

JOHN GOWER

Confessio Amantis

Volume 1

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SECOND EDITION



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

by

MEDIEVAL INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS
Kalamazoo, Michigan
2006



PREFACE

The *Confessio Amantis* has been an important part of my thinking for more than three decades. This volume, the first in a set of three, includes the frame of the poem; that is, the Prologue, Book 1, and Book 8. The three-volume edition provides readers with a complete text of Gower's poem, along with extensive glosses, bibliography, and explanatory notes. Volume 2 of the edition includes Books 2–4, and volume 3, Books 5–7. Books 2–4 follow one kind of development, following in its structure the outline of Vice and its children found in Gower's early French poem, the *Mirour de l'Omme*; then in volume 3 (Books 5–7) Gower offers another kind of development as he shifts his internal structure from romance banter and a formulaic confession to philosophical inquiry.

Despite the surface simplicity of the *Confessio*, the smoothness of its verse, and the apparent normality of its vocabulary, the poem is not easy to read. Gower's syntax is sometimes convoluted, using word order that is unfamiliar to modern readers, particularly in its placement of coordinating conjunctions in medial positions instead of at the head of the clause, but also occasionally imitating French idioms. Often we encounter inverted word order, and occasionally headless clauses and unusual use of hidden prepositions. Gower is a writer keenly aware of how to make language work for him, however, and he shapes the syntax pointedly toward his purpose. His vocabulary is not as broad as Chaucer's, but he uses words with distinctions of connotation that shift subtly from one context to another as shades of meaning change. One often encounters *rime riche*, which focuses attention on wordplay and the interiority of sense. Gower is alert to the innuendoes of language pertaining to law and legal matters. He also is well versed in French and Latin romance literature, which he uses with a grace and confidence that may slip past the casual reader. Thus this edition has sought to provide abundant glosses and notes to make his Middle English more fully clear to modern readers.

The *Confessio Amantis* is bilingual. This edition includes all Latin components of the poem along with translations. The Latin poetry is often graceful, although it sometimes seems to strive for difficulty and enigma; this opacity occasionally results in brilliantly significant ambiguities, at other times in collisions of partial metaphors. Both effects are challenging to translate. The Latin prose of the marginalia often has a legalistic ungainliness of style. But this quality provides congruities of idea that are important to the larger sense of Gower's poem. His Latin skills affect his English as he refashions the vocabulary with neologisms, such as “reprise”; likewise, his Latin is occasionally a calque of fourteenth-century English. For example, Gower will use the infinitive of “to desire” (*velle*) to mean the noun “desire” (normally this would be *desiderium* or *cupiditas* in Latin — words that do not scan well in iambic hexameter or its hemistiches used in elegiac couplets). But this is a case where in using *velle* he is thinking of the English word “wille,” as in “to have your will,” where in his Latin he says *habere velle*, the two words *wille* and *velle* sounding alike. When he

writes English he is sometimes thinking in Latin, and when he writes Latin he is sometimes thinking in English.

Gower's poem is written in essentially the same dialect as Chaucer's poetry, that is, the literary dialect of cultivated Londoners of the late fourteenth century. The orthography of Fairfax 3 looks different from Chaucer's Ellesmere MS, however, largely because of the greater influence of French and Kentish spelling conventions in Fairfax. Commonly Gower (or his amanuensis) used *ie* as a digraph for /e/, a convention common in Anglo-Norman and in the Kentish dialect. So one finds *chiere, hiere, hiede, siek*, and the like in the *Confessio* where in Chaucer one would expect *chere* or *cheere, here* or *heere, hede* or *heede, sek* or *seek*. Gower's scribe will not hesitate to use both Chaucer's and the Kentish forms in rhymes like *dede/wom-manhiede*, and so on. Where Chaucer uses *e* or *o*, Gower regularly uses the Anglo-Norman digraph *oe*, as in *poeple, proeved, moerdre*, and *coevere*. Gower probably pronounced the vowel as /e/ or /o/ as did Chaucer. In the *Confessio* one also finds spellings that reflect Romance etymology instead of actual pronunciation, such as *double* which rhymes with *aboute, deceipte* which rhymes with *conceite*, and *pleigne* which rhymes with *peine*.

One encounters a few Kentish phonemes in Chaucer, but in Gower they are frequent, especially Kentish *e* from Old English *y* where we would expect in Middle English *i* or *y*. So we find in Gower *ferst, senne, helle*, and *pet*, where we would normally find *first, sinne, hill*, and *pit* in Chaucer. Gower's scribes occasionally use *i* in all these instances, but we also find the Southern *u* for *i*, as in *hulles* or *puttes* for *hills* or *pits*. Finally, we find the Kentish participial ending *-ende* in the *Confessio*, where Chaucer normally uses *-inge*, though the latter form is also common in Gower.

In this edition of the *Confessio* I have followed the guidelines of the Middle English Texts Series and regularized *u/v* and *i/j* according to modern spelling conventions. I have also followed modern practices of punctuation and capitalization. As an aid to pronunciation I have placed an accent over *-é* if the vowel is long and given full syllabic value. So, instead of *charite, cite*, or *pite* the text will read *charité, cité*, and *pité*. According to this practice *honeste* and *honesté* will be distinguishable words, the adjective in two syllables, the noun in three. Sometimes unstressed *-e* is pronounced as *-ə* or not at all. In the fourteenth century, pronouns and prepositions are undergoing rapid change and thus often prove to be confusing. Gower commonly uses *hir* for "her," *her* for "their," *hem* for "them" or "themselves," and *him* for "him" or "himself." Distinction between the second person pronoun and the definite article is made by spelling the one *thee* and the other *the*. I have capitalized pronouns referring to the Christian deity along with proper names for the deity, though these capitalizations do not necessarily occur in the Middle English or among many modern stylists. But the practice saves on glossing and often makes hard passages clear where, in Middle English, no ambiguity seems to have been intended.

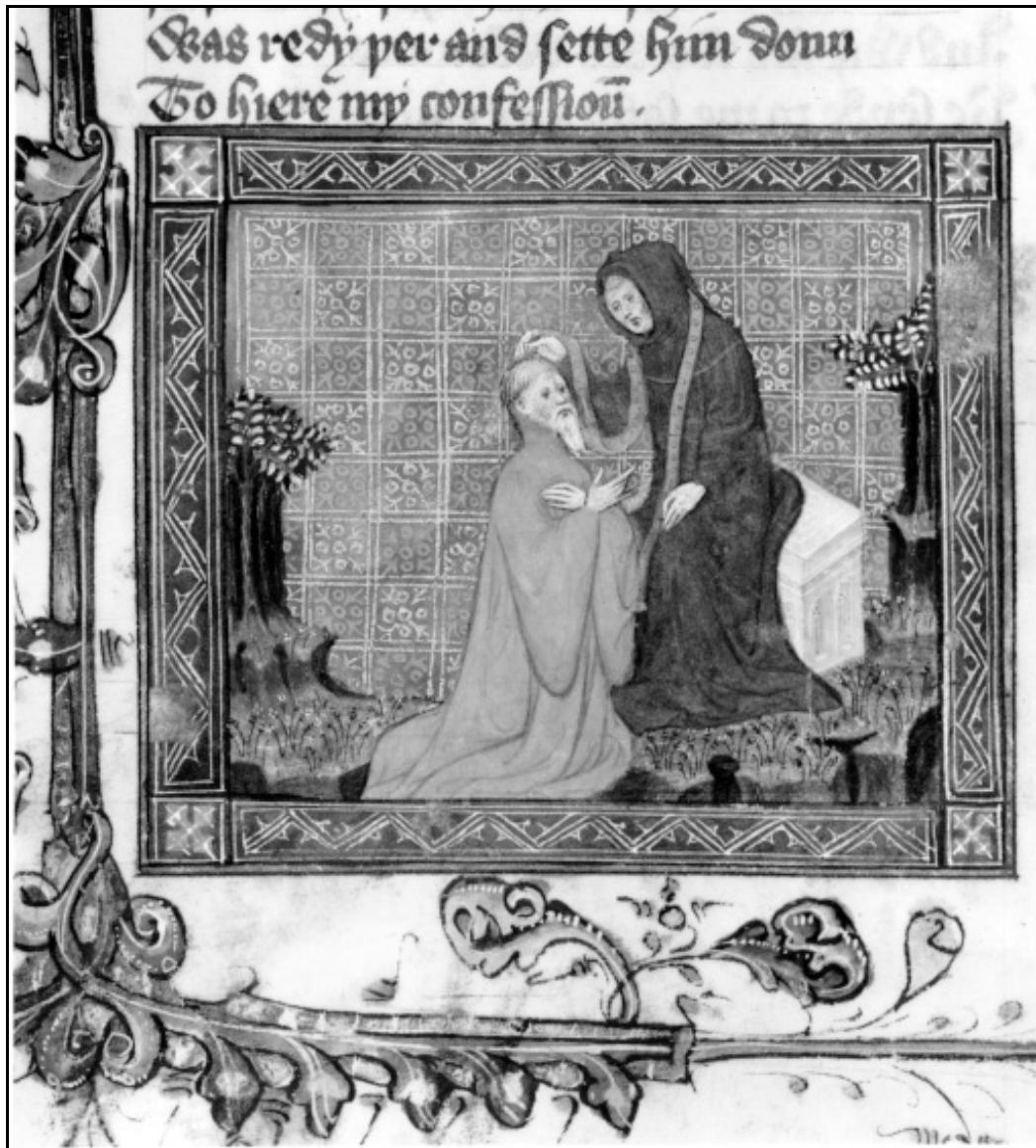


Illustration 1: MS Bodl. 902, fol. 8r. Bodleian Library, Oxford University. *Confessio Amantis* [The Confession of the Lover]. The representation of Amans as an old man is unique to this manuscript. (Contrast illustrations 3 and 5.) The artist seems knowledgeable of the conclusion to the poem where the lover sees his face defaced “[w]ith elde” [8.2828]. Some have argued that the portrait is of Gower himself as he points the way. See notes to Book 8.

ENTER GOWER

To sing a song that old was sung,
From ashes ancient Gower is come,
Assuming man's infirmities
To glad your ear, and please your eyes.
It hath been sung at festivals,
On ember-eves and holy-ales;
And lords and ladies in their lives
Have read it for restoratives:
The purchase is to make men glorious,
*Et bonum quo antiquius, eo melius.*¹
If you, born in these latter times,
When wit's more ripe, accept my rimes,
And that to hear an old man sing
May to your wishes pleasure bring,
I life would wish, and that I might
Waste it for you like taper-light.

I tell you what mine authors say.

— William Shakespeare, *Pericles*, I.Prol.1–16, 20²

¹ “The older a good thing is, the better.” The phrase is proverbial, though Hoeniger (Arden Shakespeare edition, p. 6) notes that *communius* is more common in the proverb than *antiquius*. Shakespeare’s choice of *antiquius* is well attuned to the poet Gower’s concerns. Ancient texts provide the purchase necessary for cultural amelioration and for their “restorative” value to the psyches of men and women “in their lives.” The proverb with *communius* is found in T. Lodge, *Wits Miserie* (1576), where it is quoted as an axiom of Aristotle, and in Marston, *The Dutch Courtezan* (1605).

² Shakespeare, *Pericles*, ed. Hoeniger, pp. 5–6. For a brief discussion of Shakespeare’s understanding and use of Gower in *Pericles*, see the Explanatory Note to Book 8, line 271 (below).



INTRODUCTION

*Scripture veteris capiunt exempla futuri,
Nam dabit experta res magis esse fidem.*

[Writings of antiquity contain examples for the future,
For a thing experienced will afford greater faith.]

— Gower, *Vox Clamantis*, Prol. to Book I, lines 1–2¹

Thanne telle I hem ensamples many oon
Of olde stories longe tyme agoon.
For lewed peple loven tales olde;
Swiche thynges kan they wel reporte and holde.

— Chaucer's Pardoner, *CT VI(C)435–38*²

GOWER, MAKER OF TALES

For Gower, old tales and their power to shape a “lewed peple” (to quote the Pardoner) are not something to be scorned.³ Tales enable the mind to rethink itself. Coming as they do from outside one’s immediate consciousness, they embody a culture’s sense of order and help to place the reader within the ethical terms of the culture. They clarify the meanings of right and wrong and thus can serve as the restorative of which Shakespeare’s Gower speaks. Tales forge identities. The *Confessio Amantis*, like the “writings of antiquity” that Gower mentions in the *Vox Clamantis*, is written to provide a bridge between the past and an anticipated future, a bridge that gives its audience a better sense of the present.⁴ As

¹ The Latin text of *Vox Clamantis* is from Gower, *Complete Works*, ed. Macaulay, 4:20. The translation is based on that found in Gower, *Major Latin Works*, trans. Stockton.

² For discussion of these specific lines from the Pardoner’s Prologue with regard to tale-telling, see Kolve, *Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative*, pp. 18–19, who offers thoughtful considerations on “holding” tales in the memory for purposes of mental dialogue.

³ Some portions of this introduction are adapted from the introduction to *Confessio Amantis*, ed. Peck (1968).

⁴ As medieval writers frequently recognized, the present is an illusion. It can only be sensed. St. Augustine puts the matter succinctly: “it is in you, my mind, that I measure periods of time” (*Confessions* XI.xxvii.36). Having contemplated the “present” as a lifetime, a year, a day, or an hour — all of which measures are instantly more a matter of past than present, he observes, “if you can think of some bit of time which cannot be divided into even the smallest instantaneous moments, that alone is what we can call ‘present’. And this time flies so quickly from future into past that it is an interval with no duration. If it has duration, it is divisible into past and future. But the present occupies no space” (*Confessions* XI.xv.20). Compare *The Cloud of Unknowing*’s theory of atoms of time which, if surpassed, place one momentarily in the presence of God, the only true present (see chs. 4 and 6).

Gower explains, the reading of old tales affords its participants “a thing experienced” (*experta*), a means of testing knowledge personally the way one might momentarily test any kind of sensual information, whether from nature or parchment, by trying it out in the mind to find out how it might be true.⁵ In the *Confessio*, the experiencing of a tale equates with testing it. Each tale demarcates a trial through which one has the potential to learn and grow. In this sense, the plots of Gower’s stories are deliberately *experiential*. They are *about* experience, but likewise they provide examples *to be tested in the mind*. Their plots develop through choices made by characters who, like the readers assessing them, anticipate some hoped-for denouement.⁶

Gower thinks within concepts of knowing that are ancient, though mainly articulated in the fourteenth century by writers steeped in the ideas of St. Augustine, who explored relentlessly the illusions people spin about themselves as they explore the interstices between time, memory, experience, consciousness of the present, and one’s relationship with language.⁷ All such ideas are crucial to Gower the storyteller.⁸ In his attempt to understand temporal relationships and the psyche, Augustine takes his example from literary experience, as if reading affords the best means of perceiving how time and mind work:

⁵ Fourteenth-century writers repeatedly insist that truth is relative to the perceiver. Consider Chaucer’s *Book of the Duchess*, where the narrator rereads his Ovid to test it in his mind, wondering “yf hit were so” (line 233). See note 12. Petrarch’s observations on the value of old sayings and ancient writings are useful in understanding what Gower means by *experta* and how a medieval reader might “experience” old books and ideas. In a letter to Giovanni Colonna di San Vito (25 September 1342) Petrarch writes: “Nothing moves me so much as the quoted maxims of great men. I like to rise above myself, to test my mind to see if it contains anything solid or lofty, or stout and firm against ill-fortune, or to find if my mind had been lying to me about itself. And there is no better way of doing this — except by direct experience, the surest mistress — than by comparing one’s mind with those it would most like to resemble. Thus, as I am grateful to my authors who give me the chance of testing my mind against maxims frequently quoted, so I hope my readers will thank me” (*Letters from Petrarch*, p. 68).

⁶ Hope, anticipation, and need of a good ending, despite the lack of certainty of where we are now or where we are going, is one of the most characteristic considerations of Middle English literature. It is found repeatedly in questions such as Chaucer’s “not wot I . . . Ne where I am, ne in what contree” and his search for “any stiryng man / That may me telle where I am” (*House of Fame*, lines 474–79), or Will’s perpetual search in *Piers Plowman*, or such poignant lyrics as “Kindely is now my coming” with its “Scharp and strong is my deying, / I ne woth whider schal I” (Luria and Hoffman, *Middle English Lyrics*, #237, lines 5–6).

⁷ St. Augustine is the doctrinal authority most cited by philosophers such as Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, and Roger Bacon, theologians such as Wyclif, and writers such as Gower, Chaucer, Langland, and the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*.

⁸ For Augustine, time is movement, a “shuttling of the future into the past, moving through an immeasurable point” (Wills, “Augustine’s Magical Decade,” p. 30). That immeasurable point is the present, which we try to understand or make exist sensibly through the abridgments of mental acts. Augustine argues that “without creation, no time can exist” (*Confessions* XI.xxx.40). Being a phenomenon of creation, time can be understood only by measure, by relationships of moments (see *Confessions*, XI.xxvi.33 and XI.xxvi.34–36). Time is thus a kind of fiction — a tale, if you will — a distension of once-upon-a-time moments, stretching feeling according to measures made “real” as the mind expands itself through anticipation of the future and recollection of the past (*Confessions* XI.xxxi.41). Time enables one to frame the present even though we cannot know what it is. We make tales of time through which we imagine that we can grasp its being.

Say I am about to recite a psalm. Before I start, my anticipation includes the psalm in its entirety, but as I recite it, whatever I have gone over, detaching it from anticipation, is retained by memory. So my ongoing act is tugged [*distenditur*] between the memory of what I just said and the anticipation of what I am just about to say, though I am immediately engaged in the present transit from what was coming to what is past. As this activity works itself out, anticipation dwindles as memory expands, until anticipation is canceled and the whole transaction is lodged in memory. And what happens with the whole psalm is equally what happens with each verse of it, each syllable — and with the whole long liturgy of which the psalm may be a part, or with the whole of any man's life, whose parts are his own acts, or with the whole world, whose parts are the acts of men.⁹

Augustine privileges reading as a synecdoche for the mind's capacity to create a present in relation to the confines of the past and the anticipation of the future. Such a practice provides a useful substructure for Gower's ideas about tale-telling in relation to the moral goals of his *Confessio*. The present he wishes to understand is perpetually transitive. His tales are parts of a whole that offer diverse access to the present. In the *Confessio* tales testify through fiction what the case may be.¹⁰

Gower's conceptualization of literary "experience" as useful testimony compares well with Chaucer's. In the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women*, Chaucer, like Gower, honors books as a key of "remembraunce," observing, "Wel ought us thanne honouren and beleve / These bokes, there [where] we han noon other preve" (*LGW* Prologue, F.26–28). Initially, the juxtaposition seems to be between the experience of reading and that of daily practical experience, as if to say, we believe books until some better empirical proof may be found.¹¹ But upon reflection "the other preve" is, like a thing experienced (*experta*), better understood as the testing of any deeper understanding or perceptual revision, whether practical or theoretical. That is, books are understood mainly in the head; but so too is nature. Both nature and books are texts that perplex the viewer. Belief and thought are not, however, binary oppositions; rather, thought, with its perpetual reinvention of both past and present, challenges and sustains belief, whether in the writings of Gower or Chaucer.¹²

⁹ *Confessions* XI.xxviii.38, as translated by Garry Wills, *St. Augustine*, p. 90; Wills' brackets.

¹⁰ Garry Wills notes that Augustine's term *confessio* is synonymous with *testimonium*, *confiteri* meaning "to testify." For Augustine "even inanimate things confess — testify to — their Creator: 'Their beauty is their testimony' (*Pulchritudo eorum confessio eorum, Sermones* 241.2)" (*St. Augustine*, pp. xiv–xvi). Wills' explanation of Augustine's concept is useful in grasping the intentions of Gower's confessional tactic where telling serves a key part in a restorative procedure. The many parts of his poem challenge the reader even as Genius and Amans provoke and test each other.

¹¹ Compare Gower's *Nam dabit experta res magis esse fidem* (for a thing experienced will afford greater faith). See the opening epigram of this Introduction.

¹² For example, in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* the narrator reads a text from Ovid, then goes over it repeatedly ("[I] overlocked hyt everydel") to discover "yf hit were so" (lines 232–33); that is, he rereads to get at what *might* be taken as the "truth" of the matter. That "truth" is, of course, contingent upon the capabilities of the perceiver, capabilities qualified by the reader's prejudice and intellectual capacities. Boethius puts the matter shrewdly: "alle thing that is iwist nis nat knownen by his nature propre, but by the nature of hem that comprehendhen it" (Chaucer's translation, *Boece*, 5.pr.6.2–4). Gower works from a similar concept, fully cognizant of the relativity of experience to language. Although "experience" may be no authority, as Chaucer's Wife of Bath amusingly explains (*CT* III[D]1 ff.), it is the primary means available to people for testing the possibilities and proba-

Like *Vox Clamantis* and much of Chaucer's poetry, *Confessio Amantis* is deliberately a bookish poem, rooted in old texts—*scripture veteris*. But it is likewise empirical, albeit within the fictive framework of an imagined “lover of the world” quizzed by a responsive intellect, a “genius” that puts to the test memory in response to history (the texts of the past). Rooted in old texts, this testimonial confession is a poem *of* and *for* the present, a poem for King Richard *now* in 1390 or for England in 1392.¹³ This precise historical positioning introduces a philosophical proposition akin to the problematics of understanding experience. Janet Coleman sees this locating of texts within specific historical contexts as a new and distinguishing feature of later fourteenth-century English literature.¹⁴ The point is, of course, not simply to locate fiction within historical contexts; rather, it is part of an attempt to explore the relativity of time itself to fictive formulations within the mind. The mind is a perpetual plot-maker as it invents narratives it imagines to be the present (the way things are at the moment) within a metaphysic of temporality. In this regard, the *Confessio*, like so many other late-fourteenth-century poems,¹⁵ creates a fiction of soul-searching. But it is soul-searching of a special kind. Gower's argument takes as its goal the accessing of the present by reconfiguring the past. Although the poem is ostensibly textual—that is, an interweaving of old maxims, proverbs, tales, social propositions, political alignments—it is also a subtly psychological work, a poem that through its rhetoric explores *how* the human psyche can understand itself within history—*now*.

Gower is the first English writer to use “history” as an English word.¹⁶ He regularly rhymes the term with “memory,” for to his way of thinking history and memory are correlative. That is, without history, there can be no memory; and without memory, there can be no history. But the point of historical knowledge is not to enable people to live in the past, or even to understand the past in the way we would expect a modern historian to proceed; rather, it is to enable people to live more vitally in the present—“The present time which now is” (*CA* 8.258), as Gower puts it. The present is, for Gower, a state of mind every bit as much as the past or future must be. And it is for this reason that the tales must be told and “experienced.” Just as the past must be perpetually reinvented (and Gower is a master at such

bilities out of which they discover the relativity of knowledge. For discussion of the philosophical issues here see Peck, “Phenomenology of Make Believe,” pp. 250–58.

¹³ Gower first circulated the poem in 1390 with a dedication and concluding prayers addressed to King Richard. In 1392, he changed the dedication and conclusion to honor Henry of Derby (later King Henry IV) and to conclude with prayers for the state of England. See “Politics and Society,” below, pp. 19 ff.

¹⁴ Compare Chaucer's setting the Man of Law's Tale on April 18, or the dream in *HF* on the tenth day of the tenth month, or his frequent use of May 3 as an auspicious day. The effect is to relate fiction to historical moments in “real” time.

¹⁵ For example, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, and *Book of the Duchess*; Langland's *Piers Plowman*; the anonymous *Pearl*; and Guillaume de Deguileville's *Pélerinage de la vie humaine*.

¹⁶ Gower probably borrows the term from OF *estoire*, which is in turn derived from late Latin in the twelfth century to indicate “a (vernacular) narrative of past events, presented as true, and whose authenticity is attested by an authority” (Damian-Grint, “*Estoire* as a Word and Genre,” p. 198). The term was perhaps borrowed to differentiate *romanz* from more “historical” kinds of writing. Chaucer never uses the word “history,” though he does use the aphetic form, “*storie*” (which he rhymes with “memorie”), in *Troilus and Criseyde*, where Criseyde, considering her life, observes: “Men myght a book make of it, lik a *storie*” (5.585).

invention), so too must the present be perpetually reinvented if one is to have any notion of oneself in a locatable way. One claims the present by locating it within the terms of memory. In his tale-telling, Gower enters into a refined phenomenology where time, history, memory, and a fictionalizing of the past make discourse of the “now”-world presentable.

In *Confessio Amantis*, Gower is preeminently a storyteller. Through the voice of the poet and Genius, his surrogate contact with practical matters and the wisdom of antiquity, Gower revitalizes a treasury of old tales, thereby provisioning his new vessel with reclaimed ideas — a “tally” of tales for taking mental stock of the natural order of things.¹⁷ Like Chaucer’s Pardoner, who shrewdly uses tales to influence people — “For lewed peple loven tales olde” (VI[C]437) — Gower conjures old tales as a means of wooing an audience toward a confessional self-assessment. Like the Pardoner, he is well aware that people use stories to “reporte and holde” (CT VII[C]438). He is also aware that tales can deceive. Genius’ stories are full of manipulators who, like the Pardoner, tell tales as a means of satisfying their greed; in fact, Gower creates some of Middle English literature’s most notorious deceivers, characters like Mundus in the Tale of Mundus and Paulina in Book 1 or Nectanabus in Book 6. But unlike Genius’ villains or Chaucer’s Pardoner, Gower’s motive is not venal. That is, his tales are bound to the good intention of the teller and what he imagines the desirous intentions of his audience to be. Certainly Gower would entertain, but he is shrewdly aware that he has little control over his willful readers. He can only woo them and attempt to manipulate their responses through his rhetoric. The tales, he says, are to be “Somwhat of lust [pleasure], somewhat of lore [wisdom]” (Prol.19).¹⁸ But, inevitably, his intention is intuitive — a feeling that people commonly yearn for the good and that the soul’s welfare is generative within the outlines of a Christian doctrine that conforms with the goals of his society at large.

This earnest side of Gower’s intention received adverse criticism in the early part of the twentieth century, which tended to view him as a moralist rather than as a poet of the first rank. But more recently the challenge of writing moral verse artfully has been better appreciated. John Fisher praises Gower’s “absolute integrity, his coherent grasp of the ideals of his day, and his fearless expression of the moral judgments growing out of those ideals.”¹⁹ In his *Vox Clamantis*, a poem written c. 1378–82, Gower spoke as a moralist, delineating the ideals of social behavior through the genre of complaint. In the *Confessio* (c. 1386–90) he

¹⁷ I make the “tally” pun to heighten the connotations of *tale* in Gower’s usage. Both *tale* and *tally* have the same root, the Old Teutonic **tala*, as in the verb *taljan*, meaning to mention things in their natural or due order, to relate, enumerate, reckon (see *OED*). Both words, along with *tell*, imply a process of ordering, of taking account. When the wife in Chaucer’s Shipman’s Tale tells her husband to score the debt on her “taile” (CTVII[B²]416), she makes a triple pun on tail/tale/tally, with related puns on accounting. Gower regularly utilizes two components of the pun, those of tale and tally, in the economics of his narrative, though he does not make puns on *tail* as readily as Chaucer.

¹⁸ The “lust” and “lore” phrasing is akin to Chaucer’s telling of tales for “best sentence [wisdom] and moost solaas [entertainment]” (CT I[A]798). Coleman (*Medieval Readers and Writers*, p. 16) argues that most works in the period were written not merely to entertain but rather to inspire readers to criticize and eventually reform social practice. While this may be true, it is also true that the writers of the 1380s and 1390s were acutely aware of the limitations of literary assertion, as well as the dangers of political criticism and attempts by writers at reform. See Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*, on the use of Latin traditions as a means of disguising discontent in advice literature. See also Middleton, “Idea of Public Poetry,” pp. 101–02, and Peter, *Complaint and Satire*, p. 70.

¹⁹ John Gower, p. v.

now offers a new, more subtle formulation where moral assessment takes place through the nuances of fiction. As Kurt Olsson puts it, “This poem is as effectively moral in its ‘game’ as it is in its earnestness, and in both things together Gower will challenge and ultimately reward the careful reader.”²⁰ Gower’s tales stand as “ensamples” for stocktaking and are central to the poem’s overall strategy of using entertainment for the winning of mental health and God’s pardon. Though his own intention is good, Gower knows that the success of that triangulation between writer, text, and reader, and therefore the success of his whole enterprise, lies in the relativity of language and the intention of his reader.

For Gower, the value of a tale resides in its capacity to take its audience some place. Plots, like time, move, and they move people, stretching their feelings, as Augustine puts it;²¹ they lay out an ethical geography and provide direction through an imaginary terrain. But the direction is never single-dimensional. The poem speaks with many voices simultaneously — the voices of Genius the confessor and Amans the lover, and with the voices of all the characters within the examples. These fictive voices are framed by another more subtle fiction, the voice of John Gower the poet, with his concerns about the welfare of England. Just as the voicing of the poem is multidimensional, so too are its settings. Sometimes the settings may be specifically identified places or times, or they may lie in the spaces between Genius’ attempts to guide Amans in his confusion and erratic love and his efforts to account for that love. Although the voicing of “Gower the poet” functions in a narrative parameter within the poem larger than that of Genius, the poet’s frame “story” is, nonetheless, akin to Genius’ confessional scheme in that the “poet,” like Genius, wishes to take his audience simultaneously in two directions: 1) toward a better understanding of the commonweal of the state, and 2) toward a better understanding of the welfare of the soul.

READING AS THERAPY

Hundreds of old stories will be envisioned in *Confessio Amantis* before the therapy of the distracted lover can be concluded. For Gower, reading is powerful medicine. As a concept, “reading” has provocative implications in Middle English. It connotes engagement of the reader through sight and (especially in a culture where books were commonly read aloud) hearing, as we might expect, but it likewise signifies engagement of the mind in a broad range of interior activities, such as learning, teaching, interpretation of riddles, dreams, and parables; it also denotes perception, discernment, deduction, and the ability to estimate, enumerate, count, or think. But it is further used with the sense of giving counsel and advice. It can mean to confer, advise, decide in council, or to agree or decide in the mind. The term has political implications as a word connoting acts of decreeing, guiding, governing, controlling, preparing, making ready, or exercising authority. And reading has a crucial psychological implication of carrying out one’s intention. In the course of Gower’s poem Amans learns to read by listening to tales and contemplating their implications. He is not an adept reader any more than he is an adept listener. The tales provide him with information, but, given his preoccupation, their significance often passes him by. Like all readers, he is obliged to be inventive — to find a personal means of framing the ideas of the tales within his unique consciousness.

²⁰ *Structures of Conversion*, p. 2.

²¹ *Confessions* XI.xxxi.41.

Confession nurses by healing the cracks in the psyche which have come about through the degenerative anxieties of time and careless beholding. The one confessing must provide a narrative for his chaotic behavior, a “tale” that can be read and weighed by the interrogator. To approach the psychological demands of the poem, Gower introduces a debate between competing mental components — Amans, Venus, Genius, a mistress of the imagination who never appears but is ever yearned for, a forgotten sense of common profit, and so on — who are personified to give testimony to the ramifications of ill health. Augustine discusses the mental faculties at length, providing a terminological basis for analysis of aberrant human behavior, particularly of the brain enfeebled by the Fall.²² Augustine argues that the mind of humankind was created to reflect the Trinity and thus consists of three principal agents: Memory, Intellect, and Will.²³ Early in his writing Augustine sees the Intellect (cognate with the Second Person) as the superior faculty upon whose right use healthy human behavior depends; later, as his theology becomes increasingly subtle, he shifts the primary focus of problems in human behavior to the Will (cognate with the Third Person).²⁴ It is to the later writings of Augustine that the fourteenth century, with its latent distrust of reason (though not of Christ), found itself most attracted. With the new fourteenth-century emphasis on empirical thought and an individual’s responsibility for personal governance, attention in ethics is increasingly concentrated on free choice and the struggle to assess the intermingling of desire and moral behavior.

Augustine’s focus on willful behavior was developed by Boethius into questions of intent,²⁵ which relocate Will (love) as a function of heart as well as brain. Intention is bound to desire — what one wants and wills — and often develops from an imagined deficiency that one wishes to remedy. By the eleventh century “brain science” had developed spatial models of the brain which are akin to Augustine’s, but with some modifications deriving from Galen.²⁶ Medieval diagrams of the brain introduce a new faculty to Augustine’s scheme, *ima-*

²² It is perhaps noteworthy that medieval medical diagrams of the brain often label the figure as “Disease Man.” The diagrams identify the areas of the brain where specific diseases might be located. See Clarke and Dewhurst, *Illustrated History of Brain Function*, figs. 5, 7, 9, 12, 13, 16, and 17.

²³ Augustine’s most detailed discussion of mental faculties appears in *De Trinitate*, Books 9–11.

²⁴ A comparable shift of focus occurs in northern Europe between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries as the ideology of a monastic culture, focusing upon the Intellect, sees pride as the primary sin. But gradually, as the commercial revolution takes place and the educational centers shift from monasteries to universities, inns of court, and a culture of guildsmen, the focus shifts to the Will as the faculty most often abused, with sins of avarice and greed as the greatest threats to human welfare. See Little, “Pride Goes before Avarice”; Lopez, *Commercial Revolution*; Yunck, *Lineage of Lady Meed*; Bloomfield, *Seven Deadly Sins*; and Baldwin, “Medieval Merchant.”

²⁵ On the prominence of intention in Boethius see *Consolation* 3.pr.11 and 12, 4.m.1 and pr.2, and 5.m.4 and pr.6. By the fourteenth century intention has become a central concern of civil law as well. See Chaucer’s Parson’s Tale on the complexity of self-adjudication as every aspect of motive becomes essential to the assessment of behavior. For general discussion of the concept see Bowers, *Crisis of Will in Piers Plowman*, and Dihle, *Theory of Will in Classical Antiquity*.

²⁶ See Clarke and Dewhurst, *Illustrated History of Brain Function*, pp. 10–48. The concept of three primary functions of the brain, namely, Imagination, Reason, and Memory, goes back to Galen, as far as medieval writers are concerned. Nemesius, bishop of Emesia (c. AD 390), and Augustine first propose a cell doctrine of brain function (Clarke and Dewhurst, p. 10), which dominates diagrams until well past the medieval period.

ginativa, which functions as a cognitive server for intellect and memory. A representative account of brain functions may be found in Bartholomaeus Anglicus' encyclopedia *De proprietatibus rerum*, written before 1250, but translated into English by John Trevisa in the later fourteenth century:

The innere witte is departid aþre [into three] by þre regiouns of þe brayn, for in þe brayn beþ þre smale celles. Þe formest [the frontal cell] hatte [is called] *yimaginatiua*, þerin þinges þat þe vttir [outer] witte [i.e., the senses] apprehendip withoute beþ i-ordeyned and iþput togedres withinne. . . . Þe middil chambre hatte *logica* þerin þe vertu estimatiue is maister. Þe þridde and þe laste is *memoratiua*, þe vertu of mynde. Pat vertu holdip and kepiþ in þe tresour of mynde þingis þat beþ apprehendid and iþnowe by þe *yimaginatif* and *racio*.²⁷

Yimaginative works with intuitions from the senses to create the mental experience of images in the brain, separate from the external forms. Under the influence of will, *yimaginative* can combine forms into new forms not found in nature. In some brain diagrams the first cell is subdivided between *sensus communis* and *yimaginative*.²⁸ This image-making component of the brain is particularly attuned to sight and hearing.²⁹ Gower draws upon the concept when he discusses the primacy of sight and hearing as the senses most influential in cognition. As he puts it in the Latin verses early in Book 1, before line 289: *Visus et auditus fragilis sunt ostia mentis*, “Vision and hearing are fragile gateways of the mind.” Genius then goes on to execrate abuse of these two senses which are deemed crucial to understanding.

As a personification in the *Confessio*, Genius is closely related to the frontal lobe of the brain, *yimaginative*, as he presents and manipulates images while putting tales together. In Chaucer's Second Nun's Tale, St. Cecile explains to Tiburce the “sapiences three” of the brain — “Memorie, engyn, and intellect also” (VIII[G]338–39). “Engyn,” derived from *ingenium*, is that tale's term for *imaginative*, a term in whose jurisdiction Genius is an evident component. In Gower, Genius is the principal agent of therapy as he presents tales to the willful Amans in hope of engaging his intellect. Gower develops Genius from two well-known medieval counterparts, one in Alanus de Insulis' *De Planctu Natura*, and the other in Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose*. In these two antecedents Genius represents a combination of natural reason, ingenuity (what we would call invention or “creativity”), and procreativity. He is subservient to Nature, and Nature, being God's creation, is essentially good. That she is subject to time and mortality is not her fault, but rather humankind's, who, in sinning, act “unnaturally.” There is an essential ambiguity here: desire is natural and may lead to natural fulfillment; or, if ungoverned (i.e., willful), it may lead to “unnatural” disaster. The rightness

²⁷ Capitulum x [f. 21^{va}], Bartholomaeus Anglicus, I.98.

²⁸ E.g., the three-cell diagram of the brain in Triumphus Augustinus de Anchona, in *Opusculum perutile de cognitione animae*, revised by Achillini (1503), printed by Kolve (*Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative*, p. 25; discussed, p. 23). See also Clarke and Dewhurst, *Illustrated History of Brain Function*, p. 27.

²⁹ See the diagrams in Clarke and Dewhurst, *Illustrated History of Brain Function*. In some instances, the cells in the frontal lobe, identified with sensation and imagination, are linked directly to the eye. E.g., the drawing c. 1310 in Cambridge University Library Gg.I.I, fol. 490v (figure 39 in Clarke and Dewhurst; see also figures 24, c. 1410, and 32, c. 1501, which also link the eyes directly to the brain). One conclusion that might be drawn is that a diseased brain is simply an unbalanced one, often unbalanced by a failure to guard the eye or ear.

of desire depends upon the functions of both will and intention. Genius looks after Nature's mortal creatures; he is pleased when each finds satisfaction proper to its created purpose. So too in Gower, where Genius' primary means for judging behavior is to decide whether an act is natural or "unkynde." Genius is a most felicitous choice for analyzing the witless love crimes of Amans against Nature. It is to Genius that Amans must turn for penance, since, in his idleness, "genius" and his right use of inward visualization are what have become twisted.³⁰ The confessor, with his "lust and lore," attempts to help Amans re-create a more balanced view of himself.

Within the strictures of Gower's psychomachia, Genius serves as Venus' priest, but this does not make him necessarily subservient to her or even entirely sympathetic with her motives. In Alanus, Venus and her son Cupid help Genius to fulfill his office of replenishing Nature (that is to say, the sexual urge for singular pleasure which Venus and Cupid instill in creatures does help Nature to reproduce her kind). But although Gower's Genius enjoys the assistance of Venus and the god of love, he nevertheless objects scornfully to their selfish demands when they turn natural love into unnatural fantasies or mutually exclusive and unfruitful games. In fact, from the beginning of the poem it is clear that his interests are more imaginative than Venus'. He will speak of more things than love, at least love as cupidinous Amans has come to define the term. Usually he tells tales pertaining to specific sins, then, at Amans' request, tells additional tales pertaining to the lover's particular relationship with the sin. In order to help Amans see beyond his infatuation, Genius will, as the poem progresses, ultimately instruct him in all the humanities. The climax of his argument is Book 7, in which he explains the education of a king, lessons in governance which Amans must learn if he is to reclaim and rule the lost kingdom of his soul. Genius knows that love founded on mutuality, on what both Gower and Chaucer (among others) call "common profit," is the only love that is consistently satisfactory. Although Genius' understanding of higher love is limited, he can appreciate it as history has revealed it, just as Jean de Meun's Genius appreciates without fully understanding the "beau parc" of the good shepherd with its "fontaine de vie" toward the end of *Roman de la Rose*. Most certainly he can see from his natural vantage point that in the events of human behavior the love of Cupid is inconstant and that that of Venus usually ends in mockery. History demonstrates that this is so. That Venus would send Amans to Genius is understandable, however, in that she owes her very existence to the phenomena of time and nature over which Genius has perceptual jurisdiction.

Genius provides the impetus for Amans' therapy. His tales serve as a visual guide for the inner eye.³¹ But the therapy itself can take place only through Amans' choices, under the guidance of his memory and intellect. Just as the first cell of the brain is subdivided into *sensus communis* and *yimaginativa*, likewise the second cell, that of the intellect, is divided into two parts too, namely *phantasia* and *aestimativa*. Intellect enables humankind to reason, estimate, and calculate. Some diagrams of the brain refer to this cell as the residence of *logica*,

³⁰ See Kolve's perceptive discussion of the role of the inner eye and seeing ear particularly as adjuncts to memory in the process of cognition (*Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative*, pp. 27–58).

³¹ See Kolve (*Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative*) on the prominence of visual images and the inner eye in the therapeutic process of reading. Even the nose has an "inner eye" capable of projecting images in the brain. See illustration 63 in Clark and Dewhurst (*Illustrated History of Brain Function*, p. 43) for a fourteenth-century drawing of the eye in relation to the brain that also crudely depicts the eye of the nose.

others of *ratio*. This cell too is subject to will and intention. *Phantasia* is an especially volatile area and, like reason, can be perverse. That is, through misintent reason can become ratiocination, and fantasy, instead of providing a godlike, generative function, can become a foolish wishfulfiller of the sort that the lover commits himself so strongly to in the middle books of the *Confessio*, where he projects scenario after scenario on how he will win his lady or humiliate his opponents.

The third cell, *memoria*, which Augustine had compared to God the Father, the First Person of the Trinity from which all else comes, is more than simply a storehouse of past recollections. For Gower, memory is central to his psychopharmicon whereby, as in Boethius, the whole process of therapy might be seen as self-recovery after a severe case of forgetfulness.³² Memory and motive are linked by Triumphus Augustinus de Anchona and others, *motiva* being the impulse toward the good that is deep-seated in memory. Augustine had linked the idea to what he called divine illumination, a Platonic recollection of eternity and divine purpose with which every person is born and for which every person unwittingly yearns. In the *Confessions*, Augustine uses container metaphors to describe memory — a treasury or storehouse, a vast hall (X.viii.14), caves and caverns (X.xvi.20), or “the stomach of the mind” (X.xiv.21–22).³³ Although, as we have seen, it may be difficult to realize the present within time, it certainly may be realized in memory, where a whole lifetime may be present, except for what is lost by forgetfulness (see Augustine, *Confessions* X.xvi.24). Memory is “an awe-inspiring mystery . . . a power of profound and infinite multiplicity,” Augustine observes (X.xvii.26). For everyone, the desire for happiness is located in the memory. Memory enables the mind to put fragments together and in this regard is a primary source of happiness in the processes of therapy (see *Confessions* X.xx.29–xxv.31–32). Of all faculties, memory, more than any other, makes possible the grasp of numbers that helps satisfy the soul’s need for right order.

Boethius and Augustine emphasize that confession is remembering. So too in Gower, where memory provides the key to Amans’ restoration. It is his means of reclaiming his forgotten, natural self in order that he may be released from its fantastic, willfully unnatural substitutions. The *Confessio* begins by asserting that lore of the past needs to be drawn into “remembrance” (Prol.69, 93); by remembering we begin not only to perceive the agencies by which men have corrupted themselves but also to rediscover the meaning of “common profit.” Repeatedly, Genius emphasizes that the tales are to be held in remembrance, and Amans again and again asks to be questioned so that he might recall what he has forgotten. The process of forgetting, confessing, and remembering is neatly epitomized in the account of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, based on Daniel 4. Gower places the story near the end of Book 1, as a model of therapy. In a vision Nebuchadnezzar saw what his fate would be if he continued in his vainglorious pride. He called Daniel to him, who explained what the dream meant. But the king forgot; he let the counsel “passe out of his mynde” (1.2951). The consequence of his forgetfulness is loss of human status. He is turned into a dumb ox and for seven years eats grass, drinks from the slough, and sleeps among the bushes, until finally

³² See especially *Consolation* 1.pr.6, where the disconsolate narrator has been diagnosed as having forgotten who he is.

³³ Geoffrey of Vinsauf, in *Poetria Nova*, a work known to both Gower and Chaucer, devotes his concluding chapter to the metaphor of memory as stomach of the mind and to the right ways to feed it (ch. 5, trans. Nims, pp. 87–91).

he remembers what he has lost and prays for forgiveness. He makes a covenant with God and vows to follow humility, at which point, in the twinkling of an eye, just as he reformed his mind so too his body is reformed. Needless to say, when he returned to his throne he remembered to reform his behavior as a king also. Only his vainglory he forgot: “Evere afterward out of memoire / He let it passe”(1.3038–39).

Gower presents memory as the Lover’s means of drawing the loose ends of his distracted self together. Memory enables him to see himself wholly. The antithesis of memory and unified vision is forgetfulness and “divisioun.”³⁴ In the Prologue Gower uses the metaphor of division extensively to depict the decrepitude of fourteenth-century England. For Gower, sin is intimately tied to his concepts of memory and time. Sin equates with forgetting. Forgetting is the mind’s willful divergence from the ordained order of things. As Gower puts it, sin is “moder of divisioun” (Prol.1030), and division is “moder of confusioun” (Prol.852). Time as we know it began with the Fall. As “moder of divisioun” sin substitutes illusion in place of divine presence. Genius’ therapeutic tales are designed to provoke memory and serve as an antidote that makes possible the objectifying of illusion so that the deluded sinner might regain control of a just sense of being. By providing a position outside one’s “confusioun,” therapeutic tale-telling helps to make possible a reconsideration of the self-deceit of sin.³⁵

To forget one’s ordained purpose is to disintegrate into disjunctive fragments. Gower’s favorite emblem of disintegration, an emblem he used in *Vox Clamantis* as well as the *Confessio*, he took from Daniel 2: the account of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the monster of time, with its head of gold, chest of silver, belly of brass, and legs and feet of iron and clay (Prol.585 ff.).³⁶ Gower places the narrative immediately after his critique of the three estates. Although most of the scribes of Gower manuscripts place an image of the dreaming Nebuchadnezzar at the beginning of the story (c. lines 578–96), the illustrator of the Fairfax 3 manuscript begins the poem with the image, as if to establish the Prologue’s central theme (see figure 2), namely, the degeneration of time in the divisive decades in England at the end of the fourteenth century. Like others, the Fairfax illustrator depicts the king asleep, dreaming of a monster who towers over him. Significantly, the monster is in the shape of man for, as Gower explains, the corruption of time is the consequence of man’s severance from God: “al this wo is cause of man,” who is himself “the lasse world” (Prol.905 ff.). Like the Bodley 294 illustrator, the Fairfax illustrator follows the marginal gloss to lines Prol.1031–41 and

³⁴ On the evils of division and dividedness see the Prologue, lines 127, 333, 576, 654, 782, 799, 830, 851, 889, 893, 966, 967, 971, 992, 996, 1010, 1022, and 1030.

³⁵ It is noteworthy that many of the manuscripts of *CA* include a miniature of Amans kneeling before Genius in hope of receiving a blessing. The image provides a visual meditation on the therapeutic ideal of reading the cultural ideology of Genius’ orderly narratives as they, addressing Amans’ confusion through his eye and ear, encourage moral reconsideration. See illustrations 1, 3, and 5.

³⁶ See Griffiths, “*Confessio Amantis*: The Poem and Its Pictures,” pp. 163–78, and Emmerson, “Reading Gower in a Manuscript Culture,” pp. 167–70, for discussion of the recurrent illuminations in Gower manuscripts. The illustration depicting Nebuchadnezzar’s dream is the most often repeated of any representation. Griffiths refers to it as “the dream of precious metals,” an inadequate title given Gower’s pointed use of the image and the narrative on which it is based. Aside from the fact that iron and clay can scarcely be called precious metals, the point of the account in Daniel and Gower is to demarcate the divisive degeneration of time as human society becomes progressively fragmented by the monstrosities of sin. A preferable designation might be “the dream of the monster of time and the monstrosity of sin.” See illustrations 2 and 4 for examples of this image.

picks up the detail from Daniel 2:34 that tells of a great stone cut from the mountain not by human hand that will crush to powder the clay feet of the monster (see illustrations 2 and 4). In both illustrations, the boulder hurtles toward the statue at that apocalyptic moment when time and the monstrosity of sin will instantly be destroyed and time and sin shall be no more.³⁷ In the text of the poem, as Genius introduces the story of Nebuchadnezzar, he reminds the reader of a perspective beyond time, where sits

The hyhe almyhti pourveance
In whos eterne remembrance
Fro ferst was every thing present. (Prol.585–87)

foreknowledge

As people become increasingly forgetful, they lose that sense of the present to become progressively divided from God and eternal memory. Gower extends Daniel's exposition on the vanity of princes beyond that of the Bible so that it reaches even into the fourteenth century. The clay feet epitomize wars with France and civil strife in England as bitter divisions within Christendom crumble into such factions as the Great Schism and Lollardy.

By analogy, these times of division apply to "the lasse world" of the lover, as well. Through metaphors of division Gower links the romance plot of Books 1–8 with the estates critique of the Prologue. Like England, Amans too is a state at war with itself, unable to arrive at a treaty suitable to the demands of its many factions. He is, indeed, his own worst enemy. Toward the end of his confession, Genius will compare him to a burning stick that reduces itself to ashes.

Intimately related to Gower's views on memory and division are his views on poetry. He concludes his discussion of Nebuchadnezzar's monster of time with the story of Arion, the bard whose song was so sweet that it restored peace wherever it was heard:

... of so good mesure
He song, that he the bestes wilde
Made of his note tame and milde,
The hinde in pes with the leoun,
The wolf in pes with the moloun,
The hare in pees stod with the hound;
And every man upon this ground
Which Arion that time herde,
Als wel the lord as the schepherde,
He broghte hem alle in good acord;
So that the comun with the lord,
And lord with the comun also,
He sette in love bothe tuo
And putte awey malencolie. (Prol.1056–69)

meter/harmonic ratio

wild animals

deer

sheep

them

citizenry (common people)

This second exemplum that concludes the Prologue functions with a thrust opposite to the fractiousness of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, introducing a poetic of amelioration within which

³⁷ See Apocalypse 21. In VC 7 Gower explores ideas of the apocalypse in detail; there he depicts his narrator as one who bears the name of John of the Apocalypse as he begins his diatribe against the ills of the fourteenth century. See Salisbury, "Remembering Origins," pp. 175–77, on Gower's riddling on his name.

the poem operates for the betterment of humankind. The poet is society's rememberer who sees with a unified vision to charm people out of their melancholy and "divisioun." He teaches people to laugh, not hate (Prol.1071). Gower must surely have seen his own purpose in the example. His poem, like the music of Arion, or like the songs of Apollonius and his daughter Thaise in Book 8, would provide therapy in troubled times. We shall see, in fact, that before the poem is over even Amans will smile and become England's poet.

GOWER'S RHETORIC OF ABRIDGMENT: THE "MIDDEL WEIE"

Gower's rhetorical strategy claims to locate the argument of his English poem along a "middel weie" (Prol.17), a pathway *between* rigorous instruction and entertainment. One might make much of the "in-betweenness" of Gower's poem. The *Confessio* mediates between audience and idea. But it is also in-between in its fictional relativity. Gower is sometimes labeled old-fashioned and conservative in his ethics,³⁸ but there are ways in which quite the opposite is the case. Gower's method is part of a radically new fourteenth-century philosophy of reading (albeit based on ancient literary principles), a method that might be labeled phenomenological epistemology, where one knows mainly by exploring spaces *between* fictions. His radical epistemology is akin to Chaucer's where the poet presents his persona as a figure caught indeterminately between magnets of equal strength (*Parliament of Fowls*, lines 148–49); or Boccaccio, attempting to know truth through fiction,³⁹ or Langland learning truth through peregrinations amidst the false; or the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* attempting to unknow what is "known" because of the limitations of realizable knowledge. A middle way can never be stable. It is always configured by what it is between. Yet this relativity of middling may be the only means through which stability can be imagined in a temporal world. Betweenness is inevitably a matter of metonymy, where the name of one thing is used to get at the features of another. It should come as no surprise that the subjunctive mood is more prominent in Gower's poem than the imperative. Through its fictive propositions, the *Confessio* is more a study in possibilities than in moral certainties.

To travel his "middel weie" Gower claims that the style of his English poem, like that which is proper to confession, will be "plein" (see 1.357); that is, "me liketh to comune / And pleinly for to telle it oute" (1.70–71) in order to make the message more accessible to an untutored as well as a clerkish audience. From its stylistic medial point, the Prologue addresses all three estates; that is, although initially dedicated to the king, this poem addresses all people — the lewed as well as the learned. Its primary themes are similar to those of Chaucer in his contemporaneous ballade, "Lak of Stedfastnesse," with its strongly Boethian hope for security of place rather than permutation, stability rather than fickleness, truth rather than deceit, pity and mercy toward fellow men rather than covetousness and oppression. Chaucer's appeal to King Richard in the envoy to that poem puts the matter succinctly: "Dred God, do law, love trouthe and worthinesse, / And wed thy folk agein to stedfastnesse" (lines 27–28) — all themes recurrent in Gower.

In the *Confessio*, Genius' tales often admonish, but the strength of Gower's proposition, like Chaucer's, is that tales do have the capacity to "wed" people in a tie that, despite tur-

³⁸ Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, pp. 127–28.

³⁹ See *Boccaccio on Poetry*, ed. and trans. Osgood, especially Book 14, chs. 8–14, on the possibilities of knowing through fiction.

bulent times, could reunite social practices with ideologies. The fickle divisions within the state and within the soul perpetually require mending. Gower would have his tales participate in that remedy. When read carefully they may help to provide the only therapy possible for heart and soul, a therapy that comes from one's own assessment of the fictionally mediated experience. That is, the moral effect of Gower's argument can only be found in the most uncertain realm of all—the inceptive intuitions of his audience. How the audience will respond, Gower can only guess, and, like Chaucer, pray for the reader's good intent.⁴⁰ As Gower puts it in Book 8, “kep the sentence of my lore . . . [and] go ther vertu moral duelleth” (8.2923–25),⁴¹ a sentiment exactly in keeping with the ethical economy of both Gower and Chaucer. But “keeping” is, he knows, a tricky business.

Part of the moral strength of the *Confessio* lies in Gower's mastery of his craft, a mastery of design that tallies the smallest of details. Measure defines his verses, a concept pivotal to the poem's utopian vision. There is a singing quality to Gower's tales. Indeed, in this poem he writes some of the most mellifluous, precisely measured verse in Middle English.⁴² This textual richness contributes well to the keeping of the sense. Likewise, Genius' tales always have a strong storyline—a sense of going some place. His plots are as rich in invention and as carefully crafted as the narratives of the ancients rediscovered by Genius for his (and Gower's) particular purposes. He has, moreover, a keen awareness of differences of voice not only between characters and levels of fiction, but between himself and all constructed versions of himself as poet.⁴³ C. S. Lewis points out, “Gower everywhere shows a concern for

⁴⁰ In Book 8 Gower prays with “hol entente” (line 2968) that he and others will find a means of understanding the confusion of their lives. In the concluding section he prays for the state of England, first that the clergy act justly and “[a]ftir the reule of charité” in “hope that men schuldyn se / This lond amende” (lines 3003–05; emphasis mine) and that the king will “entende” toward “rightwisnesse” (line 3069). As Gower laid out so clearly in the Prologue, after God destroyed the Tower of Babel, His *entente* (line 1023) was to isolate humankind within diverse languages. For comparison, see Chaucer who, like Gower, repeatedly invites his readers, trapped in their diverse personal languages, to amend his verse, the implication being that, given the instability of language and his own limited understanding, the most important text lies in the reader's perception. See the Retraction (CT I[X]1082), The Parson's Tale (I[X]60), and *Troilus and Criseyde* (3.1332); with an amusing variant in *HF* (lines 92–93). On the limitations of humankind's dullness of wit as a psychological inevitability as well as a modesty trope, see Lawton, “Dullness and the Fifteenth Century.”

⁴¹ The lines are spoken by Venus as she admonishes “Gower” to leave her court to return to his books. Gower may have got the idea from the Prologue to Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* (F text), where Alceste sends Chaucer back to his books to work apart from Cupid's court, albeit still exploring the modes of courtesy within society.

⁴² See Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, pp. 201–13, on the merits of Gower's plain style. It “has a sweetness and freshness which we do not find in the ‘polite’ style of later periods. Often a couplet in Gower sounds like a snatch of song” (p. 201). See also Burrow's *Ricardian Poetry*, especially pp. 50–51. Gower's metrical proficiency might be compared with that of Ben Jonson, who much admired Gower and often referred to him in his discussion of grammar in his treatise, *The English Grammar*. So attracted is Jonson to Gower and his more famous contemporary Chaucer that, in *Timber, or Discoveries*, he warns teachers to “beware of letting them [students] taste of *Gower*, or *Chaucer* at first, lest falling too much in love with Antiquity . . . they grow rough and barren in language onely. When their judgements are firme, and out of danger, let them reade both, the old and the new” (Ben Jonson, ed. Herford, Simpson, and Simpson, 8:618).

⁴³ Excellent examples of Gower's careful manipulation of fictive voicing of his persona occur in *Vox Clamantis* where, in the headnote, line 16, he presents himself *quasi in propria persona* [as if in his

form and unity which is rare at any time and which, in the fourteenth century in England, entitles him to all but the highest praise. He is determined to get in all the diversity of interests which he found in his model, and even to add to them his own new interest of tale-telling; but he is also determined to knit all these together into some semblance of a whole.”⁴⁴ We should not think of this “whole” as an aesthetic absolute, however, though his poem certainly is well constructed. Its aesthetic is shaped not so much by its completeness as by its tangential probing. The tangents may contradict one another, though they proceed from common questions. From beginning to end, the *Confessio* is a cluster of tales (texts and propositions) that require one to respond. It is a poem best understood as a sequence of queries rather than an anthology of answers.

THE GENRE OF THE *CONFESSIO AMANTIS*

In setting up his romance narrative Gower creates an expository frame that, in the manner of complaint, excoriates the ills of the world as they are manifest in the three estates, and then, in the end, he returns to the persona of “John Gower” to pray for the welfare of the kingdom.⁴⁵ All but two of the tales are found in the “framed” portion of the poem, where Gower moves more intricately into his multilayered fiction. The two exceptions are the story of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the statue of degenerative time (Prol.585–880), followed by the story of Arion (Prol.1053–88). Both tales are exemplary of key issues in the Prologue, namely, 1) the destructive effects of divisiveness in modern times, and 2) the need for imaginative amelioration through restorative tales. As we have seen, they identify the critical and salvific concepts that support the basic thesis of the poem’s progress.

The interior section of the poem (Books 1–8), composed in the genre of confession/consolation, presents hundreds of tales in diverse subgenres drawn from dozens of sources and organized in terms of the seven deadly sins. Recent critics have referred to Gower as a “compiler,” an archivist who collects examples according to some system of organization.⁴⁶

own person] while speaking of the uprising of 1381. Macaulay observes: “The author takes care to guard his readers against a too personal application of his descriptions” (*Complete Works*, 4:377). But Gower also wants to keep his reader aware even in this expository moment of issues of fictive voicing. Compare the Latin gloss in the margin adjacent to lines 59 ff. in *CA* 1, where Gower explains *Hic quasi in persona aliorum, quos amor alligat, fingens se auctor esse Amantem* [Here the author, fashioning himself to be the Lover as if in the role of those others whom love binds]. See Galloway (“Gower in His Most Learned Role”) on Gower’s differentiations of persona in *VC*.

⁴⁴ *Allegory of Love*, pp. 198–99.

⁴⁵ See Dimmick, “‘Redinge of Romance’ in Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*,” for considerations of *CA* under the umbrage of romance conventions.

⁴⁶ On Gower as compiler see Minnis, “Late-Medieval Discussions of *Compilatio*,” pp. 386–87, and *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, pp. 194–200; Olsson, *Structures of Conversion*, pp. 1–15; and Edwards, “Selection and Subversion.” Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, speaks of Gower as “a compiler who tried to present himself as an author” (p. 210). But Olsson challenges the imputation of failure in Minnis’ assertion (p. 5); he finds in the term *compilator* “a means of identifying issues and strategies that become central to Gower in the work; the procedure of compilation impinges significantly on how he understands history and organizes moral experience itself.” Such activities “energize his authorship” (p. 5) rather than weaken it. See Schutz, “Absent and Present Images,” on the poem as a mixed genre that functions through mirroring.

It is a useful term, since Gower several times refers to himself as *compilator* in his Latin *marginalia*. But “compiler” scarcely gets at the poetic vision Gower is attempting to construct. Kurt Olsson has demonstrated a shift in terminology from compiler to author as the poem progresses, suggesting that Gower is becoming aware of what his work is capable of accomplishing as he gets further into it.⁴⁷ It may well be that the shift in terminology is part of the poem’s dramatic design. What seems initially to be compilation — a treasury of lore for a culture-hungry audience — becomes upon reflection something much more “original.” Every act of memory is a step toward originality as details of the past are reviewed. Gower must have been acutely aware of this creative dramatic process from the outset. I can think of no instance in which a “story” is simply retold as it is found in its source. Sometimes the transformations are broad, like his rewriting of the Tale of Narcissus; sometimes they are subtle, as in his adapting of biblical accounts. But the old material is always reworked according to his plan and re-presented, one might say, according to the new contexts of the present world. Divisive times require prolific exempla as remedy, along with a good bit of wit. Through the several personae that Gower manipulates one is perpetually alerted to what Anthony Farnham refers to as the poet’s “keen awareness of the didactic value of misdirected seriousness” and an “almost perverse comic sense.”⁴⁸

The later fourteenth-century literary scene in England, newly attuned to incipient strategies of history, delights in diversity of signification. In rhetoric and the arts it is a time of multiple signifiers,⁴⁹ where, instead of *this* being equitable with *that*, the sign is equivocal, linked provocatively with *this*, *that*, and several *others*.⁵⁰ Gower himself is a master at multiple voicing. A tale may be read one way in terms of its immediate context, another way in

⁴⁷ *Structures of Conversion*, pp. 5–15.

⁴⁸ “Art of High Prosaic Seriousness,” pp. 164–65.

⁴⁹ Part of the delight may be attributed to a new awareness of the relativity of knowledge and a loss of confidence in abstract equations. If direct knowledge of truth is impossible for temporal creatures, then one can only know through likenesses, which is a kind of knowing and not knowing simultaneously. See Myles, *Chaucerian Realism*, particularly the second chapter, and Peck (*Kingship and Common Profit* and “Phenomenology of Make Believe”).

⁵⁰ A good example of delight in multiple possibilities of meaning may be found in Pierre Bersuire’s “De formis figurisque deorum,” the opening chapter to his *Ovidius Moralizatus*, in which he discusses numerous ways in which classical mythology may be interpreted. See Peck’s discussion of Bersuire and the complexities of irony and multiple voicing in Gower (“Problematics of Irony, pp. 219–21). Behind such hermeneutics lie the playful practices of the Victorine school in the twelfth century, particularly works like Hugh of St. Victor’s *De arca noe*, with its piling on of meanings for the ark in diverse contexts, or Anselm’s propositions on the volatile relationships between fiction and perceived truth in the *Monologion*, or Boethius’ representation of wordplay and the house of Dedalus, in the popular *Consolation of Philosophy* (3.pr.12). In the fourteenth century, contemporaneous with Gower, consider the heteroglossic ideation of *Margarete* in Usk’s *Testament of Love*, or the daisy in the Prologue to Chaucer’s *Legend of Good Women*, or the pearl in the poem of that name, or the perpetually shifting semantic valences of Piers in *Piers Plowman*. One is reminded of Duns Scotus in his use of suppositional logic in his development of an empirical science, where four quite different arguments are given to explain a proposition, an *if this, then that* strategy in which all propositions become correlative to the procedure of the argument. This “newe science,” as Chaucer calls it (*Parliament of Fowls*, line 25), becomes a way of looking at things with results contingent upon the suppositional premises of initial propositions. What Usk called “delight in making” becomes a concept for reading as well as a formula for composing, a matter rather different from compiling.

relation to its source, another still in relation to its narrator (usually Genius), or in a further way in terms of Amans' prejudicial response to the tale; and finally it must be read in terms of the historical Gower and the several purposes of the whole poem.⁵¹ Gower is perpetually conscious of the relativity of meaning to the different voices in his poem along with the alterable meanings of signs in relation to their sources and contexts. This hermeneutic of conditional perception anchored in diverse suppositions underlies the flexible choices of genre through which he makes particular statements.

There is, however, a distinctly definable plot to the fictive section of the poem — namely, the “tale” of Amans in debate with Genius. In a broad view, the *Confessio Amantis* is one of several Middle English poems that may be classified as poems of consolation. It is a genre with a powerful philosophical appeal to the later fourteenth century. The confessional aspect of the genre owes much to St. Augustine though, in the fourteenth century, the principal model behind the soul-searching is Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*. The likenesses of the group (which includes poems such as *Pearl*, Usk's *Testament of Love*, Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, *The Parliament of the Three Ages*, and, in a more complex way, Langland's *Piers Plowman*) lie in both subject matter and plot structure. Frequently consolation poems are dream visions, though the Boethian model is technically not a dream vision (nor is the *Confessio Amantis*, for that matter),⁵² but rather a projected condition of displacement. In each the primary subject is the narrator's restless state of mind, which may, in turn, reflect upon some unstable social situation. The plot is the narrator/dreamer's search for repose, a search which, given the contingencies of time, can never be completed with full satisfaction. Given the uncertainty of circumstances, the means of argument within the plot is confrontational as well as confessional.⁵³

The skeletal structure of a Boethian consolation plot normally follows four main steps.⁵⁴ 1) There will be an opening description of the narrator's physiological confusion and spiritual inertia, his displacement and alienation. His psychological turmoil will be presented as an illness he suffers within Fortune's domain. Usually, the illness will manifest itself in some form of death wish. The invalid may express a desire for help, but at the same time

⁵¹ See Donaldson (*Speaking of Chaucer*, pp. 1–12) on the voicing in Chaucer, particularly in *CT*, which comes closest to the considerations required in the assessing of Gower's voicing. In the same vein see Olsson (*Structures of Conversion*), who, after observing that Gower, according to a Senecan model of voices in a chorus wherein multiple voices speak as one, observes that Gower, nonetheless, “works to separate, to create for the work an impression of *compilatio*, and does so by authoring divergent outlooks. Indeed, as he breaks his own voice out into many voices in his fiction of a compilation, he does by very different means what Chaucer does through his pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales*” (p. 12).

⁵² Though technically not a dream vision, Boethius' *Consolation* was consistently regarded as one, given the fact that the narrator is lying ill upon his bed and Philosophy comes to him as if in a vision. In setting up his exemplum Gower might have put his narrator to sleep, then had him meet Venus and Genius, but such a literalization of the shifting categories of mind was not necessary. All the poet needs to do is to project fictive situations which serve the same requirements as the discrete boundaries of a dream world. All thought is a kind of dream, and as Chaucer puts it in *HF*, “dreme he barefot, dreme he shod” (line 98), that is, whether he is sleeping or awake, he is still dreaming.

⁵³ The best discussion that I know of the debate components of the poem is Olsson's discussion of the *tumultuator* conventions through which Gower creates dispute and discord for the unbinding of ideas. See especially *Structures of Conversion*, pp. 13–15 and 70–72.

⁵⁴ This portion of my argument is adapted from my earlier edition of *CA* (1968), pp. ix–x.

acknowledge that he does not know where to find it. 2) The distracted, dis-eased narrator will then perform some act of choice that will precipitate a change of scene, whereupon new “characters” will appear which are projections of different fragments of his anxious self or his environment. The new setting is now in the realm of the mind, where the heart of the quest will take place. 3) The argument of the poem will be conducted through dialogue between the narrator and the new characters. This multiplication of voicing is the most elastic part of the genre. It enables the poet to explore conditional propositions through the superpositions of each, thus opening for the reader an intellectual playground in which problems may be dramatized. It is here and in the conclusion that the author will exercise the most originality as he chooses particular devices suitable to the intention of the argument. But regardless of the device, whether it be a hart hunt as in *The Book of the Duchess*, a walk beside a river coming from Paradise as in *Pearl*, a hunt by a poacher in a deep wood as in *The Parliament of the Three Ages*, a search for salvation amidst a field full of folk as in *Piers Plowman*, or a confessional debate with Genius as in the *Confessio Amantis*, the argument will most likely begin with questions of identity, such as “What or who am I?” “Where am I?” or “What is the trouble with my soul?” It will then progress through a series of partial revelations (tales, if you will) which present themselves dramatically and bear some similarity to Boethius’ baring of his wound in order that Philosophy might apply the appropriate medicine. 4) The analysis and therapy will end with a tense moment in which the disturbed persona will waver, then achieve a revelation, usually partial, that will precipitate his return to the dilemma that initiated the search. The narrator may still be baffled by the meaning of the dreamlike experience, but he will, at least, have a better sense of what is at stake.

The *Confessio Amantis* is organized along the lines I have outlined, though Gower will, as we shall see, exercise a great deal of ingenuity in working within them. His most radical change is the introduction of a complex social analogue in the frame narrative that qualifies readings within the romance plot. Such a scheme is highly ambitious and even daring⁵⁵ as Gower attempts to conjoin social criticism presented in a nonfictional mode with fiction. At least the effect leaves no doubt in the reader’s mind about Gower’s convictions regarding the urgency of his argument; we find ourselves dealing with England as well as the Lover,⁵⁶ aware that the two are somehow interconnected. Since this political side of the poem’s frame narrative is likely to give modern readers of the *Confessio* the greatest difficulty, I will preface my discussion of the poem’s romance structure with an attempt to locate the concerns of the poem within the divisive political circumstances of the late 1380s to which the Prologue and the conclusion to the frame allude.

⁵⁵ The daring lies in criticizing people of higher social station in the fourteenth century but also in imagining that the moral force of the form might make a difference. See Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*, pp. 31–38 and 108–36, and Middleton, “Idea of Public Poetry,” pp. 91–92 and 95–104, on the danger of such literary activities.

⁵⁶ His model for such a strategy might have been Chaucer or, perhaps, Jean de Meun in his continuation of *Le Roman de la Rose*. See Middleton, “Idea of Public Poetry,” pp. 89–90, on the bridging of metaphysical and moral philosophy in fourteenth-century English literature.

POLITICS AND SOCIETY

The Prologue focuses emphatically on division within the state as cause of the woes of the times. As a social document the *Confessio* is securely anchored in the time of its origins — Gower has seen to that. The social concerns are not simply conservative or aristocratic,⁵⁷ though conservation of social structures is, for Gower, a primary concern. Few poets have been so deeply committed to the welfare of present times as Gower. That commitment was evident in his Anglo-Norman *Mirour de l'Omme*, where he first assesses English society within a gridwork of sins and remedies. Likewise, in his subsequent Latin work, the *Vox Clamantis*, one finds a comparable commitment toward understanding aberrations of the present time. Both of these earlier works are devoted to discursive analysis of the layout of social and political culture. The welfare of the kingdom remains a focal concern of the *Confessio Amantis*, especially in the Prologue and in the diatribe against war in Book 3 (Wrath), the discussions of labor in Book 4 (Sloth), of religion in Book 5 (Avarice), in the extended discourse on the pedagogy of the king of Book 7, and, finally, in the appeal for good rule in the conclusion to Book 8.⁵⁸ But the *Confessio Amantis* is more densely layered than Gower's earlier works. The frame narrative and the digressions of Books 4, 5, and 7, lay out what Gower perceives the sociological problems of the day to be, particularly factious aggressions within the three estates that disrupt the commonweal, peace, and unity.

In 1390, when Gower first completed and began circulating *Confessio Amantis*, England was at a relatively quiet moment between two turbulent decades. Peace after turbulence is indeed a concern of Gower's poem, from its beginning to its conclusion.⁵⁹ To a Londoner like Gower, living close to the seat of England's government, the decade of the 1380s had been an extended nightmare. The decade had begun with pervasive economic and political crises that led to the Uprising of 1381, a bloody protest that, as it descended upon London, reverberated through all levels of society but solved little. Gower might well have witnessed the burning of John of Gaunt's Savoy Palace and the siege of the Tower from his residence at St. Mary Overeys, across the river in Southwark. When young King Richard had shown

⁵⁷ As Gower's critique cuts across all three estates, his position is not too dissimilar from Langland's in *Piers Plowman* B.6, where Piers sets up rules of governance on his half acre. In Gower the commons is governed by the king and the church, though all three share responsibility for good rule. It is an evil time when the commons rebel, but an especially evil time if proud churchmen or aristocrats promote themselves at the cost of the kingdom. See Emmerson, "Reading Gower in a Manuscript Culture," pp. 171–75, on *CA* as a public poem.

⁵⁸ None of the expository sections — on the difficulty of justifying war, on the origins of labor and the professions, on the history of religion, and on the education of the king — appear in this volume, though they will occur in volumes 2 and 3 of this edition. For detailed summaries of the expository sections, see my one-volume edition of selections from *CA* (1968), pp. 192, 222–23, 242–48, and 368–414.

⁵⁹ Peace became for Gower almost a mania in his recurrent attempts to address the political chaos of England during his lifetime. It is not only central to his three major works, *Mirour de l'Omme*, *Vox Clamantis*, and *Confessio Amantis*; at the end of the 1390s, after the deposition of Richard, he wrote the *Tripartite Chronicle*, lamenting the greed of Richard's party and celebrating the justice of their overthrow. His final English poem is *In Praise of Peace*, c. 1400, a poem that hopes Henry's new administration can restore peace to the nation. The theme of peace is also found in such works of Chaucer as "Lak of Stedfastnesse" and The Tale of Melibee, both of which works bear close ties with *CA*.

his mettle in facing the rebels in Smithfield,⁶⁰ it must have seemed a demonstration of royal courage that Gower would have admired greatly, an action that might well have added a note of sincerity to the dedication to Richard in the Prologue and concluding dedication of the *Confessio* in 1390.

But the king had reason to admire Gower in return, which may have been a factor in his inviting the poet onto his royal barge (see Prol.*24-*92, the first recension account of the particular occasion out of which the *Confessio* grew). Earlier, in the late 1370s, Gower had attempted to address the factiousness of that “disastrous decade”⁶¹ by means of the *Vox Clamantis* (c. 1377–81), a precautionary complaint against greed and private aggrandizement among the aristocracy as well as the unruly behavior manifested by the dissidents. In the 1370s the executive government of Edward III had been attacked on all sides by often vicious factions that assailed the clerical ministers of state, impeached the king’s chamberlain and a number of lesser officials, murdered the chancellor and treasurer, and indiscriminately massacred officers of the law and minor civil servants. In the *Vox*, Gower’s attack on such behavior is forthright and carefully reasoned, albeit in Latin. The social critique of *Vox Clamantis* was read primarily by ecclesiasts and men of law, though it must also have been known to some in the royal court and perhaps even the king himself. At least, he would most likely have known something of Gower’s recounting of the terrors of the revolt in 1381.

As kings go, Richard was remarkably learned. In the prince’s adolescence Simon Burley had served as his tutor, and it is possible that Richard’s interest in books may have been instilled by Burley.⁶² The extent to which he was affiliated with or encouraged writers in English in the younger days of his rule can only be surmised. He was evidently fond of Chaucer and may have been aware, at least, of the literary interests of others. Anne Middleton, in her discussion of Thomas Usk’s *Testament of Love*, projects a literary coterie in London in the last two decades of the fourteenth century who took pride in the composing of vernacular literature and wrote for each other.⁶³ These wordcrafters — men like Chaucer, Langland,

⁶⁰ See Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, pp. 126–56, for an account of Gower as a witness to history in *VC*, and Staley, “Gower, Richard II, Henry of Derby, and the Business of Making Culture,” for discussion of *CA* in its day. For a general survey of social events and responses to the “hurling time” of the uprising see Peck, “Social Conscience and the Poets.” For a useful anthology of literature of protest from the period see Dean, ed., *Medieval English Political Writings*.

⁶¹ The phrase is McKisack’s, in *Fourteenth Century*; see p. 384, for a summary of the “disastrous” events.

⁶² See Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 15–16, and Maude V. Clarke, *Fourteenth Century Studies*, pp. 120–23. Burley’s library holdings included Egidio Colonna’s *De regimine principum*, a book akin to *VC*. See Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, pp. 18–19, on Burley’s book holdings. It is likely that Richard would have understood and appreciated the advice-to-princes genre, at which Gower was particularly adept. See also Michael J. Bennett, “Court of Richard II and the Promotion of Literature,” and Kerby-Fulton and Justice, “Langlandian Reading Circles.”

⁶³ The most thorough discussion of Gower’s relationship with his fourteenth-century audience is Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, pp. 126 ff. The genius of Middleton’s more succinct observations lies in its shifting of the audience of Gower from an aristocracy or coterie of ecclesiasts to a group of writers whose bond lies not in their social privilege but in their delight as men of letters in wordcrafting and the clerical arts of bookmaking, what Usk refers to as “perdurable letters” (3.923), those “sleight inseer[s]” who “can souke hony of the harde stone, oyle of the drye rocke” and “lyghtly fele nobley of mater in my leude ymagination closed” (*Testament of Love* 3.104–06). See Middleton,

Gower, Usk, the *Pearl-poet*, Strode, Clanvowe, Hoccleve, and later Lydgate, along with the craftsmen of dozens of other anonymous literary gems, such as *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*, *The Stanzaic Morte Arthur*, *The Storie of Asneth*, and *The Pistel of Swete Susan* — wrote with the resourcefulness of a new Renaissance mentality that defined what Coleman calls “England’s literary golden age.”⁶⁴ Gower, along with Chaucer, was at the center of the group. We know something of the genius of these writers through their comments upon each other. Their reputation, particularly that of Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, lasted into the high Renaissance of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, where they were praised for the marvelous inception in England of literary delight.

Although the degree to which the king was aware of such remarkable beginnings is unclear, he must have known something of what was happening. Gower’s Latin *Vox Clamantis* may be the work to which Richard alludes in the 1390 Prologue to the *Confessio Amantis*, when he invited Gower aboard the royal barge on the Thames to encourage him to write “Som newe thing . . . That he himself it mighte looke / After the forme of my writyng” (lines *51–*53).⁶⁵ It is after this meeting that Gower presumably began working on the *Confessio Amantis*. Whether he actually began writing the poem with the Prologue we do not know. It is conceivable that the Prologue was written later, though certainly no later than 1389. Perhaps the meeting on the Thames that the Prologue refers to occurred c. 1385, before the machinations of the Appellants began, though the remainder of the Prologue probably alludes to the later events.

Like the *Vox*, the Prologue to the *Confessio* offers a critique of the times. The critique is similar to that of the *Vox*, perhaps not so much because Gower thinks in patterns as because the times of the 1380s are so similar in their factionalism to those of the 1370s. In the years immediately after the great revolt, England could scarcely be seen to be at peace, even though the unruly bloodshed had been quelled. The punitive and restrictive laws that were enacted offered little security or satisfaction to anyone. In 1386, baronial unrest in opposition to the young king spilled over into Parliament. Anticipation of the impending attack on the king and his counselors may explain Chaucer’s resignation from his position in the Customs Office and his move out of London. Chaucer was certainly loyal to the king as he took up residence in Kent where the queen resided. He served in the Parliament of 1386 as a member from Kent, perhaps to act in support of the crown. But during the next year and the year following things did not go well for the king.⁶⁶ In November of 1387, three powerful barons — Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick — attacked Richard through his counselors. With support from Derby (Henry of Lancaster) and Mowbray, they “appealed” five of Richard’s administrators and principal supporters — Neville, De Vere, Suffolk, Tresilian, and

⁶⁴ Thomas Usk’s ‘Perdurables Letters,’ pp. 63, 68–70, 88n35, and 94–104, where she specifically considers Gower.

⁶⁵ *Medieval Readers and Writers*, p. 14.

⁶⁶ Another possibility of work by Gower known to the king might be early love poems (in French) which later were incorporated into the *Cinkante Balades*. See Macaulay, 1:lxxiii, on the history of the *Balades*.

⁶⁷ For succinct discussions of the events following 1386 and Usk’s execution, see Saul, *Richard II*, pp. 193–94, and Scott, “Chaucer and the Parliament of 1386.” For a more detailed analysis see McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 424–61. See also Stow, “Richard II in John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*,” pp. 13–24.

the Lord Mayor of London Nicholas Brembre, along with four knights of the royal household, including Thomas Usk, a man of letters friendly to Chaucer and Gower, and Simon Burley, young King Richard's friend and tutor. Suffolk and Neville fled. Tresilian and Brembre hid out in London. De Vere went to Chester to assemble an army. Burley wanted to go into hiding, but De Vere persuaded him to stand his ground firmly with the king. When De Vere and Richard's men were defeated at Radcot Bridge all were at the mercy of the Appellants. There was talk of deposing Richard, but that drastic action was opposed by Derby and Mowbray. Instead, the Appellants turned upon Richard's administration: On 3 February 1388, when the "Merciless Parliament" convened, they caught, tried, convicted, and executed Brembre and Tresilian. When Neville and Suffolk fled to the continent, the purge focused upon Burley, who was popular with Londoners and many of the barony. As Scott puts it, Gloucester, his integrity on the line, forced a conviction "on the feeble charge of 'leading Richard in his youth to form a corrupt court,' the only charge out of eight on which he could force a confirmation. All the power which Derby exerted, and even the plea of Queen Anne on her knees at Gloucester's feet, failed to deter Gloucester's vengeance, and Burley went to the scaffold in the Tower."⁶⁷ On March 4, Thomas Usk, Chaucer's friend and associate in the arts, a man doubtless known to Gower, was likewise executed.⁶⁸ Condemned as a traitor "faux and malveise," Usk was sentenced to execution in a most brutal manner. After being drawn and hanged, he was "immediately taken down and, after about thirty strokes of the axe, beheaded."⁶⁹ Brutalities such as these demonstrated the trauma of the factious behavior that Gower had written about in *Vox* and which underlie the appeal for peace in the Prologue to the *Confessio Amantis*. But where in *Vox* the focus was on all three estates, particularly the commons, here the focus is more on the first estate — the barony and the king.

After the ugly scenes of 1388, however, quieter days were in sight. In 1389 Richard declared himself free of tutelage and capable of rule as a monarch of full age. Chaucer returned to London to become Clerk of the King's Works. For the next few years there was some stability at court and its surrounding environs. After the atrocities earlier in the decade it seems that all parties were making an effort to cooperate. When Richard claimed his sovereignty the Appellants and their enforced administration withdrew quietly. Warwick retired to his estates, Arundel planned a crusade to the Holy Land, and Derby went to Prussia, where Gloucester followed. As May McKisack points out, Richard had been "carefully unprovocative," and with John of Gaunt's return from Portugal there seemed to be a "general restoration of unity."⁷⁰

Some have thought that when Richard fell at odds with the city of London in 1392 Gower turned his loyalties away from the king to embrace Henry, count of Derby, who had been one of the Appellants at the time of the Merciless Parliament. But there is no sound evidence that Gower was hostile toward the king early in the decade. The dedication to

⁶⁷ Scott, "Chaucer and the Parliament of 1386," p. 85; see also Saul, *Richard II*, p. 194.

⁶⁸ See Strohm, "Politics and Poetics," pp. 83–112, on the politics surrounding Usk's execution; Kerby-Fulton and Justice, "Langlandian Reading Circles," pp. 59–83, for discussion of Usk's intellectual confreres; and Shoaf's introduction to his edition of Usk's *Testament of Love*, pp. 5–7, for a general survey of the issues. On possible links between Usk and Gower's *VC*, see Summers, "Gower's *Vox Clamantis* and Usk's *Testament of Love*," pp. 56–59.

⁶⁹ *The Westminster Chronicle*, ed. and trans. Hector and Harvey, p. 315.

⁷⁰ *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 464–65.

Henry is certainly sincere, but the poet is careful to keep that version separate from the earlier one. The Ricardian *Confessio* continued to be recopied until the end of the century when Richard was deposed. At that point Gower clearly was disappointed in the king and makes his disappointment evident in his attack on Richard and his courtiers in the *Tripartite Chronicle*, which he appended to the *Vox Clamantis*. But many tumultuous events transpired between 1390 and 1399. The world itself seemed to have changed.

THE ROMANCE PLOT OF THE *CONFESSIO AMANTIS*

After the Prologue, Gower mutes his critique on the turmoil of the times to focus, instead, on the mental tumult of a distracted lover. In the confessional section of the text Gower turns the crisis of political division into a psychological crisis that leads to a kind of schizophrenic behavior that the poet addresses through the therapy of tale-telling. The romance plot of the *Confessio* (in effect, the dream) begins as the poet, announcing in the Latin marginal gloss that he will assume the guise of a lover, tells how he, filled with “woful care” on a “wofull day” in May, puts his “wofull chance” (1.74–75) into the hands of Fortune as he sets out for the wood. Everything around him seems happy and gay but Amans is miserable. He is unhappy

For I was further fro my love
Than erthe is fro the hevene above. (1.105–06)

from

Once in the wood the lover throws himself to the ground and wishes he were dead. Then he awakens in his pain and, filled with self-pity, cries out to Cupid and Venus, who suddenly appear before him and transfix his heart on love’s fiery dart.⁷¹

This opening description defines the lover’s disorientation and thus establishes the main considerations of the romance plot. Trapped within the contradictions of Nature and his own desire, Amans, in his fantasy, has set himself apart from the mutual pleasures of Nature’s domain in hope of enjoying singular pleasures. His main desire is to pamper his secretive emotions. The piercing of his heart by Cupid’s dart clinches his loss of natural freedom. He is trapped by his amorous confusion, and many tales will pass before he returns home from dysfunctional spiritual exile.

When Venus first addresses Amans, she asks him questions of identity typical of the consolation genre: “What art thou, sone?” (1.154, 160). Amans replies, “A caitif that lith hiere: / What wolde ye, my ladi diere?” (1.161–62). The question is reminiscent of Boethius’ *Consolation*, where Philosophy asked, “What are you?” of that narrator. The right answer is, of course, “A man.”⁷² But in his infatuation Amans has forgotten what a man should be.

⁷¹ The romance devices here — the wandering in May, the music of the birds, the woeful frustration of the lovesick persona, the encounter with Venus and Cupid, and Cupid’s fiery, captivating dart — are all found in the opening section of Guillaume de Lorris’ *Roman de la Rose*, which sets the tone for many a *fin amor* love quest in France and England well into the fifteenth century and later. The love language signifies that the narrator has become “Amans” and that the subject of the poem will henceforth be the love fantasies of Fortune’s child.

⁷² Compare Philosophy’s catechism for Boece as she attempts to identify the specifics of his illness (*Consolation* 1.pr.6): “Whethir wenestow,’ quod sche, ‘that this world be governed by foolysche happes and fortunows, or elles wenestow that ther be inne it ony governement of resoun?’” (lines 7–10, Chau-

Rather than a creature of free choice, he sees himself as a helpless, supine “caitif.” He asks to be cured of his affliction, but Venus says:

“Tell thi maladie:
 What is thi sor of which thou pleignest?
 Ne hyd it noght, for if thou feignest,
 I can do thee no medicine.”⁷³ (1.164–67)

*sorrow; complain
 hide the truth
 help you with*

Her question is reminiscent of Philosophy’s request that Boethius bare his wound by reiterating his illness truthfully (see *Consolation*, 1.pr.4). But Venus is no Dame Prudence or Lady Philosophy. Her intention is quite the opposite, her demands a parody of Philosophy’s. Her motives are defensive and courtly, based on suspicion rather than mutual trust. She has learned how to deal with “[f]aitours” (1.174). In her world nobody trusts anybody. Let Amans explain his intentions!

Gower’s use of confession as a device for developing his argument is a felicitous choice, “a master-stroke which organizes the whole of Gower’s material,” C. S. Lewis observes.⁷⁴ The device opens limitless possibilities for variety and dramatic effects. But Gower did not choose the device for literary reasons alone. Confession, as Gower understood it, is an act of self-discovery. It is for him what psychoanalysis is for us. Confession begins with a review of experience in an effort to find out why it is that we are the way we are, in order that we may ultimately reintegrate our minds and emotions. “You have forgotten what you are” (see note 61), Philosophy tells Boethius: Amans’ problem is precisely the same. Having displaced his affection for the commonweal with a lover’s doting alienation, he is not only far from his heart’s desire, but even uncertain of what that desire is. Venus sends him to a confessor named Genius, who will become his attendant spirit. To Genius he appeals:

“I prai thee let me noght mistime
 Mi schrifte, for I am destourbed
 In al myn herte, and so contourbed,
 That I ne may my wittes gete,
 So schal I moche thing forgete.
 Bot if thou wolt my schrifte oppose
 Fro point to point, thanne, I suppose,
 Ther schal nothing be left behinde.

*confession
 perturbed*

*question me about my confession
 left unexamined*

cer’s translation). Boece is unable to answer the question reasonably, which brings Philosophy to her next crucial move: “Remembrestow that thou art a man?” (lines 55–56). When the disconsolate Boece stumbles on his definition of what a man is Philosophy knows where to begin her therapy: “Now woot I, quod sche, ‘other cause of thi maladye, and that ryght greet: thou hast left for to knownen thyselfe what thou art” (lines 68–70).

⁷³ Venus raises an important consideration in the seeking of counsel, namely, that the suppliant tell his tale truthfully: otherwise the adviser cannot address the problem accurately. Compare The Tale of Melibee, where Dame Prudence insists that for the counsel to be of value the suppliant must tell all truthfully. Contrast the summoner in The Friar’s Tale, who boasts that he lies to his confessor so that he can get away with whatever he wants.

⁷⁴ Lewis goes on to suggest that “the confession in the *Roman de la Rose* taught Gower nothing except, possibly, the name and office of Genius.” The confessional device “is, as far as I know, entirely Gower’s own and he has seldom received full credit for it” (*Allegory of Love*, p. 200n).

Bot now my wittes ben so blinde,
That I ne can miselven teche." (1.220–29)

Confessing, like tale-telling, is an exercise in timing. Given the confusion amidst temporarities of earth, mistiming is virtually inevitable. But at least his intention is good, and that is no small matter. Indeed, by the end of the poem nothing will be left behind: Genius, "with his wordes debonaire" (1.231), will search out the circumstances of Amans' soul, and through his questions redefine man in his rightful historical environment so that Amans may remember what he is and forget what he is not.

Amans' search for repose is, of course, analogous to England's search for peace and just administration. To regain his psychological homeland he must reclaim within himself each of the three estates. First he must reclaim his "commons," that is to say, his emotions which labor helps to regulate. The discussion on labor (Book 4.2363–2700) dwells mainly on alchemy and the writings of great men of letters. Amans does not take well to Genius' suggestion that he should study Ovid if he wants advice on dealing with his passion. He says he will heed no suggestions about giving up his lady. In the conclusion, after a long labor of penance, he changes his attitude, however, and, in Book 8, it is Ovid and the other men of letters who aid him in *his* final metamorphosis. Then a transformation as remarkable as any alchemy takes place, as we shall see, when Venus fixes up his kidneys (seat of the passions).

The discussion pertaining to the second estate (Book 5.729–1970) is more involved. Significantly Amans himself asks for instruction in the history of religions. His training begins with an outline of the pagan gods, then of Judaism, and then of Christianity. The sequence delineates the steps toward true revelation. That most of the exposition deals with the pagan deities is understandable if we keep in mind that the pagan world is simply the mutable world in which men spend most of their time. The tone of this portion of the poem is light, as Gower enjoys the incongruity of having Genius mock his godly accomplices, the classical deities. For Amans to discover objectively the ridiculousness of the pagan gods would be a crucial step toward recognizing the ridiculousness of his own pagan behavior as he attempts to do homage to Venus. But the lesson does not soak in yet. Only in the Epilogue, after he has recognized the old man in himself, does he get beyond pagan behavior to reinstate intelligently his second estate.

The hardest thing for the disconsolate rebel to accept is responsibility for his first estate, and, indeed, the instruction of Amans in the first estate (Book 7) provides the climax to the exposition, where Amans himself, out of curiosity, requests the discussion. The point seems to be that he has become sufficiently engaged in what Genius has to say to forget momentarily his infatuation. In Book 7 Genius' opening account of the universe defines the boundaries of the domain over which Amans should be king by natural right, and the discussion of man defines the rational creature Amans has forgotten. The ethical generalizations on Truth, Liberality, Justice, Pity, and Chastity define positive means for dealing with cupidity once Amans has realized what cupidity is. They provide the means through which a person cares for his soul. As Genius notes near the end of the poem:

For conseil passeth alle thing
To him which thenkth to ben a king;
And every man for his partie
A kingdom hath to justefie,
That is to sein his oghne dom.
If he misreule that kingdom,

domain (judgment, head)

He lest himself, and that is more
Than if he loste schip and ore
And al the worldes good withal:
For what man that in special
Hath noght himself, he hath noght elles,
No mor the perles than the schelles. (8.2109–20)

With the restoration of Amans' sense of right rule the romance comes to its conclusion.

THE TALES OF BOOK ONE

Several of the most memorable stories of the *Confessio* are found in Book 1. These tales, coming as they do immediately after Gower's disquisition on memory and the evils of forgetfulness, exemplify admirably Gower's idea of tales that "reporte and holde," to borrow the Pardoner's phrase, as a momentary stay against the "lewedness" of the post-lapsarian world. Book 1 is devoted to Pride and is arranged around that sin's five subdivisions — Hypocrisy, Murmur and Complaint, Presumption, Boasting, and Vain Glory.⁷⁵ Throughout the book Gower's remarkable powers of invention are evident in the variety of tales he tells — from short exempla like the Tale of Aspidis (lines 463–80) to tales of complex moral choice like the Tale of Mundus and Paulina, the Tale of Florent, the Trump of Death, the Tale of Albinus and Rosemund, or the Tale of Three Questions. One cannot help but be captivated by the stark composure of the Tale of Mundus and Paulina (lines 761–1059), a seduction narrative exposing Hypocrisy, where the deceitful Mundus (whose name *could* mean "pure," but ultimately proves to be a signifier of the corruption of the "world"),⁷⁶ under the sneaky posture of divine guide, attempts to destroy the innocent Paulina.⁷⁷ Even though she, with the assent of her husband, gives her body to the "god's" use (or thinks that she has done), she is the one who remains pure, despite the fact that she has been deceitfully dealt with by a corrupt man. The storyline is poignantly modulated with dramatic irony to demonstrate the power of family and community solidarity to underscore the point that innocence can be corrupted only by thought, not the hypocritical conniver.

The Tale of Florent (lines 1407–1861) is a loathly hag narrative, a likely source for Chaucer's Wife of Bath's Tale.⁷⁸ In this tale Genius claims to be focusing on the evils of Murmur and Complaint, though the crux of the plot hinges upon the virtue of being true

⁷⁵ These are the five subdivisions of Pride that Gower had outlined in the *Mirour de l'Omme*. The first four books of *CA* follow the arrangement of sin in the earlier poem; the last four vary the pattern extensively.

⁷⁶ For discussion of the pun on *mundus*:pure and *mundus*:world, see Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, pp. 41–45.

⁷⁷ For an unusual presentation of the tale see Hines, *Fabliau in English*, p. 215, who, in consideration of exempla and the fabliau, discusses fabliau components in the Tale of Mundus and Paulina. The tone of Gower's poem is, of course, altogether different from that of most fabliaux. That is, I do not think Gower means it as a joke, despite the peculiar sexual behavior.

⁷⁸ Gower wrote the tale sometime between 1386 and 1390. The Wife of Bath's Tale was most likely written after 1392 as part of that creative outburst that produced what Kittredge and others called "the marriage group."

to one's word.⁷⁹ Truth requires that one accept the responsibilities of one's decisions. Like the Tale of Mundus and Paulina, the Tale of Florent explores proper governance of the will. Neither Paulina nor Florent will, like Amans, fall captive to some absurd passion in an obscure wood through some misguided abuse of their wills, even though accidents beyond their ken befall them. In the story a young knight named Florent makes his way along a tortuous pathway defined by uncertainties. At the outset he seeks adventures in the western marches of England. Fortune leads him into a conflict in which he is "be strengthe take" (1.1423) and imprisoned in a castle. In the fighting he unfortunately slays Brachus, the son and heir of the "capitain" of the region (1.1419–30). The mother and grandmother of Brachus murmur and complain, demanding revenge, but fear that in exacting it they will incur the wrath of the emperor, to whom Florent is of "cousinage" (1.1437).⁸⁰ So they plan to entrap Florent through a cleverly contrived test of his character. Knowing that Florent is renowned as a knight who is true to his word, they plot to get him to commit himself to answering a question that he cannot understand. This compulsion to answer the unanswerable characterizes many of Gower's stories, thereby epitomizing the dilemma that Gower sees at the root of human need. If Florent is true to his word and returns without the answer, they can destroy him by law without fear of reprisal from the emperor. If he is false and does not return to his sentencing, then he will have destroyed himself by being untrue. For Gower, the issue here is not that Florent does not know the answer through his own cognizance — that had been true of Paulina, as well. Rather, the concern lies in *how* he deals with a problem that exceeds his grasp. A tale is by definition a test — a tally-taking — whether for the participants in the plot or the reader attempting to understand it. Every tale is paradigmatically a testing of the will. Florent's enemies have designs on his life. They imagine that he will fail to answer the impossible question and thus forfeit his life. The irony is that in Gower's moral scheme the old queen who puts the question to him is quite right: the only way he *can* be destroyed is by his own choice. The queen is wrong only insofar as she imagines that she can destroy him through subtle aggression. Florent is saved more by his integrity than by the queen's error or the old hag's answer. The hag knows this well and, in turn, counts upon his integrity for her own survival, just as he comes to count upon hers.

The grandame's test requires that Florent reveal what it is that women most desire. He searches for a year and is unable to discover an answer. On his return to his doom, filled with uncertainty, he meets a loathly hag whose hideousness is described. She tells him that she can supply the answer if he will agree to marry her. He at first refuses but then, thinking that she is old and cannot live long, agrees. She gives him the answer:

That thou schalt seie, upon this molde	<i>earth</i>
That alle wommen lievest wolde	<i>would most desire</i>
Be soverein of mannes love:	<i>To be</i>

⁷⁹ See Echard, "With Carmen's Help," pp. 32–34, on ambiguities of voicing in the tales of Florent and Albinus and Rosemond as revealed by various manuscript glosses. Echard demonstrates that the glosses, but often the text as well, deliberately displace the focus of the argument, particularly with regard to nature.

⁸⁰ Perhaps the point here supports the moral dimension of the tale, in that, in Christian ideology, all children of God hold "cousinage" to the "emperor" (i.e., to God, the ultimate authority and watchman). How God's kingship functions, however, is always an unknown. In this tale the key to familial solidarity lies in the keeping of one's word, which is the end toward which the moral speaks.

For what womman is so above,
 Sche hath, as who seith, al hire wille;
 And elles may sche noght fulfille
 What thing hir were lievest have. (1.1607–13)

*that woman [who] is thus of a higher rank
 her desire
 For otherwise
 she would most desire to have*

Armed with the answer he returns to the marches and is granted, perforce, his freedom. But being a man true to his word he is scarcely free, for, being now subcontracted,⁸¹ he must return to the wood where he met the hag and fetch her to be his wife. They are married and he, that night, must perform his marriage duties. When he turns toward her in bed he sees a lovely woman of “eyhtetiene wynter age” (1.1803). Now, in the presence of beauty, he is eager to embrace, but she tells him that he must constrain his will and choose whether he would have her fair by night or by day. He leaves the choice to her and learns that in granting her sovereignty of choice he has rid her of a curse placed upon her by a hateful stepmother. She is, in truth, the daughter of the king of Sicily who is now, through Florent’s obedience to his word, released from the curse. Thus, they live long and happily in joy together.

No summary can do justice to the wit of Gower’s narrative — its efficiency of plot, its amusing descriptions, the playful tone in which the dilemmas of Florent are cast, and the skill with which Genius has recast a tale that “clerkes . . . this chance herde” (1.1856) and wrote down “in evidence” (1.1857). The narrative is very different from the Wife of Bath’s more complexly narrated version of the story. But, given the demands of confessional interchange that Gower has established, the Tale of Florent is well-suited to its task. As in the case of Mundus and Paulina, personal and community welfare are inextricably interconnected. The true of heart bypass the hypocrite and murmur. Despite the uncertainties of the fallen universe the community somehow remains coherent.

The Trump of Death, a tale exemplifying Presumption (Surquidry), differs in tone from the tales of Florent and of Mundus and Paulina, but shares similar concerns. Like the latter, its plot is austere. But it is deliberately more single-dimensional, with sharp focus on the chastening power of death. Like Mundus, the Trump of Death has a villain, but this time the villain is a member of the family — the king’s brother, who does not, in fact, intend to be villainous. Instead of being motivated by lust, his motivation is a kind of presumptuous jealousy. The brother sees himself as superior to most of humankind, and when the king, upon meeting two ancient and decrepit pilgrims, gets down from his royal chair, embraces them hand and foot, and gives them gifts, the self-righteous brother feels humiliated that his kinsman would so abase himself. He complains that the king has dishonored the royal family by such behavior. The king, in return, teaches his proud brother a lesson in humility. He sends the Trump of Death to his kinsman’s house.⁸² The brother knows that once the

⁸¹ This problem of being caught between contracts and subcontracts is a favorite issue in Middle English romances. See, for example, *Amis and Amiloun* and *Sir Amadace* for extreme situations, though double contracts, often in conflict with each other, show up in *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnelle*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*, *Athelstan*, *Sir Degaré*, and *Havelok the Dane*, to name a few. The will is perpetually subcontracted and required to make decisions without having the necessary information to differentiate between commitments. Ever since the serpent’s subcontracting of Eve in the Garden of Eden, humankind is trapped by the need to choose amidst conditions that are not understood, and then be subjected to the necessities of consequence.

⁸² The tale incorporates admirably a larger analogue wherein God, King of the Universe, having humbled himself by descending from his royal seat in carnal form, still permits Death to continue his

trumpet has sounded there is no reprise for him or his family. They all must die. The brother puts sackcloth on himself and his family and goes barefoot to the king to plead for his life. The king replies that when he (the king) saw the two pilgrims he was so reminded of his own death that he had honored them by bowing before them. Now it is the proud brother who brings “disgrace” to the household, as is evident by his going “despuiled [naked] thurgh the toun,” dragging his wife and children with him “In sihte of alle men aboute” (1.2218–21). Were he wise, he would know that death awaits every person. Dignity resides only among the humble. I earlier referred to the tale as single-dimensional. That is its strength. As an exemplum against Surquidry the tale focuses unremittingly on presumption; there is little development of character except as it pertains to the crime. The pace is swift, the conclusion illustrious. The king leaves the brother to his own fate, albeit now chastened by the king’s judgment upon him.

The Tale of Albinus and Rosemund (1.2459–2661), a tale of choice and its inevitable consequences, illustrates the sin of Boasting (Avantance). Albinus, king of Lombardy, defeats Gurmond, king of the Geptes. He smites off Gurmond’s head and makes an ornate drinking cup of the skull. He then marries Gurmond’s daughter, Rosemunde, “A fair, a freissh, a lusti on [one]” (1.2483). She proves to be a loving wife, until Venus “In al the hoteste of here [their] love” (1.2492) turns her wheel.⁸³ Albinus invites all his worthy knights to dinner and serves Rosemund from the cup: “Drink with thi fader,” he orders (1.2551), and Rosemund drinks. When Albinus then boasts of what he has done, she feigns illness and withdraws, plotting the destruction of her boastful husband. Her maid Glodeside has taken Helmage, the king’s butler, as her lover. Rosemund slips into her maid’s bed, and when Helmage comes to “kepe his observance” (1.2605) Rosemund reveals herself and blackmails him into poisoning the king. The three then steal away to Ravenna, where the Duke, learning of Albinus’ death, poisons all three of the fugitives. Like the Trump of Death, this tale moves forward swiftly and irrevocably. The king’s boastful scorn destroys them all, as one presumption leads to another.

Book 1 ends with a summary narrative, the Tale of the Three Questions, a very complex story in contrast to the Trump of Death or the Punishment of Nebuchadnezzar discussed earlier; it is a story designed to tie all the subdivisions of Pride into a single, compelling narrative. As in the Tale of Mundus and Paulina, the Trump of Death, and the Tale of Albinus and Rosemund, the tale focuses on familial rapport — where one kind of gendered relationship (here a father and daughter) leads to another (husband and wife). The presentation of the daughter, upon whose wisdom the welfare of the whole family — and kingdom — depends, is truly remarkable. The wise Peronelle (for so she is named at the end, 1.3396) provides the pivotal wit that makes possible a felicitous conclusion. There is no villain in this tale. But there are many kinds of boundaries that are pressed to their limits, only to dissolve through verbal play. The antagonists are two men who take pride in their learning. Both are distinctly limited by their intellectual achievements. The one is the king, who rightly becomes learned (a good thing in a king, as Richard himself might attest), except that he becomes so enamored of his learning that he challenges all comers in the kingdom to contests of wit, which he, of course,

ways to serve as a reminder against pride. Humility, rather than pride, is the surest way of preparing for Death’s trump.

⁸³ The turning of the wheel is normally the prerogative of Dame Fortune. Here Gower links Fortune’s wheel to Venus, who “kepþ the blinde whel” (line 2490) and turns it so that lovers fall (line 2493).

always wins. The other is a knight who, in solving one of the king's problems, makes the king envious and determined to destroy his rival for breach of decorum (i.e., kings are supposed to win). The king poses three difficult questions; the knight must answer all three within three weeks or be put to death. The questions seem unsolvable and, in grief, the knight returns to his home, certain that his lot is hopeless. When his fourteen-year-old daughter, whom he has trained in logic, asks if she may stand in for him, he, mainly because of pride in his fatherly office, refuses: no man would be foolish enough to put his life in the hands of his daughter. But she insists that there are some answers a woman can give that a man cannot (compare the Tale of Florent). She then thoughtfully solves all three of the riddles in the presence of the king, who is so impressed with her reasoning that he, being a bachelor himself, allows that he would wed her were she not a commoner. Nonetheless, he will give her one wish. Courteously, she asks nothing for herself, but wishes that her father, who has suffered so painfully for his presumption, be made a peer. The king immediately bestows a title upon him, whereupon the daughter then observes that the one obstacle between herself and the king has been removed — her father is a nobleman. The king, pleased with her wit, weds her.

This charming tale, perhaps the most popular of all tales in the *Confessio*,⁸⁴ celebrates wit, intellect, and familial love, which answer all the subdivisions of Pride to the mutual satisfaction of the whole community. It celebrates, moreover, the integrity of women, women with voices. All the disconcerting problems are solved through wordplay, wordplay that dissolves and re-establishes new boundaries that both contain and liberate people. Gower's heroes and heroines are perpetually challenged by life's riddles. In the relativity of their responses lies their only hope. The tale establishes a paradigm that defines for Gower the value of a well-disposed will in the semantics of salvation. As a summary tale, the Tale of the Three Questions is most akin to another summary tale, the Tale of Apollonius in Book 8, which serves as a romance epitome of the whole poem.

BOOK 8, THE TALE OF APOLLONIUS, AND THE CONCLUSION

The conclusion to the *Confessio* has afforded readers a great deal of difficulty. Book 8 poses four separate problems: 1) the discussion of incest; 2) the Tale of Apollonius; 3) the concluding sequence of the romance itself; and 4) the Epilogue. As Book 8 begins the reader is confronted with the question of why Gower does not deal with the seventh sin (Lechery) as he dealt with the other six. In Book 1 Genius had said he would exorcise Amans of all seven sins, but now, instead of discussing Lechery and its various servants (*Mirour de l'Omme* names five: *fornicioun, stupre, avolterie, incest, and fodelit*), he speaks briefly of the laws governing marriage, then discusses incest, and that is all. C. S. Lewis has suggested that Genius cannot speak of the sins of Venus since he is her priest. It is true that in Book 5 Genius tried to avoid talking about Venus when he described the Greek gods, but when he was specifically called upon to do so he showed little inhibition and minced no words. There may be other reasons for the apparent alteration of his plan as well.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ In the fifteenth century, the Tale of the Three Questions is the most anthologized tale from *CA*, appearing apart from the rest of the poem in five manuscripts. See Edwards, "Selection and Subversion," pp. 259–66.

⁸⁵ See the explanatory notes to Book 8 of *CA* for detailed discussion on the issues of incest both in the poem and as an ethical and social problem.

First, a technical problem. In treating other sins, Genius had discussed each as a category of behavior and then (usually) had applied each to love. Thus many of the preceding tales deal with lechery. By Book 8 Genius has already told stories about fornication, adultery, and infatuation of various sorts. He has also told tales of incest. Why then would he single out incest as his final moral category for discussion? The answer may lie in the peculiar relationship of that vice to the illness of Amans.

Medieval writers commonly associated self-love and singular profit with incest. In *Roman de la Rose*, for example, the dreamer's self-indulgence, at first defined by Guillame de Lorris as Narcissism, is enlarged upon by Jean de Meun in the Pygmalion story where the narcissistic lover falls so greatly in love with his creation that consummation occurs, the progeny of which continues in incestuous love when Cinyrus and Myrrha beget Adonis. The term *incest* comes from Latin *in-* (not) *castus* (chaste); it commonly designated unnatural spiritual, as well as sexual, union. Its antidote, in the *Mirour*, at least, is Continence. Of all sins it pre-eminently typifies crime against family and thus against community. It is implied, then, in the selfishness of all sins. In fact, the word the Patristic Fathers generally used for sin — *cupiditas* — originates in the myth of Cupid, who incestuously loved his mother as if he were blind, the aftereffect being indeed loss of his wits. But the best illustration of this attitude towards incest may be found in Gower's own *Mirour de l'Omme*. That poem begins with an allegorical genealogy of Sin. She and all her unnatural brood are the products of incest. Born of Satan's selfish love, Sin is seduced by her father. She gives birth to Death, who in turn incestuously loves his mother, the get of this couple being the seven sins. Satan then takes his grandchildren and begets on them thirty-five subspecies of Sin. These are no true marriages: all are unnatural and motivated incestuously by lechery. Instead of creating harmony, they bring division of what should not be divided. We are reminded of the formula in the Prologue to the *Confessio*, where Sin is mother of division and division the mother of confusion.

Such an interpretation of incest is supported in the text of the *Confessio* itself. At the end of Book 7, after Genius finishes telling of the instruction of kings, Amans says his heart is still restless. He wonders if something pertaining to love has been "forgete or left behind" (7.5425). Genius acknowledges that one thing remains "Thi schrifte for to make plein" (7.5431) and that is to speak "Of love which is unavised" (7.5433). After a Latin epigram condemning the treachery of Venus' love, Genius summarizes the creation story, the fall of Lucifer, and the generations of humankind from Adam. His point is to explain how marriage laws developed and to show where men should place their love. Rather than isolating incest as a particular species of lechery Genius seems mainly concerned with exploring connotations. He speaks of "unavised" love, "mistimed" love, and "unkynde" love, and in the epigram to the story of Apollonius he speaks of excessive and immoderate love, though never does he specifically use the word incest. Although Genius is ostensibly talking about incest, and although Amans understands him only in its narrower sense, all of his generalizations seem designed to encourage the reader to look on this sin as an epitome of the selfish and unnatural qualities of cupidinous love in general. Two circumlocutions stand out particularly in this regard. Genius objects to men who passionately "taken wher thei take may" (8.152) and, again, to a man who knows no good "Bot takth what thing comth next to honde" (8.163). Here the focus is clearly on nearsighted love. After he has told the story of Apollonius, Genius observes that instead of taking whatever love is close at hand, men should "Tak love where it mai noght faile" (8.2086). His point seems to be that Amans should stop feeding morosely on his emotions and look to something more important.

The story of Apollonius dramatizes this idea superbly. Antiochus is the man who indulges himself myopically, taking where he may what is near at hand. But the effects are terrible. He becomes worse than a beast:

The wylde fader thus devoureth
 His oghne fleiss, which non socoureth,
 And that was cause of mochel care. (8.309–11) *whom no one helps*

Having abandoned his natural office of father, he corrupts his other office, that of king, and adjusts laws to satisfy his foolish desire. To avoid dealing with his inner anarchy he becomes a tyrant, slays his daughter's natural suitors, and puts their heads on the town gates. Sin breeds sin: “with al his pride” (8.2004), he slothfully ignores his natural responsibilities (“Him thoghte that it was no sinne,” 8.346), lecherously gluts himself on his own flesh, enviously hides his daughter from other men, and then even becomes a murderer “full of rancour and of ire” (8.500). Ultimately he becomes too “unkynde,” and God strikes him down with lightning.

Apollonius, on the other hand, shows what it means “to love in good manere” (8.2010). He fulfills admirably Genius’ five points of policy (Truth, Liberality, Justice, Pity, Chastity) which should govern a king’s behavior (see 7.1711–5397). He adheres to Truth, accepting responsibilities and fulfilling promises. He exemplifies Liberality in providing wheat for the starving people of Tharse and in properly rewarding the physician Cerymon for saving his wife. He understands the importance of Justice and brings wicked Dionise and Strangulio to trial according to the laws of their own land. He has Pity on the people of Tharse, first in giving them food and then in respecting their laws and judgment when their king has offended him. And he adheres to Chastity, not only in the winning of his wife and in the care of himself and her memory after her supposed death, but also in the care of his daughter. He is confronted with a situation like that which confronted Antiochus. When Thaise sings to him to woo him from his melancholy, he feels strong love for her. But he does not impose on her. Rather than taking what is near at hand and thus losing his daughter, as Antiochus did, he recovers his daughter by loving chastely. Diana rewards him for his chastity by enabling him to recover his wife. He in no way behaves *incaste*.

Apollonius’ story is admirably suited to the conclusion of the *Confessio*. In addition to exemplifying good kingship and condemning incontinence, its plot provides a model for Amans at the end of his quest. Apollonius is a lover in exile who also is trying to regain his homeland. Fortune is a most bitter enemy, pursuing him with storms and assassins, stripping him of friends and possessions. She denies him his identity at every turn, making him a prince without a country, a husband without a wife, and a father without a child. Even so, he maintains his integrity. Although driven to the brink of despair, so far in fact that like Saul he strikes out, he recovers with the aid of his daughter. Thaise is his good seed. Like her father she too is victimized by Fortune, narrowly escaping murder only to end up in a brothel. But she, like her father, remembers her skill in music and science to save herself and also advance the community. Both she and Apollonius have learned to maintain their spiritual estates. The tale thus ends on a note of joy after woe: Apollonius finally achieves a happy homecoming. No more exile for him. He becomes king of all the lands he attended, and governs them “of on [one] assent” (8.1990).

Amans’ homecoming differs from Apollonius’ in that his exile is a spiritual exile. He has learned from Genius’ examples, but at the same time he has not learned. He misses the

point of Apollonius' story, though he does now ask directly for advice. He is at least that much closer to Truth. He speaks plainly: "teche [me] / What is my beste, as for an ende" (8.2058–59). Genius tells him to seek love which may not fail; let trifles be. He calls Amans' love sinful and says he should free himself before it is too late:

"Yit is it time to withdrawe,
And set thin herte under that lawe,
The which of reson is governed
And noght of will. And to be lerned,
Ensamples thou hast many on
Of now and ek of time gon,
That every lust is bot a while;
And who that wole himself beguile,
He may the rathere be deceived." (8.2133–41)

instructed
many a one
passing moment
sooner

But Genius insists that Amans must make the decision himself; he can only show the way. He then poses his last question, the ultimate question of Christian humanism: "Now ches if thou wolt live or deie" (8.2148).

But Amans is simply not ready to make that choice. Although the preliminary questions have been asked and illustrated, their meaning has not yet come home. Again he dodges to protect his emotions. His defense is that characteristic "but you don't understand" of lovers:

Mi wo to you is bot a game,
That fielen noght of that I fiele. (8.2152–53)

feel

He wants sympathy. Yet at the same time he begins to realize rationally that Genius' advice makes sense. As he starts using reason the point of view of the poem shifts. Instead of dialogue and debate between Genius and Amans, we now have first-person narration.⁸⁶ The effect is to make the debate seem to be going on within Amans, while at the same time he seems to be looking down at himself:

Tho was betwen mi prest and me
Debat and gret perplexeté:
Mi resoun understod him wel,
And knew it was soth everydel
That he hath seid, bot noght forthi
Mi will hath nothing set therby.
For techinge of so wis a port
Is unto love of no despert;
Yit myhte nevere man beholde
Reson, wher love was withholde;
Thei be noght of o governance. (8.2189–99)

Conflict
altogether true
What; not even so
will (desire)
wise a bearing
delight
the same (one)

⁸⁶ It is perhaps noteworthy that Chaucer likewise uses the shift to first person in the conclusion to his *Canterbury Tales*, where, from the Prologue to The Canon Yeoman's Tale on, he uses first-person narrative in the Prologues and Retraction. As in Gower, Chaucer seems to be manipulating voice so that he moves back into the voice not simply of Geoffrey but of the poet himself and asks for prayers on his behalf in the Retraction as he puts fiction aside to consider more personal issues.

In this divided state of mind, Amans begs Genius to present his supplication to Venus. Genius agrees. Then Amans, quite objectively, tells how he sat upon a green and wrote with tears instead of ink his appeal. The appeal itself is clearly by a man “noght of o [one] governance” (line 2199): one voice pleads to Nature for release from love’s cruelty, and the other pleads to Venus for satisfaction. Yet the effect of his writing is to formalize his dissatisfaction so that he can cope with it. The complaint stands sharply in contrast to his emotional outburst in Book 1 when Venus first appeared. Although Reason does not yet hold sway, she is at least present. His analysis of his malady is accurate, and although his desires are still at odds with his analysis, he is beginning, in these twelve stanzas of rhyme royal, to impose order on them.

The effect of Amans’ prayer is immediate. Venus appears less than a mile away.⁸⁷ Again she asks, this time in mockery, who he is. “John Gower” (line 2321), he responds. The point here is not to let the world know who wrote the poem. Rather, it marks a new beginning. Amans has come a long way from “A caitif that lith hiere” (1.161). His homeland has been identified; what remains is the repossession. Venus acknowledges the schizophrenic intention of Amans’ “bille” (8.2324 ff.) but offers no help. She leaves the dispute to Amans and Nature. Amans must reconcile himself with Nature or be refused any consolation. Gower cleverly has Amans recount her words in retrospect as he ponders her whimsical rejection of his appeal. It is he who acknowledges, now with keen awareness, that “olde grisel is no fole” (8.2407). Her only counsel is “Remembre wel hou thou art old” (8.2439). That acknowledgment causes Amans to faint, which brings him to the final step in his re-education.

In his swoon Amans envisions a parliament of lovers. These lovers are those whose stories Genius has just told. They pass in review before him — first those caught up in the heat of their desire, then those betrayed by love who are in sorrow. In contrast he sees the four constant women whose example of goodness the whole world remembers. This vision designates Amans’ recognition of the moral implications of what he has learned. In this act of remembrance he incorporates the meaning of the past into himself. The scene shifts from the recollection of the examples from history to the historians themselves. Old Age approaches Venus, accompanied by his train of lovers — David, Aristotle, Virgil, Plato, “Sortes,” and Ovid. These authors of the past pray for Amans’ release. It is their prayer which is answered: Cupid removes the fiery dart. The wisdom of antiquity answers the needs of the present, once the present understands through its own experience. It is a matter of community regained.

The rest seems simple. As Amans comes out of his trance Venus places an ointment on his heart, his temples, and his kidneys, implying the restitution of his three estates (the kingdom of his soul, the sanctuary of his intelligence, and the residence of his passions). She also gives him a mirror that he might recognize the old man he has become. This time he does not swoon. He looks directly at himself, reason returns, and he is made “sobre and hol ynowh” (8.2869). Venus laughs at him and asks him what love was. Amans cannot answer: “be my trouthe I knew him noght” (8.2875). His fantasy has gone so far from him that it is as if Cupid had never been.

⁸⁷ The point here is another instance of Gower’s insight into the relationship of time and space. When the right time is discovered space collapses. Compare Chaucer’s *Book of the Duchess* where, after the long ordeal in the woods exploring the black knight’s unconsolability, the wood, in an instant, disappears, and the “long castel” appears “from us but a lyte” (lines 1318, 1317), now that the knight has faced his grief and seen it through “be my trouthe” (line 1309). The dreamer has found the moment that he can now move “homwarde” (line 1315).

Genius gives Amans absolution — a “peire of bedes” (line 2904), with the motto *Por reposer* — and Venus tells him to return to his books, where moral virtue dwells.⁸⁸ Then she returns to the stars. Amans is on his own. For a brief but telling moment he stands in amazement:⁸⁹ has all his labor, all his lust come to this — an old man and some beads? Then, like Troilus at the end of his romance, he smiles at it all. The smile is the final clue to his release. In that moment,

Homward a softe pas y wente,
Wher that with al myn hol entente
Upon the poynt that y am schryve
I thenke bidde whil y live. (8.2967–70)

confessed (absolved)
pray

This phase of the reiteration is complete: Amans has become “John Gower,” poet. In that role he does what he can do — pray for the welfare of his other self, the kingdom of England.

The concluding sequences in the two main versions of the poem are quite different,⁹⁰ yet at the same time similar. In the 1390 Ricardian version, after an amusing admonition by Venus to Chaucer “upon his latere age” that he should leave off serving Venus in verse since the “lond fulfil is overal” with such “testament[s] of love” (8.*2941–*55),⁹¹ the poet prays that the king “Richard by name the secounde” (8.*2987) be blessed by God the creator; like Chaucer in “Lak of Stedfastnesse,” he exhorts the king to have pity on the people and rule in justice, peace, and accord. He then presents his poem to Richard, and, “feble and old” (8.*3070), makes his peace with the world — “Whan game is best, is best to leve” (8.*3087). In the Lancastrian ending the admonition to Chaucer is deleted and replaced by an eloquent prayer for the State of England. The prayer serves as a kind of Epilogue to the poem and grows quite naturally out of the romance plot, as Gower quite brilliantly fuses his larger social theme with Amans’ story. This prayer for England’s welfare stands in striking contrast to the infatuated pleas of Amans before he was shriven. Having regained his sense of kingdom Gower prays, now as poet, for common profit, right use of memory, and good governance.

For if men takyn remembrance
What is to live in unité,
Ther ys no staat in his degree
That noughe to desire pes (8.2988–91)

take notice

⁸⁸ The instruction to return to his books is reminiscent of Cupid’s command to Geoffrey at the end of the Prologue to *LGW* F.556, 578.

⁸⁹ The dreamer’s awakening in amazement is a prominent feature of dream visions and visionary poems like *CA* where the poet, returning to his first voice, is left to pick up the pieces as he returns home to everyday duties. Compare the conclusions to *Pearl*, *The Book of the Duchess*, and *The Parliament of the Three Ages*.

⁹⁰ Perhaps the best comparison of the two endings is that of Echard, “Pre-Texts.”

⁹¹ The phrase “testament of love” seems to echo the title given to Usk’s Boethian apology that he wrote in prison while awaiting execution. Middleton (“Thomas Usk’s ‘Perdurabile Letters,’” p. 88n35) argues persuasively that the phrase indirectly praises Usk and that Gower certainly knew Usk’s treatise. See also Usk, *Testament of Love*, ed. Shoaf, p. 12.

It is a heartfelt desire for peace after the deep social wounds of the 1380s, a desire that was already by 1392 becoming threatened once again and would ultimately be utterly frustrated as the century came to its conclusion with the overthrow and execution of the king. In response to Richard's heavy-handed treatment of Henry by exiling him and confiscating his estates, Gower, like many others in England, turned against Richard. The king's irresponsible behavior seemed to annihilate the peace and accord Gower so desired. It was as if the events of time were once again demonstrating the wisdom of Gower's prophetic vision.

MANUSCRIPTS OF *CONFESSIO AMANTIS*

John Fisher lists and classifies forty-nine manuscripts of the *Confessio Amantis*, with an additional eight manuscripts which include excerpts from the poem.⁹² The manuscripts are usually divided into three versions (recensions). The first recension was probably composed between 1386 and 1390. Thirty-two of the manuscripts fall into this category. After 1390 Gower continued working on the poem, adding lines and tales. Seven manuscripts fall into this category, which is sometimes referred to as the second recension. In 1392 Gower revised a first recension manuscript, changing the dedication of the poem from Richard II to Henry, count of Derby (later Henry IV). This version changes the account of his meeting Richard on the Thames, substituting instead verses in praise of England. It also deletes an encomium on Chaucer. Ten manuscripts survive that are based on the 1392 revision, referred to as the third recension.⁹³ A Spanish translation (dated 1400) which purports to be based upon a Portuguese translation of the poem survives in a single manuscript. I have consulted the following manuscripts in composing this volume:

- Fairfax 3. Bodleian Library 3883. Late-fourteenth century. [The premiere third recension manuscript. The manuscript has been carefully revised and corrected by the first hand, perhaps "under the direction of the author."⁹⁴ In addition to *CA*, the manuscript includes Gower's *Traitié* and *Carmen multiplice viciorum pestilencia*. There is some punctuation in the manuscript, which seems to be carefully carried out. The Latin verses usually occur in the columns of Middle English verse, with the Latin commentary in the margins. The manuscript also consistently marks in the margins changes of speaking voice in places where dialogue occurs. Genius is identified as *Confessor* and the lover as *Amans*. I have used Fairfax 3 as my base text and included all the Latin apparatus.]
- Bodley 902. Bodleian Library. Early-fifteenth century. [A revised first recension manuscript of high quality, used here and by Macaulay for the first recension conclusion to Book 8, which remarks on Chaucer and the "testament of love." The first leaf of this manuscript is missing, thus the need to rely on Bodley 294 for the Ricardian Prologue.]
- Bodley 294. Bodleian Library. Early-fifteenth century. [A second recension manuscript, used by Macaulay for the passages replaced in the Prologue of the third recension.]

⁹² John Gower, pp. 303–09.

⁹³ For a detailed description of the individual manuscripts, see Gower's *Complete Works*, ed. Macaulay, 2:cxxxviii–clxvii.

⁹⁴ See Gower, *Complete Works*, ed. Macaulay, 2:cxxx.

- St. John’s College, Cambridge, 34.B.12. First quarter of the fifteenth century. [A first recension manuscript similar to that used as the basis for the third recension. Includes *CA* only. The text and spelling are closer to Fairfax 3 than any other first recension manuscript. The punctuation usually agrees with Fairfax 3. This manuscript omits much of the Latin marginalia found variously in the other manuscripts.]
- Huntington El. 26 A.17 (the “Stafford Manuscript”). Late-fourteenth century. [A second recension manuscript of very high quality text. Includes *CA* only. Unfortunately, the manuscript is missing seventeen leaves.]
- Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, 63. Mid-fifteenth century. [A second recension manuscript that is closely related to the Stafford manuscript. Includes *CA* and Cato’s *Disticha*.]

MANUSCRIPTS OF GOWER’S OTHER MAJOR WORKS

Cinkante Balades (c. 1350–1400)

- Trentham Hall (Duke of Sutherland, Dunrobin Castle, c. 1400).

Mirour de l’Omme (c. 1376–78), also known as *Speculum Hominis* and *Speculum Meditantis*

- Cambridge University Library MS Additional 3035 (before 1400).

Vox Clamantis (c. 1377–81)

Twelve manuscripts survive:⁹⁵

Group A: Before the Great Uprising

Group B: After the Great Uprising

Group C: After 1400, including the *Tripartite Chronicle* at the end

Modern printed editions are based on All Souls College, Oxford, MS 98 (c. 1400).

Other important manuscripts include Bodleian MS Digby 138 (early-fifteenth century) and British Library Cotton Tiberius A.iv (c. 1408).

Tripartite Chronicle (c. 1400)

Five manuscripts, four of which are appended to *Vox Clamantis*. The manuscript favored by modern editors is All Souls College, Oxford, MS 98.

Laureate Poems (c. 1400)

Found in the five manuscripts of *Tripartite Chronicle*. Include “Rex celi deus,” “H. aquile pullus,” “O recolende,” “Carmen super multiplici viciorum pestilencia,” “Tractatus de lucis scrutinio,” “Ecce patet tensus,” “Est amor in glosa pax bellica,” “Eneidos bucolis,” “O Deus immense,” and “Quicquid homo scribat.”

In Praise of Peace (c. 1400)

- Trentham Hall manuscript (c. 1400).

⁹⁵ See Fisher, *John Gower*, pp. 306–08.



CHRONOLOGY OF GOWER'S LIFE AND WORKS

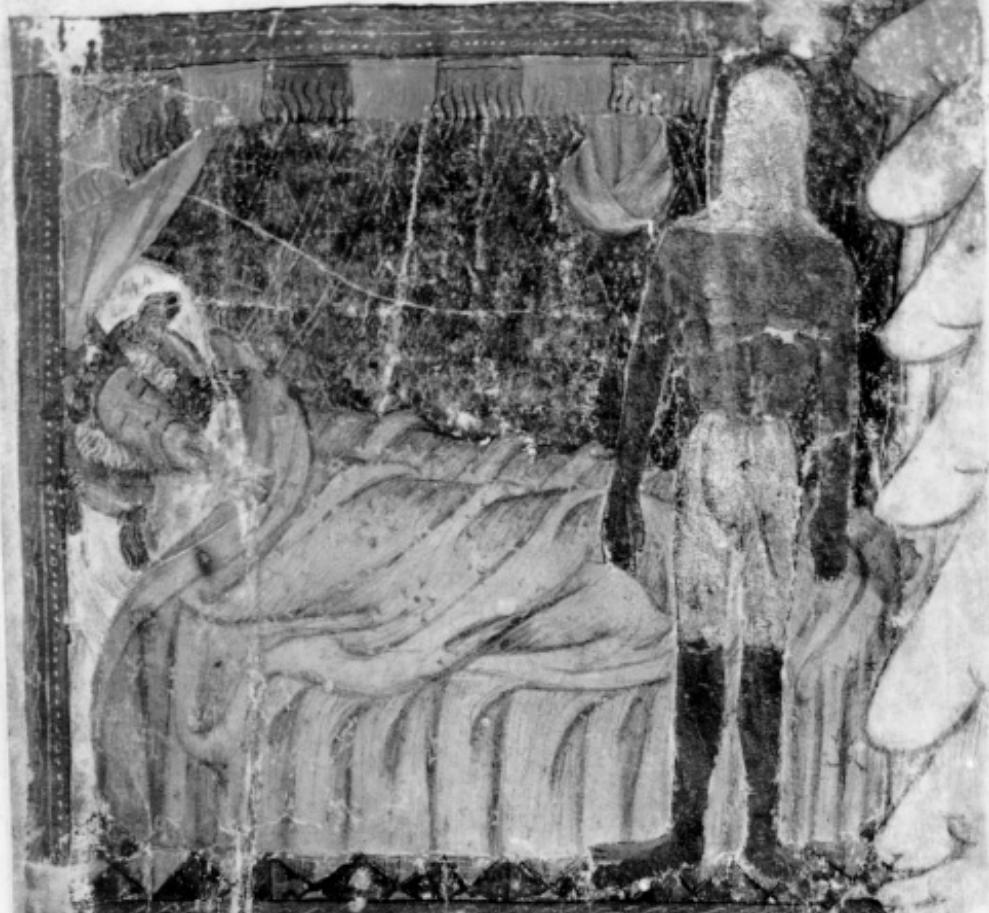
- c. 1330 John Gower is born, probably in Kent or Yorkshire, into a family of considerable prominence and means, which held land in Kent, Yorkshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk; kin to Sir Robert Gower.
- c. 1345 Geoffrey Chaucer born.
- 1365 Gower purchases Aldingdon Septvauns, an estate in Kent. The purchase was later contested by the crown, but in 1368 Gower's claim is adjudged just. During this decade Gower appears to have prospered, perhaps in some legal or civil office.
- 1368 Gower acquires a manor of Kentwell in Suffolk which formerly had belonged to Sir Robert Gower.
- 1373 Gower disposes of the manors of Aldingdon and Kentwell.
- c. 1376–79 Gower writes *Mirour de l'Omme*, an allegory of about 32,000 octosyllabic lines composed in twelve-line stanzas. He appears not to have had the poem recopied, since only one fragmentary manuscript of the poem is known to exist. It may be that Gower wrote the work for his own pleasure in what turned out to be a trial run for his two greater poems, both of which draw on it. Although the poem is in French, Gower later changed its title to *Speculum Hominis*, then to *Speculum Meditantis*, so that it might correspond to the Latin titles of his other works.
The *Mirour* is a commentary on the dilemma of fallen man. Its structure is panoramic, like a triptych which tells allegorically the genealogy of sin and the corruption of the time world, then offers a catalogue of vices and virtues that neatly classifies the errors of man and the remedies open to him, and finally presents an exaltation of the Virgin Mary, who offers frenzied man a realizable hope for extrication from the bewildering world. Like *Vox Clamantis*, it includes an extended section on the three estates.
- 1377 King Edward III dies; the regency for Richard II, age 10, is established.
- c. 1377 Gower takes up residence at St. Mary Overeys Priory, where he spends most of the rest of his life. Tradition claims that in this year Gower financed repair and restoration of the priory, which had burned a century and a half earlier. The

priory had its own scriptorium, where Gower may have supervised the copying of his poems.

- 1377–81 In about 1377 Gower begins work on *Vox Clamantis*, a moral essay of seven books written in Latin elegiac verse. The title is prophetic and derives from the gospel account of John the Baptist who comes as the voice crying in the wilderness. The tone throughout is apocalyptic. Gower seems to have begun composition with what is now Book 2 and to have completed the poem shortly after the Uprising, adding at that time the allegorical dream vision which constitutes Book 1. Eighteen years later, after the ascension of Henry IV to the throne, he added the *Tripartite Chronicle* to the poem.
Book 2 announces the poem's title and defines man's loss of eminence in the universe: Fortune is not to blame; the fault of man's alienation lies in himself. Books 3 and 4 offer a bold diatribe against the corrupt clergy and religious orders. Book 5 is an attack on knighthood, which has also failed. Book 6 attacks those who have corrupted the laws themselves — lawyers, judges, and the king. Book 7 summarizes man's desperate condition by recounting Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the degeneration of the time world through incursions of Sin and Death. Book 1, written last, provides a brilliant dramatization of the consequences of irresponsible behavior of the upper echelons of society. By means of dream fable, Gower depicts the nightmarish world of a society gone berserk, where even the common men, in whom Gower elsewhere has great faith, turn themselves into animals ravaging each other. Book 1 ends with an emblem of chaos in which common profit has been totally obliterated. In a dramatically memorable scene, the narrator, unwillingly caught up in his narrative, finds himself isolated in a wilderness, afraid of all men about him, who seem surely bent on his destruction. This book should not be understood simply as an attack on the commons in revolt against hierarchy, but rather as a dramatic statement of the consequences of a whole society in disintegration, the causes of which Gower analyzes in the remaining books. To Gower the Peasants' Revolt must have seemed veritable proof of the validity of his prophetic attack on corrupt religious and civil authorities.
- 1378 Chaucer gives power of attorney to John Gower and Richard Forester while he travels abroad on the continent.
- 1381 The Rising of Essex and Kentishmen and their march on London in June. The burning of John of Gaunt's Savoy Palace and execution of Archbishop Simon Sudbury and others. The king's confrontation of the mob at Mile End and the killing of Wat Tyler.
- 1382 Gower is granted manors of Feltwell in Norfolk and Moulton in Suffolk, which he rents to Thomas Blakelake, parson, for £160 per annum.
- c. 1385 Chaucer dedicates *Troilus and Criseyde* to "moral Gower" and "philosophical Strode." (The term "moral" should be understood to include that which pertains to the mores of society, as well as ethics.)

- c. 1386 Gower begins work on *Confessio Amantis*; Chaucer begins work on the *Legend of Good Women*.
- 1388 The Merciless Parliament and the Lords Appellant defeat King Richard and his faction and execute Nicholas Brembre and Thomas Usk, both of whom were friends of Chaucer and known to Gower.
- 1389 Richard II declares himself monarch of full age, free of tutelage.
- 1390 Gower completes the first recension of the *Confessio Amantis* which he dedicates to the young King Richard, who had encouraged him to write the poem, and to his friend Geoffrey Chaucer. Thirty-one of the forty-nine known manuscripts of the poem follow this recension. It was popular because of the account of the king's commissioning of the poem and because of the dedication to Chaucer.
- 1390–92 Gower continues work on *Confessio Amantis*. During this period and, perhaps, beyond he does some revision of Books 5, 6, and 7 of the poem, adding new material and occasionally rearranging the old. In 1392 he issues a copy akin to Fairfax 3 which revises the conclusion of the poem to exclude praises of King Richard; to the Prologue of this edition he adds a dedication to Henry of Lancaster. That 1392 version, sometimes referred to as the third recension, was occasionally recopied, though not to the extent that the 1390 edition was. This Lancastrian recension of the poem does not include the passages which had been added to the middle books. The Fairfax 3 manuscript is the principal manuscript of this group, and although it is a relatively small group, it represents perhaps the most carefully prepared revision of the poem. It is conceivable that Gower himself supervised the corrections of Fairfax 3.
- 1393 In return for the issue of *Confessio Amantis* now dedicated to Henry of Lancaster, count of Derby, Henry presents Gower with an ornamental collar.
- 1394–97 Gower composes various lesser Latin poems, including "Carmen super multipli viciorum pestilencia," "O Deus immense," and "De Lucis scrutino."
- 1397 Gower writes a sequence of eighteen French balades entitled *Traitié*. Each balade is of three stanzas in rhyme royal, without envoy; the eighteenth balade has a fourth stanza which functions as envoy to the whole sequence.
- 1398 Gower marries Agnes Groundolf. This may have been his second marriage. If so, the first marriage must have been in his younger days, some years prior to his residence at St. Mary Overeys. The marriage to Agnes Groundolf may have been a matter of convenience in order that someone might care for the aging poet who was, according to tradition, on the verge of blindness.
- 1399 Richard II is deposed by act of Parliament; Henry of Lancaster becomes King Henry IV. Five weeks after his coronation Henry grants Gower two pipes per annum of Gascony wine, perhaps in response to Gower's writing of the *Tripartite*

- Chronicle*, an allegorical attack on Richard's court and the rescue of England by Henry.
- 1399–1400 Gower dedicates and presents *Cinkante Balades* to King Henry. He also writes at this time his so-called laureate poems ("Rex celi deus," "H. aquile pullus," "O recolende"), praising the king in whom he placed such high hope, and also his last English poem, *In Praise of Peace*. This latter poem may have been written after the poet had become blind.
- 1400 Geoffrey Chaucer dies.
- 1408 John Gower dies and is buried in St. Mary Overeys Priory Church. He now lies in Southwark Cathedral.



Glorie d'ees sainctes (sola papa labor munimusq;
allant quo munimus ipse munera canam.
Quia tamen lucidi lingua cantat Insula Briti.
ingloria, armante metra nivante loquar
ossibus ergo tareis que content ossa loquacie
absit. et interpres stet protul' ovo mastus.
Inquit prologus.

Illustration 2: MS Fairfax 3, fol. 2r. Bodleian Library, Oxford University. Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the Monster of Time.



CONFESSIO AMANTIS: PROLOGUE

- i. *Torpor, ebes sensus, scola parua labor minimusque
Causant quo minimus ipse minora canam:
Qua tamen Engisti lingua canit Insula Brutii
Anglica Carmenta metra iuuante loquar
Ossibus ergo carens que conterit ossa loquelis
Absit, et interpres stet procul oro malus.*¹ (see note)

INCIPIT PROLOGUS

	Of hem that writen ous tofore The bokes duelle, and we therfore Ben tawht of that was write tho: Forthi good is that we also	<i>Of those who wrote before us remain Are instructed from what; then Therefore us here</i>
5	In oure tyme among ous hiere Do wryte of newe som matiere, Essampled of these olde wyse, So that it myhte in such a wyse, Whan we ben dede and elleswhere,	<i>Cause to be written anew Exemplified by; wise [men/books] manner are dead</i>
10	Beleve to the worldes eere In tyme comende after this. Bot for men sein, and soth it is, That who that al of wisdom writ It dulleth ofte a mannes wit	<i>Be left behind for; ear coming But since men say; true whoever writes only sententiously</i>
15	To him that schal it aldai rede, For thilke cause, if that ye rede, I wolde go the middel weie And wryte a bok between the tweie, Somwhat of lust, somewhat of lore,	<i>Of the one who reads it all day that same; if you agree</i>
20	That of the lasse or of the more Som man mai lyke of that I wryte. And for that fewe men endite In oure Engliss, I thenke make	<i>two pleasure; learning (wisdom) less be pleased with what since; compose (see note) plan to make</i>

¹ Listlessness, dull discernment, little schooling and least labor are the causes by which, I, least of all, sing things all the lesser. Nonetheless, in the tongue of Hengist in which the island of Brutus sang, with Carmenta's aid I will utter English verses. Let then the boneless one that breaks bones with speeches be absent, and let the interpreter wicked in word stand far away.

	A bok for Engelondes sake,	(see below, for first-recension verses)
25	The yer sextenthe of Kyng Richard.	
	What schal befallie hierafterward	
	God wot, for now upon this tyde	knows; time
	Men se the world on every syde	see
	In sondry wyse so diversed,	various ways; changed
30	That it wel nyh stant al reversed,	nearly stands
	As for to speke of tyme ago.	Compared to time past
	The cause whi it changeth so	
	It needeth nought to specifie,	
	The thing so open is at ſe	eye
35	That every man it mai beholde.	
	And natheles be daies olde,	in the old days
	Whan that the bokes weren levere,	more dear
	Wrytinge was beloved evere	
	Of hem that weren vertuous;	those who
40	For hier in erthe amonges ous,	
	If no man write hou that it stode,	no one; how; stood
	The pris of hem that weren goode	reputation of those who
	Scholde, as who seith, a gret partie	as one may say
	Be lost; so for to magnifie	
45	The worthi princes that tho were,	then

[The Ricardian recension of the poem reads as follows (lines *24–*92):]

	A book for King Richardes sake	
*25	To whom bilongeth my ligeance	allegiance
	With al myn hertes obeissance	
	In al that ever a liege man	
	Unto his king may doon or can;	
	So ferforth I me recomaunde	myself admit
*30	To him which al me may comaunde,	all people may
	Prayend unto the hihe regne	
	Which causeth every king to regne,	Praying; high ruler (i.e., God)
	That his corone longe stonde.	
	I thenke and have it understande,	
*35	As it bifel upon a tyde,	time
	As thing which scholde tho bityde,	then happen
	Under the toun of newe Troye,	
	Which took of Brut his ferste joye,	
	In Temse whan it was flowende	Thames; flowing
*40	As I by bote cam rowende,	came rowing by in a boat
	So as Fortune hir tyme sette,	
	My liege lord par chaunce I mette;	
	And so bifel, as I cam neigh,	
	Out of my bot, whan he me seigh,	near
*45	He bad me come into his barge.	saw

- 46 The bokes schewen hiere and there,
Wheroft the world ensampled is;
And tho that deden thanne amis
Thurgh tirannie and craulté *those who did*
- 50 Right as thei stoden in degré,
So was the wrytinge of here werk.
Thus I, which am a burel clerk,
Purpose for to wryte a bok *Just as
their
ignorant clerk*
- 55 After the world that whilom tok
Long tyme in olde daies passed.
Bot for men sein it is now lassed,
In worse plit than it was tho, *Intend to
About; once came about
Long ago*
- 60 I thenke for to touche also
The world which neweth every dai,
So as I can, so as I mai. *since men see; lessened
plight; then
plan therefore to touch upon
renews [itself]*
- 65 Thogh I seknesse have upon honde
And longe have had, yit woll I fonde
To wryte and do my bisinesse,
That in som part, so as I gesse, *estimate*
- 65 The wyse man mai ben avised.
For this prologue is so assised *composed*
- 65 That it to wisdom al belongeth.

- *46 And whan I was with him at large,
Amonges othre thinges seyde *comfortably (without restraint)*
- He hath this charge upon me leyde,
And bad me doo my busynesse
- *50 That to his hihe worthiness
Som newe thing I scholde booke, *compose*
- That he himself it mighte looke
After the forme of my wryting.
- *55 And thus upon his comaundyng
Myn hert is wel the more glad *commanded*
- To write so as he me bad; *fear*
- And eek my fere is wel the lasse
That non envyte schal compasse
- Without a resonable wite
- *60 To feyne and blame that I write. *misconstrue*
- A gentil herte his tunge stilleth,
That it malice noon distilleth,
- But preyseth that is to be preised; *what*
- But he that hath his word unpeyseyd *unleashed*
- *65 And handeleth onwrong every thing,
I pray unto the heven king *meanly perverts*
- Fro suche tungen He me schilde. *shield*

- 68 What wys man that it underfongeth,
He schal drawe into remembrance
70 The fortune of this worldes chance,
The which no man in his persone
Mai knowe, bot the god alone.
Whan the prologue is so despended,
This bok schal afterward ben ended
75 Of love, which doth many a wonder
And many a wys man hath put under.
And in this wyse I thenke trete
Towardes hem that now be grete,
Betwen the vertu and the vice
80 Which longeth unto this office.
Bot for my wittes ben to smale
To tellen every man his tale,
This bok, upon amendment
To stonde at his commandement,
With whom myn herte is of accord,
85 I sende unto myn oghne lord,
Which of Lancastre is Henri named.
The hyhe God him hath proclaimed
Ful of knyghtode and alle grace.
- understands
except the good alone
finished
be finished up
[As a book] about love
has toppled many a wise person
way I plan to treat (make a discourse)
In respect to those who (In submission to those who)
pertain; social position
But since; too small
for correction
To submit to
own

- *68 And natholes this world is wilde
Of such jangling, and what bifalle,
*70 My kinges heste schal nought falle,
That I, in hope to deserve
His thonk, ne schal his wil observe;
And elles were I nought excused,
For that thing may nought be refused
*75 Which that a king himselfe byt.
Forthi the symblesce of my wit
I thenke if that it may avayle
In his service to travaile.
Though I seknesse have upon honde,
*80 And long have had, yit wol I fonde,
So as I made my byheste,
To make a book after his heste,
And write in such a maner wise,
Which may be wisdom to the wise
*85 And pley to hem that lust to pleye.
But in proverbe I have herd seye
That who that wel his werk begynneth
The rather a good ende he wynneth;
And thus the prologue of my book
- happens
behest
obey
ordered
illness
attempt
promise
command

90 So woll I now this werk embrace
 With hol trust and with hol believe.
 God grante I mot it wel achieve.

*whole
 that I have the power to finish*

[THE STATE]

ii. *Tempus preteritum presens fortuna beatum*
Linquit, et antiquas vertit in orbe vias.
Progenuit veterem concors dileccio pacem,
Dum facies hominis nuncia mentis erat:
Legibus vnicolor tunc temporis aura resulosit,
Iusticie plane tuncque fuere vie.
Nuncque latens odium vultum depingit amoris,
Paceque sub dicta tempus ad arma tegit;
Instar et ex variis mutabile Cameliontis
Lex gerit, et regnis sunt noua iura nouis:
Climata que fuerant solidissima sicque per orbem
Soluuntur, nec eo centra quietis habent.¹

(see note)

☞
 95 If I schal drawe into my mynde
 The tyme passed, thanne I fynde
 The world stod thanne in al his welthe.
 Tho was the lif of man in helthe,
 Tho was plenté, tho was richesse,
 Tho was the fortune of prouesse,
 Tho was knythhode in pris be name,
 Wheroft the wyde worldes fame —
 Write in cronicque — is yit withholde.
 Justice of lawe tho was holde,
 The privilege of regalie
 Was sauf, and al the baronie
 105 Worschiped was in his astat;
 The citees knewen no debat,
 The poeple stod in obeissance

(see note)

its wealth

Then

high time of virtue (strength)
valued by report

Written; chronicles; yet maintained
Justice was then upheld by law
royalty
safe
Honored; its estate
people

*90 After the world that whilom took,
 And eek somdel after the newe,
 I wol begynne for to newe.

once came about

¹ Present-day Fortune has left behind the blessed times of the past, and overturned on her world-wheel the ancient ways. Harmonious love engendered the old-time peace, when the face was the messenger of a person's thought: then the uncolored air of the times was aglow with laws, and then the paths of justice were broad and even. But now hidden hatred presents a painted face of love, and clothes under false peace an age at arms. The law carries itself like the chameleon, changeable with every varied thing; and new laws are for new kingdoms. Regions that were most steady throughout the world's orb are unmoored, nor do they possess axis-points of quiet.

- Under the reule of governance,
And pes, which ryhtwisnesse keste,
With charité tho stod in reste.
Of mannes herte the corage
Was schewed thanne in the visage;
The word was lich to the concete
Withoute semblant of deceite.
- 110 Tho was ther unenvied love,
Tho was the vertu sett above
And vice was put under fote.
Now stant the crop under the rote.
The world is changed overal,
115 And therof most in special
That love is falle into discord.
And that I take to record
Of every lond, for his partie,
The comune vois which mai noght lie;
120 Noght upon on, bot upon alle
It is that men now clepe and calle,
And sein the regnes ben divided:
In stede of love is hate guided,
The werre wol no pes purchace,
125 And lawe hath take hire double face,
So that justice out of the weie
With ryhtwisnesse is gon aweie.
And thus to loke on every halve,
Men sen the sor withoute salve,
130 Which al the world hath overtake.
Ther is no regne of alle outtake,
For every climat hath his diel
After the tornyng of the whiel,
Which blinde Fortune overthoweth.
135 Wherof the certain no man knoweth.
The hevene wot what is to done,
Bot we that duelle under the mone
Stonde in this world upon a weer,
And namely bot the pouer
140 Of hem that ben the worldes guides —
With good consail on alle sides —
Be kept upriht in such a wyse,
That hate breke noght th'assise
Of love, whiche is al the chief
145 To kepe a regne out of meschief.
For alle resoun wolde this,
That unto him which the heved is
The membres buxom scholden bowe,
And he scholde ek her trowthe allowe,
- peace; justice kissed
then
shown; face (countenance)
like; concept
Then
top; root (i.e., upside down)
particular
Whereby
From; part
unanimous voice of the people
one
what; make appeal
see kingdoms at odds
war; obtain
lawyers; put on (donned) their
all sides
see the wound lacking healing ointment
has ruined
excepted
has its share
According to
turns over
fact (certainty) no one
knows
moon (i.e., amidst changeability)
in doubt
unless; power
Of those who are
way
the court
principal means
kingdom
who; head (see note)
obedient
also their loyalty accept

- 155 With al his herte and make hem chiere,
 ↗ For good consail is good to hiere.
 Althogh a man be wys himselfe,
 Yit is the wisdom more of tuelve;
 And if thei stoden bothe in on,
 To hope it were thanne anon
 That God his grace wolde sende
 To make of thilke werre an ende,
 Which everyday now groweth newe.
 And that is gretly for to rewe
 In special for Cristes sake,
 Which wolde His oghne lif forsake
 Among the men to geve pes.
 But now men tellen natheles
 That love is fro the world departed,
 So stant the pes unevene parted
 With hem that liven now adaias.
 Bot for to loke, at alle assaies,
 To him that wolde resoun seche
 After the comun worldes speche
 It is to wondre of thilke werre,
 In which non wot who hath the werre.
 For every lond himself deceyveth
 And of desese his part receyveth,
 And yet ne take men no kepe.
 Bot thilke Lord which al may kepe,
 To whom no consail may ben hid,
 Upon the world which is betid,
 Amende that wherof men pleigne
 With trewe hertes and with pleine,
 And reconcile love ageyn,
 As He which is king sovereign
 Of al the worldes governaunce,
 And of His hyhe porveaunce
 Afferme pes betwen the londes
 And take her cause into Hise hondes,
 So that the world may stonde appesed
 And His Godhede also be plesed.
- And welcome them with all his heart
 hear (see note)*
- Yet
 one*
- that war*
- repent*
- Who; own life
 give peace
 nonetheless*
- from
 peace unequally distributed*
- at any rate
 seek*
- that strife
 no one knows; worse
 itself
 trouble its share*
- men are indifferent (take no heed)*
- But that very*
- come to pass*
- [May he] amend; complain*
- simple*
- [may he] reconcile*
- lofty overview*
- Made*
- their*
- reconciled*

[THE CHURCH]

- iii. *Quas coluit Moises vetus aut nouus ipse Iohannes,
 Hesternas leges vix colit ista dies.
 Sic prius ecclesia bina virtute polita
 Nunc magis inculta pallet vtraque via.
 Pacificam Petri vaginam mucro resumens
 Horruit ad Cristi verba cruoris iter;*
- (see note)*

*Nunc tamen assiduo gladium de sanguine tinctum
 Vibrat auaricia, lege tepente sacra.
 Sic lupus est pastor, pater hostis mors miserator,
 Predoqe largitor, pax et in orbe timor.¹*

	To thenke upon the daies olde,	<i>When thinking; days of old</i>
195	The lif of clerkes to beholde,	<i>(see note)</i>
	Men sein how that thei weren tho	<i>see; then</i>
	Ensample and reule of alle tho	<i>those</i>
	Whiche of wisdom the vertu soughten.	<i>Who; sought</i>
	Unto the God ferst thei besoughten	<i>prayed</i>
200	As to the substaunce of her scole,	<i>For the material wealth of their community</i>
	That thei ne scholden noght before	<i>[So] that; besmirch</i>
	Her wit upon none erthly werkes,	<i>Their</i>
	Which were agein th'estat of clerkes,	<i>against</i>
	And that thei myhten flee the vice	<i>[so] that; might flee</i>
	Which Simon hath in his office,	
205	Wheroft he takth the gold in honde.	
	For thilke tyme, I understande,	
	The Lumbard made non eschange	<i>bankers had not [yet] financed</i>
	The bisschopriches for to change,	<i>purchase</i>
	Ne yet a lettre for to sende	<i>papal provision</i>
210	For dignité ne for provende,	<i>prebend</i>
	Or cured or withoute cure.	<i>Either with or without spiritual duties</i>
	The cherche keye in aventure	<i>power of the church</i>
	Of armes and of brygantaille	<i>brigands (irregular troops)</i>
	Stod nothing thanne upon bataille;	
215	To fyhte or for to make cheste	<i>strife</i>
	It thoghthe hem thanne noght honeste.	<i>honorable</i>
	Bot of simplesce and pacience	
	Thei maden thanne no defence.	<i>prohibition</i>
	The court of worldly regalie	
220	To hem was thanne no baillie.	<i>jurisdiction</i>
	The vein honour was noght desired,	<i>empty (vain)</i>
	Which hath the proude herte fyred;	<i>heart inflamed</i>
	Humilité was tho withholde,	<i>practiced (held with)</i>
	And Pride was a vice holde.	<i>held to be a vice</i>
225	Of holy cherche the largesse	<i>Gave; distributed quantities of alms</i>
	Gaf thanne and dede gret almesse	<i>were needy</i>
	To povere men that hadden nede;	

¹ *The laws of yesterday that old Moses and new John — that one — cultivated, this day hardly keeps. Thus the church, formerly glittering with a double virtue and now instead disheveled, grows pale at either path. At the word of Christ the sword of Peter, regaining its peaceful sheath, abhorred the way of blood; now, however, with sacred law grown tepid, covetousness vigorously thrusts its blood-stained sword. Thus the wolf is the shepherd, the father the enemy, death the commiserator, the brigand the benefactor, and the peace on earth is fear.*

	Thei were ek chaste in word and dede, Wheroft he poeple ensample tok;	also
230	Her lust was al upon the bok, Or for to preche or for to preie, To wisse men the ryhte weie Of such as stode of trowthe unlied.	<i>Their desire</i> <i>Either; or; pray</i> <i>teach</i>
235	Lo, thus was Petres barge stiered Of hem that thilke tyme were, And thus cam ferst to mannes ere The feith of Crist and alle goode	<i>St. Peter's ship guided</i> <i>By those who at that time lived</i> <i>ear</i>
240	Thurgh hem that thanne weren goode And sobre and chaste and large and wyse. Bot now men sein is otherwise, Simon the cause hath undertake,	<i>generous</i> <i>But now [what] men say; contrarywise</i>
245	The worldes swerd on honde is take; And that is wonder natheles, Whan Crist Himself hath bode pes And set it in His Testament,	<i>grasped</i> <i>proclaimed peace</i>
250	How now that holy cherche is went Of that here lawe positif Hath set, to make werre and strif For worldes good, which may noght laste.	<i>has departed</i> <i>From what their [own] formal law</i> <i>Has established; war; contention</i> <i>material wealth</i> <i>knows</i>
255	God wot the cause to the laste Of every right and wrong also; But whil the lawe is reuled so That clerkes to the werre entende,	<i>do not know how</i>
260	I not how that thei scholde amende The woful world in othre thinges, To make pes betwen the kynges After the lawe of charité,	<i>According to</i> <i>duty</i>
265	Which is the propre dueté Belongende unto the presthode. Bot as it thenkth to the manhode, The hevene is ferr, the world is nyh,	<i>seems to human beings</i> <i>far; near</i>
270	And veine gloire is ek so slyh, Which coveitise hath now withholde, That thei non other thing beholde, As thogh Crist myhte noght availe	<i>also so sly</i> <i>retained [as servant]</i> <i>Except what they</i> <i>wars</i>
	To don hem riht be other weie. Into the swerd the cherche keie Is torned, and the holy bede Into cursinge, and every stede	<i>the moment it is requested</i> <i>tithe (L. decima, "tenth")</i>
		<i>bring about justice by other means</i> <i>key</i> <i>prayer</i> <i>place</i>

- 275 Which scholde stonde upon the feith
 And to this cause an ere leyth,
 Astoned is of the querele. ear
quarrel
 That scholde be the worldes hele
 Is now, men sein, the pestilence
 Which hath exiled pacience What (i.e., the papacy); health
 Fro the clergie in special. say; plague
 And that is schewed overal,
 In eny thing whan thei ben grieved.
 Bot if Gregoire be believed,
 As it is in the bokes write, priesthood
 He doth ous somdel for to wite revealed everywhere
 The cause of thilke prelacie, thwarted
 Wher God is noght of compaignie.
 For every werk as it is founded
 Schal stonde or elles be confounded;
 Who that only for Cristes sake
 Desireth cure for to take, written
 And noght for pride of thilke astat, causes us in part to know
 To bere a name of a prelat, such a priestly estate
 He schal be resoun do profit title
 In holy cherche upon the plit benefice (curacy)
 That he hath set his conscience. such [priestly] estate
 Bot in the worldes reverence by reason give profit
 Ther ben of suche manie glade in the manner
 Whan thei to thilke astat ben made, established his conscience
 Noght for the merite of the charge, (see note)
 Bot for thei wolde hemself descharge
 Of poverté and become grete. rid themselves
 And thus for pompe and for beyete property
 The Scribe and ek the Pharisee
 Of Moises upon the See [Red] Sea
 In the chaire on hyh ben set; released
 Wheroft the feith is ofte let, entrusted to them
 Which is betaken hem to kepe.
 In Cristes cause alday thei slepe, there is no forgetting
 Bot of the world is noght forȝete; there is no forgetting
 For wel is him that now may gete
 Office in court to ben honourē.
 The stronge coffre hath al devoured
 Under the keye of avarice
 The tresor of the benefice,
 Wheroft the povere schulden clothe
 And ete and drinke and house bothe;
 The charité goth al unknowe,
 For thei no grein of pité sowe;
 And slouthē kepeth the libraire

- Which longeth to the saintuaire;
To studie upon the worldes lore
Sufficeth now withoute more;
325 Delicacie his swete toth
Hath fostred so that it fordoth
Of abstinence al that ther is.
And for to loken over this,
If Ethna brenne in the clergie
330 Al openly to mannes ſye,
At Avynoun th'experience
Theroft hath gove an evidence
Of that men ſen hem so diuided.
And yit the cauſe is noght decided.
335 Bot it is ſeid and evere ſchal,
Betwen tuo ſtoles lyth the fal
Whan that men wenē best to ſitte.
In holy cherche of ſuch a ſlitte
Is for to rewe unto ous alle;
340 God grante it mote wel beſalle
Towardes him whiche hath the trowthe.
Bot ofte is ſen that mochel ſlowthe,
Whan men ben drunken of the cuppe,
Doth mochel harm, whan fyf is uppe,
345 Bot if ſomwho the flamme ſtanche;
And ſo to ſpeke upon this branche,
Which proude Envie hath mad to ſpringe,
Of Scisme, cauſeth for to bringe
This newe ſecte of Lollardie,
350 And alſo many an heresie
Among the clerkes in hemſelue.
It were betre dike and delve
And ſtonde upon the ryhte feith,
Than knowe al that the Bible ſeith
355 And erre as ſomme clerkes do.
Upon the hond to were a ſchoo
And ſette upon the fot a glove
Acordeth noght to the behove
Of reſonable mannes us.
360 If men behielden the vertus
That Crist in erthe taghte here,
Thei ſcholden noght in ſuch manere,
Among hem that ben holden wiſe,
The Papacie ſo deſguife
365 Upon diſterne eleccioun,
Which ſtant after th'affeccioun
Of ſondry londes al aboute.
Bot whan God wole, it ſchal were oute,
- belongs to the Church (sanctuary)
teaching*
- sweet tooth
destroys*
- burns among the clergy (see note)
people's eyes*
- given; indication
Since men see them*
- two stools lies the fall
think*
- division (schism)
Is regrettable for us all
may well turn out*
- In respect to whoever has
sloth*
- Unless someone should extinguish the flame*
- [fit] causes*
- themselves
to ditch; dig (i.e., work as a plowman)*
- shoe
foot*
- Is not becoming; advantage
usage
adhered to*
- dress up*
- holds according to the inclination*
- wants, it [the schism] will wear away*

- For trowthe mot stonde ate laste.
 370 Bot yet thei argumenten faste
 Upon the Pope and his astat,
 Wheroft hei falle in gret debat;
 This clerk seith yee, that other nay,
 And thus thei dryve forth the day,
 375 And ech of hem himself amendeth
 Of worldes good, bot non entendeth
 To that which comun profit were.
 Thei sein that God is myhti there,
 And schal ordeine what He wile,
 380 Ther make thei non other skile
 Where is the peril of the feith,
 Bot every clerk his herte leith
 To kepe his world in special,
 And of the cause general,
 385 Which unto holy cherche longeth,
 Is non of hem that underfongeth
 To schapen eny resistence.
 And thus the riht hath no defence,
 Bot ther I love, ther I holde.
 390 Lo, thus tobroke is Cristes folde,
 Wheroft the flock withoute guide
 Devoured is on every side,
 In lacke of hem that ben unaware
 Schepherdes, whiche her wit beware
 395 Upon the world in other halve.
 The scharpe pricke in stede of salve
 Thei usen now, wheroft the hele
 Thei hurte of that thei scholden hele;
 And what schep that is full of wulle
 400 Upon his back, thei toose and pulle,
 Whil ther is eny thing to pile.
 And thogh ther be non other skile
 Bot only for thei wolden wynne,
 Thei leve noght, whan thei begynne,
 405 Upon her acte to procede,
 Which is no good schepherdes dede.
 And upon this also men sein,
 That fro the leese which is plein
 Into the breres thei forcacche
 410 Her orf, for that thei wolden lacche
 With such duresce, and so bereve
 That schal upon the thornes leve
 Of wulle, which the brere hath tote;
 Wheroft the schep ben al totore
 415 Of that the hierdes make hem lese.
- must remain
 debate vigorously*
- great conflict*
- pass the time
 improves*
- In respect to*
- declare*
- argument*
- [About] where peril to faith exists
 exerts his desire (lays his heart)*
- To support his own fortunes*
- belongs
 undertakes*
- Except where; there
 broken to pieces*
- want; those who; careless
 who spend their wit*
- On another part of the world*
- goad
 health*
- heal*
- wool*
- shear*
- plunder*
- reason*
- make a profit*
- cease*
- their*
- behavior*
- pasture land; open
 briars; drive out*
- Their sheep, because they would flike to steal*
- By; cruelty; rob*
- What [the sheep] shall*
- briar*
- fleeced*
- what the shepherds; lose*

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| | Lo, how thei feign chalk for chese,
For though thei speke and teche wel,
Thei don hemself therof no del.
For if the wolf com in the weie,
Her gostly staf is thanne aweie,
Wherof thei scholde her flock defende;
Bot if the povere schep offende
In eny thing, thogh it be lyte,
They ben al redy for to smytle; | something worthless for something good |
| 420 | little | apply to themselves; part |
| | For al is bot a chirie feire
This worldes good, so as thei telle;
Also thei sein ther is an helle,
Which unto mannes sinne is due,
And bidden ous therfore eschue
That wikkid is, and do the goode.
Who that here wordes understande,
It thenkth thei wolden do the same; | Their spiritual
With which |
| 425 | reckon (tally) | |
| | Bot yet betwen ernest and game | little |
| 430 | lot (OF merel, "token," "coin")
speak
a few here and there | |
| 435 | those are; [St. Paul] says (see note)
The ones
summoned (chosen) | |
| | sheepfold's gate | |
| 440 | Have abandoned; behave contrarily | |
| | at Simon's heels | |
| 445 | what; heart
the clerical profession
what | |
| | to us; public assembly
harm
cherry harvest fair | |
| 450 | | |
| 455 | | |
| 460 | | What
Whosoever; their
One would think they would behave accordingly |

- Ful ofte it torneth otherwise.
With holy tales thei devise
How meritoire is thilke dede
Of charité, to clothe and fede
The povere folk and for to parte
The worldes good, bot thei departe
Ne thenken noght fro that thei have.
Also thei sein, good is to save
With penance and with abstinence
Of chastité the continence;
Bot pleinly for to speke of that,
I not how thilke body fat,
Which thei with deynté metes kepe
And leyn it softe for to slepe,
Whan it hath elles al his wille,
With chastité schal stonde stille.
And natheles I can noght seie,
In auunter if that I misseye.
Touchende of this, how evere it stonde,
I here and wol noght understande,
For therof have I noght to done.
Bot He that made ferst the mone,
The hyhe God, of His goodnesse,
If ther be cause, He it redresce.
Bot what as eny man accuse,
This mai reson of trowthe excuse;
The vice of hem that ben ungoode,
Is no reproef unto the goode.
For every man hise oghne werkes
Schal bere, and thus as of the clerkes
The goode men ben to comende,
And alle these othre God amende.
For thei ben to the worldes ſye
The mirour of ensamplerie,
To reulen and to taken hiede
Betwen the men and the Godhiede.
- pious stories*
distribute
detach [themselves]
And do not consider [distributing]
do not know how that fattened body
foods maintain
everything else to its desire
can remain steady
On the chance that I am wrong
hear
it is not my business
moon
may He redress it
evil; unrighteous
bear; regarding churchmen
righteous will be commended
others may God improve
eye
example
guide; warn

[THE COMMONS]

- iv. *Vulgaris populus regali lege subactus*
Dum iacet, vt mitis agna subbit onus.
Si caput extollat et lex sua frena relaxet,
Vt sibi velle iubet, Tigridis instar habet.

*Ignis, aqua dominans duo sunt pietate carentes,
Ira tamen plebis est violenta magis.¹*

(see note)

	Now for to speke of the comune,	commons (third estate)
500	It is to drede of that fortune Which hath befallen in sondri londes. Bot often for defalte of bondes Al sodeinliche, er it be wist,	
	¶ A tonne, whanne his lye arist, Tobrekth and renneth al aboute, Which elles scholde noght gon oute;	tun (vessel); its lye boils over (see note)
505	And ek fulofte a litel skar Upon a banke, er men be war, Let in the strem, which with gret peine,	crack (hole) before; aware [of it]
510	If evere man it schal restreigne. Wher lawe lacketh, errour groweth, He is noght wys who that ne troweth, For it hath proeved ofte er this.	does not believe
	And thus the comun clamour is	noisy disapproval
515	In every lond wher poeple dwelleth, And eche in his compleignte telleth How that the world is al miswent, And therupon his jugement	
	Gifth every man in sondry wise.	Every man gives; ways
520	Bot what man wolde himselfe avise, His conscience and noght misuse, He may wel ate ferste excuse. His God, which evere stant in on,	consider
	In Him ther is defalte non,	
525	So moste it stonde upon ousselve Nought only upon ten ne twelve, Bot plenerliche upon ous alle, For man is cause of that schal falle.	stands united no deficiency ourselves
¶	And natheles yet som men wryte	fully
530	And sein that fortune is to wyte, And som men holde oppinon That it is constellacion, Which causeth al that a man doth.	what shall befall (see note)
	God wot of bothe which is soth.	blame
535	The world as of his propre kynde Was evere untrewe, and as the blynde	the stars knows; true its own nature

¹ *So long as the commonfolk lies subjugated by royal law, it will bear its burden as meek as a ewe lamb; if its head should come up and the law relax its reins on it, as desire commands for itself, it becomes like a tiger [or, like the Tigris River]. Fire, domination by water are two things without mercy, but the wrath of the commoners is more violent.*

	Improprelich he demeth fame, He blameth that is noght to blame And preiseth that is noght to preise. Thus whan he schal the thinges peise, Ther is deceipte in his balance, And al is that the variance Of ous, that schold ous betre avise.	judge what
540	For after that we falle and rise, The world arist and falth withal, So that the man is overal His oghne cause of wel and wo. That we fortune clepe so Out of the man himself it groweth	weigh <i>who should; consider in accord with how</i>
545	And who that otherwise troweth, Behold the poeple of Israel: For evere whil thei deden wel, Fortune was hem debonaire, And whan thei deden the contraire, Fortune was contrariende, So that it proeveth wel at ende	likewise <i>call</i> <i>believes</i> <i>Israel</i>
550	Why that the world is wonderfull And may no while stonde full, Though that it seme wel besein. For every worldes thing is vein, And evere goth the whiel aboute, And evere stant a man in doute: Fortune stant no while stille,	<i>to them</i> <i>adverse</i> <i>unfavorable</i>
555	So hath ther no man al his wille. Als fer as evere a man may knowe, Ther lasteth nothing bot a throwe. The world stant evere upon debat, So may be seker non astat:	<i>astonishing</i> <i>furnished</i>
560	Now hier now ther, now to now fro, Now up now doun, this world goth so, And evere hath don and evere schal, Wheroft I finde in special A tale writen in the Bible,	<i>stands</i>
565	Which moste nedes be credible. And that as in conclusioun Seith that upon divisioune Stant, why no worldes thing mai laste, Til it be drive to the laste.	<i>moment</i> <i>in turmoil (see note)</i> <i>secure</i>
570	Til it be drive to the laste. And fro the ferste regne of alle Into this day, hou so befallie, Of that the regnes ben muable The man himself hath be coupable.	<i>true (believed)</i>
575		<i>end [of all things]</i>
580		<i>mutable</i> <i>has been to blame</i>

Which of his propre governance
Fortuneth al the worldes chance.

[NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM]

- v. *Prosper et aduersus obliquo tramite versus* (see note)
Immundus mundus decipit omne genus.
Mundus in euentu versatur ut alea casu,
Quam celer in ludis iactat auara manus.
Sicut ymago viri variantur tempora mundi,
*Statque nichil firmum preter amare deum.*¹
- 585 The hyhe almyhti pourveance, *foreknowledge*
 In whos eterne remembrance
 Fro ferst was every thing present,
 He hath his prophecie sent,
 In such a wise as thou schalt hiere, *manner; hear*
 To Daniel of this matiere,
 590 Hou that this world schal torne and wende *change and decay (see note)*
 Til it befallie to his ende. *its*
 Wherof the tale telle I schal,
 In which it is betokned al.
- 595 As Nabugodonosor slepte, *dream overwhelmed him; remembered*
 A swene him tok, the which he kepte
 Til on the morwe he was arise,
 For he therof was sore agrise. *sorely terrified*
 To Daniel his drem he tolde,
 600 And preide him faire that he wolde *asked him courteously what*
 Arede what it tokne may, *Interpret; signify*
 And seide, “Abedde wher I lay,
 Me thoghte I syh upon a stage *saw*
 Wher stod a wonder strange ymage.
- 605 His hed with al the necke also *Its*
 Thei were of fin gold bothe tuo; *both of them*
 His brest, his schuldres, and his armes
 Were al of seler, bot the tharmes, *silver; entrails*
 The wombe, and al doun to the kne, *belly*
 610 Of bras thei were upon to se; *look*
 The legges were al mad of stiel, *steel*
 So were his feet also somdiel, *in part*
 And somdiel part to hem was take *made*
 Of erthe which men pottes make.

¹ *Fortunate and adverse, turning through its mazy trail, the unclean, disordered world deceives every sort. The world is overturned in its outcomes as a die in a toss, as quickly as the covetous hand throws at the games. Like an image of man do the ages of the world vary, and nothing besides the love of God stands firm.*

- 615 The fieble meynd was with the stronge,
So myhte it wel noght stonde longe.
☞ And tho me thoghte that I sih
A gret ston from an hull on hyh
Fel doun of sodein aventure
620 Upon the feet of this figure,
With which ston al tobroke was —
Gold, selver, erthe, stiel, and bras —
That al was into pouldre broght,
And so forth torned into noght.”
- 625 This was the svevne which he hadde,
That Daniel anon aradde,
And seide him that figure strange
Betokneth how the world schal change
And waxe lasse worth and lasse,
630 Til it to noght al overpassee.
The necke and hed, that weren golde,
He seide how that betokne scholde
A worthi world, a noble, a riche,
To which non after schal be liche.
☞ Of selver that was overforth
Schal ben a world of lasse worth;
☞ And after that the wombe of bras
Tokne of a werse world it was.
☞ The stiel which he syh afterward,
640 A world betokneth more hard.
☞ Bot yet the werste of everydel
Is last, whan that of erthe and stiel
He syh the feet departed so,
For that betokneth mochel wo.
645 Whan that the world divided is,
It moste algate fare amis,
For erthe which is meynd with stiel
Togedre may noght laste wiel,
Bot if that on that other waste;
650 So mot it nedes faile in haste.
☞ The ston, which fro the hully stage
He syh doun falle on that ymage,
And hath it into pouldre broke,
That svevne hath Daniel unloke,
655 And seide how that is Goddes myht,
Which whan men wene most upryht
To stonde, schal hem overcaste.
And that is of this world the laste,
And thanne a newe schal beginne,
660 Fro which a man schal nevere twinne.
- weak was mingled with
then it seemed to me (see note)
hill on high
clay, steel; brass
So that; powder
dream
explained (see note)
- Is an omen of (Portends); vary
grow less and less valuable
becomes worthless*
- like
that [the gold] was directly above (see note)
- (see note)
- saw (see note)
- of all (see note)
- saw; divided
- must unceasingly go wrong
alloyed (mingled)
well
- Unless they both consume one another
- mountainous location (see note)
- powder smashed
dream; interpreted (unlocked)
- explained
think
- depart

¶ Or al to peine or al to pes
That world schal lasten endeles. *Either entirely for pain or peace (see note)
forever*

[DANIEL'S PROPHECIES FULFILLED]

- Lo thus expondeth Daniel
The kynges swevene faire and wel *dream*
- 665 In Babiloyne the cité,
Wher that the wiseste of Caldee
Ne cowthen wite what it mente;
Bot he tolde al the hol entente,
As in partie it is befalla. *Could not figure out; meant
whole meaning*
- ¶ Of gold the ferste regne of alle
671 Was in that kinges time tho,
And laste manye daies so,
Therwhiles that the monarchie
Of al the world in that partie
675 To Babiloyne was soubgit;
And hield him stille in such a plit,
Til that the world began diverse.
And that was whan the king of Perse,
Which Cirus hyhte, agein the pes *region
subjected*
- 680 Forth with his sone Cambises
Of Babiloine al that empire,
Ryht as thei wolde hemself desire,
Put under in subjeccioun
And tok it in possessioun, *plight
began to change
Persia*
- 685 And slain was Baltazar the king,
Which loste his regne and al his thing. *Cyrus was named, against the peace
kingdom; possessions*
- ¶ And thus whan thei it hadde wonne,
The world of seler was begonne *(see note)*
- 690 And that of gold was passed oute.
And in this wise it goth aboute
Into the regne of Darius; *proceeds*
- And thanne it fell to Perse thus,
That Alisaundre put hem under, *overthrew them*
- 695 Which wroghte of armes many a wonder,
So that the monarchie lefte *Who
remained*
- With Grecs, and here astat uplefte,
And Persiens gon under fote, *their estate elevated*
- So soffre thei that nedes mote. *suffer what needs must be*
- ¶ And tho the world began of bras, *(see note)*
- 700 And that of seler ended was.
Bot for the time thus it laste,
Til it befell that ate laste
This king, whan that his day was come,
With strengthe of deth was overcome.

- 705 And natholes yet er he dyde,
He schop his regnes to divide
To knyhtes whiche him hadde served,
And after that thei have deserved
Gaf the conquestes that he wan;
Wherof gret werre tho began
Among hem that the regnes hadde,
Thurgh proud Envie which hem ladde,
Til it befell agein hem thus.
The noble Cesar Julius,
715 Which tho was king of Rome lond,
With gret bataille and with strong hond
Al Grece, Perse, and ek Caldee
Wan and put under, so that he
Noght al only of th'orient
720 Bot al the marche of th'occident,
Governeth under his empire,
As he that was hol lord and sire,
And hield thurgh his chivalrie
Of al this world the monarchie,
725 And was the ferste of that honour
Which tok the name of Emperour.
Wher Rome thanne wolde assaille,
Ther myhte nothing contrevaille,
Bot every contré moste obeie.
730 Tho goth the regne of bras aweie,
And comen is the world of stiel,
And stod above upon the whiel.
As stiel is hardest in his kynde,
Above alle othre that men finde
735 Of metals, such was Rome tho
The myhtieste, and laste so
Long time amonges the Romeins
Til thei become so vileins,
That the fals Emperour Leo
740 With Constantin his sone also
The patrimoine and the richesse,
Which to Silvestre in pure almesse
The ferste Constantinus lefte,
Fro holy cherche thei berefete.
745 Bot Adrian, which Pope was,
And syh the meschief of this cas,
Goth into France for to pleigne,
And preith the grete Charlemeine,
For Cristes sake and soule hele
750 That he wol take the querele
Of holy cherche in his defence.
- before; died
arranged for (shaped); to be divided

according to what they
Distributed; booty; won

war

those who
motivated them

armed might

Not only all of the East
territories of the West

absolute
prowess in warfare

of such honor

attack
resist with equal force

(see note)
[Fortune's] wheel

depraved (villainous)

stole

complain

health
quarrel

- And Charles for the reverence
Of God the cause hath undertake,
And with his host the weie take
755 Over the montz of Lombardie; Alps
Of Rome and al the tirandie
With blodi swerd he overcom
And the cité with strengthe nom tyrants
In such a wise; and there he wroghte by force took
760 That holy cherche agein he broghte manner
Into franchise, and doth restore
The Popes lost, and gaf him more. sovereignty; causes to be restored
And thus whan he his God hath served,
He tok, as he wel hath deserved,
765 The diademe and was coroned. loss of property
Of Rome and thus was abandoned surrendered
Th'empire, which cam nevere agein
Into the hond of no Romein;
Bot a long time it stod so stille
770 Under the Frenscche kynges wille, controlled
Til that Fortune hir whiel so ladde,
That afterward Lombardy it hadde,
Noght be the swerd, bot be soffrance
Of him that tho was kyng of France,
775 Which Karle Calvus cleped was; was called
And he resigneth in this cas
Th'empire of Rome unto Lowis
His cousin, which a Lombard is. relative
¶ And so hit laste into the year (see note)
780 Of Albert and of Berenger;
Bot thanne upon dissencioun
Thei felle, and in divisioun
Among hemself that were grete, themselves
So that thei loste the beyete possession
785 Of worshipe and of worldes pes, peace
Bot in proverbe natholes
Men sein, ful selden is that welthe seldom [it] is
Can soffre his oghne astat in helthe, tolerate its own; to be healthy
And that was on the Lombardz sene; seen in the case of the
790 Such comun strif was hem betwene
Thurgh coveitise and thurgh Envie
That every man drowh his partie,
Which myhte leden eny route,
Withinne burgh and ek withoute. seduced his followers
795 The comun ryht hath no felawe, Whoever might; mob
So that the governance of lawe city
Was lost, and for necessité, common law
Of that thei stode in such degré Since

- 800 Al only thurgh divisioun,
Hem nedeth in conclusioun
Of strange londes help beside.
And thus for thei hemself divide
And stonden out of reule unevene,
Of Alemaine princes sevene
805 Thei chose in this condicioun,
That upon here eleccioun
Th'empire of Rome scholde stonde.
And thus thei lefte it out of honde
For lacke of grace, and it forsoke,
810 That Alemans upon hem toke.
And to confermen here astat,
Of that thei founden in debat
Thei token the possessioun
After the composicioun
815 Among hemself, and therupon
Thei made an emperour anon,
Whos name as the cronique telleth
Was Othes; and so forth it duelleth,
Fro thilke day yit unto this,
820 Th'empire of Rome hath ben and is
To th'Alemans. And in this wise,
As ye tofore have herd divise
How Daniel the sweve expondeth
Of that ymage, on whom he foundeth
825 The world which after scholde falle,
Come is the laste tokne of alle.
Upon the feet of erthe and stiel
So stant this world now everydiele
Departed, which began riht tho,
830 Whan Rome was divided so.
And that is for to rewe sore,
For alway siththe more and more
The world empeireth every day.
Wheroft the sothe schewe may,
835 At Rome ferst if we beginne.
The wall and al the cit withinne
Stant in ruine and in decas;
The feld is wher the paleis was,
The toun is wast, and overthat,
840 If we beholde thilke astat
Which whilom was of the Romeins,
Of knythode and of citezeins,
To peise now with that beforne,
The chaf is take for the corn.
845 As for to speke of Romes myht,
- They had need finally
foreign
since they*
- From Germany
their*
- [So] that
strengthen their property
that [which]; in turmoil
gained rulership over*
- According to the agreement*
- Otto
that*
- Under jurisdiction of the Germans
prior to this have heard explained
dream
established by interpretation*
- thereafter
worsens
truth*
- city
Stands; decay
field
ruined; moreover
condition*
- freemen
compare (weigh)
accepted
Rome's power*

- Unethes stant ther ought upryht
Of worshipe or of worldes good,
As it before tyme stod.
And why the worshipe is aweie,
850 If that a man the sothe seie,
The cause hath ben divisioun,
Which moder of confusioun
Is wher sche cometh overal,
Noght only of the temporal
855 Bot of the spirital also.
The dede proeveth it is so,
And hath do many day er this,
Thurgh venom which that medled is
In holy cherche of ertly thing.
860 For Crist Himself makth knowleching
That no man may togedre serve
God and the world, bot if he swerve
Foward that on and stonde unstable;
And Cristes word may noght be fable.
865 The thing so open is at ſye,
It nedeth noght to ſpecifie
Or ſpeke ought more in this matiere;
Bot in this wiſe a man mai lere
Hou that the world is gon aboute,
870 The which wel nyh is wered oute,
After the forme of that figure
Which Daniel in his scripture
Expondeth, as tofore is told.
Of bras, of ſelver, and of gold
875 The world is passed and agon,
And now upon his olde ton
It ſtant of brutel erthe and ſtiel,
The whiche acorden nevere a diel;
So mot it nedes ſwerve aside
880 As thing the which men ſen divide.
☞ Th'apostel writ unto ous alle
And ſeith that upon ous is falle
Th'ende of the world; ſo may we knowe,
This ymage is nyh overthrowe,
885 Be which this world was ſignified,
That whilom was ſo magnefied,
And now is old and fieble and vil,
Full of meschief and of peril,
And ſtant divided ek also
890 Lich to the feet that were ſo,
As I tolde of the ſtatue above.
And this men ſen, thurgh lacke of love
- Scarcely stands; anything*
sees the truth
mingled
declares
unless he
Away from that one (God)
so evident to the eye
learn
worn
come to naught (gone to ruin)
toes
brittle (untrustworthy)
not at all
come apart
(see note)
nearly overthrown
By
feeble; vile
Like

- Where as the lond divided is,
It mot algate fare amis. *must continually*
- 895 And now to loke on every side,
A man may se the world divide,
The werres ben so general
Among the Cristene overal,
That every man now secheth wreche, *conflicts (wars)*
- 900 And yet these clerkes alday preche
And sein, good dede may non be
Which stant noght upon charité.
I not hou charité may stonde,
Wher dedly werre is take on honde. *seeks vengeance*
- 905 Bot al this wo is cause of man,
The which that wit and reson can,
And that in tokne and in witnesse
That ilke ymage bar liknesse
Of man and of non other beste. *I do not know how*
- 910 For ferst unto the mannes heste
Was every creature ordeined,
Bot afterward it was restreigned.
Whan that he fell, thei fallen eke,
Whan he wax sek, thei woxen seke; *creature*
- 915 For as the man hath passioun,
Of seknesse, in comparisoun
So soffren othre creatures. *command (dominion)*
- ¶ Lo, ferst the hevenly figures,
The sonne and mone eclipsen bothe. *created*
- 920 And ben with mannes senne wrothe;
The purest eir for senne alofte
Hath ben and is corrupt ful ofte,
Right now the hyhe wyndes blowe,
And anon after thei ben lowe, *also*
- 925 Now clowdy and now clier it is. *sick*
- So may it proeven wel be this,
A mannes senne is for to hate,
Which makth the welkne to debate.
And for to se the propreté *similarly*
- 930 Of every thyng in his degree,
Benethe forth among ous hiere
Al stant aliche in this matiere.
The see now ebbeth, now it floweth, *(see note)*
- 935 The lond now welketh, now it groweth,
Now be the trees with leves grene,
Now thei be bare and nothing sene,
Now be the lusti somer floures
Now be the stormy wynter shoures,
Now be the daies, now the nyghtes, *clear*
- mankind's sins made angry*
- air; on high*
- infected*
- sin; to be hated*
- causes; heavens to be in turmoil*
- On earth*
- sea*
- withers*
- are*

- 940 So stant ther nothing al uprythes.
 Now it is lyht, now it is derk,
 And thus stant al the worldes werk
 After the disposicioun
 Of man and his condicioun.
- 945 Forthi Gregoire in his *Moral* (see note)
 Seith that a man in special
 The lasse world is properly,
 And that he proeveth redely.
 For man of soule resonable
- 950 Is to an angel resemblable,
 And lich to beste he hath fielinge,
 And lich to trees he hath growinge;
 The stones ben and so is he.
 Thus of his propre qualité
- 955 The man, as telleth the clergie, as learning teaches us
 Is as a world in his partie,
 And whan this litel world mistorneth,
 The grete world al overtorneth.
 The lond, the see, the firmament,
- 960 Thei axen alle jugement make war against him
 Agein the man and make him werre.
 Therwhile himself stant out of herre,
 The remenant wol noght acorde.
 And in this wise, as I recorde,
- 965 The man is cause of alle wo, stands out of kilter (ME herre, "hinge")
 Why this world is divided so.

[DIVISION AND EVIL]

- ¶ Division, the Gospell seith, (see note)
 On hous upon another leith,
 Til that the regne al overthrowe.
 One; lays
 realm
- 970 And thus may every man wel knowe,
 Division aboven alle
 Is thing which makth the world to falle,
 And evere hath do sith it began. since
- ¶ It may ferst proeve upon a man; (see note)
 The which, for his complexioun
 Is mad upon divisioun
 Of cold, of hot, of moist, of drye,
 He mot be verray kynde dye, must by [his] very nature die
 For the contraire of his astat
 contrariness
- 975 Stant evermor in such debat,
 Til that o part be overcome,
 Ther may no final pes be nome.
 Bot otherwise, if a man were peace be attained

	Mad al togedre of o matiere	<i>Made; one</i>
985	Withouten interrupcioun, Ther scholde no corrupcioun Engendre upon that unité. Bot for ther is diversité	<i>separation of parts</i>
	Withinne himself, he may noght laste,	<i>disintegration</i>
990	That he ne deieth ate laste.	<i>because</i>
	Bot in a man yit over this	<i>survive</i>
	Full gret divisioun ther is, Thurgh which that he is evere in strif,	<i>But that he ultimately dies</i>
	Whil that him lasteth eny lif.	<i>(see note)</i>
995	The bodi and the soule also Among hem ben divided so, That what thing that the body hateth	<i>themselves</i>
	The soule loveth and debateth;	<i>fights [against the body]</i>
	Bot natholes fulofte is sene	
1000	Of werre which is hem betwene The fieble hath wonne the victoire.	
	And who so drawth into memoire	<i>(see note)</i>
	What hath befallie of old and newe,	
	He may that werre sore rewe,	<i>war sorely lament</i>
1005	Which ferst began in Paradis.	
	For ther was proeved what it is,	<i>demonstrated</i>
	And what desese there it wroghete;	
	For thilke werre tho forth broghte	
	The vice of alle dedly sinne,	
1010	Thurgh which division cam inne	
	Among the men in erthe hierie,	<i>(see note)</i>
	And was the cause and the matiere	
	Why God the grete flodes sende,	
	Of al the world and made an ende	<i>sent</i>
1015	Bot Noë with his felaschipe,	<i>Except Noah</i>
	Which only weren saulf be schipe.	<i>safe by</i>
	And over that thurgh senne it com	<i>besides that; came about</i>
	That Nembrot such emprise nom,	<i>enterprise undertook (see note)</i>
	Whan he the Tour Babel on heihte	
1020	Let make, as he that wolde feihte	<i>Had made; fight</i>
	Agein the hihe Goddes myht,	
	Wherof divided anon ryht	<i>immediately</i>
	Was the langage in such entente,	
	Ther wiste non what other mente,	<i>none knew</i>
1025	So that thei myhten noght procede.	
	And thus it stant of every dede	
	Wher senne takth the cause on honde	
	It may upriht noght longe stonde;	
	For senne of his condicioun	
1030	Is moder of divisioun	<i>mother</i>

- ¶ And tokne whan the world schal faile.
 For so seith Crist withoute faile,
 That nyh upon the worldes ende
 Pes and accord awey schol wende
 1035 And alle charité schal cesse
 Among the men, and hate encresce;
 And whan these toknes ben befalle,
 Al sodeinly the ston schal falle,
 As Daniel it hath beknowe,
 1040 Which al this world schal overthrowe,
 And every man schal thanne arise
 To joie or elles to juise,
 Wher that he schal for evere dwelle,
 Or straught to hevene or straught to helle.
 1045 In hevene is pes and al accord,
 Bot helle is ful of such discord
 That ther may be no loveday.
 Forthi good is, whil a man may,
 Echon to sette pes with other
 1050 And loven as his oghne brother;
 So may he winne worldes welthe
 And afterward his soule helthe.

[EXAMPLE OF ARION]

- ¶ Bot wolde God that now were on
 An other such as Arion,
 1055 Which hadde an harpe of such temprure,
 And therto of so good mesure
 He song, that he the bestes wilde
 Made of his note tame and milde,
 The hinde in pes with the leoun,
 1060 The wolf in pes with the molton,
 The hare in pees stod with the hound;
 And every man upon this ground
 Which Arion that time herde,
 Als wel the lord as the schepherde,
 1065 He broghte hem alle in good accord;
 So that the comun with the lord,
 And lord with the comun also,
 He sette in love bothe tuo
 And putte awey malencolie.
 1070 That was a lusti melodie,
 Whan every man with other low;
 And if ther were such on now,
 Which cowthe harpe as he tho dede,
 He myhte availe in many a stede

*signifies (see note)**close to (nigh)
shall depart
cease**foreseen**be resurrected
justice**own**(see note)**tunefulness
meter/harmonic ratio?
wild animals**deer
sheep**them**citizenry (common people)**laughed
such a person
Who
place*

- 1075 To make pes wher now is hate;
 For whan men thenken to debate,
 I not what other thing is good.
 Bot wher that wisdom waxeth wod,
 And reson torneth into rage,
 engage in conflict
 do not know
 goes mad
- 1080 So that mesure upon oulfrage
 Hath set his world, it is to drede;
 For that bringth in the comun drede,
 Which stant at every mannes dore.
 Bot whan the scharpnesse of the spore
 door
 spur
- 1085 The horse side smit to sore,
 It grieveth ofte. And now nomore,
 As for to speke of this matiere,
 Which non bot only God may stiere.
 horse's; pierced too sorely
 guide (govern)

EXPLICIT PROLOGUS

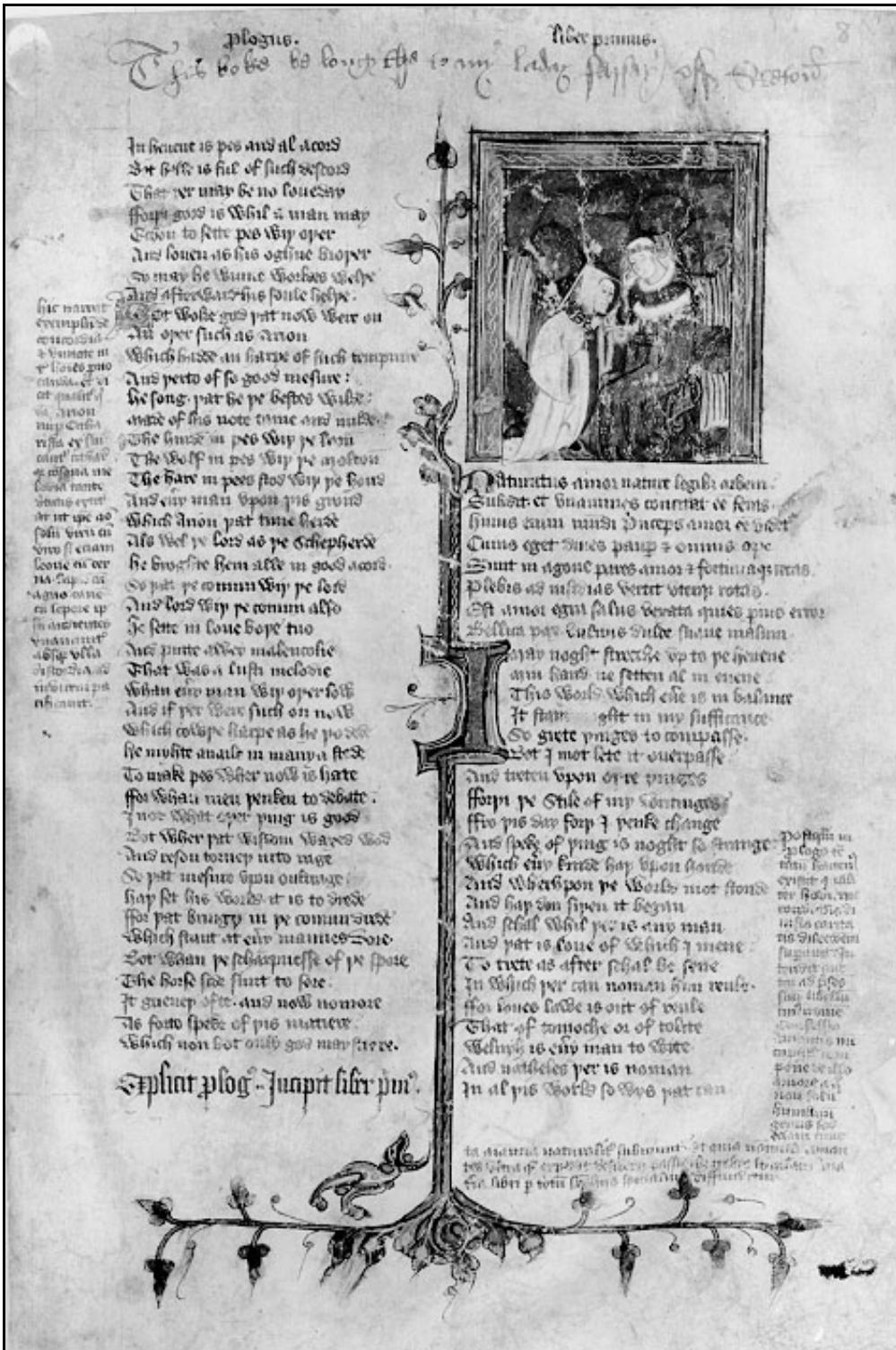


Illustration 3: MS Fairfax 3, fol. 8r. Bodleian Library, Oxford University. The Confession of the Lover to Genius.



CONFESSIO AMANTIS: BOOK 1 (PRIDE)

INCIPIT LIBER PRIMUS

[ON LOVE]

- i. *Naturatus amor nature legibus orbem* (see note)
Subdit, et vnanimes concitat esse feras: (see note)
Huius enim mundi Princeps amor esse videtur,
Cuius eget diues, pauper et omnis ope.
Sunt in agone pares amor et fortuna, que cecas
Plebis ad insidias vertit vterque rotas.
Est amor egra salus, vexata quies, pius error,
Bellica pax, vulnus dulce, suave malum.¹

- I may noght strecche up to the hevene
Min hand, ne setten al in evene
This world, which evere is in balance:
It stant noght in my sufficance
5 So grete thinges to compasse,
Bot I mot lete it overpassee
And treten upon othre thinges.
Forthi the stile of my writinges
Fro this day forth I thenke change
10 And speke of thing is noght so strange,
Which every kinde hath upon honde,
And wherupon the world mot stonde,
And hath don sithen it began,
And schal whil ther is any man;
15 And that is love, of which I mene
To trete, as after schal be sene.
In which ther can no man him reule,
For loves lawe is out of reule,
- stands not; ability
undertake
must; go by
discourse on
Therefore; style
plan to (see note)
something [that] is not; foreign
nature has at hand
must
since
no one can govern himself
unruly passion causes disorder

¹ *Love fashioned for nature's ends subjects the world to the laws of nature, and incites harmonized ones to wildness [or: incites wild ones to harmony]. Love is seen to be the prince of this world, whose bounty rich man, poor man, and every man demand. Equal in the contest are Love and Fortune, both of which turn their blind wheels to entrap the people. Love is a sharp salvation, a troubled quiet, a pious error, a warring peace, a sweet wound, a soothing ill.*

	That of to moche or of to lite	<i>too much; too little</i>
20	Wel nyh is every man to wyte, And natholes ther is no man In al this world so wys, that can Of love tempre the mesure, Bot as it falth in aventure.	<i>blame</i> <i>For, in truth,</i>
25	For wit ne strengthe may noght helpe, And he which elles wolde him yelpe Is rathest throwen under fote, Ther can no wiht therof do bote. For yet was nevere such covine,	<i>falls by chance</i> <i>Neither intelligence nor</i>
30	That couthe ordeine a medicine To thing which God in lawe of kinde Hath set, for ther may no man finde The rihte salve of such a sor. It hath and schal ben everemor	<i>who otherwise; boast</i> <i>most quickly; foot</i> <i>Where no one; be of help</i> <i>conspiracy</i> <i>Who knew how to concoct</i>
35	That love is maister wher he wile, Ther can no lif make other skile; For wher as evere him lest to sette, Ther is no myht which him may lette. Bot what schal fallen ate laste,	<i>natural law</i>
40	The sothe can no wisdom caste, Bot as it falleth upon chance. For if ther evere was balance Which of fortune stant governed, I may wel lieve as I am lerned	<i>remedy; ailment</i>
45	That love hath that balance on honde, Which wol no reson understande. For love is blind and may noght se, Forthi may no certeinete Be set upon his jugement,	<i>no creature do otherwise</i> <i>wherever he chooses to set himself</i>
50	Bot as the whiel aboute went He gifth his graces undeserved, And fro that man which hath him served Ful ofte he takth aweye his fees, As he that pleieth ate dees;	<i>power that may stop him</i>
55	And therupon what schal befalle He not, til that the chance falle, Wher he schal lese or he schal winne. And thus ful ofte men beginne, That if thei wisten what it mente,	<i>reliance</i>
60	Thei wolde change al here entente. And for to proven it is so, I am miselven on of tho, Which to this scole am underfonge. For it is siththe go noght longe,	<i>believe; taught</i>
65	As for to speke of this matiere,	<i>wheel [of Fortune] turns</i> <i>gives</i>
		<i>winnings</i> <i>dice</i>
		<i>knows not; happens</i> <i>Whether; lose</i>
		<i>knew</i>
		<i>their (see note)</i>
		<i>myself one of those</i> <i>made a member of</i>
		<i>since</i>

I may you telle, if ye woll hier,
A wonder hap which me befell,
That was to me bothe hard and fell,
Touchende of love and his fortune,
70 The which me liketh to comune
And pleinly for to telle it oute.
To hem that ben lovers aboue
Fro point to point I wol declare
And wryten of my woful care,
75 Mi wofull day, my wofull chance,
That men mowe take remembrance
Of that thei schall hierafter rede:
For in good feith this wolde I rede,
That every man ensample take
80 Of wisdom which him is betake,
And that he wot of good aprise
To teche it forth, for such emprise
Is for to preise; and therfore I
Woll wryte and schewe al openly
85 How love and I togedre mette
Wheroft the world ensample fette
Mai after this, whan I am go,
Of thilke unsely jolif wo,
Whos reule stant out of the weie,
90 Nou glad and nou gladnesse aweie,
And yet it may noght be withstonde
For oght that men may understande.

hear
wondrous adventure
cruel
its
explain (communicate)

may
what; read next
advise

to him is allotted
knows by sound learning
enterprise
praiseworthy

obtain (fetch)
gone
unfortunate happy woe

Now

[COMPLAINT TO CUPID AND VENUS]

- ii. *Non ego Sampsonis vires, non Herculis arma* (see note)
Vinco, sum sed vt hii victus amore pari.
Vt discant alii, docet experientia facti,
Rebus in ambiguis que sit habenda via.
Deuius ordo ducis temptata pericla sequentem
Instruit a tergo, ne simul ille cadat.
Me quibus ergo Venus, casus, laqueauit amantem,
*Orbis in exemplum scribere tendo palam.*¹

Upon the point that is befall
Of love, in which that I am falle,

¹ *I do not indeed outdo Sampson's powers or Hercules' arms; but I am conquered as they were, by an equal love. Experience of the deed teaches so that others might learn what path should be held amidst uncertain circumstances. The twisting progress of one leading instructs another following at his back in the dangers already met, so that he too should not fall. Therefore, those disasters by which Venus ensnared me as a lover I strive to write, publicly, as example for the world.*

- 95 I thenke telle my matiere:
Now herkne, who that wol it hiere,
Of my fortune how that it ferde.
☞ This enderday, as I forthferde
To walke, as I yow telle may,
100 And that was in the monthe of Maii,
Whan every brid hath chose his make
And thenkth his merthes for to make
Of love that he hath achieved;
Bot so was I nothing relieved,
105 For I was further fro my love
Than erthe is fro the hevene above.
As for to speke of eny sped,
So wiste I me non other red,
Bot as it were a man forfare
110 Unto the wode I gan to fare,
Noght for to singe with the briddes,
For whanne I was the wode amiddes,
I fond a swote grene pleine,
And ther I gan my wo compleigne
115 Wisshinge and wepinge al myn one,
For other merthes made I none.
So hard me was that ilke throwe,
That ofte sithes overthrowe
To grounde I was withoute breth;
120 And evere I wisshide after deth,
Whanne I out of my peine awok,
And caste up many a pitous lok
Unto the hevene, and seide thus:
[Amans] “O thou Cupide, O thou Venus,
125 Thow god of love and thou goddesse,
Wher is pité? wher is meknesse?
Now doth me pleinly live or dye,
For certes such a maladie
As I now have and longe have hadd,
130 It myhte make a wis man madd,
If that it scholde longe endure.
O Venus, queene of loves cure,
Thou lif, thou lust, thou mannes hele,
Behold my cause and my querele,
135 And yif me som part of thi grace,
So that I may finde in this place
If thou be gracious or non.”
And with that word I sawh anon
The kyng of love and qweene bothe;
140 Bot he that kyng with yhen wrothe
His chiere aweiward fro me caste,
- happened (fared)
other day; went forth (see note)
- bird; mate
- obtained
- from
- any success
know; council
worn out with travel
- wood; go
birds
- sweet
- alone by myself
- [for] me; very pain (circumstance)
many times
- life; delight; well-being
complaint
- Whether
- angry eyes
countenance

- And forth he passedede ate laste.
 Bot natheles er he forth wente
 A firy dart me thoghte he hente
 145 And threw it thurgh myn herte rote:
 In him fond I non other bote,
 For lenger list him noght to duelle.
 Bot sche that is the source and welle
 Of wel or wo, that schal betide
 150 To hem that loven, at that tide
 Abod, bot for to tellen hiere
 Sche cast on me no goodly chiere:
 Thus natheles to me sche seide,
 [Venus] “What art thou, sone?” and I abreide
 155 Riht as a man doth out of slep,
 And therof tok sche riht good kep
 And bad me nothing ben adrad:
 Bot for al that I was noght glad,
 For I ne sawh no cause why.
 160 And eft scheo asketh, what was I:
 [Amans] I seide, “A caitif that lith hiere:
 What wolde ye, my ladi diere?
 Schal I ben hol or elles dye?”
 [Venus] Sche seide, “Tell thi maladie:
 165 What is thi sor of which thou pleignest?
 Ne hyd it noght, for if thou feignest,
 I can do thee no medicine.”
 [Amans] “Ma dame, I am a man of thyne,
 That in thi court have longe served,
 170 And aske that I have deserved,
 Som wele after my longe wo.”
 And sche began to loure tho,
 [Venus] And seide, “Ther is manye of yow
 Faitours, and so may be that thou
 175 Art riht such on, and be feintise
 Seist that thou hast me do servise.”
 And natheles sche wiste wel,
 Mi world stod on an other whiel
 Withouten eny faiterie:
 180 Bot algate of my maladie
 Sche bad me telle and seie hir trowthe.
 [Amans] “Ma dame, if ye wolde have rowthe,”
 Quod I, “thannewold I telle yow.”
 [Venus] “Sey forth,” quod sche, “and tell me how;
 185 Schew me thi seknesse everydier.”
 [Amans] “Ma dame, that can I do wel,
 Be so my lif therto wol laste.”
 With that hir lok on me sche caste,
- before he left
 seized
 deepest part of my heart
 relief (reward)
 [it] pleased; dwell
 well
 gladness (weal); happen
 them; time
 Awaited; speak of here
 regard
 started
 notice
 afraid
 then (after) she
 captive (wretch); lies
 be made well (whole); die
 sorrow; complain
 hide the truth
 help you with
 scowl then
 Imposters (OF faiteor, “contriver”)
 by deceit
 Say
 knew
 wheel [of Fortune]
 false pretense
 in any case
 compassion
 Provided that; should last to that extent

- [Venus] And seide: "In auuter if thou live,
 190 Mi will is ferst that thou be schrive;
 And natheles how that it is
 I wot miself, bot for al this
 Unto my prest, which comth anon,
 I woll thou telle it on and on,
 195 Bothe all thi thought and al thi werk.
 O Genius myn oghne clerk,
 Com forth and hier this mannes schrifte,"
 Quod Venus tho; and I uplifte
 Min hefd with that and gan beholde
 200 The selve prest which as sche wolde
 Was redy there and sette him doun
 To hiere my confessioun.
- In doubt
be confessed/absolved*
- know
priest, who will arrive immediately
one thing at a time*
- hear; confession
then; raised up*
- self-same
himself*

[CONFESSIO AMANTIS, THE LOVER'S CONFESSION]

- iii. *Confessus Genio si sit medicina salutis
 Experiar morbis, quos tulit ipsa Venus.
 Lesa quidem ferro medicantur membra saluti,
 Raro tamen medicum vulnus amoris habet.*¹ (see note)
- This worthi prest, this holy man
 To me spekende thus began,
 [Confessor] And seide: "Benedicité,
 Mi sone; of the felicité
 Of love and ek of all the wo
 Thou schalt thee schrive of bothe tuo.
 [P] What thou er this for loves sake
 210 Hast felt, let nothing be forsake,
 Tell pleinliche as it is befalle."
 And with that word I gan doun falle
 On knees, and with devocioun
 And with full gret contricioun
- [Amans] I seide thanne: "Dominus,
 Min holi fader Genius;
 So as thou hast experience
 Of love, for whos reverence
 Thou schalt me schriven at this time,
 220 I prai thee let me noght mistime
 Mi schrifte, for I am destourbed
 In al myn herte, and so contourbed,
 That I ne may my wittes gete,
- speaking
Bless you*
- also*
- before (see note)*
- Lord*
- confession
perturbed*

¹ Having confessed to Genius, I will try to discover whether that is the healing medicine for the diseases that Venus herself has transmitted. Even limbs wounded by the knife may be brought to health by treatment; yet rarely does the wound of love have a physician.

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 225 | So schal I moche thing forgete.
Bot if thou wolt my schrifte oppose
Fro point to point, thanne, I suppose,
Ther schal nothing be left behinde.
Bot now my wittes ben so blinde,
That I ne can miselven teche." | question me about my confession
left unexamined |
| 230 | Tho he began anon to preche,
And with his wordes debonaire
He seide to me softe and faire: | Then; soon |
| 235 | [Confessor] "Thi schrifte to oppose and hiere,
Mi sone, I am assigned hiere
Be Venus the godesse above,
Whos prest I am touchende of love. | By
pertaining to (see note) |
| | Bot nathelas for certein skile
I mot algate and nedes wile
Noght only make my spekynges
Of love, bot of othre thinges,
That touchen to the cause of vice. | But nonetheless; specific reasons
must continuously |
| 240 | For that belongeth to th'office
Of prest, whos ordre that I bere,
So that I wol nothing forbere,
That I the vices on and on | leave out
point by point |
| 245 | Ne schal thee schewen everychon;
Wheroft thou myht take evidence
To reule with thi conscience.
Bot of conclusion final | |
| 250 | Conclude I wol in special
For love, whos servant I am,
And why the cause is that I cam.
So thenke I to don bothe tuo, | |
| 255 | Ferst that myn ordre longeth to,
The vices for to telle arewe,
Bot next above alle othre schewe
Of love I wol the propretes,
How that thei stonde be degrees | in succession (a row) |
| 260 | After the disposicioun
Of Venus, whos condicioun
I moste folwe, as I am holde.
For I with love am al withholde,
So that the lasse I am to wyte, | bound
in bondage |
| 265 | Thogh I ne conne bot a lyte
Of othre thinges that ben wise:
I am noght tawht in such a wise;
For it is noght my comun us
To speke of vices and vertus, | less; blame
know only a little
prudent |
| 270 | Bot al of love and of his lore,
For Venus bokes of no more | way
custom (use)
teaching |

	Me techen nowther text ne glose.	commentary
	Bot for als moche as I suppose	
	It sit a prest to be wel thewed,	becomes; instructed
	And schame it is if he be lewed,	ignorant
275	Of my presthode after the forme	
	I wol thi schrifte so enforme,	
	That ate leste thou schalt hiere	
	The vices, and to thi matiere	
	Of love I schal hem so remene,	recount (bring back)
280	That thou schalt knowe what thei mene.	
	For what a man schal axe or sein	ask
	Touchende of schrifte, it mot be plein,	Regarding confession; must be complete
	It nedeth noght to make it queinte,	strange
	For trowthe hise wordes wol noght peinte:	cover over
285	That I wole axe of thee forthi,	That [which]; ask you therefore
	My sone, it schal be so pleinly,	
	That thou schalt knowe and understande	
	The pointz of schrifte how that thei stonde."	

[SENSES OF SIGHT AND SOUND]

iv.	<i>Visus et auditus fragilis sunt ostia mentis, Que viciosa manus claudere nulla potest. Est ibi larga via, graditur qua cordis ad antrum Hostis, et ingrediens fossa talenta rapit. Hec michi confessor Genius primordia profert, Dum sit in extremis vita remorsa malis. Nunc tamen ut poterit semiviva loquela fateri, Verba per os timide conscientia mentis agam.¹</i>	(see note)
-----	--	------------

	Between the lif and deth I herde	
290	This prestes tale er I answerde,	before
	And thanne I preide him for to seie	speak
	His will, and I it wolde obeie	
	After the forme of his apprise.	teaching
☞	Tho spak he to me in such a wise,	Then; manner (see note)
295	And bad me that I scholde schryve	confess
	As touchende of my wittes fyve,	senses
	And schape that thei were amended	see to it that
	Of that I hadde hem mispended.	
	For tho be proprely the gates,	<i>In whatever way I had abused (misspent) them those are</i>

¹ *Vision and hearing are fragile gateways of the mind, which no vice-weakened hand can keep shut. A wide path is there by which an enemy strides to the inner cave of the heart and, entering, seizes the buried coin. These first principles Genius the Confessor offers me, while my vexed life is in deadly peril. But now in order that a half-living speech might be able to be uttered, I will fearfully press out through my mouth words privy to my thoughts.*

- 300 Thurgh whiche as to the herte algates
Comth alle thing unto the feire,
Which may the mannes soule empeire.
And now this matiere is broght inne:
assuredly
our dealings (market-fair)
harm
- [Confessor] "Mi sone, I thenke ferst beginne
305 To wite how that thin yhe hath stonde,
The which is, as I understande,
The moste principal of alle,
Thurgh whom that peril mai befalla.
know; your eye has fared
of all [the senses]
nature
- 310 Ful manye such a man mai finde,
Whiche evere caste aboue here yhe,
To loke if that thei myhte aspie
Ful ofte thing which hem ne toucheth,
Bot only that here herte soucheth
315 In hindringe of an other wiht;
And thus ful many a worthi knyht
And many a lusti lady bothe
Have be ful ofte sythe wrothe.
So that an yhe is as a thief
320 To love, and doth ful gret meschief;
And also for his oghne part
Ful ofte thilke firy dart
Of love, which that evere brenneth,
Thurgh him into the herte renneth:
325 And thus a mannes yhe ferst
Himselfe grieveth alther werst,
And many a time that he knoweth
Unto his oghne harm it groweth.
Mi sone, herkne now forthi
330 A tale, to be war therby
Thin yhe for to kepe and warde,
So that it passe nocht his warde.
that does not pertain to them
their heart suspects
creature
been many times angry
eye
its own
that same fiery
burns
Through; runs (pierces)
eye first
worst of all
listen to; therefore
made aware
guard
its domain

[TALE OF ACTEON]

- Ovide telleth in his bok
¶ Ens ample touchende of mislok,
335 And seith hou whilom ther was on,
A worthi lord, which Acteon
Was hote, and he was cousin nyh
To him that Thebes ferst on hyh
Up sette, which king Cadme hyhte.
340 This Acteon, as he wel myhte,
Above alle othre caste his chiere,
And used it fro yer to yere,
With houndes and with grete hornes
inappropriate looking (see note)
how once there was one
Was named; near-relative
high
Cadmus was called
set his heart
customarily

- 345 Among the wodes and the thornes
 To make his hunting and his chace: *chase*
 Where him best thoghte in every place
 To finde gamen in his weie,
 Ther rod he for to hunte and pleie. *amuse himself*
 So him befell upon a tide *time*
 350 On his hunting as he cam ride, *came to ride*
 In a forest alone he was:
 He syh upon the grene gras
 The faire freisshe floures springe,
 He herde among the leves singe
 355 The throstle with the nyhtingale:
 Thus er he wiste into a dale *Thus, before he knew it*
 He cam, wher was a litel plein, *clearing*
 All round aboute wel besein *furnished*
 With buisshes grene and cedres hyhe; *green bushes; tall cedars*
 360 And ther withinne he caste his yhe. *eye*
 Amidd the plein he syh a welle,
 So fair ther myhte no man telle,
 In which Diana naked stod
 To bathe and pleie hire in the flod *bathe herself; play; water*
 365 With many a nimphe, which hire serveth. *who served her*
 Bot he his yhe awey ne swerveth *eye did not turn away*
 Fro hire which was naked al, *From her who was stark naked*
 And sche was wonder wroth withal. *intensely angry*
 370 And him, as sche which was godesse,
 Forschop anon, and the liknesse *take on [the likeness] of*
 Sche made him taken of an hert, *in front of; was surprised*
 Which was tofore hise houndes stert,
 That ronne besiliche aboute
 With many an horn and many a route,
 375 That maden mochel noise and cry: *horn-blast; company of hunters*
 And ate laste, unhappely,
 This hert his oghne houndes slowhe *Who made great hue and cry*
 And him for vengance al todrowhe. *his own hounds slew the hart*
utterly tore him apart
Confessor Lo now, my sone, what it is
 380 A man to caste his yhe amis, *eye*
 Which Acteon hath dere aboght; *dearly bought*
 Be war forthi and do it noght.
 For ofte, who that hiede toke,
 Betre is to winke than to loke.
 385 And for to proven it is so,
 Ovide the poete also
 A tale which to this matiere
 Acordeth seith, as thou schalt hiere.

[TALE OF MEDUSA]

- 390 In Metamor it telleth thus,
How that a lord which Phorceus
Was hote, hadde dowhtres thre.
Bot upon here nativit 
Such was the constellacioun,
That out of mannes nacioun
395 Fro kynde thei be so miswent,
That to the liknesse of serpent
Thei were bore, and so that on
Of hem was cleped Stellibon,
That other soster Suriale,
400 The thridde, as telleth in the tale,
Medusa hihte, and natheles
Of comun name Gorgones
In every contr  ther aboute,
As monstres whiche that men doute,
405 Men clepen hem; and bot on yhe
Among hem thre in pourpartie
Thei hadde, of which thei myhte se:
Now hath it this, now hath it sche;
After that cause and nede it ladde,
410 Be throwes ech of hem it hadde.
A wonder thing yet more amis
Ther was, wheroft I telle al this.
What man on hem his chiere caste
And hem behield, he was als faste
415 Out of a man into a ston
Forschape, and thus ful manyon
Deceived were, of that thei wolde
Mislope, wher that thei ne scholde.
Bot Perseus that worthi knyht,
420 Whom Pallas of hir grete myht
Halp, and tok him a schield therto,
And ek the god Mercurie also
Lente him a swerd, he, as it fell,
Beyende Athlans the hihe hell
425 These monstres soghte, and there he fond
Diverse men of thilke lond
Thurgh sihte of hem mistorned were,
Stondende as stones hiere and there.
Bot, he, which wisdom and prouesse
430 Hadde of the god and the godesse,
The schield of Pallas gan embrace,
With which he covereth sauf his face,
Mercuries swerd and out he drowh,
- Was called (see note)*
their nativity
- From nature; askew*
- born; one*
them was called
- was called*
- fear*
only one eye
to share
- By turns*
- countenance cast*
beheld them
- Transformed; full many a one*
- Pallas Athena*
gave him
- as it happened*
Beyond Atlas; high hill
- disfigured*
- placed on his arm*
safely

- And so he bar him that he slowh
 435 These dredful monstres alle thre.
Confessor Lo now, my sone, avise thee,
 That thou thi sihte noght misuse:
 Cast noght thin yhe upon Meduse,
 That thou be torned into ston:
 440 For so wys man was nevere non,
 Bot if he wel his yhe kepe
 And take of fol delit no kepe,
 That he with lust nys ofte nome,
 Thurgh strengthe of love and overcome.
 445 Of mislokynge how it hath ferd,
 As I have told, now hast thou herd,
 Mi goode sone, and tak good hiede.
 And over this yet I thee rede
 That thou be war of thin heringe,
 450 Which to the herte the tidinge
 Of many a vanité hath broght,
 To tarie with a mannes thoght.
 And natheles good is to hiere
 Such thing wherof a man may lere
 455 That to vertu is accordant,
 And toward al the remenant
 Good is to torne his ere fro;
 For elles, bot a man do so,
 Him may ful ofte mysbefalle.
 460 I rede ensample amonges alle,
 Wherof to kepe wel an ere
 It oghte pute a man in fere.

[ASPIDIS THE SERPENT]

- A serpent, which that Aspidis
 Is cleped, of his kynde hath this,
 465 That he the ston noblest of alle,
 The which that men carbuncle calle,
 Berth in his hed above on heihte.
 For which whan that a man be sleyhte
 The ston to winne and him to daunte,
 470 With his carecte him wolde enchaunte,
 Anon as he perceiveth that,
 He leith doun his on ere al plat
 Unto the ground, and halt it faste,
 And ek that other ere als faste
 475 He stoppeth with his tail so sore,
 That he the wordes lasse or more
 Of his enchantement ne hiereth;

he so carried himself

take heed

*wanton delight
is not often taken*

*advise you
hearing*

With which to vex

learn

What; in agreement

*ear [away] from
unless*

(see note)

*Bears; in the upper part of his body
by cunning
overwhelm
conjuration (charm)
As soon as
places; one ear; flat
holds
also; ear just as tightly
assiduously
[So] that
doesn't hear*

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 480 | And in this wise himself he skiereth,
So that he hath the wordes weyved
And thurgh his ere is noght deceived. | <i>manner; defends
excluded (avoided)</i> |
|-----|---|---|

[SIRENS]

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| | An othre thing, who that recordeth,
Lich unto this ensample acordeth,
Which in the tale of Troie I finde.
Sirenes of a wonder kynde | <i>if one calls it to mind</i> |
| 485 | Ben monstres, as the bokes tellen,
And in the grete se thei duellen:
Of body bothe and of visage
Lik unto wommen of yong age
Up fro the navele on hih thei be, | <i>(see note)</i>
<i>sea</i> |
| 490 | And doun benethe, as men mai se,
Thei bere of fissahe the figure.
And over this of such nature
Thei ben, that with so swete a stevene
Lik to the melodie of hevene | <i>above</i>
<i>voice</i> |
| 495 | In wommanysshe vois thei singe,
With notes of so gret likinge,
Of such mesure, of such musike,
Wheroft the schipes thei beswike
That passen be the costes there. | <i>delight</i>
<i>deceive</i> |
| 500 | For whan the schipmen leie an ere
Unto the vois, in here avys
Thei wene it be a paradys,
Which after is to hem an helle.
For reson may noght with hem duelle, | <i>give ear</i>
<i>their judgment</i>
<i>think</i> |
| 505 | Whan thei tho grete lustes hiere;
Thei conne noght here schipes stiere,
So besiliche upon the note
Thei herkne, and in such wise assote,
That thei here rihte cours and weie | <i>stay with them</i>
<i>those great delights hear</i>
<i>do not know how to steer their ships</i>
<i>busily; song</i>
<i>listen; are befuddled</i> |
| 510 | Forgete, and to here ere obeie,
And seilen til it so befall
That thei into the peril falle,
Where as the schipes be todrawe,
And thei ben with the monstres slawe. | <i>to their ear obey</i>
<i>sail</i> |
| 515 | Bot fro this peril nathelis
With his wisdom king Uluxes
Ascapeth and it overpasseth;
For he tofor the hond compasseth
That no man of his compaignie | <i>broken apart</i>
<i>slain</i> |
| 520 | Hath pouer unto that folie
His ere for no lust to caste; | <i>Ulysses</i>
<i>gets past</i>
<i>beforehand devises</i> |

- For he hem stoppede alle faste,
 That non of hem mai hiere hem singe.
 So whan thei comen forth seilinge,
 Ther was such governance on honde,
 That thei the monstres have withstonde
 And slain of hem a gret partie.
 Thus was he sauf with his navie,
 This wise king, thurgh governance.
- Confessor** Wheroft, my sone, in remembrance
 Thou myht ensample taken hiere,
 As I have told, and what thou hiere
 Be wel war, and gif no credence,
 Bot if thou se more evidence.
- 535 For if thou woldest take kepe
 And wisly cowthest warde and kepe
 Thin yhe and ere, as I have spoke,
 Than haddest thou the gates stoke
 Fro such sotie as comth to winne
 540 Thin hertes wit, which is withinne,
 Wheroft that now thi love excedeth
 Mesure, and many a peine bredeth.
 Bot if thou cowghest sette in reule
 Tho tuo, the thre were eth to reule:
 545 Forthi as of thi wittes five
 I wole as now no more schryve,
 Bot only of these ilke tuo.
 Tell me therfore if it be so,
 Hast thou thin yhen oght misthrowe?"
- Amans** "Mi fader, ye, I am beknowe,
 I have hem cast upon Meduse,
 Theroft I may me noght excuse:
 Min herte is growen into ston,
 So that my lady therupon
- 555 Hath such a priente of love grave,
 That I can noght miselvse save."
- Opponit Confessor** "What seist thou, sone, as of thin ere?"
- Respondet Amans** "Mi fader, I am guiltyf there;
 For whanne I may my lady hiere,
 560 Mi wit with that hath lost his stiere:
 I do noght as Uluxes dede,
 Bot falle anon upon the stede,
 Wher as I se my lady stonde;
 And there, I do yow understande,
- 565 I am topulled in my thoght,
 So that of reson leveth noght,
 Wheroft that I me mai defende."
- [So] that none of them; them
 slew a great many of them
 ships
- know how to protect and preserve
 gates (eyes and ears) locked up
 foolishness
- breeds
 Unless; understand how to govern
 Those two; [other] three; easy
- interrogate
 eyes ever misused
 I admit guilt
- mark of love engraved
- guilty there [too]
 hear
 its rudder
- collapse immediately on the spot
 Where [I am] when I see
- pulled to pieces
 remains nothing
 defend myself

Confessor “Mi goode sone, God th’amende!
 For as me thenketh be thi speche
 570 Thi wittes ben riht feer to seche.
 As of thin ere and of thin yhe
 I woll no more specefie,
 Bot I woll axen over this
 Of othre thing how that it is.”

God help you
far to seek
ask beyond this

[HYPOCRISY]

v. *Celsior est Aquila que Leone ferocior ille,*
Quem tumor elati cordis ad alta mouet.
Sunt species quinque, quibus esse Superbia ductrix
Clamat, et in multis mundus adheret eis.
Laruando faciem ficto pallore subornat
Fraudibus Ypocrisy mellea verba suis.
Sicque pios animos quamsepe ruit muliebres
Ex humili verbo sub latitante dolo.¹

[Confessor] “Mi sone, as I thee schal enforce,
 575 Ther ben yet of an other forme
 Of dedly vices sevene applied,
 Wheroft the herte is ofte plied
 To thing which after schal him grieve.
 580 The ferste of hem thou schalt believe
 Is Pride, which is principal,
 And hath with him in special
 Ministres five ful diverse,
 Of whiche, as I thee schal reherse,
 585 The ferste is seid Ypocrisy.
 If thou art of his compaignie,
 Tell forth, my sone, and schrif thee clene.”

(see note)
assigned
bent

called Hypocrisy

[Amans] “I wot noght, fader, what ye mene:
 590 Bot this I wolde you beseche,
 That ye me be som weie teche
 What is to ben an ypcrite;
 And thanne if I be for to wyte,
 I wol beknownen, as it is.”

to blame
understand

[Confessor] “Mi sone, an ypcrite is this:
 595 A man which feigneth conscience,
 As thogh it were al innocence

who feigns

¹ *Higher than an eagle and more fierce than a lion is that one whom the swelling of a heart, borne upwards, moves to the heights. There are five species over which Pride clamors that she is the leader, and the world clings to those in many ways. By enchanting the face with a feigned paleness, Hypocrisy decks out honey-sweet words with his frauds. And thus time and again he overwhelms pious, womanly souls by means of humble speech with deceit hidden underneath.*

- Without, and is noght so withinne;
And doth so for he wolde winne
Of his desir the vein astat.
in order that he might gain
vain
- 600 And whanne he comth anon therat,
He scheweth thanne what he was.
The corn is torned into gras,
That was a rose is thanne a thorn,
And he that was a lamb beforne
Is thanne a wolf, and thus malice
Under the colour of justice
Is hid; and as the poeple telleth,
disguise
hidden
clerks know; he (the hypocrite)
their
- Ipocrisia Religiosa** These ordres witen where he duelleth,
As he that of here conseil is,
610 And thilke world which thei er this
Forsoken, he drawth in agein:
He clotheth richesse, as men sein,
Under the simplesce of poverte,
And doth to seme of gret decerte
Thing which is litel worth withinne:
He seith in open, fy! to sinne,
And in secre ther is no vice
Of which that he nis a norrice:
And evere his chiere is sobre and softe,
620 And where he goth he blesseth ofte,
Wheroft the blinde world he dreccheth.
Bot yet al only he ne streccheth
His reule upon religioun,
Bot next to that condicioun
625 In suche as clepe hem holy cherche
It scheweth ek how he can werche
Ipocrisia Ecclesiastica Among tho wyde furred hodes,
To geten hem the worldes goodes.
And thei hemself ben thilke same
630 That setten most the world in blame,
Bot yet in contraire of her lore
Ther is nothing thei loven more;
So that semende of liht thei werke
The dedes whiche are inward derke.
And thus this double Ypocrisie
With his devolte apparantie
A viser set upon his face,
Wheroft toward this worldes grace
He semeth to be riht wel thewed,
640 And yit his herte is al beschrewed.
Bot natheles he stant believed,
And hath his pourpos ofte achieved
Of worshipe and of worldes welthe,
- the same; that they before
disguises wealth
causes; value
openly
secretly
is not nurse
countenance
destroys
religious orders
appears also
[of monks]
most accuse; of fault
contradiction of their teaching
devout appearance
places (sets)
mannered
evilly disposed
accomplished

	And takth it, as who seith, be stelthe	
645	Thurgh coverture of his fallas.	<i>By concealment of his falsity</i>
	And riht so in semblable cas	<i>similar manner</i>
	This vice hath ek his officers	
	Ipocrisis Secularis Among these othre seculers	<i>men of the world also</i>
	Of grete men, for of the smale	
650	As for t'acompte he set no tale,	<i>He makes no reckoning (tally) in his account</i>
	Bot thei that passen the commune	<i>surpass the ordinary</i>
	With suche him liketh to comune,	
	And where he seith he wol socoure	
	The poeple, there he woll devour;	
655	For now aday is manyon	<i>many a person</i>
	Which spekth of Peter and of John	
	And thenketh Judas in his herte.	
	Ther schal no worldes good asterte	<i>escape</i>
	His hond, and yit he gifth almesse	<i>alms</i>
660	And fasteth ofte and hiereth Messe:	<i>Mass</i>
	With <i>mea culpa</i> , which he seith,	
	Upon his brest fullofte he leith	<i>places</i>
	His hond, and cast upward his yhe,	<i>eyes</i>
	As thogh he Cristes face syhe;	<i>saw</i>
665	So that it semeth ate syhte,	
	As he alone alle othre myhte	<i>prayer</i>
	Rescoue with his holy bede.	<i>place</i>
	Bot yet his herte in other stede	<i>prayers</i>
	Among hise bedes most devoute	
670	Goth in the worldes cause aboute,	<i>property</i>
	How that he myhte his warisoun	
	Encresce.	

[HYPOCRISY OF LOVERS]

	And in comparisoun	
	Ther ben lovers of such a sort,	<i>in like manner</i>
675	That feignen hem an humble port,	<i>bearing (see note)</i>
	And al is bot Ypocrisie,	
	Which with deceipte and flaterie	
	Hath many a worthi wif beguiled.	
	For whanne he hath his tunge affiled,	<i>polished</i>
	With softe speche and with lesinge,	<i>lies</i>
680	Forth with his fals pitous lokynge,	
	He wolde make a womman wene	<i>think</i>
	To gon upon the faire grene,	
	Whan that sche falleth in the mir.	<i>mire</i>
	For if he may have his desir,	
685	How so falle of the remenant,	<i>Whatever happens as a consequence</i>
	He halt no word of covenant;	<i>agreement</i>

- Bot er the time that he spede,
 Ther is no sleihte at thilke nede,
 Which eny loves faitour mai,
 690 That he ne put it in assai,
 As him belongeth for to done.
 The colour of the reyni mone
 With medicine upon his face
 He set, and thanne he axeth grace,
 695 As he which hath sieknesse feigned.
 Whan his visage is so desteigned,
 With yhe upcast on hire he siketh,
 And many a contenance he piketh,
 To bringen hire into believe
 700 Of thing which that he wolde achieve,
 Wheroft he berth the pale hewe;
 And for he wolde seme trewe,
 He makth him siek, whan he is heil.
 Bot whanne he berth lowest the seil,
 705 Thanne is he swiftest to beguile
 The womman, which that ilke while
 Set upon him feith or credence.
- Opponit Confessor** Mi sone, if thou thi conscience
 Entamed hast in such a wise,
 710 In schrifte thou thee myht avise
 And telle it me, if it be so."
- Respondet Amans** "Min holy fader, certes no.
 As for to feigne such sieknesse
 It nedeth noght, for this witnesse
 715 I take of God, that my corage
 Hath ben mor siek than my visage.
 And ek this mai I wel avowe,
 So lowe cowthe I nevere bowe
 To feigne humilité withoute,
 720 That me ne leste betre loute
 With alle the thoghtes of myn herte;
 For that thing schal me nevere asterte,
 I speke as to my lady diere
 To make hire eny feigned chiere.
 725 God wot wel there I lye noght,
 Mi chiere hath be such as my thoght;
 For in good feith, this lieveth wel,
 Mi will was betre a thousanddel
 Than eny chiere that I cowthe.
 730 Bot, sire, if I have in my yowthe
 Don otherwise in other place,
 I put me therof in your grace:
 For this excusen I ne schal,
- watery (*pale*)
- discolored
eye; sighs
expressive posture he assumes
- the [lover's] pallid complexion
- makes himself [seem] sick; well
sail
- at that same moment
- Wounded
- As regards feigning
There is no need
- sick; countenance
also
I could never bow so low
- That I did not want to bow better
- will never occur to me
[That] I [would]
countenance
- believe
desire was a thousand-times better
expression (cheer) I knew
- I shall not declare

- That I have elles overal
 735 To love and to his compaignie
 Be plein withoutte Ypocrisie.
 Bot ther is on the which I serve,
 Althogh I may no thonk deserve,
 To whom yet nevere into this day
 740 I seide onlyche or ye or nay,
 Bot if it so were in my thoght.
 As touchende othre seie I noght
 That I nam somdel for to wytte
 Of that ye clepe an ypocrate."
- Confessor** "Mi sone, it sit wel every wiht
 To kepe his word in trowthe upryght
 Towardes love in alle wise.
 For who that wolde him wel avise
 What hath befallen in this matiere,
 750 He scholde noght with feigned chiere
 Deceive love in no degré.
 To love is every herte fre,
 Bot in deceipte if that thou feignest
 And therupon thi lust atteignest,
 755 That thou hast wonne with thi wyle,
 Thogh it thee like for a whyle,
 Thou schalt it afterward repente.
 And for to prove myn entente,
 I finde ensample in a croniqe
 760 Of hem that love so beswike.
- Been direct
one*
- said only yes or no*
- other [kinds of hypocrisy]
am not somewhat to blame
With regard to what you call
behooves; person*
- desire obtain
your deviousness*
- chronicle
Of those who thus defraud love*

[TALE OF MUNDUS AND PAULINA]

- It fell be olde daies thus,
 Whil th' emperor Tiberius
 765 The monarchie of Rome ladde,
 Ther was a worthi Romein hadde
 A wif, and sche Pauline hihite,
 Which was to every mannes sihte
 Of al the cité the faireste,
 And as men seiden, ek the beste.
 It is and hath ben evere yit,
 770 That so strong is no mannes wit,
 Which thurgh beauté ne mai be drawe
 To love, and stonde under the lawe
 Of thilke bore frele kinde,
 Which makth the hertes yhen blinde,
 775 Wher no reson mai be comuned:
 And in this wise stod fortuned
 This tale, of which I wolde mene;
- (see note)*
- Roman citizen [who] had
was called*
- also the most virtuous*
- Of such nature, created frail
heart's eyes
shared*
- speak*

- 780 This wif, which in hire lustes grene
 Was fair and freiss and tendre of age,
 Sche may noght lette the corage
 Of him that wole on hire assote.
 Ther was a duck, and he was hote
 Mundus, which hadde in his baillie
 To lede the chivalerie
 Of Rome, and was a worthi knyht;
 Bot yet he was noght of such myht
 The strengthe of love to withstonde,
 That he ne was so broght to honde,
 That malgré wher he wole or no,
 This yonge wif he loveth so,
 That he hath put al his assay
 To wynne thing which he ne may
 Gete of hire graunt in no manere,
 Be gifte of gold ne be preiere.
 And whanne he syh that be no mede
 Toward hir love he myhte spedie,
 Be sleyhte feigned thanne he wroghte;
 And therupon he him bethoghte
 How that ther was in the cité
 A temple of such auctorité,
 To which with gret devocioun
 The noble wommen of the toun
 Most comunliche a pelrinage
 Gon for to preie thilke ymage
 Which the godesse of childinge is,
 And cleded was be name Ysis:
 And in hire temple thanne were,
 To reule and to ministre there
 After the lawe which was tho,
 Above alle othre prestes tuo.
 This duck, which thoghte his love gete,
 Upon a day hem tuo to mete
 Hath bede, and thei come at his heste;
 Wher that thei hadde a riche feste,
 And after mete in privé place
 This lord, which wolde his thonk pourchace,
 To ech of hem gaf thanne a gifte,
 And spak so that be weie of schrifte
 He drowh hem unto his covine,
 To helpe and schape how he Pauline
 After his lust deceive myhte.
 And thei here trowthes bothe plyhte,
 That thei be nyhte hire scholden wynne
 Into the temple, and he therinne
- her youthful charm
 hinder the sexual desire
 on her become besotted
 duke; called
 charge (duty)
 horsemen
- 785 But that he was so reined in [by love]
 despite whether he would
- 790 effort
 might not
 Obtain with her consent
 By; nor by supplication
 bribery
 succeed
- 795 By sneaky tricks; proceeded
 recalled
- 800 on pilgrimage
 in order to pray to that
 childbirth
 was called by
- 805 In conformity with; then
 two
 duke who thought to obtain
- 810 requested; came; command
 feast
 secret
- 815 gratitude purchase
 them gave
 confession
 secret plan (conspiracy)
- 820 their troth; pledged
 succeed in bringing

- 825 Schal have of hire al his entente;
And thus accorded forth thei wente.
Now lest thurgh which ypcrisie
Ordeigned was the tricherie,
Wherof this ladi was deceived.
- 830 These prestes hadden wel conceived
That sche was of gret holinesse;
And with a contrefet simplesse,
Which hid was in a fals corage,
Feignende an hevenely message
- 835 Thei come and seide unto hir thus:
“Pauline, the god Anubus
Hath sent ous bothe prestes hiere,
And seith he woll to thee appiere
Be nyghtes time himself alone,
- 840 For love he hath to thi persone:
And therupon he hath ous bede,
That we in Ysis temple a stede
Honestly for thee pourveie,
Wher thou be nyhte, as we thee seie,
- 845 Of him schalt take avisoun.
For upon thi condicioun,
The which is chaste and ful of feith,
Such pris, as he ous tolde, he leith,
That he wol stonde of thin acord;
- 850 And for to bere hierof record
He sende ous hidre bothe tuo.”
Glad was hire innocence tho
Of suche wordes as sche herde
With humble chiere, and thus answerde,
- 855 And seide that the goddes wille
Sche was al redy to fulfille,
That be hire housebondes leve
Sche wolde in Ysis temple at eve
Upon hire goddes grace abide,
- 860 To serven him the nyghtes tide.
The prestes tho gon hom agein,
And sche goth to hire sovereign,
Of goddes wille and as it was
Sche tolde him al the pleine cas,
- 865 Wherof he was deceived eke,
And bad that sche hire scholde meke
Al hol unto the goddes heste.
And thus sche, which was al honeste
To godward after hire entente,
- 870 At nyght unto the temple wente,
Wher that the false prestes were;
- agreed
Now hear
- Pretending
- will appear to you
- commanded us
place
ordain
say
- shall have a vision
personal character
- value; puts
agree in sentiment with you
- sent
- permission
- await
- lord (husband)
- also
should submit herself
Wholly; command
virtuous
- Toward the god with full integrity

- And thei receiven hire there
 With such a tokne of holinesse,
 As thogh thei syhen a godesse,
 And al withinne in privé place
 A softe bedd of large space
 Thei hadde mad and encourtined,
 Wher sche was afterward engined.
 Bot sche, which al honour supposeth,
 The false prestes thanne opposeth,
 And axeth be what observance
 Sche myhte most to the plesance
 Of godd that nyghtes reule kepe.
 And thei hire bidden for to slepe,
 Liggende upon the bedd alofte,
 For so, thei seide, al stille and softe
 God Anubus hire wolde awake.
 The conseil in this wise take,
 The prestes fro this lady gon;
 And sche, that wiste of guile non,
 In the manere as it was seid
 To slepe upon the bedd is leid,
 In hope that sche scholde achieve
 Thing which stod thanne upon bilieve,
 Fulfilld of alle holinesse.
 Bot sche hath failed, as I gesse,
 For in a closet faste by
 The duck was hid so prively
 That sche him myhte noght perceive;
 And he, that thoghte to deceive,
 Hath such arrai upon him nome,
 That whanne he wolde unto hir come,
 It scholde semen at hire yhe
 As thogh sche verrailiche syhe
 God Anubus, and in such wise
 This ypocrite of his queintise
 Awaiteth evere til sche slepte.
 And thanne out of his place he crepte
 So stille that sche nothing herde,
 And to the bedd stalkende he ferde,
 And sodeinly, er sche it wiste,
 Beclipt in armes he hire kiste:
 Wherof in wommanysshe drede
 Sche wok and nyste what to rede;
 Bot he with softe wordes milde
 Conforteth hire and seith, with childe
 He wolde hire make in such a kynde
 That al the world schal have in mynde
- saw
*prepared; draped
seduced*
- 875
 880
 885
 890
 895
 900
 905
 910
 915
- questioned
asked by
- bade her
lying
- manner given
- who knew of no treachery*
- which then was thought to be possible
- suppose
- private room near by
duke; secretly
- put such clothing upon himself
- eyes
truly saw
- cunning
- stalking he went
before she knew it
- Embraced in arms, he kissed her*
- terror
knew not what to think
- impregnate her [with a child] of such a nature*

- 920 The worschipe of that ilke sone; *same son*
 For he schal with the goddes wone, *dwell*
 And ben himself a godd also.
 With suche wordes and with mo, *more*
 The whiche he feigneth in his speche,
 This lady wit was al to seche,
 925 As sche which alle trowthe weneth: *lady's wit was gone*
 Bot he, that alle untrowthe meneth, *faith believes*
 With blinde tales so hire laddle, *unfaithfulness intends*
 That all his wille of hire he hadde. *deceitful tales; seduced*
 And whan him thoghte it was ynowh, *enough*
 930 Agein the day he him withdrawh *At dawn; withdrew himself*
 So prively that sche ne wiste *did not know*
 Wher he becom, bot as him liste *Where he went; pleased him*
 Out of the temple he goth his weie.
 And sche began to bidde and preie
 935 Upon the bare ground knelende, *pray; pray*
 And after that made hire offrende,
 And to the prestes giftes grete
 Sche gaf, and homward be the strete.
 The duck hire mette and seide thus:
 940 "The myhti godd which Anubus *gave; [goes] homeward by*
 Is hote, he save thee, Pauline, *duke*
 For thou art of his discipline
 So holy, that no mannes myht
 Mai do that he hath do to nyht
 945 Of thing which thou hast evere eschued. *called; may he save you*
 Bot I his grace have so poursuied,
 That I was mad his lieutenant: *made*
 Forthi be weie of covenant
 Fro this day forth I am al thin,
 950 And if thee like to be myn,
 That stant upon thin oghne wille." *depends; your own determination*
 Sche herde his tale and bar it stille,
 And hom sche wente, as it befell,
 Into hir chambre, and ther sche fell
 955 Upon hire bedd to wepe and crie,
 And seide: "O derke ypocrisie,
 Thurgh whos dissimilacion
 Of fals ymaginacion
 I am thus wickedly deceived!
 960 Bot that I have it aperceived *perceived*
 I thonke unto the goddes alle;
 For thogh it ones be befallie,
 It schal nevere eft whil that I live,
 And thilke avou to godd I give."
 965 And thus wepende sche compleigneth, *once has happened*
again (after)
this vow
mourns

- Hire faire face and al desteigneth
 With wofull teres of hire ye,
 So that upon this agonie
 Hire housebonde is inne come,
 970 And syh how sche was overcome
 With sorwe, and axeth what hire eileth.
 And sche with that hirself beweileth
 Welmore than sche dede afore,
 And seide, "Helas, wifhode is lore
 975 In me, which whilom was honeste,
 I am non other than a beste,
 Now I defouled am of tuo."
 And as sche myhte speke tho,
 Aschamed with a pitous onde
 980 Sche tolde unto hir housebonde
 The sothe of al the hole tale,
 And in hire speche ded and pale
 Sche swouneth wel nyh to the laste.
 And he hire in hise armes faste
 985 Uphield, and ofte swor his oth
 That he with hire is nothing wroth,
 For wel he wot sche may ther noght:
 Bot natheles withinne his thoght
 His herte stod in sori plit,
 990 And seide he wolde of that despit
 Be venged, how so evere it falle,
 And sende unto hise frendes alle.
 And whan thei weren come in fere,
 He tolde hem upon this matiere,
 995 And axeth hem what was to done:
 And thei avised were sone,
 And seide it thoghte hem for the beste
 To sette ferst his wif in reste,
 And after pleigne to the king
 1000 Upon the matiere of this thing.
 Tho was this wofull wif conforted
 Be alle weies and despored,
 Til that sche was somdiel amended;
 And thus a day or tuo despended;
 1005 The thridde day sche goth to pleigne
 With many a worthi citezeine,
 And he with many a citezein.
 Whan th'emerperour it herde sein,
 And knew the falshed of the vice,
 1010 He seide he wolde do justice:
 And ferst he let the prestes take
 And, for thei scholde it noght forsake,
- stains
 eyes
 asks what ails her
 laments
 before
 lost
 who once was virtuous (chaste)
 beast
 two
 then
 sigh
 truth; whole story
 deathlike
 faints nearly to death
 could do nothing
 together sent (in company)
 asked them
 it seemed best to them
 reassure his wife
 subsequently complain
 Then
 ways; cheered
 passed
 went to lament
 worthy female citizen
 male citizen
 heard the account
 had the priests arrested
 in order that they; deny

- He put hem into questioun;
Bot thei of the suggestioun
1015 Ne couthen noght a word refuse,
Bot for thei wolde hemself excuse,
The blame upon the duck thei leide.
Bot theragein the conseil seide
That thei be noght excused so,
1020 For he is on and thei ben tuo,
And tuo han more wit then on,
So thilke excusement was non.
And over that was seid hem eke,
That whan men wolden vertu seke,
1025 Men scholde it in the prestes finde;
Here ordre is of so hyh a kinde,
That thei be duistres of the weie:
Forthi, if eny man forsueie
Thurgh hem, thei be noght excusable.
1030 And thus be lawe resonable
Among the wise jugges there
The prestes bothe dampned were,
So that the privé tricherie
Hid under fals Ipocrisie
1035 Was thanne al openliche schewed,
That many a man hem hath beschrewed.
And whan the prestes weren dede,
The temple of thilke horrible dede
Thei thoghten purge, and thilke ymage,
1040 Whos cause was the pelrinage,
Thei drowen out and als so faste
Fer into Tibre thei it caste,
Wher the rivere it hath defied:
And thus the temple purified
1045 Thei have of thilke horrible sinne,
Which was that time do therinne.
Of this point such was the juise,
Bot of the duck was other wise:
For he with love was bestad,
1050 His dom was noght so harde lad;
For love put reson awei
And can noght se the rihte weie.
And be this cause he was respited,
So that the deth him was acquitted,
1055 Bot for al that he was exiled,
For he his love hath so beguiled,
That he schal nevere come agein:
For who that is to trowthe unplein,
He may noght failen of vengance.
- them under interrogation
accusation
deny
wanted to excuse themselves
duke they laid*
- he (the duke) is one [person]*
- that excuse
And beyond that*
- Their; noble
guides*
- Therefore; goes astray
Because of them
by law*
- were condemned*
- shown
[So] that; cursed
executed*
- thought to purge; that same
aim (end); [Paulina's] journey*
- justice
duke was treated differently
Since; beset
judgment*
- relieved of the death penalty*
- dishonest*

1060	And ek to take remembrance Of that Ypocrisie hath wrought On other half, men scholde noght To lihtly lieve al that thei hiere, Bot thanne scholde a wis man stiere	<i>pay attention</i> <i>To what</i> <i>believe</i>
1065	The schip, whan suche wyndes blowe: For ferst, thogh thei beginne lowe, At ende thei be noght menable, Bot al tobroken mast and cable, So that the schip with sodein blast,	<i>at first; they (winds of hypocrisy)</i> <i>In the end; not fit to guide [the ship]</i>
1070	Whan men lest wene, is overcast, As now ful ofte a man mai se. And of old time how it hath be I finde a gret experiance, Wheroft to take an evidence	<i>least expect</i> <i>see</i> <i>from time past how it has been</i> <i>demonstration</i> <i>get a clue</i>
1075	Good is, and to be war also Of the peril, er him be wo.	<i>beware</i> <i>before disaster befalls him</i>

[TROJAN HORSE]

1080	Of hem that ben so derk withinne, At Troie also if we beginne, Ipocrisie it hath betraied: For whan the Greks hadde al assaied, And founde that be no bataille	<i>Concerning those who are so blind within</i> <i>therefore</i> <i>it (Troy)</i> <i>tried everything</i> <i>by (see note)</i>
1085	Ne be no siege it myhte availe The toun to winne thurgh prouesse, This vice feigned of simplesce Thurgh sleyhte of Calcas and of Crise It wan be such a maner wise:	<i>prowess</i> <i>trickery</i> <i>conquered in this way</i> <i>had forged</i> <i>design; workmanship</i>
1090	An hors of bras thei let do forge, Of such entaile, of such a forge, That in this world was nevere man That such an other werk began.	<i>undertook</i>
1095	The crafti werkman Epius It made, and for to telle thus, The Greks, that thoghten to beguile The kyng of Troie, in thilke while With Anthenor and with Enee,	<i>Antenor; Aeneas</i>
1100	That were bothe of the cité And of the couseil the wiseste, The richeste and the myhtieste, In privé place so thei trete With fair beheste and giftes grete	<i>secret; negotiate</i> <i>promises</i> <i>[so] that; deceived</i> <i>agreed</i> <i>peace</i>
	Of gold, that thei hem have engined Togedre; and whan thei be covined, Thei feignen for to make a pes,	

- And under that yit natheles
 1105 Thei schopen the destruccioun *fashioned*
 Bothe of the kyng and of the toun.
 And thus the false pees was take
 Of hem of Grece and undertake.
 And therupon thei founde a weie,
 1110 Wher strengthe myhte noght aweie, *avail*
 That sleihte scholde helpe thanne;
 And of an ynche a large spanne
 Be colour of the pees thei made,
 And tolden how thei weren glade
 1115 Of that thei stoden in accord;
 And for it schal ben of record,
 Unto the kyng the Gregois seiden,
 Be weie of love and this thei preiden,
 As thei that wolde his thonk deserve,
 1120 A sacrifice unto Minerve,
 The pes to kepe in good entente,
 Thei mosten offre er that thei wente.
 The kyng, conseiled in this cas
 Be Anthenor and Eneas, *By*
 1125 Therto hath goven his assent: *given*
 So was the pleine trowthe blent
 Thurgh contrefet Ipocrisie
 Of that thei scholden sacrificie.
 The Greks under the holinesse
 1130 Anon with alle besinesse *concealed (darkened; blinded)*
 Here hors of bras let faire dihte,
 Which was to sen a wonder sihte;
 For it was trapped of himselfe,
 And hadde of smale whieles twelve,
 1135 Upon the whiche men ynowe *deceitful Hypocrisy*
 With craft toward the toun it drowe,
 And goth glistrende agein the sunne.
 Tho was ther joye ynowh begunne,
 For Troie in gret devocioun
 1140 Cam also with processioune *drew*
 Agein this noble sacrificise
 With gret honour, and in this wise
 Unto the gates thei it broghte.
 Bot of here entré whan thei soghte,
 1145 The gates weren al to smale; *entirely too*
 And therupon was many a tale,
 Bot for the worschipe of Minerve,
 To whom thei comen for to serve,
 Thei of the toun, whiche understode
 1150 That al this thing was do for goode, *much discussion*

- For pes, wherof that thei ben glade,
 The gates that Neptunus made
 A thousand wynter ther tofore,
 Thei have anon tobroke and tore;
 1155 The stronge walles doun thei bete,
 So that in to the large strete
 This hors with gret solempnité
 Was brought withinne the cité,
 And offred with gret reverence,
 1160 Which was to Troie an evidence
 Of love and pes for everemo.
 The Gregois token leve tho
 With al the hole felaschipe,
 And forth thei wenten into schipe
 1165 And crossen sail and made hem yare,
 Anon as thogh thei wolden fare:
 Bot whan the blake wynter nyght
 Withoute mone or sterre lyght
 Bederked hath the water stronde,
 1170 Al prively thei gon to londe
 Ful armed out of the navie.
 Synon, which mad was here aspie
 Withinne Troie, as was conspired,
 Whan time was a tokne hath fired;
 1175 And thei with that here weie holden,
 And comen in riht as thei wolden,
 Ther as the gate was tobroke.
 The pourpos was full take and spoke:
 Er eny man may take kepe,
 1180 Whil that the cité was aslepe,
 Thei slowen al that was withinne,
 And token what thei myhten wynne
 Of such good as was sufficant,
 And brenden up the remenant.
 1185 And thus cam out the tricherie,
 Which under fals Ypocrisie
 Was hid, and thei that wende pees
 Tho myhten finde no reles
 Of thilke swerd which al devoureth.
 1190 Ful ofte and thus the swete soureth,
 Whan it is knowe to the tast.
 He spilleth many a word in wast
 That schal with such a poeple trete;
 For whan he weneth most begete,
 1195 Thanne is he schape most to lese.
 And riht so if a womman chese
 Upon the wordes that sche hiereth
- broken to pieces; torn down*
fortified
- Greeks departed then*
whole company
- set the sails; made them (sails) ready*
go [home]
- Enveloped in darkness; shore*
secretly
- was made their spy*
prearranged
signal [flight]; lit
take their way
- Where*
- care*
- slew*
- burnt*
became known
- sweet becomes sour*
- thinks to gain the most*
destined to lose most
should choose
hears

- Som man, whan he most trewe appiereth,
Thanne is he forthest fro the trowthe:
1200 Bot yit ful ofte, and that is rowthe,
Thei speden that ben most untrewe
And loven every day a newe,
Wheroft the lief is after loth
And love hath cause to be wroth.
1205 Bot what man that his lust desireth
Of love, and therupon conspireth
With wordes feigned to deceive,
He schal noght faile to receive
His peine, as it is ofte sene.
- Confessor** Forthi, my sone, as I thee mene,
It sit thee wel to taken hiede
That thou eschuike of thi manhiede
Ipocrisie and his semblant,
That thou ne be noght deceivant,
1215 To make a womman to believe
Thing which is noght in thi believe:
For in such feint Ipocrisie
Of love is al the tricherie,
Thurgh which love is deceived ofte;
1220 For feigned semblant is so softe,
Unethes love may be war.
Forthi, my sone, as I wel dar,
I charge thee to fle that vice,
That many a womman hath mad nice;
1225 Bot lok thou dele noght withal.”
- Amans** “Iwiss, fader, no mor I schal.”
- Confessor** “Now, sone, kep that thou hast swore:
For this that thou hast herd before
Is seid the ferste point of Pride.
1230 And next upon that other side,
To schryve and speken over this
Touchende of Pride, yit ther is
The point seconde, I thee behote,
Which Inobedience is hote.”
- that is a pity
succeed who are
beloved is later the enemy
pain (punishment)
advise you
It behooves; heed
[So] that; avoid
conviction
false
so quiet
Scarcely may love beware
has made many a woman foolish
Indeed
called
confess
assure
called*

[DISOBEDIENCE]

- vi. *Flectere quam frangi melius reputatur, et olle
Fictilis ad cacabum pugna valere nequit.
Quem neque lex hominum, neque lex diuina valebit
Flectere, multociens corde reflectit amor.
Quem non flectit amor, non est flectendus ab ullo,
Set rigor illius plus Elephante riget.
Dedignatur amor poterit quos scire rebelles,* (see note)

*Et rudibus sortem prestat habere rudem;
Set qui sponte sui subicit se cordis amore,
Frangit in aduersis omnia fata pius.¹*

- | | | |
|------------------|---|--|
| 1235 | "This vice of Inobedience
Agein the reule of conscience
Al that is humble he desalloweth,
That he toward his God ne boweth
After the lawes of His heste. | <i>censures</i> |
| 1240 | Noght as a man bot as a beste,
Which goth upon his lustes wilde,
So goth this proude vice unmylde,
That he desdeigneth alle lawe:
He not what is to be felawe, | <i>command</i>
<i>follows (see note)</i> |
| 1245 | And serve may he noght for pride;
So is he badde on every side,
And is that selve of whom men speke,
Which wol noght bowe er that he breke.
I not if love him myhte plie, | <i>disdains</i>
<i>does not know what it is</i> |
| 1250 | For elles for to justefie
His herte, I not what mihte availe. | <i>same thing</i>
<i>bend before he is broken</i>
<i>do not know; might bend</i> |
| Confessor | Forthi, my sone, of such entaile
If that thin herte be disposed,
Tell out and let it noght be glosed:
For if that thou unbuxom be
To love, I not in what degree
Thou schalt thi goode world achieve." | <i>disposition</i> |
| 1255 | For if that thou unbuxom be
To love, I not in what degree
Thou schalt thi goode world achieve." | <i>concealed</i>
<i>disobedient</i>
<i>do not know</i> |
| Amans | "Mi fader, ye schul wel believe,
The yonge whelp which is affaited
Hath noght his maister betre awaited,
To couche, whan he seith 'Go lowe!'
That I, anon as I may knowe
Mi ladi will, ne bowe more.
Bot other while I grucche sore
Of some thinges that sche doth,
Wheroft I woll telle soth:
For of tuo pointz I am bethoght,
That, thogh I wolde, I myhte noght
Obeie unto my ladi heste; | <i>acquire</i>
<i>trained</i>
<i>cowe timidly; Lie down!</i>
<i>as soon as I may know</i> |
| 1265 | Bot I dar make this beheste, | <i>My lady's wish, nor [does a trained dog]</i>
<i>grumble wretchedly</i> |
| 1270 | Bot I dar make this beheste, | <i>the truth</i>
<i>reminded</i>
<i>my lady's command</i>
<i>promise</i> |

¹ *To bend is thought better than to break, and the attack of the earthen pot cannot prevail over the cauldron. Many a time the man whom neither human nor divine law is strong enough to bend is bent over in his heart by love. The man whom love cannot bend cannot be bent by anything, for his inflexibility stands more rigid than an elephant. Love despairs those he can recognize as rebels, and he sees to it that the uncivil have an uncivil fate. But he who, a pious man, freely subjects himself to Love in his heart, in adversities shatters all fates.*

	Save only of that ilke tuo I am unbuxom of no mo."	<i>That except for these same two disobedient; more those two one</i>
Opponit Confessor	"What ben tho tuo? tell on," quod he.	
Respondet Amans	"Mi fader, this is on, that sche	
1275	Comandeth me my mowth to close, And that I scholde hir noght oppose In love, of which I ofte preche, Bot plenerliche of such a speche Forbere, and soffren hire in pes.	<i>question fully</i>
1280	Bot that ne myht I natheles For al this world obeie ywiss; For whanne I am ther as sche is, Though sche my tales noght alowe, Agein hir will yit mot I bowe,	<i>certainly should not allow</i>
1285	To seche if that I myhte have grace: Bot that thing may I noght embrace For ought that I can speke or do; And yit ful ofte I speke so, That sche is wroth and seith, 'Be stille.'	<i>angry</i>
1290	If I that heste schal fulfille And therto ben obedient, Thanne is my cause fully schent, For specheles may no man spede. So wot I noght what is to rede;	<i>command lost succeed advise</i>
1295	Bot certes I may noght obeie, That I ne mot algate seie Somwhat of that I wolde mene; For evere it is aliche grene, The grete love which I have,	<i>But that I must certainly say fresh</i>
1300	Wheroft I can noght bothe save Mi speche and this obedience: And thus ful ofte my silence I breke, and is the ferste point Wheroft that I am out of point	<i>out of step</i>
1305	In this, and yit it is no pride. Now thanne upon that other side To telle my desobeissance, Ful sore it stant to my grevance And may noght sinke into my wit;	<i>second point</i>
1310	For ofte time sche me bit To leven hire and chese a newe, And seith, if I the sothe knewe How ferr I stonde from hir grace, I scholde love in other place.	<i>orders new [lover]</i>
1315	Bot therof woll I desobeie; For also wel sche myhte seie, 'Go tak the mone ther it sit,'	<i>with respect to that she might as well say moon where</i>

- As bringe that into my wit:
 For ther was nevere rooted tre,
 1320 That stod so faste in his degré,
 That I ne stonde more faste
 Upon hire love, and mai noght caste
 Min herte awey, althogh I wolde.
 For God wot, thogh I nevere scholde
 1325 Sen hir with yhe after this day,
 Yit stant it so that I ne may
 Hir love out of my brest remue.
 This is a wonder retenué,
 That malgré wher sche wole or non
 1330 Min herte is everemore in on,
 So that I can non other chese,
 Bot whether that I winne or lese,
 I moste hire loven til I deie;
 And thus I breke as be that weie
 1335 Hire hestes and hir comandinges,
 Bot trewliche in non othre thinges.
 Forthi, my fader, what is more
 Touchende to this ilke lore
 I you beseche, after the forme
 1340 That ye pleinly me wolde enforme,
 So that I may myn herte reule
 In loves cause after the reule.”
- But that I stood*
God knows
eye
remove
engagement of service
despite whether she
steadfast
choose
Regardless whether
by that manner
according to the proper procedure

[MURMUR AND COMPLAINT]

- vii. *Murmur in aduersis ita concipit ille superbus,*
Penit quod ex bina sorte perurget eum.
Obvia fortune cum spes in amore resistit,
*Non sine mentali murmure plangit amans.*¹

- [Confessor]** “Toward this vice of which we trete
 1345 Ther ben yit tweie of thilke estrete,
 Here name is Murmur and Compleignte:
 Ther can no man here chiere peinte
 To sette a glad semblant therinne,
 For thogh fortune make hem wynne,
 Yit grucchen thei, and if thei lese,
 1350 Ther is no weie for to chese
 Wherof thei myhten stonde appesed.
- vice (i.e., Pride)*
the same extraction (see note)
Their
their countenance depict
even if; succeed
grumble; lose
choose
Whereby; appeased

¹ *The proud man generates grumbling in adversities in such a way that the penalty from a twofold fate presses down upon him. When ready hope in love struggles against fortune, not without a grumbling in the mind does the lover complain.*

- So ben thei comunly desesed; *distressed*
 Ther may no welthe ne poverté
 Attempren hem to the decerte
 1355 Of buxomnesse be no wise; *merit*
 For ofte time thei despise
 The goode fortune as the badde,
 As thei no mannes reson hadde,
 Thurgh pride, wheroft thei be blinde. *obedience by any means*
- 1360 And ryht of such a maner kinde
 Ther be lovers, that thogh thei have
 Of love al that thei wolde crave,
 Yit wol thei grucche be som weie,
 That thei wol noght to love obeie *as [well as]*
 1365 Upon the trowthe, as thei do scholde; *As if*
 And if hem lacketh that thei wolde,
 Anon thei falle in such a peine,
 That evere unbuxomly thei pleigne
 Upon fortune, and curse and crie,
 1370 That thei wol noght here hertes plie *grumble about something*
 To soffre til it betre falle. *[So] that*
 Forthi if thou amonges alle
 Hast used this condicioun,
 Mi sone, in thi confessioun *desire*
 1375 Now tell me pleinly what thou art.” *Instantly; discomfort*
Amans “Mi fader, I beknowe a part,
 So as ye tolden hier above *complain*
 Of Murmur and Compleignte of love,
 That for I se no sped comende, *manner of behavior*
 1380 Agein fortune compleignende *success coming*
 I am, as who seith, everemo:
 And ek ful ofte tyme also,
 Whan so is that I se and hiere
 Or hevy word or hevy chiere *Either; or*
 1385 Of my lady, I grucche anon;
 Bot wordes dar I speke non,
 Wheroft sche myhte be desplesed.
 Bot in myn herte I am desesed
 With many a Murmur, God it wot; *sweat*
 1390 Thus drinke I in myn oghne swot,
 And thogh I make no semblant,
 Min herte is al desobeissant;
 And in this wise I me confesse
 Of that ye clepe unbuxomnesse. *I show no sign of it*
- 1395 Now telleth what youre conseil is.” *you call inobedience*
Confessor “Mi sone, and I thee rede this, *advise*
 What so befallе of other weie,
 That thou to loves heste obeie *command*

- Als ferr as thou it myht suffise:
 1400 For ofte sithe in such a wise
 Obedience in love availeth,
 Wher al a mannes strengthe faileth;
 Wheroft, if that thee list to wite
 In a cronique as it is write,
 1405 A gret ensample thou myht fynde,
 Which now is come to my mynde.

[TALE OF FLORENT]

- Ther was whilom be daies olde
 1410 A worthi knyht, and as men tolde
 He was nevoeu to th'empemour
 And of his court a courteour.
 Wifles he was, Florent he hihte.
 He was a man that mochel myhte;
 Of armes he was desirous,
 Chivalerous and amorous,
 1415 And for the fame of worldes speche,
 Strange aventures for to seche,
 He rod the marches al aboute.
 And fell a time, as he was oute,
 Fortune, which may every thred
 1420 Tobreke and knette of mannes sped,
 Schop, as this knyht rod in a pas,
 That he be strengthe take was,
 And to a castell thei him laddde,
 Wher that he fewe frendes hadde.
 1425 For so it fell that ilke stounde
 That he hath with a dedly wounde
 Feihtende, his oghne hondes slain
 Branchus, which to the capitain
 Was sone and heir, wheroft ben wrothe
 1430 The fader and the moder bothe.
 That knyht Branchus was of his hond
 The worthieste of al his lond,
 And fain thei wolden do vengance
 Upon Florent, bot remembrance
 1435 That thei toke of his worthiness
 Of knyhtthod and of gentillesse,
 And how he stod of cousinage
 To th'empemour, made hem assuage,
 And dorsten noght slen him for fere.
 1440 In gret despiteisoun thei were
 Among hemeself, what was the beste.
 Ther was a lady, the slyheste
- once in days of old
 (see note)
 nephew
- Wifeless; was called
 who had great power
- Foreign; seek
 borderlands
- Sever and tie; success
 Contrived; narrow passageway
 forceably captured
- befell at that time
- Fighting, by his own military prowess slain
 military governor of the castle
 are angry
- in his military prowess
- eagerly
- made them grow calm
 slay him because of fear
 debate
 themselves
 most sly

- Of alle that men knewe tho,
So old sche myhte unethes go,
1445 And was grantdame unto the dede:
And sche with that began to rede,
And seide how sche wol bringe him inne,
That sche schal him to dethe winne
Al only of his oghne grant,
1450 Thurgh strengthe of verray covenant
Withoute blame of eny wiht.
Anon sche sende for this kniht,
And of hire sone sche alleide
The deth, and thus to him sche seide:
1455 "Florent, how so thou be to wyte
Of Branchus deth, men schal respite
As now to take vengement,
Be so thou stonde in juggement
Upon certein condicoun,
1460 That thou unto a questioun
Which I schal axe schalt ansuere;
And over this thou schalt ek swere,
That if thou of the sothe faille,
Ther schal non other thing availe,
1465 That thou ne schalt thi deth receive.
And for men schal thee noght deceive,
That thou therof myht ben avised,
Thou schalt have day and tyme assised
And leve saufly for to wende,
1470 Be so that at thi daies ende
Thou come agein with thin avys."
This knyht, which worthi was and wys,
This lady preith that he may wite,
And have it under seales write,
1475 What questioun it scholde be
For which he schal in that degree
Stonde of his lif in jeupartie.
With that sche feigneth compaignie,
And seith: "Florent, on love it hongeth
1480 Al that to myn axinge longeth:
What alle wommen most desire
This wole I axe, and in th'empire
Wher as thou hast most knowlechinge
Tak conseil upon this axinge."
1485 Florent this thing hath undertake,
The day was set, the time take,
Under his seal he wrot his oth,
In such a wise and forth he goth
Hom to his emes court agein;
- then
scarcely get about
grandmother to the dead man (Branchus)
advise
him (Florent)
lure him to his death
Exclusively by his own consent
true (binding)
any man
sent
alleged

even though you are to blame
For; delay
For the time being
Provided that you

ask [you] shall answer
And in addition to this you; also
right answer (truth)

But that you shall
so that men
[In order] that; advised
allotted
permission safely to go
Provided that
your opinion

know

jeopardy
depends
question pertains
question

determined
uncle's

- 1490 To whom his aventure plein
He tolde, of that him is befallen.
And upon that thei weren alle
The wiseste of the lond asent,
Bot natheles of on assent fully
- 1495 Thei myhte noght acorde plat,
On seide this, an othre that.
After the disposicioun
Of naturel complexioun
To som womman it is plesance, sent for
- 1500 That to an othre is grevance;
Bot such a thing in special,
Which to hem alle in general
Is most plesant, and most desired one
- 1505 Above alle othre and most conspired,
Such o thing conne thei noght finde craved for
- 1510 Be constellacion ne kinde:
And thus Florent withoute cure
Mot stonde upon his aventure,
And is al schape unto the lere,
As in defalte of his answere. them
- This knyht hath levere for to dye
Than breke his trowthe and for to lye
In place ther as he was swore,
And schapth him gon agein therfore. default
- 1515 Whan time cam he tok his leve,
That lengere wolde he noght beleve,
And preith his em he be noght wroth,
For that is a point of his oth,
He seith, that no man schal him wreke, would rather die
- 1520 Thogh afterward men hiere speke
That he par aventure deie.
And thus he wente forth his weie
Alone as knyht aventurous,
And in his thought was curious break his pledge and lie
- 1525 To wite what was best to do:
And as he rod alone so,
And cam nyh ther he wolde be,
In a forest under a tre
He syh wher sat a creature, prepared himself to return again
- 1530 A lothly wommannysch figure,
That for to speke of fleisch and bon
So foul yit syh he nevere non. tarry
- This knyht behield hir redely,
And as he wolde have passed by,
Sche cleped him and bad abide; uncle that he not be angry
- 1535 And he his horse heved aside oath
- avenge
- Even though
- by chance should die
- eager
- know
- hitherto saw
- carefully
- called to him and told him to stop
- horse's head

- Tho torneth, and to hire he rod,
And there he hoveth and abod,
To wite what sche wolde mene.
Then turned; rode
paused and waited
To find out what she intended
to take pity on him
- 1540 And sche began him to bemene,
And seide: "Florent be thi name.
Thou hast on honde such a game,
That bot thou be the betre avised,
Thi deth is schapen and devised,
unless; better informed
1545 That al the world ne mai thee save,
Bot if that thou my conseil have."
Florent, whan he this tale herde,
Unto this olde wyht answerde
And of hir conseil he hir preide.
creature
- 1550 And sche agein to him thus seide:
"Florent, if I for thee so schape,
That thou thurgh me thi deth ascape
And take worschipe of thi dede,
What schal I have to my mede?"
for you so devise
1555 "What thing," quod he, "that thou wolt axe."
"I bidde nevere a betre taxe,"
Quod sche, "bot ferst, er thou be sped,
Thou schalt me leve such a wedd,
That I wol have thi trowthe in honde
ask for; payment
1560 That thou schalt be myn housebonde."
"Nay," seith Florent, "that may noght be."
"Ryd thanne forth thi wey," quod sche,
"And if thou go withoute red,
Thou schalt be sekerliche ded."
counsel
1565 Florent behihte hire good ynowh
Of lond, of rente, of park, of plowh,
Bot al that compteth sche at noght.
Tho fell this knyht in mochel thought,
Now goth he forth, now comth agein,
certainly be killed
1570 He wot noght what is best to sein,
And thoghte, as he rod to and fro,
That chese he mot on of the tuo,
Or for to take hire to his wif
Or elles for to lese his lif.
say
- 1575 And thanne he caste his avantage,
That sche was of so gret an age,
That sche mai live bot a while,
And thoghte put hire in an ile,
Wher that no man hire scholde knowe,
island
1580 Til sche with deth were overthrowe.
And thus this yonge lusti knyht
Unto this olde lothly wiht
Tho seide: "If that non other chance
loathly creature
opportunity

- 1585 Mai make my deliverance,
 Bot only thilke same speche
 Which, as thou seist, thou schalt me teche,
 Have hier myn hond, I schal thee wedde." here
gave as a pledge
- And thus his trowthe he leith to wedde.
 With that sche frounceth up the browe: wrinkled up
- 1590 "This covenant I wol allowe," agreement; accept
 Sche seith; "if eny other thing
 Bot that thou hast of my techyng if any other means
 Fro deth thi body mai respite,
 I woll thee of thi trowthe acquite, Except that [which]
 1595 And elles be non other weie. save
 Now herkne me what I schal seie. release you of your vow
 Whan thou art come into the place But by no other means
 Wher now thei maken gret manace
- And upon thi comyng abyde, await
- 1600 Thei wole anon the same tide will swiftly at that very moment
 Oppose thee of thin answere. Ask you for
 I wot thou wolt nothing forbere not at all hold back
 Of that thou wenest be thi beste, From what you think your best [effort]
 And if thou myht so finde reste,
- 1605 Wel is, for thanne is ther no more. That is fine; no more [to do]
 And elles this schal be my lore, But otherwise; teaching
 That thou schalt seie, upon this molde earth
 That alle wommen lievest wolde would most desire
 Be soverein of mannes love: To be
- 1610 For what womman is so above, that woman [who] is thus of a higher rank
 Sche hath, as who seith, al hire wille; her desire
 And elles may sche noght fulfille For otherwise
 What thing hir were lievest have. she would most desire to have
 With this answere thou schalt save
- 1615 Thiself, and other wise noght. achieved
 And whan thou hast thin ende wroght, i.e., do not forget
 Com hier agein, thou schalt me finde, glum looks
 And let nothing out of thi minde." does not know
- He goth him forth with hevy chiere, attain
- 1620 As he that not in what manere must bind himself
 He mai this worldes joie atteigne: such a one who
 For if he deie, he hath a peine, the most unbecoming
 And if he live, he mot him binde
- 1625 To such on which of alle kinde glad; sad
 Of wommen is th'unsemylieste: Either; or
 Thus wot he noght what is the beste:
 Bot be him lief or be him loth,
 Unto the castell forth he goth
 His full answere for to give,
- 1630 Or for to deie or for to live.

- Forth with his conseil cam the lord,
 The thinges stoden of record,
 He sende up for the lady sone,
 And forth sche cam, that olde mone.
- 1635 In presence of the remenant
 The strengthe of al the covenant
 Tho was reherced openly,
 And to Florent sche bad forthi
 That he schal tellen his avis,
- 1640 As he that woot what is the pris.
 Florent seith al that evere he couthe,
 Bot such word cam ther non to mowthe,
 That he for gifte or for behest
 Mihte eny wise his deth areste.
- 1645 And thus he tarieith longe and late,
 Til that this lady bad algate
 That he schal for the dom final
 Gif his ansuere in special
 Of that sche hadde him ferst opposed;
- 1650 And thanne he hath trewly supposed
 That he him may of nothing yelpe,
 Bot if so be tho wordes helpe,
 Whiche as the womman hath him tawht;
 Wheroft he hath an hope cawht
- 1655 That he schal ben excused so,
 And tolde out plein his wille tho.
 And whan that this matrone herde
 The manere how this knyht ansuerde,
 Sche seide, "Ha! Treson! Wo thee be,
- 1660 That hast thus told the privité,
 Which alle wommen most desire!
 I wolde that thou were afire."
 Bot natholes in such a plit
 Florent of his answere is quit:
- 1665 And tho began his sorwe newe,
 For he mot gon, or ben untrewi,
 To hire which his trowthe hadde.
 Bot he, which alle schame dradde,
 Goth forth in stede of his penance,
- 1670 And takth the fortune of his chance,
 As he that was with trowthe affaited.
 This olde wyht him hath awaited
 In place wher as he hire lefte:
 Florent his wofull heved uplefte
- 1675 And syh this vecke wher sche sat,
 Which was the lothlieste what
 That evere man caste on his yhe:
- at once
 consort (OE *gemana*, "intercourse")*
- accordingly
 opinion
 reward
 knew*
- promise
 prevent*
- demanded continuously
 final judgment (doom)*
- Give; precisely
 first asked*
- boast*
- then*
- Woe be to you
 Who have; secret*
- in flames
 dilemma*
- justified in his answer*
- then his grief began to renew
 must*
- who had his promise
 shame feared*
- Goes forth on behalf of
 endures
 governed
 creature*
- woeful head raised up
 saw; hag
 thing
 cast his eye upon*

- 1680 Hire nase bass, hire browes hyhe,
 Hire yhen smale and depe set,
 Hire chekes ben with teres wet,
 And rivelen as an emty skyn
 Hangende doun unto the chin,
 Hire lippes schrunken ben for age,
 Ther was no grace in the visage.
1685 Hir front was nargh, hir lockes hore,
 Sche loketh forth as doth a More,
 Hire necke is schort, hir schuldres courbe —
 That myhte a mannes lust destourbe!
 Hire body gret and nothing smal,
1690 And schortly to descriue hire al,
 Sche hath no lith withoute a lak;
 Bot lich unto the wollesak
 Sche proferth hire unto this knyht,
 And bad him, as he hath behyht,
1695 So as sche hath ben his warant,
 That he hire holde covenant,
 And be the bridel sche him seseth.
 Bot Godd wot how that sche him pleseth
 Of suche wordes as sche spekth:
1700 Him thenkth wel nyh his herte brekth
 For sorwe that he may noght flee,
 Bot if he wolde untrewe be.
 Loke, how a sek man for his hele
 Takth baldemoine with canele,
1705 And with the mirre takth the sucre,
 Ryht upon such a maner lucre
 Stant Florent, as in this diete:
 He drinkth the bitre with the swete,
 He medleth sorwe with likyng,
1710 And liveth, as who seith, deyinge;
 His youthe schal be cast awei
 Upon such on which as the weie
 Is old and lothly overal.
 Bot nede he mot that nede schal:
1715 He wolde algate his trowthe holde,
 As every knyht therto is holde,
 What happ so evere him is befalle.
 Thogh sche be the foulest of alle,
 Yit to th'onour of womanhiede
1720 Him thoghte he scholde taken hiede;
 So that for pure gentilesse,
 As he hire couthe best adresse,
 In ragges, as sche was totore,
 He set hire on his hors tofore
- nose low; brows high-arched
i.e., beady eyes
- wrinkled
- forehead; narrow; gray
Moor
- stooped (curved)
- limb; deficiency
woolsack
- offered herself
promised
- guarantor
- [hors'e] bridle; seizes him
Only God knows; pleases him
- It seems to him
flee
- sick; health
gentian root; cinnamon
- myrrh
sort of gain
- pleasure
- whey
- bound
- the honor
It seemed to him
- Providing for her as best he could array
since she was all tattered
before [him]

- 1725 And forth he takth his weie softe. *quietly*
 No wonder thogh he siketh ofte *often sighs*
 Bot as an oule fletch be nyhte *owl flies by night*
 Out of alle othre briddes syhte, *birds*
 Riht so this knyht on daies brode *in broad daylight*
- 1730 In clos him hield, and schop his rode *Kept himself hidden; did his riding*
 On nyghtes time, til the tyde *At night; time*
- That he cam there he wolde abide; *secretly*
 And prively withoute noise *ugly woman (rump; OF cuisse, "thigh")*
 He bringth this foule grete coise
- 1735 To his castell in such a wise *her figure observe*
 That no man myhte hire schappe avise, *took*
 Til sche into the chambre cam: *trusted*
 Wher he his privé conseil nam *them*
 Of suche men as he most troste, *best (lovely lady)/beast*
- 1740 And tolde hem that he nedes moste *personal serving women; sent for*
 This beste wedde to his wif, *soon took off*
 For elles hadde he lost his lif.
- The privé wommen were asent, *dressed*
 That scholden ben of his assent:
- 1745 Hire ragges thei anon of drawe, *hoary locks comb through (divide)*
 And, as it was that time lawe, *did not want to be shorn*
 Sche hadde bath, sche hadde reste, *attire as then was the custom*
 And was arraied to the beste. *Decided; it (the custom)*
- Bot with no craft of combes brode *craftily covered*
- 1750 Thei myhte hire hore lockes schode, *them (her hoary locks)*
 And sche ne wolde noght be schore *dressed*
 For no conseil, and thei therfore, *inspected*
 With such atyr as tho was used, *more foul to look on [than before]*
 Ordeinen that it was excused,
- 1755 And hid so crafteliche aboute, *more foul to look on [than before]*
 That no man myhte sen hem oute. *more foul to look on [than before]*
 Bot when sche was fulliche arraied *more foul to look on [than before]*
 And hire atyr was al assaied, *more foul to look on [than before]*
 Tho was sche foulere on to se.
- 1760 Bot yit it may non other be: *more foul to look on [than before]*
 Thei were wedded in the nyght. *more foul to look on [than before]*
 So wo begon was nevere knyht *more foul to look on [than before]*
 As he was thanne of mariage. *more foul to look on [than before]*
- 1765 And sche began to pleie and rage, *more foul to look on [than before]*
 As who seith, I am wel ynowh; *more foul to look on [than before]*
 Bot he therof nothing ne lowh, *more foul to look on [than before]*
 For sche tok thanne chiere on honde *more foul to look on [than before]*
 And clepeth him hire housebonde, *more foul to look on [than before]*
 And seith, "My lord, go we to bedde, *more foul to look on [than before]*
- 1770 For I to that entente wedde, *more foul to look on [than before]*
 That thou schalt be my worldes blisse," *more foul to look on [than before]*

- And profreth him with that to kisse,
As sche a lusti lady were.
His body myhte wel be there,
1775 Bot as of thoght and of memoire
His herte was in purgatoire.
Bot yit for strengthe of matrimoine
He myhte make non essoine,
That he ne mot algates plie
1780 To gon to bedde of compaignie.
And whan thei were abedde naked,
Withoute slep he was awaked;
He torneth on that other side,
For that he wolde hise yhen hyde
1785 Fro lokynge on that fole wyht.
The chambre was al full of lyht,
The courtins were of cendal thinne,
This newe bryd which lay withinne,
Thogh it be noght with his acord,
1790 In armes sche beclipe hire lord,
And preide, as he was torned fro,
He wolde him torne ageinward tho;
"For now," sche seith, "we ben bothe on."
And he lay stille as eny ston,
1795 Bot evere in on sche spak and preide,
And bad him thenke on that he seide,
Whan that he tok hire be the hond.
He herde and understod the bond,
How he was set to his penance,
1800 And, as it were a man in trance,
He torneth him al sodeinly
And syh a lady lay him by
Of eyhtetiene wynter age,
Which was the faireste of visage
1805 That evere in al this world he syh:
And as he wolde have take hire nyh,
Sche put hire hand and be his leve
Besoghte him that he wolde leve,
And seith that for to wynne or lese
1810 He mot on of tuo things chese,
Wher he wol have hire such on nyght,
Or elles upon daies lyht,
For he schal noght have bothe tuo.
And he began to sorwe tho,
1815 In many a wise and caste his thoght,
Bot for al that yit cowthe he noght
Devise himself which was the beste.
And sche, that wolde his hertes reste,
- offers to kiss him*
- excuse*
- But that he need[s] must comply*
- companionship*
- amorously in bed*
- lay awake*
- turned his back to her*
- eyes hide*
- ugly creature*
- (OF cendal, a costly fabric)*
- bride*
- consent*
- embraced*
- prayed; turned away*
- [That] he would turn himself; then*
- one*
- steadfastly (insistently)*
- what he had said*
- married her*
- wait*
- lose*
- must one of two things choose*
- Whether; by night*
- daylight*
- then*
- who wanted his peace of mind*

- 1820 Preith that he scholde chese algate,
Til ate laste longe and late
He seide: "O ye, my lyves hele,
Sey what you list in my querele,
I not what ansuere I schal give:
Bot evere whil that I may live,
I wol that ye be my maistresse,
For I can noght miselve gesse
Which is the beste unto my chois.
Thus grante I yow myn hole vois,
Ches for ous bothen, I you preie;
1830 And what as evere that ye seie,
Riht as ye wole so wol I."
"Mi lord," sche seide, "grant merci,
For of this word that ye now sein,
That ye have mad me sovereign,
Mi destiné is overpassed,
That nevere hieraftir schal be lassed
Mi beauté, which that I now have,
Til I be take into my grave;
Bot nyht and day as I am now
1840 I schal alwey be such to yow.
The kinges dowhter of Cizile
I am, and fell bot siththe awhile,
As I was with my fader late,
That my stepmoder for an hate,
1845 Which toward me sche hath begonne,
Forschop me, til I hadde wonne
The love and sovereigneté
Of what knyht that in his degré
Alle othre passeth of good name.
1850 And, as men sein, ye ben the same,
The dede proeveth it is so.
Thus am I youres evermo."
Tho was plesance and joye ynowh,
Echon with other pleide and lowh;
1855 Thei live longe and wel thei ferde,
And clerkes that this chance herde
Thei writen it in evidence,
To teche how that obedience
Mai wel fortune a man to love
1860 And sette him in his lust above,
As it befell unto this knyht.
- Confessor** Forthi, my sone, if thou do ryht,
Thou schalt unto thi love obeie,
And folwe hir will be alle weie."
- chose nevertheless*
life's salvation
Say what you please; debate
do not know
discern
my whole voice
Choose
Just as you might wish
Since you have made
fulfilled
diminished
Sicily
it befell but a while ago
out of hatred
transformed; until
you are that one
Then; enough
Each; played; laughed
fared together
in a state of prosperity
desire in all ways

- Amans** “Min holy fader, so I wile:
 For ye have told me such a skile
 Of this ensample now tofore,
 That I schal evermo therfore
 Hierafterward myn observance
 1870 To love and to his obeissance
 The betre kepe: and over this
 Of pride if ther ought elles is,
 Wherof that I me schryve schal,
 What thing it is in special,
 1875 Mi fader, axeth, I you preie.”
- Confessor** “Now lest, my sone, and I schal seie:
 For yit ther is Surquiderie,
 Which stant with Pride of compaignie;
 Wherof that thou schalt hiere anon,
 1880 To knowe if thou have gult or non
 Upon the forme as thou schalt hiere:
 Now understand wel the matiere.”

[PRESUMPTION]

- viii. *Omnia scire putat, set se Presumpcio nescit,*
Nec sibi consimilem quem putat esse parem
Qui magis astutus reputat se vincere bellum,
In laqueos Veneris forcius ipse cadit.
Sepe Cupido virum sibi qui presumit amantem
*Fallit, et in vacuas spes reddit ipsa vias.*¹

- [Confessor]** “Surquiderie is thilke vice
 Of Pride, which the thridde office
 1885 Hath in his court, and wol noght knowe
 The trowthe til it overthrowe.
 Upon his fortune and his grace
 Comth ‘Hadde I wist’ ful ofte aplace;
 For he doth al his thing be gesse,
 1890 And voideth alle sikernesse.
 Non other conseil good him siemeth
 Bot such as he himselfe diemeth;
 For in such wise as he compasseth,
 His wit alone alle othre passeth;
 1895 And is with pride so thurghsoght,

Presumption is that [particular]

until it falls into calamity

(see note)

Had I known

carries out all his business by supposition

drives away all certainty

judges

[he] is; pervaded

¹ All things Presumption thinks he knows, but he does not know himself, nor does he think that anyone similar to him is his equal. He who thinks himself more astute in winning the battle falls all the more tightly into Venus's snares. Often Cupid betrays the man who presupposes a lover for himself, and Hope itself turns back down empty roads.

- That he alle othre set at noght,
And weneth of himselfen so,
That such as he ther be no mo,
So fair, so semly, ne so wis;
1900 And thus he wolde bere a pris
Above alle othre, and noght forthi
He seith noght ones 'grant mercy'
To Godd, which alle grace sendeth,
So that his wittes he despendeth
1905 Upon himself, as thogh ther were
No godd which myhte availe there.
Bot al upon his oghne witt
He stant, til he falle in the pitt
So ferr that he mai noght arise.
- 1910 And riht thus in the same wise
☞ This vice upon the cause of love
So proudly set the herte above,
And doth him pleinly for to wene
That he to loven eny qwene
- 1915 Hath worthinesse and sufficance;
And so withoute pourveance
Ful ofte he heweth up so hihe,
That chippes fallen in his yhe;
And ek ful ofte he weneth this:
- 1920 Ther as he noght beloved is,
To be beloved alther best.
Now, sone, tell what so thee lest
Of this that I have told thee hier."
- Amans** "Ha, fader, be noght in a wer!
1925 I trowe ther be no man lesse,
Of eny maner worthinesse,
That halt him lasse worth thanne I
To be beloved; and noght forthi
I seie in excusinge of me,
- 1930 To alle men that love is fre.
And certes that mai no man werne;
For love is of himself so derne,
It luteth in a mannes herte.
Bot that ne schal me noght asterte,
- 1935 To wene for to be worthi
To loven, bot in hir mercy.
Bot, sire, of that ye wolden mene,
That I scholde otherwise wene
To be beloved thanne I was,
- 1940 I am beknowe as in that cas."
- Confessor** "Mi goode sone, tell me how."
- thinks
more
nor so wise [as he is]
take the prize
nevertheless
used up
(see note)
causes him; think
prudence
chops so high up
eye
also very often he thinks
Where [i.e., by whom]
best of all
you wish
you here
doubt
nevertheless
myself
prevent
secret
lurks
that [fidea] will not occur to me
think that I am
except at her authority
intend
I should think differently
I admit [my guilt] in that case

- Amans** “Now lest, and I wol telle yow,
 Mi goode fader, how it is.
 Ful ofte it hath befallen or this
 1945 Thurgh hope that was noght certein,
 Mi wenynge hath be set in vein
 To triste in thing that halp me noght,
 Bot onliche of myn oughne thought.
 For as it semeth that a belle
 1950 Lik to the wordes that men telle
 Answerth, riht so ne mor ne lesse,
 To yow, my fader, I confesse,
 Such will my wit hath overset,
 That what so hope me behet,
 1955 Ful many a time I wene it soth,
 Bot finali no spied it doth.
 Thus may I tellen, as I can,
 Wenynge beguileth many a man.
 So hath it me, riht wel I wot:
 1960 For if a man wole in a bot
 Which is withoute botme rowe,
 He moste nedes overthowen.
 Riht so wenynge hath ferd be me,
 For whanne I wende next have be,
 1965 As I be my wenynge caste,
 Thanne was I furthest ate laste,
 And as a foll my bowe unbende,
 Whan al was failed that I wende.
 Forthi, my fader, as of this,
 1970 That my wenynge hath gon amis
 Touchende to Surquiderie,
 Gif me my penance er I die.
 Bot if ye wolde in eny forme
 Of this matiere a tale enforme,
 1975 Which were agein this vice set,
 I scholde fare wel the bet.”
- listen
 before now
 thinking has been determined in vain
 To trust
 desire my intellect has
 whatever hope might promise
 believe it true
 success it brings about
 Thinking beguiles
 go down
 what would happen next
 by my thinking imagined
 fool
 recount*

[TALE OF CAPANEUS]

- [Confessor]** “Mi sone, in alle maner wise
 1980 Surquiderie is to despise,
 Wheroft I finde write thus.
 The proude knyght Capaneus
 He was of such Surquiderie,
 That he thurgh his chivalerie
 Upon himself so mochel triste,
 That to the goddes him ne liste
 1985 In no querele to beseche,
- (see note)
 Presumption
 military prowess
 In himself so much trusted
 it pleased him not
 conflict to pray*

- Bot seide it was an ydel speche,
Which caused was of pure drede,
For lack of herte and for no nede.
And upon such presumpciooun
- 1990 He hield this proude opinioun,
Til ate laste upon a dai,
Aboute Thebes wher he lay,
Whan it of siege was belein,
This knyht, as the Croniques sein,
- 1995 In alle mennes sihte there,
Whan he was proudest in his gere,
And thoghte how nothing myhte him dere,
Ful armed with his schield and spere
As he the cité wolde assaile,
- 2000 Godd tok himselfe the bataille
Agein his Pride, and fro the sky
A firy thonder sodeinly
He sende, and him to pouldre smot.
And thus the Pride which was hot,
- 2005 Whan he most in his strengthe wende,
Was brent and lost withouten ende:
So that it proeveth wel therfore,
The strengthe of man is sone lore,
Bot if that he it wel governe.
- 2010 And over this a man mai lerne
That ek ful ofte time it grieveth,
Whan that a man himself believeth,
As thogh it scholde him wel beseme
That he alle othre men can deme,
- 2015 And hath forgete his oghne vice.
A tale of hem that ben so nyce,
And feigne hemself to be so wise,
I schal thee telle in such a wise,
Wheroft thou schalt ensample take
- 2020 That thou no such thing undertake.
- it [prayer] was a useless utterance*
fear
- besieged*
- armor*
wound
- thunderbolt*
powder pulverized
- most trusted in his strength*
- proves clearly*
lost
Unless
- moreover*
it is injurious
- be proper for him*
judge
forgotten his own
those who are so stupid

[TRUMP OF DEATH]

- I finde upon Surquiderie,
How that whilom of Hungarie
- 2025 Be olde daies was a king
Wys and honeste in alle thing:
And so befell upon a dai,
And that was in the monthe of Maii,
As thilke time it was usance,
This kyng with noble pourveance
Hath for himself his charr araied,
- once*
- honorable*
- May*
custom
provision

- 2030 Wherinne he wolde ride amaid
 ↗ Out of the cité for to pleie,
 With lordes and with gret nobleie
 Of lusti folk that were yonge:
 Wher some pleide and some songe,
 2035 And some gon and some ryde,
 And some prike here hors aside
 And bridlen hem now in now oute.
 The kyng his yhe caste aboute,
 Til he was ate laste war
 2040 And syh comende agein his char
 Two pilegrins of so gret age,
 That lich unto a dreie ymage
 Thei weren pale and fade hewed,
 And as a bussh which is besnewed,
 2045 Here berdes weren hore and whyte;
 Ther was of kinde bot a lite,
 That thei ne semen fulli dede.
 Thei comen to the kyng and bede
 Som of his good par charité;
 2050 And he with gret humilité
 Out of his char to grounde lepté,
 And hem in bothe hise armes kepte
 And keste hem bothe fot and hond
 Before the lordes of his lond,
 2055 And gaf hem of his good therto:
 And whanne he hath this dede do,
 He goth into his char agein.
 Tho was Murmur, tho was Desdeign,
 Tho was Compleignte on every side,
 2060 Thei seiden of here oghne Pride
 Eche until othre: "What is this?
 Oure king hath do this thing amis,
 So to abesse his realté
 That every man it myhte se,
 2065 And humbled him in such a wise
 To hem that were of non emprise."
 Thus was it spoken to and fro
 Of hem that were with him tho
 Al prively behinde his bak;
 2070 Bot to himselfen no man spak.
 The kinges brother in presence
 Was thilke time, and gret offence
 He tok therof, and was the same
 Above alle othre which most blame
 2075 Upon his liege lord hath leid,
 And hath unto the lordes seid,
- a-maying*
(see note)
- played [games]*
were walking; were riding
were spurring their; alongside
now reining them in, now releasing the reins
eye
became aware
saw coming toward
- withered effigy*
- covered with snow*
Their beards; hoary
so little natural vitality left
they seemed almost totally dead
made supplication for
- took*
kissed them
- gave them*
- Then; Disdain*
- in their own Pride*
- wrongly*
degrade his kingship
- himself; manner*
worth
- By those who*
secretly
- He took in response to that, and*
who
sovereign had laid

- Anon as he mai time finde,
Ther schal nothing be left behinde,
That he wol speke unto the king.
- 2080 Now lest what fell upon this thing.
The day was merie and fair ynowh,
Echon with othre pleide and lowh,
And fallen into tales newe,
How that the freisshe floures grewe,
2085 And how the grene leves spronge,
And how that love among the yonge
Began the hertes thanne awake,
And every bridd hath chose hire make:
And thus the Maies day to th'ende
- 2090 Thei lede, and hom agein thei wende.
The king was noght so sone come,
That whanne he hadde his chambre nome
His brother ne was redi there,
And broghte a tale unto his ere
- 2095 Of that he dede such a schame
In hindringe of his oghne name,
Whan he himself so wolde drecche,
That to so vil a povere wrecche
Him deigneth schewe such simplesce
- 2100 Agein th'astat of his noblesce:
And seith he schal it no mor use,
And that he mot himself excuse
Toward hise lordes everychon.
The king stod stille as eny ston,
- 2105 And to his tale an ere he leide,
And thoghte more than he seide.
Bot natholes to that he herde
Wel cortaisly the king answerde,
And tolde it scholde be amended.
- 2110 And thus whan that her tale is ended,
Al redy was the bord and cloth,
The king unto his souper goth
Among the lordes to the halle;
And whan thei hadden souped alle,
- 2115 Thei token leve and forth thei go.
The king bethoghte himself tho
How he his brother mai chastie,
That he thurgh his Surquiderie
Tok upon honde to despreise
- 2120 Humilité, which is to preise,
And therupon gaf such conseil
Toward his king that was noght heil;
Wherof to be the betre lered,
- As soon as*
- listen to what befell*
- laughed*
- bird; her mate*
- went*
- had no sooner come [home]*
- Than that when; taken*
- His brother was already there*
- ear*
- own*
- debase*
- vile*
- It seemed to him worthy to show such humility*
- nobility*
- behave that way no more*
- must excuse himself*
- To each one of his lords*
- listened carefully to his tale*
- to what he heard*
- said it should*
- their complaint*
- thought to himself then*
- may reprove (chasten)*
- praiseworthy*
- wholesome*
- taught*

- He thenkth to maken him afered.
 2125 It fell so that in thilke dawe
 Ther was ordeined be the lawe
 A trompe with a sterne breth,
 Which cleped was the trompe of deth:
 And in the court wher the king was
- 2130 A certein man this trompe of bras
 Hath in kepinge, and therof serveth,
 That whan a lord his deth deserveth,
 He schal this dredful trompe blowe
 Tofore his gate, and make it knowe
- 2135 How that the jugement is gove
 Of deth, which schal noght be forgove.
 The king, whan it was nyht, anon
 This man asente and bad him gon
 To trompen at his brother gate;
- 2140 And he, which mot so don algate,
 Goth forth and doth the kynges heste.
 This lord, which herde of this tempeste
 That he tofore his gate blew,
 Tho wiste he be the lawe and knew
- 2145 That he was sikerliche ded:
 And as of help he wot no red
 Bot sende for hise frendes alle
 And tolde hem how it is befalle.
 And thei him axe cause why
- 2150 Bot he the sothe noght forthi
 Ne wiste, and ther was sorwe tho:
 For it stod thilke tyme so,
 This trompe was of such sentence,
 That theragein no resistence
- 2155 Thei couthe ordeine be no weie,
 That he ne mot algate deie,
 Bot if so that he may pourchace
 To gete his liege lordes grace.
 Here wittes therupon thei caste,
- 2160 And ben apointed ate laste.
 This lord a worthi ladi hadde
 Unto his wif, which also dradde
 Hire lordes deth, and children five
 Betwen hem two thei hadde alyve,
- 2165 That weren yonge and tendre of age,
 And of stature and of visage
 Riht faire and lusty on to se.
 Tho casten thei that he and sche
 Forth with here children on the morwe,
- 2170 As thei that were full of sorwe,
- It occurred to him to frighten him
 that time*
- trumpet; fierce sound
 called; trumpet of death*
- in [his] keeping, and has the job of using it
 [Such] that*
- Before
 given
 reprieved*
- sent for*
- who must do so regardless
 command*
- Then he understood by the law
 assuredly dead*
- since for help he knew no plan
 Except [that he should] send
 And [that he should] tell them
 asked
 truth*
- Knew not*
- by no means
 might not have to die nonetheless
 Unless he succeed*
- In getting; forgiveness
 Their; inclined
 came to a decision*
- Then they planned
 their*

- Al naked bot of smok and sherte,
To tendre with the kynges herte,
His grace scholden go to seche
And pardoun of the deth beseche.
2175 Thus passen thei that wofull nyht,
And erly, whan thei sihe it lyht,
Thei gon hem forth in such a wise
As thou tofore hast herd devise,
Al naked bot here schortes one.
- 2180 Thei wepte and made mochel mone,
Here her hangende aboute here eres;
With sobbinge and with sory teres
This lord goth thanne an humble pas,
That whilom proud and noble was;
- 2185 Wheroft the cité sore afflyhte,
Of hem that sihen thilke syhte:
And natholes al openly
With such wepinge and with such cri
Forth with hise children and his wif
- 2190 He goth to preie for his lif.
Unto the court whan thei be come,
And men therinne have hiede nome,
Ther was no wiht, if he hem syhe,
Fro water mihte kepe his yhe
- 2195 For sorwe which thei maden tho.
The king supposeth of this wo,
And feigneth as he noght ne wiste;
Bot natholes at his upriste
Men tolden him how that it ferde:
- 2200 And whan that he this wonder herde,
In haste he goth into the halle,
And alle at ones doun thei falle,
If eny pité may be founde.
The king, which seth hem go to grounde,
- 2205 Hath axed hem what is the fere,
Why thei be so despouled there.
His brother seide: "Ha! lord, mercy!
I wot non other cause why,
Bot only that this nyht ful late
- 2210 The trompe of deth was at my gate
In tokne that I scholde deie;
Thus be we come for to preie
That ye mi worldes deth respite."
"Ha! fol, how thou art for to wyte,"
- 2215 The king unto his brother seith,
"That thou art of so litel feith,
That only for a trompes soun
- except for
move to tenderness
- except for their shirts alone
great lament
- Their hair hanging about their ears
- once
became sorely distressed (afflicted)
- On the part of those who
publicly
- pray
- taken heed
person [who] if he saw them
- anticipates
feigns as if he knew nothing
arising
- [To see] if
who sees them drop to the ground
fear
- despoiled (naked)
Ah!
know
- As a sign; had to die
pray
my earthly death cancel
fool; blame

- Hast gon despained thurgh the toun, *naked*
 Thou and thi wif in such manere
- 2220 Forth with thi children that ben here,
 In sihte of alle men aboute,
 For that thou seist thou art in doute
 Of deth, which stant under the lawe
 Of man, and man it mai withdrawe,
 2225 So that it mai par chance fail.
 Now schalt thou noght forthi mervaile
 That I doun fro my charr alihete,
 Whanne I behield tofore my sihte
 In hem that were of so gret age
 2230 Min oghne deth thurgh here ymage,
 Which God hath set be lawe of kynde,
 Wheroft I mai no bote finde:
 For wel I wot, such as thei be,
 Riht such am I in my degree,
 2235 Of fleissh and blod, and so schal deie.
 And thus, thogh I that lawe obeie
 Of which the kinges ben put under,
 It oghte ben wel lasse wonder
 Than thou, which art withoute nede
 2240 For lawe of londe in such a drede,
 Which for t'acompte is bot a jape,
 As thing which thou miht overscape.
 Forthi, mi brother, after this
 I rede, sithen that so is
 2245 That thou canst drede a man so sore,
 Dred God with al thin herte more.
 For al schal deie and al schal passe,
 Als wel a leoun as an asse,
 Als wel a beggere as a lord,
 2250 Towardes deth in on accord *in steadfast accord*
 Thei schullen stonde." And in this wise
 The king hath with hise wordes wise
 His brother tawht and al forgive.
- Confessor** Forthi, mi sone, if thou wolt live
 2255 In vertu, thou most vice eschui,
 And with low herte humblesce suie,
 So that thou be noght surquidous." *eschew*
humble heart follow humility
presumptuous
- Amans** "Mi fader, I am amorous,
 Wheroft I wolde you beseche
 2260 That ye me som ensample teche,
 Which mihte in loves cause stonde."
- Confessor** "Mi sone, thou schalt understande,
 In love and othre thinges alle
 If that Surquiderie falle,

- 2265 It may to him noght wel betide
 Which useth thilke vice of Pride,
 Which torneth wisdom to wenynge
 And sothfastnesse into lesyng
 Thurgh fol yimaginacion.
- 2270 And for thin enformacion,
 That thou this vice as I thee rede
 Eschuie schalt, a tale I rede,
 Which fell whilom be daies olde,
 So as the clerk Ovide tolde.
- this same vice
 wishful thinking
 truth into lying
 foolish*
- in olden days
 man of letters*

[TALE OF NARCISSUS]

- 2275 Ther was whilom a lordes sone,
 Which of his Pride a nyce wone
 Hath cawht, that worthi to his liche,
 To sechen al the worldes riche,
 Ther was no womman for to love.
- 2280 So hihe he sette himselfe above
 Of stature and of beauté bothe,
 That him thoghte alle wommen lothe:
 So was ther no comparisoun
 As toward his condicioun.
- 2285 This yonge lord Narcizus hihte:
 No strengthe of love bowe mihte
 His herte, which is unaffiled.
 Bot ate laste he was beguiled,
 For of the goddes pourveance
- 2290 It fell him on a dai par chance,
 That he in all his proude fare
 Unto the forest gan to fare,
 Amonges othre that ther were
 To hunte and to desporte him there.
- 2295 And whanne he cam into the place
 Wher that he wolde make his chace,
 The houndes weren in a throwe
 Uncoupled and the hornes blowe.
 The grete hert anon was founde,
- 2300 Which swifte feet sette upon grounde,
 And he with spore in horse side
 Him hasteth faste for to ride,
 Til alle men be left behinde.
 And as he rod, under a linde
- 2305 Beside a roche, as I thee telle,
 He syh wher sprong a lusty welle:
 The day was wonder hot withalle,
 And such a thurst was on him falle,
- once
 foolish attitude
 [namely] that worthy as his peer
 world's territory
 (see note)
 high*
- loathsome
 equal
 moral disposition
 was called
 might humble
 untrained*
- provision
 by chance
 bearing*
- entertain himself*
- hunt
 instantly*
- hart soon*
- [Narcissus] hastened himself*
- tree*

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| 2310 | That he moste owther deie or drinke;
And doun he lihte and be the brinke
He teide his hors unto a branche,
And leide him lowe for to stanche
His thurst: and as he caste his lok
Into the welle and hiede tok, | either
alighted
tied |
| 2315 | He sih the like of his visage,
And wende ther were an ymage
Of such a nimphe as tho was faie,
Wheroft love his herte assaie
Began, as it was after sene, | took heed
saw; likeness (peer) |
| 2320 | Of his sotie, and made him wene
It were a womman that he syh.
The more he cam the welle nyh,
The nerr cam sche to him agein;
So wiste he nevere what to sein; | magical (enchanted/of fairy)
assault |
| 2325 | For whanne he wepte, he sih hire wepe,
And whanne he cride, he tok good kepe,
The same word sche cride also:
And thus began the newe woe,
That whilom was to him so strange. | From his besottedness; think
saw
near
nearer
knew; to say
woe |
| 2330 | Tho made him love an hard eschange:
To sette his herte and to beginne
Thing which he mihte nevere winne.
And evere among he gan to loue,
And preith that sche to him come oute; | love made with him; exchange
bow down |
| 2335 | And otherwhile he goth a ferr,
And otherwhile he draweth nerr,
And evere he fond hire in o place.
He wepth, he crith, he axeth grace,
There as he mihte gete non; | sometimes; away |
| 2340 | So that agein a roche of ston,
As he that knew non other red,
He smot himself til he was ded.
Wheroft the Nimpthes of the welles,
And othre that ther weren elles | against
As one who; counsel
dashed |
| 2345 | Unto the wodes belongende,
The body, which was ded ligende,
For pure pité that thei have
Under the grene thei begrave.
And thanne out of his sepulture | |
| 2350 | Ther spong anon par aventure
Of floures such a wonder syhte,
That men ensample take myhte
Upon the dedes whiche he dede,
As tho was sene in thilke stede; | grass; buried |
| 2355 | For in the wynter freysshe and faire | deeds; did
that place |

- The floures ben, which is contraire
 To kynde, and so was the folie
 Which fell of his Surquiderie.
- Confessor** Thus he, which love hadde in desdeign,
 2360 Worste of alle othre was besein,
 And as he sette his pris most hyhe,
 He was lest worth in loves yhe
 And most bejaped in his wit:
 Wherof the remembrance is yit,
 2365 So that thou myht ensample take,
 And ek alle othre for his sake."
- Amans** "Mi fader, as touchende of me,
 This vice I thenke for to fle,
 Which of his wenynge overtroweth;
 2370 And nameliche of thing which groweth
 In loves cause or wel or wo.
 Yit pryded I me nevere so,
 Bot wolde God that grace sende,
 That toward me my lady wende
 2375 As I towardes hire wene!
 Mi love scholde so be sene,
 Ther scholde go no pride a place.
 Bot I am ferr fro thilke grace,
 As for to speke of tyme now;
 2380 So mot I soffre, and preie yow
 That ye wole axe on other side
 If ther be eny point of Pride,
 Wherof it nedeth to be schrive."
- Confessor** "Mi sone, Godd it thee forgive,
 2385 If thou have eny thing misdo
 Touchende of this, bot overmo
 Ther is an other yit of Pride,
 Which never cowthe hise wordes hide,
 That he ne wole himself avaunte;
 2390 Ther mai nothing his tunge daunte,
 That he ne clappeth as a belle:
 Wherof if thou wolt that I telle,
 It is behovely for to hiere,
 So that thou myht thi tunge stiere,
 2395 Toward the world and stonde in grace,
 Which lacketh ofte in many place
 To him that can noght sitte stille,
 Which elles scholde have his wille."
- flowers are present*
To nature
- endowed*
premium most high
least; eye
tricked
- avoid*
Of one who believes too much in his thinking
generates
either gladness or sadness
prided myself never
[if only] God would send that grace
lady should turn wishful thinking
As I do toward her
- other [aspect] yet*
[Such] that; boast
- makes noise*
suitable
guide

[BOASTING]

ix. *Magniloque propriam minuit iactancia lingue
 Famam, quam stabilem firmat honore cilens.
 Ipse sui laudem meriti non percipit, vnde
 Se sua per verba iactat in orbe palam.
 Estque viri culpa iactancia, que rubefactas
 In muliere reas causat habere genas.¹*

		[Confessor] “The vice cleped Avantance	Boasting
2400		With Pride hath take his aqueintance, So that his oghne pris he lasseth, When he such mesure overpasseth That he his oghne herald is. That ferst was wel is thanne mis, That was thankworth is thanne blame, And thus the worschipe of his name Thurgh pride of his avantarie He torneth into vilenie.	worth he diminishes
2405		I rede how that this proude vice	<i>What at first; amiss worthy of thanks; blameworthy fame (see note)</i>
		Hath thilke wynd in his office, Which thurgh the blastes that he bloweth The mannes fame he overthroweth Of vertu, which scholde elles springe Into the worldes knowlechinge;	official function
2410		Bot he fordeth it alto sore.	<i>destroys it all too sorely</i>
		And riht of such a maner lore Ther ben lovers: forthi if thow Art on of hem, tell and sei how.	<i>one of them</i>
		Whan thou hast taken eny thing	
2415		Of loves gifte, or nouche or ring, Or tok upon thee for the cold Som goodly word that thee was told, Or frendly chiere or tokne or lettre, Wheroft thin herte was the bettre,	<i>either brooch or chilling anguish [of love]</i>
2420		Or that sche sende thee greetinge, Hast thou for Pride of thi likinge Mad thin avant wher as thee liste?”	<i>sent you greeting</i>
		Amans “I wolde, fader, that ye wiste, Mi conscience lith noght hierie:	<i>boast; it pleased you</i>
2425		Yit hadde I nevere such matiere, Wheroft myn herte myhte amende,	<i>improve in spirit</i>

¹ *The boasting of a bombastic tongue diminishes the genuine fame that being silent would, with honor, confirm as stable. That one does not perceive praise of his merit, so he openly extolls himself in his own words to the world. There is moreover the sinful boasting of a man, which makes the guilty cheeks on a woman redden.*

- Noght of so mochel that sche sende
 Be mowthe and seide, "Griet him wel!" *By mouth
nothing (no portion)*
 And thus for that ther is no diel
- 2435 Wherof to make myn avant,
 It is to reson acordant
 That I mai nevere, bot I lye,
 Of love make avanterie. *unless I lie*
- I wot noght what I scholde have do,
 2440 If that I hadde encheson so, *grounds for so [doing]
many times*
 As ye have seid hier manyon;
 Bot I fond cause nevere non:
 Bot daunger, which wel nyh me slowh,
 Theroft cowthe telle ynowh, *[her] aloofness; has nearly killed me
could tell plenty*
 2445 And of non other Avantance.
- Thus nedeth me no repentance.
 Now axeth furthere of my lif,
 For hierof am I noght gultif." *guilty
pleased
know*
- Confessor** "Mi sone, I am wel paid withal;
 2450 For wite it wel in special
 That love of his verrai justice
 Above alle othre agein this vice
 At alle times most debateth, *combats*
 With al his herte and most it hateth.
- 2455 And ek in alle maner wise
 Avantarie is to despise,
 As be ensample thou myhte wite,
 Which I finde in the bokes write. *know*

[TALE OF ALBINUS AND ROSEMUND]

- Of hem that we Lombars now calle *those who*
 2460 Albinus was the ferst of alle
 Which bar corone of Lombardie, *the crown*
 And was of gret chivalerie *prowess (see note)*
 In werre agein diverse kings. *war against*
- 2465 So fell amonges othre thinges,
 That he that time a werre hadde
 With Gurmond, which the Geptes ladde, *who led the Geptes*
 And was a myhti kyng also,
 Bot natheles it fell him so, *turned out for him thus [that]*
 Albinus slowh him in the feld: *slew*
- 2470 Ther halp him nowther swerd ne scheld,
 That he ne smot his hed of thanne,
 Wherof he tok awey the panne, *But that he smote his head off*
 Of which he seide he wolde make *cut off the brain-pan*
 A cuppe for Gurmondes sake, *Gurmond's destruction*
 2475 To kepe and drawe into memoire

- Of his bataille the victoire.
 And thus whan he the feld hath wonne,
 The lond anon was overronne
 And sesed in his oghne hond,
 2480 Wher he Gurmondes dowhther fonda,
 Which maide Rosemounde hihte,
 And was in every mannes sihte
 A fair, a freissh, a lusti on.
 His herte fell to hire anon,
 2485 And such a love on hire he caste,
 That he hire weddeth ate laste.
 And after that long time in reste
 With hire he duelte, and to the beste
 Thei love ech other wonder wel.
 2490 Bot sche which kepth the blinde whel,
 Venus, whan thei be most above,
 In al the hoteste of here love,
 Hire whiel sche torneth, and thei felle
 In the manere as I schal telle.
 2495 This king, which stod in al his welthe
 Of pes, of worschipe, and of helthe,
 And felte him on no side grieved,
 As he that hath his world achieved,
 Tho thoghte he wolde a feste make;
 2500 And that was for his wyves sake,
 That sche the lordes ate feste,
 That were obeissant to his heste,
 Mai knowe: and so forth therupon
 He let ordeine, and sende anon
 2505 Be lettres and be messagiers,
 And warnede alle hise officiers
 That every thing be wel arraied:
 The grete stiedes were assaied
 For joustinge and for tornement,
 2510 And many a perled garnement
 Embroudred was agein the dai.
 The lordes in here beste arrai
 Be comen ate time set:
 On jousteth wel, an other bet,
 2515 And otherwhile thei torneie,
 And thus thei casten care aweie
 And token lustes upon honde.
 And after, thou schalt understonde,
 To mete into the kinges halle
 2520 Thei come, as thei be beden alle:
 And whan thei were set and served,
 Thanne after, as it was deserved,
- “legally” transferred to his own use
was called
- at peace
to the highest degree
- wheel
on high
most passionate condition of their love
- peace; fame
in no respect unhappy
- Then
- [So] that
command
Might know [the lords]
gave orders
- By
- steeds were readied
- in preparation for the day
their
- One; better
- grew interested in pleasures
- feast
all had been invited to do

- To hem that worthi knythes were,
So as thei seten hiere and there,
2525 The pris was gove and spoken oute
Among the heraldz al aboute.
And thus benethe and ek above
Al was of armes and of love,
Wheroft abouten ate bordes
2530 Men hadde manye sondri wordes,
That of the merthe which thei made
The king himself began to glade
Withinne his herte and tok a pride,
And sih the cuppe stonde aside,
2535 Which mad was of Gurmoundes hed,
As ye have herd, whan he was ded,
And was with gold and riche stones
Beset and bounde for the nones,
And stod upon a fot on heihte
2540 Of burned gold, and with gret sleihte
Of werkmanschipe it was begrave
Of such werk as it scholde have,
And was policed ek so clene
That no signe of the skulle is sene,
2545 Bot as it were a grifnes ey.
The king bad bere his cuppe awey,
Which stod tofore him on the bord,
And fette thilke. Upon his word
This skulle is fet and wyn therinne,
2550 Wheroft he bad his wif beginne:
“Drink with thi fader, Dame,” he seide.
And sche to his biddinge obeide,
And tok the skulle, and what hire liste
Sche drank, as sche which nothing wiste
2555 What cuppe it was: and thanne al oute
The kyng in audience aboute
Hath told it was hire fader skulle,
So that the lordes knowe schulle
Of his bataille a soth witnesse,
2560 And made avant thurgh what prouesse
He hath his wyves love wonne,
Which of the skulle hath so begonne.
Tho was ther mochel Pride alofte,
Thei speken alle, and sche was softe,
2565 Thenkende on thilke unkynde Pride,
Of that hire lord so nyh hire side
Avanteth him that he hath slain
And piked out hire fader brain,
And of the skulle had mad a cuppe.
- those who*
prize was given; announced
below and above [according to social status]
Whereof in several places
rejoice
saw; standing out of the way
skill
engraved
polished
[the size of] a griffin's egg
ordered to be borne away
[ordered] that other one to be fetched
brought
obeyed
the amount that pleased her
knew
true
boast; prowess
Which with
quiet
Thinking; cruel (disrespectful)

- 2570 Sche soffreth al til thei were uppe,
And tho sche hath seknesse feigned,
And goth to chambre and hath compleigned
Unto a maide which sche triste,
So that non other wyht it wiste.
- 2575 This mayde Glodeside is hote,
To whom this lady hath behote
Of ladischipe al that sche can,
To vengen hire upon this man,
Which dede hire drinke in such a plit
- 2580 Among hem alle for despit
Of hire and of hire fader bothe;
Wheroft hire thoghtes ben so wrothe,
Sche seith, that sche schal noght be glad,
Til that sche se him so bestad
- 2585 That he no more make avant.
And thus thei felle in covenant,
That thei acorden ate laste,
With suche wiles as thei caste
That thei wol gete of here acord
- 2590 Som orped knyht to sle this lord:
And with this sleihte thei beginne,
How thei Helmege myhten winne,
Which was the kinges boteler,
A proud, a lusti bacheler,
- 2595 And Glodeside he loveth hote.
And sche, to make him more assote,
Hire love granteth, and be nyhte
Thei schape how thei togedre myhte
Abedde meete: and don it was
- 2600 This same nyht; and in this cas
The qwene hirself the nyht secounde
Wente in hire stede, and there hath founde
A chambre derk withoute liht,
And goth to bedde to this knyht.
- 2605 And he, to kepe his observance,
To love doth his obeissance,
And weneth it be Glodeside;
And sche thanne after lay aside,
And axeth him what he hath do,
- 2610 And who sche was sche tolde him tho,
And seide: "Helmege, I am thi qwene,
Now schal thi love wel be sene
Of that thou hast thi wille wroght:
Or it schal sore ben aboght,
- 2615 Or thou schalt worche as I thee seie.
And if thou wolt be such a weie
- finished (got up)
illness
whom she trusted
person knew it
called
promised
Who made her drink; circumstance
angry
situated (beset)
[So] that he should boast no more
agreement
their
valiant
deceit
chief servant in charge of drink
passionately
besotted
dutiful worship
thinks
then
*Either; paid for
tell you*

- Do my plesance and holde it stille,
 For evere I schal ben at thi wille,
 Bothe I and al myn heritage.”
- 2620 Anon the wylde loves rage, *passion*
 In which no man him can governe, *can govern himself*
 Hath mad him that he can noght werne, *refuse*
 Bot fell al hol to hire assent: *completely*
 And thus the whiel is al miswent, *awry*
- 2625 The which Fortune hath upon honde; *deceit*
 For how that evere it after stonde,
 Thei schope among hem such a wyle,
 The king was ded withinne a whyle.
 So slihly cam it noght aboute
- 2630 That thei ne ben descoevered oute, *But that they were discovered*
 So that it thoghte hem for the beste *it seemed best to them*
 To fle, for there was no reste:
 And thus the tresor of the king
 Thei trusse and mochel other thing,
- 2635 And with a certein felaschipe *load up*
 Thei fledde and wente awey be schipe, *company*
 And hielde here rihte cours fro thenne, *their straight*
 Til that thei come to Ravenne,
 Wher thei the dukes helpe soghte.
- 2640 And he, so as thei him besoghte, *dwell*
 A place granteth for to duelle;
 Bot after, whan he herde telle
 Of the manere how thei have do,
 This duk let schape for hem so,
- 2645 That of a puison which thei drunke *what they; labored for [i.e., reste, line 2632]*
 Thei hadden that thei have beswunke.
 And al this made avant of Pride:
 Good is therfore a man to hide
 His oghne pris, for if he speke,
- 2650 He mai lihtliche his thonk tobreke. *praise (fame)*
 In armes lith non avantage *easily his reward destroy*
 To him which thenkth his name avance *lies no advantage*
 And be renomed of his dede. *who intends*
- 2655 And also who that thenkth to spedē *succeed*
 Of love, he mai him noght avaunte; *practices*
 For what man thilke vice haunte,
 His pourpos schal ful ofte faile.
- 2660 In armes he that wol travaile *must*
 Or elles loves grace atteigne,
 His lose tunge he mot restreigne, *guards (bears the key)*
Confessor Forthi, my sone, in alle weie
 Tak riht good hiede of this matiere.”

Amans “I thonke you, my fader diere,
 2665 This scole is of a gentil lore;
 And if ther be oght elles more
 Of Pride, which I schal eschuie,
 Now axeth forth, and I wol suie
 What thing that ye me wole enforme.”

follow (pursue)

Confessor “Mi sone, yit in other forme
 Ther is a vice of Prides lore,
 Which lich an hauk whan he wol sore,
 Fleith upon heihte in his delices
 After the likyng of his vices,
 2675 And wol no mannes resoun knowe,
 Til he doun falle and overthrowe.
 This vice veine gloire is hote,
 Wheroft, my sone, I thee behote
 To trete and speke in such a wise,
 2680 That thou thee myht the betre avise.”

instruction

soar

delight

is called

promise

understand

[VAINGLORY]

x. *Gloria perpetuus pregnat mundana dolores,*
Qui tamen est vanus gaudia vana cupid.
Eius amiciciam, quem gloria tollit inanis,
Non sine blandiciis planus habebit homo:
Verbis compositis qui scit strigilare fauellum,
Scandere sellata iura valebit eques.
Sic in amore magis qui blanda subornat in ore
Verba, per hoc brauium quod nequit alter habet.
Et tamen ornatos cantus variosque paratus
*Letaque corda suis legibus optat amor.*¹

[Confessor] “The proude vice of veine gloire
 ↗ Remembreth noght of purgatoire;
 Hise worldes joyes ben so grete,
 Him thenkth of hevene no beyete:
 2685 This lives pompe is al his pes.
 Yit schal he deie natholes,
 And therof thenkth he bot a lite,
 For al his lust is to delite
 In newe thinges, proude and veine,
 2690 Als ferforth as he mai atteigne.

Thinks not of (see note)

intense

Heaven seems no profit to him

peace

little

¹ *Worldly glory engenders continual sorrows, but he who is vain desires vain joys. A plain and simple man will not gain without flattery the friendship of a man whom empty glory has raised up. He who knows how to curry Favel with carefully composed words will succeed in mounting up the saddled laws as a knight. Thus in love, the one who more greatly prepares flattering words in his mouth takes by this the prize that another cannot. And nonetheless elaborate songs and varied adornments and cheerful hearts — these love selects for its laws.*

- | | | |
|--------------|--|---|
| | I trowe, if that he myhte make
His body newe, he wolde take
A newe forme and leve his olde!
For what thing that he mai beholde,
The which to comun us is strange,
Anon his olde guise change
He wole and falle therupon,
Lich unto the camelion,
Which upon every sondri hewe | believe |
| 2695 | That he beholt he moste newe
His colour, and thus unavised
Ful ofte time he stant desguised.
Mor jolif than the brid in Maii
He makth him evere freissh and gay,
And doth al his array desguise,
So that of him the newe guise
Of lusti folk alle othre take;
And ek he can carolles make, | common use
Soon; ways (fashion) |
| 2700 | Rondeal, balade and virelai.
And with al this, if that he may
Of love gete him avantage,
Anon he wext of his corage
So overglad, that of his ende
Him thenkth ther is no deth comende: | change
unwisely
in newfangled clothing
bird in May
himself |
| 2705 | 2710
For he hath thanne at alle tide
Of love such a maner pride,
Him thenkth his joie is endeles. | from him; latest fashion (see note)
Of people of pleasure
also; compose |
| 2715 | Confessor Now schrif thee, sone, in Godes pes,
And of thi love tell me plein
2720 If that thi gloire hath be so vein." | death coming
time
confess yourself; peace
openly |
| Amans | "Mi fader, as touchinge of al
I may noght wel ne noght ne schal
Of veine gloire excuse me,
That I ne have for love be | |
| 2725 | The betre adresced and arraied;
And also I have ofte assaied
Rondeal, balade, and virelai
For hire on whom myn herte lai
To make, and also for to peinte | arranged and adorned
attempted |
| 2730 | Caroles with my wordes qweinte,
To sette my pourpos alofte;
And thus I sang hem forth ful ofte
In halle and ek in chambre aboute,
And made merie among the route, | devise; embellish
clever |
| 2735 | Bot yit ne ferde I noght the bet.
Thus was my gloire in vein beset
Of al the joie that I made; | company
better |

- For whanne I wolde with hire glade,
And of hire love songes make, rejoice
2740 Sche saide it was noght for hir sake,
And liste noght my songes hiere
Ne witen what the wordes were.
So for to speke of myn arrai,
Yit couthe I nevere be so gay
2745 Ne so wel make a songe of love,
Wherof I myhte ben above
And have encheson to be glad;
Bot rathere I am ofte adrad
For sorwe that sche seith me nay.
2750 And natholes I wol noght say,
That I nam glad on other side;
For fame, that can nothing hide,
Alday wol bringe unto myn ere
Of that men speken hier and there,
2755 How that my ladi berth the pris,
How sche is fair, how sche is wis,
How sche is wommanlich of chiere;
Of al this thing whanne I mai hiere,
What wonder is thogh I be fain?
2760 And ek whanne I may hiere sain
Tidinges of my ladi hele,
Althogh I may noght with hir dele,
Yit am I wonder glad of that;
For whanne I wot hire good astat,
2765 As for that time I dar wel swere,
Non other sorwe mai me dere,
Thus am I gladed in this wise.
Bot, fader, of youre lores wise,
Of whiche ye be fully tawht,
2770 Now tell me if yow thenketh awht
That I therof am for to wyte.”
- Confessor** “Of that ther is I thee acquite,
Mi sone, he seide, and for thi goode
I wolde that thou understande:
2775 For I thenke upon this matiere
To telle a tale, as thou schalt hiere,
How that agein this proude vice
The hihe God of his justice
Is wroth and gret vengeance doth.
- 2780 Now herkne a tale that is soth:
Thogh it be noght of loves kinde,
A gret ensample thou schalt finde
This veine gloire for to fle,
Which is so full of vanité.”
- wished not; to hear
Nor to know
dress
reason
afraid
[may] say no to me
am not
ear
bears the prize
countenance
glad
said
News of my lady's health
associate
harm
[drawing] from your wise teachings
if anything occurs to you
to blame
should ponder [this]
true
love's nature

[NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PUNISHMENT]

xi. *Humani generis cum sit sibi gloria maior,
 Sepe subesse solet proximus ille dolor:
 Mens elata graues descensus sepe subbit,
 Mens humilis stabile molleque firmat iter.
 Motibus innumeris voluntat fortuna per orbem;
 Cum magis alta petis, inferiora time.¹*

[Confessor] “Ther was a king that mochel myhte,
 Which Nabugodonosor hihte,
 Of whom that I spak hier tofore.

*could wield great power
 was called*

¶ Yit in the Bible his name is bore,
 For al the world in orient

Even; fame is upheld (see note)

2790 Was hol at his comandement:
 As thanne of kinges to his liche
 Was non so mynty ne so riche;
 To his empire and to his lawes,
 As who seith, alle in thilke dawes

*completely
 compared to him*

2795 Were obeissant and tribut bere,
 As thogh he godd of erthe were.
 With strengthe he putte kinges under,
 And wroghte of Pride many a wonder;
 He was so full of veine gloire,

*So to speak; those days
 paid*

2800 That he ne hadde no memoire
 That ther was eny good bot he,
 For pride of his prosperité;
 Til that the hihe king of kinges,
 Which seth and knoweth alle thinges,

except himself

2805 Whos yhe mai nothing asterte —
 The privetés of mannes herte
 Thei speke and sounen in his ere
 As thogh thei lowde wyndes were —
 He tok vengeance upon this pride.

*high
 sees
 eye; escape
 secrets
 resound; ear*

2810 Bot for He wolde awhile abide
 To loke if he him wolde amende,
 To him a foretokne He sende,
 And that was in his slep be nyhte.
 This proude kyng a wonder syhte

warning

2815 Hadde in his swewe, ther he lay:
 Him thoghte, upon a merie day

dream

¹ Even when the human race possesses a greater glory, sorrow often is likely to lie very near by. An exalted spirit will often drop down dangerous descents; a humble spirit establishes a reliable and gentle path. Fortune turns with innumerable movements through the world-wheel; when you seek the greater heights, fear the places that are all the lower.

- As he beheld the world aboute,
 A tree fulgrowe he syh theroute,
 Which stod the world amiddes evene,
 2820 Whos heihte straghte up to the hevene;
 The leves weren faire and large,
 Of fruit it bar so ripe a charge,
 That alle men it myhte fede:
 He sih also the bowes spriede
 2825 Above al erthe, in whiche were
 The kinde of alle briddes there;
 And ek him thoghte he syh also
 The kinde of alle bestes go
 Under this tree aboute round
 2830 And fedden hem upon the ground.
 As he this wonder stod and syh,
 Him thoghte he herde a vois on hih
 Criende, and seide aboven alle:
 "Hew doun this tree and lett it falle,
 2835 The leves let defoule in haste
 And do the fruit destruie and waste,
 And let of schreden every braunche,
 Bot ate rote let it staunche.
 Whan al his Pride is cast to grounde,
 2840 The rote schal be faste bounde,
 And schal no mannes herte bere,
 Bot every lust he schal forbere
 Of man, and lich an oxe his mete
 Of gras he schal pourchace and ete,
 2845 Til that the water of the hevene
 Have waisshen him be times sevene,
 So that he be thurghknowe ariht
 What is the heveneliche myht,
 And be mad humble to the wille
 2850 Of Him which al mai save and spille."
- This king out of his swefne abreide,
 And he upon the morwe it seide
 Unto the clerkes whiche he hadde:
 Bot non of hem the sothe aradde,
 2855 Was non his swevene cowthe undo.
 And it stod thilke time so,
 This king hadde in subjeccioun
 Judee, and of affeccioun
 Above alle othre on Daniel
 2860 He loveth, for he cowthe wel
 Divine that non other cowthe:
 To him were alle thinges cowthe,
 As he it hadde of Goddes grace.
- directly in the center
stretched up*
- crop*
- birds*
- up high
louder than*
- allow every branch to be hacked off
root; be left intact*
- relinquish
food
gather and eat*
- be made to know absolutely correctly*
- destroy
dream awoke
told
scholars
truth interpreted
dream knew how to explicate
it happened at that time*
- Judea; friendship*
- knew well how
To elucidate as no others knew how to
known
Since he it (understanding) had by*

- He was before the kinges face
 2865 Asent, and bode that he scholde
 Upon the point the king of tolde
 The fortune of his swevene expounde,
 As it scholde afterward be founde.
 Whan Daniel this swevene herde,
 2870 He stod long time er he ansuerde,
 And made a wonder hevy chiere.
 The king tok hiede of his manere,
 And bad him telle that he wiste,
 As he to whom he mochel triste,
 2875 And seide he wolde noght be wroth.
 Bot Daniel was wonder loth,
 And seide: "Upon thi somen alle,
 Sire king, thi swevene mote falle;
 And natholes touchende of this
 2880 I wol thee tellen how it is,
 And what desese is to thee schape:
 God wot if thou it schalt ascape.
 The hihe tree, which thou hast sein
 With lef and fruit so wel besein,
 2885 The which stod in the world amiddes,
 So that the bestes and the briddes
 Governed were of him alone,
 Sire king, betokneth thi persone,
 Which stant above all erthli thinges.
 2890 Thus regnen under thee the kinges,
 And al the poeple unto thee louteth,
 And al the world thi pouer doubteth,
 So that with vein honour deceived
 Thou hast the reverence weyved
 2895 Fro Him which is thi king above,
 That thou for drede ne for love
 Wolt nothing knownen of thi Godd,
 Which now for thee hath mad a rodd
 Thi veine gloire and thi folie
 2900 With grete peines to chastie.
 And of the vois thou herdest speke,
 Which bad the bowes for to breke
 And hewe and felle doun the tree,
 That word belongeth unto thee:
 2905 Thi regne schal ben overthrowe,
 And thou despuled for a throwe,
 Bot that the rote scholde stonde.
 Be that thou schalt wel understande,
 Ther schal abyden of thi regne
 2910 A time agein whan thou schalt regne.

*Sent for; commanded
 Upon matter the king would speak of
 future destiny in his dream expound*

an extraordinarily dire expression

*what he knew
 As if to someone he greatly trusted
 angry
 reluctant [to reply]
 all your enemies
 [if only] your dream would befall
 But
 how it is [for you]
 discomfort is fashioned for you*

furnished

signifies

*under you the [other] kings
 bow
 fears
 empty honor
 dismissed*

for neither fear nor

made a [chastening] rod

pains to chastise

boughs to be broken

*despoiled for a time
 Except that the root*

By

- And ek of that thou herdest seie — *heard said*
 To take a mannes herte awei *[Namely]*
 And sette there a bestial, *bestial [heart]*
 So that he lich an oxe schal
- 2915 Pasture, and that he be bereined *Feed; rained upon*
 Be times sefne and sore peined, *For seven times; sorely afflicted*
 Til that he knowe his Goddes mihtes,
 Than scholde he stonde agein uprihites —
- Al this betokneth thin astat, *condition*
 2920 Which now with God is in debat: *in conflict*
 Thi mannes forme schal be lassed, *human shape shall be diminished*
 Til sevene yer ben overpassed,
 And in the liknesse of a beste *beast*
 Of gras schal be thi real feste. *royal feast*
- 2925 The weder schal upon thee reine, *weather; rain*
 And understand that al this peine,
 Which thou schalt soffre thilke tide,
 Is schape al only for thi pride *fashioned entirely*
 Of veine gloire, and of the sinne,
- 2930 Which thou hast longe stonden inne.
 So upon this condicoun
 Thi swevene hath exposicioun.
 Bot er this thing befallie in dede,
 Amende thee, this wolde I rede:
- 2935 Gif and departe thin almesse, *before; should occur indeed*
 Do mercy forth with rihtwisnesse, *Change your ways; advise*
 Besech and prei the hihe grace, *Give and distribute; alms*
 For so thou myht thi pes pourchace *along with righteousness*
 With Godd, and stonde in good accord.” *high obtain*
- 2940 Bot Pride is loth to leve his lord,
 And wol noght soffre humilité *rudder*
 With him to stonde in no degree;
 And whan a schip hath lost his stiere, *guide*
 Is non so wys that mai him stiere *waves*
- 2945 Agein the wawes in a rage. *heart*
 This proude king in his corage *completely lost*
 Humilité hath so forlore, *dream he saw beforehand*
 That, for no swevene he sih tofore,
 Ne yit for al that Daniel
- 2950 Him hath conseiled everydel, *had instructed him in every point*
 He let it passe out of his mynde,
 Thurgh veine gloire, and as the blinde, *before he have disaster*
 He seth no weie, er him be wo. *[fit] besell*
 And fell withinne a time so,
- 2955 As he in Babiloine wente, *seized*
 The vanité of Pride him hente;
 His herte aros of veine gloire,

- So that he drowh into memoire
 His lordschipe and his regalie
 2960 With wordes of Surquiderie.
 And whan that he him most avaunteth,
 That lord which veine gloire daunteth,
 Al sodeinliche, as who seith treis,
 Wher that he stod in his paleis,
 2965 He tok him fro the mennes sihte.
 Was non of hem so war that mihte
 Sette yhe wher that he becom.
 And thus was he from his kingdom
 Into the wilde forest drawe,
 2970 Wher that the myhti Goddes lawe
 Thurgh His pouer dede him transforme
 Fro man into a bestes forme;
 And lich an oxe under the fot
 He graseth, as he nedes mot,
 2975 To geten him his lives fode.
 Tho thoghte him colde grases goode,
 That whilom eet the hote spices.
 Thus was he torned fro delices:
 The wyn which he was wont to drinke
 2980 He tok thanne of the welles brinke
 Or of the pet or of the slowh,
 It thoghte him thanne good ynowh.
 In stede of chambres wel arraied
 He was thanne of a buissh wel paied,
 2985 The harde ground he lay upon,
 For othre pilwes hath he non;
 The stormes and the reines falle,
 The wyndes blowe upon him alle,
 He was tormented day and nyht,
 2990 Such was the hihe Goddes myht,
 Til sevene yer an ende toke.
 Upon himself tho gan he loke;
 In stede of mete, gras, and stres,
 In stede of handes, longe cles,
 2995 In stede of man a bestes lyke
 He syh; and thanne he gan to syke
 For cloth of gold and for perrie,
 Which him was wont to magnesie.
 Whan he behield his cote of heres,
 3000 He wepte and with ful woful teres
 Up to the hevene he caste his chiere
 Wepende, and thoghte in this manere;
 Thogh he no wordes myhte winne,
 Thus seide his herte and spak withinne:
- presumption
 most boasts of himself
 whom; conquers
 quick as one, two, three
 palace
 withdrew himself
 none of them so shrewd who might
 eye
 drawn (taken)*
- caused him to change
 grazes; must
 Then seemed to him
 [He] who once ate
 delights*
- Either; pit; slough
 enough
 bush well pleased*
- came to an end
 prepared food; straw
 claws
 beast's likeness
 saw; sigh
 precious stones (OF pierre, "stone")*
- coat of hair
 tears
 countenance
 convey*

- 3005 "O mihti Godd, that al hast wrought
 And al myht bringe agein to noght,
 Now knowe I wel, bot al of Thee,
 This world hath no prosperité:
 In Thin aspect ben alle liche,
 3010 The povere man and ek the riche;
 Withoute Thee ther mai no wight,
 And Thou above alle othre miht.
 O mihti lord, toward my vice
 Thi merci medle with justice;
 3015 And I woll make a covenant,
 That of my lif the remenant
 I schal it be Thi grace amende,
 And in Thi lawe so despende
 That veine gloire I schal eschuie,
 3020 And bowe unto thin heste and suie
 Humilité, and that I vowe."
 And so thenkende he gan doun bowe,
 And thogh him lacke vois and speche,
 He gan up with his feet areche,
 3025 And wailende in his bestly stevene
 He made his pleignte unto the hevene.
 He kneleth in his wise and braieth,
 To seche merci and assaieth
 His God, which made him nothing strange,
 3030 Whan that he sih his pride change.
 Anon as he was humble and tame,
 He fond toward his God the same,
 And in a twinklinge of a lok
 His mannes forme agein he tok,
 3035 And was reformed to the regne
 In which that he was wont to regne;
 So that the Pride of veine gloire
 Evere afterward out of memoire
 He let it passe. And thus is schewed
 3040 What is to ben of Pride unthewed
 Agein the hihe Goddes lawe,
 To whom no man mai be felawe.
Confessor Forthi, my sone, tak good hiede
 So for to lede thi manhiede,
 3045 That thou ne be noght lich a beste.
 Bot if thi lif schal ben honeste,
 Thou most humblesce take on honde,
 For thanne myht thou siker stonde.
 And for to speke it otherwise,
 3050 A proud man can no love assise;
 For thogh a womman wolde him plese,
- created
except for You alone
all are the same
also
creature [be]
have power
 mingle
remaining days
by Your
proceed
 avoid
command; follow
began upward; reach up
 voice
manner and brays
appeals to
who did not ignore him
restored; dominion
 reign
 uncivilized
 govern
 honorable
 securely
 satisfy

- His Pride can noght ben at ese.
 Ther mai no man to mochel blame
 A vice which is for to blame; blameworthy
 3055 Forthi men scholde nothing hide
 That mihte falle in blame of Pride,
 Which is the werste vice of alle:
 Wherof, so as it was befall,
 The tale I thenke of a croniue
 3060 To telle, if that it mai thee like,
 So that thou myht humblesce suie
 And ek the vice of Pride eschuiue,
 Wherof the gloire is fals and vein;
 Which God Himself hath in desdeign,
 3065 That thogh it mounte for a throwe,
 It schal doun falle and overthowe." time

[HUMILITY AND THE TALE OF THREE QUESTIONS]

- xii. *Est virtus humilis, per quam deus altus ad yma
 Se tulit et nostre viscera carnis habet.
 Sic humilis superest, et amor sibi subditur omnis,
 Cuius habet nulla sorte superbus opem:
 Odit eum terra, celum deiecit et ipsum,
 Sedibus inferni statque receptus ibi.*¹

- [Confessor] "A king whilom was yong and wys,
 The which sette of his wit gret pris. value (see note)
 Of depe yimaginaciouns
 3070 And strange interpretaciouns,
 Problemes and demandes eke, questions also
 His wisdom was to finde and seke;
 Wherof he wolde in sondri wise
 Opposen hem that weren wise.
 3075 Bot non of hem it myhte bere
 Upon his word to geve answere,
 Outaken on, which was a knyht.
 To him was every thing so liht,
 That also sone as he hem herde,
 3080 The kinges wordes he answerde;
 What thing the king him axe wolde,
 Theroft anon the trowthe he tolde.
 The king somdiel hadde an envie, became somewhat envious

¹ *It is a humble power by which high God carried himself to the depths, and possessed the bowels of our flesh. Thus the humble is exalted, and love subdues all to itself, whose power the proud by no chance possesses. The earth hates the proud, even heaven itself expels him, and he remains in the regions of hell where he has been received.*

- 3085 And thoghte he wolde his wittes plie
 To sette som conclusioun,
 Which scholde be confusioune
 Unto this knyht, so that the name
 And of wisdom the hihe fame
 Toward himself he wolde winne.
- 3090 And thus of al his wit withinne
 This king began to studie and muse,
 What strange matiere he myhte use
 The knyghtes wittes to confounde;
 And ate laste he hath it founde,
- 3095 And for the knyht anon he sente,
 That he schal telle what he mente.
 Upon thre pointz stod the matiere
 Of questions, as thou schalt hiere.
 The ferste point of alle thre
- 3100 Was this: "What thing in his degré
 Of al this world hath nede lest,
 And yet men helpe it althermest?"
 The secounde is: "What most is worth,
 And of costage is lest put forth?"
- 3105 The thridde is: "Which is of most cost,
 And lest is worth and goth to lost?"
 The king thes thre demandes axeth,
 And to the knyht this lawe he taxeth,
 That he schal gon and come agein
- 3110 The thridde weke, and telle him plein
 To every point, what it amonteth.
 And if so be that he misconsteth,
 To make in his answere a faile,
 Ther schal non other thing availe,
- 3115 The king seith, bot he schal be ded
 And lese hise goodes and his hed.
 The knyht was sori of this thing
 And wolde excuse him to the king,
 Bot he ne wolde him noght forbere,
- 3120 And thus the knyht of his answere
 Goth hom to take avisement:
 Bot after his entendement
 The more he caste his wit aboute,
 The more he stant therof in doute.
- 3125 Tho wiste he wel the kinges herte,
 That he the deth ne scholde asterte,
 And such a sorwe hath to him take,
 That gladschipe he hath al forsake.
 He thoghte ferst upon his lif,
- 3130 And after that upon his wif,
- apply
 proposition
 humiliation
- [So] that
- its
 least need [of help]
 most of all
 worth most
 expense; least of all
 greatest cost
 of least value; goes to ruin
 questions asks
 prescribed duty he imposes
- third week
 means
 misconstrues
 And fails in his answer
- executed
 lose; head
- himself
 reprieve
- think it over
 purpose
- Then knew
 should not escape

- Upon his children ek also,
Of whiche he hadde dowhtres tuo;
The yongest of hem hadde of age
Fourtiene yer, and of visage
3135 Sche was riht fair, and of stature
Lich to an hevenely figure,
And of manere and goodli speche,
Thogh men wolde alle londes seche,
Thei scholden noght have founde hir like.
- 3140 Sche sih hire fader sorwe and sike,
And wiste noght the cause why;
So cam sche to him prively,
And that was where he made his mone
Withinne a gardin al him one;
- 3145 Upon hire knes sche gan doun falle
With humble herte and to him calle,
And seide: "O goode fader diere,
Why make ye thus hevy chiere,
And I wot nothing how it is?
- 3150 And wel ye knownen, fader, this,
What aventure that you felle
Ye myhte it saufly to me telle,
For I have ofte herd you seid,
That ye such trust have on me leid,
- 3155 That to my soster ne my brother,
In al this world ne to non other,
Ye dorste telle a privité
So wel, my fader, as to me.
Forthi, my fader, I you preie,
- 3160 Ne casteth noght that herte aweie,
For I am sche that wolde kepe
Youre honour." And with that to wepe
Hire yhe mai noght be forbore,
Sche wissbeth for to ben unbore,
- 3165 Er that hire fader so mistriste
To tellen hire of that he wiste:
And evere among merci sche cride,
That he ne scholde his conseil hide
From hire that so wolde him good
- 3170 And was so nyh his fleissh and blod.
So that with wepinge ate laste
His chiere upon his child he caste,
And sorfulli to that sche preide
He tolde his tale and thus he seide:
- 3175 "The sorwe, dowhther, which I make
Is noght al only for my sake,
Bot for thee bothe and for you alle:
- them
- might seek throughout the world
one who could compare to her*
- saw; sigh
- knew
- secretly
- lament
- all by himself
- mourning*
- chance event*
- placed*
- private confidence*
- love and trust away*
- eyes; restrained
- unborn
- mistrust
- knew
- again and again
- desired good for him*
- near

- For such a chance is me befall,
 That I schal er this thridde day
 3180 Lese al that evere I lese may,
 Mi lif and al my good therto:
 Therfore it is I sorwe so."
 "What is the cause, helas!" quod sche,
 "Mi fader, that ye scholden be
 3185 Ded and destruid in such a wise?"
 And he began the pointz devise,
 Whiche as the king told him be mowthe,
 And seid hir pleinly that he cowthe
 Ansuere unto no point of this.
 3190 And sche, that hiereth how it is,
 Hire conseil gaf and seide tho:
 "Mi fader, sithen it is so,
 That ye can se non other weie,
 Bot that ye moste nedes deie,
 3195 I wolde preie of you a thing:
 Let me go with you to the king,
 And ye schull make him understande
 How ye, my wittes for to fonde,
 Have leid your ansuere upon me;
 3200 And telleth him, in such degré
 Upon my word ye wole abide
 To lif or deth, what so betide.
 For yit par chaunce I may pourchace
 With som good word the kinges grace,
 3205 Your lif and ek your good to save.
 For ofte schal a womman have
 Thing which a man mai noght areche."
 The fader herde his dowhter speche,
 And thoghte ther was resoun inne,
 3210 And sih his oghne lif to winne
 He cowthe don himself no cure;
 So betre him thoghte in aventure
 To put his lif and al his good,
 Than in the maner as it stod
 3215 His lif in certein for to lese.
 And thus thenkende he gan to chese
 To do the conseil of this maide,
 And tok the pourpos which sche saide.
 The dai was come and forth thei gon,
 3220 Unto the court thei come anon,
 Wher as the king in juggement
 Was set and hath this knyght assent.
 Arraigned in hire beste wise
 This maiden with hire wordes wise
- Lose*
- by mouth
told her; could*
- gave; then*
- Except*
- in order to test (discover)*
- You will abide by my word*
- yet perchance; obtain*
- attain
daughter's*
- saw [that]; gain*
- in a gamble*
- lose*
- sent for*

- 3225 Hire fader ladde be the hond
 Into the place, wher he fond
 The king with othre whiche he wolde,
 And to the king knelende he tolde
 As he enformed was tofore,
 others whom he wanted
- 3230 And preith the king that he therfore
 His dowhtres wordes wolde take,
 And seith that he wol undertake
 Upon hire wordes for to stonde.
 Tho was ther gret merveile on honde,
- 3235 That he, which was so wys a knyht,
 His lif upon so yong a wyht
 Besette wolde in jeupartie,
 And manye it hielden for folie:
 Bot ate laste natheles
 creature
 jeopardy
- 3240 The king comandeth ben in pes,
 And to this maide he caste his chiere,
 And seide he wolde hire tale hiere,
 He bad hire speke, and sche began:
 "Mi liege lord, so as I can,"
 response hear
- 3245 Quod sche, "the pointz of whiche I herde,
 Thei schul of reson ben ansuerde.
 shall be answered reasonably
 The ferste I understande is this,
 What thing of al the world it is,
 Which men most helpe and hath lest nede.
- 3250 Mi liege lord, this wolde I rede:
 The erthe it is, which everemo
 With mannes labour is bego;
 Als wel in wynter as in Maii
 The mannes hond doth what he mai
 declare
- 3255 To helpe it forth and make it riche,
 And forthi men it delve and dyche
 And eren it with strengthe of plowh,
 Wher it hath of himself ynowh,
 So that his nede is ate leste.
 dig
 cultivate; plow
 itself
 its need [of him] is least of all
- 3260 For every man and bridd and beste,
 And flour and gras and rote and rinde,
 And every thing be weie of kynde
 Schal sterve, and erthe it schal become;
 As it was out of erthe nome,
 root and bark
 nature
 earth; die
 taken
- 3265 It schal to th'erthe torne agein:
 And thus I mai be resoun sein
 That erthe is the most nedoles,
 And most men helpe it natheles.
 So that, my lord, touchende of this
 say
 without need
- 3270 I have ansuerd hou that it is.

- That other point I understod,
Which most is worth and most is good,
And costeth lest a man to kepe:
Mi lord, if ye woll take kepe,
3275 I seie it is humilité,
Thurgh which the hihe Trinité
As for decerte of pure love
Unto Marie from above,
Of that He knew hire humble entente,
3280 His oghne sone adoun He sente,
Above alle othre and hire He ches
For that vertu which bodeth pes.
So that I may be resoun calle
Humilité most worth of alle.
3285 And lest it costeth to maintiene,
In al the world as it is sene;
For who that hath humblesce on honde,
He bringth no werres into londe,
For he desireth for the beste
3290 To setten every man in reste.
Thus with your hihe reverence
Me thenketh that this evidence
As to this point is sufficant.
And touchende of the remenant,
3295 Which is the thridde of youre axinges,
What leste is worth of alle thinges,
And costeth most, I telle it, Pride;
Which mai noght in the hevene abide,
For Lucifer with hem that felle
3300 Bar Pride with him into helle.
Ther was Pride of to gret a cost,
Whan he for Pride hath hevene lost;
And after that in paradis
Adam for Pride loste his pris:
3305 In midelerthe and ek also
Pride is the cause of alle wo,
That al the world ne mai suffise
To stanche of Pride the reprise:
Pride is the heved of alle sinne,
3310 Which wasteth al and mai noght winne;
Pride is of every mis the pricke,
Pride is the werste of alle wicke,
And costneth most and lest is worth
In place where he hath his forth.
3315 Thus have I seid that I wol seie
Of myn answere, and to you preie,
Mi liege lord, of youre office
- second point*
- take heed*
- meritoriousness*
- From [the fact] that*
- chose*
- signifies peace*
- by*
- least*
- humility*
- strife*
- It seems to me*
- questions*
- least*
- those who fell*
- Bore*
- prize*
- To pay the cost of Pride*
- head*
- of every wrong the sting*
- wickedness*
- course*

- That ye such grace and such justice
Ordeigne for mi fader hiere,
3320 That after this, whan men it hiere,
The world therof mai speke good.”
The king, which reson understod
And hath al herd how sche hath said,
Was inly glad and so wel paid
3325 That al his wraththe is overgo:
And he began to loke tho
Upon this maiden in the face,
In which he fond so mochel grace,
That al his pris on hire he leide,
3330 In audience and thus he seide:
“Mi faire maide, wel thee be!
Of thin ansuere and ek of thee
Me liketh wel, and as thou wilt,
Forgive be thi fader gilt.
3335 And if thou were of such lignage,
That thou to me were of parage,
And that thi fader were a pier,
As he is now a bachelier,
So seker as I have a lif,
3340 Thou scholdest thanne be my wif.
Bot this I seie natholes,
That I wol schape thin encress;
What worldes good that thou wolt crave,
Axe of my gifte and thou schalt have.”
3345 And sche the king with wordes wise
Knelende thonketh in this wise:
“Mi liege lord, God mot you quite!
Mi fader hier hath bot a lite
Of warison, and that he wende
3350 Hadde al be lost; bot now amende
He mai wel thurgh your noble grace.”
With that the king riht in his place
Anon forth in that freisshe hete
An erldom, which thanne of eschete
3355 Was late falle into his hond,
Unto this knyght with rente and lond
Hath gove and with his chartre sesed;
And thus was al the noise appesed.
This maiden, which sat on hire knes
3360 Tofore the king, hise charitees
Comendeth, and seide overmore:
“Mi liege lord, riht now tofore
Ye seide, as it is of record,
That if my fader were a lord
- pleased*
- reward (praise); laid*
- lineage*
- equal rank*
- peer*
- commoner*
- As certainly as*
- would in that case*
- fashion your prosperity*
- Ask from my gift*
- may God requite you*
- property; thought*
- fresh passion*
- eschew (forfeiture)*
- given; endowed*
- quarrel reconciled*
- Before*
- moreover*

- 3365 And pier unto these othre grete,
 Ye wolden for noght elles lete
 That I ne scholde be your wif;
 And this wot every worthi lif,
 A kinges word it mot ben holde.
 great men
 prevent
But that I should be
 must
- 3370 Forthi, my lord, if that ye wolde
 So gret a charité fulfille,
 God wot it were wel my wille.
 For he which was a bacheler,
 Mi fader, is now mad a pier;
 knows; desire
- 3375 So whenne as evere that I cam,
 An erles dowhter now I am."
 This yonge king, which peised al,
 Hire beauté and hir wit withal,
 As he that was with love hent,
 however I arrived formerly
 nobleman's
 weighed (assessed)
 seized
- 3380 Anon therto gaf his assent.
 He myhte noght the maide asterte,
 That sche nis ladi of his herte;
 So that he tok hire to his wif,
 To holde whyl that he hath lif:
 escape [the cleverness off] the maiden
 [Such] that she is not
- 3385 And thus the king toward his knyht
 Acordeth him, as it is riht.
 And over this good is to wite,
 In the croniique as it is write,
 This noble king of whom I tolde
 moreover it is good to know
- 3390 Of Spaine be tho daies olde
 The kingdom hadde in governance,
 And as the bok makth remembrance,
 Alphonse was his propre name:
 The knyht also, if I schal name,
 was called
- 3395 Danz Petro hihte, and as men telle,
 His dowhter wyse Peronelle
 Was cleped, which was full of grace:
 And that was sene in thilke place,
 Wher sche hir fader out of teene
 sorrow
- 3400 Hath broght and mad hirself a qweene,
 Of that sche hath so wel desclosed
 The pointz wherof sche was opposed.
 questioned
- Confessor** "Lo now, my sone, as thou myht hiere,
 Of al this thing to my matiere
 3405 Bot on I take, and that is Pride,
 To whom no grace mai betide:
 In hevene he fell out of his stede,
 And paradis him was forbede,
 The goode men in erthe him hate,
 for my concern
 Only one
 await
 place
 forbidden
- 3410 So that to helle he mot algate,
 Where every vertu schal be weyved
 must assuredly go
 rejected

- And every vice be received.
 Bot Humblesce is al otherwise,
 Which most is worth, and no reprise
 3415 It takth agein, bot softe and faire,
 If eny thing stond in contraire,
 With humble speche it is redresced.
 Thus was this yonge maiden blessed,
 The which I spak of now tofore.
- 3420 Hire fader lif sche gat therfore,
 And wan with al the kinges love.
 Forthi, my sone, if thou wolt love,
 It sit thee wel to leve Pride
 And take Humblesce upon thi side;
- 3425 The more of grace thou schalt gete.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, I woll noght forgete
 Of this that ye have told me hiere,
 And if that eny such manere
 Of humble port mai love appaie,
 3430 Hierafterward I thenke assaie:
 Bot now forth over I beseche
 That ye more of my schrifte seche.”
- Confessor** “Mi goode sone, it schal be do:
 Now herkne and ley an ere to;
 3435 For as touchende of Prides fare,
 Als ferforth as I can declare
 In cause of vice, in cause of love,
 That hast thou pleinly herd above,
 So that ther is no mor to seie
- 3440 Touchende of that; bot other weie
 Touchende Envie I thenke telle,
 Which hath the propre kinde of helle:
 Withoute cause to misdo
 Toward himself and othre also,
- 3445 Hierafterward as understande
 Thou schalt the spieces, as thei stonde.”
- financial charge
takes back; quiet*
- leave*
- satisfy
plan to try*
- confession
done*
- characteristic nature*
- As hereafter; recognize
categories*



CONFESSIO AMANTIS: BOOK 8 (LECHERY)

INCIPIT LIBER OCTAVUS

- i *Qve fauet ad vicium vetus hec modo regula confert,* (see note)
 Nec nouus econtra qui docet ordo placet.
 Cecus amor dudum nondum sua lumina cepit,
 *Quo Venus impositum deuia fallit iter.*¹ (see note)

[ON MARRIAGE AND INCEST]

- [Confessor] “The myhti God, which unbegunne
Stant of Himself and hath begunne *who without beginning*
 Alle othre thinges at His wille, (see note)
The hevene Him liste to fulfille *it pleases Him; fill completely*
5 Of alle joie, where as He *With*
 Sit inthronized in His see, *throne (seat)*
 And hath Hise angles Him to serve, *angels*
 Suche as Him liketh to preserve, *it pleases Him*
 So that thei mowe noght forsueie: *might not go astray*
10 Bot Lucifer He putte aweie, *mob*
 With al the route apostazied *those who*
 Of hem that ben to him allied,
 Whiche out of hevene into the helle
 From angles into fendas felle;
15 Wher that ther is no joie of lyht,
 Bot more derk than eny nyght
 The peine schal ben endeles;
 And yit of fyres natheles *fires*
 Ther is plenté, bot thei ben blake,
20 Wheroft no syhte mai be take.
 Thus whan the thinges ben befallie,
 That Luciferes court was falle
 Wher dedly Pride hem hath conveied,
 Anon forthwith it was pourveied *it [hell] was established*

¹ *This rule that favors the old vice is useful at the present time, nor does the new order please which teaches contrarily to that. Love long blind has not yet received its eyes, wherefore devious Venus warps with deception the affixed path.*

- 25 Thurgh Him which alle thinges may;
He made Adam the sexte day
In Paradis, and to his make
Him liketh Eve also to make,
And bad hem cresce and multiplie. *who has power [to do] all things
as his mate
them increase*
- 30 For of the mannes progenie,
Which of the womman schal be bore,
The nombre of angles which was lore,
Whan thei out fro the blisse felle,
He thoghte to restore, and felle *was lost
and to fill*
- 35 In hevene thilke holy place
Which stod tho voide upon His grace.
Bot as it is wel wiste and knowe,
Adam and Eve bot a throwe,
So as it scholde of hem betyde, *stood then empty
known; known
a moment*
- 40 In Paradis at thilke tyde
Ne duelten, and the cause why,
Write in the bok of Genesi,
As who seith, alle men have herd,
Hou Raphael the fyri swerd *Just as it had for them come to pass
that time
Dwelt not [but a moment]
So to speak*
- 45 In honde tok and drof hem oute,
To gete here lyves fode aboute
Upon this wofull erthe hiere.
Metodre seith to this matiere,
As he be revelacion *get their
Methodius*
- 50 It hadde upon avision,
Hou that Adam and Eve also
Virgines comen bothe tuo
Into the world and were aschamed,
Til that nature hem hath reclamed *by visionary experience
recalled*
- 55 To love, and tauht hem thilke lore,
That ferst thei keste, and overmore
Thei don that is to kinde due,
Wheroft thei hadden fair issue.
A sone was the ferste of alle, *taught them this wisdom
[So] that; kissed; thereafter
nature*
- 60 And Chain be name thei him calle;
Abel was after the secounde,
And in the geste as it is founde,
Nature so the cause ladde,
Tuo doughtres ek Dame Eve hadde, *Cain by name
story*
- 65 The ferste cleped Calmana
Was, and that other Delbora.
Thus was mankinde to beginne;
Forthi that time it was no sinne
The soster for to take hire brother,
Whan that ther was of chois non other:
To Chain was Calmana betake, *Cain*

- And Delboram hath Abel take,
 In whom was gete natheles
 Of worldes folk the ferste encres.
 75 Men sein that nede hath no lawe,
 And so it was be thilke dawe
 And laste into the Secounde Age,
 Til that the grete water rage,
 Of Noe, which was seid the flod,
 80 The world, which thanne in senne stod,
 Hath dreint, outake lyves eyhte.
 Tho was mankinde of litel weyhte;
 Sem, Cham, Japhet, of these thre,
 That ben the sones of Noe,
 85 The world of mannes nacion
 Into multiplicacion
 Was tho restored newe agein
 So ferforth, as the bokes sein,
 That of hem thre and here issue
 90 Ther was so large a reteneue,
 Of naciouns seventy and tuo,
 In sondri place ech on of tho
 The wyde world have enhabited.
 Bot as nature hem hath excited,
 95 Thei token thanne litel hiede,
 The brother of the sosterhiede
 To wedde wyves, til it cam
 Into the time of Habraham.
 Whan the thridde Age was begunne,
 100 The nede tho was overrunne,
 For ther was poeple ynouh in londe.
 Thanne ate ferste it cam to honde,
 That sosterhode of mariage
 Was torned into cousinage,
 105 So that after the rihte lyne
 The cousin weddeth the cousine.
 For Habraham, er that he deide,
 This charge upon his servant leide,
 To him and in this wise spak,
 110 That he his sone Isaac
 Do wedde for no worldes good,
 Bot only to his oghne blod:
 Wheroft his servant, as he bad,
 Whan he was ded, his sone hath lad
 115 To Bathuel, wher he Rebecke
 Hath wedded with the whyte necke;
 For sche, he wiste wel and syh,
 Was to the child cousinage nyh.
- increase
 necessity has no law
 in that day
- storm
 Noah; called the flood
 sin
- drowned except for; eight
 little force (quantity, importance)
- To such a degree
 those three; their
- [That] in; each one of those
- took; heed
 from among
- Abraham
- necessity then was past
 enough
- circumstance of marrying sisters
 marrying blood-relatives
- male relative; female relative
 before he died
 duty; laid (placed)
- Cause to wed; worldly goods
 own
 commanded
- knew; saw
 near blood-relative

- And thus as Habraham hath tawht,
 120 Whan Isaac was God betawht,
 His sone Jacob dede also,
 And of Laban the dowhtres tuo,
 Which was his em, he tok to wyve,
 And gat upon hem in his lyve,
 125 Of hire ferst which hihte Lie,
 Sex sones of his progenie,
 And of Rachel tuo sones eke:
 The remenant was for to seke,
 That is to sein of foure mo,
 130 Wheroft he gat on Bala tuo,
 And of Zelpha he hadde ek tweie.
 And these tuelve, as I thee seie,
 Thurgh providence of God Himselfe
 Ben seid the Patriarkes tuelve;
 135 Of whom, as afterward befell,
 The tribes tuelve of Irahel
 Engendred were, and ben the same
 That of Hebreus tho hadden name,
 Which of sibrede in alliance
 140 For evere kepten thilke usance
 Most comunly, til Crist was bore.
 Bot afterward it was forbore
 Amonges ous that ben baptizid;
 For of the lawe canonized
 145 The Pope hath bede to the men,
 That non schal wedden of his ken
 Ne the seconde ne the thridde.
 Bot thogh that holy cherche it bidde,
 So to restreigne mariage,
 150 Ther ben yit upon loves rage
 Full manye of suche nou aday
 That taken wher thei take may.
 For love, which is unbesein
 Of alle reson, as men sein,
 155 Thurgh sotie and thurgh nyceté,
 Of his voluptuosité
 He spareth no condicion
 Of ken ne yit religion,
 Bot as a cock among the hennes,
 160 Or as a stalon in the fennes,
 Which goth amonges al the stod,
 Riht so can he no more good,
 Bot takth what thing comth next to honde.
- Confessor** Mi sone, thou schalt understande,
 165 That such delit is for to blame.
- in the hands of God (i.e., dead)*
- Who; uncle
begot; them during his lifetime
was called Leah*
- Six
two; also*
- begat upon Beulah two
two*
- Are called*
- then had the name
kinship*
- that same custom
born
abandoned*
- canon law
ordained*
- from love's passion
nowadays*
- unendowed
any reason
folly; stupidity*
- distinguishes no social circumstance
kin nor*
- stallion; marshlands
all the horses
he knows no more*

- Forthi if thou hast be the same
 To love in eny such manere,
 Tell forth therof and schrif thee hiere." *confess yourself here*
- Amans** "Mi fader, nay, God wot the sothe,
 170 Mi feire is noght of such a bothe,
 So wylde a man yit was I nevere,
 That of mi ken or lief or levere
 Me liste love in such a wise:
 And ek I not for what emprise
 175 I scholde assote upon a nonne,
 For thogh I hadde hir love wonne,
 It myhte into no pris amonte,
 So therof sette I non accompte.
 Ye mai wel axe of this and that,
 180 Bot sothli for to telle plat,
 In al this world ther is bot on
 The which myn herte hath overgon;
 I am toward alle othre fre."
- Confessor** "Full wel, mi sone, nou I see
 185 Thi word stant evere upon o place.
 Bot yit therof thou hast a grace,
 That thou thee myht so wel excuse
 Of love suche as som men use,
 So as I spak of now tofore.
 190 For al such time of love is lore,
 And lich unto the bitterswete;
 For thogh it thenke a man ferst swete,
 He schal wel fielen ate laste
 That it is sour and may noght laste.
 195 For as a morsell envenimed,
 So hath such love his lust mistimed,
 And grete ensamples manyon
 A man mai finde therupon.

[EXAMPLES OF INCEST]

- At Rome ferst if we beginne,
 200 Ther schal I finde hou of this sinne
 ⚡ An emperour was for to blame,
 Gayus Caligula be name,
 Which of his oghne sostres thre
 Berefte the virginité: *Stolen*
 205 And whanne he hadde hem so forlein,
 As he the which was al vilein,
 He dede hem out of londe exile.
 Bot afterward withinne a while
 God hath beraft him in his ire *raped*

- 210 His lif and ek his large empire:
And thus for likinge of a throwe
Forevere his lust was overthrowe.
 Of this sotie also I finde,
 Amon his soster agein kinde,
215 Which hihte Thamar, he forlay;
 Bot he that lust an other day
 Aboghte, whan that Absolon
 His oghne brother therupon,
 Of that he hadde his soster schent,
220 Tok of that senne vengement
 And slowh him with his oghne hond:
 And thus th'unkinde unkinde fond.
 And for to se more of this thing,
 The Bible makth a knowleching,
225 Wheroft thou miht take evidence
 Upon the sothe experience.
 Whan Lothes wif was overgon
 And schape into the salte ston,
 As it is spoke into this day,
230 Be bothe hise dowhtres thanne he lay,
 With childe and made hem bothe grete,
 Til that nature hem wolde lete,
 And so the cause aboute ladde
 That ech of hem a sone hadde,
235 Moab the ferste, and the seconde
 Amon, of whiche, as it is founde,
 Cam afterward to grete encres
 Tuo nacion: and natheles,
 For that the stockes were ungoode,
240 The branches mihten noght be goode;
 For of the false Moabites
 Forth with the strengthe of Amonites,
 Of that thei weren ferst misgete,
 The poeple of God was ofte upsete
245 In Irahel and in Judee,
 As in the Bible a man mai se.
- Confessor** Lo thus, my sone, as I thee seie,
 Thou miht thiselv be beseie
 Of that thou hast of othre herd.
250 For evere yit it hath so ferd,
 Of loves lust if so befall
 That it in other place falle
 Than it is of the lawe set,
 He which his love hath so beset
255 Mote afterward repente him sore.
 And every man is othres lore;
- pleasure of a moment*
folly
against nature
Who was called; violated
later
Paid for
disgraced
sin vengeance
unnatural one
(see note)
true
overwhelmed
By
them; release
thus [nature] managed the matter
[So] that
trunks [of the genealogical tree]
misbegotten
Israel; Judah
furnished
From what
fixed
counsel

Of that befell in time er this
 The present time which now is
 Mai ben enformed hou it stod,
 260 And take that him thenketh good,
 And leve that which is noght so.
 Bot for to loke of time go,
 Hou lust of love excedeth lawe,
 It oghte for to be withdrawe;
 265 For every man it scholde drede,
 And nameliche in his sibrede,
 Which torneth ofte to vengance:
 Wherof a tale in remembrance,
 Which is a long process to hiere,
 270 I thenke for to tellen hiere.”

that which seems to him
time passed
kindred
narrative (drama)

[TALE OF APOLLONIUS OF TYRE]

ii. *Omnibus est communis amor, set et immoderatos*
Qui facit excessus, non reputatur amans.
Sors tamen vnde Venus attractat corda, videre
Que racionis erunt, non racione sinit.¹

Of a croniue in daies gon,
 The which is cleped *Pantheon*,
 In loves cause I rede thus,
 Hou that the grete Antiochus,
 275 Of whom that Antioche tok
 His ferste name, as seith the bok,
 Was coupled to a noble queene,
 And hadde a dowghter hem betwene:
 Bot such fortune cam to honde,
 280 That deth, which no king mai withstonde,
 Bot every lif it mote obeie,
 This worthi queene tok aweie.
 The king, which made mochel mone,
 285 Tho stod, as who seith, al him one
 Withoute wif, bot natheles
 His doghter, which was pierleles
 Of beauté, duelte aboute him stille.
 Bot whanne a man hath welthe at wille,
 The fleissh is frele and falleth ofte,
 290 And that this maide tendre and softe,
 Which in hire fadres chambres duelte,

chronicle
(see note)
lament
so to speak, alone by himself
beyond compare
frail
that [truth]

¹ *Love belongs to all the community; but let he who carries out immoderate excesses not be thought a lover. Yet the fate by which Venus attracts hearts does not allow [us] by means of reason to see the things of reason.*

	Withinne a time wiste and felte. For likinge and concupiscence Withoutte insihte of conscience	<i>knew; experienced desire; carnal lust</i>
295	The fader so with lustes blente, That he caste al his hole entente His oghne doghter for to spille.	<i>desires blinded destroy</i>
	This king hath leisir at his wille With strengthe, and whanne he time sih,	<i>leisure for saw</i>
300	This yonge maiden he forlih. And sche was tendre and full of drede,	<i>raped</i>
	Sche couthe noght hir maidenhede Defende, and thus sche hath forlore	<i>knew not how her To protect; lost</i>
	The flour which sche hath longe bore.	<i>flower; carried</i>
305	It helpeth noght althogh sche wepe, For thei that scholde hir bodi kepe Of wommen were absent as thanne,	<i>protect</i>
	And thus this maiden goth to manne. The wylde fader thus devoureth	<i>is taken by a man</i>
310	His oghne fleissh, which non socoureth, And that was cause of mochel care.	<i>whom no one helps</i>
	Bot after this unkinde fare Out of the chambre goth the king,	<i>unnatural business</i>
	And sche lay stille, and of this thing,	
315	Withinne hirself such sorghe made, Ther was no wiht that mihte hir glade, For feere of thilke horrible vice.	<i>sorrow</i>
	With that cam inne the norrice Which fro childhode hire hadde kept,	<i>person; console</i>
320	And axeth if sche hadde slept, And why hire chiere was unglad.	<i>fear of that same</i>
	Bot sche, which hath ben overlad Of that sche myhte noght be wreke,	<i>nurse</i>
	For schame couthe unethes speke;	
325	And natheles mercy sche preide With wepende yhe and thus sche seide:	
	“Helas, mi soster, waileway,	
	That evere I sih this ilke day!	
	Thing which mi bodi ferst begat	
330	Into this world, onliche that Mi worldes worschipe hath bereft.”	
	With that sche swouneth now and eft,	<i>countenance</i>
	And evere wissbeth after deth,	<i>compelled</i>
	So that wel nyh hire lacketh breth.	<i>avenged</i>
335	That other, which hire wordes herde, In confortinge of hire ansuerde, To lette hire fadres fol desir	<i>could scarcely prayed</i>
	Sche wiste no recoverir.	<i>weeping eyes</i>
		<i>Alas</i>
		<i>saw; same</i>
		<i>first begat my body</i>
		<i>honor; stolen</i>
		<i>fainted; again</i>
		<i>breath failed her</i>
		<i>heard</i>
		<i>obstruct; foolish passion</i>
		<i>knew; helper</i>

	Whan thing is do, ther is no bote,	done; remedy
340	So suffren thei that suffre mote;	must
	Ther was non other which it wiste.	knew
	Thus hath this king al that him liste	pleased him
	Of his likinge and his plesance,	desire; pleasure
	And laste in such continuance,	persisted in
345	And such delit he tok therinne,	
	Him thoghte that it was no sinne;	
	And sche dorste him nothing withseie.	oppose
	Bot fame, which goth every weie,	
	To sondry regnes al aboute	
350	The grete beauté telleth oute	noble lineage
	Of such a maide of hih parage:	
	So that for love of mariage	
	The worthi princes come and sende,	arrive and send [messages]
	As thei the whiche al honour wende,	expect
355	And knewe nothing hou it stod.	
	The fader, whanne he understod,	
	That thei his dowhter thus besoghte,	
	With al his wit he caste and thoghte	
	Hou that he myhte finde a lette;	invent an obstruction
360	And such a statut thanne he sette,	statute; established
	And in this wise his lawe he taxeth,	imposes
	That what man that his doghter axeth,	
	Bot if he couthe his question	Unless
	Assoile upon suggestion	Solve
365	Of certein thinges that befelle,	
	The whiche he wolde unto him telle,	
	He scholde in certein lese his hed.	certainly lose; head
	And thus ther weren manye ded,	
	Here hevedes stondende on the gate,	
370	Til ate laste longe and late,	Their heads piked
	For lacke of ansuere in the wise,	according to the rules
	The remenant that weren wise	remainder
	Eschuieden to make assay.	Avoided making the attempt (see note)
☞	Til it befell upon a day	
375	Appolinus the Prince of Tyr,	
	Which hath to love a gret desir,	
	As he which in his hihe mod	high spirits
	Was likende of his hote blod,	Was amorously disposed because of his passion
	A yong, a freissh, a lusti knyht,	
380	As he lai musende on a nyht	musing
	Of the tidinges whiche he herde,	
	He thoghte assaie hou that it ferde.	to ascertain; would fare
	He was with worthi compainie	
	Arraied, and with good navie	
385	To schipe he goth, the wynd him dryveth,	

- And seileth, til that he arryveth.
 Sauf in the port of Antioche
 He londeth, and goth to aproche
 The kinges court and his presence. *Safe*
- 390 Of every naturel science,
 Which eny clerk him couthe teche,
 He couthe ynowh, and in his speche
 Of wordes he was eloquent; *could
knew enough*
- 395 And whanne he sih the king present,
 He preith he moste his dowhter have.
 The king agein began to crave,
 And tolde him the condicion, *[that] he might
demand (asserted his privilege)*
- 400 Hou ferst unto his question
 He mote ansuere and faile noght,
 Or with his heved it schal be boght.
 And he him axeth what it was. *must
head*
- 405  The king declarereth him the cas
 With sturne lok and sturdi chiere,
 To him and seide in this manere:
 "With felonie I am upbore,
 I ete and have it noght forbore
 Mi modres fleissh, whos housebonde
 Mi fader for to seche I fonde,
 Which is the sone ek of my wif. *(Apollonius) asked; (the question)
(see note)
harsh expression
(see note)
sustained (see note)
have not desisted from doing it*
- 410 Hierof I am inquisitif;
 And who that can mi tale save,
 Al quyt he schal my doghter have;
 Of his ansuere and if he faile,
 He schal be ded withoute faile. *try
also*
- 415 Forthi my sone," quod the king,
 "Be wel avised of this thing,
 Which hath thi lif in jeupartie." *riddle solve
By rights (Freely)*
- 420  Appolinus for his partie,
 Whan he this question hath herd,
 Unto the king he hath ansuerd
 And hath rehersed on and on
 The pointz, and seide therupon: *one by one*
- 425 "The question which thou hast spoke,
 If thou wolt that it be unloke,
 It toucheth al the priveté
 Betwen thin oghne child and thee,
 And stant al hol upon you tuo." *elucidated (unlocked)
secret matters*
- 430  The king was wonder sory tho,
 And thoghte, if that he seide it oute,
 Than were he schamed al aboute.
 With slihe wordes and with felle
 He seith, "Mi sone, I schal thee telle, *pertains entirely to
vexed then (see note)
sly; treacherous [words]*

	Though that thou be of litel wit, It is no gret merveile as yit, Thin age mai it noght suffise: Bot loke wel thou noght despise Thin oghne lif, for of my grace Of thretty daies fulle a space I grante thee, to ben avised."	<i>be advised (beware)</i>
435	¶ And thus with leve and time assised This yonge prince forth he wente, And understod wel what it mente, Withinne his herte as he was lered, That for to maken him afered	<i>permission; established (see note)</i>
441	445 The king his time hath so deslaied. Wheroft he dradde and was esmaied, Of treson that he deie scholde, For he the king his sothe tolde; And sodeinly the nyhtes tyde,	<i>taught afraid delayed afraid (dismayed)</i>
	450 That more wolde he noght abide, Al prively his barge he hente And hom agein to Tyr he wente; And in his oghne wit he seide For drede, if he the king bewreide,	<i>secret (truth) revealed took</i>
455	455 He knew so wel the kinges herte, That deth ne scholde he noght asterte, The king him wolde so poursuie. Bot he, that wolde his deth eschuie, And knew al this tofor the hond,	<i>own betrayed (exposed)</i>
460	460 Forsake he thoghhte his oghne lond, That there wolde he noght abyde; For wel he knew that on som syde This tirant of his felonie Be som manere of tricherie	<i>escape pursue avoid remain occasion</i>
465	465 To grieve his bodi wol noght leve. ¶ Forthi withoute take leve, Als priveliche as evere he myhte, He goth him to the see be nyhte In schipes that be whete laden:	<i>aggrieve; leave off (see note)</i>
470	470 Here takel redy tho thei maden And hale up seal and forth thei fare. Bot for to tellen of the care That thei of Tyr begonne tho, Whan that thei wiste he was ago,	<i>secretly sea at night were laden with grain</i>
475	475 It is a pité for to hiere. Thei losten lust, thei losten chiere, Thei toke upon hem such penaunce, Ther was no song, ther was no daunce, Bot every merthe and melodie	<i>hauled up the sail anxiety experienced then knew; gone pleasure; cheerfulness themselves</i>

- 480 To hem was thanne a maladie;
 For unlust of that aventure sorrow
 Ther was no man which tok tonsure;
 In doelful clothes thei hem clothe,
 The bathes and the stwes bothe
 brothels (stews)
 485 Thei schetten in be every weie;
 Ther was no lif which leste pleie
 closed up
 Ne take of eny joie kepe,
 Bot for here liege lord to wepe;
 And every wyht seide as he couthe,
 who preferred to seek pleasure
 "Helas, the lusti flour of youthe,
 Oure prince, oure heved, our governour,
 Thurgh whom we stoden in honour,
 Withoute the comun assent
 Thus sodeinliche is fro ous went!"
 490 Such was the clamour of hem alle.
 Bot se we now what is befall
 Upon the ferste tale plein,
 And torne we therto agein.
 Antiochus the grete sire, powerful ruler
 495 Which full of rancour and of ire
 His herte berth, so as ye herde,
 Of that this Prince of Tyr ansuerde,
 He hadde a feloun bacheler,
 Which was his privé consailer,
 500 Concerning that which
 And Taliart be name he hihte:
 He was called
 The king a strong puison him dihte
 prepared
 Withinne a buiste and gold therto,
 box
 In alle haste and bad him go
 Directly
 Strawht unto Tyr, and for no cost
 510 Ne spare he, til he hadde lost
 gotten rid of
 The Prince which he wolde spille.
 And whan the king hath seid his wille,
 This Taliart in a galeie
 boat
 With alle haste he tok his weie:
 515 The wynd was good, he saileth blyve,
 swiftly
 Til he tok lond upon the ryve
 shore
 Of Tyr, and forthwithal anon
 speedily
 Into the burgh he gan to gon,
 city; went
 And tok his in and bod a throwe.
 lodgings and waited a bit
 520 Bot for he wolde noght be knowe,
 so that
 Desguised thanne he goth him oute;
 He sih the wepinge al aboute, saw
 And axeth what the cause was,
 asked
 And thei him tolden al the cas,
 situation
 525 How sodeinli the prince is go.
 has gone
 And whan he sih that it was so,

- And that his labour was in vein,
Anon he torneth hom agein,
And to the king, whan he cam nyh,
530 He tolde of that he herde and syh,
Hou that the Prince of Tyr is fled,
So was he come agein unsped.
The king was sori for a while,
Bot whan he sih that with no wyle
535 He myhte achieve his crualté,
He stinte his wraththe and let him be.
- Bot over this now for to telle
Of aventures that befelle
Unto this prince of whom I tolde,
540 He hath his rihte cours forth holde
Be ston and nedle, til he cam
To Tharse, and there his lond he nam.
A burgeis riche of gold and fee
Was thilke time in that cité,
545 Which cleped was Strangulio,
His wif was Dionise also:
This yonge prince, as seith the bok,
With hem his herbergage tok;
And it befell that cité so
550 Before time and thanne also,
Thurgh strong famyne which hem ladde
Was non that eny whete hadde.
Appolinus, whanne that he herde
The meschief, hou the cité ferde,
555 Al freliche of his oghne gifte
His whete, among hem for to schifte,
The which be schipe he hadde broght,
He gaf, and tok of hem riht noght.
Bot sithen ferst this world began,
560 Was nevere yit to such a man
Mor joie mad than thei him made.
For thei were alle of him so glade,
That thei for evere in remembrance
Made a figure in resemblance
565 Of him, and in the comun place
Thei sette him up, so that his face
Mihte every maner man beholde,
So as the cité was beholde;
It was of latoun overgilt:
570 Thus hath he noght his gifte spilt.
- Upon a time with his route
This lord to pleie goth him oute,
And in his weie of Tyr he mette
- vain
without success
vexed
deceit
controlled; anger
(see note)
compass
made his landfall
citizen; landed income
at that (the same)
Who was called
lodging
Previously; then
burdened them
any grain
misfortune; fared
distribute
by ship
from them nothing in return
statue
Just as; beholde
latten (copper-tin alloy)
wasted
company (see note)
from Tyre

- 575 A man, the which on knees him grette,
And Hellican be name he hihte,
Which preide his lord to have insihte
Upon himself, and seide him thus,
Hou that the grete Antiochus
Awaitheth if he mihte him spille.
greeted
was called
concern
For himself (his safety)
- 580 That other thoghte and hield him stille,
And thonked him of his warnyng,
And bad him telle no tidinge,
Whan he to Tyr cam hom agein,
That he in Tharse him hadde sein.
Lay in ambush so that; destroy
- 586 Fortune hath evere be muable
And mai no while stonde stable,
For now it hiheth, now it loweth,
Now stant upriht, now overthoweth,
Now full of blisse and now of bale,
changeable (see note)
rises; falls
happiness; sorrow
- 590 As in the tellinge of mi tale
Hierafterward a man mai liere,
Which is gret routhe for to hiere.
This lord, which wolde don his beste,
Withinne himself hath litel reste,
learn
pity; hear
- 595 And thoghte he wolde his place change
And seche a contré more strange.
Of Tharsiens his leve anon
He tok, and is to schipe gon.
His cours he nam with seiil updrawe,
remote
- 600 Where as Fortune doth the lawe,
And scheweth, as I schal reherse,
How sche was to this lord diverse,
The which upon the see sche ferketh.
The wynd aros, the weder derketh,
took; sail unfurled
To where Fortune determines [he should go]
explain
adverse
- 605 It blew and made such tempeste,
Non ancher mai the schip areste,
Which hath tobroke al his gere;
The schipmen stode in such a feere,
Was non that myhte himself bestere,
keep secure
broken asunder; its rigging
- 610 Bot evere awaite upon the lere,
Whan that thei scholde drenche at ones.
Ther was ynowh withinne wones
Of wepinge and of sorghe tho;
This yonge king makth mochel wo
make a movement
destruction
drown
- 615 So for to se the schip travaile:
Bot al that myhte him noght availe;
The mast tobrak, the seiil torof,
The schip upon the wawes drof,
Til that thei sihe a londes cooste.
then
suffer
- 620 Tho made avou the leste and moste,
ripped in shreds
waves was driven
made vow(s); least; greatest

	Be so thei myhten come alonde;	<i>Provided that</i>
	Bot he which hath the see on honde,	
	Neptunus, wolde noght acorde,	
	Bot al tobroke cable and corde,	<i>shattered utterly</i>
625	Er thei to londe myhte aproche,	
	The schip toclef upon a roche,	<i>split apart</i>
	And al goth doun into the depe.	
	Bot he that alle thing mai kepe	
	Unto this lord was merciable,	
630	And broghte him sauf upon a table,	<i>plank</i>
	Which to the lond him hath upbore;	
	The remenant was al forlore,	<i>lost</i>
	Wheroft he made mochel mone.	<i>lament (moan)</i>
☞	Thus was this yonge lord him one,	<i>by himself alone (see note)</i>
635	Al naked in a povere plit:	<i>wretched condition</i>
	His colour, which whilom was whyt,	
	Was thanne of water fade and pale,	
	And ek he was so sore acale	<i>chilled</i>
	That he wiste of himself no bote,	<i>remedy</i>
640	It halp him nothing for to mote	<i>complain</i>
	To gete agein that he hath lore.	<i>lost</i>
	Bot sche which hath his deth forbore,	<i>held off</i>
	Fortune, thogh sche wol noght yelpe,	<i>boast</i>
	Al sodeinly hath sent him helpe,	
645	Whanne him thoghte alle grace aweie;	<i>fisherman</i>
	Ther cam a fisshere in the weie,	
	And sih a man ther naked stonde,	
	And whan that he hath understande	
	The cause, he hath of him gret routhe,	<i>pity</i>
650	And onliche of his povere trouthe	<i>purely; loyalty [even as a poor man]</i>
	Of suche clothes as he hadde	
	With gret pité this lord he cladde.	
	And he him thonketh as he scholde,	<i>repaid</i>
	And seith him that it schal be yolde,	<i>social position</i>
655	If evere he gete his stat agein,	<i>tell him</i>
	And preide that he wolde him sein	<i>nearby; any</i>
	If nyh were eny toun for him.	
	He seide, "Yee, Pentapolim,	
	Wher bothe king and queene duellen."	
660	Whanne he this tale herde tellen,	<i>entreated</i>
	He gladeth him and gan beseche	
	That he the weie him wolde teche.	
	And he him taghte, and forth he wente	
	And preide God with good entente	
665	To sende him joie after his sorwe.	
☞	It was noght passed yit midmorwe,	<i>mid-day (see note)</i>
	Whan thiderward his weie he nam,	<i>took</i>

- Wher sone upon the non he cam. noon
 He eet such as he myhte gete,
 670 And forth anon, whan he hadde ete,
 He goth to se the toun aboute,
 And cam ther as he fond a route crowd
 Of yonge lusti men withalle.
 And as it scholde tho befall,
 675 That day was set of such assisse, appointment
 That thei scholde in the londes guise, custom of the land
 As he herde of the poeple seie,
 Here comun game thanne pleie;
 And crid was that thei scholden come
 680 Unto the gamen alle and some agile; strong
 Of hem that ben delivere and wyhte,
 To do such maistrie as thei myhte.
 Thei made hem naked as thei scholde,
 For so that ilke game wolde,
 685 As it was tho custume and us, then; use
 Amonges hem was no refus. [being naked] was no disgrace
 The flour of al the toun was there
 And of the court also ther were,
 And that was in a large place
 690 Riht evene afore the kinges face, was called
 Which Artestrathes thanne hihte.
 The pley was pleid riht in his sihte,
 And who most worthi was of dede
 Receive he scholde a certein mede
 695 And in the cité bere a pris. valiant; in combat
reward
gain distinction
savvy; wise (see note)
knew a bit
to try his luck
 Appolinus, which war and wys
 Of every game couthe an ende,
 He thoghte assaie, hou so it wende,
 And fell among hem into game.
 700 And there he wan him such a name, took note
 So as the king himself acompteth
 That he alle othre men surmonteth,
 And bar the pris above hem alle. had excellence
 The king bad that into his halle
 705 At souper time he schal be broght; did not leave [his meal]
 And he cam thanne and lefte it noght, all alone
 Withoute compaignie al one.
 Was non so semlich of persone,
 Of visage and of limes bothe,
 710 If that he hadde what to clothe. If [only]; something [appropriate]
 At souper time natholes
 The king amiddes al the pres crowd
 Let clepe him up among hem alle, invite
 And bad his mareschall of halle

- 715 To setten him in such degré
 That he upon him myhte se.
 The king was sone set and served,
 And he, which hath his pris deserved
 After the kinges oghne word, distinction
 720 Was mad beginne a middel bord,
 That bothe king and queene him sihe.
 He sat and caste aboute his yhe
 And sih the lordes in astat,
 And with himself wax in debat According to
 725 Thenkende what he hadde lore,
 And such a sorwe he tok therfore,
 That he sat evere stille and thoghte,
 As he which of no mete roghte. table [above the general table]
[So] that; might see him
eye
- 730  The king behield his heynesse,
 And of his grete gentillesse
 His doghther, which was fair and good
 And ate bord before him stod,
 As it was thilke time usage, grew conflicted
 735 He bad to gon on his message
 And fonde for to make him glad.
 And sche dede as hire fader bad,
 And goth to him the softe pas
 And axeth whenne and what he was, lost
 And preith he scholde his thoghtes leve. food was concerned
(see note)
- 740 He seith, “Ma dame, be youre leve,
 Mi name is hote Appolinus,
 And of mi richesse it is thus,
 Upon the see I have it lore. at that time customary
told [her] to go at his request
attempt
- 745 The contré wher as I was bore,
 Wher that my lond is and mi rente,
 I lefste at Tyr, whan that I wente. gently
put aside
 The worschipe of this worldes aghte,
 Unto the god ther I betaghte.” called
- 750 And thus togedre as thei tuo speeke,
 The teres runne be his cheeke. sea; lost
income
 The king, which therof tok good kepe,
 Hath gret pité to sen him wepe, departed
 And for his doghther sende agein,
 And preide hir faire and gan to sein honor; possessions
 755 That sche no lengere wolde drecche, god I commended there (left behind)
 Bot that sche wolde anon forth fecche
 Hire harpe and don al that sche can
 To glade with that sory man. tears
 And sche to don hir fader heste paid careful attention
- 760 Hire harpe fette, and in the feste
 Upon a chaier which thei fette courteously; proceeded to say
hesitate
find enjoyment; unhappy
father's command
fetched; feast

- Hirself next to this man sche sette:
 With harpe bothe and ek with mouthe
 To him sche dede al that sche couthe
 To make him chiere, and evere he siketh,
 And sche him axeth hou him liketh. sighs
asks; it pleases him
- 765 "Ma dame, certes wel," he seide,
 "Bot if ye the mesure pleide
 Which, if you list, I schal you liere,
 It were a glad thing for to hiere." ratios (metrics) played (see note)
teach
- 770 "Ha, lieve sire," tho quod sche,
 "Now tak the harpe and let me se
 Of what mesure that ye mene." dear sir
- 775 Tho preith the king, tho preith the queene,
 Forth with the lordes alle arewe,
 That he som merthe wolde schewe;
 He takth the harpe and in his wise
 He tempreth, and of such assise
 Singende he harpeth forth withal,
 That as a vois celestial
 Hem thoghte it souneth in here ere,
 As thogh that he an angel were. Then pray
together
in his [own] style
tunes; manner
- 780 Thei gladen of his melodie,
 Bot most of all the compainie
 The kinges doghter, which it herde,
 And thoghte ek hou that he ansuerde,
 Whan that he was of hire opposed,
 Withinne hir herte hath wel supposed
 That he is of gret gentilesse. It seemed to them
- 785 Hise dedes ben therof witnesse
 Forth with the wisdom of his lore;
 It nedeth noght to seche more,
 He myhte noght have such manere,
 Of gentil blod bot if he were. questioned
- 790 Whanne he hath harped al his fille,
 The kinges heste to fulfille,
 Awey goth dissh, awey goth cuppe,
 Doun goth the bord, the cloth was uppe,
 Thei risen and gon out of halle. unless he were
teaching
- 795 The king his chamberlein let calle,
 And bad that he be alle weie
 A chambre for this man pourveie,
 Which nyh his oghne chambre be.
 "It schal be do, mi lord," quod he. command
- 800 Appolinus of whom I mene
 Tho tok his leve of king and queene
 And of the worthi maide also,
 Which preide unto hir fader tho, in every fashion (see note)
prepare

- That sche myhte of that yonge man
810 Of the sciences whiche he can
His lore have; and in this wise
The king hir granteth his aprise,
So that himself therto assente.
Thus was acorded er thei wente,
815 That he with al that evere he may
This yonge faire freisshe may
Of that he couthe scholde enforme;
And full assented in this forme
Thei token leve as for that nyght.
☞ And whanne it was amorwe lyht,
821 Unto this yonge man of Tyr,
Of clothes and of good atir
With gold and selver to despende
This worthi yonge lady sende:
825 And thus sche made him wel at ese,
And he with al that he can plese
Hire serveth wel and faire agein.
He tawhte hir til sche was certein
Of harpe, of citole, and of rote,
830 With many a tun and many a note
Upon musique, upon mesure,
And of hire harpe the temprure
He tawhte hire ek, as he wel couthe.
Bot as men sein that frele is youthe,
835 With leisir and continuance
This mayde fell upon a chance,
That love hath mad him a querele
Agein hire youthe freissh and frele,
That malgré wher sche wole or noght,
840 Sche mot with al hire hertes thoght
To love and to his lawe obeie;
And that sche schal ful sore abeie.
For sche wot nevere what it is,
Bot evere among sche fieleth this:
845 Thenkende upon this man of Tyr,
Hire herte is hot as eny fyr,
And otherwhile it is acale;
Now is sche red, nou is sche pale
Riht after the condicion
850 Of hire yimaginacion.
Bot evere among hire thoghtes alle,
Sche thoghte, what so mai befallie,
Or that sche lawhe, or that sche wepe,
Sche wolde hire goode name kepe
855 For feere of wommannyshe schame.
- from that
Of the kinds of learning he had knowledge of
instruction
Provided that [Apollonius]*
- maiden
on these terms
(see note)*
- in turn
accomplished
(see note)*
- tune
tuning
persistence
change of fortune
made himself quarrel*
- despite whether
must
sorely pay for
continually
chilled (a-cold)*
- continually
Whether; laugh*

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 860 | Bot what in ernest and in game,
Sche stant for love in such a plit,
That sche hath lost al appetit
Of mete, of drinke, of nyghtes reste,
As sche that not what is the beste;
Bot for to thenken al hir fille
Sche hield hire ofte times stille
Withinne hir chambre, and goth noght oute:
The king was of hire lif in doute,
Which wiste nothing what it mente. | <i>For food
who knows not what</i>
<i>kept herself</i> |
| 865 | Bot fell a time, as he out wente
To walke, of princes sones thre
Ther come and felle to his kne;
And ech of hem in sondri wise | <i>Who knew
(see note)</i> |
| 870 | Besoghte and profreth his servise,
So that he myhte his doghter have.
The king, which wolde his honour save,
Seith sche is siek, and of that speche | <i>Says; sick; matter
implore</i> |
| 875 | Tho was no time to beseche;
Bot ech of hem do make a bille
He bad, and wryte his oghne wille,
His name, his fader, and his good; | <i>declaration [of wealth and position]</i> |
| 880 | And whan sche wiste hou that it stod,
And hadde here billes oversein,
Thei scholden have ansuere agein.
Of this conseil thei weren glad, | <i>possessions</i> |
| 885 | And writen as the king hem bad,
And every man his oghne bok
Into the kinges hond betok,
And he it to his dowhter sende, | <i>their inventories perused</i> |
| 890 | And preide hir for to make an ende
And wryte agein hire oghne hond,
Riht as sche in hire herte fond. | <i>petition
(see note)</i> |
| 895 | The billes weren wel received,
Bot sche hath alle here loves weyved,
And thoghte tho was time and space
To put hire in hir fader grace,
And wrot agein and thus sche saide:
"The schame which is in a maide | <i>their; rejected</i> |
| 900 | With speche dar noght ben unloke,
Bot in writinge it mai be spoke;
So wryte I to you, fader, thus:
Bot if I have Appolinus,
Of al this world, what so betyde, | <i>Unless
whatever happens
tolerate</i> |

- Ye schull for me be dowhterles."
- This lettre cam, and ther was press *a crowd*
 905 Tofore the king, ther as he stod; *Before*
 And whan that he it understod,
 He gef hem ansuer by and by, *them*
 Bot that was do so prively, *secretly*
 That non of othres conseil wiste. *[So] that*
- 910 Thei toke her leve, and wher hem liste *their; it pleased them*
 Thei wente forth upon here weie. *their*
 The king ne wolde noght bewreie *reveal*
 The conseil for no maner hihe, *haste*
 915 Bot soffreth til he time sihe: *saw (see note)*
 And whan that he to chambre is come, *taken*
 He hath unto his conseil nome
 This man of Tyr, and let him se
 The lettre and al the priveté, *secret contents*
 The which his dowhter to him sente.
- 920 And he his kne to grounde bente
 And thonketh him and hire also,
 And er thei wenten thanne atuo,
 With good herte and with good corage *before; separated*
 Of full love and full mariage
- 925 The king and he ben hol acorded.
 And after, whanne it was recorded
 Unto the dowhter hou it stod,
 The gifte of al this worldes good
 Ne scholde have mad hir half so blythe: *joyous*
- 930 And forth withal the king als swithe, *swiftly*
 For he wol have hire good assent,
 Hath for the queene hir moder sent.
 The queene is come, and whan sche herde
 Of this matiere hou that it ferde,
- 935 Sche syh debat, sche syh desese, *conflict; distress*
 Bot if sche wolde hir dowhter plese, *Unless*
 And is thereto assented full.
 Which is a dede wonderfull,
 For no man knew the sothe cas *true situation*
- 940 Bot he himself, what man he was;
 And natheles, so as hem thoghte,
 Hise dedes to the sothe wroghte
 That he was come of gentil blod.
 Him lacketh noght bot worldes good,
- 945 And as therof is no desperair,
 For sche schal ben hire fader heir,
 And he was able to governe.
 Thus wol thei noght the love werne *forbid*
 Of him and hire in none wise,

- 950 Bot ther accorded thei divise
 ↗ The day and time of mariage.
 Wher love is lord of the corage,
 Him thenketh longe er that he spedē;
 Bot ate laste unto the dede
 955 The time is come, and in her wise
 With gret offrendē and sacrificise
 Thei wedde and make a riche festē,
 And every thing which was honestē
 Withinnen house and ek withoutē
 960 It was so don, that al aboute
 Of gret worschipe, of gret noblesse
 Ther cride many a man largesse
 Unto the lordes hihe and loude;
 The knyhtes that ben yonge and proude,
 965 Thei joustē ferst and after daunce.
 The day is go, the nyghtes chaunce
 Hath derked al the bryhte sonne;
 This lord, which hath his love wonne,
 Is go to bedde with his wif,
 970 Wher as thei ladde a lusti lif,
 And that was after somdel sene,
 For as thei pleiden hem betwene,
 Thei gete a child betwen hem tuo,
 To whom fell after mochel wo.
 ↗ Now have I told of the spousailes.
 976 Bot for to speke of the mervailles
 Whiche afterward to hem befelle,
 It is a wonder for to telle.
 It fell adai thei rideñ oute,
 980 The king and queene and al the route,
 To pleien hem upon the stronde,
 Wher as thei sen toward the londe
 A schip sailende of gret array.
 To knowe what it mene may,
 985 Til it be come thei abide;
 Than sen thei stonde on every side,
 Endlong the schipes bord to schewe,
 Of penonceals a riche rewe.
 Thei axen when the schip is come.
 990 Fro Tyr, anon ansuerde some,
 And over this thei seiden more
 The cause why thei comen fore
 Was for to seche and for to finde
 Appolinus, which was of kinde
 995 Her liege lord: and he appiereth,
 And of the tale which he hiereth
- agreed upon a plan for
(see note)*
- heart*
- It seems to him; succeed*
- according to their custom*
- honorable*
- cried out for (gave thanks for) almsgiving*
- somewhat revealed*
- wedding (see note)*
- company*
- shore*
- awaited*
- ship's side*
- banners; display (row)*
- whence*
- by birth right*
- Their*

- He was riht glad; for thei him tolde,
 That for vengeance, as God it wolde,
 Antiochus, as men mai wite, know
- 1000 With thondre and lyhthnynge is forsmite;
 His doghter hath the same chaunce,
 So be thei bothe in o balance.
 "Forthi, oure liege lord, we seie
 In name of al the lond, and preie,
 1005 That left al other thing to done,
 It like you to come sone [That] it please you
 And se youre oghe liege men
 With othre that ben of youre ken,
 That live in longinge and desir
 1010 Til ye be come agein to Tyr."
 This tale after the king it hadde
 Pentapolim al overspradde,
 Ther was no joie for to seche; seek
 For every man it hadde in speche
 1015 And seiden alle of on acord, one
 "A worthi king schal ben oure lord:
 That thoghte ous ferst an hevinesse
 Is schape ous now to gret gladnesse."
 Thus goth the tidinge overal.
- ☞ Bot nede he mot, that nede schal: (see note)
- 1021 Appolinus his leve tok, commended (said farewell to)
 To God and al the lond betok far and wide
 With al the poeple long and brod,
 That he no lenger there abod.
- 1025 The king and queene sorwe made, then
 Bot yit somdiel thei weren glade gladness; woe
 Of such thing as thei herden tho. pregnant wife
 And thus between the wel and wo
 To schipe he goth, his wif with childe, Who
- 1030 The which was evere meke and mylde
 And wolde noght departe him fro,
 Such love was between hem tuo.
 Lichorida for hire office
 Was take, which was a norrice, nurse
- 1035 To wende with this yonge wif, travel
 To whom was schape a woful lif. For whom was destined
 Withinne a time, as it betidde, happened
 Whan thei were in the see amidde, sea amidst
 Out of the north thei sihe a cloude;
- 1040 The storm aros, the wyndes loude
 Thei blewen many a dredful blast,
 The welkne was al overcast, heaven
 The derke nyht the sonne hath under,

- Ther was a gret tempeste of thunder;
 1045 The mone and ek the sterres bothe moon; also
 In blake cloudes thei hem clothe,
 Wheroft here brihte lok thei hyde.
 This yonge ladi wepte and cride,
 To whom no confort myhte availe;
- 1050 Of childe sche began travaile, entered into labor
 Wher sche lay in a caban clos.
 Hire woful lord fro hire aros,
 And that was longe er eny morwe, before any
 So that in anguisse and in sorwe
- 1055 Sche was delivered al be nyhte by
 And ded in every mannes syhte; [was] dead
 Bot natholes for al this wo
 A maide child was bore tho.
- ☞ Appolinus whan he this knew, (see note)
 1060 For sorwe a swoune he overthrew, he was overthrown in a faint
 That no man wiste in him no lif. knew
 And whanne he wok, he seide, "Ha, wif,
 Mi lust, mi joie, my desir,
 Mi welthe and my recoverir, helper
- 1065 Why schal I live, and thou schalt dye?
 Ha, thou Fortune, I thee deffie,
 Nou hast thou do to me thi werste.
 Ha, herte, why ne wolt thou berste, burst
 That forth with hire I myhte passe?
- 1070 Mi peines weren wel the lasse." agonies would be; less
 In such wepinge and in such cry
 His dede wif, which lay him by,
 A thousand sithes he hire kiste; times
 Was nevere man that sih ne wiste saw nor knew
- 1075 A sorwe unto his sorwe lich. alike
 For evere among upon the lich
 He fell swounende, as he that soghte corpse
 His oghne deth, which he besoghte one who
 Unto the goddes alle above own; prayed for
- 1080 With many a pitous word of love. those
 Bot suche wordes as tho were
 Yit herde nevere mannes ere,
 Bot only thilke whiche he seide. Except for those [present]
- 1085 The maister schipman cam and preide prayed
 With othre suche as be therinne,
 And sein that he mai nothing winne
 Agein the deth, bot thei him rede, unless they advise him
 He be wel war and take hiede,
 The see be weie of his nature
- 1090 Receive mai no creature

- Withinne himself as for to holde
 The which is ded: forthi thei wolde,
 As thei conseilen al aboute,
 The dede body casten oute.
- 1095 For betre it is, thei seiden alle,
 That it of hire so befalle,
 Than if thei scholden alle spille.
- ☞ The king, which understod here wille
 And knew here conseil that was trewe,
 Began agein his sorwe newe
 With pitous herte, and thus to seie:
 "It is al reson that ye preie.
 I am," quod he, "bot on alone,
 So wolde I noght for mi persone
 1105 Ther felle such adversité.
 Bot whan it mai no betre be,
 Doth thanne thus upon my word,
 Let make a cofre strong of bord,
 That it be ferm with led and pich."
- 1110 Anon was mad a cofre sich,
 Al redy broght unto his hond;
 And whanne he sih and redy fond
 This cofre mad and wel enclosed,
 The dede bodi was besowed
 1115 In cloth of gold and leid therinne.
 And for he wolde unto hire winne
 Upon som cooste a sepulture,
 Under hire heved in aventure
 Of gold he leide sommes grete
 1120 And of jeueals a strong beyete
 Forth with a lettre, and seide thus:
 ☞ "I, king of Tyr Appollinus,
 Do alle maner men to wite,
 That hiere and se this lettre write,
 1125 That helpeles withoute red
 Hier lith a kinges doghter ded:
 And who that happeth hir to finde,
 For charité tak in his mynde,
 And do so that sche be begrave
 1130 With this tresor, which he schal have."
 Thus whanne the lettre was full spoke,
 Thei have anon the cofre stoke,
 And bounden it with yren faste,
 That it may with the wawes laste,
 1135 And stoppen it be such a weie,
 That it schal be withinne dreie,
 So that no water myhte it grieve.
- in order to carry*
The [one] who
perish
their intention (see note)
one
[Such] that; strengthened
Soon; such a coffin
nailed shut
sewed up
gain for her
head as a gamble [with Fortune]
great quantities
jewels a great possession
(see note)
Cause; know
Who hear; written
help (a cure)
Here lies
let him take thought
buried
coffin nailed shut
iron
waves endure
sealed
dry
harm

- And thus in hope and good believe
 Of that the corps schal wel aryve,
 1140 Thei caste it over bord als blyve. quickly
(see note)
- ☞ The schip forth on the wawes wente;
 The prince hath changed his entente,
 And seith he wol noght come at Tyr
 As thanne, bot al his desir
 1145 Is ferst to seilen unto Tharse. diminish
arose; weather clears
- 1150 The wyndy storm began to skarse,
 The sonne arist, the weder cliereth,
 The schipman which behinde stiereth,
 Whan that he sih the wyndes saghte,
 Towardes Tharse his cours he straghte. at peace
made straight
(see note)
- ☞ Bot now to mi matiere agein,
 To telle as olde bokes sein,
 This dede corps of which ye knowe
 With wynd and water was forthrowe
 1155 Now hier, now ther, til ate laste tossed about
 At Ephesim the see upcaste
 The cofre and al that was therinne.
 Of gret merveile nou beginne
 Mai hiere who that sitteth stille;
- 1160 That God wol save mai noght spille. What; perish
 Riht as the corps was throwe alonde,
 Ther cam walkende upon the stronde
 A worthi clerc, a surgien,
 And ek a gret phisicien, shore
scholar; surgeon
- 1165 Of al that lond the wisest on, one
Who was called
 Which hihte Maister Cerymon;
 Ther were of his disciples some. several of his students
- 1170 He peiseth ther was somewhat in,
 And bad hem bere it to his in,
 And goth himselfe forth withal. feels by weight
them bear; residence
- Al that schal falle, falle schal;
 Thei comen hom and tarie noght;
 This cofre is into chambre broght,
 1175 Which that thei finde faste stoke, tightly nailed shut
 Bot thei with craft it have unloke.
 Thei loken in, where as thei founde
 A bodi ded, which was bewounde
- In cloth of gold, as I seide er, look
said before
- 1180 The tresor ek thei founden ther
 Forth with the lettre, which thei rede.
 And tho thei token betre hiede; heed
 Unsowed was the bodi sone, Unsewn
 And he, which knew what is to done,

- 1185 This noble clerk, with alle haste
 Began the veines for to taste,
 And sih hire age was of youthe,
 And with the craftes whiche he couthe
 He soghte and fond a signe of lif. veins; probe
saw
knew
- 1190 With that this worthi kinges wif
 Honestly thei token oute,
 And maden fyres al aboute;
 Thei leide hire on a couche softe,
 And with a scheete warmed ofte Honorably
- 1195 Hire colde brest began to hete,
 Hire herte also to flacke and bete.
 This maister hath hire every joignt
 With certein oile and balsme enoignt,
 And putte a liquour in hire mouth, flutter
- 1200 Which is to fewe clerkes couth,
 So that sche coevereth ate laste:
 And ferst hire yhen up sche caste,
 And whan sche more of strengthe cawhte,
 Hire armes bothe forth sche strawhte, known
recovers
eyes
- 1205 Hield up hire hond and pitously
 Sche spak and seide, “Ha, wher am I?
 Where is my lord, what world is this?”
 As sche that wot noght hou it is.
 Bot Cerymon the worthi leche stretched
- 1210 Ansuerde anon upon hire speche
 And seith, “Ma dame, yee ben hiere
 Wher yee be sauf, as yee schal hiere
 Hierafterward; forthi as nou
 Mi conseil is, conforteth you: physician (leech)
- 1215 For trusteth wel withoute faile,
 Ther is nothing which schal you faile,
 That oghte of reson to be do.”
 Thus passen thei a day or tuo;
 Thei speke of noght as for an ende, take comfort
- 1220 Til sche began somdiel amende,
 And wiste hireselven what sche mente.
not of a final resolution [to the situation]
- ☞ Tho for to knowe hire hol entente,
 This maister axeth al the cas,
 Hou sche cam there and what sche was. knew herself what she intended
(see note)
- 1225 “Hou I cam hiere wot I noght,”
 Quod sche, “bot wel I am bethoght
 Of othre thinges al aboute”:
 Fro point to point and tolde him oute
 Als ferforthli as sche it wiste. who
- 1230 And he hire tolde hou in a kiste
 The see hire threw upon the lond, I am well aware
- straightforwardly; knew
coffin (chest)
sea*

- And what tresor with hire he fond,
 Which was al redy at hire wille,
 As he that schop him to fulfille
 1235 With al his myht what thing he scholde.
 Sche thonketh him that he so wolde,
 And al hire herte sche discloseth,
 And seith him wel that sche supposeth
 Hire lord be dreint, hir child also;
 1240 So sih sche noght bot alle wo.
 Wherofto the world no more
 Ne wol sche torne, and preith therfore
 That in som temple of the cité
 To kepe and holde hir chasteté,
 1245 Sche mihte among the wommen duelle.
 Whan he this tale hir herde telle,
 He was riht glad, and made hire knownen
 That he a dowhter of his own
 Hath, which he wol unto hir give
 1250 To serve, whil thei bothe live,
 In stede of that which sche hath lost;
 Al only at his oghne cost
 Sche schal be rendred forth with hire.
 Sche seith, "Grant mercy, lieve sire,
 1255 God quite it you, ther I ne may."
 And thus thei drive forth the day,
 Til time com that sche was hol;
 And tho thei take her conseil hol,
 To schape upon good ordinance
 1260 And make a worthi pourveance
 Agein the day whan thei be veiled.
 And thus, whan that thei be conseiled,
 In blake clothes thei hem clothe,
 This lady and the dowhter bothe,
 1265 And yolde hem to religion.
 The feste and the profession
 After the reule of that degré
 Was mad with gret solempneté,
 Where as Diane is seintefied;
 1270 Thus stant this lady justefied
 In ordre wher sche thenkth to duelle.
 Bot now ageinward for to telle
 In what plit that hire lord stod inne:
 He seileth, til that he may winne
 1275 The havene of Tharse, as I seide er;
 And whanne he was aryved ther,
 And it was thurgh the cité knowe,
 Men myhte se withinne a throwe,
 prepared himself to
 drowned
 delivered
 dear
 May God repay
 well
 whole
 submitted (surrendered) themselves
 sanctified
 made righteous
 (see note)
 reach
 before
 in a short time

- As who seith, al the toun at ones,
 1280 That come agein him for the nones,
 To given him the reverence,
 So glad thei were of his presence:
 And thogh he were in his corage
 Desesed, yit with glad visage
 1285 He made hem chiere, and to his in,
 Wher he whilom sojourned in,
 He goth him straught and was resceived.
 And whan the presse of poeple is weived,
 He takth his hoste unto him tho,
 1290 And seith, "Mi frend Strangulio,
 Lo, thus and thus it is befallie,
 And thou thiself art on of alle,
 Forth with thi wif, whiche I most triste.
 Forthi, if it you bothe liste,
 1295 Mi doghther Thaise be youre leve
 I thenke schal with you beleve
 As for a time; and thus I preie,
 That sche be kept be alle weie,
 And whan sche hath of age more,
 1300 That sche be set to bokes lore.
 And this avou to God I make,
 That I schal nevere for hir sake
 Mi berd for no likinge schave,
 Til it befallie that I have
 1305 In covenable time of age
 Beset hire unto mariage."
 Thus thei acorde, and al is wel,
 And for to resten him somdel,
 As for a while he ther sojorneth,
 1310 And thanne he takth his leve and torneth
 To schipe, and goth him hom to Tyr,
 Wher every man with gret desir
 Awaiteth upon his comynge.
 Bot whan the schip com in seilinge,
 1315 And thei perceiven it is he,
 Was nevere yit in no cité
 Such joie mad as thei tho made;
 His herte also began to glade
 Of that he sih the poeple glad.
 1320 Lo, thus fortune his hap hath lad;
 In sondri wise he was travailed,
 Bot hou so evere he be assailed,
 His latere ende schal be good.
 And for to speke hou that it stod
 1325 Of Thaise his doghther, wher sche duelleth,
- So to speak; at once
towards him*
- Distressed
dwelling (inn)*
- crowd; expelled*
- one
trust
pleases
with your permission
remain*
- in every way [appropriate]*
- learning*
- opportune moment*
- agree
somewhat*
- then
be joyful*
- circumstance has determined
afflicted*
- (see note)*

- In Tharse, as the cronique telleth,
 Sche was wel kept, sche was wel loked,
 Sche was wel tawht, sche was wel boked,
 So wel sche spedde hir in hire youthe
 1330 That sche of every wisdom couthe,
 That for to seche in every lond
 So wys another no man fond,
 Ne so wel tawht at mannes yhe.
 Bot wo worthe evere fals envie!
 to the human eye
- 1335 For it befell that time so,
 A dowhther hath Strangulio,
 The which was cleped Philotenne.
 Bot fame, which wole evere renne,
 Cam al day to hir moder ere,
 1340 And seith, wher evere hir doghter were
 With Thayse set in eny place,
 The comun vois, the comun grace
 Was al upon that other maide,
 And of hir doghter no man saide.
- 1345 Who wroth but Dionise thanne?
 Hire thoghte a thousand yer til whanne
 Sche myhte ben of Thaise wreke
 Of that sche herde folk so speke.
 And fell that ilke same tyme,
 1350 That ded was trewe Lychoride,
 Which hadde be servant to Thaise,
 So that sche was the worse at aise,
 For sche hath thanne no servise
 Bot only thurgh this Dionise,
 1355 Which was hire dedlich anemie
 Thurgh pure treson and envie.
 Sche, that of alle sorwe can,
 Tho spak unto hire bondeman,
 Which cleped was Theophilus,
 1360 And made him swere in conseil thus,
 That he such time as sche him sette
 Schal come Thaise for to fette,
 And lede hire oute of alle sihte,
 Wher as no man hire helpe myhte,
 1365 Upon the stronde nyh the see,
 And there he schal this maiden sle.
 This cherles herte is in a traunce,
 As he which drad him of vengance
 Whan time comth an other day;
 1370 Bot yit dorste he noght seie nay,
 Bot swor and seide he schal fulfille
 Hire hestes at hire oghne wille.
- chronicle
 watched over
 succeeded
 knew
 seek
 to the human eye
- called
 travel
 ear
- became angry
 It seemed to her
 avenged
 For what
 very same time
- ease
- enemy
- who; knows
- fetch
 lead; sight
- shore near; sea
 slay
 daze
- feared vengeance for himself
- dared
- orders; own

- 1375 The treson and the time is schape,
So fell it that this cherles knape
Hath lad this maiden ther he wolde
Upon the stronde, and what sche scholde
Sche was adrad; and he out breide
A rusti swerd and to hir seide,
“Thou schalt be ded.” “Helas!” quod sche,
“Why schal I so?” “Lo thus,” quod he,
“Mi ladi Dionise hath bede,
Thou schalt be moerdred in this stede.”
This maiden tho for feere schryhte,
And for the love of God almyhte
1385 Sche preith that for a litel stounde
Sche myhte knele upon the grounde,
Toward the hevene for to crave,
Hire wofull soule if sche mai save.
And with this noise and with this cry,
1390 Out of a barge faste by,
Which hidd was ther on scomerfare,
Men stertern out and weren ware
Of this feloun, and he to go,
And sche began to crie tho,
1395 “Ha, mercy, help for Goddes sake!
Into the barge thei hire take,
As thieves scholde, and forth thei wente.
Upon the see the wynd hem hente,
And malgré wher thei wolde or non,
1400 To for the weder forth thei gon,
Ther halp no seil, ther halp non ore,
Forstormed and forblownen sore
In gret peril so forth thei dryve,
Til ate laste thei aryve
1405 At Mitelene the cité.
In havene sauf and whan thei be,
The maister schipman made him boun,
And goth him out into the toun,
And profreth Thaise for to selle.
1410 On Leonin it herde telle,
Which maister of the bordel was,
And bad him gon a redy pas
To fetten hire, and forth he wente,
And Thaise out of his barge he hente,
1415 And to this bordeller hir solde.
And he, that be hire body wolde
Take avantage, let do crye,
That what man wolde his lecherie
Attempte upon hire maidenhede,
- arranged (see note)
churlish attendant
where
should [endure]
drew
- commanded
place
fear screamed
- time
beseech
- piracy
- he [Theophilus] fled
then
- took
despite
- Before the [bad] weather
- prepared a plan for himself
- A certain Leonin
Who; brothel
quick pace
- seized
brothel-keeper

- 1420 Lei doun the gold and he schal spedē. succeed
 And thus whan he hath crid it oute
 In syhte of al the poeple aboute,
 ↗ He ladde hire to the bordel tho. *brothel (see note)*
 No wonder is thogh sche be wo:
- 1425 Clos in a chambre be hireselve,
 Ech after other ten or tuelve
 Of yonge men to hire in wente;
 Bot such a grace God hire sente,
 That for the sorwe which sche made
 1430 Was non of hem which pouer hade
 To don hire eny vileinie.
 This Leonin let evere aspie,
 And waiteth after gret beyete;
 Bot al for noght, sche was forlete, *profit*
 1435 That mo men wolde ther noght come. *abandoned*
 Whan he therof hath hiede nome,
 And knew that sche was yit a maide,
 Unto his oghne man he saide,
 That he with strengthe again hire leve *[Such] that*
 1440 Tho scholde hir maidenhood bereve. *taken heed*
 This man goth in, bot so it ferde,
 Whan he hire wofull pleintes herde
 And he therof hath take kepe,
 Him liste betre for to wepe *without her permission*
 1445 Than don ogh特 elles to the game. *rob*
 And thus sche kepte hirself fro schame,
 And kneleth doun to th'erthe and preide
 Unto this man, and thus sche seide:
 "If so be that thi maister wolde
 1450 That I his gold encresce scholde, *It pleased him*
 It mai noght falle be this weie:
 Bot soffre me to go mi weie *come about by this means*
 Out of this hous wher I am inne,
 And I schal make him for to winne
- 1455 In som place elles of the toun, *Provided that it be a religious house*
 Be so it be religiouн,
 Wher that honeste wommen duelle.
 And thus thou myht thi maister telle,
 That whanne I have a chambre there,
 1460 Let him do crie ay wyde where,
 What lord that hath his doghter diere,
 And is in will that sche schal liere *learn*
 Of such a scole that is trewe,
 I schal hire teche of thinges newe,
 1465 Which as non other womman can *as soon as*
 In al this lond." And tho this man

- Hire tale hath herd, he goth agein,
And tolde unto his maister plein
That sche hath seid; and therupon,
1470 Whan than he sih beyete non
At the bordel because of hire,
He bad his man to gon and spire
A place wher sche myhte abyde,
That he mai winne upon som side
1475 Be that sche can: bot ate leste
Thus was sche sauf fro this tempeste.
- ¶ He hath hire fro the bordel take,
Bot that was noght for Goddes sake,
Bot for the lucre, as sche him tolde.
- 1480 Now comen tho that come wolde
Of wommen in her lusty youthe,
To hiere and se what thing sche couthe:
Sche can the wisdom of a clerk,
Sche can of every lusti werk
- 1485 Which to a gentil womman longeth,
And some of hem sche undersongeth
To the citole and to the harpe,
And whom it liketh for to carpe
Proverbes and demandes slyhe,
- 1490 An other such thei nevere syhe,
Which that science so wel tawhte:
Wheroft sche grete giftes cawhte,
That sche to Leonin hath wonne;
And thus hire name is so begonne
- 1495 Of sondri thinges that sche techeth,
That al the lond unto hir secheth
Of yonge wommen for to liere.
- ¶ Nou lete we this maiden hiere,
And speke of Dionise agein
- 1500 And of Theophile the vilein,
Of whiche I spak of nou tofore.
Whan Thaise scholde have be forlore,
This false cherl to his lady
- 1505 Whan he cam hom, al prively
He seith, “Ma dame, slain I have
This maide Thaise, and is begrave
In privé place, as ye me bide.
Forthi, ma dame, taketh hiede
- 1510 And kep conseil, hou so it stonde.”
This fend, which this hath understande,
Was glad, and weneth it be soth:
Now herkne, hierafter hou sche doth.
Sche wepth, sche sorweth, sche compleigneth,
- What
saw no gain
seek
By what she knew
(see note)
for gain
knew
knew
knew; desirable skill
belongs
took in [as students]
to tell
cunning riddles
received
gained
established
(see note)
scoundrel
utterly destroyed
buried
secret; commanded
keep it secret, however things should go

- 1515 And of sieknesse which sche feigneth
 Sche seith that Taise sodeinly
 Be nyhte is ded, “as sche and I
 Togedre lyhen nyh my lord.”
 Sche was a womman of record,
 And al is lieved that sche seith;
 good reput
 believed
- 1520 And for to give a more feith,
 Hire housebonde and ek sche bothe
 In blake clothes thei hem clothe,
 And made a gret enterrement;
 And for the poeple schal be blent,
 funeral
 blinded
- 1525 Of Thaise as for the remembrance,
 After the real olde usance
 A tumbe of latoun noble and riche
 With an ymage unto hir liche
 Liggende above therupon
 ancient royal custom
 tomb; latten (tin and copper alloy)
 statue in her likeness
- 1530 Thei made and sette it up anon.
 Hire epitaffe of good assisse
 Was write aboute, and in this wise
 It spak: “O yee that this beholde,
 Lo, hier lith sche, the which was holde
 here lies; considered
- 1535 The faireste and the flour of alle,
 Whos name Thaisis men calle.
 The king of Tyr Appolinus
 Hire fader was: now lith sche thus.
 Fourtiene yer sche was of age,
 Whan deth hir tok to his viage.”
 journey
 (see note)
- 1540 ~~¶~~ Thus was this false treson hidd,
 Which afterward was wyde kidd,
 As be the tale a man schal hiere.
 Bot for toclare mi matiere,
 declare
- 1545 To Tyr I thenke tornagein,
 And telle as the croniqes sein.
 Whan that the king was comen hom,
 And hath left in the salte fom
 His wif, which he mai noght forgete,
 foam (i.e., sea)
- 1550 For he som confort wolde gete,
 He let somoune a parlement,
 To which the lordes were asent;
 And of the time he hath ben oute,
 He seth the thinges al aboute,
 traveling
- 1555 And told hem ek hou he hath fare,
 Whil he was out of londe fare;
 And preide hem alle to abyde,
 For he wolde at the same tyde
 Do schape for his wyves mynde,
 wait
- 1560 As he that wol noght ben unkinde.
 time
 Have arrangements made; wife's memory
 disloyal (ungrateful)

- Solempne was that ilke office,
And riche was the sacrifice;
The feste reali was holde.
And thereto was he wel beholde;
1565 For such a wif as he hadde on
In thilke daies was ther non.
- Whan this was do, thanne he him thoghte
Upon his doghter, and besoghte
Suche of his lordes as he wolde,
1570 That thei with him to Tharse scholde,
To fette his doghter Taise there.
And thei anon al redy were,
To schip thei gon and forth thei wente,
Til thei the havene of Tharse hente.
- 1575 Thei londe and faile of that thei seche
Be coverture and sleyhte of speche.
This false man Strangulio,
And Dionise his wif also,
That he the betre trowe myhte,
- 1580 Thei ladden him to have a sihte
Wher that hir tombe was arraied.
The lasse yit he was mispaied,
And natheles, so as he dorste,
He curseth and seith al the worste
- 1585 Unto Fortune, as to the blinde,
Which can no seker weie finde;
For sche him neweth evere among,
And medleth sorwe with his song.
- 1589 Bot sithe it mai no betre be,
He thonketh God and forth goth he
Seilende toward Tyr agein.
- 1595 Bot sodeinly the wynd and reyn
Begonne upon the see debate,
So that he soffre mot algate
The lawe which Neptune ordeigneth;
- 1600 Wheroft ful ofte time he pleigneth,
And hield him wel the more esmaied
Of that he hath tofore assaied.
So that for pure sorwe and care,
- 1605 Of that he seth his world so fare,
The reste he lefte of his caban,
That for the conseil of no man
Agein therinne he nolde come,
Bot hath benethe his place nome,
- Wher he wepende alone lay,
Ther as he sih no lyht of day.
And thus tofor the wynd thei dryve,
- feast royally*
entirely duty-bound
one
- (see note)*
- reached*
cannot acquire what; seek
By concealment; trickery
- trust (believe)*
- displeased*
dared
- secure*
changes
intermixes
- since*
(see note)
- sea churn*
in any case
- laments*
dismayed
before endured
- Since he sees; go*
- would not*
in the hold; taken

- 1610 Til longe and late thei aryve
 With gret distresce, as it was sene,
 Upon this toun of Mitelene,
 Which was a noble cité tho.
 And hapneth thilke time so,
 The lordes bothe and the comune
 The hihe festes of Neptune
 Upon the stronde at the rivage,
 As it was custumme and usage,
 Sollempneliche thei besihe.
- ☞ Whan thei this strange vessel syhe
 Come in, and hath his seal avaled,
 The toun therof hath spoke and taled.
 The lord which of the cité was,
 Whos name is Athenagoras,
 Was there, and seide he wolde se
 What schip it is, and who thei be
 That ben therinne: and after sone,
 Whan that he sih it was to done,
 His barge was for him arraied,
 And he goth forth and hath assaied.
 He fond the schip of gret array,
 Bot what thing it amonte may,
 He seth thei maden hevy chiere,
 Bot wel him thenkth be the manere
 That thei be worthi men of blod,
 And axeth of hem hou it stod;
 And thei him tellen al the cas,
 Hou that here lord fordrive was,
 And what a sorwe that he made,
 Of which ther mai no man him glade.
 He preith that he here lord mai se,
 Bot thei him tolde it mai nocht be,
 For he lith in so derk a place,
 That ther may no wiht sen his face.
 Bot for al that, thogh hem be loth,
 He fond the ladre and doun he goth,
 And to him spak, bot non ansuere
 Agein of him ne mihte he bere
 For oght that he can don or sein;
 And thus he goth him up agein.
 Tho was ther spoke in many wise
- 1615 shore at the coast
- 1620 Solemnly they celebrated
 (see note)
- 1625 lowered
- 1630 argued (gossiped)
- 1635 investigated
- 1640 whatever it signified
 sees they were lamenting
- 1645 desperately driven
- 1650 cheer up
 their
- ☞ person see
 But despite; it displeased them
- Back from him
 do or say
- determined (see note)
 would be sent for

- 1655 To glade with this woful king,
 Sche can so moche of every thing,
 That sche schal gladen him anon.
 A messenger for hire is gon,
 And sche cam with hire harpe on honde, knows
- 1660 And seide hem that sche wolde fonde
 Be alle weies that sche can,
 To glade with this sory man.
 Bot what he was sche wiste noght,
 Bot al the schip hire hath besought attempt
- 1665 That sche hire wit on him despende,
 In aunter if he myhte amende,
 And sein it schal be wel aquit.
 Whan sche hath understanden it,
 Sche goth hir doun, ther as he lay, who; knew
- 1670 Wher that sche harpeth many a lay
 And lich an angel sang withal;
 Bot he no more than the wal
 Tok hiede of eny thing he herde.
 And whan sche sih that he so ferde, like
- 1675 Sche falleth with him into wordes,
 And telleth him of sondri bordes,
 And axeth him demandes strange,
 Wheroft sche made his herte change,
 And to hire speche his ere he leide wall (i.e., source of strength)
- 1680 And hath merveile of that sche seide.
 For in proverbe and in probleme
 Sche spak, and bad he scholde deme
 In many soubtil question:
 Bot he for no suggestioun saw; fared so
- 1685 Which toward him sche couthe stere,
 He wolde noght o word ansuere,
 Bot as a madd man ate laste
 His heved wepende awey he caste,
 And half in wraththe he bad hire go. various tales (jest)
- 1690 Bot yit sche wolde noght do so,
 And in the derke forth sche goth,
 Til sche him toucheth, and he wroth,
 And after hire with his hond unusual riddles
- 1695 He smot: and thus whan sche him fond
 Desesed, courtaisly sche saide,
 “Avoi, mi lord, I am a maide;
 And if ye wiste what I am,
 And out of what lignage I cam, puzzle (riddle)
- With that he sobreth his corage asked; judge
- 1701 Ye wolde noght be so salvage.” prompting
- With that he sobreth his corage He, weeping, quickly turned his head away
- 1701 And put awey his hevy chiere. That in respect to him; could stir up
- recoiled
- struck
- Desist!
- knew how
- savage
- mood (see note)
- morose behavior

- Bot of hem tuo a man mai liere
 What is to be so sibb of blod.
 Non wiste of other hou it stod,
 1705 And yit the fader ate laste
 His herte upon this maide caste,
 That he hire loveth kindly,
 And yit he wiste nevere why.
 Bot al was knowe er that thei wente;
 1710 For God, which wot here hol entente,
 Here hertes bothe anon descloseth.
 This king unto this maide opposeth,
 And axeth ferst what was hire name,
 And wher sche lerned al this game,
 1715 And of what ken that sche was come.
 And sche, that hath hise wordes nome,
 Ansuerth and seith, "My name is Thaise,
 That was som time wel at aise.
 In Tharse I was forthdrawe and fed;
 1720 Ther lerned I til I was sped
 Of that I can. Mi fader eke
 I not wher that I scholde him seke;
 He was a king, men tolde me.
 Mi moder dreint was in the see."
 1725 Fro point to point al sche him tolde,
 That sche hath longe in herte holde,
 And nevere dorste make hir mone
 Bot only to this lord alone,
 To whom hire herte can noght hele,
 1730 Torne it to wo, torne it to wele,
 Torne it to good, torne it to harm.
 And he tho toke hire in his arm,
 Bot such a joie as he tho made
 Was nevere sen; thus be thei glade,
 1735 That sory hadden be toforn.
 Fro this day forth Fortune hath sworn
 To sette him upward on the whiel;
 So goth the world, now wo, now wel:
 This king hath founde newe grace,
 1740 So that out of his derke place
 He goth him up into the liht,
 And with him cam that swete wiht,
 His daughter Thaise, and forth anon
 Thei bothe into the caban gon
 1745 Which was ordeigned for the king,
 And ther he dede of al his thing,
 And was arraied realy.
 And out he cam al openly,
- of those two one may learn
 akin by blood
 Neither knew*
- [Such] that; warmly (naturally)*
- discovered before
 who knew their whole
 Their; soon
 questioned*
- parentage
 understood*
- ease
 brought up
 successful
 what I know
 know not*
- drowned*
- held
 dared; complaint*
- stay concealed
 Whether it may turn*
- then*
- creature*
- carried out all his business
 royally
 (see note)*

- Wher Athenagoras he fond,
 1750 The which was lord of al the lond.
 He preith the king to come and se
 His castell bothe and his cité,
 And thus thei gon forth alle in fiere,
 This king, this lord, this maiden diere. *all together*
- 1755 This lord tho made hem riche feste
 With every thing which was honeste,
 To plese with this worthi king.
 Ther lacketh him no maner thing.
 Bot yit for al his noble array, *celebration*
 1760 Wifles he was into that day,
 As he that yit was of yong age. *honorable*
 So fell ther into his corage
 The lusti wo, the glade peine
 Of love, which no man restreigne *heart*
- 1765 Yit nevere myhte as nou tofore.
 This lord thenkth al his world forlore,
 Bot if the king wol don him grace; *lost*
 He waiteth time, he waiteth place,
 Him thoghte his herte wol tobreke, *king (Apollonius)*
- 1770 Til he mai to this maide speke
 And to hir fader ek also
 For mariage. And it fell so,
 That al was do riht as he thoghte, *burst asunder*
 His pourpos to an ende he broghe,
 Sche weddeth him as for hire lord.
 Thus be thei alle of on acord.
- ¶ Whan al was do riht as thei wolde,
 The king unto his sone tolde
 Of Tharse thilke traiterie, *wished (see note)*
 1780 And seide hou in his compaignie
 His dogharter and himselfen eke
 Schull go vengance for to seke.
 The schipes were redy sone,
 And whan thei sihe it was to done, *son-in-law (Athenagoras)*
- 1785 Withoute lette of eny wente
 With seal updrawe forth thei wente
 Towardes Tharse upon the tyde.
 Bot he that wot what schal betide,
 The hihe God, which wolde him kepe, *hindrance of any plan*
- 1790 Whan that this king was faste aslepe,
 Be nyghtes time he hath him bede
 To seile into an other stede:
 To Ephesim he bad him drawe,
 And as it was that time lawe, *protect*
 1795 He schal do there his sacrificise; *ordered*
place

- And ek he bad in alle wise
 That in the temple amonges alle
 His fortune, as it is befall,
 Touchende his doghter and his wif
 1800 He schal beknowe upon his lif. *The events of his life*
 The king of this avisoun
 Hath gret ymagineacioun,
 What thing it signefie may;
 And natholes, whan it was day,
 1805 He bad caste ancher and abod; *declare*
 And whil that he on ancher rod,
 The wynd, which was tofore strange, *unfavorable*
 Upon the point began to change,
 And torneth thider as it scholde.
 1810 Tho knew he wel that God it wolde, *Then*
 And bad the maister make him yare,
 Tofor the wynd for he wol fare
 To Ephesim, and so he dede. *ship captain; ready*
 And whanne he cam unto the stede *place*
 1815 Where as he scholde londe, he londeth
 With al the haste he may, and fondeth *strives*
 To schapen him be such a wise,
 That he may be the morwe arise
 And don after the mandement *mandate*
 1820 Of Him which hath him thider sent. *took*
 And in the wise that he thoghte,
 Upon the morwe so he wroghte;
 His doghter and his sone he nom,
 And forth unto the temple he com
 1825 With a gret route in compaignie,
 Hise giftes for to sacrificie.
 The citezains tho herden seie
 Of such a king that cam to preie
 Unto Diane the godesse,
 1830 And left al other besinesse,
 Thei comen thider for to se
 The king and the solempneté.
surrounded (see note)
humbly gone
 1835 With worthi knythes environed
 The king himself hath abandoned
 Into the temple in good entente.
 The dore is up, and he in wente,
 Wher as with gret devocioun
 Of holi contemplacioun
 Withinne his herte he made his schrifte; *confession*
 1840 And after that a riche gifte
 He offreth with gret reverence,
 And there in open audience

- Of hem that stoden thanne aboute,
He tolde hem and declarerh oute
1845 His hap, such as him is befalle,
Ther was nothing forgete of alle.
His wif, as it was Goddes grace,
Which was professed in the place,
As sche that was abbesse there,
1850 Unto his tale hath leid hire ere:
Sche knew the vois and the visage,
For pure joie as in a rage
Sche strawhte unto him al at ones,
And fell aswoune upon the stones,
1855 Wheroft the temple flor was paved.
Sche was anon with water laved,
Til sche cam to hirself agein,
And thanne sche began to sein,
“Ha, blessed be the hihe sonde,
1860 That I mai se myn housebonde,
That whilom he and I were on!”
The king with that knew hire anon,
And tok hire in his arm and kiste.
And al the toun thus sone it wiste.
1865 Tho was ther joie manyfold,
For every man this tale hath told
As for miracle, and were glade,
Bot nevere man such joie made
As doth the king, which hath his wif.
1870 And whan men herde hou that hir lif
Was saved, and be whom it was,
Thei wondren alle of such a cas.
Thurgh al the lond aros the speche
Of Maister Cerymon the leche
1875 And of the cure which he dede.
The king himself tho hath him bede,
And ek this queene forth with him,
That he the toun of Ephesim
Wol leve and go wher as thei be,
1880 For nevere man of his degré
Hath do to hem so mochel good;
And he his profit understod,
And granteth with hem for to wende.
And thus thei maden there an ende,
1885 And token leve and gon to schipe
With al the hole felaschipe.
-  This king, which nou hath his desir,
Seith he wol holde his cours to Tyr.
Thei hadden wynd at wille tho,
- circumstances
omitted at all*
- laid her ear*
- passion
went straight*
- washed*
- say
decree*
- knew*
- by*
- physician
healing: performed
summoned*
- them to go*
- (see note)*

- 1890 With topselcole and forth thei go,
 And striken nevere, til thei come
 To Tyr, where as thei havene nome,
 And londen hem with mochel blisse.
 Tho was ther many a mowth to kisse,
 1895 Echon welcometh other hom,
 Bot whan the queen to londe com,
 And Thaise hir doghter be hir side,
 The joie which was thilke tyde
 Ther mai no mannes tunge telle:
 1900 Thei seiden alle, "Hier comth the welle
 Of alle wommannysshe grace."
 The king hath take his real place,
 The queene is into chambre go:
 Ther was gret feste arraied tho;
 1905 Whan time was, thei gon to mete,
 Alle olde sorwes ben forgete,
 And gladen hem with joies newe.
 The descoloured pale hewe
 Is now become a rody cheke,
 1910 Ther was no merthe for to seke,
 Bot every man hath that he wolde.
 ☛ The king, as he wel couthe and scholde,
 Makth to his poeple riht good chiere;
 And after sone, as thou schalt hiere,
 1915 A parlement he hath sommoned,
 Wher he his doghter hath coroned
 Forth with the lord of Mitelene,
 That on is king, that other queene.
 And thus the fadres ordinance
 1920 This lond hath set in governance,
 And seide thanne he wolde wende
 To Tharse, for to make an ende
 Of that his doghter was betraied.
 Theroft were alle men wel paied,
 1925 And seide hou it was for to done.
 The schipes weren redi sone,
 And strong pouer with him he tok;
 Up to the sky he caste his lok,
 And syh the wynd was covenable.
 ☛ Thei hale up ancher with the cable,
 1931 The sei on hih, the stiere in honde,
 And seilen, til thei come alonde
 At Tharse nyh to the cité;
 And whan thei wisten it was he,
 1935 The toun hath don him reverence,
 He telleth hem the violence,
- topsail-wind (i.e., wind on the topsail)
 never with sails lowered (stricken)
 took haven*
- royal*
- dinner*
- what he wanted
 was able and ought to (see note)*
- pleased*
- favorable
 (see note)*

- Which the tretour Strangulio
 And Dionise him hadde do
 Touchende his dowhter, as yee herde.
 1940 And whan thei wiste hou that it ferde,
 As he which pes and love soghte,
 Unto the toun this he besoghte,
 To don him riht in juggement.
 Anon thei were bothe asent
 1945 With strengthe of men, and comen sone,
 And as hem thoghte it was to done,
 Atteint thei were be the lawe
 And diemed for to honge and drawe,
 And brent and with the wynd toblowe,
 1950 That al the world it myhte knowe.
 And upon this condicion
 The dom in execucion
 Was put anon withoute faile.
 And every man hath gret mervaile,
 1955 Which herde tellen of this chance,
 And thonketh Goddes pourveance,
 Which doth mercy forth with justice.
 Slain is the moerdrer and moerdrice
 Thurgh verray trowthe of rihtwisnesse,
 1960 And thurgh mercy sauf is simplesse
 Of hire whom mercy preserveth;
 Thus hath he wel that wel deserveth.
 Whan al this thing is don and ended,
 This king, which loved was and frended,
 1965 A lettre hath, which cam to him
 Be schipe fro Pentapolim,
 Be which the lond hath to him write,
 That he wolde understande and wite
 Hou in good mynde and in good pes
 1970 Ded is the king Artestrates,
 Wheroft heil alle of on accord
 Him preiden, as here liege lord,
 That he the lettre wel conceive
 And come his regne to receive,
 1975 Which God hath gove him and fortune;
 And thus besoghte the commune
 Forth with the grete lordes alle.
 This king sih how it was befallie,
 Fro Tharse and in prosperité
 1980 He tok his leve of that cité
 And goth him into schipe agein:
 The wynd was good, the see was plein,
 Hem nedeth noght a riff to slake,
- Convicted
 sentenced
 burned; blown in all directions
 [So] that
 judgment
 providence
 saved is the innocence
 goodness who goodness
 (see note)
 good memory
 one
 beseeched; their
 consider
 commons
 saw
 calm
 reef sail; let out*

- Til thei Pentapolim have take.
- 1985 The lond, which herde of that tidinge,
Was wonder glad of his cominge;
He resteth him a day or tuo
And tok his conseil to him tho,
And sette a time of Parlement,
- 1990 Wher al the lond of on assent
Forth with his wif hath him corouned,
Wher alle goode him was fuisouned. *abundantly supplied*
- 1995 Honesteliche as for to wedde,
Honesteliche his love he spedde
And hadde children with his wif,
And as him liste he ladde his lif;
And in ensample as it is write, *it pleased him*
- 2000 That alle lovers myhten wite
How ate laste it schal be sene
Of love what thei wolden mene. *written*
For se now on that other side,
Antiochus with al his pride, *know*
- 2005 Which sette his love unkindely,
His ende he hadde al sodeinly,
Set agein kinde upon vengance, *unnaturally*
And for his lust hath his penance. *against nature*

[THE CONFESSOR'S FINAL COUNSEL]

- Confessor ad Amantem** “Lo thus, mi sone, myht thou liere
What is to love in good manere,
And what to love in other wise.
The mede arist of the servise; *reward arises out of*
Fortune, thogh sche be noght stable,
Yit at som time is favorable
- 2015 To hem that ben of love trewe.
Bot certes it is for to rewe
To se love agein kinde falle, *nature oppose*
For that makth sore a man to falle,
As thou myht of tofore rede.
- 2020 Forthi, my sone, I wolde rede
To lete al other love aweie,
Bot if it be thurgh such a weie
As love and reson wolde acorde.
For elles, if that thou descorde,
- 2025 And take lust as doth a beste, *advise*
Thi love mai noght ben honeste; *beast*

For be no skile that I finde
Such lust is noght of loves kinde."

*reason
love's nature*

[THE LOVER'S ADMISSION AND REQUEST]

[Amans] "Mi fader, hou so that it stonde,
Youre tale is herd and understande,
As thing which worthi is to hiere,
Of gret ensample and gret matiere,
Wheroft, my fader, God you quyte.
Bot if this point miself aquite
I mai riht wel, that nevere yit
I was assoted in my wit,
Bot only in that worthi place
Wher alle lust and alle grace
Is set, if that Danger ne were.
Bot that is al my moste fere.
I not what ye fortune accompte,
Bot what thing danger mai amonte
I wot wel, for I have assaied;
For whan myn herte is best arraied
And I have al my wit thurghsought
Of love to beseche hire oght,
For al that evere I skile may,
I am concluded with a nay.
That o sillable hath overthowen
A thousand wordes on a rowe
Of such as I best speke can;
Thus am I bot a lewed man.
Bot, fader, for ye ben a clerk
Of love, and this matiere is derk,
And I can evere leng the lasse,
Bot yit I mai noght let it passe,
Youre hole conseil I beseche,
That ye me be som weie teche
What is my beste, as for an ende."

[THE CONFESSOR'S REPLY]

[Confessor] "Mi sone, unto the trouthe wende
Now wol I for the love of thee,
And lete alle othre truffles be.
The more that the nede is hyh,
The more it nedeth to be slyh
To him which hath the nede on honde.
I have wel herd and understande,
Mi sone, al that thou hast me seid,

turn

frivolities

skillfully contrived

- 198 And ek of that thou hast me preid, *(see note)*
 Nou at this time that I schal
- 2070 As for conclusioun final
 Conseile upon thi nede sette.
 So thenke I finaly to knette
 This cause, where it is tobroke, *knit*
 And make an ende of that is spoke. *broken*
- 2075 For I behihte thee that gifte
 Ferst whan thou come under my schrifte,
 That thogh I toward Venus were, *promised you*
 Yit spak I suche wordes there,
 That for the presthod which I have, *under the control of*
- 2080 Min ordre and min astat to save,
 I seide I wolde of myn office
 To vertu more than to vice
 Encline, and teche thee mi lore.
 Forthi to speken overmore
- 2085 Of love, which thee mai availe,
 Tak love where it mai noght faile.
 For as of this which thou art inne,
 Be that thou seist it is a sinne, *By what*
 And sinne mai no pris deserve; *prize*
- 2090 Withoute pris and who schal serve,
 I not what profit myhte availe.
 Thus folweth it, if thou travaile
 Wher thou no profit hast ne pris,
 Thou art toward thiself unwis. *Without reward; whoever should deserve*
do not know
labor
reward
- 2095 And sett thou mytest lust atteigne,
 Of every lust th'ende is a peine,
 And every peine is good to fle;
 So it is wonder thing to se,
 Why such a thing schal be desired. *And assume [for the sake of the argument] that*
- 2100 The more that a stock is fyred,
 The rathere into aisshe it torneth;
 The fot which in the weie sporneth
 Ful ofte his heved hath overthrowe.
 Thus love is blind and can noght knowe *stick is burned*
sooner; ashes
foot; trips (spurns)
head
- 2105 Wher that he goth, til he be falle.
 Forthi, bot if it so befalle
 With good conseil that he be lad,
 Him oughte for to ben adrad.
 For conseil passeth alle thing *fallen*
unless it should so happen
- 2110 To him which thenkth to ben a king;
 And every man for his partie
 A kingdom hath to justefie,
 That is to sein his oghne dom.
 If he misreule that kingdom, *afraid (cautious)*
domain (judgment, head)

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 2115 | He lest himself, and that is more
Than if he loste schip and ore
And al the worldes good withal:
For what man that in special
Hath noght himself, he hath noght elles, | loses
oar |
| 2120 | No mor the perles than the schelles;
Al is to him of o value.
Thogh he hadde at his retenue
The wyde world riht as he wolde,
Whan he his herte hath noght withholde | pearls; shells
one [indiscriminate] value
in his command |
| 2125 | Toward himself, al is in vein.
And thus, my sone, I wolde sein,
As I seide er, that thou aryse,
Er that thou falle in such a wise
That thou ne myht thiself rekevere; | before
recover |
| 2130 | For love, which that blind was evere,
Makth alle his servantz blinde also.
My sone, and if thou have be so,
Yit is it time to withdrawe,
And set thin herte under that lawe, | |
| 2135 | The which of reson is governed
And noght of will. And to be lerned,
Ensamples thou hast many on
Of now and ek of time gon,
That every lust is bot a while; | instructed
many a one |
| 2140 | And who that wole himself beguile,
He may the rathere be deceived.
Mi sone, now thou hast conceived
Somwhat of that I wolde mene.
Hierafterward it schal be sene | sooner |
| 2145 | If that thou lieve upon mi lore;
For I can do to thee no more
Bot teche thee the rihte weie:
Now ches if thou wolt live or deie." | believe; instruction |

[DEBATE BETWEEN THE CONFESSOR AND THE LOVER]

- | | | |
|---------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| [Amans] | Mi fader, so as I have herd | |
| 2150 | Your tale, bot it were ansuerd, | |
| ☞ | I were mochel for to blame. | (see note) |
| | Mi wo to you is bot a game, | |
| | That fielen noght of that I fiele. | feel |
| | The fielinge of a mannes hiele | heel |
| 2155 | Mai noght be likned to the herte: | heart |
| | I mai noght, thogh I wolde, asterte, | escape |
| | And ye be fre from al the peine | Even if you |
| | Of love, wheroft I me pleigne. | complain |

- It is riht esi to comaunde; *give orders*
 2160 The hert which fre goth on the launde *hart*
 Not of an oxe what him eileth; *Knows nothing; ox; ails*
 It falleth ofte a man merveileth *It often happens that*
 Of that he seth an other fare, *About what he sees*
 Bot if he knewe himself the fare, *condition*
 2165 And felt it as it is in soth, *truth*
 He scholde don riht as he doth, *do the same as he does*
 Or elles werse in his degré: *you*
 For wel I wot, and so do ye,
 That love hath evere yit ben used,
 2170 So mot I nedes ben excused.
 Bot, fader, if ye wolde thus
 Unto Cupide and to Venus
 Be frendlich toward mi querele,
 So that myn herte were in hele *health*
 2175 Of love which is in mi briest,
 I wot wel thanne a betre prest
 Was nevere mad to my behove.
 Bot al the whiles that I hove
 In noncertein betwen the tuo, *With regard to love*
 2180 And not if I to wel or wo
 Schal torné, that is al my drede,
 So that I not what is to rede. *advantage*
 Bot for final conclusion
 I thenke a supplicacion *linger (hover)*
 2185 With pleine wordes and expresse *uncertainty*
 Wryte unto Venus the goddesse,
 The which I preie you to bere
 And bringe agein a good ansuere.” *know not whether; gladness; woe*
back
[Amans to reader] Tho was betwen mi prest and me
 2190 Debat and gret perplexeté: *Conflict*
 Mi resoun understod him wel,
 And knew it was soth everydel
 That he hath seid, bot noght forthi *altogether true*
 Mi will hath nothing set therby. *What; not even so*
 2195 For techinge of so wis a port *will (desire)*
 Is unto love of no despert;
 Yit myhte nevere man beholde *wise a bearing*
 Reson, wher love was withholde; *delight*
 Thei be noght of o governance. *the same (one)*
 2200 And thus we fallen in distance,
 Mi prest and I, bot I spak faire,
 And thurgh mi wordes debonaire
 Thanne ate laste we acorden, *agreed*
 So that he seith he wol recorden *remember*
 2205 To speke and stonde upon mi syde

- To Venus bothe and to Cupide;
 And bad me wryte what I wolde,
 And seith me trewly that he scholde
 Mi lettre bere unto the queene.
- 2210 And I sat doun upon the grene
 Fulfilt of loves fantasie,
 And with the teres of myn ye
 In stede of enke I gan to wryte
 The wordes whiche I wolde endite
 2215 Unto Cupide and to Venus.
 And in mi lettre I seide thus:

*ink; began
to express*

[THE LOVER'S POETIC SUPPLICATION]

- [Amans] “The wofull peine of loves maladie,
 2215 Agein the which mai no phisique availe,
 Min herte hath so bewhaped with sotie,
 2220 That wher so that I reste or I travaile,
 I finde it evere redy to assaile
 Mi resoun, which that can him noght defende.
 Thus seche I help, wherof I mihte amende.
- medicine (see note)
 overwhelmed; dotage
 whether I
 himself not protect
- Ferst to Nature if that I me compleigne,
 2225 Ther finde I hou that every creature
 Som time ayer hath love in his demeine,
 So that the litel wrenne in his mesure
 Hath yit of kinde a love under his cure;
 And I bot on desire, of which I misse:
 2230 And thus, bot I, hath every kinde his blisse.
- in the year
 wren in its music
 by nature; its jurisdiction
 only one
 except; species
- The resoun of my wit it overpasseth,
 Of that Nature techeth me the weie
 To love, and yit no certein sche compasseth
 Hou I schal sped, and thus betwen the tweie
 2235 I stonde, and not if I schal live or deie.
 For thogh reson agein my will debate,
 I mai noght fle, that I ne love algate.
- succeed
 do not know
 be in conflict
 [so] that I do not love anyway
- Upon miself is thilke tale come,
 Hou whilom Pan, which is the god of kinde,
 2240 With love wrastlede and was overcome:
 For evere I wrastle and evere I am behinde,
 That I no strengthe in al min herte finde,
 Wheroft that I mai stonden eny throwe;
 So fer mi wit with love is overthrowe.
- nature
 tumble (event)

- 2245 Whom nedeth help, he mot his helpe crave,
 Or helpeles he schal his nede spille:
 Pleinly thurghsoght my wittes alle I have,
 Bot non of hem can helpe after mi wille;
 And als so wel I mihte sitte stille,
 As preie unto mi lady eny helpe:
 Thus wot I noght wherof miself to helpe.
- Unto the grete Jove and if I bidde,
 To do me grace of thilke swete tunne,
 Which under keie in his celier amidde
 Lith couched, that fortune is overrunne,
 Bot of the bitter cuppe I have begunne,
 I not hou ofte, and thus finde I no game;
 For evere I axe and evere it is the same.
- I se the world stonde evere upon eschange,
 Nou wyndes loude, and nou the weder softe;
 I mai sen ek the grete mone change,
 And thing which nou is lowe is eft alofte;
 The dredfull werres into pes ful ofte
 Thei torne; and evere is Danger in o place,
 Which wol noght change his will to do me grace.
- Bot upon this the grete clerc Ovide,
 Of love whan he makth his remembrance,
 He seith ther is the blinde god Cupide,
 The which hath love under his governance,
 And in his hond with many a fyri lance
 He woundeth ofte, ther he wol noght hele;
 And that somdiel is cause of mi querele.
- Ovide ek seith that love to parforne
 Stant in the hond of Venus the goddesse;
 Bot whan sche takth hir conseil with Satorne,
 Ther is no grace, and in that time, I gesse,
 Began mi love, of which myn hevynesse
 Is now and evere schal, bot if I spede:
 So wot I noght miself what is to rede.
- Forthi to you, Cupide and Venus bothe,
 With al myn hertes obeissance I preie,
 If ye were ate ferste time wrothe,
 Whan I began to love, as I you seie,
 Nou stynt, and do thilke infortune aweie,
 So that Danger, which stant of retenuie
 With my ladi, his place mai remue.
- thoroughly searched
pray
that sweet cup
key; wine cellar
Lies
- change
weather still
full moon
(see note)
- heal
fulfill
(melancholic god of destruction)
to follow as a course of action
- stop; do away with*
remove

- O thou Cupide, god of loves lawe,
 That with thi dart brennende hast set afyre
 Min herte, do that wounde be withdrawe,
 2290 Or gif me salve such as I desire.
 For service in thi court withouten hyre
 To me, which evere yit have kept thin heste,
 Mai nevere be to loves lawe honeste.
- O thou, gentile Venus, loves queene,
 2295 Withoute guilt thou dost on me thi wreche;
 Thou wost my peine is evere aliche grene
 For love, and yit I mai it noght areche:
 This wold I for my laste word beseche,
 That thou mi love aquite as I deserve,
 2300 Or elles do me pleinly for to sterve."
- burning cause; to be taken away
 love balm (salve)
 payment
 who; obeyed your commands*
- Without [my being] guilty; vengeance
 fresh
 attain
 pray
 cause me fully to die*

[VENUS' REPLY]

- [Amans to reader] Whanne I this supplicacioun
 With good deliberacioun,
 In such a wise as ye nou wite,
 2305 Unto Cupide and to Venus,
 This prest which hihte Genius
 It tok on honde to presente,
 On my message and forth he wente
 To Venus, for to wite hire wille.
- And I bod in the place stille,
 And was there bot a litel while,
 Noght full the montance of a mile,
 Whan I behield and sodeinly
 2310 I sih wher Venus stod me by.
- So as I myhte, under a tre
 To grounde I fell upon mi kne,
 And preide hire for to do me grace:
 Sche caste hire chiere upon mi face,
 And as it were halvinge a game
- 2315 Sche axeth me what is mi name.
 "Ma dame," I seide, "John Gower."
- [Venus] "Now John," quod sche, "in my pouer
 Thou most as of thi love stonde;
 For I thi bille have understande,
 2320 In which to Cupide and to me
 Somdiel thou hast compleigned thee,
 And somdiel to Nature also.
 Bot that schal stonde among you tuo,
 For therof have I noght to done;
- (see note)
 written
 who was called
 know
 waited
 duration of a mile's walk
 half in jest
 epistle (petition)
 Somewhat*

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 2330 | For Nature is under the mone
Maistresse of every lives kinde,
Bot if so be that sche mai finde
Som holy man that wol withdrawe
His kindly lust agein hir lawe;
Bot sielde whanne it falleth so,
For fewe men ther ben of tho,
Bot of these othre ynowe be,
Whiche of here oghne nyceté
Agein Nature and hire office | <i>moon
species of life
Unless</i> |
| 2335 | Deliten hem in sondri vice,
Wherof that sche ful ofte hath pleigned,
And ek my court it hath desdeigned
And evere schal; for it receiveth
Non such that kinde so deceiveth. | <i>natural desire
seldom</i> |
| 2340 | For al onliche of gentil love
Mi court stant alle courtz above
And takth noght into retenue
Bot thing which is to kinde due,
For elles it schal be refused. | <i>wantonness
nature</i> |
| 2345 | Wherof I holde thee excused,
For it is manye daies gon,
That thou amonges hem were on
Which of my court hast ben withholde;
So that the more I am beholde | <i>under its command
obliged</i> |
| 2350 | Of thi desese to commune,
And to remue that fortune,
Which manye daies hath thee grieved.
Bot if my conseil mai be lieved,
Thou schalt ben esed er thou go | <i>discomfort to discuss
change
believed</i> |
| 2355 | Of thilke unsely jolif wo,
Wherof thou seist thin herte is fyred.
Bot as of that thou hast desired
After the sentence of thi bille,
Thou most therof don at my wille, | <i>unhappy</i> |
| 2360 | And I therof me wole avise.
For be thou hol, it schal suffise.
Mi medicine is noght to sieke
For thee and for suche olde sieke,
Noght al per chance as ye it wolden, | <i>take thought
seek</i> |
| 2365 | Bot so as ye be reson scholden,
Acordant unto loves kinde.
For in the plit which I thee finde,
So as mi court it hath awarded,
Thou schalt be duely rewarded; | <i>sick [men]</i> |
| 2370 | And if thou woldest more crave,
It is no riht that thou it have.” | |
| 2375 | | |

[OLD AGE]

iii. *Qvi cupid id quod habere nequit, sua tempora perdit,
 Est vbi non posse, velle salute caret.
 Non estatis opus gelidis hirsuta capillis,
 Cum calor abcessit, equiperabit hiems;
 Sicut habet Mayus non dat natura Decembri,
 Nec poterit compar floribus esse lutum;
 Sic neque decrepita senium iuvenile voluptas
 Floret in obsequium, quod Venus ipsa petit.
 Conveniens igitur foret, vt quos cana senectus
 Attigit, vllerius corpora casta colant.¹*

	Venus, which stant withoute lawe	
☞	In noncertein, bot as men drawe	(see note)
	Of Rageman upon the chance,	(see note)
2380	Sche leith no peis in the balance,	lays no weight
	Bot as hir lyketh for to weie;	weigh
	The trewe man ful ofte aweie	
	Sche put, which hath hir grace bede,	<i>who has prayed to her for grace</i>
	And set an untrewe in his stede.	
2385	Lo, thus blindly the world sche diemeth	<i>judges</i>
	In loves cause, as to me siemeth:	<i>as it seems to me</i>
	I not what othre men wol sein,	<i>know not; say</i>
	Bot I algate am so besein,	<i>assuredly; so circumstanced</i>
	And stonde as on amonges alle	
2390	Which am out of hir grace falle,	
	It nedeth take no witnesse:	
	For sche which seid is the goddesse,	<i>called</i>
	To whether part of love it wende,	<i>whichever; turns</i>
	Hath sett me for a final ende	
2395	The point wherto that I schal holde.	
	For whan sche hath me wel beholde,	
	Halvyng of scorn, sche seide thus:	<i>Half in scorn</i>
	“Thou wost wel that I am Venus,	
	Which al only my lustes seche;	
2400	And wel I wot, thogh thou beseche	
	Mi love, lustes ben ther none,	
	Whiche I mai take in thi persone;	
	For loves lust and lockes hore	<i>love's desire; gray hair</i>
	In chambre acorden nevermore,	

¹ *Whoever desires what he cannot have, wastes his time; where “I’m able” is absent, “I want” is unhealthy. Winter, hairy with icy locks, is not equal to summer’s work, when its heat has receded. Nature does not give to December just as May has, nor can clay compare to flowers; and thus old men’s lust does not flower in youthful compliance, as Venus herself demands. It would be appropriate, therefore, for those whom white old age touches henceforth to cultivate chaste bodies.*

- 2405 And thogh thou feigne a yong corage,
 It scheweth wel be the visage
 That olde grisel is no fole:
 There ben ful manye yeeres stole
 With thee and with suche othre mo,
 2410 That outward feignen youthe so
 And ben withinne of pore assay.
 'Min herte wolde and I ne may'
 Is noght beloved nou adayes;
 Er thou make eny suche assaies
 2415 To love, and faile upon the fet,
 Betre is to make a beau retret;
 For thogh thou myhatest love atteigne,
 Yit were it bot an ydel peine,
 Whan that thou art noght sufficant
 2420 To holde love his covenant.
 Forthi tak hom thin herte agein,
 That thou travaile noght in vein,
 Wheroft my court may be deceived.
 I wot and have it wel conceived,
 2425 Hou that thi will is good ynowh;
 Bot mor behoveth to the plowh,
 Wheroft thee lacketh, as I trowe:
 So sitte it wel that thou beknowe
 Thi fieble astat, er thou beginne
 2430 Thing wher thou miht non ende winne.
 What bargain scholde a man assaie,
 Whan that him lacketh for to paie?
 Mi sone, if thou be wel bethought,
 This toucheth thee; forget it noght:
 2435 The thing is torned into was;
 That which was whilom grene gras,
 Is welked hey at time now.
 Forthi mi conseil is that thou
 Remembre wel hou thou art old."
- old gray nag; foal*
i.e., likely to fail the test
attempts
event
graceful exit
uphold love's
[So] that you labor
you are deficient
So let it be suitable; knowledge
accomplish nothing
attempt
lacks means of payment
i.e., is past
sun-dried hay

[PARLIAMENT OF EXEMPLARY LOVERS]

- 2440 Whan Venus hath hir tale told,
 And I bethought was al aboute,
(see note)
 Tho wiste I wel withoute doute,
 That ther was no recoverir;
 And as a man the blase of fyr
 2445 With water quencheth, so ferd I;
 A cold me cawhte sodeinly,
 For sorwe that myn herte made
 Mi dedly face pale and fade
- treatment*

- 2450 Becam, and swoune I fell to grounde.
 And as I lay the same stounde,
 Ne fully quik ne fully ded,
 Me thoghte I sih tofor myn hed
 Cupide with his bowe bent,
 And lich unto a Parlement,
 Which were ordeigned for the nones,
 With him cam al the world at ones
 Of gentil folk that whilom were
 Lovers, I sih hem alle there
 Forth with Cupide in sondri routes.
 Min yhe and as I caste aboutes,
 To knowe among hem who was who,
 I sih wher lusti youthe tho,
 As he which was a capitein,
 Tofore alle othre upon the plein
 Stod with his route wel begon,
 Here hevedes kempt, and therupon
 Garlandes noght of o colour,
 Some of the lef, some of the flour,
 And some of grete perles were;
 The newe guise of Beawme there,
 With sondri thinges wel devised,
 I sih, wheroft thei ben queintised.
 It was al lust that thei with ferde,
 Ther was no song that I ne herde,
 Which unto love was touchende;
 Of Pan and al that was likende
 As in pipinge of melodie
 Was herd in thilke compaignie
 So lowde, that on every side
 It thoghte as al the hevene cride
 In such acord and such a soon
 Of bombard and of clarion
 With cornemuse and schallemelle,
 That it was half a mannes hele
 So glad a noise for to hiere.
 And as me thoghte, in this manere
 Al freissh I syh hem springe and dance,
 And do to love her entendance
 After the lust of youthes heste.
 Ther was ynowh of joie and feste,
 For evere among thei laghe and pleie,
 And putten care out of the weie,
 That he with hem ne sat ne stod.
 And over this I understod,
 So as myn ere it myhte areche,
- time
Neither; alive nor
head
- once
diverse groups
And as I cast my eye around
- endowed
leaf
- Bohemia
adorned
- sound
bagpipe; shawm
health
- youth's ordinance*
- extend to*

- The moste matiere of her speche
 Was al of knyhthod and of armes,
 And what it is to ligge in armes
 With love, whanne it is achieved.
- 2500 Ther was Tristram, which was believed
 With bele Ysolde, and Lancelot
 Stod with Gunnore, and Galahot
 With his ladi, and as me thoghte,
 I syh wher Jason with him broghte
 2505 His love, which that Creusa hihte,
 And Hercules, which mochel myhte,
 Was ther berende his grete mace,
 And most of alle in thilke place
 He peyneth him to make chiere
 2510 With Eolen, which was him diere.
- Theseus, thogh he were untrewe
 To love, as alle wommen knewe,
 Yit was he there natheles
 With Phedra, whom to love he ches.
- 2515 Of Grece ek ther was Thelamon,
 Which fro the king Lamenedon
 At Troie his doghther refte aweie,
 Eseonen, as for his preie,
 Which take was whan Jason cam
 2520 Fro Colchos, and the cité nam
 In vengance of the ferste hate;
 That made hem after to debate,
 Whan Priamus the newe toun
 Hath mad. And in avisoun
 2525 Me thoghte that I sih also
 Ector forth with his brethren tuo;
 Himself stod with Pantaselee,
 And next to him I myhte se,
 Wher Paris stod with faire Eleine,
 2530 Which was his joie sovereine;
 And Troilus stod with Criseide,
 Bot evere among, althogh he pleide,
 Be semblant he was hevy chiered,
 For Diomede, as him was liered,
 2535 Cleymeth to ben his parconner.
 And thus full many a bacheler,
 A thousand mo than I can sein,
 With yowthe I sih ther wel besein
 Forth with here loves glade and blithe.
- 2540 And some I sih whiche ofte sithe
 Compleignen hem in other wise;
 Among the whiche I syh Narcise
- who was accepted as a lover*
By the beautiful (see note)
Guinevere
- was called*
carrying
- snatched away*
prey
- took*
to enter conflict
- Helen*
highest joy
- sad*
taught
- partner [in love with Criseyde]*
- endowed*
their
- saw; often times*

- And Piramus, that sory were.
 The worthi Grek also was there,
 2545 Achilles, which for love deide.
 Agamenon ek, as men seide,
 And Menelay the king also
 I syh, with many an other mo,
 Which hadden be fortuned sore
 2550 In loves cause.
- Who had been unfortunate*
- And overmore
 Of wommen in the same cas,
 With hem I sih wher Dido was,
 Forsake which was with Enee;
 And Phillis ek I myhte see,
 2555 Whom Demephon deceived hadde;
 And Adriagne hir sorwe ladde,
 For Theseus hir soster tok
 And hire unkindely forsok.
 I sih ther ek among the press
 2560 Compleignende upon Hercules
 His ferste love Deyanire,
 Which sette him afterward afyre.
 Medea was there ek and pleigneth
 Upon Jason, for that he feigneth,
 2565 Withoute cause and tok a newe;
 Sche seide, "Fy on alle untrewe!"
 I sih there ek Deydamie,
 Which hadde lost the compaignie
 Of Achilles, whan Diomede
 2570 To Troie him fette upon the nede.
- Ariadne*
- Among these othre upon the grene
 I syh also the wofull queene
 Cleopatras, which in a cave
 With serpentz hath hirself begrave
 2575 Al quik, and so sche was totore,
 For sorwe of that sche hadde lore
 Antonye, which hir love hath be.
 And forth with hire I sih Tisbee,
 Which on the scharpe swerdes point
- unnaturally*
- crowd*
- 2580 For love deide in sory point;
 And as myn ere it myhte knowe,
 Sche seide, "Wo worthe alle slowe!"
 The pleignte of Progne and Philomene
 Ther herde I what it wolde mene,
 2585 How Tereus of his untrouthie
 Undede hem bothe, and that was routhe;
 And next to hem I sih Canace,
 Which for Machaire hir fader grace
- deceived*
- fetched*
- 2585
 Quite alive; torn to pieces
 lost
- buried*
- at a sad moment*
- Destroyed; pity*
- father's*

- Hath lost, and deide in wofull plit.
 2590 And as I sih in my spirit,
 Me thoghte amonges othre thus
 The doghter of king Priamus,
 Polixena, whom Pirrus slowh,
 Was there and made sorwe ynowh,
 2595 As sche which deide gulteles
 For love, and yit was loveles.
 And for to take the despert,
 I sih there some of other port,
 And that was Circes and Calipse,
 2600 That cowthen do the mone eclipse,
 Of men and change the liknesses,
 Of art magique sorceresses;
 Thei hielde in honde many on,
 To love wher thei wolde or non.
 2605 Bot above alle that ther were
 Of wommen I sih foure there,
 Whos name I herde most comended:
 Be hem the court stod al amended;
 For wher thei comen in presence,
 2610 Men deden hem the reverence,
 As thogh thei hadden be goddesses,
 Of al this world or emperesses.
 And as me thoghte, an ere I leide,
 And herde hou that these othre seide,
 2615 "Lo, these ben the foure wyves,
 Whos feith was proeved in her lyves:
 For in essample of alle goode
 With mariage so thei stode
 That fame, which no gret thing hydeth,
 2620 Yit in cronique of hem abydeth."
 Penolope that on was hote,
 Whom many a knyght hath loved hote,
 Whil that hire lord Ulixes lay
 Full many a yer and many a day
 2625 Upon the grete siege of Troie.
 Bot sche, which hath no worldes joie
 Bot only of hire housebonde,
 Whil that hir lord was out of londe,
 So wel hath kept hir wommanhiede,
 2630 That al the world therof tok hiede,
 And nameliche of hem in Grece.
 That other womman was Lucrece,
 Wif to the Romain Collatin;
 And sche constreigned of Tarquin
 2635 To thing which was agein hir wille,
- killed*
enough
- of another bearing*
- cause eclipses of the moon*
And change the shapes of men
- many a one*
whether they would or not
- ear*
- Behold*
- [first] one was called*
passionately
Ulysses
- second*

- Sche wolde noght hirselen stille,
Bot deide only for drede of schame
In keping of hire goode name,
As sche which was on of the beste.
- 2640 The thridde wif was hote Alceste,
Which whanne Ametus scholde dye
Upon his grete maladye,
Sche preide unto the goddes so,
That sche receyveth al the wo
2645 And deide hirself to give him lif:
Lo, if this were a noble wif.
- The ferthe wif which I ther sih,
I herde of hem that were nyh
Hou sche was cleped Alcione,
2650 Which to Seyix hir lord al one
And to no mo hir body kepte;
And whan sche sih him dreynt, sche lept
Into the wawes where he swam,
And there a sefoul sche becam,
2655 And with hire wenges him bespradde
For love which to him sche hadde.
- Lo, these foure were tho
Whiche I sih, as me thoghte tho,
Among the grete compaignie
2660 Which Love hadde for to guye.
Bot Youthe, which in special
Of Loves court was mareschal,
So besy was upon his lay,
That he non hiede where I lay
2665 Hath take. And thanne, as I behield,
Me thoghte I sih upon the field,
Wher Elde cam a softe pas
Toward Venus, ther as sche was.
With him gret compaignie he ladde,
2670 Bot noght so manye as Youthe hadde:
The moste part were of gret age,
And that was sene in the visage,
And noght forthi, so as thei myhte,
Thei made hem yongly to the sihte:
2675 Bot yit herde I no pipe there
To make noise in mannes ere,
Bot the musette I myhte knowe,
For olde men which souneth lowe,
With harpe and lute and with citole.
- 2680 The hovedance and the carole,
In such a wise as love hath bede,
A softe pas thei dance and trede;
- keep silent*
died
- one*
called
- Because of*
- seafowl*
embraced
- those*
saw; then
- lead*
- law*
- quietly*
- musette (a kind of bagpipe)*
- court dance*

- And with the wommen otherwhile
 With sobre chier among thei smyle,
 For laghtrē was ther non on hyh.
 2685 And natholes full wel I syh
 That thei the more queinte it made
 For love, in whom thei weren glade. *graciously they behaved*
- And there me thoghte I myhte se
 2690 The king David with Bersabee,
 And Salomon was noght withoute:
 Passende an hundred on a route
 Of wyves and of concubines,
 Juesses bothe and Sarazines,
 2695 To him I sih alle entendant. *Jewesses*
- I not if he was sufficant,
 Bot natholes for al his wit
 He was attached with that writ
 Which love with his hond enseleth,
 2700 Fro whom non erthly man appeleth.
 And over this, as for a wonder,
 With his leon which he put under,
 With Dalida Sampson I knew,
 Whos love his strengthe al overthrew.
- I syh there Aristotle also,
 Whom that the queene of Grece so
 Hath bridled, that in thilke time
 Sche made him such a silogime,
 That he forgat al his logique; *syllogism*
- 2710 Ther was non art of his practique,
 Thurgh which it mihte ben excluded
 That he ne was fully concluded
 To love, and dede his obeissance.
 And ek Virgile of aqueintance
- I sih, wher he the maiden preide,
 Which was the doghter, as men seide,
 Of th'empemour whilom of Rome;
 Sortes and Plato with him come,
 2715 So dede Ovide the poete. *Socrates (see note)*
- I thoghte thanne how love is swete,
 Which hath so wise men reclamed,
 And was myself the lasse aschamed,
 Or for to lese or for to winne
 In the meschief that I was inne: *Either to lose or*
- 2720 And thus I lay in hope of grace.
 And whan thei comen to the place
 Wher Venus stod and I was falle,
 These olde men with o vois alle
 2725 To Venus preiden for my sake. *one*

- 2730 And sche, that myhte noght forsake
 So gret a clamour as was there,
 Let pité come into hire ere;
 And forth withal unto Cupide
 Sche preith that he upon his side
 2735 Me wolde thurgh his grace sende
 Som confort, that I myhte amende,
 Upon the cas which is besfalle.
 And thus for me thei preiden alle
 Of hem that weren olde aboute,
 2740 And ek some of the yonge route,
 Of gentillesse and pure trouthe
 I herde hem telle it was gret routhe,
 That I withouten help so ferde.
 And thus me thoghte I lay and herde.
- improve*
- crowd*
- pity*

[CUPID RETURNS]

- 2745 Cupido, which may hurte and hele
 In loves cause, as for myn hele
 Upon the point which him was preid
 Cam with Venus, wher I was leid
 2750  Swounende upon the grene gras.
 And, as me thoghte, anon ther was
 On every side so gret presse,
 That every lif began to presse,
 I wot noght wel hou many score,
 2755 Suche as I spak of now tofore,
 Lovers, that comen to beholde,
 Bot most of hem that weren olde.
 Thei stoden there at thilke tyde,
 To se what ende schal betyde
 Upon the cure of my sotie.
- health*
- (see note)*
- crowd*
- began to feel the pressure*
- foolishness*
- 2760 Tho myhte I hiere gret partie
 Spekende, and ech his oghne avis
 Hath told, on that, another this:
 Bot among alle this I herde,
 Thei weren wo that I so ferde,
 2765 And seiden that for no riote
 An old man scholde noght assote;
 For as thei tolden redely,
 Ther is in him no cause why,
 Bot if he wolde himself benyce;
- own advice*
- one that*
- love disorder*
- be foolish*
- 2770 So were he wel the more nyce.
 And thus desputen some of tho,
 And some seiden nothing so,
 Bot that the wylde loves rage
- Except; make foolish*
- foolish*
- passion*

- 2775 In mannes lif forberth non age; *does not spare age*
 Whil ther is oyle for to fyre, *burn*
 The lampe is lyhtly set afyre, *easily*
 And is ful hard er it be queynt *before it be quenched*
 Bot only if it be som seint, *saint*
 Which God preserveth of his grace.
- 2780 And thus me thoghte, in sondri place
 Of hem that walken up and doun
 Ther was diverse opinioune,
 And for a while so it laste,
 Til that Cupide to the laste,
 2785 Forth with his moder full avised,
 Hath determined and devised
 Unto what point he wol descende.
 And al this time I was liggende *lying*
 Upon the ground tofore his yhen, *before; eyes*
 2790 And thei that my desese syhen *saw*
 Supposen noght I scholde live;
 Bot he, which wolde thanne give
 His grace, so as it mai be,
 This blinde god which mai noght se,
 2795 Hath groped til that he me fond; *dart*
 And as he pitte forth his hond
 Upon my body, wher I lay,
 Me thoghte a fyri lancegay,
 Which whilom thurgh myn herte he caste,
 2800 He pulleth oute, and also faste *immediately*
 As this was do, Cupide nam *took*
 His weie, I not where he becam,
 And so dede al the remenant
 Which unto him was entendant,
 2805 Of hem that in avision
 I hadde a revelacion,
 So as I tolde now tofore.

[HEALING LOVE'S WOUND]

- 2810 Bot Venus wente noght therfore,
 Ne Genius, whiche thilke time
 Abiden bothe faste byme. *by me*
 And sche which mai the hertes bynde
 In loves cause and ek unbinde,
 Er I out of mi trance aros,
 Venus, which hield a boiste clos, *closed box*
 2815 And wolde noght I scholde deie,
 Tok out mor cold than eny keie
 An oignement, and in such point

- Sche hath my wounded herte enoight,
My temples and mi reins also. *kidneys (L. renes)*
- 2820 And forth withal sche tok me tho
A wonder mirour for to holde,
In which sche bad me to beholde
And taken hiede of that I syhe; *then*
- 2825 Wherinne anon myn hertes yhe
I caste, and sih my colour fade,
Myn yhen dymme and al unglade,
Mi chiekes thinne, and al my face *should see*
- With elde I myhte se deface,
So riveled and so wo besein, *eye*
- 2830 That ther was nothing full ne plein,
I syh also myn heres hore. *saw; pale*
- Mi will was tho to se no more
Outwith, for ther was no plesance; *eyes*
- And thanne into my remembrance
2835 I drowh myn olde daies passed,
And as reson it hath compassed, *old age; defaced*
-  I made a liknesse of miselvē
Unto the sondri monthes twelve, *wrinkled; woebegone*
- Wheroft the yeer in his astat *(see note)*
- 2840 Is mad, and stant upon debat,
That lich til other non acordeth. *its*
- For who the times wel recordeth,
And thanne at Marche if he beginne, *Made*
- Whan that the lusti yeer comth inne,
2845 Til Augst be passed and Septembre,
The mynty youthe he may remembre *delight*
- In which the yeer hath his deduit
Of gras, of lef, of flour, of fruit, *rain*
- Of corn and of the wyny grape.
- 2850 And afterward the time is schape
To frost, to snow, to wynd, to rein, *rain*
- Til eft that Mars be come agein:
The wynter wol no somer knowe, *once was hot*
- The grene lef is overthrowe,
2855 The clothed erthe is thanne bare, *many*
- Despuiled is the somerfare, *affrighted*
- That erst was hete is thanne chele.
- And thus thenkende thoghtes fele,
I was out of mi swoune affraied, *affrighted*
- 2860 Wheroft I sih my wittes straied,
And gan to clepe hem hom agein.
And whan Resoun it herde sein
That loves rage was aweie,
He cam to me the rihte weie,

- 2865 And hath remued the sotie
Of thilke unwise fantasie,
Wheroft I was wont to pleigne,
So that of thilke fyri peine
I was mad sobre and hol ynowh. *removed; folly*
- 2870 Venus behield me than and lowh,
And axeth, as it were in game,
What love was. And I for schame
Ne wiste what I scholde ansuere;
And natheles I gan to swere *complain*
- 2875 That be my trouthe I knew him noght;
So ferr it was out of mi thoght,
Riht as it hadde nevere be.
“Mi goode sone,” tho quod sche,
“Now at this time I lieve it wel, *believe*
- 2880 So goth the fortune of my whiel;
Forthi mi conseil is thou leve.”
“Ma dame,” I seide, “be your leve,
Ye witen wel, and so wot I,
That I am unbehovely *unfit*
- 2885 Your court fro this day forth to serve.
And for I may no thonk deserve,
And also for I am refused,
I preie you to ben excused.
And natheles as for the laste, *From; before*
- 2890 Whil that my wittes with me laste,
Touchende mi confession
I axe an absolucion
Of Genius, er that I go.”
The prest anon was redy tho, *depart*
- 2895 And seide, “Sone, as of thi schrifte
Thou hast ful pardoun and forgifte;
Forget it thou, and so wol I.”
“Min holi fader, grant mercy,”
Quod I to him, and to the queene
- 2900 I fell on knes upon the grene,
And tok my leve for to wende.
Bot sche, that wolde make an ende,
As therto which I was most able,
A peire of bedes blak as sable *set of identical beads*
- 2905 Sche tok and heng my necke aboue;
Upon the gaudes al withoute
Was write of gold, *Por reposer.*
“Lo,” thus sche seide, “John Gower,
Now thou art ate laste cast, *determined (thrown)*
- 2910 This have I for thin ese cast,
That thou no more of love sieche. *ordained (shaped)*
- seek*

- Bot my will is that thou besieche
And preie hierafter for the pes,
And that thou make a plein reles
2915 To love, which takth litel hiede
Of olde men upon the nede,
Whan that the lustes ben aweie:
Forthi to thee nys bot o weie,
In which let reson be thi guide;
2920 For he may sone himself misguide,
That seth noght the peril tofore.
Mi sone, be wel war therfore,
And kep the sentence of my lore
And tarie thou mi court no more,
2925 Bot go ther vertu moral duelleth,
Wher ben thi bokes, as men telleth,
Whiche of long time thou hast write.
For this I do thee wel to wite,
If thou thin hele wolt pourchace,
2930 Thou miht noght make suite and chace,
Wher that the game is noght pernable;
It were a thing unresonable,
A man to be so overseie.
Forthi tak hiede of that I seie;
2935 For in the lawe of my comune
We be noght schape to comune,
Thiself and I, nevere after this.
Now have y seid al that ther is
Of love as for thi final ende.
2940 Adieu, for y mot fro thee wende."

[LEAVE-TAKING OF VENUS]

- And with that word al sodeinly,
Enclosid in a sterred sky,
Venus, which is the qweene of love,
Was take into hire place above,
2945 More wist y nougnt wher sche becam.
And thus my leve of here y nam,
her; took

[The first recension of the poem reads as follows (lines *2941–*3114):]

- [Venus] . . . “And gret wel Chaucer whan ye mete,
As mi disciple and mi poete:
For in the floures of his youthe
In sondri wise, as he wel couthe,
*2945 Of ditees and of songes glade,
The whiche he for mi sake made,

- And forth with al the same tide
 Hire prest, which wolde nought abide,
 Or be me lief or be me loth,
 2950 Out of my sighte forth he goth,
 And y was left withouten helpe.
 So wiste I nought wher of to yelpe,
 Bot only that y hadde lore
 My time, and was sori therfore.
 2955 And thus bewhapid in my thought,
 Whan al was turnyd into nought,
 I stod amasid for a while,
 And in myself y gan to smyle
 Thenkende uppon the bedis blake,
 2960 And how they weren me betake,
 For that y schulde bidde and preie.
 And whanne y sigh non othre weie
 Bot only that y was refusid,
 Unto the lif which y hadde usid
 2965 I thoughte nevere torne agein:
 And in this wise, soth to seyn,
 Homward a softe pas y wente,
 Wher that with al myn hol entente
- Whether it was pleasing or displeasing to me*
- boast
lost
overwhelmed
- beads
given to me
ask for mercy; pray
saw

- The lond fulfilde is overal:
 Wherof to him in special
 Above alle othre I am most holde.
 *2950 For thi now in hise daies olde
 Thow schalt him telle this message,
 That he upon his latere age,
 To sette an ende of alle his werk,
 As he which is myn owne clerk,
 *2955 Do make his testament of love,
 As thou hast do thi schrifte above,
 So that mi court it mai recorde.”
- [Amans] “Madame, I can me wel acord,”
 Quod I, “to telle as ye me bidde.”
- *2960 And with that word it so betidde,
 Out of my sihte al sodeynly,
 Enclosed in a sterred sky,
 Up to the hevene Venus straghte,
 And I my rihte weie cawhte,
 *2965 Hoom fro the wode and forth I wente,
 Wher as with al myn hoole entente,
 Thus with mi bedes upon honde,
 For hem that trewe love foonde
- loyal (beholden)
- happened
wood
beads

[PRAYER FOR ENGLAND]

- iv *Parce precor, Criste, populus quo gaudeat iste;
Anglia ne triste subeat, rex summe, resiste.
Corrige quosque status, fragiles absolue reatus;
Vnde deo gratus vigeat locus iste beatus.*¹

- ¶ He which withinne daies sevene
This large world forth with the hevene
Of his eternal providence (see note)
Hath mad, and thilke intelligence
2975 In mannys soule resonable
Hath schape to be perdurable,
Wheroft the man of his feture
Above alle erthli creature eternal

[PRAYER FOR RICHARD]

- iv *Ad laudem Cristi, quem tu, virgo, peperisti,
Sit laus Ricardi, quem sceptra colunt leopardi.
Ad sua precepta compleui carmina cepta,
Que Brutii nata legat Anglia perpetuata.²*

- He which withinne dayes sevne
This large world forth with the hevene
Of His eternal providence
Hath maad, and thilke intelligence
*2975 In mannes soule resonable
Enspired to himself semblable,
Wheroft the man of his fature
Above alle earthly creature

¹ Spare I pray, O Christ, the people in order that they may rejoice; stand in opposition, highest king, lest England should sadly go down. Correct each estate, absolve frail defendants. May this blessed place thereupon thrive, grateful [or pleasing] to God.

² For the praise of Christ which you, O Virgin, gave birth to, let there be praise of Richard, whom the leopard's scepters honor. At his orders I have completed the songs that were undertaken; let England, born of Brutus, read them, thus made perpetual.

- 2980 Afir the soule is immortal,
To thilke lord in special,
As He which is of alle things
The creatour, and of the kynges
Hath the fortunes uppon honde,
His grace and mercy for to fonde
Upon my bare knes y preie,
That He this lond in siker weie
Wol sette upon good governance.
For if men takyn remembrance
What is to live in unité,
2990 Ther ys no staat in his degree
That noughe to desire pes,
Withouten which, it is no les,
To seche and loke into the laste,
Ther may no worldes joye laste.
2995 Ferst for to loke the clergie,
Hem oughte wel to justefie
Thing which belongeth to here cure,
As for to praie and to procure
Oure pes toward the hevene above,
3000 And ek to sette reste and love
-

- After the soule is immortal,
*2980 To thilke Lord in special,
As He which is of alle things
The creatour, and of the kinges
Hath the fortunes upon hoonde,
His grace and mercy for to foonde
Upon mi bare knees I preye,
That he my worthi king conveye,
Richard by name the Secounde,
In whom hath evere yit be founde
Justice medled with pité,
*2990 Largesce forth with charité.
In his persone it mai be schewed
What is a king to be wel thewed,
Touching of pité namely:
For he yit nevere unpitously
*2995 Agein the liges of his loond,
For no defaute which he foond,
Thurgh craulté vengaunce soghte;
And thogh the worldes chaunce in broghte
Of infortune gret debat,
*3000 Yit was he not infortunat,

Among ous on this erthe hiere.
 For if they wroughte in this manere
 Afir the reule of charité,
 I hope that men schuldyn se
 3005 This lond amende.

And ovyr this,
 To seche and loke how that it is
 Touchende of the chevalerie,
 Which for to loke, in som partie
 Is worthi for to be comendid,
 3010 And in som part to ben amendid,
 That of here large retene
 The lond is ful of maintenue,
 Which causith that the commune right
 In fewe contrees stant upright.
 3015 Extorcioun, contekt, ravine
 Withholde ben of that covyne,
 Aldai men hierin gret compleignte
 Of the desease, of the constreignte,
 Wheroft the poeple is sore oppressid:
 3020 God graunte it mote be redressid.
 For of knyghthode th'ordre wolde
 That thei defende and kepe scholde

*knighthood**improved**maintenance (i.e., private armies)**assault, pillaging**Are loyal to that conspiracy**hear*

For he which the fortune ladde,
 The hihe God, him overspradde
 Of His Justice, and kepte him so
 That his astat stood evere mo
 *3005 Sauf, as it oghte wel to bee;
 Lich to the sonne in his degree,
 Which with the clowdes up alofte
 Is derked and bischadewed ofte,
 But hou so that it trowble in th'eir,
 *3010 The sonne is evere briht and feir,
 Withinne himself and noght empeired:
 Althogh the weder be despeired,
 The heed planete is not to wite.
 Mi worthi prince, of whom I write,
 *3015 Thus stant he with himselfe cheer,
 And dooth what lith in his poweer
 Not oonly heer at hoom to seeke
 Love and acorde, but outward eeke,
 As he that save his poeple wolde.
 *3020 So been we alle wel byholde
 To do service and obeyssaunce
 To him, which of his heyh suffraunce

*With**its**principal; not to blame*

- The comun right and the fraanchise
Of holy cherche in alle wise,
3025 So that no wikkē man it dere, *injure*
And therfore servith scheld and spere.
Bot for it goth now other weie,
Oure grace goth the more aweie.
And for to lokyn ovyrmore,
3030 Wherof the poeple pleigneth sore,
Toward the lawis of oure lond,
Men sein that trouthe hath broke his bond
And with brocage is goon aweie, *clandestine business dealings*
So that no man can se the weie
3035 Wher for to fynde rightwisnesse.
And if men sechin sikernesse *certitude*
Upon the lucre of marchandie, *wealth of worldly goods*
Compassement and tricherie *Scheming*
Of singuler profit to wynne,
3040 Men seyn, is cause of mochil synne,
And namely of divisioun,
Which many a noble worthi toun
Fro welthe and fro prosperité
Hath brought to gret adversité.

-
- Hath many a grete debat appesed, *great conflict settled*
To make his lige men been esed;
*3025 Wherfore that his croniqe schal *praise*
For evere be memorial *truly*
To the loenge of that he dooth.
For this wot every man in sooth,
What king that so desireth pees,
*3030 He takth the weie which Crist chees: *chose*
And who that Cristes weies sueth, *follows*
It proveth wel that he eschueth
The vices and is virtuous,
Wherof he mot be gracious
*3035 Toward his God and acceptable.
And so to maake his regne stable,
With al the wil that I mai give
I preie and schal whil that I live,
As I which in subjeccioun
*3040 Stonde under the proteccioun, *wield control over myself*
And mai miselven not bewelde, *sickness*
What for seknesse and what for elde,
Which I receyve of Goddes grace.
But thoght me lacke to purchace *obtain*

- 3045 So were it good to ben al on, *united*
 For mechil grace ther uppon
 Unto the citees schulde falle,
 Which myghte availle to ous alle,
 If these astatz amendid were,
 3050 So that the vertus stodyn there
 And that the vices were aweie,
 Me thenkth y dorste thanne seie,
 This londis grace schulde arise. *dare*

[ON KINGSHIP]

- Bot yit to loke in othre wise,
 3055 Ther is a stat, as ye schul hiere,
 Above alle othre on erthe hiere,
 Which hath the lond in his balance.
 To him belongeth the leiance *allegiance*
 Of clerk, of knyght, of man of lawe;
 3060 Undir his hond al is forth drawe
 The marchant and the laborer;
 So stant it al in his power
 Or for to spille or for to save. *Either to destroy or save*
 Bot though that he such power have,
 3065 And that his myghtes ben so large,

- *3045 Mi kinges thonk as by decerte, *merit*
 Yit the simplesce of mi poverte
 Unto the love of my ligance
 Desireth for to do plesance:
 And for this cause in myn entente
 *3050 This povere book heir I presente
 Unto his hihe worthiness,
 Write of my simple bisinesse, *occupation*
 So as seeknesse it suffre wolde.
 And in such wise as I ferst tolde,
 *3055 Whan I this book began to maake,
 In som partie it mai by taake
 As for to lawhe and for to pleye; *laugh*
 And for to looke in other weye,
 It mai be wisdom to the wise,
 *3060 So that somdel for good aprise
 And eek somdel for lust and game
 I have it mad, as thilke same
 Which axe for to been excused,
 That I no rethoriqe have used *learning*
 *3065 Upon the forme of eloquence,

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| | He hath hem nought withouten charge,
To which that every kyng ys swore.
So were it good that he therfore
First unto rightwisnesse entende, | <i>responsibilities</i>
<i>sworn</i> |
| 3070 | Wherof that he hymself amende
Toward his God and leve vice,
Which is the chief of his office;
And aftir al the remenant | <i>improve</i>
<i>leave</i> |
| 3075 | He schal upon his covenant
Governe and lede in such a wise,
So that ther be no tirandise,
Wherof that he his poeple grieve, | |
| | Or ellis may he nought achieve
That longith to his regalie. | |
| 3080 | For if a kyng wol justifie
His lond and hem that beth withynne,
First at hymself he mot begynne,
To kepe and reule his owne astat, | <i>make righteous</i> |
| | That in hymself be no debat | <i>conflict</i> |
| 3085 | Toward his God: for othre wise
Ther may non erthly kyng suffise
Of his kyngdom the folk to lede, | |

For that is not of mi science;
But I have do my trewe peyne
With rude wordes and with pleyne
To speke of thing which I have toold.

- *3070 But now that I am feble and oold,
And to the worschipe of mi king
In love above alle other thing
That I this book have mad and write,
Mi muse dooth me for to wite
causes me to know
What

*3075 That it is to me for the beste
Fro this day forth to taake reste,
That I no moore of love maake.
But he which hath of love his maake
It sit him wel to singe and daunce,

*3080 And do to love his entendance
In songes bothe and in seynges
After the lust of his pleyinges,
For he hath that he wolde have:
But where a man schal love crave

*3085 And faile, it stant al ootherwise.
In his proverbe seith the wise,
Whan game is beste, is best to leve:

- Bot he the kyng of hevene drede. *Unless he*
 For what kyng sett hym uppon pride
 3090 And takth his lust on every side
 And wil nought go the righte weie,
 Though God his grace caste aweie
 No wondir is, for ate laste
 He schal wel wite it mai nought laste, *know*
 3095 The pompe which he secheth here.
 Bot what kyng that with humble chere
 Aftir the lawe of God eschuieth *avoids*
 The vices, and the vertus suieith, *follows*
 His grace schal be suffisant
 3100 To governe al the remenant *appertains*
 Which longith to his duité;
 So that in his prosperité
 The poeple schal nought ben oppressid,
 Wherof his name schal be blessid,
 3105 For evere and be memorial.

[FAREWELL TO THE BOOK]

- And now to speke as in final,
 Touchende that y undirtok
 In Englesch for to make a book *(see note)*

- And thus forthi my fynal leve,
 Withoute makynge eny moore, *writing*
 *3090 I take now for evere moore
 Of love and of his dedly heele,
 Which no phisicien can heele.
 For his nature is so divers,
 That it hath evere som travers
 *3095 Or of to moche or of to lite,
 That fully mai no man delyte,
 But if him lacke or that or this.
 But thilke love which that is
 Withinne a mannes herte affermed,
 *3100 And stant of charité confermed,
 That love is of no repentaile; *has no remorse*
 For it ne berth no contretaile, *reckoning of debt*
 Which mai the conscience charge,
 But it is rather of descharge,
 *3105 And meedful heer and overal.
 Forthi this love in special
 Is good for every man to hoolde,
 And who that resoun wol byholde,

- Which stant betwene ernest and game,
 3110 I have it maad as thilke same
 Which axe for to ben excusid,
 And that my bok be nought refusid
 Of lered men, whanne thei it se,
 For lak of curiosité:
 3115 For thilke scole of eloquence
 Belongith nought to my science,
 Upon the forme of rethoriqe
 My wordis for to peinte and pike,
 As Tullius som tyme wrot.
- Bot this y knowe and this y wot,
 That y have do my trewe peyne
 With rude wordis and with pleyne,
 In al that evere y couthe and myghte,
 This bok to write as y behighte,
 3120 So as siknesse it soffre wolde;
 And also for my daies olde,
 That y am feble and impotent,
 I wot nought how the world ys went.
 So preye y to my lordis alle
- Now in myn age, how so befalle,
 That y mote stonden in here grace;
 For though me lacke to purchace
 Here worthi thonk as by decerte,
 Yit the symplesse of my poverte
 3130 Desireth for to do plesance
 To hem undir whos governance
 I hope siker to abide.
- 3135
- Who asks learned subtle learning [in my book] embellish; polish Cicero unsophisticated words promised To the extent that illness would allow it feeble; powerless know not their obtain merit secure*

[FAREWELL TO EARTHLY LOVE]

- But now upon my laste tide
 That y this book have maad and write,
 3140 My muse doth me for to wite,
 And seith it schal be for my beste
 Fro this day forth to take reste,
 That y no more of love make,
- causes me to know firsthand write about*

- Al oother lust is good to daunte:
 *3110 Which thing the hihe God us graunte
 Forth with the remenant of grace
 So that of hevene in thilke place
 Wher resteth love and alle pees,
 Our joye mai been endelees.

[Here ends the poem in the First Recension.]

- 3145 Which many an herte hath overtake,
And ovyrtunyd as the blynde
Fro reson into lawe of kynde;
Wher as the wisdom goth aweie
And can nougnt se the ryhte weie
How to governe his oghne estat,
Bot everydai stant in debat
Withinne himself, and can nougnt leve.
And thus forthy my final leve
I take now for evere more,
Withoute makyng any more
3155 Of love and of his dedly hele,
Which no phisicien can hele.
For his nature is so divers,
That it hath evere som travers
Or of to moche or of to lite,
3160 That plenly mai no man delite,
Bot if him faile or that or this.
Bot thilke love which that is
Withinne a mannes herte affermed,
And stant of charité confermed:
3165 Such love is goodly for to have,
Such love mai the bodi save,
Such love mai the soule amendē.
The hyhe God such love ous sende
Forthwith the remenant of grace,
3170 So that above in thilke place
Wher resteth love and alle pes,
Oure joie mai ben endeles.

*Explicit iste liber, qui transeat, obsecro liber
Vt sine liuore vigeat lectoris in ore.*

*Qui sedet in scannis celi det vt ista Iohannis
Perpetuis annis stet pagina grata Britannis.
Derbeie Comiti, recolunt quem laude periti,
Vade liber purus, sub eo requiesce futurus.*

[Here ends this book, and may it, I implore, travel free so that without a bruise it may thrive in the reader's ear. May He who sits in the throne of heaven grant that this page of John remain for all time pleasing to the Britains. Go, spotless book, to the Count of Derby,¹ whom the learned honor with praise, and take repose when you will be in his keeping.]

[**Here ends the poem in the Lancastrian Recension.]**

¹ That is, Henry Bolingbroke, who ascended to the throne in 1400. Gower shifted his endorsement from Richard to Henry well before that time, at the latest by 1392. See Prologue, lines 24–92, and the note to Prologue, lines 22ff.

EXIT GOWER

Epistola super huius opusculi sui complementum Iohanni Gower a quodam philosopho transmissa:

*Qvam cinxere freta, Gower, tua carmina leta
Per loca discreta canit Anglia laude repleta.
Carminis Athleta, satirus, tibi, siue Poeta,
Sit laus completa quo gloria stat sine meta.*

[An epistle on the completion of this work of John Gower, conveyed by a certain philosopher:

In diverse regions, O Gower, England, which the waters girdle around, full of praise sings your happy songs.¹ Champion of song, satirist, or poet — to you may praise be full by which glory stands without limit.]

¹ Whether the songs are “full of praise” for England, or England “full of praise” for Gower’s poetry is grammatically ambiguous (*laude repleta*). For a similar grammatically possible, hyperbolic praise of Gower’s poem, see the Latin verses after *2971, along with the note. That the verse here too allows that meaning by the same technique, along with metrical and other features of the Latin here, suggests either that Gower himself wrote these words of the “certain philosopher,” or that a Latinist very much in his “school” of Latin poetry constructed them. The very existence of marginal glosses written by the author for his own work somewhat supports the former possibility. At the least, he had no modesty about including them.



THE COLOPHONS

John Fisher notes that at least fifteen of the earliest versions of *Vox Clamantis* and *Confessio Amantis* conclude with a colophon.¹ These are basically alike, consisting of four short paragraphs: 1) In the first John Gower acknowledges the intellectual gifts that God has given him and asserts that in the time allotted him on earth he has composed three books of instructive material for the benefit of others. 2) The first book, written in French (i.e., the *Mirour de l'Omme*), is in ten parts, treats of the vices and virtues, and would teach the right path for the sinner's return to God. He then names the book — *Speculum Hominis*, in the first recension manuscripts, and *Speculum Meditantes* in the later ones. 3) The second book, written in Latin, tells of the peasants rebellion in the fourth year of young King Richard II and the outrages that fell upon men. This book was titled *Vox Clamantis*. 4) The third book, written in English, is in eight parts, made at the request of Richard II. It follows the prophecy of Daniel on the mutability of earthly kingdoms and treats of the education of King Alexander. The subject is love and includes many exempla. The book is called *Confessio Amantis*.

But although the colophons in the several manuscripts are essentially the same, there are some noteworthy variations — enough to warrant printing all three examples: St. John's 34 (a revised version of the first recension); Bodley 294 (a second recension manuscript of the early fifteenth century); and Bodley Fairfax 3 (a third recension manuscript, end of the fourteenth century, which is the base text of the present edition). Fisher includes the colophon to Bodley 902 rather than St. John's 34, for which he provides a translation on pp. 88–89. He prints it along with the colophons to Bodley 294 and Fairfax 3 as Appendix B, pp. 311–12.

FIRST RECENSION (St. John's 34, fols. 214r–214v)

Quia vnumquisque prout a deo accepit aliis impartiri tenetur, Iohannes Gower super hiis que deus sibi intellectualiter donauit, villicacionis sue rationem,² dum tempus instat, secundum aliquid alleuiare cupiens, inter labores et ocia ad aliorum noticiam tres libros doctrine causa subsequenti propterea composuit.³

¹ The colophons generally appear at the end of the manuscripts. Thus in St. John's 34 the colophon appears directly following *CA*, while in Fairfax 3 the colophon is separated from *CA* by *Traitié* and *Carmen super multiplice viciorum pestilencia*. See Fisher, *John Gower*, pp. 88–91.

² There is an allusion and a pun here: in Luke 16:2, the parable of the unjust steward, the lord asks the steward to “render an account of your stewardship”; but the Latin word for “account” is *ratio*, which also means “reason, rational ability.” In Gower’s passage God has endowed Gower’s reason with many things, as well as “his account of his stewardship.”

³ Possibly because the third recension was originally added to a copy containing the first rather than the second recension, the initial two paragraphs of those recensions are the same, apart from

Primus liber Gallico sermone editus in x diuiditur partes, et tractans de viciis et virtutibus, necnon et de variis huius seculi gradibus, viam qua peccator transgressus ad sui creatoris agnitionem redire debet, recto tramite docere conatur. Titulusque libelli istius Speculum Hominis nuncupatus est.

Secundus enim liber, sermone Latino versibus exametri et pentametri⁴ compositus, tractat super illo mirabili euentu qui in Anglica tempore domini Regis Ricardi secundi anno regni sui quarto contigit, quando seruiles rustici impetuose contra nobiles et ingenuos regni insurexerunt. Innocenciam tamen dicti domini Regis tunc minoris etatis causa inde excusabilem pronuncians, culpas aliunde, ex quibus et non a fortuna talia inter homines contingunt enormia, evidencius declarat. Titulusque voluminis huius, cuius ordo vii continet paginas, Vox Clamantis nominatur.

Tercius liber iste Anglico sermone in viii partes diuisus, qui ad instanciam serenissimi principis dicti domini Regis Anglie Ricardi secundi conficitur, secundum Danielis propheticam super huius mundi regnorum mutacione a tempore Regis Nabugodonosor usque nunc tempora distinguit. Tractat eciam secundum Nectanabum et Aristotilem super hiis quibus Rex Alexander tam in sui regimen quam aliter eorum disciplina edoctus fuit. Principalis tamen huius libri materia super amorem et amantum condiciones fundamentum habet. Ubi variarum cronicarum historiarumque sentencie necnon Poetarum Philosophorumque scripture ad exemplum distinccius inseruntur. Nomenque presentis opusculi Confessio Amantis specialiter intitulatur.

[Since each man is obliged to impart to others as he has received from God, John Gower, desiring, while time allows, to mitigate somewhat the account of his stewardship concerning those things with which God has intellectually endowed him, has composed between labors and leisure for the notice of others three books, for the sake of doctrine, in the following form:

The first book, produced in the French language, is divided into ten parts and, discoursing about vices and virtues as well as about the various social degrees of this world, it strives to teach by the straight path the way by which a sinner, having transgressed, ought to return to a recognition of his Creator. The title of this book is declared to be the *Mirror of Man*.

The second book, composed in Latin hexameter and pentameter verses, discourses about that astonishing event that occurred in England in the time of the lord King Richard II, in the fourth year of his reign, when rustic bondsmen impetuously rebelled against the nobles and magnates of the kingdom. Noting the excusable innocence, however, of the said lord king then on the grounds that he was underage, it declares the blame for these things to fall more clearly elsewhere, from which, and not by mere fortune, such terrible things happen among human beings. And the title of this volume, whose structure contains eight pieces of writing, is named the *Vox Clamantis* (*Voice of One Crying*).

the Latin title of the *Mirour de l'Omme*, and the change of “intellectually” to “materially” to describe the advantages with which God had endowed the poet. The second recension, which introduces those changes, also differs in various other details in those paragraphs. Apart from those parallels or traces of some direct connection in the opening paragraphs, the first and third recensions otherwise differ more widely than the second and third. The three colophons alter the comments on King Richard II most visibly, and they alter the descriptions of Gower's French and Latin poems somewhat. Only one small change was made in the description of the *Confessio Amantis* in later recensions: the omission of the next to last sentence describing its various kinds of sources and materials.

⁴ That is, elegaic couplets. The third recension of the colophon simplifies this notice about the meter of the *Vox Clamantis*.

The third book, which is fashioned in the English language on account of reverence to the most vigorous lord, his lord Henry of Lancaster, then count of Derby, differentiated historical times according to the prophecy of Daniel concerning the transformation of the kingdoms of this world, from the time of King Nebuchadnezzar up until now. It also discourses about those things in which King Alexander was tutored in accord with Nectabanus and Aristotle, as much in his governance as in other matters of his instruction. But the principal subject of this work has its basis in love and lovers' infatuated passions. There, the essences of various chronicles and histories as well as the writings of poets and philosophers are inserted more particularly by way of example. And the name specifically designated for it was chosen to be the *Confessio Amantis* (*Confession of a Lover*).]

SECOND RECENSION (Bodley 294, fol. 199v)

Quia unusquisque prout a deo accepit aliis impartiri tenetur, Iohannes Gower, super hiis que deus sibi sensualiter⁵ donauit villicacionis sue rationem secundum aliquid alleuiare cupiens, tres precipue libros per ipsum, dum vixit, doctrine causa compositos ad aliorum noticiam in lucem seriose produxit.

Primus liber Gallico sermone editus in decem diuiditur partes, et tractans de viciis et virtutibus viam precipue qua peccator in penitendo Cristi misericordiam assequi poterit, tota mentis deuocione finaliter contemplatur. Titulusque libelli istius Speculum Meditantis nuncupatus est.

Secundus liber versibus exametri et pentametre sermone latino componitur. Tractat de variis infortuniis tempore Regis Ricardi secundi in Anglia multipliciter contingentibus, vbi pro statu regni compositor deuocius exorat. Nomenque volumina huius, quod in septem diuiditur partes, Vox Clamantis intitulat.

Tercius iste liber qui in octo partes ob reuerencia serenissimi domini sui domini Henrici de Lancastria tunc Derbie Comitis Anglico sermone conficitur secundum Danielis propheciam super huius mundi regnorum mutacione a tempore Regis Nabugodonosor usque nunc tempora distinguit. Tractat etiam secundum Aristotilem super hiis quibus Rex Alexander tam in sui regimen quam aliter eius disciplina edoctus fuit. Principalis tamen huius operis materia super amorem et infatuatas amantum passiones fundamentum habet. Nomenque sibi appropriatum Confessio Amantis specialiter sortitus est.

[Since each man is obliged to impart to others as he has received from God, John Gower, desiring, while he lives, to mitigate somewhat the account of his stewardship concerning those things with which God has materially endowed him, has in particular brought forth into the light three books by him, fashioned for the sake of doctrine for the notice of others.

The first book, produced in the French language, is divided into ten parts, and, discoursing about vices and virtues, it contemplates at the end the path especially by which a penitent sinner with total devotion of mind might be able to follow Christ's mercy, and the title of this book is declared to be the *Mirror of the Contemplator*.

The second book is composed in the Latin language in hexameter and pentameter. It treats about the various misfortunes occurring in England in the time of King Richard II,

⁵ Fisher observes that the first recension *intellectualiter* is replaced in the later recensions by *sensualiter*, "perhaps in recognition of the fortunate physical endowment which carried the poet through nearly eight decades" (*John Gower*, p. 89). Possibly also he was recording his gratitude for his increasing material wealth as he matured.

where the maker devoutly prays on behalf of the realm's condition. And the name of this book, which is divided into seven parts, is entitled *Vox Clamantis* (*Voice of One Crying*).

The third book, which is fashioned in the English language on account of reverence to the most vigorous lord, his lord Henry of Lancaster, then count of Derby, differentiated historical times according to the prophecy of Daniel concerning the transformation of the kingdoms of this world, from the time of King Nebuchadnezzar up until now. It also discourses about those things in which King Alexander was tutored in accord with Aristotle, as much in his governance as in other matters of his instruction. But the principal subject of this work has its basis in love and lovers' infatuated passions. And the name specifically designated for it was chosen to be the *Confessio Amantis* (*Confession of a Lover*).]

THIRD RECENSION (Fairfax 3, fol. 194v)

Quia vñusquisque, prout a deo accepit, aliis impartiri tenetur, Iohannes Gower super hiis que deus sibi sensualiter donauit villicacionis sue rationem, dum tempus instat, secundum aliquid alleuiare cupiens, inter labores et ocia ad aliorum noticiam tres libros doctrine causa subsequenti propterea compositus.

Primus liber Gallico sermone editus in decem diuiditur partes, et tractans de viciis et virtutibus, necnon et de variis huius seculi gradibus,⁶ viam qua peccator transgressus ad sui creatoris agnitionem redire debet, recto tramite docere conatur. Titulusque libelli istius Speculum Meditantis nuncupatus est.

Secundus enim liber sermone latino metrice compositus tractat de variis infortuniis tempore Regis Ricardi Secundi in Anglia contingentibus. Vnde non solum regni proceres et communes tormenta passi sunt, set et ipse crudelissimus rex suis ex demeritis ab alto corruens in foueam quam fecit finaliter proiectus est.⁷ Nomenque voluminis huius Vox Clamantis intitulatur.

Tercius iste liber qui ob reuerenciam strenuissimi domini sui domini Henrici de Lancastria, tunc Derbeie Comitis, Anglo sermone conficitur, secundum Danielis propheciam super huius mundi regnorum mutacione a tempore regis Nabugodonosor vsque nunc tempora distinguit. Tractat eciam secundum Aristotilem super hiis quibus rex Alexander tam in sui regimen quam aliter eius disciplina edoctus fuit. Principalis tamen huius operis materia super amorem et infatuatas amantum passiones fundamentum habet. Nomenque sibi appropriatum Confessio Amantis specialiter sortitus est.

[Since each man is obliged to impart to others as he has received from God, John Gower, desiring, while time allows, to mitigate somewhat the account of his stewardship concerning those things with which God has materially endowed him, has composed, between labors and leisure for the notice of others three books, for the sake of doctrine, in the following form:

⁶ The phrase, "as well as about the various social degrees of this world," appearing in the first and third recension but dropped from the second, reflects the turn in the later part of the *Mirour de l'Omme* toward estates satire.

⁷ The scathing denunciation of the ruin during Richard II's reign in the final recension of this passage in the colophon treats the general disruption of society depicted in the survey of estates in the *Vox Clamantis* as if it were an analysis specifically of the ills of Richard's reign. The view extends and even hardens the anti-Ricardian revised Prologue of the *Confessio Amantis* and the changed dedication at beginning and ending of that poem; the three colophons chart the progress of the poet's condemnation of Richard.

The first book, produced in the French language, is divided into ten parts and, discoursing about vices and virtues as well as about the various social degrees of this world, it strives to teach by the straight path the way by which a sinner, having transgressed, ought to return to a recognition of his Creator. The title of this book is declared to be the *Mirror of the Contemplator*.

The second book, composed metrically in Latin, discourses about the various misfortunes occurring in England in the time of King Richard II. Wherefore not only the nobility of the kingdom and the commons suffered torments, but even the most unfit king himself, because of his own shortcomings rushing down from on high, was thrown into the pit that he had made; and this volume is entitled the *Vox Clamantis* (*Voice of One Crying*).

The third book, which is fashioned in the English language on account of reverence to the most vigorous lord, his lord Henry of Lancaster, then count of Derby, differentiated historical times according to the prophecy of Daniel concerning the transformation of the kingdoms of this world, from the time of King Nebuchadnezzar up until now. It also discourses about those things in which King Alexander was tutored in accord with Aristotle, as much in his governance as in other matters of his instruction. But the principal subject of this work has its basis in love and lovers' infatuated passions. And the name specifically designated for it was chosen to be the *Confessio Amantis* (*Confession of a Lover*).]

In whiche it is bytokened al
Hic i prologo tractat de statua illa
qua rex nabugodonosor viderat i sopm
cui caput aureum pectus argenteum. vent
eneus. tibee ferree. pedum v quedam ps
ferrea quedam fidelis videbat. Sub q
membris diversitate secundum danielis
expositione huius mundi variacō figurabat.



Nabugodonosor slepte.
A svenen him toke pe whiche
he kepte. Til on pe morsle
he was arise. for he yof was sore agse.
To daniel his drem he tolde
And prayd him faire pat he wold
Aerde what it toke may.

celso moni
quasi in n
And p
A gret stoo
ffel doun o
vpon ye fe
wip whiche
Gold silue
yat al wa
And so for
Hic loci
primo de
G his
yat daniel
And sayd
Bitokenep
And sayd
Til it to
The nekk
he sayd
a Worpy
To whiche
Of silue
Schal ben
D e pe
A nd s
Tokne of
D e tu
G he s

Illustration 4: MS Bodl. 294, fol. 4v. Bodleian Library, Oxford University. Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the Monster of Time.

O gemus myn offne clerke
 Com forp and hier pis mannes sthrifte
 Quod venus ys and I wplifte
 myn hees with yat and gan byholde
 The selue whiche as sthe wolle
 Was redy per and sette hym down
 To here my confessioun



Confessus Geno si sit medicina salutis
 Oppr morbis quos tulit ipa ven?
 lesa quidem ferro medicant mēb salut
 Paro tū medicū vnlus amoris het.

This worty prest yis holy man
 To me spekunde yns bigan
 And seyd he benedict
 my sonne of ye felicite
 Of loue and eet of al ye we
 Thou shalst be schrewe of hore tuo

I prey ye
 my sthr
 In al m
 That I
 So stha
 But if
 fro po
 ther st
 But ne
 That I
 The he
 And wi
 he says
 Thy st
 my son
 Seru
 Wy ve
 whos?
 But na
 I mot a
 rough
 Of lou
 That
 for ya
 Of pr
 So pat
 That I

Illustration 5: MS Bodl. 294, fol. 9r. Bodleian Library, Oxford University. The Lover confesses to Genius.



EXPLANATORY NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS: ***Anel.***: Chaucer, *Anelida and Arcite*; ***BD***: Chaucer, *Book of the Duchess*; ***CA***: Gower, *Confessio Amantis*; ***CT***: Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*; ***HF***: Chaucer, *House of Fame*; ***LGW***: Chaucer, *Legend of Good Women*; ***Mac***: Macaulay (4 vol. *Complete Works*); ***MED***: Middle English Dictionary; ***Met.***: Ovid, *Metamorphoses*; ***MO***: Gower, *Mirour de l'Omme*; ***MS(S)***: manuscript(s); ***OED***: Oxford English Dictionary; ***PF***: Chaucer, *Parliament of Fowls*; ***PL***: *Patrologia Latina*; ***RR***: Lorris and de Meun, *Roman de la Rose*; ***TC***: Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*; ***Tilley***: Tilley, *Dictionary of Proverbs in England*; ***Vat. Myth.***: Vatican Mythographer I, II, or III; ***VC***: Gower, *Vox Clamantis*; ***Whiting***: Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases*. For manuscript abbreviations, see p. 303.

EXPLANATORY NOTES TO PROLOGUE

Illustration 2: Fairfax 3, fol. 2r. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of the Monster of Time. This is the most recurrent subject for illustration in the Gower MSS. The drawings are always unique, but all include two basic components, namely the sleeping king and the monster. See Illustration 4 to compare the Bodley 294 illustrator's representation with that of the Fairfax illustrator. In some MSS, such as Bodley 902, the first page is missing; in others, such as the Stafford MS, the picture has been cut out; in others still, a blank has been left for the picture to be drawn in. See Griffiths, "Poem and Its Pictures," for discussion of the placement of the illustrations and Emmerson, "Reading Gower," on the relationship of the illustration to the *mise en page*. N.b. note to Latin verse v below (p. 248).

Latin verses i (before line 1). **Lines 1–2:** Opening protestations of literary modesty were legion in medieval Latin poetry. This verse parallels in brief outline the longer, preliminary sections of the popular twelfth-century school-text, Johannes de Hauilla's *Architrenius*, which inveighs against Sloth, Lechery, Sleep, Detraction, Mockery, Error, etc. (lines 1–40), asserts the poet's modest abilities yet confidence in success (lines 55–56), and exhorts envious detractors to remain far off (lines 213–15). Behind the modesty trope, Gower challenges his audience to read his work sympathetically, even though it is written in English. The implication is that English, Hengist's language (**line 3**), is inferior as a literary language. To counteract its insularity he alludes to the history of the peoples of the island and the heroic origins of the nation founded by Brutus, the great-grandson of Aeneas. See Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* for the full account of the Trojan descendant's winning of the island from giants, founding his kingdom, and siring a line of kings that culminates with King Arthur, despite the treachery of Hengist. Hengist was the first Saxon on the

island. One anecdote in this mythical history recounts that Hengist's daughter greeted the reigning British king, Vortiger, with the drinking toast "Wassail!" ("Be healthy!"); according to the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century prose *Brut*, a popular French and English adaptation and continuation of Geoffrey's history, this was the first "Englisse" word spoken in Britain (*Brut*, ch. 57; ed. Brie, 1.52). **Line 4:** *Carmentis* is said by Isidore of Seville to have first brought Latin script to the speakers of ancient Italy (*Etymologies* 1.4.1). Gower will "utter" but also write his English verses, an event implicitly as foundational as Hengist's and Carmentis' founding contributions to linguistic history. See Echard, "With Carmen's Help," pp. 3–10, on Carmen as Gower's muse and one who makes tongues. **Line 5:** The tongue, whose lack of bones yet had "bone-breaking" power, was the subject of many Latin proverbs (ed. Echard and Fanger, pp. xxxvii and 3). See also *VC* 5.921–22: "Res mala lingua loguax, res peior, pessima res est, / Que quamuis caret ossibus, ossa terit" ("An evil thing is a talkative tongue . . . / which although it lack bones, destroys bones"); and *CA* 3.462–65: "the harde bon . . . [a] tunge brekth it al to pieces." **Line 6:** The *Architrenius* also concludes its introductory sections with the same ritual apotropaicism: "Let the slanderous razor of envy, keen only in treachery, remain far off, and far off too be that viper whose venom is harmful only to noteworthy achievements" (lines 213–15).

On the subject of *CA* as a bilingual poem with distinct functions for each language, see Yeager, "'Oure englisse' and Everyone's Latin"; Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, pp. 274–75n45; and Olsen, "Betwene Ernest and Game," pp. 5–18 (on likenesses between its bilingual structure and that of Dante's *Vita Nuova*). Pearsall suggests that the vernacular author who nearest approaches Gower in his extensive use of Latin in diverse ways (vatic verse headings, scholastic apparatus of prose commentaries, Latin speech prefixes, and elaborate Latin apparatus at the end of the poem including a long colophon and various Latin poems) is Boccaccio ("Gower's Latin in the *Confessio Amantis*," p. 15). For further discussion of Gower's Latin verses see Echard and Fanger, *Latin Verses*, especially pp. xiii–lviii, and sundry notes. On Gower's shorter Latin poems see the edition by Yeager (*Minor Latin Works*). On tensions between Latin and English texts see Batchelor, "Feigned Truth and Exemplary Method."

- 2 *bokes duelle*. Gower positions books as the repository of moral values and history, against which he encourages the reader to judge present behavior. Books provide examples from "olde wyse" (line 7); that wisdom of the past enables people to see what is new, whether in method, topic, or circumstance.
- 7 *Essampled*. For discussion of Gower's use of narrative exempla see Yeager, "John Gower and the *Exemplum* Form"; Shaw, "Gower's Illustrative Tales"; Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*; Runacres, "Art and Ethics"; and Mitchell, *Ethics and Exemplary Narrative*. For his use of Ovid see Harbert, "Lessons from the Great Clerk." See also note to Book 1, line 79.
- 7–8 *wyse . . . wyse*. Gower's verse thrives on *rime riche*, the rhyming of homophones (words with the same sound but different meanings or functions). The device catches the ear off-guard and provokes double, more careful reading, the way

riddles do. Single glosses (e.g., *wyse* as both “wise” [men or books] and “manner”) can scarcely do justice to the device which, like puns, flourishes on multiplicity of meanings and function, such as adjective versus noun, etc. The device reminds us that glosses are starting points only, not simple equations or “facts.” See note to Prol.237–38.

- 11–18 An inkblot in the middle of the first column obliterates a portion of the text. The blot apparently was made sometime after the page had been copied and bound, for two streaks extend toward the center, as if running down the page. A corresponding blot occurs on the facing page, a mirror image of the first blot. If this MS was in fact corrected by Gower, as Macaulay suggested, the poet himself could be the culprit (2:cxxx). More likely, the accident occurred at some later date after the presentation of the copy.
- 17 The *middel weie* is both a rhetorical and an ethical proposition. Gower would see his poem as a mediator between social issues and personal moral choices. See Middleton (“Idea of Public Poetry,” pp. 101–02) on the public dimensions of Gower’s methodological agenda. By striking a medial position between wisdom and delight, with English as his medium, the poet would make fictive paradigms from which moral therapy might be achieved. See Introduction, pp. 13–15.
- 19 *Somewhat of lust, somewhat of lore.* See Zeeman on Gower’s appropriation of “Amans, his love, his text and all texts of courtly love into an exemplum of worldly uncertainty and deceit” (“Framing Narrative,” p. 223). *Lust*, she suggests, denotes desire, the feeling of pleasure and delight, but also the object of desire and something causing pleasure. The shift of the narrator from *auctor* to Amans engages the reader in the pleasure of narrative, while the conversion of the lover into the old man in Book 8 brutally subverts the courtly narrative as a deceit from which there is no “recoverir” (pp. 231–32, with reference to 8.2443).
- 22 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic in principio declarat qualiter in anno Regis Ricardi secundi sexto decimo Iohannes Gower presentem libellum composuit et finaliter compleuit, quem strenuissimo domino suo domino Henrico de Lancastria tunc Derbeie Comiti cum omni reuerencia specialiter destinauit.* [Here in the beginning he declares how in the sixteenth year of King Richard II John Gower composed and ultimately completed the present little book, which he especially designated with all reverence for the most vigorous lord, his lord Henry of Lancaster, at that time Earl of Derby.] This Latin inscription is found in only five MSS, and appears to be a late addition, after the establishing of the third recension, though not necessarily in third recension copies. It does *not* occur, however, in Fairfax 3. Olsson points out that what is important here is the fact that the note replaces a gloss at Prol.34 of the first recension, which read: “John Gower . . . most zealously compiled the present little book, like a honeycomb gathered from various flowers” (see full text of the gloss below, at the end of the following note). Olsson suggests that the shift from *compilauit* to *compleuit* (from compilation to composition) may indicate a shift in Gower’s conception of his work as he puts aside the earlier sense of himself as a *compilator* gathering flowers of wisdom from the past to consider himself more confidently in the role of *auctor* (*Structures of Conversion*, pp. 5–11). Nicholson (“Dedications,” pp. 171–74),

on the other hand, suggests that the Latin note was added by Gower or a scribe long after the original presentation to Henry, and thus the gloss gives a misleading account of the history of *CA*.

- 24 *A bok for Engelondes sake.* Aers (“Reflections on Gower as ‘Sapiens in Ethics and Politics’”) sees in the phrase an epitome of Gower’s attack on ecclesiastical failure. Aers suggests that Gower is attempting to persuade lay power, especially that of the sovereign (line 25), that what was destructive of the church was also subversive of royal power, and that “the sovereign needed the wholehearted support of the church. . . . The *auctor* of the Prologue and Genius in Book II [with his attack on the papacy] develop a radical critique of the actually existing church combined with a defence of the secular sovereign’s role in challenging the ecclesiastical hierarchy when it is judged to be in serious error” (p. 196).
- 24–92 These lines are found only in third recension MSS. That is, they must have been written c. 1392 when Gower rededicated the poem to Henry of Lancaster, count of Derby. Nicholson (“Dedications”) argues that the change in text represents the honoring of a patron, not some disenchanted transfer of allegiance from Richard to the count of Derby; others have seen evidences of disappointment in Richard (e.g., Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, pp. 7–9; “Politics and Psychology,” pp. 224–38; Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*, pp. 109–10; and Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, pp. 297–99). The majority of the MSS include the Richard citation here marked as *24–*92, rather than the dedication to Henry that was introduced in 1392 as in the carefully corrected Fairfax 3 MS. But the earlier dedication continued to be copied after 1392, almost certainly with Gower’s approval. Thus I have placed the first dedication as a parallel text in this edition. For further comment see note to Prol.25, below. On Gower as a Lancastrian advocate, see Staley, *Languages of Power*, pp. 351–55.
- *24–*25 *book . . . bilongeth.* N.b. spelling differences here as juxtaposed to the spelling of the Fairfax scribe. Macaulay uses Bodley 294 as the text for the Ricardian version, as do I. He allows that the spelling in his edition has been “slightly normalized” (2:457), which is an understatement. I have followed the spelling of Bodley 294 as an antidote to any notion that the spelling of the Fairfax 3 scribe necessarily equates with Gower’s.
- 25 *The yer sextente of Kyng Richard.* Gower completed his first version of *CA* during or prior to the fourteenth year of Richard’s reign. Although some portions of the poem may have been written four or five years or perhaps even seven years earlier, when Chaucer was working on *TC* and beginning *LGW*, the Prologue of *CA* may have been completed later. In that first version, lines *24–*92 tell of Gower’s boarding of the royal barge and the king’s requesting that he write the poem, which the poet agrees to do despite ill health (*79–*80), out of “ligeance” and “obeissance” (lines *25–*26) to his king. By 1392, the sixteenth year of Richard’s reign, Gower rewrote this beginning and conclusion of the poem, deleting the king’s commission here and the ending of the poem in praise of Richard’s worthiness, and dedicated the poem to Henry of Lancaster (see Prol. 81–92 and the Latin postscript to Book 8), even as much as seven years before Henry would become king. (See Mac 2:cxxvii–clxx, for a description of most of

the known MSS and an account of the revisions; see Fisher, *John Gower*, pp. 116–17, for discussion of the revisions in their historical setting.) The politics underlying the revision are not known. Perhaps Gower became disenchanted with Richard's behavior as king at the time of the king's harsh treatment of London officials earlier in 1392. That he sees hope for England in a man like Henry of Lancaster so long before he would return from exile to "save" England seems clairvoyant, though it is quite possible that Gower meant only for the Fairfax 3 version of *CA* to be a compliment to Henry and that recopying of the earlier recensions continued with the poet's approval.

*33

That his corone longe stonde. This line, especially, resonates in its omission from the third recension, where Gower speaks of time reversing itself as it yearns for the good rule of one like Henry of Lancaster. In the *Tripartite Chronicle*, Gower, perhaps anachronistically, sees Richard's misbehavior reaching back to 1392 and earlier as he quite boldly speaks of not only shortening but ending Richard's reign.

*34–*35

☞ **Latin marginalia:** Inserted between lines *34–*35 in MS Bodley 294, a second recension MS which has been my copy-text for lines *24–*92, is a Latin summary: *Hic declarat in primis qualiter ob reuerenciam serenissimi principis domini sui [Regis Anglie Ricardi secundi] totus suus humilis Iohannes Gower, licet graui infirmitate diu multipliciter fatigatus, huius opusculi labores suscipere non recusauit, sed tanquam fauum ex variis floribus recollectum, presentem libellum ex variis cronicis, historiis, poetarum philosophorumque dictis, quatenus sibi infirmitas permisit, studiosissime compilauit.* [Here he declares particularly how, because of reverence of the most serene prince, his lord king of England Richard II, his own and humble John Gower, although long wearied in many ways by grave illness, did not refuse to take up the labors of this little work, but instead has most zealously compiled the present little book from various chronicles, histories, and sayings of poets and philosophers, like a honeycomb gathered from various flowers, to the extent that his infirmity allowed him.] In some first and second recension MSS, e.g., Cambridge University Library Mm 2.21, the Latin note appears in the margin, though the practice of inserting marginal prose summaries into the text itself, just as the Latin verse epigrams appear in the text, is common in many of the later MSS, even though the insertion disrupts the sense and syntax of the English verse. Usually the Latin insertions are written in a different colored ink, as here. On the *variis floribus* trope as evidence of Gower's initial regard for his work as *compilatio*, a sort of anthology of purposeful writing from former days, see Olsson, *Structures of Conversion*, pp. 5–11.

*37

newe Troye. Gower flatters Richard and the kingdom with the allusion to London as the "new Troye," as if to identify a renaissance of ancient culture of which they are the heart. The designation was encouraged by Edward III and Richard II, as part of the celebration of the new vernacular culture surpassing that of France or even Italy. The term evolves from the mythography of Geoffrey of Monmouth, since the Trojan descendant Brutus founded his kingdom on the happy island. Contemporary romances based on Geoffrey, such as *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*, impress their audience with the superiority of Arthur's culture to that of Rome or France. See note to Latin verses i, above.

- *45 *He bad me come into his barge.* For speculation against the historicity of the meeting on the Thames, see Grady, “Gower’s Boat.” But see Staley, *Languages of Power*, pp. 16–17.
- 52 *burel clerk.* Literally, one dressed in coarse clothing — hence common or ignorant; possibly a lay clerk, though more likely an oxymoron (secular-religious). See Galloway, “Gower in His Most Learned Role,” on the unusual posture of secular learnedness that Gower cultivates.
- 59 *neweth every dai.* See Olsson, *Structures of Conversion*, pp. 10 ff., on Gower’s concept of the value of reading and of the past as new ideas come out of old works. The idea is intimately linked to his technique of *compilatio*, which becomes a means of invention rather than encyclopedic accumulation. The retelling converts dead ideas to living ones for the audience as well as for Amans. Olsson goes on to suggest that this process of perpetual renewal provides an interconnectedness between Gower’s earlier writings and *CA* (pp. 16 ff.). Compare Chaucer’s “For out of olde feldes, as men seyth, / Cometh al this newe corn from yer to yere” (*PF* lines 22–23).
- 60 *So as I can, so as I mai.* Proverbial: “As I am able, so will I do.” Not in Whiting, though Tilley, *Dictionary of Proverbs*, offers the variant: “Men must do as they may (can), not as they would” (M554).
- 61–62 Although the allusion to the poet’s illness enhances the Prologue’s theme of the degenerating world and thus anticipates the conclusion to the poem where the poet rejects mundane love because of his decrepitude, biographers generally agree that Gower was in fact in ill health during his later years. He had retired from public life some fifteen years earlier and was now over sixty years old. It is noteworthy that this couplet alone is found in both the first and third recensions (compare *79–*80). Gower changed the dedication, but not the reference to his illness.
- 67 *to wisdom al belongeth.* Simpson argues that the branch of wisdom to which Gower is referring is that of the stoic and moral philosophers (Socrates, Seneca, and Boethius), who, according to Robert Holcot’s third kind of *sapientia* in his *Commentum super librum sapientiae*, define *sapientia* as “the collection of intellectual and moral powers” (“Ironic Incongruence,” pp. 618–19).
- 72 *bot the god alone.* Conceivably the sense might be “God alone.” But Macaulay (2:459) notes the preeminence of locutions such as “the god” (i.e., the good) in 2:594, and “the vertu” (Prol.116), “the manhode” (Prol.260), “the man” (Prol.546, 582), and “[t]he charité” (Prol.319), etc. See also “the vertu and the vice” (Prol.79). The placement of the article reflects a French affectation. The implication seems deterministic, as if the good know by virtue of their goodness. See Mark 4:11–12, where the good see and hear the mysteries of God, but to others (those outside the faith) things happen in parables.
- 77 ff. Macaulay suggests that in lines 77 ff. Gower alludes to Book 7, which deals with the instruction of great men. He glosses the lines to read: “I shall make a discourse also with regard to those who are in power, marking the distinction

between the virtues and the vices which belong to their office" (2:459). Certainly the sense of the lines is complex with respect to authority and submission (see marginal gloss to lines 77–80). Book 7 provides one context; but the lines might also be understood in terms of *CA* 8.2109–20, where the focus shifts from great men as power figures now to kingship as a psychological phenomenon. That is, in writing about love which has upset so many men he will in this "wise" (that is, in the mode of courtly romance) consider virtues and vices which have general significance to "great" men of all times. See Peck's discussion of 8.2109 ff. in *Kingship and Common Profit*, pp. 173–74, and his earlier edition (1967), pp. xxi–xxii.

81–87 *Bot for my wittes . . . amendement . . . is Henri named.* The modesty trope with deference to the patron is common in late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century literature, as the author presents his work as receptive to criticism.

*86–88 *in proverbe.* See Whiting W646.

Latin verses ii (before line 93). **Line 2:** *vertit in orbe* has punning implications difficult to translate in brief: *vertit* may mean "has overturned, destroyed," but also in context the rotation of Fortune's orb; *in orbe* may mean "on [Fortune's] wheel" or "in the world." The association between Fortune's *orbis* and the world's *orbis* is increasingly clear in the verse (as throughout Gower's poetry). "World-wheel" makes an effort to capture both the global sense and the pun on Fortune's inexorably turning wheel. Compare Chaucer's "Lak of Stedfastnesse" and "Fortune: Balade de Visage sanz Peinture." The idea of a "golden age" is a commonplace of ancient and medieval poetry; for Gower's likeliest models see Boethius, *Consolation* 2.m.5, and Jean de Meun, *RR*, lines 8381–9668. Compare Chaucer's "The Former Age." **Line 9:** For a different comparison to the chameleon, see *CA* 1.2698–2702.

94 *The tyme passed.* On Gower's nostalgic feel for the ancients and former days as an *ubi sunt* golden age, see Peter, *Complaint and Satire*, p. 70.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *De statu regnorum, vt dicunt, secundum temporalia, videlicet tempore regis Ricardi secundi anno regni sui sexto decimo.* [Concerning the status of kingdoms, as they say, in regard to worldly matters, in the time of King Richard II in the sixteenth year of his reign.]

113 *The word was lich to the conceite.* A phrase equivalent to Chaucer's "The wordes moote be cosyn to the dede" (*CT* I[A]742), which Chaucer attributes to Plato. The phrase is proverbial. See Whiting W645.

120 *in special.* "In its specifics, or singularities," or "in its details, or particularities." Gower frequently uses the term with philosophical precision, as if it marks features of the minor premise from which causation might be deduced. See Prol.165, 281, 383, 432, 572, 946. Boethius speaks of the confusion of humankind in terms of knowing and not knowing simultaneously: "while the soule is hidd in the cloude and in the derknesse of the membres of the body, it ne hath nat al foryeten itself, but it withholdeth the somme of things and lesith the *singularites*. Thanne who so that sekith sothnesse, he nis in neyther nother

habite, for he not nat al, ne he ne hath nat al foryeten; but yit hym remembreth the somme of thinges that he withholdeth, and axeth conseile, and retreith deepliche thinges iseyn byforne (that is to seyn, the grete somme in his mynde) so that he mowe *adden the parties* that he hath foryeten to thilke that he hath withholden" (Chaucer's *Boece*, 5.m.3.43–56; emphasis mine).

- 124 *comune vois*. Macaulay emends to *comun vois*. His emendation improves the meter. In his idealism, Gower imagines an innate voice of truth lying within the people of every society, like a God-given conscience which might be sounded in hard times despite the almost universal corruptions of sin and oppression. See Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit* (especially pp. xi–xxv), for discussion of the people and the common voice. Compare the proverb *vox populi vox dei*, which recurs in *MO* and *VC*. See Whiting V52–V54.
- 143 *Stonde in this world upon a weir*. *Weir* derives from Old Germanic **warra*, meaning “conflict,” “doubt,” “uncertainty.” N.b. OHG *werra*, MDu, MLG *werre*, ONF *wiere*, and OE and ME *wer(e)*. In ME its homonym *weir*, for a bog or stagnant water, provides a rich pun, as one who *stonde* in doubt is akin to one who stands on unstable ground or is “bogged down.” A second homonym, *were* (the past tense of the verb *to be*), provides a further pun, as if the newness of an idea passes, becomes lost, and the mind falls back into a forgetting. See Chaucer's *HF*, lines 970–82, for a similar use of the term. This wordplay is highly Boethian in its sense of place versus lack of steadfastness, a sensibility commonly implicit in the often-repeated main verb *to stand*, which is used philosophically several hundred times in *CA* (e.g., “evere stant . . . in doute” [Prol.562] or “stant evere upon debat” [Prol.567]). On uncertainty and mutability as philosophical concepts within the Prologue and Book 1, see Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*.
- 152–53 ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Apostolus. Regem honorificate* [The Apostle: “Honor the king” — 1 Peter 2:17]
- 155 *With al his herte and make hem chiere*. “And welcome them with all his heart.” Gower commonly places the conjunction in a medial position where we would require its position at the head of the clause. See also Prol.521, 756, and 1014. Macaulay cites Prol.759 as well, which is possible, though I have punctuated the sentence as if the first clause were an instance of enjambment and “wroghte” a transitive verb.
- 156 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Salomon. Omnia fac cum consilio* [Solomon: “Do all things with counsel”] *Fili sine consilio nihil facias, et post factum non paeniteberis* [My son, do nothing without counsel, and thou shalt not repent when thou hast done — Vulgate/Douai, Ecclesiasticus 32:24]. Macaulay (2:460) notes that Gower often cites Ecclesiasticus in *MO*, but the proverb is very common. Compare Chaucer's Miller's Tale (I[A]3529–30): “For thus seith Salomon, that was ful trewe: / ‘Werk al by conseil, and thou shalt nat rewe’”; and Merchant's Tale (IV[E]1485–86): “Wirk alle thyng by conseil . . . And thanne shalpow nat repente thee.” See Whiting C470. The proverb also occurs in The Tale of Melibee (VII[B²]1003) which Benson suggests is due to Albertanus of Brescia, *Lib.*

consolationis et consilii, a source for The Tale of Melibee.

- 167 *Among the men to geve pes.* Gower is alluding to the recurrent wars with France, Spain, and Scotland. A three-year truce had been made with France and Scotland in 1389, but, because of profiteering, it was not maintained. An attempt for a truce with Spain in the same year failed. Not until 1396, when Richard married the daughter of the king of France, was a firm truce established with the French.
- Latin verses iii** (before line 193). **Line 4:** Macaulay suggests the double virtue to be charity and chastity (2:460).
- 194–99 **Latin marginalia:** *De statu cleri, vt dicunt, secundum spiritualia, videlicet tempore Roberti Gibbonensis, qui nomen Clementis sibi sortitus est, tunc antipape.* [Concerning the status of the clergy, as they call them, in regard to spiritual matters, in the time of Robert of Geneva, who took to himself the name Clement, at that time the antipope.] In 1378 the Great Schism began, in which both Pope Urban VI (supported by the English) and Clement VII (supported by the French) were elected popes, in Rome and Avignon respectively; the schism did not end until 1418. Gower attacks the Avignon pope Clement also in *VC* 3.955–56. It may be a sign of his different anticipated audiences or different kinds of linguistic decorum that, although Gower discusses in English the moral point of the schism (below, lines 360–77), he names names only in Latin.
- 196 *Ensampler.* The term is a favorite of Gower in defining “a fitting vehicle for his personal philosophy by mirroring the complexities and interrelatedness of the microcosm and the macrocosm in its multileveled construction” (Shaw, “Gower’s Illustrative Tales,” p. 447). See Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*; Run-acres, “Art and Ethics”; and Mitchell, *Ethics and Exemplary Narrative*, on the diversity of rhetorical functions of “ensamples” in *CA* as Gower effects the transformation of sources for judiciously particularized situations.
- 204 *Simon.* Simon Magus, a Samaritan sorcerer mentioned in Acts 8:18–24. Simon offers money for purchasing the power of the Holy Spirit, but Peter rebukes him, condemning his iniquity. Hence, *simony*, the practice of buying or selling ecclesiastical preferment, benefices, emoluments, or sacred objects for personal gain. Simon’s name became synonymous with ecclesiastical corruption. See also line 241.
- 207–11 *Lumbard . . . withoute cure.* Lombardy, especially Milan and Lucca, was the banking center of Europe in the fourteenth century. The Lombards were so notorious as bankers, moneylenders, and pawnbrokers that their name came to denote such behavior in both Old French and Middle English (*OED*). Langland links Lombards and Jews to exemplify avarice in *Piers Plowman* B 5.238, and in C 4.193–94 he yokes merchants, “mytrede bysshopes,” Lombards, and Jews as enemies of Conscience. Lombard bankers were often employed as intermediaries in church and state transactions, which sometimes became confused. The Lombard’s refusal to make *eschange* alludes to King Richard’s dispute with London when city officials would not lend revenue to the king but would lend to the Lombards. Macaulay notes that “the ‘letter’ referred to [in

line 209] is the papal provision, or perhaps the letter of request addressed to the pope in favour of a particular person" (2:461). Gower makes a similar complaint in *VC* 3.1375 ff. (See also *CA* 2.2093 ff.) For full discussion of the relationship of the Lombard bankers to English kings in the previous century, see Kaeuper, *Bankers to the Crown*.

- 237–38 *goode . . . goode. Rime équivoque*, where the poet repeats words or portions of words with punning effect (compare *rime riche*), and metonymic structures are preeminent features of Gower's rhetoric and the basis of much of its wit and innuendo. For discussion of the devices and their effects upon the poem's texture see Olsen, "Betwene Ernest and Game," pp. 33–69. For a *tour de force* example of the device see 5.79–90.
- 247 *lawe positif*. Positive law refers to any law which is arbitrarily instituted; it is customarily classified as distinct from divine law and natural law. Gower's point is that the church has departed from its own regulation. It is perhaps noteworthy that under positive law fell the selling of indulgences, pardons, trentals, and the like, a jurisdiction that was much abused. Chaucer satirizes the manipulations of such laws in *The Friar's Tale*, *The Summoner's Tale*, and *The Pardoner's Tale*. See also *Piers Plowman* B 7.168–95 and *VC* 3.227 ff.
- 266–77 "The allusion is to the circumstances of the campaign of the Bishop of Norwich in 1385; cf. *Vox Clam.* iii. 373 (margin), and see Froissart (ed. Lettenhove [Brussels, 1879]), vol. x. p. 207" (Mac 2:461–62).
- 284 *Gregoire*. The allusion is to Gregory I's *Pastoral Care* 1.8, 9. (See *PL* 76.1128.)
- 298–305 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Gregorius. Terrenis lucris inhiant, honore prelacie gaudent, et non vt prosint, set vt presint, episcopatum desiderant.* [Gregory: "They gulp down worldly riches, rejoice in the honor of the prelacy and desire a bishopric, not to be a help but to be the head."] Macaulay observes that the passage is taken loosely from Gregory's *Homilies on the Gospel*, printed in *PL* 76:1128 and *Regula Pastoralis* 2.6. See his note (2:462).
- 329 *Ethna*. Mt. Etna, the Sicilian volcano (the highest in Europe, over 10,000 feet), frequently cited in classical sources from Thucydides to Lucretius and repeatedly used in Gower as a metaphor of the explosive fires of Envy. See *CA* 2.20, 163, 2337, 5.1289, and so on. Perhaps Gower takes the figure from Ovid, *Met.* 8.868, though references abound in all mythographers.
- 331 Gower refers to the papal dispute between Clement VII at Avignon and Boniface IX at Rome, both of whom claimed the allegiance of Christendom. He sees the schism in the head of the church as responsible for schismatic heresies such as Lollardry throughout the clergy.
- 349 *Lollardie*. A derogatory term implicating Christian fundamentalists who, following the views of Wyclif and promulgating the first straight translation of the Bible into English since the Norman Conquest, challenged the authority of the priesthood and the efficacy of the sacraments.
- 369 *For trow the mot stonde ate laste*. Proverbial. See Whiting T509.

- 389 *ther I love, ther I holde.* Proverbial. See Whiting L571. The sense is that one is loyal to what one loves and that that may be the best “defence” (line 388).
- 434–36 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qui vocatur a deo tanquam Aaron.* [“Who is called by God, like Aaron” — Hebrews 5:4]. Aaron was the articulate priest, chosen by God to assist his brother Moses in guiding the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the desert. The full passage (Hebrews 5:1–6) refers to those who choose themselves for the priesthood versus those chosen by God. See Exodus 4:14. In Gower’s day, Hebrews was thought to have been written by St. Paul.
- 462 ff. *betwen ernest and game.* Gower’s objection is to evasiveness by ecclesiasts who turn moral issues into word games with which to advantage their worldly estates. They use fiction (“holy tales”) for harm rather than common profit.
- 484 *made ferst the mone.* I.e., created the first sphere, beneath which is the chaos of the world (see line 142), the sublunar realm of shadows, doubts, sloth, greed, and such confusions that so afflict the church these days.
- 491–92 *For every man his eghne werkes / Schal bere.* Proverbial. See Whiting M79.
- 496 *mirour of ensamplerie.* Good “clerkes” (line 492) reflect the “goodnesse” of “the hyhe God” (line 485), and, thus, though in the realm of sublunar chaos, provide good example of ordinances between “the men and the Godhiede” (line 498).
- Latin verses iv** (before line 499). **Line 1:** *Vulgaris populus . . .* The tone of these verses is akin to that of the first book of *VC*, where Gower assails the people for becoming destructively willful during the Rising of 1381.
- 504–07 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De statu plebis ut dicunt, secundum accidencium mutabilia.* [Concerning the status of the people, as they say, in regard to the changeability of events.]
- 511 *Wher lawe lacketh, errour groweth.* Proverbial. See Whiting L109.
- 518–19 *And therupon his iugement / Gifft every man in sondry wise.* “And thereupon every man gives his judgment in diverse ways.”
- 529–43 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota contra hoc, quod aliqui sortem fortune, aliqui influenciam planetarum ponunt, per quod, vt dicitur, rerum euentus necessario contingit. Set pocius dicendum est, quod ea que nos prospera et aduersa in hoc mundo vocamus, secundum merita et demerita hominum digno dei iudicio proveniunt.* [Note against this, that some posit the chance of fortune, some the influence of planets, as the means by which, as is said, the outcome of things is contingent on necessity. But it should rather be said that those things we call prosperity and adversity in this world devolve according to the merit or demerits of human beings, by the worthy judgment of God.]
- 567–71 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Boicius. O quam dulcendo humane vite multa amaritudine aspersa est.* [Boethius: “O how the sweetness of human life is stained by much bitterness.”] See *Consolation 2.pr.4*. Gower’s rendition simplifies the wording.

Latin verses v (before line 585). **Line 1:** *Prosper et . . .* The vision of Nebuchadnezzar is frequently depicted at this point in MSS which have miniatures at or near the beginning of *CA* (see illustrations 2 and 4). Gower's account of the vision is based on Daniel 2:19–45, though Gower expands Daniel's commentary anachronistically (lines 633–821) in order to comment on the decadence of contemporary history. See *VC* 7, where he uses the same biblical device. For discussion see Introduction, pp. 11–13, and Peck, "John Gower and the Book of Daniel."

- 591–608 ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic in prologo tractat de Statua illa, quam Rex Nabugodonosor viderat in sompnis, cuius caput aureum, pectus argenteum, venter eneus, tibiae ferree, pedum vero quedam pars ferrea, quedam fictilis videbatur, sub qua membrorum diuersitate secundum Danielis exposicionem huius mundi variacio figurabatur.* [Here in the Prologue he discourses about that Statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had seen in dreams, whose head was gold, chest silver, stomach brass, legs iron, but whose feet were some part iron, some part clay, through which diversity of members, according to Daniel's exposition, the variation of this world is figured.] See Daniel 2:31–45. The passage was a common locus for medieval historical allegory.
- 617–24 ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic narrat vterius de quodam lapide grandi, qui, vt in dicto sompnio videbatur, ab excuso monte super statuam corruens ipsam quasi in nichilum penitus contruit.* [Here he narrates further concerning the certain great stone, which, as appeared in the said dream, rushed from a high mountain onto the statue and utterly crushed it almost to nothing.]
- 619 of sodein aventure. Gower treats fortune (*aventure*) as a demonstrative component of God's will, an important counterforce to the classical notion of the degeneration of time.
- 626–30 ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur de interpretacione sompnii, et primo dicit de significacione capitis aurei.* [Here he speaks concerning the interpretation of the dream, and first he speaks concerning the interpretation of the head of gold.]
- 635–39 ☞ **Latin marginalia.** Brief Latin directors at the appropriate lines: line 635: *De pectore argenteo* [Concerning the silver chest]; line 637: *De ventre eneo* [Concerning the brass stomach]; line 639: *De tibieis ferreis* [Concerning the iron legs].
- 641 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *De significacione pedum, qui ex duabus materiis discordantibus adinuicem diuisi extiterant.* [Concerning the significance of the feet, which exist in division because of the two mutually discordant materials.]
- 641–42 *the werste of everydel / Is last.* Proverbial. See variants in Tilley W918 and W911. The saying is congruent with an entropic theory of history, one which Daniel counters with his theory of divine purpose that he proceeds to explicate.
- 651–54 ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *De lapidis statuam confringentis significacione.* [Concerning the significance of the stone shattering the statue.]
- 658 *the laste.* Gower projects an apocalyptic conclusion to the old world, after which the new age of the Parousia shall begin.

- 661–69 ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic consequenter scribit qualiter huius seculi regna variis mutationibus, prout in dicta statua figurabatur, secundum temporum distincções sencibiliter hactenus diminuuntur.* [Here consequently he writes how the kingdoms of this world, because of various mutations, just as they are figured in the said statue, are perceptibly diminished in accord with each distinction of historical times right up to the present.]
- 663 *thus expondeth Daniel.* Daniel's explication satisfies Nebuchadnezzar's concern by providing meaning to the king's otherwise depressing vision of the degeneration of time, where worse moves to worst.
- 670–76 ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *De seculo aureo, quod in capite statue designatum est, a tempore ipsius Nabugodonosor Regis Caldee usque in regnum Ciri Regis Persarum.* [Concerning the golden age, which is designated in the statue's head, from the time of that Nebuchadnezzar, King of Chaldea, up to the kingdom of Cyrus, King of the Persians.]
- 688–94 ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *De seculo argenteo, quod in pectore designatum est, a tempore ipsius Regis Ciri usque in regnum Alexandri Regis Macedonie.* [Concerning the silver age, which is designated in the chest from the time of King Cyrus up to the kingdom of Alexander, King of Macedonia.]
- 698 *soffre thei that nedes mote.* Proverbial. Variant of Whiting N61. See 1.1714 and 8.1020.
- 699–705 ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *De seculo eneo, quod in ventre designatum est, a tempore ipsius Alexandri usque in regnum Iulii Romanorum Imperatoris.* [Concerning the age of brass, which is designated in the belly, from the time of that Alexander up to the kingdom of Julius, Emperor of the Romans.]
- 731–37 ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *De seculo ferreo, quod in tibis designatum est, a tempore Iulii usque in regnum Karoli magni Regis Francorum.* [Concerning the age of iron, which is designated in the legs, from the time of Julius up to the kingdom of Charles the Great, King of the Franks.]
- 745 ff. “It is hardly necessary to point out that our author's history is here incorrect. Charlemagne was not called in against the Emperor Leo, who died in the year before he was born, but against the Lombards by Adrian I, and then against the rebellious citizens of Rome by Leo III, on which latter occasion he received the imperial crown” (Mac 2:464). Gower is following Brunetto Latini's account in the *Trésor*.
- 759 *wise; and.* See note to line 155.
- 772 ff. Macaulay notes (2:464) that “Here again the story is historically inaccurate, but it is not worthwhile to set it straight.” Gower's historicist/ethical point is plainly evident, despite the deficiency of historical accuracy.
- 779–806 ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *De seculo nouissimis iam temporibus ad similitudinem pedum in discordiam lapsò et diuiso, quod post decessum ipsius Karoli, cum imperium Romanorum in manus Longobardorum peruererat, tempore Alberti et Berengarii incepit: nam ob eorum diuisionem contigit, vt Almanni imperatoriam adepti sunt maiestatem. In*

cuius solium quendam principem theotonicum Othonem nomine sublimari primitus constituerunt. Et ab illo regno incipiente diuisio per vniuersum orbem in posteros concreuit, vnde nos ad alterutrum diuisi huius seculi consummacionem iam ultimi expectamus. [Concerning the age of the most recent times, in the likeness of the feet, fallen and divided in discord, which began after the passing of that Charles, when the Roman Empire fell to the hands of the Lombards, in the time of Albert and Berengar: for on their account division occurred as the Germans seized the imperial majesty. In this throne they caused to be raised up a certain Teutonic prince, Otto by name. And from the inception of this kingdom, division hardened through the whole world for subsequent generations, whence we expect from one or the other of the divisions the end of this present, last age.]

- 851–52 *divisioun . . . moder of confusioun.* On *divisioun* as a moral crux in *CA* see Introduction, pp. 11–13. Also see White, “Division and Failure,” p. 600, and Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, pp. 14–22 and 32–35. Right use of memory is the best remedy for division, which is, ultimately, a kind of forgetting. See Chandler on three types of remembering — confession, tales, and spiritual memory — that “work to reunite Amans’ divided self” (“Memory and Unity,” p. 18).
- 881–83 *Th’apostel writ . . . Th’ende of the world.* Macaulay (2:465) sees an allusion here to St. Paul, 1 Corinthians 10:11–12: “These things . . . are written for our correction, upon whom the ends of the world are come . . . let him take heed lest he fall.”
- 881–85 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic dicit secundum apostolum, quod nos sumus in quos fines seculi deuenerunt.* [Here he speaks in accord with the Apostle, that we are “those upon whom the end of the world has come.”] See 1 Corinthians 10:11–12: “these things . . . are written for our correction, upon whom the ends of the world are come. . . . [L]et him take heed lest he fall.” N.b. the apocalyptic overtones of the various references to the world divided against itself in wars, especially lines 883–904 and 1029–44.
- 904 *Wher dedly werre is take on honde.* The first of Gower’s antiwar assertions, which remain prominent to the end of his life. See his last English poem *In Praise of Peace* (ed. Livingston).
- 910 ff. See *MO*, lines 26605 ff. and *VC* 7.509 ff. on the corruption of all creation due to man’s fall.
- 918–23 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic scribit quod ex diuisionis passione singula creata detrimentum corruptibile paciuntur.* [Here he writes that from the suffering of and desire for division, all created things suffer a corrupting diminishment.] “Suffering of and desire for division” seeks to translate *divisionis passione*. “Suffering” is the routine sense of *passio* elsewhere to mean, like ME “passioun,” both “desire to sin” as well as “suffering” (see, e.g., the marginal Latin at line 9). Thus it is likely that an ambiguous sense of “sinful desire for” as well as “suffering of” obtains in the Latin as in the corresponding English here: “man hath passioun / Of seknesse” (Prol.915–16). This ambiguity, however, is absent from the verb for the second Latin clause, *paciuntur*, as from the corresponding English: “So soffren othre creatures” (Prol.917).

- 945 ff. *Gregoire in his Moral. Moralia VI.16 (PL 75.740).* Macaulay (2:465) notes that this idea of man as a microcosm is one of Gower's favorite citations. Gregory is commenting on Job 5:10 ("Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields" — Douai), where he gives the *sensus mysticus* of *universa* as "man." See *MO*, lines 26869 ff., which attributes the "man as a microcosm" idea to Aristotle (see especially line 26929), and *VC* 7.639 ff. Gregory's passage is also quoted in *RR*, lines 19246 ff. See Fox, *Mediaeval Sciences*, pp. 18–19.
- 949 ff. Following Gregory's elaboration of Job 5:10 (see note to lines 945 ff., above), Gower delineates the medieval concept of a tripartite soul, with intelligence akin to the divine, feeling akin to that of the animal, and growth to that of the vegetable.
- 967–70 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic dicit secundum euangelium, quod omne regnum in se divi- sum desolabitur.* [Here he speaks in accord with the Evangelist, that "every kingdom divided against itself will be devastated."] See Luke 11:17, with the present tense changed to future.
- 971–72 *Division aboven alle / . . . makth the world to falle.* On division as the primary effect of the Fall that leaves the psyche stranded amidst contingencies, see Introduction, pp. 11–13, and White ("Division and Failure," pp. 601–03, 607 ff.) on such bifurcations as soul and body, reason and its antagonists (sex, desire, appetite, complexion, need, etc.), and other forms of fragmentation both social and personal.
- 974–77 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Quod ex sue complexionis materia diuisus homo mortalis existat.* [That, divided because of the components of his constitution, every human being is mortal.]
- 975–79 *complexioun / Is mad upon divisioun . . . the contraire of his astat.* Macaulay: "That is, the opposite elements in his constitution ('complexioun') are so much at variance with one another" (2:465).
- 978 *He mot be verray kynde dye.* Gower's theory of death and the corruptibility of mixed elements is in agreement with medical theories of his day. Averroës, following Aristotle's thesis that all living things consist of mixtures of the primal elements, argues that if bodies were one and the same there would be no contrariety corrupting them. But unlike stones, which have one nature and are permanent, the body is composed of various natures and thus decays (*Avicennae Cantica cum Averrois Commentariis*, I.19. See Fox, *Mediaeval Sciences*, p. 34.) Plato explains this idea of corruptibility fully in *Timaeus* 81c–82b. The *Timaeus* was the one Platonic dialogue that was well known and honored in the Latin West during the Middle Ages. Although Gower probably did not know the *Timaeus* firsthand, he certainly knew of it.
- 982 *no final pes be nome.* The line anticipates Gower's conclusion where Venus gives Amans a "peire of bedes" upon which is written "*Por reposer*" (8.2904–07), putting to rest his internal conflict, giving him back his true name "John Gower," and restoring his quiet vision of "pes" (see below, 8.2913 ff.).

- 989–90 *he may noght laste, / That he ne deieh ate laste.* “He may not survive / But that he dies in the end.” The *noght* . . . *That* . . . *ne* idiom occurs repeatedly in Gower, where *ne* functions not as a negative but as a calque with *That* to form a relative conjunction “But that,” “Than that.” See *MED* *that* conj. 2c on *that ne* constructions that the *MED* glosses as “lest.” Gower’s additional *noght* alters the sense somewhat. See notes to 1.786–88, 1.2046–47, and 1.2091–93.
- 991–96 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Quod homo ex corporis et anime condicione diuisus, sicut saluationis ita et dampnacionis aptitudinem ingreditur.* [That every human being, divided because of the condition of body and soul, is capable of salvation as much as of damnation.]
- 1001 *The sieble hath wonne the victoire.* In sin, beginning with the fall from Paradise (Prol.1005), the proverb “the weaker has the worse” becomes inverted (so it seems). See Whiting W131 and F110.
- 1002–06 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Adam a statu innocencie diuisus a paradiso voluptatis in terram laboris peccator projectus est.* [How Adam, divided from a state of innocence as a sinner, was cast from a paradise of pleasure into a world of labor.]
- 1005 *ferst began in Paradis.* Sin began in Paradise, but it is noteworthy that Gower does not place the blame for divisiveness on Eve. The Latin marginalia at 1002 mentions Adam’s division from innocence, but the Fall is not otherwise linked to gender problems.
- 1011–17 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter populi per vniuersum orbem a cultura dei diuisi, Noe cum sua sequela dumtaxat exceptis, diluio interierunt.* [How the populace of the entire earth, divided from the worship of God, were destroyed in the flood, except for Noah with his following.]
- 1013 *sende.* A preterit form. Macaulay cites 1.851, 992, 1452, etc., as parallel examples (2:466).
- 1018–26 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter in edificacione turris Babel, quam in dei contemptum Nembrot erexit, lingua prius hebraica in varias linguas celica vindicta diuidebatur.* [How in the building of the Tower of Babel, which Nembrot erected in contempt of God, language, at first Hebrew, was divided by heavenly retribution into various languages.]
- 1022–25 On the “poetic Babel” that Gower, a master at multiple voicing, introduces in this passage — a babel of voices that oppose and even contradict, so that the mind can scarcely contain the contradictions — see Echard, “With Carmen’s Help,” p. 30. Elsewhere in her essay Echard stresses Gower’s awareness of “the uncontrollable nature of text, in both its intellectual complexities and physical manifestations” (p. 10). Throughout the *Confessio* “language — all language — is shown to be radically unreliable” (p. 9).
- 1031–41 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter mundus, qui in statu diuisionis quasi cotidianis presenti tempore vexatur flagellis, a lapide superueniente, id est a divina potencia vsque ad resolucionem omnis carnis subito conterentur.* [How the world, which is almost daily in a state of division at the present time and is ravaged by punishments,

- will, by the stone coming down on it (that is, by divine power), be suddenly crushed, destroying all flesh.]
- 1045–52 One reason love is so powerful in Gower's scheme is that it has the capacity, when experienced wholesomely, to heal division. See lines 967–1044.
- 1047 *loveday*. A day set for making peaceful settlement of deadlocked disputes.
- 1053–54 *wolde God . . . An other such as Arion*. Echard, "With Carmen's Help," pp. 29–30, notes the conditional tense as part of her argument that Gower is keenly aware of the inability of language, even that of the poet, to contain authority in any stable way. Echard agrees with Yeager (*John Gower's Poetic*) that Gower may be in search of a new Arion, but that Gower knows how difficult it will be to find him. The story of Arion first appears in Herodotus 1.24. Also see Ovid, *Fasti*, 2.79–118 ff., Hyginus, *Fables* 194, and Solinus, cap. 11, for a third-century account of Arion as a dolphin. The story is well known in the later Middle Ages and appears in collections of Latin moralized tales such as those described in the *British Museum Catalogue of Romances* and in some versions of the *Gesta Romanorum* (for example, see Oesterley, cap. 148). Gower ignores that part of the story which deals with the dolphin and concentrates on Arion the peacemaker to create an effect appropriately reminiscent of the peaceable kingdom in Isaia 11:1–10. See VC 1.i.1–124, for a description of what England might be like if it were to find its Arion. The figure of Arion, with his harp and sense of good measure, becomes a metaphor for the poet himself. See Yeager (*John Gower's Poetic*) for an extended analysis of Gower's Arion poetic. See also Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, pp. 22–23; and Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, p. 289.
- 1053–72 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic narrat exemplum de concordia et vnitate inter homines prouocanda; et dicit qualiter quidam Arion nuper Citharista ex sui cantus cithareque consona melodia tante virtutis extiterat, ut ipse non solum virum cum viro, set eciam leonem cum cerua, lupum cum agno, canem cum lepore, ipsum audientes vnanimiter absque vlla discordia adinvicem pacificauit.* [Here he tells a story about the stimulating of concord and unity among human beings: and he says how a certain Arion, a harper in recent times, was of such power and virtue because of the harmonious melody of his song and his harp that he pacified unanimously and without any discord those hearing him, not only mutually pacifying man with man, but even lion with deer, wolf with sheep, and hound with hare.]
- 1056 *good mesure*. The idea is Pythagorean and could allude to the harmonic ratio of sounds to each other in a well-tempered instrument, though more likely the sense is that the performer kept good rhythm.
- 1088 In his revisions of the first recension, Gower may have added ten lines. Macaulay (2:466) notes that Sidney College MS concludes the Prologue as follows:
- So were it gode at þis tide
Pat eueri man vpon his side
besowt and preied for þe pes
wiche is þe cause of al encres
of worschep and of werldis welþe

of hertis rest of soule helpe
 withouten pes stant no þing gode
 forthi to crist wiche sched his blode
 for pes beseketh alle men
 Amen amen amen amen.

Macaulay observes that the Sidney College MS is related to the Stafford MS, which is missing the conclusion to the Prologue. Had they been found in the Stafford MS, Macaulay suggests, “the authority of S would be conclusive in their favour.” The lines were printed by Caxton and Berthelet, with some variation in spelling.

EXPLANATORY NOTES TO BOOK 1

Illustration 3: Fairfax 3, fol. 8r. The Lover confesses to Genius. Variations on this drawing of Amans confessing to Genius are found in more than half the *CA* MSS. Only in Fairfax 3 and Harley 3869 does it appear at the head of Book 1. Usually it is placed after 1.202, as in Bodley 902 (Illustration 1), where the illumination depicts “Amans” as an old man that some have thought might represent the elderly poet. Macaulay (2:cxxxviii) sees a likeness between the portrait and the effigy on Gower’s tomb. See Griffiths, “*Confessio Amantis*: The Poem and Its Pictures,” p. 177, for a short account of twenty-seven MSS that contain or left space for pictures, especially the Dream of Precious Metals drawings and/or Amans and his confessor drawings. For comparison with Bodley 294, see illustration 5. The Fairfax 3 reproduction provides a good image of the placement of marginal glosses in our base text.

Latin verses i (before line 1). **Line 1:** *Naturatus amor*. The translation presented for the enigmatic and crucial phrase *naturatus amor* is informed by Winthrop Wetherbee’s discussion of this phrase (“Latin Structure and Vernacular Space”) in terms of the self-conflicting presentations of human love in Boethius, Alanus de Insulis, and Jean de Meun that Gower mines throughout the *CA*. Wetherbee remarks that Gower’s phrase “conveys a sense of scholastic authority that is belied by close scrutiny” (p. 7). Yet the translation here is also informed by an analogous phrase from medieval Latin discussions of Aristotle, *natura naturata*, which may be understood as “nature instantiated in specific forms of life,” or in a broader sense as the means by which nature has furthered its inherent purpose of creating life, as shown by twelfth-century Latin translations of Averroës’ Arabic commentary on Aristotle, the means by which Aristotle’s works were known in the West: “for this is the end of Nature, namely that it does not act except on account of something, just as artifice does not act except on account of something. Then [Aristotle] has declared that that on account of which, having been [specifically] instantiated [*naturata*], Nature acts, is seen to be the soul [or: life force, *anima*] in living things [*animalibus*]” (*Averrois Cordubensis Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis De Anima Libros*, ed. Crawford, p. 187). The teleological and instantiating freight of the medieval Aristotelian tradition of *natura naturata* has at least indirectly influenced Gower’s Latin, and perhaps more pervasively his historical and ethical outlook on nature and love, available to Gower in the works of the thirteenth-century popular pur-

veyers of medieval Aristotelianism, Brunetto Latini, Giles of Rome, and Bartholomaeus Anglicus, although none of these uses the phrase *natura naturata* or, less surprisingly, *naturatus amor* (Brunetto Latini comes close to the former when he defines Nature as “double: that which gives birth, and that which is born” [*une ki fet naistre, et une de ce ki est net*] — *Li Livres dou tresor* 3.52, ed. Carmody, p. 360). Significantly, elsewhere Gower novelly adapted the Latin verb *naturare* to English, evidently to mean “to give a species specific traits”: “He which natureth every kinde, / The myhti God” (*CA* 7.393–94). He is the only writer attested before the sixteenth century to have used this word in English. **Line 2:** *vnanimes concital esse feras*. The syntax is perfectly ambiguous, so the diametrically opposed alternate meanings have been printed in the translation itself. **Line 3:** *Huius enim mundi Princeps*. White (*Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, p. 219) notes that *huius princeps mundi* is also the title of the Devil.

Translation of the epigram is also assisted by the marginal gloss (see the next note), where Gower states that he is discussing “that love by which not only the human species but indeed every living thing is naturally subjected.” Yet an inherent contradiction and instability lies in the phrase, as Wetherbee correctly emphasizes: human love, in Gower’s and the medieval Christian perception of the post-lapsarian world, is the very thing that most resists harmony with Nature’s positive, pristine purposes. In the context of the *CA*, the two terms of the phrase resist reconciliation as few other pairings might. The radical ambiguity of the rest of Gower’s sentence emphasizes this irreconcilability.

9 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Postquam in Prologo tractatum hactenus existit, qualiter hodiernae condicionis diuisio caritatis dilectionem superauit, intendit auctor ad presens suum libellum, cuius nomen Confessio Amantis nuncupatur, componere de illo amore, a quo non solum humanum genus, sed etiam cuncta animancia naturaliter subiciuntur. Et quia nonnulli amantes ultra quam expedit desiderii passionibus crebro stimulantur, materia libri per totum super hiis specialius diffunditur.* [After he has set forth to this point the treatment in the Prologue of how the division of today’s condition has overcome the love of charity, the author presently intends to compose his little book, whose name is “The Confession of a Lover,” concerning that love by which not only the human species but indeed every living thing is naturally subjected. And since some lovers are often goaded by the passions of desire beyond what is appropriate, the matter of the book throughout is set forth for these especially.] For a picture of this gloss in the manuscript itself, see Illustration 3.

18–24

loves lawe is out of reule . . . ther is no man . . . that can / Of love tempre the mesure. See White, *Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, pp. 218–19, on the potency of desire that affects all people in defiance of Aristotelian ideas of balance and measure. *Loves lawe* (line 18) here equates with that *cupiditas* that Boethius says is born into all creatures that could lead to the true good but seldom does (*De cons.* 3.p2).

35

love is maister wher he wile. Proverbial. See Whiting L518.

59 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic quasi in persona aliorum, quos amor alligat, fingens se auctor esse Amantem, varias eorum passiones variis huius libri distincionibus per singula*

scribere proponit. [Here the author, fashioning himself to be the Lover as if in the role of those others whom love binds, proposes to write about their various passions one by one in the various sections of this book.] For discussion of this passage as Gower projects a persona and an epistemology of make-believe for his narrative, see Peck, “Phenomenology of Make Believe,” pp. 257 ff.

- 62 *I am miselven on of tho.* N.b., the Latin marginal gloss (above). From this point on, Gower projects a persona who is not simply a moral commentator on society but an embodiment of human stresses, a dramatic component of his “proof” (see line 61). In the Prologue he had announced that he would provide a “Mirour of ensamplerie” (Prol.496); henceforth the “ensample” will be complicated through a first-person drama as well as a textual one — an empirical mean between the abstract and the personal. See Spitzer, “Note on the Poetic and Empirical ‘I’ in Medieval Authors”; and Strohm, “Note on Gower’s Personas,” pp. 293–95. For discussion of the narrative of *CA* in terms of its framing devices, see Pearsall, “Gower’s Narrative Art”: “The poem as a whole gains enormously from the dramatic scheme, just as Gower himself gained from the freedom it gave him” (p. 477).
- 72 *To hem that ben lovers.* In defining a new dramatic function for his persona Gower likewise provides a dramatic role for his audience. On this love trope Staley raises the question “was Richard’s court during this period a place of love talk,” talk that was not simply a matter of sexual practice but rather a “language that expressed relationships of power?” (*Languages of Power*, p. 51). Compare love tropes in Usk, Chaucer, and the *Gawain*-poet (pp. 42–59).
- 79 *That every man ensample take.* On the philosophical premises of Gower’s use of examples for instruction, see notes to Prol.7, 196, and 1.1339–40. Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, using Alan de Lille’s *Anti-claudianus* as a text parallel in many ways with *CA*, explores Alan’s notion that narrative images provide the soul with a means of picturing itself (pp. 244–48). Such “ensamples” function as a kind of inducted “scientific” information by which the soul can place itself in the cosmos and society” (p. 230).
- 88 *jolif wo.* Compare *le jolif mal sanz cure* of Gower’s *Cinkante Balades* 13, line 24. The courtly phrase is a favorite. See also *CA* 6.84 and 8.2360, with variants such as “jolif peine” in 7.1910.
- Latin verses ii** (before line 93). **Line 1:** *Non ego . . .* Latin proverbs often list powerful or wise men deceived by women; see *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, lines 2416–28, for a Middle English rendition of this tradition. Gower’s passage resembles the longer discussion of lust’s power in the *Architrenius*, where Hercules, rare in other Latin proverbs of this kind, appears along with Sampson, Solomon, and Ulysses as a victim of Venus (7.116–33).
- 98 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic declarat materiam, dicens qualiter Cupido quodam ignito iaculo sui cordis memoriam graui vlcere perforauit, quod Venus percipiens ipsum, vt dicit, quasi in mortis articulo spasmatum, ad confitendum se Genio sacerdoti super amoris causa sic semivium specialiter commendauit.* [Here he declares the substance of his story, saying how Cupid pierced through the memory of his heart by means of a cer-

tain burning missile, leaving a serious wound; whereby Venus, perceiving him, as he states, twitching as if in his death throes, particularly recommended that, half-alive, he confess to Genius the priest about the topic of love.]

- 100–39 *in the monthe of Maii . . . And with that word I sawh anon / The kyng of love and gweene bothe.* The poet imagines a characteristic dream vision situation when, in the month of May, the dreamer sets out into a wood, prays while listening to the birds, and sleeps to dream of the King and Queen of Love; except that here the “dreamer/lover” never goes to sleep. But this is not to say that he is “awake,” either. As Olsson so aptly puts it, “The lover, though ‘awake,’ does not know he lives in a dream” (*Structures of Conversion*, p. 47).
- 124 [*Amans.*] The amanuensis of Fairfax 3 regularly places speech tags in the margin. The brackets indicate speech markers that do not appear in the MS but have been added to the edition for clarity.
- O thou Cupide, O thou Venus.* For discussion of Gower’s use of these amorous deities, see Tinkle, *Medieval Venuses and Cupids*, especially pp. 178–97, though her remarks throughout the book are germane.
- 138 *with that word I sawh anon.* The important thing to notice here is that ideas appear as visual personifications to the lover. On the prominence of visual imaginings in medieval thought processes see Kolve, *Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative*, especially pp. 24–42. See the Latin gloss on sight and hearing as doors of the mind (preceding 1.289) and Genius’ discussion of eyes and ears as the dominant intuitive senses. See also footnotes 29–31 in the Introduction.
- 140 *yhen wrothe.* The situation is similar in ways to Chaucer’s Prol. to *LGW*, where Cupid, the God of Love, with his queen, comes upon Geoffrey near the daisy and looks upon him with angry, piercing eyes. Chaucer’s queen is Alceste, rather than Venus, but in neither instance is Cupid presented as blind.
- 145 *herte rote.* *MED* glosses the term as the seat of the passions, or the vital center of life. Exactly what the anatomical designations might be is unclear. *MED* suggests the hollow of the heart or perhaps the “apex.” The conclusion to Plato’s *Timaeus* (91 a–e) describes a conduit that runs down the spine to the scrotum, from which living sperm, seeking egress, take their path. Conceivably the *herte rote* may extend even to that depth. In the *RR* (lines 1679–2008) Cupid shoots five arrows into the lover’s heart, two (Beauty and Simplicity) through the eye, and three (Courtesy, Company, and Fair Seeming) through the side or below the breast. This pattern seems evident in *CA* 1.144–45, where “A firy dart me thoghte he [Cupid] hente / And threw it thurgh myn herte rote.” If it enters through the side and lodges in the heart’s inner chamber that would precipitate a sympathetic response in the lower region. Another organ linked to the concept of *herte rote* is the “reines,” which are also regarded the seat of passions and can refer to the kidneys, heart, or the male generative organ (*MED* reine n.[2]. 2a and 2b). E.g., in the treatise *Sidrak and Bokkus* we learn that if a lecher overexerts his lechery, “Of his reynes he leseþ þe might. / Pan is þe seed feble and veyne / And to engendre haþ no mayne [strength]” (lines 6874–76 in Bodleian Laud MS 559). According to the Middle English version of *The*

Anatomy of Guy de Chauliae, “þe sperme takeþ þe sauour off þe harte, of þe liuer, and þe Reynes, and bi þe nerues þe whiche, be cause of delectacioun, descenden fro þe braines to þe ballockes” (ed. Wallner, p. 73). Similarly *The Prose Salernitan Questions* (c. 1200) observes: “The natural heat is . . . aroused by the psychic virtue, and by their combined action, the blood contained in the liver moves and in moving emits heat; from it there evaporates a smoky cloud which, when it has been made subtle, spreads from the liver to the heart. From the heart the spirit moves to the penis by means of the arteries and makes it stiffen” (see Jacquot and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, p. 83). That is, Cupid’s arrow piercing the side and lodging in the heart might thus be thought to affect the whole emotional system, from the chambers of the heart to the kidneys and male organs, the *herte rote*.

- 148–49 *source and welle / Of wel or wo*. Traditionally, Venus carries two cups, one sweet, the other bitter, from which the lover drinks; thus, in medieval courtly poetry she is the *source and welle* of the lover’s joy and/or pain.
- 161 *caitif*. It is noteworthy that two early MSS, Bodley 294 and Egerton 1991, identify the speaker here as *Iohn Gowere*, rather than *caitif*.
- 178 *Mi world stod on an other whiel*. Proverbial. See Whiting W208.
- 196 *O Genius myn oghne clerk*. The originals behind Gower’s Genius may be found in Jean de Meun’s portion of *RR* and Alanus de Insulis’ *De Planctu Naturae*. Gower’s Genius defines several voices in the poem. He is presented as an agent of memory who can compile and relate afresh the stories and materials of history; he is a creative agent, capable of formulating propositions according to nature and moral concepts as well; he is a priest of both the emotional and rational capacities of the individual, though his capacities as a philosopher are limited by the circumstances of the occasion; and he is usually benevolent in his role as intermediary between Amans, momentary situations, and Nature. See the Introduction, pp. 5–6, 7–10, 17, 18, 34. For further discussion of Genius, see Economou, “Character Genius”; Schueler, “Gower’s Characterization of Genius”; Nitzsche, *Genius Figure*; Baker, “Priesthood of Genius”; Wetherbee, “Theme of Imagination” and “Genius and Interpretation”; Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit* and “Problematics of Irony,” pp. 212–24; Olsson, *Structures of Conversion*, pp. 52–62; and Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, pp. 148–97.

Latin verses iii (before line 203). The “wound” of love (**line 4**) is a topos reaching far back in medieval and classical writing. A widely influential classical instance is Dido in *Aeneid* 4.1–2, and much French poetry elaborated the metaphor. Boethius’ *Consolation*, whose dialogue form was a direct model for *CA*, invokes throughout its first book the metaphor of the narrator’s “illness” of false love for the goods of Fortune, and Philosophy’s “cure” by means of the “medicine” of her teachings. At the end of *CA*, Gower revisits the same issues in English (8.3152–56). Simpson (*Sciences and the Self*, pp. 200–01) links this passage to Ovid’s *Remedias amoris* as a warning against love’s catastrophes.

- 203 *This worthi prest, this holy man.* On Genius as confessor to Amans, see Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, especially pp. 148–66 (“Genius, praecceptor amoris”). Simpson sees Genius and Amans as two aspects of a single person, with Genius as a figure of imagination and Amans as the will in an unstable relationship richly informed with Ovidian irony and what Gower calls elsewhere “double speche” (7.1733).
- 205 *Benedicité.* “Bless you.” The standard form of address of the priest to the one confessing, answered by the penitent with *Dominus*, “Lord [Father, I have sinned].”
- 209 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic dicit qualiter Genio pro Confessore sedenti prouolutus Amans ad confitendum se flexis genibus incuruatur, supplicans tamen, vt ad sui sensus informacionem confessor ille in dicendis opponere sibi benignius dignaretur.* [Here he tells how the Lover, bowed over, kneels on bent knees to confess to Genius seated as a confessor, beseeching nonetheless that, to inform his understanding, the Confessor would graciously deign to question him in matters that ought to be said.] For graphic representations of the idea see illustrations 1, 3, and 5. Pearsall (“Gower’s Latin,” pp. 22–24) reads this marginal commentary as a means to establish a clerical code that underlies much of the poem. See also Craun on Gower’s methodology in querying the deviant speaker (*Lies, Slander, and Obscenity*, pp. 131 ff.).
- 236 ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Sermo Genii sacerdotis super confessione ad Amantem.* [The sermon of Genius the priest to the Lover about confession.]
- 275–76 See note to 1.1339–40.
- 284 *trowthe hise wordes wol noght peinte.* Proverbial. See Whiting T515.
- Latin verses iv** (before line 289). The buried coin, *fossa talenta* (**line 4**), recalls the Gospel parable of the talents, where the sinful servant takes the talent his lord has given him and buries it in the earth (Matthew 25:14–30).
- 294 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic incipit confessio Amantis, cui de duobus precipue quinque sensuum, hoc est de visu et auditu, confessor pre ceteris opponit.* [Here begins the confession of the Lover, to whom the Confessor particularly inquires concerning two of the five senses, that is concerning sight and sound.]
- 299–308 This passage begins in the third person, then, by line 304, modulates into the voice of the confessor as he addresses Amans as “mi sone.” It is not until line 530 that the MS starts using marginal speech tags, though beside line 236 the marginal Latin gloss identifies the speakers, along with their activities.
- 304–08 See *Timaeus* 45b–47e for Plato’s explanation of why the eye is man’s principal sense organ and the ear next in importance. These two senses enable man to perceive the numbers, motions, harmonies, and rhythms of the universe, whereby the soul is illuminated. Plato ignores the other three senses entirely as agencies for illuminating the soul, although later (61d–68d) he discusses all five senses as part of man’s physical mechanism for understanding material phenomena. Plato’s premises constitute one basis for medieval preoccupations

with vision and harmony (see the Latin verses after *CA* 1.288). They also explain why Genius exorcises only these two of the Lover's five senses. They are the doors to his soul, which Genius hopes to restore. See Introduction, notes 25 and 26, for citation of medieval medical treatises linking the eye to the frontal lobe of the brain, where Imagination and Fantasy reside.

- 333 ff. Compare Ovid, *Met.* 3.130–259. Genius omits from the story Acteon's companions and his friendly gesture of giving them the rest of the day off, the account of Diana's disrobing, the efforts of the nymphs to hide their mistress from the eyes of the intruder, the throwing of water on Acteon to distract him, the catalog of hounds, Acteon's efforts to speak, and the debate of the gods on the justice of Diana's revenge. Genius adds the detail of Acteon's pride (1.341). Ovid puts the blame on Fortune, but Genius implies that Acteon might have turned his eye away had he chosen to do so (1.366). The conventional romance description of his entering the forest (1.352–60) suggests why he did not: he turns the enclosed garden (*hortus conclusus*) into a garden of delight and does not get out. Amans fares better, thanks to Genius, and, ultimately, accepts the trials of old age.
- 334 *touchende of mislok.* See Schutz's discussion of the issues of seeing in her analysis of the stories of Acteon and Medusa as mirror images of each other ("Absent and Present Images," pp. 108–15).
- 334 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic narrat Confessor exemplum de visu ab illicitis preseruando, dicens qualiter Acteon Cadmi Regis Thebarum nepos, dum in quadam Foresta venacionis causa spaciaretur, accidit vt ipse quendam fontem nemorosa arborum pulcritudine circumventum superveniens, vidi ibi Dianam cum suis Nymphis nudam in flumine balneantem; quam diligencius intuens oculos suos a muliebri nuditate nul latenter auertere volebat. Vnde indignata Diana ipsum in cerui figuram transformauit; quem canes propriae apprehendentes mortiferis dentibus penitus dilaniarunt.* [Here the Confessor relates an instructive example concerning the guarding of sight from illicit things, saying how Acteon the nephew of Cadmus the King of the Thebans, while he was walking in a certain forest to go hunting, happened to come upon a certain stream surrounded by the woodsy beauty of trees where he saw Diana nude with her nymphs bathing in the river, whom he carefully examined, not at all wishing to turn away his eyes from her womanly nudity. Wherefore Diana, indignant, transformed him into the form of a stag, whom his own dogs caught and tore to pieces with their deadly teeth.]
- 384 *Betre is to winke than to loke.* Proverbial. See Whiting W366.
- 389 ff. Compare Ovid, *Met.* 4.772–803. Gower is apparently using additional sources, however. Genius names Medusa's sisters, as Ovid does, though he calls Stheno, "Stellibon," and Euryale, "Suriale." Moreover, he combines the story of the Graeae, who share one tooth and one eye, with the story of the Gorgons. Macaulay (2:468) notes that this confusion appears in Boccaccio, *Genealogiae Deorum Gentilium* 10.10, which Gower may have known. Whether Gower follows Boccaccio or not, the mingling of the two stories is fortuitous for Genius' purpose in demonstrating the evil of "mislove" and the wisdom of looking well.

- 391 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit aliud exemplum de eodem, vbi dicit quod quidam princeps nomine Phorceus tres progenuit filias, Gorgones a vulgo nuncupatas, que vno partu exorte deformitatem monstrorum serpentinam obtinuerunt; quibus, cum in etatem peruererant, talis destinata fuerat natura, quod quicumque in eas aspiceret in lapidem subito mutabatur. Et sic quam plures incaute respicientes visis illis perierunt. Set Perseus miles clipeo Palladis gladioque Mercurii munitus eas extra montem Athlantis conhabitantes animo audaci absque sui periculo interfecit.* [Here he presents another instructive example about the same thing, where he says that a certain prince, Phorceus by name, bore three daughters, commonly called the Gorgons, who acquired the serpentine deformity of monsters from one aspect of their birth. For these, when they had come to maturity, nature had been destined in such ways that whoever should look at them was suddenly turned into a stone. And thus all those who incautiously glanced at them died at the sight. But Perseus, a knight furnished with the shield of Pallas and the sword of Mercury, with a bold spirit and without any danger to himself killed them as they were dwelling beyond Mount Athlans.]
- 423 *Lente him a swerd.* Macaulay notes that “Mercury’s sword is not mentioned either by Ovid or Boccaccio” (2:468).
- 463 ff. The legend of Aspidis derives from Psalm 57:5–6, which speaks of “the deaf asp that stoppeth her ears.” In his commentary on the psalm Augustine explains how the serpent can stop two ears with one tail; his suggestion is followed by Isidore in *Etymologies* 12.4, though neither mentions the carbuncle (see also *MO*, lines 15253–64). That detail may come from the legendary jewel in the toad’s head, or perhaps from Brunetto Latini’s *Trésor*. Compare the jewel-bearing serpent in the Tale of Adrian and Bardus (*CA* 5.5060 ff.), or the serpent who carries a jewel of health in his mouth in the English *Gesta Romanorum* (cap. 7). For discussion of the ambiguity of the asp as an *in bono* (prudence) and *in malo* (obstinence) figure of the senses, see Olsson, *Structures of Conversion*, pp. 63–72.
- 465–67 *The ston noblest of alle . . . carbuncle calle / Berth in his hed.* On the folk-type of the serpent with a crown or precious jewel in/on/about his head, see Aarne-Thompson, *Types of the Folktale* 672 (the serpent’s crown), 672A (a man who steals a serpent’s crown), 672B (a little girl takes away the serpent’s gold crown), 672C (serpent at wedding leaves crown), and, especially, 672D (the stone of the snake). See also Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, vol. 1, B103.42 (serpent with jewel in his mouth), B103.4.2.1 (grateful snake spits out lump of gold for his rescuer), B103.4.2.2 (snake vomits jewels), B108.1 (serpent as patron of wealth), B112 (treasure-producing serpent’s crown); and vol. 2 D1011.3.1 (magic serpent’s crown). The *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem de Mirabilibus Indiae* speaks of serpents with emeralds around their necks who, in the spring, sometimes fight, leaving behind “emeralds of enormous size” (Katz, *Romances of Alexander*, p. 123).
- 466 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic narrat Confessor exemplum, vt non ab auris exauditione fatua animus deceptus inuoluatur. Et dicit qualiter ille serpens, qui aspis vocatur, quendam preciosissimum lapidem nomine Carbunculum in sue frontis medio gestans,*

contra verba incantantis aurem vnam terre affigendo premit, et aliam sue caude stimulo firmissime obturat. [Here the Confessor recounts an instructive example in order that a deceived soul might not be assailed by the ear's foolish overhearing. And he says how the serpent who is called Aspis, carrying a certain most precious stone, Carbuncle by name, in the middle of its forehead, protected himself against the words of an enchanter by pressing down one ear and fixing it to the ground, and closing off the other most firmly with the point of its tail.]

- 481 ff. Gower follows Guido delle Colonne, *Hist. Troiae* III (*Gest Historiale* lib. 32), in presenting his Tale of the Sirens. Benoît tells the story in *Roman de Troie*, but he does not include all the details that Gower includes, though Vat. Myth. II (101) does.
- 483 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Aliud exemplum super eodem, qualiter rex Vluxes cum a bello Troiano versus Greciam nauigio remearet, et prope illa Monstra marina, Sirenes nuncupata, angelica voce canoras, ipsum ventorum aduersitate nauigare oporteret, omnium nautarum suorum aures obturari coegit. Et sic salutari prouidencia prefultus absque periculo saluus cum sua classe Vluxes pertransiit.* [Another instructive example about the same thing: how king Ulysses, when he was returning toward Greece from the Trojan war traveled back on a ship. When approaching those seaside monsters called the Sirens, singers with angelic voices, he was forced to sail against the winds, and he ordered the ears of all his sailors to be stopped up. And thus assisted by a saving providence and safe from danger, Ulysses with his vessel passed through.]
- 576 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur quod septem sunt peccata mortalia, quorum caput Superbia varias species habet, et earum prima Ypocrisy dicitur, cuius proprietatem secundum vicum simpliciter Confessor Amanti declarat.* [Here he says that there are seven mortal sins, whose head, Pride, has various species, and the first of these is called Hypocrisy, whose properties as a vice the Confessor declares to the Lover in simple terms.]
- 608 *Ipocrisy Religiosa.* [Religious Hypocrisy.]
- 627–28 *Ipocrisy Ecclesiastica.* [Ecclesiastic Hypocrisy.]
- 648 *Ipocrisy Secularis.* [Secular Hypocrisy.]
- 674 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat Confessor cum Amante super illa presertim Ipocrisy, que sub amoris facie fraudulenter latitando mulieres ipsius ficticiis credulas sepissime decipit innocentes.* [Here the Confessor discourses with the Lover particularly about that Hypocrisy that, fraudulently hiding under a face of love, very often deceives innocent, credulous women with his fictions.]
- 704–06 *berth lowest the seil . . . to beguile / The womman.* Proverbial. See Whiting S14.
- 708 *Opponit Confessor.* [The Confessor inquires.]
- 712 *Respondet Amans.* [The Lover replies.]
- 752 *To love is every herte fre.* Proverbial. See Whiting L516. See also CA 1.1929–30. Compare Chaucer, *CT* I(A)1606 and *CT* V(F)767.

- 759 *a cronique*. Precisely what chronicle Genius alludes to is unclear. The story of Mundus and Paulina is said to be historical by Josephus, *Antiquitatum Judaiarum* 18. Hegesippus, 2.4, follows Josephus, who in turn is followed by Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale* 7.4, any of which may have been Gower's source. The story is told in verse by Godfrey of Viterbo, *Pantheon* 15, but Macaulay says this version was certainly not Gower's source (2:470).
- 763 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Quod Ipocrisia sit in amore periculosa, narrat exemplum qualiter sub regno Tiberii Imperatoris quidam miles nomine Mundus, qui Romanorum dux milicie tunc prefuit, dominam Paulinam pulcherrimam castitatisque famosissimam mediantibus duobus falsis presbiteris in templo Ysis deum se esse fingens sub ficte sanctitatis ypocrisi nocturno tempore viciauit. Vnde idem dux in exilium, presbiteri in mortem ob sui criminis enormitatem dampnati extiterant, ymagoque dee Ysis a templo euulsa vniuerso conclamante populo in flumen Tiberiadis proiecta mergebatur.* [Showing that Hypocrisy is most dangerous in love, he presents an instructive example how under the reign of Tiberius the Emperor a certain knight, Mundus by name, who then was preeminent before all others as a duke of the army of the Romans, defiled the most beautiful and most famously chaste lady Paulina, with two false priests as go-betweens in the temple of Isis, fashioning himself to be a god under the hypocrisy of a feigned sanctity at nighttime. Wherefore the same duke was condemned to exile, and the priests to death on account of the enormity of their crime, while the image of the goddess, pulled from the temple with universal approval by the people, was thrown into the Tiber river and sunk.]
- 767 *of al the cité the faireste.* An analogue to the Tale of Mundus and Paulina may be found in the Hebrew *Tales of Alexander the Macedonian* (אלכסנדרוס מלך ממלכת) (ג'ז) found in a compilation of the eleventh-century *Chronicles of Jerahmeel*. The surviving MS, now in the Bodleian Library, dates from about 1325. A very beautiful woman, the fairest on earth, goes once a month to the temple of the god Atzilin to offer sacrifice. The priest, Matan, smitten by her beauty, tells her that the god would beget a son upon her, "for there is no other woman in the entire world worthy to be with him" (Reich, ed., *Tales of Alexander the Macedonian*, p. 75). She gets permission from her husband, who sends pillows, coverings, mattresses, and silken garments to adorn the occasion. Matan accepts the gifts and sends the woman's maid away. At midnight he enters to perform his rites, but the maid slips into the room to watch. Matan has intercourse with the woman nine times. After he has exhausted his strength and rises to leave, the maid strikes him on the head with a statue of Atzilin, killing him. The beautiful woman is scandalized by the deception and insists on telling her husband, who goes to the king. He takes the case to Alexander who says the temple should be destroyed, since it has been defiled. He then asks to see the woman himself, and, amazed at her beauty, demands that she be given to him. The king would protect the woman and her husband, but is overwhelmed by Alexander, who locks the woman in a portable temple where he has his way with her night and day. She gives birth to a son whom he names Alexander. But the child dies at the age of nine months on the same day that Alexander's horse Bucephalus dies. Alexander builds a mausoleum for his

horse and son, then consoles his wife, who conceives a second child. She dies in childbirth. See Reich, ed., *Tales of Alexander the Macedonian*, pp. 73–79. This analogue ties in as well with Gower's Tale of Nectanabus, *CA* 6.1789–2366. Gower's knowledge of Alexander lore is extensive, though it is doubtful that he could have known the Hebrew manuscript directly, which was still in Italy during his lifetime.

- 773 *Othilke bore frele kinde*. Macaulay observes: “Human nature is described as frail from birth, and by its weakness causing blindness of the heart” (2:470).
- 775 Just as the eye is the most important sense organ for human revelation (see note to lines 1.304–08 above), so too it is the principal sense organ for guiding reason. Augustine's three steps toward virtue (*visio, contemplatio, actio*) mark also the three steps toward sin. In both instances the process begins with the eye's response to beauty or the desirable, which in turn stimulates the will and desire. The process is one, though the ends are different. All cupidinous lovers are first struck through the eye by Cupid's first arrow — beauty; see *RR*, lines 1681 ff.
- 786–88 *noght . . . That . . . ne*. See notes to *Prol.* 989–90, 1.1295–96, 1.2046–47, 1.2091–93, 1.2629–30, 1.2722–24, 1.3366–67. Gower's construction here and in the other cited examples is unusual in Middle English, where the *ne* following *that* serves as a calque rather than a simple negative. Andrew Galloway (correspondence May 2, 2005) suggests that the construction is parallel to the Old French construction “*pres (que) ne*,” “*por poi (que) ne*,” etc., where *ne* denotes not a negative but instead “an action that has/had almost occurred” (see Kibler, *Introduction to Old French*, pp. 264–65). The Old French analogy is insightful, it seems to me, in that it takes what might otherwise be regarded as a medial negative conjunction and binds it to the relative conjunction (“but that,” “than that”). The sense of “almost,” however, does not hold precisely. We could translate: “But yet he was not of such strength / To withstand the power of love / But that he was almost reined in [by love], / Despite whether he would or not,” though the *so* in line 788 displaces the adverbial sense of *almost*. I.e., the sense is more likely “But he was so reined in [by love] / That despite whether he would or not” (lines 788–89). Compare 1.1296, where the *algate* likewise obliterates any sense of *almost*. In some instances the preceding “*noght*” is not required, though the sense is still “But that”: e.g., 1.1321. In other instances, instead of “*noght*,” Gower uses “*non*”: e.g., 1.1465, 1.1778–79; or a neither/nor construction as in 1.2470–71. And there are several instances when the *ne* simply functions as a negative after *That*, as in 1.1379, where the *for* cancels the conjunctive function of *ne*; or 1.2800 and 1.3045, where it is part of a double negative. But there are instances in which it simply functions as a negative adverb: 1.3168 and 1.3307.
- 852 *Glad was hire innocence tho*. Gower's Paulina “which in hire lustes grene / Was fair and freissch and tendre of age” (1.778–79) is innocent in her youth and of “humble cheire” (1.854). As Olsson observes, Gower presents Paulina in an entirely positive light: “Genius has left out the boasts of her counterparts in tradition: the Paulina of Josephus' *Antiquities* (18.3.4), the foolish Madonna

Lisetta da Ca' Quirino of Boccaccio's *Decameron* (4.2), and the Olympias of Gower's later story of Nectanabus (6.1789–2366) all, to some degree, have an exaggerated sense of self-worth, and they easily succumb to the blandishments of a pretender-god or angel" (*Structures of Conversion*, p. 74).

- 966 *Hire faire face and al destaigneth.* N.b. the medial coordinating conjunction: "And stains her face all over."
- 975 *honeste.* Of persons or their hearts, honest signifies virtuousness or chastity (*MED*). A wife is said to be chaste if she has to do only with her husband in a seemly manner. When Pauline learns "Now I defouled am of tuo" (line 977), she fears that she can no longer claim that honor. See Chaucer's Parson's Tale (X[I]940). On tensions between communal honor and manipulative deceit, see Craun, *Lies, Slander, and Obscenity*, pp. 129–31.
- 1003 *til that sche was somdiel amended.* See Ryting, "In Search of the Perfect Spouse," p. 119, on the importance of compassion and appropriate displays of affection in Gower's perception of what constitutes a good marriage like that epitomized in the relationship of Paulina and her spouse.
- 1077 ff. The story of the Trojan Horse is found in Dictys, *De Bello Trojano* V.II,12; Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 25620 ff.; and Guido, *Hist. Troiae* III (*Gest Historiale* 29.11846 ff.), all of which Gower may have known. Guido and his translators (not Dictys or Benoît) describe the horse as made of brass.
- 1081 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic vtterius ponit exemplum de illa eciam Ypocrisia, que inter virum et virum decipiens periculosisima consistit. Et narrat, qualiter Greci in obsidione ciuitatis Troie, cum ipsam vi comprehendere nullatenus potuerunt, fallaci animo cum Troianis pacem vt dicunt pro perpetuo statuebant: et super hoc quendam equum mire grossitudinis de ere fabricatum ad sacrificandum in templo Minerue confingentes, sub tali sanctitatis ypocrisi dictam Ciuitatem intrarunt, et ipsam cum inhabitantibus gladio et igne comminuentes pro perpetuo penitus deuastarunt.* [Here he presents a further instructive example concerning that same Hypocrisy, who stands as most dangerous when bringing deceit between man and man. And he tells how the Greeks in the siege of the city of Troy, although they were not able to take it by any means of force, with a false spirit established peace with the Trojans, in perpetuity, as they say. And in addition to this, fashioning a certain horse of miraculous size made from brass for sacrificing in the temple of Minerva, under such hypocrisy of sanctity they entered the said city, and threatening it along with its inhabitants with fire and the sword they utterly and permanently destroyed it.]
- 1085 The treachery of *Calcas and of Crise* is part of the medieval invention that ultimately culminated in Chaucer's *TC*. In Homer he is the son of Thestor, a diviner who accompanies the Greek army to Troy (*Iliad* 1.69 ff.), and in Virgil he helps build the wooden horse (*Aeneid* 2.185). But once he is made a Trojan who betrays the city and claims the return of his daughter in exchange for Antenor, his treachery becomes a key component of all retellings.

- 1087 *hors of bras.* An unusual detail, given the prominence of the wooden horse myth in Virgil. Perhaps Gower found the forging of a brass horse, as in Guido (see note to lines 1077 ff.), rather than the building of a wooden horse, as in Dares and Dictys and Benoît, to be more compatible with the machinations of hypocrisy. Hypocrites are forgers (lines 1087–88), not carpenters. Brass horses are not unknown in romance literature. See Chaucer's Squire's Tale.
- 1091 *Epius.* The name *Epius* (i.e., Epeius) appears to come from Virgil through Benoît (as opposed to *Apius* in Guido), as does the account of the destruction of Neptune's gates (lines 1151–55). In Homer's *Odyssey* 8.493, Epeius is the maker of the wooden horse, with the help of Athena.
- 1095 *Anthenor . . . Enee.* The treachery of Antenor and Aeneas is scarcely mentioned in Virgil, but it is much emphasized in Dictys, Benoît, and Guido. On Antenor's deceit see Chaucer's *TC* 4.197–205.

Latin verses vi (before line 1235). The reference in **line 2** is to Ecclesiasticus 13:3.

- 1241 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur de secunda specie Superbie, que Inobedientia dicitur: et primo illius vicii naturam simpliciter declarat, et tractat consequenter super illa precipue Inobedientia, que in curia Cupidinis exosa amoris causam ex sua imbecillitate sepissime retardat. In cuius materia Confessor Amanti specialius opponit.* [Here he speaks concerning a second species of Pride, which is called Disobedience; and first he declares in general terms the nature of that vice, and consequently discourses about that Disobedience in particular, which, despising the cause of love in the court of Cupid, is very often impeded because of its stupidity. In this matter the Confessor particularly questions the Lover.]
- 1273 *Opponit Confessor.* [The Confessor inquires.]
- 1274 *Respondeat Amans.* [The Lover replies.]
- 1293 *For specheles may no man spedē.* Proverbial. Macaulay compares *CA* 6.447, “For selden get a domb man lond” (2:472). See Whiting S554. See also *CA* 4.439–40.
- 1295–96 See note to 1.786–88.
- 1328 *retenue.* The gloss “engagement of service” is Macaulay's, who compares *Balades* 8.17: “Q'a vous servir j'ai fait ma retenue” (2:472).
- 1339–40 *forme . . . enforme.* See Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, pp. 1–10, on Gower's use of “information” as a component of self-formation in *CA*. (Compare 1.275–76, 1973–74, 2669–70 and 8.817–18.) Simpson reads *CA* as a fable of the soul “in which the impetus of the soul to reach its own perfection, or form, determines the narrative form” (*Sciences and the Self*, p. 230). Form informing form is a reciprocal inside-outside paradigm in which exemplary matter provides pedagogical information that impresses the heart as text “follows the soul's contours” (p. 7). “The pedagogic sense lies in wait behind the artistic” (p. 8), a paradigm that makes possible an “information” of the reader by the simultaneous processes of understanding backwards and forwards (inwards and outwards) required in any creative process. Simpson presents the argument in terms of twelfth- and fourteenth-century philosophical/empirical theory.

- 1344 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur de Murmure et Planctu, qui super omnes alios Inobedientie secreiores vt ministri illi deseruunt.* [Here he speaks about Grumbling and Complaint, which above all others serve Disobedience very intimately as his ministers.]
- 1345 ff. See Echard, “With Carmen’s Help,” pp. 32–34, on the ambiguous relationships between the Latin marginal gloss and the English text as Genius shifts the topic from murmur and complaint to truth and obedience in the exemplary Tale of Florent.
- 1403–06 Unique to third recension manuscripts. See textual note. Hahn cites the first recension couplet, where, instead of Fairfax’s “In a cronique as it is write” (1.1404), we get: “And in ensample of this matiere / A tale I fynde, as thou shalt hiere.” Hahn concludes: “This revision transforms the pedigree of Gower’s retelling from a popular *tale* — perhaps *Ragnelle*, in its surviving form, or some other performative text — to literate narrative” (“Old Wives Tales,” p. 100).
- 1407 ff. The Tale of Florent is apparently based on the same source as Chaucer’s Wife of Bath’s Tale; or, more likely, Chaucer drew upon Gower’s story as he put together the marriage group of *CT* in the 1390s. See Peck, “Folklore and Powerful Women.” The tale joins two folk motifs, the loathly lady transformed through love and the answering of a riddle to save one’s life. See Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, D732, and Whiting’s discussion in Bryan and Dempster, eds., *Sources and Analogues of Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales*, pp. 223–68. A similar story is found in *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnelle*; see Hahn, ed., *Sir Gawain*, pp. 41–80. Macaulay (2:473) notes Shakespeare’s allusion to Gower’s version of the story in *Taming of the Shrew*, I.ii.69. For comparison of the three Middle English versions of the tale and the possibility that The Wife of Bath’s tale is a playful inversion of Gower’s more sober narrative, see Lindahl, “Oral Undertones,” pp. 72–75. Dimmick notes that Florent is the only one of the analogues that does not use an Arthurian setting (“Redinge of Romance,” p. 135).
- 1408 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic contra amori inobedientes ad commendacionem Obedientie Confessor super eodem exemplum ponit; vbi dicit quod, cum quedam Regis Cizilie filia in sue iuuentutis floribus pulcherrima ex eius Nouerce incantacionibus in vetulam turpissimam transformata extitit, Florencius tunc Imperatoris Claudi Nepos, miles in armis strenuissimus amorosisque legibus intendens, ipsam ex sua obediencia in pulcritudinem pristinam mirabiliter reformauit.* [Here against those disobedient to love and as commendation to Obedience, the Confessor presents an instructive example on the same thing, where he tells that, when a certain daughter of the King of Sicily who was most beautiful in the bloom of her youth but transformed into a most ugly old woman by her stepmother’s incantation, Florent, then the nephew of the Emperor Claudius, a knight most strenuous in fighting and committed to the laws of love, miraculously refashioned her, because of his obedience, into her original beauty.] For discussion of the juxtaposition of this Latin text with the vernacular Tale of Florent to create a dynamic ambiguity, a kind

of *mise-en-page disputatio* between the two texts, see Batchelor, “Feigned Truth and Exemplary Method,” pp. 3–10.

- 1409 *nevoeu to th'empemour*. Gower has shifted the location of some portions of the story from the Celtic Arthurian world found in Irish loathly lady narratives to the continent with its *emperour*. See the Latin marginal gloss where *Florenctius* (Florent) is identified with his uncle, the Roman Emperor *Claudius* (*Imparatoris Claudi*). When the grantdame tells Florent to seek the answer to her question “in th'empire / Wher as thou hast most nowlechinge” (1.1482–83), she, in effect, sends him home to the familiar patriarchal terrain of his uncle, in whom Florent confides, but also whom he cautions against retaliation when he fails to obtain the answer. The grantdame’s strategy misleads the youth by returning him to the patriarchal ignorance of his roots, while, at the same time, co-opting the emperor’s revenge. That the hag (the wild card against the grantdame’s scheme) comes from “Cizile” (1.1841) also locates the story on the continent as do Florent’s learned but futile attempts to find the answer “be constellacion [and] kinde” (1.1508); such academic schemes help him no more than does Aurelius’ trip to the “tregetour” of Orleans in Chaucer’s Franklin’s Tale.
- 1413 ff. See Dimmick, “‘Redinge of Romance,’” pp. 128–30, on Florent as a tale of “wish-fulfilment disguised as an *exemplum*” (p. 128).
- 1417 *marches*. “Borderlands,” i.e., marginal areas where Florent seeks adventures. They could be the western marches of England, though not necessarily, given the fact that their location is unspecified. Thomas Hahn has suggested to me that perhaps Florent, like Arveragus in Chaucer’s Franklin’s Tale, seeks to make his name “In Engelond, that cleped was eek Briteyne / To seke in armes worshipe and honour” (CT V[F]810–11).
- 1474 *under seales write*. On the precision of legal contracts and procedures throughout the tale, see Peck, “Folklore and Powerful Women.”
- 1509 *is al shape unto the lere*. Macaulay glosses “‘prepared for the loss’ (OE. *lyre*)” (2:473). But see *MED leir* n.1b, meaning “burial place.” I.e., Florent is “prepared for his death”; or, he is “all set (resigned) to be brought to his grave.”
- 1533 *redely*. “Quickly” is an obvious gloss; but “carefully” perhaps makes better sense, based on *MED red* n.1a, 5a, or 6a, implying “advice, deliberation, prudence.”
- 1634 *that olde mone*. “Consort” is perhaps too gentle a gloss. Clearly, the phrase is meant to be derogatory. Given the root of the word (*gemaene*: intercourse), “old fuck” might be more apt. See also *MED mon* n.2: “evil personified, the Devil,” which is likewise an apt pejorative description.
- 1686 *a More*. Used here as a sign of ugliness. Compare Dunbar’s disparaging wit in his short poem “Of a Black Moor,” with its refrain “My lady with the mickle lips.”
- 1714 *nede he mot that nede schal*. Proverbial. See Whiting N61. Compare Prol.698 and 8.1020.

- 1769 *go we*. See Green, “Speech Acts and the Art of the Exemplum,” pp. 178–79, on Gower’s use of subjunctive mood rather than imperative mood, which he uses very little.
- Latin verses viii** (before line 1883). On the importance of self-knowledge in Gower and its medieval tradition, see Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, pp. 125–33, 203–211.
- 1887 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur de tercia specie Superbie, que Presumpcio dicitur, cuius naturam primo secundum vicium Confessor simpliciter declarat.* [Here he speaks about the third species of Pride, which is called Presumption, whose nature as a vice the Confessor first declares in simple terms.]
- 1911 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat Confessor cum Amante super illa saltem presumpcione, ex cuius superbia quam plures fatui amantes, cum maioris certitudinis in amore spem sibi promittunt, inexpediti cicius destituuntur.* [Here the Confessor discourses with the Lover especially about that presumption from the pride of which very many foolish lovers, when they promise themselves hope of greater certainty in love, are suddenly and unpreparedly made destitute.]
- 1917 *heweth up so hihe.* Proverbial. See Whiting H221.
- 1977 ff. The story of Capaneus’ presumption was a favorite exemplum of pride among medieval writers. See Chaucer, *Anel.* line 59; TC 5.1504. His story is told in Statius, *Thebaid* 3.598 ff., 4.165 ff., 6.731 ff., and 10 *passim*, especially 738 to the end. Statius is probably Gower’s main source, though the story is mentioned in varying degrees of completeness in Hyginus, *Fabularum Liber LXVIII*, LXX, LXXI; Boccaccio, *Genealogie deorum gentilium libri* 9.36; and Ovid, *Met.* 9.404. See Shaw (“Gower’s Illustrative Tales,” pp. 439–40) on the tale’s service as an exemplum.
- 1978 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum contra illos, qui de suis viribus presumentes debiliores efficiuntur. Et narrat qualiter ille Capaneus, miles in armis probatissimus, de sua presumens audacia inuocationem ad superos tempore necessitatis ex recordia tantum et non aliter primitus prouenisse asseruit. Vnde in obsidione Ciuitatis Thebarum, cum ipse quodam die coram suis hostibus ad debellandum se obtulit, ignis de celo subito superveniens ipsum armatum totaliter in cineres combussit.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against those who, presuming on their own powers, are made weaker. And he tells how that Capaneus, a knight most tested in arms, presuming on his boldness, asserted that a vow to the gods at a time of need proceeded only from madness and nothing else. Wherefore in the siege of the city of the Thebans, when he himself on a certain day threw himself into fighting before his enemies, a fire descending from heaven suddenly burned him, fully armed, to ashes.]
- 2021 ff. Versions of the *Trump of Death* occur in the Latin *Gesta Romanorum* (cap. 143), *Vita Barlaam et Josaphat*, cap. vi (PL 74.462), exemplum 42 of Jacques de Vitry’s *Exempla* (ed. Crane, p. 151), and other sermon books, etc. Shaw (“Gower’s Illustrative Tales,” pp. 440–47) offers a detailed examination of Gower’s adaptation of his sources in shaping his “ensample” (1.2019). See Schutz (“Absent and Present Images,” pp. 115–18) on binary mirroring in the tale.

- 2031 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur Confessor contra illos, qui de sua sciencia presumentes aliorum condiciones diiudicantes indiscrete redarguunt. Et narrat exemplum de quodam principe Regis Hungarie germano, qui cum fratrem suum pauperibus in publico vidit humiliatum, ipsum redarguendo in contrarium edocere presumebat: set Rex omni sapientia prepollens ipsum sic incaute presumenter ad humilitatis memoriam terribili prouidencia micus castigauit.* [Here the Confessor speaks against those who, presuming on their own knowledge and judging carelessly, rebuke the condition of others. And he offers an instructive example concerning a certain prince, the brother of the king of Hungary, who when he saw his brother abase himself in public to paupers, by rebuking him presumed to instruct him to the contrary. But the king, preeminent in every wisdom, punished more gently than terrible providence does the one presuming so incautiously, so that he would remember humility.]
- 2046–47 “There was such a small account of natural vitality left / That they seemed almost totally dead.” See Galloway, “Middle English Poetics.” Galloway explains the syntactic oddity of the “Bot a lite . . . That . . . ne” clause as a calque of the Old French “presque . . . ne” where the *ne* denotes not a negative but, instead, “an action that has almost occurred,” citing examples in Chrétien’s *Le Chevalier de la Charette*. See also the explanatory note to 1.786–88.
- 2091–93 *noght . . . That . . . ne.* The *ne* functions with *That* as a relative conjunction “Than that.” See notes to Prol.989–90 and 1.786–88.
- 2214 ff. Macaulay (2:474) cites *Vita Barlaam et Josephat*, cap. vi, here:
- O stulte ac demens, si fratrii tui, cum quo idem tibi genus et par honos est, in quem nullius omnino sceleris tibi conscius es, praeconem ita extimuisti, quonam modo mihi reprehensionis notam idcirco inussisti, quod Dei mei praecones, qui mortem, ac Domini, in quem me multa et gravia sclera perpetrasse scio, pertimescendum adventum mihi quavis tuba vocalius altiusque denuntiant, humiliter ac demisse salutarim? [“O mad fool, if you are so terrified at the herald of your brother, with whom you are equal in family and rank, against whom you are aware of no crime at all of yours, might I pay respects humbly and meekly to the heralds of my God, who announce to me vocally and loudly, with whatever sort of trumpet, my death and the fearsome arrival of my lord, against whom I know I have committed many terrible crimes?”]
- 2247 *al schal dieie.* Proverbial. See Whiting D101.
- 2274 *clerk Ovide.* See *Met.* 3.344–510, for the story of Narcissus; also Boccaccio’s *Genealogie deorum gentilium libri* 7.59. Genius alters the conclusion to suit his heterosexual vision. Medieval writers commonly present Narcissism as a dangerous component of erotic love. Guillaume de Lorris’ *RR*, lines 1439–1614, was an influential text in this regard. See Schutz (“Absent and Present Images,” pp. 109, 118–20) on Gower’s alteration of his source to use specular effects to create introspection.
- 2279 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic in speciali tractat Confessor cum Amante contra illos, qui de propria formositate presumentes amorem mulieris dedignantur.* Et narrat exemplum

qualiter cuiusdam Principis filius nomine Narcizus estiuo tempore, cum ipse venacionis causa quendam ceruum solus cum suis canibus exagitaret, in grauem sitim incurrens necessitate compulsus ad bibendum de quodam fonte pronus se inclinauit; vbi ipse faciem suam pulcherrimam in aqua percipiens, putabat se per hoc illam Nympham, quam Poete Ekko vocant, in flumine coram suis oculis pocius conspexisse; de cuius amore confestim laqueatus, vt ipsam ad se de fonte extraheret, pluribus blandiciis adulabatur. Set cum illud perficere nullatenus potuit, pre nimio languore deficiens contra lapides ibidem adiacentes caput exuerberans cerebrum effudit. Et sic de propria pulcritudine qui fuerat presumptuosus, de propria pulcritudine satuatus interiit. [Here in particular the Confessor discourses with the Lover against those who, presuming on their own beauty, disdain the love of a woman. And he narrates an instructive example about how a son of a certain prince, Narcissus by name, during the springtime, when hunting alone with his hounds he pursued a certain stag, and running with severe thirst, compelled by necessity to drink from a certain stream, he lowered himself flat to the ground. There, perceiving in the water his own most beautiful face, he thought instead that he was regarding that nymph whom poets call Echo, in the river before his eyes. Instantly snared by love of her, in order that he might draw her out from the stream he wooed her with many seductions. But when he could not at all achieve that, growing weak from too great an illness, he struck his head against stones lying around in that same place, pouring out his brains. And thus he who had been presumptuous about his own beauty died infatuated by his own beauty.]

- 2304–21 Genius introduces a Celtic component of fairy magic to his version of Narcissus' downfall as he dismounts at heat of day and under a tree drinks from a well. Compare *Sir Orfeo*, in Laskaya and Salisbury, eds., *Middle English Breton Lays*, pp. 15–60, especially lines 65–174, where Herodis (Eurydice) sleeps under “a fair ympe-tre” (line 70) at the heat of day and is taken by the king of fairies. See Severs, “Antecedents of *Sir Orfeo*,” for discussion of the Celtic/Irish tradition. Compare Celtic fairy motifs in the Tale of Florent.
- 2343–58 “This pretty passage is a late addition, appearing only in the third recension MSS and one other copy, so far as I know” (Mac 2:475). The application of the story to the fact that the narcissus blooms in early spring (1.2355–57) appears to be Gower’s invention.
- 2406 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur de quarta specie Superbie, que Lactancia dicitur, ex cuius natura causatur, vt homo de seipso testimonium perhibens suarum virtutum merita de laude in culpam transfert, et suam famam cum ipse extollere vellet, illam proprio ore subuertit. Set et Venus in amoris causa de isto vicio maculatos a sua Curia super omnes alios abhorrens expellit, et eorum multiloquium verecunda detestatur. Vnde Confessor Amanti opponens materiam plenius declarat.* [Here he speaks concerning the fourth species of Pride, which is called Boasting, by whose nature it is brought about that a man, offering testimonial about himself, transforms the merits of his own virtues from praise to blame, and when he himself would wish to extol his own fame overturns it with his own mouth. But Venus, abhorring above all others those stained by this vice in the cause of love, expels

them and, ashamed of their blabbing, execrates them. Whence the Confessor, querying the Lover, declares the matter more fully.]

- 2443 *daunger*. *Daunger* personifies the woman's aloofness in courtly relationships. In *RR* he is presented as a somewhat churlish figure who perpetually thwarts the aggressions of male desire.
- 2459 ff. The popular story of Albinus and Rosemund is first told by Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* 2.28. See also Godfrey of Viterbo, *Pantheon*, 23.5–6.
- 2462 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum contra istos, qui uel de sua in armis probitate, vel de suo in amoris causa desiderio completo se iactant. Et narrat qualiter Albinus primus Rex Longobardorum, cum ipse quendam alium Regem nomine Gurmundum in bello morientem triumphasset, testam capitis defuncti auferens cipham ex ea gemmis et auro circumligatum in sue victorie memoriam fabricari constituit: insuper et ipsius Gurmundi filiam Rosemundam rapiens, maritali thoro in coniugem sibi copulauit. Vnde ipso Albino postea coram sui Regni nobilibus in suo regali conuiuio sedente, dicti Gurmundi cipham infuso vino ad se inter epulas afferri iussit; quem sumptum vxori sue Regine porrexit dicens, "Bibe cum patre tuo." Quod et ipsa huiusmodi operis ignara fecit. Quo facto Rex statim super hiis que per prius gesta fuerant cunctis audientibus per singula se iactauit. Regina vero cum talia audisset, celato animo factum abhorrens in mortem domini sui Regis circumspecta industria conspirauit; ipsumque auxiliantibus Glodesida et Helmege breui subsecuto tempore interfecit: cuius mortem Dux Ravenni tam in corpus dicte Regine quam suorum fautorum postea vindicauit. Set et huius tocius in infortunii sola superbie iactancia somitem ministrabat.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against those who boast either about their trials in war or about their fulfilled desires in the cause of love. And he narrates how Albinus, the first king of the Lombards, when he himself was triumphant over a certain other king dying in battle, Gurmund by name, carried away the top of the dead man's skull and caused a goblet, bound with gems and gold, to be fabricated from it, in memory of his victory. In addition to this, he captured the daughter of this same Gurmund, Rosemund, and coupled her to himself as a spouse in the marital bedchamber. Wherefore when this Albinus was later sitting before the nobles of his kingdom at his royal banquet, amidst the feasting he ordered the goblet of the said Gurmund to be brought filled with wine to him. When he had received it, he offered it to his wife the queen, saying, "Drink with your father," which indeed she, ignorant of a piece of work of this kind, unknowingly did. Once done, the king immediately boasted to all those listening about those things that he had formerly accomplished, one by one. But when the queen had heard such things she, abhorring in her concealed thoughts his deed, conspired the death of her lord the king by a circumspect endeavor, and with Glodesida and Helmege helping her, she killed him a short while after. The duke of Ravenna later revenged his death on the bodies both of the said queen and of her helpers. But indeed of this whole misfortune a single boasting of pride furnished the kindling-wood.] Macaulay notes that the wording "*Bibe cum patre tuo*" is exactly that of the prose account in Godfrey of Viterbo's *Pantheon* (2:477).

- 2565 *thilke unkynde Pride.* *MED unkinde* 4c cites this line in Gower with the meaning “lacking natural affection or concern for or loyalty to a spouse; of a wife: undutiful toward her husband, fractious; of a husband, husband’s pride: lacking proper respect for his wife, indifferent to his wife’s feelings.” N.b. *CA* 3.2055, where Orestes condemns Clytemnestra: “O cruel beste unkinde” for the slaughter of her own lord. See also *MED unkynde* 6a and 4d. That the duke of Ravenna quietly poisons Rosemund (1.2644–46) would seem to be the result of an unspoken law: wives don’t kill husbands, lest they be *unkynede*.
- 2629–30 *noght . . . That . . . ne.* See note to 1.786–88.
- 2642 ff. Macaulay observes that Gower “winds up the story abruptly. According to the original story, Longinus the Prefect of Ravenna conspired with Rosemunda to poison Helmichis; and he, having received drink from her hand and feeling himself poisoned, compelled her to drink also of the same cup” (2:477).
- Latin verses x** (before line 2681). **Line 5: fauellum.** Favel, a medieval creation, is generally related to flattery (from Latin *fabella*) and is bodied forth as a horse to be “curried” by his followers (because *fauvel* is ‘fawn colored’ in Old French, hence a fawn-colored horse): see the fourteenth-century French *Roman de Fauvel* (ed. Langförs). In that poem Favel is acrostically defined as the progenitor of flattery, avarice, villainy, variety (changeability), envy, and laziness; he seeks to marry Fortune but is denied because of Fortune’s higher lineage and so must settle for Vaine Gloire. *Piers Plowman* introduces Favel to English literature, but not specifically as a horse (B.2.158 ff.). The “saddled laws” that Gower places on Favel’s back could show some connection with the passage in *Piers Plowman*, where saddled sheriffs and professional jury members carry Meed and False (so Echard and Fanger, *Latin Verses in the Confessio Amantis*). More likely, however, Gower’s saddling Favel with laws and climbing on Favel as a knight are simply elaborations of the allegory of the *Roman de Fauvel*, a connection confirmed by Gower’s association of Favel with Vain Glory whom Favel marries in the *Roman*. Yet by the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century the dramatized idea of “currying favor” was very widespread in England and in more literal terms than our own cliché usually conveys; the chronicler Thomas Walsingham describes a public sermon in 1406 where a lord ordered his servant to present to the preacher a currying comb, “suggesting that he was fawning on the prelates of the church.” The archbishop of Canterbury, less amused than the other spectators, ordered the servant to walk naked for several days as penance with a curry-comb in one hand and a candle in the other. Obviously the symbolism of the curry-comb in both events was clear to many without any specific literary source (see Walsingham, *St. Albans Chronicle*, ed. Galbraith, p. 2).
- 2657 *His pourpos schal ful ofte faille.* See Bakalian, *Aspects of Love*, pp. 12–20, on Albinus’ avantage (boasting) and the swiftness of his demise once he “over-reaches himself and is swept away by his pride” (p. 18).
- 2682 ff.  **Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur de quinta specie superbie, que Inanis gloria vocatur, et eiusdem vicii naturam primo describens super eodem in amoris causa Confessor*

Amanti consequenter opponit. [Here he speaks about the fifth species of Pride, which is called Empty (or Vain) Glory, and first describing the nature of this same vice, the Confessor consequently questions the Lover concerning it, in the cause of love.]

- 2698 *camelion.* Probably the lizard but not necessarily. The *MED* cites Gower's line here to signify a creature of diverse colors and notes various references in Gower's contemporary, John Trevisa, where the chameleon is "a litel beste of dyverse coloures" like a *stellio* (gecko) or the *lusardis*; or an *evete* (lizard, salamander, or newt); or "a flekked beste" like a leopard or basilisk. Trevisa also uses the word to indicate a giraffe, while Mandeville uses the word for "a lytill best as a Goot." See Whiting C137 for proverbial underpinning.
- 2706 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Salomon. Amictus eius annunciat de eo.* [Solomon: "His cloak declares what he is."] See Ecclesiasticus 19:27, which Gower abbreviates.
- 2722–24 *noght . . . That . . . ne.* See note to 1.786–88.
- 2727 *Rondeal, balade and virelai.* Burrow ("Portrayal of Amans," p. 21) notes that in Gower "these compositions are not incorporated in the text of the poem itself as we would expect in Machaut or Froissart."
- 2785 ff. Based on Daniel 4:1–34 (Dan. 4:4–37, King James). The story was a popular exemplum of pride (e.g., *VC* 7; *MO*, lines 1885–95 and 21979–96; and Chaucer's Monk's Tale, *CT* VII[B²]2143–82). For detailed discussion of the passage, see Peck, "John Gower and the Book of Daniel."
- 2788 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum contra vicium inanis glorie, narrans qualiter Nabugodonosor Rex Caldeorum, cum ipse in omni sue maiestatis gloria celsior extitisset, deus eius superbiam castigare volens ipsum extra formam hominis in bestiam fenum comedentem transmutauit. Et sic per septennium penitens, cum ipse potenciorem se agnouit, misertus deus ipsum in sui regni solium restituta sanitate emendatum graciosius collocauit.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against the vice of Empty (or Vain) Glory, relating how Nebuchadnezzar, King of the Chaldeans, when he himself was established very high in all the glory of his majesty, God, wishing to chastise his pride, transmuted him into a grass-eating beast. And thus making penance for seven years, when this one acknowledged him to be more powerful, God took pity and graciously placed him again on the soil of his kingdom, freed from blemish and with his health restored.]
- 2925 *The weder schal upon thee reine.* "The weather shall rain upon you." But it also could mean, "The sheep shall rule over you."
- 3067 ff. No specific source has been identified for the Tale of Three Questions.
- 3068 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic narrat Confessor exemplum simpliciter contra Superbiam; et dicit quod nuper quidam Rex famose prudencie cuidam militi suo super tribus questionibus, vt inde certitudinis responsionem daret, sub pena capitalis sentencie terminum prefixit. Primo, quid minoris indigencie ab inhabitantibus orbem auxilium maius obtinuit. Secundo, quid maioris valencie meritum continens minoris expense reiprasas exiguit.*

Tercio, quid omnia bona diminuens ex sui proprietate nichil penitus valuit. Quarum vero questionum quedam virgo dicti militis filia sapientissima nomine patris sui solutionem aggrediens taliter Regi respondit. Ad primam dixit, quod terra nullius indiget, quam tamen adiuvare cotidianis laboribus omnes intendunt. Ad secundam dixit, quod humilitas omnibus virtutibus prevaleat, que tamen nullius prodegalitatis expensis mensuram excedit. Ad tertiam dixit, quod superbia omnia tam corporis quam anime bona deuastans maiores expensarum excessus inducit. Et tamen nullius valoris, ymmo tocius perditionis, causam sua culpa ministrat. [Here the Confessor narrates an instructive example against pride in general; and he says that in recent times a certain King, famous for his prudence, presented to a certain one of his knights a logical challenge comprising three questions, to which he might give a correct response under pain of capital punishment: first, what having less need has obtained greater help from inhabitants on earth; second, what having merit of greater value demands less expense; third, what diminishes all good things but is worth utterly nothing in itself. Of these questions, however, a certain most wise virgin daughter of the said knight, advancing a solution in the name of her father, responded thusly to the king. To the first, she said that the earth has need of nothing, but all strive to help it with daily labors. To the second, she said that humility is worth more than all virtues, but it does not exceed any expense of prodigality. To the third, she said that pride devastating all good things both of the body and the soul induces excessive expenses. And nonetheless its guilt furnishes the source of no value but instead of total loss.] In the phrase *minoris expense reprisas*, *reprisa* means “expenses lost, cost,” but, like its Old French and ME versions (both *reprise*), it is commonly found in legal documents and normally with the technical legal sense of “a fixed charge deducted annually from an estate’s revenue” (Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List*, and *MED*). Gower is the only writer attested as broadening the meaning of the word in English to mean, as here, simply “cost” (see explanatory notes to 1.3308 and 5.4708). His usage was not followed by other writers.

- 3308 *To stanche . . . the reprise.* Macaulay glosses *reprise* as “trouble”; i.e., “To stop the trouble of Pride” (2:479). But the *MED* favors “To pay the cost of Pride” (see *MED* s.v. *reprise* b; and s.v. *staunchen* 3c). See also the comment on the Latin *reprisa* above.
- 3366–67 *noght . . . That . . . ne.* See note to 1.786–88.
- 3369 ff. Macaulay (2:479) notes that Gower has heavily corrected these lines.
- 3397–3400 The MS is torn here, with line 3397 ending *gr*; line 3398 ending *plac*; and line 3400 ending *qwee*.

EXPLANATORY NOTES TO BOOK 8

Notes to Latin verses i (before line 1). **Line 1:** *confert*. While unusual in other Latin writers, “is useful” is a regular sense of *confert* for Gower (e.g., in *VC*); as is also common in Gower’s Latin (but more striking here), the object of verbs of pleasure

and displeasure is omitted — “people at the present time” are implicitly those who find the rule of lechery useful, and the “new teaching” against it unpleasing. This grammatically understood object (“us”) has been the implied target of much of the poem, in view from the first line on. **Line 4:** *impositum*. “Affixed” here translates *impositum*, which may mean the path was “imposed” either legitimately (like the proper order of a restrained life) or deceptively (compare “impostor”). “The impostured path” would be a possible although awkward rendition of the phrase.

- 1 ff. Macaulay imagines that Gower “had some embarrassment as regards the subject [incest] of his eighth book” (3:536). But contrast Scanlon’s perceptive juxtaposing of medieval attitudes toward the topic with those of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (“Riddle of Incest,” pp. 93–112).
- 3 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Postquam ad instanciam Amantis confessi Confessor Genius super hiis que Aristotiles Regem Alexandrum edocuit, vna cum aliarum Cronicarum exemplis seriose tractauit, iam vltimo in isto octauo volumine ad confessionem in amoris causa regrediens tractare proponit super hoc, quod nonnulli primordia nature ad libitum voluptuose consequentes, nullo humane rationis arbitrio seu ecclesie legum impositione a suis excessibus debite refrenantur. Vnde quatenus amorem concernit Amantis conscientiam pro finali sue confessionis materia Genius rimari conatur.* [After the confessor Genius has discoursed at the urging of the confessing Lover about those things that Aristotle taught King Alexander along with instructive examples taken one by one from other chronicles, now finally in this eighth book he returns to confession in the cause of love. He proposes to discourse about that matter which some, voluptuously following at their will the initial order of nature, do not refrain from by any judgment of human reason or statute of ecclesiastical law. About this insofar as it pertains to love, as the final portion of his confession, Genius tries to probe the Lover’s conscience.]
- 10 *Bot Lucifer He putte aweie.* Medieval popular histories of creation commonly begin with the fall of the angels, Lucifer being the brightest and second only to God. That fall makes way for the creation of humankind as replacement for the angelic failure. Compare the sequence of events in *Cursor Mundi* or in the mystery plays.
- 21–26 The N-Town plays place the fall of the angels on the fifth day of creation, followed by the creation of man on the sixth. Perhaps Gower has a similar scheme in mind as he speaks of the fall of Lucifer through deadly pride, then jumps to the sixth day and Adam’s creation.
- 30–34 *of the mannes progenie . . . The nombre of angles . . . to restore.* That the numbers of creation, disrupted by the fallen angels, would be restored with the creation and redemption of mankind was commonplace in fourteenth-century thought. See, for example, *Cursor Mundi*, lines 514–16 (“Adam þer-for was wrought þan / Þe tent ordir for to fullfill, / Pat lucifer did for to spill” — ed. Morris, pp. 36–38); similarly in the York Cycle, at the end of the first play, “The Fall of the Angels,” Deus announces that his “after-warkes” (line 152) will make up for the lack caused by the fall; then, in the second play, “Creation,” that “yne þat

þis world es ordand euyn" (line 29), Deus will begin creation to restore what has been lost. As a patristic source for the idea, see St. Augustine, *Enchiridion*, ch. 29, entitled: "The Restored Part of Humanity Shall, in Accordance with the Promises of God, Succeed to the Place Which the Rebellious Angels Lost." Augustine is uncertain about what the exact number is but is confident that God has such a number in mind since he ordered all things in "measure, and number, and weight" (in Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 3.247). See also Augustine's *De civitate Dei* Book 22, ch. 1.

- 48 *Metodre*. The reference is to Methodius, "in whose *Revelationes* it is written, 'Sciendum namque est, exeuntes Adam et Eevam de Paradiso virgines fuisse' [For it should be known that Adam and Eve were virgins when they left Paradise], so that 'Into the world' in l.53 must mean from Paradise into the outer world" (Mac 2:536).
- 54 *nature hem hath reclaimed*. The sexual drive of "nature" serves a positive function here. The issue of incest, soon to come, qualifies the regulation of desire. See the sinister consequences of Lot's daughters following "nature" in 8.230 ff., or the circumstances of Antiochus, who acts "[w]ithoute insihte of conscience" in following his "likinge and concupiscence" (8.293–94).
- 62 ff. Methodius identifies the sisters of Cain and Abel as Calmana and Debora (Mac 2:536).
- 146 *non schal wedden of his ken*. On the history of Ecclesiastical Law regarding marriage of kin, see Donavin's discussion of the meaning of incest in the Middle Ages (*Incest Narratives*, pp. 9–19) and the sophisticated cultural psychoanalysis of incest in *CA* by Scanlon ("Riddle of Incest").
- 147 *Ne the seconde ne the thridde*. On Gower's scheme of the traditional first three ages and Gower's fourth where papal law rules against marriage of immediate kin or those twice or three times removed, see Scanlon, "Riddle of Incest," pp. 109–12.
- 158 *ne yit religion*. Macaulay notes: "The seduction of one who was a professed member of a religious order was usually accounted to be incest: cp. *Mirour*, lines 9085 ff. and line 175 below" (3:536).
- 163 *what thing comth next to honde*. See Olsson, "Love, Intimacy, and Gower," pp. 93–95, on the cost of betrayal of intimacy at home. Olsson draws interesting parallels between Antiochus' incestuous behavior and Amans' shortsightedness in love. See also Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, p. 164.
- 201 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur contra illos, quos Venus sui desiderii feruore inflammans ita incestuosos efficit, vt neque propriis Sororibus parcunt. Et narrat exemplum, qualiter pro eo quod Gayus Caligula tres sorores suas virgines coitu illicito oppressit, deus tanti sceleris peccatum impune non ferens ipsum non solum ab imperio set a vita iusticia vindice priuauit. Narrat eciam aliud exemplum super codem, qualiter Amon filius Dauid fatui amoris concupiscencia preuentus, sororem suam Thamar a sue virginitatis pudicicia inuitam deflorauit, propter quod et ipse a fratre suo Absolon postea interfectus, peccatum sue mortis precio invitus redemit.* [Here he speaks against

those whom Venus has made so incestuously inflamed by the fervor of their desire that they do not spare even their own sisters. And he narrates an instructive example how, because Gaius Caligula assaulted his three virgin sisters in illicit coitus, God, not tolerating the sin of so great a crime to be unpunished, by just vindication not only deprived him of imperial rule, but of life. He narrates also another instructive example on the same matter, how Amon the son of David, overwhelmed by lust of fatuous love, sexually violated his unwilling sister Tamar, deflowering her modest virginity, on account of which he, later being killed by his brother Absolon, also unwilling, repaid his sin with the price of his death.]

- 202 *Caligula*. Gower's source is Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars* 4.24. That Gower knew Suetonius directly is likely in that Chaucer cites "Swetonius" as source for his account of Nero in The Monk's Tale. Higden's *Polychronicon*, Bk. 4, ch. 7, also tells of Caligula's incest: he was "A swiþe wicked man. . . . he lay by his owne sustres, and gat a douȝter on þat oon, and lay by þat oþer afterward, and at þe laste he exciled his sustres þat he hadde i-lay by" (Trevisa's translation, pp. 363–65). Neither Suetonius nor Higden attribute the cause of his death to incest, however. That seems to be Genius' insight.
- 214–19 *Amon . . . Thamer . . . Absolon . . . his soster schent*. The story of Amon's incestuous rape of Tamar and Absolon's jealous revenge may be found in 2 Kings [2 Samuel] 13.
- 224 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic narrat, qualiter Loth duas filias suas ipsis consenientibus carnali copula cognouit, duosque ex eis filios, scilicet Moab et Amon, progenuit quorum postea generacio praua et exasperans contra populum dei in terra saltim promissionis vario grauamine quam sepius insultabat.* [Here he narrates how Lot knew in carnal copulation his two daughters, with them both consenting, and how he generated two sons from them, namely Moab and Amon, whose depraved and exasperating lineage was later very often abusive against the people of God, at least in the Land of Promise, by means of various kinds of trouble.] The story of Lot's fellowship with his daughters is found in Genesis 19:30–38.
- 232 As in the Tale of Canacee and Machaire, nature impels the incestuous desire and, in birth, provides a release, but with disastrous progeny. See Kelly, *Love and Marriage*, pp. 140–41.
- 256 *every man is oþres lore*. Proverbial. See Whiting M170.
- 263 *excedeth lawe*. Diane Watt suggests that although Amans claims he is not guilty of incest (8.184–89), in a sense he is guilty "insofar as he seems to be engaged in an oedipal struggle with his own incestuous parents: Venus and Cupid, the queen and king of love" (*Amoral Gower*, p. 128).
- 269 *process*. Gower thinks of history as a process (L. *processus*); that is, a pageant or play, staged on "middelerthe." It is a narrative, a story that unfolds. See *MED* *proces* 3a, c, and f.
- 271 ff. The "Tale of Apollonius" was popular and appears in English before Gower in an Old English translation. See Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre*, Appendix 1: "Latin

and Vernacular Versions of *HA* to 1609,” pp. 182–216. Appendix 2 deals with “Medieval and Renaissance Allusions to the Story of Apollonius.” The tale occurs in Godfrey of Viterbo’s *Pantheon*, which Gower used frequently, though his version includes many details not to be found in Godfrey, or in the Latin *Gesta Romanorum*, cap. 153. The eleventh-century Latin prose version, *Historia Apollonii Tyrii*, a version which Godfrey used as his source, was most likely known by Gower as well. It includes details found in Gower which do not occur in Godfrey. See Macaulay’s useful discussion (3:536–38) and Singer’s edition and discussion of *Apollonius von Tyrus* in his edition of Godfrey of Viterbo’s *Cronica*. Shakespeare’s *Pericles*, in which “Gower” is the commentator, is based only in part on Gower’s version of the story. For critical discussion of the story see Diminick, “Redinge of Romance,” pp. 136–37; Donavin, *Incest Narratives*, pp. 64–86; Gallacher, *Love, the Word, and Mercury*, pp. 129–38; Goodall, “John Gower’s *Apollonius of Tyre*”; Olsen, “Betwene Ernest and Game,” pp. 71–86; Olsson, *Structures of Conversion*, pp. 215–25; Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, pp. 166–72; Robins, “Romance,” pp. 169–72; Scanlon, “Riddle of Incest,” pp. 112–27; Watt, *Amoral Gower*, pp. 127–48; and Yeager, *John Gower’s Poetic*, pp. 216–29. Because Macaulay’s notes on this tale are extensive and excellent I have cited them liberally, supplying translations of the Latin. See notes to lines 404 ff., 542 ff., 679, 767 ff., 866 ff., 1089 ff., 1184 ff., 1248, and 1349 ff.

272 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur adhuc contra incestuosos amantum coitus. Et narrat mirabile exemplum de magno Rege Antiocho, qui vxore mortua propriam filiam violauit: et quia filie Matrimonium penes alios impedire voluit, tale ab eo exiit edictum, quod si quis eam in vxorem peteret, nisi ipse prius quoddam problema questionis, quam ipse Rex proposuerat, veraciter solueret, capitali sentencia puniretur. Super quo veniens tandem discretus iuuensis princeps Tyri Appolinus questionem soluit; nec tamen filiam habere potuit, set Rex indignatus ipsum propter hoc in mortis odium recollegit. Vnde Appolinus a facie Regis fugiens, quamplura, prout inferius intitulantur, propter amorem pericula passus est.* [Here he speaks moreover against the incestuous coitus of lovers. And he narrates a miraculous instructive example about the great king Antiochus, who after his wife had died violated his own daughter. And because he wanted to prevent the marriage of his daughter with any others, such an edict went forth from him, that if anyone should seek her as a wife, unless he first accurately solved a certain problem of a puzzle which the king himself had proposed, he would receive capital punishment. Whereupon a shrewd youth, Apollonius the ruler of Tyre, arriving, solved the puzzle. Yet he was not able to have the daughter; instead the king, indignant, conceived against him because of this a mortal hatred. Wherefore Apollonius, fleeing from the king’s presence, suffered very many dangers, as are described below.]

279–92

On shared beds and incest after the death of the mother, see Shaw, “Role of the Shared Bed.” Shaw cites various accounts in which mothers and sons and fathers and daughters share beds with disastrous results, albeit thinking, as Antiochus does, “that it was no sinne” (line 346).

280

deth, which no king mai withstonde. Proverbial. See Whiting D78, D101.

293–94

See note to line 54, above.

- 299 *With strengthe.* “By force.” On rape as violence — *violentus concubitus* — see Hanawalt, “Whose Story Was This?” See also the note to line 347.
- 309–10 *devoureth / His oghne fleisshe.* On incest as cannibalism see Donavin, *Incest Narratives*.
- 312 *This unkinde fare.* See note to 1.2565 on indifference toward the rights of kinsmen as *unkinde* behavior.
- 347 *sche dorste him nothing withseie.* See Donavin, *Incest Narratives*, pp. 64–94, on the political effects of the incestuous rape of Antiochus’ daughter.
- 374 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De aduentu Appolini in Antiochiam, vbi ipse filiam Regis Antiochi in uxorem postulauit.* [Concerning Apollonius’ arrival at Antioch, where he requests to have as wife the daughter of King Antiochus.]
- 376–80 *gret desir . . . hihe mod . . . hote blod . . . lusti knyght . . . musende on a nyht.* Genius presents Apollonius’ willful behavior as a phenomenon of youth and nature rather than intemperate or sinful behavior.
- 402 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Questio Regis Antiochi.* [The puzzle of King Antiochus.]
- 404 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Scelere uehor, materna carne vescor, quero patrem meum, matris mee virum, uxoris mee filium.* [“I am conveyed by crime, I feed on maternal flesh, I seek my father, the husband of my mother, the son of my wife.”] On the gloss Macaulay observes: “The riddle as given in the Laud MS. is, ‘Scelere uehor. Materna carne uescor. Quero patrem meum matris mee uirum uxoris mee filium, nec inuenio.’ Most copies have ‘fratrem meum’ for ‘patrem meum,’ but Gower agrees with the Laud MS. I do not attempt a solution of it beyond that of Apollonius, which is, ‘Quod dixisti scelere uehor, non es mentitus, ad te ipsum respice. Et quod dixisti materna carne uescor, filiam tuam intuere’” (2:538). The riddle closely resembles riddles from ancient through late medieval times about the cyclical generation of water and ice, which invariably use an incestuous metaphor: e.g., “My mother bore me, and soon my mother is born from me; the daughter whom the mother bore has generated the mother.” See Galloway, “Rhetoric of Riddling” (n.b., riddle Ha 11 and analogues, p. 99 and note 108). The riddle in the story of Apollonius, of course, has a literal incestuous meaning, and thus is almost not a riddle at all. But the story presumes that an audience (including previous suitors) would first consider the riddle metaphorically like other ancient and medieval riddles.
- 405–14 Goolden, “Antiochus’s Riddle,” offers a detailed comparison of Gower’s riddle with the Latin version. See entries in Nicholson (*Annotated Index*, pp. 503–04) for thumbnail summaries of critical discussions of the riddle, and, more recently, Watt (*Amoral Gower*, pp. 129–34).
- 418 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Responsio Appolini.* [Apollonius’ response.]
- 421 *reheresed on and on.* Gower regularly celebrates the individual who can reason well and think problems through step-by-step. Compare, especially, the rational behavior of Peronelle in the Tale of the Three Questions, Florent in his tale, Paulina and her husband in the Tale of Mundus and Paulina, the king in

- Trump of Death, and, ultimately, “John Gower,” as he once again exercises his reason.
- 428 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Indignacio Antiochi super responsione Appolini.* [Antiochus' indignation over Apollonius' response.]
- 431 *With slihe wordes and with felle.* Contrast Antiochus' thought process with that of Apollonius as Antiochus uses his reason to subvert truth.
- 440 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De recessu Appolini ab Antiochia.* [Concerning Apollonius' retreat from Antioch.]
- 466 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De fuga Appolini per mare a Regno suo.* [Concerning Apollonius' flight across the sea from his kingdom.]
- 496 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota qualiter Thaliartus Miles, vt Appolinum veneno intoxicate, ab Antiocho in Tyrum missus, ipso ibidem non inuento Antiochiam rediit.* [Note how Taliart the knight, sent by Antiochus to Tyre so that Apollonius might be sickened with poison, returned to Antioch when he was not found there.]
- 536 *He stinte his wrath the and let him be.* Macaulay notes Gower's variation from the source here, objecting that the change takes away Apollonius' motive for fleeing to Tarsus (3:538).
- 537 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolinus in portu Tharsis applicuit, vbi in hospicio cuiusdam magni viri nomine Strangulionis hospitatus est.* [How Apollonius arrived at the port of Tharsis, where in the household of a certain great man, Strangulio by name, he was given hospitality.]
- 542 ff. Macaulay (3:539) notes “In the original Apollonius meets ‘Hellanicus’ at once on landing, and is informed by him of the proscription. He makes an offer to Strangulio to sell his wheat at cost price to the citizens, if they will conceal his presence among them. The money which he receives as the price of the wheat is expended by him in public benefits to the state, and the citizens set up a statue of him standing in a two-horse chariot (biga), his right hand holding forth corn and his left foot resting upon a bushel measure.”
- 571 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Hellicanus ciuis Tyri Tharsim veniens Appolinum de insidiis Antiochi premuniuit.* [How Hellican, a citizen of Tyre, coming to Tharsis, forewarned Apollonius about the treacheries of Antiochus.]
- 575–77 *Hellican . . . preide his lord to have insihte / Upon himself.* In his wandering Apollonius seems at the mercy of Fortune (see 8.585–92). But in Gower Fortune is double-valenced, the good mixed with the bad, with the resolve determined less by chance than by *insihte upon himself*.
- 585 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolinus portum Tharsis relinquens, cum ipse per mare navigio securiorem quesuuit, superueniente tempestate nauis cum omnibus preter ipsum solum in eadem contentis iuxta Pentapolim periclitabatur.* [How Apollonius, departing the port of Tharsis, sought a more secure one by passage across the sea, but his ship was endangered along with all those aboard it except for himself, when a tempest overtook them near Pentapolis.]

- 630 *broghte him sauf upon a table.* Earlier, Apollonius was a food supplier as he brought grain to Mittelene. Now he himself is served up as Fortune brings him ashore on a *table* (plank). The felicitous pun comments well on Dame Fortune's movable feasts.
- 634 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolinus nudus super litus iactabatur, vbi quidam piscator ipsum suo collobo vestiens ad vrbem Pentapolim direxit.* [How Apollonius was thrown naked onto the shore, where a certain fisherman, clothing him with his tunic, directed him to the city of Pentapolis.]
- 646 *cam a fisshere in the weie.* Just as the sea is a traditional sign of Fortune's instability, so the fisherman figures as an agent who makes a living out of what Fortune provides. N.b. Shakespeare's clever twist on this point in Gower's story to have the fishermen dredge up a suit of "rusty armour" in which Pericles can joust (II.i.119).
- 666 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolino Pentapolim adueniente ludus Gignasii per vrbem publice proclamatus est.* [How when Apollonius arrived at Pentapolis a gymnastics game was publicly proclaimed through the city.]
- 678 *comun game.* Gower omits references to the baths in the source (see Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre*, pp. 74–75 and note to line 679 below) and substitutes a ball game of some sort that is played naked as was the Greek "custume and us (use)" (line 685). "Comun" implies popular, though in this admirable society the king Artestrathes observes the play and rewards the victor.
- 679 Macaulay observes: "The account in the original story is here considerably different. Gower did not understand the Greek customs. 'Et dum cogitaret unde uite peteret auxilium, uidit puerum nudum per plateam currentem, oleo unctum, precinctum sabana, ferentem ludos iuueniles ad gymnasium pertinentes, maxima uoce dicentem: Audite ciues, audite peregrini, liberi et ingenui, gymnasium patet. Apollonius hoc auditio exuens se tribunario ingreditur lauacrum, utitur liquore palladio; et dum exercentes singulos intueretur, parem sibi querit et non inuenit. Subito Arcestrates rex totius illius regionis cum turba famulorum ingressus est: dumque cum suis ad pile lusum exerceretur, uolente deo miscuit se Apollonius regi, et dum currenti sustulit pilam, subili uelocitate percussam ludenti regi remisit' &c. (f. 207 v°). [And while he was pondering where he would find a means to survive, he saw running through the square a naked boy smeared with oil, wrapped with a towel, bearing equipment for a boys' gymnasium game, uttering in the loudest possible voice, "Hear ye, citizens, hear ye, visitors, freedmen and freeborn: the gymnasium is open!" Hearing this, Apollonius, removing his cloak entered the bath, and used the liquid of Pallas [oil]; and while he observed each man exerting himself, he searched for someone equal to himself and found none. Suddenly Archistrates, the king of the entire region, entered along with his crowd of servants: and while he engaged in a game of ball with his men, by God's will Apollonius participated along with the king: he caught the ball while the king was running and sent the caught ball back with accurate swiftness to the king playing] The story proceeds to say that the king, pleased

with the skill of Apollonius in the game of ball, accepted his services at the bath, and was rubbed down by him in a very pleasing manner. The result was an invitation to supper. Gower agrees here with the *Pantheon* in making the king a spectator only" (3:539).

- 696 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolinus ludum gignasii vincens in aulam Regis ad cenam honorifice receptus est.* [How Apollonius, winning the gymnastics game, was honorably received for a feast in the king's hall.]
- 720 *beginne a middel bord.* *Beginne* suggests that Apollonius is placed at the head of a second table.
- 729 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolinus in cena recumbens nichil comedit, set doloroso vultu, submisso capite, ingemiscebatur; qui tandem a filia Regis confortatus cytharam plectens cunctis audientibus citharisando ultra modum complacuit.* [How Apollonius, sitting down to the feast, ate nothing, but instead with a mournful face and lowered head began groaning; finally, being comforted by the king's daughter, he played a harp and pleased all the listeners by his harping.]
- 767 ff. Macaulay observes (3:539): "In the original all applaud the performance of the king's daughter except Apollonius, who being asked by the king why he alone kept silence, replied, 'Bone rex, si permittis, dicam quod sentio: filia enim tua in artem musicam incidit, nam non didicit. Denique iube mihi tradi liram, et scies quod nescit' (f. 208 v°). [Good king, if you permit I will say what I feel: for your daughter has jumped into the art of music but has not learned it. Command therefore that the lyre be handed to me, and you will learn what she does not.] Gower has toned this down to courtesy."
- 768 *mesure.* Measure is a technical term in music borrowed from grammar to define the metrics of a line. See Boethius, *De musica* (Augustine's *De musica* makes a similar point), where measure is discussed in terms of mode, duration, accent, and metrical feet. *MED* gives "?melody" and "?harmony" as possible glosses, but such a reading is indeed questionable and misleading. If one thinks of melody as the sequence (the measuring) of a song in a particular mode then the term might apply (see line 783). But if the term were understood to mean a pleasing tune then the gloss would be quite inappropriate. Similarly, if "harmony" means ratio and proportions of intervals, then it might be a suitable gloss, but if "harmony" is taken to mean chord structures then the gloss would be wrong. See note to Prol.1056.
- 777 *He takth the harpe.* Playing the harp teaches "mesure" (8.773), that is, proportion, moderation, and harmony, all crucial virtues for good kingship. (See note to 8.768.) As a good king Apollonius not only embodies "measure," he teaches it to his people. Of all kingly practices, this brings him closest to the angelic state (see 8.781–83) best suited to good rule.
- 801 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolinus cum Rege pro filia sua erudienda retentus est.* [How Apollonius was kept with the king in order to educate his daughter.]
- 808–11 *preide unto hir fader . . . That sche myhte . . . His lore have.* This is one of the earliest instances of the story of a nobleman in disguise who becomes the teacher

of a young noblewoman whom he ultimately marries. In the Renaissance, where the education of noblewomen becomes an important factor in their commodification for desirable marriages, the trope becomes a prominent comic device. In Gower's adaptation of *The Pantheon* the agency of the young woman is heightened as she falls in love with the stranger, chooses him as her tutor, and then insists upon him and no other as her mate. Shakespeare picks up on the idea in *Pericles*, but also, more in the vein of a Plautine comedy, in *Taming of the Shrew*, where it is the men who are suitors and the teacherly role is divided between Lucentio (for Latin studies) and Hortensio (for music) as they disguise themselves to court Bianca. See also the device in *Comedy of Errors*, Berowne in *Love's Labours Lost*, and Gascoigne's *Supposes*, as well as Ariosto's *I Suppositi*. In Gower the girl's eagerness is fulfilled, but at a terrible price, as Fortune "slays" her, then abandons her to years of service to Diana before returning her husband and daughter to her. Other later analogues of the prince in disguise as a philosopher/teacher may be seen in Pierre Marivaux's play *The Triumph of Love* (1732) and in Gioacchino Rossini's *Barber of Seville* (1816), which is based on a play by Beaumarchais (1775).

820 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter filia Regis Appolinum ornato apparatu vestiri fecit, et ipse ad puelle doctrinam in quampluribus familiariter intendebat: vnde placata puel- la in amorem Appolini exardescens infirmabatur.* [How the king's daughter caused herself to be outfitted with ornate trappings, and he sought in many friendly ways the teaching of the girl; whereupon the girl, pleased, burned and sickened with love of Apollonius.]

829

Of sharpe, of citole, and of rote. The citole was a stringed instrument with a rounded belly and neck with frets that is plucked as one might play a banjo or mandolin. The rote was a stringed instrument of the violin class played with a mechanical wheel, like a hurdy gurdy. It also had frets which were measured with one hand while the other cranked the wheel. The instrument was held in the lap. See Sadie, *New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*.

850

Of hire yimaginacion. Gower softens "the harshness which pervades much of the traditional account," allowing "Apollonius and his bride to be considerably more tender and emotional than they are in [the Latin source]" (Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre*, p. 192). Gower's focus on the bride's imagination as she tenders her thoughts characterizes his kind treatment of women throughout the poem.

866 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter tres filii Principum filiam Regis singillatim in uxorem suis supplicacionibus postularunt.* [How three sons of rulers in turn begged the king's daughter to be their wife.] In the original this incident occurs when the king and Apollonius are together. The king has been approached by the three suitors, but tells them they cannot visit his daughter because she is sick from too much study. He asks each to write his name and the amount of money he is prepared to offer as dowry, and he asks Apollonius to carry these petitions to her. She reads them and asks: "Master Apollonius, are you not sorry that I am going to be married?" Apollonius said: 'No, I am delighted that now that I have taught you well and revealed a wealth of learning, by God's favour you will also

- marry your heart's desire.' The girl said: 'Master, if you loved me, you would certainly be sorry for your teaching" (Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre*, p. 133).
- 875–80 *ech of hem do make a bille . . . And whan sche wiste hou that it stod . . . Thei scholden have ansuere.* Artestrathes' involvement of his daughter in the marriage decision stands in marked contrast to Antiochus' proceedings. He makes sure that she has a detailed resumé of each suitor — his name, his parentage, his wealth, but also *his oghne wille* (line 876; i.e., his personal reasons for wanting her as his bride) — so that she might make an informed decision. Then when she does make her choice her father takes her concerns seriously. See note to lines 889 ff.
- 889 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter filia Regis omnibus aliis relictis Appolinum in maritum preelegit.* [How the king's daughter chose Apollonius as husband, leaving all others behind.] In the original her letter has nothing of the suggestion in Gower's version of an agony of love that might lead to death. Instead, the letter is a forthright demand to control her own marriage even to her own economic disadvantage, a demand that does not even use conditional verbs: "volo coniugem naufragio patrimonio deceptum" [I want to marry the man who was cheated out of his patrimony by shipwreck]. Gower's version of her letter is full of conditional verbs: "Bot if I have Appolinus . . . I wol non other man abide . . . if I of him faile . . . Ye schull for me be dowhterles" (8.898–903). In the original some modesty is recuperated by a slight riddle in her statement, which leads to a scene of discovery: the king does not know which man that is, and must then ask the other suitors if they have been shipwrecked, before asking Apollonius if he has discovered the shipwrecked man, upon which he answers, "Bone rex, si permittis, inueni" [Good king, if you allow, I have]. But in spite of this brief riddle and discovery not in Gower, generally her demand in the original shows a woman in late antiquity asserting personal will (*volo*) in defiance of economic concerns that usually governed marriage in such culture. In Gower's version there is no coy riddle about the identity of her beloved (Apollonius is mentioned outright in the note to the king), and there is no mention of the economic pressures on marriage. There is just her love, whose force is emphasized by the conditional verbs, and the careful efforts of her father to facilitate its realization.
- 914 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Rex et Regina in maritagium filie sue cum Appolino consencierunt.* [How the king and queen consented to the marriage of their daughter with Apollonius.]
- 930 ff. Macaulay notes: There is no mention of the queen in the original. The king calls his friends together and announces the marriage" (3:540).
- 951 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolinus filie Regis nupsit, et prima nocte cum ea concubiens ipsam impregnauit.* [How Apollonius married the king's daughter, and, sleeping with her on the first night, impregnated her.]
- 952–74 Macaulay notes that the description of the wedding originates with Gower (3:540).

- 975 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Ambaciatores a Tyro in quadam naui Pentapolim venientes mortem Regis Antiochi Appolino nunciarunt.* [How ambassadors arriving from Tyre to Pentapolis in a certain ship announced to Apollonius the death of King Antiochus.]
- 1003 In the source Apollonius is named successor to Antiochus. Macaulay observes: “This was regarded by our author as an unnecessary complication” (3:540).
- 1020 *nede he mot, that nede schal.* Proverbial. Variant of Whiting N61. Compare Prol. 698 and 1.1714.
- 1020 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolino cum vxore sua impregnata a Pentapoli versus Tyrum nauigantibus, contigit vxorem, mortis articulo angustiatam, in naui filiam, que postea Thasis vocabatur, parere.* [How, when Apollonius with his pregnant wife was voyaging from Pentapolis toward Tyre, it happened that the wife, seized in the grip of death, gave birth in the ship to a daughter, who was later called Thasis.]
- 1054 ff. Macaulay notes: “So far as the original can be understood, it seems to say that the birth of the child was brought about by the storm and that the appearance of death in the mother took place afterwards, owing to a coagulation of the blood caused by the return of fair weather” (3:540).
- 1059 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolinus vxoris sue mortem planxit.* [How Apollonius mourned his wife’s death.]
- 1059–83 Most of this section is original with Gower.
- 1089 ff. Macaulay speculates: “Apparently the meaning is that the sea will necessarily cast a dead body up on the shore, and therefore they must throw it out of the ship, otherwise the ship itself will be cast ashore with it. The Latin says only, ‘nauis mortuum non suffert: iube ergo corpus in pelago mitti’ (f. 211 v°)” [a ship will not bear a corpse: therefore order the body to be tossed into the sea] (3:540).
- 1098 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter suadentibus nautis corpus vxoris sue mortue in quadam Cista plumbo et ferro obtusa que circumligata Appolinus cum magno thesauro una cum quadam littera sub eius capite scripta recludi et in mare proici fecit.* [How, with the sailors persuading him, Apollonius caused his dead wife’s body to be enclosed in a certain coffin hammered shut and wound round with lead and iron, and, with a great treasure along with a certain letter under her head, to be thrown into the sea.]
- 1122 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Copia littere Appolini capiti vxoris sue supposite.* [Copy of Apollonius’ letter deposited at his wife’s head.]
- 1141 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolinus, vxoris sue corpore in mare projecto, Tyrum relinquens cursum suum versus Tharsim navigio dolens arripuit.* [How Apollonius, when his wife’s body was thrown into the sea, abandoning Tyre took his course toward Tharsis by sea voyage, mourning.]

- 1151–1217 Along with lines 1833–66 cited by Bullough (*Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, 1.10–11; 50–54) as a probable source for the discovery of the mother section of Shakespeare’s *Comedy of Errors*.
- 1151 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter corpus predicte defuncte super litus apud Ephesim quidam medicus nomine Cerymon cum aliquibus suis discipulis inuenit; quod in hospicium suum portans et extra cistam ponens, spiraculo vite in ea adhuc inuenito, ipsam plene sanitati restituit.* [How a certain doctor, Cerymon by name, along with some of his students, found the body of the aforesaid deceased on the shore at Ephesus; carrying it into his household and taking it out of the coffin, and finding a breath of life still in her, he restored her fully to health.]
- 1160 *That God wol save mai noght spille.* Proverbial. Variation of Whiting G276.
- 1172 *Al that schal falle, falle schal.* Proverbial. Variation of Whiting H105: “Hap what hap may.”
- 1184 ff. Macaulay notes (3:540–41): “In the original it is not Cerimon himself, but a young disciple of his, who discovers the signs of life and takes measures for restoring her. She has already been laid upon the pyre, and he by carefully lighting the four corners of it succeeds in liquefying the coagulated blood. Then he takes her in and warms her with wool steeped in hot oil.”
- 1222 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter vxor Appolini sanata domum religionis peciit, vbi sacro velamine munita castam omni tempore se vovit.* [How Apollonius’ wife, healed, sought a religious establishment, where she vowed to be chaste for all time, fortified by holy scripture.]
- 1248 The daughter introduces a kind of Cinderella motif, where, as in the fairy tale, the “stepmother” would destroy the heir for the sake of her own daughter. Macaulay observes that the daughter is apparently Gower’s invention, perhaps the result of his misreading of the original “adhibitis amicis filiam sibi adoptauit,” that is, in the company of friends he adopted her as his daughter (3:541).
- 1272 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolinus Tharsim nauigans, filiam suam Thaisim Strangulioni et Dionisia vxori sue educandam commendauit; et deinde Tyrum adiit, vbi cum inestimabili gaudio a suis receptus est.* [How Apollonius, voyaging to Tharsis, placed his daughter Thaisis with Strangulio and his wife Dionisia to be educated; and thereupon he returned to Tyre, where he was received with inestimable joy by his people.]
- 1295 *Thaise.* *Tharsia* in the source, bearing the name of the city. Macaulay notes that “the Laud MS regularly calls her Thasia,” which may be the link toward Thaise (3:541).
- 1324 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Thaysia vna cum Philotenna Strangulionis et Dionisia filia omnis sciencie et honestatis doctrina imbuta est: set Thaysia Philotennam precellens in odium mortale per inuidiam a Dionisia recollecta est.* [How Thaysia along with Philotenna, daughter of Strangulio and Dionisia, was imbued with every doctrine of honorableness and science; but against Thaysia, excelling over Philotenna, was conceived a mortal hatred from Dionisia’s envy.]

- 1349 ff. Macaulay observes: “Much is made in the original story of the death of this nurse and of the revelation which she made to Tharsia of her real parentage. Up to this time she had supposed herself to be the daughter of Strangulio. The nurse suspected some evil, and advised Tharsia, if her supposed parents dealt ill with her, to go and take hold of the statue of her father in the market-place and appeal to the citizens for help. After her death Tharsia visited her tomb by the sea-shore every day, ‘et ibi manes parentum suorum inuocabat’ [and there she would invoke the ancestral gods of her parents]. Here Theophilus lay in wait for her by order of Dionysiades” (3:541).
- 1373 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Dionisia Thaysim, vt occideretur, Theophilo seruo suo tradidit, qui cum noctanter longius ab vrbe ipsam prope litus maris interficere propo- suerat, pirate ibidem prope latitantes Thaisim de manu Carnificis eripuerunt, ipsamque vsque Ciuitatem Mitelenam ducentes, cuidam Leonino scortorum ibidem magistro vendiderunt.* [How Dionisia sent Thasis to her servant Theophilus so that she might be killed. When he had sought to kill her at night along the shore very far from town, pirates hiding near there snatched Thasis from the executioner’s hand, and leading her up to the city Mitelene, they sold her to a certain Leonine, a master of prostitutes there.]
- 1406 *In havene sauf and whan thei be.* “And when they were in safe haven.”
- 1423 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Leoninus Thaisim ad lupanar destinauit, vbi dei gracia preuenta ipsius virginitatem nullus violare potuit.* [How Leonine sent Thasis to a bordello, where by the intervening grace of God no one was able to violate her virginity.]
- 1451–52 *this weie . . . mi weie.* “The rhyme is saved from being an identical one by the adverbial use of ‘weie’ in the second line, ‘mi weie’ being equivalent to ‘aweie’” (Mac 3:542).
- 1477 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Thasis a lupanari virgo liberata, inter sacras mulieres hospicium habens, sciencias quibus edocta fuit nobiles regni pueras ibidem edocebat.* [How Thasis, freed from the bordello still a virgin, taking hospitality among holy women, there taught the noble girls of the kingdom the sciences she had been taught.]
- 1480 *Now comen tho that come wolde.* Proverbial variant. See Tilley C529.
- 1498 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Theophilus ad Dionisiam mane rediens affirmauit se Thaisim occidisse; super quo Dionisia vna cum Strangulione marito suo dolorem in publico confingentes, exequias et sepulturam honorifice quantum ad extra subdola conjectione fieri constituerunt.* [How Theophilus, returning the following morning to Dionisia, affirmed that he had killed Thasis, whereupon Dionisia, along with her husband Strangulio, dissimulating a grief in public, by treacherous contrivance caused funeral rites and a sepulcher to be made honorifically, as far as the outside world was concerned.]
- 1541 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolinus in regno suo apud Tyrum existens parlia- mentum fieri constituit.* [How Apollonius, remaining in his kingdom at Tyre, convened a parliament.]

- 1560 *unkinde*. “Disloyal, ungrateful.” See note to 1.2565 on lack of loyalty to kin as unnatural (*unkynde*) behavior.
- 1567 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolinus post parliamentum Tharsim pro Thaise filia sua querenda adiit, qua ibidem non inventa abinde navigio recessit.* [How Apollonius after the parliament departed for Tharsis to seek his daughter Thaisis; not finding her there, he retreated thence by sea voyage.]
- 1590 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Nauis Appolini ventis agitata portum urbis Mitelene in die quo festa Neptuni celebrare consueuerunt applicuit; set ipse pre dolore Thaysia filie sue, quam mortuam reputabat, in fundo nauis obscuro iacens lumen videre noluit.* [How Apollonius’ ship, tossed by waves, reached the port of the city Mitelene on the day when they were accustomed to celebrate Neptune’s feast; but he, for sorrow for Thaisis his daughter whom he judged to be dead, threw himself in the dark hold of the ship and did not want to see the light.]
- 1614 *hihe festes of Neptune*. Gower provides a felicitous touch by setting the moment of Apollonius’ arrival at Mitelene at the sacred feast of Neptune. This is the *peripeteia*, the moment of reversal, the mysterious turning point of the plot. The sea, like Fortune, has seemed to be Apollonius’ enemy, having taken from him his ship, then his wife, and then leaving him drowning in the waves of his grief now that his daughter Thais is dead. But, like Fortune, Neptune has also been his friend, enabling him to escape the murderous Taliard, bringing him to safety at Pentapolim where he found his wife, then saving Thais from Theophilus’ knife and conveying her mysteriously straight to Mitelene. It also preserved Apollonius’ wife, conveying her to Ephesus. Now, through the mysterious sanctity of Neptune, the sea becomes the vehicle of his restoration — first of his lost daughter, then of his lost wife, then his kingdoms. Neptune repeatedly tests him but ultimately rewards him with all his domains.
- 1618 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Athenagoras urbis Mitelene Princeps, nauim Appolini inuestigans, ipsum sic contristatum nichilque respondentem consolari satagebat.* [How Athenagoras, the ruler of the city of Mitelene, searching Apollonius’ ship, tried to console him, while he was sorrowing and answering nothing.]
- 1622 *Athenagoras*. Archibald observes: “Gower is alone in introducing Athenagoras for the first time only when Apollonius’ ship arrives, thus omitting the auction and his shameful visit to the brothel” (*Apollonius of Tyre*, p. 70).
- 1652 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter precepto Principis, vt Appolinum consolaretur, Thaisis cum cithara sua ad ipsum in obscuro nauis, ubi jacebat, producta est.* [How by order of the ruler, in order that Apollonius might be consoled, Thaisis, with her harp, was led to him where he was lying in the darkness of the ship.]
- 1670 ff. *many a lay*. Macaulay supplies an original example (3:543): “Her song is given in the original; it is rather pretty, but very much corrupted in the manuscripts. It begins thus,

‘Per sordes gradior, sed sordis conscientia non sum,
Ut rosa in spinis nescit mucrone perire,’ &c.”

[I walk amidst corruption, but I am not conscious of corruption, / As a rose among thorns does not perish from their sharp points.]

- 1672–73 *he no more than the wal . . . herde.* Proverbial. See Whiting W26.
- 1681 ff. See Macaulay (3:543): “Several of her riddles are given in the original story and he succeeds in answering them all at once. One is this,
- ‘Longa ferior uelox formose filia silue,
Innumeris pariter comitum stipata cateruis:
Curro uias multas, uestigia nulla relinquens.’
[I am borne swiftly, long shapely daughter of the woods, / With an innumerable crowding horde of companions: / I run over many roads leaving no tracks.]
- The answer is ‘Nauis’ [Ship].
- She finally falls on his neck and embraces him, upon which he [strikes] her severely. She begins to lament, and incidentally lets him know her story. The suggestion contained in ll. 1702 ff., of the mysterious influence of kinship, is Gower’s own, and we find the same idea in the tale of Constance, ii. 1381 ff.,
- ‘This child he loveth kindly,
And yit he wot no cause why.’
- 1700 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter, sicut deus destinauit, pater filiam inuentam recognouit.* [How just as God had ordained, the father recognized the newfound daughter.]
- 1705–08 *the fader ate laste / His herte upon this maide caste, / That he hire loveth kindly, / And yit he wiste nevere why.* See Watt (*Amoral Gower*, pp. 138–40) on Gower’s adaptation of his sources to heighten the resemblances between Apollonius and Antiochus.
- 1748 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Athenagoras Appolinum de naui in hospicium honorifice recollegit, et Thaisim, patre consenciente, in vxorem duxit.* [How Athenagoras took Apollonius from the ship honorably into his household and, with her father consenting, took Thaisis as wife.]
- 1777 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolinus vna cum filia et eius marito nauim ingredientes a Mitelena vsque Tharsim cursum proposuerunt. Set Appolinus in sompnis ammonitus versus Ephesim, vt ibidem in templo Diane sacrificaret, vela per mare diuerit.* [How Apollonius, traveling along with his daughter and her husband, had set his course from Mitelene for Tharsis. But Apollonius, warned in dreams, diverted his sails across the sea toward Ephesus, so that he might offer sacrifice in the temple of Diana.]
- 1778 *his sone tolde.* Apollonius’ referring to Athenagoras here and hereafter (line 1823) simply as his *sone* bespeaks the sanctity of marriage in his piety. His sacrifice itself is given specific Christian overtones as he goes to shrift in his “holi contemplacioun” (line 1838) that leads to the “miracle” (line 1867) of his wife’s resurrection. The “hole felaschipe” (line 1886) then returns to Tyre,

then Mitelene and the coronation of Thais and Athenagoras, before bringing the law to Tharse.

- 1793 *To Ephesim.* It is noteworthy that Apollonius, having decided to take vengeance upon Dionise and Strangulio (8.1777–82), would first visit Ephesus to do his sacrifice (line 1795). This giving precedence to piety over vengeance results in the recovery of his wife.
- 1833 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolinus Ephesim in templo Diane sacrificans, vxorem suam ibidem velatam inuenit; qua secum assumpta in Nauim, versus Tyrum regressus est.* [How Apollonius at Ephesus, sacrificing in the temple of Diana, found his wife there under the veil; taking her with him on the ship, he returned toward Tyre.]
- 1887 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolinus vna cum vxore et filia sua Thyrum applicuit.* [How Apollonius with his wife and daughter reached Tyre.]
- 1912 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolinus Athenagoram cum Thaise vxore sua super Tyrum coronari fecit.* [How Apollonius caused Athenagoras along with Thaisis his wife to be crowned over Tyre.]
- 1928–29 Lewis singles out these lines for their “businesslike” poetry. They could come from a traveler, a ballad, or Homer (*Allegory of Love*, pp. 206–07).
- 1930 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Appolinus a Tyro per mare versus Tharsim iter arripiens vindictam contra Strangulionem et Dionisiam vxorem suam pro iniuria, quam ipsi Thaisi filie sue intulerunt, iudicitaliter assecutus est.* [How Apollonius, taking his path from Tyre across the sea toward Tharsis, prosecuted Strangulio and Dionisia his wife for the injury that they had inflicted on his daughter Thaisis.]
- 1963 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Artestrate Pentapolim Rege mortuo, ipsi de regno Epistolas super hoc Appolino direxerunt: vnde Appolinus vna cum vxore sua ibidem aduenientes ad decus imperii cum magno gaudio coronati sunt.* [How, with Artestrates, king at Pentapolis, having died, they sent from the kingdom letters about this to Apollonius; wherefore Apollonius and his wife arriving there are crowned with great joy, to the glory of the empire.]
- 1993–2002 “Gower’s ideas about marriage seem to come together here. A good marriage, based on the existence of honesty, compassion, fidelity, and joy in being together (evidenced by appropriate expressions of physical affection), is the proper end for virtuous lovers” (Rytting, “In Search of the Perfect Spouse,” p. 125).
- 1995–96 *Honesteliche.* See J. A. W. Bennett’s discussion of the fitting conclusion to the poem, “Gower’s ‘Honeste love.’” See also the concept as it is presented in *CA* 4.1455 ff. with its celebration of the “gentil herte” (4.1457).
- 2009 ff. *Confessor ad Amantem.* [The Confessor to the Lover.] See Simpson on Gower’s ideal philosopher-king as the reader of the poem who “a kingdom hath to justifie” (8.2112) (*Sciences and the Self*, p. 229).
- 2030 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Confessio Amantis vnde pro finali conclusione consilium Confessoris impetrat.* [The Lover seeks the Confessor’s counsel as a final conclusion.]

- 2039 *Danger*. A defense mechanism of the woman in *RR* who perpetually thwarts the ardent lover with aloofness. Guillaume de Lorris presents *Dangier* as somewhat gruff and crude but effective in warding off, up to a point at least, male aggression.
- 2040 *moste fere*. “Greatest fear,” with an ironic pun on “closest companion.” Although Gower usually spells “fiere” for “companion” (though not always), a homophonic pun seems likely.
- 2055 *leng*. The comparative form, i.e., “longer.”
- 2063–64 Proverbial. See Whiting N49.
- 2068 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic super Amoris causa finita confessione, Confessor Genius Amanti ea que sibi salubrious expediuunt, sano consilio finaliter iniungit.* [Here, with the confession concerning the cause of love finished, Genius the Confessor finally adds to his salutary counsel those things which profit him still more salubriously.]
- 2086 *Tak love where it mai noght fail*. The line resonates with the sentiments at the end of Chaucer’s *TC*, where the narrator, just prior to the dedication to Gower, advises “yonge, fresshe folkes” (5.1835) to turn their love to God who made humankind “after his ymage” (5.1839) and asserts, “What nedeth feynede loves for to seke?” (5.1848).
- 2102–03 *fot which . . . sporneth . . . his heved hath overthowe*. Proverbial. See Whiting F466.
- 2130 *love . . . that blind was evere*. Proverbial. See Tilley L506. See also *CA* 8.2794.
- 2146–47 *For I can do to thee no more / Bot teche thee the rihte weie.* Genius informs Amans that he may attempt to teach, but only Amans can learn, and that must be the consequence of Amans’ own choice, Robins cites the passage as evidence that Genius, with all his exempla, can only suggest, and that otherwise “instruction by analogy is unpersuasive” (“Romance,” p. 172).
- 2151 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur de contiouersia, que inter Confessorem et Amantem in fine confessionis versabatur.* [Here he speaks about the debate between the Confessor and the Lover at the end of the confession.]
- 2189–2209 Amans’ debate with Genius is perplexing in that it focuses the tension between reason and desire. Though Genius has consistently advocated moderation of desire he has, nonetheless, given Amans the opportunity to talk about — even indulge in — his fantasies. But now Genius puts an end to that game. Amans objects to Genius’ looking upon his passions as a game (line 2152) but his reason acknowledges that Genius is right. What is most perplexing is the discovery that both sides of the debate are occurring within him. He is the site of the debate.
- 2189 *Tho was betwen mi prest and me.* Here Gower shifts his narrative point of view from that of a dramatic dialogue to that of an onlooking narrator, albeit still in the first person. The shift in tone anticipates the Lover’s new perspective which will enable him to disengage himself from his venial infatuation so that

his love-wound might be healed. This beginning of a new objectivity is a crucial step toward the naming of “John Gower” in line 2321, which is further prelude toward his taking control of his life in full honesty.

- 2212–13 *teres . . . In stede of enke.* Gower’s graphics of the myopic behavior suit well the melodramatic pathos of his letter.
- 2217 ff. In his epistle Amans shifts into a rhyme royal stanza (the Chaucerian stanza of *TC*, *PF*, and the religious tales of *CT*) as if to ennable his sentiment. See Dean, “Gower, Chaucer, and Rhyme Royal,” who sees these stanzas as Gower’s most Chaucerian moment. Gower also uses the stanza in his French poems and *In Praise of Peace*.
- 2218 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat formam cuiusdam Supplicacionis, quam ex parte Amantis per manus Genii Sacerdotis sui Venus sibi porrectam acceptabat.* [Here he describes the form of a certain supplication, which, offered on the part of the Lover by the hand of Genius her priest, Venus accepted.]
- 2224 ff. In his narcissism Amans imagines that all succeed in love except himself, a position often echoed by lovers in Chaucer (e.g., Aurelius’ complaint to Apollo in *The Franklin’s Tale*). As in *PF*, the problem seems to the lover to be one of Nature’s doing, not his own. In constructing such debates both Chaucer and Gower draw upon sentiments expressed in Alanus de Insulis’ *De Planctu Naturae* and Jean de Meun’s *RR*, where Nature tires of hearing the lover’s complaints and threatens to discipline his unruliness. See also line 2327, where Venus identifies his complaint not simply against her and Cupid, but against Nature also.
- 2230 *bot I.* A common trope. To the heartsore man, all creatures seem to have their mates but him. Compare the popular fourteenth-century song, “Fowles in the Frith,” where the birds and the fishes have their happy places but “I mon waxe wod” (Luria and Hoffman, *Middle English Lyrics*, #6, p. 7).
- 2234–35 *and thus betwen the tweie / I stonde, and not if I schal live or deie.* Gower echoes *PF*, where the dreamer knows not whether he floats or sinks (line 7) but like an iron between two magnets of equal power (lines 148–53) is trapped in a kind of error (line 156) he seems incapable of dealing with.
- 2238 ff. In this stanza Amans sees himself caught in a *tale*, a fictional circumstance like that of Pan in love. His fictitious comparison of himself with a wrestler, caught in a throw, again echoes *PF*, where Africcan compares the dreamer seeking to understand love to an observer at a wrestling match, who has opinions on the contest even though he “may nat stonde a pul” (line 164).
- 2264 *Danger.* See note to line 2039.
- 2275 *Satorne.* In some traditions the reign of Saturn is affiliated with peace and the golden age. But seldom is he benevolent to lovers, even though Venus was generated from his desire-inflamed testicles, after he was emasculated by Jupiter. The lovers in Chaucer’s *Knight’s Tale* find him to be cold, dry, de-

- vious, and malicious; he takes delight in the ruination of hopes and fantasies — “My lookyng is the fader of pestilence” (see *CT* I[A]2454–69).
- 2301 *I.* N.b. the shift in first person from Amans the suppliant to the narrator as he returns to a more objective outside view of himself, Cupid, Venus, and “this prest which hihte Genius” (line 2306). Though technically he is still “Amans” (see the Latin speech marker to line 2301), he will forthwith identify himself as “John Gower” (line 2321). See note to line 2320.
- 2303 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur qualiter Venus, accepta Amantis Supplicacione, indilate ad singula respondit.* [Here he says how Venus, accepting the Lover’s supplication, unhesitantly answers point by point.]
- 2320 *what is mi name.* Venus’ question, though “as it were halvinge a game” (line 2319), raises the fundamental identity concern of the protagonist: who exactly is he, caught up amidst his fantasies. His reply, “John Gower” (line 2321), functions as an epiphany that propels the poem’s conclusion, with its detailed steps toward anagnorisis.
- 2330 Venus observes that Nature’s domain is sublunary, but within that realm (i.e., all places under the first sphere) she is powerful. Compare Chaucer’s description of her in *PF* where she rules as “the vicaire of the almyghty Lord” and stimulates creaturely desire as she would “prike yow with plesaunce” (*PF*, lines 379–89).
- 2339 *Agein Nature.* See White on the naturalness of the elderly Amans, rather than the unnaturalness, as most have argued. “Gower does not seem to see the universe as a place considerately arranged so that the man of goodwill shall move reasonably smoothly towards salvation; rather he sees it as a battleground on which man in his weakness must face adversaries immensely superior to him and by no means wholeheartedly committed to his spiritual good” (“Naturalness of Amans’ Love,” p. 321).
- 2378 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic in exemplum contra quoscumque viros inveteratos amoris concupiscentiam affectantes loquitur Venus, huiusque Amantis Confessi supplicacionem quasi deridens, ipsum pro eo quod senex et debilis est, multis exhortacionibus insuffici- entem redarguit.* [Here Venus tells an instructive example against whichever aged ones affect the lust of love, and, as if ridiculing the supplication of the Lover to Genius, she chastises him as inadequate with many exhortations, because he is old and weak.] Other MSS offer a different Latin gloss, which translates: Here he narrates how Venus, indignantly examining the infirmity of the languishing lover, exhorted him as inadequate with very many examples, as for a medicine, lest he should presume to try anything else in her court.
- 2379 *Rageman.* A dice game, the play of which apparently involved women and verses. See Macaulay’s note (3:544–45).
- 2398 ff. *I am Venus.* On Venus’ conflation of the vocabulary of rural labor, business, and sexuality to deal with her assessment of Amans’ impotence as a lover of the world, see Sadlek, “John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*,” especially pp. 157–58.

- 2412 ‘*Min herte wolde and I ne may.*’ Proverbial. Not in Whiting or Tilley.
- 2428–32 “When the unmasking of his senile impotence provides an unexpected moment of closure, Amans’ sense of himself as a lover is belied. The logic of evaluating his life according to external goods breaks down under its own weight: such an external way of thinking is a ‘thing where thou miht non ende winne’ (8.2430), making Amans out to be, in Aristotle’s phrase, a chameleon and weakly supported” (Robins, “Romance,” p. 173). The allusion is to *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.100b6–7.
- 2435 *The thing is torned into was.* Fowler, *History of English Literature*, sees in this line the culmination of “a moving, terrible vision, of life threatened by irresistible and irrational impulses,” where “individual tales, . . . triumphs of *refacimento*, the art of stylish re-presentation,” are brought to an end” (p. 12). See also Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, p. 178, and Zeeman, “Framing Narrative,” p. 230.
- 2439 *Remembre wel hou thou art old.* Zeeman (“Framing Narrative,” pp. 229–33) relates the presentation of “old age as the antidote to erotic love” to the pseudo-Ovidian *De Vetula*, which circulated widely in England in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. See also Burrow, “Portrayal of Amans,” especially pp. 17–24; and Echard, “With Carmen’s Help,” p. 34: “It is not only ‘Gower’ who is unfit for love, nor is it only Genius who has failed to deal with Amans’ dilemma — all of Genius’ *auctores* have been part of the effort. None of these old men is, in the end, up to the task of dealing with human nature.” The emphasis on the transformation of the lover in old age is strong in all recensions of the poem. Compare 8.*3070 and 8.2827–41. See Illustration 1, which picks up on the idea.
- 2442 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter super derisoria Veneris exhortacione contristatus Amans, quasi mortuus in terram corruit, vbi, vt sibi videbatur, Cupidinem cum innumera multitidine nuper Amantum variis turmis assistencium conspiciebat.* [How, saddened over the derisory exhortation of Venus, the Lover fell down to the earth as if dead, where, as it seemed to him, he perceived Cupid with an innumerable multitude of recent lovers with assorted crowds of attendants.]
- 2450 *And as I lay.* Macaulay (3:545–46) compares the situation to the Prol. to *LGW*, but suggests that it was not Gower’s practice to borrow directly from “contemporary poets of his own country” (3:546).
- 2470 Richard II’s new queen was, of course, Anne of Bohemia; thus Bohemian fashions were the current rage.
- 2500 ff. *believed.* Macaulay translates *which was believed / With bele Ysolde* as “who was accepted as a lover by Belle Isolde” (2:546), suggesting the root of *believed* here to be *lief* (love) rather than *leve* (belief). In this section on the company of lovers, the lovers and their companions, as Gower presents them, are all defined by their commitments to love; thus, in the instance of traitors in love like Jason, Hercules, or even the “untrewe” Theseus who “ches” Phedra, all are defined by their last commitment, which becomes their final determination.

The effect is not so much to suggest the triumph of love as its limitation. Venus confines with labels, a rather different process of enablement from Amans' recovery of his name "John Gower" and his subsequent release from Venus' constraints.

- 2501 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De nominibus illorum nuper Amantum, qui tunc Amanti spasmato, aliqui iuuenes, aliqui senes, apparuerunt. Senes autem precipue tam erga deum quam deam amoris pro sanitate Amantis recuperanda multiplicatis precibus misericorditer instabant.* [Concerning the names of those lovers from not long ago, who then appeared, some young, some old, to the convulsed Lover. But the old ones, specifically, pityingly urged with many prayers both the God and the Goddess of love to restore the Lover's health.]
- 2526–27 *Ector . . . Pantaselee.* Hector is usually presented in Latin tradition as a model husband. But here he is committed to Venus' domain with Pantaselle presented as his beloved. Compare *Cinkante Balades* 43.2:9: "Unques Ector, q'ama Pantasilée."
- 2531–35 *And Troilus . . . his parconner.* On Gower's representation of Troilus and Criseyde, derived from Chaucer, see Mieszkowski, *Reputation of Criseyde*, pp. 100–03.
- 2573 ff. *Cleopatras.* Compare Chaucer's presentation in *LGW*.
- 2582 *Wo worthe alle slowe.* The line is ambiguous: "Woe to the slain"; or "Woe to those who arrive late" (i.e., all slow). Thisbe has just impaled herself, but she also recognizes that she was late for the appointment.
- 2617–18 *alle goode / With mariage.* See Olsson, "Love, Intimacy, and Gower," pp. 82–86, on the "Foure Wyves" and their domestic roles and virtues. Olsson stresses their freedom of choosing and its liberating effects within natural and social constraints.
- 2705 Merry tales of Aristotle and Socrates overwhelmed by love were popular in scholastic satire of the later Middle Ages. See the *Lay of Socrates*, where a girl rides him around the college yard as a four-legged horse. That Aristotle is trapped in a "silogime" (line 2708) simply means that once the two premises (he and she) are in place, the conclusion is inevitable.
- 2712 *concluded.* "Determined," with an ironic pun on formal logic.
- 2718 *Sortes.* Macaulay notes: "It is impossible that this can be for 'Socrates,' with whose name Gower was quite well acquainted. Perhaps it stands for the well-known 'Sortes Sanctorum' (Virgilianae, &c.), personified here as a magician, and even figuring, in company with Virgil and the rest, as an elderly lover" (2:547). But Macaulay may be wrong. In *Piers Plowman* B.12.268 Socrates seems to be the one called by that name. The name appears for Socrates in *Amoryus and Cleopes*. See also Bacon, *Communium naturalium*, ed. Steele, p. 87, where Bacon, discussing Aristotle's *Metaphysics* VII on substantial gradation, refers to Socrates as "Sortis."
- 2749 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat qualiter Cupido Amantis senectute confracti viscera perscrutans, ignita sue concupiscencie tela ab eo penitus extraxit, quem Venus postea*

absque calore percipiens, vacuum reliquit: et sic tandem prouisa Senectus, racionem inuocans, hominem interiorem per prius amore infatuatum mentis sanitati plenius restaurauit. [Here he describes how Cupid, searching through the internal organs of the Lover, shattered by old age, entirely extracted from him the burning darts of his lust; Venus, later perceiving him to be without heat, left him empty. And thus Old Age, finally glimpsed, invoked reason in him, and very fully restored to sanity of mind the interior man who had been previously infatuated by love.]

- 2810 *byme.* A common single syllable morpheme for *by me*.
- 2819 *reins.* The kidneys are the physiological seat of the passions. See Bartholomaeus, *De renibus* 5.43, which note that from the *renes* “springiþ þe humour semynal. So seiþ Varro. For veynez and marouȝ sweten out a þynne humour into þe kideneiren [kidneys], and þat liquour is ofte resolued by hete of Venus, and renneth and comeþ and schediþ itself anon to the place of gendringe” (*De proprietatibus rerum*, 1.254).
- 2821–31 *A wonder mirour . . . Wherinne anon myn hertes yhe / I caste . . .* See Schutz’s excellent discussion of Gower’s application of mirroring technique to the conclusion of his poem, where the Lover (now “John Gower”) discovers within himself “a mirror of self-awareness.” Acteon found no such mirror and Narcissus only a distortion (“Absent and Present Images,” p. 121).
- 2837 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Quod status hominis Mensibus anni equiperatur.* [That the estate of man is equivalent to the months of the year.]
- 2857 *erst was hete is thanne chele.* Proverbial. See Whiting H552.
- 2880 *So goth the fortune of my whiel.* Venus herself becomes fortune-like, yet at the same time a spokesperson of “kinde,” as she clarifies her relationship with Amans.
- 2897 *Forget it thou, and so wol I.* The tone here is reminiscent of the all-things-shall-pass mentality of Ecclesiastes. But, more than this, remembering and forgetting are key components of Boethian psychology, where we must remember what should not have been forgotten, but also to forget what should not have preoccupied us. That Genius links his acts of remembering and letting go with that of Amans heightens the interrelationship of the two at this last point in their bifurcation prior to Genius’ disappearance, along with Amans, as they are, in their reintegration in the single psyche of John Gower, to be forgotten.
- 2904 *A peire of bedes blak as sable.* A set of beads (not just two); a rosary (*MED paire* 2b). With the departure of Genius, and then Venus herself as she disappears “al sodeinly, / Enclosid in a sterred sky” (lines 2941–42), “John Gower” is left in repose with his prayer beads and his thoughts.
- 2907 *Por reposer.* See Olsson’s discussion of “home, intimacy, and repose” (“Love, Intimacy, and Gower,” pp. 86 ff.), and of Gower’s unusual “retraction” (p. 90) as he explores the uncertainty of ever finding “perfect repose in the ‘house of this world’” (p. 91).

- 2908 *John Gower*. Chandler (“Memory and Unity”) sees this line as the culmination to the remembering/unity motif. See also Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, pp. 179–82; and Strohm, “Note on Gower’s Personas.” Strohm uses Donaldson’s notion of the three persons of Chaucer’s pilgrim to explain Gower’s staging of his threefold persona: “The substitution of John Gower for ‘Sone’ and Amans . . . marks a station on the way to lucidity and reunion of Amans with the broader perspective of the Poet” (p. 297). But Simpson puts the matter most shrewdly: “In a wonderful irony, which is itself Ovidian, the person who will finally be won over in the *Confessio* is not the lady, but Amans himself” (*Sciences and the Self*, p. 217).
- 2909 *ate laste cast*. *MED* *cast* n.1b: “at (one’s) last throw, with (one’s) back to the wall,” citing this line.
- 2926–27 *thi bokes . . . / Whiche*. Macaulay (3:547) sees a reference here to Gower’s earlier moral treatises (*MO* and *VC*), in which case the effect is akin to Chaucer’s Retraction as “Gower” is told to put aside his frivolous love complaint to adhere to his more serious literary efforts. (Chaucer had retracted his dream visions, *Troilus*, love poems, and those Canterbury Tales “that sownen into synne” (X[I]1085), but thanked God for his translation of *Boece*, saints’ lives, homilies, and devotional works.) But *thi bokes* might also allude to Gower’s library in general — these old books that still dwell among us and from which we are taught (see Prol.1–3), in which case the sense of 8.2927 would be “[Of] which you have written for many years.” See Mustanoja, *Middle English Syntax*, p. 197n2, where *whiche* hearkens back to “an old inflected genitive” comparable to “the non-periphrastic dative *which* (instead of *to which*, ‘to whom’).” If this is the sense (it is the certainly the one I prefer), then we might see a different parallel with Chaucer than the Retraction; namely, the conclusion to the F Prologue of *LGW*, where Alceste and Cupid send Geoffrey back to his books with instructions to study them and write of virtuous wives. Here Venus, with Genius at her side, sends “Gower” back to his books where “vertu moral” dwells. Compare this attitude toward the pedagogical value of old books in Gower with the proposition on Chaucer’s *PF* where old books are compared to “the olde feldes” from which “cometh al this newe corn” (lines 22–25). My point is not to suggest that one poet borrows from the other, but rather to demonstrate diverse uses of rhetorical formulas, particularly for conclusion, that an educated late fourteenth-century cohort of readers delight in and play with in like ways. See also the notes to 8.3106–37, 8.3138 ff., 8.3165–67, and the *Explicit*.
- 2938 From this point on, Fairfax 3 is copied in a new hand. The new scribe uses slightly different orthography. Particularly noticeable is *y* for the pronoun *I*, and *i* or *y* for *e* in inflections.
- 2940 ff. *Adieu, for y mot fro thee wende*. In the first recension of *CA*, based here on MS Bodley 902, lines *2941–*57 dedicate the poem to Gower’s friend Geoffrey Chaucer, then continue to the end, with acknowledgment once again of the commission by King Richard and prayers on behalf of Richard. Although the second ending, with its emphasis on good kingship and the sending forth of Gower’s English poem for the instruction of human kind accompanied by

prayers for England's sake, is essentially different from the first recension, several lines of the earlier conclusion remain essentially intact. Compare *2962 / 2942, *2969–70 / 2969–70 (now inverted), *2971–85 / 2971–85, *3061–63 / 3109–11, *3065–66 / 3115–16, *3067–68 / 3121–22, *3087–3106 / 3151–64, *3111–14 / 3169–72.

*2955 *his testament of love.* Middleton suggests an allusion honoring Thomas Usk's *Testament of Love* through a "fictively-displaced injunction to 'Chaucer'" ("Thomas Usk's 'Perdurabile Letters,'" p. 101; see also p. 88n35). Usk was part of a coterie of writers who had celebrated the joy of literature in his addresses to Chaucer — "a *jeu d'esprit*, sheer self-delighting self-display: 'Thou hast delighted me in making'" (p. 100). Upon his brutal execution by the Lords Appellant, Middleton suggests that Usk's literary achievements could not, for fear of reprisal, be acknowledged directly — thus the compliment through their mutual friend Chaucer. If Middleton is right, the dropping of these lines from the Lancastrian version of *Confessio* in 1392, the version of the Fairfax 3 manuscript, may reflect more a political expedience regarding Usk than some breech of friendship between Gower and Chaucer, as some have argued. Henry of Lancaster was one of the Appellants.

*2965 *Hoom fro the wode.* The return home from the wood is a typical romance/dream vision conclusion as the narrator reenters his former estate, perhaps somewhat enlightened by all that has occurred. His prayers and "hole entente" (lines *2966–*67) are signs of hope.

***Notes to Latin verses iv** (before line *2971). **Line 2:** The arms of England are three lions *passants gardants*, which in heraldry are also known as leopards. Normally, the plural of "scepters" would be a poetic form for "sovereignty"; but here too there is a specific heraldic referent. The scepters of countries over which a king claimed entitlement (England, Ireland, and France, for a fourteenth-century English king) were sometimes represented as part of the royal arms; the Wilton Diptych, a portable, folding altar whose subject is Richard II amidst the Virgin, Christ, saints, and angels, and which was probably commissioned for the king, shows on its exterior right wing a single crowned lion ("leopard") astride the royal banner and arms of England and France. Gower's heraldic praise of Richard here is matched by his condemnation of Richard elsewhere later. In Gower's Latin work, the *Tripartite Chronicle*, finished after Richard had been deposed by Henry Bolingbroke, Gower punningly states that Richard was "a hare and not a leopard" (*lepus est et non leopardus* — III.160).

Line 4: *What* has been "made perpetual" (*perpetuata*) may, grammatically, be either the songs (by their being sung), or England (by its being sung about).

2973 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic in anno quartodecimo Regis Ricardi orat pro statu regni, quod a diu diuisum nimia aduersitate periclitabatur.* [Here in the fourteenth year of King Richard he prays for the estate of the kingdom, which is in danger because of long-held division from excessive adversity.] The date here would be 1390. Some MSS present the marginal gloss in the Prologue, at line 21.

- *2973 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** A Latin gloss appears here in the margin: *Hic in fine libri honorificos que virtuosos illustrissimi Principis domini sui Regis Anglie Ricardi secundi mores, sicut dignum est, laude commendabili describens, pro eiusdem status salubri conseruacione cunctipotentem deuocius exorat.* [Here at the end of the book describing with commendable praise, as it is worthy to do, the honorific and virtuous qualities of the most illustrious ruler his lord king of England, Richard the Second, on behalf of the safe preservation of his estate he very devoutly entreats the Almighty in prayer.]
- 3080–3105 *For if a kyng wol justifie . . . and be memorial.* This passage, so different from the matter of the first recension's conclusion, sets Gower's political position centrally within the ethos of moral responsibility of people in powerful positions. Compare 8.2109–20. On Gower's later thoughts on the interconnectedness of personal piety and political action, see Peck, "Politics and Psychology of Governance in Gower," pp. 218–38. On Gower's interest in kingship rather than a specific king as part of an "educative dialogue with a courtly audience," see Staley, *Languages of Power*, pp. 25–40.
- *3087 *Whan game is beste, is best to leve.* A "quit-while-ahead" proverb akin to "when the game is best yt ys time to rest." See Whiting G26.
- 3106–37 *And now to speke as in final.* Gower announces his conclusion several times, somewhat like a classical music composition with suspended cadences and other concluding trickery. In this leave-taking he makes use of humility tropes of the sort that Chaucer mocks in the Prologue to the Franklin's Tale. Here, while writing "in Englesch . . . betwene ernest and game" (lines 3108–09), Gower hopes that "lered men" will not scorn him "for lak of curiosité" or "eloquence" (3114–15) or skills in "rethorique" (3117) that "Tullius" (3119) would require him "to peinte" (3118). His words are "rude" and "pleyn" (3122), partly because he is old, "feble and impotent" (3127), but in the "symplesse of my poverte" he "Desireth for to do plesance / To hem under whos governance / I hope siker to abide" (3134–37). Compare Chaucer, *CT* V(F)715–27. It is not possible to know which of the two writers wrote first; probably the two passages were written at about the same time. Whether Chaucer is mocking Gower as well as the Franklin, or whether Gower looks on the Franklin as an admirable gentleman, or whether the two writers are simply drawing upon the same conventions but in different ways is anyone's guess.
- 3108 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic in fine recapitulat super hoc quod in principio libri primi promisit se in amoris causa specialius tractaturum. Concludit enim quod omnis amoris delectacio extra caritatem nichil est. Qui autem manet in caritate, in deo manet.* [Here at the end he recapitulates concerning what in the beginning of the first book he promised he would particularly treat in the cause of love. For he concludes that all pleasure of love beyond charity is nothing. "Who remains in love, he remains in God."] The reference is to 1 John 4:16.
- 3114 *curiosité.* See Echard, "With Carmen's Help," pp. 27–29, on the interconnectedness of curiosity in the English and Latin verses.

- 3138 ff. *now uppon my laste tide.* Gower announces his conclusion once again (see notes to 8.2926–27, 3106–37, and 8.3165–67), but this one is, in truth, the last (except for the *Explicit*). The effect is like that of a musical composition with variations on a conclusion as one cadence follows another for a cumulative ornamental effect. Each utilizes rhetorical conventions for conclusion. In this instance see note to 8.3165–67.
- 3140–61 See White on Gower's use of juxtaposition to create uncertainty in the poem. The shift here from earthly love to Christian charity underscores the sense of failure in the poem as Amans is obliterated in a "rueful pessimism about the possibilities of living a life that fulfills our desire to enjoy the world as well as our obligation to live with our eyes focused on heaven" ("Division and Failure," p. 615).
- 3165–67 *Such love . . . Such love . . . Such love . . .* Here compare the use of anaphora for a conclusive effect with the Epilogue to Chaucer's *TC* 5.1828–32: "Swich fin hath . . . Swich fin hath."

Explicit. Line 6: *Vade liber purus.* Gower's farewell to his book ties in with a long-established classical tradition. See Tatlock, "Epilog of Chaucer's *Troilus*," which cites examples from Ovid, *Tristia* 1.1.1; Martial, *Epigrams* 1.3.70, 3.4.5; Statius, *Silvae* 4.4; and the *Greek Anthology* 12.208; as well as vernacular examples in Provençal and Old French lyrics, Dante, Petrarch, and, especially, Boccaccio, whose *Teseida* 12.84, *Filostrato* 9.1, *Fiammetta* 9, and the endings of *Corbaccio*, *Filocolo*, and *De Casibus Virorum Illustrum* all served as sources for Chaucer and other English writers. Tatlock makes no mention of Gower's *Explicit*. Neither does Schoeck in his "Go Little Book," or Andrews in his "Go Little Book," who, after discussion of *TC* 5.1786, proceeds to note examples from Hoccleve, Caxton, James I (in *Kingis Quair*), Hawes, and other later writers. But it is important to note Gower's commissioning of his book is not to kiss the steps of "Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan, and Stace," as in *TC* 5.1792 but rather to make its way to Henry of Lancaster, count of Derby, whose political influence, Gower opines, might help to establish a reign of peace and repose — a happy future that Gower would, with little confidence, presume to imagine.



TEXTUAL NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS: **A:** Bodleian Library MS Bodley 902 (*SC* 27573), fols. 2r–183r; **B:** Bodleian Library MS Bodley 294 (*SC* 2449), fols. 1r–197r; **C:** Corpus Christi College, Oxford MS 67, fols. 1r–209r; **F:** Bodleian Library MS Fairfax 3 (*SC* 3883; copy text for this edition), fols. 2r–186r; **J:** St. John’s College, Cambridge MS B.12 (34), fols. 1r–214r; **Mac:** G. C. Macaulay; **S:** Stafford, now Ellesmere 26, fols. 1r–169v; **T:** Trinity College, Cambridge MS R.3.2 (581), fols. 1r–147v.

TEXTUAL NOTES TO PROLOGUE

- 1 *Of.* F: *Off.* The scribe usually writes *ff* to indicate a capital letter, as in the first letter of the first words of lines 4, 66, 89, etc., which I have simply transcribed as *F*. But he occasionally writes *-ff* for *-f* in medial and terminal positions. Here, as in line 93, where the words begin sections of the poem, the point is, perhaps, to capitalize the whole word as a section marker — i.e., *OF* and *IF*.
- 29–30 Omitted in S.
- *34–*35 ~~☞ Latin marginalia:~~ line 2: *Regis Anglie Ricardi secundi*. So Mac. B omits.
- *65 *onwronng every.* So Mac. B: *outkrong eny.* J: *outkrong euery.*
- *75 *Which.* B: *What.* Most other good MSS, including J and F, read *Which*, so I have followed Mac’s emendation here.
- *77 *may.* So B. J: *myht.* Mac emends to *myhte*, as in F, though several other manuscripts read *may*. So I have left the subjunctive in the idiom of the Bodley 294 scribe.
- 80 *office.* So S, Mac. F: *officie.*
- 83 *amendement.* So S, F. Mac: *amendment.*
- 113 *word.* So F, J, Mac. S, B: *world.*
- 147–320 Omitted in S (missing leaf).
- 149 *whiche.* So F, B, Mac: *which.* J: *wheche.*
- 173 *resoun.* So B, Mac. F, J: *reson.*
- 201 *erthly.* So J, Mac. F: *ertly.* B: *eorbely.*
- 249 *which.* So B, Mac. F: *wich.* J: *wheche.*
- 280 *pacience.* So B, J, Mac. F: *paciencie.*
- 370 *argumenten.* So S, B, J, Mac. F: *argumeten.*
- 419 *com.* So F, S, J, B, Mac: *come.*
- 495–98 Omitted in S, B, J.
- 579–84 Omitted in S, B, J.
- 581 *ben.* So F. Mac: *be.*

- 588 *sent.* So S, B, J, Mac. F: *send.*
 592 *Til.* So F, S, B, J: *Tyl.* Mac: *Till.*
 723 *chivalrie.* So F, J: *cheualrie.* Mac emends to *chivalerie* from S, B for purposes of meter. The stress would fall on the second syllable.
 772 *Lombardy.* F, S: *Lombardȝ.* B: *Lumbards.* J: *Lombardi.* Mac: *Lombardz.*
 865 Omitted in B.
 957 *mistorneth.* So S, Mac. F: *mistornieth* (or, perhaps, *mistormeth*). B, J: *mystorneȝ.*
 1046 *ful.* So F, S, B, J: *foll.* Mac: *full.*
 1055–end Omitted in S (lost leaf).
 1078 *waxeth.* So J, Mac. F: *waxed.* B: *wexȝ.*

TEXTUAL NOTES TO BOOK 1

- 1–106 Omitted in S (lost leaf).
 17 *no man.* Here and elsewhere in the MS the scribe writes *noman*. I have regularly expanded the compound into two words, according to modern usage.
 19 *to moche . . . to lite.* F: *tomoche . . . tolite.* Here and hereafter I expand such compounds into two words. See note to line 17.
 125 *Thow.* So F, S, B, J, Mac: *Thou.*
 130 *wis man.* F: *wismam.* S, B, Mac: *wisman.* J: *wysmon.*
 154 *sone.* F usually capitalizes *Sone* and Mac always does when it refers to Amans. I have followed modern practice and ignored the capital.
 183 *thanne wold.* So F, S, J: *penne wold.* B: *pan wold.* Mac emends to *than wolde.*
 234 *Mi sone.* So S, F: *Mi sone sone.* B, J, Mac: *My Sone.*
 293 *the.* So S, B, J, Mac. F: *ther.*
 295 *shryve.* So F, S: *schryue.* B, Mac: *shrive.* J: *schriue.*
 298 *mispended.* So F, S: *mysdespended.* B, J: *mysdispended.* Mac emends to *misdispended*; but *hadde* is disyllabic and the emendation is unnecessary.
 310 *manye such a man.* So F, S, A, Mac: *manye suche a man.* B: *many such a man.* J: *monye such a mon.*
 334 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** line 4: *superveniens.* So Mac. F reads *superueveniens* (the repetition of *ve* occurs at a line break).
 335 *whilom.* So S, B, J, Mac. F: *whilon.*
 355 *throstle.* So S, B, Mac. F: *Trostle.* J: *prestele.*
 377 *houndes.* So S, J, B, Mac. F: *hondes.*
 393–94 *constellacioun . . . nacioun.* So S, B, F: *constellacioun . . . nacion.* J, Mac: *constellacion . . . nacion.*
 397 *bore.* So S, B, J, Mac. F: *bothe.* I have followed Mac's emendation on the basis of other MSS, but also because of the mention of *nativité* in line 392.
 483 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** line 5: *pertransiit.* So F, Mac: *pertransiuit.* Mac's form, while certainly the more common, is not necessary given the legitimacy of F.
 531 *myht.* So S, J, Mac. F: *myhte.* B: *might.*
Latin verses v (before line 575). **Line 1:** *Aquila que.* F: *Aquilaque.*
 580 *ferste.* So S, Mac. F, J: *ferst.* B: *first.* I have followed S to maintain the parallel in line 585.

- 584 *I.* So S, B, J, Mac. Omitted by F.
631–814 Omitted in J.
- 673 Ornamental capital on *Ther*; thus my division at the syntactic break.
823 *wynne*. So B, J, Mac. F: *wynme*. S: *winne*.
- 1023 *seid*. So S, A, Mac. F: *seide*. B, J: *seyd*.
1068 *tobroken*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *tobreken*.
- 1172 *Synon*. So S, B, J, Mac. F: *Symon*.
1216 *which*. So S, B, Mac. F: *wich*. J: *whech*.
1225 *Bot*. So S, Mac. F: *Byt*. B: *But*. J: *Bote*.
- 1257 *schalt*. So S, B, Mac. F: *schat*. J: *shalt*.
1301 *Mi*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *My*.
- 1344 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** line 2: *deseruiunt*. So Mac. F: *deseruiant* (induced by preceding *ut*).
1345 *Compleignte*. So S, Mac. F, J: *Compleingte*. B: *compleynte*.
1378 *Compleignte*. So S, Mac. F, J: *Compleingte*. B: *compleignt*.
- 1403–06 Lines only in third recension. Others (S, B, J) have: *And in ensample of þis matiere / A tale I fynde as þou schalt hiere* (text from B).
- 1464 Omitted in B.
- 1500 *othre*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *other*. But see 1.1496.
- 1625 *th'unsemylieste*. So F, S, B: *þunsemelieste*. J: *þe vnsemelieste*. Mac: *thunsemlieste*.
- 1648 *Gif his ansuere*. So F, S: *ȝive his ansuere*. B, Mac: *Yiue his answere*. J: *ȝeue his answere*.
- 1719 *womanhiede*. So F, S, Mac: *wommanhiede*. B: *wommanhede*. J: *wommonhede*.
- 1747 *Sche*. So F, S, B, J: *Heo*. Mac: *She*.
- 1785 *sole*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *foule*.
- 1881–82 Omitted in S.
- 2017–20 S has only two lines: *Wherof þou miht þiselue lere / I þenke telle as þou schalt hiere*.
2043 *Thei*. So Mac. F: *That*. S: *þe*. B: *þey*. J: *They*.
- 2105 *And*. So S, B, J, Mac. F: *An*.
- 2159 *Here*. So S, Mac. F: *Hire*. B: *Her*. J: *Heor*.
- 2171 *sherte*. So F, S: *schert*. B, J, Mac: *scherte*.
- 2267–74 This transition was altered in the third recension. Others (S, B, J) have:
For þi eschew it I þe rede / For in Ouide a tale I rede / how þat a man was ouer-take / Wherof þou might ensample take (text from B).
- 2311–12 *branche . . . stanche*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *braunche . . . staunche*.
2343–58 Omitted in S, B, J.
- 2360 *alle*. So F, S, J, B, Mac: *all*.
2369–72 Omitted in S, B, J.
- 2398 *have his wille*. Mac emends to *have al his wille*, from S, B, J. Metrically the emendation is unnecessary if *scholde* is disyllabic.
- 2457 *myhte*. So F, S, B: *might*. J, Mac: *myht*.
2460 *ferst*. So F, J, S, Mac: *ferste*.
- 2462 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** line 14: *Ravenni*. So F, Mac: *Rauennensis*.
- 2676 *Til*. So F, S, B, J: *Tyl*. Mac: *Till*. See also 8.370.
- Latin verses x** (before line 2681). **Line 5:** *scit*. So B, Mac. F, S, J: *sit*.
- 2713–14 Lines only in third recension. Others (S, B, J) have: *So ouerglad þat purgatoire / Ne might abregge his veinegloire* (text from B).

- 2827 *ek.* So F, S, B: *eek.* J, Mac: *eke.*
 2829 *tree.* So F, S, B, J. Mac: *tre.*
 2847 *thurghknowe.* So A, Mac. F: *thurgknowe.* S, B: *thurgh knowe.* J: *porouh knowe.*
 2932 *exposicioun.* So S, B, Mac. F, J: *exposicion.*
 3068 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** line 5: *obtinuit.* So Mac. F: *obtitinuit.*
 3351 *mai.* So S, J, Mac. F: *mar.* B: *may.*
 3357 *sesed.* So S, B, J, Mac. F: *seled.*
 3398 *sene.* So Mac. F, S: *scene.* B: *seene.* J: *schene* (omits *was*).

TEXTUAL NOTES TO BOOK 8

- 1–336 Omitted in S (lost leaves).
 3 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** line 1: *Postquam ad.* So Mac. F: *Postquam ad ad* (second *ad* repeated after line break).
 201 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** line 7: *pudicicia.* So Mac. F: *pudicia* (loss of letters by eye-skip).
 237 *grete.* So F, B, J, A, C, Mac: *gret.*
 416 *avised of.* F: *auised of.*
 466 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *mare.* So Mac. F omits at line break.
 535 *He.* So S, B, J, Mac. F: *His.*
 975 *spousailes.* So S, B, Mac. F: *spousales.* J: *sposailes.*
 1024 *lenger.* So S, B, J, Mac. F: *lengerr.*
 1029 *schipe.* So F, S, J, B, Mac: *schip.*
 1039 *thei.* So F, S, B, Mac: *they.*
 1047 *here.* So S, A, C, Mac. F, J: *hire.* B: *her.*
 1055 *delivered.* So S, J, B, Mac. F: *deliiled.*
 1069 *I.* So S, B, J, Mac. F: *it.*
 1088 *take.* So F, S, B, J, Mac: *tak.*
 1110 *sich.* So B, J, Mac. F, S: *such.* *sich* is found nowhere else in F, but I have followed B, J, and Mac for the sake of rhyme.
 1177 *thei.* So S, B, J, Mac. F: *be.*
 1212 *Wher.* So F, S, B, J, Mac: *Where.*
 1252 Omitted in B.
 1498 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** line 3: *confingentes.* So Mac. F: *configentes* (macron omitted or no longer visible).
 1575 *Thei.* So F, S, J, B, Mac: *They.*
 1650 *were.* So F, S, B, J, Mac: *weren.*
 1687 *madd man.* So S, Mac. F: *madd mad man.* B: *mad man.* J: *mad mon.*
 1890 *thei.* So F, S, J, B, Mac: *they.*
 1999 *as it is write.* So F, S, B, J, Mac: *his lif was write.*
 2106 *so befallie.* So B, J, Mac. F: *so be befallie.* Eyeskip from previous line.
 2367–68 Omitted in S.
 2369–70 Lines altered in S: *Noght al as pou desire woldest / Bot so as pou be resoun scholdest.*
 2371–76 Omitted in S.
 2462 *sih.* So S, Mac. F, J: *syh.* The line is omitted in B.
 2481 *soon.* So F. Mac silently emends to *soun* from S, B, J, which improves the sense but not the rhyme.

- 2938–3146 A new hand picks up the copying of the poem in F.
2938–66 Written over an erasure in F.
2946 *here*. B, Mac: *hire*.
*2960 *word*. So J, Mac. A: *world*, as in other first recension MSS.
2970 *live*. So S, B, Mac. F: *lieve*.
2989 *live*. So S, B, Mac. F: *lieve*. I have followed Mac's emendation, though *lieve* is certainly possible, especially if the religious rather than the social implication is being emphasized. See also note to line 2970.
2994 *worldes*. So B, Mac. F: *wordles*. S: *worldis*.
3037 *marchandie*. So B, Mac. F: *machandie*. S: *merchandie*.
3094 *wite it*. So S, B, Mac. F: *wite ?t*.
3108 ff. ~~☞ Latin marginalia~~: line 1: *libri primi*. So Mac. F omits *primi*.
3147–end Another new hand picks up the copying of the poem in F.



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GLOSSARY

abide, abyde(n) *wait, remain, endure*
achieve *finish, succeed, settle*
acompten *include; tell; confess; compute; evaluate*
acorde *agree*
adresce *arrange, prepare, array*
affeccioun *inclination*
afferme *fix, confirm, establish*
agein *against*
algate *in every respect, unceasingly, especially*
alther *gen. of all*
and *conj., occasionally placed medially rather than at the head of a coordinated clause*
appel *appeal to a higher authority; accuse*
 aquite *free; repay, give, make amends, relieve; deprive*
asterte *escape*
awaite(n) *watch; lie in ambush*
axe *ask, ask for; demand*

barme *bosom*
be *by*
be(n) *be, been; am, are*
beclippe, beclipt *embrace(d); contain(ed)*
beheste *promise; assurance*
behote *promised, assured, pronounced, dedicated*
benyme *take away*
beschrewe *curse*
beste *beast*
betake *give, deliver, command*
beyete(n) *gain, property, possession; acquire, obtain, provide; beget*

bille *letter*
bot *except, unless, only*
bote *reward, remedy, help*
chiere *face, looks, countenance; welcome*
childinge *childbirth*
clepeth *calls*
coign *coin, money*
colour *color, manner, pretext, reason*
compasse *devise, contrive; undertake; surround; consider, achieve*
comune *common people; commonwealth; ordinary, familiar*
comune(n) *participate, conform; have dealings with; communicate*
conne *know, know how; be able to*
couthe *could; understood; knew how*
covine *company; agreement; devise, conspiracy*
cunnyng *skilled*
cure *charge of a parish; care, help, remedy; trouble, grief*

dai, dawe *day*
dampne *condemn*
dar, dorste, durste *dare(d)*
debat *strive, dispute*
debate *contend*
decas *destruction*
dede *did; dead; deed*
defence, defense *prohibition, protection*
defend *protect, forbid*
del, diel *part, portion*
dele(n) *have to do, consult*
delivere *active; readily*
deme *judge, condemn; decide*
dere *harm, injure*

dere, diere dear; precious	grucche complain
describe describe	ha interjection
despuile rob, strip	haveles destitute, without possessions
do cause, make, put	hele heal; conceal, cover
dom judgment	hem them; themselves
drye endure, suffer; experience	here their; here; hear
duc, duck, duk duke, leader	heste command
echon each one	heved head
eft after	hewe hue
eir air	hie hasten
ek(e) also	hiere hear
engin(e) disposition, ingenuity; deceive, entrap	hihte was called
entaille form, fashion, sculpture	his his; its
entente meaning; intention, purpose, thought	hol, hool, hole whole; wholly
er(e) ear; before	honeste honorable, noble, appropriate, truthful
 	honesté honorableness, worthiness; splendor, elegance, comeliness; virtue, decency
faitour deceiver, imposter, cheat; one who is false or feigns	hote(n), hatte be named; be called; command, order, bid; promise
feint false, sluggish, deceitful; faint	
fele many	ilke same
fere, fiere companion; in fiere together	Irahel Israel
ferst first	irous angry, wrathful
fette(n) fetch, get	iwiss truly, certainly
finde, fint, fond find (found), invent(ed), provide(d)	
fol fool; foolish	jape joke, trick, deception; to behave foolishly; fondle; have sexual intercourse
fonde try, attempt	jolif lusty, frolicsome, amorous
fordo destroy; condemn; render useless; blot out	juel jewel
forlore, forlorn utterly lost	juise judgment, punishment
fre free person	
fro from	kepe care
 	kesse, kiste kiss(ed)
gate gate, gateway; passage; road, path, street	kinde nature, manner, race; natural, kind
gaude(s) ornamental beads in a rosary; bawble; finery, fripperies	kiste chest
gere fighting equipment, harness; clothes; behavior	
gesse infer, conclude; discern; suppose	lacche seize
gete(n) get; beget	laghtere laughter
glas mirror	large wide, liberal
good good; wealth; kindness	latoun bronze
gove(n) give; given	laude praise
	lawhe laugh

leche physician, remedy
leiance allegiance
leie, lein lay, set, apply
leman lover
lere loss
lere, liere learn, teach, guide
les lie, falsehood
lese lose
lesinge lie, lying, falsehood
lief dear, pleasant
lieve believe, trust
likned compared
list like, desire
loenge praise
longe belong
lore n. learning, teaching; v. lost
loure frown
loute bow, yield
low, lowh laugh
lust desire, charm, pleasure

maister scholar, tutor, official
make mate, match; fashion
makinge making, composing
malgré in spite of
manyon many a one
marche border
mased amazed, confused
mede reward, gift, bribe; worldly gain; meadow
medle mingle
memoire memory
men people
mete food
mete(n) meet; dream
mochel great
molde earth; fashion
mone moan, lament; moon; companion
mote must
mowe may, be able to, might
muable changing, easily moved
myht might; strength, prowess

n- sometimes attached to words to indicate the negative: e.g., **not** = *ne+wot* (*knows not*); **nyste** = *ne+wyste* (*knew not*)

nacioun country, people, group, race
nam am not
nam, nom took
nest nest; next
newe new; renew; newly
niht, nyht(e) night; become night
non noon
nyce, nice foolish, fastidious, delicate
nyh near

of of, from, by, by reason of
of off
oghne own
on on, in
on one; **in on** united, without ceasing
or, er(e) before
or or; **or . . . or** either . . . or, whether
 . . . or

paie pay, please, satisfy
part(e) part; divide, distribute, depart, share

parti variegated; colorful
pas step, pace, gait; road, passageway
peine pain, punishment, endeavor; suffer, take pains, be troubled

peise weigh

per, par by, for, through or by means of

pes peace

plat plainly, flatly, entirely, frankly
plein full; plain, smooth, simple; fully, plainly

pourchace procure, seek; endeavor, succeed

prest priest

pris value, prize, fame, renown, praise

privé secret

propre proper, own, appropriate

pure unalloyed, excellent, honest, absolute; entirely

queinte clever, wise; curious, crafty, cunning, gentle

querele dispute, altercation, cause, claim, enterprise

qweme please, be pleasing

rape *haste; hasten; rape*
rathere *sooner*
real *royal*
recche, rowhte, roghte *care for, heed*
rede(n) *read, take counsel, contemplate; advise*
rote *custom, condition*
rote *a medieval musical instrument, probably of the violin class*
roune *whisper*
routhe *pity, compassion*
rowe *row, company; dawn; be rowe in order*
ryht *right; justice*

sawe *saying, speech*
sshape(n), schope(n) *shape, contrive, prepare, bring about; create*
sche, scheo *she*
schenet *harmed, ruined*
schrifte *confession*
schrive(n) *confess, hear confession, absolve, receive absolution*
se, seth, sih(e); sawh; sen, sein *see, saw, seen*
seie, sein; seid, sayde *say; declare; said; spoken*
sek, siek, sik *sick*
siete *sit, sat*
sih *saw*
sike, syke *sigh*
siker *certain, sure, secure; surely*
sithe *time(s)*
siththe *since*
skile *reason*
sleichte *skill, deceit, trickery*
slyh *cunning, sly*
sodeinliche *suddenly*
solein *alone, lonely, strange*
sonde *message, sending, decree; messenger*
soth(e) *truth*
stede *place; horse*
stevene *voice; promise*
such on *such a person*
sui *follow*
swevene, swefne *dream*

take(n) *take, give; betake*
teene, tene *sorrow, injury, hardship, vexation, anger*
th- often affixed to words for *the* as in *th apostel* (*the apostle*), *thair* (*the air*), and *thastat* (*the estate*). In such constructions I have used an apostrophe to differentiate the article from the noun (i.e., *th apostel*)
that *that, which, so that; that . . . ne but that, than that, lest, almost*
ther(e) *there, where, whereas, at that point, thereby, therefore*
tho *those; then*
thrinne *therein*
thurgh *through*
tobroke *break to pieces*
tofore *before; formerly*
totore *torn to bits*
tour *tower*

unavised *unwise, unwisely*
unbuxom *disobedient*
unethes *scarcely, hardly*
unkinde *unnatural, ungrateful*
unsely *unhappy*
upon *on, upon, into, with regard to, by reason of*

vois *voice, rumor, vote*

war *aware, careful*
wawe *wave*
wede *dress, cover*
wene *think, expect, believe*
werne *refuse, prevent*
wif *woman, wife*
wight *person; creature*
will(e) *will, pleasure, willfulness*
wise *manner*
wiste *knew*
wit *mind, reason, senses*
wite(n), wot *know*
wod *mad, wild*
worthe(n) *become*

wreche *wretch; vengeance; avenge;*
 satisfy
wyle *cunning*
wyte *blame, censure*

yare *ready*
ye, yhe *eye*
ynowh *enough*
ywiss *certainly, truly; indeed*



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JOHN GOWER

Confessio Amantis

Volume 2

Edited by
Russell A. Peck,
with Latin translations by
Andrew Galloway

SECOND EDITION

TEAMS • Middle English Texts Series

MEDIEVAL INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo



INTRODUCTION

Confessio Amantis is a poem of patterns and postures. Book 1 establishes the frame: it is the pattern-book out of which the rest of the poem develops. The author, identified in Book 8.2908 as “John Gower,” transforms himself into a frustrated lover who is set before the priest of Venus, Genius, to learn the proper ethics of love. Devoted to Pride, the book’s single-sin pattern governs the poem’s structure through the first half of the poem, with each subsequent book analyzing a different sin: Envy (Book 2), Wrath (Book 3), and Sloth (Book 4). As in Book 1, each sin has (at least initially) five attendants. Patterns make possible variation and development, and in Book 4, near the poem’s center, Gower gives Sloth two additional henchmen and introduces digressive materials that radically change the presentational format as it evolves through the remainder of the poem.¹

The sequence of sins and their subdivisions corresponds roughly to Gower’s presentation of sin and her children in *Mirour de l’Omme*,² but within Gower’s vernacular poem the tonal effect is quite different. Gower radically alters the voicing and the rhetorical conception of the argument. The *Mirour* is an extended *descriptio* narrative: it occasionally uses dialogue but views its materials in the third person. In the *Confessio*, Gower commits himself to a dramatic mode, using the Ciceronian technique of *ethopoeisis*, the craft of impersonation.³ He changes his voice as protagonist to that of Amans, the lover, who will be interrogated by an opposing aspect of himself, Genius, to review the byways of Gower’s world until a conclusion might be reached. These two postures of self, Amans and Genius, address the audience and each other as characters in the first person. Thus, unlike Gower’s principal earlier treatises, the *Mirour* or *Vox Clamantis*, *Confessio Amantis* has a plot. As audience we respond to the characters’ exchanges as if we were witnessing a play.

¹ On the distribution of materials in *Confessio* into groups of three (Books 1–3 and 5–7) with a pivotal moment at the center (Book 4), see Olsson, “Natural Law,” pp. 244–47; see also Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, especially pp. 97, 102–06, and 140 ff.

² One significant change Gower makes in the treatment of sin in the later work is that in *MO Sin (Pecchē)* is female, born of Satan. Espoused by her father, she gives birth to Death. Death, in a second generation of incest, breeds seven daughters by Sin; the seven in turn, in a kind of communal bigamy, each have five daughters through the service of World. In contrast, the seven deadly sins of *Confessio Amantis* are male; their work force is likewise male and is referred to mainly in political terms such as *ministres, felawes, oghne brother, deceivant, brod* (brood), *chief, chamberlein*, or *servants in his baile*, etc.

³ The theoretical basis for my argument here is influenced by Specht, in his seminal essay “Ethopoeia” or Impersonation.” Specht applies his investigations to Chaucer; he makes no mention of Gower. Charles Runacres’ essay on *exempla* has likewise been influential in the way I conceive my argument.

GOWER'S DRAMATURGY: VOICE AND THE STAGING OF IDEAS

Essentially, *ethopoeisis* is an exercise in creating fictive personae who behave as if alive.⁴ As a craft that invents images to stimulate the mind of the reader, *ethopoeisis* facilitates philosophical consideration of the psychological drama of reading. In *Confessio*, Gower *enacts* voices and ideas. The methodology is more dramatic than any he had used in his earlier writings.⁵ That he is thinking theatrically is evident by his creation of the debate between Amans and Genius and by speech markers that punctuate the margins of his text. He is not a dramatist like the Wakefield Master or even Chaucer. Chaucer is highly theatrical;⁶ Gower, less so. But the term “drama” lends itself well to the *Confessio*, which, though more formal than Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, is in the same mold of intellectual penetration as his friend and contemporary.⁷

Gower, like Chaucer, was certainly aware of the advantageous voicing of live theater and occasionally uses stage analogies in his poem. For example, in the Prologue, when Nebuchadnezzar relates to Daniel his dream of the monster of time, the king observes:

⁴ Latin rhetoricians subdivide the *topos* into subcategories such as *conformatio* (personification, the representation of “an absent person as present, or in making a mute thing or one lacking form articulate, and attributing to it a definite form and a language or a certain behaviour appropriate to its character”—Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.53.66 ff., pp. 398–99): “Conformatio est cum aliqua quae non adest persona configitur quasi adsit, aut cum res muta aut informis fit eloquens, et forma ei et oratio adtribuitur ad dignitatem adcommodata aut actio quaedam”); *demonstratio* (ocular demonstration, “when an event is so described in words that the business seems to be enacted and the subject to pass vividly before our eyes”—*Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.55, trans. Caplan, pp. 404–05); “Demonstratio est cum ita verbis res exprimitur ut geri negotium et res ante oculos esse videatur”); or other such devices as *enargeia* (vitality), *evidentia* (the evoking of detail), *repraesentatio* (lively description), *effictio* (portrayal), and *notatio* (character delineation)—all devices pertaining to that which “sets forth the whole incident and virtually brings it before our eyes” (*Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.55.69, trans. Caplan, pp. 408–09: “statuit enim rem totam et prope ponit ante oculos”). See also Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 8.3, trans. H. E. Butler, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), on eloquence and its formal components.

⁵ The exception here is the highly theatrical nightmare of the Great Revolt of 1381, where society goes insane and transforms into beasts pursuing the dreamer through woods. Gower added the vision to *Vox Clamantis* as Book 1 (c. 1382). In several ways that book, with its highly rhetorical, dramatic structure and its extensive use of Ovid, is a precursor to strategies of impersonation used in *Confessio Amantis*.

⁶ On Chaucer’s theater antics, see Ganim, *Chaucerian Theatricality*. Ganim argues emphatically that “theatrical” is a better term for Chaucer’s mode than “dramatic,” given the poet’s “skeptical, almost modern version of creation” (p. 28).

⁷ One might think of Gower in relation to Chaucer as Ben Jonson to Shakespeare. Like Jonson, Gower enjoys dramatizing humorous types and has strong interest in the inner workings of rhetoric *per se*, which accounts in part for Jonson’s extensive use of Gower in illustrating points of grammar in *Timber: or Discoveries Made upon Men and Matter, as They Have Flowed out of His Daily Reading*, an essay that neither Shakespeare nor Chaucer would ever have written, but that Gower, with his keen interest in rhetoric, could well have done. Like Jonson, Gower has a satiric disenchantment with human endeavor akin to Ovid’s. His comedy of manners has more in common with Sir Epicure Mammon or Brayne-worme than with Falstaff.

“Abedd wher I lay
Me thoghte I syh upon a stage
Wher stod a wonder strange ymage.” (Prol.602–04)

Daniel, in reply, picks up the stage image to speak of the stone that destroys the statue, “The ston, which fro the hully [elevated] stage / He syh doun falle on that ymage” (Prol.651–52). The dream appears as a play performed in the mind of the dreamer, who, like an audience, is left to determine its meaning with whatever help he can get. Similarly, in the story of Ceix and Alceone in Book 4, Genius relates how Alceone’s prayer is answered as Morpheus and a cast of helpers are summoned to appear in her dream:

This Yris, fro the hihe stage . . .
The hevene lich unto a bowe
Sche bende, and so sche cam doun lowe,
The god of slep wher that sche fond. (4.2977, 2983–85)

The image envisions an elevated staging area, a platform such as one used in the heaven scenes of a cycle play, from which the player descends to Morpheus in a lower world. In both instances “stage” implies a place where performances occur before the eyes and ears of an audience.⁸

These examples of theater in performance typify Gower’s understanding of how the brain stages sensory inception. I am not suggesting that the *Confessio* is a roadside drama of the sort sometimes attributed to Chaucer,⁹ or that he is writing with the flamboyance of Chaucer. Drama, for Gower, is more quiet and introspective; it takes place in the mind. Gower stages his narrative as a “confession.” Confession is a performative art in which both parties have dramatic roles. Amans, a knot of volatile passions and needs, welcomes instruction; Genius, in the manner of a responsive priest, interrogates him through *exempla*, usually in the form of stories. Amans responds in a host of moods, ranging from the quizzical to the enthusiastic or forlorn.

In *Mirour de l’Omme*, lines 14761–905, Gower talks about confession, likening the soul to a mirror made by nature to receive in appearance and color what is placed before it:

Just as the pupil of the eye cannot, despite its care, turn away from its stronghold the form and semblance of what passes before its view (whether that be ugly or beautiful) but rather must see it, so also the soul, despite what she should do, cannot at all take away the imagination that has

⁸ Sight and hearing function as primary agents in Gower’s drama of interrogation and confession. On the primacy of the eye and the ear for human intuition see *Confessio Amantis* 1.294 ff. and the explanatory note to 1.304–08. See also the Introduction to volume 1 of this edition, pp. 7–12, especially notes 25–26 on medieval notions of how the eye works in conjunction with the brain.

⁹ See, for example, seminal works like Kittredge’s proposition of *The Canterbury Tales* as roadside drama in *Chaucer and His Poetry*; or Lowes, *Chaucer and the Development of His Genius*; or Lumiansky’s *Of Sondry Folk*. See C. David Benson’s excellent summary of such readings of Chaucer in *Chaucer’s Drama of Style*, pp. 3–25.

first claimed her, but must send it to the heart. But then, for her protection, she wisely has to call on God.¹⁰

In this sense, a confessor helps one use the inner eye to assess the drama that unfolds upon the mirror. Gower goes on to cite Boethius' seven questions that should be asked to stimulate discussion, questions of who, what, what place, how, how many, how often, with whom. (Compare the seven "circumstances" in Chaucer's The Parson's Tale, X[I]958–81.) Gower concludes:

Confession must be complete; nothing must be left out. Therefore, one should read through the book of the conscience so that the account might be complete. Boethius says this in his teaching, "He who is wounded and wants to be healed must without negligence show the physician his wound, however wide and grievous it may be; then he can heal." This analogy gives a good example of the matter.¹¹

What is important here is the dramatic role of conscience, who serves both as audience / observer and adjudicator in the confessional poem.

Confession is rhetorically akin to dialogue (*sermocinatio*), or, rather, hypothetical dialogue (*sermocinaciones consequentes*), where several voices come into play simultaneously in a kind of "open address"¹² that speaks to the audience out of its own fourteenth-century cultural background.¹³ Simpson makes the point that an image requires not only a creator

¹⁰ Wilson, trans., lines 14773–84. "Car sicomme del oill la prunelle, / Ou soit ce chose laide ou belle, / Qe passe par devant sa voie, / Malgré le soen de sa casselle / La fourme et la semblance d'elle / Ne puet guencher, maisque la voie, / Ne l'alme auci, malgré q'il doie, / L'ymaginer q'au cuer convoie / Au primer point de la querelle / N'el puet du tout hoster envoie; / Mais lors luy falt pour sa manoie / Q'au dieu bien sagement appelle" (*MO*, in Gower, *Complete Works*, ed. Macaulay, vol. 1, lines 14773–84).

¹¹ "Confessioun doit estre entiere, / Qe riens y doit lesser derere: / Pour ce l'escrit du conscience / Om doit parlire en tieu maniere, / Sique l'acompte en soit plenere. / Ce dist Boëce en sa science: 'Cil q'est naufrez et garir pense, / Devant le mire en sa presence, Sicomme la plaie est large et fiere / Descouverir doit sanz negligence; / Lors puet garir.' Ceste evidence / Essample donne a la matiere" (*MO*, in Gower, *Complete Works*, ed. Macaulay, vol. 1, lines 14893–94). The Boethius allusion is to *The Consolation of Philosophy* Book 1.pr.4, lines 3–6 (in Chaucer's translation): "Yif thou abidest after helpe of thi leche, the byhoveth discovre thy wownde." Chaucer's translation of Boethius' "oportet ut vulnus detegas tuum" as "the byhoveth discovre thy wownde" is brilliant in getting at the therapeutic process of uncovering and discovering so central to confession. "Discovre," as he uses the word, is akin in function to epiphany or anagnoresis in drama.

¹² I borrow the term from Hill (*Stages and Playgoers*, p. 4). Hill identifies "open address" as a hallmark of medieval drama and differentiates it from "direct address" in that, rather than suggesting a "one-way dynamic, stage to audience only" as in direct address, it acknowledges the audience's returning of "the stage's gaze that they may be partners in the address" (p. 5). This distinction, as I hope to demonstrate, is crucial to the social/psychological focus of Gower's dramatic strategy as it shifts the staging area from text to the mind of the audience receiving the stimulus of the action.

¹³ Cultural markers may be in the form of local allusions, proverbs, references to legal practices, the Latin epigrams and Latin marginalia of Gower's text, the voicing of natural science or theological propositions, and, of course, the *exemplum*-effects of the hundreds of stories and vignettes. And they will be expressed through a wide range of rhetorical figures that commonly expedite *ethopoeia* — *exclamatio* (emotional outcry), *repetitio/anaphora* (juxtaposition of detail through lists linked emphatically by repeated words and syntax), *interpretatio* (same meaning expressed differently), *significatio* (conveying

of the image but a viewer of the image as well, who, like the creator, gives the image shape. The viewer becomes an informer of the form, akin in some ways to the Creator who informed it.¹⁴ That is, perceiving an image is a dramatic event — images in action, evidence on parade, ideas in process — that requires a responsive ear-and-eye audience. Gower's poem is written for an audience whose brain becomes staging area for its *poiesis*. Simpson rightly considers Gower's poetic to be “centered in the imagination, in which ideas can never be wholly extracted from the images that produce them.”¹⁵ Nevertheless, although the content of images may not be wholly extracted or comprehended, conversely, the image perpetually stimulates imagination afresh, so that the mind, in its ceaseless open-address rehearsals of what has been seen, can re-create likenesses. On its new mental stage images form a procession that is quintessentially theatrical, “ernest in game,” where ideas play out their moments on a hypothetical playing field.¹⁶

This open-address feature of performative games, especially the apprehending of “evidence,” is crucial to understanding the way dialogic *adlocutio* works in the *Confessio*.¹⁷ Indeed, such performance lies at the heart of Gower's art in compiling his poem. *Adlocutio* evokes combinations of voices that catch us up, as audience, in simultaneous linearities of thought. The effects of such tangents, each projecting from specific moments in the poem, perpetually alter the audience's perspective. Good drama keeps its audience alert to what is new. In drama images talk. Multiple “voices,” each vying for attention, distribute their claims across the flat surface of one's consciousness and coexist by juxtaposition, as if on a

more than is actually said), *translatio* (metaphorical meaning restated), *denominatio* (the naming of something by a part or quality), *ratiocinatio* (reasoning with oneself), and *adnominatio* (the use of words in different forms, as in rhyme riche, to focus attention through wordplay) — all of which devices abound in Gower's poem as part of his *sermocinationes consequentes* (hypothetical dialogue).

¹⁴ See Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, especially pp. 1–21 and 230–71.

¹⁵ Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, p. 235. Simpson is juxtaposing Gower's Aristotelian habit of mind with that of the Neoplatonist Alan de Lille, whose images give way to ideas. Gower's technique operates within a dramatic rather than an allegorical ideology, where the image provokes but cannot control the response of the audience and thus, like metaphor, “can never be wholly extracted” by mental representation.

¹⁶ One of Gower's favorite phrases is “ernest and game” (e.g., Prol.462, 2.528, 3.549, 4.50, 8.856, 8.3109). Like Chaucer, he uses the phrase to juxtapose “sentence and solaas.” He also frequently links “game” with “pleie.” Both terms imply performative acts and appear dozens of times in the poem to feature activities that engage in imitative, diverting, festial, or contested and oppositional (albeit gentle) behavior — all activities that share social as well as personal perceptions. In this sense, both “game” and “pleie” reflect the vocabulary of drama. “Game” implies a representational activity, with conventions and rules that require adjudication by both performers and spectators. On “game” and “pleie” as signifiers of performative drama, see Kolve (*Play Called Corpus Christi*, pp. 8–32), who discusses many uses of self-referential terms in miracle plays.

¹⁷ The rhetorical figure of *adlocutio*, a term used by Emporius as a Latin equivalent of *ethopoeia* (see Miller, Prosser, and Benson, *Readings in Medieval Rhetoric*, pp. 33–36, as cited by Specht), serves well in getting at Gower's dialogic uses of interresponsive impersonations as they debate, exhort, confess, allow, or request information and evidences of each other. See note 3.

single canvas.¹⁸ The perpetual input destabilizes placement reception. What had initially seemed to be scenery becomes plot, an interlaced field of vision where we, as audience, mediate lines (margins or declared boundaries) in the way that a medieval audience might respond to the “lines” of miracle plays, those “quike [living] bookis” for unlearned folk.¹⁹ Such drama, whether staged at church door, the public square, roadside, or in books, *exempla*, or gnomic maxims, improvises before our eyes, ears, and consciousness. As the intuited text becomes narrative in our minds, we (the observer/participants) must supply the life, as it were, as we play amidst/between interstices left by the playwright. All focal points call out for attention with their *first*-person demands, like “tell me,” “see me,” “hear me,” as they pass before the pupils of our “eyes,” each competing to win sympathy or to shock or disrupt (which is what “capture our attention” means). It behooves the audience to bend tangents inception through the senses into circles of understanding.²⁰

But to which voice should we listen? Think of a play like the Wakefield *Noah*, where Noah and his wife, Uxor, interrupt the diegesis of their microworld to address us as audience in their effort to gain advantage each over the other by pointing up in our consciousness their personally invested perspectives. *Confessio Amantis* is a study in just such personal investments, whether the agent be Amans or Genius or a conflux of characters within *exempla* that call thoughts into play.

DRAMA, PLAY, AND THE LIBERATION OF VOICE

Why, we might ask, would Gower, who had established himself authoritatively as a leading Latin polemicist amidst powerful circles in London, turn his efforts from political satire to the theatricalities of popular, vernacular fiction? The answer lies in the capacity of *ethopoeisis* to create an open address for ideas not easily confined by philosophic or polemic

¹⁸ The proposition I wish to evoke here is akin to the Ockhamist notion that the mind is like a *tabula nuda*, what Chaucer refers to as “a whit wal or a table, / For hit ys redy to cacche and take / Al that men wil theryn make, / Whethir so men wil portreye or peynte” (*BD*, lines 780–83). Like an illumination, the scene of Gower’s drama is a flat surface against which action is recorded.

¹⁹ The language “quike bookis” and “lewed men” comes from a Wycliffite sermon in its critique of miracle plays (Davidson, ed., *Middle English Treatise on the Playing of Miracles*, p. 45, lines 48–50, and p. 40, lines 211–19). Kolve (*Play Called Corpus Christi*) discusses the Wycliffite critic and stresses the cultural value of “living” representations and the “need for a kind of theater that could stage mythic actions as well, which could make phenomena never experienced in the normal course of things visible and dramatically ‘real’” (p. 25).

²⁰ This mental process of staging is akin to what Lady Philosophy speaks of in Boethius’ *Consolation of Philosophy* when she advises Boethius: “Whoso that seketh sooth by a deep thought, and coveyteth not to ben disseyvid by no mysweyes, lat hym rollen and trenden withynne hymself the lyght of his ynwarde sighte: and let hym gaderyn ayein, enclynyng into a compas, the longe moevynges of his thoughtes and let hym techyn his corage that he hath enclosid and hid in his tresors, al that he compassest or secheth fro withoute” (*Consolation of Philosophy* 3.m.11.1–9 — Chaucer’s translation). As images are incorporated by the mind, they are turned over again and again within the imagination, regathered into a compass, and placed in the treasury of memory as the intellect takes the received tangents, “longe moevynges of his thoughtes,” and uses them to define both playing field and issues. The “play” becomes a study in vantage, the vantage of this voice as it is enfolded by the audience into discernable space.

modes. Although one would be hard put to find many similarities between the careers of John Gower and the late twentieth-century playwright Michael Frayn, one point of kinship is worth exploring in answer to just such a question. Both Gower and Frayn make radical shifts in their modes of writing along the way in their literary careers. Frayn explains how he turned from philosophy, journalism, and novel-writing to drama because of the limitations of voicing in those other modes.²¹

Like Frayn, Gower, who began with major treatises in French and Latin, turns in the *Confessio* to a different mode.²² Gower too would become a conjurer, working with an audience much less predictable than that of his learned Latin coterie, an audience of all people — female and male, learned and lewed.²³ Mixed up with his decision to impersonate rather than declare ideas is his attitude toward the dramatic possibilities of vernacular writing per se and the relationships between text and audience that are affected by such a decision. Jacques de Vitry touches upon comparable issues when he writes about uses of *exempla* with regard to particular audiences:

When we are speaking in Latin, in a convent and to a congregation of the wise, then we can say many things, and do not need to descend to particulars: to laymen, however, it is

²¹ As Frayn puts it: “I found it increasingly difficult to locate my own voice. One of the pleasures of writing for the stage is that it’s other people’s voices” (Page, *File on Frayn*, p. 81). Frayn had begun his intellectual life as a philosopher, writing his senior thesis at Cambridge on Wittgenstein. Later he published a Wittgenstein-like exercise that he called *Constructions* (1974). He began his professional life as a journalist, then turned to writing novels. But he put aside novel-writing to concentrate on plays instead, which, as he explains in an interview with Craig Raine, liberated him from the constraints of novelistic voicing so that he might pose issues dramatically. In his plays he creates a platea, a kind of *tabula nuda* (a “Nothing On”) upon which to juxtapose ideas embodied in the voices of others; accountability for the action falls through open address upon the audience, not on the personae of his play, who can behave as they choose. On the importance of audience Frayn explains: “I sometimes feel that the skill of audiences is not always sufficiently noted. Some theatregoers arrive late, certainly, some of them comment on the performance aloud and wait for the laugh-lines to cough. But the surprising thing really is how few behave like this, and how many understand the conventions and are prepared to abide by them. To find two, or five, or ten good actors to perform a play is difficult; to find two hundred or five hundred, or a thousand good people to watch it, night after night, is a miracle (Frayn, *Plays: One*, pp. xi–xii). Gower might sympathize with Frayn in this matter. Writing is worth the effort if the author finds fifty, or thirty, or even ten good readers.

²² Gower begins his writing career with the *Mirour de l’Omme*, a moral treatise addressing the ills of the world that uses *exempla* in a more prescriptive way than is possible in the *Confessio Amantis*; then moves on to the *Vox Clamantis*, which addresses with its abstractions a particularly learned audience. In the *Confessio* his turning to the vernacular and its more general audience (the Wives of Bath, so to speak, for whom *experience* may well be the best authority), shifts the effect to receptors whose expectations, idiosyncracies, and biases of judgment are less stable, but, in their special ways, no less valid. We are the ones who, like the persona of Chaucer’s *Book of the Duchess*, must wonder if what he reads is true, and, if so, how? (See *BD*, lines 231–33.)

²³ As conjurer he is anxiously aware of responsibilities attendant upon his decision. At the conclusion of Book 6, as we shall see, conjurors like Nectanabus and Ulysses, who abuse their craft, are doomed to the curse of their own craftsmanship.

necessary to demonstrate everything as though to the eye, and in a way perceptible to the senses.²⁴

Vitry differentiates between Latin, a language of abstraction, which conveys well ideas to those of like assumptions, and vernacular, the common language of untutored laymen, which, to function well, depends upon specific details for a dramatic, rather than logical, effect, whereby the author/speaker, as at a demonstration, depends upon particulars perceived by the unstable senses of an unknown audience. No two people, regardless of station in life, hear or see the same thing.²⁵ But that is what makes drama so exciting: the audience may still receive instruction, albeit by their own judgment, even though they may not necessarily or predictably be instructed.

The vernacular is a playground for laymen, a vehicle through which sensual experience may be particulated. Drama is an intuited art, appealing directly to the eyes and ears of an audience.²⁶ This dramatic process of reception is key to Gower's middle-way strategy of fictive personae and *exempla*. We enter into a game of staged suppositions. Giles of Rome puts the matter this way:

Therfore in moral matir the processe mot be by euydens and figures and likness. And so it is iwrite, primo Ethicorum, that moral matier is to louyng of the sothe, is ischewed boystousliche, and by likness, by soche preues and of dedes that faleth ofte tyme.²⁷

The key terms here, *processe*, *euydens*, *figura*, and *likness*, although *boystousliche*, bring to life deeds and proofs for consideration by those who love the truth. As in a processional play, evidence and effect are fundamentally matters of staging.

GOWER AS DRAMATIST: CREATING THE FRAME

Gower and Chaucer begin writing *Confessio Amantis* and *The Canterbury Tales* at about the same time. Composed in narrative verse, both poems share dramatic components—character impersonation, dialogue, *exempla*, etc. To hold diverse strategies together both writers

²⁴ In *The Exempla or Illustrative Stories from the Sermones Vulgares of Jacques de Vitry*, ed. Crane, p. xxxixn; as translated by Runacres ("Art and Ethics," p. 117), to whom I am grateful for several ideas on how *exempla* function in the matrix of the *Confessio*. The Latin text reads (*Proemium*, p. 1): "Quando verò in conventu et congregatione sapientum Latino idiomate loquimur, tunc plura dicere possumus, eò quod ad singularia non oportet descendere: laicis autem oportet quasi ad oculum, et sensibiliter omnia demonstrare."

²⁵ Chaucer puts the matter succinctly (and wittily) as the folk in The Squire's Tale "gauren" (gawk) at the display before them: "Diverse folk diversly they demed; / As manye heddes, as manye wittes ther been. / They murmureden as dooth a swarm of been, / And maden skiles after hir fantasies" (V[F]190, 202–05).

²⁶ See note 8, above.

²⁷ [Giles of Rome], *The Governaunce of Kings and Princes*, 1.1.1, p. 6, trans., Trevisa. Trevisa's word "processe" is well chosen, given its dramatic, processional connotations (*processus* is a term commonly used to identify plays in the fourteenth century), as evidences, figures, and likenesses unfold before our eyes and ears.

create narrative frames that serve as a staging area for the drama that ensues.²⁸ In the first volume of this edition of *Confessio Amantis*, I have included the frame of the poem (that is, The Prologue and Books 1 and 8). Volumes 2 and 3, as if affiliated staging areas, present that which is seen within the frame. As in any drama, whether set in the round or on a proscenium stage, the way in which the action is framed and what qualifies as frame are crucial to the audience's perception of the pageant. The scene defines a temporary intellective residence for the configuration of ideas within cultural practices.

V. A. Kolve suggests a parallel between framing in drama and framing in the visual arts: "The arch [i.e., the frame] determines our field of vision, our angle of sight; it includes and excludes, and it was the common inheritance of the Middle Ages."²⁹ This "common inheritance" of framing is evident in medieval stage practices as diverse as processions, street scenes, architecture, decorated manuscripts, and the framing of ideas in logic and

²⁸ A number of excellent studies have been done on medieval frame narratives, particularly with reference to Chaucer and the structure of *The Canterbury Tales*, with an occasional nod toward *Troilus and Criseyde*. See especially Pratt and Young, "Literary Framework"; Hinckley, "Framing-tale"; Clawson, "Framework of the *Canterbury Tales*"; Andersen, "An Analysis of the Framework Structure of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*"; Harrington, "Experience, Art, and the Framing of the *Canterbury Tales*"; Holley, "Medieval Optics and the Framed Narrative"; and Gittes, *Framing the Canterbury Tales*. Ganim comments on the concept of stability and placement that dominate such approaches (*Chaucerian Theatricality*), preferring a term like "quotation" to "framing," on grounds that it "suggests more forcefully the dialogic and self-generating style of the work" (p. 21). Framing "becomes enormously important not as drama, but as a context for each tale and as a model of reception" (p. 29). From my point of view, however, that placement as "a model of reception" is precisely the basis of the drama, in much the way that a stage set might be. Rather than establishing "stability," it opens the possibilities of projection whereby each tangent of reception is destabilized by the relativity of the scene. In Gower (as in Chaucer) there are dozens of conflicting frames at work, within which and out of which dramatic actions take flight.

²⁹ See *The Play Called Corpus Christi*, p. 57. Kolve attempts to get at cultural components of the vernacular cycle's drama of human history by means of an analogy with the visual arts, a painting by Marco Basaiti, *L'Orazione nell'orto*, where, inside an arch, we see the three chosen disciples asleep in Gethsemane while Christ prays. The framing arch of the painting, he suggests, focuses the audience's attention upon the drama of a specific moment. Standing on either side of the arch are four observers, two friars, a bishop, and a saint, who, as they view the scene, help to focus attention, but, in doing so, become part of the scene, reminding us that, like all in the audience, they add another dimension to the experience, thereby turning an image being seen into a drama of seeing, since they too are being viewed.

For my purposes, an even more useful image than the Basaiti might be Girolamo da Santacroce's *Annunciation* (c. 1540) in the Minneapolis Institute of Art, where God and the angels, in the upper region of the painting, look down from eternity as Gabriel approaches Mary praying at the edge of time at her oratory. Gabriel crosses a tessellated floor to a three-dimensional area represented quite literally as an empty stage on which the subsequent action will be played out, once the Word has taken up its new residence in what Chaucer calls "the cloistre blisful of [her] sydes" (CT VIII[G]43). As Mary prays, the dove and baby shoot down, as if by proclamation, from God the Father. The stage is framed on the left by images of a woman and child riding a donkey, a woman drawing water at a well, and the Presentation as Mary climbs the stairs to enter the Temple; and, on the right, the frame consists of wood panel carvings of the creation of Eve, the Temptation in the Garden, and the Expulsion, before which the Visitation, in real life, is occurring. All phases of time and eternity converge in the blank space of this moment. For a fine color reproduction of the proto-drama see: <http://www.artsmia.org/uia-bin/uia_coc.cgi/query/2?uf+via_GOFYze>.

theology, where history itself is framed by eschatology. The same principle of seeing applies well to *Confessio Amantis* as situations are brought into play and the poet draws lines of perception that directly and indirectly affect our gaze. As in the cycle plays or a frame narrative like *The Canterbury Tales*, the frame is a positioning device that provides entrances into an action. Gower's plot is determined by the impersonation of Amans at the center, with Genius as his observer. A visual representation of this feature of the poem, its staging, so to speak, may be found in drawings in Book 1 of several early manuscripts of the lover at the foot of Genius who is receiving the lover's confession.³⁰ In Bodley 902, fol. 8r, for example, we find an image of Amans kneeling in shrift before Genius, who is blessing the acolyte with a benedictory gesture. The scene is framed by a decorated border with quatrefoils in each corner (see p. 34 of this volume).³¹ The drawing is not, of course, by Gower; rather, it provides a reader's response from a time very near to (or perhaps even within) Gower's lifetime, a response that in itself enacts what I deem to be the essence of dramatic action as Gower conceives it — an action within the perspective of an observer who is reciprocally implicated in the process.³² The tessellated background of the scene situates the activity in an artificial, rhetorical space (*ethopoeisis* is a human activity of choice, not one that simply occurs within nature), as if to remind us that the whole posture of this "confession" is staged within a carefully crafted and culturally patterned idea. Imagistically, it projects a realizable idea, though never in the poem is it or can it be fully realized. What we get, rather, are *evidences*, *figura*, and *likenesses*, to borrow Giles of Rome's terminology.³³ On either side of the drawing, trees upon cliffs, linked by a meadow, provide borders to the central image, as if to remind us that the impersonation, though not natural, is set within boundaries of the natural world, just as the tessellated scrim indicates that it is also set within art. In this poem, as we shall see, nature is the most elusive complex against which human behavior is enacted. Nature's relationship with human craft creates an ambiguous, often conflicting tension. The sightlines from one quatrefoil to its opposite, that is, from the upper left to the lower right and the upper right to the lower left, intersect at Amans' crossed hands, as if to imply (as we shall see) that hands possess some kind of agency.³⁴

What is remarkable about the Bodley 902 drawing of Amans is his presence as an old man, rather than as a young lover; a figure, perhaps, of Gower the impersonator, rather than simply

³⁰ See the METS *Confessio* volume 1 for reproductions of three such drawings; the Bodley 902 image appears on p. xi of volume 1 and p. 34 of the present volume. See also Griffiths, "Confessio Amantis": The Poem and Its Pictures."

³¹ On traditional symbolism affiliated with quatrefoils, see Fein, *Moral Love Songs and Laments*, particularly her discussions of the four leaves of the truelove (pp. 161–68 and 206n66), where the four-leafed "truelove" suggests the love knot in contexts ranging from lovers of each other to the love of God and God's love of man from the Cross. See also "Bird with Four Feathers," pp. 255–88, in the same volume.

³² I mean "process" as a theatrical term, the *processus* of events unfolding in a play, as in the banns for a pageant announced by the vexillators who bear the standards. For a useful study of Gower's illustrators as readers, see Eberle, "Miniatures as Evidence." See also Griffiths, cited above in note 30.

³³ See note 27.

³⁴ Hands, from the hand of God to hands of men, whether being thrust "agein the pricke" (3.116) or gently sustaining one in need, commonly stand as a metonymy for agency, the doing of deeds. People do things with their hands, and hands, in turn, make things possible.

the conventional lover being impersonated, as in other manuscript illuminations of the scene (see illustrations 3 [p. 71] and 5 [p. 235] of the second edition of volume 1). Although the Bodley 902 illumination is placed at the beginning of Book 1, it is as if we are at the end of the poem when Genius releases the old man, once he has been renamed “John Gower” (see 8.2898 ff.).³⁵ This linking of the image to an idea of “author” is heightened by the index finger of “Gower’s” right hand, pointing toward Genius even as Genius, with his right hand, pronounces a blessing on the old man — an admirable representation of the ultimate reciprocity of *adlocutio* dialogics.

As if in accordance with Kolve’s frame theory, the Bodley 902 illustrator presents dramatically a double idea — like that of the poem itself — where, within the diegesis of the poem’s frame, the impersonation of the lover seeks nature’s blessings in the mutable time world, but also where the author, while touching his heart with his left hand, points with his right the way to social and moral issues beyond the framework of nature or his impersonation. The pointing-hand gesture is akin to that of Chaucer the poet pointing the way in the Ellesmere manuscript of *The Canterbury Tales*³⁶ or of Gower pointing arrows at the world in two of the *Vox Clamantis* manuscripts.³⁷ The frame sets the stage, while gestures define the plot. The interactive images in the interior space project upon the consciousness of the viewer a host of relationships. That is, hidden within the imagery is a staged version of the poetic processes of the whole poem.

As we view the image, we see more than Amans, the picture’s (and Gower’s) centering device. As our consciousness unfolds, we see that Genius, as priest/observer/interlocuter, is part of the scene as well. As Genius questions then releases the lover (whether here or in the poem itself) we catch ourselves observing cultural values — “kynde,” proverbial lore, Ovidian and *Romance of the Rose* allusions, and dramatic conventions (whether of the church with its confessionals or the state with its laws,³⁸ or the psyche of the common people in its vernacular voicing) — within the surface linearities of imagery. These lines of vision affect our responses, often addressing us in the “first person,” or, at least, an impersonation of their voices, so that we find ourselves caught up in a medieval drama of interlaced fields of vision, fields in which we as audience are required to perform as mediators and decide for ourselves what arch will frame which voice or whatever perspective we choose to invoke. As we proceed into the poem’s playing space we become increasingly aware that we as readers are part of that vantage as well, a vantage structured for shifting effects against the artful patterning of the tessellated scrim.

³⁵ The image represents the poet as poet, assuming *adlocutio* a role, yet at the same time maintaining his true character as instructor/preceptor (i.e., if Amans is Gower, so too is Genius).

³⁶ The image appears on Ellesmere fol. 153v, between The Tale of Sir Thopas and The Tale of Melibee, the two tales told by Geoffrey.

³⁷ On the political and ethical content of the drawing of Gower pointing his arrows at the world in British Library MS Cotton Tiberius A.iv of *Vox Clamantis*, fol. 8v, see Pearsall “Gower’s Narrative Art,” p. 475, and Stockton (Gower, *Major Latin Works*), p. 342; and on the comical variant of the drawing in Bodleian Library, Oxford MS Laud 719, see Salisbury, “Remembering Origins,” pp. 174–77, 182, 184.

³⁸ On the performative aspects of law, the staging of justice in medieval England through dramatic formulas, proclamations, summons, and reading aloud, see Clanchy, “Hearing and Seeing,” in *From Memory to Written Record*, especially pp. 277–78.

THE SETTING: NATURE AS STAGE PROPERTY

In discussing the Bodley 902 illumination of the elderly Amans being blessed by Genius, I suggested that the tree imagery on either side of the illustration placed the action of the poem within hypothetical boundaries of nature. In many of the poem's sources and analogues, works like Jean de Meun's *Romance of the Rose*, Alan de Lille's *Complaint of Nature*, and Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls* (confessional works with a Genius, or at least a counselor figure), Nature appears as a personification — Dame Nature, “the vicaire of the almyghty Lord,” as Chaucer puts it in *Parliament of Fowls* (line 379). But although Gower is following ideas in all of these analogues, impersonating the lover and Genius in debate, he does not offer an impersonation of Nature. Rather nature is part of the scene, never given direct voice, never even placed in the reassuring position of God's servant, as in Chaucer. The point is absolutely crucial to our viewing of the play and the relativity of its personae.

What exactly is nature in the *Confessio*? Gower never settles on a single definition. Nature is ambiguous, sometimes referred to as *nature*, at other times *kinde*. Phrases like “the weie of *kinde*,” “the weie of nature,” “the lawes of *kinde*,” and “the lawes of nature” occur dozens of times in the poem. They serve as a given in a proposition, a fundamental premise, but without exact definition of what the *weie* and *lawes* are. At times *nature* and *kinde* seem to be separate entities: e.g., in speaking of Iphis, Genius comments on the lore “that nature in *kinde* hath sett” (4.495), where *nature* seems superior to *kinde*. Or, he tells “hou God of His justice / Be weie of *kinde* and ek *nature*” (5.4918–19) damns the ungrateful, where *kinde* is preeminent while *nature* seems a pleonastic “also.”

Mainly they seem equivalent. Feminine pronouns are used for both, which suggests a kind of persona, but she is never given a direct voice. Occasionally she is presented as an aspect of God's agency: “The hihe makere of nature / Hire hath visitid in a throwe” (2.916–17); in 5.5961 she is “the goddesse” who brings spring. She is often identified as a teacher: “nature hem tawhte” (3.367); “Nature, tok hem into lore” (3.175), and “Nature techeth me the weie” (8.2232). Quite evidently, she has great force: she must be obeyed (3.350), or may not be foreborn (5.3063), or compels “every wiht” (4.484). Gower differentiates between nature and reason (see 2.2594 and 2.3053), the point being, perhaps, that nature has power over the body but that reason, being that which separates man from beast, is God-given, which would demarcate a fundamental limitation of nature.

Genius commonly affiliates both nature and kind with natural instincts, particularly sexual, which reason is obliged to govern. This instinctual affiliation enables her to coerce lovers and make them bow to her demands. Sometimes she seems part of an Ovidian climate defined primarily by specific situations. The opposition of nature and reason and the power of natural drives place Amans and Genius in a duplicitous setting that is perpetually at odds with itself. Uneasy lies the plot where uncertainty persists. But, without a self-generated affirmation of nature's presence (i.e., without a designated *adlocutio* voice), *nature/kinde* remains mysterious, sometimes a powerful force for good — except when she is not.

Instead of an articulate Dame Nature, Gower gives us trees (so to speak), a *selva oscura*, to borrow from Dante (*Inferno* 1.2), a tangled forest like that of the Black Knight in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, where shadows predominate and, in the darkness, the way is confusing, easily lost. Is the setting blessed, or is it cursed? Medieval writers take diverse positions on nature in an effort to deal with her apparent instabilities. One approach is to personify her as God's form-maker, through whose wondrous creations God's authority may be seen. The model for this approach appears in *de Trinitate* arguments, such as those by St.

Augustine and Boethius, asserting that the form of the Creator may be found in his work. This is a position picked up eloquently by St. Anselm in the *Monologion* and St. Bonaventure in *The Mind's Road to God*. It is a position implicit in Simpson's intricate discussion of form being informed by the will of the creator.³⁹ This has always been an attractive position, in that it imagines an orderly universe and a benevolent Creator whose will is evident in the patterns of creation, patterns in which all people participate. It has a psychological component as well that encourages self-knowledge as the surest way to understanding the Informer/Creator, since people have been created in a likeness to God. (See especially Augustine's *De Trinitate*, and to some degree Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*.)

But there is another traditional view of nature that operates in the same space but to opposite effect, a more disturbing view akin to Augustine's attitude in *City of God* and *On Christian Doctrine*, where the natural world is a divisive, fallen place, overwhelmed by cupidity, a place of "mortal strokes of the spere," a dry prison of which "Th'eschewing is only the remedye!" (as Chaucer puts it in *Parliament of Fowls*, lines 135, 40). This view is strongly emphasized in the *Mirour de l'Omme*, where, after the seven daughters of Sin (Peccché) are born, they seduce World to produce thirty-five devious offspring. Hugh White is most eloquent on this more cynical view as he allows that nature may, in Gower, have a few bright sparks for Amans' edification, but, for the most part, it is part of that triumvirate of evil influences — the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. White concludes:

It has to be confessed that nature lines up with the forces of unreason, its influence in the critical area of human sexual love tending to operate against reason and goodness, and that therefore one ought ideally to seek to liberate oneself, near impossible though this seems to be — an acutely worrying fact — from natural sexual impulse. This fatally compromises any attempt to celebrate the things of this world as if they were not at root irreconcilable with the things of heaven and this is why *Confessio Amantis* ends in renunciation and a proclamation of its own failure.⁴⁰

Simpson and White identify two poles between which Gower's natural setting vacillates. By leaving her unpersonified, Gower can avoid making nature into one thing or the other. The fact that an ambiguous *nature/kinde* is built into the setting of his poem heightens the insecurity of both Amans and Genius and places the reader, who attempts to evaluate the ethics of situations, on rocky ground. The locus from which the protagonists attempt their adjudications is subverted even before they utter a word.

A third approach commonly articulated in medieval lore resides with canon lawyers, where, rather than imagining a person or cursing a condition, we are advised to look at effects. We should engage reason, that component of human endowment given by God, to move beyond dilemmas of the flesh to examine patterns of nature's "laws." Kurt Olsson, in his seminal essay on natural law in Gower (1982), outlines medieval understandings of *ius*

³⁹ See, especially, Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, pp. 1–21.

⁴⁰ White, *Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, p. 219.

naturae that I take up in the Introduction to volume 3, where law and the order of nature, rather than impersonation, become the focal issue.⁴¹

For the most part, especially in the first half of the poem (Books 1–4), Gower leaves all hints of the jurisdiction of nature ambiguously embedded in the setting. To achieve a conclusion, the reader is left to apply propositions. The drama thus has different endings, depending upon which propositions the reader chooses to establish — the sour position of a White, the more benevolent position of a Simpson, or the more legal perspicuity of an Olsson. In effect the reader, through open address, is left to give nature her voice. But this ambiguity greatly enhances the drama of Amans and his stageworthy feelings. Much can be staged — whether comic or tragic — on a platform of shadows.

ADLOCUTIO AND THE ARTFUL CRAFTING OF AMANS

Amidst the parameters of nature and the tessellated patterns of the poem's rhetorical artistry, Gower projects Amans and Genius as two sides of one concern.⁴² Amans is the quintessential ego, buoyed up by perpetual esperance until his illusions, in Book 8, come to nothing. Possibilities may fade, but Amans' yearning does not. Amans is a figure of desire; Genius is more akin to ingenuity and reason (though sometimes his local responses seem more like ratiocination). Both originate rhetorically in Ovidian treatises like the *Amores*, *Ars amatoria*, *Remedia amoris*, and *Tristia*.⁴³ Few works of the fourteenth century can rival the gentle reciprocities of *debat* between Amans and Genius. In terms of Christian ethics, Amans equates to some extent with *cupiditas*, but more of a Boethian sort than Augustinian, which is why he is so genial, so accessible to our readerly delights.⁴⁴

⁴¹ See Olsson, "Natural Law." The five points of *ius naturae* that Olsson considers are (1) *ius naturae* as the law of animal nature, (2) *ius naturae* as an instinct leading to charity, (3) *ius naturae* as primitive nature, (4) *ius naturae* as cosmic order, and (5) *ius naturae* as natural reason.

⁴² Simpson (*Sciences and the Self*) puts the matter well: "Genius is, after all, Amans's genius — his natural generative and imaginative power, whose sympathies extend in one direction into the senses and in the other into the reason" (p. 196). The pair of impersonations "represents the naturally regenerative powers of the soul interacting with each other, bringing the will back into its proper mediation with, or conformity with, the reason" (p. 197). For Simpson, this is the crucial drama at the heart of the poem.

⁴³ See Simpson's analysis of Genius and Amans as Ovidian progeny in their new Gower clothes (*Sciences and the Self*, pp. 134–66).

⁴⁴ On Boethius, see *Consolation of Philosophy* 2.pr.2 and 2.pr.11, where Philosophy presents *cupiditas* as a basic component of human nature, the will, so to speak, out of which all action is motivated. God planted desire for satisfaction in the minds of people (compare Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*, where Nature pricks her creatures with "plesaunce" [line 389] as a motivator), though folly often turns them from the true good toward false goods, which heightens human frustration and anxiety (3.pr.2). Although desire perturbs people with perpetual anxiety (2.pr.4), without it humankind would be inert. Philosophy goes on to consider the important benefits of governing desire, but in even its most raw forms *cupiditas* is the starting point, whether for good or for ill. In this regard we should consider Amans to be a comic figure of potential, albeit not a very potent one. For Augustine's view, see *On Christian Doctrine* 3.10.16, where charity is defined as "the motion of the soul toward the enjoyment of God for His own sake, and the enjoyment of one's self and of one's neighbor for the sake of God; but 'cupidity' is a motion of the soul toward the enjoyment of one's self, one's neighbor, or any corporal thing for the sake of something other than God" (p. 88). See Jeffrey, "Charity, Cupidity." This Augustinian position

Amans is a good student, though perhaps for the wrong reasons. He repeatedly asks for more instruction. So great is his appetite for further inquiry into the possibilities of experience that one wonders whether it might not be the thrill of thinking about experience, rather than honest shrift, that motivates his ever-hungry interest. At the outset of Book 2 (Envy) Amans is quick to admit that he has had sorrow over another man's joy, especially if that joy involves his lady. Then his heart burns a thousand times hotter than Etna, and his torment is worse than a ship "forstormed and forblowe" (2.25). He is okay if the flirtation is public — that is simple courtesy — but when they whisper (especially "whan thei talen longe" — 2.47), his anxiety is so great that he becomes speechless: "I can noght telle my desese" (2.50). In his dialogue Amans proves himself to be a master of *adlocutio* as he *thinks himself* into lifelike scenarios that exemplify Genius' postures.

One of the finer strokes of Gower's technique is to give him imaginative talents, a capacity to project himself into animated situations at the merest suggestion. As he responds to Genius it is as if he, too, knows the admonitions of Quintilian to "display the inner thoughts . . . as though they were talking with themselves."⁴⁵ Quintilian is not concerned with presenting three-dimensional characters. Rather, he speaks of "inner thoughts" and hypothetical dialogue. The effect will be not a full character, but rather a cluster of rhetorical functions, like a cartoon, a lively kind of line drawing.⁴⁶ Improvisation may be spritely but flattened, nonetheless, by terms of discourse. Amans does not have resonances of personality like Chaucer's Criseyde. He simply does not function that way. Conversely, Criseyde may have desires and proffer courtly responses, as Amans does. But in her totality she has no place in a work like *Confessio Amantis*.

In *adlocutio* rhetoric, impersonation may lack depth, but, in the hands of a skillful writer like Gower, it can make up for that deficiency through a range of subtle nuances. The problem with Amans is that, as a conventional figure of desire, he is like a character from *commedia dell'arte*. His "inner thoughts" are so subjective, so fleeting, that it is hard to pin him down. This does not mean that he lacks conviction (certainly he has plenty of comic intensity and resilience); it is just that his conviction is perpetually overshadowed by the momentary situation in which he finds himself.

In Book 2, for example, Genius opposes Amans with questions. Amans impersonates in his nimble imagination what Genius suggests, as if his brain responds to whatever passes before his eye. His mind becomes a marketplace of transactions, as mental commodities are parsed in subtle though indiscriminate ways. Are you guilty of Falssemblant, Genius asks: "Now ley thi conscience in weyhte [balance scale] . . . If thou were evere custummer / To Falssemblant in eny wise" (2.1926–29). Initially, his answer is easy: "Mi goode fader, certes no" (2.1931). (He is still responding, perhaps, to the story of Demetrius and that deceitful scoundrel Perseus.) But as Genius presses him he becomes responsive: he can, indeed, imagine — with some gusto — such possibilities. Has Falssemblant, Genius asks, ever whispered in your ear when you are thinking of your lady so that you say to yourself, "I am so celee

is subscribed in the poem's conclusion, though it is not clarified or articulated during the course of the poem's development. Rather, like nature, it lurks as a subtext.

⁴⁵ Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* vd.3 (9.2.30 and 34), as cited by Specht, p. 2.

⁴⁶ I do not wish to seem pejorative in commenting on the cartoon-like features of Gower's characters. Gower's metonymic style depends on fragments of ideas in action, rather than on anything akin to realism.

[secretive], / Ther mai no mannes priveté / Be heled [covered] half so wel as myn.’ / Art thou . . . of such engin?” (2.1953–56). Put this way, Amans (though he is not Genius) can conceive ingeniously of plenty of ways in which he employs deceit, and he relishes telling about it: He feigns “beste semblant” (2.1964) to make his rivals friendly toward him so that he can learn their thoughts. Then he dampens his rival’s ardor, catches “his carte amidd the myr” (2.1974), to overthrow him. He does not care about deceitful lovers as a category, providing they leave *his* lady alone. But he will deceive them in any way he can if they threaten him. To pick up information he keeps his ears ever alert, backed by his will, heart, and wit (2.1998) as he “feigne[s] compaignie” (2.2001). If any man speaks to his lady he forgives her fully in hope of gaining her thanks, but always he would “feigne compaignie” (2.2030) “til I knowe / Mi ladi lovers al arowe” (2. 2037–38).⁴⁷ In his mind he lines up her lovers in a row, intent upon using each against the other as he slanders them before his lady: “al the worste I can endite / I telle it to my ladi plat / In forthringe of myn oghne astat, / And hindre hem al that evere I may” (2.2046–49). So, though he knows nothing of the political deceits of a Perseus, when Genius activates his mind with regard to his own special peeves, he thinks of plenty of good reasons for false-seeming and savors the telling.

But the dramatic mechanism turns back upon Genius, who had been for a time audience to Amans, rather than questioner. Caught up in Amans’ boisterous account, Genius reapplies the commercial metaphor with which he had begun his interrogation (recall the balance scale and “custummer” in lines 2.1926–28) and shifts from Amans’ ego study to the false countenances of Lombard merchants who make “profit of oure oghne lond” (2.2111). Lombards are masters at “soubtil hond” behavior to obtain “[t]he beste goodes of the lond / And bringe chaf and take corn” (2.2125–27). The shift catches us as audience by surprise. It awakens us to the realization that Gower’s concern is not simply character study, but cultural study and the very psyche of self-interest and capitalism.

In Book 3 (Wrath) we see comparable reciprocities between Amans and Genius, as well as a more analytic capacity on the part of Amans. Amans becomes increasingly aware of differences between inside and outside behavior, not simply in terms of false-seeming, but in terms of psychological effect. At the outset he acknowledges how the success of others makes him burn inside, not simply because of their success but because of his own lost opportunities, almost like a travesty of having left undone those things he ought to have done, which Chaucer’s Parson sees as a crucial step in the psychology of contrition.⁴⁸ But if Amans is contrite, that has little to do with the restoration of his soul. Contrition for him is rather a feature of his frustration: “al wakende I dreme and meete / That I with hire alone meete” (3.51–52). Gower’s use of *adnominatio* here, as he puns through rhyme riche (*meete*=dream; *meete*= encounter), focuses our attention on Amans’ brain, which is indeed his meeting/dreaming place. In such a waking somnolence he becomes inwardly more angry and outwardly more frightened, distraught, and dismayed, as a thousand times a day her “nay” sounds in his ears (see lines 3.56–60). His lady, of course, does not in fact say “no” a thousand times a day. The fear and

⁴⁷ Gower toys amusingly with the rhetorical device of *expositio* [repetition] as he plays on *feign* in lines 2.2001 and 2030 to dramatize Amans’ fixation.

⁴⁸ See CT X(I)231–54. The Parson echoes the ancient prayer of forgiveness for doing things that ought not to have been done and also for leaving undone things that ought to have been done, a prayer which Amans here travesties in his lost-opportunities remorse. The prayer is based on Matthew 23:23 and Luke 11:42.

sense of rejection originate in his own brooding self-chastisement. The only outward effect of his melancholy is felt by his servants, on whom he stages his frustration (3.87–92).

But all such anger melts when he is in his lady's presence and she speaks "a goodli word unto me" (3.99). Then, "[f]or al the gold that is in Rome" (3.100), he could not be angry. In fact he becomes so "overgladed [in] my thought" (3.106) that offenses are forgotten. Yet, the instant "sche miscaste hire yhe" (3.110) he falls back into a deeper despondency than before and is "withal so mat" (3.114) that everything seems vile to him. The extreme vacillation of his behavior dramatizes the merciless authority he has given to Fortune at the expense of his own will so that he is checkmated.⁴⁹ Gower uses a tessellation of rhetorical figures at this point to stage Amans' frustration:⁵⁰

	And thus myn hand agein the pricke	<i>against</i>
	I hurte and have do many day,	
	And go so forth as I go may,	
	Fulofte bitinge on my lippe,	
120	And make unto myself a whippe	
	With which in many a chele and hete	(i.e., <i>emotional swings</i>)
	Mi wofull herte is so tobete,	<i>pummeled</i>
	That all my wittes ben unsofte	<i>ill-willed (prickly)</i>
	And I am wroth, I not how ofte;	<i>know not</i>
125	And al it is malencolie	
	Which groweth of the fantasie	
	Of love, that me wol noght loute.	<i>not obey me</i>
	So bere I forth an angri snoute	<i>Thus; angry expression (nose bent out of shape)</i>
	Ful manye times in a yer. (3.116–29)	

The account is rhetorically vivid in its study of the unreality of Amans' dilemma as he rages inside himself and at all about him. As Genius tries to instruct him further by means of the wretched Tale of Canacee and Machaire, he hides his pain as a Stoic: "Let every man love as he wile" (one maxim that the tale does *not* exemplify), though having said so, he immediately reasserts his pain, "Be so it be noght my ladi" (3.398–99).

As Book 3 proceeds we find Amans making increasingly fine distinctions. He is becoming a grammarian as he identifies hidden possibilities with his sly parsing. Does he chide? No. Has he complained to his lady? Yes. If, however, self-accusation is what chiding means, then he is utterly guilty, for he perpetually chastises his heart for having misspoken or remained silent when speech might have been to his advantage. In this regard his anger is so great that he could take vengeance on himself. He is like a beshitten owl who defiles itself on its own roost (3.585). When Genius gives him a precise Aristotelian definition of hate (3.857–63) he explains that he could not hate his lady — he has made a vow to that effect —

⁴⁹ Chess is a common figure of Fortune's game, which she always wins with her "checkmate." See Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, lines 618–71.

⁵⁰ Rhetorical figures here include, to name a few, *sententia* (proverbs and biblical lore, 3.116); *chiasma* ("go so forth as I go may," line 118), *interpretatio*, *significatio*, and *synecdoche* (the masochism of lip biting and turning himself into a whip, 3.119–20), *denominatio* (his "hand" and "herte" as figures for himself, 3.116, 122), *translatio* (his converting of himself into an "angri snoute," 3.128), etc.

but when she gives him “schorte wordes” (3.874) he would they were “despent” (3.877) or that he was beyond the range of hearing them: “The word I hate and hire I love” (3.883). But certainly he hates janglers who lie about her. He hopes Cupid will smite them with the same rod that has smitten him.

With regard to Contek, his heart knows no end of such strife. As he loves perpetually but never succeeds, he shows shrewd insight into the psychological mechanisms of his dilemma. He stands in a “wer” (3.1148, “a doubt or confusion”), as he makes “werre” (3.1150, “war”) against himself (more *adnominatio*) until he is weary of his life. He recognizes the evil effects of wilfulness upon his heart, and he gets plenty of counsel from his Reason and Wit (3.1157 ff.) as they oppose his Will. The political chaos within the estate of his heart (*denominatio* for soul) is debilitating. Will requires its own rule; Wit and Reason try to “put him out of retenue” (3.1166) or “holde him under fote” (3.1167). Hope sides with Will and sets his heart in jeopardy with wishing and fantasy. So Amans’ heart is torn apart as Reason and Wit despise Will and Hope in vicious Contek. Genius defends Will as a faculty committed to love, though he acknowledges that one should also be reasonable. To illustrate his premise he tells the Tale of Diogenes, where Reason helps the philosopher subvert the willful Alexander and his minions. Likewise, the Tale of Pyramus and Thisbe illustrates how unmediated desire can lead to precipitous error. The suicide of the lovers leads Genius to consider Homicide. Are you guilty here, he asks the lover? Certainly in intention he is: he would gladly murder Daunger, his lady’s counselor (3.1537 ff.). Amans then sides with the lover in the *The Romance of the Rose*, in his antagonistic summation of the behavior of Daunger.

Genius opposes Amans’ comedy of agitation with words of caution against rashness in a series of “better” proverbs: Better to float than sink (3.1628); Better to chew the bridle than be thrown in the mud (3.1629–31); Better to cast water on the fire than to let the house burn down (3.1632–33). Genius’ well-placed use of *anaphora* (the better, better, better repetitions) leads to a summary sentence: “Suffrance hath evere be the beste / To wissen him that secheth reste” (3.1639–40). My point is that Amans is less a creature of nature than of *ethopoeisis* and the rhetorical figures attendant upon it. His origin is more in Ovid and Cicero than in red-blooded Englishmen. Yet in Gower’s setting he coexists with nature and English society in virtually irreconcilable terms.

DRAMATIC TALES OF BOOKS 2 AND 3

Several tales in Book 2 (Envy) stand out for their theatrical precision. The Tale of the Travelers and the Angel (2.291–372) is unusual in that rather than being an abridgment of its source, as is usually the practice with Gower, it is an expansion.⁵¹ Still it is a gem of efficiency that offers insights into how Gower constructs a dramatic narrative. Avianus (his source) begins his fable by speculating on the riddle of men’s minds and tells how Jove sends Phebus Apollo with a gift that will test the mettle of men. Phebus finds a pair of squabblers, watches the rage in their faces, and offers the gift: one will get whatever he wishes; the other will receive the same, only twofold. After one man chooses to be blind in

⁵¹ Fable 22 of Avianus is twenty lines long; in Jacques de Vitry and other *exempla*, it is even shorter. See explanatory note to 2.291. Gower’s adaptation is eighty-two lines in length.

one eye so that the other will lose both eyes, Apollo returns to report to the gods, “who wept to hear his words about mankind’s astonishing meanness.”⁵²

Gower expands the narrative by means of interior monologue laced with legal sentiments. He begins with a proposition somewhat reminiscent of the beginning of Job: Jupiter, in heaven, looks down at humankind, who are perpetually sending him petitions. In order to have better criteria for judging cases, he sends an angel to walk among people. The angel assumes a human form in order to go unnoticed.⁵³ He comes upon two travelers walking along a road and listens to their quarrel: “ech of hem his reson hadde” (2.311). The angel, with a nice Gowerian touch, tells “tales” to get a sense of what motivates the two. He soon deduces that one is covetous and the other envious. Knowing what he knows, the angel feigns departure and in gratitude explains who he is — God’s messenger. He conceives of a scheme to expose their shamelessness (in Avianus the scheme originates with Jove) and offers each a gift that, like a fairy-tale wish, will reward the petitioner with whatever he desires. But there is a contractual component to this gift that will test their humanity: one will choose and the other will receive twice what the first asked for.

Both travelers are instantly aware of the legal implications of the gift and plot how to use it to their advantage. The covetous man is first to respond. He defers his wish, coveting a double portion of what his companion desires. The envious man is hard put as he stages possibilities in his mind along with the consequences contingent upon his choice. In his envy he scripts a strategy that will give him joy at the other’s sorrow and keep him from sorrow at the other’s joy. He chooses to be blinded in one eye so that his companion will be made totally blind. Instantly the gifts are bestowed. The covetous man weeps in grief over the other’s success, and the envious man, despite having lost one eye, laughs at his blind companion’s tears.

We are not told what the angel thought of the choice or what he reported to Jupiter; rather, Genius simply dramatizes the workings of Envy and Covetousness. His point has unfolded before our eyes, without description or corollary propositions, only irony as each man fares according to his wishes. The *exemplum* ends with a demonstration: “That on wepte, and that other lowlh” (2.362). Instead of a report to Jupiter or a *deus ex machina* conclusion with the gods condemning the mean-tempered companions, Genius pessimistically observes that the world worsens everyday,⁵⁴ because men, their imaginations infected by Envy, perpetually seek to aggrieve their kinsmen (2.365–72). In Gower’s version the two companions provide their own conclusion, leaving Jupiter and angel as audience rather than as judges. The fault is not with nature (“it acordeth noght to kinde,” 2.369) but with selfish people. The drama ends in the particular, where all problems originate. The cause holds center stage in open address to the beholder.

⁵² Avianus, *Fables*, p. 30.

⁵³ This detail is, as far as I have been able to gather, unique to Gower. That the angel goes in human form reminds us of Chaucer’s The Friar’s Tale, where the fiend, who has no form of his own, chooses the one most likely to win for him what he seeks. Jupiter’s angel seems to be following the same tactic.

⁵⁴ Genius’ view of degenerative time and history echoes the parable of the monster staged in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in the Prologue, lines 595–602. That is, among sinful men, times get progressively worse. But in temporal matters Gower commonly uses opposition and juxtaposition to provide the ambiguous balance characteristic of his poem. Elsewhere in Book 2 Genius will tell tales (particularly the “historical” tales) that dramatize redemptive time, just as Gower did with the story of Arion that follows Nebuchadnezzar’s vision in the Prologue.

The Tale of Deianira, Hercules, and Nessus (2.2145–2307) is likewise a masterpiece of efficient dramatic staging. The tale exemplifies the dangers of Falssemblant. Gower's conflation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 9.101–272 and *Heroides* 9.1–168 shifts the focus of the story from Hercules to Deianira. He streamlines Ovid's extended reviews of Hercules' labors, the hero's cowardly demeaning of himself as he becomes a transvestite "lover," his appeals to the gods when in the throes of death, and Ovid's rhetorical flourishes as Hercules is metamorphosed into a god. That is, he shapes the narrative brilliantly to suit its new context. He changes Nessus from centaur to giant, omits the Hydra's blood to substitute instead the poison from Hercules' own arrow which, through Nessus' blood, infects the shirt that will destroy him.

Genius casts the plot in four scenes. The first presents the situation: Hercules, feeling great tenderness toward his bride, is concerned about crossing a river. As he busies himself with her safety, the deceitful villain Nessus feigns friendship and, with "double entente" (2.2192), works out a stratagem to have the woman for himself. What the bride and groom see "tofore here yhe" (2.2200) is his semblance of trust (2.2185). This scene climaxes with Hercules, having seen the ruse, slaying the giant with the poisoned arrow shot from afar. A good beginning, indeed. The brief second scene complicates the plot, as false-seeming Nessus gives his would-be lover his bloody shirt, saying it has "such a grace" (2.2250) that it will make one whose affection has wandered return his love to her. "Who was tho glad bot Deianyre?" (2.2255). With potent dramatic irony Gower tells how her heart is on fire (2.2256) in response to her good fortune as she locks the blood-hot gift in her coffer.

In the third scene the development occurs as time passes and Hercules' love drifts to Eolen. Gower details this section more fully as we see Eolen making Hercules "so nyce" (2.2268) that he, in his infatuation, wears her clothes. Several of the ideas here Gower takes from Deianira's lament in Ovid's *Heroides*, especially Hercules' loss of strength (2.2273) and his embarrassing behavior, as the greatest of warriors becomes so hopelessly debilitated that none can help him (2.2274).⁵⁵ As in the *Heroides*, Deianira hears of the tragedy and in great sorrow attempts to save him by means of the shirt. She, of course, has "double entente" too, namely to save him from his folly but also to restore their relationship.

The final scene is the denouement, where Gower reduces the 113 lines of Ovid's conclusion (*Met.* 9.159–272) to five as Hercules puts on the shirt and, burning with the poisonous blood, rips up trees, makes his own pyre, and cremates himself. The dramatic irony is exact as each shapes his own doom. Gower's adaptation of the story focuses on Falssemblant. There is no Jupiter to take pity on the hero and turn him into a god. He simply becomes victim of his own falseness, which is the subject of Gower's play. Gower shapes his plot and sightlines in terms of what he wants his audience to see. The scenes keep "tofore here yhe" (2.2200) all that the audience needs to know.

More than any other part of the *Confessio*, Book 2 deals with "historical" materials—the Tale of Constance, the Tale of Pope Boniface, and the Tale of Constantine and Silvester. The fact that Genius identifies the source of the Tale of the False Bachelor as a chronicle suggests that it too bears upon this configuration of "historical" materials. The point is that for Gower time itself is a drama, with a beginning, middle, and end. We are caught up in

⁵⁵ The passage resonates well against *Vox Clamantis* Book 5, chapters 1–6, where Gower stresses the incompatibility of knighthood and love antics: "What honor shall a conqueror have if a woman's love can conquer him?" (5.1.20); "The man who is once free and subjugates himself voluntarily [to silly love] ought to be reckoned more idiotic than an idiot" (5.1.31–32) — Stockton's translation, pp. 196–97.

the middle of its bewildering ways. As we have observed in the discussion of nature, in the fallen world time often seems utterly degenerative. The Tale of Boniface and the Tale of the False Bachelor confirm this view, as good but naïve people are drawn to destruction by the treacherous strategies of stewards and counselors.

Gower characteristically works by contrast. Opposite to the pessimistic Tale of Boniface and the Tale of the False Bachelor, he stages the Tale of Constance and the Tale of Constantine and Silvester, redemptive tales more congenial in their views of history. The two are linked by wordplay on the names of the title characters (Constance/Constantine), whose subsequent behavior defines constancy, the very quality that thwarts patterns of degeneration. Both Constance and Constantine know how to live where they live, despite whims of fortune and evildoers. Though Constance is moved all about the world, she is stable in her faith. Her movements demonstrate that God is the perfect audience: His eyes behold all spaces on earth.

Unlike Custance in Chaucer's *The Man of Law's Tale*, where all agency is attributed to the will of God, Gower's Constance is more empowered. In her we watch a heroine in performance. As in *Trivet*, Genius represents her activities in discrete scenes. Messengers approach her in Rome, and she converts them, proselytizing "with hire wordes wise" (2.606). She explains the faith, and they are baptized. Her busy behavior propels the plot. The messengers return to Barbarie, bearing her mark upon them. The Sultan must see and wed her. But Constance is not the only female force in the poem. The Sultan's mother reads the events in her mind's eye, and Envy enters her heart. Rather than describe the Sultana's behavior, Genius stages her thoughts as she imagines that the marriage of her son will diminish her estate (2.646–49). In a deceitful speech that would make the rhetorician Matthew of Vendôme proud,⁵⁶ she feigns words "in his ere" (2.654): "Mi sone, I am be double weie / With al myn herte glad and blithe, / For that myself have ofte sithe / Desired thou wolt, as men seith, / Receive and take a newe feith" (2.656–60). The "double weie," of course, outwardly suggests the twofold measure and delight that the wedding would bring her, as she enjoys her son and his bride's wedding. But, secretly, "double weie" means that "through double-dealing" she will destroy him. Her speech impersonates a loving openness, all the while concealing her vicious scheme. She refers to Constance as a "worschipful" wife (2.662), the daughter of an emperor, who will bring them great honor, and asks that she herself be given "such grace" when "my doughter come schal, / That I mai thanne in special, / So as me thenkth it is honeste, / Be thilke which the ferste feste / Schal make unto hire welcominge" (2.666–71). Bette Davis could not have played it better: the motherly affection, the eagerness to help, the desire to go all out, the loving vanity of wishing to be first in preparing the welcome feast — and the vicious, homicidal treachery. We know as we watch that only she, "be double weie," could bring it off. Gower's sight lines focus on the slaughter as all but one are butchered "in a sodein rage / Endlong the bord as thei be set" (2.688–89). She kills even her own son, so that her actions may not be hindered. But Constance she would torture, rather than kill as, with élan, she watches the bride in shock amidst the dishes and cups — "Bebled [covered with blood] thei weren overal" (2.700).

Gower's story is straightforward, vivid in its detail, and quite different from Chaucer's, which is heavily punctuated with the overwrought *Man of Law's* rhetorical outbursts and di-

⁵⁶ See Matthew's *Ars versificatoria* (1.63, 67, 74–82), delineating requisites for impersonating character and personal attributes.

gressions. Gower's heroine is strong, whether as teacher, mother, or decision maker. Her intelligence and ingenuity are especially evident when the wicked steward Theloüs, spying her ship adrift, boards thinking he will “[d]jemene hire at his oghne wille” (2.1101). But he fails to reckon with her shrewdness. She allows that “he scholde hire wel conforte” (2.1113), providing he check to make sure no one is near. As the villain peers overboard, Constance prays to God and “sodeinliche he was out throwe” (2.1121) to drown. Constance's duplicity is juxtaposed with that of the Sowdeness; self-defense contrasts with calculated homicide, a subject to be explored further in Book 3. Here the villain is undone by his lust; she is saved by her faith. The tale leaves us to contemplate the workings of redemptive history, as God helps the faithful.

The concluding tale in Book 2, the Tale of Constantine and Silvester, likewise provides an *exemplum* of redemptive history, but with a twist at the end. Constantine is smitten with leprosy. His counselors advise him to bathe in the blood of infants as a cure. Babes are rounded up, but as the emperor sees the oncoming slaughter and the grieving mothers, he recognizes that every person must choose vice or virtue — “Thus stonden alle men franchised” (2.3263) — and he chooses virtue. So instead of murdering the children he feeds them and clothes them, realizing in his actions that one who would be lord must “be servant to pité” (2.3300). Instead of cursing him the community now prays for him. The next night God sends him a vision of Pope Sylvester on Mount Celion. There he receives instruction in the history of humankind in the scope and impact of a cycle play, from the Fall to the Last Judgment, where every man, whether plowman or knight, “lewed” man or clerk, “[s]chal stonde upon his oghne werk” (2.3424). The cup designed to bath him in babies' blood now becomes his baptismal vessel, and his malady falls away like “fisshes skales” (2.3456). In appreciation he endows the church on earth with wealth. But then comes the twist. Unlike the Tale of Constance, the Tale of Constantine does not end on a happy note. Despite Constantine's redemptive deeds, we abruptly return to the notion of degenerative history as a voice from on high declares: “Today is venym schad / In Holi Cherche of temporal, / Which medleth with the spiritual” (2.3490–92), a curse that history has borne out.⁵⁷ The only hope lies in charity, which helps one in both worlds (2.3499): “If charité be take on honde, / Ther folweth after mochel grace” (2.3502–03). But that is a matter of individual choice, not decree, just as it was, in fact, for Constantine.

The chilling conclusion to the story and to Book 2 anticipates the dark conclusion of the *Confessio*, as White reads it. The point is that in the fallen world, social agendas are often doomed to failure. Constantine would do a good deed by way of his donation, but, given the materiality of the gift and the envy of the world, the stark, heavenly pronouncement comes as no more of a surprise than “John Gower's” hapless rejection of the world in Book 8.

Gower's dramatic tactics work by juxtaposition — this tale set against that. The same dramatic strategy holds true for Book 3 (Wrath). The tactic reminds us of a basic principle of all exemplary machinery, where fiction addresses the truth, in the meditative circumlocutions of the audience. The Tale of Pyramus and Thisbe is another of Gower's Ovidian tales, here exemplifying Folhaste. The tale is told with pleasing variation of syntax, run-on rhythms, witty wordplay, aphorism, and rhetorical questions; it has two well-placed speeches, and an

⁵⁷ In Book 2, the phrase “venym schad” perhaps resonates against Hercules' envenomed shirt, as wealthy churchmen, benefactors of the Donation of Constantine, can now dress themselves in splendid vestments.

abundance of charming details and touching pathos, whereby any reader would regret with heartfelt pity the hastiness of each lover's suicide.

The plot is laid out cinematically through a straightforward sequence of visual "takes." Apart from the brief speech by each lover, the tale is virtually a dumb show. First we are given the setting — the town that Semiramis walled, with a wall of its own that separates the lovers, "wow to wow and wall to wall" (3.1341); then the narrative zooms close up to the lovers' situation, their efforts to communicate, and their plan to meet. Thisbe sets out in the dark alone, encounters the lion, drops her wimple, and hides in a bush. From another angle we witness Pyramus' discovery of the wimple, his prayer, and his death. Thisbe discovers the corpse, faints, utters her last speech in the manner of the *Heroides* (though vastly more brief), and commits suicide. The moral: "Bewar that of thin oghne bale / Thou be noght cause in thi folhaste" (3.1496–97).

In his refocusing of the story, Gower takes a number of liberties with Ovid's narrative, all of which work well in his modulation. In Ovid, the couple's parents forbid marriage. In Gower the parents are simply ignored; nature provides all the reasons necessary for lovers. As Cupid casts his fire on them (3.1353), their passion ignites. They do not find a chink in the wall through which to whisper; in their eagerness, they make one (3.1371). Gower puns on Pyramus' fiery name (what he was "hote" ["called"] and their "hote" love [3.1375–76])⁵⁸ as they devise a way to "winne a speche, / Here wofull peine for to lissee" (3.1360–61). There is no stopping this burning passion, Cupid has seen to that. After they agree to meet at the well, Gower focuses, with characteristic affection for female agency, on Thisbe's lonely but determined journey through the night disguised with quiet steps so that none will know (3.1384–91). To heighten the drama he changes Ovid's well-fed lion to a hungry one setting out to take its prey in a field, thereby making the situation more dangerous for Thisbe than it was in Ovid.

Though Gower's play heightens the natural compulsions of appetite, its tone is nonetheless courtly. Rather than hide Thisbe in a forest, Genius gently compares her to a bird in a mew as she takes refuge in a bush. Once she is secure Genius imagines how she might have passed the time and invents an occupation for her, namely thinking warm thoughts about Pyramus as unto herself she "pleigneth ay" (3.1415). But, although gentler, Gower's version is also more bloody than that of his sources. After the lion kills his prey "in his wilde rage" (3.1398) and, "with his blodi snoute" (3.1400), comes to the well to drink, he finds the wimple, which he mauls: he "hath [it] todrawe, / Bebled aboute and al forgnawe" (3.1405–06). It is as if he does to the wimple what he would have done, given the chance, to Thisbe. He drinks and then returns to the wood. The lion, following its ravenous nature, exposes powerful forces within natural behavior. Perhaps if Pyramus and Thisbe had better understood such forces they would not have found themselves in so bad a position.

When Pyramus finds the bloody wimple, all totorn, he thinks she has been devoured and, in a hasty move, "sodeinly" (3.1428) draws his sword and kills himself. Gower gives him his only speech in the tale at this point as he melodramatically accuses himself of "felonie" and concludes that he is the cause of her death (3.1431–33). When Thisbe finds him she cannot speak "for hire herte schette [closed]" (3.1453), and she swoons. The shutting of her heart is a remarkably precise explanation of her swoon, as if Genius considers fainting to be caused by blood deficit to the brain, which is alleviated only when she starts breathing again ("Sche cawhte breth," 3.1461) and comes to. She then makes her one and only speech

⁵⁸ *Pyros*: Greek for fire; *pyra*: Latin for funeral pyre, see explanatory note to 3.1375–76 on *hote/hote*.

(3.1462–81). Gower gives her greater powers of analysis than Pyramus (she gets twenty lines, he got three) as she calls out to Venus and blind Cupid, who has so painfully been her guide.

Gower plays up the pathos of the situation as she touches Pyramus, gives him yearning looks, embraces him, and kisses him. Her wits are overcome, and she puts the sword's point against her breast and falls upon it. Thus "bothe on o swerd bledende / Thei weren founde ded liggende" (3.1493–94). No mention is made of her removing the sword from Pyramus' breast before she falls upon it, so apparently they are skewered together on the one bloody sword when people find them, a fitting together-at-last image of their passionate love.

Book 2 (Envy) featured histories; Book 3 (Wrath), stories pertaining to the Trojan war, Thebes, and the conquests of Alexander. Gower links war with anger, rage, and homicide. The Tale of Orestes introduces multiple issues of homicide so pivotal to the concluding of the book. Based upon Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie*, the tale focuses on legal issues even more than vengeance. Orestes is raised by a worthy knight Taltabius, who teaches him strong family values. When his mother murders his father, Orestes vows vengeance against the "moerdrice" (3.2003). In his anger he would tear off her "pappes" (3.2010) with his own hands, have her drawn by horses, and then fed to dogs as a warning against patricide. Having made up his mind (no oracle commands him here), he prays to the gods for guidance; they hear his prayer and send him to Mycene. Egiste has married Climestre; he is a great scoundrel, having "forlai" (3.2031) his daughter and then abandoned her. Clearly he has no regard for the sanctity of family structures. As in Benoît, when Orestes returns his mother locks herself in her castle,⁵⁹ which Orestes puts under siege. At last he is victorious and his mother is publicly executed according to Orestes' vow. He recognizes the unnaturalness of his act, but justifies his vengeance: "Unkindely for thou hast wroght, / Unkindeliche it schal be boght" (3.2065–66). Egiste returns, is defeated, and is hanged on the gibbet, as befits traitors.

This moment in the poem provides a fine example of Gower's seamless shifting of his play from narcissistic comedy to hard social critique. As debate ensues on the justice of Orestes' behavior, Gower raises various points of law, complicated by the fact that the slaying of kin is involved. Genius exonerates Orestes on grounds that a murderer deserves death. But then Gower gives the story an unexpected twist. Egiona, Egiste's daughter and sister on his mother's side to Orestes, hangs herself: "Vengance upon hireself sche soghte, / And hath of hire unhappi wit / A moerdre with a moerdre quit. / Such is of moerdre the vengance" (3.2192–95). This eye-for-an-eye assessment makes a kind of sense, but tenderhearted Amans (3.2203), apparently distressed by the death of Egione, recognizes the difficulty of right discernment: "What is to done, and what to leve" (3.2205). Is murder ever justified, he asks? Genius gives a textbook response, delineating three legal situations for homicide: (1) to punish traitors and robbers, (2) to support law and common rights, and (3) to defend one's country (3.2210–40). When Amans challenges him further on the ethics of "dedly werres" (3.2242), Genius insists that the "evidence" is "[t]o rewle with thi conscience" (3.2249–50) and proceeds to assail the evils of war (3.2251–2360), based on authorities from Jesus to the Apostles. To know what to do and what to leave is indeed a matter of conscience. Amans presses the point, wondering about justification of homicide in war.

⁵⁹ An interesting feature, very different from Aeschylus, is Benoît's medievalization of the story as Orestes, knighted by Idomeneus, raises a powerful army garnered by friendship, obligation, and marriage, and puts the city under siege. Orestes butchers his mother, then ambushes Aegisthus at a pass and brings him bound to the city for public execution. His friends see to it that Orestes is made king.

This diatribe against war, so timely in the late 1380s as Richard attempts to maintain peace with France, is the first major political digression that Gower has allowed his impersonations. For a moment the drama moves from one stage (“character”) to another (“international politics”). The shift confuses our sense of voice and vantage as the tone moves from *ethopoeisis* toward the polemics of the Prologue, albeit still within the jurisdiction of his protagonists. Genius acknowledges that nature opposes war: War burns churches, slays priests, is an excuse for rape of wives and maidens and a distraction from law and God. The motives behind war are evil, and its effects horrendous: conscience is suspended, as war becomes a raw excuse for plunder.

Genius gives the war digression *exempla* of its own. To illustrate the evil effect of war upon the state Genius tells the Tale of Alexander and the Pirate (3.2363 ff.), the gist of which is that one criminal is promoted by another. This example is followed by an account of the wars and death of Alexander, a scenario that Diogenes had predicted earlier while sitting in his tub (3. 1201 ff.). Rather than being heroic, Alexander’s life is desolate. He dies far from home: “Thus was he slain that whilom slowh” (3.2461).

Amans immediately applies Genius’ ideas and questions him further: Are the crusades lawful? When pressed, Genius allows that no homicide is acceptable. Supporting his argument largely from the Bible (Moses’ commandments, Christ’s nativity, and the shepherd’s song of peace), he concludes that shedding of blood is, in short, unlawful; only blind conscience can approve of it (3.2541). Deadly wars should cease:

For who that wolde ensample take,
 The lawe which is naturel
 Be weie of kinde scheweth wel
 That homicide in no degree,
 Which werreth agein charité,
 Among the men ne scholde duelle. (3.2580–85)

Homicide negates natural law, the proof being evident in Solinus’ account of a strange bird with a face of blood and bone like a man’s, who murders people and devours them. But when he goes to drink and sees his own manlike image, like a mime, reflected back at him, he becomes so distraught that he dies. The implication seems to be that Homicide, the taking of a life of one born with human countenance, is a form of suicide. The *exemplum* underscores the fate of Egiona, as murder looks upon murder and destroys the self.

Genius concludes Book 3 with the Tale of Telaphus and Teucer, a story that admirably goes back to propositions considered in the Tale of Orestes, namely the evil of families destroying each other. This tale ends in positive accord, however, as Achilles, about to slay his enemy Teucer, is asked by Telephus (Achilles’ son) to be merciful since at another time Teucer had been merciful to him (Telephus). Later, Teucer makes Telephus his heir. The story demonstrates the value of mercy, the antidote to homicide, whereby a family is restored rather than destroyed from within. The materials shaping the conclusion to Book 3, from Orestes on, juxtapose vividly drawn short subjects interlaced with commentary to provide a peaceful ending to the Book of Wrath. The tone is quite different from the dark prophecies of doom following the donation of Constantine at the end of Book 2. The posture is one of hope even in the face of outrageous slaughter in continental campaigns, bishop’s crusades,

merciless parliaments, and behind-the-scenes vengeance. Gower seems to be saying that the need for mercy to temper brutal “justice” has seldom been greater.⁶⁰

BOOK 4: THE PLAY’S STRUCTURAL CENTER

Derek Pearsall speaks of Book 4 as “much the best book” in *Confessio Amantis*, with its tales of Pygmalion, Demephon and Phillis, Rosiphelee, Ceix and Alceone, and Iphis and Araxarathen.⁶¹ It is the high point of the poet’s impersonation of Amans, as he and Genius go at it in an attempt to understand Sloth. Sloth, by its very nature, is a sin of mediocrity that in its doziness lends itself well to comedy.⁶² In its amusing realization of Amans’ quietly self-indulgent loverliness Book 4 serves well as culmination to the first half of the poem. It finishes up structural features of the opening books and introduces new directions that will be unfurled in the second half of the poem. It is, indeed, a pivotal book. As in the first three books Genius once again confesses a particular sin and its five cohorts. But now he adds two more, not to imply that Sloth has a sturdy back and hearty disposition but that with Sloth things just happen.

Perhaps the most foreboding change is Genius’ extended disquisition on love, labor, and inventors. Book 3 had introduced extended ethical digression in its debate on war; now dialogic amplification becomes a significant feature of the narrative. In Book 5 we will encounter even longer digressions on the history of religions, and Book 7 will be predominantly expository so that such amplification can no longer be labeled digression. Perhaps we might think of Genius in a double role: as preceptor, who questions Amans, but also as expositor, like the character Expositor in a medieval pageant, who can stand outside the diegesis of the plot to remark on broader issues, but is still part of it.⁶³ It is as if two consciences — one dramatic (Preceptor), the other intellective (Expositor) — struggle for center stage. As we move into the latter portion of the poem, the dramatic functions of dialogic *adlocutio* will somewhat sub-

⁶⁰ In his patterning by juxtaposition of misericordia and legal homicide Gower perhaps has in mind the debate between Mercy and Justice in the Four Daughters of God paradigm, so popular in late medieval England: e.g., *Cursor Mundi* (1.9517–52); *Gesta Romanorum* (no. 55); Grosseteste’s *Castel of Love*, a translation of *Chasteau D’Amour* (1275); *The Court of Sapience* (Bk. 1); *Piers Plowman* (B.18., C.21); *Castel of Perseverance* (lines 3130 ff.); *Mankind* (lines 832–82); and *Ludus Coventriæ* (lines 97–103). See Murphy’s “Four Daughters of God” entry in Jeffrey, *Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*, pp. 290–91.

⁶¹ Pearsall, *Gower and Lydgate*, p. 17. One might quibble with Pearsall, preferring Book 1, with its introduction of Amans and Genius and array of outstanding stories; or Book 8, for its Tale of Apollonius and Gower’s brilliant staging of the conclusion(s) to his frame tale; or Book 5, with its reconceiving of the poem’s structure and splendid telling of the story of Medea; or, if one were in a weird mood, Book 7, with its encyclopedic attempt to introduce into a courtly frame-tale ambitious education-of-the-prince teachings. Nonetheless, it is easy to understand Pearsall’s preference.

⁶² This sin, as if too lazy to push toward the front (no proud urge to be first) or to claim privilege of being last (as if indifferent to being the ultimate), is commonly listed in medieval handbooks as the fourth sin, the middling of the seven. It is perhaps worth noting, however, that in *VC* it is placed fifth, with Avarice as the fourth.

⁶³ As a character in medieval drama, Expositor is almost part of the frame, except that he is, nonetheless, part of the action. He speaks to the moment, but from the vantage of cultural wisdom, both within the moment and apart from it. Expositor is especially prominent in the N-Town cycle, but appears in other cycles, too, in Procession of the Prophets plays like that of Chester.

side as the poem's subtext, like so many wisdom manuals of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, provides a wisdom-hungry vernacular audience with lore they seem to cherish even as much as the stories. Only toward the end of Book 8, in the staging of the poem's denouement, is the tension between *ethopoeisis* and exposition resolved as the poet once again becomes John Gower and, in effect, gives birth to himself.

Three aspects of the structure of Book 4 are striking: (1) the presenting of two additional children of Sloth — Somnolence and Tristesse — beyond the usual five; (2) the long exposition on labor, discovery, and invention placed between Genius' discussion of Idleness and Somnolence; and (3) the predominance of Ovidian materials throughout the book (twelve of the thirteen major tales),⁶⁴ with Ovid being the primary source as well for the impersonation of Amans as lover and Genius as preceptor. That Ovid should become most prominent here is understandable, for he, more than any other poet, delineated the power of love to invade the sleepy lives of the unwitting. In Gower that kind of laziness is a component of all vices because in sin the watchful guardians of the soul's house (Reason, Imagination, Memory) procrastinate, become indolent, negligent, and forgetful, and doze off, while Will indulges in idle play that culminates in Ovidian dilemmas.

Amans' perpetual love distractions serve well as occasions for tales of procrastination, forgetfulness (mainly male forgetfulness), and indolence. While Aeneas procrastinates, Dido (herself a procrastinator) stages her suicide through literary analogies with the dying swan that drove a quill through her brain; Ulysses also procrastinates, but Penelope, with more intelligence than Dido, uses her quill to write letters that will awaken her husband from his indolence. Another instance of male forgetfulness in love is found in the Ovidian Tale of Demephon and Phillis, where, as with Dido, suicide is used as a means of making a dramatic statement. In contrast to forgetful Aeneas, Ulysses, and Demephon, busy Pygmalion shows courage and so devotes himself to his sculpture that it comes to life, though the reader is left wondering about the larger implications of Genius' ardent example. In Ovid, Pygmalion swore off women because of the faults he perceived in the foul Proepoetides, who denied the divinity of Venus and were turned to stone; so he reverses the process and shapes a more ideal woman in stone who then, through the blessing of Venus, comes to life (*Met.* 10.243–97). In Gower, Pygmalion has no "evil-woman" excuse. He is simply "a lusti man of yowthe" (4.373) who "made an ymage of entaile" (4.378) in likeness of a woman and, falling in love with it, "he himself beguileth" (4.387). His love is "pure impression / Of his yimaginacion" (4.389–90). Genius seems unconcerned with the unnaturalness of the act; rather, he admires the artist's persistence: "Lo, thus he wan a lusti wif, / Which obeissant was at his wille" (4.424–25). His point is that the power of the word "mai worche above kinde" (4.438). This may be so, though one wonders about the goal of such word power. Is Genius becoming idle in his yearning for vitality? Gower leaves us puzzling over how words can effect one's sense of reality.

The problem becomes even more complex when Genius moves on to his next Ovidian tale, the story of Iphis (4.451 ff.), where Venus transforms a girl child into a boy so that she/he can consummate her love with her girlfriend. For Genius the example seems to celebrate the importance of fearless compulsion in love. But White's assessment of the problem that Gower raises here is probably right:

⁶⁴ The only other of significant length is the Tale of Rosiphelee. There are ten other shorter *exempla* from the Bible, the *Roman de Troie*, etc., ranging from about ten to fifty lines in length.

Gower allows one to feel that Nature may be so intent on sexual activity that she is even prepared to operate against her own arrangements for its channelling. The presentation hints that at the bottom of the human psyche lies a naked, unconditioned, undifferentiating sexual impulse — and that suggests something morally anarchic at the bottom of the totality one calls Nature.⁶⁵

The *exemplum* is part of Genius' proof of love's power, but for the audience it lingers in the mind as a matter unresolved, as if to say, that is how it is — at this moment.

Gower brings up Iphis again in the final tale to Book 4. This time he (very male) is hopelessly in love with Araxarathen. She rejects his love, no Venus intervenes, and he hangs himself at the gate tree (4.3593–94), a victim of despondency (Tristes). The crowd pities Iphis and condemns Araxarathen for her indifference. She takes the blame to herself, recognizes that she will become an epitome of how a maiden did amiss, and, in this instance, Gower follows the metamorphosis in Ovid and turns her into a stone. But what she is a sign of is left unclear. As Iphis commits suicide he imagines how tormented she will be by his death. This is more spite than love. After her transformation to stone, the king hears the sad story and provides a kind of twisted Romeo and Juliet ending, where the stone is turned into a monument so that the two might be laid to rest in Venus' temple, her stone bearing the inscription of the ill-fated love:

Hier lith, which slowh himself, Iphis,
For love of Araxarathen:
And in ensample of tho wommen,
That soffren men to deie so,
Hire forme a man mai sen also,
Hou it is torned fleissh and bon
3680 Into the figure of a ston.
He was to neyssh and sche to hard. *too soft; too*
Be war forthi hierafterward;
Ye men and wommen bothe tuo,
Ensampleth you of that was tho. (4.3674–84)

The epitaph focuses Ovidian motifs throughout the book, not only to the earlier tale of Iphis, but also Pygmalion (where stone turns to flesh, through force of love), Dido (where suicide is used to torment the hardhearted lover), and the cautionary Tale of Rosiphelee, where the woman modifies her hardheartedness.

Though not an Ovidian tale as such, the Tale of Rosiphelee, with its transformational plot, works well in an Ovidian context. Rosiphelee, a strong-minded woman, leaves no room in her heart for men. None, through “non yimaginacion” (4.1258) can set her in the way of “loves occupacion” (4.1257). But Cupid, as an Ovidian god, gets his revenge: one day in May, as she walks at dawn in a park admiring the flowers and beasts who go in pairs (“The madle go with the femele,” 4.1301), her life passes before her eyes as a dramatic allegory:

⁶⁵ White, *Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, p. 193. White goes on to cite Kelly's notion that such a sexual drive is an “unmodified” instinct that man shares with beasts, an instinct that takes no notice of person, number, or gender. See Kelly, *Love and Marriage*, p. 140.

a pageant of fair ladies appears, all riding sidesaddle on “faire amblende hors” (4.1309). But the pretty scene is disrupted by a shocker, a pattern of Gower’s staging that is by now becoming familiar. How is it that a dirty little spoiler so often intrudes to upset gladness? At the rear of the lovely pageant comes an “annuied” (4.1346, “anxious”) woman in tattered dress on a black jade, bearing about her waist “twenty score / Of horse haltres” (4.1356–57). When asked about her dismay and lowly lot she explains that she was a king’s daughter who “liste noght to love obeie” (4.1389) and now is required to serve as halter-bearer and knave to those in love’s train. Rosiphelee, chastened by the play she has witnessed, returns home. The metamorphosis takes place in her mind as she changes her attitude and swears to herself that “sche none haltres wolde bere” (4.1446). The Ovidian moral occurs not in the pageant but in Rosiphelee’s perception. But is she liberated or a victim of social and cultural coercion?

In Book 4, Genius uses some Ovidian *exempla* that have little to do directly with love, such as the stories of Phaeton and Icarus to explain Negligence. But usually there is a love connection. In the Tale of Hercules and Achelons, for example, Hercules’ prowess as a warrior is a key factor in his ability to win the love of Deianire. Coming as it does after the telling of the disastrous conclusion to that marriage in Book 2, where the warrior became a pathetic transvestite, the reader is left pondering the larger implications of human actions as they grow out of specific moments. What seems exemplary in a particular instance may not ultimately prove felicitous.⁶⁶ As with the two tales of Iphis, the two of Hercules leave us uncertain of the bases upon which we make judgments. If we think in terms of a syllogism, where all agency is conditional upon the minor premise (the cause factor of reasoning where particulars are necessary for any conclusion to be drawn), we recognize the value of Genius’ principle of teaching through example. But in the drama of events seen we also must recognize that appreciating the particular does not guarantee understanding of causes (the far cause, or whatever) toward which momentary judgments proceed. Wit and Reason need to be perpetually awake, lest Idleness dissolve all promise in what Chaucer calls “rotten sologardye.”⁶⁷

The need to understand cause (the way we get from here to there) helps us to perceive why Ovid is so important to Genius at this point of the confession. Metamorphosis, transposition, change — all hinge upon placement of the minor premise (cause). Genius cannot guarantee one thing or another because he does not control Amans’ response, which, even though predictable, may turn in quite unexpected directions. All consciousnesses are contingent, and the contingencies are likely to originate in, or at least be affected by, desire (the Will). If we hope for a good end, on what features of the experience do we concentrate? What constitutes evidence? What will be discovered in the open-address process?

To approach this matter Genius introduces a twelve-hundred-line expostulation on idleness in love, what it is and what its effect might be. The Tale of Rosiphelee had left Amans pondering problems of Venus’ law and its variabilities. Cupid’s law is potent, but marriage is

⁶⁶ The effect is akin to modern experimental drama, where we get the plot reversed rather than in flashback, as in Pinter’s *Betrayal* or Sondheim’s *Merrily We Roll Along*, where, starting at the end (scarred by scores of selfish miscues), we as audience, when we finally arrive at the happy moments of gladness and possibility with which the story began, find it hard to share in the innocent joy of beginning, knowing where it all will end.

⁶⁷ CT VIII(G)17. Chaucer uses the phrase to describe Idleness and its dissolution of resolve in the Prologue to The Second Nun’s Tale, a passage akin in many ways with Gower’s remarks on the sin. See Peck, “Ideas of ‘Entente.’”

excellent; sexual activity is necessary for the continuation of the human race, as the subsequent biblical Tale of Jephthah's daughter makes clear for women. For men prowess is necessary for the survival of the culture. But Amans wonders where such reasoning takes him. Should he cross the sea to win at arms, but lose his lady at home? He then provides his own example to the contrary, the story of Achilles and Polixena, where the soldier, drawn to the female, is slain (4.1683 ff.). He would do what his lady commands, but nothing works right. The more he makes her his business, kneeling and praying to her with "goode wordes and with softe" (4.1749), the more she refuses. Genius tries to reassure him with stories of Nauplis and Ulysses, Protesilaus, Saul, Achilles, Penthesilea, Philemenis, and Aeneas, illustrating how and why a knight should follow arms, but then qualifies his remarks by observing that Gentilesse, as well as prowess, requires work.

This leads Genius the Expositor to discuss the uses and history of labor, a survey of discoverers and inventors from alchemy to letters, as open address dissolves into direct address. It may seem ironic that the discussion of Somnolence should follow so tedious a section of the poem, though we must remind ourselves as audience, that just such particularities, though laborious in the gleaning, help the mind establish a stay against Sloth. Indeed, one side of the audience yearns for information, to be told what's what, especially when all else seems so unstable. The consideration of Somnolence is formulated around two *exempla*, both derived from Ovid, which provide positive examples of keeping watch, though, as so often is the case in Book 4, Genius' energetic "positive" examples are subverted by implications beyond the immediate purview of the example and its moment.

The first example, the Tale of Ceix and Alceone, is one of the best known and best told of Gower's Ovidian tales. Genius uses it to demonstrate that dreams may help to guide behavior. This tale lends itself well to Gower's dramatic principles. He embellishes the account of the descent into the cave of sleep with an amusing list of things *not* there — fire, sparks, squeaky doors, trees with crows or magpies in them — in effect a catalogue of things that give light or make noise that would awaken a sleeper. Sleep is obliged to consider how the shipwreck will be staged in Alceone's dream. So he sends Morpheus, who can take on other shapes and impersonate Ceix; Ithecus, who can imitate every sound and provide the soundtrack; and Panthasas, who can transform "[o]f everything the rihte forme" (4.3050) and thereby be stage crew for the shipwreck as it is played out in Alceone's dream. Oh the power of theater! So vivid is the re-creation of the event that Alceone cries out in her sleep and has to be comforted by her ladies. Next morning she leaves her ladies behind (another lonely journey) to find the body floating in the sea, and, with no fear of drowning, rushes toward it. The gods, watching the scene in audience, take pity on her and Ceix, and, to avoid "double harm" (4.3088), transform the lovers into birds. We see them swimming together, watch their embraces and kisses, and learn of their progeny — "many a dowhter and a sone / Thei bringen forth of briddes kinde" (4.3118–19).

The second example, Cephalus' prayer, is one of the most successful *aubades* in English. Although Genius presents it to illustrate diligent activity against Somnolence, when considered in view of the ways of nature, it leaves us wondering whether such an example illustrates industry, as Genius implies, or, from some more objective perspective, a hidden form of Sloth that challenges the very foundation of love's activities and socially responsible labor. This "tale" differs from other stories in that, instead of providing a full narrative, we are simply given a moment. But that is plenty to provide a fully developed psyche as it attempts to enforce its will. The rhetorician Emporus says *adlocutio* should "express in every place the life-style of him

whose words are being created,”⁶⁸ and such certainly is the case here. Cephalus addresses his pathetic appeal first to Apollo and then to Diana, but mainly he is seeking an “audience,” regardless of who might be listening. That is, like Rosiphelee (or Amans, for that matter), he is busy staging his feelings. He is careful to set up a specific situation: having lain all night “[w]ith Aurora that swete may” (4.3190) in his arms, his heart cries out as day approaches, “O Phebus, which the daies liht / Governest . . . in cilence and in covert / Desireth for to be beschaded” (4.3197–3207). His appeal is personal, direct, and flattering to Phebus, who, as governor of light, keeper of laws of nature, source of gladness for “every creature” (4.3199), might conceivably alter the patterns of nature to favor Cephalus and Aurora.⁶⁹ The intensity of his feeling makes him seem exceptional: “Bot natheles” (4.3201), he pleads, love has its claims too. Lovers need dark-time to fulfill their “plesance” (4.3218). So, arguing with the support of one aspect of nature (i.e., potent emotions), he asks Phebus to alter another aspect (the diurnal cycle) and “[w]ithdrawgh the banere of thin armes, / And let thi lythes ben unborn” (4.3220–21). Proof of the validity of his appeal lies in the immediacy of his situation and feeling, giving him a most kindly reason, namely, that “I mi love hath underfonge, / Which lith hier be mi syde naked” (4.3226–27). One implication is that Phebus himself has known such naked delight and, as a lover, will be sympathetic. Surely he will respond gladly.

Cephalus’ second appeal for more time is perhaps less promising. He calls on Diana, praising her noblesse, noting her residence in Cancer, a place conducive to love and the begetting of children (4.3249) — all purposes deemed right according to nature. As for himself, he promises that, if granted his appeal, he will fulfill his duties without the least hint of sloth: “With al myn herte I wolde serve/ Be nyhte, and thi [Diane’s] vigile observe” (4.3251–52). One wonders, however, whether Diana will be attracted by comparisons with Venus and what are clearly not chaste sexual motives.⁷⁰ There may be some irony in the fact that as Cephalus observes Diana’s vigil, he imagines others taking note of his industry. Is he pious or simply an exhibitionist, using the gods as audience? How does this “pley” work? Perhaps he should do less talking and more performing.

Whether Cephalus’ prayer succeeds we are not actually told. If the gods did intercede, then common profit would certainly be put aside and singular profit become the rule of nature.⁷¹ Genius places himself in a contradictory position. That Cephalus would “do the lawe / In thilke point of loves heste, / Which cleped is the nyghtes feste, / Withoute slep of sluggardie” (4.3256–59) seems commendable since it gives him opportunity, at least “in thilke point,” to excoriate the lazy who fail to pay the debt (4.3269) but fall asleep instead,

⁶⁸ See Specht, “Ethopoeia’ or Impersonation,” p. 3.

⁶⁹ The appeal to nature to alter its patterns for the singular benefit of the lovers typifies such prayers. Compare Dorigen and Aurelius in Chaucer’s Franklin’s Tale, who, in their desire to correct nature according to their imagined needs, prove their sincerity and the justice of their request by pointing to the tears on their cheeks as nature lends authority to their plea that nature be altered.

⁷⁰ There is no conflict between Diana’s being the goddess of both chastity and childbearing. Chaucer’s Parson, for example, points out that “assembling” for the purpose of bearing children and for paying the debt “hath the merite of chastitee” (CT X[I]940).

⁷¹ One is reminded of Dorigen’s plea that the universe be reconstructed according to her wishes, or Aurelius’ appeal to Apollo to look favorably upon his tearful cheeks in Chaucer’s Franklin’s Tale. See Peck, “Sovereignty and the Two Worlds.”

making sleep “his retenue” (4.3267) when “love *scholde* ben awaited” (4.3265, my emphasis). But does this mean that nature’s laws are relative to personal desire?

Much of the wit in the passage derives from the context in which Gower has placed the scene. That is, we have been amused by thousands of lines devoted to Amans’ lack of success in love. That he would fall asleep if he ever should succeed in lying naked in his lover’s arms is beyond his ability to comprehend:

Mi fader, who that hath his love
 Abedde naked be his syde,
 And wolde thanne hise yhen hyde
 With slep, I not what man is he (4.3276–79)

We can understand the logic of the moment from the point of view of each disputant — Cephalus in bed, Genius caught up in his propositions against Sloth, and Amans desiring to glean something that has a happy result. He knows that his lady will continue to reject him. So *his* plea is, in fact, the opposite of that of Cephalus. He knows that love is a matter of dreams, whether by night or by day. And he knows that at night sometimes he almost has his way with her — but only in his dreams. He also knows that love is a matter of looking. So, unlike Cephalus, he does not crave that the “sonnes carte” (4.3291) tarry or that the moon stay the night; rather he yearns for night to pass quickly so that he might at least *see* his lady the next day. Gower leaves us in an ethical dilemma. How can we, in our indolence, keep the fleeting images of our desire present for our pleasure? How can we keep the play from closing?

Although the first half of Gower’s poem vacillates between bright hopes and dark confusion, it ends on a low note, as Sloth dissolves into Tristesse (Despondency). Genius warns that Tristesse “forsaketh alle trouthe / And wole unto no resoun bowe” (4.3436–37). It dramatizes the rejection of God’s trust only to end up in a void: “Thus dwyneth [dwindles/pines away] he, til he be ded” (4.3440). Genius exemplifies the point with the Tale of Iphis and Araxarathen and its would-be lover who ends his life a suicide.⁷² But this tale does not stand alone in this regard. Suicides are prominent in the middle books of the *Confessio*: Hercules in Book 2; Pyramus and Thisbe and Egione in Book 3; and, in addition to Iphis in Book 4, there are Canacee, Dido, Phillis, and, in their way, Alceone and Araxarathen, who, by choice, mutate into forms quite different from their God-given shapes.

If the *Confessio Amantis* is a study of the self’s effort to claim its own estate, as I think it is, one might wonder why such emphasis is placed upon suicide here at the very heart of the lover’s quest. Is there something in Amans that is suicidally blind to the danger of his own shortsighted desires? Is his play, in short, nothing more than idle delusion? Perhaps the beginning of *Mirour de l’Omme* can help to understand the question. Sin, Gower argues, negates the Creator (the Informer of the form) by attacking the Informer through the form,⁷³ to return

⁷² One is reminded of Spenser’s similar progression in *The Faerie Queene* when Red Cross Knight, an idle “lover,” finds himself rotting in Orgolio’s prison, and even though rescued, in his idleness ends up with Sir Trevisan in the cave of suicides, nurturing the feeble idea that he will at least help God out by taking his own life.

⁷³ I am deliberately playing upon Simpson’s language in his opening chapter on “self” (see note 15), in that it offers a fresh way of approaching an idea I had sensed in the *Confessio* when I attempted to explore Gower’s sense of the soul in *Kingship and Common Profit* (1978).

the created self that was once blessed by God with reason into nothingness — suicide, indeed. Warning all lovers, desirous of sin, that the end sought is actually death (“chapeal de sauls,” a “willow wreath” — *MO*, line 6), the protagonist excoriates: “All was nothing, however much man now has, and all this nothing returns to nothing through nothing [i.e., sin (Pecché)], which causes everything to be annihilated.”⁷⁴ The lover’s yearning is doomed to pass away, like a dream, into nothingness (“Trestout come songe passeroit / En nient” — *MO*, lines 28–29), for “that nothing makes them desert their God for a nothing that must revert to nothing and become more vile than dung.”⁷⁵

These passages resonate with Ecclesiastes, though Gower directs his audience to the Gospel of John 1:3, where God creates the Word out of nothing. At the core of sin lies Sloth, which permits that which was given by God to rot, to become putrefaction, something “more vile than dung.” This is the dilemma addressed at the heart of *Confessio Amantis* and again at the conclusion of the poem, where the lover’s aspirations come to nothing, nothing but dreams. But in Book 8 the deceptive dreams are put aside as the poet turns to prayer, hopeful that Reason might return to make possible a peaceable kingdom. For now, Amans wants to know more about love, both the form and the matter, and we move on to Book 5.

MANUSCRIPTS

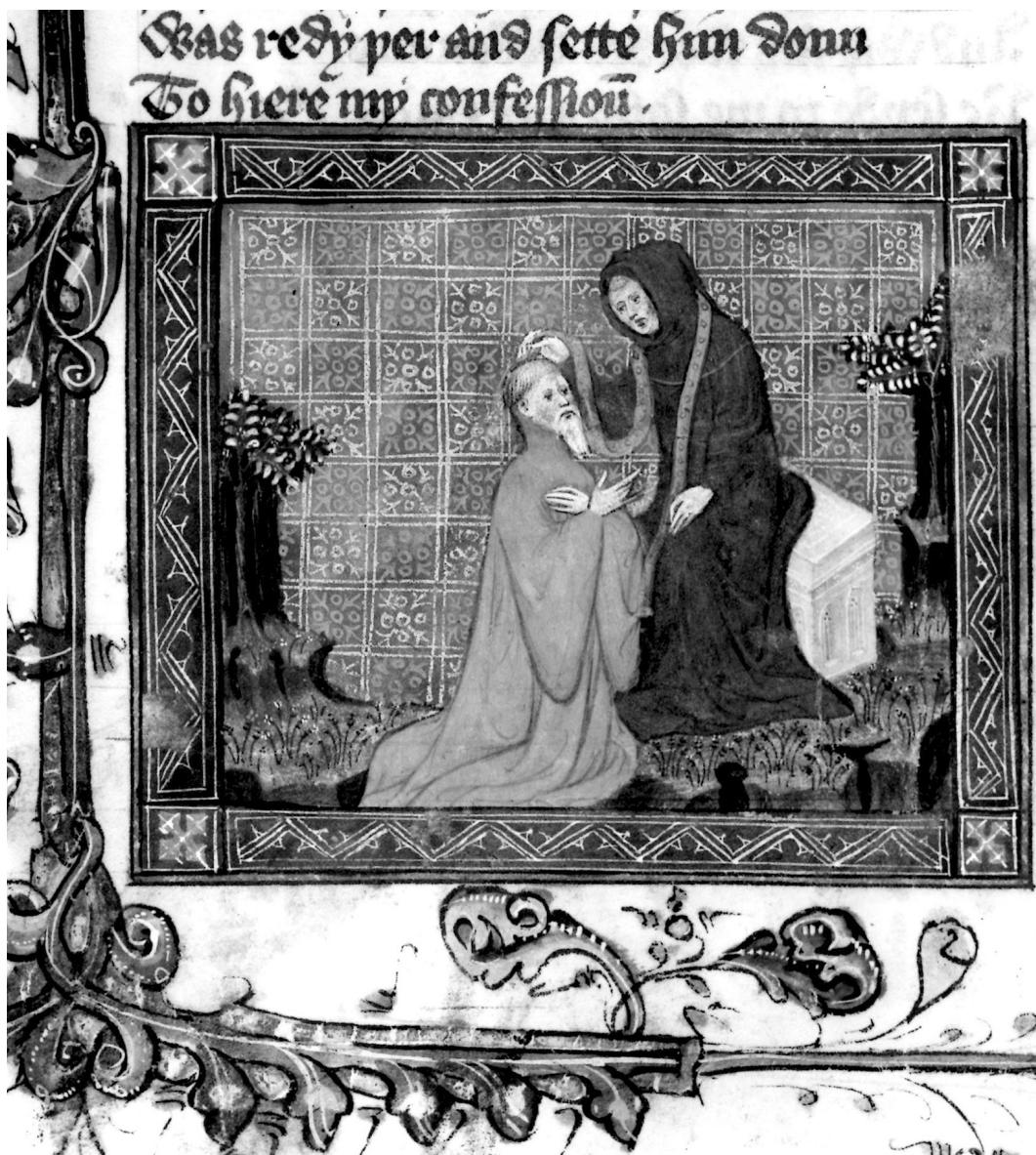
Indexed as item 2262 in Brown and Robbins, eds., *Index of Middle English Verse*, and Cutler and Robbins, eds., *Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse*. In composing this new edition of the *Confessio Amantis*, I have consulted a select number of the dozens of manuscripts of the poem, manuscripts generally considered to be the best representatives of the various recensions of Gower’s English poem:

- A: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 902 (SC 27573), fols. 2r–183r. [Ricardian recension.]
- B: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 294 (SC 2449), fols. 1r–197r. [Modified recension.]
- C: Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 67, fols. 1r–209r. [Unrevised Ricardian recension.]
- F: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Fairfax 3 (SC 3883), fols. 2r–186r. [Lancastrian recension; base-text for this edition.]
- J: Cambridge, St. John’s College, MS B.12 (34), fols. 1r–214r. [Revised Ricardian recension.]
- S: San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, MS Ellesmere (*olim* Stafford) 26 A.17, fols. 1r–169v. [Modified recension.]
- T: Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.3 (581), fols. 1r–147v. [Modified recension.]

For a complete listing of *Confessio* manuscripts, as well as a stemma of their relationships, see Fisher, *John Gower*, pp. 303–09.

⁷⁴ “Tout estoit nient, quanq’ om ore tient / Et tout ce nient en nient revient / Par nient, qui tout fait anientir” (*MO*, lines 37–39, Wilson’s translation).

⁷⁵ “Que nient les fait leur dieu guerpir / Pour nient, q’en nient doit revertir / Et devenir plus vil que fient” (*MO*, lines 46–48, Wilson’s translation).



MS Bodley 902, fol. 8r. Confessio Amantis [The Confession of the Lover]. The representation of Amans as an old man is unique to this manuscript. (Contrast illustrations 3 and 5 in Volume 1.) The artist seems knowledgeable of the conclusion to the poem where the lover sees his face defaced “[w]ith elde” [8.2828]. Some have argued that the portrait is of Gower himself. See notes to Book 8. Reprinted by permission of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.



CONFESSIO AMANTIS: BOOK 2 (ENVY)

[ON ENVY]

- i. *Inuidie culpa magis est attrita dolore,
Nam sua mens nullo tempore leta manet:
Quo gaudent alii, dolet ille, nec unus amicus
Est, cui de puro comoda velle facit.
Proximitatis honor sua corda veretur, et omnis
Est sibi leticia sic aliena dolor.
Hoc etenim vicium quam sepe repugnat amanti,
Non sibi, set reliquis, dum fauet ipsa Venus.
Est amor ex proprio motu fantasticus, et que
Gaudia fert alius, credit obesse sibi.¹*

[Confessor] “Now after Pride the secounde		
	Ther is, which many a woful stounde	<i>occasion (attitude)</i>
	Towardes othre berth aboute	<i>bears</i>
	Withinne himself and noght withoute;	
5	For in his thoght he brenneth evere,	<i>burns perpetually</i>
	Whan that he wot another levere	<i>knows; more loved</i>
	Or more vertuous than he,	
	Which passeth him in his degré;	
10	Theroft he takth his maladie:	<i>is afflicted with (see note)</i>
	That vice is cleped hot Envie.	<i>called burning Envy</i>
	Forthi, my sone, if it be so	
	Thou art or hast ben on of tho,	<i>one of those</i>
	As for to speke in loves cas,	
	If evere yit thin herte was	
15	Sek of another mannes hele?”	<i>Sick from (by); health</i>

¹ *The sin of Envy is greatly chased by sorrow, for his mind does not stay happy for any time at all; what others rejoice in, he laments. He has not a single friend whose desire he would carry out from simple helpfulness. A neighbor's glory vexes his thoughts, and every delight of others is a sorrow to him. Indeed, this vice frequently assails a lover, when Venus sheds favor not on him but on the rest. It is a love that is delusional by its own motives, and the joys that another carries he believes are an injury to himself.*

[SORROW FOR ANOTHER'S JOY]

[Amans] “So God avance my querele,
 Mi fader, ye, a thousand sithe:
 Whanne I have sen another blithe
 Of love, and hadde a goodly chiere,
 20 Ethna, which brenneth yer be yere
 Was thanne noght so hot as I
 Of thilke sor which prively
 Min hertes thoght withinne brenneth.
 The schip which on the wawes renneth,
 25 And is forstormed and forblowe,
 Is noght more peined for a throwe
 Than I am thanne, whanne I se
 Another which that passeth me
 In that fortune of loves gifte.
 30 Bot, fader, this I telle in schrifte,
 That is nowher bot in o place;
 For who that lese or finde grace
 In other stede, it mai noght grieve.
 Bot this ye mai riht wel believe,
 35 Toward mi ladi that I serve,
 Thogh that I wiste for to sterve,
 Min herte is full of such sotie,
 That I myself mai noght chastie.
 Whan I the court se of Cupide
 40 Aproche unto my ladi side
 Of hem that lusti ben and freisshe
 (Thogh it availe hem noght a reisshē,
 Bot only that thei ben in speche),
 Mi sorwe is thanne noght to seche.
 45 Bot whan thei rounen in hire ere,
 Than groweth al my moste fere,
 And namly whan thei talen longe;
 Mi sorwes thanne be so stronge
 Of that I se hem wel at ese,
 50 I can noght telle my desese.
 Bot, sire, as of my ladi selve,
 Thogh sche have wowers ten or twelve,
 For no mistrust I have of hire
 Me grieveth noght, for certes, sire,
 55 I trowe, in al this world to seche,
 Nis womman that dede and speche
 Woll betre avise hire what sche doth,
 Ne betre, for to seie a soth,
 Kepe hire honour ate alle tide,
 60 And yit get hire a thank beside.

aid in
times
glad
happy countenance
Etna; burns year by
pain; secretly
burns
beaten by storms; tossed about by winds
time
surpasses
confession
one
[should] lose
knew [that I would] die
foolishness
chastise (control)
helps them not at all (not a twig)
not far away
whisper; her ear
increases; worst fear
converse
Because I; them; ease
herself
would-be lovers
believe; seek
There is no woman who [by] deed
counsel herself
Nor better, to tell the truth
times
earn herself an expression of gratitude as well

	Bot natheles I am beknowe,	<i>I acknowledge (confess)</i>
	That whanne I se at eny throwe,	<i>time</i>
	Or elles if I mai it hiere,	<i>hear</i>
65	That sche make eny man good chiere,	
	Thogh I therof have noght to done,	<i>interpose itself (interfere) instantly</i>
	Mi thought wol entermette him sone.	<i>distant</i>
	For thogh I be miselve strange,	
	Envie makth myn herte change,	
	That I am sorghfully bestad	<i>distressed</i>
70	Of that I se another glad	
	With hire; bot of othre alle,	
	Of love what so mai befallie,	
	Or that he faile or that he spedie,	<i>Whether . . . or; succeed</i>
	Therof take I bot litel heede.	
75	Now have I seid, my fader, al	
	As of this point in special,	<i>understood</i>
	Als ferforthli as I have wist.	<i>desire</i>
	Now axeth further what you list."	
[Confessor]	"Mi sone, er I axe eny more,	
80	I thenke somdiel for thi lore	<i>before I ask any</i>
	Telle an ensample of this matiere	
	Touchende Envie, as thou schalt hiere.	
	Write in Civile this I finde:	<i>Civil Law</i>
	Thogh it be noght the houndes kinde	<i>hound's nature</i>
85	To ete chaf, yit wol he werne	<i>straw; harass</i>
	An oxe which comth to the berne,	<i>barn</i>
	Therof to taken eny fode.	
	And thus, who that it understande,	
	It stant of love in many place.	
90	Who that is out of loves grace	
	And mai himselfen noght availe,	<i>advance his own cause</i>
	He wolde another scholde faile;	<i>would [have it that]</i>
	And if he may put eny lette,	<i>obstacle</i>
	He doth al that he mai to lette.	<i>hinder</i>
95	Wheroft I finde, as thou schalt wite,	<i>know</i>
	To this pourpos a tale write.	

[TALE OF ACIS AND GALATEA]

	Ther ben of suche mo than twelve,	
	That ben noght able as of hemselfe	
	To gete love, and for Envie	
100	Upon alle othre thei aspie;	<i>spy</i>
☞	And for hem lacketh that thei wolde,	<i>(see note)</i>
	Thei kepte that non other scholde	
	Touchende of love his cause spedie.	
	Wheroft a gret ensample I rede,	<i>would take care</i>

105	Which unto this matiere acordeth, As Ovide in his bok recordeth, How Poliphemus whilom wroghte, Whan that he Galathee besoghte Of love, which he mai noght lacche.	<i>corresponds</i>
110	That made him for to waite and wacche Be alle weies how it ferde, Til ate laste he knew and herde How that another hadde leve To love there as he mot leve,	<i>entreated</i> <i>obtain</i> <i>observe and watch (spy)</i> <i>fared</i>
115	As for to speke of eny sped. So that he knew non other red, Bot for to wayten upon alle, Til he may se the chance falle That he hire love myhte grieve,	<i>permission</i> <i>might desire</i> <i>success</i> <i>counsel</i> <i>observe everything</i>
120	Which he himself mai noght achieve. This Galathee, seith the poete, Above alle othre was unmete Of beauté, that men thanne knewe, And hadde a lusti love and trewe,	<i>their; spoil (destroy)</i>
125	A bacheler in his degree. Riht such another as was sche, On whom sche hath hire herte set, So that it myhte noght be let For gifte ne for no beheste,	<i>unsurpassed</i> <i>hindered</i> <i>bribes; promise</i> <i>command</i> <i>called</i>
130	That sche ne was al at his heste. This yonge knyght Acis was hote, Which hire ageinward als so hote Al only loveth and no mo. Hierof was Poliphemus wo	<i>Who in return just as passionately</i> <i>Exclusively</i>
135	Thurgh pure Envie, and evere aspide, And waiteth upon every side, Whan he togedre myhte se This yonge Acis with Galathé.	<i>looks around everywhere</i>
140	So longe he waiteth to and fro, Til ate laste he fond hem tuo, In privé place wher thei stode To speke and have here wordes goode. The place wher as he hem syh,	<i>secret</i>
145	It was under a banke nyh The grete see, and he above Stod and behield the lusti love Which ech of hem to other made With goodly chiere and wordes glade,	<i>their</i> <i>them saw</i> <i>hill near</i>
150	That al his herte hath sette afyre Of pure Envie: and as a fyre Which fletch out of a myhti bowe,	<i>inflamed (aroused)</i> <i>bolt for a crossbow</i> <i>flies</i>

	Aweie he fledde for a throwe, As he that was for love wod, Whan that he sih how that it stod.	<i>time</i> <i>mad</i>
155	This Polipheme a geant was; And whan he sih the sothe cas, How Galathee him hath forsake And Acis to hire love take, His herte mai it noght forbere	<i>giant</i> <i>true situation</i>
	That he ne roreth lich a bere; And as it were a wilde beste, The whom no reson mihte areste, He ran Ethna the hell aboute, Wher nevere yit the fyr was oute,	<i>accepted Acis as her beloved</i>
160	165 Fulfilde of sorghe and gret desese, That he syh Acis wel at ese. Til ate laste he him bethoghte, As he which al Envie soghte, And torneth to the banke agein,	<i>bear</i>
	170 Wher he with Galathee hath seyn Acis, whom that he thoghte grieve, Thogh he himself mai noght relieve. This geant with his ruide myht Part of the banke he schof doun riht,	<i>restrain</i> <i>hill</i>
175	175 The which evene upon Acis fell, So that with fallinge of this hell This Poliphemus Acis slowh, Wherof sche made sorwe ynowh. And as sche fledde fro the londe,	<i>sorrow; agitation</i> <i>Since; saw</i>
	180 Neptunus tok hire into honde And kept hire in so sauf a place Fro Polipheme and his manace, That he with al his false Envie Ne mihte atteigne hir compaignie.	<i>planned to harm</i>
185	185 This Galathee of whom I speke, That of hirself mai noght be wreke, Withouten eny semblant feigned Sche hath hire loves deth compleigned, And with hire sorwe and with hire wo	<i>barbarous strength</i> <i>hill; shoved</i>
	190 Sche hath the goddes moeved so, That thei of pité and of grace Have Acis in the same place, Ther he lai ded, into a welle Transformed, as the bokes telle,	<i>hill</i> <i>killed</i> <i>enough</i>
195	195 With freissh stremes and with cliere, As he whilom with lusti chiere Was freissh his love for to qweme. And with this ruide Polipheme	<i>obtain</i> <i>avenged</i>
		<i>streams</i>
		<i>please</i> <i>crude</i>

- For his Envie and for his hate
 200 Thei were wrothe. *hatred*
- Confessor** And thus algate,
 Mi sone, thou myht understonde,
 That if thou wolt in grace stonde
 With love, thou most leve Envie:
 And as thou wolt for thi partie
 205 Toward thi love stonde fre,
 So most thou soffre another be,
 What so befall upon the chance:
 For it is an unwys vengance,
 Which to non other man is lief,
 210 And is unto himselfe grief.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, this ensample is good;
 Bot how so evere that it stod
 With Poliphemes love as tho,
 It schal noght stonde with me so,
 215 To worchen eny felonie *To practice*
 In love for no such Envie.
 Forthi if ther ought elles be,
 Now axeth forth, in what degré
 It is, and I me schal confesse
 220 With schrifte unto youre holinesse.”

[JOY OVER ANOTHER'S GRIEF]

- ii. *Orta sibi solito mentalia gaudia liuor*
Dum videt alterius, dampna doloris agit.
Inuidus obridet hodie fletus aliorum,
Fletus cui proprios crastina fata parant.
Sic in amore pari stat sorte iocosus, amantes
Cum videt illusos, inuidus ille quasi.
Sit licet in vacuum, sperat tamen ipse leuamen
Alterius casu, lapsus et ipse simul.¹

- [Confessor]** “Mi goode sone, yit ther is
 A vice revers unto this,
 Which envious takth his gladnesse
 225 Of that he seth the hevinesse *derives happiness*
(see note)
 Of othre men. For his welfare
 Is whanne he wot another care:
 Of that another hath a fall,

¹ *Spite, when he sees another's joyous thoughts, stirs up injuries of sorrow, born from himself alone. The envious man today ridicules the weepings of others, for whom tomorrow's fates prepare his own laments. Thus in love, the man who is joyous when he sees baffled lovers stands in the same circumstance as the envious man. Even if in vain, and even if he himself at the same time is destroyed, he nonetheless hopes for solace by another's ruin.*

	He thenkth himself arist withal. Such is the gladschipe of Envie	<i>powerful</i>
230	In worldes thing, and in partie Fulofte times ek also In loves cause it stant riht so. If thou, my sone, hast joie had, Whan thou another sihe unglad, 235 Schrif thee therof."	
	Amans "Mi fader, yis: I am beknowe unto you this.	<i>admit this to you</i>
	Of these lovers that loven streyte, And for that point which thei coveite Ben poursuantz fro yeer to yere	<i>possessively (tightly)</i>
240	In loves court, whan I may hiere How that thei clymbe upon the whel, And whan thei wene al schal be wel, Thei ben doun throwen ate laste, Thanne am I fedd of that thei faste,	<i>plaintiffs</i>
245	And lawhe of that I se hem loure; And thus of that thei brewe soure I drinke swete, and am wel esed Of that I wot thei ben desesed. Bot this which I you telle hiere	<i>hear</i>
250	Is only for my lady diere; That for non other that I knowe Me reccheth noght who overthrowe, Ne who that stonde in love upriht. Bot be he squier, be he knyht,	<i>[Fortune's] wheel</i>
255	Which to my ladiward poursuieth, The more he lest of that he suith, The mor me thenketh that I winne, And am the more glad withinne Of that I wot him sorwe endure.	<i>think</i>
260	For evere upon such aventure	<i>feast on what they starved from</i>
☞	It is a confort, as men sein, To him the which is wo besein To sen another in his peine, So that thei bothe mai compleigne.	<i>laugh; them scowl dejectedly</i>
265	Wher I myself mai noght availe To sen another man travaile, I am riht glad if he be let; And thogh I fare noght the bet, His sorwe is to myn herte a game.	<i>know; upset</i>
270	Whan that I knowe it is the same Which to mi ladi stant inclined, And hath his love noght termined, I am riht joifull in my thoght.	<i>I care not</i>
		<i>loses; pursues</i>
		<i>it seems to me</i>
		<i>(see note)</i>
		<i>in a sad state</i>
		<i>may not help myself</i>
		<i>labor</i>
		<i>hampered</i>
		<i>brought to a successful conclusion</i>

- 275 If such Envie grieveth oght,
As I beknowe me coupable,
Ye that be wys and resonable,
Mi fader, telleth youre avis."
- Confessor** "Mi sone, Envie into no pris
Of such a forme, I understande,
280 Ne mihte be no resoun stonde.
For this Envie hath such a kinde,
That he wole sette himself behinde
To hindre with anothre wyht,
And gladly lese his oghne riht
285 To make another lesen his.
And for to knowe how it so is,
A tale lich to this matiere
I thenke telle, if thou wolt hiere,
To schewe proprely the vice
290 Of this Envie and the malice.
- acknowledge myself to be guilty*
esteem (good repute)
by no reason
nature
set himself at a disadvantage
To cause hindrance against
lose; entitlement (just claim/possessions)
lose

[TALE OF THE TRAVELERS AND THE ANGEL]

- 295 Of Jupiter this finde I write,
How whilom that he wolde wite
Upon the pleigntes whiche he herde,
Among the men how that it ferde,
295 As of here wrong condicion
To do justificacion.
And for that cause doun he sente
An angel, which aboute wente,
That he the sothe knowe mai.
- 300 So it befell upon a dai
This angel, which him scholde enforce,
Was clothed in a mannes forme,
And overtok, I understande,
Tuo men that wented over londe,
305 Thurgh whiche he thoghte to aspie
His cause, and goth in compaignie.
This angel with hise wordes wise
Opposeth hem in sondri wise,
Now lowde wordes and now softe,
310 That mad hem to desputen ofte,
And ech of hem his reson hadde.
And thus with tales he hem ladde
With good examinacioun,
Til he knew the condicioun,
315 What men thei were bothe tuo;
And sih wel ate laste tho,
That on of hem was coveitous,
- written*
once; wished to investigate
complaints (see note)
fared
Specifically concerning their
bring justice
- Questions*
Now [with] loud
one

- And his fela was envious.
 And thus, whan he hath knowlechinge,
 320 Anon he feigneth departinge,
 And seide he mot algate wende.
 Bot herkne now what fell at ende:
 For thanne he made hem understande
 That he was there of Goddes sonde,
 325 And seide hem, for the kindeschipe
 That thei have don him felaschipe,
 He wole hem do som grace agein,
 And bad that on of hem schal sein
 What thing him is lievest to crave,
 330 And he it schal of gifte have.
 And over that ek forthwithal
 He seith that other have schal
 The double of that his felaw axeth;
 And thus to hem his grace he taxeth.
 335 The coveitous was wonder glad,
 And to that other man he bad
 And seith that he ferst axe scholde,
 For he supposest that he wolde
 Make his axinge of worldes good;
 340 For thanne he knew wel how it stod,
 That he himself be double weyhte
 Schal after take, and thus be sleyhte,
 Because that he wolde winne,
 He bad his fela ferst beginne.
 345 This envious, thogh it be late,
 Whan that he syh he mot algate
 Make his axinge ferst, he thoghte,
 If he worshipe or profit soghte,
 It schal be doubled to his fiere:
 350 That wolde he chese in no manere.
 Bot thanne he scheweth what he was
 Toward Envie, and in this cas
 Unto this Angel thus he seide
 And for his gifte this he preide,
 355 To make him blind of his on yhe,
 So that his fela nothing syhe.
 This word was noght so sone spoke,
 That his on yhe anon was loke,
 And his felawh forthwith also
 360 Was blind of bothe his yhen tuo.
 Tho was that other glad ynowh,
 That on wepte, and that other lowh,
 He sette his on yhe at no cost,
 Wherof that other two hath lost.
- companion*
recognition of this
must soon leave
by God's command
most dear according to his desire
appoints
covetous person
request
by
Since he wished to
envious person
companion
one eye
might see
blinded (shut)
laughed

365 Of thilke ensample which fell tho,
 Men tellen now fulofte so,
 The world empeireth comunly,
 And yit wot non the cause why.
 For it acordeth noght to kinde *becomes worse*
 370 Min oghne harm to seche and finde *none know*
 Of that I schal my brother grieve;
 It myhte nevere wel achieve.

Confessor What seist thou, sone, of this folie?"

Amans "Mi fader, bot I scholde lie, *unless*
 375 Upon the point which ye have seid
 Yit was myn herte nevere leid,
 Bot in the wise as I you tolde. *set*
 Bot overmore, if that ye wolde
 Oght elles to my schrifte seie *Except*
 380 Touchende Envie, I wolde preie."

Confessor "Mi sone, that schal wel be do.
 Now herkne and ley thin ere to."

[DETRACTION]

iii. *Inuidie pars est detraccio pessima, pestem*
Que magis infamem flatibus oris agit.
Lingua venenato sermone repercutit auras,
Sic ut in alterius scandala fama volat.
Morsibus a tergo quos inficit ipsa fideles,
Vulneris ignoti sepe salute carent.
Set generosus amor linguam conseruat, vt eius
*Verbum quod loquitur nulla sinistra gerat.*¹

Confessor "Touchende as of envious brod *kind of person*
 I wot noght on of alle good;
 385 Bot natheles, suche as thei be, *know not one of any*
 Yit is ther on, and that is he
~~as~~ Which cleped is Detraccioun. *(see note)*
 And to conferme his acciououn,
 He hath withholde Malebouche,
 390 Whos tunge neither pyl ne crouche² *deed*
 Mai hyre, so that he pronounce
 A plein good word withoute frounce *retained*
 Awher behinde a mannes bak. *complication (ambiguity)*
 Anywhere

¹ *The worst part of Envy is Detraction, which stirs up a plague of infamy with the gustings of the mouth. The tongue resounds in the air with poisonous speech, just as Rumor flies away, in scandal to another. The faithful ones whom she inflicts unawares with bites from the back often lack a medicine for the wound. But noble love guards a tongue, so that the word he speaks produces nothing sinister.*

² *Whose tongue neither tower nor cross (i.e., head or tail of a coin, hence, "no money")*

- 395 For thogh he preise, he fint som lak,
Which of his tale is ay the laste,
That al the pris schal overcaste:
And thogh ther be no cause why,
Yit wole he jangle noght forthi,
As he which hath the heraldie
400 Of hem that usen for to lye.
For as the netle which up renneth
The freisshe rede roses brenneth
And makth hem fade and pale of hewe,
Riht so this fals envious hewe,
405 In every place wher he duelleth,
With false wordes whiche he telleth
He torneth preisinge into blame
And worschipe into worldes schame.
Of suche lesinge as he compasseth,
410 Is non so good that he ne passeth
Betwen his teeth and is bacbited,
And thurgh his false tunge endited.
Lich to the scharnebudes kinde,
Of whos nature this I finde,
415 That in the hoteste of the dai,
Whan comen is the merie Maii,
He sprat his wynges and up he fleteth.
And under al aboute he seth
The faire lusti floures springe,
420 Bot therof hath he no likinge;
Bot where he seth of eny beste
The felthe, ther he makth his feste,
And therupon he wole alyhte,
Ther liketh him non other sihte.
425 Riht so this janglere envious,
Thogh he a man se vertuous
And full of good condiciooun,
Theroft makth he no menciououn:
Bot elles, be it noght so lyte,
430 Wheroft that he mai sette a wyte,
Ther renneth he with open mouth,
Behinde a man and makth it couth.
Bot al the vertu which he can,
That wole he hide of every man,
435 And openly the vice telle,
As he which of the scole of helle
Is tawht, and fostred with Envie
Of houshold and of compaignie,
Wher that he hath his propre office
440 To sette on every man a vice.
- finds (*invents*)
always the conclusion
good repute; destroy
- quarrel; nonetheless
office of herald
are accustomed to deceit
- nettle
stings (*burns*)
- honor
lies; devises
- traduced
composed
- dung beetle's (*scarab's*) nature
- in all directions; sees
- excrement
- backbiter
- regardless of how insignificant it may be
blame (*suit*)
- known
- school

- How so his mouth be comely,
 His word sit evermore awry
 And seith the worste that he may.
 And in this wise now a day
 445 In loves court a man mai hier
 Fulofte pleigne of this matiere,
 That many envious tale is stered,
 Wher that it mai noght ben ansuered;
 Bot yit fulofte it is believed,
 450 And many a worthi love is grieved
 Thurgh bacbitinge of fals Envie.
 If thou have mad such janglerie
 In loves court, mi sone, er this,
 Schrif thee therof.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, yis:
 455 Bot wite ye how? Noght openly,
 Bot otherwhile prively,
 Whan I my diere ladi mete,
 And thenke how that I am noght mete
 Unto hire hihe worthiness,
 460 And ek I se the besinesse
 Of al this yonge lusty route,
 Whiche alday pressen hire aboute,
 And ech of hem his time awaiteth,
 And ech of hem his tale affaiteth,
 465 Al to deceive an innocent,
 Which woll noght ben of here assent;
 And for men sein ‘unknowe unkest,’
 Hire thombe sche holt in hire fest
 So clos withinne hire oghne hond,
 470 That there winneth no man lond;
 Sche lieveth noght al that sche hiereth,
 And thus fulofte hirself sche skiereth
 And is al war of ‘hadde I wist.’
 Bot for al that myn herte arist,
 475 Whanne I thes comun lovers se,
 That woll noght holden hem to thre,
 Bot welnyh loven overal,
 Min herte is envious withal,
 And evere I am adrad of guile,
 480 In aunter if with eny wyle
 Thei mihte hire innocence enchaunte.
 Forthi my wordes ofte I haunte
 Behynden hem, so as I dar,
 Wheroft my ladi may be war:
 485 I sai what evere comth to mowthe,
 And worse I wolde, if that I cowthe;
- askance (slanderous)*
- proposed (concocted)*
- injured*
- (see note)*
- Confess yourself*
- equal*
- preoccupation*
- crowd*
- abides*
- invents*
- their*
- ‘unknown unkissed’*
- thumb; holds; fist*
- tightly; own hand*
- gains; ground*
- believes*
- defends (preserves)*
- ‘if I had only known’*
- swells with passion*
- promiscuous*
- three [women]*
- afraid of*
- In case*
- employ*

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 490 | For whanne I come unto hir speche,
Al that I may enquere and seche
Of such deceipte, I telle it al,
And ay the werste in special.
So fayn I wolde that sche wiste
How litel thei ben for to triste,
And what thei wolde and what thei mente,
So as thei be of double entente. | <i>knew
be trusted
would like; would intend
deceitful
intend wickedness
vigorous
truth</i> |
| 495 | Thus toward hem that wicke mene
My wicked word was evere grene.
And natheles, the soth to telle,
In certain if it so befelle
That althertrewest man ybore,
To chese among a thousand score,
Which were alfulli for to triste,
Mi ladi lovede, and I it wiste,
Yit rathere thanne he scholde spedē,
I wolde swiche tales sprede
To my ladi, if that I myhte,
That I scholde al his love unrihte,
And therto wolde I do mi peine.
For certes thogh I scholde feigne,
And telle that was nevere thoght,
For al this world I myhte noght
To soffre anothre fully winne,
Ther as I am yit to beginne.
For be thei goode, or be thei badde,
I wolde non my ladi hadde; | <i>the utterly most true; born
fully
if I knew it
succeed
dislodge</i> |
| 500 | I wolde makth fulofte aspie
And usen wordes of Envie,
Al for to make hem bere a blame.
And that is bot of thilke same,
The whiche unto my ladi drawe,
For evere on hem I rounge and gknawē
And hindre hem al that evere I mai;
And that is, sothly for to say,
Bot only to my lady selve.
I telle it noght to ten ne tuelve,
Therof I wol me wel avise,
To speke or jangle in eny wise
That toucheth to my ladi name,
The which in ernest and in game
I wolde save into my deth. | <i>continuously spy
only of the same sort
slander; disparage
protect
rather lack life</i> |
| 505 | For me were levere lacke breth
Than speken of hire name amis.
Now have ye herd touchende of this,
Mi fader, in confessioun, | |
| 510 | | |
| 515 | | |
| 520 | | |
| 525 | | |
| 530 | | |

- 535 And therfor of Detraccioun
 In love, of that I have mispoke,
 Tel how ye wole it schal be wroke. *judged (punished)*
- I am al redy for to bere
 Mi peine, and also to forbere
 What thing that ye wol noght allowe. *desist from*
- 540 For who is bounden, he mot bowe.
 So wol I bowe unto youre heste,
 For I dar make this beheste,
 That I to yow have nothing hid,
 Bot told riht as it is betid. *compelled; comply
command
promise*
- 545 And otherwise of no mispeche,
 Mi conscience for to seche,
 I can noght of Envie finde,
 That I mispoke have ogh特 behinde
 Wherof love owhte be mispaid. *has happened
displeased*
- 550 Now have ye herd and I have said;
 What wol ye, fader, that I do?"
- Confessor** "Mi sone, do no more so,
 Bot evere kep thi tunge stille,
 Thou miht the more have of thi wille.
- 555 For as thou saist thiselven here,
 Thi ladi is of such manere,
 So wys, so war in alle thinge,
 It nedeth of no bakbitinge
 That thou thi ladi misenforme.
- 560 For whan sche knoweth al the forme, *details (essence of the thing)*
 How that thiself art envious,
 Thou schalt noght be so gracious
 As thou peraunter scholdest elles.
- 565 Ther wol no man drinke of tho welles
 Whiche as he wot is puyson inne; *those
poison*
- And ofte swich as men beginne
 Towardes othre, swich thei finde,
 That set hem ofte fer behinde,
 Whan that thei wene be before.
- 570 Mi goode sone, and thou therfore
 Bewar and lef thi wicke speche, *quit*
 Wherof hath fallen ofte wreche
 To many a man befor this time.
- For who so wole his handes lime, *smear with bird lime*
- 575 Thei mosten be the more unclene;
 For many a mote schal be sene,
 That wolde noght cleve elles there,
 And that schold every wys man fere.
 For whoso wol another blame,
- 580 He secheth ofte his oghne schame,

Which elles myhte be riht stille.
 Forthi if that it be thi wille
 To stonde upon amendment,
 A tale of gret entendement
 585 I thenke telle for thi sake,
 Wheroft thou miht ensample take.

[moral] improvement

[TALE OF CONSTANCE]

¶ A worthi kniht in Cristes lawe
 Of grete Rome, as is the sawe,
 The sceptre hadde for to rihte;
 590 Tiberie Constantin he hihte,
 Whos wif was cleped Ytalie.
 Bot thei togedre of progenie
 No children hadde bot a maide,
 And sche the God so wel apaide,
 595 That al the wide worldes fame
 Spak worschipe of hire goode name.
 Constance, as the croniue seith,
 Sche hihte, and was so ful of feith,
 That the greteste of Barbarie,
 600 Of hem whiche usen marchandie,
 Sche hath converted, as thei come
 To hire upon a time in Rome,
 To schewen such thing as thei broghte;
 Whiche worthili of hem sche boghte,
 605 And over that in such a wise
 Sche hath hem with hire wordes wise
 Of Cristes feith so full enformed,
 That thei therto ben all conformed,
 So that baptesme thei receiven
 610 And alle here false goddes weyven.
 Whan thei ben of the feith certein,
 Thei gon to Barbarie agein,
 And ther the Souldan for hem sente
 And axeth hem to what entente
 615 Thei have here ferste feith forsake.
 And thei, whiche hadden undertake
 The rihte feith to kepe and holde,
 The matiere of here tale tolde
 With al the hole circumstance.

(see note)
so says the story
rule
was called

pleased

nobility of heathendom
who engage in commerce

620 And whan the Souldan of Constance
 Upon the point that thei ansuerde
 The beauté and the grace herde,
 As he which thanne was to wedde,
 In alle haste his cause spedde

renounce

their
whole

- 625 To sende for the mariage.
 And furthermor with good corage
 He seith, be so he mai hire have,
 That Crist, which cam this world to save,
 He woll believe: and this recorded,
- 630 Thei ben on either side acorded,
 And therupon to make an ende
 The Souldan hise hostages sende
 To Rome, of princes sones tuelve:
 Wheroft the fader in himselfe
- 635 Was glad, and with the pope avised
 Tuo cardinals he hath assissed
 With othre lordes many mo,
 That with his doghter scholden go,
 To se the Souldan be converted.
- 640 Bot that which nevere was wel herted,
 Envie, tho began travaile
 In destourbance of this spousaile
 So prively that non was war.
 The moder which this Souldan bar
- 645 Was thanne alyve, and thoghte this
 Unto hirself: 'If it so is
 Mi sone him wedde in this manere,
 Than have I lost my joies hiere,
 For myn astat schal so be lassed.'
- 650 Thenkende thus sche hath compassed
 Be sleihte how that sche may beguile
 Hire sone; and fell withinne a while,
 Betwen hem two whan thei were,
 Sche feigneth wordes in his ere,
- 655 And in this wise gan to seie:
 'Mi sone, I am be double weie
 With al myn herte glad and blithe,
 For that miself have ofte sithe
 Desired thou wolt, as men seith,
- 660 Receive and take a newe feith,
 Which schal be forthringe of thi lif:
 And ek so worshipful a wif,
 The doughter of an emperour,
 To wedde it schal be gret honour.
- 665 Forthi, mi sone, I you beseche
 That I such grace mihte areche,
 Whan that my doughter come schal,
 That I mai thanne in special,
 So as me thenkth it is honeste,
- 670 Be thilke which the ferste feste
 Schal make unto hire welcominge.'

*appointed
more*

*of a kind disposition
to work (see note)
marriage
secretly*

honorable

obtain

- The Souldan granteth hire axinge,
And sche therof was glad ynowh.
For under that anon sche drowh
With false wordes that sche spak
Covine of deth behinde his bak.
And therupon hire ordinance
Sche made so, that whan Constance
Was come forth with the Romeins,
Of clerkes and of citezeins,
A riche feste sche hem made;
And most whan that thei weren glade,
With fals covine which sche hadde
Hire clos Envie tho sche spradde,
And alle tho that hadden be
Or in apert or in privé
Of conseil to the mariage,
Sche slowh hem in a sodein rage
Endlong the bord as thei be set,
So that it myhte noght be let;
Hire oghne sone was noght quit,
Bot deide upon the same plit.
Bot what the hihe God wol spare
It mai for no peril misfare.
This worthi maiden which was there
Stod thanne, as who seith, ded for feere,
To se the feste how that it stod,
Which al was torned into blod.
The dissh forth with the coppe and al
Bebled thei weren overal.
Sche sih hem deie on every side;
No wonder thogh sche wepte and cride
Makende many a wofull mone.
Whan al was slain bot sche alone,
This olde fend, this Sarazine,
Let take anon this Constantine
With al the good sche thider broghte,
And hath ordeined, as sche thoghte,
A nakid schip withoute stiere,
In which the good and hire in fiere,
Vitailed full for yeres fyve;
Wher that the wynd it wolde dryve,
Sche putte upon the wawes wilde.
Bot He which alle thing mai schildre,
Thre yer, til that sche cam to londe,
Hire schip to stiere hath take in honde,
And in Northumberlond aryveth.
And happeth thanne that sche dryveth
- request*
- Conspiracy*
- agreement*
- hidden*
- Either publically or privately*
- All along the table*
- hindered*
- acquitted*
- circumstance*
- Covered with blood*
- female pagan*
- prepared*
- empty; rudder*
- her (Constance) together*
- Fully provided with food*
- waves*
- protect (see note)*
- guide*

- Under a castel with the flod,
 Which upon Humber banke stod
 And was the kynges oghne also,
 The which Allee was cleped tho,
 A Saxon and a worthi knyht,
 Bot he believeth noght ariht.
called then
- Of this castell was chastellein
 Elda the kinges chamberlein,
 A knyghtly man after his lawe;
 And whan he sih upon the wawe
 The schip drivende alone so,
saw; waves
- He bad anon men scholden go
 To se what it betokne mai.
might portend
- This was upon a somer dai,
 The schip was loked and sche founde.
examined
- Elda withinne a litel stounde
 It wiste, and with his wif anon
 Toward this yonge ladi gon,
 Wher that thei founden gret richesse.
 Bot sche hire wolde noght confesse,
 Whan thei hire axen what sche was.
short time
- It knew
- And natheles upon the cas
 Out of the schip with gret worschipe
 Thei toke hire into felaschipe,
 As thei that weren of hir glade.
 Bot sche no maner joie made,
 Bot sorweth sore of that sche fond
honor
- No Cristendom in thilke lond.
 Bot elles sche hath al hire wille,
 And thus with hem sche duelleth stille.
sorely because; found
- in quiet*
- Dame Hermyngheld, which was the wif
 Of Elda, lich her oghne lif
 Constance loveth; and fell so,
 Spekende alday betwen hem two,
 Thurgh grace of Goddes pourveance
 This maiden tawhte the creance
(see note)
- Unto this wif so parfitly,
 Upon a dai that faste by
 In presence of hire housebonde,
 Wher thei go walkende on the stronde,
 A blind man, which cam there lad,
faith
- Unto this wif criende he bad,
 With bothe hise hondes up and preide
 To hire, and in this wise he seide:
 'O Hermyngheld, which Cristes feith,
 Enformed as Constance seith,
 Received hast, gif me my sihte.'
- perfectly*
- along the beach*

	Upon his word hire herte afflihte Thenkende what was best to done, Bot natheles sche herde his bone And seide, 'In trust of Cristes lawe, Which don was on the crois and slawe, Thou bysne man, behold and se.'	<i>was disturbed</i>
770	With that to God upon his kne Thonkende he tok his sihte anon, Wherof thei merveile everychon, Bot Elda wondreth most of alle. This open thing which is befallen Concludeth him be such a weie, That he the feith mot nede obeie.	<i>prayer</i>
775	With that to God upon his kne Thonkende he tok his sihte anon, Wherof thei merveile everychon, Bot Elda wondreth most of alle. This open thing which is befallen Concludeth him be such a weie, That he the feith mot nede obeie.	<i>Who was put; slain dim-eyed man, look</i>
780	Now lest what fell upon this thing. This Elda forth unto the king A morwe tok his weie and rod, And Hermyngele at home abod Forth with Constance wel at ese. Elda, which thoghte his king to ples,	<i>received</i>
785	As he that thanne unwedded was, Of Constance al the pleine cas Als goodliche as he cowthe tolde. The king was glad and seide he wolde Come thider upon such a wise	<i>Constrained</i>
790	That he him mihte of hire avise, The time apointed forthwithal. This Elda triste in special Upon a knyht, whom fro childhode He hadde updrawe into manhode.	<i>scrutinize</i>
795	To him he tolde al that he thoghte, Wherof that after him forthoghte; And natheles at thilke tide Unto his wif he bad him ride To make redi alle thing	<i>raised</i>
800	Agein the cominge of the king, And seith that he himself tofore Thenkth for to come, and bad therfore That he him kepe, and told him whanne. This knyht rod forth his weie thanne;	<i>he regretted time</i>
805	And soth was that of time passed He hadde in al his wit compassed How he Constance myhte winne. Bot he sih tho no sped therinne, Wherof his lust began t'abate,	<i>Against</i>
810	And that was love is thanne hate; Of hire honour he hadde Envie, So that upon his tricherie	<i>devised conquer [sexually]</i>
		<i>to decline hatred</i>

- A lesinge in his herte he caste.
 Til he cam home he hieth faste,
 815 And doth his ladi t'understonde
 The message of hire housebonde:
 And therupon the longe dai
 Thei setten thinges in arrai,
 That al was as it scholde be
 820 Of everything in his degree;
 And whan it cam into the nyht,
 This wif hire hath to bedde dyht,
 Wher that this maiden with hire lay.
 This false knyht upon delay
 825 Hath taried til thei were aslepe,
 As he that wolde his time kepe
 His dedly werkes to fulfille;
 And to the bed he stalketh stille,
 Wher that he wiste was the wif,
 830 And in his hond a rasour knif
 He bar, with which hire throte he cutte,
 And prively the knif he putte
 Under that other beddes side,
 Wher that Constance lai beside.
 835 Elda cam hom the same nyht,
 And stille with a privé lyht,
 As he that wolde noght awake
 His wif, he hath his weie take
 Into the chambre, and ther liggende
 840 He fond his dede wif bledende,
 Wher that Constance faste by
 Was falle aslepe; and sodeinly
 He cride alowd, and sche awok,
 And forthwithal sche cast a lok
 845 And sih this ladi blede there,
 Wherof swounende ded for fere
 Sche was, and stille as eny ston
 Sche lay, and Elda therupon
 Into the castell clepeth oute,
 850 And up sterte every man aboute,
 Into the chambre and forth thei wente.
 Bot he, which alle untrouthethe mente,
 This false knyht, among hem alle
 Upon this thing which is befallen
 855 Seith that Constance hath don this dede;
 And to the bed with that he yede
 After the falshed of his speche,
 And made him there for to seche,
 And fond the knif, wher he it leide,
- deceit; plotted
hastens swiftly*
- its*
- prepared*
- razor*
- side of the bed*
- dim*
- lying
dead; bleeding*
- fainting dead away; fear*
- calls*
- unfaithfulness intended*
- deed
went*
- pretended; search*

- 860 And thanne he cride and thanne he seide,
 'Lo, seth the knif al blody hiere!
 What nedeth more in this matiere
 To axe?' And thus hire innocence
 He sclaundreth there in audience
- 865 With false wordes whiche he feigneth.
 Bot yit for al that evere he pleigneth,
 Elda no full credence tok:
 And happeth that ther lay a bok,
 Upon the which, whan he it sih,
- 870 This knyht hath swore and seid on hih,
 That alle men it mihte wite,
 'Now be this bok, which hier is write,
 Constance is guiltif, wel I wot.'
- With that the hond of hevene him smot
- 875 In tokne of that he was forswore,
 That he hath bothe hise yhen lore,
 Out of his hed the same stounde
 Thei sterte, and so thei weren founde.
 A vois was herd, whan that they felle,
- 880 Which seide, 'O dampned man to helle,
 Lo, thus hath God the sclaundre wroke
 That thou agein Constance hast spoke:
 Beknow the sothe er that thou dye.'
- And he told out his felonie,
 885 And starf forth with his tale anon.
 Into the ground, wher alle gon,
 This dede lady was begrave.
 Elda, which thoghte his honour save,
 889 Al that he mai restreigneth sorwe.
- ¶ For the seconde dai a morwe
 The king cam, as thei were acorded;
 And whan it was to him recorded
 What God hath wrought upon this chaunce,
 He tok it into remembrance
- 895 And thoghte more than he seide.
 For al his hole herte he leide
 Upon Constance, and seide he scholde
 For love of hire, if that sche wolde,
 Baptesme take and Cristes feith
- 900 Believe, and over that he seith
 He wol hire wedde, and upon this
 Asseured ech til other is.
 And for to make schorte tales,
 Ther cam a Bisschop out of Wales
- 905 Fro Bangor, and Lucie he hihte,
 Which thurgh the grace of God almihte
- [So] that; know*
- guilty*
- perjured*
eyes lost
instant
popped out
- avenged*
- Confess*
confessed
died
- (see note)*
- reported*
- whole*
- Be baptized*
- Each of them makes vows to the other*
- was named*

- The king with many another mo
Hath cristned, and betwen hem tuo
He hath fulfild the mariage. *more*
- 910 Bot for no lust ne for no rage
Sche tolde hem nevere what sche was;
And natheles upon the cas
The king was glad, how so it stod,
For wel he wiste and understod
- 915 Sche was a noble creature.
The hihe makere of nature
Hire hath visited in a throwe,
That it was openliche knowe
Sche was with childe be the king,
- 920 Wherof above al other thing
He thonketh God and was riht glad.
And fell that time he was bestad
Upon a werre and moste ride;
And whil he scholde there abide,
- 925 He lefte at hom to kepe his wif
Suche as he knew of holi lif,
Elda forth with the Bisschop eke.
And he with pouer goth to seke
Agein the Scottes for to fonde
- 930 The werre which he tok on honde.
☞ The time set of kinde is come:
This lady hath hire chambre nome,
And of a sone bore full,
Wherof that sche was joiefull,
- 935 Sche was delivered sauf and sone. *sound*
The bisshop, as it was to done,
Gaf him baptesme and Moris calleth; *names him*
And therupon, as it befalleth,
With lettres writen of record
- 940 Thei sende unto here liege lord,
That kepers weren of the qweene.
And he that scholde go betwene,
The messenger, to Knaresburgh,
Which toun he scholde passe thurgh,
- 945 Ridende cam the ferste day.
The kinges moder there lay,
Whos rihte name was Domilde,
Which after al the cause spilde. *Who subsequently; destroyed*
For he, which thonk deserve wolde,
- 950 Unto this ladi goth and tolde
Of his message al how it ferde.
And sche with feigned joie it herde
And gaf him giftes largely,

- 955 Bot in the nyht al prively
 Sche tok the lettres whiche he hadde,
 Fro point to point and overradde,
 As sche that was thurghout untrewe,
 And let do wryten othre newe
 959 In stede of hem, and thus thei spieke:
~~¶~~ ‘Oure liege lord, we thee beseke
 That thou with ous ne be noght wroth,
 Though we such thing as is thee loth
 Upon oure trowthe certefie.
 Thi wif, which is of faierie,
 965 Of such a child delivered is
 Fro kinde which stant al amis:
 Bot for it scholde noght be seie,
 We have it kept out of the weie
 For drede of pure worldes shame,
 970 A povere child and in the name
 Of thilke which is so misbore
 We toke,¹ and therto we be swore,
 That non bot only thou and we
 Schal knownen of this priveté.
 975 Moris it hatte, and thus men wene
 That it was boren of the qweene
 And of thin oghne bodi gete.
 Bot this thing mai noght be forgete,
 That thou ne sende ous word anon
 980 What is thi wille therupon.’
 This lettre, as thou hast herd devise,
 Was contrefet in such a wise
 That no man scholde it aperceive:
 And sche, which thoghte to deceive,
 985 It leith wher sche that other tok.
 This messager, whan he awok,
 And wiste nothing how it was,
 Aros and rod the grete pas
 And tok this lettre to the king.
 990 And whan he sih this wonder thing,
 He makth the messager no chiere,
 Bot natheles in wys manere
 He wrot agein, and gaf hem charge
 That thei ne soffre noght at large
 995 His wif to go, bot kepe hire stille,
 Til thei have herd mor of his wille.
 This messager was gifteles,
- utterly unfaithful
 had written*
- (see note)*
- faith*
- nature; entirely amiss
 seen*
- deem*
- begotten*
- But that you send*
- notice*

¹ Lines 970–72: I.e., we replaced it with a healthy child of poor parents

- Bot with this lettre natholes,
Or be him lief or be him loth,
1000 In alle haste agein he goth
Be Knaresburgh, and as he wente,
Unto the moder his entente
Of that he fond toward the king
He tolde; and sche upon this thing
1005 Seith that he scholde abide al nyht
And made him feste and chiere ariht,
Feignende as thogh sche cowthe him thonk.
Bot he with strong wyn which he dronk
Forth with the travail of the day
1010 Was drunke, aslepe, and while he lay,
Sche hath hise lettres overseie
And formed in another weie.
- ☞ Ther was a newe lettre write,
Which seith: 'I do you for to wite,
1015 That thurgh the conseil of you tuo
I stonde in point to ben undo,
As he which is a king deposed.
For every man it hath supposed,
How that my wif Constance is faie;
1020 And if that I, thei sein, delaie
To put hire out of compaignie,
The worschipe of my regalie
Is lore; and over this thei telle,
Hire child schal noght among hem duelle,
1025 To cleymen eny heritage.
So can I se non avantage,
Bot al is lost, if sche abide.
Forthi to loke on every side
Toward the meschief as it is,
1030 I charge you and bidde this,
That ye the same schip vitaile
In which that sche tok arivaile,
Therinne and putteth bothe tuo,
Hiresell forth with hire child also,
1035 And so forth broght unto the depe
Betaketh hire the see to kepe.
Of foure daies time I sette,
That ye this thing no longer lette,
So that your lif be noght forfeit.'
- 1040 And thus this lettre contrefet
The messenger, which was unwar,
Upon the kinges halve bar,
And where he scholde it hath betake.
Bot whan that thei have hiede take,
- Whether it pleased him or not*
- (see note)*
- bewitched*
- reign*
- claim*
benefit
- demand*
- sea*
- permit*
- On the king's behalf*

- 1045 And rad that writen is withinne,
So gret a sorwe thei beginne,
As thei here oghne moder sihen
Brent in a fyr before here yhen:
Ther was wepinge and ther was wo,
1050 Bot finaly the thing is do.
Upon the see thei have hire broght,
Bot sche the cause wiste noght,
And thus upon the flod thei wone,
This ladi with hire yonge sone.
- 1055 And thanne hire handes to the hevene
Sche strawhte, and with a milde stevene
Knelende upon hire bare kne
Sche seide, 'O hihe magesté,
Which sest the point of every trowthe,
- 1060 Tak of thi wofull womman rowthe
And of this child that I schal kepe.'
And with that word sche gan to wepe,
Swounende as ded, and ther sche lay.
Bot He which alle thinges may
- 1065 Conforteth hire, and ate laste
Sche loketh and hire yhen caste
Upon hire child and seide this:
'Of me no maner charge it is
What sorwe I soffre, bot of thee
- 1070 Me thenkth it is a gret pité,
For if I sterve thou schalt deie.
So mot I nedes be that weie
For moderhed and for tendresse
With al myn hole besinesse
- 1075 Ordeigne me for thilke office,
As sche which schal be thi norrice.'
Thus was sche strengthed for to stonde;
And tho sche tok hire child in honde
And gaf it sowke, and evere among
- 1080 Sche wepte, and otherwhile song
To rocke with hire child aslepe.
And thus hire oghne child to kepe
Sche hath under the Goddes cure.
- ¶ And so fell upon aventure,
1085 Whan thilke yer hath mad his ende,
Hire schip, so as it moste wende
Thurgh strengthe of wynd which God hath give,
Estward was into Spaigne drive
Riht faste under a castell wall,
- 1090 Wher that a hethen amirall
Was lord, and he a stiward hadde,
- As [if]; their own; had seen
Burnt; in front of their eyes*
- knew*
dwell
- meek voice*
- condition of every act of loyalty*
pity
- Fainting*
who; has power to do
- necessarily by that reason*
On behalf of
whole diligence
- Ordain myself for that role*
As one who; nursemaid
- again and again (at times)*
- (see note)*
- admiral*

- Oon Theloüs, which al was badde,
A fals knyht and a renegat.
He goth to loke in what astat
1095 The schip was come, and there he fond
Forth with a child upon hire hond
This lady, wher sche was alone.
He tok good hiede of the persone,
And sih sche was a worthi wiht,
1100 And thoghte he wolde upon the nyht
Demene hire at his oghne wille,
And let hire be therinne stille,
That mo men sih sche noght that dai.
At Goddes wille and thus sche lai,
1105 Unknowe what hire schal betide;
And fell so that be nyhtes tide
This knyht withoute felaschipe
Hath take a bot and cam to schipe,
And thoghte of hire his lust to take,
1110 And swor, if sche him daunger make,
That certeinly sche scholde deie.
Sche sih ther was non other weie,
And seide he scholde hire wel conforte,
That he ferst loke out ate porte,
1115 That no man were nyh the stede,
Which myhte knowe what thei dede,
And thanne he mai do what he wolde.
He was riht glad that sche so tolde,
And to the porte anon he ferde.
1120 Sche preide God, and He hire herde,
And sodeinliche he was out throwe
And dreynt, and tho began to blowe
A wynd menable fro the lond,
And thus the myhti Goddes hond
1125 Hire hath conveied and defended.
☞ And whan thre yer be full despended,
Hire schip was drive upon a dai,
Wher that a gret navye lay
Of schipes, al the world at ones.
1130 And as God wolde for the nones,
Hire schip goth in among hem alle,
And stinte noght, er it be falle
And hath the vessell undergete,
Which maister was of al the flete,
1135 Bot there it resteth and abod.
This grete schip on anker rod;
The lord cam forth, and whan he sih
That other ligge abord so nyh,
- who was utterly vicious
apostate*
- sized her up
handsome creature*
- Have intercourse with her
leave her there alone
[So] that*
- If he would
place*
- went*
- favorable*
- passed (see note)*
- remained*
- [ship] lay alongside so near*

- He wondreth what it myhte be,
 1140 And bad men to gon in and se.
 This ladi tho was crope aside,
 As sche that wolde hireselven hide,
 For sche ne wiste what thei were:
 Thei soghte aboute and founde hir there
 1145 And broghten up hire child and hire;
 And therupon this lord to spire
 Began, fro whenne that sche cam,
 And what sche was. Quod sche, 'I am
 A womman wofully bestad.
 1150 I hadde a lord, and thus he bad,
 That I forth with my litel sone
 Upon the wawes scholden wone,
 Bot why the cause was, I not.
 Bot He which alle thinges wot
 1155 Yit hath, I thonke Him, of His miht
 Mi child and me so kept upriht,
 That we be save bothe tuo.'
 This lord hire axeth overmo
 How sche believeth, and sche seith,
 1160 'I lieve and triste in Cristes feith,
 Which deide upon the Rode tree.'
 'What is thi name?' tho quod he.
 'Mi name is Couste,' sche him seide,
 Bot forthermor for noght he preide
 1165 Of hire astat to knowe plein,
 Sche wolde him nothing elles sein
 Bot of hir name, which sche feigneth.
 Alle othre thinges sche restreigneth,
 That a word more sche ne tolde.
 1170 This lord thanne axeth if sche wolde
 With him abide in compaignie,
 And seide he cam fro Barbarie
 To Romeward, and hom he wente.
 Tho sche supposeth what it mente,
 1175 And seith sche wolde with him wende
 And duelle unto hire lyves ende,
 Be so it be to his plesance.
 And thus upon here aqueaintance
 He tolde hire pleinly as it stod,
 1180 Of Rome how that the gentil blod
 In Barbarie was betraied,
 And therupon he hath assaied
 Be werre, and taken such vengance,
 That non of al thilke alliance,
 1185 Be whom the tresoun was compassed,
- crept into seclusion*
- inquire*
- afflicted*
- know not*
- moreover*
- Cross*
- Muslim world*
- Provided that
their familiarity*
- betrayed*
- members of the alliance*

- Is from the swerd alyve passed;
 Bot of Constance hou it was,
 That cowthe he knowe be no cas,
 Wher sche becam, so as he seide. *went*
- 1190 Hire ere unto his word sche leide,
 Bot forther made sche no chiere.
 And natholes in this matiere
 It happeth thilke time so,
 This lord, with whom sche scholde go,
 1195 Of Rome was the senatour,
 And of hir fader th'emerour
 His brother doughter hath to wyve,
 Which hath hir fader ek alyve,
 And was Salustes cleped tho; *brother's; as a wife*
 1200 This wif Heleine hihte also,
 To whom Constance was cousine.
 Thus to the sike a medicine
 Hath God ordeined of His grace,
 That forthwith in the same place
 1205 This senatour his trowthe plihte, *pledged*
 Forevere, whil he live mihte,
 To kepe in worschipe and in welthe,
 Be so that God wol give hire helthe,
 This ladi, which fortune him sende. *Provided that*
- 1210 And thus be schipe forth sailende
 Hire and hir child to Rome he broghte,
 And to his wif tho he besoghte
 To take hire into compaignie.
 And sche, which cowthe of courtesie
 1215 Al that a good wif scholde konne, *know*
 Was inly glad that sche hath wonne *inwardly*
 The felaschip of so good on. *a person*
 Til tuelve yeres were agon,
 This emperoures dowhter Custe
- 1220 Forth with the dowhter of Saluste
 Was kepte, bot no man redily
 Knew what sche was, and noght forthi
 Thei thoghten wel sche hadde be
 In hire astat of hih degré,
 1225 And every lif hire loveth wel.
- ☞ Now herke how thilke unstable whel
 Which evere torneth went aboute.
 The king Allee, whil he was oute,
 As thou tofore hast herd this cas,
 1230 Deceived thurgh his moder was:
 Bot whan that he cam home agein,
 He axeth of his chamberlein
- (see note)*
turned again
away at war

- And of the bisschop ek also,
Wher thei the qweene hadden do. *(i.e., caused to go)*
- 1235 And thei answerde, there he bad,
And have him thilke lettred rad,
Which he hem sende for warant,
And tolde him pleinli as it stant,
And sein, it thoghte hem gret pité *it seemed to them*
- 1240 To se so worthi on as sche,
With such a child as ther was bore,
So sodeinly to be forlore. *abandoned*
- He axeth hem what child that were;
And thei him seiden, that naghere, *nowhere*
- 1245 In al the world thogh men it soghte,
Was nevere womman that forth broghe
A fairer child than it was on.
And thanne he axede hem anon,
Whi thei ne hadden write so? *spoke as*
- 1250 Thei tolden so thei hadden do.
He seide, 'Nay.' Thei seiden, 'Yis.'
The lettred schewed rad it is,
Which thei forsoken everidel. *utterly repudiated*
- Tho was it understande wel
1255 That ther is tresoun in the thing.
The messenger tofore the king
Was broght and sodeinliche opposed;
And he, which nothing hath supposed *interrogated*
- Bot alle wel, began to seie
1260 That he nagher upon the weie
Abod, bot only in a stede; *nowhere*
And cause why that he so dede
Was, as he wente to and fro,
At Knaresburgh be nyhtes tuo *one place*
- 1265 The kinges moder made him duelle.
And whan the king it herde telle,
Withinne his herte he wiste als faste
The treson which his moder caste. *knew immediately*
- And thoghte he wolde noght abide,
1270 Bot forth riht in the same tide
He tok his hors and rod anon.
With him ther rideon mani on, *had perpetrated*
- To Knaresburgh and forth thei wente,
And lich the fyr which tunder hente, *delay*
- 1275 In suche a rage, as seith the bok,
His moder sodeinliche he tok
And seide unto hir in this wise:
'O beste of helle, in what juise *time*
Hast thou deserved for to deie, *many [a] one*
- tinder catches*
- devil; legal punishment*

- 1280 That hast so falsly put aweie
 With tresoun of thi bacbitinge
 The treweste at my knowlechinge
 Of wyves and the most honeste?
 Bot I wol make this beheste,
 1285 I schal be venged er I go.' *promise*
 And let a fyr do make tho,
 And bad men for to caste hire inne.
 But ferst sche tolde out al the sinne,
 And dede hem alle for to wite *caused them*
- 1290 How sche the lettres hadde write,
 Fro point to point as it was wroght.
 And tho sche was to dethe broght
 And brent tofore hire sones yhe;
 Wheroft these othre, which it sihe
 1295 And herden how the cause stod,
 Sein that the juggement is good,
 Of that hir sone hire hath so served.
 For sche it hadde wel deserved
 Thurgh tresoun of hire false tunge,
 1300 Which thurgh the lond was after sunge,
 Constance and every wiht compleigneth.
 Bot he, whom alle wo distreigneth,
 This sorghfull king, was so bestad,
 That he schal nevermor be glad,
 1305 He seith, eftsonne for to wedde,
 Til that he wiste how that sche spedde,
 Which hadde ben his ferste wif.
 And thus his yonge unlusti lif *listless*
 1309 He dryveth forth so as he mai.
 ¶ Til it befell upon a dai,
 Whan he hise werres hadde achieved,
 And thoghte he wolde be relieved
 Of soule hele upon the feith
 Which he hath take, thanne he seith *soul's health; by means of*
- 1315 That he to Rome in pelrinage
 Wol go, wher pope was Pelage,
 To take his absolucioun.
 And upon this condicioun *pilgrimage*
 He made Edwyn his lieutenant,
 1320 Which heir to him was apparant, *Pelagius*
 That he the lond in his absence
 Schal reule. And thus be providence
 Of alle thinges wel begon *provided*
 He tok his leve and forth is gon.
 1325 Elda, which tho was with him there,
 Er thei fulliche at Rome were,
- And every person laments for Constance
 torments
 distressed*
- (see note)*
- Who was his heir apparent*

- Was sent tofore to pourveie; *make provisions*
 And he his guide upon the weie,
 In help to ben his herbergour,
 1330 Hath axed who was senatour, *harbinger*
 That he his name myhte kenne,
 Of Capadoce, he seide, Arcenne
 He hihte, and was a worthi kniht.
 To him goth Elda tho forth riht
 1335 And tolde him of his lord tidinge,
 And preide that for his comynge
 He wolde assigne him herbergage;
 And he so dede of good corage.
 Whan al is do that was to done,
 1340 The king himself cam after sone.
 This senatour, whan that he com,
 To Couste and to his wif at hom
 Hath told how such a king Allee
 Of gret array to the citee
 1345 Was come, and Couste upon his tale
 With herte clos and colour pale *constricted*
 Aswoune fell, and he merveileth *Fainted*
 So sodeinly what thing hire eyleth,
 And cawhte hire up, and whan sche wok, *ails*
 1350 Sche syketh with a pitous lok *sighs*
 And feigneth seknesse of the see; *sea sickness*
 Bot it was for the king Allee, *because of*
 For joie which fell in hire thoght
 That God him hath to toune broght.
 1355 This king hath spoke with the pope
 And told al that he cowthe agrope,
 What grieveth in his conscience;
 And thanne he thoghte in reverence
 Of his astat, er that he wente,
 1360 To make a feste, and thus he sente
 Unto the senatour to come
 Upon the morwe and othre some,
 To sitte with him at the mete. *feast*
 This tale hath Couste noghte forgete,
 1365 Bot to Moris hire sone tolde
 That he upon the morwe scholde
 In al that evere he cowthe and mihte
 Be present in the kinges sihte,
 So that the king him ofte sihe. *might often see him*
 1370 Moris tofore the kinges yhe
 Upon the morwe, wher he sat,
 Fulofte stod, and upon that
 The king his chiere upon him caste,

- And in his face him thoghte als faste
 1375 He sih his oghne wif Constance.
 For nature as in resemblance
 Of face hem liketh so to clothe,
 That thei were of a suite bothe.
 The king was moeved in his thoght
 1380 Of that he seth, and knoweth it noght; *sees; understands naturally*
 This child he loveth kindly,
 And yit he wot no cause why.
 Bot wel he sih and understod
 That he toward Arcenne stod,
 1385 And axeth him anon riht there,
 If that this child his sone were.
 He seide, 'Yee, so I him calle,
 And wolde it were so befall,
 Bot it is al in other wise.'
- 1390 And tho began he to devise
 How he the childe moder fond
 Upon the see from every lond
 Withinne a schip was stiereles, *without rudder*
 And how this ladi helpeles
- 1395 Forth with hir child he hath forthdrawe. *fostered*
 The king hath understande his sawe,
 The childe name and axeth tho,
 And what the moder hihite also
 That he him wolde telle he preide.
- 1400 'Moris this child is hote,' he seide, *called*
 'His moder hatte Couste, and this *is called*
 I not what maner name it is.' *know not*
 But Allee wiste wel ynowh, *knew*
 Wheroft somdiel smylende he lowh; *laughed*
- 1405 For Couste in Saxoun is to sein
 Constance upon the word Romein.
 Bot who that cowthe specefie
 What tho fell in his fantasie,
 And how his wit aboute renneth
- 1410 Upon the love in which he brenneth, *burns*
 It were a wonder for to hiere.
 For he was nouther ther ne hiere,
 Bot clene out of himself aweie,
 That he not what to thenke or seie,
- 1415 So fain he wolde it were sche. *knows not*
 Wheroft his hertes priveté *eagerly he wished*
 Began the werre of yee and nay, *secret place*
 The which in such balance lay, *war of yes and no*
 That contenance for a throwe *suspense*
- 1420 He loste, til he mihte knowe *time*

- The sothe; bot in his memoire
 The man which lith in purgatoire
 Desireth noght the hevene more,
 That he ne longeth al so sore
 1425 To wite what him schal betide.
 And whan the bordes were aside
 And every man was rise aboue,
 The king hath weyved al the route,
 And with the senatour alone
 tables; out of the way
- 1430 He spak and preide him of a bone,
 To se this Couste, wher sche duelleth
 At hom with him, so as he telleth.
 The senatour was wel appaied;
 This thing no lengere is delaied.
 dismissed; company
- 1435 To se this Couste goth the king,
 And sche was warned of the thing,
 And with Heleine forth sche cam
 Agein the king, and he tho nam
 Good hiede, and whan he sih his wif,
 1440 Anon with al his hertes lif
 He cawhte hire in his arm and kiste.
 Was nevere wiht that sih ne wiste
 A man that more joie made,
 Wheroft heien weren alle glade
 1445 Whiche herde tellen of this chance.
 This king tho with his wif Constance,
 Which hadde a gret part of his wille,
 In Rome for a time stille
 Abod and made him wel at ese.
 desire
- 1450 Bot so yit cowthe he nevere plese
 His wif, that sche him wolde sein
 Of hire astat the trowthe plein,
 Of what contré that sche was bore,
 Ne what sche was, and yit therfore
 1455 With al his wit he hath don sieke.
 Thus as they lihe abedde and spieke,
 Sche preide him and conseileth bothe,
 That for the worschipe of hem bothe,
 So as hire thoghte it were honeste,
 1460 He wolde an honourable feste
 Make, er he wente, in the cité,
 Wher th'empemour himself schal be.
 He graunteth al that sche him preide.
 Bot as men in that time seide,
 1465 This emperour fro thilke day
 That ferst his dowharter wente away
 He was thanne after nevere glad;
- petition
 pleased
 given notice
 Toward; then took
 creature; saw; knew
 endeavored to learn

- Bot what that eny man him bad
Of grace for his dowhter sake,
1470 That grace wolde he noght forsake.
And thus ful gret almesse he dede,
Wherof sche hadde many a bede.
☞ This emperour out of the toun
Withinne a ten mile enviroun,
1475 Where as it thoghte him for the beste,
Hath sondry places for to reste;
And as fortune wolde tho,
He was duellende at on of tho.
The king Allee forth with th'assent
1480 Of Couste his wif hath thider sent
Moris his sone, as he was taght,
To th'emerour, and he goth straught
And in his fader half besoghte,
As he which his lordschipe soghte
1485 That of his hihe worthiness
He wolde do so gret meknesse,
His oghne toun to come and se,
And give a time in the cité,
So that his fader mihte him gete
1490 That he wolde ones with him ete.
This lord hath granted his requeste,
And whan the dai was of the feste,
In worschipe of here emperour
The king and ek the senatour
1495 Forth with here wyves bothe tuo,
With many a lord and lady mo,
On horse ride him agein;
Til it befell, upon a plein
Thei sihen wher he was comende.
1500 With that Constance anon preiende
Spak to hir lord that he abyde,
So that sche mai tofore ryde,
To ben upon his bienvenue
The ferste which schal him salue.
1505 And thus after hire lordes graunt
Upon a mule whyt amblaunt
Forth with a fewe rod this qweene.
Thei wondren what sche wolde mene,
And ridein after softe pas;
1510 Bot whan this ladi come was
To th'emerour, in his presence
Sche seide alowd in audience,
'Mi lord, mi fader, wel you be!
And of this time that I se
- alms*
prayer
(see note)
- seemed to him*
- instructed*
- toward him*
- festive welcoming*
- ambling*
rode
- to your health*

- 1515 Youre honour and your goode hele,
 Which is the helpe of my querele,
 I thonke unto the Goddes myht.'
 For joie his herte was affliht
 Of that sche tolde in remembrance; *excited*
- 1520 And whanne he wiste it was Constance,
 Was nevere fader half so blithe.
 Wepende he keste hire ofte sithe,
 So was his herte al overcome;
 For thogh his moder were come *knew*
 1525 Fro deth to lyve out of the grave,
 He mihte no mor wonder have *glad*
 Than he hath whan that he hire sih.
 With that hire oghne lord cam nyh *near*
 And is to th'empemour obeied; *submissive*
- 1530 Bot whan the fortune is bewreied,
 How that Constance is come aboute,
 So hard an herte was non oute,
 That he for pité tho ne wepte. *revealed*
 Arcennus, which hire fond and kepte,
- 1535 Was thanne glad of that is falle,
 So that with joie among hem alle
 Thei ridein in at Rome gate.
 This emperour thoghte al to late,
 Til that the pope were come, *met with a certain fortune*
- 1540 And of the lordes sende some
 To preie him that he wolde haste;
 And he cam forth in alle haste,
 And whan that he the tale herde,
 How wonderly this chance ferde, *hope*
- 1545 He thonketh God of His miracle,
 To whos miht mai be non obstacle.
 The king a noble feste hem made,
 And thus thei weren alle glade.
 A parlement, er that thei wente,
- 1550 Thei setten unto this entente,
 To puten Rome in full espeir
 That Moris was apparent heir
 And scholde abide with hem stille,
 For such was al the londes wille. *(see note)*
- ¶ Whan everything was fulli spoke,
 Of sorwe and queint was al the smoke,
 Tho tok his leve Allee the king,
 And with full many a riche thing,
 Which th'empemour him hadde give, *quenched*
- 1560 He goth a glad lif for to live;
 For he Constance hath in his hond,

- Which was the confort of his lond.
 For whan that he cam hom agein,
 Ther is no tunge it mihte sein
- 1565 What joie was that ilke stounde *same time*
 Of that he hath his qweene founde,
 Which ferst was sent of Goddes sonde,
 Whan sche was drive upon the stronde,
 Be whom the misbelieve of sinne
- 1570 Was left, and Cristes feith cam inne
 To hem that whilom were blinde.
- ¶ Bot he which hindreth every kinde *(see note)*
 And for no gold mai be forboght,
 The deth, comende er he be soght,
 1575 Tok with this king such aqueintance, *redeemed*
 That he with al his retenance
 Ne mihte noght defende his lif;
 And thus he parteth from his wif,
 Which thanne made sorwe ynowh.
- 1580 And therupon hire herte drowh *Who*
 To leven Engelond forevere
 And go wher that sche hadde leve,
 To Rome, whenne that sche cam.
 And thus of al the lond sche nam
- 1585 Hir leve, and goth to Rome agein. *rather [be]*
 And after that the bokes sein,
 Sche was noght there bot a throwe,
 Whan deth of kinde hath overthowre
- ¶ Hir worthi fader, which men seide *(see note)*
 1590 That he between hire armes deide.
 And afterward the yer suiendo
- ¶ The God hath mad of hire an ende, *following*
 And fro this worldes faierie
- ¶ Hath take hire into compaignie. *(see note)*
 1595 Moris hir sone was corouned,
 Which so ferforth was abandonouned
 To Cristes feith, that men him calle
 Moris the Cristeneste of alle.
- And thus the wel meninge of love *most Christian*
 1600 Was ate laste set above;
 And so as thou hast herd tofore,
 The false tungen weren lore,
 Whiche upon love wolden lie. *lost*
- Forthi touchende of this Envie
 1605 Which longeth unto bacbitinge, *defamation*
 Be war thou make no lesinge
 In hindringe of another wiht. *lying*
 And if thou wolt be tawht ariht

- What meschief bakbitinge doth
1610 Be other weie, a tale soth
Now miht thou hiere next suiende,
Which to this vice is acordende. *following*

[TALE OF DEMETRIUS AND PERSEUS]

- | | | |
|------|---|----------------------------------|
| | In a cronique, as thou schalt wite,
A gret ensample I finde write,
Which I schal telle upon this thing.
Philippe of Macedoyne kyng
Two sones hadde be his wif,
Whos fame is yit in Grece rif. | <i>know (see note)</i> |
| 1615 | Demetrius the ferste brother
Was hote, and Perseus that other.
Demetrius men seiden tho
The betre knyht was of the tuo,
To whom the lond was entendant,
As he which heir was apparant
To regne after his fader dai. | <i>well known</i> |
| 1620 | Bot that thing which no water mai
Quenche in this world, bot evere brenneth,
Into his brother herte it renneth,
The proude Envie of that he sih | <i>was called</i> |
| 1625 | His brother scholde clymbe on hih,
And he to him mot thanne obeie:
That may he soffre be no weie.
With strengthe dorst he nothing fondre, | <i>burns</i> |
| 1630 | So tok he lesinge upon honde,
Whan he sih time and spak therto.
For it besell that time so,
His fader grete werres hadde | <i>because he saw</i> |
| 1635 | With Rome, whiche he streite ladde
Thurgh mihty hond of his manhode,
As he which hath ynowh kniethode,
And ofte hem hadde sore grieved. | <i>By force of arms; attempt</i> |
| 1640 | Bot er the werre were achieved,
As he was upon ordinance
At hom in Grece, it fell per chance,
Demetrius, which ofte aboute | <i>lying</i> |
| 1645 | Ridende was, stod that time oute,
So that this Perse in his absence,
Which bar the tunge of pestilence,
With false wordes whiche he feigneth | <i>turbulently led</i> |
| 1650 | Upon his oghne brother pleigneth
In priveté behinde his bak.
And to his fader thus he spak: | |

- ‘Mi diere fader, I am holde
 Be weie of kinde, as resoun wolde,
 1655 That I fro yow schal nothing hide,
 Which mihte torne in eny side
 Of youre astat into grevance.
 Forthi myn hertes obeissance
 Towardes you I thenke kepe,
 1660 For it is good ye take kepe
 Upon a thing which is me told.
 Mi brother hath ous alle sold
 To hem of Rome, and you also;
 For thanne they behote him so,
 1665 That he with hem schal regne in pes. *promised*
 Thus hath he cast for his encress
 That youre astat schal go to noght;
 And this to proeve schal be broght
 So ferforth, that I undertake
 1670 It schal noght wel mow be forsake.’ *be able to be*
 The king upon this tale ansuerde
 And seide, if this thing which he herde
 Be soth and mai be broght to prove,
 ‘It schal noght be to his behove,
 1675 Which so hath schapen ous the werste, *advantage (benefit)*
 For he himself schal be the ferste
 That schal be ded, if that I mai.’
 Thus afterward upon a dai,
 Whan that Demetrius was come,
 1680 Anon his fader hath him nome, *taken*
 And bad unto his brother Perse
 That he his tale schal reherse
 Of thilke tresoun which he tolde.
 And he, which al untrowthe wolde,
 1685 Conseileth that so hih a nede
 Be treted wher as it mai spedie,
 In comun place of juggement.
 The king therto gaf his assent;
 Demetrius was put in hold,
 1690 Wheroft that Perseüs was bold.
 Thus stod the trowthe under the charge,
 And the falshede goth at large,
 Which thurgh beheste hath overcome
 The greteste of the lordes some,
 1695 That privelich of his acord
 Thei stonde as witnesse of record:
 The jugge was mad favorable;
 Thus was the lawe deceivable
 So ferforth that the trowthe fond

- 1700 Rescousse non, and thus the lond
Forth with the king deceived were.
The gulteles was dampned there
And deide upon accusement.
Bot such a fals conspirement,
1705 Thogh it be privé for a throwe,
Godd wode noght it were unknowe;
And that was afterward wel proved
In him which hath the deth controvred.
Of that his brother was so slain
1710 This Perseus was wonder fain,
As he that tho was apparant,
Upon the regne and expectant,
Wheroft he wax so proud and vein,
That he his fader in desleign
1715 Hath take and set of non accompte,
As he which thoghte him to surmonte;
That wher he was ferst debonaire,
He was tho rebell and contraire,
And noght as heir bot as a king
1720 He tok upon him alle thing
Of malice and of tirannie
In contempt of the regalie,
Livende his fader, and so wroghte,
That whan the fader him bethoghite
1725 And sih to whether side it drowh,
Anon he wiste well ynowh
How Perse after his false tunge
Hath so th'envious belle runge,
That he hath slain his oghne brother.
1730 Wheroft as thanne he knew non other,
Bot sodeinly the jugge he nom,
Which corrupt sat upon the dom,
In such a wise and hath him pressed,
That he the sothe him hath confessed
1735 Of al that hath be spoke and do.
Mor sori than the king was tho
Was nevere man upon this molde,
And thoghte in certein that he wolde
Vengance take upon this wrong.
1740 Bot th'other parti was so strong,
That for the lawe of no statut
Ther mai no riht ben execut.
And upon this division
The lond was torned up so doun,
1745 Wheroft his herte is so distraght,
That he for pure sorwe hath caught
- Rescue*
(i.e., [was] executed); indictment
hidden for a time
devised
glad
heir apparent
of no importance
have control over
royal prerogative
With his father still living
spread the news
own
took
bench of justice
tortured
earth
upside down

- The maladie of which nature
Is queint in every creature.
And whan this king was passed thus,
1750 This false-tunged Perseüs
The regiment hath underfonge.
Bot ther mai nothing stonde longe
Which is noght upon trowthe grounded,
For God, which alle thing hath bounded
1755 And sih the falshod of his guile,
Hath set him bot a litel while,
That he schal regne upon depos.
For sodeinliche as he aros
So sodeinliche doun he fell.
1760 In thilke time it so befell,
This newe king of newe Pride
With strengthe schop him for to ride,
And seide he wolde Rome waste,
Wheroft he made a besi haste,
1765 And hath assembled him an host
In al that evere he mihte most.
What man that mihte wepne bere
Of alle he wolde non forbere;
So that it mihte noght be nombred,
1770 The folk which after was encombred
Thurgh him, that God wolde overthrowe.
Anon it was at Rome knowe,
The pompe which that Perse ladde,
And the Romeins that time hadde
1775 A consul, which was cleped thus
Be name, Paul Emilius,
A noble, a worthi kniht withalle.
And he which chief was of hem alle
This werre on honde hath undertake.
1780 And whanne he scholde his leve take
Of a yong dowhther which was his,
Sche wepte, and he what cause it is
Hire axeth, and sche him ansuerde
That Perse is ded; and he it herde,
1785 And wondreth what sche meene wolde;
And sche upon childhode him tolde
That Perse hir litel hound is ded.
With that he pulleth up his hed
And made riht a glad visage,
1790 And seide how that was a presage
Touchende unto that other Perse,
Of that fortune him scholde adverse,
He seith, for such a prenostik
- depression by which natural vigor (see note)*
quenched
entrapped by grief
government; seized
limited
For as suddenly as
military force prepared himself
vigorous
army
excuse [from conscription]
who was called
in her innocence
head
be unfavorable to him

- Most of an hound was to him lik:
 1795 For as it is an houndes kinde
 To berke upon a man behinde,
 Riht so behinde his brother bak
 With false wordes whiche he spak
 He hath do slain, and that is rowthe.
 bark at a man from behind
- 1800 'Bot he which hateth alle untrowthe,
 The hihe God, it schal redresse;
 For so my dowhter prophetesse
 Forth with hir litel houndes deth
 Betokneth.' And thus forth he geth
 1805 Conforted of this evidence,
 With the Romeins in his defence
 Agein the Greks that ben comende.
 This Perseüs, as noght seende
 This meschief which that him abod,
 1810 With al his multitude rod,
 And prided him upon the thing,
 Of that he was become a king,
 And how he hadde his regne gete.
 goes
 1815 Which longeth unto governance.
 Wheroft thurgh Goddes ordinance
 It fell, upon the wynter tide
 That with his host he scholde ride
 Over Danubie thilke flod,
 river
 1820 Which al beforse thanne stod
 So harde, that he wende wel
 To passe. Bot the blinde whiel,
 Which torneth ofte er men be war,
 Thilke ys which that the horsmen bar
 1825 Tobrak, so that a gret partie
 Was dreint; of the chivalerie
 The rerewarde it tok aweie;
 Cam non of hem to londe dreie.
 frozen over
 knew well
 blind (governed by chance)
- 1830 Paulus the worthi kniht Romein
 1830 Be his aspie it herde sein,
 And hasteth him al that he may,
 So that upon that other day
 He cam wher he this host beheld,
 And that was in a large feld,
 1835 Wher the baneres ben desplaied.
 He hath anon hise men arraied,
 And whan that he was embatailled,
 He goth and hath the feld assailed,
 And slowh and tok al that he fond;
 1840 Wheroft the Macedoyne lond,
 Broke apart
 rear guard
 dry
 marshaled
 arrayed for battle
 besieged

	Which thurgh king Alisandre honoured Long time stod, was tho devoured.	
	To Perse and al that infortune Thei wyte, so that the comune	<i>And on Perseus lay the blame</i>
1845	Of al the lond his heir exile; And he despeired for the while Desguised in a povere wede	<i>beggar's clothes</i>
	To Rome goth, and ther for nede The craft which thilke time was,	
1850	To worche in latoun and in bras, He lerneth for his sustienance.	<i>bronze</i>
	Such was the sones pourveance, And of his fader it is seid,	
	In strong prisoun that he was leid	
1855	In Albe, wher that he was ded For hungry and defalte of bred.	<i>lack of food</i>
	The hound was tokne and prophecie That lich an hound he scholde die,	
	Which lich was of condicioun,	
1860	Whan he with his detraccioun Bark on his brother so behinde.	
Confessor	Lo, what profit a man mai finde, Which hindre wole another wiht.	<i>person</i>
	Forthi with al thin hole miht,	
1865	Mi sone, eschuiie thilke vice."	
Amans	"Mi fader, elles were I nyce: For ye therof so wel have spoke,	<i>stupid</i>
	That it is in myn herte loke	
	And evere schal. Bot of Envie,	
1870	If ther be more in his baillie Towardes love, sai me what."	<i>charge</i>
Confessor	"Mi sone, as guile under the hat With sleyhtes of a tregetour	<i>sleight of hand; magician</i>
	Is hidd, Envie of such colour	
1875	Hath yit the ferthe deceivant, The which is cleped Falssemblant,	<i>False-seeming</i>
	Wheroft the matiere and the forme	
	Now herkne and I thee schal enforme."	

[FALSE-SEMBLANT]

- iv. *Nil bilinguis aget, nisi duplo concinat ore,
Dumque diem loquitur, nox sua vola legit.
Vultus habet lucem, tenebras mens, sermo salutem,
Actus set morbum dat suus esse grauem.
Pax tibi quam spondet, magis est prenistica guerre;
Comoda si dederit, disce subesse dolum.*

*Quod patet esse fides in eo fraus est, que politi
 Principium pacti finis habere negat.
 O quam condicio talis deformat amantem,
 Qui magis apparens est in amore nichil.¹*

- [Confessor] “Of Falssemblant if I schal telle,
 1880 Above alle othre it is the welle
 Out of the which deceipte floweth.
 Ther is no man so wys that knoweth
 Of thilke flos which is the tyde,
 1885  Ne how he scholde himselfen guide (see note)
 To take sauf passage there. ear
 And yit the wynd to mannes ere
 Is softe, and as it semeth oute
 It makth clier weder al aboute;
 Bot thogh it seme, it is noght so.
 1890 For Falssemblant hath evermo
 Of his conseil in compaignie
 The derke untrewe Ypocrisie,
 Whos word discordeth to his thoght.
 Forthi thei ben togedre broght
 1895 Of o covine, of on houshold,
 As it schal after this be told.
 Of Falssemblant it nedeth noght
 To telle of olde ensamples oght;
 For al dai in experience
 1900 A man mai se thilke evidence
 Of faire wordes which he hiereth;
 Bot yit the barge Envie stiereth boat; guides
 And halt it evere fro the londe,
 Wher Falssemblant with ore on honde oar
 1905 It roweth, and wol noght arive,
 Bot let it on the wawes dryve
 In gret tempeste and gret debat,
 Wheroft that love and his astat
 Empeireth. And therfore I rede, Deteriorates; advise
 1910 Mi sone, that thou fle and drede
 This vice, and what that othre sein,
 Let thi semblant be trewe and plein. countenance
 For Falssemblant is thilke vice,

¹ *A double-talker will undertake nothing without singing with a double mouth, and while he speaks in daylight, night covers his intentions. His face holds light, his mind shadows; his words healing, but his action produces grave illness. The peace that he solemnly promises you is a foreshadowing of greater war; if he should offer helpfulness, learn that guile lies underneath it. What lies displayed as faith is fraud inside, and the conclusion of a crafted truce denies the beginning it had. Oh, how such a condition deforms a lover, who, appearing to be more in love, is not at all.*

- Which never was withoute office. *duties*
 1915 Wher that Envie thenkth to guile, *deceive*
 He schal be for that ilke while
 Of privé conseil messagier.
- For whan his semblant is most clier, *That [which] never*
 1920 Thanne is he most derk in his thoght.
 Thogh men him se, thei knowe him noght; *That [which] never*
 Bot as it scheweth in the glas
 Thing which therinne nevere was,
 So scheweth it in his visage
 That nevere was in his corage.
- 1925 Thus doth he al his thing with sleyhte. *balance (see note)*
 ↗ Now ley thi conscience in weyhte,
 Mi goode sone, and schrif thee hier, *confess yourself*
 If thou were evere custummer
- 1929 To Falssemblant in eny wise.”
- Confessio Amantis** “For ought I can me yit avise,
 Mi goode fader, certes no.
 If I for love have ought do so,
 Now asketh, I wol praei yow,
 For elles I wot nevere how
 1935 Of Falssemblant that I have gilt.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, and sithen that thou wilt *since you desire*
 That I schal axe, gabbe noght, *What; ask, don't tell lies*
 Bot tell if evere was thi thoght
 With Falssemblant and coverture *concealment (stealth)*
- 1940 To wite of eny creature *know*
 How that he was with love lad; *by love guided*
 So were he sori, were he glad,
 Whan that thou wistest how it were,
 Al that he rounede in thin ere *knew*
 1945 Thou toldest forth in other place, *whispered*
 To setten him fro loves grace *displace*
 Of what womman that thee best liste, *desire*
 Ther as no man his conseil wiste *In a case in which; knew*
 Bot thou, be whom he was deceived *by*
- 1950 Of love and from his pourpos weyved; *turned away*
 And thoghtest that his destourbance *advance*
 Thin oghne cause scholde avance, *secretive*
 As who saith, ‘I am so celee,
 Ther mai no mannes priveté
- 1955 Be heled half so wel as myn.’ *covered (hidden)*
 Art thou, mi sone of such engin, *scheming*
 Tell on.”
- Amans** “Mi goode fader, nay *In general*
 As for the more part I say; *acknowledge*
 Bot of somdiel I am beknowe,

- 1960 That I mai stonde in thilke rowe
 Amonges hem that saundres use.
 I wol me noght therof excuse,
 That I with such colour ne steyne,
 Whan I my beste semblant feigne
- 1965 To my felawh, til that I wot
 Al his conseil bothe cold and hot:
 For be that cause I make him chiere,
 Til I his love knowe and hiere;
 And if so be myn herte soucheth
- 1970 That ought unto my ladi toucheth
 Of love that he wol me telle,
 Anon I renne unto the welle
 And caste water in the fyr,
 So that his carte amidd the myr,
- 1975 Be that I have his conseil knowe,
 Fulofte sithe I overthrowe,
 Whan that he weneth best to stonde.
 Bot this I do you understande,
 If that a man love elleswhere,
- 1980 So that my ladi be noght there,
 And he me telle, I wole it hide.
 Ther schal no word ascape aside,
 For with deceipte of no semblant
 To him breke I no covenant;
- 1985 Me liketh noght in other place
 To lette no man of his grace,
 Ne for to ben inquisitif
 To knowe another mannes lif.
 Wher that he love or love noght,
- 1990 That toucheth nothing to my thoght,
 Bot al it passeth thurgh myn ere
 Riht as a thing that nevere were,
 And is forgete and leid beside.
 Bot if it touche on eny side
- 1995 Mi ladi, as I have er spoken,
 Myn eres ben noght thanne lokon.
 For certes, whanne that betitt,
 Mi will, myn herte, and al my witt
 Ben fully set to herkne and spire
- 2000 What eny man wol speke of hire.
 Thus have I feigned compaignie
 Fulofte, for I wolde aspie
 What thing it is that eny man
 Telle of mi worthi lady can.
- 2005 And for tuo causes I do this,
 The ferste cause wherof is
- false colors (lit., red sandalwood)*
- stain*
- suspects*
- Since*
Many times
thinks
- Provided that*
If
- set aside*
- previously*
locked shut
- listen; inquire*

- If that I myhte ofherkne and seke
 That eny man of hire mispeke,
 I wolde excuse hire so fully,
 2010 That whan sche wist it inderly,
 Min hope scholde be the more
 To have hir thank forevermore.
 That other cause, I you assure,
 Is, why that I be covverture
 2015 Have feigned semblant ofte time
 To hem that passen alday by me
 And ben lovers als wel as I.
 For this I weene trewely,
 That ther is of hem alle non,
 2020 That thei ne loven everich on
 Mi Ladi: for sothliche I lieve
 And durste setten it in prieve,
 Is non so wys that scholde asterte,
 Bot he were lustles in his herte,
 2025 Forwhyn he my ladi sihe,
 Hir visage and hir goodlych yhe,
 Bot he hire lovede, er he wente.
 And for that such is myn entente,
 That is the cause of myn aspie,
 2030 Why that I feigne compaignie
 And make felawe overal;
 For gladly wolde I knownen al
 And holde me covert alway,
 That I fulofte ye or nay
 2035 Ne liste ansuere in eny wise,
 Bot feigne semblant as the wise
 And herkne tales, til I knowe
 Mi ladi lovers al arowe.
 And whanne I hiere how thei have wrought,
 2040 I fare as thogh I herde it noght
 And as I no word understande;
 Bot that is nothing for here goode.
 For lieveth wel, the sothe is this,
 That whanne I knowe al how it is,
 2045 I wol bot forthren hem a lite,
 Bot al the worste I can endite
 I telle it to my ladi plat
 In forthringe of myn oghne astat,
 And hindre hem al that evere I may.
 2050 Bot for al that yit dar I say,
 I finde unto miself no bote,
 Althogh myn herte nedes mote,
 Thurgh strengthe of love, al that I hiere
- hear of*
inwardly
in competition with me
if he should see my lady
eye
Who would not love her
feign courtesy (friendship)
one after another
advance their cause only a little (i.e., not at all)
compose
straight out
advantage
might necessarily have to

- Discovere unto my ladi diere:
 2055 For in good feith I have no miht
 To hele fro that swete wiht,
 If that it touche hire eny thing.
 Bot this wot wel the hevene king,
 That sithen ferst this world began,
 2060 Unto non other strange man
 Ne feigned I semblant ne chiere,
 To wite or axe of his matiere,
 Thogh that he lovede ten or tuelve,
 Whanne it was noght my ladi selve.
 2065 Bot if he wolde axe eny red
 Al onlich of his oghne hed,
 How he with other love ferde,
 His tales with myn ere I herde,
 Bot to myn herte cam it noght
 2070 Ne sank no deppere in my thoght,
 Bot hield conseil, as I was bede,
 And told it nevere in other stede,
 Bot let it passen as it com.
 Now, fader, say what is thi dom,
 2075 And hou thou wolt that I be peined
 For such semblant as I have feigned."
Confessor "Mi sone, if reson be wel peised,
 Ther mai no vertu ben unpreised
 Ne vice non be set in pris.
 2080 Forthi, my sone, if thou be wys,
 Do no viser upon thi face,
 Which as wol noght thin herte embrace,
 For if thou do, withinne a throwe
 To othre men it schal be knowe,
 2085 So miht thou lihtli falle in blame
 And lese a gret part of thi name.
 And natheles in this degree
 Fulofte time thou myht se
 Of suche men that now aday
 2090 This vice setten in asay.
 I speke it for no mannes blame,
 Bot for to warne thee the same.
 Mi sone, as I mai hiere talke
 In every place where I walke,
 2095 I not if it be so or non,
 Bot it is manye daies gon
 That I ferst herde telle this,
 How Falssemblant hath ben and is
 Most comunly fro yer to yere
 2100 With hem that duelle among ous here,
- ability
*To conceal; creature
 in any way*
- since
- know
- lady's person
 counsel
(i.e., without any outside manipulation)
- place
- judgment
- appearances; adopted
 weighed
- esteem
- Put no mask
- in a short time
- lose; reput
- trial
- know not

- Of suche as we Lombardes calle.
 For thei ben the slyeste of alle,
 So as men sein in toune aboute,
 To feigne and schewe thing withoute
 2105 Which is revers to that withinne.
 Wherof that thei fulofte winne,
 Whan thei be reson scholden lese.
 Thei ben the laste and yit thei chese,
 And we the ferste, and yit behinde
 2110 We gon, there as we scholden finde
 The profit of oure oghne lond.
 Thus gon thei fre withoute bond
 To don her profit al at large,
 And othre men bere al the charge.
 2115 Of Lombardz unto this covine,
 Whiche alle londes conne engine,
 Mai Falssemblant in special
 Be likned, for thei overal,
 Wher as they thenken for to duelle,
 2120 Among hemself, so as thei telle,
 Ferst ben enformed for to lere
 A craft which cleped is Fa-crere.
 For if Fa-crere come aboute,
 Thanne afterward hem stant no doute
 2125 To voide with a soubtil hond
 The beste goodes of the lond
 And bringe chaf and take corn.
 Whereas Fa-crere goth tosorn,
 In all his weie he fynt no lette;
 2130 That dore can non huissher schette
 In which him list to take entré:
 And thus the conseil most secré
 of every thing Fa-crere knoweth,
 Which into strange place he bloweth,
 2135 Where as he wot it mai most grieve.
 And thus Fa-crere makth believe,
 So that fulofte he hath deceived,
 Er that he mai ben aperceived.
 Thus is this vice for to drede;
 2140 For who these olde bokes rede
 Of suche ensamples as were ar,
 Him oghte be the more war
 Of alle tho that feigne chiere,
 Wherof thou schalt a tale hiere.
- most sneaky*
lose
choose
fetter
gang
manipulate
teach
called; Make-believe
hindrance
door; usher close
he desires
spreads about
harm
creates credence (confidence)
in former times
wary
all those who

[TALE OF DEIANIRA, HERCULES, AND NESSUS]

- 2145 Of Falssemblant which is believed
 Ful many a worthi wiht is grieved,
 And was long time er we wer bore.
 ¶ To thee, my sone, I wol therfore *(see note)*
 A tale telle of Falssemblant,
- 2150 Which falseth many a convenant,
 And many a fraude of fals conseil
 Ther ben hangende upon his seil.
 And that aboghten gulteles
 Bothe Deianire and Hercules,
 2155 The whiche in gret desese felle
 Thurgh Falssemblant, as I schal telle.
 Whan Hercules withinne a throwe
 Al only hath his herte throwe
 Upon this faire Deianire,
 2160 It fell him on a dai desire,
 Upon a rivere as he stod,
 That passe he wolde over the flod
 Withoute bot, and with him lede
 His love, bot he was in drede
 2165 For tendresce of that swete wiht,
 For he knew noght the forde ariht.
 Ther was a geant thanne nyh,
 Which Nessus hihte, and whanne he sih
 This Hercules and Deianyre,
 2170 Withinne his herte he gan conspire,
 As he which thurgh his tricherie
 Hath Hercules in gret envie,
 Which he bar in his herte loke,
 And thanne he thoghte it schal be wroke.
 2175 Bot he ne dorste natheles
 Agein this worthi Hercules
 Falle in debat as for to feihte;
 Bot feigneth Semblant al be sleihte
 Of frendschipe and of alle goode,
 2180 And comth where as thei bothe stode,
 And makth hem al the chiere he can,
 And seith that as here oghne man
 He is al redy for to do
 What thing he mai; and it fell so
 2185 That thei upon his Semblant triste,
 And axen him if that he wiste
 What thing hem were best to done,
 So that thei mihten sauf and sone
 The water passe, he and sche.
- sail*
paid the penalty
- breaks*
- one time*
- river*
boat
- giant; near*
was called; saw
- locked*
satisfied
- do battle*
- their*
- trusted*
knew
- safe and sound*

- 2190 And whan Nessus the priveté
 Knew of here herte what it mente,
 As he that was of double entente,
 He made hem riht a glad visage.
 And whanne he herde of the passage
 2195 Of him and hire, he thoghte guile,
 And feigneth semblant for a while
 To don hem plesance and servise,
 Bot he thoghte al another wise.
 This Nessus with hise wordes slyhe
 2200 Gaf such conseil tofore here yhe
 Which semeth outward profitable
 And was withinne deceivable.
 He bad hem of the stremes depe
 That thei be war and take kepe,
 2205 So as thei knowe noght the pas;
 Bot for to helpe in such a cas,
 He seith himself that for here ese
 He wolde, if that it mihte hem plesse,
 The passage of the water take,
 2210 And for this ladi undertake
 To bere unto that other stronde
 And sauf to sette hire up alonde,
 And Hercules may thanne also
 The weie knowe how he schal go,
 2215 And herto thei acorden alle.
 Bot what as after schal befallie,
 Wel payd was Hercules of this,
 And this geant also glad is,
 And tok this ladi up alofte
 2220 And set hire on his schuldre softe
 And in the flod began to wade,
 As he which no grucchinge made,
 And bar hire over sauf and sound.
 Bot whanne he stod on dreie ground
 2225 And Hercules was fer behinde,
 He sette his trowthe al out of mynde,
 Whoso therof be lief or loth,
 With Deianyre and forth he goth,
 As he that thoghte to dissevere
 2230 The compaignie of hem for evere.
 Whan Hercules therof tok hiede,
 Als faste as evere he mihte him spiede
 He hyeth after in a throwe.
 And hapneth that he hadde a bowe,
 2235 The which in alle haste he bende,
 As he that wolde an arwe sende,
- deceitfully*
- their eye*
- passage*
- shore
upon*
- pleased*
- gently*
- complaining (i.e., apparently gladly)*
- dry
far*
- agreeable or disagreeable*
- move himself*
- arrow*

- Which he tofore hadde envenimed.
He hath so wel his schote timed,
That he him thurgh the bodi smette,
2240 And thus the false wiht he lette.
Bot lest now such a felonie:
Whan Nessus wiste he scholde die,
He tok to Deianyre his scherte,
Which with the blod was of his herte
2245 Thurghout desteigned overal,
And tolde how sche it kepe schal
Al prively to this entente,
That if hire lord his herte wente
To love in eny other place,
2250 The scherte, he seith, hath such a grace,
That if sche mai so mochel make
That he the scherte upon him take,
He schal alle othre lete in vein
And torne unto hire love agein.
2255 Who was tho glad bot Deianyre?
Hire thoghte hire herte was afyre
Til it was in hire cofre loke,
So that no word therof was spoke.
The daies gon, the yeres passe,
2260 The hertes waxen lasse and lasse
Of hem that ben to love untrewe:
This Hercules with herte newe
His love hath set on Eolen,
And therof spieken alle men.
2265 This Eolen, this faire maide,
Was, as men thilke time saide,
The kinges dowhter of Eurice;
And sche made Hercules so nyce
Upon hire love and so assote,
2270 That he him clotheth in hire cote,
And sche in his was clothed ofte;
And thus fieblesce is set alofte,
And strengthe was put underfote,
Ther can no man therof do bote.
2275 Whan Dianyre hath herd this speche,
Ther was no sorwe for to seche.
Of other helpe wot sche non,
Bot goth unto hire cofre anon.
With wepende yhe and woful herte
2280 Sche tok out thilke unhappy scherte,
As sche that wende wel to do,
And broghte hire werk aboute so
That Hercules this scherte on dede,
- previously; poisoned*
smote
stopped (prevented)
hear
gave
stained
secretly
others leave
It seemed to her
locked
foolish
infatuated
coat
weakness; on top
Where; bring deliverance
seek
weeping eye
ill-fortuned
thought

- 2285 To such entente as she was bede
Of Nessus, so as I seide er.
Bot therof was sche noght the ner,
As no fortune may be weyved;
With Falssemblant sche was deceived,
That whan sche wende best have wonne,
Sche lost al that sche hath begonne.
For thilke scherte unto the bon
His body sette afyre anon,
And cleveth so, it mai noght twinne,
For the venom that was therinne.
- 2290 *counseled*
avoided
thought; won
Because of
- 2295 And he thanne as a wilde man
Unto the hihe wode he ran,
And as the clerk Ovide telleth,
The grete tres to grounde he felleth
With strengthe al of his oghne myht,
And made an huge fyr upriht,
And lepte himself therinne at ones
And brende him bothe fleissh and bones.
Which thing cam al thurgh Falssemblant,
That false Nessus the Geant
- 2300 *to the quick*
set on fire
be separated
Because of
deep wood
trees
suddenly
burned himself up
- 2305 Made unto him and to his wif,
Wheroft he hath lost his lif,
And sche sori for everemo.
- Confessor** Forthi, my sone, er thee be wo,
I rede, be wel war therfore;
- 2310 For whan so gret a man was lore,
It oghte give a gret conceipte
To warne alle othre of such deceipte."
- Amans** "Grant mercy, fader, I am war
So fer that I no more dar
2315 Of Falssemblant take aqueintance;
Bot rathere I wol do penance
That I have feigned chiere er this.
Now axeth forth, what so ther is
2319 Of that belongeth to my schrifte."
- Confessor** "Mi sone, yit ther is the fifte
Which is conceived of Envie,
And cleped is Supplantarie,
Thurgh whos compassement and guile
Ful many a man hath lost his while
- 2325 In love als wel as otherwise,
Hierafter as I schal devise."
- lost*
pattern
so deeply
fifth [division]
scheming and deceit
consider

[SUPPLANTATION]

v. *Inuidus alterius est Supplantator honoris,
Et tua quo vertat culmina subtus arat.
Est opus occultum, quasi que latet anguis in herba,
Quod facit, et subita sorte nocivus adest.
Sic subtilis amans alium supplantat amantem,
Et capit occulte, quod nequit ipse palam;
Sepeque supplantans in plantam plantat amoris,
Quod putat in propriis alter habere bonis.¹*

[Confessor] “The vice of Supplantacioun

	With manye a fals collacioun,	inference
	Which he conspireth al unknowe,	
2330	Full ofte time hath overthrowe	
☞	The worschipe of another man.	(see note) guard
	So wel no lif awayte can	
	Agein his sleyhte for to caste,	
	That he his pourpos ate laste	
2335	Ne hath, er that it be withset.	
	Bot most of alle his herte is set	
	In court upon these grete offices	
	Of dignitees and benefices.	
	Thus goth he with his sleyhte aboute	
2340	To hindre and schowve another oute	
	And stonden with his sly compas	
	In stede there another was;	place where
	And so to sette himselfen inne,	
	He reccheth noght, be so he winne,	cares not, provided that
2345	Of that another man schal lese,	lose
	And thus fulofte chalk for chese	cheese
	He changeth with ful litel cost,	
	Wheroft another hath the lost	
	And he the profit schal receive.	
2350	For his fortune is to deceive	
	And for to change upon the whel	
	His wo with othre mennes wel.	woe; gladness
	Of that another man availeth,	By that which; humiliates (reduces in fortune)
	His oghne astat thus up he haleth,	uplifts
2355	And takth the bridd to his beyete,	bird; possession
	Wher othre men the buisshes bete.	beat the bushes

¹ *Supplanter of Another's Honor is an envious man, and where he plows he turns over your rows. What he makes is a secret work, and it lies hidden like a snake in the grass: then, in a sudden twist of fate, the evil one is present. Thus a cunning lover supplants another lover, and seizes suddenly what he cannot have in public. And often, the supplanting one grafts to the plant of love what another thinks he possesses among his own goods.*

	Mi sone, and in the same wise	
	Ther ben lovers of such emprise,	<i>a purpose</i>
	That schapen hem to be relieved	<i>contrive</i>
2360	Where it is wrong to ben achieved.	
	For it is other mannes riht,	
	Which he hath taken dai and niht	
	To kepe for his oghne stor	
	Toward himself for everemor,	
2365	And is his propre be the lawe,	<i>own by</i>
	Which thing that axeth no felawe,	<i>requires none to share it</i>
	If love holde his covenant.	
	Bot thei that worchen be supplauant,	<i>by supplantation</i>
	Yit wolden thei a man supplauante,	
2370	And take a part of thilke plaunte	<i>graft</i>
	Which he hath for himselfe set.	
	And so fulofte is al unknet	<i>unraveled</i>
	That som man weneth be riht fast.	<i>thinks to be secure</i>
	For Supplant with his slyhe cast	<i>stratagem</i>
2375	Fulofte happneth for to mowe	<i>harvest</i>
	Thing which another man hath sowe,	<i>sown</i>
	And makth comun of propreté	
	With sleihte and with soubtilité,	
	As men mai se fro yer to yere.	
2380	Thus cleymeth he the bot to stiere,	<i>boat</i>
	Of which another maister is.	
¶	Forthi, my sone, if thou er this	<i>(see note)</i>
	Hast ben of such professioun,	
	Discovere thi confessioun:	
2385	Hast thou supplanted eny man?"	
Confessio Amantis	"For oght that I you telle can,	
	Min holi fader, as of the dede	
	I am withouten eny drede	
	Al gulteles; bot of my thoght	
2390	Mi conscience excuse I noght.	
	For were it wrong or were it riht,	
	Me lakketh nothing bote myht	<i>power</i>
	That I ne wolde longe er this	
	Of other mannes love ywiss	<i>truly</i>
2395	Be weie of Supplantacioun	<i>By</i>
	Have mad apropriacioun	<i>appropriated</i>
	And holde that I nevere boghte,	<i>what</i>
	Thogh it another man forthoghte.	<i>[Even] though; [might] displease</i>
	And al this speke I bot of on,	
2400	For whom I lete alle othre gon;	
	Bot hire I mai noght overpassee,	
	That I ne mot alwey compasse,	<i>scheme</i>
	Me roghte noght be what queintise,	<i>should care not; cunning</i>

- So that I mihte in eny wise
 2405 Fro suche that mi ladi serve
 Hire herte make for to swerve
 Withouten eny part of love.
 For be the goddes alle above
 I wolde it mihte so befall,
 2410 That I alone scholde hem alle
 Supplante, and welde hire at mi wille.
 And that thing mai I noght fulfille,
 Bot if I scholde strengthe make;
 And that I dar noght undertake,
 2415 Thogh I were as was Alisaundre,
 For therof mihte arise skaundre;
 And certes that schal I do nevere,
 For in good feith yit hadde I levere
 In my simplesce for to die,
 2420 Than worche such Supplantarie.
 Of otherwise I wol noght seie
 That if I founde a seker weie,
 I wolde as for conclusioun
 Worche after Supplantacioun,
 2425 So hihe a love for to winne.
 Now, fader, if that this be sinne,
 I am al redy to redresce
 The gilt of which I me confesse.”
- Confessor** “Mi goode sone, as of Supplant
 2430 Thee thar noght drede tant ne quant,
 As for nothing that I have herd,
 Bot only that thou hast misferd
 Thenkende, and that me liketh noght,
 For Godd beholt a mannes thoght.
 2435 And if thou understode in soth
 In loves cause what it doth,
 A man to ben a Supplantour,
 Thou woldest for thin oghne honour
 Be double weie take kepe.
- 2440 Ferst for thin oghne astat to kepe,
 To be thiself so wel bethought
 That thou supplanted were noght,
 And ek for worschipe of thi name
 Towardes othre do the same,
 2445 And soffren every man have his.
 Bot natheles it was and is,
 That in a wayt at alle assaies
 Supplant of love in oure daies
 The lief fulofte for the levere
 2450 Forsakth, and so it hath don evere.
- possess her according to
use force
slander
rather
more certain way
exalted
so many nor how many (i.e., in any way)
proceeded incorrectly [in your]
contemplates
In double measure be careful
honor
in an ambush
loved one; more desired one*

- Ensample I finde therupon,
 At Troie how that Agamenon
 Supplantede the worthi knyht
 Achilles of that swete wiht,
 2455 Which named was Brexeida;
 And also of Criseida,
 Whom Troilus to love ches,
 Supplanted hath Diomedes.
- (see note) *creature*

[TALE OF GETA AND AMPHITRION]

- Of Geta and Amphitriion,
 2460 That whilom weren bothe as on
 Of frendschipe and of compaignie,
 I rede how that Supplantarie
 In love, as it betidde tho,
 Beguiled hath on of hem tuo.
 2465 For this Geta that I of meene,
 To whom the lusti faire Almeene
 Assured was be weie of love,
 Whan he best wende have ben above
 And sikerest of that he hadde,
 2470 Cupido so the cause ladde,
 That whil he was out of the weie,
 Amphitrioun hire love aweie
 Hath take, and in this forme he wroghte.
 Be nyhte unto the chambre he soghte,
 2475 Wher that sche lay, and with a wyle
 He contrefeteth for the whyle
 The vois of Gete in such a wise,
 That made hire of hire bedd arise,
 Wenende that it were he,
 2480 And let him in, and whan thei be
 Togedre abedde in armes faste,
 This Geta cam thanne ate laste
 Unto the dore and seide, ‘Undo.’
 And sche ansuerde and bad him go,
 2485 And seide how that abedde al warm
 Hir lief lay naked in hir arm.
 Sche wende that it were soth.
 Lo, what Supplant of love doth:
 This Geta aforth bejaped wente,
 2490 And yit ne wiste he what it mente;
 Amphitriion him hath supplanted
 With sleyhte of love and hire enchaunted.
 And thus put every man out other,
 The schip of love hath lost his rother,
- (see note) *Who once; as one*
happened then
Was bound by promise of matrimony
most certain
manner
cunning deceit
Thinking
bound in an embrace
beloved
thought; true
tricked
knew not
its rudder

- 2495 So that he can no reson stiere.
 And for to speke of this matiere
 Touchende love and his Supplant,
 A tale which is acordant
 Unto thin ere I thenke enforme.
 2500 Now herkne, for this is the forme.

[TALE OF THE FALSE BACHELOR]

- 2505 Of thilke cité chief of alle
 Which men the noble Rome calle,
 Er it was set to Cristes feith,
 Ther was, as the cronique seith,
 An emperour, the which it ladde
 In pes, that he no werres hadde.
 There was nothing desobeissant
 Which was to Rome appourtenant,
 Bot al was torned into reste.
 2510 To some it thoghte for the beste,
 To some it thoghte nothing so
 And that was only unto tho
 Whos herte stod upon knythhode.
 Bot most of alle of his manhode
 2515 The worthi sone of th'empemour,
 Which wolde ben a werreior,
 As he that was chivalerous
 Of worldes fame and desirous,
 Began his fadre to beseche
 2520 That he the werres mihte seche,
 In strange marches for to ride.
 His fader seide he scholde abide,
 And wolde granten him no leve.
 Bot he, which wolde noght beleve,
 2525 A kniht of his to whom he triste,
 So that his fader nothing wiste,
 He tok and tolde him his corage,
 That he pourposeth a viage.
 If that fortune with him stonde,
 2530 He seide how that he wolde fonde
 The grete see to passe unknowe,
 And there abyde for a throwe
 Upon the werres to travale.
 And to this point withoute faile
 2535 This kniht, whan he hath herd his lord,
 Is swore and stant of his acord.
 And thei that bothe yonge were,
 So that in privé conseil there,
- (see note)
- pertaining (i.e., a rightful possession)
- foreign lands
- stay
- permission to depart
- tarry (remain)
- trusted
- knew
- secret plan
- journey
- attempt
- time
- labor
- sworn
- Even if

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| 2540 | Thei ben assented for to wende.
And therupon to make an ende,
Tresor ynowh with hem thei token,
And whan the time is best thei loken
That sodeinliche in a galeie
From Romelond thei wente here weie
And londe upon that other side.
The world fell so that ilke tide,
Which evere hise happens hath diverse,
The grete Soldan thanne of Perse
Agein the Caliphe of Egipte
A werre, which that him beclipte,
Hath in a marche costeiant.
And he, which was a poursuiant
Worschipe of armes to atteigne,
This Romein, let anon ordeigne,
That he was redi everydel.
And whan he was arraied wel
Of everything which him belongeth,
Straght unto Kaire his weie he fongeth,
Wher he the Soldan thanne fond,
And axeth that withinne his lond
He mihte him for the werre serve,
As he which wolde his thonk deserve. | depart
galley ship
their
sultan; Persia
surrounded
bordering (adjacent) district |
| 2550 | The Soldan was riht glad with al,
And wel the more in special
Whan that he wiste he was Romein.
Bot what was elles in certein,
That mihte he wite be no weie.
And thus the kniht of whom I seie
Toward the Soldan is beleft,
And in the marches now and eft,
Wher that the dedli werres were,
He wroghte such knihthode there,
That every man spak of him good.
And thilke time so it stod, | for which it is his duty
Cairo; battle position he takes |
| 2555 | This mihti Soldan be his wif
A dowhter hath, that in this lif
Men seiden ther was non so fair.
Sche scholde ben hir fader hair,
And was of yeres ripe ynowh. | knew
departed |
| 2560 | Hire beauté many an herte drowh
To bowe unto that ilke law
Fro which no lif mai be withdrawe,
And that is love, whos nature
Set lif and deth in aventure | |
| 2565 | Of hem that knyhthode undertake. | |
| 2570 | | |
| 2575 | | |
| 2580 | | |
| 2585 | | |

- This lusti peine hath overtake
 The herte of this Romein so sore,
 That to knihtode more and more
 Prouesce avanceth his corage. *Bravery emboldens; heart*
 2590 Lich to the leoun in his rage,
 Fro whom that alle bestes fle,
 Such was the knyht in his degré.
 Wher he was armed in the feld,
 Ther dorste non abide his scheld; *dared none stand [and face] reputé*
 2595 Gret pris upon the werre he hadde.
 Bot sche which al the chance ladde,
 Fortune, schop the marches so
 That be th'assent of bothe tuo,
 The Soldan and the Caliphe eke, *by*
 2600 Bataille upon a dai thei seke,
 Which was in such a wise set
 That lengere scholde it noght be let. *delayed*
 Thei made hem stronge on every side,
 And whan it drowh toward the tide *time*
 2605 That the bataille scholde be,
 The Soldan in gret priveté
 A gold ring of his dowhter tok
 And made hire swere upon a bok
 And ek upon the goddes alle, *arrayed for battle*
 2610 That if fortune so befalle
 In the bataille that he deie,
 That sche schal thilke man obeie
 And take him to hire housebonde,
 Which thilke same ring to honde *taken*
 2615 Hire scholde bringe after his deth.
 This hath sche swore, and forth he geth
 With al the pouer of his lond
 Unto the marche, where he fond
 His enemy full embatailled. *timorous*
 2620 The Soldan hath the feld assailed:
 Thei that ben hardy sone assemblen,
 Wherof the dredfull hertes tremblen.
 That on sleth, and that other sterveth,
 Bot above alle his pris deserveth *one slays; other dies*
 2625 This knihtly Romein; where he rod,
 His dedly swerd no man abod,
 Agein the which was no defence.
 Egipre fledde in his presence,
 And thei of Perse upon the chace *honor*
 2630 Poursuien: bot I not what grace
 Befell, an arwe out of a bowe
 Al sodeinly that ilke throwe *could withstand*
Against
chase
know not

- The Soldan smot, and ther he lay.
 The chace is left for thilke day,
 2635 And he was bore into a tente.
 The Soldan sih how that it wente,
 And that he scholde algate die;
 And to this knyft of Romanie,
 As unto him whom he most triste,
 2640 His dowhther ring, that non it wiste,
 He tok, and tolde him al the cas,
 Upon hire oth what tokne it was
 Of that sche scholde ben his wif.
 Whan this was seid, the hertes lif
 2645 Of this Soldan departeth sone;
 And therupon, as was to done,
 The dede body wel and faire
 Thei carie til thei come at Kaire,
 Wher he was worthily begrave.
 2650 The lordes, whiche as wolden save
 The regne which was desolat,
 To bring it into good astat
 A parlement thei sette anon.
 Now herkne what fell therupon:
 2655 This yonge lord, this worthi kniht
 Of Rome, upon the same niht
 That thei amorwe trete scholde,
 Unto his bacheler he tolde
 His conseil, and the ring withal
 2660 He scheweth, thurgh which that he schal,
 He seith, the kinges dowhther wedde,
 For so the ring was leid to wedde,
 He tolde, into hir fader hond,
 That with what man that sche it fond
 2665 She scholde him take to hire lord.
 And this, he seith, stant of record,
 Bot no man wot who hath this ring.
 This bacheler upon this thing
 His ere and his entente leide,
 2670 And thoghte more thanne he seide,
 And feigneth with a fals visage
 That he was glad, bot his corage
 Was al set in another wise.
 These olde philosophres wise
 2675 Thei writen upon thilke while,
 That he mai best a man beguile
 In whom the man hath most credence;
 And this befell in evidence
 Toward this yonge lord of Rome.
- pursuit of the enemy*
- saw*
- in any event*
- trusted*
- [so] that*
- to Cairo*
- buried*
- kingdom*
- likewise*
- pledged*

- 2680 His bacheler, which hadde tome,
 Whan that his lord be nihte slepte,
 This ring, the which his maister kepte,
 Out of his pours awey he dede,
 And putte another in the stede. *who had opportunity*
- 2685 Amorwe, whan the court is set,
 The yonge ladi was forth fet,
 To whom the lordes don homage,
 And after that of mariage
 Thei trete and axen of hir wille. *purse*
- 2690 Bot sche, which thoghte to fulfille
 Hire fader heste in this matiere,
 Seide openly, that men mai hiere,
 The charge which hire fader bad. *place*
- 2695 Tho was this lord of Rome glad
 And drowth toward his pours anon,
 Bot al for noght, it was agon.
 His bacheler it hath forthdrawe,
 And axeth therupon the lawe *removed*
- 2700 That sche him holde covenant. *undertaken*
- 2705 The tokne was so sufficant
 That it ne mihte be forsake,
 And natheles his lord hath take
 Querelle agein his oghne man;
 Bot for nothing that evere he can *then*
- 2710 He mihte as thanne noght ben herd,
 So that his cleym is unansuerd,
 And he hath of his pourpos failed.
- This bacheler was tho consailed
 And wedded, and of thilke empire
- 2715 He was coroned lord and sire,
 And al the lond him hath received;
 Wherof his lord, which was deceived,
 A seknesse er the thridde morwe
 Conceived hath of dedly sorwe.
- 2720 And as he lay upon his deth,
 Therwhile him lasteth speche and breth,
 He sende for the worthieste
 Of al the lond and ek the beste,
 And tolde hem al the sothe tho,
- 2725 That he was sone and heir also
 Of th' emperor of grete Rome,
 And how that thei togedre come,
 This kniht and he. Riht as it was,
 He tolde hem al the pleine cas,
- 2730 And for that he his conseil tolde,
 That other hath al that he wolde,

	And he hath failed of his mede. As for the good he takth non hiede, He seith, bot only of the love	<i>reward</i> <i>wealth</i>
2730	Of which he wende have ben above. And therupon be lettore write He doth his fader for to wite Of al this matiere as it stod;	<i>believed</i> <i>existed in the heavens</i>
	And thanne with an hertly mod	<i>causes; know</i>
2735	Unto the lordes he besoghte To telle his ladi how he boghte Hire love, of which another gladeth. And with that word his hewe fadeth,	<i>heartfelt passion</i>
	And seide, 'Adieu, my ladi swete.'	
2740	The lif hath lost his kindly hete, And he lay ded as eny ston, Wherof was sory many on, Bot non of alle so as sche.	<i>its natural heat</i>
	This false knyght in his degree	
2745	Arested was and put in hold, For openly whan it was told Of the tresoun which is befalle, Thurghout the lond thei seiden alle,	<i>prison</i>
	If it be soth that men suppose,	
2750	His oghne untrowthe him schal depose. And for to seche an evidence, With honour and gret reverence, Wherof they mihten knowe an ende,	
	To th'emerour anon thei sende	
2755	The lettore which his sone wrot. And whan that he the sothe wot, To telle his sorwe is endeles. Bot yit in haste natholes	
	Upon the tale which he herde	
2760	His stiward into Perse ferde With many a worthi Romein eke, His liege tretour for to seke;	<i>traveled</i> <i>also</i> <i>seek</i>
	And whan thei thider come were, This kniht him hath confessed there	
2765	How falsly that he hath him bore, Wherof his worthi lord was lore.	<i>lost</i>
	Tho seiden some he scholde deie, Bot yit thei founden such a weie	
	That he schal noght be ded in Perse;	
2770	And thus the skiles ben diverse. Because that he was coroned, And that the lond was abandoned	<i>reasonings</i>
	To him, althogh it were unriht,	<i>given over</i> <i>unjust</i>

- 2775 Ther is no peine for him diht; *punishment; allowable*
 Bot to this point and to this ende
 Thei granten wel that he schal wende
 With the Romeins to Rome agein.
 And thus acorded ful and plein,
 The qwike body with the dede
 With leve take forth thei lede,
 Wher that Supplant hath his juise. *depart*
 2780 Wheroft thou thee miht avise
 Upon this enformacioun
 Touchende of supplantacioun,
 That thou, my sone, do noght so.
 And for to take hiede also
 What Supplant doth in other halve,
 Ther is no man can finde a salve
 Pleinly to helen such a sor. *living*
 2785 It hath and schal ben everemor,
 Whan Pride is with Envie joint,
 He soffreth no man in good point,
 Wher that he mai his honour lette.
 And therupon if I schal sette *heal; wound*
 2790 Ensample, in holy cherche I finde
 How that Supplant is noght behinde;
 God wot if that it now be so.
 For in cronique of time ago
 I finde a tale concordable
 2795 Of Supplant, which that is no fable,
 In the manere as I schal telle,
 So as whilom the thinges felle. *obstruct*
 2800 *formerly*

[TALE OF POPE BONIFACE]

- At Rome, as it hath ofte falle,
 2805 The vicair general of alle *(see note)*
 Of hem that lieven Cristes feith
 His laste day, which non withseith,
 Hath schet as to the worldes yē, *believe*
 Whos name if I schal specefie,
 He hihte Pope Nicolas. *none may oppose*
 2810 And thus whan that he passed was,
 The cardinals, that wolden save *shut; eye*
 The forme of lawe, in the conclave
 Gon for to chese a newe pope,
 And after that thei cowthe agrope *was called*
 2815 Hath ech of hem seid his entente,
 Til ate laste thei assente
 Upon an holy clerk reclus, *who wanted to maintain*
Proceeded to choose
according to what they could determine
agree

- Which full was of gostli vertus. *spiritual*
 His pacience and his simplesse
 2820 Hath set him into hih noblesse.
 Thus was he pope canonized,
 With gret honour and intronized. *enthroned*
 And upon chance as it is falle,
 His name Celestin men calle;
 2825 Which notefied was be bulle
 To holi cherche and to the fulle
 In alle londes magnified.
 Bot every worschipe is envied, *honor*
 And that was thilke time sene.
 2830 For whan this pope of whom I meene
 Was chose, and othre set beside,
 A cardinal was thilke tide
 Which the papat longe hath desired
 And therupon gretli conspired; *same; burns*
 2835 Bot whan he sih fortune is failed,
 For which long time he hath travailed,
 That ilke fyr which Ethna brenneth
 Thurghout his wofull herte renneth,
 Which is resembled to Envie, *runs*
 2840 Wherof Supplant and tricherie
 Engendred is; and natheles
 He feigneth love, he feigneth pes,
 Outward he doth the reverence,
 Bot al withinne his conscience
 2845 Thurgh fals ymaginacioun *remarkable trick*
 He thoghte Supplantacioun.
 And therupon a wonder wyle
 He wroghte: for at thilke whyle
 It fell so that of his lignage
 2850 He hadde a clergoun of yong age, *educated*
 Whom he hath in his chambre affaited.
 This cardinal his time hath waited,
 And with his wordes slyhe and queinte,
 The whiche he cowthe wysly peinte,
 2855 He schop this clerk of which I telle *arranged for*
 Toward the pope for to duelle,
 So that withinne his chambre anyht *Near*
 He lai, and was a privé wyht
 Toward the pope on nyhtes tide. *at night*
 2860 Mai no man fle that schal betide.
 This cardinal, which thoghte guile, *that [which] must occur*
 Upon a day whan he hath while *who thought [to] beguile*
 This yonge clerc unto him tok,
 And made him swere upon a bok,

- 2865 And told him what his wille was.
 And forth withal a trompe of bras
 He hath him take, and bad him this:
 'Thou schalt,' he seide, 'whan time is,
 Awaite, and take riht good kepe
 2870 Whan that the pope is fast aslepe
 And that non other man be nyh.
 And thanne that thou be so slyh
 Thurghout the trompe into his ere,
 Fro hevene as thogh a vois it were,
 2875 To sounе of such prolacioun
 That he his meditacioun
 Theroф mai take and understande,
 As thogh it were of Goddes sonde.¹
 And in this wise thou schal seie,
 2880 That he do thilke astat aweiе
 Of pope, in which he stant honoured;
 So schal his soule be socoured
 Of thilke worschipe ate laste
 In hevene which schal evere laste.'
- 2885 This clerс, whan he hath herd the forme
 How he the pope scholde enforme,
 Tok of the cardinal his leve,
 And goth him hom, til it was eve,
 And prively the trompe he hedde,
 2890 Til that the pope was abedde.
 And at the midnyght, whan he knewh
 The pope slepte, thanne he blewh
 Withinne his trompe thurgh the wal,
 And tolde in what manere he schal
 2895 His papacie leve, and take
 His ferste astat. And thus awake
 This holi pope he made thries,
 Wherof diverse fantasies
 Upon his grete holinesse
 2900 Withinne his herte he gan impresse.
 The pope ful of innocence
 Conceiveth in his conscience
 That it is Goddes wille he cesse;
 Bot in what wise he may relese
 2905 His hihe astat, that wot he noght.
 And thus withinne himself bethoght,
- trumpet
given to him
when it is time
Observe
- near
- give that estate
- saved from damnation
honor
- outline [of the plan]
- evening
secretly; hid
- sounded (blew)
- return to
former estate
- [that] he resign
- knows
convinced

¹ Lines 2872–78: *And then make yourself so sly / As to blow a note of such a pitch / Through the trumpet into his ear, / As if it were a voice from heaven, / [So] that he might consider it and believe / It was by God's command*

- He bar it stille in his memoire,
 Til he cam to the consistoire;
 And there in presence of hem alle
 2910 He axeth if it so befall
 That eny pope cesse wolde,
 How that the lawe it soffre scholde.
 Thei seten alle stille and herde,
 Was non which to the point ansuerde,
 2915 For to what pourpos that it mente
 Ther was no man knew his entente,
 Bot only he which schop the guile.
 This cardinal the same while
 Al openly with wordes pleine
 2920 Seith if the pope wolde ordeigne
 That ther be such a lawe wrought
 Than mihte he cesse and elles noght.
 And as he seide, don it was,
 The pope anon upon the cas
 2925 Of his papal autorité
 Hath mad and gove the decré.
 And whan that lawe was confermed
 In due forme and al affermed,
 This innocent, which was deceived,
 2930 His papacie anon hath weyved,
 Renounced, and resigned eke.
 That other was nothing to seke,
 Bot underneth the such a jape
 He hath so for himselfe schape,
 2935 That how as evere it him beseme,
 The mitre with the diadem
 He hath thurgh Supplantacion.
 And in his confirmacion
 Upon the fortune of his grace
 2940 His name is cleped Boneface.
 Under the viser of Envie,
 Lo, thus was hid the tricherie,
 Which hath beguiled many on.
 Bot such conseil ther mai be non,
 2945 With treson whan it is conspired,
 That it nys lich the sparke fyred
 Up in the rof, which for a throwe
 Lith hidd, til whan the wyndes blowe
 It blaseth out on every side.
 2950 This Bonefas, which can noght hyde
 The tricherie of his Supplant,
 Hath openly mad his avant
 How he the papacie hath wonne.
- contrived*
- created*
- resign or else not*
- official papal position*
- given*
- ratified*
- abandoned*
- (i.e., Boniface); readily available [for the office]*
- is not like*
- roof; moment*
- Lies hidden*
- bursts into flame*
- boast*

- Bot thing which is with wrong begonne
 2955 Mai nevere stonde wel at ende.
 Wher Pride schal the bowe bende,
 He schet fulofte out of the weie.
 And thus the pope of whom I seie,
 Whan that he stod on hih the whiel,
 2960 He can noght soffre himself be wel.
 Envie, which is loveles,
 And Pride, which is laweles,
 With such tempeste made him erre,
 That charité goth out of herre,
 2965 So that upon misgovernance
 Agein Lowyz the king of France
 He tok querelle of his oulfrage
 And seide he scholde don hommage
 Unto the cherche bodily.
 2970 Bot he that wiste nothing why
 He scholde do so gret servise
 After the world in such a wise,
 Withstod the wrong of that demande;
 For noght the pope mai comande
 2975 The king wol noght the pope obeie.
 This pope tho be alle weie
 That he mai worche of violence
 Hath sent the bulle of his sentence
 With cursinge and with enterdit.
 2980 The king upon this wrongful plyt,
 To kepe his regne fro servage,
 Conseiled was of his barnage
 That miht with miht schal be withstonde.
 Thus was the cause take on honde,
 2985 And seiden that the papacie
 Thei wolde honoure and magnefie
 In al that evere is spirital;
 Bot thilke Pride temporal
 Of Boneface in his persone,
 2990 Agein that ilke wrong alone
 Thei wolde stonden in debat.
 And thus the man and noght the stat
 The Frensche schopen be her miht
 To grieve. And fell ther was a kniht,
 2995 Sire Guilliam de Langharet,
 Which was upon this cause set;
 And therupon he tok a route
 Of men of armes and rod oute,
 So longe and in a wayt he lay,
 3000 That he aspide upon a day
- deviate
out of killer*
- outrage*
- in person*
- papal edict*
- peers of the realm
opposed*
- it so happened
William*
- company*
- an ambush*

- The pope was at Avinoun,
And scholde ryde out of the toun
Unto Pontsorge, the which is
A castell in Provence of his.
- 3005 Upon the weie and as he rod,
This kniht, which hoved and abod
Embuissched upon horse bak,
Al sodeinliche upon him brak
And hath him be the bridel sesed,
- 3010 And seide: 'O thou, which hast desesed
The court of France be thi wrong,
Now schalt thou singe another song:
Thin enterdit and thi sentence
Agein thin oghne conscience
- 3015 Hierafter thou schalt fiele and grope.
We pleigne noght agein the pope,
For thilke name is honourable,
Bot thou, which hast be deceivable
And tricherous in al thi werk,
- 3020 Thou Bonefas, thou proude clerk,
Misledere of the papacie,
Thi false bodi schal abyne
And soffre that it hath deserved.'
- Lo, thus the Supplantour was served;
3025 For thei him ladden into France
And setten him to his penance
Withinne a tour in harde bondes,
Wher he for hunger bothe hise hondes
Eet of and deide — God wot how —
- 3030 Of whom the wrytinge is yit now
Registred, as a man mai hiere,
Which spekth and seith in this manere:
 Thin entré lich the fox was slyh,
Thi regne also with pride on hih
- 3035 Was lich the leon in his rage;
Bot ate laste of this passage
Thi deth was to the houndes like.
 Such is the lettre of his cronicque
Proclaimed in the court of Rome,
3040 Wheroft the wise ensample nome.
- And yit, als ferforth as I dar,
I rede alle othre men be war,
And that thei loke wel algate
That non his oghne astat translate
- 3045 Of holi cherche in no degree
Be fraude ne soubtilité:
For thilke honour which Aaron tok
- stayed; waited
In ambush
sprang into action
by the rein seized

by your

be punished

subjected
tower; shackles

Devoured (Ate off); died

Your beginning like; sly (see note)

took

advise

- Schal non receive, as seith the bok
Bot he cleped as he was.
- 3050 What I schal thenken in this cas
Of that I hiere now aday,
I not: bot he which can and may,
Be reson bothe and be nature
The help of every mannes cure,
3055 He kepe Simon fro the folde.
- ¶ For Joachim thilke abbot tolde
How suche daies scholden falle,
¶ That comunliche in places alle
The chapmen of such mercerie
3060 With fraude and with Supplantarie
So manye scholden beie and selle,
That he ne may for schame telle
So foul a senne in mannes ere.
Bot God forbiede that it were
- 3065 In oure daies that he seith.
For if the cleric beware his feith
In chapmanhod at such a feire,
The remenant mot nede empeire
Of al that to the world belongeth;
- 3070 For whan that holi cherche wrongeth,
I not what other thing schal rihte.
And natheles at mannes sihte
Envie for to be preferred
Hath conscience so differred,
- 3075 That no man loketh to the vice
Which is the moder of malice,
And that is thilke false Envie,
Which causeth many a tricherie;
For wher he may another se
- 3080 That is mor gracious than he,
It schal noght stonden in his miht
Bot if he hindre such a wiht.
And that is welnyh overal,
3084 This vice is now so general.
- ¶ Envie thilke unhapp indrowh,
Whan Joab be deceipte slowh
Abner, for drede he scholde be
With King David such as was he.
And thurgh Envie also it fell
- 3090 Of thilke false Achitofell,
For his conseil was noght achieved,
Bot that he sih Cusy believed
With Absolon and him forsake,
He heng himself upon a stake.
- know not*
- (see note)*
- (see note)*
- merchandise*
- buy*
- uses*
- bargaining*
- behaves wrongly*
- know not; provide correction*
- Unless; person*
- (see note)*

- 3095 Senec witnesseth openly
How that Envie proprely
Is of the court the comun wenche,
And halt taverne for to schenche
That drink which makth the herte brenne, *pour*
3100 And doth the wit aboute renne,
Be every weie to compasse
How that he mihte alle othre passe,
As he which thurgh unkindeschipe
Envieth every felaschipe. *unnatural behavior*

3105 So that thou miht wel knowe and se,
Ther is no vise such as he,
Ferst toward Godd abhominable,
And to mankinde unprofitable:
And that be wordes bot a fewe
3110 I schal be reson prove and schewe.”

[THE PALLOR OF ENVY]

- vi. *Inuidie stimulus sine causa ledit abortus,*
Nam sine temptante crimine crimen habet.
Non est huius opus temptare Cupidinis archum,
Dumque faces Veneris ethnica flamma vorat.
Absque rubore gene, pallor quas fuscus obumbrat,
*Frigida nature cetera membra docent.*¹

- | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| [Confessor] "Envie if that I schal descriue, | | describe |
| He is noght schaply for to wyve | | appropriate to marry |
| In erthe among the wommen hiere; | | |
| For ther is in him no matiere | | (see note) |
| 3115 | Wheroft he mihte do plesance. | |
| Ferst for his hevy continance | | |
| Of that he semeth evere unglad, | | |
| He is noght able to ben had; | | |
| And ek he brenneth so withinne, | | |
| 3120 | That kinde mai no profit winne, | |
| Wheroft he scholde his love plese. | | |
| For thilke blod which scholde have ese | | |
| To regne among the moiste veines, | | |
| Is drye of thilke unkendeli peines | | by those unnatural |
| 3125 | Thurgh whiche Envie is fyred ay. | |
| And thus be reson prove I may | | always |

¹ *The goad of envy, an ill-timed birth, hurts without cause; for it possesses sin without sin tempting it. He has no need for Cupid's bow to tempt him, since the heathen flame devours Venus' torches. The cheeks, drained of red, which a dusky pallor obscures, reveal the other limbs to be frigid in nature.*

- That toward love Envie is noght; *near love*
 And otherwise if it be soght,
 Upon what side as evere it falle, *whatsoever side it [might] occur*
- 3130 It is the werste vice of alle,
 Which of himself hath most malice.
 For understand that every vice
 Som cause hath, wherof it groweth,
 Bot of Envie no man knoweth
 3135 Fro whenne he cam bot out of helle. *except*
 For thus the wise clerkes telle,
 That no spirit bot of malice
 Be weie of kinde upon a vice
 Is tempted, and be such a weie
 3140 Envie hath kinde put aweie *except a malicious one*
 And of malice hath his steringe,
 Wherof he makth this bakbitinge,
 And is himself therof desesed.
 So mai ther be no kinde plesed;
 3145 For ay the mor that he envieth, *strives*
 The more agein himself he plieth.
 Thus stant Envie in good espeir *hope*
 To ben himself the develes heir,
 As he which is his nexte liche
 3150 And forthest fro the heveneriche, *closest peer (closest look-a-like)*
 For there mai he nevere wone. *heavenly kingdom*
- Confessor** Forthi, my goode diere sone, *dwell*
 If thou wolt finde a siker weie
 3154 To love, put Envie aweie.” *would like to find a more secure*
- Amans** “Min holy fader, reson wolde
 That I this vice eschuie scholde.
 Bot yit to strengthe mi corage,
 If that ye wolde in avantage
 Therof sette a recoverir, *in addition (to boot)*
 3160 It were to me a gret desir, *remedy*
 That I this vice mihte flee.”

[CHARITY AND PITY AS REMEDY]

- Confessor** “Now understand, my sone, and se,
 Ther is phisique for the seke, *medicine; sick*
 And vertus for the vices eke. *antidotes*
- 3165 Who that the vices wolde eschuie, *follow*
 He mot be resoun thanne suie
 The vertus; for be thilke weie
 He mai the vices don aweie,
 For thei togedre mai noght duelle.
 3170 For as the water of a welle

- Of fyr abateth the malice,
Riht so vertu fordoth the vice. *drives out*
- Agein Envie is Charité,
Which is the moder of Pité,
3175 That makth a mannes herte tendre,
That it mai no malice engendre
In him that is enclin thereto.
For his corage is tempred so,
That thogh he mihte himself relieve, *gain comfort*
- 3180 Yit wolde he noght another grieve,
Bot rather for to do plesance
He berth himselfen the grevance,
So fain he wolde another ese. *gladly*
- 3185 Wheroft, mi sone, for thin ese
Now herkne a tale which I rede,
And understand it wel, I rede.

[TALE OF CONSTANTINE AND SYLVESTER]

- Among the bokes of Latin
I finde write of Constantin
3189 The worthi Emperour of Rome,
Suche infortunes to him come, *(see note)*
- ¶ Whan he was in his lusti age,
The lepre cawhte in his visage
And so forth overal aboute, *leprosy; face
then everywhere else*
- That he ne mihte ryden oute:
3195 So lefte he bothe schield and spere,
As he that mihte him noght bestere,
And hield him in his chambre clos.
Thurgh al the world the fame aros,
The grete clerkes ben asent *take vigorous action
secluded
was spread abroad
[medical] scholars; sent for*
- 3200 And come at his comandement
To trete upon this lordes hele.
So longe thei togodre dele,
That thei upon this medicine
Aponten hem, and determine *health
consult*
- 3205 That in the maner as it stod
Thei wolde him bathe in childe blod *Resolve themselves
child's blood*
- Withinne sevene wynter age.
For, as thei sein, that scholde assuage
The lepre and al the violence,
3210 Which that thei knewe of accidence *leprosy
by circumstance (i.e., pathologically)*
- And noght be weie of kinde is falle.
And therto thei acorden alle
As for final conclusioun,
And tolden here opinioune *their*

- 3215 To th'emerour. And he anon
 His conseil tok, and therupon
 With lettres and with seales oute
 Thei sende in every lond abouthe
 The yonge children for to seche,
 3220 Whos blod, thei seiden, schal be leche
 For th'emerours maladie.
 Ther was ynowh to wepe and crie
 Among the modres whan thei herde
 Hou wofully this cause ferde,
 3225 Bot natheles thei moten bowe;
 And thus wommen ther come ynowhe
 With children soukende on the tete.
 Tho was ther manye teres lete,
 Bot were hem lieve or were hem lothe,
 3230 The wommen and the children bothe
 Into the paleis forth be broght
 With many a sory hertes thought
 Of hem whiche of here bodi bore
 The children hadde, and so forlore
 3235 Withinne a while scholden se.
 The modres wepe in here degré,
 And manye of hem aswoune falle,
 The yonge babes criden alle.
 This noyse aros, the lord it herde,
 3240 And loked out, and how it ferde
 He sih, and as who seith abreide
 Out of his slep, and thus he seide:
 'O thou divine pourveance,
 Which every man in the balance
 3245 Of kinde hast formed to be liche,
 The povere is bore as is the riche
 And deieth in the same wise.
 Upon the fol, upon the wise
 Siknesse and hele entrecoume.
 3250 Mai non eschuiue that fortune
 Which kinde hath in hire lawe set;
 Hire strengthe and beauté ben beset
 To every man aliche fre,
 That sche preferreth no degré
 3255 As in the disposicioun
 Of bodili complexioun.
 And ek of soule resonable
 The povere child is bore als able
 To vertu as the kinges sone;
 3260 For every man his oghne wone
 After the lust of his assay
- official documents*
- seek*
- solution*
- fared*
- must be submissive*
- like it or not*
- destroyed*
- according to their nature*
- saints*
- infants*
- started*
- providence*
- scales*
- nature; the same*
- poor*
- dies; manner*
- have fellowship*
- bestowed*
- equally*
- [Such] that she exalts no social rank*
- as capable*
- Of attaining virtue*
- by his own habit*
- desire; attempt*

- The vice or vertu chese may. *choose*
 Thus stonden alle men franchised, *possessing freedom*
 3264 Bot in astat thei ben divised; *One is a lord*
Nota To some worschipe and richesse,
 To some poverté and distresse,
 On lordeth and another serveth;
 Bot yit as every man deserveth
 The world gift hought his giftes hiere.
 3270 Bot certes he hath gret matiere
 To ben of good condicioun,
 Which hath in his subjeccioun
 The men that ben of his semblance.' *[He] who*
likeness
 And ek he tok a remembrance
 3275 How He that made lawe of kinde
 Wolde every man to lawe binde,
 And bad a man, such as he wolde
 Toward himself, riht such he scholde
 Toward another don also.
 3280 And thus this worthi lord as tho
 Sette in balance his oghne astat
 And with himself stod in debat,
 And thoghte hou that it was noght good
 To se so mochel mannes blod
 3285 Be spilt for cause of him alone.
 He sih also the grete mone, *lament*
 Of that the modres were unglade,
 And of the wo the children made,
 Wheroft al his herte tendreth,
 3290 And such pité withinne engendreth,
 That him was levere for to chese *it was preferable to him; choose*
 His oghne bodi for to lese, *lose*
 Than se so gret a moerdre wroght
 Upon the blod which gulteth noght. *murder perpetrated*
is in no way guilty
 3295 Thus for the pité which he tok
 Alle othre leches he forsok.
 And put him out of aventure
 Al only into Goddes cure;
 And seith, 'Who that woll maister be,
 3300 He mot be servant to pité.' *physicians*
 So ferforth he was overcome *danger (risk)*
 With charité, that he hath nome
 His conseil and hise officers,
 And bad unto hise tresorers
 3305 That thei his tresour al aboute *taken*
 Departe among that povere route
 Of wommen and of children bothe,
 Wheroft thei mihte hem fede and clothe *Distribute; crowd*

- And saufli tornen hom agein
 3310 Withoute lost of eny grein.
 Thurgh charité thus he despendeth
 His good, wheroft he amendeth
 The povere poeple, and contrevailleth
 The harm, that he hem so travaileth:
 3315 And thus the woful nyghtes sorwe
 To joie is torned on the morwe.
 Al was thonkinge, al was blessinge,
 Which erst was wepinge and cursinge.
 Thes wommen gon hom glade ynowh,
 3320 Ech on for joie on other lowh
 And preiden for this lordes hele,
 Which hath relesshed the querele,
 And hath his oghne will forsake
 In charité for Goddes sake.
 3325 Bot now hierafter thou schalt hier
 What God hath wroght in this matiere,
 As He which doth al equité.
 To him that wroghte charité
 He was ageinward charitous,
 3330 And to pité he was pitous.
 For it was nevere knowe yit
 That charité goth unaquit.
 The nyht, whan he was leid to slepe,
 The hihe God, which wolde him kepe,
 3335 Seint Peter and seint Poul him sende,
 Be whom he wolde his lepre amende.
 Thei tuo to him slepende appiere
 Fro God, and seide in this manere:
 'O Constantin, for thou hast served
 3340 Pité, thou hast pité deserved:
 Forthi thou schalt such pité have
 That God thurgh pité woll thee save,
 So schalt thou double hele finde,
 Ferst for thi bodiliche kinde,
 3345 And for thi wofull soule also,
 Thou schalt ben hol of bothe tuo.
 And for thou schalt thee noght despeire,
 Thi lepre schal no more empeire
 Til thou wolt sende therupon
 3350 Unto the Mont of Celion,
 Wher that Silvestre and his clergie
 Togedre duelle in compaignie
 For drede of thee, which many day
 Hast ben a fo to Cristes lay,
 3355 And hast destruid to mochel schame
 loss; vigorous youth
 recompenses
 countermands
 vexes
 good will
 formerly
 one; laughed
 good health
 Who
 in return
 unrequited
 leprosy cure
 come into view
 spoke
 because you have
 two different kinds of health
 physical nature
 grow worse
 foe; law
 slaughtered; great

- The prechours of His holy name.
 Bot now thou hast somdiel appesed
 Thi God, and with good dede plesed,
 That thou thi pité hast bewared
 3360 Upon the blod which thou hast spared.
 Forthi to this salvacioun
 Thou schalt have enformacioun,
 Such as Silvestre schal thee teche.
 Thee nedeth of non other leche.'
- 3365 This emperour, which al this herde,
 'Grant merci lordes,' he ansuerde,
 'I wol do so as ye me seie.
 Bot of o thing I wolde preie:
 What schal I telle unto Silvestre
- 3370 Or of youre name or of youre estre?'
 And thei him tolden what thei hihte,
 And forthwithal out of his sihte
 Thei passen up into the hevene.
 And he awok out of his swevene,
- 3375 And clepeth, and men come anon.
 He tolde his drem, and therupon
 In such a wise as he hem telleth
 The mont wher that Silvestre duelleth
 Thei have in alle haste soght,
- 3380 And founde he was and with hem broght
 To th' emperour, which to him tolde
 His swevene and elles what he wolde.
 And whan Silvestre hath herd the king,
 He was riht joiful of this thing,
- 3385 And him began with al his wit
 To techen upon holi writ
 Ferst how mankinde was forlore,
 And how the hihe God therfore
 His Sone sende from above,
- 3390 Which bore was for mannes love,
 And after of His oghne chois
 He tok His deth upon the Crois;
 And how in grave He was beloke,
 And how that He hath helle broke,
- 3395 And tok hem out that were Him lieve;
 And for to make ous full believe
 That He was verrai Goddes Sone,
 Agein the kinde of mannes wone
 Fro dethe He ros the thridde day,
- 3400 And whanne He wolde, as He wel may,
 He styh up to His Fader evene
 With fleissh and blod into the hevene;
- placated*
- bestowed*
- physician*
- you tell me*
- country*
- were called*
- dream*
- calls; quickly*
- dream*
- lost*
- enclosed*
- harrowed*
- those out; dear to Him*
- fully accept as valid*
- true*
- Against; nature; custom*
- ascended*

- And riht so in the same forme
 In fleissh and blod He schal reforme,
 3405 Whan time comth, the qwike and dede
 At thilke woful dai of drede,
 Where every man schal take his dom,
 Als wel the maister as the grom.
 The mihti kinges retene
 3410 That dai may stonde of no value
 With worldes strengthe to defende;
 For every man mot thanne entende
 To stonde upon his oghne dedes
 And leve alle othre mennes nedes.
 That dai mai no consail availe,
 3415 The pledour and the plee schal faille,
 The sentence of that ilke day
 Mai non appell sette in delay;
 Ther mai no gold the jugge plie,
 3420 That he ne schal the sothe trie
 And setten every man upriht,
 Als wel the plowman as the kniht.
 The lewed man, the grete clerk
 Schal stonde upon his oghne werk,
 3425 And such as he is founde tho,
 Such schal he be for everemo.
 Ther mai no peine be relessed,
 Ther mai no joie ben encressed,
 Bot endeles, as thei have do,
 3430 He schal receive on of the tuo.
 And thus Silvestre with his sawe
 The ground of al the Newe Lawe
 With gret devocion he precheth,
 Fro point to point and pleinly techeth
 3435 Unto this hethen emperour,
 And seith the hihe creatour
 Hath underfonge his charité,
 Of that he wroghte such pité,
 Whan he the children hadde on honde.
 Thus whan this lord hath understande
 3440 Of al this thing how that it ferde,
 Unto Silvestre he thanne ansuerde,
 With al his hole herte and seith
 That he is redi to the feith.
 And so the vessel which for blod
 3445 Was mad, Silvestre, ther it stod,
 With clene water of the welle
 In alle haste he let do felle,
 And sette Constantin therinne
- resurrect
living; dead*
- receive; judgment
servant*
- must*
- advocate*
- legal appeal
sway*
- But that he shall test the truth*
- layman; scholar*
- then*
- wise words
foundation*
- accepted
[Because] of*
- where*
- he caused to be filled*

- 3450 Al naked up unto the chinne.
 And in the while it was begunne,
 A liht, as thogh it were a sunne,
 Fro hevene into the place com
 Wher that he tok his Cristendom.
- 3455 And evere among the holi tales
 Lich as thei weren fışshes skales
 Ther fallen from him now and eft,
 Til that ther was nothing beleft
 Of al his grete maladie. *left over*
- 3460 For he that wolde him purefie,
 The hihe God hath mad him clene,
 So that ther lefte nothing sene;
 He hath him cleensed bothe tuo,
 The bodi and the soule also. *remained*
- 3465 Tho knew the emperour in dede
 That Cristes feith was for to drede,
 And sende anon hise lettres oute
 And let do crien al aboute,
 Up peine of deth that no man weyve *should turn aside*
- 3470 That he baptesme ne receive.
 After his moder qweene Heleine *[Such] that he not take baptism*
 He sende, and so betwen hem tweine
 Thei treten, that the cité all
 Was cristned, and sche forth withall.
- 3475 This emperour, which hele hath founde,
 Withinne Rome anon let founde
 Tuo cherches, whiche he dede make
 For Peter and for Poules sake,
 Of whom he hadde a visiou; *had built*
- 3480 And gaf therto possessioun
 Of lordschipe and of worldes good.
 Bot how so that his will was good
 Toward the pope and his franchise, *jurisdiction*
 Yit hath it proved other wise,
- 3485 To se the worchinge of the dede:
 For in cronique this I rede;
 Anon as he hath mad the gifte,
 A vois was herd on hih the lifte,
 Of which al Rome was adrad, *above in the air*
- 3490 And seith: 'Today is venym schad
 In Holi Cherche of temporal,
 Which medleth with the spirital.'
 And hou it stant of that degree
 Yit mai a man the sothe se.
- 3495 God mai amende it, whan He wile;
 I can therto non other skile. *know; reason*

- Confessor** Bot for to go ther I began,
 How charité mai helpe a man
 To bothe worldes, I have seid;
 3500 And if thou have an ere leid, *ear placed*
 Mi sone, thou miht understande,
 If charité be take on honde,
 Ther folweth after mochel grace.
 Forthi, if that thou wolt pourchace
 3505 How that thou miht Envie flee, *Ally yourself*
 Aqueinte thee with charité,
 Which is the vertu sovereine.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, I schal do my peine.
 For this ensample which ye tolde
 3510 With al myn herte I have withholde, *retained*
 So that I schal for everemore
 Eschuie Envie wel the more.
 And that I have er this misdo,
 Gif me my penance er I go.
 3515 And over that to mi matiere
 Of schrifte, why we sitten hiere
 In priveté between ous tweie,
 Now axeth what ther is, I preie.”
- Confessor** “Mi goode sone, and for thi lore
 3520 I woll thee telle what is more,
 So that thou schalt the vices knowe.
 For whan thei be to thee full knowe,
 Thou miht hem wel the betre eschuie.
 And for this cause I thenke suie *pursue*
 3525 The forme bothe and the matiere,
 As now suiendo thou schalt hiere
 Which vice stant next after this.
 And whan thou wost how that it is,
 As thou schal hiere me devise,
 3530 Thow miht thiself the betre avise.”



CONFESSIO AMANTIS: BOOK 3 (WRATH)

INCIPIT LIBER TERCIUS

[ON MELANCHOLY]

- i. *Ira suis paribus est par furii Acherontis,
Quo furor ad tempus nil pietatis habet.
Ira malencolicos animos perturbat, vt equo
Iure sui pondus nulla statera tenet.
Omnibus in causis grauat Ira, set inter amantes
Illa magis facili sorte grauamen agit:
Est vbi vir discors leuiterque repugnat amori,
Sepe loco ludi fletus ad ora venit.¹*

	[Confessor] “If thou the vices lest to knowe, Mi sone, it hath noght ben unknowe, Fro ferst that men the swerdes grounde, That ther nis on upon this grounde, A vice forein fro the lawe, Wherof that many a good felawe Hath be distraught be sodein chance. And yit to kinde no plesance It doth, bot wher he most achieveth His pourpos, most to kinde he grieveth, As he which out of conscience Is enemy to pacience And is be name on of the sevene, Which ofte hath set this world unevene, And cleped is the cruel Ire, Whos herte is everemore on fyre To speke amis and to do bothe, For his servantz ben evere wrothe.”	desire swords sharpened there is a thing on earth inimical to deranged nature (see note) but rather by; one at odds called Both to speak and to do wrong angry
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¹ *Wrath along with its peers is on par with the furies of Acheron; by means of it, Fury has no pity for the moment. Wrath disturbs melancholic souls, so that no scale holds its weights in equal judgment. Wrath weighs heavily in every cause; among lovers it stirs up weighty grievances on little grounds. Where a man is full of discord and lightly assails love, lamentation instead of playfulness often fills his face.*

[Amans] “Mi goode fader, tell me this:

20 What thing is Ire?”

[Confessor] “Sone, it is

That in oure Engliss Wrathe is hote,
Which hath hise wordes ay so hote,
That all a mannes pacience
Is fyred of the violence.
25 For he with him hath evere fyve
Servantz that helpen him to stryve:
The ferst of hem Malencolie
Is cleped, which in compaignie
An hundred times in an houre
30 Wol as an angri beste loure,
And no man wot the cause why.
Mi sone, schrif thee now forthi:
Hast thou be Malencolien?”

Confessio Amantis “Ye, fader, be Seint Julien,

35 Bot I untrewe wordes use,
I mai me noght therof excuse.
And al makth love, wel I wot,
Of which myn herte is evere hot,
So that I brenne as doth a glede
40 For Wrathe that I mai noght sped.
And thus fulofte a day for noght
Save onlich of myn oghne thoght
I am so with miselven wroth,
That how so that the game goth
45 With othre men, I am noght glad;
Bot I am wel the more unglad,
For that is othre mennes game
It torneth me to pure grame.
Thus am I with miself oppressed
50 Of thoght, the which I have impressed,
That al wakende I dreme and meete
That I with hire alone meete
And preie hire of som good ansuere.
Bot for sche wol noght gladly swere,
55 Sche seith me nay withouten oth;
And thus wexe I withinne wroth,
That outward I am al affraied,
And so distempred and esmaied,
A thousand times on a day
60 Ther souneth in myn eres ‘Nay,’
The which sche seide me tofore.
Thus be my wittes as forlore;
And namely whan I beginne
To rekne with miself withinne

called

burned away by

them

called

grimace

knows

confess

Unless

burning coal

succeed

rage

dream; dream

pledge herself

frightened

disconcerted (upset)

[That]

sounds; ears

as if abandoned

- 65 How many yeres ben agon,
 Siththe I have trewly loved on
 And nevere tok of other hede,
 And evere aliche fer to spedē
 I am, the more I with hir dele,
 70 So that myn happ and al myn hele
 Me thenkth is ay the leng the ferre,
 That bringth my gladschip out of herre,
 Wheroft my wittes ben empeired,
 And I, as who seith, al despeired.
 75 For finaly, whan that I muse
 And thenke how sche me wol refuse,
 I am with anger so bestad,
 For al this world mihte I be glad:
 And for the while that it lasteth
 80 Al up so doun my joie it casteth,
 And ay the furthere that I be,
 Whan I ne may my ladi se,
 The more I am redy to wraththe,
 That for the touchinge of a laththe
 85 Or for the torninge of a stree
 I wode as doth the wylde se,
 And am so malencolious,
 That ther nys servant in myn hous
 Ne non of tho that ben aboute,
 90 That ech of hem ne stant in doute
 And wenēn that I scholde rave
 For anger that thei se me have.
 And so thei wondre more and lasse,
 Til that thei sen it overpassee.
 95 Bot, fader, if it so betide,
 That I aproche at eny tide
 The place wher my ladi is,
 And thanne that hire like ywiss
 To speke a goodli word unto me,
 100 For al the gold that is in Rome
 Ne cowthe I after that be wroth,
 Bot al myn anger overgoth;
 So glad I am of the presence
 Of hire, that I all offence
 105 Forgete, as thogh it were noght,
 So overgladed is my thoght.
 And natheles, the soth to telle,
 Ageinward if it so befelle
 That I at thilke time sihe
 110 On me that sche miscaste hire yhe,
 Or that sche liste noght to loke,
- Since; one
far from succeeding
deal
fortune; health
ever; longer the farther
out of kilter
are damaged
- beset
thin strip of wood
straw
rage; sea
is not
think that I am raving mad
- happens
time
it pleases her perchance
goes away
truth
[would] see
eye

- And I therof good hiede toke,
 Anon into my ferste astat
 I torne, and am withal so mat,
 115 That evere it is aliche wicke.
 And thus myn hand agein the pricke
 I hurte and have do many day,
 And go so forth as I go may,
 Fulofte bitinge on my lippe,
 120 And make unto miself a whippe
 With which in many a chele and hete
 Mi wofull herte is so tobete,
 That all my wittes ben unsofte
 And I am wroth, I not how ofte;
 125 And al it is malencolie
 Which growtheth of the fantasie
 Of love, that me wol noght loute.
 So bere I forth an angri snoute
 Ful manye times in a yer.
 130 Bot, fader, now ye sitten hier
 In loves stede, I yow beseche
 That som ensample ye me teche,
 Wheroft I mai miself appese.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, for thin hertes ese
 135 I schal fulfill thi preiere,
 So that thou miht the betre lere
 What mischief that this vice stereth,
 Which in his anger noght forbereth,
 Wheroft that after him forthenketh,
 140 Whan he is sobre and that he thenketh
 Upon the folie of his dede;
 And of this point a tale I rede.

[TALE OF CANACE AND MACHAIRE]

- ¶ Ther was a king which Eolus
 Was hote, and it befell him thus,
 145 That he tuo children hadde faire.
 The sone cleped was Machaire,
 The dowharter ek Canace hihte.
 Be daie bothe and ek be nyhte,
 Whil thei be yonge, of comun wone
 150 In chambre thei togedre wone,
 And as thei scholden pleide hem ofte,
 Til thei be growen up alofte
 Into the youthe of lusti age,
 Whan kinde assaileth the corage
 155 With love and doth him for to bowe,

*return; checkmated
the same bad
against*

*(i.e., emotional swings)
pummeled
ill-willed (prickly)
know not*

*not obey me
Thus; angry expression (nose bent out of shape)*

role (place as love's representative)

*learn
incites*

it is regrettable to him (he regrets)

*(see note)
called*

*was called
habitation
dwelt*

nature attacks the heart

- That he no reson can allowe,
Bot halt the lawes of nature.
For whom that love hath under cure,
As he is blind himself, riht so
160 He makth his client blind also.
In such manere as I you telle
As thei al day togodre duelle,
This brother mihte it noght asterte
That he with al his hole herte
165 His love upon his soster caste.
And so it fell hem ate laste,
That this Machaire with Canace
Whan thei were in a privé place,
Cupide bad hem ferst to kesse,
170 And after sche which is maistresse
In kinde and techeth every lif
Withoute lawe positif,
Of which sche takth no maner charge,
Bot kepth hire lawes al at large,
175 Nature, tok hem into lore
And tawht hem so, that overmore
Sche hath hem in such wise daunted,
That thei were, as who seith, enchaunted.
And as the blinde another ledeth
180 And til thei falle nothing dredeth,
Riht so thei hadde non insihte;
Bot as the bridd which wole alihite
And seth the mete and noght the net,
Which in deceipte of him is set,
185 This yonge folk no peril sihe,
Bot that was likinge in here yhe,
So that thei felle upon the chance
Wher witt hath lore his remembrance.
So longe thei togodre assemble,
190 The wombe aros, and sche gan tremble,
And hield hire in hire chambre clos
For drede it scholde be disclos
And come to hire fader ere.
Wheroft the sone hadde also fere,
195 And feigneth cause for to ryde;
For longe dorste he noght abyde,
In aunter if men wolde sein
That he his soster hath forlein.
For yit sche hadde it noght beknowe,
200 Whos was the child at thilke throwe.
Machaire goth, Canace abit,
- {Such} that
abides by (obeys)*
- escape
whole*
- kiss*
- instruction*
- conquered*
- has no fear at all*
- bird; alight
food*
- saw
that which; pleasing to their eye*
- lost
copulate*
- father's notice*
- dared
On the chance that; say
robbed of virginity
admitted
at that time
remains*

- The which was noght delivered yit,
Bot riht sone after that sche was.
Now lest and herkne a woful cas.
- 205 The sothe, which mai noght ben hid,
Was ate laste knowe and kid
Unto the king, how that it stod.
And whan that he it understod,
Anon into malencolie,
- 210 As thogh it were a frenesie,
He fell, as he which nothing cowthe
How maistrefull love is in yowthe.
And for he was to love strange,
He wolde noght his herte change
- 215 To be benigne and favorable
To love, bot unmerciable
Betwen the wawe of wod and wroth
Into his dowhtres chambre he goth,
And sih the child was late bore,
- 220 Wherof he hath hise othes swore
That sche it schal ful sore abyte.
And sche began merci to crie,
Upon hire bare knes and preide,
And to hire fader thus sche seide:
- 225 'Ha mercy! Fader, thenk I am
Thi child, and of thi blod I cam.
That I misdede yowthe it made,
And in the flodes bad me wade,
Wher that I sih no peril tho.
- 230 Bot now it is befall so,
Merci, my fader, do no wreche!
And with that word sche loste speche
And fell doun swounende at his fot,
As sche for sorwe nedes mot.
- 235 Bot his horrible craulté
Ther mihte atempre no pité.
Out of hire chambre forth he wente
Al full of wraththe in his entente,
And tok the conseil in his herte
- 240 That sche schal noght the deth asterte,
As he which malencolien
Of pacience hath no lien,
Wherof his wraththe he mai restreigne.
And in this wilde wode peine,
- 245 Whanne al his resoun was untame,
A kniht he clepeth be his name,
And tok him as be weie of sonde
A naked swerd to bere on honde,
- Who had not yet
listen and hear*
- like one who knew nothing*
- distant*
- gentle*
- wave of insanity and rage*
- saw*
- pay dearly*
- saw; then*
- vengeance*
- in a faint
must*
- elude*
- fetter (moral restraint)*
- wild insane pain*
- calls*
- employed; message*

- And seide him that he scholde go
 250 And telle unto his dowhter so
 In the manere as he him bad,
 How sche that scharpe swerdes blad
 Receive scholde and do withal
 So as sche wot wherto it schal. blade
 255 Forth in message goth this kniht
 Unto this wofull yonge wiht,
 This scharpe swerd to hire he tok.
 Wheroft that al hire bodi qwok,
 For wel sche wiste what it mente, creature
 260 And that it was to thilke entente
 That sche hireselven scholde slee.
 And to the kniht sche seide: 'Yee,
 Now that I wot my fadres wille,
 That I schal in this wise spille, shook with fear
 265 I wole obeie me therto,
 And as he wole it schal be do. knew
 Bot now this thing mai be non other,
 I wole a lettre unto mi brother,
 So as my fieble hand may wryte,
 270 With al my wofull herte endite.' Insofar as
 Sche tok a penne on honde tho,
 Fro point to point and al the wo,
 Als ferforth as hireself it wot,
 Unto hire dedly frend sche wrot, write
 275 And tolde how that hire fader grace
 Sche mihte for nothing pourchace.
 And over that, as thou schalt hiere,
 Sche wrot and seide in this manere:
 'O thou my sorwe and my gladnesse, pen in hand then
 280 O thou myn hele and my siknesse,
 O my wanhope and al my trust,
 O my desese and al my lust,
 O thou my wele, o thou my wo,
 O thou my frend, o thou my fo, knows
 285 O thou my love, o thou myn hate,
 For thee mot I be ded algate. health
 Thilke ende may I noght asterte,
 And yit with al myn hole herte, despair
 Whil that me lasteth eny breth, disease; pleasure
 290 I wol thee love into my deth. delight; woe
 Bot of o thing I schal thee preie,
 If that my litel sone deie,
 Let him be beried in my grave
 Beside me, so schalt thou have must; for sure
 295 Upon ous bothe remembrance. This finish; escape
breath

	For thus it stant of my grevance.	
	Now at this time, as thou schalt wite,	<i>know</i>
	With teres and with enke write	<i>ink written</i>
	This lettore I have in cares colde:	<i>chilling dread</i>
300	In my riht hond my penne I holde,	
	And in my left the swerd I kepe,	
	And in my barm ther lith to wepe	
	Thi child and myn, which sobbeth faste.	<i>bosom; lies</i>
	Now am I come unto my laste.	
305	Farewel, for I schal sone deie,	<i>soon die</i>
	And thenk how I thi love abeie.'	<i>pay for</i>
	The pomel of the swerd to grounde	
	Sche sette, and with the point a wounde	
	Thurghout hire herte anon sche made,	
310	And forthwith that al pale and fade	<i>wan</i>
	Sche fell doun ded fro ther sche stod.	<i>from where</i>
	The child lay bathende in hire blod	<i>bathing</i>
	Out rolled fro the moder barm,	
	And for the blod was hot and warm,	
315	He basketh him abouthe thrinne.	<i>[Having] rolled out from; mother's since therein</i>
	Ther was no bote for to winne,	<i>forgiveness to be gained</i>
	For he, which can no pité knowe,	
	The king cam in the same throwe,	
	And sih how that his dowhter dieth	
320	And how this babe al blody crieth;	<i>moment</i>
	Bot al that mihte him noght suffise,	<i>saw</i>
	That he ne bad to do juise	
	Upon the child, and bere him oute,	
	And seche in the forest abouthe	
325	Som wilde place, what it were,	<i>wild animal</i>
	To caste him out of honde there,	<i>come to his rescue</i>
	So that som beste him mai devoure,	<i>deed</i>
	Where as no man him schal socoure.	
	Al that he bad was don in dede.	
330	Ha, who herde evere singe or rede	<i>sung or declared</i>
	Of such a thing as that was do?	
	Bot he which ladde his wraththe so	
	Hath knowe of love bot a lite.	
	Bot for al that he was to wytte,	<i>blame</i>
335	Thurgh his sodein malencolie	
	To do so gret a felonie.	
	Confessor Forthi, my sone, how so it stonde,	
	Be this cas thou miht understande	
	That if thou evere in cause of love	
340	Schalt deme, and thou be so above	<i>arbitrate; powerfully positioned</i>
	That thou miht lede it at thi wille,	
	Let nevere thurgh thi Wraththe spille	<i>destroy</i>

	Which every kinde scholde save.	<i>[That] which; nature behooves</i>
345	For it sit every man to have Reward to love and to his miht, Agen whos strengthe mai no wiht. And siththe an herte is so constreigned, The reddour oghte be restreigned To him that mai no bet aweie,	<i>Regard for creature [persist]</i>
350	Whan he mot to nature obeie. For it is seid thus overal, That nedes mot that nede schal Of that a lif doth after kinde, Wheroft he mai no bote finde	<i>harshness</i>
355	What nature hath set in hir lawe Ther mai no mannes miht withdrawe, And who that worcheth theragein, Fulofte time it hath be sein, Ther hath befallle gret vengance,	<i>according to nature strength</i>
360	Wheroft I finde a remembrance.	

[TALE OF TIRESIAS AND THE SNAKES]

	Ovide after the time tho	
	Tolde an ensample and seide so,	
	How that whilom Tiresias,	<i>once</i>
☞	As he walkende goth per cas,	<i>walking went by chance (see note)</i>
365	Upon an hih montaine he sih	<i>saw</i>
	Tuo serpentz in his weie nyh,	<i>near his path</i>
	And thei, so as nature hem tawhte,	<i>taught them</i>
	Assembled were, and he tho cawhte	<i>Copulating; grabbed</i>
	A yerde which he bar on honde,	<i>stick</i>
370	And thoghte that he wolde fonde	<i>attempt</i>
	To letten hem, and smot hem bothe:	<i>stop them; struck</i>
	Wheroft the goddes weren wrothe;	<i>Both because he</i>
	And for he hath destourbed kinde	
	And was so to nature unkinde,	
375	Unkindeliche he was transformed,	<i>Unnaturally</i>
	That he which erst a man was formed	<i>[So] that; who first</i>
	Into a womman was forshape.	<i>transformed</i>
	That was to him an angri jape;	<i>infuriating prank</i>
	Bot for that he with Angre wroghte,	
380	His Angres angreliche he boghte.	<i>paid for</i>
	Confessor Lo thus, my sone, Ovide hath write,	
	Wheroft thou miht be reson wite,	<i>know</i>
	More is a man than such a beste.	
	So mihte it nevere ben honeste	<i>honorable</i>
385	A man to wraththen him to sore	
	Of that another doth the lore	<i>Because another carries out the teaching</i>

Of kinde, in which is no malice,
 Bot only that it is a vice.
 And thogh a man be resonable,
 390 Yit after kinde he is menable
 To love, wher he wole or non. whether
 Thenk thou, my sone, therupon
 And do Malencolie aweie;
 For love hath evere his lust to pleie, put; aside
 395 As he which wolde no lif grieve.”

Amans “Mi fader, that I mai wel lieve; believe
 Al that ye tellen it is skile. reasonable
 Let every man love as he wile,
 Be so it be noght my ladi, Provided that it is not
 400 For I schal noght be wroth therby.
 Bot that I wraththe and fare amis,
 Alone upon miself it is,
 That I with bothe love and kinde
 Am so bestad, that I can finde put upon
 405 No weie how I it mai asterte. may escape it
 Which stant upon myn oghne herte [That] which stands
 And toucheth to non other lif,
 Save only to that swete wif
 For whom, bot if it be amended,
 410 Mi glade daies ben despended,
 That I miself schal noght forbere
 The Wraththe which that I now bere,
 For therof is non other leche. remedy
 Now axeth forth, I yow beseche,
 415 Of Wraththe if ther ought elles is,
 Wherof to schryve.” confess

[Confessor] “Sone, yis.”

[CONTENTION]

- ii. *Ira mouet litem, que lingue frena resoluens
 Laxa per infames currit ubique vias.
 Rixarum nutrix quos educat ista loquaces,
 Hos Venus a latere linquit habere vagos.
 Set pacienter agens taciturno qui celet ore,
 Vincit, et optati carpit amoris iter.*¹

¹ *Wrath stirs up conflict, which, released and loosening the tongue's reins, runs everywhere through the paths of infamy. The nursemaid of quarrels, she informs those chatterers, and Venus releases them from her side to be wanderers. But he who deals patiently and keeps things concealed with a silent mouth conquers, and he follows the path of a desired love.*

	“Of Wraththe the secounde is Cheste,	<i>Contention (Quarreling)</i>
	Which hath the wyndes of tempeste	
420	To kepe, and many a sodein blast	
	He bloweth, wherof ben agast	
¶	Thei that desiren pes and reste.	<i>(see note)</i>
	He is that ilke ungoodlieste	<i>same most rude [person]</i>
	Which many a lusti love hath twinned;	
	For he berth evere his mowth unpinned,	<i>Who; estranged</i>
425	So that his lippes ben unloke	
	And his corage is al tobroke,	<i>unlocked</i>
	That everything which he can telle,	
	It springeth up as doth a welle,	<i>emotion; broken loose</i>
	Which mai non of his stremes hyde,	
430	Bot renneth out on every syde.	
	So buillen up the foule sawes	<i>runs</i>
	That Cheste wot of his felawes.	<i>boils; malicious words</i>
	For as a sive kepeth ale,	<i>knows</i>
	Riht so can Cheste kepe a tale.	<i>sieve holds ale</i>
435	Al that he wot he wol desclose,	<i>And [will] speak before asking anyone</i>
	And speke er eny man oppose.	
	As a cité withoute wal,	
	Wher men mai gon out overal	
	Withouten eny resistence,	
440	So with his crooked eloquence	
	He spekth al that he wot withinne;	
	Wherof men lese mor than winne,	<i>lose</i>
	For ofte time of his chidinge	
	He bringth to house such tidinge,	
445	That makth werre ate beddeshed.	<i>war; bed's head</i>
	He is the levein of the bred,	<i>yeast</i>
	Which soureth al the past aboute.	<i>dough nearby</i>
	Men oghte wel such on to doute,	<i>such a person to fear</i>
	For evere his bowe is redi bent,	
450	And whom he hit I telle him schent,	<i>count him ruined</i>
	If he mai perce him with his tunge.	
	And ek so lowde his belle is runge,	
	That of the noise and of the soun	<i>sound</i>
	Men feeren hem in al the toun	
455	Welmore than thei don of thonder.	
	For that is cause of more wonder;	
	For with the wyndes whiche he bloweth	
	Fulofte sythe he overthoweth	<i>Often times</i>
	The cites and the policie,	
460	That I have herd the poeple crie,	<i>So that; heard</i>
	And echon seide in his degré,	
	‘Ha wicke tunge, wo thee be!’	
	For men sein that the harde bon,	<i>bone</i>

- 465 Althogh himselfen have non,
 A tunge brekth it al to pieces.
 He hath so manye sondri spieces
 Of vice, that I mai noght wel
 Desriue hem be a thousanddel.
 Bot whan that he to Cheste falleth,
 470 Ful many a wonder thing befalleth,
 For he ne can nothing forbere.
- Opponit Confessor** "Now tell me, sone, thin ansuere,
 If it hath evere so betidd,
 That thou at eny time hast chidd
 475 Toward thi love."
- Confessio Amantis** "Fader, nay;
 Such Cheste yit unto this day
 Ne made I nevere, God forbede:
 For er I sunge such a crede,
 I hadde levere to be lewed;
 480 For thanne were I al beschrewed
 And worthi to be put abak
 With al the sorwe upon my bak
 That eny man ordeigne cowthe.
 Bot I spak nevere yit be mowthe
 485 That unto Cheste mihte touche,
 And that I durste riht wel vouche
 Upon hirself as for witnesse;
 For I wot, of hir gentilesse
 That sche me wolde wel excuse,
 490 That I no suche thinges use.
 And if it scholde so betide
 That I algates moste chide,
 It myhte noght be to my love.
 For so yit was I nevere above,
 495 For al this wyde world to winne
 That I dorste eny word beginne,
 Be which sche mihte have ben amooved.
 And I of Cheste also reproeved.
 Bot rathere, if it mihte hir like,
 500 The beste wordes wolde I pike
 Whiche I cowthe in myn herte chese,
 And serve hem forth instede of chese,
 For that is helplich to defie;
 And so wolde I my wordes plie,
 505 That mihten Wraththe and Cheste avale
 With tellinge of my softe tale.
 Thus dar I make a forward,
 That nevere unto my ladiward
 Yit spak I word in such a wise,
- by a thousandth-part*
- rather; stupid*
- set back*
- could impose*
- by mouth*
- That [which]*
- (i.e., his beloved's authority)*
- at any time*
- so advantageously positioned*
- choose*
- cheese*
- assists digestion*
- pledge*

- 510 Wheroft that Cheste scholde arise.
 This seie I noght, that I fuloſte
 Ne have, whanne I spak most ſoſte,
 Per cas ſeid more thanne ynowh;
 Bot ſo wel halt no man the plowh
 515 That he ne balketh otherwhile,
 Ne ſo wel can no man affile
 His tunge, that ſom time in rape
 Him mai ſom liht word overscape,
 And yit ne meneth he no Cheſte.
- 520 Bot that I have agein hir heſte
 Fuloſte ſpoke, I am beknowe;
 And how my will is, that ye knowe.
 For whan my time comth abouthe,
 That I dar ſpeke and ſeie al outhe
 525 Mi longe love, of which ſche wot
 That evere in on aliche hot
 Me grieveth, thanne al my deseſe
 I telle, and though it hir deſpleſe,
 I ſpeke it forth and noght ne leve.
 530 And thogh it be beside hir leve,
 I hope and trowe natheles
 That I do noght agein the pes;
 For thogh I telle hir al my thoght,
 Sche wot wel that I chyde noght.
 535 Men mai the hihe God beseche,
 And He wol hiere a mannes ſpeche
 And be noght wroth of that he ſeith;
 So gifth it me the more feith
 And makth me hardi, ſoth to ſeie,
 540 That I dar wel the betre preie
 Mi ladi, which a womman is.
 For thogh I telle hir that or this
 Of love, which me grieveth ſore,
 Hire oghte noght be wroth the more,
 545 For I withoute noise or cri
 Mi pleignte make al buxomly
 To puten alle wraththe away.
 Thus dar I ſeie unto this day
 Of Cheſte in ernest or in game
 550 Mi ladi ſchal me nothing blame.
 Bot ofte time it hath betidd
 That with miselven I have chidd,
 That no man couthe betre chide.
 And that hath ben at every tide
 Whanne I cam to miſelf alone.
 555 For thanne I made a privē mone,
- By chance*
plow
does not stumble once in a while
- haste*
casual word slip out
- command*
admit
- continuously passionate*
discomfort
- keeping back nothing*
without her permission
believe nonetheless
(i.e., to break the law)
- implore*
- what*
- bold*
- humbly*
- {Such} that*
time
- furtive lament*

- And every tale by and by,
 Which as I spak to my ladi,
 I thenke and peise in my balance
 560 And drawe into my remembrance;
 And thanne, if that I finde a lak
 Of eny word that I mispak,
 Which was to moche in eny wise,
 Anon my wittes I despise
 565 And make a chidinge in myn herte,
 That eny word me scholde asterte
 Which as I scholde have holden inne.
 And so forth after I beginne
 And loke if ther was elles oght
 570 To speke, and I ne spak it noght.
 And thanne, if I mai seche and finde
 That eny word be left behinde,
 Which as I scholde more have spoke,
 I wolde upon miself be wroke,
 575 And chyde with miselven so
 That al my wit is overgo.
 For no man mai his time lore
 Recovere, and thus I am therfore
 So overwroth in al my thoght,
 580 That I myself chide al to noght.
 Thus for to moche or for to lite
 Fulofte I am miself to wyte.
 Bot al that mai me noght availe,
 With Cheste thogh I me travaile.
 585 Bot oule on stock and stock on oule:
 The more that a man defoule,
 Men witen wel which hath the wersē;
 And so to me nys worth a kerse,
 Bot torneth on myn oghne hed,
 590 Thogh I, til that I were ded,
 Wolde evere chyde in such a wise
 Of love as I to you devise.
 Bot, fader, now ye have al herd
 In this manere how I have ferd
 595 Of Cheste and of dissencioun,
 Gif me youre absolucioun.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, if that thou wistest al,
 What Cheste doth in special
 To love and to his welwillinge,
 600 Thou woldest flen his knowlechinge
 And lerne to be debonaire.
 For who that most can speke faire
 Is most acordende unto love:
- review; weigh*
fault
excessive in any way
disparage
should slip out of me
left unspoken
said
take vengeance
overwhelmed
lost
to no result
too; little
blame
belabor myself
owl; branch
which [one]
is not; sprig of cress
If I
Give
knew
flee acquaintanceship with it

- 605 Fair speche hath ofte brought above
 Ful many a man, as it is knowe,
 Which elles scholde have be riht lowe
 And failed mochel of his wille.
 Forthi hold thou thi tung stille
 And let thi witt thi wille areste,
 So that thou falle noght in Cheste,
 Which is the source of gret destance.
 And tak into thi remembrance
 If thou miht gete pacience,
 Which is the leche of alle offence,
 As tellen ous these olde wise.
 610 For whan noght elles mai suffise
 Be strengthe ne be mannes wit,
 Than pacience it oversit
 And overcomth it ate laste;
 Bot he mai nevere longe laste,
 Which wol noght bowe er that he breke.
 Tak hiede, sone, of that I speke.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, of your goodli speche
 And of the witt which ye me teche
 I thonke you with al myn herte.
 For that world schal me nevere asterte,
 That I ne schal your wordes holde,
 Of pacience as ye me tolde,
 Als ferforth as myn herte thenketh,
 620 And of my wraththe it me forthenketh.
 Bot, fader, if ye forthwithal
 Som good ensample in special
 Me wolden telle of som croniue,
 It scholde wel myn herte like
 Of pacience for to hiere,
 So that I mihte in mi matiere
 The more unto my love obeie
 And puten mi desese aweie.”
- intelligence restrain your desire*
discord
healer
(see note)
By
patience endures it (the problem)
- bow before he breaks*
what
state of things (world) shall for me never arise
But that I shall; cling to
far as; considers
And [as far as] I regret my wrath

[PATIENCE OF SOCRATES]

- [Confessor]** “Mi sone, a man to beie him pes
 640 Behoveth soffre as Socrates
 Ensample lefte, which is write.
 And for thou schalt the sothe wite
 Of this ensample what I mene,
 Although it be now litel sene
 645 Among the men thilke evidence,
 Yit he was upon pacience
 So sett, that he himself assaie
- earn quiet for himself*
Must suffer
recorded
(see note)
seen
for himself to try

	In thing which mihte him most mispaie Desireth, and a wickid wif	<i>displease desires; shrewish</i>
650	He weddeth, which in sorwe and strif Agein his ese was contraire. Bot he spak evere softe and faire, Til it befell, as it is told, In wynter, whan the dai is cold,	
655	This wif was fro the welle come, Wher that a pot with water nome Sche hath, and broghte it into house, And sih how that hire seli spouse Was sett and loked on a bok	<i>taken</i>
660	Nyh to the fyr, as he which tok His ese for a man of age. And sche began the wode rage, And axeth him what devel he thoghte, And bar on hond that him ne roghte	<i>hapless husband</i>
665	What labour that sche toke on honde, And seith that such an housebonde Was to a wif noght worth a stre. He seide nowther 'nay' ne 'ye,'	<i>claimed; did not care</i>
670	Bot hield him stille and let hire chyde; And sche, which mai hirself noght hyde, Began withinne for to swelle, And that sche broghte in fro the welle, The waterpot sche hente alofte	<i>undertook</i>
675	And bad him speke, and he al softe Sat stille and noght a word ansuerde. And sche was wrooth that he so ferde, And axeth him if he be ded. And al the water on his hed	<i>straw</i>
680	Sche pourede oute and bad awake. Bot he, which wolde noght forsake His pacience, thanne spak, And seide how that he fond no lak In nothing which sche hadde do.	<i>behaved</i>
685	For it was wynter time tho, And wynter, as be weie of kinde Which stormy is, as men it finde, Ferst makth the wyndes for to blowe, And after that withinne a throwe	<i>dead</i>
690	He reyneth and the watergates Undoth; 'And thus my wif algates, Which is with reson wel besein, Hath mad me bothe wynd and rein After the sesoun of the yer.'	<i>told him to wake up</i>
	And thanne he sette him nerr the fer,	<i>spoke</i>
		<i>found no fault</i>
		<i>anything that</i>
		<i>then</i>
		<i>nature</i>
		<i>in a moment</i>
		<i>He (Winter)</i>
		<i>stirred up</i>
		<i>According to</i>
		<i>sat himself nearer; fire</i>

- 695 And as he mihte hise clothes dreide, *dried*
 That he no more o word ne seide; *[Such] that*
 Wheroft he gat him somdel reste,
 For that him thoghte was the beste.
- Confessor** I not if thilke ensample yit *know not; still*
 700 Accordeth with a mannes wit, *did then*
 To soffre as Socrates tho dede: *circumstance*
 And if it falle in eny stede *lose*
 A man to lese so his galle,
 Him oghte among the wommen alle
 705 In loves court be juggement *by*
 The name bere of Pacient,
 To give ensample to the goode
 Of pacience how that it stode,
 That othre men it mihte knowe.
- 710 And, sone, if thou at eny throwe *any time*
 Be tempted, agein Pacience, *against*
 Tak hiede upon this evidence;
 It schal per cas thee lasse grieve.” *perhaps vex you less*
- Amans** “Mi fader, so as I believe,
 715 Of that schal be no maner nede, *[there] shall be*
 For I wol take so good hiede,
 That er I falle in such assai,
 I thenke eschuike it, if I mai.
 Bot if ther be oght elles more
 720 Wheroft I mihte take lore, *to avoid it*
 I preie you, so as I dar,
 Now telleth, that I mai be war,
 Some other tale in this matiere.” *take instruction*
- Confessor** “Sone, it is evere good to lere *learn*
 725 Wheroft thou miht thi word restreigne,
 Er that thou falle in eny peine.
 For who that can no conseil hyde,
 He mai noght faile of wo beside,
 Which schal befaller er he it wite,
 730 As I finde in the bokes write. *knows*

[JUPITER, JUNO, AND TIRESIAS]

- Yit cam ther nevere good of strif,
 To seche in all a mannes lif.
 Thogh it beginne on pure game,
 735 Fulofte it torneth into grame *harm (see note)*
 And doth grevance upon som side.
 Wheroft the grete clerk Ovide
 After the lawe which was tho
 Of Jupiter and of Juno *Never yet has come; from*

	Makth in his bokes menciou	
740	How thei felle at dissenciou	<i>jest (game)</i>
	In manere as it were a borde,	<i>banter words</i>
	As thei begunne for to worde	<i>themselves</i>
	Among hemself in privaté.	<i>comparison</i>
	And that was upon this degree,	
745	Which of the tuo more amorous is,	
	Or man or wif? And upon this	<i>woman</i>
	Thei mihten noght acorde in on,	
	And toke a juge therupon,	
	Which cleped is Tiresias,	
750	And bede him demen in the cas;	<i>arbitrate</i>
	And he withoute avisement	<i>thinking it over</i>
	Agein Juno gaf juggement.	<i>Against</i>
	This goddesse upon his ansuere	
	Was wroth and wolde noght forbere,	
755	Bot tok awey foreveremo	
	The liht fro bothe hise yhen tuo.	<i>two eyes</i>
	Whan Jupiter this harm hath sein,	
	An other bienfai theragein	<i>favor in compensation</i>
	He gaf, and such a grace him doth,	
760	That for he wiste he seide soth,	<i>[Jupiter] knew; [Tiresias] spoke the truth</i>
	A sothseiere he was forevere.	<i>prophet</i>
	Bot yit that other were levere,	<i>would be preferable to the other (Tiresias)</i>
	Have had the lokinge of his yhe,	<i>vision; eyes</i>
	Than of his word the prophecie.	
765	Bot how so that the sothe wente,	<i>whatever the truth might be</i>
	Strif was the cause of that he hente	<i>suffered</i>
	So gret a peine bodily.	
Confessor	Mi sone, be thou war ther by,	
	And hold thi tunge stille clos.	<i>(i.e., guard your speech)</i>
770	For who that hath his word desclos	
	Er that he wite what he mene,	
	He is fulofte nyh his tene	<i>near; torment</i>
	And lest ful many time grace,	<i>loses</i>
	Wher that he wolde his thonk pourchace.	
775	And over this, my sone diere,	
	Of othre men, if thou miht hiere	
	In privaté what thei have wroght,	
	Hold conseil and descoevere it noght,	
	For Cheste can no conseil hele,	<i>keep no secret</i>
	Or be it wo or be it wele.	<i>Whether it be</i>
	And tak a tale into thi mynde,	
780	The which of olde ensample I finde.	

[TALE OF PHEBUS AND CORNIDE]

- Phebus, which makth the daies lihte,
 A love he hadde, which tho hihte
 Cornide, whom aboven alle
 He pleseth. Bot what schal befall
 Of love ther is no man knoweth,
 Bot as fortune hire happes throweth.
 So it befell upon a chaunce,
 A yong kniht tok hire aqueintance
 And hadde of hire al that he wolde.
 Bot a fals bridd, which sche hath holde
 And kept in chambre of pure yowthe,
 Discocovereth all that evere he cowthe.
 This briddes name was as tho
 Corvus, the which was thanne also
 Welmore whyt than eny swan,
 And he (that schrewe) al that he can
 Of his ladi to Phebus seide.
 And he for wraththe his swerd outbreide,
 With which Cornide anon he slowh.
 Bot after him was wo ynowh,
 And tok a full gret repentance,
 Wherof in tokne and remembrance
 Of hem whiche usen wicke speche,
 Upon this bridd he tok this wreche,
 That ther he was snow whyt tofore,
 Evere afterward colblak therfore
 He was transformed, as it scheweth,
 And many a man yit him beschreweth
 And clepen him into this day
 A raven, be whom yit men mai
 Take evidence, whan he crieth,
 That som mishapp it signefieth.
 Be war therfore and sei the beste,
 If thou wolt be thiself in reste,
 Mi goode sone, as I thee rede.
- who then was called (see note)*
Except
desired
from its earliest youth
told
(Phebus); unsheathed
killed
woeful enough
felt remorse
vengeance
where
curses
speak [only] the best
advise

[JUPITER AND LAAR]

- For in another place I rede
 Of thilke nimphe which Laar hihte.
 For sche the priveté be nyhte,
 How Jupiter lay be Jutorne,
 Hath told, god made hire overtorne.
 Hire tunghe he kutte, and into helle
 Forevere he sende hir for to duelle,
- read (see note)*
Because; by
beside
be overthrown

825 As sche that was noght worthi hiere
 To ben of love a chamberere,
 For sche no conseil cowthe hele. conceal
 And suche adaies be now fele
 In loves court, as it is seid, many
 830 That lete here tungen gon unteid. their tongues

[Confessor] Mi sone, be thou non of tho,
 To jangle and telle tales so, gossip
 And namely that thou ne chyde,
 For Cheste can no conseil hide,
 835 For Wraththe seide nevere wel.”

Amans “Mi fader, soth is everydel
 That ye me teche, and I wol holde
 The reule to which I am holde,
 To fle the Cheste, as ye me bidde,
 840 For wel is him that nevere chidde.
 Now tell me forth if ther be more
 As touchende unto Wraththes lore.”

[HATE]

iii. *Demonis est odium quasi Scriba, cui dabit Ira
 Materiam scripti cordi ad antra sui.
 Non laxabit amor odii quem frena restringunt,
 Nec secreta sui iuris adire sinit.*¹

[Confessor] “Of Wraththe yit ther is another,
 Which is to Cheste his oghne brother,
 845 And is be name cleped Hate, called
 That soffreth noght withinne his gate
 That ther come owther love or pes, (see note)
 For he wol make no reles
 Of no debat which is befalle.
 850 Now spek, if thou art on of alle,
 That with this vice hast ben withholde.”

[Amans] “As yit for oghth that ye me tolde,
 Mi fader, I not what it is.” know not

[Confessor] “In good feith, sone, I trowe yis.”

[Amans] “Mi fader, nay, bot ye me lere.” teach

[Confessor] “Now lest, my sone, and thou schalt here.
 Hate is a wraththe noght schewende, visible

¹ *Hatred is like the devil's scribe, to whom Wrath will give the substance of the inscription for the heart's inner sanctum. Love will not release whomever the reins of hatred hold for: The love of hatred will not release whomever its reins hold], nor will it permit entry to the secrets of its law.*

	Bot of long time gaderende,	<i>gathering</i>
	And duelleth in the herte loken,	<i>locked</i>
860	Til he se time to be wroken.	<i>avenged</i>
	And thanne he scheweth his tempeste	
	Mor sodein than the wilde beste,	
	Which wot nothing what merci is.	
864	Mi sone, art thou knowende of this?"	
Confessio Amantis	"Mi goode fader, as I wene,	<i>understand</i>
	Now wot I somdel what ye mene.	
	Bot I dar saufly make an oth,	<i>dare; swear</i>
	Mi ladi was me nevere loth.	<i>hateful</i>
	I wol noght swere, natheles,	
870	That I of hate am gulteles;	
	For whanne I to my ladi plie	<i>bow (ingratiate myself)</i>
	Fro dai to dai and merci crie,	
	And sche no merci on me leith	
	Bot schorte wordes to me seith,	<i>bestows</i>
875	Thogh I my ladi love algate,	
	Tho wordes moste I nedes hate,	<i>entirely</i>
	And wolde thei were al despent,	
	Or so ferr oute of londe went	<i>exhausted</i>
	That I nevere after scholde hem hiere.	
880	And yit love I my ladi diere.	<i>dearly</i>
	Thus is ther Hate, as ye mai se	
	Betwen my ladi word and me;	<i>lady's words</i>
	The word I hate and hire I love,	
	What so me schal betide of love.	
885	Bot fortherore mor I wol me schryve,	<i>confess</i>
	That I have hated al my lyve	
	These janglers, whiche of here Envie	<i>calumniators; their</i>
	Ben evere redi for to lie.	
	For with here fals compassement	<i>scheming</i>
890	Fulofthen thei have mad me schent	<i>undone</i>
	And hindred me fulofte time,	
	Whan thei no cause wisten bi me,	<i>knew against me</i>
	Bot onliche of here oghne thoght.	
	And thus fulofthen have I boght	
895	The lie, and drank noght of the wyn.	<i>The dregs</i>
	I wolde here happ were such as myn.	
	For how so that I be now schrive,	
	To hem ne mai I noght forgive,	
	Til that I se hem at debat	
900	With love, and thanne myn astat	
	Thei mihten be here oghne deme,	<i>by their own judge</i>
	And loke how wel it scholde hem qweme	<i>please them</i>
	To hindre a man that loveth sore.	<i>intensely (fervently)</i>
	And thus I hate hem everemore,	

- 905 Til love on hem wol don his wreche. *vengeance*
 For that schal I alway beseche
 Unto the mihti Cupido,
 That he so mochel wolde do,
 So as he is of love a godd,
- 910 910 To smyte hem with the same rodd
 With which I am of love smite;
 So that thei mihten knowe and wite
 How hindringe is a wofull peine
 To him that love wolde atteigne.
- 915 915 Thus evere on hem I wayte and hope, *spy*
 Til I mai sen hem lepe a lope,
 And halten on the same sor *leap; leap*
 Which I do now: for overmor *go lame from*
 I wolde thanne do my myht
- 920 920 So for to stonden in here lyht,
 That thei ne scholden finde a weie
 To that thei wolde, bot aweie
 I wolde hem putte out of the stede *place*
 Fro love, riht as thei me dede
- 925 925 With that thei speke of me be mowthe.
 So wolde I do, if that I cowthe,
 Of hem, and this, so God me save,
 Is al the hate that I have,
 Toward these janglers everydiel;
- 930 930 I wolde alle othre ferde wel.
 Thus have I, fader, said mi wille;
 Say ye now forth, for I am stille.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, of that thou hast me said
 I holde me noght fulli paid. *pleased*
- 935 935 That thou wolt haten eny man,
 To that acorden I ne can,
 Thogh he have hindred thee tofore.
 Bot this I telle thee therfore,
 Thou miht upon my beneicoun *with my blessing*
- 940 940 Wel haten the condicioun
 Of tho janglers, as thou me toldest,
 Bot furthermor, of that thou woldest
 Hem hindre in eny other wise,
 Such Hate is evere to despise.
- 945 945 Forthi, mi sone, I wol thee rede, *counsel*
 That thou drawe in be frendlilhede
 That thou ne miht noght do be hate;
 So miht thou gete love algate
 And sette thee, my sone, in reste,
- 950 950 For thou schalt finde it for the beste.
 And over this, so as I dar,

	I rede that thou be riht war Of othre mennes hate aboute Which every wysman scholde doute.	wary
955	For Hate is evere upon await, And as the fisshere on his bait Sleth, whan he seth the fisshes faste, So, whan he seth time ate laste, That he mai worche another wo,	fear in ambush
960	Schal no man tornen him therfro, That Hate nyle his felonie Fulfille and feigne compaignie Yit natheles, for Falssemblant Is toward him of covenant	[hooked] tight <i>woe upon another person</i>
965	Withholde, so that under bothe The privé wraththe can him clothe, That he schal seme of gret believe. Bot war thee wel that thou ne lieve Al that thou sest tofore thin yhe,	<i>would not; crime</i>
970	So as the Gregois whilom syhe. The bok of Troie whoso rede, Ther mai he finde ensample in dede.	by conspiracy Retained believe eye <i>Greeks once saw</i>

[TALE OF KING NAMPLUS AND THE GREEKS]

☞	Sone after the destruccioun, Whan Troie was al bete doun	(see note)
975	And slain was Priamus the king, The Gregois, whiche of al this thing Ben cause, tornen hom agein. Ther mai no man his happ withsein;	<i>fate oppose</i>
980	It hath be sen and felt fuloste, The harde time after the softe. Be see as thei forth homward wente, A rage of gret tempeste hem hente;	<i>By sea</i> <i>seized</i>
985	Juno let bende hire parti bowe, The sky wax derk, the wynd gan blowe, The firy welkne gan to thondre, As thogh the world scholde al to sondre;	<i>variegated bow</i>
990	Fro hevene out of the watergates The reyni storm fell doun algates And al here takel made unwelde, That no man mihte himself bewelde.	<i>heaven began</i> <i>split</i>
995	Ther mai men hiere schipmen crie, That stode in auuter for to die. He that behinde sat to stiere Mai noght the forestempne hiere;	<i>powerless</i> <i>have control over himself</i>
	The schip aros agein the wawes,	<i>Who stood at risk</i> <i>guide</i> <i>ship's prow hear</i> <i>waves</i>

	The lodesman hath lost his lawes, The see bet in on every side.	<i>helmsman; sense of direction</i>
	Thei nysten what fortune abide, Bot sette hem al in Goddes wille,	<i>knew not; to expect</i>
1000	Wher He hem wolde save or spille. And it fell thilke time thus:	<i>Whether; destroy</i>
	Ther was a king, the which Namplus Was hote, and he a sone hadde	<i>Was called</i>
	At Troie, which the Gregois ladde,	<i>had conquered</i>
1005	As he that was mad prince of alle, Til that fortune let him falle.	
	His name was Palamades, Bot thurgh an hate natheles	
	Of some of hem his deth was cast	<i>By some</i>
1010	And he be tresoun overcast.	<i>overthrown</i>
	His fader, whan he herde it telle, He swor, if evere his time felle,	
	He wolde him venge, if that he mihte, And therto his avou behihte.	<i>promised</i>
1015	And thus this king thurgh privé hate Abod upon await algate,	<i>secret hatred</i>
	For he was noght of such emprise To vengen him in open wise.	<i>ambush</i>
	The fame, which goth wyde where,	<i>disposition</i>
1020	Makth knowe how that the Gregois were Homward with al the felaschipe	<i>avenge himself; manner</i>
	Fro Troie upon the see be schipe.	
	Namplus, whan he this understod,	
	And knew the tydes of the flod,	<i>tides; sea</i>
1025	And sih the wynd blew to the lond, A gret decepte anon he fond	<i>toward</i>
	Of privé hate, as thou schalt hiere, Wherof I telle al this matiere.	<i>invented</i>
	This king the weder gan beholde,	<i>weather</i>
1030	And wiste wel thei moten holde	<i>knew; must</i>
	Here cours endlong his marche riht,	<i>Their; along his right border</i>
	And made upon the derke nyght	
	Of grete schydes and of blockes	<i>kindling and blocks [of wood]</i>
	Gret fyr agein the grete rockes	
1035	To schewe upon the helles hihe, So that the flete of Grece it sihe.	<i>shine [as beacons]; high hills</i>
	And so it fell riht as he thoghte:	<i>[would] see</i>
	This flete, which an havene soghte,	<i>befell just as he planned</i>
	The bryghte fyres sih aferr,	<i>at a distance</i>
1040	And thei hem drowen nerr and nerr, And wende wel and understode	<i>nearer</i>
	How al that fyr was mad for goode,	<i>believed well</i>

- To schewe wher men scholde aryve,
And thiderward thei hasten blyve.
make landfall
hasten quickly
- 1045 In Semblant, as men sein, is guile,
And that was proved thilke while;
The schip, which wende his helpe acroche,
Drof al to pieces on the roche,
And so ther deden ten or twelve;
died
- 1050 Ther mihte no man helpe himselfe,
For ther thei wenden deth ascape,
Withouten help here deth was schape.
Thus thei that comen ferst tofore
Upon the rockes be forlore,
were lost
- 1055 Bot thurgh the noise and thurgh the cri
These othre were al war therby.
And whan the dai began to rowe,
Tho mihten thei the sothe knowe,
That wher thei wenden frendes finde,
dawn
Then
- 1060 Thei founden frenschipe al behinde.
The lond was thanne sone weyved,
Wher that thei hadden be deceived,
And toke hem to the hihe see;
Therto thei seiden alle yee,
soon quit
- 1065 Fro that dai forth and war thei were
Of that thei hadde assaied there.
take themselves back; sea
agreed
[more] cautious
Because of what; experienced
- Confessor** Mi sone, hierof thou miht avise
How fraude stant in many wise
Amonges hem that guile thenke;
1070 Ther is no scrivein with his enke
Which half the fraude wryte can
That stant in such a maner man.
Forthi the wise men ne demen
The thinges after that thei semen,
according to what
- 1075 Bot after that thei knowe and finde.
The mirour scheweth in his kinde
As he hadde al the world withinne,
And is in soth nothing therinne;
And so farth Hate for a throwe:
fares; for a time
- 1080 Til he a man hath overthowen,
Schal no man knowe be his chere
Which is avant, ne which arere.
Forthi, mi sone, thenke on this."
- 1085 [Amans] "Mi fader, so I wole ywiss;
And if ther more of Wraththe be,
Now axeth forth per charité,
As ye be youre bokes knowe,
And I the sothe schal beknowe."
before; behind
indeed
acknowledge

[CONTEK AND HOMICIDE]

- iv. *Qvi cohibere manum nequit, et sit spiritus eius
Naribus, hic populo sepe timendus erit.
Sepius in luctum Venus et sua gaudia transfert,
Cumque suis thalamis talis amicus adest.
Est amor amplexu non ictibus alliciendus,
Frangit amicicias impetuosa manus.*¹

[Confessor] "Mi sone, thou schalt understande

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1090 | That yit towardeſ Wraththe ſtonde
Of dedly vices othre tuo:
And for to telle here names ſo,
It is Contek and Homicide,
That ben to drede on every ſide.
Contek, ſo as the bokeſ ſein,
Folhāſt hath to his chamberlein,
Be whos conſeil al unavideſ
Is Pacience moſt deſpideſ,
Til Homicide with hem meete. | near
two others
their
Discord (Strife)
are dreadful in all ways (see note) |
| 1095 | | |
| 1100 | Fro Merci thei ben al unmeete,
And thus ben thei the worſte of alle
Of hem whiche unto wraththe falle,
In dede bothe and ek in thought.
For thei acompte here wraththe at noȝt,
Bot if ther be ſchedinge of blod; | To Mercy unequal |
| 1105 | And thus lich to a beſte wod
Thei knowe noȝt the God of lif.
Be ſo the have or ſwerd or knif
Here dedly wraththe for to wreke,
Of pitē list hem noȝt to ſpeke; | worthless
Unless
insane beaſt |
| 1110 | Non other reſon thei ne fonge,
Bot that thei ben of mihtes ſtronge.
Bot war hem wel in other place,
Where every man behoveth grace,
Bot ther I trowe it ſchal hem faille, | Provided that they; either ſword
avenge |
| 1115 | To whom no merci mihte availe,
Bot wroghten upon tiraundie,
That no pitē ne mihte hem plie. | take
let them beware
be lacking to them |
| Opponit Confessor Now tell, my ſone.” | | But [rather]
[Such] that; bend |
| [Amans] | | guilty |
| [Confessor] “If thou haſt be coupable of that.” | | |

¹ *He who cannot restrain his hand and whose “spirit is in his nostrils” will often be fearsome to the people. And more often Venus transforms joys into sorrow when such a friend is present in the wedding bed. Love must be enticed by a caress not by blows, and a hasty hand shatters friendships.*

- Confessio Amantis** “Mi fader, nay, Crist me forbiede!
 I speke onliche as of the dede
 Of which I nevere was coupable
 Withoute cause resonable.
- 1125 Bot this is noght to mi matiere
 Of schrifte. Why we sitten hiere?
 For we ben sett to schryve of love,
 As we begunne ferst above. *confess*
 And natheles I am beknowe
- 1130 That as touchende of loves throwe,
 Whan I my wittes overwende,
 Min hertes contek hath non ende,
 Bot evere it stant upon debat
 To gret desese of myn astat
 1135 As for the time that it lasteth.
 For whan mi Fortune overcasteth
 Hire whiel and is to me so strange,
 And that I se sche wol noght change,
 Than caste I al the world aboute
- 1140 And thenke hou I at home and oute
 Have al my time in vein despended,
 And se noght how to ben amended,
 Bot rathere for to be empeired,
 As he that is wel nyh despeired.
- 1145 For I ne mai no thonk deserve,
 And evere I love and evere I serve,
 And evere I am aliche nerr.
 Thus, for I stonde in such a wer,
 I am, as who seith, out of herre;
- 1150 And thus upon miself the werre
 I bringe, and putte out alle pes,
 That I fulofte in such a res
 Am wery of myn oghne lif.
 So that of Contek and of strif
- 1155 I am beknowe and have ansuerd,
 As ye, my fader, now have herd.
 Min herte is wonderly begon
 With conseil, wheroft Witt is on,
 Which hath Resoun in compaignie;
- 1160 Agein the whiche stant partie
 Will, which hath Hope of his acord,
 And thus thei bringen up Descord.
 Witt and Resoun conseilien ofte
 That I myn herte scholde softe,
- 1165 And that I scholde Will remue
 And put him out of retenue,
 Or elles holde him under fote. *I confess*
circumstances
overtur
quarrel (discord)
overturns
distant
wasted
improved
made worse
discouraged (in despair)
attain
doubt
confused (unhinged)
frenzy
admit
supplied
Against this faction stands
remove

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| 1170 | For as thei sein, if that he mote
His oghne rewle have upon honde,
Ther schal no witt ben understande.
Of Hope also thei tellen this,
That overal, wher that he is,
He set the herte in jeupartie
With wisschinge and with fantasie,
And is noght trewe of that he seith,
So that in him ther is no feith.
Thus with Reson and Wit avised
Is Will and Hope aldai despised.
Reson seith that I scholde leve | must
<i>uncontrolled behavior</i> |
| 1175 | | |
| 1180 | To love, wher ther is no leve
To sped, and Will seith theragein
That such an herte is to vilein,
Which dar noght love and, til he spede,
Let Hope serve at such a nede. | cease
<i>permission</i>
<i>To succeed</i>
<i>too lowborn</i> |
| 1185 | He seith ek, where an herte sit
Al hol governed upon Wit,
He hath this lyves lust forlore.
And thus myn herte is al totore
Of such a Contek as thei make. | <i>Who [would] not dare [to] love; until he succeeds</i>

<i>Completely; Reason</i>
<i>pleasure in this life lost</i> |
| 1190 | Bot yit I mai noght Will forsake,
That he nys maister of my thought,
Or that I sped, or sped noght." | <i>is not</i> |
| 1195 | Confessor "Thou dost, my sone, agein the riht;
Bot love is of so gret a miht,
His lawe mai no man refuse, | |
| 1200 | So miht thou thee the betre excuse.
And natheles thou schalt be lerned
That Will scholde evere be governed
Of Reson more than of Kinde,
Wherof a tale write I finde. | <i>you yourself</i>
<i>instructed</i>

<i>By; Nature</i> |

[TALE OF DIOGENES AND ALEXANDER]

- | | | |
|------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | A philosophre of which men tolde | |
| | Ther was whilom be daies olde, | <i>once</i> |
| | And Diogenes thanne he hihte. | <i>was named</i> |
| 1205 | So old he was that he ne mihte | <i>(see note)</i> |
| | The world travaile, and for the beste | |
| | He schop him for to take his reste, | <i>prepared himself</i> |
| | And duelte at hom in such a wise, | |
| | That nyh his hous he let devise | <i>had constructed</i> |
| | Endlong upon an axeltré | <i>Along an axletree</i> |
| 1210 | To sette a tonne in such degré, | <i>barrel</i> |
| | That he it mihte torne aboute; | |

	Wherof on hed was taken oute, For he therinne sitte scholde And torne himself so as he wolde,	one head (end)
1215	To take th'air and se the hevene And deme of the planetes sevene, As he which cowthe mochel what.	<i>in whatever way he wished</i> <i>air</i> <i>examine</i> <i>knew a great many things</i>
	And thus fulofte there he sat To muse in his philosophie	
1220	Solein withoute compaignie: So that upon a morwetyde, As thing which scholde so betyde, Whan he was set ther as him liste	<i>Alone</i> <i>morning</i> <i>happen</i> <i>as it pleased him</i> <i>arisen</i>
	To loke upon the sonne ariste, Wherof the propretes he sih,	
1225	It fell ther cam ridende nyh King Alisandre with a route.	<i>riding nearby</i> <i>troop</i>
	And as he caste his yhe aboute, He sih this tonne, and what it mente	
1230	He wolde wite, and thider sente A knyht, be whom he mihte it knowe,	<i>barrel; meant</i> <i>know</i>
	And he himself that ilke throwe Abod, and hoveth there stille.	
	This kniht after the kinges wille	<i>for the moment</i> <i>Waited; lingers</i>
1235	With spore made his hors to gon And to the tonne he cam anon,	<i>spur</i>
	Wher that he fond a man of age,	
	And he him tolde the message,	
	Such as the king him hadde bede,	<i>commanded</i>
1240	And axeth why in thilke stede The tonne stod, and what it was.	<i>asked; that place</i>
	And he, which understod the cas,	
	Sat stille and spak no word agein.	<i>in reply</i>
	The kniht bad speke and seith, 'Vilein,	<i>Churl</i>
1245	Thou schalt me telle, er that I go;	
	It is thi king which axeth so.'	<i>thus asks</i>
	'Mi king?' quod he, 'That were unriht.'	<i>false (unright)</i>
	'What is he thanne?' seith the kniht,	
	'Is he thi man?' 'That seie I noght,'	
1250	Quod he, 'bot this I am bethoght,	<i>but this I have in mind</i>
	Mi mannes man hou that he is.'	<i>is what he is</i>
	'Thou lyest, false cherl, ywiss,'	<i>lie; for sure</i>
	The kniht him seith, and was riht wroth,	<i>really angry</i>
	And to the king agein he goth	
1255	And tolde him how this man ansuerde.	
	The king, whan he this tale herde,	<i>heard</i>
	Bad that thei scholden alle abyde,	<i>Ordered; wait</i>
	For he himself wol thider ryde.	

- 1260 And whan he cam tofore the tonne,
He hath his tale thus begonne:
'Al heil,' he seith, 'what man art thou?' *barrel*
Quod he, 'Such on as thou sest now.'
The king, which hadde wordes wise,
His age wolde noght despise,
1265 Bot seith, 'Mi fader, I thee preie
That thou me wolt the cause seie,
How that I am thi mannes man.'
'Sire king,' quod he, 'and that I can,
If that thou wolt.' 'Yis,' seith the king.
- 1270 Quod he, 'This is the sothe thing:
Sith I ferst resoun understod,
And knew what thing was evel and good,
The will which of my bodi moeveth,
Whos werkes that the God reproeveth,
1275 I have restreigned evermore,
As him which stant under the lore
Of reson, whos soubgit he is,
So that he mai noght don amis.
And thus be weie of covenant
1280 Will is my man and my servant,
And evere hath ben and evere schal.
And thi will is thi principal,
And hath the lordschipe of thi witt,
So that thou cowhest nevere yit
- 1285 Take o dai reste of thi labour;
Bot for to ben a conquerour
Of worldes good, which mai noght laste,
Thou hiest evere aliche faste,
Wher thou no reson hast to winne. *hasten*
- 1290 And thus thi will is cause of sinne,
And is thi lord, to whom thou servest,
Wheroft thou litel thonk deservest.'
The king of that he thus answerde
Was nothing wroth, bot whanne he herde
- 1295 The hihe wisdom which he seide,
With goodly wordes this he preide,
That he him wolde telle his name.
'I am,' quod he, 'that ilke same,
That which men Diogenes calle.'
- 1300 Tho was the king riht glad withalle,
For he hadde often herd tofore
What man he was, so that therfore
He seide, 'O wise Diogene,
Now schal thi grete witt be sene;
- 1305 For thou schalt of my gifte have *of what he had answered*
- Hello*
a one; see
- the fact of the matter*
Since
- your principal ruler*
your intelligence

- What worldes thing that thou wolt crave.'
- Quod he, 'Thanne hove out of mi sonne,
And let it schyne into mi tonne;
For thou benymst me thilke gifte,
1310 Which lith noght in thi miht to schifte.
Non other good of thee me nedeth.'
- This king, whom every contré dredeth,
Lo, thus he was enformed there.
Wherof, my sone, thou miht lere
- 1315 How that thi will schal noght be lieved,
Where it is noght of wit relieved.
And thou hast seid thiself er this
How that thi will thi maister is;
Thurgh which thin hertes thoght withinne
- 1320 Is evere of Contek to beginne,
So that it is gretli to drede
That it non homicide brede.
For love is of a wonder kinde,
And hath hise wittes ofte blinde,
- 1325 That thei fro mannes reson falle;
Bot whan that it is so befall
That will schal the corage lede,
In loves cause it is to drede.
Wherof I finde ensample write,
- 1330 Which is behovely for to wite. obligatory

[TALE OF PYRAMUS AND THISBE]

-  I rede a tale, and telleth this: (see note)
- The Cité which Semiramis
Enclosed hath with wall aboute,
Of worthi folk with many a route
- 1335 Was enhabited here and there;
Among the whiche tuo ther were
Above alle othre noble and grete,
Dwellende tho withinne a strete
So nyh togedre, as it was sene, crowd of people
- 1340 That ther was nothing hem betwene,
Bot wow to wow and wall to wall. then; neighborhood
- This o lord hadde in special
A sone, a lusti bacheler,
In al the toun was non his pier.
- 1345 That other hadde a dowhter eke,
In al the lond that for to seke
Men wisten non so faire as sche.
And fell so, as it scholde be,
This faire dowhter nyh this sone house partition (wough)

*equal
also*

knew

- 1350 As thei togedre thanne wone,
 Cupide hath so the thinges schape,
 That thei ne mihte his hand ascape,
 That he his fyr on hem ne caste:
 Wheroft her herte he overcaste *dwelled*
- 1355 To folwe thilke lore and suie
 Which nevere man yit miht eschuie;
 And that was love, as it is happed,
 Which hath here hertes so betrapped,
 That thei be alle weies seche *overwhelmed*
- 1360 How that thei mihten winne a speche,
 Here wofull peine for to lissee.
 Who loveth wel, it mai noght misse,
 And namely whan ther be tuo
 Of on acord, how so it go, *pursue*
- 1365 Bot if that thei som weie finde.
 For love is evere of such a kinde
 And hath his folk so wel affaited,
 That howso that it be awaited,
 Ther mai no man the pourpos lette. *avoid*
- 1370 And thus betwen hem tuo thei sette
 An hole upon a wall to make,
 Thurgh which thei have her conseil take
 At alle times whan thei myhte.
 This faire maiden Tisbee hihte, *their*
- 1375 And he whom that sche loveth hote
 Was Piramus be name hote.
 So longe here lecoun thei recorden,
 Til ate laste thei acorden
 Be nihtes time for to wende *[So] that*
- 1380 Alone out fro the tounes ende,
 Wher was a welle under a tree;
 And who cam ferst, or sche or he,
 He scholde stille there abide.
 So it befell the nyghtes tide *was named*
- 1385 This maiden, which desguised was,
 Al prively the softe pas
 Goth thurgh the large toun unknowe,
 Til that sche cam withinne a throwe
 Wher that sche liketh for to duelle, *passionately*
- 1390 At thilke unhappy freisshe welle,
 Which was also the forest nyh
 Wher sche comende a leoun syh
 Into the feld to take his preie,
 In haste and sche tho fledde aweie, *called*
- 1395 So as fortune scholde falle,
 For feere and let hire wympel falle *their lesson (instruction by experiences)*
- go*
- whether she or
(That person)
at night time*
- [with] silent step*
- was pleased to wait
ill-fortuned
near
coming; lion saw*
- And she in haste then*
- And in fear let*

- Nyh to the welle upon th'erbage. grass
 The leoun in his wilde rage
 A beste, which that he fond oute, had discovered
- 1400 Hath slain, and with his blodi snoute,
 Whan he hath eten what he wolde,
 To drynke of thilke stremes colde
 Cam to the welle, where he fond
 The wympel, which out of hire hond
- 1405 Was falle, and he it hath todrawe,
 Bebled aboute and al forgnawe;
 And thanne he strawhte him for to drinke
 Upon the freisshe welles brinke,
 And after that out of the plein
- 1410 He torneth to the wode agein.
 And Tisbee dorste noght remue,
 Bot as a bridd which were in mue
 Withinne a buissh sche kepte hire clos
 So stille that sche noght aros; [dared] not move
- 1415 Unto hirself and pleigneth ay.
 And fell, whil that sche there lay, [it so] befell
 This Piramus cam after sone
 Unto the welle, and be the mone
 He fond hire wimpel blodi there. by moonlight
- 1420 Cam nevere yit to mannes ere ear
 Tidinge, ne to mannes sihte
 Merveile, which so sore afluxte
 A mannes herte, as it tho dede
 To him, which in the same stede
- 1425 With many a wofull compleignyng afflicted
 Began his handes for to wringe,
 As he which demeth sikerly
 That sche be ded. And sodeinly
 His swerd al nakid out he breide
- 1430 In his folhaste, and thus he seide: place
 'I am cause of this felonie,
 So it is resoun that I die,
 As sche is ded because of me.' lament
 And with that word upon his kne
- 1435 He fell, and to the goddes alle judged
 Up to the hevene he gan to calle,
 And preide, sithen it was so
 That he may noght his love as tho
 Have in this world, that of her grace
- 1440 He miht hire have in other place,
 For hiere wolde he noght abide,
 He seith. Bot as it schal betide,
 The pomel of his swerd to grounde crime

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 1445 | He sette, and thurgh his herte a wounde
He made up to the bare hilte.
And in this wise himself he spilte
With his folhaste and deth he nam.
For sche withinne a while cam,
Wher he lai ded upon his knif. | <i>killed</i>
<i>took</i> |
| 1450 | So wofull yit was nevere lif
As Tisbee was, whan sche him sih.
Sche mihte noght o word on hih
Speke oute, for hire herte schette,
That of hir lif no pris sche sette,
Bot ded swounende doun sche fell. | <i>aloud</i>
<i>stopped beating</i>
<i>value</i> |
| 1455 | Til after, whanne it so befell
That sche out of hire traunce awok,
With many a wofull pitous lok
Hire yhe alwei among sche caste
Upon hir love, and ate laste | |
| 1460 | Sche cawhte breth and seide thus:
'O thou which cleped art Venus,
Goddesse of love, and thou, Cupide,
Which loves cause hast for to guide,
I wot now wel that ye be blinde, | <i>eye</i> |
| 1465 | Of thilke unhapp which I now finde
Only betwen my love and me.
This Piramus, which hiere I se
Bledende, what hath he deserved? | <i>misfortune</i> |
| 1470 | For he youre heste hath kept and served,
And was yong and I bothe also.
Helas, why do ye with ous so?
Ye sette oure herte bothe afyre, | <i>command</i> |
| 1475 | And maden ous such thing desire
Wheroft that we no skile cowthe;
Bot thus oure freisshe lusti yowthe
Withoute joie is al despended,
Which thing mai nevere ben amended. | <i>cause (reason) knew</i>
<i>wasted</i> |
| 1480 | For as of me this wol I seie,
That me is leve for to deie
Than live after this sorghful day.'
And with this word, where as he lay, | <i>preferable</i>
<i>sorrowful</i> |
| 1485 | Hire love in armes sche embraseth,
Hire oghne deth and so pourchaseth
That now sche wepte and nou sche kiste,
Til ate laste, er sche it wiste, | |
| 1490 | So gret a sorwe is to hire falle,
Which overgoth hire wittes alle.
As sche which mihte it noght asterte,
The swerdes point agein hire herte | <i>knew</i>
<i>overcomes</i>
<i>escape</i> |

- Sche sette, and fell doun therupon,
Wherof that sche was ded anon.
And thus bothe on o swerd bledende
1494 Thei weren founde ded liggende.
- Confessor** Now thou, mi sone, hast herd this tale,
Bewar that of thin oghne bale
Thou be noght cause in thi folhaste,
And kep that thou thi witt ne waste
Upon thi thoght in aventure,
1500 Wherof thi lyves forsfeture
Mai falle. And if thou have so thoght
Er this, tell on and hyde it noght.”
- Confessio Amantis** “Mi fader, upon loves side
Mi conscience I woll noght hyde,
1505 How that for love of pure wo
I have ben ofte moeved so,
That with my wisshes if I myhte,
A thousand times, I yow plyhte,
I hadde storven in a day;
- 1510 And therof I me schryve may,
Though love fully me ne slowh,
Mi will to deie was ynowh,
So am I of my will coupable.
And yit is sche noght merciable,
- 1515 Which mai me give lif and hele.
Bot that hir list noght with me dele,
I wot be whos conseil it is,
And him wolde I long time er this,
And yit I wolde and evere schal,
- 1520 Slen and destruie in special.
The gold of nyne kinges londes
Ne scholde him save fro myn hondes,
In my pouer if that he were;
Bot yit him stant of me no fere
- 1525 For noght that evere I can manace.
He is the hindrere of mi grace;
Til he be ded I mai noght sped.
So mot I nedes taken hiede
And schape how that he were aweie,
- 1530 If I therto mai finde a weie.”
- of one sword bleeding
lying dead*
- Confessor** Now thou, mi sone, hast herd this tale,
Bewar that of thin oghne bale
Thou be noght cause in thi folhaste,
And kep that thou thi witt ne waste
Upon thi thoght in aventure,
1500 Wherof thi lyves forsfeture
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Mi will to deie was ynowh,
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And yit is sche noght merciable,
- 1515 Which mai me give lif and hele.
Bot that hir list noght with me dele,
I wot be whos conseil it is,
And him wolde I long time er this,
And yit I wolde and evere schal,
- 1520 Slen and destruie in special.
The gold of nyne kinges londes
Ne scholde him save fro myn hondes,
In my pouer if that he were;
Bot yit him stant of me no fere
- 1525 For noght that evere I can manace.
He is the hindrere of mi grace;
Til he be ded I mai noght sped.
So mot I nedes taken hiede
And schape how that he were aweie,
- 1530 If I therto mai finde a weie.”
- be on guard that you do not waste your reason
grief*
- would have died
confess myself*
- guilty*
- power*
- menaced with death*

[ON DAUNGER]

- Confessor** “Mi sone, tell me now forthi,
Which is that mortiel enemy
That thou manakest to be ded.”
- menaced with death*

1535	Confessio Amantis	"Mi fader, it is such a qwed, That wher I come, he is tofore, And doth so, that mi cause is lore."	<i>scoundrel</i> <i>before [me]</i> <i>lost</i>
	[Confessor]	"What is his name?"	
1540	[Amans]	"It is Daunger, Which is mi ladi consailer. For I was nevere yit so slyh, To come in eny place nyh Wher as sche was be nyht or day, That Danger ne was redy ay, With whom for speche ne for mede Yit mihte I nevere of love spedē;	<i>Standoffishness</i> <i>Who; lady's counselor</i>
1545		1545 For evere this I finde soth, Al that my ladi seith or doth To me, Daunger schal make an ende, And that makth al mi world miswende. And evere I axe his help, bot he	<i>reward</i> <i>succeed</i> <i>[to be] true</i>
1550		1550 Mai wel be cleped Sanz Pitē; For ay the more I to him bowe, The lasse he wol my tale alowe. He hath mi ladi so englued, Sche wol noght that he be remued;	<i>turn awry</i> <i>ask</i> <i>called Pitiless</i>
1555		1555 For evere he hangeth on hire seal, And is so privé of conseil, That evere whanne I have oght bede, I finde Danger in hire stede And myn ansuere of him I have;	<i>ensnared</i> <i>does not want; removed</i> <i>Because; sail (i.e., keeps company with her)</i>
1560		1560 Bot for no merci that I crave, Of merci nevere a point I hadde. I finde his ansuere ay so badde, That werse mihte it nevere be. And thus betwen Danger and me	<i>prayed</i> <i>place</i>
1565		1565 Is evere werre til he dye. Bot mihte I ben of such maistrie, That I Danger hadde overcome, With that were al my joie come. Thus wolde I wonde for no sinne,	<i>wicked</i> <i>war</i>
1570		1570 Ne yit for al this world to winne, If that I mihte finde a sleyhte, To leie al myn astat in weyhte; I wolde him fro the court dissevere, So that he come ageinward nevere.	<i>avoid</i> <i>devious means</i>
1575		1575 Therfore I wisshe and wolde fain That he were in som wise slain; For while he stant in thilke place, Ne gete I noght my ladi grace. Thus hate I dedly thilke vice,	

- 1580 And wolde he stode in non office
 In place wher mi ladi is;
 For if he do, I wot wel this,
 That owther schal he deie or I
 Withinne a while; and noght forthi
 1585 On my ladi fulofte I muse,
 How that sche mai hirself excuse,
 If that I deie in such a plit.
 Me thenkth sche mihte noght be qwyt
 That sche ne were an homicide.
- 1590 And if it scholde so betide,
 As God forbiede it scholde be,
 Be double weie it is pité.
 For I, which al my will and witt
 Have gove and served evere yit,
- 1595 And thanne I scholde in such a wise
 In rewardinge of my servise
 Be ded, me thenkth it were a rowthe.
 And furthermor, to telle trowthe,
 Sche, that hath evere be wel named,
- 1600 Were worthi thanne to be blamed
 And of reson to ben appeled,
 Whan with o word sche mihte have heled
 A man, and soffreth him so deie.
 Ha, who sawh evere such a weie?
- 1605 Ha, who sawh evere in such destresse —
 Withoute pité gentilesse,
 Withoute mercy wommanhede,
 That wol so quyte a man his mede,
 Which evere hath be to love trewe?
- 1610 Mi goode fader, if ye rewé
 Upon mi tale, tell me now,
 And I wol stinte and herkne yow.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, attempre thi corage
 Fro Wraththe, and let thin herte assuage.
- 1615 For whoso wole him underfonge,
 He mai his grace abide longe,
 Er he of love be received;
 And ek also, bot it be weyved,
 Ther mihte mochel thing befalle,
- 1620 That scholde make a man to falle
 Fro love, that nevere afterward
 Ne durste he loke thiderward.
 In harde weies men gon softe,
 And er thei clymbe avise hem ofte.
- 1625 Men sen alday that rape reweth;
 And whoso wicked ale breweth,
- nonetheless
- acquitted
- given
If
- pity
- [so far] well-reputed
- indicted
healed
- reward
- have pity
- stop; listen [to]
- be vassal to him [Wrath]
wait a long time
- difficult paths; cautiously
before; advise themselves
- haste causes grief
foul ale

- Fulofte he mot the wersse drinke:
 Betre is to flete than to sincke;
 Betre is upon the bridel chiewe
 1630 Thanne if he felle and overthrew —
 The hors — and stiked in the myr.
 To caste water in the fyr
 Betre is than brenne up al the hous.
 The man which is malicious
 1635 And folhastif, fulofte he falleth,
 And selden is whan love him calleth.
 Forthi betre is to soffre a throwe
 Than be to wilde and overthrowe.
 Suffrance hath evere be the beste
 1640 To wissen him that secheth reste.
 And thus, if thou wolt love and spedē,
 Mi sone, soffre as I thee rede.
 What mai the mous agein the cat?
 And for this cause I axe that,
 1645 Who mai to love make a werre,
 That he ne hath himself the werre?
 Love axeth pes and evere schal,
 And who that flihteth most withal
 Schal lest conquerē of his emprise.
 1650 For this thei tellen that ben wise,
 Wicke is to stryve and have the wersse;
 To hasten is noght worth a kerse;
 Thing that a man mai noght achieve,
 That mai noght wel be don at eve,
 1655 It mot abide til the morwe.
 Ne haste noght thin oghne sorwe,
 Mi sone, and tak this in thi witt:
 He hath noght lost that wel abitt.
 Ensample that it falleth thus,
 1660 Thou miht wel take of Piramus,
 Whan he in haste his swerd outdrowh
 And on the point himselfe slowh
 For love of Tisbee pitously,
 For he hire wypel fond blody
 1665 And wende a bestē hire hadde slain;
 Wher as him oghte have be riht fain,
 For sche was there al sauf beside.
 Bot for he wolde noght abide,
 This meschief fell. Forthi be war,
 1670 Mi sone, as I thee warne dar,
 Do thou nothing in such a res,
 For suffrance is the welle of pes.
 Thogh thou to loves court poursuie,
- float
bite into
(i.e., the horse); overturned
became stuck
- fall over
Patience
- counsel
mouse [do] against
ask
war
- But that he himself is worse [off]*
- It is wicked
sprig of cress
- the end of the day
- who can wait well
- supposed a beast
glad
- wait
- hasty action
peace
would pursue

- 1675 Yit sit it wel that thou eschuiue *eschew*
 That thou the court noght overhaste,
 For so miht thou thi time waste;
 Bot if thin happ therto be schape,
 It mai noght helpe for to rape.
 Therfore attempre thi corage;
 Folhaste doth non avantage,
 Bot ofte it set a man behinde
 In cause of love, and that I finde
 Be olde ensample, as thou schalt hiere,
 Touchende of love in this matiere.
- Unless; circumstance
be hasty
moderate; passion*

[TALE OF PHEBUS AND DAPHNE]

- 1685 A maiden whilom ther was on, *once; one*
 Which Daphne hihte, and such was non *Who; was called*
 Of beauté thanne, as it was seid.
- ☞ Phebus his love hath on hire leid, *(see note)*
 And therupon to hire he soghte
- 1690 In his folhaste, and so besoghte, *cried out*
 That sche with him no reste hadde;
 For evere upon hire love he gradde,
 And sche seide evere unto him nay.
 So it befell upon a dai,
- 1695 Cupide, which hath every chance *circumstance*
 Of love under his governance,
 Syh Phebus hasten him so sore.
 And for he scholde him haste more,
 And yit noght speden ate laste, *succeed*
- 1700 A dart thurghout his herte he caste, *place*
 Which was of gold and al afyre,
 That made him manyfold desire *lead*
 Of love more thanne he dede.
 To Daphne ek in the same stede
- 1705 A dart of led he caste and smot, *place*
 Which was al cold and nothing hot.
 And thus Phebus in love brenneth,
 And in his haste aboute renneth,
 To loke if that he mihte winne;
- 1710 Bot he was evere to beginne, *always starting over*
 For evere awei fro him sche fledde,
 So that he nevere his love spedde.
 And for to make him full believe
 That no Folhaste mihte achieve *accomplished*
- 1715 To gete love in such degree, *Rashness*
 This Daphne into a lorer tre
 Was torned, which is evere grene, *laurel*

- In tokne, as yit it mai be sene,
 That sche schal duelle a maiden stille,
 1720 And Phebus failen of his wille.
 Be suche ensamples, as thei stonde,
 Mi sone, thou miht understande,
 To hasten love is thing in vein,
 Whan that fortune is theragein.
- 1725 To take where a man hath leve
 Good is, and elles he mot leve;
 For whan a mannes happes failen,
 Ther is non haste mai availen.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, grant merci of this!
 1730 Bot while I se mi ladi is
 No tre, bot halt hire oghne forme,
 Ther mai me no man so enforme,
 To whether part fortune wende,
 That I unto mi lyves ende
 1735 Ne wol hire serven everemo.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, sithen it is so,
 I seie no mor; bot in this cas
 Bewar how it with Phebus was.
 Noght only upon loves chance,
 1740 Bot upon every governance
 Which falleth unto mannes dede,
 Folhaste is evere for to drede,
 And that a man good consail take,
 Er he his pourpos undertake,
 1745 For consail put Folhaste aweie.”
- Amans** “Now goode fader, I you preie,
 That for to wisse me the more,
 Som good ensample upon this lore
 Ye wolden telle of that is write,
 1750 That I the betre mihte wite
 How I Folhaste scholde eschuie,
 And the wisdom of conseil suie.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, that thou miht enforme
 Thi pacience upon the forme
 1755 Of olde essamples, as thei felle,
 Now understand what I schal telle.

[TALE OF ATHEMAS AND DEMEPHON]

- Whan noble Troie was belein
 And overcome, and hom agein
 1759 The Gregois torned fro the siege,
 The kinges founde here oghne liege
 In manye places, as men seide,

*permission
do without
fortunes fail*

*tree; keeps her own shape
instruct
whatever*

since

instruct

*know
avoid
follow*

besieged

*Greeks
their own vassals (see note)*

- That hem forsoke and desobeide.
 Among the whiche fell this cas
 To Demephon and Athemas,
 1765 That weren kinges bothe tuo,
 And bothe weren served so.
 Here lieges wolde hem noght receive,
 So that thei mote algates weyve
 To seche lond in other place,
 1770 For there founde thei no grace.
 Wheroft heil token hem to rede,
 And soghten frendes ate nede
 And ech of hem asseureth other
 To helpe as to his oghne brother,
 1775 To vengen hem of thilke oulfrage
 And winne agein here heritage.
 And thus thei ryde aboute faste
 To gete hem help, and ate laste
 Thei hadden pouer sufficant,
 1780 And maden thanne a covenant,
 That thei ne scholden no lif save,
 Ne prest, ne cleric, ne lord, ne knave,
 Ne wif, ne child, of that thei finde,
 Which berth visage of mannes kinde,
 1785 So that no lif schal be socoured,
 Bot with the dedly swerd devoured.
 In such Folhaste here ordinance
 Thei schapen for to do vengance.
 Whan this pourpos was wist and knowe
 1790 Among here host, tho was ther blowe
 Of wordes many a speche aboute.
 Of yonge men the lusti route
 Were of this tale glad ynowh;
 Ther was no care for the plowh.
 1795 As thei that weren Folhastif,
 Thei ben acorded to the strif,
 And sein it mai noght be to gret
 To vengen hem of such forfeit.
 Thus seith the wilde unwise tonge
 1800 Of hem that there weren yonge.
 Bot Nestor, which was old and hor,
 The salve sih tofore the sor,
 As he that was of conseil wys.
 So that anon be his avis
 1805 Ther was a privé conseil nome.
 The lordes ben togedre come;
 This Demephon and Athemas
 Here pourpos tolden, as it was;
- Who were*
- depart*
- adopted a course of action*
- offense*
- their vow*
- known*
- blown*
- speech [spread] about*
- crowd*
- in agreement about the violence*
- say*
- loss*
- gray*
- healing ointment saw rather than*
- taken*

- 1810 Thei sieten alle stille and herde,
 Was non bot Nestor hem ansuerde.
 He bad hem, if thei wolde winne,
 Thei scholden se, er thei beginne,
 Here ende, and sette here ferste entente,
 That thei hem after ne repente. *[So] that; [fwould] not repent*
- 1815 And axeth hem this questioun,
 To what final conclusioun
 Thei wolde regne kinges there, *rule there [as] kings*
 If that no poeple in londe were;
 And seith, it were a wonder wierde *strange fate*
 1820 To sen a king become an hierde,
 Wher no lif is bot only beste *who became a shepherd*
 Under the liegance of his heste. *beast*
 For who that is of man no king,
 The remenant is as nothing. *command*
- 1825 He seith ek, if the pourpos holde *also*
 To sle the poeple, as thei tuo wolde,
 Whan thei it mihte noght restore,
 Al Grece it scholde abegge sore, *avenge*
 To se the wilde beste wone
- 1830 Wher whilom duelte a mannes sone.
 And for that cause he bad hem trete, *them negotiate a peace*
 And stinte of the manaces grete. *stop*
 Betre is to winne be fair speche, *by*
- 1834 He seith, than such vengance seche;
Nota For whanne a man is most above,
 Him nedeth most to gete him love. *seek*
 Whan Nestor hath his tale seid,
 Agein him was no word withseid;
 It thoghte hem alle he seide wel.
- 1840 And thus Fortune hire dedly whiel
 Fro werre torneth into pes.
 Bot forth thei wenten natheles,
 And whan the contres herde sein
 How that here kinges be besein *their kinds were equipped*
- 1845 Of such a pouer as thei ladde,
 Was non so bold that hem ne dradde,
 And for to seche pes and grith
 Thei sende and preide anon forthwith,
 So that the kinges ben appesed, *peace; cessation of hostility*
- 1850 And every mannes herte is esed;
 Al was forgete and noght recorded.
 And thus thei ben togedre acorded;
 The kinges were agein received,
 And pes was take and wraththe weived, *departed*

- 1855 And al thurgh conseil which was good
Of him that reson understod.
- Confessor** Be this ensample, sone, attempre
Thin herte and let no will distempre
- Nota** Thi wit, and do nothing be myht
1860 Which mai be do be love and riht.
Folhaste is cause of mochel wo;
Forthi, mi sone, do noght so.
And as touchende of Homicide
Which toucheth unto loves side,
1865 Fulofte it falleth unavised
Thurgh Will, which is noght wel assised
Whan Wit and Reson ben aweie,
And that Folhaste is in the weie,
Wherof hath falle gret vengance.
- 1870 Forthi tak into remembrance
To love in such a maner wise
That thou deserve no juise.
For wel I wot, thou miht noght lette
That thou ne schalt thin herte sette
1875 To love, wher thou wolt or non;
Bot if thi wit be overgon,
So that it torne into malice,
Ther wot no man of thilke vice
What peril that ther mai befallae.
- 1880 Wherof a tale amonges alle,
Which is gret pité for to hiere,
I thenke for to tellen hiere,
That thou such moerdre miht withstonde,
Whan thou the tale hast understonde.
- be done by*
not very reliable
punishment
prevent
overwhelmed
hear
here
[So] that

[TALE OF ORESTES]

- 1885 Of Troie at thilke noble toun,
Whos fame stant yit of renoun
☞ And evere schal to mannes ere,
The siege laste longe there,
Er that the Greks it mihten winne,
1890 Whil Priamus was king therinne;
Bot of the Greks that lyhe aboute
Agamenon ladde al the route.
This thing is knownen overal,
Bot yit I thenke in special
1895 To my matiere therupon
Telle in what wise Agamenon,
Thurgh chance which mai noght be weived,
Of love untrewe was deceived.
- ear (see note)*
evaded

- 1900 An old sawe is, 'Who that is slyh
 In place where he mai be nyh,
 He makth the ferre lieve loth.' *near
distant love loathsome*
- 1905 Ther while Agamenon batailleth
 To winne Troie, and it assailleth,
 Fro home and was long time ferr, *far away*
 Egistus drowh his qweene nerr,
 And with the leiser which he hadde
 This ladi at his wille he ladde. *led*
- 1910 Sche was therof gretli to blame,
 To love there it mai noght laste.
 Bot fell to meschief ate laste,
 For whan this noble worthi kniht
 Fro Troie cam, the ferste nyht
- 1915 That he at home abedde lay,
 Egistus, longe er it was day,
 As this Climestre him hadde asent,
 And weren bothe of on assent, *sent for
one*
 Be treson slowh him in his bedd.
- 1920 Bot moerdre, which mai noght ben hedd, *hidden*
 Sprong out to every mannes ere,
 Wheroft the lond was full of fere.
 Agamenon hath be this qweene
 A sone, and that was after sene.
- 1925 Bot yit as thanne he was of yowthe, *evident
But since*
 A babe, which no reson cowthe,
 And as Godd wolde, it fell him thus.
 A worthi kniht Taltabius
 This yonge child hath in kepinge,
- 1930 And whan he herd of this tidinge,
 Of this treson, of this misdede,
 He gan withinne himself to drede,
 In aunter if this false Egiste
 Upon him come, er he it wiste, *before he knew it*
- 1935 To take and moerdre of his malice
 The child, which he hath to norrice.
 And for that cause in alle haste
 Out of the lond he gan him haste
 And to the king of Crete he strawhte
- 1940 And him this yonge lord betawhite, *went
entrusted*
 And preide him for his fader sake
 That he this child wolde undertake
 And kepe him til he be of age,
 So as he was of his lignage;
- 1945 And tolde him over al the cas, *Because*

- How that his fadre moerdred was,
 And hou Egistus, as men seide,
 Was king, to whom the lond obeide.
 And whanne Ydomeneux the king
 1950 Hath understandinge of this thing,
 Which that this kniht him hadde told,
 He made sorwe manyfold
 And tok this child into his warde,
 And seide he wolde him kepe and warde,
 1955 Til that he were of such a myht
 To handle a swerd and ben a knyht,
 To venge him at his oghme wille.
 And thus Horestes duelleth stille:
 Such was the childe rihte name,
 1960 Which after wroghte mochel schame
 In vengance of his fader deth.
 The time of yeres overgeth,
 That he was man of brede and lengthe,
 Of wit, of manhod, and of strengthe,
 1965 A fair persone amonges alle.
 And he began to clepe and calle,
 As he which come was to manne,
 Unto the King of Crete thanne,
 Preiende that he wolde him make
 1970 A kniht and pouer with him take,
 For lengere wolde he noght beleve,
 He seith, bot preith the king of leve
 To gon and cleyme his heritage
 And vengen him of thilke oulfrage
 1975 Which was unto his fader do.
 The king assenteth wel therto,
 With gret honour and knyht him makth,
 And gret pouer to him betakth,
 And gan his journé for to caste,
 1980 So that Horestes ate laste
 His leve tok and forth he goth.
 And he that was in herte wroth,
 His ferste pleinte to bemene,
 Unto the cité of Athene
 1985 He goth him forth and was received,
 So there was he noght deceived.
 The duc and tho that weren wise
 Thei profren hem to his servise;
 And he hem thonketh of here profre
 1990 And seith himself he wol gon offre
 Unto the goddes for his sped,
 As alle men him geven red.
- keeping (protection)
 guard
- passes
 [So] that; breadth; height
- Praying
 a force [of soldiers]
 remain
 leave (permission)
- outrage
- And with great honor makes him knight
 entrusts
- complaint to express
- In such a manner that
 duke and those who
- success
 advised him [to do]

- So goth he to the temple forth.
Of giftes that be mochel worth *are very valuable*
- 1995 His sacrifice and his offringe
He made; and after his axinge
He was ansuerd, if that he wolde
His stat recovere, thanne he scholde
Upon his moder do vengance
- 2000 So cruel, that the remembrance
Theroft mihte everemore abide,
As sche that was an homicide
And of hire oghne lord moerdrice.
Horestes, which of thilke office *murderess*
- 2005 Was nothing glad, as thanne he preide
Unto the goddes there and seide
That thei the juggement devise,
How sche schal take the juise.
And therupon he hadde ansuere, *duty*
- 2010 And therupon he hadde ansuere,
That he hire pappes scholde of tere
Out of hire brest his oghne hondes,
And for ensample of alle londes
With hors sche scholde be todrawe, *breasts; tear off*
- 2015 Til houndes hadde hire bones gnawe
Withouten eny sepulture. *bosom; with his own hands*
- 2020 The duc and his pouer he hadde, *grave*
And to a cité forth thei gon,
The which was cleped Cropheon,
Where as Phoieus was lord and sire,
Which profreth him withouten hyre
- 2025 His help and al that he mai do,
As he that was riht glad therto,
To grieve his mortiel enemy.
And tolde hem certein cause why,
How that Egiste in mariage *duke*
- 2030 His dowhter whilom of full age
Forlai, and afterward forsok, *Raped; forsook [her]*
Whan he Horestes moder tok.
Men sein, 'Old senne newe schame': *took [in marriage]*
- 2035 Thus more and more aros the blame
Agein Egiste on every side.
Horestes with his host to ride
Began, and Phoieus with hem wente;
I trowe Egiste him schal repente. *sin*
- Thei ride forth unto Micene, *himself*

- 2040 Wher lay Climestre thilke qweene,
The which Horestes moder is.
And whan sche herde telle of this,
The gates weren faste schet,
And thei were of here entré let. *securely shut
their entrance obstructed*
- 2045 Anon this cité was withoute
Belein and sieged al aboute,
And evere among thei it assaile,
Fro day to nyht and so travaile,
Til ate laste thei it wonne; *Besieged; waylaid
continually*
- 2050 Tho was ther sorwe ynowh begonne.
Horestes dede his moder calle
Anon tofore the lordes alle
And ek tofor the poeple also,
To hire and tolde his tale tho, *before*
- 2055 And seide, 'O cruel beste unkinde,
How mihtest thou thin herte finde,
For eny lust of loves drawhte,
That thou acordest to the slawhte
Of him which was thin oghne lord? *unnatural
love's cup
slaughter*
- 2060 Thi treson stant of such record,
Thou miht thi werkes noght forsake;
So mot I for mi fader sake
Vengance upon thi bodi do,
As I comanded am therto. *put aside
must*
- 2065 Unkindely for thou hast wroght,
Unkindeliche it schal be boght:
The sone schal the moder sle,
For that whilom thou seidest "yee"
To that thou scholdest "nay" have seid.' *Unnaturally
paid for*
- 2070 And he with that his hond hath leid
Upon his moder brest anon,
And rente out fro the bare bon
Hire pappes bothe and caste awei
Amiddes in the carte weie, *mother's breast
tore; bone
threw away
cart's path*
- 2075 And after tok the dede cors
And let it drawe awey with hors
Unto the hound and to the raven;
Sche was non other wise graven.
Egistus, which was elles where, *dead body
dragged*
- 2080 Tidinges comen to his ere
How that Micenes was belein,
Bot what was more herd he noght sein.
With gret manace and mochel bost
He drowh pouer and made an host *News; ear
besieged*
- 2085 And cam in rescousse of the toun.
Bot al the sleyhte of his tresoun *gathered an army
rescue*

- Horestes wiste it be aspie,
 And of his men a gret partie
 He made in buisshement abide,
 2090 To waite on him in such a tide
 That he ne mihte here hond ascape:
 And in this wise as he hath schape
 The thing befell, so that Egiste
 Was take, er he himself it wiste,
 2095 And was forth broght hise hondes bounde,
 As whan men han a tretour founde.
 And tho that weren with him take,
 Whiche of tresoun were overtake,
 Togedre in o sentence falle.
 2100 Bot false Egiste above hem alle
 Was demed to diverse peine,
 The worste that men cowthe ordeigne,
 And so forth after be the lawe
 He was unto the gibet drawe,
 2105 Where he above alle othre hongeth,
 As to a tretour it belongeth.
 Tho fame with hire swifte wynges
 Aboute flyh and bar tidinges,
 And made it cowth in alle londes
 2110 How that Horestes with hise hondes
 Climestre his oghne moder slowh.
 Some sein he dede wel ynowh,
 And som men sein he dede amis,
 Diverse opinion ther is.
 2115 That sche is ded thei speken alle,
 Bot pleinli hou it is befallie,
 The matiere in so litel throwe
 In soth ther mihte no man knowe
 Bot thei that weren ate dede.
 2120 And comunliche in every nede
 The worste speche is rathest herd
 And lieved, til it be ansuerd.
 The kinges and the lordes grete
 Begonne Horestes for to threte
 2125 To puten him out of his regne.
 'He is noght worthi for to renge,
 The child which slowh his moder so,'
 Thei saide; and therupon also
 The lordes of comun assent
 2130 A time sette of parlement,
 And to Athenes king and lord
 Togedre come of on acord,
 To knowe hou that the sothe was.
- ambush await
time*
- captured, before
[with] his hands bound
traitor discovered
those who were*
- condemned to various torments*
- by
gibbet*
- known*
- slew*
- so short a period of time
truth; understand [what happened]
Except those who; at [the] deed*
- most quickly heard
believed; contradicted*
- rule*

- So that Horestes in this cas
 2135 Thei senden after, and he com.
 King Menelay the wordes nom
 And axeth him of this matiere.
 And he, that alle it mihten hiere,
 Ansuerde and tolde his tale alarge,
 2140 And hou the goddes in his charge
 Comanded him in such a wise
 His oghne hond to do juise.
 And with this tale a duc aros,
 Which was a worthi knight of los,
 2145 His name was Menesteus,
 And seide unto the lordes thus:
 'The wreeche which Horestes dede,
 It was thing of the goddes bede,
 And nothing of his crualté;
 2150 And if ther were of mi degree
 In al this place such a kniht
 That wolde sein it was no riht,
 I wole it with my bodi prove.'
 And therupon he caste his glove,
 2155 And ek this noble duc alleide
 Ful many another skile, and seide
 Sche hadde wel deserved wreche,
 Ferst for the cause of spousebreche,
 And after wroghte in such a wise
 2160 That al the world it oghte agrise,
 Whan that sche for so foul a vice
 Was of hire oghne lord moerdrice.
 Thei seten alle stille and herde,
 Bot therto was no man ansuerde,
 2165 It thoghte hem alle he seide skile,
 Ther is no man withseie it wile;
 Whan thei upon the reson musen,
 Horestes alle thei excusen.
 So that with gret solempneté
 2170 He was unto his digneté
 Received, and coroned king.
 And tho befell a wonder thing;
 Egiona, whan sche this wiste,
 Which was the dowhter of Egiste
 2175 And soster on the moder side
 To this Horeste, at thilke tide,
 Whan sche herde how hir brother spedde,
 For pure sorwe, which hire ledde,
 That he ne hadde ben exiled,
 2180 Sche hath hire oghne lif beguiled
- took*
fully
[By] his own hand; judgment
duke
good reputation (fame)
vengeance; took
commanded
(i.e., threw down the gauntlet in challenge)
alleged
reason
vengeance
adultery
offend
It seemed; spoke reason
speak against
honor
knew
time
succeeded
betrayed

	Anon and hyng hireselve tho. It hath and schal ben everemo, To moerdre who that wole assente, He mai noght faille to repente.	<i>hanged; then</i>
2185	This false Egiona was on, Which for to moerdre Agamenon Gaf hire acord and hire assent, So that be Goddes juggement,	<i>by</i>
	Thogh that non other man it wolde,	
2190	Sche tok hire juise as sche scholde; And as sche to another wroghte, Vengance upon hireself sche soghte, And hath of hire unhappi wit	<i>punishment</i>
	A moerdre with a moerdre quit.	
2195	Such is of moerdre the vengance.	
Confessor	Forthi, mi sone, in remembrance Of this ensample tak good hiede. For who that thenkth his love spiede With moerdre, he schal with worldes schame	<i>to expedite</i>
2200	Himself and ek his love schame."	
Amans	"Mi fader, of this aventure Which ye have told, I you assure Min herte is sory for to hiere, Bot only for I wolde lere	<i>because; learn</i>
2205	What is to done, and what to leve. And over this now be your leve,	<i>avoid</i>
	That ye me wolden telle I preie, If ther be lieffull eny weie	<i>(see note)</i>
2209	Withoute senne a man to sle."	<i>lawful</i>
		<i>sin</i>
Confessor	"Mi sone, in sondri wise, ye. What man that is of traiterie, Of moerdre or elles robberie Atteint, the jugge schal noght lette,	<i>various ways, yes</i>
	Bot he schal slen of pure dette,	
2215	And doth gret senne, if that he wonde. For who that lawe hath upon honde, And spareth for to do justice For merci, doth noght his office,	<i>Convicted</i>
	That he his mercy so bewareth,	<i>refrains</i>
2219	Whan for o schrewe which he spareth A thousand goode men he grieveth. With such merci who that believeth To plese God, he is deceived,	<i>duty</i>
		<i>squanders</i>
		<i>one wicked person (see note)</i>
2224	Or elles resoun mot be weyved. The lawe stod er we were bore, How that a kinges swerd is bore In signe that he schal defende	<i>aggrieves</i>
		<i>must be abandoned</i>
		<i>before (see note)</i>

- His trewe poeple and make an ende
Of suche as wolden hem devoure.
- 2230 Lo thus, my sone, to socoure
The lawe and comun riht to winne,
A man mai sle withoute sinne,
And do therof a gret almesse,
- 2234 So for to kepe rihtwisnesse.
- ¶ And over this for his contré
In time of werre a man is fre
Himself, his hous, and ek his lond
Defende with his oghne hond,
- 2240 And slen, if that he mai no bet,
After the lawe which is set.”
- Amans** “Now, fader, thanne I you beseche
Of hem that dedly werres seche
In worldes cause and scheden blod,
- 2244 If such an homicide is good.”
- [Confessor]** “Mi sone, upon thi question
The trowthe of myn opinion,
Als ferforth as my wit arecheth
And as the pleine lawe techeth,
- 2250 I woll thee telle in evidence,
To rewle with thi conscience.”
- good deed*
maintain justice
(see note)
war
[To] defend; own
kill; find no better [solution]
- Concerning*
common law

[EVIL OF WAR]

- v. *Qvod creat ipse deus, necat hoc homicida creatum,*
Vltor et humano sanguine spargit humum.
Vt pecoris sic est hominis crux, heu, modo fusus,
Victa iacet pietas, et furor vrget opus.
Angelus “In terra pax” dixit, et ultima Cristi
*Verba sonant pacem, quam modo guerra fugat.*¹

- [Confessor]** “The hihe God of His justice
 ¶ That ilke foule horrible vice
Of Homicide he hath forbede,
Be Moises as it was bede.
- 2255 Whan Goddes Sone also was bore,
He sende Hise anglis doun therfore,
Whom the schepherdes herden singe,
Pes to the men of welwillinge
In erthe be among ous here.
- same (specific) (see note)*
forbidden
By Moses; commanded
Peace; properly directed intention

¹ *The creature that God himself creates, Homicide slays, sprinkling the ground with human blood as an avenger. A human being's bloodthirstiness is like a beast's: once — alas! — it is poured out, pity lies conquered, and rage urges on the work. The Angel said “peace on earth,” and the final words of Christ express a peace from which wars now depart.*

- 2260 So for to speke in this matiere
 After the lawe of charité,
 Ther schal no dedly werre be.
 And ek nature it hath defended
 And in hir lawe pes comended,
 Which is the chief of mannes welthe,
 Of mannes lif, of mannes helthe.
 Bot dedly werre hath his covine
 Of Pestilence and of Famine,
 Of Poverté and of alle wo,
 Wheroft this world we blamen so,
 Which now the werre hath under fote,
 Til God Himself therof do bote.
 For alle thing which God hath wroght
 In erthe, werre it bringth to noght.
 The cherche is brent, the priest is slain,
 The wif, the maide is ek forlain,
 The lawe is lore, and God unserved.
 I not what mede he hath deserved
 That suche werres ledeth inne.
 If that he do it for to winne,
 Ferst to accompte his grete cost
 Forth with the folk that he hath lost,
 As to the worldes rekeninge
 Ther schal he finde no winnyng;
 And if he do it to pourchace
 The hevene mede, of such a grace
 I can noght speke, and natheles
 Crist hath comanded love and pes,
 And who that worcheth the revers,
 I trowe his mede is ful divers.
 And sithen thanne that we finde
 That werres in here oghne kinde
 Ben toward God of no decerte,
 And ek thei bringen in poverte
 Of worldes good, it is merveile
 Among the men what it mai eyle,
 That thei a pes ne conne sette.
 I trowe senne be the lette,
 And every mede of senne is deth;
 So wot I nevere hou that it geth.
 Bot we that ben of o believe
 Among ousself, this wolde I lieve
 That betre it were pes to chese,
 Than so be double weie lese.
 I not if that it now so stonde,
 Bot this a man mai understande,
- also; prohibited*
- most important factor*
- confederates*
- remedy*
- war reduces it to nothing*
- church; burnt*
- raped*
- lost*
- know not; desert (punishment)*
- introduces*
- heaven's reward*
- believe; reward; the complete opposite*
- since*
- by their very nature*
- merit*
- impoverishment*
- harm*
- sin; obstacle*
- reward; sin; death (see note)*
- a single*
- ourselves; believe*
- to choose peace*
- lose*
- know not*

- Who that these olde bokes redeth,
That Coveitise is on which ledeth,
And broghte ferst the werres inne.
Covetousness is the leading factor
- 2310 At Grece if that I schal beginne,
Ther was it proved hou it stod:
To Perce, which was ful of good,
Thei maden werre in special,
And so thei deden overal,
2315 Wher gret riches was in londe,
So that thei leften nothing stonde
☞ Unwerrered, bot onliche Archade.
For there thei no werres made,
Because it was bareigne and povere,
2320 Wheroft he mihten noght recovere;
And thus poverté was forbore,
He that noght hadde noght hath lore.
Bot yit it is a wonder thing,
Whan that a riche worthi king,
2325 Or other lord, what so he be,
Wol axe and cleyme propreté
In thing to which he hath no riht,
Bot onliche of his grete miht.
For this mai every man wel wite,
2330 That bothe kinde and lawe write
Expressly stonden theragein.
Bot he mot nedes somwhat sein,
Althogh ther be no reson inne,
Which secheth cause for to winne.
2335 For Wit that is with Will oppressed
Whan Coveitise him hath adressed
And alle Resoun put aweie,
He can wel finde such a weie
To werre, where as evere him liketh,
2340 Wheroft he the world entriketh,
That many a man of him compleigneth.
Bot yit alwei som cause he feigneth,
And of his wrongful herte he demeth
That al is wel, what evere him semeth,
2345 Be so that he mai winne ynowh.
For as the trew man to the plowh
Only to the gaignage entendeth,
Riht so the werreior despendeth
His time and hath no conscience.
2350 And in this point for evidence
Of hem that suche werres make,
Thou miht a gret ensample take,
How thei her tirannie excusen
Unassailed (see note)
barren
gain a profit
avoided
had nothing lost nothing
demand; claim
because of; power
know
natural and written law
in opposition
Who seeks grounds
deceives
Provided that; enough
[agricultural] profit
Just so the warrior squanders
their

- 2355 Of that thei wrongfull werres usen,
And how thei stonde of on accord,
The souldeour forth with the lord,
The poore man forth with the riche,
As of corage thei ben liche,
To make werres and to pile
2360 For lucre and for non other skyle.
Wheroft a propre tale I rede,
As it whilom befell in dede.
- disposition; alike
pillage
reason
once; fact

[TALE OF ALEXANDER AND THE PIRATE]

- 2365 Of him whom al this erthe dradde,
Whan he the world so overladde
Thurgh werre, as it fortuned is,
King Alisandre, I rede this:
How in a marche, where he lay,
It fell per chance upon a day
A rovere of the see was nome,
2370 Which many a man hadde overcome
And slain and take here good aweie.
This pilour, as the bokes seie,
A famous man in sondri stede
Was of the werkes whiche he dede.
2375 This prisoner tofor the king
Was broght, and there upon this thing
In audience he was accused.
And he his dede hath noght excused,
Bot preith the king to don him riht,
2380 And seith, 'Sire, if I were of miht,
I have an herte lich to thin;
For if the pouer were myn,
Mi will is most in special
To rifle and geten overal
2385 The large worldes good aboute.
Bot for I lede a povere route
And am, as who seith, at meschief,
The name of pilour and of thief
I bere; and thou, which routes grete
2390 Miht lede and take thi begete,
And dost riht as I wolde do,
Thi name is nothing cleped so,
Bot thou art named "Emperour."
Oure dedes ben of o colour
2395 And in effect of o decerte,
Bot thi richesse and my poverte
Tho ben noght taken evene liche.
- feared
tyrannized
Through war
(see note)
borderland
pirate; sea; captured
Who; overwhelmed
stolen their goods
pillager
places
did
before
behavior
give him justice
akin to your own
steal; everywhere
poor gang
pillager
troops
plunder
called
one worth
poverty

- And nathelas he that is riche
 This dai, to morwe he mai be povere; *poor*
 2400 And in contraire also recovere
 A povere man to gret richesse
 Men sen: forthi let rihtwisnesse
 Be peised evene in the balance.' *therefore; justice weighed*
- The king his hardi contienance
 2405 Behield, and herde hise wordes wise,
 And seide unto him in this wise:
 'Thin ansuere I have understande,
 Wheroft my will is, that thou stonde
 In mi service and stille abide.'
- 2410 And forthwithal the same tide
 He hath him terme of lif withholde,
 The mor and for he schal ben holde,
 He made him kniht and gaf him lond,
 Which afterward was of his hond *loyal*
- 2415 An orped kniht in many a stede,
 And gret prouesce of armes dede,
 As the croniqes it recorden. *valiant knight; place of prowess*
- And in this wise thei acorden,
 The whiche of o condicioun
 2420 Be set upon destruccioun.
 Such capitein such retene.
 Bot for to se to what issue
 The thing befalleth ate laste,
 It is gret wonder that men caste
- 2425 Here herte upon such wrong to winne,
 Wher no begete mai ben inne,
 And doth desese on every side: *profit*
 Bot whan reson is put aside
 And will governeth the corage, *heart*
- 2430 The faucon which that fletch ramage
 And soeffreth nothing in the weie,
 Wheroft he mai take his preie,
 Is noght mor set upon ravine,
 Than thilke man which his covine *flies untamed*
- 2435 Hath set in such a maner wise.
 For al the world ne mai suffise
 To will which is noght resonable. *rapaciousness conspiracy*
- ¶ Wheroft ensample concordable
 Lich to this point of which I meene, *(see note)*
 2440 Was upon Alisandre sene,
 Which hadde set al his entente
 So as fortune with him wente,
 That reson mihte him non governe,
 Bot of his will he was so sterne,

- 2445 That al the world he overran
 And what him list he tok and wan.
 In Ynde the superiour
 Whan that he was ful conquerour,
 And hadde his wilful pourpos wonne
 2450 Of al this erthe under the sonne,
 This king homward to Macedoine,
 Whan that he cam to Babiloine,
 And wende most in his empire,
 As he which was hol lord and sire,
 2455 In honour for to be received,
 Most sodeinliche he was deceived,
 And with strong puison envenimed.
 And as he hath the world mistimed
 Noght as he scholde with his wit,
 2460 Noght as he wolde it was aquit.
 Thus was he slain that whilom slowh,
 And he which riche was ynowh
 This dai, tomorwe he hadde noght.
 And in such wise as he hath wroght
 2465 In destorbance of worldes pes,
 His werre he fond thanne endeles,
 In which forevere desconfit
 He was.
 Lo now, for what profit
 Of werre it helpeth for to ryde,
 2470 For coveitise and worldes pride
 To sle the worldes men aboute,
 As bestes whiche gon theroute.
 For every lif which reson can
 Oghth wel to knowe that a man
 2475 Ne scholde thurgh no tirannie
 Lich to these othre bestes die,
 Til kinde wolde for him sende.
 I not hou he it mihte amende,
 Which takth awei foreveremore
 2480 The lif that he mai noght restore.
- Confessor** Forthi, mi sone, in alle weie
 Be wel avised, I thee preie,
 Of slawhte er that thou be coupable
 2484 Withoute cause resonable.”
- pleased him*
sun
had to return into
poison
repaid
slew
nothing
peace
war
vanquished
nature would send for him
know not; remedy
Who
guilty

[ON CRUSADES]

Amans “Mi fader, understande it is,
 That ye have seid; bot over this
 I prei you tell me ‘nay’ or ‘yee,’

- To passe over the grete see
 To werre and sle the Sarazin,
 2490 Is that the lawe?" *ocean*
- Confessor** "Sone myn,
 To preche and soffre for the feith,
 That have I herd the Gospell seith;
 Bot for to slee, that hiere I noght.
 Crist with His oghne deth hath boght
 2495 Alle othre men, and made hem fre, *them*
 In tokne of parfit charité;
 And after that He tawhte Himselfe,
 Whan He was ded, these othre tuelve
 Of Hise Apostles wente aboute
 2500 The holi feith to prechen oute,
 Wherof the deth in sondri place
 Thei soffre, and so God of His grace
 The feith of Crist hath mad aryse.
 2504 Bot if thei wolde in other wise
- Nota** Be werre have broght in the creance,
 It hadde yit stonde in balance. *By war; the faith
been unstable*
 And that mai proven in the dede;
 For what man the croniqes rede,
 Fro ferst that holi cherche hath weyved
 2510 To preche, and hath the swerd received,
 Wherof the werres ben begonne,
 A gret partie of that was wonne
 To Cristes feith stant now miswent. *now has become profligate*
 Godd do therof amendment,
 2515 So as he wot what is the beste. *might know*
 Bot, sone, if thou wolt live in reste *at peace*
 Of conscience wel assised, *judged*
 Er that thou sle, be wel avised. *slay; advised*
 For man, as tellen ous the clerkes,
 2520 Hath God above alle ertheli werkes
 Ordeined to be principal,
 And ek of soule in special
 He is mad lich to the Godhiede.
 So sit it wel to taken hiede
- 2525 And for to loke on every side,
 Er that thou falle in Homicide,
 Which senne is now so general,
 That it welnyh stant overal,
 In holi cherche and elles where. *has become commonplace*
- 2530 Bot al the while it stant so there,
 The world mot nede fare amis.
 For whan the welle of pité is
 Thurgh coveitise of worldes good *must necessarily go astray*

- Defouled with schedinge of blod,
 2535 The remenant of folk aboute
 Unethe stonden eny doute
 To werre ech other and to slee.
 So is it al noght worth a stree,
 The charité wherof we prechen,
 2540 For we do nothing as we techen.
 And thus the blinde conscience
 Of pes hath lost thilke evidence
 Which Crist upon this erthe tawhte.
 Now mai men se moerdre and manslawte
 2545 Lich as it was be daies olde,
 Whan men the sennes boghte and solde.
 In Grece afore Cristes feith,
 I rede, as the cronique seith,
 Touchende of this matiere thus,
 2550 In thilke time hou Peleus
 His oghne brother Phocus slowh;
 Bot for he hadde gold ynowh
 To give, his senne was despensed
 With gold, wherof it was compensated.
 2555 Achastus, which with Venus was
 Hire Priest, assoilede in that cas,
 Al were ther no repentance.
 And as the bok makth remembrance,
 It telleth of Medee also;
 2560 Of that sche slowh her sones tuo,
 Egeus in the same plit
 Hath mad hire of hire senne quit.
 The sone ek of Amphioras,
 Whos rihte name Almeus was,
 2565 His moder slowh, Eriphile;
 Bot Achilo the Priest and he,
 So as the bokes it recorden,
 For certein somme of gold acorden
 That thilke horrible sinfull dede
 2570 Assoiled was. And thus for mede
 Of worldes good it falleth ofte
 That Homicide is set alofte
 Hiere in this lif; bot after this
 Ther schal be knowe how that it is
 2575 Of hem that suche thinges werche,
 And hou also that holi cherche
 Let suche sennes passe quyte,
 And how thei wole hemself aquite
 Of dedly werres that thei make.
 2580 For who that wolde ensample take,
- Hardly have any fear
 commit war against each
 straw*
- sins
 before (see note)*
- killed
 because; enough*
- two sons*
- sin acquitted*
- Absolved; payment*
- put aside*
- do*
- sins slip by as absolved
 excuse themselves*

- The lawe which is naturel
 Be weie of kinde scheweth wel
 That Homicide in no degree,
 Which werreth agein charité,
 2585 Among the men ne scholde duelle.
 For after that the bokes telle,
 To seche in al this worldesriche,
 Men schal noght finde upon his liche
 A beste for to take his preie.
- 2590 And sithen kinde hath such a weie,
 Thanne is it wonder of a man,
 Which kynde hath and resoun can,
 That he wol owther more or lasse
 His kinde and resoun overpasse,
 2595 And sle that is to him semblable.
 So is the man noght resonable
 Ne kinde, and that is noght honeste,
 Whan he is worse than a beste.
- ¶ Among the bokes whiche I finde
 2600 Solyns spekth of a wonder kinde,
 And seith of fowles ther is on,
 Which hath a face of blod and bon
 Lich to a man in resemblance.
 And if it falle him so per chance,
 2605 As he which is a fowhl of preie,
 That he a man finde in his weie,
 He wol him slen, if that he mai.
 Bot afterward the same dai,
 Whan he hath eten al his felle,
 2610 And that schal be beside a welle,
 In which whan he wol drinke take,
 Of his visage and seth the make
 That he hath slain, anon he thenketh
 Of his misdede, and it forthenketh
 2615 So gretly, that for pure sorwe
 He liveth noght til on the morwe.
 Be this ensample it mai wel suie
 That man schal Homicide eschuie,
 For evere is merci good to take,
 2620 Bot if the lawe it hath forsake
 And that justice is theragein.
 For ofte time I have herd sein
 Amonges hem that werres hadden,
 That thei som while here cause ladden
 2625 Be merci, whan thei mihte have slain,
 Wheroft that thei were after fain.
 And, sone, if that thou wolt recorde
- seek; kingdoms of the world
 in his likeness
 beast; its prey*
- nature; exceed
 kill what is most akin to him*
- not befitting [his] status*
- (see note)*
- Solinus; wonder of nature
 birds; one*
- bird of prey*
- sees; match (likeness)*
- regrets*
- until the next day
 follow*
- glad
 bear witness to*

The vertu of Misericorde,
 Thou sihe nevere thilke place,
 2630 Where it was used, lacke grace.
 For every lawe and every kinde
 The mannes wit to merci binde;
 And namely the worthi knihtes,
 Whan that thei stonden most uprihites
 2635 And ben most mihti for to grieve,
 Thei scholden thanne most relieve
 Him whom thei mihten overthrowe,
 As be ensample a man mai knowe.

compassion
[would see]

[TALE OF TELAPHUS AND TEUCER]

He mai noght failen of his mede
 2640 That hath merci, for this I rede,
 In a cronique and finde thus.
 Whan Achilles with Telaphus
 His sone toward Troie were,
 It fell hem, er thei comen there,
 2645 Agein Theucer the king of Mese
 To make werre and for to sese
 His lond, as thei that wolden regne
 And Theucer put out of his regne.
 And thus the marches thei assaile,
 2650 Bot Theucer gaf to hem bataille;
 Thei foghte on bothe sides faste,
 Bot so it hapneth ate laste,
 This worthi Grek, this Achilles,
 The king among alle othre ches,
 2655 As he that was cruel and fell,
 With swerd in honde on him he fell,
 And smot him with a dethes wounde,
 That he unhorsed fell to grounde.
 Achilles upon him alyhte,
 2660 And wolde anon, as he wel mihte,
 Have slain him fullich in the place;
 Bot Thelaphus his fader grace
 For him besoghte, and for pité
 Preith that he wolde lete him be,
 2665 And caste his schield betwen hem tuo.
 Achilles axeth him why so,
 And Thelaphus his cause tolde,
 And seith that he is mochel holde,
 For whilom Theucer in a stede
 2670 Gret grace and socour to him dede,
 And seith that he him wolde aquite,

reward
Who

(see note)

befell to them
Against; Mysia
seize

borderlands

chose
wicked

[So] that

loyal

provided

- And preith his fader to respite.
 Achilles tho withdrawh his hond.
 Bot al the pouer of the lond,
 2675 Whan that thei sihe here king thus take,
 Thei fledde and han the feld forsake.
 The Greecs unto the chace falle,
 And for the moste part of alle
 Of that contré the lordes grete
 2680 Thei toke, and wonne a gret begete. *possession*
 And anon after this victoire
 The king, which hadde good memoire,
 Upon the grete merci thoghte,
 Which Telaphus toward him wroghte,
 2685 And in presence of al the lond
 He tok him faire be the hond,
 And in this wise he gan to seie:
 'Mi sone, I mot be double weie
 Love and desire thin encress;
 2690 Ferst for thi fader Achilles
 Whilom ful many dai er this,
 Whan that I scholde have fare amis,
 Rescousse dede in mi querele *Rescue*
 And kepte al myn astat in hele.
 2695 How so ther falle now distance
 Amonges ous, yit remembrance
 I have of merci which he dede
 As thanne: and thou now in this stede
 Of gentilesce and of franchise
 2700 Hast do mercy the same wise.
 So wol I noght that eny time
 Be lost of that thou hast do by me; *for me*
 For hou so this fortune falle,
 Yit stant mi trust aboven alle,
 2705 For the mercy which I now finde,
 That thou wolt after this be kinde:
 And for that such is myn espeir, *hope*
 As for my sone and for myn eir *heir*
 I thee receive, and al my lond
 2710 I give and sese into thin hond.' *deliver*
 And in this wise thei acorde,
 The cause was misericorde.
 The lordes dede here obeissance
 To Thelaphus, and pourveance *mercy*
 2715 Was mad so that he was coroned:
 And thus was merci reguerdoned,
 Which he to Theucer dede afore. *provision*
rewarded

- Confessor** Lo, this ensample is mad therfore,
 That thou miht take remembrance,
 2720 Mi sone; and whan thou sest a chaunce,
 Of other mennes passioun
 Tak pité and compassioun,
 And let nothing to thee be lief,
 Which to another man is grief. *dear*
[cause for] grief
- 2725 And after this if thou desire
 To stonde agein the vice of Ire,
 Consaile thee with Pacience,
 And tak into thi conscience
 Merci to be thi governour. *against*
- 2730 So schalt thou fiele no rancour,
 Wherof thin herte schal debate
 With Homicide ne with hate
 For Cheste or for Malencolie. *[Either] for*
- 2735 Thou schalt be soft in compaignie
 Withoute Contek or Folhaste:
 For elles miht thou longe waste
 Thi time, er that thou have thi wille
 Of love; for the weder stille *calm weather*
- 2739 Men preise, and blame the tempestes.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, I wol do youre hestes,
 And of this point ye have me tawht,
 Toward miself the betre sawht
 I thenke be, whil that I live.
 Bot for als moche as I am schriven *commands*
- 2745 Of Wraththe and al his circumstance,
 Gif what you list to my penance,
 And asketh forthere of my lif,
 If otherwise I be gulfif *guilty*
- 2749 Of enything that toucheth sinne.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, er we departe atwinne,
 I schal behinde nothing leve.”
- Amans** “Mi goode fader, be your leve
 Thanne axeth forth what so you list,
 For I have in you such a trist,
 2755 As ye that be my soule hele, *soul's health*
 That ye fro me wol nothing hele,
 For I schal telle you the trowthe.” *conceal*
- Confessor** “Mi sone, art thou coupable of Slowthe
 2759 In eny point which to him longeth?” *guilty; Sloth*
- Amans** “My fader, of tho pointz me longeth
 To wite pleinly what thei meene,
 So that I mai me schriven cleene.” *confess myself thoroughly*
- Confessor** “Now herkne, I schal the pointz devise;
 And understand wel myn aprise: *teaching*

- 2765 For schrifte stant of no value
To him that wol him noght vertue
To leve of vice the folie.
For word is wynd, bot the maistrie
Is that a man himself defende
2770 Of thing which is noght to comende,
Wherof ben fewe now aday.
And natheles, so as I may
Make unto thi memoire knowe,
The pointz of Slowthe thou schalt knowe."
- exert himself*
significant accomplishment
prohibit (protect)
commendable

EXPLICIT LIBER TERCIUS



CONFESSIO AMANTIS: BOOK 4 (SLOTH)

INCIPIT LIBER QUARTUS

[ON LACHESCE, OR PROCRASTINATION]

i. *Dicunt accidiam fore nutricem viciorum,
Torpet et in cunctis tarda que lenta bonis:
Que fieri possent hodie transfert piger in cras,
Furatoque prius ostia claudit equo.
Poscenti tardo negat emolumenta Cupido,
Set Venus in celeri ludit amore viri.*¹

[Confessor] “Upon the vices to procede
After the cause of mannes dede, behavior
The ferste point of Slowthe I calle
Lachesce, and is the chief of all,
And hath this propreliche of kinde,
To leven alle thing behinde. Procrastination
5 Of that he mihte do now hier property of nature
☞ He tarieth al the longe yer, leave
And everemore he seith, ‘Tomorwe’; here and now
10 And so he wol his time borwe, (see note)
And wissbeth after ‘God me sende,’
That whan he weneth have an ende,
Thanne is he ferhest to beginne.
Thus bringth he many a meschief inne
15 Unwar, til that he be meschieved, thinks
And may noght thanne be relieved.
And riht so nowther mor ne lesse
It stant of love and of lachesce.
Somtime he slowtheth in a day harmed (jeopardized)
20 That he nevere after gete mai.
Now, sone, as of this ilke thing, neither
If thou have eny knowleching behaves slothfully
same

¹ *They say that Sloth is the nurse of the vices, and, tardy and sluggish, it is also torpid in all good matters. What might be done today it transfers, indolent, to tomorrow, and after the horse is stolen it closes the doors. Cupid denies his rewards to the one asking tardily, but Venus plays at merry love for one who is prompt.*

	That thou to love hast don er this, Tell on."	done before
Confessio Amantis	"Mi goode fader, yis.	yes
25	As of lachesce I am beknowe That I mai stonde upon his rowe, As I that am clad of his suite. For whanne I thoghte mi poursuite To make, and therto sette a day	I admit
30	To speke unto the swete May, Lachesce bad abide yit And bar on hond it was no wit Ne time for to speke as tho. Thus with his tales to and fro	<i>i.e., in his livery [as a retainer]</i>
35	Mi time in tariinge he drowh. Whan ther was time good ynowh, He seide, 'Another time is bettre; Thou schalt mowe senden hire a lettre, And per cas wryte more plein	bade [me] abide yet declared [that]; neither intelligent Nor timely; then
40	Than thou be mowthe durstest sein.' Thus have I lete time slyde For Slowthe, and kepte noght my tide, So that Lachesce with his vice Fulofte hath mad my wit so nyce,	spent time
45	That what I thoghte speke or do With tariinge he hield me so, Til whanne I wolde and mihte noght. I not what thing was in my thoght, Or it was drede, or it was schame;	foolish planned to speak
50	Bot evere in ernest and in game I wot ther is long time passed. Bot yit is noght the love lassed Which I unto mi ladi have; For thogh my tunge is slowh to crave	know not Whether; fear
55	At alle time, as I have bede, Min herte stant evere in o stede And axeth besiliche grace, The which I mai noght yit embrace. And God wot that is malgré myn;	know diminished
60	For this I wot riht wel a fin, Mi grace comth so selde aboute, That is the Slowthe of which I doute Mor than of al the remenant Which is to love appourtenant.	beg (ask) prayed one place continuously [for] yet in spite of my [will]
65	And thus as touchende of Lachesse, As I have told, I me confesse To you, mi fader, and beseche That furthermor ye wol me teche;	know well in the end seldom fear all the rest pertaining Procrastination

- And if ther be to this matiere
 70 Som goodly tale for to liere
 How I mai do Lachesce awei,
 That ye it wolden telle I preie."
Confessor "To wisse thee, my sone, and rede,
 Among the tales whiche I rede,
 75 An old ensample therupon
 Now herkne, and I wol tellen on.
- cause; [to go] away*
guide; counsel
one

[TALE OF AENEAS AND DIDO]

- Agein Lachesce in loves cas
 I finde how whilom Eneas,
 79 Whom Anchises to sone hadde,
~~¶~~ With gret navie, which he ladde
 Fro Troie, aryveth at Cartage,
 Wher for a while his herbergage
 He tok; and it betidde so,
 With hire which was qweene tho
 85 Of the cité his aqueintance
 He wan, whos name in remembrance
 Is yit, and Dido sche was hote,
 Which loveth Eneas so hote
 Upon the wordes whiche he seide,
 90 That al hire herte on him sche leide
 And dede al holi what he wolde.
 Bot after that, as it be scholde,
 Fro thenne he goth toward Ytaile
 Be schipe, and there his arivaile
 95 Hath take, and schop him for to ryde.
 Bot sche, which mai noght longe abide
 The hote peine of loves throwe,
 Anon withinne a litel throwe
 A lettre unto hir kniht hath write,
 100 And dede him pleinly for to wite,
 If he made eny tariinge,
 To drecche of his ageincomynge,
 That sche ne mihte him fiele and se,
 Sche scholde stonde in such degré
 105 As whilom stod a swan tofore,
 Of that sche hadde hire make lore;
 For sorwe a fethere into hire brain
 She schof and hath hireselue slain:
 As king Menander in a lay
 110 The sothe hath founde, wher sche lay
 Sprantlende with hire wynges tweie,
- Against*
once
as a son
fleet of ships; led (see note)
lodging
then
yet; called
Who; passionately
laid
did entirely; desired
Italy
By; place of disembarkation
chosen; prepared; depart
perturbation
while
caused him; know
delay; returning [to her]
[Such] that
once; in a prior time
mate lost
(the swan) thrust
poem
truth
Sprawling (Writhing); two

- As sche which scholde thanne deie
For love of him which was hire make. *mate*
‘And so schal I do for thi sake,’
115 This qweene seide, ‘wel I wot.’
Lo, to Enee thus sche wrot
With many another word of pleinte. *lament*
Bot he, which hadde hise thoghtes feinte
Towardes love and full of Slowthe,
120 His time lette, and that was rowthe. *delayed; a pity*
For sche, which loveth him tofore,
Desireth evere more and more,
And whan sche sih him tarie so, *saw*
Hire herte was so full of wo,
125 That compleignende manyfold
Sche hath hire oghne tale told
Unto hirself, and thus sche spak:
‘Ha, who fond evere such a lak *fault*
Of Slowthe in eny worthi kniht?’
130 Now wot I wel my deth is diht *determined*
Thurgh him which scholde have be mi lif.’
Bot for to stinten al this strif,
Thus whan sche sih non other bote, *way out*
135 Riht evene unto hire herte rote *heart's root*
A naked swerd anon sche threste, *thrust*
And thus sche gat hireselue reste
In remembrance of alle slowe.

- Confessor** Wheroft, my sone, thou mihte knowe
How tariinge upon the nede
140 In loves cause is for to drede; *to be feared*
And that hath Dido sore aboght,
Whos deth schal evere be bethoght. *pondered*
And overmore if I schal seche
In this matiere another speiche,
145 In a cronique I finde write *a second example*
A tale which is good to wite.

[TALE OF ULYSSES AND PENELOPE]

- At Troie whan king Ulixes
Upon the siege among the pres *crowd*
Of hem that worthi knihtes were
150 Abod long time stille there,
In thilke time a man mai se
How goodli that Penolope, *(see note)*
Which was to him his trewe wif,
Of his Lachesce was pleintif;

- 155 Wherof to Troie sche him sende
 Hire will be lettre, thus spekende:
 'Mi worthi love and lord also,
 It is and hath ben evere so,
 That wher a womman is alone,
 160 It makth a man in his persone
 The more hardi for to wowe,
 In hope that sche wolde bowe
 To such thing as his wille were,
 Whil that hire lord were elleswhere.
- 165 And of myself I telle this:
 For it so longe passed is,
 Sithe ferst than ye fro home wente,
 That welnyh every man his wente
 To there I am, whil ye ben oute,
 170 Hath mad, and ech of hem aboute,
 Which love can, my love secheth,
 With gret preiere and me besecheth.
 And some maken gret manace,
 That if thei mihten come in place
 175 Wher that thei mihte here wille have,
 Ther is nothing me scholde save,
 That thei ne wolde werche thinges;
 And some tellen me tidynges
 That ye ben ded, and some sein
 180 That certeinly ye ben besein
 To love a newe and leve me.
 Bot hou as evere that it be,
 I thonke unto the goddes alle,
 As yit for oght that is befall
 185 Mai no man do my chekes rede.
 Bot natheles it is to drede,
 That Lachesce in continuance
 Fortune mihte such a chance,
 Which no man after scholde amende.'
- 190 Lo, thus this ladi compleignende
 A lettre unto hire lord hath write,
 And preyde him that he wolde wite
 And thenke hou that sche was al his,
 And that he tarie noght in this,
 195 Bot that he wolde his love aquite,
 To hire ageinward and noght wryte
 Bot come himself in alle haste,
 That he non other paper waste,
 So that he kepe and holde his trowthe
 200 Withoute lette of eny Slowthe.
- woo
yield
- Since first; departed
way
where
made
knows; seeks
- threat
- their carnal desire
- accomplish [their] deeds
- endowed with beauty
- make me blush
- might [bring about]
- And [should] remember
And that he [should] not delay
set free
- [So] that
might keep

- Unto hire lord and love liege
 To Troie, wher the grete siege
 Was leid, this lettre was conveied.
 And he, which wisdom hath pourveied
 205 Of al that to reson belongeth,
 With gentil herte it underfongeth.
 And whan he hath it overrad,
 In part he was riht inly glad,
 And ek in part he was desesed.
 210 Bot love his herte hath so thorghsesed
 With pure ymagineacioun,
 That for non occupacioun
 Which he can take on other side,
 He mai noght flitt his herte aside
 215 Fro that his wif him hadde enformed;
 Wherof he hath himself conformed
 With al the wille of his corage
 To schape and take the viage
 Homward, what time that he mai,
 220 So that him thenketh of a day
 A thousand yer, til he mai se
 The visage of Penolope,
 Which he desireth most of alle.
 And whan the time is so befall
 225 That Troie was destruid and brent,
 He made non delaient,
 Bot goth him home in alle hihe,
 Wher that he fond tofore his yhe
 His worthi wif in good astat.
 230 And thus was cessed the debat
 Of love, and Slowthe was excused,
 Which doth gret harm, where it is used,
 And hindreth many a cause honeste.

[THE GREAT CLERK GROSSETESTE]

- ¶ For of the grete cleric Grossteste
 235 I rede how besy that he was
 Upon clergie an hed of bras
 To forge, and make it for to telle
 Of suche things as befelle.
 And sevene yeres besinesse
 240 He leyde, bot for the Lachesse,
 Of half a minut of an hour,
 Fro ferst that he began laboure
 He loste all that he hadde do.

(*see note*)

learning; head

but because of

245 And otherwhile it fareth so,
 In loves cause who is slow,
 That he withouthe under the *wow*
 Be nyhte stant fulofte acold,
 Which mihte if that he hadde wold
 249 His time kept, have be withinne.

wall

[THE FOOLISH VIRGINS]

255 Bot Slowthe mai no profit winne,
 Bot he mai singe in his karole
 How Latewar cam to the dole,¹
 Wher he no good receive mihte.
 And that was proved wel be nyhte
 Whilom of the maidenes fyve,
 Whan thilke lord cam for to wyve.
 For that here oyle was aweie
 To lihte here lampes in his weie,
 Here Slowthe broghte it so aboute,
 260 Fro him that thei ben schet withouthe. *shut*

Confessor Wherof, my sone, be thou war,
 Als ferforth as I telle dar.
 For love moste ben awaited.
 And if thou be noght wel affaited
 265 In love to eschuiie Slowthe, *trained*
 Mi sone, for to telle trowthe,
 Thou miht noght of thiself ben able
 To winne love or make it stable,
 269 Althogh thou mihest love achieve.”

Confessio Amantis “Mi fader, that I mai wel lieve. *believe*

275 Bot me was nevere assigned place,
 Wher yit to geten eny grace,
 Ne me was non such time apointed;
 For thanne I wolde I were unjoynted
 Of every lime that I have, *limb*
 If I ne scholde kepe and save
 Min houre bothe and ek my stede,
 If my ladi it hadde bede.
 Bot sche is otherwise avised
 280 Than grante such a time assised;
 And natheles of mi lachesse
 Ther hath be no defalte I gesse
 Of time lost, if that I mihte.
 Bot yit hire liketh noght alyhte

place
requested
 minded
arranged

¹ *How I-Showed-Up-Too-Late came to the distribution of alms*

- 285 Upon no lure which I caste;
 For ay the more I crie faste,
 The lasse hire liketh for to hiere. hear
 So for to speke of this matiere,
 I seche that I mai noght finde,
 290 I haste, and evere I am behinde,
 And wot noght what it mai amounte.
 Bot, fader, upon myn acompte,
 Which ye be sett to examine
 Of schrifte after the discipline,
 295 Sey what your beste conseil is.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, my conseil is this:
 How so it stonde of time go,
 Do forth thi besinesse so,
 That no Lachese in thee be founde.
 300 For Slowthe is mihti to confounde
 The spied of every mannes werk.
 For many a vice, as seith the clerk,
 Ther hogen upon Slowthes lappe
 Of suche as make a man mishappe,
 305 To pleigne and telle of ‘hadde I wist.’ ‘had I known’
 And therupon if that thee list
 To knowe of Slowthes cause more,
 In special yit overmore
 Ther is a vice full grevable
 310 To him which is therof coupable,
 And stant of alle vertu bare,
 Hierafter as I schal declare.” wish
to blame
barren

[PUSILLAMITÉ, OR COWARDICE]

- ii. *Qui nichil attempitat, nichil expedit, oreque muto
 Munus Amicicie vir sibi raro capit.
 Est modus in verbis, set ei qui parcit amori
 Verba referre sua, non fauet vllus amor.*¹

- [Confessor]** “Touchende of Slowthe in his degré,
 Ther is yit Pusillamité, Cowardice
 315 Which is to seie in this langage,
 He that hath litel of corage
 ☛ And dar no mannes werk beginne. (see note)
 So mai he noght be resoun winne;
 For who that noght dar undertake, begin something

¹ *He who tries nothing accomplishes nothing, and a man rarely collects the reward of Friendship with a silent mouth. There is moderation in words; but love does not favor the man who is stingy in uttering words to his love.*

- 320 Be riht he schal no profit take.
 Bot of this vice the nature
 Dar nothing sette in aventure,
 Him lacketh bothe word and dede,
 Wheroft he scholde his cause spedē. *carry out*
- 325 He woll no manhed understande,
 For evere he hath drede upon honde.
 Al is peril that he schal seie,
 Him thenkth the wolf is in the weie,
 And of ymaginacioun *[because] of fantasy*
- 330 He makth his excusacioun
 And feigneth cause of pure drede,
 And evere he faileth ate nede,
 Til al be spilt that he with deleth.
 He hath the sor which no man heleth, *destroyed; undertakes*
 335 The which is cleped lack of herte.
 Thogh every grace abouthe him sterte,
 He wol noght ones stere his fot;
 So that be resoun lese he mot, *[can] heal*
 339 That wol noght aunte for to winne.
- Confessor** And so forth, sone, if we beginne
 To speke of love and his servise,
 Ther ben truantz in such a wise
 That lacken herte, whan best were
 To speke of love, and riht for fere *abounds*
- 345 Thei wexen doumb and dar noght telle,
 Withoute soun as doth the belle *once move*
 Which hath no claper for to chyme.
 And riht so thei as for the tyme
 Ben herteles withoute speche, *by; lose he must*
- 350 Of love and dar nothing beseche; *venture in order to win*
 And thus thei lese and winne noght.
 Forthi, my sone, if thou art oght
 Coupable as touchende of this Slowthe,
 354 Schrif thee therof and tell me trowthe.” *Who lack courage*
- Amans** “Mi fader, I am al beknowe
 That I have ben on of tho slowe,
 As for to telle in loves cas.
 Min herte is yit and evere was,
 As thogh the world scholde al tobreke, *timid*
- 360 So ferful, that I dar noght speke
 Of what pourpos that I have nome,
 Whan I toward mi ladi come,
 Bot let it passe and overgo.” *speak* *sound*
- Confessor** “Mi sone, do no more so!
 365 For after that a man poursuith *one; nothing*
 To love, so fortune suieth *And dare ask nothing concerning love* *lose; nothing*
- I fully acknowledge*
one; those [who are] slothful
- break apart*
- taken*
- slip away*
- according to what*
follows

Fulofte and gifth hire happy chance
 To him which makth continuance
 To preie love and to beseche;
 370 As be ensample I schal thee teche.

who perseveres

[PYGMALION AND HIS STATUE]

¶ I finde hou whilom ther was on, (see note)
 Whos name was Pymaleon,
 Which was a lusti man of yowthe.
 The werkes of entaile he cowthe
 375 Above alle othre men as tho;
 And thurgh fortune it fell him so,
 As he whom love schal travaile,
 He made an ymage of entaile
 Lich to a womman in semblance
 380 Of fature and of contienance,
 So fair yit nevere was figure.
 Riht as a lyves creature
 Sche semeth, for of yvor whyt
 He hath hire wroght of such delit,
 385 That sche was rody on the cheke
 And red on bothe hire lippes eke;
 Wheroft he himself beguileth.
 For with a goodly lok sche smyleth,
 So that thurgh pure impression
 390 Of his ymaginacion
 With al the herte of his corage
 His love upon this faire ymage
 He sette, and hire of love preide;
 Bot sche no word ageinward seide.
 395 The longe day, what thing he dede,
 This ymage in the same stede
 Was evere bi, that ate mete
 He wolde hire serve and preide hire ete,
 And putte unto hire mowth the cuppe.
 400 And whan the bord was taken uppe,
 He hath hire into chambre nome,
 And after, whan the nyht was come,
 He leide hire in his bed al nakid.
 He was forwept, he was forwakid,
 405 He keste hire colde lippes ofte,
 And wissbeth that thei weren softe,
 And ofte he rouneth in hire ere,
 And ofte his arm now hier now there
 He leide, as he hir wolde embrace,
 410 And evere among he axeth grace,

craft of sculpture he mastered
then

belabor
sculþture
Like
feature; outward appearance

living
white ivory

ruddy
also
beguiles himself

in return

at dinner
eat

taken

full of tears; sleepless
kissed

whispers; ear

continually

- As thogh sche wiste what he mente.
 And thus himself he gan tormente
 With such desese of loves peine,
 That no man mihte him more peine. *cause him more pain*
- 415 Bot how it were, of his penance
 He made such continuance *persistence*
 Fro dai to nyht, and preith so longe,
 That his preiere is underfonge, *accepted*
 Which Venus of hire grace herde;
- 420 By nyhte and whan that he worst ferde, *was most miserable*
 And it lay in his nakede arm,
 The colde ymage he fieleth warm
 Of fleissh and bon and full of lif.
- 425 Lo, thus he wan a lusti wif,
 Which obeissant was at his wille;
 And if he wolde have holde him stille
 And nothing spoke, he scholde have failed.
 Bot for he hath his word travailed
- 430 And dorste speke, his love he spedde,
 And hadde al that he wolde abedde. *dared to speak; won desired in bed*
 For er thei wente thanne atwo,
 A knave child betwen hem two
 Thei gete, which was after hote *called*
 Paphus, of whom yit hath the note *designation*
- 435 A certein yle, which Paphos *island*
 Men clepe, and of his name it ros. *call*
- Confessor** Be this ensample thou miht finde *beyond nature*
 That word mai worche above kinde.
- 440 Forthi, my sone, if that thou spare *woe*
 To speke, lost is al thi fare,
 For Slowthe bringth in alle wo.
- 445 And over this to loke also,
 The god of love is favorable
 To hem that ben of love stable, *those who*
 And many a wonder hath befalle.
- Wherof to speke amonges alle,
 If that thee list to taken hede,
 Theroft a solein tale I rede, *lonely (strange)*
 Which I schal telle in remembraunce
- 450 Upon the sort of loves chaunce. *fate; circumstance*

[TALE OF IPHIS AND IANTE]

-  The king Ligdus upon a strif *quarrel (see note)*
 Spak unto Thelacuse his wif,
 Which thanne was with childe grete;
 He swor it scholde noght be lete *it would not be prevented*

- 455 That if sche have a dowhter bore
 That it ne scholde be forlore
 And slain, wherof sche sory was.
 So it befell upon this cas,
 Whan sche delivered scholde be,
 460 Isis be nyhte in priveté,
 Which of childinge is the goddesse,
 Cam for to helpe in that destresse,
 Til that this lady was al smal,
 And hadde a dowhter forthwithal;
 465 Which the goddesse in alle weie
 Bad kepe, and that thei scholden seie
 It were a sone: and thus Iphis
 Thei namede him, and upon this
 The fader was mad so to wene.
 470 And thus in chambre with the qweene
 This Iphis was forthdrawe tho,
 And clothed and arraied so
 Riht as a kinges sone scholde.
 Til after, as fortune it wolde,
 475 Whan it was of a ten yer age,
 Him was betake in mariage
 A duckes dowhter for to wedde,
 Which Iante hihte, and ofte abedde
 These children leien, sche and sche,
 480 Which of on age bothe be.
 So that withinne time of yeeres,
 Togedre as thei ben pleiefieres,
 Liggende abedde upon a nyht,
 Nature, which doth every wiht
 485 Upon hire lawe for to muse,
 Constreigneth hem, so that thei use
 Thing which to hem was al unknowe;
 Wherof Cupide thilke throwe
 Tok pité for the grete love,
 490 And let do sette kinde above,
 So that hir lawe mai ben used,
 And thei upon here lust excused.
 For love hateth nothing more
 Than thing which stant agein the lore
 495 Of that nature in kinde hath sett.
 Forthi Cupide hath so besett
 His grace upon this aventure,
 That he acordant to nature,
 Whan that he syh the time best,
 500 That ech of hem hath other kest,
 Transformeth Iphe into a man,
- if she should bear a daughter
 be nothing but destroyed*
- Who; childbearing
 distressful circumstance
 normal-sized again*
- Ordered to be kept*
- understand*
- taken away then*
- [To] him was delivered
 duke's*
- Who; in bed*
- playmates*
- And caused [the love] to be put above nature*
- their desire*
- teaching
 what nature naturally*
- situation*
- kissed*

	Wherof the kinde love he wan Of lusti yonge Iante his wif; And tho thei ladde a merie lif,	<i>natural</i>
505	Which was to kinde non offence.	<i>then</i>
	Confessor And thus to take an evidence, It semeth love is welwillende To hem that ben continuende	<i>benevolent</i>
	With besy herte to poursuie	<i>continue</i>
510	Thing which that is to love due. Wherof, my sone, in this matiere Thou miht ensample taken hiere,	
	That with thi grete besinesse	<i>diligence</i>
	Thou mihte atteigne the richesse	
515	Of love, if that ther be no Slowthe."	
	Amans "I dar wel seie be mi trowthe, Als fer as I my witt can seche,	<i>confessed before</i>
	Mi fader, as for lacke of speche,	
	Bot so as I me schrof tofore,	<i>lost</i>
520	Ther is non other time lore, Wherof ther mihte ben obstacle	
	To lette love of his miracle,	<i>hinder</i>
	Which I beseche day and nyht.	
	Bot, fader, so as it is riht	
525	In forme of schrifte to beknowe What thing belongeth to the slowe,	<i>confession; acknowledge</i>
	Your faderhode I wolde preie,	
	If ther be forthere eny weie	
529	Touchende unto this ilke vice."	<i>same</i>
	Confessor "Mi sone, ye, of this office	<i>yes</i>
	Ther serveth on in special, Which lost hath his memorial,	
	So that he can no wit withholde	
	In thing which he to kepe is holde,	<i>bound</i>
535	Wherof fulofte himself he grieveth: And who that most upon him lieveth,	
	Whan that hise wittes ben so weyved,	<i>addled</i>
	He mai full lihtly be deceived."	

[FORGETFULNESS]

- iii. *Mentibus oblitus alienis labitur ille,
Quem probat accidia non meminisse sui.*

*Sic amor incautus, qui non memoratur ad horas,
Perdit et offendit, quod cuperare nequit.¹*

		[Confessor] “To serve Accidie in his office,	Sloth
540		Ther is of Slowthe an other vice, Which cleped is Forgetelnesse;	
		That noght mai in his herte impresse Of vertu which reson hath sett,	
	☞	So clene his wittes he forget.	(see note)
545		For in the tellinge of his tale No more his herte thanne his male Hath remembrance of thilke forme Wherof he scholde his wit enforme As thanne, and yit ne wot he why.	wallet
550		Thus is his pourpos noght forthi Forlore of that he wolde bidde, And skarsly if he seith the thridde To love of that he hadde ment. Thus many a lovere hath be schent.	<i>he knows not nonetheless Deprived; plead for a third part intended destroyed</i>
555		Tell on therfore, hast thou be oon Of hem that Slowthe hath so begon?”	overwhelmed
		Confessio Amantis “Ye, fader, ofte it hath be so, That whanne I am mi ladi fro And thenke untoward hire drawe,	toward (unto)
560		Than cast I many a newe lawe And al the world torne up so doun, And so recorde I mi lecoun And wryte in my memorial What I to hire telle schal,	
565		Riht al the matiere of mi tale. Bot al nys worth a note schale;	<i>is not worth a nutshell</i>
		For whanne I come ther sche is, I have it al forgeete ywiss;	<i>truly</i>
		Of that I thoghite for to telle	<i>what I planned to say</i>
570		I can noght thanne unethes spelle That I wende altherbest have rad, So sore I am of hire adrad. For as a man that sodeinli	<i>scarcely speak</i>
		A gost behelde, so fare I;	<i>entirely intended [to] have declared</i>
575		So that for feere I can noght gete Mi witt, bot I miself forgeete, That I wot nevere what I am,	<i>sorely; afraid</i>
			<i>ghost</i>
			<i>know; who</i>

¹ *The forgetful one, whom Sloth reveals not to remember himself, slips from others' minds. Thus negligent love, who is not mindful of time passing, loses and offends what he cannot obtain.*

	Ne whider I schal, ne whenne I cam, Bot muse as he that were amased.	<i>wither I will [go]; whence I came</i>
580	Lich to the bok in which is rased The lettre, and mai nothing be rad, So ben my wittes overlad, That what as evere I thoghte have spoken, It is out fro myn herte stoken,	<i>erased</i>
585	And stonde, as who seith, doumb and def, That al nys worth an yvy lef, Of that I wende wel have seid. And ate laste I make abreid, Caste up myn hed and loke aboute,	<i>overwhelmed</i>
590	Riht as a man that were in doute And wot noght wher he schal become. Thus am I ofte al overcome, Ther as I wende best to stonde. Bot after, whanne I understonde,	<i>out of; thrust</i>
595	And am in other place alone, I make many a wofull mone Unto myself, and speke so: 'Ha fol, wher was thin herte tho, Whan thou thi worthi ladi syhe?	<i>[I] stand; deaf</i>
600	Were thou afered of hire yhe? For of hire hand ther is no drede. So wel I knowe hir wommanhede, That in hire is no more oulfrage Than in a child of thre yeer age.	<i>ivy leaf</i>
605	Whi hast thou drede of so good on, Whom alle vertu hath begon, That in hire is no violence Bot goodlighiede and innocence Withouten spot of eny blame?	<i>fool; then</i>
610	Ha, nyce herte, fy for schame! Ha, couard herte of love unlered, Wheroft thou so sore afered, That thou thi tunge soffrest frese, And wolt thi goode wordes lese,	<i>saw</i>
615	Whan thou hast founde time and space? How scholdest thou deserve grace, Whan thou thiself darst axe non, Bot al thou hast forgete anon? And thus despite I loves lore,	<i>eyes</i>
620	Bot help ne finde I noght the more, Bot stomble upon myn oghne treine And make an ekinge of my peine. For evere whan I thenke among How al is on myself along,	<i>outrage</i>
		<i>fear</i>
		<i>lament</i>
		<i>fool; then</i>
		<i>allow to freeze</i>
		<i>lose</i>
		<i>cowardly heart; untutored</i>
		<i>dare to ask none</i>
		<i>cloak ends</i>
		<i>increase</i>
		<i>dependent</i>

- 625 I seie, 'O fol of alle foles,
 Thou farst as he between tuo stoles
 That wolde sitte and goth to grounde.
 It was ne nevere schal be founde,
 Betwen forgetelnesse and drede
- 630 That man scholde any cause spedē.'
 And thus, myn holi fader diere,
 Toward myself, as ye mai hiere,
 I pleigne of my forgetelnesse.
 Bot elles al the besinesse
- 635 That mai be take of mannes thoght,
 Min herte takth, and is thorghsoght
 To thenken evere upon that swete
 Withoute Slowthe, I you behete.
 For what so falle, or wel or wo,
- 640 That thoght forgete I neveremo,
 Wher so I lawhe or so I loure,
 Noght half the minut of an houre
 Ne mihte I lete out of my mende,
 Bot if I thoghte upon that hende.
- 645 Theroft me schal no Slowthe lette
 Til deth out of this world me fette,
 Althogh I hadde on such a ring
 As Moises thurgh his enchanting
 Somtime in Ethiope made,
- 650 Whan that he Tharbis weddid hade.
 Which ring bar of Oblivion
 The name, and that was be resoun
 That where it on a finger sat,
 Anon his love he so forgat,
- 655 As thogh he hadde it nevere knowe.
 And so it fell that ilke throwe,
 Whan Tharbis hadde it on hire hond,
 No knowlechinge of him sche fond,
 Bot al was clene out of memoire,
- 660 As men mai rede in his histoire.
 And thus he wente quit away,
 That nevere after that ilke day
 Sche thoghte that ther was such on;
- 665 Bot in good feith so mai noght I,
 For sche is evere faste by,
 So nyh that sche myn herte toucheth,
 That for nothing that Slowthe voucheth
 I mai forgete hire, lief ne loth.
- 670 For overal, where as sche goth,
 Min herte folwith hire aboute.
- dear*
- solicitude*
- assure*
- laugh; scowl*
- gracious [lady]*
- prevent*
- fetches*
- such a person*
- like it or not (willy-nilly)*

- Thus mai I seie withoute doute,
 For bet for wers, for ought for noght,
 Sche passeth nevere fro my thoght.
- 675 Bot whanne I am ther as sche is,
 Min herte, as I you saide er this,
 Somtime of hire is sore adrad,
 And somtime it is overglad,
 Al out of reule and out of space.
- 680 For whan I se hire goodli face
 And thenke upon hire hih pris,
 As thogh I were in Paradis,
 I am so ravisht of the syhte,
 To speke unto hire I ne myhte
- 685 As for the time, thogh I wolde.
 For I ne mai my wit unfolde
 To finde o word of that I mene,
 Bot al it is forgete clene;
 And thogh I stonde there a myle,
- 690 Al is forgete for the while:
 A tungi I have and wordes none.
 And thus I stonde and thenke alone
 Of thing that helpeth ofte noght;
 Bot what I hadde afore thoght
- 695 To speke, whanne I come there
 It is forgete, as noght ne were,
 And stonde amased and assoted,
 That of nothing which I have noted
 I can noght thanne a note singe,
- 700 Bot al is out of knowlechinge.
 Thus, what for joie and what for drede,
 Al is forgeten ate nede.
 So that, mi fader, of this Slowthe
 I have you said the pleine trowthe;
- 705 Ye mai it as you list redresce.
 For thus stant my forgetelnesse
 And ek my pusillamit .
 Sey now forth what you list to me,
- 709 For I wol only do be you."
- Confessor** "Mi sone, I have wel herd how thou
 Hast seid, and that thou most amende:
 For love his grace wol noght sende
 To that man which dar axe non.
 For this we knownen everichon,
- 715 A mannes thoght withoute speche
 God wot, and yit that men beseche
 His will is; for withoute bedes
 He doth His grace in fewe stedes:
- where
before
sorely afraid
too cheerful
- great excellence
- [even] though I wanted [to]
thought reveal
what I intend
- i.e., about twenty minutes
time
- that is often useless
before planned
- as if it had never been
[I] stand bewildered; befuddled
written music for
- beyond comprehension
- cowardice
wish
- act according to you (i.e., to your advice)
- dares not ask
- knows; that men [should] make requests
prayers
bestows; places

And what man that forget himself,
 720 Among a thousand be noght tuelve
 That wol Him take in remembraunce,
 Bot lete him falle and take his chaunce.
 Forthi pull up a besi herte,
 Mi sone, and let nothing asterte
 725 Of love fro thi besinesse.
 For touchinge of Forgetelnesse,
 Which many a love hath set behinde,
 A tale of gret ensample I finde,
 Wherof it is pité to wite
 730 In the manere as it is write.

*That [God] will take thought for
 escape
 from your diligence
 know*

[TALE OF DEMOPHON AND PHYLLIS]

King Demephon, whan he be schipe
 To Troieward with felaschipe
 735 Sailende goth, upon his weie
 It hapneth him at Rodopeie,
 As Eolus him hadde blowe,
 To londe, and rested for a throwe.
 And fell that ilke time thus,
 The dowhter of Ligurgius,
 Which qweene was of the contré,
 740 Was sojournende in that cité
 Withinne a castell nyh the stronde,
 Wher Demephon cam up to londe.
 Phillis sche hihite, and of yong age
 And of stature and of visage
 745 Sche hadde al that hire best besemeth.
 Of Demephon riht wel hire qwemeth,
 Whan he was come, and made him chiere;
 And he, that was of his manere
 A lusti knyht, ne myhte asterte
 750 That he ne sette on hire his herte;
 So that withinne a day or tuo
 He thoghte, howevre that it go,
 He wolde assaie the fortune,
 And gan his herte to commune
 755 With goodly wordes in hire ere;
 And for to put hire out of fere,
 He swor and hath his trowthe pliht
 To be forevere hire oghne knyht.
 And thus with hire he stille abod,
 760 Ther while his schip on anker rod,
 And hadde ynowh of time and space

*by
 Sailing (see note)
 blown him
 Who
 was called
 most becomes her
 [she] pleases herself
 [she] welcomed him
 escape
 try
 began
 troth pledged
 remained*

- To speke of love and seche grace. seek
 This ladi herde al that he seide,
 And hou he swor and hou he preide,
 765 Which was as an enchantement
 To hire, that was innocent.
 As thogh it were trowthe and feith
 Sche lieveth al that evere he seith,
 And as hire infortune scholde,
 770 Sche granteth him al that he wolde.
 Thus was he for the time in joie,
 Til that he scholde go to Troie.
 Bot tho sche made mochel sorwe,
 And he his trowthe leith to borwe
 775 To come, if that he live may,
 Agein withinne a monthe day,
 And therupon thei kisten bothe.
 Bot were hem lieve or were hem lothe,
 To schipe he goth and forth he wente
 780 To Troie, as was his ferste entente.
 The daies gon, the monthe passeth,
 Hire love encresceth and his lasseth,
 For him sche lefte slep and mete.
 And he his time hath al forgete,
 785 So that this wofull yonge qweene,
 Which wot noght what it mihte meene,
 A lettre sende and preide him come,
 And seith how sche is overcome
 With strengthe of love in such a wise
 790 That sche noght longe mai suffise
 To liven out of his presence;
 And putte upon his conscience
 The trowthe which he hath behote,
 Wheroft sche loveth him so hote,
 795 Sche seith, that if he lengere lette
 Of such a day as sche him sette,
 Sche scholde sterven in his Slowthe,
 Which were a schame unto his trowthe.
 This lettre is forth upon hire sonde,
 800 Wheroft somdiel confort on honde
 Sche tok, as sche that wolde abide
 And waite upon that ilke tyde
 Which sche hath in hire lettre write.
 Bot now is pité for to wite,
 805 As he dede erst, so he forgat
 His time eftstone and oversat.
 Bot sche, which mihte noght do so,
- believed
[it] should (mis)happen to her
 desired
- pledges as surely
 return
 month's time
 kissed
whether it were pleasing or not
- lessens
 food
 But
- sent
- power
- promised
 passionately
[should] delay
- die because of
 fidelity
- same time
- previously
 delayed too long

	The tyde awayteth everemo, And caste hire yhe upon the see.	time (tide) sea
810	Somtime nay, somtime yee, Somtime he cam, somtime noght, Thus sche desputeth in hire thoght And wot noght what sche thenke mai.	<i>knows not</i> <i>abstaining from food</i>
815	Bot fastende al the longe day Sche was into the derke nyht, And tho sche hath do set up lyht In a lanterne on hih alofte	<i>then</i>
	Upon a tour, wher sche goth ofte, In hope that in his cominge	<i>tower</i>
820	He scholde se the liht brenninge, Wherof he mihte his weies rihte To come wher sche was be nyhte. Bot al for noght, sche was deceived,	<i>burning</i>
	For Venus hath hire hope weyved, And schewede hire upon the sky	<i>ignored</i>
825	How that the day was faste by, So that withinne a litel throwe The daies lyht sche mihte knowe. Tho sche behield the see at large,	<i>while</i>
830	And whan sche sih ther was no barge Ne schip, als ferr as sche may kenne, Doun fro the tour sche gan to renne Into an herber al hire one,	<i>perceive</i> <i>tower; run</i>
	Wher many a wonder woful mone	<i>garden by herself alone</i>
835	Sche made, that no lif it wiste, As sche which al hire joie miste, That now sche swouneth, now sche pleigneth, And al hire face sche desteigneth	<i>lament</i>
	With teres, whiche, as of a welle	<i>knew</i>
840	The stremes from hire yhen felle; So as sche mihte and evere in on Sche clepede upon Demephon, And seide, 'Helas, thou slowe wiht,	<i>lost</i>
	Wher was ther evere such a knyht,	<i>[So] that; faints</i>
845	That so thurgh his ungentilesce Of Slowthe and of Forgetelnesce	<i>stains</i>
	Agein his trowthe brak his stevene?' And tho hire yhe up to the hevene	<i>eyes</i>
	Sche caste, and seide, 'O thou unkinde,	<i>continuously</i>
850	Hier schalt thou thurgh thi Slowthe finde, If that thee list to come and se, A ladi ded for love of thee, So as I schal myselve spille;	<i>called</i>
		<i>creature</i>
		<i>fidelity; word</i>
		<i>destroy</i>

- Whom, if it hadde be thi wille,
 855 Thou mihtest save wel ynowh.'
 With that upon a grene bowh
 bough
 A ceinte of selk, which sche ther hadde,
 Sche knette, and so hireself sche ladde,
 girdle of silk
 That sche aboute hire whyte swere
 860 *tied; induced*
 It dede, and hyng hirselen there.
 Wheroft the goddes were amooved,
 And Demephon was so reproeved,
 That of the goddes providence
 Was schape such an evidence
 865 *against the slothful*
 Evere afterward agein the slowe,
 That Phillis in the same throwe
 Was schape into a notetre,
 [Such] that; instant
 That alle men it mihte se,
 nut tree
 870 And after Phillis philliberd
 This tre was cleped in the yerd,
 And yit for Demephon to schame
 Into this dai it berth the name.
 This wofull chance how that it ferde
 Anon as Demephon it herde,
 875 And every man it hadde in speche,
 His sorwe was noght tho to seche;
 He gan his Slowthe for to banne,
 Bot it was al to late thanne.
- Confessor** Lo thus, my sone, miht thou wite
 880 Agein this vice how it is write;
 For no man mai the harmes gesse,
 That fallen thurgh Forgetelnesse,
 Wheroft that I thi schrifte have herd.
 Bot yit of Slowthe hou it hath ferd
 885 In other wise I thenke oppose,
 If thou have gult, as I suppose." *ask*

[NEGLIGENCE]

- iv. *Dum plantare licet, cultor qui necgligit ortum,*
 Si desint fructus, imputet ipse sibi.
 Preterit ista dies bona, nec valet illa secunda,
 *Hoc caret exemplo lentus amore suo.*¹

¹ When it is the proper time to plant, let the farmer who neglects the garden hold himself responsible if fruit should be lacking. The right moment will have passed, nor is a later one efficacious; the man tardy in his love lacks this teaching.

- [Confessor] “Fulfil of Slowthes essamplaire
 Ther is yit on, his secretaire,
 And he is cleped Negligence,
 890 Which wol noght loke his evidence,
 Wheroft he mai be war tofore;
 Bot whanne he hath his cause lore,
 Thanne is he wys after the hond,
 Whanne helpe may no maner bond.
 895 Thanne ate ferste wolde he binde:
 Thus evermore he stant behinde.
 Whanne he the thing mai noght amende,
 Thanne is he war, and seith at ende,
 ‘Ha, wolde God I hadde knowe!’
 900 Wheroft bejaped with a mowe
 He goth, for whan the grete stiede
 Is stole, thanne he taketh hiede,
 And makth the stable dore fast.
 Thus evere he pleith an aftercast
 905 Of al that he schal seie or do.
 He hath a manere eke also,
 Him list noght lerne to be wys,
 For he set of no vertu pris
 Bot as him liketh for the while;
 910 So fieleth he fulofte guile,
 Whan that he weneth siker stonde.
 And thus thou miht wel understande,
 Mi sone, if thou art such in love,
 Thou miht noght come at thin above
 915 Of that thou woldest wel achieve.”
- Confessio Amantis** “Mi holi fader, as I lieve,
 I mai wel with sauf conscience
 Excuse me of necgligence
 Towardes love in alle wise.
 920 For thogh I be non of the wise,
 I am so trewly amerous,
 That I am evere curious
 Of hem that conne best enforme
 To knowe and witen al the forme
 925 What falleth unto loves craft.
 Bot yit ne fond I noght the haft
 Which mihte unto that bladd acorde;
 For nevere herde I man recorde
 What thing it is that myhte availe
 930 To winne love withoute faile.
 Yit so fer cowthe I nevere finde
 Man that be resoun ne be kinde
- one; secretary
called
keep watch over his documents
(see note)
after the fact
deceived; grimace
horse
plays; plan made after the event
excellence
he often suffers guile
believes he stands on solid ground
untroubled conscience
myself
not one of the learned
aspects
That pertain to
handle of the tool
blade be fitting
nature

- Me cowthe teche such an art,
 That he ne failede of a part;
 935 And as toward myn oghne wit,
 Controeve cowthe I nevere yit
 To finden eny sikernes
 That me myhte outhere more or lesse
 Of love make for to sped.
 940 For lieveth wel withoute drede,
 If that ther were such a weie,
 As certeinliche as I schal deie
 I hadde it lerned longe ago.
 Bot I wot wel ther is non so.
 945 And natholes it may wel be,
 I am so rude in my degree
 And ek mi wittes ben so dulle,
 That I ne mai noght to the fulle
 Atteigne to so hih a lore.
 950 Bot this I dar seie overmore,
 Althogh mi Wit ne be noght strong,
 It is noght on mi Will along,
 For that is besi nyht and day
 To lerne al that he lerne may
 955 How that I mihte love winne.
 Bot yit I am as to beginne
 Of that I wolde make an ende,
 And for I not how it schal wende,
 That is to me mi moste sorwe.
 960 Bot I dar take God to borwe,
 As after min entendement,
 Non other wise necgligent
 Thanne I yow seie have I noght be.
 Forthi, per seinte charité,
 965 Tell me, mi fader, what you semeth.”
Confessor “In good feith, sone, wel me qwemeth,
 That thou thiself hast thus aquit
 Toward this vice, in which no wit
 Abide mai, for in an houre
 970 He lest al that he mai laboure
 The longe yer, so that men sein,
 Whatevere he doth it is in vein.
 For thurgh the Slowthe of Negligence
 Ther was yit nevere such science
 975 Ne vertu, which was bodely,
 That nys destruid and lost therby.
 Ensample that it hath be so
 In boke I finde write also.
- Could teach me
 [Such] that*
- Discover
 assurance
 either
 succeed
 trust well
 means*
- would have learned it*
- Attain; lofty an erudition*
- It is not my Will's fault*
- still a beginner*
- since I know not; turn out*
- as surely
 understanding*
- how it seems to you
 pleases
 absolved*
- loses
 say*
- corporeal
 is not destroyed*

[TALE OF PHAETON]

	Phebus, which is the sonne hote,	<i>sun called</i>
980	That schyneth upon erthe hote And causeth every lyves helthe,	<i>earth warmly</i>
¶	He hadde a sone in al his welthe, Which Pheton hihte, and he desireth	<i>(see note)</i>
	And with his moder he conspireth,	<i>was called</i>
985	The which was cleped Clemenee, For help and conseil, so that he	<i>was called</i>
	His fader carte lede myhte Upon the faire daies brihte.	<i>father's chariot</i>
	And for this thing thei bothe preide	
990	Unto the fader, and he seide He wolde wel, bot forth withal	
	Thre pointz he bad in special Unto his sone in alle wise,	
	That he him scholde wel avise	
995	And take it as be weie of lore. Ferst was, that he his hors to sore	<i>instruction</i>
	Ne prike, and over that he tolde That he the renes faste holde;	<i>sorely</i>
	And also that he be riht war	
1000	In what manere he lede his charr, That he mistake noght his gate,	<i>reins</i>
	Bot up avisement algate He scholde bere a siker yhe	<i>very careful</i>
	That he to lowe ne to hyhe	
1005	His carte dryve at eny throwe, Wherof that he mihte overthrowe.	<i>[should] steer; chariot</i>
	And thus be Phebus ordinance	<i>[So] that; pathway</i>
	Tok Pheton into governance	<i>with good attention always</i>
	The sonnes carte, which he ladde.	<i>keep a sharp eye</i>
1010	Bot he such veine gloire hadde Of that he was set upon hyh,	<i>[neither] too low nor too high</i>
	That he his oghne astat ne syh	<i>any moment</i>
	Thurgh negligence and tok non hiede;	
	So mihte he wel noght longe spedē.	
1015	For he the hors withoute lawe The carte let aboute drawe	<i>Because of which; tumble over</i>
	Wher as hem liketh wantounly.	<i>by Phebus' permission</i>
	That ate laste sodeinly,	<i>his own control</i>
	For he no reson wolde knowe,	<i>drove</i>
1020	This fyri carte he drof to lowe, And fyreth al the world aboute;	
	Wherof thei weren alle in doubte,	<i>Because he was</i>
		<i>own situation saw not</i>
		<i>succeed</i>
		<i>it pleased them</i>
		<i>[So] that</i>
		<i>scorched</i>
		<i>fear</i>

- And to the god for helpe criden
Of suche unhappes as betyden.
1025 Phebus, which syh the necgligence,
How Pheton agein his defence
His charr hath drive out of the weie,
Ordeigneth that he fell aweie
Out of the carte into a flod
1030 And dreynte. Lo now, hou it stod
With him that was so negligent,
That fro the hyhe firmament,
For that he wolde go to lowe,
He was anon doun overthrowe.

[TALE OF ICARUS]

- 1035 In hih astat it is a vice
To go to lowe, and in service
It grieveth for to go to hye,
Wherof a tale in poesie
I finde, how whilom Dedalus,
1040 Which hadde a sone, and Icharus
He hihte, and thogh hem thoghte lothe,
In such prison thei weren bothe
With Minotaurus, that aboute
Thei mihten nawher wenden oute;
1045 So thei begonne for to schape
How thei the prison mihte ascape.
This Dedalus, which fro his yowthe
Was tawht and manye craftes cowthe,
Of fetheres and of othre thinges
1050 Hath mad to fle diverse wynges
For him and for his sone also;
To whom he gaf in charge tho
And bad him thenke therupon,
How that his wynges ben set on
1055 With wex, and if he toke his flyhte
To hyhe, al sodeinliche he mihte
Make it to melte with the sonne.
And thus thei have her flyht begonne
Out of the prison faire and softe;
1060 And whan thei weren bothe alofte,
This Icharus began to monte,
And of the conseil non accompte
He sette, which his fader tawhte,
Til that the sonne his wynges cawhte,
1065 Wherof it malt, and fro the heihte
- misfortunes; happened*
who saw
despite; prohibition
path
ocean
drowned
- too high*
(see note)
was called; it seemed wretched to them
prepare
knew
fly
Too high
sun
their
climb
no account

Withouten help of eny sleihte
 He fell to his destruccion.
 And lich to that condicion
 Ther fallen ofte times fele
 1070 For lacke of governance in wele,
 Als wel in love as other weie.”

craft
many
prosperity

Amans “Now goode fader, I you preie,
 If ther be more in the matiere
 1074 Of Slowthe, that I mihte it hiere.”
Confessor “Mi sone, and for thi diligence,
 Which every mannes conscience
 Be resoun scholde reule and kepe,
 If that thee list to taken kepe,
 I wol thee telle, aboven alle
 1080 In whom no vertu mai befalle,
 Which gift unto the vices reste
 And is of slowe the sloweste.”

[IDLENESS]

v. *Absque labore vagus vir inutilis ocia plectens,*
Nescio quid presens vita valebit ei.
Non amor in tali misero viget, immo valoris
*Qui faciunt opera clamat habere suos.*¹

[Confessor] “Among these othre of Slowthes kinde,
 Which alle labour set behinde,
 1085 And hateth alle besinesse,
 Ther is yit on, which Ydelnesse
 ☩ Is cleped, and is the norrice
 In mannes kinde of every vice,
 Which secheth eases manyfold.
 1090 In wynter doth he noght for cold,
 In somer mai he noght for hete;
 So whether that he frese or swete,
 Or he be inne, or he be oute,
 He wol ben ydel al aboute,
 1095 Bot if he pleie oght ate dees.
 For who as evere take fees
 And thenkth worschipe to deserve,
 Ther is no lord whom he wol serve,
 As for to duelle in his servise,

hates; industry
one
nurse (see note)

pleasures
nothing because of
heat
freeze or sweat
indoors; outside

Unless; dice
[retainer's] fees
honor

¹ *I know not what good this life will be to the useless man, drifting far from any labor and weaving his idleness. Love does not thrive in such a wretch, but Love rather claims as his own those who do deeds of valor.*

- 1100 Bot if it were in such a wise,
Of that he seth per aventure
That be lordschipe and coverture
He mai the more stonde stille,
And use his ydelnesse at wille.
- 1105 For he ne wol no travail take
To ryde for his ladi sake,
Bot liveth al upon his wissches;
And as a cat wolde ete fissaſſes
Withoutē wetinge of his cles,
- 1110 So wolde he do, bot natheles
He faileth ofte of that he wolde.
- Confessor** Mi sone, if thou of such a molde
Art mad, now tell me plein thi schrifte."
- Amans** "Nay, fader, God I give a gifte,
1115 That toward love, as be mi wit,
Al ydel was I nevere yit,
Ne nevere schal, whil I mai go."
- Confessor** "Now, sone, tell me thanne so,
What hast thou don of besischipe
1120 To love and to the ladischipe
Of hire which thi ladi is?"
- Confessio Amantis** "Mi fader, evere yit er this
In every place, in every stede,
What so mi lady hath me bede,
- 1125 With al myn herte obedient
I have therto be diligent.
And if so is sche bidde noght,
What thing that thanne into my thoght
Comth ferſt of that I mai suffise,
- 1130 I bowe and profre my servise,
Somtime in chambre, somtime in halle,
Riht as I se the times falle.
And whan sche goth to hiere masse,
That time schal noght overpasſe,
- 1135 That I naproche hir ladihede,
In aunter if I mai hire lede
Unto the chapelle and agein.
Thanne is noght al mi weie in vein:
Somdiel I mai the betre fare,
- 1140 Whan I, that mai noght fiele hir bare,
Mai lede hire clothed in myn arm.
Bot afterward it doth me harm
Of pure yimaginacioun;
For thanne this collacioun
- 1145 I make unto miselven ofte,
- Unless
sees by fortune
aristocratic privilege and its legal protection*
- according to his desires*
- claws*
- frame*
- effort (exertion)*
- location
commanded*
- [it] is so [that] she asks nothing*
- Just as
hear
slip by
fail to approach
On [the] chance that I might
back*
- embrace her naked*
- reflection*

- And seie, 'Ha lord, hou sche is softe,
How sche is round, hou sche is smal!
Now wolde God I hadde hire al
Withoute danger at mi wille!'
- 1150 And thanne I sike and sitte stille,
Of that I se mi besi thoght
Is torned ydel into noght.
Bot for al that lete I ne mai,
Whanne I se time another dai,
- 1155 That I ne do my besinesse
Unto mi ladi worthiness.
For I therto mi wit afaite
To se the times and awaite
What is to done and what to leve.
- 1160 And so, whan time is, be hir leve,
What thing sche bit me don, I do,
And wher sche bidt me gon, I go,
And whanne hir list to clepe, I come.
Thus hath sche fulliche overcome
- 1165 Min ydelnesse til I sterve,
So that I mot hire nedes serve,
For as men sein, nede hath no lawe.
Thus mot I nedly to hire drawe,
I serve, I bowe, I loke, I loute,
- 1170 Min yhe folweth hire aboute,
What so sche wole so wol I,
Whan sche wol sitte, I knele by,
And whan sche stant, than wol I stonde.
Bot whan sche takth hir werk on honde
- 1175 Of wevinge or embrouderie,
Than can I noght bot muse and prie
Upon hir fingres longe and smale,
And now I thenke, and now I tale,
And now I singe, and now I sike,
- 1180 And thus mi contienance I pike.
And if it falle, as for a time
Hir liketh noght abide bi me,
Bot besien hire on other thinges,
Than make I othre tariings
- 1185 To dreche forth the longe dai,
For me is loth departe away.
And thanne I am so simple of port,
That for to feigne som despert
I pleie with hire litel hound
- 1190 Now on the bedd, now on the ground,
Now with hir briddes in the cage;
- slender*
- female aloofness*
- sigh*
- despite; I cannot cease*
- prepare*
- leave*
- by her permission*
- bids*
- bids*
- it pleases her to call*
- die*
- must*
- must I of necessity*
- bend*
- eye*
- gaze*
- slender*
- reflect; talk*
- sigh*
- composure; select [as agreeable]*
- It does not please her [to] be with me
to occupy herself with*
- draw out*
- bearing*
- birds*

- For ther is non so litel page,
 Ne yit so simple a chamberere,
 That I ne make hem alle chere,
 1195 Al for thei scholde speke wel.
 Thus mow ye sen mi besi whiel,
 That goth noght ydeliche aboute.
 And if hir list to ride in char,
 1200 On pelrinage or other stede,
 I come, thogh I be noght bede,
 And take hire in min arm alofte
 And sette hire in hire sadel softe,
 And so forth lede hire be the bridel,
 For that I wolde noght ben ydel.
 1205 And if hire list to ride in char,
 And thanne I mai therof be war,
 Anon I schape me to ryde
 Riht evene be the chares side;
 And as I mai, I speke among,
 1210 And otherwhile I singe a song,
 Which Ovide in his bokes made,
 And seide, 'O whiche sorwes glade,
 O which wofull prosperité
 Belongeth to the propreté
 1215 Of love, whoso wole him serve!
 And yit therfro mai no man swerve,
 That he ne mot his lawe obeie.'
 And thus I ryde forth mi weie,
 And am riht besi overal
 1220 With herte and with mi body al,
 As I have said you hiertofore.
 Mi goode fader, tell therfore,
 Of Ydelnesse if I have gilt."
- Confessor** "Mi sone, bot thou telle wilt
 1225 Oght elles than I mai now hiere,
 Thou schalt have no penance hiere.
 And natholes a man mai se,
 How now adayes that ther be
 Ful manye of suche hertes slowe,
 1230 That wol noght besien hem to knowe
 What thing love is til, ate laste,
 That he with strengthe hem overcaste,
 That malgré hem thei mote obeie
 And don al ydelschipe aweie,
 1235 To serve wel and besiliche.
 Bot, sone, thou art non of swiche,
 For love schal thee wel excuse.
- So that; speak well [of me]
 wheel*
- it pleases her
 pilgrimage; place
 bidden*
- gently*
- carriage
 be aware of that
 prepare myself*
- speak from time to time
 sometimes*
- unless*
- slothful
 exert themselves*
- despite themselves; must*
- diligently*

Bot otherwise, if thou refuse
 To love, thou miht so per cas
 1240 Ben ydel, as somtime was
 A kinges dowhter unavised,
 Til that Cupide hire hath chastised,
 Wheroft thou schalt a tale hiere
 Acordant unto this matiere.

[TALE OF ROSIPHELEE]

1245	Of Armenye, I rede thus,	<i>Armenia</i>
	Ther was a king, which Herupus	
	Was hote, and he a lusti maide	<i>called</i>
	To dowhter hadde and, as men saide,	
1248	Hire name was Rosiphelee,	<i>(see note)</i>
1250	Which tho was of gret renomee,	<i>Who then; renown</i>
	For sche was bothe wys and fair	
	And scholde ben hire fader hair.	<i>father's heir</i>
	Bot sche hadde o defalte of Slowthe	<i>one deficiency [in her]</i>
	Towardes love, and that was rowthe;	<i>[a] pity</i>
1255	For so wel cowde no man seie,	
	Which mihte sette hire in the weie	<i>Who (What)</i>
	Of loves occupacion	
	Thurgh non yimaginacion;	
	That scole wolde sche noght knowe.	<i>school [of love]</i>
1260	And thus sche was on of the slowe	<i>one of the slothful</i>
	As of such hertes besinesse,	
	Til whanne Venus the goddesse,	
	Which loves court hath for to reule,	
	Hath broght hire into betre reule	<i>[Will] have brought her up (i.e., have educated her)</i>
1265	Forth, with Cupide and with his miht.	<i>by means of Cupid; power</i>
	For thei merveille how such a wiht,	<i>person</i>
	Which tho was in hir lusti age,	<i>Who then; youthfully sensual</i>
	Desireth nother mariage	
	Ne yit the love of paramours,	
1270	Which evere hath be the comun cours	
	Amonges hem that lusti were.	
	So was it schewed after there,	
	For he that hihe hertes loweth	<i>who humbles proud hearts</i>
	With fyri dartes whiche he throweth,	
1275	Cupide, which of love is godd,	
	In chastisinge hath mad a rodd	<i>made an instrument of punishment</i>
	To dryve awei hir wantounesse;	
	So that withinne a while, I gesse,	
	Sche hadde on such a chance sporned,	<i>stumbled</i>
1280	That al hire mod was overtorne,	<i>disposition</i>

- Which ferst sche hadde of slow manere.
 For thus it fell, as thou schalt hiere,
 Whan come was the monthe of Maii,
 Sche wolde walke upon a dai,
 1285 And that was er the sonne ariste;
 Of wommen bot a fewe it wiste,
 And forth sche wente prively
 Unto the park was faste by,
 Al softe walkende on the gras,
 1290 Til sche cam ther the launde was
 Thurgh which ther ran a gret rivere.
 It thoghte hir fair, and seide, 'Here
 I wole abide under the schawe,'
 And bad hire wommen to withdrawe,
 1295 And ther sche stod alone stille,
 To thenke what was in hir wille.
 Sche sih the swote floures springe,
 Sche herde glade foules singe,
 Sche sih the bestes in her kinde,
 1300 The buck, the do, the hert, the hinde,
 The madle go with the femele.
 And so began ther a querele
 Betwen love and hir oghne herte,
 Fro which sche couthe noght asterte.
 1305 And as sche caste hire yhe aboute,
 Sche syh clad in o suite a route
 Of ladis, wher thei comen ryde
 Along under the wodes syde.
 On faire amblende hors thei sete,
 1310 That were al whyte, fatte, and grete,
 And everichon thei ride on side.
 The saddles were of such a pride,
 With perle and gold so wel begon,
 So riche syh sche nevere non;
 1315 In kertles and in copes riche
 Thei weren clothed, alle liche,
 Departed evene of whyt and blew;
 With alle lustes that sche knew
 Thei were embrouded overal.
 1320 Here bodies weren long and smal,
 The beauté faye upon her face
 Non erthly thing it may desface;
 Corones on here hed thei beere,
 As ech of hem a qweene weere,
 1325 That al the gold of Cresus halle
 The leste coronal of alle
- before; sun arose
 knew
 discreetly
 [that was] near by
- seemed lovely to her
 grove of trees
- contemplate
 saw; sweet
 birds
 animals; their
 doe; hart
 male
- could not escape
 eye
 matching colors; company
- wood's edge
- each rode sidesaddle
 opulence
 well equipped
- gowns; expensive cloaks
 all the same
 Equally mixed
 charming things
- lithe
 enchanting beauty; their
- Crowns; their heads; bear
 As [if] each of them
 [So] that
 smallest crown

- Ne mihte have boght after the worth.
Thus come thei ridende forth.
- 1330 The kinges dowhter, which this syh,
For pure abaissht drowh hire adryh
And hield hire clos under the bowh,
And let hem passen stille ynowh.
For as hire thoghte in hire avis,
To hem that were of such a pris
1335 Sche was noght worthi axen there,
Fro when thei come or what thei were.
Bot levere than this worldes good
Sche wolde have wist hou that it stod,
And putte hire hed a litel oute.
1340 And as sche lokede hire aboute,
Sche syh comende under the linde
A womman up an hors behinde.
The hors on which sche rod was blak,
Al lene and galled on the back,
1345 And haltede, as he were encluyed,
Wheroft the womman was annuied.
Thus was the hors in sori plit,
Bot for al that a sterre whit
Amiddes in the front he hadde.
1350 Hir sadel ek was wonder badde,
In which the wofull womman sat,
And natheles ther was with that
A riche bridel for the nones
Of gold and preciouuse stones.
1355 Hire cote was somdiel totore;
Aboute hir middel twenty score
Of horse haltres and wel mo
Ther hyngen ate time tho.
Thus whan sche cam the ladi nyh,
1360 Than tok sche betre hiede and syh
This womman fair was of visage,
Freyssh, lusti, yong, and of tendre age.
And so this ladi, ther sche stod,
Bethoghte hire wel and understod
1365 That this, which com ridende tho,
Tidinges couthe telle of tho
Which as sche sih tofore ryde;
And putte hir forth and preide 'Abide!'
And seide, 'Ha, suster, let me hiere,
1370 What ben thei that now riden hiere,
And ben so richeliche arraied?'
- saw
*For sheer wonder; herself aside
kept herself hidden; bough*
- elegance
to ask
- rather
known
- linden tree
- limped; ill-shod (hurt by a nail)
vexed
- white star
On his forehead
- torn
- at that particular time
near
saw
- then
those
- [she] came forward; 'Wait!'
hear
here
splendidly

- 1375 This womman, which com so esmaied,
 Ansuerde with ful softe speche,
 And seith, 'Ma dame, I schal you teche.
 These ar of tho that whilom were
 Servantz to love, and trowthe beere,
 Ther as thei hadde here herte set.
 Farewel, for I mai noght be let.
 Ma dame, I go to mi servise,
 So moste I haste in alle wise;
 Forthi, ma dame, gif me leve,
 I mai noght longe with you leve.'
 'Ha, goode soster, yit I preie,
 Tell me whi ye ben so beseie
 And with these haltres thus begon."
 "Ma dame, whilom I was on
 That to mi fader hadde a king;
 Bot I was slow, and for nothing
 Me liste noght to love obeie,
 And that I now ful sore abeie.
 For I whilom no love hadde,
 Min hors is now so fieble and badde,
 And al totore is myn arai,
 And every yeer this freisshe Maii
 These lusti ladis ryde aboute,
 And I mot nedes suie here route
 In this manere as ye now se,
 And trusse here haltres forth with me,
 And am bot as here horse knave.
 Non other office I ne have,
 Hem thenkth I am worthi no more,
 For I was slow in loves lore,
 Whan I was able for to lere,
 And wolde noght the tales hiere
 Of hem that couthen love teche.'
 'Now tell me thanne, I you beseche,
 Wheroft that riche bridel serveth.'
 With that hire chere awei sche swerveth,
 And gan to wepe, and thus sche tolde:
 'This bridel, which ye nou beholde
 So riche upon myn horse hed,
 Ma dame, afore, er I was ded,
 Whan I was in mi lusti lif,
 Ther fel into myn herte a strif
 Of love, which me overcom,
 So that therafter hiede I nom
 And thoghte I wolde love a kniht.
- disconcerted
My lady
kept their love pledges
their hearts
delayed
remain
thus furnished
covered
once; one
lothful
sorely pay
clothing
follow their path
pack their
their stable boy
stories hear
face; turns
previously, before; dead
overwhelmed me
took

- That laste wel a fourtenyht,
For it no lengere mihte laste,
1420 So nyh my lif was ate laste.
Bot now, allas, to late war
That I ne hadde him loved ar.
For deth cam so in haste bi me,
Er I therto hadde eny time,
1425 That it ne mihte ben achieved.
Bot for al that I am relieved,
Of that mi will was good therto,
That love soffreth it be so
That I schal swiche a bridel were.
- 1430 Now have ye herd al myn ansuere.
To Godd, ma dame, I you betake,
And warneth alle, for mi sake,
Of love that thei ben noght ydel,
And bidd hem thenke upon mi brydel.'
- 1435 And with that word al sodeinly
Sche passeth, as it were a sky,
Al clene out of this ladi sihte.
And tho for fere hire herte afflihte,
And seide to hirself, 'Helas!
- 1440 I am riht in the same cas.
Bot if I live after this day,
I schal amende it, if I may.'
And thus homward this lady wente,
And changede al hire ferste entente,
- 1445 Withinne hire herte and gan to swere
That sche none haltres wolde bere.
- Confessor** Lo, sone, hier miht thou taken hiede,
How ydelnesse is for to drede,
Namliche of love, as I have write.
- 1450 For thou miht understande and wite,
Among the gentil nacion
Love is an occupacion
Which for to kepe hise lustes save
1455 Scholde every gentil herte have.
- For as the ladi was chastised,
Riht so the knyght mai ben avised,
Which ydel is and wol noght serve
To love, he mai per cas deserve
A gretttere peine than sche hadde,
- 1460 Whan sche aboute with hire ladde
The horse haltres; and forthi
Good is to be wel war therbi.
Bot for to loke aboven alle,
- So close my life was to its end
it was
earlier
upon me
Before
[So] that it (love)*
- In that my intention; to that extent
bridle wear*
- commend you
And may you admonish*
- passing cloud
was startled
Alas
situation*
- know*
- desires healthy (unharmed)
(see note)*
- by chance*
- forewarned*

- These maidens, hou so that it falle,
 1465 Thei scholden take ensample of this
 Which I have told, for soth it is.
 Mi ladi Venus, whom I serve,
 What womman wole hire thonk deserve,
 Sche mai noght thilke love eschuie
 1470 Of paramours, bot sche mot suie
 Cupides lawe; and natheles
 Men sen such love sielde in pes,
 That it nys evere upon aspie
 Of janglinge and of fals envie,
 1475 Fulofte medlid with diseise.
 Bot thilke love is wel at ese,
 Which set is upon mariage;
 For that dar schewen the visage
 In alle places openly. *dares to show its face*
- 1480 A gret mervaile it is forthi
 How that a maiden wolde lette,
 That sche hir time ne besette
 To haste unto that ilke feste,
 Wherof the love is al honeste. *delay*
 1485 [So] that; would not occupy
 In hurrying
- 1490 Men mai recovere lost of good,
 Bot so wys man yit nevere stod
 Which mai recovere time lore.
 So mai a maiden wel therfore
 Ensample take, of that sche strangeth
 1495 Hir love, and longe er that sche changeth
 Hir herte upon hir lustes greene
 To mariage, as it is seene.
 For thus a yer or tuo or thre
 Sche lest, er that sche wedded be,
 1495 Whyl sche the charge myhte bere
 Of children, whiche the world forbere
 Ne mai, bot if it scholde faile.
 Bot what maiden hire esposaile
 Wol tarie, whan sche take mai,
 1500 Sche schal per chance another dai
 Be let, whan that hire lievest were.
 Wherof a tale unto hire ere,
 Which is coupable upon this dede
 I thenke telle of that I rede. *loses*
burden
fail to impose
unless [offspring] should be lacking
marriage
when she may enter into it
perhaps
obstructed; most dear to her
blameworthy

[TALE OF JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER]

- 1505 Among the Jewes, as men tolde
 Ther was whilom be daies olde

- 1505 A noble duck, which Jepte hihte.
 ¶ And fell, he scholde go to fyhte
 Agein Amon, the cruel king.
- 1510 And for to speke upon this thing,
 Withinne his herte he made avou
 To God and seide, 'Ha Lord, if Thou
 Wolt grante unto Thi man victoire,
 I schal in tokne of Thi memoire
- 1515 The ferste lif that I mai se,
 Of man or womman wher it be,
 Anon as I come hom agein,
 To Thee, which art God sovereign,
 Slen in Thi name and sacrificie.'
- 1520 And thus with his chivalerie
 He goth him forth, wher that he scholde,
 And wan al that he winne wolde
 And overcam his fomen alle.
- 1525 Mai no man lette that schal falle.
 This duc a lusti dowhter hadde,
 And fame, which the wordes spradde,
 Hath broght unto this ladi ere
 How that hire fader hath do there.
- 1530 Sche waiteth upon his cominge
 With dansinge and with carolinge,
 As sche that wolde be tofore
 Al othre, and so sche was therfore
 In Masphat at hir fader gate
- 1535 The ferste; and whan he com therate,
 And sih his doucher, he tobreide
 Hise clothes, and wepende he seide:
 'O mihti God among ous hiere,
 Nou wot I that in no manere
- 1540 I hadde al that I coude sein
 Agein mi fomen be Thi grace,
 So whan I cam toward this place
 Ther was non gladdere man than I.
 But now, mi Lord, al sodeinli
- 1545 Mi joie is torned into sorwe,
 For I mi dowhter schal morrowe
 Tohewe and brenne in Thi servise
 To loenge of Thi sacrificie
 Thurgh min avou, so as it is.'
- 1550 The maiden, whan sche wiste of this,
 And sih the sorwe hir fader made,
 So as sche mai with wordes glade
- duke; was called
 [it] so happened; fight (see note)
 Against
 vowed
- whether it [might] be
 As soon as
 Slay
 band of knights
- enemies
 hinder that [which] must be
 duke; lively
- go before
 father's
 ripped apart
- complete
 foes by
 Cut to pieces; burn
 In praise
- knew

- Conforteth him, and bad him holde
 The covenant which he is holde
 1555 Towardes God, as he behihte.
 Bot natheles hire herte aflihte
 Of that sche sih hire deth comende;
 And thanne unto the ground knelende
 Tofore hir fader sche is falle,
 1560 And seith, so as it is befall
 Upon this point that sche schal deie,
 Of o thing ferst sche wolde him preie,
 That fourty daies of respit
 He wolde hir grante upon this plit,
 1565 That sche the whyle mai bewepe
 Hir maidenhod, which sche to kepe
 So longe hath had and noght beset;
 Wheroft hir lusti youthe is let,
 That sche no children hath forthdrawe
 1570 In mariage after the lawe,
 So that the poeple is noght encressed.
 Bot that it mihte be relesSED,
 That sche hir time hath lore so,
 Sche wolde be his leve go
 1575 With othre maidens to compleigne,
 And afterward unto the peine
 Of deth sche wolde come agein.
 The fader herde his doucher sein,
 And therupon of on assent
 1580 The maidens were anon asent,
 That scholden with this maiden wende.
 So for to speke unto this ende,
 Thei gon the dounes and the dales
 With wepinge and with wofull tales,
 1585 And every wyht hire maidenhiede
 Compleigneth upon thilke nede,
 That sche no children hadde bore,
 Wheroft sche hath hir youthe lore,
 Which nevere sche recovere mai.
 1590 For so fell that hir laste dai
 Was come, in which sche scholde take
 Hir deth, which sche mai noght forsake.
 Lo, thus sche deiede a wofull maide
 For thilke cause which I saide,
 1595 As thou hast understande above."
- Amans** "Mi fader, as toward the love
 Of maidens for to telle trowthe,
 Ye have thilke vice of Slowthe,
- keep
 [to] which; behoden
 promised
 trembled
 coming
- assailed
 wasted
- according to
 population
- lost
 with his permission
 virgins
 pain
- sent for
 go
- lost

- Me thenkth, riht wonder wel declared,
 1600 That ye the wommen have noght spared
 Of hem that tarien so behinde. *who tarry*
- Bot yit it falleth in my minde,
 Toward the men hou that ye spieke
 Of hem that wole no travail sieke *labor seek*
- 1605 In cause of love upon decerte.
 To speke in wordes so coverte,
 I not what travaill that ye mente." *according to its merit*
cryptically
know not
- Confessor** "Mi sone, and after min entente
 I woll thee telle what I thoghte,
 1610 Hou whilom men here loves boghte *once men earned their love*
 Thurgh gret travaill in strange londes,
 Wher that thei wroghten with here hondes
 Of armes many a worthi dede,
 In sondri place, as men mai rede."
- carried out; their hands*

[DECERTE, OR MERITORIOUSNESS]

- vi. *Quem probat armorum probitas Venus approbat, et quem*
Torpor habet reprobum reprobat illa virum.
Vecors segnicies insignia nescit amoris,
*Nam piger ad brauium tardius ipse venit.*¹

- [Confessor]** "That every love of pure kinde
 1616 Is ferst forthdrawe, wel I finde.
 Bot natheles yit overthis *moreover*
 Decerte doth so that it is *Meritoriousness*
-  The rather had in mani place. *more quickly obtained*
- 1620 Forthi who secheth loves grace,
 Wher that these worthi wommen are,
 He mai noght thanne himselfe spare
 Upon his travail for to serve,
 Wherof that he mai thonk deserve,
 1625 There as these men of armes be,
 Somtime over the grete se. *ocean*
 So that be londe and ek be schipe
- He mot travaile for worshipe
 And make manye hastyf rodes, *military forays*
- 1630 Somtime in Prus, somtime in Rodes,
 And somtime into Tartarie;
 So that these heraldz on him crie, *Prussia; Rhodes*

¹ *Venus approves the man whom prowess in arms tests; and the reprobate man whom torpor possesses she disapproves. Mad sluggishness does not know the banners of love, for, lazy, he arrives too slowly at the victory prize.*

- 'Vailant, vailant, lo, wher he goth!
 And thanne he gift hem gold and cloth,
 1635 So that his fame mihte springe,
 And to his ladi ere bringe
 Som tidinge of his worthinesse
 So that sche mihte of his prouesce
 Of that sche herde men recorde,
 1640 The betre unto his love acorde
 And danger pute out of hire mod.
 Whanne alle men recorden good,
 And that sche wot wel, for hir sake
 That he no travail wol forsake.
- Confessor** Mi sone, of this travail I meene.
 1646 Nou schrif thee, for it schal be sene
 If thou art ydel in this cas."
- Confessio Amantis** "My fader, ye, and evere was.
 For as me thenketh trewely
 1650 That every man doth mor than I
 As of this point, and if so is
 That I have ought so don er this,
 It is so litel of acompte,
 As who seith, it mai noght amonte
 1655 To winne of love his lusti gifte.
 For this I telle you in schrifte,
 That me were levere hir love winne
 Than Kaire and al that is therinne.
 And for to slen the hethen alle,
 1660 I not what good ther mihte falle,
 So mochel blod thogh ther be schad.
 This finde I writen, hou Crist bad
 That no man other scholde sle.
 What scholde I winne over the se,
 1665 If I mi ladi loste at hom?
 Bot passe thei the salte fom,
 To whom Crist bad thei scholden preche
 To al the world and his feith teche.
 Bot now thei rucken in here nest
 1670 And resten as hem liketh best
 In all the swetnesse of delices.
 Thus thei defenden ous the vices,
 And sitte hemselfen al amidde;
 To slen and feihten thei ous bidde
 1675 Hem whom thei scholde, as the bok seith,
 Converten unto Cristes feith.
 Bot hierof have I gret mervaile,
 Hou thei wol bidde me travaile:
- remove standoffishness from her attitude*
- labor*
to this labor I refer
confess
- it would be preferable to me*
Cairo
- do not know*
spilled
commanded
kill
across the sea
- [let] those cross over; foam*
- cower; their*
- forbid us*
But place themselves in the midst
command
Those who

- 1680 A Sarazin if I sle schal,
I sle the soule forth withal,
And that was nevere Cristes lore.
Bot nou ho ther, I seie no more.
Bot I wol speke upon mi schrifte;
And to Cupide I make a gifte,
That who as evere pris deserve
Of armes, I wol love serve;
And thogh I scholde hem bothe kepe,
Als wel yit wolde I take kepe
Whan it were time to abide,
As for to travaile and to ryde:
For how as evere a man laboure,
Cupide appointed hath his houre.
- 1685 *whoever [might] deserve renown*
I shall serve love
(i.e., love and arms)
- 1690 *sit tight*
- 1695 *(see note)*
- 1700 Bothe of himself and of his men
At Troie for Polixenen,
Upon hire love whanne he fell,
That for no chance that befell
Among the Grecs or up or doun,
He wolde noght agein the toun
Ben armed, for the love of hire.
And so me thenketh, lieve sire,
A man of armes mai him reste
Somtime in hope for the beste,
If he mai finde a weie nerr.
- 1705 *dear*
- 1710 What scholde I thanne go so ferr
In strange londes many a mile
To ryde, and lese at hom therwhile
Mi love? It were a schort begete
To winne chaf and lese whete.
Bot if mi ladi bidde wolde,
That I for hire love scholde
Travaile, me thenkth trewely
I mihte fle thurghout the sky,
And go thurghout the depe se,
- 1715 *lose*
poor bargain
lose
- 1720 For al ne sette I at a stre
What thonk that I mihte elles gete.
What helpeth it a man have mete,
Wher drinke lacketh on the bord?
What helpeth eny mannes word
To seie hou I travaile faste,
Wheras me faileth ate laste
That thing which I travaile fore?
O in good time were he bore,
- straw*
thanks; otherwise get
food
is missing; table

- 1725 That mihte atteigne such a mede.
 Bot certes if I mihte spede
 With eny maner besinesse
 Of worldes travail, thane I gesse,
 Ther scholde me non ydelschipe
- 1730 Departen fro hir ladischipe.
 Bot this I se, on daies nou
 The blinde god, I wot noght hou,
 Cupido, which of love is lord,
 He set the thinges in discord,
- 1735 That thei that lest to love entende
 Fulofte he wole hem give and sende
 Most of his grace; and thus I finde
 That he that scholde go behinde,
 Goth many a time ferr tofore.
- 1740 So wot I noght riht wel therfore,
 On whether bord that I schal seile.
 Thus can I noght miself conseile,
 Bot al I sette on aventure,
 And am, as who seith, out of cure
- 1745 For ought that I can seie or do.
 Forevermore I finde it so,
 The more besinesse I leie —
 The more that I knele and preie
 With goode wordes and with softe —
- 1750 The more I am refused ofte,
 With besinesse and mai noght winne.
 And in good feith that is gret sinne;
 For I mai seie, of dede and thoght
 That ydel man have I be noght.
- 1755 For hou as evere I be deslaied,
 Yit evermore I have assaied.
 Bot thogh my besinesse laste,
 Al is bot ydel ate laste,
 For whan th'effect is ydelnesse,
- 1760 I not what thing is besinesse.
 Sei, what availeth al the dede,
 Which nothing helpeth ate nede?
 For the fortune of every fame
 Schal of his ende bere a name.
- 1765 And thus for ought is yit befalle,
 An ydel man I wol me calle
 As after myn entendement.
 Bot upon youre amendement,
 Min holi fader, as you semeth,
- 1770 Mi reson and my cause demeth."
- attain; boon
succeed
- Separate me from
least
- far ahead
- which ship-side; sail (i.e., on whatever tack)
- commit to chance
beyond help
- apply
- put off
continued to try
is persistent
- know not
- intention
- judge

- Confessor** “Mi sone, I have herd thi matiere,
 Of that thou hast thee schriven hiere.
 And for to speke of ydel fare,
 Me semeth that thou tharst noght care,
 1775 Bot only that thou miht noght spede.
 And therof, sone, I wol thee rede,
 Abyd, and haste noght to faste;
 Thi dees ben every dai to caste,
 Thou nost what chance schal betyde.
 1780 Betre is to wayte upon the tyde
 Than rowe agein the stremes stronge.
 For thogh so be thee thenketh longe,
 Per cas the revolucion
 Of hevene and thi condicion
 1785 Ne be noght yit of on accord.
 Bot I dar make this record
 To Venus, whos prest that I am,
 That sithen that I hidir cam
 To hiere, as sche me bad, thi lif,
 1790 Wheroft thou elles be gultif,
 Thou miht hierof thi conscience
 Excuse, and of gret diligence,
 Which thou to love hast so despended,
 Thou oghitest wel to be comended.
 1795 Bot if so be that ther oghit faile,
 Of that thou slowthest to travaile
 In armes for to ben absent,
 And for thou makst an argument
 Of that thou seidest hiere above,
 1800 Hou Achilles thurgh strengthe of love
 Hise armes lefte for a throwe,
 Thou schalt another tale knowe,
 Which is contraire, as thou schalt wite.
 For this a man mai finde write,
 1805 Whan that knythode schal be werred,
 Lust mai noght thanne be preferred;
 The bedd mot thanne be forsake
 And schield and spere on honde take,
 Which thing schal make hem after glade,
 1810 Whan thei ben worthi knihtes made.
 Wheroft, so as it comth to honde,
 A tale thou schalt understande,
 Hou that a kniht schal armes suie,
 And for the while his ese eschuie.
- confessed here*
ought not
Except in how; succeed
advise
Wait; too
dice
know not
powerful currents
though it seems a long time to you
By chance
neglect
sent to war
pursue
forsake

[TALE OF NAUPLUS AND ULYSSES]

- 1815 Upon knythode I rede thus:
 How whilom whan the king Nauplus,
 The fader of Palamades, once
 ↗ Cam for to preien Ulixes
 With othre Gregois ek also, (see note)
- 1820 That he with hem to Troie go,
 Wher that the siege scholde be,
 Anon upon Penolope
 His wif, whom that he loveth hote,
 Thenkende, wolde hem noght behote. *His (Ulysses') wife; passionately*
[he] would not promise them [that he would go]
- 1825 Bot he schop thanne a wonder wyle,
 How that he scholde hem best beguile,
 So that he mihte duelle stille
 At home and welde his love at wille. *he (Ulysses) devised; clever deceit*
- 1830 Wherof erli the morwe day
 Out of his bedd, wher that he lay,
 Whan he was uppe, he gan to fare
 Into the field and loke and stare,
 As he which feigneth to be wod.
 He tok a plowh, wher that it stod,
 Wherinne anon in stede of oxes possess
- 1835 He let do yoken grete foxes,
 And with gret salt the lond he siew.
 Bot Nauplus, which the cause kniew,
 Agein the sleihte which he feigneth
 1840 Another sleihte anon ordeigneth.
 And fell that time Ulixes hadde
 A chyld to sone, and Nauplus radde
 How men that sone taken scholde
 And setten him upon the molde *pretended; insane*
- 1845 Wher that his fader hield the plowh
 In thilke furgh which he tho drowh.
 For in such wise he thoghte assaie
 Hou it Ulixes scholde paie,
 If that he were wod or non. *plow*
- 1850 The knihtes for this child forthgon;
 Thelamacus anon was fett,
 Tofore the plowh and evene sett,
 Wher that his fader scholde dryve
 Bot whan he sih his child, als blyve *oxen*
- 1855 He drof the plowh out of the weie,
 And Nauplus tho began to seie,
 And hath half in a jape cryd:
 'O Ulixes, thou art aspyd;
 What is al this thou woldest meene? *sowed*
- deceit; feigns*
- A son as his child; advised*
- earth*
- the same furrow; then plowed*
- to test (investigate)*
- please*
- insane*
- fetched*
- And set directly before the plow*
- swiftly*
- jest*
- discovered*

- 1860 For openliche it is now seene
 That thou hast feigned al this thing,
 Which is gret schame to a king,
 Whan that for lust of eny slowthe
 Thou wolt in a querele of trowthe
 1865 Of armes thilke honour forsake,
 And duelle at hom for loves sake.
 For betre it were honour to winne
 Than love, which likinge is inne.
 Forthi tak worschipe upon honde,
 1870 And elles thou schalt understande
 These othre worthi kinges alle
 Of Grece, which unto thee calle,
 Towardes thee wol be riht wrothe,
 And grieve thee per chance bothe.
 1875 Which schal be to thee double schame
 Most for the hindryng of thi name,
 That thou for Slouthe of eny love
 Schalt so thi lustes sette above
 And leve of armes the knyhtode,
 1880 Which is the pris of thi manhode
 And oghte ferst to be desired.'
 Bot he, which hadde his herte fyred
 Upon his wif, whan he this herde,
 Noght o word theragein answarde,
 1885 Bot torneth hom halvinge aschamed,
 And hath withinne himself so tamed
 His herte, that al the sotie
 Of love for chivalerie
 He lefte, and be him lief or loth,
 1890 To Troie forth with hem he goth,
 That he him mihte noght excuse.
 Thus stant it, if a knyht refuse
 The lust of armes to travaile,
 Ther mai no worldes ese availe,
 1895 Bot if worschipe be withal.
 And that hath schewed overal;
 For it sit wel in alle wise
 A kniht to ben of hih emprise
 And puten alle drede awei.
 1900 For in this wise, I have herd seie:

*honor**harm**excellence**returns home half**foolishness**whether it pleased him or not**not excuse himself**as well**lofty chivalric deed**manner**(see note)***[EXAMPLES OF PROWESS: PROTESILAUS]**

- ¶ The worthi king Protheselai
 On his passage wher he lai
 Towardes Troie thilke siege,

- Sche which was al his oghne liege,
 1905 Laodomie his lusti wif,
 Which for his love was pensif,
 As he which al hire herte hadde,
 Upon a thing wherof sche dradde
 A lettred, for to make him duelle
 1910 Fro Troie, sende him, thus to telle,
 Hou sche hath axed of the wyse,
 Touchende of him in such a wise,
 That thei have don hire understande,
 Towardes othre hou so it stonde,
 1915 The destiné it hath so schape
 That he schal noght the deth ascape
 In cas that he arryve at Troie.
 Forthi as to hir worldes joie
 With al hire herte sche him preide,
 1920 And many another cause alleide,
 That he with hire at home abide.
 Bot he hath cast hir lettred aside,
 As he which tho no maner hiede
 Tok of hire wommannyshe drede;
 1925 And forth he goth, as noght ne were,
 To Troie, and was the ferste there
 Which londeth, and tok arryvaile.
 For him was levere in the bataille,
 He seith, to deien as a knyht,
 1930 Than for to lyve in al his myht
 And be reproeved of his name.
 Lo, thus upon the worldes fame
 Knyththode hath evere yit be set,
 1934 Which with no couardie is let.

[SAUL]

- ¶ Of king Saul also I finde,
 Whan Samuel out of his kinde,
 Thurgh that the Phitonesse hath lered
 In Samarie was arered
 Long time after that he was ded,
 1940 The king Saul him axeth red,
 If that he schal go fyhte or non.
 And Samuel him seide anon,
 'The ferste day of the bataille
 Thou schalt be slain withoute faille
 1945 And Jonathas thi sone also.'
 Bot hou as evere it felle so,
 This worthi kniht of his corage

*own loyal subject**Who; melancholic**[Apart] from Troy**made**determined**presented (alleged)
[So] that; [would] remain**anxiety**as if it were nothing**it was preferable to him**in his reputation**cowardice; hindered**(see note)**unnaturally**what; prophesied**called back from the dead**advice*

	Hath undertake the viage, And wol noght his knyhhode lette	<i>military expedition</i> <i>hinder</i>
1950	For no peril he couthe sette; Wherof that bothe his sone and he Upon the Montz of Gelboe Assemblen with here enemys.	<i>knew [to be] determined</i>
	For thei knyhhode of such a pris	<i>Join [in battle]; their</i> <i>value</i>
1955	Be olde daies thanne hielden, That thei non other thing behielden. And thus the fader for worschipe Forth with his sone of felaschipe	<i>would consider</i> <i>honor</i>
	Thurgh lust of armes weren dede,	<i>love; slain</i>
1960	As men mai in the Bible rede, The whos knyhhode is yit in mende, And schal be to the worldes ende.	<i>Whose; memory</i>

[EDUCATION OF ACHILLES]

1960	And for to loken overmore, It hath and schal ben evermore	<i>(see note)</i>
1965	That of kniethode the prouesse Is grounded upon hardinesse Of him that dar wel undertake.	
	And who that wolde ensample take Upon the forme of knyghtes lawe,	
1970	How that Achilles was forthdrawe With Chiro, which Centaurus hihte, Of many a wondre hiere he mihte. For it stod thilke time thus,	<i>educated</i>
	That this Chiro, this Centaurus,	<i>By Chiro; was called</i>
1975	Withinne a large wildernesse, Wher was leon and leonesse, The lepard and the tigre also,	<i>(i.e., the listener)</i>
	With hert and hynde, and buck and doo,	
	Hadde his duellinge, as tho befell,	
1980	Of Pileon upon the hel,	
	Wherof was thanne mochel speche.	<i>hart; doe</i>
	Ther hath Chiro this chyld to teche,	<i>its</i>
	What time he was of tuelve yer age;	<i>hill</i>
	Wher for to maken his corage	<i>youth</i>
1985	The more hardi be other weie, In the forest to hunte and pleie	<i>heartiness</i>
	Whan that Achilles walke wolde,	
	Centaurus bad that he ne scholde	
	After no beste make his chace,	
1990	Which wolde flen out of his place, As buck and doo, and hert and hynde,	

	With whiche he mai no werre finde;	<i>In whom he would find no fight</i>
	Bot tho that wolden him withstonde,	
	Ther scholde he with his dart on honde	<i>spear</i>
1995	Upon the tigre and the leon	
	Pourchace and take his veneison,	<i>Pursue; game animal</i>
	As to a kniht is acordant.	<i>fitting</i>
	And therupon a covenant	
	This Chiro with Achilles sette,	
2000	That every day withoute lette	<i>without fail</i>
	He scholde such a cruel beste	
	Or slen or wounden ate leste,	<i>Either; or</i>
	So that he mihte a tokne bringe	
	Of blod upon his hom cominge.	
2005	And thus of that Chiro him tawhte	<i>from what</i>
	Achilles such an herte cawhte,	<i>courageousness developed</i>
	That he no more a leon dradde	<i>feared</i>
	Whan he his dart on honde hadde	
	Thanne if a leon were an asse.	
2010	And that hath made him for to passe	<i>surpass</i>
	Alle othre knihtes of his dede	<i>feats of strength</i>
	Whan it cam to the grete nede,	
	As it was afterward wel knowe.	
Confessor	Lo, thus, my sone, thou miht knowe	
2015	That the corage of hardiesce	
	Is of knyghtode the prouesce,	<i>excellence</i>
	Which is to love sufficant	
	Aboven al the remenant	
	That unto loves court poursuie.	<i>pursue</i>
2020	Bot who that wol no Slowthe eschui,	<i>avoid</i>
	Upon kniighthode and noght travaile,	<i>labor honorably</i>
	I not what love him scholde availe;	<i>know not what use love would be to him</i>
	Bot every labour axeth why	<i>demands an inducement</i>
	Of som reward, wheroft that I	
2025	Ensamples couthe telle ynowe	
	Of hem that toward love drowe	
	Be olde daies, as thei scholde."	
Amans	"Mi fader, therof hiere I wolde."	
Confessor	"Mi sone, it is wel resonable,	
2030	In place which is honorable	
	If that a man his herte sette,	
	That thanne he for no Slowthe lette	<i>[should] delay</i>
	To do what longeth to manhede.	
	For if thou wolt the bokes rede	
2035	Of Lancelot and othre mo,	
	Ther miht thou sen hou it was tho	
	Of armes, for thei wolde atteigne	
	To love, which withoute peine	

- 2040 Mai noght be gete of ydelnesse.
 And that I take to witnesse
 An old cronique in special,
 The which into memorial
 Is write, for his loves sake,
 Hou that a kniht schal undertake.
- And [as to] that*

[TALE OF HERCULES AND ACHELONS]

- 2045 Ther was a king, which Oenes
 Was hote, and he under his pes
 Hield Calidoyne in his empire,
 And hadde a dowhter Deianire.
 Men wiste in thilke time non
 2050 So fair a wiht as sche was on;
 And as sche was a lusti wiht,
 Riht so was thanne a noble kniht,
 To whom Mercurie fader was.
 This kniht the tuo pilers of bras,
 2055 The whiche yit a man mai finde,
 Sette up in the desert of Ynde;
 That was the worthi Hercules,
 Whos name schal ben endeles
 For the merveilles whiche he wroghte.
- called; in his dominion*
(see note)
- 2060 This Hercules the love soghte
 Of Deianire, and of this thing
 Unto hir fader, which was king,
 He spak touchende of mariage.
 The king knowende his hih lignage,
 2065 And dradde also hise mihtes sterne,
 To him ne dorste his dowhter werne;
 And natheles this he him seide,
 How Achelons er he ferst preide
 To wedden hire, and in accord
 2070 Thei stode, as it was of record.
 Bot for al that this he him granteth,
 That which of hem that other daunteth
 In armes, him sche scholde take,
 And that the king hath undertake.
- lively person*
India
fame
carried out
- 2075 This Achelons was a geant,
 A soubtil man, a deceivant,
 Which thurgh magique and sorcerie
 Couthe al the world of tricherie.
 And whan that he this tale herde,
 2080 Hou upon that the king ansuerde
 With Hercules he moste feighte,
 He tristeth noght upon his sleighe
- dared; refuse to give*
earlier; [had] prayed
agreement
defeats
affirmed
deceiver
Who
Understood
what the king [had] answered

	Al only, whan it comth to nedē,		
	Bot that which voydeth alle drede	<i>removes all fears</i>	
2085	And every noble herte stereth,	<i>inspires</i>	
	The love, that no lif forbereth,	<i>that leaves no living thing untouched</i>	
	For his ladi, whom he desireth,		
	With hardiesse his herte fyreth,	<i>inflames</i>	
	And sende him word withoute faile		
2090	That he wol take the bataille.	<i>agree upon</i>	
	Thei setten day, thei chosen field,		
	The knihtes coevered under schield		
	Togedre come at time set,		
	And echon is with other met.		
2095	It fell thei foughтен bothe afote,	<i>on foot</i>	
	Ther was no ston, ther was no rote,		
	Which mihte letten hem the weie,	<i>hinder their arena</i>	
	But al was voide and take aweie.	<i>removed</i>	
	Thei smyten strokes bot a fewe,		
2100	For Hercules, which wolde schewe	<i>show</i>	
	His grete strengthe as for the nones,		
	He sterte upon him al at ones	<i>rushed</i>	
	And cawhte him in hise armes stronge.	<i>seized</i>	
	This geant wot he mai noght longe		
2105	Endure under so harde bondes,	<i>powerful a clutch</i>	
	And thoghte he wolde out of hise hondes		
	Be sleyhte in som manere ascape.		
	And as he couthe himself forschape,	<i>change shape</i>	
	In liknesse of an eddre he slipte	<i>adder; slipped</i>	
2110	Out of his hond, and forth he skipte;		
	And efte, as he that feighe wole,		
	He torneth him into a bole,	<i>turns himself; bull</i>	
	And gan to belwe of such a soun,	<i>bellow; sound</i>	
	As thogh the world scholde al go doun.	<i>collapse</i>	
2115	The ground he sporneth and he tranceth,	<i>paws; tramples</i>	
	Hise large hornes he avanceth		
	And caste hem here and there aboute.	<i>tosses them here</i>	
	Bot he, which stant of him no doute,	<i>possesses no fear of him</i>	
	Awaiteh wel whan that he cam,		
2120	And him be bothe hornes nam	<i>took</i>	
	And al at ones he him caste		
	Unto the ground, and hield him faste,		
	That he ne mihte with no sleighe	<i>[So] that; trickery</i>	
	Out of his hond gete upon heighe,	<i>upright</i>	
2125	Til he was overcome and yolde,	<i>yielded</i>	
	And Hercules hath what he wolde.	<i>desired</i>	
	The king him granteth to fulfille		
	His axinge at his oghne wille,		
	And sche for whom he hadde served,		

- 2130 Hire thoghte he hath hire wel deserved. *It seemed to her*
 And thus with gret decerte of armes
 He wan him for to ligge in armes, *He gained for himself to lie in arms*
 As he which hath it dere aboght,
 2134 For otherwise scholde he noght. *have nothing*

[PENTHESILEA, PHILEMENIS, AENEAS]

- ¶ And overthis if thou wolt hiere
 Upon kniethode of this matiere,
 Hou love and armes ben aqueinted,
 A man mai se bothe write and peinted
 So ferforth that Pantasilee, *moreover (see note)*
 2140 Which was the queene of Feminee,
 The love of Hector for to sieke
 And for th'onour of armes eke,
 To Troie cam with spere and schield,
 And rod hirself into the field *written and portrayed*
 2145 With maidens armed al a route
 In rescouss of the toun aboute,
 Which with the Gregois was belein. *rescue*
 ¶ Fro Pafagoine and as men sein,
 Which stant upon the worldes ende, *besieged*
 2150 That time it likede ek to wende *(see note)*
 To Philemenis, which was king,
 To Troie, and come upon this thing
 In helpe of thilke noble toun;
 And al was that for the renoun *it was also pleasing*
 2155 Of worschipe and of worldes fame,
 Of which he wolde bere a name. *To Philemenis [to travel]*
 And so he dede, and forthwithal
 He wan of love in special
 A fair tribut foreveremo. *possess the renown*
 2160 For it fell thilke time so,
 Pirrus the sone of Achilles
 This worthi queene among the press *(i.e., Penthesilea); multitude*
 With dedli swerd soghte out and fond,
 And slowh hire with his oghne hond;
 2165 Wherof this king of Pafagoine
 Pantasilee of Amazoine,
 Wher sche was queene, with him ladde,
 With suche maidens as sche hadde
 Of hem that were left alyve,
 2170 Forth in his schip, til thei aryve;
 Wher that the body was begrave *buried*
 With worschipe, and the wommen save. *honor; saved*
 And for the goodschipe of this dede

	Thei granten him a lusti mede		
2175	That every yeer as for truage To him and to his heritage Of maidens faire he schal have thre. And in this wise spedde he, Which the fortune of armes soghte,	<i>reward</i> <i>a pledge of tribute</i>	
2180	With his travail his ese he boghte; For otherwise he scholde have failed, If that he hadde noght travailed.	<i>manner he prospered</i>	
2185	Eneas ek withinne Ytaile, Ne hadde he wonne the bataille And don his miht so besily Agein king Turne his enemy, He hadde noght Lavine wonne; Bot for he hath him overronne And gete his pris, he gat hire love.	<i>labored</i> <i>(see note)</i>	
		<i>energetically</i>	
		<i>Turnus</i>	
		<i>would not have</i>	
		<i>conquered (Turnus)</i>	
		<i>victory</i>	

[GENTILESSE]

2190	Be these ensamples here above, Lo, now, mi sone, as I have told, Thou miht wel se, who that is bold And dar travaile and undertake The cause of love, he schal be take	<i>By</i>
2195	The rathere unto loves grace; For comunliche in worthi place The wommen loven worthiness Of manhode and of gentilesse, For the gentils ben most desired."	
[Amans]	"Mi fader, bot I were inspired	
2201	Thurgh lore of you, I wot no weie What gentilesce is for to seie, Wherof to telle I you beseche."	<i>edification</i> <i>How nobility is to be described</i>
[Confessor]	"The ground, mi sone, for to seche	
2205	Upon this diffinicion, The worldes constitucion Hath set the name of gentilesse Upon the fortune of richesse Which of long time is falle in age.	
2210	Thanne is a man of hih lignage After the forme, as thou miht hiere, Bot nothing after the matiere. For who that resoun understande, Upon richesse it mai noght stonde,	<i>has become vulnerable</i>
2215	For that is thing which faileth ofte. For he that stant today alofte And al the world hath in hise wones,	<i>possession</i>

- Tomorwe he falleth al at ones
 Out of richesse into poverte,
 2220 So that therof is no decerte
 Which gentilesce makth abide.
 And for to loke on other side
 Hou that a gentil man is bore,
 Adam, which alle was tofore
 2225 With Eve his wif, as of hem tuo,
 Al was aliche gentil tho;
 So that of generacion
 To make declaracion,
 Ther mai no gentilesce be.
- 2230 For to the reson if we se,
 Of mannes berthe the mesure,
 It is so comun to nature,
 That it gifth every man aliche,
 2235 Als wel to povere as to the riche;
 For naked thei ben bore bothe,
 The lord no more hath for to clothe
 As of himself that ilke throwe,
 Than hath the povereste of the rowe.
 And whan thei schulle bothe passe,
 2240 I not of hem which hath the lasse
 Of worldes good, bot as of charge
 The lord is more for to charge,
 Whan God schal his accompte hiere,
 2244 For he hath had hise lustes hiere.
 Bot of the bodi, which schal deie,
 Althogh ther be diverse weie
 To deth, yit is ther bot on ende,
 To which that every man schal wende,
 2250 Als wel the beggere as the lord,
 Of o nature, of on accord.
 Sche which oure eldemoder is,
 The erthe, bothe that and this
 Receiveth and alich devoureth,
 That sche to nouther part favoureth.
- 2255 So wot I nothing after kinde
 Where I mai gentilesse finde.
 For lacke of vertu lacketh grace,
 Wherof richesse in many place,
 Whan men best wene for to stonde,
 2260 Al sodeinly goth out of honde.
 Bot vertu set in the corage,
 Ther mai no world be so salvage,
 Which mihte it take and don awei,
 Til whanne that the bodi deie;
- before all other*
- then*
- gifts*
- at that time*
- lineup*
- know not*
- be held responsible*
- hear*
- pleasures here*
- (see note)*
- journey*
- ancient mother*
- earth*
- {Such} that*
- according to nature*
- think*
- heart*
- worldly circumstances; violent*

- 2265 And thanne he schal be riched so,
That it mai faile neveremo.
So mai that wel be gentilesse,
Which gifth so gret a sikernesse:
For after the condicion
2270 Of resonable entencion,
The which out of the soule groweth
And the vertu fro vice knoweth,
Wherof a man the vice eschuieth,
Withoute Slowthe and vertu suith,
2275 That is a verrai gentil man,
And nothing elles which he can,
Ne which he hath, ne which he mai.
Bot for al that yit nou aday,
In loves court to taken hiede,
2280 The povere vertu schal noght spiede,
Wher that the riche vice woweth;
For sielde it is that love alloweth
The gentil man withoute good,
Thogh his condicion be good.
2285 Bot if a man of bothe tuo
Be riche and vertuous also,
Thanne is he wel the more worth.
Bot yit to putte himselfe forth
He moste don his besinesse,
2290 For nowther good ne gentilesse
Mai helpen hem whiche ydel be.
Bot who that wole in his degré
Travaile so as it belongeth,
It happeth ofte that he fongeth
2295 Worschipe and ese bothe tuo.
For evere yit it hath be so,
That love honeste in sondri weie
Profiteth, for it doth aweie
The vice, and as the bokes sein,
2300 It makth curteis of the vilein,
And to the couard hardiesce
It gifth, so that verrai prouesse
Is caused upon loves reule
To him that can manhode reule;
2305 And ek toward the wommanhiede,
Who that therof wol taken hiede,
For thei the betre affaited be
In everything, as men mai se.
For love hath evere hise lustes grene
2310 In gentil folk, as it is sene,
Which thing ther mai no kinde areste.
- made so wealthy*
certainty
follows
truly noble
nothing else [produces it]
i.e., the virtue not based on wealth; achieve
presses its case
[moral] condition
receives
Honor
honorable love
a courtier out of a peasant
produced by
are fashioned

	I trowe that ther is no beste, If he with love scholde aqueinte, That he ne wolde make it queinte	<i>creature</i>
2315	As for the while that it laste. And thus I conclude ate laste, That thei ben ydel, as me semeth, Whiche unto thing that love demeth Forslowthen that thei scholden do.	<i>behave graciously</i>
2320	And overthis, mi sone, also After the vertu moral eke To speke of love if I schal seke, Among the holi bokes wise I finde write in such a wise,	<i>Behave slothfully with regard to what moreover (see note)</i>
2325	'Who loveth noght is hier as ded'; For love above alle othre is hed, Which hath the vertus for to lede, Of al that unto mannes dede Belongeth: for of ydelschipe	<i>dead</i>
2330	He hateth all the felaschipe. For Slowthe is evere to despise, Which in desdeign hath al apprise, And that acordeth noght to man. For he that wit and reson kan,	<i>to be scorned</i>
2335	It sit him wel that he travaile Upon somthing which mihte availe, For ydelschipe is noght comended, Bot every lawe it hath defended. And in ensample therupon	<i>holds all instruction that (such scorn) is capable of engage himself yield something worthwhile</i>
2340	The noble wise Salomon, Which hadde of everything insihte, Seith, 'As the briddes to the flihte Ben made, so the man is bore To labour,' which is noght forbore	<i>birds</i>
2345	To hem that thenken for to thryve. For we, whiche are now alyve, Of hem that besi whylom were, Als wel in scole as elleswhere, Mowe every day ensample take,	<i>avoided</i>
2350	That if it were now to make Thing which that thei ferst founden oute, It scholde noght be broght aboute. Here lyves thanne were longe, Here wittes grete, here mihtes stronge,	<i>From those who formerly were industrious (see note)</i>
2355	Here hertes ful of besinesse, Wheroft the worldes redinesse In bodi bothe and in corage Stant evere upon his avantage.	<i>if it were [necessary] now to create invented</i>
		<i>Their</i>
		<i>worthwhile occupation</i>
		<i>spirit</i>

- And for to drawe into memoire
 2360 Here names bothe and here histoire,
 Upon the vertu of her dede
 In sondri bokes thou miht rede. *their actions*

[ON THE USES OF LABOR]

vii. *Expedit in manibus labor, vt de cotidianis
 Actibus ac vita viuere possit homo.
 Set qui doctrine causa fert mente labores,
 Preualet et merita perpetuata parat.*¹

- Of every wisdom the parfit
 2364 The hyhe God of His spirit
 Gaf to the men in erthe hiere
 Upon the forme and the matiere
 Of that he wolde make hem wise.
 And thus cam in the ferste apprise
 Of bokes and of alle goode *the perfection*
 2370 Thurgh hem that whilom understande
 The lore which to hem was give,
 Wheroft these othre, that now live,
 Ben every day to lerne newe.
 Bot er the time that men siewe,
 2375 And that the labour forth it broghte,
 Ther was no corn, thogh men it soghte,
 In non of al the fieldes oute; *teaching*
 ⚭ And er the wisdom cam aboute
 Of hem that ferst the bokes write,
 2380 This mai wel every wys man wite,
 Ther was gret labour ek also.
 Thus was non ydel of the tuo,
 That on the plogh hath undertake
 With labour which the hond hath take,
 2385 That other tok to studie and muse,
 As he which wolde noght refuse
 The labour of hise wittes alle.
 And in this wise it is befallie,
 Of labour which that thei begunne
 2390 We be now tawht of that we kunne.
 Here besinesse is yit so seene,
 That it stant evere alyche greene;
 Al be it so the bodi deie, *before; scattered seed on the ground*
- (see note)
- know*
- what we understand*

¹ *Labor with the hands is productive, such that in daily life and actions a man might be able to live. But he who for the sake of wisdom bears labors in the mind prevails further and obtains perpetual merit.*

- 2395 The name of hem schal nevere aweie. *disappear*
 2395 In the croniqes as I finde.

[DISCOVERERS AND INVENTORS]

- Cham, whos labour is yit in minde,
 Was he which ferst the lettres fond
 And wrote in Hebreu with his hond.
 Of naturel philosophie
- 2400 He fond ferst also the clergie. *invented; learning*
 Cadmus the lettres of Gregois
 Ferst made upon his oghne chois.
 Theges of thing which schal befallie,
 He was the ferste augurre of alle. *soothsayer*
- 2405 And Philemon be the visage *physiognomy*
 Fond to descriue the corage.
 Cladyns, Esdras, and Sulpices,
 Termegis, Pandulf, Frigidilles,
 Menander, Ephiloquorus,
- 2410 Solins, Pandas, and Josephus *composers (writers)*
 The ferste were of enditours,
 Of old cronicque and ek auctours:
 And Heredot in his science
 Of metre, of rime, and of cadence,
- 2415 The ferste was of which men note. *whether*
 And of musique also the note
 In mannes vois, or softe or scharpe,
 That fond Jubal; and of the harpe
 The merie soun, which is to like,
- 2420 That fond Poulin斯 forth with phisique. *pleasing*
 Zenzis fond ferst the pourture,
 And Prometheus the sculpture;
 After what forme that hem thoghte,
 The resemblance anon thei wroghte. *Apollo; medicine*
- 2425 Tubal in iren and in stel *Zeuxis; portrait painting*
 Fond ferst the forge and wroghte it wel.
 And Jadahel, as seith the bok,
 Ferst made net and fisses tok.
 Of huntynge ek he fond the chace,
- 2430 Which now is knowe in many place. *they conceived*
 A tente of cloth with corde and stake
 He sette up ferst and dede it make.
 Verconius of cokerie *shaped*
- 2435 Ferst made the delicacie. *woolen goods invented*
 The craft Minerve of wolle fond *[by] her own hand*
 And made cloth hire oghne hond,

- And Delbora made it of lyn: *linen*
 Tho wommen were of great engyn. *Those; ingenuity*
- 2440 Bot thing which gifth ous mete and drinke
 And doth the labourer to swinke *causes; toil*
 To tile lond and sette vines,
 Wheroft the cornes and the wynes
 Ben sustenance to mankinde,
 In olde bokes as I finde,
- 2445 Saturnus of his oghne wit
 Hath founde ferst, and more yit
 Of chapmanhode he fond the weie,
 And ek to coigne the moneie *mercantilism*
 Of sondri metall, as it is,
- 2450 He was the ferste man of this.
 Bot hou that metall cam a place *into place*
 Thurgh mannes wit and Goddes grace
 The route of philosophres wise
 Controoveden be sondri wise, *company*
 2455 Ferst for to gete it out of myne,
 And after for to trie and fyne. *Discovered (Experimented)*
- separate metal from ore; refine*

[ALCHEMY]

- ¶ And also with gret diligence *(see note)*
 Thei founden thilke experiance,
 Which cleped is alconomie, *that experienced science*
 2460 Wheroft the selver multeplie *alchemy*
 Thei made and ek the gold also.
 And for to telle hou it is so,
 Of bodies sevne in special
 With foure spiritz joynt withal
- 2465 Stant the substance of this matiere.
 The bodies whiche I speke of hiere
 Of the planetes ben begonne.
 The gold is titled to the sonne,
 The mone of selver hath his part,
- 2470 And iren that stant upon Mart, *assigned; sun*
 The led after Satorne groweth,
 And Jupiter the bras bestoweth,
 The coper set is to Venus,
 And to his part Mercurius *moon; silver; its*
 2475 Hath the quikselver, as it falleth,
 The which, after the bok it calleth,
 Is ferst of thilke fowre named
 Of spiritz, whiche ben proclaimed;
 And the spirit which is secounde
- 2480 In sal armoniak is founde. *pertains to Mars* *its*
gum ammoniac

- The thridde spirit sulphur is;
 The ferthe suiendo after this
 Arcennicum be name is hote. *is called*
- 2485 In these thinges whiche I seie,
 Thei worchen be diverse weie.
 For as the philosophre tolde
 Of gold and seler, thei ben holde
 Tuo principal extremites,
 2490 To whiche alle othre be degres
 Of the metalls ben accordant,
 And so thurgh kinde resemblant,
 That what man couthe aweie take
 The rust, of which thei waxen blake,
 2495 And the savour and the hardnesse,
 Thei scholden take the liknesse
 Of gold or seler parfitly.
 Bot for to worche it sikirly,
 Betwen the corps and the spirit, *body*
 2500 Er that the metall be parfit,
 In sevene formes it is set;
 Of alle and if that on be let,
 The remenant mai noght availe,
 Bot otherwise it mai noght faile.
- 2505 For thei be whom this art was founde
 To every point a certain bounde
 Ordeignen, that a man mai finde
 This craft is wroght be weie of kinde,
 So that ther is no fallas inne. *by; invented*
- 2510 Bot what man that this werk beginne,
 He mot awaite at every tyde,
 So that nothing be left aside,
 Ferst of the distillacacion,
 Forth with the congelacion,
 2515 Solucion, descencion,
 And kepe in his entencion
 The point of sublimacion,
 And forth with calcinacion
 Of veray approbacion
- 2520 Do that ther be fixacion
 With tempred hetes of the fyr,
 Til he the parfit elixir
 Of thilke philosophres ston
 Mai gete, of which that many on
 2525 Of philosophres whilom write.
 And if thou wolt the names wite
 Of thilke ston with othre tuo,
- Before*
- obstructed*
- nature*
falseness
- must*
- reduction [to a nontransferable substance]*
- once wrote*
know

Whiche as the clerkes maden tho,
So as the bokes it recorden,
2530 The kinde of hem I schal recorden.

*relate**nature; them; commit to memory*

[THREE PHILOSOPHER STONES]

These olde Philosophres wyse
Be weie of kinde in sondri wise
Thre stones maden thurgh clergie.

2535 The ferst, if I schal specefie,
Was lapis vegetabilis,
Of which the propre vertu is
To mannes hele for to serve,
As for to kepe and to preserve
The bodi fro siknesses alle,
2540 Til deth of kinde upon him falle.

The ston seconde I thee behote
Is lapis animalis hote,
The whos vertu is propre and cowth
For ere and yhe and nase and mouth,
2545 Wherof a man mai hiere and se
And smelle and taste in his degré,
And for to fiele and for to go
It helpeth man of bothe tuo.
The wittes fyve he underfongeth
2550 To kepe, as it to him belongeth.

The thridde ston in special
Be name is cleped minerall,
Which the metalls of every mine
Attempreth, til that thei ben fyne,
2555 And pureth hem be such a weie,
That al the vice goth aweie
Of rust, of stink, and of hardnesse.
And whan thei ben of such clennesse,
This mineral, so as I finde,
2560 Transformeth al the fersete kynde
And makth hem able to conceive
Thurgh his vertu, and to receive
Bothe in substance and in figure
Of gold and seler the nature.

2565 For thei tuo ben th'extremetes,
To whiche after the propretes
Hath every metal his desir,
With help and confort of the fyr
Forth with this ston, as it is seid,
2570 Which to the sonne and mone is leid;
For to the rede and to the whyte

*learned procedures**(see note)**health**assure**called**perceive and be animate**undertakes**pertains**refined**fit] purifies**stench; lack of fusibility**refinement**initial nature**laid**i.e., gold and silver (see note)*

- 2575 This ston hath pouer to profite.
 It makth multiplicacioun
 Of gold, and the fixacioun
 It causeth, and of his habit
 He doth the werk to be parfit
 Of thilke elixer which men calle
 Alconomie, as is befall
 To hem that whilom weren wise.
- 2580 Bot now it stant al otherwise;
 Thei speken faste of thilke ston,
 Bot hou to make it, nou wot non
 After the sothe experience.
 And natholes gret diligence
- 2585 Thei setten upon thilke dede,
 And spille more than thei spede;
 For allewey thei finde a lette,
 Which bringeth in poverte and dette
 To hem that riche were afore.
- 2590 The lost is had, the lucre is lore,
 To gete a pound thei spenden fyve;
 I not hou such a craft schal thryve
 In the manere as it is used:
 It were betre be refused
- 2595 Than for to worchen upon weene
 In thing which stant noght as thei weene.
 Bot noght forthi, who that it knewe,
 The science of himself is trewe
 Upon the forme as it was founded,
- 2600 Wheroft the names yit ben grounded
 Of hem that ferste it founden oute;
 And thus the fame goth aboue
 To suche as soghten besinesse
 Of vertu and of worthiness.
- 2605 Of whom if I the names calle,
- now knows none
- lose; succeed [in making]
 hindrance
- before
 money is lost
- know not
- expectation
 suppose
 nonetheless

[FIRST ALCHEMISTS]

- 2610 Hermes was on the ferste of alle,
 To whom this art is most applied;
 Geber therof was magnified,
 And Ortolan and Morien,
 Among the whiche is Avicen,
 Which fond and wrot a gret partie
 The practique of Alconomie;
 Whos bokes, pleinli as thei stonde
 Upon this craft, fewe understande;
- 2615 Bot yit to put hem in assai
- the first one of all
- try them out

- Ther ben full manye now aday,
That knownen litel what thei meene.
It is noght on to wite and weene;
In forme of wordes thei it trete,
2620 Bot yit they failen of begete,
For of to moche or of to lyte
Ther is algate founde a wyte,
So that thei folwe noght the lyne
Of the parfite medicine,
2625 Which grounded is upon nature.
Bot thei that writen the scripture
Of Grek, Arabe, and of Caldee,
Thei were of such auctorité
That thei ferst founden out the weie
2630 Of al that thou hast herd me seie;
Wheroft the cronique of her lore
Schal stonde in pris foreveremore.
- know; interrogate*
possession
too much; too little
always; blame
Arabic
praise

[LETTERS AND LANGUAGE]

- Bot toward oure marches hiere,
Of the Latins if thou wolt hiere,
2635 Of hem that whilom vertuous
Were and therto laborious,
Carmente made of hire engin
The ferste lettres of Latin,
Of which the tunge Romein cam,
2640 Wheroft that Aristarchus nam
Forth with Donat and Dindimus
The ferste reule of scole, and thus,
How that Latin schal be componed
And in what wise it schal be soned,
2645 That every word in his degré
Schal stonde upon congruité.
And thilke time at Rome also
Was Tullius with Cithero,
That writen upon Rethorike,
2650 Hou that men schal the wordes pike
After the forme of eloquence,
Which is, men sein, a gret prudence.
And after that out of Hebreu
Jerom, which the langage kneu,
2655 The Bible, in which the Lawe is closed,
Into Latin he hath transposed;
And many an other writere ek
Out of Caldee, Arabe, and Grek
With gret labour the bokes wise
- regions here*
[own] cleverness
From
took
institutional instruction
constructed
pronounced
its
choose
translated

- 2660 Translateden. And otherwise
The Latins of hemself also
Here studie at thilke time so
With gret travaile of scole toke
In sondri forme for to boke,
Their
higher learning
- 2665 That we mai take here evidences
Upon the lore of the sciences,
Of craftes bothe and of clergie;
Among the whiche in poesie
To the lovers Ovide wrot
[So] that; written results
- 2670 And tawhte, if love be to hot,
In what manere it scholde akiele.
too heated
be cooled
- Confessor** Forthi, mi sone, if that thou fiele
That love wringe thee to sore,
- 2674 Behold Ovide and take his lore.”
wisdom
- Amans** “Mi fader, if thei mihte spedē
Mi love, I wolde his bokes rede;
And if thei techen to restreigne
Mi love, it were an ydel peine
To lerne a thing which mai noght be.
facilitate
- 2680 For lich unto the greene tree,
If that men toke his rote aweie,
Riht so myn herte scholde deie,
If that mi love be withdrawe.
taken away
matter
- 2685 Wheroftouchende unto this sawe
Mi love, and ydelschipe eschuie.”
avoid
- Confessor** “Mi goode sone, soth to seie,
If ther be siker eny weie
To love, thou hast seid the beste.
- 2690 For who that wolde have al his reste
And do no travail at the nede,
It is no resoun that he spedē
In loves cause for to winne;
fare well
- 2695 For he which dar nothing beginne,
I not what thing he scholde achieve.
Bot overthis thou schalt believe,
So as it sit thee wel to knowe,
That ther ben othre vices slowe,
know not
- 2700 Whiche unto love don gret lette,
If thou thin herte upon hem sette.”
slothful
harm
them

[SOMNOLENCE]

- viii. *Perdit homo causam linquens sua iura sopori,
Et quasi dimidium pars sua mortis habet.*

*Est in amore vigil Venus, et quod habet vigilanti
Obsequium thalamis fert vigilata suis.¹*

- [Confessor] “Toward the slowe progenie
Ther is yit on of compaignie,
And he is cleped Sompnolence,
Which doth to Slouthe his reverence,
2705 As he which is his chamberlein,
☞ That many an hundred time hath lein
To slepe, whan he scholde wake.
He hath with love trewes take,
That wake whoso wake wile,
2710 If he mai couche a doun his bile,
He hath al wowed what him list;
That ofte he goth to bedde unkist,
And seith that for no druerie
He wol noght leve his sluggardie.
2715 For thogh no man it wole allowe,
To slepe leve than to wowe
Is his manere, and thus on nyghtes,
Whan that he seth the lusti knyghtes
Revelen, wher these wommen are,
2720 Awey he skulketh as an hare,
And goth to bedde and leith him softe,
And of his Slouthe he dremeth ofte
Hou that he stiketh in the myr,
And hou he sitteth be the fyr
2725 And claweth on his bare schanckes,
And hou he clymbeth up the banckes
And falleth into slades depe.
Bot thanne whoso toke kepe,
Whanne he is falle in such a drem,
2730 Riht as a schip agein the strem,
He routeth with a slepi noise,
And brustleth as a monkes froise,
Whanne it is throwe into the panne.
And otherwhile sielde whanne
2735 That he mai dreme a lusti swevene,
Him thenkth as thogh he were in hevene
And as the world were holi his.
And thanne he spekth of that and this,
And makth his exposicion
2740 After the disposicion
Of that he wolde, and in such wise
- slothful
a particular one
Sommolence
(see note)
accommodation made
lay down his beak (i.e., go to sleep)
has done all the wooing he wants
[Such] that; unkissed
love matter
leave
rather; woo
sees
Making revel
lays himself down softly
mud
scratches; legs
grassy glades
snores
sizzles; pancake
rarely
dream; erotic dream
wholly

¹ *A man yielding his rights to sleep loses his case, and his side wins, as it were, but a half-death. Venus is a sentry guard in love, and, awakened, she carries to her bed that service which she keeps for the wakeful.*

- He doth to love all his service.
 I not what thonk he schal deserve. *know not; reward*
 Bot, sone, if thou wolt love serve,
 2745 I rede that thou do noght so." *advise*
- Confessio Amantis** "Ha, goode fader, certes no.
 I hadde levere, be mi trowthe,
 Er I were set on such a slouthie
 And beere such a slepi snoute,
 2750 Bothe yhen of myn hed were oute.
 For me were betre fulli die
 Thanne I of such a slugardie
 Hadde eny name, God me schilde;
 For whan mi moder was with childe,
 2755 And I lay in hire wombe clos,
 I wolde rathere Atropos,
 Which is goddesse of alle deth,
 Anon as I hadde eny breth,
 Me hadde fro mi moder cast.
 2760 Bot now I am nothing agast,
 I thonke Godd; for Lachesis,
 Ne Cloto, which hire felawe is,
 Me schopen no such destiné,
 Whan thei at mi nativité
 2765 My weerdes setten as thei wolde;
 Bot thei me schopen that I scholde
 Eschuie of slep the truandise,
 So that I hope in such a wise
 To love for to ben excused,
 2770 That I no Sompnolence have used.
 For certes, fader Genius,
 Yit into nou it hath be thus,
 At alle time if it befelle
 So that I mihte come and duelle
 2775 In place ther my ladi were,
 I was noght slow ne slepi there.
 For thanne I dar wel undertake,
 That whanne hir list on nyhtes wake
 In chambre as to carole and daunce,
 2780 Me thenkth I mai me more avaunce,
 If I mai gon upon hir hond,
 Thanne if I wonne a kinges lond.
 For whanne I mai hire hand beclippe,
 With such gladnesse I daunce and skippe
 2785 Me thenkth I touche noght the flor.
 The ro, which renneth on the mor,
 Is thanne noght so lyht as I.
 So mow ye witen wel forthi,
rather, by
Before
carry
eyes
[it] would be better utterly to
reputation, [may] God protect me
enclosed
Death
As soon as
from my mother abandoned me
(one of the fateful sisters)
companion
Shaped for me
fate determined
Avoid the truancy of sleep
it pleases her
grasp
It seems to me; floor
roebuck; moor
know

- That for the time slep I hate.
- 2790 And whanne it falleth othergate,
So that hire like noght to daunce,
Bot on the dees to caste chaunce
Or axe of love som demande,
Or elles that hir list comaunde
- 2795 To rede and here of Troilus,
Riht as sche wole or so or thus,
I am al redi to consente.
And if so is that I mai hente
Somtime among a good leisir,
- 2800 So as I dar of mi desir
I telle a part; bot whanne I preie,
Anon sche bidt me go mi weie
And seith it is ferr in the nyht;
And I swere it is even liht.
- 2805 Bot as it falleth ate laste,
Ther mai no worldes joie laste,
So mot I nedes fro hire wende
And of my wachche make an ende.
- 2810 And if sche thanne hiede toke,
Hou pitousliche on hire I loke,
Whan that I schal my leve take,
Hire oghte of mercy for to slake
Hire daunger, which seith evere 'nay.'
- 2815 Bot he seith often, 'Have good day,'
That loth is for to take his leve:
Therfore, while I mai believe,
I tarie forth the nyght along,
For it is noght on me along
- 2820 To slep that I so sone go,
Til that I mot algate so;
And thanne I bidde Godd hire se,
And so doun knelende on mi kne
I take leve, and if I schal,
- 2825 I kisse hire, and go forthwithal.
And otherwhile, if that I dore,
Er I come fulli to the dore,
I torne agein and feigne a thing,
As thogh I hadde lost a ring
- 2830 Or somwhat elles, for I wolde
Kisse hire eftstones, if I scholde,
Bot selden is that I so sped.
And whanne I se that I mot nede
Departen, I departe, and thanne
- 2835 With al myn herte I curse and banne
That evere slep was mad for yhe;
- otherwise
- dice
ask some question about love
what [fit] pleases her to order
hear
(i.e., or whatever else she wants)
- seize
At some point in the course of things
- bids
too late at night
- must; depart
vigil
- diminish
aloofness
he (her "daunger")
- dependent (i.e., because of my wish)
- pray God watch over her
kneeling
- [might] dare
door
- soon after
succeed
must necessarily
- swear and curse
made; eye

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| | For, as me thenkth, I mihte dryhe
Withoute slep to waken evere,
So that I scholde noght dissevere
Fro hire, in whom is al my liht. | endure
separate |
| 2840 | And thanne I curse also the nyght
With al the will of mi corage,
And seie, 'Awey, thou blake ymage,
Which of thi derke cloudy face | <i>potent desire</i> |
| | Makst al the worldes lyht deface,
And causest unto slep a weie,
Be which I mot nou gon aweie
Out of mi ladi compaignie. | <i>By</i> |
| 2845 | O slepi nyght, I thee desie,
And wolde that thou leye in presse
With Proserpine the goddesse
And with Pluto the helle king. | <i>be put away</i> |
| | For til I se the daies spring,
I sette slep noght at a risshe.'
And with that word I sike and wisshe,
And seie, 'Ha, whi ne were it day? | <i>rush (straw)</i>
<i>sigh</i> |
| 2850 | For yit mi ladi thanne I may
Beholde, thogh I do nomore.'
And eft I thenke furthermore,
To som man hou the niht doth ese, | <i>next I think</i> |
| | Whan he hath thing that mai him plesse
The longe nyghtes be his side,
Where as I faile and go beside.
Bot slep, I not wherof it serveth, | <i>i.e., affords sensual gratification</i> |
| 2855 | Of which no man his thonk deserveth
To gete him love in eny place,
Bot is an hindrere of his grace
And makth him ded as for a throwe, | <i>know not</i> |
| | Riht as a stok were overthrowe.
And so, mi fader, in this wise
The slepi nyghtes I despise, | <i>for a time</i> |
| 2860 | And evere amiddes of mi tale
I thenke upon the nyhtingale,
Which slepeth noght be weie of kinde
For love, in bokes as I finde. | <i>Just as if a tree trunk</i> |
| | Thus ate laste I go to bedde,
And yit min herte lith to wedde
With hire, wher as I cam fro; | <i>stands as a pledge</i> |
| 2865 | Thogh I departe, he wol noght so,
Ther is no lock mai schette him oute,
Him nedeth noght to gon aboute, | |
| | That perce mai the harde wall;
Thus is he with hire overall, | <i>he (my heart)</i> |
| 2870 | | |
| 2875 | | |
| 2880 | | |

That be hire lief, or be hire loth
 Into hire bedd myn herte goth,
 2885 And softly takth hire in his arm
 And fieleth hou that sche is warm,
 And wissbeth that his body were
 To fiele that he fieleth there.
 And thus miselven I tormente,
 2890 Til that the dede slep me hente.

whether she likes it or not
[should] seize me

[ON DREAMS]

Bot thanne be a thousand score
 Welmore than I was tofore
 I am tormented in mi slep,
 Bot that I dreme is noght of schep;
 2895 For I ne thenke noght on wulle,
 Bot I am drecched to the fulle
 Of love, that I have to kepe,
 That nou I lawhe and nou I wepe,
 And nou I lese and nou I winne,
 2900 And nou I ende and nou beginne.
 And otherwhile I dreme and mete
 That I alone with hire mete
 And that Danger is left behinde;
 And thanne in slep such joie I finde,
 2905 That I ne bede nevere awake.
 Bot after, whanne I hiede take,
 And schal arise upon the morwe,
 Thanne is al torned into sorwe,
 Noght for the cause I schal arise,
 2910 Bot for I mette in such a wise,
 And ate laste I am bethoght
 That al is vein and helpeth noght.
 Bot yit me thenketh be my wille
 I wolde have leie and slepe stille,
 2915 To meten evere of such a swewe,
 For thanne I hadde a slepi hevene.”

Confessor “Mi sone, and for thou tellest so,
 A man mai finde of time ago
 That many a swewe hath be certein,
 2920 Al be it so, that som men sein
 That swevenes ben of no credence.
 Bot for to schewe in evidence
 That thei fuloste sothe thinges
 Betokne, I thenke in my wrytinges
 2925 To telle a tale therupon,
 Which fell be olde daies gon.

what I dream of is not sheep
wool
tormented
With love; watch over
[Such] that now; laugh
lose
dream; dream
meet
pray [that I might] never
dreamed
mindful
vain
lain; continued sleeping
dream; dream
dreams
true matters
Signify

[TALE OF CEIX AND ALCEONE]

- ¶ This finde I write in poesie: (see note)
- Ceix the king of Trocinie
Hadde Alceone to his wif,
- 2930 Which as hire oghne hertes lif
Him loveth; and he hadde also
A brother, which was cleped tho
Dedalion, and he per cas
Fro kinde of man forschape was
then named
by chance
transformed
- 2935 Into a goshauk of liknesse;
Wheroft the king gret heynnesse
Hath take, and thoghte in his corage
To gon upon a pelrinage
Into a strange regioun,
heart
pilgrimage
foreign land
- 2940 Wher he hath his devocioun
To don his sacrifice and preie,
If that he mihte in eny weie
Toward the goddes finde grace
His brother hele to pourchace,
brother's health
- 2945 So that he mihte be reformed
Of that he hadde be transformed.
To this pourpos and to this ende
This king is redy for to wende,
As he which wolde go be schipe;
From what
- 2950 And for to don him felaschipe
His wif unto the see him broghte,
With al hire herte and him besoghte,
That he the time hire wolde sein,
Whan that he thoghte come agein.
go
- 2955 'Withinne,' he seith, 'tuo monthe day.'
And thus in al the haste he may
He tok his leve, and forth he seileth
Wepende, and sche hirself beweileth,
And torneth hom, ther sche cam fro.
sea accompanied him
And with
- 2960 Bot whan the monthes were ago,
The whiche he sette of his comyng,
And that sche herde no tydinge,
Ther was no care for to seche.
Wheroft the goddes to beseche
home, where
gone
- 2965 Tho sche began in many wise,
And to Juno hire sacrificise
Above alle othre most sche dede,
And for hir lord sche hath so bede
To wite and knowe hou that he ferde,
distress to seek (i.e., none lacking)
- 2970 That Juno the goddesse hire herde,
Anon and upon this matiere
prayed
fared
- And at once

- Sche bad Yris hir messagere
 To slepes hous that sche schal wende,
 And bidde him that he make an ende
 2975 Be swevene and schewen al the cas
 Unto this ladi, hou it was.
 This Yris, fro the hihe stage,
 Which undertake hath the message,
 Hire reyny cope dede upon,
 2980 The which was wonderli begon
 With colours of diverse hewe,
 An hundred mo than men it knewe;
 The hevene lich unto a bowe
 Sche bende, and so she cam doun lowe,
 2985 The god of sleep wher that sche fond.
 And that was in a strange lond,
 Which marcheth upon Chymerie.
 For ther, as seith the poesie,
 The god of Slep hath mad his hous,
 2990 Which of entaille is merveilous.
 Under an hell ther is a cave,
 Which of the sonne mai noght have,
 So that no man mai knowe ariht
 The point betwen the dai and nyht.
 2995 Ther is no fyr, ther is no sparke,
 Ther is no dore which mai charke,
 Wheroft an yhe scholde unschette,
 So that inward ther is no lette.
 And for to speke of that withoute,
 3000 Ther stant no gret tree nyh aboute
 Wheron ther myhte crowe or pie
 Alihte, for to clepe or crie.
 Ther is no cok to crowe day,
 Ne beste non which noise may
 3005 The hell, bot al aboute round
 Ther is growende upon the ground
 Popi, which berth the sed of sleep,
 With othre herbes suche an hep.
 A stille water for the nones
 3010 Rennende upon the smale stones,
 Which hihte of Lethes the rivere,
 Under that hell in such manere
 Ther is, which gifth gret appetit
 To slepe. And thus full of delit
 3015 Slep hath his hous; and of his couche
 Withinne his chambre if I schal touche,
 Of hebenus that slepi tree
 The bordes al aboute be,
- go
- By dream vision; show
- rainy cloak (rainbow) put on
- wonderfully ornamented
- borders on Chimerea
- decor
- hill
- creak
- eye: open (unshut)
- impediment [to sleep]
- nearby
- magpie
- call
- cock
- animal; make noises
- [On] the hill
- Poppies; bear
- huge quantity
- is called
- hill
- gives
- ebony

	And for he scholde slepe softe,	<i>softly</i>
3020	Upon a fethrebed alofte He lith with many a pilwe of doun: The chambre is strowed up and doun With svevenes many thousandfold.	<i>pillow; down strown dreams</i>
	Thus cam Yris into this hold,	
3025	And to the bedd, which is al blak, Sche goth, and ther with Slep sche spak, And in the wise as sche was bede The message of Juno sche dede.	<i>commanded conveyed</i>
	Fulofte hir wordes sche reherceth,	
3030	Er sche his slepi eres perceth; With mochel wo bot ate laste His slombrende yhen he upcaste And seide hir that it schal be do.	<i>ears pierces reluctance (expression of woe)</i>
	Wherof among a thousand tho,	<i>eyes</i>
3035	Withinne his hous that slepi were, In special he ches out there Thre, whiche scholden do this dede: The ferste of hem, so as I rede,	<i>done then</i>
	Was Morpheus, the whos nature	
3040	Is for to take the figure Of what persone that him liketh, Wherof that he fulofte entriliketh The lif which slepe schal be nyhte;	<i>whatever; pleases him deceives</i>
	And Ithecus that other hihte,	<i>Someone who; at night</i>
3045	Which hath the vois of every soun, The chiere and the condicioun Of every lif, what so it is; The thridde suiendo after this	<i>Icelos; second was called</i>
	Is Panthasas, which may transforme	
3050	Of everything the rihte forme, And change it in another kinde. Upon hem thre, so as I finde, Of svevenes stant al th'apparence,	<i>following Phantasos</i>
	Which otherwhile is evidence	
3055	And otherwhile bot a jape. Bot natheles it is so schape, That Morpheus be nyht alone Appiereth until Alceone	<i>sometimes is true testimony other times but a joke things are thus arranged</i>
	In liknesse of hir housebonde	<i>unto</i>
3060	Al naked ded upon the stronde, And hou he dreynte in special These othre tuo it schewen al. The tempeste of the blake cloude,	<i>dead; beach drowned</i>
	The wode see, the wyndes loude,	
3065	Al this sche mette, and sih him dyen;	<i>angry sea dreamed; saw him die</i>

- Wherof that sche began to crien,
 Slepende abedde ther sche lay,
 And with that noise of hire affray
 Hir wommen sterter up aboute,
 3070 Whiche of here ladi were in doute,
 And axen hire hou that sche ferde;
 And sche, riht as sche syh and herde,
 Hir swevene hath told hem everydel.
 And thei it halsen alle wel
 3075 And sein it is a tokne of goode;
 Bot til sche wiste hou that it stode,
 Sche hath no confort in hire herte,
 Upon the morwe and up sche sterte,
 And to the see, wher that sche mette
 3080 The bodi lay, withoutte lette
 Sche drowh, and whan that sche cam nyh,
 Stark ded, hise armes sprad, sche syh
 Hire lord flietende upon the wawe.
 Wheroft hire wittes ben withdrawe,
 3085 And sche, which tok of deth no kepe,
 Anon forth lepte into the depe
 And wolde have cawht him in hire arm.
 This infortune of double harm
 The goddes fro the hevene above
 3090 Behielde, and for the trowthe of love,
 Which in this worthi ladi stod,
 Thei have upon the salte flod
 Hire dreinte lord and hire also
 Fro deth to lyve torned so,
 3095 That thei ben schapen into briddes
 Swimmende upon the wawe amiddes.
 And whan sche sih hire lord livende
 In liknesse of a bridd swimmende,
 And sche was of the same sort,
 3100 So as sche mihte do despert,
 Upon the joie which sche hadde
 Hire wynges bothe abrod sche spradde,
 And him, so as sche mai suffise,
 Beclipte and keste in such a wise
 3105 As sche was whilom wont to do.
 Hire wynges for hire armes tuo
 Sche tok, and for hire lippes softe
 Hire harde bile, and so fulofte
 Sche fondeth in hire briddes forme,
 3110 If that sche mihte hirself conforme
 To do the plesance of a wif,
 As sche dede in that other lif.
- where
fearful outcry
- for their; fear
ask
- every bit
interpret
- knew
- And in the morning
sea; dreamed
- hesitation
- near
saw
- floating; waves
- faithfulness
- birds
- living
bird
- Embraced; kissed
once
- tries

- For thogh sche hadde hir pouer lore,
Hir will stod as it was tofore,
3115 And serveth him so as sche mai.
Wherof into this ilke day
Togedre upon the see thei won,
Wher many a dowhther and a sone
Thei bringen forth of briddes kinde;
3120 And for men scholden take in mynde
This Alceoun the trewe queene,
Hire briddes yit, as it is seene,
Of Alceoun the name bere.
- human ability lost
before*
dwell
hold in memory
i.e., Halcyon

[ON SLEEPING AND WAKING]

- Confessor** Lo, thus, mi sone, it mai thee stere
3125 Of sweenes for to take kepe,
For ofte time a man aslepe
Mai se what after schal betide.
Forthi it helpeth at som tyde
A man to slepe, as it belongeth,
3130 Bot slowthe no lif underfongeth
Which is to love appourtenant.”
- Confessio Amantis** “Mi fader, upon covenant
I dar wel make this avou,
Of all mi lif that into nou,
3135 Als fer as I can understande,
Yit tok I nevere slep on honde,
Whan it was time for to wake;
For thogh myn yhe it wolde take,
Min herte is evere theragein.
- 3140 Bot natheles to speke it plein,
Al this that I have seid you hiere
Of my wakin, as ye mai hiere,
It toucheth to mi lady swete.
For otherwise, I you behiete,
- 3145 In strange place whanne I go,
Me list nothing to wake so.
For whan the wommen listen pleie,
And I hir se noght in the weie
Of whom I scholde merthe take,
- 3150 Me list noght longe for to wake,
Bot if it be for pure schame,
Of that I wolde eschuie a name,
That thei ne scholde have cause non
To seie, ‘Ha, lo, wher goth such on,
- 3155 That hath forlore his contenaunce!’
And thus among I singe and daunce,
- stir
heed*
*happen
time*
*But no one accepts sloth
[No one, that is] who*
up to the present
*it (sleep)
opposed*
*here
hear*
*assure
foreign*
*It does not please me at all
wish to play*
*the reputation
[So] that*
*lost his composure
continually*

- And feigne lust ther as non is.
 For ofte sithe I fiele this:
 Of thoght, which in mi herte falleth
 3160 Whanne it is nyht, myn hed appalleth,
 And that is for I se hire noght
 Which is the wakere of mi thoght.
 And thus as tymliche as I may,
 Fulofte whanne it is brod day,
 3165 I take of all these othre leve
 And go my weie, and thei beleve,
 That sen per cas here loves there.
 And I go forth as noght ne were
 Unto mi bedd, so that alone
 3170 I mai ther ligge and sighe and grone
 And wisshen al the longe nyht,
 Til that I se the daies lyht.
 I not if that be Sompnolence,
 Bot upon youre conscience,
 3175 Min holi fader, demeth ye.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, I am wel paid with thee,
 Of sleep that thou the sluggardie
 Be nyhte in loves compaignie
 Eschuiued hast, and do thi peine
 3180 So that thi love thar noght pleine.
 For love upon his lust wakende
 Is evere, and wolde that non ende
 Were of the longe nyhtes set.
 Wherof that thou be war the bet,
 3185 To telle a tale I am bethought,
 Hou love and slep acorden noght.
- often times*
grows faint
because
Who
early
remain
Who see by chance their
as if there were nothing [wrong]
fantasize
know not
judge
pleased
your love ought not complain
I have in mind

[PRAYER OF CEPHALUS]

- For love who that list to wake
 Be nyhte, he mai ensample take
 3189 Of Cephalus, whan that he lay
 With Aurora that swete may
 In armes all the longe nyht.
 Bot whanne it drogh toward the liht,
 That he withinne his herte sih
 The dai which was amorwe nyh,
 3195 Anon unto the sonne he preide,
 For lust of love, and thus he seide:
 ‘O Phebus, which the daies liht
 Governest til that it be nyht,
 And gladest every creature
 3200 After the lawe of thi nature,
- maiden (see note)*
saw
sun
Because of desire

- Bot natheles ther is a thing,
 Which onli to the knouleching
 Belongeth as in privaté
 To love and to his dueté,
 3205 Which asketh noght to ben apert,
 Bot in cilence and in covert
 Desireth for to be beschaded.
 And thus whan that thi liht is faded
 And Vesper scheweth him alofte,
 3210 And that the nyght is long and softe,
 Under the cloudes derke and stille
 Thanne hath this thing most of his wille.
 Forthi unto thi myhtes hyhe,
 As thou which art the daies yhe,
 3215 Of love and myht no conseil hyde,
 Upon this derke nyhtes tyde
 With al myn herte I thee beseche
 That I plesance myhte seche
 With hire which lith in min armes.
 3220 Withdrawgh the banere of thin armes,
 And let thi lyhtes ben unborn,
 And in the signe of Capricorn,
 The hous appropred to Satorne,
 I preie that thou wolt sojorne,
 3225 Wher ben the nihtes derke and longe.
 For I mi love have underfonge,
 Which lith hier be mi syde naked,
 As sche which wolde ben awaked,
 And me lest nothing for to slepe.
 3230 So were it good to take kepe
 Nou at this nede of mi preiere,
 And that thee like for to stiere
 Thi fyri carte, and so ordeigne,
 That thou thi swifte hors restreigne
 3235 Lowe under erthe in Occident,
 That thei towardes Orient
 Be cercle go the longe weie.
 And ek to thee, Diane, I preie,
 Which cleped art of thi noblesse
 3240 The nyhtes mone and the goddesse,
 That thou to me be gracious.
 And in Cancro thin oghne hous
 Agein Phebus in opposit
 Stond al this time, and of delit
 3245 Behold Venus with a glad yhe.
 For thanne upon astronomie
 Of due constellacion
- exposed (made public)*
silence
obscured
- lofty powers*
eye
- who lies*
banner of your heraldic sign (i.e., sunrise)
- embraced (received)*
by
- guide*
- West*
East
By circle
- called are*
moon

- Thou makst prolificacion,
And dost that children ben begete:
cause; born
- 3250 Which grace if that I mihte gete,
With al myn herte I wolde serve
Be nyhte, and thi vigile observe.'
- Confessor** Lo, thus this lusti Cephalus
Preide unto Phebe and to Phebus
3255 The nyhte in lengthe for to drawe,
So that he mihte do the lawe
In thilke point of loves heste,
Which cleped is the nyghtes feste,
Withoute slep of sluggardie,
3260 Which Venus out of compaignie
Hath put awey, as thilke same,
Which lustles, ferr from alle game
In chambre doth fulofte wo
Abedde, whanne it falleth so
3265 That love scholde ben awaited.¹
Bot Slowthe, which is evele affaited,
With slep hath mad his retenue,
That what thing is to love due,
Of all his dette he paieth non.
3270 He wot noght how the nyht is gon
Ne hou the day is come aboute,
Bot onli for to slepe and route
Til hyh midday, that he arise.
Bot Cephalus dede otherwise,
3275 As thou, my sone, hast herd above."
- Amans** "Mi fader, who that hath his love
Abedde naked be his syde,
And wolde thanne hise yhen hyde
With slep, I not what man is he:
3280 Bot certes as touchende of me,
That fell me nevere yit er this.
Bot otherwhile, whan so is
That I mai cacche slep on honde
Liggende alone, thanne I fonde
3285 To dreme a merie sweve ne er day;
And if so falle that I may
Mi thought with such a sweve ne plese,
Me thenkth I am somdiel in ese,
For I non other confort have.
3290 So nedeth noght that I schal crave
- carry out
that climax of love's command
is called; feast
- by herself
- ill-prepared
- pays nothing
- snore
- did
- Lying; contrive
dream before
- dream

¹ Lines 3259–65: *Without the sleep of sluggishness, / Whom Venus from her companionship / Has exiled on the grounds that he is the very one who has often miserably treated those / Who [are] pleasureless, far from any playfulness, / In bed in their chamber where it happens / That love should have been expected*

- The sonnes carte for to tarie,
 Ne yit the mone, that sche carie
 Hire cours along upon the hevene,
 For I am noght the more in evene
 3295 Towardes love in no degree.
 Bot in mi slep yit thanne I se
 Somwhat in svevene of that me liketh,
 Which afterward min herte entriliketh,
 Whan that I finde it otherwise.
 3300 So wot I noght of what servise
 That slep to mannes ese doth.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, certes thou seist soth,
 Bot only that it helpeth kinde
 Somtyme, in Phisique as I finde,
 3305 Whan it is take be mesure.
 Bot he which can no slep mesure
 Upon the reule as it belongeth,
 Fulofte of sodein chance he fongeth
 Such infortune that him gieveth.
 3310 Bot who these olde bokes lieveth,
 Of Sompnolence hou it is write,
 Ther may a man the sothe wite,
 If that he wolde ensample take,
 That otherwhile is good to wake:
 3315 Wheroft a tale in poesie
 I thenke for to specefie.
- tricks my heart*
- taken in moderation*
- believe*
- a man may know the truth*

[TALE OF ARGUS AND MERCURY]

- ☞ Ovide telleth in his sawes
 How Jupiter be olde dawes
 Lay be a mayde, which Yo
 3320 Was cleped, wheroft that Juno
 His wif was wroth, and the goddesse
 Of Yo torneth the liknesse
 Into a cow, to gon theroute
 The large fieldes al aboute
 3325 And gete hire mete upon the griene.
 And therupon this hyhe queene
 Betok hire Argus for to kepe,
 For he was selden wont to slepe,
 And yit he hadde an hundred yhen,
 3330 And alle alyche wel thei syhen.
 Now herkne hou that he was beguiled.
 Mercurie, which was al affiled
 This cow to stele, he cam desguised,
 And hadde a pipe wel devised
- tales (see note)*
in olden days
- called*
- furious*
- throughout*
- food: grassy field*
- Employed*
- eyes*
- prepared*
steal

- 3335 Upon the notes of musiue,
Wherof he mihte hise eres like.
And over that he hadde affaited
Hise lusti tales, and awaited
His time; and thus into the field
- 3340 He cam, where Argus he behield
With Yo, which beside him wente.
With that his pype on honde he hente,
And gan to pipe in his manere
Thing which was slepi for to hiere.
- 3345 And in his pipinge evere among
He tolde him such a lusti song,
That he the fol hath broght aslepe.
Ther was non yhe mihte kepe
His hed, the which Mercurie of smot,
- 3350 And forthwithal anon fot hot
He stal the cow which Argus kepte,
And al this fell for that he slepte.
Ensample it was to manye mo,
That mochel Slep doth ofte wo,
- 3355 Whan it is time for to wake:
For if a man this vice take,
In Sompnolence and him delite,
Men scholde upon his dore wryte
His epitaphe, as on his grave;
- 3360 For he to spille and noght to save
Is schape, as thogh he were ded.
- Confessor** Forthi, mi sone, hold up thin hed,
And let no slep thin yhe englue,
- 3364 Bot whanne it is to resoun due."
- Amans** "Mi fader, as touchende of this,
Riht so as I you tolde it is,
That ofte abedde, whanne I scholde,
I mai noght slepe, thogh I wolde;
For love is evere faste by me,
- 3370 Which takth no hiede of due time.
For whanne I schal myn yhen close,
Anon min herte he wole oppose
And holde his scole in such a wise,
Til it be day that I arise,
- 3375 That selde it is whan that I slepe.
And thus fro Sompnolence I kepe
Min yhe: and forthi if ther be
Oght elles more in this degré,
Now axeth forth."
- Confessor** "Mi sone, yis;
- 3380 For Slowthe, which as moder is
- ears please*
moreover; invented
- protect*
cut off
speedily
- happened because*
- often causes harm*
- For dying: not for being safe*
[He] is fashioned
- stick shut*
- Except; appropriate to reason*
- with me (i.e., so has me in its grasp)*
the appropriate time
- give his lectures*
- [So] that*
- yes*

The forthdrawere and the norrice
 To man of many a dredful vice,
 Hath yit another laste of alle,
 Which many a man hath mad to falle,
 3385 Wher that he mihte nevere arise;
 Wheroft for thou thee schalt avise,
 Er thou so with thiself misfare,
 What vice it is I wol declare.”

breeder; nurse

[TRISTESSE, OR DESPONDENCY]

ix. *Nil fortuna iuuat, vbi desperacio ledit;*
Quo desiccatur humor, non viridescit humus.
Magnanimus set amor spem ponit et inde salutem
*Consequitur, quod ei prospera fata fuent.*¹

[Confessor] “Whan Slowthe hath don al that he may
 To dryve forth the longe day, (see note)
 3391 Til it be come to the nede, has reached a crisis
 Thanne ate laste upon the dede
 He loketh hou his time is lore,
 And is so wo begon therfore, lost
 3395 That he withinne his thought conceiveth
 Tristesce, and so himself deceiveth,
 That he wanhope bringeth inne,
 Wher is no confort to beginne,
 Bot every joie him is deslaied. withheld from him
 3400 So that withinne his herte affraied
 A thousand time with o breth
 Wepende he wissbeth after deth,
 Whan he fortune fint adverse.
 For thanne he wole his hap reherce, affrighted
 3405 As thogh his world were al forlore, a single breath
 And seith, ‘Helas, that I was bore! hopes for death
 Hou schal I live? Hou schal I do?
 For nou fortune is thus mi fo,
 I wot wel God me wol noght helpe. lost
 3410 What scholde I thanne of joies yelpe, Alas; born
 Whan ther no bote is of mi care?
 So overcast is my welfare,
 That I am schapen al to strif.
 Helas, that I nere of this lif, boast
 3415 Er I be fulliche overtake!” reward
 Before

¹ *No fortune is pleasing when despair has delivered its wound; where moisture has dried up, the ground will not green up. But greathearted love deposits hope and therefore achieves deliverance, since good fortunes then favor him.*

- And thus he wol his sorwe make,
 As God him mihte noght availe.
 Bot yit ne wol he noght travaile
 To helpe himself at such a nede,
 3420 Bot slowtheth under such a drede,
 Which is affermed in his herte,
 Riht as he mihte noght asterte
 The worldes wo which he is inne. *escape*
- Also whan he is falle in sinne,
 3425 Him thenkth he is so ferr coupable, *far guilty*
 That God wol noght be merciable
 So grete a sinne to forgive;
 And thus he leeveth to be schrive. *neglects to be absolved*
- And if a man in thilke throwe
 3430 Wolde him consaile, he wol noght knowe *discovers*
 The sothe, thogh a man it finde. *nature*
 For Tristesce is of such a kinde,
 That for to meintiene his folie,
 3435 ~~He~~ *(see note)* He hath with him Obstination,
 Which is withinne of such a Slouthe,
 That he forsaketh alle trouthe
 And wole unto no resoun bowe.
 And yit ne can he noght avowe *reason except rashly (unadvisedly)*
 His oghne skile bot of hed. *languishes (pines away); dead*
- 3440 Thus dwyneth he, til he be ded, *Despair*
 In hindringe of his oghne astat.
 For where a man is obstinat,
 Wanhope folweth ate laste,
 Which mai noght after longe laste, *go*
- 3445 Til Slouthe make of him an ende.
 Bot God wot whider he schal wende. *gloomy demeanor*
- Confessor** Mi sone, and riht in such manere *Who*
 Ther be lovers of hevy chiere, *delayed; their intention*
 That sorwen mor than it is ned, *know not how to counsel themselves*
- 3450 Whan thei be taried of here sped *lose; of success*
 And conne noght hemselven rede, *stop pursuing love*
 Bot lesen hope for to sped *skin; complexion*
 And stinten love to poursewe. *listless; their hearts grow*
- And thus thei faden hyde and hewe, *one of those*
- 3455 And lustles in here hertes waxe.
 Hierof it is that I wolde axe,
 If thou, mi sone, art on of tho.” *Except for; I confess*
- Confessio Amantis** “Ha, goode fader, it is so, *demolished*
 Outake a point, I am beknowe;
 3460 For elles I am overthrowe
 In al that evere ye have seid.
 Mi sorwe is evermore unteid,

- And secheth overal my veines;
 Bot for to conseile of mi peines,
 3465 I can no bote do therto; *remedy*
 And thus withouten hope I go,
 So that mi wittes ben empeired,
 And I, as who seith, am despeired *weakened*
 To winne love of thilke swete,
 3470 Withoute whom, I you behiete, *assure*
 Min herte, that is so bestad, *afflicted*
 Riht inly nevere mai be glad.
 For be my trouthe I schal noght lie, *endure*
 Of pure sorwe, which I drye
 3475 For that sche seith sche wol me noght, *tormenting*
 With drecchinge of myn oghne thoght *despair*
 In such a wanhope I am falle, *scarcely*
 That I ne can unethes calle,
 As for to speke of eny grace,
 3480 Mi ladi merci to pourchace. *place*
 Bot yit I seie noght for this *prayer*
 That al in mi defalte it is; *dared, said [it]*
 For I cam nevere yit in stede,
 Whan time was, that I my bede
 3485 Ne seide and, as I dorste, tolde. *sinful [person]*
 Bot nevere fond I that sche wolde,
 For oght sche knew of min entente,
 To speke a goodly word assente.
 And natheles this dar I seie,
 3490 That if a sinful wolde preie *For insufficient requests for mercy*
 To God of his forgivenesse *hell*
 With half so gret a besinesse
 As I have do to my ladi,
 In lacke of askinge of merci
 3495 He scholde nevere come in helle.
 And thus I mai you sothli telle,
 Save only that I crie and bidde,
 I am in Tristesce al amidde *Despair*
 And fulfild of Desesperance. *Hopelessness*
 3500 And therof gif me mi penance,
 Min holi fader, as you liketh.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, of that thin herte siketh *sighs*
 With sorwe, miht thou noght amende,
 Til love his grace wol thee sende,
 3505 For thou thin oghne cause empeirest *impair*
 What time as thou thiself despeirest.
 I not what other thing availeth, *know not*
 Of hope whan the herte faileth,
 For such a sor is incurable, *sorrow*

3510 And ek the goddes ben vengable.
 And that a man mai riht wel frede,
 These olde bokes whoso rede,
 Of thing which hath befaller this.
 Now hier of what ensample it is.

feel

[TALE OF IPHIS AND ARAXARATHEN]

- 3515 Whilom be olde daies fer
 Of Mese was the king Theucer,
 Which hadde a kniht to sone, Iphis.
 ¶ Of love and he so maistred is,
 That he hath set al his corage
- Once; far gone
 Mysia
 as a son
 (see note)
- 3520 As to reguard of his lignage
 Upon a maide of lou astat.
 Bot thogh he were a potestat
 Of worldes good, he was soubgit
 To love, and put in such a plit,
- In comparison to his lineage*
low
potentate
- 3525 That he excedeth the mesure
 Of reson, that himself assure
 He can noght; for the more he preide,
 The lasse love on him sche leide.
 He was with love unwys constreigned,
- 3530 And sche with resoun was restreigned.
 The lustes of his herte he suieth,
 And sche for drede schame eschuieth,
 And as sche scholde, tok good hiede
 To save and kepe hir wommanhiede.
- 3535 And thus the thing stod in debat
 Betwen his lust and hire astat.
 He gaf, he sende, he spak be mouthe,
 Bot yit for oght that evere he couthe
 Unto his sped he fond no weie,
- gave [gifts]; sent [messages]*
success
- 3540 So that he caste his hope aweie,
 Withinne his herte and gan despeire
 Fro dai to dai, and so empeire,
 That he hath lost al his delit
 Of lust, of slep, of appetit,
- [to] become worse*
- 3545 That he thurgh strengthe of love lasseth
 His wit, and resoun overpasseth.
 As he which of his lif ne rowhte,
 His deth upon himself he sowhte,
 So that be nyhte his weie he nam,
- lessens*
exceeds his reason
had no pity
- 3550 Ther wiste non wher he became;
 The nyht was derk, ther schon no mone,
 Tofore the gates he cam sone,
 Wher that this yonge maiden was,
- took*
knew; where he went
shone no moon

- And with this wofull word, 'Helas!'
- 3555 Hise dedli pleintes he began
So stille that ther was no man
It herde, and thanne he seide thus:
'O thou Cupide, o thou Venus,
Fortuned be whos ordinaunce
- 3560 Of love is every mannes chaunce,
Ye knownen al min hole herte,
That I ne mai your hond asterte;
On you is evere that I crie,
And yit you deigneth noght to plie,
- 3565 Ne toward me youre ere encline.
Thus for I se no medicine
To make an ende of mi querele,
My deth schal be in stede of hele.
Ha, thou mi wofull ladi diere,
- 3570 Which duellest with thi fader hiere
And slepest in thi bedd at ese,
Thou wost nothing of my desese,
Hou thou and I be now unmete.
Ha lord, what svevene schalt thou mete,
- 3575 What dremes hast thou nou on honde?
Thou slepest there, and I hier stonde.
Thogh I no deth to thee deserve,
Hier schal I for thi love sterfe,
Hier schal a kinges sone dye
- 3580 For love and for no felonie;
Wher thou therof have joie or sorwe,
Hier schalt thou se me ded tomorwe.
O herte hard aboven alle,
This deth, which schal to me befalle
- 3585 For that thou wolt noght do me grace,
Yit schal be told in many a place,
Hou I am ded for love and trouthe
In thi defalte and in thi slouthe.
Thi Daunger schal to manye mo
- 3590 Ensample be for everemo,
Whan thei my wofull deth recorde.'
- 3595 The morwe cam, the nyht is gon,
Men comen out and syh anon
Wher that this yonge lord was ded.
Ther was an hous withoute red,
For no man knew the cause why.
- 3600 Ther was wepinge and ther was cry:
- complaints*
- escape*
- comply*
- ear*
- because*
- place of health*
- distress*
- incompatible (at odds)*
- dream; dream*
- die*
- crime*
- Aloofness*
- remember*
- saw*
- counsel*

- This maiden, whan that sche it herde,
 And sih this thing hou it misferde,
 Anon sche wiste what it mente,
 And al the cause hou it wente
 3605 To al the world sche tolde it oute,
 And preith to hem that were aboute
 To take of hire the vengance,
 For sche was cause of thilke chance,
 Why that this kinges sone is spilt. *Immediately; knew*
- 3610 Sche takth upon hirself the gilt,
 And is al redi to the peine
 Which eny man hir wole ordeigne.
 And bot if eny other wolde,
 Sche seith that sche hirselfe scholde *killed*
- 3615 Do wreche with hire oghne hond,
 Thurghout the world in every lond
 That every lif therof schal speke,
 Hou sche hirself it scholde wreke. *wreak vengeance*
- Sche wepth, sche crith, sche swouneth ofte,
 3620 Sche caste hire yhen up alofte
 And seide among ful pitously:
 'A, Godd, Thou wost wel it am I,
 For whom Iphis is thus besein. *avenge*
- Ordeine so, that men mai sein
 3625 A thousand wynter after this,
 Hou such a maiden dede amis,
 And as I dede, do to me. *continually*
- For I ne dede no pité
 To him which for mi love is lore, *troubled*
- 3630 Do no pité to me therfore.' *lost*
- And with this word sche fell to grounde
 Aswoune, and ther sche lay a stounde. *for a time*
- The goddes, whiche hir pleigntes herde
 And syhe hou wofully sche ferde,
 3635 Hire lif thei toke awey anon,
 And schopen hire into a ston
 After the forme of hire ymage
 Of bodi bothe and of visage. *transformed her*
- And for the merveile of this thing
 3640 Unto the place cam the king
 And ek the queene and manye mo; *more*
- And whan thei wisten it was so,
 As I have told it hier above,
 Hou that Iphis was ded for love,
 3645 Of that he hadde be refused,
 Thei hielden alle men excused
 And wondren upon the vengance. *knew*

- And for to kepe in remembrance,
 This faire ymage mayden liche
 3650 With compaignie noble and riche
 With torche and gret sollempnité
 To Salamyne the cité
 Thei lede, and carie forth withal
 The dede corps, and sein it schal
 Beside thilke ymage have
 His sepulture and be begrave:
 This corps and this ymage thus
 Into the cité to Venus,
 Wher that goddesse hire temple hadde,
 3660 Togedre bothe tuo thei ladde.
 This ilke ymage as for miracle
 Was set upon an hyh pinacle,
 That alle men it mihte knowe,
 And under that thei maden lowe
 3665 A tumbe riche for the nones
 Of marbre and ek of jaspere stones,
 Wherin this Iphis was beloken,
 That evermor it schal be spoken.
 And for men schal the sothe wite,
 3670 Thei have here epitaphe write,
 As thing which scholde abide stable.
 The lettres graven in a table
 Of marbre were and seiden this:
 'Hier lith, which slowh himself, Iphis,
 3675 For love of Araxarathen:
 And in ensample of tho wommen,
 That soffren men to deie so,
 Hire forme a man mai sen also,
 Hou it is torned fleissh and bon
 3680 Into the figure of a ston.
 He was to neysshe and sche to hard.
 Be war forthi hierafteward;
 Ye men and wommen bothe tuo,
 3684 Ensamplēth you of that was tho.'
- Confessor** Lo thus, mi sone, as I thee seie,
 It grieveth be diverse weie
 In desespeir a man to falle,
 Which is the laste branche of alle
 Of Slouthe, as thou hast herd devise.
 3690 Wherof that thou thiself avise
 Good is, er that thou be deceived,
 Wher that the grace of hope is weyved."
- Amans** "Mi fader, hou so that it stonde,
 Now have I pleinly understande
 declare it must
 sepulcher; buried
 [So] that
 know the truth
 their
 too soft; too
 eradicated
 fully

3695 Of Slouthes court the propreté,
Wherof touchende in my degré
Forevere I thenke to be war.

Bot over this, so as I dar,
With al min herte I you beseche,
3700 That ye me wolde enforme and teche
What ther is more of youre aprise
In love als wel as otherwise,
So that I mai me clene schryve."

Confessor "Mi sone, whyl thou art alyve

3705 And hast also thi fulle mynde,
Among the vices whiche I finde
Ther is yit on such of the sevene,
Which al this world hath set unevene
And causeth manye thinges wronge,
3710 Where he the cause hath undersonge.
Wherof hierafter thou schalt hiere
The forme bothe and the matiere."

absolve myself

therefore

rocked the whole world

When he (i.e., that sin) has taken up the case

EXPLICIT LIBER QUARTUS



EXPLANATORY NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS: *Anel.*: Chaucer, *Anelida and Arcite*; **BD**: Chaucer, *Book of the Duchess*; **CA**: Gower, *Confessio Amantis*; **De Civ. Dei**: Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*; **CT**: Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*; **Hyg**: Hyginus, *The Myths of Hyginus (Fabulae)*; **Gest Hyst.**: “*Gest Hystoriale*” of the *Destruction of Troy*; **HF**: Chaucer, *House of Fame*; **LGW**: Chaucer, *Legend of Good Women*; **Mac**: Macaulay, *Complete Works of John Gower*; **MED**: Middle English Dictionary; **Met.**: Ovid, *Metamorphoses*; **MO**: Gower, *Mirour de l'Omme*; **OED**: Oxford English Dictionary; **PF**: *Parliament of Fowls*; **PL**: Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina*; **Rom.**: Chaucer, *Romaunt of the Rose*; **RR**: Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose*; **TC**: Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*; **Vat. Myth.**: Vatican Mythographer I, II, or III; **VC**: Gower, *Vox Clamantis*; **Whiting**: Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases*. For manuscript abbreviations, see Textual Notes.

EXPLANATORY NOTES TO BOOK 2

- 9 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic in secundo libro tractat de Inuidia et eius speciebus, quarum dolor alterius gaudii prima nuncupatur, cuius condicionem secundum vicium Confessor primitus describens, Amanti, quatenus amorem concernit, super eodem consequenter opponit.* [Here in the second book he discourses about Envy and its species, the first of which is called Sorrow for Another's Joy; and the Confessor, initially describing to the Lover its condition as a vice as far as love is concerned, subsequently interrogates him about this.]
- 10 *hot Envie.* See Braswell's discussion in “Confession as Characterization” on similarities between Gower's method of interrogation and fourteenth century penitential manuals (*Medieval Sinner*, pp. 81–87). See Olsson, *Structures of Conversion*, pp. 92 ff., on Genius' use of “conventional modes of the *forma tractandi* — definition, proof and refutation, division, and the positing of examples” in his confessional discourse on the vices.
- 11 *my sone.* See Craun, *Lies, Slander, and Obscenity*, p. 133, on Gower's extensive use of the phrase throughout *CA* as a formula of subordination derived from practices of confession.
- 16 ff. *So God avance my querele.* From the beginning of Book 2 Amans is more fully developed as a “character,” representing what Burrow calls “the inconsistencies of an undisinterested mind” (“Portrayal of Amans,” p. 10). From this point on in Books 2–4 Amans himself becomes as interesting in his dramatically convoluted responses to questions of his behavior as the tales Genius tells for his instruction. In this regard, his origin shares more with Machaut's *Le Livre dou Voir Dit* and Froissart's *Espinette Amoureuse* than with the *RR* (“Portrayal

of Amans,” p. 6). The *querele* — a dispute, debate, complaint, lament, argument — becomes a genre in its own right in the later fourteenth century, especially for lovers with their perpetual questions and sallies into arenas of contention. The term carries connotations of battle as well as legal strife. Gower uses the term a couple dozen times in *CA*, and it defines most of Amans’ postures in the middle books of the poem.

20 *Ethna*. Gower often uses the volcanic Mt. Etna as a sign of the eruptive nature of Envy and also Wrath. Compare Prol.329–30, and 2.163–66, 2837–39. Stockton (Gower, *Major Latin Works*, p. 477n21) cites comparable passages in *MO*, lines 3805 ff., and *Tripartite Chronicle* 2.207. The idea perhaps originates in Ovid, *Met.* 5.346–58, where the proud and envious giant Typhoeus, buried under Sicily, vents his rage by means of the volcano’s eruptions, and 13.867–69, where Cyclops, with Etna in his breast, pleads with Galatea to love him rather than Acis.

83 *Write in Civile*. That is, in civil law (the Roman law was used in England only in special property cases, especially the transmission of clerical property; other kinds of property were governed by English common law). As Macaulay (2:480) shrewdly suggests, the proverbial statement Gower presents seems ultimately dependent on Justinian’s *Institutes* 1.7, which repeals the law passed under Augustus Caesar (3 AD). The Fufian Caninian Act restricted the proportion of an owner’s slaves who could be freed at the owner’s death (a restriction apparently originally intended to keep down the numbers of new citizens at a time when the empire “still seemed to be expanding” (Robinson, “Persons,” p. 21); for a text and translation of the act in Justinian, see Justinian, *Institutes* (trans. Birks and McLeod), pp. 40–41. The proverbial notion alluded to in lines 83–87 evidently emerged from an early misreading: the text of Justinian that medieval authors read usually corrupted the names used to identify the law to read “Lex Fusia Canina” (“the Fusian canine law,” with both a misreading of *minims* to make *Caninia* into *canina*, and a misreading of *f* as *s* to make *Fusia* from *Fufia* — both errors that probably dated back early in the textual tradition of Justinian and remained uncertain until more recent editions: Macaulay’s own source-text apparently read “Furia Caninia”). Since the text in Justinian argued that the law should be repealed “quasi libertatibus impedientem et quodammodo invidam” (“as a hindrance to and in some sense an invidious enemy of freedoms”), medieval authors found ways to link the idea of *invidia* (in context “invidious enemy” but also simply the sin “envy”) to this “Fusian canine law,” and thence to the useless envy of dogs who protect property from which they do not themselves benefit. Thus, as Macaulay (2:480) notes, John Bromyard in the later fourteenth century under *Invidia* in his *Summa confessorum* states that “omnes isti sunt de professione legis Fusie canine. Ille enim Fusius inventor fuit legis cuius exemplum seu casus est iste. Quidam habet fontem quo non potest proprium ortum irrigare . . . Posset tamen alteri valere sine illius documento, ipse tamen impedit ne alteri prosit quod sibi prodesse non potest, ad modum canis, sicut predictum est: a cuius condicione lex canina vocata est inter leges duodecim tabularum, que quia iniqua fuit, in aliis legibus correcta est, sicut

patet Institut. lib. i de lege Fusia canina tollenda" ("all those of the legal profession are Fusian canines. For this Fusius was the founder of a law whose pattern or circumstance was this: a certain man owned a spring from which he could not water his own fields. . . . Even though he would have been able to help another without harming himself, he nonetheless prevented anyone else from profiting from what could not profit him, just like a dog, according to the saying. From this the law was called the 'canine law' among the laws of the twelve tables, but because it was iniquitous, it was corrected in other laws, just as is said in the Institutes, book 1, 'concerning the repeal of the Fusian canine law'") (Galloway, "Literature of 1388"). See also Fisher, *John Gower*, pp. 155–56, 365n38, who compares dog-in-the-manger passages in *MO* and *VC*.

101 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum saltem contra istos qui in amoris causa aliorum gaudiis inuidentes nequaquam per hoc sibi ipsis proficiunt. Et narrat, qualiter quidam iuuenis miles nomine Acis, quem Galathea Nympha pulcherrima toto corde peramauit, cum ipsi sub quadam rupe iuxta litus maris colloquium adinuicem habuerunt, Poliphemos Gigas concussa rupe magnam inde partem super caput Acis ab alto proiciens ipsum per inuidiam interfecit. Et cum ipse super hoc dictam Galatheam rapere voluisset, Neptunus Giganti obsistens ipsam inuolatam salua custodia preseruavit. Set et dii miserti corpus Acis defuncti in fontem aque dulcissime subito transmularunt.* [Here the Confessor presents an illustrative example at least against those who, while in the cause of love being envious of the joys of others, do not at all profit themselves by this. And he tells about a certain young knight named Acis, whom the most beautiful nymph Galatea deeply loved with her whole heart. When they were under a certain rock next to the shores of the sea holding conversation with one another, Polypheus the giant, having broken a rock, threw a huge part of it from above on Acis' head, killing him through envy. And although after this the giant wanted to rape the aforesaid Galatea, Neptune prevented him, preserving her inviolate by his safe custody. But even the gods, pitying dead Acis, instantly transformed his body into a spring of sweetest water.]

104 ff.

The story of Acis and Galatea may be found in Ovid, *Met.* 13.738–897. N.b. also Vat. Myth. II 201. Macaulay notes that Polypheus' running around Etna in a jealous rage before killing Acis is Gower's addition (2:480). See Runacres' discussion of the tale as an *exemplum* that balances artistry of narrative with ethics, particularly in its focus on Polypheus' voyeuristic obsession ("Art and Ethics," pp. 111–14) that leads to his hatred not of Galatea herself but of her capacity to love another (pp. 130–34).

106

As Ovide in his bok recordeth. Ovid is Gower's major literary source for *CA*. Pearson ("Gower's Narrative Art," p. 478) notes that Ovid "provides 38 of the 133 stories in the poem." See also Simpson ("Genius's 'Enformacioun'").

107–84

Chaucer's Ghoast borrows these lines as Arg. 5 in the "love of antiquity"'s "twelve pleasant fables of Ovid penn'd after the ancient manner of writing in England."

145

grete see. I.e., the Mediterranean. See *CA* 3.2488. Compare *CT* I(A)59.

- 150 *fyre*. See *MED vire* n. 1, i.e., a bolt from a crossbow. But Gower could be punning: Itô (*John Gower*, p. 38n21) reads as *fire*, thinking perhaps of a flaming arrow, relating the passage to *MO*, lines 3805–19, where Envy, Etna, and burning are affiliated. See also Runacres on Poliphemous: “His heart burns, and he flees like some huge flaming arrow, burning like Etna” (“Art and Ethics,” p. 131).
- 224 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur Confessor de secunda specie Inuidie, que gaudium alterius doloris dicitur, et primo eiusdem vicii materiam tractans amantis conscientiam super eodem ulterius inuestigat.* [Here the Confessor speaks about the second species of Envy, which is called Joy for Another’s Sorrow, and, at first treating the substance of that vice, he then investigates further the Lover’s conscience in terms of it.] Burrow (“Portrayal of Amans,” p. 9) emphasizes the orderly, point-by-point manner of Genius’ questions, noting that delight in the poem lies less in the systematic opposing of the lover’s conscience than the unpredictable ingenuity of Amans’ responses.
- 246–47 *of thathei brewe soure / I drinke swete.* Proverbial. Not cited by Whiting.
- 261 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Boicius: Consolacio miserorum est habere consortem in pena.* [Boethius: “A consolation of the wretched is to have company in their pain.”] Proverbial, but not in fact by Boethius (“misery loves company”). A common proverb. See Whiting, W715. Reidy observes: “A Latin marginal note in Ellesmere and one other MS have the beginning of the common Latin proverb ‘The solace of the wretched is to have companions in grief’ (Walther 29943), quoted in slightly different form (Walther, Nova Series, 35687) in some other MSS” (in *Riverside Chaucer*, p. 949n746–47, note to The Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale). See also TC 1.708–09, with Latin marginal glosses in MSS Rawlinson Poet. 163 and Arch. Selden. B.24, both in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.
- 291 ff. The Tale of the Travelers and the Angel derives from the widely known Fables of Avianus, fable 22. The Latin text and translation may be found in *Minor Latin Poets*, ed. Duff and Duff, pp. 715–17. A lively translation appears by Slavitt in *Fables of Avianus*, p. 30. In Latin the fable is only 20 lines long (13 lines of prose in Crane’s edition). See also Jacques de Vitry’s *Exemplum* 196 on the avaricious and envious men; Robert Holcot, *In Librum Sapientiae Regis Solomonis*, lectio 29; Guilelmus Peraldus, *Summa Virtutum ac Vitiorum*; and John Bromyard, *Summa Prædicantium* 1.6.19, to name a few. See Crane’s edition of Jacques de Vitry (*Exempla*, p. 212) for more.
- 293 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum presertim contra illum, qui sponte sui ipsius detrimentum in alterius penam maiorem patitur. Et narrat quod, cum Iupiter angelum suum in forma hominis, ut hominum condiciones exploraret, ab excelsa in terram misit, contigit quod ipse angelus duos homines, quorum unus cupidus, alter inuidus erat, itinerando spacio quasi unius dici comitabatur. Et cum sero factum esset, angelus eorum noticie seipsum tunc manifestans dixit, quod quicquid alter eorum ab ipso donari sibi pecierit, illud statim obtinebit, quod et socio suo secum comitanti affirmsat duplicandum. Super quo cupidus impeditus avaricia, sperans sibi diuicias carpere duplicatas, primo petere recusauit. Quod cum inuidus animaduerteret, naturam sui vicii concernens, ita ut socius suus vtroque lumine priuaretur, seipsum*

monoculum fieri constanter primus ab angelo postulabat. Et sic vnius inuidia alterus auariciam maculauit. [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example especially against that man who willingly endures his own detriment for the sake of another's greater pain. And he narrates how, when Jupiter sent his angel in a man's form from on high down to earth in order to investigate the circumstances of men, it happened that this angel journeyed around for about the span of a day in the company of two men, one of whom was covetous, the other envious. And when it had become late, the angel, then making clear his identity to their understanding, said that whatever one of them should petition him for, that he would obtain immediately, and he swore that it would be doubled for the companion traveling with him. Whereupon the covetous man, snared by avarice, refused to petition first, hoping to receive double wealth for himself. When the envious man, perceiving the nature of his vice, had noticed this, he unflinchingly demanded that he himself might first be one-eyed in order that his companion might be deprived of both eyes. And thus the envy of the one spoiled the avarice of the other.]

- 298 *An angel.* *Sidrak and Bokkus* labels the covetous man “þe deuelis gripe [griffen] of helle”; the angels would be a better model for man since in heaven no angels “coueiteþ operis blis / But holdeþ hem paide [pleased] eche of his” (ed. Burton, 1.285, lines 4766, 4779–80). Thus it is that angels are particularly shrewd at investigating this particular sin and serve as “Goddes sonde” (2.324).
- 387 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat Confessor de tercia specie Inuidie, que Detraccio dicitur, cuius morsus vipereos lesa quamsepe fama deplangit.* [Here the Confessor discourses about the third species of Envy, which is called Detraction, whose venomous bites very often a wounded reputation bewails.] Craun (*Lies, Slander, and Obscenity*, p. 136n63) relates Genius' remarks on Detraction, Malebouche, and backbiting to Peyraut's *Summa de Vitiis*, fols. G8r–H2v; the *Speculum Vitae*, lines 14143–228; *De Lingua*, fols. 165v–168v; Etienne de Bourbon's *Tractatus*, fols. 228v–230v; the *Speculum Morale*, cols. 1144–51; Carpenter's *Destructorium*, fols. 507v–508v; the *Fasciculus Morum*, pp. 158–62; John Bromyard's *Summa Prædicantium*, fols. 71r–84v; and Robert Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne*, lines 1239–1306 and 3529–3646.
- 389 *Malebouche.* “Wicked-tongue,” a dangerous slanderer of lovers in *RR* (e.g., lines 2847 ff.), becomes a common prop in courtly literature for malicious gossip that degrades the lofty feelings the would-be lover wishes to engage in. See *MO*, lines 2677 ff. Chaucer uses only the anglicized form “Wikkid-Tunge” (*Rom.*, lines 3871, 3878, 4141, 4233, 4267, 4484, 5851, 7355, 7422, 7474, 7476, 7498; compare *TC* 1.39, 2.785, 804, 5.755). But Lydgate follows Gower's French vocabulary with Malebouche in *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, line 260, as does Roos in *La Belle Dame sans Mercy*, line 741.
- 398 *jangle.* Gower devotes considerable attention to the sin of jangling, especially as a feature of Detraction (see 2.425, 452, and 526); but also of Cheste and Envy (3.832, 887), Idleness (4.1474), Jealousy (5.519 ff.), Stealth and Michery

(5.6532), and Gossip (7.4774). Usually it is a woman, like the Wife of Bath or Dame Sirith, or the women in Dunbar's "Twa Mariit Wemen and the Wedo": all of whom are presented as archjnglers. (See Trevisa, *Governance of Kings* 2.2.21, pp. 248–49, on the evil of women jnglers, or Jacques de Vitry for dozens of *exempla* on quarrelsome women.) In Gower, however, every instance of the vice exemplifies a negative trait in men.

- 399 *heraldie*. "Office of herald"; or perhaps "livery." (Mac. 2:481).
- 417–32 Craun (*Lies, Slander, and Obscenity*, p. 138) notes that the same image of flying dung beetles as a commentary on detraction occurs in the fourteenth-century *Book of Vices and Virtue*: "[detractors] ben þe biteles þat flen þe floures and loueþ þe dong of an hors or a best, as men seen alday bi þe weye" (as quoted by Craun).
- 452 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic in amoris causa huius vicii crimen ad memoriam reducens Confessor Amanti super eodem plenius opponit.* [Here in the cause of love, the Confessor rehearses for remembrance the sin of this vice, more fully questioning the Lover.]
- 454–551 Gower has received praise for his lively presentation of Amans in this third confession in Book 2. Burrow sees it as one of the best illustrations of Gower's "penetrating, but always general, psychological perception," a portrayal of what Burrow wittily calls "the inconsistencies of an undisinterested mind" ("Portrayal of Amans," p. 10). See Nicholson's useful summary of critical observations on the passage (*Annotated Index*, p. 184).
- 467 *unknowe unkest*. Proverbial. See Whiting, U5. Compare Chaucer, *TC* 1.809: "Unknowe, unkist, and lost that is unsought." The idiom also occurs in Usk and Charles of Orleans (see Whiting). Evidently its purview is courtly and literary. As is often the case in *CA*, proverbs come in clusters. Compare the proverbial effects of 2.470 and 473.
- 479 *evere I am adrad of guile*. "In speaking against detractors, the lover asks for [his lady's] good, but ironically, his own speech, as he colors 'the wordes of his sawe,' includes the deceit and enchantment he fears his lady is subjected to by others." Besides, she is "a knowing person and not a mere innocent, and . . . does not really need his protection" (Olsson, *Structures of Conversion*, p. 94).
- 513–14 Burrow comments on this dramatic moment as Amans' comic inconsistency shifts from "self-righteous claims" to open confession ("Portrayal of Amans," p. 10).
- 529 *I wolde save*. The lover's protecting of his beloved's good name is a commonplace requirement of courtesy. See Capellanus, *Art of Courtly Love*, the first case (pp. 167–68), and rule 13, "When made public love rarely endures" (p. 185).
- 587 ff. Chaucer's Man of Law also tells the "Tale of Constance" (see Schlauch's discussion in *Sources and Analogues*, ed. Bryan and Dempster, pp. 155–206; and Hibbard, *Mediaeval Romance*). Olsson (*Structures of Conversion*, pp. 92–106) comments on the radical differences between the complex narration of

Chaucer and the plain style of Gower. Unlike Chaucer's heroine, surrounded with the "ring of protective, talismanic texts" of the Man of Law, Gower's Constance is "self-possessed" (Olsson, *Structures of Conversion*, p. 95). Although both Gower's and Chaucer's poems are derived from Trivet's *Chronique*, Gower's version is closer to the source and was apparently written earlier than Chaucer's. See Correale on the relationship of Gower to Trivet. Macaulay enumerates Gower's variations from his original (2:482–84). An analogue of the story of Constance, which includes a moral commentary, may be found in the English *Gesta Romanorum* (cap. 69). For further discussion of the tale, see Wetherbee, "Constance and the World"; Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, pp. 62–70; Esch, "John Gower's Erzählkunst"; Archibald, "Flight from Incest," pp. 259–72; and Yeager, "Gower's Images." See Wetherbee ("John Gower," pp. 605–06) and Dimmick ("Redinge of Romance," pp. 132–36) for links with the Tale of Apollonius. See also Hibbard (*Mediæval Romance*, pp. 23–34), for comparisons with the Middle English romance *Emaré*; and Dimmick (pp. 130–37) on the tale in terms of conventions of romance narrative.

587 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur Confessor contra istos in amoris causa detrahentes, qui suis obloquiis aliena solacia perturbant. Et narrat exemplum de Constancia Tiberii Rome Imperatoris filia, omnium virtutum famosissima, ob cuius amorem Soldanus tunc Persie, ut eam in uxorem ducere posset, Cristianum se fieri promisit; cuius accepta cauzione consilio Pelagii tunc pape dicta filia vna cum duobus Cardinalibus aliisque Rome proceribus in Persiam maritagi causa nauigio honorifice destinata fuit: que tamen obloquencium postea detractionibus variis modis, prout inferius articulatur, absque sui culpa dolorosa fata multiplicitate passa est.* [Here the Confessor speaks against those making detractions in the cause of love, who by their slurs disturb others' comforts. And he narrates an instructive example about Constance, daughter of Tiberius the Emperor of Rome, a woman most famous for every virtue, on account of whose love the one who was then sultan of Persia promised to make himself Christian, in order that he might take her as a bride. With his pledge having been accepted, by the counsel of Pelagius, the pope at that time, the said daughter along with two cardinals and other dignitaries of Rome was sent with full ceremony on the voyage for the sake of the marriage in Persia. She, however, by the detractions in various manners of those casting slurs on her, as is detailed below, later without any guilt of her own suffered in many ways wretched travails.]

590

Tiberie Constantin. For discussion of the father-daughter relationship between Constance and her father, particularly in terms of power and authority issues, see Bullón-Fernández (*Fathers and Daughters*, pp. 75–101).

601–10

Sche hath converted. In Chaucer Christ does the converting. See also 4.597–98. Wetherbee contrasts Gower's Constance with Chaucer's, emphasizing the "measure of reality" ("Constance and the World," p. 72), that she has in Gower. She is "continually engaged with the world around her through the medium of social institutions." Although she is "in many respects a representation of the mission of the church," carrying with her

the threat or promise of radical transformation . . . the prevailing emphasis is on *how* she fulfills her evangelical mission, how her influence is mediated by the attraction her human presence exerts on others, and by the institutions of the different cultures with which she comes in contact. Her strength involves not only her constancy in faith but her humanity and intelligence, and it expresses itself best in situations which call her womanhood into action and enable her to function as daughter, wife, and mother as well as saint. ("Constance and the World," p. 70)

In the end, she does not simply transcend earthly confines, she becomes "in effect the Church itself" (p. 81).

641 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter adueniente Constancia in Barbariam Mater Soldani, huiusmodi nupcias perturbare volens, filium suum vna cum dicta Constancia Cardinalibusque et aliis Romanis primo die ad conuiuium inuitauit: et conuescentibus illis in mensa ipsum Soldanum omnesque ibidem preter Constanciam Romanos ab insidiis latitantibus subdola detractione interfici procurauit. Ipsam que Constanciam in quadam naui absque gubernaculo positam per altum mare ventorum flatibus agitandam in exilium dirigi solam constituit.* [How, when Constance had arrived in Barbary, the sultan's mother, desiring to disturb this marriage, on the first day invited her son along with the said Constance and the cardinals and other Romans to a feast. And while they were all gorging together at the table, she procured that, by hidden treachery with sly detraction, the sultan and all the Romans there, apart from Constance, would be killed. She ordered that Constance be cast into exile, placed onto the high seas in a ship without a steering-oar, assailed by the blasts of the winds.]

656

be double weie. Several have commented on Gower's keen awareness and strong asseverations on double talk (Sins of the Tongue) in the Tale of Constance. Elizabeth Allen compares Gower with Chaucer "as a fellow muddier of moral waters" ("Chaucer Answers Gower," p. 629), who, as a moral poet, explores contingencies rather than positing answers and uses this tale in particular to trouble audiences rather than reassure them. Gower seems fully aware of "the moral value of narrative instability" as he "destabilizes" Trivet (p. 641).

693–94

what . . . God wol spare / It mai for no peril misfare. Proverbial. See Whiting, G276. Compare 5.2426 and 8.1160.

699–700

The dissh forth with the coppe and al / Bebled thei weren overal. The grotesque uses of sacramental imagery "provides a measure of the alienation of the culture of Barbarie, not only from Christianity, but from simply human *pietas*" (Wetherbee, "Constance and the World," p. 71).

714 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter nauis cum Constancia in partes Anglie, que tunc pagana fuit, prope Humber sub quodam castello Regis, qui tunc Allee vocabatur, post triennium applicuit, quam quidam miles nomine Elda, dicti castelli tunc custos, e naui lete suscipiens vxori sue Hermynghelde in custodiam honorifice commendauit.* [How after three years, the ship with Constance arrived in the regions of England, which was then pagan, near the Humber under a castle of the king at that time, who was called Allee. A certain knight, Elda by name, at that time the

- guardian of the said castle, happily taking her from the ship, commended her to the keeping of his wife Hermynghelda with all honor.]
- 749–834 Trivet has Hermyngeld baptized before she dies. In Gower she is murdered before baptism. Dulak (“Gower’s ‘Tale of Constance,’” pp. 368–69) remarks that the alteration is significant in that Gower thus represents the three kinds of baptism in his conversion narrative: baptism of blood (the Sultan), baptism of desire (Hermyngheld), and baptism of water (Alla). In Chaucer “Jhesu hath converted [her] thurgh his grace” (CT II[B¹]538).
- 751 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Constancia Eldam cum uxore sua Hermynghelda, qui antea Cristiani non extiterant, ad fidem Cristi miraculose conuertit.* [How Constance miraculously converted to the faith of Christ Elda, along with his wife Hermynghelda, who had hitherto not been Christian.]
- 769–71 *In trust of Cristes lawe . . . behold and se.* That Hermyngeld through her “creance” (2.754) can assist in miracles without having been baptized of water supports Dulak’s notion (in “Gower’s ‘Tale of Constance’”) that her desire constitutes baptism. See explanatory note to lines 749–834.
- 779 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter quidam miles iuuenes in amorem Contancie exardescens, pro eo quod ipsa assentire noluit, eam de morte Hermynghelde, quam ipsem noctanter interfecit, verbis detractoris accusauit. Set Angelus domini ipsum sic detrahentem in maxilla subito percuciens non solum pro mendace comprobauit, set ictu mortali post ipsius confessionem penitus interfecit.* [How a young knight burning with love for Constance, to which she did not want to assent, accused her with detracting words of the death of Hermynghelda, whom he himself had killed by night. But an angel of the Lord, striking him suddenly in the jaw while he was detracting her, not only convicted him for his lie but also, with a mortal blow after his confession, utterly killed him.]
- 811–13 Craun notes that the knight chiefly defames Constance because he envies her advancement of the chamberlain who had previously had to rely on him; such political motivation is not evident in Trivet, where the knight seemingly “acts to cover his sexual advances” (*Lies, Slander, and Obscenity*, p. 149).
- 847 *stille as eny ston.* Proverbial. See Whiting, S772, and variants “dumb as any stone,” S762, and “mute as any stone,” S765. Compare *CA* 1.1794 and 2104.
- 890 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Rex Allee ad fidem Cristi conuersus baptismum recepit et Contanciam super hoc leto animo despousauit; que tamen qualis vel unde fuit alicui nullo modo fatebatur. Et cum infra breue postea a domino suo impregnata fuisse, ipse ad debellandum cum Scotis iter arripuit, et ibidem super guerras aliquamdiu permanxit.* [How King Allee, having been converted to the faith of Christ, received baptism, and after this married Constance with a joyous soul; but she did not at all declare to anyone what she was or from where. And when, after a short time, she had become pregnant by her lord, he left to fight with the Scots, and he remained there for a time engaged in battles.]
- 905 *Lucie.* Macaulay observes that the name appears to be trisyllabic: *Lucie* (2:485).

- 911 *She tolde hem nevere what sche was.* Several have commented on Constance's maintaining an aura of mystery about her origins. See Nicholson (*Annotated Index*, p. 192). Of particular interest is Esch's suggestion (in "John Gower's Erzählkunst") that Constance's silence creates a Märchenmotif about her that adds to Domilde's accusation that she is "of fairie" (2.964). Gower heightens the fairytale quality of the story when, upon the death of Constance, we are told that God takes her "fro this worldes faerie" into his own "compaignie" (2.1593–94).
- 916–17 Kelly (*Love and Marriage*, pp. 140–41) compares the role of nature in conception here with natures role in the impregnation of Canace in 3.143 ff.
- 931 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Regina Constancia infantem masculum, quem in baptismo Mauricum vocant, Rege absente enixa est. Set inuida Regis mater Domilda super isto facto condolens litteris mendacibus Regi certificauit quod vxor sua demoniaci et non humani generis quoddam monstrorum fantasma loco geniture ad ortum produxit; huius modique detractionibus aduersus Contanciam in tanto procurauit, quod ipsa in nauim, qua prius venerat, iterum ad exilium vna cum suo partu remissa desolabatur.* [How while the king was absent Queen Constance gave birth to a male infant, whom in baptism they call Maurice. But the envious queen mother Domilda, lamenting because of this, certified with lying letters to the king that his wife had brought into the world a monstrous phantasm of demonic and not human species in the place of an offspring; and by means of these detractions against Constance so managed it that she was abandoned again to exile in the ship in which she had first arrived, along with her tender offspring.]
- 947 *Domilde.* In Trivet, her name is given as "Deumylde," "Doumilde," "Dounylde," "Domulde," and "Domylde." In Chaucer she is "Donegild." Macaulay notes that the Rawlinson manuscript has "Downilde" (2:485).
- 960 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Prima littera in commendacionem Constancie ab Episcopo Regi missa per Domildam in contrarium falsata.* [First letter in commendation of Constance, sent by the bishop to the king, falsified to its opposite by Domilda.]
- 964 *faerie.* See explanatory note to 2.749–834, above.
- 1013 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Secunda littera per Regem Episcopo remissa a Domilda iterum falsata.* [Second letter sent back by the king to the bishop, again falsified by Domilda.]
- 1048 *Brent in a fyr before hereyhen.* Elizabeth Allen ("Chaucer Answers Gower," p. 644) comments on the irony of Constance's "imagined public burning" as a result of Domilde's deceit. Domilde will ultimately be the one "caste" into the fire (2.1287).
- 1078–83 Dimmick notes the "delicate pathos" of the lines as "an emblem of human love informed by the divine" ("Redinge of Romance," p. 131).
- 1084 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Nauis Constancie post biennium in partes Hispanie superioris inter Sarazenos iactabatur, a quorum manibus deus ipsam conseruans graciosissime liberauit.* [How Constance's ship was tossed after two years into

- the regions of upper Spain among the Saracens, from whose hands God, preserving her, liberated her by His grace.]
- 1084–1125 Chaucer's heroine is more placid than Gower's. In Chaucer an unnamed thief boards the boat to make her his leman, but Mary helps her, the thief falls overboard, and "Crist unwemmed kept Custance" (*CT* II[B¹]924). Gower's heroine is closer to Trivet's, where when Constance convinces Thelouës, the "fals knyght and a renegat" (2.1093), to look out at the port to see if anyone is near, he, as a result of Constance's prayer, is blown overboard.
- 1126 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter nauicula Constancie quodam die per altum mare vagans inter copiosam Nauium multitudinem dilapsa est, quarum Arcennus Romanorum Consul, Dux et Capitaneus ipsam ignotam suscipiens usque ad Romam secum perduxit; ubi equalem uxori sue Helene permansuram reverenter associauit, necnon et eiusdem filium Mauricium in omni abundancia quasi proprium educauit.* [How Constance's little ship, wandering through the high seas, one day fell in among an abundant multitude of ships, whose leader and captain, Arcennus, the consul of the Romans, led her unrecognized all the way with him to Rome. There he reverently joined her as an equal to his wife Helen, so long as she would remain there, and he also reared her son Maurice with every benefit as if he were his own.]
- 1148–49 *I am / A womman wofully bestad.* Constance's point is injustice done, not self-pity. See Grennen's discussion of Chaucer's Custance as the "embodiment of the virtue of *constantia*, a virtue she is given innumerable opportunities to demonstrate precisely because of the failure of human legal structures to protect her" ("Chaucer's Man of Law," p. 498). The same is true of Gower's heroine. But, as Olsson points out, her security lies in her nature. "Her eyes are always open, and her tale never betrays in her an attitude of 'hadde I wiste'" ("Love, Intimacy and Gower," p. 96).
- 1226 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Rex Allee inita pace cum Scotis a guerris rediens et non inuenta uxore sua causam exilii diligencius perscrutans, cum Matrem suam Domildam inde culpabilem sciuisse, ipsam in igne proiciens comburis fecit.* [How King Allee, returning from the wars after peace had been entered into with the Scots, and with his wife not to be found, and diligently inquiring into the cause of her exile, caused his mother Domilda to be burned by throwing her into the fire when he discovered her in that matter to be guilty.]
- 1264 *At Knaresburgh.* Edwards ("Knaresborough Castle," pp. 306–09) argues that, because of its affiliations with the murder of Thomas à Becket, Knaresburgh still bore the aroma of treachery and treason in Gower's day, hence Gower's addition of the detail.
- 1278–93 *O beste of helle . . . thi bacbitinge . . . to deth broght / And brent tofore hire sones yhe.* Chaucer simply says "that Alla, out of drede, / His mooder slow" (*CT* II[B¹]893–94). Itô (*John Gower*, pp. 32–33) links Gower's more violent account to "Trivet's lurid description of the matricide" but notes that Gower, appropriately, shifts the mode of execution from the sword to the fire, as befits the volcanic rage of Domilde's backbiting. Compare Gower's affiliation

- of Envy and Wrath with Mt. Etna elsewhere in *CA* (2.163, 2037, and Prol. 329), and also *MO*, lines 3805–18.
- 1285 *I schal be venged.* Macaulay notes that “the first and second recensions have ‘It shal’” (2:486).
- 1310 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter post lapsum xii annorum Rex Allee absolucionis causa Romam proficiscens vxorem suam Constanciam vna cum filio suo diuina prouidencia ibidem letus inuenit.* [How after the passage of twelve years, King Allee, making his way to Rome for the sake of absolution, joyously discovered by divine providence his wife Constance there, along with his son.]
- 1355–63 Peck notes that Gower, unlike Chaucer or Trivet, places Alla’s encounter with Constance on the return trip, after visiting the pope, as if to link the king’s shriven condition with his recovery of his family. “The king sets his life in hierarchical order so that other reorderings may follow” (*Kingship and Common Profit*, p. 68).
- 1370–82 Moris is not the only child in *CA* who makes possible the denouement. Gower often uses children as guides to their stumbling parents. Compare his role with that of Peronelle in the Tale of Three Questions (1.3067 ff.), and Thais in the Tale of Apollonius (8.271 ff.).
- 1473 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Constancia, que antea per totum tempus exilii sui penes omnes incognitam se celauit, tunc demum patri suo Imperatori seipsam per omnia manifestauit: quod cum Rex Allee sciuisse, vna cum vniuersa Romanorum multitudine inestimabili gaudio admirantes cunctipotentem laudarunt.* [How Constance, who previously for the entire time of her exile had concealed herself unrecognized from everyone, finally then revealed herself in all ways to her father the emperor. And when King Allee had understood, he, along with the entire multitude of Romans, marveling in inestimable joy, together praised the Almighty.]
- 1516 *my querele.* See Bullón-Fernández’s remarks on the significance of Constance’s *querele* with her father (*Fathers and Daughters*, pp. 83–86), which to some degree reflects the perpetual debate between the Church and spiritual ideology, and political and lay power invested in the state.
- 1524–25 *thogh his moder were come / Fro deth to lyve out of the grave.* This striking metaphor, in which the father sees his mother in his daughter (a passage original with Gower), perpetrates a number of provocative innuendoes. Bullón-Fernández compares Constance to Mary vis-à-vis her father as “she becomes her father’s mother” (*Fathers and Daughters*, p. 92). The passage also strengthens Genius’ emphasis on the law of nature so central to his ideology.
- 1555 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Mauricius cum Imperatore vt heres Imperii remansit, et Rex Allee cum Constancia in Angliam regressi sunt.* [How Maurice remained with the emperor as the heir of the empire, and King Allee returned with Constance to England.]

- 1572 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Rex Allee post biennium in Anglia humane carnis resolucionem subiens nature debitum persoluit, post cuius obitum Constanca cum patre suo Rome se transtulit moraturam.* [How King Allee, after two years in England, underwent the decline of human flesh and paid his debt to nature; after his death Constance betook herself to stay in Rome with her father.]
- 1572–77 *Bot he (death) which hindreth . . . And for no gold mai be forboght . . . Tok with this king such aqueintance . . . he parteth from his wif.* Tatlock (*Development and Chronology*, p. 184n) suggests that this passage lies behind Chaucer's flourish, “For Deeth, that taketh of heigh and logh his rente, / Whan passed was a yeer . . . / Out of this world this kyng Alla he hente” (CT II[B¹]1142–44).
- 1589 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De morte Imperatoris.* [Concerning the emperor's death.]
- 1592 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De morte Constancie.* [Concerning Constance's death.]
- 1594 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De coronacione Mauricii, qui adhuc in Cronicis Mauricius Imperator Cristianissimus nuncupatus est.* [Concerning the coronation of Maurice, who to this day is called in chronicles “Maurice the most Christian emperor.”]
- 1595 *Moris hir sone was corouned.* Bullón-Fernández speculates that there may be a hint of “a kind of incestuous love” here, “that Moris's inheriting from Constantine suggests that he is the offspring of the father and the daughter” (*Fathers and Daughters*, p. 92). But the point seems rather to be that Constantine, who sought an heir by marrying Constance to the Sultan, simply accepts his only child's offspring, which fortunately is male. He, in his long-standing grief over the alleged death of Constance, finds that his lineage is not barren after all — a provocative Christian motif of the grafted-on heritage, especially since Moris is “the Cristeneste of alle” (2.1598).
- 1613 ff. The story of Demetrius and Perseus is found in several potential sources, including Justin, *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*, Book 32; Valerius Maximus, *Factorum ac Dictorum Memorabilium* 1.5.3; Orosius, *Comonitorium* 5.20; and perhaps Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale* 5.65 ff. (see Macaulay 2:487 for discussion).
- 1613 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum contra istos detractores, qui in alterius vituperium mendacia confingentes diffamacionem fieri procurant. Et narrat qualiter Perseus, Philippi Regis Macedonie filius, Demetrio fratri suo ob eius probitatem inuidens, composito detractionis mendacio ipsum apud patrem suum mortaliter accusauit, dicens quod ipse non solum patrem set et totum Macedonie regnum Romanis hostibus proditorie vendidisset: quem super hoc in iudicium producens, testibus que iudicibus auro subornatis, quamuis falsissime morte condempnatum euicit: quo defuncto eciam et pater infra breve postea mortuus est. Et sic Perseo successiue regnante deus huiusmodi detractionis inuidiam abhorrens ipsum cum vniuersa suorum pugnatorum multitudine extra Danubii fluvium ab Emilio tunc Romanorum Consule euentu bellico interfici fortunauit. Ita quod ab illo die Macedonie potestas penitus destructa Romano Imperio subiugata deseruivit, et eius detraccio, quam contra alium conspirauerat, in sui ipsius diffamacionem pro perpetuo diuulgata consistit.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against those detractors who, fashioning lies in vituperation of another, cause

defamation to be made. And he tells how Perseus, son of Philip, king of the Macedonians, being envious of his brother Demetrius on account of his probity, lethally accused him before his father, composing a lie of detraction, declaring that Demetrius was selling by treachery not only his father but also the whole kingdom of Macedonia to their enemies, the Romans. Bringing him to the judicial court on these grounds, and with witnesses and judges having been suborned by money, he destroyed him by having him condemned to death, however falsely. And after he died, his father within a short time had died as well. And thus with Perseus taking the throne as successor, God, abhorring the envy of this kind of detraction, destined him to be killed as a consequence of war along with the entire multitude of his warriors beyond the Danube River by Emilius, then consul of the Romans. Wherefore from that day on the power of Macedonia, having been entirely destroyed and subjugated, was subservient to the Roman Empire; and his detraction, which he had conspired against the other, became well known in perpetuity to his own defamation.]

- 1706 *Godd wode noght it were unknowe.* Gower often presents God as an overseer who sets things straight after deceitful men pervert them. E.g., 1.2776–79, where God uses Nebuchadnezzar to show just vengeance; also the several proverbs on truth, including “For trowthe hise wordes wol noght peinte” (1.284). See also explanatory note to 2.1752–53, below.
- 1728 *th’envious belle runge.* Proverbial. See Whiting, B233.
- 1745–51 *The maladie* (line 1747) that the king catches, a malady that catches all men, is apparently not in this instance death but rather a deep depression that is the result of his distraught and sorrowful condition (lines 1745–46). *And whan this king was passed thus* (line 1749) does not mean that he died but rather that he sojourns in his debilitating condition. Perseus thus must seize the *regiment* (line 1751), rather than inherit it. We are told subsequently that the king dies by starvation in prison in Albe (2.1853–57).
- 1752–53 Proverbial. Whiting does not cite this specific passage, but it is akin to such truth proverbs in *C4* as Prol.369, 3.205, 5.4604, and 7.1957–60.
- 1884 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat Confessor super quarta specie Inuidie, que dissimilatio dicitur, cuius vultus quanto maioris amicicie appareniam ostendit, tanto subtilioris doli fallacias ad decipiendum mens ymaginatur.* [Here the Confessor discourses about the fourth species of Envy, which is called Dissimulation. The more his face displays an appearance of friendship, the more his mind schemes tricks for deceiving by subtler guile.]
- 1912 Genius uses the term *semblant* as an equivalent to “good intention”; “that is, Genius is suggesting that Amans attempt to see without prejudice what is being intuited, knowing that that is impossible” (Peck, “Phenomenology of Make Believe,” p. 259).
- 1921–22 See explanatory note to 3.1076–78.
- 1926 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic in amoris causa Confessor super isto vicio Amanti opponit.* [Here in the cause of love the Confessor questions the Lover about that vice.]

- 1928–29 *custummer/To Falssemblant*. On the capitalistic metaphor linking Falssemblant to the merchants and Lombard bankers as well as lovers, see Peck (“Phenomenology of Make Believe,” pp. 259–60).
- 1938 *if evere was thi thought*. See Galloway, “Middle English as a Foreign Language,” on Gower’s use of French construction in shaping, for comic effect, the spirit of conjecture in hypothetical situations and thoughts on what *nearly* was true (pp. 96–97).
- 2090 *asay*. Macaulay follows F to read *a say*, then views *say* as a shortened form meaning “trial.” But given the *a*-here and the common word *asay* (from French *assai*) it is more likely that the scribe left a space accidentally and that *asay* is the intended form (Galloway, “Literature of 1388”).
- 2100–22 Gower’s hostility toward Lombard bankers and their *Falssemblant* and *Facrere* (make-believe, deception) resonates throughout the poem and is echoed in Chaucer too (e.g., *The Shipman’s Tale*). Lombard values seek gain and mercantile profit, rather than common profit, “to cheat men of the profits from their own land” and to usurp the rights of others (Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, p. 70).
- 2145 ff. The story of Deianira and Nessus is found in Ovid, *Met.* 9.8–272. It also appears in Hyg. 34–36; Vat. Myth. I 58; Ovid, *Heroides* 9; and Boccaccio, *Genealogie Deorum Gentilium Libri* 9.17. Mainzer (“Gower’s Use of the ‘Mediaeval Ovid,’” p. 217) identifies two details in Gower’s version that are found in *Ovidius Moralizatus* but not in Ovid’s narrative, namely that Iole is the daughter of King Eurytus and that “Hercules changed clothes with her.” The idea of *Falssemblant* comes mainly from Jean de Meun’s allegorical representation in *RR*, where he is one of the principal agents in Jean’s attack on hypocrisy amongst the friars, as well as lovers (lines 10467–12380). In Gower, Deianara is more clearly a victim than she is in the sources, suggesting once again his sympathy for women. See Brown (“Tale of Deianira and Nessus,” pp. 15–19).
- 2148 ff. **☞ Latin Marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum contra istos, qui sub dissimilate benevolencie speculo alios in amore defraudant. Et narrat qualiter Hercules, cum ipse quoddam fluum, cuius vada non nouit, cum Deianira transmeare proposuit, superueniens Nessus Gigas ob amiciciam Herculis, vt dixit, Deianiram in vlnas suas suscipiens trans ripam salvo perduxit. Et statim cum ad litus peruenisset, quamcito currere potuit, ipsam tanquam propriam in preiudicium Herculis asportare fugiens conabatur: per quod non solum ipsi set etiam Herculi moris euentum fortuna postmodum causauit.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against those who defraud others in love under a falsified image of benevolence. And he narrates how, when Hercules tried with Deianira to cross a certain river whose fords he did not know, Nessus the Giant intervened on behalf of his friendship for Hercules (as he claimed), and, lifting Deianira up onto his shoulders, transported her across the stream to safety. But as soon as he had arrived at the shore he fled as fast as he could run, trying to carry her away for himself to Hercules’ disadvantage. By this

- means he later brought about, by chance, the result of his own as well as Hercules' death.]
- 2227 *lief or loth*. Proverbial. See Whiting, L232. The sense might also be “friend or foe,” i.e., “everyone.”
- 2270 *he him clotheth in hire cote*. Gower makes emphatically clear the maxim that each man must wear what he chooses, setting up the conclusion, 2.2279–2302, where Hercules willfully clothes himself in the shirt that destroys him. See Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, pp. 61–62.
- 2270–71 *clotheth . . . clothed*. On the interstices between make-believe, false-seeming, feigned “chiere” (2.2143), clothing, and staged fantasies in the tale, see Peck, “Phenomenology of Make Believe,” pp. 260–62.
- 2331 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat Confessor de quinta specie Inuidie, que Supplantacio dicitur, cuius cultor, priusquam percipiatur, aliena dignitatis et officii multociens intrusor existit.* [Here the Confessor discourses about the fifth species of Envy, which is called Supplantation, whose plowshare, before it might be noticed, often gouges as an intruder another's dignity and duty.]
- 2346 *chalk for chese*. Proverbial. See Whiting, C134. Compare *CA* Prol.416.
- 2366 The gloss is Macaulay's (2:489).
- 2382 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic in amoris causa opponit Confessor Amanti super eodem.* [Here in the cause of love the Confessor asks the Lover about that same thing.]
- 2430 *tant ne quant*. Macaulay compares *MO*, lines 3654 and 23358 (2:489).
- 2452 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Agamenon de amore Brexeide Achillem, et Diomedes de amore Criseide Troilum supplantauit.* [How Agamenon supplanted Achilles from Briseide's love, and Diomedes supplanted Troilus from Criseyde's love.] Gower may have gotten the story from Hyginus (106) or Ovid (*Heroides* 3). Macaulay notes that “In Benoît and Guido the name is ‘Briseida,’ but Boccaccio was aware that Briseis was a different person (*Gen. Deorum*, xii. 52)” (2:489).
- 2459–95 Gower's story of Geta and Amphitriion relates to the legend of Hercules' conception. See *Met.* 6.112, *Hyg.* 29, and *Vat. Myth.* I 50, where Jupiter lies with Alcmene disguised as Amphitriion, her husband, while he is away in battle. Gower substitutes Amphitriion for the supplanter, though the wife Alcmene remains the same; where he gets Geta, the new husband, is not known. Nor is there reference to the conception of Hercules. In Hyginus, Amphitriion accepts the fact that Jove must have lain with his wife and from that day he does not lie with her himself. Perhaps in Gower we are to understand that Amphitriion follows Jove's example and seeks out other women who might “undo” the door (line 2483) for a husband in disguise. Genius' making of Geta and Amphitriion close friends adds to the villainy of Amphitriion's behavior. See Wright on links with Vitalis of Blois' twelfth-century Latin comedy, *Geta*, particularly with regard to names and motifs of supplantation (“Gower's Geta,” pp. 214–17).

- 2459 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Amphitron socium suum Gentam, qui Almeenam peramavit, se ipsum loco alterius cautelosa supplantacione substituit.* [How Amphitron substituted himself for his companion Geta by a deceptive supplantation in another's place.]
- 2483 *Undo.* The undo-the-door trope is a favorite fabliaux convention, as the virtuous one asks for entry but is frustrated by circumstances on the other side. N.b. the comic variation in *The Squire of Low Degree*, lines 534 ff. See Thompson, *Folktale*, p. 323, on the false bridegroom motif.
- 2499–2500 *enforme . . . forme.* See Simpson (*Sciences and the Self*, pp. 1–6) on Gower's wordplay on *enforme/forme/enformasioun*. "Genius is not simply passing on 'information' passively; he is instead actively informing a tale" (p. 4). (N.b. also 4.924–25.) Simpson emphasizes the polysemous wordplay on *form* as "shape," "material," "a process of filling the shape," an imparting process. "[I]n practice Genius's literary act of informing stories is designed to teach, or inform, Amans, and so the act of literary information shades into a pedagogic sense" (p. 5). See 5.450 on Genius who "wolde enforme and teche."
- 2501 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic in amoris causa contra fraudem detractionis ponit Confessor exemplum. Et narrat de quodam Romani Imperatoris filio, qui probitatem armorum super omnia excercere affectans nesciente patre ultra mare in partes Persie ad deseruendum Soldano super guerras cum solo milite tanquam socio suo ignotus se transtulit. Et cum ipsis milicie fama super alios ibidem celsior accreuiisset, contigit ut in quodam bello contra Caliphum Egipti inito Soldanus a sagitta mortaliter vulneratus, priusquam moreretur, quendam anulum filie sue secretissimum isti nobili Romano tradidit, dicens qualiter filia sua sub paternae benedictionis vinculo adiurata est, quod quicumque dictum anulum ei afferret, ipsam in coniugem pre omnibus susciperet. Defuncto autem Soldano, versus Civitatem que Kaire dicitur itinerantes, iste Romanus commilitoni suo huius misterii secretum reuelauit; qui noctanter a bursa domini sui anulum furto surripiens, hec que audiuit usui proprio falsissima Supplantacione applicauit. Et sic seruus pro domino despontata sibi Soldani filia coronatus Persie regnauit.* [Here in the cause of love the Confessor presents an instructive example against the fraud of detraction. And he tells about a certain son of the Roman emperor, who desiring above all things to engage in deeds of arms, betook himself across the sea, without his father's knowledge, into regions of Persia to serve the Sultan in the wars, remaining anonymous and with only one knight as his companion. And when the repute of his knightly prowess had grown higher there than any others, it happened that in a certain war that had broken out against the caliph of Egypt, the Sultan was mortally wounded by an arrow; before he died, he passed a certain most secret ring of his daughter to the nobleman, saying how his daughter had sworn under the bond of paternal blessing that whoever offered her the said ring would gain her as wife ahead of all others. With the Sultan dying, the Roman, traveling with his companion toward the city which is called Cairo, revealed to him the secret of his mystery. And his companion knight, stealing the ring furtively from his lord's purse at night, applied what he had heard to his own purposes, by most false Supplantation. And thus the servant instead

of the lord, with the Sultan’s daughter married to him, was crowned and reigned over Persia.]

- 2501 ff. The *cronique* (line 2504) that Genius cites as source for the Tale of the False Bachelor has not been found. Thorpe (“Source of the *Confessio Amantis*,” pp. 175–81) suggests that Gower may have known an early sequel to *The Seven Sages of Rome, Le Roman de Marques de Rome*, which has numerous parallels with Gower’s tale, up to line 2714. Minnis (*Gower’s Confessio Amantis*, p. 60) proposes a juxtaposition of two Roman tales, one pagan and one Christian, in this tale and the Tale of Constantine and Sylvester that follows.
- 2741 *ded as eny ston.* Proverbial. See Whiting, S759 and S759a. Compare “still as any stone,” S771. See note to line 847.
- 2795 ff. Gower might have found accounts of Boniface’s corruption of the papacy in various chronicles, including those of Rishanger, Higden, and Walsingham. See Macaulay’s discussion (2:490–91) of both historical and legendary materials on Boniface. The tale includes a number of inaccuracies, particularly the capture at Avignon, but suits Genius’ purposes well. See Scanlon’s discussion of the anticlerical critique in *CA* that begins in the Prologue and culminates in the tales of Boniface and Constantine in Book 2, where Gower demonstrates shrewdly the necessity of lay authority in the face of clerical corruption (*Narrative, Authority, and Power*, pp. 248–67).
- 2804 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum contra istos in causa dignitatis adquirende supplantatores. Et narrat qualiter Papa Bonifacius predecessorem suum Celestimum a papatu coniectata circumuencione fraudulenter supplantauit. Set qui potentes a sede deponit, huiusmodi supplantacionis fraudem non sustinens, ipsum sic in sublime exaltatum postea in profundi carceris miseriam proici, fame que siti cruciari, necnon et ab huius vite gaudiis dolorosa morte explantari finali conclusione permisit.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against those supplanters in the cause of acquiring dignity. And he tells how Pope Boniface supplanted his predecessor Celestine from the papacy, with a scheme fraudulently constructed. But He Who deposes the powerful from their seats, not tolerating the fraud of this sort of supplantation, allowed the one who had been sublimely exalted to be thrown later into the wretchedness of deep prison, tortured by hunger and thirst, and at the last end to be uprooted from the joys of this life in a sorrowful death.] Gower’s shift of the *exempla* from romance traditions to historical *exempla*, such as Boniface and Constantine, links the conclusion of Book 2 to the earlier chronicle of Constance and illustrates well Gower’s perception of the close relationships between “history” and “tale-making” as components of ethical reflection. See Macaulay’s extended discussion of English chronicle accounts of Boniface, particularly those of Walsingham and Higden (2:490–91).
- 2966 *Lowyz.* The French king who deposed Boniface VIII, when the pope threatened him with excommunication, was Philip the Fair (Philip IV, 1268–1314), not Louis.
- 2983 *miht with miht schal be withstonde.* Proverbial. See Whiting, M535.

- 2995 *Guilliam de Langharet.* Guillaume de Nogaret, whom Philip sent to arrest the pope and bring him to trial by a church council in France. For discussion of events surrounding the two “quarrelles” (n.b. 2.2967), see Tierney, *Crisis of Church and State*; Strayer, *Reign of Philip the Fair*; and Wood, *Philip the Fair and Boniface*.
- 3028–29 The image of the envious man devouring himself evokes Gower’s strong conviction that “the church destroys itself when its officials supplant Christ and, with Envy and Avarice, devour their own members. Such robbing of the people is a form of cannibalism” (Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, p. 73).
- 3033 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Cronica Bonifacii: Intrasti ut vulpis, regnasti ut leo, et mortuus es ut canis.* [Chronicle of Boniface: “You have entered like a wolf, reigned like a lion, and died like a dog.”]
- 3055 *kepe Simon fro the folde.* I.e., protected the people from simony; that is, the buying and selling of ecclesiastical preferments and benefices, or any form of making profit from sacred things, a practice named after Simon Magus (Acts 8:9–24).
- 3056 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de prophecia Ioachim Abbatis.* [Note concerning the prophecy of Abbot Joachim.] Macaulay (2:491) notes that the marginal notation is in a different hand and that the Latin is omitted altogether in some manuscripts.
- 3058 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Quanti Mercenarii erunt in ouile dei, tuas aures meis narrationibus fedare nolo.* [I do not wish to befoul your ears with my declarations of how many merchants there will be in the sheepfold of God.]
- 3059 *mercerie.* On the basis of this passage *MED*, n. (a), suggests figuratively “the stock in trade of simoniacs.”
- 3085 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Ioab princeps milicie Dauid inuidie causa Abner subdole interfecit. Et qualiter eciam Achitophel ob hoc quod Cusy in consilio Absolon preferebat, accensus inuidia laqueo se suspendit.* [How Joab, a leader in David’s army, for the sake of envy killed Abner by guile. And how also Achitophel because Cusy was exalted in Absolon’s council hanged himself with a noose, burning in envy.] See 2 Kings (2 Samuel) 3:27 and 17:23.
- 3085–94 Abbot Joachim’s warning has not been identified. Accounts of Joab’s treachery and Achitophel’s death occur in 2 Kings (2 Samuel) 3:6–39; 16:20–17:23. The reference to Seneca in line 3095 is based on Dante, *Inferno* 13.64. Compare Gower’s earlier mention of the business in *MO* (lines 3831 ff.). See Stollreither’s discussion of eighteen passages that Gower draws from the Old Testament in compiling the *exempla* of *CA* (see Stollreither, *Quellen-Nachweise*).
- 3095–99 Compare Chaucer, *LGW* F.358–60, where Envy is compared to a “lavendere [washerwoman] of court.”
- Latin verses vi** (before line 3111). **Line 4:** The *ethnica flamma* is, literally, a “heathen flame” (from the Vulgate Bible on); but Macaulay takes it as possibly an adjective for “Mt. Ethna,” described at several spots in Gower’s texts as a metaphor for

Envy. A pun on such a sense is very likely. Yet here the literal sense “heathen” seems primary, because the cult of Venus is described throughout the *CA* in quasi-Christian terms (with Genius as priest, etc.), so any force that competed with that quasi-religion would be (quasi-) heathen. The Christian scope of what follows in this section of Book 2, with the story of Constantine and Pope Sylvester, strongly reinforces the intersection, here at least, between Venus’ teachings and those of Christianity (Galloway, “Literature of 1388”).

- 3114 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic describit Confessor naturam Inuidie tam in amore quam aliter secundum proprietatem vicii sub compendio.* [Here the Confessor describes the nature of Envy, as much in love as in a summary of the vice according to its properties.]
- 3122–25 *thilke blod . . . / Is drye . . . / Thurgh whiche Envie is fyred ay.* See Fox (*Mediaeval Sciences*, pp. 32–33) on the destructive effects that Envy can have on the physiology of the body.
- 3174 *moder of Pité.* In *MO* Charity is presented as the remedy. Thus the strong emphasis in the story of Constantine and Sylvester makes a fitting conclusion to Book 2. On thematic links between the story and that of Constance at the beginning of Book 2, see Bullón-Fernández (*Fathers and Daughters*, pp. 42–45, 83–86, and 97–100); and Yeager (“Gower’s Images”), where the theme of “motherhood” links the mother Constance to the mother church. On the political potency of the ethics of pity in the latter 1380s, see Galloway (“Literature of 1388,” pp. 90–104).
- 3187 ff. The story of Constantine and Sylvester is based on the *Legenda Aurea*. See Porter’s remarks on Amans as “surrogate for Richard II” in this section of the poem, where “the Donation of Constantine . . . sow[s] the seeds of dissolution within the Church,” a topic he had previously explored in *VC* (“Gower’s Ethical Microcosm,” p. 147).
- 3190 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum de virtute caritatis contra Inuidiam. Et narrat de Constantino Helene filio, qui cum Imperii Romani dignitatem optimuerat, a morbo lepre infectus, medici pro sanitate recuperanda ipsum in sanguine puerorum masculorum balneare proposuerunt. Set cum innumera multitudo matrum cum filiis huiusmodi medicine causa in circuitu palacii affuisset, Imperatorque eorum gemitus et clamores percepisset, caritate motus ingemiscens sic ait: “O vere ipse est dominus, qui se facit seruum pietatis.” Et hiis dictis statum suum cunctipotentis medele committens, sui ipsius morbum pocius quam infancium mortem benignus elegit. Vnde ipse, qui antea Paganus et leprosus extiterat, ex vnda baptismatis renatus vtriusque materie, tam corporis quam anime, diuino miraculo consecutus est salutem.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example concerning the virtue of charity against envy. And he narrates about Constantine, the son of Helen, who when he had obtained high office in the Roman Empire became infected by the illness of leprosy; and for the sake of recovering his health, the physicians proposed to bathe him in the blood of male children. But when an innumerable multitude of mothers with sons had arrived in the courtyard of the palace on account of this medicine, and the emperor had perceived their

moaning and outcries, he, groaning and moved by charity, thus spoke: “O truly he is a lord who makes himself the servant of charity.” And with these words committing his condition to the healing of the Almighty, he benignly chose his own illness rather than the death of infants. Whence he who previously had been pagan and leprous emerged from the waves of baptism having been reborn in both substances of his being, body and soul, and was consequently healed by divine miracle.]

- 3220 *leche*. The sense here may be simply “physician” or “cure,” but the more technical sense of the term may be more precise, where *leche* refers to a solution poured over something to draw out a particular substance; hence, my gloss “solution,” with reference to the blood of infants in which Constantine is to bathe to draw out the leprosy.
- 3243–73 Pearsall (“Gower’s Narrative Art,” p. 478) singles out this passage as an example of Gower’s narrative power: “Gower’s special achievement is to embody, in Constantine’s soliloquy and in the description of the working of his mind and heart, the very substance of human charity and pity, and not only that, but also to convey, through Constantine’s meditation on the essential equality of all men in the sight of the ‘divine pourveance’ (lines 3243–73) the justness of moral discrimination which precedes virtuous action.”
- 3249–59 White cites this passage as evidence for Gower’s aligning of nature with the body. The *And ek* of line 3257 “marks a movement away from the sphere of *kinde* toward the reasonable soul,” which is of God’s shaping jurisdiction that lies beyond nature (*Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, pp. 185–86).
- 3251 *kinde hath in hire lawe*. Yeager (*John Gower’s Poetic*) attempts to differentiate Gower’s use of *kinde* and *nature*. But White, citing Gower’s use of the feminine adjective in this line, challenges the distinction: “Gower conceives of Kinde here in terms of Romance literature’s Goddess Nature (contrast Langland’s male personification Kinde), demonstrating how the native and romance terms can be equivalent for Gower in at least one very important area” (*Nature, Sex and Goodness*, p. 174n2).
- 3257–59 Fisher (*John Gower*, p. 196) sees the passage on equality as “one of Gower’s favorite adages,” derived “ultimately from Cassiodorus’ *Varia* xii.3.”
- 3263–64 The universal enfranchisement of people, regardless of estate, is a common topic in Gower. Compare 8.2109–20.
- 3275–79 Genius echoes Matthew 7:12 (also Luke 6:31), the “Golden Rule,” a biblical passage that Gratian, in his discussion of natural law, picked up from Isidore: “Ius naturae est, quod in lege et in euangelio continetur, quo quisque iubetur alii facere, quod sibi uult fieri, et prohibetur alii inferre, quod sibi nolit fieri” [Natural law is what is contained in the law and the Gospels, by which each person is commanded to do to another what he would wish done to himself, and is prohibited from doing to another what he would not wish done to himself]. Dist. I ante c. 1 (Gratian, *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, ed. Friedberg and Richter, 1.1). I am indebted to Barr (“Treatment of Natural Law,” p. 50) for

the reference and translation. Gower's phrasing reflects his interest in law even as much as his interest in Scripture.

- 3432 *The ground of al the Newe Lawe.* On the intersection of Christian charity and natural law as a focal topic in the Tale of Constantine and Sylvester, see Olsson (*Structures of Conversion*, pp. 102–06).
- 3491–92 Compare *Piers Plowman* B.15.556–68. The claim about the Donation of Constantine was significant to the Lollards, who (unlike Gower) sought to strip the church altogether of its “poisonous” worldly possessions. The story of the angel appears as early as Gerald of Wales in the twelfth century; some accounts present the voice as the devil's. (For references to further reading, see Hudson (*Premature Reformation*, pp. 330–35)).

EXPLANATORY NOTES TO BOOK 3

- 1 *If thou the vices lest to knowe.* See Simpson (*Sciences and the Self*, pp. 167–97) on the “psychological information” of Book 3 and of the limitations of both Genius' and Amans' abilities to sort through the limitations of what they can understand.
- 5 *A vice forein fro the lawe.* The *MED* glosses *forein* in this line as “contrary, inimical” (see adj. 3 [d]). The “foreignness” of Wrath to law makes it particularly dangerous to social and political structures. See Fisher (*John Gower*, p. 196), who sees the line as Gower's means of focusing on legal issues throughout his canon.
- 8 *And yit to kinde no plesance.* See note to 3.2263–64 on the contrariness of Pride, Envy, and Wrath to nature.
- 8 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic in tertio libro tractat super quinque speciebus Ire, quarum prima Malencolia dicitur, cuius vicium Confessor primo describens Amanti super eodem consequenter opponit.* [Here in the third book he discusses the five types of Wrath, the first of which is called Melancholy, which the Confessor first describes then asks the Lover concerning it.]
- 18 *For his servantz ben evere wrothe.* On violence in Book 3, particularly against women — Canace, Cornide, Laar, Daphne, Clytemnestra — in which men seem to feel that such rage is their special prerogative, see Donavin, “When reson torneth into rage.” The victims expose mechanisms behind taboos against such behavior as “Gower builds a case against violence” (p. 216). “Women's bodies are pierced, sliced, dismembered, and metamorphosed to expiate a men's frustration about love” (p. 219).
- 27 *Malencolie.* On melancholy as a mental or emotional disorder affiliated with wrath in Gower's day, see Wack (*Lovesickness and Its Commentaries*, pp. 11–13, 162).
- 47–48 *mennes game . . . pure grame.* Itô (*John Gower*, pp. 244–45) sees Gower's prominent use of *adnominatio* (a *paronomasia* — punning and word-play

- through phrasal rhymes) as a means of sharpening the contrast of ideas. Gower uses comparable word play in *MO*. For other examples, see *CA* 2.55–56, 5.4885–86, 5327–28, 7053–54, 6.1379–81, 3571–72, and 8.479–80.
- 128 *angri snoute*. A fine example of Gower’s persona surpassing, through “comical deformity,” “self-satire,” and “dramatic self-parody,” the literary mold in which he has been cast. See Peck (*Kingship and Common Profit*, p. 81).
- 131 *In loves stede*. Compare the Latin construction *in vicem amoris*, which defines a role, rather than a physical location.
- 143 Gower’s source for the Tale of Canace and Machaire is Ovid, *Heroides* 11. Genius softens the story and appeals to the reader’s sympathy for Canace by adding her speech to her father and her letter to her brother. To heighten the pathos and focus on the father’s cruel anger, he places the death of the child, bathed in his mother’s blood, after the mother’s death. See Chaucer’s witty allusion to this “wikkē ensample” in the introduction to The Man of Law’s Tale, *CT* II(B¹)77–80. Lydgate retells Gower’s version in his *Fall of Princes* (1.6833– 7070). The tale reveals “none of the stock responses of the narrow moralist, but a sober and compassionate meditation on the blind instinctual nature of sexual passion” (Pearsall, “Gower’s Narrative Art,” p. 481). “Melancholy, not incest, is the topic governing the tale” (Olsson, *Structures of Conversion*, p. 112).
- 143 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum contra istos, qui cum vires amoris non sunt realiter experti, contra alios amantes malencolica seueritate ad iracundiam vindicte prouocantur. Et narrat qualiter Rex Eolus filium nomine Macharium et filiam nomine Canacem habuit, qui cum ab infancia vsque ad pubertatem inuicem educati fuerant, Cupido tandem ignito iaculo amborum cordis desideria amorose penetrauit, ita quod Canacis natura cooperante a fratre suo impregnata parturit: super quo pater, intollerabilem iuuentutis concupiscentiam ignorans nimiaque furoris malencolia preuentus, dictam filiam cum partu dolorosissimo casu interfici adiudicauit.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against those who, although they have not really experienced the powers of love, are vindictively provoked to wrathfulness against other lovers, in a melancholic severity. And he narrates how King Eolus had a son, Macharius by name, and a daughter, Canace by name. After they had been raised together from infancy up to adolescence, Cupid at length penetrated the desires of both their hearts amorously with a burning arrow, such that Canace, with nature cooperating, became pregnant by her brother and gave birth. Whereupon their father, ignorant of the unbearable lusts of youth and prepossessed by an excessive melancholy of fury, judged that the said daughter with her offspring in this most mournful case be put to death.] The story is attractively told in Gower, despite the quibbling of Chaucer’s Man of Law. Lydgate was evidently moved by Gower’s version, as he somewhat incongruously inserts it into *Fall of Princes* as the conclusion to Book 1 (1.6835–7070). As in Gower, the heart of Lydgate’s narrative is Canace’s touching letter of complaint to her brother.

- 148–81 See White's discussion of the basic natural sexual instinct (*CA* 8.68–70) where, before the positing of laws to the contrary, incest was accepted behavior, a perspective that remains present in nature and that is "certainly operative of Genius' account of what happened to Canace and Machaire" (*Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, p. 194).
- 154–57 In Book 3, especially, Gower explores richly the complex ambiguities of nature. On questions of whether persons may go against *the lawes of nature* (line 157) without punishment — "fordon the lawe of kynde," as Chaucer puts it (*TC* 1.238) — see Olsson ("Natural Law," pp. 232–34). But although Gower grants some allowances toward *leges naturae*, neither he nor his priest "is content merely to exonerate the impulses of animalic 'kinde'" (p. 233).
- 172 *lawe positif*. "Nature informed by reason." (Kelly, *Love and Marriage*, p. 141). Macaulay notes:
- Gower's view is that there is nothing naturally immoral about incestuous marriage, but that it is made wrong by the "lex positiva" of the Church. This position he makes clear at the beginning of the eighth book, by showing that in the first ages of the world such marriages must have been sanctioned by divine authority, and that the idea of kinship as a bar to marriage had grown up gradually, cousins being allowed to marry among the Jews, though brother and sister might not, and that finally the Church had ordered:
- That non shall wedden of his ken
Ne the seconde, ne the thridde.
III. 147 ff.
- If attacked by Chaucer with regard to the subject of this story, he would no doubt defend himself by arguing that the vice with which it dealt was not against nature, and that the erring brother and sister were in truth far more deserving of sympathy than the father who took such cruel vengeance. (2:493)
- As Schueler emphasizes, in this tale Gower does not defend incest but rather acknowledges the power of natural love ("Gower's Characterization," p. 253).
- 178 *enchanted*. Gower's term here has received considerable commentary, from "overlaid with the nostalgia of his own loss but instinct with a pity and understanding" (Fison, "Poet in John Gower," p. 21); the blinding of creatures as blind Cupid does (Bennett, *Middle English Literature*, p. 108); and a spell cast on people regardless of law and reason (Collins, "Love, Nature and Law," p. 120); to children "innocently blind" (Runacres, "Art and Ethics," p. 125). The enchantment does not exculpate the lovers, however; as C. David Benson points out, the term "usually carried a clearly sinister meaning" ("Incest and Moral Poetry," pp. 103–04). See Nicholson (*Annotated Index*, p. 221).
- 205 *The sothe, which mai noght ben hid*. Proverbial. See Whiting, S490.
- 213 *he was to love strange*. See Bullón-Fernández's reading of the tale (*Fathers and Daughters*, pp. 158–72) on levels as diverse as confinement of the body politic by an absolutist king to the confinement of Canace, whose subtext is confined

- by patriarchy and Genius, her “literary father.” In this respect “Canace exemplifies literary creativity” (p. 160). See explanatory note to line 268.
- 225 ff. When Eolus ignores Canace’s touching plea, Olsson suggests, “he rejects a basic good in nature, the good of *cognatio*. . . . The extraordinary power of this tale is that while it exposes a weakness in *kinde* itself, it also builds that perception into a dissuasion from melancholic wrath” (*Structures of Conversion*, p. 113).
- 248 *naked swerd*. It is “as though [Eolus] is proposing incest at a double remove, substituting the knight for himself and the sword for the phallus” (Spearing, “Canace and Machaire,” p. 217).
- 268 *I wole a lettre unto mi brother*. Bullón-Fernández sees Canace as a woman locked in a private sphere. In Ovid she has a nurse to talk to. In Gower she is totally isolated, able only to write a letter with ink and, ultimately, with the blood of her body. “Writing the letter can . . . be seen as Canace’s attempt to create a private space for herself. . . . [P]erhaps both Chaucer and Gower explored and developed a sense of privacy of the self in their work partly as a response to Richard’s pretense that he owned both everybody’s goods and their lives. Both writers may have seen a need . . . to erase the line between private and public” (*Fathers and Daughters*, p. 165). C. David Benson makes the point that the tale is “a ‘wikke ensample’ of one who loved sinfully,” which “does not invite our sympathy for the couple so much as our horror at the sin they have committed and the evil it produces.” Gower, he points out, has added to Ovid the secrecy of their passion, “inspired by irrational desire,” which all recognize, “including the couple themselves, as wrong, and disastrous in its consequences” (“Incest and Moral Poetry,” pp. 102–03). Olsson observes that incest may be “*inordinatus*, but it is not *innaturalis*”: “Nature ‘keþth hire lawes al at large’ (3.174), but the human being is obligated to temper or ‘modifie’ those laws by reason and, as derived from it, the ‘lawe positif’” (*Structures of Conversion*, p. 113).
- 312–15 See Nolan (“Lydgate’s Literary History,” pp. 61–69) on Lydgate’s borrowing from Gower in his *Fall of Princes*.
- 322 *ne bad to do juise*. Literally: “would not order [someone] to impose judicial punishment,” the infinitive setting up a sequence of parallel infinitives in the next lines, “. . . to bear . . . to seek . . . to cast.” Perhaps the sequence begins with “to win” in line 316.
- 337–59 “The moral perspective that Gower adopts for the Canace and Machaire story tends to protect Nature from censure by turning over attention to the father’s culpability, as he overreacts to something presented as a natural necessity” (White, *Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, p. 197), which from the position of positive law seems to proclaim “Nature’s potential moral anarchy” (p. 199). On love as “a disease endemic in the natural God-given order, the *lawe of kinde*,” see pp. 204–05.
- 342–59 Kelly observes that the proposition that Amans has no power to alter the laws of nature (see 3.154–57) simply demonstrates once again that “Gower has let

- his confessor run away with himself. . . . Genius is not speaking the truth but merely the opinion of lovers" (*Love and Marriage*, p. 144).
- 344–50 Simpson compares Genius' excusing the incestuous lovers to Dante's Francesca "in her claims for moral leniency in . . . her technically incestuous love" ("Genius's 'Enformacioun,'" p. 173).
- 352 *That nedes mot that nede schal.* Proverbial. See Whiting, N61. The fatalistic maxim is a favorite of Gower. See also 1.1714 and 8.1020.
- 355 Bennett notes that "law of kind" and "kindly law" were "the earliest English equivalents to *lex naturae*; 'laws of nature' first occurring in Gower" (*Parlement of Foules*, pp. 197–98n3). He goes on to note that "natural law" first occurs in *Cursor Mundi*.
- 361 The details for the story of Tiresias and the snakes occur in Ovid, *Met.* 3.324–27, Hyg. 75, and Vat. Myth. I 16, all of which Gower probably had access to, though it is Ovid that he cites. The tale is a good follow-up to Canace and Machaire in defining the virtues and limitations of nature. See explanatory note to lines 373–75.
- 364 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic narrat qualiter Tiresias in quodam monte duos serpentes inuenit pariter commiscentes, quos cum virga percussit. Irati dii ob hoc quod naturam impediuit, ipsum contra naturam a forma virili in muliebrem transmutarunt.* [Here he narrates how Tiresias discovered on a certain mountain two serpents mingling together, whom he struck with a rod. The gods, wrathful on account of the fact that he had impeded nature, transmogrified him unnaturally from a male into a womanly form.]
- 369–94 The author of *Chaucer's Ghoast* borrows these lines as his "translation/re-telling" in an ancient manner of the tale of Socrates' patience in Arg. 11. Chaucer's Wife of Bath does allude to the tale, but the source of the seventeenth-century poet's ghostly version is Gower, not Chaucer.
- 373–75 Fisher (*John Gower*, p. 196), cites this passage to demonstrate the interface between law and nature: the Tale of Tiresias and the Snakes "illustrates the all-embracing virtue of legitimate sexual intercourse." "Tiresias is punished for disrupting nature by having his own nature disrupted" (Cresswell, "Tales of Acteon and Narcissus," p. 37, as cited by Nicholson, *Annotated Index*, p. 224).
- 383 *More is a man than such a beste.* Simpson (*Sciences and the Self*, pp. 176–77) juxtaposes the act of Tiresias against the snakes with that of Aeolus, who destroys Canace and her baby for her incestuous coupling with Machaire, to show how man is more than beast and thus lives by more complex rules.
- 398–99 *Let every man love as he wile, / Be so it be noght my ladi.* Earlier, Amans recognizes his own destructive impulses as he terrorizes his household (2.87–98). But now he seems more moderate, even potentially sympathetic of Canace and Machaire, providing he gets his way. This leads to his invoking his wrath "Alone upon miself" (3.402), which Elizabeth Allen ("Chaucer Answers

Gower,” pp. 634–35) likens to the progress of Canace’s suicide, as she brings home her guilt. The point is that “Amans’s limitations encourage us to face a particular danger of self-examination: the risk of an obsessive, self-destructive, disconnection from an outside world where every man can ‘love as he will’ as long as it does not touch others. . . . The *Confessio* insists not only on the reader’s inward turn but also, in response, on a search for willed interconnections, however tenuous or tangential: the *Confessio* seeks to make self-examination socially responsible” (p. 636).

- 417 ff. See Craun (*Lies, Slander, and Obscenity*, pp. 117–18) on Cheste and Detraction as Sins of the Tongue in penitential manuals.
- 421 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat Confessor super secunda specie Ire, que Lis dicitur, ex cuius contumeliis innumerosa dolorum occasio tam in amoris causa quam aliter in quampluribus sepissime exorta est.* [Here the Confessor treats the second species of Wrath, which is called Conflict, from whose aggressions very often arises many an occasion of sorrows both in the cause of love and elsewhere in very many things.]
- 433 *as a sive keþeth ale.* Proverbial. See Whiting, S305. Stockton (*Major Latin Works*, p. 405n3) notes other examples in *VC* 3.1546, 6.1359, and *MO* 17656–58.
- 463–65 *the harde bon / Althogh himselven have non, / A tunge brekth.* For the proverbial idea, see the Latin verses at the opening of *CA* (Prol.i, and note on p. 284 of vol. 1 of this edition).
- 502–03 *instede of chese, / For that is helþlich to defie.* Soft and semisoft cheese was considered an aid to digestion: “mylky chese moysteþ þe wombe (stomach). . . And chese yete after mete þrusteþ downard the mete” (Trevisa, trans., *On the Properties of Things* 2.1334.15–20). Seymour emends *mylky* to *[newe]*, but I have preferred to follow the reading of the six principal manuscripts.
- 532 *agein the pes.* A legal phrase. Any crime is something done “against the [king’s] peace” (*contra pacem*). For references, see Alford (*Piers Plowman: Glossary*, s. v. *pes*).
- 577–78 *no man mai his time lore / Recovere.* Proverbial. See Whiting, T307. Compare *CA* 4.1485–87. Perhaps the most amusing expression of the proverb is Harry Bailey’s in *CT* II(B¹)28–31.
- 585 *oule on stock and stock on oule.* Proverbial. See Whiting, O69. The implication is that the branch (*stock*) on which the owl roosts becomes besitten and thus befouls the bird in return.
- 616 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Seneca: Pacienza est vindicta omnium iniuriarum.* [Seneca: Patience is the conqueror of all injuries.] The thought is consistent with the moral essays of Seneca popular in the Middle Ages (esp. “On Wrath” and “On Mercy”), but the precise formulation does not come from those, nor from the apocryphal collection of “proverbs” associated with Seneca (*Proverbia Senecae*) (Galloway, “Literature of 1388”).

- 621 *wol noght bowe er that he breke*. Proverbial. See Whiting, B484. Compare Chaucer's *TC* 1.257–58: "The yerde is bet that bowen wole and wynde / Than that that brest."
- 640 Chaucer's Jankyn puts his chiding Wife of Bath in her place with the same story (*CT* III[D]727–32). He learned the story from Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum* 1.48 (*PL* 23, col. 278), whence Gower may also have learned it, though the story was a commonplace epitome of patience.
- 643 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum de pacientia in amore contra litites habenda. Et narrat qualiter vxor Socratis ipsum quodam die multis sermonibus litigauit; set cum ipse absque vlla responsione omnia probra pacienter sustulit, indignata vxor quandam ydriam plenam aque, quam in manu tenebat, super caput viri sui subito effudit, dicens, "Euigila et loquere": qui respondens tunc ait, "O vere iam scio et expertus sum quia post ventorum rabiem sequuntur ymbres": et isto modo lititis contumeliam sua pacientia deuicit.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example concerning the necessity in love of keeping patience against attacks. And he narrates how Socrates' wife attacked him one day with many speeches; but when he endured all trials patiently without any response, the wife, indignant, suddenly poured out on her husband a pot full of water that she was holding in her hand, saying, "Wake up and speak." He then responding said, "O truly now I know and have experienced, that after a frenzy of winds follow rains." And by this means he conquered the invective of the strife with his patience.]
- 671 *swelle*. Wrath is the pent-up vice; often in medieval lore the angry man is said to swell to bursting. The idea dates at least as early as Seneca (first century), "On Anger" 1.20 and 2.36.
- 693 Chaucer's Xantippa is less gentle than Gower's. In her rage she dumps a pisspot upon Socrates' head; he calmly wipes his beard and observes: "Er that thonder stynte, comth a reyn!" *CT* III(D)732.
- 731–64 "A lover of antiquity," the author of *Chaucer's Ghoast* (1672) "borrows" these lines for his Arg. 3 on Ovid's Tiresias, as if they were his own "penn'd after the ancient manner of writing in England."
- 734 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum, quod de alterius lite intromittere cauendum est. Et narrat qualiter Iupiter cum Iunone super quadam questione litigabat, videlicet vtrum vir an mulier in amoris concupiscencia feruencius ardebat; super quo Tiresiam eorum iudicem constituebant. Et quia ille contra Iunonem in dicte litis causa sentenciam diffiniuit, irata dea ipsum amborum oculorum lumine claritatis absque remissione priuauit.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example how one must take care not to interfere in another's quarrel. And he tells how Jupiter was arguing with Juno on a certain question: whether a man or a woman felt hotter passion in the lust of love; for this they established Tiresias as their judge. And since he declared against Juno in the case of the said conflict, the irate goddess deprived him forever of sight in both eyes.]

- 781–814 These lines are plagiarized as Arg. 4 of *Chaucer's Ghoast* as the “antiquarian” poet attempts to effect “Chaucer’s” style.
- 783 ff. Chaucer’s Manciple also rehearses a version of this tale. It is a story from Ovid, *Met.* 2,531–632, often told by medieval authors: e.g., *Ovide Moralisé*; Machaut, *Le Livre dou Voir Dit*, lines 7773–8110; *Seven Sages of Rome*, lines 2193–2292; and various allusions in *RR*. See James Work, in *Sources and Analogues*, pp. 699–722.
- 784 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Quia litigantes ora sua cohibere nequiunt, hic ponit Confessor exemplum contra illos qui in amoris causa alterius consilium reuelare presumunt. Et narrat qualiter quedam auis tunc albissima nomine coruus consilium domine sue Cornide Phebo denudauit; unde contigit non solum ipsam Cornidem interfici, set et coruum, qui antea tanquam nix albus fuit, in piceum colorem pro perpetuo transmutari.* [Since disputants cannot conceal their utterances, here the Confessor presents an instructive example against those who in the cause of love presume to reveal the counsel of another. And he narrates how a certain bird who was the whitest of white, the crow [*corvus*] by name, laid bare to Phoebus the counsel of his mistress Cornida; whence it happened that not only was Cornida killed, but also Corvus, who had previously been snow white, was transmuted forever into pitch black.]
- 815 *Be war therfore and sei the beste.* “Beware, therefore, and speak only the best.” Compare 3.768. The admonitory phrases bear some resonances with the repeated injunctions to “beware” by Chaucer’s Manciple, who admonishes the Cook: “My sone, keep wel thy tonge, and keep thy freend. / A wikked tonge is worse than a feend” (CT IX[H]319–20); see also “Beth war, and taketh kep what that ye seye” (IX[H]310) and “Kepe wel thy tonge and thenk upon the crowe” (IX[H]362). Some have held that Chaucer, with his ten “my sone’s” in forty lines, is sending up Gower’s story.
- Ultimately the point derives from early medieval sayings about guarding the tongue, e.g., “maledicus ne esto” (pseudo-Cato, “Do not be abusive” [*Minor Latin Poets*, p. 596, line 41]). Translations of such advice poetry were popular in the later fourteenth through the fifteenth centuries, and sometimes emphasize Gower’s phrase about careful restraint of the tongue. For a direct parallel, see Lydgate’s “Say the Best, and Never Repent” (in *Minor Poems*, pp. 795–99). While Lydgate’s short advice poem clearly draws on Chaucer’s many comments on the same topic, his collection of notions more often parallels Gower, and Lydgate’s poem may even be inspired by this moment in the *CA*. For broad discussion of the pastoral background of the topic of “sins of the tongue” and aspects of its place in Middle English literature, see Craun (*Lies, Slander, and Obscenity*).
- 818 *another place.* I.e., Ovid’s *Fasti* 2,585–616, where the story is told at greater length. In Ovid, Laar is not condemned as a jangler, except by Jupiter.
- 818 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur super eodem: Et narrat qualiter Laar Nimpha de eo quod Iupiter Iuturnam adulterauit, Iunoni Iouis vxori secretum reuelauit. Quapropter Iupiter ira commotus lingua Laaris prius abscisa ipsam postea in*

profundum Acherontis exulem pro perpetuo mancipauit. [Here he speaks about the same thing: and he narrates how Laar the Nymph had secretly revealed to Juno, Jupiter's wife, how Jupiter had committed adultery with Juterna. On account of this Jupiter, moved to wrath, first had Laar's tongue cut away, then committed her perpetually to exile in deepest Acheron.]

- 838 *reule.* With his keen interest in law, Gower uses the noun *reule* with technical precision in diverse ways. In *CA* Prol.108 “reule” connotes “jurisdiction”; in 1.883 its sense is that of “a religious practice.” In 4.2642 it implies “a norm of procedure within an academy”; or in 7.1051, “the law of nature.” In 7.47, it suggests “a set of rules governing morality in general.” In expressions like “oghe reule” (3.1169) or “oute of reule” (6.1283), the sense is “lack of control” or “disorder.” Here, given the terms of confession that Genius has established, Amans uses the word to suggest the regulation governing the religious contract he has set up with Genius, his priest.
- 847 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat Confessor de tercia specie Ire, que Odium dicitur, cuius natura omnes Ire inimicicias ad mentem reducens, illas usque ad tempus vindicte velud Scriba demonis in cordis papiro commemorandas inserit.* [Here the Confessor discourses about the third species of Wrath, which is called Hatred, whose nature, summarizing all enmities of Wrath in its mind like the devil's scribe, inserts them into the heart's paper as memoranda until the time of inflicting them.]
- 973 The story of Nauplius' revenge occurs in Benoît, *Le Roman de Troie*, lines 27671–930, *Gest Hyst.* 32.12552–704, Hyg. 116, and Vat. Myth. II (201 ff.). Gower appears to have followed more than one source.
- 973 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum contra illos qui, cum Ire sue odium aperte vindicare non possint, facta dissimilacione vindictam subdole assequuntur. Et narrat quod cum Palamades princeps Grecorum in obsidione Troie a quibusdam suis emulis proditorie imperfectus fuisse, paterque suus Rex Namplus in patria sua tunc existens huiusmodi euentus certitudinem sciuisse, Grecos in sui cordis odium super omnia recollegit. Vnde contigit quod, cum Greci deuicta Troia per altum mare versus Greciam nauigio remeantes obscurissimo noctis tempore nimia ventorum tempestate iactabantur, Rex Namplus in terra sua contra litus maris, ubi maiora saxorum eminebant pericula, super cacumina montium grandissimos noctanter fecit ignes: quos Greci aspicientes saluum portum ibidem inuenire certissime putabant, et terram approximantes diruptis nauibus magna pars Grecorum periclitabatur. Et sic, quod Namplus viribus nequit, odio latitante per dissimilacionis fraudem vindicauit.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against those who, when they are not able openly to inflict their wrath's hate, pursue their punishment surreptitiously. And he narrates that when Palamades, prince of the Greeks, had been treacherously killed by certain of his rivals at the siege of Troy, his father King Namplus, when he had learned while he was in his own country the certainty of this event, collected in his heart a hatred for the Greeks above all others. Whence it happened that, after Troy was sacked, when the Greeks were returning home by ship toward Greece across the deep ocean, at the darkest point of night they were tossed about by a tempest of extraordinarily

strong winds; and King Namplus, in his land across from the seashore where the greatest dangers of rocks jutted out, caused great fires to be set on the peaks of mountains. The Greeks, seeing those, firmly believed that they had discovered a safe harbor there, and approaching the land with the ships torn apart, the majority of the Greeks were endangered. And thus, what Namplus was not able to do by force, he inflicted through fraud of dissimulation by means of a hidden hatred.] Runacres cites the opening of this gloss as an example of *moralitas* that serves “as a constant reminder of the importance of the ethical purpose of the poem” that may not be “closely linked to the . . . *narraciones*” (“Art and Ethics,” p. 121).

- 977 *tornen hom agein*. See Olsson (“Love, Intimacy, and Gower,” pp. 86–92) on the centrality of the woman and home to Gower’s ideology of return and repose. He notes perceptively the large number of rough homecomings, such as those of the Greeks here (compare the tales of Leucothoe, 5.6722–51, or Elda’s desperate circumstance as he would wake his wife, 2.836–38, or Jephthah’s unhappy return, 4.1517). “Life at home can be disrupted or destroyed by domestic tyranny, external assault, random misfortune, and, perhaps most tragically, betrayal” (p. 92). But regardless of circumstances, the quality of the return is likely to be bound up in memory, that Boethian domicile possessed well by Gower’s four good wives in 8.2617–18, “a memory that . . . fully acknowledges their own unsettled condition and their suffering. They understand their humanity [as the Greeks in these lines do not], and they also understand what it means to be rooted in relationship: their lives ‘at home,’ for all they must remember, help give them, unsentimentally, both constancy and stability” (p. 93). It is this sense of home and repose upon which Gower builds the conclusion to his poem in Book 8.
- 981–1000 “Ships and the sea, indeed, are always good in Gower. . . . This excellence in Gower’s sea-pieces has led some to suppose that he was familiar with sea travel — as he may well have been; but it is, in fact, only one manifestation of his devotion to movement and progression, his preoccupation with things that change as you watch them” (Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, p. 207). See also 4.1741 ff., 4.3063, and 8.1928–29.
- 1073–75 Proverbial. A variant of Whiting, J75.
- 1076–78 Compare 2.1921–22. Mitchell, remarking on the intrinsic deception of mirrors to which Gower alludes, notes the common use of mirror imagery in didactic discourse on memory and meditation in the later Middle Ages and suggests that by means of such recurring remarks, Gower craftily “implicates the specular supposition of exemplary rhetoric itself” (“Reading for the Moral,” p. 130). For a summary of uses of mirrors in speculation on mental behavior see Herbert Grabes (*Mutable Glass*). Gower uses the idea of a mirror’s illusory reflection that has *nothing therinne* (3.1078) to underscore the trickiness of imagination as it feeds such illusions as hatred, a self-deception that can overthrow a person (3.1079–80), or sustains Falssemblant, who, indeed, offers a treacherous “glas” (2.1921).

Latin verses iv (before line 1089). **Lines 1–2:** *sit spiritus eius / Naribus*, “whose spirit is in his nostrils,” a biblical phrase for an angry man; see Isaiah 2:22 (Galloway, “Literature of 1388”).

- 1094 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat Confessor super quarta et quinta specie Ire, que impetuositas et homicidium dicuntur. Set primo de impetuositate specialius tractare intendit, cuius natura spiritum in naribus gestando ad omnes Ire mociones in vindictam parata pacientiam nullatenus obseruat.* [Here the Confessor treats the fourth and fifth species of Wrath, which are called Aggressiveness and Homicide. And first he intends particularly to discuss Aggressiveness, whose nature, bearing its “spirit in his nostrils,” prepares it to inflict all manner of wrath in its readiness for vengeance and makes it not at all act with patience.] For the phrase “spirit in his nostrils,” see above, note on Latin verses iv (before line 1089).
- 1141–44 *al my time in vein despended.* See Galloway (“Gower’s Quarrel”) on Amans’ assessment of lost labor in love as “almost purely mercantile” (p. 247). See also 5.4438–75 on the failure of his usurious investments (p. 248).
- 1193–99 See White on the power of natural love, whose influence may sometimes be overwhelming (“Naturalness of Amans’ Love,” p. 319). “Gower does not seem to see the universe as a place considerably arranged so that the man of goodwill shall move reasonably smoothly towards salvation; rather he sees it as a battleground on which man in his weakness must face adversaries immensely superior to him and by no means wholeheartedly committed to his spiritual good” (p. 321). See also White (“Division and Failure,” p. 605).
- 1194–99 *love is of so gret a miht . . . Will scholde evere be governed / Of Reson more than of Kinde.* A focal passage on the potential destructive powers of blind Nature without the good governance of Reason. On the proverbial wisdom of line 1194, see Whiting, L518, L534, L538, L540, and L544, on *CA* 1.18, 35, and 5.4556. See also Chaucer’s The Franklin’s Tale, *CT* V(F)764–66, and *PF*, line 12.
- 1201 The story of Diogenes’ confrontation with Alexander is a favorite medieval tale. See Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale* 3.68 ff.; Latin *Gesta Romanorum*, cap. 183; Walter Burley, *De Vita Philosophorum*, cap. 1. The messenger and the axletree are apparently Gower’s additions to the story. Pfister suggests that Gower draws on Valerius Maximus (“Spuren Alexanders des Grossen,” p. 86). But see also *Dicts and Sayings*, which includes many questions and sayings not found in Gower.
- 1204 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum, quod hominis impetuosa voluntas sit discretionis moderamine gubernanda. Et narrat qualiter Diogenes, qui motus animi sui rationi subiugarat, Regem Alexandrum super isto facto sibi opponentem plenius informauit.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example showing that a man’s aggressive will must be guided by discretion’s rudder. And he narrates how Diogenes, who had subjugated the motions of his mind to reason, very fully informed King Alexander when he questioned him about this.]

- 1331 Chaucer also tells the story of Pyramus and Thisbe in *LGW*. The story is based on Ovid, *Met.* 4.55–166. Of the two, Chaucer follows the source more closely, in a mood of high sentiment. For a brief comparison of these two Middle English accounts with Ovid, see Macaulay (2:497–98). See Harbert (“Lessons from the Great Clerk,” pp. 91–93) for an insightful comparison of Gower and Ovid.
- 1331 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic in amoris causa ponit Confessor exemplum contra illos qui in sua dampna nimis accelerantes ex impetuositate seipso multociens offendunt. Et narrat qualiter Piramus, cum ipse Tisbee amicam suam in loco inter eosdem deputato tempore aduentus sui promptam non inuenit, animo impetuoso seipsum pre dolore extracto gladio mortaliter transfodit: que postea infra breue veniens cum ipsum sic mortuum inuenisset, eciam et illa in sui ipsius mortem impetuose festinans eiusdem gladii cuspide sui cordis intima per medium penetrauit.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against those who in the cause of love very often offend by rushing excessively from aggressive impetuosity to their own destruction. And he narrates how Piramus, when he did not find his girlfriend Thisbe ready at the time of his arrival in the place designated by both, with a spirit impetuous from anguish drew his sword and fatally transfixes himself. And when she, arriving later within a short time, found him thus dead, she too hastening to her death pierced the innermost regions of her heart with the point of the same sword.]
- 1370–71 In Gower the lovers work together to make a hole in the wall, unlike in Ovid, where the chink is simply found.
- 1375–76 . . . *hote* / . . . *hote*. Kim Zarins, in her unpublished essay “Poetic Justice: *Rime Riche* and Wordplay in Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*” (presented at the Cornell/Rochester graduate student symposium at the University of Rochester, April 13, 2002), explores the extended resonances of Gower’s prominent use of this device. Pyramus is not just *hote* [called] Pyramus, “he is hot and hotly desired,” as his name, derived from the Greek word for fire, implies. It is as if “hote” “determines Pyramus’s character and fate” (p. 4). See also the puns on “hote” in 4.87–88, which anticipate Dido’s fiery doom, and 3.21–22, where Wrath is presented as burning passion.
- 1386 *the softe pas.* Gower’s Middle English uses some case inflections for certain idioms; here, *softe* has a final *-e* because it is in a dative or residually instrumental case.
- 1420–23 A. B. Taylor notes Gower’s use of 1 Cor. 2:9, proposing that Shakespeare, who also draws on the same passage in *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, may well have been using Gower’s version of the story as well as Ovid’s as a source for the rude mechanicals’ sentimental farce (“John Gower,” p. 382). Shakespeare, like Gower, changes Ovid’s lioness (*leaena*) to a ravenous male lion (lines 1398–1400) with his “blodi snoute.”
- 1469 *what hath he deserved?* Pearsall emphasizes Gower’s ignoring of Ovid’s metamorphoses to focus instead on moral issues as his characters perceive them. The word *deserved* provides “an index of Gower’s preoccupation with

- human actions as responsible, as part of a meaningful pattern" ("Gower's Narrative Art," p. 480).
- 1537 *Daunger*. The personification of female insecurity, resistance, and aloofness in *RR*, who repeatedly thwarts Amans in his love quest. See Luria (*Readers Guide to Roman de la Rose*, pp. 42–44); and Fleming (*Roman de la Rose: A Study*, pp. 187–89).
- 1615–58 This tour de force of proverbs is unusual even for the sententious Genius. The point seems to be that therapy often begins in commonplace wisdom, out of which something more substantial may come. Compare Philosophy's use of proverbs as she begins to engage the confused Boece in *Consolation of Philosophy* 1.m.6 and 3.m.1. Several of the wise sayings are cited in Whiting, though not all.
- 1630–31 *Thanne if he felle and overthrewe — / The hors*. The syntax seems awkward because of the delayed antecedent (it is the horse that falls, not the rider) and the use of *overthrewe* as an intransitive verb (see Mac 2:499 on *overthrewe*). The passage, beginning at line 1629, is proverbial, combining two proverbs—the chaffing at the bridle (see Whiting, B533) and "Dun is in the myre" (see Chaucer's The Manciple's Tale, *CT* IX[H]5; and Whiting, D434).
- 1639–40 *Suffrance hath ever...That secheth reste*. Proverbial. See Whiting, S859.
- 1658 *He hath noght lost that wel abitt*. Proverbial. See Whiting, A6. Compare *CA* 4.1776.
- 1680 *Folhaste doth non avantage*. Proverbial. See Whiting, F463. Compare 3.1861.
- 1685 ff. The source may be Ovid, *Met.* 1.452–567.
- 1688 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum contra illos qui in amoris causa nimia festinacione concupiscentes tardius expedient. Et narrat qualiter pro eo quod Phebus quamdam virginem pulcherimam nomine Daphnem nimia amoris acceleracione insequebatur, iratus Cupido cor Phebi sagitta aurea ignita ardencius vulnerauit: et econtra cor Daphne quadam sagitta plumbea, que frigidissima fuit, sobrios perforauit. Et sic quanto magis Phebus ardencior in amore Daphnem prosecutus est, tanto magis ipsa frigidior Phebi concupiscenciam toto corde fugitiua dedignabatur.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against those who in the cause of love desire too hastily and too slowly carry it out. And he narrates how since Phebus pursued a certain very beautiful virgin, Daphne by name, with too great a hastiness for love, Cupid irritably wounded Phebus' heart with a golden arrow burning very hotly, but in contrast pierced Daphne's heart more somberly with a certain lead arrow which was exceedingly cold. And thus the more ardently in love Phebus pursued Daphne, the more coldly she disdained him, wholeheartedly fleeing Phebus' lust.]
- 1716–20 Genius' remarks on the significance of the laurel tree seem to be based on *Ovide Moralisé* rather than Ovid. See Mainzer ("Gower's Use of the 'Mediaeval Ovid,'" pp. 217–18).

- 1729–35 Amans' response reveals "a flicker of wit sometimes [to be found] in the lover's literal-minded responses" (Pearsall, "Gower's Narrative Art," p. 477). The wry humor is part of Gower's dramatic sense of narrative voice. See also Runacres ("Art and Ethics," p. 128) and Bennett (*Middle English Literature*, p. 413) cited by Nicholson (*Annotated Index*, pp. 242–43).
- 1757–1862 Gower's story of Athemas (Acamas) and Demephon is based chiefly on *Le Roman de Troie*, lines 28147 ff., though it is found also in the Troy stories of Dictys and Guido.
- 1760 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum contra illos qui nimio furore accensi vindictam Ire sue vltra quam decet consequi affectant. Et narrat qualiter Athemas et Demephon Reges, cum ipsis de bello Troiano ad propria remeassent et a suis ibidem pacifice recepti non fuissent, congregato aliunde pugnatorum excercitu, regiones suas non solum incendio vastare set et omnes in eisdem habitantes a minimo usque ad maiorem in perpetuam vindicte memoriam gladio interficere feruore iracundie proposuerunt. Set Rex Nestor, qui senex et sapiens fuit, ex pacientia tractatus inter ipsos Reges et eorum Regna inita pace et concordia huiusmodi impetuositatem micius pacificauit.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against those who, inflamed by excessive fury, desire to inflict the punishment of their wrath beyond what is appropriate. And he tells how kings Athemas and Demephon, having returned from the Trojan war to their own people and having not been received peacefully there by their own populace, collected from elsewhere an army and, in a frenzy of anger, proposed not only to devastate their own regions but also to put to the sword everyone living in them, from the least to the most important, as a permanent memorial to their revenge. But King Nestor, who was old and wise, allowed patience to lead him and mildly pacified this aggressiveness, initiating a peace and a treaty between the kings and their kingdoms.]
- 1772 *soghten frendes ate nede.* Proverbial. See Whiting, F634. Compare 5.4912–14, for variant.
- 1792–1800 *Of yonge men the lusti route . . . / Of hem that there weren yonge.* Compare the portrayal of the hasty foolishness of the young in matters of war in Chaucer's Tale of Melibee *CT VII(B²)*1034–35, as they oppose the wise counsel of the elderly.
- 1861 *Folhaste is cause of mochel wo.* Proverbial. See Whiting, F463. Compare 3.1680.
- 1885 Gower's most direct source for the story of Orestes seems to be Benoît, *Le Roman de Troie*, lines 28047–112, 28285–412, 28469–533. For a lively modern English translation see Meek, *Historia Destructionis Troiae*, pp. 243–46. See also *Gest Hyst.*, ed. Panton and Donaldson, 33.12937–13042, and Lydgate's adaptation, *Troy Book*, 5.1467–1780. This is one of the few instances in which Gower's story, with its conflict of religious and political obligations and its intimations of later Renaissance elaborations of royal family tragedy, is longer than his author's. Its reception by critics has been mixed. Pearsall ("Gower's Narrative Art," p. 483), remarks that Gower's retelling "fails completely to make its point or to extract any simple story line" and refers to

it as “a sad mangling of high tragedy.” Hiscoe (“Ovidian Comic Strategy”) sees the omission of the murder of Agamemnon as comic. See Nicholson (*Annotated Index*, pp. 244–45), for a review of critical opinions.

- 1885–2195 See Wetherbee (“Rome, Troy, and Culture,” pp. 27–29) on the “latent violence” that becomes a recurrent theme in tales of chivalric values in *CA*. The “anti-social aspect of knightly conduct is presented as a function of chivalric education itself and serves to reinforce Gower’s treatment of . . . the uneasy relationship between chivalric prerogative and obligation on the one hand and the institutions of family, society, and civic government on the other” (p. 27). Gower goes beyond Benoît in introducing Idomeneus as guardian to the child Orestes to shape the boy’s purpose; in Gower Menestheus interrupts the trial with a vehement attack on Clytemnestra that cuts off the judicial proceedings “in a sort of coda, Aegisthus’s daughter Egiona is driven to suicide” at the failure of parliament to banish Orestes, “but Genius sees in this only a divine judgement on her complicity in the murder of Agamemnon” (p. 28). “The harshness of Menetheus’s uncontested judgments on Clytemnestra and the virtual equation of justice with violence against women in the subsequent action leave the story conspicuously unresolved” (p. 29).
- 1887 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum contra illos qui ob sue concupiscentie desiderium homicide efficiuntur. Et narrat qualiter Climestra vxor Regis Agamenontis, cum ipse a bello Troiano domi redisset, consilio Egisti, quem adultera peramauit, sponsum suum in cubili dormientem sub noctis silencio trucidabat; cuius mortem filius eius Horestes tunc minoris etatis postea diis admonitus seueritate crudelissima vindicauit.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against those who, on account of the desire of their lust, are made murderers. And he narrates how Climestra the wife of King Agamemnon, when he had returned home from the Trojan war, stabbed her spouse to death in the silence of the night while he was sleeping, by the counsel of Egistus, whom she, adulterer, doted on. Afterwards, Horestes, then of tender age and alerted by the gods, with a most cruel severity, revenged his death.]
- 1899–1901 *Who that is slyh . . . makth the ferre lieve loth.*’ Compare Chaucer’s The Miller’s Tale (I[A]3392–93); see Whiting, S395 for other variants.
- 1920 *moerdre, which mai noght ben hedd.* Proverbial; see Whiting, M806. Compare Chaucer’s The Prioress’s Tale, “Mordre wol out” (CT VII[B²]576), and The Nun’s Priest’s Tale (CT VII[B²]3052 ff.).
- 2033 *‘Old senne newe schame.’* Proverbial. See Whiting, S338. Compare *CA* 6.5116 and *VC* 4.874.
- 2055 *O cruel beste unkinde.* White cites this line, along with 1.2565 (Rosamund and Albinus), 5.5906 (Philomela, Procne, and Tereus), and 8.222 (Amon, Thamer, and Absolon), to define Gower’s regard for “the high dignity of the natural order,” that order being the “action and feeling conceived as normal and appropriate to the relationship between man and wife” (*Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, p. 177). Simpson (*Sciences and the Self*, pp. 190–91) sees this as “a critical moment in the argument of Book III” as the question is raised, “is one

‘unkynde’ act justly dealt with by another?” The question goes back to the Tale of Canace and Machaire at the beginning of the book and stands in contrast to the behavior of Tiresias and the snakes, where an “unkinde” act of disturbing natural law is readily understandable.” The implication in such passages is that natural law is insufficient in itself, demanding “a politics” formed out of personal ethics that places constraint on human relationships (Simpson, pp. 191–92). See also Olsson, “Natural Law.”

- 2121–22 *worste speche is rathest herd / And lieved.* Proverbial. See Whiting, S619. Compare Chaucer’s The Squire’s Tale (CT V[F]222–23), where the adage defines that cynical component of the “lewednesse” of the press as “[t]hey demen gladly to the badder ende.”
- 2206 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic queritur quibus de causis licet hominem occidere.* [Here is asked what causes justify killing a man.]
- 2220 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Seneca: Iudex qui parcit vlcisci, multos improbos facit.* [Seneca: A judge who is sparing in retribution makes many shameless men.] I have not found the precise source, though the passage resembles mottos from the pseudo-Seneca *Proverbs* (Galloway, “Literature of 1388”).
- 2225 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Apostolus: Non sine causa Iudex gladium portat.* [Apostle: Not without cause does the Judge bear a sword.] Adapting Romans 13:4, describing the prince (not the judge).
- 2235 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Pugna pro patria.* [Fight for your country.] Found among the short sayings attributed to Cato (*Minor Latin Poets*, p. 594, line 23). Mainzer (“Albertano of Brescia’s *Liber Consolationis*,” p. 89) suggests Albertano of Breccia’s *Liber Consolationis* as another possible source.
- 2249–50 Mitchell (“Reading for the Moral,” p. 134) notes the frequency with which Gower rhymes *evidence* and *conscience* (no fewer than eight times; see especially 1.247–48 and 5.2919–20). The pairing magnifies the contingency of rule of conscience because of the instability of intuited particulars. But, as Mitchell observes, “Judgement exists because of the uncertainty of moral application” (p. 137).
- Latin verses v** (before line 2251). **Line 1:** there is an obvious echo in the *creature* that God creates (*creatum/creat*); **line 2:** a more subtle punning echo appears in the *earth* (*humum*) that is sprinkled with *human* blood (*humano*). The second pun emphasizes, among other things, the origins of human flesh from earth (Gen. 2:7); the line recalls Cain’s murder of Abel, whose blood calls out from the earth to God (Gen. 4:8–10). **Line 5:** *In terra pax.* “Peace on earth”; see Luke 2:14. **Lines 5–6:** *vltima Cristi / Verba.* The reference to Jesus’ “final words” invokes Paul’s summary of Jesus’ message rather than the gospels’ description of his actual last words; see especially 1 Corinthians 7:15, Ephesians 2:17.
- 2252 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur contra motores guerre, que non solum homicidii set vniuerse mundi desolacionis mater existit.* [Here he speaks against those who instigate war, which is the mother of homicide and of the world’s total

- destruction.] On the debate over war, at the center of which were Richard's peace efforts in 1389, see Saul (*Richard II*, pp. 205–34).
- 2263–64 That Nature loves peace is a featured proposition in Gower. Compare 3.386–87. Olsson ("Natural Law," p. 244) suggests that Pride, Envy, and Wrath are the most unnatural vices. But Wrath is especially unkind.
- 2263–2437 The story of Alexander and the Pirate was popular; see, for example, St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 4.4; the Latin *Gesta Romanorum*, cap. 146; and Jofroi of Waterford's *Secretum Secretorum*. Chaucer alludes to the story in The Manciple's Tale. See note to 3.2393.
- 2299 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Apostolus: Stipendium peccati mors est.* [Apostle: The wages of sin are death.] Romans 6:23.
- 2317 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Nota, quod Greci omnem terram fertilem debellabant, set tantum Archadiam, pro eo quod pauper et sterilis fuit, pacifice dimiserunt.* [Note that the Greeks attacked every fertile land, and only left Arcady in peace, because it was poor and sterile.]
- 2342–60 *alwei som cause he feigneth . . . / For lucre and for non other skyle.* For an ironic illustration of hypocritical militaristic arguments to gain *lucre* of the sort Genius condemns, see *Piers Plowman* B.3.175–208. Pacifist sentiment was high among intellectuals in the late fourteenth century, especially after the failure of the 1360 Treaty of Brétigny in 1377, followed by successive English defeats in the Hundred Years' War. The most extreme pacifists were the Lollards (see Hudson, *Premature Reformation*, pp. 369–70), whose views on this as on some other topics are paralleled by Gower (Galloway, "Literature of 1388"). See also Gower's Latin poem *O Deus Immense* (Mac 4:362–64), appealing to the king at the end of the century, after he had returned England to military solutions for problems, to seek peaceful solutions. Saul summarizes the point of the poem well: the people suffer because of the king's commitment to war. "Instead of initiating purges and imposing censorship, he should hasten into the highways and byways and listen to what his subjects had to tell him. He should let them speak openly, for to suppress their talk was to store up danger. Above all, he should avoid avarice, for the treasure to be collected in people's hearts was more valuable than any amount of treasure he could collect in coin" (*Richard II*, p. 288). See also pp. 436–37 on Gower's disillusionment with the king.
- 2366 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic declarat per exemplum contra istos Principes seu alios quoscumque illicite guerre motores. Et narrat de quodam pirata in partibus marinis spoliatore notissimo, qui cum captus fuisset, et in iudicium coram Rege Alexandro productus et de latrocínio accusatus, dixit, "O Alexander, vere quia cum paucis sociis spoliorum causa naues tantum exploro, ego latrunculus vocor; tu autem, quia cum infinita bellatorum multitudine vniuersam terram subiugando spoliasti, Imperator diceris. Ita quod status tuus a statu meo differt, set eodem animo condicionem parilem habemus."* Alexander vero eius audaciam in responsione comprobans, ipsum penes se familiarem retinuit; et sic bellicosus bellatori complacuit. [Here he speaks through an instructive example against those princes or any others who instigate illicit

wars. And he tells about a certain pirate who was a most notorious pillager in the ocean regions, who, when he was captured and brought in judgment before King Alexander and accused of robbery, said, “O Alexander, truly, since I venture forth with only a few associates for the sake of robbing ships, I am called a pillager; but you, since you have pillaged by subjugating the whole earth with a vast multitude of soldiers, are called an emperor. Thus your estate differs from mine, but we possess an equal circumstance and the same intention.” And Alexander, approving his audacity in this response, retained him among his household affinity; and thus the warlike one was pleased with another warlike one.] Yeager (“Oure English,” p. 47) cites this gloss as a characteristic example of Gower’s use of marginalia to create a double voicing, one inside, the other (the Latin) looking in as if from a different world. The story may be found in Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 4.4 and Cicero, *De republica* 3.14. In *Gesta Romanorum* 146, the pirate is named Diomede.

- 2393 *art named “Emperour.”* Chaucer’s Manciple offers the idea in miniature as he describes the relativity of words and deeds, using Alexander and the Outlaw as his example (CT IX[H]223–39).
- 2438 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic secundum gesta Regis Alexandri de guerris illicitis ponit Confessor exemplum, dicens quod quamuis Alexander sua potencia tocius mundi victor sibi subiugarat imperium, ipse tandem mortis Victoria subiugatus cunctipotentis sentenciam euadere non potuit.* [Here according to the deeds of King Alexander, the Confessor presents an instructive example, saying that although Alexander by his power subjugated to himself an empire as the conqueror of the whole world, he was nonetheless subjugated by the victory of death, and was not able to avoid the sentence of the Almighty.]
- 2461 *Thus was he slain that whilom slowh.* Alexander is not a victim of chance but of his own choices. He epitomizes the unwise king tyrannized by his own will. See Peck (*Kingship and Common Profit*, pp. 87–89) on Gower’s views on will, choice, and fate. See, especially, *VC* 2.4.203–08 on this matter.
- 2484 *Without cause resonable.* For a balanced view of when to wage war but of the preferability of peace, see *VC* 5.13.961–76.
- 2490–2515 Gower’s attack on the crusades reflects his general disaffection for clerical abuse. See Peck (*Kingship and Common Profit*, p. 89). Coleman (*Medieval Readers*, pp. 91–92 and pp. 300–01n88) sees Gower’s lack of military ethic to be part of a “disappointment in England’s chivalry,” where chivalric romance leans toward complaint, and where anticrusade sentiments (e.g., *CA* 4.1608 ff.) echo “the opinions of the Lollards” (p. 301).
- 2547 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Facilitas venie occasionem prebet delinquendi.* [Ease of lust offers occasion for sinning.]
- 2580–98 “The law of nature is here defined by the behaviour of animals” (White, *Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, p. 183). Compare 5.4917–31 and 3.2631–32, “where *kinde* may refer to impulse of an instinctive nature”; see also *MO* 4885–87 (White, p. 184n32). The point is that Nature does not give reason

- to human beings. That comes from God in conjunction with humankind's immortal soul. Compare 7.490–93. See also Baker ("Priesthood of Genius," p. 290) on Gower's condemnation of war as part of his affirmation of "kinde" and reason.
- 2588–89 Olsson ("Natural Law," p. 234) suggests that, for Gower, these lines show that a "lawe of kinde" as well as reason "should keep man from injuring others."
- 2597 *honeste*. Olsson ("Natural Law," p. 232) suggests that the term implies "a generic moral probity (*honestum*)" (compare 8.1994–97); Genius expressly uses the term here in his accommodation of natural law to reason. It refers to the relationships of shamefastness to reasonability. Compare Gower's use of the term in 7.5388 and 8.2026. See also the Latin marginal gloss at 7.4218.
- 2599 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Nota secundum Solinum contra homicidas de natura cuiusdam Auis faciem ad similitudinem humanam habentis, que cum de preda sua hominem juxta flum occiderit videritque in aqua similem sibi occisum, statim pre dolore moritur.* [Note according to Solinus against homicides concerning the nature of a certain bird having a face like a human one, which, when it killed a man for its prey next to a river and saw in the water that he was similar to the one he had killed, immediately died for grief.]
- 2600–01 *Solyns spekth of . . . fowhles.* Compare MO 5029–40. The reference appears to be to Solinus' *Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium*, which describes strange lands, peoples, and other creatures of the world; but I have been unable to identify the specific passage. Much of Solinus is copied from Philip's *Natural History*, but I find no reference to such a bird there either. Perhaps he has in mind some form of vulture, with "a face of blod and bon / Lich to a man in resemblance" (3.2602–03) but the point is that the bird serves as a figure of remorse that is deep-seated within its nature, a kind of conscience.
- 2639–2717 Apparently Gower follows Benoît, *Roman de Troie*, lines 6519–6612, though the story also occurs in Dares, *De Excidio Troiae Historia* 16, and Guido, *Historia Destructionis Troiae (Gest Hyst.* 13.5225 ff.). The moral *He mai noght failen of his mede / That hath merci* (lines 2639–40) is Augustinian. See Yeager (*Pax Poetica*, pp. 105–06). The tale itself shows how to end war and stands in opposition to the foolish and fatal war-making of Alexander (see Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, p. 90).
- 2642 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum de pietate contra homicidum in guerris habenda. Et narrat qualiter Achilles vna cum Thelapho filio suo contra Regem Meseē, qui tunc Theucer vocabatur, bellum inierunt; et cum Achilles dictum Regem in bello prostratum occidere voluisse, Thelaphus pietate motus ipsum clipeo suo cooperiens veniam pro Rege a patre postulauit: pro quo facto ipse Rex adhuc viuens Thelaphum Regni sui heredem libera voluntate constituit.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example concerning maintaining a pitying [or pious] restraint against killing in war. And he tells how Achilles along with Thelaphus his son waged war against King Mesea who then was called Theucer; and when Achilles wanted to kill the said king who had fallen in the battle, Thelaphus, moved by pity [or piousness], covered him with his shield

and begged mercy from his father on behalf of the king; for which deed the king, still living, willingly established Thelaphus as the heir to his kingdom.]

- 2703–06 Immoderate love is only partially successful in teaching benevolence. Nonetheless, “by nature man should be inclined to graciousness, trust, and a liberality modeled on the ‘fre largesse’ of Nature” (Olsson, “Natural Law,” p. 246). In Books 1, 2, and 3 Genius “discovered a good in the ‘lawe of kinde’ independent of its power to offset the sins of malice” (p. 246); in Books 5, 6, and 8, he identifies a “reson” that is “independent of its power to remedy the sins of ‘nature’” (p. 247).
- 2722 *Tak pité and compassioun.* Pity is the fifth daughter of Patience, the remedy against homicide and wrath in general. See *MO* 13897–969, where Gower compares it to treacle, a remedy that cures the heart of poisonous swelling and the abscess of old rancor. On the troubled nature of this topic, especially during the machinations of the Merciless Parliament, see Galloway, “Literature of 1388.”

EXPLANATORY NOTES TO BOOK 4

Latin Verses i (before line 1). **Line 1:** *Dicunt accidiam fore nutricem viciorum* (“They say that sloth is the nurse of the vices”). Proverbial. See Whiting, S392. Gower’s source could be *Distichs of Cato*. He plays variations on the adage in *MO* 5266–68 and *CA* 4.3380–82 and 7.4384–86. **Line 4:** *Furatoque prius ostia claudit equo* (“After the horse is stolen [Sloth] closes the doors”). Proverbial. See Whiting, S697. Compare *CA* 4.901–03. Bennett suggests that gnomic phrases such as this lend credit to the idea that the Latin rubrics are Gower’s (*Middle English Literature*, p. 414).

- 4 *Lachesce, and is the chief of all.* Compare Langland, *Piers Plowman* A 9.25–47, the parable of the man in a boat amidst a storm who is “lost for laccheise of hymselfe” (A 9.32).
- 8 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic in quarto libro loquitur Confessor de speciebus Accidie, quarum primam Tardacionem vocat, cuius condicionem pertractans Amanti super hoc consequenter opponit.* [Here in the fourth book the Confessor speaks about the species of Sloth, the first of whom he calls Tarrying, and, elaborating its nature to the Lover, he then inquires regarding this.]
- 9 *Tomorwe.* Macaulay (2:501) notes the borrowing from *MO*, line 5606: “Lachesce dist, ‘Demein, demein.’”
- 77–312 Gower bases his adaptation of Dido’s story on Ovid’s *Heroides* 7, or some version of Ovid’s story with commentary. He also may make use Vincent of Beauvais’ *Speculum Naturale*. See Schmitz, “Gower, Chaucer, and the Classics,” for discussion of Gower’s use of source materials in composing this account of Dido’s response to Aeneas’ betrayal. Other medieval retellings of Dido’s grief, like Gower’s mostly based on Ovid’s *Heroides* rather than the original account by Virgil, may be found in Chaucer’s *HF*, lines 219–432; *LGW*, lines 924–1367; Jean de Meun’s *RR*, lines 13173 ff., and Pynson’s

“Letter of Dydo to Eneas” (242 lines with a 63-line prologue and 14-line Envoy), in his *Boke of Fame Made by Geffrey Chaucer with dyverse other of his works*, 1526?, STC 5088, a poem independent of Gower, Chaucer, and *Heroides*, though pleasantly affiliated.

On the yoking of Dido and Aeneas, Penelope and Ulysses, Grosseteste, and the Foolish Virgins to exemplify *Lachesce*, Burrow (*Ricardian Poetry*, pp. 84–85) observes:

Gower creates a primary effect of wit and ingenuity. What, the riddle might run, do Aeneas, Ulysses, Bishop Grosseteste, and the Foolish Virgins have in common? But there is also humour, in the relation of the two Ovidian examples to the lover's case. Aeneas and Ulysses each enjoyed the devotion of his lady, and any “lachesse” in such circumstances is unimaginable to Amans. He would not delay for a moment . . . if only his mistress would take the slightest notice of him. . . . Beyond this humour, again, lie possibilities of irony. Both Aeneas and Ulysses were “delayed.” . . . [Perhaps] “lachesse in loves cas” is not a vice at all.

See also Peck (“Problematics of Irony,” pp. 216–18) for a more detailed analysis of irony in Book 4.

80 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum contra istos qui in amoris causa tardantes delinquunt. Et narrat qualiter Dido Regina Cartaginis Eneam ab incendiis Troie fugitium in amorem suum gauisa suscepit: qui cum postea in partes Ytalie a Cartagine bellaturum se transtulit, nimiamque ibidem moram faciens tempus reditus sui ad Didonem vltra modum tardauit, ipsa intollerabili dolore concussa sui cordis intima mortali gladio transfodit.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against those who are delinquent in the cause of love by tarrying. And he narrates how Dido the Queen of Carthage, rejoicing, wrapped in her love Eneas fleeing from the fires of Troy. When he afterwards betook himself from Carthage to battles in the regions of Italy and, making there too great a delay, unreasonably extended the time of his return to Dido, she, stricken by an unbearable sorrow, stabbed the innermost regions of her heart with a lethal sword.]

99 ff.

On Gower's dialogic craftsmanship in shaping the ethical ironies of Sloth in Dido's busy letter writing with its swan example, see Peck (“Problematics of Irony,” pp. 216–18).

104 ff.

“This picture seems to be constructed partly from a misreading or misunderstanding of Ovid, *Her. Ep.* vii.I.f., ‘Sic ubi fata vocant, udis, abiectus in herbis / Ad vada Mæandri concinit albus olor.’ [“Thus, at the summons of fate, casting himself down amid the watery grasses by the shallows of Maeander, sings the white swan” — trans. Showerman.] It is difficult to see how our author translated these lines, but the result, which must have been chiefly due to his imagination, is rather creditable to him. Chaucer gives the true sense in *LGW*, lines 1355 ff.: ‘Ryght so,’ quod she, ‘as that the white swan / Ayenst his deth begynneth for to syng: / Ryght so to yow I make my compleynynge’” (Mac 2:502).

- 147–234 Gower's version of Ulysses' return vaguely follows *Heroides* 1, though the story is so common and here so brief that he probably wrote from memory.
- 152 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur super eodem qualiter Penelope Vlixem maritum suum, in obsidione Troie diucius morantem, ob ipsius ibidem tardacionem Epistola sua redarguit.* [Here he speaks about the same thing, how Penelope complained in her letter against her husband Ulysses on account of his tardiness, since he was delaying too long at the siege of Troy.]
- 153 *his trewe wif.* Bakalian (*Aspects of Love*, pp. 35–44) sees the Tale of Penelope as part of Gower's celebration of true marriage and “deep and caring love,” which the poet characterizes as “honeste” love. It is reciprocal love, as she reminds Ulysses (4.195), showing her “friskey side” as she “wolde his love aquite” as soon as he gets home. Bakalian draws parallels between Gower's views on marriage here and in the tales of Alceone, Alcestis, and Lucrece: all four good wives have strong affinities with the poet's attitude toward marriage in his *Traitié*.
- 204–06 On the kinship of imagination, *ingenium*, the *gentil herte* (line 206), and “resonable entencion” (4.2270) on the peripheries of Sloth, see Olsson (“Aspects of *Gentilesse*,” pp. 242–45). On the loose ties of *gentilesse* with *ingenium*, see pp. 253–54. Amans' busyness leads to many forms of invention but without full engagement of his “wittes alle” (4.2387); nor is Genius much help in his sorting out the distinctions. Olsson's essay is quite fine in its relating of matters of idleness and *gentilesse* of a self-indulgent kind in the tales of Ulysses, Pygmalion, and Araxarathen.
- 234 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota adhuc super eodem de quodam Astrologo, qui quoddam opus ingeniosum quasi ad complementum septennio perducens, vnius momenti tardacione omnem sui operis diligenciam penitus frustrauit.* [Note moreover about the same matter, concerning a certain astrologer who, pursuing for seven years a certain most cunning labor almost to its completion, totally negated all the diligence of his work by the delay of a single moment.] Many apocryphal stories of magic grew up around the reputations of Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon and their experiments. See, e.g., Robert Greene's play, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, which offers a more elaborate version of the story of the talking head of brass: as in Gower, the head talked, but the experimenter slept through his success.
- 250 ff. The source for the story of the Foolish Virgins is Matthew 25:1–13.
- 271 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota adhuc contra tardacionem de v. virginibus fatuis, que nimiam moram facientes intrante sposo ad nupcias cum ipso non introierunt.* [Note moreover against delay the account of the five foolish virgins, who taking too much of a delay did not enter the wedding ceremony with the groom when he arrived.]
- Me was nevere assigned place. Amans' “problem is not in keeping his appointments but getting them” (Pearsall, “Gower's Narrative Art,” p. 476).

- 317 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur Confessor de quadam specie Accidie, que pusillanimitas dicta est, cuius ymaginatiua formido neque virtutes aggredi neque vicia fugere audet; sicque vtriusque vite, tam active quam contemplatiue, premium non attingit.* [Here the Confessor speaks about a certain type of Sloth which is called Cowardice, whose imaginary fear does not dare to embrace virtues or flee vices. And thus it does not attain the reward of either kind of life, the active or the contemplative.]
- 365–69 Simpson (*Sciences and the Self*, pp. 160–61) compares Genius' advocacy of boldness in love to Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* 1.607–08, where the rustic lover is advised by the *praeceptor amoris* to go for it, that Chance and Venus help the brave. See also 4.723–25 and 4.1776–85, where Genius' advice is “stickingly close” to that of Ovid's teacher (p. 161).
- 371 ff. The Tale of Pygmalion and the Statue could be based on Ovid, *Met.* 10.243–97, or Jean de Meun, *RR*, lines 20817–21210. The tale was well known, though Genius embellishes it nicely. See Peck (“Problematics of Irony,” pp. 222–23). Kuczynski (“Gower's Metaethics,” pp. 201–05) offers an analysis of the dangerous role of fantasy in the tale. See also explanatory note to line 1155.
- 372 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic in amoris causa loquitur contra pusillanimes, et dicit quod Amans pre timore verbis obmutescere non debet, set continuando preces sui amoris expedicionem tucius prosequatur. Et ponit Confessor exemplum, qualiter Pigmaleon, pro eo quod preces continuauit, quandam ymaginem ebrneam, cuius pulcritudinis concupiscencia illaqueatus extitit, in carnem et sanguinem ad latus suum transformatam sencit.* [Here he speaks against cowards in the cause of love, and he says that the Lover ought not to keep muted his words because of fear, but by continuing his prayers would more securely pursue the fulfillment of his love. And the Confessor presents an instructive example how Pigmaleon, because of the fact that he continued his prayers, perceived that a certain ivory statue — by the lust of whose beauty he was ensnared — was transformed by his side into flesh and blood.]
- 448 *solein.* The gloss “lonely (strange)” is Macaulay's, based on Gower's recurrent use of the term *solein/soulein* in *MO* in the sense of “alone, lonely.” Macaulay challenges Pauli's reading of “solempne,” which “gives neither sense nor metre” (2:503).
- 451ff. The story of Iphis is from Ovid, *Met.* 9.666–797. The account of the ring of oblivion, which follows, is perhaps based on Peter Comestor's commentary on Exodus 6 (*PL* 198, col. 1144). The story also appears (from Comestor) in Ranulf Higden's popular *Polychronicon* 2:322–25.
- 451ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum super eodem, qualiter Rex Ligdus vxori sue Thelacuse pregnanti minabatur, quod si filiam pareret, infans occideretur: que tamen postea cum filiam ediderat, Isis dea partus tunc presens filiam nomine filii Yphim appellari ipsamque more masculi educari admonuit: quam pater filium credens, ipsam in maritagium filie cuiusdam principis etate solita copulauit. Set cum Yphis debitum sue coniugi vnde soluere non habuit, deos in sui adiutorium interpellabat; qui super hoc miserti femininum genus in masculinum ob affectum nature in Yphe per*

omnia transmatarunt. [Here he presents an instructive example about the same thing, how King Ligdus threatened his pregnant wife Thelacuse, that if she bore a daughter he would kill the baby. But nonetheless later, when she had issued forth a baby girl, Isis the goddess of birth, then being present, instructed her to call her daughter Yphis by name and to raise her in the manner of a son. The father, believing he had a son, joined her at the usual age in marriage to the daughter of a certain prince. But when Yphis did not possess the wherewithal to render her debt to her bride, she called upon the gods for help; and these, taking pity on this on account of what nature desires, entirely transformed Yphis' gender from feminine to masculine.]

- 461 *of childinge is the goddesse.* In Ovid Isis is identified as Io, in her transformed state. She is the one who reassures Thelacuse that her child will be safe and who, when the time comes, changes her into a male. Gower gives the power of transformation to Cupid (4.488), but here specifies that Isis is goddess of childbirth. In Ovid, she only says she is a goddess who will bring help to those who call upon her (*Met.* 9.699–701). *The Assembly of Gods* comes closer to Genius' interpretation by observing that “[o]f all maner frute she had the governaunce” (line 335).
- 475 *ten yer age.* In Ovid the two are married at age thirteen. See Watt on Gower's having them marry before they are sexually active (“Sins of Omission,” pp. 542–46), but also the culture's different attitudes toward females with females and men with men. Female sodomy “seems to have been more or less invisible in Gower's own society; there is little or no surviving evidence in England or Wales of women being examined about sexual misconduct with women” (pp. 543–44).
- 478–505 The story of Iphis and Iante raises the question of potential homosexuality. White (*Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, p. 193) suggests that “Nature may be so intent on sexual activity that she is even prepared to operate against her own arrangements for its channeling. The presentation hints that at the bottom of the human psyche lies a naked, unconditioned, undifferentiating sexual impulse—and that suggests something morally anarchic at the bottom of the totality one calls Nature.” That is, Nature is reassuringly moral and simultaneously troublingly unreliable. Compare *MO*, lines 8629–40 and 17185–91, and also the Tale of Canace and Machaire (3.143–336).
- 488 *Cupide.* See note to line 461. By giving the agency of transformation to Cupid, rather than Isis, Genius shifts the emphasis to the power of love rather than women among women, where (in Ovid) Isis remembers her life as Io and argues that if she could be protected by transformation, so too can Thelacuse. Whenever she speaks to Thelacuse the signs of her intention are figured in her horns (recalling the cow, but also the moon, another figure for childing and change).
- 501 *Transformeth Iphe into a man.* Trevisa/Higden suggests that such a transformation might be possible within the jurisdiction of nature. After commenting on hermaphrodites and androgyny he observes: “we haueþ i-seie

and i-herde þat some haueþ i-chaunged hir schap; for we sighe in Affrica a mayde þe same day þat sche scholde haue be i-wedded, i-chaunged and i-torned into a man, and was i-berded anon, and anoon hadde alle lymes as a man schulde haue, and wedded a wyf withinne a schort tyme after. Also Seynte Austyn de civitate Dei, libro 3, capitulo 29, toucheþ þat A. Gellius [libro] Atticarum noctium seipþ þat wommen beeþ somtyme i-torned into men: hit is no made tale, but hit is soop as þe lettre is i-write" (*Polychronicon* 2:195). I have not been able to find the passage in Augustine to which Higden alludes. See also Watt, who observes that according to medieval medical theory "the transformation from female to male was not in itself contrary to nature" ("Sins of Omission," p. 544), citing Thomas Laquer, *Making Sex*, especially pp. 134–42; and also Joan Cadden, *Meaning of Sex Difference*, p. 3.

- 544 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat Confessor de vicio Obliusionis, quam mater eius Accidia ad omnes virtutum memorias necnon et in amoris causa immemorem constituit.* [Here the Confessor treats about the vice of Forgetfulness, whose mother, Sloth, makes her forgetful of every memory of virtue even in the cause of love.]

626 *between tuo stoles.* Proverbial. See Whiting, S794. Compare *CA* Prol.336.

629 *Between forgetelnesse and drede.* Juxtaposition of opposites, "Between the two extremes" (5.7641), is a common feature of gnomic observation. Compare *TC* 3.1315: "bitwixen drede and sikernesse." In Gower, e.g., "Between the vertu and the vice" (Prol.79, 7.2739); "between ernest and game" (Prol.462 — commonplace in Chaucer); "lif and deth" (1.289, 5.5466); "dai and nyht" (4.2994); "the corps and the spirit" (4.2499); "whyt and red" (5.3016); "to moche and lyte" (5.7689); "angel and man" (6.1531); "wel or wo" (4.639, 7.1441, 8.1028); "the trouthe and the falshode" (7.1533); "more and lesse" (7.2015); and "Between the reddour and pité" (7.3919, 7.4171), to cite a few.

647 ff. Macaulay notes (2:503):

For the Ring of Forgetfulness here spoken of see Petrus Comestor, *Exodus* vi., where it is related that Moses in command of the Egyptians captured the chief city of the Ethiopians by the help of Tarbis, daughter of their king, and married her in recompense of her services. Then, wishing to return to Egypt and being detained by his wife, "tanquam vir peritus astrorum duas imagines sculpsit in gemmis huius efficacie, ut altera memoriam, altera oblivionem conferret. Cumque paribus anulis eas inseruisset, alterum, scilicet oblivionis anulum, uxori praebuit, alterum ipse tulit; ut sic pari amore sic paribus anulis insignirentur. Coepit ergo mulier amoris viri obliisci, et tandem libere in Aegyptum regressus est" (Migne, *Patrol.* vol. 198, p. 1144). [“as a man most learned about the stars, he carved gemstones into two images with the following powers: namely that one would produce memory, the other forgetfulness. And when he had inserted these into two similar rings, he offered the ring of forgetfulness to his wife and took the other himself, so that thus they would be engraved with an equal love by equal rings. The woman therefore proceeded to forget her love of her husband, and he finally departed freely into Egypt.” trans. Galloway.] Compare Godfr. Viterb., *Pantheon*, v. (p. 155).

- 731 ff. The Tale of Demophon and Phyllis was well known. See *RR*, lines 13211 ff., and Chaucer, *LGW*, lines 2394–2561. Gower's version seems to be derived from Ovid, *Heroides* 2, and *Remedia Amoris*, lines 591–604, though he might also have consulted works such as Hyg. 59, Vat. Myth. I 156 or II 258, or Boccaccio, *Genealogie Deorum Gentilium Libri* 10.52 and 11.25. Gower alters several details (for example, he reverses Demophon's itinerary so that he is on his way to Troy instead of returning). Gower may have been the first to translate “amygdalus” as “fillibert,” thereby creating the pun. Lydgate follows Gower's suggestion in *The Temple of Glas*, line 88, and *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, lines 68–70.
- 733 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic in amoris causa contra obliuiosos ponit Confessor exemplum, qualiter Demophon versus bellum Troianum itinerando a Phillide Rodopeie Regina non tantum in hospicium, sed eciam in amorem, gaudio magno susceptus est: qui postea ab ipsa Troie descendens redditum infra certum tempus fidelissime se compromisit. Set quia huiusmodi promissionis diem statutum postmodum oblitus est, Phillis obliuionem Demephontis lacrimis primo deplangens, tandem cordula collo suo circumligata in quadam corulo pre dolore se mortuam suspendit.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against Forgetfulness in the cause of love, telling how Demophon in traveling toward the Trojan war was received with great joy by Phillis, queen of Rodopeia, taken not only in hospitality but also in love, and who subsequently departing from her for Troy faithfully promised that he would return within a certain time. But because he later forgot the established day of this promise, Phillis, at first bewailing tearfully Demophon's forgetfulness, finally, wrapping a rope around her neck, for sorrow hanged herself to death on a hazel tree.]
- 823–26 Remarking on the constancy of Phillis' vigil, and in reference to Gower's tender regard for Canace, Medea, and Lucrese, Pearsall observes: “It is . . . women who draw forth Gower's largest humanity and his most deeply effective expressions of that humanity” (“Gower's Narrative Art,” p. 481).
- Latin verses iv** (before line 887). Sowing and bearing fruit are common metaphors for sexual relations and bearing offspring; see, e.g., *RR*, lines 19701–35.
- 892 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat Confessor de vicio Necligencie, cuius condicio Accidiam amplectens omnes artes sciencie, tam in amoris causa quam aliter, ignominiosa pretermittens, cum nullum poterit eminere remedium, sui ministerii diligenciam expostfacto in vacuum attemptare presunit.* [Here the Confessor discourses about the vice of Negligence, whose nature it is to embrace Sloth and ignominiously neglect all the skills of knowledge, both in love's case and elsewhere. Then, when no remedy is found in his case, he attacks groundlessly and after the fact assails the courtroom officer's diligence.] Note: *remedium*, *minister*, and *expostfacto* are all legal terms, in keeping with the metaphor of a badly handled court case.
- 901–03 *grete stiede . . . stable dore fast.* Proverbial. See Whiting, S697.
- 979–1034 The story of Phaeton was well known. See Ovid, *Met.* 2.1–328; Hyg. 154; Vat. Myth. II 57; and Boccaccio, *Genealogie Deorum Gentilium Libri* 7.41. Macaulay

notes (2:504): “The moral drawn by Gower from the story of Phaeton is against going too low, that is abandoning the higher concerns of love owing to slothful negligence. The next story is against aiming too high and neglecting the due claims of service.”

- 982 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic contra vicium necligencie ponit Confessor exemplum; et narrat quod cum Pheton filius Solis currum patris sui per aera regere debuerat, admonitus a patre ut equos ne deviarent equa manu diligencius refrenaret, ipse consilium patris sua negligencia preteriens, equos cum curru nimis basse errare permisit; vnde non solum incendio orbem inflammatu, set et seipsum de curru cadentem in quoddam fluum demergi ad interitum causauit.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against the vice of Negligence; and he narrates that when Phaeton, the son of the Sun, was about to steer his father's chariot through the air, he was admonished by his father that, lest he misguide his horses, he should rein them in with an equal hand. But he ignored his father's counsel by his negligence, and allowed the horses and the chariot to wander too far down; whence not only did he burn the earth with fire, but he also caused his own demise by falling from the chariot into a certain river.]
- 1035–71 For the story of Icarus see Ovid, *Met.* 8.183–259, though the story was common, e.g., Vat. Myth. II 61. See *CA* 4.5286.
- 1039 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Exemplum super eodem de Icharo Dedali filio in carcere Minotauri existente, cui Dedalus, ut inde euolaret, alas componens, firmiter iniunxit ne nimis alte propter Solis ardorem ascenderet: quod Icharus sua negligencia postponens, cum alcius sublimatus fuisset, subito ad terram corruens expirauit.* [An instructive example on the same thing, concerning Icarus, the son of Daedalus: while they were in the Minotaur's prison, Daedalus, fashioning wings that he might escape, firmly enjoined him not to rise too high on account of the sun's heat. But Icarus dismissed this because of his negligence, and when he had risen up too high, he rushed suddenly down to the earth and died.]
- 1087 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur Confessor super illa specie Accidie, que Ociūm dicitur, cuius condicio in virtutum cultura nullius occupacionis diligenciam admittens, cuiuscumque expedicionem cause non attingit.* [Here the Confessor speaks about that species of Sloth which is called Idleness, whose condition it is to take on no diligence of any labor in the cultivation of virtues, and not to attain to the fulfillment of any cause whatsoever.]
- 1155 *besinesse.* See Kuczynski, “Gower's Metaethics,” on Gower's double-valenced use of the term *besinesse* here and elsewhere in Book 4 as part of his discussion of the Tale of Pygmalion and the Statue and its relationship to the ethics of choice.
- 1167 *nede hath no lawe.* Proverbial, and (apparently) a legal maxim. See Whiting, N51. See also *CA* 8.75, and *Piers Plowman* B.20.10 ff.
- 1180 *mi contienance I pike.* Macaulay (2:505) glosses the sense to be: “thus I keep up a pretence (for staying),” comparing the line to 1.698, “And many a contenance

- he piketh." Certainly he is concerned with such a pretense, but his means seems to be preparing an agreeable countenance to meet the occasion with his best face on.
- 1196 *mi busi whiel*. An image of playing Fortune's game, but also of the busy circumnavigation of his gaze, as she is the hub that he watches from all angles.
- 1245 ff. No specific source is known for the Tale of Rosiphilee, though stories of punishment for aloof ladies are common in medieval literature. See Neilson, "Purgatory of Cruel Beauties." The plot is somewhat akin to that of *Dame Sirith*, where a woman is frightened by a terrifying alternative into becoming sexually active, though here the moral is more gentle. The tale has been regarded by many as among Gower's best-told stories. See Nicholson (*Annotated Index*, pp. 274–79).
- 1249 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum contra istos qui amoris occupacionem omittentes, grauioris infortunii casus expectant. Et narrat de quadam Armenie Regis filia, que huiusmodi condicione in principio iuuentutis ociosa persistens, mirabili postea visione castigata in amoris obsequium pre ceteris diligencior efficitur.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against those who, omitting attention to love, have in store a fall of graver misfortune. And he narrates about a daughter of the king of Armenia, who, persisting lazily in this condition in early youth, and then chastised by a miraculous vision, is made more diligent than anyone in servility to love.]
- 1301 *madle*. From Anglo-Norman *madl(e)*, a variant of "mâle." Gower uses the word again in *CA* 7.4215: "The madle is mad for the femele." See also "Femelle et madle en un enfant" (*MO*, line 1029); and "la mort depose / Son madle, soule se dispose" (*MO*, line 17884–85).
- 1321–21 J offers the following couplet instead of the lines in F: *The beaute of hire face schon / Wel brihter þen þe cristel ston*, an attractive alternative followed in some other manuscripts.
- 1396–402 Kendall, in his discussion of women as household exchange, notes that the groom's princess laments the "loss of status" (*Lordship and Literature*, p. 144) due to her refusal to love/marry thus warning Rosiphilee of the cost of her "independent agency. . . . To serve household interests with her own will is to write herself out of household activity after marriage. Rosiphelee's vision instructs her to decide to become a sign of the bond by which patrimonies are transferred and men achieve lordship" (p. 145). She will join the adorned procession of exemplary ladies who "appear as personally empty signs of marriage" (p. 145).
- 1452–54 *Love is an occupacion. . . .* Love, *gentilesse*, and idleness all seem to be ambiguously linked here, pointing to a subversion of aristocratic notions of ease and the games surrounding *demandes d'amour*, as Genius argues both sides of the questions. See Olsson ("Aspects of Gentilesse," pp. 230–41). The model behind these subjective courtly equivocations is *RR* and the courtesies of

- Oiseuse (Idleness) and the Garden of Deduit (Pleasure). See Fleming (*Roman de la Rose: A Study*, pp. 78–80) on idleness, *otium*, and *luxuria*.
- 1454 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Non quia sic se habet veritas, sed opinio Amantum.* [For the truth is not thus, but this is the opinion of Lovers.]
- 1467–84 In exploring Genius' cultural relationship with Venus, White amusingly suggests: "One might try to see Genius as priest-in-charge of a very difficult parish: he can legitimately lament Venus' moral shortcomings and still be determined to serve her, perhaps to bring her into a more satisfactory moral state"; nevertheless, "telling evidence that Genius finds his double loyalty unsustainable comes with [his] final recommendation that Amans should abandon love . . . his double status . . . seems to suggest that while his priesthood presses him toward nature, his association with love is an association with vice" ("Division and Failure," p. 609). See 8.2075–88.
- 1495–96 *Whyl sche the charge myhte bere / Of children.* Genius suggests that the woman who is "slow to marry" might have children in the meantime anyway, and he notes that marriage would impose onto her the full burden of supporting them. Although the passage strays increasingly far from the initial point of the tale of Rosiphelee, Genius addresses a pressing economic reason for marriage from an unmarried mother's point of view. Women were apparently marrying much later or not at all in the later fourteenth century, evidently in part because of attractive wages after the population decline from the Black Death. Many women in late fourteenth-century England kept working (as servants or others) into their mid-twenties, and perhaps up to 17 percent never did marry: see Goldberg (*Women, Work and Life Cycle*, e.g., pp. 20, 329). Goldberg's evidence suggests that sexual involvement was assumed in many of the disputes about marriage contracts that reached law courts (p. 329), implying that illegitimate children might be common; but Goldberg also hypothesizes (in contrast to Genius) that one reason women did delay marriage in this period was precisely to put off the burden of many children that an early marriage would more likely impose (p. 352). Goldberg argues that, by the late fifteenth century, the drop in procreation was severe enough that English culture began emphasizing women as wives and mothers and disparaging them as workers, a pattern of social prejudice against working women that, with periods of exception, obtained for centuries (see e.g., p. 352). Yet this prejudice against women who married late or never is already apparent in Genius' comments here. (See Galloway, "Literature of 1388.")
- 1505 The Tale of Jephthah's Daughter is based on Judges 11. The story is also briefly retold in Chaucer's Physician's Tale, though with a reversal of the moral as Virginia offers prayers of gratitude for preserving her virginity. Genius' account adheres more closely to the Vulgate.
- 1508 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum super eodem: Et narrat de filia Iepte, que cum ex sui patris voto in holocaustum deo occidi et offerri deberet, ipsa pro eo quod virgo fuit et prolem ad augmentacionem populi dei nondum genuisset, xl dierum spacium vt cum suis sodalibus virginibus suam defleret virginitatem, priusquam*

moreretur, in exemplum aliarum a patre postulauit. [Here he presents an instructive example about the same thing, and he narrates about Jephthah's daughter, who, when by her father's vow she ought to have been offered in a sacrifice to God and killed, besought from her father a span of forty days to lament with her companions her virginity, as an example for other women — because she was a virgin and had not yet given birth for the augmentation of the people of God — before she would die.]

- 1524 *Mai no man lette that schal falle.* Proverbial and ancient, evidently predating Christian ethics (compare *Beowulf*, line 455, “Gæð a wyrd swa hio scel!” [fate always proceeds as it must]).
- 1562–89 In his discussion of “bourgeois didacticism” in Gower, Galloway (“Gower’s Quarrel”) writes: “By framing [Jephtha’s daughter’s] death in terms of lost productivity and situating it with other economic morals in the book of Sloth, Gower emphasizes an ethic in which material and population gain is the selfless goal of community, by which *the people* might be *encressed*. . . . Such an ethic is obviously alienated from the immediate self-interest of survival. She acquieses in her death . . . without complaint about that” (p. 249). Galloway then contrasts Chaucer’s adaptation of the story in The Physician’s Tale, which converts the sense from common profit to one of proper governance (pp. 249–52).
- 1619 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur quod in amoris causa milicie probitas ad armorum laboris exercicium nullatenus torpescat.* [Here he declares that in the cause of love, probity of military service for the exertion of labor in arms should by no means become lax.]
- 1633 *lo, wher he goth!* The line has resonances of Troilus’ fame as he passes Criseyde’s window in Chaucer’s poem, while the people exclaim over his valor (TC 2.610–58); certainly his fame serves him well in the busyness of love. As he passes the window a second time, Pandarus asserts, “Lo, yond he rit!” (TC 2.1284), to which Criseyde replies, “Ye, so he doth!”
- 1650–55 Amans’ sheepish faintheartedness (see 5.6945) derives more from fourteenth-century French *dits amoureux* than from the heartier *RR*. See Burrow, “Portrayal of Amans,” especially pp. 6–11.
- 1682 *Bot nou ho ther, I seie no more.* The Lover’s ideas have drifted close to a topic of great controversy in the 1380s and 1390s: clerics on crusade. Most dangerously, his views echo the complaints of the heretical and pacifist Lollards concerning crusades. On the broader topic of Gower’s pacifism see explanatory note to 3.2342–60. Many orthodox writers and intellectuals as well as Lollards were incensed by the “crusade” mounted by bishop Henry Despenser of Norwich in 1383 against the “schismatic” (French-supported) Pope Clement VII, on behalf of the English-supported Pope Urban VI. For good reason, the endeavor was controversial in the English parliament and court, before, during, and after its miserable failure. Bishop Despenser took five months to be utterly defeated in the battle on behalf of the pope, fighting Flemish supporters of Clement even though most of the Flemish supported

- Urban. For discussion and listing of the Lollard writings against this, see Hudson and Gradon, *English Wycliffite Sermons*, pp. 146–51. (See also Galloway, “Literature of 1388.”)
- 1693 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic allegat Amans in sui excusacionem, qualiter Achilles apud Troiam propter amorem Polexenae arma sua per aliquod tempus dimisit.* [Here the Lover alleges in his excuse, how Achilles at Troy on account of love for Polyxena put away his arms for a certain time.]
- 1710 *To winne chaf and lese whete.* An inversion of the proverb “Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille” (CTVII[B²]3443). See Whiting, W205. The metaphor is biblical; see Jeremiah 23:28, Matthew 3:12, and Luke 3:17, but also Paul, 2 Corinthians 3:6. Compare also CT II(B¹)701–02, X(I)35–36, and LGW G.312, G.529. See Robertson, *Preface to Chaucer*, pp. 58, 316–17, and Peck, “St. Paul and the *Canterbury Tales*,” pp. 92–96.
- 1757–60 *besinesse.* See Kuczynski (“Gower’s Metaethics”) on *besinesse* as a metaphysical concept reaching back to Abelard. See also Gower’s treatment of the idea in his Tale of Pygmalion.
- 1815–95 The story of Nauplius and Ulysses is referred to in Ovid, *Met.* 8.39, and Hyg. 95, though both name Palamedes, son of Nauplius, as the exposer of Ulysses. Gower also adds the foxes to pull the plow instead of the horse and oxen, as in Hyginus.
- 1818 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic dicit quod amoris delectamento postposito miles arma sua preferre debet: Et ponit exemplum de Vlixe, cum ipse a bello Troiano propter amorem Penelope remanere domi voluisset, Nauplius pater Palamedes eum tantis sermonibus allocutus est, quod Vlices thoro sue coniugis relicto labores armorum una cum aliis Troie magnanimus subibat.* [Here he says that, postponing the pleasure of love, a knight ought to prefer taking up arms; and he presents an instructive example about when Ulysses wanted to remain at home from the Trojan war on account of his love for Penelope, that Nauplius the father of Palamedes spoke to him with such speeches that Ulysses, leaving behind the bed of his wife, magnanimously took up the labors of arms, along with the others to Troy.]
- 1901–34 The worth of King Protesilaus is recorded in Ovid, *Heroides* 13.
- 1901 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic narrat super eodem qualiter Laodomia Regis Protheselai vxor, volens ipsum a bello Troiano secum retinere, fatatam sibi mortem in portu Troie prenunciavit: set ipse miliciam pocius quam ocia affectans, Troiam adiit, vbi sue mortis precio perpetue laudis Cronicam ademit.* [Here he narrates about the same thing, how Laodomia, the wife of King Protesilaus, wishing to keep him away from the Trojan war and with her, prognosticated his destined death in the port of Troy. But he, desiring militarism over idleness, went to Troy, where he purchased a historical record of perpetual fame for himself, at the price of his death.]
- 1935 ff. The account of Saul is based on 1 Kings 27–31 (1 Samuel 27–31, KJV).

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Adhuc super eodem, qualiter Rex Saul, non obstante quod per Samuelem a Phitonissa suscitatum et coniuratum responsum, quod ipse in bello moreretur, accepisset, hostes tamen suos aggrediens milicie famam cunctis huius vite blandimentis preposuit.* [Moreover on the same thing: how King Saul, even though he had received the response from Samuel (raised from the dead by Phitonissa and conjured to answer) that he would die in war, nonetheless, he attacked his enemies, putting the fame of military achievement before all pleasures of this life.]

1963–2013 The education of Achilles by Chiron is based upon Statius, *Achilleid* 2.110–28. See note to 3.1885–2195 on the violence of chivalric education. N.b., Wetherbee, “Rome, Troy, and Culture” (pp. 29–31), on Gower’s subsequent modifications of Statius in the Tale of Achilles and Deidamia (5.2961–2301), as Achilles, withdrawn from the context of the male chivalry he learned from Chiron, “adapts to life as a girl with remarkable and wholly uncanonical ease” that is quite apart from chivalry. He is “both graceful and . . . innocent” in his new role and so convincingly assimilated into the feminine virtues of “honour, servise and reverence” that even Ulysses is unable to recognize him.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur quod miles in suis primordiis ad audaciam prouocari debet. Et narrat qualiter Chiro Centaurus Achillem, quem secum ab infancia in monte Pileon educauit, vt audax efficeretur, primitus edocuit, quod cum ipse venacionibus ibidem insisteret, leones et tigrides huiusmodique animalia sibi resistencia et nulla alia fugitiua agitaret. Et sic Achilles in iuuentute animatus famosissime milicie probitatem postmodum adoptauit.* [Here he states that a knight in his beginning years ought to be stirred to valor. And he tells how Chiron the centaur, who had taken Achilles unto himself from infancy to educate him to be bold, from the beginning taught him, when he was in pursuit of game, to attack lions and tigers and other animals of that sort which offered resistance to him, and not any others that fled him. And Achilles thus disposed from youth later most famously acquired his excellence in arms.]

2014–2134 The story of Hercules and Achelous may be found in Ovid, *Met.* 9.1–97, though Gower relies on other sources for making Mercury his father (elsewhere in classical sources it is Jupiter) and for mention of the pillars of Hercules. The latter were well known in the fourteenth century; see, e.g., Higden, *Polychronicon* 1, cap. 11, pp. 302–05; and Chaucer, *The Monk’s Tale*, *CT* VII (B²)2117–18. Gower is apparently unique in naming Achelous “Achelons” (a form repeated in the *Traité* 7 where the same story is found [Mac 1:383–84]). Gower’s misreading of *u* as *n* in the Latin sources he used for the name was a common sort of error in some medieval scripts; “textura” script, for example (often used for elegant Latin), makes *u* and *n* nearly indistinguishable (Galloway, “Literature of 1388”).

2045–2131 The author of *Chaucer’s Ghoast* (1672) adopts these lines as his own in Arg. 6 on *Hercules, Achilous and Deianire*.

2048 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic dicit, quod Miles priusquam amoris amplexu dignus efficiatur, euentus bellicos Victoriosus amplectere debet. Et narrat qualiter Hercules et*

Achelons propter Deianiram Calidoinie Regis filiam singulare duellum adinuicem inierunt, cuius victor Hercules existens armorum meritis amorem virginis laudabiliter conquestauit. [Here he says that before a knight may be made worthy for the embrace of love, he ought to grasp military actions most victoriously. And he tells how Hercules and Achelon entered into single combat with one another on account of Deianira, daughter of the king of Calidonia, and as the victor in this by merit of arms Hercules most praiseworthy conquered the virgin's love.]

2135 ff. The accounts of Penthesilea and Philemenis derive from Benoît, *Roman de Troie*, lines 24309 ff. and 25767 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Nota de Pantasilea, Amazonie Regina, que Hectoris amore colligata contra Pirrum Achillis filium apud Troiam arma ferre eciam personaliter non recusauit.* [Note concerning Penthesilea, queen of Amazonia, who, bound to love of Hector, did not excuse herself from personally bearing arms at Troy against Pirrus the son of Achilles.]

2148 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Nota qualiter Philemenis propter milicie famam a finibus terre in defensionem Troie veniens tres puellas a Regno Amazonie quolibet anno percipiendas sibi et heredibus suis imperpetuum ea de causa habere promeruit.* [Note how Philemenis, for the fame of military glory, came from the boundaries of his own land in defense of Troy; and for that reason he merited having three young women provided each year in perpetuity from the kingdom of Amazonia, to be possessed by himself and his heirs.]

2183 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Nota pro eo quod Eneas Regem Turnum in bello deuicit, non solum amorem Lavine, set et regnum Ytalie sibi subiugatum obtinuit.* [Note that since Aeneas conquered King Turnus in battle, he obtained not only Lavinia's love but also the subjection of the kingdom of Italy.]

2199 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic dicit, quod generosi in amoris causa sepius preferuntur. Super quo querit Amans, Quid sit generositas: cuius veritatem questionis Confessor per singula dissoluit.* [Here he states that nobles are more often preferable in the cause of love. Regarding this, the Lover asks what nobility is; the truth of the matter the Confessor elaborates point by point.]

2204–2319 Genius' discussion of *gentilesse* is Boethian in origin (see especially *Consolation of Philosophy* 3.pr.6 and m.6) and bears many details in common with Chaucer's views. See Chaucer's "Gentilesse," as well as the discussion of the subject in The Wife of Bath's Tale (CT III[D]1109–64) and The Franklin's Tale. Gower first expressed the ideas in *MO*, lines 23389 ff. See also Dante, *Convivio* 4.10 ff., and Jean de Meun's *RR*, lines 18607–946, both of whom draw upon Boethius. For discussion of Gower's debate on *gentilesse* as an ambiguous courtly virtue see Olsson (*Structures of Conversion*, pp. 119–46). Also see note to 4.2270, below.

2209–11 *long time is falle in age . . . hih lignage / After the forme.* Compare Chaucer's "Gentilesse," where the lineage of the virtue is traced back to the "firste stok" (line 1), that is to Christ ("the firste fader in magestee" — line 19), in whose "forme" (to borrow Gower's term), rather than in public offices such as pope,

- king, or cardinal (“Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe” — lines 7, 14, 21), the “traces” of the virtue may be found (line 3).
- 2226 *Al was aliche gentil tho.* Compare the popular adage: “Whan Adam delve and Eve span,/ Who was then the gentleman?” The couplet was used in the Rising of 1381 but had a long lineage before that time. See Albert Friedman, “Whan Adam Delved . . .”: Contexts of a Historical Proverb,” in Larry Benson, ed., *Learned and the Lewed*, pp. 213–30.
- 2245 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Omnis quidem ad unum finem tendimus, sed diuerso tramite.* [We all are indeed headed to one end, though by diverse pathways.]
- 2269–70 *after the condicion / Of resonable entencion.* Olsson (*Structures of Conversion*, p. 131) cites Dante’s *Purgatorio* to exemplify the inner workings of *gentilesse*, apprehension, and intentionality in these lines. As Dante puts it: “Each one apprehends vaguely a good wherein the mind may find rest, and this it desires” (*Purgatorio* 17.127–28), and “Your faculty of apprehension draws an image from a real existence and displays it within you, so that it makes the mind turn to it; and if, thus turned, the mind inclines toward it, that inclination is love” (18.22–26; Singleton trans. as cited by Olsson). J. D. Burnley’s discussion of medieval cognitive psychology is useful in understanding what Gower means by *the condicion* (*Chaucer’s Language*, pp. 103–06).
- 2312–15 *no beste, / . . . with love scholde aqueinte, / . . . make it queinte / . . . while that it laste.* Genius engages in wordplay of a courtly/sexual kind that is well suited to the refined sensibility of *gentilesse* he wishes to convey. Compare Chaucer’s *HF*, lines 239–52, where, in describing the initial lovemaking of Dido and Aeneas, the narrator gets caught up to the point of embarrassment in his “queynte” words describing “[h]ow they aqueynteden in fere” (lines 245, 250; with a pun on “that faculte” [line 248] as well) to conclude, somewhat self-righteously: “Hyt were a long proces to telle, / And over-long for yow to dwelle” (lines 251–52). Gower’s remarks on the effects of love as beasts *with love scholde aqueinte* (“become intimate with” each other — *MED aqueinten* v. 1 [a]) and *make it queinte* (i.e., behave charmingly, or, perhaps, friskily) share in this playful idea of sex. For Genius, as a force of nature, the sexual connotations of courtesy are positive; but as he presents them, they are also noble, appropriate to *gentilesse* and *fin amour*. *[W]hile that it laste* acknowledges the transience of such physical love and emotional highs.
- 2321 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de amore caritatis, vbi dicit, Qui non diligit, manet in morte.* [Note concerning the love of charity, where it says, “Who does not love remains in death.”] See explanatory note to line 2325.
- 2325 1 John 3:14: “He that loveth not, abideth in death.”
- 2342–44 Job 5:7.
- 2348 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Apostolus: Quaecumque scripta sunt, ad nostram doctrinam scripta sunt.* [Apostle: “Whatever things are written, they are written for our wisdom.”] See Romans 15:4. Compare Chaucer’s Nun’s Priest: “For Seint Paul

- seith that al that writen is, / To oure doctrine it is ywrite, ywis; / Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille" (*CT VII[B²]* 3441–43).
- 2363 ff. That man must labor is one of the primary conditions of postlapsarian existence (Gen. 3:17–19). In Gower's scheme, each man must reclaim Paradise for himself, and that effort involves mental as well as physical cultivation. (Compare Chaucer's *PF*, lines 15–18, and his *Canon's Yeoman's* philosophy of labor.) Many of the founders of the various arts, industries, and sciences which Genius enumerates are found in Godfrey of Viterbo's *Pantheon*, though not all occur there. See Macaulay (2:508–11). Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalicon*, ch. 3, also has such a passage.
- 2377 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur contra ociosos quoscumque, et maxime contra istos, qui excellentis prudencie ingenium habentes absque fructu operum torpescunt. Et ponit exemplum de diligencia predecessorum, qui ad tocius humani generis doctrinam et auxilium suis continuis laboribus et studiis, gracia mediante diuina, artes et sciencias primitus inuenerunt.* [Here he speaks against idle men of whatever sort, and particularly against those who, possessing an intellect of excellent power, grow languid without gaining the fruit of any labor. And he presents an instructive example concerning the diligence of those who have come before, who originally discovered the arts and sciences for the wisdom and assistance of the entire human race, by their continual labors and inquiries, and with the assistance of divine grace.]
- 2396–98 *Cham . . . wrot in Hebreu.* Cham was the first and oldest son of Noah. St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 16.11, identifies Heber, a descendent of the fifth generation of Cham (Sem, Ham) as the one through whom Hebrew survives (thus the name Hebrew, called after him). Augustine argues that after the flood, when the languages were divided, Hebrew survived only with Cham and his descendants. Augustine does not provide Gower's specific source for the idea, however, and different sources give different inventors for the Hebrew alphabet. According to Hugh of St. Victor (*Didascalicon* 2.3), "The letters of the Hebrews are believed to have taken start with Moses through the written Law" (trans. Taylor, p. 85). Higden/Trevisa's *Polychronicon* gives the credit to Enoch (2:223).
- 2399–2400 *Of naturel philosophie / He (Cham) fond ferst also the clergie.* Remigius' commentary on Donatus' *Ars Minor* gives Cham credit for erecting two columns that preserve the arts (see Hugh, *Didascalicon* 3.2, trans. Taylor, p. 210, note to line 34). The idea is given more full treatment in Godfrey of Viterbo's *Pantheon*:
- Temporibus Nini legitur Cham, sistere uita.
Abstulit et regnum sibi Ninus rex Niniuita,
Primus in astrologis Cham sua scripta tulit
Ninus eum pepulit, ne rex foret ipse rebellis,
Omnibus exustis quos scripserat ipse libellis,
Nam timet arte sua, ne sua regna ruant.
Septem quas legimus, Cham, primus scripserat artes
Philosophos docuit per sydera noscere partes,

Quas iterum reliqui, post didicere uiri.
 Has artes, longis Cham scripperat ipse columnis,
 Ne uel ab igne simul pereant, uel hiantibus undis
 Aerea uel lateris, quaque columha fuit.

[Cham is said to have passed his life in Ninus' time: Ninus, king of the Ninevites, took his kingdom from him. Cham first undertook to write about astrology, and Ninus expelled him, lest Cham become a king to rebels, and caused all the writings Cham had produced to be burned; for Ninus feared his art, lest his kingdom be destroyed. Cham first wrote down the seven arts that we learn, and through them he had taught philosophers to know the parts of the heavens and to leave them again to others, and after for men to teach them. These arts Cham had written onto long columns, lest they perish either by fire or the engulfing waves; each column was of bronze or brick.] *Pantheon* 3, col. 105 (trans. Galloway).

- 2401 *Cadmus*. On Cadmus as inventor of the Greek alphabet, see Godfrey of Viterbo, *Pantheon* 6, col. 157: “Tunc Cadmus Graecas literas sedecim fecit. Apollo etiam cytharam condidit, et artem medicinalem inuenit. Eo tempore orti sunt Theologi, qui de dijs falsis carmina composuerunt, ut Orpheus, Museus, Linus . . .” [“Then Cadmus made the 16 Greek letters; Apollo invented the harp, and the art of medicine; at that time theologians arose who composed songs about false gods, such as Orpheus, Museus, Linus . . .”], trans. Galloway. See also Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologiae* 1.3.5–6, as adapted by Hugh of St. Victor, which tells how “Cadmus brought the alphabet from Phoenicia into Greece” (Hugh, *Didascalicon* 3.2, trans. Taylor, p. 86).
- 2403 *Theges*. For Tages on augury see Hugh of St. Victor: “Mercury is reported the first discoverer of illusions; the Phrygians discovered auguries; Tages first gave soothsaying to the Etruscans; hydromancy first came from the Persians” (Hugh, *Didascalicon*, ed. Charles Henry Buttmer, vi.xv, as cited in trans. Taylor, p. 155).
- 2405 *Philemon be the visage*. On Philemon, inventor of physiognomy, see *Secretum Secretorum*, under the heading “Certeyne rewles of phisomy, to knowe by onely thought when men lokes on any man, of what condicions he es,” where we learn that “Aristotal sais howe þat in tyme of Ypocras þer was a philosopher hight Philomon, þat was chefe mayster and hyest doctur of þis science.” The passage goes on to discuss Philomon’s disquisition on “þe complexion” pertaining to people who are “lucherus, deceitus, auarus, and lyfynge liccherie” and such “thynges filthy and reprovable” (British Library MS Sloane 213, fol. 118, *Secretum Secretorum*, ed. Manzalaoui, pp. 10–11).
- 2407 *Cladyns*. Claudian, an Alexandrian writer who came to Italy c. 395 A.D. and was admired as the last representative of the classical tradition in Latin poetry by such writers as Orosius and Augustine. In the later Middle Ages he is known mainly through the *De raptu Proserpinae* (The Rape of Proserpine), which was a common school-text for learning Latin.

Esdras. “After the Law had been burned by the Chaldeans and when the Jews had returned to Jerusalem, Esdras the scribe, inspired by the Divine Spirit, restored the books of the Old Testament, corrected all the volumes of the Law and the Prophets which had been corrupted by the gentiles, and arranged the whole of the Old Testament into twenty-two books, so that there might be just as many books of the Law as there were letters in the alphabet” (Isidore, *Etymologiae* 6.3.1–2, as quoted by Hugh, *Didascalicon* 4.4, trans. Taylor, p. 105).

Sulpices. Possibly Sulpicius Servius, author of love poems, mentioned by Horace and Ovid, or Sulpicius Camerinus, an epic poet mentioned by Ovid; though more likely Sulpicius Apollinaris, scholar, teacher of Aulus Gellius, author of learned letters, and verse summaries of the *Aeneid* and the plays of Terence. (See *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p. 1023.) *Recueil de Textes sur Saint Martin* (Épinal, MS 73, fol.1) has an early twelfth-century illumination of Sulpitius dictating to Abbot Richer. Jean Porcher (*French Miniatures*, pl. 13) identifies the figure as Sulpicius Severus.

- 2407–12 Lists of authors, whether chroniclers or inditers, often appear in medieval works for edification. E.g., see Machaut’s *Le Livre dou Voir Dit*, lines 5709–42, on inventors and lawgivers; 5743–60 on the seven wise men of Rome; and 5779–94, where the king instructs the lover through a list of writers on the difficulty that even the wisest men have in dealing with women who drive them mad with love and flirtation. Or TC 5.1792, where Chaucer sends his “litel bok” (5.1786) to kiss the steps of writers he would emulate. Here, in lines 2407 ff., Gower instructs his audience in the names of diverse early writers, without specifying their kinds of writing or intentions.
- 2408 *Termegis*. Macaulay (2:508) suggests that *Termegis* refers to Termegistus (i.e., Hermes Trismegistus) and is disyllabic with the stress on the final syllable. In his translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus’ *De Proprietatibus Rerum* Trevisa cites Trismegistus variously as an authority on the soul, alchemy, and the geometry of God.
- Pandulf*. Curial historian, author of *Liber Pontificalis*, a collection of biographies of popes, beginning with St. Peter and continuing to the early twelfth century. Pandulf was nephew to Hugo of Alatari.
- Frigidilles*. I have not been able to establish who he might be. Dares of Phrygia, author of *De Excidio Troiae Historia*, on the fall of Troy, might be a possibility.
- 2409 *Menander*. The most famous Greek poet of the New Comedy, which prevailed after the death of Alexander the Great. Though he wrote over one hundred plays, only one survives. He was quoted by writers as diverse as Propertius and St. Paul. Most of the plays of Terence are avowedly derived from him. In the Middle Ages his name became synonymous with the writing of comedy, though no one in England would have seen a copy or read a translation. It is just a name with which to conjure.
- Ephiloquorus*. Hamilton suggests that “the name of Eutropius may be hidden under ‘Ephiloquerius,’” a chronicler of “the stories of Romanes” mentioned

in Jofroi's version of the *Secreta Secretorum* ("Some Sources of the Seventh Book," pp. 340–41), a "chronique" Gower appears to have drawn upon repeatedly in Books 4 and 7. For Eutropius in lists of various medieval authorities see Hamilton, p. 341n3.

- 2410 *Solins*. Probably refers to Solinus rather than Solon, the sixth-century (B.C.) Athenian lawmaker, though Machaut cites "Solons dathennes" (Solon of Athens) in his list of the seven wise men of Rome (Machaut's *Le Livre dou Voir Dit*, lines 5751–52). But in *CA* 3.2600 ff., he is cited as a wise man of natural science, which suggests Solinus, the author of *Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium*, with all its curiosities of the natural world.
- Pandas*. I have been unable to identify this writer.
- Josephus*. First-century author of history of the Jews, often cited by early Christian commentators. He is frequently referred to by Higden and Trevisa (*Polychronicon*). He is mentioned by Chaucer, *HF*: "The Ebrayk Josephus the olde, / That of Jewes gestes tolde; / And he bar on hys shuldres hye / The fame up of the Jewerye" (lines 1433–36).
- 2413 *Heredot*. Herodotus, ancient Greek historian, called by some the "father of history," who recorded cultural events through observations of place and the construction of heroes, like Solon, Croesus, or Cleomenes. He was admired by Cicero, Lucius, and Quintillian for his sweet and beauteous style as well as his grandeur and emotional power.
- 2418 *Jubal*. According to Genesis 4:21, Jubal, brother to Tubalcain, is the inventor of the art of harp and organ playing. His name was commonly confused with that of his brother in the Middle Ages, the distinction being between Tubal and Tubalcain. E.g., Chaucer, "Tubal, / That found out first the art of songe; / For as hys brothres hamers ronge / Upon hys anvelt up and doun, / Theroft he took the firste soun" (*BD* 1162–66). Or as Lydgate puts it: "Tubal was fadyr & fynder of song, / Of consonantes, and of armony. . . . For Tubal came furst þe melody / Of sugryd musyk, and of mynstralsy" ("A Pageant of Knowledge," in *Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, pp. 724–38, lines 66–70). *Cursor Mundi* refers to them as Cubal and Cubaltain. (I, T, and C are not always easily distinguishable in medieval hands.) As far as Jubal is concerned, however, Gower has it right.
- 2420 *Poulins*. Macaulay is surely right in identifying *Poulins* as Apollo, citing *Pantheon* 6, col. 157: "Apollo etiam citharam condidit et artem medicinalem invenit" (2:508) [Apollo invented the harp and the art of medicine]. See also *Pantheon* 6, col. 133: "Illiis temporibus, Moses erat orbe superstes, / Tunc et Apollo fuit remouens medicamine pestes. / In cunctis medicus primus Apollow fuit" ["In those days Moses was living on earth, and then Apollo was taking away disease with medicine: Apollo was first of all as a doctor"], trans. Galloway. Lydgate, in "A Pageant of Knowledge," a work directly influenced by Gower's discussion of discoverers and inventors, writes: "Phebus fond furst craft of medicine, / By touche of pounce, veyne, & inspeccions" (in *Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, pp. 724–38, lines 108–09). The initial vowel in Gower's naming of him has simply been dropped by aphaeresis.

- 2421 *Zenzis*. Zeuxis is commonly cited as the founder of portrait painting. See *RR*, lines 16155–79, a passage often fittingly illuminated with pictures of him painting from diverse models.
- 2422 *Promotheus the sculpture*. Trevisa explains the matter this way: “Me[n] saiþ þat Prometheus, Rapetus his sone, and Atlas þe astronomere, his broþer, made men; so seiþ Ouidius in Magno; noþeles þat is i-seide, for of men þat were vnkonnyng and boistous as bestes he made konnyng [men] and wise. Isidorus 13°. Also for me[n] redeþ þat he made ymages of men goo and walke in þe grounde by a certeyn craft” (*Polychronicon* 2:311). Macaulay (2:508) cites Godfrey of Viterbo. The passage is *Pantheon* 5, col. 143: “Tunc et Prometheus, qui filius est Atlantis / Dat statuas hominis humano more meantis” [“And then Prometheus, who is Atlas’ son, provides statues of a man moving in a human manner”], trans. Galloway.
- 2425 *Tubal in iren and in stel*. See explanatory note to 4.2418 on the confusion of Tubal with his brother Jubal. Tubalcain, according to Genesis 4:22, is the first artificer in brass and iron. *Cursor Mundi* calls him “þe formast smyth” (line 1518).
- 2427 *Jadahel*. Jabal, son of Ada (Genesis 4:20). Macaulay (2:508–09) notes that Godfrey of Viterbo (*Pantheon* 2 col. 91) “calls him by the same name and makes the same statement about his hunting and fishing: In mundo Iadahel posuit tentoria primus, / Venator prior ipse fuit, feritate ferinus, / Primus et invalidid retia mersit aquis” [“Jadahel first established tents on earth; savage in his brutality, he was the first hunter; and he first submerged nets into yielding waters”], trans. Galloway.
- 2433 *Verconius*. I have not been able to identify this reference.
- 2435 *Minerve*. Compare 5.1202–03. The tradition of Minerva as inventor of cloth-making is strong: “They tell that the practice of fabric making was first shown the Greeks by Minerva, and they believe too that she designed the first loom, dyed fleece, and was the inventress of olive-growing and of handicraft” — Isidore, *Etymologiae* 19.20.1–2, as adapted by Hugh, *Didascalicon* 3.2 (trans. Taylor, p. 85). Or, Trevisa, *Polychronicon*: “Pis mayde Pallas, þat heet Mynerua also, fonde vp meny craftes, and specialliche wolcraft, and was þe liȝtloker i-trowed a goddes. For me (men) wiste litel whennes sche come” (2:297). Compare Lydgate, “A Pageant of Knowledge” (in *Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, pp. 724–38), lines 87–88.
- 2437 *Delbora made it of lyn*. In *CA* 8.62 ff., she is identified as Adam and Eve’s second daughter, who marries Abel. A prominent source for the idea is Methodius’ *Apocalypse*, which is a principal source for Higden, in *Polychronicon* (2:221). Trevisa picks up on the idea in “Methodius: ‘þe Bygynnyng of þe World and þe Ende of Worldes’” (“Methodius: ‘þe Bygynnyng,’” p. 95). According to *Polychronicon* (2:221), Delbora and Abel were born in the thirtieth year (Brunetto, *Tresor* 1.20.2 says thirty-second year) of Adam’s life and Seth in the hundred and thirtieth year. In *Cursor Mundi*, “Seth spoused his sister delbora” (line 1449), an idea that is repeated in line 1502, the idea

being that after her first husband's death, she marries the brother, according to Hebrew law. I have found no precedent for her discovering how to make linen, though Lydgate follows Gower in declaring that "Delbora of lynen clope makyng / The practyke sought, bokes bere wytnesse" ("A Pageant of Knowledge," in *Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, pp. 724–38, lines 89–90). Given the purity of Seth's line in the ancestry of Christ, it makes sense to give the invention of linen to Delbora, since it is regarded as the purest of cloths, one not made from animals. See Gilroy (*History of Silk*), who cites Apuleius, Jerome, and Plutarch on the purity of the fabric and its use in religious vestments. Machaut's *Le Livre dou Voir Dit* says that Noema (a child of Lamech, see Genesis 4:22) invented linen-making and in her name fabric and cloth are fashioned (lines 5727–30). On the history of linen-making and its uses see Pliny, *Naturalis historiae*, 19.i–vi.

- 2439–56 Saturn is usually portrayed as cold, cruel, and malicious. See *CA* 7.935–41. Compare Chaucer's Knight's Tale *CA* 1(A)2443–78; or *The Assembly of Gods*, lines 279–87. But, under the governance of Jupiter he also has a gentle, benevolent side which Genius alludes to here. Bartholomaeus Anglicus' *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (trans. Trevisa, 8, cap. 12) begins: "Saturnus hab̄ pat name of *saturando* 'makyng fulness and plente: His wif hatte Opis of *opulencia* 'fulnes and plente' bat sche ȝeueþ to man and beest, as Isidir seip and Marcianus also" (1.478). Given his affinity for opulence, mining and thus coin-making (lines 2448–55) are under his jurisdiction. See also Godfrey's *Pantheon* 6, cols. 117–18, cited in part by Macaulay (2:509):

Saturnus statuit super aquora vela moueri
Denarios posuit commercia rite mereri.
Ipse prior clypeos mulitiis ante gerit.
Navibus Italianam prior hic ornasse putatur.
Aedificans Sutrium, dum vivit ibi dominatur,
Triticeum semen primus in urbe serens.
Saturnus natum latuisse Iovem recitatur.
In Sutrio latuit, Latium locus ille vocatur.

[Saturn established that sails would be moved across the waters; he established that commerce would properly merit using money. He first carried forward the shields of a soldier. He is thought to have first ornamented Italy with ships. Building Sutrium, he was lord there as long as he lived, first sowing wheat seed in the city. Saturn is said to have hidden his son Jupiter: in Sutrium he lay hidden; he calls the place “Latium”] (trans. Galloway).

And, as in Gower, the planets and their metals are affiliated with four spirits — quicksilver, orpiment, sal ammoniac, and brimstone. See *CT* VIII[G]820–24, and John Reidy’s note to VIII[G]820 (*Riverside Chaucer*, p. 950) along with his introduction to the tale (pp. 946–48), delineating possible sources (mainly translations from Arabic) for passages such as these in Chaucer and Gower, especially sources such as Vincent of Beauvais’ *Speculum Naturale* and Arnaldus de Villanova.

- 2472 *Jupiter the bras bestoweth.* Usually Jupiter is linked with tin. (See note to 4.2468–78, where Chaucer’s Canon’s Yeoman says tin and also the Lydgatian *Assembly of Gods*, lines 269–71, where Jupiter has a crown of tin upon his head.) Bronze is an alloy of tin and copper. Perhaps the idea is that Jupiter is in one of his amorous or delicate moods, copper being “set . . . to Venus” (4.2473). This characterization of Jupiter is unusual. The only other instance linking Jupiter with bronze that I have been able to locate is in Christine de Pisan’s *Epistle of Othea* (fable 6), which was written about a decade after Gower composed the line in *CA*. Chaucer uses double metals — “tynned yron” or “led and yron” in *HF* (lines 1482 and 1431) — to comment on Virgil (guided by Jupiter and Mars) and Josephus (under the influence of Saturn and Mars), though use of alloys in which the primary affiliation is hidden is less common.
- 2501 *sevene formes.* The seven are enumerated in lines 2513–18.
- 2533 *Thre stones.* Compare Lydgate, *Secrees of Old Philisoffres*, lines 530–34: “And of stoonys / Specially of three — / Oon myneral / Another vegatatyff . . . [and] Oon / was Callyd anymal.” Steele suggests that “stoonys” here does not mean “stone,” but rather “compound” and that these were three compounds used in medicine. He cites the *Rosarium Philosophorum* as a parallel text: “Tres sunt lapides, et tres sales sunt, ex quibus totum magisterium consistit: scilicet mineralis, plantalis, & animalis” (p. 93). [There are three stones, and three salts, from which all teaching is set firm: namely mineral, plant, and animal.] Some argued that there is only one potent stone, the philosopher’s stone, called the Elixir, a three-in-one stone, with powers to cure the sick.
- 2534 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Nota de tribus lapidibus, quos philosophi composuerunt, quorum primus dicitur lapis vegetabilis, qui sanitatem conseruat, secundus dicitur lapis animalis, qui membra et virtutes sencibiles fortificat, tertius dicitur lapis mineralis, qui omnia metalla purificat et in suum perfectum naturali potentia ducit.* [Note concerning the three stones that philosophers created, the first of which is called the vegetative stone, which preserves health; the second the animal stone, which fortifies the limbs and the senses; the third the mineral stone, which purifies all metals and leads them into its own perfection by its natural power.]
- 2571 *to the rede and to the whyte.* The final stages in alchemical transformation, to red gold or to white silver. In the most elaborate alchemical schemes, a “marriage” must occur between the Red Man and the White Woman — two forms of the philosopher’s stone — to transform a base metal into gold or silver. It is not clear that Gower understands the more arcane symbolism of this science; for

- a late fifteenth-century effort to make it all clear to “lay-men” (line 2, p. 5), see Thomas Norton’s *Ordinal of Alchemy*: e.g., “Then is the faire white woman / Mariede to the rodie mane” (5.2663–64). Gower’s syntax shows that here *rede* is (as often in nonalchemical contexts) simply gold itself, and *whyte* is (as also in nonalchemical contexts) simply silver, in respect to both of which the philosopher’s stone has “pouer to profite” (line 2572) (Galloway “Literature of 1388”).
- 2606 *Hermes*. Presumably Hermes Trismegistus, the “inventer of alchemy,” to whom many thirteenth and fourteenth century alchemical treatises such as the *Emerald Tablet* are attributed.
- 2608 *Geber*. Of the early Islamic alchemists, Geber is the most often cited, with over five hundred works attributed to him. One tenth-century Arab alchemist claimed he never existed; others have attempted to link him with Jabir (Abu Musa Dschabir Ben Hayan Ben Abdullah el-Sufi el-Tarsusi el-Kufi, an alchemist from the ancient city of Kufa, now in present-day Iraq), though some have attempted to place him in eighth-century Spain. Others say he traveled a lot, fearing to be in one place too long because of his skills in the arts. The work most often linked with his name in the fourteenth century is the *Summa Perfectionis*, a work M. P. E. Berthelot says is thoroughly Latin in origin and derives from the thirteenth century (“Géber et ses œvres alchimiques,” 1:336–50). Macaulay (2:510) cites *Super Artem Alkemie*, a work on the refining of gold and silver, attributed to Geber in Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 1384 (SC 7578–87).
- 2609 *Ortolan and Morien*. *Ortolan* (also cited in alchemical treatises as Hortolanus) is a name sometimes used for John Garland, who was primarily a rhetorician. A treatise on alchemy, *Compendium Alchimiae*, was often attributed to him, though it was actually by one Martin Ortolan. Garland, it seems, gained not only an item for his bibliography but a new name as well. See Thorndike (*History of Magic*, vol. 3 [1934], ch. 11) on Hortolanus and his influence.
- Morien* “is said to have been a hermit in the mountains near Jerusalem. The two ‘books of Morien’ in the form of dialogues between him and Kalid the son of Gesid may be read in Latin (translated from Arabic) in MS. Digby 162” (Mac 2:510). See also Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 1416 (SC 7609–11), fols. 90r and 91r. *Hermes*, *Geber*, *Ortolon*, *Morien*, and *Avicenna* are frequently cited together in popular early to mid-fourteenth-century alchemical treatises such as Arnald of Villanova’s various *Rosaries*, the *Desiderabile Desiderium*, attributed to John Dastin (mid-fourteenth century), and Petrus Bonus’ *Pretiosa Margarita Novella* (c. 1330). See Thorndike (*History of Magic*, vol. 3, chs. 3–5).
- 2610 *Avicen*. Avicenna (980–1037) lived in Persia, the district of Bokhara. A great deal is known about his childhood and latter life. About one hundred treatises are attributed to him, many of which circulated in England in the fourteenth century. His best-known and most-copied work is his *Canon of*

- Medicine.* Macaulay notes that a “short treatise of Avicen on Alchemy may be found in MS. Ashmole 1420” (2:510).
- 2624 *the parfite medicine.* The perfect medicine is that which has the capacity to transform the imperfect to completeness. As an alchemical idea it pertains to the “elixir” with its capacity to “werk to be parfit” (4.2576–77), the power to change base metals or alloys to silver or gold; it may also be affiliated with the philosopher’s stone that can transmute metals or be *medicine* to restore (refine) health or life, whether to metals or creatures.
- 2637 *Carmente.* Evander’s wife, a prophetess, and, according to Hyg. 278, the mother of Cadmus. She brought an alphabet of fifteen letters, based on Cadmus’ Greek alphabet, to the Latins. See Godfrey of Viterbo, *Pantheon* 6, col. 159: “Post [Faunum] regnavit Latinus, cuius mater nomine Carmentis, nympha, literas Latinas invenit” [“after Faunus Latinus reigned, whose mother was the nymph Carmentis, who invented Latin letters”], trans. Galloway. See also Tacitus, *Annales* 11.14, and Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.4.1, 5.39.1. Martianus Capella derives her name from *carmen* (a song or prophetic chant) because she “got her name from the songs she poured out as prophesies” (vol. 2, p. 53). Gower referred to *Carmente* earlier in the *CA* Prologue, Latin verses i, line 4; see explanatory note, vol. 1, p. 284.
- 2640 *Aristarchus.* Aristarchus of Samothrace, head of the library at Alexandria, was reputed to be “extremely scholarly,” the one with whom scientific scholarship began (*Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p. 159). He wrote commentaries on Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, and Greek dramatists. He was viewed by medieval writers as a great schoolman.
- 2641 *Donat and Dindimus.* Aelius Donatus, fourth-century teacher of St. Jerome, was the most influential grammarian. His *Ars Minor* introduces beginning students of Latin to the eight parts of speech and grammatical functions; the *Ars Maior* is more advanced and includes sections on flaws and virtues of speech. He also wrote commentaries on Terence and Virgil (*Oxford Classical Dictionary*, pp. 494–95). *Dindimus* is Didymus (first century B.C.), a student of Aristarchus at Alexandria, who is said to have written between thirty-five hundred and four thousand works — redactions, commentaries, lexicography, grammar studies on orthography and inflections, synopses of Solon, and others (*Oxford Classical Dictionary*, pp. 467–68).
- 2648 *Tullius with Cithero.* Gower seems to consider Tully and Cicero to be two different people. See Macaulay’s note (2:510). Compare *CA* 7.1588–1606, where Tullius is a rhetorician and watchman over rules of order, and Cithero a Roman consul in debate over the execution of Catiline and his coconspirators.
- 2654 *Jerom.* The translator of the Bible into Latin (the Vulgate). He was a student of Donatus.
- 2668–69 *in poesie / To the lovers Ovide wrot.* The allusion is to such works in general as *Amores*, *Ars Amatoria*, and the *Remedia Amoris*, though love lies at the heart of

- the *Heroides* and many of the tales in the *Metamorphosis*, Gower's two most favored sources.
- 2669–71 *To the lovers Ovide wrote / . . . if love be to hot, / In what manere it scholde akiele.* Ovid's *Remedium Amoris* parodically sets itself to disenchant lovers; it was much revered in medieval culture as an indication that Ovid at some point had transformed his licentious morality, evident in such works as the *Ars Amatoria*, into a more nearly Christian morality (Galloway, "Literature of 1388").
- 2675–79 See Simpson (*Sciences and the Self*, pp. 150–51) on reading and consent. "Amans's reply insists on the connection between desire and literary understanding . . . Amans, then, as desire, desires only the fulfillment of his very self" (p. 151). Genius, as "enformer" (see 2.2496–500), must find the means whereby he can "enforme" him.
- 2676 *I wolde his bokes rede.* See Simpson (*Sciences and the Self*, pp. 230–71) on issues of reading as a key factor in Gower's poetic, a poetic rooted in imagination: "What else is the *Confessio Amantis* than, at one level, an extended and extremely subtle account of the psychology of reading?" (p. 254). See also 4.875–88 as an account of the components of reading, and 7.5411–19 on Amans' difficulty in being an attentive reader/listener. "The end of the play . . . reveals the way in which the imagination plays an intricate part in the process of psychic reintegration" (p. 269).
- 2706 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur de Sompnolencia, que Accidie Cameraria dicta est, cuius natura semimortua alicuius negocii vigilias obseruare soporifero torpore recusat: vnde quatenus amorem concernit Confessor Amanti diligencius opponit.* [Here he speaks concerning Somnolence, which is called the chamberlain of Sloth, whose half-dead nature it is to excuse itself by sleepy torpor from observing the vigils far as this concerns love.] The phrasing "observing the vigils" metaphorically invokes an evening religious service that Somnolence has missed by falling asleep.
- 2795 *rede and here of Troilus.* Lovers are often presented as wishful readers where the subject of their text offers an unheeded warning. E.g., in Dante's *Inferno* 5, lines 127–38, where Paolo and Francesca are reading the romance of *Lancelot* ("Galeotto fu l'libro e chi lo scrisse" — "A pimp was the book and he who wrote it") when they are caught and murdered by her husband. In Chaucer's *TC* Criseyde is reading the ominous "romaunce . . . of Thebes" (2.100) when Pandarus approaches her with his "uncle" proposition. In a felicitous touch Gower has Amans' fantasy feasting on the story of Troilus (presumably from Chaucer's text, which was dedicated to Gower), as the lover panders his imagination with happy love thoughts, heedless of the poem's dark conclusion.
- 2855 *Ha, whi ne were it day?* Gower gives Amans' alba a comic twist. In most auroral complaints, lovers are conventionally happily in bed together, lamenting the approach of dawn. E.g., the Prayer of Cephalus (*CA* 4.3187–3252), which fulfills the conventions exactly, as Cephalus literally lies in bed with Aurora, beseeching Apollo to hold back the sun. See also *TC* 3.1450–63, where Troilus bemoans the coming of "cruel day" (3.1450) that will separate him from his

Criseyde; or The Reeve's Tale, where Aleyn laments "Fare weel, Malyne, sweete wight! / The day is come; I may no lenger byde" (*CT* I[A]4236–37); or where Romeo and Juliet, in Shakespeare's play (3.5), try to convince themselves that the lark is a nightingale so that the night might last. Here the poor solitary Amans laments the duration of night, yearning for day, though also thinking, in his restless frustration "upon the nyhtingale" (4.2872).

- 2876–83 See Olsson ("Love, Intimacy, and Gower," pp. 73–77) on Amans' fantasies of stolen love, his fear of opposition, and the marketplace conception of his desires, which are intimate and secure for him only insofar as they remain mental, fictive, and private. In their "world of unsecured truths and shape-shifting fictions, the only constant is an unstable carnal appetite that willy-nilly fosters physical intimacy" (p. 78).
- 2903 *Danger is left behinde.* Loss of inhibition is often a feature of the psychology of medieval literary dreams. See *RR*, lines 2411–35, where the lover, in his dreams, holds his beloved quite naked in his arms; or the condition where, in his mind, he does all that he desires to do, with no constraint from the woman (lines 21553–750).
- 2927 ff. The story of Ceïx and Alceone is based on Ovid, *Met.* 11.266–748. Compare Chaucer's retelling of the tale in *Book of the Duchess*, lines 62–220, especially the descent into the cave of sleep, and also the storm scene in *VC* 1.1663–94. Gower may be working from Chaucer here, but that does not inhibit his own powers of invention.
- ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum, qualiter Sompnia prenóstice veritatis quandoque certitudinem figurant. Et narrat quod, cum Ceix Rex Trocinie pro reformacione fratris sui Dedalionis in Ancipitrem transmutati peregre proficiscens in mari longius a patria dimersus fuerat, Iuno mittens Yridem nunciam suam in partes Chymerie ad domum Sompni, iussit quod ipse Alceone dicti Regis vxori huius rei euentum per Sompnia certificaret. Quo facto Alceona rem perscrutans corpus mariti sui, vbi super fluctus mortuus iactabatur, inuenit; que pre dolore angustiata cupiens corpus amplectere, in altum mare super ipsum prosiliit. Vnde dii miserti amborum corpora in aues, que adhuc Alceones dicte sunt, subito conuerterunt.* [Here he presents an instructive example, how dreams sometimes represent the certainty of truth, prognostically. And he narrates that when Ceix, king of Trocinia, was drowned while traveling abroad on the sea very far from his country on behalf of his brother Dedalion, who had been transformed into a hawk, Juno, sending Yris her messenger into the regions of Chymeria to the house of Sleep, ordered that her messenger should certify through dreams the outcome of this matter to Alceona, the wife of the said king. When this was done, Alceona, investigating the matter, discovered the body of her husband where it had been tossed up dead on the waves; and she, desiring to embrace the body, for wrenching grief threw herself into the deep sea after it. Wherfore the gods, pitying them, immediately transformed both of their bodies into birds, which to this day are called "halcyons."]

- 2930 *hire oghne hertes lif.* Bakalian reiterates her proposition that this tale, like those of Penelope, Alcestis, and Lucrece, emphasizes the virtues of true marriage — the authority, dignity, holiness, and honor. Neither Ceix nor Alceone are guilty of Sloth, but, rather, they embody its remedy (*Aspects of Love*, p. 46). Indeed, we might turn to the *Mirour de L'Omme* to understand the virtuous behavior they embody that cures Sloth — their *Provesce* (*MO*, lines 14101–15180) and her children: Alceone in her diligence stands “Vigile, contre le vice de Sompnolence” (*MO*, lines 14101–10); she is magnanimous rather than indolent (*Peresce*, *MO* lines 14197–98) as she pursues her lost husband through prayers and vision; and her love is constant, rather than lazy (*Lacheté*, *MO*, lines 14318–19), and solicitous rather than idle (*Oedivesce*, *MO*, lines 14401–06), as she flies over the water to reach him. In sum, her/their behavior is knowing and wise (*Science*), rather than negligent, full of conscience and intelligence, reason and remembrance (*MO*, lines 14592–604).
- 2979–81 Bennett points out that Caxton, in his translation of Ovid, follows Gower’s account of Iris’ visit to the cave of Morpheus, borrowing such descriptive phrases as *reyny cope* (line 2979) and *colours of diverse hewe* (line 2981) in his “And dyde on his rayne cope” and description of the bend of the rainbow “dyversly colowred” (“Caxton and Gower,” p. 216). See note to 4.3014b–19.
- 3009–14a The soporific effects of the running stream of Lethe Gower takes from Ovid, *Met.* 2.602–04: “muta quies habitat; saxo tamen exit ab imo / rivus aquae Lethes, per quem cum murmure labens” [“There mute silence dwells. But from the bottom of the cave there flows the stream of Lethe, whose waves gently murmuring over the gravelly bed, invite to slumber”], 4.163.
- 3014b–19 Again, the details follow Ovid, *Met.* 11.610–12:
- at medio torus est ebano sublimis in antro,
plumeus, atricolor, pullo velmine tectus,
quo cubat ipse deus membris languore solutis.
[But in the cavern’s central space there is a high couch of ebony, downy soft, black-hued, spread with a dusky coverlet] (trans. Miller, 4.163).
- Gower’s *hebenus that slepi tree* (line 3017) is a felicitous touch, as if, besides its soft, black, nighttime properties, it has a medicinal *slepi* quality. Trevisa/Bartolomaeus, *De Proprietatibus Rerum* 17.52, says that *ebenus* makes a soft, sweet-smelling smoke and that it is good as a purge and for “comforde”; in a salve (*colirium*), it “helpeþ yhen” (2.944), but no mention is made of its being a soporific. Caxton admired the line and borrowed from it in his “The cowche was made of Hebenus that sleepy tree” (Bennett, “Caxton and Gower,” p. 216). Henry Bradley (“Cursed Hebenon,” pp. 85–86) suggests Gower’s line as source for Marlowe’s “jouye of Hebon” (*Jew of Malta* 3.4.103), which in turn lies behind Shakespeare’s potent juice of hebona that Claudius pours in old Hamlet’s ear. Spenser may also have *hebonus that slepi tree* in mind in *Faerie Queene* 2.7.52, where the tree of “Heben sad” grew in the Garden of Proserpina, surrounded by “a blacke flood which . . . is the river

- of Cocytus deepe." All three Renaissance writers could have, of course, been drawing upon Caxton, without knowing the original source of the phrase.
- 3020–21 *fethrebed alofle . . . with many a pilwe of doun.* Compare Chaucer's *BD*, lines 248–55, where the narrator offers gifts of a featherbed, black satin coverlet, pillows, and striped pillowcases to the gods if they will grant him sleep. Apparently Gower's Iris made her journey after Chaucer's narrator fulfilled his pledge! Ovid mentions no featherbed or pillows, though the ebony bed is "plumeus" and has a dark coverlet (*Met.* 2.611).
- 3059–62 *In liknesse of hir housebonde . . . / These othre tuo it schewen al.* The orchestration of the dream, with Morpheus' different helpers playing different roles and maneuvering stage-scenery, resembles a courtly "Disguising" or "Interlude," various names for brief plays. For brief descriptions and further references, see Wickham (*Medieval Theatre*, pp. 159–66, 169–75). (See also Galloway, "Literature of 1388.")
- 3088 *double harm.* A grief two times over. Compare *TC* 1.1: "The double sorwe of Troilus."
- 3114 *Hir will stod as it was tofore.* Pearsall contrasts Ovid's transformations with Gower's, where though her body changes to "briddes forme" (line 3109), Alcyone's will remains unchanged, "an affirmation of the pathetic endurance of wifely fidelity" ("Gower's Narrative Art," p. 480).
- 3187 ff. Amans' Prayer of Cephalus is based, perhaps, on Ovid's *Amores*, 1.13.39–40, though there the situation is reversed, with Aurora invoking the steeds of night. The lover's aubade is apparently original for the most part with Gower. Saturn's metal is lead; it is thus associated with dullness and slowness. Cephalus would have the sun residing under Saturn's influence in order that it might be slow getting up. See Specht ("Ethopoeia or Impersonation") on the rhetorical prescriptions of *adlocutio* (dramatic soliloquy that impersonates an appeal for pity).
- 3190 ff. ☞ **Latin Marginalia:** *Hic dicit quod vigilia in Amantibus et non Sompnolencia laudanda est. Et ponit exemplum de Cephalo filio Phebi, qui nocturno cilencio Auroram amicam suam diligencius amplectens, Solem et lunam interpellabat, videlicet quod Sol in circulo ab oriente distanciori currum cum luce sua retardaret, et quod luna spera sua longissima orbem circuiens noctem continuaret; ita vt ipsum Cephalum amplexibus Aurore volutum, priusquam dies illa illucesceret, suis deliciis adquiescere diuicius permettere dignarentur.* [Here he says that wakefulness not Somnolence should be praised among lovers. And he presents an instructive example concerning Cephalus the son of Phebus, who, in the silence of night embracing his girlfriend Aurora very diligently, called out to the sun and moon, asking, namely, that the sun might slow down its chariot with his light in making an orbit more distant from the east, and that the moon, traveling an orbit with a very long trajectory, might prolong the night, so that they might deign to permit Cephalus, wrapped in the embraces of Aurora, to enjoy his pleasures longer before the day might shine.]

- 3240–42 *nyhtes mone and the goddesse . . . in Cancro thin oghne hous.* Luna (moon, Diana) is at home only in Cancer, the fourth mansion, the house of treasures and terminations. If Luna and Venus share Cancer in gladness (4.3245), it is a happy and profitable time for lovers (Curry, *Chaucer and the Medieval Sciences*, pp. 173–75).
- 3269 *Of all his dette he paieth non.* The “conjugal debt” is sex, as the common medieval interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:3 asserted; for contemporary literary comments, see, e.g., The Wife of Bath’s Prologue, *CT* III(D)129–30, and The Parson’s Tale *CT* X(I)375.
- 3317 ff. For the story of Mercury and Argus see Ovid, *Met.* 1.588–721. The author of *Chaucer’s Ghoast* uses lines 3317–52 as the basis of his “translation” of Ovid’s story of Io and Argus.
- ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur in amoris causa contra istos qui Sompnolencie dediti ea que seruare tenentur amittunt. Et narrat quod, cum Yo puella pulcherima a Iuno in vaccam transformata et in Argi custodiam sic deposita fuisset, superueniens Mercurius Argum dormientem occidit, et ipsam vaccam a pastura rapiens, quo voluit secum perduxit.* [Here he speaks in the cause of love against those who, having given themselves over to Somnolence, lose those things which they are held to preserve. And he narrates that, when Io, a very beautiful young woman, was transformed into a cow by Juno and had been thus deposited in the custody of Argus, Mercury intervened, killing Argus while he was asleep, and snatching the cow from the pasture, leading her with him where he wanted.]
- 3321 *the goddesse.* In Ovid, Jupiter turns Io into a cow to hide her from Juno. In Gower Juno turns her into a cow, setting up Argus as watchman, as a punishment for infidelity.
- 3354 *mochel Slep doth ofte wo.* Genius’ aptitude for gnomic statements serves well to conclude the narrative in terms of his particular goals. The tale becomes a survey of sleepy choices in which its folk lose themselves through somnolence.
- 3390 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur super ultima specie Accidie, que Tristicia siue Desperacio dicitur, cuius obstinata condicio tocius consolacionis spem deponens, alicuius remedii, quo liberari poterit, fortunam sibi euenire impossibile credit.* [Here he speaks against the last species of Sloth, which is called Sadness or Despair, whose obstinate character it is to put away the hope of any consolation, and to believe that the good fortune of any remedy, by which it might be freed, could not possibly come to it.]
- 3396 *Tristesce.* “Gower’s addition of Despair as a seventh child of Envy is a master stroke. It provides fitting conclusion to the first half of the *Confessio*. . . . Amans shares more than he would like to see with Dido and Phyllis, those lovers strung up between hope and suicide” (Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, p. 96). N.b., the variety of terms Genius uses to define this sin: *obstinacie* (4.3434), *wanhope* (4.3443), *desesperance* (4.3499), *despeire* (4.3541), which he twice rhymes with *empeire* (4.3505, 4.3542), to get at the potent impairment of dwindling effects caused by *tristesce*, as it leans toward suicide.

- 3434 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Obstinacio est contradiccio veritatis agnite.* [Obstinacy is the rejection of recognizing the truth.]
- 3489–95 David Allen, remarking on the analogy of Amans' love of his lady, who offers him no hope, and the penitent Christian's hope for divine grace, suggests that Amans makes a stride forward by intuiting "the flaw in the analogy between earthly and heavenly love upon which his entire confession is based" ("God's Faithfulness," p. 210).
- 3498–99 *I am in Tristesce al amide / And fulsild of Desesperance.* "Genius ends the book with the tale of Iphis' suicide outside the gate of his would-be mistress, Araxarathen, who refuses to recognize him. It is a fit emblem of the lover of fantasy's fate. Though Genius may not have a very full understanding of the moral implications of this tale of self-destruction through indulgence of willful fantasy, his example at least shows Amans the futility of despondency. That is in itself some consolation" (Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, p. 97).
- 3515 ff. See Ovid, *Met.* 14.698–761. Gower reverses the social rank of the lover and his mistress. In Ovid, Anaxarete is highborn while the youth is lowborn. Ovid's lady feels no remorse; she is simply turned into a stone as she sees the funeral pass by her window. See Macaulay's discussion (2:513), but, especially that of David Allen, who argues thoughtfully that Gower uses the tale in its altered form to introduce theological considerations on the efficacy of God's volition. The Tale of Iphis at the beginning of Book 4 suggested that the god of love is favorable to those stable in love (see 4.443–44). The opposite seems to be the case here, as nothing this Iphis does can move Araxarathen. By reversing the social rank of the lover and mistress Gower ties the story more directly into the debate over God's potential and absolute powers. (See explanatory note to 4.3577–80.) "Amans has given himself over to a being . . . of absolute power" who rejects him absolutely; but all the while he imagines that "the lady has ordained a way for him to win her favors," according to the ordination of the Christian God ("God's Faithfulness," p. 218). Amans thus stands "in a state of complete contradiction" (p. 219), his labor being Sloth rather than true "busynesse." See also Burke ("Women in John Gower's *Confessio*," pp. 248–50).
- 3518 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic narrat qualiter Iphis, Regis Theucri filius, ob amorem cuiusdam puelle nomine Araxarathen, quam neque donis aut precibus vincere potuit, desperans ante patris ipsius puelle ianuas noctanter se suspendit. Vnde dii commoti dictam pueram in lapidem durissimum transmularunt, quam Rex Theucer vna cum filio suo apud Civitatem Salamynam in templo Veneris pro perpetua memoria sepeliri et locari fecit.* [Here he narrates how Iphis, the son of King Theucer, on account of love for a certain girl, Araxarathen by name, whom he was not able to conquer by gifts or pleas, in despair hanged himself one night before the doors of the father of the said girl. Wherefore, the gods, moved, transmuted the said girl into a most hard stone, which King Theucer caused to be located and buried along with his son in the temple of Venus in the city of Salamyna, in perpetual memory.]

- 3577–80 David Allen links the wording here to the death of another king's son, Christ, who dies "showing his love for an inferior, humanity" ("God's Faithfulness," p. 213). Similar readings of the story are found in the *Ovide Moralisé*, especially 14.5601–05; whereas William Donald Reynolds points out that the reader is instructed to "say allegorically that this girl is the soul, this young man Christ who was hung on the gibbet of the cross for love of her" ("Ovidius Moralizatus," p. 414).
- 3627–28 *And as I dede, do to me. / For I ne dede no pité.* In Ovid, Anaxarete is "unmoved by her lover's fate." In Gower, "stricken with remorse" over her lack of pity, Araxarathen follows the golden rule and begs for punishment. "She behaves, in fact, like a lady" (Pearsall, "Gower's Narrative Art," pp. 480–81).
- 3648–66 See Lynch's discussion of this vivid description with which Genius concludes his tale. The descriptive technique differs from the rest of the tale, written in a plain style, with little pictorial material (*High Medieval Dream Vision*, pp. 173–76). Lynch calls the tale an epitome of the way Gower points his narratives.



TEXTUAL NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS: **A:** Bodleian Library MS Bodley 902 (*SC* 27573), fols. 2r–183r; **B:** Bodleian Library MS Bodley 294 (*SC* 2449), fols. 1r–197r; **C:** Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 67, fols. 1r–209r; **F:** Bodleian Library MS Fairfax 3 (*SC* 3883; copy-text for this edition), fols. 2r–186r; **J:** Cambridge, St. John's College MS B.12 (34), fols. 1r–214r; **Mac:** G. C. Macaulay; **S:** Stafford, now Ellesmere 26, fols. 1r–169v; **T:** Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.2 (581), fols. 1r–147v.

TEXTUAL NOTES TO BOOK 2

- 44 *Mi.* Mac reads *My*, as in B. So too in lines 48, 79, and 1998. B often reads *My*, but F, S, and J usually read *Mi*, as in this instance.
- 71 *othre.* So in F, A, J, C, S, and B; Mac: *other*.
- 117 *Bot.* So in S and Mac; F: *Bo*; J: *Bote*; B: *But*.
- 149 *sette.* So in F and A. Mac emends to *set* on the basis of J, S, and B.
- 352 *Envie.* F: *Ennvie*; J: *enuie*; S: *Enuie*; B: *enuye*. Mac's emendation.
- Latin Verses iii (before line 383). Line 2: *infamem*.** So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *infamen*.
- 409 *suche.* Mac emends to *such*, as in J, S, and B.
- 674 *sche.* So in F, S, and B; J: *heo*; Mac: *she*. So too in lines 678, 848, and 1587.
- 710 *hire.* So in J, S, and Mac; F: *hiere*; B: *hir*.
- 844 *cast.* So in F, J, and B. Mac emends to *caste*, as in A, C, and S.
- 890 *dai.* So in F, J, and S; B and Mac: *day*.
- 949 *thonk.* So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *thong*. So also in line 2562.
- 1039 *forset.* So in B; F: *forffet*; J: *forfeet*. Mac reads *forsfet*, as in S.
- 1103 *mo men sih sche.* So in A, S, and Mac; F: *no men seih sche*; J: *no men seith hire*.
- 1151 *forthwith.* So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *forthwith*. So too in lines 1479, 1495, and 1803.
- 1169 *ne.* So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *no*.
- 1353 *which.* So in S, B, and Mac; F: *wich*; J: *whech*. See also line 3492.
- 1441 *kiste.* So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *keste*.
- 1539 *the.* So in J, S, B, and Mac; omitted in F.
- 1640 *knighthode.* So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *knithode*.
- 1675 *hath.* F: *as.* Mac's emendation, largely on the authority of S.
- 1778 *And he.* So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *As he*.
- 1788 *his hed.* So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *is hed*.
- 1856 *hungre.* So in F, A, and J. Mac emends to *hunger*, as in S and B.
- 1860 *detraccioun.* So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *detractioun*.
- 1896 *be told.* So in J, B, and Mac; F, A, and S: *betold*.

- 2072 *told*. So in F and B; Mac: *tolde*, as in A, J, and S.
 2214 *The*. So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *Thei*.
 2247 *Al*. So in S, B, and Mac; F: *And*; J: *All*.
 2328 *manye*. So in F, A, and S. Mac emends to *many*, as in J and B.
 2477 *a wise*. So in J, S, B, and Mac; F and A: *awise*.
 2537 *And*. So in F, A, J, S, and B. Mac emends to *As*, but see MED: *and* 5b.
 2698 *therupon*. So in J, S, B, and Mac; F, A: *thervpon*.
 2822 *With*. So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *Wit*.
 2903 *is*. So in J, S, B, and Mac; omitted in F.
 2917 *schop*. So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *schap*.
 3119 *And*. So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *An*.
 3486 *For*. So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *ffro*.
 3492 *Which*. So in S, B, and Mac; F: *Wich*; J: *Whech*.

TEXTUAL NOTES TO BOOK 3

- 446 *He*. So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *His*.
 663 *axeth*. So in J, B, and Mac; F: *axex*.
 847 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia, line 3:** *velut*. F: *velud*. Mac's emendation.
 858 *gaderende*. F: *gadarende*. Mac's emendation.
 901 *here*. So in J and Mac; F: *hire*; B: *her*.
 1174 *wisshinge*. So in C and B; F, A, and J: *wihssinge*. Mac adheres to F.
 1503 *loves*. So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *loue*.
 1605 *in such*. Mac: *such*, as in B, despite F, S, A, J, and T.
 1731 *bot*. So in F and J; Mac: *but*, as in S and B.
 1771 *thei*. So in F, J, S, and B; Mac: *they*. So too in line 1812.
 1866 *Thurgh*. So in S, B, and Mac; F: *Thourgh*; J: *Thorouh*.
 1914 *ferste*. So in A, S, B, and Mac; F: *ferst*; J: *firste*.
 1930 *herd*. So in F and S; A, J, B, and Mac: *herde*.
 1968 *Unto*. So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *Vnto* to.
 2538 *al*. So in F, J, S, and B; Mac: *all*.
 2252 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia, line 2:** *vniversi*. So S and Mac; F and B: *uniuerse*.
 2544 *manslawte*. So in F; J, S, and Mac: *manslawhte*; B: *manslaughter*.

TEXTUAL NOTES TO BOOK 4

- 65 *Lachesse*. So F, S, and B; Mac: *lachesce*.
 86 *remembrance*. So in S; F: *remebrance*; J and B: *remembraunce*.
 138 *mihte*. So in F and A. Mac emends to *miht* as in J and S.
 170 *Hath*. F: *Had*. Mac's emendation on the basis of other good MSS.
 187 *Lachesce*. So in F, S, and B; Mac: *Lachesse*.
 269 *Althogh*. So in J and S; F: *All thogh*, followed by Mac; B: *Al pough*.
 317 **☞ Latin marginalia, line 2:** *ymaginatiua*. F: *ymaginatitiua*; B: *ymaginatiue*.
 514 *mihte*. So in F, A, and S; Mac: *miht*; J: *myht*; B: *might*.
 584 *out*. So in B and Mac; F: *ouht*; S: *out fro*.
 586 *al*. So in F, S, and B; Mac: *all*.
 684 *To*. So in F; J, S, B, and Mac: *That*.

- 708 *what*. So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *whatt*.
 833 *al*. So in F, J, S, and B; Mac: *all*.
 1031 *negligent*. So in F and B; S and Mac: *necligent*.
 1222 *Mi*. So in F and S; Mac: *my*, as in B. Also in line 2675
 1224 Mac omits the speech marker.
 1321 *faye*. Several good MSS read: *faire*. See Mac 2.337.
 1321–22 J reads: *The beaute of hir face shon / Wel brihtur þen þe cristel ston*.
 1336 *thei*. So in F, S, and B; Mac: *they*.
 1568 *hir*. So in F, S, and B; Mac: *her*.
 1592 *mai*. So in F and S; Mac and B: *may*. So too in lines 2308 and 3176.
 1619 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia, line 2:** *torpescat*. F: *nultenus*. Mac's emendation.
 1805 *knythode*. So in S and Mac; F: *knyhode*; J: *knyghthode*; S: *knighthode*.
 1838 *Bot*. So in S; Mac and B: *But*; J: *Bote*. So too in line 3266.
 1875 *to the(e)* (two words). So in J, C, and B; F, A, and Mac: *to the*.
 1893 *lust*. So in J, S, B, A, and Mac; F: *luste*.
 1944 *be slain*. So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *beslain*.
 2010 *made*. So in F and B. Mac emends to *mad*, as in A, J, C, and T.
 2183 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia, line 1:** *Turnum*. So in B; F: *Turnuum*. Mac emends
 silently.
 2251 *eldemoder*. Several good MSS read *eldirmodor*, or some variant. J: *elde modor*;
 S: *eldemoder*; B: *olde moder*. See Mac 2.362.
 2324 *a wise*. So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *awise*.
 2503 *remenant*. So in B and Mac; F: *rememant*.
 2512 *left*. So in J, B, and Mac; F: *lefte*.
 2534 *ferst*. So in F, J, and A. Mac emends to *ferste*, with support from S.
 2534 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia, line 3:** *qui membra*. So in B and Mac; F: *que membra*.
 2642 *and*. Mac emends to *as*, following S and B.
 2743 *schal*. So in J, B, and Mac; F: *shal*.
 2867 *him*. So in J and Mac; F and B: *hem*.
 3233 *Thi*. So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *This*.
 3427 *grete*. So in F and A. Mac emends to *gret*, with support from J, C, and B.
 3437 *resoun*. So in F and B; Mac: *reson*.
 3445 *Til*. So in F, J, and B; Mac: *Till*.
 3515 *Whilom*. So in S, B, and Mac; J: *Somtyme*.
 3560 *mannes*. So in S, B, and Mac; F: *manes*; J: *monnes*.
 3576 *slepest*. So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *sleplest*
 3596 *syh*. Mac emends to *syhe*, in accord with A, J, S, and B.
 3607–08 *vengance/chance*. So in S; F and Mac: *vengance/chaunce*; B: *vengaunce/chaunce*
 3678 *a man*. So in J, B, and Mac; F: *aman*.



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JOHN GOWER

Confessio Amantis

Volume 3

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

by

MEDIEVAL INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS
Kalamazoo, Michigan
2004



INTRODUCTION

These olde worldes with the newe
Who that wol take in evidence,
Ther mai he se th'experience,
What thing it is to kepe lawe,
Thurgh which the wronges ben withdrawe
And rihtwisnesse stant commended,
Wherof the regnes ben amended.

— *Confessio Amantis*, 7.2702–08

We all get sucked into history in the end!

— Derek Pearsall¹

In the Introduction to the second volume of this edition of *Confessio Amantis*, I explored Gower's use of dramatic, performative devices in the staging of “the self's effort to claim its own estate” (vol. 2, p. 39), pointing to Derek Pearsall's remark that Book 4, with its wealth of well-wrought Ovidian tales and its vigorous impersonation of Amans, is “much the best book” in the *Confessio*.² But although Book 4 is a high point, the culmination of the first half of the poem, it is a very particular kind of high point, one enlivened by the vivacious characterization of the desire-laden Amans, who is eager to please and be pleased.³

Book 5, which begins the second “half” of the poem, takes the reader in another direction. Gower alters his earlier structural patterns to shift the focus from confession and impersonation to education — education in good rule — with emphasis on the means, rather than the effect. The shift is no great jump. Rather, it is a subtle turning from a lively critique of Amans' lusty “would-be” behavior (he never actually succeeds in much) to a less dramatic, more sobering assessment, especially in Book 7, of what constitutes the laws of right behavior “wherof the regnes ben amended” (7.2708). The mode changes from that of the dramatist to that of the historian. Gower's historiographics have been an ever-present actant⁴ in the voicing

¹ Private correspondence, 18 June 2004.

² Pearsall, *Gower and Lydgate*, p. 17, as cited in the second volume of this edition of Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (hereafter C4), p. 31.

³ One of the best discussions of Amans as a literary creation is Burrow's insightful analysis of Amans in terms of the French *Dits amoureux* tradition (“The Portrayal of Amans,” pp. 6–24). See also Cowling, “Gower's Ironic Self-Portrait.”

⁴ I have borrowed this useful term from Greimas who, in his *Sémantique structurale* (pp. 172–91), attempts to get at the voicing of functions within a narrative or argument by means of reformulation of units of meaning that he thinks of (casts) in terms of *dramatis personae* that act within a morphological matrix. Working from folklorist Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*, Greimas defines

of his argument, ever since the beginning of the Prologue, where estates theory became a more philological component of the poem's political *sentence*. But now his manipulation of our consciousness of history and how it matters moves quietly toward the forefront, gradually turning what had seemed to be minor digressions on the history of labor (Book 3) and the history of invention (Book 4) into a carefully crafted agenda in estates history marked by a fresh rhetorical strategy. The shift leads to a second, less dramatic, high point than that of Book 4, but a new plateau, nonetheless, in the more cerebral Book 7, a wisdom book on the instruction of the king.

The first three books of the *Confessio* are organized according to a confessional paradigm of one sin (and her brood) per book; the innuendoes of the sin are enlarged upon through a family scheme that Gower had devised in his first major opus, the *Mirour de l'Omme* (c. 1376–79).⁵ Genius, through his exempla, demonstrates how sin and its fivefold progeny eagerly invade territory that once belonged to humankind but which, now that it has been colonized by sin, needs reclamation. Genius attempts to accomplish this amendment by means of his inquisitorial exploration of desires and effects. In the second half of the poem he develops a new proceeding. This change in strategy began with the discussion of labor in Book 3 (Wrath);⁶ then, at the end of Book 4 (Sloth), after Genius has exorcized the five children of Sloth, the coming divergence is made more explicit as Genius adds two additional subcategories — Somnolence and Tristesse (Despondency), as if to break the mold of the *Mirour* to precipitate different structural procedures that will define the second half of the *Confessio*.

Book 5, devoted to Dame Avarice, is by far the longest book in the *Confessio*.⁷ As in the earlier books, Genius begins with a general definition of the sin by means of an exemplum,

the character of an idea through the function of its actants. Actants are akin to motifs, but are more precisely focused on the morphology of voicing.

⁵ The story of Sin in *Mirour de l'Omme* goes like this: The Devil gives birth to Sin (lines 205 ff.), then, enamored of her, enjoys pleasant entertainment whereby she gives birth to a son, Death. Her son incestuously copulates with her, and she gives birth to the Seven Deadly Sins (241 ff.). These seven daughters are then espoused by the Devil (who gives Hell as the dowry) to World (757 ff.). They approach World in a grand processional, with each Sin riding on one animal while holding another: Pride, on a lion, carries an eagle; Envy, on a dog, carries a sparrowhawk; Anger, on a boar, bears a cock on her fist; Sloth, on an ass, holds an owl; Avarice, on a badger, takes a goshawk on one fist and a merlin on the other; Gluttony, with kite on hand, rides a wolf, followed by Drunkenness whose rein she holds; and Lechery, on a goat, carries a tethered dove. Once married to World, each Sin gives birth to five offspring: Pride, to Hypocrisy, Vainglory, Arrogance, Boasting, and Disobedience (949–2616); Envy, to Detraction, Sorrow-at-other's-Joy, Joy-for-other's-Grief, Supplanting, and False-semblance (2617–3852); Anger, to Ill-Temper, Contention, Hatred, Strife, and Homicide (3853–5124); Sloth, to Somnolence, Laziness, Slackness, Idleness, and Negligence (5125–6180); Avarice, to Covetousness, Rapine, Usury, Simony, and Stinginess (6181–7704); Gluttony, to Voracity, Delicacy, Drunkenness, Superfluity, and Prodigality (7705–8616); and Lechery, to Fornication, Rape, Adultery, Incest, and Wantonness (8617–9720). But we are not left hopeless before such an onslaught, for, meanwhile, Reason weds the Seven Virtues (Humility, Charity, Patience, Prowess, Generosity, Measure, and Chastity), each of whom mothers five helpful children, enabling life in the world to seem less desperate.

⁶ We should acknowledge, however, that all the actants of the change are anchored in the Prologue, particularly in the discussion of the three estates and Nebuchadnezzar's dream of history. Gower the historian is present in the poem long before Gower the dramatist makes his presence known.

⁷ Book 5 is 7844 lines long; Book 7 is next with 5438; then Book 4, with 3712. Book 6 is the shortest, with 2440 (not counting the Prologue, with 1088 lines, as a book).

in this instance the story of ill-fated Midas. The tale tells how Midas' sense of kingship (i.e., a kingship that should define the spiritual/political properties of his personal being as well as that of his realm) gets displaced by an avaricious preoccupation with gold. It is normal for the soul to yearn for sufficiency, but Midas, in his myopic greed, confuses wealth with security.⁸ The king becomes a money man, rather than mentor, as avarice destroys all the estates he governs. No longer do "mete and cloth" suffice (5.320); only gold seems to satisfy his tyrannical appetite, a fate that brings disastrous consequences to himself and his kingdom.

But how is it that presumably rational people can become so pathetically ruined by such obvious folly? For Gower, sin is a psychopathic condition. Genius bolsters his story of Midas with an account of Tantalus, thereby shifting the mode from a social effect to a psychological one. Tantalus, who has everything he needs for a good life, imagines he suffers from a deep-seated deprivation. His appetite becomes insatiable and leads to an internally profound sense of need. Genius describes the depravity in terms of uncontrollable appetite:

<p>Lo nou, which a wreche, That mete and drinke is him so couth, And yit ther comth non in his mouth! Lich to the peines of this flod Stant Avarice in worldes good: <i>He hath ynowh and yit him nedeth,</i> For his skarsnesse it him forbeideth, And evere his hunger after more <i>Travaileth him aliche sore,</i> So is he <i>peined overal.</i> (5.388–97, emphasis mine)</p>	<p><i>what a punishment</i> <i>evident</i></p> <p><i>stinginess; denies</i></p> <p><i>Afflicts; sorely</i> <i>tormented (made wretched)</i></p>
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Though he has enough, it perpetually *seems* that he needs more, and, because of what amounts to a twisted sense of insufficiency, his labor gives him perpetual pain: "He hath ynowh and yit him nedeth" (5.393). Though he may be "peined overal" (5.397), his torment is self-induced.

As in the first half of the poem, after establishing his general definition of the sin, Genius goes on to the particular applicability of Avarice to lovers, where, in this instance, the loverly equivalent is Jealousy. Jealousy, like Avarice, is an insatiable possessiveness, the guarding of an illusory personal domain that may or may not be one's own. Such a "misease,"⁹ Genius observes, is feverish obsession (5.577 ff.) that alters the vision of the jealous person by means

⁸ On the disruptive in-roads of capitalism as it displaces feudal ideology whereby money, rather than feudal love and loyalty, becomes the new index of social achievement, see Little, "Pride Goes before Avarice." Where Pride had always ranked first of the sins ever since the fall of Lucifer, now, in the fourteenth century, Avarice seems the subtler, more pervasive corruption, the main contender for the number-one ranking among the sins. And, though prominent like newfangledness among all estates, it is especially prominent among churchmen who should be the most wise, self-sacrificing guides to society, but now seem the most debased. Note, for instance, Chaucer's corrupt churchmen like the Friar, Summoner, Pardoner, and Monk, or the prominence of Lady Meed and her magnetism in the Visio section of the B-Text of *Piers Plowman*. See Yunck, *The Lineage of Lady Meed*; Baldwin, "The Medieval Merchant"; and Dean, *Six Ecclesiastical Satires*.

⁹ According to the *OED*, *misease* remains in modern usage into the twentieth century as a term for "distress, affliction; trouble, misery; extreme suffering or discomfort," as well as "uneasiness or disquiet"; with earlier connotations of "need, want, and poverty." It serves Gower well as a psychological term for the fretted anxieties of the soul upon which the chances of the world so persistently play.

of “feigned enformacioun / Of his ymagineacioun” (5.593–94).¹⁰ The example Genius gives of such a self-induced, self-informing Jealousy is the Ovidian Tale of Vulcan and Venus, where Vulcan’s jealousy causes him more pain than the vengeful harm he perpetrates upon his wife. The example leads Amans to question the tenets of pagan theogeny. In response, Genius gives Amans a lesson in the history of religions, the longest digression in the poem (5.747–1970).

Gower places this history of religion in Book 5 for a specific reason, namely, his acute reaction to venality within the Christian Church. We can establish a better understanding of the intensity of his concern by returning to the *Mirour de l’Omme*, where, after describing the seven deadly sins and presenting remedies for each, the protagonist turns his attention to the three estates. Since mankind’s relationship with God should be one’s premier concern, Gower begins his remarks with the second estate, the Church, commencing first with the Court of Rome:

I believe firmly that the rights of the head of Holy Church under God, if that man conducts himself rightly, are placed above all others. But this position is now changed, for what was humility is now pride, and one can see that what used to be liberality has now turned into covetousness. . . . What I intend to write here is not from myself only, but is rather *the murmur, complaint, voice, and cry of all Christian folk*. . . . Simon is now reigning with gold and silver in the court of Rome, so that the case of the poor, despite all clamor, shall not be heard. (MO, lines 18433–55, emphasis mine)¹¹

Gower continues his critique, contrasting the venality of modern-day prelates, who would let “everyone perish rather than let a single finger of [their own] hand be injured,” with the pagan king Codrus who “himself suffered martyrdom for the safety of his subjects” (MO 20003–12).¹² In *Confessio Amantis* Book 5, the tone of Gower’s religious history is perhaps less angry than it was in the *Mirour*, but, tinged as it is with mockery of the admixture of superstition, piety, and greed, whether among the foolish pagans, with their belief in the incestuous promiscuity and bestiality of the gods, or among Christians who abuse God’s sufferance thinking to make themselves more rich, it is no less bitter.

Just as Gower shifted the governing trope in *Mirour* from the domestic (Sin’s household) to a political arena (the three estates), so in Book 5 of the *Confessio*, instead of moving the confession forward by means of the familial trope of Sin and her offspring, as he had done in the first half of the poem, Gower now shifts to a political configuration — Dame Avarice with her

¹⁰ See Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, especially his introduction (pp. 1–21) with its discussion of “enformacioun” and “informatio” not as “inert bodies of knowledge,” but rather as “the action of transmitting and receiving knowledge” (p. 2), whereby forms are brought into the mind for effect (p. 8). Simpson sees this instructional process as being for Gower essentially Platonic, akin to the discussion of form and its inception in Alan of Lille’s *Anticlaudianus*, a process shaped by Aristotelian lore, especially in Book 7 of the *Confessio*.

¹¹ Gower, *Mirour de l’Omme* (hereafter MO), pp. 253–54. The whole of Gower’s lengthy ethical history on the condition of Holy Church (MO 18421–21780) focuses on Avarice that runs throughout the papacy and the whole Court of Rome, infecting cardinals, bishops, archdeacons, deans, priests, annuelers, friars, and students — in short, the whole of the establishment. It must have seemed to Gower that the venality of the Church in the early 1370s had become progressively worse in the later 1380s, despite the efforts towards church reform by the radical Wycliffites, of whom he strongly disapproved.

¹² Compare Gower’s use of the same example in *CA* 7.3163 ff., where Codrus, albeit a pagan king, is his principal exemplum for the fourth point of policy, Pity.

court and “servantz manyon” (5.1971–75). This broadening of the domestic to include political typology culminates in Book 7 with the education of the king, especially in terms of good and false counsel. Dame Avarice, like Lady Meed in *Piers Plowman*, is patroness of all vices. It is as if the account of the religions of the world has launched Gower’s project into estate satire where we examine Avarice’s twelve devious courtiers,¹³ beginning with Covetoise, False Witness, Perjury, and Usury, then continuing with Parsimony (Skarsness), Ingratitude (Unkynde), Ravine, and Robbery, and concluding with Stealth, Michery (Pilfering), Sacrilege, and Prodigality. (With more than twice the number of categories — from five children to twelve courtiers — this book is more than twice the length of most others.) The political trope (the court) fits in with the poet’s overarching criticism of the three estates in the Prologue, where he discussed the State (Prol. 93 ff.), the Church (Prol. 193 ff.), and the Commons (Prol. 499 ff.), but not just the three estates — rather those estates as Gower critiques them at about the time of the Merciless Parliament.¹⁴ Although Book 5 includes several of the finest and most original tales in Gower, there is a significant increase in short exempla that scarcely qualify as tales at all, but are more akin to a homiletic technique that serves Genius well as he turns attention toward social and political concerns rather than love matters or theatrical twists of the psyche.

Book 6, on Gluttony, is the shortest book in the *Confessio*. It discusses only two kinds of the sin, Drunkenness and Delicacy, then speculates on the indulgences of sorcery and witchcraft to conclude with the Tale of Ulysses and Telegonus and the Tale of Nectanabus. This latter tale is one of the pivotal stories in the whole of the *Confessio* in that it sets up Book 7, where Genius explains to Amans, at the lover’s request, how Aristotle taught Alexander. The device enables the poet to shelve his confessional drama in order to focus on ethics, bringing the educational substructure to its culmination. Some readers might feel cheated by Gower at this point, as he puts aside his greatest character creation, Amans. The decision is in a way like Plato’s when he leaves behind the philosophical drama of *The Symposium* and *The Republic* to turn his attention, instead, to the writing of *Laws*.

Book 7, like *Laws*, is, in its quiet way, a triumph. As Gower shifts from playwright to social counselor his mode of rhetoric changes from his usual tale-telling to historical examples based on “real” kings from Roman, Greek, and biblical history, some of whom rule well, some abominably, while others just muddle through for reasons that Genius, armed with the *Secretum Secretorum*, the Bible, Valerius Maximus, Brunetto Latini, Livy, Seneca, and others, explicates.¹⁵ The effect is encyclopedic and of interest in terms of the coherent educational

¹³ Avarice’s court might well be seen as a subversion of the wastrel court surrounding young Richard II. I have noted elsewhere that Amans in his youth-oriented court bears some likeness to young Richard, who is said to have invited the older poet to his barge to talk about poetry (“Politics and Psychology of Governance,” pp. 229–30). It is amusing to imagine what Richard, age 18 or so when the event would have happened, might have looked like in his courtly finery. Or, if we prefer to think of Amans, even at the beginning, as an old man, a “faïtour” disguising himself as young, the Court of Avarice, nonetheless, would figure well as Richard’s court, with its preoccupation with fashion and *dit-amoreaux* affectations paid for by the labor of the people. On the extravagance of fashion and costly show in Richard’s court, see Eberle, especially her discussion of *Richard the Redeless* (“Politics of Courtly Style,” pp. 170–73).

¹⁴ See Galloway, “The Literature of 1388 and the Politics of Pity.”

¹⁵ The list is long, including Arphaghes, Manachaz, Zorobabel (1 Esdras 3–5), Ahab, Josaphat, Saul, Agag, David, Amalech, Phineas, the evil Rehoboam, and Solomon in his evil days when he foolishly divided the kingdom (from 3 Kings [1 Kings] 11), Julius Caesar, Trajan, Conrad, and lesser Ro-

principles that, although diverse, are brought together by measure of the questions they raise.¹⁶

GOWER THE HISTORIAN

“We all get sucked into history in the end,” Derek Pearsall writes. This proposition is true for Gower at all phases of his life. Though he may begin hither and yon, the issue he explores always resolves itself into some form of cultural history, especially as it pertains to law.¹⁷ According to both the *OED* and the *MED*, Gower is the first writer to appropriate the Latin word *historia* into English as the neologism, “history.” That borrowing is not surprising, however, since, more than any of his literary contemporaries, Gower thinks and acts like a historian. Chaucer’s term for history is “story,” which involves for him the reading of the past, usually from books, in an effort to recover models that reflect upon our own lives. Gower uses the same techniques, but goes beyond them to assemble cultural and scientific data in order to get a handle on both past and present. It is perhaps noteworthy that five of the six times he uses the word “histoire” in the *Confessio* he rhymes it with “memoire.” The two concepts are, indeed, intimately connected. Memory is first in a trinity of human faculties,¹⁸ providing the Intellect and Will (the other two) with the basic material from which they suppose. Any act of memory is inevitably a kind of storytelling, as thought and imagination use recollected experiences to document and comment on particular historical events, either directly or subversively. History and memory are correlevant for Gower, for when a king forgets his office to become courtier, the whole kingdom becomes “faitour” to its honest mission, a situation about which Gower is deeply disturbed, given the expensive waste of money and talent that seems to pervade the royal court.¹⁹

mans like Pompeius, Maximin, Gaius Fabricius, Carmidotirus (from various sources like Brunetto, Seneca, Livy, etc.), others from Greece, Persia, and the East like Cyrus, Cambises, Lycurgus, Codrus, and cruel leaders like Leontius, Siculus, Lichaon, and Spartachus — the list goes on to embody a cameo political history of borders of the Mediterranean region over several hundred years.

¹⁶ On Gower’s skill at discovering connections without compromising difference, see Fisher: “The most impressive feature of Gower’s moral philosophy that emerges from careful study of the text of his works . . . is not its high idealism, nor its concern over the relations between the individual and society, nor even its progressive views on social justice under the rule of law. It is rather the unity and coherence of Gower’s world view and the success with which he managed to infuse into a heterogeneous mass of conventional material a personal vision capable still of commanding our respect” (John Gower, p. 203).

¹⁷ One is again reminded of Plato, where, so often, the argument of his dialogue ends, as in *Crito*, with some form of civic law addressing the one who has questions. In Book 7 (the intellectual plateau of the second half of *CA*), there are ninety-two specific references to law, more than twice as many as in any other book, the second being the much longer Book 5, with thirty-five. And, as I hope to demonstrate in my discussion of individual tales, the workings of contracts and agreements constitute the subtext of most plots as the teller shapes the governance of “history” itself.

¹⁸ See St. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, Books 9–11. See Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*, ed. Peck, vol. 1, pp. 5, 9–15, for further discussion on Gower’s use of the term “history” and his views on brain functions.

¹⁹ Gower uses the term “faitour” repeatedly to get at the falseness at the core of so much civic behavior. From the outset of the poem it is the term with which Venus labels Amans (1.175–79). See Calin on Gower’s powerful opposition to the courtly ethos (“John Gower’s Continuity,” p. 100), as he mocks it through the “luftalking” of “faitours.”

Gower is a historian of many sorts, thinking at times like a political analyst, at times like a judge or court of justice, and at other times like a chronicler or compiler of instructive exempla. He thinks of history in terms of “evidence” (7.2703), evidence that enables him to plot the events of time (or of a life) in an effort to assess its meaning. He is a master at taking the long view even as he looks to immediate resonances in “the present time which now is” (8.258). He goes to books of antiquity like a sorcerer seeking out voices he might consult. Always he thinks of such findings as evidence — evidence that might be used in a trial.²⁰

When he gathers lore and strategies from popular sources and attempts to find common echoes that reverberate in ever-present oral traditions — “the murmur, complaint, voice, and cry of all Christian folk,” as he puts it in the *Mirour* passage cited above — Gower the historian behaves like a folklorist. This voice of the people, what Middleton speaks of as a public voice, which so often resonates throughout the *Confessio*, puts a distinctive stamp on Gower’s style and the way in which he utilizes his sources.²¹ He is, indeed, a political analyst, an estates historian, but he is a folk historian, too, as he tallies the voice of the people²² and the public functions that deploy themselves as the actants of folklore. As Middleton observes, “this poetic voice is vernacular, practical, worldly, plain, public-spirited, and peace-loving — in a word, rather than courtly or clerical in its professed values and social allegiances” (p. 98). Such a voice differs from the private, more individual voicing of Chaucerian characters, but rather, like a figure of the folk, is a voicing of diverse cultural strands as if they were components of a communal psyche.

Much has been written about Gower’s use of sources — almost, at times, a custodial use, as the notes to this edition would hope to make clear. This custodial mentality is a key feature of the *Confessio* as historian Gower compiles exemplary materials — his stories — the way a librarian might, to create a cultural repository of what is necessary if the culture is to remain intact and survive. Gower compiles with a purpose — the welfare of his audience. He is a collective mediator of lore and law. But there is a twist to this side of Gower that invites both intellect and heart to break down the walls of his mental repository to open outwardly upon the vistas of nature — meadows, forests, and a vast unexplored and unsecured

²⁰ One might think of the protagonist of Chaucer’s *Book of the Duchess*, who reads the story of Seys and Alcyone, then looks back over its details, wondering “yf it were so” (BD, line 233), where one calls upon one’s powers of judgment to validate experience.

²¹ See Middleton’s classic essay “The Idea of Public Poetry in the Reign of Richard II,” where she links Gower’s notion of the “common” or “commune” with Cicero’s *res publica res populi*, where “the public good, or commonwealth, is the people’s affair, in the sense that ‘people’ are considered not as a herd, assembled in any sort of way, but as *a people*, bound by agreement as to law and rights and associated for mutual benefit or expediency” [Cicero, *De re publica* 1.25.39]. “Common” denotes “the commonwealth as a whole, the community or fellowship, the populace or citizenry, as well as the ‘common people’” (p. 100). Middleton defines this public voice as distinctive of Ricardian writers, especially Gower and Langland, emphasizing its situating itself in a medial position, between lust and lore or the nobility and the commons, etc., for a kind of experiential immanence located within history rather than as a transcendent notion. See also David Benson’s expansion of the idea in *Public Piers Plowman*.

²² Ferster, “O Political Gower,” p. 42, is especially useful on this point as she discusses “the people” as counselors to the king. *Vox populi, vox dei* (“The voice of the people is the voice of God”) is a recurrent aphorism in *Vox Clamantis*, which concludes: “What I have set down is the voice of the people [*plebis*], but you will also see that where the people [*populus*] call out, God is often there” (VC 7, ch. 25.l.1470, trans. Stockton, p. 288).

space that exceeds his own predilection. That is, Gower is astutely aware that “history,” whether in old texts or folk experience, is constructed out of “memory” by individual writers and readers who plot for particular purposes. He knows that all documents of the past, the written and the oral, are open to trial and judgment and are relative to the times in which they were produced as well as the times in which they are heard once again.

Like a good historian, Gower’s powers of invention are often most potent when he takes the kernel of antiquity and reshapes it to a new context. But even his most derivative compilations require us as readers to consider the varieties of derivation from which the compilations evolve—oftentimes from great writers of former times like the “Ovide poete” (who is so often named),²³ or Statius or Benoît (who so seldom are identified); sometimes from non-literary texts such as Brunetto Latini’s *Trésor* or Giles of Rome’s *De regimine principum* (“The Governance of Kings and Princes”); and sometimes as well from non-textual sources, the experiential voice of the people. All such evolutions (whether literary or oral) are insistently cultural, as Gower uses them, but they deliberately include in their historicity elements of what we would now label “folklore.”²⁴

Like a good folklorist, Gower listens to what he thinks the voice of the people might be, the voice of the common people and their common law, a voice “which mai noght lie” (Prol. 124), simply because it is the authentic thing itself, that bundle of shared values beyond the individual, the voice of God — *vox populi, vox dei*. He also looks to the lore of experience, the lessons to be seen through behavior.²⁵ For Gower, folklore is a “science,” the lore (wisdom) counterbalanced against the desires (lust) of the people.²⁶ From the outset of the *Confessio* Gower announces that he would speak “[s]omwhat of lust (desire), somewhat of lore (wisdom)” (Prol. 19). As a writer, he is, most certainly, aware of the cultural relativity of any historian’s views. His sophisticated notion of storytelling is always alert to the politics and

²³ Gower uses the word “poete” seven times in *Confessio*, always in conjunction with Ovid — “Ovide the Poet” (1.386, 5.878, 8.2719) or with Ovid’s poetry (2.121, 5.5231, 5.6713, 5.6804).

²⁴ Or, perhaps, I should say “folklaw.” (N.b., the multiple meanings of “lore” in Middle English.) The term “folklore” is a nineteenth-century invention, coined in 1846 by William Thoms for a discipline he labeled, as he puts it, with “a good Saxon compound, Folklore, — *the Lore of the People*” (*The Athenaeum*, No. 982, August 22, 1846, p. 862), a phrase that sounds like something taken right out of Gower in some *vox-clamantis* mood. Thoms is attempting to establish a discipline for exploring oral tradition. If there were anyone in fourteenth-century England who approximated what Thoms meant by folklorist it would be Gower, a writer who celebrates and legitimates the voices of popular culture. Though he never uses the specific kenning “folk-lore,” the two components of the folklore compound appear hundreds of times in Gower’s poem, as actants within the *vox-populi* paradigm. He looks upon the dicts and sayings of the people (albeit largely through books), their proverbs and commonsense responses as a means of penetrating modes of everyday behavior. The content is not likely to be particularly sophisticated, i.e., what the “comun poeple” say and do provides the illusion of a living text, even as it borrows hand-me-down clothes of the past. Such a record may not be analytic, but it certainly may be analyzed.

²⁵ I’m thinking here of such behavior as the shame Vulcan feels “Which oghte for to ben a lore / For every man that liveth hiere, / To reulen him in this matiere” (5.704–06), where experience itself becomes “lore.”

²⁶ See Prol. 19. *Science*, a means of knowing, is a favorite term of Gower (forty-three references in CA) to identify the wisdom of a discipline, whereby a people can glue their culture together or think of themselves as a people. It is a function within behavior that fixes the grammatology of being, enabling actants, the acteur, and the audience to interrelate. See Peck, “Folklore and Powerful Women,” p.17n34.

civic ordinances projecting from all actions. But he is also aware that even the most objective historicizations are relative to the goals and predilections of the historian. That is, Gower knows that history is culturally produced; but, at the same time, especially from his folklorist view, he insists that there *are* universals, and that they are *not* confined to issues of religion, faith, or aesthetics. Within his political vision law supplies humankind with what for him are the universals necessary if life is to be orderly — divine law, to be sure, and natural law, too, but also the very human common law.²⁷ Good laws sustain good lore.

BOOK 5: AVARICE

Perhaps more than any single rhetorical ploy in Gower, it is the folkloric instinct that makes his tales so different from their sources. It is this same instinct that sets him apart from Chaucer, Langland, and the *Gawain/Pearl*-poet.²⁸ I will not be able to talk about many of the tales that appear in Books 5–7, but those that I have singled out I have chosen, in part, because of their diverse forms of historicity — tales that comment on government and the function of law(s) within nature and politics, especially as such detail applies to the reign of Richard II; tales that draw upon sources of past ages, now made current as they address the experiences of Amans (Gower's Everyman) and his audience; and tales that use folkloric techniques that add an immediacy through the ever-present voice of the common people.

²⁷ On the universality of natural law, see Gratian, *Dist. 5 ante c.1* (Friedberg I, 1): *Naturale ius inter omnia primatum obtinet et tempore et dignitate. Cepit enim ab exordio rationalis creature, nec variatur tempore sed immutabile permanet* [“Natural law is foremost among other laws in antiquity and dignity. For it has its primary source in the reason of creatures, and does not alter with time but remains immutable”]. Elsewhere in the *Decretals* he relates natural law to customary human practice: *Humanum genus duobus regitur, naturali uidelicet iure et moribus. Ius naturae est quod in lege et in euangelio continetur, quo quisque iubetur alii facere, quod sibi vult fieri, et prohibetur alii inferre, quod sisi nolit fieri* [“Humankind is ruled by two things, that is, natural law and custom. Natural law is what is contained in the law and the Gospels, by which each person is commanded to do to another that he would wish done to himself, and is prohibited from doing to another what he would not wish done to himself”] (*Dist.1 ante c.1* [Friedberg, I,i]). Isidore makes a similar differentiation (akin to Gratian's) between natural law and custom: *Ius naturale est commune omnium nationum, et quot ubique instinctu naturae, non constitutione aliqua habetur* [“Natural law is common to all nations and is held everywhere by the instinct of nature, not by some written constitution”] — Isidore of Seville, *PL* 82.199.] This “instinct of nature” creates a sense of the universal in the individual. The distinction between the individual and the universal poses a *questio* that pervades all of Gower's writings. One principal difference between divine law and natural or positive law is time. Natural law is more universal than written constitutions, but, nonetheless, its presence is temporal. People perceive natural law by “natural intention” (*instinctu naturae*), but this inborn instinct is expressed primarily through experience, which is individual and temporal. Instinct may be plotted (that is, it is always subject to narrative), and that plot, not the instinct itself, is what we consider ourselves to be. The twelfth-century glossator on the *Decretum Gratiani* explains the matter this way: *Est itaque naturale ius vis quaedam humanae creature a natura insita ad faciendum bonum cavendumque contrarium* [“Natural law is therefore a certain force planted by nature in human beings so that they work towards good and avoid its opposite”]. The functional concept here is *towards*; in the time world, we are always working *towards* something, yearning *towards* some goal. For citation and the translation of the legal texts, see Barr, “Treatment of Natural Law,” pp. 50–51. See also Olsson, “Natural Law.”

²⁸ I have written about folkloric materials in the Tale of Florent, a tale with no known direct source, but one of Gower's most successful individual stories (see Peck, “Folklore and Powerful Women”).

Some of the tales have well-known literary backgrounds; others come from more obscure places. But they all stand as part of the exemplary evidence that Gower assembles in *Confessio*, his cultural treasury, written “in oure English . . . for Engelondes sake” (Prol. 23–24).

The Tale of Adrian and Bardus

The Tale of Adrian and Bardus comes as close as any in the *Confessio* to being a bona fide folktale. It has literary sources, though Gower uses them freely, adding folk touches of his own, especially in the latter part of the tale when the emperor Justinian brings his applicable laws into Bardus’ world of chance to make possible the folktale’s perquisite happy ending. Macaulay (3.502–03) notes with regard to the Tale of Adrian and Bardus,

This story, which is of Eastern origin, is told near the end of the *Speculum Stultorum* (i.e. *Burnellus*), with which Gower was acquainted, as we know from the *Vox Clamantis*. The names there are Bernardus and Dryānus, and the animals are three, a serpent, an ape, and a lion. A similar tale is told by Matthew Paris, under the year 1195, as related by King Richard I in order to recommend liberality in the cause of Christendom. In this the rich man is Vitalis, a Venetian, and the poor man’s name is not given. The animals in the pit are a lion and a serpent. Vitalis thanks his deliverer, and appoints a time for him to come to his palace in Venice and receive the promised reward of half his goods; but when he comes, he is refused with contumely. The magic qualities of the gem which the serpent brings are not mentioned in the story of Vitalis.²⁹

In this folktale of the rich man and the poor man, Gower seems to be working less from a specific source than from a recollection that is modified by actants he knows from other folk stories. This tale, despite all its fantastic components, puts us in the presence of the daily struggles of the poor. Through its lore Gower perpetually reminds us of legal structures that sustain the kingdom despite class inequities.

Like other folktales, the Tale of Adrian and Bardus studies wish-fulfillment — evil wishes as well as harmless and benevolent ones. Bardus works hard as a woodcutter, hoping to survive life’s struggles. His wife shares his goals and aspirations. Adrian, on the other hand, is a loner who imagines himself superior to others. He is incapable of friendship or gratitude. He takes whatever anyone would give, but never returns in kind. He presumes he is a law unto himself and thinks nothing of breaking contracts or committing perjury. He is blind to any benefits that kind deeds to others might offer, and, in his ingratitude, “he fell unwar into a pet [pit] / Wher that it mihte noght be let [made known]” (5.4945–46). His ingratitude is a self-imposed dilemma, like that of Tantalus, from which he will never, in truth, recover, even though Bardus gives him a new start by pulling him out of the pit.

The crux of Gower’s story is “th’emperour Justinian” (5.5127) and his law. He is a just leader, a man who is quite the opposite of Adrian. His concern is with his people and a well-run kingdom. He demonstrates admirably the ideal of kingship that Genius will later explain, namely, “[w]hat thing it is to kepe lawe / Thurgh which the wronges ben withdrawe”

²⁹ It is noteworthy that just as Gower commonly uses tales to exemplify to the people the behavior of kings, real English kings used tales for a comparable purpose: to explain human behavior to the people for ethical purposes. In addition to Macaulay’s reference to Richard I mentioned here, there are accounts of Edward I staging folk stories for political ends at feasts and before his counselors, discussed by Loomis in “Chivalric and Dramatic Imitations of Arthurian Romance,” pp. 91–92, and in his “Edward I, Arthurian Enthusiast.”

(7.2705–07). When Justinian learns of the magic gem that returns to its purse even after it has been sold, “he let sende for the man, / And axede him hou that it was” (5.5128–29). He hears patiently the whole story and indicates that he will himself redress the situation. The emperor works according to law, calling Adrian before his “court of juggement” (5.5143) where “the lawe hath diemed and ordeigned / Be hem [By them] that were avised wel” (5.5152–53). Justinian may be wise as Solomon, but, rather than acting arbitrarily, he works in the English way, through laws and wise judges. The case is one, we are told, that

Stant in the memoire into this day
 Wheroft that every wysman may
 Ensamplen him, and take in mynde
 What schame it is to ben unkinde;
 Agein the which reson debateth,
 And every creature it hateth. (5.5157–62)

ungrateful

Gower shows a fine sense of legal precedent, precedent remembered not just by men of law in their law books but by “every wysman,” who looks to such rulings for “ensample.” In Gower’s folktale, rather than some fairy godmother, it is the law, living within cultural “memoire” that guarantees the happy ending — the law administered by a good king and his “court of juggement.” The tale thus becomes a study in good rule that functions through the auspices of a good king, an idea that voices, throughout the *Confessio*, an abiding subtext.

It is indeed remarkable how often the plot of English popular romance hinges upon the integrity of the king and his laws.³⁰ If the king is weak, selfish, or unjust, the future of his kingdom will be bleak indeed. In this regard, the Tale of Adrian and Bardus provides an anatomy of good rule and is an important cog in the mechanism that defines the intellectual climax of the *Confessio*. In folktales, the happiest conclusion of all reintegrates with society at large those marginalized by injustice.

Gower’s tales often validate the political institution and its laws. Richard Kaeuper makes the compelling point that one of the most significant differences between England and the Continent is “the long-term growth of Royal power. Real meaning infused the widespread idea that the king of England was responsible for order and justice in his realm; from an early date this royalist ideal appeared regularly in documents by which officials remembered and acted.”³¹ Repeatedly, a key differentiation between an English retelling of a French popular romance and the original will be, in the English, the felicitous role of the king and his laws which provide order when the going gets rough.³² For Gower, a good folktale emphatically

³⁰ I am indebted on this point to conversations with Richard Kaeuper, who does much with narrative fiction as a mirror documenting contemporary historical concerns.

³¹ See especially ch. 6, “English Kingship, Chivalry and Literature,” in *Chivalry and Violence*, pp. 107–20, as cited on p. 109.

³² Contrast the simpler story of Marie de France’s *Lay of Sir Launfal* with Thomas Chester’s *Sir Launfal*, with its introduction of the mercantile perspective of the mayor and the hero’s populist approval rating as well as the king’s parliament of knights who must try Launfal in opposition to the vindictive queen; or continental versions of the story of Orpheus with the Middle English *Sir Orfeo*, where “Sir Orfewe,” king of Winchester, after the loss of his queen Dame Heuropis to the king of fairy, carefully appoints his deputy, then seeks his queen. When he recovers her from the fairy king, he returns to his court in disguise, carefully establishes his deputy’s loyalty and the truth of their covenants, then reveals

reinscribes political capital for the benefit of the whole community. The best happy ending, for Gowerian folktale, is the political one, when “regnes ben amended” (7.2708).

As in so many folktales, the Cinderella-like Bardus, a person so minimal that he must cull wood in the wilderness for sustenance, is elevated to a ranking member of society and is thus legitimated. Not all details of the narrative are idealized, however. A practical streak runs through Gower’s story that is as revealing of his folk vision as the fantastic one. Bardus’ kind act is a practical gesture, not an idealistic one. Like the better-established merchants in this proto-capitalist society, Bardus looks out for his means of survival. Self-interest is necessary, but it need not be malevolent. That is, he is a capitalist, but unlike the “unkynde” Adrian, his “kynde” has not been tainted by venality, and thus the benevolence of animal nature comes to his aid when the grateful ape and serpent, whom he first pulled out of the pit when trying to rescue Adrian, assist him with their gifts of gratitude.

Just as animals in the tale assume symbolic characteristics of a gentle nature that resents ingratitude, so does Adrian become their opposite, a mean-spirited man incapable of gratitude. In this tale, the merchants become part of the symbolic mechanism as well. They are good people who behave reasonably when they report to Justinian the odd behavior of the gem that keeps returning to Bardus’ purse. They act more out of curiosity than anger. Their reasonable behavior, combined with the animals’ gratitude, gets Bardus’ case before the king and his court of law.

Like a good folktale, the story is strongly goal-oriented.³³ The goals are always defined by specific situations. The players and their ethics are determined by their actions. At the outset, Bardus struggles in a basically degraded, inferior position; with mercantile enterprise he works hard in hope of achieving enough wealth to find some kind of security and dignity. He looks for compensation that will justify his laborious existence. His story is quite opposite to that of Midas: he is not avaricious, but neither does he scorn material advantage. His story openly acknowledges just payment; class privilege, on the other hand, that abuses fair acquisition of material goods is deconstructed step by step. The plot is simple, transparent, even predictable: what we need, we try to obtain. That is, the plot is sententious in challenging ways as its folk

himself to his court, which welcomes him and his queen with gladness and “gode likeing” (line 599) as the whole kingdom, the royalty and all the people, celebrate together in common profit — “God graunt our *alle* wele to fare! Amen!” (line 604 — emphasis mine). See Laskaya and Salisbury, eds., *The Middle English Breton Lays*, p. 41. Other examples that illustrate Kaeuper’s point might include *King Horn*, in which the title character returns to reestablish good rule in the kingdom of his father, thereby redeeming his mother, who has been hiding under a rock for years; or *Perceval of Galles*, so different from Chrétien, where the rescue of his mother and the reestablishment of good rule at home displaces Chrétien’s grail quest (in both *King Horn* and *Perceval of Galles* the widowed mothers are secured in new marriages that fittingly guarantee their happiness in old age); or several of the Gawain tales, where, for example, without precedent in the Vulgate tales, Gawain brings honor to Arthur’s court by his fulfilling of his quest for the Green Knight; or by dealing with the Carl of Carlisle who, in his conversion to courtesy, joins Arthur’s court; or in his allowing of victory to Gologras in order to maintain honor and good rule in Arthur’s court despite the king’s aggressive ways; or in his saving of the king’s life by marrying Dame Ragnelle, etc. — all tales that reassert the value of good law understood and embodied in good people whereby the kingdom survives by definition and by fact.

³³ On the role of goal-oriented behavior in fairy tale, see Glazer on Adlerian concepts in fairy tales: “Role of Wish Fulfillment in Märchen,” pp. 64 ff. Glazer explicates two Cinderella stories, one from Limousin in France, and the other from Gümüşhane in Turkey (pp. 67–75), to exemplify goal orientation.

symbolism helps us contemplate the social structures surrounding it, whereby, as the story unfolds, details such as the animals and their gracious behavior, the ingratitude of Adrian, the neediness and persistence of Bardus, the wise insights of the king, and the legal structures of the state come to mean more than they did at first.³⁴ It is this cohesion of the folkloric with classical rhetoric that so often sets Gower's style apart from that of Chaucer or Langland.

But before leaving this tale, one further word about its plain style. The Tale of Adrian and Bardus offers excellent examples of Gower's moving back and forth between the Latinate constructions of classical rhetoric and the rhythms of folk syntax. The tale begins with a long sentence that interrupts itself frequently with balanced clauses. Let me write the sentence as prose, to make more evident its hypotactic syntax:

To speke of an unkinde man, I find hou whilom Adrian, of Rome which a gret lord was, upon a day as he per cas to wode in his huntinge wente, it hapneth at a soudein wente, after his chace as he poursuith, thurgh happ, the which no man eschuieth, he fell unwar into a pet [pit], wher that it mihte noght be let. (5.4937–46)

After this convoluted setting up of the context, the tale moves into a rhythmic double-duple folk meter to describe Adrian's fall:

The pet was dep · and he fell lowe,	<i>pit</i>
That of his men · non myhte knowe	
Wher he becam, · for non was nyh,	<i>Where he had gone</i>
Which of his fall · the meschief syh. (5.4947–50)	<i>Who</i>

This is followed by two long sentences that, like the first sentence, move the plot along with periodic constructions, interspersed clauses, and skillful use of enjambment, after which the narrative moves into dialogue, with paratactic speech rhythms:

And thus, alone ther he lay, clepende and criende al the day for socour and deliverance, til agein even it fel per chance, a while er it began to nyhte, a povere man, which Bardus hihte, cam walkende with his asse and hadde gadred him a tasse of grene stickes and of drie *to selle*,³⁵ who that wolde hem beie, as he whiche hade no liflode, bot whanne he myhte such a lode to toune with his asse carie. And as it fell him for to tarie that ilke time nyh the pet, and hath the truse faste knet, he herde a vois, which cride dimme, and he his ere to the brimme *hath leid*, and herde it was a man, *which seid*: (5.4951–69)

“Ha, help hier Adrian, And I wol given half mi good.”	<i>here</i>
The povere man · this understod, <i>As he that wolde · gladly winne</i> ,	
And to this lord · which was withinne	

³⁴ See Fisher, *John Gower*, p. 203, as cited in note 16 above.

³⁵ In the first passage (5.4951–69), I have marked instances of enjambment in italic, since by printing the passage as a prose block the run-over effect is likely to be lost. In the verse passage that follows, I have marked in italics those passages that dramatize Bardus' poverty, his just concern about material gain, and his recognition of the need for legal contracts if he is to have any hope of getting on in life. The raised dots in lines 4972 ff. mark strong caesurae, characteristic of folk rhymes in verse.

He spak and seide, · “*If I thee save,
What sikernesse · schal I have
Of covenant, · that afterward
Thou wolt me · give such reward
As thou behihest · nou tofore?*”
That other hath · *his othes swore
Be hevene and · be the goddes alle,
If that it myhte · so befalle
That he out of the · pet him broghte,
Of all the goodes · whiche he oghte
He schal have evene · halvendel.* (5.4970–85)

security
agreement
promised a moment ago
equal half

The passages demonstrate Gower’s mastery of dialogue, both direct and indirect, that, along with folk rhythms, moves the story forward and, at the same time, establishes through its folk *metier* the legal issues that become the crux of the tale when, at the end, these contractual details of the “covenant” are rehearsed at Adrian’s trial. The tone is direct and simple, but the issues are more complex: this folktale, set up in terms of legal contracts, engages social commitments that are, in Gower’s view, the very basis of society — the keeping of law through which the wrongs of society may be identified and remedied.

The Tale of Jason and Medea

There are many other quite wonderful tales in Book 5 besides the Tale of Adrian and Bardus — e.g., the Tale of Virgil’s Mirror, the King and the Steward’s Wife, the Tale of Achilles and Deidamia, and several Ovidian tales, especially the Tale of Hercules and Faunus, based on Ovid’s *Fasti*. But one of the best is the Tale of Jason and Medea. As in the Bardus story, Gower draws upon the *métier* of folklore and its subtexts to shape the tone and consequent ethical parameters of his version of the famous story. As in Bardus, natural law and contractual law conjoin with folk components as operative universals in the tale.

Gower’s adaptation is based on two well-known literary sources: 1) Benoît’s *Roman de Troie*, the main plot of which Gower adheres to in the first 680 lines of the poem (the story of the golden fleece, the secret marriage of Jason and Medea, and his victorious return from Colchos to Greece); and 2) the first four hundred lines of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* Book 7, from which Gower takes the basic guidelines for the last three hundred lines of his tale and its concluding events, namely, his account of Medea’s rejuvenation by magic of Jason’s decrepit father Eson at a great price to her own physical beauty, Jason’s subsequent breech of his marriage vow as he abandons Medea for Creusa, and Medea’s erasure of the effects of the broken contract by the murder of his sons in retaliation.

The effect of Gower’s story is quite different from Benoît’s (and utterly different from Ovid’s), largely because of his strongly sympathetic treatment of Medea, a sympathy qualified by astute contractual modifications. Medea’s character is developed not in a novelistic manner, the way Chaucer develops Criseyde’s personality, but rather in a folkloristic way. That is, she is presented not as a “realistic” or self-reflective woman like Criseyde, nor as a schizophrenic witch, as she is in Ovid.³⁶ Rather, she is a configuration of female character functions of the sort

³⁶ Ovid’s account begins with what appears to be a debate between two women, both of whom in their witchcraft can see into the future, but almost immediately we recognize that both of them are

one finds in folk typologies — the yearnings of a pubescent woman, a sense of adventure and fascination with the outside world, a strong desire for emotional commitment, and a fierce loyalty to her beloved. She embodies a young woman's need for independence from her parents, but at the same time she is deeply religious and naturally modest. She is, moreover, presented as having a practical side: she is savvy about money and has a keen sense of the workings of law. In this regard she is like the well-educated Peronelle in the Tale of the Three Questions (1.3067 ff.) or Thais in the Tale of Apollonius (8.271 ff.), a positive role model for a young aristocratic woman. She is very smart and observant. But, unlike his sources, Gower plays down her skills in witchcraft until, at the command of her husband, she is called upon to use them for what she knows will be to her own detriment, a sacrifice she is willing to make on her husband's behalf. The narrative appears to exonerate her in the end when the unfaithful Jason attempts to retaliate against her for destroying his children, but is unable to touch her; she, leaving Jason in "gret destresse" (5.4222), is given refuge in the court of the goddess Pallas.

Genius is sympathetic to Medea throughout the narrative, even though she does dastardly things: she betrays her father, robs the family treasury, and, ultimately, murders her children. But these horrendous events are the consequence of abuses against Medea, abuses defined by breeches of contract within which she, in keeping with her basically generous nature, has attempted to lead an honorable life. This is a tale about Perjury, and Jason is the perjuror. During the course of the action Medea is defined by several different contracts, contracts that the legal-minded Gower is careful to spell out. We are encouraged always to assess her actions through the situations in which she is placed. This is not to say that she makes no choices. On the contrary, she is quite clear-headed about her decisions (very different from Ovid's Medea, in this regard, who is trapped in a perpetual rant between contradictory positions she both detests and adores).

Gower's Medea is a complex bundle of social and political pressures. Her story is framed in such a way that virtually every action is given a political overtone that qualifies ethical judgment in each situation. For example, Gower develops the role of Oetes, her father, far beyond what it was in Benoît. In his dialogue with Jason when he first arrives from Greece, Oetes does all that he can to discourage the youth, fearing that, should Jason fail, the Greeks might attack Colchos in retaliation. When Jason remains headstrong, the father plays his trump card, bringing out his beautiful daughter Medea in hope of distracting Jason. This use of her virginal beauty as bait exonerates her falling in love with Jason; she does what Oetes intended — and more. She is not some witch who seduces a young man. Nature takes care of the bewitching part. She loves him and would honorably wed him (albeit without her father's blessing, but certainly at his instigation) before any sexual activity takes place. But once she is married to Jason, her life is defined by a different set of contractual expectations: she gives her loyalty to her husband, rather than her father, which is as the law would require. We may feel remorse for Oetes and his wife, after Jason preemptively leaves Colchis, taking Medea and her inheritance with him, but the politics of her decisions are rational, and she is given room to be admired for her choices. She acts knowingly, even though she is young and new at the game of life.

Gower's Medea has a strong sense of propriety and loyalty to her commitments. When Oetes commands that Jason and Medea meet, all goes exactly as he planned. Nature takes its course, and they almost instantly fall in love. But Gower's presentation of the moment is quite

Medea: one tells about the hateful evils of predatory men who would harm her, and the other of her love of male beauty and masculine company.

different from the comparable scene in *Benoît*. In the *Roman de Troie* the focus is heavily on Jason's response to Medea's femininity. The poet introduces Medea through an *effictio* of womanly beauty that helps the reader to see what Jason sees — her figure, her encircling hair that sets off her beautiful eyes and lovely face, her mouth and sweet glances, her chin, her beautiful torso and lovely arms, and her rounded hips³⁷ (*Rom. de Troie* 1254–62).

Gower omits the description entirely. Instead, Jason simply “good hiede nam [took]” and finds in her “nothing loth” as she “softē” takes his hand in welcome and seats him publicly at table (5.3370–75). She “gan hir yhe [eye] impresse / Upon his face and his stature,” for she had never seen anyone so “wel farende” as he (5.3378–81). But Genius does not fault her for her courteous behavior or her penetrating glances. She is simply observant and responsive at this naive but informing moment. Rather, it is Jason who seems at fault (if fault is to be found), for he “ne mihte noght withholde his lok” (5.3383). He has no excuse for not knowing enough to guard his eyes.³⁸ Ironically, this womanizing propensity is what will draw him to Creusa at the end and lead to the heedless destruction of his legacy, despite all his concern for his father.

Medea's natural affections are presented affectionately, especially her modesty, as she “with simple chiere and meke . . . wax al aschamed” when she brings Jason into her bedroom where she is “redi to bedde” (5.3476–81). But most striking at this intimate moment is not her devious, youthful passion but rather her ability to deal in awkward situations with a clear head.³⁹ She arranges the bedding of the bride to take place only after a marriage service in the presence of a “figure of Jupiter” (5.3485) has been performed, with her lady-in-waiting as witness. Details of the marriage contract are precisely laid out, including his swearing that while his life lasts “he wolde hire holde for his wif” (5.3492). Then, having given his word, they kiss to seal the contract. As is so often the case, we once again see the legal-minded Gower at work. Although there are many charges of indecorum that could be brought against Medea, she does work within the sufferances of divine and natural law, and common law, too, if her contracts with men are taken into consideration. The final judgment of the tale is against Jason, who swore “an oth which is noght soth” (5.4224).

There is jollity in the consummation, as they, in bed all naked, “hadden bothe what thei wolde” (5.3499). But although the lovemaking seems a mutually happy reward, a more sobering detail lurks in the background, namely the spelling out of a prenuptial agreement which stipulated that Jason would enter into the contract with her, providing that she give him the instruction and equipment necessary to survive the quest for the fleece (5.3443 ff.).

³⁷ I have translated *Large e grant a la forcheüre* (line 1259) as “rounded hips,” though, technically, *forcheüre* is an anatomical term for “crotch” or “groin.”

³⁸ Jason seems to have forgotten the story of Acteon, his fellow Greek from the lands of mythology, who, in Book I of the *Confessio*, learned the hard way that when he looked on Diana as she played “naked al” in the “flood” that disaster would ensue: “Betre is to winke than to loke!” [1.363–84], Genius abjures. If only he had taken time to read that story! But Jason is not a careful reader, nor is he interested in taking time; in his avarice, he is too busy taking anything he can get.

³⁹ Ames' cogent observation is worth citing here: “Surely Gower was not being ironic when he described Medea as a blushing maid who naively believed Jason's oaths of fidelity or Cleopatra as a woman who had suffered for love. His comments suggest rather their acceptance into the Women's Club” (“The Feminist Connections,” p. 69). My point is that Gower's Medea is conscious of her position as woman both in her political awareness and her physiological responses. In this regard she does not object or protest; she recognizes the potency of the Women's Club, which makes her destruction of Creusa at the end of her “story” all the more poignant — for both women in their “sosterhode” (see 7.4196–4209).

That agreement qualifies, at least, the headiness of the romance. Medea keeps her side of the contract. After their pleasures, she gives him precise instructions on how to deal with the fire-breathing oxen, the serpent that never sleeps, the dragon's teeth, the plowing of the teeth into a furrow from which knights will grow and be slain. (One might read the scenario almost as a prophecy of the fate of Jason and his heritage as he plants his own seed in a furrow that produces young knights who, alas, will soon be destroyed.) If he carries out the instructions well, the fleece will be his. Medea makes sure that he can remember details of the charm, then warns him that the new day approaches and he must get up so that she can give him the ring with its magical stone,⁴⁰ the ointment, and the glue that will save his life and honor: “thus Medea for Jason / Ordeigneth, and preith therupon / That he nothing forgete scholde” (5.3623–25). Finally, she leads him in communal prayers to Jupiter.

Gower adds a touching parting scene as she takes her new husband in her arms, weeps, prays again, then faints (5.3634–59). There is little sentiment of this sort in *Benoît*, and certainly not in Ovid, but such sentiment is an important component of the folk morphology of her sincerity — one of the actants intertwined with the legal ones. Gower's Medea is a complicated woman, not just some headstrong schoolgirl. She governs well in her domain. Gower establishes this aspect of Medea in part by means of her serving maid, who acts as go-between, personal attendant, and witness. The woman is discreet and utterly loyal to her mistress, a confirmation of the integrity of the political domain over which Medea governs so capably. Medea keeps an orderly household; she “ordeigneth” (5.3624) well for everyone in her domain, providing they uphold their end of the agreements.

After Jason sets out, Medea watches from her tower (another Gower addition) with pious, loving prayers; when he carries out her orders and succeeds, Gower rises to the occasion with striking poetic adornment:

Jason Medea noght forgat,
On bothe his knes he gan doun falle,
And gaf thonk to the goddes alle.
The flees he tok and goth to bote,
The sonne schyneth bryhte and hote,
The flees of gold schon forth withal,
The water glistreth overal. (5.3728–34)

goes to the boat

This is indeed their shining moment. From her tower Medea knows where to look and catches sight of the glint of the fleece. She is a good reader of signs and finds pleasure in her reading, recognizing his success long before anyone else knows. She sends her heart to her lover by metaphor express, as she imagines how she would help him: “If that sche hadde wynges tuo,⁴¹ / Sche wolde have flowe unto him tho / Strawht ther he was into the bot” (5.3749–51). When Jason returns, the people, who know nothing of the circumstances, cry with one voice, “Ha,

⁴⁰ The ring Medea gives to Jason, with its potent gemstone that protects her beloved, evokes a folk-motif found in many a medieval romance; e.g., Chrétien's *Yvain* and the Middle English *Ywain and Gawayn*, *Perceval of Galles*, *William of Palerne*, and *King Horn*. On the magical power of gems in medieval romances, saints' lives, lapidaries, and individual lives (the stones need not necessarily be in rings), see Heather, “Precious Stones,” pp. 249–64.

⁴¹ This idea of her attending him on “wynges tuo” is not as idly girlish a thought as it might at first seem. Later, when commanded by her husband to restore Eson, she will indeed fly through the air.

wher was evere under the hevene / So noble a knyht as Jason is?" (5.3766–67). Gower projects a fine instance of common profit as nobles and commons conjoin in their joy at the marvellous folkloric moment (5.3758–59).⁴² They refer to him as "a faie knight" and immediately become folk historians who create a legend within their communal imagination: "For it was nevere of mannes miht / The flees of gold so for to winne, / And thus to talen thei beginne" (5.3769–72).

Medea is, of course, the one who deserves the credit, but her quiet response is appropriate, for according to law husband and wife are one. Though he is her guardian, his praise is her praise.⁴³ Her pleasure in "his" triumph is one further indication of her wifeliness. We know, however, the great debt he owes his wife; we have seen how she is thrilled with all that has transpired, but we also know how casual his concerns for her are. Gower gives us a romance, but he also subverts it. Once again, we are left troubled by the plot's cruel twists.

Both Benoît and Gower give Jason a bath after he returns to Colchus (compare *Rom. de Troie* line 1999 with *CA* 5.3801–11), a comparative detail that exemplifies the differences in Gower's presentation of his heroine and her presence in the source. In Benoît we are *told* it happened; in Gower we *see* it happen, as Jason prepares for his reception at court: he "wyssh him clene as eny bon," takes a "sopp," puts on his best clothes, and "kempde his hed" to come forth "al merie and glad / Riht strawht into the kinges halle" (5.3806–11). Comparable popular romance enhancements beyond the French may be seen in Medea's shy greeting of him after his return, in the assembly where Jason gives his speech and receives praise, in the supper feast followed by their second night in the bridal chamber, and in their planning for an immediate departure after Medea obtains her dowry from the treasury.⁴⁴ Gower is superbly in control of his literary medium in this tale, a master of sentiment in many a touching scene, not just for Medea and her beloved, but for her parents as well — witness the tender weeping of her mother and the wild antics of her father when they find out their daughter has gone (5.3911–26) — sentiment that pleases even as Gower histories ethical issues and personal contracts that will unfold with startling perplexity in the end.

The conclusion of Gower's poem is loosely based on Ovid in one of the most convoluted passages in the *Metamorphoses*. Gower's relatively elaborate account of Jason's hasty nighttime

⁴² Fisher, *John Gower*, p. 196, sees this as a moment of common profit as the people, the powerful and the ordinary, respond "with o voice" (5.3765).

⁴³ See Pollock and Maitland, *The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I*, 1.485, on oneness in marriage despite male guardianship.

⁴⁴ Several critics have commented on the swift departure of Jason and Medea from Colchus and their taking of Medea's dowry with them. See Nicholson, *Annotated Index*, pp. 353–54; Eichinger, *Die Trojasage als Stoffquelle*, p. 70, notes that neither Benoît nor Guido describe the departure, suggesting that Gower uses the passage as a means of transition into his Ovidian source. Schmitz, *Middel Weie*, p. 159, considers Medea's obtaining of her dowry by taking it to be a theft, while Itô, *John Gower*, p. 89, considers it to be, instead, a confirmation of her devotion to her husband, noting her condemnation in Benoît ("Grant folie fist Medea") as she robs her father (line 2030) and also the fact that in Euripides, Seneca, and *Ovide moralisé* (7.655–78), she kills her younger brother Absyrtus, cuts him to pieces, and scatters the fragments at sea so that the pursuers will lose time gathering up the bits. Certainly, Gower gives us a more gentle portrait of Medea than any of the other treatments, where, even in this testy moment, she shows devotion and loyalty to her new guardian, as Itô remarks. We are told that she thinks "her father to beguile" (5.3896), but that could refer more to her marriage and her leaving without letting her father know, rather than simply the fact that she "al priveli" (5.3898) took with her "the tresor which hir fader hadde" (5.3897), details that cannot be easily ignored.

departure from Colchos, Medea's effort “hir fader to beguile” (5.3896), the parents' discovery next morning that the two have gone, and their pursuit “with caliphe and with galeie” (5.3915) provides a smooth transition between the sources. So too, Gower's repeated use of a hunting metaphor to describe Jason's triumphal venture. When he returns with the golden fleece we are told “hou Jason broghte his preie” (5.3763) back to Colchos. That night he goes forth “stalkende al prively” (5.3861) into Medea's chamber, takes his “ese” with Medea “naked and al warm” (5.3867), then flees with the treasure before dawn. When he arrives in Greece he comes “with his preie” (5.3927), which could be read as the fleece, Medea, or the treasury. The hunting trope might be understood as a sign of an admirable masculinity, but it also subverts the integrity of his relationship with his new wife, who is already being couched as the victim.

As Gower rewrites the story, with his elaborate account of loyal Medea's effort to restore the youth of Jason's father, he offers his audience some of the most musical and flowing lines in Middle English.⁴⁵ He acknowledges that the effect is mainly a “novellerie” (5.3955) as he takes his reader into a fairy realm where Medea flies by midnight with a wondrous world of stillness on every side, her head bare and her hair flowing as she begins her incantations to the wind, the sea, the land, and to Echates, goddess of sorcerie (5.3982). She rides in a chariot pulled by dragons past the mythic lands of Crete and Othrys and Olympus, as she obtains the potions and prepares for the bloodletting that will restore the youth of Eson, Jason's arthritic father. The scene is one of the most extended accounts of magic in Middle English literature. But, although Medea's effort that begins in gliding poetry succeeds in transforming Eson, it ends in blood-curdling cackling that leaves Medea old, desiccated, and exhausted, whereupon, when Peleus, Jason's uncle, dies, and Jason becomes king, he takes a younger, more beautiful wife, and puts Medea aside. When Medea strikes back she has the reader's sympathy as well as that of Pallas and her divine court that provides refuge to the abandoned woman. As Genius declares, “Lo, what mihte eny man devise, / A womman schewe in eny wise / Mor hertly love in every stede, / Than Medea to Jason dede?” (5.4175–78).⁴⁶ Her “hertly love” is not some irresponsible passion; it is more an affective piety, appropriate to a lady of her position.

⁴⁵ Gower has often been praised for his melodious verse. See Lewis on the pleasurable of Gower's verse with its singing style and the “beauty of the architectonics,” its striking imagery and efficiency as Medea, for example, upon seeing Jason returned safely “sche for joie hire maide kiste” (5.3800), where, as Lewis puts it, the whole scene comes “alive in six words” (*Allegory of Love*, pp. 200–08, n.b. 204–06); Ricks on Gower's “use of the ordinary”—words like “soft,” where Medea welcomes Jason “And softe tok him be the hond, / And doum thei seten bothe same” (5.3374–75), and “thing,” when Venus says to the aged lover, “The thing is torned into was” (8.2435)—for effects that are quite extraordinary (“Metamorphosis in Other Words,” pp. 26–31); and, especially, Street, whose paean to Gower's lyricism, with its musical, onomatopoeic effects and sensual contrasts, is eloquent confirmation of what Skelton meant when he said that Gower “first garnysshed our English rude” (“John Gower,” p. 238).

⁴⁶ It is worth contrasting Gower's sensitive treatment of Medea that is so skillfully set within complex legal and social situations with Chaucer's more satirical and sentimental tale in *Legend of Good Women*. Chaucer draws more upon Guido than Benoît, attacking Jason less through breech of contract than through mockery of his cad-like nature. By combining the story of Hypsipyle with that of Medea, he can amusingly assail Jason for betraying two women where other cads betray one, a circumstance that so angers Geoffrey that he would challenge Jason to a duel—“Have at thee, Jason! Now thy horn is blowe!” (*LGW*, line 1383). Street gets at the difference between the two treatments of the story well when she contrasts Gower's “large tapestry woven after the plan of Benoît” with Chaucer's “wood-block,” with its “strong emotional colour” and swift movement (“John Gower,” p. 239).

The conclusion of Medea's story is both subversive and liberating. Gower's treatment of Medea's violent revenge upon Jason moves quite beyond the patriarchal laws of his own day, which had difficulty in deciding how to deal with women who murder their children. But it raises legal questions that might well have been of interest to the poet. Salisbury succinctly points to the difficulty that courts had in adjudicating such cases.⁴⁷ Gower seems to appreciate the law's problem in dealing with Medea, who, as a wife, was property under her husband's jurisdiction, when even into the latter part of the sixteenth century, "a wife could not be guilty of stealing her husband's goods, because in law husband and wife were one person."⁴⁸ The same rationale might be applied to Medea, who is both Jason's property and his equal through marriage; she has in her keeping his children, though their status is defined by their father. For Medea the situation has been perplexed by Jason's putting her aside, thereby breaking his marriage oath, an oath blessed by Jupiter, of him being hers and her being his for the rest of their lives. In abandoning Medea, he, in a sense, has killed her; she, by slaying his children before his eyes, simply reenacts his crime. He, as husband and guardian, might attempt to take revenge, though the law, were it invoked, might, given his guilt through perjury, hesitate. Indeed, it is Medea herself who defines the legal point as she tells Jason before she kills the boys, "Oh thou of every lond / The moste untrewe creature, / Lo, this schal be thi forfeiture" (5.4212–14).⁴⁹

Hanawalt cites numerous instances in which women who murdered their children or their husbands, for that matter, were judged to be insane and were put in the custody of others.⁵⁰ Certainly Medea would have had ample grounds for such a plea, and, given the provocation, might well have been put in the care of a convent (obviously, she could not be put in her husband's care), which is, in effect, what happens in Gower's tale, as she is received into the court of Pallas.⁵¹

This pagan tale gives the poet opportunity to try Medea in a court of higher justice that looks at evidence that might be overridden or disregarded in an actual court of law. This

⁴⁷ Salisbury notes that although few cases are recorded, "infanticide and child murder [may have been] common practices simply interpreted by certain courts as misdemeanors rather than felonies. Four cases recorded in England demonstrate the presuppositions of jurists regarding women and their children in what appear to be suspect judgments. One woman was brought before a secular court for murdering her two-year-old daughter and forcing her four-year-old son to sit in hot hearth coals. Another woman beat her ten-year-old son to death but was judged to be insane. In another case, the mother tried to commit suicide, but changed her mind and killed her children instead. In a fourth case, a woman killed her two-year-old son and daughter with an axe, but was released on bail and placed under the supervision of twelve of her kin. Women were often presumed to be guilty . . . but [were] assigned only the mildest of penances because of their own status as intellectually inferior creatures. And when they were not treated like children, or considered insane or possessed by demons, the death was determined to be accidental" (*Domestic Violence in Medieval Texts*, p. 11). See also Hanawalt, "Female Felon," and Hurnard, *King's Pardon for Homicide*, p. 162.

⁴⁸ *Oxford History of the Laws of England*, 6.569–70.

⁴⁹ I'm grateful to Yeager for pointing out the legal terminology here (*John Gower's Poetic*, p. 121n18).

⁵⁰ Insanity was the most common plea for a mother killing her children. Hanawalt cites half a dozen cases ("Female Felon," p. 131; notes p. 139).

⁵¹ Hanawalt cites the instance of a woman who killed her husband in bed by cutting his throat with a small scythe and breaking his skull, who, instead of pleading self-defense, "fled to a church and abjured the realm" ("Female Felon," p. 131; citing Hunnisett, *Bedfordshire Coroners' Rolls*, p. 102).

higher court comes down on Medea's side and exonerates her. Her tale does not advocate the slaughter of children. Rather, it presents the dire effects of perjury within the domestic scene, an area which might be overlooked by patriarchal rule, but which can readily be addressed *vox populi, vox dei* as she answers to a higher authority, "unto Pallas the court above" (5.4219). The childless Jason is simply left to his empty rage and lost heritage.

BOOK 6: GLUTTONY

Book 6, less than a third the length of Book 5, is essentially an extension of its great neighbor, with drunkenness and delicacy the only two subforms of gluttony to be discussed. Both are akin to the predations of Avarice. It is no surprise then that Books 5 and 6 share many of the same motifs, especially when Book 6 turns its attention from delicacy to sorcery. Drunkenness and delicacy are, like sorcery, sins of delusion and beguilement, indulgences that lead to self-destruction.

For often he that wol beguile
 Is guiled with the same guile,
 And thus the guilour is beguiled. (6.1379–81)

Such sins of beguilement are the result of appetite, as is avarice; drunkenness and delicacy make the world seem to be other than it is, whereby one might have "so mochel of mi wille" (6.203) that "withoute blenchinge of myn yhe" he might think to see "of Paradis the moste joie" (6.205–07) and to sleep "in Goddes barm" (6.227). The primary consideration of these sins is self-gratification, like the behavior of Adrian, where the delicate "set hire chiere at no delit, / Bot he have *al his appetit*" (6.685–86 — emphasis mine). Delicacy is largely a predatory feeding of the eye (6.784, 792, 827) or the ear (6.830, 846, 895–96). Often at night (at a "reresouper" [late supper]), when Thought is the cook (6.748–49, 913–14) and when his beloved's voice lingers in his dreams as "a blisse of hevene" (6.874), Amans thinks himself at "a cherie feste" that requires "non other fode" (6.889).⁵²

It is easy to see how sorcery factors into both gluttony and avarice. With all its witchcraft toward the end, the Tale of Jason and Medea might fit neatly into Book 6, though it is Jason, not Medea, who is the beguiler beguiled. In his fantasies he is, even more than Medea, who is the real thing, a would-be sorcerer who would eagerly have immediate access to his dreams and desires. Medea, moreover, does not die a victim of her sorcery, the way

⁵² One of the best discussions of Amans' delicacy is Burrow's "The Portrayal of Amans." Burrow's argument is especially fine in explaining Gower's debt to the fourteenth-century French *uits amoreux* such as Machaut's *Voir-Dit* and Froissart's *Espinette Amoureuse*, where the lover encounters his lady not always in dream but through delicate voyeurism as he watches her from afar or as near as he can get, maybe even touching her or being touched by her as she plucks a hair from his clothing. The delicate lover with his "feinte herte" (5.6945 — see also 5.6659–69) has "a distinctly unheroic temper"; such lovers "have to content themselves with winning trifling favours from their mistress by sending her little poems or doing her little services" (p. 6). Burrow contrasts such personifications with the presentation of the lover in the *Roman de la Rose*. It is the later poems of Machaut and Froissart that have the greater influence on Gower. "It is, in fact, hard to imagine this lover facing even the allegorical encounters braved by the lover in the *Roman de la Rose*" (p. 7). He is mainly a "yes" or "no" man with an active imagination filled with trifles that help to hide him (and us) from his old age.

Ulysses and Nectanabus do; rather, she controls her fate and is translated to heaven, over-leaping death. Nonetheless, her tale segues readily into the sorcery tales at the end of Book 6. As Book 7 will make clear, sorcery and good kingship are contradictory concepts.

The Tale of Ulysses and Telegonus

The story of Ulysses and Telegonus illustrates the need for close attendance on rational behavior, and in this respect is a warning to kings, even good kings — a reminder that unheeded acts are often revisited upon the perpetrator. Ulysses is presented as a wise man who has been attentive to education in all areas of living. Even so, his effort is inadequate. His story begins with a catalogue of his worthiness, as knight, king, clerk, rhetorician, astronomer, philosopher, prophet, horticulturalist, physician, and surgeon (6.1396–1411). He has also studied the occult, mainly for purposes of self-defense, which enables him to deal with the two sorceresses in the tale, Calypso and Circe, who would gain power over him but fail: “Thei couthe moche, he couthe more” (6.1441). He does take his pleasures with them, but it is casual, more like a business perk than a commitment. There are no binding agreements.

After he returns to Penelope he governs wisely. His family is loyal to him, and so are his people. He has left behind, however, unbeknownst to him, a pregnant Circe, a deed of delicacy that will come back to haunt him, despite all his wisdom. As he sleeps, he “mette a svevne [dreamed a dream]” (6.1523) that “bothe his yhen fedde” (6.1522). An angelic-looking man appears before him with a “pensel” on a staff that depicts three fishes of one color in the manner of a tower. The figure embraces him as a family member might, but warns “that on of ous the deth schal take, / Whan time comth of destiné” (6.1546–47). When Ulysses asks the meaning of the pennon the dream figure says that it is a sign “of an empire” (6.1562), then disappears.

Ulysses awakens and, thinking the figure must represent his son (as it indeed does), attempts to protect himself by confining Telemachus and surrounding himself with strong body guards. But, as the Latin marginal gloss attributed to Bernardus, explains: *Plures plura sciunt et seipsos nesciunt* [“Many know many things and are ignorant of themselves”]. Genius picks up on the gloss with “A man hath knowleching / Save of himself of alle thing” (6.1567–68), a key point, pertaining to the culmination of man’s need to search for self-knowledge, if he would “thenkth to ben a king” (8.2110).

This disastrous tale is filled with admirable behavior: Circe has been a good mother to Telegonus, educating him and teaching him all about his famous father. When the boy comes of age she sends him to Ulysses for training in a man’s world. As Telegonus eagerly approaches the palace the one thing he is not prepared for is his father’s defensiveness. Instead of a loving embrace he meets guards who refuse him entry. When he asks to see his father they, having no clue of who he might be, menace and threaten him. Words lead to blows, and the youth kills the best five of the guards. Ulysses hears the scuffle, approaches, and is pierced by the lance bearing the pennon. When he is struck, every man cries out, “The king! the king!” and Telegonus realizes, “Helas! I have min oghne fader slain” (6.1711–15) and touchingly wishes he were the one dead, instead. The dying Ulysses asks to see the youth and have the pennon’s heraldry explained, whereupon he learns of Telegonus’ story, forgives his new son, and, “al bledende he kest [kissed] him ofte” (6.1746). There has been no malice behind Ulysses’ actions and certainly none by the boy. The fault lies only in their ignorance. With good will Ulysses introduces Telegonus to Telemachus, grants him his heritage, and dies.

The moral to the Tale of Ulysses and Telegonus defines the limitations of sorcery as a guiding principle and sets up the Tale of Nectanabus, another tale in which the son kills the father:

Lo, wherof sorcerie serveth.
 Thurgh sorcerie his lust he wan, desire
 Thurgh sorcerie his wo began, woe
 Thurgh sorcerie his love he ches, chose
 Thurgh sorcerie his lif he les; lost
 The child was gete in sorcerie, begotten through
 The which ded al this felonie:
 Thing which was agein kynde wroght
 Unkindeliche it was aboght;
 The child his oghne fader slowh, slew
 That was unkindeschipe ynowh. (6.1768–78) unnaturalness enough

The moral applies equally well to both tales, insofar as sorcery offers a quick fix when the going gets tough. Genius calls it “unkindeschipe” in that the sorcerer alters nature when it does not suit him. In *Vox Clamantis*, Gower sees a connection between fate and sorcery.

Each man shapes for himself his own destiny, incurs his own lot according to his desire, and creates his own fate (*fata*). In fact, a free mind voluntarily claims what it does for its various desserts in the name of fate (*sortis*). In truth, fate (*sors*) ought always to be handmaiden to the mind, from which the name itself which will be its own is chosen. (*VC* II.ii.203–08)⁵³

This is a difficult proposition. As creatures of choice we like to believe that we are not fated, that we can figure out problems and arrive at solutions that have the capacity to carry us to our goals. Indeed, this is the essence of all educational programs. Yet as creatures of will and desire, we often too readily believe what we wish, thereby curtailing our freedom.

⁵³ That Gower sees the matter as one of “desire” (i.e., the will) is crucial to his essentially Augustinian view in which thought negotiates interchanges between Memory, Intellect, and Will, with a component of Imagination (Imaginativa, Ingenium, Genius, or Invention) thrown in. (See *CA*, ed. Peck, vol. 1, pp. 8–13.) In *De Civ. Dei* V.9 Augustine writes: “Our wills have power to do all God wanted them to do and foresaw they could do. Their power, such as it is, is a real power. What they are to do they will most certainly do, because God foresaw both that they could do it and that they would do it. . . . Thus, if I wanted to use the word ‘fate’ for anything at all, I should prefer to say that ‘fate’ is the action of a weak person, while ‘choice’ is the act of the stronger man who holds the weak man in his power, rather than to admit that the choice of our will is taken away in that order of causes . . . called fate.” Or, as Boethius explains, in giving in heedlessly to desire “that man that so dooth hath cast away his scheeld, and is remooved from his place, and enlaceth hym in the cheyne with whiche he mai ben drawen” (*Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. Chaucer, 1.m.4.19–22). It is within this paradigm that Gower insists that the sorcerer is often trapped by his own beguilings (see 6.1389–91). “The child his oghne fader slowh” (6.1777) might be glossed as “fate,” given that it is the product of choice given over to fantasy. In the Tale of Ulysses and Telegonus, and the Tale of Nectanabus as well, the sorcerer cannot foresee his death and is caught off guard by his beguilings. The philosopher accommodates his thought to accept death; the sorcerer, through his delicate revision of reality, obscures death, which then catches him off guard. See Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, pp. 130–32.

The Tale of Nectanabus

The Tale of Nectanabus is the crowning example of a king who, fearful of death, looks for quick fixes to escape bad situations.⁵⁴ He abandons his kingdom and turns to sorcery to effect his wishes. As in the Tale of Ulysses and Telegonus, his solution, though brilliant in its way, is shortsighted, a myopia established by the opening lines of the tale. Genius starts the story with a prayer to God, the High Creator, King of Kings, who “Ful many a wonder worldes chance / Let slyden under His suffrance: / Ther wot no man the cause why / Bot He the which is almyghty” (6.1791–94). God’s “suffrance” of “worldes chance” requires that people show sufferance of their own before they make choices and attempt to impose sense upon the indeterminate. The slippery area (what “slyden under His suffrance”) leaves room for reasonable constructions, but also for sorcery that slips past sufferance by fusing fantasy with reason to achieve an easy solution. The tale is a deconstruction of just such easy solutions to chance wonders of the world as it explores consequences along with choice, thereby helping to set up Book 7.

When King Nectanabus learns that Egypt will be attacked, he disguises himself (6.1807) and flees to Macedonia, taking with him three trusted yeomen “of his chambre” and “part of the beste good he hadde” (6.1811–16).⁵⁵ Wealth and adulmentation are part of sorcery’s seductive appeal, to the public and to Nectanabus himself, and he uses both to his personal advantage: he has the pleasure of seducing the seductive queen at her birthday party, the thrill of getting to play God, a delicate sense of power through manipulative prophecies, and the glory not only of besting King Philip by means of clever tricks but also of getting Philip to believe his ruse to the applause and amazement of a horde of people. His skits are diverting in the way that good fiction can be as he works within patterns of expectation in people who, as the excitement of chance events mounts (the mysteriously pregnant queen, the marvelous happenings within nature, etc.), willingly suspend disbelief so that they may participate in the implausible fictions.

So it goes for Olympias, too, who is smitten from the moment she first gazes into the hypnotic eye of the sorcerer (6.1864–67). When Nectanabus impregnates her imagination by means of the dream he sends to her (along with his explication), she is receptive, flattered to imagine that a god has singled her out and wants to copulate with her so that she might give

⁵⁴ Gower’s principal source for the Tale of Nectanabus is Thomas of Kent’s Anglo-Norman *Roman de toute Chevalerie*. For the account of Philip’s vision of the conceiving of Alexander and for the account of Nectanabus’ death Gower draws in part on a Latin source, the *Historia de Preliis*. A Middle English adaptation of Thomas of Kent’s poem may be found in the metrical *Kyng Alisaunder* (early fourteenth century), and portions of the *Historia de Preliis* are translated in the Middle English Alliterative Alexander Fragments (c. 1340–70); these Middle English poems share many specific details with the plotting of Gower’s poem, but it is evident that Gower worked with the Anglo-Norman and Latin versions, rather than an English translation. See Macaulay 3.519 on Gower’s relationship with earlier English Alexander stories: “It would be quite contrary to [Gower’s] practice to follow an English authority.” See Lumiansky for accounts and editions of the Middle English Alexander poems.

⁵⁵ In Gower’s source Nectanabus travels alone. Gower makes it clear that the man values privilege and the means to make a good showing, sufficient, for example, to impress a queen who is herself given to extravagance and exhibition. We might contrast Chaucer’s canon and his yeoman who cannot get by Harry Bailly’s astute surveillance because of their “sluttish” appearance (CT VIII[G]636). Nectanabus’ disguise, of which his three chamberlains are a part, is designed to make a good impression in the world’s opinion, the way Chaucer’s Merchant does, “sownyng alwey th’encrees of his wynnyng” to advance his “chevyssauunce” (CT I[A]275, 282). Nectanabus has become more a PR man than a king.

birth to the greatest king yet born.⁵⁶ The fantastic idea seems reasonable, in its way, because she has done much at her birthday feast to make herself beautiful and is eager to attract attention, “for hire list to be beholde / And preised of the poeple aboute” (6.1828–29). Her seductive appearance (her sorcery, one might say) is part of what makes her so seduceable, a fact Nectanabus is quick to assay. She thrives on adulation and, when she “schop hir for to ride oute” (6.1830), is ready to believe any flattery Nectanabus might bestow upon her.

Philip likewise is easily taken in by comparable mind tricks as he, fresh from his fantastic conquests, witnesses aberrations of nature — a dragon turning into an eagle, a flying pheasant who lays an egg mid-flight which, when it drops to earth, cracks open to release a serpent, the earthquake and eclipse and tempest at the baby’s birth, and so forth. Philip, an amazing man who expects wondrous events to enhance his importance, takes such wonders in stride, as confirmation of his own fantastic triumphs.

Gower’s focus on details of impregnation and mysterious birthing establishes the very rituals of magic, beguilement, and wish fulfillment. Nectanabus is the perpetrator, but, almost inevitably, he will be the victim as well, as his amazing child kills him by thrusting him from the tower wall: “Ly down there apart. / Whereof nou serveth al thin art?” (6.2311–12). Such “lying apart” is indeed a fit end for the sorcerer (a still birth, so to speak), who, in his disguises, has set himself apart with his own special rules to play god. But he is no “king of kings,” despite his gulling of Philip. (The “see foul” [6.2129] in this instance is *not* some form of the Holy Spirit at an Annunciation or an angel sent from God to inform Joseph of Mary’s child, but, rather, it is an actual gull.) When the child of the sorcerer once again destroys its parent, we see into the strange workings of the High Creator, who permits weird things to happen in the first place.⁵⁷ The child may be a trope of “fate” (i.e., *sortis*), but, if so, Nectanabus’ death is merely a figure of “consequence,” not tragedy.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Olympias offers a thought-provoking contrast to Paulina in the Tale of Mundus and Paulina (CA 1.761–1059), a tale exemplifying hypocrisy. A chivalrous duke named Mundus desires Paulina and bribes two priests of the temple of Isis, “the godesse of childinge” (1.805), to inform her that the god Anubus desires to mate with her. She takes counsel of her husband, and they, being pious people, agree to the demands of the god. Mundus plays god, and with his “blinde tales . . . alle his wille of here he hadde” (1.927–28). The next day he boasts to her of his achievement. She goes to her chamber to weep at his “derke ypcrisie” but then tells her husband of the dissimulation. They take counsel of the emperor, who executes the priests and exiles Mundus. Mundus and Nectanabus have much in common: both are sorcerers with words who blind people to accomplish their sexual desire but also as a demonstration of their power; both are chivalrous and use religion as a means toward accomplishing their ends. The biggest difference in the stories is between Paulina and Olympias. Olympias is seduced because she wants to be; Paulina seems to be victimized by her piety, though in truth it is her piety and honest relationship with her husband and the state that saves her and her household. Comparison of the two tales establishes astute differences between true kingship and sorcery. Paulina and her husband govern themselves well and benefit from the emperor and the laws of Rome. The kingdom, as mirrored in the emperor and his people, remains intact. The fates of Mundus and Nectanabus are similar: Nectanabus abandons his kingdom and goes into exile, where he dies; Mundus abandons self rule and is sentenced to exile. We are not told of his death, but it seems inevitable that it will be in exile too.

⁵⁷ The tale is filled with spurious religious implications, such as the divine impregnation of the Virgin Mary, the mysterious son becoming the King of Kings, etc. But the sorcerer is more like a Dr. Frankenstein, whose creation, despite all his cleverness, comes back to haunt him within the realm of nature, which the sorcerer does not, in fact, control, but only manipulates.

⁵⁸ Or, if it is tragedy, it is *de casibus* tragedy, what Boethius calls tragedy of fortune in *The Consol*

BOOK 7: THE EDUCATION OF THE KING

Genius follows the Tale of Nectanabus with short sketches of other sorcerers (Zoroaster and the “Phitonesse of Samarie” [6.2387] that Saul visited), but as he finishes, Amans picks up from the Tale of Nectanabus to inquire further about Alexander’s education after the death of the sorcerer:

this I wolde you beseche,
Beside that me stant of love,
As I you herde speke above
Hou Alisandre was betawht
To Aristotle, and so well tawht
Of al that to a king belongeth,
Wherof min herte sore longeth
To wite what it wolde mene. (6.2408–15)

Apart from my concerns with love
entrusted
know

This is a crucial moment in the poem in that the lover acknowledges that he yearns to know more than matters of love. He wants not simply to hear about kings (though we have noted how frequently Genius’ stories are framed by matters of kingship, whether good or bad); rather, he wants to know *how* they are taught and *what* they should know. It is as if he senses a common kingship (or the potential for one) in every man, recognizing (momentarily, at least) that, if he is to get beyond illusion, beguilement, and sorceries, he is going to require different equipment from what he presently possesses.

In Book 7 Genius’ instruction on the education of the king takes the listener beyond sorcery to explore possibilities of how truth and its benefits may be accomplished in deed. Thought must be trained to function rationally rather than to serve merely as fantasy’s cook. To instruct the lover-now-turned-intellectual-acolyte, Genius draws upon a host of Gower’s favorite sources — *The Secretum Secretorum* (a manual in which Aristotle teaches Alexander all disciplines), Brunetto Latini’s *Li Livres dou Trésor* (on subjects ranging from the history of humankind, the saints, the Holy Roman Empire, and physics and astronomy, to the creatures of the world, the ethics of Aristotle on virtues and vices, rhetoric, and regal behavior), Aristotle’s treatise on meteorology, various treatises on astronomy such as Albertus Magnus’ *Speculum astronomiae*, Valerius Maximus’ *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, Godfrey of Viterbo’s *Pantheon*,⁵⁹ Giles of Rome’s *De regimine principum* (a treatise on the governance of kings and

lation of Philosophy 2.pr.1.

⁵⁹ The main literary accomplishment of Godfrey of Viterbo (c.1125–after 1202), a member of the royal chapel of Conrad III of Germany, who subsequently served Frederick I Barbarossa and Henry VI as court chaplain and notary, was a Latin verse/prose history of the world that was ultimately called *Pantheon* (“Collection of all the Gods”). Beginning with the origins of Troy and then proceeding to the origins of European peoples from the Trojans, tracing the account even into the 12th century, where he ends with the deeds of Henry VI, the *Pantheon* combines folktales, mythology, legends, popular fiction, chronicle, and moral exempla for purposes of “historical” instruction in schools. Like Gower’s *Confessio*, the work has strong political objectives as well as moral ones, particularly in terms of the education of princes. Dillon (“Godfrey of Viterbo”) notes that the “work took shape in several stages, of which the first was the largely verse *Speculum regum* (*Mirror of Kings*), dedicated to Henry VI and completed in 1183. *Speculum regum* was replaced in 1185 by *Memoria seculorum* (*Memory of the Ages*), subsequently renamed *Liber memorialis* (*Book of Memory*). That in turn was expanded into the

princes that Simon Burley may have used for the instruction of Richard II, just as his father had done in his education of Richard's father, the Black Prince),⁶⁰ Higden's *Polichronicon* (a massive encyclopedia—a history of the world—that Trevisa translated), Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti* (which Gower drew upon widely throughout the *Confessio* for lore), various mythographers (Fulgentius, Hyginus, and the Vatican Mythographers), and Jerome's Vulgate Bible, to name but a few of the gems in Gower's cultural treasury. Chaucer claims to have had sixty books at his bed's head; Gower cites them, sometimes word for word!

Genius begins his instruction with discussion of the tools of analysis. Like Aristotle, he knows that the individual needs equipment for research even as much as answers. He divides his pedagogical task into three general categories (again, an evident Aristotelian influence): Theory, Rhetoric, and Practice. Theory includes such topics as the arts, with discussion of mathematics, physics, astronomy (what it is, and how to read [use] it), music, human history, and the earth in general. His section on Rhetoric is quite short, but pithy in its observations on word power, problems of interpretation and communication, and eloquence. But the heart of his instruction is devoted to discussion of Practice in its three parts: Ethics (7.1649–68), Economics (7.1668–78), and Policy (7.1679–98). And it is this last category, Policy, with its five points, that has strongest bearing on kingship and thus receives the most attention. The five points of Policy are: 1) Truth (with its memorable adaptation of 1 Esdras 3 on “The King, Wine, Woman, and Truth”); 2) Liberality (marked by a host of short exempla from the Bible and moral treatises); 3) Justice (the heart of the heart of Book 7, with its discussion of law, common profit, the story of Lycurgus and his laws, and a list of lawgivers from the Hebrew and Egyptian to the Trojan and the Greek and then the Roman); 4) Pity (with its story of Codrus, but also observations on war, where sometimes pity is inappropriate, though usually not, and problems of finding good counsel);⁶¹ and 5) Chastity (with its brief account of numerous

more encyclopedic *Liber universalis* (*Book of All*), itself the basis for three successive versions of the final *Pantheon*.” Godfrey includes in his chronicle such delights as the Tale of Apollonius of Tyre, stories of Alexander, and a version of the *Prophecy of the Tiburtine Sibyl*. His work was a source for numerous medieval writings including Brunetto Latini's *Trésor*.

⁶⁰ “Though a soldier of irascible disposition who fought alongside the Black Prince at Najera, Simon Burley, young Richard's tutor, came from a distinguished intellectual background. His kinsman Walter Burley, one of Archbishop Bradwardine's circle, a student of William of Ockham, and close friend of Richard de Bury, had been tutor to young Edward the Black Prince when he was twelve. Author of *De Deo Natura et Arte* (see Shapiro, pp. 86 ff.), Walter was doubtless an influence on young Simon's intellectual interests and a factor in Edward's naming of Simon to tutor his son and heir, Richard (see Jones, *The Royal Policy of Richard II*, pp. 160–61). Both Walter and Simon had copies of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* in their libraries, a book upon which Richard seems to have modelled his theory, if not his practice, of good rule.” Quoted, with modifications, from Peck, “Politics and Psychology of Governance in Gower,” p. 231n43. See also Walker, “Richard II's Views on Kingship.”

⁶¹ On “the menacing and unreliable nature of pity as a political and legal instrument,” see Gal loway's superb discussion of “the Merciless Parliament” in 1388 and the politics of pity in the *Confessio* (“Literature of 1388,” pp. 68 ff. and 90–104). Gower's position here is in keeping with the ideals of royal policy. Regularly English kings insisted that their interest and that of the people is peace, but that those who oppose the peace will be crushed. Rebellion against the king is rebellion against peace itself. Kaeuper cites Richard FitzNigel's *Dialogue of the Exchequer*, “the first administrative treatise written in Western European history (c. 1179),” which insists that “nobody must venture to oppose the king's ordinance, made as it is in the interest of peace” (*Dialogus de Scaccario*, where the king is again identified with the interests of peace,— see Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, p. 108. In *War, Justice, and Public Order*,

violators of chastity, including a fascinating discussion of Solomon's shortcomings). Then the book concludes with three stories that exemplify the value of chaste restraint: the Tale of Tarquin and Aruns that culminates in the rape of Lucrece, where we are moved by the destructive effects upon the very heart of the community of powerful men who disregard chastity; the Tale of Virginia and Virginius, which again demonstrates abuse of the flower of virtue by an evil ruler, one who is subsequently overthrown by the people — “thus th'unchaste was chastised” (7.5301);⁶² and, finally, the Tale of Tobias and Sara, where domestic virtue answers to whatever complications the fiend Asmod might use to oppose chastity.

In the *Mirour*, Chastity is the remedy against the seventh sin, Lechery. Although no single book in the *Confessio* is devoted to Lechery (one might argue that when Genius applies a love component to each of the other deadly sins, every book of the lover's confession deals this sin, thus obviating the need of a separate book for it), the three chastity tales at the end of Book 7 and the one great tale of Apollonius of Tyre in Book 8 do, in fact, explore the five children of Lechery as presented in the *Mirour*: the first daughter, Fornicacioun, is the subject of the Tale of Virginia; the second and third, Stupre and Avoulerie, are featured in the story of Aruns and his assault on his friend Collatin's wife, Lucrece. The fourth, Incest, is explored in great detail at the beginning of Book 8 and then in the Tale of Apollonius;⁶³ and the fifth, Foldelit, is the subject of the Tale of Tobias and Sara. All four of these tales celebrate Chastity, the remedy against Lechery. The five daughters of Chastity outlined in the *Mirour* are likewise represented in these tales, namely, Bonnegarde, Virginité, Matri-moigne, Continence, and Aspre (Hard Life), especially in the virtuous women like Sara (who keeps watch so well), Virginia, Lucrece, Thais and her mother, but also in men like Brutus (in the story of Lucrece), Tobias, and Apollonius.

The first two books of the *Confessio* and the last two conclude with very positive tales: Book 1, with the Tale of the Three Questions (exemplifying humility), and Book 2, with the Tale of Constantine and Sylvester (exemplifying chastity); then Book 7, with the Tale of Tobias and Sara (emphasizing chastity), and Book 8, with the Tale of Apollonius (emphasizing humility). But like Books 2 and 8, Book 7 ends on a downturn as Amans, despite all the good instruction and chaste counsel, puts aside reason as a remedy for his unrest, and falls back into his funk:

Do wey, mi father, I you preie!
Of that ye have unto me told

Kaeuper notes that Edward I “characterized law and order measures he had taken in 1305 as efforts ‘to suppress the disorders, tumults, and outrages of the past which were like the start of war and which flouted the lordship of the king.’ The royal sense of responsibility for the public peace could scarcely be more plain” (pp. 139–40, citing PRO King's Remembrancer Memoranda Roll 79, Trinity Recorda, m.41d; rp.: CCR 1302–1307, 454–55). See also ch. 3, “Growth of Royal Peace Jurisdiction,” pp. 143–69.

⁶² Ferster makes the important point with regard to this tale's proximity to concerns of the latter part of the fourteenth century: “To bring the story of a Roman uprising closer to the fourteenth century by turning it into the story of the deposition of a king — in a poem supposedly requested and written for Richard II — suggests that Gower was willing to be less than friendly to Richard even before he switched the dedication to Henry” (“O Political Gower,” p. 36). Ferster's point is especially poignant, given the placement of the story near the end of Book 7.

⁶³ Incest is a major theme throughout the *Confessio* (n.b. especially the Tale of Canace and Machaire [3.147 ff.]). For detailed discussion of the motif see Donavin, *Incest Narratives*, Bullón-Fernández, *Fathers and Daughters*, and Scanlon, “The Riddle of Incest.”

I thonke you a thousandfold.
 The tales sounen in myn ere,
 Bot yit myn herte is elleswhere,
 I mai miselve noght restreigne
 That I nam evere in loves peine. (7.5408–14)

resound; ear

am not

Even while Genius' tales still “sounen in myn ere,” Amans regresses into the chaos of “worldes chance” (6.1791), so to speak, which can be exciting, but after too many beguilements may seem depressingly fated. Here, as at the end of Book 8, where Gower turns away from the realm of fiction to speak in his own voice to pray for the state of England, there may still be recollections of the education of the king with its celebration of the redemptive propositions of law. The rapacious nature of which Hugh White speaks “fatally compromises any attempt to celebrate the things of this world as if they are not at root irreconcilable with the things of heaven,” a circumstance that leads to renunciation and “a proclamation of its own failure.”⁶⁴ This renunciation is not too different from the disenchantment with sorcery at the end of Book 6, given the emptiness of its consequences. With the ideas of kingship and law, that center so many of Gower’s poems, still sounding “in myn ere” without touching his heart, Amans’ forgetfulness leaves him in an insupportable position. He falls once again into that realm of fantasy and fiction that had left him prostrate in the woods in Book 1, wishing he were dead (1.110–50). Amans remains, like a victim of sorcery, caught up in a “love which is unavised” (7.5433). He believes he has no choices, and thus has no choices, slain, in effect, by the child of his own fantasy.

GOWER AND THE LAW

John Leland, named King’s Antiquary by Henry VIII, claimed that Gower was trained at the Inns of Court, which could well be true, given the prominence of legal terminology, legal history, and legal concerns throughout Gower’s writings. Although no records survive of his involvement in specific legal training or practice, he appears to have had some sort of legal connection throughout his professional life. John Fisher, Gower’s modern biographer,⁶⁵ cites as evidence the poet’s “description of the training of the lawyer, the degree of coif, and the privileges of serjeancy” in the *Mirour* (lines 24373ff), along with his technical descriptions of the functions of legal terms such as *plaidour*, *client*, *tort*, *deslayment*, *cas*, *advocat*, *president*, *apprentis*, *attourné*, and *pourchas*, which accord well with precise training in the profession.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ White, *Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, p. 219. See the discussion of this passage in *Confessio Amantis*, ed. Peck, vol. 2, p. 16.

⁶⁵ See Fisher, *John Gower*, p. 57. Macaulay (4.xxvi) suggests the “possibility that Gower was bred to the law, though he may not have practised it for a living.” Macaulay argues from the assumption that the poet had sufficient wealth that a legal practice, such as being a pleader, would not have been necessary. Fisher’s argument is more sophisticated, based on historical details and the prevailing concerns of Gower’s three major works.

⁶⁶ A “Gower” appears several times in Tottil’s 1585 publication of the legal yearbooks for 1355 and 1356, though that may not be the same Gower. The legal records of property transactions that are almost certainly the poet’s, however, are carefully prepared, suggesting to Fisher, at least, that when the poet had writs and charters drawn up he knew what he was doing. In the *Mirour* he speaks

Good laws stand behind and beyond the events of momentary crises. Again and again, as we have seen, when a tale is over its meaning — its stability — is linked to the benefits of long-standing civil rule. That, when all is said and done, remains a constant (if not quite a universal) that offers reassuring guidance amidst “worldes chance.” In his introduction of the third point of policy, Justice, after celebrating the importance of “a kinges governance . . . in his ligance” (7.2697–98), Gower observes:

What is a lond wher men ben none?
 What ben the men whiche are alone
 Withoute a kinges governance?
 What is a king in his ligance,
 Wher there is no lawe in londe?
 What is to take lawe on honde,
 Bot if the jugges weren trewe?
 These olde worldes with the newe
 Who that wol take in evidence,
 There mai he se th'experience,
 What thing it is to kepe lawe,
 Thurgh which the wronges ben withdrawe
 And rihtwisnesse stant commended,
 Wheroft the regnes ben amended. (7.2695–2708)

kingdoms; restored (reformed)

What is a king if there is no law in the land? Gower’s exemplary stories supply “evidence” in its historied form that helps people experience the value of law for purposes of guidance. Such laws, monitored by the king, cut across generations; they cut across social divisions as well, linking lords and commons, helping each to understand “propre dueté” (7.2711). The evidence of law enables a king to perceive how he must “himself ferst justesie / Towardes God in his degré” (7.2730–31) — God, the King of Kings, who alone may chastise kings (7.2735). The righteous king, under God, works through law:

If lawe stonde with the riht,
 The poeple is glad and stant upriht.
 Where as the lawe is resonable,
 The comun poeple stant menable,
 And if the lawe torné amis,
 The poeple also mistorned is. (7.2759–64)

compliant (in agreement)

are skewed

Gower articulates admirably a point of English history, namely, a widespread trust in the virtues of English law. As Kaeuper explains, “Law was a tough and flexible bond joining power and authority in kingship. Royal power was expressed through jurisdiction which expanded steadily and brought the king’s government ‘over the horizon’ into the localities.”⁶⁷ The proud expansion of the virtues of law was promulgated by the king’s court, but espe-

of wearing a garment with rayed (striped) sleeves, which suggests a professional involvement in the law. (See Fisher, *John Gower*, p. 57.) That Chaucer gave Gower power of attorney in 1378, when Chaucer went to Italy, is further evidence that Gower was at least competent in legal matters. But one undeniable fact is the prominence of legal interests in his greatest poem, the *Confessio Amantis*.

⁶⁷ Kaeuper, *War, Justice, and Public Order*, p. 140.

cially by the folk mythology surrounding good rule that Gower (and dozens of other English romance writers) arrive at in the catharsis of a good ending. The role of kingship is a central feature in public consciousness, and, when a king and his laws fail, the voice of the people cries out vociferously.⁶⁸

Gower caps his remarks on the centrality of law to a good life with the Tale of Lycurgus. Lycurgus studied society and the welfare of its citizens to develop laws of equity and common profit (7.2956–57), which, once codified, become the laws of Athens. As he introduces his code to the Athenians, Lycurgus insists that “The lawe which I tok on honde, / Was al togodre of Goddes sonde / And nothing of myn oghne wit” (7.2961–63). That is, the laws that he posits are divine in origin, but come to him through natural law. Lycurgus gives credit to the god Mercurius for his concept of law. But to assure his people that the laws are maintained, not just imposed, he tells them that he must go away and makes them agree to adhere to the law and let it be their guide in his absence. That is, they must learn to maintain the law for themselves, not because of some king. Lycurgus establishes his law by disappearing. Words stand in his place as superior mediators. As long as the compact (forward, bond, that which is knit — see line 3008) is maintained the people have nothing to worry about. The state will survive. Lycurgus then disappears, never to return. But, we are told by Genius, the people of Athens maintain their oaths. Keeping of one’s word is the key to all social contracts and personal ones as well.

Thus hath Ligurgius his *wille*,
 And tok his leve and forth he wente.
 Bot lest nou wel to what *entente* listen
 Of *rihtwisnesse* he dede so:
 For after that he was ago,
 He *schope* him never to be founde; contrived
 So that Athenis, which was *bounde*,
 Nevere after scholde be *releßed*,
 Ne thilke *goode lawe* cessed,
 Which was for *comun profit* set.
 And in this wise he hath it *knet*; established
 He, which the *comun profit* soghte,
 The king, *his oghne astat ne roghte*; did not care about
 To *do profit* to the *comune*,
 He tok of exil the fortune,
 And lefte of prince thilke office
 Only *for love and for justice*,
 Thurgh which he thoghhte, if that he myhte,
Forevere after his deth to rihte
 The cité which was *him betake*. (7.2998–3017)⁶⁹ entrusted to him

⁶⁸ For examples of satirical and polemical criticism of failed central authority and of faulty application of just laws, all of which affirms just rule indirectly, see Dean, ed., *Medieval English Political Writings*; the first seven passus of *Piers Plowman*, B-text; *Richard the Redeless and Mum and the Sothsegger*, ed. Dean; or, especially, Gower in *Vox Clamantis* and *The Tripartite Chronicle*. But at the heart of such criticism is an affirmation of good kingship and law and how they should perform in unison.

⁶⁹ I have italicized those terms in the passage that focus attention on will, choice, and personal, social, and legal contracts that help Lycurgus’ plan to succeed.

Lycurgus mastered the law and thus was never mastered by it. The words that he left to the city keep order, but not through an old law imposed by a king; rather, they are written by free assent on the hearts of the people, even in the king's absence. This law to which the people give assent perpetually provides the city with a common language, a language that sets boundaries and useful parameters for narratives that cut across the interstices of memory, yet still cohere. Gower's position is in keeping with specific royal statutes, like the first Statute of Westminster (1285) that, as Kaeuper puts it, "worried over 'the peace less kept and the laws less used, and the offenders less punished than they ought to be so that the people feared the less to offend'. The king announced in the opening clause that the peace of the Church and of the land will henceforth be guarded and that commonright will be done to all, rich and poor."⁷⁰ The law binds, but it also keeps the people free, as long as it is just and justly administered. The *Confessio* repeatedly makes the point that people who uphold law gain access to perpetuity, the universals of nature, which, though temporal, provide some relief from the traumas of time; people who abuse law, however, are bound to the wheel of their abuse.

From *Mirour de l'Omme* to the *Vox Clamantis* to *Confessio Amantis* to *Cronica Tripertita* and the shorter Latin poems in the early fifteenth century, Gower always had his eye trained on his literary exempla, the matter of his legal training, and the workings of the three kings under whose rule he lived his life — Edward III, Richard II, and Henry IV.⁷¹ His writings against the extravagances of Edward III, his concern over the education of the young King Richard along with his revulsion at the king's later indulgences, and his hope for the nation (embodied perhaps in Henry IV) are perpetually present under the surface of his writing. A good king must be the most excellent of people, the one to whom all look for guidance. "For if men scholde trouthe seche / And founde it noght withinne a king, / It were an unsittende thing" (7.1734–36), so "unsittende," in fact, that the people have the right to remove him from office.⁷² But in the evidences of history, whether good or bad, one can see "What thing it is to kepe lawe, / Thurgh which the wronges ben withdrawe / And rihtwisnesse stant commended, / Wherof the regnes ben amended" (7.2705–08). It is a noble belief, the essence of the pratique out of which Gower unfolds his appeal.

⁷⁰ Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, p. 108. The citation is from *Statutes of the Realm*, I, 19, 45, 26.

⁷¹ See Peck, "Politics and Psychology of Governance in Gower," especially pp. 224–38, on Gower and his critique of the ruling kings in his lifetime, particularly his moving away from the capricious behavior of Richard in the early 1390s. For an excellent discussion of Gower's understanding of the workings of law at the interface between justice and pity in his assessment of Richard II's behavior from 1388 to 1399 and after (as detailed in *Cronica Tripertita* and the *Confessio*), see Galloway ("Literature of 1388," *passim*).

⁷² See, for example, Knighton (1386), where Richard II is being addressed on behalf of the voice of the people: "Yet there remains one other thing which we have to tell you on behalf of your people. They have an ancient law, which not long since, lamentably, had to be invoked, which provides that if the king, upon some evil counsel, or from wilfulness and contempt or moved by his violent will, or in any other improper way, estrange himself from his people, and will not be governed and guided by the laws of the land, and its enactments and laudable ordinances, and the wholesome counsel of the lords and nobles of the kingdom, but wrong-headededly, upon his own unsound conclusions, follows the promptings of his untempered will, then it would be lawful with the common assent and agreement of the people of the realm to put down the king from his royal seat, and raise another of the royal lineage in his place" (*Knighton's Chronicle*, p. 361).

MANUSCRIPTS

Indexed as item 2262 in Brown and Robbins, eds., *Index of Middle English Verse*, and Cutler and Robbins, eds., *Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse*. In composing this new edition of the *Confessio Amantis*, I have consulted a select number of the dozens of manuscripts of the poem, manuscripts generally considered to be the best representatives of the various recensions of Gower's English poem:

- A: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 902 (SC 27573), fols. 2r–183r. [Revised first recension.]
- B: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 294 (SC 2449), fols. 1r–197r. [Second recension.]
- C: Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 67, fols. 1r–209r. [Unrevised first recension.]
- F: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Fairfax 3 (SC 3883), fols. 2r–186r. [Third recension; base-text for this edition.]
- J: Cambridge, St. John's College, MS B.12 (34), fols. 1r–214r. [Revised first recension.]
- S: San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, MS Ellesmere (*olim* Stafford) 26 A.17, fols. 1r–169v. [Second recension.]
- T: Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.3 (581), fols. 1r–147v. [Second recension.]

For a complete listing of *Confessio* manuscripts, as well as a stemma of their relationships, see Fisher, *John Gower*, pp. 303–09.



CONFESSIO AMANTIS: BOOK 5 (AVARICE)

INCIPIT LIBER QUINTUS

i. *Obstat avaricia nature legibus, et que
Largus amor poscit, striccius illa vetat.
Omne quod est nimium viciosum dicitur aurum,
Vellera sicut oues, seruat avarus opes.
Non decet vt soli seruabitur es, set amori
Debet homo solam solus habere suam.¹*

Ferst whan the hyhe God began
This world, and that the kinde of man
Was falle into no gret encress,
For worldes good tho was no press,
5 Bot al was set to the comune,
Thei spieken thanne of no fortune
Or for to lese or for to winne,
Til Avarice broghte it inne;
And that was whan the world was woxe
10 Of man, of hors, of schep, of oxe,
And that men knewen the moneie.
Tho wente pes out of the weie,
And werre cam on every side
Which alle love leide aside
15 And of comun his propre made,
So that instede of schovele and spade
The scharpe swerd was take on honde.
And in this wise it cam to londe,
Wheroft men maden dyches depe
20 And hyhe walles for to kepe
The gold which Avarice encloseth.
Bot al to lytel him supposeth,
Thogh he mihte al the world pourchace;

*created
and [when]; nature
Had fallen; aggrandizement
then [there]; eagerness
added to the common [good]*

*Either . . . or; lose
(see note)
increased*

*became aware of money
peace
war
put aside all love*

*made his private property out of the common good
in this manner it happened
deep moats*

it seemed all too small to him

¹ *Avarice obstructs the laws of nature, and those things that generous love requests, she (Avarice) very stingily denies. All gold that is excessive is called vicious; as a sheep preserves its coat, so an avaricious man preserves his wealth. It is not fitting that coin should be kept for one alone. So in love, one single man ought to have his sole woman.*

- For what thing that he may embrace
 25 Of gold, of catel or of lond,
 He let it nevere out of his hond,
 Bot get him more and halt it faste,
 As thogh the world scholde evere laste.
 So is he lych unto the helle:
 30 For as these olde bokes telle,
 What comth therinne, lasse or more,
 It schal departe neveremore.
 Thus whanne he hath his cofre loken,
 It schal noght after ben unstoken,
 35 Bot whanne him list to have a syhte
 Of gold, hou that it schyneth brihte,
 That he ther on mai loke and muse.
 For otherwise he dar noght use
 To take his part, or lasse or more.
 40 So is he povere, and everemore
 Him lacketh that he hath ynowh:
 An oxe draweth in the plowh,
 Of that himself hath no profit;
 A schep riht in the same plit
 45 His wolle berth, bot on a day
 Another takth the flees away.
 Thus hath he that he noght ne hath,
 For he therof his part ne tath.
 To seie hou such a man hath good,
 50 Who so that reson understod,
 It is impropreliche seid,
 For good hath him and halt him teid,
 That he ne gladeth noght withal,
 Bot is unto his good a thral;
 55 And as soubgit thus serveth he,
 Wher that he scholde maister be.
 Such is the kinde of th'averous.
Confessor “Mi sone, as thou art amerous,
 Tell if thou farst of love so.”
Confessio Amantis “Mi fader, as it semeth, ‘no.’
- 61 That averous yit nevere I was,
 So as ye setten me the cas.
 For as ye tolden here above,
 In full possession of love
 65 Yit was I nevere hiertofore,
 So that me thenketh wel therfore,
 I mai excuse wel my dede.
 Bot of mi will withoute drede,
 If I that tresor mihte gete,
 70 It scholde nevere be forgete,
- treasure chest locked
opened
Except; desires; glimpse
gaze
- He feels deprived of that which he has plenty of*
- does not partake
To say that
- bound
slave
subject
- nature of the avaricious
behave
fare so in love
- In the manner you posit this*
- behavior (conduct)
(i.e., his beloved's favor)

- That I ne wolde it faste holde,
Til god of love himselfe wolde
That deth ous scholde parte atuo. in two
trust well
- 75 That evene with min oghne lif,
If I that swete lusti wif
Mihte ones welden at my wille,
Forevere I wolde hire holde stille. subdue according to my desire
- 80 And in this wise, taketh kepe,
If I hire hadde, I wolde hire kepe;
And yit no Friday wolde I faste,
Thogh I hire kepte and hielde faste. take heed
*If I possessed her
abstain [from her]*
- 85 Fy on the bagges in the kiste!
I hadde ynogh, if I hire kiste.
For certes, if sche were myn,
I hadde hir leveire than a myn (i.e., every day would be a feast day)
[money] bags; chest
- 90 Of gold. For al this worldes riche
Ne mihte make me so riche
As sche, that is so inly good.
I sette noght of other good, kissed
would rather have her
earthly kingdom
- 95 For mihte I gete such a thing,
I hadde a tresor for a king;
And thogh I wolde it faste holde,
I were thanne wel beholde. tightly
bound (obliged)
- 100 Bot I mot pipe nou with lasse,
And suffre that it overpasse,
Noght with mi will, for thus I wolde
Ben averous, if that I scholde. greedy
be content now with less
endure until [this condition] ends
- 105 Bot, fader, I you herde seie
Hou th'averous hath yit som weie,
Wheroft he mai be glad; for he
Mai whanne him list his tresor se miserly
- 110 And gropre and fiele it al aboute,
Bot I fulofte am schet theroute,
Ther as my worthi tresor is. shut
From where
- 115 So is mi lif lich unto this,
That ye me tolden hier tofore,
Hou that an oxe his yock hath bore yoke
benefit
- 116 For thing that scholde him noght availe.
And in this wise I me travaile;
For who that evere hath the welfare, profit
- 117 I wot wel that I have the care,
For I am hadd and noght ne have, know
- 118 And am, as who seith, loves knave.
Nou demeth in youre oghne thought,
If this be avarice or noght.” servant

- Confessor** “Mi sone, I have of thee no wonder,
 Thogh thou to serve be put under
 With love which to kinde acordeth; *overcome
accords with nature's demands*
 120 Bot so as every bok recordeth,
 It is to kinde no plesance *nature*
 That man above his sustienance
 Unto the gold schal serve and bowe,
 For that mai no reson avowe. *beyond what is necessary to sustain life
sanction*
- 125 Bot Avarice natheles,
 If he mai geten his encress
 Of gold, that wole he serve and kepe,
 For he takth of noght elles kepe *pays attention to nothing else*
 Bot for to fille hise bagges large; *moneybags*
 130 And al is to him bot a charge, *burden*
 For he ne parteth noght withal
 Bot kepth it, as a servant schal.
 And thus, thogh that he multeplie
 His gold, withoute tresorie *should
assets (resources)*
- 135 He is, for man is noght amended
 With gold bot if it be despended *unless; disbursed*
 To mannes us; wherof I rede *use; offer for instruction*
 A tale, and tak therof good hiede,
 Of that befell be olde tyde,
 140 As telleth ous the clerk Ovide.

[TALE OF MIDAS]

- Bachus, which is the god of wyn,
 Acordant unto his divin *status as a divinity*
 A prest, the which Cillenus hihte, *was called Silenus*
 He hadde, and fell so that be nyhte *by night*
 145 This prest was drunke and goth astraied, *went astray*
 ☩ Wherof the men were evele apaied *ill pleased (see note)*
 In Frigelond, whereas he wente. *Phrygia*
 Bot ate laste a cherl him hente *lowly servant seized him*
 With strengthe of other felaschipe, *companions*
 150 So that upon his drunkeschipe *chains*
 Thei bounden him with chenes faste,
 And forth thei ladde him als so faste
 Unto the king, which hihte Myde. *who was called Midas*
 Bot he, that wolde his vice hyde,
 155 This courteis king tok of him hiede, *heed*
 And bad that men him scholde lede
 Into a chambre for to kepe,
 Til he of leisir hadde slepe.
 And tho this prest was sone unbounde,
 160 And up a couche fro the grounde

- To slepe he was leid softe ynowh.
 And whanne he wok, the king him drowh
 To his presence and dede him chiere,
 So that this prest in such manere,
 165 Whil that him liketh, there he duelleth.
 And al this he to Bachus telleth,
 Whan that he cam to him agein.
 And whan that Bachus herde sein
 170 How Mide hath don his courtesie,
 Him thenkth it were a vilenie,
 Bot he rewarde him for his dede,
 So as he mihte of his godhiede.
 Unto this king this god appiereth
 175 And clepeth, and that other hiereth.
 This god to Mide thonketh faire
 Of that he was so debonaire
 Toward his prest, and bad him seie
 What thing it were he wolde preie,
 He scholde it have of worldes good.
 180 This king was glad, and stille stod,
 And was of his axinge in doute,
 And al the world he caste aboute,
 What thing was best for his astat,
 And with himself stod in debat
 185 Upon thre pointz, the whiche I finde
 Ben lievest unto mannes kinde.
 The ferste of hem it is delit,
 The tuo ben worschipe and profit.
 And thanne he thoghte, 'If that I crave
 190 Delit, thogh I delit mai have,
 Delit schal passen in myn age.
 That is no siker avantage,
 For every joie bodily
 Schal ende in wo: delit forthi
 195 Wol I noght chese. And if worschipe
 I axe and of the world lordschipe,
 That is an occupacion
 Of proud ymaginacion,
 Which makth an herte vein withinne;
 200 Ther is no certein for to winne,
 For lord and knave al is o weie,
 Whan thei be bore and whan thei deie.
 And if I profit axe wolde,
 I not in what manere I scholde
 205 Of worldes good have sikernesse;
 For every thief upon richesse
 Awaiteth for to robbe and stele:
drew
As long as it pleased him
Unless
speaks
dearest
[other] two; honor (esteem, fame)
What; certain
corporeal
honor
assurance
born
do not know
certainty
Lies in ambush

- Such good is cause of harmes fele. many
 And also, thogh a man at ones
 210 Of al the world withinne his wones possession
 The tresor myhte have everydel,
 Yit hadde he bot o mannes del part
 Toward himself, so as I thinke,
 Of clothinge and of mete and drinke, In respect to himself
 215 For more, outake vanité, except for
 Ther hath no lord in his degré.'
 And thus upon the pointz diverse
 Diverseliche he gan reherce
 What point him thoghte for the beste;
 220 Bot pleinly for to gete him reste sure
 He can no siker weie caste.
 And natheles yit ate laste
 He fell upon the coveitise
 Of gold; and thanne in sondri wise
 225 He thoghte, as I have seid tofore, lost
 Hou tresor mai be sone lore,
 And hadde an inly gret desir
 Touchende of such recoverir, safekeeping
 Hou that he mihte his cause availe advance
 230 To gete him gold withoute faile.
 Withinne his herte and thus he preiseth
 The gold, and seith hou that it peiseth weighs
 Above al other metall most.
 'The gold,' he seith, 'may lede an host lead
 235 To make werre agein a king; against
 The gold put under alle thing, destroys everything (see note)
 And set it whan him list above; raises it [back] up when it pleases
 The gold can make of hate love
 And werre of pes and ryht of wrong,
 240 And long to schort and schort to long; [can make] long into short
 Withoute gold mai be no feste,
 Gold is the lord of man and beste, animal
 And mai hem bothe beie and selle; buy
 So that a man mai sothly telle truly
 245 That al the world to gold obeith.'
 Forthi this king to Bachus preieth
 To grante him gold, bot he excedeth
 Mesure more than him nedeth.
 Men tellen that the maladie
 250 Which cleped is ydropesie called; dropsy
 Resembled is unto this vice
 Be weie of kinde of Avarice.
 The more ydropesie drinketh, one afflicted with dropsy
 The more him thursteth, for him thinketh it seems to him

- 255 That he mai nevere drinke his fille,
So that ther mai nothing fulfille
The lustes of his appetit.
And riht in such a maner plit
Stant Avarice and evere stod.
- 260 The more he hath of worldes good,
The more he wolde it kepe streyte,
And evere mor and mor coveite.
And riht in such condicoun
Withoute good discreciooun
- 265 This king with Avarice is smite,
That al the world it myhte wite,
For he to Bachus thanne preide,
That wherupon his hond he leide,
It scholde thurgh his touche anon
- 270 Become gold, and therupon
This god him granteth as he bad.
Tho was this king of Frige glad,
And for to put it in assai
With al the haste that he mai,
- 275 He toucheth that, he toucheth this,
And in his hond al gold it is,
The ston, the tree, the lef, the gras,
The flour, the fruit, al gold it was.
Thus toucheth he, whil he mai laste
- 280 To go, bot hunger ate laste
Him tok, so that he moste nede
Be weie of kinde his hunger fede.
The cloth was leid, the bord was set,
And al was forth tofore him fet,
- 285 His disch, his coppe, his drinke, his mete;
Bot whanne he wolde or drinke or ete,
Anon as it his mouth cam nyh,
It was al gold, and thanne he syh
Of Avarice the folie.
- 290 And he with that began to crie,
And preide Bachus to forgive
His gilt, and soffre him for to live,
And be such as he was tofore,
So that he were noght forlore.
- 295 This god, which herde of his grevance,
Tok rowthe upon his repentance,
And bad him go forth redily
Unto a flod was faste by,
Which Paceole thanne hyhte,
- 300 In which as clene as evere he myhte
He scholde him waishen overal,
- keep it tightly bound*
- afflicted*
know
- requested*
- test it out*
- food*
either to drink or eat
- near*
- saw*
- would not be doomed to destruction*
- pity*
- river nearby*
was called

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 305 | And seide him thanne that he schal
Recovere his ferste astat agein.
This king, riht as he herde sein,
Into the flod goth fro the lond,
And wisshe him bothe fot and hond
And so forth al the remenant,
As him was set in covenant.
And thanne he syh merveilles strange:
The flod his colour gan to change,
The gravel with the smale stones
To gold thei torne bothe at ones,
And he was quit of that he hadde,
And thus fortune his chance ladde. | heard said
washed himself
river its color
free |
| 310 | And whan he sih his touche aweie,
He goth him hom the rihte weie
And liveth forth as he dede er,
And putte al Avarice afer,
And the richesse of gold despiseth,
And seith that mete and cloth sufficeth. | previously did
away |
| 315 | Thus hath this king experience
Hou foles don the reverence
To gold, which of his oghne kinde
Is lasse worth than is the rinde
To sustienance of mannes fode. | food and clothing
its own |
| 320 | And thanne he made lawes goode
And al his thing sette upon skile.
He bad his poeple for to tile
Here lond, and live under the lawe,
And that thei scholde also forthdrawe | reason
till |
| 325 | Bestaile, and seche non encress
Of gold which is the breche of pes.
For this a man mai finde write,
Tosfor the time, er gold was smite
In coign, that men the florin knewe, | Their
raise |
| 330 | Ther was welnyh no man untrewe.
Tho was ther nouther schield ne spere
Ne dedly wepne for to bere;
Tho was the toun withoute wal,
Which nou is closed overal; | Livestock
breach of the peace |
| 335 | Tho was ther no brocage in londe,
Which nou takth every cause on honde.
So mai men knowe, hou the florin
Was moder ferst of malengin
And bringere inne of alle werre, | Before; before; struck
Into coins |
| 340 | Wheroft this world stant out of herre
Thurgh the conseil of Avarice,
Which of his oghne propre vice | Then
bear |
| 345 | | shady transactions (bribery)
happens in all situations |
| | | treacherous schemes
strife
out of joint |
| | | its own private |

- Is as the helle wonderfull. *astonishing*
 350 For it mai neveremor be full,
 That what as evere comth therinne, *[In] that whatever*
 Awey ne may it nevere winne. *go*
 Bot, sone myn, do thou noght so. *my son*
 Let al such Avarice go
 355 And tak thi part of that thou hast.
 I bidde noght that thou do wast, *engage in squandering*
 Bot hold largesce in his mesure; *generosity*
 And if thou se a creature,
 Which thurgh poverte is falle in nede,
 360 Gif him som good, for this I rede *advise*
 To him that wol noght given here,
 What peine he schal have elleswhere.

[PUNISHMENT OF TANTALUS]

- ¶ Ther is a peine amonges alle *torment (see note)*
 Benethe in helle, which men calle
 365 The wofull peine of Tantaly, *Tantalus*
 Of which I schal thee redely
 Devise hou men therinne stonde.
 In helle, thou schalt understande,
 Ther is a flod of thilke office, *such a function*
 370 Which serveth al for Avarice:
 What man that stonde schal therinne,
 He stant up evene unto the chinne;
 Above his hed also ther hongeth
 A fruyt which to that peine longeth *pertains to that pain*
 375 And that fruit toucheth evere in on
 His overlippe. And therupon
 Swich thurst and hunger him assaileth,
 That nevere his appetit ne faileth. *overcame him*
 Bot whanne he wolde his hunger fede,
 380 The fruit withdrawth him ate nede,
 And thogh he heve his hed on hyh, *lifts; head*
 The fruit is evere aliche nyh, *equally near*
 So is the hunger wel the more;
 And also, thogh him thurste sore
 385 And to the water bowe a doun,
 The flod in such condicoun
 Avaleth, that his drinke areche
 He mai noght. Lo nou, which a wreche,
 That mete and drinke is him so couth,
 390 And yit ther comth non in his mouth!
 Lich to the peines of this flod
 Stant Avarice in worldes good.

- He hath ynowh and yit him nedeth,
For his skarsnesse it him forbiedeth,
And evere his hunger after more
Travaileth him aliche sore,
So is he peined overal.
Forthi thi goodes forth withal,
Mi sone, loke thou despende,
Wherof thou myht thiself amende
Bothe hier and ek in other place.
And also if thou wolt pourchace
To be beloved, thou most use
Largesce, for if thou refuse
To give for thi loves sake,
It is no reson that thou take
Of love that thou woldest crave.
Forthi, if thou wolt grace have,
Be gracious and do largesse,
Of Avarice and the seknesse
Eschuie above alle other thing,
And take ensample of Mide king
And of the fload of helle also,
Where is ynowh of alle wo.
- And thogh ther were no matiere
Bot only that we finden hiere,
Men ogheten Avarice eschuie;
For what man thilke vice suie,
He get himself bot litel reste.
- For hou so that the body reste,
The herte upon the gold travaileth,
Whom many a nyghtes drede assaileth;
For thogh he ligge abedde naked,
His herte is everemore awaked,
- And dremeth, as he lith to slepe
How besi that he is to kepe
His tresor, that no thief it stèle.
Thus hath he bot a woful wele.
- stinginess; denies
Afflicts; sorely
tormented (made wretched)
here
deserve
Generosity
Avoid
follows
labors
fear
lie
alert

[AVARICE: JEALOUSY OF LOVERS]

- And riht so in the same wise,
430 If thou thiself wolt wel advise,
Ther be lovers of suche ynowe,
That wole unto no reson bowe.
If so be that thei come above,
Whan thei ben maistres of here love,
435 And that thei scholden be most glad,
With love thei ben most bestad,
- achieve success
their
troubled

- So fain thei wolde it holden al.
 Here herte, here yhe is overal,
 And wenien every man be thief,
 440 To stele awey that hem is lief;
 Thus thurgh here oghne fantasie
 Thei fallen into Jelousie.
 Thanne hath the schip tobroke his cable,
 With every wynd and is muable.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, for that ye nou telle,
 446 I have herd ofte time telle
 Of Jelousie, bot what it is
 Yit understande I nevere er this.
 Wherfore I wolde you besedche,
 450 That ye me wolde enforme and teche
 What maner thing it mihte be.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, that is hard to me.
 Bot natholes, as I have herd,
 Now herkne and thou schalt ben ansuerd.
 455 Among the men lacke of manhode
 In mariage upon wifhode
 Makth that a man himself deceiveth,
 Wherof it is that he conceiveth
 That ilke unsely maladie,
 460 The which is cleped Jelousie;
 Of which if I the propreté
 Schal telle after the nyceté,
 So as it worcheth on a man,
 A fievere it is cotidian,
 465 Which every day wol come aboute,
 Wher so a man be inne or oute.
 At hom if that a man wol wone,
 This fievere is thanne of comun wone
 Most grevous in a mannes yhe,
 470 For thanne he makth him tote and pryhe,
 Wher so as evere his love go;
 Sche schal noght with hir litel too
 Misteppe, bot he se it al.
 His yhe is walkende overal;
 475 Wher that sche singe or that sche daunce,
 He seth the leste contienance;
 If sche loke on a man aside
 Or with him roune at eny tyde,
 Or that sche lawghe, or that sche loure,
 480 His yhe is ther at every houre.
 And whanne it draweth to the nyght,
 If sche thanne is withoute lyht,
 Anon is al the game schent;
- eye
 thinks
 dear
 their own
 broken its
 easily moved
 heard often
 courteous behavior (gentility)
 unhappy
 called
 (see note)
 foolishness
 fever; a daily recurrence
 Whether
 dwell
 habit
 eye
 spy (gaze) and pry
 toe
 without his seeing
 eye
 least expression
 whisper; occasion
 laugh; frown
 moment
 joy
 game [of love] spoiled

- For thanne he set his parlement
 485 To speke it whan he comth to bedde,
 And seith, 'If I were now to wedde,
 I wolde nevermore have wif.'
 And so he torneth into strif
 The lust of loves dueté, *love's debt (i.e., sexual intercourse)*
 490 And al upon diverseté. *pervereness*
- If sche be freissh and wel araied,
 He seith hir baner is displaied *her sign of availability*
 To clepe in gestes fro the weie: *invite*
 And if sche be noght wel beseie,
 495 And that hir list noght to be gladd,
 He berth an hond that sche is madd *it pleases her not (she chooses)*
 And loveth noght hire housebonde; *maintains that*
 He seith he mai wel understande,
 That if sche wolde his compaignie, *desired*
 Sche scholde thanne afore his ye *eye*
 Schewe al the plesir that sche mihte.
 So that be daie ne be nyhte *neither by day nor by*
 Sche not what thing is for the beste, *does not know*
 Bot liveth out of alle reste;
 505 For what as evere him liste sein, *it pleases him to speak*
 Sche dar noght speke a word agein, *keeps her*
 Bot wepth and holt hire lippes clos. *Without rest*
 Sche mai wel wryte, 'Sanz repos,' *married to such a one*
 The wif which is to such on maried.
 510 Of alle wommen be he waried, *may he be cursed*
 For with this fievere of Jalouzie *everyday*
 His echedaies fantasie *sorrow*
 Of sorghe is evere aliche grene,
 So that ther is no love sene,
 515 Whil that him list at hom abyde.
 And whan so is he wol out ryde,
 Thanne hath he redi his aspie *spy*
 Abidinge in hir compaignie,
 A janglere, an evel-mouthed oon, *backbiter*
 520 That sche ne mai nowhider gon,
 Ne speke a word, ne ones loke,
 That he ne wol it wende and croke *twist and distort*
 And torne after his oghne entente,
 Thogh sche nothing bot honour mente.
 525 Whan that the lord comth hom agein, *just has to say something about it*
 The janglere moste somewhat sein;
 So what withoute and what withinne,
 This fievere is evere to beginne,
 For where he comth he can noght ende,
 530 Til deth of him have mad an ende.

- For thogh so be that he ne hiere,
Ne se, ne wite in no manere
Bot al honour and wommanhiede,
Therof the Jelous takth non hiede,
535 Bot as a man to love unkinde,
He cast his staf, as doth the blinde,
And fint defaulte where is non;
As who so dremeth on a ston
Hou he is leid, and groneth ofte,
540 Whan he lith on his pilwes softe.
So is ther noght bot strif and cheste,
Whan love scholde make his feste;
It is gret thing if he hir kisse.
Thus hath sche lost the nyhtes blisse,
545 For at such time he gruccheth evere
And berth on hond ther is a levere,
And that sche wolde another were
In stede of him abedde there;
And with tho wordes and with mo
550 Of Jelousie, he torneth fro
And lith upon his other side,
And sche with that drawth hire aside,
And ther sche wepeth al the nyht.
Ha, to what peine sche is dyht,
555 That in hire youthe hath so beset
The bond which mai noght ben unknet!
I wot the time is ofte cursed,
That evere was the gold unpursed,
The which was leid upon the bok,
560 Whan that alle othre sche forsok
For love of him. Bot al to late
Sche pleigneth, for as thanne algate
Sche mot forbere and to him bowe,
Thogh he ne wole it noght allowe.
565 For man is lord of thilke feire,
So mai the womman bot empeire,
If sche speke oght agein his wille;
And thus sche berth hir peine stille.
Bot if this fievere a womman take,
570 Sche schal be wel mor harde schake;
For thogh sche bothe se and hiere,
And finde that ther is matiere,
Sche dar bot to hirselve pleine,
And thus sche suffreth double peine.
- Confessor** Lo thus, mi sone, as I have write,
576 Thou miht of Jelousie wite
His fievere and his condicion,
- hear
see nor know
- finds
in an uncomfortable position
laid; complains often
- contention
- a major event
happiness
complains
one preferred [by her]
wishes
- those; more
- herself
- constrained
arranged
bond (marriage); untied
- the marriage fee
missal
- in every respect
- he will not praise it
that business
only become worse off
- in silence
- impute (blame)

	Which is full of suspcion.	
580	Bot wheroft that this fievere groweth, Who so these olde bokes troweth, Ther mai he finden hou it is: For thei ous teche and telle this, Hou that this fievere of Jelousie Somdel it growtheth of sotie	<i>trusts</i>
585	Of love, and somdiel of untrust. For as a sek man lest his lust, And whan he may no savour gete, He hateth thanne his oughne mete, Riht so this fieverous maladie,	<i>foolishness</i> <i>suspicion</i> <i>sick; loses; desire</i>
590	Which caused is of fantasie, Makth the Jelous in fieble plit To lese of love his appetit Thurgh feigned enformacion Of his ymaginacion.	<i>own food</i>
595	Bot finali to taken hiede, Men mai wel make a liklihiede Betwen him which is averous Of gold and him that is jelous Of love, for in on degré	<i>plight</i> <i>lose</i> <i>deceitful</i>
600	Thei stonde bothe, as semeth me. That oon wolde have his bagges stille, And noght departen with his wille, And dar noght for the thieves slepe, So fain he wolde his tresor kepe;	<i>comparison</i> <i>miserly</i>
605	That other mai noght wel be glad, For he is evere more adrad Of these lovers that gon aboute, In aunter if thei putte him oute. So have thei bothe litel joye	<i>one</i> <i>fearful</i>
610	As wel of love as of monoie. Now hast thou, sone, at my techinge Of Jelousie a knowlechinge, That thou myht understande this, For whenne he comth and what he is,	<i>In case they should</i> <i>money (wealth)</i>
615	And ek to whom that he is lik. Be war forthi thou be noght sik Of thilke fievere as I have spoke, For it wol in himself be wroke. For love hateth nothing more,	<i>as a result of my</i>
620	As men mai finde be the lore Of hem that whilom were wise, Hou that thei spieke in many wise.”	<i>avenged</i> <i>by (i.e., in) the teaching</i> <i>those who once</i>
Amans	“Mi fader, soth is that ye sein. Bot for to loke ther agein,	

625 Befor this time hou it is falle,
 Wheroft ther mihte ensample falle
 To suche men as be jelous
 In what manere it is grevous,
 Riht fain I wolde ensample hier.”

Confessor “Mi goode sone, at thi preiere
 631 Of suche ensamples as I finde,
 So as thei comen nou to mynde
 Upon this point, of time gon
 I thenke for to tellen on.

*request**intend; one*

[TALE OF VULCAN, MARS, AND VENUS]

635 Ovide wrot of manye thinges,
 Among the whiche in his wrytinges
 He tolde a tale in poesie,
 Which toucheth unto Jelousie,
 Upon a certein cas of love.

640 Among the goddes alle above
 It fell at thilke time thus:

 The god of fyr, which Vulcanus
 Is hote, and hath a craft forthwith
 Assigned, for to be the smith
 Of Jupiter, and his figure

*that**(see note)**Is called*

645 Bothe of visage and of stature
 Is lothly and malgracious,
 Bot yit he hath withinne his hous
 As for the likyng of his lif

loathly; ugly

650 The faire Venus to his wif.
 Bot Mars, which of batailles is
 The god, an yhe hadde unto this.

pleasure

655 As he which was chivalerous,
 It fell him to ben amerous,
 And thoghte it was a gret pité
 To se so lusti on as sche

eye

Be coupled with so lourde a wiht.
 So that his peine day and nyght
 He dede, if he hire winne myhte;

*married; clumsy a creature
 labor constantly*

660 And sche, which hadde a good insihte
 Toward so noble a knyhtli lord,
 In love fell of his accord.
 Ther lacketh noght bot time and place,

regard

That he nys siker of hire grace:¹
 665 Bot whan tuo hertes falle in on,

in one accord

¹ Lines 663–64: i.e., *he is certain of her favor in all ways except the details of how they would meet*

- So wys await was nevere non,
 That at som time thei ne mete;¹
 And thus this faire lusti swete
 With Mars hath ofte compaignie.
- 670 Bot thilke unkynde Jelousie,
 Which everemor the herte opposeth,
 Makth Vulcanus that he supposeth
 That it is noght wel overal,
 And to himself he seide, he schal
 675 Aspie betre, if that he may.
 And so it fell upon a day,
 That he this thing so slyhli ledde,
 He fond hem bothe tuo abedde
 Al warm, ech on with other naked.
- 680 And he with craft al redy maked
 Of stronge chenes hath hem bounde,
 As he togedre hem hadde founde,
 And lefte hem bothe ligge so,
 And gan to clepe and crie tho
 685 Unto the goddes al aboute;
 And thei assembled in a route
 Come alle at ones for to se.
 Bot none amendes hadde he,
 Bot was rebuked hiere and there
 690 Of hem that loves frendes were,
 And seiden that he was to blame,
 For if ther fell him eny schame,
 It was thurgh his misgovernance:
 And thus he loste contienance,
 695 This god, and let his cause falle;
 And thei to skorne him lowhen alle,
 And losen Mars out of hise bondes.
 Wherof these erthli housebondes
 Forevere myhte ensample take,
 700 If such a chaunce hem overtake.
 For Vulcanus his wif bewreide,
 The blame upon himself he leide,
 Wherof his schame was the more;
 Which oghte for to ben a lore
 705 For every man that liveth hiere,
 To reulen him in this matiere.
 Thogh such an happ of love asterte,
 Yit scholde he noght apointe his herte
 With Jelousie of that is wrought,
- oppresses*
- See (spy)*
- slyly managed*
- found them*
- chains*
- lying thus*
- call; then*
- company*
- those who*
- courtly (gracious) standing*
- all laughed*
- loosened*
- Because; maligned*
- lesson*
- control himself*
- circumstance; come about*
- not fill*

¹ Lines 666–67: i.e., *no amount of close scrutiny can prevent such a couple from meeting*

- 710 Bot feigne, as thogh he wiste it noght;
For if he lete it overpasse,
The sclaundre schal be wel the lasse,
And he the more in ese stonde.
For this thou myht wel understande,
720 That where a man schal nedes lese,
The leste harm is for to chese.
Bot Jelousie of his untrist
Makth that full many an harm arist,
Which elles scholde noght arise;
720 And if a man him wolde avise
Of that befell to Vulcanus,
Him oghte of reson thenke thus,
That sithe a god therof was schamed,
Wel scholde an erthli man be blamed
725 To take upon him such a vice.
- Confessor** Forthi, my sone, in thin office
Be war that thou be noght jelous,
Which ofte time hath schent the hous.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, this ensample is hard,
730 Hou such thing to the heveneward
Among the goddes myhte falle.
For ther is bot o God of alle,
Which is the Lord of hevene and helle.
Bot if it like you to telle
735 Hou suche goddes come aplace,
Ye mihten mochel thonk pourchace,
For I schal be wel tawht withal.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, it is thus overal
With hem that stonden misbelieved,
740 That suche goddes ben believed:
In sondri place sondri wise
Amonges hem whiche are unwise
Ther is betaken of credence;
Wheroft that I the difference
745 In the manere as it is write
Schal do thee plainly for to wite.”
- knew
must necessarily lose
least; choose
increase
otherwise; come about
take counsel
ruined
all the way to heaven
come into existence
belief
cause you openly to know

[RELIGIONS]

- ii. *Gentibus illusis signantur templa deorum,
Vnde deos cecos nacio ceca colit.*

*Nulla creatori racio facit esse creatum
Equiperans, quod adhuc iura pagana souent.*¹

[Confessor]	"Er Crist was bore among ous hiere,	Before
¶	Of the believes that tho were	then
	In foure formes thus it was.	(see note)
750	Thei of Caldee as in this cas	
	Hadde a believe be hemselfe,	unto themselves
	Which stod upon the signes tuelve,	twelve signs of the zodiac
	Forth ek with the planetes sevene,	
	Whiche as thei sihe upon the hevene	saw
755	Of sondri constellacion	
	In here yimaginacion	their
	With sondri kerf and pourtreture	carving
	Thei made of goddes the figure.	
	In th'elementz and ek also	
760	Thei hadden a believe tho;	then
	And al was that unresonable:	
	For th'elementz ben servicable	
	To man, and ofte of accidence,	in their observable features
	As men mai se th'experience,	
765	Thei ben corrupt be sondri weie;	
	So mai no mannes reson seie	are gods in any way
	That thei ben god in eny wise.	carefully take thought
	And ek, if men hem wel avise,	
	The sonne and mone eclipse bothe,	
770	That be hem lieve or be hem lothe,	So that whether they want it or not
	Thei soffre; and what thing is passible	susceptible to suffering
¶	To ben a god is impossible.	Cannot be a god (see note)
	These elementz ben creatures,	created entities
	So ben these hevenly figures,	
775	Wheroft mai wel be justefied	
	That thei mai noght be deified.	(i.e., created things may not be gods)
	And who that takth awey th'onour	the honor
	Which due is to the Creatour,	
	And gifteth it to the creature,	
780	He doth to gret a forsfaiture.	offence
	Bot of Caldee natholes	
	Upon this feith, thogh it be les,	falsehood (lies)
	Thei holde affermed the creance;	belief
	So that of helle the penance,	
785	As folk which stant out of believe,	
	Thei schull receive, as we believe.	

¹ *The temples of the gods are inscribed by deluded peoples; whence a blind race worships blind gods. No reason allows a created being to be equal to its creator; yet this is what pagan laws foster.*

[THE EGYPTIANS]

	Of the Chaldeus, lo, in this wise	(see note)
	Stant the believe out of assisse.	<i>beyond legal standards (i.e., against divine law)</i>
	Bot in Egipte worst of alle	
790	The feith is fals, hou so it falle;	<i>animals</i>
	For thei diverse bestes there	
	Honoure, as thogh thei goddes were:	
	And natheles yit forth withal	
	Thre goddes most in special	
795	Thei have, forth with a goddesse,	<i>their certitude</i>
	In whom is al here sikernesse.	
	Tho goddes be yit cleped thus,	<i>Those; called</i>
	Orus, Typhon, and Isirus.	<i>Horus; Osiris</i>
	Thei were brethren alle thre,	
800	And the goddesse in hir degré	<i>Their; called</i>
	Here soster was and Ysis hyhte,	<i>copulated with by</i>
	Whom Isirus forlai be nyhte	
	And hield hire after as his wif.	
	So it befell that upon strif	
805	Typhon hath Isre his brother slain,	<i>Osiris</i>
	Which hadde a child to sone Orayn,	<i>Horus the younger</i>
	And he his fader deth to herte	<i>father's death</i>
	So tok, that it mai noght asterte	<i>cannot fail</i>
	That he Typhon after ne slowh,	<i>(i.e., nothing could prevent him from killing Typhon)</i>
810	Whan he was ripe of age ynowh.	
	Bot yit th'Egipciens trowe	<i>believe</i>
	For al this errorr, which thei knowe,	
	That these brethren ben of myht	<i>sufficient strength</i>
	To sette and kepe Egipte upriht,	
815	And overthowre, if that hem like.	
	Bot Ysis, as seith the croniqe,	
	Fro Grece into Egipte cam,	
	And sche thanne upon honde nam	<i>undertook</i>
	To teche hem for to sowe and eere,	<i>cultivate</i>
820	Which no man knew tofore there.	
	And whan th'Egipciens syhe	<i>saw</i>
	The fieldes fulle afore here yhe,	<i>before their eyes</i>
	And that the lond began to greine,	<i>bear grain</i>
	Which whilom hadde be bareigne,	<i>once; barren</i>
825	For th'erthe bar after the kinde	<i>according to its nature</i>
	His due charge — this I finde —	<i>Its fitting offspring</i>
	That sche of berthe the goddesse	<i>childbirth</i>
	Is cleped, so that in destresse	<i>is called</i>
	The wommen there upon childinge	
830	To hire clepe, and here offringe	<i>call; their</i>
	Thei beren, whan that thei ben lyhte.	<i>have given birth</i>

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 834 | Lo, hou Egipte al out of syhte
Fro resoun stant in misbelieve
For lacke of lore, as I believe. | <i>false belief</i>
<i>instruction</i> |
|-----|--|---|

[THE GREEKS]

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| | Among the Greks, out of the weie
As thei that reson putte aweie,
Ther was, as the cronique seith,
Of misbelieve another feith,
That thei here goddes and goddesses,
As who seith, token al to gesses
Of suche as weren full of vice,
To whom thei made here sacrifice.
The hihe god, so as thei seide,
To whom thei most worshipe leide,
Saturnus hihte, and king of Crete
He hadde be; bot of his sete
He was put doun, as he which stod
In frenesie, and was so wod,
That fro his wif, which Rea hihte,
Hise oghne children he to plihte,
And eet hem of his comun wone.
Bot Jupiter, which was his sone
And of full age, his fader bond
And kutte of with his oghne hond
Hise genitals, whiche als so faste
Into the depe see he caste;
Wheroft the Greks afferme and seie,
Thus whan thei were caste aweie,
Cam Venus forth be weie of kinde.
And of Saturne also I finde
How afterward into an yle
This Jupiter him dede exile,
Wher that he stod in gret meschief.
Lo, which a god thei maden chief! | confused (see note) |
| 840 | | their
acceded to assumptions |
| 844 | | |
| | was called (see note)
been; throne | |
| 850 | | mad
was called
tear to pieces
ate them as a customary habit |
| 855 | | |
| | was an adult
cut off; own hand | |
| 860 | | sea
assert |
| | | in a natural way |
| 865 | | |
| | such a one | |
| 871 | For Jupiter was the secounde,
Which Juno hadde unto his wif;
And yit a lechour al his lif
He was, and in avouterie
He wroghte many a tricherie; | (see note)
adultery |

- 875 And for he was so full of vices,
 Thei cleped him god of delices,
 Of whom, if thou wolt more wite,
 Ovide the poete hath write.
 Bot yit here sterres bothe tuo,
 880 Saturne and Jupiter also,
 Thei have, althogh thei be to blame,
 Attitled to here oghne name. *Named after their own
(see note)*
- 885  Mars was another in that lawe,
 The which in Dace was forthdrawe,
 Of whom the clerk Vegecius
 Wrot in his bok, and tolde thus,
 Hou he into Ytaile cam,
 890 And such fortune ther he nam,
 That he a maiden hath oppressed,
 Which in hire ordre was professed,
 As sche which was the prioresse
 In Vestes temple the goddesse,
 So was sche wel the mor to blame.
 Dame Ylia this ladi name *took*
- 895 Men clepe, and ek sche was also
 The kinges dowhter that was tho,
 Which Mynitor be name hihte.
 So that agein the lawes ryhte
 Mars thilke time upon hire that
 900 Remus and Romulus begat,
 Which after, whan thei come in age,
 Of kniethode and of vassellage
 Ytaile al hol thei overcome *called
then
was called*
- 905 And foundeden the grete Rome;
 In armes and of such emprise
 Thei weren, that in thilke wise
 Here fader Mars for the mervaile
 The god was cleped of bataille.
 910 Thei were his children bothe tuo;
 Thurgh hem he tok his name so,
 Ther was non other cause why.
 And yit a sterre upon the sky
 He hath unto his name applied,
 914 In which that he is signified. *completely*
- 915  Another god thei hadden eke,
 To whom for conseil thei beseke,
 The which was brother to Venus,
 Appollo men him clepe thus.
 He was an hunte upon the helles,
 920 Ther was with him no vertu elles,
 Wherof that enye bokes karpe, *warlike prowess
the same manner
Their
called
also (see note)*
- hunter; hills
skill
say*

	Bot only that he couthe harpe;	<i>Except that he knew how to play the harp</i>
	Which whanne he walked over londe,	
	Fulofte time he tok on honde,	
925	To gete him with his sustienance,	<i>To earn some food</i>
	For lacke of other pourveance.	<i>provision</i>
	And otherwhile of his falshede	
	He feignede him to conne arede	<i>be able to explain</i>
	Of thing which after scholde falle;	<i>happen</i>
930	Wherof among hise sleyhtes alle	
	He hath the lewed folk deceived,	<i>untutored people</i>
	So that the betre he was received.	
	Lo now, thurgh what creacion	
	He hath deificacion,	
935	And cleped is the god of wit	<i>called</i>
	To suche as be the foles yit.	<i>fools yet</i>
☞	And other god, to whom thei soghte,	<i>(see note)</i>
	Mercurie hihte, and him ne roghete	
	What thing he stal, ne whom he slowh.	
940	Of sorcerie he couthe ynowh,	<i>was called; cared not</i>
	That whanne he wolde himself transforme,	<i>stole; killed</i>
	Fulofte time he tok the forme	
	Of womman and his oghne lefte;	<i>knew enough</i>
	So dede he wel the more thefte.	
945	A gret spekere in alle thinges	
	He was also, and of lesinges	<i>false sayings</i>
	An auctour, that men wiste non	
	Another such as he was on.	<i>authority (founder); knew</i>
	And yit thei maden of this thief	
950	A god, which was unto hem lief,	<i>pleasing</i>
	And clepede him in tho believes	
	The god of marchantz and of thieves.	<i>designated; those beliefs</i>
	Bot yit a sterre upon the hevene	
954	He hath of the planetes sevene.	
☞	Bot Vulcanus, of whom I spak,	<i>(see note)</i>
	He hadde a courbe upon the bak,	<i>hump (curve); back</i>
	And therto he was hepehalt,	<i>lame</i>
	Of whom thou understande schalt,	
	He was a schrewe in al his youthe,	
960	And he non other vertu couthe	<i>accomplished</i>
	Of craft to helpe himselfe with,	
	Bot only that he was a smith	
	With Jupiter, which in his forge	
	Diverse things made him forge;	
965	So wot I noght for what desir	<i>I know not</i>
	Thei clepen him the god of fyr.	<i>called</i>

- | | | |
|------|--|--------------------------|
| | King of Cizile Ypolitus | Sicily (see note) |
| 970 | A sone hadde, and Eolus | |
| | He hihte, and of his fader grant | |
| | He hield be weie of covenant | |
| | The governance of every yle | |
| | Which was longende unto Cizile, | |
| | Of hem that fro the lond forein | |
| | Leie open to the wynd al plein. | [were] far removed |
| 975 | And fro thilke iles to the londe | |
| | Fulofte cam the wynd to honde: | |
| | After the name of him forthi | |
| | The wyndes cleped Eoli | |
| 980 | Tho were, and he the god of wynd. | Those |
| | Lo nou, hou this believe is blynd! | |
| | The king of Crete Jupiter, | (see note) |
| | The same which I spak of er, | earlier |
| 985 | Unto his brother, which Neptune | |
| | Was hote, it list him to comune | |
| | Part of his good, so that be schipe | |
| | He mad him strong of the lordschipe | |
| | Of al the see in tho parties; | |
| | Wher that he wroghte hise tyrannyes, | |
| 990 | And the strange yles al aboute | |
| | He wan, that every man hath doute | |
| | Upon his marche for to saile; | |
| | For he anon hem wolde assaile | |
| | And robbe what thing that thei ladden, | |
| | His sauf conduit bot if thei hadden. | |
| 995 | Wheroft the comun vois aros | Unless they had his |
| | In every lond, that such a los | |
| | He cawhte, al nere it worth a stre, | |
| | That he was cleped of the see | |
| | The god be name, and yit he is | |
| 1000 | With hem that so believe amis. | |
| | This Neptune ek was thilke also, | |
| | Which was the ferste foundour tho | |
| | Of noble Troie, and he forthi | |
| 1004 | Was wel the more lete by. | |
| | The loresman of the schepherdes, | Was all the more honored |
| | And ek of hem that ben netherdes, | teacher (see note) |
| | Was of Archade and hihte Pan: | neatherds (cowherds) |
| | Of whom hath spoke many a man, | Arcadia; called |
| | For in the wode of Nonarcigne, | |
| 1010 | Enclosed with the tres of Pigne, | Peneus |
| | And on the Mont of Parasie | Parnassus |
| | He hadde of bestes the baillie, | charge (keeping) |

- And ek benethe in the valleie,
Wher thilke rivere, as men seie,
1015 Which Ladon hihte, made his cours, *was called*
He was the chief of governours
Of hem that kepten tame bestes,
Wheroft he maketh yit the festes
In the cité Stinfalides. *Stymphalus*
- 1020 And forth withal yit natheles
He tawhte men the forthdrawinge
Of bestaile, and ek the makinge
Of oxen, and of hors the same,
Hou men hem scholde ryde and tame. *breeding
livestock; training*
- 1025 Of foules ek, so as we finde,
Ful many a soubstiel craft of kinde
He fond, which no man knew tofore.
Men dede him worschipe ek therfore, *also*
That he the ferste in thilke lond
- 1030 Was which the melodie fond
Of riedes, whan thei weren ripe, *reeds*
With double pipes for to pipe;
Therof he gaf the ferste lore,
Til afterward men couthe more. *instruction
know*
- 1035 To every craft for mannes helpe
He hadde a redi wit to helpe
Thurgh naturel experience.
And thus the nyce reverence *foolish*
Of foles, whan that he was ded,
- 1040 The fot hath torned to the hed,
And clepen him god of nature,
For so thei maden his figure.
-  Another god, so as thei fiele, *(see note)*
Which Jupiter upon Samele *Semele*
1045 Begat in his avouterie, *adultery*
Whom, for to hide his lecherie,
That non therof schal take kepe,
In a montaigne for to kepe,
Which Dyon hihte and was in Ynde, *Dionysus was called*
- 1050 He sende, in bokes as I finde:
And he be name Bachus hihte, *was called*
Which afterward, whan that he mihte,
A wastour was, and al his rente *revenue*
In wyn and bordel he despente. *lechery he used up*
- 1055 Bot yit, al were he wonder badde,
Among the Greks a name he hadde;
Thei cleped him the god of wyn,
And thus a glotoun was dyvyn.

- ¶ Ther was yit Esculapius *(see note)*
- 1060 A godd in thilke time as thus.
His craft stod upon surgerie;
Bot for the lust of lecherie,
That he to Daires dowhter drowh,
It fell that Jupiter him slowh:
- 1065 And yit thei made him noght forthi *not for that reason*
A god, and was no cause why.
In Rome he was long time also
A god among the Romeins tho;
For, as he seide, of his presence
- 1070 Ther was destruid a pestilence,
Whan thei to th'yle of Delphos wente,
And that Appollo with hem sente
This Esculapius his sone,
Among the Romeins for to wone. *dwell*
- 1075 And there he duelte for a while,
Til afterward into that yle,
Fro whenne he cam, agein he torneth,
Where al his lyf that he sojorneth
Among the Greks, til that he deide.
- 1080 And thei upon him thanne leide
His name, and god of medicinē
He hatte after that ilke line. *was called; same*
- ¶ Another god of Hercules *(see note)*
- 1085 Thei made, which was natheles
A man, bot that he was so strong,
In al this world that brod and long
So myhti was no man as he.
Merveiles tuelve in his degré,
- 1090 As it was couth in sondri londes,
He dede with hise oghne hondes
Agein geantz and monstres bothe,
The whiche horrible were and lothe,
Bot he with strengthe hem overcam:
- 1095 Wherof so gret a pris he nam, *reputation; acquired*
That thei him clepe amonges alle
The god of strengthe, and to him calle.
And yit ther is no reson inne,
For he a man was full of sinne,
- 1100 Which proved was upon his ende, *burned*
For in a rage himself he brende;
And such a cruel mannes dede
Acordeth nothing with godhede.
- ¶ Thei hadde of goddes yit another, *(see note)*
Which Pluto hihte, and was the brother *was called*

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 1105 | Of Jupiter, and he fro youthe
With every word which cam to mouthe,
Of eny thing whan he was wroth,
He wolde swere his commun oth,
Be Lethen and be Flegeton, | from
angry |
| 1110 | Be Cochitum and Acheron,
The whiche, after the bokes telle,
Ben the chief fodes of the helle:
Be Segne and Stige he swor also,
That ben the depe pettes tuo | <i>By Lethe</i>
<i>By Cocytus</i> |
| 1115 | That ben the depe pettes tuo
Of helle the most principal.
Pluto these othes overal
Swor of his commun custummance,
Til it befell upon a chance, | <i>principal rivers</i>
<i>Seine; Styx</i>
<i>pits two</i> |
| 1120 | That he for Jupiteres sake
Unto the goddes let do make
A sacrifice, and for that dede
On of the pettes for his mede
In helle, of which I spak of er, | <i>habitual practice</i>
<i>by the casting of lots</i>
<i>behalf</i> |
| 1125 | Was granted him; and thus he ther
Upon the fortune of this thing
The name tok of helle king.
Lo, these goddes and wel mo | <i>ordered (caused to be made)</i> |
| | Among the Greks thei hadden tho,
And of goddesses manyon, | <i>One; pits; reward</i> |
| 1130 | Whos names thou schalt hiere anon,
And in what wise thei deceiven
The foles whiche here feith receiven. | <i>earlier</i> |
| 1135 | So as Saturne is soverein
Of false goddes, as thei sein,
So is Sibeles of goddesses | <i>many a one</i>
<i>hear soon</i>
<i>manner</i>
<i>their</i> |
| | The moder, whom withoute gesses
The folk payene honoure and serve,
As thei the whiche hire lawe observe. | <i>(see note)</i> |
| 1140 | Bot for to knownen upon this
Fro when sche cam and what sche is,
Bethincia the contré hihte,
Wher sche cam ferst to mannes sihte; | <i>without doubt</i> |
| | And after was Saturnes wif,
Be whom thre children in hire lif | <i>pagan</i> |
| 1145 | Sche bar, and thei were cleped tho
Juno, Neptunus, and Pluto,
The whiche of nyce fantasie
The poeple wolde deifie. | <i>Berecynthia; is called</i> |
| | And for hire children were so, | <i>then</i> |
| 1150 | Sibeles thanne was also
Mad a goddesse, and thei hire calle | <i>foolish</i>
<i>since</i> |

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| | The moder of the goddes alle.
So was that name bore forth,
And yit the cause is litel worth. | |
| 1155 | A vois unto Saturne tolde
Hou that his oghne sone him scholde | |
| | Out of his regne putte aweie;
And he because of thilke weie,
That him was schape such a fate, | (see note)
<i>circumstance (problem, situation)</i> |
| 1160 | Sibebe his wif began to hate
And ek hire progenie bothe.
And thus, whil that thei were wrothe, | <i>also</i> |
| | Be Philerem upon a dai
In his avouterie he lai, | <i>Philyra</i>
<i>adultery</i> |
| 1165 | On whom he Jupiter begat;
And thilke child was after that
Which wroghte al that was prophecied,
As it tofore is specefied:
So that whan Jupiter of Crete | |
| 1170 | Was king, a wif unto him mete
The dowhther of Sibebe he tok,
And that was Juno, seith the bok.
Of his deification
After the false oppinion, | <i>suitable</i> |
| 1175 | That have I told, so as thei meene.
And for this Juno was the queene
Of Jupiter and soster eke,
The foles unto hire sieke,
And sein that sche is the goddesse | |
| 1180 | Of regnes bothe and of richesse:
And ek sche, as thei understande,
The water nimpes hath in honde
To leden at hire oghne heste;
And whan hir list the sky tempeste, | <i>kingdoms</i> |
| | The rainbowe is hir messenger.
Lo, which a misbelieve is hier!
That sche goddesse is of the sky
I wot non other cause why. | <i>own commands</i>
<i>it pleases her to make the sky stormy</i> |
| 1185 | Another goddesse is Minerve, | (see note) |
| 1190 | To whom the Greks obeie and serve:
And sche was nyh the grete lay
Of Triton founde, wher she lay
A child forcast, bot what sche was
Ther knew no man the sothe cas. | <i>lake</i>
<i>placed</i>
<i>cast away</i>
<i>true case</i> |
| 1195 | Bot in Aufrique sche was leid
In the manere as I have seid,
And caried fro that ilke place
Into an yle fer in Trace. | |

- 1200 The which Palene thanne hihte,
Wher a norrice hir kepte and dihte.
And after, for sche was so wys
That sche fond ferst in hire avis
The cloth makinge of wolle and lyn,
Men seiden that sche was divin,
1205 And the goddesse of sapience
Thei clepen hire in that credence.
☞ Of the goddesse which Pallas
Is cleped sondri speche was.
On seith hire fader was Pallant,
1210 Which in his time was geant,
A cruel man, a bataillous.
Another seith hou in his hous
Sche was the cause why he deide.
And of this Pallas some ek seide
1215 That sche was Martes wif; and so
Among the men that weren tho
Of misbelieve in the riote
The goddesse of batailles hote
She was, and yit sche berth the name.
1220 Now loke, hou thei be for to blame.
☞ Saturnus after his exil
Fro Crete cam in gret peril
Into the londes of Ytaile,
1225 And ther he dede gret mervaile,
Wheroft his name duelleth yit.
For he fond of his oghne wit
The ferste craft of plowh tilinge,
Of eringe and of corn sowinge,
1230 And how men scholden sette vines
And of the grapes make wynes;
Al this he tawhte. And it fell so,
His wif, the which cam with him tho,
Was cleped Cereres be name,
1235 And for sche tawhte also the same,
And was his wif that ilke throwe,
As it was to the poeple knowe,
Thei made of Ceres a goddesse,
In whom here tilthe yit thei blesse,
1240 And sein that Tricolonius
Hire sone goth amonges ous
And makth the corn good chep or dere,
Riht as hire list fro yer to yeere;
So that this wif because of this
1244 Goddesse of cornes cleped is.
- was called
attended
invented; according to her counsel
wisdom
called; faith
(see note)
explanations exist
One
giant
warlike man

In the disorder of misbelief
called
(see note)
cultivation; grain
then
at that same time
their cultivation
say
costly
it pleases her
grain is called

- ☞ King Jupiter, which his likinge
 Whilom fulfelde in alle thinge,
 So priveliche aboute he ladde
 His lust, that he his wille hadde
 Of Latona, and on hire that
 1250 Diane his dowhter he begat
 Unknowen of his wif Juno.
 And afterward sche knew it so,
 That Latona for drede fledde
 Into an ile, wher sche hedde
 1255 Hire wombe, which of childe aros.
 Thilke yle cleped was Delos;
 In which Diana was forthbroght,
 And kept so that hire lacketh noght.
 And after, whan sche was of age,
 1260 Sche tok non hiede of mariage,
 Bot out of mannes compaignie
 Sche tok hire al to venerie
 In forest and in wildernes
 For ther was al hire besinesse
 1265 Be daie and ek be nyghtes tyde
 With arwes brode under the side
 And bowe in honde, of which sche slowh
 And tok al that hir liste ynowh
 Of bestes whiche ben chacable.
 1270 Wherof the cronique of this fable
 Seith that the gentils most of alle
 Worschipen hire and to hire calle,
 And the goddesse of hihe helles,
 Of grene trees, of freisshe welles,
 1275 Thei clepen hire in that believe,
 Which that no reson mai achieve.
- ☞ Proserpina, which dowhter was
 Of Cereres, befell this cas:
 Whil sche was duellinge in Cizile,
 1280 Hire moder in that ilke while
 Upon hire blessinge and hire heste
 Bad that sche scholde ben honeste,
 And lerne for to weve and spinne,
 And duelle at hom and kepe hire inne.
 1285 Bot sche caste al that lore aweie,
 And as sche wente hir out to pleie,
 To gadre floures in a pleine,
 And that was under the monteine
 Of Ethna, fell the same tyde
 1290 That Pluto cam that weie ryde,
 And sodeinly, er sche was war,
- pleasure (see note)
- secretly; took
- hid
- with child grew large
- This same
- born
- hunting
- also by nighttime
- arrows
- killed
- fair game (huntable)
- pagans (gentiles)
- high hills
- obtain
- (see note)
- same time
- command
- teaching
- before

- He tok hire up into his char. *chariot*
 And as thei ride in the field,
 Hire grete beauté he behield,
 1295 Which was so plesant in his ye, *eye*
 That for to holde in compainie
 He weddeth hire and hield hire so
 To ben his wif foreveremo.
 And as thou hast tofore herd telle
 1300 Hou he was cleped god of helle,
 So is sche cleped the goddesse
 Because of him, ne mor ne lesse.
- Confessor** Lo, thus, mi sone, as I thee tolde,
 The Greks whilom be daies olde
 1305 Here goddes hadde in sondri wise, *Their
wisdom of their teaching*
 And thurgh the lore of here aprise
 The Romeins hielden ek the same.
 And in the worschipe of here name
 To every godd in special
 1310 Thei made a temple forth withal,
 And ech of hem his yeeres dai *its annual holiday
of splendid furnishings*
 Attitled hadde; and of arai
 The temples weren thanne ordeigned,
 And ek the poeple was constreigned
 1315 To come and don here sacrifice;
 The priestes ek in here office
 Solempne maden thilke festes.
 And thus the Greks lich to the bestes
 The men in stede of God honoure,
 1320 Whiche mihten noght hemself socoure,
 Whil that thei were alyve hierie.
 And over this, as thou schalt hierie,
 The Greks fulfilt of fantasie *(see note)*
 Sein ek that of the helles hihe *also; high hills*
 1325 The goddes ben in special,
 Bot of here name in general
 Thei hoten alle Satiri. *are all called Satyrs*
 Ther ben of Nimpthes proprely *(see note)*
 In the believe of hem also:
 1330 Oreades thei seiden tho
 Attitled ben to the monteines;
 And for the wodes in demeynes *possession (see note)*
 To kepe, tho ben Driades; *those are*
 Of freishe welles Naiades; *(see note)*
 1335 And of the Nimpthes of the see *sea*
 I finde a tale in propreté, *pertinent tale; (see note)*

- Hou Dorus whilom king of Grece,
Which hadde of infortune a piece,
His wif forth with hire dowhtres alle,
1340 So as the happes scholden falle,
With many a gentil womman there
Dreint in the salte see thei were:
Wheroft the Greks that time seiden,
And such a name upon hem leiden,
1345 Nereides that thei ben hote,
The Nimpthes whiche that thei note
To regne upon the stremes salte.
Lo now, if this believe halte!
Bot of the Nimpthes as thei telle,
1350 In every place wher thei duelle
Thei ben al redi obeissant
As damoiselles entendant
To the goddesses, whos servise
Thei mote obeie in alle wise;
1355 Wheroft the Greks to hem beseek
With tho that ben goddesses eke,
And have in hem a gret credence.
- ¶ And yit withoutte experience
Salve only of illusion,
1360 Which was to hem dampnacion,
For men also that were dede
Thei hadden goddes, as I rede,
And tho be name Manes hihten,
To whom ful gret honour thei dihten,
1365 So as the Grekes lawe seith,
Which was agein the rihte feith.
Thus have I told a gret partie;
Bot al the hole progenie
Of goddes in that ilke time
1370 To long it were for to rime.
Bot yit of that which thou hast herd,
Of misbelieve hou it hath ferd,
Ther is a gret diversité.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, riht so thenketh me.
1375 Bot yit o thing I you beseche,
Which stant in alle mennes speche,
The godd and the goddesse of love,
Of whom ye nothing hier above
Have told, ne spoken of her fare,
1380 That ye me wolden now declare
Hou thei ferst comen to that name.”
- [Confessor]** “Mi sone, I have it left for schame,
¶ Because I am here oghne prest;
- once
- Drowned
- called
- if this belief can [possibly] hold firm*
- them beseech
- (see note)
- were called
- offered
- against
- Too
- fared
- one
- their doings
- their own (see note)

- Bot for thei stonden nyh thi brest
 1385 Upon the schrifte of thi matiere,
 Thou schalt of hem the sothe hiere. *disclosure*
truth
- And understand nou wel the cas.
 Venus Saturnes dowhter was,
 Which alle danger putte aweie *resistance*
- 1390 Of love, and fond to lust a weie;
 So that of hire in sondri place
 Diverse men felle into grace,
 And such a lusti lif sche ladde,
 That sche diverse children hadde,
- 1395 Nou on be this, nou on be that. *one*
 Of hire it was that Mars begat
 A child, which cleped was Armene;
 Of hire also cam Andragene, *Harmonia*
 To whom Mercurie fader was. *Androgynus (Hermaphroditus)*
- 1400 Anchises begat Eneas
 Of hire also, and Ericon
 Biten begat, and therupon,
 Whan that sche sih ther was non other,
 Be Jupiter hire oghne brother
- 1405 Sche lay, and he begat Cupide.
 And thilke sone upon a tyde,
 Whan he was come unto his age,
 He hadde a wonder fair visage,
 And fond his moder amourous,
- 1410 And he was also lecherous:
 So whan thei weren bothe alone,
 As he which yhen hadde none *eyes*
 To se reson, his moder kiste;
 And sche also, that nothing wiste *knew*
- 1415 Bot that which unto lust belongeth,
 To ben hire love him undersongeth. *undertook*
 Thus was he blind, and sche unwys.
 Bot natheles this cause it is,
 Why Cupide is the god of love,
- 1420 For he his moder dorste love. *dared to*
to try
 And sche, which thoghte hire lustes fonde,
 Diverse loves tok in honde,
 Wel mo thanne I thee tolde hiere;
 And for sche wolde hirselfe skiere, *defend her own behavior*
- 1425 Sche made comun that despert,
 And sette a lawe of such a port,
 That every womman mihte take
 What man hire liste, and noght forsake *not refuse*
 To ben als comun as sche wolde.
- 1430 Sche was the ferste also which tolde

- That wommen scholde here bodi selle.
 Semiramis, so as men telle,
 Of Venus kepte thilke aprise,
 And so dede in the same wise
 1435 Of Rome faire Neabole,
 Which liste hire bodi to rigole;
 Sche was to every man felawe,
 And hild the lust of thilke lawe,
 Which Venus of hirself began;
 1440 Wheroft that sche the name wan,
 Why men hire clepen the goddesse
 Of love and ek of gentilesse,
 Of worldes lust and of plesance.
 Se nou the foule mescreance
 1445 Of Greks in thilke time tho,
 Whan Venus tok hire name so.
 Ther was no cause under the mone
 Of which thei hadden tho to done,
 Of wel or wo wher so it was,
 1450 That thei ne token in that cas
 A god to helpe or a goddesse.
 Wheroft, to take mi witnesse,
 The king of Bragmans Dindimus
 1455 Wrot unto Alisandre thus:
 In blaminge of the Grekes feith
 And of the misbelieve, he seith
 How thei for every membre hadden
 A sondri god, to whom thei spradden
 1460 Here armes and of help besoghten.
 Minerve for the hed thei soghten,
 For sche was wys, and of a man
 The wit and reson which he can
 Is in the celles of the brayn,
 Wheroft thei made hire soverain.
 1465 Mercurie, which was in his dawes
 A gret spekere of false lawes,
 On him the kepinge of the tunge
 Thei leide, whan thei spieke or sunge.
 For Bachus was a glotoun eke,
 1470 Him for the throte thei beseke,
 That he it wolde waisshon ofte
 With swote drinke and with softe.
 The god of schuldres and of armes
 Was Hercules; for he in armes
 1475 The myhtieste was to fihte,
 To him tho limes thei behihte.
- the same teaching*
- delight*
- held*
- gained*
- false belief*
- then*
- (see note)*
- different*
- compartments*
- pray*
- wash*
- sweet*
- dedicated*

- The god whom that thei clepen Mart *call Mars*
 The brest to kepe hath for his part,
 Forth with the herte, in his ymage
 1480 That he adresce the corage. *So that he controls*
 And of the galle the goddesse,
 For sche was full of hastifesse
 Of wraththe and liht to grieve also, *quick*
 Thei made and seide it was Juno.
 1485 Cupide, which the brond afyre *on fire*
 Bar in his hond, he was the sire
 Of the stomak, which builleth evere,
 Wheroft the lustes ben the levere.
 To the goddesse Cereres,
 1490 Which of the corn gaf hire encress
 Upon the feith that tho was take,
 The wombes cure was betake; *custody: undertaken*
 And Venus thurgh the lecherie,
 For which that thei hire deifie,
 1495 Sche kept al doun the remenant
 To thilke office appourtenant.

[IDOL WORSHIP]

- Thus was dispers in sondri wise
 1500 The misbelieve, as I devise, *sculpture (see note)*
 With many an ymage of entaille,
 Of suche as myhte hem noght availe;
 For thei withoute lyves chiere *living countenance*
 Unmyhti ben to se or hiere *Strengthless*
 Or speke or do or elles fiele;
 And yit the foles to hem knele,
 1505 Which is here oghne handes werk.
 Ha lord, hou this believe is derk,
 And fer fro resonable wit!
 And natheles thei don it yit:
 That was today a ragged tre, *What; scruffy*
 1510 Tomorwe upon his majesté
 Stant in the temple wel besein. *well cared for*
 How myhte a mannes resoun sein
 That such a stock mai helpe or grieve? *say*
 Bot thei that ben of such believe
 1515 And unto suche goddes calle,
 It schal to hem riht so befalle,
 And failen ate moste nede.
 Bot if thee list to taken hiede
 And of the ferste ymage wite, *know*
 1520 Petornius therof hath write *Petronius*

- And ek Nigargorus also;
 And thei afferme and write so,
 That Prometheus was tofore
 And fond the ferste craft therfore,
 1525 And Cirophanes, as thei telle,
 Thurgh conseil which was take in helle,
 In remembrance of his lignage
 Let setten up the ferste ymage.
 Of Cirophanes seith the bok,
 1530 That he for sorwe, which he tok
 Of that he sih his sone ded,
 Of confort knew non other red,
 Bot let do make in remembrance
 A faire ymage of his semblance
 1535 And set it in the market place,
 Which openly tofore his face
 Stod every dai to don him ese.
 And thei that thanne wolden plesse
 The fader, scholden it obeie,
 1540 Whan that thei comen thilke weie.
- ¶ And of Ninus king of Assire
 I rede hou that in his empire
 He was next after the secounde
 Of hem that ferst ymages founde.
 1545 For he riht in semblable cas
 Of Belus, which his fader was
 Fro Nembroth in the rihte line,
 Let make of gold and stones fine
 A precious ymage riche
 1550 After his fader evene liche;
 And therupon a lawe he sette,
 That every man of pure dette
 With sacrifice and with truage
 Honoure scholde thilke ymage:
 1555 So that withinne time it fell,
 Of Belus cam the name of Bel,
 Of Bel cam Belzebub, and so
 The misbelieve wente tho.
- 1559 The thridde ymage next to this
 ¶ Was, whan the king of Grece Apis
 Was ded, thei maden a figure
 In resemblance of his stature.
 Of this king Apis seith the bok
 That Serapis his name tok,
 1565 In whom thurgh long continuance
 Of misbelieve a gret creance
 Thei hadden, and the reverence
- Nicagoras*
- saw*
- course of action*
- had made*
- Assyria (see note)*
- offering*
- then*
- (see note)*
- credulity*

- Of sacrifice and of encence
 To him thei made: and as thei telle,
 1570 Among the wondres that befelle,
 Whan Alisandre fro Candace
 Cam ridende, in a wilde place
 Undur an hull a cave he fond;
 And Candalus, which in that lond
 1575 Was bore, and was Candaces sone,
 Him tolde hou that of commun wone
 The goddes were in thilke cave.
 And he, that wolde assaie and have
 A knowlechinge if it be soth,
 1580 Liht of his hors and in he goth,
 And fond therinne that he soghte.
 For thurgh the fendas sleihte him thoghte,
 Amonges othre goddes mo
 That Serapis spak to him tho,
 1585 Whom he sih there in gret arrai.
 And thus the fend fro dai to dai
 The worschipe of ydolatrie
 Drowh forth upon the fantasie
 Of hem that weren thanne blinde
 1590 And couthen noght the trouthe finde.
 Thus hast thou herd in what degré
 Of Grece, Egipte, and of Caldee
 The misbelieves whilom stode;
 And hou so that thei be noght goode
 1595 Ne trewe, yit thei sprungen oute,
 Wherof the wyde world aboute
 His part of misbelieve tok.
 Til so befell, as seith the bok,
 That god a poeple for himselfe
 1600 Hath chose of the lignages tuelve,
 Wherof the sothe redely,
 As it is write in Genesi,
 I thenke telle in such a wise
 1604 That it schal be to thin apprise.
- hill*
practice
Got off
devil's deception
one day after another
tribes
your instruction

[THE JEWS]

- After the flod, fro which Noé
 Was sauf, the world in his degré
 Was mad, as who seith, newe agein,
 Of flour, of fruit, of gras, of grein,
 1605 Of beste, of bridd and of mankinde,
 Which evere hath be to God unkinde.
 For noght withstandende al the fare,
- Noah*
according to its office
made
(see note)

- Of that this world was mad so bare
 And afterward it was restored,
 Among the men was nothing more
 1615 Towards God of good lyyng,
 Bot al was torned to likinge
 After the fleissh, so that forgete
 Was He which gaf hem lif and mete,
 Of hevene and erthe creatour. *made so barren*
 increased
- 1620 And thus cam forth the grete error,
 That thei the hihe God ne knewe,
 Bot maden othre goddes newe,
 As thou hast herd me seid tofore.
 Ther was no man that time bore,
 1625 That he ne hadde after his chois
 A god, to whom he gaf his vois.
 Wherof the misbelieve cam
 Into the time of Habraham.
 Bot he fond out the rihte weie,
 1630 Hou only that men scholde obeie
 The hihe God, which weldeth al,
 And evere hath don and evere schal,
 In hevene, in erthe and ek in helle.
 Ther is no tunge His miht mai telle.
- 1635 This patriarch to his lignage
 Forbad, that thei to non ymage
 Encline scholde in none wise,
 Bot here offrende and sacrificise
 With al the hole hertes love *rules*
 their
- 1640 Unto the mihti God above
 Thei scholden give and to no mo.
 And thus in thilke time tho
 Began the secte upon this erthe,
 Which of believes was the ferthe.
- 1645 Of rihtwisnesse it was conceived,
 So moste it nedes be received
 Of Him that alle riht is inne,
 The hihe God, which wolde winne
 A poeple unto His oghne feith.
- 1650 On Habraham the ground He leith,
 And made him for to multeplie
 Into so gret a progenie,
 That thei Egipte al overspradde.
 Bot Pharao with wrong hem ladde
- 1655 In servitute agein the pes,
 Til God let sende Moises
 To make the deliverance;
 And for his poeple gret vengeance *systems of belief; fourth*
against the peace (i.e., illegally)

- He tok, which is to hiere a wonder.
 1660 The king was slain, the lond put under,
 God bad the Rede See divide,
 Which stod upriht on either side
 And gaf unto his poeple a weie,
 That thei on fote it passe dreie *dry*
 1665 And gon so forth into desert.
 Wher for to kepe hem in covert, *under shelter*
 The daies, whan the sonne brente,
 A large cloude hem overwente,
 And for to wissen hem be nyhte, *guide them by*
 1670 A firy piler hem alyhte. *came down [before] them*
 And whan that thei for hunger pleigne,
 The myhti God began to reyne
 Manna fro hevene doun to grounde,
 Wheroft ech of hem hath founde
 1675 His fode, such riht as him liste; *each according to his desire*
 And for thei scholde upon Him triste, *trust*
 Riht as who sette a tonne abroche,
 He percede the harde roche,
 And sprong out water al at wille, *one who would tap open a cask*
 1680 That man and beste hath drunke his fille.
 And afterward He gaf the Lawe
 To Moises, that hem withdrawe
 Thei scholden noght fro that he bad.
 And in this wise thei be lad, *way*
 1685 Til thei tok in possession *seized*
 The londes of promission, *promise*
 Wher that Caleph and Josué
 The marches upon such degré
 Departen, after the lignage *Distributed*
 1690 That ech of hem as heritage
 His porpartie hath underfonge. *share; received*
 And thus stod this believe longe,
 Which of prophetes was governed;
 And thei hadde ek the poeple lerned *taught*
 1695 Of gret honour that scholde hem falle;
 Bot ate moste nede of alle
 Thei faileden, whan Crist was bore.
 Bot hou that thei here feith have bore,
 It nedeth noght to tellen al,
 1700 The matiere is so general:
 Whan Lucifer was best in hevene *the best [angel]*
 And oghte moste have stonde in evene,
 Towardes God he tok debat,
 And for that he was obstinat,
 1705 And wolde noght to trouthe encline,

- He fell forevere into ruine:
 And Adam ek in Paradis,
 Whan he stod most in al his pris
 After th'astat of Innocence, *nobility*
- 1710 Agein the God brak his defence
 And fell out of his place aweie:
 And riht be such a maner weie
 The Jwes in here beste plit, *their best situation*
 Whan that thei scholden most parfit
- 1715 Have standon upon the prophecie,
 Tho fallen thei to most folie,
 And Him which was fro hevene come,
 And of a maide his fleissh hath nome, *took*
 And was among hem bore and fedd,
- 1720 As men that wolden noght be spedd
 Of Goddes Sone, with o vois
 Thei hinge and slowhe upon the crois.
 Wherof the parfit of here Lawe *hung; cross*
 Fro thanne forth hem was withdrawe, *perfection*
- 1725 So that thei stonde of no merit,
 Bot in truage as folk soubgit
 Withoute propreté of place
 Thei liven out of Goddes grace,
 Dispers in alle londes oute. *bondage; subject*
- 1730 And thus the feith is come aboute,
 That whilom in the Jewes stod,
 Which is noght parfihltiche good.
 To speke as it is nou befallie,
 Ther is a feith aboven alle,
- 1735 In which the trouthe is comprehended,
 Wherof that we ben alle amended. *Dispersed throughout all*

[THE CHRISTIANS]

- The hihe almyhti majesté,
 Of rihtwisnesse and of pité,
 The sinne which that Adam wroghte,
 Whan He sih time, agein He boghte, *redeemed*
- 1740  And sende His Sone fro the hevene
 To sette mannes Soule in evene,
 Which thanne was so sore falle
 Upon the point which was befallie, *(see note)*
- 1745 That he ne mihte himself arise.
 Gregoire seith in his aprise,
 It helpeth noght a man be bore,
 If Goddes Sone were unbore; *teaching*
 For thanne thurgh the ferste sinne,

- 1750 Which Adam whilom broghte ous inne,
 Ther scholden alle men be lost;
 Bot Crist restoreth thilke lost,
 And boghte it with His fleissh and blod.
 And if we thenken hou it stod
- 1755 Of thilke rancoun which He payde, *ransom*
 As saint Gregoire it wrot and sayde, *(see note)*
 Al was behovely to the man. *profitable*
- 1760 For that wherof his wo began
 Was after cause of al his welthe,
 Whan He which is the welle of helthe,
 The hihe creatour of lif,
 Upon the nede of such a strif
 So wolde for His creature
 Take on Himself the forsfaiture *penalty*
- 1765 And soffre for the mannes sake.
 Thus mai no reson wel forsake
 That thilke senne original *sin*
 Ne was the cause in special
 Of mannes worschipe ate laste, *honor*
- 1770 Which schal withouten ende laste.
 For be that cause the Godhede
 Assembled was to the manhede
 In the Virgine, where He nom
 Oure fleissh and verai man becom
- 1775 Of bodely fraternité;
 Wheroft the man in his degré
 Stant more worth, as I have told,
 Than he stod erst be manyfold,
 Thurgh baptesme of the Newe Lawe, *previously by many times over*
- 1780 Of which Crist Lord is and felawe.
 And thus the hihe Goddes myht,
 Which was in the Virgine alyht,
 The mannes soule hath reconciled,
 Which hadde longe ben exiled.
- 1785 So stant the feith upon believe,
 Withoute which mai non achieve
 To gete him paradis agein.
 Bot this believe is so certein,
 So full of grace and of vertu,
- 1790 That what man clepeth to Jhesu *appeals to*
 In clene lif forthwith good dede,
 He mai noght faile of hevene mede,
 Which taken hath the rihte feith;
 For elles, as the Gospel seith,
- 1795 Salvacion ther mai be non.
 And for to preche therupon *heaven's reward*

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| | Crist bad to Hise apostles alle,
The whos pouer as nou is falle
On ous that ben of Holi Cherche,
If we the goode dedes werche;
For feith only sufficeth noght,
Bot if good dede also be wroght. | <i>Those whose</i>
<i>(see note)</i> |
| 1799 | Confessor Now were it good that thou forthi,
Which thurgh baptesme proprely
Art unto Cristes feith professed,
Bewar that thou be noght oppressed
With Anticristes Lollardie. | |
| 1805 | For as the Jwes prophecie
Was set of God for avantage, | <i>(see note)</i> |
| 1810 | Riht so this newe tapinage
Of Lollardie goth aboute
To sette Cristes feith in doute.
The seintz that weren ous tofore,
Be whom the feith was ferst upbore,
That Holi Cherche stod relieved,
Thei oghтен betre be believed
Than these, whiche that men knowe
Noght holy, thogh thei feigne and blowe
Here Lollardie in mennes ere. | <i>sect of deceivers</i>
<i>Their; ear</i> |
| 1815 | Bot if thou wolt live out of fere,
Such newe lore, I rede, eschui,
And hold forth riht the weie and suie,
As thine ancestres dede er this,
So schalt thou noght believe amis. | <i>advise, avoid</i>
<i>follow</i> |
| 1820 | Crist wroghte ferst and after tawhte,
So that the dede His Word arawhte;
He gaf ensample in His persone,
And we the wordes have al one,
Lich to the tree with leves grene,
Upon the which no fruit is sene. | <i>created; taught (see note)</i>
<i>interpreted</i> |
| 1824 | The priest Thoas, which of Minerve | |
| 1830 | The temple hadde for to serve,
And the Palladion of Troie | <i>(see note)</i> |
| 1835 | Kepte under keie, for monoie
Of Antenor which he hath nome,
Hath soffred Anthenor to come
And the Palladion to stèle,
Wherof the worschipe and the wele
Of the Troiens was overthrowe. | <i>Kept locked up; bribe</i>
<i>taken</i>
<i>steal</i>
<i>honor; prosperity</i> |
| 1840 | Bot Thoas at the same throwe,
Whan Anthenor this juel tok,
Wynkende caste awei his lok | <i>jewel</i>
<i>turned his look aside</i> |

- For a deceipte and for a wyle:
As he that scholde himself beguile, *wily trick*
1845 He hidde his yhen fro the sihte,
And wende wel that he so mihte
Excuse his false conscience.
I wot noght if thilke evidence *the same*
Nou at this time in here estatz
Excuse mihte the prelatz,
Knowende hou that the feith discresceth *Given that*
And alle moral vertu cesseneth,
Wheroft that thei the keies bere, *guard*
Bot yit hem liketh noght to stere
1855 Here gostliche yhe for to se *Their spiritual (inner) eye*
The world in his adversité;
Thei wol no labour undertake
To kepe that hem is betake.
Crist deide Himselfe for the feith,
1860 Bot nou our feerfull prelat seith,
'The lif is suete,' and that he kepeth,
So that the feith unholpe slepeth, *neglected*
And thei unto here ese entenden
And in here lust her lif despenden,
1865 And every man do what him list. *what pleases him*
Thus stant this world fulfild of mist,
That no man seth the rihte weie.
The wardes of the cherche keie *keepers*
1870 Thurgh mishandlinge ben mysreynt, *twisted askew*
The worldes wawe hath welnyh dreynyt
The schip which Peter hath to stiere,
The forme is kept, bot the matiere
Transformed is in other wise.
Bot if thei weren gostli wise, *Unless; spiritually*
1875 And that the prelatz weren goode,
As thei be olde daies stode,
It were thanne litel nede
Among the men to taken hiede
Of that thei hieren Pseudo telle, *False*
1880 Which nou is come for to duelle,
To sowe cokkel with the corn,
So that the tilthe is nyh forlorn, *crop; lost*
Which Crist sew ferst his oghne hond.
Nou stant the cockel in the lond, *weeds*
1885 Wher stod whilom the goode grein,
For the prelatz nou, as men sein,
Forslowthen that thei scholden tile.
And that I trowe be the skile, *Neglect by sloth what they*
Whan ther is lacke in hem above, *reason*

- 1890 The poeple is stranged to the love
Of trouthe, in cause of ignorance.
For wher ther is no pourveance
Of liht, men erren in the derke.
Bot if the prelatz wolden werke
Upon the feith which thei ous teche,
Men scholden noght here weie seche
Withoute liht, as now is used:
Men se the charge aldai refused,
Which Holi Cherche hath undertake.
- 1895
- 1900 Bot who that wolde ensample take, (see note)
- 1901 Gregoire upon his Omelie
Agein the Slouthe of Prelacie
Compleigneth him, and thus he seith:
'Whan Peter, fader of the feith,
- 1905 At domesdai schal with him bringe
Judeam, which thurgh his prechinge
He wan, and Andrew with Achaie
Schal come his dette for to paie,
And Thomas ek with his beyete
- 1910 Of Ynde, and Poul the routes grete
Of sondri londes schal presente,
And we fulfld of lond and rente,
Which of this world we holden hiere,
With voide handes schul appiere,
- 1915 Touchende oure cure spirital,
Which is our charge in special,
I not what thing it mai amonte
Upon thilke ende of oure accompte,
Wher Crist himself is auditour,
- 1920 Which takth non hiede of vein honour.'
Th'office of the chancellerie
Or of the kinges tresorie
Ne for the writ ne for the taille
To warant mai noght thanne availe;
- 1925 The world, which nou so wel we trowe,
Schal make ous thanne bot a mowe:
So passe we withoute mede,
That we non otherwise spedde,
Bot as we rede that he spedde,
- 1930 The which his lordes besant hedde
And therupon gat non encress.
Bot at this time natheles,
What other man his thonk deserve,
The world so lusti is to serve,
- 1935 That we with him ben all acorded,
And that is wist and wel recorded
- estranged from
provision
wander
- with the Achaians
- gains
India
- property and income
- empty
spiritual duty
- do not know
- summons; tally stick
- trust
grimace
reward
- achieve our goal
- Except as; succeeded
coin hid
- known

	Thurghout this erthe in alle londes Let knythes winne with here hondes, For oure tunge schal be stille	their
1940	And stonde upon the fleisshes wille. It were a travail for to preche The feith of Crist, as for to teche The folk paiene, it wol noght be; Bot every prelat holde his see	<i>bodily desire</i> <i>labor</i>
1945	With al such ese as he mai gete Of lusti drinke and lusti mete, Wheroft the bodi fat and full Is unto gostli labour dull And slowh to handle thilke plowh.	<i>pagan</i> <i>spiritual</i> <i>slow</i>
1950	Bot elles we ben swifte ynowh Toward the worldes Avarice. And that is as a sacrifice, Which, after that th'apostel seith, Is openly agein the feith	<i>St. Paul</i>
1955	Unto th'idoles gove and granted. Bot natheles it is nou haunted, And vertu changed into vice, So that largesce is Avarice, In whos chapitre now we trete."	<i>gave</i> <i>practiced</i>
Amans	"Mi fader, this matiere is bete So fer, that evere whil I live I schal the betre hiede give Unto miself be many weie. Bot over this nou wolde I preie	<i>discussed (beaten)</i>
1961	To wite what the branches are Of Avarice, and hou thei fare Als wel in love as otherwise."	<i>know</i>
1965		
Confessor	"Mi sone, and I thee schal devise In such a manere as thei stonde, So that thou schalt hem understande."	<i>them</i>

[COVETOUSNESS]

- iii. *Agros iungit agris cupidus domibusque domosque,
Possideat totam sic quasi solus humum.
Solus et inumeros mulierum spirat amores,
Vt sacra millenis sit sibi culta Venus.*¹

¹ *The cupidinous man joins fields to other fields, and houses to other houses, so that he alone might own nearly the whole landscape. And he alone pursues the love of innumerable women, so that Venus, sacred to thousands, might be worshiped by him alone.*

	[Confessor]	"Dame Avarice is noght soleine, Which is of gold the capiteine, Bot of hir court in sondri wise	<i>solitary lady captain</i>
1974		After the scole of hire aprise	<i>instruction (expertise)</i>
	¶	Sche hath of servantz manyon, Wheroft that Covoitise is on; Which goth the large world aboute, To seche th'avantages oute, Wher that he mai the profit winne	<i>many a one (see note) seek the sources of profit</i>
1980		To Avarice, and bringth it inne. That on hald and that other draweth, Ther is no day which hem bedaweth, No mor the sonne than the mone, Whan ther is eny thing to done,	<i>one dawns upon them sun; moon</i>
1985		And namely with Covoitise; For he stant out of al assisse Of resonable mannes fare. Wher he pourposeth him to fare Upon his lucre and his beyete,	<i>manner (sort) doings</i>
1990		The smale path, the large strete, The furlong and the longe mile, Al is bot on for thilke while. And for that he is such on holde,	<i>money; possessions wide street</i>
1995		Dame Avarice him hath withholde, As he which is the principal Outward, for he is overal A pourveour and an aspie.	<i>engaged in her service</i>
2000		For riht as of an hungri pie The storve bestes ben awaited, Riht so is Covoitise afaited To loke where he mai pourchace,	<i>procurer; spy magpie dead; attended prepared</i>
		For be his wille he wolde embrace Al that this wyde world beclippeth; Bot evere he somwhat overhippeth,	<i>procure by encompasses</i>
2005		That he ne mai noght al fulfill The lustes of his gredi wille. Bot where it falleth in a lond, That Covoitise in myhti hond	<i>overlooks (skips over) So that</i>
		Is set, it is ful hard to fiede;	<i>support oneself</i>
2010		For thanne he takth non other hiede, Bot that he mai pourchace and gete. His conscience hath al forgete, And not what thing it mai amonte	<i>Except</i>
		That he schal afterward acompte.	<i>knows not; cost</i>
2015		Bote as the luce in his degré Of tho that lasse ben than he The fisshes griedeli devoureth,	<i>confess (square accounts) pike; its those; smaller</i>

- So that no water hem socoureth,
Riht so no lawe mai rescowe
2020 Fro him that wol no riht allowe;
For wher that such on is of myht,
His will schal stonde in stede of riht.
Thus be the men destruid fulofte,
Til that the grete God alofte
2025 Agein so gret a covoitise
Redresce it in His oghne wise:
And in ensample of alle tho
I finde a tale write so,
The which, for it is good to liere,
2030 Hierafterward thou schalt it hiere.
- covetousness*
teach

[TALE OF VIRGIL'S MIRROR]

- ¶ Whan Rome stod in noble plit,
Virgile, which was tho parfit,
A mirour made of his clergie
And sette it in the tounes ſye
2035 Of marbre on a piler withoute;
That thei be thritty mile aboute
Be daie and ek also be nyhte
In that mirour beholde myhte
Here enemys, if eny were,
2040 With al here ordinance there,
Which thei agein the cité caste,
So that, whil thilke mirour laste,
Ther was no lond which mihte achieve
With werre Rome for to grieve;
2045 Wheroft was gret envie tho.
And fell that ilke time so,
That Rome hadde werres stronge
Agein Cartage, and stoden longe
The tuo cites upon debat.
2050 Cartage sih the stronge astat
Of Rome in thilke mirour stonde,
And thoghte al prively to fonde
To overthowre it be som wyle.
And Hanybal was thilke while
2055 The prince and ledere of Cartage,
Which hadde set al his corage
Upon knihtod in such a wise,
That he be worthi and be wise
And be non othre was conseiled,
2060 Wheroft the world is yit merveiled
Of the maistries that he wroghte
- (see note)*
who was then unblemished
by means of his learning
eye (i.e., public view)
Their
while this; endures
succeed
aggrieve
then
same
fierce wars
at war
saw; powerful condition
secretly to discover a means
by some stratagem
inclination
by worthy and wise men
conquests

- Upon the marches whiche he soghte. *territories*
- And fell in thilke time also,
The king of Puile, which was tho
2065 Thoghte agein Rome to rebelle,
And thus was take the querele
Hou to destruie this mirour. *Apulia*
- Of Rome tho was emperor
Crassus, which was so coveitous,
2070 That he was evere desirous
Of gold to gete the pilage;
Wheroft that Puile and ek Cartage
With philosophres wise and grete
Begunne of this matiere trete,
2075 And ate laste in this degré
Ther weren philosophres thre,
To do this thing whiche undertoke,
And therupon thei with hem toke
A gret tresor of gold in cophres,
2080 To Rome and thus these philisophres
Togedre in compainie wente,
Bot no man wiste what thei mente.
Whan thei to Rome come were,
So prively thei duelte there,
2085 As thei that thoghten to deceive.
Was non that mihte of hem perceive,
Til thei in sondri stedes have
Here gold under the ground begrave
In tuo tresors, that to beholde
2090 Thei scholden seme as thei were olde.
And so forth thanne upon a day
Al openly in good arai
To th' emperor thei hem presente,
And tolden it was here entente
2095 To duellen under his servise.
And he hem axeth in what wise;
And thei him tolde in such a plit,
That eche of hem hadde a spirit,
The which slepende a nyht appiereth
2100 And hem be sondri dremes lereth
After the world that hath betid.
Under the ground if oght be hid
Of old tresor at eny throwe,
Thei schull it in here sweenes knowe;
2105 And upon this condicioun,
Thei sein, what gold under the toun
Of Rome is hid, thei wole it finde,
Ther scholde nocht be left behinde, *time*
whatever
- initiated the debate [about]*
- knew; intended*
- places*
Their; buried
two repositories
ancient
- while they slept*
instruct
- dreams*

	Be so that he the halvendel	<i>Provided that; half part</i>
2110	Hem grante, and he assenteth wel; And thus cam Sleighe for to duelle With Covoitise, as I thee telle. This emperour bad redily That thei be logged faste by	<i>Deceit</i>
2115	Where he his oghne body lay; And whan it was amorwe day, That on of hem seith that he mette Wher he a goldhord scholde fette. Wheroft this emperour was glad,	<i>he himself lay</i>
2120	And therupon anon he bad His mynours for to go and myne, And he himself of that covine Goth forth withal, and at his hond The tresor redi there he fond,	<i>dreamed</i>
2125	Where as thei seide it scholde be; And who was thanne glad bot he? Upon that other dai secounde Thei have another goldhord founde, Which the seconde maister tok	<i>group of conspirators</i>
2130	Upon his swevene and undertok. And thus the sothe experiance To th' emperour gaf such credence, That al his trist and al his feith So sikerliche on hem he leith,	<i>treasure</i>
2135	Of that he fond him so relieved, That thei ben parfitli believed, As thogh thei were goddes thre. Nou herkne the soutileté.	<i>trust</i>
	The thridde maister scholde mete,	<i>truly</i>
2140	Which, as thei seiden, was unmete Above hem alle, and couthe most; And he withoute noise or bost Al priveli, so as he wolde, Upon the morwe his swevene tolde	<i>satisfied</i>
2145	To th' emperour riht in his ere, And seide him that he wiste where A tresor was so plentivous Of gold and ek so precious Of jeuеals and of riche stones,	<i>trick (stratagem)</i>
2150	That unto alle hise hors at ones It were a charge sufficant. This lord upon this covenant Was glad, and axeth where it was. The maister seide, under the glas,	<i>dream</i>
2155	And tolde him eke, as for the myn,	<i>outcry</i>
		<i>secretly</i>
		<i>dream</i>
		<i>ear</i>
		<i>knew</i>
		<i>beyond comparison</i>
		<i>knew of</i>
		<i>outray</i>
		<i>dream</i>
		<i>ear</i>
		<i>miror</i>
		<i>also, with regard to the mining</i>

- He wolde ordeigne such engin
 That thei the werk schull undersette
 With tymber, that withoute lette
 Men mai the tresor sauflie delve,
 2160 So that the mirour be himselfe
 Withoute empeirement schal stonde.
 And this the maister upon honde
 Hath undertake in alle weie.
 This lord, which hadde his wit aweie
- 2165 And was with Covoitise blent,
 Anon therto gaf his assent;
 And thus thei myne forth withal,
 The timber set up overal,
 Wheroft the piler stod upriht;
 2170 Til it befell upon a nyht
 These clerkes, whan thei were war
 Hou that the timber only bar
 The piler wher the mirour stod
 (Here sleihte no man understod),
 2175 Thei go be nyhte unto the myne
 With pich, with soulphe, and with rosine,
 And whan the cité was aslepe,
 A wylde fyr into the depe
 Thei caste among the timberwerk,
 2180 And so forth, whil the nyht was derk,
 Desguised in a povere arai
 Thei passeden the toun er dai.
 And whan thei come upon an hell,
 Thei sihen how the mirour fell,
 2185 Wheroft thei maden joie ynowh,
 And ech of hem with other lowh,
 And seiden, 'Lo, what coveitise
 Mai do with hem that be noght wise!
 And that was proved afterward,
 2190 For every lond, to Romeward
 Which hadde be soubgit tofore,
 Whan this mirour was so forlore
 And thei the wonder herde seie,
 Anon begunne desobeie
 2195 With werres upon every side;
 And thus hath Rome lost his pride
 And was defouled overal.
 For this I finde of Hanybal,
 That he of Romeins in a dai,
 2200 Whan he hem fond out of arai,
 So gret a multitude slowh,
 That of gold ringes, whiche he drowh
- devices
 support
so that without hindrance
safely excavate
by itself
- blinded
- Their deception*
- pitch
- Disguised as beggars
 slipped out of; before
 hill
 saw
- laughed
- destroyed
[when] they heard tell of the wonder
Soon began to rebel
 wars
- found them in disorder
 slew
 pulled

- Of gentil handes that ben dede,
Buisshelles fulle thre, I rede,
2205 He felde, and made a bregge also,
That he mihte over Tibre go
Upon the corps that dede were
Of the Romeins, whiche he slowh there.
Bot now to speke of the juise,
2210 The which after the covoitise
Was take upon this emperour,
For he destruide the mirour;
It is a wonder for to hiere.
The Romeins maden a chaiere
2215 And sette here emperour therinne,
And seiden, for he wolde winne
Of gold the superfluité,
Of gold he scholde such plenté
Receive til he seide 'Ho!'
2220 And with gold, which thei hadden tho
Buillende hot withinne a panne,
Into his mouth thei poure thanne.
And thus the thurst of gold was queynt,
2224 With gold which hadde ben atteignt.
Confessor Wherof, mi sone, thou miht hiere,
Whan Covoitise hath lost the stiere
Of resonable governance,
Ther falleth ofte gret vengeance.
For ther mai be no worse thing
2230 Than Covotise aboute a king.
If it in his persone be,
It doth the more adversité;
And if it in his conseil stonde,
It bringth alday meschief to honde
2235 Of commun harm; and if it growe
Withinne his court, it wol be knowe,
For thanne schal the king be piled.
The man which hath hise londes tiled,
Awaitheth noght more redily
2240 The hervest, than thei gredily
Ne maken thanne warde and wacche,
Wher thei the profit mihten cacche:
And yit fulofte it falleth so,
As men mai sen among hem tho,
2245 That he which most coveiteth faste
Hath lest avantage ate laste.
For whan fortune is theragein,
Thogh he coveite, it is in vein;
The happes be noght alle liche:
- From; who were dead
Bushels
filled; bridge
corpses; dead
sentence (punishment)
Because
Whoa
Boiling
pour
quenched
corrupted
helm
causes more harm
perpetually
plundered
then
circumstances of fortune; the same*

- 2250 On is mad povere, another riche,
The court to some doth profit,
And some ben evere in o plit;
And yit thei bothe aliche sore
Coveite, bot fortune is more
Unto that o part favorable.
And thogh it be noght resonable,
This thing a man mai sen alday,
Wheroft I thee telle may
A fair ensample in remembrance,
2260 Hou every man mot take his chance
Or of richesse or of poverte.
Hou so it stonde of the decerte,
Hier is noght everything aquit,
For ofte a man mai se this yit,
2265 That who best doth, lest thonk schal have;
It helpeth noght the world to crave,
Which out of reule and of mesure
Hath evere stonde in aventure
Als wel in court as elles where:
2270 And hou in olde daies there
It stod, so as the thinges felle,
I thenke a tale for to telle.
- One; made poor*
must accept his fortunes
Either of
what is deserved
remitted
least thanks

[TALE OF THE TWO COFFERS]

- In a cronique this I rede.
Aboute a king, as moste nede,
2275 Ther was of knyghtes and squiers
Gret route, and ek of officers:
Some of long time him hadden served,
And thoghten that thei have deserved
2280 Avancement, and gon withoute;
And some also ben of the route
That comen bot a while agon,
And thei avanced were anon.
These olde men upon this thing,
So as thei dorste, agein the king
2285 Among hemself compleignen ofte:
Bot ther is nothing seid so softe,
That it ne comth out ate laste;
The king it wiste, and als so faste,
As he which was of hih prudence,
2290 He schop therfore an evidence
Of hem that pleignen in that cas,
To knowe in whos defalte it was.
And al withinne his oghne entente,
- as is appropriate*
company
(see note)
group
soon
knew
made; instructive example

- That no man wiste what it mente,
 2295 Anon he let tuo cofres make
 Of o semblance and of o make,
 So lich that no lif thilke throwe
 That on mai fro that other knowe:
 Thei were into his chambre broght,
 2300 Bot no man wot why thei be wroght,
 And natholes the king hath bede
 That thei be set in privé stede.
 As he that was of wisdom slih,
 Whan he therto his time slih,
 2305 Al prively, that non it wiste,
 Hise oghne hondes that o kiste
 Of fin gold and of fin perrie,
 The which out of his tresorie
 Was take, anon he felde full;
 2310 That other cofre of straw and mull
 With stones meind he felde also.
 Thus be thei fulle bothe tuo,
 So that erliche upon a day
 He bad withinne, ther he lay,
 2315 Ther scholde be tofore his bed
 A bord upset and faire spred;
 And thanne he let the cofres fette,
 Upon the bord and dede hem sette.
 He knew the names wel of tho,
 2320 The whiche agein him grucche so,
 Bothe of his chambre and of his halle,
 Anon and sende for hem alle,
 And seide to hem in this wise:
 ‘Ther schal no man his happ despise;
 2325 I wot wel ye have longe served,
 And God wot what ye have deserved.
 Bot if it is along on me
 Of that ye unavanced be,
 Or elles it belong on you,
 2330 The sothe schal be proved nou,
 To stoppe with youre evele word.
 Lo hier tuo cofres on the bord:
 Ches which you list of bothe tuo;
 And witeth wel that on of tho
 2335 Is with tresor so full begon,
 That if ye happe therupon,
 Ye schull be riche men forevere.
 Now ches and tak which you is levere:
 Bot be wel war, er that ye take;
 2340 For of that on I undertake
- had two
one likeness
alike; person at that time
one
- commanded
place
sly
saw
knew
- By his own hands [he filled]; chest
precious stones
- filled full
rubbish
mingled; filled
- early
- set up a table
had the coffers brought
- against; grumbled
- chance
- knows
- it is my fault (owing to me)
- it (the fault) is owing to you
- table
- Choose; desire
- filled
- choose; preferable to you
cautious before
one

- Ther is no maner good therinne,
Wheroft ye mihten profit winne.
Now goft togedre of on assent
And taketh youre avisement, one
2345 For bot I you this dai avance,
It stant upon youre oghne chance
Al only in defalte of grace.
So schal be schewed in this place
Upon you alle wel afyn, shown
2350 That no defalte schal be myn.'
Thei knelen alle and with o vois
The king thei thonken of this chois:
And after that thei up arise,
And gon aside and hem avise,
2355 And ate laste thei acorde; finally they agree
Wheroft her tale to recorde,
To what issue thei be falle,
A kniht schal speke for hem alle.
He kneleth doun unto the king,
2360 And seith that thei upon this thing,
Or for to winne or for to lese,
Ben alle avised for to chese.
Tho tok this kniht a yerde on honde,
And goft there as the cofres stonde, wand
where
2365 And with assent of everichon
He leith his yerde upon that on,
And seith the king hou thilke same
Thei chese in reguerdoun be name, recompense (reward)
And preith him that thei mote it have.
2370 The king, which wolde his honour save,
Whan he hath herd the commun vois,
Hath granted hem here oghne chois
And tok hem therupon the keie. gave them; key
seen
Bot for he wolde it were seie
2375 What good thei have, as thei suppose,
He bad anon the cofre unclose, open
Which was fulfild with straw and stones.
Thus be thei served al at ones.
This king thanne in the same stede place
2380 Anon that other cofre undede, opened
Where as thei sihen gret richesse,
Wel more than thei couthen gesse. saw
'Lo,' seith the king, 'nou mai ye se
That ther is no defalte in me; could estimate (evaluate)
2385 Forthi myself I wole aquyte, lack
And bereth ye youre oghne wyte
Of that fortune hath you refused.' blame
With regard to what

Thus was this wise king excused,
 And thei lefte of here evele speche
 2390 And mercy of here king beseche.

left off their

[TALE OF THE BEGGARS AND THE TWO PASTRIES]

Somdiel to this matiere lik
 I finde a tale, hou Frederik,
 Of Rome that time emperour,
 2394 Herde, as he wente, a gret clamour
 Of tuo beggers upon the weie.
 That on of hem began to seie,
 'Ha lord, wel mai the man be riche
 Whom that a king list for to riche.'
 That other saide nothing so,
 2400 Bot, 'He is riche and wel bego,
 To whom that God wole sende wele.'
 And thus thei maden wordes fele,
 Wheroft his lord hath hiede nome,
 And dede hem bothe for to come
 2405 To the paleis, wher he schal ete,
 And bad ordeine for here mete
 Tuo pastes, whiche he let do make.
 A capoun in that on was bake,
 And in that other for to winne
 2410 Of florins al that mai withinne
 He let do pute a gret richesse;
 And evene aliche, as man mai gesse,
 Outward thei were bothe tuo.
 This begger was comanded tho,
 2415 He that which hield him to the king,
 That he ferst chese upon this thing:
 He sih hem, bot he felte hem noght,
 So that upon his oghne thoght
 He ches the capoun and forsok
 2420 That other, which his fela tok.
 Bot whanne he wiste hou that it ferde,
 He seide alowd, that men it herde,
 'Nou have I certeinly conceived
 That he mai lihtly be deceived,
 2425 That tristeth unto mannes helpe;
 Bot wel is him whom God wol helpe,
 For he stant on the siker side,
 Which elles scholde go beside:
 I se mi fela wel recovere,
 2430 And I mot duelle stille povere.'

Somewhat; akin

(see note)

say

chooses to make rich

prosperity

many

taken notice

food

Two pastries; ordered to be made

capon

identical

more certain

go astray/do without

- Thus spak this begger his entente,
 And povere he cam and povere he wente;
 Of that he hath richesse soght,
 His infortune it wolde noght.
- 2435 So mai it schewe in sondri wise,
 Betwen fortune and covoitise
 The chance is cast upon a dee;
 Bot yit fulofte a man mai se
 Ynowe of suche natheles,
- 2440 Whiche evere pute hemself in press
 To gete hem good, and yit thei faile.

*die (dice)***[COVETOUSNESS OF LOVERS]**

- And for to speke of this entaile
 Touchende of love in thi matiere,
 Mi goode sone, as thou miht hiere,
- 2445 That riht as it with tho men stod
 Of infortune of worldes good,
 As thou hast herd me telle above,
 Riht so fulofte it stant be love.
 Thogh thou coveite it everemore,
- 2450 Thou schalt noght have o diel the more,
 Bot only that which thee is schape,
 The remenant is bot a jape.
 And natheles ynowe of tho
 Ther ben, that nou coveiten so,
- 2455 That where as thei a womman se,
 Ye ten or tuelve thogh ther be,
 The love is nou so unavised,
 That wher the beauté stant assised,
 The mannes herte anon is there,
- 2460 And rouneth tales in hire ere,
 And seith hou that he loveth streite,
 And thus he set him to coveite,
 An hundred thogh he sihe aday.
 So wolde he more thanne he mai;
- 2465 Bot for the grete covoitise
 Of sotie and of fol emprise
 In ech of hem he fint somewhat
 That pleseth him, or this or that;
 Som on, for sche is whit of skin,
- 2470 Som on, for sche is noble of kin,
 Som on, for sche hath rodi chieke,
 Som on, for that sche semeth mieke,
 Som on, for sche hath yhen greie,
 Som on, for sche can lawhe and pleie,

*construction**those**a single part more
is appointed for you
jest**unwise (untutored)
judged**whispers; ear
devotedly**saw every day**folly; boldness
finds something
either; or
one**rosy cheeks
meek
gleaming eyes
laugh; play*

- 2475 Som on, for sche is long and smal,
 Som on, for sche is lyte and tall,
 Som on, for sche is pale and bleche,
 Som on, for sche is softe of speche,
 Som on, for that sche is camused,
 2480 Som on, for sche hath noght ben used,
 Som on, for sche can daunce and singe;
 So that som thing to his likinge
 He fint, and thogh no more he fiele,
 Bot that sche hath a litel hiele,
 2485 It is ynow that he therfore
 Hire love, and thus an hundred score,
 Whil thei be newe, he wolde he hadde;
 Whom he forsakth, sche schal be badde.
-  The blinde man no colour demeth,
 2490 But al is on, riht as him semeth;
 So hath his lust no juggement,
 Whom covoitise of love blent.
 Him thenkth that to his covoitise
 Hou al the world ne mai suffise,
 2495 For be his wille he wolde have alle,
 If that it mihte so befalla.
 Thus is he commun as the strete,
 I sette noght of his beyete.
- Confessor** Mi sone, hast thou such covoitise?"
- Amans** "Nai, fader, such love I despise,
 2501 And whil I live schal don evere,
 For in good feith yit hadde I leve, rather
 Than to coveite in such a weie,
 To ben forevere til I deie
- 2505 As povere as Job, and loveles,
 Outaken on, for haveles
 His thonkes is no man alyve.
 For that a man scholde al unthryve
 Ther oghte no wisman coveite,
 2510 The lawe was noght set so streite:
 Forthi misself withal to save,
 Such on ther is I wolde have,
 And non of al these othre mo."
- Confessor** "Mi sone, of that thou woldest so,
 2515 I am noght wroth, bot over this angry
 I wol thee tellen hou it is.
 For ther be men, whiche otherwise,
 Riht only for the covoitise
 Of that thei sen a womman riche,
 2520 Ther wol thei al here love affiche; fix
 Noght for the beauté of hire face,
- tall; petite
comely (elegant)
of fair complexion
- pug-nosed
is a virgin
- finds
small heel
- perceives (see note)
one; it seems to him
- promiscuous; street
gain
- Except for one; possessionless
Willingly
entirely fail
- In matters where

- Ne yit for vertu ne for grace,
 Which sche hath elles riht ynowh,
 Bot for the park and for the plowh,
 2525 And other thing which therto longeth.
 For in non other wise hem longeth
 To love, bot thei profit finde;
 And if the profit be behinde,
 Here love is evere lesse and lesse,
 2530 For after that sche hath richesse,
 Her love is of proporcion.
 If thou hast such condicion,
 Mi sone, tell riht as it is."
- Confessio Amantis** "Min holi fader, nay ywiss,
 2535 Condicion such have I non.
 For trewli, fader, I love oon
 So wel with al myn hertes thoght,
 That certes, thogh sche hadde noght,
 And were as povere as Medea,
 2540 Which was exiled for Creusa,
 I wolde hir noght the lasse love;
 Ne thogh sche were at hire above,
 As was the riche qwen Candace,
 Which to deserve love and grace
 2545 To Alisandre, that was king,
 Gaf many a worthi riche thing,
 Or elles as Pantasilee,
 Which was the quen of Feminee,
 And gret richesse with hir nam,
 2550 Whan sche for love of Hector cam
 To Troie in rescousse of the toun,
 I am of such condicion,
 That thogh mi ladi of hirselfe
 Were also riche as suche tuelve,
 2555 I couthe noght, thogh it wer so,
 No betre love hir than I do.
 For I love in so plein a wise,
 That for to speke of coveitise,
 As for poverte or for richesse
 2560 Mi love is nouther mor ne lesse.
 For in good feith I trowe this,
 So coveitous no man ther is,
 Forwhy and he mi ladi sihe,
 That he thurgh lokinge of his yhe
 2565 Ne scholde have such a strok withinne,
 That for no gold he mihte winne
 He scholde noght hire love asterte,
 Bot if he lefte there his herte;
- (i.e., pasture land and arable land)
 pertain
- the land of the Amazons
 took
 rescue
 Such that if he; saw
 escape

- Be so it were such a man,
 2570 That couthe skile of a womman.
 For ther be men so ruide some,
 Whan thei among the wommen come,
 Thei gon under proteccioun,
 That love and his affeccioun
 2575 Ne schal noght take hem be the slieve;
 For thei ben out of that believe,
 Hem lusteth of no ladi chiere,
 Bot evere thenken there and hiere
 Wher that here gold is in the cofre,
 2580 And wol non other love profre:
 Bot who so wot what love amounteth
 And be resoun trewliche acompteth,
 Than mai he knowe and taken hiede
 That al the lust of wommanhiede,
 2585 Which mai ben in a ladi face,
 Mi ladi hath, and ek of grace
 If men schull given hire a pris,
 Thei mai wel seie hou sche is wys
 And sobre and simple of contenance,
 2590 And al that to good governance
 Belongeth of a worthi wiht
 Sche hath pleinli: for thilke nyht
 That sche was bore, as for the nones
 Nature sette in hire at ones
 2595 Beauté with bounté so besein,
 That I mai wel afferme and sein,
 I sawh yit nevere creature
 Of comelihied and of feture
 In eny kinges regioun
 2600 Be lich hire in comparisoun:
 And therto, as I have you told,
 Yit hath sche more a thousandfold
 Of bounté, and schortli to telle,
 Sche is the pure hed and welle
 2605 And mirour and ensample of goode.
 Who so hir vertus understode,
 Me thenkth it oughte ynow suffise
 Withouten other covoitise
 To love such on and to serve,
 2610 Which with hire chiere can deserve
 To be beloved betre ywiss
 Than sche per cas that richest is
 And hath of gold a milion.
 Such hath be myn opinion
 2615 And evere schal. Bot natheles,
- knew the craft*
- is worth*
- just appraisal*
- goodness*
- gracefulness*
- countenance*
- indeed*
- by chance who*

- | | | | |
|------|---|------|----------------|
| | I seie noght sche is haveles,
That sche nys riche and wel at ese,
And hath ynow wherwith to plese
Of worldes good whom that hire liste; | 2620 | is not |
| | Bot o thing wolde I wel ye wiste,
That nevere for no worldes good
Min herte untoward hire stod,
Bot only riht for pure love; | | knew |
| | That wot the hihe God above. | | knows |
| 2625 | Nou, fader, what seie ye therto?" | | |
| | Confessor "Mi sone, I seie it is wel do.
For tak of this riht good believe,
What man that wole himself relieve
To love in eny other wise, | | |
| 2630 | He schal wel finde his coveitise
Schal sore grieve him ate laste,
For such a love mai noght laste.
Bot nou, men sein, in oure daies | | |
| | Men maken bot a fewe assaies,
Bot if the cause be richesse; | | only; attempts |
| 2635 | Forthi the love is wel the lesse.
And who that wolde ensamples telle,
Be olde daies as thei felle,
Than mihte a man wel understande | | Unless |
| 2640 | Such love mai noght longe stonde.
Now herkne, sone, and thou schalt hiere
A gret ensample of this matiere. | | |

[TALE OF THE KING AND HIS STEWARD'S WIFE]

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| | To trete upon the cas of love,
So as we tolden hiere above,
I finde write a wonder thing.
Of Puile whilom was a king,
A man of hih complexioun
And yong, bot his affeccioun
After the nature of his age | |
| 2645 | | <i>Apulia
noble spirit</i> |
| | Was yit noght falle in his corage
The lust of wommen for to knowe.
So it betidde upon a throwe
This lord fell into gret seknesse:
Phisique hath don the besinesse | <i>(see note)
enjoyment
happened; time
sickness</i> |
| 2651 | | |
| 2655 | Of sondri cures manyon
To make him hol; and therupon
A worthi maister which ther was
Gaf him conseil upon this cas,
That if he wolde have parfit hele, | <i>many diverse treatments
learned scholar
health</i> |

- 2660 He scholde with a womman dele,
A freissh, a yong, a lusti wiht,
To don him compaignie a nyht;
For thanne he seide him redily,
That he schal be al hol therby,
And otherwise he kneu no cure.
- 2665 This king, which stod in aventur
Of lif and deth, for medicine
Assented was, and of covine
His steward, whom he tristeth wel,
2670 He tok, and tolde him everydel,
Hou that this maister hadde seid.
And therupon he hath him preid
And charged upon his ligance,
That he do make porveance
2675 Of such on as be covenable
For his plesance and delitable;
And bad him, hou that evere it stod,
That he schal spare for no good,
For his will is riht wel to paie.
- 2680 The steward seide he wolde assaie.
Bot nou hierafter thou schalt wite,
As I finde in the bokes write,
What coveitise in love doth.
This steward, for to telle soth,
2685 Amonges al the men alyve
A lusti ladi hath to wyve,
Which natheles for gold he tok
And noght for love, as seith the bok.
A riche merchant of the lond
- 2690 Hir fader was, and hire fond
So worthily, and such richesse
Of worldes good and such largesse
With hire he gaf in mariage,
That only for thilke avantage
2695 Of good this steward hath hire take,
For lucre and noght for loves sake,
And that was afterward wel seene.
Nou herkne what it wolde meene.
- 2700 This steward in his oghne herte
Sih that his lord mai noght asterte
His maladie, bot he have
A lusti womman him to save,
And thoghte he wolde give ynowh
Of his tresor; wheroft he drowh
2705 Gret coveitise into his mynde,
And sette his honour fer behynde.
- have intercourse
creature
at
well
in doubt
into [his] confidence
trusted
everything
allegiance
cause arrangements to be made
one; suitable
pleasure; [be] fond of lustful pleasure
cost
focused on pleasure [or, to pay generously]
try
know
to speak the truth
Whom he married for wealth
money
own
Saw; escape
unless
disregarded his honor

- Thus he, whom gold hath overset,
Was trapped in his oghne net;
The gold hath mad hise wittes lame,
2710 So that sechende his oghne schame
He rouneth in the kinges ere,
And seide him that he wiste where
A gentile and a lusti on
Tho was, and thider wolde he gon.
2715 Bot he mot give giftes grete;
For bot it be thurgh gret beyete
Of gold, he seith, he schal noght spede.
The king him bad upon the nede
That take an hundred pound he scholde,
2720 And give it where that he wolde,
Be so it were in worthi place.
And thus to stonde in loves grace
This king his gold hath abandouned.
And whan this tale was full rouned,
2725 The steward tok the gold and wente,
Withinne his herte and many a wente
Of coveitise thanne he caste,
Wheroft a pourpos ate laste
Agein love and agein his riht
2730 He tok, and seide hou thilke nyght
His wif schal ligge be the king.
And goth thenkende upon this thing
Toward his in, til he cam hom
Into the chambre, and thanne he nom
2735 His wif, and told hire al the cas.
And sche, which red for schame was,
With bothe hire handes hath him preid
Knelende and in this wise seid,
That sche to reson and to skile
2740 In what thing that he bidde wile
Is redy for to don his heste,
Bot this thing were noght honeste,
That he for gold hire scholde selle.
And he tho with hise wordes felle
2745 Forth with his gastly contienance
Seith that sche schal don obeissance
And folwe his will in every place.
And thus thurgh strengthe of his manace
Hir innocence is overlad,
2750 Wheroft sche was so sore adrad
That sche his will mot nede obeie.
And therupon was schape a weie,
That he his oghne wif be nyhte
- overwhelmed*
whispers; ear knew
There must
possessions succeed
Provided that
arrangement was secretly agreed upon
contrivance
Against
lie by
dwelling took
within law and reason
commanded
behest
honorable
then; cruel (fierce)
frightening expression
be obedient
overwhelmed

- Hath out of alle mennes sihte
 2755 So prively that non it wiste
 Broght to the king, which as him liste
 Mai do with hire what he wolde. *who, as it pleased him*
- For whan sche was ther as sche scholde,
 With him abedde under the cloth, *bedcovers*
 2760 The steward tok his leve and goth
 Into a chambre faste by. *close by*
 Bot hou he slep, that wot noght I,
 For he sih cause of jelousie.
- Bot he, which hath the compainie
 2765 Of such a lusti on as sche,
 Him thoghte that of his degré
 Ther was no man so wel at ese.
 Sche doth al that sche mai to plesē,
 So that his herte al hol sche hadde;
- 2770 And thus this king his joie ladde,
 Til it was nyh upon the day.
 The steward thanne wher sche lay
 Cam to the bedd, and in his wise
 Hath bede that sche scholde arise. *asked*
- 2775 The king seith, 'Nay, sche schal noght go.'
 His steward seide agein, 'Noght so;
 For sche mot gon er it be knowe,
 And so I swor at thilke throwe,
 Whan I hire fette to you hiere.' *on that occasion*
 brought
- 2780 The king his tale wol noght hiere,
 And seith hou that he hath hire boght,
 Forthi sche schal departe noght,
 Til he the brighte dai beholde.
 And cawhte hire in hisse armes folde, *the embrace of his arms*
- 2785 As he which liste for to pleie,
 And bad his steward gon his weie,
 And so he dede agein his wille.
 And thus his wif abedde stille
 Lay with the king the longe nyht,
- 2790 Til that it was hih sonne lyht.
 Bot who sche was he knew nothing.
 Tho cam the steward to the king
 And preide him that without schame
 In savinge of hire goode name
- 2795 He myhte leden hom agein
 This lady, and hath told him plein
 Hou that it was his oghne wif.
 The king his ere unto this strif
 Hath leid, and whan that he it herde, *ear*
- 2800 Welnyh out of his wit he ferde,

- And seide, 'Ha, caitif most of alle,
 Wher was it evere er this befallie,
 That eny cokard in this wise
 Betok his wif for coveitise?
 2805 Thou hast bothe hire and me beguiled
 And ek thin oghne astat reviled,
 Wheroft buxom unto thee
 Hierafter schal sche nevere be.
 For this avou to God I make,
 2810 After this day if I thee take,
 Thou schalt ben honged and todrawe.
 Nou loke anon thou be withdrawe,
 So that I se thee neveremore.'
 This steward thanne dradde him sore,
 2815 With al the haste that he mai
 And fledde awei that same dai,
 And was exiled out of londe.
 Lo, there a nyce housebonde,
 Which thus hath lost his wif forevere!
 2820 Bot natheles sche hadde a leveire:
 The king hire weddeth and honoureth,
 Wheroft hire name sche socoureth,
 Which erst was lost thurgh coveitise
 Of him, that ladde hire other wise,
 2825 And hath himself also forlore.
Confessor Mi sone, be thou war therfore,
 Wher thou schalt love in eny place,
 That thou no covoitise embrace,
 The which is noght of loves kinde.
 2830 Bot for al that a man mai finde
 Nou in this time of thilke rage
 Ful gret desese in mariage,
 Whan venom melleth with the sucre
 And mariage is mad for lucre,
 2835 Or for the lust or for the hele.
 What man that schal with outhere dele,
 He mai noght faile to repente."
- Amans** "Mi fader, such is myn entente:
 Bot natheles good is to have,
 2840 For good mai ofte time save
 The love which scholde elles spille.
 Bot God, which wot myn hertes wille,
 I dar wel take to witnesse;
 Yit was I nevere for richesse
 2845 Beset with mariage non.
 For al myn herte is upon on
 So frely, that in the persone
- most miserable wretch of all*
simpleton
Surrendered
obedient
vow
feared him greatly
foolish
preferable [husband]
remedied
earlier
disgraced
nature
mixes; sweet
desire; prosperity
either [motive] concern himself
it is good to have [possessions]
wealth
otherwise fail
who knows

- 2850 Stant al my worldes joie alone.
I axe nouther park ne plowh:
If I hire hadde, it were ynowh,
Hir love scholde me suffise
Withouten other coveitise.
Lo now, mi fader, as of this,
Touchende of me riht as it is,
Mi schrifte I am beknowe plein;
And if ye wole oght elles sein,
Of covoitise if ther be more
In love, agropeth out the sore.”
- lands for game or crops*
wishes
My confession I make known fully
investigate the problem

[PERJURY]

- iv. *Fallere cum nequeat propria vir fraude, subornat
Testes, sit quod eis vera retorta fides.
Sicut agros cupidus dum querit amans mulieres,
Vult testes falsos falsus habere suos.
Non sine vindicta periurus abibit in eius
Visu, qui cordis intima cuncta videt.
Fallere periuro non est laudanda puellam
Gloria, set false condicionis opus.*¹

- [Confessor] “Mi sone, thou schalt understande
2860 Hou Covetise hath yit on honde
In special tuo conseilours,
That ben also hise procurours.
The ferst of hem is Falswitnesse,
Which evere is redi to witnesse
2865 What thing his maister wol him hote.
Perjurie is the secounde hote,
Which spareth noght to swere an oth,
Thogh it be fals and God be wroth.
That on schal Falswitnesse bere,
2870 That other schal the thing forswere,
Whan he is charged on the bok.
So what with hepe and what with crok
Thei make here maister ofte winne
And wol noght knowe what is sinne
2875 For coveitise, and thus, men sain,
Thei maken many a fals bargain.
- agents*
(see note)
command
called
by hook or by crook

¹ *When he is not able to deceive a man by fraud, he suborns and corrupts witnesses, so that true faith is twisted back in them. In the same way, a cupidinous lover seeks women as if he were seeking lands: he desires his own false witnesses. But not without punishment will the perjurer live in the sight of whoever sees all the secrets of his heart. To deceive a girl by perjury is not a praiseworthy glory, but an action of false contract.*

- Ther mai no trewe querele arise
 In thilke queste and thilke assise,
 Where as thei tuo the poeple enforme;
 For thei kepe evere o maner forme,
 That upon gold here conscience
 Thei founde, and take here evidence;
 And thus with falswitnesse and othes
 Thei winne him mete and drinke and clothes. food
- 2880 2885 Riht so ther be, who that hem knewe,
 Of thes lovers ful many untrewe:
 Nou mai a womman finde ynowe,
 That ech of hem, whan he schal wowe,
 Anon he wole his hand doun lein
 Upon a bok, and swere and sein
 That he wole feith and trouthe bere.
 And thus he profreth him to swere
 To serven evere til he die.
 And al is verai tricherie. absolute treachery
- 2890 2895 For whan the sothe himselfen trieth,
 The more he swerth, the more he lieth;
 Whan he his feith makth althermest,
 Than mai a womman truste him lest;
 For til he mai his will achieve,
 He is no lengere for to lieve.
 Thus is the trouthe of love exiled,
 And many a good womman beguiled. truth; tests
- Confessor** And ek to speke of Falswitnesse,
 Ther be nou many such, I gesse,
 2900 2905 That lich unto the provisours
 Thei make here privé procurours,
 To telle hou ther is such a man,
 Which is worthi to love and can
 Al that a good man scholde kunne; come to know
- 2910 2915 So that with lesinge is begunne
 The cause in which thei wole procede,
 And also siker as the Crede
 Thei make of that thei knownen fals. certain; Creed
- And thus fulofte abouthe the hals
 2920 2925 Love is of false men embraced;
 Bot love which is so pourchaced
 Comth afterward to litel pris.
 Forthi, mi sone, if thou be wis,
 Nou thou hast herd this evidence,
 Thou miht thin oghne conscience
 Oppose, if thou hast ben such on.” worth
- Amans** “Nai, God wot, fader, I am non,
 Ne nevere was; for as men seith, Interrogate; a one

- Whan that a man schal make his feith,
 2925 His herte and tunge moste acorde;
 For if so be that thei discorde,
 Thanne is he fals and elles noght:
 And I dar seie, as of my thoght,
 In love it is noght discordable
 2930 Unto mi word, bot accordable. *harmonious*
- And in this wise, fader, I
 Mai riht wel swere and salvely,
 That I mi ladi love wel, *confidently*
 For that acordeth everydel.
- 2935 It nedeth noght to mi sothsawe *truthfulness*
 That I witnesse scholde drawe,
 Into this dai for nevere yit
 Ne mihte it sinke into mi wit,
 That I my conseil scholde seie
- 2940 To eny wiht, or me bewreie *any person, or expose myself*
 To sechen help in such manere,
 Bot only of mi ladi diere.
 And thogh a thousand men it wiste,
 That I hire love, and thanne hem liste *knew*
 2945 With me to swere and to witnesse,
 Yit were that no falswitnesse. *if it were to please them*
- For I dar on this trouthe duelle,
 I love hire mor than I can telle.
 Thus am I, fader, gulteles,
 2950 As ye have herd, and natholes
 In youre dom I put it al.” *judgment*
- Confessor** “Mi sone, wite in special,
 It schal noght comunliche faile,
 Althogh it for a time availe
 2955 That Falswitnesse his cause spede, *advance*
 Upon the point of his falshiede
 It schal wel afterward be kid; *known*
 Wherof, so as it is betid,
 Ensample of suche thinges blinde *deceitful things*
 2960 In a cronique write I finde.

[TALE OF ACHILLES AND DEIDAMIA]

- The goddesse of the see, Thetis,
 Sche hadde a sone, and his name is
 Achilles, whom to kepe and warde,
 2964 Whil he was yong, as into warde
 Sche thoghte him safly to betake,
 As sche which dradde for his sake
 Of that was seid in prophecie, *sea*
care for and protect
safe keeping
safely to deliver (see note)
who feared
what

- That he at Troie scholde die,
Whan that the cité was belein. *besieged*
- 2970 Forthi, so as the bokes sein,
Sche caste hire wit in sondri wise,
Hou sche him mihte so desguise
That no man scholde his bodi knowe.
And so befell that ilke throwe, *at that time*
- 2975 Whil that sche thoghte upon this dede,
Ther was a king, which Lichomede
Was hote, and he was wel begon
With faire dowhtres manyon,
And duelte fer out in an yle. *called; well supplied*
many a one
dwell far
amazing trick
- 2980 Nou schalt thou hiere a wonder wyle:
This queene, which the moder was
Of Achilles, upon this cas
Hire sone, as he a maiden were,
Let clothen in the same gere *as if he were*
Caused him to be clothed; clothing
- 2985 Which longeth unto wommanhiede.
And he was yong and tok non hiede,
Bot soffreth al that sche him dede.
Wheroft sche hath hire wommen bede
And charged be here othes alle, *by all their oaths*
- 2990 Hou so it afterward befalle,
That thei discovere noght this thing,
Bot feigne and make a knowleching,
Upon the conseil which was nome,
In every place wher thei come *taken*
- 2995 To telle and to witnesse this,
Hou he here ladi dowhter is.
And riht in such a maner wise
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,
So that Achilles underfongeth, *receives*
- 3000 As to a yong ladi belongeth,
Honour, servise, and reverence.
For Thetis with gret diligence
Him hath so tawht and so afaited
That, hou so that it were awaited, *trained*
however it might be observed
- 3005 With sobre and goodli contenance
He scholde his wommanhiede avance,
That non the sothe knowe myhte,
Bot that in every mannes syhte
He scholde seme a pure maide. *advance*
truth
innocent maiden
- 3010 And in such wise as sche him saide,
Achilles, which that ilke while
Was yong, upon himself to smyle
Began, whan he was so besein. *same time*
equipped

- And thus, after the bokes sein,
 3015 With frette of perle upon his hed,
 Al freissh betwen the whyt and red,
 As he which tho was tendre of age,
 Stod the colour in his visage,
 Then
 That for to loke upon his cheke
 3020 And sen his childly manere eke,
 He was a womman to beholde.
 And thanne his moder to him tolde,
 That sche him hadde so begon
 Because that sche thoghte gon
 3025 To Lichomede at thilke tyde,
 Wher that sche seide he scholde abyde
 Among hise dowhtres for to duelle.
 Achilles herde his moder telle,
 And wiste noght the cause why;
 3030 And natheles ful buxomly
 He was redy to that sche bad,
 Wheroft his moder was riht glad,
 To Lichomede and forth thei wente.
 And whan the king knew hire entente,
 3035 And sih this yonge dowhter there,
 And that it cam unto his ere
 Of such record, of such witnesse,
 He hadde riht a gret gladnesse
 Truly
 Of that he bothe syh and herde,
 3040 As he that wot noght hou it ferde
 Upon the conseil of the nede.
 Bot for al that King Lichomede
 Hath toward him this dowhter take,
 And for Thetis his moder sake
 3045 He put hire into compainie
 To duelle with Deidamie,
 His oghne dowhter, the eldeste,
 The faireste, and the comelieste
 Of alle hise doghtres whiche he hadde.
 Ear
 3050 Lo, thus Thetis the cause ladde,
 And lefte there Achilles feigned,
 As he which hath himself restreigned
 In al that evere he mai and can
 Out of the manere of a man,
 3055 And tok his wommannysshe chiere,
 Wheroft unto his beddefere
 Deidamie he hath be nyhte.
 Wher kinde wole himselfe rihte,
 After the philosophres sein,
 3060 Ther mai no wiht be theragein;
- ornamental diadem*
- childlike manner also*
- time*
- knew not the reason*
- obediently*
- for what she requested*
- what; saw and heard*
- In regard to the secret*
- own*
- disguised*
- bedfellow*
- by night*
- nature; direct*

- And that was thilke time scene.
 The longe nyghtes hem betuene
 Nature, which mai noght forbere,
 Hath mad hem bothe for to stere.
 3065 Thei kessen ferst, and overmore
 The hihe weie of loves lore
 Thei gon, and al was don in dede,
 Wheroft lost is the maydenhede;
 And that was afterward wel knowe.
- 3070 For it befell that ilke throwe
 At Troie, wher the siege lay
 Upon the cause of Menelau
 And of his queene Dame Heleine,
 The Gregois hadden mochel peine
 3075 Alday to sihte and to assaile.
 Bot for thei mihten noght availe
 So noble a cité for to winne,
 A privé conseil thei beginne,
 In sondri wise wher thei trete;
 3080 And ate laste among the grete
 Thei fellen unto this acord,
 That Protheus, of his record
 Which was an astronomien
 And ek a gret magicien,
 3085 Scholde of his calculacion
 Seche after constellacion,
 Hou thei the cité mihten gete.
 And he, which hadde noght forgete
 Of that belongeth to a clerk,
 3090 His studie sette upon this werk.
 So longe his wit abouthe he caste,
 Til that he fond out ate laste,
 Bot if they hadden Achilles
 Here werre schal ben endeles.
- 3095 And over that he tolde hem plein
 In what manere he was besein,
 And in what place he schal be founde;
 So that withinne a litel stounde
 Ulixes forth with Diomede
- 3100 Upon this point to Lichomede
 Agamenon togedre sente.
 Bot Ulixes, er he forth wente,
 Which was on of the moste wise,
 Ordeigned hath in such a wise,
 3105 That he the moste riche aray
 Wheroft a womman mai be gay
 With him hath take manyfold,
- made them both become aroused*
kiss
highway of love's
deed
at that time
Menelaus
Greeks
fight
secret
warlords
reputation
scholar
broadly
Unless
Their war
set up
a little while
before
one
exquisite clothing

- And overmore, as it is told,
 An harneis for a lusti kniht,
 3110 Which burned was as selver bryht,
 Of swerd, of plate, and ek of maile,
 As thogh he scholde to bataille,
 He tok also with him be schipe.
 And thus togedre in felaschipe
 3115 Forth gon this Diomede and he
 In hope til thei mihten se
 The place where Achilles is.
 The wynd stod thanne noght amis,
 Bot evene topseilcole it blew,
 3120 Til Ulixes the marche knew
 Wher Lichomede his regne hadde.
 The stieresman so wel hem ladde,
 That thei ben comen sauf to londe,
 Wher thei gon out upon the stronde
 3125 Into the burgh, wher that thei founde
 The king, and he which hath facounde,
 Ulixes, dede the message.
 Bot the conseil of his corage,
 Why that he cam, he tolde noght,
 3130 Bot undernethe he was bethoght
 In what manere he mihte aspie
 Achilles fro Deidamie
 And fro these othre that ther were,
 Full many a lusti ladi there.
 3135 Thei pleide hem there a day or tuo,
 And as it was fortuned so,
 It fell that time in such a wise,
 To Bachus that a sacrificise
 Thes yonge ladys scholden make;
 3140 And for the strange mennes sake,
 That comen fro the siege of Troie,
 Thei maden wel the more joie.
 Ther was revel, ther was daunsinge,
 And every lif which coude singe
 3145 Of lusti wommen in the route
 A freissh carole hath sunge aboute.
 Bot for al this yit natheles
 The Greks unknowe of Achilles
 So weren, that in no degré
 3150 Thei couden wite which was he,
 Ne be his vois, ne be his pas.
 Ulixes thanne upon this cas
 A thing of hih prudence hath wroght,
 For thilke aray, which he hath broght
- suit of armor; hardy
burnished
by*
- wind blew on the topsail
region*
- citadel
who has eloquence
made the greeting
heart*
- surreptitiously; mindful
distinguish
from*
- manner*
- person*
- round dance with singing*
- (i.e., having no knowledge of)*
- know
walk*

- 3155 To give among the wommen there,
 He let do fetten al the gere
 Forth with a knihtes harneis eke.
 In al a contré for to seke
 Men scholden noght a fairer se,
 3160 And every thing in his degré
 Endlong upon a bord he leide.
 To Lichomede and thanne he preide
 That every ladi chese scholde
 What thing of alle that sche wolde,
 3165 And take it as be weie of gifte;
 For thei himself it scholde schifte,
 He seide, after here oghne wille.
 Achilles thanne stod noght stille:
 Whan he the bryhte helm behield,
 3170 The swerd, the hauberk, and the schield,
 His herte fell therto anon;
 Of all that othre wolde he non,
 The knihtes gere he underfongeth,
 And thilke aray which that belongeth
 3175 Unto the wommen he forsok.
 And in this wise, as seith the bok,
 Thei knownen thanne which he was.
 For he goth forth the grete pas
 Into the chambre where he lay;
 3180 Anon, and made no delay,
 He armeth him in knyhtli wise,
 That bettre can no man devise,
 And as fortune scholde falle,
 He cam so forth tofore hem alle,
 3185 As he which tho was glad ynowh.
 But Lichomede nothing lowh,
 Whan that he syh hou that it ferde,
 For thanne he wiste wel and herde,
 His dowhter hadde be forlein;
 3190 Bot that he was so oversein,
 The wonder overgoth his wit.
 For in cronique is write yit
 Thing which schal nevere be forgete,
 Hou that Achilles hath begete
 3195 Pirrus upon Deidamie,
 Wherof cam out the tricherie
 Of Falswitnesse, whan thei saide
 Hou that Achilles was a maide.
 Bot that was nothing seene tho,
 3200 For he is to the siege go
 Forth with Ulix and Diomede.
- caused to be brought; clothing
together; armor also
- Along; table
- choose
- themselves; decide
their
- helmet
- immediately
- seizes
- swiftly
slept
- armed himself; manner
- before
- laughed
fared
- had illicit sex
- deluded
- overwhelmed
- maiden
then

- Confessor** Lo, thus was proved in the dede
 And fulli spoke at thilke while:
 If o womman another guile,
 3205 Wher is ther eny sikernessee?
 Whan Thetis, which was the goddesse,
 Deidamie hath so bejaped,
 I not hou it schal ben ascaped
 With tho wommen whos innocence
 3210 Is nou alday thurgh such credence
 Deceived ofte, as it is seene,
 With men that such untrouth the meene.
 For thei ben slyhe in such a wise,
 That thei be sleihte and be queintise
 3215 Of Falswitnesses bringen inne
 That doth hem ofte for to winne,
 Wher thei ben noght worthi thereto.
 Forthi, mi sone, do noght so.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, as of Falswitnesse
 3220 The trouthe and the matiere expresse,
 Touchende of love hou it hath ferd,
 As ye have told, I have wel herd.
 Bot for ye seiden otherwise,
 Hou thilke vice of Covoitise
 3225 Hath yit Perjurie of his accord,
 If that you list of som record
 To telle another tale also
 In loves cause of time ago,
 What thing it is to be forswore,
 3230 I wolde preie you therfore,
 Wheroft I mihte ensample take.”
- Confessor** “Mi goode sone, and for thi sake
 Touchende of this I schal fulfille
 Thin axinge at thin oghne wille,
 3235 And the matiere I schal declare,
 Hou the wommen deceived are,
 Whan thei so tendre herte bere,
 Of that thei hieren men so swere;
 Bot whan it comth unto th’assay,
 3240 Thei finde it fals another day,
 As Jason dede to Medee,
 Which stant yit of auctorité
 In tokne and in memorial;
 Wheroft the tale in special
 3245 Is in the bok of Troie write,
 Which I schal do thee for to wite.
- one woman beguiles another*
certitude
tricked
know not how
trust
cunning (guile)
causes them
desire
proof (testing of character)

[TALE OF JASON AND MEDEA]

- In Grece whilom was a king, *once*
 Of whom the fame and knowleching
- 3250 ~~Beleveth~~ yit, and Peleus *Remains yet (see note)*
 He hihte; bot it fell him thus, *was called*
 That his Fortune hir whiel so ladde
 That he no child his oghne hadde
 To regnen after his decess. *death*
- 3255 He hadde a brother natheles,
 Whos rihte name was Eson,
 And he the worthi kniht Jason
 Begat, the which in every lond
 Alle othre passede of his hond *surpassed*
 In armes, so that he the beste
- 3260 Was named and the worthieste,
 He soghte worschipe overal.
 Nou herkne, and I thee telle schal
 An aventure that he soghte,
 Which afterward ful dere he boghte. *dearly*
- 3265 Ther was an yle, which Colchos *was called*
 Was cleped, and therof aros
 Gret speche in every lond aboute,
 That such merveile was non oute
 In al the wyde world nawhere,
- 3270 As tho was in that yle there.
 Ther was a schiep, as it was told,
 The which his flees bar al of gold,
 And so the goddes hadde it set,
 That it ne mihte awei be fet *sheep*
- 3275 Be pouer of no worldes wiht. *had (displayed/possessed)*
 And yit ful many a worthi kniht
 It hadde assaied, as thei dorste,
 And evere it fell hem to the worste.
 Bot he, that wolde it noght forsake,
- 3280 Bot of his knyhthod undertake
 To do what thing therto belongeth,
 This worthi Jason, sore alongeth *sorely longs*
 To se the strange regiouns
 And knowe the condicioouns
- 3285 Of othre marches where he wente;
 And for that cause his hole entente
 He sette Colchos for to seche,
 And therupon he made a speche
 To Peleus his em the king. *uncle*
- 3290 And he wel paid was of that thing;
 And schop anon for his passage, *pleased*
arranged immediately

- And suche as were of his lignage,
 With othre knithes whiche he ches,
 With him he tok, and Hercules,
 3295 Which full was of chivalerie, *prowess*
 With Jason wente in compaignie;
 And that was in the monthe of Maii,
 Whan colde stormes were away.
 The wynd was good, the schip was yare, *ready*
 3300 Thei tok here leve, and forth thei fare
 Toward Colchos. Bot on the weie *But; way*
 What hem befell is long to seie;
 Hou Lamedon the king of Troie,
 Which oghte wel have mad hem joie, *made them welcome*
 3305 Whan thei to reste a while him preide, *asked him*
 Out of his lond he hem congeide; *dismissed*
 And so fell the dissencion,
 Which after was destruccion
 Of that cité, as men mai hiere.
 3310 Bot that is noght to mi matiere.
 Bot thus this worthi folk Gregeis *Greek*
 Fro that king, which was noght curteis, *gracious*
 And fro his lond with sail updrawe
 Thei wente hem forth, and many a sawe *speech*
 3315 Thei made and many a gret manace,
 Til ate laste into that place
 Which as thei soghte thei aryve,
 And striken sail, and forth as blyve
 Thei sente unto the king and tolden
 3320 Who weren ther and what thei wolden.
 Oetes, which was thanne king,
 Whan that he herde this tyding
 Of Jason, which was comen there,
 And of these othre, what thei were,
 3325 He thoghte don hem gret worschipe.
 For thei anon come out of schipe,
 And strawht unto the king thei wente,
 And be the hond Jason he hente, *by; seized*
 And that was ate paleis gate,
 3330 So fer the king cam on his gate *way*
 Toward Jason to don him chiere.
 And he, whom lacketh no manere,
 Whan he the king sih in presence, *saw*
 Gaf him agein such reverence
 3335 As to a kinges stat belongeth. *station pertains*
 And thus the king him underfongeth, *receives*
 And Jason in his arm he cawhte,
 And forth into the halle he strawhte, *proceeded*

- And ther thei siete and spieke of thinges, *sat*
 3340 And Jason tolde him tho tidings,
 Why he was come, and faire him preide
 To haste his time, and the kyng seide,
 'Jason, thou art a worthi kniht,
 Bot it lith in no mannes myht
- 3345 To don that thou art come fore.
 Ther hath be many a kniht forlore
 Of that thei wolden it assaie.' *been; destroyed*
 Bot Jason wolde him noght esmaie,
 And seide, 'Of every worldes cure *attempt*
 3350 Fortune stant in aventure,
 Per aunter wel, per aunter wo. *not be disconcerted*
 Bot hou as evere that it go,
 It schal be with myn hond assaied.' *care*
 The king tho hield him noght wel paied,
 3355 For he the Grekes sore dredde, *attempted*
 In aunter, if Jason ne spedde,
 He mihte therof bere a blame. *then was not; pleased*
 For tho was al the worldes fame
 In Grece, as for to speke of armes. *feared*
 3360 Forthi he dredde him of his harmes,
 And gan to preche him and to preie. *should not succeed*
 Bot Jason wolde noght obeie,
 Bot seide he wolde his porpos holde
 For ought that eny man him tolde. *bear*
 3365 The king, whan he thes wordes herde,
 And sih hou that this kniht ansuerde,
 Yit for he wolde make him glad,
 After Medea gon he bad, *military strength*
 Which was his dowhter, and sche cam. *plead with him*
- 3370 And Jason, which good hiede nam, *Regardless of what any*
 Whan he hire sih, agein hire goth;
 And sche, which was him nothing loth,
 Welcomede him into that lond,
 And softe tok him be the hond, *He called for Medea*
- 3375 And doun thei seten bothe same. *together*
 Sche hadde herd spoke of his name
 And of his grete worthiness.
 Forthi sche gan hir yhe impresse *eye*
 Upon his face and his stature,
- 3380 And thoghte hou nevere creature
 Was so wel farende as was he. *handsome*
 And Jason riht in such degré
 Ne mihte noght withholde his lok,
 Bot so good hiede on hire he tok,
- 3385 That him ne thoghte under the hevene

- Of beauté sawh he nevere hir evene,
With al that fell to wommanhiede. *match*
pertained to womanliness
- Thus ech of other token hiede,
Thogh ther no word was of record.
- 3390 Here hertes bothe of on accord
Ben set to love, bot as tho
Ther mihten be no wordes mo.
The king mad him gret joie and feste,
To alle his men he gaf an heste, *order*
- 3395 So as thei wolde his thonk deserve,
That thei scholde alle Jason serve,
Whil that he wolde there duelle.
And thus the dai, schortly to telle,
With manye merthes thei despente,
- 3400 Til nyht was come, and tho thei wente,
Echon of other tok his leve,
Whan thei no lengere myhten leve. *remain*
do not know how
- I not hou Jason that nyht slep,
Bot wel I wot that of the schep,
- 3405 For which he cam into that yle,
He thoghte bot a litel whyle;
Al was Medea that he thoghte,
So that in many a wise he soghte
His witt wakende er it was day, *manner*
waking before
- 3410 Som time yee, som time nay,
Som time thus, som time so,
As he was stered to and fro *tossed*
Of love, and ek of his conqueste
As he was holde of his beheste.
- 3415 And thus he ros up be the morwe
And tok himself Seint John to borwe,
And seide he wolde ferst beginne
At love, and after for to winne
The flees of gold, for which he com, *as guarantor*
- 3420 And thus to him good herte he nom. *took*
- Medea riht the same wise,
Til dai cam that sche moste arise,
Lay and bethoughte hire al the nyht, *pondered*
- 3425 Hou sche that noble worthi kniht
Be eny weie mihte wedde.
- And wel sche wiste, if he ne spedde
Of thing which he hadde undertake,
Sche mihte hirself no porpos take;
For if he deide of his bataile,
- 3430 Sche moste thanne algate faille
To geten him, whan he were ded. *altogether*
- Thus sche began to sette red *to use her wisdom*

- And torne aboute hir wittes alle,
 To loke hou that it mihte falle
 3435 That sche with him hadde a leisir
 To speke and telle of hir desir.
 And so it fell that same day
 That Jason with that suete may
 Togedre sete and hadden space
 3440 To speke, and he besoughte hir grace.
 And sche his tale goodli herde,
 And afterward sche him ansuerde
 And seide, 'Jason, as thou wilt,
 Thou miht be sauf, thou miht be spilt;
 3445 For wite wel that nevere man,
 Bot if he couthe that I can,
 Ne mihte that fortune achieve
 For which thou comst: bot as I lieve,
 If thou wolt holde covenant
 3450 To love, of al the remenant
 I schal thi lif and honour save,
 That thou the flees of gold schalt have.'
 He seide, 'Al at youre oghne wille,
 Ma dame, I schal treuly fulfille
 3455 Youre heste, whil mi lif mai laste.'
 Thus longe he preide, and ate laste
 Sche granteth, and behihte him this,
 That whan nyht comth and it time is,
 Sche wolde him sende certeinly
 3460 Such on that scholde him prively
 Alone into hire chambre bringe.
 He thonketh hire of that tidinge,
 For of that grace him is begonne
 Him thenkth alle othre thinges wonne.
 3465 The dai made ende and lost his lyht,
 And comen was the derke nyht,
 Which al the daies yhe blente.
 Jason tok leve and forth he wente,
 And whan he cam out of the pres,
 3470 He tok to conseil Hercules,
 And tolde him hou it was betid,
 And preide it scholde wel ben hid,
 And that he wolde loke aboute,
 Therwhiles that he schal ben oute.
 3475 Thus as he stod and hiede nam,
 A mayden fro Medea cam
 And to hir chambre Jason ledde,
 Wher that he fond redi to bedde
 The faireste and the wiseste eke;
- sweet maiden*
had leisure
- willingly*
- safe; destroyed*
know
knows what I know
- from everything else*
- promised*
- Such a person; secretly*
- day's eye (sun) concealed*
- crowd*
- what was what*
kept secret
- took heed*
maidservant (lady-in-waiting)
- for bed*
also

- 3480 And sche with simple chiere and meke,
Whan sche him sih, wax al aschamed.
Tho was here tale newe entamed;
For sikernesse of mariage
Sche fette forth a riche ymage,
3485 Which was figure of Jupiter,
And Jason swor and seide ther,
That also wiss god scholde him helpe,
That if Medea dede him helpe,
That he his pourpos myhte winne,
3490 Thei scholde nevere parte atwinne,
Bot evere whil him lasteth lif,
He wolde hire holde for his wif.
And with that word thei kisten bothe.
And for thei scholden hem unclothe,
3495 Ther cam a maide, and in hir wise
Sche dede hem bothe full servise,
Til that thei were in bedde naked.
I wot that nyght was wel bewaked;
Thei hadden bothe what thei wolde.
3500 And thanne of leisir sche him tolde,
And gan fro point to point enforme
Of his bataile and al the forme,
Which as he scholde finde there,
Whan he to th'yle come were.
3505 Sche seide, at entre of the pas
Hou Mars, which god of armes was,
Hath set tuo oxen sterne and stoute,
That caste fyr and flamme aboute
Bothe at the mouth and ate nase,
3510 So that thei setten al on blasē
What thing that passeth hem betwene,
And furthermore upon the grene
Ther goth the flees of gold to kepe
A serpent, which mai nevere slepe.
3515 Thus who that evere scholde it winne,
The fyr to stoppe he mot beginne,
Which that the fierce bestes caste,
And daunte he mot hem ate laste,
So that he mai hem yoke and dryve;
3520 And therupon he mot as blyve
The serpent with such strengthe assaile,
That he mai slēn him be bataile;
Of which he mot the teth outdrawe,
As it belongeth to that lawe,
3525 And thanne he mot tho oxen yoke,
Til thei have with a plowh tobroke
- facial expression*
Then; their; opened up
security brought
truly
separate
because; undress
know; kept sleepless
desired
conflict; details
the island
beginning: passage (adventure)
two fierce oxen
nose
on fire
green
must
must control them
quickly
extract
those

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| | A furgh of lond, in which arowe
The teth of th'addre he moste sowe,
And therof schule arise knihtes | <i>furrow; in a row
the serpent (adder)
originate</i> |
| 3530 | Wel armed up at alle rihtes.
Of hem is noght to taken hiede,
For ech of hem in hastihiede | |
| | Schal other slain with dethes wounde: | <i>lethal wound</i> |
| | And thus whan thei ben leid to grounde, | |
| 3535 | Than mot he to the goddes preie,
And go so forth and take his preie. | <i>pray
prey</i> |
| | Bot if he faile in eny wise | <i>any way</i> |
| | Of that ye hiere me devise, | |
| | Ther mai be set non other weie, | |
| 3540 | That he ne moste algates deie.
'Nou have I told the peril al:
I wol you tellen forth withal,' | |
| | Quod Medea to Jason tho, | <i>then</i> |
| | 'That ye schul knownen er ye go, | |
| 3545 | Agein the venym and the fyr
What schal ben the recoverir. | <i>antidote</i> |
| | Bot, sire, for it is nyh day,
Ariseth up, so that I may | |
| | Delivere you what thing I have, | |
| 3550 | That mai youre lif and honour save.' | |
| | Thei weren bothe loth to rise,
Bot for thei weren bothe wise, | |
| | Up thei arisen ate laste. | |
| | Jason his clothes on him caste | <i>put on</i> |
| 3555 | And made him redi riht anon,
And sche hir scherte dede upon | |
| | And caste on hire a mantel clos, | |
| | Withoute more and thanne aros. | |
| | Tho tok sche forth a riche tye | <i>splendid casket</i> |
| 3560 | Mad al of gold and of perrie,
Out of the which sche nam a ring, | <i>jewels</i> |
| | The ston was worth al other thing. | <i>took</i> |
| | Sche seide, whil he wolde it were, | |
| | Ther myhte no peril him dere, | <i>harm</i> |
| 3565 | In water mai it noght be dreynt, | <i>drowned</i> |
| | Wher as it comth the fyr is queynt, | |
| | It daunteth ek the cruel beste, | |
| | Ther may no qued that man areste, | |
| | Wher so he be on see or lond, | |
| 3570 | Which hath that ring upon his hond: | <i>evil</i> |
| | And over that sche gan to sein, | |
| | That if a man wol ben unsein, | |
| | Withinne his hond hold clos the ston. | |

- And he mai invisible gon.
- 3575 The ring to Jason sche betaulhte,
And so forth after sche him tauhete
What sacrificise he scholde make;
And gan out of hire cofre take
Him thoughte an hevenely figure,
3580 Which al be charme and be conjure
Was wrought, and ek it was thurgh write
With names, which he scholde wite,
As sche him tauhete tho to rede;
And bad him, as he wolde spede,
3585 Withoute reste of eny while,
Whan he were londed in that yle,
He scholde make his sacrificise
And rede his carecte in the wise
As sche him tauhete, on knes doun bent,
3590 Thre sithes toward orient;
For so scholde he the goddes plese
And winne himselfen mochel ese.
And whanne he hadde it thries rad,
To opne a buiste sche him bad,
3595 Which sche ther tok him in present,
And was full of such oignement,
That ther was fyr ne venom non
That scholde fastnen him upon,
Whan that he were enoynt withal.
3600 Forthi sche tauhete him hou he schal
Enoignte his armes al aboute,
And for he scholde nothing doute,
Sche tok him thanne a maner glu,
The which was of so gret vertu,
3605 That where a man it wolde caste,
It scholde binde anon so faste
That no man mihte it don aweie.
And that sche bad be alle weie
He scholde into the mouthes throwen
3610 Of tho tweie oxen that fyr blowen,
Therof to stoppen the malice;
The glu schal serve of that office.
And over that hir oignement,
Hir ring and hir enchantement
3615 Agein the serpent scholde him were,
Til he him sle with swerd or spere.
And thanne he may saufliche ynowh
His oxen yoke into the plowh
And the teth sowe in such a wise,
3620 Til he the knyghtes se arise,
should see
- entrusted*
- by magical spell; incantation*
- understand*
- recite his charm*
- box*
- gave him as present*
- neither fire or poison*
- gave; kind of glue*
- grip; securely*
- defend*
- slew*
- safely enough*

- And ech of other doun be leid
In such manere as I have seid.
Lo, thus Medea for Jason
Ordeigneth, and preith therupon
3625 That he nothing forgete scholde,
And ek sche preith him that he wolde,
Whan he hath alle his armes don,
To grounde knele and thonke anon
The goddes, and so forth be ese
3630 The flees of gold he scholde sese.
And whanne he hadde it sesed so,
That thanne he were sone ago
Withouten eny tariyng.
- Whan this was seid, into wepinge
3635 Sche fell, as sche that was thurgh nome
With love, and so fer overcome,
That al hir world on him sche sette.
Bot whan sche sih ther was no lette,
That he mot nedes parte hire fro,
3640 Sche tok him in hire armes tuo,
An hundred time and gan him kisse,
And seide, 'O, al mi worldes blisse,
Mi trust, mi lust, mi lif, min hele,
To be thin helpe in this querele
3645 I preie unto the goddes alle.'
- And with that word sche gan doun falle
On swoune, and he hire uppe nam,
And forth with that the maiden cam,
And thei to bedde anon hir broghte,
3650 And thanne Jason hire besoghte,
And to hire seide in this manere:
'Mi worthi lusti ladi dere,
Conforteth you, for be my trouthe
It schal noght fallen in mi slouthe
3655 That I ne wol thurghout fulfill
Youre hestes at youre oghne wille.
And yit I hope to you bringe
Withinne a while such tidinge,
The which schal make ous bothe game.'
- Bot for he wolde kepe hir name,
Whan that he wiste it was nyh dai,
He seide, 'A dieu, mi swete mai.'
And forth with him he nam his gere,
Which as sche hadde take him there,
3660 And straught unto his chambre he wente,
And goth to bedde and slep him hente,
And lay, that no man him awok,
- trials completed
with (by)
seize
thoroughly overwhelmed
far
delaying [him]
And kissed him a hundred times
salvation
trial
a faint; took her up
not be because of my sloth
if I do not completely fulfill
instructions
glad
reputation
knew; nearly
maiden
took; equipment
seized him

- For Hercules hiede of him tok,
Til it was undren hihi and more.
3670 And thanne he gan to sighe sore
And sodeinliche abreide of slep;
And thei that token of him kep,
His chamberleins, be sone there,
And maden redi al his gere,
3675 And he aros and to the king
He wente, and seide hou to that thing
For which he cam he wolde go.
The king therof was wonder wo,
And for he wolde him fain withdrawe,
3680 He tolde him many a dredful sawe,
Bot Jason wolde it noght recorde,
And ate laste thei acorde.
Whan that he wolde noght abide,
A bot was redy ate tyde,
3685 In which this worthi kniht of Grece
Ful armed up at every piece,
To his bataile which belongeth,
Tok ore on honde and sore him longeth,
Til he the water passed were.
3690 Whan he cam to that yle there,
He set him on his knes doun straught,
And his carecte, as he was tawht,
He radde, and made his sacrificise,
And siththe enoignte him in that wise
3695 As Medea him hadde bede;
And thanne aros up fro that stede,
And with the glu the fyr he queynte,
And anon after he atteinte
The grete serpent and him slowh.
3700 Bot erst he hadde sorwe ynowh,
For that serpent made him travaile
So harde and sore of his bataile,
That nou he stod and nou he fell.
For longe time it so befell,
3705 That with his swerd ne with his spere
He mihte noght that serpent dere.
He was so scherded al aboute,
It hield all eggetol withoute,
He was so ruide and hard of skin,
3710 Ther mihte nothing go therin;
Venym and fyr togedre he caste,
That he Jason so sore ablaste,
That if ne were his oignement,
His ring and his enchantement,
- between 9 and 10 a.m.*
- started from*
attended to him
- equipment*
- gladly discourage him*
tale
pay heed
- stay*
- oar; sorely he longs*
Until
island
- charm*
recited aloud
then anointed himself
- commanded*
place
quenched
- quickly; overtook*
killed him
- work*
- harm*
covered with scales
withstood all swords and spears
rough
- so sorely blasted*
if it were not for
charm

- 3715 Which Medea tok him tofore,
He hadde with that worm be lore;
Bot of vertu which therof cam
Jason the dragon overcam.
And he anon the teth outdrouh,
3720 And sette his oxen in a plouh,
With which he brak a piece of lond
And sieu hem with his oghne hond.
Tho mihte he gret merveile se:
Of every toth in his degré
3725 Sprong up a kniht with spere and schield,
Of whiche anon riht in the field
Ech on slow other; and with that
Jason Medea noght forgat,
On bothe his knes he gan doun falle,
3730 And gaf thonk to the goddes alle.
The flees he tok and goth to bote,
The sonne schyneth bryhte and hote,
The flees of gold schon forth withal,
The water glistreth overal.
- 3735 Medea wepte and sigheth ofte,
And stod upon a tour alofte:
Al prively withinne hirselfe,
Ther herde it nouther ten ne tuelve,
Sche preide, and seide, 'O, god him spedē,
3740 The kniht which hath mi maidenhiede!'
And ay sche loketh toward th'yle.
Bot whan sche sil withinne a while
The flees glistrende agein the sonne,
Sche saide, 'Ha lord, now al is wonne.
3745 Mi kniht the field hath overcome.
Nou wolde god he were come,
Ha lord, that he ne were alonde!'
Bot I dar take this on honde,
If that sche hadde wynges tuo,
3750 Sche wolde have flowe unto him tho
Strawht ther he was into the bot.
- The dai was clier, the sonne hot,
The Gregeis weren in gret doute,
The whyle that here lord was oute.
3755 Thei wisten noght what scholde tyde,
Bot waiten evere upon the tyde,
To se what ende scholde falle.
Ther stoden ek the nobles alle
Forth with the comun of the toun;
3760 And as thei loken up and doun,
Thei weren war withinne a throwe,
- gave him previously
by that dragon would have been destroyed*
- drew out
plow*
- sowed them
Then
From; its*
- Each one slew the other*
- goes to the boat*
- tower*
- daresay*
- where*
- fear*
- knew not; happen*
- citizenry*

- Wher cam the bot, which thei wel knowe,
 And sihe hou Jason broghte his preie.
 And tho thei gonnен alle seie,
 3765 And criden alle with o stevene,
 'Ha, wher was evere under the hevene
 So noble a knyht as Jason is?'
 And wel nyh alle seiden this,
 That Jason was a faie kniht,
 3770 For it was nevere of mannes miht
 The flees of gold so for to winne;
 And thus to talen thei beginne.
 With that the king com forth anon,
 And sih the flees, hou that it schon;
 3775 And whan Jason cam to the lond,
 The king himselfe tok his hond
 And kist him, and gret joie him made.
 The Gregeis weren wonder glade,
 And of that thing riht merie hem thoghte,
 3780 And forth with hem the flees thei broghte,
 And ech on other gan to leyhe;
 Bot wel was him that mihte neyhe,
 To se therof the propreté.
 And thus thei passen the cité
 3785 And gon unto the paleis straght.
 Medea, which forgat him naght,
 Was redy there, and seide anon,
 'Welcome, O worthi kniht Jason.'
 Sche wolde have kist him wonder fayn,
 3790 Bot schame tornede hire agayn;
 It was noght the manere as tho,
 Forthi sche dorste noght do so.
 Sche tok hire leve, and Jason wente
 Into his chambre, and sche him sente
 3795 Hire maide to sen hou he ferde;
 The which whan that sche sih and herde,
 Hou that he hadde faren oute
 And that it stod wel al aboute,
 Sche tolde hire ladi what sche wiste,
 3800 And sche for joie hire maide kiste.
 The bathes weren thanne araid,
 With herbes tempred and assaied,
 And Jason was unarmed sone
 And dede as it befell to done.
 3805 Into his bath he wente anon
 And wyssh him clene as eny bon;
 He tok a sopp, and oute he cam,
 And on his beste aray he nam,
- began to speak
one voice*
- an enchanted*
- gossip (converse)*
- saw; shone*
- laugh*
- come near*
- pass through*
- who*
- eagerly*
- turned her away*
- at that time*
- dared*
- fared*
- saw*
- prepared*
- tested*
- did as one normally would do*
- washed himself; any bone*
- had a snack (light repast)*
- put on his best clothes*

- And kempde his hed, whan he was clad, *combed*
 3810 And goth him forth al merie and glad
 Riht strawht into the kinges halle.
 The king cam with his knihtes alle
 And maden him glad welcominge;
 And he hem tolde the tidinge *news*
 3815 Of this and that, hou it befell,
 Whan that he wan the schepes fell.
 Medea, whan sche was asent, *won; sheep's fleece*
 Com sone to that parlement, *sent for*
 And whan sche mihte Jason se,
 3820 Was non so glad of alle as sche.
 Ther was no joie for to seche:
 Of him mad every man a speche; *everyone made a speech*
 Som man seid on, som man seide other. *one [thing]*
 Bot thogh he were goddes brother *even if*
 3825 And mihte make fyr and thonder, *lightning; thunder*
 Ther mihte be no more wonder
 Than was of him in that cité.
 Ech on tauhte other, 'This is he, *Each one*
 Which hath in his pouer withinne
 3830 That al the world ne mihte winne. *What no one else on earth*
 Lo, hier the beste of alle goode.' *best of all good [people]*
 Thus saiden thei that there stode,
 And ek that walkede up and doun,
 Bothe of the court and of the toun.
 3835 The time of souper cam anon, *clean up (wash)*
 Thei wischen, and therto thei gon. *beside; seated*
 Medea was with Jason set. *gourmet food brought*
 Tho was ther many a deynté fet *before them; table*
 And set tofore hem on the bord,
 3840 Bot non so likinge as the word *between the two of them*
 Which was ther spoke among hem tuo, *dared; then*
 So as thei dorste speke tho.
 Bot thogh thei hadden litel space,
 Yit thei acorden in that place *agreed*
 3845 Hou Jason scholde come at nyht,
 Whan every torche and every liht
 Were oute, and thanne of other things
 Thei spieke aloud for supposinges *[purpose of] deluding*
 Of hem that stoden there aboute.
 3850 For love is everemore in doute, *fear*
 If that it be wisly governed
 Of hem that ben of love lerned.
 Whan al was don, that dissh and cuppe
 And cloth and bord and al was uppe,
 3855 Thei waken whil hem lest to wake, *stayed awake as long as it pleased them*

- And after that thei leve take
 And gon to bedde for to reste.
 And whan him thoghte for the beste,
 That every man was faste aslepe,
 3860 Jason, that wolde his time kepe,
 Goth forth stalkende al prively
 Unto the chambre, and redely
 Ther was a maide, which him kepte.
 Medea wok and nothing slepte,
 3865 Bot natholes sche was abedde,
 And he with alle haste him spedde
 And made him naked and al warm.
 Anon he tok hire in his arm:
 What nede is for to speke of ese?
 3870 Hem list ech other for to plese,
 So that thei hadden joie ynow.
 And tho thei setten whanne and how
 That sche with him awey schal stelle.
 With wordes suche and othre fele
 3875 Whan al was treted to an ende,
 Jason tok leve and gan forth wende
 Unto his oughne chambre in pes.
 Ther wiste it non bot Hercules.
 He slepte and ros whan it was time,
 3880 And whanne it fell towardes prime,
 He tok to him suche as he triste
 In secre, that non other wiste,
 And told hem of his conseil there,
 And seide that his wille were
 3885 That thei to schipe hadde alle thinge
 So priveliche in th'evenyng,
 That no man mihte here dede aspie
 Bot tho that were of compaignie:
 For he woll go withoute leve,
 3890 And lengere woll he noght beleve;
 Bot he ne wolde at thilke throwe
 That king or queene scholde it knowe.
 Thei saide, 'Al this schal wel be do.'
 And Jason truste wel therto.
 3895 Medea in the menewhile,
 Which thoghte hir fader to beguile,
 The tresor which hir fader hadde
 With hire al priveli sche ladde,
 And with Jason at time set
 3900 Awey sche stal and fond no let,
 And straught sche goth hire unto schipe
 Of Grece with that felaschipe,
- soundly
bide his time
stealthily
eagerly
who awaited him
- came quickly
- They yearned to please each other
enough
planned
- many others
negotiated
went
contentedly (quietly)
knew
- first part of the day (6–9 a.m.)
trusted
secrecy
- their deed
Except those who
- remain
wished not at that time
- They (i.e., Hercules and others)
- deceive
- stole; hindrance

- And thei anon drowe up the seil.
 And al that nyht this was conseil,
 Bot erly, whan the sonne schon,
 Men syhe hou that thei were agon,
 And come unto the king and tolde.
 And he the sothe knowe wolde,
 And axeth where his dowhter was.
 Ther was no word bot 'Out, allas!'
 Sche was ago. The moder wepte,
 The fader as a wod man lept,
 And gan the time for to warie,
 And swor his oth he wol nocht tarie,
 That with caliphe and with galeie
 The same cours, the same weie,
 Which Jason tok, he wolde take,
 If that he mihte him overtake.
 To this thei seiden alle 'Yee.'
 Anon thei weren ate see,
 And alle, as who seith, at a word
 Thei gon withinne schipes bord,
 The sail goth up, and forth thei strauhete.
 Bot non espleit therof thei cauhte,
 And so thei tornen hom agein,
 For al that labour was in vein.
 Jason to Grece with his preie
 Goth thurgh the see the rihte weie:
 Whan he ther com and men it tolde,
 Thei maden joie yonge and olde.
 Eson, whan that he wiste of this,
 Hou that his sone comen is,
 And hath achieved that he soughte
 And hom with him Medea broughte,
 In al the wyde world was non
 So glad a man as he was on.
 Togedre ben these lovers tho,
 Til that thei hadden sones tuo,
 Wheroft hei weren bothe glade;
 And olde Eson gret joie made
 To sen th'encress of his lignage,
 For he was of so gret an age,
 That men awaiten every day
 Whan that he scholde gon away.
 Jason, which sih his fader old,
 Upon Medea made him bold,
 Of art magique, which sche couthe,
 And preith hire that his fader youthe
 Sche wolde make ageinward newe:
- secret*
- saw*
- truth*
- asked*
- madman leapt*
- curse*
- (two kinds of boats)*
- Yes*
- sea*
- aboard ship*
- set out*
- no success*
- plunder*
- most direct*
- (i.e., die)*
- Mustered a venture before Medea*
- knew*
- father's youth*

- 3950 And sche, that was toward him trewe,
Behihte him that sche wolde it do,
Whan that sche time sawh therto.
Bot what sche dede in that matiere
It is a wonder thing to hiere. Promised
- 3955 Bot yit for the novellerie
I thenke tellen a partie. hear
- ¶ Thus it befell upon a nyht,
Whan ther was noght bot sterreliht,
Sche was vanyssht riht as hir liste,
That no wyht bot hirself it wiste, person; knew
And that was ate mydnyht tyde. time
- 3960 The world was stille on every side;
With open hed and fot al bare,
Hir her tosprad sche gan to fare,
Upon hir clothes gert sche was, bare head; feet
Al specheles and on the gras hair spread out
Sche glod forth as an addre doth. clothed
- 3965 Non otherwise sche ne goth,
Til sche cam to the freisse flod,
And there a while sche withstod. ocean
- 3970 Thries sche torned hire aboue,
And thries ek sche gan doun loute stood in
And in the flod sche wette hir her,
And thries on the water ther bow
- 3975 Sche gaspeth with a drecchinge onde,
And tho sche tok hir speche on honde. drowning wave
Ferst sche began to clepe and calle utilized her speech
Upward unto the sterres alle, call and cry out
To wynd, to air, to see, to lond stars
- 3980 Sche preide, and ek hield up hir hond, And began to call to Hecate
To Echates and gan to crie, Who
Which is goddesse of sorcerie.
- 3985 Sche seide, 'Helpeth at this nede,
And as ye maden me to spedē,
Whan Jason cam the flees to seche,
So help me nou, I you beseche.' seek
- 3990 With that sche loketh and was war,
Doun fro the sky ther cam a char, chariot
The which Dragouns aboute drowe:
And tho sche gan hir hed doun bowe,
- 3995 And up sche styh, and faire and wel
Sche drof forth bothe char and whel
Above in th'air among the skyes.
The lond of Crete and tho parties ascended
- 4000 Sche soughte, and faste gan hire hye, the air [where birds and spirits live]
And there upon the hulles hyhe hasten
high hills

- Of Othrin and Olimpe also,
And ek of othre hulles mo,
Sche fond and gadreth herbes suote, sweet
4000 Sche pulleth up som be the rote,
And manye with a knyf sche scherth,
And alle into hir char sche berth. cuts off
chariot
Thus whan sche hath the hulles sought,
The flodes ther forgat sche nougat, hills
rivers
4005 Eridian and Amphrisos,
Peneie and ek Spercheidos,
To hem sche wente and ther sche nom
Bothe of the water and the fom, took
foam
The sond and ek the smale stones,
4010 Whiche as sche ches out for the nones,
And of the Rede See a part,
That was behovelich to hire art,
Sche tok, and after that aboute
Sche soughte sondri sedes oute seeds
4015 In feldes and in many greves,
And ek a part sche tok of leves:
Bot thing which mihte hire most availle
Sche fond in Crete and in Thessaile.
In daies and in nyhtes nyne,
4020 With gret travaile and with gret pyne, labor; pain
Sche was pourveid of every piece,
And torneth homward into Grece. fully supplied with every necessity
Before the gates of Eson
Hir char sche let awai to gon, chariot
4025 And tok out ferst that was therinne;
For tho sche thoghte to beginne
Such thing as semeth impossible,
And made hirselen invisible,
As sche that was with air enclosed
4030 And mihte of no man be desclosed. revealed
Sche tok up turves of the lond clogs
Without hele of mannes hond,
Al heled with the grene gras, covered
Of which an alter mad ther was altar made
4035 Unto Echates the goddesse
Of art magique and the maistresse,
And eft another to Juvente,
As sche which dede hir hole entente. the goddess of youth
accomplished; whole
Tho tok sche fieldwode and verveyne, medicinal herb; vervain
4040 Of herbes be noght betre tueyne, two
Of which anon withoute let hindrance
These alters ben aboute set.
Tuo sondri puttes faste by Two different pits

4045	Sche made, and with that hastely A wether which was blak sche slouh, And out therof the blod sche drouh And dede into the pettes tuo; Warm melk sche putte also thereto With hony meynd: and in such wise	<i>sheep; killed blood; drew put in the two pits milk mixed</i>
4050	Sche gan to make hir sacrifice, And cride and preide forth withal To Pluto the god infernal, And to the queene Proserpine. And so sche soghte out al the line	<i>lineage</i>
4055	Of hem that longen to that craft, Behinde was no name laft, And preide hem alle, as sche wel couthe, To grante Eson his ferste youthe.	<i>those who are skilled in occult arts knew</i>
4060	This olde Eson broght forth was tho. Awei sche bad alle othre go	<i>then told all others to leave</i>
	Upon peril that mihte falle;	
	And with that word thei wenten alle,	
	And lefsten there hem tuo alone.	
4065	And tho sche gan to gaspe and gone, And made signes many on,	<i>gasp and gape many a one</i>
	And seide hir wordes therupon;	
	So that with spellinge of hir charmes	<i>chanting; incantations</i>
	Sche tok Eson in bothe hire armes,	
4070	And made him for to slepe faste, And him upon hire herbes caste.	
	The blake wether tho sche tok,	
	And hiewh the fleissh, as doth a cok;	<i>minced; as a cook does altar</i>
	On either alter part sche leide,	
	And with the charmes that sche seide	
4075	A fyr doun fro the sky alyhte And made it for to brenne lyhte.	<i>burn brightly burn</i>
	Bot whan Medea sawh it brenne,	
	Anon sche gan to sterte and renne	<i>run</i>
	The fyri aulters al aboute:	<i>altars</i>
4080	Ther was no beste which goth oute More wylde than sche semeth ther.	<i>beast</i>
	Aboute hir schuldres hyng hir her	
	As thogh sche were oute of hir mynde	
	And torned in another kynde.	
4085	Tho lay ther certein wode cleft, Of which the pieces nou and eft	
	Sche made hem in the pettes wete,	<i>creature</i>
	And put hem in the fyri hete,	<i>chopped wood</i>
	And tok the brond with al the blase,	
4090	And thries sche began to rase	<i>pits wet</i>
		<i>firebrand; flame run swiftly</i>

- Aboute Eson, ther as he slepte; *where*
 And eft with water, which sche kepte,
 Sche made a cercle aboue him thries,
 And eft with fyr of sulphre twyes. *twice*
- 4095 Ful many another thing sche dede,
 Which is noght writen in this stede. *place*
 Bot tho sche ran so up and doun,
 Sche made many a wonder soun, *sound*
 Somtime lich unto the cock,
 Somtime unto the laverock, *lark*
 Somtime kacleth as an hen,
 Somtime spekth as don the men.
- 4100 And riht so as hir jargoun strangeth,
 In sondri wise hir forme changeth, *just as her speech becomes more weird*
 Sche semeth faie and no womman; *fairylike*
 For with the craftes that sche can
 Sche was, as who seith, a goddesse; *knows*
 And what hir liste, more or lesse,
 Sche dede, in bokes as we finde, *desired*
- 4110 That passeth over manneskinde. *What exceeds human nature*
 Bot who that wole of wondres hiere, *hear*
 What thing sche wroghte in this matiere,
 To make an ende of that sche gan,
 Such merveile herde nevere man.
- 4115 Apointed in the newe mone, *Prescribed by; moon*
 Whan it was time for to done,
 Sche sette a caldron on the fyr, *kettle*
 In which was al the hole atir,
 Wheron the medicine stod,
- 4120 Of jus, of water, and of blod, *herbal extract*
 And let it buile in such a plit, *boil*
 Til that sche sawh the spume whyt; *white froth (spume)*
 And tho sche caste in rynde and rote,
 And sed and flour that was for bote, *seed; remedy*
- 4125 With many an herbe and many a ston, *A poisonous snake*
 Wheroft sche hath ther many on.
 And ek Cimpheius the serpent
 To hire hath alle his scales lent,
 Chelidre hire gaf his addres skin, *boil*
- 4130 And sche to builen caste hem in; *owl*
 A part ek of the horned oule,
 The which men hiere on nyghtes houle; *howl*
 And of a raven, which was told
 Of nyne hundred wynter old,
- 4135 Sche tok the hed with al the bile; *head*
 And as the medicine it wile, *medicinal formula dictates*
 Sche tok therafter the bouele *bowel*

- Of the seewolf, and for the hele
Of Eson, with a thousand mo
4140 Of thinges that sche hadde tho,
In that Caldroun togedre as blyve
Sche putte, and tok thanne of olyve
A drie branche hem with to stere,
The which anon gan floure and bere
4145 And waxe al freiss and grene agein.
Whan sche this vertu hadde sein,
Sche let the leste drope of alle
Upon the bare flor doun falle;
Anon ther spong up flour and gras,
4150 Where as the drope falle was,
And wox anon al medwe grene,
So that it mihte wel be sene.
Medea thanne knew and wiste
Hir medicine is for to triste,
4155 And goth to Eson ther he lay,
And tok a swerd was of assay,
With which a wounde upon his side
Sche made, that therout mai slyde
The blod withinne, which was old
4160 And sek and trouble and fieble and cold.
And tho sche tok unto his us
Of herbes al the beste jus,
And poured it into his wounde;
That made his veynes fulle and sounde.
4165 And tho sche made his wounde clos,
And tok his hand, and up he ros,
And tho sche gaf him drinke a drauhte,
Of which his youthe agein he cauhte,
His hed, his herte, and his visage
4170 Lich unto twenty wynter age.
Hise hore heres were away,
And lich unto the freisshe Maii,
Whan passed ben the colde schoures,
Riht so recovereth he his floures.
4175 Lo, what mihte eny man devise,
A womman schewe in eny wise
Mor hertly love in every stede,
Than Medea to Jason dede?
Ferst sche made him the flees to winne,
4180 And after that fro kiththe and kinne
With gret tresor with him sche stal,
And to his fader forth withal
His elde hath torned into youthe,
Which thing non other womman couthe.
- shark; healing
forthwith
stir
flower; bear
smallest
grew swiftly; meadow
understood
trustworthy
of proven quality
sick; murky; feeble
use
caught
gray hair disappeared
youthfulness
knew

- 4185 Bot hou it was to hire aquit,
The remembrance duelleth yit.
King Peleus his em was ded,
Jason bar corone on his hed,
Medea hath fulfilde his wille. *uncle*
- 4190 Bot whanne he scholde of riht fulfille
The trouthe, which to hire afore
He hadde in th'yle of Colchos swore,
Tho was Medea most deceived.
For he another hath received, *pledge; before
sworn*
- 4195 Which dowhter was to King Creon.
Creusa sche hihte, and thus Jason,
As he that was to love untrewe,
Medea lefte and tok a newe.
Bot that was after sone aboght: *entered into sexual relationship with
Who
was named*
- 4200 Medea with hire art hath wroght
Of cloth of gold a mantel riche,
Which semeth worth a kinges riche,
And that was unto Creusa sent
In name of gifte and of present; *soon paid for
worthy of a kingdom*
- 4205 For sosterhode hem was betuene;
And whan that yonge freisshe queene
That mantel lappeth hire aboute,
Anon therof the fyr spong oute
And brente hir bothe fleissh and bon.
- 4210 Tho cam Medea to Jason
With bothe his sones on hire hond,
And seide, 'O thou of every lond
The moste untrewe creature,
Lo, this schal be thi forfeiture.'
- 4215 With that sche bothe his sones slough
Before his yhe, and he outdrouh
His swerd and wold have slayn hir tho,
Bot farewell, sche was ago
Unto Pallas the court above, *Pallas' court*
- 4220 Wher as sche pleigneth upon love,
As sche that was with that goddesse,
And he was left in gret destresse. *bewails*
- Confessor** Thus miht thou se what sorwe it doth
To swere an oth which is noght soth, *true*
4225 In loves cause namely.
Mi sone, be wel war forthi,
And kep that thou be noght forswore:
For this, which I have told tofore,
4229 Ovide telleth everydel." *well-cautioned
take care; perjured*
- Amans** "Mi fader, I may lieve it wel,
For I have herde it ofte seie *every part*

Hou Jason tok the flees awei
 Fro Colchos, bot yit herde I noght
 Be whom it was ferst thider broght.
 4235 And for it were good to hiere,
 If that you liste at mi preiere
 To telle, I wolde you beseche.”
Confessor “Mi sone, who that wole it seche,
 In bokes he mai finde it write;
 4240 And natholes, if thou wolt wite,
 In the manere as thou hast preid
 I schal thee telle hou it is seid.

[TALE OF PHRIXUS AND HELLE]

¶ The fame of thilke schepes fell, sheep's skin (see note)
 Which in Colchos, as it befell,
 4245 Was al of gold, schal nevere deie; it (the fleece)
 Wheroft thenke for to seie at that time
 Hou it cam ferst into that yle. Near
 Ther was a king in thilke whyle Was the recorded form of his name
 Towardes Grece, and Athemas was called
 4250 The cronique of his name was; By; fashioned
 And hadde a wif, which Philen hihte, two
 Be whom, so as fortune it dihete, those
 He hadde of children yonge tuo. boy
 Frixus, the ferste was of tho,
 4255 A knave child, riht fair withalle;
 A dowharter ek, the which men calle
 Hellen, he hadde be this wif.
 Bot for ther mai no mannes lif
 Endure upon this erthe hiere,
 4260 This worthi queene, as thou miht hiere,
 Er that the children were of age,
 Tok of hire ende the passage, (i.e., died)
 With gret worschipe and was begrave. And with honor was buried
 What thing it liketh god to have
 4265 It is gret reson to ben his; [the death] accepts
 Forthi this king, so as it is,
 With gret suffrance it underfongeth:
 And afterward, as him belongeth,
 Whan it was time for to wedde,
 4270 A newe wif he tok to bedde, was named
 Which Yno hihte and was a mayde,
 And ek the dowharter, as men saide,
 Of Cadmē, which a king also
 Was holde in thilke daies tho. Cadmus, who
then
wife
 4275 Whan Yno was the kinges make,

- Sche caste hou that sche mihte make
 These children to here fader lothe,
 And schope a wyle agein hem bothe,
 Which to the king was al unknowe.
- 4280 A yeer or tuo sche let do sowe
 The lond with sode whete aboute,
 Wheroft no corn mai springen oute;
 And thus be sleyhte and be covine
 Aros the derthe and the famine
- 4285 Thurghout the lond in such a wise,
 So that the king a sacrificise
 Upon the point of this destresse
 To Ceres, which is the goddesse
 Of corn, hath schape him for to give,
- 4290 To loke if it mai be forgive,
 The meschief which was in his lond.
 Bot sche, which knew tofor the hond
 The circumstance of al this thing,
 Agein the cominge of the king
- 4295 Into the temple, hath schape so,
 Of hire acord that alle tho
 Whiche of the temple prestes were
 Have seid and full declared there
 Unto the king, bot if so be
- 4300 That he delivere the contré
 Of Frixus and of Hellen bothe,
 With whom the goddes ben so wrothe,
 That whil tho children ben therinne,
 Such tilthe schal no man beginne,
- 4305 Wheroft to gete him eny corn.
 Thus was it seid, thus was it sworn
 Of all the prestes that ther are;
 And sche which causeth al this fare
 Seid ek therto what that sche wolde,
- 4310 And every man thanne after tolde
 So as the queene hem hadde preid.
 The king, which hath his ere leid,
 And lieveth al that evere he herde,
 Unto here tale thus ansuerde,
- 4315 And seith that levere him is to chese
 Hise children bothe for to lese,
 Than him and al the remenant
 Of hem whiche are aportenant
 Unto the lond which he schal kepe,
- 4320 And bad his wif to take kepe
 In what manere is best to done,
 That thei delivered weren sone
- deliberated*
hateful
conceived a deceit against them
- had sown*
boiled wheat
grain
deceit; fraud
- she (the stepmother)*
- Prior to*
contrived
- rid*
- cultivation*
- situation*
- ear applied*
believes
- preferable; choose*
lose
- take care*

- Out of this world. And sche anon
 Tuo men ordeigneth for to gon.
 4325 Bot ferst sche made hem for to swere
 That thei the children scholden bere
 Unto the see, that non it knowe,
 And hem therinne bothe throwe. sea
- The children to the see ben lad,
 4330 Wher in the wise as Yno bad ordered
 These men be redy for to do.
 Bot the goddesse which Juno
 Is hote, appiereth in the stede,
 4335 Is hote, appiereth in the stede, called; on the spot (i.e., immediately)
 And hath unto the men forbede
 That thei the children noght ne sle,
 Bot bad hem loke into the see should slay
 And taken hiede of that thei sihen.
 Ther swam a schep tofore here yhen,
 Whos flees of burned gold was al;
 4340 And this goddesse forth withal delay
 Comandeth that withoute lette
 Thei scholde anon these children sette
 Above upon this schepes bak;
 And al was do, riht as sche spak,
- 4345 Wheroft the men gon hom agein.
 And fell so, as the bokes sein,
 Hellen the yonge mayden tho,
 Which of the see was wobego, distressed
 For pure drede hire herte hath lore,
 4350 That fro the schep, which hath hire bore, broke her heart
 As sche that was swounende feint,
 Sche fell, and hath hirselfe dreint; [So] that
 With Frixus and this schep forth swam,
 Til he to th'yle of Colchos cam, drowned
- 4355 Where Juno the goddesse he fond,
 Which tok the schep unto the lond,
 And sette it there in such a wise
 As thou tofore hast herd devise,
 Wheroft cam after al the wo,
- 4360 Why Jason was forswore so
 Unto Medee, as it is spoke.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, who that hath tobroke
 His trouthe, as ye have told above,
 He is noght worthi for to love
 4365 Ne be beloved, as me semeth.
 Bot every newe love quemeth is pleasing
 To him which newefongel is. fickle
 And natheles nou after this,
 If that you list to taken hiede

- 4370 Upon mi schrifte to procede,
In loves cause agein the vice
Of covoitise and Avarice
What ther is more I wolde wite.” know
- Confessor** “Mi sone, this I finde write,
4375 Ther is yit on of thilke brood, one of that kind of person
Which only for the worldes good,
To make a tresor of moneie,
Put alle conscience aweie. wealth
Wheroft in thi confession aside
- 4380 The name and the condicion
I schal hierafterward declare,
Which makth on riche, another bare.” one person

[USURY]

- v. *Plus capit vsura sibi quam debetur, et illud
Fraude colorata sepe latenter agit.
Sic amor excessus quamsepe suos vt auarus
Spirat, et vnius tres capit ipse loco.*¹

- [Confessor]** “Upon the bench sittende on hih
With Avarice Usure I sih, saw
4385 Full clothed of his oghne suite,
Which after gold makth chace and suite
With his brocours, that renne aboute purveyors
Lich unto racches in a route. hunting hounds; pack
- 4389 Such lucre is non above grounde, (i.e., there is no wealth on earth)
¶ Which is noght of tho racches founde; hounds sniffed out
For wher thei se beyete sterte, wealth move
That schal hem in no wise asterte, escape
Bot thei it dryve into the net
Of lucre, which Usure hath set.
- 4395 Usure with the riche duelleth, buys
To al that evere he beith and selleth deceit
He hath ordeined of his sleyhte
Mesure double and double weyhte.
Outward he selleth be the lasse,
- 4400 And with the more he makth his tasse, loot (pile of money)
Wheroft his hous is full withinne.
He reccheth noght, be so he winne, cares; provided that
Though that ther lese ten or tuelve: Even though; ten or twelve [others] lose
His love is al toward himselfe

¹ Usury takes for itself more than it is owed, and often does so by concealed fraud. Thus love frequently pursues its excesses like an avaricious man, and takes three instead of one.

- 4405 And to non other, bot he se
 That he mai winne suche thre.
 For wher he schal oght give or lene,
 He wol ageinward take a bene,
 Ther he hath lent the smale pese. unless
three times as much
lend
in return; bean
Where; small peas
- 4410 And riht so ther ben manye of these
 Lovers, that thogh thei love a lyte,
 That scarsly wolde it weie a myte,
 Yit wolde thei have a pound again,
 As doth Usure in his bargain. weigh; mite
in exchange
So; business dealings
unequal usury
- 4415 Bot certes such usure unliche
 It falleth more unto the riche,
 Als wel of love as of beyete,
 Than unto hem that be noght grete,
 And, as who seith, ben simple and povere. possessions
- 4420 For sielden is whan thei recovere,
 Bot if it be thurgh gret decerte.
 And natheles men se poverte
 With porsuite and continuance
 Fulofte make a gret chevance it is seldom that
Unless; merit
- 4425 And take of love his avantage,
 Forth with the help of his brocage
 That maken seme wher it is noght.
 And thus fulofte is love boght
 For litel what, and mochel take, success
wins out in love
clandestine dealings
- 4430 With false weyhtes that thei make.
- Confessor** Nou, sone, of that I seide above
 Thou wost what Usure is of love:
 Tell me forthi what so thou wilt,
 4434 If thou therof hast eny gilt.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, nay, for ought I hiere
 For of tho pointz ye tolden hiere
 I wol you be mi trouthe assure,
 Mi weyhte of love and mi mesure
 Hath be mor large and mor certein weight
- 4440 Than evere I tok of love agein:
 For so yit couthe I nevere of sleyhte,
 To take agein be double weyhte
 Of love mor than I have give.
 For als so wiss mot I be schrive was never able by trickery
- 4445 And have remission of sinne,
 As so yit couthe I nevere winne,
 Ne yit so mochel, soth to sein,
 That evere I mihte have half agein
 Of so full love as I have lent. certainly
- 4450 And if myn happ were so wel went,
 That for the hole I mihte have half,

- Me thenkth I were a goddes half.
 For where Usure wole have double,
 Mi conscience is noght so trouble,
 4455 I biede nevere as to my del
 Bot of the hole an halvendel;
 That is non excess, as me thenketh.
 Bot natheles it me forthenketh,
 For wel I wot that wol noght be,
 4460 For every day the betre I se
 That hou so evere I give or lene
 Mi love in place ther I mene,
 For oght that evere I axe or crave,
 I can nothing ageinward have.
 4465 Bot yit for that I wol noght lete,
 What so befallе of mi beyete,
 That I ne schal hire give and lene
 Mi love and al mi thoght so clene,
 That toward me schal noght beleve.
 4470 And if sche of hire goode leve
 Rewarde wol me noght again,
 I wot the laste of my bargain
 Schal stonde upon so gret a lost,
 That I mai neveremor the cost
 4475 Recovere in this world til I die.
 So that touchende of this partie
 I mai me wel excuse and schal;
 And for to speke forth withal,
 If eny brocour for me wente,
 4480 That point cam nevere in myn entente.
 So that the more me merveillett,
 What thing it is mi ladi eilleth,
 That al myn herte and al my time
 Sche hath, and doth no betre bime.
 4485 I have herd seid that thoght is fre,
 And natheles in priveté
 To you, mi fader, that ben hiere
 Min hole schrifte for to hiere,
 I dar min herte wel desclose.
 4490 Touchende Usure, as I suppose,
 Which as ye telle in love is used,
 Mi ladi mai noght ben excused;
 That for o lokinge of hire ye
 Min hole herte til I dye
 4495 With al that evere I may and can
 Sche hath me wonne to hire man.
 Wheroft, me thenkth, good reson wolde
 That sche somdel rewarde scholde,
- on God's side (i.e., I should be content)*
- never demand; part
whole a half share*
- to me it is displeasing*
- ask
have in return
desist
possession*
- remain*
- bottom line*
- procurer traveled on my behalf*
- ails*
- by me*
- whole; hear*
- eye*

- And give a part, ther sche hath al.
 4500 I not what falle hierafter schal,
 Bot into nou yit dar I sein,
 Hire liste nevere give agein
 A goodli word in such a wise,
 Wheroft min hope miht arise,
 4505 Mi grete love to compense.
 I not hou sche hire conscience
 Excuse wole of this usure;
 Be large weyhte and gret mesure
 Sche hath mi love, and I have noght
 4510 Of that which I have diere boght,
 And with myn herte I have it paid.
 Bot al that is asyde laid,
 And I go loveles aboute.
 Hire oghite stonde in ful gret doute,
 4515 Til sche redresce such a sinne,
 That sche wole al mi love winne
 And giftth me noght to live by;
 Noght als so moche as 'grant mercy'
 Hir list to seie, of which I mihte
 4520 Som of mi grete peine allyhte.
 Bot of this point, lo, thus I fare
 As he that paith for his chaffare,
 And beith it diere, and yit hath non,
 So mot he nedes povere gon.
 4525 Thus beie I diere and have no love,
 That I ne mai noght come above
 To winne of love non encress.
 Bot I me wole natholes
 Touchende usure of love aquite;
 4530 And if mi ladi be to wyte,
 I preie to god such grace hir sende
 That sche be time it mot amende."
- Confessor** "Mi sone, of that thou hast ansuerd
 Touchende Usure I have al herd,
 4535 Hou thou of love hast wonne smale.
 Bot that thou tellest in thi tale
 And thi ladi therof accusest,
 Me thenkth tho wordes thou misusest.
 For be thin oghne knowlechinge
 4540 Thou seist hou sche for o lokinge
 Thin hole herte fro thee tok.
 Sche mai be such, that hire o lok
 Is worth thin herte manyfold;
 So hast thou wel thin herte sold,
 4545 Whan thou hast that is more worth.
- do not know; befall
 the present time*
- requite*
- dearly paid for*
- put aside*
- live on
 'thanks'
 by which
 alleviate*
- merchandise
 buys it dearly; nothing*
- blame*
- won very little*
- It seems to me those
 by
 one glance*
- worth many times [more than]*

- And ek of that thou tellest forth,
 Hou that hire weyhte of love unevene
 Is unto thin, under the hevene
 Stod nevere in evene that balance
 4550 Which stant in loves governance.
 Such is the statut of his lawe,
 That thogh thi love more drawe
 And peise in the balance more,
 Thou miht noght axe agein therfore
 4555 Of dueté, bot al of grace.
 For love is lord in every place,
 Ther mai no lawe him justefie
 Be reddour ne be compaignie,
 That he ne wole after his wille
 4560 Whom that him liketh spedē or spille.
- To love a man mai wel beginne,
 Bot whether he schal lese or winne,
 That wot no man til ate laste.
 Forthi coveite noght to faste,
 4565 Mi sone, bot abyd thin ende,
 Per cas al mai to goode wende.
 Bot that thou hast me told and said,
 Of o thing I am riht wel paid,
 That thou be sleyhte ne be guile
 4570 Of no brocour hast otherwhile
 Engined love, for such dede
 Is sore venged, as I rede.
- weights
govern him
By strictness; social pressure
to assist or destroy
lose
knows
too recklessly
wait your turn
turn
one; pleased
by deceit
matchmaker
Inveigled (Deceitful)

[TALE OF ECHO]

- Brocours of love that deceiven,
 No wonder is thogh thei receiven
 4575 After the wrong that thei decerven;
 For whom as evere that thei serven
 And do plesance for a whyle,
 Yit ate laste here oghne guile
 Upon here oghne hed descendeth,
 4580 Which God of his vengance sendeth,
 As be ensample of time go
 A man mai finde it hath be so.
 It fell somtime, as it was sene,
 The hihe goddesse and the queene
 4585 Juno tho hadde in compainie
 A maiden full of tricherie;
 For sche was evere in on accord
 With Jupiter, that was hire lord,
 To gete him othre loves newe,
- Procurers
In proportion to; deserve
their
(see note)

- 4590 Thurgh such brocage and was untrewe
Al otherwise than him nedeth. *procuring*
Bot sche, which of no schame dredeth,
With queinte wordes and with slyhe
Blente in such wise hir lady yhe, *deceitful; sly*
4595 As sche to whom that Juno triste,
So that therof sche nothing wiste. *Impaired . . . eye (Deceived her)*
Bot so privé mai be nothing,
That it ne comth to knowleching;
Thing don upon the derke nyht *trusted*
4600 Is after knowe on daies liht.
So it befell, that ate laste *knew*
Al that this slyhe maiden caste
Was overcast and overthowre. *secret*
For as the sothe mot be knowe, *contrived*
4605 To Juno was don understande
In what manere hir housebonde
With fals brocage hath take usure *must*
Of love mor than his mesure,
Whan he tok othre than his wif, *dishonest dealing; accepted*
4610 Wherof this mayden was gultif,
Which hadde ben of his assent.
And thus was al the game schent: *spoiled*
Sche soffreth him, as sche mot nede, *endured; had to do*
Bot the brocour of his misdede, *procurer*
4615 Sche which hir conseil gaf therto,
On hire is the vengance do.
For Juno with hire wordes hote, *angry*
This maiden, which Eccho was hote, *was named*
Reproveth and seith in this wise:
4620 'O traiteresse, of which servise
Hast thou thin oghne ladi served!
Thou hast gret peine wel deserved,
That thou canst maken it so queinte,
Thi slyhe wordes for to peinte *think*
- 4625 Towardes me, that am thi queene,
Wherof thou madest me to wene
That myn housbonde trewe were,
Whan that he loveth elleswhere,
Al be it so him nedeth noght.
- 4630 Bot upon thee it schal be boght,
Which art privé to tho doinges, *privy to those activities*
And me fulofte of thi lesinges *lies*
Deceived hast. Nou is the day
That I thi while aquite may,
- 4635 And for thou hast to me conceled
That my lord hath with othre deled, *your deceit*
because you have from me
had sexual relations

- I schal thee sette in such a kende, *circumstance*
 That evere unto the worldes ende
 Al that thou hierest thou schalt telle, *hear*
 4640 And clappe it out as doth a belle.'
 And with that word sche was forshape. *transformed*
 Ther may no vois hire mouth ascape;
 What man that in the wodes crieth,
 Withoute faile Eccho replieth,
 4645 And what word that him list to sein, *it pleases him to say*
 The same word sche seith agein.
 Thus sche, which whilom hadde leve *must remain*
 To duelle in chambre, mot beleve *hills*
 In wodes and on helles bothe,
 4650 For such brocage as wyves lothe, *their*
 Which doth here lordes hertes change
 And love in other place strange.
- Confessor** Forthi, if evere it so befallie,
 That thou, mi sone, amonges alle
 4655 Be wedded man, hold that thou hast,
 For thanne al other love is wast. *wasted*
 O wif schal wel to thee suffise;
 And thanne, if thou for covoitise
 Of love woldest axe more,
 4660 Thou scholdest don agein the lore *One*
 Of alle hem that trewe be."
- Amans** "Mi fader, as in this degré
 Mi conscience is noght accused,
 For I no such brocage have used,
 4665 Wheroft that lust of love is wonne.
 Forthi spek forth, as ye begonne,
 Of Avarice upon mi schrifte."
- Confessor** "Mi sone, I schal the branches schifte
 Be ordre so as thei ben set,
 4670 On whom no good is wel beset."

[PARSIMONY]

- vi. *Pro verbis verba, munus pro munere reddi
 Convenit, vt pondus equa statera gerat.
 Propterea cupido non dat sua dona Cupido,
 Nam qui nulla serit, gramina nulla metet.¹*

¹ *It is fitting to pay back words with words, and a gift with a gift, so that balanced scales carry the weight. Wherefore Cupid (Cupido) does not give his gifts to the avaricious (cupido); for whoever sows nothing, harvests no hay.*

[Confessor] “Blinde Avarice of his lignage

- For conseil and for cousinage, kinship
 To be withholde agein largesse,
 Hath on, whos name is seid Skarsnesse,
 4675 The which is kepere of his hous,
 And is so thurghout averous, one; called; Parsimony
 That he no good let out of honde.
 Thogh God Himself it wolde fonde,
 Of gifte scholde He nothing have; seek
 4680 And if a man it wolde crave,
 He moste thanne faile nede,
 Wher God Himselfe mai noght sped. succeed
 And thus Skarsnesse in every place
 Be reson mai no thonk porchace,
 4685 And natholes in his degree
 Above alle othre most privé
 With Avarice stant he this.
 For he governeth that ther is
 In ech astat of his office
 4690 After the reule of thilke vice:
 He takth, he kepth, he halt, he bint, binds
 That lihtere is to fle the flint flay (chip) the flint
 Than gete of him in hard or neisshe soft
 Only the value of a reysshe rush
 4695 Of good in helpinge of another,
 Noght though it were his oghne brother.
 For in the cas of gifte and lone
 Stant every man for him alone,
 Him thenkth of his unkindeschipe
 4700 That him nedeth no felaschipe.
 Be so the bagge and he acorden, moneybag (purse)
 Him reccheth noght what men recorden cares not; remember
 Of him, or it be evel or good. whether; or
 For al his trust is on his good, possessions
 4705 So that alone he falleth ofte, thinks to stand
 Whan he best weneth stonde alofte,
 Als wel in love as other wise;
 For love is evere of som reprise cost
 To him that wole his love holde.
 4710 Forthi, mi sone, as thou art holde,
 Touchende of this tell me thi schrifte:
 Hast thou be scars or large of gifte stingy; generous
 Unto thi love, whom thou servest?
 For after that thou wel deservest
 4715 Of gifte, thou miht be the bet;
 For that good holde I wel beset,
 For why thou miht the betre fare.

- Thanne is no wisdom for to spare,
For thus men sein, in every nede
4720 He was wys that ferst made mede.
For whereas mede mai noght spedē,
I not what helpeth other dede.
Fulofte he faileth of his game
That wol with ydel hand reclame
4725 His hauk, as many a nyce doth.
Forthi, mi sone, tell me soth
And sei the trouthe, if thou hast be
Unto thi love or skars or fre.”
- Confessio Amantis** “Mi fader, it hath stonde thus,
4730 That if the tresor of Cresus
And al the gold Octovien,
Forth with the richesse Yndien
Of perles and of riche stones,
Were al togedre myn at ones,
4735 I sette it at no more acompte
Than wolde a bare straw amonte,
To give it hire al in a day,
Be so that to that suete may
I myhte like or more or lesse.
4740 And thus because of my scarsnesse
Ye mai wel understande and lieve
That I schal noght the worse achieve
The pourpos which is in my thoght.
Bot yit I gaf hir nevere noght,
4745 Ne therto dorste a profre make;
For wel I wot sche wol noght take,
And give wol sche noght also,
She is eschu of bothe tuo.
And this I trowe be the skile
4750 Towardes me: for sche ne wile
That I have eny cause of hope,
Noght also mochel as a drope.
Bot toward othre, as I mai se,
Sche takth and giftth in such degré,
4755 That as be weie of frendlithiede
Sche can so kepe hir wommanhiede,
That every man spekth of hir wel.
Bot sche wole take of me no del,
And yit sche wot wel that I wolde
4760 Give and do bothe what I scholde
To plesen hire in al my myht.
Be reson this wot every wyht,
For that mai be no weie asterte:
Ther sche is maister of the herte,
- gave gifts
reward; succeed
know not*
- fool
truthfully*
- either stingy; liberal*
- amount to a barren straw*
- Provided that; sweet maiden*
- stinginess
believe*
- averse to
case*
- In regard to me*
- drop*
- part*
- knows; person
avoided
Where*

- 4765 Sche mot be maister of the good.
For God wot wel that al my mod
And al min herte and al mi thought
And al mi good, whil I have oght,
Als freliche as God hath it give,
4770 It schal ben hires, while I live,
Riht as hir list hirself commande.
So that it nedeth no demande,
To axe of me if I be scars
To love, for as to tho pars
4775 I wole ansuere and seie no.”

Confessor “Mi sone, that is riht wel do.
For oftentimes of scarsnesse
It hath be sen, that for the lesse
Is lost the more, as thou schalt hiere
4780 A tale lich to this matiere.

*oak; miserly
details*

[TALE OF BABIO AND CROCEUS]

- | | | |
|------|---|----------------------------------|
| | Skarsnesse and love acorden nevere,
For every thing is wel the leve
Whan that a man hath boght it diere: | <i>more desired</i> |
| 4784 | And for to speke in this matiere,

For sparinge of a litel cost
Fulofte time a man hath lost
The large cote for the hod. | <i>(see note)</i> |
| | What man that scars is of his good
And wol noght give, he schal noght take: | <i>whole coat; hood</i> |
| 4790 | With gifte a man mai undertake
The hihe God to plese and queme,
With gifte a man the world mai deme;
For every creature bore, | <i>satisfy</i> |
| | If thou him give, is glad therfore,
And every gladschipe, as I finde,
Is confort unto loves kinde
And causest ofte a man to spedē. | <i>be judge of</i> |
| 4795 | So was he wys that ferst gaf mede,
For mede kepeth love in house; | <i>born</i> |
| | Bot wher the men ben coveitouse
And sparen for to give a part,
Thei knowe noght Cupides art. | <i>nature</i> |
| 4800 | For his fortune and his aprise
Desdeigneth alle coveitise
And hateth alle nygardiē. | <i>prosper</i> |
| | And for to loke of this partie,
A soth ensample, hou it is so, | <i>reward</i> |
| 4805 | | <i>reward keeps love at home</i> |
| | | <i>renown</i> |

- I finde write of Babio;
 Which hadde a love at his menage, *home*
 4810 Ther was non fairere of hire age,
 And hihite Viola be name; *was called*
 Which full of youthe and ful of game
 Was of hirself, and large and fre, *generous; kindhearted*
 Bot such another chinche as he
 4815 Men wisten noght in al the lond, *miser*
 And hadde affaited to his hond
 His servant, the which Spodius
 Was hote. And in this wise thus
 The worldes good of sufficance *might not know*
 4820 Was had, bot likinge and plesance, *trained*
 Of that belongeth to richesse
 Of love, stod in gret destresse; *enjoyment*
 So that this yonge lusty wyht
 Of thing which fell to loves riht *person*
 4825 Was evele served overal,
 That sche was wobego withal, *woebegone*
 Til that Cupide and Venus eke *also*
 A medicine for the seke
 Ordeigne wolden in this cas.
 4830 So as fortune thanne was,
 Of love upon the destiné
 It fell, riht as it scholde be,
 A freissh, a fre, a frendly man
 That noght of Avarice can, *nothing; knows*
 4835 Which Croceus be name hihite, *was called*
 Toward this swete caste his sihte,
 And ther sche was cam in presence.
 Sche sih him large of his despence, *generous*
 And amorous and glad of chiere,
 4840 So that hir liketh wel to hiere
 The goodly wordes whiche he seide;
 And therupon of love he preide,
 Of love was al that he mente, *intended*
 To love and for sche scholde assente,
 4845 He gaf hire giftes evere among.
 Bot for men sein that mede is strong, *repeatedly*
 It was wel seene at thilke tyde; *reward; powerful*
 For as it scholde of ryht betyde, *this time*
 This Viola largesce hath take *fittingly happen*
 4850 And the nygard sche hath forsake. *miser*
 Of Babio sche wol no more,
 For he was grucchende everemore; *complaining*
 Ther was with him non other fare
 Bot for to prinche and for to spare, *scrimp*

- 4855 Of worldes muk to gete encress.
So goth the wrecche loveles,
Bejaped for his skarceté,
And he that large was and fre
And sette his herte to despende,
This Croceus, the bowe bende,
Which Venus tok him for to holde,
And schotte als ofte as evere he wolde.
Lo, thus departeth love his lawe,
That what man wol noght be felawe
To give and spende, as I thee telle,
He is noght worthi for to duelle
In loves court to be relieved.
Forthi, my sone, if I be lieved,
4869 Thou schalt be large of thi despence.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, in mi conscience
If ther be eny thing amis,
I wol amende it after this,
Toward mi love namely.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, wel and redely
4875 Thou seist, so that wel paid withal
I am, and forthere if I schal
Unto thi schrifte specefie
Of Avarices progenie
What vice suieth after this,
4880 Thou schalt have wonder hou it is,
Among the folk in eny regne
That such a vice myhte regne,
Which is comun at alle assaies,
As men mai finde nou adaiers.”

[INGRATITUDE]

- vii. *Cuncta creatura, deus et qui cuncta creauit,
Dampnant ingrati dicta que facta viri.
Non dolor a longe stat, quo sibi talis amicam
Traxit, et in fine deserit esse suam.*¹

- [Confessor]** “The vice lik unto the fend,
4886 Which nevere yit was mannes frend,
And cleped is Unkindeschipe,
Of covine and of felaschipe

dross; increase

generous; liberal

bent the bow [of Cupid]

distributes

*if I am to be believed
generous in expenditure*

under any circumstance

¹ *Every creature, God, and all that he created, condemn the words and deeds of an ungrateful man. Sorrow does not stand far off from such a one who has drawn to himself a girlfriend but ultimately fails to belong to her as well.*

*Ingratitude
(see note)*

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| 4890 | With Avarice he is withhold.
Him thenkth he scholde noght ben holde
Unto the moder which him bar;
Of him mai nevere man be war,
He wol noght knowe the merite,
For that he wolde it noght aquite; | <i>loyal</i> |
| 4895 | Which in this world is mochel used,
And fewe ben therof excused.
To telle of him is endeles,
Bot this I seie natheles,
Wher as this vice comth to londe, | <i>acknowledge</i>
<i>does not want to</i> |
| 4900 | Ther takth no man his thonk on honde;
Thogh he with alle his myhtes serve,
He schal of him no thonk deserve. | <i>occurs</i> |
| 4905 | He takth what eny man wol give,
Bot whil he hath o day to live,
He wol nothing rewarde agein; | <i>gain</i> |
| 4910 | He gruccheth for to give o grein,
Wher he hath take a berne full.
That makth a kinde herte dull,
To sette his trust in such frendschipe, | <i>as much as a barn will hold</i> |
| 4915 | Ther as he fint no kindeschipe;
And for to speke wordes pleine,
Thus hiere I many a man compleigne,
That nou on daies thou schalt finde | |
| 4920 | At nede fewe frendes kinde;
What thou hast don for hem tofore,
It is forgoete, as it were lore.
The bokes speken of this vice, | <i>living</i> |
| 4925 | And telle hou God of His justice,
Be weie of kinde and ek nature
And every lifissh creature,
The lawe also, who that it kan, | |
| 4930 | Thei dampnen an unkinde man.
It is al on to seie unkinde
As thing which don is agein kinde,
For it with kinde nevere stod | <i>define</i> |
| 4935 | A man to yelden evel for good.
For who that wolde taken hede,
A beste is glad of a good dede,
And loveth thilke creature | |
| 4940 | After the lawe of his nature
Which doth him ese. And for to se
Of this matiere Auctorité,
Fulofte time it hath befallen; | <i>According to</i>
<i>[That person or creature] who makes him content</i> |
| 4945 | Wherof a tale amonges alle, | |

- 4935 Which is of olde ensamplerie,
I thenke for to specefie.

[TALE OF ADRIAN AND BARDUS]

- To speke of an unkinde man,
I finde hou whilom Adrian,
Of Rome which a gret lord was,
4940 Upon a day as he per cas
To wode in his huntinge wente, (see note)
It hapneth at a soudein wente,
After his chace as he poursuith,
Thurgh happ, the which no man eschuieth, chance
4945 He fell unwar into a pet, pit
Wher that it mihte noght be let.
The pet was dep and he fell lowe,
That of his men non myhte knowe
Wher he becam, for non was nyh
4950 Which of his fall the meschief syh. Where he had gone
And thus alone ther he lay Who
Clepende and criende al the day all alone
For socour and deliverance,
Til agein eve it fell per chance,
4955 A while er it began to nyhte, Calling out (Begging)
A povere man, which Bardus hihte,
Cam forth walkende with his asse,
And hadde gadred him a tasse
Of grene stickes and of dreie
4960 To selle, who that wolde hem beie, buy them
As he which hadde no liflode,
Bot whanne he myhte such a lode
To toune with his asse carie.
And as it fell him for to tarie
4965 That ilke time nyh the pet, pause
And hath the trusse faste knet, near the pit
He herde a vois, which cride dimme,
And he his ere to the brimme
Hath leid, and herde it was a man,
4970 Which seide, 'Ha, help hier Adrian,
And I wol given half mi good.'
- The povere man this understod,
As he that wolde gladly winne,
And to this lord which was withinne
4975 He spak and seide, 'If I thee save,
What sikernesse schal I have
Of covenant, that afterward security
agreement

- Thou wolt me give such reward
As thou behihest nou tofore?' *promised a moment ago*
- 4980 That other hath his othes swore
Be hevene and be the goddes alle,
If that it myhte so befall
That he out of the pet him broghte,
Of all the goodes whiche he oghte *owned*
4985 He schal have evene halvendel. *equal half*
This Bardus seide he wolde wel;
And with this word his asse anon *gladly*
He let untrusse, and therupon
Doun goth the corde into the pet, *unloaded*
4990 To which he hath at the ende knet *tied*
A staf, wherby, he seide, he wolde
That Adrian him scholde holde.
Bot it was tho per chance falle,
Into that pet was also falle, *that moment*
- 4995 An ape, which at thilke throwe,
Whan that the corde cam doun lowe,
Al sodeinli thereto he skipte
And it in bothe hise armes clipte. *grasped*
And Bardus with his asse anon
- 5000 Him hath updrawe, and he is gon. *[the ape] departed*
Bot whan he sih it was an ape,
He wende al hadde ben a jape *thought; delusion*
Of faerie, and sore him dradde: *he was sorely afraid*
And Adrian eftstone gradde *impatiently cried out (shrieked/implored) again*
- 5005 For help, and cride and preide faste,
And he eftstone his corde caste; *again*
Bot whan it cam unto the grounde,
A gret serpent it hath bewounde, *entwined*
The which Bardus anon up drouh. *at once drew up*
- 5010 And thanne him thoghte wel ynouh *it seemed to him clear*
It was fantosme, bot yit he herde
The vois, and he thereto ansuerde,
'What wiht art thou in Goddes name?' *creature*
- 5015 'I am,' quod Adrian, 'the same,
Whos good thou schalt have evene half.' *on God's behalf*
- Quod Bardus, 'Thanne a Goddes half
The thridde time assaie I schal,' *try*
And caste his corde forth withal
Into the pet, and whan it cam
- 5020 To him, this lord of Rome it nam, *took*
And therupon him hath adresced, *prepared himself*
And with his hand fulofte blessed, *crossed himself*
And thanne he bad to Bardus hale. *haul*
And he, which understod his tale, *who; words*

- 5025 Between him and his asse al softe
 Hath drawe and set him up alofte
 Withouten harm al esely.
 He seith noght ones 'grant merci,'
 Bot strauhete him forth to the cité,
 5030 And let this povere Bardus be.
 And natheles this simple man
 His covenant, so as he can,
 Hath axed; and that other seide,
 If so be that he him umbreide
 5035 Of oght that hath be speke or do,
 It schal ben venged on him so,
 That him were betre to be ded.
 And he can tho non other red,
 Bot on his asse agein he caste
 5040 His trusse, and hieth homward faste.
 And whan that he cam hom to bedde,
 He tolde his wif hou that he spedde.
 Bot finaly to speke oght more
 Unto this lord he dradde him sore,
 5045 So that a word ne dorste he sein.
 And thus upon the morwe agein,
 In the manere as I recorde,
 Forth with his asse and with his corde
 To gadre wode, as he dede er,
 5050 He goth; and whan that he cam ner
 Unto the place where he wolde,
 He hath his ape anon beholde,
 Which hadde gadred al aboute
 Of stickes hiere and there a route,
 5055 And leide hem redy to his hond,
 Wheroft he made his trasse and bond;
 Fro dai to dai and in this wise
 This ape profreth his servise,
 So that he hadde of wode ynouh.
 5060 Upon a time and as he drouh
 Toward the wode, he sih besyde
 The grete gastli serpent glyde,
 Til that sche cam in his presence,
 And in hir kinde a reverence
 5065 Sche hath him do, and forth withal
 A ston mor briht than a cristall
 Out of hir mouth tofore his weie
 Sche let doun falle, and wente aweie,
 For that he schal noght ben adrad.
 5070 Tho was this povere Bardus glad,
 Thonkende God, and to the ston
- gently*
- (Adrian); gramercy (thanks)
 proceeded*
- demanded
 reproached (censured)
 been said or done*
- knows then no other course of action*
- hastened quickly home*
- gather wood; did before*
- wished [to go]*
- great pile*
- truss*
- wood aplenty*
- So that*
- Thanking*

- He goth and takth it up anon, *lifts*
 And hath gret wonder in his wit
 Hou that the beste him hath aquit, *repaid*
 5075 Wher that the mannes sone hath failed,
 For whom he hadde most travailed. *worked hardest*
 Bot al he putte in Goddes hond,
 And torneth hom, and what he fond
 Unto his wif he hath it schewed;
 5080 And thei, that weren bothe lewed, *uneducated*
 Acorden that he scholde it selle. *Agree*
 And he no lengere wolde duelle, *did not tarry*
 Bot forth anon upon the tale *according to this plan*
 The ston he profreth to the sale;
 5085 And riht as he himself it sette, *brought*
 The jueler anon forth fette
 The gold and made his paientment.
 Theroft was no delaientment!
 Thus whan this ston was boght and sold,
 5090 Homward with joie manyfold
 This Bardus goth; and whan he cam *took*
 Hom to his hous and that he nam
 His gold out of his purs, withinne
 He fond his ston also therinne,
 5095 Wheroft for joie his herte pleide,
 Unto his wif and thus he seide,
 'Lo, hier my gold, lo, hier mi ston!'
 His wif hath wonder therupon,
 And axeth him hou that mai be.
 5100 'Nou be mi trouthe I not,' quod he, *I do not know*
 'Bot I dar swere upon a bok, *Bible*
 That to my marchant I it tok,
 And he it hadde whan I wente:
 So knowe I noght to what entente
 5105 It is nou hier, bot it be grace. *here, unless*
 Forthi morwe in other place
 I wole it fonde for to selle, *attempt*
 And if it wol noght with him duelle,
 Bot crepe into mi purs agein,
 5110 Than dar I saufly swere and sein, *power*
 It is the vertu of the ston.'
 The morwe cam, and he is gon
 To seche aboute in other stede *place*
 His ston to selle, and he so dede,
 5115 And lefte it with his chapman there. *merchant*
 Bot whan that he cam elleswhere,
 In presence of his wif at hom,
 Out of his purs and that he nom *took*

- His gold, he fond his ston withal.
 5120 And thus it fell him overal,
 Where he it solde in sondri place,
 Such was the fortune and the grace.
 Bot so wel may nothing ben hidd,
 That it nys ate laste kidd: *happened to him repeatedly*
 5125 This fame goth aboute Rome
 So ferforth, that the wordes come
 To th'emerour Justinian,
 And he let sende for the man,
 And axede him hou that it was.
 5130 And Bardus tolde him al the cas,
 Hou that the worm and eke the beste,
 Althogh thei maden no beheste,
 His travail hadden wel aquit.
 Bot he which hadde a mannes wit,
 5135 And made his covenant be mouthe
 And swor therto al that he couthe
 To parte and given half his good,
 Hath nou forgete hou that it stod,
 As he which wol no trouthe holde. *serpent; also; ape (beast)*
 5140 This emperour al that he tolde
 Hath herd, and thilke unkindenesse
 He seide he wolde himself redresse.
 And thus in court of juggement
 This Adrian was thanne assent, *by*
 5145 And the querele in audience
 Declared was in the presence
 Of th'emerour and many mo; *knew how to do*
 Wheroft was mochel speche tho
 And gret wondringe among the press. *faith*
 5150 Bot ate laste natholes
 For the partie which hath pleigned
 The lawe hath diemed and ordeigned
 Be hem that were avised wel,
 That he schal have the halvendel *summoned*
 5155 Thurghout of Adrianes good.
 And thus of thilke unkinde blod
 Stant the memoire into this day,
 Wheroft that every wysman may
 Ensamplen him, and take in mynde *decided (arbitrated)*
 5160 What schame it is to ben unkinde;
 Agein the which reson debateth,
 And every creature it hateth. *By those who; well informed*
Confessor Forthi, mi sone, in thin office
 I rede fle that ilke vice. *half part*
 5165 For riht as the cronique seith *unnatural person*
advise [you] to flee; same

- Of Adrian, hou he his feith
 Forgat for worldes covoitise,
 Fulofte in such a maner wise
 Of lovers nou a man mai se
 5170 Full manye that unkinde be.
 For wel behote and evele laste,
 That is here lif; for ate laste,
 Whan that thei have here wille do,
 Here love is after sone ago.
- 5175 What seist thou, sone, to this cas?”
- Amans** “Mi fader, I wol seie ‘Helas
 That evere such a man was bore,’
 Which whan he hath his trouthe suore
 And hath of love what he wolde,
- 5180 That he at eny time scholde
 Evere after in his herte finde
 To falsen and to ben unkinde.
 Bot, fader, as touchende of me,
 I mai noght stonde in that degré;
- 5185 For I tok nevere of love why
 That I ne mai wel go therby
 And do my profit elles where,
 For eny sped I finde there.
 I dar wel thenken al aboute,
- 5190 Bot I ne dar noght speke it oute;
 And if I dorste, I wolde pleigne
 That sche for whom I soffre peine
 And love hir evere aliche hote,
 That nouther give ne behote
- 5195 In rewardinge of mi servise
 It list hire in no maner wise.
 I wol noght say that sche is kinde,
 And for to sai sche is unkinde,
 That dar I noght; bot God above,
- 5200 Which demeth every herte of love,
 He wot that on myn oghne side
 Schal non unkindeschipe abide.
 If it schal with mi ladi duelle,
 Theroft dar I no more telle.
- 5205 Nou, goode fader, as it is,
 Tell me what thenketh you of this?”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, of that unkindeschipe,
 The which toward thi ladischipe
 Thou pleignest, for sche wol thee noght,
 5210 Thou art to blamen of that thoght.
 For it mai be that thi desir,
 Thogh it brenne evere as doth the fyr,
- promised; evilly concluded
 in the end
 done their will
 Their; soon gone*
- Alas*
- faith sworn*
- [any reason] why*
- complain*
- continuously passionate
 to give; to promise*
- judges
 knows; own*

- Per cas to hire honour missit,
Or elles time com noght yit,
5215 Which standt upon thi destiné.
Forthi, mi sone, I rede thee,
Thenk wel, what evere thee befalle;
For no man hath his lustes alle.
Bot as thou toldest me before
5220 That thou to love art noght forswore,
And hast don non unkindenesse,
Thou miht therof thi grace blesse.
And lef noght that continuance;
For ther mai be no such grevance
5225 To love, as is unkindeschipe.
Wherofto kepe thi worschipe,
So as these olde bokes tale,
I schal thee telle a redi tale:
Nou herkne and be wel war therby,
5230 For I wol telle it openly.

[TALE OF THESEUS AND ARIADNE]

- Mynos, as telleth the poete,
The which whilom was king of Crete,
A sone hadde and Androchée
5235  He hihte. And so befell that he
Unto Athenes for to lere
Was send, and so he bare him there,
For that he was of hih lignage,
Such pride he tok in his corage,
5240 That he forgeten hath the scoles,
And in riote among the foles
He dede manye thinges wronge;
And useth thilke lif so longe,
Til ate laste of that he wroghte
He fond the meschief which he soghte,
5245 Wherofto it fell that he was slain.
His fader, which it herde sain,
Was wroth, and al that evere he mihte,
Of men of armes he him dighte
A strong pouer, and forth he wente
5250 Unto Athenys, where he brente
The pleine contré al aboute.
The cites stode of him in doute,
As thei that no defence hadde
Agein the pouer which he ladde.
5255 Egeus, which was there king,
His conseil tok upon this thing,

is inappropriate

advise you

all his desires

leave

honor

relate

pithy story

was called (see note)
study

dissipation; fools

assembled
entire
fear

- For he was thanne in the cité,
 So that of pes into tretee
 Betwen Mynos and Egeus
- 5260 Thei felle, and ben acorded thus;
 That king Mynos fro yer to yeere
 Receive schal, as thou schalt here,
 Out of Athenys for truage
 Of men that were of myhti age
- 5265 Persones nyne, of whiche he schal
 His wille don in special
 For vengance of his sones deth.
 Non other grace ther ne geth,
 Bot for to take the juise;
- 5270 And that was don in such a wise,
 Which stod upon a wonder cas.
 For thilke time so it was,
 Wherof that men yit rede and singe,
 King Mynos hadde in his kepinge
- 5275 A cruel monstre, as seith the geste:
 For he was half man and half beste,
 And Minotaurus he was hote,
 Which was begete in a riote
 Upon Pasiphe, his oghne wif,
- 5280 Whil he was oute upon the strif
 Of thilke grete siege at Troie.
 Bot sche, which lost hath alle joie,
 Whan that sche syh this monstre bore,
 Bad men ordeigne anon therfore.
- 5285 And fell that ilke time thus,
 Ther was a clerk, on Dedalus,
 Which hadde ben of hire assent
 Of that hir world was so miswent;
 And he made of his oghne wit,
- 5290 Wherof the remembrance is yit,
 For Minotaure such an hous
 Which was so strange and merveilous,
 That what man that withinne wente,
 Ther was so many a sondri wente,
- 5295 That he ne scholde noght come oute,
 Bot gon amased al aboute.
 And in this hous to loke and warde
 Was Minotaurus put in warde,
 That what lif that therinne cam,
- 5300 Or man or beste, he overcam
 And slow and fedde him therupon.
 And in this wise manye on
 Out of Athenys for truage
- peace; treaty*
- hear
tribute*
- gets
be subjected to the judgment
manner*
- story*
- called
in an act of debauchery*
- war*
- born
Ordered; deal [with it] quickly*
- one
in agreement with her
had so gone astray (lit., become crooked)*
- diverse turn*
- bewildered
to keep watch and to guard
keeping*
- killed*
- tribute*

- Devoured weren in that rage.
- 5305 For every yeer thei schope hem so,
Thei of Athenys, er thei go
Toward that ilke wofull chance,
As it was set in ordinance,
Upon fortune here lot thei caste; *their lot*
- 5310 Til that Theseus ate laste,
Which was the kinges sone there,
Amonges othre that ther were
In thilke yeer, as it befell,
The lot upon his chance fell.
- 5315 He was a worthi kniht withalle;
And whan he sih this chance falle,
He ferde as thogh he tok non hiede,
Bot al that evere he mihte spiede
With him and with his felaschipe. *behaved*
- 5320 Forth into Crete he goth be schipe,
Wher that the king Mynos he soghte,
And profreth all that he him oghte
Upon the point of here accord. *would further everything he could
On behalf of himself and of*
- 5325 This sterne king, this cruel lord,
Tok every day on of the nyne
And put him to the discipline
Of Minotaure, to be devoured.
Bot Theseus was so favoured,
That he was kept til ate laste. *their agreement*
- 5330 And in the meene while he caste
What thing him were best to do.
And fell that Adriagne tho, *then*
Which was the dowhter of Mynos, *Who*
And hadde herd the worthi los *noble fame*
- 5335 Of Theseus and of his myht
And syh he was a lusti kniht,
Hire hole herte on him sche leide, *whole*
And he also of love hir preide,
So ferforth that thei were al on. *of one accord*
- 5340 And sche ordeigneth thanne anon
In what manere he scholde him save,
And schop so that sche dede him have
A clue of thred, of which withinne
Ferst ate dore he schal beginne *save himself*
- 5345 contrived; caused him to have
ball (clew) of thread
- 5345 With him to take that on ende,
That whan he wolde ageinward wende,
He mihte go the same weie.
And over this, so as I seie,
Of pich sche toke him a pelote, *one*
- 5350 Of pitch sche toke him a pelote,
The which he scholde into the throte *pitch; gave; ball*

- Of Minotaure caste rihte.
 Such wepne also for him sche dighte,
 That he be reson mai noght faile
 To make an ende of his bataile.
- 5355 For sche him tawhte in sondri wise,
 Til he was knowe of thilke emprise,
 Hou he this beste schulde quelle.
 And thus, schort tale for to telle,
 So as this maide him hadde tawht,
- 5360 Theseus with this monstre fawht,
 Smot of his hed, the which he nam,
 And be the thred, so as he cam,
 He goth agein, til he were oute.
 Tho was gret wondre al aboute.
- 5365 Mynos the tribut hath relesSED,
 And so was al the werre cessed
 Betwen Athene and hem of Crete.
- Bot now to speke of thilke suete,
 Whos beauté was withoute wane,
- 5370 This faire maiden Adriane,
 Whan that sche sih Theseus sound,
 Was nevere yit upon the ground
 A gladder wyht than sche was tho.
 Theseus duelte a dai or tuo
- 5375 Wher that Mynos gret chiere him dede.
 Theseus in a privé stede
 Hath with this maiden spoke and rouned,
 That sche to him was abandouned
 In al that evere that sche couthe,
- 5380 So that of thilke lusty youthe
 Al prively betwen hem tweie
 The ferste flour he tok aweie.
 For he so faire tho behihte
 That evere, whil he live mihte,
- 5385 He scholde hire take for his wif,
 And as his oghne hertes lif
 He scholde hire love and trouthe bere;
 And sche, which mihte noght forbere,
 So sore loveth him agein,
- 5390 That what as evere he wolde sein
 With al hire herte sche believeth.
 And thus his pourpos he achieveth,
 So that assured of his trouthe
 With him sche wente, and that was routhe.
- 5395 Fedra hire yonger soster eke,
 A lusti maide, a sobre, a meke,
 Fulfilde of alle curtesie,
- weapon; prepared*
beast; kill
Cut off; took by
dear woman diminishment
saw
place whispered surrendered to him [sexually]
virginity prettily then promised
faith maintain resist
a pity
courtly ideals

- For sosterhode and compainie
Of love, which was hem betuene,
5400 To sen hire soster mad a queene
Hire fader lefte and forth sche wente
With him, which al his ferste entente
Forgat withinne a litel throwe,
So that it was al overthrowe,
5405 Whan sche best wende it scholde stonde. *short time*
The schip was blowe fro the londe,
Wherin that thei seilende were;
This Adriagne hath mochel fere
Of that the wynd so loude bleu,
5410 As sche which of the see ne kneu,
And preide for to reste a whyle.
And so fell that upon an yle,
Which Chyo hihte, thei ben drive,
Where he to hire his leve hath give
5415 That sche schal londe and take hire reste.
Bot that was nothing for the beste,
For whan sche was to londe broght,
Sche, which that time thoghte noght
Bot alle trouthe, and tok no kepe,
5420 Hath leid hire softe for to slepe,
As sche which longe hath ben forwacched;
Bot certes sche was evely macched
And fer from alle loves kinde.
For more than the beste unkinde
5425 Theseus, which no trouthe kepte,
Whil that this yonge ladi slepte,
Fulfilde of his unkindeschipe
Hath al forgete the goodschipe
Which Adriane him hadde do,
5430 And bad unto the schipmen tho
Hale up the seal and noght abyde,
And forth he goth the same tyde
Toward Athene, and hire alonde
He lefte, which lay nyh the stronde
5435 Slepende, til that sche awok.
Bot whan that sche cast up hire lok
Toward the stronde and sih no wyht,
Hire herte was so sore aflyht,
That sche ne wiste what to thinke,
5440 Bot drouh hire to the water brink,
Wher sche behield the see at large.
Sche sih no schip, sche sih no barge
Als ferforth as sche mihte kenne.
'Ha lord,' sche seide, 'which a senne,
(i.e., Ariadne); thought
Because; loudly blew
knew nothing
island
without sleep
badly married (matched)
Haul; not wait
beach
saw no one
frightened
knew not
sea
descry (perceive)
sin

- 5445 As al the world schal after hiere,
 Upon this woful womman hiere
 This worthi kniht hath don and wroght!
 I wende I hadde his love boght,
 And so deserved ate nede, *thought; secured
in situations of need*
- 5450 Whan that he stod upon his drede,
 And ek the love he me behihte.
 It is gret wonder hou he mihte
 Towardes me nou ben unkinde,
 And so to lete out of his mynde *promised*
- 5455 Thing which he seide his oghne mouth. *from his own mouth*
 Bot after this whan it is couth
 And drawe into the worldes fame,
 It schal ben hindringe of his name:
 For wel he wot and so wot I, *knows; know*
- 5460 He gaf his trouthe bodily,
 That he myn honour scholde kepe.
 And with that word sche gan to wepe,
 And sorweth more than ynouh:
 Hire faire tresces sche todrouh, *faith personally
enough
tore*
- 5465 And with hirself tok such a strif
 That sche betwen the deth and lif
 Swounende lay fulofte among.
 And al was this on him along,
 Which was to love unkinde so, *because of him*
- 5470 Wheroft the wrong schal everemo
 Stonde in croniue of remembrance.
 And ek it asketh a vengance
 To ben unkinde in loves cas,
 So as Theseus thanne was, *demands*
- 5475 Althogh he were a noble kniht.
 For he the lawe of loves riht
 Forfeted hath in alle weie,
 That Adriagne he putte awei,
 Which was a gret unkinde dede. *every way
In that*
- 5480 And after this, so as I rede,
 Fedra, the which hir soster is,
 He tok in stede of hire, and this
 Fel afterward to mochel teene. *grief*
 For thilke vice of which I meene,
- 5485 Unkindeschipe, where it falleth,
 The trouthe of mannes herte it palleth,
 That he can no good dede aquite.
 So mai he stonde of no merite
 Towardes God, and ek also *diminishes*
- 5490 Men clepen him the worldes fo;
 For he no more than the fend *call; enemy
fiend*

- Unto non other man is frend,
Bot al toward himself alone.
Forthi, mi sone, in thi persone
5495 This vice above alle othre fle.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, as ye techen me,
I thenke don in this matiere.
Bot over this nou wolde I hiere,
5499 Wheroft I schal me schryve more.”
- Confessor** “Mi goode sone, and for thi lore,
After the reule of coveitise
I schal the propreté devise
Of every vice by and by.
5504 Nou herkne and be wel war therby.”
- one by one

[RAPACITY]

viii. *Viribus ex clara res tollit luce Rapina,
Floris et invita virginē mella capit.*¹

- ¶ [Confessor] “In the lignage of Avarice, (see note)
Mi sone, yit ther is a vice,
His rihte name it is Ravine,
Which hath a route of his covine.
Ravine among the maistres duelleth,
5510 And with his servantz, as men telleth,
Extorcion is nou withholde. maintained
Ravine of othre mennes folde
Makth his larder and paieth noght.
For wher as evere it mai be soght,
5515 In his hous ther schal nothing lacke,
And that fulofte abyth the packe
Of povere men that duelle aboute.
Thus stant the comun poeple in doute,
Which can do non amendment; fear
5520 For whanne him faileth paiement,
Ravine makth non other skile,
Bot takth be strengthe what he wile.
So ben ther in the same wise
Lovers, as I thee schal devise,
5525 That whan noght elles mai availe,
Anon with strengthe thei assaile
And gete of love the sesine,
Whan thei se time, be Ravine.
- offers no explanation
venture
possession

¹ By violence Rapacity seizes things in broad daylight; he takes the honey from flowers and from the unwilling virgin.

- Confessor** Forthi, mi sone, schrif thee hier, *confess yourself here*
 5530 If thou hast ben a Raviner.”
- Amans** “Of love? Certes, fader, no!
 For I mi ladi love so,
 That thogh I were as was Pompeie,
 That al the world me wolde obeie,
 5535 Or elles such as Alisandre,
 I wolde noght do such a skaundre.
 It is no good man which so doth.”
- Confessor** “In good feith, sone, thou seist soth: *true*
 For he that wole of pourveance
 5540 Be such a weie his lust avance,
 He schal it after sore abie,
 Bot if these olde ensamples lie.” *from procurement*
- Amans** “Nou, goode fader, tell me on, *pay for it dearly*
 So as ye cunne manyon,
 5545 Touchende of love in this matiere.” *Unless*
- Confessor** “Nou list, mi sone, and thou schalt hierie, *can many a one*
 So as it hath befaller this,
 In loves cause hou that it is
 A man to take be Ravine
 5550 The preie which is femeline. *prey; feminine*

[TALE OF TEREUS, PROCNE, AND PHILOMENA]

- Ther was a real noble king, *royal*
 And riche of alle worldee thing,
 Which of his propre enheritance
 Athenes hadde in governance,
 5555 And who so thenke therupon,
 His name was King Pandion.
- ¶ Tuo doughtres hadde he be his wif, *two (see note)*
 The whiche he lovede as his lif.
 The ferste doughter Progné hihte,
 5560 And the secounde, as sche wel mihte, *was called Procne*
 Was cleped faire Philomene,
 To whom fell after mochel tene.
 The fader of his pourveance
 His doughter Progné wolde avance,
 5565 And gaf hire unto mariage *called*
 A worthi king of hih lignage, *suffering (injury)*
 A noble kniht eke of his hond, *foresight*
 So was he kid in every lond,
 Of Trace he hihte Tereus;
 5570 The clerk Ovide telleth thus. *advance*
 This Tereus his wif hom laddde;
 A lusti lif with hire he hadde,

- Til it befell upon a tyde,
This Progné, as sche lay him besyde,
5575 Bethoughte hir hou it mihte be
That sche hir soster myhte se,
And to hir lord hir will sche seide
With goodly wordes, and him preide
That sche to hire mihte go,
5580 And if it liked him noght so,
That thanne he wolde himselfe wende,
Or elles be som other sende,
Which mihte hire diere soster griete,
And schape hou that thei mihten miete.
5585 Hir lord anon to that he herde
Gaf his acord, and thus ansuerde:
'I wole,' he seide, 'for thi sake
The weie after thi soster take
Miself, and bringe hire, if I may.'
5590 And sche with that, there as he lay,
Began him in hire armes clippe
And kist him with hir softe lippe,
And seide, 'Sire, grant mercy.'
And he sone after was redy,
5595 And tok his leve for to go;
In sori time dede he so.
This Tereus goth forth to schipe
With him and with his felaschipe.
Be see the rihte cours he nam,
5600 Into the contré til he cam
Wher Philomene was duellinge,
And of hir soster the tidinge
He tolde, and tho thei weren glade,
And mochel joie of him thei made.
5605 The fader and the moder bothe
To leve here douthter weren lothe,
Bot if thei weren in presence.
And natheles at reverence
Of him, that wolde himself travaile,
5610 Thei wolden noght he scholde faile
Of that he preide, and give hire leve.
And sche, that wolde noght beleve,
In alle haste made hire yare
Toward hir soster for to fare
5615 With Tereus, and forth sche wente.
And he, with al his hole entente
Whan sche was fro hir frendes go
Assoteth of hire love so,
His yhe myhte he noght withholde,
time
go
someone else
greet
figure out how; meet
at once to what he heard
embrace
leave their
Unless; were in attendance
out of respect
For; carry out the mission
asked; their permission
be left behind (remain)
made herself ready
Became so besotted with love of her
[That] his eye

- 5620 That he ne moste on hir beholde.
 And with the sihte he gan desire
 And sette his oghme herte on fyre.
 And fyr, whan it to tow aprocheth,
 To him anon the strengthe acrocheth,
 Til with his hete it be devoured;
 The tow ne mai noght be socoured.
 And so that tirant raviner,
 Whan that sche was in his pouer
 And he therto sawh time and place,
 As he that lost hath alle grace
 Forgat he was a wedded man,
 And in a rage on hire he ran,
 Riht as a wolf which takth his preie.
 And sche began to crie and preie,
 'O fader, o mi moder diere,
 Nou help!' Bot thei ne mihte it hiere,
 And sche was of to litel myht
 Defense agein so ruide a knyht
 To make, whanne he was so wod
 That he no reson understood,
 Bot hield hire under in such wise
 That sche ne myhte noght arise,
 Bot lay oppressed and desesed
 As if a goshauk hadde sesed
 A brid, which dorste noght for fere
 Remue: and thus this tirant there
 Beraft hire such thing as men sein
 Mai neveremor be yolde agein,
 And that was the virginité:
 Of such Ravine it was pité.
 Bot whan sche to hirselen com,
 And of hir meschief hiede nom,
 And knew hou that sche was no maide,
 With wofull herte thus sche saide:
 'O thou of alle men the worste,
 Wher was ther evere man that dorste
 Do such a dede as thou hast do?
 That dai schal falle, I hope so,
 That I schal telle out al mi fille,
 And with mi speche I schal fulfill
 The wyde world in brede and lengthe,
 That thou hast do to me be strengthe,
 If I among the poeple duelle,
 Unto the poeple I schal it telle;
 And if I be withinne wall
 Of stones closed, thanne I schal
- straw
To itself at once gathers
its heat
straw; rescued
tyrannical ravager
- prey
- hear
strength
- vehemently reckless
- distressed
seized
- who dared not; fear*
Flee (escape)
- yielded
- took heed*
- who dared*
- breadth
What you have done; force

- Unto the stones clepe and crie, *call*
 And tellen hem thi felonie;
 And if I to the wodes wende,
 5670 Ther schal I tellen tale and ende,
 And crie it to the briddes oute,
 That thei schul hiere it al aboute.
 For I so loude it schal reherce,
 That my vois schal the hevene perce, *pierce*
 5675 That it schal soun in Goddes ere. *ear*
 Ha, false man, where is thi fere? *reverence*
 O mor cruel than eny beste, *beast*
 Hou hast thou holden thi beheste
 Which thou unto my soster madest? *promise*
- 5680 O thou, which alle love ungladest,
 And art ensample of alle untrewe,
 Nou wolde God mi soster knewe,
 Of thin untrouthe, hou that it stod!
 And he thanne as a lyon wod *enraged*
- 5685 With hise unhappi handes stronge
 Hire cauhte be the tresses longe,
 With whiche he bond ther bothe hire armes —
 That was a sieble dede of armes —
 And to the grounde anon hire caste,
 5690 And out he clippeth also faste
 Hire tunge with a peire scheres. *scissors*
 So what with blod and what with teres
 Out of hire yhe and of hir mouth,
 He made hire faire face uncouth.
 5695 Sche lay swounende unto the deth,
 Ther was unethes eny breth. *scarcely*
 Bot yit whan he hire tunge refte,
 A litel part therof belefte,
 Bot sche with al no word mai soun, *was left*
 5700 Bot chitre and as a brid jargoune. *articulate*
 And natheles that wode hound
 Hir bodi hent up fro the ground,
 And sente hir there as be his wille
 Sche scholde abyde in prison stille *chitter; chatter*
 5705 Foreveremo. Bot nou tak hiede
 What after fell of this misdede.
 Whanne al this meschief was befall,
 This Tereus — that foule him falle! — *whom may evil befall*
 Unto his contré hom he tyh; *came*
- 5710 And whan he com his paleis nyh,
 His wif al redi there him kepte.
 Whan he hir sih, anon he wepte,
 And that he dede for deceite. *awaited him*
saw, quickly

- For sche began to axe him streite, *directly*
 5715 'Wher is mi soster?' And he seide
 That sche was ded; and Progné abreide, *cried out*
 As sche that was a wofull wif,
 And stod betuen hire deth and lif,
 Of that sche herde such tidinge.
- 5720 Bot for sche sih hire lord wepinge, *thought*
 Sche wende noght bot alle trouthe,
 And hadde wel the more routhe.
 The perles weren tho forsake *jewelry*
 To hire, and blake clothes take;
- 5725 As sche that was gentil and kinde, *honor; memory*
 In worschipe of hir sostres mynde
 Sche made a riche enterement,
 For sche fond non amendment
 To syghen or to sobbe more:
- 5730 So was ther guile under the gore. *cloak*
 Nou leve we this king and queene,
 And torne agein to Philomene,
 As I began to tellen erst. *before*
 Whan sche cam into prison ferst,
- 5735 It thoghte a kinges douhter strange *seemed to*
 To maken so soudein a change
 Fro welthe unto so grete a wo;
 And sche began to thenke tho,
 Thogh sche be mouthe nothing preide,
- 5740 Withinne hir herte thus sche seide:
 'O thou, almynty Jupiter,
 That hihe sist and lokest fer, *sees*
 Thou soffrest many a wrong doinge,
 And yit it is noght thi willinge.
- 5745 To thee ther mai nothing ben hid, *know; happened to me*
 Thou wost hou it is me betid.
 I wolde I hadde noght be bore, *been born*
 For thanne I hadde noght forlore *lost*
 Mi speche and mi virginité.
- 5750 Bot, goode lord, al is in thee,
 Whan thou therof wolt do vengeance
 And schape mi deliverance.' *continually*
 And evere among this ladi wepte, *cared*
 And thoghte that sche nevere kepte
- 5755 To ben a worldes womman more,
 And that sche wissbeth everemore.
 Bot ofte unto hir soster diere
 Hire herte spekth in this manere,
 And seide, 'Ha, soster, if ye knewe
- 5760 Of myn astat, ye wolde rewe, *have pity*

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| | I trowe, and my deliverance
Ye wolde schape, and do vengance
On him that is so fals a man.
And natheles, so as I can,
I wol you sende som tokninge,
Wheroft ye schul have knowlechinge
Of thing I wot, that schal you lothe,
The which you toucheth and me bothe.' | believe
devise |
| 5765 | And tho withinne a whyle als tyt
Sche waf a cloth of selk al whyt
With lettres and ymagerie,
In which was al the felonie
Which Tereus to hire hath do;
And lappede it togedre tho | be loathsome to you
concerns
quickly
wove; silk |
| 5770 | And sette hir signet therupon
And sende it unto Progné anon.
The messenger which forth it bar,
What it amonteth is noght war;
And natheles to Progné he goth | wrapped; then
immediately |
| 5775 | And prively takth hire the cloth,
And wente agein riht as he cam.
The court of him non hiede nam.
Whan Progné of Philomene herde,
Sche wolde knowe hou that it ferde, | delivers to her
knew; been |
| 5780 | And opneth that the man hath broght,
And wot therby what hath be wrought
And what meschief ther is befallen.
In swoone tho sche gan doun falle,
And eft aros and gan to stonde, | outrages
remedy |
| 5785 | And eft sche takth the cloth on honde,
Behield the lettres and th'ymages.
Bot ate laste, 'Of suche oultrages,'
Sche seith, 'weping is noght the bote,' | swears; might |
| 5790 | And swerth, if that sche live mote,
It schal be venged otherwise.
And with that sche gan hire avise
Hou ferst sche mihte unto hire winne | [so] that
sworn |
| 5795 | Hir soster, that no man withinne,
Bot only thei that were suore,
It scholde knowe, and schop therfore
That Tereus nothing it wiste; | arranged
knew
desired |
| 5800 | And yit riht as hirselven liste,
Hir soster was delivered sone
Out of prison, and be the mone
To Progné sche was broght be nyhte. | by moonlight |
| 5805 | Whan ech of other hadde a sihte,
In chambre, ther thei were alone. | |

- Thei maden many a pitous mone; *lament*
 Bot Progné most of sorwe made,
- 5810 Which sihe hir soster pale and fade *Who saw; wan*
 And specheles and deshonoured,
 Of that sche hadde be defloured;
 And ek upon hir lord sche thoghte,
 Of that he so untreuly wroghte
- 5815 And hadde his espousaile broke. *wedding vow broken*
 Sche makth a vou it schal be wroke,
 And with that word sche kneleth doun
 Wepinge in gret devocioun.
 Unto Cupide and to Venus
- 5820 Sche preide and seide thanne thus: *eludes*
 'O ye, to whom nothing asterte
 Of love mai, for every herte
 Ye knowe, as ye that ben above
 The god and the goddesse of love:
- 5825 Ye witen wel that evere yit *Since; arranged to wed me*
 With al mi will and al my wit,
 Sith ferst ye schopen me to wedde,
 That I lay with mi lord abedde,
 I have be trewe in mi degré,
- 5830 And evere thoghte for to be,
 And nevere love in other place,
 Bot al only the king of Trace,
 Which is mi lord and I his wif.
 Bot nou allas this wofull strif!
- 5835 That I him thus ageinward finde *on the contrary*
 The most untrewe and most unkinde
 That evere in ladi armes lay.
 And wel I wot that he ne may *know*
 Amende his wrong, it is so gret;
- 5840 For he to lytel of me let, *too little; considered*
 Whan he myn oughne soster tok,
 And me that am his wif forsok.'
 Lo, thus to Venus and Cupide
 Sche preide, and furthermor sche cride
- 5845 Unto Appollo the hieste,
 And seide, 'O myhti god of reste,
 Thou do vengance of this debat.
 Mi soster and al hire astat
 Thou wost, and hou sche hath forlore *lost*
- 5850 Hir maidenhod, and I therfore
 In al the world schal bere a blame
 Of that mi soster hath a schame,
 That Tereus to hire I sente.
 And wel thou wost that myn entente *be blameworthy*

- 5855 Was al for worshipe and for goode. *honor*
sustenance
 O lord, that gifst the lives fode
 To every wyht, I prei thee hiere
 Thes wofull sostres that ben hiere,
 And let ous noght to thee ben lothe;
 We ben thin oghne wommen bothe.'
- 5860 Thus pleigneth Progné and axeth wreche, *asks vengeance*
Since, even though
 As, thogh hire soster lacke speche,
 To him that alle thinges wot
 Hire sorwe is noght the lasse hot.
- 5865 Bot he that thanne had herd hem tuo, *the two of them*
 Him oughte have sorwed everemo
 For sorwe which was hem betuene.
 With signes pleigneth Philomene,
 And Progné seith, 'It schal be wreke,
 5870 That al the world therof schal speke.'
- And Progné tho seknesse feigneth,
 Wheroft unto hir lord sche pleigneth,
 And preith sche moste hire chambres kepe,
 And as hir liketh wake and slepe. *as she needs*
- 5875 And he hire granteth to be so;
 And thus togedre ben thei tuo,
 That wolde him bot a litel good.
 Nou herk hierafter hou it stod
 Of wofull auntres that befelle:
 5880 Thes sostres, that ben bothe felle
 (And that was noght on hem along,
 Bot onliche on the grete wrong
 Which Tereus hem hadde do),
 Thei schopen for to venge hem tho.
- 5885 This Tereus be Progné his wif *mishaps*
of deadly intent
not their fault
 A sone hath, which as his lif
 He loveth, and Ithis he hihite:
 His moder wiste wel sche mihte
 Do Tereus no more grief
- 5890 Than sle this child, which was so lief. *who was so dear [to him]*
 Thus sche, that was, as who seith, mad
 Of wo, which hath hir overlad,
 Withoute insihte of moderhede
 Forgat pité and loste drede,
 5895 And in hir chambre prively
 This child withouten noise or cry
 Sche slou, and hieu him al to pieces. *overwhelmed*
regard for
- 5900 And after with diverse spieces
 The fleissh, whan it was so toheewe,
 Sche takth, and makth therof a sewe,
 With which the fader at his mete *killed; hacked*
cut to pieces
spicy dish

- Was served, til he hadde him ete;
 That he ne wiste hou that it stod,
 Bot thus his oughne fleissh and blod
 5905 Himself devoureth agein kinde,
 As he that was tofore unkinde.
 And thanne, er that he were arise,
 For that he scholde ben agrise,
 To schewen him the child was ded,
 5910 This Philomene tok the hed
 Betwen tuo disshes, and al wrothe
 Tho comen forth the sostres bothe,
 And setten it upon the bord.
 And Progné tho began the word,
 5915 And seide, 'O werste of alle wicke,
 Of conscience whom no pricke
 Mai stere, lo, what thou hast do!
 Lo, hier be nou we sostres tuo;
 O raviner, lo hier thi preie,
 5920 With whom so falsliche on the weie
 Thou hast thi tirannyne wroght.
 Lo, nou it is somdel aboght,
 And bet it schal, for of thi dede
 The world schal evere singe and rede
 5925 In remembrance of thi defame.
 For thou to love hast do such schame,
 That it schal nevere be forgete.'
 With that he sterte up fro the mete,
 And schof the bord unto the flor,
 5930 And cauhte a swerd anon and suor
 That thei scholde of his hondes dye
 And thei unto the goddes crie
 Begunne with so loude a stevene,
 That thei were herd unto the hevene;
 5935 And in a twincling of an yhe
 The goddes, that the meschief syhe,
 Here formes changen alle thre.
 Ech on of hem in his degré
 Was torned into briddes kinde;
 5940 Diverseliche, as men mai finde,
 After th'astat that thei were inne,
 Here formes were set atwinne.
 And as it telleth in the tale,
 The ferst into a nyhtingale
 5945 Was schape, and that was Philomene,
 Which in the wynter is noght sene,
 For thanne ben the leves falle
 And naked ben the buisshes alle.
- contrary to nature*
- terrified*
- placed the head
in a rage*
- evil men*
- move (guide)*
- paid for
deed*
- evil renown*
- leaped; food
table*
- swore*
- voice*
- eye*
- saw*
- Their*
- Their; established as distinctly different*

- For after that sche was a brid,
 Hir will was evere to ben hid,
 And for to duelle in privé place,
 That no man scholde sen hir face
 For schame, which mai noght be lassed,
 Of thing that was tofore passed,
 Whan that sche loste hir maidenhiede.
 Forevere upon hir wommanhiede,
 Thogh that the goddes wolde hire change,
 Sche thenkth, and is the more strange,
 And halt hir clos the wyntres day.
- Bot whan the wynter goth away,
 And that Nature the goddesse
 Wole of hir oughne fre largesse
 With herbes and with floures bothe
 The feldes and the medwes clothe,
- And ek the wodes and the greves
 Ben heled al with grene leves,
 So that a brid hire hyde mai,
 Betwen Averil and March and Maii,
 Sche that the wynter hield hir clos,
- For pure schame and noght aros,
 Whan that sche seth the bowes thikke,
 And that ther is no bare sticke,
 Bot al is hid with leves grene,
 To wode comth this Philomene
- And makth hir ferste yeres flyht;
 Wher as sche singeth day and nyht,
 And in hir song al openly
 Sche makth hir pleignte and seith, 'O why,
 O why ne were I yit a maide?'
- For so these olde wise saide,
 Which understoden what sche mente,
 Hire notes ben of such entente.
 And ek thei seide hou in hir song
 Sche makth gret joie and merthe among,
- And seith, 'Ha, nou I am a brid,
 Ha, nou mi face mai ben hid.
 Thogh I have lost mi maidenhede,
 Schal no man se my chekes rede.'
- Thus medleth sche with joie wo
 And with hir sorwe merthe also,
 So that of loves maladie
 Sche makth diverse melodie,
 And seith love is a wofull blisse,
- A wisdom which can no man wisse,
 A lusti fievere, a wounde softe:
- bird
 desire; hidden
 secret
 diminished
From a matter; previously
Even though
reclusive
keeps herself sequestered
groves
covered
lament
still a virgin
wise people
mingles
know

- This note sche reherceth ofte
 To hem whiche understande hir tale.
 Nou have I of this nyhtingale,
 Which erst was cleped Philomene,
 6000 Told al that evere I wolde mene, *intend*
 Bothe of hir forme and of hir note,
 Wherof men mai the storie note.
 And of hir soster Progné I finde,
 Hou sche was torned out of kinde
 6005 Into a swalwe swift of winge, *swallow*
 Which ek in wynter lith swounyng,
 Ther as sche mai nothing be sene.
 Bot whan the world is woxe grene
 And comen is the somertide,
 6010 Than fletch sche forth and ginth to chide,
 And chitreh out in hir langage
 What falshod is in mariage,
 And telleth in a maner speche
 Of Tereus the spousebreche. *adulterer*
- 6015 Sche wol noght in the wodes duelle,
 For sche wolde openliche telle;
 And ek for that sche was a spouse,
 Among the folk sche comth to house,
 To do thes wyves understande *cause*
- 6020 The falshod of here housebonde,
 That thei of hem be war also,
 For ther ben manye untrewe of tho. *those*
 Thus ben the sostres briddes bothe,
 And ben toward the men so lothe,
 6025 That thei ne wole of pure schame
 Unto no mannes hand be tame.
 Forevere it duelleth in here mynde *their*
 Of that thei founde a man unkinde,
 And that was false Tereus.
- 6030 If such on be amonges ous *such a person*
 I not, bot his condicion *do not know; type*
 Men sein in every region
 Withinne toune and ek withoute
 Nou regneth comunliche aboute.
- 6035 And natheles in remembrance
 I wol declare what vengance
 The goddes hadden him ordeined,
 Of that the sostres hadden pleigned.
 For anon after he was changed
- 6040 And from his oghne kinde stranged, *proper nature estranged*
 A lappewincke mad he was, *lapwing made*
 And thus he hoppeth on the gras,

- And on his hed ther stant upriht
 A creste in tokne he was a kniht;
 6045 And yit unto this dai men seith,
 A lappewincke hath lore his feith
 And is the brid falseste of alle. *lapwing; lost
bird*
- Confessor** Bewar, mi sone, er thee so falle;
 For if thou be of such covine,
 6050 To gete of love be Ravine *such a conspiracy
by*
 Thi lust, it mai thee falle thus,
 As it befell of Tereus.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, goddes forebode!
 Me were levere be fortrode *trampled
torn apart*
 6055 With wilde hors and be todrawe,
 Er I agein love and his lawe *Before I against*
 Dede eny thing or loude or stille,
 Which were noght mi ladi wille. *either loud or quiet
my lady's desire*
 Men sein that every love hath drede;
 6060 So folweth it that I hire drede, *anxiety*
 For I hire love, and who so dredeth, *revere*
 To plese his love and serve him nedeth. *fears*
 Thus mai ye knownen be this skile *must serve him (love)*
 That no Ravine don I wile *reason*
- 6065 Agein hir will be such a weie.
 Bot while I live, I wol obeie *move (bend)*
 Abidinge on hire courtesie,
 If eny merci wolde hir plie.
- 6070 Forthi, mi fader, as of this
 I wot noght I have don amis.
 Bot furthermore I you beseche,
 Som other point that ye me teche,
 And axeth forth, if ther be auht,
 That I mai be the betre tauht.”

[ROBBERY]

- ix. *Uiat vt ex spoliis grandi quamsepe tumultu,
 Quo graditur populus, latro perurget iter.
 Sic amor, ex casu poterit quo carpere predam,
 Si locus est aptus, cetera nulla timet.*¹

- [Confessor]** “Whan Covoitise in povere astat
 6076 Stant with himself upon debat
 Thurgh lacke of his misgovernance,

¹ *That he might live off his spoils, the bandit frequently ambushes, in a great onslaught, the road on which people journey. Thus love fears nothing if the setting is suitable and by chance he can snatch his prey.*

- That he unto his sustienance
 ↗ Ne can non other weie finde (see note)
 6080 To gete him good, thanne as the blinde, the blind man
 Which seth noght what schal after falle,
 That ilke vice which men calle
 Of Robberie, he takth on honde;
 Wheroft be water and be londe
 6085 Of thing which othre men beswinke by
 He get him cloth and mete and drinke. produce by [their] labor
 Him reccheth noght what he beginne, *It does not concern him what he might undertake*
 Thurgh thefte so that he mai winne.
 Forthi to maken his pourchas
 6090 He lith awaitende on the pas,
 And what thing that he seth ther passe,
 He takth his part, or more or lasse,
 If it be worthi to be take.
 He can the packes wel ransake,
 6095 So prively berth non aboute *may not discover it*
 His gold, that he ne fint it oute,
 Or other juel, what it be;
 He takth it as his propreté.
 In wodes and in feldes eke
 6100 Thus Robberie goth to seke, *also*
 Wher as he mai his pourpos finde. *seek*
 And riht so in the same kinde,
 Mi goode sone, as thou miht hierie,
 To speke of love in the matiere
 6105 And make a verrai resemblance, *acquisition*
 Riht as a thief makth his chevance
 And robbeth mennes good aboute
 In wode and field, wher he goth oute,
 So be ther of these lovers some,
 6110 In wylde stedes wher thei come
 And finden there a womman able,
 And therto place covenable,
 Withoute leve, er that thei fare,
 Thei take a part of that chaffare: *commodity (chastity)*
 6115 Yee, though sche were a scheperdesse,
 Yit wol the lord of wantounesse
 Assaie, althogh sche be unmete, *displeasing (unworthy)*
 For other mennes good is swete.
 Bot therof wot nothing the wif
 6120 At hom, which loveth as hir lif *knows*
 Hir lord, and sitt alday wisshinge
 After hir lordes hom comynge.
 Bot whan that he comth hom at eve,
 Anon he makth his wif beleve,

- 6125 For sche noght elles scholde knowe.
 He telth hire hou his hunte hath blowe,
 And hou his houndes have wel runne,
 And hou ther schon a merye sunne,
 And hou his haukes flowen wel;
- 6130 Bot he wol telle hire nevere a diel
 Hou he to love untrewe was,
 Of that he robbede in the pas,
 And tok his lust under the schawe woods
 6134 Agein love and agein his lawe. Against its law
- Confessor** Which thing, mi sone, I thee forbede,
 For it is an ungodly dede.
 For who that takth be Robberie
 His love, he mai noght justesie
 His cause, and so fulofte sithe times
- 6140 For ones that he hath be blithe
 He schal ben after sory thries.
 Ensample of suche Robberies
 I finde write, as thou schalt hiere, thrice
- 6144 Acordende unto this matiere.

[TALE OF NEPTUNE AND CORNIX]

- ¶ I rede hou whilom was a maide, once (see note)
 The faireste, as Ovide saide,
 Which was in hire time tho;
 And sche was of the chambre also
 Of Pallas, which is the goddesse
- 6150 And wif to Marte, of whom prouesse
 Is gove to these worthi knihtes.
 For he is of so grete mihtes,
 That he governeth the bataille.
 Withouten him may nocht availe
- 6155 The stronge hond, bot he it helpe; unless
 Ther mai no knyht of armes yelpe, boast
 Bot he feihte under his banere. Unless he fights
- 6160 Alone as sche wente on a dai maiden
 Upon the stronde for to pleie,
 Ther cam Neptunus in the weie,
 Which hath the see in governance; seashore
 And in his herte such plesance
- 6165 He tok, whan he this maide sih, sea
 That al his herte aros on hih,
 For he so sodeinliche unwar
 Behield the beauté that sche bar. saw

- And caste anon withinne his herte
 6170 That sche him schal no weie asterte, *escape*
 Bot if he take in avantage
 Fro thilke maide som pilage,
 Noght of the broches ne the ringes,
 Bot of some othre smale thinges
- 6175 He thoghte parte, er that sche wente; *to take away*
 And hire in bothe hise armes hente, *[he] seized*
 And putte his hond toward the cofre
 Wher for to robbe he made a profre
 That lusti tresor for to stel,
- 6180 Which passeth othre goodes fele *many other goods*
 And cleded is the maidenhede, *called*
 Which is the flour of wommanhede.
 This maiden, which Cornix be name
 Was hote, dredende alle schame,
- 6185 Sih that sche mihte noght debate, *Was called*
 And wel sche wiste he wolde algate
 Fulfillie his lust of Robberie,
 Anon began to wepe and crie,
 And seide, 'O Pallas, noble queene,
- 6190 Scheu nou thi myht and let be sene, *so that I lose not*
 To kepe and save myn honour!
 Help, that I lese noght mi flour,
 Which nou under thi keie is loke.'
 That word was noght so sone spoke,
- 6195 Whan Pallas schop recoverir *prepared a safe haven*
 After the will and the desir
 Of hire, which a maiden was,
 And sodeinliche upon this cas
 Out of hire wommanisshe kinde
- 6200 Into a briddes like I finde *bird's likeness*
 Sche was transformed forth withal,
 So that Neptunus nothing stal
 Of such thing as he wolde have stole.
 With fetheres blake as eny cole
- 6205 Out of hise armes in a throwe *flew; eye*
 Sche flih before his yhe a crowe;
 Which was to hire a more delit,
 To kepe hire maidenhede whit
 Under the wede of fethers blake,
- 6210 In perles whyte than forsake *clothes*
 That no lif mai restore agein.
 Bot thus Neptune his herte in vein
 Hath upon Robberie sett;
 The bridd is flowe and he was let,
- 6215 The faire maide him hath ascaped, *thwarted*

Wherof forevere he was bejaped
And scorned of that he hath lore. *derided*
lost

Confessor Mi sone, be thou war therfore
That thou no maidenhode stèle,
6220 Wherof men sen deseses fele *harms of all kinds*
Aldai befallie in sondri wise;
So as I schal thee yit devise
Another tale therupon,
Which fell be olde daies gon.

[TALE OF CALISTONA]

6225	King Lichaon upon his wif A dowhter hadde, a goodly lif, A clene maide of worthi fame, Calistona whos rihte name Was cleped, and of many a lord	
6230	Sche was besought, bot hire accord To love myhte no man winne, As sche which hath no lust therinne; Bot swor withinne hir herte and saide That sche wolde evere ben a maide.	<i>sought after</i> (see note)
6235	Wherof to kepe hireself in pes With suche as Amadriades Were cleped, wodemaydes, tho, And with the nimphes ek also Upon the spring of freisshe welles	<i>called, wood nymphs, then</i>
6240	Sche schop to duelle and nagher elles. And thus cam this Calistona Into the wode of Tegea, Wher sche virginité behihte Unto Diane, and therto plihte	<i>nowhere</i> <i>promised</i> <i>pledged</i>
6245	Her trouthe upon the bowes grene, To kepe hir maidenhode clene. Which afterward upon a day Was priveliche stole away; For Jupiter thurgh his queintise	<i>surreptitiously stolen</i> <i>cunning</i>
6250	From hire it tok in such a wise, That sodeinliche forth withal Hire wombe aros and sche toswal, So that it mihte noght ben hidd. And therupon it is betidd,	<i>swelled up</i>
6255	Diane, which it herde telle, In privé place unto a welle With nimphes al a compainie Was come, and in a ragerie Sche seide that sche bathe wolde.	<i>it happened</i> <i>fit of sprightliness</i>

- 6260 And bad that every maide scholde
 With hire al naked bathe also.
 And tho began the privé wo:
 Calistona wax red for schame,
 Bot thei that knewe noght the game, *circumstance*
- 6265 To whom no such thing was befallen,
 Anon thei made hem naked alle,
 As thei that nothing wolden hyde.
 Bot sche withdrawh hire evere asyde,
 And natholes into the flod,
- 6270 Wher that Diane hirselfe stod,
 Sche thoghte come unaperceived.
 Bot therof sche was al deceived;
 For whan sche cam a litel nyh,
 And that Diane hire wombe syh, *saw*
- 6275 Sche seide, 'Awey, thou foule beste, *filthy beast*
 For thin astat is noght honeste
 This chaste water for to touche;
 For thou hast take such a touche,
 Which nevere mai ben hol agein.'
- 6280 And thus goth sche which was forlein *raped (seduced)*
 With schame, and fro the nimpes fledde,
 Til whanne that nature hire spedde,
 That of a sone, which Archas
 Was named, sche delivered was.
- 6285 And tho Juno, which was the wif *fault*
 Of Jupiter, wroth and hastif,
 In pourpos for to do vengance
 Cam forth upon this ilke chance,
 And to Calistona sche spak,
- 6290 And sette upon hir many a lak, *caught in the act*
 And seide, 'Ha, nou thou art atake,
 That thou thi werk myht noght forsake.
 Ha, thou ungodlich yopocrite,
 Hou thou art gretly for to wyte!
- 6295 Bot nou thou schalt ful sore abie *to be blamed*
 That ilke stelthe and micherie,
 Which thou hast bothe take and do;
 Wherof thi fader Lichao *sorely pay*
- 6300 Schal noght be glad, whan he it wot, *underhanded conduct*
 Of that his dowhpter was so hot
 That sche hath broke hire chaste avou. *knows*
- 6305 Bot I thee schal chastise nou; *How that; lecherous*
 Thi grete beauté schal be torned,
 Thurgh which that thou hast be mistorned,
 Thi large frount, thin yhen greie, *punish now*
 I schal hem change in other weie, *broad forehead; eyes grey*

- And al the fUTURE of thi face
 In such a wise I schal defACE,
 That every man thee schal forbERE.' avoid
 6310 With that the liknesse of a bere
 Sche tok and was forshape anon. bear
- Withinne a time and therupon
 Befell that with a bowe on honde,
 To hunte and gamen for to fonde,
 6315 Into that wode goth to pleie
 Hir sone Archas, and in his weie
 It hapneth that this bere cam.
 And whan that sche good hiede nam, took
 Wher that he stod under the bowh, bough
 6320 Sche kneu him wel and to him drouh; drew
 For thogh sche hadde hire forme lore, lost
 The love was noght lost therfore
 Which kinde hath set under his lawe. nature
 Whan sche under the wodesschawe woods
 6325 Hire child behield, sche was so glad,
 That sche with bothe hire armes sprad,
 As thogh sche were in wommanhiede,
 Toward him cam, and tok non hiede
 Of that he bar a bowe bent. protect
- 6330 And he with that an arwe hath hENT arrow; seized
 And gan to teise it in his bowe, position
 As he that can non other knowe, knows not otherwise
 Bot that it was a beste wylde.
 Bot Jupiter, which wolde schylde
- 6335 The moder and the sone also,
 Ordeineth for hem bothe so,
 That thei forevere were save. protect
- Confessor** Bot thus, mi sone, thou myht have
 Ensample, hou that it is to fle
 6340 To robbe the virginité
 Of a yong innocent aweie.
 And overthis be other weie,
 In olde bokes as I rede,
 Such Robberie is for to drede,
- 6345 And nameliche of thilke good
 Which every womman that is good
 Desireth for to kepe and holde,
 As whilom was be daies olde.
 For if thou se mi tale wel
- 6350 Of that was tho, thou miht somdiel somewhat
 Of old ensample taken hiede,
 Hou that the flour of maidenhiede
 Was thilke time holde in pris. held in esteem

6355 And so it was, and so it is,
 And so it schal forevere stonde.
 And for thou schalt it understande,
 Nou herkne a tale next suiende,
 Hou maidenhod is to commende."

*following
praiseworthy*

[VIRGINITY]

x. *Ut Rosa de spinis spineto preualet orta,
 Et lili flores cespite plura valent,
 Sic sibi virginitas carnis sponsalia vincit,
 Eternos fetus que sine labe parit.*¹

[Confessor] "Of Rome among the gestes olde
 6360 I finde hou that Valerie tolde

stories

That what man tho was Emperour
 Of Rome, he scholde don honour
 To the virgine, and in the weie,
 6364 Wher he hire mette, he scholde obeie

 In worschipe of virginité,
 Which tho was of gret dignité.
 Noght onliche of the wommen tho,
 Bot of the chaste men also
 It was commended overal.

honor (see note)

6370 And for to speke in special
 Touchende of men, ensample I finde,

 Phryns, which was of mannes kinde
 Above alle othre the faireste
 Of Rome and ek the comelieste,

who; nature (see note)

6375 That wel was hire which him mihte
 Beholde and have of him a sihte,
 Thus was he tempted ofte sore;

Bot for he wolde be no more
 Among the wommen so coveited,
 6380 The beauté of his face streited

*despoiled
thrust; eyes*

He hath, and threste out bothe hise yhen,
 That alle wommen whiche him syhen
 Thanne afterward, of him ne roghte.

And thus his maidehiede he boghte.
 6385 So mai I prove wel forthi,
 Above alle othre under the sky,
 Who that the vertus wolde peise,
 Virginité is for to preise,

*cared
secured*

weigh

¹ *As the rose, born amidst thorns, prevails over its thorny thicket, and lily flowers are worth more than the sod, so virginity triumphs in itself over fleshy marital unions, and without sin gives birth to eternal offspring.*

- Which, as th'Apocalips recordeth,
 6390 To Crist in hevene best acordeth.
 So mai it schewe wel therfore,
 As I have told it hiertofore,
 In hevene and ek in erthe also
 6394 It is accept to bothe tuo. *pleasing (agreeable)*
¶ And if I schal more over this
 Declare what this vertu is,
 I finde write upon this thing
 Of Valentinian the king
 And Emperour be thilke daies,
 6400 A worthi knyht at alle assaies, *in every way*
 Hou he withoute mariage
 Was of an hundred wynter age,
 And hadde ben a worthi kniht
 Bothe of his lawe and of his myht.
 6405 Bot whan men wolde his dedes peise *evaluate*
 And his knyhthode of armes preise,
 Of that he dede with hise hondes,
 Whan he the kinges and the londes
 To his subjeccion put under,
 6410 Of al that pris hath he no wonder,
 For he it sette of non acompte,
 And seide al that may noght amonte
 Ageins o point which he hath nome,
 That he his fleissh hath overcome: *In comparison with; received*
 6415 He was a virgine, as he seide;
 On that bataille his pris he leide. *moral struggle*
 Lo nou, my sone, avise thee.”
Amans “Yee, fader, al this wel mai be,
 Bot if alle othre dede so, *others did*
 6420 The world of men were sone go *soon gone*
 And in the lawe a man mai finde,
 Hou God to man be weie of kinde
 Hath set the world to multeplie;
 And who that wol him justefie, *nature*
 6425 It is ynouh to do the lawe. *make righteous*
 And nathelas youre goode sawe
 Is good to kepe, who so may,
 I wol noght theragein seie nay.” *wise saying*

[AGAMEMNON AND CRISEIDE]

- Confessor** “Mi sone, take it as I seie;
 6430 If maidenhod be take aweie
 Withoute lawes ordinance,
 It mai noght failen of vengeance. *fail to be avenged*

- And if thou wolt the sothe wite,
 Behold a tale which is write,
 6435 Hou that the King Agamenon,
 Whan he the cité of Lesbon
 Hath wonne, a maiden ther he fond,
 Which was the faireste of the lond
 In thilke time that men wiste. *conquered*
- 6440 He tok of hire what him liste
 Of thing which was most precious,
 Wheroft that sche was dangerous.
 This faire maiden cleped is
 Criseide, doucher of Crisis, *knew*
 6445 Which was that time in special
 Of thilke temple principal,
 Wher Phebus hadde his sacrifice,
 So was it wel the more vice. *pleased him*
- Agamenon was thanne in weie
 6450 To Troeward, and tok aweie
 This maiden, which he with him ladde,
 So grete a lust in hire he hadde.
 Bot Phebus, which hath gret desdeign
 Of that his maiden was forlein, *protective*
 6455 Anon as he to Troie cam,
 Vengance upon this dede he nam
 And sende a comun pestilence. *called*
- Andi soghthen thanne here evidence
 And maden calculacion, *greater*
- 6460 To knowe in what condicion
 This deth cam in so sodeinly;
 And ate laste redly
 The cause and ek the man thei founde:
 And forth withal the same stounde *took*
- 6465 Agamenon opposed was,
 Which hath beknownen al the cas
 Of the folie which he wroghte.
 And therupon mercy thei soghte
 Toward the god in sondri wise *widespread plague*
- 6470 With preiere and with sacrifice,
 The maide and hom agein thei sende,
 And give hire good ynouh to spende
 Forevere whil sche scholde live. *time*
- And thus the senne was forgive *confronted*
- 6475 And al the pestilence cessed. *admitted*
- Confessor** Lo, what it is to ben encressed
 Of love which is evely wonne. *sin*
- It were betre noght begonne
 Than take a thing withoute leve, *augmented*

- 6480 Which thou most after nedes leve,
And yit have malgré forth withal. spite
Forthi to robbon overal
In loves cause if thou beginne,
I not what ese thou schalt winne. know not
- 6485 Mi sone, be wel war of this,
For thus of Robberie it is.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, youre ensamplerie
In loves cause of Robberie
I have it riht wel understande.
- 6490 Bot overthis, hou so it stonde,
Yit wolde I wite of youre aprise
What thing is more of Covoitise.” teaching

[STEALTH AND PILFERING]

- xi. *Insidiando latens tempus rimatur et horam
Fur, quibus occulto tempore furla parat.
Sic amor insidiis vacat, vt sub tegmine ludos
Prendere furtiuos nocte fauente queat.¹*

- Confessor** “With Covoitise yit I finde
A servant of the same kinde,
6495 Which Stelthe is hote, and Mecherie is called; Pilfering
With him is evere in compainie.
Of whom if I schal telle soth,
He stalketh as a pocok doth, walks cautiously; peacock (see note)
And takth his preie so covert, furtively
6500 That no man wot it in apert. openly
For whan he wot the lord from home,
Than wol he stalke aboute and rome;
And what thing he fint in his weie,
Whan that he seth the men aweie,
6505 He stelth it and goth forth withal, steals
That therof no man knowe schal.
And ek fulofte he goth a nyght
Withoute mone or sterreliht, moon
And with his craft the dore unpiketh, picks the lock of the door
6510 And takth therinne what him liketh.
And if the dore be so schet,
That he be of his entré let, hindered
He wole in ate wyndou crepe,

¹ *The thief, lying hidden, surreptitiously scopes out the time and hour, so that he might prepare his thefts at a hidden moment. Thus love finds leisure for treachery so that under cover, it might be able to take furtive frolicking when the night is favorable.*

- And whil the lord is faste aslepe,
 6515 He stelth what thing as him best list, *desires*
 And goth his weie er it be wist. *known*
- Fulofte also be lyhte of day
 Yit wole he stele and make assay; *attempt*
 Under the cote his hond he put,
- 6520 Til he the mannes purs have cut, *cut away*
 And rifleth that he fint therinne. *what*
 And thus he auntereth him to winne,
 And berth an horn and noght ne bloweth,
 For no man of his conseil knoweth;
- 6525 What he mai gete of his michinge, *pilfering*
 It is al bile under the winge. *i.e., unobserved*
 And as an hound that goth to folde
 And hath ther taken what he wolde,
 His mouth upon the gras he wypeth,
- 6530 And so with feigned chiere him slypeth, *sneaks about*
 That what as evere of schep he strangle,
 Ther is no man therof schal jangle,
 As for to knownen who it dede;
 Riht so doth Stelthe in every stede,
- 6535 Where as him list his preie take. *place*
 He can so wel his cause make
 And so wel feigne and so wel close,
 That ther ne schal no man suppose,
 Bot that he were an innocent,
- 6540 And thus a mannes yhe he blent: *sight he obscured*
 So that this craft I mai remene
 Withouten help of eny mene. *relate*
 Ther be lovers of that degré,
 Which al here lust in priveté, *intermediary*
- 6545 As who seith, geten al be Stelthe,
 And ofte atteignen to gret welthe
 As for the time that it lasteth.
 For love awaiteth evere and casteth
 Hou he mai stele and cacche his preie,
- 6550 Whan he therto mai finde a weie.
 For be it nyht or be it day,
 He takth his part, whan that he may,
 And if he mai no more do,
- 6554 Yit wol he stele a cuss or tuo. *kiss*
- Confessor** Mi sone, what seist thou therto?
 Tell if thou dedest evere so.”
- [Amans] “Mi fader, hou?”
- [Confessor] “Mi sone, thus, —
 If thou hast stolen eny cuss
 Or other thing which therto longeth, *kiss*

- 6560 For no man suchē thieves hongeth,
Tell on forthi and sei the trouthe." say
- Confessio Amantis** "Mi fader, nay, and that is routhe,
For be mi will I am a thief; pity
Bot sche that is to me most lief, by; desire
6565 Yit dorste I nevere in priveté dear
Noght ones take hire be the kne,
To stele of hire or this or that,
And if I dorste, I wot wel what!
And natheles, bot if I lie, dared
- 6570 Be Stelthe ne be Robberie By
Of love, which fell in mi thought,
To hire dede I nevere noght.
Bot as men sein, wher herte is failed,
Ther schal no castell ben assailed;
- 6575 Bot thogh I hadde hertes ten,
And were als strong as alle men,
If I be noght myn oghne man
And dar noght usen that I can,
I mai miselvē noght recoverē.
- 6580 Thogh I be nevere man so povere, hers
I bere an herte and hire it is,
So that me faileth wit in this,
Hou that I scholde of myn accord
The servant lede agein the lord.
- 6585 For if mi fot wolde awher go, anywhere
Or that min hand wolde elles do,
Whan that myn herte is theragein,
The remenant is al in vein.
And thus me lacketh alle wele,
- 6590 And yit ne dar I nothing stele happiness (goods)
Of thing which longeth unto love:
And ek it is so hyh above,
I mai noght wel therto areche,
6595 Bot if so be at time of speche,
Ful selde if thanne I stele may
A word or tuo and go my way.
Betwen hire hih astat and me
Comparison ther mai non be,
So that I fiele and wel I wot,
- 6600 Al is to hevy and to hot too
To sette on hond withoute leve.
And thus I mot algate leve To put my hand to; permission
To stele that I mai noght take, must certainly renounce
And in this wise I mot forsake
6605 To ben a thief agein mi wille
Of thing which I mai noght fulfille.

- For that serpent which never slept
 The flees of gold so wel ne kepte
 In Colchos, as the tale is told,
 6610 That mi ladi a thousandfold
 Nys betre yemed and bewaked,
 Wher sche be clothed or be naked.
 To kepe hir bodi nyht and day,
 Sche hath a wardein redi ay,
 6615 Which is so wonderful a wyht,
 That him ne mai no mannes myht
 With swerd ne with no wepine daunte,
 Ne with no sleihte of charme enchaunte,
 Wheroft he mihte be mad tame,
 6620 And Danger is his rihte name;
 Which under lock and under keie,
 That no man mai it stele aweie,
 Hath al the tresor underfonge
 That unto love mai belonȝe.
 6625 The leste lokinge of hire yhe
 Mai noght be stole, if he it syhe;
 And who so gruccheth for so lyte,
 He wolde sone sette a wytē
 On him that wolde stele more.
 6630 And that me grieveth wonder sore,
 For this proverbe is evere newe,
 That stronge lokes maken trewe
 Of hem that wolden stele and pyke:
 For so wel can ther no man slyke
 6635 Be him ne be non other mene,
 To whom Danger wol give or lene
 Of that tresor he hath to kepe.
 So thogh I wolde stalke and crepe,
 And wayte on eve and ek on morwe,
 6640 Of Danger schal I nothing borwe,
 And stele I wot wel may I noght.
 And thus I am riht wel bethought,
 Whil Danger stant in his office,
 Of Stelthe, which ye clepe a vice,
 6645 I schal be gulfif neveremo.
 Therfore I wolde he were ago
 So fer that I nevere of him herde,
 Hou so that afterward it ferde.
 For thanne I mihte yit per cas
 6650 Of love make som pourchas
 Be Stelthe or be som other weie,
 That nou fro me stant fer aweie.
- Is not; guarded and protected at night*
Whether
guardian ever ready
creature
made gentle
Standoffishness
So that
taken command of
sees
allege a censure (lay blame)
strong locks make true [men]
[Out] of those; pilfer
flatter
means
watch
resolved
call
gone away
by chance

- Bot, fader, as ye tolde above,
 Hou Stelthe goth a nyht for love,
 6655 I mai noght wel that point forsake,
 That ofte times I ne wake
 On nyhtes, whan that othre slepe.
 Bot hou, I prei you, taketh kepe.
 Whan I am loged in such wise
 6660 That I be nyhte mai arise
 At som wyndowe and loken oute
 And se the housinge al aboute,
 So that I mai the chambre knowe
 In which mi ladi, as I trowe,
 6665 Lyth in hir bed and slepeth softe,
 Thanne is myn herte a thief fulofte.
 For there I stonde to beholde
 The longe nyhtes that ben colde
 And thenke on hire that lyth there.
 6670 And thanne I wisshe that I were
 Als wys as was Nectanabus
 Or elles as was Protheus,
 That couthen bothe of nigromauunce
 In what liknesse, in what semblaunce,
 6675 Riht as hem liste, hemself transforme.
 For if I were of such a forme,
 I seie thanne I wolde fle
 Into the chambre for to se
 If eny grace wolde falle,
 6680 So that I mihte under the palle
 Som thing of love pyke and stèle.
 And thus I thenke thoghtes fele,
 And thogh therof nothing be soth,
 Yit ese as for a time it doth.
 6685 Bot ate laste whanne I finde
 That I am falle into my mynde,
 And se that I have stonde longe
 And have no profit underfonge,
 Than stalke I to mi bedd withinne.
 6690 And this is al that evere I winne
 Of love, whanne I walke on nyht.
 Mi will is good, bot of mi myht
 Me lacketh bothe and of mi grace;
 For what so that mi thoghte embrace,
 6695 Yit have I noght the betre ferd.
 Mi fader, lo, nou have ye herd
 What I be Stelthe of love have do,
 And hou mi will hath be therto.

- If I be worthi to penance
 6700 I put it on your ordinance."
- Confessor** "Mi sone, of stelthe I thee behiete,
 Thogh it be for a time swete,
 At ende it doth bot litel good,
 As be ensample hou that it stod
 6705 Whilom, I mai thee telle nou."
- Amans** "I preie you, fader, sei me hou."
- Confessor** "Mi sone, of him which goth be daie
 Be weie of Stelthe to assaie,
 In loves cause and takth his preie,
 6710 Ovide seide as I schal seie,
 And in his *Methamor* he tolde
 A tale, which is good to holde.

reassure

attempt
prey*Metamorphosis*

[TALE OF LEUCOTHOE]

- The poete upon this matiere
 Of Stelthe wrot in this manere.
 6715 Venus, which hath this lawe in honde
 Of thing which mai noght be withstonde,
 As sche which the tresor to warde
 Of love hath withinne hir warde,
 6720 Phebum to love hath so constreigned,
 That he withoute reste is peined
 With al his herte to coveite
 A maiden, which was warded streyte
 Withinne chambre and kept so clos,
 That selden was whan sche, desclos,
 6725 Goth with hir moder for to pleie.
 Leuchotoe, so as men seie,
 This maiden hihte and Orchamus
 Hir fader was; and befell thus.
 This daughter, that was kept so deere,
 6730 And hadde be fro yer to yeere
 Under hir moder discipline
 A clene maide and a virgine,
 Upon the whos nativite
 Of comelihiede and of beauté
 6735 Nature hath set al that sche may,
 That lich unto the fresshe Maii,
 Which othre monthes of the yeer
 Surmonteth, so withoute pier
 Was of this maiden the feture.
 6740 Wheroft Phebus out of mesure
 Hire loveth, and on every syde
 Awaiteth, if so mai betyde,

(i.e., *Ovid*)

guard

(see note)

guarded closely

at large

was named

loveliness

bodily stature

- That he thurgh eny sleihte myhte
 Hire lusti maidenhod unrith,
 6745 The which were al his worldes welthe.
 And thus lurkende upon his stelthe
 In his await so longe he lai,
 Til it befell upon a dai,
 That he thurghout hir chambre wall
 6750 Cam in al sodeinliche, and stall
 That thing which was to him so lief.
 Bot wo the while, he was a thief!
 For Venus, which was enemie
 Of thilke loves micherie,
 6755 Discovereth al the pleine cas
 To Clymene, which thanne was
 Toward Phebus his concubine.
 And sche to lette the covine
 Of thilke love, dedli wroth
 6760 To pleigne upon this maide goth,
 And tolde hire fader hou it stod;
 Wherof for sorwe welnyh wod
 Unto hire moder thus he saide:
 'Lo, what it is to kepe a maide!
 6765 To Phebus dar I nothing speke,
 Bot upon hire I schal be wreke,
 So that these maidens after this
 Mow take ensample, what it is
 To soffre her maidenhed be stole
 6770 Wherof that sche the deth schal thole.'
 And bad with that do make a pet,
 Wherinne he hath his doucher set,
 As he that wol no pité have,
 So that sche was al quik begrave
 6775 And deide anon in his presence.
 Bot Phebus, for the reverence
 Of that sche hadde be his love,
 Hath wrought thurgh his pouer above,
 That sche spong up out of the molde
 6780 Into a flour was named golde,
 Which stant governed of the sonne.
 And thus whan love is evely wonne,
 Fulofte it comth to repentaile."
- Amans** "Mi fader, that is no mervaile,
 6785 Whan that the conseil is bewreid.
 Bot ofte time love hath pleid
 And stole many a privé game,
 Which nevere yit cam into blame,
 Whan that the thinges weren hidde.
- destroy*
(see note)
- stole*
dear
- Exposes; full situation*
- obstruct; conspiracy (collusion)*
- insane*
- avenged*
- Might*
stolen
suffer
pit
- buried alive*
died immediately
- earth*
marigold
- evilly won*
repentance
- betrayed*

- 6790 Bot in youre tale, as it betidde,
 Venus discoveredede al the cas,
 And ek also brod dai it was,
 Whan Phebus such a Stelthe wroghte,
 Wheroft the maide in blame he broghte,
 6795 That afterward sche was so lore. *thus lost*
 Bot for ye seiden nou tofore
 Hou stelthe of love goth be nyhte,
 And doth hise thinges out of syhte,
 Theroft me liste also to hiere *it would please me*
 6800 A tale lich to the matiere,
 Wheroft I myhte ensample take.”
- Confessor** “Mi goode sone, and for thi sake,
 So as it fell be daies olde,
 And so as the poete it tolde, *(i.e., Ovid)*
 6805 Upon the nyhtes micherie
 Nou herkne a tale of poesie.

[TALE OF HERCULES AND FAUNUS]

- ¶ The myhtieste of alle men *(see note)*
 Whan Hercules with Eolen,
 Which was the love of his corage,
 6810 Togedre upon a pelrinage *Who; heart*
 Towardes Rome scholden go, *pilgrimage*
 It fell hem be the weie so,
 That thei upon a dai a cave
 Withinne a roche founden have,
 6815 Which was real and glorious *regal*
 And of entaile curious, *exquisite (sumptuous) workmanship*
 Be name and Thophis it was hote. *called*
 The sonne schon tho wonder hote,
 As it was in the somer tyde. *then wondrously hot*
 6820 This Hercules, which be his syde *time*
 Hath Eolen his love there,
 Whan thei at thilke cave were,
 He seide it thoghte him for the beste
 That sche hire for the hete reste *seemed to him*
 6825 Al thilke day and thilke nyht; *herself*
 And sche, that was a lusti wyht, *creature*
 It liketh hire al that he seide.
 And thus thei duelle there and pleide
 The longe dai. And so befell,
 6830 This cave was under the hell *hill*
 Of Tymolus, which was begrowe *grown over*
 With vines, and at thilke throwe
 Faunus with Saba the goddesse,

- 6835 Be whom the large wildernesse
 In thilke time stod governed,
 Weere in a place, as I am lerned,
 Nyh by, which Bachus wode hihte. *was called Bacchus' wood*
 This Faunus tok a gret insihte *regard*
 Of Eolen, that was so nyh;
- 6840 For whan that he hire beauté syh, *saw*
 Out of his wit he was assoted, *infatuated*
 And in his herte it hath so noted,
 That he forsok the nimpthes alle,
 And seide he wolde, hou so it falle,
- 6845 Assaie another for to winne *calculated*
 So that his hertes thought withinne
 He sette and caste hou that he myhte
 Of love pyke awey be nyhte
 That he be daie in other wise *role*
- 6850 To stele mihte noght suffise.
 And therupon his time he waiteth.
 Nou tak good hiede hou love afaiteth *rules (disciplines)*
 Him which withal is overcome.
- 6855 Faire Eolen, whan sche was come
 With Hercules into the cave,
 Sche seide him that sche wolde have
 Hise clothes of and hires bothe, *off*
 That ech of hem scholde other clothe.
- 6860 And al was do riht as sche bad, *tunic*
 He hath hire in hise clothes clad
 And caste on hire his gulion,
 Which of the skyn of a leon
 Was mad, as he upon the weie *slew*
- 6865 It slough, and overthis to pleie
 Sche tok his grete mace also *tied*
 And knet it at hir gerdil tho.
 So was sche lich the man arraied,
 And Hercules thanne hath assaied *undertaken*
- 6870 To clothen him in hire array.
 And thus thei jape forth the dai, *fool away the time*
 Til that her souper redy were.
 And whan thei hadden souped there, *their*
 Thei schopen hem to gon to reste;
- 6875 And as it thoughte hem for the beste, *prepared themselves*
 Thei bede, as for that ilke nyht, *went to bed*
 Tuo sondri beddes to be dyht, *prepared*
 For thei togedre ligge nolde, *would not lie*
 Because that thei offre wolde
 Upon the morwe here sacrifice. *their*
- 6880 The servantz deden here office

- And sondri beddes made anon,
 Wherin that thei to reste gon
 Ech be himself in sondri place.
 Faire Eole hath set the mace
 6885 Beside hire beddes hed above,
 And with the clothes of hire love
 Sche helede al hire bed aboute;
 And he, which hadde of nothing doute,
 Hire wympel wond aboute his cheke,
 6890 Hire kertell and hire mantel eke
 Abrod upon his bed he spredde.
 And thus thei slepen bothe abedde.
 And what of travail, what of wyn,
 The servantz lich to drunke swyn
 6895 Begunne for to route faste.
 This Faunus, which his stelthe caste,
 Was thanne come to the cave,
 And fond thei weren alle save
 Withoute noise, and in he wente.
 6900 The derke nyht his sihte blente,
 And yit it happeth him to go
 Where Eolen abedde tho
 Was leid alone for to slepe;
 Bot for he wolde take kepe
 6905 Whos bed it was, he made assai,
 And of the leoun, where it lay,
 The cote he fond, and ek he fieleth
 The mace, and thanne his herte kieleth,
 That there dorste he noght abyde,
 6910 Bot stalketh upon every side
 And soghte aboute with his hond,
 That other bedd til that he fond,
 Wher lai bewympled a visage.
 Tho was he glad in his corage,
 6915 For he hir kertell fond also
 And ek hir mantell bothe tuo
 Bespred upon the bed alofte.
 He made him naked thanne, and softe
 Into the bedd unwar he crepte,
 6920 Wher Hercules that time slepte,
 And wende wel it were sche;
 And thus in stede of Eole
 Anon he profreth him to love.
 Bot he, which felte a man above,
 6925 This Hercules, him threw to grounde
 So sore, that thei have him founde
 Liggende there upon the morwe;
- covered
 fear
 head-covering wound
 smock; sleeveless overgown also
 Spread out
 in separate beds
 from hard work; wine
 inebriated swine
 snore loudly
- snug (safe)
 obscured his vision
 investigated
 grew chilly with fear
 wearing a wimple; face
 heart
 Spread out
 thought

And tho was noght a litel sorwe,
 That Faunus of himselfe made,
 6930 Bot elles thei were alle glade
 And lowhen him to scorne aboute.
 Saba with nimphis al a route
 Cam doun to loke hou that he ferde,
 And whan that thei the sothe herde,
 6935 He was bejaped overal.

*laughed
in a great crowd*

ridiculed by everyone

Confessor Mi sone, be thou war withal
 To seche suche mecheries,
 Bot if thou have the betre aspies,
 In aunter if thee so betyde
 6940 As Faunus dede thilke tyde,
 Wheroft thou miht be schamed so."

*snitchings
Unless; inside information*

Amans "Min holi fader, certes no.
 Bot if I hadde riht good leve,
 Such mecherie I thenke leve.
 6945 Mi feinte herte wol noght serve;
 For malgré wolde I noght deserve
 In thilke place wher I love.
 Bot for ye tolden hier above
 Of Covoitise and his pilage,
 6950 If ther be more of that lignage,
 Which toucheth to mi schrifte, I preie
 That ye therof me wolde seie,
 So that I mai the vice eschuiie."

*ill will; earn
Unless; permission
to avoid*

Confessor "Mi sone, if I be order suie
 6955 The vices, as thei stonde arowe,
 Of Covoitise thou schalt knowe
 Ther is yit on, which is the laste;
 In whom ther mai no vertu laste,
 For he with God himself debateth,
 6960 Wheroft that al the hevene him hateth."

*follow in sequence
in a row
wars*

[SACRILEGE]

xii. *Sacrilegus tantum furto loca sacra prophanal;
 Vt sibi sunt agri, sic domus alma dei.
 Nec locus est, in quo non temptat amans quod amatur,
 Et que posse nequit carpere, velle capit.¹*

¹ *The sacrilegious man profanes sacred places as if by theft; he treats the cherished house of God as his own estate. Nor is there anywhere in which the lover does not attempt to possess what is beloved to him; and what Capability cannot seize, Will still grasps.*

- [Confessor] “The hihe God, which alle goode
 Pourveid hath for mannes fode
 Of clothes and of mete and drinke,
 Bad Adam that he scholde swinke
 6965 To geten him his sustiance;
 ⚡ And ek he sette an ordinance
 Upon the lawe of Moises,
 That though a man be haveles,
 Yit schal he noght be thefte stèle.
 6970 Bot nou adaias ther ben fele
 That wol no labour undertake,
 Bot what thei mai be Stelthe take
 Thei holde it sikerliche wonne.
 And thus the lawe is overronne
 6975 Which God hath set, and namely
 With hem that so untrewely
 The goodes robbe of Holi Cherche.
 The thefte which thei thanne werche
 Be name is cleped Sacrilegge,
 6980 Agein the whom I thenke alegge.
 Of his condicion to telle,
 Which rifleth bothe bok and belle,
 So forth with al the remenant
 To Goddes hous appourtenant,
 6985 Wher that he scholde bidde his bede,
 He doth his thefte in holi stede,
 And takth what thing he fint therinne.
 For whan he seth that he mai winne,
 He wondeth for no cursednesse,
 6990 That he ne brekth the holinesse
 And doth to God no reverence;
 For he hath lost his conscience,
 That though the prest therfore curse,
 He seith he fareth noght the wурse.
 6995 And for to speke it otherwise,
 What man that lasseth the franchise
 And takth of Holi Cherche his preie,
 I not what bedes he schal preie.
 Whan he fro God, which hath give al,
 7000 The pourpartie in special,
 Which unto Crist himself is due,
 Benymth, he mai noght wel eschue
 The peine comende afterward;
 For he hath mad his forward
 7005 With Sacrilegge for to duelle,
 Which hath his heritage in helle.
 And if we rede of th'olde lawe,
- Commanded; labor*
- (see note)*
- without possessions*
- by theft*
- many*
- assuredly*
- violated*
- By; called*
- accuse*
- i.e., steals everything*
- make his prayers*
- place*
- turns aside; excommunication/damnation*
- excommunicate*
- diminishes privilege*
- prey*
- prayers*
- share*
- Takes away; avoid*
- contract*

- | | | |
|------|--|---------------------|
| | I finde write, in thilke dawe
Of princes hou ther weren thre
Coupable sore in this degré.
That on of hem was cleped thus,
The proude king Antiochus;
That other Nabuzardan hihte,
Which of his craulté behyhte | <i>in that time</i> |
| 7010 | That on of hem was cleped thus,
The proude king Antiochus;
That other Nabuzardan hihte,
Which of his craulté behyhte
The temple to destruie and waste,
And so he dede in alle haste; | <i>Guilty</i> |
| 7015 | The thridde, which was after schamed,
Was Nabugodonosor named,
And he Jerusalem putte under, | <i>promised</i> |
| 7020 | Of Sacrilegge and many a wonder
There in the holi temple he wroghte,
Which Baltazar his heir aboghte,
Whan Mane, Techel, Phares write | <i>subjugated</i> |
| 7025 | Was on the wal, as thou miht wite,
So as the Bible it hath declared.
Bot for al that it is noght spared | <i>paid for</i> |
| | Yit nou aday, that men ne pile,
And maken argument and skile
To Sacrilegge as it belongeth, | <i>plunder</i> |
| 7030 | For what man that ther after longeth,
He takth non hiede what he doth. | <i>yearns</i> |

[SACRILEGIOUSNESS OF LOVERS]

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| | And riht so, for to telle soth,
In loves cause if I schal trete,
Ther ben of suche smale and grete. | |
| 7035 | If thei no leisir fynden elles,
Thei wol noght wonden for the belles,
Ne thogh thei sen the prest at masse;
That wol thei leten overpasse. | <i>turn aside; [church] bells</i> |
| 7040 | If that thei finde here love there,
Thei stonde and tellen in hire ere,
And axe of God non other grace,
Whyl thei ben in that holi place;
Bot er thei gon som avantage | <i>their; [in church]
express [their desires]; ear</i> |
| 7045 | Ther wol thei have, and som pilage
Of goodli word or of beheste,
Or elles thei take ate leste
Out of hir hand or ring or glove,
So nyh the weder thei wol love, | <i>plunder
promise</i> |
| 7050 | As who seith sche schal noght forgete,
Nou I this tokne of hire have gete.
Thus halwe thei the hihe feste. | <i>i.e., close to the wind (dangerously)
observe (celebrate)</i> |

- Such thefte mai no cherche areste,
For al is leveful that hem liketh,
To whom that elles it misliketh.
- 7055 And ek riht in the selve kinde
In grete cites men mai finde
This lusti folk, that make it gay,
And waite upon the haliday.
In cherches and in menstres eke
- 7060 Thei gon the wommen for to seke,
And wher that such on goth aboute,
Tofore the faireste of the route,
Wher as thei sitten alle arewe,
Ther wol he most his bodi schewe,
- 7065 His croket kembd and theron set
A nouche with a chapelet,
Or elles on of grene leves,
Which late com out of the greves,
Al for he scholde seme freiss.
- 7070 And thus he loketh on the fleissh
Riht as an hauk which hath a sihte
Upon the foul, ther he schal lihte;
And as he were of faierie,
He scheweth him tofore here yhe
- 7075 In holi place wher thei sitte,
Al for to make here hertes flitte.
His yhe nawher wole abyde,
Bot loke and prie on every syde
On hire and hire, as him best lyketh.
- 7080 And otherwhile among he syketh;
Thenkth on of hem, 'That was for me,'
And so ther thenken tuo or thre,
And yit he loveth non of alle,
Bot wher as evere his chance falle.
- 7085 And natheles to seie a soth,
The cause why that he so doth
Is for to stele an herte or tuo,
Out of the cherche er that he go
And as I seide it hier above,
- 7090 Al is that Sacrilege of love;
For wel mai be he stelth away
That he nevere after yelde may.
Tell me forthi, my sone, anon,
Hast thou do Sacrilege, or non,
- 7095 As I have said in this manere?"
- Confessio Amantis** "Mi fader, as of this matiere
I wole you tellen redely
What I have do; bot trewely
- inhibit
lawful
- chapels also
- Before
gathered in a row
- ornamental curl combed
jeweled clasp; diadem
one (a chaplet)
- groves
lusty
- exhibits himself before their eye
- giddy
eye nowhere; settle down
- this one and that one
from time to time sighs
- steal

- I mai excuse min entente,
 7100 That nevere I yit to cherche wente
 In such manere as ye me schryve,
 For no womman that is on lyve.
 The cause why I have it laft
 Mai be for I unto that craft
 7105 Am nothing able so to stele,
 Thogh ther be wommen noght so fele. many
 Bot yit wol I noght seie this,
 Whan I am ther mi ladi is, where
 In whom lith holly mi querele, lies wholly; complaint
 7110 And sche to cherche or to chapele And [when]
 Wol go to matins or to messe, mass
 That time I waite wel and gesse,
 To cherche I come and there I stonde,
 And thogh I take a bok on honde,
 7115 Mi contienance is on the bok, face
 Bot toward hire is al my lok.
 And if so falle that I preie
 Unto mi God, and somwhat seie
 Of Paternoster or of Crede,
 7120 Al is for that I wolde sped, succeed
 So that mi bede in Holi Cherche prayer
 Ther mihte som miracle werche
 Mi ladi herte for to chaunge,
 Which evere hath be to me so strange. lady's heart
 7125 So that al mi devucion distant
 And al mi contemplacion
 With al min herte and mi corage
 Is only set on hire ymage,
 And evere I waite upon the tyde. time
 7130 If sche loke eny thing asyde, at all
 That I me mai of hire avise, be aware of
 Anon I am with covoitise
 So smite, that me were lief
 To ben in Holi Cherche a thief,
 7135 Bot noght to stele a vestement, not at all my desire
 For that is nothing mi talent.
 Bot I wold stele, if that I mihte,
 A glad word or a goodly sythe;
 And evere mi service I profre,
 7140 And namly whan sche wol gon offre, go to make an offering
 For thanne I lede hire, if I may, lead
 For somwhat wolde I stele away.
 Whan I beclippe hire on the wast, embrace her around the waist
 Yit ate leste I stele a tast, taste
 7145 And otherwhile 'grant mercy'

- Sche seith, and so winne I therby
 A lusti touch, a good word eke,
 Bot al the remenant to seke
 Is fro mi pourpos wonder ferr. *wide of the mark*
- 7150 So mai I seie, as I seide er,
 In Holy Cherche if that I wowe,
 My conscience it wolde allowe,
 Be so that up amendment *woo*
 I mihte gete assignement
- 7155 Wher for to sped in other place.
 Such Sacrilege I holde a grace.
 And thus, mi fader, soth to seie,
 In cherche riht as in the weie,
 If I mihte ought of love take, *Provided that as compensation*
- 7160 Such hansell have I noght forsake. *an allocation of funds*
 Bot finali I me confesse,
 Ther is in me non holinesse
 Whil I hire se in eny stede; *In order to succeed*
 And yit, for ought that evere I dede,
- 7165 No Sacrilege of hire I tok,
 Bot if it were of word or lok, *Unless*
 Or elles if that I hir fredde, *feel*
 Whan I toward offringe hir ledde,
 Take therof what I take may,
- 7170 For elles bere I noght away.
 For thogh I wolde ought elles have,
 Alle othre thinges ben so save *well protected*
 And kept with such a privilege,
 That I mai do no Sacrilege.
- 7175 God wot mi wille natheles,
 Thogh I mot nedes kepe pes
 And malgré myn so let it passe,
 Mi will therto is noght the lasse, *in spite of myself*
 If I mihte other wise aweie. *be successful*
- 7180 Forthi, mi fader, I you preie,
 Tell what you thenketh therupon,
 If I therof have guilt or non.”
- Confessor** “Thi will, mi sone, is for to blame,
 The remenant is bot a game, *rest*
 7185 That I have herd thee telle as yit.
 Bot tak this lore into thi wit,
 That alle thing hath time and stede, *place*
 The cherche serveth for the bede, *prayer*
 The chambre is of another speche. *story*
- 7190 Bot if thou wistest of the wreche, *knew; vengeance*
 Hou Sacrilege it hath aboght,
 Thou woldest betre ben bethoght; *would have been better advised*

And for thou schalt the more amende,
A tale I wole on thee despende.

[TALE OF PARIS AND HELEN]

- 7195 To alle men, as who seith, knowe
It is, and in the world thurgh blowe,
Hou that of Troie Lamedon
To Hercules and to Jasoun,
Whan toward Colchos out of Grece
7200 Be see sailende upon a piece
☞ Of lond of Troie reste preide,
Bot he hem wrathfulli congeide.
And for thei founde him so vilein,
Whan thei come into Grece agein,
7205 With pouer that thei gete myhte
Towardes Troie thei hem dyhte,
And ther thei token such vengance,
Wheroft stant yit the remembrance;
For thei destruide king and al,
7210 And leften bot the brente wal.
The Greces of Troiens many slowe
And prisoners thei toke ynowe,
Among the whiche ther was on,
The kinges daughter Lamedon,
7215 Esiona, that faire thing,
Which unto Thelamon the king
Be Hercules and be th'assent
Of al the hole parlement
Was at his wille gove and granted.
7220 And thus hath Grece Troie danted,
And hom thei torne in such manere.
Bot after this nou schalt thou hiere
The cause why this tale I telle,
Upon the chances that befelle.
7225 King Lamedon, which deide thus,
He hadde a sone, on Priamus,
Which was noght thilke time at hom.
Bot whan he herde of this, he com
And fond hou the cité was falle,
7230 Which he began anon to walle
And made ther a cité newe,
That thei whiche othre londes knewe
Tho seiden, that of lym and ston
In al the world so fair was non.
7235 And on that o side of the toun
The king let maken Ylioun,
- made known
spread abroad*
- (see note)*
- dismissed them angrily
because; villainous*
- directed themselves*
- only; burned
killed
aplenly
one*
- daughter of king Lamedon*
- given
conquered*
- hear*
- died
one*
- Who; at that time*
- rebuild*

- That hile tour, that stronge place,
 Which was adrad of no manace
 Of quarel nor of non engin;
 7240 And thogh men wolde make a myn,
 No mannes craft it mihte aproche,
 For it was sett upon a roche.
 The walles of the toun aboute,
 Hem stod of al the world no doute,
 7245 And after the proporcion
 Sex gates weren of the toun
 Of such a forme, of such entaile,
 That hem to se was gret mervaile.
 The ditches weren brode and depe;
 7250 A fewe men it mihte kepe
 From al the world, as semeth tho,
 Bot if the goddes weren fo.
 Gret presse unto that cité drouh,
 So that ther was of poeple ynoch,
 7255 Of burgeis that therinne duellen;
 Ther mai no mannes tunge tellen
 Hou that cité was riche of good.
 Whan al was mad and al wel stod,
 King Priamus tho him bethoghte
 7260 What thei of Grece whilom wroghte,
 And what was of her swerd devoured,
 And hou his soster deshonoured
 With Thelamon avey was lad.
 And so thenkende he wax unglad,
 7265 And sette anon a parlement,
 To which the lordes were assent.
 In many a wise ther was spoke,
 Hou that thei mihten ben awroke,
 Bot ate laste nathelas
 7270 Thei seiden alle, 'Acord and pes.'
 To setten either part in reste
 It thoghte hem thanne for the beste
 With resonable amendement;
 And thus was Antenor forth sent
 7275 To axe Esionam agein
 And witen what thei wolden sein.
 So passeth he the see be barge
 To Grece for to seie his charge,
 The which he seide redely
 7280 Unto the lordes by and by:
 Bot where he spak in Grece aboute,
 He herde noght bot wordes stoute,
 And nameliche of Thelamon;
- bolt of a crossbow; weapon*
tunnel
- Six*
workmanship
- moats*
defend
then
- Except if; opposed to them*
multitude; drew
- merchants*
- completed*
- be avenged*
- redress*
- sea by ship*
- sagely*
one by one (completely)
- fierce*

- 7285 The maiden wolde he noght forgon,
He seide, for no maner thing,
And bad him gon hom to his king,
For there gat he non amende
For oght he couthe do or sende. *reparation*
- 7290 This Anthenor agein goth hom
Unto his king, and whan he com,
He tolde in Grece of that he herde,
And hou that Thelamon ansuerde,
And hou thei were at here above, *exalted frame of mind (i.e., on their high horse)*
That thei wol nouther pes ne love,
- 7295 Bot every man schal don his beste.
Bot for men sein that nyht hath reste,
The king bethoghte him al that nyht,
And erli, whan the dai was lyht,
He tok conseil of this matiere,
- 7300 And thei acorde in this manere,
That he withouten eny lette
A certein time scholde sette
Of parlement to ben avised.
And in the wise it was devised, *delay*
- 7305 Of parlement he sette a day,
And that was in the monthe of Maii.
This Priamus hadde in his yhte
A wif, and Hecuba sche hyhte,
Be whom that time ek hadde he *possession*
- 7310 Of sones fyve, and douhtres thre
Besiden hem, and thritty mo,
And weren knyhtes alle tho,
Bot noght upon his wif begete,
Bot elles where he myhte hem gete *was named*
- 7315 Of wommen welche he hadde knowe.
Such was the world at thilke throwe,
So that he was of children riche,
As therof was no man his liche. *begotten*
- 7320 Of parlement the dai was come,
Ther ben the lordes alle and some;
Tho was pronounced and pourposed,
And al the cause hem was disclosed,
Hou Anthenor in Grece ferde. *match*
- 7325 Thei seten alle stille and herde,
And tho spak every man aboute.
Ther was alegged many a doute, *expressed; fear*
And many a proud word spoke also;
Bot for the moste part as tho
- 7330 Thei wisten noght what was the beste,
Or for to werre or for to reste. *Whether to make war*

- Bot he that was withoute fere,
Hector, among the lordes there
His tale tolde in such a wise,
And seide, 'Lordes, ye ben wise,
7335 Ye knownen this als wel as I,
Above all othre most worthi
Stant nou in Grece the manhode
Of worthiness and of kniethode;
For who so wole it wel agrope,
7340 To hem belongeth al Europe,
Which is the thridde parti evene
Of al the world under the hevene;
And we be bot of folk a fewe.
So were it reson for to schewe
7345 The peril, er we falle thrinne.
Betre is to leve, than beginne
Thing which as mai noght ben achieved;
He is noght wys that fint him grieved,
And doth so that his grief be more.
7350 For who that loketh al tofore
And wol noght se what is behinde,
He mai fulofte hise harmes finde:
Wicke is to stryve and have the worse.
We have encheson for to corse,
7355 This wot I wel, and for to hate
The Greks; bot er that we debate
With hem that ben of such a myht,
It is ful good that every wiht
Be of himself riht wel bethoght.
7360 Bot as for me this seie I noght;
For while that mi lif wol stonde,
If that ye taken werre on honde,
Falle it to beste or to the werste,
I schal miselven be the ferste
7365 To grieven hem, what evere I may.
I wol noght ones seie nay
To thing which that youre conseil demeth,
For unto me wel more it quemeth
The werre certes than the pes;
7370 Bot this I seie natheles,
As me belongeth for to seie.
Nou schape ye the beste weie.'
Whan Hector hath seid his avis,
Next after him tho spak Paris,
7375 Which was his brother, and alleide
What him best thoghte, and thus he seide:
'Strong thing it is to soffre wrong,
fear
explore
perceive
therein
who finds himself
Bad (Harmful)
a reason; curse
fight
war
pleases
behooves
asserted
An arduous thing

- And suffre schame is more strong,
Bot we have suffred bothe tuo;
7380 And for al that yit have we do
What so we mihte to reforme
The pes, whan we in such a forme
Sente Anthenor, as ye wel knowe.
And thei here grete wordes blowe
7385 Upon her wrongful dedes eke;
And who that wole himself noght meke
To pes, and list no reson take,
Men sein reson him wol forsake.
For in the multitude of men
7390 Is noght the strengthe, for with ten
It hath be sen in trew querele
Agein an hundred false dele,
And had the betre of Goddes grace.
This hath befallen in many place;
7395 And if it like unto you alle,
I wole assaie, hou so it falle,
Oure enemis if I mai grieve;
For I have cawht a gret believe
Upon a point I wol declare.
7400 This ender day, as I gan fare
To hunte unto the grete hert,
Which was tofore myn houndes stert,
And every man went on his syde
7405 Him to poursuie, and I to ryde
Began the chace, and soth to seie,
Withinne a while out of mi weie
I rod, and nyste where I was.
And slep me cauhte, and on the gras
7410 Beside a welle I lay me doun
To slepe, and in a visioun
To me the god Mercurie cam;
Goddesses thre with him he nam,
7415 Minerve, Venus, and Juno,
And in his hond an appell tho
He hield of gold with lettres write.
And this he dede me to wite,
7420 Hou that thei putt hem upon me,
That to the faireste of hem thre
Of gold that appell scholde I give.
With ech of hem tho was I schrive,
And ech on faire me behihte.
Bot Venus seide, if that sche mihte
That appell of mi gifte gete,
Sche wolde it neveremor forgete,
- peace; on these terms*
- their; boast noisily*
- submit*
- desires to follow no reason*
- false [men] to fight*
- had the advantage*
- other*
- flanked him*
- knew not*
- brought*
- caused me to know*
- entrusted themselves to me*
- absolved*
- promised*

- 7425 And seide hou that in Grece lond
 Sche wolde bringe unto myn hond
 Of al this erthe the faireste;
 So that me thoghte it for the beste,
 To hire and gaf that appel tho. *And to her [I] gave; then*
- 7430 Thus hope I wel, if that I go,
 That sche for me wol so ordeine,
 That thei matiere for to pleigne
 Schul have, er that I come agein.
 Nou have ye herd that I wol sein. *opinion*
- 7435 Sey ye what stant in youre avis.'
 And every man tho seide his,
 And sundri causes thei recorde,
 Bot ate laste thei acorde
 That Paris schal to Grece wende, *go*
 7440 And thus the parlement tok ende.
- Cassandra, whan sche herde of this,
 The which to Paris soster is,
 Anon sche gan to wepe and weile,
 And seide, 'Allas, what mai ous eile?' *Paris' sister*
- 7445 Fortune with hire blinde whiel
 Ne wol noght lete ous stonde wel.
 For this I dar wel undertake,
 That if Paris his weie take,
 As it is seid that he schal do, *assure [you]*
- 7450 We ben forevere thanne undo.'
 This, which Cassandre thanne hihte,
 In al the world as it berth sihte,
 In bokes as men finde write,
 Is that Sibille of whom ye wite, *undone*
 7455 That alle men yit clepen sage. *promised*
- Whan that sche wiste of this viage,
 Hou Paris schal to Grece fare,
 No womman mihte worse fare
 Ne sorwe more than sche dede; *know*
- 7460 And riht so in the same stede
 Ferde Helenus, which was hir brother,
 Of prophecie and such another. *call wise*
- And al was holde bot a jape,
 So that the pourpos which was schape, *at the same moment (on the spot)*
- 7465 Or were hem lief or were hem loth,
 Was holde, and into Grece goth
 This Paris with his retenance. *Fared (i.e., Lamented)*
- And as it fell upon his chance,
 Of Grece he londeth in an yle, *adhered to*
- 7470 And him was told the same whyle
 Of folk which he began to freyne, *retinue* *island*
- Whether it were pleasing or loathsome to them*
- question*

- Tho was in th'yle queene Heleyne,
And ek of contres there aboute
Of ladis many a lusti route,
With mochel worthi poeple also. *lively company*
- 7475 The cause stod in such a wise:
For worschipe and for sacrificise
That thei to Venus wolden make,
As thei tofore hadde undertake,
Some of good will, some of beheste,
For thanne was hire hihe feste
Withinne a temple which was there. *by promise*
- 7480 Whan Paris wiste what thei were,
Anon he schop his ordinance
To gon and don his obeissance
To Venus on hire holi day,
And dede upon his beste aray.
With gret richesse he him behongeth, *put on*
7490 As it to such a lord belongeth,
He was noght armed natheles,
Bot as it were in lond of pes,
And thus he goth forth out of schipe
And takth with him his felaschipe.
- 7495 In such manere as I you seie
Unto the temple he hield his weie. *made his way*
Tydinge, which goth overal
To grete and smale, forth withal
Com to the queenes ere and tolde *News*
- 7500 Hou Paris com, and that he wolde
Do sacrificise to Venus:
And whan sche herde telle thus,
She thoghte, hou that it evere be,
That sche wole him abyde and se. *ear*
- 7505 Forth comth Paris with glad visage
Into the temple on pelrinage,
Wher unto Venus the goddesse
He gifth and offreth gret richesse,
And preith hir that he preie wolde. *await*
- 7510 And thanne aside he gan beholde
And sih wher that this ladi stod;
And he forth in his freisshe mod
Goth ther sche was and made hir chiere,
As he wel couthe in his manere, *pilgrimage*
- 7515 That of his wordes such plesance
Sche tok that al hire aqueintance,
Als ferforth as the herte lay,
He stal er that he wente away. *what he wished to pray* *intimacy*

- So goth he forth and tok his leve,
 7520 And thoghte, anon as it was eve,
 He wolde don his Sacrilegge,
 That many a man it scholde abegge. alone (pay) for
taken
- Whan he to schipe agein was come,
 To him he hath his conseil nome,
 7525 And al devised the matiere
 In such a wise as thou schalt hiere.
 Withinne nyght al prively
 His men he warneth by and by,
 That thei be redy armed sone
- 7530 For certein thing which was to done.
 And thei anon ben redi alle,
 And ech on other gan to calle,
 And went hem out upon the stronde beach
 And tok a pourpos ther alonde adopted
- 7535 Of what thing that thei wolden do,
 Toward the temple and forth thei go.
 So fell it, of devocion
 Heleine in contemplacion
 With many another worthi wiht person
- 7540 Was in the temple and wok al nyght, on an all-night vigil
 To bidde and preie unto th'yimage
 Of Venus, as was thanne usage.
 So that Paris riht as him liste
 Into the temple, er thei it wiste, before; knew
- 7545 Com with his men al sodeinly,
 And alle at ones sette ascry attacked with battle cry
 In hem whiche in the temple were,
 For tho was mochel poeple there;
 Bot of defense was no bote,
- 7550 So soffren thei that soffre mote. avail
must
- Paris unto the queene wente,
 And hire in bothe hise armes hente seized
 With him and with his felaschipe,
 And forth thei bere hire unto schipe.
- 7555 Up goth the seal and forth thei wente,
 And such a wynd fortune hem sente,
 Til thei the havene of Troie cauhte; arrived at
 Where out of schipe anon thei strauhete proceeded straight away
 And gon hem forth toward the toun,
- 7560 The which cam with processioune
 Agein Paris to sen his preie. Toward; prize
 And every man began to seie
 To Paris and his felaschipe
 Al that thei couthen of worschipe;
- 7565 Was non so litel man in Troie,

- That he ne made merthe and joie
 Of that Paris hath wonne Heleine.
 Bot al that merthe is sorwe and peine
 To Helenus and to Cassaundre;
- 7570 For thei it token schame and sklaundre
 And lost of al the comun grace,
 That Paris out of holi place
 Be Stelthe hath take a mannes wif,
 Wheroft he schal lese his lif
- 7575 And many a worthi man therto,
 And al the cité be fordo,
 Which nevere schal be mad agein.
 And so it fell, riht as thei sein,
 The sacrilege which he wroghte
- 7580 Was cause why the Gregois soughte
 Unto the toun and it beleie,
 And wolden nevere parte aweie,
 Til what be sleihte and what be strengthe
 Thei hadde it wonne in brede and lengthe,
- 7585 And brent and slain that was withinne.
- [Confessor]** Nou se, mi sone, which a sinne
 Is Sacrilege in holy stede.
 Be war therfore and bidd thi bede,
 And do nothing in Holy Cherche,
 7590 Bot that thou miht be reson werche.
- And ek tak hiede of Achilles,
 Whan he unto his love ches
 Polixena, that was also
 In holi temple of Appollo,
 7595 Which was the cause why he dyde
 And al his lust was leyd asyde.
- And Troilus upon Criseide
 Also his ferste love leide
 In holi place, and hou it ferde,
 7600 As who seith, al the world it herde;
 Forsake he was for Diomede,
 Such was of love his laste mede.
- Confessor** Forthi, mi sone, I wolde rede,
 Be this ensample as thou myht rede,
 7605 Sech elles, wher thou wolt, thi grace,
 And war thee wel in holi place
 What thou to love do or speke,
 In aunter if it so be wreke
 As thou hast herd me told before.
- 7610 And tak good hiede also therfore
 Upon what forme of Avarice,
 Mor than of eny other vice,
- doomed
rebuilt
- besieged
- deceit
(i.e., in every respect)
- recite your prayers
- chose
- died
- recompense
advise
interpret
- Seek elsewhere
guard yourself well
- In case; avenged

- I have divided in parties
 The branches, whiche of compainies
 7615 Thurghout the world in general
 Ben nou the leders overal,
 Of Covoitise and of Perjure,
 Of fals Brocage and of Usure,
 Of Skarsnesse and Unkindeschipe,
 7620 Which nevere drouh to felaschipe,
 Of Robberie and privi Stelthe,
 Which don is for the worldes welthe,
 Of Ravine and of Sacrilegge,
 Which makth the conscience aggregge; become deadened
 7625 Althogh it mai richesse atteigne,
 It floureth, bot it schal noght greine blooms; bear grain
 Unto the fruit of rihtwisnesse.
 Bot who that wolde do largesse
 Upon the reule as it is give,
 7630 So myhte a man in trouthe live
 Toward his God, and ek also
 Toward the world, for bothe tuo
 Largesse awaiteth as belongeth, is appropriate
 To neither part that he ne wrongeth;
 7635 He kepth himself, he kepth his frendes,
 So stant he sauf to bothe hise endes,
 That he excedeth no mesure,
 So wel he can himself mesure.
 Wheroft, mi sone, thou schalt wite,
 7640 So as the Philosophre hath write."

[PRODIGALITY]

- xiii. *Prodegus et parcus duo sunt extrema, que largus
 Est horum medius, plebis in ore bonus.*¹

- [Confessor]** “Betwen the tuo extremites
 Of vice stant the propretes
 Of vertu, and to prove it so
 Tak Avarice and tak also
 7645 The vice of Prodegalité;
 Betwen hem Liberalité,
 Which is the vertu of Largesse,
 Stant and governeth his noblesse.
 For tho tuo vices in discord

(*see note*)

¹ *Prodigality and parsimony are two extremes, and generosity is their middle, a trait held good by the voice of the people.*

- 7650 Stonde evere, as I finde of record;
 So that betwen here tuo debat
 Largesse reuleth his astat.
 For in such wise as Avarice,
 As I tofore have told the vice,
 Thurgh streit holdinge and thurgh skarsnesse
 Stant in contraire to Largesse,
 Riht so stant Prodegalité
 Revers, bot noght in such degré.
 For so as Avarice spareth,
 And for to kepe his tresor careth,
 That other al his oghne and more
 Agein the wise mannes lore
 Gifth and despendeth hiere and there,
 So that him reccheth nevere where.
 While he mai borwe, he wol despende,
 Til ate laste he seith, 'I wende';
 Bot that is spoken al to late,
 For thanne is poverté ate gate
 And takth him evene be the slieve,
 For erst wol he no wisdom lieve.
 And riht as Avarice is sinne,
 That wolde his tresor kepe and winne,
 Riht so is Prodegalité.
 Bot of Largesse in his degré,
 Which evene stant betwen the tuo,
 The hihe God and man also
 The vertu ech of hem commendeth.
 For he himselfen ferst amendeth,
 That overal his name spredeth,
 And to alle othre, where it nedeth,
 He gifth his good in such a wise,
 That he makth many a man arise,
 Which elles scholde falle lowe.
 Largesce mai noght ben unknowe;
 For what lond that he regneth inne,
 It mai noght faile for to winne
 Thurgh his decerté love and grace,
 Wher it schal faile in other place.
 And thus betwen to moche and lyte
 Largesce, which is noght to wyte,
 Halt evere forth the middel weie.
 Bot who that torne wole aweie
 Fro that to Prodegalité,
 Anon he lest the propreté
 Of vertu and goth to the vice;
 For in such wise as Avarice
- their mutual conflict*
described
tightfistedness
Just so
In reverse
it concerns him
receive on credit; spend
'I repent'
plucks
believe
too much; little
blame
loses

- Lest for scarsnesse his goode name,
 Riht so that other is to blame,
 Which thurgh his wast mesure excedeth,
 For no man wot what harm that bredeth. *waste*
- 7700 Bot mochel joie ther betydeth,
 Wher that largesse an herte guydeth.
 For his mesure is so governed,
 That he to bothe partz is lerned,
 To God and to the world also,
 He doth reson to bothe tuo.
 The povere folk of his almesse
 Relieved ben in the destresse
 Of thurst, of hunger and of cold.
- 7710 The gifte of him was nevere sold,
 Bot frely give, and natheles
 The myhti God of His encress
 Rewardeth him of double grace;
 The hevene he doth him to pourchace
 And gifteth him ek the worldes good.
- 7715 And thus the cote for the hod
 Largesse takth, and yit no sinne
 He doth, hou so that evere he winne.
- ☞ What man hath hors men give him hors, *(see note)*
 7720 And who non hath of him no fors, *nothing*
 For he mai thanne on fote go;
 The world hath evere stonde so.
 Bot for to loken of the tweie,
 A man to go the siker weie, *more certain way*
- ☞ Betre is to give than to take:
 With gifte a man mai frendes make,
 Bot who that takth or gret or smal,
 He takth a charge forth withal,
 And stant noght fre til it be quit.
- 7724 So for to deme in mannes wit, *judge*
 It helpeth more a man to have
 His oghne good, than for to crave
 Of othre men and make him bounde,
 Wher elles he mai stonde unbounde.
- ☞ Senec conseileth in this wise, *(see note)*
 7736 And seith, 'Bot if thi good suffise
 Unto the liking of thi wille,
 Withdrawh thi lust and hold thee stille,
 And be to thi good sufficant.'
- 7740 For that thing is appourtenant *pertinent*
 To trouthe and causeth to be fre
 After the reule of charité,

- ¶ Which ferst beginneth of himselfe. *(see note)*
- For if thou richest othre twelve,
- 7745 Wheroft thou schalt thiself be povere,
I not what thonk thou miht recovere.
Whil that a man hath good to give,
With grete routes he mai live
And hath his frendes overal,
7750 And everich of him telle schal.
Therwhile he hath his fulle packe,
Thei seie, 'A good felawe is Jacke';
Bot whanne it faileth ate laste,
Anon his pris thei overcaste,
7755 For thanne is ther non other lawe
Bot, 'Jacke was a good felawe.'
Whan thei him povere and nedy se,
Thei lete him passe and farwel he;
Al that he wende of compainie
7760 Is thanne torned to folie.
Bot nou to speke in other kinde
Of love, a man mai suche finde,
That wher thei come in every route
Thei caste and waste her love aboute,
7765 Til al here time is overgon,
And thanne have thei love non.
For who that loveth overal,
It is no reson that he schal
Of love have eny propreté.
7770 Forthi, mi sone, avise thee
If thou of love hast be to large,
For such a man is noght to charge:
And if it so be that thou hast
Despended al thi time in wast
7775 And set thi love in sondri place,
Though thou the substance of thi grace
Lese ate laste, it is no wonder;
For he that put himselfen under,
As who seith, comun overal,
7780 He lest the love special
Of eny on, if sche be wys.
For love schal noght bere his pris
Be reson, whanne it passeth on.
So have I sen ful many on,
7785 That were of love wel at ese,
Whiche after felle in gret desese
Thurgh wast of love, that thei spente
In sondri places wher thei wente.

- Confessor** Riht so, mi sone, I axe of thee
 7790 If thou with Prodegalité
 Hast hier and ther thi love wasted.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, nay; bot I have tasted
 In many a place as I have go,
 And yit love I nevere on of tho,
 7795 Bot for to drive forth the dai.
 For lieveth wel, myn herte is ay
 Withoute mo foreveremore
 Al upon on, for I no more
 Desire bot hire love alone.
- 7800 So make I many a privé mone,
 For wel I fiele I have despended
 Mi longe love and noght amended
 Mi sped, for ought I finde yit.
 If this be wast to youre wit
- 7805 Of love, and Prodegalité,
 Nou, goode fader, demeth ye:
 Bot of o thing I wol me schryve,
 That I schal for no love thryve,
 7809 Bot if hirself me wol relieve.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, that I mai wel lieve.
 And nathelas me semeth so,
 For ought that thou hast yit misdo
 Of time which thou hast despended,
 It mai with grace ben amended.
- 7815 For thing which mai be worth the cost
 Per chaunce is nouther wast ne lost;
 For what thing stant on aventure,
 That can no worldes creature
 Tell in certein hou it schal wende,
 7820 Til he therof mai sen an ende.
 So that I not as yit therfore
 If thou, mi sone, hast wonne or lore.
 For ofte time, as it is sene,
 Whan somer hath lost al his grene
- 7825 And is with wynter wast and bare,
 That him is left nothing to spare,
 Al is recovered in a throwe.
 The colde wyndes overblowe,
 And stille be the scharpe schoures,
- 7830 And soudeinliche agein his floures
 The somer hapneth and is riche.
 And so per cas thi graces liche,
 Mi sone, thogh thou be nou povere
 7834 Of love, yit thou miht recovere.”
- pass the time
believe; ever
- improved
fortune
understanding
- you judge
confess
- Unless
believe
- is subject to chance
change
- do not know
lost
- its youthful vigor
laid waste; barren
- showers
in preparation for
appears
similarly

Amans “Mi fader, certes grant merci.
Ye have me tawht so redeli,
That evere whil I live schal
The betre I mai be war withal
Of thing which ye have seid er this.
7840 Bot overmore hou that it is,
Toward mi schrifte as it belongeth,
To wite of othre pointz me longeth;
Wherof that ye me wolden teche
With al myn herte I you beseche.”

it behooves me

EXPLICIT LIBER QUINTUS



CONFESSIO AMANTIS: BOOK 6 (GLUTTONY)

INCIPIT LIBER SEXTUS

i. *Est gula que nostrum maculauit prima parentem
Ex vettito pomo, quo dolet omnis homo.
Hec agit vt corpus anime contraria spirat,
Quo caro fit crassa, spiritus atque macer.
Intus et exterius si que virtutis habentur,
Potibus ebrietas conviciata ruit.
Mersa sopore, labris, que Bacchus inebriat hospes,
Indignata Venus oscula raro premit.¹*

	[Confessor] “The grete senne original, Which every man in general Upon his berthe hath envenymed, In Paradis it was mystymed:	<i>sin</i>
5	Whan Adam of thilke appell bot, His swete morscel was to hot, Which dedly made the mankinde.	<i>committed ate (bit) too spicy mortal</i>
	¶ And in the bokes as I finde, This vice, which so out of rule	<i>(see note)</i>
10	Hath sette ous alle, is cleped Gule, Of which the branches ben so grete, That of hem alle I wol noght trete, Bot only as touchende of tuo I thenke speke and of no mo;	<i>called Gluttony</i>
15	Wherof the ferste is Dronkeschipe, Which berth the cuppe felaschipe. Ful many a wonder doth this vice, He can make of a wisman nyce, And of a fool, that him schal seme	<i>foolish</i>
20	That he can al the lawe deme, And given every juggement	<i>judge (arbitrate)</i>

¹ *It is Gluttony that first tainted our parents, by the primeval apple for which every human being mourns. This sin makes the body yearn for things contrary to the soul, by which the flesh is made stout and the spirit thin. If anything virtuous belongs to a man, within or without, loathsome drunkenness destroys it with tippling. Indignant Venus rarely imprints kisses languid with sleep on lips that Bacchus the tavern host has made drunken.*

Which longeth to the firmament
 Bothe of the sterre and of the mone;
 And thus he makth a gret clerk sone
 25 Of him that is a lewed man. *unlearned (layman)*

Ther is nothing which he ne can,
 Whil he hath Dronkeschipe on honde.
 He knowth the see, he knowth the stronde;
 30 He is a noble man of armes,
 And yit no strengthe is in his armes.
 Ther he was strong ynoch tofore,
 35 With Dronkeschipe it is forlore,
 And al is changed his astat,
 And wext anon so fieble and mat,
 That he mai nouther go ne come,
 Bot al togedre him is benome
 40 That he wot nevere what he doth,
 Ne which is fals, ne which is soth,
 Ne which is dai, ne which is nyht,
 And for the time he knowth no wyht,
 45 That he ne wot so moche as this,
 What maner thing himselfen is,
 Or he be man, or he be beste.
 That holde I riht a sori feste,
 Whan he that reson understod
 50 So soudeinliche is woxe wod,
 Or elles lich the dede man,
 Which nouther go ne speke can.
 Thus ofte he is to bedde broght,
 Bot where he lith yit wot he noght,
 55 Til he arise upon the morwe,
 And thanne he seith, 'O, which a sorwe
 It is a man be drinkeles!'
 So that halfdrunke in such a res
 With dreie mouth he sterte him uppe,
 60 And seith, 'Nou *baillez ça* the cuppe.'
 That made him lese his wit at eve
 Is thanne a morwe al his beleve;
 The cuppe is al that evere him pleseth,
 And also that him most deseseth.
 65 It is the cuppe whom he serveth,
 Which alle cares fro him kerveth
 And alle bales to him bringeth:
 In joie he weþþt, in sorwe he singeth,

sea

totally lost

spent (powerless)

[from] him is taken away

must

hindrance

true

person

Whether

grown senseless

put to bed

delirium (stupor)

arises abruptly

pass (let go) the cup!

in the morning; trust

does most harm to him

extirpates (removes)

disasters (harms)

- For Dronkeschipe is so divers,
 70 It may no whyle stonde in vers.
 He drinkth the wyn, bot ate laste
 The wyn drynkth him and bint him faste,
 And leith him drunke be the wal,
 As him which is his bonde thral
 75 And al in his subjeccion.
- unstable (perverse)*
in order (metrical form)
- captures securely*
lays
slave to vice

[DRUNKENNESS OF LOVERS]

- And lich to such condicion,
 As for to speke it other wise,
 It falleth that the moste wise
 Ben otherwhile of love adoted,
 80 And so bewhaped and assoted,
 Of drunke men that nevere yit
 Was non, which half so loste his wit
 Of drinke, as thei of such thing do
 Which cleped is the jolif wo;
- doting*
befuddled and infatuated
- 85 And waxen of here oghne thought
 So drunke, that thei knowe noght
 What reson is, or more or lesse.
 Such is the kinde of that sieknesse,
 And that is noght for lacke of brain,
 90 Bot love is of so gret a main,
 That where he takth an herte on honde,
 Ther mai nothing his miht withstonde.
 The wise Salomon was nome,
 And stronge Sampson overcome,
 95 The knihtli David him ne mihte
 Rescouce, that he with the sihte
 Of Bersabee ne was bestad.
 Virgile also was overlad,
 And Aristotle was put under.
- called*
neither more nor
nature
judgment (common sense)
strength
- 100 Forthi, mi sone, it is no wonder
 If thou be drunke of love among,
 Which is above alle othre strong.
 And if so is that thou so be,
 Tell me thi schrifte in privité;
- taken*
- 105 It is no schame of such a thew
 A yong man to be dronkelew.
 Of such phisique I can a part,
 And as me semeth be that art,
 Thou scholdest be phisonomie
- himself*
- 110 Be schapen to that maladie
 Of lovedrunke, and that is routhe."
- Bathsheba; overwhelmed*
overpowered
- confession*
trait
besotted
natural science; know a bit
- by physical features*
pity

- Confessio Amantis** “Ha, holi fader, al is trouthe
 That ye me telle: I am beknowe
 That I with love am so bethrowe,
 115 And al myn herte is so thurgh sunke,
 That I am verrailiche drunke,
 And yit I mai bothe speke and go.
 Bot I am overcome so,
 And torned fro miself so clene,
 120 So that excusen I ne mai
 Min herte, fro the ferste day
 That I cam to mi ladi kiththe,
 I was yit sobre nevere siththe.
 125 Wher I hire se or se hire noght,
 With musinge of min oghne thoght,
 Of love, which min herte assaileth,
 So drunke I am, that mi wit faileth
 And al mi brain is overtorned,
 130 And mi manere so mistorned,
 That I forgete al that I can
 And stonde lich a mased man;
 That ofte, whanne I scholde pleie,
 It makth me drawe out of the weie
 135 In soulein place be miselve,
 As doth a labourer to delve,
 Which can no gentil mannes chere.
 Or elles as a lewed frere,
 Whan he is put to his penance,
 140 Riht so lese I mi contienance.
 And if it nedes so betyde,
 That I in compainie abyde,
 Wher as I moste daunce and singe
 The hovedance and carolinge,
 145 Or for to go the newefot,
 I mai noght wel heve up mi fot,
 If that sche be noght in the weie.
 For thanne is al mi merthe aweie,
 And waxe anon of thoght so full,
 150 Wherof mi limes ben so dull
 I mai unethes gon the pas.
 For thus it is and evere was,
 Whanne I on suche thoghtes muse,
 The lust and merthe that men use,
 155 Whan I se noght mi ladi byme,
 Al is forgete for the time
 So ferforth that mi wittes changen
 And alle lustes fro me strangen,
 160
- do confess*
tormented
- utterly*
know not
- I gained knowledge of my lady*
since
- behavior*
- deranged*
enter into group activities
- solitary; by myself alone*
- knows; behavior*
stupid (misguided; unlearned)
- lose*
must so happen
- court dance (a kind of round dance)*
“dance in the newfangled way”
- out in public (in view)*
- limbs*
scarcely walk
- beside me*
- flee*

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 160 | That thei seie alle trewely
And swere that it am noght I.
For as the man which ofte drinketh,
With wyn that in his stomac sinketh
Wext drunke and witles for a throwe,
Riht so mi lust is overthrowe, | <i>Became; a time</i> |
| 165 | And of myn oghne thought so mat
I wexe that to myn astat
Ther is no lime wol me serve,
Bot as a drunke man I swerve
And suffre such a passion | <i>defeated</i>
<i>limb</i>
<i>stagger</i> |
| 170 | That men have gret compassion,
And everich be himself merveilleth
What thing it is that me so eilleth.
Such is the manere of mi wo
Which time that I am hire fro, | <i>each to himself</i>
<i>ails</i> |
| 175 | Til eft agein that I hire se.
Bot thanne it were a nyceté
To telle you hou that I fare.
For whanne I mai upon hire stare,
Hire wommanhede, hire gentillesse, | |
| 180 | Myn herte is full of such gladnesse,
That overpasseth so mi wit,
That I wot nevere where it sit,
Bot am so drunken of that sihte,
Me thenkth that for the time I mihte | |
| 185 | Riht sterte thurgh the hole wall;
And thanne I mai wel, if I schal,
Bothe singe and daunce and lepe aboute,
And holde forth the lusti route. | <i>leap</i>
<i>act in a lusty (or joyful) manner</i> |
| 190 | Bot natheles it falleth so
Fulofte, that I fro hire go
Ne mai, bot as it were a stake,
I stonde avisement to take | |
| 195 | I and loke upon hire faire face;
That for the while out of the place
For al the world ne myhte I wende.
Such lust comth thanne into mi mende, | <i>stare (take advisement)</i>
<i>turn [away]</i>
<i>desire; mind</i> |
| 200 | So that withoute mete or drinke,
Of lusti thoughtes whiche I thinke
Me thenkth I mihte stonden evere.
And so it were to me leve | <i>food</i> |
| 205 | Than such a sihte for to leve,
If that sche wolde gif me leve
To have so mochel of mi wille.
And thus thenkende I stonde stille | <i>rather</i> |
| | Withoute blenchinge of myn yhe, | <i>blinking; eye</i> |

	Riht as me thoghte that I syhe Of Paradis the moste joie. And so therwhile I me rejoie, Into myn herte a gret desir,	saw greatest happiness therewith; rejoice
210	The which is hotere than the fyr, Al soudeinliche upon me renneth, That al mi thoght withinne brenneth, And am so ferforth overcome,	burns
	That I not where I am become; So that among the hetes stronge	do not know
215	In stede of drinke I underfonge A thoght so swete in mi corage, That nevere pyment ne vernage Was half so swete for to drinke.	am filled with (welcome, receive, appropriate) heart sweetened wine
220	For as I wolde, thanne I thinke As thogh I were at myn above, For so thurgh drunke I am of love, That al that mi sotye demeth	had succeeded
	Is soth, as thanne it to me semeth.	besottedness thinks
225	And whyle I mai tho thoghtes kepe, Me thenkth as thogh I were aslepe And that I were in Goddes barm; Bot whanne I se myn oghne harm,	God's bosom
	And that I soudeinliche awake	perceive
230	Out of my thought, and hiede take Hou that the sothe stant in dede, Thanne is mi sekernesse in drede And joie torned into wo,	fact
	So that the hete is al ago	certainty afrighted
235	Of such sotie as I was inne. And thanne ageinward I beginne	woe
	To take of love a newe thorst,	thirst
	The which me grieveth altherworst,	pains me worst of all
	For thanne comth the blanche fievere,	pale
240	With chele and makth me so to chievere, And so it coldeth at myn herte,	chills; shiver
	That wonder is hou I asterte,	escape
	In such a point that I ne deie.	die
	For certes ther was nevere keie	key
	Ne frozen ys upon the wal	ice
	More inly cold than I am al.	
	And thus soffre I the hote chele,	burning cold
	Which passeth othre peines fele.	many/excellent
	In cold I brenne and frese in hete.	burn; freeze; heat
245	And thanne I drinke a biter swete With dreie lippe and yhen wete.	experience pain and pleasure mingled
	Lo, thus I tempre mi diete.	eyes wet
250		

- And take a drauhte of such reles, *power*
 That al mi wit is herteles, *stupefied*
 255 And al myn herte, ther it sit, *where*
 Is, as who seith, withoute wit.
 So that to prove it be reson
 In makinge of comparison
 Ther mai no difference be
 260 Betwen a drunke man and me.
 Bot al the worste of everychon
 Is evere that I thurste in on; *perpetually*
 The more that myn herte drinketh,
 The more I may; so that me thinketh,
 265 My thurst schal nevere ben aqueint. *quenched*
 God schilde that I be noght dreint
 Of such a superfluité, *forbid; drowned*
 For wel I fiele in mi degré
 That al mi wit is overcast, *overwhelmed*
 270 Wherof I am the more agast,
 That in defaulte of ladischipe
 Per chance in such a drunkeschipe
 I mai be ded er I be war. *before I know it*
 For certes, fader, this I dar
 275 Beknowe and in mi schrifte telle:
 Bot I a drauhte have of that welle,
 In which mi deth is and mi lif,
 Mi joie is torned into strif,
 That sobre schal I nevere worthe, *become*
 280 Bot as a drunke man forworthe; *be enfeebled*
 So that in londe where I fare
 The lust is lore of mi welfare,
 As he that mai no bote finde. *pleasure; lost*
 Bot this me thenkth a wonder kinde, *relief (deliverance)*
 285 As I am drunke of that I drinke,
 So am I ek for falte of drinke; *lack*
 Of which I finde no reles. *relief*
 Bot if I myhte natholes
 Of such a drinke as I coveite, *one draught [of love's drink]*
 290 So as me liste, have o receite, *become sober*
 I scholde assobre and fare wel.
 Bot so Fortune upon hire whiel
 On hih me deigneth noght to sette,
 Foreveremore I finde a lette. *difficulty (obstacle)*
 295 The boteler is noght mi frend,
 Which hath the keie be the bend; *by the fastening cord*
 I mai wel wisshe and that is wast,
 For wel I wot, so freissh a tast,
 Bot if mi grace be the more, *pointless*
Unless

- 300 I schal assaie nevermore. attempt
 Thus am I drunke of that I se, what
 For tastinge is defended me, prohibited (denied)
 And I can noght miselven stanche. restrain
 So that, mi fader, of this branche aspect [of Gluttony]
 305 I am guiltif, to telle trouthe.” seems a pity to me
- Confessor** “Mi sone, that me thenketh routhe; assuages pain
 For lovedrunke is the meschief futilely
 Above alle othre the most chief, person
 If he no lusti thoght assaie, seems a pity to me
 310 Which mai his sori thurst alliae. assuages pain
 As for the time yit it lisseth futilely
 To him which other joie misseth. person
 Forthi, mi sone, aboven alle seems a pity to me
 Thenk wel, hou so it thee befalle, assuages pain
 315 And kep thi wittes that thou hast, futilely
 And let hem noght be drunke in wast. person
 Bot natheles ther is no wyht seems a pity to me
 That mai withstonde loves miht. assuages pain
 Bot why the cause is, as I finde, futilely
 320 Of that ther is diverse kinde person
 Of lovedrunke, why men pleigneth seems a pity to me
 After the court which al ordeigneth, assuages pain
 I wol thee tellen the manere; listen
 Nou lest, mi sone, and thou schalt hiere.

[TALE OF JUPITER AND THE TWO CASKS]

- 326  For the fortune of every chance (see note)
 After the goddes pourveance success
 To man it groweth from above, before it happens
 So that the sped of every love success
 Is schape there, er it befalle. before it happens
 330 For Jupiter aboven alle, wine cellar
 Which is of goddes sovereign, casks
 Hath in his celier, as men sein, wine cellar
 Tuo tonnes fulle of love drinke casks
 That maken many an herte sinke wine cellar
 335 And many an herte also to flete, float
 Or of the soure or of the swete. Either
 That on is full of such piment, one; sweet, spiced wine
 Which passeth all entendement surpasses; understanding
 Of mannes witt, if he it taste, surpasses; understanding
 340 And makth a jolif herte in haste. bitter
 That other biter as the galle, grow faint
 Which makth a mannes herte palle, bitter
 Whos drunkeschipe is a sieknesse. grow faint

	Thurgh fieling of the biternesse.	suffering
345	Cupide is boteler of bothe, Which to the lieve and to the lothe Gifth of the swete and of the soure, That some lawhe, and some loure. Bot for so moche as he blind is,	chief wine servant beloved; hateful
		laugh; glower
350	Fulofte time he goth amis And takth the badde for the goode, Which hindreth many a mannes fode Withoute cause, and forthreth eke. So be ther some of love seke,	bad [wine] comfort (emotional satisfaction)
		improves [it] also
		sick
355	Whiche oghte of reson to ben hole, And some comen to the dole In happ and as hemselve leste Drinke undeserved of the beste. And thus this blinde boteler	well bestowing cup
		With good fortune; themselves please
360	Gifth of the trouble in stede of cler And ek the cler in stede of trouble: Lo, hou he can the hertes trouble, And makth men drunke al upon chaunce Withoute lawe of governance.	turbid murky torment
365	If he drawe of the swete tonne, Thanne is the sorwe al overronne Of lovedrunke, and schalt noght greven So to be drunken every even, For al is thanne bot a game.	cask evening
370	Bot whanne it is noght of the same, And he the biter tonne draweth, Such drunkeschipe an herte gnaweth And fiebleth al a mannes thoght, That betre him were have drunke noght	enfeebles
375	And al his bred have eten dreie; For thanne he lest his lusti weie With drunkeschipe, and wot noght whider To go, the weies ben so slider, In which he mai per cas so falle,	slippery by chance
380	That he schal breke his wittes alle. And in this wise men be drunke After the drink that thei have drunke. Bot alle drunken noght alike, For som schal singe and som schal syke,	sigh
385	So that it me nothing merveilleth, Mi sone, of love that thee eilleth; For wel I knowe be thi tale, That thou hast drunken of the duale, Which biter is, til God thee sende	narcotic drink
390	Such grace that thou miht amende.	get well

Bot, sone, thou schalt bidde and preie
 In such a wise as I schal seie,
 That thou the lusti welle atteigne
 Thi wofull thurstes to restreigne
 395 Of love, and taste the swetnesse,
 As Bachus dede in his distresse,
 Whan bodiliche thurst him hente
 In strange londes where he wente.
 When bodily thirst seized him

[PRAYER OF BACCHUS IN THE DESERT]

400 This Bachus sone of Jupiter (see note)
 Was hote, and as he wente fer
 Be his fadres assignement
 To make a werre in Orient,
 And gret pouer with him he ladde,
 So that the heiere hond he hadde
 405 And victoire of his enemys,
 And torneth homward with his pris,
 In such a contré which was dreie
 A meschief fell upon the weie.
 As he rod with his compainie
 410 Nyh to the strondes of Lubie, near; shores of Libya
 Ther myhte thei no drinke finde
 Of water nor of other kinde,
 So that himself and al his host
 Were of defalte of drinke almost
 415 Destruid, and thanne Bachus preide
 To Jupiter, and thus he seide:
 'O hihe fader, that sest al,
 To whom is reson that I schal
 Beseche and preie in every nede,
 420 Behold, mi fader, and tak hiede
 This wofull thurst that we ben inne
 To staunche, and grante ous for to winne,
 And sauf unto the contré fare
 Wher that oure lusti loves are
 425 Waitende upon oure homcominge.'
 And with the vois of his preiynge,
 Which herd was to the goddes hihe,
 He syh anon tofore his yhe
 A wether, which the ground hath sporned;
 430 And wher he hath it overtorne,
 Ther sprang a welle, freissh and cler,
 Wheroft his oghne boteler
 After the lustes of his wille
 Was every man to drinke his fille.

upper hand
over
glory
barren (dry)

lack

[you] who see all

succeed
safely; go

before; eye
sheep; who had scraped

- 435 And for this ilke grete grace
 Bachus upon the same place
 A riche temple let arere,
 Which evere scholde stonde there *be raised*
- 439 To thursti men in remembrance.
- Confessor** Forthi, mi sone, after this chance
 It sit thee wel to taken hiede
 So for to preie upon thi nede,
 As Bachus preide for the welle;
 And thenk, as thou hast herd me telle,
 Hou grace he gradde and grace he hadde. *prayed for*
 He was no fol that ferst so radde,
 For selden get a domb man lond. *counseled*
 Tak that proverbe, and understand *silent person*
 That wordes ben of vertu grete.
- 445 Forthi to speke thou ne lete, *desist not*
 And axe and prei erli and late
 Thi thurst to quenche, and thenk algate, *assuredly*
 The boteler which berth the keie
 Is blind, as thou hast herd me seie.
- 450 And if it mihte so betyde, *happen*
 That he upon the blinde side
 Per cas the swete tonne arauhte, *cask presents itself*
 Than schalt thou have a lusti drauhte
 And waxe of lovedrunke sobre.
- 455 And thus I rede thou assobre *make sober*
 Thin herte in hope of such a grace,
 For drunkeschipe in every place,
 To whether side that it torne,
 Doth harm and makth a man to sporne *trip*
- 460 And ofte falle in such a wise,
 Wher he per cas mai noght arise.

[TRISTRAM AND ISOLDE]

-  And for to loke in evidence *(see note)*
 Upon the sothe experience,
 So as it hath befaller this,
- 470 In every mannes mouth it is
 Hou Tristram was of love drunke
 With Bele Ysolde, whan thei drunke
 The drink which Brangwein hem betok,
 Er that king Marc his eem hire tok *Fair Isolde*
gave them
 Before; uncle
- 475 To wyve, as it was after knowe.
 And ek, mi sone, if thou wolt knowe,
 As it hath fallen overmore
 In loves cause, and what is more

- 480 Of drunkeschipe for to drede,
As it whilom befell in dede,
Wherof thou miht the betre eschui
Of drunke men that thou ne suie
The compaignie in no manere,
A gret ensample thou schalt hiere.

better avoid
follow

484

[MARRIAGE OF PIRITHOUS]

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------------------|
| | This finde I write in poesie | (see note) |
| | Of thilke faire Ipotacie, | |
| | Of whos beauté ther as sche was | wherever |
| | Spak every man; and fell, per cas, | |
| | That Pirotous so him spedde, | by chance |
| 490 | That he to wyve hire scholde wedde, | |
| | Wherof that he gret joie made. | |
| | And for he wolde his love glade, | |
| | Agein the day of mariage | |
| | Be mouthe bothe and be message | |
| 495 | Hise frendes to the fest he preide, | feast; invited |
| | With gret worschipe and, as men seide, | |
| | He hath this yonge ladi spoused. | |
| | And whan that thei were alle housed, | |
| | And set and served ate mete, | |
| 500 | Ther was no wyn which mai be gete, | |
| | That ther ne was plenté ynouh: | |
| | Bot Bachus thilke tonne drouh, | |
| | Wherof be weie of drunkeschipe | |
| | The greteste of the felaschipe | |
| 505 | Were oute of reson overtake; | |
| | And Venus, which hath also take | |
| | The cause most in special, | |
| | Hath gove hem drinke forth withal | |
| | Of thilke cuppe which exciteth | |
| 510 | The lust wherinne a man deliteth. | |
| | And thus be double weie drunke, | |
| | Of lust that ilke fyri funke | fiery spark |
| | Hath mad hem, as who seith, halfwode, | half mad |
| | That thei no reson understande, | |
| 515 | Ne to non other thing thei syhen, | |
| | Bot hire, which tofore here yhen | before their eyes |
| | Was wedded thilke same day, | |
| | That freissh wif, that lusti may, | |
| | On hire it was al that thei thoghten. | maiden |
| 520 | And so ferforth here lustes soghten, | |
| | That thei the whiche named were | |
| | Centauri, ate feste there | |

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Of on assent, of on acord | <i>of one mind; unanimously</i> |
| 525 | This yonge wif, malgré hire lord, | <i>despite</i> |
| | In such a rage awei forth ladden, | <i>dragged</i> |
| | As thei whiche non insihte hadden | |
| | Bot only to her drunke fare, | <i>their drunken conduct</i> |
| | Which many a man hath mad misfare | <i>suffered misfortune</i> |
| | In love als wel as other weie. | |
| 530 | Wherof, if I schal more seie | |
| | Upon the nature of the vice, | |
| | Of custume and of excercice | |
| | The mannes grace hou it fordoth, | |
| | A tale, which was whilom soth, | |
| | Of fooles that so drunken were, | |
| 535 | I schal reherce unto thin ere. | <i>ear</i> |

[TALE OF GALBA AND VITELLIUS]

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 540 | I rede in a cronicque thus
Of Galba and of Vitellus,
The whiche of Spaigne bothe were
The greteste of alle othre there,
And bothe of o condicion | |
| | ¶ After the disposicion
Of glotonie and drunkeschipe. | (see note) |
| 545 | That was a sori felaschipe,
For this thou miht wel understande,
That man mai wel noght longe stonde
Which is wyndrunke of comun us,
For he hath lore the vertus | |
| | Wheroft reson him scholde clothe. | commonly drunk on wine
lost; natural abilities |
| 550 | And that was seene upon hem bothe.
Men sein ther is non evidence,
Wheroft to knowe a difference
Betwen the drunken and the wode, | |
| | For thei be never nouther goode; | mad |
| 555 | For wher that wyn doth wit awcie,
Wisdom hath lost the rihte weie,
That he no maner vice dredeth. | |
| | No more than a blind man thredeth
His needle be the sonnes lyht, | causes intelligence to wander |
| 560 | No more is reson thanne of myht,
Whan he with drunkeschipe is blent. | |
| | And in this point thei weren schent,
This Galba bothe and ek Vitelle, | So that; fears |
| 565 | Upon the cause as I schal telle,
Wheroft good is to taken hiede. | blinded
destroyed |
| | For thei tuo thurgh her drunkenhiede | |

- Of witles excitacioun
 Oppressede al the nacion
 Of Spaigne; for of fool usance,
 570 Which don was of continuance
 Of hem which alday drunken were,
 Ther was no wif ne maiden there,
 What so thei were, or faire or foule,
 Whom thei ne token to defoule,
 575 Wherof the lond was often wo:
 And ek in othre thinges mo
 Thei wroghten many a sondri wrong.
 Bot hou so that the dai be long,
 The derke nyht comth ate laste.
- 580 God wolde noght thei scholden laste
 And schop the lawe in such a wise,
 That thei thurgh dom to the juise
 Be dampned for to be forlore.
 Bot thei, that hadden ben tofore
 585 Enclin to alle drunkenesse,
 Here ende thanne bar witnesse;
 For thei in hope to assuage
 The peine of deth, upon the rage
 That thei the lasse scholden fiele,
 590 Of wyn let fille full a miele
 And dronken til so was befall
 That thei her strengthes losten alle
 Withouten wit of eny brain.
 And thus thei ben halfdede slain,
 595 That hem ne grieveth bot a lyte.
- Confessor** Mi sone, if thou be for to wyte
 In eny point which I have seid,
 Wherof thi wittes ben unteid,
 599 I rede clepe hem hom agein."
- Amans** "I schal do, fader, as ye sein,
 Als ferforth as I mai suffise;
 Bot wel I wot that in no wise
 The drunkeschipe of love aweie
 I mai remue be no weie,
 605 It stant noght upon my fortune.
 Bot if you liste to comune
 Of the seconde Glotonie,
 Which cleped is Delicacie,
 Wherof ye spieken hier tofore,
 610 Beseche I wolde you therfore."
- Confessor** "Mi sone, as of that ilke vice,
 Which of alle othre is the norrice,
 And stant upon the retenure
- foolish behavior*
continually
By them who
- endure*
- by judgment of punishment*
- mitigate*
- bowl*
- senses entirely*
- blame*
- untied*
- get rid of by*
- discuss*
- second [species of]*
called
- nurse*

615 Of Venus, so as it is due,
 The propreté hou that it fareth
 The bok hierafter nou declareth."

[DELICACY]

ii. *Delicie cum diuiciis sunt iura potentum,*
 In quibus orta Venus excitat ora gule.
 Non sunt delicie tales, que corpora pascunt,
 Ex quibus impletus gaudia venter agit,
 Quin completus amor maiori munere gaudet,
 *Cum data deliciis mens in amante satur.*¹

[Confessor] "Of this chapitre in which we trete

There is yit on of such diete
 To which no povere mai atteigne,
 For al is past of paindemeine
 And sondri wyn and sondri drinke,
 Wheroft he wole ete and drinke.
 Hise cokes ben for him affaited,
 So that his body is awaited,
 That him schal lacke no delit,
 Als ferforth as his appetit
 Sufficeth to the metes hote.
 Wheroft this lusti vice is hote
 Of Gule the Delicacie,
 Which al the hole progenie
 Of lusti folk hath undertake
 To feede, whil that he mai take
 Richesses wheroft to be founde.
 Of Abstinence he wot no bounde,
 To what profit it scholde serve.
 And yit phisique of his conserve
 Makth many a restauracioun
 Unto his recreacioun,
 Which wolde be to Venus lief.
 Thus for the point of his relief
 The coc which schal his mete arraie,
 Bot he the betre his mouth assaie,
 His lordes thonk schal ofte lese,
 Er he be served to the chese.
 For ther mai lacke noght so lyte,

pastries

*cooks; controlled
taken care of (served)*

(see note)

*spicy foods
called*

whole

restraint (propriety)

*pleasing
in order to please him*

cook; food prepare

Unless; tempt

lose

cheese

small [a thing]

¹ *Sensualities, along with riches, are the laws of the powerful, in which Venus, stirring, excites Gluttony's kisses. No sensualities feed the body and cause the filled stomach to give joy, which do not allow sated love to take joy in a greater reward, when the mind sated with food yields to sensualities in loving.*

- That he ne fint anon a wyte;
 For bot his lust be fully served,
 Ther hath no wiht his thonk deserved.
 And yit for mannes sustenance,
 650 To kepe and holde in governance,
 To him that wole his hele get
 Is non so good as comun mete.
 For who that loketh on the bokes,
 It seith, confeccion of cokes,
 655 A man him scholde wel avise
 Hou he it toke and in what wise.
 For who that useth that he knoweth,
 Ful selden seknesse on him groweth;
 And who that useth metes strange,
 660 Though his nature empeire and change
 It is no wonder, lieve sone,
 Whan that he doth agein his wone.
 For in phisique this I finde,
 Usage is the seconde kinde.
 ↗
- But; will find some fault*
health
ordinary food
cooks
be careful
that which
exotic foods
should degenerate
dear
against; custom
medical theory
Custom (see note)

[DELICACY OF LOVERS]

- 665 And riht so changeth his astat
 He that of love is delicat.
 For though he hadde to his hond
 The beste wif of al the lond,
 Or the faireste love of alle,
 670 Yit wolde his herte on othre falle
 And thenke hem mor delicious
 Than he hath in his oghne hous.
 Men sein it is nou ofte so;
 Avise hem wel, thei that so do.
 675 And for to speke in other weie,
 Fulofte time I have herd seie,
 That he which hath no love achieved,
 Him thenkth that he is noght relieved,
 Thogh that his ladi make him chiere,
 680 So as sche mai in good manere
 Hir honour and hir name save,
 Bot he the surplus mihte have.
 Nothing withstandende hire astat,
 Of love more delicat
 685 He set hire chiere at no delit,
 Bot he have al his appetit.
 Mi sone, if it be with thee so,
 Tell me.”
- at his disposal*
Unless

Confessio Amantis "Myn holi fader, no:

- For delicat in such a wise
 690 Of love, as ye to me devise
 Ne was I nevere yit guiltif; *guilty*
 For if I hadde such a wif
 As ye speke of, what scholde I more?
 For thanne I wolde neveremore
 695 For lust of eny wommanhiede
 Myn herte upon non other fiede. *feed*
 And if I dede, it were a wast. *did; waste*
 Bot al withoute such repast
 Of lust, as ye me tolde above,
 700 Of wif, or yit of other love,
 I faste, and mai no fode gete,
 So that for lacke of deinté mete,
 Of which an herte mai be fedd,
 I go fastende to my bedd. *fasting*
 705 Bot myhte I geten, as ye tolde,
 So mochel that mi ladi wolde
 Me fede with hir glad semblant, *happy countenance*
 Though me lacke al the remenant,
 Yit scholde I somdel ben abeched *rest*
 710 And for the time wel refreched.
 Bot certes, fader, sche ne doth;
 For in good feith, to telle soth,
 I trowe, thogh I scholde sterfe, *believe; die*
 Sche wolde noght hire yhe swerve, *eye*
 715 Mine herte with o goodly lok
 To fede, and thus for such a cok
 I mai go fastinge everemo.
 Bot if so is that eny wo
 Mai fede a mannes herte wel,
 720 Theroft I have at every meel
 Of plenté more than ynowh;
 Bot that is of himself so towh,
 Mi stomach mai it noght defie. *tough*
 Lo, such is the delicacie *digest*
 725 Of love, which myn herte fedeth.
 Thus have I lacke of that me nedeth.
 Bot for al this yit natheles
 I seie noght I am gylteles,
 That I somdel am delicat.
 730 For elles were I fulli mat, *defeated (checkmated)*
 Bot if that I som lusti stounde *opportunity*
 Of confort and of ese founde,
 To take of love som repast;
 For thogh I with the fulle tast

- 735 The lust of love mai noght fiele,
 Min hunger otherwise I kiele
 Of smale lustes whiche I pike,
 And for a time yit thei like,
 allay
 steal
 please
- 739 If that ye wisten what I mene."
- Confessor** "Nou, goode sone, schrif thee clene
 Of suche deyntes as ben goode,
 Wheroft thou takst thin hertes fode."
- Confessio Amantis** "Mi fader, I you schal reherce,
 Hou that mi fodes ben diverse,
 745 So as thei fallen in degré.
 O fiedinge is of that I se,
 Another is of that I here,
 The thridde, as I schal tellen here,
 It groweth of min oghne thoght,
 750 And elles scholde I live noght;
 For whom that failleth fode of herte,
 He mai noght wel the deth asterte.
 otherwise
 escape
- ¶ Of sihte is al mi ferste fode,
 Thurgh which myn yhe of alle goode
 755 Hath that to him is acordant,
 A lusti fode sufficant.
 Whan that I go toward the place
 Wher I schal se my ladi face,
 Min yhe, which is loth to faste,
 760 Beginth to hungre anon so faste,
 That him thenkth of on houre thre,
 Til I ther come and he hire se.
 And thanne after his appetit
 He takth a fode of such delit,
 765 That him non other deynté nedeth.
 Of sondri sihtes he him fedeth.
 He seth hire face of such colour,
 That freisshere is than eny flour,
 He seth hire front is large and plein
 770 Withoute fronce of eny grein,
 He seth hire yhen lich an hevene,
 He seth hire nase straught and evene,
 He seth hire rode upon the cheke,
 He seth hire rede lippes eke,
 775 Hire chyn acordeth to the face,
 Al that he seth is full of grace,
 He seth hire necke round and clene,
 Therinne mai no bon be sene,
 He seth hire handes faire and whyte;
 780 For al this thing without wyte
 He mai se naked ate leste,
 blame
 uncovered

- So is it wel the more feste
 And wel the more Delicacie
 Unto the fiedinge of myn yhe.
 785 He seth hire schapthe forth withal,
 Hire bodi round, hire middel smal,
 So wel begon with good array,
 Which passeth al the lust of Maii,
 Whan he is most with softe schoures
 790 Ful clothed in his lusti floures.
 With suche sihtes by and by
 Min yhe is fed; bot finaly,
 Whan he the port and the manere
 Seth of hire wommanysshe chere,
 795 Than hath he such delice on honde,
 Him thenkth he mihte stille stonde,
 And that he hath ful sufficance
 Of liflode and of sustienance
 As to his part foreveremo.
 800 And if it thoghte alle othre so,
 Fro thenne wolde he nevere wende,
 Bot there unto the worldes ende
 He wolde abyde, if that he mihte,
 And fieden him upon the syhte.
 805 For thogh I mihte stonden ay
 Into the time of Domesday
 And loke upon hire evere in on,
 Yit whanne I scholde fro hire gon,
 Min yhe wolde, as thogh he faste,
 810 Ben hungerstorven al so faste,
 Til eft agein that he hire syhe.
 Such is the nature of myn yhe.
 Ther is no lust so deintefull,
 Of which a man schal noght be full,
 815 Of that the stomac underfongeth,
 Bot evere in on myn yhe longeth.
 For loke hou that a goshauk tireth,
 Riht so doth he, whan that he pireth
 And toteth on hire wommanhiede.
 820 For he mai nevere fulli fiede
 His lust, bot evere aliche sore
 Him hungreth, so that he the more
 Desireth to be fed algate.
 And thus myn yhe is mad the gate,
 825 Thurgh which the deyntes of my thoght
 Of lust ben to myn herte broght.
 Riht as myn yhe with his lok
 Is to myn herte a lusti coc
- likeness*
shapely: waist thin
vitality
sights perpetually
bearing
behavior
for the moment
depart
eternally
takes in
pulls
peers
gazes
satisfy
desire
cook

- Of loves fode delicat,
 831 Riht so myn ere in his astat,
 Wher as myn yhe mai noght serve,
 Can wel myn hertes thonk deserve
 And fieden him fro day to day
 With suche deyntes as he may.
 835 For thus it is, that overal,
 Wher as I come in special,
 I mai hiere of mi ladi pris;
 I hiere on seith that sche is wys,
 Another seith that sche is good,
 840 And som men sein, of worthi blod
 That sche is come, and is also
 So fair, that nawher is non so;
 And som men preise hire goodli chiere.
 Thus every thing that I mai hiere,
 845 Which souneth to mi ladi goode,
 Is to myn ere a lusti foode.
 And ek min ere hath over this
 A deynté feste, whan so is
 That I mai hiere hirselfe speke.
 850 For thanne anon mi faste I breke
 On suche wordes as sche seith,
 That full of trouthe and full of feith
 Thei ben, and of so good despert,
 That to myn ere gret confort
 855 Thei don, as thei that ben delices.
 For al the metes and the spices,
 That eny Lombard couthe make,
 Ne be so lusti for to take
 Ne so ferforth restauratif,
 860 I seie as for myn oghne lif,
 As ben the wordes of hire mouth.
 For as the wyndes of the south
 Ben most of alle debonaire,
 So whan hir list to speke faire,
 865 The vertu of hire goodly speche
 Is verrailly myn hertes leche.
 And if it so befall me among,
 That sche carole upon a song,
 Whan I it hiere I am so fedd,
 870 That I am fro miself so ledd,
 As thogh I were in paradis.
 For certes, as to myn avis,
 Whan I here of hir vois the stevene,
 Me thenkth it is a blisse of hevene.
- ear; its (see note)*
- he = my ear*
- lady's renown*
- hear one say*
- nowhere*
- manners*
- concerns*
- foods*
- heart's physician*
- sound*

- 875 And ek in other wise also
 Fulofte time it falleth so,
 Min ere with a good pitance
 Is feed of redinge of romance
 Of Ydoine and of Amadas,
- 880 That whilom weren in mi cas,
 And eke of othre many a score,
 That loveden longe er I was bore.
 For whan I of here loves rede,
 Min ere with the tale I fede;
- 885 And with the lust of here histoire
 Somtime I drawe into memoire
 Hou sorwe mai noght evere laste;
 And so comth hope in ate laste,
 Whan I non other fode knowe.
- 890 And that endureth bot a throwe,
 Riht as it were a cherie feste;
 Bot for to compten ate leste,
 As for the while yit it eseth
 And somdel of myn herte appeseth.
- 895 For what thing to myn ere spreedeth,
 Which is plesant, somdel it feedeth
 With wordes suche as he mai gete
 Mi lust, instede of other mete.
- Amans** Lo thus, mi fader, as I seie,
 900 Of lust the which myn yhe hath seie,
 And ek of that myn ere hath herd,
 Fulofte I have the betre ferd.
 And tho tuo bringen in the thridde,
 The which hath in myn herte amidde
- 905 His place take, to arraie
 The lusti fode, which assaie
 I mot; and nameliche on nyghtes,
 Whan that me lacketh alle sihtes,
 And that myn heringe is aweie.
- 910 Thanne is he redy in the weie
 Mi rere souper for to make,
 Of which myn hertes fode I take.
- ¶ This lusti cokes name is hote
 Thoght, which hath evere hise pottes hote
 915 Of love buillende on the fyr
 With fantasie and with desir,
 Of whiche er this fulofte he fedde
 Min herte, whanne I was abedde;
 And thanne he set upon my bord
- 920 Bothe every syhte and every word
 Of lust which I have herd or sein.
- not last forever*
- little while*
- cherry festival*
- Yet even so to say*
- soothes*
- food*
- fared*
- desirable; taste*
- must; at night*
- he = my thought*
- late supper*
- cook's; called (see note)*
- hot*
- seething*
- placed; table*

- Bot yit is noght mi feste al plein,
 Bot al of woldes and of wissches,
 Theroft have I my fulle disshess,
 925 Bot as of fielinge and of tast,
 Yit mihte I nevere have o repast.
 And thus, as I have seid aforn,
 I licke hony on the thorn,
 And as who seith, upon the bridel
 930 I chiewe, so that al is ydel
 As in effect the fode I have.
 Bot as a man that wolde him save
 Whan he is sek, be medicine,
 Riht so of love the famine
 935 I fonde in al that evere I mai
 To fiede and dryve forth the day,
 Til I mai have the grete feste,
 Which al myn hunger myhte areste.
 Lo suche ben mi lustes thre;
 940 Of that I thenke and hiere and se
 I take of love my fiedinge
 Withoute tastinge or fielinge:
 And as the plover doth of eir
 I live, and am in good espeir
 945 That for no such delicacie
 I trowe I do no glotonie.
 And natheles to youre avis,
 Min holi fader, that be wis,
 I recommande myn astat
 950 Of that I have be delicat.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, I understande wel
 That thou hast told hier everydel,
 And as me thenketh be thi tale,
 It ben delices wonder smale,
 955 Wheroft thou takst thi loves fode.
 Bot, sone, if that thou understande
 What is to ben delicious,
 Thou woldest noght be curious
 Upon the lust of thin astat
 960 To ben to sore delicat,
 Wheroft that thou reson excede.
 For in the bokes thou myht rede,
 If mannes wisdom schal be suied,
 It oghte wel to ben eschued
 965 In love als wel as other weie.
 For, as these holi bokes seie,
 The bodely delices alle
 In every point, hou so thei falle,
- complete*
- bit*
- I champ [futilely]*
- wishes to heal himself*
- sick, by*
- stop*
- three desires (joys)*
- on air*
- hope*
- entrust*
- In respect to which*
- [truly] voluptuous*
- too greatly*
- followed*
- avoided*

- ¶ Unto the soule don grievance. *(see note)*
 970 And for to take in remembrance,
 A tale accordant unto this,
 Which of gret understandinge is
 To mannes soule resonable,
 974 I thenke telle, and is no fable.

[TALE OF DIVES AND LAZARUS]

- ¶ Of Cristes word, who wole it rede, *(see note)*
 Hou that this vice is for to drede
 In th'evangile it telleth plein,
 Which mot algate be certein, *openly*
 For Crist Himself it berth witnesse.
 980 And thogh the clerk and the clergesse *clergy*
 In Latin tunge it rede and singe,
 Yit for the more knoulechinge
 Of trouthe, which is good to wite,
 I schal declare as it is write *know*
 985 In Engleissh, for thus it began.
 Crist seith: 'Ther was a riche man,
 A mihti lord of gret astat,
 And he was ek so delicat
 Of his clothing, that everyday
 990 Of pourpre and bisse he made him gay, *purple fabric; precious linen; himself*
 And eet and drank therto his fille
 After the lustes of his wille,
 As he which al stod in delice
 And tok non hiede of thilke vice.
 995 And as it scholde so betyde, *leper; time*
 A povere lazre upon a tyde
 Cam to the gate and axed mete.
 Bot there mihte he nothing gete
 His dedly hunger for to stanche,
 1000 For he, which hadde his fulle panche *belly*
 Of alle lustes ate bord,
 Ne deigneth noght to speke a word,
 Onliche a crumme for to give,
 Wheroft the povere myhte live *Even to give so much as a crumb*
 1005 Upon the gifte of his almesse.
 Thus lai this povere in gret destresse
 Acold and hungred ate gate,
 Fro which he mihte go no gate,
 So was he wofulli besein. *poor man*
 1010 And as these holi bokes sein, *way*
 The houndes comen fro the halle,
 Wher that this sike man was falle, *provided for*
 had fallen

- And as he lay ther for to die,
 The woundes of his maladie
 1015 Thei licken for to don him ese.
 Bot he was full of such desese
 That he mai noght the deth eschape,
 Bot as it was that time schape,
 The soule fro the bodi passeth,
 1020 And He whom nothing overpasseth,
 The hihe God, up to the hevene
 Him tok, wher He hath set him evene
 In Habrahammes barm on hyh,
 Wher he the hevene joie syh
 1025 And hadde al that he have wolde.
 And fell, as it befalle scholde,
 This riche man the same throwe
 With soudein deth was overthowen,
 And forth withouten eny wente
 1030 Into the helle straught he wente.
 The fend into the fyr him drouh,
 Wher that he hadde peine ynouh
 Of flamme which that evere brenneth.
 And as his yhe aboute renneth,
 1035 Toward the hevene he cast his lok,
 Wher that he syh and hiede tok
 Hou Lazar set was in his se
 Als ferr as evere he mihte se
 With Habraham; and thanne he preide
 1040 Unto the patriarch and seide:
 “Send Lazar doun fro thilke sete,
 And do that he his finger wete
 In water, so that he mai droppe
 Upon my tungue, for to stoppe
 1045 The grete hete in which I brenne.”
 Bot Habraham answerde thenne
 And seide to him in this wise:
 “Mi Sone, thou thee miht avise
 And take into thi remembrance,
 1050 Hou Lazar hadde gret penance,
 Whyl he was in that other lif,
 Bot thou in al thi lust jolif
 The bodily delices soghtest.
 Forthi, so as thou thanne wroghkest,
 1055 Nou schalt thou take thi reward
 Of dedly peine hieraftward
 In helle, which schal evere laste;
 And this Lazar nou ate laste
 The worldes peine is overronne,
- bodily infirmity*
- destined*
- Abraham's bosom*
- it happened as happen it should*
- moment*
- overthrown*
- any turning aside*
- heavenly seat*
- entreated*
- passed beyond*

- 1060 In hevene and hath his lif begonne
Of joie, which is endeles.
Bot that thou preidest natheles,
That I schal Lazar to thee sende
With water on his finger ende,
what you prayed for
- 1065 Thin hote tunge for to kiele,
Thou schalt no suche graces fiele;
For to that foule place of sinne,
Forevere in which thou schalt ben inne,
Comth non out of this place thider,
cool
taste (sense [with your tongue])
- 1070 Ne non of you mai comen hider;
Thus be yee parted nou atuo.”
The riche ageinward cride tho:
“O Habraham, sithe it so is,
rich man again
- 1075 That Lazar mai noght do me this
Which I have axed in this place,
I wolde preie another grace.
For I have yit of brethren fyve,
That with mi fader ben alyve
Togedre duellende in on hous;
- 1080 To whom, as thou art gracious,
I preie that thou woldest sende
Lazar, so that he mihte wende
To warne hem hou the world is went,
That afterward thei be noght schent
proceed
world turns
- 1085 Of suche peines as I drye.
Lo, this I preie and this I crie,
Now I may noght miself amende.”
destroyed
suffer
- 1090 The patriarch anon suiende
To his preiere ansuerde nay,
And seide him hou that everyday
His brethren mihten knowe and hiere
Of Moises on erthe hiere
And of prophetes othre mo,
What hem was best. And he seith no;
- 1095 Bot if ther mihte a man aryse
Fro deth to lyve in such a wise,
To tellen hem hou that it were,
He seide hou thanne of pure fere
Thei scholden wel be war therby.
cautioned
- 1100 Quod Habraham: “Nay sikerly;
For if thei nou wol noght obeie
To suche as techen hem the weie,
And alday preche and alday telle
Hou that it stant of hevene and helle,
1105 Thei wol noght thanne taken hiede,
Thogh it befelle so in dede

- That eny ded man were arered,
 To ben of him no betre lered
 Than of another man alyve.””
- Confessor** If thou, mi sone, canst descriyve
 1111 This tale, as Crist Himself it tolde,
 Thou schalt have cause to beholde,
 To se so gret an evidence,
 Wherof the sothe experience
 1115 Hath schewed openliche at ye, eye
 That bodili delicacie
 Of him which geveth non almesse
 Schal after falle in gret destresse,
 And that was sene upon the riche.
 1120 For he ne wolde unto his liche
 A crumme given of his bred.
 Thanne afterward, whan he was ded,
 A drope of water him was werned. refused
 Thus mai a mannes wit be lerned
 1125 Of hem that so delices taken;
 Whan thei with deth ben overtaken,
 That erst was swete is thanne sour.
 Bot he that is a governour
 Of worldes good, if he be wys,
 1130 Withinne his herte he set no pris value
 Of al the world, and yit he useth
 The good that he nothing refuseth,
 As he which lord is of the thinges.
 The nouches and the riche ringes,
 1135 The cloth of gold and the perrie
 He takth, and yit delicacie
 He leveth, thogh he were al this.
 The beste mete that ther is
 He ett, and drinkth the beste drinke;
 1140 Bot hou that evere he ete or drinke,
 Delicacie he put aweie,
 As he which goth the rihte weie
 Noght only for to fiede and clothe
 His bodi, bot his soule bothe.
 1145 Bot thei that taken otherwise
 Here lustes, ben none of the wise;
 And that whilom was schewed eke,
 If thou these olde bokes seke, seek
 Als wel be reson as be kinde,
 1150 Of olde ensample as men mai finde.
- resurrected*
instructed
- made evident by the rich man*
(Lazarus') body
- [so] that; denies [himself]*
As he [behaves] who is lord
brooches
precious stones
- even though he should wear*

[NERO'S SENSUALITY]

- What man that wolde him wel avise,
 Delicacie is to despise,
 Whan kinde acordeth noght withal;
 1154 Wherof ensample in special
 ⚭ Of Nero whilom mai be told, (see note)
 Which agein kinde manyfold
 Hise lustes tok, til ate laste
 That God him wolde al overcaste;
 Of whom the croniue is so plein,
 1160 Me list no more of him to sein.
 And natholes for glotonie
 Of bodili Delicacie,
 To knowe his stomak hou it ferde,
 Of that no man tofore herde,
 1165 Which he withinne himself bethoghte,
 A wonder soubtil thing he wroghte. devised
- Thre men upon eleccioun
 Of age and of complexiou
 Lich to himself be alle weie
 1170 He tok towardes him to pleie,
 And ete and drinke als wel as he.
 Therof was no diversité.
 For every day whan that thei eete,
 Tofore his oghne bord thei seete,
 1175 And of such mete as he was served,
 Althogh thei hadde it noght deserved, Even though
 Thei token service of the same.
 Bot afterward al thilke game
 Was into wofull ernest torned;
 1180 For whan thei weren thus sojorned,
 Withinne a time at after mete following the noon meal
 Nero, which hadde noght forgete
 The lustes of his frele astat,
 As he which al was delicat,
 1185 To knowe thilke experience,
 The men lete come in his presence.
 And to that on the same tyde,
 A courser that he scholde ryde
 Into the feld, anon he bad; one; time
 1190 Wherof this man was wonder glad,
 And goth to prike and prance aboute.
 That other, whil that he was oute,
 He leide upon his bedd to slepe:
 The thridde, which he wolde kepe
 1195 Withinne his chambre, faire and softe horse
 commanded
- second; he (the equestrian)

- He goth now doun nou up fulofte,
 Walkende a pass, that he ne slepte,
 Til he which on the courser lept
 Was come fro the field agein.
- 1200 Nero thanne, as the bokes sein,
 These men doth taken alle thre
 And slouh hem, for he wolde se
 The whos stomak was best defied.
 And whanne he hath the sothe tryed,
 1205 He fond that he which goth the pass
 Defyed best of alle was,
 Which afterward he usede ay.
 And thus what thing unto his pay
 Was most plesant, he lefte non.
- 1210 With every lust he was begon,
 Wheroft the bodi myhte glade,
 For he non abstinence made;
 Bot most above alle erthli thinges
 Of wommen unto the likinges
- 1215 Nero sette al his hole herte,
 For that lust scholde him noght asterte.
 Whan that the thurst of love him cawhte,
 Wher that him list he tok a drauhete,
 He spareth nouther wif ne maide,
- 1220 That such another, as men saide,
 In al this world was nevere yit.
 He was so drunke in al his wit
 Thurgh sondri lustes whiche he tok,
 That evere, whil ther is a bok,
- 1225 Of Nero men schul rede and singe
 Unto the worldes knowlechinge,
 Mi goode Sone, as thou hast herd.
 Forevere yit it hath so ferd,
 Delicacie in loves cas
- 1230 Withoute reson is and was;
 For wher that love his herte set,
 Him thenkth it myhte be no bet;
 And thogh it be noght fulli mete,
- 1234 The lust of love is evere swete.
- Confessor** Lo, thus togedre of felaschipe
 Delicacie and drunkeschipe,
 Wheroft reson stant out of herre,
 Have mad full many a wisman erre
 In loves cause most of alle.
- 1240 For thanne hou so that evere it falle,
 Wit can no reson understande,
 Bot let the governance stonde
- The [one] whose; digested*
walked about
Digested
pleasure
self-denial
whole
pleasure; not escape him
proper
order (off the hinges)
err

	To Will, which thanne wext so wylde, That he can noght himselfe schylde	<i>grows so wild</i>
1245	Fro no peril, bot out of feere The weie he secheth hiere and there, Him recheth noght upon what syde. For oftetime he goth beside, And doth such thing withoute drede	<i>protect</i> <i>without fear</i>
1250	Wheroft him oghte wel to drede. Bot whan that love assoteth sore, It passeth alle mennes lore; What lust it is that he ordeigneth, Ther is no mannes miht restreigneth,	<i>astray</i> <i>fearlessly</i> <i>afraid</i>
1255	And of the godd takth he non hiede. Bot laweles withoute drede, His pourpos for he wolde achieve Ageins the pointz of the believe,	<i>infatuates sorely</i> <i>teaching</i>
1260	He tempteth hevene and erthe and helle, Hierafterward as I schal telle.”	<i>good</i> <i>faith</i>

[SORCERY AND WITCHCRAFT]

iii. *Dum stimulatur amor, quicquid iubet orta voluptas,
Audet et aggreditur, nulla timenda timens.
Omne quod astra queunt herbarum siue potestas,
Seu vigor inferni, singula temptat amans.
Quod nequit ipse deo mediante parare sinistrum,
Demonis hoc magica credulus arte parat.
Sic sibi non curat ad opus que recia tendit,
Dummodo nudatam prendere possit auem.*¹

[Confessor] “Who dar do thing which love ne dar?

	To love is every lawe unwar, Bot to the lawes of his heste	<i>command (see note)</i>
1265	The fissa, the foul, the man, the beste Of al the worldes kinde louteth.	<i>bows</i>
	For love is he which nothing douteth.	<i>fears</i>
☞	In mannes herte where he sit, He compteth noght toward his wit	<i>reckons not in</i>
	The wo no more than the wele,	<i>woe; gladness</i>
1270	No more the hete than the chele, No mor the wete than the dreie,	<i>heat; cold</i>

¹ *While love prods, whatever rising voluptuousness commands, it dares and advances toward, fearing nothing that ought to be feared. Everything that the stars or the power of herbs may do, or the force of the infernal regions, the lover tries them all. What sinister things he is not able to perform with God's help, he performs what he can by believing in the devil's magic art. Thus he gives no care to what things his net gathers for the work, provided that he might be able to seize the bird plucked naked.*

- No mor to live than to deie,
 So that tofore ne behinde
 He seth nothing, bot as the blinde
 1275 Withoute insyhte of his corage
 He doth merveilles in his rage.
 To what thing that he wole him drawe,
 Ther is no God, ther is no lawe,
 Of whom that he takth eny hiede;
 1280 Bot as Baiard the blinde stede,
 Til he falle in the dich amidde,
 He goth ther no man wole him bidde;
 He stant so ferforth out of reule,
 Ther is no wit that mai him reule.
 1285 And thus to telle of him in soth,
 Ful many a wonder thing he doth,
 That were betre to be laft,
 Among the whiche is wicchecraft,
 That som men clepen Sorcerie,
 1290 Which for to winne his druerie
 With many a circumstance he useth,
 Ther is no point which he refuseth.
- ☞ The craft which that Saturnus fond,
 To make prickes in the sond,
 1295 That Geomance cleped is,
 Fulofte he useth it amis;
 And of the flod his Ydromance,
 And of the fyr the Piromance,
 With questions ech on of tho
 1300 He tempteth ofte, and ek also
 Aeremance in juggement
 To love he bringth of his assent.
 For these craftes, as I finde,
 A man mai do be weie of kinde,
 1305 Be so it be to good entente,
 Bot he goth al another wente.
 For rathere er he scholde faile,
 With Nigromance he wole assaile
 To make his incantacioun
 1310 With hot subfumigacioun.
 Thilke art which Spatula is hote,
 And used is of comun rote
 Among paiens, with that craft ek
 Of which is auctor Thosz the Grek,
 1315 He worcheth on and on be rowe:
 Razel is noght to him unknowe,
 Ne Salomones Candarie,
 His Ydeac, his Eutonye;
- neither before or behind (i.e., nowhere)*
- heart*
- middle of the ditch*
- where; command*
- call*
- paramour*
- invented (see note)*
- sand*
- Divination by Earth is called*
- Divination by Water*
- Divination by Fire*
- those*
- Divination by Air*
- Unless; direction*
- Divination with the dead; venture*
- smoky incense*
- Divination with bones is called*
- usage*
- pagans*
- originator*
- one after the other in order*

- 1320 The figure and the bok withal
 Of Balamuz, and of Ghenbal
 The seal, and therupon th'yimage
 Of Thebith, for his avantage
 He takth, and somwhat of Gibiere,
 Which helplich is to this matiere.
- 1325 Babilla with hire sones sevene,
 Which hath renonced to the hevene,
 With cernes bothe square and rounde,
 He traceth ofte upon the grounde,
 Makende his invocacioun;
- 1330 And for full enformacioun
 The scole which Honorius
 Wrot, he poursuieth: and lo, thus
 Magique he useth for to winne
 His love, and spareth for no sinne.
- 1335 And over that of his sotie,
 Riht as he secheth sorcerie
 Of hem that ben magiciens,
 Riht so of the naturiens
 Upon the sterres from above
- 1340 His weie he secheth unto love,
 Als fer as he hem understandeth.
 In many a sondry wise he fondeth:
 He makth ymage, he makth sculpture,
 He makth writinge, he makth figure,
- 1345 He makth his calculacions,
 He makth his demonstracions;
 His houres of astronomie
 He kepeth as for that partie
 Which longeth to th'inspeccion
- 1350 Of love and his affeccion;
 He wolde into the helle seche
 The Devel himselfe to beseche,
 If that he wiste for to spedē
 To gete of love his lusti mede.
- 1355 Wher that he hath his herte set,
 He bede nevere fare bet
 Ne wite of other hevene more.
- Confessor** Mi sone, if thou of such a lore
 1359 Hast ben er this, I red thee leve."
- Amans** "Min holi fader, be youre leve
 Of al that ye have spoken hiere
 Which toucheth unto this matiere,
 To telle soth riht as I wene,
 I wot noght o word what ye mene.
- 1365 I wol noght seie, if that I couthe,
- moreover
- figures
- foolishness
- astrologers
- seeks
them
- astronomy (and astrology)
- pertains to
its
hell
- he (the devil) knew how to succeed
love's desired results
- would ask never to fare better
Nor know
teaching
before; advise; desist
- understand

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| | That I nolde in mi lusti youthe
Benethe in helle and ek above
To winne with mi ladi love
Don al that evere that I mihte; | <i>did not wish</i> |
| 1370 | For therof have I non insihte
Wher afterward that I become,
To that I wonne and overcome
Hire love, which I most coveite." | <i>To do</i> |
| | Confessor "Mi sone, that goth wonder streite,
1375 For this I mai wel telle soth,
Ther is no man the which so doth,
For al the craft that he can caste,
That he n'abeith it ate laste.
For often he that wol beguile | <i>Provided that I won</i>
<i>oppressively</i> |
| | 1380 Is guiled with the same guile,
And thus the guilour is beguiled.
As I finde in a bok compiled
To this matiere an old histoire,
The which comth nou to mi memoire, | <i>Despite; skill; devise</i>
<i>does not pay for it</i> |
| 1385 | And is of gret essamplerie
Agein the vice of Sorcerie,
Wheroft non ende mai be good.
Bot hou whilom therof it stod,
A tale which is good to knowe | <i>beguiled</i> |
| 1390 | To thee, mi sone, I schal beknowe. | <i>reveal</i> |

[TALE OF ULYSSES AND TELEMON]

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| | Among hem which at Troie were,
Uluxes ate siege there
Was on be name in special,
Of whom yit the memorial | <i>those who
(see note)
one by</i> |
| 1395 | Abit, for whyl ther is a mouth,
Forevere his name schal be couth.
He was a worthi knyht and king
And clerk knowende of every thing.
He was a gret rethorien, | <i>Remains
known</i> |
| 1400 | He was a gret magicien;
Of Tullius the rethorique,
Of King Zorastes the magique,
Of Tholomé th'astronomie,
Of Plato the philosophie, | <i>Cicero</i> |
| 1405 | Of Daniel the slepi dremes,
Of Neptune ek the water stremes,
Of Salomon and the proverbes,
Of Macer al the strengthe of herbes,
And the phisique of Ypocras, | <i>interpretation of/ sleepy dreams
i.e., navigation</i> |
| | | <i>Hippocrates</i> |

- 1410 And lich unto Pictagoras
Of surgerie he knew the cures.
Bot somewhat of his aventures,
Which schal to mi matiere acorde,
To thee, mi sone, I wol recorde.
- 1415 This king, of which thou hast herd sein,
Fro Troie as he goth hom agein
Be schipe, he fond the see divers,
With many a wyndi storm revers.
Bot he thurgh wisdom that he schapeth
- 1420 Ful many a gret peril ascapeth,
Of whiche I thenke tellen on,
Hou that malgré the nedle and ston
Wynddrive he was al soudeinly
Upon the strondes of Cilly,
- 1425 Wher that he moste abyde a whyle.
Tuo queenes weren in that yle
Calipsa named and Circes;
And whan thei herde hou Uluxes
Is londed ther upon the ryve,
- 1430 For him thei senden als so blive.
With him suche as he wolde he nam
And to the court to hem he cam.
Thes queenes were as tuo goddesses
Of art magique sorceresses,
- 1435 That what lord comth to that rivage,
Thei make him love in such a rage
And upon hem assote so,
That thei wol have, er that he go,
Al that he hath of worldes good.
- 1440 Uluxes wel this understod:
Thei couthe moche, he couthe more.
Thei schape and caste agein him sore
And wroghte many a soutil wyle,
Bot yit thei mihte him noght beguile.
- 1445 Bot of the men of his navie
Thei tuo forschope a gret partie,
Mai non of hem withstande here hestes;
Som part thei schopen into bestes,
Som part thei schopen into foules,
- 1450 To beres, tigres, apes, oules,
Or elles be som other weie.
Ther myhte hem nothing desobeie,
Such craft thei hadde above kinde.
Bot that art couthe thei noght finde
- 1455 Of which Uluxes was deceived,
That he ne hath hem alle weyved,
- unfavorable
adverse
- despite the compass
- shores of Sicily
had to
- shore
immediately (gladly)
took
- coast
to become so madly in love
- knew
vigorously
plot (scheme)
- transformed
their commands
- turned
birds
- bears; owls
- them (Calypso and Circe) in nothing
beyond nature
- avoided

- And broght hem into such a rote
 That upon him thei bothe assote;
 And thurgh the science of his art
 1460 He tok of hem so wel his part
 That he begat Circes with childe.
 He kepte him sobre and made hem wilde,
 He sette himselfe so above
 That with here good and with here love,
 1465 Who that therof be lief or loth,
 Al quit into his schip he goth.
 Circes toswolle bothe sides
 He lefte, and waiteth on the tydes,
 And straught thurghout the salte fom
 1470 He takth his cours and comth him hom,
 Where as he fond Penolopé.
 A betre wif ther mai non be,
 And yit ther ben ynowhe of goode.
 Bot who hir goodschipe understode
 1475 Fro ferst that sche wifhode tok,
 Hou many loves sche forsok
 And hou sche bar hire al aboute,
 Ther whiles that hire lord was oute,
 He mihte make a gret avant
 1480 Amonges al the remenant
 That sche was on of al the beste.
 Wel myhte he sette his herte in reste,
 This king, whan he hir fond in hele.
 For as he couthe in wisdom dele,
 1485 So couthe sche in wommanhiede.
 And whan sche syh withoute drede
 Hire lord upon his oghne ground,
 That he was come sauf and sound,
 In al this world ne mihte be
 1490 A gladdere womman than was sche.
 The fame, which mai noght ben hidd,
 Thurghout the lond is sone kidd,
 Here king is come hom agein:
 Ther mai no man the fulle sein,
 1495 Hou that thei weren alle glade,
 So mochel joie of him thei made.
 The presens every day be newed,
 He was with giftes al besnewed;
 The poeple was of him so glad,
 1500 That thogh non other man hem bad,
 Taillage upon hemself thei sette,
 And as it were of pure dette
 Thei geve here goodes to the king:
- condition
doted
cleverness
share (spoils)
impregnated
himself; them
their wealth
exempt from their power
swollen up
foam
are plenty of excellent ones
carried herself
make a great boast
one of the very best
[good] health (prosperity)
womanliness
soon made known
Their
entirely tell
presents; were produced
showered
ordered them to
Taxation; themselves

- 1505 This was a glad hom welcomyng.
 Thus hath Uluxes what he wolde,
 His wif was such as sche be scholde,
 His poeple was to him sougit,
 Him lacketh nothing of delit.
 Bot Fortune is of such a sleyhte,
- 1510 That whan a man is most on heyhte,
 Sche makth him rathest for to falle:
 Ther wot no man what schal befall,
 The happes over mannes hed
 Ben honged with a tendre thred.
- 1515 That proved was on Uluxes,
 For whan he was most in his pes,
 Fortune gan to make him werre
 And sette his welthe al out of herre.
 Upon a dai as he was merie,
- 1520 As thogh ther mihte him nothing derie,
 Whan nyght was come, he goth to bedde,
 With slep and bothe his yhen fedde.
 And while he slepte, he mette a sweweñe:
 Him thoghte he syh a stature evene,
- 1525 Which brihtere than the sonne schon;
 A man it semeth was it non,
 Bot yit it was as in figure
 Most lich to mannyssh creature,
 Bot as of beauté hevenelich
- 1530 It was most to an angel lich.
 And thus betwen angel and man
 Beholden it this king began,
 And such a lust tok of the sihte,
 That fain he wolde, if that he mihte,
- 1535 The forme of that figure embrace;
 And goth him forth toward the place,
 Wher he sih that ymage tho,
 And takth it in his armes tuo,
 And it embraceth him agein
- 1540 And to the king thus gan it sein:
 'Uluxes, understand wel this,
 The tokne of oure aqueintance is
 Hierafterward to mochel tene.
 The love that is ous betuene,
- 1545 Of that we nou such joie make,
 That on of ous the deth schal take,
 Whan time comth of destiné —
 It may non other wise be.'
- 1550 Uluxes tho began to preie
 That this figure wolde him seie
- desired
 subject
 pleasure
 deceit
 most swiftly
chance possibilities; head (see note)
 peaceful security
 war
 out of kilter
 when
 harm
 eyes
 dreamt; dream
saw a comely form
 human
 like
 desire
 eagerly
 two
intimate fellowship
grief (chagrin, misfortune)
 one of us
 then

- What wyht he is that seith him so. *person (creature); tells*
- This wyht upon a spere tho
A pensel which was wel begon,
Embrouded, scheweth him anon: *pennant; undertaken*
- 1555 Thre fisses alle of o colour *one*
In manere as it were a tour *tower*
Upon the pensel were wroght. *pennant; embroidered*
Uluxes kneu this tokne noght,
And preith to wite in som partie *heraldic emblem*
- 1560 What thing it myhte signefie. *royal estate; departed*
'A signe it is,' the wyht ansuerde,
'Of an empire,' and forth he ferde
Al sodeinly, whan he that seide.
Uluxes out of slep abreide, *started*
- 1565 And that was riht agein the day, *just prior to*
That lengere slepen he ne may.
-  Men sein, a man hath knowleching *understanding (knowledge) (see note)*
Save of himself of alle thing; *Except*
His oghne chance no man knoweth, *fate (destiny, circumstance)*
1570 Bot as Fortune it on him throweth. *casts (as with dice)*
Was nevere yit so wys a clerk,
Which mihte knowe al Goddes werk,
Ne the secret which God hath set
Agein a man mai noght be let. *hinder*
- 1575 Uluxes, thogh that he be wys,
With al his wit in his avis,
The mor that he his svevene acompteth, *dream considers*
The lasse he wot what it amonteth.
For al his calculacion, *Despite*
- 1580 He seth no demonstracion *saw*
Al pleinly for to knowe an ende.
Bot natholes hou so it wende,
He dradde him of his oghne sone.
That makth him wel the more astone, *upset*
- 1585 And schop therfore anon withal,
So that withinne castel wall
Thelamachum his sone he schette, *Telemachus; imprisoned*
And upon him strong warde he sette. *guard*
The sothe furthere he ne knew, *truth*
- 1590 Til that Fortune him overthreu.
Bot natholes for sikernes, *security*
Wher that he mihte wite and gesse
A place strengest in his lond,
Ther let he make of lym and sond *ordered to be made; lime and sand (cement)*
- 1595 A strengthe where he wolde duelle; *stronghold*
Was nevere man yit herde telle
Of such another as it was.

- And for to strengthe him in that cas, *protect*
 Of al his lond the sekereste *most certain*
 1600 Of servantz and the worthieste, *most noble*
 To kepen him withinne warde, *guarded condition*
 He sette his bodi for to warde; *protect*
 And made such an ordinance,
 For love ne for aqueintance,
 1605 That were it erly, were it late, *whatever might happen*
 Thei scholde lete in ate gate *ordered*
 No maner man, what so betydde,
 Bot if so were himself it bidde.
 Bot al that myhte him noght availe, *afflict*
 1610 For whom Fortune wole assaile,
 Ther mai be non such resistance
 Which mihte make a man defence; *protect a man*
 Al that schal be mot falle algate. *must happen anyway*
 This Circes, which I spak of late,
 1615 On whom Uluxes hath begete *forgotten*
 A child, thogh he it have forgete, *as inevitably happened*
 Whan time com, as it was wone,
 Sche was delivered of a sone,
 Which cleped is Thelonus. *called*
 1620 This child, whan he was bore thus,
 Aboute his moder to ful age, *knows*
 That he can reson and langage,
 In good astat was drawe forth.
 And whan he was so mochel worth
 1625 To stonden in a mannes stede, *place*
 Circes his moder hath him bede *bidden*
 That he schal to his fader go,
 And tolde him al togedre tho
 What man he was that him begat.
 1630 And whan Thelonus of that *aware*
 Was war and hath ful knowleching
 Hou that his fader was a king,
 He preith his moder faire this,
 To go wher that his fader is;
 1635 And sche him granteth that he schal,
 And made him redi forth withal.
 It was that time such usance, *custom*
 That every man the conoiscance
 Of his contré bar in his hond, *emblem of allegiance*
 1640 Whan he wente into strange lond;
 And thus was every man therfore
 Wel knowe, wher that he was bore. *born*
 For espiiale and mistrowinges
 Thei dede thanne suche thinges, *Because of spying; distrust*

- 1645 That every man mai other knowe.
 So it befell that ilke throwe
 Thelogonus as in this cas;
 Of his contré the signe was
 Thre fisses, whiche he scholde bere
 1650 Upon the penon of a spere. *at that time*
 And whan that he was thus arraied
 And hath his harneis al assaied,
 That he was redy everydel,
 His moder bad him farewell,
 1655 And seide him that he scholde swithe *pennant mounted on a spear*
 His fader griete a thousand sithe.
 Thelogonus his moder kiste
 And tok his leve, and wher he wiste
 His fader was, the weie nam, *gear; made ready*
 1660 Til he unto Nachaie cam, *swifly*
 Which of that lond the chief cité
 Was cleded, and ther axeth he
 Wher was the king and hou he ferde.
 And whan that he the sothe herde, *greet; times*
 1665 Wher that the king Uluxes was,
 Alone upon his hors gret pas *knew*
 He rod him forth, and in his hond
 He bar the signal of his lond *took*
 With fisses thre, as I have told. *Ithaca (Achaeia)*
 1670 And thus he wente unto that hold,
 Wher that his oghne fader duelleth.
 The cause why he comth he telleth
 Unto the kepers of the gate,
 And wolde have comen in therate,
 1675 Bot schortli thei him seide nay. *called; asked*
 And he als faire as evere he may
 Besoghte and tolde hem ofte this,
 Hou that the king his fader is.
 Bot they with proude wordes grete *curly*
 1680 Begunne to manace and threte,
 Bot he go fro the gate faste, *threaten*
 Thei wolde him take and sette faste. *Unless*
 Fro wordes unto strokes thus
 Thei felle, and so Thelogonus *seize; imprison*
 1685 Was sore hurt and welnyh ded;
 Bot with his scharpe speres hed
 He makth defence, hou so it falle,
 And wan the gate upon hem alle,
 And hath slain of the beste fyve; *took; despite all of them*
 1690 And thei ascriden als so blyve
 Thurghout the castell al aboute. *raised the battle cry immediately*

- On every syde men come oute,
Wheroft the kinges herte afflihte,
And he with al the haste he mihte
1695 A spere cauhte and out he goth,
As he that was nyh wod for wroth.
He sih the gates ful of blod,
Thelonus and wher he stod
He sih also, bot he ne knew
1700 What man it was, and to him threw
His spere, and he sterte out asyde.
Bot destiné, which schal betide,
Befell that ilke time so,
Thelonus knew nothing tho
1705 What man it was that to him caste,
And while his oghne spere laste,
With al the signe therupon
He caste unto the king anon,
And smot him with a dedly wounde.
1710 Uluxes fell anon to grounde;
Tho every man, 'The king! the king!'
Began to crie, and of this thing
Thelonus, which sih the cas,
On knes he fell and seide, 'Helas!
1715 I have min oghne fader slain.
Nou wolde I deie wonder fain,
Nou sle me who that evere wile,
For certes it is riht good skile.'
He crith, he wept, he seith therfore,
1720 'Helas, that evere was I bore,
That this unhappy destiné
So wofulli comth in be me!
This king, which yit hath lif ynouh,
His herte agein to him he drouh,
1725 And to that vois an ere he leide
And understod al that he seide,
And gan to speke, and seide on hih,
'Bring me this man.' And whan he sih
Thelonus, his thoght he sette
1730 Upon the swene which he mette,
And axeth that he myhte se
His spere, on which the fisshes thre
He sih upon a pensel wroght.
Tho wiste he wel it faileth noght,
1735 And badde him that he telle scholde
Fro whenne he cam and what he wolde.
Thelonus in sorghe and wo
So as he mihte tolde tho
- trembled (was disturbed)*
- nearly insane for anger*
- at him*
- left aside*
- shall inevitably come*
- then*
- Then*
- gladly*
- the reasonable thing to do*
- to himself*
- ear*
- loudly*
- dream; dreamt*
- Then knew; it (the dream)*
- sorrow; woe*

- Unto Uluxes al the cas,
 1740 Hou that Circes his moder was,
 And so forth seide him everydel,
 Hou that his moder gret him wel,
 And in what wise sche him sente.
 Tho wiste Uluxes what it mente,
 1745 And tok him in hise armes softe,
 And al bledende he kest him ofte,
 And seide, 'Sone, whil I live,
 This infortune I thee forgive.'
 After his other sone in haste
 1750 He sende, and he began him haste
 And cam unto his fader tyt.
 Bot whan he sih him in such plit,
 He wolde have ronne upon that other
 Anon, and slain his oghne brother,
 1755 Ne hadde be that Uluxes
 Betwen hem made accord and pes,
 And to his heir Thelamachus
 He bad that he Thelogonus
 With al his pouer scholde kepe,
 1760 Til he were of his woundes depe
 Al hol, and thanne he scholde him give
 Lond wher upon he mihte live.
 Thelamachus, whan he this herde,
 Unto his fader he ansuerde
 1765 And seide he wolde don his wille.
 So duelle thei togedre stille,
 These brethren, and the fader sterveth.
 Lo, wheroft sorcerie serveth.
 Thurgh sorcerie his lust he wan,
 1770 Thurgh sorcerie his wo began,
 Thurgh sorcerie his love he ches,
 Thurgh sorcerie his lif he les;
 The child was gete in sorcerie,
 The which dede al this felonie.
 1775 Thing which was agein kynde wroght,
 Unkindeliche it was aboght:
 The child his oghne fader slowh,
 That was unkindeschipe ynowh.
 Forthi tak hiede hou that it is
 1780 So for to winne love amis,
 Which endeth al his joie in wo.
 For of this art I finde also,
 That hath be do for loves sake,
 Wheroft thou miht ensample take,
 1785 A gret cronique imperial,
- told him everything*
sent greetings to him
knew
bleeding; kissed
swiftly
peace
power; look after
died
desire
woe
chose
lost
begotten through
paid for
slew
unnaturalness
in the wrong way
chronicle

Which evere into memorial
Among the men, hou so it wende,
Schal duelle to the worldes ende.

[TALE OF NECTANABUS]

- 1790 The Hihe Creatour of thinges,
Which is the King of alle Kinges,
Ful many a wonder worldes chance
Let slyden under His suffrance:
¶ Ther wot no man the cause why,
Bot He the which is almyghty.
1795 And that was proved whilom thus,
Whan that the king Nectanabus,
Which hadde Egipte for to lede,
Bot for he sih tofor the dede
Thurgh magique of his sorcerie,
1800 Wheroft he couthe a gret partie,
Hise enemys to him comende,
Fro whom he mihte him noght defende,
Out of his oghne lond he fledde;
And in the wise as he him dredde
1805 It fell, for al his wicchecraft,
So that Egipte him was beraft,
And he desguised fledde aweie
Be schipe, and held the rihte weie
To Macedoine, wher that he
1810 Aryveth ate chief cité.
Thre yomen of his chambre there
Al only for to serve him were,
The whiche he trusteth wonder wel,
For thei were trewe as eny stiel.
1815 And hapneth that thei with him ladde
Part of the beste good he hadde.
Thei take loginge in the toun
After the disposicion
Wher as him thoghte best to duelle.
1820 He axeth thanne and herde telle
Hou that the king was oute go
Upon a werre he hadde tho;
Bot in that cité thanne was
The queene, which Olimpias
1825 Was hote, and with sollempneté
The feste of hir nativité,
As it befell, was thanne holde;
And for hire list to be beholde
And preised of the poeple aboute,
- Who
wonder of the world's happenings
Allowed to happen
knows (see note)
Except
once
- approaching
feared
despite all
direct way
- steel
wealth
lodging
- war
called
birthday celebration
since it pleased her to be beheld

- 1830 Sche schop hir for to ride oute
 At after mete al openly.
 Anon were alle men redy,
 And that was in the monthe of Maii,
 This lusti queene in good arrai
 Was set upon a mule whyt.
 To sen it was a gret delit
 The joie that the cité made;
 With freisshe thinges and with glade
 The noble toun was al behonged,
 And every wiht was sore alonged
 To se this lusti ladi ryde.
 Ther was gret merthe on alle syde.
 Wher as sche passeth be the strete,
 Ther was ful many a tymber bete
 And many a maide carolende.
 And thus thurghout the toun pleiende
 This queene unto a pleine rod,
 Wher that sche hoved and abod
 To se diverse game pleie,
 The lusti folk jouste and tourneie;
 And so forth every other man,
 Which pleie couthe, his pley began,
 To plesse with this noble queene.
 Nectanabus cam to the grene
 Amonges othre and drouh him nyh.
 Bot whan that he this ladi sih
 And of hir beauté hiede tok,
 He couthe noght withdrawe his lok
 To se noght elles in the field,
 Bot stod and only hire behield.
 Of his clothinge and of his gere
 He was unlich alle othre there,
 So that it hapneth ate laste,
 The queene on him hire yhe caste,
 And knew that he was strange anon.
 Bot he behield hire evere in on
 Withoute blenchinge of his chere.
 Sche tok good hiede of his manere,
 And wondreth why he dede so,
 And bad men scholde for him go.
 He cam and dede hire reverence,
 And sche him axeth in cilence
 Fro whenne he cam and what he wolde.
 And he with sobre wordes tolde,
 And seith, 'Ma dame, a clerk I am,
 To you and in message I cam,
- prepared herself
 after supper; publicly*
- bedecked
 person; sorely longing*
- timbrel beaten
 singing and dancing
 playing
 onto the green park rode
 paused; waited*
- Who knew a sport*
- near
 saw*
- anything else*
- eye
 immediately knew; foreign
 continually
 turning his face away*
- quietly
 what his purpose was*
- scholar
 And I came to you with a message*

- The which I mai noght tellen hiere; *here*
 Bot if it liketh you to hiere,
 It mot be seid al prively,
 1880 Wher non schal be bot ye and I.' *pleases you to hear*
 Thus for the time he tok his leve.
 The dai goth forth til it was eve,
 That every man mot lete his werk. *must leave*
- 1885 And sche thoghte evere upon this clerk,
 What thing it is he wolde mene,
 And in this wise abod the queene
 And passeth over thilke nyht *[thus] gets through the night*
 Til it was on the morwe liht.
 Sche sende for him, and he com,
- 1890 With him his astellabre he nom, *astrolabe; brought*
 Which was of fin gold precious
 With pointz and cercles merveilous;
 And ek the hevenely figures
 Wroght in a bok ful of peintures *pictures*
 1895 He tok this ladi for to schewe, *brought; show*
 And tolde of ech of hem be rewe
 The cours and the condicion.
 And sche with gret affeccion *in order*
 Sat stille and herde what he wolde.
- 1900 And thus whan he sih time, he tolde *excitement (feeling)*
 And feigneth with hise wordes wise
 A tale, and seith in such a wise: *saw the right moment*
 "Ma dame, bot a while ago,
 Wher I was in Egipte tho, *then*
- 1905 And radde in scole of this science, *read (studied)*
 It fell into mi conscience
 That I unto the temple wente,
 And ther with al myn hole entente *whole*
 As I mi sacrifice dede, *performed*
- 1910 On of the goddes hath me bede *One; commanded*
 That I you warne prively, *advise secretly*
 So that ye make you redy, *yourself*
 And that ye be nothing agast; *affrighted*
 For he such love hath to you cast, *set upon you*
- 1915 That ye schul ben his oghne diere, *precious love*
 And he schal be your beddefiere,
 Til ye conceive and be with childe.' *lover (bedfellow)*
 And with that word sche wax al mylde, *grew quiet*
 And somdel red becam for schame,
- 1920 And axeth him that goddes name, *Hammon of Libya*
 Which so wol don hire compainie.
 And he seide, 'Amos of Lubie.'
 And sche seith, 'That mai I noght lieve, *believe*

- Bot if I sihe a betre prieve.' *see; proof*
 1925 'Ma dame,' quod Nectanabus,
 'In tokne that it schal be thus,
 This nyht for enformacion
 Ye schul have an avision,
 That Amos schal to you appiere, *prophetic dream*
 1930 To schewe and teche in what manere
 The thing schal afterward befall.
 Ye ogheten wel aboven alle
 To make joie of such a lord,
 For whan ye ben of on acord, *you are conjoined*
 1935 He schal a sone of you begete,
 Which with his swerd schal winne and gete
 The wyde world in lengthe and brede.
 Alle erthli kinges schull him drede,
 And in such wise, I you behote, *conquer*
 1940 The god of erthe he schal be hote.'
 'If this be soth,' tho quod the queene,
 'This nyht, thou seist, it schal be sene.
 And if it falle into mi grace,
 Of god Amos that I pourchace *far and wide*
 1945 To take of him so gret worschipe,
 I wol do thee such ladischipe,
 Wheroft thou schalt foreveremo
 Be riche.' And he hir thonketh tho,
 And tok his leve and forth he wente. *fear him*
 1950 Sche wiste litel what he mente,
 For it was guile and sorcerie,
 Al that sche tok for prophecie. *promise*
 Nectanabus thurghout the day,
 Whan he cam hom wher as he lay, *called*
 1955 His chambre be himselfe tok,
 And overtorneth many a bok,
 And thurgh the craft of artemage
 Of wex he forgeth an ymage. *manage*
 He loketh his equacions *honor*
 1960 And ek the constellacions,
 He loketh the conjuncions, *benevolence*
 He loketh the recepcions,
 His signe, his houre, his ascendent,
 And drawth fortune of his assent: *reciprocal effect of planets*
 1965 The name of queene Olimpias
 In thilke ymage write was
 Amiddes in the front above.
 And thus to winne his lust of love
 Nectanabus this werk hath diht; *magic*
 1970 And whan it cam withinne nyht, *wax; shaped*
prepared

- That every wyht is falle aslepe,
 He thoghte he wolde his time kepe,
 As he which hath his houre apointed.
 And thanne ferst he hath enoignted *anointed*
- 1975 With sondri herbes that figure,
 And therupon he gan conjure,
 So that thurgh his enchantement
 This ladi, which was innocent
 And wiste nothing of this guile, *Dreamed*
- 1980 Mette, as sche slepte thilke while,
 Hou fro the hevene cam a lyht
 Which al hir chambre made lyht.
 And as sche loketh to and fro,
 Sche sih, hir thoghte, a dragoun tho, *saw, it seemed to her*
- 1985 Whos scherdes schynen as the sonne,
 And hath his softe pas begonne
 With al the chiere that he may
 Toward the bedd ther as sche lay,
 Til he cam to the beddes side. *scales shone; sun*
- 1990 And sche lai stille and nothing cride,
 For he dede alle his thinges faire
 And was courteis and debonaire.
 And as he stod hire fasteby,
 His forme he changeth sodeinly, *with propriety*
- 1995 And the figure of man he nom,
 To hire and into bedde he com,
 And such thing there of love he wroghte,
 Wherof, so as hire thanne thoghte,
 Thurgh likinge of this god Amos *close to her*
- 2000 With childe anon hire wombe aros,
 And sche was wonder glad withal.
 Nectanabus, which causeth al
 Of this metrede the substance,
 Whan he sih time, his nigromance *took*
- 2005 He stinte and nothing more seide
 Of his carecte, and sche abreide
 Out of hir slep, and lieveth wel
 That it is soth thanne everydel
 Of that this clerk hire hadde told, *dream*
- 2010 And was the gladdere manyfold
 In hope of such a glad metrede,
 Which after schal befallie in dede.
 Sche longeth sore after the dai,
 That sche hir swene telle mai *deed*
- 2015 To this guilour in priveté,
 Which kneu it als so wel as sche.
 And natheles on morwe sone *dream*
- deceiver*
- Who knew*
- soon*

- 2020 Sche lefte alle other thing to done,
 And for him sende, and al the cas
 Sche tolde him pleinly as it was,
 And seide hou thanne wel sche wiste
 That sche his wordes mihte triste,
 For sche fond hire avisoun
 Riht after the condicion
 Which he hire hadde told tofore;
 And preide him hertely therfore
 That he hire holde covenant
 So forth of al the remenant,
 That sche may thurgh his ordinance
 Toward the god do such plesance,
 That sche wakende myhte him kepe
 In such wise as sche mette aslepe.
 And he, that couthe of guile ynouh,
 Whan he this herde, of joie he louh,
 And seith, 'Ma dame, it schal be do.
 Bot this I warne you therto:
 This nyht, whan that he comth to pleie,
 That ther be no lif in the weie
 Bot I, that schal at his likinge
 Ordeine so for his cominge,
 That ye ne schull noght of him faile.
 For this, ma dame, I you consaile,
 That ye it kepe so privé,
 That no wiht elles bot we thre
 Have knowlechinge hou that it is;
 For elles mihte it fare amis,
 If ye dede oght that scholde him grieve.'
 And thus he makth hire to believe,
 And feigneth under guile feith.
 Bot natholes al that he seith
 Sche troweth; and agein the nyht
 Sche hath withinne hire chambre dyft,
 Wher as this guilour faste by
 Upon this god schal privly
 Awaite, as he makth hire to wene.
 And thus this noble gentil queene,
 Whan sche most trusteth, was deceived.
 The nyht com, and the chambre is weyved,
 Nectanabus hath take his place,
 And whan he sih the time and space,
 Thurgh the deceipte of his magique
 He put him out of mannes like,
 And of a dragoun tok the forme,
 As he which wolde him al conforme
- might trust*
- keep his promise with her*
- receive*
- dreamt in sleep*
- laughed*
- believes; in preparation for*
- prepared*
- secretly*
- Serve (wait upon); think*
- emptied*
- likeness*

- 2065 To that sche sih in svevene er this;
And thus to chambre come he is.
The queene lay abedde and sih,
And hopeth evere, as he com nyh,
That he god of Lubye were,
2070 So hath sche wel the lasse fere.
Bot for he wold hire more assure,
Yit eft he changeth his figure,
And of a wether the liknesse
He tok, in signe of his noblesse
2075 With large hornes for the nones.
Of fin gold and of riche stones
A corone on his hed he bar,
And soudeinly, er sche was war,
As he which alle guile can,
2080 His forme he torneth into man,
And cam to bedde, and sche lai stille,
Wher as sche soffreth al his wille,
As sche which wende noght misdo.
Bot natholes it hapneth so,
2085 Althogh sche were in part deceived,
Yit for al that sche hath conceived
The worthieste of alle kiththe,
Which evere was tofore or siththe
Of conqueste and chivalerie;
2090 So that thurgh guile and sorcerie
Ther was that noble knyht begunne,
Which al the world hath after wunne.
Thus fell the thing which falle scholde.
Nectanabus hath that he wolde:
2095 With guile he hath his love sped,
With guile he cam into the bed,
With guile he goth him out agein.
He was a schrewed chamberlein,
So to beguile a worthi queene,
2100 And that on him was after seene.
Bot natholes the thing is do.
This false god was sone go,
With his deceipte and hield him clos,
Til morwe cam, that he aros.
2105 And tho, whan time and leisir was,
The queene tolde him al the cas,
As sche that guile non supposeth;
And of tuo pointz sche him opposeth.
On was, if that this god no more
2110 Wol come agein, and overmore,
Hou sche schal stonden in accord
- what she saw; dream before
continually believes
fear
reassure
sheep
for the occasion
knows
desire
who thought nothing done amiss
offspring
since
i.e., Alexander
conquered
made evident
And with his deceit kept hidden
morning came, when
then
happennstance
questions
One
secondly*

- With king Philippe hire oghne lord,
 Whan he comth hom and seth hire grone.
 'Ma dame,' he seith, 'let me alone:
 2115 As for the god I undertake
 That whan it liketh you to take
 His compaignie at eny throwe,
 If I a day tofore it knowe,
 He schal be with you on the nyght;
 2120 And he is wel of such a myht
 To kepe you from alle blame.
 Forthi conforte you, ma dame,
 Ther schal non other cause be.'
 Thus tok he leve and forth goth he.
 2125 And tho began he for to muse
 Hou he the queene mihte excuse
 Toward the king of that is falle,
 And fond a craft amonges alle,
 Thurgh which he hath a see foul daunted,
 2130 With his magique and so enchaunted,
 That he flyh forth, whan it was nyht,
 Unto the kinges tente riht,
 Wher that he lay amidde his host.
 And whanne he was aslepe most,
 2135 With that the see foul to him broghte
 And othre charmes, whiche he wroghte
 At hom withinne his chambre stille,
 The king he torneth at his wille,
 And makth him for to dreme and se
 2140 The dragoun and the priveté
 Which was betuen him and the queene.
 And over that he made him wene
 In swevene, hou that the god Amos,
 Whan he up fro the queene aros,
 2145 Tok forth a ring, wherinne a ston
 Was set, and grave therupon
 A sonne, in which, whan he cam nyh,
 A leoun with a swerd he sih.
 And with that priente, as he tho mette,
 2150 Upon the queenes wombe he sette
 A seal, and goth him forth his weie.
 With that the swevene wente aweie,
 And tho began the king awake
 And sigheth for his wyves sake,
 2155 Wher as he lay withinne his tente,
 And hath gret wonder what it mente.
 With that he hasteth him to ryse
 Anon, and sende after the wise,
 sees; give birth
 leave it to me
 promise
 any time
 before
 disgrace
 consequence
sea fowl taken control of
 army
 fully asleep
By means of what
 secret
 think
 dream
 engraved
 sun
 lion; saw
impression; dreamed
 wisemen

- Among the whiche ther was on,
 2160 A cleric, his name is Amphion. *scholar*
 Whan he the kinges swevene herde,
 What it betokneth he ansuerde,
 And seith, 'So siker as the lif,
 A god hath leie be thi wif,
 2165 And gete a sone, which schal winne
 The world and al that is withinne.
 As leon is the king of bestes,
 So schal the world obeie his hestes,
 Which with his swerd schal al be wonne,
 2170 Als ferr as schyneth eny sonne.' *As certain as life itself
 lain
 begotten*
 The king was doubtif of this dom;
 Bot natholes, whan that he com
 Agein into his oghne lond,
 His wif with childe gret he fond.
 2175 He mihte noght himselfe stiere, *control himself*
 That he ne made hire hevy chiere;
 Bot he which couthe of alle sorwe,
 Nectanabus, upon the morwe
 Thurgh the decepte and nigromance
 2180 Tok of a dragoun the semblance,
 And wher the king sat in his halle,
 Com in rampende among hem alle
 With such a noise and such a rore,
 That thei agast were also sore
 2185 As thogh thei scholde deie anon. *creeping (crawling)*
 And natholes he grieveth non,
 Bot goth toward the deyss on hih;
 And whan he cam the queene nyh,
 He stinte his noise, and in his wise
 2190 To hire he profreth his servise,
 And leith his hed upon hire barm; *bosom*
 And sche with goodly chiere hire arm
 Aboute his necke ageinward leide,
 And thus the queene with him pleide
 2195 In sihte of alle men aboute. *in return laid*
 And ate laste he gan to loute
 And obeissance unto hire make,
 As he that wolde his leve take.
 And sodeinly his lothly forme
 2200 Into an egle he gan transforme,
 And flyh and sette him on a raile; *perched on a railing*
 Wherof the king hath gret mervaile,
 For there he pruneth him and piketh,
 As doth an hauk whan him wel liketh,
 2205 And after that himself he schok,

- Wherof that al the halle quok,
As it a terremote were. *earthquake*
- Thei seiden alle, god was there:
In such a res and forth he flyh. *violent motion; flew*
- 2210 The king, which al this wonder syh,
Whan he cam to his chambre alone,
Unto the queene he made his mone
And of forgivenesse hir preide;
For thanne he knew wel, as he seide,
2215 Sche was with childe with a godd.
Thus was the king withoute rodd
Chastised, and the queene excused
Of that sche hadde ben accused.
And for the gretere evidence,
2220 Yit after that in the presence
Of king Philipp and othre mo,
Whan thei ride in the fieldes tho,
A pheasant cam before here yhe,
The which anon as thei hire syhe, *pheasant; their eyes*
- 2225 Fleende let an ey doun falle,
And it tobrak tofore hem alle.
And as thei token therof kepe,
Thei syhe out of the schelle crepe
A litel serpent on the ground,
2230 Which rampeth al aboute round,
And in agein it wolde have wonne,
Bot for the brennyng of the sonne
It myhte noght, and so it deide.
And therupon the clerkes seide,
2235 'As the serpent, whan it was oute,
Went enviroun the schelle aboute
And mihte noght torne in agein,
So schal it fallen in certein:
This child the world schal environe, *creeps*
- 2240 And above alle the corone
Him schal befall, and in yong age
He schal desire in his corage,
Whan al the world is in his hond,
To torn agein into the lond
2245 Wher he was bore, and in his weie
Homward he schal with puison deie.' *returned*
- The king, which al this sihe and herde,
Fro that dai forth, hou so it ferde,
His jalousie hath al forgete.
2250 Bot he which hath the child begete,
Nectanabus, in priveté
The time of his nativit  *saw*

- Upon the constellacioun
Awaitheth, and relacion
- 2255 Makth to the queene hou sche schal do,
And every houre apointeth so,
That no mynut therof was lore.
So that in due time is bore
This child, and forth with therupon
- 2260 Ther felle wondres many on
Of terremote universiel.
The sonne tok colour of stiel
And loste his lyht; the wyndes blewe
And manye strengthes overthrewe.
- 2265 The see his propre kinde changeth,
And al the world his forme strangeth;
The thonder with his fyri levene
So cruel was upon the hevene,
That every erthli creature
- 2270 Tho thoghte his lif in aventure.
The tempeste ate laste cesseneth,
The child is kept, his age encresseth,
And Alisandre his name is hote,
To whom Calistre and Aristote
- 2275 To techen him philosophie
Entenden, and astronomie,
With othre thinges whiche he couthe
Also, to teche him in his youthe
Nectanabus tok upon honde.
- 2280 Bot every man mai understande,
Of sorcerie hou that it wende,
It wole himselfe prove at ende,
And namely for to beguile
A lady, which withoute guile
- 2285 Supposeth trouthe al that sche hiereth.
Bot often he that evele stiereth
His schip is dreynt therinne amidde,
And in this cas riht so betidde.
Nectanabus upon a nyght,
- 2290 Whan it was fair and sterre lyht,
This yonge lord ladde up on hih
Above a tour, wher as he sih
The sterres suche as he acompteth,
And seith what ech of hem amonteth,
- 2295 As thogh he knewe of alle thing;
Bot yit hath he no knowleching
What schal unto himself befall.
Whan he hath told his wordes alle,
This yonge lord thanne him opposeth,
- Observes; [a] discourse*
- prescribes*
- lost*
- earthquake*
- assumed; steel*
- strongholds*
- sea its own nature*
- alters its form*
- lightning*
- Then; its life in peril*
- watched over (nurtured)*
- called*
- Callisthenes; Aristotle*
- poorly steers*
- just so it happened*
- tower*
- just as he recounts*
- questions*

- 2300 And axeth if that he supposeth
 What deth he schal himselfe deie.
 He seith, 'Or Fortune is awei
 And every sterre hath lost his wone,
 Or elles of myn oghne sone
 2305 I schal be slain, I mai noght fle.' *escape*
 Thoghte Alisandre in priveté,
 'Hierof this olde dotard lieth,'
 And er that other oght aspieth,
 Al sodeinliche his olde bones
 2310 He schof over the wal at ones,
 And seith him, 'Ly doun there apart:
 Wheroft nou serveth al thin art?
 Thou knewe alle othre mennes chance
 And of thiself hast ignorance. *fate*
- 2315 That thou hast seid amonges alle
 Of thi persone, is noght befallé.' *has not come to pass*
 Nectanabus, which hath his deth,
 Yit while him lasteth lif and breth
 To Alisandre he spak and seide
- 2320 That he with wrong blame on him leide. *rebuke*
 Fro point to point and al the cas
 He tolde, hou he his sone was.
 Tho he, which sory was ynowh,
 2325 Out of the dich his fader drouh,
 And tolde his moder hou it ferde *Then; who drew*
 In conseil; and whan sche it herde
 And kneu the toknes whiche he tolde,
 Sche nyste what sche seie scholde, *private*
 Bot stod abayssh as for the while
 2330 Of his magique and al the guile.
 Sche thoghte hou that sche was deceived,
 That sche hath of a man conceived,
 And wende a god it hadde be.
 Bot natheles in such degré,
 2335 So as sche mihte hire honour save, *made arrangements so that; buried*
 Sche schop the body was begrave. *paid for*
 And thus Nectanabus aboghte
 The sorcerie which he wroghte.
 Thogh he upon the creatures
- 2340 Thurgh his carectes and figures *charms*
 The maistrie and the pouer hadde,
 His creatour to noght him ladde,
 Agein whos lawe his craft he useth,
 Whan he for lust his god refuseth,
 2345 And tok him to the dievles craft. *devil's rendered*
 Lo, what profit him is belaft:

- That thing thurgh which he wende have stonde, *thought to have*
 Ferst him exiled out of londe
 Which was his oghne, and from a king
 2350 Made him to ben an underling;
 And siththen to deceive a queene,
 That torneth him to mochel teene;
 Thurgh lust of love he gat him hate,
 That ende couthe he noght abate. *grief*
 2355 His olde sleyhtes whiche he caste,
 Yonge Alisandre hem overcaste: *stop*
 His fader, which him misbegat,
 He slouh; a gret mishap was that.
 Bot for o mis another mys *overturned*
 2360 Was yolde, and so fulofte it is.
 Nectanabus his craft miswente,
 So it misfell him er he wente.
 I not what helpeth that clergie
 Which makth a man to do folie, *killed*
 2365 And nameliche of nigromance,
 Which stant upon the mescreance. *one evil (crime); evil (crime)*
given in return
twisted awry
before he died
learning
folly
heresy (treachery)

[ZOROASTER]

- ¶ And for to se more evidence, *(see note)*
 Zorastes, which th'experience
 Of art magique ferst forth drouh,
 2370 Anon as he was bore, he louh,
 Which tokne was of wo suinge. *Zoroaster*
 For of his oghne controvinge
 He fond magique and tauhite it forth;
 Bot al that was him litel worth,
 2375 For of Surrie a worthi king *laughed*
 Him slou, and that was his endyng. *sign; ensuing woe*
 Bot yit thurgh him this craft is used,
 And he thurgh al the world accused,
 For it schal nevere wel achieve *Assyria*
 2380 That stant noght riht with the believe. *turn out well*
 Bot lich to wolle is evele sponne,
 Who lest himself hath litel wonne,
 And ende proveth every thing. *in accord with the [true] faith*
wool; poorly spun
loses

[SAUL AND THE WITCH]

- 2384 Saul, which was of Juys king, *king of the Jews*
 ¶ Up peine of deth forbad this art, *(see note)*
 And yit he tok therof his part.
 The Phitonesse in Samarie

Gaf him conseil be Sorcerie,
 Which after fell to mochel sorwe,
 2390 For he was slain upon the morwe.

Confessor To conne moche thing it helpeth,
 Bot of to mochel no man yelpeth.
 So for to loke on every side,
 Magique mai noght wel betyde.
 2395 Forthi, my sone, I wolde rede
 That thou of these ensamples drede,
 That for no lust of erthli love
 Thou seche so to come above,
 Wheroft as in the worldes wonder
 2400 Thou schalt forevere be put under."

*learn
boasts*

advise

[ALEXANDER AND ARISTOTLE]

Amans "Mi goode fader, grant mercy,
 Forevere I schal be war therby.
 Of love what me so befall,
 Such Sorcerie aboven alle
 2405 Fro this dai forth I schal eschui,
 That so ne wol I noght poursuie
 Mi lust of love for to seche.
 Bot this I wolde you beseche,
 Beside that me stant of love,
 2410 As I you herde speke above
 Hou Alisandre was betawht
 To Aristotle, and so wel tawht
 Of al that to a king belongeth,
 Wheroft min herte sore longeth
 2415 To wite what it wolde mene.
 For be reson I wolde wene
 That if I herde of thinges strange,
 Yit for a time it scholde change
 2419 Mi peine, and lisst me somdiel."

Apart from my concerns with love

entrusted

Confessor "Mi goode sone, thou seist wel.
 For wisdom, hou that evere it stonde,
 To him that can it understande
 Doth gret profit in sondri wise;
 Bot touchende of so hih aprise,
 2425 Which is noght unto Venus knowe,
 I mai it noght miselve knowe,
 Which of hir court am al forthdrawe
 And can nothing bot of hir lawe.
 Bot natheles to knowe more
 2430 Als wel as thou me longeth sore;
 And for it helpeth to comune,

comfort me somewhat

since; discuss

Al ben thei noght to me comune,
The scoles of philosophie,
Yit thenke I for to specefie,
2435 In boke as it is comprehended,
Wheroft thou mihtest ben amended.
For thogh I be noght al cunnyng
Upon the forme of this wrytyng,
Som part therof yit have I herd,
2440 In this matiere hou it hath ferd."

Although they are not

improved

EXPLICIT LIBER SEXTUS



CONFESSIO AMANTIS: BOOK 7 (EDUCATION OF THE KING)

INCIPIT LIBER SEPTIMUS

i. *Omnibus in causis sapiens doctrina salutem
Consequitur, nec habet quis nisi doctus opem.
Naturam superat doctrina, viro quod et ortus
Ingenii docilis non dedit, ipsa dabit.
Non ita discretus hominum per climata regnat,
Quin, magis vt sapiat, indiget ipse scole.¹*

[Confessor] “I, Genius, the prest of love,
Mi sone, as thou hast preid above since; entreated
That I the scole schal declare
Of Aristotle and ek the fare [educational] circumstances
5 Of Alisandre, hou he was tauht,
I am somdel therof destrauht, perturbed
For it is noght to the matiere
Of love, why we sitten hiere
To schryve, so as Venus bad. (see note)
10 Bot natheles, for it is glad
So as thou seist, for thin aprise instruction
To hiere of suche thinges wise,
Wheroft thou myht the time lisse,
So as I can, I schal thee wisse.
15 For wisdom is at every throwe
Above alle other thing to knowe
In loves cause and elleswhere.
Forthi, my sone, unto thin ere, relieve
Though it be noght in the registre
20 Of Venus, yit of that Calistre inform (guide)
And Aristotle whylom write circumstance
To Alisandre, thou schalt wite. once wrote
know

¹ *In every matter, wise doctrine gains well-being, nor does anyone except the learned man acquire wealth. Doctrine surpasses nature; whatever ancestry ripe for learning does not provide a clever man, doctrine will give him. No man of discretion rules anywhere in the world's regions who would not impoverish himself by schooling in order to learn more.*

	Bot for the lores ben diverse, I thenke ferst to thee reherce	<i>teachings</i>
25	The nature of Philosophie, Which Aristotle of his clergie, Wys and expert in the sciences, Declareth thilke intelligences, As of thre pointz in principal.	<i>learning</i>
30	Wherof the ferste in special Is Theorique, which is grounded On him which al the world hath founded, Which comprehendeth al the lore.	<i>categories (branches of learning)</i>
35	And for to loken overmore, Next of sciences the seconde Is Rethorique, whos faconde Above alle othre is eloquent.	<i>understands all matters of wisdom</i>
40	To telle a tale in juggement So wel can no man speke as he.	<i>present a case at trial</i>
45	The laste science of the thre It is Practique, whos office The vertu tryeth fro the vice, And techeth upon goode thewes To fle the compaignie of schrewes,	<i>separates</i>
50	Which stant in disposicion Of mannes free eleccion. Practique enformeth ek the reule, Hou that a worthi king schal reule His realme bothe in werre and pes.	<i>disposition</i>
55	Lo, thus danz Aristotiles These thre sciences hath divided And the nature also decided, Wherof that ech of hem schal serve.	<i>scoundrels</i>
60	The ferste, which is the conserve And keper of the remenant, As that which is most sufficant And chief of the Philosophie, If I therof schal specefie So as the Philosophre tolde, Nou herkne, and kep that thou it holde."	<i>kingdom; war; peace</i> <i>don (professor)</i> <i>(i.e., Aristotle)</i> <i>listen; mark (be sure)</i>

[THEORY, THE FIRST POINT OF PHILOSOPHY]

- ii. *Prima creatorem dat scire sciencia summum:
Qui caput agnoscit, sufficit illud ei.*

*Plura viros quandoque iuuat nescire, set illud
Quod videt expediens, sobrius ille sapit.¹*

[Confessor] “Of Theorique principal
The Philosophre in special *particular*
The propretees hath determined,
As thilke which is enlumined
65 Of wisdom and of hih prudence *high*
¶ Above alle othre in his science. *(see note)*
And stant departed upon thre,
The ferste of which in his degré
Is cleped in Philosophie *called*
70 The science of Theologie;
That other named is Phisique, *second*
The thridde is seid Mathematique. *called*

[THEOLOGY]

Theologie is that science
Which unto man gifth evidence
75 Of thing which is noght bodily, *physical*
Wheroft men knowe redely
The hihe almyhti Trinité,
Which is o God in unité
Withouten ende and beginnyng
80 And creatour of alle thinge,
Of hevene, of erthe and ek of helle.
Wheroft, as olde bokes telle,
The Philosophre in his resoun
Wrote upon this conclusioun, *(i.e., Aristotle)*
85 And of his wrytinge in a clause
He clepeth God the ferste cause,
Which of Himself is thilke good,
Withoute whom nothing is good,
Of which that every creature
90 Hath his beinge and his nature. *Has come into existence*
¶ After the beinge of the thinges
Ther ben thre formes of beings: *essential nature (see note)*
Thing which began and ende schal,
That thing is cleped temporal;
95 Ther is also be other weie
Thing which began and schal noght deie, *entities*

¹ *The first branch of learning allows one to know the highest creator: who recognizes the head, that suffices for him. Not knowing more than that is sometimes good for men; but what he sees useful, he very prudently comes to know.*

- As soules, that ben spiritiel:
 Here beinge is perpetuel.
 Bot ther is on above the sonne,
 100 Whos time nevere was begonne,
 And endeles schal evere be;
 That is the God, whos magesté
 Alle othre thinges schal governe,
 And His beinge is sempiterne.
 105 The God, to whom that al honour
 Belongeth, He is creatour,
 And othre ben Hise creatures.
 The God commandeth the natures
 That thei to Him obeien alle;
 110 Withouten Him, what so befalle,
 Her myht is non, and He mai al.
 The God was evere and evere schal,
 And thei begonne of His assent;
 The times alle be present
 115 To God, to hem and alle unknowe,
 Bot what Him liketh that thei knowe.
 Thus bothe an angel and a man,
 The whiche of al that God began
 Be chief, obeien Goddes myht,
 120 And he stant endeles upriht.
 To this science ben privé
 The clerks of divinité,
 The whiche unto the poeple prechen
 The feith of holi cherche and techen,
 125 Which in som cas upon believe
 Stant more than thei conne prieve
 Be weie of argument sensible.
 Bot natheles it is credible,
 And doth a man gret meede have,
 130 To him that thenkth himself to save.
 Theologie in such a wise
 Of hih science and hih aprise
 Above alle othre stant unlike,
 134 And is the ferste of Theoriqe.
- Their manner of existence (essence)
 one; sun*
- Their
 intention*
- faith
 prove
 determinant argument (logic)*
- causes one to have; reward*
- lofty wisdom; learning*

[PHYSICS]

- ¶ Phisique is after the secounde,
 Thurgh which the Philosophre hath founde
 To techen sondri knowlechinges
 Upon the bodiliche thinges.
 Of man, of beste, of herbe, of ston,
 140 Of fissch, of foughl, of everychon
- (see note)*
- entities*
- birds*

144 That ben of bodeley substance,
 The nature and the circumstance
 Thurgh this science it is ful soght,
 Which vaileth and which vaileth noght.
 physical (material)
 fully investigated
 is beneficial/profits

[MATHEMATICS]

- 145 The thridde point of Theorique,
 Which cleped is Mathematique,
 Devided is in sondri wise
 And stant upon diverse aprise.
 The ferst of whiche is Arsmetique,
 And the secounde is seid Musique,
 The thridde is ek Geometrie,
 Also the ferthe Astronomie.
 fields of learning
 art of measuring (calculating)
 called
 (see note)
- 150 Of Arsmetique the matiere
 Is that of which a man mai liere
 What Algorisme in nombre amonteth,
 Whan that the wise man accompeth
 After the formel propreté
 Of Algorismes abecé.
 Be which multiplicacioun
 Is mad and diminucioun
 Of sommes be th'experience
 Of this art and of this science.
 learn
 computing with Arabic numbers signifies
 computes
 the A,B,Cs of Arabic numbering
- 155 The seconde of Mathematique,
 Which is the science of Musique,
 That techeth upon Armonie
 A man to make melodie
 Be vois and soun of instrument
 Thurgh notes of acordement,
 The whiche men pronounce alofte,
 Nou scharpe notes and nou softe,
 Nou hihe notes and nou lowe,
 As be the gamme a man mai knowe,
 Which techeth the prolacion
 Of note and the condicion.
 Art of Composition (Harmony)
 harmony
 aloud
 piercing; gentle
 musical scale
 combination and rhythmic arrangement
 quality
 (see note)
- 160 The seconde of Mathematique,
 Which is the science of Musique,
 That techeth upon Armonie
 A man to make melodie
 Be vois and soun of instrument
 Thurgh notes of acordement,
 The whiche men pronounce alofte,
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 Nou scharpe notes and nou softe,
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 As be the gamme a man mai knowe,
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 Of note and the condicion.
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 piercing; gentle
 musical scale
 combination and rhythmic arrangement
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 The whiche men pronounce alofte,
 Nou scharpe notes and nou softe,
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 As be the gamme a man mai knowe,
 Which techeth the prolacion
 Of note and the condicion.
 Art of Composition (Harmony)
 harmony
 aloud
 piercing; gentle
 musical scale
 combination and rhythmic arrangement
 quality
 (see note)
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 Which is the science of Musique,
 That techeth upon Armonie
 A man to make melodie
 Be vois and soun of instrument
 Thurgh notes of acordement,
 The whiche men pronounce alofte,
 Nou scharpe notes and nou softe,
 Nou hihe notes and nou lowe,
 As be the gamme a man mai knowe,
 Which techeth the prolacion
 Of note and the condicion.
 Art of Composition (Harmony)
 harmony
 aloud
 piercing; gentle
 musical scale
 combination and rhythmic arrangement
 quality
 (see note)

- | | | |
|-----|---|----------------------------------|
| 185 | These olde philosophres wise,
Of al this worldes erthe round,
Hou large, hou thikke was the ground,
Controeden th'experience;
The cercle and the circumference
Of everything unto the hevene;
Thei setten point and mesure evene.
Mathematique above th'erthe
Of hyh science hath yit the ferthe,
Which spekth upon Astronomie
And techeth of the sterres hihe,
Beginnyng upward fro the mone.
Bot ferst, as it was for to done,
This Aristotle in other thing
Unto this worthi yonge king
The kinde of every element
Which stant under the firmament,
Hou it is mad and in what wise,
Fro point to point he gan devise." | <i>Discovered by observation</i> |
| 190 | | <i>fourth</i> |
| 195 | | <i>allows understanding of</i> |
| 200 | | <i>teaches about</i> |
| | | <i>moon</i> |
| | | <i>nature</i> |
| | | <i>made; manner</i> |

[FOUR-FOLD CREATION]

- iii. *Quatuor omnipotens elementa creauit origo,
Quatuor et venti partibus ora dabat.
Nostraque quadruplici complexio sorte creature
Corpore sicutque suo stat variatus homo.*¹

[Confessor] “Tofore the creacion

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 205 | Of eny worldes stacion,
Of hevene, of erthe, or eke of helle,
So as these olde bokes telle,
As soun tofore the song is set
And yit thei ben togedre knet, | <i>sound before
knit</i> |
| 210 | Riht so the hihe pourveance
Tho hadde under his ordinance
A gret substance, a gret matiere,
Of which he wolde in his manere
These othre thinges make and forme. | <i>(see note)</i> |
| 215 | For yit withouten eny forme
Was that matiere universal,
Which hihite ylem in special.
Of ylem, as I am enformed,
These elementz ben mad and formed, | <i>is called hyle (primordial matter)</i> |

¹ *The omnipotent Beginning created the four elements and gave mouths to the regions of the four winds. Our constitution too is fashioned in a four-fold manner, and thus in his body man exists in a varied state.*

- 220 Of ylem elementz thei hote
After the Scole of Aristote,
Of whiche if more I schal reherce,
Foure elementz ther ben diverse. are called

[FOUR ELEMENTS]

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| | The ferste of hem men erthe calle,
Which is the lowest of hem alle,
And in his forme is schape round,
Substancial, strong, sadd and sound,
As that which mad is sufficant
To bere up al the remenant.
For as the point in a compas | (see note) |
| 225 | Stant evene amiddes, riht so was
This erthe set and schal abyde,
That it may swerve to no side,
And hath his centre after the lawe
Of kinde, and to that centre drawe
Desireth every worldes thing,
If ther ne were no lettyng. | its
<i>firmly established and undivided</i>
<i>created</i> |
| | Above th'erthe kepth his bounde
The water, which is the secounde
Of elementz, and al withoute
It environeth th'erthe aboute.
Bot as it scheweth, noght forthi
This soubtil water myghtely,
Thogh it be of himselfe softe,
The strengthe of th'erthe perceth ofte; | <i>right in the middle</i>
(see note) |
| 235 | For riht as veines ben of blod
In man, riht so the water flod
Th'erthe of his cours makth ful of veines,
Als wel the helles as the pleines.
And that a man may sen at ye, | <i>obstruction</i>
<i>nature; to fall toward that center</i> |
| | For wher the hulles ben most hyhe,
Ther mai men welle stremes finde.
So proveth it be weie of kinde
The water heyher than the lond. | <i>nevertheless</i>
<i>thin (pure)</i>
<i>itself</i>
<i>fortified matter</i> |
| 240 | And over this nou understand,
Air is the thridde of elementz,
Of whos kinde his aspirementz
Takth every lifissh creature,
The which schal upon erthe endure. | <i>hills; plains</i>
<i>eye</i> |
| 245 | For as the fissh, if it be dreie,
Mot in defaute of water deie,
Riht so withouten air on lyve | <i>hills; high</i>
<i>explains</i> |
| | | (see note) |
| 250 | | <i>nature its breathing</i>
<i>living</i> |
| 255 | | <i>Must for lack of</i> |
| 260 | | |

- 264 No man ne beste myhte thryve,
The which is mad of fleissh and bon.
There is outake of alle non. exempted
- 265  This air in periferies thre
Divided is of such degré,
Benethe is on and on amidde,
To whiche above is set the thridde,
And upon the divisions one
- 270 There ben diverse impressions
Of moist and ek of drye also,
Whiche of the sonne bothe tuo
Ben drawe and haled upon hy,
And maken cloudes in the sky, raised
- 275 As schewed is at mannes sihte;
Wheroft be day and ek be nyhte
After the times of the yer
Among ous upon erthe her
In sondri wise thinges falle. by
- 279  The ferste periferie of alle
Engendreth myst and overmore
The dewes and the frostes hore,
After thilke intersticion interstice (slot)
- 284 In whiche thei take impression.
- 285  Fro the seconde, as bokes sein,
The moiste dropes of the reyn
Descenden into middilerthe,
And tempreth it to sed and erthe,
And doth to springe grass and flour. causes to flower
- 290 And ofte also the grete schour
Out of such place it mai be take,
That it the forme schal forsake
Of reyn, and into snow be torned; taken
- 295 And ek it mai be so sojorned
In sondri places up alofte,
That into hail it torneth ofte. rain
- 300  The thridde of th'air after the lawe
Thurgh such matiere as up is drawe
Of dreie thing, as it is ofte,
Among the cloudes upon lofte, (see note)
- 305 And is so clos, it may noght oute;
Thanne is it chased sore aboute,
Til it to fyr and leyt be falle,
And thanne it brekth the cloudes alle, lightning
- 310 The whiche of so gret noyse craken,
That thei the feerful thonder maken.
The thonderstrok smit er it leyte, The lightning bolt strikes before it flashes

- And yit men sen the fyr and leyte, light
 The thonderstrok er that men hiere: before they hear the thunder
 310 So mai it wel be proeved hiere is perceived from a distance
 In thing which schewed is fro feir,
 A mannes yhe is there nerr [That]; eye; nearer
 Thanne is the soun to mannes ere. sound; ear
 And natheles it is gret feere fear
 315 Bothe of the strok and of the fyr,
 Of which is no recoverir safety (shelter)
 In place wher that thei descende,
 Bot if God wolde His grace sende. Unless
 And for to speken over this, (see note)
 320 In this partie of th'air it is see by night
 That men fulofte sen be nyhte
 The fyr in sondri forme alythe.
 Somtime the fydrake it semeth, fiery dragon
 325 And so the lewed poeple it demeth;
 Somtime it semeth as it were ignorant; judge
 A sterre, which that glydeth there: meteorite
 Bot it is nouther of the tuo, neither
 The Philosophre telleth so, i.e., Aristotle
 330 And seith that of impressions vaporous emanations
 Thurgh diverse exalacions come into being
 Upon the cause and the matiere many names
 Men sen diverse forme appiere A falling star
 Of fyr, the whiche hath sondri name.
 Assub, he seith, is thilke same,
 335 The which in sondry place is founde,
 Whanne it is falle doun to grounde,
 So as the fyr it hath aneled, kindled
 Lich unto slym which is congeled.
 Of exalacion I finde
 340 Fyr kinled of the same kinde, ignited
 Bot it is of another forme;
 Wherof, if that I schal conforme
 The figure unto that it is,
 These olde clerkes tellen this,
 345 That it is lik a got skippende, skipping goat
 And for that it is such semende,
 It hatte *Capra saliens*. is called “leaping goat”
 And ek these astronomiens astronomers
 Another fyr also, be nyhte
 350 Which scheweth him to mannes syhte, itself
 Thei clepen Eges, the which brenneth St. Elmo's fire
 Lik to the corrant fyr that renneth running
 Upon a corde, as thou hast sein,

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 355 | Whan it with poudre is so besein
Of sulphre and othre thinges mo.
Ther is another fyr also,
Which semeth to a mannes yhe
Be nyghtes time as thogh ther flyhe
A dragon brennende in the sky,
And that is cleped proprely
Daaly, wheroft men sein fulofte,
'Lo, wher the fyri drake alofte
Fleth up in th'air!' and so thei demen.
Bot why the fyres suche semen
Of sondri formes to beholde,
The wise Philosophre tolde,
So as tofore it hath ben herd. | <i>provided (furnished)
more</i> |
| 360 | | <i>eye
By; flies
burning
called
say
reckon</i> |
| 365 | | <i>i.e., Aristotle</i> |
| 370 | Confessor Lo thus, my sone, hou it hath ferd:
Of air the due propreté
In sondri wise thou myht se,
And hou under the firmament
It is ek the thridde element,
Which environeth bothe tuo,
The water and the lond also. | <i>happens
ways
surrounds</i> |
| 374 | | |
| 375 | And for to tellen overthis
Of elementz which the ferthe is,
That is the fyr in his degré,
Which environeth th'other thre
And is withoute moist al drye. | <i>(see note)</i> |
| 380 | Bot lest nou what seith the clergie;
For upon hem that I have seid
The creatour hath set and leid
The kinde and the complexion
Of alle mennes nacion. | <i>lacking moisture
hear; learned traditions</i> |
| 385 | Foure elementz sondri ther be,
Lich unto whiche of that degré
Among the men ther ben also
Complexions foure and no mo,
Wheroft the Philosophre treteth, | <i>nature; constitution
diverse
Like</i> |
| 390 | That he nothing behinde leteth,
And seith hou that thei ben diverse,
So as I schal to thee reherse. | <i>[Such] that; leaves</i> |

[FOUR COMPLEXIONS]

- He which natureth every kinde,
The myhti God, so as I finde,
Of man, which is his creature,
Hath so devideſ the nature,
That non til other wel acordeth;
(see note)

	And be the cause it so discordeth, The lif which fieleth the seknesse Mai stonde upon no sekernesse.	illness certitude
400	Of th'erthe, which is cold and drye, The kinde of man Malencolie Is cleped, and that is the ferste, The most ungoodlich and the werste;	<i>Is called unhappy (unfortunate)</i>
405	For unto loves werk on nyht Him lacketh bothe will and myht: No wonder is, in lusty place Of love though he lese grace.	<i>should lose</i>
410	What man hath that complexion, Full of ymaginacion Of dredes and of wrathful thoghtes, He fret himselfen al to noghtes.	<i>wears himself out; nothing</i>
	The water, which is moyste and cold, Makth Fleume, which is manyfold	<i>Phlegm (see note)</i>
415	Forgetel, slou and wery sone Of everything which is to done. He is of kinde sufficant To holde love his covenant,	<i>Forgetful; slow; weary</i>
	Bot that him lacketh appetit, Which longeth unto such delit.	<i>perform sexually</i>
420	What man that takth his kinde of th'air, He schal be lyht, he schal be fair, For his complexion is blood. Of alle ther is non so good,	<i>is appropriate nature (see note)</i>
	For he hath bothe will and myht To plese and paie love his riht: Wher as he hath love undertake, Wrong is if that he be forsake.	<i>sanguine</i>
425	What man that takth his kinde of th'air, He schal be lyht, he schal be fair, For his complexion is blood. Of alle ther is non so good,	<i>pay; its just desserts</i>
	For he hath bothe will and myht To plese and paie love his riht: Wher as he hath love undertake, Wrong is if that he be forsake.	<i>(see note)</i>
430	The fyr of his condicion Appropreth the complexion Which in a man is Colre hote, Whos propretes ben dreie and hote.	<i>Is a characteristic symptom of the constitution Choler called</i>
	It makth a man ben enginous And swift of fote and ek irous;	<i>ingenious (cunning) irascible</i>
435	Of contek and folhastifnesse He hath a riht gret besinesse, To thenke of love and litel may. Though he behote wel a day,	<i>quarreling</i>
	On nyht whan that he wole assaie, He may ful evelle his dette paie.	<i>And have little ability to think about love promises well by day exert himself</i>
440	After the kinde of th'element, Thus stant a mannes kinde went As touchende his complexion,	<i>poorly perform sexually (see note) natural inclination</i>

- Upon sondri division
 445 Of dreie, of moiste, of chele, of hete,
 And ech of hem his oghne sete
 Appropred hath withinne a man.
 And ferst to telle as I began,
 ⚒ The splen is to Malencolie
 450 Assigned for herbergerie.
 ⚒ The moiste Fleume with his cold
 Hath in the lunges for his hold
 Ordeined him a propre stede,
 454 To duelle ther as he is bede.
 ⚒ To the Sanguin complexion
 Nature of hire inspeccion
 A propre hous hath in the liver
 For his duellinge mad delivere.
 ⚒ The dreie Colre with his hete
 460 Be weie of kinde his propre sete
 Hath in the galle, wher he duelleth,
 So as the Philosophre telleth.

[FOUR SERVANTS OF THE HEART]

- Nou over this is for to wite,
 465 As it is in Phisique write
 Of liver, of lunge, of galle, of splen,
 Thei alle unto the herte ben
 Servantz, and ech in his office
 Entendeth to don him service,
 As he which is chief lord above.
 470 The liver makth him for to love,
 The lunge gifth him weie of speche,
 The galle serveth to do wreche,
 The splen doth him to lawhe and pleie,
 Whan al unclennesse is aweie.
 475 Lo, thus hath ech of hem his dede.
 And to sustienen hem and fede
 In time of recreacion,
 Nature hath in creacion
 The stomach for a comun coc
 480 Ordeined, so as seith the boc.
 The stomach coc is for the halle,
 And builleth mete for hem alle,
 To make hem myghty for to serve
 The herte, that he schal noght sterve,
 485 For as a king in his empire
 Above alle othre is lord and sire,

*cold; hot
habitation*

*(see note)
lodging*

Phlegm (see note)

*place
prescribed [to do]
(see note)*

*liver
free (unencumbered)*

*heat
residence
gall bladder*

know (see note)

Strives

*causes one to inflict harm
laugh
disease*

its behavior (function)

cook

cooks food

die (starve)

	So is the herte principal, To whom reson in special Is gove as for the governance.	<i>the governor</i>
490	And thus nature his pourveance Hath mad for man to liven hiere; Bot God, which hath the soule diere, Hath formed it in other wise.	<i>given preparations</i>
495	That can no man pleinli devise; Bot as the clerkes ous enforme, That lich to God it hath a forme, Thurgh which figure and which liknesse The soule hath many an hyh noblesse Appropred to his oghne kinde.	<i>holds the soul dearly</i>
500	Bot ofte hir wittes be mad blinde Al onliche of this ilke point, That hir abydinge is conjoint Forth with the bodi for to duelle. That on desireth toward helle,	<i>entirely because of their destiny</i>
505	That other upward to the hevene; So schul thei nevere stonde in evene, Bot if the fleissh be overcome And that the soule have holi nome The governance, and that is selde,	<i>one yearns for</i>
510	Whil that the fleissh him mai bewelde. Al erthli thing which God began Was only mad to serve man; Bot He the soule al only made Himselven for to serve and glade.	<i>wholly taken over seldom may dominate him</i>
515	Alle othre bestes that men finde Thei serve unto here oghne kinde; Bot to reson the soule serveth, Wheroft the man His thonk deserveth And get him with hise werkes goode	<i>please</i>
520	The perdurable lyves foode.	<i>God's blessing obtains gets [for] himself by eternal life's</i>

[FOUR DIVISIONS OF THE WORLD]

	Of what matiere it schal be told,	
¶	A tale lyketh manyfold The betre, if it be spoke plein: Thus thinke I for to torne agein	<i>pleases (see note)</i>
525	And telle plenerly therfore Of th'erthe, wheroft nou tofore I spak, and of the water eke, So as these olde clerkes spieke, And sette proprely the bounde	<i>more completely</i>
530	After the forme of mappemounde,	<i>map of the world</i>

- Thurgh which the ground be pourparties
Departed is in thre parties,
That is Asie, Aufrique, Europe,
The whiche under the hevene cope,
535 Als ferr as streccheth eny ground,
Begripeth al this erthe round.
Bot after that the hihe wrieche
The water weies let out seche
And overgo the helles hye,
540 Which every kinde made dye
That upon middelerthe stod,
Outake Noe and his blod —
His sones and his doughtres thre —
Thei were sauf and so was he.
545 Here names, who that rede rihte,
Sem, Cam, Japhet the brethren hihte;
And whanne thilke almyhthy hond
Withdrouh the water fro the lond,
And al the rage was aweie
550 And erthe was the mannes weie,
The sones thre, of whiche I tolde,
Riht after that hemselfe wolde,
This world departe thei begonne.
- ☞ Asie, which lay to the sonne
Upon the marche of Orient,
Was graunted be comun assent
To Sem, which was the sone eldeste;
For that partie was the beste
555 And double as moche as othre tuo,
And was that time bounded so
Wher as the flos which men Nil calleth
Departeth fro his cours and falleth
Into the See Alexandrine,
Ther takth Asie ferst seisine
560 Toward the West, and over this
Of Canahim wher the flos is
Into the Grete See rennende;
Fro that into the worldes ende
Estward, Asie it is algates,
565 Til that men come unto the gates
Of Paradis, and there ho.
And schortly for to speke it so,
Of Orient in general
570 Withinne his bounde Asie hath al.
- ☞ And thanne upon that other syde
Westward, as it fell thilke tyde,
The brother which was hote Cham
- by sections*
- mantle of heaven*
- Comprise*
- vengeance*
- high hills*
- brought death to every creature*
- Except; kin*
- Their; understands correctly*
- were called*
- flood*
- According to what they themselves*
- divided*
- sun (see note)*
- region of the East*
- greatest*
- set with boundaries*
- Nile*
- (see note)*
- possession*
- Mediterranean running*
- in every way (continuously)*
- stops (whoa!)*
- (see note)*
- befell at that time*
- called*

	Upon his part Aufrique nam.	took
580	Japhet Europe tho tok he,	
	Thus parten thei the world on thre.	
	Bot yit ther ben of londes fele	many
	In Occident as for the chele,	<i>the West; cold</i>
	In Orient as for the hete,	<i>the East; heat</i>
	Which of the poeple be forlete	<i>abandoned</i>
585	As lond desert that is unable,	<i>not usable</i>
	For it mai noght ben habitable.	
☞	The water eke hath sondri bounde,	<i>demarcations (see note)</i>
	After the lond wher it is founde,	
	And takth his name of thilke londes	<i>its; the same lands</i>
590	Wher that it renneth on the strondes:	<i>along the shore</i>
	Bot thilke see which hath no wane	<i>limits</i>
	Is cleped the gret Occeane,	<i>called; Ocean</i>
	Out of the which arise and come	
	The hyhe flobes alle and some.	<i>high tides</i>
595	Is non so litel welle spring,	
	Which ther ne takth his beginnyng,	<i>its origin</i>
	And lich a man that haleth breth	<i>draws breath</i>
	Be weie of kinde, so it geth	<i>According to nature; goes</i>
	Out of the see and in agein,	<i>ocean</i>
600	The water, as the bokes sein.	<i>tell</i>
☞	Of elementz the propretes	<i>(see note)</i>
	Hou that thei stonden be degrees,	
	As I have told, nou myht thou hiere,	<i>hear</i>
	Mi goode sone, al the matiere	
605	Of erthe, of water, air, and fyr.	
	And for thou saist that thi desir	
	Is for to witen overmore	
	The forme of Aristotles lore,	<i>teaching</i>
	He seith in his entendement,	<i>discourse</i>
610	That yit ther is an element	
	Above the foure, and is the fifte,	
	Set of the hihe Goddes gifte,	
	The which that orbis cleped is.	<i>sphere</i>
	And therupon he telleth this,	
615	That as the schelle hol and sound	
	Encloseth al aboute round	
	What thing withinne an ey belongeth,	<i>egg</i>
	Riht so this orbis underfongeth	<i>sphere; contains</i>
	These elementz alle everychon,	
620	Which I have spoke of on and on.	<i>one by one</i>
	Bot overthis nou tak good hiede,	
	Mi sone, for I wol procede	
	To speke upon Mathematique,	
	Which grounded is on Theorique.	

- 625 The science of Astronomie
 I thinke for to specefie,
 Withoute which, to telle plein,
 Alle othre science is in vein
 Toward the scole of erthli thinges.
 630 For as an egle with his winges
 Fleth above alle that men finde,
 So doth this science in his kinde.”
- explicate*
its nature

[ASTRONOMY]

- iv. *Lege planetarum magis inferiora reguntur,*
Ista set interdum regula fallit opus.
Vir mediante deo sapiens dominabitur astris,
*Fata nec immerito quid nouitatis agunt.*¹

- [Confessor] “Benethe upon this erthe hiere
 Of alle thinges the matiere,
 635 As tellen ous thei that ben lerned,
 Of thing above it stant governed,
 That is to sein of the planetes.
 The cheles bothe and ek the hetes,
 ☰ The chances of the world also,
 640 That we fortune clepen so,
 Among the mennes nacion
 Al is thurgh constellacion,
 Wheroft som man hath the wele,
 And som man hath deseses fele
 645 In love als wel as othre thinges.
 The stat of realmes and of kinges
 In time of pes, in time of werre
 It is conceived of the sterre:
 And thus seith the naturien
 650 Which is an astronomien.
 Bot the divin seith otherwise,
 That if men weren goode and wise
 And plesant unto the Godhede,
 Thei scholden noght the sterres drede.
 655 For o man, if him wel befalle,
 Is more worth than ben thei alle
 Towardes Him that weldeth al.
 Bot yit the lawe original,
 Which He hath set in the natures,
- cold weather; hot*
(see note)
call
good fortune
distresses many
caused by
natural philosopher
astronomer/astrologer
theologian
fear
if he is lucky
affects

¹ *Things lower down are ruled by the law of the planets, and sometimes that governance foils endeavor. With God's intervention the wise man will rule the stars, and the fates will not cause anything suddenly unfavorable.*

- 660 Mot worchen in the creatures,
That therof mai be non obstacle,
Bot if it stonde upon miracle
Thurgh preiere of som holy man.
And forthi, so as I began
665 To speke upon Astronomie,
As it is write in the clergie,
To telle hou the planetes fare,
Som part I thenke to declare,
Mi sone, unto thin audience.
- 670 Astronomie is the science
Of wisdom and of hih connynge,
Which makth a man have knowlechinge
Of sterres in the firmament,
Figure, cercle, and moevement
675 Of ech of hem in sondri place,
And what betwen hem is of space,
Hou so thei moeve or stonde faste,
Al this it telleth to the laste.
- Assembled with Astronomie
680 Is ek that ilke Astrologie,
The which in juggementz acompteth
Th'effect, what every sterre amonteth,
And hou thei causen many a wonder
To tho climatz that stonde hem under.
- 685 And for to telle it more plein,
These olde philosophres sein
That orbis, which I spak of err,
Is that which we fro th'erthe a ferr
Beholde, and firmament it calle,
- 690 In which the sterres stonden alle,
Among the whiche in special
Planetes sefne principal
Ther ben, that mannes sihte demeth,
Bot th'orizonte, as to ous semeth.
- 695 And also ther ben signes tuelve.
Whiche have her cercles be hemselfe
Compassed in the zodiaque,
In which thei have here places take.
And as thei stonden in degré,
- 700 Here cercles more or lasse be,
Mad after the proporcion
Of th'erthe, whos condicion
Is set to be the foundement
To sustiene up the firmament.
- 705 And be this skile a man mai knowe,
The more that thei stonden lowe,
- Must*
in learned sources
hearing
advanced learning
stars
discloses
Associated
evaluates
signifies
regions
sphere; spoke of earlier
afar
seven
regards
Beyond the celestial vault
spheres by themselves
their
by

- The more ben the cercles lasse; smaller
 That causeth why that some passe
 Here due cours tofore another. before
- 710 Bot nou, mi lieve dere brother,
 As thou desirest for to wite
 What I finde in the bokes write,
 To telle of the planetes sevne,
 Hou that thei stonde upon the hevene
 715 And in what point that thei ben inne,
 Tak hiede, for I wol beginne,
 So as the Philosophre tauhte taught
 To Alisandre and it betauhte commended
 Wheroft he was fulli tawht instructed
 720 Of wisdom, which was him betawht. entrusted

[SEVEN PLANETS]

- ¶ Benethe alle othre stant the mone, At the base of (see note)
 The which hath with the see to done. ocean
 Of flodes hihe and ebbes lowe tides
- 725 Upon his change it schal be knowe.
 And every fissh which hath a schelle
 Mot in his governance duelle,
 To wexe and wane in his degré,
 As be the mone a man mai se;
 And al that stant upon the grounde
 730 Of his moisture it mot be founde.
 Alle othre sterres, as men finde,
 Be schynende of here oghne kinde
 Outake only the monelyht, Except
 Which is noght of himselfe bright,
 735 Bot as he takth it of the sonne. receives it from
 And yit he hath noght al fulwonne
 His lyht, that he nys somdiel derk;
 Bot what the lette is of that werk
 In Almageste it telleth this: i.e., Ptolemy's astronomical treatise
- 740 The mones cercle so lowe is, close to earth
 Wheroft the sonne out of his stage
 Ne seth him noght with full visage,
 For he is with the ground beschadedyd,
 So that the mone is somdiel faded overshadowed
- 745 And may noght fully schyne cler. born
 Bot what man under his pouer
 Is bore, he schal his places change
 And seche manye londes strange.
 And as of this condicion
- 750 The mones disposicion

- Upon the lond of Alemaigne
Is set, and ek upon Breaigne,
Which nou is cleped Engelond;
For thei travaile in every lond. *Germany*
- 754 754 Of the planetes the secounde
Above the mone hath take his bounde,
Mercurie, and his nature is this,
That under him who that bore is,
In boke he schal be studious *labor*
(see note)
its planetary orbit
- 760 And in wrytinge curious,
And slouh and lustles to travaile
In thing which elles myhte availe:
He loveth ese, he loveth reste,
So is he noght the worthieste; *born*
765 Bot yit with somdiel besinesse
His herte is set upon richesse.
And as in this condicion,
Th'effect and disposicion *zealous*
770 Of this planete and of his chance
Is most in Burgoigne and in France. *sluggish*
prosper (be sufficient)
its influences
- 775 775 Next to Mercurie, as wol befallie,
Stant that planete which men calle
Venus, whos constellacion
Governeth al the nacion *diligence (industry)*
Of lovers, wher thei spiede or non,
Of whiche I trowe thou be on: *as it so happens (see note)*
780 Bot whiderward thin happes wende,
Schal this planete schewe at ende,
As it hath do to many mo,
To some wel, to some wo. *whether; succeed or not*
one
fortunes turn
And natheles of this planete *gladness (bliss); woe*
The moste part is softe and swete; *benevolent; pleasurable*
For who that therof takth his berthe,
He schal desire joie and merthe,
785 Gentil, courteis, and debonaire,
To speke his wordes softe and faire,
Such schal he be be weie of kinde,
And overal wher he may finde *by; nature*
Plesance of love, his herte boweth
790 With al his myht and there he woweth. *woos*
He is so ferforth amourous,
He not what thing is vicious *to such a degree*
Touchende love, for that lawe *knows not*
- 795 Ther mai no maner man withdrawe,
The which venerien is bore *is born under Venus*
Be weie of kinde, and therefore
Venus of love the goddesse

- Is cleped: bot of wantounesse
The climat of hir lecherie
800 Is most commun in Lombardie.
- Next unto this planete of love
The brighte sonne stant above,
Which is the hindrere of the nyght
And forthrere of the daies lyht,
805 As he which is the worldes ſye,
Thurgh whom the lufte compaignie
Of foules be the morwe singe,
The freiffhe floures sprede and springe,
The hihe tre the ground beschadeth,
810 And every mannes herte gladeth.
And for it is the hed planete,
Hou that he sitteth in his ſete,
Of what richesse, of what nobleie,
814 These bokes telle, and thus thei ſeie.
- Of gold glistrende spoke and whiel
The ſonne his carte hath faire and wiel,
In which he ſitt, and is coroned
With brighte ſtones environed;
820 Of whiche if that I ſpeke ſchal,
Ther be tofore in ſpecial
Set in the front of his corone
Thre ſtones, whiche no persone
Hath upon erthe, and the ferſte is
825 Be name cleped licuchiſ;
That othre tuo be cleped thus,
Aſtrices and ceramius.
In his corone also behinde,
Be olde bokes as I finde,
830 Ther ben of worthi ſtones thre
Set ech of hem in his degré,
Wheroſ a cristall is that on,
Which that corone is ſet upon;
The ſeconde is an adamant;
835 The thridde is noble and avenant,
Which cleped is ydriades.
And over this yit nathelis
Upon the ſydes of the werk,
After the wrytinge of the clerk,
840 Ther ſitten fyve ſtones mo:
The ſmaragdine is on of tho,
Jaspis and elitropius
And dendides and jacinctus.
Lo, thus the corone is beset,
Wheroſ it ſchyneth wel the bet;
- called
region of influence
(see note)
eye
birds at
tall; shades
makes glad
principal
(see note)
all around
By name called lychnites(?)
Cat's eye; thunderſtone
diamond
beautiful (pleasant)
emerald
Jasper; heliotrope
(see note)

- 845 And in such wise his liht to sprede
 Sit with his diadem on hede
 The sonne schynende in his carte.
 And for to lede him swithe and smarte
 After the bryhte daies lawe,
 850 Ther ben ordeined for to drawe
 Foure hors his char and him withal,
 Wheroft the names telle I schal:
 Eritheus the ferste is hote,
 The which is red and schyneth hote,
 855 The seconde Acteos the bryhte,
 Lampes the thridde coursier hihte,
 And Philogeus is the ferthe,
 That bringen lyht unto this erthe,
 And gon so swift upon the hevene,
 860 In foure and twenty houres evene
 The carte with the bryhte sonne
 Thei drawe, so that overronne
 Thei have under the cercles hihe
 Al middelerthe in such an hye. haste
- 865 And thus the sonne is overal
 The chief planete imperial,
 Above him and benethe him thre:
 And thus betwen hem regneth he,
 As he that hath the middel place
 870 Among the sevene, and of his face
 Be glade alle erthly creatures,
 And taken after the natures
 Here ese and recreacion.
 And in his constellacion
 875 Who that is bore in special,
 Of good will and of liberal
 He schal be founde in alle place,
 And also stonde in mochel grace
 Toward the lordes for to serve
 880 And gret profit and thonk deserve.
 And over that it causeth yit
 A man to be soubtil of wit
 To worche in gold, and to be wys
 In everything which is of pris. value
- 885 Bot for to speken in what cost
 Of al this erthe he regneth most
 As for wisdom, it is in Grece,
 Wher is aproped thilke spiece. region
- 890  Mars the planete bataillous
 Next to the sonne glorious
 Above stant, and doth mervailles characteristic; attribute
- excelling in combat (see note)*

- Upon the fortune of batailes.
The conquerours be daies olde
Were unto this planete holde.
Bot who that his nativit 
Hath take upon the propret 
Of Martes disposiciooun
Be weie of constellacioun,
He schal be fiers and folhastif
And desirous of werre and strif.
Bot for to telle redely
In what climat most comunly
That this planete hath his effect,
Seid is that he hath his aspect
Upon the Holi Lond so cast,
That there is no pes stedefast.
-  Above Mars upon the hevene,
The sexte planete of the sevene,
Stant Jupiter the delicat,
Which causeth pes and no debat.
For he is cleded that planete
Which of his kinde softe and swete
Attempreth al that to him longeth;
And whom this planete underfongeth
To stonde upon his regiment,
He schal be meke and pacient
And fortunat to marchandie
And lusti to delicacie
In everything which he schal do.
- This Jupiter is cause also
Of the science of lyhte werkes,
And in this wise tellen clerkes
He is the planete of delices.
Bot in Egipte of his offices
He regneth most in special:
For ther be lustes overal
Of al that to this lif befalleth;
For ther no stormy weder falleth,
Which myhte grieve man or beste,
And ek the lond is so honeste
That it is plentevous and plein,
Ther is non ydel ground in vein;
And upon such felicit 
Stant Jupiter in his degr .
-  The heyeste and aboven alle
Stant that planete which men calle
Saturnus, whos complexion
Is cold, and his condicion
- loyal (*beholden*)
- 900 *impetuous; foolhardy*
war
- 905 *influence*
- 910 *peace*
(*see note*)
- 915 *sensual (luxurious)*
- 920 *Tempers; pertains*
takes in
Under the control of its planetary influence
- 925 *lucky in commercial business*
eager for pleasure (luxury)
- 930 *easy (frivolous?)*
- 934 *pleasures (delights)*
- 935 *i.e., every living creature*
excellent (rich)
- (see note)

- 940 Causeth malice and craulté
To him the whos nativité
Is set under his governance.
For alle hise werkes ben grevance
And enemy to mannes hele,
In what degré that he schal dele.
945 His climat is in Orient,
Wher that he is most violent.
 Of the planetes by and by,
Hou that thei stonde upon the sky,
Fro point to point as thou myht hirre,
950 Was Alisandre mad to liere.
Bot overthis touchende his lore,
Of thing that thei him tawhte more
Upon the scoles of clergie
954 Now herkne the philosophie.
- happiness (comfort)*
In whatever way he (Saturn) is involved
the East
made to learn
schools of learning

[TWELVE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC]

- เมษ 960 He which departeth dai fro nyht,
That on derk and that other lyht,
Of sevene daies made a weke,
A monthe of foure wekes eke
He hath ordeigned in His lawe,
965 Of monthes tuelve and ek forthdrawe
He hath also the longe yeer.
And as He sette of his pouer
Acordant to the daies sevene
Planetes sevene upon the hevene,
970 As thou tofore hast herd devise,
To speke riht in such a wise,
To every monthe be Himselfe
Upon the hevene of signes tuelve
He hath after His ordinal
975 Assigned on in special,
Wheroft so as I schal rehersen,
The tydes of the yer diversen.
Bot plenly for to make it knowe
Hou that the signes sitte arowe,
980 Ech after other be degré
In substance and in propreté
The zodiaque comprehendeth
Withinne his cercle, as it appendeth.
- (see note)*
The one
power
book of rules
one [month]
vary
are ordered
its; as is proper
(see note)
sheep
- ♉ 980 The ferste of whiche nathelis
Be name is cleped Aries,
Which lich a wether of stature
Resembled is in his figure.

- And as it seith in Almageste,
Of sterres tuelve upon this beste
985 Ben set, wheroft in his degré
The wombe hath tuo, the heved hath thre,
The tail hath sevne, and in this wise,
As thou myht hiere me divise,
Stant Aries, which hot and drye
990 Is of himself, and in partie
He is the receipte and the hous
Of myghty Mars the bataillous.
And overmore ek, as I finde,
The Creatour of alle kinde
995 Upon this signe ferst began
The world, whan that He made man.
And of this constellacioun
The verray operacioun
Availeth, if a man therinne
1000 The pourpos of his werk beginne.
For thanne he hath of propreté
Good sped and gret felicité.
The tuelve monthes of the yeer
Attitled under the pouer
1005 Of these tuelve signes stonde;
Wheroft that thou schalt understande
This Aries on of the tuelve
Hath March attitled for himselfe,
Whan every bridd schal chese his make,
1010 And every neddre and every snake
And every reptil which mai moeve,
His myht assaieth for to proeve,
To crepen out agein the sonne,
Whan ver his seson hath begonne.
Taurus the seconde after this
1016 Of signes, which figured is
Unto a bole, is dreie and cold;
And as it is in bokes told,
He is the hous appourtianant
1020 To Venus, somdiel discordant.
This bole is ek with sterres set,
Thurgh whiche he hath hise hornes knet
Unto the tail of Aries,
So is he noght ther sterreles.
1025 Upon his brest ek eyhtetiene
He hath, and ek, as it is sene,
Upon his tail stonde othre tuo.
His monthe assigned ek also
- sign of the zodiac (beast)*
belly; head
refuge
true influence
Is propitious; in [that sign]
intrinsically
Assigned; power
assigned
bird; choose its mate
adder
attempts
spring its
(see note)
bull; dry
pertaining
somewhat
bull
linked
without stars
eighteen

- 1030 Is Averil, which of his schoures
Ministreth weie unto the floures. *April*
Provides
- 1035 The thridde signe is Gemini,
Which is figured redely
Lich to tuo twinnes of mankinde,
That naked stonde; and as I finde, *(see note)*
- 1040 Thei be with sterres wel bego:
The heved hath part of thilke tuo
That schyne upon the boles tail,
So be thei bothe of o parail;
But on the wombe of Gemini
Ben fyve sterres noght forthi,
And ek upon the feet be tweie,
So as these olde bokes seie,
That wise Tholomeus wrot. *well endowed*
bull's
one make-up
- 1045 His propre monthe wel I wot
Assigned is the lusti Maii,
Whanne every brid upon his lay
Among the griene leves singeth,
And love of his pointure stingeth
After the lawes of nature *nevertheless*
- 1050 The youthe of every creature.
Cancer after the reule and space
Of signes halt the ferthe place. *Ptolemy*
- 1055 Like to the crabbe he hath semblance,
And hath unto his retienance
Sextiene sterres, wherof ten,
So as these olde wise men
Describe, he berth on him tofore,
And in the middel tuo be bore, *song*
green leaves
with his pricking
- 1060 And foure he hath upon his ende.
Thus goth he sterred in his kende,
And of himself is moiste and cold,
And is the propre hous and hold
Which appartieneth to the mone, *retinue*
- 1065 And doth what longeth him to done.
The monthe of Juin unto this signe
Thou schalt after the reule assigne.
The fifte signe is Leo hote, *nature*
- 1070 Whos kinde is schape dreie and hote,
In whom the sonne hath herbergage. *moon*
- 1075 And the semblance of his ymage
Is a leoun, which in baillie
Of sterres hath his pourpartie:
The foure, whiche as Cancer hath
Upon his ende, Leo tath *called*
lodging *(see note)*
keeping
share
takes

- 1075 Upon his heved, and thanne nest
He hath ek foure upon his brest,
And on upon his tail behinde,
In olde bokes as we finde.
His propre monthe is Juyl be name,
In which men pleien many a game. next
- 1080  After Leo Virgo the nexte
Of signes cleped is the sexte,
Wheroft the figure is a maide;
And as the Philosophre saide,
Sche is the welthe and the risinge,
The lust, the joie and the likinge
Unto Mercurie; and soth to seie
Sche is with sterres wel beseie,
Wheroft Leo hath lent hire on, virgin
- 1085 1090 Which sit on hih hir heved upon,
Hire wombe hath fyve, hir feet also
Have other fyve: and overmo
Touchende as of complexion,
Be kindly disposicion endowed
1095 Of dreie and cold this maiden is.
And for to tellen over this
Hir monthe, thou schalt understande,
Whan every feld hath corn in honde
And many a man his bak hath plied, one
1100 Unto this signe is Augst applied. head
- 1100  After Virgo to reknen evene
Libra sit in the nombre of sevne, August
- 1105  Which hath figure and resemblance
Unto a man which a balance (see note)
Berth in his hond as for to weie:
In boke and as it mai be seie,
Diverse sterres to him longeth, scale
Wheroft on hevede he underfongeth
Ferst thre, and ek his wombe hath tuo, weigh
- 1110 Unto Venus, so that alofte
Sche resteth in his hous fulofte, seen
1110 And doun benethe eighte othre mo.
This signe is hot and moiste bothe,
The whiche thinges be noght lothe head; undertakes
- 1115 Unto Venus, so that alofte
Sche resteth in his hous fulofte,
And ek Saturnus often hyed unappealing
Is in this signe and magnefied. often times
- 1115 His propre monthe is seid Septembre,
Which gifth men cause to remembre, exalted
If eny sor be left behinde in its exaltation
- 1120 Of thing which grieve mai to kinde. any hurt

- ¶ Among the signes upon heighte
 The signe which is nombred eighte
 Is Scorpio, which as feloun
 Figured is a scorpions.
 1125 Bot for al that yit natheles
 Is Scorpio noght sterreles;
 For Libra granteth him his ende
 Of eighte sterres, wher he wende,
 The whiche upon his heved assised
 1130 He berth, and ek ther ben divised
 Upon his wombe sterres thre,
 And eighte upon his tail hath he.
 Which of his kinde is moiste and cold
 And unbehovely manyfold;
 1135 He harmeth Venus and empeireth,
 Bot Mars unto his hous repeireth,
 Bot war whan thei togedre duellen.
 His propre monthe is, as men tellen,
 Octobre, which bringth the kalende
 1140 Of wynter, that comth next suiendo.
 ¶ The nynthe signe in nombre also,
 Which folweth after Scorpio,
 Is cleped Sagittarius,
 The whos figure is marked thus,
 1145 A monstre with a bowe on honde,
 On whom that sondri sterres stonde,
 Thilke eighte of whiche I spak tofore,
 The whiche upon the tail ben bore
 Of Scorpio, the heved al faire
 1150 Bespreden of the Sagittaire;
 And eighte of othre stonden evene
 Upon his wombe, and othre sevene
 Ther stonde upon his tail behinde.
 And he is hot and dreie of kinde.
 1155 To Jupiter his hous is fre,
 Bot to Mercurie in his degré,
 For thei ben noght of on assent,
 He worcheth gret empeirement.
 This signe hath of his propreté
 1160 A monthe, which of dueté
 After the sesoun that befalleth
 The plowed oxe in wynter stalleth;
 And fyr into the halle he bringeth,
 And thilke drinke of which men singeth,
 1165 He torneth must into the wyn.
 Thanne is the larder of the swyn;
- on high (see note)*
treacherous evildoer
without stars
tail
arranged on his head
unfittingly
beware
prelude
following
(see note)
Studded [with stars]
by nature
harm
plow oxen [are] brought in
unfermented grape juice
slaughter of the pigs

- That is Novembre which I meene,
Whan that the lef hath lost his greene.
- 1170 The tenthe signe, dreie and cold, (see note)
The which is Capricornus told, called
Unto a got hath resemblance: goat
For whos love and whos aqueintance fellowship
Withinne hise houses to sojorne
- 1175 It liketh wel unto Satorne, moon; is unpleasing
Bot to the mone it liketh noght,
For no profit is there wroght.
This signe as of his propreté
Upon his heved hath sterres thre,
And ek upon his wombe tuo,
1180 And tweie upon his tail also.
Decembre after the yeeres forme,
So as the bokes ous enforce,
With daies schorte and nyghtes longe
This ilke signe hath underfonge. same; claimed
- 1185 Of tho that sitte upon the hevene
Of signes in the nombre ellevene
- 1190 Aquarius hath take his place, (see note)
And stant wel in Satornes grace,
Which duelleth in his herbergage,
Bot to the sonne he doth oulfrage. lodging
This signe is verrailly resembled
Lich to a man which halt assembled
In eyther hand a water spoute,
Wheroft the stremes rennen oute. injury (outrage)
- 1195 He is of kinde moiste and hot,
And he that of the sterres wot
Seith that he hath of sterres tuo
Upon his heved, and ben of tho
That Capricorn hath on his ende; run
by nature
- 1200 And as the bokes maken mende,
That Tholomeus made himselfe,
He hath ek on his wombe tuelve,
And tweie upon his ende stonde.
Thou schalt also this understande, head
- 1205 The frosti colde Janever,
Whan comen is the newe yeer,
That Janus with his double face
In his chaire hath take his place
And loketh upon bothe sides, mention
- 1210 Somdiel toward the wynter tydes,
Somdiel toward the yeer suiendo,
That is the monthe belongende to come (following)

- Unto this signe, and of his dole
He gifth the ferste primerole. *contribution (alms giving)
primrose*
- 1215 The tuelfthe, which is last of alle
Of signes, Piscis men it calle,
¶ The which, as telleth the scripture,
Berth of tuo fisshes the figure. *(see note)*
- 1220 So is he cold and moiste of kinde,
And ek with sterres, as I finde,
Beset in sondri wise, as thus:
Tuo of his ende Aquarius
Hath lent unto his heved, and tuo
This signe hath of his oghne also
1225 Upon his wombe, and over this
Upon his ende also ther is
A nombre of twenty sterres bryghte,
Which is to sen a wonder sighte.
Toward this signe into his hous
- 1230 Comth Jupiter the glorious,
And Venus ek with him acordeth
To duellen, as the bok recordeth.
The monthe unto this signe ordeined
Is Februuer, which is bereined,
1235 And with londfloodes in his rage
At fordes letteth the passage. *supplied with rain
obstructs*
- Nou hast thou herd the propreté
Of signes, bot in his degré
Albumazar yit over this
- 1240 Seith, so as th'erthe parted is
In foure, riht so ben divised
The signes tuelve and stonde assised,
That ech of hem for his partie
Hath his climat to justefie. *put in place*
- 1245 Wherof the ferst regiment
Toward the part of Orient
From Antioche and that contré
Governed is of signes thre,
That is Cancer, Virgo, Leo:
1250 And toward Occident also
From Armenie, as I am lerned,
Of Capricorn it stant governed,
Of Pisces and Aquarius:
And after hem I finde thus,
- 1255 Southward from Alisandre forth
Tho signes whiche most ben worth
In governance of that doaire,
Libra thei ben and Sagittaire
With Scorpio, which is conjoint *Alexandria
significant
control of that region entitled to them*

- 1260 With hem to stonde upon that point.
 Constantinople the cité,
 So as the bokes tellen me,
 The laste of this division
 Stant untoward Septemtrion,
 1265 Wher as be weie of pourveance
 Hath Aries the governance
 Forth with Taurus and Gemini.
 Thus ben the signes propreli
 Divided, as it is reherced,
 1270 Wherof the londes ben diversed.
- not in a northerly direction*
- differentiated*

[FIFTEEN STARS]

- Confessor** Lo thus, mi sone, as thou myht hiere, *hear*
 Was Alisandre mad to liere *caused to learn*
 Of hem that weren for his lore. *About those; instruction*
- 1275 Bot nou to loken overmore,
 Of othre sterres hou thei fare
 I thenke hierafter to declare,
 So as king Alisandre in youthe
 Of him that suche thinges couthe
 Enformed was tofore his yhe
 1280 Be nyhte upon the sterres hihe.
 Upon sondri creacion
 Stant sondri operacion,
 Som worcheth this, som worcheth that; *(see note)*
- 1284 The fyr is hot in his astat
 ☀ And brenneth what he mai atteigne, *reach*
 The water mai the fyr restreigne,
 The which is cold and moist also.
 Of other thing it farth riht so
 Upon this erthe among ous hiere;
- 1290 And for to speke in this manere,
 Upon the hevene, as men mai finde,
 The sterres ben of sondri kinde
 And worchen manye sondri thinges
 To ous, that ben here underlinges.
- 1295 Among the whiche forth withal
 Nectanabus in special,
 Which was an astronomien
 And ek a gret magicien,
 And undertake hath thilke emprise
- 1300 To Alisandre in his aprise *teaching*
 As of magique naturel
 To knowe, enformeth him somdel
 Of certein sterres what thei mene;

- 1305 Of whiche, he seith, ther ben fiftene,
And sondrily to everich on
A gras belongeth and a ston,
Wheroft men worchen many a wonder
To sette thing bothe up and under.
- 1310  To telle riht as he began,
The ferste sterre Aldeboran,
The cliereste and the moste of alle,
Be rihte name men it calle;
Which lich is of condicion
To Mars, and of complexion
- 1315 To Venus, and hath therupon
Carbunculum his propre ston:
His herbe is anabulla named,
Which is of gret vertu proclaimed.
- 1320  The seconde is noght vertules;
Clota or elles Pliades
It hatte, and of the mones kinde
He is, and also this I finde,
He takth of Mars complexion:
And lich to such condicion
- 1325 His ston appropred is cristall,
And ek his herbe in special
The vertuous fenele it is.
- 1330  The thridde, which comth after this,
Is hote Algol the clere rede,
Which of Satorne, as I may rede,
His kinde takth, and ek of Jove
Complexion to his behove.
His propre ston is dyamant,
- 1335 Which is to him most acordant;
His herbe, which is him betake,
Is hote eleborum the blake.
- 1340  So as it falleth upon lot,
The ferthe sterre is Alhaiot,
Which in the wise as I seide er
Of Satorne and of Jupiter
Hath take his kinde; and therupon
- 1344 The saphir is his propre ston,
Marrubium his herbe also,
The whiche acorden bothe tuo.
- 1348  And Canis Major in his like
The fifte sterre is of magique,
The whos kinde is Venerien,
As seith this astronomien.
His propre ston is seid berille,
- plant pertains to*
(see note)
(brightest star in Taurus)
Ruby
Its; spurge (wartweed)
not without power (see note)
(the Seven Sisters)
receives
The stone attributed [to him]
(see note)
(brightest star in Perseus)
for his benefit
diamond
allotted to him
called hellebore
(see note)
Capella
manner; before
common or white horehound
Sirius (the dog star) (see note)
nature pertains to Venus
beryl

- 1350 Bot for to worche and to fulfille
Thing which to this science falleth,
Ther is an herbe which men calleth
Saveine, and that behoveth nede
1354 To him that wole his pourpos spede. *Juniper berries*
The sexte suiendo after this
Be name Canis Minor is;
The which sterre is Mercurial
Be weie of kinde, and forth withal,
As it is writen in the carte, *advance*
1360 Complexion he takth of Marte.
His ston and herbe, as seith the Scole,
Ben achates and primerole. *treatise*
By; Algomeiza (Procyon) *Mars*
1365 Which sondri nature underfongeth.
The ston which propre unto him longeth,
Gorgonza proprely it hihte:
His herbe also, which he schal rihte
Upon the worchinge as I mene, *School [of Aristotle]*
1370 Is celidoine freissh and grene. *agate; primrose*
The sefnthe sterre in special
Of this science is Arial, *(see note)*
1375 To whom lapacia the grete
Is herbe, bot of no beyete;
His ston is honochinus hote,
Thurgh which men worchen gret riote. *lappacium maius*
Sterre Ala Corvi upon heihte *profit*
Hath take his place in nombre of eighte,
Which of his kinde mot parforne *onyx*
The will of Marte and of Satorne:
1380 Be name is hote Alaezel, *(see note)*
Which takth his propre kinde thus
Bothe of Mercurie and of Venus.
His ston is the grene amyraude, *emerald*
To whom is goven many a laude. *great praise*
1385 Salge is his herbe appourtenant *Sage*
Aboven al the remenant *(see note)*
The tenthe sterre is Almareth,
Which upon lif and upon deth *Arcturus*
Thurgh kinde of Jupiter and Mart
1390 He doth what longeth to his part.
His ston is jaspe, and of planteine *jasper*
He hath his herbe sovereine.
The sterre ellefthe is Venenas, *Benenais (second star in Ursa Major) (see note)*
The whos nature is as it was
1395 Take of Venus and of the mone,

- In thing which he hath for to done.
 Of adamant is that perrie
 In which he worcheth his maistrie;
 Thilke herbe also which him befalleth,
 1400 Cicorea the bok it calleth. Chicory
- ¶ Alpheta in the nombre sit, *Alphecca (Gemma, in Corona Borealis) (see note)*
 And is the tuelfthe sterre yit;
 Of Scorpio which is governed,
 And takth his kinde, as I am lerned;
- 1405 And hath his vertu in the ston
 Which cleped is topazion: topaz
 His herbe propre is rosmarine,
 Which schapen is for his covine. rosemary
- ¶ Of these sterres, whiche I mene,
 1410 Cor Scorpionis is thritiene;
 The whos nature Mart and Jove
 Have goven unto his behove.
 His herbe is aristologie,
 Which folweth his astronomie.
- 1415 The ston which that this sterre alloweth,
 Is sardis, which unto him boweth. suited; its character (nature)
- ¶ The sterre which stant next the laste,
 Nature on him this name caste
 And clepeth him Botercadent;
- 1420 Which of his kinde obedient (see note)
 Is to Mercurie and to Venus.
 His ston is seid crisolitus,
 His herbe is cleped satureie, given for his benefit (use)
 1424 So as these olde bokes seie. (a medicinal plant)
- ¶ Bot nou the laste sterre of alle
 The tail of Scorpio men calle,
 Which to Mercurie and to Satorne
 Be weie of kinde mot retorne
 After the preparacion savory
 1430 Of due constellacion. (see note)
- The calcedoine unto him longeth,
 Which for his ston he undersongeth;
 Of majorane his herbe is grounded.
 Thus have I seid hou thei be founded,
 1435 Of every sterre in special, previous setting in order
 Which hath his herbe and ston withal,
 As Hermes in his bokes olde
 Witnesse berth of that I tolde. chalcedony
- Denebalgedi (cauda capricorni)*
- possesses*
- marjoram*

[AUTHORS OF ASTRONOMY]

- ¶ The science of Astronomie, (see note)
 1440 Which principal is of clergie learning
 To dieme between wo and wel distinguish
 In thinges that be naturel,
 Thei hadde a gret travail on honde
 That made it ferst ben understande;
- 1445 And thei also which overmore Their; teaching
 Here studie sette upon this lore,
 Thei weren gracious and wys
 And worthi for to bere a pris.
 And whom it liketh for to wite
- 1450 Of hem that this science write, Noah
 On of the ferste which it wrot
 After Noe, it was Nembrot,
 To his disciple Ychonithon
 And made a bok forth therupon
- 1455 The which Megaster cleped was. Ptolemy
 Another auctor in this cas
 Is Arachel, the which men note;
 His bok is Abbategnyh hote.
 Danz Tholomé is noght the leste,
- 1460 Which makth the bok of Almageste; science of measuring altitude
 And Alfraganus doth the same,
 Whos bok is Chatemuz be name.
 Gebuz and Alpetragus eke
 Of Planisperie, which men seke,
- 1465 The bokes made: and over this Plane geometry
 Ful many a worthi clerc ther is,
 That writen upon this clergie
 The bokes of Altemetrie,
 Planemetrie and ek also,
- 1470 Whiche as belongen bothe tuo, Abraham; one
 So as thei ben naturiens,
 Unto these Astronomiens.
 Men sein that Habraham was on;
 Bot whether that he wrot or non,
- 1475 That finde I noght; and Moises Moses
 Ek was another: bot Hermes
 Above alle othre in this science
 He hadde a gret experience;
 Thurgh him was many a sterre assised,
- 1480 Whos bokes yit ben auctorized. put in place (located)
 I mai noght knownen alle tho
 That writen in the time tho
 Of this science; bot I finde,
- regarded as correct (trustworthy)

- 1485 Of jugement be weie of kinde
 That in o point thei alle acorden:
 Of sterres whiche thei recorden
 That men mai sen upon the hevene,
 Ther ben a thousand sterres evene
 And tuo and twenty, to the syhte
 1490 Whiche aren of hemself so bryhte,
 That men mai dieme what thei be,
 The nature and the propreté.
 Nou hast thou herd, in which a wise
 These noble philosophres wise
 1495 Enformeden this yonge king,
 And made him have a knowleching
 Of thing which ferst to the partie
 Belongeth of Philosophie,
 Which Theorique cleped is,
 1500 As thou tofore hast herd er this.
 Bot nou to speke of the secounde,
 Which Aristotle hath also founde,
 And techeth hou to speke faire,
 Which is a thing full necessaire
 1505 To contrepise the balance,
 Wher lacketh other sufficance.”
- are of themselves*
discern
counterweight (balance)

[RHETORIC, THE SECOND PART OF PHILOSOPHY]

- v. *Compositi pulcra sermonis verba placere*
Principio poterunt, veraque fine placent.
Herba, lapis, sermo, tria sunt virtute repleta,
*Vis tamen ex verbi pondere plura facit.*¹

- [Confessor] “Above alle erthli creatures
 The hihe makere of natures
 The word to man hath gove alone,
 1510 So that the speche of his persone,
 Or for to lese or for to winne,
 The hertes thoght which is withinne
 Mai schewe, what it wolde mene;
 And that is noghwhere elles sene
 1515 Of kinde with non other beste.
 So scholde he be the more honeste,
 To whom God gaf so gret a gifte,
 And loke wel that he ne schifte
- spoken language; given*
lose (see note)
nowhere
creature
Thus
adapt

¹ *Lovely words of crafted speech can please at the beginning, but true ones please at the end. Herb, stone, speech are all three full of power; but the force from the weight of a word does more.*

- Hise wordes to no wicked us; purpose
 1520 For word the techer of vertus
 Is cleded in Philosophie.¹
 Wherof touchende this partie,
 Is Rethorique the science
 Appropried to the reverence
 1525 Of wordes that ben resonable.
 And for this art schal be vailable
 With goodli wordes for to like,
 It hath Gramaire, it hath Logique,
 That serven bothe unto the speche.
- 1530 Gramaire ferste hath for to teche
 To speke upon congruité.
 Logique hath eke in his degré
 Betwen the trouthe and the falshode
 The pleine wordes for to schode, correctness
 1535 So that nothing schal go beside,
 That he the riht ne schal decide,
 Wherof full many a gret debat
 Reformed is to good astat,
 And pes sustiened up alofte declare
 1540 With esy wordes and with softe,
 Wher strengthe scholde lete it falle.
 The Philosophre amonges alle
 Forthi commendeth this science,
 Which hath the reule of eloquence.
- 1545 In ston and gras vertu ther is, power
 Bot yit the bokes tellen this,
 That word above alle erthli thinges
 Is vertuous in his doinges,
 Wher so it be to evel or goode. powerful; its activities
 1550 For if the wordes semen goode Whether
 And ben wel spoke at mannes ere,
 Whan that ther is no trouthe there,
 Thei don fulofte gret deceipte;
 For whan the word to the conceipte
- 1555 Descordeth in so double a wise, deceitful a manner
 Such Rethorique is to despise
 In every place, and for to drede.
 For of Uluxes thus I rede,
 As in the bok of Troie is founde,
- 1560 His eloquence and his facounde linguistic facility
 Of goodly wordes whiche he tolde,
 Hath mad that Anthenor him solde

¹ Lines 1520–21: *For in Philosophy, language (proper word use) is called the teacher of virtue*

- The toun, which he with tresoun wan. *conquered*
- Word hath beguiled many a man;
- 1565 With word the wilde beste is daunted,
With word the serpent is enchaunted,
Of word among the men of armes
Ben woundes heeled with the charmes,
Wher lacketh other medicine;
- 1570 Word hath under his discipline
Of sorcerie the karectes. *written charms*
- The wordes ben of sondri sectes,
Of evele and eke of goode also;
The wordes maken frend of fo,
1575 And fo of frend, and pes of werre,
And werre of pes, and out of herre
The word this worldes cause entriketh,
And reconsileth whan him liketh.
The word under the coupe of hevene
- 1580 Set everything or odde or evene;
With word the hihe God is plesed,
With word the wordes ben appesed,
The softe word the loude stilleth;
Wher lacketh good, the word fulfilleth,
- 1585 To make amendes for the wrong;
Whan wordes medlen with the song,
It doth plesance wel the more.
- ¶ Bot for to loke upon the lore
Hou Tullius his Rethorique *Cicero*
- 1590 Componeth, ther a man mai pike
Hou that he schal hise wordes sette,
Hou he schal lose, hou he schal knette,
And in what wise he schal pronounce
His tale plein withoute frounce.
- 1595 Wherof ensample if thou wolt seche,
Tak hiede and red whilom the speche
Of Julius and Cithero,
Which consul was of Rome tho,
Of Catoun eke and of Cillene,
- 1600 Behold the wordes hem betwene,
Whan the tresoun of Cateline
Descoevered was, and the covine
Of hem that were of his assent
Was knowe and spoke in parlement,
- 1605 And axed hou and in what wise
Men scholde don hem to juise.
Cillenus ferst his tale tolde,
To trouthe and as he was beholde,
The comun profit for to save,
- Constructs; select (see note)*
- release; construe [an argument]*
- ambiguity*
- [Caesar]; Cicero*
Who; then
Cato; Silanus
- conspiracy (collusion)*
were associated [with him]
- bring them to justice*
- was bound in duty*

- 1610 He seide hou tresoun scholde have
 A cruel deth; and thus thei spieke,
 The consul bothe and Catoun eke,
 And seiden that for such a wrong
 Ther mai no peine be to strong. *punishment*
- 1615 Bot Julius with wordes wise
 His tale tolde al otherwise,
 As he which wolde her deth respite,
 And fondeth hou he mihte excite
 The jugges thurgh his eloquence
- 1620 Fro deth to torn the sentence
 And sette here hertes to pité.
 Nou tolden thei, nou tolde he; *spoke*
 Thei spieken plein after the lawe,
 Bot he the wordes of his sawe *speech*
- 1625 Coloureth in another weie
 Spekende, and thus betwen the tweie,
 To trete upon this juggement,
 Made ech of hem his argument.
 Wherof the tales for to hiere,
- 1630 Ther mai a man the scole liere *learn*
 Of Rethoriqes eloquencies,
 Which is the secounde of sciences
 Touchende to Philosophie;
 Wherof a man schal justifie
- 1635 Hise wordes in disputeisoun,
 And knette upon conclusioun *construct*
 His argument in such a forme,
 Which mai the pleine trouthe enforme
 And the soubtil cautele abate,
- 1640 Which every trewman schal debate.” *deceitfulness*
true man; combat

[PRACTICE, THE THIRD PART OF PHILOSOPHY]

- vi. *Practica quemque statum pars tercia Philosophie*
Ad regimen recte dicit in orbe vie:
Set quanto maior Rex est, tanto magis ipsum
Hec scola concernit, qua sua regna regat.¹

[Confessor] “The ferste, which is Theorique,
 And the secounde Rethorique,
 Sciences of Philosophie,
 I have hem told as in partie,

¹ *Practice, the third part of Philosophy, guides each estate on earth by its regimen of a good life: but by as much as a King is greater, by that much the more this study, by which he rules his kingdom, pertains to him.*

- 1645 So as the Philosophre it tolde
To Alisandre: and nou I wolde
☞ Telle of the thridde what it is,
The which Practique cleped is.
Practique stant upon thre things
1650 Toward the governance of kinges;
Wheroft the ferst Etique is named,
The whos science stant proclaimed
To teche of vertu thilke reule,
Hou that a king himself schal reule
1655 Of his moral condicion
With worthi disposicion
Of good livinge in his persone,
Which is the chief of his corone.
It makth a king also to lerne
1660 Hou he his bodi schal governe,
Hou he schal wake, hou he schal slepe,
Hou that he schal his hele kepe
In mete, in drinke, in clothinge eke:
Ther is no wisdom for to seke
1665 As for the reule of his persone,
The which that this science alone
Ne techeth as be weie of kinde,
That ther is nothing left behinde.
That other point which to Practique
1670 Belongeth is Iconomique,
Which techeth thilke honesté
Thurgh which a king in his degré
His wif and child schal reule and guie,
So forth with al the companie
1675 Which in his houshold schal abyde,
And his astat on every syde
In such manere for to lede,
That he his houshold ne mislede.
Practique hath yit the thridde aprise,
1680 Which techeth hou and in what wise
Thurgh hih pourveied ordinance
A king schal sette in governance
His realme, and that is Policie,
Which longeth unto regalie
1685 In time of werre, in time of pes,
To worschipe and to good encress
Of clerk, of kniht and of marchant,
And so forth of the remenant
Of al the comun poeple aboute,
1690 Withinne burgh and eke withoute,
Of hem that ben artificiers,
- (see note)
- Ethics
- health maintain
food; also
- nature
- Economics
- govern; rule
- field of instruction
- pertains to kingship
- honor
- In town and out (i.e., everywhere)
craftsmen (tradesmen, workmen)

- 1695 Whiche usen craftes and mestiers,
 Whos art is cleped mechanique.
 And though thei ben noght alle like,
 Yit natheles, hou so it falle,
 O lawe mot governe hem alle,
 Or that thei lese or that thei winne,
 After th'astat that thei ben inne.
 Lo, thus this worthi yonge king
 1700 Was fulli tauht of everything,
 Which mihte give entendement
 Of good reule and good regiment
 To such a worthi prince as he.
 Bot of verray necessité
 1705 The Philosophre him hath betake
 Fyf pointz, whiche he hath undertake
 To kepe and holde in observance,
 As for the worthi governance
 Which longeth to his regalie,
 1710 After the reule of Policie."

[TRUTH, THE FIRST PART OF POLICY]

- vii. *Moribus ornatus regit hic qui regna moderna,
 Cercius expectat ceptra futura poli.
 Et quia veridica virtus supereminet omnes,
 Regis ab ore boni fabula nulla sonat.*¹

- [Confessor] "To every man behoveth lore,
 Bot to no man belongeth more
 Than to a king, which hath to lede
 1714 The poeple; for of his kinghede
 He mai hem bothe save and spille.
 And for it stant upon his wille,
 It sit him wel to ben avised,
 And the vertus whiche are assissted
 Unto a kinges regiment,
 1720 To take in his entendement.
 Wherof to tellen, as thei stonde,
 Hierafterward nou woll I fonde.
 Among the vertus on is chief,
 And that is Trouthe, which is lief
 1725 To God and ek to man also.
 And for it hath ben evere so,

¹ *He who rules modern kingdoms adorned with virtues more securely looks toward the future rule above. And because truth-telling stands above all virtues, so no lying fable is heard from the mouth of a good king.*

- Tawhte Aristotle, as he wel couthe,
To Alisandre, hou in his youthe
He scholde of Trouthe thilke grace
1730 With al his hole herte embrace,
So that his word be trewe and plein,
Toward the world and so certein
That in him be no double speche.
For if men scholde trouthe seche
1735 And founde it noght withinne a king,
It were an unsittende thing.
The word is tokne of that withinne,
Ther schal a worthi king beginne
To kepe his tunge and to be trewe,
1740 So schal his pris ben evere newe.
Avise him every man tofore,
And be wel war, er he be swore,
For afterward it is to late,
If that he wole his word debate.
1745 For as a king in special
Above all othre is principal
Of his pouer, so scholde he be
Most vertuous in his degré;
And that mai wel be signefied
1750 Be his corone and specified.
-  The gold betokneth excellence,
That men schull don him reverence
As to here liege sovereign.
The stones, as the bokes sein,
1755 Commended ben in treble wise:
Ferst thei ben harde, and thilke assisise
Betokneth in a king constance,
So that ther schal no variance
Be founde in his condicion;
- 1760 And also be descripcion
The vertu which is in the stones
A verrai signe is for the nones
Of that a king schal ben honeste
And holde trewly his behesite
1765 Of thing which longeth to kinghede.
The bryhte colour, as I rede,
Which in the stones is schynende,
Is in figure betoknende
The cronique of this worldes fame,
1770 Which stant upon his goode name.
The cercle which is round aboute
Is tokne of al the lond withoute,
- knew how to do*
whole
unseemly (inappropriate)
repute; fresh
bound by solemn compact
make unstable (dispute)
By
(see note)
this distinctive feature
Symbolizes; constancy
promise
pertains to royalty
shining
report

- Which stant under his gerarchie,
That he it schal wel kepe and guye. rule
rule (guide)
- 1775 And for that Trouthe, hou so it falle,
Is the vertu soverein of alle,
That longeth unto regiment,
A tale, which is evident
Of trouthe in comedacioun,
1780 Toward thin enformacion,
Mi sone, hierafter thou schalt hiere
Of a cronique in this matiere. [most] sovereign

[ESDRAS ON THE KING, WINE, WOMEN, AND TRUTH]

- As the cronique it doth reherce,
A soldan whilom was of Perce, sultan; Persia
- 1785 Which Daires hihte, and Ytaspis Darius was called
- His fader was; and soth it is true (see note)
- That thurgh wisdom and hih prudence
Mor than for eny reverence
Of his lignage as be descente
- 1790 The regne of thilke empire he hente. seized
- And as he was himselfe wys,
The wisemen he held in pris esteem
- And soghte hem oute on every side,
That toward him thei scholde abide.
- 1795 Among the whiche thre ther were showed
- That most service unto him bere,
As thei which in his chambre lyhen
And al his conseil herde and syhen.
- Here names ben of strange note,
1800 Arpaghes was the ferste hote, was called
- And Manachaz was the secounde,
Zorobabel, as it is founde
In the cronique, was the thridde.
- This soldan, what so him betidde,
1805 To hem he triste most of alle, those he trusted
- Wherof the cas is so befallie:
This lord, which hath conceiptes depe, concepts (thoughts)
- Upon a nyht whan he hath slepe,
As he which hath his wit desposed,
1810 Touchende a point hem hath opposed.
- The kinges question was this:
Of thinges thre which strengest is, most powerful
- The wyn, the womman, or the king?
And that thei scholde upon this thing
- 1815 Of here ansuere avised be, their; take counsel
- He gaf hem fulli daies thre,

- And hath behote hem be his feith
That who the beste reson seith,
He schal resceive a worthi mede. *promised*
- 1820 Upon this thing thei token hiede
And stoden in desputeison,
That be diverse opinion
Of argumentz that thei have holde
Arpaghes ferst his tale tolde, *reward*
1825 And seide hou that the strengthe of kinges
Is myhtiest of alle thinges.
For king hath pouer over man,
And man is he which reson can,
As he which is of his nature *took heed*
- 1830 The moste noble creature
Of alle tho that God hath wroght;
And be that skile it semeth noght,
He seith, that eny ertly thing
Mai be so myhty as a king. *controversial debate*
- 1835 A king mai spille, a king mai save,
A king mai make of lord a knave
And of a knave a lord also. *destroy*
- 1840 The pouer of a king stant so,
That he the lawes overpasseth;
What he wol make lasse, he lasseth,
What he wol make more, he moreth;
And as the gentil faucon soreth, *surpasses*
1845 He fleteth, that no man him reclameth;
Bot he alone alle othre tameth,
And stant himself of lawe fre. *lessens*
Lo, thus a kinges myht, seith he,
So as his reson can argue, *increases*
Is strengest and of most value. *calls him back*
- 1850 Bot Manachaz seide otherwise,
That wyn is of the more emprise;
And that he scheweth be this weie. *free from law (unchallengeable)*
- 1855 The wyn fulofte takth aweie
The reson fro the mannes herte;
The wyn can make a krepel sterte, *account; make clear*
And a delivere man unwelde; *greater potency*
It makth a blind man to behelde,
And a bryht yhed seme derk; *cripple leap*
- 1860 It makth a lewed man a clerk,
And fro the clerkes the clergie
It takth aweie, and couardie
It torneth into hardiesse;
Of avarice it makth largesse. *vigorous; weak*
The wyn makth ek the goode blod, *to have eyesight*
bright-eyed [person]; scholar
ignorant (lay)
learning
generosity

- 1865 In which the soule which is good
 Hath chosen hire a resting place,
 Whil that the lif hir wole embrace.
 And be this skile Manachas *logic*
 Ansuered hath upon this cas,
 And seith that wyn be weie of kinde *nature*
- 1870 Is thing which mai the hertes binde
 Wel more than the regalie.
 Zorobabel for his partie
 Seide, as him thoghte for the beste,
 That wommen ben the myhtieste. *vintner*
From
- 1875 The king and the vinour also
 Of wommen comen bothe tuo;
 And ek he seide hou that manhede
 Thurgh strengthe unto the wommanhede
 Of love, wher he wole or non, *eye*
- 1880 Obeie schal; and therupon,
 To schewe of wommen the maistrie,
 A tale which he syh with yhe
 As for ensample he tolde this:
- 1885 Hou Apemen, of Besazis *(see note)*
 Which dowhter was, in the paleis
 Sittende upon his hihe deis,
 Whan he was hotest in his ire *anger*
 Toward the grete of his empire,
 Cirus the king tirant sche tok,
- 1890 And only with hire goodly lok
 Sche made him debonaire and meke, *meek*
 And be the chyn and be the cheke *by*
 Sche luggeth him riht as hir liste,
 That nou sche japeth, nou sche kiste, *dragged him; it pleased her*
- 1895 And doth with him what evere hir liketh; *fondles; kissed*
 Whan that sche loureth, thanne he siketh,
 And whan sche gladeth, he is glad: *it pleases her*
 And thus this king was overlad *scowls; sighs*
 With hire which his leman was. *overwhelmed*
- 1900 Among the men is no solas,
 If that ther be no womman there;
 For bot if that the wommen were,
 This worldes joie were awei: *By; lover*
- 1905 Thurgh hem men finden out the weie
 To knihthode and to worldes fame; *fear*
 Thei make a man to drede schame,
 And honour for to be desired.
- 1910 Thurgh the beauté of hem is fyred
 The dart of which Cupide throweth, *forged*
 Wherof the jolif peine growtheth,

- Which al the world hath under fote.
 A womman is the mannes bote,
 His lif, his deth, his wo, his wel;
 And this thing mai be schewed wel,
 1915 Hou that wommen ben goode and kinde,
 For in ensample this I finde.

deliverance (remedy)

[TALE OF ALCESTIS]

- ☞ Whan that the duk Ametus lay
 Sek in his bedd, that every day
 Men waiten whan he scholde deie,
 1920 Alceste his wif goth for to preie,
 As sche which wolde thonk deserve,
 With sacrifice unto Minerve,
 To wite ansuere of the goddesse
 Hou that hir lord of his seknesse,
 1925 Wheroft he was so wo besein,
 Recovere myhte his hele agein.
 Lo, thus sche cride and thus sche preide,
 Til ate laste a vois hir seide,
 That if sche wolde for his sake
 1930 The maladie soffre and take,
 And deie hirself, he scholde live.
 Of this ansuere Alceste hath give
 Unto Minerve gret thonkinge,
 So that hir deth and his livinge
 1935 Sche ches with al hire hole entente,
 And thus acorded hom sche wente.
 Into the chambre and whan sche cam,
 Hire housebonde anon sche nam
 In bothe hire armes and him kiste,
 1940 And spak unto him what hire liste;
 And therupon withinne a throwe
 This goode wif was overthrowe
 And deide, and he was hool in haste.
 So mai a man be reson taste,
 1945 Hou next after the God above
 The trouthe of wommen and the love,
 In whom that alle grace is founde,
 Is myhtiest upon this grounde
 And most behovely manyfold.
 1950 Lo, thus Zorobabel hath told
 The tale of his opinion.
 Bot for final conclusion
 What strengest is of erthli thinges,
 The wyn, the wommen, or the kinges,

Admetus (see note)

Sick

goodwill attain

know

woefully afflicted
health

took

what she wished

immediately well

earth

most necessary many times over

- 1955 He seith that trouthe above hem alle
 Is myhtiest, hou evere it falle.
 The trouthe, hou so it evere come,
 Mai for nothing ben overcome;
 It mai wel soffre for a throwe,
 Bot ate laste it schal be knowe. time
known
- 1960 The proverbe is, who that is trewe,
 Him schal his while nevere rewe.
 For hou so that the cause wende,
 The trouthe is schameles at ende,
 Bot what thing that is troutheles,
 It mai noght wel be schameles,
 And schame hindreth every wyht.
 So proveth it, ther is no myht
 Withoute trouthe in no degré. creature
- 1965 1970 And thus for trouthe of his décré
 Zorobabel was most commended,
 Wheroft the question was ended,
 And he resceived hath his mede:
 For trouthe, which to mannes nedē
 Is most behoveliche overal. inquiry
reward
- 1975 Forthi was trouthe in special
 The ferst point in observance
 Betake unto the governance
 Of Alisandre, as it is seid:
 For therupon the ground is leid
 Of every kinges regiment,
 As thing which most convenient
 Is for to sette a king in evene
 Bothe in this world and ek in hevene.” useful (profitable)
- 1980 settle (situate); at rest

[LARGESS, THE SECOND PART OF POLICY]

- viii. *Absit Auaricia, ne tangat regia corda,
 Eius enim spoliis excoriatur humus.
 Fama colit largum volitans per secula Regem,
 Dona tamen licitis sunt moderanda modis.¹*

- [Confessor] “Next after Trouthe the secounde,
 1986 In Policie as it is founde,
 Which serveth to the worldes fame
 In worschipe of a kinges name,
 Largesse it is, whos privilegge Generosity (Munificence)

¹ *Let Avarice be absent, lest it touch the royal heart, for the ground is stripped bare by its plunderings. Flying through the ages, fame honors a liberal King; but gifts must be moderated by appropriate means.*

- ¶ Ther mai non Avarice abregge. *reduce in strength (see note)*
- 1991 The worldes good was ferst comune, *held in common*
 Bot afterward upon fortune
 Was thilke comun profit cessed, *quelled*
 For whan the poeple stod encresed
- 1995 And the lignages woxen grete, *Soon; private gain*
 Anon for singulier begete
 Drouh every man to his partie;
 Whero cam in the ferste envie
 With gret debat and werres stronge,
- 2000 And laste among the men so longe, *knew*
 Til no man wiste who was who,
 Ne which was frend ne which was fo,
 Til ate laste in every lond
 Withinne hemself the poeple fond
- 2005 That it was good to make a king, *resolve (settle)*
 Which mihte appesen al this thing *justice*
 And give riht to the lignages *division; their*
 In partinge of here heritages
 And ek of al here other good.
- 2010 And thus above hem alle stod *royal power*
 The king upon his regalie,
 As he which hath to justifie
 The worldes good fro covoitise.
 So sit it wel in alle wise
- 2015 A king betwen the more and lesse
 To sette his herte upon largesse
 Toward himself and ek also
 Toward his poeple; and if noght so,
 That is to sein, if that he be
- 2020 Toward himselfen large and fre *rob; pillage*
 And of his poeple take and pile, *by; logic*
 Largesse be no weie of skile, *but rather*
 It mai be seid, bot Avarice,
 Which in a king is a gret vice.
- 2025 A king behoveth ek to fle *is constrained also*
 The vice of Prodegalité, *excessive extravagance*
 That he mesure in his expence *moderation*
 So kepe, that of indigence *from poverty*
 He mai be sauf; for who that nedeth,
- 2030 In al his werk the worse he spedeth.
- ¶ As Aristotle upon Chaldee *(see note)*
 Ensample of gret auctorité
 Unto king Alisandre tauhte
 Of thilke folk that were unsauhte *out of accord (hostile)*
 Toward here king for his pilage.
 Whero he bad, in his corage

That he unto thre pointz entende,
 Wher that he wolde his good despende.
 Ferst scholde he loke, hou that it stod,
 2040 That al were of his oghne good
 The giftes whiche he wolde give,
 So myhte he wel the betre live.
 And ek he moste taken hiede
 If ther be cause of eny nede,
 2045 Which oghte for to be defended,
 Er that his goodes be despended.
 He mot ek, as it is befallie,
 Amonges othre thinges alle
 Se the decertes of his men;
 2050 And after that thei ben of ken
 And of astat and of merite,
 He schal hem largeliche aquite,
 Or for the werre, or for the pes,
 That non honour falle in desres
 2055 Which mihte torne into defame,
 Bot that he kepe his goode name,
 So that he be noght holde unkinde.
 For in cronique a tale I finde,
 Which spekth somdiel of this matiere,
 2060 Hierafterward as thou schalt hiere.

must also
merits
according to how; kinship

[TALE OF JULIUS AND THE POOR KNIGHT]

¶ In Rome, to poursuie his riht,
 Ther was a worthi povere kniht,
 Which cam alone for to sein
 His cause, when the court was plein,
 2065 Wher Julius was in presence.
 And for him lacketh of despence,
 Ther was with him non advocat
 To make ple for his astat.
 Bot thogh him lacke for to plede,
 2070 Him lacketh nothing of manhede;
 He wiste wel his pours was povere,
 Bot yit he thoghte his riht recovere,
 And openly poverté alleide,
 To th'empemour and thus he seide:
 2075 'O Julius, lord of the lawe,
 Behold, mi conseil is withdrawe
 For lacke of gold; do thin office
 After the lawes of justice.
 Help that I hadde conseil hiere
 2080 Upon the trouthe of mi matiere.'

pursue; privilege (see note)
duly constituted
because; cash flow
counsel (attorney)
To plead
knew
restore
pleaded
legal counselor
case

- And Julius with that anon
 Assigned him a worthi on,
 Bot he himself no word ne spak.
 This kniht was wroth and fond a lak
 2085 In th'empemour, and seide thus:
 'O thou unkinde Julius,
 Whan thou in thi bataille were
 Up in Aufrique, and I was there,
 Mi myht for thi rescousse I dede
 2090 And putte no man in my stede;
 Thou wost what woundes ther I hadde.
 Bot hier I finde thee so badde,
 That thee ne liste speke o word
 Thin oghne mouth, nor of thin hord
 2095 To give a florin me to helpe.
 Hou scholde I thanne me beyelpe
 Fro this dai forth of thi largesse,
 Whan such a gret unkindenesse
 Is founde in such a lord as thou?'
- 2100 This Julius knew wel ynou
 That al was soth which he him tolde;
 And for he wolde noght ben holde
 Unkinde, he tok his cause on honde,
 And as it were of Goddes sonde,
 2105 He gaf him good ynouh to spende
 Forevere into his lives ende.
 And thus scholde every worthi king
 Take of his knihtes knowleching,
 Whan that he syh thei hadden nede,
 2110 For every service axeth mede.
 Bot othre, whiche have noght deserved
 Thurgh vertu, bot of japes served,
 A king schal noght deserve grace,
 Thogh he be large in such a place.

[TALE OF ANTIGONUS AND CINICHUS]

- 2115 It sit wel every king to have
 Discretion, whan men him crave,
 So that he mai his gifte wite,
 Wheroft I finde a tale write,
 2120 Hou Cinichus a povere kniht
 A somme which was over myht
 Preide of his king Antigonus.
 The king ansuerde to him thus,
 And seide hou such a gifte passeth
 His povere astat: and thanne he lasseth,

Assigned [for service]; one

outraged; fault

rescue

place

know

myself be proud

enough

true

messenger

requires reward

repay

(see note)

overly great

reduced his request

- 2125 And axeth bot a litel peny,
 If that the king wol give him eny.
 The king ansuerde, it was to smal
 For him, which was a lord real;
 To give a man so litel thing
 2130 It were unworschipe in a king. *dishonorable (undignified)*
learn
- That for to give is in manere:
 For if a king his tresor lasseth
 Withoute honour and thonkles passeth,
 2135 Whan he himself wol so beguile,
 I not who schal compleigne his while,
 Ne who be rihte him schal relieve.
 Bot natholes this I believe,
 To helpe with his oghne lond
 2140 Behoveth every man his hond
 To sette upon nécessité.
- ¶ And ek his kinges realté
 Mot every liege man conforte,
 With good and bodi to supporte,
 2145 Whan thei se cause resonable.
 For who that is noght entendable
 To holde upright his kinges name,
 Him oghte for to be to blame.

[FLATTERY]

- ¶ Of policie and overmore *(see note)*
 2150 To speke in this matiere more,
 So as the Philosophre tolde,
 A king after the reule is holde
 To modifie and to adresce *direct*
- 2154 Hise giftes upon such largesce
 ¶ That he mesure noght excede. *(see note)*
 For if a king falle into nede,
 It causeth ofte sondri thinges
 Whiche are ungodly to the kinges.
 What man wol noght himself mesure,
 2160 Men sen fulofte that mesure
 Him hath forsake: and so doth he
 That useth Prodegalité,
 Which is the moder of poverte,
 Wheroft the londes ben deserfe;
 2165 And namely whan thilke vice
 Aboute a king stant in office
 And hath withholde of his partie *moderate*
moderation

- The covoitouse flaterie,
 Which many a worthi king deceiveth,
 2170 Er he the fallas aperceiveth
 Of hem that serven to the glose.
 For thei that cunnen plese and glose,
 Ben, as men tellen, the norrices
 Unto the fostringe of the vices,
 2175 Wheroft fulofte nathelles
 A king is blamed gulteles.
- ☞ A Philosophre, as thou schalt hiere, (see note)
 Spak to a king of this matiere,
 And seide him wel hou that flatours
 2180 Coupable were of thre errours.
 ☞ On was toward the goddes hihe, Culpable
 That weren wrothe of that thei sihe
 The meschief which befalle scholde
 2184 Of that the false flatour tolde.
 ☞ Toward the king another was, (see note)
 Whan thei be sleihte and be fallas
 Of feigned wordes make him wene
 That blak is whyt and blew is grene
 Touchende of his condicion.
 2190 For whanne he doth extorcion
 With manye another vice mo,
 Men schal noghtinden on of tho
 To groucche or speke theragein,
 Bot holden up his oil and sein
 2195 That al is wel, whatevere he doth.
 And thus of fals thei maken soth,
 So that here kinges yhe is blent
 And wot not hou the world is went.
 ☞ The thirdde errorre is harm comune, (see note)
 2200 With which the poeple mot commune
 Of wronges that thei bringen inne:
 And thus thei worchen treble sinne,
 That ben flatours aboute a king.
 Ther myhte be no worse thing
 2205 Aboute a kinges regalie,
 Thanne is the vice of flaterie.
 And nathelles it hath ben used,
 That it was nevere yit refused
 As for to speke in court real;
 2210 For there it is most special,
 And mai noght longe be forbore.
 Bot whan this vice of hem is bore,
 That scholden the vertus forthbringe,
- false becomes aware of
 flattery
 flatter
 nurses
- One (see note)
 angry; what they saw
- deceit; falsehood
- flattery and say
- true
 eye is blinded
- royal court
- customary
 [Such] that
 royal

- 2215 And trouthe is torned to lesinge,
It is, as who seith, agein kinde,
Wheroft an old ensample I finde. *lies
against nature*

[TALE OF DIOGENES AND ARISTIPPUS]

- Among these othre tales wise
Of philosophres, in this wise
- 2220  I rede, how whilom tuo ther were, *(see note)*
And to the scole for to lere
Unto Athenes fro Cartage
Here frendes, whan thei were of age,
Hem sende; and ther thei stoden longe,
Til thei such lore have undersonge, *learning; achieved*
2225 That in here time thei surmonte
Alle othre men, that to accompte
Of hem was tho the grete fame. *recount*
The ferste of hem his rihte name
Was Diogenes thanne hote, *called*
2230 In whom was founde no riote. *unruly behavior*
His felaw Arisippus hyhte, *was called*
Which mochel couthe and mochel myhte. *knew and had the power to do much*
Bot ate laste, soth to sein,
Thei bothe tornen hom agein
- 2235 Unto Cartage and scole lete. *left*
This Diogenes no beyete *possession*
Of worldes good or lasse or more
Ne soghite for his longe lore,
Bot tok him only for to duelle
- 2240 At hom; and as the bokes telle,
His hous was nyh to the rivere
Besyde a bregge, as thou schalt hiere. *bridge; hear*
Ther duelleth he to take his reste,
So as it thoghte him for the beste,
- 2245 To studie in his philosophie,
As he which wolde so defie
The worldes pompe on every syde.
Bot Arisippe his bok aside
- 2250 Hath leid, and to the court he wente,
Wher many a wyle and many a wente *wile; devious path*
With flaterie and wordes softe
He caste, and hath compassed ofte
Hou he his prince myhte plese;
- 2255 And in this wise he gan him ese
Of vein honour and worldes good.
The londes reule upon him stod,
The king of him was wonder glad,

- And all was do, what thing he bad,
Bothe in the court and ek withoute. *done; commanded*
- 2260 With flaterie he broghte aboute
His pourpos of the worldes werk,
Which was agein the stat of clerk,
So that philosophie he lefte
And to richesse himself uplefte. *against the proper role of a learned man*
- 2265 Lo, thus hadde Arisippe his wille.
Bot Diogenes duelte stille
At home and loked on his bok.
He soghte noght the worldes crok,
For vein honour ne for richesse, *opulent splendor; elevated*
- 2270 Bot all his hertes besinesse
He sette to be vertuous;
And thus withinne his oghne hous
He liveth to the sufficance
Of his havinge. And fell per chance, *seduction*
- 2275 This Diogene upon a day,
And that was in the monthe of May,
Whan that these herbes ben holsome,
He walketh for to gadre some
In his gardin, of whiche his joutes *occupations*
- 2280 He thoghte have, and thus aboutes
Whanne he hath gadred what him liketh,
He satte him thanne doun and pyketh
And wyssh his herbes in the flod
Upon the which his gardin stod, *vegetable soup*
in all directions
- 2285 Nyh to the bregge, as I tolde er.
And hapneth, whil he sitteth ther,
Cam Arisippe be the strete
With manye hors and routes grete,
And straught unto the bregge he rod, *cleans*
washes; stream
- 2290 Wher that he hoved and abod;
For as he caste his yhe nyh,
His felaw Diogene he syh,
And what he dede he syh also,
Wheroft he seide to him so: *road*
- 2295 'O Diogene, God thee spedē
It were certes litel nede
To sitte there and wortes pyke,
If thou thi prince couthest lyke,
So as I can in my degré.' *stopped*
eye nearby
- 2300 'O Arisippe,' agein quod he,
'If that thou couthist, so as I,
Thi wortes pyke, trewely
It were als litel nede or lasse,
That thou so worldly wolt compasse *herbs (plants)*
knew how to please
knew how, as I do

- 2305 With flaterie for to serve,
 Wherof thou thenkest to deserve
 Thi princes thonk, and to pourchace
 Hou thou myht stonden in his grace,
 For getinge of a litel good.
- 2310 If thou wolt take into thi mod
 mind
 Reson, thou myht be reson deeme
 by reason judge
 That so thi prince for to queeme
 please
 Is noght to reson acordant,
 Bot it is gretly discordant
 Unto the scoles of Athene.'
- 2315 Lo, thus ansuerde Diogene
 Against
 Agein the clerkes flaterie.
 example
 Bot yit men sen th'essamplerie
 Of Arisippe is wel received,
- 2320 And thilke of Diogene is weyved.
 avoided
 Office in court and gold in cofre
 Is nou, men sein, the philosophre
 Which hath the worschipe in the halle.
 Bot flaterie passeth alle
- 2325 In chambre, whom the court avanceth;
 For upon thilke lot it chanceth
 To be beloved nou aday.
 I not if it be ye or nay,
 Bot as the comun vois it telleth;
- 2330 Bot wher that flaterie duelleth
 honor
 In eny lond under the sonne,
 Ther is ful many a thing begonne
 Which were betre to be left —
- 2335 That hath be schewed nou and eft.
 Bot if a prince wolde him reule
 Of the Romeins after the reule,
 In thilke time as it was used,
 This vice scholde be refused,
- 2340 Wherof the princes ben assoted.
 Bot wher the pleine trouthe is noted,
 Ther may a prince wel conceive,
 That he schal noght himself deceive,
 Of that he hiereth wordes pleine;
- 2345 For him thar noght be reson pleigne,
 That warned is er him be wo.
 And that was fully proeved tho,
 Whan Rome was the worldes chief,
 The sothseiere tho was lief,
- 2350 Which wolde noght the trouthe spare,
 Bot with hise wordes pleine and bare
 To th'empemour hise sothes tolde,
- befuddled (deceived)*
 himself
 truth-teller; beloved

As in cronique is yit withholde,
 Hierafterward as thou schalt hiere
 2354 Acordende unto this matiere.

[TRIUMPH, HUMILITY, AND THE ROMAN EMPERORS]

- ¶ To se this olde ensamplerie, *model; (see note)*
 That whilom was no flaterie
 Toward the princes wel I finde;
 Wheroft so as it comth to mynde,
 Mi sone, a tale unto thin ere, *ear*
 2360 Whil that the worthi princes were
 At Rome, I thenke for to tellen.
 For whan the chances so befellen
 That eny Emperour as tho
 Victoire hadde upon his fo, *unforseen circumstances*
 2365 And so forth cam to Rome agein,
 Of treble honour he was certein,
 Wheroft that he was magnefied.
 The ferste, as it is specefied,
 Was, whan he cam at thilke tyde, *chariot*
 2370 The charr in which he scholde ryde
 Foure whyte stiedes scholden drawe;
 Of Jupiter be thilke lawe
 The cote he scholde were also; *triumphal cloak; wear*
 Hise prisoners ek scholden go
 2375 Endlong the charr on eyther hond,
 And alle the nobles of the lond
 Tofore and after with him come
 Ridende and broghten him to Rome,
 In thonk of his chivalerie
 2380 And for non other flaterie.
 And that was schewed forth withal;
 Wher he sat in his charr real, *royal chariot*
 Beside him was a ribald set, *fool*
 Which hadde hise wordes so beset,
 2385 To th'empemour in al his gloire
 He seide, 'Tak into memoire,
 For al this pompe and al this pride
 Let no justice gon aside, *go astray (deviate)*
 Bot know thiself, what so befalle.
 2390 For men sen ofte time falle
 Thing which men wende siker stonde. *think secure*
 Thogh thou victoire have nou on honde,
 Fortune mai noght stonde alway;
 The whiel per chance another day

- 2395 Mai torne, and thou myht overthrowe;
Ther lasteth nothing bot a throwe.' *moment*
With these wordes and with mo
This ribald, which sat with him tho, *fool*
To th'empemour his tale tolde.
- 2400 And overmor whatevere he wolde,
Or were it evel or were it good, *Whether; or*
So pleinly as the trouthe stod,
He spareth noght, bot spekth it oute;
And so myhte every man aboute
- 2405 The day of that solempneté
His tale telle als wel as he
To th'empemour al openly.
And al was this the cause why;
That whil he stod in that noblesse,
- 2410 He scholde his vanité represse
With suche wordes as he herde.

[THE EMPEROR AND THE MASONS]

- ¶ Lo nou, hou thilke time it ferde *(see note)*
Toward so hih a worthi lord:
For this I finde ek of record,
- 2415 Which the cronique hath auctorized. *confirmed*
What Emperour was entronized,
The ferste day of his corone,
Wher he was in his real throne *royal*
And hield his feste in the paleis
- 2420 Sittende upon his hihe deis *high dais*
With al the lust that mai be gete,
Whan he was gladdest at his mete, *food*
And every menstrual hadde plead,
- 2425 And every disour hadde seid *storyteller*
What most was plesant to his ere,
Than ate laste comen there
Hise macons, for thei scholden crave *masons; desire to know*
Wher that he wolde be begrave, *buried*
And of what ston his sepulture
- 2430 Thei scholden make, and what sculpture
He wolde ordeine therupon.
Tho was ther flaterie non *Then*
The worthi princes to bejape; *delude*
The thing was otherwise schape *contrived*
- 2435 With good conseil; and otherwise
Thei were hemselven thanne wise,
And understoden wel and knewen.
Whan suche softe wyndes blewen

- 2440 Of flaterie into here ere, *their ear*
 Thei setten noght here hertes there;
 Bot whan thei herden wordes feigned,
 The pleine trouthe it hath desdeigned
 Of hem that weren so discrete.
- 2445 So tok the flatour no beyete *possession*
 Of him that was his prince tho.
 And for to proven it is so,
 A tale which befell in dede
 In a cronique of Rome I rede.
- 2450  Cesar upon his real throne *royal (see note)*
 Wher that he sat in his persone
 And was hyest in al his pris,
 A man, which wolde make him wys,
 Fell doun knelende in his presence,
- 2455 And dede him such a reverence,
 As thogh the hihe God it were.
 Men hadden gret mervaille there
 Of the worschipe which he dede.
 This man aros fro thilke stede,
- 2460 And forth with al the same tyde
 He goth him up and be his side *equal*
 He set him doun as pier and pier,
 And seide, 'If thou that sittest hier
 Art God, which alle thinges myht,
- 2465 Thanne have I do worschipe ariht
 As to the God; and otherwise,
 If thou be noght of thilke assisse, *condition*
 Bot art a man such as am I,
 Than mai I sitte faste by,
- 2470 For we be bothen of o kinde.'
- 2470 Cesar ansuerde and seide, 'O blinde, *blind man*
 Thou art a fol, it is wel sene *fool*
 Upon thiself, for if thou wene *think*
 I be a God, thou dost amys
 To sitte wher thou sest God is;
- 2475 And if I be a man, also
 Thou hast a gret folie do,
 Whan thou to such on as schal deie
 The worschipe of thi God aweie
 Hast goven so unworthely.
- 2480 Thus mai I prove redely,
 Thou art noght wys.' And thei that herde
 Hou wysly that the king ansuerde,
 It was to hem a newe lore;
 Wheroft thei dradden him the more,
- 2485 And broghten nothing to his ere,

- Bot if it trouthe and reson were.
 So be ther manye, in such a wise
 That feignen wordes to be wise,
 And al is verray flaterie
 2490 To him which can it wel aspie.
- ¶ The kinde flatour can noght love
 Bot for to bringe himself above;
 For hou that evere his maister fare,
 So that himself stonde out of care,
 2495 Him reccheth noght: and thus fulofte
 Deceived ben with wordes softe
 The kinges that ben innocent.
 Wherof as for chastiemant
 The wise Philosophre seide,
 2500 What king that so his tresor leide
 Upon such folk, he hath the lesse,
 And yit ne doth he no largesse,
 Bot harmeth with his oghne hond
 Himself and ek his oghne lond,
 2505 And that be many a sondri weie.
 Wherof if that a man schal seie,
 As for to speke in general,
 Wher such thing falleth overal
 That eny king himself misreule,
 2510 The Philosophre upon his reule
 In special a cause sette,
 Which is and evere hath be the lette
 In governance aboute a king
 Upon the meschief of the thing,
 2515 And that, he seith, is Flaterie.
 Wherof tofore as in partie
 What vice it is I have declared;
 For who that hath his wit bewared
 Upon a flatour to believe,
 2520 Whan that he weneth best achieve
 His goode world, it is most fro.
 And for to proeven it is so
 Ensamples ther ben manyon,
 Of whiche if thou wolt knownen on,
 2525 It is behovely for to hiere
 What whilom fell in this matiere.

*(see note)**own hand**impediment**applied**many a one**useful
once happened*

[TALE OF AHAB AND MICAIAH]

- Among the kinges in the Bible
 I finde a tale, and is credible,
 2529 Of him that whilom Achab hihte,

was called Ahab

- ¶ Which hadde al Irahel to rihte;
 Bot who that couthe close softe
 And flatre, suche he sette alofte
 In gret astat and made hem riche;
 Bot thei that spieken wordes liche
- 2535 To trouthe and wolde it noght forbere,
 For hem was non astat to bere,
 The court of suche tok non hiede.
 Til ate laste upon a nede,
 That Benedab king of Surie
- 2540 Of Irahel a gret partie,
 Which Ramoth Galaath was hote,
 Hath sesed; and of that riote
 He tok conseil in sondri wise,
 Bot noght of hem that weren wise.
- 2545 And natheles upon this cas
 To strengthen him, for Josaphas,
 Which thanne was king of Judee,
 He sende for to come, as he
 Which thurgh frendschiipe and alliance
- 2550 Was next to him of aqueintance;
 For Joram sone of Josaphath
 Achabbes dowhter wedded hath,
 Which hihte faire Godelie.
- 2555 And thus cam into Samarie
 King Josaphat, and he fond there
 The king Achab: and whan thei were
 Togedre spekende of this thing,
 This Josaphat seith to the king,
- 2560 Hou that he wolde gladly hiere
 Som trew prophete in this matiere,
 That he his conseil myhte give
 To what point that it schal be drive.
 And in that time so befell,
- 2565 Ther was such on in Irahel,
 Which sette him al to flaterie,
 And he was cleped Sedechie.
 And after him Achab hath sent,
 And he at his comandement
- 2570 Tofore him cam, and be a sleyhte
 He hath upon his heved on heyhte
 Tuo large hornes set of bras,
 As he which al a flatour was,
 And goth rampende as a leoun
- 2575 And caste hise hornes up and doun,
 And bad men ben of good espeir,
 For as the hornes percen th'air,
- Israel; govern (see note)*
knew how to use fair words courteously
them wealthy (powerful)
- Israel*
called
gang
- in fellowship*
- hear*
- head*
Two
- leaping about (rampant)*
- hope*
air

- He seith, withoute resistence,
So wiste he wel of his science
That Benedab is desconfit. *defeated*
- 2580 Whan Sedechie upon this plit
Hath told this tale to his lord,
Anon ther were of his accord
Prophetes false manye mo
To bere up oil, and alle tho *To speak flatteringily; those*
- 2585 Affermen that which he hath told, *Corroborate*
Wheroft the king Achab was bold
And gaf hem giftes al aboute.
Bot Josaphat was in gret doute,
And hield fantosme al that he herde,
- 2590 Preiende Achab, hou so it ferde,
If ther were eny other man,
The which of prophecie can,
To hiere him speke er that thei gon.
Quod Achab thanne, 'Ther is on,
- 2595 A brothell, which Micheas hilte; *scoundrel (whoreson); called*
Bot he ne comth noght in my sihte,
For he hath longe in prison lein. *lain*
Him liketh nevere yit to sein
A goodly word to mi plesance;
- 2600 And natholes at thin instance
He schal come oute, and thanne he may
Seie as he seide many day;
For yit he seide nevere wel.'
- 2605 Tho Josaphat began somdel *sloth*
To gladen him in hope of trouthe,
And bad withouten eny slouth
That men him scholden fette anon. *fetch immediately*
- 2610 And thei that weren for him gon,
Whan that thei comen wher he was,
Thei tolden unto Micheas *predict no misfortune*
- 2615 The manere hou that Sedechie
Declared hath his prophecie;
And therupon thei preie him faire
That he wol seie no contraire,
- 2620 Wheroft the king mai be desplesed,
For so schal every man ben esed,
And he mai helpe himselfe also. *given*
- Micheas upon trouthe tho
His herte sette, and to hem seith,
Al that belongeth to his feith
And of non other feigned thing,
That wol he telle unto his king,
Als fer as God hath gove him grace.

- 2625 Thus cam this prophete into place
 Wher he the kinges wille herde;
 And he therto anon ansuerde,
 And seide unto him in this wise:
 ‘Mi liege lord, for mi servise,
 Which trewe hath stonden evere yit,
- 2630 Thou hast me with prisone aquit; *repaid*
 Bot for al that I schal noght glose *obscure*
 Of trouthe als fer as I suppose;
 And as touchende of this bataille,
 Thou schalt noght of the sothe faile.
- 2635 For if it like thee to hiere, *saw*
 As I am tauht in that matiere, *before*
 Thou mihte it understande sone;
 Bot what is afterward to done *lay [before me]*
 Avise thee, for this I sih.
- 2640 I was tofor the throne on hih, *Asking*
 Wher al the world me thoghte stod,
 And there I herde and understod
 The vois of God with wordes cliere
 Axende, and seide in this manere:
- 2645 “In what thing mai I best beguile
 The king Achab?” And for a while
 Upon this point thei spieken faste.
 Tho seide a spirit ate laste,
 “I undertake this emprise.”
- 2650 And God him axeth, “In what wise?” *believes*
 “I schal,” quod he, “deceive and lye
 With flaterende prophecie
 In suche mouthes as he lieveth.”
 And He which alle thing achieveth
- 2655 Bad him go forth and don riht so.
 And over this I sih also
 The noble peple of Irahel
 Dispers as schep upon an hell, *sheep; hill*
 Withoute a kepere unarraied; *in disarray*
- 2660 And as thei wente aboute astraied,
 I herde a vois unto hem sein,
 “Goth hom into your hous agein,
 Til I for you have betre ordeigned.” *aimlessly*
- 2665 Quod Sedechie, ‘Thou hast feigned
 This tale in angringe of the king.’ *invented*
 And in a wraththe upon this thing *provocation*
 He smot Michee upon the cheke;
 The king him hath rebuked eke,
 And every man upon him cride. *also*
- 2670 Thus was he schent on every side, *scorned*

- Agein and into prison lad,
For so the king himselfe bad.
The trouthe myhte noght ben herd;
Bot afterward as it hath ferd,
2675 The dede proveth his entente.
Achab to the bataille wente,
Wher Benedab for al his scheld
Him slouh, so that upon the feld
His poeple goth aboute astray.
2680 Bot God, which alle thinges may,
So doth that thei no meschier have;
Here king was ded and thei ben save,
And hom agein in Goddes pes
Thei wente, and al was founde les
2685 That Sedechie hath seid tofore.
So sit it wel a king therfore
To loven hem that trouthe mene;
For ate laste it wol be sene
That flaterie is nothing worth.
2690 Bot nou to mi matiere forth,
As for to speken overmore
After the Philosophres lore,
The thridde point of policie
I thenke for to specifie."

[JUSTICE, THE THIRD PART OF POLICY]

- ix. *Propter transgressos leges statuuntur in orbe,
Vt viuant iusti Regis honore viri.
Lex sine iusticia populum sub principis umbra
Deuiat, vt rectum nemo videbit iter.*¹

[Confessor] "What is a lond wher men ben none?

- 2696 What ben the men whiche are alone
Withoute a kinges governance?
What is a king in his ligance,
2700 Wher that ther is no lawe in londe?
What is to take lawe on honde,
Bot if the jugges weren trewe?
These olde worldes with the newe
Who that wol take in evidence,
Ther mai he se th'experience,

(see note)

¹ *Laws are established on earth on account of transgressors, so that righteous men might live by the King's honor. Law without justice makes the people deviant [see note] under the shadow of the ruler, so that no one will see the straight path.*

- 2705 What thing it is to kepe lawe,
 Thurgh which the wronges ben withdrawe
 And rihtwisnesse stant commended,
 Wherof the regnes ben amended. *kingdoms; restored (reformed)*
unite
- 2710 The lordes forth with the commune,
 Ech hath his propre dueté;
 And ek the kinges realté
 Of bothe his worschipe underfongeth, *commonwealth*
honor receives
- 2715 Which of his hihe worthinessse
 Hath to governe rihtwisnesse,
 As he which schal the lawe guide.
 And natholes upon som side
 His pouer stant above the lawe, *Has the inherent right to govern*
- 2720 To give bothe and to withdrawe
 The forfet of a mannes lif;
 Bot thinges whiche are excessif
 Agein the lawe, he schal noght do
 For love ne for hate also.
- 2725 The myhtes of a king ben grete,
 Bot yit a worthi king schal lete *keep*
- ¶ Of wrong to don al that he myhte;
 For he which schal the poeple ryhte,
 It sit wel to his regalie *From doing wrong; (see note)*
- 2730 That he himself ferst justefie
 Towardes God in his degré:
 For his astat is elles fre
 Toward alle othre in his persone,
 Save only to the God alone,
- 2735 Which wol himself a king chastise,
 Wher that non other mai suffise.
 So were it good to taken hiede
 That ferst a king his oghne dede
 Betwen the vertu and the vice
- 2740 Redresce, and thanne of his justice
 So sette in evene the balance *judged impartially*
 Towardes othre in governance,
 That to the povere and to the riche
 His lawes myhten stonde liche,
- 2745 He schal excepte no persone. *the same*
show favoritism to no one
 Bot for he mai noght al him one
 In sondri places do justice,
 He schal of his real office
 With wys consideracion *royal*
- 2750 Ordeigne his deputacion
 Of suche jugges as ben lerned,

- So that his poeple be governed
 Be hem that trewe ben and wise.
 For if the lawe of covoitise
 2755 Be set upon a jugges hond,
 Wo is the poeple of thilke lond,
 For wrong mai noght himselfen hyde.
 Bot elles on that other side,
 If lawe stonde with the riht,
 2760 The poeple is glad and stant upriht.
 Wher as the lawe is resonable,
 The comun poeple stant menable,
 And if the lawe torne amis,
 2764 The poeple also mistorned is.
- compliant (in agreement)*
are skewed

[EMPEROR MAXIMIN]

- ¶ And in ensample of this matiere
 Of Maximin a man mai hiere,
 Of Rome which was emperour,
 That whanne he made a governour
 Be weie of substitucion
 2770 Of province or of region,
 He wolde ferst enquere his name,
 And let it openly proclaime
 What man he were, or evel or good.
 And upon that his name stod
 2775 Enclin to vertu or to vice,
 So wolde he sette him in office,
 Or elles putte him al aweie.
 Thus held the lawe his rihte weie,
 Which fond no let of covoitise:
 2780 The world stod thanne upon the wise,
 As be ensample thou myht rede;
 And hold it in thi mynde, I rede.
- (see note)*
appointment
either; or
found no impediment from
memory

[GAIUS FABRICIUS]

- In a cronicke I finde thus,
 Hou that Gayus Fabricius,
 2785 Which whilom was Consul of Rome,
 Be whom the lawes yede and come,
 Whan the Sampnites to him broghte
 ¶ A somme of gold, and him besoughte
 To don hem favour in the lawe,
 2790 Toward the gold he gan him drawe,
 Wheroft in alle mennes lok
 A part up in his hond he tok,
- come and go*
(see note)

- Which to his mouth in alle haste
 He putte it for to smelle and taste,
 2795 And to his yhe and to his ere,
 Bot he ne fond no confort there.
 And thanne he gan it to despise,
 And tolde unto hem in this wise:
 'I not what is with gold to thryve,
 2800 Whan non of all my wittes fyve
 Fynt savour ne delit therinne.
 So is it bot a nyce sinne
 Of gold to ben to covoitous;
 Bot he is riche and glorious,
 2805 Which hath in his subjeccion
 Tho men which in possession
 Ben riche of gold, and be this skile:
 For he mai aldai whan he wile,
 Or be hem lieve or be hem lothe,
 2810 Justice don upon hem bothe.'
 Lo, thus he seide, and with that word
 He threw tofore hem on the bord
 The gold out of his hond anon,
 And seide hem that he wolde non:
 2815 So that he kepte his liberté
 To do justice and equité,
 Withoute lucre of such richesse.
 Ther be nou fewe of suche, I gesse,
 For it was thilke times used,
 2820 That every jugge was refused
 Which was noght frend to comun riht.
 Bot thei that wolden stonde upriht
 For trouthe only to do justice
 Preferred were in thilke office
 2825 To deme and jugge commun lawe,
 Which nou, men sein, is al withdrawe.
 To sette a lawe and kepe it noght
 Ther is no comun profit soght;
 Bot above alle natholes
 2830 The lawe, which is mad for pes,
 Is good to kepe for the best,
 For that set alle men in reste.

[EMPEROR CONRAD]

-  The rihtful Emperour Conrade
 To kepe pes such lawe made
 2835 That non withinne the cité
 In destorbance of unité

(see note)

- Dorste ones moeven a matiere. *stir up trouble*
 For in his time, as thou myht hiere,
 What point that was for lawe set
 2840 It scholde for no gold be let, *obstructed*
 To what persone that it were. *whatever*
 And this broghte in the comun fere *fear*
 Why every man the lawe dradde,
 For ther was non which favour hadde.

[CARMIDOTIRUS]

- 2845 So as these olde bokes sein, *commander of the Praetorian Guard*
 I finde write hou a Romein,
 Which Consul was of the Pretoire,
 Whos name was Carmidotoire,
 2850  He sette a lawe for the pes *(see note)*
 That non, bot he be wepneles, *unless; weaponless*
 Schal come into the conseil hous,
 And elles as malicious *on the grounds of intending malice*
 He schal ben of the lawe ded. *put to death by law*
 To that statut and to that red *counsel*
 2855 Acorden alle it schal be so,
 For certein cause which was tho.
 Nou lest what fell therafter sone. *listen to*
 This consul hadde for to done,
 And was into the feldes ride;
 2860 And thei him hadden longe abide, *waited for him to arrive*
 That lordes of the conseil were,
 And for him sende, and he cam there
 With swerd begert, and hath forgete, *girded*
 Til he was in the conseil sete.
 2865 Was non of hem that made speche, *investigate*
 Til he himself it wolde seche,
 And fond out the defalte himselfe;
 And thanne he seide unto the tuelve,
 Whiche of the senat weren wise,
 2870 'I have deserved the juise, *judgment*
 In haste that it were do.'
 And thei him seiden alle no;
 For wel thei wiste it was no vice,
 Whan he ne thoghte no malice,
 2875 Bot onliche of a litel slouth. *sloth*
 And thus thei leften as for routhe *spared*
 To do justice upon his gilt,
 For that he scholde nocht be spilt.
 And whanne he sih the maner hou
 2880 Thei wolde him save, he made avou *slain*

- With manfull herte, and thus he seide,
 That Rome scholde nevere abreide
 His heires, whan he were of dawe,
 That here ancestre brak the lawe.
 2885 Forthi, er that thei weren war,
 Forth with the same swerd he bar
 The statut of his lawe he kepte,
 So that al Rome his deth bewepte.
- upbraid (censure)
dead (lit., at the end of his days)*
- aware*
- mourned*

[CAMBYSSES]

- ¶ In other place also I rede,
 2890 Wher that a jugge his oghne dede
 Ne wol noght venge of lawe broke,
 The king it hath himselven wroke.
 The grete king which Cambises
 Was hote, a jugge laweles
 2895 He fond, and into remembrance
 He dede upon him such vengance:
 Out of his skyn he was beflain
 Al quyk, and in that wise slain,
 So that his skyn was schape al meete,
 2900 And nayled on the same seete
 Wher that his sone scholde sitte.
 Avise him, if he wolde flitte
 The lawe for the coveitise,
 Ther sih he redi his juise.
 2905 Thus is defalte of other jugge
 The king mot otherwhile jugge,
 To holden up the rihte lawe.
 And for to speke of th'olde dawe,
 To take ensample of that was tho,
 2910 I finde a tale write also,
 Hou that a worthi prince is holde
 The lawes of his lond to holde,
 Ferst for the hihe Goddes sake,
 And ek for that him is betake
 2915 The poeple for to guide and lede,
 Which is the charge of his kinghede.
- (see note)*
- Will not take vengeance for a broken law
avenged*
- wrecked
entirely skinned
Alive*
- circumvent*
- judgment [that would befall him]*
- olden days
then*
- bound
uphold*
- obliged*

[TALE OF LYCURGUS]

- In a cronique I rede thus
 Of the rihtful Ligurgius,
 Which of Athenis prince was,
 2920 Hou he the lawe in every cas,
 ¶ Wherof he scholde his poeple reule,
- (see note)*

- Hath set upon so good a reule,
 In al this world that cité non
 Of lawe was so wel begon
 2925 Forth with the trouthe of governance.
 Ther was among hem no distance,
 Bot every man hath his encress;
 Ther was withoute werre pes,
 Withoute envie love stod;
- 2930 Richesse upon the comun good
 And noght upon the singuler
 Ordeigned was, and the pouser
 Of hem that weren in astat
 Was sauf: wheroft upon debat
 2935 Ther stod nothing, so that in reste
 Mihte every man his herte reste.
 And whan this noble rihtful king
 Sih hou it ferde of al this thing,
 Wheroft the poeple stod in ese,
 2940 He, which forevere wolde plesē
 The hihe God, whos thonk he soghte,
 A wonder thing thanne him bethoghte,
 And schop if that it myhte be,
 Hou that his lawe in the cité
 2945 Mihte afterward forevere laste.
 And therupon his wit he caste
 What thing him were best to feigne,
 That he his pourpos myhte atteigne.
 A parlement and thus he sette,
 2950 His wisdom wher that he besette
 In audience of grete and smale,
 And in this wise he tolde his tale.
 'God wot, and so ye witen alle,
 Hierafterward hou so it falle,
 2955 Yit into now my will hath be
 To do justice and equité
 In forthringe of comun profit;
 Such hath ben evere my delit.
 Bot of o thing I am beknowe,
 2960 The which mi will is that ye knowe:
 The lawe which I tok on honde,
 Was altogedre of Goddes sonde
 And nothing of myn oghne wit;
 So mot it nede endure yit,
 2965 And schal do lengere, if ye wile.
 For I wol telle you the skile;
 The god Mercurius and no man
 He hath me tawht al that I can
- for personal gain*
- uncertainty (instability)*
- Saw*
- instituted*
- knows; know*
- I acknowledge*
- entirely; sent by God*
- reason*
- know*

- Of suche lawes as I made,
 2970 Wheroft that ye ben alle glade;
 It was the god and nothing I,
 Which dede al this, and nou forthi
 He hath comanded of his grace
 That I schal come into a place
 2975 Which is forein out in an yle, *far removed*
 Wher I mot tarie for a while,
 With him to speke, as he hath bede. *commanded*
 For as he seith, in thilke stede
 He schal me suche thinges telle,
 2980 That evere, whyl the world schal duelle, *place*
 Athenis schal the betre fare.
 Bot ferst, er that I thider fare,
 For that I wolde that mi lawe
 Amonges you ne be withdrawe
 2985 Ther whyles that I schal ben oute, *All the while*
 Forthi to setten out of doute
 Bothe you and me, this wol I preie,
 That ye me wolde assure and seie
 With such an oth as I wol take,
 2990 That ech of you schal undertake
 Mi lawes for to kepe and holde.'
 Thei seiden alle that thei wolde,
 And therupon thei swore here oth,
 That fro the time that he goth,
 2995 Til he to hem be come agein,
 Thei scholde hise lawes wel and plein
 In every point kepe and fulfille.
 Thus hath Ligurgius his wille,
 And tok his leve and forth he wente.
 3000 Bot lest nou wel to what entente
 Of rihtwisnesse he dede so:
 For after that he was ago,
 He schop him nevere to be founde; *contrived*
 So that Athenis, which was bounde,
 3005 Nevere after scholde be relessed,
 Ne thilke goode lawe cessed,
 Which was for comun profit set.
 And in this wise he hath it knet; *established*
 He, which the comun profit soghte,
 3010 The king, his oghne astat ne roghte; *did not care about*
 To do profit to the comune,
 He tok of exil the fortune,
 And lefte of prince thilke office
 Only for love and for justice,
 3015 Thurgh which he thoghte, if that he myhte,

Forevere after his deth to rihte
 The cité which was him betake.
 Wheroft men oghe ensample take
 The goode lawes to avance
 3020 With hem which under governance
 The lawes have for to kepe;
 For who that wolde take kepe
 Of hem that ferst the lawes founde,
 Als fer as lasteth eny bounde
 3025 Of lond, here names yit ben knowe.
 And if it like thee to knowe
 Some of here names hou thei stonde,
 Nou herkne and thou schalt understande.

entrusted to him
improve (advance, encourage)
established
region

[FIRST LAWGIVERS]

3030 Of every bienfet the merite
 The God himself it wol aquite;
 And ek fulofte it falleth so,
 The world it wole aquite also,
 Bot that mai noght ben evene liche.
 3035 The God he gifth the heveneriche,
 The world gifth only bot a name,
 Which stant upon the goode fame
 Of hem that don the goode dede.
 And in this wise double mede
 Resceiven thei that don wel hiere;
 3040 Wheroft if that thee list to hiere
 After the fame as it is blowe,
 Ther myht thou wel the sothe knowe,
 Hou thilke honeste besinesse
 Of hem that ferst for rihtwisnesse
 3045 Among the men the lawes made,
 Mai nevere upon this erthe fade.
 Forevere, whil ther is a tunge,
 Here name schal be rad and sung
 And holde in the cronique write;
 3050 So that the men it scholden wite,
 To speke good, as thei wel oghten,
 Of hem that ferst the lawes soghten
 In forthringe of the worldes pes.
 Unto th'Ebreas was Moises
 3055 The ferste, and to th'Egipciens
 Mercurius, and to Troiens
 Ferst was Neuma Pompilius,
 To Athenes Ligurgius
 Gaf ferst the lawe, and to Gregoisi

meritorious action
reward
(see note)
kingdom of heaven
reward
here
hear
widely acclaimed
devised
Hebrews
Greeks

- 3060 Foroneus hath thilke vois,
And Romulus to the Romeins.
For suche men that ben vileins
The lawe in such a wise ordeigneth,
That what man to the lawe pleigneth,
is plaintiff
- 3065 Be so the jugge stonde upriht,
He schal be served of his riht.
And so ferforth it is befall
That lawe is come among ous alle.
God lieve it mote wel ben holde,
3070 As every king therto is holde;
For thing which is of kinges set,
With kinges oghte it noght be let.
What king of lawe takth no kepe,
Be lawe he mai no regne kepe.
evaded (nullified)
pays no heed
By
- 3075 Do lawe awey, what is a king?
Wher is the riht of eny thing,
If that ther be no lawe in londe?
This oghte a king wel understonde,
As he which is to lawe swore,
3080 That if the lawe be forbore
Withouten execucioun,
It makth a lond torne up so doun,
Which is unto the king a sclandre.
disgrace
- 3085 Forthi unto king Alisandre
The wise Philosophre bad,
That he himselfe ferst be lad
Of lawe, and forth thanne overal
So do justice in general,
led
- 3090 That al the wyde lond aboute
The justice of his lawe doute,
And thanne schal he stonde in reste.
For therto lawe is on the beste
Above alle other erthly thing,
To make a liege drede his king.
- 3095 Bot hou a king schal gete him love
Toward the hihe God above,
And ek among the men in erthe,
This nexte point, which is the ferthe
Of Aristotles lore, it techeth.
fourth
- 3100 Wherof who that the scole secheth,
What policie that it is
The bok reherceth after this."

[PITY, THE FOURTH PART OF POLICY]

x. *Nil racionis habens vbi velle tirannica regna
 Stringit, amor populi transiet exul ibi.
 Set Pietas, regnum que conseruabit in euum,
 Non tantum populo, set placet illa deo.¹*

[Confessor] “It nedeth noght that I delate

3105 The pris which preised is algate,
 And hath ben evere and evere schal,
 Wheroft to speke in special,
 It is the vertu of Pité,
 Thurgh which the Hihe Magesté

*describe at length
 esteemed renown; continually*

¶ Was stered, whan His Sone alyhte,
 3110 And in Pité the world to rihte
 Tok of the maide fleissh and blod.
 Pité was cause of thilke good,
 Wheroft that we ben alle save.
 Wel oghete a man Pité to have

*moved; descended to earth (see note)
 amend (atone for)
 maiden (i.e., the Virgin Mary)*

3115 And the vertu to sette in pris,
 Whan He Himself which is al wys
 Hath schewed why it schal be preised.
 Pité may noght be conterpeised
 Of tirannie with no peis;

esteem

3120 For Pité makth a king courteis
 Bothe in his word and in his dede.

*balanced
 By; weight*

Nota It sit wel every liege drede
 His king and to his heste obeie,
 And riht so be the same weie
 3125 It sit a king to be pitous
 Toward his poeple and gracious
 Upon the reule of governance,
 So that he worche no vengance,
 Which mai be cleded craulté.

*It is suitable for; [to] fear
 command*

3130 Justice which doth equité
 Is dredfull, for he no man spareth.
 Bot in the lond wher Pité fareth
 The king mai nevere faile of love,
 For Pité thurgh the grace above,
 3135 So as the Philosophre affermeth,
 His regne in good astat conserfmeth.

It befits

¶ Thus seide whilom Constantin:
 ‘What Emperour that is enclin

(see note)

¹ *Lacking all reason, a tyrant's will strips bare the kingdom, and the people's love roams as an exile there. But Pity [see note], and the kingdom it will preserve for eternity, is pleasing both to the people and to God.*

- 3140 To Pité for to be servant,
Of al the worldes remenant
He is worthi to ben a lord.'
- 3145  In olde bokes of record *(see note)*
This finde I write of essamplaire:
Troian the worthi debonaire,
Be whom that Rome stod governed,
Upon a time as he was lerned
Of that he was to familier,
He seide unto that conseillier,
That for to ben an emperour
3150 His will was noght for vein honour,
Ne yit for reddour of justice;
Bot if he myhte in his office
Hise lordes and his poeple plese,
Him thoghte it were a grettere ese
3155 With love here hertes to him drawe,
Than with the drede of eny lawe.
For whan a thing is do for doute,
Fulofte it comth the worse aboute;
Bot wher a king is pietous,
3160 He is the more gracious,
That mochel thrift him schal betyde,
Which elles scholde torne aside.
- Trajan*
- rigor*
- fear*
- success to him; come about*
otherwise; (see note)

[TALE OF CODRUS]

- 3165  Of Pité for to speke plein,
Which is with mercy wel besein,
Fulofte he wole himselfe peine
To kepe another fro the peine,
For Charité the moder is
Of Pité, which nothing amis
Can soffre, if he it mai amende.
- 3170 It sit to every man livende *befits; living*
To be pitous, bot non so wel
As to a king, which on the whiel
Fortune hath set aboven alle.
For in a king, if so befallle
- 3175 That his Pité be ferme and stable,
To al the lond it is vailable
Only thurgh grace of his persone.
For the Pité of him alone
Mai al the large realme save.
- 3180 So sit it wel a king to have
Pité; for this Valeire tolde,
And seide hou that be daies olde
- beneficial*
- Valerius Maximus*

- Codrus, which was in his degré
King of Athenis the cité,
3185 A werre he hadde agein Dorrence: *the Dorians*
And for to take his evidence
What schal befalle of the bataille,
He thoghte he wolde him ferst consaille *seek advice*
With Appollo, in whom he triste; *From; trusted*
3190 Thurgh whos ansuere this he wiste, *knew*
Of tuo pointz that he myhte chese,
Or that he wolde his body lese
And in bataille himselfe deic, *Either*
Or elles the seconde weie,
3195 To sen his poeple desconfit. *defeated*
Bot he, which Pité hath parfit
Upon the point of his believe,
The poeple thoghte to relieve,
And ches himselfe to be ded.
3200 Wher is nou such another hed, *head*
Which wolde for the lemes dye? *limbs*
And natheles in som partie
It oughte a kinges herte stere, *guide*
That he hise liege men forbere.
3205 And ek toward hise enimis *praise*
Fulofte he may deserve pris,
To take of Pité remembrance,
Wher that he myhte do vengance.
For whanne a king hath the victoire,
3210 And thanne he drawe into memoire *vengeance*
To do Pité in stede of wreche,
He mai noght faile of thilke speche
Wherof arist the worldes fame, *arose*
To give a prince a worthi name.

[TALE OF POMPEIUS AND THE KING OF ARMENIA]

- 3215 I rede hou whilom that Pompeie,
To whom that Rome moste obeie,
A werre hadde in jeupartie *war; uncertainty*
Agein the king of Ermenie,
¶ Which of long time him hadde grieved. *(see note)*
3220 Bot ate laste it was achieved
That he this king desconfit hadde, *defeated*
And forth with him to Rome ladde
As prisoner, wher many a day
In sori plit and povere he lay,
3225 The corone of his heved deposed, *poverty*
Withinne walles faste enclosed; *head*

- And with ful gret humilité
He soffreth his adversité.
Pompeie sih his pacience
- 3230 And tok pité with conscience, tenderness
So that upon his hihe deis dais
Tofore al Rome in his paleis, Before
As he that wolde upon him rewe, take pity
Let give him his corone newe
- 3235 And his astat al full and plein undo
Restoreth of his regne agein,
And seide it was more goodly thing
To make than undon a king,
To him which pouer hadde of bothe.
- 3240 Thus thei, that weren longe wrothe, angry [at each other]
Acorden hem to final pes; Came to terms; peace
And yit justice natholes
Was kept and in nothing offended,
Wheroft Pompeie was comended.
- 3245 Ther mai no king himself excuse, temper
Bot if justice he kepe and use, sin
Which for t'eschuiue craulté
He mot attempre with Pité.
Of craulté the felonie
- 3250 Engendred is of tirannie, which
Agein the whos condicion
God is himself the champion,
Whos strengthe mai no man withstonde. stand against
- 3255 Forevere yit it hath so stonde,
That God a tirant overladde.
Bot wher Pité the regne ladde,
Ther mihte no fortune laste
Which was grevous, bot ate laste
The God himself it hath redresced.
- 3260 Pité is thilke vertu blessed pleasing to God
Which nevere let his maister falle; (i.e., one who is piteous)
Bot craulté, thogh it so falle may happen
That it mai regne for a throwe, for a little bit
God wole it schal ben overthrowe.
- 3265 Wheroft ensamples ben ynowhe those who move that game piece
Of hem that thilke merel drowhe. (see note)
- ¶ Of craulté I rede thus:
Whan the tirant Leoncius
Was to th'empire of Rome arrived, descended upon
3270 Fro which he hath with strengthe prived deprived [of power]
The pietous Justinian,
As he which was a cruel man,
His nase of and his lippes bothe nose off

- He kutte, for he wolde him lothe
 3275 Unto the poeple and make unsuitable.
 Bot he which is al merciable,
 The hihe God, ordeigneth so,
 That he withinne a time also,
 Whan he was strengest in his ire,
 3280 Was schoven out of his empire. *driven out*
 Tiberius the pouer hadde,
 And Rome after his will he ladde,
 And for Leonce in such a wise
 Ordeigneth, that he tok juise
 3285 Of nase and lippes bothe tuo, *should receive judicial punishment*
 For that he dede another so,
 Which more worthi was than he.
 Lo, which a fall hath craulté,
 And Pité was set up agein.
 3290 For after that the bokes sein,
 Therbellis king of Bulgarie
 With helpe of his chivalerie
 Justinian hath unprisoned
 And to th'empire agein coroned.

[CRUELTY OF SICULUS]

- 3295 In a cronique I finde also
 Of Siculus, which was ek so
 A cruel king lich the tempeste, *(see note)*
 The whom no Pité myhte areste,
 He was the ferste, as bokes seie,
 3300 Upon the see which fond galeie *sea; invented the galley*
 And let hem make for the werre,
 As he which al was out of herre
 Fro Pité and misericorde;
 For therto couthe he noght acorde,
 3305 Bot whom he myhte slen, he slouh, *had them made; war*
 And therof was he glad ynouh.
 He hadde of conseil manyon,
 Among the whiche ther was on
 Be name which Berillus hihte, *out of kilter (unhinged)*
 3310 And he bethoghte him hou he myhte *compassion*
 Unto the tirant do likinge,
 And of his oghne ymaginynge
 Let forge and make a bole of bras, *kill; killed*
 And on the side cast ther was
 3315 A dore, wher a man mai inne, *was called*
 Whan he his peine schal beginne
 Thurgh fyr, which that men putten under. *ingratiate himself*
door; enter
torture

- And al this dede he for a wonder,
 That whanne a man for peine cride,
 3320 The bole of bras, which gapeth wyde,
 It scholde seme as thogh it were
 A belwinge in a mannes ere
 And noght the criinge of a man.
 Bot he which alle sleihtes can,
 3325 The devel, that lith in helle faste,
 Him that this caste hath overcast,
 That for a trespass which he dede
 He was putt in the same stede,
 And was himself the ferste of alle
 3330 Which was into that peine falle
 That he for othre men ordeigneth:
 Ther was no man which him compleigneth.
 Of tirannie and craulté
 Be this ensample a king mai se,
 3335 Himself and ek his conseil bothe,
 Hou thei ben to mankinde lothe
 And to the God abhominal.
 Ensamples that ben concordable
 I finde of othre princes mo,
 3340 As thou schalt hiere, of time go.
- bellowing; ear*
deceptions knows
who lies
brought about; overthrown
place
designed
lamented for him
appropriate
from time past

[DIONYSIUS AND HIS HORSE]

- ¶ The grete tirant Dionys,
 Which mannes lif sette of no pris,
 Unto his hors fulofte he gaf
 The men in stede of corn and chaf,
 3345 So that the hors of thilke stod
 Devoureden the mennes blod,
 Til fortune ate laste cam
 That Hercules him overcam,
 And he riht in the same wise
 3350 Of this tirant tok the juise.
 As he til othre men hath do,
 The same deth he deide also,
 That no Pité him hath socoured,
 Til he was of hise hors devoured.
- (see note)*
value
corral
So that
punished

[LICHAON]

- 3355 Of Lichaon also I finde
 Hou he agein the lawe of kinde
 ¶ Hise hostes slouh, and into mete
 He made her bodies to ben ete
- against*
(see note)

- With othre men withinne his hous.
 3360 Bot Jupiter the glorious,
 Which was commooved of this thing,
 Vengance upon this cruel king
 So tok, that he fro mannes forme
 Into a wolf him let transforme:
 3365 And thus the crualté was kidd,
 Which of long time he hadde hidd;
 A wolf he was thanne openly,
 The whos nature prively
 He hadde in his condicion.
 3370 And unto this conclusioun,
 That tirannie is to despise,
 I finde ensample in sondri wise,
 And nameliche of hem fulofte,
 The whom Fortune hath set alofte
 3375 Upon the werres for to winne.
 Bot hou so that the wrong beginne
 Of tirannie, it mai noght laste,
 Bot such as thei don ate laste
 To othre men, such on hem falleth;
 3380 For agein suche Pité calleth
 Vengance to the God above.
 For who that hath no tender love
 In savinge of a mannes lif,
 He schal be founde so gultif,
 3385 That whanne he wolde mercy crave
 In time of nede, he schal non have.

[NOBLENESSE OF THE LION]

- ¶ Of the natures this I finde,
 The fierce leon in his kinde,
 Which goth rampende after his preie,
 3390 If he a man finde in his weie,
 He wole him slen, if he withstonde.
 Bot if the man coude understande
 To falle anon before his face
 In signe of mercy and of grace,
 3395 The leon schal of his nature
 Restreigne his ire in such mesure,
 As thogh it were a beste tamed,
 And torne awey halfvinge aschamed,
 That he the man schal nothing grieve.
 3400 Hou scholde thanne a prince achieve
 The worldes grace, if that he wolde
 Destruie a man whanne he is yold
- books on natural history; (see note)
 lion; nature*
- resists*
- somewhat (halfway)
 So that; injure*
- has yielded*

- And stant upon his mercy al?
Bot for to speke in special,
3405 Ther have be suche and yit ther be
Tirantz, whos hertes no pité
Mai to no point of mercy plie,
That thei upon her tirannie
Ne gladen hem the men to sle;
- 3410 And as the rages of the see
Ben unpitous in the tempeste,
Riht so mai no Pité areste
Of craulté the gret oultrace,
Which the tirant in his corage
3415 Engendred hath: wheroft I finde
A tale, which comth nou to mynde.

*depends on; entirely**sea*

[TALE OF SPERTACHUS AND THAMERIS]

- I rede in olde bokes thus,
Ther was a duk, which Spertachus
Men clepe, and was a werreior,
3420 A cruel man, a conquerour
With strong pouer the which he ladde.
For this condicion he hadde,
That where him hapneth the victoire,
His lust and al his moste gloire
3425 Was for to sle and noght to save.
Of rancoun wolde he no good have
For savinge of a mannes lif,
Bot al goth to the swerd and knyf,
So lief him was the mannes blod.
- 3430 And natholes yit thus it stod,
So as fortune aboute wente,
He fell riht heir as be descente
To Perse, and was coroned king.
And whan the worschipe of this thing
3435 Was falle, and he was king of Perse,
If that thei weren ferst diverse,
The tirannies whiche he wroghte,
A thousandfold welmore he soghte
Thanne afterward to do malice.
- 3440 The God vengeance agein the vice
Hath schape: for upon a tyde,
Whan he was heihest in his pride,
In his rancour and in his hete
Agein the queene of Marsagete,
- 3445 Which Thameris that time hihte,
He made werre al that he myhte.

*duke**called (see note)**ransom**dear to him**honor**they (tyrannical acts); hostile (vicious)**wrath**was called*

- And sche, which wolde hir lond defende,
 Hir oghne sone agein him sende,
 Which the defence hath undertake.
- 3450 Bot he desconfit was and take; *defeated*
 And whan this king him hadde in honde,
 He wol no mercy understande,
 Bot dede him slen in his presence.
- The tidinge of this violence
 3455 Whan it cam to the moder ere,
 Sche sende anon ay wydewhere
 To suche frendes as sche hadde,
 A gret pouer til that sche ladde.
 In sondri wise and tho sche caste
- 3460 Hou sche this king mai overcaste; *overthrow*
 And ate laste acorded was,
 That in the danger of a pass,
 Thurgh which this tirant scholde passe,
 Sche schop his pouer to compasse
- 3465 With strengthe of men be such a weie *devised a means; surround*
 That he schal noght eschape aweie.
 And whan sche hadde thus ordeigned,
 Sche hath hir oghne bodi feigned,
 For feere as though sche wolde flee
- 3470 Out of hir lond: and whan that he
 Hath herd hou that this ladi fledde,
 So faste after the chace he spedde,
 That he was founde out of array. *out of ranks*
 For it betidde upon a day,
- 3475 Into the pas whanne he was falle, *Those lying in ambush disperse*
 Th'embuisschementz tobrieken alle
 And him beclipte on every side,
 That fle ne myhte he noght aside,
 So that ther weren dede and take
- 3480 Tuo hundred thousand for his sake, *surrounded*
 That weren with him of his host.
 And thus was leid the grete bost
 Of him and of his tirannie.
 It halp no mercy for to crie
- 3485 To him which whilom dede non; *dead; captured*
 For he unto the queene anon
 Was brought, and whan that sche him sih,
 This word sche spak and seide on hih: *saw*
 'O man, which out of mannes kinde
- 3490 Reson of man hast left behinde
 And lived worse than a beste,
 Whom Pité myhte noght areste,
 The mannes blod to schede and spille

- Thou haddest nevere yit thi fille.
 3495 Bot nou the laste time is come,
 That thi malice is overcome:
 As thou til othre men hast do,
 Nou schal be do to thee riht so.'
 Tho bad this ladi that men scholde
 3500 A vessel bringe, in which sche wolde
 Se the vengeance of his juise, *judicial penalty*
 Which sche began anon devise;
 And tok the princes whiche he ladde,
 Be whom his chief conseil he hadde,
 3505 And whil hem lasteth eny breth,
 Sche made hem blede to the deth
 Into the vessel wher it stod.
 And whan it was fulfild of blod,
 Sche caste this tirant therinne,
 3510 And seide him, 'Lo, thus myht thou wynne
 The lustes of thin appetit.
 In blod was whilom thi delit,
 Nou schalt thou drinken al thi fille.'
 And thus onliche of Goddes wille,
 3515 He which that wolde himselfe strange *estrangle*
 To Pité, fond mercy so strange, *From; distant*
 That he withoute grace is lore. *lost*
 So may it schewe wel therfore
 That craulté hath no good ende;
 3520 Bot Pité, hou so that it wende,
 Makth that the God is merciable,
 If ther be cause resonable
 Why that a king schal be pitous.
 Bot elles, if he be doubtous *fearful*
 3525 To slen in cause of rihtwisnesse,
 It mai be said no pitousnesse,
 Bot it is pusillamité, *cowardice*
 Which every prince scholde flee.
 For if Pité mesure excede,
 3530 Kinghode mai noght wel procede
 To do justice upon the riht,
 For it belongeth to a knyht
 Als gladly for to fihte as reste,
 To sette his liege poeple in reste,
 3535 Whan that the werre upon hem falleth. *war*
 For thanne he mote, as it befalleth,
 Of his knyhthode as a leon
 Be to the poeple a champioun
 Withouten eny Pité feigned.
 3540 For if manhode be restreigned,

- Or be it pes or be it werre,
 Justice goth al out of herre,
 So that knyghtode is set behinde.
 Of Aristotles lore I finde,
 3545 A king schal make good visage,
 That no man knowe of his corage
 Bot al honour and worthiness.
 For if a king schal upon gesse
 Withoute verrai cause drede,
 3550 He mai be lich to that I rede;
 And thogh that it be lich a fable,
 Th'ensample is good and resonable.
- in disorder*
- put a good face on things*
- So that*
- Except*
- without due consideration*
- true cause*

[TALE OF THE MOUNTAIN AND THE MOUSE]

- As it be olde daies fell,
 I rede whilom that an hell
 3555 Up in the londes of Archade
 A wonder dredful noise made;
 ⚡ For so it fell that ilke day,
 This hell on his childinge lay,
 And whan the throwes on him come,
 3560 His noise lich the day of dome
 Was ferfull in a mannes thought
 Of thing which that thei sihe noght,
 Bot wel thei herden al aboute
 The noise, of which thei were in doute,
 3565 As thei that wenden to be lore
 Of thing which thanne was unbore.
 The nerr this hell was upon chance
 To taken his diliverance,
 The more unbuxomliche he cride;
 3570 And every man was fledd aside,
 For drede and lefte his oghne hous.
 And ate laste it was a mous
 The which was bore and to norrice
 Betake; and tho thei hield hem nyce,
 3575 For thei withoute cause dradde.
 Thus if a king his herte ladde
 With everything that he schal hiere,
 Fulofte he scholde change his chiere
 And upon fantasie drede,
 3580 Whan that ther is no cause of drede.
- once; hill*
- Arcadia*
- (see note)*
- in childbirth*
- birth pains*
- judgment (doom)*
- fear*
- thought; lost*
- nearer; by chance*
- be delivered*
- defiantly*
- mouse*
- That was born*
- deemed themselves stupid*
- were afraid*
- countenance*
- Horace (see note)*
- rather*
- follow Achilles*
- war; avoid (eschew)*

- 3585 So as Tersites dede at Troie. did
 Achilles al his hole joie
 Sette upon armes for to fihte;
 Tersites soghte al that he myhte
 Unarmed for to stonde in reste:
 3590 Bot of the tuo it was the beste
 That Achilles upon the nede
 Hath do, wheroft his knyhtlihiede
 Is yit comended overal.

[A TIME FOR WAR]

- ¶ King Salomon in special *(see note)*
 3595 Seith, as ther is a time of pes,
 So is a time natholes
 Of werre, in which a prince algate assuredly
 Schal for the comun riht debate
 And for his oghne worschipe eke. *own honor also*
- 3600 Bot it behoveth noght to seke.
 Only the werre for worschipe,
 Bot to the riht of his lordschipe,
 Which he is holde to defende, obliged
 3604 Mote every worthi prince entende.
- ¶ Betwen the simplesce of Pité *innocence; (see note)*
 And the folhaste of craulté, *rashness*
 Wher stant the verray hardiesce, *true bravery*
 Ther mote a king his herte adresce, *must; direct (control)*
 Whanne it is time to forsake, *turn away*
- 3610 And whan time is also to take
 The dedly werres upon honde,
 That he schal for no drede wonde, *Unless; sloth*
 If rihtwisnesse be withal.
 For God is myhty overal
- 3615 To forthren every mannes trowthe, *succeed*
 Bot it be thurgh his oghne slowthe;
 And namely the kinges nede
 It mai noght faile for to spedre, *Since he [the king] represents them all*
 For he stant one for hem alle.
- 3620 So mote it wel the betre falle
 And wel the more God favoureth,
 Whan he the comun riht socoureth. *helps*
 And for to se the sothe in dede,
 Beholde the Bible and thou myht rede
- 3625 Of grete ensamples manyon,
 Wheroft that I wot tellen on.

[GIDEON]

- Upon a time, as it befell,
Agein Judee and Irahel *Judah; Israel*
- 3629 Whan sondri kinges come were
In pourpos to destruie there
The poeple which God kepte tho,
And stod in thilke daies so, *whom; looked after then*
That Gedeon, which scholde lede
The Goddes folk, tok him to rede
3635 And sende in al the lond aboute,
Til he assembled hath a route
With thritti thousand of defence,
To fihte and make resistence
Agein the whiche hem wolde assaille. *attack (assault)*
- 3640 And natheles that o bataille
Of thre that weren enemys
Was double mor than was al his;
Wheroft that Gedeon him dradde,
That he so litel poeple hadde. *battalion*
twice as many
so few
- 3645 Bot He which alle thing mai helpe,
Wher that ther lacketh mannes helpe,
To Gedeon His angel sente,
And bad, er that he forther wente,
Al openly that he do crie *pleasant life*
- 3650 That every man in his partie
Which wolde after his oghne wille
In his delice abide stille
At hom in eny maner wise,
For pourchas or for covoitise, *set out*
- 3655 For lust of love or lacke of herte,
He scholde noght aboute sterte,
Bot holde him stille at hom in pes.
Wheroft upon the morwe he les
Wel twenty thousand men and mo, *keep himself quietly; peace*
lost
- 3660 The whiche after the cri ben go.
Thus was with him bot only left
The thridde part, and yit God eft
His angel sende and seide this
To Gedeon: 'If it so is *proclamation had departed*
- 3665 That I thin help schal undertake,
Thou schalt yit lasse poeple take,
Be whom mi will is that thou spedē.
Forthi to morwe tak good hiede,
Unto the flos whan ye be come, *afterward*
- 3670 What man that hath the water nome
Up in his hond and lapeth so, *fewer*
succeed
river
taken
drinks

- To thi part ches out alle tho;
 And him which wery is to swinke,
 Upon his wombe and lith to drinke,
 3675 Forsak and put hem alle aweie.
 For I am myhti alle weie,
 Wher as me list myn help to schewe
 In goode men, thogh thei ben fewe.'
- This Gedeon awaiteth wel,
 3680 Upon the morwe and everydel,
 As God him bad, riht so he dede.
 And thus ther leften in that stede
 With him thre hundred and no mo,
 The remenant was al ago.
- 3685 Wheroft that Gedeon merveileth,
 And therupon with God conseileth,
 Pleignende als ferforth as he dar.
 And God, which wolde he were war
 That he schal spedē upon his riht,
 3690 Hath bede him go the same nyht
 And take a man with him, to hiere
 What schal be spoke in his matiere
 Among the hethen enemis;
 So mai he be the more wys,
 3695 What afterward him schal befalle.
- This Gedeon amonges alle
 Phara, to whom he triste most,
 Be nyhte tok toward thilke host,
 Which logged was in a valleie,
 3700 To hiere what thei wolden seie;
 Upon his fot and as he ferde,
 Tuo Sarazins spekende he herde.
 Quod on, 'Ared mi svevēne ariht,
 Which I mette in mi slep tonyht.
- 3705 Me thoghte I sih a barli cake,
 Which fro the hull his weie hath take,
 And cam rollende doun at ones;
 And as it were for the nones,
 Forth in his cours so as it ran,
 3710 The kinges tente of Madian,
 Of Amalech, of Amoreie,
 Of Amon and of Jebuseie,
 And many another tente mo
 With gret noise, as me thoghte tho,
 3715 It threw to grounde and overcaste,
 And al this host so sore agaste
 That I awok for pure drede.'
- labor
[And] falls onto his stomach to drink
- pays close attention
just so he did
place
more
gone
- takes counsel
Complaining
- heathen
- lodged
- speaking; heard
Interpret; dream correctly
dreamed
- saw a barley cake
hill
- terrified

- ‘This swene can I wel arede,’ *dream*
 Quod th’other Sarazin anon:
- 3720 ‘The barli cake is Gedeon,
 Which fro the hell doun sodeinly
 Schal come and sette such ascry *outray*
 Upon the kinges and ous bothe,
 That it schal to ous alle lothe. *be hateful*
- 3725 For in such drede he schal ous bringe,
 That if we hadden flyht of wynge,
 The weie on fote in desespeir
 We scholden leve and flen in th’eir, *escape*
 For ther schal nothing him withstonde.’
- 3730 Whan Gedeon hath understande
 This tale, he thonketh God of al,
 And priveliche agein he stal, *stole away*
 So that no lif him hath perceived.
 And thanne he hath fulli conceived *living person*
- 3735 That he schal sped, and therupon *fare well*
 The nyht suiendo he schop to gon
 This multitude to assaile. *following; prepared*
 Nou schalt thou hiere a gret mervaile, *attack*
 With what voisdie that he wroghte.
- 3740 The litel poeple which he broghte, *cunning: worked*
 Was non of hem that he ne hath *small group*
 A pot of erthe, in which he tath *An earthen pot; takes*
 A lyht brennende in a kressette, *lamp (metal cup)*
 And ech of hem ek a trompette
- 3745 Bar in his other hond beside; *time*
 And thus upon the nyhtes tyde *Duke*
 Duk Gedeon, whan it was derk, *Set himself to*
 Ordeineth him unto his werk,
 And parteth thanne his folk in thre,
- 3750 And chargeth hem that thei ne fle, *raise the battle cry*
 And tawhte hem hou thei scholde ascrie *one voice in unison*
 Alle in o vois per compaignie,
 And what word ek thei scholden speke,
 And hou thei scholde here pottes breke
- 3755 Ech on with other, whan thei herde *their pots break*
 That he himselfe ferst so ferde; *That Gideon himself; did so*
 For whan thei come into the stede, *place*
 He bad hem do riht as he dede. *did*
- 3760 And thus stalkende forth a pas *duke*
 This noble duk, whan time was,
 His pot tobrak and loude ascride, *smashed; cried out*
 And tho thei breke on every side.
 The trompe was noght for to seke; *The trumpet [blast] was not far behind*
 He blew, and so thei blewen eke *also*

- 3765 With such a noise among hem alle,
 As thogh the hevene scholde falle.
 The hull unto here vois ansuerde,
 This host in the valleie it herde,
 And sih hou that the hell alyhte;
hill; their
 3770 So what of hieringe and of sihte,
 Thei cawhten such a sodein feere,
 That non of hem belefte there.
 The tentes hole thei forsoke,
 That thei non other good ne toke,
remained
 3775 Bot only with here bodi bare
 Thei fledde, as doth the wylde hare.
 And evere upon the hull thei blewe,
 Til that thei sihe time, and knewe
 That thei be fled upon the rage;
utterly
 3780 And whan thei wiste here avantage,
 Thei felle anon unto the chace.
 Thus myht thou sen hou Goddes grace
 Unto the goode men availeth;
 Bot elles ofte time it faileth
 3785 To suche as be noght wel disposed.
 This tale nedeth noght be glosed,
 For it is openliche schewed
 That God to hem that ben wel thewed
 Hath gove and granted the victoire:
knew their position
 3790 So that th'ensample of this histoire
 Is good for every king to holde;
 Ferst in himself that he beholde
 If he be good of his livinge,
 And that the folk which he schal bringe
 3795 Be good also, for thanne he may
 Be glad of many a merie day,
 In what as evere he hath to done.
 For he which sit above the mone
moon
 And alle thing mai spille and spedē,
 3800 In every cause, in every nede
 His goode king so wel adresceth,
 That alle his fomen he represeth,
 So that ther mai no man him dere;
 And als so wel he can forbere,
destroy; cause to succeed
 3805 And soffre a wickid king to falle
 In hondes of his fomen alle.
directs
enemies
injure

[SAUL AND AGAG]

Nou furthermore if I schal sein
 Of mi matiere, and torne agein

- ¶ To speke of justice and pité *(see note)*
- 3810 After the reule of realté,
This mai a king wel understande,
Knighthode mot ben take on honde,
Whan that it stant upon the nede:
He schal no rihtful cause drede,
3815 No more of werre thanne of pes,
If he wol stonde blameles; *guiltless*
For such a cause a king mai have
That betre him is to sle than save,
Wheroft thou myhte ensample finde.
- 3820 The hihe makere of mankinde
Be Samuel to Saul bad,
That he schal nothing ben adrad
Agein king Agag for to fihte;
For this the Godhede him behihte,
3825 That Agag schal ben overcome;
And whan it is so ferforth come,
That Saul hath him desconfit,
The God bad make no respit,
That he ne scholde him slain anon.
- 3830 Bot Saul let it overgon
And dede noght the Goddes heste.
For Agag made gret beheste
Of rancoun which he wolde give,
King Saul soffreth him to live
3835 And feigneth pité forth withal.
Bot He which seth and knoweth al,
The hihe God, of that he feigneth
To Samuel upon him pleigneth,
And sende him word, for that he lefte
3840 Of Agag that he ne berefte
The lif, he schal noght only dye
Himself, bot fro his regalie
He schal be put foreveremo,
Noght he, bot ek his heir also,
3845 That it schal nevere come agein.

[DAVID AND JOAB]

- Thus myht thou se the sothe plein,
¶ That of to moche and of to lyte *excess and insufficiency (see note)*
Upon the princes stant the wyte. *blame*
- 3850 Bot evere it was a kinges riht
To do the dedes of a knyht;
For in the handes of a king
The deth and lif is al o thing

- After the lawes of justice.
 To selen it is a dedly vice,
 3855 Bot if a man the deth deserve;
 And if a king the lif preserve
 Of him which oghete for to dye,
 He suieth noght th'ensamplerie
 Which in the Bible is evident: *follows*
- 3860 Hou David in his testament,
 Whan he no lengere myhte live,
 Unto his sone in charge hath give
 That he Joab schal selen algate;
 And whan David was gon his gate, *an order has given
at once
had passed on*
- 3865 The yonge wise Salomon
 His fader heste dede anon,
 And slouh Joab in such a wise,
 That thei that herden the juise
 Evere after dradden him the more, *command did immediately
judicial punishment*
- 3870 And God was ek wel paid therfore,
 That he so wolde his herte pley
 The lawes for to justefie.
 And yit he kepte forth withal
 Pité, so as a prince schal, *well pleased
make submissive (mollify)
administer*
- 3875 That he no tirannie wroghte;
 He fond the wisdom which he soghte,
 And was so rihtful natheles,
 That al his lif he stod in pes,
 That he no dedly werres hadde, *esteem*
- 3880 For every man his wisdom dradde.
 And as he was himselfe wys,
 Riht so the worthi men of pris
 He hath of his conseil withholde;
 For that is every prince holde *bound*
- 3885 To make of suche his retenue
 Whiche wise ben, and to remue
 The foles: for ther is nothing
 Which mai be betre aboute a king
 Than conseil, which is the substance *remove
fools*
- 3890 Of all a kinges governance.

[SOLOMON'S WISDOM]

-  In Salomon a man mai see
 What thing of most necessité
 Unto a worthi king belongeth.
 Whan he his kingdom underfongeth, *(see note)*
 3895 God bad him chese what he wolde,
 And seide him that he have scholde *inherits
choose*

- What he wolde axe, as of o thing.
 And he, which was a newe king,
 Forth therupon his bone preide
 3900 To God, and in this wise he seide:
 'O King, be whom that I schal regne,
 Gif me wisdom, that I my regne,
 Forth with Thi poeple which I have,
 To Thin honour mai kepe and save.'
- 3905 Whan Salomon his bone hath taxed,
 The God of that which he hath axed
 Was riht wel paid, and granteth sone
 Noght al only that he his bone
 Schal have of that, bot of richesse,
 3910 Of hele, of pes, of hih noblesse,
 Forth with wisdom at his axinges,
 Which stant above alle othre thinges.
 Bot what king wole his regne save,
 ☩ Ferst him behoveth for to have
 3915 After the God and his believe
 Such conseil which is to believe,
 Fulfilde of trouthe and rihtwisnesse.
 Bot above alle in his noblesse
 Betwen the reddour and pité
 3920 A king schal do such equité
 And sette the balance in evene,
 So that the hihe God in hevene
 And al the poeple of his nobleie
 Loange unto his name seie.
 3925 For most above all erthli good,
 Wher that a king himself is good
 It helpeth, for in other weie
 ☩ If so be that a king forsueie,
 Fulofte er this it hath be sein,
 3930 The comun poeple is overlein
 And hath the kinges senne aboght,
 Althogh the poeple agulte noght.
 Of that the king his God misserveth,
 The poeple takth that he descerveth
 3935 Hier in this world, bot elleswhere
 I not hou it schal stonde there.
 Forthi good is a king to triste
 Ferst to himself, as he ne wiste
 Non other help bot God alone;
 3940 So schal the reule of his persone
 Withinne himself thurgh providence
 Ben of the betre conscience.
- petition prayed*
- by: rule kingdom*
- prayer; demanded*
- pleased*
- health*
- it is obligatory for him (see note)*
- trustworthy*
- severity*
- Praise*
- goes astray (see note)*
- oppressed*
- dearly paid for (suffered)*
- are not guilty*
- suffer what; deserves*
- know not*
- trust*

And for to finde ensample of this,
A tale I rede, and soth it is.

true

[COURTIERS AND THE FOOL]

- 3945 In a cronique it telleth thus:
The king of Rome Lucius
Withinne his chambre upon a nyght
The steward of his hous, a knyht,
Forth with his chamberlein also, *(see note)*
3950 To conseil hadde bothe tuo,
And stoden be the chiminee
Togedre spekende alle thre.
And happeth that the kinges fol *fool*
Sat be the fyr upon a stol,
3955 As he that with his babil pleide, *jester's scepter played*
Bot yit he herde al that thei seide,
And therof token thei non hiede.
The king hem axeth what to rede
Of such matiere as cam to mouthe,
3960 And thei him tolden as thei couthe.
Whan al was spoke of that thei mente,
The king with al his hole entente *whole*
Thanne ate laste hem axeth this,
What king men tellen that he is.
3965 Among the folk touchende his name,
Or be it pris, or be it blame,
Riht after that thei herden sein,
He bad hem for to telle it plein,
That thei no point of soth forbere,
3970 Be thilke feith that thei him bere. *By*
The steward ferst upon this thing
Gaf his ansuere unto the king
And thoghte glose in this matiere, *thought to flatter*
And seide, als fer as he can hiere, *hear*
3975 His name is good and honourable.
Thus was the stieward favorable,
That he the trouthe plein ne tolde.
The king thanne axeth, as he scholde,
The chamberlein of his avis. *thoughts [on the matter]*
3980 And he, that was soubtil and wys,
And somdiel thoghte upon his feith,
Him tolde hou al the poeple seith
That if his conseil were trewe,
Thei wiste thanne wel and knewe *understood*
3985 That of himself he scholde be
A worthi king in his degré.

- And thus the conseil he accuseth
 In partie, and the king excuseth.
 The fol, which herde of al the cas
 3990 That time, as Goddes wille was,
 Sih that thei seiden noght ynowh,
 And hem to skorne bothe lowh,
 And to the king he seide tho:
 'Sire king, if that it were so,
 3995 Of wisdom in thin oghne mod
 That thou thiselven were good,
 Thi conseil scholde noght be badde.'
 The king therof merveille hadde,
 Whan that a fol so wisly spak,
 4000 And of himself fond out the lack
 Withinne his oghne conscience.
 And thus the foles evidence,
 Which was of Goddes grace inspired,
 Makth that good conseil was desired.
 4005 He putte awey the vicious
 And tok to him the vertuous;
 The wrongful lawes ben amended,
 The londes good is wel despended,
 The poeple was no more oppressed,
 4010 And thus stod everything redressed.
 For where a king is propre wys,
 And hath suche as himselfen is
 Of his conseil, it mai noght faile
 That everything ne schal availe.
 4015 The vices thanne gon aweie,
 And every vertu holt his weie;
 Wheroft the hihe God is plesed,
 And al the londes folk is esed.
 For if the comun poeple crie,
 4020 And thanne a king list noght to plie
 To hiere what the clamour wolde,
 And otherwise thanne he scholde
 Desdeigneth for to don hem grace,
 It hath be sen in many place,
 4025 Ther hath befallen gret contrarie;
 And that I finde of ensamplaire.

*said
laughed*

holds its

*chooses not to relent
hear*

*seen repeatedly
misfortune*

[FOLLY OF REHOBOAM]

- After the deth of Salomon,
 Whan thilke wise king was gon,
 And Roboas in his persone
 4030 Receive scholde the corone,

- ¶ The poeple upon a parlement (see note)
 Avised were of on assent,
 And alle unto the king thei preiden,
 With comun vois and thus thei seiden:
 4035 'Oure liege lord, we thee beseche
 That thou receive oure humble speche
 And grante ous that which reson wile,
 Or of thi grace or of thi skile.
 Thi fader, whil he was alyve
 4040 And myhte bothe grante and pryve, take away
 Upon the werkes whiche he hadde
 The comun poeple streite ladde.
 Whan he the temple made newe,
 Thing which men nevere afore knewe
 4045 He broghte up thanne of his taillage, arbitrary taxation
 And al was under the visage
 Of werkes whiche he made tho.
 Guise
 Then
 Bot nou it is befall so,
 That al is mad, riht as he seide,
 4050 And he was riche whan he deide;
 So that it is no maner nede,
 If thou therof wolt taken hiede,
 To pilen of the poeple more,
 Which long time hath be grieved sore. pillage
 4055 And in this wise as we thee seie,
 With tendre herte we thee preie
 That thou relesse thilke dette,
 Which upon ous thi fader sette.
 And if thee like to don so,
 4060 We ben thi men foreveremo,
 To gon and comen at thin heste.'
 The king, which herde this requeste,
 Seith that he wole ben avised, seek advise
 And hath therof a time assissed;
 4065 And in the while as he him thoghte
 Upon this thing, conseil he soghte.
 And ferst the wise knyghtes olde,
 To whom that he his tale tolde,
 ¶ Conseilen him in this manere; (see note)
 4070 That he with love and with glad chiere
 Forgive and grante al that is axed
 Of that his fader hadde taxed;
 For so he mai his regne achieve
 With thing which schal him litel grieve. demanded
 4075 The king hem herde and overpasseth,
 And with these othre his wit compasseth,
 That yonge were and nothing wise. disregards
 made up his mind

- And thei these olde men despise,
 ↗ And seiden: 'Sire, it schal be schame
 4080 Forevere unto thi worthi name,
 If thou ne kepe noght the riht,
 Whil thou art in thi yonge myht,
 Which that thin olde fader gat.
 Bot seie unto the poeple plat
 4085 That whil thou livest in thi lond,
 The leste finger of thin hond
 It schal be strengere overal
 Than was thi fadres bodi al.
 And this also schal be thi tale,
 4090 If he hem smot with roddes smale,
 With scorpions thou schalt hem smyte;
 And wher thi fader tok a lyte,
 Thou thenkst to take mochel more.
 Thus schalt thou make hem drede sore
 4095 The grete herte of thi corage,
 So for to holde hem in servage.'
 This yonge king him hath conformed
 To don as he was last enformed,
 Which was to him his undoinge.
 4100 For whan it cam to the spekinge,
 He hath the yonge conseil holde,
 That he the same wordes tolde
 Of al the poeple in audience;
 And whan thei herden the sentence
 4105 Of his malice and the manace,
 Anon tofore his oghne face
 Thei have him oultreli refused
 And with ful gret reproef accused.
 So thei begunne for to rave,
 4110 That he was fain himself to save;
 For as the wilde wode rage
 Of wyndes makth the see salvage,
 And that was calm bringth into wawe,
 So for defalte of grace and lawe
 4115 This poeple stered al at ones
 And forth thei gon out of hise wones;
 So that of the lignages tuelve
 Tuo tribes only be hemselfe
 With him abiden and no mo.
 4120 So were thei foreveremo
 Of no retorn withoute espeir
 Departed fro the rihtfull heir.
 Al Irahel with comun vois
 A king upon here oghne chois
- (see note) *plainly* *keep them* *utterly* *violence* *sea wild* *turn into a rough sea* *stirred themselves all simultaneously* *territory (place of dwelling)* *twelve tribes* *by themselves* *hope* *Israel*

- 4125 Among hemself anon thei make,
 And have here yonge lord forsake;
 A povere knyht Jeroboas
 Thei toke, and leste Roboas,
 Which rihtfull heir was be descente. *their*
Jereboam
Reheboam
- 4130 Lo, thus the yonge cause wente:
 For that the conseil was noght good,
 The regne fro the rihtfull blod
 Evere afterward divided was.
 So mai it proven be this cas
- 4135 That yong conseil, which is to warm,
 Er men be war doth ofte harm.
 Old age for the conseil serveth,
 And lusti youthe his thonk deserveth
 Upon the travail which he doth; *too zealous*
Before; become prudent
- 4140 And bothe, for to seie a soth,
 Be sondri cause for to have,
 If that he wole his regne save
 A king behoveth every day.
 That on can and that other mai,
- 4145 Be so the king hem bothe reule,
 For elles al goth out of reule. *one possesses knowledge, another power*
Provided that

[WISDOM AND THE KING]

- And upon this matiere also
 A question betwen the tuo
- 4150  Thus writen in a bok I fond;
 Wher it be betre for the lond *(see note)*
Whether
- 4155 A king himselfe to be wys,
 And so to bere his oghne pris,
 And that his consail be noght good,
 Or otherwise if it so stod,
 A king if he be vicious
- 4160 And his conseil be vertuous.
 It is ansuerd in such a wise,
 That betre it is that thei be wise
 Be whom that the conseil schal gon,
 For thei be manye, and he is on; *one*
individual
- 4165 And rathere schal an one man
 With fals conseil, for oghit he can,
 From his wisdom be mad to falle,
 Thanne he alone scholde hem alle
 Fro vices into vertu change,
- 4170 For that is wel the more strange.
 Forthi the lond mai wel be glad,
 Whos king with good conseil is lad, *led*

- Which set him unto rihtwisnesse,
 4170 So that his hihe worthiness
 Betwen the reddour and Pité
 Doth mercy forth with equité.
 A king is holden overal
 To Pité, bot in special
 4175 To hem wher he is most beholde;
 Thei scholde his Pité most beholde
 That ben the lieges of his lond,
 For thei ben evere under his hond
 After the Goddes ordinaunce
 4180 To stonde upon his governance.
- ¶ Of th'empemour Anthonius
 I finde hou that he seide thus,
 That levere him were for to save
 Oon of his lieges than to have
 4185 Of enemis a thousand dede.
 And this he lernede, as I rede,
 Of Cipio, which hadde be
 Consul of Rome. And thus to se
 Diverse ensamples hou thei stonde,
 4190 A king which hath the charge on honde
 The comun poeple to governe,
 If that he wole, he mai wel lerne.
 Is non so good to the plesance
 Of God as is good governance.
- 4195 And every governance is due
 To Pité: thus I mai argue
 That Pité is the foundement
 Of every kinges regiment,
 If it be meddled with justice.
- 4200 Thei tuo remuen alle vice,
 And ben of vertu most vailable
 To make a kinges regne stable.
 Lo, thus the foure pointz tofore,
 In governance as thei ben bore,
 4205 Of Trouthe ferst and of Largesse,
 Of Pité forth with Rihtwisnesse,
 I have hem told; and over this
 The fifte point, so as it is
 Set of the reule of Policie,
- 4210 Wheroft a king schal modefie
 The fleisschly lustes of nature,
 Nou thenk I telle of such mesure,
 That bothe kinde schal be served
 And ek the lawe of God observed."
- especially so
indebted*
- (see note)*
- Scipio; been*
- bound by duty
assert
basis (foundation)*
- blended
Those two get rid of
efficacious*
- sexual urge*

[CHASTITY, THE FIFTH PART OF POLICY]

xi. *Corporis et mentis regem decet omnis honestas,
Nominis vt famam nulla libido ruat.
Omne quod est hominis effemimat illa voluptas,
Sit nisi magnanimi cordis, vt obstet ei.*¹

[Confessor] “The madle is mad for the femele,

male; made; female

4216 Bot where as on desireth fele,
That nedeth noght be weie of kinde:
For whan a man mai redy finde
His oghne wif, what scholde he seche

one; many

nature

4220 In strange places to beseche
To borwe another mannes plouh,
Whan he hath geere good ynouh
Affaited at his oghne heste,
And is to him wel more honeste

seek (entreat)

plow (see note)

implements; enough

Fashioned; command

noble (appropriate)

4225 Than other thing which is unknowe?
Forthi scholde every good man knowe
And thenke, hou that in mariage
His trouthe plight lith in morgage,
Which if he breke, it is falshode,

think

stands as a pledge

4230 And that discordeth to manhode,
And namely toward the grete,
Wheroft the bokes alle trete.

(Aristotle)

teaches

4235 The lore hou that he schal mesure
His bodi, so that no mesure
Of fleisshly lust he scholde excede.
And thus forth if I schal procede,
The fifte point, as I seide er,

seldom

4240 Is Chasteté, which sielde wher
Comth nou adaiies into place;
And natheles, bot it be grace
Above alle othre in special,
Is non that chaste mai ben all.

4245 Bot yit a kinges hihe astat,
Which of his ordre as a prelat
Schal ben enoignt and seintefied
He mot be more magnefied
For digneté of his corone,

sanctified

crown

¹ Every sort of honorableness of body and mind is proper for a king, so that no lust destroys his name's repute. Sensuous indulgence effeminarizes everything there is in a man, unless he be a great-hearted [see note] man who can oppose it.

- 4250 Than scholde another low persone,
Which is noght of so hih emprise.
Therfore a prince him scholde avise,
Er that he felle in such riote,
And namely that he n'assote
4255 To change for the wommanhede
The worthinesse of his manhede.
- ¶ Of Aristotle I have wel rad
Hou he to Alisandre bad
That for to gladen his corage
4260 He schal beholde the visage
Of wommen, whan that thei ben faire.
Bot yit he set an essamplaire,
His bodi so to guide and reule,
That he ne passe noght the reule,
4265 Wherof that he himself beguile.
For in the womman is no guile
Of that a man himself bewhapeth;
Whan he his oghne wit bejapeth,
I can the wommen wel excuse.
4270 Bot what man wole upon hem muse
After the fool impression
Of his ymagnacioun,
Withinne himself the fyr he bloweth,
Wherof the womman nothing knoweth,
4275 So mai sche nothing be to wyte.
For if a man himself excite
To drenche, and wol it noght forbere,
The water schal no blame bere.
What mai the gold, thogh men coveite?
4280 If that a man wol love streite,
The womman hath him nothing bounde;
If he his oghne herte wounde,
Sche mai noght lette the folie;
And thogh so felle of compainie
4285 That he myht eny thing pourchace,
Yit makth a man the ferste chace,
The womman fletch and and he poursuieth:
So that be weie of skile it suith,
The man is cause, hou so besfalle,
4290 That he fuloste sithe is falle
Wher that he mai noght wel aryse.
And natholes ful manye wise
Befoled have hemself er this,
As nou adaiers yit it is
4295 Among the men and evere was,
The stronge is fieblest in this cas.
- achievement (glory)
take into consideration (advise himself)
dissipation (debauchery)
behave not foolishly
- (see note)
- the limit
- befuddles
tricks
- whoever; muse upon them
- blame
cause
drown
- devotedly
- hinder
cruel
- reason; follows
- times
- Deluded; themselves before
- weakest

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| | It sit a man be weie of kinde
To love, bot it is noght kinde
A man for love his wit to lese. | by way of nature
natural
lose |
| 4300 | For if the monthe of Juil schal frese
And that Decembre schal ben hot,
The yeer mistorneth, wel I wot.
To sen a man fro his astat
Thurgh his sotie effeminat, | goes awry; know
see; [apart] from |
| 4305 | And leve that a man schal do,
It is as hose above the scho,
To man which oghte noght ben used.
Bot yit the world hath ofte accused
Ful grete princes of this dede, | By his foolishness [made] effeminate
cease doing what
shoe |
| 4310 | Hou thei for love hemself mislede,
Wheroft manhode stod behinde,
Of olde ensamples as I finde. | customary |

[SARDANAPALUS]

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| | These olde gestes tellen thus,
That whilom Sardana Pallus,
Which hield al hol in his empire
The grete kingdom of Assire, | old stories |
| 4315 | Was thurgh the slouthe of his corage
Falle into thilke fyri rage
Of love, which the men assoteth, | (see note) |
| 4320 | Wheroft himself he so rioteth,
And wax so ferforth womannyssh,
That agein kinde, as if a fissh
Abide wolde upon the lond, | makes fatuous
debauches |
| 4325 | In wommen such a lust he fond,
That he duelte evere in chambre stille,
And only wroghte after the wille
Of wommen, so as he was bede, | |
| | That selden whanne in other stede
If that he wolde wenden oute, | bidden |
| 4330 | To sen hou that it stod aboute.
Bot ther he keste and there he pleide,
Thei tawhten him a las to breide,
And weve a pours, and to enfile | |
| | A perle: and fell that ilke while,
On Barbarus, the Prince of Mede, | kissed; played
train; cord to braid
purse; string |
| 4335 | Sih hou this king in wommanhede
Was falle fro chivalerie,
And gat him help and compaignie, | it so happened |
| | And wroghte so, that ate laste | One; Media |
| 4340 | This king out of his regne he caste, | |

Which was undon foreveremo.
And yit men speken of him so,
That it is schame for to hiere.

[DAVID]

- ¶ Forthi to love is in manere. *love is [i.e., should be] in moderation (see note)*
- 4345 King David hadde many a love,
Bot natheles alwey above
Knyhthode he kepte in such a wise,
That for no fleissqli covoitise
Of lust to ligge in ladi armes
4350 He lefte noght the lust of armes. *warfare*
For where a prince hise lustes suieth,
That he the werre noght poursuieth *desire follows*
Whan it is time to ben armed,
His contré stant fulofte harmed,
4355 Whan th'enemis ben woxe bolde, *are grown overconfident (rash)*
That thei defence non beholde.
Ful manye a lond hath so be lore,
As men mai rede of time afore
Of hem that so here eses soghten,
4360 Which after thei full diere aboghten. *lost*
before

[CYRUS AND THE LYDIANS]

- ¶ To mochel ese is nothing worth, *(see note)*
For that set every vice forth
And every vertu put abak,
Wheroft priss torneth into lak,
4365 As in cronique I mai reherse *sets aside (impede)*
Which telleth hou the king of Perse,
That Cirus hihte, a werre hadde *excellence; deficiency*
Agein a poeple which he dradde,
Of a contré which Liddos hihte;
4370 Bot yit for oght that he do mihte *was called*
As in bataille upon the werre,
He hadde of hem alwey the werre.
And whan he sih and wiste it wel,
That he be strengthe wan no del,
4375 Thanne ate laste he caste a wyle *worse*
This worthi poeple to beguile,
And tok with hem a feigned pes,
Which scholde lasten endeles,
So as he seide in wordes wise,
4380 Bot he thoghte al in other wise. *knew*
For it betidd upon the cas, *peace*
happened

- Whan that this poeple in reste was,
 Thei token eses manyfold;
 And worldes ese, as it is told,
 4385 Be weie of kinde is the norrice *nurse*
 Of every lust which toucheth vice.
 Thus whan thei were in lustes falle,
 The werres ben forgeten alle; *pleasures*
 Was non which wolde the worschipe
 4390 Of armes, bot in idelschipe *honor*
 Thei putten besinesse aweie
 And token hem to daunce and pleie.
 Bot most above alle othre thinges
 Thei token hem to the likinges
 4395 Of fleysshly lust, that chasteté
 Received was in no degré,
 Bot every man doth what him liste.
 And whan the king of Perse it wiste,
 That thei unto folie entenden,
 4400 With his pouer, whan thei lest wenden, *least expected*
 Mor sodeinly than doth the thunder
 He cam, forevere and put hem under.
 And thus hath lecherie lore
 The lond, which hadde be tofore
 4405 The beste of hem that were tho. *lost*
then

[COUNSEL OF BALAAM]

- ¶ And in the Bible I finde also *(see note)*
 A tale lich unto this thing, *like*
 Hou Amalech the paien king, *pagan*
 Whan that he myhte be no weie
 4410 Defende his lond and putte aweie
 The worthi poeple of Israel,
 This Sarazin, as it befell,
 Thurgh the conseil of Balaam
 A route of faire wommen nam, *group; took*
 4415 That lusti were and yonge of age,
 And bad hem gon to the lignage
 Of these Hebreus: and forth thei wente
 With yhen greye and browes bente *arched*
 And wel arraigned everych on;
 4420 And whan thei come were anon
 Among th'Hebreus, was non insihte,
 Bot cacche who that cacche myhte,
 And ech of hem hise lustes soghte,
 Whiche after thei full diere boghte.
 4425 For grace anon began to faile,

- That whan thei comen to bataille
 Thanne afterward, in sori plit
 Thei were take and disconfit,
 So that withinne a litel throwe
 4430 The myht of hem was overthrowe,
 That whilom were wont to stonde.
 Til Phinees the cause on honde
 Hath take, this vengeance laste,
 Bot thanne it cessedate laste,
 4435 For God was paid of that he dede:
 For wher he fond upon a stede
 A couple which misferde so,
 Thurghout he smot hem bothe tuo,
 And let hem ligge in mennes yhe;
 4440 Wheroft alle othre whiche hem sihe
 Ensamplede hem upon the dede,
 And preiden unto the Godhiede
 Here olde sennes to amende:
 And He, which wolde His mercy sende,
 4445 Restored hem to newe grace.
 Thus mai it schewe in sondri place,
 Of chasteté hou the clennesse
 Acordeth to the worthiness
 Of men of armes overal;
 4450 Bot most of alle in special
 This vertu to a king belongeth,
 For upon his fortune it hongeth
 Of that his lond schal sped or spille.
 Forthi bot if a king his wille
 4455 Fro lustes of his fleissh restreigne,
 Agein himself he makth a treigne,
 Into the which if that he slyde,
 Him were betre go besyde.
 For every man mai understande,
 4460 Hou for a time that it stonde,
 It is a sori lust to lyke,
 Whos ende makth a man to syke
 And torneth joies into sorwe.
 The brihte sonne be the morwe
 4465 Beschyneth noght the derke nyht,
 The lusti youthe of mannes myht,
 In age bot it stonde wel,
 Mistorneth al the laste whiel.
- while*
pleased
place
were misbehaving thus
them lie; sight
Their; absolve
purity
succeed; fail
snare
It were better for him to escape
sigh
Shines
Changes for the worse

[LECHEROUS SOLOMON AND THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM]

- That every worthi prince is holde
 4470 Withinne himself himself beholde,
 To se the stat of his persone,
 And thenke hou ther be joies none
- Upon this erthe mad to laste,
 4475 And hou the fleissh schal ate laste
 The lustes of this lif forsake,
 Him oghte a gret ensample take
 Of Salomon, whos appetit
 Was holy set upon delit,
 To take of wommen the plesance.
- So that upon his ignorance
 4480 The wyde world merveileth yit,
 That he, which alle mennes wit
 In thilke time hath overpassed,
 With fleisshly lustes was so tassed
 4485 That he which ladde under the lawe
 The poeple of God, himself withdrawe
 He hath fro God in such a wise,
 That he worschipe and sacrificise
 For sondri love in sondri stede
 4490 Unto the false goddes dede.
 This was the wise ecclesiaste,
 The fame of whom schal evere laste,
 That he the myhti God forsook,
 Agein the lawe whanne he tok
 4495 Hise wyves and hise concubines
 Of hem that weren Sarazines,
 For whiche he dede ydolatrie.
 For this I rede of his sotie:
- Sche of Sidoyne so him ladde,
 4500 That he knelende hise armes spradde
 To Astrathen with gret humblesse,
 Which of hire lond was the goddesse.
- And sche that was a Moabite
 4505 Thurgh lust, which al his wit devoureth,
 That he Chamos hire god honoureth.
- Another Amonyte also
 4510 With love him hath assoted so,
 Hire god Moloch that with encense
 He sacreth, and doth reverence
 In such a wise as sche him bad.
 Thus was the wiseste overlad
- made (see note)*
- wholly*
- burdened*
- withdrawn*
- places*
- dead*
- folly*
- (see note)*
- Astarte*
- (see note)*
- infatuated*
- sacrificed to*
- overcome*

- With blinde lustes whiche he soghte;
 4514 Bot he it afterward aboghte. *paid for*
 ☛ For Achias Selonites, *(see note)*
 Which was prophete, er his decess,
 Whil he was in hise lustes alle,
 Betokneth what schal after falle. *before; demise*
 For on a day, whan that he mette
 4520 Jeroboam the knyht, he grette *Foretells*
 And bad him that he scholde abyde, *met*
 To hiere what him schal betyde.
 And forth withal Achias caste
 His mantell of, and also faste *greeted*
 4525 He kut it into pieces twelve, *off*
 Wherof tuo partz toward himselfe
 He kepte, and al the remenant,
 As God hath set His covenant,
 He tok unto Jeroboas,
 4530 Of Nabal which the sone was
 And of the kinges court a knyht,
 And seide him, 'Such is Goddes myht,
 As thou hast sen departed hiere *divided*
 Mi mantell, riht in such manere
 4535 After the deth of Salomon
 God hath ordeigned therupon,
 This regne thanne he schal divide:
 Which time thou schalt ek abide,
 And upon that division
 4540 The regne as in proporcione
 As thou hast of mi mantell take, *garment*
 Thou schalt receive, I undertake, *swear*
 And thus the sone schal abie *pay for*
 The lustes and the lecherie
 4545 Of him which nou his fader is.'
 So for to taken hiede of this,
 It sit a king wel to be chaste, *befits*
 For elles he mai lihtly waste
 Himself and ek his regne bothe,
 4550 And that oughte every king to lothe.
 O, which a senne violent,
 Wherof so wys a king was schent,
 That the vengeance in his persone *destroyed*
 Was noght ynouh to take alone,
 4555 Bot afterward, whan he was passed,
 It hath his heritage lassed, *diminished (lessened)*
 As I more openli tofore
 The tale tolde. And thus therfore
 ☛ The Philosophre upon this thing *(see note)*

- 4560 Writ and conseileth to a king,
 That he the surfeſt of luxure
 Schal tempre and reule of ſuch meſure,
 Which be to kinde ſufficient
 And ek to reſon acordant,
 4565 So that the luſtes ignorance
 Because of no miſgovernance,
 Thurgh which that he be overthowē,
 As he that wol no reſon knowe.
 For bot a mannes wit be ſwerved,
 4570 Whan kinde is dueſiche ſerved,
 It oghete of reſon to ſuffiſe;
 For if it falle him otherwiſe,
 He mai tho luſtes ſore drede.
- ¶ For of Anthonie thus I rede,
 4575 Which of Severus was the ſone,
 That he his lif of comun wonē
 Gaf holy unto thilke vice,
 And ofte time he was ſo nyce,
 Wheroſt nature hire hath compleigned
 4580 Unto the God, which hath deſigned
 The werkes whiche Antonie wroghte
 Of luſt, whiche he ful ſore aboghte.
 For God his forſet hath ſo wroke
 That in cronique it is yit ſpoke.
 4585 Bot for to take remembrance
 Of ſpecial miſgovernance
 Thurgh covoitise and injuſtice
 Forth with the remenant of vice,
 And nameliche of lecherie,
 4590 I finde write a gret partie
 Withinne a tale, as thou ſchalt hiere,
 Which is th'ensample of thiſ matiere.

[TALE OF TARQUIN AND ARUNS]

- So as theſe olde geſtes ſein,
 The proude tirannyſſh Romein
 4595 Tarquinus, which was thanne king
 And wroghte many a wrongſful thiſg,
 Of ſones hadde manyon,
 Among the whiche Arrons was on,
 ¶ Lich to his fader of maneres;
 4600 So that withinne a fewe yeres
 With tresoun and with tirannie
 Thei wonne of lond a gret partie,
 And token hiede of no justice,

- Which due was to here office *duty*
 4605 Upon the reule of governance.
 Bot al that evere was plesance
 Unto the fleisshes lust thei toke.
 And fell so, that thei undertoke
 A werre, which was noght achieved,
 4610 Bot ofte time it hadde hem grieved,
 Agein a folk which thanne hihte
 The Gabiens: and al be nyhte
 This Arrons, whan he was at home
 In Rome, a privé place he nom
 4615 Withinne a chambre, and bet himselfe
 And made him woundes ten or tuelve
 Upon the bak, as it was sene.
 And so forth with hise hurtes grene *fresh wounds*
 In al the haste that he may
 4620 He rod, and cam that other day
 Unto Gabie the cité,
 And in he wente. And whan that he
 Was knowe, anon the gates schette,
 The lordes alle upon him sette
 4625 With drawe swerdes upon honde.
 This Arrons wolde hem noght withstande,
 Bot seide, 'I am hier at your wille,
 Als lief it is that ye me spille,
 As if myn oghne fader dede.'
 4630 And forthwith in the same stede *place*
 He preide hem that thei wolde se,
 And schewede hem in what degré
 His fader and hise brethren bothe,
 Whiche, as he seide, weren wrothe,
 4635 Him hadde beten and reviled,
 Forevere and out of Rome exiled.
 And thus he made hem to believe,
 And seide, if that he myhte achieve
 His pourpos, it schal wel be yolde,
 4640 Be so that thei him helpe wolde. *rewarded*
 Whan that the lordes hadde sein
 Hou wofully he was besein, *agitated*
 Thei token pité of his grief;
 Bot yit it was hem wonder lief
 4645 That Rome him hadde exiled so. *wondrouslly pleasant to them*
 These Gabiens be conseil tho
 Upon the goddes made him swere,
 That he to hem schal trouthe bere
 And strengthen hem with al his myht;
 4650 And thei also him have behiht *promised*

- To helpen him in his querele.
 Thei schopen thanne for his hele
 That he was bathed and enoignt,
 Til that he was in lusti point;
 4655 And what he wolde thanne he hadde,
 That he al hol the cité ladde
 Riht as he wolde himself divise.
 And thanne he thoghte him in what wise
 He myhte his tirannie schewe;
- 4660 And to his conseil tok a schrewe,
 Whom to his fader forth he sente
 In his message, and he tho wente,
 And preide his fader for to seie
 Be his avis, and finde a weie,
 4665 Hou thei the cité myhten winne,
 Whil that he stod so wel therinne.
 And whan the messager was come
 To Rome, and hath in conseil nome
 The king, it fell per chance so
 4670 That thei were in a gardin tho,
 This messager forth with the king.
 And whanne he hadde told the thing
 In what manere that it stod,
 And that Tarquinus understod
 4675 Be the message hou that it ferde,
 Anon he tok in honde a yerde,
 And in the gardin as thei gon,
 The lylie croppes on and on,
 Wher that thei weren spongen oute,
 4680 He smot of, as thei stode aboute,
 And seide unto the messager:
 'Lo, this thing, which I do nou hier,
 Schal ben in stede of thin ansuere;
 And in this wise as I me bere,
 4685 Thou schalt unto mi sone telle.'
 And he no lengere wolde duelle,
 Bot tok his leve and goth withal
 Unto his lord, and told him al,
 Hou that his fader hadde do.
- 4690 Whan Arrons herde him telle so,
 Anon he wiste what it mente,
 And therto sette al his entente,
 Til he thurgh fraude and tricherie
 The princes hefdes of Gabie
 4695 Hath smiten of, and al was wonne:
 His fader cam tofore the sonne
 Into the toun with the Romeins,
- prepared then; health
 anointed
 vigorous condition
 desired
 completely
 villainous rascal
 taken
 staff
 lily blossoms one by one
 off
 Immediately he knew
 heads
 cut off*

- And tok and slowh the citezeins
Without reson or pité,
4700 That he ne spareth no degré.
And for the sped of this conqueste
He let do make a riche feste
With a sollempne sacrificise
In Phebus temple; and in this wise
4705 Whan the Romeins assembled were,
In presence of hem alle there,
Upon th'alter whan al was diht
And that the fyres were alyht,
From under th'alter sodeinly *prepared
fires; kindled*
- 4710 An hidous serpent openly
Cam out and hath devoured al
The sacrifice, and ek withal
The fyres queynt, and forth anon,
So as he cam, so is he gon *quenched*
- 4715 Into the depe ground agein.
And every man began to sein,
'Ha lord, what mai this signefie?'
And therupon thei preie and crie
To Phebus, that thei mihten knowe
4720 The cause: and he the same throwe
With gastly vois, that alle it herde,
The Romeins in this wise ansuerde,
And seide hou for the wikkidnesse
Of pride and of unrihtwisnesse, *injustice*
- 4725 That Tarquin and his sone hath do,
The sacrifice is wasted so,
Which myhte noght ben acceptable
Upon such senne abhominable.
And over that yit he hem wisseth, *made known to them*
- 4730 And seith that which of hem ferst kisseth
His moder, he schal take wrieche
Upon the wrong. And of that speche
Thei ben withinne here hertes glade,
Thogh thei outward no semblant made. *vengeance*
- 4735 Ther was a knyht which Brutus hihte,
And he with al the haste he myhte
To grounde fell and th'erthe kiste,
Bot non of hem the cause wiste, *knew*
Bot wenden that he hadde sporned *thought; tripped*
- 4740 Per chance, and so was overtorne.
Bot Brutus al another mente;
For he knew wel in his entente
Hou th'erthe of every mannes kinde *a different thing meant*
Is moder. Bot thei weren blinde, *nature*

- 4745 And sihen noght so fer as he.
 Bot whan thei lefsten the cité
 And comen hom to Rome agein,
 Thanne every man which was Romein
 And moder hath, to hire he bende *hastened*
- 4750 And keste, and ech of hem thus wende
 To be the ferste upon the chance,
 Of Tarquin for to do vengance,
 So as thei herden Phebus sein.

[TALE OF THE RAPE OF LUCRECE]

- Bot every time hath his certein, *its duration*
 4755 So moste it nedes thanne abide, *happen*
 Til afterward upon a tyde *time*
-  Tarquinus made unskilfully *without discretion (see note)*
 A werre, which was fasteby *war; nearby*
 Agein a toun with walles stronge
- 4760 Which Ardea was cleped longe, *for a long time*
 And caste a siege theraboute,
 That ther mai no man passen oute.
 So it befell upon a nyht,
 Arrons, which hadde his souper diht, *prepared*
- 4765 A part of the chivalerie *knighthood*
 With him to soupe in compaignie
 Hath bede: and whan thei comen were *invited*
 And seten at the souper there,
 Among here othre wordes glade
- 4770 Arrons a gret spekinge made, *dispute*
 Who hadde tho the beste wif
 Of Rome. And ther began a strif,
 For Arrons seith he hath the beste.
 So jangle thei withoute reste,
- 4775 Til ate laste on Collatin, *one*
 A worthi knyht, and was cousin *who was*
 To Arrons, seide him in this wise:
 'It is,' quod he, 'of non emprise *useless*
 To speke a word, bot of the dede,
- 4780 Theroft it is to taken hiede.
 Anon forthi this same tyde *time*
 Lep on thin hors and let ous ryde:
 So mai we knowe bothe tuo
 Unwarli what oure wyves do,
- 4785 And that schal be a trewe assay.' *assessment*
 This Arrons seith noght ones nay.
 On horse bak anon thei lepte
 In such manere, and nothing slepte,

- Ridende forth til that thei come
 4790 Al prively withinne Rome;
 In strange place and doun thei lihte,
 And take a chambre, and out of sihte
 Thei be desguised for a throwe,
 So that no lif hem scholde knowe.
 4795 And to the paleis ferst thei soghte,
 To se what thing this ladi wroghte
 Of which Arrons made his avant.
 And thei hire sihe of glad semblant,
 Al full of merthes and of bordes;
 4800 Bot among alle hire othre wordes
 Sche spak noght of hire housebonde.
 And whan thei hadde al understande
 Of thilke place what hem liste,
 Thei gon hem forth, that non it wiste,
 4805 Beside thilke gate of bras,
 Collacea which cleped was,
 Wher Collatin hath his duellinge.
 Ther founden thei at hom sittinge
 Lucrece his wif, al environed
 4810 With wommen, whiche are abandoned
 To werche, and sche wroghte ek withal,
 And bad hem haste, and seith, 'It schal
 Be for mi housebondes were,
 Which with his swerd and with his spere
 4815 Lith at the siege in gret desese.
 And if it scholde him noght dispiese,
 Nou wolde God I hadde him hiere;
 For certes til that I mai hiere
 Som good tidinge of his astat,
 4820 Min herte is evere upon debat.
 For so as alle men witnesse,
 He is of such an hardiesse,
 That he can noght himselfe spare,
 And that is al my moste care,
 4825 Whan thei the walles schulle assaile.
 Bot if mi wissches myhte availe,
 I wolde it were a groundles pet,
 Be so the siege were unknelt,
 And I myn housebonde sihe.'
- With that the water in hire yhe
 4830 Aros, that sche ne myhte it stoppe,
 And as men sen the dew bedroppe
 The leves and the floures eke,
 Riht so upon hire whyte cheke
 4835 The wofull salte teres felle.
- hidden
- time
no living person might know them
- boast
- jokes
- they desired
in such a way that no one knew
- surrounded
- utterly devoted
To [their] work; worked
- wearing apparel
- Who
- Lies; discomfort
- If only God wanted that
- hear
- welfare
- in turmoil
- restrain
- it (*Ardea*); bottomless pit
- dispersed
- as [when]; besprinkle
- also

- Whan Collatin hath herd hire telle
 The menyngē of hire trewe herte,
 Anon with that to hire he sterte,
 And seide, 'Lo, mi goode diere,
 4840 Nou is he come to you hiere,
 That ye most loven, as ye sein.'
 And sche with goodly chiere agein
 Beclipte him in hire armes smale,
 And the colour, which erst was pale,
 4845 To beauté thanne was restored,
 So that it myhte noght be mored.
 The kinges sone, which was nyh,
 And of this lady herde and syh
 The thinges as thei ben befallē,
 4850 The resoun of hise wittes alle
 Hath lost; for love upon his part
 Cam thanne, and of his fyri dart
 With such a wounde him hath thurghsmite,
 That he mot nedes fiele and wite
 4855 Of thilke blinde maladie,
 To which no cure of surgerie
 Can helpe. Bot yit nathelē
 At thilke time he hield his pes
 That he no contienance made,
 4860 Bot openly with wordes glade,
 So as he couthe in his manere,
 He spak and made frendly chiere,
 Til it was time for to go.
 And Collatin with him also
 4865 His leve tok, so that be nyhē
 With al the haste that thei myhte
 Thei ride to the siege agein.
 Bot Arrons was so wo besein
 With thoghtes whiche upon him runne,
 4870 That he al be the brode sunne
 To bedde goth, noght for to reste,
 Bot for to thenke upon the beste
 And the faireste forth withal
 That evere he syh or evere schal,
 4875 So as him thoghte in his corage,
 Where he pourtreith hire ymage:
 Ferst the fetures of hir face,
 In which nature hadde alle grace
 Of wommanly beauté beset,
 4880 So that it myhte noght be bet;
 And hou hir yelwe her was tresced
 And hire atir so wel adresced,
- leapt*
- Embraced*
- greater (made more)*
- feel; know*
- woefully afflicted*
- broad daylight*
- best [woman]*
- heart*
- yellow hair; arranged (braided)*
- arrayed*

- And hou sche spak, and hou sche wroghte, *worked*
 And hou sche wepte, al this he thoghte,
 4885 That he forgeten hath no del, *no detail*
 Bot al it liketh him so wel,
 That in the word nor in the dede
 Hire lacketh noght of wommanhiede.
 And thus this tirannysshe knyht
 4890 Was soupled, bot noght half ariht, *moved (made supple)*
 For he non other hiede tok,
 Bot that he myhte be som crok, *by some stratagem*
 Althogh it were agein hire wille,
 The lustes of his fleissh fulfille;
 4895 Which love was noght resonable, *fickle*
 For where honour is remuable, *watched*
 It oughte wel to ben avised. *satisfied*
 Bot he, which hath his lust assised
 With melled love and tirannie, *mingled*
 4900 Hath founde upon his tricherie
 A weie which he thenkth to holde,
 And seith, 'Fortune unto the bolde *(see note)*
 Is favorable for to helpe.'
 And thus withinne himself to yelpe, *boast*
 4905 As he which was a wylde man,
 Upon his treson he began:
 And up he sterte, and forth he wente
 On horsebak, bot his entente
 Ther knew no wiht, and thus he nam *person; took*
 4910 The nexte weie, til he cam *fastest (closest)*
 Unto Collacea the gate
 Of Rome, and it was somdiel late,
 Riht evene upon the sonne set,
 As he which hadde schape his net *Just as*
 4915 Hire innocence to betrappe. *devised*
 And as it scholde tho mishappe, *ensnare*
 Als priveliche as evere he myhte *then*
 He rod, and of his hors alyhte *secretly*
 Tofore Collatines in, *Before; residence (inn)*
 4920 And al frendliche he goth him in, *quite friendly*
 As he that was cousin of house. *[a] relative*
 And sche, which is the goode spouse,
 Lucrece, whan that sche him sih,
 With goodli chiere drowh him nyh,
 4925 As sche which al honour supposeth, *asks*
 And him, so as sche dar, opposeth
 Hou it stod of hire housebonde.
 And he tho dede hire understonde *caused her to understand*
 With tales feigned in his wise,

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| 4930 | Riht as he wolde himself devise,
Wherof he myhte hire herte glade,
That sche the betre chiere made,
Whan sche the glade wordes herde,
Hou that hire housebonde ferde. | <i>fared</i> |
| 4935 | And thus the trouthe was deceived
With slih tresoun, which was received
To hire which mente alle goode.
For as the festes thanne stode,
His souper was ryht wel arraied. | <i>prepared (cooked)
attempted</i> |
| 4940 | Bot yit he hath no word assaied
To speke of love in no degré;
Bot with covert soubtilité
His frendly speches he affaiteth,
And as the tigre his time awaiteth | <i>embellishes</i> |
| 4945 | In hope for to cacche his preie.
Whan that the bordes were aweie
And thei have souped in the halle,
He seith that slep is on him falle,
And preith he moste go to bedde. | <i>tables</i> |
| 4950 | And sche with alle haste spedde,
So as hire thoghte it was to done,
That everything was redi sone.
Sche broghte him to his chambre tho
And tok hire leve, and forth is go | <i>as she thought proper</i> |
| 4955 | Into hire oghne chambre by,
As sche that wende certeinly
Have had a frend, and hadde a fo,
Whero fell after mochel wo. | <i>near at hand
who thought
but [she] had an enemy</i> |
| 4960 | This tirant, thogh he lyhe softe,
Out of his bed aros fulofte,
And goth aboute, and leide his ere
To herkne, til that alle were
To bedde gon and slepten faste. | <i>ear
listen</i> |
| 4965 | And thanne upon himself he caste
A mantell, and his swerd al naked
He tok in honde; and sche unwaked
Abedde lay, bot what sche mette,
God wot; for he the dore unschette | <i>remained asleep
dreamed
knows; unlatched
secretly</i> |
| 4970 | So prively that non it herde,
The softe pas and forth he ferde
Unto the bed wher that sche slepte,
Al sodeinliche and in he crepte,
And hire in bothe his armes tok. | <i>And all suddenly in</i> |
| 4975 | With that this worthi wif awok,
Which thurgh tendresce of wommanhiede
Hire vois hath lost for pure drede. | <i>delicacy</i> |

- That o word speke sche ne dar,
And ek he bad hir to be war,
For if sche made noise or cry,
4980 He seide, his swerd lay faste by
To slen hire and hire folk aboute.
And thus he broghte hire herte in doute,
That lich a lamb whanne it is sesed
In wolves mouth, so was desesed
4985 Lucrece, which he naked fond,
Wheroft sche swounede in his hond,
And, as who seith, lay ded oppressed.
And he, which al him hadde adresced
To lust, tok thanne what him liste,
4990 And goth his wey, that non it wiste,
Into his oghne chambre agein,
And clepede up his chamberlein,
And made him redi for to ryde.
And thus this lecherouse pride
4995 To horse lepte and forth he rod.
And sche, which in hire bed abod,
Whan that sche wiste he was agon,
Sche clepede after liht anon
And up aros long er the day,
5000 And caste awey hire freissh aray,
As sche which hath the world forsake,
And tok upon the clothes blake.
And evere upon continuinge,
Riht as men sen a welle springe,
5005 With yhen fulle of wofull teres,
Hire her hangende aboute hire eres,
Sche wepte, and no man wiste why.
Bot yit among full pitously
Sche preide that thei nolden drecche
5010 Hire housebonde for to fecche
Forth with hire fader ek also.
Thus be thei comen bothe tuo,
And Brutus cam with Collatin,
Which to Lucrece was cousin,
5015 And in thei wenten alle thre
To chambre, wher thei myhten se
The wofulleste upon this molde,
Which wepte as sche to water scholde.
The chambre dore anon was stoke,
5020 Er thei have oght unto hire spoke;
Thei sihe hire clothes al desguised,
And hou sche hath hirself despised,
Hire her hangende unkemd aboute,
- careful*
intimidated her
seized
terrified
completely overwhelmed
had prepared himself
pleased him
knew
arrogant lecher
remained
knew
before
black
incessantly
eyes
hair; ears
would not delay
most woeful; earth
as if she would [turn] into water
closed
all in disarray
hated
hair; uncombed

- Bot nathelas sche gan to loute *bow*
 5025 And knele unto hire housebonde;
 And he, which fain wolde understande
 The cause why sche ferde so, *who was eager to know
behaved*
 With softe wordes axeth tho,
 'What mai you be, mi goode swete?' *then*
 5030 And sche, which thoghte hirself unmete
 And the lest worth of wommen alle,
 Hire wofull chiere let doun falle
 For schame and couthe unnethes loke. *What is wrong
unfit (horrible to look upon)*
 And thei therof good hiede toke,
 5035 And preiden hire in alle weie
 That sche ne spare for to seie
 Unto hir frendes what hire eileth,
 Why sche so sore hirself beweileth, *most worthless
countenance*
 And what the sothe wolde mene.
 5040 And sche, which hath hire sorwes grene, *troubles*
 Hire wo to telle thanne assaith,
 Bot tendre schame hire word delaieth,
 That sondri times as sche minte *laments*
 To speke, upon the point sche stinte.
 5045 And thei hire bidden evere in on
 To telle forth, and therupon,
 Whan that sche sih sche moste nede,
 Hire tale betwen schame and drede
 Sche tolde, noght withoute peine. *intended
stopped*
 5050 And he, which wolde hire wo restreigne, *saw; needs must do it*
 Hire housebonde, a sory man,
 Conforteth hire al that he can,
 And swor, and ek hire fader bothe,
 That thei with hire be noght wrothe *mortification*
 5055 Of that is don agein hire wille;
 And preiden hire to be stille,
 For thei to hire have al forgive.
 Bot sche, which thoghte noght to live,
 Of hem wol no forgivenesse, *angry*
 5060 And seide, of thilke wickednesse
 Which was unto hire bodi wroght,
 Al were it so sche myhte it noght,
 Nevere afterward the world ne schal
 Reproeven hire; and forth withal, *Rebuke*
 5065 Er eny man therof be war,
 A naked swerd, the which sche bar
 Withinne hire mantel priveli,
 Betwen hire hondes sodeinly
 Sche tok, and thurgh hire herte it throng, *pierced*
 5070 And fell to grounde, and evere among,

- Whan that sche fell, so as sche myhte,
 Hire clothes with hire hand sche rihte,
 That no man dounward fro the kne
 Scholde eny thing of hire se:
 5075 Thus lay this wif honestly,
 Althogh she deide wofully.
 Tho was no sorwe for to seke.
 Hire housebonde, hire fader eke
 Aswoune upon the bodi felle;
 5080 Ther mai no mannes tunge telle
 In which anguissh that thei were.
 Bot Brutus, which was with hem there,
 Toward himself his herte kepte,
 5085 And to Lucrece anon he lept,
 The blodi swerd and pulleth oute,
 And swor the goddes al aboute
 That he therof schal do vengance.
 And sche tho made a contienance,
 Hire dedlich yhe and ate laste
 5090 In thonkinge as it were up caste,
 And so behield him in the wise,
 Whil sche to loke mai suffise.
 And Brutus with a manlich herte
 Hire housebonde hath mad up sterte
 5095 Forth with hire fader ek also
 In alle haste, and seide hem tho
 That thei anon withoute lette
 A beere for the body fette;
 Lucrece and therupon bledende
 5100 He leide, and so forth out criende
 He goth into the marketplace
 Of Rome: and in litel space
 Thurgh cry the cité was assembled,
 And every mannes herte is trembled,
 5105 Whan thei the sothe herde of the cas.
 And therupon the conseil was
 Take of the grete and of the smale,
 And Brutus tolde hem al the tale.
 And thus cam into remembrance
 5110 Of senne the continuance,
 Which Arrons hadde do tofore,
 And ek, long time er he was bore,
 Of that his fadre hadde do
 The wrong cam into place tho;
 5115 So that the comun clamour tolde
 The newe schame of sennes olde.
 And al the toun began to crie,
- adjusted*
So that
honorable
also
Fainting
expression
delay
bier (coffin); obtain
bleeding
gathered
shaken
persistence
done before
done

- ‘Awey, awey the tirannie
Of lecherie and covoitise!’ *Away, away with*
 5120 And ate laste in such a wise
The fader in the same while
Forth with his sone thei exile,
And taken betre governance.
Bot yit another remembrance
 5125 That rihtwisnesse and lecherie
Acorden noght in compaignie
With him that hath the lawe on honde,
That mai a man wel understande,
As be a tale thou shalt wite,
 5130 Of olde ensample as it is write. *know*

[TALE OF VIRGINIA]

- At Rome whan that Apius,
Whos other name is Claudius,
Was governour of the cité,
Ther fell a wonder thing to se
 5135 Touchende a gentil maide, as thus,
Whom Livius Virginius *Concerning*
 Begeten hadde upon his wif. *(see note)*
Men seiden that so fair a lif
As sche was noght in al the toun.
 5140 This fame, which goth up and doun,
To Claudius cam in his ere,
Wheroft his thoght anon was there,
Which al his herte hath set afyre,
That he began the flour desire *flower*
 5145 Which longeth unto maydenhede,
And sende, if that he myhte sped
The blinde lustes of his wille.
Bot that thing mai he noght fulfille,
For sche stod upon mariage. *was engaged to be married*
 5150 A worthi kniht of gret lignage,
Illicius which thanne hihte,
Acorded in hire fader sihte *was called*
Was, that he scholde his doucher wedde.
Bot er the cause fully spedde, *before the endeavor was finished*
 5155 Hire fader, which in Romanie
The ledinge of chivalerie
In governance hath undertake,
Upon a werre which was take
Goth out with al the strengthe he hadde *underway*
 5160 Of men of armes whiche he ladde.
So was the mariage left,

- And stod upon accord til eft.
 The king, which herde telle of this,
 Hou that this maide ordeigned is
 5165 To mariage, thoghte another.
 And hadde thilke time a brother,
 Which Marchus Claudius was hote,
 And was a man of such riote
 Riht as the king himselfe was.
- 5170 Thei tuo togedre upon this cas
 In conseil founden out this weie,
 That Marchus Claudius schal seie
 Hou sche be weie of covenant
 To his service appourtenant
- 5175 Was hol, and to non other man;
 And therupon he seith he can
 In every point witnesse take,
 So that sche schal it noght forsake.
 Whan that thei hadden schape so,
- 5180 After the lawe which was tho,
 Whil that hir fader was absent,
 Sche was somouned and assent
 To come in presence of the king
 And stonde in ansuere of this thing.
- 5185 Hire frendes wisten alle wel
 That it was falshed everydel,
 And comen to the king and seiden,
 Upon the comun lawe and preiden,
 So as this noble worthi knyht
- 5190 Hir fader for the comun riht
 In thilke time, as was befallie,
 Lai for the profit of hem alle
 Upon the wylde feldes armed,
 That he ne scholde noght ben harmed
- 5195 Ne schamed, whil that he were oute;
 And thus thei preiden al aboute.
 For al the clamour that he herde,
 The king upon his lust ansuerde,
 And gaf hem only daies tuo
- 5200 Of respit; for he wende tho,
 That in so schorte a time appiere
 Hire fader mihte in no manere.
 Bot as therof he was deceived,
 For Livius hadde al conceived
- 5205 The pourpos of the king tofore,
 So that to Rome agein therfore
 In alle haste he cam ridende,
 And lefte upon the field liggende
- by agreement [to be pursued] later*
pledged
intended
was called
lecherous disposition
wholly
devised
sent for
knew
utterly false
figured then
riding

- | | | |
|------|---|-----------------------------------|
| | His host, til that he come agein.
And thus this worthi capitein
Appiereth redi at his day,
Wher al that evere reson may
Be lawe in audience he doth,
So that his dowhter upon soth | army till he should come |
| 5210 | Of that Marchus hire hadde accused
He hath tofore the court excused.
The king, which sih his pourpos faile,
And that no sleihte mihte availe,
Encombred of his lustes blinde | |
| 5215 | The lawe torneth out of kinde,
And half in wraththe as thogh it were,
In presence of hem alle there
Deceived of concupiscence | |
| 5220 | Gaf for his brother the sentence,
And bad him that he scholde sese
This maide and make him wel at ese;
Bot al withinne his oghne entente | <i>Misled by</i> |
| 5225 | He wiste hou that the cause wente,
Of that his brother hath the wyte | <i>seize</i> |
| 5230 | He was himselfen for to wyte.
Bot thus this maiden hadde wrong,
Which was upon the king along,
Bot agein him was non appel, | <i>knew</i> |
| 5235 | And that the fader wiste wel.
Wheroft upon the tirannie,
That for the lust of Lecherie
His douhter scholde be deceived, | <i>censure</i> |
| 5240 | And that Ilicius was weyved
Untrewly fro the mariage,
Riht as a leon in his rage, | <i>to be blamed</i> |
| 5245 | Which of no drede set acompte
And not what pité scholde amounte,
A naked swerd he pulleth oute, | <i>was wronged</i> |
| 5250 | The which amonges al the route
He threste thurgh his dowhter side,
And al alowd this word he cride:
'Lo, take hire ther, thou wrongfull king, | <i>caused by the king</i> |
| 5255 | For me is levere upon this thing
To be the fader of a maide,
Thogh sche be ded, than if men saide
That in hir lif sche were schamed | <i>against; recourse (appeal)</i> |
| | And I therof were evele named.' | <i>knew</i> |
| | Tho bad the king men scholde areste
His bodi, bot of thilke heste,
Lich to the chaced wylde bor, | <i>obstructed</i> |
| | | <i>Maliciously</i> |
| | | <i>lion</i> |
| | | <i>knows not; lead to</i> |
| | | <i>thrust</i> |
| | | <i>capture (seize)</i> |
| | | <i>command</i> |
| | | <i>hunted wild boar</i> |

- The houndes whan he fieleth sor,
 Tothroweth and goth forth his weie,
 In such a wise for to seie
 This worthi kniht with swerd on honde
 5260 His weie made, and thei him wonde, *avoid*
 That non of hem his strokes kepte; *parried*
 And thus upon his hors he lept,
 And with his swerd droppende of blod,
 The which withinne his doucher stod,
 5265 He cam ther as the pouer was
 Of Rome, and tolde hem al the cas,
 And seid hem that thei myhten liere
 Upon the wrong of his matiere,
 That betre it were to redresce
 5270 At hom the grete unrihtwisnesse, *injustice*
 Than for to werre in strange place *make war; foreign*
 And lese at hom here oghne grace. *lose; their own*
 For thus stant every mannes lif
 In jeupartie for his wif *In danger*
 5275 Or for his dowhter, if thei be
 Passende another of beauté.
 Of this merveile which thei sihe *saw*
 So apparant tofore here yhe, *clearly before their eyes*
 Of that the king him hath misbore,
 5280 Here othes thei have alle swore
 That thei wol stonde be the riht.
 And thus of on accord upriht
 To Rome at ones hom agein
 Thei torne, and schortly for to sein,
 5285 This tirannyne cam to mouthe, *was spoken of (came to mouth)*
 And every man seith what he couthe, *knew*
 So that the privé tricherie,
 Which set was upon lecherie,
 Cam openly to mannes ere; *ear*
 5290 And that broghte in the comun feere,
 That every man the peril dradde
 Of him that so hem overladde.
 Forthi, er that it worse falle,
 Thurgh comun conseil of hem alle
 5295 Thei have here wrongfull king deposed,
 And hem in whom it was supposed
 The conseil stod of his ledinge
 Be lawe unto the dom thei bringe,
 Wher thei receiven the penance
 5300 That longeth to such governance.
 And thus th'unchaste was chastised,
 Wherof thei myhte ben avised

- That scholden afterward governe,
And be this evidence lerne,
5305 Hou it is good a king eschui
The lust of vice and vertu suie. avoid
follow

[TALE OF TOBIAS AND SARA]

- To make an ende in this partie,
Which toucheth to the Policie
Of Chastité in special,
5310 As for conclusion final
- ¶ That every lust is to eschue (see note)
Be gret ensample I mai argue:
Hou in Rages a toun of Mede
Ther was a mayde, and as I rede,
- 5315 Sarra sche hihte, and Raguel was called
Hir fader was; and so befell,
Of bodi bothe and of visage
Was non so fair of the lignage,
- 5320 To seche among hem alle, as sche;
Wheroft the riche of the cité,
Of lusti folk that couden love,
Assoted were upon hire love, Crazy
And asken hire for to wedde.
- 5325 On was which ate laste spedde,
Bot that was more for likinge,
To have his lust, than for weddinge,
As he withinne his herte caste,
Which him repenteth ate laste.
- 5330 For so it fell the ferste nyht, prepared
That whanne he was to bedde dyht,
As he which nothing God besecheth
Bot al only hise lustes secheth,
Abedde er he was fully warm
- 5335 And wolde have take hire in his arm,
Asmod, which was a fend of helle,
And serveth, as the bokes telle,
To tempte a man of such a wise,
Was redy there, and thilke emprise,
- 5340 Which he hath set upon delit,
He vengeth thanne in such a plit,
That he his necke hath writhe atuo.
This yonge wif was sory tho, Who knew
Which wiste nothing what it mente;
- 5345 And natholes yit thus it wente
Noght only of this ferste man,
Bot after, riht as he began,

- Sexe othre of hire housebondes
 Asmod hath take into hise bondes,
 So that thei alle abedde deiden
 5350 Whan thei her hand toward hir leiden,
 Noght for the lawe of mariage,
 Bot for that ilke fyri rage
 In which that thei the lawe excede.
 For who that wolde taken hiede
 5355 What after fell in this matiere,
 Ther mihte he wel the sothe hiere.
 Whan sche was wedded to Thobie,
 And Raphael in compainie
 Hath tawht him hou to ben honeste,
 5360 Asmod wan noght at thilke feste,
 And yit Thobie his wille hadde;
 For he his lust so goodly ladde,
 That bothe lawe and kinde is served,
 Wheroft he hath himself preserved,
 5365 That he fell noght in the sentence.
 O which an open evidence
 Of this ensample a man mai se,
 That whan likinge in the degré
 Of mariage mai forsueie,
 5370 Wel oghte him thanne in other weie
 Of lust to be the betre avised.
 For God the lawes hath assissed
 Als wel to reson as to kinde,
 Bot he the bestes wolde binde
 5375 Only to lawes of nature,
 Bot to the mannes creature
 God gaf him reson forth withal,
 Wheroft that he nature schal
 5379 Upon the causes modefie,
Nota That he schal do no lecherie,
 And yit he schal hise lustes have.
 So ben the lawes bothe save
 And everything put out of scandre;
 As whilom to king Alisandre
 5385 The wise Philosophre tawhite,
 Whan he his ferste lore cawhte,
 Noght only upon chasteté,
 Bot upon alle honesteté;
 Wheroft a king himself mai taste,
 5390 Hou trewe, hou large, hou joust, hou chaste
 Him oghte of reson for to be,
 Forth with the vertu of Pité,
 Thurgh which he mai gret thonk deserve
- died in bed*
their; laid
- honorable*
- desire so seemly governed*
- go wrong*
- submitted*
- (see note)*
satisfaction
- teaching received*
- honorableness*

- 5395 Toward his Godd, that he preserve
 Him and his poeple in alle welthe
 Of pes, richesse, honour and helthe
 Hier in this world and elles eke.
- Confessor** Mi sone, as we tofore spieke
 In schrifte, so as thou me seidest,
 5400 And for thin ese, as thou me preidest,
 Thi love throghes for to lisso,
 That I thee wolde telle and wisse
 The forme of Aristotles lore,
 I have it seid, and somdiel more
 5405 Of othre ensamples, to assaie
 If I thi peines myhte allae
 Thurgh eny thing that I can seie.”
- Amans** “Do wey, mi fader, I you preie!
 Of that ye have unto me told
 5410 I thonke you a thousandfold.
 The tales sounen in myn ere,
 Bot yit myn herte is elleswhere,
 I mai miselve noght restreigne,
 That I nam evere in loves peine.
 5415 Such lore couthe I nevere gete,
 Which myhte make me forgete
 O point, bot if so were I slepte,
 That I my tydes ay ne kepte
 To thenke of love and of his lawe;
 5420 That herte can I noght withdrawe.
 Forthi, my goode fader diere,
 Lef al and speke of my matiere
 Touchende of love, as we begonne:
 If that ther be oght overronne
 5425 Or oght forgete or left behinde
 Which falleth unto loves kinde,
 Wheroft nedeth to be schrive,
 Nou axeth, so that whil I live
 5429 I myhte amende that is mys.”
- Confessor** “Mi goode diere sone, yis.
 Thi schrifte for to make plein,
 Ther is yit more for to sein
 Of love which is unavised.
 Bot for thou schalt be wel avised
 5435 Unto thi schrifte as it belongeth,
 A point which upon love hongeth
 And is the laste of alle tho,
 I wol thee telle, and thanne ‘Ho.’”
- throes; relieve
guide
try
alleviate
Enough of this
resound; ear
am not
unless
feeling
Leave
skipped over
yes
ill-considered
[say] “stop”



EXPLANATORY NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS: **Bart.** *Ang.*: Trevisa's translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *On the Properties of Things*; **BD**: Chaucer, *Book of the Duchess*; **CA**: Gower, *Confessio Amantis*; **De nuptiis**: Martianus Capella, *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*; **CT**: Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*; **De formis**: Petrus Berchorius, *De formis figurisque deorum*; **De Is**: Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*; **Did.**: Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalion*; **Diod.**: Diodorus Siculus, *Historia Librii*; **Etym.**: Isidore, *Etimologiae* (PL 82); **Ful.**: Fulgentius, *Mythographies*; **Gen. deorum**: Boccaccio, *Genealogie deorum gentilium libri*; **HF**: Chaucer, *House of Fame*; **Hyg.**: Hyginus, *The Myths of Hyginus* (*Fabulae*); **LGW**: Chaucer, *Legend of Good Women*; **Mac**: G. C. Macaulay (4 vol. *Complete Works*); **MED**: *Middle English Dictionary*; **Met.**: Ovid, *Metamorphoses*; **MO**: Gower, *Mirour de l'Omme*; **OCCL**: *Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*; **OED**: *Oxford English Dictionary*; **PL**: *Patrologia Latina*; **Poet. astr.**: Hyginus, *Poetica astronomica*; **RR**: Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose*; **TC**: Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*; **Trésor**: Brunetto Latini, *The Book of the Treasure*; **Val. Max.**: Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*; **Vat. Myth.**: Vatican Mythographer I, II, or III; **VC**: Gower, *Vox Clamantis*; **Vit. Barl.**: *Vitae Sanctorum Barlaam Ermitae et Josaphat Indiae Regis*. For manuscript abbreviations, see p. 34.

EXPLANATORY NOTES TO BOOK 5

- 8 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic in quinto libro intendit Confessor tractare de Auaricia, que omnium malorum radix dicitur, necnon et de eiusdem vicii speciebus: set primo ipsius Auaricie naturam describens Amanti quatenus amorem concernit super hoc specialius opponit.* [Here in the fifth book the Confessor intends to discourse about Avarice, which is called the root of all evils, and also about the species of this vice. But first, describing the nature of Avarice to the Lover in so far as it concerns love, on this he particularly questions him.]
- 17–18 *on honde . . . to londe.* A poetic tag “with little semantic content” (*OED lond* n. 1[g]), which, with *comen to*, means “to occur,” “happen.” Compare 1.3288–89 and 5.4899–4900. See also 5.341–42 and 5.975–76.
- 49–57 Compare *MO* 7645 ff. on the idea that the money owns the avaricious person rather than the other way around.
- 79–90 Here Gower uses as many as six *rimes riches* in succession, a technique he had perfected in *MO*. Itô (*John Gower*, pp. 224–25) notes that Gower uses this kind of wordplay more in dialogue between the Confessor and Amans than in the tales themselves. For further discussion of Gower's use of *rime équivoque* in these lines, see Olsen, “*Betwene Ernest and Game*”, pp. 55–56, and Zarins, “*Poetic Justice*,” on *rime riche*.

- 123 ff. *Unto the gold schal serve and bowe.* Macaulay (2.514n127–36) notes how Gower emphasizes gold's mastery over its servants by placing *gold* as the first stressed word in lines 127, 134, and 136, as if the iteration exemplifies gold's control of its avaricious thralls.
- 141 ff. Gower's story of Midas is based on *Met.* 11.85–145. Midas' debate over the three choices is Gower's addition to the traditional story. See also *Hyg.* 191, and *Ful.* 2.10. For discussion of Gower's manipulation of Ovid's tale, see Moran, "Tale of Midas."
- 143 *Cillenus.* Silenus was a wise but truculent satyr, who was raised by Dionysus. Midas captured him and forced him to reveal his wisdom, namely, that it is best never to have been born, second best to die as soon as possible (Herodotus 8.138, Pseudo-Plutarch, *Consolatio ad Apollonium* 27, and Virgil, Eclogue 6). Godley draws a parallel between the capture of Silenus and Menelaus' capture of Proteus in *The Odyssey* (Herodotus, p.145n2). Silenus was notorious for his drunkenness.
- 146 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur contra istos Auaros. Et narrat qualiter Mida Rex Frigie Cillenum Bachi sacerdotem, quem rustici vinculis ferreis alligarunt, dissoluit, et in hospicium suum benignissime recollegit; pro quo Bacchus quodcumque manus Rex exigere vellet donari concessit. Vnde Rex Auaricia ductus, ut quicquid tangeret in aurum conuerteretur, indiscrete peciit. Quo facto postea contigit quod cibos cum ipse sumere vellet, in aurum conuersos manducare non potuit. Et sic percipiens aurum pro tunc non posse sibi valere, illud auferri, et tunc ea que victui sufficerent necessaria iteratis precibus a deo mitissime postulauit.* [Here he speaks against the avaricious, and he tells how Midas of Frigia released Silenus the priest of Bacchus, whom peasants had bound in iron chains, and how Midas most benignly nurtured him in his own residence. For this, Bacchus granted that the king be given as much as his hand might reach to. Wherefore the king, led by avarice, foolishly requested that whatever he touched be turned to gold. With this made so, it happened that the food he wanted to take turned to gold, and he could not eat; and thus perceiving that the gold now could not help him, he most humbly begged the god with repeated prayers to take it away, and then supply those necessities which might suffice for victuals.]
- 236 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Salomon. Pecunie obediunt omnia.* [Solomon: "All things obey money" (Ecclesiastes 10:19).]
- 249 ff. Compare MO 7063–7108 on the likening of the avaricious man to one afflicted with dropsy, that dries up a man with unnatural thirst, regardless of how much he drinks.
- 334 *To for the time.* On Gower's *ubi sunt* nostalgic response within the rhetoric of complaint satire to the former age as a golden time before gold was smitten, see Peter, *Complaint and Satire*, p. 70.
- 363 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de pena Tantali, cuius amara sitis dampnatos torquet auaros.* [Note concerning the punishment of Tantalus, whose bitter thirst tortures the avaricious in hell.]

The story of Tantalus was well known: for example, Hyg. 82; Ful. 2.18; Vat. Myth. II 102; *Gen. deorum* 12.1. Ovid alludes to the story several times, though he never tells it fully.

- 388 *which a wreche*. The sense might be “what a miserable person.” But I have followed Macaulay’s gloss (2.515) “what a punishment” as being especially apt to the context.
- 389 *couth*. *MED* gives “known; well-known, familiar,” *couth*, adj. (1a), citing this line. But I have preferred 1b, “evident.” “Near” would be satisfactory, too, though “evident,” meaning “in front of your face” is better.
- 461 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Nota de Ialousia, cuius fantastica suspicio amorem quamuis fidelissimum multociens sine causa corruptum ymaginatur.* [Note concerning Jealousy, whose phantasmic suspicion very often baselessly imagines that love, even if most faithful, is corrupt.] Compare the fantastic rage of Jean de Meun’s jealous husband in *RR*, lines 8455–9492. Both writers associate jealousy with Avarice. Chaucer likewise draws upon the tradition in creating jealous husbands like old Januarie in The Merchant’s Tale, who would keep May locked in his garden; or John the carpenter and his sweet Alison in The Miller’s Tale: “Jalous he was, and heeld hire narwe in cage” (*CT* I[A]3224). For women, jealousy is seen to be a self-protective virtue, though still the source of often baseless fantasies (though sometimes not so baseless) as it would help the women to protect what is rightfully hers. See *RR*, lines 3526–754, where li Jaloux stirs Daungier (Resistance) into action against Amans.
- 464 *fievere . . . cotidian*. Although jealousy is commonly seen to be a kind of rage, jealous love is often compared to a debilitating daily fever. See *RR* lines 1831 ff., where the god of love instructs the lover on the pains of love, along with the pains of the jealous lover described by Friend in lines 8455 ff.; or the feverish self-protective behavior of Troilus in *TC* 1.491, 1.916, 2.1520, or 3. 1213. See also Chaucer’s *Romaunt*, lines 2391–2452, a passage close to Gowen’s portrayal of the indolent, love-sick, jealous Amans in *CA* 4.1648–1770, 4.2746–2916, and 5.467 ff.
- 468 *of comun wone*. “of common practice, custom, or habit.” See 5.851 and 3.149 for similar use of the idiom.
- 513 *aliche grene*. Jealousy is the green sickness; see *OED* adj. (3a) on the green eye of jealousy and the green, bilious, pale, sickly complexion associated with jealousy. See also *OED* “green-eyed.”
- 558–59 *gold unpursed . . . leid upon the bok*. See Macaulay (2.515n558–59): “The gold in question is that which is laid upon the service-book in payment of the marriage fees: ‘and the Man shall give unto the Woman a Ring, laying the same upon the book with the accustomed duty to the Priest and Clerk.’ *Marriage Service*.”
- 564 The gloss is from Macaulay (2.515), who compares the usage to Prol. 154.
- 591–94 See Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, p. 172, on the possibilities of “deceptive psychological ‘information’” capable of transforming man from his ideal state.

Much of Amans' reception of Genius' examples in Books 2–6, but especially in Book 3, illustrates the problems of *feigned enformacion* (line 593), as one chooses to give it and the other to receive it, a key, perhaps, to the main thrust of Genius and Amans' unstable debate in the middle books of the poem.

- 639–700 The author of *Chaucer's Ghoast* (1672) steals and adapts these lines as if they were his own in his Arg. 7, the story of Venus, Mars, and Vulcan. He presents the passage as if he were affecting Chaucer's style in presenting Ovidian tales, "penn'd after the ancient manner of writing in England." The plagiarism is proof that Gower is at least being read during the Restoration period, albeit considered obscure enough to pass as another's work. See also 5.6225–81 and 5.6715–80.
- 642 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum contra istos maritos quos Ialousia maculauit. Et narrat qualiter Vulcanus, cuius vxor Venus extilit, suspicionem inter ipsam et Martem concipiens, eorum gestus diligencius explorabat: vnde contigit quod ipse quadam vice ambos inter se pariter amplexantes in lecto nudos inuenit, et exclamans omnem ceterum deorum et dearum ad tantum spectaculum conuocauit: super quo tamen derisum pocius quam remedium a tota cohorte consecutus est.* [Here he presents an instructive example against those husbands whom jealousy has tainted. And he narrates how Vulcan, whose wife was Venus, conceiving a suspicion about something between her and Mars, scrutinized very diligently their activities. Whence it happened that he by a certain chance discovered both of them naked, entwined with one another in bed, and, crying out, he convened all the rest of the gods and goddesses to such a spectacle. Nonetheless, laughter from all the court, rather than a remedy, followed thereupon.] Vulcan's capturing of Mars in bed with Venus is one of the favorites of all ancient stories. See Hyg. 148; Vat. Myth. II 121; *Gen. deorum* 9.3; and *Met.* 4.170; *Ars amatoria* 2.589; and *Vit. Barl.* (PL 78.551), to name a few.
- 729 ff. Macaulay's indignation at "the very ill-advised digression" (2.515) on pagan religions is sufficiently unsedate to be quoted in full:
- There is no more reason why this should come in here than anywhere else, indeed if the question of false gods was to be raised at all, it ought to have come in as an explanation of the appearance of Venus and Cupid in the first book. Many stories have been told, for example those of Acteon, of the Gorgons, of Tiresias, of Phoebus and Daphne, of Phaeton, of Ceix, of Argus, and of Midas, which required the explanation quite as much as this one, and the awkwardness of putting it all into the mouth of the priest of Venus is inexcusable.
- 732–1302 Gower's principal authority in his discussion of the Chaldean, Egyptian, and Greek religions is *Vit. Barl.* 1.27 (PL 73.548–55), the *cronique* that he mentions in lines 816 and 837 (N.b. the ME translation *Barlam and Iosaphat*). Although that work includes lore on the Greek gods, Gower's generalizations about them range far beyond the information supplied by *Vit. Barl.* But Gower also draws on *Etym.*, Book 8 (PL 82.293–326), which begins by discussing matters of religion, faith, heresy, and schism and deals with Christianity, Judaism, and the pagan gods, especially those of Greece and Egypt. For a succinct discussion of the history behind such catalogues of classical deities

as Gower's, see Seznec, *Survival of the Pagan Gods*, especially ch. 1. The observations by Dindimus to Alexander at the end of the discussion could be drawn from any number of versions (Latin, Old French, Middle English) of the ever-popular history of Alexander, or of chronicles that include that history. *Orus* (line 798) apparently refers to Horus the Elder, while *Orayn* (line 806) would be Horus the Child.

Isirus (line 798) is, of course, Osiris, and *Typhon* (line 798) is Seth. In my glosses I have used modern spelling for the Greek deities except in those instances when I have not been able to identify the character. For example, when Genius calls the father of Ilia *Mynitor* (line 897), the reference is clearly to Numitor; so too his *Ypolitus* (line 967) is Hippotas, and his *Sibeles* (line 1135) is Cybele, and *Philerem* (line 1163) is Philyra. Of the two pits of Hell that Pluto swears by, *Stige* (line 1113) must be Styx, while, Andrew Galloway suggests, *Segne* is perhaps the river Seine (an anti-French joke of the Hundred Years War, as if the Parisian river were one of the pits of Hell).

748 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Quia secundum Poetarum fabulas in huius libelli locis pluribus nomina et gestus deorum falsorum intitulantur, quorum infidelitas ut Christianis clarius innotescat, intendit de ipsorum origine secundum varias Paganorum Sectas scribere consequenter. Et primo de Secta Chaldeorum tractare proponit.* [Since, following the fables of the poets, the names and deeds of the false gods are inscribed in many places in this book, in order to describe their unsuitability for faith (*infidelitas*) he intends to write subsequently about their origin according to various pagan sects. And first he proposes to treat the sect of the Chaldeans.]

765

ben corrupt be sondri weie. The scornful tone with which Genius depicts the foolishness of a Chaldean theogony based on mutable elements comes from *Vit. Barl.* 1.27 (PL 73.548).

772 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Et nota quod Nembroth quartus a Noe ignem tanquam deum in Chaldea primus adorari decreuit.* [And note that Nimrod, fourth after Noah, first ordered fire to be worshiped as a god.] See Genesis 10:8–9, where Nimrod is identified as a mighty hunter. In *Cursor Mundi* he is son of Chus, son of Cham, who becomes king of Babylon and builds the Tower of Babel, using bricks prepared by fire (lines 2195–2304).

774

heavenly figures. See *Vit. Barl.* 1.27 (PL 73.548) on the worshiping of features of the zodiac as gods. Martianus credits “the sanctums of Egyptian priests” with keeping of the secrets of such study “for almost forty thousand years” (8.812).

787 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *De Secta Egipciorum.* [Concerning the sect of the Egyptians.]

789

worst of alle. The Egyptian gods are worst because of the bestial (5.791), incestuous (5.801–03), fratricidal (5.805), and murderous ways (5.809) of Osiris, Isis, Horus, and the monstrous Typhon. N.b., the tone of *Vit. Barl.* 1.27 (PL 73.552): *Ægyptii autem eos stultitia et stoliditate superantes, gravius quam ullæ aliae*

- nationes aberrarunt* [But the Egyptians were more grossly aberrant than any other peoples, surpassing them all in stupidity and vulgarity]).
- 798 *Orus, Typhon, and Isirus.* On the Egyptian gods (also Isis, 5.801), see *Vit. Barl.* (PL 73.552), Vat. Myth. II 90–91 and Vat. Myth. III 6.3; and *Gen. deorum* 2.4. That they could turn themselves into animals, see Hyg. 196.
- 805 *Typhon.* Typhon, originating in Greek mythology, is only later identified with the Egyptian god Set. According to Hesiod, Ge lay with Tartarus to conceive her youngest child Typhon, a huge monster with a hundred dragon heads instead of hands. Typhon attacked Zeus, temporarily defeating him, until Zeus, using his thunderbolts, confined him beneath Etna, from which his rage still spews forth. According to the *Homeric Hymns*, Hera gave birth to him without benefit of a father, but that is a story Gower would not likely have known. Hyginus reports the details from Hesiod in Hyg. 152. Typhon appears again in Hyg. 196 and in *Poet. astr.* 2.28, where the gods change themselves into beasts to avoid Typhon's assault.
- 816–17 *Ysis . . . Fro Grece into Egipce cam.* Leonhard notes that Isis was traditionally associated with Io, whom Jupiter hid away from Juno and made a goddess in Egypt ("Classical Mythology," p. 52n4).
- 819 *teche hem for to sowe and eere.* Leonhard notes that Isis, "as wife of Osiris, began the cultivation of grain, when he, god of the Nile, taught the use of the plow. She was also the earth goddess (Vat. Myth. II 90). She was identified with Ceres, and, as goddess of the moon, with Io (Diod. 1.24.9–10; Vat. Myth. II 89). She was mother of Horus (*De Is* 19, 52, 65, 68)" ("Classical Mythology," p. 55n.). None of these sources suggest that she is goddess of childbirth (see *CA* 5.827–31).
- 835 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *De Secta Grecorum.* [Concerning the sect of the Greeks.]
- 839–41 *here goddes and goddesses . . . weren full of vice.* Itô ("Gower's Use of *Vita Barlaam*," pp. 11–12) notes that these lines are likely taken from *Vit. Barl.* (PL 73.550): *Græci igitur sapientiae laudem sibi arrogantes, stultiores etiam Chaldaeis se præbuerunt, complures videlicet deos inducentes, partim masculos, partim feminas, vitiosarum omnis generis affectionum, ac scelerum architectos* [The Greeks, while arrogating to themselves great fame for wisdom, revealed themselves to be stupider even than the Chaldeans, exhibiting a great many gods, some masculine and some feminine, as connivers of all types of vicious passions and wicked deeds].
- 845–63 *Saturnus.* Gower could have constructed his Saturn from various sources — Hyg. 139; Ful. 1.2; Vat. Myth. I (102, 104, 105); Vat. Myth. III 1; *Gen. deorum* 9.1; or, especially, Bart. Ang. 8.12, pp. 473–80. His castration is a central point in *RR*, lines 5505–18. Usually he is presented as cold, cruel, and malicious, an enemy of love. But Gower does give him some good traits as well, as the donor of agriculture in Italy (5.1221–44) and the discoverer of geomancy (6.1292–94), if that gift can be viewed as a favor. Gower cites three wives: Rhea, whose children he ate (5.849), Cybele (who in some instances

may be the same as Rhea), by whom he sired Jupiter, Neptune, Juno, and Pluto (5.1133), and Ceres, who induced him to give the gift of agriculture to Italy (5.1221 ff.).

- 845 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota qualiter Saturnus deorum summus appellatur.* [Note how Saturn is called the highest of the gods.]
- 864 *Lo, which a god thei maden chief!* The Greek gods get off to a bad start in Genius' review, as he presents the daddy of them all as a cannibal, emasculated by his own lecherous son, who casts him into exile.
- 870 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Iupiter deus deliciarum.* [Jupiter the god of pleasure.]
- 870–72 *Jupiter . . . the secounde . . . a lechour.* Genius regards Saturn as the first. Jupiter in his pleasanse and delicacy is often portrayed as a lecher (see Vat. Myth. III 15 on Jove's lecherous behavior in all signs of the zodiac). In Gower his lovers include: Juturna (3.821), Io (4.3318), Semele (5.1044), Latona (5.1245), Venus (5.1404), and Callisto (5.6249). He is the one who gives his son Cupid the two tuns of sweet and bitter love potions (6.330–36 and 8.2252–58). Elsewhere, Gower does give him other roles besides lechery. He is a benevolent, all-seeing god, almost like the Christian deity, in 2.291, the Tale of the Angel and the Travelers; so too when he answers Philomela's prayer (5.5741 ff.) or performs miracles in response to Bacchus' prayer in the desert (6.398–439). Also he often performs judiciously in matters of law. Bart. Ang. 8.12 offers a good summary of his traits. See also Vat. Myth. III 3.1–9.
- 883 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Mars deus belli.* [Mars the god of war.]
- 885 *Vegecius.* Flavius Vegetius Renatus, author of *Epitoma rei militaris* (c. 383), a treatise of some influence on military thinking into the Renaissance. See Robert's edition of Jean de Meun's translation. No mention is made there of Mars' fathering of Romulus and Remus, however.
- 894 *Dame Ylia.* Rhea Silvia, the mother of Romulus and Remus. She was loved by Mars, who fathered the twins (see 5.899–900). Amulus, younger brother of Numitor, king of Alba, condemned her to be a Vestal Virgin (i.e., the "prioress" of 5.891). For early Latin versions of the story, see Livy, *Ab urbe condita* (On the Founding of the City) 1.3.10 ff.; Dionysus Halicarnassensis, *Antiquitates Romanae* 1.76.1 ff.; and Plutarch, *Vitae Parallelae, Romulus.* 3 ff.
- 897 *Mynitor.* Numitor, elder son of Proca, king of Alba, and father of Rhea Silvia. His younger brother overthrew him for a time. He gave his grandsons the land on which to found Rome. See Livy, *Ab urbe condita* 1.3–6.
- 915 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Appollo deus Sapientie.* [Apollo the god of wisdom.]
- 917–18 *brother to Venus, / Appollo.* I have not been able to identify a source that links Apollo's genealogy with Venus. Perhaps Genius is thinking of Venus Dione, "O Joves doughter deere," as Chaucer puts it (TC 3.3), in which case Apollo and Venus are kin, by consequence of father Jupiter's lechery. This would explain Genius' numerous accounts of Apollo's seduction of nymphs and women (the "lewed folk" that he deceives — 5.931) such as Cornide (3.783

ff.), Daphne (3.1688 ff.), and Leucothoe (5.6719 ff.). He also fathered Aescylapius (5.1072) and Phaeton (4.979). Mythographers regularly praise Apollo's skills at harping and hunting, which Genius begrudgingly here acknowledges by granting him the phrase "god of wit" (5.935), though he turns his harping skills into minstrelsy by which means he gets "[h]is sustenaunce" (5.925–26). Lewis (*Allegory of Love*, p. 211) sees Genius' grumbling expostulation as "mere abuse," though he finds the passage to be "irresistibly funny." But I suspect that the "irresistible" humor throughout this section is quite intentional. Gower is having an amusing time distorting the hijinks of the gods that he has worked hard with for so many years by means of just such cultural incongruities. In the neoplatonic tradition Apollo is viewed as an allegorical figure of Christ, a god of light and benefactor of nature. (See *Assembly of Gods*, ed. Chance, p. 95). Gower is having fun making Venus' priest so hostile and impatient with pagan lore, which well he might be, given the fact that he is an aspect of libido, even as Amans is, though for a different effect.

- 937 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Mercurius deus Mercatorum et furorum.* [Mercury the god of merchants and thieves.] See Ful. 1.18 on Mercury as the complete trader — *mercium-curum*.
- 938 *Mercurie hihete.* For a neat summary of Mercury's qualities — his name, his involvement with merchants, his thievery, his shape-shifting, his dress, his capricious activities, see Ful. 1.18. See also Vat. Myth. III 9 and Bart. Ang. 8.15.
- 940–43 On Mercury's *sorcerie* and his ability to be male or female, see *Etym.* 8.11.49 (*PL* 82.321), which links Mercury to sorcery and Hermes Trismegistus; Bart. Ang. 8.15, which comments on his being *quasi medius currens* (Mercury), "as rennyng in þe middil," a "nyȝt planete, now male, now female"; and *De formis*, pp. 25–26: *Quando enim volebat, de viro in feminam & de femina in masculum se mutabat, de albis vero nigra & de nigris candida faciebat.* [For whenever he wanted, he changed himself from man to woman and from woman to man; and he could make black from white and brilliance from darkness.]
- 955 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Vulcanus deus Ignis.* [Vulcan the god of fire.]
- 959 *He was a schrewe in al his youthe.* Perhaps Genius is alluding to Vulcan's being cast out of heaven (Vat. Myth. I 128 and II 40); or perhaps the shrew allusion is to his spying on his wife Venus to trap her in bed with her lover Mars (Hyg. 148; Vat. Myth. II 121; or *Vit. Barl.* [*PL* 78.551]), thereby offending the court of love.
- 967 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Eolus deus ventorum.* [Eolus the god of the winds.]
- 981 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Neptunus deus maris.* [Neptune the god of the sea.]
- 981 *king of Crete Jupiter.* Jupiter became king of Crete when he overthrew Saturn. See *Gen. deorum* 4.1; Vat. Myth. I 2.105; and *Vit. Barl.* (*PL* 73.550), though I do not find the specific phrase in these "sources." The phrase does appear in Giovanni Villani's c. 1300 *Nuova Cronica* ("Iove re di Creti"), Book 1, ch. 8.

- 983 *Neptune*. Glossators commonly equate Neptune with water (Vat. Myth. I 107 and Ful. 1–4). Vat. Myth. III 5 offers a useful summary compilation of his traits. See Chance on the natural allegorization of Neptune in Bernard Silvestris, Martianus Capella, William of Conches, and others (*Medieval Mythography*, pp. 711–12). Gower sometimes uses him as a metaphor for the power of the sea (8.623 ff.), but that is not the point here. In his comic vilification of the pagan gods, Genius presents Neptune (Jupiter's brother — the lot of them are bad) as a sailor/pirate whose behavior is so outrageous that the “comun vois” (5.995) rises against him to force him into exile and give him a bad name (5.996–1000). The implication is that in ancient times (and perhaps later, too) if someone is bad enough he may be made into a god. In Gower his founding of Troy does, however, bring him some honor (5.1002–04; compare 1.1152), a tradition found in Dictys 5.11; Benoît 25921 ff.; and Guido 30, p. 234.
- 1005 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Pan deus nature*. [Pan the god of nature.]
- 1007 *Pan*. Gower gives Pan a more detailed and favorable review than the other pagan gods, partly because he helps people through “naturel experience” (5.1037). (See the discussion of Gower's ambiguous use of nature as part of the poem's setting in my introduction to volume 2, pp. 14 ff.) Gower includes no stories about Pan. Rather, he is a pastoral force, a god of shepherds, living in Arcadia and its environs (i.e., “Nonarcigne” [Nonacris], 5.1009), near the river Ladon on the “Mount of Parasie” (Parnassus). Most of the place names are found in Ovid's description of Pan in *Met.* 1.689 ff., 600 ff. Leonhard, “Classical Mythology,” p. 76, suggests that *Pigne* may be the river Peneus, which Gower elsewhere calls “Peneie” (5.4006). The references to animal husbandry (the shepherd keeping his sheep, the breeder of oxen and tamer of horses, etc.) match up well with *Fasti* 2.271. His invention of double reed pipes (5.1029–34) is mentioned in *Met.* 1.705 ff. But to call him “god of nature” (5.1041) foolishly puts the foot above the head (5.1040).
- 1009 *Nonarcigne*. Nonacris, a mountain in Arcadia on whose slopes Pan saw the wood nymph Syrinx whom he pursued with passion only to end up embracing the marsh reeds into which she had been transformed. Pan's lament was so pathetic that pipes with reeds fitted together were devised to keep the name of the maiden. Music from the reeds is so sweet that it charms Argus to sleep, for all his eyes, whereby he is slain. See *Met.* 1.682–721. (N.b., *CA* 5.1029–34.)
- 1015 *Ladon*. The river in Arcadia where Pan attempted to rape Syrinx. See *Met.* 1.702.
- 1019 *cité Stinfalides*. See *Fasti* 2.271 ff., where the Stymphalian waters bore witness to Pan's pastoral activities. The city of Stymphalus is near the Stymphalian lake from which Hercules, in his sixth labor, killed the detestable Stymphalian birds. See *Met.* 11.187 ff. Elsewhere in Gower it is the place where Pan teaches animal husbandry, including that of “foules” (5.1025). See Leonhard, “Classical Mythology,” p. 92.
- 1043 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Bachus deus vini*. [Bacchus the god of wine.]

- 1044 *Jupiter upon Semele*. Gower is following the tradition of Dionysus being conceived upon Semele found in *Met.* 3.259 ff., *Vat. Myth.* I 120, *Ful.* 2.12, and *Gen. deorum* 5.25.
- 1044–58 See *Met.* 3.256–315 on Semele's birthing of *Dyon (Bacchus)*; *Met.* 4.20, 605 and 15.413 on his conquest of India; and 13.650 ff. on his wine-making talents. *Vat. Myth.* III 12 summarizes the events and sources of his story. So too *Gen. deorum* 5.25. See Pliny, *Naturalis historiae* 4.39, 12.85, and 16.9 on his role as god of fields and vines.
- 1049 *in Ynde*. Dionysus' sojourn in India, which he conquered and where he then established the art of viniculture, is recorded in Euripides, *Bacchae*; Plutarch, *On Rivers*; Pausanias 10.29.2; Diod. 2.38; Strabo 9.5.5; Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 2.8.9. See *De formis* 15.1, p. 42, which cites *Ful.* 2.12, to the effect that Dionysus took his name from a mountain in India.
- 1059 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Esculapius deus medicinae*. [Esculapius the god of medicine.]
- Esculapius*. Gower's source here seems to be *Vit. Barl.* (PL 73.551), though, as Hamilton points out ("Studies in the Sources," p. 501), Genius converts Tyn-dareus' son into *Daires dowhter* (5.1063), perhaps to add lechery to the doctor's character traits. *Vit. Barl.* does not include details about Esculapius' travels to Rome or "Delphos" (line 1071) to do his father Apollo's bidding. But those travels are hinted at in Livy 10.47ff. In addition, Ovid's versions of the story in *Met.* 15.622–744 and *Fasti* 6.733–62 have some bearing on Genius' account. See also *De nuptiis* 9.926 (where Esculapius is called "Asclepiades").
- 1071 *Delphos*. Perhaps a slip for *Delos* (n.b., 5.1256, where Genius gets it right), though Mainzer ("John Gower's Use of the 'Mediaeval Ovid,'" p. 219) finds a similar reference to Delphi as an island in a gloss to an early fifteenth-century manuscript of *Ovidius Moralizatus*.
- 1083 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hercules deus fortitudinis*. [Hercules the god of strength.] See *Vat. Myth.* III 13.
- 1088 *Merveiles twelve*. See *Hyg.* 30.
- 1096 *The god of strengthe*. Compare the marginal gloss at 1083. Hamilton ("Studies in the Sources," pp. 503–04) suggests Albericus' *Poetarius* as the source of the epithet, where *fortitudo* translates as *strengthe*, not moral courage.
- 1100 *in a rage himself he brende*. See the Tale of Deianira, Hercules, and Nessus, 2.2295–2302.
- 1103 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Pluto deus Inferni*. [Pluto the god of the Underworld.]
- 1109–10 On the four rivers of Hades called Lethe, Flegeton, Acheron, and Cocytus, see *De formis* 15.1, pp. 43–45, *Vat. Myth.* III 6.2–4, or *Gen. deorum* 3.14–17. Berchorius' *De formis* glosses the names of the rivers to mean "forgetfulness," "ardor" (as in the burning ardor of avarice), "without salvation," and "mourning" (pp. 44–45).

- 1119 *for Jupiteres sake*. Compare 1.2474, “for Gourmoundes sake.” The sense is “for the destruction of” or “out of disdain for” plus a genitive noun. See *MED sake* n. 4a(e).
- 1133 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota, qualiter Sibeles Dearum Mater et origo nuncupatur.* [Note how Cybele is called the mother and source of the goddesses.]
- 1135–36 *Sibeles of goddesses / The moder.* Cybele, the mother of the gods. Also called Rhea and Berecynthia (Gower’s “Bethincia,” line 1141). See Vat. Myth. I 230, Vat. Myth III.2, *Fasti* 4.181–96, 359–64, and *De formis* 15.1, pp. 35–36. See also *CA* 5.1160. For a convenient summary of the activities of Rhea (Kybele), the great Mother, see Rose, *Handbook of Greek Mythology*, pp. 45–47.
- 1146 *Juno, Neptunus, and Pluto.* On the three children of Cybele, see Vat. Myth. I 2.102. Juno is sometimes called “moder” because she is Jupiter’s wife, thus queen mother over the Olympian gods.
- 1157 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Iuno Dea Regnorum et diuiciarum.* [Juno the goddess of kingdoms and riches.]
- 1163 *Philerem.* Itô, “Gower’s Use of *Vita Barlaam*,” p. 15, points out that the source of Gower’s attribution of the mothering of Jupiter to Philyra appears to be *De formis*, Book 15, which reads: *Cognovitque Philirem in qua Iovem genuit, que fingit se lapidem peperisse, ipsum Saturno devorandum dedit, Iovem vero in Archadia nutritri caute fecit, qui tamen ipsum postea de regno expulit & eiecit* [And he knew Philyra, the one with whom he made Jove. She pretended to have given birth to a stone, gave that to Saturn to be devoured, and secretly had Jove brought up in Arcady, who nonetheless afterwards expelled Saturn from his kingdom] (p. 6). Both Vat. Myth. I 103 and *Gen. deorum* 7.62 identify Philyra, daughter of Ocean, as one of Saturn’s wives, but her child by Saturn is Chiron, the centaur, who first invented medicine.
- 1176–88 Genius’ presentation of Juno bears some likeness to *De formis* (especially pp. 32–33), which identifies her as a figure of air and the sky, served by Iris as the rainbow and nymphs as clouds (compare 5.1184–88). She is sister and wife of Jove, yet always a virgin, with great wealth both in kingdoms and riches (5.1177–80), and is said to be nourished by Neptune and sea nymphs (5.1182).
- 1189 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Minerva Dea sapienciarum.* [Minerva the goddess of wise women.]
- 1189–1200 Gower’s account of Minerva being found as an abandoned child by Lake Triton in Africa, whence she is borne to Thrace where she acquires a new name, Pallas, comes primarily from *Etym.* 8.9.71–75 (PL 82.322): *Haec Minerva, et Tritonia dicitur. Triton enim Africæ palus est, circa quam fertur virginali apparuisse aetate, propter quod Tritonia nuncupata est. Unde et tanto proclivius dea credita, quanto minus origo ejus innotuit. Pallas autem dicta, vel ab insula Pallene in Thracia, in qua nutrita est.* [She is called Minerva and Tritonia. For Triton is a swamp of Africa, around which she is said to have appeared at a maidenly age, on account of which she is called Tritonia. Whence the more her origin has become less known, the more she is believed to be a goddess. She is also

- called Pallas from the island Palle in Thrace, where she was raised.] See also Vat. Myth. III 10.
- 1202–03 *she fond ferst . . . cloth makinge of wolle and lyn.* On Minerva as inventor of cloth making, see note to 4.2435, which cites Methodius' *Apocalypse, Elym.* 19.20.1–2, *Did.* 3.2, and Higden 2.11 (Trevisa's translation) for similar statements on Minerva's inventions.
- 1205 *goddesse of sapience.* See, for example, Bernardus Silvestris' *Commentary*, pp. 46–47, where Pallas [Minerva] represents the life of contemplation: "Minerva, as is *media vel intima cogitatio*, 'central or innermost thought,' is wisdom which resides in the brain" (p. 47). See also Vat. Myth. II 39 and *De nuptiis* 6.567 ff.
- 1207 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Pallas Dea bellorum.* [Pallas the goddess of wars.]
- That Genius presents Pallas and Minerva as separate deities is understandable if we think of the ancient gods as allegorical packages: Minerva as wisdom and Pallas as war, though of one character, are separate aspects. Gower seems well aware that differing traditions underlie all the gods, e.g., 5.1214: "Some ek seide . . ."
- 1207–20 *Pallas.* See note to lines 1189–1200 on Minerva's several names. Gower suggests that according to one tradition (*sondri speche* — 5.1208) this name derives from the giant Pallant, who was *hire fader . . . a cruel man, a bataillous* (5.1209–11); another that she was *in his hous* and *was the cause why he deide* (5.1212–13). Gower's source here might be Vat. Myth. III 10.1, which indicates that she got the name after she killed the giant Pallant near Lake Tritonia (*Gigantem Pallentem juxta fluvium Tritonem interfecerit* [p. 221]).
- 1214–15 *some ek seide / That sche was Martes wif.* Who the *some* might be is a puzzler. Ful. 2.11 and Vat. Myth. III 10.3–6 tell how Jupiter, for his amusement, gave Pallas to Vulcan in marriage, and the scene that follows is indeed amusing as the warrior woman defends her chastity so fiercely that Vulcan drops his seed on the floor, whereupon the serpentine Erichthonius is born, whom Pallas raises until he can invent chariots, become lord of Athens, and win blessings for the city when he accepts Pallas' gift of the olive branch. Perhaps the idea of pitting the divine female warrior [Pallas] against the divine male warrior [Mars] appealed to some commentator; or perhaps the idea that Pallas, as Vulcan's wife whom Mars beds, means that Mars made an attempt with Pallas rather than Venus. But whatever the idea, one component is certain: Pallas remains virgin and potent, regardless of whether Jupiter is amused. The *Vit. Barl.* makes no mention of either Minerva or Pallas.
- 1221 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Ceres dea frugum.* [Ceres the goddess of grains.]
- 1223–24 *Into the londes of Ytaile, / And ther he dede gret mervaile.* On Saturn's great agricultural gifts to human kind, see Ful. 1.2, with its etymology of his name from *saturando* (glutting), along with his wife, the opulent Ops; and Bart. Ang. 8.12.
- 1227–44 On Ceres as goddess of grain and produce, see Ful. 1.11 and Bernardus Silvestris' *Commentary* (pp. 12, 48, 91, 96), where the plenty of Ceres and the

- wine of Bacchus are recurrently identified as that which keeps Venus from freezing.
- 1245 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Diana Dea Moncium et Siluarum.* [Diana the goddess of mountains and woods.]
- 1250 *Diane his dowhter he begat.* Gower moves far beyond *Vit. Barl.* in his account of Diana, her conception, her birthing, and her life. All Barlam (the “cronique” of line 1270) reports is: “Also þei say þat Diana was his [Apollo’s] suster and a goddesse, and she was a grete huntore, and bare bowe and arrowes, and sometyme an harpe. And she wolde walke alone with here doggis in hylles and wodis to hunte both herte and hynde. This is inconvenyent to a goddesse to be of þis condicion” (lines 4579–84). On her birthing, see Vat. Myth. III 8.3. Numerous sources celebrate her chastity.
- 1277 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Proserpina Dea Infernorum.* [Proserpina the goddess of the underworlds.]
- See Vat. Myth. I 7, 112, and 186; Vat. Myth. II 94–95 and 100–101; Vat. Myth. III 7; Ful. 1.10; and Hyg. 146.
- 1277–1302 *Proserpina.* Gower’s conversion of the story of Ceres’ daughter into a romance format is based mainly on *Fasti* 4.393 ff., with some hints at *Met.* 5.291 ff. and Hyg. 146 for the place names of Sicily and Etna. *Fasti* refers to the “Trinacrian land” (4.420), another name for Sicily. See also *Gen. deorum* 8.4. Proserpina’s story is not mentioned in *Barlam and Iosaphat*.
- 1323 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota, quod dii Montium Satiri vocantur.* [Note that the gods of the mountains are called satyrs.]
- 1328 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Oreades Nimphe Montium.* [Oreades the nymphs of the mountains.]
- 1328–35 *Nimphe . . . Oreades . . . Driades . . . Naiades . . . of the see.* The wood and sea nymphs are often cited together. E.g., *Etym.* 8.11.96–97 (PL 82.324–25). Itô suggests that “the four kinds of fairies attending Diana” derive from *De formis* (“Gower’s Use of *Vita Barlaam*,” p. 15).
- 1332 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Driades Siluarum.* [Dryads of the woods.]
- 1334 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Naiades fontium.* [Naiads of the streams.]
- 1336 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nereides Marium.* [Nereids of the seas.]
- 1337–45 *Dorus whilom king of Grece . . . Nereides.* Traditionally, as in *Met.* 2.268–69, Nereus is the father of the Nereids. Their mother is Doris, daughter of Oceanus and Tethys, Nereus’ wife. But see Vat. Myth. III 5.1, where Dorus, king of Greece, was lost at sea, but his children survive to become the Nereids. (*Dorus enim rex extitit Graeciae, qui in mari dicitur cum exercitu suo perisse. Quare a poëtis, adulatio et figmento ubique deservientibus, ipse dea marina et exercitus ejus filiae ipsius, id est Nymphae marinae dicti sunt.* [“For Dorus was the king of Greece, who is said to have perished with his army in the ocean. Wherefore poets, always slaves to flattery and fiction, call him the goddess of the sea and

his army his daughters, that is the Nymphs of the ocean.”]) See also Servius, *Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii Carmina Commentarii*, which identifies Dorus as the son of Poseidon and father of the sea nymphs. On the nymphs themselves, see *Elym.* 8.11.96–97. On the meaning of the name *Dorus* (bitterness, “since bitterness is dominant in sea water”), see Bernardus Silvestris, *Commentary* 3, p. 20. The etymology is especially apt when the sea takes your wife and all your daughters, as in 5.1339–42.

- 1358 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Manes dii mortuorum.* [Manes the gods of the dead.]
- 1363 *Manes.* The name given by the Romans to the souls of the dead. Leonhard cites Vat. Myth. III 6.18 and 6.29 as well as *Gen. deorum* 1.34 to indicate “that there was some interest in the significance of the Manes” (“Classical Mythology,” pp. 64–65). The soul of the departed were “sometimes regarded as gods and worshiped with divine honors” (p. 65n1), as Genius points out on 5.1361–62. Thus his conclusion that “Grekes law” accorded the deceased “ful gret honour” (5.1364–65). See also *Etym.* 8.100 (*PL* 82.325–26). The term also is used topographically to indicate the realm of the dead (e.g., *Fasti* 2.609 and *Aeneid* 3.565 and 11.181), or the underworld gods (*Aeneid* 10.39), or as an indicator of family ancestors (*Met.* 9.406 ff.). See the entry in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p. 916.
- 1374–81 Amans’ question to Genius about how he came to be in the service of Venus puts Genius on the spot. As Lewis observes, Gower has not “blundered into [the tension] by an oversight.” Rather, Genius “is forced against his will to pass sentence on the very powers that he serves” (*Allegory of Love*, p. 219). Genius acknowledges that stories of Venus and Cupid often epitomize the absurdities he asks Amans to condemn. See also Bennett, “Gower’s ‘Honeste Love,’” pp. 109–10.
- 1382–1443 See Nicholson (*Annotated Index*, pp. 332–34) on numerous discussions of Genius’ denunciation of Venus and the incongruities of his dual role.
- 1383 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Cupido et Venus deus et dea amoris nuncupantur.* [How Cupid and Venus are called the god and goddess of love.]
- 1420 *For he his moder dorste love.* On sexual chaos in Gower and Gower’s sympathy for the mother as the son’s desire is projected upon her, see Watt (*Amoral Gower*, pp. 83–90). Gower “stops short of making Venus solely responsible for sexual sin; instead Cupid is made to share the blame” (p. 90).
- 1427–29 *take / What man hire liste, and noght forsake / To ben als comun as sche wolde.* Olsson cites this passage as an example of Venus’ self-interested *gentilesse* that “blurs the very distinction of being gentle” (“Aspects of *Gentilesse*,” p. 228). In Book 4, on Sloth, Genius had suggested the possibility of some ennobling effects of *gentilesse*, but here the goddess’ form of *gentilesse* is “consistent with her own excessive regard for fleshly comfort and her desire to live [what Alanus de Insulis calls] ‘the soft life of barren ease’” (p. 228).
- 1453 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de Epistola Dindimi Regis Bragmannorum Alexandro magno directa, vbi dicit quod Greci tunc ad corporis conseruacionem pro singulis*

membris singulos deos specialiter appropriari credunt. [Note concerning the letter of Dindimus, king of the Brahmen, directed to Alexander the Great, where it states that the Greeks believe that, to protect the body, particular gods are assigned to particular members of the body.] Macaulay's note (2.517) is especially useful:

As for the letters said to have been exchanged between Alexander and the king of the Bragmans (or Brahmins), we find them at length in the *Historia Alexandri Magni de Prelis*, which was the source of most of the current stories about Alexander. The passage referred to is as follows: *Tot deos colis quot in tuo corpore membra portas. Nam hominem dicis paruum mundum, et sicut corpus hominis habet multa membra, ita et in celo dicis multos deos existere. Iunonem credis esse deum cordis, eo quod iracundia nimia mouebatur. Martem vero deum pectoris esse dicis, eo quod preceps extitit preliorum. Mercurium deum lingue vocas, ex eo quod plurimum loquebatur. Herculem deum credis brachiorum, eo quod duodecim virtutes exercuit preliando. Bachum deum gutteris esse putas, eo quod ebrietatem primus inuenit. Cupidinem esse deam dicis, eo quod fornicatrix extitit; tenere dicis facem ardentem, cum qua libidinem excitat et accendit, et ipsam deam iecoris etiam existimas. Cererem deam ventris esse dicis, et Venerem, eo quod fuit mater luxurie, deam genitalium membrorum esse profers* (e 2. ed. Argent, 1489 [You worship as many gods as you possess members of your body. For you say that man is a little world, and just as the body of man has many members, so too in the heaven, you say, many gods exist. You believe Juno to be the god of the heart, since she was moved by excessive wrath; Mars you say is the god of the breast, since he was the leader of wars. Mercury you call the god of the tongue, since he spoke a very great deal; Hercules you believe the god of the arms, since he had the strength of twelve in his warring. You think Bacchus was the god of the throat, since he first discovered drunkenness. You say that Cupid is a goddess, since she was a fornicator; you say she held a burning torch, with which she excited and kindled lust, and you judge her indeed to be a goddess of the liver. You say that Ceres was the goddess of the stomach, and you present Venus, since she was the mother of lust, as the goddess of the members of generation]). Cp. the English alliterative *Wars of Alexander*, E.E.T.S., 1886, ll. 4494 ff. There is no mention of Minerva in either of these.

- 1460–96 This practice of linking the dominion of gods to parts of the anatomy is ancient (see note to 7.1453 ff.). For a superb painting of the idea, see “The Anatomical/Zodiacal Man” in Cazelles and Rahofer, p. 63 (fol. 14v). Such conventions go hand in hand with the rhetoric of anatomical personification; see the note on “stomach,” below, 7.479–80.
- 1498 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de prima ydolorum cultura, que ex tribus precipue Statuis exorta est; quarum prima fuit illa, quam in filii sui memoriam quidam princeps nomine Cirophanes a sculptore Prometheo fabricari constituit.* [Note concerning the worship of the first idols, which arose particularly from three statues, the first of which was one that a certain king by the name of Syrophanes ordered to be fashioned, in memory of his son by the sculptor Prometheus.] See Ful. 1.1.
- 1513 *That such a stock mai helpe or grieve.* Gower seems to be punning on the stock of a “ragged tre” (line 1509) in contrast to the stock of true religion, a stock that goes back to the Creator Himself to define the barrenness of idolatry, as

in Chaucer's "Gentilesse," beginning "The firste stok, fader of gentilesse," that "was ful of rightwisnesse," etc. (line 8).

- 1541 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Secunda Statua fuit illa, quam ad sui patris Beli culturam Rex Ninus fieri et adorari decreuit. Et sic de nomine Beli postea Bel et Belzebub ydolum accreuit.* [The second statue was one that King Ninus ordered to be made and adored for the worship of his father Belus. And thus from Belus' name, Bel and Belzebub later grew as idols.] Macaulay notes that Gower's account agrees "very nearly" with Godfrey of Viterbo, *Pantheon* 4, where Godfrey cites the image as the first example of an idol, titled, "Quare primum idolum in mundo et quo tempore fuit" ["Why and at what time was the first idol on earth"] (2.517).
- 1560 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Tertia Statua fuit illa, que ad honorem Apis Regis Grecorum sculpta fuit, cui postea nomen Serapis imponentes, ipsum quasi deum Pagani coluerunt.* [The third statue was one that was sculpted in honor of Apis, king of the Greeks, whom pagans later gave the name Serapis, and worshipped him as if he were a god.] Macaulay cites *Pantheon* 4: "His temporibus apud Egyptios constructum est idolum magnum in honorem Apis, Regis Argivorum; quidam tamen dicunt in honorem Ioseph, qui liberavit eos a fame; quod idolum Serapis vocabatur, quasi idolum Apis" ["In those days, a great idol in honor of Apis, King of the Argives, was fashioned among the Egyptians; certain ones say it was in honor of Joseph, who liberated them from hunger, since the idol was called Serapis, as if to say 'the idol of Apis.'"] (2.517).
- 1571 Macaulay (2.517–18) cites *Historia Alexandri magni de Preliis*, fol. 1v, ed. Argent, 1489: "Exiens inde Alexander cum Candeolo profecti sunt iter diei vnius, et venerunt ad quandam speluncam magnam et hospitati sunt ibi. Dixitque Candeolus, 'Omnes dii concilium in ista spelunca concelebrant.' Cum hoc audisset Alexander, statim fecit victimas diis suis, et ingressus in speluncam solus vidit ibi caligines maximasque nubes stellasque lucentes, et inter ipsas stellas quendam deum maximum," etc. [Alexander, departing from there with Candeolus, made his way for a day until he came to a certain vast cavern, where they took their dwelling. And Candeolus said, "all the gods hold their council in this cavern." When Alexander heard that, he at once made sacrifices to his gods, and entering into the cave alone, he saw there mists and huge clouds and bright stars, and among the stars a certain highest god, etc.].
- 1598–1736 Ames suggests that Gower's attitude toward the Jews in this section of his history of religions defines well his position on the subject of Judaism. Although Genius ridicules the idolatries and immoralities of the pagans, he praises the beliefs of the Jews: "God Himself chose the Jews. While all the world worshiped foul idols, Abraham alone found out the right way, how men should obey only the high God." He forbade idolatry and offered sacrifice to God from his heart. God laid the foundation of faith on Abraham; to Moses He gave the Law and sent prophets to guide the people, then and now ("Source and Significance," p. 47).

- 1609 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De Hebreorum seu Iudeorum Secta, quorum Sinagoga, ecclesia Cristi superueniente, defecit.* [Concerning the sect of the Hebrews or the Jews, whose synagogue fell when the church of Christ supervened.]
- 1741 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De fide Cristiana, in qua perfecte legis complementum, summi misterii sacramentum, nostreque saluacionis fundamentum infallibiliter consistere credimus.* [Concerning the Christian faith, in which we believe to consist infallibly the completion of the perfect law, the sacrament of the highest mystery, and the foundation of our salvation.]
- 1756 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Gregorius. O necessarium Ade peccatum! O felix culpa, que talam ac tantum meruit habere redemptorem!* [Gregory: O necessary sin of Adam! O fortunate guilt, which merited to have such and so great a redeemer!] See Gregory, *In I Reg.* 8.7 (*PL* 79.222).
- 1765 ff. Macaulay (2.518) cites Gregory, *In I Reg.* 8.7 ff. (*PL* 79.222): “Et quidem, nisi Adam peccaret, Redemptorem nostrum carnem suscipere nostram non oporteret. . . . Si ergo pro peccatoribus venit, si peccata deessent, eum venire non oporteret. . . . Magna quippe sunt mala quae per primae culpae meritum patimur, sed quis electus nollet peiora perpeti, quam tantum Redemptorem non habere?” [And indeed, if Adam had not sinned, there would have been no need for a Redeemer of us to take on our bodily form. . . . If therefore he came on behalf of sinners, if sin had been absent, it would not have been necessary for him to come. . . . Great, indeed, are the evils that we suffer through the just merit of the first sin; but who would not want to suffer worse, than not to have such a Redeemer?]
- 1800 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Iacobus. Fides sine operibus mortua est.* [James: Faith without works is dead.] See James 2:26.
- 1807 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic contra istos qui iam lollardi dicuntur.* [Note here against those who are now called Lollards.]
- 1825 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Incepit Jhesus facere et docere.* [Jesus began to do and to teach.] See Acts 1:1.
- 1831–47 Gower’s source for Thoaz and Antenor’s desecration of the Temple of Minerva is Benoît’s *Roman de Troie*, lines 25615–72.
- 1832 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota quod, cum Anthenor Palladium Troie a templo Minerue abstulit, Thoas ibidem summus sacerdos auro corruptus oculos auertit, et sic malum quasi non videns scienter fieri permisit.* [Note that when Anthenor took away the Palladium from the temple of Minerva, Thoas the highest priest in that place, having been corrupted by gold, averted his eyes, and thus knowingly allowed the evil to take place as if not seeing it.]
- 1859–99 Stockton (p. 402n1) compares Gower’s critique of false clergy with *MO* 20209–20832 and *VC* 3.16–29. Compare also *CA* 3.2490–2515.
- 1881 *cokkel with the corn.* The idea originates in Matthew 13:25, where the noxious weeds of heresy are said to mingle with the good seed. Gower also alludes to the idea in *Carmen super multiplici viciorum pestilencia*, line 20: *Lollia messis ha-*

bens granum perturbat et ipsum [The harvest with tares confuses the grain itself]. Compare Chaucer's Epilogue to The Man of Law's Tale (*CT* II[B¹]:1182–83) where the Shipman, in response to the Host's accusation that the Parson talks like a Lollard, warns, “He wolde sownen som difficulte / Or springen cokkel in our clene corn”; and *Mum and the Sothsegger*, line 1165a. See *Richard the Redeless and Mum and the Sothsegger*, ed. Dean, especially his note to line 1165a.

- 1900 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Gregorius. Quando Petrus cum Judea, Andreas cum Achaia, Thomas cum Ynde, et Paulus cum gente venient, quid dicemus nos moderni, quorum fossum talentum pro nichilo computabitur?* [Gregory: When Peter will come with Judea, Andrew with the Greeks, Thomas with India, and Paul with the people, what will we moderns say, whose buried talent will be counted as nothing?]
- 1930 *his lordes besant hedde.* See Matthew 25:14–30. The one who hides the talent rather than invest it (25:18) is cast out as an unprofitable servant and left to weep and gnash his teeth (25:30).
- 1960–61 *this matiere is bete / So fer.* Gower seems to be making fun of himself and his long digression on religion by having Amans observe that the matter is *bete so fer*, i.e., explained so thoroughly that it has been beaten to death.
- 1975 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat confessor super illa specie Auaricie, que Cupiditas dicitur, quam in amoris causa pertractans Amanti super hoc opponit.* [Here the Confessor treats that species of Avarice called Cupidity, and, pursuing this in the cause of love, he questions the Lover about this.]
- 2031 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum contra magnates cupidos. Et narrat de Crasso Romanorum Imperatore, qui turrim, in qua speculum Virgili Rome fixum extiterat, dolosa circumuentus cupiditate euerit; unde non solum sui ipsius perditionem, set tocius Civitatis intollerabile dampnum contingere causauit.* [Here he poses an instructive example against cupidinous (covetous) magnates. And he tells about Crassus the Roman emperor, who, tricked by treacherous cupidity, destroyed a tower in which the mirror of Virgil in Rome had been set up; whence he caused not only his own perdition, but also an intolerable loss to the whole city.]
- 2031–2224 Gower's version of the Tale of Virgil's Mirror is most similar to the version of *Roman des Sept Sages* identified as A by Gaston Paris (Hamilton, “Some Sources,” p. 336n2), though it was popular and occurs in various forms in the Latin moralized tales (e.g., the Latin *Gesta Romanorum*, cap. clxxxvi). Macaulay notes that “Gower seems to be responsible for the introduction of Carthage and Hannibal” (3.495).
- 2034 *the tounes yē.* “The tower, with its mirror and distinguished architect, functions as an emblem of wisdom, recalling Genius' admonition to Amans in Book 1: ‘thin yhe for to kepe and warde, / So that it passe noght his warde’” (1.331–32; Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, p. 106). Crassus (5.2069), the dull-witted emperor whose name Gower derives from L *crassus*, meaning “dense or stupid” (in *Roman des Sept Sages* he is simply referred to as “Le Roy de Romme”) guards his ear no better than his eye, so when Hannibal sends his three “philosophers,” who whisper *riht in his ere* (5.2145) the news of the

buried treasure, he undermines his tower digging for it and is destroyed. “By failing to keep proper vigil, Crassus, like Thoas, threw away the key to his own Palladian” (Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, p. 107). Other Middle English versions refer to the villain as “sire Cressus” and “Cresus the riche man,” thereby conflating the avaricious king of Rome with the myth of Croesus, king of Lydia (p. 196n5.4).

- 2222–23 *Into his mouth thei poure thanne; / And thus the thurst of gold was queynt.* Wetherbee (*Chaucer and the Poets*, p. 198) notes that Gower explicitly has Crassus drink the molten gold (he does so implicitly in Dante and Chaucer), where in other sources he has already been killed in battle.
- 2273–2390 The Tale of the Two Coffers is similar to that told by Boccaccio in *Decameron* 10.1. Variations of the story are found in such collections of moral tales as *Vit. Barl.* 6 (PL 74.462, following the Trump of Death story); Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale* 15.10; *Legenda Aurea*; and the English *Gesta Romanorum* (EETS e.s. 33, cap. lxvi). See also Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*.
- 2278 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit Confessor exemplum contra illos, qui in domibus Regum seruientes, pro eo quod ipsi secundum eorum cupiditatem promoti non existunt, de regio seruicio quamuis in eorum defectu indiscrete murmurant.* [Here the Confessor presents an instructive example against those who, serving in kings’ houses, because they were not promoted as seemed appropriate to their own cupidity, indiscretely grumble about royal service, however much it injures themselves.]
- 2296–98 *Of o semblance and of o make / So lich that no lif . . . mai fro that other knowe.* Unlike the coffers in *The Merchant of Venice* and its analogues, these two are indistinguishable. As Macaulay points out, “the choice is a purely fortuitous one” (3.496).
- 2391–2441 A similar story to that of the two pastries occurs in the Latin *Gesta Romanorum*, cap. cix.
- 2395 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic de diuiciarum Accidencia: vbi narrat qualiter Fredericus Romanorum Imperator duos pauperes audiuit litigantes, quorum unus dixit, “Bene potest ditari, quem Rex vult ditare.” Et alius dixit, “Quem deus vult ditare, diues erit.” Que res cum ad experimentum postea probata fuisse, ille qui deum inuocabat pastellum auro plenum sortitus est, alius vero caponis pastellum sorte preelegit.* [Note here concerning the superficial features of riches: where it is narrated and how Frederick the Roman emperor heard two paupers arguing, one of whom said, “He will be enriched whom the king wants to enrich,” while the other said, “He will be wealthy whom God wants to enrich.” When this matter had later been tested by experience, the one who had invoked God selected, by lot, a pastry full of gold, but the other chose, by lot, a pastry of capon.]
- 2400–01 Proverbial. See Whiting G246. Compare *VC* 2, Prol. 68. Ultimately derived from Proverbs 10:22.
- 2489 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Cecus non iudicat de coloribus.* [A blind man makes no judgments about colors.] Proverbial. Compare Chaucer’s *TC*, “A blind man cannot juggen wel in hewes” (2.21).

- 2497 *commun as the strete.* Proverbial. See Whiting, S831 and C64. Compare “As commune as þe Cartwey to knave and to all” in *Piers Plowman* B.3.132.
- 2648 *affeccioun.* I.e., the faculty of the soul concerned with emotion and volition.
- 2650 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum contra istos qui non propter amorem sed propter diuicias sponsalia sumunt. Et narrat de quodam Regis Apulie Seneschallo, qui non solum propter pecuniam vxorem duxit, set eciam pecunie commercio vxorem sibi despontam vendidit.* [Here he presents an instructive example against those who take marriage vows not on account of love but of wealth. And he narrates about a certain seneschal of the king of Apulia, who not only took his wife because of money, but also sold her, divorced from himself, in a commercial exchange.] The Tale of the King and the False Steward is based on *Roman des Sept Sages*.
- 2844 *richesse.* *Richesse* is a member of the Court of Idleness in Guillaume de Lorris’ *RR*, lines 1017 ff. The world is in the power of *Richesse*, who is said to have great gifts at winning her way with her beauty that is defined by costly ornaments. She is accompanied by a youth accustomed to fine mansions, lavish spending, and rich clothing. She supports him as if coins grew out of granaries, a phenomenon Gower’s Amans says he has not known.
- 2863 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat super illis Auaricie speciebus, que falsum Testimonium et Perjurium nuncupantur; quorum fraudulenta circumuencio tam in cupiditatis quam in amoris causa sui desiderii propositum quamsepe fallaciter attingit.* [Here he treats those species of avarice that are called False Testimony and Perjury, whose fraudulent betrayal, both in the cause of cupidity and the cause of love, frequently and fallaciously achieves the goal of its desire.]
- 2872 *hepe.* From Middle Low German, Middle Dutch. A kind of pruning hook. *MED* and *OED* cite no other instance of the term in English. Perhaps Gower knows it from a Dutch proverb.
- 2961 ff. The Tale of Achilles and Deidamia is told fully in Statius, *Achilleid* 1.198–960. Condensed versions occur in collections of moralized tales (for example, the Latin *Gesta Romanorum*, cap. clvi). On the ethical implications of cross-dressing in Gower, see Watt, *Amoral Gower*, pp. 69–76.
- 2965 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum de illis, qui falsum testificantes amoris innocenciam circumveniunt. Et narrat qualiter Thetis Achillem filium suum adolescentem, muliebri vestitum apparatu, asserens esse puellam inter Regis Lichomedis filias ad educandum produxit. Et sic Achilles decepto Rege filie sue Deidamie socia et cubicularia effectus super ipsam Pirrum genuit; qui postea mire probitatis miliciam assecutus mortem patris sui apud Troiam in Polixenon tirannice vindicauit.* [Here he presents an instructive example about those who, bearing false witness, betray a woman innocent in love. And he narrates how Thetis placed Achilles, her youthful son, to be raised among the daughters of King Lichomede, dressed in woman’s garb, asserting that he was a girl. And thus Achilles, with the king deceived, having been made the companion and roommate of the king’s daughter, Deidamia, engendered on her Pirrus, who later, pursuing

- military endeavors of miraculous probity, tyrannically took revenge against Polyxenes for the death of his father at Troy.] See note to line 7591, below.
- 3062–69 In Statius, Achilles rapes Deidamia in a grove at a Bacchic festival, an act presented with graphic detail as Achilles grips her in his powerful arms and accomplishes his desire as she fills the grove and mountain with her cries, which the other women think to be the signal to dance (1.640–48). Genius converts the deed into an act of mutual arousal as nature first lets them kiss and then leads them down the *hihe weie of loves lore* (line 3066).
- 3063 *Nature*. Kelly observes that *Nature*, in this instance, implies the “mating instinct,” noting that Gower characteristically avoids placing moral blame on the instincts of natural love (*Love and Marriage*, pp. 137–38).
- 3247 ff. Gower’s story of Medea draws both from Benoît’s *Roman de Troie*, lines 715–2078, and Ovid’s *Met.* 7.1–424. Macaulay discusses Gower’s use of Benoît (3.497). Compare Chaucer’s version of the Medea story in *LGW*, lines 1500–1697. Lydgate offers a version, based mainly on Guido, that is more sprawling and somewhat less sympathetic to Medea (*Troy Book* 1.1513–3715). See Harbert, “Lessons from the Great Clerk,” pp. 93–97; Morse, *Medieval Medea*; Grinnell, “Medea’s Humanity”; and especially Bakalian (*Aspects of Love*, pp. 85–100). The tale of Medea in *Traité* 8.1–3 is also highly sympathetic toward Medea. There the recurrent moral of the refrain is *Freinte espousaile dieus le vengua*, “God will avenge a broken marriage” (*Traité* 8.3, lines 7, 14, and 21).
- 3249 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic in amoris causa ponit exemplum contra periuros. Et narrat qualiter Iason, priusquam ad insulam Colchos pro aureo vellere ibidem conquestando transmearet, in amorem et coniugium Medee Regis Othonis filie iuramento firmius se astrinxit; set suo postea completo negocio, cum ipsam secum navigio in Greciam perduxisset, ubi illa senectam patris sui Esonis in floridam iuuentutem mirabili scientia reformauit, ipse Iason fidei sue ligamento aliisque beneficiis postpositis, dictam Medeam pro quadam Creusa Regis Creontis filia periurus dereliquit.* [Here he presents an instructive example against perjurors in the cause of love. And he narrates how Jason, before he travelled to the island of Colchos for conquering the golden fleece, very firmly bound himself by oath to love and marry Medea, daughter of King Otho. But with his business having been completed, when he led her with him by ship to Greece where she reformed the old age of his father Eso into flowering youth by a miraculous science, this Jason, setting aside the ties of his faith and other favors owed, abandoned, as a perjurer, the said Medea in favor of a certain Creusa, daughter of King Creon.]
- 3303–09 For a lively Middle English retelling of Lamedon’s offense to Jason and the subsequent destruction of the first Troy, see Lydgate’s *Troy Book* (1.925–1196; 3721–4436), based on Guido de Columnis’ *Historia destructionis Troiae*.
- 3416 *Seint John to borwe.* I.e., “committed himself to St. John’s care.” St. John was a visionary; the implication may be that Jason lends himself to (or puts himself in the hands of) what may come, which only St. John might foresee. Or, given Jason’s assertion that “he wolde ferst beginne / At love” (lines 3417–18),

it is remotely possible that Gower intends a parodic allusion to “God is love” (1 John 4:8) to define Jason’s hypocrisy.

- 3484–92 Medea’s piety here is notable. Their mutual consent and solemn vows at the altar of God would be taken, according to medieval custom, as the basis of a true and binding marriage, which is important to subsequent details in their relationship, as Jason proves unfaithful and destroys all. See Kelly (*Love and Marriage*, p. 131) on the gravity of Jason’s infidelity. For discussion of Gower’s manipulation of his sources to create a tale highly sympathetic to Medea, see Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, pp. 109–15.
- 3495 *Ther cam a maide.* No maid is mentioned in Benoît or Guido. Her loyal presence adds to Medea’s dignity.
- 3590 *Thre sithes toward orient.* Genius gives Medea a good Hebrew sense of prayerful validation. See Daniel 6:10: “Daniel opening the windows in his upper chamber towards Jerusalem . . . knelt down three times a day, and adored, and gave thanks before his God, as he had been accustomed to do before.” Compare 3 Kings (1 Kings) 8:22–53 (the prayer of Solomon to “pray thee towards the way of their land”—8:48).
- 3594–3601 *To opne a buiste . . . of such oignement . . .* Heroic women often cure or protect men by means of an ointment in a box. See *Destruction of Troy*, line 782 (compare Laud *Troy Book*, line 919); the Lady of Norison in *Yvain* (compare *Ywain and Gawain*, line 1761–82); see also Psyche’s venture into Hell in Apuleius to get the box of beauty ointment, though that’s for women.
- 3669 *undren hih.* Benoît writes “halte tierce” (*Roman de Troie*, line 1760).
- 3850–52 Proverbial. See Whiting, L517.
- 3957 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota quibus medicamentis Esonem senectute decrepitum ad suę iuuentutis adolescenciam prudens Medea reduxit.* [Note by what medicines shrewd Medea led Eson, decrepit with age, back to the early part of his youth.]
- 3981–82 *Echates . . . goddesse of sorcerie.* Hecate, the goddess of night, is the deity to whom witches commonly pray. See *Macbeth* 3.5, where Hecate tells the three weird sisters of Macbeth’s approach, and 4.1, where she appears with prophecies for Macbeth. The *MED* (*ecate*) cites *Palladius* (DukeH d.2) 1.586 and 11.253, where “Echates,” here figured as the crescent moon, exerts her influence on things terrestrial.
- 4039 *fieldwode and verveyne.* Medicinal herbs. The *MED* identifies *verveyne* as a genus of verbena, especially *Verbena officinalis*. The plant is used in cookery recipes and medicinal remedies, veterinary remedies, magic, and rites. The juice was extracted by boiling the herb. Precisely what *fieldwode* is remains uncertain, though it too appears to have something to do with magic.
- 4136 *medicine it wile.* “medicinal formula dictates.” See *MED* *wille* v. 7c and *medicine* n. 1a.

- 4175–84 This recapitulation of the heroine’s virtues prior to disaster is unusual in medieval writing. It illustrates well Gower’s keen sense of dramatic structure within his story as well as his detailed attention to female worth, particularly her intelligence, dedication, and powerful independence. “In Medea Gower has achieved his finest portrait of a powerful woman who loves her husband” (Bakalian, *Aspects of Love*, p. 87).
- 4213 *moste untrewe creature*. N.b., *CA* 8.2563–66, where Gower’s sympathy for Medea, as the last among six forsaken women and four wives, is evidenced by the fact that she is the only one of the women who speaks: “Fy on alle untrewe” (8.2566). See Bakalian, *Aspects of Love*, p. 99.
- 4219 *Pallas*. The court of Pallas Athena is the suitable residence for Medea to retire in Gower’s poem. Vat. Myth. I presents Pallas as the goddess of wisdom, invention, and ingenuity, as well as prowess in warfare — all qualities characteristic of Medea (Vat. Myth. I 124–25).
- 4243 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota qualiter aureum vellus in partes insule Colchos primo deuenit. Athemas Rex Philen coniugem, ex qua Frixum et Hellen genuit: mortua autem Philen [MS: Hellen] Athemas Ynonem Regis Cadni filiam poste in vxorem duxit, que more Nouerce dictos infantes in tantum recollegit odium, quod ambos in mare proici penes Regem procurauit. Vnde Iuno compaciens quendam Arietem grandem aureo vestitum vellere ad litus natantem destinauit; super cuius dorsum pueros apponi iussit. Quo facto Aries super vndas regressus cum solo Frixo sibi adherente in Colchos applicuit, vbi Iuno dictum Arietem cum suo vellere, prout in aliis canetur cronicis, sub arta custodia collocauit.* [Note how the Golden Fleece first came to the regions of the island of Colchos. King Athemas had Philen as a wife, from whom he bore Frixus and Hellen; but when Philen died, Athemas married Ino the daughter of King Cadmus, who, in the manner of stepmothers, held the aforementioned infants in such hatred that she procured both to be thrown into the sea that belonged to the king. Whence Juno, struck by sympathy, directed a certain huge ram clothed with a golden fleece to swim to shore, on whose back she ordered the children to be placed. With this done, the ram, retreating on the waves with only Frixus clinging on him, headed to Colchos, where Juno established the said ram with its fleece under close watch, just as is presented in other chronicles.]
- 4243–4361 The story of Phrixus and Helle occurs without much variation of detail in Hyg. 2–3; Vat. Myth. I 23; II 134; *Gen. deorum* 13.67; and *Fasti* 3.851–76, though Gower’s adaptation is closer to the *Ovide Moralisé* in the spelling of “Frixus” (line 4254), “Yno” (line 4271), and in details such as the mention of “soda whete” (line 4281) and the priest’s instruction to the queen (lines 4292–4307) or Jupiter’s sending the rain (line 4332). See Mainzer, “John Gower’s Use of the ‘Mediaeval Ovid,’” pp. 220–22, and Yeager, “John Gower and the Uses of Allusion,” p. 210. In *The Folktale*, Thompson compares the couple’s fleeing from their cruel stepmother to such a folk motif as Aarne, Type 450 (pp. 279–80).

- 4383 Genius' casting his observations upon Usury in the rhetorical format of a dream vision is unusual in moral diatribe but is well suited to his tale-telling format.
- 4383–4430 On Usury, with fraudulent *brocours* at hand (line 4387), compare *VC* 5.12.703 ff. Schmitz (*Middel Weie*, p. 104) points out Gower's comparison of usurers to packs of hounds (*racches in a route*, line 4388), noting Gower's skill in using animals to define mankind's loss of humanity through vice. Compare *VC* 1, with its nightmare on the Uprising of 1381.
- 4390 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat de illa specie Auaricie, que Vsura dicitur, cuius creditor in pecunia tantum numerata plusquam sibi de iure debetur incrementum lucri adauget.* [Here he narrates about that species of avarice which is called Usury, by which a lender of a certain price amasses returns of wealth more than by law he ought to.]
- 4452 *I were a goddeshalf.* See Macaulay's note: "This seems to mean, 'I should be content,' that is, I should be ready to say 'In God's name let it be so'" (3.501). Compare 5.5016 and *BD* lines 370 and 757.
- 4485 *thoght is fre.* Proverbial. See Whiting, T238.
- 4551–60 On the lawless nature of the law of love outlined here and elsewhere in Gower, see Collins, "Love, Nature and Law," pp. 117–19. N.b., *CA* 1.42–51, 1049–52, 2.2361–67, 3.169–75, 6.1262–65, 1278–84, and 8.2111–15. For comparison with Chaucer, see *TC* 3.1744–45, 1748 and 4.618, as well as The Knight's Tale (*CT* I[A]1164–69). Collins also considers passages in Chaucer's Monk's and Franklin's Tales, *Scogan*, and *LGW* (F-text), as well as several texts from Aquinas' *Summa theologiae*.
- 4556 *love is lord in every place.* Proverbial. See Whiting, L518. Compare *CA* 1.34–35 and Whiting, L509: "Love has no law."
- 4572 Genius modifies Ovid's version of the story considerably to suit his purpose. Compare *Met.* 3.359 ff.
- 4579 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum contra istos maritos qui vltra id quod proprias habent vxores ad noue voluptatis incrementum alias mulieres superfue lucrari non verentur. Et narrat qualiter Iuno vindictam suam in Echo decreuit, pro eo quod ipsa Echo in huiusmodi mulierum lucris adquirendis de consilio mariti sui Iouis mediatrix extiterat.* [Here he presents an instructive example against those husbands who are not ashamed to gain, in excess profit, other women beyond what they have as their own wives, for the purpose of the profit of novel pleasure.]
- 4583–4652 On Gower's expansion of Ovid's story of Echo by developing her character and punishment, see Zipf, "Tale of Echo."
- 4640 *clappe it out as doth a belle.* Proverbial. See Whiting, B236. Compare *CA* 1.2390–91.

- 4676 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat super illa specie Auaricie que Parcimonia dicitur, cuius natura tenax aliqualem sue substancie porcionem aut deo aut hominibus participare nullatenus consentit.* [Here he treats about that species of Avarice called Parsimony, whose stingy nature does not at all consent to share the least portion of its wealth with either God or men.]
- 4720 *He was wys that ferst made mede.* Proverbial. See Whiting, G78. Compare *CA* 5.7716–17. See also *Havelok the Dane*, ed. Smithers, p. 130, note to line 1636. The allusion is to that person who first established the institution of gift giving, which Genius takes as the best antidote to Skarsnesse. Generosity is an important social concept in Gower's system of social values.
- 4723–25 *he faileth of his game / That wol with ydel hand reclame / His hauk.* Genius' sententious remark borders on the proverbial. See Whiting, *Chaucer's Use of Proverbs*, p. 147. Compare Chaucer's Reeve: "With empty hand men may na haukes tulle" (CTI[A]4134) and the Wife of Bath's "With empty hand men may none haukes lure" (CTIII[D]415).
- 4730 *Cresus.* Cresus, the last king of Lydia, famed for his wealth (i.e., "rich as Croesus"). On his unhappy fate, see Chaucer's Monk's Tale (*CT VII[B²]*2727–66) and *HF*, lines 105–06.
- 4731 *Octovien.* The emperor Augustus Caesar (63 BC–AD 14), ruler of Rome during the "Golden Age" of Latin literature; thus Gower's pun on *al the gold*. For Christian commentators, the Golden Age and Octavian locate Christ's birth and the reign of peace.
- 4781–4869 The story of Babio and Croceus is derived from the *Comoedia Babionis*, a Latin poem in a quasi-dramatic form which was popular in the fourteenth century. See Wright, *Early Mysteries*, p. 65.
- 4785 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur contra istos, qui Auaricia stricti largitatis beneficium in amoris causa confundunt. Et ponit exemplum, qualiter Croceus largus et hillaris Babionem auarum et tenacem de amore Viole, que pulcherrima fuit, donis largissimis circumuenit.* [Here he speaks against those who, constrained by Avarice, in the cause of love thwart the goodness of generosity. And he presents an instructive example, how generous and cheerful Croceus by large gifts undid the avaricious and stingy Babio in his love for Viola, who was extremely beautiful.]
- 4785–86 *For sparinge of a litel cost / Fulofste time a man hath lost.* Proverbial. See Whiting, *Chaucer's Use of Proverbs*, p. 273.
- 4799 *mede kepeth love in house.* Proverbial. See *MO*, line 25490.
- 4854–55 *Bot for to prinche and for to spare, / Of worldes muk to gete enress.* Proverbial. Whiting, M798.
- 4866 *noght worthi for to duelle.* In the *RR*, *Richesse* is one of the principal attendants in the garden of Love, while *Poverte* grimaces on the outside of the wall as a warning to all who enter.

- 4888 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur super illa aborta specie Auaricie, que Ingratitudo dicta est, cuius condicionem non solum creator, sed etiam cuncte creature abominabilem detestantur.* [Here he speaks about that monstrous offspring of the species of Avarice, which is called Ingratitude, whose nature not only the Creator but also creatures detest as abominable.]
- 4937 ff. The Tale of Adrian and Bardus is Eastern in origin. It occurs near the end of the *Speculum Stultorum* and a variation of it is told by Richard I in Matthew Paris' *Chronica Majora* (entry for 1195). A variation is likewise present in the Middle English *Gesta Romanorum* (cap. lxv).
- 4941 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic dicit qualiter bestie in suis beneficiis hominem ingratum naturaliter precellunt. Et ponit exemplum de Adriano Rome Cenatore, qui in quadam Foresta venacionibus insistens, dum predam persequeretur, in Cisternam profundam nescia familia corravit: ubi superueniens quidam pauper nomine Bardus, immissa cordula, putans hominem extraxisse, primo Simeam extraxit, secundo Serpentem, tertio Adrianum, qui pauperem despiciens aliquid ei pro benefacto reddere recusabat. Set tam Serpens quam Simea gratuita benevolencia ipsum singulis donis sufficienter remunerarunt.* [Here he says how animals in their beneficence naturally surpass an ungrateful human being. And he presents an instructive example about Adrian, a senator of Rome, who, forging through a certain forest for hunting, fell into a deep cavern while he was pursuing his prey, with his family unaware of what had happened. A certain poor man arriving there, Bardus by name, having sent a rope down thinking to extract a man, pulled out first an ape, second a serpent, and third Adrian, who, despising the poor man, refused to reward him for his charitable action. But both the serpent and the ape in grateful benevolence remunerated him with separate gifts.]
- 5171 *wel behote and evelle laste.* Proverbial. A variant on “great promise, small performance.” See Whiting, P409 and P411.
- 5231 *the poete.* The story of Ariadne is told in *Met.* 8.169, and *Hyg.* 42–43; Gower does not follow either source closely, though *the poete* doubtless refers to Ovid. For a contemporary retelling of the story, compare Chaucer's *LW*, lines 1886–2227. See Bakalian, *Aspects of Love*, pp. 113–20, on Ariadne as the last of Gower's forsaken women tales.
- 5234 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum contra viros amori ingratos. Et narrat qualiter Theseus Cadmi filius, consilio suffultus Adriagne Regis Mynos filie, in domo que laborinthus dicitur Minotaurum vicit: vnde Theseus Adriagne sponsalia certissime promittens ipsam vna cum Fedra sorore sua a Creta secum navigio duxit. Set statim postea obliito gratitudinis beneficio Adriagnam ipsum saluarem in insula Chio spretam post tergum reliquit; et Fedram Athenis sibi sponsalam ingratus coronauit.* [Here he presents an instructive example against men ungrateful in love. And he narrates how Theseus, the son of Cadmus, supported by the counsel of Ariadne, daughter of King Mynos, conquered the Minotaur in the house called the Labyrinth. Wherefore Theseus, promising most emphatically marriage vows to Ariadne, led her along with her sister Phedra by ship with him from Crete. But immediately afterwards, forgetting the debt of gratitude, he left Ariadne

- who had saved him behind on the island of Chios, spurned; and, ingrate, awarded to himself Phedra as a bride at Athens.]
- 5339 *al on.* “Of one accord,” with a hint of legality, in that they have come to an agreement. The sense might also be “alone,” though that means of sealing the agreement, testifying, you might say, mainly comes later (5.5381–82).
- 5413 *Chyo.* Presumably Naxos, but where Gower comes up with this designation is uncertain. Ovid provides *Dia* as a name for Naxos, which may lie behind a faulty transcription.
- 5505 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat super illa specie cupida que Rapina nuncupatur, cuius mater extorcio ipsam ad deseruiendum magnatum curiis specialius commendauit.* [Here he treats that cupidinous species which is called Rapacity, whose mother, Extortion, particularly commends her (Rapacity) to the service of magnates in courts.]
- 5551 ff. Gower’s story of Tereus, Procne, and Philomela comes loosely from *Met.* 6.424–674. The story was a favorite example of the cruelty of rape. See Chaucer’s *LGW*, lines 2228–2393, and *TC* 2.64–73. Pearsall notes that “Ovid is Gower’s major source of narrative material in the *Confessio*” and discusses in detail the stories of Procne and Philomela, Ceix and Alceone, and Medea (“Gower’s Narrative Art,” pp. 478–83). So too Lepley, “Tale of Tereus.” See also Watt (*Amoral Gower*, pp. 90–97) on Tereus’ tyrannous masculinity. Watt includes a reproduction of Pierpont Morgan Library MS M.126, fol. 122r, depicting the cutting out of Philomena’s tongue and the end of Tereus’ feast as Procne explains what he has done (p. 97). In tales such as these (Tereus, Medea, Rosamund and Albinus, Mundus and Paulina, and Nectanabus) the reader continually encounters “contradictions that are not and can never be fully resolved” (p. 103).
- 5557 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum contra istos in amoris causa raptiores. Et narrat qualiter Pandion Rex Athenarum duas filias, videlicet Progne et Philomenam, habuit. Progne autem Tereo Regi Tracie desponsata, contigit quod cum Tereus ad instanciam vxoris sue Philomenam de Athenis in Traciam sororie visitacionis causa secum quadam vice perduceret, in concupiscentiam Philomene tanta seueritate in itinere dilapsus est, quod ipse non solum sue violencia rapine virginitatem eius oppressit, set et ipsius linguam, ne factum detegeret, forpice mutulauit. Vnde in perpetue memorie Cronicam tanti raptoris austeritatem miro ordine dii postea vindicarunt.* [Here he presents an instructive example against those who are rapists in the cause of love. And he narrates how Pandion the king of the Athenians had two daughters, namely Procne and Philomena. Now after Procne was betrothed to Tereus the king of Thracia, it happened that, when Tereus at the prompting of his wife led Philomena with him from Athens to Thracia by chance for the sake of a sisterly visit, on the journey he fell into lust for Philomena of such intensity that he not only by violent rape violated her virginity, but also with a pair of shears mutilated her tongue, lest she reveal the deed. Wherefore the gods by a miraculous means later took vengeance on the severity of such a rape, as a record of perpetual memory.]

- 5605–11 Gower efficiently shifts the focus from Ovid's sly Tereus, with his seductive language, to parental concern in general as the parents (no mother is mentioned in Ovid) wonder whether Philomene should go *þþot if thei weren in presence* (line 5607). At last they agree because of their delight in their son-in-law's company and because they do not wish him to fail. They have been made to feel proud of him and his attentions. In Gower the betrayal is of the fundamental domestic structure — the family.
- 5634–61 See Mast's discussion of Gower's sympathetic treatment of rape victims, particularly his presentation here of the emotional damage to Philomena ("Rape," pp. 112–16). As preface to her discussion of rape in *CA*, Mast (p. 106) cites *MO* (lines 8725–36), a passage worth quoting here:
- As autres jofnes femelines
De Stupre et de ses disciplines
Sovent auci vient Grant dammage:
Quant de lour corps ne sont virgines,
Et que l'en sciet de leur covines,
Par ce perdonnt leur mariage,
Dont met esclandre en lour lignage,
Sique pour honte en leur putage
Tout s'enfuent comme orphelines,
Dont croist sur honte plus hontage,
Quant au bordell pour l'avantage
De sustienance sont enclines.
- [Great harm often comes to young women from Rape and her followers: when they are no longer virgins in body and the secret is out, they lose their chances at marriage, bring scandal to their family, so that (like orphans) they run away for shame, and, forced into brothels to support themselves, their shame increases into more shame. Trans. Wilson, p. 120.]
- 5668 *felonie*. Philomena calls attention to the legal implications of Tereus' crime, as does Gower. Rape of virgins was a felony punished by castration and blinding. See Bracton, *De legibus* f147, *Appellum de raptu virginem* (vol. 2, pp. 414–15), and Mast, "Rape," pp. 114 and 126n6.
- 5904–06 Here Gower gives rape and murder almost equal status (Mast, "Rape," p. 115).
- 5988 *Schal no man se my chekes rede*. Pearsall emphasizes the charm and tenderness with which Gower distances reactions to the horror of events by focusing on meaningful human behavior such as the nightingale's blush that it would poignantly hide ("Gower's Narrative Art," p. 479).
- 5993–95 *love is a wofull blisse*. Proverbial. See Whiting L513 and Tilley L505a.
- 6006 *in wynter lith swounyng*. The idea here is that the swallow sleeps in the mud through the winter, then appears in the spring and builds its nest out of mud. White, in his *Book of Beasts*, p. 117n1, cites Dr. Johnson's observation that swallows "certainly sleep all the winter. A number of them conglobulate together, by flying round and round, and then all in a heap throw themselves underwater, and lie in the bed of a river."

- 6059 *every love hath drede.* Proverbial. See Whiting L517.
- 6079 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur super illa Cupiditatis specie quam furtum vocant, cuius Ministri alicuius legis offensam non metuentes, tam in amoris causa quam aliter, suam quamsepe conscienciam offendunt.* [Here he speaks about that species of Cupidity which is called Robbery, whose ministers, not fearing to offend any law, frequently offend conscience itself, both in the cause of love and elsewhere.]
- 6117 *unmete.* The sense is complex. As a shepherdess the woman might be “becoming,” “incomparable”; or she might be “ugly,” “hideous,” “unsightly,” “displeasing,” all glosses common enough for *unmete* and suitable in defining the rapaciousness of the assailant, who rapes mainly because she is there, possibly for reasons of arousal, though more likely not. But given the fact that the “robber” is called “lord” and, as a hunter with hounds, must be of some station in life, a political sense may apply, such as “unworthy,” or “of inferior station,” in which case the passage is another in which Gower criticizes the privileged for their presumptuous treatment of common people, who would take from the poor simply because they would have what others have — “For other mennes good is swete” (line 6118).
- 6118 *other mennes good is swete.* Mast suggests that in Gower’s time “a woman’s sexuality was largely thought of as a commodity” and rape “an assault on male property.” Thus rape equates with theft more than passionate desire, the will “to dominate rather than to fornicate lecherously” (“Rape,” p. 108). The assault of Tereus upon Philomena certainly seems passion driven, however (n.b., “in a rage on hire he ran” [line 5632]).
- 6145 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur contra istos in amoris causa predones, qui cum in suam furtive concupiscenciam aspirant, fortuna in contrarium operatur. Et narrat quod cum Neptunus quamdam virginem nomine Cornicem solam iuxta mare deambularem oppremere suo furto voluisset, superueniens Pallas ipsam e manibus eius virginitate seruata gracius liberavit.* [Here he speaks against those bandits in the cause of love against whom fortune works contrariously, when they make pursuits in their furtive love. And he narrates that when Neptune wanted to assault by his robbery a certain virgin, Cornix by name, when she was wandering along the seashore, Pallas Athena intervened and graciously freed her from his hands, with her virginity intact.]
- For the story of Neptune and Cornix, see *Met.* 2.542–632. Gower’s adaptation of the story of Cornix is more detailed than Ovid’s and shifts the focus from competition among gods to a victim of male aggression as Neptune uses Cornix’s beauty as an excuse for his lechery to become a pillager, not of broaches and rings, but of her most personal treasure, her maidenhead. In Ovid the god simply pursues; in Gower he is a robber, a rapist who seizes her in his arms and thrusts his hand toward the coffer (5.6177), none of which detail is in Ovid. Cornix, in turn, is given a touching prayer as she defends the flower she has always kept under lock and key. Pallas comes to her aid, transforming her into a crow that slips through Neptune’s greedy hands:

- “The bridd is flowe and he was let” (5.6214). Thwarted and shamed, he becomes a fool forever, “scorned of that he hath lore” (5.6217).
- 6150 *wif to Marte*. Compare 5.1214 ff. where, as “goddess of batailles” (5.1218, *Pallas Dea bellorum*, as the marginal gloss points out), she is said to be “Martes wif” (5.1215). This does not, of course, inhibit Mars’ attraction to Venus, and adds additional voltage to the Judgment of Paris.
- 6204–11 In Ovid there is none of the *delit* (line 6207) that *Cornix* experiences, a feeling of freedom as she flees off in front of Neptune’s eyes. The sharp contrast between her white virginity and her black feathers is also Gower’s. Gower raises “our sympathy and compassion for the innocent girl by making the plea to the goddess as emotional as possible” as he focuses on the horror of rape for women (Mast, “Rape,” pp. 121–22).
- 6225 The source of the Tale of Calistona is most likely *Met.* 2.409–541, where she is not given a name but is only called *virgo Nonacrina* (he does name Arcas); and *Fasti* 2.153–92, where she is called Callisto. Another Latin source might be *Poet. astr.* 2.1, for the story of Calistona, and 2.4 for an account of her son Arcas; and *Hyg.* 176–77, which, though brief, discusses the stars in Callisto’s constellation. The Tale of Calistona pairs well with that of *Cornix* in that the fate of the two women, though similar in that they are both translated into animals, is, nonetheless, very different. Here the god succeeds in having his way with the woman, and she, a rape victim, is left trapped by pregnancy. Gower is sensitive to her shame and touching effort to remain a part of Diana’s sacred community. But Diana offers no sympathy. After the child is born Juno transforms Calistona into a bear and, almost cruelly, leaves her human sensibilities intact: “For though she hadde hire forme lore, / The love was noght lost therfore / Which kinde hath set under his lawe” (5.6321–23). When her son Archas grows up and, as a hunter, pursues her, Gower focuses on the mother’s love as she would embrace her son despite her vulnerability. The moment is so poignant that Jupiter, the culprit who raped her, intercedes to protect them both. In this instance, the forces of nature win out, moderating even Jupiter’s behavior.
- 6225–81 The author of *Chaucer’s Ghoast* (1672), Arg. 10, adapts these lines without acknowledgment in his Ovidian tale of Calisto and Jupiter. He cuts out the birthing of Archas, however.
- 6231 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum contra istos in causa virginitatis lese predones. Et narrat quod cum Calistona Lichaontis mire pulcritudinis filia suam virginitatem Diane conseruandam castissima vouisset, et in Siluam que Tegea dicitur inter alias ibidem Nymphas moraturam se transtulisset, Iupiter virginis castitatem subtili furto surripiens, quendam filium, qui postea Archas nominatus est, ex ea genuit: unde Iuno in Calistonam seuiens eius pulcritudinem in vrse turpissime deformitatem subito transfigurauit.* [Here he presents an instructive example against those robbers who assault women in the cause of love. And he narrates that when most chaste Calistona, the most wondrously beautiful daughter of Lichaon, vowed to Diana to preserve her virginity, and betook herself into the forest called

Tegea to dally there with other nymphs, Jupiter stole away the chastity of this virgin by a deceitful robbery, and bore from her a certain son, who later was named Archas. Wherefore Juno, raging against Calistona, instantly transfigured her beauty into the hideous deformity of a bear.]

- 6359 ff. See *MO*, lines 17119 ff., where the saying is attributed to Jerome. Valerius does speak of a man named Spurinna (*Val. Max.* 4.5, ext. 1) who destroys the beauty of his face to protect his virginity. Compare *MO*, lines 18301 ff. The subsequent reference to the Apocalypse is 14:4. The account of Valentinian's virginity occurs in *Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum*, where the emperor is said to be *octogenarius*. See Macaulay, p. xix of the introduction to *CA*, who finds it odd that the priest of Venus praises virginity. On this point see White (*Division and Failure*, pp. 608–10. Compare *MO*, lines 18301 ff., where "Phirinus, who was so handsome that all the women of the neighborhood were forced to love him . . . , cut out parts of his body with his own hands, thus overcoming Wantonness" (trans. Wilson, p. 251). Mutilation of one's God-given nature was considered a sin by the Christian Church (n.b., the condemnation of Origen for his self-castration to avoid lechery), but Gower gets around the problem by noting that Phirinus is an unbeliever who, even so, values virginity so passionately that he might, nonetheless, serve as an exemplum "for our edification" (p. 251).
- 6365 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur de virginitatis commendacione, vbi dicit quod nuper Imperatores ob tanti status dignitatem virginibus cedebant in via.* [Here he speaks about the commendation of virginity, saying that, formerly, emperors would give way to virgins in the street on account of the dignity such status possessed.]
- 6372 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur, qualiter Phyrinus, iuuenum Rome pulcherrimus, ut illesam suam conseruaret virginitatem, ambos oculos eruens vultus sui decorum abhominabilem constituit.* [Here he says how Phyrinus, the most handsome of the young men of Rome, made his beauty horrible by plucking both eyes from his face, so that he might preserve his virginity undamaged.]
- 6395 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur qualiter Valentinianus Imperator, cum ipse octogenarius plures prouincias Romano Imperio belliger subiugasset, dixit se super omnia magis gaudere de eo, quod contra sue carnis concupiscentiam victoriam obtinuisset; nam et ipse virgo omnibus diebus vite castissimus permansit.* [Here he speaks how the Emperor Valentinian, when as an attacker at eighty years old he had subjugated many provinces to the Roman empire, said that above all things he took pleasure in having won victory over the lusts of his flesh; for he remained a most chaste virgin for all the days of his life.]
- 6433 ff. Not Chaucer's Criseyde, but Briseis. See *Heroides* 3.
- 6498 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat super illa Cupiditatis specie, que secretum latrociniū dicitur, cuius natura custode rerum nesciente ea que cupid tam per diem quam per noctem absque strepitu clanculo furatur.* [Here he treats about that species of Cupidity which is called secret robbery, whose nature it is to rob clandestinely those things it desires, both by day and by night, without a cry, with the guardian of the goods unawares.]

- 6584 *The servant lede agein the lord.* Amans is meticulously correct here in the politics of love. His heart can imagine many things it would like to do, especially were he to touch her knee (line 6566), though he dares not; but even if he had the strength of ten, he, as servant, would still not commit treason by rebelling against his lord (i.e., the lady), whom he honors. The point here is not so much that he is cowardly (though he may be, in plenty of ways), but that he abides by the hierarchies of vassalage.
- 6620 *Danger.* In *RR* Danger is the primary component in the woman's defense mechanism. Thus he is particularly the enemy of Amans, the would-be lover. See *RR*, lines 2809–4028, as the base churl interrupts Amans just as he is becoming familiar with Bel Acueil (Fair Welcome) and imprisons the lover's hoped for success, as Gower puts it, "under lock and under keie" (5.6621).
- 6632 *stronge lokes maken trewe.* Proverbial. See Whiting, L419.
- 6659–69 Burrow compares the passage to a miniature painting of the lover's confession; the technique is akin to that found in Froissart's *Espinette Amoureuse* ("Portrayal of Amans," p. 6). "This lover, gazing across the rooftops to the window of the room where his lady is sleeping, is first cousin to Froissart's lover gazing up at the window of his lady's house. Both poets favour a kind of realistic detailing which, so far from disturbing the graceful courtly style, makes it more poignant and delectable" (p. 7).
- 6713 ff. Based on *Met.* 4.190–270. See Gaston's remarks on Gower's alterations of Ovid to create a more stealthy Phoebus in "Tale of Leucothoe."
- 6715–80 The author of *Chaucer's Ghoast* (1672), Arg. 9, includes these lines in his penning "in the ancient manner of writing in England" of Ovid's tale of Phoebus and Leucothoë.
- 6718 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic in amoris causa super isto Latrocinio quod de die contigit ponit exemplum. Et narrat quod, cum Leuchotoe Orchami filia in cameris sub arta matris custodia virgo preseruabatur, Phebus eius pulcritudinem concupiscens, in conclave domus clara luce subintrans, virginis pudiciciam matre nescia deflorauit: unde ipsa impregnata iratus pater filiam suam ad sepeliendum viuam effodit; ex cuius tumulo florem, quem Selsequium vocant, dicunt tunc consequenter primitus acreuisse.* [Here he presents an instructive example about that robbery in the cause of love which happens by day; and he narrates that, when Leuchotoe, the daughter of Orchamus, was kept a virgin in a chamber under the strict guard of her mother, Phebus, lustng after her beauty, slipped into the house's chamber in a beam of light and deflowered the virgin's modesty, with her mother unawares. Wherefore, with her pregnant, her enraged father buried his daughter alive in a tomb, out of which they say that a flower that is called "sunflower" first subsequently grew.]
- 6745 *The which were al his worldes welthe.* The sense seems to be that the only worldly treasure Apollo wants at the moment is Leucothoe's treasure, which he would steal at any price.

- 6807–6935 For the story of Hercules and Faunus, see *Fasti* 2.303–58. Ovid refers to the story as a merry tale handed down from days of old (*traditur antiqui fabula plena ioci*) to explain why celebrants of the feast of Bacchus wear no clothes. Ovid concludes: “Thus betrayed by vesture, the god loves not garments which deceive the eye, and bids his worshipers come naked to his rites” (*veste deus lusus fallentes lumina vestes / non amat et nudos ad sua sacra vocal* — *Fasti* 2.357–58). Genius shifts the focus of Ovid’s fabliau from the practices of a religious festival to a farce on stealth and pilfering (micherie).
- 6807 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum super eodem quod de nocte contigit. Et narrat qualiter Hercules cum Eole in quadam spelunca nobili, Thopis dicta, sub monte Thymolo, vbi silua Bachi est, hospicio pernoctarunt. Et cum ipsi variis lectis seperatim iacentes dormierunt, contigit lectum Herculis vestimentis Eole lectumque Eole pelle leonis, qua Hercules induebatur, operiri. Super quo Faenus a silua descendens speluncam subintravit, temptans si forte cum Eole sue concupiscencie voluptatem nesciente Hercule furari posset. Et cum ad lectum Herculis muliebri palpata veste ex casu peruenisset, putans Eolen fuisse, cubiculum nudo corpore ingreditur; quem seniens Hercules manibus apprehensum ipsum ad terram ita fortiter allisit, ut impotens sui corporis effectus usque mane ibidem requieuit, vbi Saba cum Nimpis silvestribus superueniens ipsum sic illusum deridebat.* [Here he presents an instructive example concerning the same thing which occurred by night. And he narrates how Hercules took his lodging for the night with Eolen in a certain noble cave, called Thopis, under Mount Thymolus where the woods of Bacchus are. And while they were sleeping, lying separately in different beds, the bed of Hercules happened to be made up with the clothes of Eolen, and the bed of Eolen with the lionskin that Hercules wore. Whereupon Faunus, descending from the woods, went down into the cave, seeing if by chance he might sneak his fulfillment of lust with Eolen with Hercules unawares. And when by chance he arrived at Hercules’ bed, after having stroked the womanly clothing thinking it was Eolen, he entered the bed with his body naked; perceiving him, Hercules, seizing him with his hands, thus powerfully smashed him to the ground, so that, made entirely powerless in his body, he remained there until morning, where Saba arriving with the wood nymphs mocked him, having been thus deceived.]
- 6810 *pelrinage.* In Ovid they are on pilgrimage to the festival of the god of wine in the grove of Bacchus and the vineyard of Tmolus, details which Gower does not mention, though he does call the place where they bed down for the night “Bachus wode” (5.6837).
- 6852 ff. *Nou take good hiede hou love asaiteth / Him which withal is overcome.* When a lover dresses in his lady’s clothing the implication is, for Gower, that his wit has been overwhelmed. See *VC* 5.1–6 (trans. Stockton, pp. 196–206) on the effemimation of the knight who would become a lover. In Ovid there seems to be no moral opprobrium connected with cross-dressing.
- 6892 *bothe abedde.* I.e., “in separate beds.” In Ovid they sleep in separate beds, since they are preparing to celebrate the festival in honor of Bacchus next morning and wish to be in all purity (*quae facerent pure* — *Fasti* 2.330). The separate-beds detail is necessary for Faunus’ plan to work (or not work, as the case may be).

- 6894 *drunke swyn*. Proverbial, not a political commentary on the servants, who here have a good start on the festival to be celebrated in the morning. To be drunk as a swine is a common saying that is more descriptive than pejorative. See Whiting, S955. In Ovid there is no swine metaphor: the attendants only fall into a drunken slumber after they finish their tasks.
- 6921–23 *wende wel it were sche . . . he profreth him to love*. Ovid does not mention any confusion on Hercules' part; rather Faunus, his penis "harder than horn" (*Fasti* 2.346), lifts the bottom edge of the garment only to encounter the rough hair that bristles from Hercules' legs, at which moment the Tirynthian hero, apparently having just awakened, tosses him out of bed.
- 6961 ff. In some manuscripts of *CA* (but not the Stafford or Sidney Sussex College manuscripts), about two hundred additional lines on sacrilege follow line 6980 and include the Tale of Lucius and the Statue, a tale told also in *MO*, lines 7093–7128, and which is to be found in various fourteenth-century Latin and Middle English story books (e.g., see the Middle English *Gesta Romanorum*, cap. lxviii) as well as classical sources including Cicero's *De natura deorum* and Val. Max. 1.1, ext.3. The story may be summarized as follows: Before Rome was Christian, Caesar made a statue of Apollo, gorgeously adorned with a gold beard, a gold mantle, and a fine carbuncle ring. It happened that a famous clerk named Lucius, a courtier of wit and amusement, squandered all his goods and fell into poverty. To make up for his losses he robbed the statue of its ring, mantle, and beard. The king was informed of the desecration, and Lucius was discovered in possession of the loot. When questioned about the robbery Lucius replied: "When I beheld the god, his hand was outstretched, offering me the ring, which I took in appreciation of his largesse. Moreover, in gratitude I removed the cold heavy gold mantle which so encumbered his shoulders — a garment too cold for winter and too heavy for summer. Then, as I looked at him, I saw his large beard and remembered that his father, who stood there before him, was a beardless youth. So I removed the beard that he might be like his father. Therefore I ask to be excused of the charges against me." See how men lighten their consciences with sacrilege!
- 6966 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat super ultima Cupiditatis specie, que Sacrilegium dicta est, cuius furtum ea que altissimo sanctificantur bona depredans ecclesie tantum spoliis insidiatur.* [Here he treats the last species of Cupidity, which is called Sacrilege, whose robbery assaults those things which the Highest has sanctified, seizing the goods of the church as its spoils.]
- 7012 *proude king Antiochus*. Perhaps Antiochus II, III, or IV alluded to but not named in the latter part of Daniel, though it is doubtful that Gower would have known commentaries that spoke of him. The boastful Antiochus Epiphanes, known for his loud mouth in Daniel 7:8 and 7:25, and evoked as antichrist in Apocalypse 13:6, is a possibility too. But probably Gower is speaking of Antiochus, the namesake of Antioch, who appears as the evil, incestuous king at the beginning of Gower's Tale of Apollonius (8.274 ff.).

- 7013 *Nabuzardan*. According to 4 Kings (2 Kings) 25:8–21, Nebuzaradan, captain of Nebuchadnezzar’s guard, looted Jerusalem, burnt the house of the Lord, the king’s house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, then delivered the priests and keepers of the door to Nebuchadnezzar, who executed them. *MO*, lines 7177–88, links him with Belshazzar as one upon whom God took vengeance for his sacrilege.
- 7018 *Nabugodonosor*. “At the end of the book we find our old friend Nebuchadnezzar” (Fisher, *John Gower*, p. 196). Genius uses the Babylonian king for many purposes, mainly as an exemplum of Pride in Prol. 585–662 and 1.2785–3042, and then again here to exemplify sacrilege. The Book of Daniel is Gower’s source for the more extended exempla on pride (see Peck, “John Gower and the Book of Daniel”), though here the sacrilege allusions are more akin to 4 Kings (2 Kings) 25, where the king of Babylon is the destroyer of Jerusalem and its priesthood rather than the inquisitor of Daniel who is so often brought to see the light, despite his pride.
- 7022 ff. The accounts of Nebuchadnezzar and Balthazar and the writing on the wall appear in Daniel 3–5.
- 7022–23 *Baltazar . . . Mane, Techel, Phares*. See Belshazzar’s feast and the writing on the wall in Daniel 5.5. Daniel’s interpretation of the inscription “is built on a paronomastic reworking of the Aramaic” (*Dictionary of Biblical Tradition*, p. 329), where *Mene* indicates that “God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it”; *Tekel*, “Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting”; and *Peres*, “Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”
- 7070–72 *he loketh on the fleissh / Riht as an hauk*. Proverbial. See Whiting, H201.
- 7187 “There is a time and place for all things.” See Ecclesiastes 3:1–8.
- 7195 ff. Gower’s account of Paris’ abduction of Helen is found in Benoît, *Roman de Troie*, lines 3845–3928 and 4167–4936. See also Dares, Books 7–10, and Guido, Books 6–7. For a Middle English retelling of the story, based on Guido, see Lydgate’s *Troy Book*, Books 2–5.
- 7197 *of Troie*. On Gower’s disenchantment with chivalry and his pervasive use of Troy for social commentary on his own time, see Wetherbee, “John Gower,” pp. 595–96 (on *VC*) and 601–02 (on *CA*): “The world of chivalry is for Gower an uncentered world of ceaseless, random movement, its activities often directly at odds with social order. . . . The career of Paris (5.7195–7590) exposes a society unable to acknowledge the reckless desire to which it owes its origin, and committed by its blind pursuit of that desire to inevitable dissolution.” See also the explanatory note to 6.1391 ff.
- 7201 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic in amoris causa super istius vicii articulo ponit exemplum. Et narrat, pro eo quod Paris Priami Regis filius Helenam Menelai vxorem in quadam Grecie insula a templo Veneris Sacrilegus abduxit, illa Troie famosissima obsidio per vniuersi orbis climata divulgata precipue causabatur. Ita quod huiusmodi Sacrilegium non solum ad ipsius regis Priami omniumque suorum interitum, set eciam ad perpetuam vrbis desolacionem vindicte somitem ministrabat.* [Here he presents an in-

structive example about that vice (Sacrilege) in the cause of love. And he narrates that, because Paris the son of King Priamus sacrilegiously abducted Helen the wife of Menelaus from a temple of Venus on a certain Greek island, that most famous siege of Troy, eminently described through all the regions of the world, was set in motion. So it was that this Sacrilege furnished the kindling of revenge, leading not only to the death of King Priamus himself and all his people, but also to the perpetual desolation of the city.]

- 7228–57 For another ME account of the rebuilding of Troy, so wondrous in its *entaille* (line 7247), see Lydgate's *Troy Book* 2.481–768.
- 7341 *thridde parti*. The other two parts are Asia and Africa. Traditionally, each continent was settled by one of Noah's sons: Europe by Japheth, Asia by Shem, and Africa by Ham. See *Cursor Mundi*, lines 2081 ff. Also Higden's *Polychronicon*, trans. Trevisa, 1.6: "De orbis divisione," with citations from Augustine, Isidore, and Pliny. For a splendid map showing the three sons and their parts of the orb, accompanied by drawings of strange creatures from the diverse continents, see Schedel, ed., *Chronicle of the World*, pl. 13.
- 7353 *Wicke is to stryve and have the worse*. Proverbial. See Whiting, S842, and compare *CA* 3.1651.
- 7441–62 Genius calls upon his books (line 7453) as authority for the three premonitory prophesies by Cassandra, Sybil, and Helenus. But given the predilection of the company their words are thought to be "bot a jape" (line 7463) and thus are ignored. The passage links such choices to their doom, at the heart of which is sacrilege.
- 7591 Lydgate gives an account of Achilles' infatuation for Polixena in much greater detail in *Troy Book* 4.551–3267.
- 7642 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic de virtute Largitatis, que ad oppositum Auaricie inter duo extrema, videlicet Parcimoniam et Prodegalitatem, specialiter consistit.* [Note here concerning the virtue of Generosity, which in opposition to Avarice, particularly stands between two extremes, namely Parsimony and Prodigality.]
- 7719 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Lucas. Omni habenti dabitur.* [Luke: To whoever has, it will be given. (Luke 8:18.)]
- What man hath hors men give him hors.* Proverbial. See Whiting, H537.
- 7720–21 *[The one who has no horse] . . . he mai thanne on fote go.* Proverbial. See Whiting, H512.
- 7725 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Beacius est dare quam accipere.* ["Betre is to give than to take" — line 7725.] Proverbial. See Whiting, G93.
- 7726 *With gifte a man mai frendes make.* Proverbial. See Whiting, G87.
- 7735 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Seneca. Si res tue tibi non sufficiant, fac vt rebus tuis sufficias.* [Seneca: If your goods are not sufficient for you, see that you suffice for your goods. (Attributed to Seneca, but actually from Caecilius Balbus, *De nugis philosophorum* 11.3.)]

- 7736–39 *Bot if thi good suffise . . . be to thi good sufficant.* Proverbial. See Whiting, G346. Compare Chaucer, “Truth,” line 2.
- 7743 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Apostolus. Ordinata caritas incipit a seipsa.* [The Apostle: “Ordered charity begins from itself.”] See Canticle of Canticles 2:4.
- 7774 *Despended al thi time in wast.* Right use of time is a central philosophical concept for Gower. See the Introduction to volume 1 of *CA*. Compare Harry Bailly’s criticism of the pilgrim Chaucer who with his rhyming in The Tale of Sir Thopas “doost noght elles but despendedest tyme” (*CT VII[B²]*931).

EXPLANATORY NOTES TO BOOK 6

- 8 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic in sexto libro tractare intendit de illo capitali vicio quod Gula dicitur, nec non et de eiusdem duabus solummodo speciebus, videlicet Ebrietate et Delicacia, ex quibus humane concupiscencie oblectamentum habundancius augmentatur.* [Here in the sixth book he intends to discourse about that capital sin which is called Gluttony, and also about its two species, namely Drunkenness and Sensuality, by which are augmented very abundantly the delights of human lust.]
- 12 *of hem alle I wol noght trete.* Mindful of his original plan to address the five children of each sin, Genius prepares his reader for his new scheme where, now, he will speak only “of tuo . . . and of no mo” (lines 13–14).
- 60 *baillez ça the cuppe.* Compare Gloton’s admonition in *Piers Plowman*, “Lat go þe cuppe!” (B.5.337), the idea being that the revelers drink from a single bowl which, when one imbiber holds it too long, the company demands that he let go so that the next can drink. The *ça* heightens the imperative. That the glutton bursts into a macaronic French cuts two ways, with a jab at the drunk’s pretension, but also at French inebriation. Most wine consumed in England was imported from France.
- 93–99 Tales of wise or powerful men besotted by love are virtually a genre of medieval entertainment unto itself. Tales of Samson’s infatuations derive from Judges 14–16, with its folktale qualities; the famous story of David and Bathsheba originates in 2 Kings (2 Samuel) 11. The love follies of Virgil, Socrates, and Aristotle are favorite inventions of the fabliaux traditions. E.g., Juan Ruiz’s *Libro de Buen Amor*, 261–64, where Virgil attempts to reach his love in a tower, but is tricked by her when she leaves him hanging midway up in a basket where, next day, he is dishonored with mockery by all who see him so compromised; he retaliates by enchanting every candle flame or fire in Rome so that all go out in an instant and none can be lit except by the private parts of the woman who tricked him. Or, see the variant in the Icelandic tale of Virgil and the basket, *Virgilesrímur*. For a visual depiction of Virgil’s dilemma, see Lucas van Leyden’s Netherlandish engraving of the scene. Aristotle is featured in various adaptations based mainly on Henri d’Andeli’s thirteenth-century *Le lai d’Aristote*. For discussion of such popular tropes, see Smith, *Power of Women*, especially chapters 3 (“Tales of the Mounted Aristotle,” pp.

66–102) and 5 (“The Power of Women Topos in Fourteenth Century Visual Art,” pp. 137–90). Smith includes forty-five remarkable illustrations.

- 107–11 *Of such physique . . . schapen to that maladie / Of lovedrunke.* Wack (“Lovesickness in *Troilus*,” p. 56) summarizes Constantinus’ *Vitalicum* and Gerald of Berry’s *Glosses* on such a malady:

The sight of a beautiful form may cause the soul to go mad with desire, as Constantinus says. In Gerard’s formulation, the mind ‘overestimates’ the value of the perceived object and desires it excessively. This overestimation, however, can only take place if the material composition of the brain is corrupt, that is, the imagination must be excessively cold and dry so that the overestimated image adheres abnormally and excites the concupiscent power. An excess of black bile or another humor (some later treatises list semen in this category) may also cause the disease. The etiology is thus both psychic and somatic, but the material composition of the body, particularly of the brain, is crucial in the development of the illness. No ethical valuation is attached to the causal mechanisms in any of the texts — the patient is not held ‘guilty’ or ‘responsible’ for his illness.

Compare *VC* 5.3.130–40 ff: “When a man sees her womanly beauty — so sweet, elegant and fine, but more like an angel’s — he thinks her a goddess, and puts his fate of life and death in her hands. . . . Outwardly, he does not show what the sight of her means to him; inwardly, the sting of love pierces his heart. . . . His mind’s eye grows dull, blind from the darkness of lust, and he sinks down to his own destruction. . . . So he goes blindly mad because of his blind love.” See also Bakalian, *Aspects of Love*, pp. 124–25 and 138–43, on lovesickness as a kind of drunkenness.

- 239 *blanche fievere.* “A stage of lovesickness analogous to chills” (*MED*, citing this passage). For an extensive discussion of ailments of love and their remedies, see Wack, *Lovesickness*, 1989.

- 248 *peines fele.* The primary sense is that the pains of love surpass all others. But *fele* can also mean “excellent,” *peines fele* thus mirroring the oxymoronic “hote chele” (line 247) and “biter swete” (line 250).

- 325 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic narrat secundum Poetam, qualiter in suo celario Iupiter duo dolea habet, quorum primum liquoris dulcissimi, secundum amarissimi plenum consistit, ita quod ille cui fatata est prosperitas de dulci potabit, alter vero, cui aduersabitur, poculum gustabit amarum.* [Here he narrates, according to the Poet (identified as “Homer” in *RR* 6813; see *Iliad* 24.527), how in his cellar Jupiter has two vats, the first of which is full of most sweet liquid, the second of most bitter liquid, such that he for whom prosperity is fated will drink from the sweet, but another, for whom there will be adversity, will drink the bitter cup.]

- 330 ff. The story of Jupiter’s two tunns may be found in *RR*, lines 6813 ff., and before that in Boethius’ *Consolation* 2.pr.2, though Boethius does not name Homer as his source. Chaucer’s Wife of Bath alludes to the story (*CT* III[D]170) as she delights in assuming Cupid’s role as butler of the tunns, to serve sweet or bitter as she pleases.

- 352 *hindreth many a mannes fode.* The sense might be “causes indigestion,” though more likely *fode* implies “emotional satisfaction” (n.b., *MED fode* n.1, 2a and 2b), hence the gloss “comfort.”
- 391 ff. The story of Bacchus’ return from war and the miraculous fountain in the desert occurs in *Poet. astr.* 2.20, under the heading “Aries,” and in *Vat. Myth.* I 121.
- 399 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic qualiter potus aliquando sicienti precibus adquiritur. Et narrat in exemplum quod, cum Bachus de quodam bello ad oriente repatrians in quibusdam Lubie partibus alicuius generis potum non inuenit, fusis ad Iouem precibus, apparuit ei Aries, qui terram pede percussit, statimque fons emanauit; et sic potum petenti peticio preualuit.* [Note here how a drink for a thirsty man is sometimes acquired by a prayer; and he tells in the illustrative story that, when Bacchus was returning home to the east from a certain war, in some regions of Libya he did not find a drink of any sort. Pouring forth prayers to Jupiter, a ram appeared before him, which stamped the earth with its hoof, and immediately a spring welled up. And thus a petition prevailed for a petitioner.]
- 467 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic de amoris ebrietate ponit exemplum, qualiter Tristrans ob potum, quem Brangweyne in naui ei porrexit, de amore Bele Isolde inebriatus extitit.* [Here he presents an illustrative story about the intoxication of love, how Tristran, on account of a drink that Brangwein offered to him aboard the ship, was intoxicated with love for Fair Isolde.]
- The Tristran story was very popular. For a full account of the drinking of the love potion, see Gottfried von Strassburg’s *Tristan*, lines 1367 ff. (ch. 15 in some editions).
- 485 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic de periculis ebrietatis causa in amore contingentibus narrat quod, cum Pirothous illam pulcherimam Ypotaciam in vxorem duceret, quosdam qui Centauri vocabantur inter alios vicinos ad nupcias invitauit; qui vino imbuti, noue nuptie formositatem aspicientes, duplice ebrietate insanierunt, ita quod ipsi subito salientes a mensa Ipotaciam a Pirothoo marito suo in impetu rapuerunt.* [Here, concerning the dangers of inebriation occurring in the cause of love, he narrates that when Pirithous took the most beautiful Ipotacia as bride he invited to the wedding certain ones among his other neighbors who were called centaurs. These, soured in wine, gazing on the shapeliness of the newly wed bride, raved madly with a double inebriation, such that, suddenly leaping from the wedding feast table, they forcefully abducted Ipotacia from her husband Pirithous.]
- The story of Pirithous is found in *Met.* 12.210 ff.
- 537 ff. No clear source is known for this story of Galba and Vitellius, though Hamilton suggests that the plot comes from a misreading of Eutropius, by way of the French *Secretum Secretorum* (“Some Sources,” p. 340).
- 542 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur specialiter contra vicium illorum, qui nimia potacione quasi ex consuetudine ebriosi efficiuntur. Et narrat exemplum de Galba et Vitello, qui potentes in Hispania principes fuerunt, set ipsi cotidiane ebrietatis potibus assueti, tanta vicinis intulerunt enormia, quod tandem toto conclamante populo pena sentencie*

capitalis in eos iudicialiter diffinita est: qui priusquam morerentur, vt penam mortis alleuiarent, spontanea vini ebrietate sopiti, quasi porci semimortui gladio interierunt. [Here he speaks particularly against the vice of those who regularly keep themselves inebriated by means of too much drink. And he narrates an illustrative story about Galba and Vitellius, who then were powerful rulers in Spain, but were accustomed to drinking for daily inebriation. They inflicted so many horrors on their neighbors that finally, from the outcry of the entire people, a sentence of judicial death was imposed on them. But before they might die, in order to blunt the pain of death, they willingly stunned themselves with the inebriation of wine, and were slaughtered half-alive like pigs, by the sword.]

- 625 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat super illa specie Gule que Delicacia nuncupatur, cuius mollices voluptuose carni in personis precipue potentibus queque complacencia corporaliter ministrat.* [Here he treats about that species of Gluttony which is called Sensuality, whose softness of voluptuous flesh, especially in the persons of the powerful, each bodily pleasure serves.]
- 664 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Philosophus. Consuetudo est altera natura.* [Philosopher: “Habit is a second nature.”]
- 737 *smale lustes whiche I pike.* Several meanings are compatible with *pike* in this context: “steal” (given the fact that Amans feeds with his eyes [6.753] by stealing glances; see *MED piken* v.1, 8), but also “choose” (with his *smale lustes* Amans is perpetually willful) and “tidy up” (see *MED piken* v.1, 6 and 5), with a strong hint as well of “peck at” (the way one might pick at one’s food), given the reference to his “hunger” in 6.736 (see *MED piken* v. 1, 2 and 4).
- 743 *reherce.* Amans’ “rehearsal” of female beauty uses the device of *effictio*, so common in romance literature, praising the woman’s parts beginning with the top of the head and moving downward. The device, which originates in Canticle of Canticles 4, is brought to life by Amans’ dramatization of what his eye sees, which he personifies as a lusty voyeur (lines 753–826).
- 745–50 Amans’ three degrees (line 745) of delicately feeding his fantasy define the primary avenues of intellection that Genius, as confessor, is attempting to exorcize: 1) the eye, 2) the ear (the eye and ear being two windows of the soul defined in Book 1 as the primary senses affecting the welfare of the psyche), and 3) *thoght* (line 749), the agency that converts what is seen and heard into images of desire that please and sustain the lover’s fantasy. The trio is presented in *RR* (lines 2643–2764) as *Douz Regart* (Sweet Looking), *Douz Parler* (Sweet Hearing of the lady’s “voice”), and *Douz Penser* (Sweet Thinking), three gifts from Cupid that make the lover’s pains seem all the more desirable — all good cooks, in Gower, for the seasoning of delicate and tasty food. See the explanatory note to line 939.
- 753 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota qualiter visus in amore se continet delicatus.* [Note how sensual sight restrains itself in love.]
- 767–76 Although Macaulay (2.xv) and others see the lady as “a creature of flesh and blood,” Kinneavy emphasizes the conventional rhetoric (*effictio*) of Amans’

lady, who need only be compared with Chaucer's *Criseyde* or Henryson's to see "how lacking she is in flesh and blood"; mainly she is a creature of "inference" ("Gower's *Confessio Amantis* and the *Penitentials*," p. 157).

- 786 *Hire bodi round, hire middel smal.* Commonplace *figura* of tantalizing female beauty in Middle English romance. *Round* equates with shapeliness (e.g., compare Chaucer's *TC* 3.1250) and *smal* with a lithesome, small-waisted womanly comeliness (e.g., compare Chaucer's *Miller's Tale*, *CT* I[A]3234; *Merchant's Tale*, *CT* IV[E]1602; *TC* 3.1247; and the *Romaunt*, line 1032); *The Tale of Sir Thopas*, *CT* VII(B²)2026, provides an amusing analogue.
- 793–94 *the port and the manere . . . of hire wommanyshe chere.* [C]here can refer to her lovely countenance, but more, to her courtly behavior and breeding. The bearing of the beautiful woman (*port* and *manere*, line 793) is a potent feature of the eroticizing of the female by the male fantasy. Compare Chaucer's *TC* 1.281–87, where Troilus first admires *Criseyde*'s stature, then is captivated by "hire mevyng and hire chere" (1.289); or *BD*, where the Black Knight, having seen the good fair White amidst a "route" of ladies, falls in love with her manner (line 827), but is captivated when "I sawgh hyr daunce so comlily, / Carole and syng so swetely, / Laughe and pleye so womanly, / And loke so debonairly, / So goodly speke and so frendly, / That certes y trowe that evere-more / Nas seyn so blysful a tresor" (lines 848–54; see also *CA* 6.868 ff.). As in Gower, sight, hearing, and thought all correspond to shape the impression in the male's fantasy.
- 795 *on honde.* I have glossed the phrase as "for the moment," though that may be too elaborate a gloss. The phrase often appears as a line filler (see the note to 5.17–18); perhaps something like "you can count on it" would be better.
- 817–19 The figure is of the courtly lady carrying a goshawk on hand as they set out on a hunt. Here the woman is eroticized as the object of the goshawk's piercing gaze.
- 830 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter auris in amore delectatur.* [How the ear is sensually pleased in love.]
- 838 *I hiere on seith.* Amans revels in *douz parler* as he hears pleasing talk in praise of his lady. Chaucer offers a variant on the idea in *TC* as he has the lady laugh in her heart (2.1592) at kind words and praise of Troilus, who is sick (2.1576–96). She too is enjoying the aural delicacies.
- 857 *Lombard.* I.e., Lombardy, where Milan was the seat of Italian bankers who, since the time of Edward I, financed much of England's opulence and thus became synonymous in late fourteenth-century literary parlance with luxury and delicacy (Macaulay notes that Gower refers to a pastry called "pain [bread] lumbard" in *MO* [3.514]), and, especially, with "merchants," "trade," "merchandizing," and "money."
- 879 *Ydoine* and *Amadas*. The allusion is to an Old French romance that enjoyed some popularity in England but was never translated into Middle English. It is alluded to in *Emaré*, *Sir Degrevant*, and *Cursor Mundi*. Amadas (not to be

confused with Sir Amadace in the Middle English romance of that name) is utterly devoted to Ydoine, and though severely tried by unhappy circumstances, like Amans, remains utterly faithful to his lady and her provocative eyes. See Reinhard, *Amadas et Ydoine*, along with his *Old French Romance of 'Amadas et Ydoine'*. The Old French poem has been translated into English by Arthur, as *Amadas and Ydoine*. See also Meechan-Jones' discussion ("Questioning Romance," pp. 35–49).

- 891 *cherie feste*. Cherry season lasts about a fortnight, and thus a very short time.
- 913 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia.** *Qualiter cogitatus impressiones leticie yimaginatiuas cordibus inserit amantum.* [How mental impressions impose imaginations of happiness in lovers' hearts.]
- 939 *mi lustes thre*. See note to lines 745–50, above, comparing the three dainties of Amans to the three gifts of the God of Love in *RR* (lines 2643–2764). See also the Proem to Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato*, where the lover debates which of the three gives greater pleasure.
- 943 *plover*. Proverbial. The plover (a bird) allegedly feeds on air, and thus has a most delicate palette. See Whiting, P272.
- 969 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Delicie corporis militant aduersus animam.* [Sensualities of the body militate against the soul.]
- 975 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum contra istos delicatos. Et narrat de diuite et Lazaro, quorum gestus in euangilio Lucas euidencius describit.* [Here he presents an illustrative story against those sensualists. And he narrates about the rich man (Dives) and the leper (Lazarus), whose story will be found more fully in the Gospel of Luke.]
- The story of Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31) was a common theme for homiletic elaboration.
- 1151–1227 Whether the raconteur be Chaucer, Jean de Meun, Boethius, or a market-place storyteller, tales about Nero's atrocities and follies offered the medieval imagination endless moral pleasure. Hamilton notes that the general authority for Gower's rendition might be Eutropius, as in the account of Galba and Vitellius, but, like Macaulay, observes that the source for the experiment in digestion is unknown ("Some Sources," p. 340). Tiller notes that this particular episode is also told of Frederick II Hohenstaufen (p. 228).
- 1155 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur de delicacia Neronis, qui corporalibus deliciis magis adherens spiritalia gaudia minus obtinuit.* [Here he speaks about the sensuality of Nero, who, adhering more to physical delights, all the less obtained spiritual joys.]
- 1197 *Walkende a pass*. The *Secretum Secretorum* agrees with Nero on value of walking after eating to enhance digestion: "When þu art arise fro mete, walke a litil

vpon soft gress," rather than take a long nap (*The Booke of Goode Governance*, 12th doctrine; *Secretum Secretorum*, p. 6).

Latin verses iii (before line 1261). **Line 8:** *Nudatam . . . auem* [the “bird plucked naked”] keeps in view the lover’s erotic goal, but simultaneously presents this in unappealing terms of preparing and eating game-fowl.

- 1261–66 Love dares anything. Proverbial. See Whiting, L503.
- 1267 ff. ☛ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat qualiter Ebrietas et Delicacia omnis pudicicie contrarium instigantes inter alia ad carnalis concupiscentie promocionem Sacrilegio magicam requirunt.* [Here he treats of how Drunkenness and Sensuality, instigating against all modesty, among other things seek out magical advancement of carnal lust by sorcery.]
- 1280 *as Baiard the blinde stede.* Proverbial. See Whiting, B71; also B72 and B73. The proverb is common in fourteenth-century literature. Compare Chaucer, *CT* VIII(G)1413–16. Bayard as a figure of an unruly horse was also common. See *TC* 1.218–24.
- 1293 ff. ☛ **Latin marginalia:** *Nota de Auctorum necnon et de librorum tam naturalis quam execrabilis magice nominibus.* [Note the names both of authorities and books, of natural and of forbidden magic.]
- 1293–1334 Gower’s principal source for the list of authors and titles seems to be Albertus Magnus’ *Speculum astronomiae*: 11.85–87 cites Raziel (see line 1316); Balemuz appears twice, associated with Hermes (11.7, 47–51); *Ghenbal* (line 1320) appears in the first line of “Salomon’s” book of magic *De sigillis ad daemoniacos* (*On the sigils possessed by demons*): “*Capitulum sigilli gandal et tanchil etc.*” (11.81–83); and Thebit (see line 1322), son of Chora, is also cited (11.129–34). See Albertus 17.6–15 for connections between Saturn and kinds of divination (n.b. note to lines 1295–1302, below). See also note to lines 1317–18.
- 1295–1302 *Geomance . . . Ydromance . . . Piromance . . . Aeremance.* Divination according to the four elements. “Nigromance” (line 1308) is Black Magic, or the calling up of spirits from the dead. Gower seems to be classifying all such “sciences” under Delicacie in that they all attempt to make something out of nothing, like the plover feeding on air or the lover’s fantasy becoming his precious reality.
- 1308–10 *With Nigromance he wole assaile / To make his incantacioun / With hot subfumigacioun.* Galloway, in his review of *Conjuring Spirits*, observes: “Gower writes, describing an illicit means of getting a beloved [by] parroting language like that found in . . . ‘The Book of Angels’ . . . where a man will be loved by all the women who see him if he writes the figure of Venus on a silver plate and ‘suffumigates’ it with aloe wood and other materials” (p. 565). See Lidaka, “*Book of Angels*,” and Albertus on necromancy, that most abominable form of divination that requires “suffumigations and invocation” (11.4–5).
- 1311 *Spatula.* Not found in Albertus, this is “the art of divination from the shoulder blades of animals” (Fox, *Mediaeval Sciences*, pp. 146–47, who cites an Arabic treatise, *De spatula*, translated in the early twelfth century by Hugh of Santalla).

- 1314 ff. *Thosz the Grek.* Toz Graecus (Thoth, Thoz, and Hermes Trismegistus) is often cited by later writers such as Daniel of Morley, William of Auvergne, and Albertus 11.71–75, which includes a work on the stations for the cult of Venus, another on the four mirrors of Venus, and a third on the images of Venus, all of which are attributed to Toz Graecus. See Thorndike 2.225–28.
- 1317–18 *Ne Salomones Candarie, / His Ydeac, his Eutonye.* Gower seems to have misread Albertus, who states that “amongst the books of Salomon, there is the book, *De quatuor annulis* (*On the four rings*) . . . which begins like this: ‘*De arte eutonica et ydaica etc.*’ (*On eutonic and ydaic art etc.*’); and the book *De novem candariis* (*On the nine candles*)” (11.76–68, trans. Zambelli).
- 1323 *Gibiere.* Probably Geber, who was not a magician but rather a noted alchemist (Fox, *Mediaeval Sciences*, p. 147). See chapter 2 of Albertus.
- 1325 *Babilla with hire sones sevene.* Babilla is one of the names for Babylon. The allusion seems to be astronomical, where “hire sones sevene” alludes to the seven planets and their spheres. See Lidaka (“*Book of Angels*,” note to line 1327) for examples of charms and magic squares based on the seven planets, lore that may be, perhaps, traced back to Babylonian astrology.
- 1327 *cernes bothe square and rounde.* Cernes are “circles or other peripheral figures used in magic” (Fox, *Mediaeval Sciences*, p. 147). On circles and magic squares, see Lidaka, “*Book of Angels*,” pp. 34–44, and Karpenko, “Magic Squares.”
- 1331 *The scole of Honorius.* “Honorius was the supposed author of the *Liber sacratus* or *Liber juratus* as it was sometimes called because of the oath which had to be taken to gain possession of the volume” (Fox, *Mediaeval Sciences*, p. 147). See Mathiesen’s essay on the *Liber juratus*, that is, *The Sacred or Sworn Book*, which includes a history of the work from the thirteenth century into the seventeenth, along with numerous excerpts on magical operations (“A Thirteenth-Century Ritual”). Honorius is not mentioned in Albertus, though Belamuz’s book *De horarum opere* is, which may have suggested Honorius to someone.
- 1381 *And thus the guilour is beguiled.* Proverbial. See Whiting, G491. See also *Piers Plowman* B.15.340 ff.
- 1391 ff. The story of Ulysses and Telegonus is told by Dictys, 6.14, 15; by Benoît, lines 28701–28825, 29815–30300; and in the *Gest Hystoriale* 34.13208–53, 36. 13802–13989. Wetherbee notes that the Tale of Telegonus is the last of Gower’s Troy narratives, the fatal encounter of father and son based on “the somber final episode of the *Roman de Troie*. Like Chaucer’s Knight’s Tale, it exposes the uncontrollable relation of intimacy and violence in the chivalric bond” (“John Gower,” p. 602). See also Hyg. 126–27.
- 1392 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota contra istos ob amoris causam sortilegos; vbi narrat in exemplum quod, cum Vluxes a subuersione Troie repatriare nauigio voluisset, ipsum in Insula Cilly, vbi illa expertissima maga nomine Circes regnauit, contigit applicuisse; quem vt in sui amoris concupiscenciam exardesceret, Circes omnibus suis incantacionibus vincere conabatur. Vluxes tamen magica potencior ipsam in amore subegit, ex qua filium nomine Thelogonum genuit, qui postea patrem suum interfecit: et sic contra fidei*

naturam genitus contra generacionis naturam patricidium operatus est. [Note against those who use sorcery in the cause of love. Here he narrates in an instructive example that, when Ulysses wanted to return by ship to his homeland after the sacking of Troy, he happened to arrive at the Island of Cilly, where the most expert magician, Circes by name, ruled. Since she burned for him in the lust of her desire, Circes tried to conquer all his men with incantations. Ulysses, however, more powerful than magic, subjected her in love, from which a son, Theologonus by name, was born, who later killed his father. And thus having been generated in violation of the nature of faith (Theologonus) carried out patricide in violation of the nature of generation.]

- 1395–96 *whyl ther is a mouth, / Forevere his name schal be couth.* This tribute to Ulysses is testimony to the power and function of the voice of the people within their culture, as well as a tribute to the king's popularity.
- 1398 *clerk knowende.* Ulysses is wise in most ways. But Olsson, *John Gower and the Structures of Conversion*, p. 186, notes a deficiency in his wisdom: "Ulysses's knowledge lacks an *ordinatio*, or a field of topics to organize remembrance, and that is because he is driven by *sensualitas*, by a desire for immediate gratification of his 'lustes.' He is a character who has lost his history."
- 1408 *al the strengthe of herbes.* "A poem *De Viribus Herbarum* passed in the Middle Ages under the name of *Macer*" (Mac 3.516).
- 1422 *nedle and ston.* A "rather daring anachronism" on Gower's part (Mac 3.517).
- 1472 *A betre wif.* Genius deliberately sets Penelope's virtue against Ulysses' sensuality. In her wisdom, she is not confused or fooled by strangers at her door.
- 1513 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Oracius. Omnia sunt hominum tenui pendencia filo.* [Horace: All human matters are dangling by a slender thread.] Stollreither notes that the passage is from Ovid, *Ponti* 4.3.35, not Horace (*Quellen-Nachweise*, p. 57).
- 1513–14 *happes over mannes hed / Ben honged with a tendre thred.* Proverbial. See Whiting, H99.
- 1523–63 *he mette a swewene.* "The dream of Ulysses is the only one described by Gower in which the will of a personal agent, god or magician, is not the initiating force. No cause is stated" (Fox, *Mediaeval Sciences*, p. 109).
- 1567 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Bernardus. Plures plura sciunt et seipso nesciunt.* [Bernard: Many know many things and are ignorant of themselves.] The phrase is also used in *Piers Plowman*, B.11.3, at a key moment.
- 1575–81 Bakalian points out that in *Traité* 6.3, "Ulysses dies as a direct result of his infidelity" (*Aspects of Love*, p. 42). But in *CA* he is slain by his unknown son in part "because he has lost his ability to reason and correctly interpret the dream of his own death" (p. 41). Fox notes that although Ulysses' dream needs explication Ulysses is "unable to interpret it" (*Mediaeval Sciences*, p. 109). In Benoît he seeks help from others, but Gower leaves him on his own: "For al his calculacion / He seth no demonstracion / Al plainly for to knowe an ende" (6.1579–81).

- 1660 *Nachaie*. Presumably Ithaca, though perhaps Achaea. Benoît's *Roman de Troie* reads "Tant qu'il vint droit en Acaie," which Macaulay suggests refers to Ithaca, for which *Nachaie* could be a mistake (3.518).
- 1768–78 Perhaps Gower's most succinct moral. The anaphora provides both emphasis on sorcery as well as a plot review, leading up to an epigrammatic couplet (lines 1777–78), with multiple puns on *unkindeschipe* to imply not only witchcraft and sorcery but also an "unfilial act," "unnaturalness," "ingratitude," "improper rule," "disloyalty," "ungenerosity," "lack of natural affection," etc.
- 1789 ff. Because he was Alexander's teacher and a magician, Nectanabus was a favorite in popular medieval literature. Gower may be working from Thomas of Kent's Anglo-Norman *Roman de toute Chevalerie*, the Latin *Historia de Prelis Alexandri* (Macaulay [3.519] gives a comparison of these two texts with Gower), Valerius' *Res Gestae Alexandri*, or some version of the *Alexandrei* by Walter of Châtillon. See deAngeli, "Julius Valerius' Account of the Birth of Alexander"; and De Bellis, "Thomas of Kent's Account of the Birth of Alexander." For general discussion, see Hamilton, "Some Sources," pp. 504–16; and Beidler, "Diabolical Treachery in the Tale of Nectanabus." Simpson links this tale with the Tale of Ulysses and Telegonus as examples of "self-ignorance in the learned, and the political consequences of that ignorance" (*Sciences and the Self*, p. 211).
- 1793 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic narrat exemplum super eodem, qualiter Nectanabus ab Egipto in Macedoniam fugitiuus, Olimpiadem Philippi Regis ibidem tunc absentis vxorem arte magica decipiens, cum ipsa concubuit, magnumque ex ea Alexandrum sortilegus genuit: qui natus, postea cum ad erudiendum sub custodia Nectanabi commendatus fuisset, ipsum Nectanabum patrem suum ab altitudine cuiusdam turris in fossam profundam proiciens interfecit. Et sic sortilegus ex suo sortilegio infortunii sortem sortitus est.* [Here he narrates an instructive example on the same thing, how Nectanabus, a fugitive from Egypt into Macedonia, deceived by magic art Olimpias the wife of Phillip the king there, who was away at that time. The sorcerer slept with her and generated from her Alexander the Great, who, having been born, when he was later commended to an education under the tutelage of Nectanabus, murdered his father Nectanabus by throwing him from a certain high tower into a deep pit. And thus the sorcerer was fated to an ill fate by his own sorcery.] The last line insistently puns on *sor* (fate) and *sortilegus* (fate-teller or sorcerer). See also VC 2.4.203–08, where Gower expounds upon sorcery and fate. See Peck, "Phenomenology of Make Believe," pp. 258–66.
- 1799 *magique of his sorcerie*. On Nectanabus' lack of real power over his victims as he manipulates illusions to gull people, see Peck, "Phenomenology of Make Believe," pp. 264–66.
- 1844 *tymber*. A percussion instrument, such as a small drum, tambourine, or a stringed instrument, used to accompany carols and other dances.
- 1848 *hoved and abod*. "paused and waited." Compare 2.3006. See *MED hoven* v 2a.
- 1858 *He couthe noght withdrawe his lok*. See Genius' fundamental advice on the importance of guarding your eyes well, with which he begins his instruction of Amans

- (1.304 ff.), and the dangers of “mislok” (1.334) as evidenced by stories of Acteon and Medusa. Queen Olympia needs some of the same advice (6.1864).
- 1882–83 *The dai goth forth . . . man mot lete his werk.* Compare Chaucer’s *Parliament of Fowls*, where the nightfall trope is also used to set up a dream-troubled night.
- 1886–88 *queene / And passeth over thilke nyht / Til it was on the morwe liht.* It is possible that *thilke nyht* (line 1887) is the subject of *passeth over* rather than *queene*, but there are plenty of examples of people struggling with anxiety-provoking thoughts to get through the night in medieval poetry (e.g., the opening of Chaucer’s *BD*). *MED* offers “survive,” “escape,” “endure” as glosses for *passen over* n. (e), which provide a more vivid sense of what is going on for the queen than simply saying “the night passed and it was day.” I take *queene* (line 1886) to be the subject of *passeth over*, rather than *nyht* on grounds that her restless preoccupation with Nectanabus’ words occupies her all night. How one gets through restless nights is a favorite topic in dream visions. The narrator in *BD* relies on a book “To rede and drive the night away” (line 49). Olympia’s only relief is to rehearse the words.
- 1922 *Amos of Lubie.* Hammon of Lybia. See *De nuptiis*, Book 2 (“The Marriage,” especially 2.158–93). Hammon is one of the demigods who, like Dionysus, Osiris, Isis, and Triptolemus, have celestial souls but may appear in human form for the benefit of the whole world. Philology places him as “the exalted power of the Father Unknown” (p. 58), a light in darkness (see *CA* 6.1981–82) known by many names — Phoebus, Lyceus, Serapis, Osiris, Mithras, Dis, Horus, Typhon, Attis, Phoenician Adonis, and “Hammon from parched Lybia” (p. 59), as he works his wonders.
- 1935 *He schal a sone of you begete.* For difficult-to-come-by sources for Gower’s Tale of Nectanabus’ conception and birth, see De Bellis’ excerpts with translation (based on the Paris Manuscript) from “Thomas of Kent’s Account of the Birth of Alexander,” which includes the following subsections: The Prologue; Of Nectanabus, King of Lybia; How Nectanabus fled and came to Macedonia; Of the Queen of Macedonia; How Alexander was conceived; How a shortwing hawk is transmitted to Philip in a vision; How Nectanabus changed himself into a dragon; Of the pheasant which, in flight, lays an egg; How Alexander is born and of the miracles that occur at his birth; Of Bucephalus, Alexander’s horse, and how he ate people; and How Alexander killed his father, and how Nectanabus criticized Alexander. And, also, see deAngeli’s text and translation of “Julius Valerius’ Account of the Birth of Alexander.”
- 1962 *receptions.* *MED* cites this line, with the astrological meaning: “the reciprocal effect of two planets when each is in a sign where the other has a dignity.”
- 1963 *ascendent.* The degree of the ecliptic or zodiac arising above the horizon at a given moment. See *MED accendent* n.
- 2274 *Calistre.* Callisthenes, Aristotle’s nephew, accompanied Alexander as biographer and historian of his military campaigns on his eastern expedition. The biography extolled him as son of Zeus. Callisthenes quarreled with Alex-

ander, however, and was accused of conspiracy; he was put to death in 327. The murder caused strong hostility against Alexander by the school of Aristotle. Although Callisthenes' biography of the king does not survive, his name became attached to early versions of the Romance of Alexander. See *OCCL*, pp. 111–12.

- 2338 *sorcerie*. See Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, pp. 87–88, on Nectanabus' sorcery and the fating of his life; and pp. 135–38, on the ultimate folly of his self-beguiling as he uses his sorcery to look out for himself.
- 2367 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota qualiter Rex Zorastes, statim cum ab utero matris sue nasceretur, gaudio magno risit; in quo prenesticum doloris subsequentis signum figurabatur: nam et ipse detestabilis magice primus fuit inventor, quem postea Rex Surrie dira morte trucidauit, et sic opus operarium consumpsit.* [Note how King Zoroaster laughed with great joy as soon as he was born from his mother's womb, in which was figured the prognostication of future sorrow; for he was also the first inventor of detestable magic, and later the king of Syria executed him in a terrible death, and thus the work consumed the workman.]
- On Zoroaster see Pliny, *Naturalis historiae* 7.15, and Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 21.14. Zoroaster is the Greek form of Iranian Zarathustra. He is treated as a historical figure of the sixth century or earlier.
- 2385 ff. See 1 Kings (1 Samuel) 27–31.
- 2392 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de Saule et Phitonissa.* [Note concerning Saul and Phitonissa.]
- 2387 *Phitonesse in Samarie.* The witch of Endor. See 1 Kings (1 Samuel) 28:3–25.
- 2392 *Bot of to mochel no man yelpeth.* Proverbial. See Whiting, M788.
- 2408–15 See Minnis, “Moral Gower,” pp. 74–75, on Gower’s use of Amans’ desire (*min herte sore longeth*, line 2414) to learn of Aristotle’s instruction of Alexander as a means of providing a *raison d’être* for the encyclopedic doctrine of the *Secretum Secretorum* that constitutes much of Book 7.
- 2420–36 Genius announces the philosophical content and goals of Book 7. See Simpson on the “Platonic poetics” (*Sciences and the Self*, p. 70) grounded in Boethius and Alan of Lille that Gower works from in creating Genius and the rhetorical order that he shapes to present the idea of the philosopher king that becomes the center of Book 7 and, for that matter, the whole poem. See especially pp. 203–11, on self-knowledge; the encyclopedic matter of Book 7 “is produced out of the joint desire of Amans and Genius” and is first provoked by Amans (p. 207).

EXPLANATORY NOTES TO BOOK 7

Book 7 has provoked a wide critical response, from charges of artless digression, “absolutely irrelevant to the main subject” (Macaulay, “John Gower,” p. 149), to praise as structurally “the most important” in the whole poem (Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, p. 140). For a

summary of positions see Nicholson, *Annotated Index*, pp. 423–26. For seminal discussion on the book's function as advice-to-kings literature, see Coffman, "John Gower in His Most Significant Role"; Pearsall, *Gower and Lydgate*, pp. 16–17; Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, pp. 126–56; Olsson, *John Gower and the Structures of Conversion*, pp. 191–214; and Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*, pp. 108–36. Simpson suggests that the book provides from its inside position the actual framework of *CA*: "The whole poem outside of Book VII is a discussion of ethics and economics . . . [that] leads inevitably to the explicit political discourse of Book VII" (*Sciences and the Self*, p. 220); "the real 'frame' of the *Confessio* . . . is not the confession of Amans, but rather the *divisio philosophiae* of Book VII" (p. 223). Macaulay points out that the most important source for the book is the *Trésor* of Brunetto Latini, a work based largely on Aristotle, "with whose works Latini was exceptionally well acquainted" (3.522). My citations of Brunetto are based on the translation by Barrette and Baldwin and are cited by book, chapter, and page number to this edition. Astell notes also derivations from Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* and the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum* (*Chaucer and the Universe of Learning*, pp. 76–83). See Wetherbee on the "integrative function" of Book 7 ("John Gower," p. 604), and Porter, "Gower's Ethical Microcosm," especially p. 154.

5 *Alisandre*. In Book 7 Alexander is given a more positive treatment than elsewhere in *CA*. In *MO*, lines 22849 ff., David is presented as the exemplary king; Alexander is the tyrant, fortune's fool (*MO*, lines 22051–80). Similarly, in the Tale of Diogenes (*CA* 3.1201 ff.), Alexander and the Pirate (3.2363 ff.), the Wars of Alexander (3.2438 ff.), and Alexander as the student of Nectanabus (6.2271 ff.), he is presented as one who wields power without much intelligence. But in Book 7, where he is mainly the occasion for Aristotle's instruction in the tools of self-governance and kingship, he fares better. On the popularity of the pedagogical trope of Aristotle teaching kingly virtues to young Alexander, see *Secretum Secretorum* along with various Latin texts, originally translated from a tenth-century pseudo-Aristotelian Arabic teaching text, the *Kitab sîrî al-âsrâr* (*The Book of the Secret of Secrets*).

7 *For it is noght to the matiere*. Gower makes a rather subtle point here through the complex voicing of his poem. Genius is concerned about his contract with Venus. But in the reciprocity of that contract with his client he is obliged to digress. Yet what is digression for him may be central to the poet, since his confessor's voice reaches into matter touched on prior to this, mainly in the Prologue and the Latin voicing of the poem. The paradox enables him to approach doctrine directly, yet still within his fictive framework. For Genius, it is the "gladness" of the digression that justifies it (see line 10).

9 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Quia omnis doctrina bona humano regimini salutem confert, in hoc septimo libro ad instanciam Amantis languidi intendit Genius illam ex qua Philosophi et Astrologi philosophie doctrinam Regem Alexandrum imbuerunt, secundum aliquid declarare. Diuidit enim philosophiam in tres partes, quarum prima Theorica, secunda Rethorica, tercua Practica nuncupata est, de quarum condicionibus subsequenter per singula tractabit.* [Since all good doctrine confers well-being on the human condition, in this seventh book, at the prompting of the languishing Lover, Genius intends to declare in some respects the doctrine of philosophy with which philosophers and astrologers imbued King Alexander.

- Thus he divides philosophy into three parts, the first of which is called Theory, the second Rhetoric, and the third Practice, concerning whose natures one by one he will subsequently discourse.]
- 20 See the explanatory note to 6.2274. *Calistre*, a second-century Greek work purportedly written by Callisthenes (Pseudo-Callisthenes), became the base text for various medieval renditions of Alexander's travels, including *Historia de Prelis* and *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*. See *The Greek Alexander Romance*, trans. Stoneman.
- 28 *intelligences*. Macaulay relates the term *intelligencias* in the margin at 1.149, where the sense seems to be the same as "sciences," that is, divisions or provinces of knowledge (2.522n26ff.).
- 51–52 Gower probably did not know Aristotle's work firsthand. Genius' account of Aristotle's division of Philosophy into "Theorique," "Rethorique," and "Practique" (lines 30–46) is based mainly on the third book of Brunetto Latini's *Trésor*.
- 54–55 *conserve / And kepere*. See Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, pp. 217–29, on the theoretical and practical sciences of philosophy as the *conserve / And kepere of the remenant*. Politics, even more than the theoretical sciences, focuses ethical and economic themes of the poem so "that we can understand how a mediation between body and soul might be possible" (p. 225). In his humanism Gower always seems aware of the demands of the body (p. 229).
- 61 On the divisions of Theorique, see *Trésor* 1.3.1–8. See also *Did.*, appendix A (trans. Taylor, p. 153), for additions Hugh made on the divisions of the theoretical into Theology, Physics, and Mathematics.
- 66 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat de prima parte Philosophie, que Theorica dicitur, cuius natura triplici dotata est sciencia, scilicet Theologia, Phisica, et Mathematica: set primo illam partem Theologie declarabit.* [Here he discourses concerning the first part of Philosophy, which is called Theory, whose learning is endowed by a triple nature, namely Theology, Natural Science ("Physics"), and Mathematics; and first he will declare Theology's part.]
- 70 *The science of Theologie*. "The first and highest" branch of theory, dealing with that which "goes beyond heaven and shows us the nature of those things which have no corporeal existence," and concerns such matters as God the All Powerful, the Holy Trinity, the Catholic faith, and the law of Holy Church, that is, "everything pertaining to divinity" (*Trésor* 1.3.2, p. 3). See *CA* 7.73–134.
- 71 *Phisique*. Discourse on the nature of things; the physical sciences. Brunetto (*Trésor* 1.3.3) argues that through physics "we know the nature of those things which have corporeal existence and are related to corporeal things, that is, of men and beasts and birds, of fish, of plants, of stones and of the other corporeal things which are around us" (p. 3). See also *Did.* 2.16: "Physics searches out . . . the causes of things as found in their effects . . . The word *physis* means nature, and therefore Boethius places natural physics in the

higher division of the theoretical knowledge,” as part of a triumvirate with ethics and logic (p. 71). See *CA* 7.135–44.

- 72 *Mathematique*, akin to *Practique*, should not be confused with modern implications of mathematics. For Aristotle it is used to identify what later came to be called the quadrivium, that is, the study of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. These sciences all deal with ratios, proportions, and kinds of enumerations. The separate treatises by Augustine and Boethius entitled *De musica*, for example, do not deal with music as we think of it, but are primarily concerned with meter, what we might call prosody, along with matters of proportion (what we might extend into harmony) and categories of metrics and ratio (modes). See also the note to lines 7.145–202.
- 73–134 See the explanatory note to 7.70.
- 82 *as olde bokes telle*. Gower reminds us on several occasions that, although the frame of Book 7 may be the *Secretum Secretorum*, he draws upon various *bokes* to give us his full account of Aristotle’s teaching. That teaching is, of course, as important for us and Amans as it was for Alexander, who may or may not have been a good student. (See note to 7.5.)
- 86 *ferste cause*. See Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* 1.1–8, on *simpliciter*, the number base from which all follows, and 2.1–2 on causes. The idea becomes commonplace, though central to theology and logic. See Boethius, *De Consolatione* 2.m.8, 3.pr.10, and 4.m.6, especially on yearning for the simplicity of God. Compare Chaucer’s Knight’s Tale (*CT* I[A]2987–89) on “The Firste Moevere of the cause above” and the “faire cheyne of love” which is the “effect” of his “entente”; or, Chaucer’s balade “Gentillesse” and “The firste stok, fader of gentillesse,” from whose “trace” all who would be gentle must derive. See Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*.
- 88 *Without whom nothing is good*. Christ, “the ferste cause,” is the orderer of all creation. Take Christ out of the creation and chaos ensues. N.b., Chaucer’s Parson’s Tale (*CT* X[I]217–18). Evil is absence of Christ, a nothingness without substance. See *Trésor* 1.11 (“How Evil Was Invented,” p. 9): “Evil was invented by the Devil; it was not created, and therefore it is nothing, for that which is without God is nothing, and God did not make Evil.”
- 89–90 *every creature . . . his beinge and his nature*. Olsson cites this passage as part of his demonstration that one’s “title to existence, moral or otherwise, is not a person’s own, and neither are his or her secrets. Existence and the ‘privetes of mannes herte’ (1.2806) belong to God” (“Love, Intimacy, and Gower,” p. 94).
- 91 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota quod triplex dicitur essentia: Prima temporanea, que incipit et desinit, Secunda perpetua, que incipit et non desinit, Tertia sempiterna, que nec incipit nec desinit.* [Note that being is called triple: First temporal, which begins and ceases; Second perpetual, which begins and does not cease, and Third eternal, which neither begins nor ends.]
- 92 ff. *thre formes of beings*. The division of what is “born and dies,” what is “born but does not die,” and what is “not born and does not die” was a traditional aca-

demic (and thus theological) hierarchy of being, ultimately based on Aristotle's ideas of what is moved and moves others, what is moved and does not move others, and what is not moved but moves others (the Prime Mover). Thirteenth- and fourteenth-century scholasticism was much concerned with issues of causality which elaborated these issues of being. See Gilson's *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, pp. 250–545. A good reference for distinctions between forms and causes moving beyond Aristotle is the third chapter of Duns Scotus' *Treatise on God as First Principle*. See the selection in Baird and Kauffmann's *Philosophic Classics Volume II: Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 425–30.

- 98 *Here beinge is perpetuel.* The idea is that of God as *deus conservans*, who perpetually sustains creation through His presence.
- 121–30 Here Theology insists that things may be “credible,” even though they may not be “prieve by weie of argument sensible” (7.126–28). The proposition behind Genius’ point regarding the preeminence of faith over sensible proof echoes Augustine’s *Credo ut intelligam* (“I believe in order to understand”). Chaucer lends support to the idea at the beginning of *LGW* (F.1–16).
- 135 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de secunda parte Theorice, que Phisica dicitur.* [Note concerning the second part of Theory, which is called Natural Science (“Physics”).]
- 135–44 *Phisique.* See note to 7.71, above.
- 145 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de tercia parte Theorice, que Mathematica dicitur, cuius condicio quatuor in se continent intelligencias, scilicet Arsmeticam, Musicam, Geometriam et Astronomiam: set primo de Artismetice natura dicere intendit.* [Note concerning the third part of Theory, which is called Mathematics, whose nature contains in itself four branches of knowledge (*intelligencias*; compare “intelligences,” lines 28 and 176), namely Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, and Astronomy; and first he intends to speak about the nature of Arithmetic.]
- 145–202 The four subdivisions of mathematics are usually referred to as the Quadrivium (see note to 7.72). That all four depend upon line, measure, time, and space explains their relationship with “mathematics.” On the divisions of mathematics, see *Trésor* 1.3.4–8 (pp. 3–4); *De nuptiis* 6–9; and *Did.*, Appendix A. The fourfold classification is ancient, though Boethius provides the designation *quadrivium* and prepared texts for each that became standard curricula in medieval universities. Gower’s ordering of the four differs from that of Boethius in that he places *musica* second rather than third, thus reversing it with *geometria*.
- 153 *Arsmetique.* See *Trésor* 1.3.5 (p. 3) on arithmetic as the first subject of mathematics. See *De nuptiis* 7 (“Arithmetic”) for a more full account of the subject.
- 155 *Algorisme.* Macaulay (3.522) notes: “This stands properly for the decimal system of numeration, but the use of the word in the plural, l.158, shows that Gower did not use it in this sense only. The association of the word ‘Algorismes’ below with the letters *a*, *b*, *c* (‘Abece’) seems to suggest some kind of algebraical expression, but this is perhaps due to a misunderstanding by

- Gower of the word ‘abaque’ (or ‘abake’) in the *Trésor* . . . : ‘Et de ce sont li enseignement de l’abaque et de l’augorisme.’”
- 163 See the explanatory note to 7.72.
- 163 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de Musica, que secunda pars Artis Mathematicae dicitur.* [Note concerning Music, which is called the second part of the Mathematic Art.]
- 163–64 *The seconde . . . is the science of Musique.* “The second is music, which teaches us to make musical sounds, by singing, playing stringed instruments, and on organs and other harmonizing instruments, combining the sounds for the pleasure of the people, or in Church the service of our Lord” (*Trésor* 1.3.6; compare *Did.* 2.12). See also *De nuptiis* 9 (“Harmony”). Augustine and Boethius both produced tractates on the science of music, which concerned primarily discussion of metrics. (Boethius’ text was still in use at Oxford in the eighteenth century.) Genius’ description focuses more on what we would think of as music, namely, harmony (line 165), melody (line 166), voice and instruments, and the relationship of notes. (Compare Chaucer’s account of the singing birds in *BD*, lines 294–315, with some notes high, some low, but all of one accord with harmonies and melodies sweet.) But Genius also comments on Boethian subjects of prolation (duration), pronunciation, rhythm, and tone (lines 170–74).
- 175 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de tercia specie Artis Mathematicae, quam Geometriam vocant.* [Note concerning the third species of the Mathematic Art, which they call Geometry.]
- 176–90 *the thridde intelligence / Full of wisdom and of clergie / And cleped . . . Geometrie.* See *Trésor* 1.3.7: “The third [division of Mathematics] is geometry, through which we know the measurements and proportions of things: their length, width and height. It was through the subject of geometry that the ancient sages attempted to find the relative dimensions of heaven and earth, and the distance from the one to the other, and many other proportions which are truly marvellous.” See also *De nuptiis* 6 (“Geometry”).
- 191–202 *Astronomie.* See *Trésor* 1.3.8: “The fourth subject is astronomy, which teaches us the entire organization of heaven and the firmament and the stars, and the movement of the seven planets through the zodiac, that is, through the twelve signs, and how the weather changes from hot to cold to rain to drought to wind, by reason of what is established in the stars.” See also *De nuptiis* 8 (“Astronomy”).
- 209 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic interim tractat de creacione quatuor Elementorum, scilicet terre, aquae, aeris et ignis, necnon et de eorum naturis, nam et singulis proprietates singule attribuuntur.* [Here meanwhile he discourses about the creation of the four Elements, namely earth, water, air, and fire, and also about their natures, for to each particular one are attributed particular properties.]
- 216 *ylem.* “Hyle” is the term used by the twelfth-century author Bernardus Silvestris for primordial matter; see his widely copied *Cosmographia*, ed. and trans. Wetherbee, pp. 67–75: “Hyle was Nature’s most ancient manifestation, the inexhaustible womb of generation, the primary basis of formal existence, the matter of all bodies, the foundation of substance” (p. 70).

- 223 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de Terra, quod est primum elementum.* [Note concerning the Earth, which is the first element.]
- 223 On the four elements, four complexions, four humors, and four seasons and nature's role in perpetually harmonizing and ordering discordant matters, see *Trésor* 1.99–107. Brunetto's categories derive ultimately from the first book of Aristotle's *Meteorologica*. On the creation of the elements, see Bernardus Sylvestrus, *Cosmographia*, ch. 2, especially pp. 72–73, where first comes fire, then earth, then water, then air. Gower begins at the center, with earth, then water, air, and fire.
- 232 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Philosophus. Vnumquodque naturaliter appetit suum centrum.* [The Philosopher: Each thing naturally desires its center.]
- 234–35 *centre drawe . . . every worldes thing.* See *Trésor* 1.104.6–10, where Brunetto explains why heaviest things are closest to the center and lighter things more distant, but still are drawn toward the center according to their natures.
- 237 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de Aqua, quod est secundum elementum.* [Note concerning Water, which is the second element.]
- 238 *water.* See *Trésor* 1.105. Genius' comparison of the streams of earth with veins of blood in men (7.245–46) comes from the opening section of this chapter: “the earth . . . is all perforated and full of veins and caverns, which is why the waters which flow from the sea go out and come back through the earth . . . which is similar to what happens to the blood in man, which spreads into veins, so that the blood flows up and down through the whole body.” On water springing from high hills (7.247–53), see *Trésor* 1.105.2.
- 254 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de Aere, quod est tertium elementum.* [Note concerning Air, which is the third element.]
- 255 *Air.* See *Trésor* 1.106, though Brunetto does not discuss air in terms of “peripheries.”
- 265 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota qualiter Aer in tribus Periferiis diuiditur.* [Note how Air is divided into three Atmospheric Layers (*Periferia*).] Macaulay (3.523) suggests that Gower's three “peripheries” are perhaps a refinement of the two strata of air laid out in Aristotle's *Meteorologica* 1.3, but the parallels are thin. On knowledge of the *Meteorologica* in the fourteenth century and the commentaries of Averroes and Albertus Magnus on Aristotle picked up by others like Jacobus Angeli and John of Damascus, and Blasius in his lectures on *Meteorologica* at Pavia in 1385, see Thorndike, vol. 4, especially pp. 67, 83, 102, 158, 367, and especially 653–54.
- 280 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De prima Aeris Perifera.* [Concerning the first Layer of Air.]
- 285 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De secunda Aeris Perifera.* [Concerning the second Layer of Air.]
- 297 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De tercia Aeris Perifera.* [Concerning the third Layer of Air.]

- 312–13 A further proof of the preeminence of sight over the other senses. See the discussion of lightning, 7.307–18. That the sight is nearer to the eye than the sound is to the ears is evident by the fact that we see the lightning before we hear the thunder. See 1.304 ff. on sight being “the most principal of alle” the senses (n.b., 1.304–08n); also *Trésor* 1.106.8 and Bart. Ang. 3.17 (*De sensu visus*).
- 319–67 On fiery exhalations, lightning, firedrakes, and other airy demonstrations, see *Trésor* 1.106, especially 7–9, although Gower’s remarks about *Assub* (line 334), *Capra saliens* (line 347), *Eges* (line 351), and *Daaly* (line 361) are not in Brunetto. Aristotle (i.e., the “philosophre” Genius cites in 7.228) speaks in *Meteorologica* 1.4.2–3 of “the appearance of burning flames in the sky, of shooting stars and of what some people call ‘torches’ and ‘goats’” (p. 559).
- 319 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic qualiter Ignes, quos noctanter in Aeris discurrere videmus, secundum varias apparetie formas varia gestant nomina; quorum primus Assub, secundus Capra saliens, tertius Eges et quartus Daali in libris Philosophorum nuncupatus est.* [Note here how Fires, which we see traveling at night through the Air, carry various names according to various apparitions of forms: the first is called in philosophers’ books Assub, the second Capra saliens (“skipping Goat”), third Eges, and the fourth Daali.]
- 334 *Assub.* Macaulay notes that “this word is used in Latin translations of Aristotle as an equivalent of ‘stella cadens,’ or falling star, as if Gower is repeating authorities “without understanding them” (Mac 3.523), though Genius is talking about the variant terms in slightly different contexts and may simply have preferred the more descriptive term for his goat analogy. He is talking about names of the “same kinde” (line 340) but of another “forme” (line 341), as if to say that comets do not always behave in the same way, some falling, some “skippende” (line 345), some reaching earth and some not, thus “semende” (line 346) to be different.
- 375 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de Igne, quod est quartum elementum.* [Note concerning Fire, which is the fourth element.] On fire as the fourth element, see *Trésor* 1.107.
- 393–489 God has given the four complexions as aspects of human nature, but, though Nature affects human behavior through these conditions, the soul is governed by God alone. See 7.490–520. Gower appears to be working from *Trésor* 1.101.1–6, though Brunetto is more brief; he remarks on the conditions of the humors but does not discuss body parts in conjunction with the humors as Genius does (7.449–75). Perhaps the more useful text for comparison and contextualization of Gower’s views in conjunction with Aristotle, Augustine, Avicenna, etc., is Bart. Ang. 4, which deals extensively with the conditions of the body and the humors (vol. 1, pp. 129–62). White points out that, in the debate between body and soul, the two are, in some instances, at loggerheads; but that does not mean that the influence of Nature cannot be benign. “In fact, it may be that the idea of Nature is for Gower the focus of a vision of the healing of the fundamental division between soul and body and hence a talismanic concept” (*Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, p. 187). Genius

- holds together the two poles between the sacred and erotic (p. 188; and Baker, “The Priesthood of Genius”).
- 396–400 See White on man as victim of his own “divided constitution” (“Division and Failure,” p. 602). Compare 7.490–510, 515–20; and also, of course, Prol. 575–78, 827–33, 851–53, and 967–1011.
- 397 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic qualiter secundum naturam quatuor elementorum quatuor in humano corpore complexiones, scilicet Malencolia, Fleuma, Sanguis et Cölera, naturaliter constituuntur: vnde primo de Malencolia dicendum est.* [Note here how according to the nature of the four elements are naturally constituted four humors (*complexiones*) in the human body, namely Melancholy, Phlegm, Blood, and Choler (Bile). Wherefore first there is a discussion about Melancholy.] See Bart. Ang. 4.11.
- 414 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De complexione Fleumatis.* [Concerning the humor of Phlegm.] See Bart. Ang. 4.9.
- 421 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De complexione Sanguinis.* [Concerning the humor of Blood.] See Bart. Ang. 4.7.
- 429 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De complexione Colere.* [Concerning the humor of Bile.] See Bart. Ang. 4.10.
- 441 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota qualiter quatuor complexiones quatuor in homine habitationes diuisim possident.* [Note how the four humors respectively possess four habitations in man.]
- 449 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Splen domus est Malencolie.* [The spleen is Melancholy’s home.]
- 451 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Pulmo domus Fleumatis.* [The lung is Phlegm’s home.]
- 455 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Epar domus Sanguinis.* [The liver is the home of Blood.]
- 459 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Fel domus Colere.* [The gall-bladder is the home of Bile.]
- 463 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de Stomacho, qui vna cum aliis cordi specialius deseruit.* [Note concerning the Stomach, which along with the others particularly serves the heart.] Gower looks on the parts of the body as a community, each member of which has specific obligations to keep the estate functioning in a healthy way. Bartholomaeus provides the most detailed Middle English analysis of the body parts, their nature, and how they function, starting at the head and its several parts and proceeding downward to the feet, in Book 5 of *Properties*. Each part of the anatomy is given a separate chapter, not just for head, but skull, hair, eyes, eyelids, etc. The approach is more Aristotelian than Platonic, with little attention given to the metaphysics and sociology of the body that so interests Gower. Bartholomaeus works primarily from a Latin version of Aristotle’s *Parts of Animals*.
- 473–75 This is “Gower’s most explicit statement about the nature and physical origin of laughter” (Burke, “Genial Gower,” p. 42), thereby asserting his belief in the legitimacy of laughter as a means of expression. “Explaining that each

bodily organ has a rightful purpose to fulfill on behalf of the heart, the poet echoes the medical traditions of his day in locating the source of laughter in the spleen.”

- 479–80 *stomach . . . the boc.* In Gower the stomach is a *comun coc* [cook] / *Ordeined, as seith the boc.* In Bartholomaeus it is “the dore of þe wombe, and fongiþ mete and drynke, and sendiþ to þe guttis” (Bart. Ang. 5.38, 1.29–30). What precisely *the boc* is that Gower speaks of I have been unable to determine, but such personification is not unusual, even in medical texts. E.g., Master Nicolaus of Salerno, a twelfth-century follower of Galen, presents the digestive system as a kitchen in which staples, ground at the mill, are prepared to sustain the rest of the community (i.e., the body). The mouth is the mill, the teeth the mill-stones, and the tongue is the miller, “for just as grain is received into a mill, so is food taken into the mouth; and in the same way that the grain is cast by the hand of the miller under the grindstones (*molares*) to be ground, so is food cast by the tongue beneath the molar teeth to be masticated.” The stomach is the receiving kettle: “It has the liver below it like a fire underneath a caldron; and thus the stomach is like a kettle of food, the gall-bladder is the cook, and the liver is the fire” (Corner, *Anatomical Texts of the Earlier Middle Ages*, pp. 78–79).
- 485–89 *For as a king in his empire / . . . So is the herte principal, / . . . for the governance.* Compare Chaucer, *BD*, lines 495–96: “[the hert] ys membre principal / Of the body.” The dreamer, observing the pallid color of the Black Knight, notes that in his grief his blood has all “fled for pure drede” (line 490) down to his heart. This passage is in its way key to the whole of Book 7 of the *Confessio*, where the sound education of the king is, for Gower, essentially the education of the heart of man, king of his empire attempting to define the proper governance of the soul. See 8.2109–20. Burnley, discussing Gower and a Stoic tradition that sees the heart as “principal” member of the body, remarks that although Gower may not be aware of the technical import of the word, he certainly adopts the same administrative metaphor that draws an analogy between individual man and the state. For Gower, “The heart governs the rest of the body by reason, just as a king rules a kingdom” (*Chaucer’s Language*, p. 66).
- 490–520 That Gower follows his Stoic paradigm of heart/king/rule with a discussion of the soul’s “hyh noblesse / Appropried to his oghne kinde” (7.498–99) where, unlike the soul of beasts, it “to reson . . . serveth” (7.517), adds specific support to Burnley’s observation in the explanatory note to 7.485–89, above. Gower’s awareness of the “technical import of the word” *principal* seems, in this instance, to be quite precise. See *VC* 2.217–348, where Gower discusses the relationship between men, animals, and morality. See also note to 7.396–400.
- 521–600 Gower seems to be following *Trésor* 1.121–24 (pp. 85–98) in his division of the map of the world into three parts (Asia, Europe, and Africa), surrounded by Ocean. See also Trevisa’s translation of Higden’s *Polychronicon* 1.6.
- 522 ff.  **Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur vltierius de diuisione Terre que post diluvium tribus filiis Noe in tres partes, scilicet Asiam, Africam et Europam diuidebatur.* [Here he speaks further about the division of the Earth, which after the flood was

divided by the three sons of Noah into three parts, namely Asia, Africa, and Europe.]

- 523 *if it be spoke plein.* Schmitz, *Middel Weie*, p. 38n39, reads *plein* as “plainness, clarity, simplicity,” to suggest irony as Gower uses the term in introducing the most scholarly sections of the poem. But the sense is more likely that of the adverbial form of the adj. *plein(e)*, i.e., “completely, entirely; fully, clearly.” See *MED* *plein* adv.
- 554 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De Asia.* [Concerning Asia.]
- 558–74 Gower’s discussion of the *seisine* of Asia is based on *Trésor* 1.121.2, where we learn that “Asia contains half of the whole earth, from the place where the Nile empties into the sea in Alexandria and from the place where the Tanain River empties into the sea in the branch called Saint George, towards the Orient, extending as far as the Ocean and the earthly paradise” (p. 86).
- 566 *Canahim.* An error for *Tanain*. See note to 7.558–74.
- 575 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De Afrika et Europa.* [Concerning Africa and Europe.]
- 587 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de mari quod magnum Oceanum dicitur.* [Note concerning the sea which is called the Great Ocean.]
- 601 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic secundum philosophum de quinto Elemento, quod omnia sub celo creata infra suum ambitum continent, cui nomen Orbis specialiter appropriatum est.* [Note here according to the philosopher concerning the fifth Element, which contains everything created under heaven within its orbit, to whom the name *Orbis* is uniquely granted.]
- 613–20 *orbis.* See *Trésor* 1.103.2. The fifth element, ether: “it is a round heaven which surrounds and encloses within itself all other elements and the other things which do not partake of divinity; and it is to the world as the shell is to the egg, which encloses and contains what is inside, and because it is completely round, it is necessary inevitably that the earth and the shape of the world be round” (p. 64).
- 630–32 *as an egle . . . Fleth above . . . So doth this science.* One is reminded of Chaucer’s eagle in *HF*, who is well grounded in mathematics, especially those parts dealing with astronomy and geometry. On astronomy as the winged “maiden of the sky,” see *De nuptiis* 8.807. Martianus does not use the metaphor of an eagle, however.
- 639 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur de Artis Mathematicae quarta specie, que Astronomia nuncupata est, cui etiam Astrologia socia connumeratur: set primo de septem planetis, que inter astra potenciores existunt, incipiendo a luna seorsum tractare intendit.* [Here he speaks concerning the fourth species of the Art of Mathematics, which is called Astronomy, with whom Astrology is counted a companion. And first he intends to discourse concerning the seven planets, which are the more powerful ones among the stars, beginning specifically with the moon.]

- 651–54 *Bot the divin seith otherwise.* Theology is a component of *sapientia*, while astronomy falls under the classification of *scientia*, a lower kind of knowledge useful for understanding the body, but not capable of overriding theological insights. Thus men *scholden noght the sterres drede* (line 654). On the superiority of *sapientia*, see Augustine, *De Trinitate* 12. Macaulay notes that line 652 echoes “Sapiens dominabitur astris” (VC 2.217 ff.). See Jean Gerson, *Trilogium astrologie theologizate*, where all the sciences are handmaids of theology. Though astrology is a noble science, some people abuse it by superstitious observations and sacrilegious errors. Gerson’s authorities include Alkindi, Oresme, Augustine, and d’Ailly (Thorndike 4.116–17).
- 670 *Astronomie.* See *De nuptiis* 8 on astronomy as sixth of the liberal arts. Macaulay states that Gower’s “astronomy is for the most part independent of the *Trésor*” (3.522), but see the numerous parallels between 7.685–709, 721–27, 731–35, 774–75, 782, 865–70, 889–94, 909–12, 935–39, 973–78 and *Trésor* noted by Hamilton (“Some Sources,” p. 341n7).
- 694 *Bot.* Macaulay suggests that *bot* might mean *out*, though it would be unusual as a southern form. The *MED*, s. v. *orison(e) n.* 2, thinks the line should read *Be* [i.e., “by”] *th’orizonte*, the reading in several manuscripts and one which Macaulay suggests as a possibility, though he prefers “beyond.”
- 717–20 Gower often puns on *tauhte* and *betauhte* (e.g., 5.3575–76, 6.2411–12), but seldom does he create quadruple puns, as he does here, to celebrate Aristotle’s learned role as instructor.
- 721 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic de prima planeta, que aliis inferior Luna dicitur.* [Note here concerning the first planet, lower than the others, which is called the Moon.]
- 725–30 *Benethe alle othre stant the mone.* An excellent source for medieval planetary lore to set against Genius’ discussion of the seven planets is Bart. Ang., 8.12–18. Bartholomaeus works from Saturn to the moon (the seventh sphere to the first), rather than from the inside out (first to the seventh), as Gower does. Chapters 17–18 discuss *luna*. To explain water’s love of the moon (see *CA* 7.23–24) Bartholomaeus draws an analogy between iron and a magnet (8.17, lines 20–27 [p. 490]).
- 739–946 *every fissh which hath a schelle / Mot. . . / wexe and wane in his degré / As be the mone.* See *Trésor* 1.117.2: “for when it [the moon] waxes, marrow begins to increase in bones, and the marrow of crabs and crawfish and all animals and fish grows; even the sea swells and produces great waves. When the moon wanes, all things decrease and are smaller than before” (p. 79).
- 739–946 Gower is not actually following Ptolemy’s *Almagest*, although that work certainly underlay the sources he was working with, namely Alchandrus. Part of his material may have been gleaned from Brunetto Latini’s *Trésor*, part from Vincent of Beauvais’ *Speculum naturale* and from Fulgentius’ *Mythologicon*, part from redactions of *De nuptiis*, and part from astronomical lists and treatises

such as the *Speculum astronomiae* (variously ascribed to Roger Bacon and Albertus Magnus). See Fox, *Mediaeval Sciences*, pp. 65–83.

The association of planets with man's elemental character was maintained on the best authority, though usually the writers were careful to maintain free will, too. (For example, John of Salisbury, *Polycraticus*, 2.18–19; Herman of Dalmatia's translation of Albumazar's *Introductum in astronomiam*, which became the basis for Aquinas' views on astrology in *Summa theologiae*; and the *Speculum astronomiae*. Medieval theory of planetary influence may be ultimately traced back through Ptolemy to the *Timaeus*, where the planets are viewed as instruments of time.) Theories of planetary influence provided a convenient means for characterizing men and circumstances and are thus commonly alluded to in medieval literature. See, for example, Chaucer's use of Saturn as a malignant influence beyond which there is only Higher Love in The Knight's Tale; and Gower's VC 2.221 ff., where we are told that God will hold the heavens in check and make Saturn pleasing if men become willing to observe His precepts.

755 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De secunda planeta, que Mercurius dicitur.* [Concerning the second planet, which is called Mercury.]

755–70 Because his course is the quickest of the other planets, apart from the moon, Mercury is often said to be the messenger of the gods and is praised for his eloquence. See *The Assembly of Gods*, lines 365–71; or Martianus Capella's elaborate allegory in *De nuptiis (The Marriage of Philology and Mercury)*. Gower goes a different path, however; those born under his influence are *studious* (line 759, i.e., “zealous”) in reading and writing, but *slough and lustles to travaile / In thing which elles myhte availe* (lines 761–62). Andrew Galloway has suggested by correspondence that the implication here is perhaps akin to Nicholas' delight in lying around reading and enjoying music rather than doing work as John the carpenter does in Chaucer's Miller's Tale, being rather more particular about doing what might be considered strenuous. The source of Gower's idea affiliating Mercury with business perhaps comes from *De formis* (see p. 25, where Berchorius derives the name Mercury from *mercatorum currus*, asserting that he is thus said to be god of merchants and thieves [*Iste ergo dicebatur deus marcatorum, deus eciam furorum*]). See also “The Wise Book of Philosophy and Astronomy” (Cambridge University Library MS Ll.4.14) in Krochalis and Peters, *World of Piers Plowman*, pp. 5–15, which notes that Mercury makes men “grette geters, and gladliche spending” (p. 15); such passages explain why Gower says Mercury's children have *besinesse* in pursuit of wealth, with their hearts *set upon richesse* (CA 7.765–66). I have not found a source for the national connections that Gower affiliates with each planet. Galloway wonders whether the linking of Mercury with Burgundy and France might not be an acknowledgment of the literary skills of Froissart and Machaut.

771 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De tercia planeta, que Venus dicitur.* [Concerning the third planet, which is called Venus.]

- 773 The linking of Venus with *the nacion / Of lovers* (lines 774–75) is universal. Genius acknowledges variously that she provokes lechery, though Gower's presentation of her in Books 1 and 8 suggests a concern that reaches beyond promiscuity, which she scorns when it is manifested in Amans. On the climate of her lechery being *most commun in Lombardie* (line 800) one might think of the boastful Syr Valentyne "yn Lumbardye" in Thomas Chestre's *Sir Launfal* (lines 505 ff.), who jousts "for love of his leman" (line 523).
- 801 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de Sole, qui medio planetarum residens Astrorum principatum obtinet.* [Note concerning the Sun, who residing in the middle of the planets possesses a princely authority over the Stars.]
- 815 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de curru Solis necnon et de vario eiusdem apparatu.* [Note concerning the chariot of the Sun and also its various features.]
- 815–47 On the fifteen stars and their relative stones and herbs, see Heather, pp. 224–27. The description of the sun's crown draws upon *De nuptiis* 1.75, though other sources are used as well. See Hamilton ("Some Sources," p. 345).
- 822–26 *Thre stones . . . cleped Licuchis . . . Astrices and Ceramis.* Hamilton ("Some Sources," p. 345) identifies the source as Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis* 22.5–6 (ed. Eyssenhardt, 1886); *quippe tres fuerant a fronte gemmae Lychnis, Astrites, et Ceraunos* (see also Book 1.75, The Betrothal, in the Stahl, Johnson, Burge translation, vol. 2, p. 27). The three gems in Sol's crown all possess powers of light and the capacity to heal dark illnesses. The *MED* glosses *licuchis* as [? error for *lychnites*], which seems likely, given Martianus' term *lychnis* in the Latin. *De dea Syria*, attributed to Lucian of Samosata, identifies the stone in the headpiece of the Syrian goddess at Hieropolis as *lychnis*, a stone with the brightness of fire. Pseudo-Callisthenes, *The Greek Alexander Romance*, 2.24, tells of *lychnis*, a gleaming white stone that Alexander found in the belly of a monstrous lake fish who pursued Alexander and jumped right out of the water after him. Alexander speared the fish, cut it open, and found inside "a gleaming stone . . . as bright as a lantern. Alexander took the stone, set it in gold and used it at night instead of a lamp" (p. 124). According to the Peterborough Lapidary, *astrites* is a stone like a star in clearness that contains an enclosed light, "as it were a ster goinge withyne, & maketh the sonne bemes lyȝt" (21, p. 71). According to the London Lapidary *Ceraunius* comes in many colors and protects anyone who carries it from lightning and fire; the North Midland Lapidary likewise tells how the stone protects one from lightning, lightens burdens, and "schynes as it wer byrnyng" (25, p. 54).
- 835 *ydriades.* I have been unable to identify this stone. It is not a term found in the lapidaries that Evans and Serjeantson consider in *English Mediaeval Lapidaries*. The stem of the word suggests a watery appearance (Greek *hydro*). The *MED* simply glosses the term as "a kind of precious stone." *De nuptiis* also identifies the other two, besides Gower's *ydriades* (which Martianus calls "hydatis," and which is translated as "a water-colored stone" [1.75]), as adamant and crystal. This particular grouping could suggest that "water-colored" means clear rather than blue or green. See also Hamilton ("Some Sources," p. 345).

- 842 *dendides and jacinctus.* Dendrides, from a Latin term pertaining to trees, are stones with sprig-like crystals and arborescent forms (e.g., oxides of iron and manganese). Jacinth in the lapidaries are called blue gems, probably sapphires, as distinct from the variety of zircon with a reddish orange tinge now called jacinth. See the grouping of a sapphire, dendritis, and striped jasper in *De nuptiis* (1.75). The term is also used for varieties of topaz and garnet (*OED*).
- 853–64 Macaulay notes that the sun's horses (Erythreus, Actaeon, Lampros, and Philogeus) are named by Fulgentius (1.12) in the same order that they are named in Gower and that they represent the four divisions of the day: Erythreus, taking his name from the red light of morning and Philogeus from the sun's inclination at evening; "Ovid gives a different set of names" (3.524). Hyginus, *De Planetis* 4.108–10 (Basel, 1535), offers a handsome drawing of Sol with bright stones in his crown (compare *CA* 7.818); the chariot wheel bears the sign of Leo. His four horses are not named.
- 889 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de quinta planeta, que Mars dicitur.* [Note concerning the fifth planet, which is called Mars.]
- 907 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de sexta planeta, que Iupiter dicitur.* [Note concerning the sixth planet, which is called Jupiter.]
- 935 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De septima planeta, que reliquis celsior Saturnus dictus est.* [Note concerning the seventh planet, which, higher than all others, is called Saturn.]
- 955 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Postquam dictum est de vii. Planetis, quibus singuli septimane dies singulariter attitulantur, dicendum est iam de xii. Signis, per que xii. Menses Anni variis temporibus effectus varios assequuntur.* [After there has been discussion about the seven Planets, by each of which the seven days are individually named, there must be discussion about the twelve Signs, through which the twelve Months of the Year follow their various outcomes at various times.]
- 955–78 *He which departeth dai fro nyht.* Gower is careful to present the shaping of the zodiac in a Christian context. Commentaries abound upon God's creating the *planetes sevene upon the hevene* to accord (*acordant*) with the making of the earth in seven days (7.963–64). Compare *VC* 7.587–90. Stockton cites Psalm 8:4–10 as a supporting text. See also St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 11.31, on seven as a number and measure of completeness, or *De formis* 15.1, pp. 40–41, on complementary sevens in nature, as Berchorius contemplates the natural realm of Pan.
- 955–1280 See Fox, *Mediaeval Sciences*, pp. 65–80, on Gower's use of Alchandrus, rather than Ptolemy, on the signs of the zodiac, even though he cites the *Almageste* (line 983). Where Macaulay thought Gower to be floundering and getting it mixed up (see Mac 3.525), he is "actually following his source very carefully" (Fox, *Mediaeval Sciences*, p. 68). See note to 7.739–946, above.
- 979 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic de primo Signo, quod Aries dicitur, cui Mensis Marci specialiter appropriatus est. Quo deus in primo produxit ad esse creatu.* [Note here concerning the first Sign, which is called Aries, to whom the Month of March specifically belongs. "Under him God first brought creation into being."]

In this and the following eleven sets of Latin glosses, the second sentences describing each of the twelve zodiacal signs scan as regular poetic lines. In the translation, I use quotation marks to indicate those lines that are cast in poetic form. A Latin poem on the seasons is thus spread across these marginal notes, which probably should be added to the list of Gower's own Latin poetry. The meter varies between dactylic hexameter and dactylic pentameter (as two hemiepes?), which, taken two by two, present standard elegiac couplets, Gower's most common Latin meter. This regular elegiac pattern begins this "poem" but it is varied in the second half, by a doubled hexameter, closing with five successive hexameters. Thus, with hexameter lines marked as "h" and the pentameters necessary for an elegiac couplet marked as "p," the assembled poem on the seasons has the following overall pattern:

979ff.	(h)	Quo deus in primo produxit ad esse creatu;
1015ff.	(p)	Quo prius occultas invenit herba vias.
1031ff.	(h)	Quo volucrum cantus gaudet de floribus ortis;
1051ff.	(p)	Quo falcat pratis pabula tonsor equis.
1067ff.	(h)	Quo magis ad terras expandit Lucifer ignes;
1081ff.	(h)	Quo vacuata prius pubes replet horrea messis.
1101ff.	(p)	Vinea quo Bachum pressa liquore colit.
1121ff.	(h)	Floribus exclusis yemis qui ianitor extat.
1141ff.	(h)	Quo mustum bibulo linquit sua nomina vino.
1169ff.	(h)	Ipse diem Nano noctemque Gigante figurat.
1185ff.	(h)	Quo Ianus vultum duplum conuerit in annum.
1215ff.	(h)	Quo pluie torrens riparum concitat ampnes.

(Andrew Galloway)

979–81 *The ferste . . . is cleped Aries . . . a wether of stature.* Aries, the *wether*, is first because, like the lead ram, he guides the flock of other signs through the heavens. See Allen, *Star Names*, p. 76. Gower makes certain that credit for this orderly fact is not simply a matter of astrology but rather a part of God's design. See note to lines 994–96. On the structure of Gower's presentation of the signs of the zodiac, see also the note to 1141–63, below.

989 *hot and drye.* Macaulay observes: "According to the astrologers, Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius preside over the element of fire, and are hot and dry by nature; Taurus, Virgo, Capricornus over that of earth, being dry and cold; Gemini, Libra, Aquarius preside over air, and are hot and moist; while Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces are moist and cold, having dominion over water (Albumasar, cited by Vincent of Beauvais, *Spec. nat.* xv. 36)" (3.525). See Bart. Ang. 8.9 (vol. 1, pp. 460–65), on the nature of the zodiac; and 8.10 (vol. 1, pp. 465–73), on the signs of the zodiac.

991 See Bart. Ang. 8.11–18 (vol. 1, pp. 473–95), on the planets, their refuge, and their relationships with earth and the zodiac; their marriages, conditions, humors, and, especially in ch. 11, their motions and effects on weather, health, nations, etc.

992 *Of myghty Mars the bataillous.* Aries and Mars (Ares) are linked in two ways besides the verbal punning in their names: Allen notes that "among astrol-

ogers Aries was a dreaded sign indicating passionate temper and bodily hurt" (*Star Names*, p. 79), whereby March, the first month, is often stormy and blustery, thus *bataillous*; but also, because of the story of Phrixus (Ovid refers to Aries as *Phrixea ovis* in *Fasti* 3.852), where Phrixus, son of Athamas, fled on the back of the ram (*aries* — *Fasti* 3.867) with his sister Helle toward Colchis, to escape the wrath of Ino. Helle fell off and was drowned (thus the Hellespont), and Phrixus sacrificed the ram and hung its fleece in the Grove of Ares, where it turned to gold (another of Aries' titles is *Ovis aurea*), thereby further linking Aries and Mars. See Allen, *Star Names*, p. 76. The golden fleece became the object of Jason's quest (n.b., Gower's Tale of Jason and Medea). See also Gower's Tale of Phrixus and Helle (5.4243–4361).

- 994–96 *The Creatour of alle kinde / Upon this signe ferst began / The world.* Man was created in the sign of Aries, which signifies beginnings (see 7.1000), as part of God's design, "Whan every bridd schall chese his make, / And every nedre and every snake / And every reptil which mai moeve, / His myht assaieth for to proeve, / To crepen out agein the sonne, / Whan ver his seson hath begonne" (7.1009–14). Allen notes biblical commentators who link Aries with Abraham's ram, caught in the thicket as substitute sacrifice for Isaac (*Star Names*, p. 78), a sign of the greatest new beginning.
- 1015 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Secundum Signum dicitur Taurus, cuius Mensis est Aprilis. Quo prius occultas invenit herba vias.* [The second Sign is called Taurus, whose Month is April. "Under him the greenery first discovers the hidden pathways."]
- 1020 *somdiel discordant.* Macaulay notes that the hot and moist Libra (7.1111) is more accordant to Venus than is the "dreie and cold" Taurus (7.1017) with which she is affiliated here (3.525).
- 1029–30 Though Taurus may be "dreie and cold" (7.1017), his month, April, is proverbially known for *his schoures* that *ministreth weie unto the floures*, not only in the modern "April showers bring May flowers" proverb, but in Lydgate's "holsom as the Aprile shour / Fallyng on the erbes newe" (*Reson*, lines 6310–11); Hawes' "More sweter fer than the Aprell shour" (Oxford 13); or Chaucer's *Anelida and Arcite* (lines 309–10): "I myghte as wel holde Aperill fro reyn, / As holde yow, to make yow be stidfast." See Whiting, A173 and A176.
- 1033 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Tercium Signum dicitur Gemini, cuius Mensis Maius est. Quo volucrum cantus gaudet de floribus ortis.* [The third Sign is called Gemini, whose Month is May. "Under him the song of birds rejoices at the emergence of flowers."]
- 1036 ff. "This statement and the others like it below, 1073, 1089, 1127, 1147, 1198, 1222, may be taken to indicate that the division of the signs was very uncertain in our author's mind. It may be observed that the usual representation of Taurus in star-maps is with his head, not his tail, towards Gemini" (Mac 3.525).
- 1043 *wise Tholomeus wrot.* I.e., the *Almagest*. See note to lines 1239–40, below.

- 1044–50 Gower's celebration of youth, love, and May has reminded readers of the opening of Chaucer's *CT*. See Fisher, *John Gower*, p. 253, who compares the passage to *MO*, lines 939–46. The "vivid verbal miniatures" in this section on the months (Manzalaoui, "'Noght in the Registre of Venus,'" p. 160) add a lyric quality to this otherwise technical section of Book 7. See also 7.1009–14 and 7.1159–68 for other lovely examples of Gower's skills at vignette composition. Manzalaoui suggests that this use of poetic description is a pictorial practice Gower seems to have learned from the *Secretum* (p. 175).
- 1051 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Quartum Signum Cancer dicitur, cuius Mensis Iunius est. Quo falcat pratis pabula tonsor equis.* [The fourth Sign is called Cancer, whose Month is June. "Under him the shearer cuts the hay from the flat fields."]
- 1069 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Quintum signum Leo dicitur, cuius Mensis Iulius est. Quo magis ad terras expandit Lucifer ignes.* [The fifth sign is called Leo, whose Month is July. "Under him the morning star spreads his fires more across the earth."]
- 1081 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Sextum Signum Virgo dicitur, cuius Mensis Augustus est. Quo vacuata prius pubes replet horrea messis.* [The sixth Sign is called Virgo, whose Month is August. "Under him the youth refill the emptied granaries with the harvests."] The scansion requires one false quantity (the second syllable of *replet* must be scanned short); but the line is clearly hexameter like the others in this "seasons poem."
- 1103 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Septimum Signum Libra dicitur, cuius Mensis Septembbris est. Vinea quo Bachum pressa liquore colit.* [The seventh Sign is called Libra, whose Month is September. "Under him the vineyard, squeezed, honors Bacchus with its fluid."]
- 1106–09 "There is grave doubt in my mind whether Gower was aware that there are two zodiacs — the zodiac of the *signs* and the zodiac of the *constellations*. He calls his divisions 'signs,' although he clearly thinks of his 'signs' as constellations to be seen in the heavens," as these lines on Virgo make evident (Fox, *Mediaeval Sciences*, pp. 79–80).
- 1121 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Octauum Signum Scorpio dicitur, cuius Mensis October est. Floribus exclusis yemis qui ianitor extat.* [The eighth Sign is called Scorpio, whose Month is October. "He stands as the gatekeeper of winter, keeping flowers out."]
- 1132–34 *eighte . . . unbehovely.* Eight is usually regarded as a benevolent number, a sign of new beginning, baptism, and new life; but its being *unbehovely* (unfiting, improper, unsuitable) for the tail of Scorpio may be one further sign of the treacherous felonies of this deceitful mansion.
- 1141–43 ff. *The nynthe signe . . . cleped Sagittarius.* Fox, *Mediaeval Sciences*, pp. 66–68, analyzes Gower's description of Sagittarius to demonstrate how Gower's discussion of the zodiac signs works. The elements Gower considers include 1) the figure of the constellation (in this instance a centaur), 2) the number of stars in each of the three subdivisions of the sign (head, body, tail), 3) the

“quality” of the sign (hot and dry, in this instance), 4) the dignity or debility of certain planets when residing in the sign (here Sagittarius is the house of Jupiter), and 5) an account of the month over which the sign rules. This latter feature “may even permit one to notice that the descriptions of the months embedded in this unpromising matrix are among the loveliest and freshest that Gower ever wrote” (p. 66).

- 1141 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nonum signum Sagittarius dicitur, cuius Mensis Nouember est. Quo mustum bibulo linquit sua nomina vino.* [The ninth Sign is called Sagittarius, whose Month is November. “Under him the wine-must changes its name to drinkable wine.”]
- 1165–68 *must into the wyn . . . larder of the swyn; / That is Novembre which I meene, / Whan that the lef hath lost his greene.* The duke of Berry’s *Très Riches Heures*, pl. 10, depicts September as the month for harvest of grapes; thus the fermentation period (*must into wyn*) imagined here would be two months. Pl. 12, November, when the trees have lost their green and the acorns fall, depicts hogs devouring the acorns as their final fattening for slaughter in late November and December. Compare Bart. Ang. 9.17, *De septembri*: “In þis monthe grapis beþ ripe and þerfore he is iþeint in a vineþerd as a gardeynere gadringe grapis in a basket”; and 9.19, *De nouembre*: “þat tyme beestis waxiþ fatte and nameþliche swyne; and þerfore he is iþeint as a cherle betyng okes and fedinge his swyne wiþ mast and ackornis.” In Trevisa and most books of hours, December is identified as the time of slaughter and the salting of the meat, a time in closer proximity to Christmas feasts.
- 1169 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Decimum Signum Capricorus dicitur, cuius Mensis December est. Ipse diem Nano noctemque Gigante figurat.* [The tenth Sign is called Capricorn, whose Month is December. “He fashions day as a dwarf, and night as a giant.”]
- 1174 *Satorne.* Saturn’s sour disposition is wintry, therefore suitable to Capricorn and Aquarius (see 7.1188).
- 1175 *Bot to the mone it liketh noght.* Macaulay notes that “Capricorn is the ‘fall’ of the Moon, being opposite to her house, Cancer, as the next sign Aquarius is that of the Sun, see line 1190” (3.525). Martianus observes that the winter tropic begins in the eighth degree of Capricorn, passes through the entire body of Capricorn “to the feet of Aquarius, thence to the end of the tail of Cetus, then to Lepus and the front paws of Canis; then through Argo and the back of Centaurus to the sting of Scorpio; next through the last part of Sagitta, and back again to the eighth degree of Capricornus” (*De nuptiis* 8.830).
- 1187 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Vndeclimum Signum Aquarius dicitur, cuius Mensis Ianuarius est. Quo Ianus vultum duplum conuertit in annum.* [The eleventh Sign is called Aquarius, whose Month is January. “Under him Janus turns his double-face toward the year.”]
- 1207–14 *Janus with his double face.* Winter storms appear most fiercely in the latter days of Aquarius, and thus are Janus-like as they look back to the ferocity of winter but forward also to *the ferste primerole* (line 1214).

- 1217 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Duodecimum Signum Piscis dicitur, cuius Mensis Februarius est. Quo pluuiet torrens riparum concitat ampnes.* [The twelfth Sign is called Pisces, whose Month is February. “Under him the torrent of rain showers incites the rivers from their banks.”]
- 1239–40 *Albumazar . . . Seith.* The allusion is to Abu’Ma’sar’s *Introductorium in astromiam*. Hamilton (“Some Sources”) asserts that Gower’s whole “detailed account of the influence of the planets on the men and countries under their control, and a description of the signs of the zodiac, the planets in their mansions, and the months tributary to them” (7.685–1236) was suggested by a short section of the *Secretum*, based on Abu’Ma’sar (p. 342), the same passage from which Gower drew his references to “Tholemeus” (7.1043, 1201).
- 1271 ff. Gower’s discussion of the universe moves from earth, through the planets, to the fixed stars which occupy the eighth sphere and are immutable. That the fixed stars are fifteen in number perhaps suggests through number symbolism the conjoining of heaven (8) and earth (7)—eternity and temporality. (See Hugh of St. Victor’s discussion of the number fifteen in *De arca Noe morali* 3.16.) Because of the stars’ permanence (and thus potency), more magicians than Nectanabus based wonder-working calculations on them. (See Chaucer’s “tregetour” in The Franklin’s Tale, *CT F[V]1280*). Gower’s account of the fifteen stars with their respective herbs and stones is taken from *Liber hermetis de XV stellis et de XV lapidibus et de XV herbis, XV figuris, etc.*, which, Macaulay notes, is found in several fourteenth-century manuscripts. Ideler’s *Untersuchungen über den Ursprung und die Bedeutung der Sternnamen*, provides information on a number of the names (Mac 3.526). Vincent of Beauvais observes (*Speculum naturale* 16.53) that every herb on earth has a star in the sky which is concerned with it and causes it to grow.
- 1281–1438 These lines on the fifteen stars are included in Longleat House MS 174, a fifteenth-century collection of letters and Middle English medical treatises. See Harris, who remarks on minor changes in the Longleat text, concluding that “the purposes behind the inclusion of the extract . . . [in Longleat] must have been practical” (“The Longleat House Extracted Manuscript,” p. 88).
- 1285 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat super doctrina Nectanabi, dum ipse iuuenem Alexander instruxit, de illis precipue xv stellis vna cum earum lapidibus et herbis, que ad artis magice naturalis operacionem specialius conueniunt.* [Here he discourses on the doctrine of Nectanabus while he instructed the young Alexander, specifically concerning the fifteen stars along with their stones and herbs that are particularly conducive to the operation of the art of natural magic.]
- 1295–1308 See Hamilton (“Studies in the Sources,” pp. 511–12), on various versions of *Liber hermetis* that attribute authorship of the treatise to Nectanabus, as does Gower.
- 1296 *Nectanabus.* Alexander’s natural father. See *CA* 6.1789–2366. Minnis, commenting on Gower’s use of the Nectanabus story to set up Book 7 in a cohesive way, points out that “Calistre and Aristote taught the young king philosophy,” while it was Nectanabus who taught him astronomy and magic

- (7.1295–1308), which may not have been the most wise move by Nectanabus, given the fact that it was on a fair and starry night while they were observing the heavens from a tower that, to prove the old astrologer wrong, Alexander pushed Nectanabus off the tower, thus proving him right (“Moral Gower,” pp. 74–75).
- 1309 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Prima stella vocatur Aldeboran, cuius lapis Carbunculus et herba Anabulla est.* [The first star is called Aldeboran, whose stone is Carbuncle and herb Anabulla.]
- 1319 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Secunda stella vocatur Clota seu Pliades, cuius lapis Cristal-lum et herba Feniculus est.* [The second star is called Clota or Pliades, whose stone is Crystal and herb Fennel.]
- 1320–23 *Clota . . . Mars.* Clota is a Celtic goddess of the river Clyde. It is a curious coincidence that one of the valleys on Mars has, in modern times, been given the name Clota, suggesting that not only has Clota taken Mars’ complexion, but Mars is now under the influence of Clota!
- 1328 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Tertia stella vocatur Algol, cuius lapis Dyamans et herba Ele-borum nigrum est.* [The third star is called Algol, whose stone is Diamond and herb black Hellebore.] Macaulay 3.526 is helpful in identifying Arabic meanings to star names and in linking Gower’s phrasing to *Liber Hermetis*.
- 1337 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Quarta stella vocatur Alhaiot, cuius lapis Saphirus et herba Marrubium est.* [The fourth star is called Alhaiot, whose stone is Sapphire and herb Horehound.]
- 1345 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Quinta stella vocatur Canis maior, cuius lapis Berillus et herba Savina est.* [The fifth star is called the greater Dog Star, whose stone is Beryl and herb Savin.]
- 1355 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Sexta stella vocatur Canis minor, cuius lapis Achates et herba Primula est.* [The sixth star is called the lesser Dog Star, whose stone is Agate and herb Cowslip.]
- 1363 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Septima stella vocatur Arial, cuius lapis Gorgonza et herba Celidonia est.* [The seventh star is called Arial, whose stone is Gorgonza and herb Celadine.]
- 1364 *Arial.* Macaulay suggests “Cor Leonis” or Regulus (3.526); North links *cor leonis* with Calbelezed (*Chaucer’s Universe*, p. 271, caption to figure 33, which includes a drawing of a rampant lion).
- 1371 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Octaua stella vocatur Ala Corui, cuius lapis Honochinus et herba Lapacia est.* [The eighth star is called Crow’s Wing, whose Stone is Honochinus and herb Sorrel.]
- 1379 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nona stella vocatur Alaezel, cuius lapis Smaragdus et herba Salgea est.* [The ninth star is called Alaezel, whose stone is Emerald and herb Sage.]

- 1386 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Decima stella vocatur Almareth, cuius lapis Iaspis et herba Plantago est.* [The tenth star is called Almareth, whose stone is Jasper and herb Plantain.]
- 1393 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Vndecima stella vocatur Venenas, cuius lapis Adamans et herba Cicorea est.* [The eleventh star is called Venenas, whose stone is Adamant and herb Chicory.]
- 1397 *adamant.* “lodestone (magnet)” is the sense here, given the stone’s affiliation with Venus and the moon, with their powerful powers of attraction (tides, love, etc.). Gower also uses the term to mean “diamond,” as in 7.833, when speaking of the precious gem in a royal crown. See *MED adamant* n. 1 and 2.
- 1401 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Duodecima stella vocatur Alpheta, cuius lapis Topazion et herba Rosa marina est.* [The twelfth star is called Alpheta, whose stone is Topaz and herb Rosemary.]
- 1401 *Alpheta*, from Arabic for the beggar’s dish (Mac 3.526).
- 1409 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Terciadecima stella vocatur Cor Scorpionis, cuius lapis Sardis et herba Aristologia est.* [The thirteenth star is called the Scorpion’s Heart, whose stone is Sardis and herb Birthwort.]
- 1417 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Quartadecima stella vocatur Botercadent, cuius lapis Crisolitus et herba Satureia est.* [The fourteenth star is called Botercadent, whose stone is Chrysolite and herb Savory.]
- 1419 *Botercadent.* Macaulay notes that the Latin source (*Liber hermetis*) reads “*Vultur cadens*,” that is perhaps Vega; but ‘Botercadent’ would probably be a different star, namely that called in Arabic ‘*Batn-Kaitos*’ or Whale’s belly” (Mac 3.526–27). The “Falling Vulture” (*vultur cadens*) could indeed be Vega (the brightest star in the constellation Lyra), derived from Arabic *al-Waqi* and so named for the story of the bird that swoops down to grab Orpheus’ lyre from the river at Jupiter’s request. *MED* glosses the term to mean “falling Bittern (name of a star or constellation); ? The Whale’s Belly (star in Cetus).” According to *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, “*Animals in the Bible*,” the bittern (Lat. *botháurus vulgaris*) is sometimes substituted for the pelican, which, “of his kinde,” is a swooping bird as it feeds. But perhaps Macaulay’s first option (Vega) is the better identification, since the next line comments on his being obedient “of his kinde” to Mercury and Venus.
- 1425 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Quintadecima stella vocatur Cauda Scorpionis, cuius lapis Calcedonia et herba Maiorana est.* [The fifteenth star is called the Scorpion’s Tail, whose stone is Chalcedony and herb Marjoram.]
- 1426 *tail of Scorpio.* In *Liber Hermetis*, the phrase is ‘*Cauda Capricorni*’ (Mac 3.527).
- 1439 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic de Auctoribus illis, qui ad Astronomie scienciam pre ceteris studiosius intendentibus libros super hoc distinctis nominibus composuerunt.* [Note here concerning his Authorities, who, striving very zealously beyond all others towards the science of Astronomy, composed books about this under various names.]

- Here, in his naming of the astronomers, Gower seems to be following Albertus Magnus' *De libris licitis et illicitis*, the *Speculum astronomiae*, and, perhaps, Michael Scot's *Introductio astrologiae*. See Fox, *Mediaeval Sciences*, pp. 80–83.
- 1449 ff. Macaulay notes that the names of the chief authors of books on astronomy seem to be taken from Albertus Magnus' *Speculum astronomiae* or *De libris licitis et illicitis*, cap. ii (3.527).
- 1461 *Alfraganus*. Author of *Rudimenta astronomica*.
- 1507–87 Since Christ Himself is God's Word, the Second Person being the *expression* of the First Person, abuse of language is a sin against Truth. Gower follows the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition in which truth (not simply persuasion) is a fundamental requisite of Rhetoric. Words used for persuasion, regardless of truth, are false rhetoric.
- 1507–1640 Murphy identifies this passage as the first discussion of rhetoric in the English language. Gower's source is *Trésor* 3. On Gower's shift away from Brunetto's praise of ornativeness in favor of a plain style, see Schmitz (*Middel Weie*, pp. 28–37). Gower links Rhetoric with Ethics rather than Politics, where it serves as a guide to all people, not just rulers (pp. 168–97). For Gower, language is the universal gift of the Creator, a primary means of discovering divine likeness in the ethics of self rule (pp. 32–33). See Nicholson's annotations of scholars on this passage (*Annotated Index*, pp. 440–41). Craun notes that Gower begins treating rhetoric “exactly where pastoral treatises on deviant speech begin: with the origin and function of speech” (*Lies, Slander, and Obscenity*, p. 118).
- 1511 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat de secunda parte Philosophie, cuius nomen Rethorica facundos efficit. Loquitur eciam de eiusdem duabus speciebus, scilicet Grammatica et Logica, quarum doctrina Rethor sua verba perornat.* [Here he discourses about the second part of Philosophy, Rhetoric by name, which produces eloquent speakers. He speaks especially about two of its species, namely Grammar and Logic, by whose doctrine the Orator adorns his words.]
- 1522–25 *touchende . . . Rethorique . . . that ben resonable.* See Watt (*Amoral Gower*, pp. 38–60) on Gower's linking of rhetoric and reason as concepts gendered masculine, drawing on *Trésor*, which he then subverts in various ways. Gower “is concerned with his own reputation and the notoriety or eminence of his patron, forefathers, and other authorities, and also with the questions of whether writing is a legitimate and moral activity, what is the proper way to do it, and what are the difficulties in achieving a virile rhetorical style” (p. 60).
- 1558–63 On Ulysses as rhetorician, see Gittes, “Ulysses,” p. 13.
- 1588 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de Eloquencia Iulii in causa Cateline contra Cillenum et alios tunc vrbis Rome Concives.* [Note concerning the Eloquence of Julius in the case of Cateline against Cillenus and others who were then Citizens of the city of Rome.]

- 1588–1640 Rather than *Tullius* (line 1589), Gower is following Brunetto Latini in the *Trésor*, 1.36.5, which also uses the Roman Senate’s discussion of the fate of Catiline as a model of right use of Rhetoric.
- 1607 *Cillenus*. “D. Junius Silanus, who as consul-designate gave his opinion first. It is tolerably evident in this passage, as it is obvious in 4.2647 ff., that Gower did not identify Tullius with Cicero” (Mac 3.527).
- 1641 ff. The three part division of *Practique* ultimately comes from Aristotle and is found in Giles of Rome’s *De regimine principium*, Bromyard’s “regimen” in his *Summa praedicantium*, and Bonaventure’s *De reductione Artium ad Theologiam* and *Secretum Secretorum*, though in this instance his source is probably Brunetto Latini’s *Trésor* 1.3.4.
- 1647 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat de tercia parte Philosophie, que Practica vocatur, cuius species sunt tres, scilicet Elica, Ichonomia, et Policia, quarum doctrina regia magestas in suo regimine ad honoris magnificenciam per singula dirigitur.* [Here he discourses about the third part of Philosophy, which is called Practice, whose species are three, namely Ethics, Economics, and Policy, by whose doctrine the royal majesty is directed point by point in his governance toward his honor’s magnificence.]
- 1650 Gower’s main source for practices of *the governance of kinges* is Giles of Rome’s *De regimine principium*. See David Fowler’s edition of Trevisa’s translation.
- 1670–78 *Iconomique*. See Simpson on economies as a central idea in the *Confessio*, particularly with reference to *familia* (i.e., domestic economies), but also the inner life of “conseil,” “wit,” and “resoun,” the *familia* of the soul (*Sciences and the Self*, pp. 221–23).
- 1673 *[a king] His wif and child schal reule and guie.* Burke (“Women,” pp. 240, 253n6) notes that this is the only reference in the poem to female submission in marriage, a further demonstration of the poet’s kind disposition toward women.
- 1706 The five points of policy that Genius explores — Truth (lines 1723 ff.), Liberality (lines 1985 ff.), Justice (lines 2695 ff.), Pity (lines 3103 ff.), and Chastity (lines 4215 ff.) — follow vaguely the model of kingly instruction in the *Secretum Secretorum*. There the recommended virtues are liberality, wisdom, chastity, mercy, truth, and also justice. In the *Secretum*, Aristotle is less systematic than Genius is. This portion of the *Confessio* is pointedly directed towards the English throne. See Coffman, “John Gower, Mentor for Royalty,” pp. 953–64; and Hamilton, “Some Sources”.
- 1715 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic secundum Policiam tractare intendit precipue super quinque regularum Articulis, que ad Principis Regimen obseruande specialius existunt, quarum prima veritas nuncupatur. Per quam veridicus fit sermo Regis ad omnes.* [Here in respect to Policy he intends to discourse particularly about five Elements of rules, which must especially be observed for the Governance of a Ruler, the first of which is named truth. Through this a King’s speech is made faithfully true to all.]

- 1716 *And for it stant upon his wille.* The Will, the third of the human faculties, the others being Memory and Intellect, was especially emphasized in fourteenth-century philosophical discourse as the starting point of ethics. Thus the will (desire) of the king is especially important. Compare, for example, Chaucer's "Lak of Stedfastnesse," where the will is repeatedly singled out as the crux of the problem (n.b. lines 6, 9, 13, 22).
- 1733 *double speche.* The implicit point here is that God gave humankind language for communication. But in his predatory sins, humankind uses language to deceive, rather than clarify. Double speech is thus an aspect of fallen nature. See Chaucer's remarks on the Fall where "mannes word," which once was obligation, is now "nothing lyk" ("Lak of Stedfastnesse," lines 2–6) or his recurrent proverb on the importance of words being "cosyn to the dede" (CT I[A]742). For Gower the phrase is tied to the evils of division that characterize corrupt behavior in modern times. See Prol. 850–55 and 967–1052. At the same time, given the fallen condition of the world, equivocal language may be the best tool for understanding the confusion. See Peck, "Phenomenology of Make Believe"; Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, pp. 198 ff.; and Olsson, "Rhetoric, Gower, and the Late Medieval Exemplum," pp. 187–94, especially p. 189.
- 1735–36 On failure of truth in a king as *an unsittende thing*, see Peck, "Politics and Psychology," p. 238.
- 1741–43 *Avise . . . tofore, / And be wel war . . . / For afterward it is to late.* Proverbial. See Whiting, *Chaucer's Use of Proverbs*, p. 151.
- 1750 *corone.* On the crown as a symbol of kingship, see Peck, "Politics and Psychology," p. 238.
- 1751 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota super hiis que in corona Regis designantur.* [Note concerning those things which are signified in a King's crown.]
The various significances of the parts of a king's crown are also elaborated in the alliterative poem *Richard the Redeless*, passus 1, lines 35–48.
- 1782 *cronique.* The reference is to 1 Esdras 3–4:41. Utley notes that Gower's is the earliest full treatment of this theme in English (*Crooked Rib*, p. 313). See also Gower's use of the story in *MO*, lines 2276–800. The attitude toward women is less benevolent in *MO* where Gower uses the figure of woman overcoming the king as a jibe at Alice Perrers (*MO*, lines 22801–72). See Stillwell, "John Gower," pp. 457–58, on the more negative attitude toward women in *MO*. In *C4* the anti-feminist components of his sources have been removed. See Burke, "Sources and Significance," p. 11.
- 1786 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic narrat, qualiter Darius filius Ytaspis Soldanus Percie a tribus suis Cubiculariis, quorum nomina Arpaghes, Manachaz et Zorobabel dicta sunt, nomine questionis singillatum interrogauit, vtrum Rex aut mulier aut vinum maioris fortitudinis vim obtineret: ipsis vero varia opinione respondentibus, Zorobabel vltimus asseruit quod mulier sui amoris complacencia tam Regis quam vini potenciam excellit. Addidit insuper pro finali conclusione dicens, quod veritas super omnia vincit. Cuius responsio ceteris laudabilior acceptabatur.* [Here he narrates how the Sultan of

Persia, Darius the son of Ytaspis, separately interrogated with a question three of his Chamberlains, whose names are said to be Arpaghes, Manachaz, and Zorobabel, about whether a king, a woman, or wine possessed the greatest strength. The others responded with various opinions, but Zorobabel, the last one, asserted that a woman by the delight of her love exceed the power both of a king and of wine. He added moreover as a final conclusion the statement that truth conquers all. His response was accepted by all as more praiseworthy.] The story of Darius and the three counselors is based on 1 Esdras 3–4:41. The story is popular among fourteenth-century and early fifteenth-century English writers. Compare Lydgate, *Siege of Thebes*, lines 1721–45. See also Chaucer's Dame Prudence, who gives an amusing variation on the story, where jasper is declared stronger than gold, wisdom stronger than jasper, and woman strongest of all (The Tale of Melibee, *CT* VII[B²] 1106–08). Gower has added Zorobabel's illustrative account of Alcestis (lines 1917 ff.). Compare Chaucer's use of Alcestis as the model of virtue in *LGW*. A further variation of the story of Darius' questions occurs in the Latin *Gesta Romanorum*, cap. cclviii. For critical discussion of the illustrative example, see Burke ("Sources and Significance"), who suggests Flavius Josephus, Peter Comestor, and Vincent of Beauvais as possible additional sources. Wetherbee considers the tale, followed by the extended analysis of the five points of policy, to be "a summarial statement of the problems of self-governance and social order posed by the earlier books" ("John Gower," p. 604).

- 1800–02 *Arpaghes . . . Manachaz . . . Zorobabel*. Zorobabel appears in 1 Esdras, but Gower's source for the other names is unknown. They do not appear in Esdras, Peter Comestor, or Flavius Josephus.
- 1884 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic de vigore amoris, qui inter Cirum Regem Persarum et Apemen Besazis filiam ipsius Regis Concubinam spectante tota Curia experiebatur.* [Note here concerning the power of love, which was experienced between Cyrus, the king of the Persians, and Apemen, daughter of Besazis, the concubine of this king, while the entire court watched.]
- 1884–99 Bakalian suggests that Apemen's dominance of the besotted Cyrus reflects Gower's lingering distaste of Edward III's later years under the influence of Alice Perrers. Yet, "however angry Gower may still be with the irresponsible behavior of the deceased Edward, in the *Confessio* he recognizes that women can be accomplished helpmeets to men" (*Aspects of Love*, p. 54). E.g., 7.1890–91, where Apemen subdues the tyrant's notorious anger.
- 1904–07 *Thurgh hem [women] men finden out the weie / To knighthode and to worldes fame . . .* Bakalian contrasts the voice of Genius that acknowledges women's usefulness in making knights fear shame and desire honor with the position against women as a detrimental influence on knighthood in *VC* 5.1.20 ff. and *MO*, lines 22801 ff. (*Aspects of Love*, pp. 52–57).
- 1912 *bote*. A term rich with connotations: salvation, reward, deliverance, amends; advantage, profit; but also penance, expiation, cure. There could be a pun on vessel (boat), as well.

- 1917 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota de fidelitate Coniugis, qualiter Alcesta vxor Ameti, vt maritum suum viuiscaret, seipsam morti spontanee subegit.* [Note the fidelity of married partners, how Alceste the wife of Ametus subjected herself by her own will to death in order that her husband might be revived.]
- 1917–49 Gallacher discusses Alcestis as a synecdoche for “trouthe” itself, “a culmination of Gower’s ‘legend of good women’” (*Love, the Word, and Mercury*, p. 105). Her generosity in giving her life for her husband’s recovery “clarifies Gower’s purpose in intermeshing the classical with the biblical story” (p. 104). See *CA* 7.1944–49.
- 1934–40 Burke (“Sources and Significances,” pp. 12–13) remarks on the wholeheartedness of Alcestis’ self-sacrifice; her tenderness toward her husband epitomizes Gower’s esteem for a good marriage. He omits the story of Hercules’ rescue of Alcestis, perhaps to emphasize the dedication and pathos of her commitment.
- 1957–60 *The trouthe . . . schal be knowe.* Proverbial. See Whiting, T509. Compare *CA* Prol. 369. See also Whiting, S490–491, and *CA* 3.205 and 5.4604.
- 1990 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat de regie maiestatis secunda Policia, quam Aristotiles largitatem vocat: cuius virtute non solum propulsata Avaricia Regis nomen magnificum extollitur, sed et sui subditi omni diuiciarum habundancia iocundiores efficiuntur.* [Here he discourses about the second Policy of royal majesty, which Aristotle calls Liberality, by whose virtue is Avarice repelled, and not only is the King’s name extolled as magnificent, but also his subjects are made happier by every abundance of wealth.]
- 2003 ff. On the evolution of kingship and the current necessity of kings, see *RR*, lines 9603–36, 18545–18606; and *Piers Plowman* B.Pro.113, 132–38, 141–42, where kings are also looked on, not as part of the original order, but rather as an expedience, a necessary evil which resulted from the fall.
- 2031 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota super hoc quod Aristotiles Alexandrum exemplificauit de exaccionibus Regis Chaldeorum* [Note, concerning this, that Aristotle instructed Alexander by an example about the exactions of the King of the Chaldeans.]
- 2061 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic secundum gesta Iulii exemplum ponit, qualiter Rex suorum militum, quos probos agnouerit, indigenciam largitatis sue beneficiis releuare tenetur.* [Here following the deeds of Julius he presents an instructive example, how the King was led to relieve his knight’s poverty, since he saw they (his deeds) were worthy, by the beneficence of his liberality.]
- The account of the king of Chaldee’s prodigality may be found in the *Secretum Secretorum*. The story of Julius and the Poor Knight, which comes next, is based ultimately on Seneca, *De beneficiis* 5.24, though it is retold in the Latin *Gesta Romanorum*, cap. lxxxvii. The story of King Antigonus, which follows, may originate with Brunetto Latini’s *Trésor*, though there the story is an example of hypocritical excuses.

- 2110 *every service axeth mede.* Proverbial. See Whiting, S168. Compare *CA* 4.2023–24: “Bot every labour axeth why / Of som reward,” and 8.2012: “The mede arist of the service.” Perhaps the source is Matthew 10:10b: “for the workman is worthy of his meat.”
- 2115–30 Hamilton (“Some Sources,” p. 339) suggests the *Tractatus de diversis historiis Romanorum* as a source for this story and others in Book 7, namely, the tales of Codrus (7.3163–3214), Fabricius (7.2783–2832), the Roman Triumph (7.2355–2411), Julius Caesar and the Poor Knight (7.2061–2114), the Emperor and the Masons (7.2412–31), and the story of Alexander and the Pirate in 3.2363–2437. But see also the notes to 7.2061 ff., 7.2328–2490, 7.2765 ff., and 7.3163 ff.
- 2119 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum de Rege Antigono, qualiter dona regia secundum maius et minus equa discrecio moderanda sunt.* [Here he presents an instructive example concerning King Antigonus, how royal gifts must be moderated in respect to more and less equal discretion.]
- 2142 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic quod Regius status a suis fidelibus omni fauore supportandus est.* [Note here that the Royal estate must be supported with all goodwill by the king’s faithful.]
- 2149 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic secundum Aristotilem, qualiter Principum Prodigalitas paupertatem inducit communem.* [Note here following Aristotle, how the Prodigality of Rulers induces poverty for all.]
- 2155 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Seneca. Sic aliis benefacito, vt tibi non noceas.* [Seneca: Be thus beneficent to others, so you may not be harmful to yourself.]
- 2162–63 *Proegalité . . . is the moder of poverte.* Proverbial. See Whiting, P405.
- 2177 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota qualiter in principum curiis adulatores triplici grauitate offendunt.* [Note how in the courts of rulers, flatterers offend by a triple gravity.]
- 2181 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Primo contra deum.* [First, against God.]
- 2185 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Secundo contra Principem.* [Second, against the Prince.]
- 2199 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Tercio contra populum.* [Third, against the people.]
- 2217 ff. Based on an anecdote in *Val. Max.* 4.3, ext. 4b.
- 2219 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic contra vanitates adulantum loquitur, et narrat quod cum Arisippus de Cartagine Philosophus scole studium relinquens sui Principis obsequio in magnis adulacionibus pre ceteris carior assistebat, accidit vt ipse quodam die Diogenem Philosophum nuper socium suum, virum tam moribus quam sciencia probatissimum, herbas ad olera sua collectas lauantem ex casu ad ripam inuenit: cui ait, “O Diogenes, vere si tu sicut et ego Principi tuo placere scires, huiusmodi herbas aut colligere aut lauare tibi minime indigeret.” Cui alter respondit, “O Arisippe, certe et si tu sicut et ego olera tua colligere et lauare scires, principem tuum ob inanis glorie cupiditatem blandiri nullatenus deberes.”* [Here he speaks against the vanities of flatterers, and he narrates how when Arisippus, the Philosopher from Carthage, left his studies at school, he very painstakingly contributed to the obsequiousness given to his

Ruler even beyond others among the important flatterers. It happened that one day he found by chance at a riverbank Diogenes the Philosopher, not long ago his companion, a man most worthy both in manners and learning, washing herbs he had collected as his cooking-vegetables. To him Arisippus said, “O Diogenes, truly if you knew as I do how to please your Ruler, there would hardly be need for you either to collect or wash such herbs.” To him the other answered, “O Arisippus, certainly also if you knew how to collect and wash cooking-vegetables, you would not at all need to blandish your ruler on account of empty lust for glory.”]

2328–2490 Of these accounts of the Roman triumphal processions Macaulay (3.530) notes: “The Roman Triumph as here related was a commonplace of preachers and moralists, cf. Bromyard, *Summa praedicantium*, I.v.36.” See also the Latin *Gesta Romanorum*, cap. xxx. Precisely which “Chronicle” Genius speaks of is not known. Hoccleve’s *Regiment of Princes* mentions the custom of masons visiting the emperor to plan his sepulcher; a marginal note there refers the reader to *Vita Johannis Eleemosynarii*. That custom is also described in Jofroi’s *Secretum Secretorum*.

2355 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic narrat super eodem, qualiter nuper Romanorum Imperator, cum ipse triumphator in hostes a bello Rome rediret, tres sibi laudes in signum sui triumphi precipue debebantur: primo quatuor equi albissimi currum in quo sedebat vherent, secundo tunica Iovis pro tunc indueretur, tercio sui captiui propre currum as vtrumque latus catherati deambularent. Set ne tanti honoris adulacio eius animum in superbiam extolleret, quidam scurra linguosus iuxta ipsum in curru sedebat, qui quasi continuatis vocibus improporando ei dixit, “Notheos,” hoc est nosce te ipsum, “quia si hodie fortuna tibi prospera fuerit, cras forte versa rota mutabilis aduersabitur.”* [Here he narrates about the same thing, how not long ago the Roman Emperor, when as a triumpher against enemies returned home from war to Rome, three signs of his triumph were particularly due: first, that four pure-white horses should draw the chariot in which he was sitting; second, that the coat of Jupiter should be put on him for that time; and third, that his captives should walk in chains near the chariot on both sides. But lest the adulation of such honor should inflate his spirit with pride, a certain man with facility in scurribilities sat next to him in the chariot, and chastised him with a steady stream, saying, “Notheos,” that is, know yourself, “because if fortune will have been prosperous to you today, tomorrow perhaps its mutable wheel turned downwards will throw you below.”]

2359 *unto thin ere.* Since Flattery’s primary means of entering the mind of its victim is through the ear, the wise emperor has his “Ribald” beside him to occupy his ear with warnings against the folly of “his gloire,” causing him to “Tak into memoire” the vanity of victory, which Fortune can “overthow” in “nothing bot a throwe” (lines 2385–96).

2388–89 This concept of self-knowledge (n.b. the marginal gloss cites the Delphi Oracle’s *nosce te ipsum*) is implicit in the structure of the whole poem (see Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, p. 204), especially as it moves through the refocusings

of “self” in Book 8, leading to the naming of John Gower and his communal sense of self manifest in his prayer for England.

- 2412 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic eciam contra adulacionem scribit quod primo die quo nuper Imperator intronizatus extitit, latomi sui ab ipso constanter peterent, de quali lapide sue sepulture tumulum fabricarent; vt sic futuram mortem commemorans vanitates huius seculi transitorias facilius reprimeret.* [Here he also writes against adulation, that on the first day when a former Emperor was enthroned his masons continually sought to know from him from what stone they should construct the tomb of his sepulcher; so that thus commemorating his future death he might more easily resist the transitory vanities of this world.]
- 2449 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic inter alia gesta Cesaris narrat vnum exemplum precipue contra illos qui, cum in aspectu principis aliis sapienciores apparere vellent, quandoque tamen similate sapiencie talia committunt, per que ceteris stultiores in fine comprobantur.* [Here among other deeds of Caesar he narrates an instructive example especially against those who wished to appear wiser than others in the ruler’s presence, but sometimes commit such things of pretended wisdom that through these they were finally proven stupider than others.]
- 2470 On the king’s wise use of discretion to answer the flatterer, see Peck (*Kingship and Common Profit*, pp. 146–47). Porter sees this exemplum as the third of three on self-knowledge, the surest defense against flattery, the first two being the Roman Triumph and the Emperor and the Masons (“Gower’s Ethical Microcosm,” pp. 156–57).
- 2491 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota, qualiter isti circa Principem adulatores pocius a Curia expelli, quam ad regie maiestatis munera acceptari, Policia suadente deberent.* [Note how those flatterers around a Ruler ought, by the argument of Policy, to be expelled from the Court rather than accepted as adornments of a king’s majesty.]
- 2493 ff. See Burnley, who cites lines 2495–508 of Chaucer’s Monk’s Tale in connection with his assessment of Gower’s changing attitude toward Richard as a king become tyrant: “As a moral philosopher whose concern was with the ‘commune profit,’ Gower would begin to see himself no longer as the philosophic instructor of a young prince, as an Aristotle to Richard’s Alexander, but rather he would begin to share the rôle that he allots also to Arundel who, by his moral teaching, endeavoured ‘to deflect the king from his fury.’ No longer an Aristotle, he might well see himself instead as a Seneca restraining the madness of his own contemporary Nero” (*Chaucer’s Language*, p. 15).
- 2527 ff. See 3 Kings (1 Kings) 22.
- 2530 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur vltierius de consilio adulantum, quorum fabulis principis aures organize veritatis auditum capere nequint. Et narrat exemplum de Rege Achab, qui pro eo quod ipse prophecias fidelis Michee recusauit blandiciisque adulantis Zedechie adhesit, Rex Sirie Benedab in campo bellator ipsum diuino iudicio deuictum interfecit.* [Here he speaks further about the counsel of flatterers, by means of whose fables a ruler’s ears are not able to receive the sound of harmonious truth. And he narrates an instructive example about King Ahab,

who because of the fact that he rejected the prophecies of faithful Micaiah and clung to the blandishments and flatteries of Zedekiah, King Benedab of Syria as a warrior in the field killed him, condemned by divine judgment.]

2541 *Ramoth Galaath*. Ramoth-Gilead was the site of King Ahab's last battle (4 Kings [2 Kings] 8:28 ff.; compare 3 Kings [1 Kings] 22:3 ff.). Ramah means "heights" and appears in several biblical place-names, e.g., the place where the cry of Rachel was heard as she wept for her lost children (Jeremias 31:15).

Latin verses ix (before line 2695). **Line 4:** *Deuiat*. A nearly verbatim translation here seems best, although it obscures the pun: *deuiat* (a post-Classical word) means both "stray from the path" (a metaphor that the rest of the verse repeats), and "be transgressive" in a moral or legal sense.

2695–2701 *What is . . . What ben . . . What is . . . What is . . . Bot if . . .* This magnificent use of anaphora marks a rhetorical triumph for Gower as he moves toward the culmination of his poem in its celebration of Law epitomized in the Tale of Lycurgus, lines 2917 ff., a tale skillfully set up by a sequence of exempla on good and bad rulers — Maximin, Gaius Fabricius, Emperor Conrad, Consul Carmidotitus, and Cambyses — all of whom demonstrate "th'experience" of "What thing it is to kepe lawe" (7.2704–05).

2695–3102 Fisher sees Gower's discussion of justice as the "climax in Gower's treatment of the themes of law and order," noting close echoes with *MO*, lines 205 ff., and *VC* 6.469 ff. (pp. 200–01 ff.).

2699 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat de tercia Principum regis Policia, que Iusticia nominata est, cuius condicione legibus incorrupta unicuique quod suum est equo pondere distribuit.* [Here he discourses about the third Policy of the Governance of rulers, which is called Justice, whose nature, uncorrupted by laws, distributes to each human being with an equal weight what is properly his.]

2709–24 Gower is careful to differentiate the king's relationship with law from that of the commons, noting that in some instances the king has power that *stant above the lawe* (line 2719), but emphasizing with equal conviction that the king must *governe* with *rihtwisnesse / As he which schal the lawe guide* (lines 2716–17); see also lines 2732 ff., demonstrating that "if the lawe torne amis, / The poeple also mistorned is" (7.2763–64).

2727 ff. ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Imperatoriam maiestatem non solum armis, sed etiam legibus oportet esse armatam.* [It is necessary for imperial majesty to be armed not only with weapons but also with laws.]

2730 *That he himself ferst justifie.* Compare 8.2109–20 on each man's kingdom of the self that he must "justifie" (8.2112) or else lose his estate.

2732–64 "Gower's most lucid and earnest comment on the interdependence of the king, the legal system, and a peaceful nation" (Fisher, *John Gower*, p. 201). Compare *VC* 6.487–94.

2762 *menable.* *MED* adj. 1b glosses: "pliant; controllable." But those terms have more negative connotations that apply less well than "compliant (in agree-

ment)." If, of course, the law is turned amiss, then the people will be "mis-torned" (7.2764) as well and will become "uncontrollable."

- 2765 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic de iusticia Maximini Imperatoris, qui cum alicuius prouincie custodem sibi substituere volebat, primo de sui nominis fama proclamatione facta ipsius condicionem diligencius uestigabat.* [Note here concerning the justice of Emperor Maximin, who when he wanted to substitute a governor of some province of his, first, making proclamation, would investigate very diligently his repute.]

Macaulay (3.530) notes that the account of Maximin is found in Godfrey of Viterbo, *Speculum Regum*. The accounts of Gaius Fabricius and Consul Carmidotirus are based on Val. Max. 4.3.5a and 6.5, ext. 4, respectively. Emperor Conrad is mentioned in Godfrey.

- 2788 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum de iudicibus incorruptis. El narrat qualiter Gayus Fabricius nuper Rome Consul aurum a Sampnitibus sibi oblatum renuit, dicens quod nobilis est aurum possidentes dominio subiugare, quam ex auri cupiditate dominii libertatem amittere.* [Here he presents an instructive example about uncorrupted judges. And he narrates how Gaius Fabricius, who not long ago was the Consul of Rome, rejected gold brought to him by the Sampnites, saying that it was more noble to subjugate those possessing gold to dominion, than to lose the freedom of dominion by the love of gold.]

- 2833 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic narrat de iusticia nuper Conradi Imperatoris, cuius tempore alicuius reuerencia persone, aliqua seu precum interuencione quacunque vel auri redempcione, legum Statuta commutari seu redimi nullatenus potuerunt.* [Here he narrates about the justice of the recent Emperor Conrad, in whose days the Statutes of law could not at all be revoked or commuted on the grounds of anyone's social status, of any intervention of pleas, or any sort of payment of gold.]

- 2849 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota exemplum de constancia iudicis; vbi narrat de Carmidotiro Rome nuper Consule, qui cum sui statuti legem nescius offendisset, Romanique super hoc penam sibi remittere voluissent, ipse propria manu, vbi nullus alias in ipsum vindex fuit, sui criminis vindictam executus est.* [Note an instructive example about the constancy of a judge, where it tells about Carmidotirus the recent Consul of Rome, who, when he had unknowingly broken the law of his own statute, and when the Romans wanted to remit him from the penalty, carried out by his own hand the retribution of his crime, when no one else would be his executioner.]

- 2889 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota quod falsi iudices mortis pena puniendi sunt, narrat enim qualiter Cambises Rex Persarum quendam iudicem corruptum excoriari viuum fecit, eiusque pelle cathedram iudiciale operiri constituit: ita quod filius suus super patris pellem postea pro tribunali cessurus iudicii equitatem evidencius memoraretur.* [Note that false judges must be punished with the penalty of death. For he narrates how Cambises, King of the Persians, caused a certain corrupt judge to be flayed alive, and caused his skin to be fashioned into a judicial chair, so that his son, who would later sit as a tribunal on his father's skin, would be more sharply mindful of equity in judgment.]

The story of Cambyses and his judge, first told by Herodotus (5.25), was popular with medieval audiences. Macaulay (3.531) notes its recurrence in Val. Max. 6.3, ext. 3; the Latin *Gesta Romanorum*, cap. xxix; and Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*. See Chaucer's Summoner's Tale (CT III[D]2043–78) for another story of the legendary tyrant.

- 2918 *Ligurgius*. The tale is well known. See the Latin *Gesta Romanorum* 169. Val. Max. 2.6.1, 5.3.ext.2, and 7.2.ext.15 all contain references to his laws. Gower's version offers "the most eloquent statement in all Gower's writing of the legal foundation of society and the ideal relationship of the king to the law" (Fisher, *John Gower*, p. 202), an evaluation of the story supported by Gallacher (*Love, the Word, and Mercury*, pp. 118–20), who sees the pact with the Athenians as "an anagnorisis, a movement from ignorance to knowledge in regard to the divine authority of their ruler," and Peck (*Kingship and Common Profit*, pp. 148–49), who contrasts Ligurgius' sense of peace and the common good with that of Amans. See also Street ("John Gower," p. 232), who identifies Lygurgus as Gower's favorite hero, given his love of the people and the common good.
- 2921 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum de Principibus illis, qui non solum legem statuentes illem conseruant, sed ut commune bonum adaugeant, propriam facultatem diminuunt. Et narrat quod, cum Ligurgius Athenarum princeps subditos suos in omni prosperitatis abundancia diuites et unanimes congruis legibus stare fecisset, volens ad utilitatem rei publice leges illas firmius obseruari, peregre proficisci se finxit; sed prius iuramentum solempe a legiis suis sub hac forma exegit, quod ipsi usque in redditum suum leges suas nullatenus infringenterent: quibus iuratis peregrinacionem suam in exilium absque reditu pro perpetuo delagauit.* [Here he presents an instructive example concerning those Rulers who not only having established a law preserve it, but also in order that they might augment the common good diminish their own power. And he tells that Ligurgius the ruler of the Athenians had established his subjects in every abundance of prosperity, wealth, and unanimity by means of appropriate laws, when, wishing those laws to be more firmly observed for the utility of the commonwealth, caused himself to depart to foreign lands. But first he extracted a solemn oath from his lieges in this manner: that they would not break his laws in any way until he returned. With these things sworn, he commuted his pilgrimage into exile to be permanent, without return.]
- 3019 *The goode lawes to avance.* To the question of which is higher, the law or the king, Sidrak replies: "Lawe is of more auctorite / Thenne Kyng or any prince may be" — *Sidrak and Bokkus* 2.448 (Laud B lines 6559–60).
- 3029 ff. The list of lawgivers is based on *Trésor* 1.17.
- 3033 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ad eorum laudem, qui iusticie causa leges primo statuerunt, aliquorum nomina specialius commemorat.* [Here in praise of those who for the sake of justice first established laws, he specifically commemorates some of their names.]

- 3054 ff. Macaulay notes (3.531):

This list of legislators is from [Brunetto's] *Trésor* . . . but the text which our author used seems to have been corrupt. The passage runs thus in the printed edition: 'Moyses fu li premiers qui bailla la loi as Hebreus; et li rois Foroneus fu li premiers qui la bailla as Grezois; Mercures as Egypciens, et Solon à cels de Athenes; Ligurgus as Troyens; Numa Pompilius, qui regna après Romulus en Rome, et puis ses filz, bailla et fist lois as Romains premierement,' &c. If we suppose 'Solon' to have been omitted in the MS., the passage might read (with changes in punctuation) nearly as we have it in Gower. [Moses was the first man to whom God gave the law, and Moses gave it to the Hebrews; King Phoroneus was the first to give it to the Greeks, Mercury to the Egyptians, Solon to the Athenians, Lycurgus to the Trojans. Numa Pompilius, who reigned after Romulus in Rome, and afterward his son, first gave law to the Romans, etc. — trans. Paul Barrette and Spurgeon Baldwin]

Note that Brunetto links Lycurgus with the Trojans, rather than Athens.

- 3075–77 *Do lawe awey, what is a king. . . .* One of several passages that place law at the center of the state and human definitions. Compare 7.2695–2708, 7.2759–64, and 7.3092–94.

Latin verses x (before line 3103). **Line 3: Pietas.** Echard and Fanger (*Latin Verses*, p. 84) rightly note that *pietas* connotes mercy, self-restraint, and obedience to God; for discussion of these senses, see Galloway, "Literature of 1388."

- 3109 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat de quarta Principum regiminis Policia, que Pietas dicta est; per quam Principes erga populum misericordes effecti misericordiam altissimi gracie consequuntur.* [Here he discourses about the fourth Policy of the governance of Rulers, which is called Pity, by which Rulers, having been made merciful to the people, with much grace follow the mercy of the almighty.]

- 3130–31 The contest between Justice and Pity echoes the debate between the four Daughters of God (Righteousness, Mercy, Truth, and Peace), where Mercy, in her pity, convinces Righteousness, akin to the law, to permit grace to assist humankind. See, for example, Robert Grosseteste's *Chasteau d'Amour* (lines 275–566 in the Middle English translation), *Piers Plowman* B.18.110–24, where the daughters meet at a crossroad to debate the fate of humankind after the Crucifixion; or *The Castle of Perseverance*, lines 3129–3560.

- 3135–36 *the Philosophre.* Itô (John Gower, pp. 183–85) identifies the Philosopher as Cassiodorus on grounds of similar passages in *MO*, lines 23059–61 and 13918–20, where "Cassodre" is specified, and also in 7.*3161–*62 (found only in MSS B, T, A), which reads "Cassodre in his apprise telleth, / The regne is sauf, wher pite duelleth," with a Latin marginal gloss: *Cassodorus. Vbi regnat pietas, consolidatur regnum* [Where pity (or piety) reigns, the reign is secure] (Mac 3.319), and is clearly akin to the idea that Pity *[h]is regne in good astat confermeth* (line 3136).

- 3137 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Constantinus Imperator ait: "Vere se dominum esse comprobat, qui seruum pietatis se facit."* [Emperor Constantine said, "Truly he proves himself a lord who makes himself pity's servant."]

See the story of Constantine and Sylvester (*CA* 2.3187 ff.) for a further exemplum of Constantine's pity. An account of Troian may be found in Godfrey of Viterbo, *Spec. reg.* 2.14.

- 3142 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Troianus ait, quod ipse subditos suos solite pietatis fauore magis quam austeritatis rigore regere, eorumque benevolenciam pocius quam timorem penes se attractare proponebat.* [Trajan said that he proposed to rule his subjects more by the good wishes of pity than by the rigor of austerity, and to attract their benevolence toward him rather than their fear.]
- 3144 *Troian the worthi debonaire.* Roman emperor from A.D. 98–117. Trajan gained a reputation as a virtuous ruler and patron of the arts—learned, fair-minded, and orderly. Jacobus de Voragine, in the life of St. Ignatius, tells of Trajan's having repented the torment and execution of St. Ignatius, upon learning from Pliny the Younger that Ignatius was a virtuous man (*Golden Legend*, Feb. 1). John the Deacon (*Sancti Gregorii Magni vita* 2.44, eighth century) tells of Pope Gregory weeping and praying for Trajan's soul, a prayer answered by God, whereby Trajan was returned to life long enough to know Christ, believe, and, upon his second death, be received into heaven. (See Aquinas, *Summa theol.* III, Suppl., q. 71, a. 5. ad 5.) The story was picked up in *Fiore di filosofi*, an account used by Dante who mentions the virtuous Trajan in *Purgatorio* 10.76 ff. as an example of humility (Trajan helped a widow whose son had been slain, even while he was in the midst of battle). Fiore's account is reprinted in Singleton's translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 211–12. Following the lead of Fiore and Aquinas, Dante places Trajan in heaven, the first of the five virtuous rulers: “Of the five which make an arch for my brow, he who is nearest to my beak consoled the poor widow for her son. Now, he knows by experience of this sweet life and the opposite, how dear it costs not to follow Christ” (*Paradiso* 20.43–48, Singleton, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 223). The fifth of the five is also a pagan, the Trojan Ripheus; Dante's point demonstrates the power of grace beyond institutions or human understanding. (See Aquinas, *Summa theol.* II.II, q. 2, a. 7, ad 3, on Christ's revelation to virtuous gentiles, including the Sibyl, who foretold things about Christ.) In *Piers Plowman* B.11.140 Trajan appears as one “broken oute of helle,” “a trewe knyȝte” (B.11.141) whose salvation did not depend on clerks and their books, but rather only on “loue and leaute and my lawful domes” (B.11.145), a fact known by St. Gregory, who desired Trajan's salvation (B.11.146–47), whereby the emperor was saved by grace “withoute syngynge of masses” (B.11.151) and “by loue, and by lernyne of my lyuyng in treuthe” (B.11.152).
- 3162 Six manuscripts of the second recension, including S, B, and T, follow line 3162 with the Tale of the Jew and the Pagan (based on the *Secretum Secretorum*), which Macaulay includes in 3.320 ff., and which may be summarized as follows: To exemplify Pity, Aristotle told King Alexander how two men met one hot summer in the wilderness between Cairo and Babylon. One asked the other about his faith. The other said he was a Pagan whose law bade him to be gracious and debonair and to love all men alike, whether they be rich or poor.

The first man then said he was a Jew who by his law would be a true fellow to no man unless he be another Jew. For if the fellow were not a Jew, he might take both life and goods from him. The Pagan marveled at so strange a law. As they traveled on under the hot sun, the Jew, who was on foot, schemed how he might ride. So he said to the Pagan, who rode upon an ass to which he had tied all his goods: “If your law is as you say you are behoden to me in my weariness and distress to let me ride a mile or two that I might rest my body.” The Pagan, who would not displease his companion, saw his plight and in pity let him ride full soft. On they went, chatting away about this and that until at last the Pagan could go no further. When he asked the Jew to let him ride again, the Jew hastened on ahead, saying: “You upheld your law by giving me succor; now I will do my duty according to the law of Jewry: ‘Thin asse schal go forth with me / With al thi good, which I have sesed; / And that I wot thou art desesed, / I am riht glad and noght mispaid’” (lines *3294–*97). The deserted Pagan knelt on the ground, raised his hands to heaven, and prayed: “O highest Trust, who loves righteousness, I beseech with humble heart that you see and judge this quarrel. Mercy or vengeance I leave to your judgment.” So he went on “with drery chiere,” (line *3312) hoping to catch sight of the Jew, but without success until nightfall. Then from the highway he at last beheld the Jew, lying all bloody in a valley, slain by a lion. Looking about he found his ass nearby, still in harness, safe and sound. See how the piteous man deserves pity, as Aristotle bears witness. Pity is the source of all virtue, and God will repress under foot its enemies. See Ames, “Source and Significance.”

3163 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic de Principiis pietate erga populum, vbi narrat quod, cum Codrus Rex Athenarum contra Dorences bellum gerere deberet, consulto prius Appolline responsum accepit, quod vnum de duobus, videlicet aut seipsum in prelio interfici et populum suum saluari, aut populum interfici et se saluum fieri, eligere oporteret. Super quo Rex pietate motus plebisque sue magis quam proprii corporis salutem affectans, mortem sibi prelegit; et sic bellum aggrediens pro vita multorum solus interiit.* [Note here concerning the pity of a Ruler toward his people, where he narrates that, when Codrus, King of the Athenians, had to wage war against the Dorians, he first consulted Apollo. He received the answer that it was necessary to choose one of two things: namely, either that he be killed in battle and his people saved, or his people be killed and he be kept safe. Whereupon the King, moved by pity and desiring the safety of his people more than his own body, chose death for himself. And thus going into battle he alone died for the lives of many.]

3181

Valeire. See Val. Max. 5.6.ext.1, where the tale of Codrus is told as an example of piety. See also *MO*, lines 19981–20004 where the story is also attributed to Valerius. The story of Codrus also occurs in the Latin *Gesta Romanorum*, cap. xli, and Jofroi’s *Secretum Secretorum*. On Codrus’ Christ-like willingness to sacrifice his life for his people see Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, pp. 149–50, and Porter, “Gower’s Ethical Microcosm,” p. 158.

3201

lemes. Compare the Reeve’s Prologue (*CT I[A]3886*): “Oure olde lemes mowe wel been unweelde.”

- 3215 A source for The Tale of Pompeius and the King of Armenia might be Val. Max. 5.1.9–10.
- 3219 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum de victoriosi Principis pietate erga aduersarios suos. Et narrat quod, cum Pompeius Romanorum Imperator Regem Armenie aduersarium suum in bello victum cepisset, captumque vinculis alligatum Rome tenuisset, tirannidis iracundie stimulos postponens, pietatis mansuetudinem operatus est. Dixit enim quod nobilius est Regem facere quam deponere: super quo dictum Regem absque villa redempcio ne non solum a vinculis absolutit, set ad sui regni culmen gratuita voluntate coronatum restuit.* [Here he presents an instructive example concerning the pity of a victorious Ruler toward his adversaries. And he narrates that, when Pompey, the Emperor of the Romans, had taken captive in battle the King of Armenia, his adversary, and bound him captive in chains at Rome, he put aside the goads of tyrannical wrath and devoted himself to the clemency of pity. For he said that it was more noble to make a King than to depose one; whereupon he not only released the said King from his chains without any ransom, but he also by free will restored him, crowned, to fullest height of power in his own kingdom.]
- 3230 *conscience.* I have followed Lewis (*Studies in Words*, p. 183) in glossing *conscience* as “tenderness.”
- 3266 *merel.* *MED* notes that a *merel* is a counter used in the game of *merels*, and thus, with *drowhe* means “to make a move.”
- 3267 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur contra illos, qui tirannica potestate principatum obtinenetes in iniquitatis sue malicia gloriantur. Et narrat exemplum, qualiter Leontius tirannus pium Iustinianum non solum a solio imperatorie maiestatis fraudulenter expulit, set vt ipse inhabilis ad regnum in aspectu plebis efficeretur, naso et labris abscisis, ipsum tirannice mutulavit. Deus tamen, qui super omnia pius est, Tiberio superueniente vna cum adiutorio Terbellis Bulgarie Regis, Iustinianum interfecto Leoncio ad imperium restitui misericorditer procurauit.* [Here he speaks against those who, obtaining a principality by tyrannical power, glory in the malice of their iniquity. And he narrates an instructive example, how Leontius the tyrant fraudulently not only expelled Justinian from the majesty of his imperial throne but also, that he might be made unsuitable for reign in the appearance of a commoner, tyrannically mutilated him, cutting off his nose and lips. Nonetheless God, who is pitying beyond all, with Tiberius intervening along with the help of Terbelis the King of Bulgaria, mercifully caused Justinian to be restored to his empire, after Leontius had been killed.]
- Macaulay (3.532) notes: “Justinian II is described by Gibbon as a cruel tyrant, whose deposition by Leontius was fully deserved, and who, when restored by the help of Terbelis, took a ferocious vengeance on his opponents: ‘during the six years of his new reign, he considered the axe, the cord, and the rack as the only instruments of royalty.’ Nothing apparently could be less appropriate than the epithet ‘pietous,’ which Gower bestows upon him.”
- 3295 ff. Gower apparently read the story in Godfrey of Viterbo’s *Pantheon*, where Barillus is the name given to Perillus, as in the *CA*, though the story was a

favorite of late Roman authors. See the Latin *Gesta Romanorum*, cap. xlvi; Cicero often cited the story of Phalaris and his brass bull (e.g., *De Divinatione* 3.33, *Verrine Orations* 4.73); and Diod. 9.19.1.

3297 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur vltierius de crudelitate Siculi tiranni, necnon et de Berillo eiusdem Consiliario, qui ad tormentum populi quendam taurum eneum tirannica coniectura fabricari constituit; in quo tamen ipse prior, proprio crimine illud exigente, vsque ad sui interitus expiracionem iudicialiter torquebatur.* [Here he speaks moreover about the cruelty of Siculus the tyrant, and also about Berillus his Counselor, who for the torment of the people tyrannically caused to be constructed a certain brass bull, in which nonetheless he first, by the means of his own criminal creation, was judicially tortured to the last gasp of his annihilation.]

3341 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic de Dionisio tiranno, qui mire crudelitatis seueritate eciam hospites suos ad deuorandum equis suis tribuit: cui Hercules tandem superveniens victum impium in impietate sua pari morte conclusit.* [Note here concerning Dionysius the tyrant, who by an extraordinary severity of cruelty gave even his guests to his horses to be devoured; finally, Hercules overcame him, and brought the impious captive by his own impiety to an equally impious death.]

The tyrant Dionysius has been confused with Diomedes, whom Hercules overthrew. Mainzer (“John Gower’s Use of the ‘Mediaeval Ovid,’” pp. 223–24) suggests Ovid’s *Ibis* as the source on the basis of a verbal parallel — the marginal gloss at lines 3345 ff. — as well as the substitution of Dionysus for Diomedes, though the story also occurs in *Met.* 1.221–43.

3346 *Devoureden the mennes blod.* Compare Alexander’s horse Bucephalus, who was also a man-eater, though the dramatic irony of Gower’s exemplum, where the one who feeds his guests to his horse is eaten by his horse himself (line 3354), is uniquely satisfying. See note 6.1935.

3357 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic de consimili Lichaontis tirannia, qui carnes hominum hominibus in suo hospicio ad vescendum dedit; cuius formam condicioni similem Iupiter coequans ipsum in lupum transformauit.* [Note here concerning the similar tyranny of Lichaon, who gave the flesh of men to the men in his household for eating; Jupiter, making his form similar to his nature, transformed him into a wolf.] See *Met.* 1.209–43. Hamilton (“Some Sources,” pp. 333–34) suggests *Trésor* 1.173.5 as source, with the piteous lion coming from the French *Secretum Secretorum*.

3387 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota qualiter Leo hominibus stratis parcit.* [Note how the Lion spares fallen men.]

3417–3517 The story of Spartacus occurs in Justin, *Epitome* 1.8, and Orosius, *Historiarum* 2.7. Macaulay (3.532) suggests that the names in Gower’s account apparently come from Peter Comestor (*PL* 198.1471).

3419 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur precipue contra tirannos illos qui, cum in bello vincere possunt, humani sanguinis effusione saturari nequunt.* *Et narrat in exemplum de quodam Persarum Rege, cuius nomen Spertachus erat, qui pre ceteris tunc*

in Oriente bellicosus et Victoriosus, quoscumque gladio vincere poterat, absque pietate interfici constituit. Set tandem sub manu Thamaris Marsegetarum Regine in bello captus, quod a diu quesivit, seueritatem pro seueritate finaliter invenit. Nam et ipsa quosdam vas de sanguine Persarum plenum ante se afferri decreuit, in quo caput tiranni usque ad mortem mergens dixit: "O tirannorum crudelissime, semper esuriens sanguinem sitisti: ecce iam ad saturitatem sanguinem bibe." [Here he speaks especially against those tyrants who, when they are able to conquer in battle, cannot be satiated by the effusion of human blood. And he narrates in an instructive example about a certain King of the Persians, whose name was Spertachus, who, more warlike and victorious than others in the East, killed without pity whomever he was able to conquer by the sword. Finally, however, he was captured in battle by the hand of Thamaris the Queen of the Marsegetes which she had long sought, he finally received severity for his severity. For she decreed that a certain container full of Persian blood be brought before him, in which, submerging the head of the tyrant until he died, she said, "O most cruel of tyrants, always thirstily you have drunk blood; behold now, drink blood to your fill."]

3444

queene of Marsagete. Macaulay (3.532–33) notes that most histories call Thamyris “queen of the Scythians.” The name *Marsagete* apparently comes from Peter Comestor, who also gives “Spartachus” as the youthful name of the Persian King Cyrus. See note to 7.3417–3517. This story of Thamyris is also found in Christine de Pizan’s *Book of the City of Ladies*, 1.17.2, where she is called the Amazon queen.

3520–31

Pitē . . . Makth that the God is merciable, / If ther be cause resonable. Gower is “certainly arguing in scholastic terms the importance of a rationally defined mean as the arbiter of virtue. *Pitee* is an emotion which leads on in suitable circumstances to *mercy*. It seems to be considered a virtue, and is opposed to the vice of excess which is labelled *pusillamite*, and which inhibits the enforcement of true justice” (Burnley, *Chaucer’s Language*, p. 129).

3557 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur secundum Philosophum, dicens quod sicut non decet Principes tirannica impetuositate esse crudeles, ita nec decet timorosa pusillanimitate esse recordes.* [Here he speaks according to the Philosopher, saying that just as it is not fitting for Rulers to be cruel with tyrannical impetuosity, so it is not fitting for them to be cowardly with timid faint-heartedness.]

3575

For thei withoute cause dradde. Part of the wit of this fearsome tale is its inversion of the proverb “as fearful as a mouse” (see Whiting, M732).

3581 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic secundum Oracium de magnanimo Yacide et pusillanime Thersite.* [Note here according to Horace concerning the great-heartedness of Aeacida and the faint-heartedness of Thersites.] The reference should be to Juvenal, *Satires* 8.269 ff., instead of Horace. Stollreither (*Quellen-Nachweise*, p. 57) notes a similar false attribution to Horace in *MO*, line 23370, and also in the marginal gloss to *CA* 6.1513–14.

3594 ff.

☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Salomon. Tempus belli, tempus pacis.* [Solomon: “A time of war, a time of peace.”] (Ecclesiastes 3:8.)

- 3595 *ther is a time of pes* is the culmination verse for the “All things have their season” passage (Ecclesiastes 3.1–8). Barnie notes that Gower “was a man of peace, but not a pacifist,” pointing out that the poet, like many of his contemporaries, differentiated with thoughtful discretion between just and unjust war (*War in Medieval English Society*, p. 122). Not only is this the topic of 7.3594–3622 but also of 3.2230–40, and *MO*, lines 23608 ff.
- 3605 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota qualiter inter duo extrema consistit virtus.* [Note how virtue is what stands between two extremes.]
- 3627–942 For Gideon’s story, see Judges 7; the story of Saul and Agag occurs in 1 Kings (1 Samuel) 15. For David’s advice to Solomon and Solomon’s wisdom in following it, see 3 Kings (1 Kings) 2–12.
- 3630 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic dicit quod Princeps iusticie causa bellum nullo modo timere debet. Et narrat qualiter dux Gedeon cum solis tricentis viris quinque Reges, scilicet Madianitarum, Amalechitarum, Amonitarum, Amoreorum et Iebuseorum, cum eorum exercitu, qui ad lxxxx^{la} Milia numeratus est, gracia cooperante diuina, victoriouse in fugam conuertit.* [Here he says that a Ruler for the sake of justice in the cause of war ought never to be timid. And he narrates how the leader of Gideon with three hundred men, and with the help of divine grace, victoriously drove in flight five Kings, namely of the Midianites, of the Amalachites, of the Ammonites, of the Amorites, and of the Jebusites along with their army, who numbered ninety thousand.]
- 3807–3912 Hamilton (“Some Sources,” pp. 337–38) notes that all three of the biblical exempla in this passage (Saul and Agag, David and Joab, and Solomon’s Wisdom) are, along with the detailed story of Diogenes and Aristippus, found in Jofroi’s French *Secretum Secretorum* as examples of Justice and Wisdom, suitable to royal Prudence.
- 3809 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic dicit quod ubi et quando causa et tempus requirunt, princeps illos sub potestate sua, quos iusticie aduersarios agnouerit, occidere de iure tenetur. Et narrat in exemplum qualiter, pro eo quod Saul Regem Agag in bello deuictum iuxta Samuelis consilium occidere noluit, ipse diuino iudicio non solum a regno Israel priuatus, sed et heredes sui pro perpetuo exhereditati sunt.* [Here he says that where and when cause and time require, a ruler is compelled by right to kill those under his power whom he recognizes to be adversaries of justice. And he narrates in an instructive example how, because Saul following Samuel’s counsel did not want to kill King Agag when he was conquered in war, not only was he deprived by divine right of the rule of Israel, but also his heirs were disinherited forever.]
- 3835–37 *feigneth . . . feigneth.* False pity is the worst since it corrupts truth and turns virtue into a mockery.
- 3847 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic narrat ulterius super eodem, qualiter Dauid in extremis iusticie causa vt Ioab occideretur absque villa remissione filio suo Salomonis iniunxit.* [Here he narrates further on the same thing, how David, under duress because of justice, enjoined his son Solomon that Joab might be killed without any remission.]

- 3891 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic dicit quod populum sibi commissum bene regere super omnia Principi laudabilius est. Et narrat in exemplum qualiter, pro eo quod Salomon, vt populum bene regeret, ab altissimo sapientiam specialius postulauit, omnia bona pariter cum illa sibi habundancius aduenerunt.* [Here he says that it is very praiseworthy above all things for a Ruler to rule well the people entrusted to him. And he narrates in an instructive example how, because Solomon asked particularly for wisdom from the Almighty so that he might rule well the people, all good things along with that wisdom came in great abundance.]
- 3914 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic dicit secundum Salomonem, quod regie maiestatis imperium ante omnia sano consilio dirigendum est.* [Here he says according to Solomon that an empire of royal majesty must be guided before all other things by salutary counsel.]
- 3928 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achiui.* [In respect to whatever thing kings rave about, the Achaeans are punished.] See Horace, *Odes* 3.3.26–28.
- 3945 Macaulay notes (3.533) that Gower's "chronicle" is Godfrey of Viterbo's *Pantheon*.
- 3949 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic de Lucio Imperatore exemplum ponit, qualiter Princeps sui nominis famam a secretis consiliariis sapienter inuestigare debet; et si quid in ea sinistrum inuenerit, prouisa discrecio ad dexteram conuertat.* [Here he presents an instructive example about Emperor Lucius, how a Ruler ought wisely to investigate his reputation by secret counselors; and if he should find anything sinister in his repute, he should transform it by discreet provision to something righteous.]
- 4027–4146 The account of Rehoboam occurs in 3 Kings (1 Kings) 12. Notice that throughout this portion of the poem, where his criticism of the king and his counsel becomes most pointed, Gower makes extensive use of biblical sources; his argument rests on the highest authority, of which there can be no dispute. See Ferster (*Fictions of Advice*, pp. 123–34) on Gower's use of Rehoboam in his advice to kings as he addresses crises in Richard II's reign.
- 4031 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic dicit quod Seniores magis experti ad Principis consilium admittendi pocius existunt. Et narrat qualiter, pro eo quod Roboas Salomonis filius et heres senium sermonibus renuncians dicta inuenit preelegit, de xii. tribubus Israel a dominio suo x. penitus amisit, et sic cum duabus tantummodo illusus postea regnauit.* [Here he says that Older Men more expert in advising the Ruler should be particularly embraced. And he narrates how, because Rehoboam, son of Solomon and heir, renounced the advice of older men and chose the sayings of younger men, he utterly lost from his dominion ten tribes of Israel from the twelve, and thus deceived, he later reigned with only two.]
- 4069 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De consilio Senium.* [Concerning the counsel of the Old.]
- 4077–78 *yonge were and nothing wise / . . . olde men despise.* On youth ignoring the wisdom of the elderly, see notes to 7.4134 ff. and 4137.

- 4079 **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De consilio iuuenum.* [Concerning the counsel of the young.]
- 4134–43 Compare *VC* 6.755–60, which counsels youth to take advice for peace from wise men, rather than harming themselves by turning from peaceful good to wickedness. Compare the wise counsel of the elderly to those who are young and eager for war in Chaucer's Tale of Melibee (VII[B²]1035–41).
- 4137 *Old age for the conseil serveth.* Proverbial. See Whiting, A70.
- 4147–4214 The king with his wise counselor is Antoninus Pius, whose story Macaulay believes Gower probably knew from Godfrey of Viterbo's *Pantheon* (3.533).
- 4149 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota questionem cuiusdam Philosophi, utrum regno conuenientius foret principem cum malo consilio optare sapientem, quam cum sano consilio ipsum eligere insipientem.* [Note the question of a certain Philosopher, whether it would be better for a kingdom to prefer a wise ruler surrounded by bad counsel, or to choose a foolish ruler with astute counsel.]
- 4181 *Anthonius.* Macaulay (3.533) cites the biographer Capitolinus who presents Antoninus Pius as one who loved peace (*Historiae Augustae*, ed. 1620, p. 20).
- 4181 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota adhuc precipue de principis erga suos subditos debita pietate. Legitur enim qualiter Anthonius a Cipione exemplificatus dixit, quod mallet unum de populo sibi commisso virum salvare, quam centum ex hostibus alienigenis in bello perdere.* [Note up to this point especially concerning the necessary pious pity of rulers in respect to their subjects. For it is written how Antony, instructed by an example from Scipio, said that he would prefer to save one man from among the people entrusted to him, than to lose a hundred from foreign enemies in battle.]
- 4195 *due.* “Bound by duty,” as glossed by Macaulay (3.533).
- Latin verses xi** (before line 4215). **Line 4:** *magnanimi. Magnanimitas*, mention of which Gower reserves for his final Latin verses in this “mirror for princes,” was a fundamental virtue in later, Aristotelian Christian culture. It often denoted a species of strength (hence was sometimes classed under “fortitude”). It is keyed here to the king's repute (*fama*), in a wholly positive sense of “fame.” Brunetto Latini's *Trésor* states, “The person who is magnanimous is the greatest and most honorable man there is; he will never be troubled by a trivial thing, and his heart is not concerned with an ugly thing. Therefore magnanimity is the crown and beacon of all virtues” (Book 2, ch. 23). Its virtue is its balance between extremes, and theme that reverberates with Gower's own poetic goal of “the middel weie” (Prol. 17).
- 4215–5438 See Nicholson's summary review (*Annotated Index*, pp. 472–76) of scholarly discussions of Chastity as conclusion to Book 7, ranging from Dodd's remarks on chastity in marriage, as an account that perhaps has bearing on the duties of the sovereign, especially young Richard (*Courtly Love*, pp. 74–75); Utley's suggestion that “Gower and Chaucer helped make marriage respectable material for *belles lettres*” (Nicholson, *Annotated Index*, p. 472); to Murphy's suggestion that Gower uses Chastity as a means of bridging his discussions on the

education of the king back to his survey of the seven deadly sins (“John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*,” p. 403n).

4215–17 “[P]erhaps the implication [is] that nature is providing a moral lesson [in monogamy] for human beings, who should follow the example of the birds as the poet represents himself doing” (White, *Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, p. 190n50).

4221 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat secundum Aristotelem de quinta principum regiminis Policia, que Castitatem concernit, cuius honestas impudicicie motus obtemperans tam corporis quam anime mundiciam specialius perseruat.* [Here he discourses according to Aristotle about the fifth Policy of governance of rulers, which concerns Chastity, whose honorableness, impeding impudent activity, preserves both body and soul.]

4226–29 *Forthi . . . in mariage / His trouthe plight lith in morgage, / Which if he breke, it is falshode.* Bakalian relates this “truth-in-marriage” concept to *Traité* 18.2. 8–14, which reads in her translation: “Of the three blessed estates it is the second which disposes itself to marriage in righteous love; and he who brings to ruin this order in wantonness has much to fear if he does not lead himself back. Therefore it is good that each one prepare himself to love with unblemished fidelity. He is not loving who misguides his love” (*Aspects of Love*, p. 34).

4233–37 Minnis (“Moral Gower,” pp. 77–78) notes that despite Gower’s frequent citation of *Secretum Secretorum* in Book 7, in his discussion of Chastity he draws mainly on other sources like Giles of Rome. Compare *CA* 7.4257–61 and 5384–88. See also *VC* 6.12 on the control of desire, abstention from voluptuousness, and lawful companionship with one’s wife.

4239–40 *The fiste point . . . Is Chasteté.* Here the term enjoys a broader definition than we normally give it. Chastity is the proper maintenance of just marriages. It is a virtue that depends on what one is married to and what the rationale behind that marriage is. The discussion begins with a general admonition against lechery, the seventh of the deadly sins (Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, p. 150). As in *MO*, Chastity in its five points (Bonnegarde, Virginite, Matrimonie, Continence, and Aspre [hard life]), all of which are exemplified in Genius’ discussion at the end of Book 7, is the antidote for Lechery.

4257 ff. **Latin marginalia:** *Nota de doctrina Aristotilis, qualiter Princeps, vt animi sui iocunditatem prouocet, mulieres formosas crebro aspicere debet. Cauet tamen, ne mens voluptuosa torpescens ex carnis fragilitate in vicium dilabatur.* [Note concerning the doctrine of Aristotle, how a Ruler, that he might provoke his spirit to joy, ought to look frequently at beautiful women. Let him take care, however, lest his voluptuous mind, becoming indolent, slide into vice because of the flesh’s weakness.]

4298–302 *it is nocht kinde . . . that Decembre schal ben hot.* Pearsall emphasizes that “the moral message of the poem is clear: the unqualified endorsement of reason over passion, and of marriage as the proper and only sanction of love” (“The Gower Tradition,” p. 182). See Utley, *Crooked Rib*, pp. 101–02, 286, on

Gower's use of the May/December trope that anticipates Chaucer's elaborate development of the motif in *The Merchant's Tale*.

- 4313–4405 The story of Sardanapulus occurs in Godfrey of Viterbo's *Pantheon*, where the conqueror Arbaces is referred to as Barbatus (Mac 3.534). The account of Cyrus' conquest over the Lydians occurs in Herodotus 1.154–55 and in Justin, *Epistle* a.7, though in those versions Cyrus' corruption of the Lydians takes place after he has had to put down (successfully) a revolt.
- 4314 ff. *Sardana Pallus*. On gender transgressions and the price of effeminacy for King Sardanapalus (the *falle fro chivalerie* — 7.4337), see Watt (*Amoral Gower*, pp. 70–71). Collins presents him in his *fyri rage* (7.4318) as one subdued by Love, “a tyrannous monarch whose laws are based on unreason,” who, when he is “deprive[d] . . . of self-sovereignty,” becomes an extreme example of a ruler made womanish (p. 122). Compare *TC* 4.3515 ff. and 8.2111–20 on the loss of self and personal domain to self-misgovernance.
- 4317 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum qualiter, pro eo quod Sardana Pallus Assiriorum Princeps muliebri oblectamento effeminatus sue concupiscencie torporem quasi ex consuetudine adhibebat, a Barbaro Rege Medorum super hoc insidiante in sui feruoris maiori voluptate subitis mutacionibus extinctus est.* [Here he presents an instructive example how, because Sardanapalus the Ruler of the Assyrians was effeminized by womanly delight and habitually lapsed into the slothfulness of his lust, by suddenly changed circumstances he was treacherously destroyed amidst his great voluptuousness of passion by Barbarus, King of the Medes.]
- 4344 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota qualiter Dauid amans mulieres propter hoc probitatem Armorum non minus excercuit.* [Note how David, loving women, exerted no less excellence in arms because of this.]
- 4361 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur qualiter regnum lasciuie voluptatibus deditum de facili vincitur. Et ponit exemplum de Ciro Rege Persarum, qui cum Liddos mire probitatis strenuissimos sibique in bello aduersantes nullo modo vincere potuit, cum ipsis tandem pacis tractatum dissimilans concordiam finalem stabiliri finxit. Super quo Liddi postea per aliquod tempus armis insoliti sub pacis torpore voluptatibus intendebant: quod Cirus percipiens in eos armatus subito irruit, ipsosque indefensibiles vincens sub imperio tributarios subiugauit.* [Here he tells how a kingdom given to the voluptuousness of lust is easily conquered. And he presents an instructive example concerning Cyrus the King of the Persians, who when he was not at all able in battle to conquer his enemies — the most strenuous Lydians of extraordinary military excellence — deceived them, fashioning a treaty of peace with them. Whereupon the Lydians later for a certain time became unaccustomed to weapons, and under the sloth of peace turned themselves to voluptuousness. Cyrus, perceiving this, armed his army and suddenly rushed upon them. He thus conquered them while they were incapable of defending themselves and subjugated them as tributaries to the empire.]
- 4384–86 *worldes ese . . . is the norrice / Of every lust.* Proverbial. A variation of “idleness is nurse of vices.” See Whiting, I6. See also *CA* 4.1086–89 and *MO*, lines

5266–68, which cites Cato's *Distichs*. Compare *CT* VII(B²)1589, and VIII (G)1–3.

- 4406 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic qualiter fata bellica luxus infortunat. Et narrat quod cum Rex Amalech Hebreis sibi insultantibus resistere nequit, consilio Balaam mulieres regni sui pulcherrimas in castra Hebreorum misit; qui ab ipsis contaminati graciam statim amiserunt. Et sic ab Amalech deuicti in magna multitudine gladio ceciderunt.* [Note here how sensual indulgence makes for bad outcomes in battle. And he narrates that when King Amalech was not able to resist the Hebrews assailing him, by Balaam's counsel he sent the most beautiful women of his kingdom into the camps of the Hebrews, who, contaminated by the women, immediately lost their divine grace. And thus conquered by Amalech, they died by the sword in a vast multitude.]
- 4406–4573 On the counsel of Balaam, see Numbers 22–25, where the pagan king is Balac, not Amalech, and Balaam refuses to curse or otherwise harm the Israelites. Gower's version is a mixture of Balac's desire to defend himself from Israel and the Israelites' weakness as described in Numbers 25:1–2. Balac, in the Bible, never actually sends the women. For the account of Phinees, see Numbers 25.
- 4418 *With yhen greye and browes bente.* Amalech's women set off their grey eyes with plucked eyebrows (a conventional sign of female beauty) as a weapon against the Hebrews, whose unchaste response they are counting on. They might have succeeded were it not for Phinees, who kills the first two who succumb to temptation as a warning to others. That sight is more potent than *yhen greye and browes bente*. One basis of Chastity is Bonnegarde ("Good Care" or "Right Watchmanship," devoted to guarding of the five senses, those "special doors and windows through which the devil enters the soul," so that they go not astray or admit the enemy — *MO*, lines 16585–16608; see note to 7.4239–40); n.b., Bonnegarde as a virtue well exemplified in the Tale of Tobias and Sara which follows shortly (7.5307 ff.), though it does not help Lucrece much, despite all her care. Here see also discussions of "mislok" and the failure to guard the eyes elsewhere in *CA* (especially 1.304 ff.). See note to 6.1858.
- 4469 ff. Based on 3 Kings (1 Kings) 11.
- 4469–77 Wickert (*Studies in John Gower*) notes that reflections on death are not common in royal instruction books though such material is found in *VC* and Waltenham's *Myroure of Synners* (p. 154).
- 4473 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur qualiter Principum irregulata voluptas eos a semita recta multociens deuiare compellit. Et narrat exemplum de Salomone, qui ex sue carnis concupiscentia victus mulierum blandientis in sui scandalum deos alienos colerre presumebat.* [Here he speaks how the unregulated lusts of Rulers often compels them to deviate from the straight path. And he narrates an instructive example about Solomon, who was conquered by the blandishments of women because of the lust of his flesh and thereby was led to worship strange gods, to his scandal.]

- 4477 *whos appetit.* *MED* glosses “appetite” in this line as “sexual craving.” Medieval writers differentiate kinds of appetite, depending upon the impetus of the desire. Gower seems to have in mind here the desire of the “soule *vegetabilis*” that “hab a vertu of gendrингe þat is nedeful to multiplie and bringe forþ þinges in kinde,” the “vertu of appetit” being to take whatever “foode” is “nedeful” (Bart. Ang. 3, cap. 8). This craving to satisfy natural necessities or body functions is what Chaucer’s Parson refers to as “the appetites of the fyve wittes” (*CT* X[I]207), or what the Wife of Bath means when she says she “evere folwede myn appetit” (*CT* III[D]623). Compare Januarie, who “folwed ay his bodily delyt / On wommen, ther as was his appetyt” (*CT* IV[E]1249–50).
- 4499 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De filia Regis Cidonie.* [Concerning the daughter of King Sidonia.]
- 4501 *Astrathen.* Ashtart, Ashtoreth, Astarte: a Semitic goddess worshiped by Canaanites, Hebrews, Phoenicians; a goddess of untrammeled sexual love; in some colonies honored by religious prostitution and temple harlots; linked to Ishtar, she is a goddess of maternity and fertility, who suckles the child Tam-muz at her breast; a creatrix of men; a war-goddess among Phoenicians but also in early matriarchal communities. See *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* 2.115–18. Gower bases his names Astrathen, Chamos (line 4506), and Moloch (line 4509) on 3 Kings (1 Kings) 11:33. Sidon was a Phoenician seaport.
- 4503 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De filia Regis Moab.* [Concerning the daughter of King Moab.]
- 4506 *Chamos.* Chemosh, the national god of Moab, mentioned in the Moabite Stone. The name was often compounded with other names, such as Ashtar-Chemosh or Chemosh-nadab or Chemosh-yahi. The term was used in the same way Hebrews used the term Yahweh. Numbers 21:29 warns: “Woe to thee Moab: thou art undone, O people of Chamos.” See *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* 8.759–61.
- 4507 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De filia Regis Amon.* [Concerning the daughter of King Amon.]
- 4509 *Moloch.* “A Canaanite god to whom children were sacrificed by being burned alive” (see Sol Liptzin’s entry on Moloch in the *Dictionary of Biblical Tradition*, pp. 516–17). N.b., Leviticus 18:21, 20:2–5; Deuteronomy 12:31, 18:9–10; 4 Kings (2 Kings) 23:10.
- 4515 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Nota hic qualiter Achias propheta, in signum quod regnum post mortem Salomonis ob eius peccatum a suo herede diminueretur, pallium suum in xii, partes scidit, vnde x. partes Ieroboe filio Nabal, qui regnaturus postea successit, precepto dei tribuit.* [Note here how Achias the prophet, in sign that the kingdom would be diminished after Solomon’s death by his heir, tore his mantle into twelve pieces, from which he gave as tribute ten pieces by God’s command to Jeroboah the son of Nabal, who, about to reign, succeeded him later.] See 3 Kings (1 Kings) 11:29–32.

- 4559 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Aristotiles. O Alexander, super omnia consulo, conserua tibi calorem naturalem.* [Aristotle: “O Alexander, I counsel you above all, preserve your natural warmth for yourself.”] Macaulay (3.534) relates the Latin quotation to the *Secretum Secretorum*: “O summe rex, studeas modis omnibus custodire et retinere calorem naturalem” (ed. 1520, f. 25v) [O highest king, be zealous by every means to preserve and retain your natural warmth].
- 4569–71 “[H]ere one might say that natural sexual appetite provides moral guidance, its satisfaction, and no more, indicating what is legitimate” (White, *Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, p. 190).
- 4570–71 *dueliche served, / It oughte of reson to suffise.* See White (*Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, p. 201) on the possible accommodation of “the natural sexual urge” and the “necessity of restraint” in Gower’s view of Nature. Compare Chaucer’s Parson, *CT* X(I)935–42, on measure in sexual behavior and matters of paying the debt to the body within the privileges of chaste behavior. Toby, *CA* 7.5361–65, exemplifies precisely the proposition, where “bothe lawe and kinde is served” (7.5363).
- 4574 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *De voluptuoso Antonio.* [Concerning Antonius the voluptuary.]
- 4574 *Anthonie.* Macaulay (3.534) notes: “Caracalla, son of Severus, is here meant. His name was Aurelius Antonius, and he is called Aurelius Antonius in the *Pantheon* (*Mon. Germ. Hist.* xxii. p.166). Caracalla is called by Orosius ‘omnibus hominibus libidine intemperantior, qui etiam novercam suam Iuliam uxorem duxerit’ (*Hist.* vii.18 [more intemperate in lust than any other man, and who indeed took his stepmother Julia as his wife]), and this character of him is repeated in the *Pantheon*.]
- 4593 Gower’s story of Tarquin, Aruns, and Lucrece is much enlarged from Ovid, *Fasti* 2.687–852. See also Chaucer’s *LGW*, lines 1680–1885; Latin *Gesta Romanorum*, cap. cxxxv; and Shakespeare’s *Rape of Lucrece*. For the story in fourteenth-century chronicles and commentaries, see Galloway, “Chaucer’s *Legend of Lucrece*.” Livy 1.53–54 (Sextus) and 1.57–59 (Lucrece) might also be a source.
- 4599 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic loquitur de Tarquino nuper Rome Imperatore, necnon et de eiusdem filio nomine Arrons, qui omni viciorum varietate repleti tam in homines quam in mulieres innumera scelera perpetrarunt: set specialiter super hiis que contra Gabinos fraudulenter operati sunt tractare intendit.* [Here he speaks about Tarquin, not long ago Emperor of Rome, and also about his son Aruns by name, who replete with every variety of vice perpetrated innumerable sins both against men and women; but particularly he intends to discourse about those which they fraudulently carried out against the Gabines.]
- 4598 *Arrons.* Macaulay: “[n]either Aruns nor Sextus is named in Ovid, who speaks only of ‘Tarquinius iuvenis.’ Gower gives to Aruns the place of Sextus throughout this and the following story” (3.534). For various arguments regarding the confusion of Aruns and Sextus, see Nicholson, *Annotated Index*, p. 479.

- 4694–95 *hefdes of Gabie / Hath smiten of.* The decapitation of the Gabines is fit punishment in that they foolishly brought Aruns into their fold of their own volition. The slaughter is Gower's addition to the narrative, as if to demonstrate that when the king errs the people suffer. See Peck (*Kingship and Common Profit*, pp. 153–56).
- 4754 In Ovid (*Fasti* 2.721–852), the rape of Lucrece is not a separate story but simply a continuation of the account of Tarquin's sons that concludes with the banishment of the lot of them. Chaucer also presents Lucrece as a separate story in *LGW*, lines 1680–1885. Root, “Chaucer's Legend of Medea,” pp. 146–48, suggests that Chaucer draws some details from Gower. Pearsall (“Gower's Narrative Art,” p. 481) suggests that “[i]n his story of Lucrece, Gower achieves perhaps his most perfect realisation of womanliness.” See also note 7.4888.
- 4757 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic narrat quod, cum Tarquinus in obsidione Ciuitatis Ardee, vt eam destrueret, intentus fuit, Arrons filius eius Romam secreto adiens in domo Collatini hospitatus est; vbi de nocte illam castissimam dominam Lucreciam ymaginata fraude vi oppressit: vnde illa pre dolore mortua, ipse cum Tarquino patre suo tota conclamante Roma in perpetuum exilium delegati sunt.* [Here he narrates that, when Tarquin was striving to besiege the City of Ardea so that he might destroy it, his son Aruns secretly journeyed to Rome and was put up in the house of Collatine, where by night (Aruns) forced himself upon the most chaste lady Lucretia, by calculated deception. Wherefore she, having died for sorrow, (Aruns) with Tarquin his father were sent into perpetual exile, by the clamoring of all of Rome.]
- 4778–85 Collatine is guilty of the same error as the Gabiens when he foolishly invites his enemy into his home. See note 7.4694–95.
- 4888 *Hire lacketh nocht of wommanhiede.* On Lucrece as living embodiment of a praiseworthy woman, see Bakalian, *Aspects of Love*, pp. 57–73, who compares Lucrece to the epitome of a good woman described in *VC* 5.6.295 ff. (p. 58). See also Burke (“Women,” p. 239) and Schmitz, who sees her “tenderness” as that which sets her apart in Gower from other medieval writers (*Fall of Women*, p. 80).
- 4902 **☞ Latin marginalia.** *Audaces fortuna iuuat.* [Fortune helps the bold.]
- 4902–03 *Fortune unto the bolde / Is favorable.* Proverbial. See Whiting, F519. N.b., also, *MO*, lines 22927–28, and *VC* 6.969.
- 4922–58 Lucrece's “openness and hospitality to the unexpected visitor,” detailed by her timid, polite questions about the war and her husband (Pearsall, “Gower's Narrative Art,” p. 481), create a stunning, bitterly ironic effect that Lucrece resolutely comprehends, albeit silently, after the betrayal. Her swoon, not found in Ovid, is Gower's means of demarcating her innocence. The brutality of Aruns' destruction of her highly civil world evokes sympathy and draws the audience close to the political complexities of her tragedy, a point that is central to Gower's book on the delicate balances of good kingship which here have been so cruelly abrogated.

- 4981 *To slen hire and hire folk aboute.* Mast ("Rape," p. 117) points to the higher stakes for Lucrece in Gower's version, where her modesty is not the only concern. This is not to say that he underestimates the "value of a wife's good reputation" (see p. 131n82). But she is keenly aware of the political issues of Aruns' assault. See also Simpson (*Sciences and the Self*, p. 215): "Lucrece's rape . . . reveals the violent concupiscence of territorial invasion."
- 4986 *Wherof sche swounede in his hond.* Pearsall ("Gower's Narrative Art," p. 481) makes the cogent point that in Gower's story "every suggestion of acquiescence is eliminated." She is open and hospitable when Tarquin arrives. Tarquin is in bed upon her even as she awakens and, overwhelmed by fear, she loses her voice and swoons.
- 4994 *lecherouse pride.* *Pride* as well as *lecherouse* carry sexual connotations here. See *MED prid(e) n.(2) 5(a)* and *OED pride sb.*¹ 11, for examples of *pride* implying sexual desire, especially in animals. Gower's phrase has implications of a sex maniac whose one thought is to have his triumph over Collatine through the destruction of his wife.
- 5001 *As sche which hath the world forsake.* Pearsall observes: "Her actions on the morrow have the momentous, pre-ordained quality of one who has, like Clarissa, already passed beyond suffering into a different world" ("Gower's Narrative Art," p. 481).
- 5030 *unmete.* *MED unmete* adj. 2 suggests "unfit" and "unworthy" as glosses for this line but also with possible meanings of "displeasing" and "horrible to look at," senses which seem particularly apt for this passage, given Lucrece's concern over how the people will look upon her husband as well as herself in this disgrace. Her fears of how the event must appear constitutes her shame and "wofull chiere" (line 5032), whereby she casts down her eyes "and couthe unnethes loke" (line 5033).
- 5069 *thurgh hire herte it throng.* Mast cites St. Augustine's assessment of Lucrece's suicide in *The City of God* — *si adultererata, cur laudata; si pudica, cur occisa* (if she is adulterous, why is she praised? If chaste, why was she put to death?) — to observe that "Gower rejects this misogynistic reading and lets his heroine die with dignity and without reproach" ("Rape," p. 119). That Augustine's commentary was known in Gower's literary circle, see Chaucer's satirical allusion to Augustine's "gret compassioun" for Lucrece in *LGW*, line 1690.
- 5091 *so beheld him in this wise.* Mast ("Rape," p. 120) suggests that Lucrece, in her look at Brutus, is cognizant of the political ramifications of her act whereby "her shameful rape is the cause of the end of the rape of her country by Tarquin's family."
- 5116 *newe schame of sennes olde.* Proverbial. See Whiting, S338. Compare *CA* 3.2033: "Old senne newe schame." Also *VC* 4.874.
- 5131 Like the Rape of Lucrece, the Tale of Virginia was very popular. The original version occurs in *Livy*. Jean de Meun includes the tale in *RR*, Boccaccio includes it in *De mulieribus claris*, and Chaucer includes it in the *Canterbury*

Tales as The Physician's Tale. Boccaccio and Chaucer cite Livy as their sources, though in fact they follow Jean de Meun. Gower follows Livy 3.44–50 or perhaps Pierre Bersuire's Old French translation of Livy. The tale provides another example of a leader who loses his kingship through lechery. See Ferster's reading of the tale as a precaution to Richard II ("O Political Gower," p. 36).

- 5136 *Livius Virginius*. Gower's version of the Tale of Virginia gives more attention to the father than do other versions. He is a man of honor, a civic-minded knight fighting in defense of the city; he is a conscientious father who has looked after his daughter well, having arranged a distinguished marriage. When he learns of her peril and imminent disgrace he rides in from the front, slays his daughter to protect her from defilement, escapes, and musters a force to retaliate against the would-be tyrant/rapist. He is obliged to act swiftly and decisively, and he does.
- 5137 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic ponit exemplum super eodem, qualiter Liuius Virginius dux exercitus Romanorum vnicam filiam pulcherimam habens cum quodam nobili viro nomine Ilicio, vt ipsam in vxorem duceret, finaliter concordauit. Set interim Apius Claudius tunc Imperator virginis formositatem, vt eam violaret, concupiscens, occasiones quibus matrimonium impedire, ipsamque ad sui vsum apprehendere posset, subdola conspiracione fieri coniectauit. Et cum propositum sui desiderii productis falsis testibus in iudicio Imperator habere debuisset, pater tunc ibidem presens extracto gladio filie sue pectus mortali vulnere per medium transfodit, dicens: "Malo michi de filia mea virginem habere mortuam, quam in sui scandalum meretricem reseruare viuentem."* [Here he presents an instructive example on the same thing, how Livius Virginius, leader of the army of the Romans, having a most beautiful daughter, made a settlement with a nobleman, Ilicius by name, that he would take her as a bride. But meanwhile Apius Claudius, then Emperor, lustng after the virgin's beauty, plotted to violate her using a treacherous conspiracy: he caused circumstances that would impede the marriage, so that he might be able to seize her to his own use. And when the Emperor was owed the fulfillment of his desire, producing false witnesses in judgment, her father, present there, with a drawn sword transfixed his daughter's breast through the middle in a mortal wound, saying, "As for my daughter, I prefer to have a dead virgin than, to her own scandal, a live whore."]
- 5140–41 *This fame . . . cam in his ere*. Another instance in which Gower alters his source to fit the exemplum to the principal motifs of his poem; here, once again, we witness the infection of a mind through the senses (windows of the mind), especially the eyes or the ears, without the safekeeping of Bonnegarde. See also 1.289–574.
- 5307 The Tale of Tobias and Sara is found in the apocryphal book of Tobit, 6–8.
- 5311 ff. **☞ Latin marginalia:** *Hic inter alia castitatis regimen concernencia loquitur quomodo Matrimonium, cuius status Sacramentum, quasi continenciam equiperans, eciam honeste delectacionis regimine moderari debet. Et narrat in exemplum, qualiter pro eo quod illi vii.^{tem} viri, qui Sarre Raguelis filie magis propter concupiscentiam quam propter matrimonium voluptuose nupserunt, vnius post alium omnes prima nocte a demone*

Asmodeo singillatim iugulati interierunt. [Here, among other things concerning the governance of chastity, he says how matrimony, whose sacramental status almost equals sexual abstinence, ought to be moderated by governance even in legitimate pleasure. And he narrates in an instructive example how, because the seven husbands who had married Sara daughter of Raguel had done so more on account of lust than voluptuousness of matrimony, all of them, one after another, had separately died, strangled at night by the demon Asmodeus.]

- 5361 *yit Thobie his wille hadde.* “Love does sometimes go right, but it is not human judgement that makes it do so. The story of Toby and Sara shows the erotic ordered by a supernatural intervention — and in so doing suggests the rarity of such ordering” (White, *Nature, Sex, and Goodness*, p. 203).
- 5363 *bothe lawe and kinde is served.* See note to 7.4570–71.
- 5372–81 In his appreciation of both God-given reason and the laws of nature “Genius himself undergoes a sea-change . . . from which he never retreats”; before Book 7 he is Amans’ inspiration, often a “fool ymagynation”; but in Book 7 and thereafter he represents a balance between reason and nature (Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, pp. 215–16). “The person who will finally be won over . . . is not the lady, but Amans himself” (p. 217).
- 5411–12 *The tales sounen in myn ere, / Bot yit myn herte is elleswhere.* Dimmick wittily identifies Amans as “the first of Gower’s critics to respond to five thousand lines on the philosophy of Aristotle with distinctly muted enthusiasm” (“Redinge of Romance,” p. 127).
- 5372–81 The passage exemplifies the need to control sexuality (Benson, “Incest,” p. 103).



TEXTUAL NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS: **A:** Bodleian Library MS Bodley 902 (*SC* 27573), fols. 2r–183r; **B:** Bodleian Library MS Bodley 294 (*SC* 2449), fols. 1r–197r; **C:** Corpus Christi College, Oxford MS 67, fols. 1r–209r; **F:** Bodleian Library MS Fairfax 3 (*SC* 3883; copy text for this edition), fols. 2r–186r; **J:** St. John’s College, Cambridge MS B.12 (34), fols. 1r–214r; **Mac:** G. C. Macaulay; **S:** Stafford, now Ellesmere 26, fols. 1r–169v; **T:** Trinity College, Cambridge MS R.3.2 (581), fols. 1r–147v.

TEXTUAL NOTES TO BOOK 5

- 57–213 Omitted in J (missing leaf).
- 306 *wisshe*. So F, J, S: *wyssh*. B, Mac: *wissh*.
- 412 *take*. So F, J, S, B, Mac: *tak*.
- 448 *understode*. So F, S, B: *understood*. J, Mac: *understod*.
- 630 *Mi*. So F, S, J, B, Mac: *My*.
- 650 Omitted in J (eyeskip).
- 786 *Thei*. So F, S, J, B, Mac: *They*.
- 787 *Chaldeus*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *Caldeus*.
- 811 *th'Egipciens*. So F, S, J, B, Mac: *thegipcienes*.
- 821 *th'Egipciens*. So F, S, J, B, Mac: *thegipcienes*.
- 890 *hire*. So S, B, Mac. F: *hirer*. J: *hir*.
- 901 *Which*. So F, B, J, S, Mac: *Whiche*.
- 955 *Bot*. So F, S, B, Mac: *But*. J: *Bote*.
- 1220 *thei*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *they*.
- 1275 *Thei*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *They*.
- 1316 *priestes*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *Prestes*.
- 1322 The small capital, signified here by an indent, appears at line 1323 in F, S, B, J, Mac.
- 1452 The small capital, signified here by an indent, appears at line 1453 in F, S, B, J, Mac.
- 1535 *set*. So F, J, S, B, Mac: *sette*.
- 1540 *thei*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *they*.
- 1615–1770 Omitted in J (missing leaf).
- 1685 *tok*. So F, S, Mac: *toke*. B: *tooke*.
- 1715 *stond*. So F, S, B, Mac: *stonde*.
- 1724–43 Altered in B:
Which mannes soule haþ set in euene
And haþ his grace reconciled

Fro which þe man was ferst exiled
And in himself so sore falle

- 1781–92 Altered in B:
 þburgh vertu of his hihe might
 Which in marie was alight
 To bigge mannes soule aȝein
 And þis bilieue is so certein
 So ful of grace and of vertu
 That what men clepeþ to Ihesu
 In cleene lyf forþ wiþ good dede
 He may nought faile of heuene meede
 So þat it stant vpon bilieue
 þat euery man may wel achieue
- 1835 *Antenor*. So F (though see lines 1836 and 1841). S, B, J, Mac: *Anthenor*.
 1950 *ben*. So B, Mac. F, S, J: *be*.
 2057 *knihthod*. So Mac. F: *knithode*. S: *knyhthod*. B: *knighthode*. J: *knyhthode*.
 2098 *eche*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *ech*.
 2167 *thei*. So F, S, B, J. Mac: *they*.
 2179 *Thei*. So F, S, B, J. Mac: *They*.
 2434 *infortune*. So S, B, J, Mac. F: *infortume*.
 2551 *rescousse*. So S, B, J, Mac (and elsewhere in F). F: *recousse*.
 2598 *comelihied*. So F, S, B: *comlihede*. J: *comelihed*. Mac: *comlihied*.
 2735 *told*. So F, B, S, J, Mac: *tolde*.
 2761 *faste by*. So S, B, J, Mac. F: *fastby*.
 2904 *Ther*. So F, S, B, J. Mac: *There*.
 2906 *such*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *suche*.
 2932 *here*. So S, B, J, Mac. F: *hire*.
 3199 *procourours*. So S, J, Mac. F, B: *procurous*.
 3218 *salvely*. So F, S, Mac. B, A, J: *sauely*.
 3242 *seene*. So F, S, B, J. Mac: *sene*.
 3393 *mi*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *my*.
 3542 *yit*. So F, S, B, J. Mac: *yet*.
 3823 *mad*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *made*.
 3892 *wol*. So F, S, B, J. Mac: *woll*.
 3892 *seid*. So F, S, J, B, Mac: *seide*.
 3990 *That*. So F, S, J, B, Mac: *The*.
 4020 *And*. So S, B, J, Mac. F: *An*.
 4040 Altered in B: *To make wiþ þis medicine*.
 4427 *be*. So F, S, J, B, Mac: *ben*.
 4504 *tueyne*. So F, B: *tweyne*. J: *tweine*. Mac: *tueine*.
 4663 *wher it is noght*. So F, J, S, B, Mac: *wher is noght*.
 4728 *miht*. So F, S, Mac: *mihte*. B: *might*. J: *myht*.
 4854 *Mi*. So F, S, J, B, Mac: *My*.
 4990 *thi*. So F, S, B, J. Mac: *thy*.
 4990 *prinche*. See MED *pinch(e)*.
 4990 *the*. Added above the line in F. Not noted in Mac. S, B, J omit.

- 5001 *Bot.* So F, S, J, B, Mac: *But.*
 5039 *Bot.* So F, S, J, B, Mac: *But.*
 5056 *trasse.* So F, S, B, J: *trusse.* Mac: *trosse.*
 5131 *eke.* So F, S, T, C, A, J, Mac: *ek.* B: *eek.*
 5236 *bare.* So F, S, B, T, C, A, J, Mac: *bar.*
 5302 *manye.* So F, S: *manie.* B, C, A, Mac: *many.* J: *monie.*
 5349 *toke.* So F, S, C, A, J, Mac: *tok.* B: *took.*
 5364 *wondre.* So F, S, J, B, T, C, A, Mac: *wonder.*
 5464 *tresces.* So T, C, A, Mac. F, S, J: *trescess.* B: *tresses.*
 5552 *worldee.* So F, S, B, J, Mac: *worldes.*
 5684 *thanne.* So F, S, B, J: *thenne.* Mac: *than.*
 5721 *Sche.* So F, S, B, J: *Heo.* Mac: *She.*
 5769 *tyt.* So S, Mac. F, J: *tyd.* B: *tit.*
 5846 *myhti.* So F, S, B: *mighty.* J: *mihti.* Mac: *myghti.*
 5918 *be.* So S, B, J, F, Mac: *ben.*
 5925 *remembrance.* So S, B, J, Mac. F: *remenbrance.*
 5962 *largesse.* So S, B, J, Mac. F: *larchesse.*
 6020 *here.* So F, S, B: *hir.* J, Mac: *hire.*
 6084 *water.* So B, C, A, Mac. F, S, J: *watre.*
 6103 *Mi.* So F, S, J, B, Mac: *My.*
 6110 *wylde.* So S, J, Mac. F: *wyldee.* B: *wilde.*
 6130 *hire.* So F, S, B, J, Mac: *her.*
 6190 *and.* So S, B, J, Mac. F: *ad.*
 6395–6405 Altered in S, B, and other second recension manuscripts, with additional lines that cite Gregory's comparing the life of a virgin to that of an angel before proceeding to the story of Valentinan's chastity (see Mac 3.121–23 [S text]).
 6407 *hise.* So F, S, B, J, Mac: *his.*
 6585 *wolde.* So S, B, A, J, Mac. F: *wold.*
 6694 *thoghte.* So F, A, J, S, Mac: *thoght.* B: *thought.* J: *thouhte.*
 6821–7000 Omitted in S (missing leaf).
 6862 *leon.* So F, B: *lioun.* J, Mac: *leoun.*
 6877 A later hand has placed a "Note" in the margin of F.
 6883 *Ech.* So B, C, A, J, Mac. F: *Eche.*
 6981–82 Additional lines in B (see Mac 3.139).
 7032–33 Additional lines in S, B: The Tale of Lucius and the Statue (see Mac 3.141–45 [S text]).
 7274 *Antenor.* So F, S, B, J, Mac: *Anthenor.* See also note to line 1835.
 7303–04 Omitted in B (eyeskip).
 7586 *Nou.* So F, J, S, B, Mac: *Now.*
 7619 *Skarsnesse.* So J, Mac. F: *Skarnesse.* S, B: *scarsnesse.*
 7701–46 Omitted in S, B.
 7815–16 Omitted in J (eyeskip).
 7819 *Tell.* So F, A, S, C, B, J, Mac: *Telle.*

TEXTUAL NOTES TO BOOK 6

- 69 *For*. So S, B, J, Mac. F: *ffro*.
 162 *wyn*. So F, S, B, J. Mac: *win*.
 285 Omitted in B (eyeskip).
 408 *the*. So S, B, J, Mac. F: *thei*.
 495 *fest*. So F, C, S, B, A, J, Mac: *feste*.
 536 *thin*. So F, S, B, J. Mac: *thine*.
 554 *never*. So F, S, C, B, T, A, J, Mac: *nevere*.
 665–964 Inserted after line 1146 in S, B, preceded by six additional lines (see Mac 3.198).
 785 *schapthe*. So F, S. Other manuscripts read *schappe* (B) or *schape* (J), thinking, perhaps, that the earlier scribe must have unintentionally doubled the *p* with *b*. But *MED shaft(e)* n. 1d, gives *schapthe* as a normal spelling for *shaft*, with the sense of “appearance, likeness; guise; a shape, form; an idol; also, an image in a mirror,” citing this passage in Gower.
 1140 Omitted in J (eyeskip).
 1147–48 Omitted in S, B.
 1186 *lete*. So F, S, A, J, B, T, C, Mac: *let*.
 1307 Omitted in J (eyeskip).
 1391 *which*. So F, C, A, J, S, B, Mac: *whiche*.
 1412 *his*. So B, J, Mac. F, S: *hise*.
 1428 *thei*. So F, S, J, B, Mac: *they*.
 1602 *He*. So S, B, J, Mac. F: *His*.
 1735 *badde*. So F, S, Mac: *badd*. B: *bad*. J: *bed*.
 1823 *Bot*. So F, S, J, B, Mac: *But*.
 2062 *put*. So F, S, J, C, B, A, Mac: *putte*.
 2071 *wold*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *wolde*.
 2233 *myhte*. So F, S, Mac: *mihte*. B: *mighty*. J: *miht*.
 2247 *sihe*. So F, S, A, Mac: *sih*. B: *sigh*. J: *sye*.
 2314 *of*. So S, B, Mac. F, A: *if*. J: *yif*.
 2356 *Alisandre*. So F, S, J, B, Mac: *Alisaundre*.
 2357–7.88 Omitted in S (missing leaf).
 2433 *philosophie*. So B, J, Mac. F: *Philopie*.

TEXTUAL NOTES TO BOOK 7

- 55 *remenant*. So F, B, J. Mac: *remnant*.
 190 *Thei*. So S, J, Mac. F: *The*. B: *They*.
 219 *thei*. So F, S, J, B, Mac: *they*.
 340 *same*. So F, S, B, J. Mac: *fame*.
 483 *myhty*. So F, S: *myhti*. B: *mighty*. J: *mihti*. Mac: *myghty*.
 602 *thei*. So F, S, B, J. Mac: *they*.
 672 *knowlechinge*. So B, J, Mac. F: *knowechinge*. S: *knowleching*.
 979–82 Omitted in B.
 1073 *whiche*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *which*.
 1274 *Bot*. So F, S, J, B, Mac: *But*. See also lines 2588, 2722, and 3784.

- 1289 *hiere*. So F, S, J, Mac: *here*. B: *heere*.
- 1402 *tuelfthe*. So F, B, J, S, Mac: *twelfthe*.
- 1671 *honesté*. So S, F, B, J, Mac: *honestete*. Meter, rhyme, and other spellings of the term favor the emendation.
- 1690 *eke*. So F, S, B: *eek*. J, Mac: *ek*.
- 1815 *ansuere*. So S, Mac. F: *anssuere*. B, J: *answere*.
- 1964 *at*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *ate*.
- 2329–31 Altered in B and other second recension manuscripts: The Example of Dante's Rebuff of the Flatterer (see Mac 3.296).
- 2588 *bot*. So F, S, B, J, B, Mac: *but*.
- 2637 *mihte*. So F, S, B: *might*. J, Mac: *miht*.
- 2641–3004 Omitted in S (two missing leaves).
- 2722 *bot*. So F, B, J, Mac: *but*.
- 2780 *thanne*. So F, B, Mac: *than*.
- 2806 *which*. So F, B, J, Mac: *whiche*.
- 3003 *schop*. So C, A, J, Mac. F: *schope*. B: *schoop*.
- 3135 Altered in B: *So as þe holy book affermēþ*.
- 3136–37 Additional lines in B and other second recension manuscripts: The Examples of James, Cassiodorus, Cicero, and Alexander (see Mac 3.319). Additional lines in S: The Tale of the Jew and the Pagan (see Mac 3.320–25).
- 3148 *conseillier*. So J, F: *conseilleir*. S, Mac: *conseiller*. B: *counseiler*.
- 3162–63 Additional lines in B: The Tale of the Jew and the Pagan (see Mac 3.320–25 [S text]).
- 3400 *thanne*. So F, S, B, J: *thenne*. Mac: *than*.
- 3530 *mai*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *may*.
- 3568 *diliverance*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *deliverance*.
- 3575 *cause*. So S, B, J, Mac. F: *causa*.
- 3592 *knyhtlihede*. So S, Mac. F: *knythlihede*. B: *knightlihede*. J: *knighthede*.
- 3639 *hem*. So S, B, Mac. F, J: *he*. The reasons for the scribal error in F are easy to understand, since *wolde* could be singular. But the slightly more subtle phrasing "Against those who wished to assail them" is clearly correct in context. (Andrew Galloway.)
- 3687 *als*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *as*.
- 3751 *thei*. so F, S, B, J, Mac: *they*.
- 3784 *Bot*. So F, S, J, B, Mac: *But*.
- 3808 *mi*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *my*.
- 3819 *myhte*. So F, S, J: *mihte*. B: *might*. C, A, Mac: *myht*.
- 3861 *no*. So S, B, J, Mac. F: *non*.
- 4064 *assised*. So F, S, B, J, Mac: *assised*.
- 4115 *stered*. So F, S, J, Mac: *is stered*. B: *is stired*.
- 4194 *good*. So S, B, J, Mac. F: *god*. Emendation to match previous line.
- 4357 *manye*. So F, A, S, B, Mac: *many*. J: *mony*.
- 4395 *fleysshly*. So Mac. F: *fleyssly*. S, J: *fleisshly*. B: *fleischly*.
- 4665 *thei*. So F, S, J, B, Mac: *they*.
- 4737 *grounde*. So S, B, J, Mac. F: *ground*.
- 4967 *bot*. So F, S, J, B, Mac: *but*.

- 5135 *as.* So S, B, J, Mac. F: *and.*
5267 *seid.* So F. S, B, A, J, Mac: *seide.*
5383 *put.* So S, B, J, Mac. F: *pit.*
5411 *sounen.* So S, B, J, Mac. F: *sounnen.*
5417–8.336 Omitted in S (two missing leaves).



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- Virgo:** 7.1081–1100; 7.1249
- Vitellius (Vitellus, Vitelle):** drunkenness 6.537 ff. See Tale of Galba and Vitellius
- Vulcan (Vulcanus):** Tale of Vulcan, Mars, and Venus 5.635 ff.; biography 5.955–66
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GLOSSARY

abide, abyde(n) wait, remain, endure
achieve finish, succeed, settle
acompten include; tell; confess; compute; evaluate
acorde agree
adresce arrange, prepare, array
affeccioun inclination
afferme fix, confirm, establish
agein against
alther gen. of all
and conj., occasionally placed medially rather than at the head of a coordinated clause
appel appeal to a higher authority; accuse
aquite free; repay, give, make amends, relieve; deprive
asterte escape
awaite(n) watch; lie in ambush
axe ask, ask for; demand

barme bosom
be by
be(n) be, been; am, are
beclippe, beclipt embrace(d); contain(ed)
beheste promise; assurance
behote promised, assured, pronounced, dedicated
benyme take away
beschrewे curse
beste beast
betake give, deliver, command
beyete(n) gain, property, possession; acquire, obtain, provide; beget
bille letter
bot except, unless, only

bote reward, remedy, help
chiere face, looks, countenance; welcome
childinge childbirth
clepeth calls
coign coin, money
colour color, manner, pretext, reason
compasse devise, contrive; undertake; surround; consider, achieve
comune common people; commonwealth; ordinary, familiar
comune(n) participate, conform; have dealings with; communicate
conne know, know how; be able to
couthе could; understood; knew how
covine company; agreement; devise, conspiracy
cunnyngе skilled
cure charge of a parish; care, help, remedy; trouble, grief

dai, dawe day
dampne condemn
dar, dorste, durste dare(d)
debat strive, dispute
debate contend
decas destruction
defence, defense prohibition, protection
defend protect, forbid
del, diel part, portion
dele(n) have to do, consult
delivere active; readily
deme judge, condemn; decide
dere harm, injure
dere, diere dear; precious
describe describe
despuile rob, strip

do <i>cause, make, put</i>	haveles <i>destitute, without possessions</i>
dom <i>judgment</i>	hele <i>heal; conceal, cover</i>
drye <i>endure, suffer; experience</i>	hem <i>them; themselves</i>
duc, duck, duk <i>duke, leader</i>	here <i>their; here; hear</i>
 	heste <i>command</i>
echon <i>each one</i>	heved <i>head</i>
eft <i>after</i>	hewe <i>hue</i>
eir <i>air</i>	hie <i>hasten</i>
ek(e) <i>also</i>	hiere <i>hear</i>
engin(e) <i>disposition, ingenuity; deceive, entrap</i>	hihte <i>was called</i>
entaille <i>form, fashion, sculpture</i>	hol, hool, hole <i>whole; wholly</i>
entente <i>meaning: intention, purpose, thought</i>	honeste <i>honorable, noble, appropriate, truthful</i>
er(e) <i>ear; before</i>	honesté <i>honorableness, worthiness; splendor, elegance, comeliness; virtue, decency</i>
 	hote(n), hatte <i>be named; be called; command, order, bid; promise</i>
faitor <i>deceiver, imposter, cheat; one who is false or feigns</i>	
feint <i>false, sluggish, deceitful; faint</i>	ilke <i>same</i>
fele <i>many</i>	irous <i>angry, wrathful</i>
fere, fier <i>companion; in fier</i> <i>together</i>	iwiss <i>truly, certainly</i>
ferst <i>first</i>	
fette(n) <i>fetch, get</i>	jape <i>joke, trick, deception; to behave foolishly; fondle; have sexual intercourse</i>
finde, fint, fond <i>find (sound), invent(ed), provide(d)</i>	jolif <i>lusty, frolicsome, amorous</i>
fol <i>fool; foolish</i>	juel <i>jewel</i>
fonde <i>try, attempt</i>	juise <i>judgment, punishment</i>
fordo <i>destroy; condemn; render useless; blot out</i>	
forlore, forlorn <i>utterly lost</i>	kepe <i>care</i>
fre <i>free person</i>	kesse, kiste <i>kiss(ed)</i>
fro <i>from</i>	kinde <i>nature, manner, race; natural, kind</i>
 	kiste <i>chest</i>
gate <i>gate, gateway; passage; road, path, street</i>	
gaude(s) <i>ornamental beads in a rosary; bawble; finery, fripperies</i>	lacche <i>seize</i>
gere <i>fighting equipment, harness; clothes; behavior</i>	laghtere <i>laughter</i>
gesse <i>infer, conclude; discern; suppose</i>	large <i>wide, liberal</i>
gete(n) <i>get; beget</i>	latoun <i>bronze</i>
glas <i>mirror</i>	laude <i>praise</i>
good <i>good; wealth; kindness</i>	lawhe <i>laugh</i>
gove(n) <i>give; given</i>	leche <i>physician, remedy</i>
grucche <i>complain</i>	leiance <i>allegiance</i>
 	leie, lein <i>lay, set, apply</i>
ha <i>interjection</i>	lemman <i>lover</i>
	lere <i>loss</i>

lere, liere learn, teach, guide

les lie, falsehood

lese lose

lesinge lie, lying, falsehood

lief dear, pleasant

lieve believe, trust

lkned compared

list like, desire

loenge praise

longe belong

lore n. learning, teaching; v. lost

loure frown

loute bow, yield

low, lowh laugh

lust desire, charm, pleasure

maister scholar, tutor, official

make mate, match; fashion

makinge making, composing

malgré in spite of

manyon many a one

marche border

mased amazed, confused

mede reward, gift, bribe; worldly gain; meadow

medle mingle

memoire memory

men people

mete food

mete(n) meet; dream

mochel great

molde earth; fashion

mone moan, lament; moon; companion

mote must

mowe may, be able to, might

muable changing, easily moved

myht might; strength, prowess

n- sometimes attached to words to indicate the negative: e.g., **not** = *ne+wot* (*knows not*); **nyste** = *ne+wyste* (*knew not*)

nacioun country, people, group, race

nam am not

nam, nom took

nest nest; next

newe new; renew; newly

niht, nyht(e) night; become night

non noon

nyce, nice foolish, fastidious, delicate

nyh near

of of, from, by, by reason of

of off

oghne own

on on, in

on one; **in on** united, without ceasing

or, er(e) before

or or; **or . . . or** either . . . or, whether . . . or

paie pay, please, satisfy

part(e) part; divide, distribute, depart, share

parti variegated; colorful

pas step, pace, gait; road, passageway

peine pain, punishment, endeavor; suffer, take pains, be troubled

peise weigh

per, par by, for, through or by means of

pes peace

plat plainly, flatly, entirely, frankly

plein full; plain, smooth, simple; fully, plainly

pourchace procure, seek; endeavor, succeed

pris value, prize, fame, renown, praise

privé secret

propre proper, own, appropriate

pure unalloyed, excellent, honest, absolute; entirely

queinte clever, wise; curious, crafty, cunning, gentle

querele dispute, altercation, cause, claim, enterprise

qweme please, be pleasing

rape haste; hasten; rape

rathere sooner

real royal

recche, rowhte, roghte care for, heed

rede(n) read, take counsel, contemplate, advise

- rote** custom, condition
- rote** a medieval musical instrument,
probably of the violin class
- roune** whisper
- routhe** pity, compassion
- rowe** row, company; dawn; **be rowe** in
order
- ryht** right; justice
- sawe** saying, speech
- sshape(n), schope(n)** shape, contrive,
prepare, bring about; create
- sche, scheo** she
- schenet** harmed, ruined
- schrifte** confession
- schrive(n)** confess, hear confession,
absolve, receive absolution
- se, seth, sih(e); sawh; sen, sein** see,
saw, seen
- seie, sein; seid, sayde** say; said; spoken
- sek, siek, sik** sick
- siete** sit
- sih** saw
- sike, syke** sigh
- siker** certain, sure, secure; surely
- sithe** time(s)
- siththe** since
- skile** reason
- sleihte** skill, deceit, trickery
- slyh** cunning, sly
- sodeinliche** suddenly
- solein** alone, lonely, strange
- sonde** message, sending, decree;
messenger
- sothe** truth
- stevene** voice; promise
- suie** follow
- swevene, swefne** dream
- take(n)** take, give; betake
- teene, tene** sorrow, injury, hardship,
vexation, anger
- th-** often affixed to words for *the* as in
thapostel (*the apostle*), *thair* (*the air*),
and *thastat* (*the estate*). In such
words I have used an apostrophe
to differentiate the article from
- the noun (i.e., *th' apostel*)
- that** that, which, so that
- ther(e)** there, where, whereas, at that
point, thereby, therefore
- tho** those; then
- thrinne** therein
- thurgh** through
- tobreke** break to pieces
- tofore** before, formerly
- totore** torn to bits
- tour** tower
- unavised** unwise, unwisely
- unbuxom** disobedient
- unethes** scarcely, hardly
- unkinde** unnatural, ungrateful
- unseley** unhappy
- upon** on, upon, into, with regard to, by
reason of
- vois** voice, rumor, vote
- war** aware, careful
- wawe** wave
- wede** dress, cover
- wene** think, expect, believe
- werne** refuse, prevent
- wif** woman, wife
- wight** person; creature
- will(e)** will, pleasure, willfulness
- wise** manner
- wiste** knew
- wit** mind, reason, senses
- wite(n), wot** know
- wod** mad, wild
- worthe(n)** become
- wreche** wretch; vengeance; avenge;
satisfy
- wyle** cunning
- wyte** blame, censure
- yare** ready
- ye, yhe** eye
- ynowh** enough
- ywiss** certainly, truly; indeed