Arge, Seyng a palays myghty of beeldyng, Of which Adrastus called was the kyng, A manly man riche and wonder sage And ronne was somdel into age,	Argos construction <i>powerful; wise advanced</i>
1195	Born of the ile which called is Chysoun, And whylom sone of the kyng Chaloun. And for his witt, in story as is kouth, He chosen was in his tendre youth Of alle Arge to be crowned kyng.	<i>long ago; Talos skill; history; known</i>
1200	Chief of alle Grece by record of wryting, Not be dissent nor successiououn But al only of fre elecciououn To holde of Arge the sceptre in his bond, As most worthy of alle Grekes lond,	<i>by descent</i>
1205	Loved and drad for wisdam and justice. And as the story pleynly can devise, This worthy kyng hadde doghtres two, Passyng fair and right good also. It were to longe her beauté to discryve.	<i>held in awe self daughters Exceedingly too; describe</i>
1210	And the eldest called was Argive, Deyfyle ynamed the seconde.	Argia
1215	And Adrastus, lich as it is founde, This worthy kyng hadde sone non, To succede after he be gon,	<i>Delphile no son</i>
1220	For which he was duryng al his lyff Trist in hert and passingly pensif. But hool his trust and his hope stod Be aliaunce of some worthy blood Brought inne by mene of his doghtres tweyn,	<i>Sad; melancholic whole</i>
1225	That he shal be relefed of his peyne Thorgh recomfort of some hie mariage. And soothly yet ful high in his corage He troubled was be occasion Of a sweven and a vision	<i>remedy; noble truly; heart dream</i>
	Shewed to hym upon a certeyn nyght. For as hym thought in his inward sight Whyl he slept, by cleer inspecciououn, A wylde boor and a fers lyoun	<i>imagination</i>

Secunda Pars

	Possede shal, thise bestes in her rage.	Possess
1230	His doghtres two be bond of mariage In shorte tyme within a certeyn day, Which broght his herte in ful grete affray. But thing in soth that destiné hath shape Her in this world ful hard is to eskape,	alarm <i>in truth</i>
1235	Eke merveylous a man t'eschewe his faate. And Polymytle, of whom I spak late, With the tempest bete and al bereyned, Be grace only the cité hath atteyned, Wher Adrastus ful stanty of degré	<i>Also; avoid</i> <i>recently</i> <i>beaten; drenched with rain</i>
1240	Thilike tyme helde his royal see. The troublly nyght, myrk and ful obscure, Hath brought this knyght only be aventure Thorgh the cité, enclosed with a wal, Unto the paleys chief and principal,	<i>At that time; seat</i> <i>dim; dark</i> <i>by chance</i>
1245	Wher as the kynge in his chambre alofte Lay in his bed and slepte wonder softe. Eke alle his folk hadde her chambres take, Lik as Fortune peraunner hadde shape, The silfe tyme because it was so late;	<i>Also; their</i> <i>by chance</i> <i>some</i> <i>by chance</i>
1250	And casuelly no porter at the gate, As it had be right for the nonys. And in a porche bilt of square stonyis, Ful myghtely enarched envyroun, Wher the domys and plees of the toun	<i>for the occasion</i>
1255	Weren execut and lawes of the kyng. And ther this knyght, without mor taryng, Wery and maat from his stede alight, Hangynghe the rene in al the hast he myght Upon his arme surer hym to kepe.	<i>delay</i> <i>exhausted</i> <i>Tying; rein; haste</i>
1260	And leyde hym doune and gan anon to slepe, As hym sempte that tyme for the beste. And whil that he lay thus forto reste, Of aventure ther cam a knyght ryding, The worthiest in this world lyvynge.	<i>immediately</i> <i>it seemed to him</i>
1265	Curteys, lowly, and right vertuous, As seith myn autour, called Tidus, Eurous in armes and manly in werkynge,	<i>humble; powerful</i> <i>author; Tydeus</i> <i>Prosperous; deeds</i>

The Siege of Thebes

	Of his byrthe sone unto the kyng Of Calydonye, a londe of gret renoun.	By Calydon
1270	And he, alas, out of that regioun Exiled was for he his brother sclowe, As Stace of Thebes wroth the manere howe, Al be that he to hym no malys mente. For on a day, as they on huntyng wente	because; slew Status Although; hatred
	In a forest for herte and for hynde, So as he stod under a grene lynde And casuellie lete his arow slippe, He slough his broder called Menalippe; Thorgh mortal sort his honde was begyled,	bucks; hind lime tree accidentally slew; Menalippe
1280	For which he was banished and exiled, As the lawe narowe sette his charge. And for this caas he cam first to Arge, Into the porche wher Polymyse slepe, Of aventure ere he toke eny kepe,	deadly chance; deceived
1285	The same nyght hidously beseyn With the tempest of thonder wynde and reyn; And fift also anoy and gret damage Thorgh the forest holding his passage, As Polymyse hadde do toforn,	By chance before; notice in a dreadful state
1290	In peryl ofte likly to be lorn, With beestes rage set on every side, Til of grace withouten eny guyde He rode thorgh Arge the grete myghty toun, Stregh to the paleys and the chief dongoun,	[he] felt; discomfort
1295	Lich as I tolde wher Polymyse lay; And at his comyng made a gret affray, For he was blynde thorgh derknesse of the nyght And hym to gwy he ne fonde no light	did before lost savage Until by chance
	Whan he cam inne of priket nor of torche,	guide
1300	Til he unwarily entered the porche And wold han take ther his herbygage, But Polymyse stert up in a rage, Sodeynly awaked as I rede,	candle awares lodging started
	With the nyng of his proude stede.	awakened; imagine
1305	And first of al, whan that he byhelde A knyght yarmyd upon his brest a shelde	neighing armed with

Secunda Pars

	And gan the maner of his aray adverte,	<i>dress notice</i>
	Of verrey ire upon his hors he sterte,	<i>true; mounted</i>
	And cruelly gan tydinges enquere	<i>fiercely; news ask</i>
1310	Whensys he cam or what he dede there,	<i>Whence</i>
	And bad in hast his answer to devise.	<i>deliver</i>
	And Tydeus, in ful humble wise,	
	Answerd ageyn of verrey gentillesse	
	And seid in soth that of hegh distresse,	<i>great trouble</i>
1315	Of the tempest and the derke nyght.	
	He dryven was lich an erraunt knyght,	<i>wandering</i>
	Of nede only and necessite	<i>By</i>
	And high constreyn of his adveesite,	
	To take loggyng wher so that he myght,	
1320	And in that courte therfor he alight	
	Without mor, thenkyng non outrage	<i>trespass</i>
	Nor to no wight moving ne damage.	<i>provoking</i>
	Than Polymyte of malys and hegh pride	<i>Then; hated</i>
	Tolde hym shortly he shuld not abide	<i>remain</i>
1325	Nor logge ther, thogh he had it sworn.	<i>even if</i>
	"For I," quod he, "toke it up toforn	<i>before</i>
	And wil it kepe during al this nyght,	
	I seie thee platly maugré al thy myght."	<i>plainly despite</i>
	Quod Tydeus, "That is no curtesie	
1330	Me to devoyde but rather vileynde,	<i>cast out</i>
	Yif ye take hede that seme a gentil knyght.	<i>If, notice who</i>
	And I suppose ye han no title of right	<i>have; claim</i>
	To this loggyng be way of heritage	<i>inheritance</i>
	More than have I, for alle youre felle rage.	<i>bitter</i>
1335	And, pardé, yit it shal be no desese,	<i>By God; inconvenience</i>
	Til tomorrow we thogh ye do me ese,	<i>if you assist me</i>
	Of gentillesse only with youre leve;	<i>[Out] of permission</i>
	To suffre me, it shal littil greve."	<i>accommodate</i>
	But ay the more Tydeus spak faire,	
1340	Polomyte was froward and contrayre	<i>hostile</i>
	And shortly seide it geyneth not to stryve,	<i>debate</i>
	That of force he shal devoide blyve,	<i>withdraw quickly</i>
	Or uttrely atwen hem bothe two	<i>them</i>
	This thynge to trie he most have ado.	<i>settle (by arms); undertake</i>
1345	And Tydeus, seyng no bettre mene,	<i>seeing</i>

The Siege of Thebes

- Ful lik a knyght in steel yarmyd clene,
Without abood faste gan hym spedē
Wonder lyvely forto take his stede;
And thus thies knyghtes, pompous and ellat,
1350 For litil cause fillen at debat.
And as they ranne togider on hoesbak,
¹³⁵² Everich on other first his spere brak.
And after that, ful surquedous of pride,
With sharpe swerdes they togyder ryde
1355 Ful yrously thise myghty championys,
In her fury lik tygres or lyouns.
And as they hurtle that all the paleis shoke,
Kyng Adrastus out of his slep awoke,
And made in hast his chamberleynes calle
1360 And thorugh the courte his worthy knyghtes alle,
Comaundyng hem to descende and se
And reporte what it myghte be,
This wonder noyse in his courte be nyght.
And whan they saugh two straunge knyghtes fight
1365 In platys bright and in thikke male,
Withoutute juge, they hadde grete mervale
And disamayed of this unkouth thing,
As they fond tolde so the kyng.
And Adrastus for derknesse of the nyght,
1370 From his chambre with many toeche light
Into the courte is discended doun,
All his meynē stondyng envyroun,
Of thydes knyghtes having ful gret wonder.
And of manhode he put hem first asonder,
1375 Hem comaundyng lich a gentil kyng,
To leuen her strif and sesen of fighting;
And entred inne with a knyghtly loke;
And first fro hem her swerdes both he took,
Affirmyng ek, as to his fantasie,
1380 It was a rage and a gret folye
So wilfully her lyves to juparte,
Withoutute juge her querel to departe
And specialy in the derke nyght
Whan neither myght of other han no sight,

Secunda Pars

1385	Charching hem upon peyne of her lif To dissever and stynlyn of her strif. And Tydeus in al the hast he myght, Ful humblely from his stede alight, And right mekely with cheer and contenance	Charging them separate; cease
1390	Put hym hooly in the governance Of Adrastus in al maner thing. And Polymyte mad ek no taryng To light also and wolde not withsey The kyngges biddynge lowly to obey,	dismount; oppose humbly due
1395	So as hym ought with diew reverence. And as thei stood both in his presence, He gan enquere first of her estaat, The cause also why they weren at debat, Of her cuntrees soothly and her age;	ask about; social rank in conflict homelands lineage
1400	He axed ek touching her lynage, Be discent of what stok thei wee born. And Tydeus his answer gaf toform; Toldie pleynly and made no lesyng, How that he was sone to the kyng	gave form lie
1405	Of Caledoyn and rightful heir thereto; And of his exile the sooth he told also, As ye han herde in the storye rad. And Polymyte, with cheer and face sad, Unto the kyng touching his contré	truth read serious
1410	Seyde he was born in Thebes the cité, And Jocasta, the grete famous quene, His moder was withouten eny wene. But of his fader whilom kyng and lord, For verray shame he spak not a word.	doubt once true
1415	Only for he (yif I shal not feyne) His fader was and brother bothe tweyne: The which, in sooth, he was ful loth to tellle, And eke the kyng wold hym not compelle Of gentillesse but bad, withoute blame,	(<i>f.</i> dissemble truth; reluctant
1420	Of his birth forto have no shame; For hool the caas and maner every dell Touchyng his kynne he knewe the ground ful wel, Lich as it was, by ful clier report.	Out of nobility; ordered; reproof part Concerning; family

The Siege of Thebes

	Enforsyng hym forto do confort	Striving
1425	With all his myght and his bysy peyne, This manly kyng to the knyghtes tweyne; And to hem seide, afoen hym as they stood, He wiste wel that of ful worthy blood They were dyscended, touchyng ther kynrede;	<i>before</i> <i>noble</i>
1430	And made in hast his officeres lede The straunge knyghtes beyng at debat Thorgh his paleys to chambres of estat, Eche by hymself forto take his ese.	<i>high rank</i>
1435	And everything, in soth, that myght hem plesse, Was offred hem lich to her estates. And whan they weren disarmed of her platis,	<i>armor</i>
	Cusshewes, greves, and her sabatons, <i>leg armor (see note)</i> , skin armor, armored shoes	
	Her harneys voyded and her habergons, <i>set of armor taken off; coat of mail</i>	
1440	Tweyne mantels unto hem wer broght, Frett with peerle and riche stonys, wrought Of cloth of golde and velvety cremysyn, Ful richely furred with ermyne,	<i>Adorned; pearls</i> <i>velvet crimson</i> <i>ermine</i>
	To wrap hem inne ageyn the colde morowe,	
	After the rage of her nyghtes soeowe,	
1445	To take her reste to the sonne arise.	<i>until</i>
	And than the kyng in ful prudent wise	<i>then</i>
	First of alle was not nekkeles	<i>negligent</i>
	The knyghtes hertes for to sett in pees,	
	That ever after, I dar afferme it wel,	
1450	Eche was to other trew as eny stede During her lif both in woord and dede Under a knotte bounde of brotherede.	<i>sworn bond; brotherhood</i>
	And Adrastus the worthy kyng famous	
	A feeste made riche and plentevous	<i>plentiful</i>
1455	To thise knyghtes, hymself therat present.	
	And after mete ful goodly he hath sent,	
	This noble kyng, for his doghters dere	
	Of gentyllesse forto make chere	
	To the knyghtes come fro so ferre.	
1460	And lik in soth as Lucyfer the sterre	<i>Lucifer (the sun; see note)</i>
	Gladeth the morow at his uprysing,	
	So thou ladies at her incomyng,	<i>those; arrival</i>

Secunda Pars

- With the stremes of her eyen clere,
Goodly apport, and wommanly manere,
Contenaunce and excellent faynesse,
To alle the court broghten in gladnesse.
For the frechnesse of her hevenly cheres
So agreeable was to the straungers
At her entré that in special
1465 Hem thought it lik a thynge celestial,
Enhastyng hem in ful knyghtly wise
Ageynes hem goodly to arise.
And as they mette with humble contenaunce,
Ful konyngly did her observaunce,
1470 Hem conveying to her sitting place.
But soothly I ha leyser non nor space
To reherce and put in remembraunce
Hoonly the maner of her daliaunce.
It were to longe for you to abide.
1475 But wel I woot that the god Cupide,
By influence of his myghty hond
And the fervence of his fliry broond,
Her metyng first fortuned hath so wel
That his arowes of gold and not of stiel
1480 Iperced han the knyghtes hertes tweyn
Thorgh the brest with such a lusty peyn
That ther abood sharpe as spere or launce,
Depe yficed the poynt of remembraunce,
Which may not lightly raced ben away.
1485 And thus in joye they dryve forth the day
In play and revel for the knyghtes sake.
And towardes nyght they her chambres take
At dieu tyme, as her fader bad;
And on her way the knyghtes han hem lad
1490 Reverently up be many staire;
Takynge lieve gan anon repaire
To her logging in a ful statly toure,
Assigned hem be the harberioure.
1495 And after spices pleynly and the wyn
In coppes grete wroght of gold ful fyn,
Withoute taryng to bed streight they gon.
- eyes bright
bearing

brightness; appearance

Hastening

politely

have
tell

too

know

torch
favored

Pierced

remained
fixed
pulled out

retire
proper

lodging: splendid
knight who arranges lodgings for guests
spices (or spice cakes; see note)

The Siege of Thebes

- Touchyng her reste, wher thei slepte or non,
Demeth ye lovers that in such maner thing
B'experience han fully knowlechyg.
1505 For it is nat declared in my boke.
But as I fynde, the kyng al nyght woke,
Thoghtful in herte, the story specifies,
Musing sore and ful of fantasies.
First advertyngh the grete worthynesse
1510 Of this knyghtes and the semlynesse,
Her lusty youth, her force and her manhode,
And how thei weren ycome of royal blode.
Al this he ganne to revolve aboule,
Ay in his herte havyng a maner doute,
1515 Atwene two hangyng in balaunce
Where he shulde maken an aliaunce
Atwene his doghtren and the knyghtes tweyn.
For on thyng ay his herte gan constreyn,
The remembrance of his avisoun,
1520 Of which toform I made mencioune,
Touchyng the lyon and the wilde boor
(It nedeth nat to reherce it mor),
Casting away in his fantasie,
What it myghte cleerly signyfie.
1525 This dirke dreme; this was hid and cloos.
But on the morowe Adrastus up aroos,
And to the temple the righte way he took,
And gan preie devoutly on his book
To the goddes his dreme to speefle.
1530 And they hym bad homward forto bye
And to beholde in the knyghtes sheldys
The felle beestys peynted in the feedlys,
Which shal to hym, be cleer inspeccoun,
Ful pleynly make declaracioun
1535 Of his dreme which he hadde in the nyght.
And Adrastus enhasted hym ful right
In her sheldes wisly to beholde,
Wher that he saugh, as the goddes tolde,
In the sheldes hangyng upon hokys
1540 The beestes rage with her mortal lokys.
- whether
who
recorded
speculation
considering
one; distress
before
repeat
obscure dream; hidden; enclosed
clarify
hasten
shields
fierce; heraldic fields (see note)
explanation
saw
hooks
ferocious looks

Secunda Pars

	And to purpos, lik as writ Bochas, Polymynte ful streght embraced was In the hyde of a feerce lyoun;	regarding this matter; <i>Boccaccio</i> <i>covered</i>
1545	And Tydeus aboven his haberious A gypen hadde hidous sharpe and hoor, Wroght of the bristels of a wylde boor.	<i>mail jacket</i> <i>short doublet; grey</i> <i>bristles</i>
	The whiche beestis, as the story lerys, Wer wroght and bete upon her banerys, Displaied brood whan they shulde fight.	<i>teaches</i> <i>embossed; banners</i> <i>Unfurled</i>
1550	Wheroft the kyng whan he hadde a sight At hys reperir in herte was ful glad, And with a face ful demur and sad With his lordes, that he about hym hadde,	<i>return</i> <i>serious</i>
	To the temple he thys knyghtes ladde. And whan they hadde with all circumstaunces	<i>these</i>
1555	Of rytys olde don her observaunces, Hom to the court they resort agyn. And in an halle riche and wel beseyn, This worthy kyng of herte lyberal	<i>splendid; furnished</i> <i>generous</i>
1560	Made a feeste solempne and royal, Which in deyntys surly dyd excelle. But it were veyn every cours to telle, Her straunge sewes and her sotyltees,	<i>delicacies surely</i> <i>wasteful</i>
	Ne how they sat lik to her degrees; For lak of tyme I lat it overslyde.	<i>exotic souces; ornamental desserts</i> <i>according to their rank</i>
1565	And after mete Adrastus toke asyde The knyghtes two and lik a prudent man In sykré wise thus his tale he gan. "Sirs," quod he, "I ne doute it sought	<i>pax by</i> <i>meal</i>
1570	That it is fressh and grene ay in your thought How that first by goddyns ordynauce, And after next thorgh fatys purveaunce, How that ye weren brought into this lond	<i>private</i> <i>new always</i>
1575	Bothe tweyn but now this laste nyght; Of whoos comyng I am ful glad and light First in myself, shortly to expresse, Whan I considre and se the liklynnesse	<i>foresight</i> <i>only</i>
	Of your personys with the circumstancys	<i>handsomeness</i>

The Siege of Thebes

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 1580 | And hool the maner of your governancys,
Seyng ful wel — wherto shuld I feyne —
Ye likly be herafter to atteyn
To grete estat and habundance of good
Thorgh youre birth and your royal blood: | <i>why; dissemble</i> |
| 1585 | Ye may not fayle but ye have wrong,
For ye are both manly and right strong.
And forto sette youre hertes mor at reste
My purpoos is I hope for the beste,
So that in you be no variance | <i>unless</i>
<i>disagreement</i> |
| 1590 | To make a knotte as be allyaunce,
Atwixe yow and my doghtres two,
Yif youre hertes accorde wel thereto.
And for I am fully in dyspeyr
To succede for to han an heir, | <i>of</i>
<i>despair</i> |
| 1595 | Therfor ye shal han possessioun
Duryng my lyf of half this regioun
Foerwith in hond and hool after my day.
Ther is no man that thereto shal sey nay.
And soothly after whan that I am grave, | <i>In advance; entirely; death</i> |
| 1600 | Eche of yow shal his party have
Of this kyngdām, as I have provided;
This to seyn, it shal be devyded
Atwen yow two, everich to be crowned,
Youre pourparties be equytē compowned | <i>buried</i>
<i>portion</i> |
| 1605 | So egally in every mannys sight
That ech of yow rejoysē shal his ryght.
And by your wit ye shul the lond amend,
And of manhode knightlylē it diffend
Ageyn oure enmyes and oure mortal fon. | <i>shares; settled</i> |
| 1610 | And for the daies passed ben and gon
Of my desyres and my lusty youth,
I am ful set forto make kouth
That ye shal han lik myn opynyoun
The governaunce of this regioun. | <i>inheritance</i> |
| 1615 | To this entente me semeth for the beste,
Ye to governe and I to lyve in reste,
Fully to folowe the lust of my desyris,
Hunte and hauke in wodes and ryverys | <i>foes</i>
<i>prepared; known</i>
<i>by my decree</i> |

Secunda Pars

- Whansoever I ha therto plesaunce,
1620 And for to han non other attendance
Unto nothing but unto myn ese.
For which shortly yif it agre and plese
That I have seid to you that be so wis
And be according unto youre avis,
1625 Delaieth not but in woordes pleyn
What yow semeth gif answerē ageyn."
And whan Adrastus hadde his tale fyned,
Tydeus with hed ful lowe enclyned,
As he that was a verray gentyl knyght,
1630 With al his power and his fulle myght
Ful humblyely thanked he the kyng
Touchyng his profre of so high a thyng
And for his parte seide he wolde assente
Fully of herte, nevere to repente.
1635 To all that ever the kyng hath sayd.
And Polymyte was also wel apayd,
In the story as it is comprehendid.
And so they ben bothe condescendyd
The kyngges wille to fulfille in dede
1640 From poymt to poymt and therupon procede,
Whersoever that they wynne or lese,
And Tydeus made his brother chese,
Of gentillesse and of curtesye,
Which that was most to his fantasye
1645 Of the sustren for to han to wive.
And he in soth chosen hath Argyve,
Which eldest was ful wommanly to se.
And Tydeus tok Deyphylee,
Of her beautē most sovereyn excellent.
1650 And Adrastus thorghoute his lond hath sent
For his lordes and his baronage
To be present at the mariage
Of the knytties and make no lettyng.
And they echon cam at his bidding
1655 In goodly wyse meke and ful benygne
Ageyn the day that he dide assigne.
And thyder cam ful many lusty knyght

The Siege of Thebes

	Ful wel beseyn and many lady bright From every coost and many frecessh sqwyer,	well appointed region; squire
1660	The story seith, and many comunere, To byholde the grete ryalte And the maner of thys solempnyte. But to telle all the circumstances Of justes, revel, and the dyvers daunces,	[af] commoner <i>jousts</i>
1665	The feestes riche, and the gyftes grete, The pryste sighes and the fervent hete Of lovys folk brennyng as the glede, And devyses of many sondry wede, The touches stole and th'amerous looks	secret; heat burning; coal heraldic symbols; clothes stolen <i>books</i>
1670	By sotyl craft leyd down lyne and hokes The jalous folk to traysshon and begyle In their awayt with many sondry wile — Al this in soth descriyven I ne can, But wel wote I the newe fame ran	amorous; betray snare truth describe know; rumor spread widely
1675	This menewhil with ful swift passage Unto Thebes of this mariage. And by report trewe and not yfeyned, The sounre therof the eeres hath atteyned, Myn auctor wrat, of Ethyocles,	made up round; ears
1680	Touchyng th'onour and the gret encres Of Polymyte heghly magryfied, And how that he newly was allied With Adrastus in the londe of Arge. The whiche thyng he gretly gan to charge,	 <i>contemplate</i>
1685	Dredyng inly that this mariage Shal after turne unto his damage, Sore musyng and castyng up and doun The grete power and the hegh renoun Of Adrastus, the which of Grekes land	 <i>pondering</i>
1690	Hadde al the power soget to his hand, Lest that he for Polymytes sake Wold upon hym a newe werre make, But yif that he, lik the convencioune, At tym sette delyvered the toun	subject sake
1695	To his broder by bond of oth besworn, Be covauntes assured her toform,	<i>Unless; following the agreement</i> <i>here before</i>

Secunda Pars

- Yif ye remembre late as I you told:
Which he was nat in purpos forto hold,
But from his heste caste forto varye,
1700 And therupon list no lenger tarye
Lich his desire to shape remedyes.
And ffirst he sente for his next allies
In whom he hadde most his affiaunce,
For his lordes that hadde governaunce
1705 Of his kyngdom to come to hym anon.
And whan they weren peesent everichon,
He seide pleynly, wesyng for his best,
That his hert shal never lyve in rest
But in sorowe and in a maner drede,
1710 Tyl his brother outrely be dede,
That he in Thebes in his royal sete
Myght allone regnen in quiete:
He mente hymself shortly, and non other,
Unperturbed of Polymytle his brother.
1715 And at this counsayl divers of entent,
I fynde wrt thee folkes were present —
Some in sooth that feithful were and trewe,
And some also that can chaunge of newe,
And other ek that betwixe tweyn
1720 Covertly kowde under colour feyn.
~~¶¶~~ The firste seide, aboven alle thyng,
Trouthe shulde longe to a kyng,
Of his word not be variable
But pleyn and hool as a centre stable.
1725 For trouthe first, withouten eny wene,
Is chief pylar that may a kyng sustene
~~¶¶~~ In joye and honour for to lede his lyff.
~~¶¶~~ For trouth whilom hadde a prerogatiſſ,
As of Esdre the book can specyfie;
1730 Record I take of prudent Neemye
That worthy kyngges for al her grete pride,
Wyn, and wymmen ben ek set asyde,
With all her power and domynacion
Havynge reward in comparisoun
1735 To trouthes myght and trouthes worthynesse.
- If; lately
did not intend
promise planned; deviate
wish; linger*
- close allies*
- every one
thinking*
- Until*
- devious in meaning
kinds of people*
- between the two*
- doubt
pillar*
- once; precedence
Exdras*
- Witness; Nehemiah*
- held at low value*
- by*

The Siege of Thebes

- For as Esdre pleynly doth expresse,
Who taketh hede, in the same place,
Be the influence sothly and the grace
Of trouthe allon this olde Neemye power
- 1740 Gat hym licence to reedifie
The wallys newe of Jerusalem. permission to rebuild
- ~~1742~~ Which trouth is tresour chief of every rewme.
For Salomon writ how that thynges tweyne — treasure principal; realm
- 1745 Trouthe and mercy lynked in a cheyne —
Preserve a kyng lik to his degré
From al meschife and adversité.
Allas, therfor that eny doublenesse, duplicity
~~1748~~ Variaunce, or unsicrenesse, instability
Chauge of weed or mutabilé,
Fraude or deceyte or unstabileté
Shuld in a kyng han domynacioun power
To causen after his destruccioun.
- 1755 Of kyngges redeth the story dounne be rowe,
And seth how many han ben overthowre to the end
Thorgh her falshede fro Fortunes Whel. see
For unto God pleseth never a del their
A kyng to ben double of entent, not at all
For it may happe that the world is blent duplicities in
Ful ofte sith be sleight of her werkynge. occur; blind
1760 But this the trouthe — God seeth everythyng many times by deceit
Right as it is, for ther may be no cloude
To forn his sight trouthe forto shrowde. Before; veil
It may be clipped and derked be disceyte, obscured; dimmed by deceit
By fals engyne liggyng in aweyte, cunning; ambush
- 1765 As a serpent forto undermyne;
~~1768~~ But at the last it wol clerly shyne, beams
Who that seith nay, shew his brighte bemes. realms
For it in soth of kyngdames and of reawmes
Is berer up and conservatrice
- 1770 From al meschife, sothfast mediatrice misfortune, truthful mediator
To God above, whoso list to se, wishes
To kepe a kyng in prosperité
On every side, as I afferme dar.
- For which, ye kyngges and lordes, beth wel war be

Secunda Pars

- 1775 Your bihestes justly foeto holde,
And thenk how Thebes with his walles olde
Distroied was — platly this no les —
For doublenesse of Ethiocles,
Which his puple after sore aboutt,
1780 Only for he nat by counsell wrought
Of hem that wern bothe trewe and wis
(Hym lyst nat worchen after her devys)
But lefte trouthe and sette his fantasye
To be governed by fals flaterye,
1785 That bad hym thenke how he was a knyght,
And to holde of force, more than right,
Duryng his lyf lordship of the toun,
And not to lese his possessioun
For no bond nor heestes mad toform,
1790 But lete his brother blowen in an horn,
Wher that hym lyst or pypen in a red.
This was the counsail platly and the reed
Of swich as liste nat to seyn the soth
But falsly flater with her wordes smoth.
1795 And whan they hadde hool her tale fyned,
Ethiocles fully is enclynnyd,
Whosoever therat laugh or wepe,
Lik her counsayl possessioun to kepe.
Who that sey nay or gruche therageyn;
1800 Hym to contrarye he thought was but veyn.
1805 But in this whyl hath the shene sonne
The twelve signes round aboute ronne
Sith Ethiole be just rekesyng
In Thebes was crowned lord and kyng.
Holdyng the sceptre and the dyademe,
1810 That be resoun, as it wolde seme,
The tyme was ful complet and the space
Of covenante he shulde voide his place
And Polymyte ek his journé make
Toward Thebes, pocessioun to take
Of dieu title but he hadde wronge,
Which thought in soth the yeer was wonder longe
Of his exil er it kam aboute.
- promises
plainly: lies
duplicity
afterwards; paid the penalty for
because; acted
advise
plainly; advice
those who did not wish; truth
deceitful
entirely their tale finished
grumble
oppose
bright
Since
By agreement
due; was mistaken
Who

The Siege of Thebes

- And for he hadde in hert a manere doute,
1815 Lest in his broder ther wer falshed found,
T' aquyte hymself lik as he was bound,
To Adrastus he gan declar his herte,
Beseching hym this mater to adverte
And therupon to give a counsayl sone
1820 Touchyng his right what was best to done,
Wher it was bet to gon or to abyde
Or liche a knyght manfully to ryde
Hymself allone and make no massage,
For to chalaunge his rightful heritage
1825 Withinne Thebes eyther be pees or stryf,
And therupon to juparte his lif.
Thus was he set for al his fierce brother.
But Adrastus sothly thought another
Bet was to sende than hymself to gon,
1830 Lest he were trapped among his mortal son,
Havynge his brother suspecte in this cas
That be fraude or be some fallas
He wolde werk to his destruccioun,
Yif he wer hardye to entren into toun.
1835 For which he bad hym prudently tak hede,
Ful concludyng how it was mor sped
That some other be to Thebes sent
To appareyve fully the entent
Of Ethiole outward be some signe
1840 And wher that he his croune wil resigne
For thilke yeer, lik as he made his ooth,
And whan he knewe how his purpos goth
Therupon to werken and procede:
Thus Adrastus wisely gan hym rede.
1845 And whil they trete upon this matere,
Tydeus with a manly chere
Sade uttely for his broder sake
This massage he wold undertake
With hool th' emprise of th' embassytat,
1850 Wer it wilful or infortunat:
He wil not spare what so that betide.
But Adrastus on the tother syde
- treachery*
To discharge his duties
reveal his intentions
ponder

Whether: better

either
risk
resolved; arrogant
truly; someone else
better
enemies

by: deceit

If: bold enough

advantage

judge

whether

what he intends
act

discussed

Said decidedly: brother's

enterprise: embassy
prosperous
forbear

Secunda Pars

	And Polymyte in conclusioun Werem contrarye to that opynyoun	<i>opposed</i>
1855	And seide soothly, as hem thoghte right, Sith that he was so wel a preved knyght And discended of so worthy blood, That they nolde for non erthly good, For all Thebes with the regalye,	<i>acknowledged</i>
	Put his body in such jupartie.	<i>would not kingdom</i>
1860	But all this thyng avayled hem right nocht, For he wol forth how dere that it be boght, Takynge lieve first of all th'estatys, And armed hym in mayle and sure platys,	<i>no matter what the cost</i>
1865	And shope hym forth upon his journe. Who made sorowe but Deyphylé,	<i>chain mail and armor plates</i>
1870	With bitter teeres dewed al her face, Ful ofte sith swownyng in the place, Trist and mournyng in her blake wede Whan she saugh that he took his stede?	<i>got ready to start</i>
	So inwardly encres gan her mone, Seyng her lord so ride forth allone Upon his way, this worthy Tydeus.	<i>Oftentimes; fainting Sad; clothes</i>
1875	And in al hast, the story telleth us, He spedde hym so, makyng no delayes, That in space of a fewe daies The hege toures of Thebes he gan se,	<i>grief</i>
	And entred is into the cité, Wisly enquiryng wher the paleys stood;	<i>Seeing</i>
1880	And lik a knyght thidere he streight rood, Markyd ful wel in many manrys sight, Lich Mars hymself, in stiel armed bright, Til he atteyned hath the chief dongoun,	<i>high towers</i>
	Wher as the kyng helde his mancyoun.	
1885	And thorgþ the paleys with a knyghtly look Into the hall the righte way he took, From his stede whan he lighte doun, Not afered but hardy as lyoun,	<i>Noticed</i>
	Wher as the kyng with lordes a gret route	<i>Like</i>
1890	In the halle sittynge rounde aboute, He entred inne most manful of corage,	<i>reached; tower dwelling</i>
		<i>afraid</i>
		<i>crowd</i>
		<i>[was] sitting</i>

The Siege of Thebes

	T'execute the fyn of his massage.	<i>purpose</i>
	And as hym thought convenient and due,	<i>appropriate</i>
	Ful komyngly he gan the kyng salve.	<i>courteously; address</i>
1895	Requiring hym, of kyngly excellence,	<i>Requesting</i>
	In goodly wise to geve hym audience	
	And not disdeyne neither in port ne cheer,	<i>be angry; bearing nor countenance</i>
	Sith he was come as a massagere	<i>messenger</i>
	From Polymytle his owne brodere dere,	
1900	Gynnyng his tale thus, as ye shal here.	<i>Beginning</i>
1898	"Sir," quod he, "unto your worthynesse	
	My purpoos is breefly to expresse	
	Th'effecte only, as in sentement,	<i>gist; meaning</i>
	Of the massage why that I am sent.	
1905	It were in veyn longe processe fotio make,	
	But of my mater the verrey ground to take,	<i>substance</i>
	In eschewyng of prolixité	
	And voyde away al superfluyté,	<i>excess</i>
	Sith youresilf best ought to understand	
1910	The cause fully that we han on hond	
	And ek conceyve th'entent of my menyng,	<i>understand</i>
	Of rightwisnesse longgyng to a kynge,	
	First considred, yif that ye tak hede,	<i>(if)</i>
	Whan Edippus the olde kyng was dede,	
1915	How that yoursilf and youre brother blyve	<i>at once</i>
	For the croune contagiously gan stryve	<i>perniciously; contend</i>
	As mortal foon by ful gret hatrede	<i>enemies</i>
	Which of yow two shulde first succede,	
	Til that ye were be meenys reconcyled —	<i>intermediaries</i>
1920	Ye to regne and he to be exiled	
	Out of this towne for a yeeres space	
	And than ageyn resorte to his place	<i>return</i>
	To regne as kyng and ye to voyden oute,	<i>leave</i>
	So as your tourne be processe kam aboute	
1925	Everich of yow patiently t'endure	
	Th'enterchaungyng of his aventure,	<i>fortune</i>
	Who were put out or stood in his estat,	
	Therupon to make no debat,	<i>conflict</i>
	Lich the covenant and convencioune,	<i>According to</i>
1930	Enrolled up by lordys of this toun,	<i>Written on a roll</i>

Secunda Pars

- Which of reson may not be denied.
And sith ye han a yeer yoccupied,
Polimytes requereth yow of right
T'awite you lik a trewe knyght
In eschewyng of mortal wenne and strif,
Sith ye han had a prerogatif
As eldest brother forto regne afoern.
And thenketh eke how that ye ar sworn
Your oth to kepe and make no taryng,
Holy adverting lich a prudent kyng
That trouth is mor in comparisoun
Than all the tresour of your reggoun,
Mor acceptable unto god and man
Than all richesse that ye rekne kan.
Wherefor in hast (and lat ther be no slouthe),
Quynteth yoursilf justly of your trouthe
Unto youre brother, avoyding this cytē,
And lat hym regnen in his eyaltē,
The croune of Thebes a yeer to occupie.
Than wol al Grece preise and magnyfie
Youre hegh renoun and may sey non other
But ye han quytt you justly to your brother.
This hool th'effeete of al that I wil seyn,
Answer expectant what ye list sende ageyn."
- Whan Tydeus hadde told his tale,
Ethiocles, trist and wonder pale,
His conceyt first in maner hath refreyned,
Dyssimulyng under colour feyned,
Shewyng a cheer in maner debonayre,
To his entent wonderly contrayre,
Inward in here wood and furious;
Turnyng his face towarde Tydeus,
He gan afraid, and at the last outbreak,
And even thus unto hym he spak.
"I ha gret mervaile," quod he, "in my thought
Of the message which that thou hast broght,
That my brother, as thou hast expownyd,
Desyret so in Thebes to be crownyd,
Havynge reward to the habundance,
- since: held the throne
asks
To perform your duties
avoiding: war
first
Wholly considering
enumerate
Acquit, promise
departing from
esalt
reputation; say
have acquitted yourself
meaning
I await your answer
sad
thought; restrained
face; affable
angry
upbraid; shout out
have
explained

The Siege of Thebes

- 1970 The grete plenté, and the suffisaunce
That he hath nowe with the kyng of Arge;
That me semeth he shuld lityl charge
To han lordship or domynacioun
In the boundis of this lytyl toun,
It seems to me; care
- 1975 Sith he regneth so freshly in his flours,
Surmountyng all his predecessours
Be newe encres thorgh fortunis myght;
Wherof in hert I am right glad and light,
Fully trustyng, yif I hadde nede
Since
- 1980 To his helpe, that withoute drede
Lik a brother than I shuld hym fynde
To meward feithful, trewe, and kynde,
Supposing pleynly evermor
Of this regne he set but lityl stor
Surpassing
- 1985 Nor cast hym not for so short a while
As for a yeer, his brother to exile,
To lyve in poverté and gret distresse.
He wol not suffre it of his high noblesse.
It were no token as of brotherede
By
- 1990 But a signe rather of hatrede
To interrupte my possessiou
Of this tilil pore regioun."
Al that he spak, who that couth adverse,
Of verrey scorn, rooted in his herte;
intended
- 1995 As it sempte, the story can you teche,
By the surplus soothly of his speche,
He myghte nat no lenger hym refreyne
But platly seide, "as atwene us tweyne,
I mene thus Polymytes and me,
brotherhood
- 2000 Ther nys no bonde nor no sureté
Nor feith ymade that may hym avaylle,
As he cleymeth to ha the governaylle
Of this cité, nowther yere nor day.
For I shal lete hym, soothly, yif I may,
observe
- 2005 That he shal not be title of no bond
Rejoysse in Thebes half a foot of londe.
Late hym kepe all that he hath wonne!
For I purpoos, as I ha begonne,
seemed
- remainder*
- contain*
- between as two*
- is not any*
- promise*
- governance*
- hinder*
- have*

Secunda Pars

	To regne in Thebes enforth al my lyve,	<i>uninterruptedly; life</i>
2010	Maugré al hem that therageynes stryve And in despit of his frendes all Or the counsaylle that hym list to calle. Lat hym be sur, and know this right wel, His manacyng I dred never a del.	<i>Despite; them; contend</i> <i>council; might wish</i> <i>not at all</i>
2015	And sikerly, as to my devis, It scheweth wel that thou were not wis But suppreised with a manere rage To take on thee this surquedous massage, And presume to do so hegh offence	<i>surely; opinion</i> <i>overtaken; madness</i> <i>arrogant</i>
2020	So boldely to speke in my presence, But al yfere avayle shal right noght. For the tyding that thou hast ybrought Shal unto hym be but disencrees. He better were to ha ben in pees	<i>together</i> <i>news</i> <i>loss</i>
2025	Than of foly and presumpcion Ageynes me to seke occasiou.	
	For whil I lyve — and therio her myn hond — As I seide erst, he wynmeth her no lond, Whyl the walles of this toun may stond.	<i>hand [in promise]</i> <i>before; gains here</i>
2030	For fynaly I do thee understand That they shal first be bete doune ful lowe And alle the toures to the erth ythrowe, Er he in Thebes have eny thyng ado. Lo, her is al. Retourne and sey him so."	<i>would have you</i> <i>beaten</i> <i>thrown</i> <i>Before</i>
2035	Whan Tydeus saugh the fervent ire Of the kyng with angre set afire, Ful of despit and malencolye, Conceyvyng eke the grete felonye	<i>wrath</i> <i>Realizing; fury</i>
	In his apport, lik as he wer wood,	<i>bearing; insane</i>
2040	This worthy knyght a lityl while stood Sad and demur, or oght he wolde seyn. But at the laste thus he spak agyn. "Certes," quod he, "I conceyve of newe	<i>Serious; before anything</i>
	Aboute thee, thy counsel is untrewe —	<i>realize; once more</i>
2045	I dar it seyn and vowen at the best — Nor thou art not feithful of thy behest,	<i>declare; completely</i>
2050	Stable of thy word that thou hast seid toform	<i>promise</i> <i>before</i>

The Siege of Thebes

- But deceyveable and falsly ek forsworn
And ek perjur of thyn assured ooth.
2050 But whersobe that thou be lief or loth,
I seye thee shortly — hold it for no fage —
Al shal turn unto thy damage;
Trust it wel, and in ful cruel wyse
Alle Grekes londe shal upon thee ryse
2055 To ben avenged and manly to redresse
The gret untrouth and the hegh falsnesse
Which that thou hast ageyn thy brother wrought.
It shal ful dere after this be bought.
And verrely in dede, as thou shalt lere,
2060 Kyng Adrastus wil medle of this matere
And alle the lordes about hym envyrouns
That bounde ben to his subjeccioun;
Prynces, dukes, and many a noble knyght,
In sustenyng of thy brotheres right,
2065 Shal on a day with sper and with shield
Ageynes thee be gadered in a feld.
Knyghtly to peeve al be on assent
That thou art fals and double of entent,
Of thy promys atteynt and ek outrayed.
2070 And leve me wel it shal not be delayed
But in al hast execute in dede.
Lik thi desert thou shalt ha thy mede.
For God above of his rightwisnesse
Swich open wrong shal in hast redresse,
2075 And of his myght al such collusioune
Reforme ageyn and al extorsioune.
For this the fyn, falshede shal not vaile
Ageynes trouth in feeld to hold batayle.
Wrong is crooked, bothen halt and lame.
2080 And here anon in my brotheres name,
As I that am next of his alye
In his querel, I shortly thee deffye.
Fully avyzed with al myn hool entent.
And ye lordes that ben her present,
2085 I yow requere of your worthynesse
To saye trouth and to ber witnesse,
- pledged
whether you like it or not
lie
- against
paid for
truly; learn
intervene in
surrounding
- with one intent
duplicious
convicted; broken away from
believe
- According to your merits; reward
- aspiration
anail
- both
- kinship
challenge you
aware
- ask

Secunda Pars

- Whan tyme comth, justly to recorde *testify*
How your kyng falsly can discorde *did deviate*
From his heest of fals variaunce. *promise through*
2090 And thenk how ye on feith and lygaunce *allegiance*
Ar bounde echon — ye may not go therfro — *avoid it*
Ferto obeye and serve, bothe two,
This nexte yeer now anon folowynge
As to your lord and your trewe kyng
2095 Polemytes, thogh he be now absent,
By just accoed maad in parlement,
At youre devis which sitten her a rowe,
Engrosed up, as it is wel knowe,
And enrolled only for witnesse
2100 In youre regesters to voyden al falsnesse,
That non of you vary may of newe
Fro that I say, but he be untrewe.
For which I rede yoursilf to acquyte.
Lat no tyme lenger you respit
2105 But at onys withoute mor taryng,
Of manly force fetteth hom your kyng,
Maugré his foon, lik as ye ar bounde,
And lat in yow slouthe non be founde,
To put hym justly in pocessioune —
2110 This my consayl in conclusioun.“
Whan Tydeus hadde his massage saide,
Lik to the charge that was on hym laide,
As he that list no lenger ther sojourne, *wished*
Fro the kyng he gan his face tourne,
2115 Nat astouned nor in his hert afferde *dismayed*
But ful proudly leyde hond on his swerde,
And in despit who that was lief or loth, *pleased*
A sterne pas thorgh the halle he goth
Thorghout the courte, and manly took his stede,
2120 And out of Thebes faste gan hym spede, *in the open country*
Enhastynge hym til he was at large,
And sped hym forth toward the londe of Arge.
Thus leve I hym ride forth a while,
Whilys that I retourne ageyn my style
2125 Unto the kyng which in the halle stood *writing instrument*

The Siege of Thebes

	Among his lordes furious and wood,	<i>mad</i>
	In his herte wroth and evel apayd	<i>angry; discontented</i>
	Of the wordes that Tydeus hath said,	
	Specialy havynge remembraunce	
2130	On the proude, dispitous diffiaunce	<i>throne</i>
	Whilys that he sat in his royal see,	<i>For</i>
	Upon which he wil avenged be	
	Ful cruelly, what evere that befalle.	
	And in his ire he gan to hym calle	<i>anger</i>
2135	Chief constable of his chyvalrye,	<i>knighthood</i>
	Charchyng hym faste for to hye	<i>Charging; hasten</i>
	With al the worthy chooce of his housholde,	<i>best men</i>
	Which as he knewe most manful and most bolde,	
	In al hast Tydeus to swe	<i>follow</i>
2140	To form or he out of his load remwe,	<i>Before; go away</i>
	Up peyn of lyf and lesyng of her hede,	<i>their heads</i>
	Withoute mercy anon that he be dede.	<i>immediately; slain</i>
	And of knyghtes fyfty weren in nombre,	
	Myn autour seith, unwarily hym t'encombe,	<i>without warning; overpower</i>
2145	Armed echon in mayle and thikke stiel	<i>chain mail</i>
	And therwithal yhoersed wonder wiel.	
¶¶	At a posterne forth they gan to ryde	<i>backgate</i>
	By a geypath that ley oute aside,	<i>short cut</i>
	Secretly that no man hem espie,	
2150	Only of tresoun and of felonye.	<i>treachery</i>
	They haste hem forth al the longe day	
	Of cruel malys forto stoppe his way,	<i>hatred</i>
	Thorgh a forest all of on assent,	<i>one</i>
	Ful covarly to leyn a busshement	<i>lay an ambush</i>
2155	Under an hill at a streite passage,	<i>narrow</i>
	To falle on hym at mor avaantage,	
	The same way that Tydeus gan drawe,	
	At thylike mount wher that Spynx was slawe.	<i>slain</i>
	He nothing war in his opynyoun	<i>aware</i>
2160	Of this compassed conspiracion	<i>planned</i>
	But innocent and lich a gentyl knyght	
	Rood ay forth to that it drowe to nyght,	<i>until</i>
	Sool by hymself, withoute companye,	<i>Alone</i>
	Havynge no man to wisse hym or gye.	<i>direct; guide</i>

Secunda Pars

- 2165 But at the laste lifting up his hede,
 Toward eve he gan taken hede.
 Mid of his way right as eny lyne,
 Thoght he saugh ageyn the mone shyne straight
 Sheldes fresh and plates borned bright,
 The which environ casten a gret lyght, against
 Ymagynnyng im his fantasye burnished
 Ther was treason and conspiracye
 Wrought by the kyng his journe forto lette. around
 And of al that he nothyng ne sette, opinion
 2170 But wel assured in his manly herte obstruct
 List nat onys asyde to dyverte, did not care
 But kepte his way, his shield upon his brest,
 And cast his spere manly in the rest. wished; once
 And the firste platly that he mette set
 2175 Thorgh the body proudly he hym smette,
 That he fille ded, chief mayster of hem all,
 And than at onys they upon hym falle smote
 On every part be compas envyroun.
 But Tydeus thorgh his hegh renoun commander of them
 2180 His blody swerde lete about hym glyde,
 Sleth, and kylleth upon every side then at once
 In his ire and his mortal tene,
 That mervaille was he myghte so sustene on every side; encircling
 Ageyn hem all in every half besette.
 2185 But his swerde was so sharpe whette Slays
 That his foemen fonde ful unsoute.
 But he, alias, was mad light afoote murderous rage
 Be force grounded in ful gret distresse;
 But of knyghthod and of gret prouesse on every side
 2190 Up he roos, maugré all his foond
 And as they cam, he slogh hem oon be on,
 Lik a lyoun rampaunt in his rage.
 And on this hille he fond a narow passage,
 Which that he took of ful high prudence; ground
 2195 And liche a boor stondyng at diffence,
 As his foemen proudly hym assayle,
 Upon the pleyn he made her blode to raylle enemies; disagreeable
 Al environ, that the soyl wex rede to dismount
 By
 2200 despite; enemies
 slew
 threatening (see note)
 flow
 around; grew

The Siege of Thebes

- Now her, now ther as they fille dede,
2205 That her lay on and ther lay two or thre.
So mercyles in his cruelté
Th'ilke day he was upon hem founde.
And attomys his enemyes to confounde,
Wher as he stood this myghty champioun
2210 Be side he saugh with water turned doun
An huge ston large, rounde, and squar;
And sodeynly, er that thei wer war,
As it hadde leyn ther for the nonys,
Upon his foen he rolled it at onys,
2215 That ten of hem wenten unto wrak
And the remnaunt, amased, drogh abak;
For on by on they weente to meschaunce.
And fynaly he broghte to outraunce
Hem everychon Tydeus, as blyve,
2220 That non but on was left of hem alyve
Hymself yhurt and ywounded kene,
Thurgh his harneys bledyng on the grene.
The Theban knyghtes in compas rounde aboute
In the vale lay slayen all the route,
2225 Which pitously ageyn the mone gape;
For non of hem, shortely, myght eskafe
But dede echon as thei han deserved,
Save on excepte the which was reserved
By Tydeus of intencioune
2230 To the kyng to make relacioun
How his knyghtes han on her journé sped,
Everich of hem his lyf left for a wed,
And at the metyng how they han hem born —
To tellen al he sured was and swom
2235 To Tydeus ful lowly on his kne.
By which ensample ye opynly may se
Ageynes trouth falshed hath no myght.
Fy on querilis nat grounded upon right,
Withoute which may be no victoyné.
2240 Therfor ech man ha this in memoyné:
That gret power, shortely to conclude,
Plenté of good, nor moch multitude,
- ferocity
*That same: discovered [to bef
at once; destroy*
- thick
aware
- As if; for the occasion
enemies; at once
were killed*
- astounded, drew
one by one; destruction
put to death*
- Them; quickly*
- sharply
armor
- all around
company
- Who; moon
- one; kept
- fored
pledge
- pledged
- falsehood
- have

Secunda Pars

- | | | |
|------|---|---------------------------|
| | Scleight or engyne, fors or felonye | deceit; treachery |
| | Arn to feble to holden chanpartye | Are; hold the field |
| 2245 | Ageynes trouth, who that list take hede. | whoever |
| | For at the ende falshede may not sped | succeed |
| | T'endure longe — ye shul fynde it thus. | |
| | Record I take of worthy Tydeus, | Witness |
| | Which with his hand thoegh trouthes excellencie | |
| 2250 | Fyfty knyghtes slegh in his dyffence | slew |
| | But on except, as I late tolde, | Except for one, [last] as |
| | Sworn and assured with his honde upholde | |
| | The kyng t'enforme how they wern atteynt. | to inform; overpowered |
| | And Tydeus, of bledyng wonder feynt, | |
| 2255 | Maat and wery and in gret distresse, | Exhausted |
| | And overleyd of verray feblenesse, | overcome |
| | But as he myght hymselfe tho sustene, | then |
| | He took his hors stondyng on the grene, | |
| | Worched up, and forth he gan to ryde | Mounted |
| 2260 | An esy pas with his woundes wyde. | pace |
| | And soothly yit in his opynyoun | |
| | He was alway affered of tresoun. | |
| | But anguysshous and ful of bysy peyne | constant pain |
| | He rode hym forth til he did atteyne | arrive |
| 2265 | Into the boundes of Lygurgus lond, | |
| | A worthy kyng and manly of his hond. | |
| | And he ful paal only for lak of blood | |
| | Tydeus saugh wher a castel stood, | saw |
| 2270 | Strong and myghty belt upon a roche, | built; rock |
| | Toward which he faste gan approche, | |
| | Conveyed thider be clernessee of the ston | |
| | That be nyght ageyn the moone shon, | by |
| | On heghe toures with crestes marcial. | martial |
| | And joyneaut almost to the wal | |
| 2275 | Was a gardyn lityl out be syde, | |
| | Into which Tydeus gan ride | |
| | Of aventure be a gate smal, | By chance |
| | And ther he fond, forto rekne al, | |
| | A lusty herbere unto his devis, | |
| 2280 | Soote and fressh lich a paradys, | pleasant arbor; fancy |
| | Verray heavenly of inspeccioun. | Truly; in appearance |

The Siege of Thebes

- And first of al he alyghte doun,
The goodly place whan that he byheld,
And fro his nek he voyded hath his sheld,
2285 Drogh the brydyl from his horses hede,
Let hym goon, and took no maner hede
Thorgh the gardyn that enclosed was,
Hym to pasture on the grene gras.
And Tydeus, mor hevie than is led,
2290 Upon the herbes grene, whit, and red,
As hym thoughte that tyme for the best,
He leid hym doun foito tak his rest,
Of werynesse desirous to slepe;
And non awayt his body foito kepe;
2295 And with dremes groched ever among.
Ther he lay to the larke song
With notes newe hegh up in the ayr,
The glade morowe rody and right fayr,
Phebus also, casting up his bemes,
2300 The heghe hilles gilte with his stremes,
The sylver dewe upon the herbes rounde;
Ther Tydeus lay upon the ground
At the uerist of the shene sunne,
And stoundemele his grene woundes runne
2305 Round about, that the soyl depeynt
¶ Of the grene with the rede meynt.
And every morowe for hoolsomnesse of eyre
Lygurgus doghter maked her repeyr,
Of custom ay among the floures newe
2310 In this gardyn of many dyverse hwe
Swich joye hadde, foito taken hede,
On her stalkes foito sen hem spredie,
In the allures walking to and fro.
And whan she hadde a litil while goo
2315 Herself allon casting up her sight,
She byheld wher an armed knyght
Lay to rest hym on the herbes colde;
And hym besyde she gan ek byholde
His myghty stede walkyng her and ther.
2320 And she anon fille in a maner fer,
- removed
Drew
- lead
- guard
moaned
- until; song
- rosy
- bright
from time to time; fresh
- colored
mixed
- morning
return
- colors
- garden walks
- alone
- was frightened*

Secunda Pars

- Speeally whan she saugh the blood
Sprad al the grene abouthe ther she stood.
But at the laste she kaught hardynesse
And woommanly gan her forto dresse
2325 Toward this knyght, havyng a manere drede
And gret doute lest that he were dede.
And of her wille sothly this was chief —
That she thoughte forto mak a prief
How that it stood of this man, ful ofte.
- 2330 And forth she gooth and touched hym ful softe,
Ther as he lay with her hondes smale.
And with a face dedly bleyk and pale,
Lich as a man adawed in a swogh,
Up he stert, and his swerd he drogh
2335 Nat fully out, but put it up ageyn,
Anon as he hath the lady seyn,
Beseching hir only of her grace
To han pitē upon his trespace
And rewe on hym of her woommanhede.
- 2340 For of affray he was falle in drede,
Lest he hadde assayled ben of newe
Of the Thebans peaved ful untrewe;
For dred of which he was so rekkeles,
Ful humblely hym yelding to the pes.
- 2345 Tryst in hymself he passed hadde his boundes.
And whan that she saugh his mortal woundes,
She hadde routh of verrey gentyllesse
Of his desese and of his distresse,
And bad he shulde no thing be dismayd,
- 2350 Nor in herte sorowful nor affrayd,
Discomfort hym in no maner thing.
"For I," quod she, "am doghter to the kyng
Callyd Lygurge, which gretly me delyte
Every morowe this gardyn to visyte;
- 2355 It is to me so passingly disport.
Wherfor," quod she, "beth of good comfort,
For no wight her touchyng your viage
Shal hynder you nor do yow no damage.
And yif ye list of al your aventure
- around where
regained her courage
move
- truly
examination
- wan
awakened from his swoon
drew
- As soon as
- have pity
fright
again
- heedless
- Certain
- pity
discomfort
not at all
- said
who
- excellent pleasure
be
person, concerning
- if, wish

The Siege of Thebes

2360	The pleyne trouth unto me discute, I wil in soth do my byssynesse To refoarme youre grevous hevynesse With al my myght and hool my dylygence, That I hope of youre gret offence	disclose try (make an effort) remedy injury
2365	Ye shal han helpe in your adversit�. And, as ferforth as it lith in me, Trusteth right wel, ye shul no faute fynde."— And whan he saugh that she was so kynde,	insofar as fault
	So wommanly, so goodly and besyngne	
2370	In al her poort be many dyvers signe, He unto hir be oedre wold not spare His aventuris fully to declare, In Thebes first touching his massage,	bearing by in sequence relate
	And at the hil of the woode rage;	wild
2375	Of his woundes and his hurtes sore (It were but veyn to reberce it mor)	
2380	By and by he told her every del, The which in soth she liked nevere a del But hadde routh and compassioune	part not at all pity
	Of his meschief wroght be fals tresoun, Byddyng in hast that he shuld hir swe;	injury follow
	And wommanly, as her thoghte dwe, To a chambre she ladde hym up alofte,	appropriate
	Ful wel beseyn, therin a bed right sofe	appointed
2385	Richely abouten apparrayled With cloth of gold, al the floor yrayled Of the same, both in length and breede.	adorned breadth
	And first this lady of her wommanhede Hir wymmen badde, as goodly as they kan,	
2390	To be attendaunt on this wounded man. And whan he was unarmed to his sherte,	disarmed
	She made first wassh his woundes smerte,	painful
	And serche hem wel with dyvers instrumentes,	probe
	And made fette sondry oynementes	had brought (fetched) various
2395	And leches ek, the beste she coude fynde, Ful crafely to staunche hem and to bynde.	physicians
	And everything that may do hym ease T'aswage his peyn or his woo t'apese	stop the flow of blood relieve

Secunda Pars

- Was in the courte and the castel sought
2400 And by her bydding to his chambre brought.
And for his sake she hath after sent
For swich deyntees as wern convenient,
Moost nutryf be phisikes lore,
Hem that wern syk or wounded to restore,
2405 Makyngh her wymmen ek to taken kep,
And wayt on hym anyghtes whan he slep,
And be wel war that nothing asterte
That was or myght be lusty to his herte.
And with al this she peied hym abyde
2410 Til he were strong and myghty forto ride,
In the castel to pley hym and dispote,
And at leysere hom ageyn resorte,
Whan he myght bywelde hym at his large.
But al for nought; he wil hom to Arge,
2415 Toke his lyeve on the nexte day.
Without aboode to hast hym on his way,
Lowly thonkyng unto her goodnesse
Of her fredam and bountevous largesse,
So wommanly that hir list tak hede
2420 Hym to refresh in his grete nede,
Beheestyng hir with al his ful myght
He wolde be hir seruaunt and hir knyght
Whyl he leveth, of what she wold hym charge.
And forth he rood til he cam to Arge
2425 In ful gret hast and wolde nowher dwelle.
But what shuld I rehercen oþther telle
Of his repeir the coostes or the pleyns,
The craggy roches or the hegh mounteyns,
Or al the maner of his hoomcomynge,
2430 Of the metyng nor the welcomynge,
Nor the joye that Adrastus made,
Nor how his sustre and his wif were glade,
Nor how that they (wherfor shuld I write?)
Embraceyd hym in her armes white,
2435 Nor the gadryng about hym and the pres,
Nor of the sorowe that Polymytes
Mad in hymself to sen hym so soor wounded,
- delicacies: appropriate according to medical learning*
- by night*
- be lacking*
- pleasing*
- omniate*
- return*
- more about freely*
- delay*
- Humbly*
- generosity*
- revive*
- Promising*
- lives, whatever*
- relate or*
- return; regions*
- crowd*

The Siege of Thebes

- His grevous hurtes, his soorys ek unsounded,
His dedly look and his face pale wounds: unhealed
- 2440 (Of alle this to gynne a newe tale begin
It were in soth a maner ydylnesse), a form of
Nor how hymself in ordre did expresse behaved
First how that he in Thebes hath hym born,
Nor how the kyng falsly was forsworn,
2445 Nor of the awayt nor tresoun that he sette, ambush
Whan fyfty knyghtes on the way hym mette,
As ye han herd al the manere howe,
Withoute which my tale is long ynowe.
But Adrastus made men to seche search
2450 In every coost for many diverse leche region: physicians
- To come in hast and make no taryng,
Upon a peyne be biddyg of the kyng,
To don her craft that he wer recured healed
And of his force in every part assured.
- 2455 And they echon so her konnyng shewe knowledge
That, in space of a daies fewe,
He was al hool maad of his siknesse,
Tho was ther joye and tho was ther gladnesse Then
Thorghout the courte and thorghout al the toun.
- 2460 For every man hath swich opynyoun prowess: humility
In Tydeus for his gentyllesse,
For his manhood and his lowlynesse
That he was holde the moste famous knyght
- 2465 And best byloved in every manrys sight
Thorghoute Grece in every regiou.
- But now most I make a digressioun,
To telle shortly as in sentement,
Of thilke knyght that Tydeus hath sent the same
Into Thebes only to declare tell
- 2470 The grete meschief and the evel fare
Unto the kyng how it is befallie,
The opyn trouth of his knyghtes alle,
How Tideus hath slayn hem everychon,
That, sauf hymself, ther eskaped non,
- 2475 Which was reserved from sheding of his blood
The kyng to telle pleynly how it stood. misfortune
every one
preserved

Secunda Pars

	And whan he hadde rehersed every poynt, Ethiocles stood in such disjoynyt Of hatful ire that he wex nyc wood.	mental conflict nearly went mad anger, savage hatred cruelly
2480	And in his tene and his felle mood, Of cruel malys to the knyght he spak And felly seid that it was for lak Only of manhood thorgh her cowardys	their cowardice
2485	That thei wern slain in so mortal wyse. "And hanged be he highe by the nekke That of your deth or of your slaughter rekke, Or you compleyn oyther on or all	let him be hanged care lament either misfortune
	Of the meschife that is yowe befall. I do no force that non of you asterte.	do not care; escaped
2490	But fyne upon your fals couard herte, That on knyght hath, thorgh his hegh renoun, Brought yow all in confusioune, Ful graceles and ful unhappy to."	defeat
	"Nay," quod this knyght, "it is no thing so.	not at all
2495	It is thyne unhappe pleynly and not oures That so many worthy werreoures, Which al her lif never hadde shame, Except this quarel taken in thy name	misfortune
	That grounded was and rooted on falssenesse:	
2500	This was cause in verray sikernessee Of our unhappe I woot wel and non other, And the untrouth don unto thy brother, And that thou were so opynly forsworn;	in truth know
	A parcel cause why that we wer lorn	
2505	Was fals brekyng of thyne assured oth." And tho the kyng almost mad for wroth In purpos was forto slee this knyght, Oonly for he seide to hym right.	A portion of: lost promised then; insane for anger
	The which, alias, both at eve and morowe,	Just because
2510	Supprised was with a dedly sorowe, Renewed ay in his remembeaunce With the pitous and unhappy chaunce Of the meschife and mysaventure,	Who Overtaken
	Touching the deth and disconfiture	
2515	Of his feeres and of hymself also;	companions

The Siege of Thebes

	That the shamfast importable wo So frat on hym with such a mortal stryf That he was wary of his owne lif, Hent a swerd, and aside sterete,	unbearable gnawed
2520	And rove hymself even to the herte, The kyng hymself beyng tho present; That the rumour and the noys is went Thorghoute Thebes and the woode rage	<i>Seized; moved suddenly</i> <i>stabbed</i> <i>then</i>
	Be swich as wern joyned by lynage To the knyghtes slayen at the hille;	savage anger
2525	That all atonys of oon herte and wille They wold han ryse thorghout the cité Upon the kyng avenged forto be.	at once risen
	Which of her deth was chief occasioune.	<i>their; cause</i>
2530	But the barouns and lordes of the toun Ful bysy wern this rumour to dysesse, Of high prudence to stynnen and appese, In quyete everythyng to sette.	<i>dispel</i> <i>stop; relieve</i>
	And after that the bodyes hom they fette Of the knyghtes, lik as ye han herde, Aforne yslawe with the blody swerde	home: carried
	Of Tydeus ful sharpe whet and grounde. And in the felde, so as they hem founde,	<i>honed</i>
	Only of love and affeccioun.	
2535	Solemneplly they broght hem into toun. And lik the maner of her rytis olde, They weren first brest into asshes colde, Everich buryed lich to his degré.	<i>them</i> <i>their ancient rituals</i> <i>burned</i>
	Lo, her kalendys of adversité, Sorowe upon sorowe, and destruccioune,	<i>Everyone; according to</i> <i>hear beginnings</i>
2540	First of the kyng and all the regyoun, For lak oonly, lik as I yow tolde, That biheestes trewly wern not holde —	
	The firste grounde and roote of this ruyne,	<i>promises</i>
2545	As the story shal clerly determyne And my tale herafter shal yow leere, Yif that yow list the remenant for to here.	<i>beginning: source</i> <i>declare</i> <i>teach</i> <i>If; wish</i>

Explicit Secunda pars

Tercia Pars

John Lydgate
Incipit pars Tercia

Tercia Pars.

	O cruel Mars ful of malencolye And of thy kynde hoot, combust, and drye	anger <i>nature hot, combustible</i>
2555	(As the sperkes shewen fro so ferre By the stremes of thi rede sterre, In thy spere as it abouthe goth), What was cause that thow were so wroth	sparks, far angry
	With hem of Thebes, thorgh whoos fervent ire	
2560	The cité brent and was sette afyre, As booke's olde wel reherce konne, Of cruel hate rooted and begunne And engendred, the story maketh mynde,	burned <i>can relate</i>
	Oonly of blood corrupt and unkynde, B'ynfeccional called orygynal.	recalls
2565	Causyng a strif dredful and mortal, Of which the meschief thoegh al Grece ran? And kyng Adrastus alderfirst began, Which hath hym cast a conquest for to make	trouble <i>first of all</i>
	Upon Thebes for Polymytes sake, In knyghtly wise ther to preve his myght, Of ful entent to recure his right.	<i>planned</i>
2570	And first of al he sette a parlement And hath his lettres and massageres sent	demonstrate <i>recover</i>
2575	Thorghoute Grece to many sondry kyngges, Hem to enhast and make no lettingges. And rounde about, as maad is mencioune, He sent also to many regyoun	hasten; delay
	For prynces, dukes, lordys, and barouns	
2580	To taken up in citees and in touns, And chesen out the moste liklyest And swich as wern preved for the best As of manhole, and saude hem up echon,	levy <i>suitable</i>
	And in her honde receyve her pay anon,	<i>such</i>
2585	With Adrastus to Thebes forto ryde.	<i>enlisted them each for a soldier</i>
2590	And the lordes that with hym abyde	<i>their; immediately</i>
		<i>those</i>

The Siege of Thebes

- In houshold stille han her leve take
To ryden horn her retinue to make
In ther contrees as they wern of degré.
2590 To stuffen hem and taken up meyné,
And make hem stronge with knyghtes and squyers,
With speres, bowes, and with ablasters
In al the hast possible that they may,
And to retourne in their best aray
2595 At terme sette, ful manly to be seyn,
To form Arge mostren in a pleyn.
And as I rede, ful worthy of degré
Thider cam first Prothonolopé,
The which was, by recorde of wryting,
2600 Of Archada sone to the kyng.
And ful prudent found in warre and pees
Ther kam also the kyng Cylmythenes.
And as I fynde, ful famous of renoun
Thyder cam ek the kyng Ypemedous.
2605 And passing all of knyghthode and of name
And excellyng by worthynesse of fame,
The noble kyng callyd Campaneus
Kam ek to Arge, the story telleth us,
Proved ful wel and hadde ryden ferre.
2610 And thider kam the kyng Meleager,
Kyng Genor ek that helde his royal sete,
Myn autour seith, in the lond of Crete,
Kyng Laeris and the kyng Pyrrus,
And ek the kyng called Tortolanus.
2615 And renomed in many regyoun
Ther cam the kyng ynamed Palemoun,
Oft assayed and found a manly knyght,
That with hym broght in steel yarmed bright
Ful many worthy out of his cuntré.
2620 And Tideus most knyghtly forto se,
That manly man, that noble werreyour,
As he that was of worthynesse flour,
Maistere and myrour by prouesse of his hond
Hath sent also into the myghty lond
2625 Of Calcedoyne of which he was hayr,
- according to their rank
garrison; retinue
longbows; crossbows
date set
Before; muster; plain
Parthenopaeus
Who
Arcadio
of Mycenes (see note)
Hippomedon
Capaneus
Meleager
Agenor
armed
renowned heroes
Calcedonia; heir

Tertia Pars

- That is a kyngdom bothe riche and fayr,
Chargyng his counsale and officers also,
In al the hast that it may be do,
To seken out the beste werreyours,
council
2630 Of famous knyghtes and preved sawdyours
Thorgh al the lond and layde on hem this charge
Withoute aboode forto come to Arge.
And they obeye ful lowly his biddynge,
delay
Enhastynge hem, and mad no letting
humbly
2635 But spedde hem fast upon her journé.
Hastening: delay
And fro Thebes the myghty strong cité
Kam doune knyghtes with many another man,
Maugré the kyng, to help what they can,
Considered first his falshed and tresoun,
Despise
2640 Ymseved only of trouth and of resoun,
falsehood
Polymythes as they were swoen of yore
Moved
To his croune justly to restore.
And whan they weren at large out of the toun,
free
Unto Arge they be descendid down
2645 And, lik her oth and her assuraunce,
loyalty
As they wern bounde only of lygeaunce,
To hym they cam in ful lowly wise,
Redy to don what hym list devise.
whatever he said
And whan he hadde her trouthe ful conceyved,
understood
2650 He hath to grace goodly hem receyved,
Assignyng hem her place mydde the hoste
Assembled ther from many diverse coste,
in the middle of
That fynaly in this compayne
regions
Ygadred was the floure of chyvalrye,
Gathered
2655 Ychosen out of al Grekes lond
Chosen
The most knyghtly and manful of her bond,
in valor
That I trowe, sith the world began,
believe, since
Ther was not seyn so many manly man,
So wel horsed with sper and with sheld
2660 Togydre assembled soothly, in a feld.
Together
fashions
Ther men may see many straunge guyses
Of armyng newe and uncouth devyses,
Every man after his fantasye,
exotic heraldic symbols
That, yif I shuld in ordre specificie
wish
if, describe

The Siege of Thebes

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 2665 | Every pes longyng to armure
And therupon do my bysy cure,
It wer in soth almost a dayes werk,
And the termes also ben to derk
To reherce hem clerly and to ryme:
I passe over only for lak of tyme.
And telle I wil forth of her loggyng,
How Adrastus the noble worthy kyng
Hath every lord lik to his degré
Receyved wel withinnen his cyté | <i>piece</i>
<i>apply myself diligently</i>
<i>would be in truth</i>
<i>too obscure</i>

<i>lodging</i> |
| 2670 | (And ther they hadde lik to her plesaunce,
Of what nedeth fulsom habundaunce,
For man and hors plenté of vitaylle),
Comaundyng that nothyng ne faylle,
That alle thise noble worthy werreoures,
Both high and lough and poor soudeoures,
Iserved weren of that they hadde node. | <i>be lacking</i>

<i>low; soldiers</i>
<i>Furnished</i> |
| 2675 | ¶ For Adrastus prudently took hede
Ful lik a kyng, touching her terme day,
That thei toform wer served of her pay. | <i>payday</i>
<i>beforehand; given</i> |
| 2680 | He was so free hym list no thyng restreyn;
And no man hadde cause to compleyn
For hunger, thrust, nor for indygence.
And in a prince it is ful gret offence,
As clerkes seyn, and a gret repreef | <i>generous; wished</i>

<i>poverty</i> |
| 2685 | Suffre his puple lyven at mescheef.
It is ful hevy and grevous in her thought,
Yif he habound and they han right noght.
He may not both possede good and herte,
He to be riche and seen his puple smerte. | <i>To allow; distress</i>

<i>flourishes; nothing</i>
<i>possess</i>
<i>suffer</i> |
| 2690 | He may the body of power wel constreyne,
But her herte hath a ful long reyne,
Maugré his myght, to loven at her large.
Ther may no kyng on hertes sette a charge
Nor hem coherden from her lyberté. | <i>command</i>

<i>Despite; power, as they wish</i>
<i>order</i>
<i>force</i> |
| 2695 | Men seyn ful ofte how that thought is fre.
For which eché peince, lord, and governour,
And specialy every conquerour,
Lat hym be war for al his hegh noblesse | <i>see</i> |

Tertia Pars

	That bountē, fredom, plentē, and largesse	
2705	Be on accord, that they his brydel lede,	<i>in agreement; bridle</i>
	Lest of his puple whan he hath most node	
	He be defrauded; whan he is but allone,	
	Than is to late forto make his mone.	
	But in his courte lat hym first devise	
2710	To exile scarshed and covetise;	
	Than is he likly, with fredam yif he gynne,	
	Love of his puple evermore to wynne,	
2715	To regne long in honure, and contune	<i>continue</i>
	Ay to encresse be favour of fortune,	
	And his ennemyes manly to oppesesse.	<i>subdue</i>
	For love is mor than gold or gret riches;	
	Gold faileth ofte; love wol abyde	
	For lyf or deth be a lordys syde;	
	And the tresour, shortly, of a kyng	<i>treasure, in brief</i>
2720	Stondeth in love aboven alle thyng.	
	Farwel lordshippe bothe moeowe and eve,	
	Specially whan love taketh his leve!	
	And whoso list a merour forto make	
	Of kyngly fredam, lat hym ensample take	
2725	Of Adrastus the manly kyng famous,	
	So liberal and so bountevous	<i>generous</i>
	Unto his puple at al tymes found,	
	Which mad hym strong his foemen to confound;	<i>enemies to destroy</i>
	And love only his ennemyes to werreye	<i>to make war on</i>
2730	Alle Grece made his bidding to obeye	
	Of oon accord knyghtly be his side,	
	Al attones to Thebes forto ryde	<i>at once</i>
	For t'avenge, sith they were so strong,	<i>since</i>
	The gret injurye and the importable wrong	<i>unbearable</i>
2735	Don to his sone and his next allye,	<i>Done: son-in-law; closest kinmen</i>
	As ye toform han herd me specifie.	<i>before: describe</i>
	But whil Grekes rest a whil in pes,	
	I will resort to Ethiocles,	<i>return</i>
	Which in Thebes warly hath espied	<i>carefully; discovered</i>
2740	Be his frendes, as he was certefied,	<i>informed</i>
	Of the Grekys hooly the ordinaunce,	<i>preparation</i>
	Her purpoos ek, and her purveaunce,	<i>provision</i>

The Siege of Thebes

- And therof had in herte a manere drede.
And first he took his counsayle and his rede
2745 Of the lordis and barons of the toun
And of the wisest of his regioun,
How he myghte maken resistance,
Manfully to stonden at diffence,
To be so strong that ther wer no doute.
**
And in the contrees adjacent aboute
And ek also in foreyn regiouns,
He hath withhold all the championys;
And therupon he sent out his espies
And his frendes and his next allies;
2755 And alle the worthy dwellyng enviroun —
Yong, fressh, and lusty — he gadred into toun,
Maskowede his wallys and his heghe tourys
And stuffed hem with manly sowdeours.
Round aboute he sette many gonnys,
2760 Grete and smale and some large as tonnys.
And in his hasty, passing fervent hete,
He spent his tresour and gaf giftes grete
Unto knyghtes and worthy men of name;
And overmor to encres his fame,
2765 He gaf to lordes juellis maryfold,
Clothes of velvet, of damask, and of gold,
To gete hym bernes soothly, as I rede,
To helpe hym now in his grete nede;
And prudently purveyed hym to form
2770 Of flessh and fisch and of wyn and corn,
Sette his capteyns erly and ek late
With ful gret stuf strong at every gate,
And mad also be werkmen that were trewe
Barbykans and bulwerkes newe.
2775 Barreris, cheynys, and dices wonder depe,
Makyngh his voun the cité forso kepe
Whil he lyveth, despit of all his foon,
And by his goddys of metal and of ston,
Ful ofte he swoor both of herte and thouht
2780 That it shal first ful der ben abouht
And many a man with pollex, swerd, and knyff
- advice
- retained
- renowned heroes; all around
- Provided openings in the parapet
garrisoned; soldiers
- cannon
- barrels
- gave
- reputation
- jewels
- before
- meat; wheat
- military force
- by
- Double towers over gates; ramparts
- pledge
- enemies
- dearly be bought
- pole ax

Tertia Pars

	Tofor this toun shal first lese his liff And ther shal ek many sydes blede Or his brother possiblly possede	<i>Before; lose</i>
2785	The toun in pees, lich as Grekes wene. But at the ende the trouthe shal be sene — Lat hym be war and wel toforn provyde.	<i>Before; possess thought</i>
	For Adrastus on that other side, For his party was not negligent,	<i>take steps beforehand</i>
2790	But on a day helde a parlement, All his lordes sittyng enviroun, To dryve shortly a pleyn conclusioun	<i>neglectful</i>
	And up t'apoynt the fyn of ther entent. But some thoughte ful expedient,	<i>all around effect decide; goal fit</i>
2795	Or they procede, to wirke be th' avice Of on that was ful prudent and right wyce And circumspecte in his werkes alle,	<i>Before wise</i>
	A worthy bissishop into age falle And called was, soothly by his name,	<i>grown old</i>
2800	Amphiorax, of whom the grete fame	
2805	Thorgh al the londe bothen est and south Amonges Grekes passingly was kouth; A man, in sooth, of olde antiquyté And most acceptid of auctorité,	<i>known old age</i>
	First be resoun of his high estat And ek for he was so forbanat	
	In his werkes and was also secrē With the goddys, knowyng her pryste.	<i>familiar their hidden lore mention</i>
2810	By graunt of whom, as booke specifie, He hadde a spirit of trewe prophecye And cowde aforne ful opynly dyvyne Thynnges begonne how they shulde fyne	<i>before; clearly interpret begin</i>
	And eke be craft of calculacioun Gif a dome of every questioun;	
2815	And hadde in magik grete experience And fynde cowde be heavenly influence And by mevyng of the heghe sterrys A fynal doome of contek and of werrys;	<i>judgment; strife</i>
	And wiste wel, as his goddys tolde,	<i>knew</i>
2820	That, yif Grekes forth her journé holde,	<i>if</i>

The Siege of Thebes

	It turn shuld platly — this no fage —	plainly; lie
	To gret meschief and to gret damage	havoc in battle
2810	Of hem ychon and in especial	
	The moste parte of the blood royal	
2825	Thorgh al Grece — it may not be withdrawe —	military expedition; slain
	In this viage shortly shal be slawe,	of
	And yif hymself with the Grekes wente,	lament
	(Who that ever wepte hym or bymente,	destiny; prevented
	This was the fyn and may nat be socoured)	
2830	Of the erth he shulde be devoured,	Alive
	Quyk as he was — he knewe it in certeyn.	because; expedient
	And for he saugh ther was non other geyn	defense
	To save his lif nor no bet diffience,	
	Than uttely withdrawnen his presence,	
2835	Preying his wiff for hym to provide,	prepare
	Yif he wer sought, that she wold hym hide	if
	And wommanly for to kepe hym cloos	hidden
	And of trouith concelen his purpoos,	intent
	For al his trust touchyng his grevaunce,	distress
2840	Was fully sette in hir purvyance.	governance
	I hope to God that he thar not drede	
	Of no deceyt in hir wommanhede.	
	She was so trewe as wommen ben echon	
	And also cloos and mwet as a ston	discreet; mute
2845	That she ne wold, as the matier stood,	
	Discuren hym for no worldly good.	Reveal
	But fynaly the Grekes, of entent,	
	In al his drede han for this bisshop sent,	
	Thogh it was long er they myght hym fynde,	
2850	For cause his wif was to hym so kynde	shut (hidden away); body (person)
	That ful seurly hath lokked up his cors.	remorse
	But for she hadde a maner of remors	troubling
2855	In hirsilf, gervyng her conscience,	
	Dreding to falle in ful grete offence,	
	Lest her soule were in peryl lorn	lost
	Whan she be oth compelled was and sworn,	
	They requeryng yif she coude telle	asking
	Wher her lord the bisshop shulde dwelle,	
	Which to discure hir herte was ful loth,	
		Whom to reveal; hesitant

Tertia Pars

- 2860 Til tyme she gan remembren on her oth,
And coude a trouth of custom not denye,
And hadde also gret conscience to lye,
Wonder hevy with a sorrowful face,
Maugré hir lust taught hem to the place
Wher as he was shet up in a toure,
Al alone havyng no socour.
They falle on hym or that he was war
And sette hym up in a ful riche char.
A fool he was to jupard his lif,
2870 Forto discure his counsel to his wif;
And yit she was ful sory for his sake,
Specially whan she saugh hym take.
Bot I hope that her hevynesse
Gan asswage ful sone, by processe,
2875 In short tyme whan that he was gon.
Ther is no tempest may last evere in on.
But this bisshope be verrey force and myght
Unto Grekes conveyed was ful right,
This hoore gray in his char sytting.
2880 And they ful glad wern of his comyng,
Havyng a trust and ful opynyoun
That, thorgh cause and occasioune
Of his wisdom and his sapience
And by vertue of his hegh presence,
2885 They shuld eschewe al adversite
Possible to falle, as in her journe.
And as the story fully hath devised,
Ful circumspect and riht wel avised
He hath pronounced in the parlement
2890 Toforn the lordes and the president
His cleer conceypte in verray sikernessee,
Nat entryked with no doublenesse,
Her dysemol daies and her fatal houres,
Her aventurys and her sharpe shoures,
2895 The froward soort and unhappy stoundys,
The compleyntes of her dedly woundys,
The woeful wrath and contrariousté
Of felle Mars in his cruelté,
refuse
Despite her wishes directed them
before he took heed
chariot
risk
reveal
seized
forever
grey-haired man; chariot
were
avoid
explained
judicious
opinion; certainty
enveloped in duplicity
unpropitious
conflicts
future fate; times
hostility
fierce

The Siege of Thebes

	And howe by mene of his gery mood	means; changeable
2900	Ther shal be shadde al the worthy blood Of the Grekes — it may not ben eschewed, If her purpos be execute and swed. "Ther is no more; this shal be the fyn: The hegh noblesse shal drawe to declyne	done; pursued outcome decay
	Of Grekes blood in meschief, sorowe, and woo; And with al this I myself also, As my fate hath aforn disposyd, Depe in the grunde I shal be enclosed And lokked up in the dirke vale	misfortune appointed <i>Deep</i> ; buried valley
2910	Of cruel deth." Lo, this was the tale That the bisshope to Adrastus tolde, Hym counsaylyng his purpos to withhold In eschuyng of mor meschief and sorowe. For alle his goddis he took unto borowe,	relinquish avoidance pledge
2915	Yif the Thebans and the Grekes mete, The fyn therof shal be so unswete That alle Grece after shal it rewe, Warnyng hem yif thei the meschief knewe That shal folowe, which no man may lette,	<i>If</i> unpleasant regret <i>if</i> avoid
2920	Thei wold abstene a siege forto sette Unto Thebes and her purpos leve. With whos woordes the lordes gan hem greve And therinne had but ful smal delit; And everechon of hertly hegh despit	intent abandon <i>were distressed</i>
2925	They abrayde and seide he was unstewe, A controover of prophecies newe, And ek also for al his longe berde An olde dotard, a coward, and aferde; And of rancour gonue to diffye	<i>cried out</i> ; false <i>inventor</i> ; recently made (<i>i.e.</i> , contrived)
2930	Both his kalkyng and his astronomye; And shortly seide thei took therof non hede, Ne wil no thyng governe hem after his rede. This was the clamour and noyse in every cost Of hegh and lough thorghout all the hoost	not at all; advice on every side
2935	And specialy of the sowdeours, And of lordes regnyng in her flours, And of th'estates effectuely, I mene,	soldiers their prime <i>in fact</i>

Tertia Pars

- | | | |
|------|---|------------------------|
| | Which of age were but tendre and grene, | young |
| | That ha not hadde by Martys influence | have |
| 2940 | Of the werre gret experience. | |
| | Her, yif ye list, ye may considre and se | wish |
| | Of conceytes ful grete diversyté, | opinions |
| | How that youth no peril cast aforne | foresees |
| | Til he by meschief sodeynly be lorn, | lost |
| 2945 | Wheras age peovydeth everything | foresees |
| 2948 | Or he bygynne to casten the endyng. | ponder |
| | Youth is governyd be a large reyne | |
| | To renne forth and can hym not reffreyn | restrain |
| | But of hede set on al attoryns, | determined all at once |
| 2950 | As he that hurtleth ageynes harde stonyss | against |
| | Brosest hymself unwarily and parbraketh. | Bruises: shatters |
| | But age experie nothyng undertaketh | experienced |
| | But he toforn be good discrecioun | Unless; beforehand |
| | Make a due examynacioun | |
| 2955 | How it wil tourne oyther to badde or good. | either |
| | But youth, as fast as stered is the blood, | stirred |
| | Taketh emprises of hasty wilfulness: | endeavors |
| | Joye at the gynnyng; the ende is wretchednesse. | |
| | The olde, prudent in al his governaunce, | old man |
| 2960 | Ful longe aforne maketh purveaunce; | provision |
| | But youth, alias, be counsall wil not wyrke, | |
| | For which ful ofte he stumbleth in the dyre. | |
| | Thus selde is seyne, the trouthe to termyne, | tell |
| | That age and youth drawe be o lyne. | share the same views |
| 2965 | And wher that foly hath domynacioun, | |
| | Wisdam is putte into subjeccioun, | |
| | Lik as this bysshop, with al his hegh prudence, | |
| | For cause he myghte ha no audience, | have |
| 2968 | All his wisdam and his profecye | |
| 2970 | Of the Grekes was halden but folye. | By |
| | For thogh Plato and wise Socrates, | |
| | Moral Seneck and Dyogenes, | |
| | Albusmasar and prudent Tholomée, | |
| | And Tullius that hadde sovereynté | |
| 2975 | Whylom in Rome as of eloquence — | Once |
| | Thogh all thise, shortly in sentence, | |

The Siege of Thebes

- Were alyve, most konnyng and experte,
And no man list her counsel to adverte
Nor of her sawes forto taken hede,
What myght availle, and it cam to nede?
For wher prudence can fynde no socour
And providence haveth no favour,
Farwel wisdam, farwel discreciooun,
For lakke only of supportacioun.
- For unsupported with his lokkes here,
Amphiorax sighen gan ful sore
With hede enclynnyd and many evyl thouht,
Whan that he sauhe his counsayl stood for nouht.
For uttrey the Grekes, as I tolde,
- 2980 Han fully cast her journé for to holde,
Made hem redy, and gonnen to hosteye
Toward Thebes the cyté to werreye,
And in Grece wil no lenger tarye;
And foorth with hem Amphiorax they carye,
- 2990 Sette in his char with a doolful herte,
Whan he wist he myghte not asterte
Of his fate the disposicioun.
And hosteying into the regioun
Of Lygurgus, Grekes gan approche
- 3000 A sondy londe with many craggy roche,
But al the way, sothly, that thei gon,
For hors nor man water was ther non —
So dry weren the vales and the pleynys.
For al that yeere they hadden had no reynys
- 3010 But ful gret droucht, as mad is mencioune;
- 3015 And al the londe cerchyng enviroun
They nowther fonde welle nor ryver
Hem to refressh nor water that was cler,
That they, alias, no refut ne konne.
- 3020 So importable was the shene sonne,
So hoot on hem in feldes wher they leye
That for meschief man and hors gan deye,
Gapyng ful drye upward into south;
- 3025 And some putten her swerdes in her mouth
And sperys hedes, in story as is told,
- knowledgeable; experienced
wished; observe
prophecies
if
trust
- sighed full sorely
hung down
saw; night
- decided
make an expedition in force
war against
- painful
knew; escape
- invading
- sandy
- valleys; plains
- drought
searching all around
- potable
refuge; know
unbearable; bright
- duress

Tertia Pars

- T'aswage her thirst with the yren cold;
And of his lif ful many on dispeyred
In this meschier and hor ageyn repeyred;
Tyl on a day worthy Tydeus
3020 And with hym ek the kyng Campaneus
Of purpoos rood thoerhoute the contré
Yif they myght eny water see
Fro coost to cost bothe fer and ner;
Til of fortune they entred an herber
3025 With trees shadowed for the sonne shene,
Ful of floures and of herbes grene,
Wonder hoolsom both of sytt and ayr.
Therinne a lady which passingly was fayr,
Sittynge as tho under a laurer tre,
3030 And in her armes a liti child hadd she,
Ful gracious of loke and of visage,
And was also wondre tendre of age,
Sone of the kyng born forto succede,
Called Ligurgus in story as I rede,
3035 Whoos herly joye and worldly ek dispot,
Al his myrrh, plesaunce, and confort
Was in this child of excellent faymesse.
And this lady, myrour of semlynnesse,
Al sodeynly as she cast up her sight
3040 And on his stede sauh an armed knyht,
Greately abasshed gan anon remwe.
But Tideus after gan to swe
And seyde, "Sustir, beth no thyng dismayed,
In youreself displesed, nor affrayed.
3045 For we ar come only to this place
Yow to biseche of mercy and of grace
Us to socour in oure grete nede,
Declaring you how it stont in dede,
Her faste by, almost at the hand,
3050 The worthiest of al Grekes land,
Kyngges, prynces ly logged in the feld
And many other with pollex, speer, and shield,
Which in meschier, peryl, and gret dred
For want of water ar likly to be ded.
- despaired*
grievous situation; returned
- if*
- arbor*
bright
- then; laurel*
- face*
- beauty*
- saw*
confused; at once withdraw
- follow*
not at all
frightened
- encamped*
pole ax
misadventure

The Siege of Thebes

- 3055 For ther was non of hegh nor lowgh degré
In all our host, now passed daies thre,
That drask, alias, excepting non estat;
Our viage is so infortunat:
Preying yow of wommanly ptyé, rank
- 3060 Benygnely, and graciously to se
How of Grece all the chyvalrye
Of her lyves stont in jupartie,
That ye wold of wommanhede telle
Yif ye knowe ryver, spryng, or welle, military expedition
- 3065 Specially now in al oure care,
Of gentillesse unto us declare.
Lo, her is alle, yif ye list to here,
That I wol seyn, myn owne suster dere." if
- 3070 And whan this lady inly vertuous
The compleynt herde of worthy Tydeus,
Of verrey ptyé chaungeth cher and hewe,
And in her herte upon her woo gan rewe,
And ful goodly seyng his distresse, inwardly
- 3075 Seyde unto hym in al his hevynesse,
"Certes," quod she, "yif I were at large
Touching this child of which I have charge,
I shuld in hast of al that doth yow greve
To my power helpen to releve, if. free
- 3080 Only of routh and compassioun,
And leve al other occupacioun,
Conveye yowe and be youre trewe guyde
To a ryver but lityl her besyde.
But I dar not so moche me assure only a little way from here
- 3085 This lityl child to put in aventurure.
I am so ferdful from it to departe.
But for youre sake yet I shal juparte
My liff, my deth of trewe affeccioun,
To provyde for your savacioun." risk
- 3090 Took the child and laide it in her lappe,
And richely in clothes gan it wrappe,
And couched it among the herbes soote,
And leyde aboute many hoolsom roote
And floures ek bothe blewe and rede. out of
lay to sleep

Tertia Pars

- 3095 And supprised with a maner drode,
With Tideus forth anon she wente,
As she in trouth that no treson mente,
And on hir way wolde nevere dwelle
Til she hym brought to a right faire welle
And to a ryvere of water ful habounde.
- 3100 But who was glad and who was tho jocounde
But Tydeus seyng the ryver,
Which in al hast sente his massager
To Adrastus and bad hym nat abide
But dounce descende to the ryver syde
- 3105 With al his host recur forto have
At this ryver her lyves forto save.
And thei enhast hem, makyng non abood,
All attonyss to the ryver rood
Fortho drynk; thei hadde so gret lust
- 3110 Of appetis forto staunche her thrust.
And some dronk and fonde it did hem good;
And some wern so fervent and so wood
Uppon the water that in sikernessee,
Thorgh undiscreet and hasty gredynesse,
- 3115 Out of mesur the watere so thei drynke
That they fille ded evene upon the brynce;
And some naked into the ryvere roonne,
Only for hete of the somer sonne,
To batthen hem (the water was so cold);
- 3120 And some also, as I ha yow told,
(I mene tho that prudent wern and wise)
The water drank in mesurable wyse,
That of the thrust they ha toforn endured
They were refreshed fully and recured.
- 3125 And Grekes than of hegh and lowe degré,
For high profit and gret commodité,
Compas the ryvere cristalyn of sighte,
Of oon accorde they her tentys pyhte
To rest hem ther in relees of her peyne
- 3130 Only the space of a day or tweyne.
And whylys Grekes upon the ryver lay,
This Tydeus upon the same day
- seized
immediately
treachery
- plentiful
merry
- Who
- remedy
- delay
All at once; rode
- wish
- satisfy, thirst
- found
- wild
- surely
- dead, bank
- have
- shose
- moderate
- thirst
- restored
- then
- comfort
- Around; crystalline*
- pitched

The Siege of Thebes

- Ful knyghtly hath don his diligence
This yonge lady with gret reverence
3135 To Adrastus goodly to presente.
At whoos comyng the kyng hymselfe wente
Ageynes hir, she fallyng down on knees,
All th'estates present and degrees
Of Grekes lond (absent was nat on);
3140 And in his armes took hir up anon,
Thanking hir of her bysynesse,
Of hir labour and her kyndenesse,
Behotyng hir, lik as he was holde,
If eny thyng pleynly that she wolde
3145 That he may don, she shuld it redy fynde.
And Grekes all, the story makefth mynde,
Of th'estatys beyng tho present,
Thanked hir with al her hool entent
For refresshyng don to many Greek;
3150 And for her part they biheght her ek,
With her body and goodes bothe two,
What her list comaunde hem forto do
To be redy platly and nat faille.
And her myn autour maketh rehersaille
3155 That this lady so faire upon to se,
Of whom the name was Isyphile,
To Adrastus told, as ye may rede,
Lynealy the stok of her kynrede,
Whilom how she a kyngges doghter was,
3160 Rehersyng hym hooly al the cas,
First why that she out of her contré wente
Shortly for she wolde not assente
To execute a conspiracion
Mad by the wymmen of that regioun —
3165 A thyng contrayr and ageyn al right —
That eche of hem upon a certeyn nyght
Be on accoed shal warly taken kepe
Fader, brother, and husband in her slepe
With knyves sharpe and rasoures kene
3170 Kytt her throttes in that mortal tene
Unto this fyn, as Bochas telle can —
- To
effort
Promising; bound
*immediately
reminds us
then*
*their; promised her
their
the might wish
plainly
here; recital*
Hypsipyle
*By descent; family
Once*
conspiracy
carefully; care
Cat; anger
For this purpose; Boccaccio

Tertia Pars

- In al that londe be not founde a man
But slayn echon to this conclusioun,
That wymmen myght han domynacioun
- 3175 In that kyngdom to regne at liberté
And on no partie interrupted be.
But for this lady passing debonayre,
To this mordre was foward and contrayre,
Kept her fader that he was not slawe
- 3180 But fro the deth preserved and withdrawe,
For which, alias, she fledde the contré,
And of a pyrat taken in the see,
To kyng Lygurgus brought in al her drede.
And for her trouth and her wommanhede
- 3185 To hir he took his yonge child to kepe,
Which in the herber allone she left slepe
Whan Tydeus she broghte to the welle.
- 3190 And by Jason some bookis telle
That this lady hadde sones two,
- 3195 Whan that he and Hercules also
Toward Colchos by hir contré cam
- 3200 For t'accomplyssh the conquest of the ram.
3205 But who that lyst by and by to se
The story hool of Ysyphylee,
- 3210 Hir fadres name of which also I wante,
Thouh some seyn he named was Thoante
And some bokes Vermes ek hym calle,
But to knowe the aventure alle
Of this lady Isyphilé the faire,
- 3215 So feithful ay and inly debonayre,
Lok on the book that John Bochas made
Whilom of wommen with rethorikes glade
And directe be ful sovereyn style
To fayre Jane, the queen of Cecile.
- 3220 Rede ther the rubrich of Ysiphylee,
Of her trouth and her hegh bounté,
Ful craftily compiled for her sake,
And whan that she hath her lieve take
Of Adrastus, homward in her weye
- 3225 Tydeus gan hyr to conveye,
- in no way disturbed*
gentle
opposed
plain
- gave*
Who
- ram /with the golden fleece/*
wishes
- lack*
- Giovanni Boccaccio*
eloquent discourses
dedicated
Sicily
chapter heading
- her (the queen's)*
taken

The Siege of Thebes

	To the gardyne til she is repeyred.	returned
	But now, alias, my mater disespeyred	/is/ hopeless
	Of alle joye and of welfulnesse	
	And destitut of myrth and alle gladnesse,	
3215	For now of woo gynne the sharpe shoures.	
	For this lady fond among the floures	found
48 ^r	Her litil child turned up the face,	
	Slayn of a serpent in the selve place,	same
	Hyr taile burlyd with skalis silver shene.	striped; scales; bright
3220	The venym was so persyg and so kene,	piercing; sharp
	So perilous ek the mortal violence	
	Caused, alias, thorg he long absence:	
	She was to slough homward forto hie.	too slow; hasten
	But now can she but wepe, wayle, and crye;	
3225	Now can she nouht but sighen and compleyn	
	And woefully wryng her handys tweyn,	Deathly; pale
	Dedly of look, pal of face and chere;	golden hair
	And gan to rende her gilt tresses clere,	
	And ofte sith she gan to seyn, "Alias,	
3230	O woeful wretch unhappy in this cas,	
	What shal I don, or whider may I tourne?	
	For this the fyn, yif I her sojourne,	if; remain
	I woot right wel I may it not eskafe	know
	The pitous fate that is for me shape.	prepared
3235	Socour is non, nor ther may be no red	plan
	Lich my desert but that I mot be ded;	merit except; must
	For thorhe my slouth and my necligence	slouch
	I have, alias, don so gret offence	
	That my gilt — I may it nat excuse —	
3240	Shal to the kyng of treson me accuse.	
	Thorgh my defaute and slouth bothe two,	negligence; sloth
	His sone is ded and his heir also,	
	Which he loved mor than al his good	Whom
	(For tresour non so nygh his herte stood	
3245	Nor was so depe grave in his corage),	penetrated; heart
	That he is likly to fallen in a rage	
	Whan it is so, myn edyous offence	
	Reported be unto his audience —	
	So importable shal be his hevynesse.	unbearable; grief

Tertia Pars

- 3250 And wel woot I in verrey sothfastnesse
That, whan the quene hath this thing espied
(To myn excus it may nat be denyed),
I doute it not ther geyneth no ptye;
Without respit she wil avenged be
3255 On me, allas, as I ha deserved
That fro the deth I may not be preserved
Nowther by bille ne supplicacioun;
For the rage of my transgressioune
Requereth deth and non other mede."
- 3260 And thus, allas, she, quaking in her drede,
Non other helpe nor remedye kan
But dreyst in sorow to the Grekes ran,
Of hertly woo face and chere disteynyd
And her chekes with wepyng al bereynyd,
3265 In hir affray distracte and furious.
Toforn alle she cam to Tydeus
And fille on knees and gan her compleynt mak,
Tolde pleynly that for Grekes sake
She mot be ded and shortly in substaunce
3270 Rehersing hym the grete of her grevaunce.
First how be traynys of a fals serpent
The child was slawe whil she was absent,
In what disjoynte and peril that she stood.
And whan that he her meschief understood,
3275 Unto hire ful knyghtly he behiht
To help and forther al that evere he myght.
Hir pitous woo to stynten and appese.
And forto fynde unto hir dissexe
Hasty confort, he went a ful gret pas
3280 To Adrastus and told hym al the cas
Of this unhappy woeful aventur,
Beseching hym to don his bysy cure,
As he was bound of equyté and right,
And adverten and to han a sight
3285 How she qwit her to Grekes her toforn
Whan they wer likly forto ha be lorn,
The socour voide of her wommanhede;
For which he most of knyghthod taken hede
- know; truthfulness*
learned
delay
Neither; petition
grief caused by
remedy
knows
plagued
heartfelt; stained
streaming with tears
fear distraught
First of all
substance; trouble
treachery
slain
difficulty
trouble
promised
stop; alleviate
distress
with great speed
circumstances
think; take into consideration
behaved; earlier
lost
If the help were not given
must

The Siege of Thebes

- To remedien this unhappy thing.
3290 And Adrastus lik a worthy kyng
T' aquyt hymself, the story maketh mynd,
To thys lady wille nat be found unkynd,
Neither for cost nor for no travaylle,
But bysy was in al that myght availe
3295 To hir socour, considered alle thingges,
And by th'avice of alle the worthy kyngges
Of Grekes lond thei be accorded thus —
Prynces, dukes and worthy Tydeus
To hold her way and al at onys ryde
3300 To Lygurgus dwelling ther besyde,
Of on entent: yif they may purchace
In eny wise forto gete grace
For this lady called Ysiphilé
They wold assay, yif it mighte be.
3305 And to his paleys ful ryal bylt of ston
The worthy Grekes cam ryding everichon,
Every lord ful fresshly on his stede.
And Lygurgus, example of manlihede,
Anon as he knewe of her comyng.
3310 T' aquyt hymself lich a gentil kyng,
Ageyn hem went to mete hem on the way,
Ful wel byseynd and in ful good array,
¶ Receyvynge hem with a ful kyngly chere;
And to Adrastus seid, as ye shul here,
3315 "Cosyn," quod he and gan hym to embrace,
"Ye be welcome to youre owne place,
Thankyng hertly to your hegh noblesse
That so goodly of your gentillesse
Towarde me ye list you to acquite,
3320 Youresilf this day your cosyn to visite,
In this castel to take youre loggyng,
That never yit I was so glad of thyng
In al my lif — and therto her my trouth.
And overmor ther shal be no slouth
3325 That the chambres and the large touris
Shal be defyvered to your herberious,
That every lord, as he is of degré,
- repay [her kindness]*
ungrateful
- agreed*
- immediately*
nearby
(if) succeed
- try, if*
- everyone*
horse
- As soon as*
behave
Toward
well appointed
- act*
- lodging*
- delay*
- made ready: harbingers (see note)*

Tertia Pars

- Unto his loggyng shal assigned be.
 Youre officers lat hymself devis
 3330 Yif the howsyng may largely suffise
 To yow and youres strecchen and atteyn,
 That non estaat ha cause to compleyn.
 And alle your hoost logged her besyde,
 Which in tentys upon you abide,
 3335 Lat hem fette be myn auctorité,
 Vitayle ynoh her in my cité.
 And alle that may socour hem or save
 And, at a word, al that evere I have
 Is ful and hool at your comaundement."
- 3340 Quod Adrastus, "That is nat our entent
 Nor on no parte cause of oure comyng,
 For we be come al for another thyng,
 A certeyn gift of you to requere,
 Benygnsely yif ye list to here,
 3345 Which may Grekes passyngly availle,
 Of our request yif that ye nat ne faille,
 Which we dar not opynly expresse,
 Withoute that ye wold of gentillesse
 Youre graunt aforn conferme and ratefy.
 3350 Than wer we bold it to specifie."
 Quod Lygurgus, "Whatevyr thyng it be,
 Nouht exceptid but only thingges thre:
 The first is this — it touch nat my lif,
 My yonge sone, pleynly, nor my wyf.
 3355 Take al my good or what ye list provyde
 Of my tresour and sette thies thre asyde —
 Al the surplus I count nat at a myte."
 Than Adrastus astounyd was a lyte
 Whan Lygurgus in conclusioun
 3360 Of his sone made excepcion.
 And whilis they entreten thus yfere,
 Ther cam forth on with a woeful chere,
 Of face and look pal and no thing rede,
 Alowde crieth, "The kynges sone is dede,
 3365 Alias the whyl, that whilom was so fayr,
 After Lygurgus born forto ben hayr,
- decide
If
be sufficient; suffice
- wait
obtain by
Food enough here
help
- ask
hear
- of
directly say
Unless
agreement before confirm
Then
- Nothing
- stipulate
- rest; mire
amazed
- negotiate; together
a person
not at all
Aloud
once
heir

The Siege of Thebes

- The which, alas, hath yolden up the beeth,
Of a serpent stonge to the deth
And with his wound newe, fressh and grene,
3370 In th'erber lith, that pité is to sene,
And hath so leyne almost al this day." Who; yielded
lies
That whan Lygurgus herde this affray
And wist his child was ded and hath no mo,
Lyttil wonder thogh that he were wo.
3375 For sodeynly the importable smerte
Ran anon and rent hym by the herte,
That, for constreyn of his dedly peyne,
Thorghouthe he felte korven every veyne.
The rage gan myne in hym so depe
3380 That he can not but sighe, sobbe, and wepe.
And with the noyse and lamentacioun
The qwen distraught is descendid doun.
And whan she knewe the ground of al this sorowe,
Hit nedeth her no teeres forto borowe
3385 But twenty tyme ny upon a rowe
Asswoun she fille unto the grunde lowe;
And stoundemele for this hegh meschaunce
Stille as ston she lyggeth in a traunce.
And whan the child into the courte was brought
3390 Tofore Lygurgus, alas, I wite hym nouht.
Upon the coes with a mortal face,
He fil atonys and gan it to embrace,
Soore grype and ageyn upsterte,
That whan Adrastus gan this thyng adverte,
3395 Of kyngly routh and compassioun
From his eyen the teeres fille doun;
Ek kyngges, dukes that aboute stood
Only of pité which is in gentyl blood,
No power hadde the water to restreyn
3400 That on her chekes dounے bygan to reyn.
But al a day wolde not suffise
Alle her sorowes in ordre to devise,
First of the kyng and of the quene also;
To tellen all, I shalde never ha do,
3405 Not in the space almost of an hour.
- at once
Hold right; spring up
observe
at intervals
Before; knew
at once
recite
finish

Tertia Pars

- But whan the stornes and the sharpe shour
Of her wepyng was somewhat overgon,
The lytil cors was graven under ston.
And Adrastus in the same tide
abated
buried
time
- 3410 Lygurgus took a litol out aside
And ful wisely with his prudent spech
(The qwen present) gan hym forto tech
That so to soeowe avaylle may right nocht,
To moedre hymself with his owne thought,
benefit may not at all
- 3415 Sith loos of deth no man may recure,
Thogh he in woo perpetuelly endure:
Since loss by; restore
- ¶ Al helpeth nat whan the soule is go.
"And our lif her, who tak hed thereto,
Is but an exile and a pilgrymage,
gone
- 3420 Ful of torment and of bitter rage,
Lich a see rennyng to and fro,
Swyng an ebbe whan the flood is do,
Ebb tide following; full tide
- Lytel space abidynge at the falle,
Briefly
- Of whos sojour the pope geveth no bulle.
duration; proclamation (certainty)
- 3425 Nor kyng is non, duk, nor emperour
That may hym shroude ageyn the fatal shour
Of cruel deth, whan hym list manace
To marke a man with his mortal mace.
shelter himself
- Than geyneth nat to his savacious
club
- 3430 Neyther fraunchyse nor proteccoun,
And lit or nocht may helpen in this caas
Sauffecondit or supersedyas.
Then it avails
- For in this world, whoso look aright,
freedom from arrest
- 3435 Noon so riche shortly nor so bold
But he mot dey oyther yong or old.
And who in youth passeth this passage,
He is eskaped al the woodde rage.
sorrow
- Al sorowe and trouble of this present lyff,
But that; die either
- 3440 Repleveshed with contek, werre and stryff,
Which seedl or nevere stont in suerté.
Wherfor best is, as semeth unto me,
No man gruch but of hegh prudence
complain
- The sonde of goddis tak in pacience.
ordinance; the gods

The Siege of Thebes

- 3445 And ye that ben so wis and manly to,
Youresilf to drowne in torment and in woo
For loos of thyng, yif that ye list to se,
Which in no wise may recured be,
Is gret foly and undiscreccioun." *if restored*
- 3450 And thus Adrastus hath conveyed doun
The substaunce hool of that he wolde seye,
Til that he fond a tyme fortio preye
Conveyent for Ysyphilee,
Bysechyngh hym fortio han pitē *communicated*
- 3455 Of that she hath offended his highnesse,
Not wilfully but of reklesnesse:
First, that he wold his doomes to dyvide,
Mercy preferre and set right aside,
At request and preier of hem alle; *decisions to distinguish*
- 3460 Of this unhappe and meschief that is falle
By hasty rigour nat to do vengeance
But thynk aforn in his purvaunce,
Who to wreches doth mercy in her drede
Shal mercy fynde whan he hath most nede; *misfortune; grief*
- 3465 And sith he hath power, myght, and space,
Lat hym tak this lady to his grace,
For lak of routh that she nat ne dye. *foresight*
- 3470 But tho the quene gan agayn replye
And platly seide as in this matere,
Avayleth not requeste nor preyere,
Pytē, mercy, nor remyssyoun,
But yif it be by this condicioun — *then* *Unless*
- 3475 That the serpent, cause of al this sorowe,
Thorgh her labour lay his hed to borowe. *pay with its head*
- 3480 This is fynal and utter recompense
To fynde grace for her gret offence,
Or ellis shortly sheede blood for blood.
And whan Grekys her answer understood,
Al of accord in her beste wise *otherwise; shed*
- 3485 Took on hem this adventurous emprise
For love only of Ysyphilee
And gan to ryde enyron the contré,
By hilles, vales, roches, and ek caves, *round about*

Tertia Pars

- In dychis dirk and in olde gravis,
3485 By every cooste cerching up and doun, *region searching*
Til at the last ful famous of renoun,
- ¶¶** The worthy knyght Parthonolopé
Was the first that happed for to se *happened*
This hydous serpent by a ryverside,
- 3490 Gret and horrible, stern and ful of pride,
Undere a roch by a banke lowe.
And in al hast he bent a sturdy bowe
And therin sette an arowe fyled kene, *sharpened*
And thorgþ the body spotted blew and grene,
- 3495 Ful myghtily he made it forto glyde,
Hent out a swerde hongyng be his syde, *Pulled; hanging*
Smoot of his hede and anon it hent
And therewithal gan the quene peseint, *off its; immediately took it*
Wherhoorgh her sorowe parcel gan aswage.
- 3500 And thus of prōwesse and of heigh corage
This manly man Parthonolopé
Hath reconciled faire Isyphilee
Unto grace fully of the quene,
Hir ire avoided and her olde tene. *bitterness*
- 3505 And by Adrastus mediacioun,
Kyng Lygurgus graunted a pardoun
To this lady, that from al daunger fre
She was restored to her libertē,
In his paleys al her lif to dwelle.
- 3510 Thogh John Bochas the contrarie telle;
For this autour affermeth out of dred
That, whan this child was by the serpent ded,
She durste not for her gret offence
Never after comen in presence *again*
- 3515 Of Lygurgus but of intencioun
Fledde anon out of that regioune:
Att herte she took the childe deth so sore.
What fille of hir I fynd can no more
Than ye han herd afoern me specifie. *happened*
- 3520 And the kyngdam, but yif bookys lye,
¶¶ Of Lygurgus was ycalled Trace.
And, as I rede in another place,

The Siege of Thebes

- He was the same myghty champiou
To Athenes that kam with Palamoun
- 3525 Ageyne his brother that called was Arcyte,
Lad in his chaar with foure boyls whyte,
Upon his hed a wreth of gold ful fyn.
[¶] And I fynd ek how Bachus, god of wyn,
With this kyng was whilom at debat
- 3530 Only for he pompous and elat,
Destruccioun dide to his vynys,
And for he first sett allay on wynnys,
Meynte water whan they were to strong.
And this Bachus for the grete wrong
- 3535 Brak his lymys and dreynyt hym in the see.
Of Lygurgus ye gete no more of me.
- [¶] But the trouthe, yif ye lyt verrifile,
Rede *Of Goddes the Genologye*,
Lynealy her kynrede be degrees,
- 3540 Ibraunched out upon twelve trees,
Mad by Bochas de Certaldo called,
Among poetys in Ytaillle stalled
Next Fraunceys Petrak swyng in certeyn.
Now unto Grekys I wil retourne ageyn,
- 3545 To telle forth shortly, yif I komme,
Of her journé that they ha begonne,
How Adrastus hath his lieve take
Of Ligurgus with his browes blake
And departyng with Seynt John to borowe
- 3550 Mad his wardes on the nexte morowe
So wel beseyn, so myghty, and so strong,
Wonder erly whan the larke song
With a trumpet warned every man
To be redy in al the hast they kan
- 3555 Forto remwe and no letting make.
And so they han the righte way itake
Toward Thebes the Grekes everychon,
That such a nombre gadred into on
Of worthy knyghtes nevere aforne was seyn,
- 3560 Whan they in fere monstred in a pleyn.
And they ne stynt by non occasioun
- conflict
arrogant; proud
vines
dilution with water
Mixed
Broke; drowned
if; confirm
fBoccaccio's Genealogia deorum gentium
By descent; family
Branched
Boccaccio
placed
Behind; Petrarch following
as security
Set in order; divisions
advised
move; delay
taken
together mastered

Tertia Pars

- Til they be come even afor the toun
 And pight her tentys proudly, as I rede,
 Under the wallys in a grene mede. pitched
- 3565 And whan the Thebans were besette aboute,
 The manly knyghtes wold han yssyd oute
 And ha scarmosshed in her lusty pride
 With her foomen on the tother side.
 But be bydding of Ethiocles encircled
sallied forth
- 3570 Alle thilk nyght thei kepte hemself in pes,
 Be cause only that it was so late,
 With gret awayt set at every gate,
 Men of armys al the nyght wakynge
 On the wallys be bydding of the kyng. watcher
- 3575 Lest ther were treynys or tresoun.
 And on the tours and in the chief dongoun
 He sette up men to make mortal sowns
 With brasyn hornys and loude clarices,
 Of ful entent the wacches forto kepe trickery or treachery
great tower (keep)
- 3580 In his warde that no man ne slepe.
 And Grekys proudly al the longe nyght
 Kyndled fyrys and maad ful gret lyght,
 Sette up logyng upon every syde,
 Lik as they shuld ever ther abyde; part of the city
- 3585 Compas the toun ther was no voide space
 But al besette her foomen to manace.
 And whilys they afor the cité laye,
 On every cost they sent out to forraye,
 Brete townes, thorpes, and vilages, As if, remain
All around; empty
- 3590 With grete ravyn makyng theyr pillages,
 Spoyle and robbe and broughte hom vitaille
 And al maner soocetes of bestaylie —
 Shep and neet — and in her cruel rage
 With houndes slowe al that was savage — encircled their enemy
- 3595 Hert and hynde, bothe buk and doo,
 The blake beer and the wilde roo,
 The fatte swyn and the tussihy boor —
 Karyng al hom for the Grekes stoor,
 Whete and wyn for her avauntage, region; forage
hamlets
greediness
foodstuff
kinds; beasts
cattle
wild
- 3600 Hay and otys, fodder and forage. hart; hind
roe
naked
Carrying; provision

The Siege of Thebes

	With this kalendis, as hem thynke dwe,	beginning
	Grekys gan the Thebans to salwe,	greet
	Mynistring hem occisiones felle,	<i>Giving; slaughter bitter</i>
	The sege sette, shortly foeto telle,	
3605	Of ful entent in their hatful prude,	
	For liif or deth therupon t'abide,	
	Whosoever therwith be agreved,	
	Til they fully her purpos have achieved;	
	Ther may therof be maked no relees.	cessation
3610	And of this ful war Ethiocles	
	Gan in party gretly to mervaille,	part
	Whan that he saugh the grete apparayle	<i>preparation</i>
	Of the Grekes the cité rounde aboue,	
	And in hymself hadde a maser doute	
3615	Now at the poynt what was best to do.	<i>that same</i>
	For thilke tyme it stood with hym so	
	That to some abidyng in the toun	
	He hadde in herte gret suspiciooun	
	List toward hym that they were unstable	<i>Lest; unreliable</i>
3620	And to his brother in party favorable;	
	For in the cité ther was variance,	
	Which unto hym was a gret meschaunce,	disaster
	For in his nede shortly he ne wiste	know
	Upon whom that he myghte triste,	<i>trust</i>
3625	For they wer not alle of on entent.	
	For which he hath for his counsale sent,	
	Al his lordes and the olde quene.	
	Which as he dempte were pur and clene,	<i>thought</i>
	Hool of on herte and not variable,	<i>Wholly of one</i>
3630	Of old expert and alway founde stable,	<i>experienced</i>
	Requeryng hem because they were wys	<i>Asking</i>
	Al openly to tellen ther avis	
	Wher it was bet pleynly in her sight	<i>Whether; better</i>
	With his brother to treten or to fight.	<i>negotiate</i>
3635	And some gaf a ful blunt sentence,	<i>gave</i>
	Which hadde of werre non experience,	
	Seyde it was best, and nat ben afferd	
	To trye his right manly with the swerd.	
	And some also that wer moor prudent	

Tertia Pars

- 3640 Spak unto hym by good avisement
 And list nat spar but their conceyte tolde
 How hit was best his covenant forto holde
 And to perforn his heeste mad toforn
 To his brother lich as he was swoen,
 So that his woerd, the wors to mak hym spedē,
 Be nat founde variant fro the dede,
 For non hatred, rancour, neyther peydē.
 And tho the queen took hym out aside,
 Tolde hym pleynly it was ful unsittynge
 Swich doublenesse to fynden in a kyng,
 And seide hym ek, althoþ he were strong,
 To his brother how he dide wrong,
 "As al the toune wil record, in dede,
 And ber witnessse, yif it kam to nede.
 Wherfor lat us shape another mene
 In this matere whil that it is grene,
 Or this quarel, gonnes of voluntē,
 Turne in the fyn to mor adversitē.
 For yif it be darreyned be bataylle,
 Who tresteth most may ful likly faille.
 And it is foly be short avisement
 To putte a strif in Martys jugement.
 For hard it is whan a juge is wood
 To tret aforn hym without loos of blood.
 And yif we put our mater hool in Marte,
 Which with the swerd his lawes doth coarte,
 Than may hit happe, wher ye be glad or loth,
 Thow and thy brother shal repente both
 And many another that is her present,
 Of youre trespass that ben innocent,
 And many thousand in cas shal compleyn
 For the debat only of yow tweyn,
 And for your strif shal fynde ful unsoote.
 And for thow art gynnyng, ground, and roote
 Of this injurie and this gret unright,
 To the goddys that herof han a sight
 Thow shalt accountys and a reknyng make
 For alle tho that persshyn for thi sake.
- deliberation
did not hold back; opinion
agreement
promises; before
to his disadvantage
inappropriate
notice
if need be
fresh
Before; began willingly
end
if; settled
in brief
Mars'
mad
argue
if
enforce
Then; whether; sad
crime
bitter
beginning, cause
injustice
those; perish

The Siege of Thebes

3680	And now the cause dryven is so ferre, Sodeyn pees oyther hasty werre Moot folowe anon; for the fatal chaunce Of lif and deth dependeth in balaunce. And no man may be no craft restreyne That upon on platly of this tweyne	advanced, far or untimely <i>Must</i> <i>hangs in the balance</i> <i>by</i> <i>one plainly; two</i> <i>chance</i>
3685	The soort mot falie, lik as it doth tourne, Whosoever lawgh or ellis mourne. And thow art dryve so narowe to the stake That thow mayst nat moo delayes make But fight or tret, this quarel forto fyne;	<i>constrained by circumstances</i>
3690	By non engyn thow canst it not declyne. And hasty cas, as folk seyn that be wys, Redresse requereth by ful short avys; For trete longe now avaylleth noght. For to the poynt sothly thou art brought:	<i>negotiate; resolve</i> <i>cunning; avert</i> <i>pressing</i> <i>quick judgment</i> <i>For to debate</i>
3695	Oyther to kepe thy poccisioun Or in al haste devoyde out of this toun, Wher thow therwith be wroth or wel apayd. Now note wel al that I ha sayd,	<i>withdraw</i> <i>Whether; pleased</i>
3700	And by my cunsayl wisly condescende Wrong, wrought of olde, newly to amende. The tyme is come — it may be non other. Wherfor in haste trete with thi brother	<i>agree</i>
3705	And ageyn hym make no resistance But to thy lordys fully gif credence, By whoos cunsayl, sith they be so sage, Late Polymyte rejoysse his heritage.	<i>deal</i>
3710	And that shal turne most to thyn avail. Loo, her is hool the fyn of our cunsail." Thou he therto froward was and loth, Accorded is, heryng al the prees;	<i>since</i>
3715	Yif he algate shal trete for a pes, It moste be by this condicioun — That he wol han the domynacioun First in chief to hymself reserved,	<i>Let</i>
	As hym thouht he hadde wel disserved, And save to hym hool the sovereynté;	<i>then; true anger</i> <i>opposed; unwilling</i> <i>crowd</i> <i>If; after all; negotiate</i>
		<i>retale</i>

Tercio Párra

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| | And under hym in Thebes the cité
He to graunte with a right good cher
Polymytes to regne for a yer,
Than avoyde and not resoort ageyn;
For mor to cleyme was nat but in veyn.
This wold he don only for her sake,
And otherwise he wil non ende make | willingly |
| 3720 | This wold he don only for her sake,
And otherwise he wil non ende make
With the Grekys, what fortune evere falle.
And fynally among his lordys alle
Ther was not on of hih nor lowgh estat
That wold gon on this ambassyat | <i>Then leave; return</i> |
| | Out of the toun, nouther for bet nor wors, | embassy |
| 3725 | Til Jocasta made sadyl her hors
And cast hersilf to gon for this treté,
To make an ende, yif it wolde be.
And this was don the morowe right be tyme,
Upon the houre whan it droh to pryme. | <i>ordered to be saddled</i>
<i>planned</i>
<i>if</i> |
| | 3730 And with hyr went hyr yonge dohtres tweyne,
Antygoné and the feyr Ymeyne,
Of hyr meyné ful many on aboute;
At the gate she was conveyed oute,
And of purpos she made first hir went | <i>her</i> |
| 3735 | On horsbak to kyng Adrastus tent,
He and his lordys beyng al yffere.
And they receyve hyr with a right glad chere,
Shewyng hyr lik to hir degré
On every half ful gret humanyté; | <i>Ismene</i>
<i>retinue</i> |
| | 3740 Polymytes rysyng fro his place,
And humblyly his moder gan embrace,
Kyssede hyr and than Antigoné
And ek Ymeyne excellyng of bewté.
And for that they passyngly were faire, | <i>way</i> |
| 3745 | Gret was the pres, concours, and repaire
Of the ladyes forto han a sight.
And Jocasta procedeth anon ryght
To Adrastus hir mater to purpose,
And gan to hym opynly disclose | <i>Displaying</i>
<i>courtesy</i> |
| | 3750 Th'entent and will of Ethiocles
And by what mene he desireth pes — | <i>crowd, gathering; assembly</i> |
| | | <i>directly</i> |
| 3755 | | <i>explain</i> |

The Siege of Thebes

- To hym reserved, as she gan specifie,
The honour hool and the regalye,
With sceptre and croune fro hym not devyded *kingship*
- 3760 But hool to hym as he hath provided
And Polymyte, be this condicoun,
Under hym to regnen in the toun
As a soget, be suffraunce of his brother.
But the Grekes thouthen al another, *subject*
3765 And specyaly worthy Tydeus.
~~¶~~ Pleynly affirmynge it shuld nat be thus:
For he wil have no condicouns
But sette asyde all excepcions,
Nothyng reservid as in special,
3770 But hool the lordship, regalye, and al,
Polymytes it fully to possede, *possess*
In Thebes crowned verrayly in dode
As rightful kyng putte in poessioune,
Lich the covenauantz and convenclooun
3775 Imad of olde, assuryd, and asselyd,
"Which shall not now of nwe be repelyd
But stable and hool in his strengthe stonde.
And lat hym so platly undyrstonde:
And first that he devoyde hym out of toun *Made: sworn; sealed*
3780 And delyvere the sceptre and the croun
To his brother and mak therof no more.
And, shortly, ellys it shal be bouht ful sore
Or this mater brought be to an ende.
For Grek is non that shal hemys wende *repealed*
- 3785 Or that our right, which is us denyed,
With lif or deth darreyned be and tryed:
We wil not arst fro this towne remewe.
And yif hym lyst al this thyng eschwe
And al meschief stytyn and appese, *force*
- 3790 To either part he may do gret ese;
Thus I mene for his avauntage:
Delyver up hool the trewe herityage
To his brother for a yeer t'endure
And Grekys shal fully hym assure, *leave*
- 3795 By what bonde that hym list devise, *in brief; otherwise*
- Before
hence go
- settled by combat
first
if; wishes; avoid
- side
- last

Tertia Pars

- The yeer compleat in our beste wise
To hym delyver ageyn pocession
Without strif or contradiccion,
And to this fyn justly hald us to.
end; hold
3800 And yif it falle that he wil nat so,
Lat hym not wayte but only after werre.
The hour is come — we wil it not differre.
Lo, her is al, and thus ye may reporte
expect
delay
To hym ageyn, whan that ye resorte,
3805 Fro which apoynt we cast us not to varye.*
And yit to hym Amphiorax contrarye
Ful pleynly saide, in conclusioune,
This fyn shal cause a destruccioune
Of hem echon, yif it forth procede
everyone of them
- To be parfoumed and execute in dede,
But thilke tyme for al his eloquence
He had in soth but lytyl audience.
For whersoever he ment good or ill,
Kyng Adrastus bad hym to be stille.
3815 And tho Jocasta, as wisdom did hyr tech,
Humble of her port with ful softe spech,
Gan seke menys in hyr fantasye,
Yif she myght the ire modefyne
Of the Grekes to make hem to enclyne
3820 In eny wise hyr rancour forto fyne.
She dyd hyr never and hir byssy cure.
But tho byfel a wonder aventure,
Cause and ground of gret confusioune,
Grekys perturbyng and also ek the toun,
3825 And it to telle may me not asterte.
For which a whil my styell I mot dyverte
And shortly telle, by descripcioune,
Of a tigre dwellyng in the toun,
Which fro a kyngdom besyden adjacent
nearby to
3830 Out of Egipte was to Thebes sent.
The whiche beest by record of scripture
Is most swift as of his nature,
And of kynd also most savage,
And most cruel whan he is in his rage;
written record
by nature

The Siege of Thebes

- 3835 And, as clerkys make mencoun,
He of body resembleth the lyoun,
And lik a greyhound the mosel and the hed,
And of eyen as eny fyret red,
Ek of his skyn, wryten as I fynde,
muzzle
eyes, ferret
- 3840 Lich a panter conversant in Ynde
With al maner hwys and colours
And is ful oft deceyved with merours
By fraude of huntys and fals apparence
Shewyd in glas withouten existence,
dwelling in India
hues
mirrors
trick
- 3845 Whan his kyndles arn be sleight ytake
And he deceyved may no rescus make.
And lik a lombe was this tygre tame,
Ageynys kynde, myn autour writh the same.
young, taken
rescue
- 3850 And this beest, mervaillous to se,
Was sent to Ymeyne and Antigone,
Which unto hem dide gret confort
And cowde playe and make good disport,
Lik a whelp that is but yong of age,
person
- 3855 No mor in sooth than doth a littil hound;
And it was worth many hundred pound
Unto the kyng, for ay in his grevaunce
Ther was nothing did hym mor plesaunce,
That for no tresour it myght not be bought.
softly
- 3860 For whan that he was pensif or in thought,
It putt hym out of his hevynesse.
And thilke tyme, the story doth expresse,
That Jocasta treded for a pes
This tame tygre in party rekkeles
at the same time
negotiated
heedless
- 3865 Out at the gates, in sight of many a man,
Into the felde wildly out ran,
And casuually rennyng to and fro,
In and oute, as doth a tame roo;
Grekys wenyng, that wer yong of age,
roo
thinking
- 3870 That this tygre hadde be savage
And cruelly besettynge al the place
Round aboute gan hym to enhace
Til he was ded and slayen in the feld.
must be
surrounding
chase

Tercia Pars

- 3875 The slaughter of whom whan that they byheld,
The proude Thebans, which on the wallys stood,
They ronne doun ful furious and wood,
Wenying he had be slayen of despit,
Takynge her hoes withoute mor respit,
Fully in purpos with Grekys forto fighte,
Believing: spite
delay
- 3880 The tigres dethe t'avengen yif they myghte,
And out they rood withoute governaylle
And ful proudly Grekes gan assaylle,
And of hatred and ful heghe desdayne
Fyl upon hem that han the tygre slayne,
governance
assault
- 3885 And cruelly qwitten hem her mede,
That many Greke in the grene mede
By the force and the grete myght
Of her foomen lay slayen in this fight,
The tigres deth so dere they aboughte,
gave them their reward
meadow
- 3890 So mortally Thebanys on hem wroghte
That al the host in the feld liggyng
Was astounyd of this sodeyn thynge.
And in this whil, of rancour rekkeles,
Out of Thebes rood Ethiocles
enemies
paid for
- 3895 And with hym ek the worthy kyng Tremour,
Of his bond a noble werreour,
That made Grekes to foesak her place
And to her tentys gan hem to enhace.
And myd the feld as thei togyder mette
lodging
- 3900 On horsbak with speres sharpe wheme
Of verray hate and envious prude,
Ful many on was ded on oother syde.
The whiche thynge whan Tideus espieth,
Wood as lyoun to horsbak he hieth,
pursue
in the middle of
honed
- 3905 As he that was never a del afferd,
But ran on hem and met hem in the berd;
And maugré hem, in his cruelté
He made hem flee hom to her cité,
Hem pursuyng of ful dedly hate,
saw
hastened
not at all afraid
face to face
despite
- 3910 That many on lay slayen at the gate,
Gapyng uprightys with her woundys wyde,
That uttreyly they durste not abyde

The Siege of Thebes

	Tofor the swerd of this Tydeus.	<i>Before</i>
	He was on hem so passēng furius,	
3915	So many Theban he roof unto the herte That, whan Jocasta the slauhtre gan adverte, Polymytes she gan prey ful fayre To make Grekis hom ageyn repaire And that they wolden stytyn to assaylie	<i>cut</i> <i>observe</i>
	For thilke day and cessen her bataylle. At whoos requeste pleynly and preyeire And at reverence of his moder dere, Polymytes, her herte to conforte, Grekes made hom ageyn resorte	<i>return</i> <i>cease</i> <i>that same</i>
3920	And Tydeus to stytten of his chas. And they of Thebes, hasting a gret pas, Ful trist and hevy ben entred into toun. And for the tygre, in conclusioune, As ye han herd, first began this stryff,	
3925	That many Theban that day lost his lyff And recurlees hath yolden up the breth In th'avengyng of the tygres deth.	<i>hastening</i> <i>sorrowful</i>
3930	And al this while duely as she ought, The quene Jocasta humblely besought Kyng Adrastus only of his grace, Some mene way wisly to purchace To make a pees atwene the bretheren tweyn	<i>beyond remedy; yielded</i>
	And the treſe so prudently oedeyne On either party that no blood be shad.	<i>means; procure</i>
3935	And this Adrastus, avise and right sad, For Grekis party answer gaf anon That other ende shortly gete she non, Lich as the lordis fully ben avisyd, Than Tydeus hath aform devisyd.	<i>agreement; construct</i>
3940	And whan she saugh it may non other be, She lieve tok and hom to the cytē She is repeired, havyng to hyr guyde Polymytes rydyng be her syde. And Tideus ladde Antigonē,	<i>thoughtful; serious</i> <i>gave immediately</i> <i>outcome</i>
3945	And of Archadye Prothonolopē The worthy kyng did his bysy peyne	<i>said</i>
3950		<i>returned</i>

Tertia Pars

- To ben attendaunt upon fair Ymeyne,
Whos hert she hath to her servise luryd;
And he ageyn hath purtraled and fyguryd
3955 Myd of his brest, which lightly may not passe,
Hooly the feturis of her fresshly face.
Hym thought she was so faire a creature,
And though that he durst hym not discure,
Yit in his hert as ferforth as he kan,
3960 He hath avowed to ben her trwe man,
Uewist to his pleynly and unknowe
How he was marked with Cupides bowe,
With his arwe sodeynly werreyed.
And to the gate the ladyes conveyed
3965 Ben entred in, for it drow to eve,
Grekys of hem taking tho her leve;
Thogh some of hem wer sory to departe,
Yit of wisdom they durste not juparte
Under a conduit to entren into toun,
3970 Lest it turned to her confusion.
Thouȝ some bookes the contrarye seyn,
But myn autour is platly therageyn
And affermeth in his opynyoun
That Tydeus of hegh discreciooun,
3975 Of wilfulness nor of no folye,
Ne wold as tho put in jupartie
Nowther hymself nor non of his ferys.
And the ladyes with her heavenly cherys,
Angelik of look and contenance,
3980 Lich as it is put in remembrance,
At her entryng from Grekys into toun,
Polomytes of gret affeccioun
The quen bysouhte thilke nyght not fyne
For t'asseye yif she myght enclyne
3985 Ethioeles, of conscience and ryght,
To kepe covenaunt, as he hath behight
Ful yore agon with the surplusage,
List the contrayre toume to damage,
First of hymself and many an other mo.
3990 And thus fro Thebes Grekys ben ago
- enticed
driven; imagined
*In his heart; vanish
features*
- dared not reveal himself*
- Unbeknoenut
- strack
- then
- safe conduct
destruction
- opposed
- then
companions
faces
- cease
try
- promised
Long ago: remaining part
- more

The Siege of Thebes

	To her tentys and rest hem al that nyght. And Lucyna the mone shon ful bright Withinne Thebes on the chief dongoun, Whan Jocasta made relacioun	castle keep
3995	Unto the kyng and told hym al the guyse, How that Grekys uttrely despysē His profre made be fals collusioune, Only excepte the convencioune,	manner disdain offer agreement
	Of old engrocyd by gret purvyance,	written out in legal form; foresight
4000	Which is enrollyd and put in remembrance, Upon which they fynaly wil restē: Hym counsaillinge, hir thouhte for the beste, To conforme hym to that he was bounde,	written in a roll obey Lest, end, destroy value
	Lyst in the fyn falsnesse hym confounde.	
4005	But al hir counsayl he set it at no peys; He dempt hymself so prudent and so wys, For he was wilful and he was indurat, And in his hert of malice obstynat,	stubborn hatred determined
	And oultrely avised in his thouht	
4010	Withinne Thebes his brother get right nouht. And in his errour thus I lete him dwelle. And of Grekis forth I wil you telle, Which al that nyght kepte hem silve cloos.	nothing at all confined the sun
	And on the morow whan Tytan up aroos.	
4015	They armyd hem and gan hem redy make, And of assent han the felde itake, With the Thebars that day out of doute Ferto flighten, yif they yssen oute.	taken sally forth
	And Adrastus in ful thrifte wise	
4020	In the feld his wardys gan devise, As he that was of all deceytes war. And richely armyd in his char Amphiorax cam with his meynē,	divisions chariot retinue
	Ful renomyd of antiquitē,	renowned
4025	And wel expert because he was old. And whil that Grekys, as I have you told, Wer bysiest her wardys to ordeyne, Myd of the feld bifyl a cas sodeyne,	experienced set out in formation
4030	Ful unhappy, lothsom, and odyble,	<i>In the middle; unexpected event</i> shocking; hateful

Tertia Pars

- 4030 For liche a thing that wer invisible
 This olde bisshop with char and hors certeyn
 Disaperyd and no mor was seyne.
 Only of fate which no man can repelle, resist
 The erth opnde and he fille to helle,
- 4035 With all his folk that upon hym abood. attended
 And sodeynly the grunde on which he stood
 Closyd ageyn and togydre shette, shut
 That never after Grekis with hym mette.
 And thus the devel for his old outrages, offenses
- 4040 Lich his decent, paied hym his wages. According to his merit
 For he ful lowe is discendid doun
 Into the dark and blake regyoun
 Wher that Pluto is crownyd and ystallyd
 With his quene Proserpina icallyd. entroned
- 4045 With whom this bisshop hath made his mansioun
 Perpetually as for his guerdoun.
 Lo, here the mede of ydolatrie,
 Of rytyd old and fals mawmetrye. dwelling
reward
reward
idolatry
 Lo, what avayllen incantaciouns
- 4050 Of exorcisms and conjurisouns;
 What stood hym stede his nigromancye,
 Calculacioun, or astronomye;
 What vaylled hym the heavenly manciouns,
 Diverse aspectis, or constellaciouns? astrological houses
positions of the stars
- 4055 The ende is nat bot sorowe and meschaunce
 Of hem that settent her outre affiaunce
 In swich werkes superstitious,
 Or trist on hem: he is ungracious.
 Record I take, shortly forto telle, trust; lacking in God's grace
- 4060 Of this byssishop sonken doun to helle,
 Whos woeful ende about in every cost
 Swich a rumour hath maked in the host
 That the noys of this uncouth thyng
 Is yronne and come to the kyng. Evidence
- 4065 How this vengeance is unwarily falle.
 And he anon made a trumpet calle
 Alle his puple out of the feld ageyn;
 And everychon assembled on a pleyn part
- rumor; strange
run
unexpectedly happened
at once
people*

The Siege of Thebes

	Tofore the kyng and also rounde aboute.	<i>Before</i>
4070	Every man of his lyf in doute Ful pitously gan to frown and loure, List that the grunde hem alle wil devoure And swalown hem in his dirke kave; And they ne can no recur hem to save.	<i>look gloomy; be mournful</i> <i>Lest</i> <i>know no remedy</i>
4075	For nouther force nor manhode may availle In swiche meschier the valewe of a maylle. For he that was wisest and koude most To serche and seke thorghout al the host, Amphiorax, whan that he lest wende,	<i>misfortune; value; haffpenny</i> <i>knew</i> <i>least expected</i>
4080	To helle is sonken and coade hym not diffende (To hym the tyme unknownen and unwist), In whom whilom was al the Grekis trist, Her hool confort, and her affiaunce. But all attonyys for this sodeyn chaunce	<i>protect</i> <i>unseen</i> <i>once; confidence</i> <i>faith</i> <i>at once; turn of events</i>
4085	And this meschier they gan hem to dispeire, Hem to Grece that they wil repeyre. This was the purpos of hem everichon. And on the wallys of Thebes lay her son, Rejoysing hem of this unhappy eure.	<i>return</i> <i>intention</i> <i>enemies</i> <i>fate</i>
4090	Weryng therby gretly to recure, And on her touras as they loken oute, They on Grekys enviously gan shoute, And of despit and gret enmyte Bad hem foolys gon hom to her contré,	<i>Thinking: win back lost ground</i> <i>malice</i> <i>fools</i> <i>Since</i>
4095	Sith they han lost her confort and socour, Her fals prophete and her dyvynour Wherthorugh her partie gretly is apeyryd. And in this wise Grekys disespeyryd, Dempte pleynly be tokens evident	<i>Through which; weakened</i> <i>despaired</i> <i>Judged</i>
4100	This cas was fallie by som enchauntement, By wichecraft or fals sorcerye, Ageynes which may be no remedye, Tristy diffence, helpe, nor socour. And whan Adrastus herde this clamour,	
4105	He bysy was ageyn this perturbaunce To provyde some maner chevysaunce And to hym calleth such counsayl as he wiste,	<i>remedy</i>

Tertia Pars

- For lyf or deth that he myghte trysie,
Requeryng hem but in wordys fewe
4110 In this meschief her mocion to shewe
And declare by good avisement
What to Grekys was most expedient
To remedyen — and mak no delay —
The uncouth noyse and the gret affray
4115 That Grekys made with clamour importune
And newe and newe evere in on contune.
And they that wern most manly and most wise
Shortly saide it wer a cowardyse
The hegh emprise that they han undirtake
4120 For dred of deth so sodeynly forsake.
It wer to hem a perpetuel shame
And outre hyndryng unto Grekys name;
And better it wer to every werreyour
Manly to dyere with worship and honour
4125 Than lik a coward with the lyf endure.
For onys shamyd, hard is to recure
His name ageyn, of what estat he be.
And sith Grekes of old antiquyté,
As of knyghthode, who so list tak hed,
4130 Ben so famous and so renomed,
Yif now of newe the shyning of her fame
Eclipsid were with eny spotte of blame,
It were a thyng uncouth forto here,
Of whoes renoun the bemes yit ben clere
4135 Thorgh al the world, wher as they han passyd,
And ben not yit dyrkyd nor diffacyd
By no report nouther on se ne londe
Thyng to forsake that they tok on honde.
"And by example of our progenitours,
4140 That whilom wern so manly conquerours,
Toforn that we into Greece wende,
Of thyng bygon lat us make an ende
And parte nat nor severe from this toun
Til it be brought to destruccioun,
4145 Wallys, tourres crestyd and batailled
And for were strongly apparayled
- Ask
misfortune their suggestion
deliberation
- strange rumor; fear
persistent
again and again; continue
- enterprise
- great discredit
- shamed; recover
reputation; whatever status
- if; suddenly; reputation
Obscured
curious to hear
- darkened; marred
- undertook
- go
began
- towers crenelated

The Siege of Thebes

	Be first dounse bese that nothyng be seyn,	beaten
	But al togyder with the erthe pleyn	
	Be low leyde or that we resorte,	<i>levelled to the earth before; return</i>
4150	That afterward men may of us reporte	<i>say</i>
	That we bygan we knyghtly han achievyd	<i>That what</i>
	Upon our fooun with worship unrepeevyd."	<i>enemies; blameless</i>
	This was the counsayle shroetly and th' avis	
	Of the Grekys that manly wern and wys,	
4155	That nevere aforn wer markyd with no blame,	<i>suck</i>
	And specialy swich as drede shame	<i>intend; happen</i>
	And fully caste what fortune ever tyde	
	On her purpos to the ende abyde,	
	That on no part her honure not apalle.	<i>fade</i>
4160	And to this counsaille Grekys on and alle	<i>Agreed; success</i>
	Ben condescendyd and, for mor happy sped,	<i>recently</i>
	Insted of hym that was so late ded,	
	Amphiorax buryed depe in helle	
	That koude whilom to the Grekys telle	<i>could once</i>
4165	Of thyngges hid how it shal falle aforn,	<i>hidden; beforehand</i>
	Instede of whom now they han hym lorn,	<i>[him] whose; lost</i>
4170	They casten hem wisly to purchace	<i>thought; obtain</i>
	Some prudent man to occupye his place,	
	That in swich thyng myght hem most availle	<i>profit</i>
	Thoergh mystery of his dyvynaylle	<i>divination</i>
	By craft of sorte or of profecye,	<i>drawing lots</i>
	Yif eny swich they couden out espye.	<i>could discover</i>
	And among al, her purpos to atteyne,	
	As I fynde, they han chosyn tweyne,	<i>two</i>
4175	Most renomed of hem everychon.	
	And Menolippus callyd was the ton,	<i>the one</i>
	And Terdymus ek the tother highte.	<i>the other was called</i>
	And for he hadde most favour in her sighte,	<i>their</i>
	This Terdymus was chosen and preferryd.	
4180	And in her choys Grekys han not erryd,	<i>long ago; task</i>
	For whilom he lemyd his emprise	
	Of his maister Amphiorax the wyse	
	And was disciple undyr his doctrine.	
	And of entent that he shal termyne	<i>state</i>
4185	Unto Grekys thynges that shal falle	<i>occur</i>

Tertia Pars

- And as a bisshop mytryd in his stalle,
They don for him in many uncouth wyse
In the temple to goddis sacrificise,
And thus conformed and stallyd in his se,
4190 A fewe dayes stood in his degré,
After his mayster with ful gret honour,
Of Grekys chose to be successour.
And al this tyme, in story as is told,
Ful gret meschief of hungre, thrust, and cold
4195 And of Thebans as they issen oute
Lay many on slayen in the route
On outher part, of fortune as they mette —
Her mortal swerdys wer so sharpe whette,
And Tydeus among hem of the toun
4200 Fro day to day pleyeth the lyoun
So cruelly, wher so that he rood,
That Theban non aforne his face abood.
He made of hem, thorg his high renown,
So gret slaughter and occisioun
4205 That as the deth fro his swerd they fledde,
And who cam nexte leid his lyf to wedde.
He qwitte hymself so lik a manly knyght
That wher he went he putte hem to the flight,
And maugré hem, in his craulté,
4210 He droff hem hem into her cité,
Hem purswyng proudly to the gate,
That unto hym they bar so dedly hate
That they hem caste by sleight or some engyn,
To bryngyn hym unwarily to hys fyn
4215 And leyde awayt for hym day and nyght.
But, o alias, this noble manly knyght,
Upon a day as he gan hem encrase
4220 And mortally made hem lese her place
And sued hem almost to the toun —
That cause was of his destrucciouin.
For on, alias, that on the wallys stood,
Which al that day upon hym abood,
With a quarel sharpe heded for his sake
Markede hym with a bowe of brake
wearing a mitre; bishop's seat in a choir
exotic manners
confirmed; installed; seat
chosen
trouble
company
either side
deadly; keenly honed
wherever
before; remained
killing
as a pledge
behaved
ferocity
drove
planned; sleight; deceit
without warning; end
in ambush
pursue
lose
followed
wasted
bolt from a crossbow sharpened
Wounded; arbalest

The Siege of Thebes

- 4225 So cruelly, makyng non arrest
Tyl it was passyd bothe bak and brest.
Wherborgh, alias, ther was non other red
Nor lechecraft but that he mot be ded —
Ther may therof be maked non delayes.
- 4230 And yit was he holdyn in his dayes
The beste knyght and most manly man,
As myn autour wel reherce kan.
But for al that was ther no dyffence
Ageyn the strok of dethys violence.
- 4235 And Bochas writh, er he was fully ded,
He was by Grekys presentyd with the hed
Of hym that gaf his laste fatal wounde;
And he was callyd, lik as it is founde,
^{#38'} Menolippus, I can non other tellie.
- 4240 But thilke day Thebans wex so felle
Upon Grekys that under her cyte
The manly kyng Parthanolope
Islayen was evene afor the gatys;
And ther also, armyd bright in platys,
- 4245 The famous kyng callyd Ypomedoun
The same day, as mad is mencioum,
On horsbak manly as he flaught
At the brigge evene upon the draught,
Besette with pres casuelly was drownyd.
- 4250 And thus fortune hath on Grekys frownyd
On every syde thilk unhappy day.
But al the maner tellen I ne may
Of her fightyng nor her slaughter in soth,
Mor to declare than myn autour doth.
- 4255 But thilke day I fynde as ye may sen,
Whan Phebus passyd was merydyen
And fro the south westward gan hym drawe,
His gyfte tressys to bathen in the wawe,
The Theban kyng felle Ethyocles.
- 4260 Rote of unreste and causer of unpes,
The slauhter of Grekys whan that he beheld,
Armyd in steel he kam out into feld,
Ful desirous in that sodeyn herte
- stop
Through which; remedy
healing
- Boccaccio
head
gave
- no more*
grew; deadly
- Slain; before
armor plate
- drawbridge
- Surrounded; combatants accidentally*
frowned
- truth
- zenith
- waves
- cruel
- Source (Root); discord*

Tertia Pars

- 4265 Polymytes at good leyser to mete,
Syngulerly with hym to han ado.
For in this world he hatede no man so
(He sat so nygh emprented in his herte).
Whoos comyng out his brother gan adverte
Upon his stede in the opposit
4270 And hadde ageynward also gret delyt
To meten hym, yif fortune assente —
Th'envious fyr so her hertys brente
With haate cankered of unkynde blood.
And lik two tygres in her rage wood,
4275 With speerys sharpe gronde for the nonys,
So as they ranne and mette both attonyss,
⁴²⁸⁰ Polymytes thorgh platys, mayle, and sheeld
Roof hym thorghout and smette hym into feld.
But whan he sauh the stremys of his blood
4280 Raylle about in maner of a flood,
At sodeynly of compassioun
From his coursere he alighte doun,
And brotherly, with a pitous face,
To save his lyf gan hym to embrace,
4285 And from his wounde of newe affeccioum,
Ful bysy was to pulle out the trunchous,
Of love only handlyng hym ryght softe.
But, o allas, whil he lay alofse,
Ful yrounly Ethiocles the felle,
4290 Of al this sorowe verraye sours and welle,
With a dagger in al his peynys smerte
His brother smoot unwarily to the herte,
Which al her lyf hadde be so wrothe.
And thus the Thebans were yslawe bothe
4295 At the entré evene aforn the toun.
But Grekys tho ben availed doun
Out of the feld, the worthy knyghtys alle.
And in Thebes loud as eny shalle
The cry aroos whan her kyng was ded.
4300 And to the gatys armyd foot and hed,
Out of the toun cam many proud Theban.
And some of hem upon the wallys ran
- without haste
Singly; battle
near impressed
His; noticed
in return
burned
envenomed by unnatural
furious
keenly sharpened for the occasion
at once
armor plates, chain mail
Pierced; smote, to the ground
Flow
warkorse
to remove his armor
out of
fragment of a spear
stood above
savage
origin
sharp
without warning
Who; angry
slain
threw; defeated
shavem (musical instrument)

The Siege of Thebes

- And gan to shoute, that pité was to here.
And they without, of her lyf in were,
4305 Withoute confort or consolacioun
Disespeyred ronne hom to the toun,
And Grekys folowen after at the bak,
That many on that day goth to wrak.
And as her foomen proudly hem assaylle,
4310 Ful many Grekys thorgh platys and thorgh maylle
Was shette thorghout, pressyng at the wallys,
And betyn of with grete rounde ballys,
That her lay on and another yonder.
And the noyse, hydousher than thonder,
4315 Of gonneshot and arblastys ek
So loude outronge that many worthy Grek
Ther lost his lyf — they wern on hem so felle.
And at the gatys, shortly forto telle,
As Grekys prees to entren the cyté,
4320 They of Thebes in her croelté
With hem mette ful furious and wood;
And mortally as they ageyn hem stood,
Men myghte sen sperys shyvere asonder,
That to byhold it was a verray wonder
4325 How they foyne with daggers and with swerdys
Thorgh the vyser amyng at the berdys,
Percyng also thorgh the rownde maylles,
Rent out peces of ther aventaylies,
That noult availleth the myghty geseran,
4330 Thorgh breest and nekke that the sperys ran.
Her wepnys wern so sharpe grounde and whet
In ther armure that ther was no let.
For ther laye on troden under foote
And yonde on percyd to the herte roote;
4335 Her lith on ded and ther another lame.
This was the play and the mortal game
Atwene Thebans and the Grekys proude,
That the swowys and the cryes loude
Of hem that lay and yolden up the goost
4340 Was herd ful fer aboute in many cost.
¶ And at the gatys and saylyng of the wal
- on the outside; doubt*
In despair
perished
enemies
armor plate; chain mail
shot
off
more hideous
cross bows
cruel
angry
against
see
thrust
viners aiming; face
metal rings
Cut; throat pieces
light coat of armor
keenly sharpened
mail; obstacle
stabbed to the heart
sights
yielded
region
assault

Tertia Pars

	Islayen was al the blood royal,	<i>Slain</i>
	Both of the toun and of Grekys lond	
	And all the worthy knyghtys of her hond.	
4345	And of lordys, yif I shal not feyne,	<i>side</i>
	On Grekys syde alyve wer but tweyne,	
	Kyng Adrastus and Campaneus.	
	That day to hem was so ungracius.	<i>if; deceptive</i>
	And for Titan westryd was so lowe	
4350	That no man myght unnethys other knowe,	<i>unfortunate</i>
	Tho of the toun shet her gatys faste	<i>Titan (the sun) passed to the west</i>
	With barrys rounde maked forto laste,	<i>scarcely</i>
	In which no wight kerfe may noe hewe,	<i>Those</i>
	And Adrastus with a Grekys fewe	<i>bars; made</i>
4355	Repeyred is hom unto his tent,	<i>cut</i>
	And al that nyght he wastyd hath and spent	
	For his unhappye in soeowe compleyning.	<i>Returned</i>
	And they in Thebes the nexte day swyng	
	Her devoure did and her byssy cure,	<i>misfortune</i>
4360	To ordeyne and make a sepulture	<i>following</i>
	For her kyng yslayen in the feeld,	<i>dales</i>
	And offred up his baner and his shield,	<i>slain</i>
	His helme, his swerd, and also his penoun,	
	Therinne of gold ibetyn a dragoun,	<i>embossed</i>
4365	High in the temple that men myghte sen.	
	And Jocasta, that infortunyd quene,	<i>ill-fornede</i>
	Her sones deth soore gan compleyne;	<i>lament</i>
	And also ek her yonge doghtres tweyne,	
	Both Ymeyne and Antigonee,	
4370	Cryden and wepte that pyte was to se.	
	But to her sorowes that was no refut,	<i>remedy</i>
	And thus the cete bar and destinat,	<i>barren</i>
	Havyng no wight to govern hem nor guye,	
	For ded and slayn was al the chyvalrye	<i>knighthood</i>
4375	And no wight left almost in the toun	
	To regne on hem by successiou.	
	But for they saugh and tokyn also hed,	<i>because</i>
	Withoutte this that they hadde an hed	<i>Unless; leader</i>
	In the cyté thei may not dure longe,	
4380	For though so be comownerys be stronge	<i>commoners</i>

The Siege of Thebes

	With multitude and have no governaylle Of an hed, ful lytyl may avaylle. Therfor they han unto her socour Ychosyn hem a newe governour,	<i>governance</i>
4385	An olde tyraunt that callyd was Creon, ⁴³⁹⁰ Ful acceptable to hem everichon, And crownyd hym withoute mor lettynge To regne in Thebes and to ben her kyng, Althogh he hadde no title by dissent	<i>Chosen</i>
	But by fre choys made in parlement. And ther to hym, lik as it is founde, By her lygeaunce of newe they wer bounde For to be trewe, whyl the cité stood,	<i>everyone</i>
4390	To hym only with body and with good.	<i>delay</i>
4395	Thus they wer sworn and suryd everichon; And he ageynward to save hem from her foon, And hem dyffende with al his ful myght, And meynten hem in al manere ryght.	<i>right</i>
	This was th'accoord as in sentement.	<i>choice</i>
4400	And in this whil hath Adrastus sent From the siege of Thebes the cyté A woundyd knyght hom to his contré Thoergh al Grece pleynly to declare	<i>allegiance</i>
	Al the slaughter and the evyl fare	<i>pledged every one</i>
4405	Of worthy Grekys, ryght as it is falle, And how that he hath lost his lordys alle Att mor meschien than eny man can mouth. And whan this thyng was in Grece couth,	<i>in return; enemies</i>
	Fyrest to Argive and Deyphylee	<i>maintain</i>
4410	And to the ladies ek in the contré And of peovynces aboute hem adjacent, They come doun, al be on assent, Worthy queenys and with hem ek duchessys	<i>substance</i>
	And other ek that callyd were contessys;	<i>self</i>
4415	And alle the ladyes and wymmen of degré ⁴⁴²⁰ Ben assembled in Arge the cyté, Lik as I rede, and alle in clothes blake, That to byhold the sorowe that they make, It were a deth to eny man alyve.	<i>fortune</i>
		<i>happened</i>
		<i>trouble</i>
		<i>known</i>
		<i>nearby</i>

Tercia Pars

- 4420 And yif I shuld by and by descriyve
Ther tendre wepyng and ther wooful sowmys,
Her complayntys and lamentacions,
Her ofte swounyng with facys ded and pale,
Therof I myghte make a newe tale,
4425 Almost a day yow to occupye.
And as myn autour doth clerly certifie,
Thorghoute Grece from all the rigiouns
Out of cities and of royal touns
Cam alle the ladies and wymmen of estat,
4430 Ful hevy cheryd and disconsolat,
To this assemblé, aforne as I you tolde,
In purpos fully her journé forto holde
Toward Thebes, thys sorwful creaturys,
Ther to bywaylle her wooful aventureys,
4435 T' aquyte hemself of trouth in wommanhede
To her lordys, which in the feld lay dede.
And as the story liketh to declare,
Al this journé they went on foote bare,
Lik as they hadde gon on pylgrymage,
4440 In tokyn of mournyng barbyd the visage,
Wympled echon and in burnet weedys,¹
Nat in charys drawen forth with steedys,
Nor on palfreys blake nowther white:
The sely wymmen koude hem not delite
4445 To hold her way but barfote forth they wente;
So feithfully everichon they ment,
Thorgh hevynesse diffacyd of her hwe;
And as I fynde, they weryn alle trwe.
Now was not that a wonder forto se
4450 So many trewe out of a cuntré,
Attounys gadryd in a companye,
And feithful alle, bookys can not lye,
Both in her port and inward in menyng?
Unto my doom it was an uncouth thyng,
4455 Among a thowsand wymmen euther tweyne
- if
declare
gloomy
before
undertake
these
barefoot
covered their faces
chariots
riding horses; or
wretched
intended
sadness marred; complexion
faithful women
At once gathered
behavior
In my judgment; marvelous
or two

¹ Wearing a wimple each one and in dark-brown clothes

The Siege of Thebes

	To fynden noon that kowde in herte feyne, It was a mervaylle nat ofte seyn aforne.	deceive
	For seelde in feldys groweth eny corn, But yif some wede spryng up ther among.	seldom if
4460	Men laye wynys whan they be to strong, But her trouth was meyne with non allayes; They were so trewe founde at alle assayes. And they ne stynt upon her journé Tyl that they cam ther they wolde be,	dilute wines mixed; alloys (impurities) proofs cease where
4465	Wher Adrastus, wrytyn as I fynde, Lay in his tent al of colour ynde, Gretly mervaylyd whan that he biheld The nombre of hem spread thorgh al the feld Clad all in blak and barfoot everychon.	indigo blue
4470	Out of his tent he dressyd hym anon, Upon his hand the kyng Campaneus; Ful trist in herte and face right pitous, Ageyn the wommen forth they went yfere. And to byhold the woeful hevy chere,	proceeded; immediately At his side Toward, together
4475	The woeful cryes also, whan they mette, The sorful sighys in her brestys shette, The teerys newe distillyng on her facys, And the swownyng in many sondry placys Whan they her lordys alyve not ne founde.	enclosed trickling down
4480	But in the feeld thorgh girt with many wounde, Lay stark upright, pleynly to endite, With dedly eyen tourmyd up the white, Who made sorowe or felt her herte ryve For hir lorde but the faire Argyve?	pierced break
4485	Who can now wepe but Deyphylee, Tydeus for she ne myghte se? Whoos constretyss were so fel and kene	 Their agonies: bitter
4490	That Adrastus myghte not sustene To byholde the ladyes so compleyne, Wisshing his herte parted wer on tweyne. And yit, alias, bothen eve and morowe — O thyng ther was that doubled al her sorowe — That old Creon, fader of fellonye, Ne wold suffre thorgh his tyramye	bear treachery

Tertia Pars

- 4495 The dede bodies be buryed nowther brente
But with beestis and houndys to be rente.
He made hem all upon an hepe be leyde.
Wherof the wymmen, trist and evyl apeyde
For verray dool, as it was no wonder,
4500 Her hertys felt almost ryve asonder.
And as my mayster Chaucer list endite,
Al clad in blak with her wymples whyte,
With gret honour and dieu reverence,
In the temple of the goddesse Clemency
4505 They abood the space of fourtenyght,
Tyl Theseus the noble worthy knyght,
Duk of Athenys, with his chyvalry
Repeyred hom out of Femynye
And with hym ladde ful feir upon to sene,
4510 Thorgh his manhood, Ypolita the quene
And her suster callyd Emelye.
And whan thies wommen gon first espye
This worthy duk as he cam rydynge,
Kyng Adrastus, hem alle conveyinge,
4515 The wommen brought unto his peesence,
Which hym bysought to give hem audience,
And all attorney swownyng in the place,
Ful humbly preiden hym of grace
To rewe on hem her harmys to redresse.
4520 But yif ye list to se the gentyllesse
Of Theseus and how he hath hym born,
Yif ye remembre ye han herde it to forn
Wel rehersyd at Depforth in the vale,
In the bygynnyng of the *Knyghlys Tale*:
4525 First how that he, whan he herd hem speke,
For verray routh felt his herte breke;
And her sorowys whan he gan adverte,
From his courser douan anon he sterte,
Hem confortyng in ful good entente.
4530 And in his armys he hem all up hente.
The *Knyghlys Tale* reherseth every del
Fro poynt to poynt, yif ye looke wel,
And how this duk withoute more abood
- nor burned*
- sorrowful and ill-content*
- sorrow*
- torn*
- Clemency*
- knight*
- Returned*
- led*
- Hippolyta*
- these; did; see*
- Who*
- fainting*
- if; wish*
- acted*
- If*
- Depford*
- pity*
- understood*
- dismounted*
- seized*
- describes wholly*
- delay*

The Siege of Thebes

- 4535 The same day toward Thebes rood,
Ful lik in sooth a worthy conquerour
And in his hoost of chyvalrye the flour;
And fynally, to spekyn of thys thing,
With old Creon that was of Thebes kyng who
How that he faught and slough hym lik a knyght slew
4540 And all his host putte unto the flyght.
Yit, as some auctours make menciou恩,
Or Theseus entred into toun, Before
The women first with pikkeys and with mallys, picks; hammers
With gret labour bete down the wallys.
4545 And in her writyng also as they sayn, their
Campaneus was on the wallys slain;
With cast of ston he was so overlaide, overwhelmed
For whom Adrastus such a sorewe made
That no man myght reles hym of his peyne. relieve
4550 And Jocasta with her doghtires tweyne,
Ful woefully oppressyd of her cherys, mournful; appearance
To Athenes wer sent as prysonerys.
What fil of hem more can I not seyn.
But Theseus, myn autour wrt certeyn, happened to them
4555 Out of the feld or he fro Thebes wente,
He bete it downe and the howsys breste,
The puple slough for al her crying loude,
Maad her wallys and her towrys proude
Rounde aboute, evene upon a rowe, before
4560 With the soyle to be lade ful lowe, razed; burned
That nought was left but the soyle al bare.
And to the wommen in reles of her care, one after another
4565 The bonys of her loedys that were slain laid
This worthy duk restoryd hath agayn.
But what shuld I any lenger dwelle
The olde rytyts by and by to tellle; rinsalt
Nor th'obsequies in ordre to devise;
Nor to declare the manere and the guyse
How the bodyes wer to asshes beent;
4570 Nor of the gommes in the flaumbe spent gums burned as incense
To make the ayre swetter of relees, for relief
As frauncencence, mirre and aloes; frankincense, myrr; aloes

Tertia Pars

- Nor how the wommen round aboute stood,
Some with mylk and some also with blood
4575 And some of hem with umeres made of gold.
Whan the asses fully weren made cold,
T'enclosyn hem of gret affecciou
And bern hem hom into her regioun;
And how that other ful dedly of her loke
4580 For love only of the bonys tooke,
Hem to kepe for a remenbraunce:
That to reherce every observaunce
That was don in the fyres bright,
The wakeplayes duryng al the nyght;
4585 Nor of the wrastlyng to telle poyst be poyst
Of hem that wern nakyd and ennyot;
How everiche other lugge gan and shake;
Nor how the wommen han her leve take
Of Theseus with ful gret humblesse,
4590 Thankyng hym of his worthynesse
That hym lyst upon her woo to rewre;
And how that he, his fredam to renewre,
With the wommen, of his hegh largesse,
Ypartyd hath ek of his richesse;
4595 And how this duk Thebes ek forsoke
And to Athenys the righte waye tooke
With laurer crownyd in signe of victorye
And the palme of conquest and of glorye,
Did his honour duely to Marte;
4600 And how the wymmen wepte whan they departe
With kyng Adrastus hom ageyn to Arge —
To tellyn al wer to gret a charge,
4605 And ek also, as ye shal understande,
At the gynnyng I took no mor on honde
Be my promys, in conclusioune,
But to reherce the destruccioune
Of myghty Thebes shortly and no more.
4610 And thus Adrastus, with his lokkys hore,
Stille abood in Arge his cyte
Unto his ende: ye gete no more of me,
Sauf, as myn auctour liketh to compyle,
- bear*
pale in appearance
- describe*
- funeral games*
- oiled*
pull
- wished: to take pity*
generosity to show again
- Divided*
- left*
- laurel*
- beginning I agreed to*
- sell*
- grey hair*
- Except; write*

The Siege of Thebes

- After that he lyved but a while;
For he was old er the siege gan,
And thought and sorowe so upon hym ran,
The which in soth shoothyd hath his dayes.
And, tyme sette, deth maketh no delayes,
And al his joye passid was and gon;
For of his lordys alyve was not on
But slain at Thebes, ye knownen al the cas.
- 4615 And whan this kyng in Arge buryed was
Ful ryaly with gret solempnyté,
It was acountyd, in bookys ye may se,
Four hundred yeer, as mad is mencioune,
To foore the beelding and fundacion
Of gret Rome so ryal and so large,
Whan the ladies departyden from Arge
To her contrés ful trest and desolat.
Lo, her the fyn of contek and debat.
Lo, her the myght of Mars the foward sterre.
- 4620 4625 4630 4635 4640 4645 4650
- old
shortened
once the time is determined
- reckoned
Before: building
- sad
strife; conflict
unfavorable star
- either: cause
remedy
level
- detriment: either
together
Wish to arrange; double face
Bellona (goddess of war); chariot
Beforehand

Tertia Pars

	Unavysed a were to bygynne, For no man woot who shal lese or wynne. And hard it is whan eyther party leseth. And douteles nowther of hem cheseth	Without deliberation knows loses neither, perceives must
4655	That they most in al swich mortal rage, Maugré her lust, felyn gret damage. It may nat be by manrys myght restreyned. And were in soth was never first ordeyned	<i>Despite their wishes, experience</i>
	But for synne folkis to chastise.	punish
4660	And as the Byble trewly kan devyse,	tell
4665	Hegh in hevene of prude and surquedye, Lucyfer, fader of envie, The olde serpent, he levyathan, Was the first that ever were gan,	began
	Whan Michael, the heavenly champioun, With his feerys venqwisshyd the dragoun And to helle cast hym downe ful lowe.	companions
4670	The whiche serpent hath the cokkyl sowe Thorgh al erth of envye and debat, That unmethys is ther non estat Withoutte stryf can lyve in charite.	cockle sown scarcely
	For every man of hegh and lough degré Envyeth now that other shulde thryve.	<i>In envious source, contend</i>
4675	And ground and cause why that men so stryve Is coveytise and fals ambicioun. That everich wold han domynacioun Over other and trede hym undyr foote,	beginning
	Which of al sorowe gynnyng is and roote.	
4680	And Crist recordyth — red Luk and ye may se — For lak of love what meschief ther shal be. For o puple, as he doth devyse, Agayn another of hate shal aryse,	trouble
	And after tellith what dyvisions Ther shal be atwixe regyouns,	one, say
4685	Everiche byssy other to oppresse. And al swich strif, as he berth wytnesse, Kalendys ben, I take his word to boewe, And a gynnyng of meschief and of sorowe:	<i>Everyone bears</i>
	Men have it founde be experience.	<i>The beginning: as witness beginning learned by</i>

The Siege of Thebes

- | | | |
|------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 4690 | But the venom and the violence
Of strif, of warre, of contek, and debat
That maketh londys bare and desolat
Shal be proscrip and voyded out of place,
And Martys swerd shal no moee manace. | <i>conflict</i> |
| 4695 | Nor his sper grevous to sustene
Shal now no mor whettyd be so kene,
¶ Nor he no mor shal his hauberk shake.
But love and pees in hertys shal awake,
And charité both in length and brede | <i>sharpened
coat of mail</i> |
| 4700 | Of newe shal her beyghte beemys sprede
Thorgh grace only in dyvers naciouns,
For to reforme atwixe regyounys
Pees and quyet, concord and unyté.
And He that is both on and two and thre, | <i>Again</i> |
| 4705 | Ek thre in on and sovereyn lord of pes,
Which in this exil for our sake ches,
For love only our troubles to termyne,
For to be born of a pur virgyne:
And lat us prey to Hym that is most good, | <i>chose
end</i> |
| 4710 | Which for mankynde shadde His herte blood,
Thorgh byseching of that heavenly quene,
Wyff and moder and a mayde clene,
To sende us pes her in this lyf present,
And of oure synnys parfit amendment, | <i>here
correction</i> |
| 4715 | And joye eternal whan we hennes wende.
Of my tale thus I make an ende. | <i>hence</i> |

Explicit.

Here ends the destruction of Thebes.

Explanatory Notes

Prologus

- 1–64 **Latin marginalia: Phœbus in Ariete.** Lydgate's opening to *The Siege of Thebes* echoes the opening of the General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* (I[A]1–18). The difference is that Chaucer's periodic sentence connects the renewal of nature and spirituality in a complex but controlled syntactic structure, while Lydgate's syntax collapses under the weight of successive clauses. Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, p. 153, suggests that Lydgate's effort at imitation reveals his confidence rather than diffidence, based on the achievement of *Troy Book*. Erdmann (2.95) argues that lines 18–19 ("The tyme in soth whan Canterbury talys / Complet and told at many sondry stage") characteristically omit the verb "to be"; they also mark a point at which Lydgate enters the literary time scheme of the spring convention and Chaucer's evidently popular text. In *Troy Book*, Lydgate tries and similarly fails to imitate Chaucer's opening; see 1.3907–43 for direct imitation and 3.1–36 for a reprise of the structural technique. Among the important early textual witnesses to *The Siege of Thebes*, Bodley MS 776 provides an indirect commentary on Lydgate's imitation; it lacks the opening eight lines and a portion from the middle of the passage yet still conveys the essential tone and fictional premise. Johnstone Parr, "Astrological Dating for Some of Lydgate's Poems," *PMLA* 67 (1952), 253–56, interprets the astrological references to yield the date of 27 April 1421 for Lydgate's return pilgrimage. Hammond, p. 369, observes that Chaucer places the sun in Aries, while Lydgate indicates the pilgrims' later departure from Canterbury by saying that the sun had passed into Taurus, the next zodiacal sign.
- 3 **Latin marginalia: Saturnus in Virgine.** As in Chaucer, Saturn is both a god and a planet. In The Knight's Tale, Palamon claims that he is in prison because of Saturn (I[A]1328), and later it is Saturn who resolves the strife between Venus and Mars by imposing a violent outcome (I[A]2438–78) to the tale. In Statius (*Thebaid* 2.356–62), Polynices invokes Saturn as a figure of justice, as he contemplates his return to Thebes from his year of exile. It is Jupiter (*Thebaid* 1.196–247) who loses his patience with Theban and Greek transgressions and promises strife.

The Siege of Thebes

- 7–8 **Latin marginalia:** *Jubiter in capite Cancri.* The gloss occurs three lines early because of marginal decoration.
- 19 **Compleat and told.** Koeppel proposed to emend to *Compleat are tolde* in order to furnish a verb.
- 22–25 Lydgate's taxonomy of tales recalls the Host's intention of introducing "myrthe" and "disport" to the Canterbury Pilgrimage (General Prologue II[A]761–76).
- 28–30 **Marginalia:** *The Cook, the Millere, and the Reeve.* Lydgate mistakenly has the Reeve drunk, along with the Cook and Miller; see Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry*, p. 75.
- 32 Lydgate mistakenly ascribes the baldness of the Miller in The Reeve's Tale (II[A]3935) to the Pardoner.
- 33 **Marginalia:** *Pardonere.*
- 34 Lydgate mistakenly ascribes the Summoner's "cherubinnes face" (II[A]624) to the Pardoner. Recent scholarship associates such inaccuracies with Lydgate's oblique challenge to Chaucer's authority rather than mere accidents. See Pearsall, "Lydgate as Innovator" and "Chaucer and Lydgate"; Ebin, "Chaucer, Lydgate, and the 'Myrie Tale,'" and John Lydgate; Bowers, "The Tale of Beryn and The Siege of Thebes: Alternative Ideas of the Canterbury Tales"; Allen; and Strohm, *England's Empty Throne*. Erdmann (2: 96) points out that Lydgate turns to The Knight's Tale with more precision at the end of the poem (lines 4463–540). Spearing, "Lydgate's Canterbury Tale," p. 337, counts some thirty allusions there to the opening, background story of The Knight's Tale.
- 35 In *The Canterbury Tales*, the conflict is between the Summoner and the Friar.
- 39–57 **Marginalia:** ¶ Chaucer. Lydgate's praise of Chaucer recalls similar passages in *Troy Book* 2.4677–719, 3.550–57, 3.4234–63, 5.3519–43. Lydgate does not actually name Chaucer until line 4501. Spearing, "Lydgate's Canterbury Tale," says of Chaucer's absence from the frametale of Lydgate's poem: "the implicit claim of the *Siege* is that in it Lydgate becomes the father whose place he usurps" (p. 338).

Explanatory Notes to Prologus

- 43 *making.* "Making" is formally correct poetic composition, as distinct from the creative activity associated with "poetry." Chaucer typically describes his craft as "making."
- 52 *his sugred mouth.* In *Troy Book*, Lydgate invokes Orpheus "wyth thy hony swete / Sugrest tongis of rethoricyens" (Prol.56–57), but quickly contrasts the "dillygence of eronycleris" (Prol.246) with Homer's "veyn fables" (Prol.263): "With sugred woedes under hony soote / His galle is hidde lowe by the rote" (Prol.277–78). Thereafter, in the narrative of *Troy Book*, "sugee" and "sugred wordis" denote treacherous, deceitful speech in the private and public spheres. Blake, "Caxton and Chaucer," pp. 32–33, notes that this passage is adapted by William Caxton in his praise of Chaucer in the prologue to his second edition (c. 1484) of *The Canterbury Tales*.
- 53–54 *keping in substance / The sentence hool withoute variance.* Lydgate's remark on Chaucer as a poet seeking to write true history echoes his praise of Guido delle Colonne (Prol.359–60) and his hope for his own poem at the end of *Troy Book* (5.3540–43).
- 55–56 *the chaf . . . the tewe piked greyn.* Compare the end of The Nun's Priest's Tale: "Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille" (VII[B²]3443).
- 59–60 **Marginalia:** ¶ At the Tabard in Southwerk. The original departure point for the pilgrims in the General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* (I[A]20).
- 65 **Marginalia:** ¶ The Hoste
- 73–74 **Marginalia:** ¶ Discryving of the Monk. a palfrey slender, long, and lene. In *The Canterbury Tales*, the Clerk's horse is described as lean (II[A]287).
- 75 *With rusty brydel mad not for the sale.* Bowers glosses the latter part of the line to mean "not worth selling," which is certainly possible given the reference to his man's "voide male" ("empty purse") in line 76. But the sense of *sale* is more likely "hall," particularly of a palace, castle, or mansion (see MED *sale*, noun 1.a). Unlike Chaucer's Monk, who would dress well and prefers the King's feast (roasted swan), Lydgate's modest Monk, with his lean horse and rusty bridle, does not yearn for or affect the pretensions of court. The MED does not cite this specific line, but neither does it cite "for the sale" as an idiom for selling.

The Siege of Thebes

- 79 *her governour*. Lydgate uses the same term for the Host as Chaucer does in the General Prologue (I[A]813).
- 81–82 Marginalia: ¶ *The wordes of the Host to the Monk.*
- 82–83 *Doun Pers, / Doun Domvryk, Doun Godfrey, or Clement.* The Host addresses Lydgate in the same manner as he does the clerics among the Canterbury pilgrims; compare the address to the Monk: "Wher shal I calle yow my lord daun John, / or daun Thomas, or elles daun Albon" (VII[B²]1929–30) and later "Wherfore, sire Monk, daun Piers by youre name, / I pray yow hertely telle us somewhat elles" (VII[B²]2792–93). The Monk's Tale is a *de casibus* tragedy that begins with the fall of Lucifer and Adam, moves through ancient figures like Alexander and Julius Caesar, and ends with some of Chaucer's contemporaries; its theme and tone complement the story of Thebes.
- 85 *ne belle.* The bridle of Chaucer's Monk is adorned with bells that "Gynglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleere / And eke as loude as dooth the chapel belle" (I[A]170–71).
- 90 *a wonder thredbar hood.* Compare the description of the Clerk in the General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*: "Ful thredbare was his overeste courtepy" (I[A]290).
- 92 Marginalia: ¶ *Lydgate.*
- 93 Marginalia: ¶ *Monk of Bery.*
- 96 Marginalia: ¶ *The wordes of the Host.*
- 101 *franchemole.* A dish consisting of a mixture of ingredients boiled or roasted in a sheep's stomach (MED). Other fifteenth-century sources gloss it as a pudding or *lucanica* (a smoked sausage).
- tansye:* a pudding or omelet with tansy (MED), a plant of the genus *Tanacetum*.
- froyse:* a kind of pancake containing chopped meat or fish (MED).
- 104 *in a feynt pasture.* Bowers (p. 21) cites the Host's chiding the monk for grazing in a "gentil pasture" (VII[B²]1933).

Explanatory Notes to Prologus

- 114 *collik passioan.* Bowers (p. 21) cites the passage on *collca passio* in John Trevisa's fourteenth-century translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus' *De proprietatibus rerum*.
- 116 ff. The Host's dietary advice sounds a bit like Pertelote's to the indulgent Chauntecleer in *The Nun's Priest's Tale* as she would govern what he puts in his "crog" (VII[B²]2961–67).
- 122 *orloger.* Compare *Parliament of Fowls*, line 350: "The kok, that orloge is of thorpes lyte," and *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, where Chauntecleer's crowing is said to be a more certain time piece than "an abbey orlogge" (VII[B²]2854). In *Troy Book*, the phrase "the cok, comoun astrologer" (1.2813) is a direct echo of *Troilus and Criseyde* 3.1415, the scene after the lovers' consummation.
- 126 *by kokkis blood.* An echo of the Host's oath "for cokkes bones" in *The Canterbury Tales* (IX[H]9 and X[I]29) and the Parson's reproof of swearing (X[I]591).
- 128–45 In bringing Lydgate under the "newe lawe" of the pilgrim "comperye" and having him set aside his monastic rule, the Host repeats the substance of the agreement that founds the temporary community and creates the dramatic frame of *The Canterbury Tales* (II[A]769–818).
- 143–44 **Marginalia:** ¶ How oure Host spak to Dame John.
- 164–66 **Marginalia:** ¶ How oure Host had Dame John telle a tale.
- 165 *jape.* The term means both a trick and a joke. In the link introducing the Pardoner's Prologue, the Host asks the Pardoner, "Telle us som myrthe or japes right anon" (VI[C]319). Erdmann (2:100) also cites the Cook's Prologue (II[A]4343); compare the Pardoner: "a jape or a tale" (X[I]1024a). Both senses of the term converge in Nicholas' intent to "amenden al the jape" (II[A]3799) at the end of *The Miller's Tale*.
- 167 *But preche not of non holynesse.* Chaucer's Host, instructing the Clerk to recount "som myrie tale" (IV[E]9) and "som murie thyng of aventure" (IV[E]15), admonishes him: "But precheth nat, as freres doon in Lente" (IV[E]12).
- 168 *some tale of myrthe or of gladnesse.* Erdmann (2:100) notes the Host's words to Chaucer at the beginning of *Sir Thopas*: "Telle us a tale of myrthe, and that anon" (VII[B²]706); compare VII(B²)964, VII(B²)3449, VIII(G)597, and X(I)46. Ebin,

The Siege of Thebes

"Chaucer, Lydgate, and the 'Myrie Tale,'" p. 331, argues that Lydgate extended Chaucer's concept of a tale of "solaas" and "sentence" by adding the element of a mirror or moral speculum with practical as well as spiritual benefits; compare Ebin, *John Lydgate*, pp. 57–58.

Prima Pars

- 188 Upon the tyme of worthy Josué, Orosius' *Historiarum adversum paganos libri vii* is the model for a universal history aligning Biblical and classical events. Erdmann (2:100) cites Boccaccio, *Genealogie deorum gentilium* 2.63 on calculations about the founding of Thebes.
- 199–227 Erdmann (2:100) points out that the source Lydgate actually is referring to as *syn auctour and Bochas bothe two* is Boccaccio's *Genealogie deorum gentilium* 5.30. Boccaccio is the source for much of the mythology that Lydgate adds or amplifies. Koeppel (pp. 23–24) points out that Thomas Warton identified Boccaccio as Lydgate's source in his *History of English Poetry* (1774–81). Clogan, "Imagining the City of Thebes in Fifteenth-Century England" (p. 161), suggests the alternative that Lydgate's mention of Amphion's song could have come from Lactantius Placidus' commentary on the *Thebaid* (Boccaccio's source) or from a gloss to Statius.
- 200–03 **Marginalia:** *How Kyng Amphyoun was the first that bilt the cytē of Thebes be the swetnesse of his sounē.* On Amphion's raising of the walls of Thebes by the sweet harmonies of the harp (lines 201–10), see also Chaucer's The Manciple's Tale, where Phebus' music is said to surpass that of Amphioun "That with his syngynge walled that citee" (IX[H]117). Chaucer also alludes to Amphioun in The Knight's Tale, when Arcite laments, "Allas, ybrought is to confusioun / The blood roial of Cadme and Amphioun" (II[A]1545–46).
- 212–15 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The exposicion of John Bochas upon this derk poysie.* In the poetic treatise that comprises Books 14–15 of the *Genealogie deorum gentilium*, Boccaccio insists that one of the defining traits of poetry is its allegorical covering, which is designed to hide meaning from common readers.
- 215–16 Sense requires "He" as the subject of *Seith* or for *Seith* to be ignored and *Gaf* to be construed as the main verb.

Explanatory Notes to Prima Pars

- 222–24 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The significacione of the harpe of Mercure.*
- 231–36 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How Kyng Amphion be mediacione of his soft spech wan the love and the hertes of the puple.*
- 234–39 The power of Amphion's song, which is the *crafty speche* of prudence (line 226), recalls Priam's rebuilding of Troy and the corresponding political allegiance that he instills in the craftsmen who become its citizens (*Troy Book* 2.479–1066). Ebin, *John Lydgate*, p. 53, remarks that Lydgate goes past his source in Boccaccio's *Genealogie deorum gentilium* to sing with "crafty speech" to demonstrate the triumph of words over arms.
- 244–85 Lydgate's excursus on the duties of kingship is consistent with the advice John Gower gives in the Prologue and Book 7 of his *Confessio Amantis* and with precepts Lydgate sets out early, in *Troy Book*, and late in his career, in his translation of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secreta Secretorum*. Allen sees two of Lydgate's explicit themes as "the maintenance of cordial relations among those in positions of power and the mutual cooperation between monarch and populace, with the initiative borne by the monarch" (p. 124). Renoir, *The Poetry of John Lydgate* (p. 112), counts some 22 instances (555 lines) in *The Siege of Thebes* where Lydgate offers advice to royalty. On the danger and practical nature of such rhetoric, see Judith Fetterley, *Fictions of Advice: The Literature and Politics of Council in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), and Richard Firth Green, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).
- 246 **Latin marginalia:** ¶ *Nota.*
- 248–51 **Marginalia:** ¶ *What availeth to a kyng or to a prince to ben goodly and bensigne of his port to his puple.*
- 265–68 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How the poor puple supponen and beren up the estat of a kyng.*
- 276 **Latin marginalia:** ¶ *Nota.*
- 277–80 **Marginalia:** ¶ *What the goodihede of a prince avayleth to wynne the hertes of hys puple.*
- 286–87 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Exsample of Kyng Amphion.*

The Siege of Thebes

- 293–305 Erdmann (2:102) points out that Lydgate confuses the details of the white ox in Ovid's account of Cadmus (*Metamorphoses* 3.1–137) with the story of Dido's founding Carthage.
- 294–97 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How after the opynoun of some auctours Cadmus bilt first the cité of Thebes.*
- 303–08 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How the conté of Boece toke first his name of a bolys skyn after called Thebes.*
- 309–13 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How Kyng Cadmus was exiled out of Thebes be prowesse of Kyng Amphion.*
- 319 clerkes, Erdmann (2:102) points out that the reference is to Boccaccio. In *Troy Book* (Prol.147–225), clerks preserve both the “pleyne trouthe” and the reputation of heroes against the corrosive power of time.
- 330–33 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How the lyne of Amphion be discent was conveied to Kyng Layus.*
- 339–40 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Kyng Layus and Jocasta hys wif.*
- 343–44 These lines are iambic tetrameter.
- 368 *The chylde's fate and dispositioun.* Astral determinism is a position that Christian writers from Augustine onwards rejected, though it remained a topic of speculation for poets like Bernardus Silvestris in his *Cosmographia*, *Experimentarius*, and *Mathematicus* (the last a story of fated patricide based on pseudo-Quintilian's *Declamatio Major* 4). Laius' consultation with his diviners reflects the late-medieval interest in both the philosophical problems of the ancient world and its cultural practices; see Alastair Minnis, *Chaucer and Pagan Antiquity* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1982), chapters 1–2.
- 369–73 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How the astronomyens and phylisophres of Thebes calked out the fate of Edypus.*
- 370 *The roor ytake at the ascendent.* The roor (Latin radix) is the time from which the astrological tables were calculated for a particular location. The ascendent is the first and most powerful astrological house that the sun enters in its twenty-four hour circuit.

Explanatory Notes to Prima Pars

- 380 *yeeres collecte. Anni collecti* are astrological tables showing a planet's position in twenty-year cycles, as distinct from those for single years (*anni exparsi*). See Chaucer's *The Franklin's Tale* V(F)1275, and his *Treatise on the Astrolabe* 2.44–45 (supplementary propositions) for the means of calculating positions according to degrees, minutes, seconds, and small fractions.
- 383 *eche aspecte and lookes ek dyvers.* Aspect is "the relative position, described in angular distance, of one planet or sign to another at a certain time" (MED), regarded as a good or evil influence; *lookes* is merely a repetition of *aspecte*.
- 385 **Latin marginalia:** ¶ *Nota.*
- 386–90 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The cursed constellacoun and indispositione of the hevene in the nativite of Edippus.* J. Parr, "The Horoscope of Edippus in Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes*" (p. 122), concludes that Lydgate does not present a technically exact horoscope for Oedipus but constructs instead an arrangement of planets — Saturn and Mars with Venus waning — that would convey the inevitability of patricide rhetorically.
- 388 *Saturn.* The Knight's Tale (I[A]2443–69) emphasizes Saturn's melancholic character; see also Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion, and Art* (New York: Basic Books, 1964), pp. 159–95.
- 392 *The same hour.* Compare phrasing at line 1057.
- 393 **Latin marginalia:** ¶ *Nota.*
- 394–98 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How the fate of Edippus disposed that he shulde sleen his owne fadere.*
- 396 The syntax requires "was" to be understood: "the clerks' judgment was that his father shall be slain."
- 442–47 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How the huntys of Kyng Poliboun fonde the chyld in the forest and presented hym to the kyng.*
- 465–66 Spearing, "Lydgate's Canterbury Tale," p. 351, notes that Lydgate's mention that Polyboun lacks an heir surprisingly echoes the narrator's remark about Criseyde:

The Siege of Thebes

"But wheither that she children hadde or noon, / I rede it naught, therfore I late it goon" (*Troilus and Criseyde* 1.132–33).

- 482–83 The pairing of *Contrarie* and *Froward* recurs in lines 1033, 1340, 3178; compare 2895–97.
- 538–40 *And within a spirit ful unclene, / Be fraude only and fals collustoun, / Answere gaf to every questioan.* Compare Lydgate's excursus on idolatry in *Troy Book* 2.5472–74, as Agamemnon sends Achilles and Pirithous to consult the Delphic oracle: "And therin was, thorough the devels sleighe, / A spirit unclene, be false illusioun, / That gaf answere to every question." Spearing, "Lydgate's Canterbury Tale," pp. 357–58, finds the attitude close to that in the Franklin's Tale: "swiche illusiouns and swiche meschaunces / As hethen folke useden in thilke dayes" (V[F]1292–93). On idolatry, see below, lines 4047–54.
- 566 *a maner tornement.* The tournament that Laius holds recalls Theseus' tournament in The Knight's Tale in its dual aim of proving chivalric worth and promoting reputation (I[A]2106–16).
- 579–81 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How Edippus slogh his fader of ignorance at the castel.*
- 581 *cruelly hym slogh.* Compare Troilus' death at the hands of Achilles: "Despitously hym slough the fierse Achille" (*Troilus and Criseyde* 5.1806).
- 611–15 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How Edippus passed by the hyll wher the monstre lay that was called Spynx.*
- 619–21 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The descripcioune of the foule monstre.*
- 660–62 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Of the problem that Spynx putte to Edippus.*
- 680 *in his manly herte.* The phrase is repeated later in the description of Tydeus at the ambush (line 2175).
- 697–700 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How Egippus exponded the problem that Spynx put to hym.*
- 726–35 Erdmann (2:105) regards the sentence as a series of run-on clauses, but the syntax is elliptical rather than broken: no man may escape the truth that, when Fortune's wheel turns, it does no good for anyone to resist further when he sees his time end

Explanatory Notes to Prima Pars

and Atropos cuts the life-thread that Clotho first wove. The sentence comes to a full stop here.

- 809–16 In conceding that Oedipus was ignorant when he married Jocasta yet suffered punishment and overthrow, Lydgate interprets the myth according to Boethian Fortune. In the *Consolation of Philosophy*, Boethius explains Fortune as the confluence of remote sources that the individual cannot foresee or adequately understand.
- 823 *I am wery mor therof to write.* Compare Chaucer's expression of exasperation in *The Legend of Good Women*: "I am agrotes herebyforn / To wryte of hem that ben in love foerswoen" (line 2454–55).
- 831 *Clio nor Calyope.* Chaucer calls upon these two muses in the proems to books 2 and 3 of *Troilus and Criseyde*; Clio, muse of history, to help him "storie" the courtship of Criseyde; and Calliope, muse of epic poetry, to help him recount the consummation of their love. Lydgate's point here is that Oedipus' marriage will not be blessed by "hevenly armonye" (line 830), regardless of the telling.
- 837 *Marcian ysname de Capelle.* Martianus Capella was the fifth-century North African writer who composed the *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, an encyclopedia of the Seven Liberal Arts prefaced by the allegorical story of the wedding of Philology and Mercury. Chaucer makes the wedding a point of satiric contrast for the marriage of January and May in The Merchant's Tale (IV[E]1732–41).
- 853–56 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The infortunat folk that weren at the weddyng: Cerebus, Herebus, Nygh[st] and her thre doghren, Drede, Fraude, Trecherie, Tresoun, Poverit, Indygencie, Nede, Deth, Cruel Mars.*
- 869 *Fraternall Hate.* Compare Statius, *Thebaid* 1.1: "Fraternas scies."
- 870–72 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Alle thise folk weren at the wedding of Edypus and Jocasta.*
- 873 *To make the towne desolat and bare.* Repeated at line 4372. The image of the desolate city is taken from the opening of the Book of Lamentations traditionally ascribed to Jeremiah. Dante uses it to represent the death of Beatrice in the *Vita Nuova* (ch. xxviii). In the *Filostrato*, Boccaccio revises Dante's use of the figure in order to signify the absence of his fictitious lover and Criseida's empty house after she has left Troy and abandoned Troiolo. Chaucer employs Boccaccio's image to

The Siege of Thebes

describe Criseyde's "paleys desolat" (5.540–53). Compare *Anelida and Arcite* lines 57–63 for the image in Chaucer's summary of the carnage of the Theban expedition (Simpson, p. 28).

- 994 **Latin marginalia:** ¶ *Tragedia Seneca de Edippo rege Thebaram.* The *Oedipus* written by Lucius Annaeus Seneca follows the main lines of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* but adds spectacular scenes such as occult rituals and Jocasta's death on stage.
- 1009 *devoide both of love and drede.* Lydgate recalls the phrasing that describes the relation of the Lombard prince Walter to his nobles and people at the beginning of Chaucer's The Clerk's Tale: "Biloved and drad" (IV[E]69). Compare line 1205, where the phrasing is applied to Adrastus as a monarch who holds power by virtue and popular consent.
- 1010 *whan Edippus for meschief was thus dede.* Lydgate follows the narrative of the prose romances. In Statius, Oedipus is alive when Creon comes to power following the deaths of Etiocles and Polynices.
- 1020 **Latin marginalia:** ¶ *Nota.*
- 1021–26 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How every man ought of dieutē to do reverence to fader and modere, or ellis ther wil folowe vengeance.*
- 1025–38 This sentence has no control over syntax; from line 1033 onwards, it is a sequence of elliptical clauses.
- 1046b **Latin marginalia:** ¶ *Secunda pars.*

Secunda Pars

- 1047 *Bowtown on the Ble.* In the frametale of *The Canterbury Tales*, the Second Nun's life of St. Cecilia has just ended when the Canon's Yeoman overtakes the pilgrims at Boghtoun under Blee (VIII[G]556), which is located about five miles from Canterbury. Lydgate imagines the pilgrims now returning to London as he tells his tale of Thebes. They have already passed the locations where the Manciple and Parson told their tales on their way to Becket's shrine.

Explanatory Notes to Secunda Pars

- 1050 *Of the clok that it drogh to nyne.* The time-telling trope resonates with Chaucer's time-telling passages, one in the Introduction to The Man of Law's Tale, where Harry Bailly urges the pilgrims on because it is already 10 o'clock and time is slipping away, and another just outside Canterbury as the Parson is called on to tell his tale. Lydgate's pilgrims are off to a good start as it is only 9 o'clock and Lydgate has already finished the first part of his triptych tale.
- 1054–56 *Zephyrus . . . hoolsom eir.* Another allusion to *The Canterbury Tales*. Compare the opening lines of the General Prologue, particularly I(A)5–18.
- 1088–89 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The controversy of the bretheren.*
- 1104–30 Simpson remarks that a "bureaucratic" and clerical wisdom is undone by the knightly interests of Eteocles and Polynices.
- 1121–22 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The convencoun of the brotheren.*
- 1161–70 Polynices' journey recapitulates Oedipus' earlier journey.
- 1190–92 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How Polymytes cam into the lond of Arge.*
- 1195 *Chysoun.* Adrastus was King of Sicyon.
- 1196 *Chaloun.* Adrastus is the son of Talaus: "senior Talaionides" (*Thebaid* 2.141); see also Hyginus, *Fabulae* 68A.1, 69, 69A.1, 70.
- 1211 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Deyphyld.*
- 1212 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Adrastus.*
- 1222–24 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The drem of Kyng Adrastus of a bor and a lyoun.*
- 1266 *Tidys.* As Erdmann points out (2:108–09), Lydgate and his sources are uncertain about the details of Tydeus' exile. Tydeus' fratricide, mentioned in line 1271 but unemphasized in Lydgate's poem, ironically reinforces the theme of internecine conflict. His first meeting with Polynices leads to violence, but they reconcile as allies and brothers-in-law.

The Siege of Thebes

- 1270–81 Statius refers briefly to Tydeus' killing of his brother (*Thebaid* 2.402–03, 2.452–54).
- 1349 *pompous and effat.* The phrase is applied later to another heroic knight, in a mythological excursus on Lycurgus (line 3530); compare *Troy Book* 1.3110, 4.250, 5.37.
- 1352–54 **Marginalia:** ¶ How Tydeus and Polyneuste strif for her logyng.
- 1374–86 Lydgate's equation of Adrastus with Theseus in Chaucer's The Knight's Tale is indicated by the repetition of the phrase *Withoute juge* (lines 1366, 1382; compare [A]1712: "Withouten juge or oother officere").
- 1408–29 In the *Thebaid* 1.679–92, Polynices identifies himself by mentioning Cadmus, Thebes, and Jocasta. Adrastus tells him that the rest of the story is well known, adding that his house has its own sins and that posterity does not bear the blame of its ancestor.
- 1437 *Cusshewes.* A cuisse is a piece of armor that covers the thighs with plate armor front and back. Greaves are armor for the lower leg. Lydgate describes the inverse scene in *Troy Book* (3.50), where the knights arm themselves with the same pieces as mentioned here.
- 1460 *Lucyfer.* Lydgate seems to mean Lucifer as the sun, as Erdmann indicates in his gloss, but normal Middle English usage construes him as the morning star. Compare Chaucer's *Boece* 3.m1.9 and *Troilus and Criseyde* 3.1417.
- 1484 *his arowes of gold and not of stiel.* Cupid's arrows representing courtly virtues and vices are mentioned in the *Roman de la rose*. Compare Chaucer's *Romanant* 946–47: "But iren was ther noon ne steell, / For al was gold."
- 1488 *Depe yfiched the poynct of remembraunce.* Compare Anelida's complaint in *Anelida and Arcite*, which laments Arcite's betrayal (lines 211, 350).
- 1499 *spices pleynly and the wyn.* Spices were taken with wine. Compare The Squire's Tale V(F)291–94 and *The Legend of Good Women*, line 1110.
- 1502–05 *Touchyng her reste . . . Demeth ye lovers . . . in my boke.* Lydgate's deferential trope originates in Chaucer. See, e.g., *Troilus and Criseyde* 3.1310–16. Lydgate picks up

Explanatory Notes to Secunda Pars

the phrase "the grete worthynesse" from *Troilus and Criseyde* 3.1316 in his line 1509.

- 1532 *feeldys*. The field is the surface of the shield on which a charge of heraldic device is displayed.
- 1541 *lik as writ Bochas. Genealogie deorum gentilium* 2.41.
- 1562–65 Lydgate uses the device of *occupatio* in a manner reminiscent of The Knight's Tale and alluding closely to The Squire's Tale (V[F]65–68), where the Squire in fact demonstrates his inability to control the figure rhetorically. Unlike Chaucer's narrators, Lydgate adheres to the ideal of brevity. A *sotylfee* is an ornamental device used at fine banquets, sometimes made of sugar and consumed, but sometimes also a table decoration that might establish the motif of the feast.
- 1615–21 Adrastus' plan to divide his kingdom between Polynices and Tydeus so that he can pursue the *last of my desyris* (line 1617) and *myn ese* (line 1621) recalls Walter's governance before his marriage to Griselda in The Clerk's Tale as much as King Lear's disastrous division of his realm in Shakespeare's play. Allen, p. 125, suggests that Lydgate may be drawing on the ironic lesson of *Troilus and Criseyde* that human plans can be thwarted by the malice of others.
- 1629 *verray gentyl knyght*. Compare Chaucer's phrasing in his idealizing portrait of the Knight in the General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*: "He was a veray, parfit gentil knyght" (II[A]72). Lydgate idealizes Tydeus, suppressing the details of his cannibalism as he dies on the battlefield; see below lines 4235–37.
- 1663–73 Another Chaucerian example of *occupatio*. See note to lines 1562–65.
- 1669–70 *th'amerous looks . . . leyd down lyne and hokes*. The notion that lines with hooks stream from the eyes of lovers to ensnare others lies at the heart of courtly love traditions. See Andreas Capellanus, *De amore*, 1.3. Relying on Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* 10.1.5, Andreas traces the origin of the word "love" (*amor*) to the word for "hook" (*hamo*): *Nam qui amat captus est cupidinis vinculis aliamque desiderat suo capere hamo* [for the lover is caught in bonds of desire and longs to catch another on his hook (*hamo*)]. See also Chaucer's "Merciles Beaute" where "Your yēn two wol slee me sodenly" (line 1); or "The Complaint of Mars," where the lover is troubled by "the stremes of thin yēn" (line 111).

The Siege of Thebes

- 1721–22 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Comendacione of Trouthe.* See note to lines 1728–32 below.
- 1724 *as a centre stable.* Compare the description of Cambyuskan in Chaucer's The Squire's Tale (V[F]22): "Of his corage as any centre stable."
- 1727 **Latin marginalia:** ¶ *Nota.*
- 1728–32 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How trouthe is preferred in the book of Esdres aforne kyngges, wymmen, and wyn.* The reference is to 3 Esdras 3–4.43, where wisemen demonstrate through debate that Truth is stronger than the king, wine, or women. The story is a great favorite among late fourteenth-century English poets. See Gower, *Confessio Amantis* 7.1783–1984, where Truth, which is stronger than all contenders, is identified as a primary point of virtue. Chaucer's Prudence gives an amusing variation on the story, where jasper is declared stronger than gold, wisdom stronger than jasper, and women strongest of all (The Tale of Melibee VII[B²]1106–08). 3 Esdras may be found in the appendix to Weber's Stuttgart edition of the Vulgate (1986), 2.1910–30. An interesting translation may be found in *The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments with the Apocryphal Books*, trans. from the Latin Vulgate by John Wycliffe and his Followers, ed. Josiah Forsball and Sir Frederic Madden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1850; 1982), vol. 2.542–75.
- 1732 *ben ek set axyde.* The syntax of this clause is confusing. The general sense is that kings, wine, and women have little value and power in comparison to truth. Erdmann (2: 66) observes that the syntax of the line confused a number of scribes.
- 1736–41 The story of the rebuilding of the wall is alluded to in 2 Esdras 2:1–8, but the account is greatly expanded in 3 Esdras 2 and 4, as the king is convinced that the keeping of his word to rebuild the wall is most important of all. See note to lines 1728–32.
- 1743–45 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Trouthe and mercye preserven a kyng from al adversyté.* Proverbs 20:28. "Misericordia et veritas custodiunt regem et roboratur clementia thronus eius" ("Mercy and truth preserve a king, and his throne is upheld by mercy"); compare Proverbs 16:12.
- 1748–50 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Chouinge nor doublenesse shuld not be in a kyng.*
- 1766 **Interlinear gloss:** *trouth.* Added to explain grammatical referent of *it:* truth wol clerly shyne.

Explanatory Notes to Secunda Pars

- 1785–86 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The counsayl of flatareres.*
- 1790 *blowen in an horn.* Compare Theseus' remark about the loser of the contest to win Emily: "He moot go pipen in an yvy leef" (I[A]1838); and the luckless priest in The Miller's Tale (I[A]3387): "Absolon may blowe the bukkes horn."
- 1801–03 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How the yeer was come out that Ethiocles regnyd.*
- 1814–60 Lydgate and his sources omit the portion of the story in which Argeia pleads that Polynices not return to Thebes to claim the throne. It is subsequent to this scene that Polynices seeks counsel with Adrastus and Tydeus volunteers to undertake the mission. In Lydgate, Tydeus' refusal to hear any objection recalls Hector's refusal in *Troy Book* to heed Andromache's and Priam's protests against his taking the field against the Greeks.
- 1846–49 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Tydeus took upon hym to down the massege of Polymyne.*
- 1867–70 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The sorowe of Deyphilé whan Tideus went toward Thebes.*
- 1889–90 The sense requires "was sittynge."
- 1901–04 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How wistly and how knyghtly Tideus did his massege.*
- 1932–35 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The request that Tideus mad in the name of Polymyt under the title of the convencion.*
- 1963–64 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The answer of Ethiocles.*
- 1983 A four-beat line.
- 2047–49 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The knyghtly awwere ageyme of Tydeus.*
- 2116–18 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How manly Tydeus departed from the kyng.*
- 2147–51 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How falsly Ethiocles leyde a busshment in the way to have slayn Tydeus.*
- 2157–58 The ambush of Tydeus repeats Oedipus' encounter with the Sphinx.

The Siege of Thebes

2173–75 Marginalia: ¶ How Tydeus outrayed fifty knyghtes that lay in a wayt for hym.

2197 *rampant*. Lydgate uses the adjective both in the sense of "threatening, fierce" and in the heraldic sense of a lion or griffon "standing in profile on the left hind leg" (MED).

2197–200 Erdmann (2:117) notes that the images here recall the battle of Palamon and Arcite in *The Knight's Tale* (I[A]1655–58).

2204 *Now her, now ther*. Tydeus' slaughter of his enemies echoes Pandarus' account to Criseyde of Troilus' prowess on the battlefield: "Now here, now ther, he hunted hem so faste, / Ther nas but Grekes blood — and Troilus" (*Troilus and Criseyde* 2.197–98).

2239–42 Marginalia: ¶ How trouth with lityl multitude hath evere in the fyn victory of falshede.

2244 *charparty*. Chaucer (*The Knight's Tale* I[A]1949) and Lydgate (*Troy Book* 2.5357, 2.5681, 3.2923) use the term in a number of contexts to mean "dispute" or "contend."

2269–71 Marginalia: ¶ How Tydeus al forwounded cam unto Ligurgus lond.

2274–75 As Erdmann (2:118) points out, the garden Tydeus enters recalls the one in which Palamon and Arcite first see Emily in *The Knight's Tale* (I[A]1056–61). The reference is interesting for what does not occur in Lydgate's poem: when he is healed of his wounds, Tydeus thanks Lygurgus' daughter for her assistance and returns to Argos.

2306–09 Marginalia: ¶ How Barurgus [Ligurgus] doghter fond Tydeus sleeping in the herber al forwounded.

2355–58 Marginalia: ¶ How womanly the lady acqeyt hir to Tydeus in his desese.

2377–79 Marginalia: ¶ Hou Tydeus was refreshed in the castel of the lady.

2424–25 Marginalia: ¶ Hou Tydeus repeyred hym to Arge al forwoundyd.

2484–88 Marginalia: ¶ How Ethiocles was assstynged whan he herd the deth of his knyghtes.

Explanatory Notes to Tercia Pars

Tercia Pars

- 2553–67 Erdmann (2:120) cites Chaucer's *Anelida and Arcite*, lines 50–53, as a source, and Spearing, "Lydgate's Canterbury Tale," p. 362n33, suggests a formal resemblance to "O crueel goddes" (The Knight's Tale I[A]1303). But compare the apostrophes to Mars in *Troy Book* Prologue 1–37 and 4.4440–537.
- 2586–88 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The gret purvaunce of Kyng Adrastus toward Thebes.*
- 2602 *Cylmythenes.* The passage from the *Roman de Edipus* printed by Erdmann (2:120) makes it clear that the proper name is an error for the title King of Mycenae: "La vint Parthonopeus qui estoit filz du roy Archade et cil de Michenes et le Roy ypomedon . . ." In the *Thebaid*, Parthonopeus is the last of the heroes named in Statius' list.
- 2613–15 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The kyngges and princes that cam with Adrastus.*
- 2661–63 As Erdmann (2:121) notes, these lines recall the passages in The Knight's Tale where the knights gather (I[A]2095–127) and later begin the tournament (I[A]2491–512). Lydgate's phrasing is close but not exact: *unscouth devyses* (line 2662) reformulates Chaucer's "devisyng of harneys / So unkouth and so riche" (I[A]2496–97) and *Every man after his fantasye* (line 2663) makes a significant change in "Everych after his opinoun" (I[A]2127). These verbal approximations belie the profound difference between Adrastus' preparations for war and Theseus' efforts to contain violence through ceremony and game.
- 2682–85 **Marginalia:** ¶ *What vayleth a kyng to payen his puple trewly her sondre.*
- 2713–14 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Hou love vayleth mor a kyng than gold or gret richesse.*
- 2750–53 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How Ethiocles made hym strong ageyn the commynge of the Grekes.*
- 2759 *gonyss.* Compare line 4315 and Chaucer's *The Legend of Good Women*, line 637, which has guns at Antony and Cleopatra's defeat at Actium (Erdmann 2:121). Cannons are mentioned in English and Italian documents from the early fourteenth century onwards.

The Siege of Thebes

- 2801–04 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How the Bysshope Amphiorax was sent for to come to the Grekes.* Renoir, *The Poetry of John Lydgate*, p. 123, argues that Lydgate presents a more positive view of Amphiarus than the closest French source, the *Roman de Edipus*, and makes him a source of wisdom.
- 2823–24 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The proph[ec]cie of Amphiorax.*
- 2832 *ther was non other geyn.* Lydgate's characteristic expression of necessity; compare *Troy Book* 1.3490, 2.7370, 3.5244, 3.5299, 4.618, 4.1400, 4.3111, 5.1947.
- 2841–72 Lydgate's casual misogyny here and at lines 4449–62 plays against his more complex treatment of women in *Troy Book* 3.4343–448, where he seems to reprove Guido delle Colonne's antifeminism but ends by affirming part of it.
- 2853–57 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How the wif of Amphiorax of conscience to save her hath discured her hasbond.*
- 2946–48 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How age and youth ben of diverse opynyons.*
- 2958 *Joye at the gyngyng: the ende is wretchednesse.* Compare the definitions of tragedy in Dante's Letter to Can Grande della Scala and the Prologue to Chaucer's The Monk's Tale (VII[B²]) 1971–81).
- 2969–72 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How that wysdom withoute supportacion avayleth lit or nocht.*
- 3007–09 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The gret meschief that Grekes hadde for watere.*
- 3034 "This Ligurgus seems to be another person than the king of the same name mentioned 2308, 2353, and the country as well as the gaeden are apparently quite unfamiliar to Tydeus" (Erdmann 2:123). Chaucer confuses Lycurgus of Nemea (mentioned in *Teseida* 6.14) with Lycurgus of Thrace (mentioned in *Thebaid* 4.386 and 7.180); see *The Riverside Chaucer*, p. 837, the note for The Knight's Tale I(A)2129.
- 3040–43 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How Tydeus compleyned to the lady in the herber for water.*
- 3069–71 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How the ladye taught Tydeus to the welle.*

Explanatory Notes to Tercia Pars

- 3154–92 The story of Hypsipyle told here, Erdmann (2:123) points out, combines Lydgate's prose sources with Boccaccio's *Genealogie deorum gentilium* 5.29, his *De claris mulieribus* 15, and Chaucer's *The Legend of Good Women*, 3155–87. In Statius, the story is told at length (*Thebaid* 5.28–498).
- 3188 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Jason.*
some bookis telle. Chaucer's *The Legend of Good Women* recounts the collusion of Jason and Hercules to seduce and betray Hypsipyle in the paired stories of Medea and Hypsipyle (1368–679). See also Gower's telling of the story of Jason, Medea, and the golden fleece in *Confessio Amantis* 5.3247–4361.
- 3192 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Hercules.*
- 3193 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Hypsipyle.*
- 3195 *Hir fadres name of which also I wante.* Hypsipyle's father is named Thoas; see Statius, *Thebaid* 5.239 and Chaucer, *The Legend of Good Women*, line 1468.
- 3204 *fayre Jane.* Giovanna (Joanna), daughter of Robert of Anjou, king of Naples, where Boccaccio lived between 1327–41. Giovanna is the last figure mentioned in Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus*. Though originally intended for Giovanna, the work, begun in 1361 and revised until 1375, is dedicated to Countess Andrea Acciaiuoli.
- 3207 *compiled.* A *compilatio* is a collection of narratives with some organizing principle, as opposed to a *collectio*, which merely gathers the materials without an organizing scheme. Chaucer and Gower describe their authorial role as that of a *compilator*, someone who writes the materials of others and augments them but adds nothing of his own.
- 3217–18 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How the child was slayn with the serpent.*
- 3313–16 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Hou Adrastus and all th' estates of Grekis praiden Lygurgus for the lif of Ysyphile.*
- 3326 *herberious.* A harbinger is a servant who rides ahead to arrange his master's lodging.

The Siege of Thebes

- 3379 *The rage gan myne.* Erdmann (2:126) proposes a source in Criseyde's inclination toward Troilus: "And after that, his manhood and his pyne / Made love withinne hire for to myne" (*Troilus and Criseyde* 2.676–77).
- 3379–83 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The sorrow that the Kyng Ligurgus made for the deth of his child and the lamentacion of the quene.*
- 3384 Erdmann (2:126) cites Criseyde's isolation in the Greek camp: "Hire nedede no teris for to borwe" (*Troilus and Criseyde* 5.726).
- 3398 *pite which is in gentyl blood.* The phrase "pitee renneth soone in gentil herte" recurs throughout Chaucer's poetry (*The Knight's Tale* I[A]1761, *The Man of Law's Tale* II[B']660, *The Merchant's Tale* IV[E]1986, *The Squire's Tale* V[F]479, *The Legend of Good Women* F 503). Guido Guinizelli's doctrinal canzone "Al cor gentil rempaira sempre amore" ("Love returns always to the gentle heart") gives one of the most important medieval expressions to the idea; see also Dante, *Convivio* 4.16.3–5. In Statius, the corresponding virtue is *clementia*, which has political significance (mercy that can supersede the mechanisms of justice) rather than aristocratic and moral meaning.
- 3417–18 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Ageynes deth may be no recur.*
- 3418–19 *And our lif her, who tak hed thereto, / Is but an exile and a pilgrymage.* Compare Egeus' speech of consolation to Palamon immediately after Arcite's death in *The Knight's Tale*: "This world nys but a thurghfare ful of wo, / And we been pilgrymes, passynge to and fro" (I[A]2847–48). Adrastus' speech of consolation to Lycurgus (lines 3409–49) also recalls Theseus' speech on providence at the end of *The Knight's Tale* and the practical wisdom of Agamemnon's speech to Menelaus after the loss of Helen (*Troy Book* 2.4337–427).
- 3430 *franchyse.* The term refers broadly to freedom and nobility of character and specifically to special rights and privileges, including right of sanctuary and freedom from arrest in certain places (MED); see also Erdmann 2:177.
- 3432 *supersedyar.* Writ to stay legal proceedings or to suspend the powers of an officer (MED and Erdmann 2:199). Erdmann 2:126–27 and Schirmer, p. 64, relate the reference to the murder of Duke John of Burgundy (10 September 1419) and cite *Troy Book* 5.3553–56 as a parallel.

Explanatory Notes to Tercia Pars

3468–70 Marginalia: ¶ How the quen wil algate han the serpente dede.

3487–89 Marginalia: ¶ How Parthonope saugh the serpent.

3510 Boccaccio, *Genealogie deorum gentilium* 3.29

3521–22 Latin marginalia: ¶ Nota de Ligurgo rege Tracce.

3522–35 In The Knight's Tale, Lycurgus is the champion who accompanies Palamon against Arcite (I[A]2128–29); compare *Teseida* 6.14. Like Chaucer, Lydgate confuses Lycurgus, the father of the slain infant Opheltes, with Lycurgus, the king of Thrace who repudiated Bacchus (*Thebaid* 4.386); see above, line 3034.

3528 Latin marginalia: ¶ Bacchus de vini.

3537–40 Latin marginalia: ¶ Nota de xii arboribus in libro Bochacii de Genealogia Deorum. Boccaccio sets out the genealogical scheme in the first proem to the *Genealogie deorum gentilium*.

3541 Certaldo. Boccaccio was born in the village of Certaldo, not far from Florence. He returned there after retirement from public life and called himself "John of Certaldo."

3589–92 Marginalia: ¶ The forey that the Grekis made in the contré about Thebes.

3620–22 Marginalia: ¶ The variaunce in Thebes among hemself.

3647–50 Marginalia: ¶ Nota The word of the Qwene Jocasta to Ethiocles.

3655 *Iar us shape another mene*. Chaucer uses the phrase to describe Fate's plan for killing Hector (*Troilus and Criseyde* 5.1551), and Lydgate uses the phrase throughout *Troy Book* to express practical deliberation in political matters.

3661–70 Ebin, *John Lydgate*, pp. 54–55, remarks that Lydgate amplifies the climax of Jocasta's speech by reiterating the example of Amphion's elevation of words over arms.

3663–65 Marginalia: ¶ How perilous it is to be governyd any querel.

The Siege of Thebes

- 3687 *dryve so narowe to the stake.* Erdmann (2:129) notes similar phrasing in The Knight's Tale: "be broght unto the stake" (I[A]2552), "ydrawen to the stake" (I[A]2642), and "broght to the stake" (I[A]2648).
- 3766–67 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The answer of Tydeus.*
- 3822–932 The episode of the tiger is amplified in details from Statius by Lydgate's sources, and Lydgate uses it to make the same point as in *Troy Book* — disastrous consequences follow from remote and oblique causes.
- 3904–05 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The manhood of Tydeus.*
- 4011 *thus I lette him dwelle.* A favorite transitional device in Chaucer; see The Knight's Tale I(A)1661, The Man of Law's Tale II(B¹)410 and 1119, The Franklin's Tale V(F)1099, The Shipman's Tale VII(B¹)306, *Troilus and Criseyde* 5.195, *The Legend of Good Women*, lines 2348 and 2383, and "Complaint of Mars" lines 74, 122.
- 4029–30 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How Amphiorax fil downe into hell.*
- 4041–44 Spearing, "Lydgate's Canterbury Tale," p. 340, finds the model for Amphiarus' descent to hell in Aurelius' address to Apollo in The Franklin's Tale (V[F]1073–75).
- 4047–54 Lydgate's style echoes Chaucer's ambiguous anaphora on pagan rites and poetry at the end of *Troilus and Criseyde* 5.1849–55. On idolatry, see above, lines 538–40. See also the note to lines 4620–30 below.
- 4167–69 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How Grekes chose hem a new dyvynour in stede of Amphiorax.*
- 4205 *That as the deth fro his swerd they fledde.* The description of Tydeus parallels that of Troilus in his effort to secure Criseyde's admiration through deeds of arms: "Fro day to day in armes so he spedde / That the Grekes as the deth him dredde" (*Troilus and Criseyde* 1.482–83).
- 4212–15 The plot to ambush Tydeus resembles the plots that Achilles organizes in *Troy Book* to kill first Hector and then Troilus.
- 4218–19 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How pitously Tydeus was slayn with a quarell.*

Explanatory Notes to Tercia Pars

- 4235–37 Boccaccio, *Genealogie deorum gentilium* 9.21 in fact records the full details of the scene in Statius, where Tydeus gnaws on the head of Menalippus; compare Dante's version of the scene with Ugolino (*Inferno* 33.1–90), to which Chaucer directs the curious reader in The Monk's Tale (VII[B¹]2458–62).
- 4239–41 **Marginalia:** ¶ *He that slogh Tydeus was callyd Menolippus.*
- 4240–54 Lydgate's treatment of the rest of the Argive heroes is in marked contrast to that of Statius, who sets the rhythm of his poem around the successive deaths of the kings who join Adrastus to move against Thebes.
- 4277–80 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How everich of the Theban bretheren slogh other toforn the cyte.*
- 4281 compassion. Schlauch, p. 19, emphasizes that the combat between the brothers is presented "in the spirit of the *Roman de Thèbes*," where the equivalent term is *pitié* (9630). Lydgate's use of *compassion* in this scene is the culmination of an ambiguous pattern: the term applies earlier to the decision not to kill the infant Oedipus, to Lycurgus' daughter's healing of Tydeus after the ambush, to Hypsipyle's response to the desperate situation of the Greek army, and to Adrastus' sympathy for Lycurgus as the king holds the body of his infant son.
- 4315 See above, line 2759.
- 4341–44 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How al the gentyl blood of Grece and Thebes was distroyed on o day.*
- 4345–48 In Statius, Adrastus is the only hero to survive the assault on Thebes. Lydgate follows his prose source in having both Adrastus and Campaneus survive (Erdmann 2:134). In the *Roman de Thèbes*, Campaneus is struck down by Jupiter's thunderbolt.
- 4372 *the cité bar and destinar.* See above, line 872.
- 4384 Creon is chosen governor of the city in the French tradition of the story, while he seizes power in Statius. Compare *Anelida and Arcite*, lines 64–68.
- 4386–88 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How Creant the old tyrant was chosen kyng of Thebes.*

The Siege of Thebes

- 4412–15 Erdmann (2:133) cites the references to queens and duchesses in The Knight's Tale (II[A]922–23), but Lydgate amplifies the number of titles and makes explicit the social standing of the women.
- 4416–18 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How alle the ladyes of Grfeice arayde hem toward Thebes.*
- 4448–62 See above, lines 2841–72. Erdmann (2:134) finds a tinge of satire in the passage.
- 4489–92 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How Creon wil not suffre the bodies nowther to be buryed nor brent.*
- 4501 *And as my mayster Chaucer list endite.* The ending portions of Lydgate's poem are linked with the opening of Chaucer's The Knight's Tale both at a narrative level and at the level of specific textual detail. Later (line 4531), Lydgate directs attention to the text itself in a summary of the tale.
- 4523 *Wel rehersyd at Depforth in the vale.* The reference is to The Reeve's Tale, not The Knight's Tale.
- 4525–28 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How the fynal destruccioune of Thebes is compendeously rehersyd in the Knyghtes Tale.*
- 4541–53 The alternative narrative that Lydgate notes — “as some auctours make mencioune” (line 4541) — is the narrative that Statius recounts at the end of the *Thebaid*.
- 4563–66 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How Dak Theseus delyvered to the ladies the bodyes of her lordys.*
- 4565–607 Lydgate's *occupatio* echoes The Knight's Tale (II[A]2919–66), the description of Arcite's funeral, and the longest sentence in Chaucer. Lydgate had used it earlier in *Troy Book* 4.3251–61.
- 4603–06 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Kyng Adrastus with the ladyes repeyred hom ageyn to Arge.*
- 4610 *ye gete no more of me.* A repeated formula in Chaucer: The Merchant's Tale (IV[E]1945), The Squire's Tale (V[F]343), The Franklin's Tale (V[F]1556), The Manciple's Prologue (IX[H]102), *House of Fame*, line 1560, *Parliament of Fowls*, line 651, *The Legend of Good Women*, line 1557; compare The Monk's Tale (VII[B²]2292) and Parson's Prologue (X[I]31).
- 4623–26 **Marginalia:** ¶ *CCCC yere tofore the fundacion of Rome was Thebes destroyed.*

Explanatory Notes to Tercia Pars

- 4628–30 Lydgate's repetition in these lines recalls the ending of *Troilus and Criseyde* where the narrator repudiates antiquity, its cultural practices, and poetic topics.
- 4634–39 **Marginalia:** ¶ *The worthy blood of Grece was destroyed at the siege and the cyte fynally brought to nought.* Renoir, *The Poetry of John Lydgate*, p. 125, points out that Lydgate's repudiation of war echoes Amphiarus' earlier warning to the Greeks about the outcome of war (lines 2887–910).
- 4649–50 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Bellona is goddesse of bataill.*
- 4661–64 **Marginalia:** ¶ *How that were bygonne in hevene by the pride and suruedye of Lucyfer.* Erdmann (2:135–36) cites Isaiah 14:12 and 17:1 and Revelations 20:1–3 and 12:7, 9. Kurose, p. 22, notes parallels in *Troy Book* 2.5845–83 and examines the implications in Lydgate's treatise *The Serpent of Division*. He wrongly equates division with mutability, confusing cause and effect (pp. 24–25).
- 4668 **Marginalia:** ¶ *Lollum.*
- 4697 **Latin marginalia:** ¶ *Surget gens contra gentem lucc xxi*. Luke 21:10: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."
- 4703 *Pees and quyet, concord and ureyté.* Lydgate echoes the terms of the Treaty of Troyes, reached in 1420. At the end of *Troy Book*, he refers to the same convention (5.3398) and sees in Henry V's marriage to Katherine of Valois the promise of "Pees and quiete" (5.3435). Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, suggests that the peace Henry negotiated was "the fulfilment of the whole historical teaching of the Thebes-story" (p. 156) and that Lydgate turned consciously to the ending in *Troy Book*. Lawton, pp. 778–79, argues that Lydgate developed the theme of the waste of war out of *Troy Book* and expressed his deeply-held convictions in this passage. Ayers, p. 468 n26, is skeptical about using 31 August 1422 as a *terminus aucti quoniam* for dating *The Siege of Thebes*, since he finds the poem's optimistic ending and the echo of the Treaty of Troyes "conventionally Christian in character." Simpson (p. 15) also places the poem after Henry's death, in the struggle between Bedford and Gloucester.
- 4704 Here Lydgate echoes the last stanza of *Troilus and Criseyde*, where Chaucer, borrowing from Dante's prayer for virtuous warriors in *Paradiso* 14.28–30, lays his hero and his poem to rest.

Textual Notes

- 43 *trouth*. MS: *trouth*. In a number of instances I have added a final -e to restore the meter. See the following: *sparē* (line 112), *bothe* (lines 151, 199, 707, 844, 1416, 1575, 1638, 2092, 2626, 2721, 3023, 3093, 3151, 3241, 4226), *shalde* (lines 218, 424, 1516, 1722, 1918, 2812, 2830, 2858, 3404), *morte* (lines 266, 733), *myghte* (line 300), *silfe* (line 372), *woode* (lines 390, 2374, 2523, 3438), *were* (lines 496, 985), *wolde* (lines 579, 1393, 1833, 3097, 3162, 3401), *hymsilve* (line 662), *trouth* (lines 673, 1722, 1725, 1762, 2649, 2786, 2963), *Thilke/thilke* (lines 699, 1240, 1841, 3616, 3862, 3920, 3983, 4240, 4255), *foure* (lines 705, 3526), *zeide* (line 777), *dyde/dide* (lines 833, 3531, 3652, 3851, 3854), *erthe* (lines 1011, 4148), *hoole* (line 1057), *berthe* (1079), *grocbe* (line 1139), *heghe* (lines 1154, 2273, 2300, 2757, 2817), *hevte* (line 1169), *silfe* (line 1249), *grenē* (lines 1276, 2288, 2290, 2304, 3564), *hadde* (line 1289), *thikke* (lines 1365, 2145), *tolde* (line 1368), *norche* (line 1370), *derke* (line 1383), *Tweyne* (line 1439), *whiche* (lines 1547, 3903), *faste* (line 1575), *fullē* (line 1630), *Sore/Soore/soore* (lines 1687, 3393, 4367), *bewire* (line 1719), *alle* (lines 1721, 2720), *croune* (line 1840), *blake* (lines 1869, 3596, 4042), *olde* (lines 1914, 4031, 4566), *avayle* (line 2021), *while* (lines 2040, 2314), *sloute* (line 2108), *moone* (line 2272), *pleyme* (line 2360), *made* (lines 2394, 2449), *highe* (line 2485), *wirke* (line 2795), *wiste* (line 2819), *hoore* (line 2879), *dirkē* (lines 2909, 4073), *gonne* (line 2929), *Conveye* (line 3081), *allone* (line 3186), *fayre* (line 3204), *taile* (line 3219), *remedye* (line 3261), *myghte* (line 3304), *newe* (line 3369), *herde* (lines 3372, 4104), *sighē* (line 3380), *aboute* (line 3397), *sharpe* (lines 3406, 3900), *sheedē* (line 3477), *lieve* (line 3547), *larke* (line 3552), *broughtē* (line 3591), *thynke* (line 3601), *strengthē* (line 3777), *helpe* (line 4103), *dredē* (line 4156), *Awene* (line 4337), *dede* (line 4495), *looke* (line 4532), *waye* (line 4596), *atwice* (lines 4684, 4702).
- 45 *esemoyrē*. For the rhyme with *gloyrē* (line 46), compare lines 2239–40.
- 46 *whom*. MS: *who*.
- 58 *deden*. MS: *des*. In a number of instances I have supplied a medial vowel or ending inflection where the meter and syntax require it. See the following: *franchemole* (line 101), *benignely/Benygnewly*, (lines 506, 3060), *Amonges* (lines 615, 2802), *diden* (line 629), *slayen/Islayen/yslayen* (lines 948, 2224, 2525, 3873, 3877, 3910, 4196, 4241, 4342, 4361), *hymsilven* (line 1119), *humblely* (line 1388), *withouten* (lines 1412, 1725), *officeres* (line 1430), *aboven* (lines 1721, 2720), *therageynes*

The Siege of Thebes

(line 2010), *Ageymer* (lines 2078, 2237, 2245, 3137, 4102), *stoundemele* (lines 2304, 3387), *rasoares* (line 3169), *wildely* (line 3866), *wichecraft* (line 4101), *lechecraft* (line 4228), *henner* (line 4715).

- 67 *logged*. MS: *louged*.
109 *with*. MS omits.
110 *to*. MS omits.
114 *collik*. MS: *collis*. Erdmann (2:99) notes Latin "collica passio" but emends to "Collikes passioun."
163 *It*. MS omits.
165 *a*. MS omits.
176b *Incipit Pars Prima*. MS: *Incipit Pars Prima. Per &c.*
177 *courtesye*. MS: *courteseye*.
185 *and*. MS: *of*.
203–04 Lines transposed in MS.
215 *Seith*. MS: *Seth*.
234 *outward*. MS: *after*.
239–42 Lines repeated with minor variation in 289–92, but evidently not cancelled in this passage.
280 *which that*. MS: *which*.
283 *clerkes can reporte*. I have retained the MS reading against other early witnesses, which Erdmann uses to emend to as *clerkes can reporte*. Parenthetical clauses are characteristic of both Chaucer's and Lydgate's style. The error in the next line shows the scribe construing the parenthetical clause as the main clause.
284 *But that*. MS: *That but*.
285 *naught*. MS: *nat*.
324 *space*. MS: *space in sooth*. MS reading hypermetric. Erdmann proposes (2:93) that this error originates with the first copyist of the poem.
358 *perceyved*. MS: *conceyved*.
365 *come*. MS: *corve*.
368 *fate*. MS: *face*.
379 *soght*. MS: *fought*.
380 *founde out bothe*. MS: *founde out of both*.
380 *collecte*. MS: *correcte*. See also Explanatory Notes.
382 *hour*. MS: *towr*.
455 *halle*. MS: *alle*.
461 *purpoos*. MS: *propoos*.
493 *uttrely*. MS: *usurely*.
498 *his*. MS: *her*.

Textual Notes

- 500 *mused*, MS: *macen*.
504 *a*, MS omits.
508 *ground*, MS: *trouthe*.
527 *he*, MS: *it*.
532 *Edippus*, MS: *Egippus*.
544 *paganysmes*, MS: *paganysme*.
553 *fend*, MS: *fond*.
561 *Unto a*, MS: *Unta*.
564 *perieyment*, MS: *perceymen*.
644 *monaster*, MS: *moyster*.
649 *preef*, MS: *preest*.
690 *vyle*. Other MSS: *foule*; see Erdmann 2:105 for arguments for either reading.
725 *remewe*, MS: *renewe*.
752 *grete*, MS: *right*.
799 *her*, MS: *hur*.
804 *be*, MS omits.
813 *punished*, MS: *punshed*.
814 *ar*, MS: *er*.
863 *Indigence*, MS: *Indigence*.
865 *Compleynt*, MS: *compleyn*.
882 *Of which*, MS: *Of the which*.
928 *To execute*, MS: *Execute*. Erdmann (2:93) regards the confusion of lines 927–28 as an error deriving from the common exemplar of all the extant witnesses. I have preserved the MS reading "To certeyn men" (line 927), which Erdmann takes as a scribal mistake for *To execute* (line 928) because of its attestation in all MSS and its metrical regularity.
982 *fal*, MS: *fal*.
990 *hem*, MS: *ham*.
1000 *sones*, MS: *somnes*. Compare line 1445.
1013 *Wers*, MS: *Werre*.
1022 *homur*, MS: *nur*.
1023 *and*, MS omits.
1028 *cherissh*, MS: *cherssh*.
1033 *contrayre*, MS: *contrarye*. See below line 3988.
1046b *Incipit Secunda Pars Eiusdem*, MS: *Incipit Secunda Pars Eiusdem. Secunda pars.*
1051 *And*, MS: *An*.
1052 *peerlys*, MS: *perelys*.
1053 *eire*, MS: *heire*.
1056 *cir*, MS: *heir*.

The Siege of Thebes

- 1070 *devoyded*, MS: *devoyden*.
1078 *forborn*, MS: *forborn*.
1098 *But*, MS omits.
1112 *thorgh*, MS: *thorg*.
1116 *regnen*, MS: *regne*.
1132 *ascendeth*, MS: *descendeth*.
1203 *To*, MS: *Be*.
1216 *and*, MS omits.
1221 *marige*, MS: *marige* (corr. *mariage*)
1222 *yer*, MS: *right*.
1256 *without*, MS: *with*.
1271 *his*, MS: *is*.
1280 *banished*, MS: *banshed*.
1300 *entered*, MS: *entred*.
1309 *tydinges*. The alternative reading in some MSS — *Tydeus* — makes sense as well.
1346 *yarmed*, MS: *armed*.
1351 *on*, MS: *or*.
1357 *And*. MS omits. Erdmann (2:109) regards this error as deriving from the exemplar common to all extant witnesses.
1358 *Kyng*, MS: *And kyng*.
1375 *gentil*, MS: *getil*.
1384 *myght*, MS: *mygh*.
1392 *taryng*, MS: *taryng*.
1393 *light*, MS: *ligh*.
1400 *He axed*, MS: *I-axed*.
1442 *ermyn*, MS: *hermyn*.
1445 *sonne*, MS: *sone*. Compare line 1000.
1448 *for to*, MS: *to*.
1465 *Contenaunce*, MS: *Contenances*.
1467 *frecchnesse*, MS: *frocchnesse*.
1484 *arowes*, MS: *harower*.
1540 *lokys*, MS: *hokys*. Other MSS: *crokes*.
1565 *it*, MS omits.
1583 *To*, MS: *The*.
and. MS: *of*. Erdmann's emendation, retained here, offers an aristocratic perspective rather than the more worldly view of the MS: *The grete estat of habundance of good*.
1591 *Awixe*, MS: *Anewxit*.
1631 *thanked he*, MS: *thanked*. Following Eilert Ekwall's suggestion 2:111.

Textual Notes

- 1646 *And.* MS: *An.*
1695 oth. MS: *both*.
1721 *aboven alle.* This line and the following one are metrically deficient in MS: *above
at*; compare line 2720 for similar MS forms.
1738 *Be the.* MS: *The.* Erdmann (2:113) regards this error as characteristic of the
exemplar common to all extant witnesses.
1749 *metabilitē.* MS: *metabilite*.
1750 *unstabilitē.* MS: *unstablete*.
1755 *fro.* MS: *for*.
Whel. MS: *wel*.
1766 *at.* MS: *a*.
1776 *And.* MS: *I*.
walles. MS: *wal*.
1784 *flaterye.* MS: *flatrye*.
1790 *blowen.* MS: *blowe*.
1802 *The.* MS: *Th*.
1803 *rekenyng.* MS: *reknyng*.
1815 *falsched.* MS: *falsed*.
1861 *hem.* MS: *hym*.
1892 *hir.* MS: *this*.
1896 *to.* MS omits.
1901 *Sir.* MS omits.
1909 *to.* MS omits.
1941 *That.* MS: *Tha*.
1957 *in maner.* MS: *in a maner*.
1966 *which.* MS: *woch*.
1981 *than.* MS: *thar*.
1988 *high.* MS: *gret*.
2006 *of.* MS omits.
2010 *al.* MS: *of*.
2022 *tyding.* MS: *dyding*.
2029 *walles.* MS: *wall*.
2045 *best.* MS: *lest*.
2073 *rightwisnesse.* MS: *rightwisnesse*.
2078 *in feeld to hold batayle.* MS: *to hold no batayle*.
2081 *next of his alye.* MS: *his next alye*. Erdmann (2:116) cites *Troy Book* I.2882 ("And
alle the lordis eke of hir alye") in support of the emendation for meter.
2084 *ye.* MS: *the*.
her. MS: *ther*.

The Siege of Thebes

- 2097 *a rowe*. MS: *arawe*.
2109 *justly*. MS: *justlyly*.
2130 *dispitour*. MS: *dispititous*.
2140 *or*. MS: *ar*.
2220 *was*. MS omits. Erdmann (2:117-18) argues the omission occurs in the exemplar common to all extant witnesses.
hew. MS: *haw*.
2224 *lay*. MS omits.
2239 *which*. MS: *woch*.
2251 *late*. MS: *layt*.
2297 *ayr*. MS: *hayr*.
2307 *eyre*. MS: *heyre* (corr. *eyre*).
2368 *so*. MS: omits *so*.
2374 *at*. MS: *af*.
2433 *wherfor*. Other MSS and Erdmann: *wherto*.
2475 *shedding*. MS: *the shedding*.
2487 *oyther*. MS: *oythe*.
2491 *That*. MS: *Tha*.
2494 *no thing*. MS: *not*.
2574 *massageres*. MS: *mussagers*.
2583 *sowde*. MS corr. from *saidie*; Erdmann emends to *sende*. Compare *Troy Book* 5.1354: "And sowden up every manly man."
2613 *Pyrrus*. MS: *of Pyrrus*.
2618 *yarmed*. MS: *armed*.
2633 *ful*. MS: *shaf*.
2645 *oth*. MS: *hoth*.
2717 *love*. MS: *gold*.
2720 *aboven alle*. MS: *above af*; compare line 1721.
2739 *Whiche in*. MS: *With inne*.
2833 *no*. MS: *to*.
2848 *han*. MS: *hath*.
2856 *oth*. MS: *hoth*. See also line 2860.
2864 *hem*. MS: *kym*.
2900 *Ther*. MS: *The*.
2920 *Thel*. MS: *The*.
2944 *by*. MS omits.
born. MS: *born*.
3007 *nor*. MS: *no*.
3026 *flowres and of herbes*. MS: *herbes and of flours*.

Textual Notes

- 3027 *ayr.* MS: *häuser*.
3051 *ly logged.* Other MSS: *be (be loggyng)*.
3064 *knowe.* MS: *knewe*.
3086 *yer.* MS: *that*. MS reading is plausible: "But for your sake, I shall risk that — my life, my death — for true affection, in order to provide for your rescue." Other witnesses read: *now*.
3099 *to a.* MS: *to*.
3108 *rood.* MS: *abood* (corr. *bood*)
3168 *husbond.* MS: *husbondys*.
3195 *wante.* MS: *wente*.
3197 *hym.* MS: *hem*.
3211 *To.* MS: *Til*.
 til. MS: *to*.
3219 *Hyr.* MS: *hy*.
3230 *O.* MS: *I*.
3232 *her.* MS: *ther*.
3251 *quene.* MS: *king*.
3292 *thys.* MS: *thy*.
3299 *al af onys.* MS: *alwayys*.
3315 *Coayn.* MS: *Coy*.
3323 *In.* MS: *An*.
3346 *our.* MS: *your*.
 yif that. MS: *that*. See Erdmann 2:125–26.
3364 *kynger.* MS: *kyng*.
3376 *rent.* I have retained the MS reading against Erdmann and other MSS: *hente*.
3383 *the.* MS omits.
3384 *nedeth.* MS: *nede*.
3385 *ny.* MS: *by*.
3436 *But.* MS: *That*.
3447 *yif that.* MS: *that*. MS reading is plausible: *loos of thyng that ye list to see*. Alternative readings are *if* and *that if*.
3477 *blood for.* MS: *bloood for*.
3488 *for to.* MS: *to*.
3496 *Hent.* MS: *Rent*.
3504 *avoided.* MS: *avoiden*.
3518 *hir.* MS: *har*.
3565 *the Thebans.* MS: *Thebans*.
3566 *han.* MS: *an*.
3577 *to.* MS: *ta*.

The Siege of Thebes

- 3595 *hynde*, MS: *ynde*.
3597 *tusky*, MS: *trusky*. Other MSS: *tusky*, *tuskyd*.
3603 *occisiones*, MS: *occasions*. Major substantive error for Erdmann (2:128); compare line 4204.
3611 *to*, MS omits.
3628 *were*, MS: *that were*.
3665 *put our mater*, MS: *puter*.
3684 *on*, MS omits.
3712 *a pes*, MS: *pes*.
3787 *remewe*, MS: *remowe*.
3831 *The whiche*, MS: *which*.
3845 *ytake*, MS: *take*.
3850 *to*, MS omits.
3852 *good*, MS: *gret*.
3903 *espieth*, MS: *esperh*.
3942 *gete*, MS: *getys*.
3950 *Prothonolopé*, MS: *Protholope*.
3965 *drow*, MS: *droweth*.
3988 *contrayre*. Erdmann emends to *contrarie*; see above note to line 1033.
4008 *And*, MS: *Ant*.
4011 *lete him*, MS: *lore hem*.
4043 *Phato*, MS: *Plyto*.
4045 *hir*, MS: *is*.
4095 *socour*, MS: *her socour*.
4180 *ir*, MS omits.
4187 *They*, MS omits.
 him, MS: *hem*.
4204 *occision*, MS: *occasion*. Compare line 3603.
4228 *but that*, MS: *that*.
4249–50 Lines transposed in MS.
4256 *passyd was*, MS: *was passyd*.
4286 *out*, MS omits.
4294 *yslawe*, MS: *yslowe*.
4298 *lound*, MS: *land*.
4306 *ronne*, MS: *room*.
4322 *hem*, MS: *ham*.
4326 *Thorgh*, MS: *Torgh*.
 amynge, MS: *hamyng*.
4362 *and*, MS: *an*.

Textual Notes

- 4373 *nor*. Erdmann emends to *ne*.
4374 *and*. MS: *an*.
4378 *that*. MS omits. Understood sense "unless" ("but that").
4389 *Althogh*. MS: *Al they*.
4390 *by*. MS omits.
 choys, MS: *loys*.
4447 *hevynesse*. MS: *hevnesse*.
4467 *mervaylyd*. MS: *awervaylyd*.
4471 *Companeus*. MS: *Companeus*.
4490 *Wissing*. MS: *Whissing*.
4491 *bothen*. MS: *both*. Compare line 2801 for *bothen*.
4518 *preiden*. MS: *preide*.
4549 *That*. MS: *Tha*.
4571 *ayre*. MS: *hayre*.
4600 *departe*. MS: *parte*.
4626 *departyden*. MS: *partyd*.
4639 *wyldernessee*. MS: *wydernesse*.
4679 *Luk*. MS: *bok*. Compare rubric citing Luke 21:10; "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (from the signs of the end of the world). Other MSS read *bok* or *the boke*, referring to the Bible in general.
4696 *mor*. Erdmann emends to *more*.
 whetyd. MS: *whyd*.
4714 *amendment*. MS: *anedement*.

Glossary

abo(o)de	delay	everychone	everyone
abraide	speak	felle	cruel
advert	notice	ferre	far
asterie	escape	foon	enemies
attonyss	at once	fredam	generosity, liberality
availle	be of use	fyn	end, goal
avisement	deliberation	gaf	gave
awayt	ambush	geve	give
ay	always	gif	give
be	by; be	gove	given
brent	burned	gynae	begin
cast	plan, foresee	ha	have
ceriously	in due order, point by point	hap	chance
char	chariot	hem	them; themselves
cher(e)	countenance, mood	hent(e)	seized, took
condescende	agree	her	her; their; hair; hear
confusious	destruction, misfortune	hight(e)	was called
contune	continue	hole, hool(e)	whole
cors	corpse	hye	hasten
co(o)st	region	kerve, korve	cut, carve
dede	deed; dead; did	konne	know
deme	judge	kynde	nature
devise	tell; arrange	lette	hinder
discure	reveal	list	lest; it pleases
dood	sorrow	lorn	lost
durste	dared	lich(e)	like
echon	every one	Martis	Mars'
eke	also	Mars	
eschew	avoid		

Glossary

maugré despite	trete negotiate
meynt(e) mixed	tweym(e) two
morow(e) morning, morrow	
of of; off	unnethys scarcely, hardly
or before	unwist unknown
oyther or; either	
pes peace	verray true
platys plate armor	voyde remove
plately plainly, openly	
pre(e)s mob, crowd, warriors	wende go
parveaunce foresight, provision	wene doubt
recurr(e) recover	wenying thinking, expecting
rede, reed advice; read	wer(e) were
renomed renowned	werre war
require ask	wex grow, become
road rode	wher where; whether
ro(o)te root, source	whilom once, long ago
routh pity	wood mad, angry
sad serious	wist knew
sentence significance, opinion	wight person
sikernes certainty	
sith since; time	yfere together
slawe slain	yif if
soth(e) truth	
stede steed, horse	
ste(e)le steel, armor	
stoundemel from time to time	
sue, swe follow, pursue	
sarquedye pride	
swich(e) such	
thilke that, that same	
tho those; then	
ton the one	
tother the other	