

JOHN
GOWER
Confessio Amantis

Volume 2

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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 *ethopoesis*, 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* (*Pecché*) 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 baille*, 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, *ethopoesis* 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, *ethopoesis* 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 confingitur 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 down 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 down 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 l.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 Sundry 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 (*sermocinationes 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 pardevant sa voie, / Malgré le soen de sa casselle / La fourme et la semblance d'elle / Ne puet guenchir, 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 manioie / 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'escript 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 / Discoverir 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 theraputic 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 *ethopoesis* — *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 *poesis*. 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, "erdest 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 "erdest 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 solas." 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 gnostic 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 incepted 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 *ethopoesis* 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 compasseth 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 recepted 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’Homme*, 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 articulated. 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:

Therefore 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 faileth 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 sensibilibus 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 diversely they demed; / As many 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 Governauce 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 intellectual 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 processionals, 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 (*ethopoesis* 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-leaved "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 visited 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 (Pecché) 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 taken 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 deceptions 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 miself a whippe	
	With which in many a chele and hete	<i>(i.e., 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 beshittened 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 *ethopoesis* 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 lowh” (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 aggrrieve 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 nought 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 Constance 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 miself have ofte siþe / 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]emene 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 "fissches 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 spirital" (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 lisse" (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 wrought, / 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: "Vengeance upon hireself sche soghte, / And hath of hire unhappi wit / A moerdre with a moerdre quit. / Such is of moerdre the vengeance" (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 *ethopoesis* 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, Demophon 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 dozi-ness 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 *Chateau 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 Coventriae* (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 *ethopoesis* 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 ymaginacion" (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 (*Tristesse*). 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 fleish and bon 3680 Into the figure of a ston. He was to neyssh and sche to hard. Be war forthi hierafterward; Ye men and wommen bothe tuo, Ensamplenth you of that was tho. (4.3674–84)	<i>too soft; too</i>
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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 ymaginacion” (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 “roten slogardye.”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 gleanings, 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 lyhtes 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 nyhtes feste, / Without 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’Homme* 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

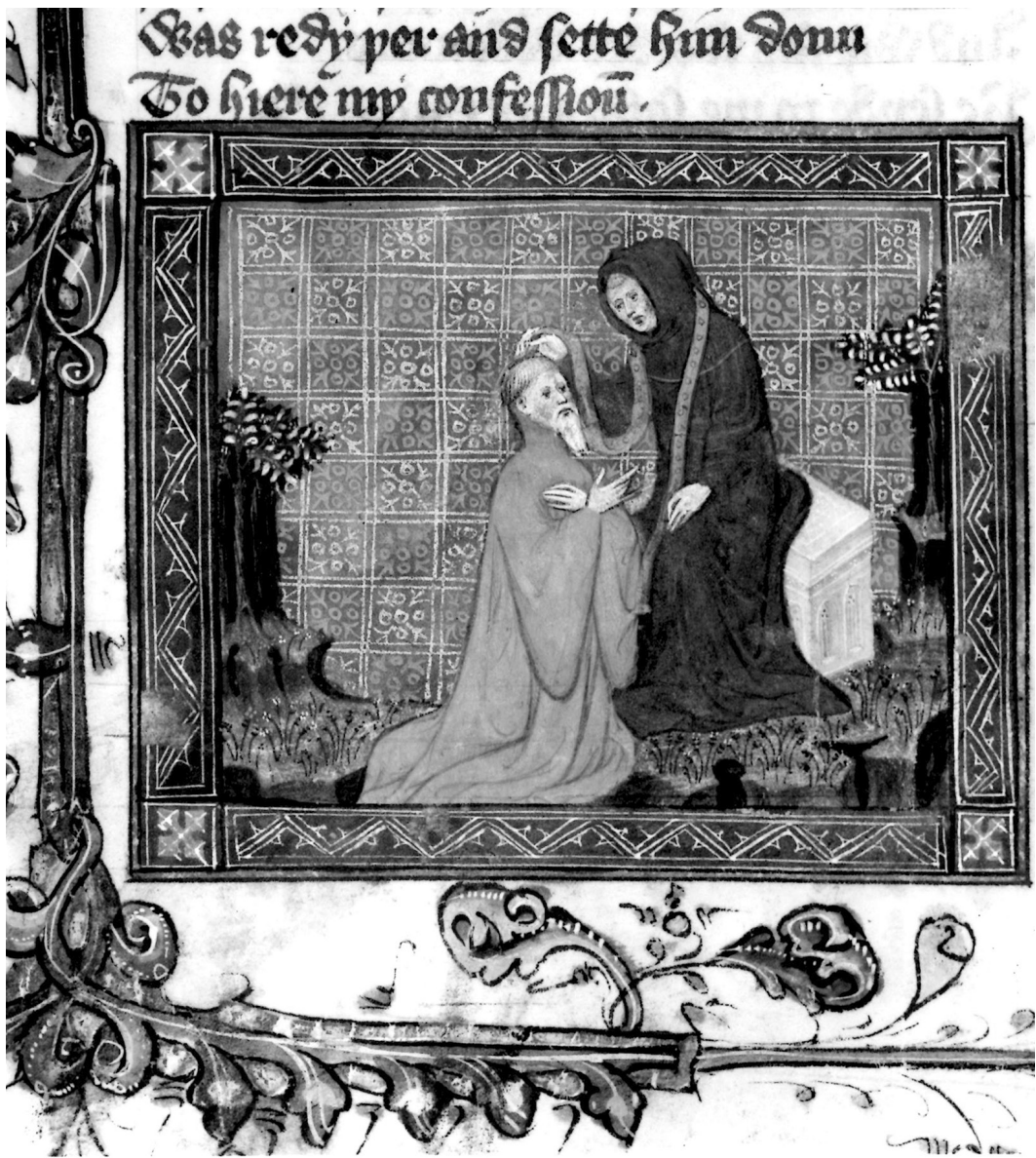
Indexed as item 2262 in Brown and Robbins, eds., *Index of Middle English Verse*, and Cutler and Robbins, eds., *Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse*. In composing this new edition of the *Confessio Amantis*, I have consulted a select number of the dozens of manuscripts of the poem, manuscripts 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> |
| | Towardses 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; | |
| ¶ | Therof he takth his maladie: | <i>is afflicted with (see note)</i> |
| 10 | 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 chafed 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,	<i>aid in</i>
	Mi fader, ye, a thousand sithe:	<i>times</i>
	Whanne I have sen another blithe	<i>glad</i>
	Of love, and hadde a goodly chiere,	<i>happy countenance</i>
20	Ethna, which brenneth yer be yere	<i>Etna; burns year by</i>
	Was thanne noght so hot as I	
	Of thilke sor which prively	<i>pain; secretly</i>
	Min hertes thocht withinne brenneth.	<i>burns</i>
	The schip which on the wawes renneth,	
25	And is forstormed and forblowe,	<i>beaten by storms; tossed about by winds</i>
	Is noght more peined for a throwe	<i>time</i>
	Than I am thanne, whanne I se	
	Another which that passeth me	<i>surpasses</i>
	In that fortune of loves gifte.	
30	Bot, fader, this I telle in schrifte,	<i>confession</i>
	That is nowher bot in o place;	<i>one</i>
	For who that lese or finde grace	<i>[should] lose</i>
	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,	<i>knew [that I would] die</i>
	Min herte is full of such sotie,	<i>foolishness</i>
	That I myself mai noght chastie.	<i>chastise (control)</i>
	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 reisshe,	<i>helps them not at all (not a twig)</i>
	Bot only that thei ben in speche),	
	Mi sorwe is thanne noght to seche.	<i>not far away</i>
45	Bot whan thei rounen in hire ere,	<i>whisper; her ear</i>
	Than groweth al my moste fere,	<i>increases; worst fear</i>
	And namly whan thei talen longe;	<i>converse</i>
	Mi sorwes thanne be so stronge	
	Of that I se hem wel at ese,	<i>Because I; them; ease</i>
50	I can noght telle my desese.	
	Bot, sire, as of my ladi selve,	<i>herself</i>
	Thogh sche have wowers ten or twelve,	<i>would-be lovers</i>
	For no mistrust I have of hire	
	Me grieveth noght, for certes, sire,	
55	I trowe, in al this world to seche,	<i>believe; seek</i>
	Nis womman that dede and speche	<i>There is no woman who [by] deed</i>
	Woll betre avise hire what sche doth,	<i>counsel herself</i>
	Ne betre, for to seie a soth,	<i>Nor better, to tell the truth</i>
	Kepe hire honour ate alle tide,	<i>times</i>
60	And yit get hire a thank beside.	<i>earn herself an expression of gratitude as well</i>

- Bot natheles I am beknowe,
 That whanne I se at eny throwe,
 Or elles if I mai it hiere,
 That sche make eny man good chiere,
 65 Thogh I therof have noght to done,
 Mi thought wol entermette him sone.
 For thogh I be miselve strange,
 Envie makth myn herte change,
 That I am sorghfully bestad
 70 Of that I se another glad
 With hire; bot of othre alle,
 Of love what so mai befalle,
 Or that he faile or that he spede,
 Therof take I bot litel heede.
 75 Now have I seid, my fader, al
 As of this point in special,
 Als ferforthli as I have wist.
 Now axeth further what you list.”
[Confessor] “Mi sone, er I axe eny more,
 80 I thenke somdiel for thi lore
 Telle an ensample of this matiere
 Touchende Envie, as thou schalt hiere.
 Write in Civile this I finde:
 Thogh it be noght the houndes kinde
 85 To ete chaf, yit wol he werne
 An oxe which comth to the berne,
 Therof to taken eny fode.
 And thus, who that it understode,
 It stant of love in many place.
 90 Who that is out of loves grace
 And mai himselven noght availe,
 He wolde another scholde faile;
 And if he may put eny lette,
 He doth al that he mai to lette.
 95 Wherof I finde, as thou schalt wite,
 To this pourpos a tale write.

*I acknowledge (confess)**time**hear**interpose itself (interfere) instantly**distant**distressed**Whether . . . or; succeed**understood**desire**before I ask any**Civil Law**hound's nature**straw; harass**barn**advance his own cause**would [have it that]**obstacle**hinder**know***[TALE OF ACIS AND GALATEA]**

- Ther ben of suche mo than twelve,
 That ben noght able as of hemselve
 To gete love, and for Envie
 100 Upon alle othre thei asprie;
 And for hem lacketh that thei wolde,
 Thei kepte that non other scholde
 Touchende of love his cause spede.
 Wherof a gret ensample I rede,

*spy**(see note)**would take care*

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> <i>entreated</i> <i>obtain</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>observe and watch (spy)</i> <i>fared</i> <i>permission</i> <i>might desire</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>success</i> <i>counsel</i> <i>observe everything</i> <i>their; spoil (destroy)</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>unsurpassed</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>hindered</i> <i>bribes; promise</i>
130	That sche ne was al at his heste. This yonge knyht Acis was hote, Which hire ageinward als so hote Al only loveth and no mo. Hierof was Poliphemus wo	<i>command</i> <i>called</i> <i>Who in return just as passionately</i> <i>Exclusively</i>
135	Thurgh pure Envie, and evere aspidé, And waiteth upon every side, Whan he togedre myhte se This yonge Acis with Galathé. So longe he waiteth to and fro,	 <i>looks around everywhere</i>
140	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, It was under a banke nyh	 <i>secret</i> <i>their</i> <i>them saw</i> <i>hill near</i>
145	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, That al his herte hath sette afyre	 <i>inflamed (aroused)</i>
150	Of pure Envie: and as a fyre Which fleth out of a myhti bowe,	<i>bolt for a crossbow</i> <i>flies</i>

	Aweie he fledde for a throwe,	<i>time</i>
	As he that was for love wod,	<i>mad</i>
	Whan that he sih how that it stod.	
155	This Polipheme a geant was;	<i>giant</i>
	And whan he sih the sothe cas,	<i>true situation</i>
	How Galathee him hath forsake	
	And Acis to hire love take,	<i>accepted Acis as her beloved</i>
	His herte mai it noght forbere	
160	That he ne roreth lich a bere;	<i>bear</i>
	And as it were a wilde beste,	
	The whom no reson mihte areste,	<i>restrain</i>
	He ran Ethna the hell aboute,	<i>hill</i>
	Wher nevere yit the fyr was oute,	
165	Fulfild of sorghe and gret desese,	<i>sorrow; agitation</i>
	That he syh Acis wel at ese.	<i>Since; saw</i>
	Til ate laste he him bethoghte,	
	As he which al Envie soghte,	
	And torneth to the banke agein,	
170	Wher he with Galathee hath seyn	
	Acis, whom that he thoghte grieve,	<i>planned to harm</i>
	Thogh he himself mai noght relieve.	
	This geant with his ruide myht	<i>barbarous strength</i>
	Part of the banke he schof down riht,	<i>hill; shoved</i>
175	The which evene upon Acis fell,	
	So that with fallinge of this hell	<i>hill</i>
	This Poliphemus Acis slowh,	<i>killed</i>
	Wherof sche made sorwe ynowh.	<i>enough</i>
	And as sche fledde fro the londe,	
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>obtain</i>
185	This Galathee of whom I speke,	
	That of herself mai noght be wreke,	<i>avenged</i>
	Withouten eny semblant feigned	
	Sche hath hire loves deth compleigned,	
	And with hire sorwe and with hire wo	
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,	
195	With freisshe stremes and with cliere,	<i>streams</i>
	As he whilom with lusti chiere	
	Was freissh his love for to qweme.	<i>please</i>
	And with this ruide Polipheme	<i>crude</i>

For his Envie and for his hate *hatred*
 200 Thei were wrothe.
Confessor And thus algate, *in every respect*
 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 vengeance,
 Which to non other man is lief,
 210 And is unto himselve 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 oght 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 *derives happiness*
 ¶ Of that he seth the hevinesse *(see note)*
 225 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. *powerful*
 Such is the gladschipe of Envie
 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. *admit this to you*
 Of these lovers that loven streyte, *possessively (tightly)*
 And for that point which thei coveite
 Ben poursuiantz fro yeer to yere *plaintiffs*
 240 In loves court, whan I may hiere *hear*
 How that thei clymbe upon the whel, *[Fortune's] wheel*
 And whan thei wene al schal be wel, *think*
 Thei ben down throwen ate laste,
 Thanne am I fedd of that thei faste, *feast on what they starved from*
 245 And lawhe of that I se hem loure; *laugh; them scowl dejectedly*
 And thus of that thei brewe soure
 I drinke swete, and am wel esed
 Of that I wot thei ben desesed. *know; upset*
 Bot this which I you telle hiere
 250 Is only for my lady diere;
 That for non other that I knowe
 Me reccheth noght who overthrowe, *I care not*
 Ne who that stonde in love upriht.
 Bot be he squier, be he knyht,
 255 Which to my ladiward poursuieth,
 The more he lest of that he suieth, *loses; pursues*
 The mor me thenketh that I winne, *it seems to me*
 And am the more glad withinne
 Of that I wot him sorwe endure.
 260 For evere upon such aventure
 It is a confort, as men sein, *(see note)*
 To him the which is wo besein *in a sad state*
 To sen another in his peine,
 So that thei bothe mai compleigne.
 265 Wher I miself mai noght availe *may not help myself*
 To sen another man travaile, *labor*
 I am riht glad if he be let; *hampered*
 And thogh I fare noght the bet,
 His sorwe is to myn herte a game.
 270 Whan that I knowe it is the same
 Which to mi ladi stant enclined,
 And hath his love noght terminated,
 I am riht joifull in my thocht. *brought to a successful conclusion*

If such Envie grieveth oght,
 275 As I beknowe me coupable, *acknowledge myself to be guilty*
 Ye that be wys and resonable,
 Mi fader, telleth youre avis."
Confessor "Mi sone, Envie into no pris *esteem (good repute)*
 Of such a forme, I understonde,
 280 Ne mihte be no resoun stonde. *by no reason*
 For this Envie hath such a kinde, *nature*
 That he wole sette himself behinde *set himself at a disadvantage*
 To hindre with anothre wyht, *To cause hindrance against*
 And gladly lese his oghne riht *lose; entitlement (just claim/possessions)*
 285 To make another lesen his. *lose*
 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.

[TALE OF THE TRAVELERS AND THE ANGEL]

Of Jupiter this finde I write, *written*
 How whilom that he wolde wite *once; wished to investigate*
 ¶ Upon the pleigntes whiche he herde, *complaints (see note)*
 Among the men how that it ferde, *fared*
 295 As of here wrong condicion *Specifically concerning their*
 To do justificacion. *bring justice*
 And for that cause down 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 enforme,
 Was clothed in a mannes forme,
 And overtok, I understonde,
 Tuo men that wented over londe,
 305 Thurgh whiche he thoughte to asprie
 His cause, and goth in compaignie.
 This angel with hise wordes wise
 Opposeth hem in sondri wise, *Questions*
 Now lowde wordes and now softe, *Now [with] loud*
 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, *one*

	And his fela was envious.	<i>companion</i>
	And thus, whan he hath knowlechinge,	<i>recognition of this</i>
320	Anon he feigneth departinge,	
	And seide he mot algate wende.	<i>must soon leave</i>
	Bot herkne now what fell at ende:	
	For thanne he made hem understonde	
	That he was there of Goddes sonde,	<i>by God's command</i>
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,	<i>most dear according to his desire</i>
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.	<i>appoints</i>
335	The coveitous was wonder glad,	<i>covetous person</i>
	And to that other man he bad	
	And seith that he ferst axe scholde,	
	For he supposeth that he wolde	
	Make his axinge of worldes good;	<i>request</i>
340	For thanne he knew wel how it stod,	
	That he himself be double weyhte	<i>by</i>
	Schal after take, and thus be sleyhte,	
	Because that he wolde winne,	<i>Since he wished to</i>
	He bad his fela ferst beginne.	
345	This envious, thogh it be late,	<i>envious person</i>
	Whan that he syh he mot algate	
	Make his axinge ferst, he thoghte,	
	If he worschipe or profit soghte,	
	It schal be doubled to his fiere:	<i>companion</i>
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,	<i>one eye</i>
	So that his fela nothing syhe.	<i>might see</i>
	This word was noght so sone spoke,	
	That his on yhe anon was loke,	<i>blinded (shut)</i>
	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,	<i>laughed</i>
	He sette his on yhe at no cost,	
	Wherof that other two hath lost.	

- 365 Of thilke ensample which fell tho,
 Men tellen now fulofte so,
 The world empeireth comunly, *becomes worse*
 And yit wot non the cause why. *none know*
 For it acordeth noght to kinde
- 370 Min oghne harm to seche and finde
 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, *set*
 Bot in the wise as I you tolde. *Except*
 Bot overmore, if that ye wolde
 Oght elles to my schrifte seie
- 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; *know not one of any*
- 385 Bot natheles, suche as thei be,
 Yit is ther on, and that is he
- ☞ Which cleped is Detraccioun. *(see note)*
 And to conferme his accioun, *deed*
 He hath withholde Malebouche, *retained*
- 390 Whos tunge neither pyl ne crouche²
 Mai hyre, so that he pronounce
 A plein good word withoute frounce *complication (ambiguity)*
 Awher behinde a mannes bak. *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”)

	For though he preise, he fint som lak,	<i>finds (invents)</i>
395	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	<i>always the conclusion good rep[ut]e; destroy</i>
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,	<i>quarrel; nonetheless office of herald are accustomed to deceit nettle stings (burns)</i>
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,	<i>honor lies; devises</i>
410	Is non so good that he ne passeth Betwen his teeth and is bachited, And thurgh his false tunge endited. Lich to the scharnebudes kinde, Of whos nature this I finde,	<i>traduced composed dung beetle's (scarab's) nature</i>
415	That in the hoteste of the dai, Whan comen is the merie Maii, He sprat his wynges and up he fleth. And under al aboute he seth The faire lusti floures springe,	<i>in all directions; sees</i>
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.	<i>excrement</i>
425	Riht so this janglere envious, Thogh he a man se vertuous And full of good condicioun, Therof makth he no mencion: Bot elles, be it noght so lyte,	<i>backbiter</i>
430	Wherof 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,	<i>regardless of how insignificant it may be blame (fault)</i>
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	<i>known</i>
440	To sette on every man a vice.	<i>school</i>

	How so his mouth be comely, His word sit evermore awry And seith the worste that he may.	<i>askance (slandorous)</i>
445	And in this wise now a day In loves court a man mai hierie Fulofte pleigne of this matiere, That many envious tale is stered, Wher that it mai noght ben ansuered; Bot yit fulofte it is believed,	<i>proposed (concocted)</i>
450	And many a worthi love is grieved Thurgh bacbitinge of fals Envie.	<i>injured</i>
☞	If thou have mad such janglerie In loves court, mi sone, er this, Schrif thee therof.”	<i>(see note)</i> <i>Confess yourself</i>
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 worthinesse,	<i>equal</i>
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,	<i>preoccupation</i> <i>crowd</i>
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,	<i>abides</i> <i>invents</i>
470	That there winneth no man lond; Sche lieveth noght al that sche hiereth, And thus fulofte himself sche skiereth And is al war of ‘hadde I wist.’ Bot for al that myn herte arist,	<i>their</i> <i>‘unknown unkissed’</i> <i>thumb; holds; fist</i> <i>tightly; own hand</i> <i>gains; ground</i> <i>believes</i> <i>defends (preserves)</i> <i>‘if I had only known’</i> <i>swells with passion</i> <i>promiscuous</i> <i>three [women]</i>
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,	<i>afraid of</i> <i>In case</i>
480	In aunter if with eny wyle Thei mihte hire innocence enchaunte. Forthi my wordes ofte I haunte Behynden hem, so as I dar, Wherof my ladi may be war:	<i>employ</i>
485	I sai what evere comth to mowthe, And worse I wolde, if that I cowthe;	

- For whanne I come unto hir speche,
 Al that I may enquire and seche
 Of such deceipte, I telle it al,
 490 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.
 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,
 500 To chese among a thousand score,
 Which were alfulli for to triste,
 Mi ladi lovede, and I it wiste,
 Yit rathere thanne he scholde spede,
 I wolde swiche tales sprede
 505 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,
 510 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;
 515 And that me makth fulofte asprie
 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,
 520 For evere on hem I rounge and gknaue
 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,
 525 Therof I wol me wel avise,
 To speke or jangle in eny wise
 That toucheth to my ladi name,
 The which in earnest and in game
 I wolde save into my deth.
 530 For me were levere lacke breth
 Than speken of hire name amis.
 Now have ye herd touchende of this,
 Mi fader, in confessioun,
- knew*
be trusted
would like; would intend
deceitful
intend wickedness
vigorous
truth
the utterly most true; born
fully
if I knew it
succeed
dislodge
continuously spy
only of the same sort
slander; disparage
protect
rather lack life

- And therfor of Detraccioun
 535 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 *desist from*
 What thing that ye wol noght allowe.
 540 For who is bounden, he mot bowe. *compelled; comply*
 So wol I bowe unto youre heste, *command*
 For I dar make this beheste, *promise*
 That I to yow have nothing hid,
 Bot told riht as it is betid. *has happened*
 545 And otherwise of no mispeche,
 Mi conscience for to seche,
 I can noght of Envie finde,
 That I mispoke have oght behinde
 Wherof love owhte be mispaid. *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.
 Ther wol no man drinke of tho welles *those*
 565 Whiche as he wot is puyson inne; *poison*
 And ofte swich as men beginne
 Towardes othre, swich thei finde,
 That set hem ofte fer behinde,
 Whan that thei wene be before. *think to have the advantage*
 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, *speck of dirt*
 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 amendement, *[moral] improvement*
 A tale of gret entendement
 585 I thenke telle for thi sake,
 Wherof thou miht ensample take.

[TALE OF CONSTANCE]

¶ A worthi kniht in Cristes lawe *(see note)*
 Of grete Rome, as is the sawe, *so says the story*
 The sceptre hadde for to rihte; *rule*
 590 Tiberie Constantin he hihte, *was called*
 Whos wif was cleped Ytalie.
 Bot thei togedre of progenie
 No children hadde bot a maide,
 And sche the God so wel apaide, *pleased*
 595 That al the wide worlde's fame
 Spak worschipe of hire goode name.
 Constance, as the cronique seith,
 Sche hihte, and was so ful of feith,
 That the greteste of Barbarie, *nobility of heathendom*
 600 Of hem whiche usen marchandie, *who engage in commerce*
 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. *renounce*
 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 *their*
 With al the hole circumstance. *whole*
 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

- 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:
 Wherof the fader in himselve
- 635 Was glad, and with the pope avised
 Tuo cardinals he hath assised *appointed*
 With othre lordes many mo, *more*
 That with his doghter scholden go,
 To se the Souldan be converted.
- 640 Bot that which nevere was wel herted, *of a kind disposition*
 ¶ Envie, tho began travaile *to work (see note)*
 In destourbance of this spousaile *marriage*
 So prively that non was war. *secretly*
 The moder which this Souldan bar
- 645 Was thanne alyve, and thoghte this
 Unto himself: '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 worschipful a wif,
 The doughter of an emperour,
 To wedde it schal be gret honour.
- 665 Forthi, mi sone, I you besече
 That I such grace mihte areche, *obtain*
 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.'

	The Souldan granteth hire axinge, And sche therof was glad ynowh. For under that anon sche drowh	<i>request</i>
675	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,	<i>Conspiracy</i>
680	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,	<i>agreement</i> <i>hidden</i>
685	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,	<i>Either publically or privately</i> <i>All along the table</i>
690	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.	<i>hindered</i> <i>acquitted</i> <i>circumstance</i>
695	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	
700	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,	<i>Covered with blood</i>
705	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,	<i>female pagan</i>
710	In which the good and hire in fiere, Vitaile full for yeres fyve; Wher that the wynd it wolde dryve, Sche putte upon the wawes wilde.	<i>prepared</i> <i>empty; rudder</i> <i>her (Constance) together</i> <i>Fully provided with food</i>
715	Bot He which alle thing mai schilde, 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	<i>waves</i> <i>protect (see note)</i> <i>guide</i>

- Under a castel with the flod,
 720 Which upon Humber banke stod
 And was the kynges oghne also,
 The which Allee was cleped tho, *called then*
 A Saxon and a worthi knyht,
 Bot he believeth noght ariht. *in the right way*
 725 Of this castell was chastellein
 Elda the kinges chamberlein,
 A knyhtly man after his lawe;
 And whan he sih upon the wawe *saw; waves*
 The schip drivende alone so,
 730 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 *short time*
 735 It wiste, and with his wif anon *knew*
 Toward this yonge ladi gon,
 Wher that thei founden gret richesse.
 Bot sche hire wolde noght confesse,
 Whan thei hire axen what sche was. *explain herself*
 740 And natheles upon the cas
 Out of the schip with gret worschipe *honor*
 Thei toke hire into felaschipe,
 As thei that weren of hir glade.
 Bot sche no maner joie made,
 745 Bot sorweth sore of that sche fond *sorely because; found*
 No Cristendom in thilke lond.
 Bot elles sche hath al hire wille,
 And thus with hem sche duelleth stille. *in quiet*
 Dame Hermyngheld, which was the wif
 750 Of Elda, lich her oghne lif
 ¶ Constance loveth; and fell so, *(see note)*
 Spekende alday betwen hem two,
 Thurgh grace of Goddes pourveance
 This maiden tawhte the creance *faith*
 755 Unto this wif so parfitly, *perfectly*
 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,
 760 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,
 765 Received hast, gif me my sihte.'

	Upon his word hire herte afflihte	<i>was disturbed</i>
	Thenkende what was best to done,	
	Bot natheles sche herde his bone	<i>prayer</i>
	And seide, 'In trust of Cristes lawe,	
770	Which don was on the crois and slawe,	<i>Who was put; slain</i>
	Thou bysne man, behold and se.'	<i>dim-eyed man, look</i>
	With that to God upon his kne	
	Thonkende he tok his sihte anon,	<i>received</i>
	Wherof thei merveile everychon,	
775	Bot Elda wondreth most of alle.	
	This open thing which is befall	
	Concludeth him be such a weie,	<i>Constrained</i>
	That he the feith mot nede obeie.	
¶	Now lest what fell upon this thing.	<i>listen (see note)</i>
780	This Elda forth unto the king	
	A morwe tok his weie and rod,	<i>rode</i>
	And Hermyngeld at home abod	
	Forth with Constance wel at ese.	
	Elda, which thoghte his king to plese,	
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	
790	That he him mihte of hire avise,	<i>scrutinize</i>
	The time apointed forthwithal.	
	This Elda triste in special	
	Upon a knyht, whom fro childhode	
	He hadde updrawe into manhode.	<i>raised</i>
795	To him he tolde al that he thoghte,	
	Wherof that after him forthoghte;	<i>he regretted</i>
	And natheles at thilke tide	<i>time</i>
	Unto his wif he bad him ride	
	To make redi alle thing	
800	Agein the cominge of the king,	<i>Against</i>
	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;	
805	And soth was that of time passed	
	He hadde in al his wit compassed	<i>devised</i>
	How he Constance myhte winne.	<i>conquer [sexually]</i>
	Bot he sih tho no sped therinne,	
	Wherof his lust began t'abate,	<i>to decline</i>
810	And that was love is thanne hate;	<i>hatred</i>
	Of hire honour he hadde Envie,	
	So that upon his tricherie	

	A lesinge in his herte he caste.	<i>deceit; plotted</i>
	Til he cam home he hieth faste,	<i>hastens swiftly</i>
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	<i>its</i> <i>prepared</i>
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.	<i>razor</i> <i>side of the bed</i>
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	<i>dim</i> <i>lying</i>
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	<i>dead; bleeding</i>
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,	<i>fainting dead away; fear</i> <i>calls</i>
850	And up sterte every man aboute, Into the chambre and forth thei wente. Bot he, which alle untrouthe mente, This false knyht, among hem alle Upon this thing which is befall	<i>unfaithfulness intended</i>
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,	<i>deed</i> <i>went</i> <i>pretended; search</i>

- 860 And thanne he cride and thanne he seide,
 'Lo, seth the knif al bloody hier!
 What nedeth more in this matiere
 To axe?' And thus hire innocence
 He slaundreth 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, *[So] that; know*
 'Now be this bok, which hier is write,
 Constance is gultif, wel I wot.'
 With that the hond of hevene him smot
 875 In tokne of that he was forswore, *perjured*
 That he hath bothe hise yhen lore, *eyes lost*
 Out of his hed the same stounde *instant*
 Thei sterde, and so thei weren founde. *popped out*
 A vois was herd, whan that they felle,
 880 Which seide, 'O dampned man to helle,
 Lo, thus hath God the slaundre wroke
 That thou agein Constance hast spoke:
 Beknow the sothe er that thou dye.'
 And he told out his felonie, *avenged*
 885 And starf forth with his tale anon. *Confess*
 Into the ground, wher alle gon, *confessed*
 This dede lady was begrave. *died*
 Elda, which thoghte his honour save,
 889 Al that he mai restreigneth sorwe.
 For the seconde dai a morwe *(see note)*
 The king cam, as thei were acorded;
 And whan it was to him recorded *reported*
 What God hath wroght upon this chaunce,
 He tok it into remembrance
 895 And thoghte more than he seide.
 For al his hole herte he leide *whole*
 Upon Constance, and seide he scholde
 For love of hire, if that sche wolde,
 Baptesme take and Cristes feith *Be baptized*
 900 Believe, and over that he seith
 He wol hire wedde, and upon this
 Asseured ech til other is. *Each of them makes vows to the other*
 And for to make schorte tales,
 Ther cam a Bisschop out of Wales
 905 Fro Bangor, and Lucie he hihte, *was named*
 Which thurgh the grace of God almihte

- The king with many another mo *more*
 Hath cristned, and between hem tuo
 He hath fulfild the mariage.
- 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, *in an instant*
 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 *intent*
 Upon a werre and moste ride; *war*
 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. *also*
 And he with pouer goth to seke *with [a] force*
 Agein the Scottes for to fonde *wage*
- 930 The werre which he tok on honde.
 ¶ The time set of kinde is come: *by nature (see note)*
 This lady hath hire chambre nome, *taken*
 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,

- Bot in the nyht al prively
 955 Sche tok the lettres whiche he hadde,
 Fro point to point and overradde,
 As sche that was thurghout untrewē, *utterly unfaithful*
 And let do wryten othre newe *had written*
 959 In stede of hem, and thus thei spieke:
 ☞ ‘Oure liege lord, we thee beseke *(see note)*
 That thou with ous ne be noght wroth,
 Though we such thing as is thee loth
 Upon oure trowthe certefie. *faith*
 Thi wif, which is of faierie,
 965 Of such a child delivered is
 Fro kinde which stant al amis: *nature; entirely amiss*
 Bot for it scholde noght be seie, *seen*
 We have it kept out of the weie
 For drede of pure worldes schame,
 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 knowen of this priveté.
 975 Moris it hatte, and thus men wene *deem*
 That it was boren of the qweene
 And of thin oghne bodi gete. *begotten*
 Bot this thing mai noght be forgete,
 That thou ne sende ous word anon *But that you send*
 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: *notice*
 And sche, which thoghte to deceive,
 985 It leith wher sche that other tok.
 This messenger, 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 messenger 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 messenger was gifteles,

¹ Lines 970–72: I.e., we replaced it with a healthy child of poor parents

- Bot with this lettre natheles,
 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 advantage,
 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,
 Hireself 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 forfet.'
 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 strengthened 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 stieward hadde,

*As [iff]; 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, *who was utterly vicious*
 A fals knyht and a renegat. *apostate*
 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, *sized her up*
 And sih sche was a worthi wiht, *handsome creature*
 1100 And thoghte he wolde upon the nyht
 Demene hire at his oghne wille, *Have intercourse with her*
 And let hire be therinne stille, *leave her there alone*
 That mo men sih sche noght that dai. *[So] that*
 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 certainly sche scholde deie.
 Sche sih ther was non other weie,
 And seide he scholde hire wel conforte,
 That he ferst loke out ate porte, *If he would*
 1115 That no man were nyh the stede, *place*
 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. *went*
 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, *favorable*
 And thus the myhti Goddes hond
 1125 Hire hath conveied and defended.
 ☞ And whan thre yer be full despended, *passed (see note)*
 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. *remained*
 This grete schip on anker rod;
 The lord cam forth, and whan he sih
 That other ligge aboard so nyh, *[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, *crept into seclusion*
 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 *inquire*
 Began, fro whenne that sche cam,
 And what sche was. Quod sche, 'I am
 A womman woefully bestad. *afflicted*
 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. *know 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 *moreover*
 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 *Muslim world*
 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. *Provided that*
 And thus upon here aqueintance *their familiarity*
 He tolde hire plainly as it stod,
 1180 Of Rome how that the gentil blod
 In Barbarie was betraied, *betrayed*
 And therupon he hath assaied
 Be werre, and taken such vengeance,
 That non of al thilke alliance, *members of the alliance*
 1185 Be whom the tresoun was compassed,

- 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 natheles in this matiere
 It happeth tilke time so,
 This lord, with whom sche scholde go,
- 1195 Of Rome was the senatour,
 And of hir fader th'emperour
 His brother doughter hath to wyve, *brother's; as a wife*
 Which hath hir fader ek alyve,
 And was Salustes cleped tho; *called*
- 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 plihthe, *pledged*
 Forevere, whil he live mihte,
 To kepe in worschipe and in welthe,
 Be so that God wol give hire helthe, *Provided that*
 This ladi, which fortune him sende.
- 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 twelve 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 *nonetheless*
 Thei thoghten wel sche hadde be
 In hire astat of hih degré,
 1225 And every lif hire loveth wel.
- ¶ Now herke how tilke unstable whel *(see note)*
 Which evere torneth went aboute. *turned again*
 The king Allee, whil he was oute, *away at war*
 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

- 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 lettre 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 naghre, *nowhere*
- 1245 In al the world thogh men it soghte,
 Was nevere womman that forth broghte
 A fairer child than it was on.
 And thanne he axede hem anon,
 Whi thei ne hadden write so?
- 1250 Thei tolden so thei hadden do. *spoke as*
 He seide, 'Nay.' Thei seiden, 'Yis.'
 The lettre schewed rad it is,
 Which thei forsoken everidel. *utterly repudiated*
- Tho was it understonde wel
- 1255 That ther is tresoun in the thing.
 The messenger tofore the king
 Was broght and sodeinliche opposed; *interrogated*
 And he, which nothing hath supposed
 Bot alle wel, began to seie
- 1260 That he nagher upon the weie *nowhere*
 Abod, bot only in a stede; *one place*
 And cause why that he so dede
 Was, as he wente to and fro,
 At Knaresburgh be nyhtes tuo
- 1265 The kinges moder made him duelle.
 And whan the king it herde telle,
 Withinne his herte he wiste als faste *knew immediately*
 The treson which his moder caste. *had perpetrated*
 And thoghte he wolde noght abide, *delay*
- 1270 Bot forth riht in the same tide *time*
 He tok his hors and rod anon.
 With him ther riden mani on, *many [a] one*
 To Knaresburgh and forth thei wente,
 And lich the fyr which tunder hente, *tinder catches*
- 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 *devil; legal punishment*
 Hast thou deserved for to deie,

- 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, *promise*
- 1285 I schal be venged er I go.
 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 wrought.
 And tho sche was to dethe broght
 And brent tofore hire sones yhe;
 Wherof 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. *And every person laments for Constance*
 Bot he, whom alle wo distreigneth, *torments*
 This sorghfull king, was so bestad, *distressed*
 That he schal nevermor be glad,
- 1305 He seith, eftsone for to wedde, *ever again*
 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, *(see note)*
 Whan he hise werres hadde achieved,
 And thoghte he wolde be relieved
 Of soule hele upon the feith *soul's health; by means of*
 Which he hath take, thanne he seith
- 1315 That he to Rome in pelrinage *pilgrimage*
 Wol go, wher pope was Pelage, *Pelagius*
 To take his absolucioun.
 And upon this condicioun
 He made Edwyn his lieutenant,
- 1320 Which heir to him was apparant, *Who was his heir apparent*
 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,

	Was sent tofore to pourveie;	<i>make provisions</i>
	And he his guide upon the weie,	
	In help to ben his herbergour,	<i>harbinger</i>
1330	Hath axed who was senatour,	
	That he his name myhte kenne.	<i>know</i>
	Of Capadoce, he seide, Arcenne	
	He hihthe, and was a worthi kniht.	<i>is called</i>
	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;	<i>allocate; lodging</i>
	And he so dede of good corage.	<i>good-heartedly</i>
	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	<i>constricted</i>
	Aswoune fell, and he merveileth	<i>Fainted</i>
	So sodeinly what thing hire eyleth,	<i>ails</i>
	And cawhte hire up, and whan sche wok,	
1350	Sche syketh with a pitous lok	<i>sighs</i>
	And feigneth seknesse of the see;	<i>sea sickness</i>
	Bot it was for the king Allee,	<i>because of</i>
	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,	<i>could find out</i>
	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.	<i>feast</i>
	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.	<i>might often see him</i>
1370	Moris tofore the kinges yhe	
	Upon the morwe, wher he sat,	
	Fulofte stod, and upon that	
	The king his chiere upon him caste,	

- 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 *tables; out of the way*
 And every man was rise aboute,
 The king hath weyved al the route, *dismissed; company*
 And with the senatour alone
 1430 He spak and preide him of a bone, *petition*
 To se this Couste, wher sche duelleth
 At hom with him, so as he telleth.
 The senatour was wel appaied; *pleased*
 This thing no lengere is delaied.
 1435 To se this Couste goth the king,
 And sche was warned of the thing, *given notice*
 And with Heleine forth sche cam
 Agein the king, and he tho nam *Toward; then took*
 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 *creature; saw; knew*
 A man that more joie made,
 Wherof thei 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, *desire*
 In Rome for a time stille
 Abod and made him wel at ese.
 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. *endeavored to learn*
 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'emperour 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 dowhter wente away
 He was thanne after nevere glad;

- 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 *excited*
 Of that sche tolde in remembrance;
- 1520 And whanne he wiste it was Constance,
 Was nevere fader half so blithe. *knew*
 Wepende he keste hire ofte siþe, *glad*
 So was his herte al overcome; *kissed; repeatedly*
 For thogh his moder were come *[even] though*
- 1525 Fro deth to lyve out of the grave,
 He mihte no mor wonder have
 Than he hath whan that he hire sih.
 With that hire oghne lord cam nyh *near*
 And is to th'emperour obeied; *submissive*
- 1530 Bot whan the fortune is bewreied, *revealed*
 How that Constance is come aboute,
 So hard an herte was non oute,
 That he for pit   tho ne wepte. *met with a certain fortune*
 Arcennus, which hire fond and kepte,
- 1535 Was thanne glad of that is falle,
 So that with joie among hem alle
 Thei riden in at Rome gate.
 This emperour thoghte al to late,
 Til that the pope were come,
- 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,
- 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 *hope*
 That Moris was apparant heir
 And scholde abide with hem stille,
- 1554 For such was al the londes wille.
    Whan everything was fulli spoke, *(see note)*
 Of sorwe and queint was al the smoke, *quenched*
 Tho tok his leve Allee the king,
 And with full many a riche thing,
 Which th'emperour him hadde give,
- 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, *by God's command*
 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, *redeemed*
 The deth, comende er he be soght,
 1575 Tok with this king such aqueintance, *fellowship*
 That he with al his retenance
 Ne mihte noght defende his lif;
 And thus he parteth from his wif,
 Which thanne made sorwe ynowh. *Who*
- 1580 And therupon hire herte drowh
 To leven Engelond forevere
 And go wher that sche hadde levere, *rather [be]*
 To Rome, whenne that sche cam. *whence*
 And thus of al the lond sche nam *took*
- 1585 Hir leve, and goth to Rome agein.
 And after that the bokes sein, *according to what*
 Sche was noght there bot a throwe, *short time*
 Whan deth of kinde hath overthrowe
- ☞ Hir worthi fader, which men seide *(see note)*
 1590 That he betwen hire armes deide.
 And afterward the yer suiende *following*
 ☞ The God hath mad of hire an ende, *(see note)*
 And fro this worldes faierie
- ☞ Hath take hire into compaignie. *(see note)*
 1595 Moris hir sone was corouned,
 Which so ferforth was abandouned *devoted fully*
 To Cristes feith, that men him calle
 Moris the Cristeneste of alle. *most Christian*
- And thus the wel meninge of love
 1600 Was ate laste set above;
 And so as thou hast herd tofore,
 The false tungen weren lore, *lost*
 Whiche upon love wolden lie.
 Forthi touchende of this Envie
 1605 Which longeth unto bacbitinge, *defamation*
 Be war thou make no lesinge *lying*
 In hindringe of another wiht.
 And if thou wolt be tawht ariht

What meschief bakbitinge doth
 1610 Be other weie, a tale soth
 Now miht thou hier next suiende, *following*
 Which to this vice is acordende.

[TALE OF DEMETRIUS AND PERSEUS]

☞ In a cronique, as thou schalt wite, *know (see note)*
 A gret ensample I finde write,
 1615 Which I schal telle upon this thing.
 Philippe of Macedoyne kyng
 Two sones hadde be his wif,
 Whos fame is yit in Grece rif. *well known*
 Demetrius the ferste brother
 1620 Was hote, and Perseus that other. *was called*
 Demetrius men seiden tho
 The betre knyht was of the tuo,
 To whom the lond was entendant,
 As he which heir was apparant
 1625 To regne after his fader dai.
 Bot that thing which no water mai
 Quenche in this world, bot evere brenneth, *burns*
 Into his brother herte it renneth,
 The proude Envie of that he sih *because he saw*
 1630 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 fonde, *By force of arms; attempt*
 So tok he lesinge upon honde, *lying*
 1635 Whan he sih time and spak therto.
 For it befell that time so,
 His fader grete werres hadde
 With Rome, whiche he streite ladde *turbulently led*
 Thurgh mihty hond of his manhode,
 1640 As he which hath ynowh knihthode,
 And ofte hem hadde sore grieved.
 Bot er the werre were achieved,
 As he was upon ordinance
 At hom in Grece, it fell per chance,
 1645 Demetrius, which ofte aboute
 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
 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, *promised*
 1665 That he with hem schal regne in pes.
 Thus hath he cast for his encress *determined; gain*
 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, *advantage (benefit)*
 1675 Which so hath schapen ous the werste,
 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 spede,
 In comun place of juggement.
 The king therto gaf his assent;
 Demetrius was put in hold,
 1690 Wherof that Perseüs was bold.
 Thus stod the trowthe under the charge,
 And the falshede goth at large,
 Which thurgh behestes 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

	The maladie of which nature Is queint in every creature.	<i>depression by which natural vigor (see note)</i>
	And whan this king was passed thus,	<i>quenched</i>
1750	This false-tunged Perseüs The regiment hath underfonge.	<i>entrapped by grief</i>
	Bot ther mai nothing stonde longe Which is noght upon trowthe grounded, For God, which alle thing hath bounded	<i>government; seized</i>
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.	<i>limited</i>
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, Wherof he made a besi haste,	<i>For as suddenly as</i>
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,	<i>military force prepared himself</i>
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	<i>vigorous</i>
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.	<i>army</i>
1780	And whanne he scholde his leve take Of a yong dowhter 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,	<i>excuse [from conscription]</i>
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,	<i>who was called</i>
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	<i>in her innocence</i>
		<i>head</i>
		<i>be unfavorable to him</i>

- Most of an hound was to him lik:
 1795 For as it is an houndes kinde
 To berke upon a man behinde, *bark at a man from behind*
 Riht so behinde his brother bak
 With false wordes whiche he spak
 He hath do slain, and that is rowthe. *causes to be slain; pity*
 1800 'Bot he which hateth alle untrowthe,
 The hihe God, it schal redresse;
 For so my dowhter prophessee
 Forth with hir litel houndes deth
 Betokneth.' And thus forth he geth *goes*
 1805 Conforted of this evidence,
 With the Romeins in his defence
 Agein the Greks that ben comende.
 This Perseüs, as noght seende *not seeing*
 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. *reign obtained*
 Bot he hath al the riht forgete
 1815 Which longeth unto governance.
 Wherof thurgh Goddes ordinance
 It fell, upon the wynter tide
 That with his host he scholde ride
 Over Danubie thilke flod, *river*
 1820 Which al befroze thanne stod *frozen over*
 So harde, that he wende wel *knew well*
 To passe. Bot the blinde whiel, *blind (governed by chance)*
 Which torneth ofte er men be war,
 Thilke ys which that the horsmen bar
 1825 Tobrak, so that a gret partie *Broke apart*
 Was dreint; of the chivalerie
 The rerewarde it tok aweie; *rear guard*
 Cam non of hem to londe dreie. *dry*
 Paulus the worthi kniht Romein
 1830 Be his asprie 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, *marshaled*
 And whan that he was embatailled, *arrayed for battle*
 He goth and hath the feld assailed, *besieged*
 And slowh and tok al that he fond;
 1840 Wherof the Macedoyne lond,

- Which thurgh king Alisandre honoured
 Long time stod, was tho devoured.
 To Perse and al that infortune *And on Perseus*
 Thei wyte, so that the comune *lay the blame*
- 1845 Of al the lond his heir exile;
 And he despeired for the while
 Desguised in a povere wede *beggar's clothes*
 To Rome goth, and ther for nede
 The craft which thilke time was,
 1850 To worche in latoun and in bras, *bronze*
 He lerneth for his sustenance.
 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 hungre and defalte of bred. *lack of food*
 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. *person*
 Forthi with al thin hole miht,
 1865 Mi sone, eschuie thilke vice.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, elles were I nyce: *stupid*
 For ye therof so wel have spoke,
 That it is in myn herte loke *locked*
 And evere schal. Bot of Envie,
 1870 If ther be more in his baillie *charge*
 Towards love, sai me what.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, as guile under the hat
 With sleyhtes of a tregetour *sleight of hand; magician*
 Is hidd, Envie of such colour
 1875 Hath yit the ferthe deceivant,
 The which is cleped Falssemblant, *False-seeming*
 Wherof 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 vota tegit.
 Vultus habet lucem, tenebras mens, sermo salutem,
 Actus set morbum dat suus esse grauem.
 Pax tibi quam spondet, magis est prenostica 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 flod which is the tyde,
☞ Ne how he scholde himselven guide (see note)
1885 To take sauf passage there.
And yit the wynd to mannes ere ear
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 untrewre Ypocrisie,
Whos word descordeth 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 causes; waves to ride
In gret tempeste and gret debat,
Wherof 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 nevere 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,
 Thanne is he most derk in his thoght.
 1920 Thogh men him se, thei knowe him noght;
 Bot as it scheweth in the glas
 Thing which therinne nevere was,
 So scheweth it in his visage
 That nevere was in his corage. *That [which] never*
 1925 Thus doth he al his thing with slechte.
 ☞ Now ley thi conscience in weyhte, *balance (see note)*
 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 advise,
 Mi goode fader, certes no.
 If I for love have oght do so,
 Now asketh, I wol praie 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;
 So were he sori, were he glad,
 Whan that thou wistest how it were, *by love guided*
 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
 Bot thou, be whom he was deceived *In a case in which; knew*
 1950 Of love and from his pourpos weyved; *by*
 And thoghtest that his destourbance *turned away*
 Thin oghne cause scholde avance, *advance*
 As who saith, ‘I am so celee, *secretive*
 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
 As for the more part I say; *In general*
 Bot of somdiel I am beknowe, *acknowledge*

- 1960 That I mai stonde in thilke rowe
 Amonges hem that saundres use. *false colors (lit., red sandalwood)*
 I wol me noght therof excuse,
 That I with such colour ne steyne, *stain*
 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; *suspects*
 And if so be myn herte soucheth
- 1970 That oght 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, *Since*
 Fulofte sihe I overthroe, *Many times*
 Whan that he weneth best to stonde. *thinks*
 Bot this I do you understonde,
 If that a man love elleswhere,
- 1980 So that my ladi be noght there, *Provided that*
 And he me telle, I wole it hide. *If*
 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. *set aside*
 Bot if it touche on eny side
- 1995 Mi ladi, as I have er spoken, *previously*
 Myn eres ben noght thanne loken. *locked shut*
 For certes, whanne that betitt,
 Mi will, myn herte, and al my witt
 Ben fully set to herkne and spire *listen; inquire*
- 2000 What eny man wol speke of hire.
 Thus have I feigned compaignie
 Fulofte, for I wolde asprie
 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

- 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 foreveremore.
 That other cause, I you assure,
 Is, why that I be coverture
 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 Forwhy and 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 asprie,
 2030 Why that I feigne compaignie
 And make felawe overal;
 For gladly wolde I knowen 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 hierde how thei have wrought,
 2040 I fare as thogh I herde it noght
 And as I no word understode;
 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,
 Although myn herte nedes mote,
 Thurgh strengthe of love, al that I hierde
- 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 thought,
 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; repute**trial**know not*

- Of suche as we Lombardes calle.
 For thei ben the slyeste of alle, *most sneaky*
 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. *lose*
 Thei ben the laste and yit thei chese, *choose*
 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 *fetter*
 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, *gang*
 Mai Falssemblant in special *manipulate*
 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 *teach*
 A craft which cleped is Fa-crere. *called; Make-believe*
 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 toforn,
 In all his weie he fynt no lette;
 2130 That dore can non huisscher schette *hindrance*
 In which him list to take entré: *door; usher close*
 And thus the conseil most secré *he desires*
 of every thing Fa-crere knoweth,
 Which into strange place he bloweth, *spreads about*
 2135 Where as he wot it mai most grieve. *harm*
 And thus Fa-crere makth believe, *creates credence (confidence)*
 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, *in former times*
 Him oghte be the more war *wary*
 Of alle tho that feigne chiere, *all those who*
 Wherof thou schalt a tale hiere.

[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 covenant, breaks
 And many a fraude of fals conseil
 Ther ben hangende upon his seil. sail
 And that aboghten gultes paid the penalty
 Bothe Deianire and Hercules,
- 2155 The whiche in gret desese felle
 Thurgh Falssemblant, as I schal telle.
 Whan Hercules withinne a throwe one time
 Al only hath his herte throwe
 Upon this faire Deianire,
- 2160 It fell him on a dai desire,
 Upon a rivere as he stod, river
 That passe he wolde over the flod boat
 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, giant; near
 Which Nessus hihte, and whanne he sih was called; saw
 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, locked
 And thanne he thoghte it schal be wroke. satisfied
- 2175 Bot he ne dorste natheles
 Agein this worthi Hercules
 Falle in debat as for to feihte; do battle
 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 their
 He is al redy for to do
 What thing he mai; and it fell so
- 2185 That thei upon his Semblant triste, trusted
 And axen him if that he wiste knew
 What thing hem were best to done,
 So that thei mihten sauf and sone safe and sound
 The water passe, he and sche.

- 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, *deceitfully*
 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 *their eye*
 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; *passage*
 Bot for to helpe in such a cas,
 He seith himself that for here ese
 He wolde, if that it mihte hem plese,
 The passage of the water take,
- 2210 And for this ladi undertake
 To bere unto that other stronde *shore*
 And sauf to sette hire up alonde, *upon*
 And Hercules may thanne also
 The weie knowe how he schal go,
- 2215 And herto thei acorden alle.
 Bot what as after schal befalle,
 Wel payd was Hercules of this, *pleased*
 And this geant also glad is,
 And tok this ladi up alofte
- 2220 And set hire on his schuldre softe *gently*
 And in the flod began to wade,
 As he which no grucching made, *complaining (i.e., apparently gladly)*
 And bar hire over sauf and sound.
 Bot whanne he stod on dreie ground
- 2225 And Hercules was fer behinde, *dry*
 He sette his trowthe al out of mynde, *far*
 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 *move himself*
 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, *arrow*

	Which he tofore hadde envenimed.	<i>previously; poisoned</i>
	He hath so wel his schote timed,	
	That he him thurgh the bodi smette,	<i>smote</i>
2240	And thus the false wiht he lette.	<i>stopped (prevented)</i>
	Bot lest now such a felonie:	<i>hear</i>
	Whan Nessus wiste he scholde die,	
	He tok to Deianyre his scherte,	<i>gave</i>
	Which with the blod was of his herte	
2245	Thurghout desteigned overal,	<i>stained</i>
	And tolde how sche it kepe schal	
	Al prively to this entente,	<i>secretly</i>
	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	<i>others leave</i>
	And torne unto hire love agein.	
2255	Who was tho glad bot Deianyre?	
	Hire thoghte hire herte was afyre	<i>It seemed to her</i>
	Til it was in hire cofre loke,	<i>locked</i>
	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 untrew:	
	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	<i>foolish</i>
	Upon hire love and so assote,	<i>infatuated</i>
2270	That he him clotheth in hire cote,	<i>coat</i>
	And sche in his was clothed ofte;	
	And thus fieblesce is set alofte,	<i>weakness; on top</i>
	And strengthe was put underfote,	
	Ther can no man therof do bote.	<i>Where; bring deliverance</i>
2275	Whan Dianyre hath herd this speche,	
	Ther was no sorwe for to seche.	<i>seek</i>
	Of other helpe wot sche non,	
	Bot goth unto hire cofre anon.	
	With wepende yhe and woful herte	<i>weeping eye</i>
2280	Sche tok out thilke unhappi scherte,	<i>ill-fortuned</i>
	As sche that wende wel to do,	<i>thought</i>
	And broghte hire werk aboute so	
	That Hercules this scherte on dede,	

- To such entente as she was bede *counseled*
 2285 Of Nessus, so as I seide er.
 Bot therof was sche noght the ner,
 As no fortune may be weyved; *avoided*
 With Falssemblant sche was deceived,
 That whan sche wende best have wonne, *thought; won*
 2290 Sche lost al that sche hath begonne.
 For thilke scherte unto the bon *to the quick*
 His body sette afyre anon, *set on fire*
 And cleved so, it mai noght twinne, *be separated*
 For the venym that was therinne. *Because of*
 2295 And he thanne as a wilde man
 Unto the hihe wode he ran, *deep wood*
 And as the clerk Ovide telleth,
 The grete tres to grounde he felleth *trees*
 With strengthe al of his oghne myht,
 2300 And made an huge fyr upriht,
 And lepte himself therinne at ones *suddenly*
 And brende him bothe fleissh and bones. *burned himself up*
 Which thing cam al thurgh Falssemblant,
 That false Nessus the Geant
 2305 Made unto him and to his wif,
 Wherof that 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, *lost*
 It oghte give a gret conceipte *pattern*
 To warne alle othre of such decepte.”
- Amans** “Grant mercy, fader, I am war
 So fer that I no more dar *so deeply*
 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 fife *fifth [division]*
 Which is conceived of Envie,
 And cleped is Supplantarie,
 Thurgh whos compassement and guile *scheming and deceit*
 Ful many a man hath lost his while
 2325 In love als wel as otherwise,
 Hierafter as I schal devise.” *consider*

[SUPPLANTATION]

- v. *Inuidus alterius est Supplantator honoris,
 Et tua quo vertat culmina subtus arat.
 Est opus occultum, quasi que lalet anguis in herba,
 Quod facit, et subita sorte nociuus 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, | <i>inference</i> |
| | Which he conspireth al unknowe, | |
| 2330 | Full ofte time hath overthrowe | |
| ☞ | The worschipe of another man. | <i>(see note)</i> |
| | So wel no lif awayte can | <i>guard</i> |
| | 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 slyh compas | |
| | In stede there another was; | <i>place where</i> |
| | And so to sette himselven inne, | |
| | He reccheth noght, be so he winne, | <i>cares not, provided that</i> |
| 2345 | Of that another man schal lese, | <i>lose</i> |
| | And thus fulofte chalk for chese | <i>cheese</i> |
| | He changeth with ful litel cost, | |
| | Wherof 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 menne wel. | <i>woe; gladness</i> |
| | Of that another man avalet, | <i>By that which; humiliates (reduces in fortune)</i> |
| | His oghne astat thus up he haleth, | <i>uplifts</i> |
| 2355 | And takth the bridd to his beyete, | <i>bird; possession</i> |
| | Wher othre men the buissches bete. | <i>beat the bushes</i> |

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 hiddenly 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,
 That schapen hem to be relieved
 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,
 Which thing that axeth no felawe,
 If love holde his covenant.
 Bot thei that worchen be supplaunt,
 Yit wolden thei a man supplaunte,
 2370 And take a part of thilke plaunte
 Which he hath for himselve set.
 And so fulofte is al unknet
 That som man weneth be riht fast.
 For Supplant with his slyhe cast
 2375 Fulofte happneth for to mowe
 Thing which another man hath sowe,
 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,
 Of which another maister is.
 ☞ Forthi, my sone, if thou er this
 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 gultes; bot of my thoght
 2390 Mi conscience excuse I noght.
 For were it wrong or were it riht,
 Me lakketh nothing bote myht
 That I ne wolde longe er this
 Of other mannes love ywiss
 2395 Be weie of Supplantacioun
 Have mad apropiacioun
 And holde that I nevere boghte,
 Thogh it another man forthoghte.
 And al this speke I bot of on,
 2400 For whom I lete alle othre gon;
 Bot hire I mai noght overpasse,
 That I ne mot alwey compasse,
 Me roghte noght be what queintise,

*a purpose
contrive*

*own by
requires none to share it*

by supplantation

graft

*unraveled
thinks to be secure*

*stratagem
harvest
sown*

boat

(see note)

power

truly

*By
appropriated
what*

[Even] though; [might] displease

scheme

should care not; cunning

- 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 befalle,
 2410 That I alone scholde hem alle
 Supplante, and welde hire at mi wille. *possess her according to*
 And that thing mai I noght fulfille, *use force*
 Bot if I scholde strengthe make;
 And that I dar noght undertake,
 2415 Thogh I were as was Alisaundre,
 For therof mihte arise sklaundre; *slander*
 And certes that schal I do nevere,
 For in good feith yit hadde I levere *rather*
 In my simplesce for to die,
 2420 Than worche such Supplantarie.
 Of otherwise I wol noght seie
 That if I founde a seker weie, *more certain way*
 I wolde as for conclusioun
 Worche after Supplantacioun,
 2425 So hihe a love for to winne. *exalted*
 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, *so many nor how many (i.e., in any way)*
 As for nothing that I have herd,
 Bot only that thou hast misferd *proceeded incorrectly [in your]*
 Thenkende, and that me liketh noght, *contemplates*
 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. *In double measure be careful*
 2440 Ferst for thin oghne astat to kepe,
 To be thiself so wel bethoght
 That thou supplanted were noght,
 And ek for worschipe of thi name *honor*
 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 *in an ambush*
 Supplant of love in oure daies
 The lief fulofte for the levere *loved one; more desired one*
 2450 Forsakth, and so it hath don evere.

Ensample I finde therupon,
 At Troie how that Agamenon *(see note)*
 Supplantede the worthi knyht
 Achilles of that swete wiht, *creature*
 2455 Which named was Brexeida;
 And also of Criseida,
 Whom Troilus to love ches,
 Supplanted hath Diomedes.

[TALE OF GETA AND AMPHITRION]

Of Geta and Amphitriton, *(see note)*
 2460 That whilom weren bothe as on *Who once; as one*
 Of frendschipe and of compaignie,
 I rede how that Supplantarie
 In love, as it betidde tho, *happened then*
 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, *Was bound by promise of matrimony*
 Whan he best wende have ben above
 And sikerest of that he hadde, *most certain*
 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. *manner*
 Be nyhte unto the chambre he soghte,
 2475 Wher that sche lay, and with a wyle *cunning deceit*
 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, *Thinking*
 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. *beloved*
 Sche wende that it were soth. *thought; true*
 Lo, what Supplant of love doth:
 This Geta aforth bejaped wente, *tricked*
 2490 And yit ne wiste he what it mente; *knew not*
 Amphitriton 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, *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]

<p>☞ 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, 2505 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'emperour, Which wolde ben a werreiour, 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 travaile. 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,</p>	<p>(see note)</p> <p><i>pertaining (i.e., a rightful possession)</i></p> <p><i>foreign lands</i> <i>stay</i> <i>permission to depart</i> <i>tarry (remain)</i> <i>trusted</i> <i>knew</i> <i>secret plan</i> <i>journey</i></p> <p><i>attempt</i></p> <p><i>time</i> <i>labor</i></p> <p><i>sworn</i> <i>Even if</i></p>
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- Thei ben assented for to wende. *depart*
 2540 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 *galley ship*
 From Romelond thei wente here weie *their*
 2545 And londe upon that other side.
 The world fell so that ilke tide,
 Which evere hise happes hath diverse,
 The grete Soldan thanne of Perse *sultan; Persia*
 Agein the Caliphe of Egipte
 2550 A werre, which that him beclipte, *surrounded*
 Hath in a marche costeiant. *bordering (adjacent) district*
 And he, which was a poursuiant
 Worschipe of armes to atteigne,
 This Romein, let anon ordeigne,
 2555 That he was redi everydel.
 And whan he was arraied wel
 Of everything which him belongeth,
 Straght unto Kaire his weie he fongeth, *for which it is his duty*
 Wher he the Soldan thanne fond, *Cairo; battle position he takes*
 2560 And axeth that withinne his lond
 He mihte him for the werre serve,
 As he which wolde his thonk deserve.
 The Soldan was riht glad with al,
 And wel the more in special
 2565 Whan that he wiste he was Romein. *knew*
 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, *departed*
 2570 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,
 2575 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, *father's heir*
 And was of yeres ripe ynowh.
 2580 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 *Put life and death in the balance*
 2585 Of hem that knyhtode undertake.

- This lusti peine hath overtake
 The herte of this Romein so sore,
 That to kniethode 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]*
- 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, *repute*
 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,
- 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
- 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. *arrayed for battle*
 2620 The Soldan hath the feld assailed: *taken*
 Thei that ben hardy sone assemblen,
 Wherof the dredfull hertes tremblen. *timorous*
 That on sleth, and that other sterveth, *one slays; other dies*
 Bot above alle his pris deserveth *honor*
- 2625 This knihtly Romein; where he rod,
 His dedly swerd no man abod,
 Agein the which was no defence. *could withstand*
 Egipte fledde in his presence, *Against*
 And thei of Perse upon the chace *chase*
- 2630 Poursuien: bot I not what grace *know not*
 Befell, an arwe out of a bowe
 Al sodeinly that ilke throwe

- 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 knyht of Romanie,
 As unto him whom he most triste,
 2640 His dowhter 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 dowhter 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, *who had opportunity*
 Whan that his lord be nihte slepte,
 This ring, the which his maister kepte,
 Out of his pours away he dede, *purse*
 And putte another in the stede. *place*
- 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.
- 2690 Bot sche, which thoghte to fulfille
 Hire fader heste in this matiere, *father's command*
 Seide openly, that men mai hiere,
 The charge which hire fader bad.
 Tho was this lord of Rome glad
- 2695 And drowh toward his pours anon,
 Bot al for noght, it was agon.
 His bacheler it hath forthdrawe, *removed*
 And axeth therupon the lawe
 That sche him holde covenant.
- 2700 The tokne was so sufficant
 That it ne mihte be forsake,
 And natheles his lord hath take *undertaken*
 Querelle agein his oghne man;
 Bot for nothing that evere he can
- 2705 He mihte as thanne noght ben herd,
 So that his cleyrn is unansuerd,
 And he hath of his pourpos failed.
 This bacheler was tho consailed *then*
 And wedded, and of thilke empire
- 2710 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.
- 2715 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,
- 2720 That he was sone and heir also
 Of th'emperour of grete Rome,
 And how that thei togedre come,
 This kniht and he. Riht as it was,
 He tolde hem al the pleine cas,
- 2725 And for that he his conseil tolde,
 That other hath al that he wolde,

	And he hath failed of his mede.	<i>reward</i>
	As for the good he takth non hiede,	<i>wealth</i>
	He seith, bot only of the love	
2730	Of which he wende have ben above.	<i>believed existed in the heavens</i>
	And therupon be lettre write	
	He doth his fader for to wite	<i>causes; know</i>
	Of al this matiere as it stod;	
	And thanne with an hertly mod	<i>heartfelt passion</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,	
	And seide, 'Adieu, my ladi swete.'	
2740	The lif hath lost his kindly hete,	<i>its natural heat</i>
	And he lay ded as eny ston,	
	Wherof was sory many on,	
	Bot non of alle so as sche.	
	This false knyht in his degree	
2745	Arested was and put in hold,	<i>prison</i>
	For openly whan it was told	
	Of the tresoun which is befallle,	
	Thurghout the lond thei seiden alle,	
	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'emperour anon thei sende	
2755	The lettre which his sone wrot.	
	And whan that he the sothe wot,	
	To telle his sorwe is endeles.	
	Bot yit in haste natheles	
	Upon the tale which he herde	
2760	His stieward into Perse ferde	<i>traveled</i>
	With many a worthi Romein eke,	<i>also</i>
	His liege tretour for to seke;	<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.	<i>reasonings</i>
	Because that he was coroned,	
	And that the lond was abandoned	<i>given over</i>
	To him, althogh it were unriht,	<i>unjust</i>

- Ther is no peine for him diht; *punishment; allowable*
 2775 Bot to this point and to this ende
 Thei granten wel that he schal wende *depart*
 With the Romeins to Rome agein.
 And thus acorded ful and plein,
 The qwike body with the dede *living*
 2780 With leve take forth thei lede,
 Wher that Supplant hath his juise. *just dessert*
 Wherof that thou thee miht avise
 Upon this enformacioun
 Touchende of supplantacioun,
 2785 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
 Plainly to helen such a sor. *heal; wound*
 2790 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. *obstruct*
 And therupon if I schal sette
 2795 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
 2800 Of Supplant, which that is no fable,
 In the manere as I schal telle,
 So as whilom the thinges felle. *formerly*

[TALE OF POPE BONIFACE]

- At Rome, as it hath ofte falle,
 ¶ The vicair general of alle *(see note)*
 2805 Of hem that lieven Cristes feith *believe*
 His laste day, which non withseith, *none may oppose*
 Hath schet as to the worldes yē, *shut; eye*
 Whos name if I schal specefie, *was called*
 He hihte Pope Nicolas.
 2810 And thus whan that he passed was,
 The cardinals, that wolden save *who wanted to maintain*
 The forme of lawe, in the conclave
 Gon for to chese a newe pope, *Proceeded to choose*
 And after that thei cowthe agrope *according to what they could determine*
 2815 Hath ech of hem seid his entente,
 Til ate laste thei assente *agree*
 Upon an holy clerk reclus,

- 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;
 2835 Bot whan he sih fortune is failed,
 For which long time he hath travailed,
 That ilke fyr which Ethna brenneth *same; burns*
 Thurghout his wofull herte renneth, *runs*
 Which is resembled to Envie,
 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
 He thoghte Supplantacioun.
 And therupon a wonder wyle *remarkable trick*
 He wroghte: for at thilke whyle
 It fell so that of his lignage
 2850 He hadde a clergoun of yong age,
 Whom he hath in his chambre affaited. *educated*
 This cardinal his time hath waitid,
 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, *Near*
 So that withinne his chambre anyht *at night*
 He lai, and was a privé wyht
 Toward the pope on nyhtes tide.
 2860 Mai no man fle that schal betide. *that [which] must occur*
 This cardinal, which thoghte guile, *who thought [to] beguile*
 Upon a day whan he hath while
 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 *trumpet*
 He hath him take, and bad him this: *given to him*
 ‘Thou schalt,’ he seide, ‘whan time is, *when it is time*
 Awaite, and take riht good kepe *Observe*
- 2870 Whan that the pope is fast aslepe
 And that non other man be nyh. *near*
 And thanne that thou be so slyh
 Thurghout the trompe into his ere,
 Fro hevene as thogh a vois it were,
- 2875 To soun of such prolacioun
 That he his meditacioun
 Therof mai take and understonde,
 As thogh it were of Goddes sonde.¹
 And in this wise thou schal seie,
- 2880 That he do thilke astat aweie *give that estate*
 Of pope, in which he stant honoured;
 So schal his soule be socoured *saved from damnation*
 Of thilke worschipe ate laste *honor*
 In hevene which schal evere laste.’
- 2885 This clerc, whan he hath herd the forme *outline [of the plan]*
 How he the pope scholde enforme,
 Tok of the cardinal his leve,
 And goth him hom, til it was eve, *evening*
 And prively the trompe he hedde, *secretly; hid*
- 2890 Til that the pope was abedde.
 And at the midnyht, whan he knewh
 The pope slepte, thanne he blewh *sounded (blew)*
 Withinne his trompe thurgh the wal,
 And tolde in what manere he schal
- 2895 His papacie leve, and take *return to*
 His ferste astat. And thus awake *former estate*
 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; *[that] he resign*
 Bot in what wise he may relesse
- 2905 His hihe astat, that wot he noght. *knows*
 And thus withinne himself bethoght, *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 befalle
 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. *contrived*
 This cardinal the same while
 Al openly with wordes pleine
 2920 Seith if the pope wolde ordeigne
 That ther be such a lawe wrought *created*
 Than mihte he cesse and elles noght. *resign or else not*
 And as he seide, don it was,
 The pope anon upon the cas
 2925 Of his papal autorité *official papal position*
 Hath mad and gove the decreté. *given*
 And whan that lawe was confermed
 In due forme and al affermed, *ratified*
 This innocent, which was deceived,
 2930 His papacie anon hath weyved, *abandoned*
 Renounced, and resigned eke.
 That other was nothing to seke, *(i.e., Boniface); readily available [for the office]*
 Bot undernethe such a jape
 He hath so for himselve schape,
 2935 That how as evere it him beseme,
 The mitre with the diademe
 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 *is not like*
 Up in the rof, which for a throwe *roof; moment*
 Lith hidd, til whan the wyndes blowe *Lies hidden*
 It blaseth out on every side. *bursts into flame*
 2950 This Bonefas, which can noght hyde
 The tricherie of his Supplant,
 Hath openly mad his avant *boast*
 How he the papacie hath wonne.

- 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, *deviate*
 That charité goth out of herre, *out of killer*
 2965 So that upon misgovernance
 Agein Lowyz the king of France
 He tok querelle of his outrage *outrage*
 And seide he scholde don homage *in person*
 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 *papal edict*
 With cursinge and with enterdit.
 2980 The king upon this wrongful plyt,
 To kepe his regne fro servage,
 Conseiled was of his barnage *peers of the realm*
 That miht with miht schal be withstonde. *opposed*
 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, *it so happened*
 2995 Sire Guilliam de Langharet, *William*
 Which was upon this cause set;
 And therupon he tok a route *company*
 Of men of armes and rod oute,
 So longe and in a wayt he lay, *an ambush*
 3000 That he aspide upon a day

- 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 *stayed; waited*
 Embuissshed upon horse bak, *In ambush*
 Al sodeinliche upon him brak *sprang into action*
 And hath him be the bridel sesed, *by the rein seized*
- 3010 And seide: 'O thou, which hast desesed
 The court of France be thi wrong, *by your*
 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,
 Misedere of the papacie,
 Thi false bodi schal abyen *be punished*
 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 *subjected*
 Withinne a tour in harde bondes, *tower; shackles*
 Wher he for hunger bothe hise hondes
 Eet of and deide — God wot how — *Devoured (Ate off); died*
- 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, *Your beginning like; sly (see note)*
 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 cronique
 Proclamed in the court of Rome,
- 3040 Wherof the wise ensample nome. *took*
 And yit, als ferforth as I dar, *advise*
 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

- 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, *know not*
 Be reson bothe and be nature
 The help of every mannes cure,
- 3055 He kepe Simon fro the folde.
 ¶ For Joachim thilke abbot tolde *(see note)*
 How suche daies scholden falle,
 ¶ That comunliche in places alle *(see note)*
 The chapmen of such mercerie *merchandise*
- 3060 With fraude and with Supplantarie
 So manye scholden beie and selle, *buy*
 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 clerc beware his feith
 In chapmanhod at such a feire, *uses*
 The remenant mot nede empeire *bargaining*
 Of al that to the world belongeth;
- 3070 For whan that holi cherche wrongeth, *behaves wrongly*
 I not what other thing schal rihte. *know not; provide correction*
 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. *Unless; person*
 And that is welnyh overal,
- 3084 This vice is now so general.
 ¶ Envie thilke unhapp indrowh, *(see note)*
 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.

- 3095 Senec witnesseth openly
 How that Envie proprely
 Is of the court the comun wenche,
 And halt tavernne for to schenche *pour*
 That drink which makth the herte brenne,
 3100 And doth the wit aboute renne,
 Be every weie to compasse
 How that he mihte alle othre passe,
 As he which thurgh unkindeschipe *unnatural behavior*
 Envieth every felaschipe.
 3105 So that thou miht wel knowe and se,
 Ther is no vise such as he,
 Ferst toward Godd abhominable, *odious to God*
 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 describe, *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 Wherof 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,
 Wherof 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. *always*
 And thus be reson prove I may

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;
 And otherwise if it be soght,
 Upon what side as evere it falle,
 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.
 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
 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,
 The more agein himself he plieth.
 Thus stant Envie in good espeir
 To ben himself the develes heir,
 As he which is his nexte liche
 3150 And forthest fro the heveneriche,
 For there mai he nevere wone.
- Confessor** Forthi, my goode diere sone,
 If thou wolt finde a siker weie
 3154 To love, put Envie aweie.”
- 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,
 3160 It were to me a gret desir,
 That I this vice mihte flee.”

*near love**whatsoever side it [might] occur**except**except a malicious one
By way of nature**its motivation**strives
hope**closest peer (closest look-a-like)
heavenly kingdom
dwell**would like to find a more secure**in addition (to boot)
remedy***[CHARITY AND PITY AS REMEDY]**

- Confessor** “Now understand, my sone, and se,
 Ther is phisique for the seke,
 And vertus for the vices eke.
 3165 Who that the vices wolde eschuie,
 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

*medicine; sick
antidotes**follow*

- 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 therto.
 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 himselven the grevance,
 So fain he wolde another ese. *gladly*
 Wherof, mi sone, for thin ese
 3185 Now herkne a tale which I rede,
 And understond 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 *leprosy; face*
 And so forth overal aboute, *then everywhere else*
 That he ne mihte ryden oute:
 3195 So lefte he bothe schield and spere,
 As he that mihte him noght bestere, *take vigorous action*
 And hield him in his chambre clos. *secluded*
 Thurgh al the world the fame aros, *was spread abroad*
 The grete clerkes ben asent *[medical] scholars; sent for*
 3200 And come at his comandement
 To trete upon this lordes hele. *health*
 So longe thei togedre dele, *consult*
 That thei upon this medicine
 Apointen hem, and determine *Resolve themselves*
 3205 That in the maner as it stod
 Thei wolde him bathe in childes blod *child's blood*
 Withinne sevene wynter age.
 For, as thei sein, that scholde assuage
 The lepre and al the violence, *leprosy*
 3210 Which that thei knewe of accidence *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 opinioun *their*

- 3215 To th'emperour. And he anon
 His conseil tok, and therupon
 With lettres and with scales oute *official documents*
 Thei sende in every lond aboute
 The yonge children for to seche, *seek*
 3220 Whos blod, thei seiden, schal be leche *solution*
 For th'empereours maladie.
 Ther was ynowh to wepe and crie
 Among the modres whan thei herde
 Hou wofully this cause ferde, *fared*
 3225 Bot natheles thei moten bowe; *must be submissive*
 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, *like it or not*
 3230 The wommen and the children bothe
 Into the paleis forth be broght
 With many a sory hertes thoght
 Of hem whiche of here bodi bore
 The children hadde, and so forlore *destroyed*
 3235 Withinne a while scholden se.
 The modres wepe in here degré,
 And manye of hem aswoune falle, *according to their nature*
 The yonge babes criden alle. *faints*
 This noyse aros, the lord it herde, *infants*
 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, *started*
 Which every man in the balance *providence*
 3245 Of kinde hast formed to be liche, *scales*
 The povere is bore as is the riche *nature; the same*
 And deieth in the same wise. *poor*
 Upon the fol, upon the wise *dies; manner*
 Siknesse and hele entrecomune. *have fellowship*
 3250 Mai non eschuie that fortune
 Which kinde hath in hire lawe set;
 Hire strengthe and beauté ben beset *bestowed*
 To every man aliche fre, *equally*
 That sche preferreth no degré *[Such] that she exalts no social rank*
 3255 As in the disposicioun
 Of bodili complexioun.
 And ek of soule resonable
 The povere child is bore als able *as capable*
 To vertu as the kinges sone; *Of attaining virtue*
 3260 For every man his oghne wone *by his own habit*
 After the lust of his assay *desire; attempt*

- The vice or vertu chese may. *choose*
 Thus stonden alle men franchised, *possessing freedom*
 3264 Bot in astat thei ben divided;
Nota To some worschipe and richesse,
 To some poverté and distresse,
 On lordeth and another serveth; *One is a lord*
 Bot yit as every man deserveth
 The world gifth noght his giftes hier.
 3270 Bot certes he hath gret matiere
 To ben of good condicioun,
 Which hath in his subjeccioun *[He] who*
 The men that ben of his semblance.' *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,
 Wherof that al his herte tendreth, *becomes sympathetic*
 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 *murder perpetrated*
 Upon the blod which gulteth noght. *is in no way guilty*
 3295 Thus for the pité which he tok
 Alle othre leches he forsok. *physicians*
 And put him out of aventure *danger (risk)*
 Al only into Goddes cure;
 And seith, 'Who that woll maister be,
 3300 He mot be servant to pité.'
 So ferforth he was overcome
 With charité, that he hath nome *taken*
 His conseil and hise officers,
 And bad unto hise tresorers
 3305 That thei his tresour al aboute
 Departe among that povere route *Distribute; crowd*
 Of wommen and of children bothe,
 Wherof thei mihte hem fede and clothe

- And saufli tornen hom agein
 3310 Withoute lost of eny grein. *loss; vigorous youth*
 Thurgh charité thus he despendeth
 His good, wherof that he amendeth *recompenses*
 The povere poeple, and contrevailleth *countermands*
 The harm, that he hem so travaileth: *vexes*
 3315 And thus the woful nyhtes sorwe
 To joie is torned on the morwe.
 Al was thonkinge, al was blessinge, *good will*
 Which erst was wepinge and cursinge. *formerly*
 Thes wommen gon hom glade ynowh,
 3320 Ech on for joie on other lowh *one; laughed*
 And preiden for this lordes hele, *good health*
 Which hath relessed the querele, *Who*
 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, *in return*
 3330 And to pité he was pitous.
 For it was nevere knowe yit
 That charité goth unaquit. *unrequited*
 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 *leprosy cure*
 Fro God, and seide in this manere: *come into view*
 'O Constantin, for thou hast served *spoke*
 3340 Pité, thou hast pité deserved: *because you have*
 Forthi thou schalt such pité have
 That God thurgh pité woll thee save,
 So schalt thou double hele finde, *two different kinds of health*
 Ferst for thi bodiliche kinde, *physical nature*
 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 *grow worse*
 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, *foe; law*
 3355 And hast destruid to mochel schame *slaughtered; great*

- The prechours of His holy name.
 Bot now thou hast somdiel appesed *placated*
 Thi God, and with good dede plesed,
 That thou thi pité hast bewared *bestowed*
 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.' *physician*
 3365 This emperour, which al this herde,
 'Grant merci lordes,' he ansuerde,
 'I wol do so as ye me seie. *you tell me*
 Bot of o thing I wolde preie:
 What schal I telle unto Silvestre
 3370 Or of youre name or of youre estre?' *country*
 And thei him tolden what thei hihte, *were called*
 And forthwithal out of his sihte
 Thei passen up into the hevene.
 And he awok out of his swevene, *dream*
 3375 And clepeth, and men come anon. *calls; quickly*
 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. *dream*
 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, *lost*
 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, *enclosed*
 And how that He hath helle broke, *harrowed*
 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 *ascended*
 With fleissh and blod into the hevene;

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| | And riht so in the same forme | |
| | In fleissh and blod He schal reforme, | <i>resurrect</i> |
| 3405 | Whan time comth, the qwike and dede | <i>living; dead</i> |
| | At thilke woful dai of drede, | |
| | Where every man schal take his dom, | <i>receive; judgment</i> |
| | Als wel the maister as the grom. | <i>servant</i> |
| | The mihti kinges retenue | |
| 3410 | That dai may stonde of no value | |
| | With worldes strengthe to defende; | |
| | For every man mot thanne entende | <i>must</i> |
| | To stonde upon his oghne dedes | |
| | And leve alle othre mennes nedes. | |
| 3415 | That dai mai no consail availe, | |
| | The pledour and the plece schal faile, | <i>advocate</i> |
| | The sentence of that ilke day | |
| | Mai non appell sette in delay; | <i>legal appeal</i> |
| | Ther mai no gold the juggle plie, | <i>sway</i> |
| 3420 | That he ne schal the sothe trie | <i>But that he shall test the truth</i> |
| | And setten every man upriht, | |
| | Als wel the plowman as the kniht. | |
| | The lewed man, the grete clerk | <i>layman; scholar</i> |
| | Schal stonde upon his oghne werk, | |
| 3425 | And such as he is founde tho, | <i>then</i> |
| | 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 | <i>wise words</i> |
| | The ground of al the Newe Lawe | <i>foundation</i> |
| | With gret devocion he precheth, | |
| | Fro point to point and plainly techeth | |
| 3435 | Unto this hethen emperour, | |
| | And seith the hihe creatour | |
| | Hath underfonge his charité, | <i>accepted</i> |
| | Of that he wroghte such pité, | <i>[Because] of</i> |
| | Whan he the children hadde on honde. | |
| 3440 | Thus whan this lord hath understonde | |
| | 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. | |
| 3445 | And so the vessel which for blod | |
| | Was mad, Silvestre, ther it stod, | <i>where</i> |
| | With clene water of the welle | |
| | In alle haste he let do felle, | <i>he caused to be filled</i> |
| | And sette Constantin therinne | |

- 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 fisshes skales
 Ther fellen from him now and eft,
 Til that ther was nothing beleft *left over*
 Of al his grete maladie.
- 3460 For he that wolde him purefie,
 The hihe God hath mad him clene,
 So that ther lefte nothing sene; *remained*
 He hath him clensed bothe tuo,
 The bodi and the soule also.
- 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. *[Such] that he not take baptism*
 After his moder qweene Heleine
 He sende, and so between hem tweine *the two of them*
 Thei treten, that the cité all *negotiated an agreement*
 Was cristned, and sche forth withall. *together with [them]*
- 3475 This emperour, which hele hath founde,
 Withinne Rome anon let founde *had built*
 Tuo cherches, whiche he dede make
 For Peter and for Poules sake,
 Of whom he hadde a visioun; *prophetic dream*
- 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 worching of the dede:
 For in cronique this I rede;
 Anon as he hath mad the gifte,
 A vois was herd on hih the lifte, *above in the air*
 Of which al Rome was adrad,
- 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 understonde,
 If charité be take on honde,
 Ther folweth after mochel grace.
 Forthi, if that thou wolt pourchace
 3505 How that thou miht Envie flee,
 Aqueinte thee with charité, *Ally yourself*
 Which is the vertu sovereigne.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, I schal do my peine. *so endeavor (take pains)*
 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 suiende 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.”

EXPLICIT LIBER SECUNDUS



CONFESSIO AMANTIS: BOOK 3 (WRATH)

INCIPIIT LIBER TERTIUS

[ON MELANCHOLY]

i. *Ira suis paribus est par furiis Acherontis,
 Quo furor ad tempus nil pietatis habet.
 Ira malencolicos animos perturbat, vt equo
 Iure sui pondus nulla statera tenet.
 Omnibus in causis grauatur 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 first that men the swerdes grounde, That ther nis on upon this grounde, 5 A vice forein fro the lawe, Wherof that many a good felawe Hath be distraght be sodein chance. And yit to kinde no plesance It doth, bot wher he most achieveth 10 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, 15 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.”	<i>desire</i> <i>swords sharpened</i> <i>there is a thing on earth</i> <i>inimical to</i> <i>deranged</i> <i>nature (see note)</i> <i>but rather</i> <i>by; one</i> <i>at odds</i> <i>called</i> <i>Both to speak and to do wrong</i> <i>angry</i>
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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 Englissh Wrathe is hote, *called*

Which hath hise wordes ay so hote,

That all a mannes pacience

Is fyred of the violence. *burned away by*

25 For he with him hath evere fyve

Servantz that helpen him to stryve:

The ferst of hem Malencolie *them*

Is cleped, which in compaignie *called*

An hundred times in an houre

30 Wol as an angri beste loure,

And no man wot the cause why. *grimace*

Mi sone, schrif thee now forthi: *knows*

Hast thou be Malencolien?” *confess*

Confessio Amantis “Ye, fader, be Seint Julien,

35 Bot I untrewed wordes use, *Unless*

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 *burning coal*

40 For Wrathe that I mai noght spede.

And thus fulofte a day for noght *succeed*

Save onlich of myn oghne thocht

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. *rage*

Thus am I with miself oppressed

50 Of thocht, the which I have impressed,

That al wakende I dreame and meete *dream; dream*

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; *pledge herself*

And thus wexe I withinne wroth,

That outward I am al affraied, *frightened*

And so distempred and esmaied, *disconcerted (upset)*

A thousand times on a day *[That]*

60 Ther souneth in myn eres ‘Nay,’ *sounds; ears*

The which sche seide me tofore.

Thus be my wittes as forlore;

And namely whan I beginne *as if abandoned*

To rekne with miself withinne

- 65 How many yeres ben agon,
 Siththe I have trewly loved on *Since; one*
 And nevere tok of other hede,
 And evere aliche fer to spede *far from succeeding*
 I am, the more I with hir dele, *deal*
- 70 So that myn happ and al myn hele *fortune; health*
 Me thenkth is ay the leng the ferre, *ever; longer the farther*
 That bringth my gladschip out of herre, *out of killer*
 Wherof my wittes ben empeired, *are damaged*
 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, *beset*
 For al this world mihte I be glad:
 And for the while that it lasteth
- 80 Al up so down 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 toringe of a stree *thin strip of wood*
 I wode as doth the wylde se, *straw*
 And am so malencolious, *rage; sea*
 That ther nys servant in myn hous *is not*
 Ne non of tho that ben aboute,
- 90 That ech of hem ne stant in doute
 And wenen that I scholde rave *think that I am raving mad*
 For anger that thei se me have.
 And so thei wondre more and lasse,
 Til that thei sen it overpasse.
- 95 Bot, fader, if it so betide, *happens*
 That I aproche at eny tide *time*
 The place wher my ladi is,
 And thanne that hire like ywiss *it pleases her perchance*
 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 *goes away*
 Of hire, that I all offence
- 105 Forgete, as thogh it were noght,
 So overgladed is my thoght.
 And natheles, the soth to telle, *truth*
 Ageinward if it so befelle
 That I at thilke time sihe *[would] see*
- 110 On me that sche miscaste hire yhe, *eye*
 Or that sche liste noght to loke,

- And I therof good hiede toke,
 Anon into my ferste astat
 I torne, and am withal so mat, *return; checkmated*
 115 That evere it is aliche wicke. *the same bad*
 And thus myn hand agein the pricke *against*
 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 *(i.e., emotional swings)*
 Mi wofull herte is so tobete, *pummeled*
 That all my wittes ben unsofte *ill-willed (prickly)*
 And I am wroth, I not how ofte; *know not*
 125 And al it is malencolie
 Which groweth of the fantasie
 Of love, that me wol noght loute. *not obey me*
 So bere I forth an angri snoute *Thus; angry expression (nose bent out of shape)*
 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,
 Wherof I mai miself appese.”
Confessor “Mi sone, for thin hertes ese
 135 I schal fulfille thi preiere,
 So that thou miht the betre lere *learn*
 What mischief that this vice stereth, *incites*
 Which in his anger noght forbereth,
 Wherof that after him forthenketh, *it is regrettable to him (he regrets)*
 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 *(see note)*
 Was hote, and it befell him thus, *called*
 145 That he tuo children hadde faire.
 The sone cleped was Machaire,
 The dowhter ek Canace hihte. *was called*
 Be daie bothe and ek be nyhte,
 Whil thei be yonge, of comun wone *habitation*
 150 In chambre thei togedre wone, *dwelt*
 And as thei scholden pleide hem ofte,
 Til thei be growen up alofte
 Into the youthe of lusti age,
 Whan kinde assaileth the corage *nature attacks the heart*
 155 With love and doth him for to bowe,

	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	<i>[Such] that abides by (obeys)</i>
160	He makth his client blind also. In such manere as I you telle As thei al day togedre duelle, This brother mihte it noght asterte	<i>escape whole</i>
165	That he with al his hole herte 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,	<i>kiss</i>
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	<i>instruction conquered</i>
180	And til thei falle nothing dredeth, Riht so thei hadde non insihte; Bot as the bridd which wole alihte And seth the mete and noght the net, Which in deceipte of him is set,	<i>has no fear at all bird; alight food</i>
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 togedre assemble,	<i>saw that which; pleasing to their eye lost copulate</i>
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. Wherof the sone hadde also fere,	<i>father's notice</i>
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,	<i>dared On the chance that; say robbed of virginity admitted</i>
200	Whos was the child at thilke throwe. Machaire goth, Canace abit,	<i>at that time remains</i>

	The which was noght delivered yit, Bot riht sone after that sche was.	<i>Who had not yet</i>
	Now lest and herkne a woful cas.	<i>listen and hear</i>
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,	<i>like one who knew nothing</i> <i>distant</i>
215	He wolde noght his herte change To be benigne and favorable To love, bot unmerciabie Betwen the wave of wod and wroth Into his dowhtres chambre he goth, And sih the child was late bore,	<i>gentle</i> <i>wave of insanity and rage</i> <i>saw</i>
220	Wherof he hath hise othes swore That sche it schal ful sore aby. And sche began merci to crie, Upon hire bare knes and preide, And to hire fader thus sche seide:	<i>pay dearly</i>
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.	<i>saw; then</i>
230	Bot now it is befalle so, Merci, my fader, do no wreche! And with that word sche loste speche And fell down swounende at his fot, As sche for sorwe nedes mot.	<i>vengeance</i> <i>in a faint</i> <i>must</i>
235	Bot his horrible cruauté Ther mihte attempre 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,	<i>elude</i> <i>fetter (moral restraint)</i> <i>wild insane pain</i>
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,	<i>calls</i> <i>employed; message</i>

- 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 *blade*
 Receive scholde and do withal
 So as sche wot wherto it schal. *knew where this must lead*
 255 Forth in message goth this kniht
 Unto this wofull yonge wiht, *creature*
 This scharpe swerd to hire he tok.
 Wherof that al hire bodi qwok, *shook with fear*
 For wel sche wiste what it mente, *knew*
 260 And that it was to thilke entente
 That sche hireselven scholde slee. *slay*
 And to the kniht sche seide: 'Yee,
 Now that I wot my fadres wille, *Yes*
 That I schal in this wise spille, *die*
 265 I wole obeie me therto,
 And as he wole it schal be do.
 Bot now this thing mai be non other,
 I wole a lettre unto mi brother,
 So as my fieble hand may wryte, *Insofar as*
 270 With al my wofull herte endite.' *write*
 Sche tok a penne on honde tho, *pen in hand then*
 Fro point to point and al the wo,
 Als ferforth as hireself it wot, *knows*
 Unto hire dedly frend sche wrot,
 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,
 280 O thou myn hele and my siknesse, *health*
 O my wanhope and al my trust, *despair*
 O my desese and al my lust, *disease; pleasure*
 O thou my wele, o thou my wo, *delight; woe*
 O thou my frend, o thou my fo,
 285 O thou my love, o thou myn hate,
 For thee mot I be ded algate. *must; for sure*
 Thilke ende may I noght asterte, *This finish; escape*
 And yit with al myn hole herte,
 Whil that me lasteth eny breth, *breath*
 290 I wol thee love into my deth.
 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
 295 Upon ous bothe remembrance.

	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 lettre 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	<i>bosom; lies</i>
	Thi child and myn, which sobbeth faste.	
	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 down 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,	<i>[Having] rolled out from; mother's</i>
	And for the blod was hot and warm,	<i>since</i>
315	He basketh him aboute thrinne.	<i>therein</i>
	Ther was no bote for to winne,	<i>forgiveness to be gained</i>
	For he, which can no pit�� knowe,	
	The king cam in the same throwe,	<i>moment</i>
	And sih how that his dowhter dieth	<i>saw</i>
320	And how this babe al bloody crieth;	
	Bot al that mihte him noght suffice,	<i>satisfy</i>
	That he ne bad to do juise	<i>So that he would not pass sentence</i>
	Upon the child, and bere him oute,	
	And seche in the forest aboute	<i>seek</i>
325	Som wilde place, what it were,	<i>whatever it might be</i>
	To caste him out of honde there,	
	So that som beste him mai devoure,	<i>wild animal</i>
	Where as no man him schal socoure.	<i>come to his rescue</i>
	Al that he bad was don in dede.	<i>deed</i>
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 wyte,	<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 understonde	
	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. *[That] which; nature*
 For it sit every man to have *behooves*
 345 Reward to love and to his miht, *Regard for*
 Agein whos strengthe mai no wiht. *creature [persist]*
 And siththe an herte is so constreigned,
 The reddour oghte be restreigned *harshness*
 To him that mai no bet aweie,
 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, *according to nature*
 Wherof he mai no bote finde
 355 What nature hath set in hir lawe
 Ther mai no mannes miht withdrawe, *strength*
 And who that worcheth theraein,
 Fulofte time it hath be sein,
 Ther hath befalle gret vengeance,
 360 Wherof 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,
 ¶ As he walkende goth per cas, *once*
 365 Upon an hih montaine he sih *walking went by chance (see note)*
 Tuo serpentz in his weie nyh, *saw*
 And thei, so as nature hem tawhte, *near his path*
 Assembled were, and he tho cawhte *taught them*
 A yerde which he bar on honde, *Copulating; grabbed*
 370 And thoghte that he wolde fonde *stick*
 To letten hem, and smot hem bothe: *attempt*
 Wherof the goddes weren wrothe;
 And for he hath destourbed kinde *stop them; struck*
 And was so to nature unkinde, *Both because he*
 375 Unkindeliche he was transformed, *Unnaturally*
 That he which erst a man was formed *[So] that; who first*
 Into a womman was forschape. *transformed*
 That was to him an angri jape;
 Bot for that he with Angre wroghte, *infuriating prank*
 380 His Angres angrelliche he boghte. *paid for*
Confessor Lo thus, my sone, Ovide hath write,
 Wherof thou miht be reson wite, *know*
 More is a man than such a beste.
 So mihte it nevere ben honeste *honorable*
 385 A man to wraththen him to sore
 Of that another doth the lore *Because another carries out the teaching*

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; *put; aside*
 For love hath evere his lust to pleie,
 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
 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 oght elles is,
 Wherof to schryve.” *confess*
[Confessor] “Sone, yis.”

[CONTENTION]

ii. *Ira mouet litem, que lingue frena resoluens*
Laxa per infames currit vbique vias.
Rixarum nutrix quos educat ista loquaces,
Hos Venus a latere linqvit 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 Chestre, Which hath the wyndes of tempeste To kepe, and many a sodein blast	<i>Contention (Quarreling)</i>
420	He bloweth, wherof ben agast	
☞	Thei that desiren pes and reste.	(see note)
	He is that ilke ungoodlieste	same most rude [person]
	Which many a lusti love hath twinned; For he berth evere his mowth unpinned,	Who; estranged
425	So that his lippes ben unloke And his corage is al tobroke, That everything which he can telle, It springeth up as doth a welle, Which mai non of his stremes hyde,	unlocked emotion; broken loose
430	Bot renneth out on every syde. So buillen up the foule sawes That Chestre wot of his felawes. For as a sive kepeth ale, Riht so can Chestre kepe a tale.	runs boils; malicious words knows sieve holds ale
435	Al that he wot he wol desclose, And speke er eny man oppose. As a cité withoute wal, Wher men mai gon out overal Withouten eny resistance,	And [will] speak before asking anyone
440	So with his croked eloquence He spekth al that he wot withinne; Wherof men lese mor than winne, For ofte time of his chidinge He bringth to house such tidinge,	lose
445	That makth werre ate beddeshed. He is the levein of the bred, Which soureth al the past aboute. Men oghte wel such on to doute, For evere his bowe is redi bent,	war; bed's head yeast dough nearby such a person to fear
450	And whom he hit I telle him schent, If he mai perce him with his tunge. And ek so lowde his belle is runge, That of the noise and of the soun Men feeren hem in al the toun	count him ruined sound
455	Welmore than thei don of thonder. For that is cause of more wonder; For with the wyndes whiche he bloweth Fulofte sythe he overthroweth The cites and the policie,	Often times
460	That I have herd the poeple crie, And echon seide in his degré, ‘Ha wicke tunge, wo thee be!’ For men sein that the harde bon,	So that; heard bone

- Although himselven have non,
 465 A tunge brekth it al to pieces.
 He hath so manye sondri spieces
 Of vice, that I mai noght wel
 Describe hem be a thousandel. *by a thousandth-part*
 Bot whan that he to Chestre 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 Chestre yit unto this day
 Ne made I nevere, God forbede:
 For er I sunge such a crede,
 I hadde levere to be lewed; *rather; stupid*
 480 For thanne were I al beschrewed
 And worthi to be put abak *set back*
 With al the sorwe upon my bak
 That eny man ordeigne cowthe. *could impose*
 Bot I spak nevere yit be mowthe *by mouth*
 485 That unto Chestre mihte touche, *That [which]*
 And that I durste riht wel vouche
 Upon himself as for witesse;
 For I wot, of hir gentillesse *(i.e., his beloved's authority)*
 That sche me wolde wel excuse,
 490 That I no suche thinges use.
 And if it scholde so betide
 That I algates moste chide, *at any time*
 It myhte noght be to my love.
 For so yit was I nevere above, *so advantageously positioned*
 495 For al this wyde world to winne
 That I dorste eny word beginne,
 Be which sche mihte have ben amoeved
 And I of Chestre also reproeved.
 Bot rathere, if it mihte hir like,
 500 The beste wordes wolde I pike
 Whiche I cowthe in myn herte chese, *choose*
 And serve hem forth instede of chese, *cheese*
 For that is helplich to defie; *assists digestion*
 And so wolde I my wordes plie,
 505 That mihten Wraththe and Chestre avale
 With tellinge of my softe tale.
 Thus dar I make a foreward, *pledge*
 That nevere unto my ladiward
 Yit spak I word in such a wise,

510	Wherof that Cheste scholde arise. This seie I noght, that I fulofte Ne have, whanne I spak most softe, Per cas seid more thanne ynowh; Bot so wel halt no man the plowh	<i>By chance plow</i>
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.	<i>does not stumble once in a while haste casual word slip out</i>
520	Bot that I have agein hir heste Fulofte spoke, I am beknowe; And how my will is, that ye knowe. For whan my time comth aboute, That I dar speke and seie al oute	<i>command admit</i>
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.	<i>continuously passionate discomfort</i>
530	And thogh it be beside hire leve, I hope and trowe natheles That I do noght agein the pes; For thogh I telle hire al my thoght, Sche wot wel that I chyde noght.	<i>keeping back nothing without her permission believe nonetheless (i.e., to break the law)</i>
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,	<i>implore what bold</i>
540	That I dar wel the betre preie Mi ladi, which a womman is. For thogh I telle hire 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 earnest or in game	<i>humbly</i>
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	<i>[Such] that time</i>
555	Whanne I cam to miself alone. For thanne I made a privé mone,	<i>furtive lament</i>

- And every tale by and by,
Which as I spak to my ladi,
I thenke and peise in my balance *review; weigh*
- 560 And drawe into my remembrance;
And thanne, if that I finde a lak *fault*
Of eny word that I mispak,
Which was to moche in eny wise, *excessive in any way*
Anon my wittes I despise *disparage*
- 565 And make a chidinge in myn herte,
That eny word me scholde asterte *should slip out of me*
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, *left unspoken*
Which as I scholde more have spoke, *said*
I wolde upon miself be wroke, *take vengeance*
- 575 And chyde with miselven so
That al my wit is overgo. *overwhelmed*
For no man mai his time lore *lost*
Recovere, and thus I am therfore
So overwroth in al my thoght,
- 580 That I myself chide al to noght. *to no result*
Thus for to moche or for to lite *too; little*
Fulofte I am miself to wyte. *blame*
Bot al that mai me noght availe,
With Chestre thogh I me travaile. *belabor myself*
- 585 Bot oule on stock and stock on oule:
The more that a man defoule, *owl; branch*
Men witen wel which hath the werse; *which [one]*
And so to me nys worth a kerse, *is not; sprig of cress*
Bot torneth on myn oghne hed,
- 590 Thogh I, til that I were ded, *If I*
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 Chestre and of dissencioun,
Gif me youre absolucioun.” *Give*
- Confessor** “Mi sone, if that thou wistest al, *knew*
What Chestre doth in special
To love and to his welwillinge,
600 Thou woldest flen his knowlechinge *flee acquaintanceship with it*
And lerne to be debonaire.
For who that most can speke faire
Is most acordende unto love:

- Fair speche hath ofte brought above
 605 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 tunge stille
 And let thi witt thi wille areste, *intelligence restrain your desire*
 610 So that thou falle noght in Chestre,
 Which is the source of gret distance. *discord*
 And tak into thi remembrance
 If thou miht gete pacience,
 Which is the leche of alle offence, *healer*
 615 As tellen ous these olde wise.
 ☞ For whan noght elles mai suffice *(see note)*
 Be strengthe ne be mannes wit, *By*
 Than pacience it oversit *patience endures it (the problem)*
 And overcomth it ate laste;
 620 Bot he mai nevere longe laste,
 Which wol noght bowe er that he breke. *bow before he breaks*
 Tak hiede, sone, of that I speke.” *what*
Amans “Mi fader, of your goodli speche
 And of the witt which ye me teche
 625 I thonke you with al myn herte.
 For that world schal me nevere astate, *state of things (world) shall for me never arise*
 That I ne schal your wordes holde, *But that I shall; cling to*
 Of pacience as ye me tolde,
 Als ferforth as myn herte thenketh, *far as; considers*
 630 And of my wraththe it me forthenketh. *And [as far as] I regret my wrath*
 Bot, fader, if ye forthwithal
 Som good ensample in special
 Me wolden telle of som cronique,
 It scholde wel myn herte like
 635 Of pacience for to hiere,
 So that I mihte in mi matiere
 The more unto my love obeie
 And puten mi desese aweie.”

[PATIENCE OF SOCRATES]

- [Confessor]** “Mi sone, a man to beie him pes *earn quiet for himself*
 640 Behoveth soffre as Socrates *Must suffer*
 Ensamble lefte, which is write. *recorded*
 And for thou schalt the sothe wite
 ☞ Of this ensample what I mene, *(see note)*
 Although it be now litel sene *seen*
 645 Among the men thilke evidence,
 Yit he was upon pacience
 So sett, that he himself assaie *for himself to try*

	In thing which mihte him most mispaie	<i>displease</i>
	Desireth, and a wickid wif	<i>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	<i>taken</i>
	Sche hath, and broghte it into house,	
	And sih how that hire seli spouse	<i>hapless husband</i>
	Was sett and loked on a bok	
660	Nyh to the fyr, as he which tok	<i>Near</i>
	His ese for a man of age.	
	And sche began the wode rage,	<i>insane rage</i>
	And axeth him what devel he thoghte,	
	And bar on hond that him ne roghte	<i>claimed; did not care</i>
665	What labour that sche toke on honde,	<i>undertook</i>
	And seith that such an housebonde	
	Was to a wif noght worth a stre.	
	He seide nowther 'nay' ne 'ye,'	<i>straw</i>
	Bot hield him stille and let hire chyde;	
670	And sche, which mai hirself noght hyde,	<i>hide [her emotions]</i>
	Began withinne for to swelle,	<i>swell [with rage]</i>
	And that sche broghte in fro the welle,	<i>what</i>
	The waterpot sche hente alofte	<i>held</i>
	And bad him speke, and he al softe	<i>silent</i>
675	Sat stille and noght a word ansuerde.	
	And sche was wroth that he so ferde,	<i>behaved</i>
	And axeth him if he be ded.	<i>dead</i>
	And al the water on his hed	
	Sche pourede oute and bad awake.	<i>told him to wake up</i>
680	Bot he, which wolde noght forsake	
	His pacience, thanne spak,	<i>spoke</i>
	And seide how that he fond no lak	<i>found no fault</i>
	In nothing which sche hadde do.	<i>anything that</i>
	For it was wynter time tho,	<i>then</i>
685	And wynter, as be weie of kinde	<i>nature</i>
	Which stormy is, as men it finde,	
	Ferst makth the wyndes for to blowe,	
	And after that withinne a throwe	<i>in a moment</i>
	He reyneth and the watergates	<i>He (Winter)</i>
690	Undoeth; 'And thus my wif algates,	
	Which is with reson wel besein,	<i>stirred up</i>
	Hath mad me bothe wynd and rein	
	After the sesoun of the yer.'	<i>According to</i>
	And thanne he sette him nerr the fer,	<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*
 Wherof 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,
 To soffre as Socrates tho dede: *did then*
 And if it falle in eny stede *circumstance*
 A man to lese so his galle, *lose*
 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 eschuie it, if I mai. *to avoid it*
 Bot if ther be oght elles more
- 720 Wherof I mihte take lore, *take instruction*
 I preie you, so as I dar,
 Now telleth, that I mai be war,
 Some other tale in this matiere.”
- Confessor** “Sone, it is evere good to lere *learn*
 725 Wherof 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 befalle er he it wite, *knows*
- 730 As I finde in the bokes write.

[JUPITER, JUNO, AND TIRESIAS]

- Yit cam ther nevere good of strif, *Never yet has come; from*
 To seche in all a mannes lif.
 Thogh it beginne on pure game,
 Fulofte it torneth into grame *harm (see note)*
- 735 And doth grevance upon som side.
 Wherof the grete clerk Ovide
 After the lawe which was tho
 Of Jupiter and of Juno

- | | | |
|------------------|---|--|
| | Makth in his bokes menciouun | |
| 740 | How thei felle at dissencioun
In manere as it were a borde,
As thei begunne for to worde
Among hemself in priuete.
And that was upon this degree, | <i>jest (game)
banter words
themselves
comparison</i> |
| 745 | Which of the tuo more amorous is,
Or man or wif? And upon this
Thei mihten noght acorde in on,
And toke a jugge therupon,
Which cleped is Tiresias, | <i>woman</i> |
| 750 | And bede him demen in the cas;
And he withoute auisement
Agein Juno gaf juggement.
This goddesse upon his ansuere
Was wroth and wolde noght forbere, | <i>arbitrate
thinking it over
Against</i> |
| 755 | Bot tok away foreveremo
The liht fro bothe hise yhen tuo.
Whan Jupiter this harm hath sein,
An other bienfait theragein
He gaf, and such a grace him doth, | <i>two eyes
favor in compensation</i> |
| 760 | That for he wiste he seide soth,
A sothseiere he was forevere.
Bot yit that other were levere,
Have had the lokinge of his yhe,
Than of his word the prophecie. | <i>[Jupiter] knew; [Tiresias] spoke the truth
prophet
would be preferable to the other (Tiresias)
vision; eyes</i> |
| 765 | Bot how so that the sothe wente,
Strif was the cause of that he hente
So gret a peine bodily. | <i>whatever the truth might be
suffered</i> |
| 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
And lest ful many time grace,
Wher that he wolde his thonk pourchace. | <i>near; torment
loses</i> |
| 775 | And over this, my sone diere,
Of othre men, if thou miht hiere
In priuete what thei have wrought,
Hold conseil and descouere it noght,
For Chestre can no conseil hele, | <i>keep no secret</i> |
| 780 | Or be it wo or be it wele.
And tak a tale into thi mynde,
The which of olde ensample I finde. | <i>Whether it be</i> |

[TALE OF PHEBUS AND CORNIDE]

- Phebus, which makth the daies lihte,
 A love he hadde, which tho hihte *who then was called (see note)*
 785 Cornide, whom aboven alle
 He pleseth. Bot what schal befall
 Of love ther is no man knoweth,
 Bot as fortune hire happes throweth. *Except*
 So it befell upon a chaunce,
 790 A yong kniht tok hire aqueintance
 And hadde of hire al that he wolde. *desired*
 Bot a fals bridd, which sche hath holde
 And kept in chambre of pure yowthe, *from its earliest youth*
 Discoevereth all that evere he cowthe.
 795 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. *told*
 800 And he for wraththe his swerd outbreide, *(Phebus); unsheathed*
 With which Cornide anon he slowh. *killed*
 Bot after him was wo ynowh, *woeful enough*
 And tok a full gret repentance, *felt remorse*
 Wherof in tokne and remembrance
 805 Of hem whiche usen wicke speche,
 Upon this bridd he tok this wreche, *vengeance*
 That ther he was snow whyt tofore, *where*
 Evere afterward colblak therfore
 He was transformed, as it scheweth,
 810 And many a man yit him beschreweth *curses*
 And clepen him into this day
 A raven, be whom yit men mai
 Take evidence, whan he crieth,
 That som mishapp it signefieth.
 815 Be war therfore and sei the beste, *speak [only] the best*
 If thou wolt be thiself in reste,
 Mi goode sone, as I thee rede. *advise*

[JUPITER AND LAAR]

- For in another place I rede *read (see note)*
 Of thilke nimphe which Laar hihte.
 820 For sche the priveté be nyhte, *Because; by*
 How Jupiter lay be Jutorne, *beside*
 Hath told, god made hire overtorne. *be overthrown*
 Hire tunge he kutte, and into helle
 Forevere he sende hir for to duelle,

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 *many*
 In loves court, as it is seid,
 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 Chestre 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, *norm of practice*
 To fle the Chestre, 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 Chestre his oghne brother,
 845 And is be name cleped Hate, *called*
 That soffreth noght withinne his gate
 850 That ther come owther love or pes, *(see note)*
 For he wol make no reles
 Of no debat which is befalle.
 Now spek, if thou art on of alle,
 That with this vice hast ben withholde.”
[Amans] “As yit for oght 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 [or: 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 sauflly 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	<i>bestows</i>
	Bot schorte wordes to me seith,	
875	Thogh I my ladi love algate,	<i>entirely</i>
	Tho wordes moste I nedes hate,	
	And wolde thei were al despent,	<i>exhausted</i>
	Or so ferr oute of londe went	
	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 forthere 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	Fuloften 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 fuloften 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 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 Thus evere on hem I wayte and hope, *spy*
 Til I mai sen hem lepe a lope, *leap; leap*
 And halten on the same sor *go lame from*
 Which I do now: for overmor
 I wolde thanne do my myht
- 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 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 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 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 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 Forthi, mi sone, I wol thee rede, *counsel*
 That thou drawe in be frendlihede
 That thou ne miht noght do be hate;
 So miht thou gete love algate
 And sette thee, my sone, in reste,
- 950 For thou schalt finde it for the beste.
 And over this, so as I dar,

- I rede that thou be riht war *wary*
 Of othre mennes hate aboute
 Which every wysman scholde doute. *fear*
 955 For Hate is evere upon await, *in ambush*
 And as the fisshere on his bait
 Sleth, whan he seth the fisshes faste, *[hooked] tight*
 So, whan he seth time ate laste,
 That he mai worche another wo, *woe upon another person*
 960 Schal no man tornen him therfro,
 That Hate nyle his felonie *would not; crime*
 Fulfille and feigne compaignie
 Yit natheles, for Falssemblant
 Is toward him of covenant *by conspiracy*
 965 Withholde, so that under bothe *Retained*
 The privé wraththe can him clothe,
 That he schal seme of gret believe.
 Bot war thee wel that thou ne lieve *believe*
 Al that thou sest tofore thin yhe, *eye*
 970 So as the Gregois whilom syhe. *Greeks once saw*
 The bok of Troie whoso rede,
 Ther mai he finde ensample in dede.

[TALE OF KING NAMPLUS AND THE GREEKS]

- ☞ Sone after the destruccioun, *(see note)*
 Whan Troie was al bete down
 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;
 It hath be sen and felt fulofte, *fate oppose*
 980 The harde time after the softe.
 Be see as thei forth homward wente, *By sea*
 A rage of gret tempeste hem hente; *seized*
 Juno let bende hire parti bowe, *variegated bow*
 The sky wax derk, the wynd gan blowe,
 985 The firy welkne gan to thondre, *heaven began*
 As thogh the world scholde al to sondre; *split*
 Fro hevene out of the watergates
 The reyni storm fell down algates
 And al here takel made unwelde, *powerless*
 990 That no man mihte himself bewelde. *have control over himself*
 Ther mai men hiere schipmen crie,
 That stode in aunter for to die. *Who stood at risk*
 He that behinde sat to stiere *guide*
 Mai noght the forestempne hiere;
 995 The schip aros agein the waves, *ship's prow hear waves*

	The lodesman hath lost his lawes, The see bet in on every side. Thei nysten what fortune abide, Bot sette hem al in Goddes wille,	<i>helmsman; sense of direction</i> <i>knew not; to expect</i>
1000	Wher He hem wolde save or spille. And it fell thilke time thus: Ther was a king, the which Namplus Was hote, and he a sone hadde At Troie, which the Gregois ladde,	<i>Whether; destroy</i> <i>Was called</i> <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> <i>overthrown</i>
1010	And he be tresoun overcast. 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> <i>secret hatred</i>
1015	And thus this king thurgh privé hate Abod upon await algate, For he was noght of such emprise To vengen him in open wise. The fame, which goth wyde where,	 <i>ambush</i> <i>disposition</i> <i>avenge himself; manner</i>
1020	Makth knowe how that the Gregois were Homward with al the felaschipe 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 deceipte anon he fond Of privé hate, as thou schalt hiere, Wherof I telle al this matiere. This king the weder gan beholde,	 <i>toward</i> <i>invented</i>
1030	And wiste wel thei moten holde Here cours endlong his marche riht, And made upon the derke nyht Of grete schydes and of blockes Gret fyr agein the grete rockes	 <i>weather</i> <i>knew; must</i> <i>Their; along his right border</i>
1035	To schewe upon the helles hihe, So that the flete of Grece it sihe. And so it fell riht as he thoghte: This flete, which an havene soghte, The bryghte fyres sih aferr,	 <i>kindling and blocks [of wood]</i> <i>shine [as beacons]; high hills</i> <i>[would] see</i> <i>befell just as he planned</i>
1040	And thei hem drowen nerr and nerr, And wende wel and understode How al that fyr was mad for goode,	 <i>at a distance</i> <i>nearer</i> <i>believed well</i>

- To schewe wher men scholde aryve, *make landfall*
 And thiderward thei hasten blyve. *hasten quickly*
- 1045 In Semblant, as men sein, is guile,
 And that was proved thilke while; *in this instance*
 The schip, which wende his helpe acroche, *thought to get its help*
 Drof al to pieces on the roche,
 And so ther deden ten or twelve; *died*
- 1050 Ther mihte no man helpe himselve,
 For ther thei wenden deth ascape, *there where they thought*
 Withouten help here deth was schape. *their death*
 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, *dawn*
 Tho mihten thei the sothe knowe, *Then*
 That wher thei wenden frendes finde,
 1060 Thei founden frenschipe al behinde.
 The lond was thanne sone weyved, *soon quit*
 Wher that thei hadden be deceived,
 And toke hem to the hihe see;
 Therto thei seiden alle yee, *take themselves back; sea*
 1065 Fro that dai forth and war thei were *agreed*
 Of that thei hadde assaied there. *[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 scribein 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 overthrowe,
 Schal no man knowe be his chere
 Which is avant, ne which arere. *before; behind*
 Forthi, mi sone, thenke on this.”
- [Amans]** “Mi fader, so I wole ywiss; *indeed*
 1085 And if ther more of Wraththe be,
 Now axeth forth per charité,
 As ye be youre bokes knowe,
 And I the sothe schal beknowe.” *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 understonde

- 1090 That yit towardes Wraththe stonde *near*
 Of dedly vices othre tuo: *two others*
 And for to telle here names so, *their*
 It is Contek and Homicide, *Discord (Strife)*
 ☞ That ben to drede on every side. *are dreadful in all ways (see note)*
 1095 Contek, so as the bokes sein,
 Folhast hath to his chamberlein,
 Be whos conseil al unavised
 Is Pacience most despised,
 Til Homicide with hem meete.
 1100 Fro Merci thei ben al unmeete, *To Mercy unequal*
 And thus ben thei the worste of alle
 Of hem whiche unto wraththe falle,
 In dede bothe and ek in thoght.
 For thei acompte here wraththe at noght, *worthless*
 1105 Bot if ther be schedinge of blod; *Unless*
 And thus lich to a beste wod *insane beast*
 Thei knowe noght the God of lif.
 Be so the have or swerd or knif *Provided that they; either sword*
 Here dedly wraththe for to wreke, *avenge*
 1110 Of pité list hem noght to speke;
 Non other reson thei ne fonge, *take*
 Bot that thei ben of mihtes stronge.
 Bot war hem wel in other place, *let them beware*
 Where every man behoveth grace,
 1115 Bot ther I trowe it schal hem faile, *be lacking to them*
 To whom no merci mihte availe,
 Bot wroghten upon tiraundie, *But [rather]*
 That no pité ne mihte hem plie. *[Such] that; bend*

Opponit Confessor Now tell, my sone.”

[Amans] “Fader, what?”

[Confessor] “If thou hast be coupable of that.” *guilty*

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, *confess*
As we begunne ferst above.
And natheles I am beknowe *I confess*
- 1130 That as touchende of loves throwe, *circumstances*
Whan I my wittes overwende, *overturn*
Min hertes contek hath non ende, *quarrel (discord)*
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 *overturns*
Hire whiel and is to me so strange, *distant*
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, *wasted*
And se noght how to ben amended, *improved*
Bot rathere for to be empeired, *made worse*
As he that is wel nyh despeired. *discouraged (in despair)*
- 1145 For I ne mai no thonk deserve, *attain*
And evere I love and evere I serve,
And evere I am aliche nerr.
Thus, for I stonde in such a wer, *doubt*
I am, as who seith, out of herre; *confused (unhinged)*
- 1150 And thus upon miself the werre
I bringe, and putte out alle pes,
That I fulofte in such a res *frenzy*
Am wery of myn oghne lif.
So that of Contek and of strif
- 1155 I am beknowe and have ansuerd, *admit*
As ye, my fader, now have herd.
Min herte is wonderly begon *supplied*
With conseil, wherof Witt is on,
Which hath Resoun in compaignie;
- 1160 Agein the whiche stant partie *Against this faction stands*
Will, which hath Hope of his acord,
And thus thei bringen up Descord.
Witt and Resoun conseilen ofte
That I myn herte scholde softe,
- 1165 And that I scholde Will remue *remove*
And put him out of retenue,
Or elles holde him under fote.

- For as thei sein, if that he mote
 His oghne rewle have upon honde,
 1170 Ther schal no witt ben understonde.
 Of Hope also thei tellen this,
 That overal, wher that he is,
 He set the herte in jeupartie
 With wisshinge and with fantasie,
 1175 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
 1180 To love, wher ther is no leve
 To spede, 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.
 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.
 1190 Bot yit I mai noght Will forsake,
 That he nys maister of my thoght,
 Or that I spede, or spede noght.”
Confessor “Thou dost, my sone, agein the riht;
 Bot love is of so gret a miht,
 1195 His lawe mai no man refuse,
 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,
 1200 Wherof a tale write I finde.
- must*
uncontrolled behavior
- cease*
permission
To succeed
too lowborn
Who [would] not dare [to] love; until he succeeds
- Completely; Reason*
pleasure in this life lost
- is not*
- you yourself*
instructed
By; Nature

[TALE OF DIOGENES AND ALEXANDER]

- A philosophre of which men tolde
 Ther was whilom be daies olde,
 And Diogenes thanne he hihte.
 1205 So old he was that he ne mihte
 The world travaile, and for the beste
 He schop him for to take his reste,
 And duelte at hom in such a wise,
 That nyh his hous he let devise
 Endlong upon an axeltré
 1210 To sette a tonne in such degré,
 That he it mihte torne aboute;
- once*
was named
(see note)
- prepared himself*
had constructed
Along an axletree
barrel

- Wherof on hed was taken oute,
 For he therinne sitte scholde
 And torne himself so as he wolde,
 1215 To take th'eir and se the hevene
 And deme of the planetes sevene,
 As he which cowthe mochel what.
 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
 To loke upon the sonne ariste,
 1225 Wherof the propretes he sih,
 It fell ther cam ridende nyh
 King Alisandre with a route.
 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,
 And he himself that ilke throwe
 Abod, and hoveth there stille.
 This kniht after the kinges wille
 1235 With spore made his hors to gon
 And to the tonne he cam anon,
 Wher that he fond a man of age,
 And he him tolde the message,
 Such as the king him hadde bede,
 1240 And axeth why in thilke stede
 The tonne stod, and what it was.
 And he, which understod the cas,
 Sat stille and spak no word agein.
 The kniht bad speke and seith, 'Vilein,
 1245 Thou schalt me telle, er that I go;
 It is thi king which axeth so.'
 'Mi king?' quod he, 'That were unriht.'
 'What is he thanne?' seith the kniht,
 'Is he thi man?' 'That seie I noght,'
 1250 Quod he, 'bot this I am bethoght,
 Mi mannes man hou that he is.'
 'Thou lvest, false cherl, ywiss,'
 The kniht him seith, and was riht wroth,
 And to the king agein he goth
 1255 And tolde him how this man ansuerde.
 The king, whan he this tale herde,
 Bad that thei scholden alle abyde,
 For he himself wol thider ryde.
- one head (end)*
in whatever way he wished
air
examine
knew a great many things

Alone
morning
happen
as it pleased him
arisen

riding nearby
troop

barrel; meant
know

for the moment
Waited; lingers

spur

commanded
asked; that place

in reply
Churl

thus asks
false (unright)

but this I have in mind
is what he is
lie; for sure
really angry

heard
Ordered; wait

- And whan he cam tofore the tonne, *barrel*
 1260 He hath his tale thus begonne:
 'Al heil,' he seith, 'what man art thou?' *Hello*
 Quod he, 'Such on as thou sest now.' *a one; see*
 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: *the fact of the matter*
 Sith I ferst resoun understod, *Since*
 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 everemore,
 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, *your principal ruler*
 And hath the lordschipe of thi witt, *your intelligence*
 So that thou cowldest 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, *hasten*
 Wher thou no reson hast to winne.
 1290 And thus thi will is cause of sinne,
 And is thi lord, to whom thou servest,
 Wherof thou litel thonk deservest.'
 The king of that he thus answerde *of what he had answered*
 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

- 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 befalle
 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.

*move along; sun**take from me that gift
bestow**believed
reason sustained (supported)**obligatory***[TALE OF PYRAMUS AND THISBE]**

- ☞ I rede a tale, and telleth this:
 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,
 1340 That ther was nothing hem betwene,
 Bot wow to wow and wall to wall.
 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

*(see note)**crowd of people**then; neighborhood**house partition (wough)**equal**also**knew*

- 1350 As thei togedre thanne wone, *dwelled*
 Cupide hath so the thinges schape,
 That thei ne mihte his hand ascape,
 That he his fyr on hem ne caste:
 Wherof her herte he overcaste *overwhelmed*
- 1355 To folwe thilke lore and suie *pursue*
 Which nevere man yit miht eschuie; *avoid*
 And that was love, as it is happed,
 Which hath here hertes so betrapped, *their*
 That thei be alle weies seche *[So] that*
- 1360 How that thei mihten winne a speche,
 Here wofull peine for to lisse. *Their; relieve*
 Who loveth wel, it mai noght misse,
 And namely whan ther be tuo
 Of on acord, how so it go,
- 1365 Bot if that thei som weie finde.
 For love is evere of such a kinde *disposition*
 And hath his folk so wel affaited, *conquered*
 That howso that it be awaited, *howsoever; spied on*
 Ther mai no man the pourpos lette. *hinder*
- 1370 And thus between 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, *was named*
- 1375 And he whom that sche loveth hote *passionately*
 Was Piramus be name hote. *called*
 So longe here lecoun thei recorden, *their lesson (instruction by experiences)*
 Til ate laste thei acorden
 Be nihtes time for to wende *go*
- 1380 Alone out fro the tounes ende,
 Wher was a welle under a tree;
 And who cam ferst, or sche or he, *whether she or*
 He scholde stille there abide. *(That person)*
 So it befell the nyhtes tide *at night time*
- 1385 This maiden, which disguised was,
 Al prively the softe pas *[with] silent step*
 Goth thurgh the large toun unknowe,
 Til that sche cam withinne a throwe
 Wher that sche liketh for to duelle, *was pleased to wait*
- 1390 At thilke unhappi freisshe welle, *ill-fortuned*
 Which was also the forest nyh *near*
 Wher sche comende a leoun syh *coming; lion saw*
 Into the feld to take his preie,
 In haste and sche tho fledde aweie, *And she in haste then*
- 1395 So as fortune scholde falle,
 For feere and let hire wympel falle *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, *dragged about (ripped)*
 Bebled aboute and al forgnawe; *Stained [it] with blood; chewed [it]*
 And thanne he strawhte him for to drinke *went directly*
 Upon the freisshe welles brinke,
 And after that out of the plein
 1410 He torneth to the wode agein.
 And Tisbee dorste noght remue, *flee*
 Bot as a bridd which were in mue *bird; mew (cote)*
 Withinne a buissh sche kepte hire clos
 So stille that sche noght aros;
 1415 Unto himself and pleigneth ay. *[dared] not move*
 And fell, whil that sche there lay, *[it so] befell*
 This Piramus cam after sone
 Unto the welle, and be the mone *by moonlight*
 He fond hire wimpel blodi there.
 1420 Cam nevere yit to mannes ere *ear*
 Tidinge, ne to mannes sihte
 Merveile, which so sore afflihte *afflicted*
 A mannes herte, as it tho dede
 To him, which in the same stede *place*
 1425 With many a wofull compleignynge *lament*
 Began his handes for to wringe,
 As he which demeth sikerly *judged*
 That sche be ded. And sodeinly
 His swerd al nakid out he breide
 1430 In his folhaste, and thus he seide:
 'I am cause of this felonie, *crime*
 So it is resoun that I die,
 As sche is ded because of me.'
 And with that word upon his kne
 1435 He fell, and to the goddes alle
 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

	He sette, and thurgh his herte a wounde	
1445	He made up to the bare hilde. 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,	<i>aloud</i> <i>stopped beating</i> <i>value</i>
1455	Bot ded swounende down sche fell. 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	<i>eye</i>
1460	Upon hir love, and ate laste 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,	
1465	I wot now wel that ye be blinde, 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, And maden ous such thing desire	<i>command</i> <i>Alas</i>
1475	Wherof that we no skile cowthe; Bot thus oure freisshe lusti yowthe Withoute joie is al despended, Which thing mai nevere ben amended. For as of me this wol I seie,	<i>cause (reason) knew</i> <i>wasted</i>
1480	That me is levere for to deie Than live after this sorghful day.' And with this word, where as he lay, Hire love in armes sche embraseth, Hire oghne deth and so pourchaseth	<i>preferable</i> <i>sorrowful</i>
1485	That now sche wepte and nou sche kiste, Til ate laste, er sche it wiste, So gret a sorwe is to hire falle, Which overgoth hire wittes alle. As sche which mihte it noght asterte,	<i>knew</i> <i>overcomes</i> <i>escape</i>
1490	The swerdes point agein hire herte	

- 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. *of one sword bleeding
lying dead*
- Confessor** Now thou, mi sone, hast herd this tale,
 Bewar that of thin oghne bale *grief*
 Thou be noght cause in thi folhaste,
 And kep that thou thi witt ne waste *be on guard that you do not waste your reason*
 Upon thi thoght in aventure,
- 1500 Wherof thi lyves forfeiture
 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. *guilty*
 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; *power*
 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 spede.
 So mot I nedes taken hiede
 And schape how that he were aweie,
- 1530 If I therto mai finde a weie.”

[ON DAUNGER]

- Confessor** “Mi sone, tell me now forthi,
 Which is that mortiel enemy
 That thou manacest to be ded.” *menaced with death*

Confessio Amantis	“Mi fader, it is such a qwed,	<i>scoundrel</i>
1535	That wher I come, he is tofore,	<i>before [me]</i>
	And doth so, that mi cause is lore.”	<i>lost</i>
[Confessor]	“What is his name?”	
[Amans]	“It is Daunger,	<i>Standoffishness</i>
	Which is mi ladi consailer.	<i>Who; lady's counselor</i>
	For I was nevere yit so slyh,	
1540	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	<i>reward</i>
	Yit mihte I nevere of love spede;	<i>succeed</i>
1545	For evere this I finde soth,	<i>[to be] true</i>
	Al that my ladi seith or doth	
	To me, Daunger schal make an ende,	
	And that makth al mi world miswende.	<i>turn away</i>
	And evere I axe his help, bot he	<i>ask</i>
1550	Mai wel be cleped Sanz Pité;	<i>called Pitiless</i>
	For ay the more I to him bowe,	
	The lasse he wol my tale alowe.	
	He hath mi ladi so englued,	<i>ensnared</i>
	Sche wol noght that he be remued;	<i>does not want; removed</i>
1555	For evere he hangeth on hire seil,	<i>Because; sail (i.e., keeps company with her)</i>
	And is so privé of conseil,	
	That evere whanne I have oght bede,	<i>prayed</i>
	I finde Danger in hire stede	<i>place</i>
	And myn ansuere of him I have;	
1560	Bot for no merci that I crave,	
	Of merci nevere a point I hadde.	
	I finde his ansuere ay so badde,	<i>wicked</i>
	That werse mihte it nevere be.	
	And thus betwen Danger and me	
1565	Is evere werre til he dye.	<i>war</i>
	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>avoid</i>
1570	Ne yit for al this world to winne,	
	If that I mihte finde a sleyhte,	<i>devious means</i>
	To leie al myn astat in weyhte;	
	I wolde him fro the court dissevere,	
	So that he come ageinward nevere.	
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 *nonetheless*
- 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 *acquitted*
 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 *given*
 Have gove and served evere yit, *If*
- 1595 And thanne I scholde in such a wise
 In rewardinge of my servise *pity*
 Be ded, me thenkth it were a rowthe.
 And furthermor, to telle trowthe,
 Sche, that hath evere be wel named, *[so far] well-reputed*
- 1600 Were worthi thanne to be blamed
 And of reson to ben appeled, *indicted*
 Whan with o word sche mihte have heled *healed*
 A man, and soffreth him so deie.
 Ha, who sawh evere such a weie?
- 1605 Ha, who sawh evere in such destresse —
 Withoute pité gentillesse,
 Withoute mercy wommanhede,
 That wol so quyte a man his mede, *reward*
 Which evere hath be to love trewe?
- 1610 Mi goode fader, if ye rewe *have pity*
 Upon mi tale, tell me now,
 And I wol stinte and herkne yow.” *stop; listen [to]*
- Confessor** “Mi sone, attempre thi corage
 Fro Wraththe, and let thin herte assuage.
- 1615 For whoso wole him underfonge, *be vassal to him [Wrath]*
 He mai his grace abide longe, *wait a long time*
 Er he of love be received;
 And ek also, bot it be weyved,
 Ther mihte mochel thing befall,
- 1620 That scholde make a man to falle
 Fro love, that nevere afterward
 Ne durste he loke thiderward.
 In harde weies men gon softe, *difficult paths; cautiously*
 And er thei clymbe avise hem ofte. *before; advise themselves*
- 1625 Men sen alday that rape reweth;
 And whoso wicked ale breweth, *haste causes grief*
foul ale

- Fulofte he mot the werse drinke:
 Betre is to flete than to sincke;
 Betre is upon the bridel chiewe
 1630 Thanne if he felle and overthrewe —
 The hors — and stikede 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 spede,
 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 fihtheth most withal
 Schal lest conquere of his emprise.
 1650 For this thei tellen that ben wise,
 Wicke is to stryve and have the werse;
 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 himselve slowh
 For love of Tisbee pitously,
 For he hire wympel fond blody
 1665 And wende a beste 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 pursuie,
- 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

- Yit sit it wel that thou eschuie *eschew*
 1675 That thou the court noght overhaste,
 For so miht thou thi time waste;
 Bot if thin happ therto be schape, *Unless; circumstance*
 It mai noght helpe for to rape. *be hasty*
 Therfore attempre thi corage; *moderate; passion*
 1680 Folhaste doth non advantage,
 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.

[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,
 That sche with him no reste hadde;
 For evere upon hire love he gradde, *cried out*
 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. *Saw; busy himself so vigorously*
 And for he scholde him haste more,
 And yit noght speden ate laste, *succeed*
 1700 A dart thurghout his herte he caste,
 Which was of gold and al afyre,
 That made him manyfold desire
 Of love more thanne he dede.
 To Daphne ek in the same stede *place*
 1705 A dart of led he caste and smot, *lead*
 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. *accomplished*
 And for to make him full believe
 That no Folhaste mihte achieve *Rashness*
 1715 To gete love in such degree,
 This Daphne into a lorer tre *laurel*
 Was torned, which is evere grene,

- 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 understonde,
 To hasten love is thing in vein,
 Whan that fortune is theragein.
 1725 To take where a man hath leve *permission*
 Good is, and elles he mot leve; *do without*
 For whan a mannes happes failen, *fortunes fail*
 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, *tree; keeps her own shape*
 Ther mai me no man so enforme, *instruct*
 To whether part fortune wende, *whatever*
 That I unto mi lyves ende
 1735 Ne wol hire serven everemo.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, sithen it is so, *since*
 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, *instruct*
 Som good ensample upon this lore
 Ye wolden telle of that is write,
 1750 That I the betre mihte wite *know*
 How I Folhaste scholde eschuie, *avoid*
 And the wisdom of conseil suie.” *follow*
- Confessor** “Mi sone, that thou miht enforme
 Thi pacience upon the forme
 1755 Of olde essamples, as thei felle,
 Now understond what I schal telle.

[TALE OF ATHEMAS AND DEMEPHON]

- Whan noble Troie was belein *besieged*
 And overcome, and hom agein
 1759 The Gregois torned fro the siege, *Greeks*
 1760 The kinges founde here oghne liege *their own vassals (see note)*
 In manye places, as men seide,

- That hem forsoke and desobeide.
 Among the whiche fell this cas
 To Demephon and Athemas,
 1765 That weren kinges bothe tuo, *Who were*
 And bothe weren served so.
 Here lieges wolde hem noght receive,
 So that thei mote algates weyve *depart*
 To seche lond in other place,
 1770 For there founde thei no grace.
 Wherof thei token hem to rede, *adopted a course of action*
 And soghten frendes ate nede
 And ech of hem assureth other
 To helpe as to his oghne brother,
 1775 To vengen hem of thilke outrage *offense*
 And winne agein here heritage.
 And thus thei ryde aboute faste
 To gete hem help, and ate laste
 Thei hadden pouer sufficient,
 1780 And maden thanne a covenant,
 That thei ne scholden no lif save,
 Ne prest, ne clerc, 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 *their vow*
 Thei schapen for to do vengeance.
 Whan this pourpos was wist and knowe *known*
 1790 Among here host, tho was ther blowe *blown*
 Of wordes many a speche aboute. *speech [spread] about*
 Of yonge men the lusti route *crowd*
 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, *in agreement about the violence*
 And sein it mai noght be to gret *say*
 To vengen hem of such forfet. *loss*
 Thus seith the wilde unwise tonge
 1800 Of hem that there weren yonge.
 Bot Nestor, which was old and hor, *gray*
 The salve sih tofore the sor, *healing ointment saw rather than*
 As he that was of conseil wys.
 So that anon be his avis
 1805 Ther was a privé conseil nome. *taken*
 The lordes ben togedre come;
 This Demephon and Athemas
 Here pourpos tolden, as it was;

- Thei sieten alle stille and herde,
 1810 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; [would] 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, *who became a shepherd*
 Wher no lif is bot only beste *beast*
 Under the liegance of his heste. *command*
 For who that is of man no king,
 The remenant is as nothing.
 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 vengeance seche; *seek*
Nota For whanne a man is most above, *powerfully positioned*
 Him nedeth most to gete him love.
 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 *peace; cessation of hostility*
 Thei sende and preide anon forthwith,
 So that the kinges ben appesed,
 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. *be done by*
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 *not very reliable*
Thurgh Will, which is noght wel assised
Whan Wit and Reson ben aweie,
And that Folhaste is in the weie,
Wherof hath falle gret vengeance.
- 1870 Forthi tak into remembrance
To love in such a maner wise
That thou deserve no juise. *punishment*
For wel I wot, thou miht noght lette *prevent*
That thou ne schalt thin herte sette
- 1875 To love, wher thou wolt or non;
Bot if thi wit be overgon, *overwhelmed*
So that it torne into malice,
Ther wot no man of thilke vice
What peril that ther mai befall.
- 1880 Wherof a tale amonges alle,
Which is gret pit   for to hiere, *hear*
I thenke for to tellen hiere, *here*
That thou such moerdre miht withstonde, *[So] that*
Whan thou the tale hast understonde.

[TALE OF ORESTES]

- 1885 Of Troie at thilke noble toun,
Whos fame stant yit of renoun
- 1890 And evere schal to mannes ere, *ear (see note)*
The siege laste longe there,
Er that the Greks it mihten winne,
- 1895 Whil Priamus was king therinne;
Bot of the Greks that lyhe aboute
Agamenon ladde al the route.
This thing is knowen overal,
Bot yit I thenke in special
- 1895 To my matiere therupon
Telle in what wise Agamenon,
Thurgh chance which mai noght be weived, *evaded*
Of love untrew   was deceived.

- An old sawe is, 'Who that is slyh
 1900 In place where he mai be nyh,
 He makth the ferre lieve loth.'
 Of love and thus fulofte it goth.
 Ther while Agamenon batailleth
 To winne Troie, and it assailleth,
 1905 Fro home and was long time ferr,
 Egistus drowh his qweene nerr,
 And with the leiser which he hadde
 This ladi at his wille he ladde.
 Climestre was hire rihte name,
 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,
 Be treson slowh him in his bedd.
 1920 Bot moerdre, which mai noght ben hedd,
 Sprong out to every mannes ere,
 Wherof 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,
 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,
 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 betawhte,
 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,

*near
distant love loathsome*

far away

led

*sent for
one*

hidden

*evident
But since*

before he knew it

for nurturing

*went
entrusted*

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, *keeping (protection)*
 And seide he wolde him kepe and warde, *guard*
 1955 Til that he were of such a myht
 To handle a swerd and ben a knyht,
 To venge him at his oghne wille.
 And thus Horestes duelleth stille:
 Such was the childe's rihte name,
 1960 Which after wroghte mochel schame
 In vengeance of his fader deth.
 The time of yeres overgeth, *passes*
 That he was man of brede and lengthe, *[So] that; breadth; height*
 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, *Praying*
 For lengere wolde he noght beleve, *a force [of soldiers]*
 He seith, bot preith the king of leve, *remain*
 To gon and cleyne his heritage, *leave (permission)*
 And vengen him of thilke outrage *outrage*
 1975 Which was unto his fader do.
 The king assenteth wel therto,
 With gret honour and knyht him makth, *And with great honor makes him knight*
 And gret pouer to him betakth, *entrusts*
 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, *complaint to express*
 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, *success*
 As alle men him geven red. *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 vengeance
 2000 So cruel, that the remembrance
 Therof mihte everemore abide,
 As sche that was an homicide
 And of hire oghne lord moerdrice. *murderess*
 Horestes, which of thilke office *duty*
 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. *punishment*
 And therupon he hadde ansuere,
 2010 That he hire pappes scholde of tere
 Out of hire brest his oghne hondes, *breasts; tear off*
 And for ensample of alle londes *bosom; with his own hands*
 With hors sche scholde be todrawe, *horses; torn apart by drawing*
 Til houndes hadde hire bones gnawe
 2015 Withouten eny sepulture. *grave*
 This was a wofull aventure!
 And whan Horestes hath al herd,
 How that the goddes have ansuerd,
 Forth with the strengthe which he ladde
 2020 The duc and his pouer he hadde, *duke*
 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
 2030 His dowhter whilom of full age
 Forlai, and afterward forsok, *Raped; forsook [her]*
 Whan he Horestes moder tok. *took [in marriage]*
 Men sein, 'Old senne newe schame': *sin*
 Thus more and more aros the blame
 2035 Agein Egiste on every side.
 Horestes with his host to ride
 Began, and Phoieus with hem wente;
 I trowe Egiste him schal repente. *himself*
 Thei riden forth unto Micene,

- 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, *before*
 To hire and tolde his tale tho,
- 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 *unnatural*
love’s cup
slaughter
 Of him which was thin oghne lord?
- 2060 Thi treson stant of such record,
 Thou miht thi werkes noght forsake;
 So mot I for mi fader sake *put aside*
must
 Vengance upon thi bodi do,
 As I comanded am therto.
- 2065 Unkindely for thou hast wroght,
 Unkindeliche it schal be boght: *Unnaturally*
paid for
 The sone schal the moder sle,
 For that whilom thou seidest “yee” *Since formerly; “yes”*
 To that thou scholdest “nay” have seid.’ *that which you; “no”*
- 2070 And he with that his hond hath leid
 Upon his moder brest anon,
 And rente out fro the bare bon *mother’s breast*
tore; bone
 Hire pappes bothe and caste aweie *threw away*
 Amiddes in the carte weie, *cart’s path*
- 2075 And after tok the dede cors *dead body*
 And let it drawe away with hors *dragged*
 Unto the hound and to the raven;
 Sche was non other wise graven. *buried*
 Egistus, which was elles where,
- 2080 Tidinges comen to his ere *News; ear*
 How that Micenes was belein, *besieged*
 Bot what was more herd he noght sein. *But [off] what more was said he heard nothing*
 With gret manace and mochel bost
 He drowh pouer and made an host *gathered an army*
- 2085 And cam in rescousse of the toun. *rescue*
 Bot al the sleyhte of his tresoun

- Horestes wiste it be aspie,
 And of his men a gret partie
 He made in buisschement 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 befaller,
 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 reнге,
 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 *took*
 And axeth him of this matiere.
 And he, that alle it mihten hierē,
 Ansuerde and tolde his tale alarge, *fully*
 2140 And hou the goddes in his charge
 Comanded him in such a wise
 His oghne hond to do juise. *[By] his own hand; judgment*
 And with this tale a duc aros, *duke*
 Which was a worthi knight of los, *good reputation (fame)*
 2145 His name was Menesteus,
 And seide unto the lordes thus:
 ‘The wreeche which Horestes dede, *vengeance; took*
 It was thing of the goddes bede, *commanded*
 And nothing of his cruauté;
 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, *(i.e., threw down the gauntlet in challenge)*
 2155 And ek this noble duc alleide *alleged*
 Ful many another skile, and seide *reason*
 Sche hadde wel deserved wreeche, *vengeance*
 Ferst for the cause of spousebreche, *adultery*
 And after wroghte in such a wise
 2160 That al the world it oghte agrise, *offend*
 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, *It seemed; spoke reason*
 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 *honor*
 Received, and coroned king.
 And tho befell a wonder thing:
 Egiona, whan sche this wiste, *knew*
 Which was the dowhter of Egiste
 2175 And soster on the moder side
 To this Horeste, at thilke tide, *time*
 Whan sche herde how hir brother spedde, *succeeded*
 For pure sorwe, which hire ledde,
 That he ne hadde ben exiled,
 2180 Sche hath hire oghne lif beguiled *betrayed*

- Anon and hyng hireselve tho. *hanged; then*
 It hath and schal ben everemo,
 To moerdre who that wole assente,
 He mai noght faille to repente.
- 2185 This false Egiona was on,
 Which for to moerdre Agamenon
 Gaf hire acord and hire assent,
 So that be Goddes juggement, *by*
 Thogh that non other man it wolde,
- 2190 Sche tok hire juise as sche scholde; *punishment*
 And as sche to another wroghte,
 Vengance upon hireself sche soghte,
 And hath of hire unhappi wit
 A moerdre with a moerdre quit.
- 2195 Such is of moerdre the vengeance.
Confessor Forthi, mi sone, in remembrance
 Of this ensample tak good hiede.
 For who that thenkth his love spiede *to expedite*
 With moerdre, he schal with worldes schame
- 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 *because; learn*
 2205 What is to done, and what to leve. *avoid*
 ☞ And over this now be your leve, *(see note)*
 That ye me wolden telle I preie,
 If ther be lieffull eny weie *lawful*
- 2209 Withouten senne a man to sle.” *sin*
Confessor “Mi sone, in sondri wise, ye. *various ways, yes*
 What man that is of traierie,
 Of moerdre or elles robberie
 Atteint, the jugge schal noght lette, *Convicted*
 Bot he schal slen of pure dette,
- 2215 And doth gret senne, if that he wonde. *refrains*
 For who that lawe hath upon honde,
 And spareth for to do justice
 For merci, doth noght his office, *duty*
- 2219 That he his mercy so bewareth, *squanders*
 ☞ Whan for o schrewe which he spareth *one wicked person (see note)*
 A thousand goode men he grieveth. *aggrieves*
 With such merci who that believeth
 To plese God, he is deceived,
- 2224 Or elles resoun mot be weyved. *must be abandoned*
 ☞ The lawe stod er we were bore, *before (see note)*
 How that a kinges swerd is bore
 In signe that he schal defende

- 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 rihtwisenesse. *good deed*
maintain justice
And over this for his contré *(see note)*
In time of werre a man is fre *war*
Himself, his hous, and ek his lond
Defende with his oghne hond, *[To] defend; own*
And slen, if that he mai no bet, *kill; find no better [solution]*
- 2240 After the lawe which is set.”
- Amans** “Now, fader, thanne I you beseche
Of hem that dedly werres seche *Concerning*
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, *common law*
I woll thee telle in evidence,
- 2250 To rewle with thi conscience.”

[EVIL OF WAR]

- v. *Quod creat ipse deus, necat hoc homicida creatum,
Vltor et humano sanguine spargit humum.
Vt pecoris sic est hominis cruor, heu, modo fusus,
Victa iacet pietas, et furor urget opus.
Angelus “In terra pax” dixit, et vltima Christi
Verba sonant pacem, quam modo guerra fugat.¹*

- [Confessor]** “The hihe God of His justice
That ilke foule horrible vice *same (specific) (see note)*
Of Homicide he hath forbede, *forbidden*
Be Moises as it was bede. *By Moses; commanded*
- 2255 Whan Goddes Sone also was bore,
He sende Hise anglis down therfore,
Whom the schepherdes herden singe,
Pes to the men of welwillinge *Peace; properly directed intention*
In erthe be among ous here.

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 *also; prohibited*
 And in hir lawe pes comended,
- 2265 Which is the chief of mannes welthe, *most important factor*
 Of mannes lif, of mannes helthe.
 Bot dedly werre hath his covine *confederates*
 Of Pestilence and of Famine,
 Of Poverté and of alle wo,
- 2270 Wherof this world we blamen so,
 Which now the werre hath under fote,
 Til God Himself therof do bote. *remedy*
 For alle thing which God hath wrought
 In erthe, werre it bringth to noght. *war reduces it to nothing*
- 2275 The cherche is brent, the priest is slain, *church; burnt*
 The wif, the maide is ek forlain, *raped*
 The lawe is lore, and God unserved. *lost*
 I not what mede he hath deserved *know not; desert (punishment)*
 That suche werres ledeth inne. *introduces*
- 2280 If that he do it for to winne,
 Ferst to acompte his grete cost
 Forth with the folk that he hath lost,
 As to the worldes rekeninge
 Ther schal he finde no winnynge;
- 2285 And if he do it to pourchace
 The hevene mede, of such a grace *heaven's reward*
 I can noght speke, and natheles
 Crist hath comanded love and pes,
 And who that worcheth the revers,
- 2290 I trowe his mede is ful divers. *believe; reward; the complete opposite*
 And sithen thanne that we finde *since*
 That werres in here oghne kinde *by their very nature*
 Ben toward God of no decerte, *merit*
 And ek thei bringen in poverté *impoverishment*
- 2295 Of worldes good, it is merveile
 Among the men what it mai eyle, *harm*
 That thei a pes ne conne sette.
 I trowe senne be the lette, *sin; obstacle*
- ☞ And every mede of senne is deth; *reward; sin; death (see note)*
- 2300 So wot I nevere hou that it geth.
 Bot we that ben of o believe *a single*
 Among ousself, this wolde I lieve *ourselves; believe*
 That betre it were pes to chese, *to choose peace*
 Than so be double weie lese. *lose*
- 2305 I not if that it now so stonde, *know not*
 Bot this a man mai understonde,

	Who that these olde bokes redeth, That Coveitise is on which ledeth, And broghte ferst the werres inne.	<i>Covetousness is the leading factor</i>
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 richesse was in londe, So that thei leften nothing stonde	
☞	Unwerred, bot onliche Archade. For there thei no werres made, Because it was bareigne and povere,	<i>Unassailed (see note)</i> <i>barren</i>
2320	Wherof thei 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,	<i>gain a profit</i> <i>avoided</i> <i>had nothing lost nothing</i>
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.	<i>demand; claim</i> <i>because of; power</i>
	For this mai every man wel wite, 2330 That bothe kinde and lawe write Expressly stonden theragein. Bot he mot nedes somewhat sein, Although ther be no reson inne, Which secheth cause for to winne.	<i>know</i> <i>natural and written law</i> <i>in opposition</i> <i>Who seeks grounds</i>
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	Wherof that 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,	<i>deceives</i>
2345	Be so that he mai winne ynowh. For as the trew man to the plowh Only to the gaignage entendeth, Riht so the werreiour despendeth His time and hath no conscience.	<i>Provided that; enough</i> <i>[agricultural] profit</i> <i>Just so the warrior squanders</i>
2350	And in this point for evidence Of hem that suche werres make, Thou miht a gret ensample take, How thei her tirannie excusen	<i>their</i>

- Of that thei wrongfull werres usen,
 2355 And how thei stonde of on acord,
 The souldour forth with the lord,
 The povere man forth with the riche,
 As of corage thei ben liche, *disposition; alike*
 To make werres and to pile *pillage*
 2360 For lucre and for non other skyle. *reason*
 Wherof a propre tale I rede,
 As it whilom befell in dede. *once; fact*

[TALE OF ALEXANDER AND THE PIRATE]

- Of him whom al this erthe dradde, *feared*
 Whan he the world so overladde *tyrannized*
 2365 Thurgh werre, as it fortunied is, *Through war*
 23 King Alisandre, I rede this: *(see note)*
 How in a marche, where he lay, *borderland*
 It fell per chance upon a day
 A rovere of the see was nome, *pirate; sea; captured*
 2370 Which many a man hadde overcome *Who; overwhelmed*
 And slain and take here good aweie. *stolen their goods*
 This pilour, as the bokes seie, *pillager*
 A famous man in sondri stede *places*
 Was of the werkes whiche he dede. *did*
 2375 This prisoner tofor the king *before*
 Was broght, and there upon this thing
 In audience he was accused.
 And he his dede hath noght excused, *behavior*
 Bot preith the king to don him riht, *give him justice*
 2380 And seith, 'Sire, if I were of miht,
 I have an herte lich to thin; *akin to your own*
 For if the pouer were myn,
 Mi will is most in special
 To rifle and geten overal *steal; everywhere*
 2385 The large worldes good aboute.
 Bot for I lede a povere route *poor gang*
 And am, as who seith, at meschief,
 The name of pilour and of thief *pillager*
 I bere; and thou, which routes grete *troops*
 2390 Miht lede and take thi begete, *plunder*
 And dost riht as I wolde do,
 Thi name is nothing cleped so, *called*
 Bot thou art named "Emperour."
 Oure dedes ben of o colour
 2395 And in effect of o decerte, *one worth*
 Bot thi riches and my povertie *poverty*
 Tho ben noght taken evene liche.

- And natheles he that is riche
 This dai, tomorwe he mai be povere; *poor*
 2400 And in contraire also recovere
 A povere man to gret richesse
 Men sen: forthi let rihtwisnesse *therefore; justice*
 Be peised evene in the balance.' *weighed*
 The king his hardi contenance
 2405 Behield, and herde hise wordes wise,
 And seide unto him in this wise:
 'Thin ansuere I have understonde,
 Wherof 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, *loyal*
 He made him kniht and gaf him lond,
 Which afterward was of his hond
 2415 An orped kniht in many a stede, *valiant knight; place*
 And gret prouesce of armes dede, *prowess*
 As the croniques it recorden.
 And in this wise thei acorden,
 The whiche of o condicioun
 2420 Be set upon destruccioun.
 Such capitein such retenue.
 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, *profit*
 And doth desese on every side:
 Bot whan reson is put aside
 And will governeth the corage, *heart*
 2430 The faucon which that fleth ramage *flies untamed*
 And soefffreth nothing in the weie,
 Wherof that he mai take his preie,
 Is noght mor set upon ravine, *rapaciousness*
 Than thilke man which his covine *conspiracy*
 2435 Hath set in such a maner wise.
 For al the world ne mai suffise
 To will which is noght resonable.
 ☞ Wherof ensample concordable *(see note)*
 Lich to this point of which I meene,
 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. *pleased him*
 In Ynde the superiour
 Whan that he was ful conquerour,
 And hadde his wilful pourpos wonne
- 2450 Of al this erthe under the sonne, *sun*
 This king homward to Macedoine,
 Whan that he cam to Babiloine,
 And wende most in his empire, *had to return into*
 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. *poison*
 And as he hath the world mistimed
 Noght as he scholde with his wit,
- 2460 Noght as he wolde it was aquit. *repaid*
 Thus was he slain that whilom slowh, *slew*
 And he which riche was ynowh
 This dai, tomorwe he hadde noght. *nothing*
 And in such wise as he hath wroght
- 2465 In destorbance of worldes pes, *peace*
 His werre he fond thanne endeles, *war*
 In which forevere desconfit *vanquished*
 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. *nature would send for him*
 I not hou he it mihte amende, *know not; remedy*
 Which takth awei foreveremore *Who*
- 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 *guilty*
- 2484 Withoute cause resonable.”

[ON CRUSADES]

Amans “Mi fader, understonde it is,
 That ye have seid; bot over this
 I prei you tell me ‘nay’ or ‘yee,’

- To passe over the grete see *ocean*
 To werre and sle the Sarazin,
 2490 Is that the lawe?"
- 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, *according to what*
 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, *By war; the faith*
 It hadde yit stonde in balance. *been unstable*
 And that mai proven in the dede;
 For what man the croniques rede, *whoever reads*
 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 amendement,
 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, *has become commonplace*
 In holi cherche and elles where.
 2530 Bot al the while it stant so there,
 The world mot nede fare amis. *must necessarily go astray*
 For whan the welle of pité is
 Thurgh coveitise of worldes good

- 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 fowhles 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,
 Wherof 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 uprihtes
 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 pute 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 between 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 withdrowh 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 Grecs 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. *mercy*
 The lordes dede here obeissance
 To Thelaphus, and pourveance *provision*
 2715 Was mad so that he was coroned:
 And thus was merci reguerdoned, *rewarded*
 Which he to Theucer dede afore.

- 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 *against*
 Merci to be thi governour.
- 2730 So schalt thou fiele no rancour,
 Wherof thin herte schal debate
 With Homicide ne with hate
 For Cheste or for Malencolie. *[Either] for*
 Thou schalt be soft in compaignie
- 2735 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, *commands*
 And of this point ye have me tawht,
 Toward miself the betre sawht *the more reconciled*
 I thenke be, whil that I live.
 Bot for als moche as I am schrive
- 2745 Of Wraththe and al his circumstance,
 Gif what you list to my penance,
 And asketh forthere of my lif,
 If otherwise I be gultif *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, *conceal*
 For I schal telle you the trowthe.”
- Confessor** “Mi sone, art thou coupable of Slowthe *guilty; Sloth*
 2759 In eny point which to him longeth?”
- Amans** “My fader, of tho pointz me longeth
 To wite plainly what thei meene,
 So that I mai me schrive cleene.” *confess myself thoroughly*
- Confessor** “Now herkne, I schal the pointz devise;
 And understond wel myn aprise: *teaching*

- 2765 For schrifte stant of no value
To him that wol him noght vertue *exert himself*
To leve of vice the folie.
For word is wynd, bot the maistrie *significant accomplishment*
Is that a man himself defende *prohibit (protect)*
2770 Of thing which is noght to comende, *commendable*
Wherof ben fewe now aday.
And natheles, so as I may
Make unto thi memoire knowe,
The pointz of Slowthe thou schalt knowe.”

EXPLICIT LIBER TERCIVS



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,	<i>behavior</i>
	The ferste point of Slowthe I calle	
	Lachesce, and is the chief of all,	<i>Procrastination</i>
5	And hath this propreliche of kinde,	<i>property of nature</i>
	To leven alle thing behinde.	<i>leave</i>
	Of that he mihte do now hier	<i>here and now</i>
¶	He tarieth al the longe yer,	<i>(see note)</i>
	And everemore he seith, “Tomorwe’;	
10	And so he wol his time borwe,	
	And wissheth after ‘God me sende,’	
	That whan he weneth have an ende,	<i>thinks</i>
	Thanne is he ferthest to beginne.	
	Thus bringth he many a meschief inne	
15	Unwar, til that he be meschieved,	<i>harmed (jeopardized)</i>
	And may noght thanne be relieved.	
	And riht so nowther mor ne lesse	<i>neither</i>
	It stant of love and of lachesce.	
	Somtime he slowtheth in a day	<i>behaves slothfully</i>
20	That he nevere after gete mai.	
	Now, sone, as of this ilke thing,	<i>same</i>
	If thou have eny knowleching	

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."	<i>done before</i>
	Confessio Amantis "Mi goode fader, yis.	<i>yes</i>
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>I admit</i> <i>i.e., in his livery [as a retainer]</i>
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>bade [me] abide yet</i> <i>declared [that]; neither intelligent</i> <i>Nor timely; then</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	<i>spent</i> <i>might just as well send</i> <i>by chance; clearly</i>
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,	<i>dare say</i> <i>time</i>
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;	<i>foolish</i> <i>planned to speak</i> <i>know not</i> <i>Whether; fear</i>
50	Bot evere in earnest 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	<i>know</i> <i>diminished</i> <i>beg (ask)</i> <i>prayed</i> <i>one place</i> <i>continuously [for]</i> <i>yet</i> <i>in spite of my [will]</i> <i>know well in the end</i> <i>seldom</i> <i>fear</i> <i>all the rest</i> <i>pertaining</i> <i>Procrastination</i>
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;	
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.	
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;	

- And if ther be to this matiere
 70 Som goodly tale for to liere
 How I mai do Lachesce aweie,
 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. *one*

[TALE OF AENEAS AND DIDO]

- Agein Lachesce in loves cas *Against*
 I finde how whilom Eneas, *once*
 79 Whom Anchises to sone hadde,
 With gret navie, which he ladde *as a son*
 80 Fro Troie, aryveth at Cartage, *fleet of ships; led (see note)*
 Wher for a while his herbergage *lodging*
 He tok; and it betidde so,
 With hire which was qweene tho *then*
 85 Of the cité his aqueintance
 He wan, whos name in remembrance
 Is yit, and Dido sche was hote,
 Which loveth Eneas so hote *yet; called*
 Upon the wordes whiche he seide, *Who; passionately*
 90 That al hire herte on him sche leide
 And dede al holi what he wolde. *laid*
did entirely; desired
 Bot after that, as it be scholde,
 Fro thenne he goth toward Ytaile *Italy*
 Be schipe, and there his arivaile *By; place of disembarkation*
 95 Hath take, and schop him for to ryde. *chosen; prepared; depart*
 Bot sche, which mai noght longe abide
 The hote peine of loves throwe, *perturbation*
 Anon withinne a litel throwe *while*
 A lettre unto hir kniht hath write,
 100 And dede him plainly for to wite,
 If he made eny tariinge,
 To drecche of his ageincomynge, *caused him; know*
 That sche ne mihte him fiele and se, *delay; returning [to her]*
 Sche scholde stonde in such degré *[Such] that*
 105 As whilom stod a swan tofore, *once; in a prior time*
 Of that sche hadde hire make lore; *mate lost*
 For sorwe a fethere into hire brain
 She schof and hath hireselve slain: *(the swan) thrust*
 As king Menander in a lay *poem*
 110 The sothe hath founde, wher sche lay *truth*
 Sprantlende with hire wynges tweie, *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 himself, 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*
 Riht evene unto hire herte rote *heart’s root*
 135 A naked swerd anon sche threste, *thrust*
 And thus sche gat hireselve reste
 In remembrance of alle slowe.

Confessor Wherof, 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 spieche, *a second example*
 145 In a cronique I finde write
 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
 155 How goodli that Penelope, *(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, *woo*
 In hope that sche wolde bowe *yield*
 To such thing as his wille were,
 Whil that hire lord were elleswhere.
- 165 And of miself I telle this:
 For it so longe passed is,
 Sithe ferst than ye fro home wente, *Since first; departed*
 That welnyh every man his wente *way*
 To there I am, whil ye ben oute, *where*
 170 Hath mad, and ech of hem aboute, *made*
 Which love can, my love secheth, *knows; seeks*
 With gret preiere and me besecheth.
 And some maken gret manace, *threat*
 That if thei mihten come in place
- 175 Wher that thei mihte here wille have, *their carnal desire*
 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 certainly ye ben besein *endowed with beauty*
 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 befalle
- 185 Mai no man do my chekes rede. *make me blush*
 Bot natheles it is to drede,
 That Lachesce in continuance
 Fortune mihte such a chance, *might [bring about]*
 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, *And [should] remember*
 Bot that he wolde his love aquite, *And that he [should] not delay*
 To hire ageinward and noght wryte *set free*
 Bot come himself in alle haste,
 That he non other paper waste, *[So] that*
 So that he kepe and holde his trowthe *might keep*
- 200 Withoute lette of eny Slowthe.

- 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 ymaginacioun,
 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 befallle
 225 That Troie was destruid and brent,
 He made non delaieement,
 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.

*accepts
read over carefully*

*made anxious
thoroughly seized*

what

*desire; heart
prepare; voyage*

a day seems to him

face

burnt

haste

[THE GREAT CLERK GROSSETESTE]

- For of the grete clerik 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 thinges as befelle.
 And sevene yeres besinesse
 240 He leyde, bot for the Lachesse,
 Of half a minut of an houre,
 Fro ferst that he began laboure
 He loste all that he hadde do.

(see note)

learning; head

but because of

And otherwhile it fareth so,
 245 In loves cause who is slow,
 That he withoute under the wow *wall*
 Be nyhte stant fulofte acold,
 Which mihte if that he hadde wold
 249 His time kept, have be withinne.

[THE FOOLISH VIRGINS]

☞ Bot Slowthe mai no profit winne, *(see note)*
 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
 255 Whilom of the maidenenes fyve,
 Whan thilke lord cam for to wyve.
 For that here oyle was aweie *their oil; unavailable*
 To lihte here lampes in his weie,
 Here Slowthe broghte it so aboute,
 260 Fro him that thei ben schet withoute. *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 *trained*
 265 In love to eschuie Slowthe,
 Mi sone, for to telle trowthe,
 Thou miht noght of thiself ben able
 To winne love or make it stable,
 269 Althogh thou mihtest love achieve.” *believe*
Confessio Amantis “Mi fader, that I mai wel lieve.
 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
 275 Of every lime that I have, *limb*
 If I ne scholde kepe and save
 Min houre bothe and ek my stede, *place*
 If my ladi it hadde bede. *requested*
 Bot sche is otherwise avised *minded*
 280 Than grante such a time assised; *arranged*
 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

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, *seek what*
 290 I haste, and evere I am behinde, *hasten*
 And wot noght what it mai amounte.
 Bot, fader, upon myn acompte, *account*
 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 Lachesce in thee be founde.
 300 For Slowthe is mihti to confounde
 The spied of every mannes werk. *progress (success)*
 For many a vice, as seith the clerk,
 Ther hongen 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 *wish*
 To knowe of Slowthes cause more,
 In special yit overmore
 Ther is a vice full grevable
 310 To him which is therof coupable, *to blame*
 And stant of alle vertu bare, *barren*
 Hierafter as I schal declare.”

[PUSILLAMITÉ, OR COWARDICE]

- ii. *Qui nichil attemptat, nichil expedit, oreque muto*
Munus Amicie vir sibi raro capit.
Est modus in verbis, set ei qui parcit amori
Verba referre sua, non fauet ullus 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,
 Wherof he scholde his cause spede. *carry out*
- 325 He woll no manhed understonde,
 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. *destroyed; undertakes*
 He hath the sor which no man heleth, *[can] heal*
- 335 The which is cleped lack of herte.
 Thogh every grace aboute him sterte,
 He wol noght ones stere his fot;
 So that be resoun lese he mot, *abounds*
once move
- 339 That wol noght auntre for to winne. *by; lose he must*
venture in order to win
- 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 *Who lack courage*
 To speke of love, and riht for fere
- 345 Thei wexen dounb and dar noght telle, *speak*
 Withoute soun as doth the belle *sound*
 Which hath no claper for to chyme.
 And riht so thei as for the tyme
 Ben herteles withoute speche, *timid*
- 350 Of love and dar nothing beseche; *And dare ask nothing concerning love*
 And thus thei lese and winne noght. *lose; nothing*
 Forthi, my sone, if thou art oght
 Coupable as touchende of this Slowthe,
- 354 Schrif thee therof and tell me trowthe.”
- Amans** “Mi fader, I am al beknowe *I fully acknowledge*
 That I have ben on of tho slowe, *one; those [who are] slothful*
 As for to telle in loves cas.
 Min herte is yit and evere was,
 As thogh the world scholde al tobreke, *break apart*
- 360 So ferful, that I dar noght speke *taken*
 Of what pourpos that I have nome,
 Whan I toward mi ladi come,
 Bot let it passe and overgo.” *slip away*
- Confessor** “Mi sone, do no more so!
 365 For after that a man poursuieth *according to what*
 To love, so fortune suieth *follows*

Fulofte and gifth hire happi chance
 To him which makth continuance *who perseveres*
 To preie love and to beseche;
 370 As be ensample I schal thee teche.

[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 *craft of sculpture he mastered*
 375 Above alle othre men as tho; *then*
 And thurgh fortune it fell him so,
 As he whom love schal travaile, *belabor*
 He made an ymage of entaile *sculpture*
 Lich to a womman in semblance *Like*
 380 Of feture and of contenance, *feature; outward appearance*
 So fair yit nevere was figure.
 Riht as a lyves creature *living*
 Sche semeth, for of yvor whyt *white ivory*
 He hath hire wroght of such delit,
 385 That sche was rody on the cheke *ruddy*
 And red on bothe hire lippes eke; *also*
 Wherof that he himself beguileth. *beguiles himself*
 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. *in return*
 395 The longe day, what thing he dede,
 This ymage in the same stede
 Was evere bi, that ate mete *at dinner*
 He wolde hire serve and preide hire ete, *eat*
 And putte unto hire mowth the cuppe.
 400 And whan the bord was taken uppe,
 He hath hire into chambre nome, *taken*
 And after, whan the nyht was come,
 He leide hire in his bed al nakid.
 He was forwept, he was forwakid, *full of tears; sleepless*
 405 He keste hire colde lippes ofte, *kissed*
 And wissheth that thei weren softe,
 And ofte he rouneth in hire ere, *whispers; ear*
 And ofte his arm now hier now there
 He leide, as he hir wolde embrace,
 410 And evere among he axeth grace, *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.
- Lo, thus he wan a lusti wif,
 425 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, *dared to speak; won*
 And hadde al that he wolde abedde. *desired in bed*
 For er thei wente thanne atwo,
 A knave child between 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
 That word mai worche above kinde. *beyond nature*
 Forthi, my sone, if that thou spare
- 440 To speke, lost is al thi fare, *woe*
 For Slowthe bringth in alle wo.
 And over this to loke also,
 The god of love is favorable
- To hem that ben of love stable, *those who*
- 445 And many a wonder hath befalle.
 Wherof to speke amonges alle,
 If that thee list to taken hede,
 Therof 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,	<i>if she should bear a daughter be nothing but destroyed</i>
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;	<i>Who; childbearing distressful circumstance normal-sized again</i>
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.	<i>Ordered to be kept understand</i>
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,	<i>taken away then</i>
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,	<i>[To] him was delivered duke's Who; in bed</i>
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	<i>playmates</i>
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	<i>And caused [the love] to be put above nature their desire teaching</i>
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,	<i>what nature naturally situation</i>
500	That ech of hem hath other kest, Transformeth Iphe into a man,	<i>kissed</i>

- Wherof the kinde love he wan *natural*
 Of lusti yonge Iante his wif;
 And tho thei ladde a merie lif, *then*
 505 Which was to kinde non offence.
Confessor And thus to take an evidence,
 It semeth love is welwillende *benevolent*
 To hem that ben continuende *continue*
 With besy herte to poursuie
 510 Thing which that is to love due.
 Wherof, my sone, in this matiere
 Thou miht ensample taken hiere,
 That with thi grete besinesse *diligence*
 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,
 Mi fader, as for lacke of speche,
 Bot so as I me schrof tofore, *confessed before*
 520 Ther is non other time lore, *lost*
 Wherof ther mihte ben obstacle
 To lette love of his miracle, *hinder*
 Which I beseche day and nyht.
 Bot, fader, so as it is riht
 525 In forme of schrifte to beknowe *confession; acknowledge*
 What thing belongeth to the slowe,
 Your faderhode I wolde preie,
 If ther be forthere eny weie
 529 Touchende unto this ilke vice.” *same*
Confessor “Mi sone, ye, of this office *yes*
 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, *bound*
 535 Wherof fulofte himself he grieveth:
 And who that most upon him lieveth,
 Whan that hise wittes ben so weyved, *addled*
 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,	<i>Sloth</i>
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.	<i>(see note)</i>
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.	<i>wallet</i>
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?”	<i>overwhelmed</i>
	Confessio Amantis “Ye, fader, ofte it hath be so, That whanne I am mi ladi fro	
	And thenke untoward hire drawe,	<i>toward (unto)</i>
560	Than cast I many a newe lawe And al the world torne up so down, 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; For whanne I come ther sche is, I have it al forgete ywiss;	<i>is not worth a nutshell</i>
	Of that I thoghte for to telle	<i>truly 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 entirely intended [to] have declared sorely; afraid</i>
	A gost behelde, so fare I;	<i>ghost</i>
575	So that for feere I can noght gete Mi witt, bot I miself forgete, That I wot nevere what I am,	<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,	<i>wither I will [go]; whence I came</i>
	Bot muse as he that were amased.	
580	Lich to the bok in which is rased	<i>erased</i>
	The lettre, and mai nothing be rad,	
	So ben my wittes overlad,	<i>overwhelmed</i>
	That what as evere I thoghte have spoken,	
	It is out fro myn herte stoken,	<i>out of; thrust</i>
585	And stonde, as who seith, doumb and def,	<i>[I] stand; deaf</i>
	That al nys worth an yvy lef,	<i>ivy leaf</i>
	Of that I wende wel have seid.	<i>thought well [to] have</i>
	And ate laste I make abreid,	<i>start [as if from sleep]</i>
	Caste up myn hed and loke aboute,	
590	Riht as a man that were in doute	<i>fear</i>
	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,	
595	And am in other place alone,	
	I make many a wofull mone	<i>lament</i>
	Unto miself, and speke so:	
	'Ha fol, wher was thin herte tho,	<i>fool; then</i>
	Whan thou thi worthi ladi syhe?	<i>saw</i>
600	Were thou afered of hire yhe?	<i>eyes</i>
	For of hire hand ther is no drede.	
	So wel I knowe hir wommanhede,	
	That in hire is no more outrage	<i>outrage</i>
	Than in a child of thre yeer age.	
605	Whi hast thou drede of so good on,	<i>fear; so good a person</i>
	Whom alle vertu hath begon,	<i>endowed</i>
	That in hire is no violence	
	Bot goodlihiede and innocence	
	Withouten spot of eny blame?	
610	Ha, nyce herte, fy for schame!	<i>foolish heart</i>
	Ha, couard herte of love unlered,	<i>cowardly heart; untutored</i>
	Wherof art thou so sore afered,	
	That thou thi tunge soffrest frese,	<i>allow to freeze</i>
	And wolt thi goode wordes lese,	<i>lose</i>
615	Whan thou hast founde time and space?	
	How scholdest thou deserve grace,	
	Whan thou thiself darst axe non,	<i>dare to ask none</i>
	Bot al thou hast forgete anon?'	
	And thus dispute I loves lore,	
620	Bot help ne finde I noght the more,	
	Bot stomble upon myn oghne treine	<i>cloak ends</i>
	And make an ekinge of my peine.	<i>increase</i>
	For evere whan I thenke among	
	How al is on miself along,	<i>dependent</i>

- 625 I seie, 'O fol of alle foles,
 Thou farst as he betwen 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 spede.'
 And thus, myn holi fader diere, *dear*
 Toward miself, as ye mai hiere,
 I pleigne of my forgetelnesse.
 Bot elles al the businesse *solicitude*
- 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. *assure*
 For what so falle, or wel or wo,
- 640 That thoght forgete I neveremo,
 Wher so I lawhe or so I loure, *laugh; scowl*
 Noght half the minut of an houre
 Ne mihte I lete out of my mende,
 Bot if I thoghte upon that hende. *gracious [lady]*
- 645 Therof me schal no Slowthe lette
 Til deth out of this world me fette, *prevent*
 Although I hadde on such a ring *fetches*
 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 knowleching 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; *such a person*
 Al was forgete and overgon.
- 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. *like it or not (willy-nilly)*
- 670 For overal, where as sche goth,
 Min herte folwith hire aboute.

- Thus mai I seie withoute doute,
 For bet for wers, for oght for noght,
 Sche passeth nevere fro my thocht.
- 675 Bot whanne I am ther as sche is, *where*
 Min herte, as I you saide er this, *before*
 Somtime of hire is sore adrad, *sorely afraid*
 And somtime it is overglad, *too cheerful*
 Al out of reule and out of space.
- 680 For whan I se hire goodli face
 And thenke upon hire hihe pris, *great excellence*
 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. *[even] though I wanted [to]*
 For I ne mai my wit unfolde *thought reveal*
 To finde o word of that I mene, *what I intend*
 Bot al it is forgete clene;
 And thogh I stonde there a myle, *i.e., about twenty minutes*
- 690 Al is forgete for the while: *time*
 A tunge I have and wordes none.
 And thus I stonde and thenke alone
 Of thing that helpeth ofte noght; *that is often useless*
 Bot what I hadde afore thocht *before planned*
- 695 To speke, whanne I come there
 It is forgete, as noght ne were, *as if it had never been*
 And stonde amased and assoted, *[I] stand bewildered; befuddled*
 That of nothing which I have noted *written music for*
 I can noght thanne a note singe,
- 700 Bot al is out of knowlechinge. *beyond comprehension*
 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 pusillamité. *cowardice*
 Sey now forth what you list to me, *wish*
- 709 For I wol only do be you.” *act according to you (i.e., to your advice)*
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. *dares not ask*
 For this we knowen everichon,
- 715 A mannes thoght withoute speche
 God wot, and yit that men beseche *knows; that men [should] make requests*
 His will is; for withoute bedes *prayers*
 He doth His grace in fewe stedes: *bestows; places*

And what man that forget himselfe,
 720 Among a thousand be noght twelve
 That wol Him take in remembraunce,
 Bot lete him falle and take his chaunce. *That [God] will take thought for*
 Forthi pull up a besi herte,
 Mi sone, and let nothing asterte *escape*
 725 Of love fro thi besinesse. *from your diligence*
 For touchinge of Forgetelnesse,
 Which many a love hath set behinde,
 A tale of gret ensample I finde,
 Wherof it is pité to wite *know*
 730 In the manere as it is write.

[TALE OF DEMOPHON AND PHYLLIS]

King Demophon, whan he be schipe *by*
 To Troieward with felaschipe
 735 Sailende goth, upon his weie *Sailing (see note)*
 It hapneth him at Rodopeie,
 As Eolus him hadde blowe, *blown him*
 To londe, and rested for a throwe.
 And fell that ilke time thus,
 The dowhter of Ligurgius,
 Which qweene was of the contré, *Who*
 740 Was sojournende in that cité
 Withinne a castell nyh the stronde,
 Wher Demophon cam up to londe.
 Phillis sche hihte, and of yong age *was called*
 And of stature and of visage
 745 Sche hadde al that hire best besemeth. *most becomes her*
 Of Demophon riht wel hire qwemeth, *[she] pleases herself*
 Whan he was come, and made him chiere; *[she] welcomed him*
 And he, that was of his manere
 A lusti knyht, ne myhte asterte *escape*
 750 That he ne sette on hire his herte;
 So that withinne a day or tuo
 He thoghte, howeve that it go,
 He wolde assaie the fortune, *try*
 And gan his herte to commune *began*
 755 With goodly wordes in hire ere;
 And for to put hire out of fere,
 He swor and hath his trowthe pliht *troth pledged*
 To be forevere hire oghne knyht.
 And thus with hire he stille abod, *remained*
 760 Ther while his schip on anker rod,
 And hadde ynowh of time and space

	To speke of love and seche grace.	<i>seek</i>
	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,	<i>believed</i>
	And as hire infortune scholde,	<i>[it] should (mis)happen to her</i>
770	Sche granteth him al that he wolde.	<i>desired</i>
	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	<i>pledges as surety</i>
775	To come, if that he live may,	<i>return</i>
	Agein withinne a monthe day,	<i>month's time</i>
	And therupon thei kisten bothe.	<i>kissed</i>
	Bot were hem lieve or were hem lothe,	<i>whether it were pleasing or not</i>
	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,	<i>lessens</i>
	For him sche lefte slep and mete.	<i>food</i>
	And he his time hath al forgete,	<i>But</i>
785	So that this wofull yonge qweene,	
	Which wot noght what it mihte meene,	
	A lettre sende and preide him come,	<i>sent</i>
	And seith how sche is overcome	
	With strengthe of love in such a wise	<i>power</i>
790	That sche noght longe mai suffise	
	To liven out of his presence;	
	And putte upon his conscience	
	The trowthe which he hath behote,	<i>promised</i>
	Wherof sche loveth him so hote,	<i>passionately</i>
795	Sche seith, that if he lengere lette	<i>[should] delay</i>
	Of such a day as sche him sette,	
	Sche scholde sterven in his Slowthe,	<i>die because of</i>
	Which were a schame unto his trowthe.	<i>fidelity</i>
	This lettre is forth upon hire sonde,	
800	Wherof somdiel confort on honde	
	Sche tok, as sche that wolde abide	
	And waite upon that ilke tyde	<i>same time</i>
	Which sche hath in hire lettre write.	
	Bot now is pité for to wite,	
805	As he dede erst, so he forgat	<i>previously</i>
	His time eftsone and oversat.	<i>delayed too long</i>
	Bot sche, which mihte noght do so,	

	The tyde awayteth everemo,	<i>time (tide)</i>
	And caste hire yhe upon the see.	<i>sea</i>
810	Somtime nay, sometime yee,	
	Somtime he cam, sometime noght,	
	Thus sche desputeth in hire thoght	
	And wot noght what sche thenke mai.	<i>knows not</i>
	Bot fastende al the longe day	<i>abstaining from food</i>
815	Sche was into the derke nyht,	
	And tho sche hath do set up lyht	<i>then</i>
	In a lanterne on hih alofte	
	Upon a tour, wher sche goth ofte,	<i>tower</i>
	In hope that in his cominge	
820	He scholde se the liht brenninge,	<i>burning</i>
	Wherof he mihte his weies rihte	
	To come wher sche was be nyhte.	<i>by night</i>
	Bot al for noght, sche was deceived,	
	For Venus hath hire hope weyved,	<i>ignored</i>
825	And schewede hire upon the sky	
	How that the day was faste by,	
	So that withinne a litel throwe	<i>while</i>
	The daies lyht sche mihte knowe.	
	Tho sche behield the see at large,	
830	And whan sche sih ther was no barge	
	Ne schip, als ferr as sche may kenne,	<i>perceive</i>
	Doun fro the tour sche gan to renne	<i>tower; run</i>
	Into an herber al hire one,	<i>garden by herself alone</i>
	Wher many a wonder woful mone	<i>lament</i>
835	Sche made, that no lif it wiste,	<i>knew</i>
	As sche which al hire joie miste,	<i>lost</i>
	That now sche swouneth, now sche pleigneth,	<i>[So] that; faints</i>
	And al hire face sche desteigneth	<i>stains</i>
	With teres, whiche, as of a welle	
840	The stremes from hire yhen felle;	<i>eyes</i>
	So as sche mihte and evere in on	<i>continuously</i>
	Sche clepede upon Demephon,	<i>called</i>
	And seide, 'Helas, thou slowe wiht,	<i>creature</i>
	Wher was ther evere such a knyht,	
845	That so thurgh his ungentilesce	
	Of Slowthe and of Forgetelnesce	
	Agein his trowthe brak his stevene?	<i>fidelity; word</i>
	And tho hire yhe up to the hevene	
	Sche caste, and seide, 'O thou unkinde,	
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>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, *girdle of silk*
 Sche knette, and so hireself sche ladde, *tied; induced*
 That sche aboute hire whyte swere *neck*
 860 It dede, and hyng hirselves there.
 Wherof the goddes were amoeved,
 And Demephon was so reproeved,
 That of the goddes providence
 Was schape such an evidence
 865 Evere afterward agein the slowe, *against the slothful*
 That Phillis in the same throwe *[Such] that; instant*
 Was schape into a notetre, *nut tree*
 That alle men it mihte se,
 And after Phillis philliberd *filbert*
 870 This tre was cleped in the yerd, *called; courtyard*
 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; *not missing then*
 He gan his Slowthe for to banne, *curse*
 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,
 Wherof that I thi schrifte have herd.
 Bot yit of Slowthe hou it hath ferd
 885 In other wise I thenke oppose, *ask*
 If thou have gult, as I suppose."

[NEGLIGENCE]

- iv. Dum plantare licet, cultor qui negligit 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**] “Fulfuld of Slowthes essamplaire
 Ther is yit on, his secretaire, *one; secretary*
 And he is cleped Negligence, *called*
 890 Which wol noght loke his evidence, *keep watch over his documents*
 Wherof he mai be war tofore;
 ☞ Bot whanne he hath his cause lore, *(see note)*
 Thanne is he wys after the hond, *after the fact*
 Whanne helpe may no maner bond.
 895 Thanne ate ferste wolde he binde:
 Thus everemore 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 Wherof bejaped with a mowe *deceived; grimace*
 He goth, for whan the grete stiede *horse*
 Is stole, thanne he taketh hiede,
 And makth the stable dore fast.
 Thus evere he pleith an aftercast *plays; plan made after the event*
 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 *excellence*
 Bot as him liketh for the while;
 910 So fieleth he fulofte guile, *he often suffers guile*
 Whan that he weneth siker stonde, *believes he stands on solid ground*
 And thus thou miht wel understonde,
 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 *untroubled conscience*
 Excuse me of necgligence *myself*
 Towards love in alle wise.
 920 For thogh I be non of the wise, *not one of the learned*
 I am so trewly ameraus,
 That I am evere curious
 Of hem that conne best enforme
 To knowe and witen al the forme *aspects*
 925 What falleth unto loves craft. *That pertain to*
 Bot yit ne fond I noght the haft *handle of the tool*
 Which mihte unto that bladd acorde; *blade be fitting*
 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 *nature*

	Me cowthe teche such an art, That he ne failede of a part;	<i>Could teach me [Such] that</i>
935	And as toward myn oghne wit, Controewe cowthe I nevere yit To finden eny sikernesse That me myhte outhere more or lesse Of love make for to spede.	<i>Discover assurance either succeed</i>
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.	<i>trust well means would have learned it</i>
945	And natheles 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.	<i>Attain; lofty an erudition</i>
950	Bot this I dar seie overmore, Although 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	<i>It is not my Will's fault</i>
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.	<i>still a beginner since I know not; turn out</i>
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,	<i>as surety understanding</i>
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	<i>how it seems to you pleases absolved</i>
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	<i>loses say</i>
975	Ne vertu, which was bodely, That nys destruid and lost therby. Ensample that it hath be so In boke I finde write also.	<i>corporeal is not destroyed</i>

[TALE OF PHAETON]

	Phebus, which is the sonne hote,	<i>sun called</i>
980	That schyneth upon erthe hote	<i>earth warmly</i>
	And causeth every lyves helthe,	
☞	He hadde a sone in al his welthe,	<i>(see note)</i>
	Which Pheton hihte, and he desireth	<i>was called</i>
	And with his moder he conspireth,	
985	The which was cleped Clemenece,	<i>was called</i>
	For help and conseil, so that he	
	His fader carte lede myhte	<i>father's chariot</i>
	Upon the faire daies brihte.	
	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.	<i>instruction</i>
	Ferst was, that he his hors to sore	<i>sorely</i>
	Ne prike, and over that he tolde	
	That he the renes faste holde;	<i>reins</i>
	And also that he be riht war	<i>very careful</i>
1000	In what manere he lede his charr,	<i>[should] steer; chariot</i>
	That he mistake noght his gate,	<i>[So] that; pathway</i>
	Bot up avisement algate	<i>with good attention always</i>
	He scholde bere a siker yhe	<i>keep a sharp eye</i>
	That he to lowe ne to hyhe	<i>[neither] too low nor too high</i>
1005	His carte dryve at eny throwe,	<i>any moment</i>
	Wherof that he mihte overthrowe.	<i>Because of which; tumble over</i>
	And thus be Phebus ordinance	<i>by Phebus' permission</i>
	Tok Pheton into governance	<i>his own control</i>
	The sonnes carte, which he ladde.	<i>drove</i>
1010	Bot he such veine gloire hadde	
	Of that he was set upon hyh,	<i>Because he was</i>
	That he his oghne astat ne syh	<i>own situation saw not</i>
	Thurgh negligence and tok non hiede;	
	So mihte he wel noght longe spede.	<i>succeed</i>
1015	For he the hors withoute lawe	
	The carte let aboute drawe	
	Wher as hem liketh wantounly.	<i>it pleased them</i>
	That ate laste sodeinly,	<i>[So] that</i>
	For he no reson wolde knowe,	
1020	This fyri carte he drof to lowe,	
	And fyreth al the world aboute;	<i>scorched</i>
	Wherof thei weren alle in doubte,	<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 necligent,
 That fro the hyhe firmament,
 For that he wolde go to lowe,
 He was anon doun overthrowe.

misfortunes; happened
who saw
despite; prohibition
path
ocean
drowned

[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

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 craft
 He fell to his destruccion.
 And lich to that condicion
 Ther fallen ofte times fele many
 1070 For lacke of governance in wele, prosperity
 Als wel in love as other weie."

Amans "Now goode fader, I you preie,
 If ther be more in the matiere
 1074 Of Slowthe, that I mihte it hierie."

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 gifth 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, hates; industry
 Ther is yit on, which Ydelnesse one
 1086 Is cleped, and is the norrice nurse (see note)
 In mannes kinde of every vice,
 Which secheth eases manyfold. pleasures
 1090 In wynter doth he noght for cold, nothing because of
 In somer mai he noght for hete; heat
 So whether that he frese or swete, freeze or sweat
 Or he be inne, or he be oute, indoors; outside
 He wol ben ydel al aboute,
 1095 Bot if he pleie oght ate dees. Unless; dice
 For who as evere take fees [retainer's] fees
 And thenkth worschipe to deserve, honor
 Ther is no lord whom he wol serve,
 As for to duelle in his servise,

¹ *I know not what good this life will be to the useless man, drifting far from any labor and weaving his idlenesses. 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 wisshes;
And as a cat wolde ete fisshes
Withoute 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 first of that I mai suffise,
- 1130 I bowe and profre my servise,
Somtime in chambre, sometime 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 ymaginacioun;
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 worthinesse.
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 fullliche 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 enbrouderie,
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 contenance 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 tariinges
- 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 desport
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. *So that; speak well [of me]*
 Thus mow ye sen mi besi whiel, *wheel*
 That goth noght ydeliche aboute.
 And if hir list to riden oute *it pleases her*
 On pelrinage or other stede, *pilgrimage; place*
 1200 I come, thogh I be noght bede, *bidden*
 And take hire in min arm alofte
 And sette hire in hire sadel softe, *gently*
 And so forth lede hire be the bridel,
 For that I wolde noght ben ydel.
 1205 And if hire list to ride in char, *carriage*
 And thanne I mai therof be war, *be aware of that*
 Anon I schape me to ryde *prepare myself*
 Riht evene be the chares side;
 And as I mai, I speke among, *speak from time to time*
 1210 And otherwhile I singe a song, *sometimes*
 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 hiertofores.
 Mi goode fader, tell therfore,
 Of Ydelnesse if I have gilt."
- Confessor** "Mi sone, bot thou telle wilt *unless*
 1225 Oght elles than I mai now hieren,
 Thou schalt have no penance hieren.
 And natheles a man mai se,
 How now adayes that ther be
 Ful manye of suche hertes slowe, *slothful*
 1230 That wol noght besien hem to knowe *exert themselves*
 What thing love is til, ate laste,
 That he with strengthe hem overcaste,
 That malgré hem thei mote obeie *despite themselves; must*
 And don al ydelschipe aweie,
 1235 To serve wel and besiliche. *diligently*
 Bot, sone, thou art non of swiche,
 For love schal thee wel excuse.

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,
 Wherof thou schalt a tale hier
 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,	
☞	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>
	Towards 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 ymaginacion;	
	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 merueille 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 overtorned,	<i>disposition</i>

- Which first sche hadde of slow manere.
 For thus it fell, as thou schalt hiere,
 Whan come was the month 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 enbrouded overal.
 1320 Here bodies weren long and smal,
 The beauté faye upon her face
 Non erthly thing it may desface;
 Coronas 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*
enchanted 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.
 The kinges dowhter, which this syh,
 1330 For pure abaisst 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,
 Wherof the womman was annuied.
 Thus was the hors in sori split,
 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 preciouise 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,
 Freysssh, 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

- This womman, which com so esmaied, *disconcerted*
 Ansuerde with ful softe speche,
 And seith, 'Ma dame, I schal you teche. *My lady*
- 1375 These ar of tho that whilom were
 Servantz to love, and trowthe beere, *kept their love pledges*
 Ther as thei hadde here herte set. *their hearts*
 Farewel, for I mai noght be let. *delayed*
 Ma dame, I go to mi servise,
- 1380 So moste I haste in alle wise;
 Forthi, ma dame, gif me leve,
 I mai noght longe with you leve.' *remain*
 'Ha, goode soster, yit I preie,
 Tell me whi ye ben so beseie *thus furnished*
 1385 And with these haltres thus begon." *covered*
 "Ma dame, whilom I was on *once; one*
 That to mi fader hadde a king;
 Bot I was slow, and for nothing *slothful*
 Me liste noght to love obeie,
 1390 And that I now ful sore abeie. *sorely pay*
 For I whilom no love hadde,
 Min hors is now so fieble and badde,
 And al totore is myn arai, *clothing*
 And every yeer this freisshe Maii
- 1395 These lusti ladis ryde aboute,
 And I mot nedes suie here route *follow their path*
 In this manere as ye now se,
 And trusse here haltres forth with me, *pack their*
 And am bot as here horse knave. *their stable boy*
- 1400 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 *stories hear*
- 1405 Of hem that couthen love teche.'
 'Now tell me thanne, I you beseche,
 Wherof that riche bridel serveth.'
 With that hire chere awei sche swerveth, *face; turns*
 And gan to wepe, and thus sche tolde:
- 1410 'This bridel, which ye nou beholde
 So riche upon myn horse hed,
 Ma dame, afore, er I was ded, *previously, before; dead*
 Whan I was in mi lusti lif,
 Ther fel into myn herte a strif
- 1415 Of love, which me overcom, *overwhelmed me*
 So that therafter hiede I nom *took*
 And thoghte I wolde love a kniht.

- That laste wel a fourtenyht,
 For it no lengere mihte laste,
 1420 So nyh my lif was ate laste. *So close my life was to its end*
 Bot now, allas, to late war *it was*
 That I ne hadde him loved ar. *earlier*
 For deth cam so in haste bi me, *upon me*
 Er I therto hadde eny time, *Before*
 1425 That it ne mihte ben achieved. *[So] that it (love)*
 Bot for al that I am relieved,
 Of that mi will was good therto, *In that my intention; to that extent*
 That love soffreth it be so
 That I schal swiche a bridel were. *bridle wear*
 1430 Now have ye herd al myn ansuere.
 To Godd, ma dame, I you betake, *commend you*
 And warneth alle, for mi sake, *And may you admonish*
 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, *passing cloud*
 Al clene out of this ladi sihte.
 And tho for fere hire herte afflihte, *was startled*
 And seide to himself, 'Helas! *Alas*
 1440 I am riht in the same cas. *situation*
 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 understonde and wite, *know*
 Among the gentil nacion
 Love is an occupacion
 Which for to kepe hise lustes save *desires healthy (unharmd)*
 1455 For as the ladi was chastised, *(see note)*
 Riht so the knyht mai ben avised,
 Which ydel is and wol noght serve
 To love, he mai per cas deserve *by chance*
 A grettere peine than sche hadde,
 1460 Whan sche aboute with hire ladde
 The horse haltres; and forthi
 Good is to be wel war therbi. *forewarned*
 Bot for to loke aboven alle,

- 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 *follow*
 Cupides lawe; and natheles *seldom; peace*
 Men sen such love sielde in pes, *is not; set upon with snares*
 That it nys evere upon asprie
 Of jangling and of fals envie,
 1475 Fulofte medlid with disese.
 Bot thilke love is wel at ese,
 Which set is upon mariage;
 For that dar schewen the visage *dares to show its face*
 In alle places openly.
 1480 A gret mervaille it is forthi
 How that a maiden wolde lette, *delay*
 That sche hir time ne besette *[So] that; would not occupy*
 To haste unto that ilke feste, *In hurrying*
 Wherof the love is al honeste.
 1485 Men mai recovere lost of good, *lost possessions*
 Bot so wys man yit nevere stod *so wise a person*
 Which mai recovere time lore. *Who; lost*
 So mai a maiden wel therfore
 Ensamble take, of that sche strangeth *of what happens if; suppresses*
 1490 Hir love, and longe er that sche changeth *[fit is] long before*
 Hir herte upon hir lustes greene *youthful desires*
 To mariage, as it is seene.
 For thus a yer or tuo or thre
 Sche lest, er that sche wedded be, *loses*
 1495 Whyl sche the charge myhte bere *burden*
 Of children, whiche the world forbere *fail to impose*
 Ne mai, bot if it scholde faile. *unless [offspring] should be lacking*
 Bot what maiden hire esposaile *marriage*
 Wol tarie, whan sche take mai, *when she may enter into it*
 1500 Sche schal per chance another dai *perhaps*
 Be let, whan that hire lievest were. *obstructed; most dear to her*
 Wherof a tale unto hire ere,
 Which is coupable upon this dede *blameworthy*
 I thenke telle of that I rede.

[TALE OF JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER]

- 1505 Among the Jewes, as men tolde
 Ther was whilom be daies olde

- A noble duck, which Jepte hihte.
 And fell, he scholde go to fyhte
 Agein Amon, the cruel king.
 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
 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 sacrifie.'
 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.
 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.
 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
 The ferste; and whan he com therate,
 And sih his douhter, he tobreide
 Hise clothes, and wepende he seide:
 'O mihti God among ous hiere,
 Nou wot I that in no manere
 This worldes joie mai be plein.
 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
 Mi joie is torned into sorwe,
 For I mi dowhter schal tomorwe
 Tohewe and brenne in Thi servise
 To loenge of Thi sacrificise
 Thurgh min avou, so as it is.'
 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 afflihte
 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 befalle
 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;
 Wherof 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 douhter 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,
 Wherof 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 understonde above.”
Amans “Mi fader, as toward the love
 Of maidens for to telle trowthe,
 Ye have thilke vice of Slowthe,

keep
[to] which; beholden
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. *according to its merit*
 To speke in wordes so coverte, *cryptically*
 I not what travaill that ye mente.” *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 *carried out; their hands*
 Of armes many a worthi dede,
 In sondri place, as men mai rede.”

[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 bravium 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 himselve 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 worschipe
 And make manye hastyf rodes, *military forays*
 1630 Somtime in Prus, somtime in Rodes, *Prussia; Rhodes*
 And somtime into Tartarie;
 So that these heraldz on him crie,

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 gifth 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. *remove standoffishness from her attitude*
 Whanne alle men recorden good,
 And that sche wot wel, for hir sake
 That he no travail wol forsake. *labor*
Confessor Mi sone, of this travail I meene. *to this labor I refer*
 1646 Nou schrif thee, for it schal be sene *confess*
 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 oght 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 *it would be preferable to me*
 Than Kaire and al that is therinne. *Cairo*
 And for to slen the hethen alle,
 1660 I not what good ther mihte falle, *do not know*
 So mochel blod thogh ther be schad. *spilled*
 This finde I writen, hou Crist bad *commanded*
 That no man other scholde sle. *kill*
 What scholde I winne over the se, *across the sea*
 1665 If I mi ladi loste at hom?
 Bot passe thei the salte fom, *[let] those cross over; foam*
 To whom Crist bad thei scholden preche
 To al the world and his feith teche.
 Bot now thei rucken in here nest *cower; their*
 1670 And resten as hem liketh best
 In all the swetnesse of delices.
 Thus thei defenden ous the vices,
 And sitte hemselven al amidde; *forbid us*
 To slen and feihten thei ous bidde *But place themselves in the midst*
 1675 Hem whom thei scholde, as the bok seith, *command*
 Converten unto Cristes feith. *Those who*
 Bot hierof have I gret mervaile,
 Hou thei wol bidde me travaile:

- A Sarazin if I sle schal,
 1680 I sle the soule forth withal,
 And that was nevere Cristes lore. *teaching*
 Bot nou ho ther, I seie no more. *stop*
 Bot I wol speke upon mi schrifte;
 And to Cupide I make a gifte,
 1685 That who as evere pris deserve *whoever [might] deserve renown*
 Of armes, I wol love serve; *I shall serve love*
 And thogh I scholde hem bothe kepe, *(i.e., love and arms)*
 Als wel yit wolde I take kepe
 Whan it were time to abide, *sit tight*
 1690 As for to travaile and to ryde:
 For how as evere a man laboure,
 Cupide appointed hath his heure.
 ¶ For I have herd it telle also, *(see note)*
 Achilles lefte hise armes so
 1695 Bothe of himself and of his men
 At Troie for Polixenen, *Polyxena*
 Upon hire love whanne he fell,
 That for no chance that befell
 Among the Greys or up or down,
 1700 He wolde noght agein the toun
 Ben armed, for the love of hire.
 And so me thenketh, lieve sire, *dear*
 A man of armes mai him reste
 Somtime in hope for the beste,
 1705 If he mai finde a weie nerr.
 What scholde I thanne go so ferr
 In strange londes many a mile
 To ryde, and lese at hom therwhile *lose*
 Mi love? It were a schort begete *poor bargain*
 1710 To winne chaf and lese whete. *lose*
 Bot if mi ladi bidde wolde,
 That I for hire love scholde
 Travaile, me thenkth trewely
 I mihte fle thurghout the sky,
 1715 And go thurghout the depe se,
 For al ne sette I at a stre *straw*
 What thonk that I mihte elles gete. *thanks; otherwise get*
 What helpeth it a man have mete, *food*
 Wher drinke lacketh on the bord? *is missing; table*
 1720 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,

- 1725 That mihte atteigne such a mede. *attain; boon*
 Bot certes if I mihte spede *succeed*
 With eny maner besinesse
 Of worldes travail, thane I gesse,
 Ther scholde me non ydelschipe
- 1730 Departen fro hir ladischipe. *Separate me from*
 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 *least*
 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. *far ahead*
- 1740 So wot I noght riht wel therfore,
 On whether bord that I schal seile. *which ship-side; sail (i.e., on whatever tack)*
 Thus can I noght miself conseile,
 Bot al I sette on aventure, *commit to chance*
 And am, as who seith, out of cure *beyond help*
- 1745 For ought that I can seie or do.
 Foreveremore I finde it so,
 The more besinesse I leie — *apply*
 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, *put off*
 Yit evermore I have assaied. *continued to try*
 Bot thogh my besinesse laste, *is persistent*
 Al is bot ydel ate laste,
 For whan th'effect is ydelnesse,
- 1760 I not what thing is besinesse. *know not*
 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 oght is yit befalle,
 An ydel man I wol me calle
 As after myn entendement. *intention*
 Bot upon youre amendement,
 Min holi fader, as you semeth,
- 1770 Mi reson and my cause demeth.” *judge*

- Confessor** “Mi sone, I have herd thi matiere,
 Of that thou hast thee schreven hiere. *confessed here*
 And for to speke of ydel fare,
 Me semeth that thou tharst noght care, *ought not*
 1775 Bot only that thou miht noght spede. *Except in how; succeed*
 And therof, sone, I wol thee rede, *advise*
 Abyd, and haste noght to faste;
 Thi dees ben every dai to caste, *Wait; too*
 Thou nost what chance schal betyde, *dice*
 1780 Betre is to wayte upon the tyde *know not*
 Than rowe agein the stremes stronge. *powerful currents*
 For thogh so be thee thenketh longe, *though it seems a long time to you*
 Per cas the revolucion *By chance*
 Of hevene and thi condicion
 1785 Ne be noght yit of on acord.
 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 Wherof thou elles be gultif,
 Thou miht hierof thi conscience
 Excuse, and of gret diligence,
 Which thou to love hast so despended,
 Thou oghtest wel to be comended.
 1795 Bot if so be that ther oght faile,
 Of that thou slowthest to travaile *neglect*
 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 knyghthode schal be werred, *sent to war*
 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.
 Wherof, so as it comth to honde,
 A tale thou schalt understonde,
 Hou that a kniht schal armes suie, *pursue*
 And for the while his ese eschuie. *forsake*

[TALE OF NAUPLUS AND ULYSSES]

- 1815 Upon knythode I rede thus:
 How whilom whan the king Nauplus, *once*
 The fader of Palamades,
 1820 Cam for to preien Ulixes *(see note)*
 With othre Gregois ek also,
 That he with hem to Troie go,
 Wher that the siege scholde be,
 Anon upon Penolope
 His wif, whom that he loveth hote, *His (Ulysses') wife; passionately*
 Thenkende, wolde hem noght behote. *[he] would not promise them [that he would go]*
 1825 Bot he schop thanne a wonder wyle, *he (Ulysses) devised; clever deceit*
 How that he scholde hem best beguile,
 So that he mihte duelle stille
 At home and welde his love at wille. *possess*
 Wherof erli the morwe day
 1830 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. *pretended; insane*
 He tok a plowh, wher that it stod, *plow*
 1835 Wherinne anon in stede of oxes *oxen*
 He let do yoken grete foxes,
 And with gret salt the lond he siew. *sowed*
 Bot Nauplus, which the cause kniew,
 Agein the sleihte which he feigneth *deceit; feigns*
 1840 Another sleihte anon ordeigneth.
 And fell that time Ulixes hadde
 A chyld to sone, and Nauplus radde *A son as his child; advised*
 How men that sone taken scholde
 And setten him upon the molde *earth*
 1845 Wher that his fader hield the plowh
 In thilke furgh which he tho drowh. *the same furrow; then plowed*
 For in such wise he thoghte assaie *to test (investigate)*
 Hou it Ulixes scholde paie, *please*
 If that he were wod or non. *insane*
 1850 The knihtes for this child forthgon;
 Thelamacus anon was fett, *fetched*
 Tofore the plowh and evene sett, *And set directly before the plow*
 Wher that his fader scholde dryve.
 Bot whan he sih his child, als blyve *swiftly*
 1855 He drof the plowh out of the weie,
 And Nauplus tho began to seie,
 And hath half in a jape cryd: *jest*
 'O Ulixes, thou art aspyd; *discovered*
 What is al this thou woldest meene?

- 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, *honor*
- 1870 And elles thou schalt understonde
 These othre worthi kinges alle
 Of Grece, which unto thee calle,
 Towardes thee wol be riht wrothe,
 And grieve thee per chance bothe. *harm*
- 1875 Which schal be to thee double schame
 Most for the hindrynge 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 *excellence*
 And oghte ferst to be desired.
 Bot he, which hadde his herte fyred
 Upon his wif, whan he this herde,
 Noght o word theragein ansuerde,
- 1885 Bot torneth hom halvinge aschamed, *returns home half*
 And hath withinne himself so tamed
 His herte, that al the sotie *foolishness*
 Of love for chivalerie
 He lefte, and be him lief or loth, *whether it pleased him or not*
- 1890 To Troie forth with hem he goth,
 That he him mihte noght excuse. *not excuse himself*
 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. *as well*
 And that hath schewed overal;
 For it sit wel in alle wise
 A kniht to ben of hih emprise *lofty chivalric deed*
 And puten alle drede aweie.
- 1900 For in this wise, I have herd seie:

[EXAMPLES OF PROWESS: PROTESILAUS]

- ☞ The worthi king Protheselai *manner*
 On his passage wher he lai *(see note)*
 Towardes Troie thilke siege,

- 1905 Sche which was al his oghne liege, *own loyal subject*
 Laodomie his lusti wif,
 Which for his love was pensif, *Who; melancholic*
 As he which al hire herte hadde,
 Upon a thing wherof sche dradde
 A lettre, for to make him duelle
 1910 Fro Troie, sende him, thus to telle, *[Apart] from Troy*
 Hou sche hath axed of the wyse,
 Touchende of him in such a wise,
 That thei have don hire understonde, *made*
 Towardes othre hou so it stonde,
 1915 The destiné it hath so schape *determined*
 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, *presented (alleged)*
 That he with hire at home abide. *[So] that; [would] remain*
 Bot he hath cast hir lettre aside,
 As he which tho no maner hiede
 Tok of hire wommannysshe drede;
 1925 And forth he goth, as noght ne were, *anxiety*
 To Troie, and was the ferste there *as if it were nothing*
 Which londeth, and tok arryvaile.
 For him was levere in the bataille,
 He seith, to deien as a knyht, *it was preferable to him*
 1930 Than for to lyve in al his myht
 And be reproeved of his name. *in his reputation*
 Lo, thus upon the worldes fame
 Knythode hath evere yit be set,
 1934 Which with no couardie is let.

[SAUL]

- ☞ Of king Saul also I finde, *cowardice; hindered*
 Whan Samuel out of his kinde, *(see note)*
 Thurgh that the Phitonesse hath lered *unnaturally*
 In Samarie was arered *what; prophesied*
 Long time after that he was ded, *called back from the dead*
 1940 The king Saul him axeth red, *advice*
 If that he schal go fyhte or non.
 And Samuel him seide anon,
 ‘The ferste day of the bataille
 Thou schalt be slain withoute faile
 1945 And Jonathas thi sone also.’
 Bot hou as evere it felle so,
 This worthi kniht of his corage

	Hath undertake the viage,	<i>military expedition</i>
	And wol noght his knyghthode lette	<i>hinder</i>
1950	For no peril he couthe sette;	<i>knew [to be] determined</i>
	Wherof that bothe his sone and he	
	Upon the Montz of Gelboe	
	Assemblen with here enemys.	<i>Join [in battle]; their</i>
	For thei knyghthode of such a pris	<i>value</i>
1955	Be olde daies thanne hielden,	
	That thei non other thing behielden.	<i>would consider</i>
	And thus the fader for worschipe	<i>honor</i>
	Forth with his sone of felaschipe	
	Thurgh lust of armes weren dede,	<i>love; slain</i>
1960	As men mai in the Bible rede,	
	The whos knyghthode is yit in mende,	<i>Whose; memory</i>
	And schal be to the worldes ende.	

[EDUCATION OF ACHILLES]

☞	And for to loken overmore,	<i>(see note)</i>
	It hath and schal ben evermore	
1965	That of knighthode 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	<i>educated</i>
	With Chiro, which Centaurus hihte,	<i>By Chiro; was called</i>
	Of many a wondre hiere he mihte.	<i>(i.e., the listener)</i>
	For it stod thilke time thus,	
	That this Chiro, this Centaurus,	
1975	Withinne a large wilderness,	
	Wher was leon and leonesse,	
	The lepard and the tigre also,	
	With hert and hynde, and buck and doo,	<i>hart; doe</i>
	Hadde his duellinge, as tho befell,	<i>its</i>
1980	Of Pileon upon the hel,	<i>hill</i>
	Wherof was thanne mochel speche.	
	Ther hath Chiro this chyld to teche,	<i>youth</i>
	What time he was of twelve yer age;	
	Wher for to maken his corage	<i>heartiness</i>
1985	The more hardi be other weie,	
	In the forest to hunte and pleie	
	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;
 Bot tho that wolden him withstonde,
 Ther scholde he with his dart on honde
 1995 Upon the tigre and the leon
 Pouchace and take his veneison,
 As to a kniht is acordant.
 And therupon a covenant
 This Chiro with Achilles sette,
 2000 That every day withoute lette
 He scholde such a cruel beste
 Or slen or wounden ate leste,
 So that he mihte a tokne bringe
 Of blod upon his hom cominge.
 2005 And thus of that Chiro him tawhte
 Achilles such an herte cawhte,
 That he no more a leon dradde
 Whan he his dart on honde hadde
 Thanne if a leon were an asse.
 2010 And that hath made him for to passe
 Alle othre knihtes of his dede
 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 knyhtode the prouesce,
 Which is to love sufficant
 Aboven al the remenant
 That unto loves court poursuie.
 2020 Bot who that wol no Slowthe eschuie,
 Upon knihthode and noght travaile,
 I not what love him scholde availe;
 Bot every labour axeth why
 Of som reward, wherof 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
 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
- In whom he would find no fight*
spear
Pursue; game animal
fitting
without fail
Either; or
from what
courageousness developed
feared
surpass
feats of strength
excellence
pursue
avoid
labor honorably
know not what use love would be to him
demand an inducement
[should] delay

2040 Mai noght be gete of ydelnesse.
 And that I take to witenesse *And [as to] that*
 An old cronique in special,
 The which into memorial
 Is write, for his loves sake,
 Hou that a kniht schal undertake.

[TALE OF HERCULES AND ACHELONS]

2045 Ther was a king, which Oenes
 Was hote, and he under his pes *called; in his dominion*
 Hield Calidoynes in his empire,
 2050 And hadde a dowhter Deianire. *(see note)*
 Men wiste in thilke time non
 So fair a wiht as sche was on;
 And as sche was a lusti wiht, *lively person*
 Riht so was thanne a noble kniht,
 To whom Mercurie fader was.
 2055 This kniht the tuo pilers of bras,
 The whiche yit a man mai finde,
 Sette up in the desert of Ynde; *India*
 That was the worthi Hercules,
 Whos name schal ben endeles *fame*
 For the merveilles whiche he wroghte. *carried out*
 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; *dared; refuse to give*
 And natheles this he him seide,
 How Achelons er he ferst preide *earlier; [had] prayed*
 To wedden hire, and in accord *agreement*
 2070 Thei stode, as it was of record.
 Bot for al that this he him granteth,
 That which of hem that other daunteth *defeats*
 In armes, him sche scholde take,
 And that the king hath undertake. *affirmed*
 2075 This Achelons was a geant,
 A soubtil man, a deceivant, *deceiver*
 Which thurgh magique and sorcerie *Who*
 Couthe al the world of tricherie. *Understood*
 And whan that he this tale herde,
 2080 Hou upon that the king ansuerde *what the king [had] answered*
 With Hercules he moste feighte,
 He tristeth noght upon his sleighte

- Al only, whan it comth to nede,
 Bot that which voydeth alle drede *removes all fears*
 2085 And every noble herte stereth, *inspires*
 The love, that no lif forbereth, *that leaves no living thing untouched*
 For his ladi, whom he desireth,
 With hardiesse his herte fyreth, *inflames*
 And sende him word withoute faile
 2090 That he wol take the bataille. *agree upon*
 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 foghten bothe afote, *on foot*
 Ther was no ston, ther was no rote,
 Which mihte letten hem the weie, *hinder their arena*
 But al was voide and take aweie. *removed*
 Thei smyten strokes bot a fewe,
 2100 For Hercules, which wolde schewe *show*
 His grete strengthe as for the nones,
 He sterte upon him al at ones *rushed*
 And cawhte him in hise armes stronge. *seized*
 This geant wot he mai noght longe
 2105 Endure under so harde bondes, *powerful a clutch*
 And thoghte he wolde out of hise hondes
 Be sleyhte in som manere ascape.
 And as he couthe himself forschape, *change shape*
 In liknesse of an eddre he slipte *adder; slipped*
 2110 Out of his hond, and forth he skipte;
 And efte, as he that feighte wole,
 He torneth him into a bole, *turns himself; bull*
 And gan to belwe of such a soun, *bellow; sound*
 As thogh the world scholde al go down. *collapse*
 2115 The ground he sporneth and he tranceth, *paws; tramples*
 Hise large hornes he avanceth
 And caste hem here and there aboute. *tosses them here*
 Bot he, which stant of him no doute, *possesses no fear of him*
 Awaiteth wel whan that he cam,
 2120 And him be bothe hornes nam *took*
 And al at ones he him caste
 Unto the ground, and hield him faste,
 That he ne mihte with no sleighte *[So] that; trickery*
 Out of his hond gete upon heichte, *upright*
 2125 Til he was overcome and yolde, *yielded*
 And Hercules hath what he wolde. *desired*
 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 *moreover (see note)*
 Upon knihthode of this matiere,
 Hou love and armes ben aqueinted,
 A man mai se bothe write and peinted *written and portrayed*
 So ferforth that Pantasilee,
 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 himself into the field
 2145 With maidens armed al a route
 In rescouss of the toun aboute, *rescue*
 Which with the Gregois was belein. *besieged*
 ☞ Fro Pafagoine and as men sein, *(see note)*
 Which stant upon the worldes ende,
 2150 That time it likede ek to wende *it was also pleasing*
 To Philemenis, which was king, *To Philemenis [to travel]*
 To Troie, and come upon this thing
 In helpe of thilke noble toun;
 And al was that for the renoun
 2155 Of worschipe and of worldes fame,
 Of which he wolde bere a name. *possess the renown*
 And so he dede, and forthwithal
 He wan of love in special
 A fair tribut foreveremo.
 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 *reward*
 To him and to his heritage *a pledge of tribute*
 Of maidens faire he schal have thre.
 And in this wise spedde he, *manner he prospered*
 Which the fortune of armes soghte,
 2180 With his travail his ese he boghte;
 For otherwise he scholde have failed,
 If that he hadde noght travailed. *labored*
 ¶ Eneas ek withinne Ytaile, *(see note)*
 Ne hadde he wonne the bataille
 2185 And don his miht so besily *energetically*
 Agein king Turne his enemy, *Turnus*
 He hadde noght Lavine wonne;
 Bot for he hath him overronne *would not have*
 And gete his pris, he gat hire love. *conquered (Turnus)*
victory

[GENTILESSE]

- 2190 Be these ensamples here above, *By*
 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
 2195 The rathere unto loves grace;
 For comunliche in worthi place
 The wommen loven worthinesse
 Of manhode and of gentilesse,
 ¶ For the gentils ben most desired.”
 [Amans] “Mi fader, bot I were enspired
 2201 Thurgh lore of you, I wot no weie *edification*
 What gentilesce is for to seie, *How nobility is to be described*
 Wherof to telle I you beseche.”
 [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. *has become vulnerable*
 2210 Thanne is a man of hih lignage
 After the forme, as thou miht hiere,
 Bot nothing after the matiere.
 For who that resoun understonde,
 Upon richesse it mai noght stonde,
 2215 For that is thing which faileth ofte.
 For he that stant today alofte
 And al the world hath in hise wones, *possession*

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 *before all other*
 2225 With Eve his wif, as of hem tuo,
 Al was aliche gentil tho; *then*
 So that of generacion
 To make declaracion,
 Ther mai no gentilesce be.
 2230 For to the reson if we se,
 Of mannes berth the mesure,
 It is so comun to nature,
 That it gifth every man aliche, *gifts*
 Als wel to povere as to the riche;
 2235 For naked thei ben bore bothe,
 The lord no more hath for to clothe
 As of himself that ilke throwe, *at that time*
 Than hath the povereste of the rowe. *lineup*
 And whan thei schulle bothe passe,
 2240 I not of hem which hath the lasse *know not*
 Of worldes good, bot as of charge
 The lord is more for to charge, *be held responsible*
 Whan God schal his accompte hie, *hear*
 2244 For he hath had hise lustes hie. *pleasures here*
 Bot of the bodi, which schal deie, *(see note)*
 Although ther be diverse weie
 To deth, yit is ther bot on ende,
 To which that every man schal wende, *journey*
 Als wel the beggere as the lord,
 2250 Of o nature, of on acord.
 Sche which oure eldemoder is, *ancient mother*
 The erthe, bothe that and this *earth*
 Receiveth and alich devoureth,
 That sche to nouthur part favoureth. *[Such] that*
 2255 So wot I nothing after kinde *according to nature*
 Where I mai gentilesse finde.
 For lacke of vertu lacketh grace,
 Wherof richesse in many place,
 Whan men best wene for to stonde, *think*
 2260 Al sodeinly goth out of honde.
 Bot vertu set in the corage, *heart*
 Ther mai no world be so salvage, *worldly circumstances; violent*
 Which mihte it take and don aweie,
 Til whanne that the bodi deie;

- 2265 And thanne he schal be riched so, *made so wealthy*
 That it mai faile neveremo.
 So mai that wel be gentilesse,
 Which gifth so gret a sikernessee: *certainty*
 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 suieth, *follows*
- 2275 That is a verrai gentil man, *truly noble*
 And nothing elles which he can, *nothing else [produces it]*
 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 nocht spiede, *i.e., the virtue not based on wealth; achieve*
 Wher that the riche vice woweth;
 For sielde it is that love alloweth *presses its case*
 The gentil man withoute good,
 Thogh his condicion be good. *[moral] condition*
- 2285 Bot if a man of bothe tuo
 Be riche and vertuous also,
 Thanne is he wel the more worth.
 Bot yit to putte himselve 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 *receives*
- 2295 Worschipe and ese bothe tuo. *Honor*
 For evere yit it hath be so,
 That love honeste in sondri weie
 Profiteth, for it doth aweie *honorable love*
 The vice, and as the bokes sein,
- 2300 It makth curteis of the vilein, *a courtier out of a peasant*
 And to the couard hardiesce
 It gifth, so that verrai prouesse
 Is caused upon loves reule *produced by*
 To him that can manhode reule;
- 2305 And ek toward the wommanhiede,
 Who that therof wol taken hiede,
 For thei the betre affaited be *are fashioned*
 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.

- I trowe that ther is no beste, *creature*
 If he with love scholde aqueinte,
 That he ne wolde make it queinte *behave graciously*
 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. *Behave slothfully with regard to what*
 2320 And overthis, mi sone, also *moreover*
 ¶ After the vertu moral eke *(see note)*
 To speke of love if I schal seke,
 Among the holi bokes wise
 I finde write in such a wise,
 2325 'Who loveth noght is hier as ded'; *dead*
 For love above alle othre is hed,
 Which hath the vertus for to lede,
 Of al that unto mannes dede
 Belongeth: for of ydelschipe
 2330 He hateth all the felaschipe.
 For Slowthe is evere to despise, *to be scorned*
 Which in desdeign hath al apprise, *holds all instruction*
 And that acordeth noght to man. *that (such scorn)*
 For he that wit and reson kan, *is capable of*
 2335 It sit him wel that he travaile *engage himself*
 Upon somthing which mihte availe, *yield something worthwhile*
 For ydelschipe is noght comended,
 Bot every lawe it hath defended. *prohibited*
 And in ensample therupon
 2340 The noble wise Salomon,
 Which hadde of everything insihte,
 Seith, 'As the briddes to the flihte *birds*
 Ben made, so the man is bore
 To labour,' which is noght forbore *avoided*
 2345 To hem that thenken for to thryve.
 For we, whiche are now alyve,
 Of hem that besi whylom were, *From those who formerly were industrious*
 ¶ Als wel in scole as elleswhere, *(see note)*
 Mowe every day ensample take,
 2350 That if it were now to make *if it were [necessary] now to create*
 Thing which that thei ferst founden oute, *invented*
 It scholde noght be broght aboute.
 Here lyves thanne were longe, *Their*
 Here wittes grete, here mihtes stronge,
 2355 Here hertes ful of besinesse, *worthwhile occupation*
 Wherof the worldes redinesse
 In bodi bothe and in corage *spirit*
 Stant evere upon his advantage.

And for to drawe into memoire
 2360 Here names bothe and here histoire,
 Upon the vertu of her dede *their actions*
 In sondri bokes thou miht rede.

[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 *the perfection*
 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 *teaching*
 Of bokes and of alle goode
 2370 Thurgh hem that whilom understode
 The lore which to hem was give,
 Wherof these othre, that now live,
 Ben every day to lerne newe.
 Bot er the time that men siewe, *before; scattered seed on the ground*
 2375 And that the labour forth it broghte,
 Ther was no corn, thogh men it soghte,
 In non of al the fieldes oute; *(see note)*
 And er the wisdom cam aboute
 Of hem that ferst the bokes write,
 2380 This mai wel every wys man wite, *know*
 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 befalle,
 Of labour which that thei begunne
 2390 We be now tawht of that we kunne. *what we understand*
 Here besinesse is yit so seene,
 That it stant evere alyche greene;
 Al be it so the bodi deie,

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.*

The name of hem schal nevere aweie. *disappear*
 2395 In the croniques 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 befaller,
 He was the ferste augurre of alle. *soothsayer*
 2405 And Philemon be the visage *physiognomy*
 Fond to describe the corage. *heart (seat of the emotions)*
 Cladyns, Esdras, and Sulpices,
 Termegis, Pandulf, Frigidilles,
 Menander, Ephiloquorus,
 2410 Solins, Pandas, and Josephus
 The ferste were of enditours,
 Of old cronique and ek auctours: *composers (writers)*
 And Heredot in his science
 Of metre, of rime, and of cadence,
 2415 The ferste was of which men note.
 And of musique also the note
 In mannes vois, or softe or scharpe, *whether*
 That fond Jubal; and of the harpe
 The merie soun, which is to like, *pleasing*
 2420 That fond Poulins forth with phisique. *Apollo; medicine*
 Zenzis fond ferst the pourtreture,
 And Promotheus the sculpture; *Zeuxis; portrait painting*
 After what forme that hem thoghte,
 The resemblance anon thei wroghte. *they conceived*
 2425 Tubal in iren and in stel *shaped*
 Fond ferst the forge and wroghte it wel.
 And Jadahel, as seith the bok,
 Ferst made net and fisshes tok.
 Of huntynge ek he fond the chace,
 2430 Which now is knowe in many place.
 A tente of cloth with corde and stake
 He sette up ferst and dede it make.
 Verconius of cokerie
 Ferst made the delicacie.
 2435 The craft Minerve of wolle fond *woolen goods invented*
 And made cloth hire oghne hond, *[by] her own hand*

- And Delbora made it of lyn:
 Tho wommen were of great engyn.
 Bot thing which gifth ous mete and drinke
 2440 And doth the labourer to swinke
 To tile lond and sette vines,
 Wherof the cornes and the wyne
 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
 Of sondri metall, as it is,
 2450 He was the ferste man of this.
 Bot hou that metall cam a place
 Thurgh mannes wit and Goddes grace
 The route of philosophres wise
 Controeveden be sondri wise,
 2455 Ferst for to gete it out of myne,
 And after for to trie and fyne.
- linen*
Those; ingenuity
causes; toil
mercantilism
into place
company
Discovered (Experimented)
separate metal from ore; refine

[ALCHEMY]

- ☞ And also with gret diligence
 Thei founden thilke experience,
 Which cleped is alconomie,
 2460 Wherof the selver multeplie
 Thei made and ek the gold also.
 And for to telle hou it is so,
 Of bodies sevene 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,
 The led after Satorne groweth,
 And Jupiter the bras bestoweth,
 The coper set is to Venus,
 And to his part Mercurius
 2475 Hath the quikselver, as it falleth,
 The which, after the bok it calleth,
 Is ferst of thilke fowre named
 Of spiritz, whiche ben proclamed;
 And the spirit which is secounde
 2480 In sal armoniak is founde.
- (see note)*
that experienced science
alchemy
assigned; sun
moon; silver; its
pertains to Mars
its
gum ammoniac

- The thridde spirit sulphur is;
 The ferthe suiende after this
 Arcennicum be name is hote. *is called*
 With blowinge and with fyres hote
 2485 In these thinges whiche I seie,
 Thei worchen be diverse weie.
 For as the philosophre tolde
 Of gold and selver, thei ben holde
 Tuo principal extremities,
 2490 To whiche alle othre be degres
 Of the metalls ben acordant,
 And so thurgh kinde resemblant, *similar natures*
 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 selver parfitly.
 Bot for to worche it sikirly,
 Betwen the corps and the spirit, *body*
 2500 Er that the metall be parfit, *Before*
 In sevene formes it is set;
 Of alle and if that on be let, *obstructed*
 The remenant mai noght availe,
 Bot otherwise it mai noght faile.
 2505 For thei be whom this art was founde *by; invented*
 To every point a certain bounde
 Ordeignen, that a man mai finde
 This craft is wroght be weie of kinde, *nature*
 So that ther is no fallas inne. *falseness*
 2510 Bot what man that this werk beginne,
 He mot awaite at every tyde,
 So that nothing be left aside,
 Ferst of the distillacion,
 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 *reduction [to a nontransferable substance]*
 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. *once wrote*
 And if thou wolt the names wite *know*
 Of thilke ston with othre tuo,

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. *learned procedures*
 2535 The ferst, if I schal specefie, *(see note)*
 Was lapis vegetabilis,
 Of which the propre vertu is
 To mannes hele for to serve, *health*
 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 *assure*
 Is lapis animalis hote, *called*
 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. *perceive and be animate*
 The wittes fyve he underfongeth *undertakes*
 2550 To kepe, as it to him belongeth. *pertains*
 The thridde ston in special
 Be name is cleped minerall,
 Which the metalls of every mine
 Attempreth, til that thei ben fyne, *refined*
 2555 And pureth hem be such a weie, *[it] purifies*
 That al the vice goth aweie
 Of rust, of stink, and of hardnesse.
 And whan thei ben of such clennesse, *stench; lack of fusibility*
 This mineral, so as I finde, *refinement*
 2560 Transformeth al the ferste kynde
 And makth hem able to conceive
 Thurgh his vertu, and to receive
 Bothe in substance and in figure
 Of gold and selver 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; *laid*
 For to the rede and to the whyte *i.e., gold and silver (see note)*

- This ston hath pouer to profite.
 It makth multiplicacioun
 Of gold, and the fixacioun
 2575 It causeth, and of his habit
 He doth the werk to be parfit
 Of thilke elixer which men calle
 Alconomie, as is befalle
 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 *now knows none*
 After the sothe experience.
 And natheles gret diligence
 2585 Thei setten upon thilke dede,
 And spille more than thei spede; *lose; succeed [in making]*
 For allewey thei finde a lette, *hindrance*
 Which bringeth in poverte and dette
 To hem that riche were afore. *before*
 2590 The lost is had, the lucre is lore, *money is lost*
 To gete a pound thei spenden fyve;
 I not hou such a craft schal thryve *know not*
 In the manere as it is used:
 It were betre be refused
 2595 Than for to worchen upon weene *expectation*
 In thing which stant noght as thei weene. *suppose*
 Bot noght forthi, who that it knewe, *nonetheless*
 The science of himself is trewe
 Upon the forme as it was founded,
 2600 Wherof the names yit ben grounded
 Of hem that ferste it founden oute;
 And thus the fame goth aboute
 To suche as soghten besinesse
 Of vertu and of worthinesse.
 2605 Of whom if I the names calle,

[FIRST ALCHEMISTS]

- Hermes was on the ferste of alle, *the first one of all*
 To whom this art is most applied;
 Geber therof was magnified,
 And Ortolan and Morien,
 2610 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 understonde;
 2615 Bot yit to put hem in assai *try them out*

Ther ben full manye now aday,
 That knowen 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;
 Wherof the cronique of her lore
 Schal stonde in pris foreveremore.

[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 Wherof 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

- 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,
 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
 2670 And tawhte, if love be to hot,
 In what manere it scholde akiele.
Confessor Forthi, mi sone, if that thou fiele
 That love wringe thee to sore,
 2674 Behold Ovide and take his lore.”
Amans “Mi fader, if thei mihte spede
 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.
 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.
 Wherof touchende unto this sawe
 2685 There is bot only to poursuie
 Mi love, and ydelschipe eschuie.”
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 spede
 In loves cause for to winne;
 For he which dar nothing beginne,
 2695 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,
 Whiche unto love don gret lette,
 2700 If thou thin herte upon hem sette.”

*Their
higher learning*

[So] that; written results

learning

*too heated
be cooled*

*wisdom
facilitate*

*taken away
matter*

avoid

fare well

know not

*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 vigilant
Obsequium thalamis fert vigilata suis.¹*

[Confessor]	“Toward the slowe progenie	<i>slothful</i>
	Ther is yit on of compaignie,	<i>a particular one</i>
	And he is cleped Sompnolence,	<i>Somnolence</i>
	Which doth to Slouthe his reverence,	
2705	As he which is his chamberlein,	
☞	That many an hundrid time hath lein	<i>(see note)</i>
	To slepe, whan he scholde wake.	
	He hath with love trewes take,	<i>accommodation made</i>
	That wake whoso wake wile,	
2710	If he mai couche a doun his bile,	<i>lay down his beak (i.e., go to sleep)</i>
	He hath al wowed what him list;	<i>has done all the wooing he wants</i>
	That ofte he goth to bedde unkist,	<i>[Such] that; unkissed</i>
	And seith that for no druerie	<i>love matter</i>
	He wol noght leve his sluggardie.	<i>leave</i>
2715	For thogh no man it wole allowe,	
	To slepe levere than to wowe	<i>rather; woo</i>
	Is his manere, and thus on nyhtes,	
	Whan that he seth the lusti knyhtes	<i>sees</i>
	Revelen, wher these wommen are,	<i>Making revel</i>
2720	Awey he skulketh as an hare,	
	And goth to bedde and leith him softe,	<i>lays himself down softly</i>
	And of his Slouthe he dremeth ofte	
	Hou that he stiketh in the myr,	<i>mud</i>
	And hou he sitteth be the fyr	
2725	And claweth on his bare schanckes,	<i>scratches; legs</i>
	And hou he clymbeth up the banckes	
	And falleth into slades depe.	<i>grassy glades</i>
	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,	<i>snores</i>
	And brustleth as a monkes froise,	<i>sizzles; pancake</i>
	Whanne it is throwe into the panne.	
	And otherwhile sielde whanne	<i>rarely</i>
2735	That he mai dreme a lusti swevene,	<i>dream; erotic dream</i>
	Him thenkth as thogh he were in hevene	
	And as the world were holi his.	<i>wholly</i>
	And thanne he spekth of that and this,	
	And makth his exposicion	
2740	After the disposicion	
	Of that he wolde, and in such wise	

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, *rather, by*
 Er I were set on such a slouth *Before*
 And beere such a slepi snoute, *carry*
 2750 Bothe yhen of myn hed were oute. *eyes*
 For me were betre fulli die *[it] would be better utterly to*
 Thanne I of such a slugardie
 Hadde eny name, God me schilde; *reputation, [may] God protect me*
 For whan mi moder was with childe,
 2755 And I lay in hire wombe clos, *enclosed*
 I wolde rathere Atropos, *Death*
 Which is goddesse of alle deth,
 Anon as I hadde eny breth, *As soon as*
 Me hadde fro mi moder cast. *from my mother abandoned me*
 2760 Bot now I am nothing agast,
 I thonke Godd; for Lachesis, *(one of the fateful sisters)*
 Ne Cloto, which hire felawe is, *companion*
 Me schopen no such destiné, *Shaped for me*
 Whan thei at mi nativité
 2765 My weerdess setten as thei wolde; *fate determined*
 Bot thei me schopen that I scholde
 Eschuie of slep the truandise, *Avoid the truancy of sleep*
 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, *grasp*
 With such gladnesse I daunce and skippe
 2785 Me thenkth I touche noght the flor. *It seems to me; floor*
 The ro, which renneth on the mor, *roeback; moor*
 Is thanne noght so lyht as I.
 So mow ye witen wel forthi, *know*

- That for the time slep I hate.
 2790 And whanne it falleth othergate, *otherwise*
 So that hire like noght to daunce,
 Bot on the dees to caste chaunce *dice*
 Or axe of love som demande, *ask some question about love*
 Or elles that hir list comaunde *what [it] pleases her to order*
 2795 To rede and here of Troilus, *hear*
 Riht as sche wole or so or thus, *(i.e., or whatever else she wants)*
 I am al redi to consente.
 And if so is that I mai hente *seize*
 Somtime among a good leisir, *At some point in the course of things*
 2800 So as I dar of mi desir
 I telle a part; bot whanne I preie, *bids*
 Anon sche bidt me go mi weie *too late at night*
 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 *must; depart*
 And of my wachche make an ende. *vigil*
 And if sche thanne hiede toke,
 2810 Hou pitousliche on hire I loke,
 Whan that I schal my leve take,
 Hire oghte of mercy for to slake *diminish*
 Hire daunger, which seith evere 'nay.' *aloofness*
 Bot he seith often, 'Have good day,' *he (her "daunger")*
 2815 That loth is for to take his leve:
 Therfore, while I mai beleve,
 I tarie forth the nyht along,
 For it is noght on me along *dependent (i.e., because of my wish)*
 To slep that I so sone go,
 2820 Til that I mot algate so;
 And thanne I bidde Godd hire se,
 And so doun knelende on mi kne *pray God watch over her*
 I take leve, and if I schal, *kneeling*
 I kisse hire, and go forthwithal.
 2825 And otherwhile, if that I dore, *[might] dare*
 Er I come fulli to the dore, *door*
 I torne agein and feigne a thing,
 As thogh I hadde lost a ring
 Or somewhat elles, for I wolde
 2830 Kisse hire eftsones, if I scholde, *soon after*
 Bot selden is that I so spede. *succeed*
 And whanne I se that I mot nede *must necessarily*
 Departen, I departe, and thanne
 With al myn herte I curse and banne *swear and curse*
 2835 That evere slep was mad for yhe; *made; eye*

- For, as me thenkth, I mihte dryhe *endure*
 Withoute slep to waken evere,
 So that I scholde noght dissevere *separate*
 Fro hire, in whom is al my liht.
- 2840 And thanne I curse also the nyht
 With al the will of mi corage, *potent desire*
 And seie, 'Awey, thou blake ymage,
 Which of thi derke cloudy face
 Makst al the worldes lyht deface,
- 2845 And causest unto slep a weie,
 Be which I mot nou gon aweie *By*
 Out of mi ladi compaignie.
 O slepi nyht, I thee defie,
 And wolde that thou leye in presse *be put away*
- 2850 With Proserpine the goddesse
 And with Pluto the helle king.
 For til I se the daies spring,
 I sette slep noght at a risshe.' *rush (straw)*
 And with that word I sike and wisshe, *sigh*
- 2855 And seie, 'Ha, whi ne were it day?
 For yit mi ladi thanne I may
 Beholde, thogh I do nomore.'
 And efte I thenke forthermore, *next I think*
 To som man hou the niht doth ese, *i.e., affords sensual gratification*
- 2860 Whan he hath thing that mai him plese
 The longe nyhtes be his side,
 Where as I faile and go beside.
 Bot slep, I not wherof it serveth, *know not*
 Of which no man his thonk deserveth
- 2865 To gete him love in eny place,
 Bot is an hindrere of his grace
 And makth him ded as for a throwe,
 Riht as a stok were overthrowe. *for a time*
 And so, mi fader, in this wise *Just as if a tree trunk*
- 2870 The slepi nyhtes I despise,
 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.
- 2875 Thus ate laste I go to bedde,
 And yit min herte lith to wedde *stands as a pledge*
 With hire, wher as I cam fro;
 Thogh I departe, he wol noght so, *he (my heart)*
 Ther is no lock mai schette him oute,
- 2880 Him nedeth noght to gon aboute,
 That perce mai the harde wall;
 Thus is he with hire overall,

- 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 wissheth 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 swevene,
 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 swevene 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 fulofte 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	then named
	Dedalion, and he per cas	by chance
	Fro kinde of man forschape was	transformed
2935	Into a goshauk of liknesse;	
	Wherof the king gret hevynesse	
	Hath take, and thoghte in his corage	heart
	To gon upon a pelrinage	pilgrimage
	Into a strange regioun,	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.	From what
	To this pourpos and to this ende	
	This king is redy for to wende,	go
	As he which wolde go be schipe;	
2950	And for to don him felaschipe	
	His wif unto the see him broghte,	sea accompanied him
	With al hire herte and him besoghte,	And with
	That he the time hire wolde sein,	
	Whan that he thoghte come agein.	
2955	'Withinne,' he seith, 'two monthe day.'	two month's time
	And thus in al the haste he may	
	He tok his leve, and forth he seileth	
	Wepende, and sche herself beweileth,	
	And torneth hom, ther sche cam fro.	home, where
2960	Bot whan the monthes were ago,	gone
	The whiche he sette of his comynge,	
	And that sche herde no tydinge,	
	Ther was no care for to seche.	distress to seek (i.e., none lacking)
	Wherof the goddes to beseche	
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	prayed
	To wite and knowe hou that he ferde,	fared
2970	That Juno the goddesse hire herde,	
	Anon and upon this matiere	And at once

- Sche bad Yris hir messagere
 To slepes hous that sche schal wende, *go*
 And bidde him that he make an ende
- 2975 Be swevene and schewen al the cas *By dream vision; show*
 Unto this ladi, hou it was.
- This Yris, fro the hihe stage,
 Which undertake hath the message,
 Hire reyny cope dede upon, *rainy cloak (rainbow) put on*
 2980 The which was wonderli begon *wonderfully ornamented*
 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 slep wher that sche fond.
 And that was in a strange lond,
 Which marcheth upon Chymerie. *borders on Chimerea*
 For ther, as seith the poesie,
 The god of Slep hath mad his hous,
 2990 Which of entaille is merveilous. *decor*
 Under an hell ther is a cave, *hill*
 Which of the sonne mai noght have,
 So that no man mai knowe ariht
 The point between the dai and nyht.
- 2995 Ther is no fyr, ther is no sparke, *creak*
 Ther is no dore which mai charke, *eye; open (unshut)*
 Wherof an yhe scholde unschette, *impediment [to sleep]*
 So that inward ther is no lette.
 And for to speke of that withoute,
- 3000 Ther stant no gret tree nyh aboute *nearby*
 Wheron ther myhte crowe or pie *magpie*
 Alihte, for to clepe or crie. *call*
 Ther is no cok to crowe day, *cock*
 Ne beste non which noise may *animal; make noises*
 3005 The hell, bot al aboute round *[On] the hill*
 Ther is growende upon the ground
 Popi, which berth the sed of slep, *Poppies; bear*
 With othre herbes suche an hep. *huge quantity*
 A stille water for the nones
- 3010 Rennende upon the smale stones,
 Which hihte of Lethes the rivere, *is called*
 Under that hell in such manere *hill*
 Ther is, which gifth gret appetit *gives*
 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 *ebony*
 The bordes al aboute be,

	And for he scholde slepe softe,	<i>softly</i>
3020	Upon a fethrebed alofte	
	He lith with many a pilwe of doun:	<i>pillow; down</i>
	The chambre is strowed up and doun	<i>strewn</i>
	With swevenes many thousandfold.	<i>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	<i>commanded</i>
	The message of Juno sche dede.	<i>conveyed</i>
	Fulofte hir wordes sche reherceth,	
3030	Er sche his slepi eres perceth;	<i>ears pierces</i>
	With mochel wo bot ate laste	<i>reluctance (expression of woe)</i>
	His slombrende yhen he upcaste	<i>eyes</i>
	And seide hir that it schal be do.	<i>done</i>
	Wherof among a thousand tho,	<i>then</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,	
	Was Morpheus, the whos nature	
3040	Is for to take the figure	
	Of what persone that him liketh,	<i>whatever; pleases him</i>
	Wherof that he fulofte entriketh	<i>deceives</i>
	The lif which slepe schal be nyhte;	<i>Someone who; at night</i>
	And Ithecus that other hihte,	<i>Icelos; second was called</i>
3045	Which hath the vois of every soun,	
	The chiere and the condicioun	
	Of every lif, what so it is;	
	The thridde suiende after this	<i>following</i>
	Is Panthasas, which may transforme	<i>Phantasos</i>
3050	Of everything the rihte forme,	
	And change it in another kinde.	
	Upon hem thre, so as I finde,	
	Of swevenes stant al th'apparence,	
	Which otherwhile is evidence	<i>sometimes is true testimony</i>
3055	And otherwhile bot a jape.	<i>other times but a joke</i>
	Bot natheles it is so schape,	<i>things are thus arranged</i>
	That Morpheus be nyht alone	
	Appiereth until Alceone	<i>unto</i>
	In liknesse of hir housebonde	
3060	Al naked ded upon the stronde,	<i>dead; beach</i>
	And hou he dreynte in special	<i>drowned</i>
	These othre tuo it schewen al.	
	The tempeste of the blake cloude,	
	The wode see, the wyndes loude,	<i>angry sea</i>
3065	Al this sche mette, and sih him dyen;	<i>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 sterten 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, withoute lette
 Sche drowh, and whan that sche cam nyh,
 Stark ded, hise armes sprad, sche syh
 Hire lord flietende upon the wawe.
 Wherof 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 desport,
 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 herself 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, *human ability lost*
 Hir will stod as it was tofore, *before*
 3115 And serveth him so as sche mai.
 Wherof into this ilke day
 Tokedre upon the see thei wone, *dwell*
 Wher many a dowhter and a sone
 Thei bringen forth of briddes kinde;
 3120 And for men scholden take in mynde *hold in memory*
 This Alceoun the trewe queene,
 Hire briddes yit, as it is seene,
 Of Alceoun the name bere. *i.e., Halcyon*

[ON SLEEPING AND WAKING]

- Confessor** Lo, thus, mi sone, it mai thee stire *stir*
 3125 Of swevenes for to take kepe, *heed*
 For ofte time a man aslepe
 Mai se what after schal betide. *happen*
 Forthi it helpeth at som tyde *time*
 A man to slepe, as it belongeth,
 3130 Bot slowthe no lif underfongeth *But no one accepts sloth*
 Which is to love appourtenant." *[No one, that is] who*
- Confessio Amantis** "Mi fader, upon covenant
 I dar wel make this avou,
 Of all mi lif that into nou, *up to the present*
 3135 Als fer as I can understonde,
 Yit tok I nevere slep on honde,
 Whan it was time for to wake;
 For thogh myn yhe it wolde take, *it (sleep)*
 Min herte is evere theragein. *opposed*
 3140 Bot natheles to speke it plein,
 Al this that I have seid you hiere *here*
 Of my wakinge, as ye mai hiere, *hear*
 It toucheth to mi lady swete.
 For otherwise, I you behiete, *assure*
 3145 In strange place whanne I go, *foreign*
 Me list nothing to wake so. *It does not please me at all*
 For whan the wommen listen pleie, *wish to play*
 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, *the reputation*
 That thei ne scholde have cause non *[So] that*
 To seie, 'Ha, lo, wher goth such on,
 3155 That hath forlore his contenance!' *lost his composure*
 And thus among I singe and daunce, *continually*

- And feigne lust ther as non is.
 For ofte sithe I fiele this: *often times*
 Of thoght, which in mi herte falleth
 3160 Whanne it is nyht, myn hed appalleth, *grows faint*
 And that is for I se hire noght *because*
 Which is the wakere of mi thoght. *Who*
 And thus as tymliche as I may, *early*
 Fulofte whanne it is brod day,
 3165 I take of all these othre leve *remain*
 And go my weie, and thei beleve, *Who see by chance their*
 That sen per cas here loves there. *as if there were nothing [wrong]*
 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, *fantasize*
 Til that I se the daies lyht.
 I not if that be Sompnolence, *know not*
 Bot upon youre conscience,
 3175 Min holi fader, demeth ye.” *judge*
Confessor “Mi sone, I am wel paid with thee, *pleased*
 Of slep that thou the sluggardie
 Be nyhte in loves compaignie
 Eschued hast, and do thi peine
 3180 So that thi love thar noght pleine. *your love ought not complain*
 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 bethoght, *I have in mind*
 Hou love and slep acorden noght.

[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 *maiden (see note)*
 In armes all the longe nyht.
 Bot whanne it drogh toward the liht,
 That he withinne his herte sih *saw*
 The dai which was amorwe nyh,
 3195 Anon unto the sonne he preide, *sun*
 For lust of love, and thus he seide: *Because of desire*
 ‘O Phebus, which the daies liht
 Governest til that it be nyht,
 And gladest every creature
 3200 After the lawe of thi nature,

- Bot natheles ther is a thing,
 Which onli to the knouleching
 Belongeth as in priveté
 To love and to his dueté,
 3205 Which asketh noght to ben apert, *exposed (made public)*
 Bot in cilenche and in covert *silence*
 Desireth for to be beschaded. *obscured*
 And thus whan that thi liht is faded
 And Vesper scheweth him alofte,
 3210 And that the nyht is long and softe,
 Under the cloudes derke and stille
 Thanne hath this thing most of his wille.
 Forthi unto thi myhtes hyhe, *lofty powers*
 As thou which art the daies yhe, *eye*
 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. *who lies*
 3220 Withdrawgh the banere of thin armes, *banner of your heraldic sign (i.e., sunrise)*
 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, *embraced (received)*
 Which lith hier be mi syde naked, *by*
 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 *guide*
 Thi fyri carte, and so ordeigne,
 That thou thi swifte hors restreigne
 3235 Lowe under erthe in Occident, *West*
 That thei towards Orient *East*
 Be cercle go the longe weie. *By circle*
 And ek to thee, Diane, I preie,
 Which cleped art of thi noblesse *called are*
 3240 The nyhtes mone and the goddesse, *moon*
 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

- 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 *carry out*
 In thilke point of loves heste, *that climax of love's command*
 Which cleped is the nyhtes feste, *is called; feast*
 Withoute slep of sluggardie,
- 3260 Which Venus out of compaignie *by herself*
 Hath put away, 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, *ill-prepared*
 With slep hath mad his retenue,
 That what thing is to love due,
 Of all his dette he paieth non. *pays nothing*
- 3270 He wot noght how the nyht is gon
 Ne hou the day is come aboute,
 Bot onli for to slepe and route *snore*
 Til hyh midday, that he arise.
 Bot Cephalus dede otherwise, *did*
- 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 *Lying; contrive*
- 3285 To dreame a merie swevene er day;
 And if so falle that I may *dream before*
 Mi thought with such a swevene plese, *dream*
 Me thenkth I am somdiel in ese,
 For I non other confort have.
- 3290 So nedeth noght that I schal crave

¹ Lines 3259–65: *Without the sleep of sluggardiness, / 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 swevene of that me liketh,
 Which afterward min herte entriketh, *tricks my heart*
 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. *taken in moderation*
 Bot he which can no slep mesure
 Upon the reule as it belongeth,
 Fulofte of sodein chance he fongeth
 Such infortune that him grieveth.
- 3310 Bot who these olde bokes lieveth, *believe*
 Of Sompnolence hou it is write,
 Ther may a man the sothe wite, *a man may know the truth*
 If that he wolde ensample take,
 That otherwhile is good to wake:
 3315 Wherof a tale in poesie
 I thenke for to specefie.

[TALE OF ARGUS AND MERCURY]

- ☞ Ovide telleth in his sawes *tales (see note)*
 How Jupiter be olde dawes *in olden days*
 Lay be a mayde, which Yo
 3320 Was cleped, wherof that Juno *called*
 His wif was wroth, and the goddesse *furious*
 Of Yo torneth the liknesse
 Into a cow, to gon theroute *throughout*
 The large fieldes al aboute
 3325 And gete hire mete upon the griene. *food; grassy field*
 And therupon this hyhe queene
 Betok hire Argus for to kepe, *Employed*
 For he was selden wont to slepe,
 And yit he hadde an hundred yhen, *eyes*
 3330 And alle alyche wel thei syhen.
 Now herkne hou that he was beguiled.
 Mercurie, which was al affiled *prepared*
 This cow to stele, he cam disguised, *steal*
 And hadde a pipe wel devised


- 3335 Upon the notes of musike,
 Wherof he mihte hise eres like. *ears please*
 And over that he hadde affaited *moreover; invented*
 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 *protect*
 His hed, the which Mercurie of smot, *cut off*
- 3350 And forthwithal anon fot hot *speedily*
 He stal the cow which Argus kepte,
 And al this fell for that he slepte. *happened because*
 Ensample it was to manye mo,
 That mochel Slep doth ofte wo, *often causes harm*
- 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 *For dying; not for being safe*
 Is schape, as thogh he were ded. *[He] is fashioned*
- Confessor** Forthi, mi sone, hold up thin hed,
 And let no slep thin yhe englue, *stick shut*
- 3364 Bot whanne it is to resoun due.” *Except; appropriate to reason*
- 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, *with me (i.e., so has me in its grasp)*
- 3370 Which takth no hiede of due time. *the appropriate time*
 For whanne I schal myn yhen close,
 Anon min herte he wole oppose
 And holde his scole in such a wise, *give his lectures*
 Til it be day that I arise,
- 3375 That selde it is whan that I slepe. *[So] that*
 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; *yes*
- 3380 For Slowthe, which as moder is

The forthdrawere and the norrice *breeder; nurse*
 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;
 Wherof for thou thee schalt avise,
 Er thou so with thiself misfare,
 What vice it is I wol declare."

[TRISTESSE, OR DESPONDENCY]

ix. *Nil fortuna iuuat, ubi desperacio ledit;
 Quo desiccat humor, non viridescit humus.
 Magnanimus set amor spem ponit et inde salutem
 Consequitur, quod ei prospera fata fauent.*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, *lost*
 And is so wo begon therfore,
 3395 That he withinne his thoght 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 *affrighted*
 A thousand time with o breth *a single breath*
 Wepende he wissheth after deth, *hopes for death*
 Whan he fortune fint adverse.
 For thanne he wole his hap reherce,
 3405 As thogh his world were al forlore, *lost*
 And seith, 'Helas, that I was bore! *Alas; born*
 Hou schal I live? Hou schal I do?
 For nou fortune is thus mi fo,
 I wot wel God me wol noght helpe.
 3410 What scholde I thanne of joies yelpe, *boast*
 Whan ther no bote is of mi care? *reward*
 So overcast is my welfare,
 That I am schapen al to strif.
 Helas, that I nere of this lif, *Alas; were not deceased*
 3415 Er I be fulliche overtake!' *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 *escape*
 The worldes wo which he is inne.
- 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
 The sothe, thogh a man it finde. *discovers*
 For Tristesce is of such a kinde, *nature*
 That for to meintene his folie,
 He hath with him Obstinacie, *(see note)*
- 3435 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
 His oghne skile bot of hed. *reason except rashly (unadvisedly)*
 3440 Thus dwyneth he, til he be ded, *languishes (pines away); dead*
 In hindringe of his oghne astat.
 For where a man is obstinat,
 Wanhope folweth ate laste, *Despair*
 Which mai noght after longe laste,
- 3445 Til Slouthe make of him an ende.
 Bot God wot whider he schal wende. *go*
- Confessor** Mi sone, and riht in such manere
 Ther be lovers of hevy chiere, *gloomy demeanor*
 That sorwen mor than it is ned, *Who*
 3450 Whan thei be taried of here sped *delayed; their intention*
 And conne noght hemselven rede, *know not how to counsel themselves*
 Bot lesen hope for to spede *lose; of success*
 And stinten love to poursewe. *stop pursuing love*
 And thus thei faden hyde and hewe, *skin; complexion*
 3455 And lustles in here hertes waxe. *listless; their hearts grow*
 Hierof it is that I wolde axe,
 If thou, mi sone, art on of tho." *one of those*
- Confessio Amantis** "Ha, goode fader, it is so,
 Outake a point, I am beknowe;
 3460 For elles I am overthrowe *Except for; I confess*
 In al that evere ye have seid. *demolished*
 Mi sorwe is everemore unteid,

	And secheth overal my veines; Bot for to conseile of mi peines,	
3465	I can no bote do therto; And thus withouten hope I go, So that mi wittes ben empeired, And I, as who seith, am despeired	<i>remedy</i> <i>weakened</i>
3470	To winne love of thilke swete, Withoute whom, I you behiete, Min herte, that is so bestad, Riht inly nevere mai be glad.	<i>assure</i> <i>afflicted</i>
3475	For be my trouthe I schal noght lie, Of pure sorwe, which I drye For that sche seith sche wol me noght, With drecching of myn oghne thocht	<i>endure</i> <i>tormenting</i>
3480	In such a wanhope I am falle, That I ne can unethes calle, As for to speke of eny grace, Mi ladi merci to pourchace.	<i>despair</i> <i>scarcely</i>
3485	Bot yit I seie noght for this That al in mi defalte it is; For I cam nevere yit in stede, Whan time was, that I my bede	<i>place</i> <i>prayer</i>
	Ne seide and, as I dorste, tolde. Bot nevere fond I that sche wolde, For oght sche knew of min entente, To speke a goodly word assente.	<i>dared, said [it]</i>
3490	And natheles this dar I seie, That if a sinful wolde preie To God of his forgivenessse With half so gret a besinesse	<i>sinful [person]</i>
3495	As I have do to my ladi, In lacke of askinge of merci He scholde nevere come in helle.	<i>For insufficient requests for mercy</i> <i>hell</i>
	And thus I mai you sothli telle, Save only that I crie and bidde, I am in Tristesce al amidde And fulfild of Desesperance.	<i>Despair</i> <i>Hopelessness</i>
3500	And therof gif me mi penance, Min holi fader, as you liketh.”	
Confessor	“Mi sone, of that thin herte siketh With sorwe, miht thou noght amende, Til love his grace wol thee sende,	<i>sighs</i>
3505	For thou thin oghne cause empeirest What time as thou thiself despeirest. I not what other thing availeth, Of hope whan the herte faileth,	<i>impair</i> <i>know not</i>
	For such a sor is incurable,	<i>sorrow</i>

3510 And ek the goddes ben vengable.
 And that a man mai riht wel frede,
 These olde bokes whoso rede,
 Of thing which hath befalle er this.
 Now hier of what ensample it is. *feel*

[TALE OF IPHIS AND ARAXARATHEN]

3515 Whilom be olde daies fer *Once; far gone*
 Of Mese was the king Theucer,
 Which hadde a kniht to sone, Iphis. *Mysia*
 Of love and he so maistred is, *as a son*
 That he hath set al his corage *(see note)*

3520 As to reguard of his lignage *In comparison to his lineage*
 Upon a maide of lou astat. *low*
 Bot thogh he were a potestat *potentate*
 Of worldes good, he was soubgit
 To love, and put in such a plit,

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. *by reason*
 The lustes of his herte he suieth, *follows*
 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, *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,

3545 That he thurgh strengthe of love lasseth *lessens*
 His wit, and resoun overpasseth. *exceeds his reason*
 As he which of his lif ne rowhte, *had no pity*
 His deth upon himself he sowhte,
 So that be nyhte his weie he nam, *took*

3550 Ther wiste non wher he becam;
 The nyht was derk, ther schon no mone, *knew; where he went*
 Tofore the gates he cam sone, *shone no moon*
 Wher that this yonge maiden was,

- And with this wofull word, 'Helas!'
 3555 Hise dedli pleintes he began *complaints*
 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 knowen al min hole herte,
 That I ne mai your hond asterte; *escape*
 On you is evere that I crie,
 And yit you deigneth noght to plie, *comply*
 3565 Ne toward me youre ere encline. *ear*
 Thus for I se no medicine *because*
 To make an ende of mi querele,
 My deth schal be in stede of hele. *place of health*
 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, *distress*
 Hou thou and I be now unmete. *incompatible (at odds)*
 Ha lord, what swevene schalt thou mete, *dream; dream*
 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 sterve, *die*
 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 *Aloofness*
 3590 Ensample be for everemo,
 Whan thei my wofull deth recorde.' *remember*
 And with that word he tok a corde,
 With which upon the gate tre
 He hyng himself, that was pité.
 3595 The morwe cam, the nyht is gon,
 Men comen out and syh anon *saw*
 Wher that this yonge lord was ded.
 Ther was an hous withoute red, *counsel*
 For no man knew the cause why.
 3600 Ther was wepinge and ther was cry:

- 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 vengeance,
 For sche was cause of thilke chance,
 Why that this kinges sone is spilt.
 3610 Sche takth upon himself 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 hirselve scholde
 3615 Do wreche with hire oghne hond,
 Thurghout the world in every lond
 That every lif therof schal speke,
 Hou sche herself it scholde wreke.
 Sche wepeth, 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.
 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.
 For I ne dede no pité
 To him which for mi love is lore,
 3630 Do no pité to me therfore.'
 And with this word sche fell to grounde
 Aswoune, and ther sche lay a stounde.
 The goddes, whiche hir pleigntes herde
 And syhe hou wofully sche ferde,
 3635 Hire lif thei toke away anon,
 And schopen hire into a ston
 After the forme of hire ymage
 Of bodi bothe and of visage.
 And for the merveile of this thing
 3640 Unto the place cam the king
 And ek the queene and manye mo;
 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 vengeance.

*Immediately; knew**killed**unless some other would**wreak vengeance**avenge**continually**troubled**did**did**lost**for a time**transformed her**more**knew*

- And for to kepe in remembrance,
 This faire ymage mayden liche
 3650 With compaignie noble and riche
 With torche and gret sollempnit 
 To Salamyne the cit 
 Thei lede, and carie forth withal
 The dede corps, and sein it schal *declare it must*
 3655 Beside thilke ymage have
 His sepulture and be begrave: *sepulcher; buried*
 This corps and this ymage thus
 Into the cit  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, *[So] that*
 And under that thei maden lowe
 3665 A tumbe riche for the nones
 Of marbre and ek of jaspre stones,
 Wherin this Iphis was beloken,
 That evermor it schal be spoken.
 And for men schal the sothe wite, *know the truth*
 3670 Thei have here epitaphe write, *their*
 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. *too soft; too*
 Be war forthi hierafterward;
 Ye men and wommen bothe tuo,
 3684 Ensampleth 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.” *eradicated*
Amans “Mi fader, hou so that it stonde,
 Now have I plainly understonde *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 underfonge.
 Wherof hierafter thou schalt hier
 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 queerele.* 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 *minimis* 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 impediens et quodammodo invidiam” (“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 nocumento, 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 correctata 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 invidentes nequaquam per hoc sibi ipsis proficiunt. Et narrat, qualiter quidam iuuenis miles nomine Acis, quem Galathea Nimpha pulcherrima toto corde peramavit, cum ipsi sub quadam rupe iuxta litus maris colloquium adinuicem habuerunt, Poliphemus Gigas concussa rupe magnam inde partem super caput Acis ab alto proiciens ipsum per invidiam interfecit. Et cum ipse super hoc dictam Galatheam rapere voluisset, Neptunus Giganti obsistens ipsam iniolatam salua custodia preseruauit. Set et dii miserti corpus Acis defuncti in fontem aque dulcissime subito transmutarunt.* [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, Polyphemos 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 Polyphemous’ 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 Polipheme’s 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*. Pear-sall (“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 that thei 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 Prædicatorum* 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 excelso in terram misit, contigit quod ipse angelus duos homines, quorum unus cupidus, alter inuidus erat, itinerando spacio quasi vnius 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 affirmat duplicandum. Super quo cupidus impeditus auaricia, sperans sibi diuicias carpere duplicatas, primo petere recusauit. Quod cum inuidus animaduerneret, naturam sui vicii concernens, ita ut socius suus utroque lumine priuaretur, seipsum*

monoculum fieri constanter primus ab angelo postulabat. Et sic unius invidia 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 “couciteþ oþeris 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 “Goddess 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 archjangers. (See Trevisa, *Governance of Kings* 2.2.21, pp. 248–49, on the evil of women jangers, 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 uninterested 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, *Mediæval 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 (*Medieval 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 cautione consilio Pelagii tunc pape dicta filia una cum duobus Cardinalibus aliisque Rome proceribus in Persiam maritaggi causa nauigio honorifice destinata fuit: que tamen obloquencium postea detractionibus variis modis, prout inferius articulatur, absque sui culpa dolorosa fata multipliciter 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 fulfils 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 nuptias 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 detraccione 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 uxori 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 (Hermyngeld), 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 ipsemet noctanter interfecit, verbis detractoriis 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 desponsauit; que tamen qualis vel unde fuit alicui nullo modo fatebatur. Et cum infra breue postea a domino suo impregnata fuisset, ipse ad debellandum cum Scotis iter arripuit, et ibidem super guerras aliquamdiu permansit.* [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 nature's role in the impregnation of Canace in 3.143 ff.
- 931 ff. ¶ **Latin marginalia:** *Qualiter Regina Constancia infantem masculum, quem in baptismo Mauricium 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 monstrosum fantasma loco geniture ad ortum produxit; huius modique detraccionibus 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 "Domyld." 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 here yhen.* 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 Theloüs, the "fals knyht 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 reuerenter associavit, necnon et eiusdem filium Mauricium in omni habundancia 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 woefully 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 sciuisset, ipsam in igne proiciens comburi 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 dethe 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 uxorem suam Constanciam una 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 exiliū sui penes omnes incognitam se celauit, tunc demum patri suo Imperatori seipsam per omnia manifestauit: quod cum Rex Allee sciisset, una cum uniuersa 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 ut 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 resolutionem subiens nature debitum persoluit, post cuius obitum Constancia 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 corowned.* 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, *Com-monorium* 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 detraccionis 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 condemnatum euicit: quo defuncto eciam et pater infra breue postea mortuus est. Et sic Perseo successiue regnante deus huiusmodi detraccionis inuidiam abhorrens ipsum cum vniuersa suorum pugnatorum multitudine extra Danubii fluiuium ab Emilio tunc Romanorum Consule euentu bellico interfici fortunauit. Ita quod ab illo die Macedonie potestas penitus destructa Romano Imperio subiugata deseruiuit, 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 *CA* as Prol.369, 3.205, 5.4604, and 7.1957–60.
- 1884 ff. ¶ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic tractat Confessor super quarta specie Inuidie, que dissimilacio dicitur, cuius vultus quanto maioris amicicie apparenciam 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, Deianira 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 dissimulate benevolencie speculo alios in amore defraudant. Et narrat qualiter Hercules, cum ipse quoddam fluvium, cuius vada non novit, cum Deianira transmeare proposuit, superueniens Nessus Gigas ob amicitiam Herculis, ut 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 eciam Herculi mortis euentum fortuna postmodum causavit.* [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 percipiat, aliene 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 supplantavit*. [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 Amphitriton 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 Amphitriton, her husband, while he is away in battle. Gower substitutes Amphitriton 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, Amphitriton 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 Amphitriton 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 Amphitriton close friends adds to the villainy of Amphitriton'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 Amphitriion socium suum Gentam, qui Almeenam peramavit, seipsum loco alterius cautelosa supplantacione substituit.* [How Amphitriion 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 *enformelforme/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 detraccionis ponit Confessor exemplum. Et narrat de quodam Romani Imperatoris filio, qui probitates armorum super omnia excercere affectans nesciente patre ultra mare in partes Persie ad deseruiendum Soldano super guerras cum solo milite tanquam socio suo ignotus se transtulit. Et cum ipsius milicie fama super alios ibidem celsior accrevisset, 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 paterne benediccionis 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 reuelavit; qui noctanter a bursa domini sui anulum furto surripiens, hec que audiuit usui proprio falsissima Supplantacione applicavit. Et sic servus pro domino desponsata sibi Soldani filia coronatus Persie regnavit.* [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 Celestinum 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 “quarelles” (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 propheta 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 David inuidie causa Abner subdole interfecit. Et qualiter eciam Achitofell ob hoc quod Cusy in consilio Absolon preferebatur, 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 Pit .* 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 Bull n-Fern ndez (*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 optinuerat, 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 palatii 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 potius 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 tercio 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 "wikke 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 usque 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 concupiscenciam 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 ‘kepth 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 Ghost* 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 sepiissime 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 kepeth 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 helplich to defie.* Soft and semisoft cheese was considered an aid to digestion: “mylky chese moystep þe wombe (stomach). . . . And chese yete after mete þrustep downward 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 beshitten and thus befouls the bird in return.
- 616 ff. ¶ **Latin marginalia:** *Seneca: Paciencia est vindicta omnium iniuriarum.* [Seneca: Patience is the conquerer 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 paciencia in amore contra lites 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 litis contumeliam sua paciencia 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 sententiam 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 avis 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 uxori 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 Iuterna. 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, ficta dissimilacione vindictam subdole assequuntur. Et narrat quod cum Palamades princeps Grecorum in obsidione Troie a quibusdam suis emulis proditorie interfectus fuisset, paterque suus Rex Namplus in patria sua tunc existens huiusmodi euentus certitudinem sciuisset, 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 nequirit, 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 therein* (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 pacienciam 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 discrecionis moderamine gubernanda. Et narrat qualiter Diogenes, qui motus animi sui rationi subiugarat, Regem Alexandrum super isto facto sibi opponentem plenius informavit.* [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 seipsos 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 transfixed 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 advantage*. 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 festinatione concupiscentes tardius expediunt. Et narrat qualiter pro eo quod Phebus quamdam virginem pulcherimam nomine Daphnem nimia amoris acceleratione insequabatur, iratus Cupido cor Phebi sagitta aurea ignita ardencius vulneravit: et econtra cor Daphne quadam sagitta plumbea, que frigidissima fuit, sobrius perforavit. Et sic quanto magis Phebus ardencior in amore Daphnem persecutus 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 ultra quam decet consequi affectant. Et narrat qualiter Athemas et Demephon Reges, cum ipsi de bello Troiano ad propria remeassent et a suis ibidem pacifice recepti non fuissent, congregato aliunde pugnatorum exercitu, 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 paciencia tractatus inter ipsos Reges et eorum Regna inita pace et concordia huiusmodi impetuositatem micus 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 Menestheus’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 concupiscencie 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:** *ultima 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 latrocinio accusatus, dixit, “O Alexander, vere quia cum paucis sociis spoliatorum causa naues tantum exploro, ego latrunculus vocor; tu autem, quia cum infinita bellatorum multitudine uniuersam 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 Diomedes.

- 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 quamvis Alexander sua potencia totius mundi victor sibi subiugarat imperium, ipse tandem mortis victoria subiugatus cunctipotentis sententiam 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 *Withoute 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 Avis faciem ad similitudinem humanam habentis, que cum de preda sua hominem iuxta fluuium 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 homicidium in guerris habenda. Et narrat qualiter Achilles una cum Thelapho filio suo contra Regem Mesea, qui tunc Theucer vocabatur, bellum inierunt; et cum Achilles dictum Regem in bello prostratum occidere voluisset, 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 piety], 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 ingeniousness. 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 delinquent. Et narrat qualiter Dido Regina Cartaginis Eneam ab incendiis Troie fugituum 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 ultra 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 synge: / Ryght so to yow I make my compleynyng’” (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 *Gentillesse*," pp. 242–45). On the loose ties of *gentillesse* 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 *gentillesse* 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, vnus 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.
- ¶ **Latin marginalia:** *Nota adhuc contra tardacionem de v. virginibus fatuis, que nimiam moram facientes intrante sponso 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.]
- 271 *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 ymaginativa formido neque virtutes aggredi neque vicia fugere audet; sicque utriusque vite, tam actiue 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.
- ¶ **Latin marginalia:** *Hic in amoris causa loquitur contra pusillanimes, et dicit quod Amans pre timore verbis obmutescere non debet, set continuando preces sui amoris expeditionem tucius prosequatur. Et ponit Confessor exemplum, qualiter Pigmaleon, pro eo quod preces continuauit, quandam ymaginem eburneam, cuius pulcritudinis concupiscencia illaqueatus extitit, in carnem et sanguinem ad latus suum transformata senciit.* [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 uxori sue Thelacuse pregnantis 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 masculini educari admonuit: quam pater filium credens, ipsam in maritagium filie cuiusdam principis etate solita copulauit. Set cum Yphis debitum sue coniugi unde soluere non habuit, deos in sui adiutorium interpellabat; qui super hoc miserti femininum genus in masculinum ob affectum nature in Yphe per*

omnia transmutarunt. [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 androgony 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 with inne a schort tyme after. Also Seynte Austyn de civitate Dei, libro 3, capitulo 29, toucheþ þat A. Gellius [libro] Atticarum noctium seiþ þat wommen beep 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 Obluionis, 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, "Betwen the tuo extremities" (5.7641), is a common feature of gnomic observation. Compare *TC* 3.1315: "bitwixen drede and sikernessee." In Gower, e.g., "Betwen the vertu and the vice" (Prol.79, 7.2739); "betwen 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); "whyte 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 "Betwen the reddour and pite" (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 efficaciac, ut altera memoriam, altera oblivionem conferret. Cumque paribus anulis eas inseruisset, alterum, scilicet oblivionis anulum, uxori prae-buit, alterum ipse tulit; ut sic pari amore sic paribus anulis insignirentur. Coepit ergo mulier amoris viri oblivisci, 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 Demephon 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 Demephon'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 Demephon versus bellum Troianum itinerando a Phillide Rodopeie Regina non tantum in hospicium, set eciam in amorem, gaudio magno susceptus est: qui postea ab ipsa Troie descendens rediturum 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 Demephon 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 Demephon'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 Negligencie, 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 presumit.* [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 negligencie 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 diligentius refrenaret, ipse consilium patris sua negligencia preteriens, equos cum curru nimis basse errare permisit; unde non solum incendio orbem inflammauit, set et seipsum de curru cadentem in quoddam fluuium 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 Ocium dicitur, cuius condicio in virtutum cultura nullius occupationis diligenciam admittens, cuiuscumque expeditionem 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 contenance 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 occupationem omittentes, grauioris infortunii casus expectant. Et narrat de quadam Armenie Regis filia, que huiusmodi condicionis 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, gentillesse, 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 Gentillesse," 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, set 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 postulavit.* [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 [Jephthah’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 acquiesces 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 excercicium 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 Polixenen 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” (CT VII[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 exposé 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 Vlixē, cum ipse a bello Troiano propter amorem Penelope remanere domi voluisset, Nauplius pater Palamades eum tantis sermonibus allocutus est, quod Vlixes thoro sue coniugis relicto labores armorum vna 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 prenunciauit: set ipse miliciam potius quam ocia affectans, Troiam adiit, ubi 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, ut audax efficeretur, primitus edocuit, quod cum ipse venacionibus ibidem insisteret, leones et tigrides huiusmodique animalia sibi resistencia et nulla alia fugitiua agitare. 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 *Traitié* 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 Delves . . .”: Contexts of a Historical Proverb,” in Larry Benson, ed., *Learned and the Lewed*, pp. 213–30.
- 2245 ff. ¶ **Latin marginalia:** *Omnes quidem ad unum finem tendimus, set 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 *gentillesse*, 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 *gentillesse* 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: “Hyт 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 *gentillesse* 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, ubi 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 prudentie ingenium habentes absque fructu operum torpescunt. Et ponit exemplum de diligencia predecessorum, qui ad totius 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 descendents. 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,
Omnibur 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 scripserat ipse columnis,
 Ne uel ab igne simul pereant, uel hiantibus undis
 Aerea uel lateris, quaque columba 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 "Certeine rewles of phisnomy, to knowe by onely thoght 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 hiest 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 lyfyng liccherie" and such "thynges filthy and reprouable" (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 Alatri.

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 ‘Ephiloquorius,’” 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 down, / Therof 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 muzyk, 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: "Illis 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 discovers 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 *Prometheus the sculpture*. Trevisa explains the matter this way: “Me[n] saip þat Prometheus, Rapetus his sone, and Atlas þe astronomere, his broþer, made men; so seiþ Ouidius in Magno; nopeles þat is i-seide, for of men þat were vnkonnynge and boistous as bestes he made konnynge [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 liztloker 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 makynge / 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 hap þat name of *saturando* 'makynge fulnes and plente: His wif hatte Opis of *opulencia* 'fulnes and plente' þat sche zeueþ to man and beest, as Isidir seiþ 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 aequora vela moueri
 Denarios posuit commercia rite mereri.
 Ipse prior clypeos mulitiis ante gerit.
 Navibus Italiam 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).

- 2457 ☞ **Latin marginalia:** *Nota de Alconomia*. [Note concerning Alchemy.]

- 2468–78 In alchemy each of the seven planets is affiliated with a metal whose properties it shares. Compare Chaucer's Canon's Yeoman:

Sol gold is, and Luna silver we threpe assert
 Mars iren, Mercurie quyksilver we clepe,
 Saturnus leed, and Juppiter is tyn,
 And Venus coper, by my fader kyn! (*CT* VIII[G]826–29)

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 Lydgatean *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 vegetatyff . . . [and] Oon / was Callyd anymal.” Steele suggests that “stonys” 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, tercius dicitur lapis mineralis, qui omnia metalla purificat et in suum perfectum naturali potencia deducit.* [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 œuvres 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 Ortolanus 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, Ortolan, 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, nympa, 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 Somnolencia, que Accidie Cameraria dicta est, cuius natura semimortua alicuius negotii vigilias obseruare soporifero torpore recusat: unde 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 Ceix 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 prenostice veritatis quandoque certitudinem figurant. Et narrat quod, cum Ceix Rex Trocinie pro reformatione fratris sui Dedalionis in Ancipitrem transmutati peregre proficiscens in mari longius a patria dimersus fuerat, Ivno mittens Yridem nunciam suam in partes Chymerie ad domum Sompni, iussit quod ipse Alceone dicti Regis uxori huius rei euentum per Sompnia certificaret. Quo facto Alceona rem perscrutans corpus mariti sui, ubi super fluctus mortuus iactabatur, inuenit; que pre dolore angustia 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, prognosticatively. 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. Wherefore 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 *Prouesce* (*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 “comforte”; in a salve (*collirium*), 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 “jouyce 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 alofte . . . with many a pilwe of down.* 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 “bridde 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 silencio Auroram amicam suam diligencius amplexens, 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 ut ipsum Cephalum amplexibus Aurore volutum, priusquam dies illa illucesceret, suis deliciis adquiescere diucius permittere 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 dedit ea que seruare tenentur amittunt. Et narrat quod, cum Yo puella pulcherima a Iunone 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 vltima specie Accidie, que Tristicia siue Desperacio dicitur, cuius obstinata condicio tocus 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 Tristesse al amiddle / And fulfild 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, *Mel.* 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 Theucris 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 puellam in lapidem durissimum transmutarunt, quam Rex Theucer una 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 pitié.* 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 *forfet*. 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 *forth with*. 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 *knithode*. 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 *deutraccioun*. So in J, S, B, and Mac; F: *deetractioun*.
- 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: *theroþon*.
 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 *wisslinge*. 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:** *uniuersi*. 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 *mihle*. 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 þough*.
 317 ¶ **Latin marginalia, line 2:** *ymaginatiua*. F: *ymaginatitiua*; B: *ymaginatiue*.
 514 *mihle*. 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 *necligent*. So in F and B; S and Mac: *necgligent*.
- 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 *knyhthode*. 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: *tothe*.
- 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 *shal*. 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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