

John Lydgate
ISOPES FABULES

Edited by
Edward Wheatley

TEAMS • Middle English Texts Series

MEDIEVAL INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS

Western Michigan University

Kalamazoo



INTRODUCTION

Isopes Fabules by John Lydgate appears to be the unfinished work of a relatively young writer, but the short collection also shows a poet who challenges himself by bringing together his knowledge of vernacular fable, Latin scholastic practice, and the most demanding stanzaic form used by his poetic model, Geoffrey Chaucer. Although the work is not consistently aesthetically successful, it is useful for what it shows readers about how a medieval English poet might begin to synthesize various literary elements and traditions — continental and insular, scholarly and popular, pagan and Christian — to contribute to the burgeoning corpus of Middle English literature by attempting the first fable collection in English.

THE EARLY LIFE OF LYDGATE

It is generally accepted that Lydgate was born around 1370, and as he writes in *Isopes Fabules*, he was born in Lydgate, a village in Suffolk near the Cambridgeshire border; like most monks, he took the name of his birthplace as his surname. By about 1382 he had joined the powerful Benedictine abbey at Bury St. Edmunds.¹ He moved through his novitiate rapidly and was ordained as a subdeacon in 1389.

If we are to trust John Shirley, the scribe who wrote MS Ashmole 59 at or near the end of Lydgate's life, then the poet was at Oxford when he wrote the fables.² Apparently he was not there as a fully matriculated student, but he was associated with Gloucester College, which belonged to the Benedictines and was closely connected with Bury St. Edmunds. Lydgate's biographer Derek Pearsall regards the poet's time at Oxford as formative, giving him "the use of one's own room and books, the ability to dispose one's own work and time and to meet and make friends. . . . It is to his sojourn at Oxford that we may attribute some of the breadth of Lydgate's secular reference."³ That breadth of reference certainly owed a great deal to the university's library of over 2,000 volumes.⁴ His Oxford years also offered him the opportunity to meet and befriend young men who would later occupy positions of considerable power. One of them was probably the future Henry V, who as Prince of Wales in 1406 wrote a letter to Richard Courtney, chancellor of Oxford, asking that Lydgate be allowed

¹ Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, p. 22.

² Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, pp. 192–93. Pearsall points out that Shirley attaches his rubric to the only fable that appears in the Ashmole Manuscript, "The Hound and the Cheese," which is the shortest and simplest of the seven. Therefore it is possible that the lengthier, more ambitious fables in the two more complete manuscripts could have been written later elsewhere.

³ Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, p. 29.

⁴ Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, p. 32.

to stay at the university because of the excellent work he was doing there.⁵ So Lydgate's time at Oxford may have laid the groundwork for his later connection to the Henrician court.

But when was Lydgate at Oxford? *Isopes Fabules* may offer clues that he was there before 1400, which would accord with the assertion of J. Norton-Smith that he began his time there in 1397, while Richard II was on the throne.⁶

Lydgate's major thematic concerns in his fable collection are the Boethian concept of *suffisaunce*, a virtue whereby each individual eschews materialism and remains content with only the necessities of life, and tyranny, a vice that belongs to individuals in power but infects the larger social body. That Lydgate would praise *suffisaunce* is hardly surprising: not only is it a virtue that readers of his fables could easily understand and apply to their lives but it was also a quality that should be paramount to members of monastic communities like Lydgate.⁷ The poet's reason for focusing on tyranny is far less obvious.⁸ None of Lydgate's possible source texts (discussed below) highlights tyranny per se; rather, they discuss abuses that the powerful visit upon the powerless in more generalized, broadly applicable terms. So it is possible that Lydgate chose to emphasize tyranny due to his dislike of Richard II, whom he could allude to but not name. Even modern historians refer to the period between 1397 and Richard's dethronement, the years that Norton-Smith believes were Lydgate's earliest at Oxford, as his "tyranny."⁹ It is clear from two later poems that Lydgate thought poorly of Richard II, which is not surprising inasmuch as he was writing for — and in praise of — the Henrician court after 1400;¹⁰ however, the evidence presented here suggests that the poet may have been critical of Richard while he was still on the throne.¹¹

SOURCES AND INFLUENCES

Isopes Fabules is partly drawn from the *Fables* of the late twelfth-century Anglo-Norman poet Marie de France, as has been generally accepted since the late nineteenth-century dissertation of Paul Sauerstein, who tabulated a number of close correspondences between

⁵ Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, pp. 29–30.

⁶ Norton-Smith, *John Lydgate: Poems*, p. 195, n. 1.

⁷ Lydgate uses the word *suffisaunce* five times in the collection; he introduces the concept in the Prologue (line 53) and it appears in three fables (lines 221, 404, 466, 952). The poet also uses the verb *to suffice* in *The Marriage of the Sun* (lines 897, 902) but it does not have particularly virtuous connotations there.

⁸ *Tyranny* and *tyrant* appear thirteen times in three fables (lines 435, 803, 806, 815, 830, 836, 840, 841, 848, 902, 906, 920, 930). It also appears in the title of the *Tale of the Wolfe and the Lamb* in the Trinity manuscript and in the postscript of *The Marriage of the Sun* in the Harley manuscript.

⁹ See, for example, Saul, *Richard II*, p. 203.

¹⁰ In "Of the Sodein Fal of Princes in Oure Dayes," Lydgate writes that "yvel counseyle" rules Richard, who was dethroned "[f]or mys-treting lordes of his monarchye" (MacCracken, *Minor Poems*, p. 660, lines 12–13). In his second redaction of "The Kings of England sithen William Conqueror," Lydgate mentions the Uprising of 1381 and then Richard's executions of Gloucester and Arundel, again through "evyll counseill" (MacCracken, p. 721, lines 139–44).

¹¹ In *Poetry of John Lydgate*, Alain Renoir states that *Isopes Fabules* "is believed to have been completed before 1400" (p. 53), though he does not mention who believes this.

Marie's text and Lydgate's translation.¹² Like most medieval writers who translated or otherwise adapted earlier literature, Marie takes pains to give her readers the genealogy of the fables that she presents: They were translated by the mythical Roman emperor Romulus for his son, and earlier Aesop (who in some strains of Aesopic literature is a slave) had written them for his master. These attributions give the genre of fable a certain degree of authority, but Marie does not stop there: she claims to be translating an English fable collection that had been translated from the Latin by none other than King Alfred, and she adds that she is undertaking the project at the behest of a certain Count William ("le cunte Willame"), although he has not been conclusively identified. So as a writer in the Anglo-Norman courtly milieu, Marie could make use of several strategies, both historical and contemporary, to ensure that her readers credited her work with the authority that she believed it deserved.

Lydgate occupied a far less privileged position when he wrote his fables if we are correct in the assumption that he was relatively young and at Oxford at the time. But whether at Bury St. Edmunds, Oxford, or elsewhere, he would have had no use for Marie's courtly, even imperious appeals to authority in her prologue, so he deploys an approach that is far better suited to the monastic or scholarly community: he situates the vernacular fables in their scholastic setting, revising and amplifying them according to curricular conventions that would have been familiar to many if not all of his readers. In doing so he obfuscates his actual source text but opens up a substantial — indeed, an almost limitless — field of texts from which he can draw to flesh out and comment upon the fables that he retells.

Various collections of fables had been curricular texts for centuries by the time Lydgate was born,¹³ and in the fourteenth century the canonical collection was sixty fables written in elegiac Latin couplets. The collection has been attributed to a number of different writers and called by names having to do with its history of publication, but the name most often associated with it is Gualterus Anglicus (Walter of England), a chaplain in the court of Henry II who evidently wrote the collection specifically as a curricular text. It enjoyed a long history in the classroom, from its creation in the twelfth century through the advent of printing in the fifteenth century. It survives in more than 170 medieval manuscripts and was printed in five countries at least fifty times before 1500, both on its own and in a compilation of the eight most important grammar school texts, the *Auctores octo* (*Eight Authors*).¹⁴ Beginning with the so-called twelfth-century Renaissance, numerous pagan texts acquired scholastic commentary which was meant to enhance their ethical import by connecting them with other ethical authorities, both scriptural or classical. Often these citations of *auctoritates* (authoritative quotations) took the form of proverbs, a form well-suited to the genre of fable which itself relied on proverbial morals to communicate its ethical message.¹⁵

Like most of his educated contemporaries Lydgate would probably have studied the fables of Gualterus Anglicus as a schoolboy, and this probability is heightened by the strong resemblance between his method of revising Marie's fables and some of the common forms of scholastic commentary used in classroom instruction. Marie's fables are generally quite short, the longest reaching 122 lines (and only one of the other 102 fables is over 100 lines

¹² Sauerstein, *Über Lydgate's Aesopübersetzung*, pp. 1–5, 26–30.

¹³ Wheatley, *Mastering Aesop*, pp. 34–51.

¹⁴ Wheatley, *Mastering Aesop*, pp. 3–4.

¹⁵ Wheatley, *Mastering Aesop*, p. 89.

long);¹⁶ the majority of the fables are under 50 lines. Furthermore, in comparison to Lydgate's decasyllabic lines, her octosyllabic ones make the fables even shorter. Lydgate's fables are much longer, averaging about 130 lines each (and that number takes into account the uncharacteristically brief "The Hound and the Cheese," which, at only 28 lines, reaches just a third of the length of the next shortest fable). The practice of lengthening fables by enriching details, dialogue, and other elements, which was suggested by classical grammarians and taught in medieval grammar schools, was called *amplificatio*.¹⁷ In some scholastic commentaries on Latin curricular fables, prose plot summaries of the syntactically difficult Latin verse are given, and these offer the commentators the opportunity to "amplify" the fables through imaginative engagement with and embellishment of the original texts; Lydgate, who generally did not shy away from prolixity, happily embraces this practice in *Isopes Fabules*. Lydgate's fables also contrast Marie's due to his love of allusions to the mythological figures, classical philosophers, writers of scripture, and even medieval theologians. Marie seems content with a relatively simple rhetorical style that is conventional for fable (and perhaps it is worth noting that the scholastic commentary tradition applied to fables had hardly begun to develop when Marie was writing). Lydgate, on the other hand, embellishes most of his fables with allusions and proverbial *auctoritates* that would not have been out of place in the medieval classroom.

But while medieval education offered models for Lydgate's project, so did his poetic model, Chaucer. Given Lydgate's knowledge — and adulation — of his literary predecessor, it seems highly likely that he would have known Chaucer's great beast fable, *The Nun's Priest's Tale*. It is so laden with *auctoritates*, voiced by not only the Nun's Priest as narrator but also animals in the fable, that it becomes a veritable compendium of proverbial knowledge, a morass of moral messages that compete for the reader's attention. What Lydgate either failed to realize or was unable to emulate was that Chaucer's wise animals give his tale its unique satirical humor; when Chauntecleer trots out multiple exempla to counter his wife's exhortation to ignore his dream of a fox, Chaucer is satirizing not only the self-important rooster who recounts them but also scholastic disputation itself. In contrast, when Lydgate's mouse plays host to the evil frog, he mentions Midas, Solomon, Diogenes, and Priam as exemplars of certain philosophies or types of behavior that merit serious (which in this case is to say humorless) attention.

In keeping with the rhetorical high style that he chose for his fable collection, Lydgate also wrote it in Chaucer's most elevated stanzaic form, rhyme royal. The rhyme scheme, *ababbcc*, is basically two interlocking quatrains, one with alternating rhyme and the other comprising two rhymed couplets, with the "b" rhyme in the fourth line playing a part in both. In *The Canterbury Tales* Chaucer reserved this stanzaic form for his tales of greatest pathos,¹⁸ and he also used it for *Troilus and Criseyde*. While some might argue that it is a pretentious choice for a collection of beast fables, Lydgate clearly considered his fabular project one of high seriousness, addressing as it does the major themes of cruel tyranny versus virtuous *suffisaunce*.

¹⁶ Fable 29, "The Wolf King," is the longest, with Fable 73, "The Peasant and the Snake," reaching 116 lines.

¹⁷ The most influential grammarian to espouse *amplificatio* was Priscian, whose *Praeexercitamina* gives detailed examples of the process. See Wheatley, *Mastering Aesop*, pp. 35–37.

¹⁸ See, for example, *The Man of Law's Tale*, *The Clerk's Tale*, and *The Prioress's Tale*.

THE MANUSCRIPTS, THEIR SCRIBES, AND THE QUESTION OF ORDER

Isopes Fabules appears in three medieval manuscripts, though only one of them contains all seven fables. British Library MS Harley 2251 is the sole surviving copy to include all of the fables, but unfortunately its anonymous scribe either copied from a poor exemplar or did not understand the basic decasyllabic line used in the collection: he tends to add words to make lines longer, a problem particularly noticeable in “The Frog and the Mouse.” And even this manuscript is not entirely complete, as it is missing a leaf that deprives it of lines 267–322.

A copy of six of the fables is in Trinity College Cambridge MS R.3.19. The prologue and first four fables in this manuscript appear on fols. 12–16, copied between 1460 and 1490 by a scribe responsible for copying most of the texts in this largely secular compilation of poetry. The last two fables, *How the Wollffe Diseyryd the Crane* and *The Hound that Bare the Chese* on fols. 236–37 were copied by the sixteenth-century antiquarian John Stow.¹⁹ Stow evidently knew the Harley manuscript because he added five missing lines (262–66) to its copy of the *Tale of the Wolfe and the Lambe*; Lydgate’s twentieth-century editor H. N. MacCracken suggests that the lines were copied from the Trinity manuscript.²⁰ It seems likely that Stow came across the Harley manuscript after having made his copy, because *The Marriage of the Sun* is missing from his manuscript, but he would probably have included it if he had been aware of its existence. At any rate, the separation of the two parts of the collection in the Trinity manuscript serves to highlight the fact that those two final fables, both among Lydgate’s shortest and simplest, differ from the other five in being devoid of classical allusions and proverbial *auctoritates* (except for the mention of Aesop himself in both of them). This unexpected pair raises interesting though probably unanswerable questions about Lydgate’s *modus operandi* in writing the fables. If we assume that he was making his way more or less consecutively through Marie’s fables (and the first four fables in the Trinity manuscript follow her order), why would he have begun his collection with rather ambitious scholastic-style amplification resulting in an impressive range of intertextual references, only to shift to a plainer, less intellectually challenging style for the later ones, all while maintaining the highly wrought rhyme royal stanzaic form? Such inconsistency might well make readers think that “the *Fabules* were a task that Lydgate returned to at odd times, and their unity in the two . . . manuscripts is scribal.”²¹

The Hound that Bare the Chese is the sole fable in Bodleian MS Ashmole 59. It was copied by London scribe John Shirley when he was ninety years old in 1455 or the following year.²² This manuscript, like the other two codices of Lydgate’s works that Shirley copied earlier in his life, has been called a commonplace book that includes a variety of materials appealing

¹⁹ Mooney, “Scribes and Booklets,” p. 241, 252. Mooney also suggests the possibility that Stow may have compiled and owned the manuscript (p. 266).

²⁰ MacCracken, *Minor Poems*, p. 575.

²¹ Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, p. 193. Pearsall mistakenly thought that both of these manuscripts were complete; the incompleteness of the Trinity manuscript makes his assertion even more persuasive.

²² For a comprehensive study of Shirley’s life and work, see Connolly, *John Shirley: Book Production*; for a brief consideration of Shirley’s copies of some of Lydgate’s works, see Sponsler, *John Lydgate: Mummings and Entertainments*.

to fifteenth-century tastes.²³ It seems very likely that Shirley had no intention of copying more than one fable into the book, and perhaps he chose Lydgate's shortest, simplest fable because as an unadorned representative of its genre it did not require the scholastic contextualization that some of the more allusion-filled fables might.

THE CURRENT TEXT

In keeping with TEAMS Middle English Texts style, medieval spelling had been modified: spelling variants that might confuse modern readers such as the lack of differentiation between *i/j* and *u/v/w* have been modernized; the runic thorn *þ* has been replaced by *th*, and yogh *ȝ* (sometimes transcribed as *y* in the manuscripts) as its modern equivalent, usually *g*. When a final -e requires pronunciation, it appears as *é*, e.g., *destiné*. When the second-person pronoun is spelled *the* in the manuscripts, it has been lengthened to *thee* to avoid confusion. Ampersands have been converted to the word *and*, and other suspension marks and abbreviations have been expanded and fully spelled out. Capitalization, word division, and punctuation follow modern conventions.

²³ Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, p. 74.



LYDGATE'S ISOPES FABULES

The Tale of the Cok that founde a precyous stone, groundyd by Isopus, the phylosopher of Rome, that yche man shuld take in gree (*with graciousness*) suche as God sent

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| | Wisdom is more in prise then gold in cofers | <i>value</i> |
| | To hem that have savour in lettrure. | <i>them; pleasure in learning; (see note)</i> |
| | Olde examples of prudent philosophers | <i>(see note)</i> |
| | Moche awaylyd to folke that dyd her cure | <i>made an effort</i> |
| 5 | To serche out lykenes in nature, | |
| | In whyche men myght conceve and clerely see | |
| | Notable sentence of gret moralyté. | <i>meaning</i> |
| | Unto purpose the poete laureate | <i>(see note); (t-note)</i> |
| | Callyd Isopus dyd hym occupy | |
| 10 | Whylom in Rome to plesse the senate | <i>Once</i> |
| | Fonde out fables, that men myght hem apply | <i>Invented</i> |
| | To sondry matyrs, yche man for hys party | <i>various; part</i> |
| | Afyr theyr lust, to conclude in substaunce | <i>inclination</i> |
| | Dyverse moralytees set out to theyr plesaunce. | <i>pleasure</i> |
| 15 | Som of foules, of bestis and of fyssh | |
| | Thys Isopus founde out exsample pleyne. | |
| | Where sylver fayleth, in a pewter dyssh | |
| | Ryall dentees byn oft tymes seyne, | <i>Royal delicacies</i> |
| | And semblably poetes, in certeyne, | <i>similarly</i> |
| 20 | In fables rude includyd gret prudence | <i>simple</i> |
| | And moralytees full notable of sentence. | <i>morals; meaning</i> |
| | Under blak erthe byn precious stones founde, | <i>precious stones; (t-note)</i> |
| | Ryche saphyres and charbuncles full ryall | <i>(t-note)</i> |
| 25 | And who that myneth downe lowe in the grounde, | <i>(t-note)</i> |
| | Of gold and sylver groweth the mynerall. | |
| | Perlys whyte, clere, and orientall | |
| | Ben ofte founde in muscle shellys blake, | <i>mussel</i> |
| | And out of fables gret wysdom men may take. | |
| | For whyche I cast to folow thys poete | <i>think</i> |
| 30 | And hys fables in Englysshe to translate, | |

- And though I have no rethoryk swete, (see note)
 Have me excusyd; I was born in Lydgate. (see note)
 Of Tullius gardeyn I passyd nat the gate, (see note); (t-note)
 And cause why: I had no lycence
 35 There to gadyr floures of elloquence. gather
- Yet as I can, forthe I woll procede
 In thys labour and my style dresse make fit; (t-note)
 To do pleasaunce to theym that shall it rede,
 Requyrng hem of verrey gentylnes true nobility
 40 Of her grace to rewe on my rudenes their; [have] mercy; simplicity; (t-note)
 Thys compilacion for to take at gree graciously; (t-note)
 Whyche theym to plese translatyd was by me.
- And yef I fall bycause of ignoraunce if
 That I erre in my translacion,
 45 Lowly of hert and feythfull obeysaunce obedience
 I me submyt to theyr correccion (see note)
 Of hem that have more clere inspeccion sight
 In matyrs that touche poetry,
 Me to reforme that they nat deny.
- And as myn auctor dothe at the cok begyn,
 I cast me to folow him in substaunce,
 Fro the trouthe in sentence nat to twyn. diverge
 As God and grace woll geve me suffysaunce give; sufficiency
 Compyle thys lybell for a remembraunce. [I]; book; (t-note)
 55 To the reders hereaftyr may be founde
 The thanke therof fully to rebounde. return
- The Cok of kynde hathe a crest rede
 Shape lyke a crowne, token of gret noblesse nobility
 By whyche he hathe, whyle it stont on hys hede stands
 60 As clerkis seyn, corage and hardynes say; (t-note)
 And of hys berde melancolyk felness cruelty
 Aboute hys nek by mercyall apparayll martial trappings
 Nature hathe geve him a stately aventayll given; neck covering
- Thys hardy foule with brest and voyce so clere (t-note)
 65 Most trewly kepeth the tydes of the night hours
 Of custom namyd comon astrologere
 In throwpes smale to make theyr hertis lyght, villages
 With spores sharpe enarmyd for to fyght spurs
 Lyke a champion justly dothe attende (t-note)
 70 As a proud capten, hys broode for to defend.

- Beteth hys wyngis, afor or he do syng, *before*
 But sluggy hertis out of theyr slepe to wake, *Bids; (t-note)*
 When Lucyfer toward the dawning *(see note)*
 Lawgheth in the oryent and hathe the west forsake
 75 To chase away the myghty clowdys blake.
 Towarde Aurora thys foule, who taketh kepe *pays attention; (see note)*
 Byddyth folk ayene awake out of theyr slepe, *again*
- Whos waker callyng thryes tolde in nombre *vigilant; thrice; (t-note)*
 With treble laudes gove to the Trinité *given*
 80 Slouthe avoydyng, clepeth folk out of ther slombre; *calls*
 Good hope repeyareth to all that hevy bee. *sorrowful*
 Comforteth the seke in hys infirmité *[He]*
 Causeth merchauntis and pylgryms to be glad,
 The thevys swerde hyd under the shad. *cloak (shade)*
- 85 Callyd the prophete of joy and all gladnes *[He is]; (t-note)*
 Embassiatour of Phebus fyry lyght, *Ambassador; (see note)*
 Whyche put away by musicall swetnes
 The ugly blaknes of the derk nyght;
 For whyche me semeth, me shuld of dew ryght *due*
 90 For three causes preferre thys foule among: *bird always*
 For waker kepyng, for hardyness and song. *vigilant observation*
- Thys foule ys waker agen the vyce of slouthe, *against*
 In vertu strong and hardy as a lyon, *(see note)*
 Stable as a geaunt opou a ground of trouthe,
 95 Agene all vyces the morall champion, *(t-note)*
 And with the entewnes of his melodious soun *musicality*
 He geveth ensample, as he his voyce doth reyse, *(t-note)*
 Howe day and night we the Lord shall preyse. *(t-note)*
- And for because his brest ys strong and cleere
 100 And on hys tipto dysposeth for to syng *(see note)*
 He ys of poettis callyd Chauncecleer. *(see note)*
 And as myn auctor remembreth by wrytyng,
 Whylom thys foule in a glad mornyng *Once*
 Rejoysyd him ayene the son shene *in*
 105 With all hys flok to walke opou a grene. *(t-note)*
- He was furst besy for to breke hys faste,
 With hys wyves about hym everychone,
 On a small donghyll to fynde a good repaste
 Gan scrape and sporne and fast about gone. *scratch*
 110 Hyd in the dong hyll he fonde a jacynct stone, *(see note); (t-note)*
 Yet hys labour and hys besy cure *care*
 Was for nat elles but for his pasture. *fodder*

- He gave ensample whyche gretly may avayle,
 As he was oonly taught by nature,
 115 To avoyde slouth by dylygent travayle
 By honest labour hys lyvelood to procure. *livelihood*
 For who woll thryve, labour must endure, *(t-note)*
 For idylnes and froward negligence *willful*
 Maketh sturdy beggars for lack of theyr dyspence. *means of subsistence*
- 120 Losengowres that fele hem strong ynough, *Idlers*
 Whyche have savour in slouth and slogardy *inclination toward*
 Have lever to beg then go at the plough *prefer*
 Dyche or delve, theymsel to occupy. *Dig*
 Thus idelnes causeth robry *robbery*
 125 In vacant pepyll that to and fro did wende: *shiftless; (t-note)*
 For theft arestyed at Tyburn make an ende. *[they] make; (see note)*
- They be no men, but folkis bestiall,
 Voyde of reson oonly for lak of grace,
 Whyche ete and drynke and labour nat at all.
 130 The cok was besy hys lyvelood to purchase
 The long day in many diverse plase,
 Hym and hys broode oonly to forstre, in trouthe, *foster*
 Such folke rebukying that lyve in slombre and slouth.
- Vertu gynneth at occupacion *begins*
 135 Vyses all procede of idelnesse *(see note)*
 Unto theves, foundres, and patroun. *founders; (see note)*
 Of thryft cometh of vertuous besynesse,
 So of myschyf slouth ys chief maistresse.
 Thys ydelnes causeth folk in dede *(t-note)*
 140 To waste theyr dayes in myschief and in nede.
- With scapyng, spornyng all the longe day
 The cok was besy hym and hys broode to fede,
 Founde a jacyncte, whyche in the donghyll lay,
 A ryche stone and a precious, as I rede, *(t-note)*
 145 Of whyche stone when the cok toke hede, *(t-note)*
 Stynt awhyle, sodenly abrayde, *Stopped; spoke*
 And to the ston evyn thus he sayde:
- “Who that knew thy nature and thy kynde,
 All the propurtees whyche of thee be tolde,
 150 A jeweller, yef he thee myght fynde,
 Wolde for thy vertues close thee in golde. *set*
 Evax to thee geveth praysyng manyfolde, *(see note); (t-note)*
 Whos lapydary bereth openly wytnesse
 Geyn sorow and wo thou bryngest in gladnesse *Against*

- 155 “The best jacyncte in Ethiope ys founde
And is of colour lyke the saphyre ynde,
Comforteth men that ly in prison bounde,
Maketh men strong and hardy of hys kynde,
Contract synewes the jacyncte doth unbynde
160 Yet for all thy vertuous excellence
Twene thee and me ys no convenience.
- Indian sapphire*
Contracted (cramped)
appropriateness
- “For me thou shalt in this place abyde.
With thee I have lyght or nought to done.
Late these merchantis that go so ferr and ryde
165 Trete of thy valew, whether hit be late or sone,
Deme how the cherle came furst in the mone.
Of suche mysteryes I take but lytell hede;
Me lyst nat hewe chyppes above myn hede.
- little*
Discuss
[And] determine; man; moon
I don't want to
- “Precyous stones longen to jewellers
170 And to princes, when they lyst wel be seyn.
To me more deynté in bernes or garners
A lytell rewarde of corn or good greyn.
To take thys stone to me hit were but veyn;
Set more store — I have hit of nature —
175 Among rude chaffe to shrape for my pasture.
- belong*
pleasing; barns; granaries
[I]; (t-note)
- “Lyke as folkis of relykis have deynté,
Theron they set a valew or a pryce,
Hygh maters profound and secree
Ne shuld nat without gret avyce
180 Be shewyd in opyn to hem that be nat wyse,
For as a wyseman in wysdom hathe delyte,
Ryght so a foole of doctrine hathe dyspyte.
- [religious] relics; pleasure*
(t-note)
deliberation
- “Golde and stones be for a kyngis hede,
Stele is tryed for platis in armure,
185 To cover churches covenable is lede
Brasse for belles, iren long to endure.
Thus every thyng followeth hys nature:
Princes to reygne, knyghtis for batayll,
Plowmen for tylth, shypmen for to sayll.
- proper*
(t-note)
tillage (cultivation)
- 190 “The hert desyareth to drynke of crystall welles,
The swan to swimme in large brood riveres,
The gentyll faucon with gesse and ryche belles
To cache hys pray lyke to hys desyres,
I with my brode to scrape afore garneres.
195 Precious stones nothyng apperteyne
To gese nor foullys that pasture on the grene.
- hart*
(t-note)
jess (leg strap in falconry)
brood
(t-note)

“Of theyr nature as folke byn dysposyd,
 Diversely they make eleccion.
 Double of vertu the saphyr in gold closyd
 200 Yche man cheseth lyke hys opinion: *[is] the sapphire . . . set*
 On cheseth the best of wysdom and reson, *chooses*
 And another, hys eyen byn so blynde,
 Cheseth the werst, the best he lyt behynde.” *leaves; (t-note)*

L'envoy

(see note); (t-note)

Though thys fabyll be boysters and rurall, *rough (coarse)*
 205 Ye may theryn consider thyngis thre: *(t-note)*
 Howe that diligence in especiall
 Hathe agayn slouthe caught the sovreynté,
 And, where fre choyse hath hys liberté,
 Cheseth the werst in earnest or in game,
 210 Who but hymself therof ys to blame?

Who foloweth vertu, vices doth eschew, *(see note)*
 He cheseth the best in myn opinion.
 The cok demyd to him hit was more dew *judged; meritorious*
 Small simple grayne then stones of hygh renoun,
 215 Of all tresour chief possessioun.
 Suche as God sent, eche man take at gre *graciously*
 Nat prowde with ryches nor groge with poverté. *grudging*

The worldly man laboreth for rychesse, *(t-note)*
 And on the worlde he set all hys intent.
 220 The vertuos man to avoyde all ydelnesse
 With suffisaunce holde hymself content. *(see note)*
 Eche man therfore, with suche as God hath sent,
 Thanke the Lorde, in vertu kepe hem stable,
 Whyche ys conclusioun of thys lytyll fable.

Explicit.

The End

**The Tale of the Wolfe and the Lambe groundyd opon Isopos, the phylosophor of Rome,
 agenst raveyn (*greed*) and tierry**

225 Ryght as atwene turment and delyces *between; delights; (t-note)*
 There ys in kynde a gret difference,
 Ryght so atwene vertues lyfe and vices
 There may be no just convenience, *congruity*
 Malyce contrary to pure innocence. *(t-note)*
 230 And phylosophers by wrytyng bere recorde
 Twene trowthe and fraude may be non acorde.

- Atwene rancour and humble pacience
 Ther is in nature a gret division.
 A sely shepe make may no resistance *innocent*
 235 Ageyn the power of a strong lyon.
 A dwerfe to fyght with a champion
 Were to febyll in a felde to endure
 By lykenes agayn nature. *(t-note)*
- Grete pykes that swymme in large stewes *fish ponds*
 240 Smaller fysshe most felly they devour. *cruelly*
 Who hath most myght the febler gladly sewes *pursues*
 The pore hathe few his party to socour. *part to help; (t-note)*
 The ravenous wolfe upon the lambe dothe lour, *scowl (lower)*
 Of whyche Isopus in his booke *(t-note)*
 245 Full notably thys example he toke.
- The lambe, the wolf, contrary of nature,
 Ever diverse and nothyng oon they thyнке.
 Bothe at onys of soden aventure *not at all the same*
 To a fresshe ryver they came downe to drynke. *once by sudden chance*
 250 At the hede spryng hy upon the brynke
 Stondeth the wolfe, a froward beste of kynde *malevolent; by nature*
 The sely lambe stood fer abak behynde. *naïve*
- Who that is froward of condicion
 And disposyd to malyce and outrage
 255 Can sone seke and fynde occasion
 Pyke a quarell for to do damage, *[To] pick*
 And unto purpose malycious of corage *spirit*
 The furyos wolfe out with hys venym brake *broke*
 And evyn thys unto the lambe he spake:
- 260 “Lyk thy ffadyr, thou art false and double
 And hym resemblest of dysposicion
 For he was wont my water here to trouble, *(t-note)*
 To meve the thyk, that lay low doune, *move; thick [mud]*
 That I myght have no recreacioune *refreshment*
 265 To drynk my fyll of water pure and clere.
 He was so contrary to trouble thys ryvere.
- “And thou of malyce art com to do the same, *(t-note)*
 Sekest occasion by trobly vyolence *troublesome*
 Agenst me and makest therof a game
 270 To fynde mater and for to do offence.” *cause*
 The lambe answerd with humble reverence,
 “Thys may nat be; the preef ys seyn full oft: *proof*
 I stond benethe and ye stond aloft.

- 275 "From the hyll the ryver downe dyscendeth;
 For to ascende hit were ageyn nature. *flow upward*
 That I stond here hit nothyng yow offendeth;
 The trouble gothe low, above hit ys most pure.
 The clere ys youres, but I must endure *clear [water]*
 Tyll ye have dronke, and then at erst begyn, *for the first time*
 280 Take as hit falleth, the thyk with the thyn. *[To] take*
- "I may nat chese; the choyse to yow ys fall.
 Hyt were but foly for me with yow to stryve.
 Ye shall for me have your desyres all;
 Of your ryght I wyll nat yow depryve."
 285 But the wolfe a cause gan contryve
 Ageyn the lambe of naturall haterede,
 Seyd unto hym quakyng in hys drede,
- "Thy feynyd speche flatteryng and benygne,
 I see hit well in myn inward syght,
 290 How thou dost agene me malygne
 To vex me wrongfully, yef thou haddyst myght.
 The lawe shall part us, whyche of us hath ryght."
 But he no lenger on the lawe abood,
 Devouryd the lambe and after soke hys blood *sucked*
- 295 The lambe was sleyn, for he seyde soth.
 Thus was law tornyd to ravyne *turned; rapaciousness*
 Dome execute by the wolfis tothe, *Judgment executed*
 By whyche lawe Naboth lost hys vyne, *vineyard; (see note)*
 Whylom commandyd by law, whyche ys dyvyne,
 300 No ravenous beste (the Bible doth devyse)
 Shuld be offred to God in sacryfyse. *set forth*
- Herdys be rekles the lambe for to defende, *Shepherds*
 Take noon hede on theyr flock to tary.
 Ther hounde ys muett, whyche that shuld attende
 305 To kepe the wache fro wolves most contrary:
 Fewe sheperdys and many mercynary, *(see note)*
 That falsly entre, as Johns gospels tolde,
 By the wyndow into Crystis folde.
- The wolfe is clyppyd, chese and mylke ys peysyd *shorn; weighed*
 310 On felle and flesh ys set a certayn pryse *pelt*
 For tylthe of lond the dong is also preysed, *tillage; dung*
 Nothyng forgete, sheperdys be so wise. *forgotten*
 The beest ys spoyld and nat without avyse. *stripped; deliberation*
 The wolf hath so ferre the lambe purchasyd *far; taken illegally*
 315 That he ys devoured and hath nothyng trespassyd.

- The ram in Colches bare a flees of golde; *(see note)*
 Therof he was despoilyd by Jason,
 The body left hoole, lyke as hit ys tolde.
 But shepe these dayes be spoilyd to the bone,
 320 For ther be wolfes many mo then oon *more than one*
 That clyp lamborn at sessions and at shyres *lambs; judicial sessions; shire courts*
 Bare to the bone, and yet they have no sheres.
- The sely lambe ys spoilyd to the bones, *innocent*
 The wolf goth fre, whether hit be ryght or wrong.
 325 When a jurroure hathe caught savour ones *(see note)*
 To be forsworn, custom maketh hym strong. *commit perjury; habit*
Si dedero ys now so mery a song *(see note)*
 Hath founde a practyk by lawe to make a preef *practice; proof*
 To hang a trew man and save an errant theef.
- 330 With empty hande men may noon hawkis lewre
 Nor cache a jurroure, but yefe he geve hym mede *if; reward (bribe)*
 The pore pleteth; what is his aventure? *pleads (his case); fortune*
 Voyde purse causeth he may nat spede. *Empty; succeed*
 The lambe put bak, the wolf the daunce doth lede. *(t-note)*
 335 Dyfference atwene these bestis tweyne
 Causyd Isopus thys tale for to feyne. *compose*
- Conclusio* *(t-note)*
- The wolfe is lykenyd to folkys ravenous,
 The sely lambe resembleth the porayle. *poor people*
 The wolfe is gredy, fell, cruell, dyspituous, *(t-note)*
 340 The lambe content with grasse for hys vytayle.
 Thei dey bothe: the wolfe may nat avayle *die; is useless; (see note)*
 Be hit for houndes caren most corumpable, *Except as rotten carrion for dogs; (t-note)*
 The lambe up servyd at the kyngis table.
- As men deserve, they receve theyr guerdon. *recompense*
 345 Onrepentaunte the tyraunt goth to hell.
 The pore man with small possession
 Vertuosly doth in the erthe dwell, *(t-note)*
 Content with lytell, doth trewly by and sell
 And of hoole hert can love God and drede.
 350 When he goth hens, hathe heven to hys mede. *hence, [he]*
- To encrese vertu and vyces to confounde
 Example here shewyd of gret diversyté.
 By Isopus was thys fable founde *(t-note)*
 Where ys rehersyd, toforne as ye may se, *above; (t-note)*
 355 The wolfis felnesse, the lambes properté, *evil nature; propriety*

The lambe comendyd for naturall mekenes,
The wolfe rebuked for ravenous felnes.

The Tale of the Frogge and the Mouse, foundyd by Isopus, the philosophor, groundyd agens deuceye.

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------------------------|
| | By a decree of Natures law, | <i>(t-note)</i> |
| | Pesyde egally the balance of reson, | <i>Weighed equally [against]</i> |
| 360 | Who that cast hym deceve hys felaw | <i>Whoever plots to; (see note)</i> |
| | Shall of deuceye receive the guerdon. | <i>recompense</i> |
| | Salary to feynynge ys simulacion. | <i>compensation; dissimulation</i> |
| | Who by dyssimelyng and fraude doth procede | <i>(t-note)</i> |
| | Lyke a defrauder receive shall hys mede. | <i>reward</i> |
| 365 | Som rejoyse theym in malyce and in fraude | <i>themselves</i> |
| | And covertly to hynder theyr neyghbors. | |
| | As men deserve, reporte geveth theym theyr lawde. | <i>public opinion; praise</i> |
| | Clothe falsly woven may kepe no fresshe colours. | <i>Cloth; (t-note)</i> |
| | The dorre on donghyll, the bee on holsom floures, | <i>hornet</i> |
| 370 | As they receive, they bryng home to theyr heve: | <i>hive</i> |
| | The oon dothe damage, the other doth releve. | |
| | Afyr theyr naturall disposicions | |
| | In man and beste ys shewyd experyence. | |
| | Some have to vertew theyr inclinacions, | |
| 375 | Oone to profyte, another to do offence; | <i>(t-note)</i> |
| | Som man pesyble, som man doth violence; | <i>peaceable</i> |
| | Som man delyteth in trouthe in hys entent, | <i>its</i> |
| | Another rejoyseth to be fraudulent. | |
| | Who that meneth treson or falsnes | <i>intends</i> |
| 380 | With a pretence outward of frendlyhede, | <i>(t-note)</i> |
| | Face counterfete of feynyd fals gladnes, | |
| | Of all enemyes suche oon ys most to drede, | |
| | And Isopus to purpos, as I rede, | |
| | Telleth how a ffrosshe felle and contraryouse, | <i>frog cruel; (t-note)</i> |
| 385 | Dowble of entent, decevyd hathe the mouse. | <i>Duplicitous</i> |
| | Of thys fable the processe for to tell, | <i>narrative</i> |
| | The frosshe of custom abode at a ryver. | <i>frog by</i> |
| | The mowse also sojornyed at a myll | |
| | That stood besyde from all dangere, | <i>separated; (t-note)</i> |
| 390 | And a morow, when Phebus shone ful clere, | <i>(see note)</i> |
| | So as the frosshe passyd therbesyde, | |
| | The mouse besought hym goodly to abyde, | |

- Lad hym up to the myll alofte, (t-note)
 Shewyd hym the hoper, the trowgh and the myll stone, *hopper (receptor for grain)*
 395 On a corne sak made hym syt softe,
 Seyde he shuld to dyner go anone, *soon; (t-note)*
 Leyde afore hym greynes many oone. (t-note)
 To shewe him of gentylnes gret favoure (t-note)
 The second course he brought in mele and floure.
- 400 “See,” quoth the mowse,”thys ys a mery lyfe.
 Here is my lordshyp and dominacion.
 I lyve here esyly out of noyse and stryfe.
 Thys cloos all hoole ys in my subjeccion. *enclosure entirely; (t-note)*
 Suffisaunce is my possessione.
- 405 As I have appetyte, I dyne late or sone,
 For Gyb, the catte, hathe here nothyng to done. *has nothing to do with this place*
- “As me semeth, I am here right well easyd.
 Better ys quyete, then troble with ryches.
 A poreman that ys with lytyll plesyd
 410 Laboreth truly, meneth no falsenes
 And is sequestryd fro worldly besynes.
 He may at nyght by many sondry preves *proofs; (t-note)*
 Meryly slepe for any fere of theves. *without*
- “Blessyd be poverté that causeth assurance,
 415 Namely when gladnes doth hys brydyll lede. *bridle lead*
 What God sendeth, hit ys to theyr plesaunce,
 Thanketh the lorde, grogeth for no nede. *complain*
 As he fyndeth, theron he doth hym fede. *Whatever*
 Thus am I content here in my householde
- 420 As well as Cresus was with all hys golde. (see note); (t-note)
- “Tresour of Mygdas medelyd was with drede, *Midas mixed; (see note)*
 Broke slepes, reft hym hys libertees.
 The pore man slepeth fearelese, taketh noon hede (see note)
 Who ryde or go; hys gatis open bee.
- 425 And I suppose, noman is more free
 Nor more assuryd, to myne opynyon,
 Then glad povert with small possession.
- “Salomon wryteth howe hit ys bet by halfe *better; (see note)*
 A lompe of brede with rejoysyng (t-note)
 430 Then at festis to have a rostyd calfe
 With hevy chere, frownyng or grogyng. (t-note)
 Nature ys content with full lytell thyng. *very*
 As men seyen and reporte, at the leste, (t-note)
 Nat many deyntees, but good chere maketh a feste. (see note)

- 435 "Where a tyraunt hath power noon or myght *none, no*
 Ys sewre abydyng unto the porayll. *safe continuance; poor people*
 Diogenes was with hys tonne as lyght *tun (barrel); cheerful; (see note); (t-note)*
 As Alysandre with all hys apparayll. *accoutrements*
 Thys lytyll mylle fynt me my vytayll; *furnishes; food*
- 440 I have therin as gret lust and joy *delight; (t-note)*
 As king Priamus had in hys towne of Troy. *(see note)*
- "The poreman mery in hys cotage
 As ys the merchaunt in hys stuffyd house;
 The plowman glad with bacon and potage *soup*
- 445 As in theyr paleyse byn prynces gloriouse. *(t-note)*
 And though that I be but a lyttell mouse,
 There ys no lorde, mo castelles hath to kepe *more*
 Then I have hernes and hooles in to crepe. *hiding places*
- "Abyde with me all nyght in thys mylle
 450 That we togedyr may have our dalyaunce. *conversation*
 Of greyn and mele thou shalt have thy fylle.
 When frendis mete ys joy and plesaunce.
 At eve at soper we shall have a petaunce, *small meal*
 And when Aurora tomorow doth apere, *(see note)*
- 455 Or we departe, we shall dyne in fere." *Ere (Before); together*
- The ffrosshe answeyrd and gan hys tale telle:
 "I have had here plente of vytayll; *(t-note)*
 Of fresshe lycour thys ys a baren mylle.
 I prayse no feeste where good drynke doth fayll,
- 460 And what is worth all the apparayll *(t-note)*
 Of diverse deyntees to a mannys lust *(t-note)*
 When aftyr mete men gon away a thrust? *thirsty; (t-note)*
- "Good drynke at festes maketh all the chere,
 Well sesenyd mete, of good drynke habundance. *(t-note)*
- 465 Here fast by ys a brode ryvere
 Whyche of fresshe watyr hath all suffisaunce. *(t-note)*
 Bacus, Thetis be causers of plesaunce *(see note)*
 And, to discure the sentence of my thought, *disclose; meaning; (t-note)*
 Where they two fayle, I sey, the fest ys nought."
- 470 They passyd forthe by a grene mede. *meadow*
 The sylver dew toward the mornyng
 Hathe of the mowse soylyd so the wede *clothes; (t-note)*
 That he hath lost hys power of rennyng. *running*
 Thus were these wormes contrary of lyvyng: *crawling creatures*
- 475 The frosshe delyteth to abyde in mory lakys, *moory (marshy)*
 The mowse to fede hym on chese and tendyr cakys. *himself*

- The mowse was wery with the frosshe to abyde,
 But the frosshe with a false feynyde chere
 Seyde to the mowse, "Yende on the other syde
 480 Ys myne abydyng uppon the water clere.
 Lat us go swymme over the ryvere,
 And lyke as I have unto thee tolde,
 Thou shalt abyde and see there my householde."
- The mowse answeyrd, quakyng in hys drede,
 485 "I have of swymyng noon experience."
 "No," quod the frosshe, "I shall tey a threde
 About thy nek by gret diligence.
 The other ende shall for thy defence
 At my leg sore be knyt behynde
 490 Over the broke passage for to fynde."
- Thus gan the ffrosshe covertly to feyne
 Of false fraude the lytell mowse to drowne.
 The frosshe by swymmyng dyd hys besy peyne
 To make the mowse lowe to plunge downe.
 495 Forthe goth the frosshe, the mowse for fere gan sowne,
 And in this whyle a kyte, or they toke hede
 Raught hem bothe up hangyng by the threde
- Fatte was the ffrosshe, the mowse sklender and lene;
 The frosshe devouryd because of hys fatnes.
 500 The threde tobrake, the mowse fell on the grene,
 Fro dethe escapyd. The frosshe for hys falsnes
 Gwerdon receveth of unkyndenes.
 For conclusion clerkis put in mynde
 Lawe and nature pleynyn on folke unkynde.
- Conclusio.*
- Of vyces all, shortly to conclude,
 505 Ther ys no vyce in comparyson
 To the vyce of ingratitude,
 For hit ys worse then pestylence or poyson,
 More to be drad, me semeth, of reson.
 510 Preservatyf made for pestylence,
 But agayn fraude may be no defence.
- In thys fable for an exemplary,
 For the party of pure innocence
 The mowse ys but sympyll, nat contrary,
 515 Where the frosshe by fraude and violence
 Under colour of frendly dylygence

*Yonder
abode*

*protection
tightly; knotted; (t-note)
brook (river)*

*made an intense effort
cry out
at that moment; kite (hawk); before
caught*

*[was] devoured
broke*

Recompense

find fault with

(t-note)

(t-note)

(t-note)

*dreaded, it seems to me
A preventive medicine [can be]*

as a model of conduct

- Was ever besy hys felow to encloy; *harm*
 The cause out sought hit dyd hymself dystroy.
- 520 To a deceyvour by ryght, as hyt is founde,
 Kynde requyreth in folkis fraudulent, *Nature*
 Where fraud is usyd, fraude mot rebounde, *must*
 Gwerdon for fraude most convenient, *Retribution; appropriate*
 For whyche Isopus in hys fynall entent
 Thys fable wrote full sothly in his wyt: *truthfully*
 525 Who useth fraude, with fraude shalbe quyt. *shall be paid back; (t-note)*
- Explicit.* *(t-note)*

The Tale of the Hownde and the Shepe groundyd agen perjuré and false wytnes founde by Isopus

- The world made diverse by froward folkis tweyne, *malevolent*
 By a false jorroure and a false wytnesse, *juror*
 Horryble monstres enbrasyd in a cheyne *bound*
 Trothe forto assayle and grevosly to oppresse,
 530 Whyche forto clypse the lyght of ryghtwysnesse *eclipse; righteousness*
 Be nat aferde with hande put forthe toforne *in front*
 Uppon a boke falsely to be forsworn. *(see note)*
- With cancryd lypes and with tung double *cankered*
 Twene ryght and wrong, forthe they woll procede *Between*
 535 Ryghtfull causes to traverse and trouble *(t-note)*
 To be forsworn on a boke for mede,
 Of conscience they take so lytell hede,
 Whyche thyng to preve by exsaamples full notable
 Of olde Isopus whylom wrote thys fable. *Long ago; once; (t-note)*
- 540 Havyng thys conceyte, set hit for a grounde,
 By maner lyknes rehersyng in sentence.
 He wrete ther was whylom a gret hounde
 Whyche toke a quarell of hatefull violence *(t-note)*
 Agayns a shepe, simple of innocence,
 545 Whyche stood alone voyde of all refuge *deprived*
 Constreynyd by force to apere afore a juge. *(t-note)*
- Agenst the sheepe, quakyng in his drede
 Withouten support of any proctour, *legal representative*
 This ravenous hound thus wrongely gan procede, *did*
 550 His tale aforsyng like a false jurroure *strengthening*
 How he had lent the sheepe, hys neyghbour,
 A large lofe his hunger to releve, *loaf [of bread]*
 As he was redy by lawe for to preve. *demonstrate*

- And his quarel more to fortelye,
 555 The sely shepe to bryng in distresse, *innocent*
 He affermed it and falsly did lye,
 Towchyng his loff, that he of kyndenesse *Pertaining to*
 Toke it the sheepe, whan he stooode in distresse *[to] the sheep*
 Of mortal hunger, whan plenté dide faile,
 560 Likly to dye for lak of vitaile, *food (victals)*
- Straitly requyrenge the juge in this matiere *Strictly*
 To geve hym audience and to do hym right *To let him be heard*
 By apparence shewyng ful sad chiere *very serious demeanor*
 As though he ment no falsnesse to no wyght. *person*
 565 The sely sheepe, astonyed in his sight, *appearance*
 Stooode abasshed ful like an innocence;
 To help hym-self cowde fynde no diffence. *[he] could*
- Towchyng the loff requyred by the hound,
 With humble chiere the sheepe did it deny,
 570 Sothly affermyng, levyng on this ground, *Truly; [as surely as he was] living; earth*
 Unto this day he never on no party
 No loff receyved, and loth he was to ly,
 Prayeng the juge that he myght frely gon,
 For other aunswey plainly cowde he none. *he could not [give]*
- 575 Quod the juge, "The lawe thow must abide
 Til there be goven sentence of jugement. *given*
 I may no favour do to nowther side *neither*
 But atwene both stande indifferent,
 As rightful juge of hert and hole intent,
 580 Til I may se by lawe to make me strong *assured*
 Whiche of the partyes have right or wrong.
- "The lawe, first founde on a triew grounde, *(see note)*
 May nat declyne from his stabilnesse." *its*
 The juge, abraidyng, axed of the hound, *speaking, asked*
 585 "Hastow," quod he, "record or witnesse *Have you*
 This douteful cause to set in sikernessee *certainty*
 For to stynt al contraversy *stop*
 Be triewe report of suche as wil nat ly?" *By; such [a witness]*
- The hound answerd, "My cause is just and triewe,
 590 And myself in law here for to aquyte,
 I have brought two that the covenant knewe,
 The faithful wolf, in trowth that doth delite,
 And with hym comyth the gentil foule, the kyte,
 Chose for the nones by report of theyr names, *for the occasion*
 595 As folke wele knowe that dredith sclaudre and shames.

- “To offende trewth the wolf doth gretly drede,
 He is so stidefast and triew of his nature.
 The gentil kyte hath refused al falshede;
 He had lever grete hunger to endure,
 600 Lovyng no raveyn unto his pasture,
 Thanne take a chykken, by record of writyng,
 To his repast, or any goselyng.”
- The hound, to accomplish thend of his entent
 Agayn the shepe to susteyne his partye,
 605 Witnesse tweyne brought in jugement:
 The wolf, the puttock (that were ful loth to ly!),
 And for to stynte the contraversy
 Of this matier, they upon hem toke
 To lay theyr hondis boldly upon a booke.
- 610 Mote they be hanged on high by the halse
 Becawse they swore wetyngly untriwe.
 The hound wele wiste his complaynt was false
 The sheepe condempned, tristy and pale of hewe.
 The twey witnesse, albe it they ne knewe
 615 The matier false, rehersed here to-forn,
 Yit drad they nat falsely to be forsworn.
- Thus al thre were false by oon assent:
 The hound, the wolf, and the cursid kyte.
 The sheepe, alas, though he were innocent,
 620 By doome compelled, as Isopos doth write.
 To pay the loff, his dettis to acyute;
 Thus constrayned, the lawe dide hym compelle
 At grete mischief his wynter flees to sell.
- The ram of Colchos bare a flees of gold
 625 Which was conquered manly by Jason,
 But this sheepe, whan he his flees hath sold,
 With cold constrayned, wynter cam upon,
 Deyd at mischief; socour had he none.
 Betwene the wolf and the puttock that nought were lost in veyne —
 630 As myn auctour sayth, parted was the kareyne.
- The sheepe thus deyde, his body al to-rent;
 The ravenous wolf the kareyne did assaile,
 The hound recovered his part by jugement,
 The false kyte cast hym nat to faile
 635 To have a repast upon his adventaile.
 Thus in this world by extorcion veriliche
 Poore folk be devoured alwey by the riche.

falsehood
would rather
stolen goods as his food

the end

kite
stop

May; neck
knowingly
knew
[was] condemned, sad

earlier
dreaded

one

judgment [was]
pay back
suffering; fleece

(see note)
manfully

carriion (the sheep's carcass)

torn apart

determined himself

- By examples, in stwes long and large *fish ponds*
 Of gret fish devoured bien the smale. *are*
- 640 Hardy is the bote that stryvith agenst the barge.
 To overpresse a pore man the riche set no tale. *oppress; have no concern about*
 A cloth sakke stuffid, shame it is to pike a male. *[Once]A; [is] stuffed; steal from; wal*
 What nedith the see to borwe of smale rivers,
 Or a grete barne to borow of strait garners? *small granaries*
- 645 Al such outrages and inconveniences
 Takith origynal of pillage and ravyne. *[their]origin*
 An extorcioner, to amende his expences,
 Can make the poore to bowe and declyne. *decrease in prosperity*
 Lierne this proverbe, found of old doctryne: *teaching*
- 650 “Suche as have no conscience of no maner wronges
 Of other mennys ledir can kut ful large thonges.” *men’s leather; strips*
- The shepe is ded, the puttock hath his part,
 Joynt from joynt the wolf hath rent asunder,
 The hounde by dome recovered hath his part. *judgment*
- 655 Such false practik is used here and yonder:
 The fiebler playneth, and that is litel wonder.
 Al suche raveyne on poraile to theyr distresse *poor people*
 Beganne at false jurroures and at false wisesse.
- To a false wisesse, record in Salamon, *recorded; Solomon; (see note)*
 660 Proverbiorum, three thynges bein compared: *[Book] of Proverbs*
 A shrewd dart, an hoked arrow is oon,
 All for the werre as it is declarid, *war*
 Yit under trefy somtyme they be spared.
 But a false wisesse hath this avantage:
- 665 With mowth infect alwey to do damage. *corrupted*
- Agayne sharpe quarrels helpith a pavice; *pavis (long body-covering shield)*
 Agayne arowes may be made defence.
 And though a swerd be riche and of grete price,
 Somtyme he sparith for to do offence.
- 670 But a false jurroure, by mortal violence,
 Nat only causith men her bloode to shede,
 But makith hem lese theyr life and goode for meede. *lose; reward*
- Ageyne verray poyson ordeyned is triacle, *true; antidote*
 As auctours sayne, by craft of medicyne,
 675 But ageyn a jurroure there were no better obstacle *defense*
 Than to geld hym yong, hys venym to declyne *castrate*
 That no false braunche myght spryng of his lyne,
 For the nombre suffisith only of two or three
 To enfecte a shyre or a grete contré.

680 It is remembred by record of auctours, *(see note)*
 As writeth Holcot upon sapience,
 How ther folwith three incomoditees
 Of false forsweryng ageyn conscience:
 First, rehersith this auctour in sentence,
 685 Upon a booke whan a false jurroure
 Forswerith hymself, he is to God a traytour.

Thereupon, this matier to conclude,
 That false forsweryng is to God treason,
 First he makith this simylytude: *analogy*
 690 That if a man withyn a regioun
 Wold contrefete, by false collusioun,
 The kynges seale, the people to begile,
 What were he worthy to deye by civile? *civil [law]*

And semblably, who can considre wele,
 695 The name of God, ordeyned to impresse,
 Is the signacle of the celestial seale.
 Goven to al Cristen of trowth to bere witesse,
 And who that ever mysusith it in falsenesse,
 Holcot affermyth it, for short conclusioun,
 700 That he to God doth opynly treason.
 Who with his hand the Holy Book doth towche
 And to record takith Cristes name,
 On holy writ, I dare me wele avowche,
 If he swere falsely, gretely is to blame,
 705 Hande of perjurye to his eternal shame.
 God and His werkis he doth utterly forsake,
 And to the fiend for ever he doth hym take. *commit himself*

In his preceptis, whiche that be devyne,
 God bad man bere no false witesse, *bade*
 710 And of oure faith to folwe the doctryne.
 Perjury is enemy to al rightwisnesse.
 What man for lucre or for richesse
 Wilbe forsworn, by sentence of clerkis,
 Falsly forsakith God and al His werkis.

715 Who swerith by God, his hand leyd on a booke,
 He causith God, auctours doth expresse,
 Unto the record of the charge he toke,
 In right or wronge, in trowth or in falsenesse,
 To preve his oth Hym takith to witesse.
 720 If his causyng to make his party strong
 Falsly concludith, he doth to God grete wrong. *purpose*

Of perjurye the trespass is ful huge,
 Wonder perilous in our Lordis sight. *Incredibly*
 For the jurroures first disseyvith the juge,
 725 Causith his neyghburgh for to lese his right,
 His conscience hurt, of grace blent the light, *extinguished*
 As a renegat that hath the Lord forsake,
 Lyke to be dampned, but he amendis make. *unless*

Isopos jurroures doth discryve,
 730 Callith theym Arpies, houndes infernal, *Harpies (see note)*
 With ravenous feete wynged to flee blyve,
 Like to Carberos that receyvith al, *(see note)*
 Gredy Tantalus whos hunger is nat smal, *(see note)*
 And be suche people, who that takith kepe, *by; pays attention*
 735 As sayth my auctour, devoured was the shepe.

Thus false forsweryng, frawde, and extorcioun
 With false witnesse afore God be dampnable,
 But if they make diew satisfaccioun *Unless*
 Thynges to restore, wherof they bien culpable.
 740 And for such folkes Isopos wrote this fable,
 To this intent that I have told aforne,
 What peril it is falsly to be forsworn.

Late al false jurroures have this in mynde:
 Remembre at shyres and at cessions,
 745 Who is forsworn settith God behynde
 And settith the fiend in ful possessioun
 Of soule and body, under his dampnacioun, *(t-note)*
 To forne his deth, but if he have repentaunce
 Or make restitucioun or do som penaunce.

How the wollffe disevyd the crane; Isopus, translatyd by John Lydgate *(t-note)*

750 In Isopos forther to proced,
 Towchyng the vyce of unkyndnesse,
 In this tretis a litel fabill I rede *literary work*
 Of engratytude, joynyd to falsenesse,
 How that a wolff, of cursyd frowardnesse *aggression*
 755 Was to the crane, of malyce, as I fynde,
 For a good torne falce founden and unkynd.

The fable is this: when bestes everychone
 Held a feste and a solempnyté,
 Ther was a wolffe strangled with a bone *celebration; (t-note)*
 760 And constrayned by grete adversyté,
 Despeyred relyvyd for to be, *(t-note)*

- For remede playnly knew he none, (t-note)
 So depe downe enteryd was the bone. (t-note)
- 765 Thorow all the cort surgons were sought *surgeons*
 Yf eny were abydynghe them amonge.
 At the last the crane was forthe brought,
 Bycaws his neke was slender, sharp, and longe,
 To serche his throt where the bone stode wronge,
 For which perlow's occupation (t-note)
- 770 The wolff behyte hym a full grete guerdon. *promised; reward*
- The bone out browght by subtile delygence (t-note)
 Of the crane by crafft of surgery,
 The court all hole being in presence, (t-note)
 Axid his rewarde and his solary. *[The crane] Asked; payment; (t-note)*
- 775 The wolffe frowardly his promys gan deny, *boldly; denied; (t-note)*
 Sayd it suffisith (and gan to make stryffe)
 Out of his mouthe that he scapid with his lyffe. *escaped*
- The wolffe denyed that he had behyte *that [which]*
 Sowght agayne hym froward occacion,
 780 Seyd he had don hym grete unryght
 And hym deseuyd by fals colusion
 Whan he his byll putte so low adowne
 In his throt to pyke away the bone.
 Other reward of hym gett he none!
- 785 Caste on the crane a full cruell loke, *[The wolf] Cast*
 Withe opyn mouthe gan to approche nere.
 "When thou," quod he, "the sayd bone toke
 Out of my throte, thou were in my daunger,
 Thy sharpe beke, neke, eyen, and chere *eyes; face; (t-note)*
- 790 Atwene my tethe, sharp, whet, and kene — *white*
 Thy lyffe in jubardy, the truthe was welle sene. *jeopardy; (t-note)*
- "At that tyme thy power was but small
 Ageyne me to holde were or stryff, *war*
 For whiche thou art boundyn in speciall
- 795 To thanke me thou scapidest withe thy lyff
 Owt of my jawes, sharper than file or knyff,
 Stode desolate in many manar wyse, *kinds of ways*
 Streyned in the bondes full narow of my fraunchyse." *Constrained; generosity; (see note)*
- 800 And semblably, makynge a false excuse *similarly*
 To pay theyr dewté unto the poraile, *poor people*
 Takyng ther service and labour to ther use,
 Ever doutles to make them to travayle,

- Yf they aught ax, tyrauntes them assayle *ask*
 And of malys constreyne them so for drede,
 805 They not so hardy of them to ax ther mede. *[The poor are] not worthy; recompense*
- The tyraunt hathe possescions and riches;
 The poure travelythe for meate, drynke, and fode.
 The ryche dothe the laborar oppresse, *(t-note)*
 For hys labour denyethe hym his lyflode.
 810 The lambe must suffre, the wolffes bene so wode. *mad*
 A playne ensample declaryd how men done,
 Shewde in the crane that plukkyd away the bone.
- Prayer of princes is a commaundement
 The poure obeyethe — they dare none other do.
 815 Presept of tyrantes is so vyolent,
 Whoever say nay, nede it muste be so,
 Hove they ther lust, they care for no mo. *Have; desires; more*
 The wolffe made holle, of very froward prede, *made whole (cured); (t-note)*
 Sufferyd the crane rewardles to abyde.
- 820 The crane was chese to be a surgon *chosen; (t-note)*
 To save the wolffe, as ye have hard beforne,
 Toke out the bone, whiche no man mighte sene, *(t-note)*
 Whiche thyng accomplyshyd, his labour he had lorne. *lost*
 The wolffe made hym blow the bokks horne. *(see note)*
 825 As it fallythe at preeffe, offt sithe *befalls in evidence, many times*
 Fayr behestes makythe foles oftetyne blythe. *promises; fools; happy; (t-note)*
- Isophus, the famous olde poyete,
 This fable wrote for a memoryalle,
 The accorde wherof unlykely and unmete *reconciliation; unmatched*
 830 Atwene tyrauntes and folke that bene rurall.
 The poure hath lytell, the extorssionar hathe all:
 His body, hys lyffe, the laborar enpartythe; *shares*
 The riche hathe all, and no thyng he departythe. *portions out*
- The moralltyé of this tale out sowght,
 835 The crane is lyke the folke that for drede
 Travayll for tyrauntes and reseve nought
 But fowll rebukes for fynall mede, *(t-note)*
 Thus connsellynge yow that this talle dothe rede, *(t-note)*
 Whill that yowr hond is in the wolffes mowthe,
 840 Remembre that with tyrauntes merci is uncothe. *unknown; (t-note)*
- To pley withe tyraunts I holde it is no jape;
 To oppres the poure they have no concience.
 Fly frome daunger, yf ye may askape!

- Thynke on the crane that dyd his delygence
 845 To helpe the wolfe. But he do recompence
 His kyndenes maneshed hym, as I fynde,
 This tall applyinge agayn folke that be unkynde.¹
- Unless [the wolf] does
 [The crane's]; menaced; (t-note)
 (see note); (t-note)*

Finis. John Lydgat, wryten by John Stow

[The Marriage of the Sun]

(t-note)

- Agayne the vice also of tyranny
 In oo contray or in on region
 850 Oon is to mekil, poetis specifiye,
 To wast and spoyle bi false extorcioun,
 For whiche Isopos makith mencynoun,
 Unto purpos bryngith in a fabil
 To be rehersed, moral and notabil.
- (see note); (t-note)
 one
 One is too many*
- 855 The tale is this, convynable and mete,
 The moralité remembrid in sentence:
 First in Cancro, whan Phebus takith his hete,
 Inportable ful ofte is his fervence
 That som while the persynge violence
 860 Of his beames, oft or men take heede,
 The soyle consumyth of herbe, grayne, and seede.
- appropriate; agreeable
 Cancer; (see note)
 Insupportable
 So that at some times; piercing
 before*
- In somer season whan Phebus shadde his streames
 The orasont clierly to enlumyne,
 It so byfelle that with his fervent beames
 865 On Tellus lordship brent up braunche and vyne,
 Til a false lust his corage dide inclyne,
 Causyng hym to fal in dotage
 To wedde a wif, born of hie parage.
- horizon
 (see note)
 desire; spirit; influence
 folly
 lineage*
- 870 But for to procede for the comowne availe,
 He hath his lettres and briefs sent
 To goddis, goddessis, beyng of his counsaile,
 Of erthe, of see, and of the firmament,
 And Saturne ther to be present,
 With Parchas sustren, that in the nombre thre
 875 Ben callid of poetis spynners of destyné.
- profit
 documents
 council (group of advisers)
 (see note)
 sisters; (see note)*
- In this matier was grete contraversye
 Atwene the goddes and goddesses of grete prise,
 Towchyng this mariage and this straunge ally,
- honor
 alliance*

¹ This tall tale against folk who are unkind (i.e., lacking in natural affection or proper thankfulness)

- 880 Whether they shal holde to shewe theyr devise, *withold; judgment*
 Til it fel that a philosophre wise *befell*
 Called Theofrast, a man ronne ferre in age, *advanced far; (see note)*
 Gaf sentence as towchyng this mariage.
- 885 Joyned with hym to gyve jugement
 Of this alliaunce in especial
 Were assigned by al the hole perlement
 The Romain poete Cocus Marcial, *(see note)*
 Cloto, Lachesis, that spynne the threde smal,
 And Antropos, withouten difference,
 To gyve hereon a diffinytif sentence.
- 890 Among these owmperis was werre none ne stryf *arbitrators; war*
 But concludyd to accord, al beyng of assent,
 That if so be that Phebus take a wyf
 And procreacioun be unto hym sent,
 By hys lynage therth shuld be brent. *the earth; burned*
- 895 This is to sayne that no erthely creature
 Hete of two sunnes may nowhile endure. *very long*
- Thus concludyng, it doth inow suffice *enough*
 Unto heven oo sunne to shyne bright. *one*
 Twey sunnes were like in many wise *likely; ways*
- 900 To brenne al the erth, by fervence of theyr myght,
 And semblaly, whoso looke aright, *similarly*
 O myghti tiraunt suffisith in a shyre *One; shire*
 Al the contrey for to sette afuyre.
- 905 If he have eyres for to succede, *heirs*
 Folowe theyr fader in successioun, *father*
 By tiraunty than are they more to drede
 In theyr ravyne and extorcoun *robbery*
 By theyr counseil and false convencioun, *agreements*
 For multitude of robbers, where they gon,
- 910 Doth more damage, sothly, than doth oon. *truly*
- Men may at the ie se a pref *eye; proof*
 Of this matere, old and yong of age:
 Lasse is to drede the malice of oo thief *Less*
 (So sayne merchauntis, ridyng in the viage). *journey*
- 915 But wher many on awaytith on the passage,
 Ther standith the parell, as it is often sene, *many a one*
 By whiche example ye wote what I mene. *know*
- Oon ageyn oon may make resistance;
 Oon ageyn many, the conquest is unkowth. *uncivilized*

- 920 Nombre of tirauntis thurgh theyr violence
 Pursweth the pore, both est and south.
 Gredy wolfis that comyn with open mowth
 Upon a folde, theyr nature can declare, *[sheep] fold*
 By experience, whether they wil hurt or spare.
- 925 By example of Phebus, as tofore is previd *above is proven*
 By an unknowth moral for liknes, *analogy, exemplum*
 Whereupon this fable was contrived
 By Isopos, of grete advisenenesse, *prudence*
 Plainly to shewe and opiny to expresse,
- 930 If oo tiraunt the people may constrayne,
 Than the malice is worse and damagith more of twayne. *Then the malice . . . of two*

Here endith the sixth fable of Isopos, discolsyng what hurt or hyndryng tirauntis done where they may have power.

Thys ffable is of the hound that bare the chese, gronddyd on Isopus agaynst covetousness, translatyd by John Lydgat, made in Oxforde *(see note)*

- An olde proverbe hathe bene sayd, and shall,
 Towchyng the vyce of grete covetyce: *(t-note)*
 Who all covetythe, oft he losythe all,
- 935 Whereuppon Isophus dothe devyce
 A morall fable, rehearsyng in this wyse,
 How a grete hownd over a bryge sware
 A large chese in his mouthe he bare. *squared bridge; (t-note)*
bore
- Castynge his loke downe to the ryver
 940 By apparence and fals yllusion,
 As hym thought, a chese ther did apere *(t-note)*
 And was nought els but a reflexion
 Of the chese in his posession, *(t-note)*
 Wiche to cache, whan he dyd his payne, *catch; utmost; (t-note)*
- 945 Opynyng his mouthe, he lost bothe twayne.
- By whiche exsample men may conceyve and lere *(t-note)*
 By experience prevyd in many place, *proven; (t-note)*
 Who all covetythe faylyth oft in fere. *at the same time; (t-note)*
 One man allone may not all purchase
- 950 Nor in armys all the worlde embrace; *[his] arms*
 A meane is best withe good governaunce
 To them that be content withe suffisaunce. *(t-note)*
- Ther is no man that lyvythe more at ease
 Than he that can withe lytill be content.
- 955 Even contrary, he standithe ever in disseasse

That in his hert with covetyce is blent.
Withe suche fals etykes many a man is shent,
Lyke as the hownd, not content withe one chese,
Desyryd tweyne, bothe he dyd lese.

blended
consuming passions; ruined
(t-note)
lose; (t-note)

Finis.

(t-note)



EXPLANATORY NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS: *CT*: Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*; *CA*: Gower, *Confessio Amantis*; *MED*: *Middle English Dictionary*; *OED*: *Oxford English Dictionary*; *Whiting*: *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases*.

THE TALE OF THE COCK

- 2 *To hem that have savour in lettrure*. This line is a close translation of the first line of the Prologue of Marie de France's *Fables*: "Cil ki seivent de lettruüre . . ." ("Those who know about learning . . .," my translation); however, the comparison of wisdom to gold is Lydgate's own.
- 3 *prudent philosophers*. Marie de France also connects philosophy and morality in her prologue (*Fables*, lines 1–10).
- 8–11 Before Lydgate there is no precedent in extant fable literature or other Aesopic texts for identifying Aesop as poet laureate, a Roman, or a writer associated with the Senate. Both the elegiac Romulus fables and Marie de France mention Romulus as the Latin adapter or translator of the fables, and Marie is apparently familiar with the legendary biography of Aesop in which he begins his life as a slave; she states that he wrote for his "mestre" ("master"; 17, 40). Robert Henryson's *Morall Fabillis*, written in the twenty-five years following Lydgate's death, includes an appearance by Aesop to the narrator in a dream vision; the fabulist says he was born in Rome and worked there as a civil lawyer (lines 1370–74).
- 31–35 Compare the Franklin's modesty in Chaucer's *CT*, V(F) 719–26.
- 32 *I was born in Lydgate*. Lydgate may have been following the example of Marie de France in choosing to identify his birthplace and thereby himself, although Marie's self-identification appears not in the prologue to her fable collection but the epilogue: "Marie ai num, si sui de France." ("Marie is my name, I am from France," *Fables*, line 4, my translation).
- 33 *Tullius*. Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BCE–43 BCE), a Roman orator and statesman, was widely admired and studied in the Middle Ages for his superlative Latin rhetorical style, which Lydgate's persona, in a conventional modesty topos, claims to be unable to imitate.
- 46–47 *submit to theyr correccion*. Lydgate's modesty trope probably has its origins in Chaucer: compare *CT*, X(I) 56–60 and *Troilus and Criseyde*, 3.1332.

- 73 *Lucyfer*. In this context Lucifer, derived from the Latin “*lucem ferens*” (“light-bearing”), is the morning star.
- 76 *Aurora*. The Roman goddess of the dawn.
- 86 *Phebus*. Phoebus Apollo, the Roman god of the sun.
- 93 *lyon*. In The Nun’s Priest’s Tale, Chaucer also compares the heroic rooster Chauntecleer to a “grym lyon” (CT, VII.3179).
- 100 *on hys tipto*. Compare CT, VII.331, where Chaunticler “stood hye upon his toos.”
- 101 *poettis callyd Chauncecleer*. Although Lydgate probably borrowed the name Chauncecleer (literally “sing clear”) from Chaucer, it had been used earlier in such beast literature as the twelfth-century *Le Roman de Renart* and *Renart le Contrefait*.
- 110 *jacynct*. Jacinth, a semiprecious gem; according to the *Peterborough Lapidary*, it is noted for its clarity and good for medicinal purposes (p. 95) and can withstand venoms and poisons (p. 96). But Lydgate’s cock is more interested in food than wealth or health. See lines 141–203.
- 126 *Tyburn*. The place of public execution for Middlesex until 1783, situated at present day London’s Oxford Street and Bayswater Road and Edgeware Road (OED).
- 135 *Vycs all procede of idelnesse*. Proverbial. See Whiting I16 and Gower, CA 4.1083 ff.
- 136 *theves, foundres, and patroun*. See MED, foundour, n3a, which cites Lydgate, *Order of Fools*: Markoff is said to be “foundour, patroun, and precident.”
- 152 *Evax*. This legendary king of Arabia is credited with having written *De Gemmis* (“Of Gems”), a verse lapidary that describes various gems and their qualities. He describes the jacinth as follows:

There are ten species of jacinth recorded, and seven are recorded here, and it is known to be of many colors, and it is said to be native to parts of much of the world. The best is of green and translucent color, and it is the one that proves to have most strength. When chastely carried, it drives out both fevers and dropsy, and it helps a woman giving birth. And it is believed to be a protection to the one who carries it. . . . And as people say, [the jacinth], whose power is thought to be stronger mounted in silver, drives away noxious visions. (*De Gemmis Scriptum Evaxis Regis Arabum* [Lubeck: H Rantzovii, 1489], my translation)

Lydgate may have seen Evax used in scholastic fable commentaries: British Library MS Add.11897, a German manuscript from the first half of the fifteenth century, uses three lines of Evax’s poem in the marginalia alongside this fable.

- After 203 *L’envoy*. A coda for verses attached to a French balade that send it on its way.
- 211–17 Lydgate inverts the conventional moral of this fable, in which the cock is said to be foolish for rejecting the gem; it appears in both Marie’s and the elegiac Romulus’s fable. Henryson spends considerable time on the lesson in his version (*The Cock and the Jasp*, in *The Complete Works*, lines 120–61).

- 221 *suffisaunce*. Lydgate's moral praising the cock allows him to highlight the virtue of "suffisaunce," which is an important theme of his fables. The philosophy that sufficiency (Lat. *sufficientia*) rather than excessive wealth brings happiness is espoused in one of the most widely read philosophical treatises during the Middle Ages, *The Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius (Book 3, Prose 9; pp. 256–57).

TALE OF THE WOLF AND THE LAMB

- 298 *Naboth*. This Old Testament figure was the owner of a vineyard inherited from his father. The king, Ahab, attempted to buy it from him, but Naboth refused to part with his inheritance. Ahab's wife Jezebel then persuaded false witnesses to swear that Naboth blasphemed against God and the king, and when they had done so, Naboth was stoned to death for a crime he did not commit. Ahab then took possession of the vineyard.

The story of Naboth appears in 3 Kings 21. Marginalia in Trinity College Cambridge MS R.3.19 next to the stanza that mentions Naboth directs the reader to 3 Kings, but to chapter 8 rather than 21.

- 306–08 Lydgate here alludes to John 10, in which Jesus compares himself to the door of sheepfold whereby the true shepherds may enter, but those who enter another way (*ascendit aliunde*) are thieves and robbers. Jesus also distinguishes between these thieves and hired shepherds for whom the profession is not their true calling, clearly representing priests whose primary concern is money. Jesus calls this kind of false shepherd a "mercenarius" (John 10:12, 13), a term echoed in Lydgate's verse. (In the General Prologue to *CT*, Chaucer's narrator defends the pious Parson who is on the pilgrimage by stating, "He was a shepherde and nought a mercenarie"[I.514]).

John 10 is also appropriate to this fable because Jesus says that the mercenaries leave the sheep to the wolf, who catches them.

- 316–18 *The ram . . . hit ys tolde*. Here Lydgate revises the story of Jason and the Golden Fleece by suggesting that Jason flayed the ram in order to get it, but in the story as it is told elsewhere in the Middle Ages, it is inanimate and detached from the animal; see, for example, "The Tale of Jason and Medea" in *CA*, 5.3247–4242, especially lines 3731–34.

- 325 In this stanza and the next Lydgate seems to anticipate, somewhat inappropriately, the false witnesses that are integral to the plot of the fable of the Sheep and the Dog.

- 327 "*Si dedero*" ("If I will give"). This phrase is conventionally associated with corrupt officials who bribe others to lie on their behalf. See *The Simonie*, written during the reign of Edward II, which states that the voice of a penniless clerk cannot be heard in Rome; "Or (*Either*) he shall singe '*si dedero*,' or al geineth him noht" (Dean, *Medieval English Political Writings, The Simonie*, line 24) and *Knighten's Chronicle*, where "Jack Trewman" would have you know that "No man may come trewthe to, bot he syng *si dedero*. Speke, spend, spende and spede, quoth Jon of

- Banthon" (Dean, *Jakke*, lines 21–24). See also *Mankind*, line 456, where Mischief, hearing the approach of Titivillus, says to Nought and New Gyse, "When owr hedys wer together I speke of *si dedero*," where upon they address the audience and take up a collection!
- 341–43 Though both die, the wolf's carcass is despicable, while the lamb is a feast for a king or a kind of consolation, perhaps, at least within a Christian context, where virtue is valued, along with a wholehearted love of God (line 349).

TALE OF THE FROG AND THE MOUSE

- 360 *cast hym*. Literally "sets himself," that is, "plots."
- 390 *Phebus*. The sun. See note line 86.
- 420 *Cresus*. Croesus, a king of Lydia in the sixth century BCE, was said to have been very wealthy by such historians as Herodotus; by the Middle Ages his name was conventionally associated with wealth. See *CA*, 5.4730 ff., and Chaucer, *The Monk's Tale*, *CT* VIII.2727–66.
- 421 *Mygdas*. Midas, a king in Greek mythology, turned everything he touched into gold. This ability was "medyld with drede" because living things that he touched changed to inanimate gold, as ultimately happened to his beloved daughter.
- 423 *The pore man slepeth fearelese, taketh noon hede*. Proverbial but not cited by Whiting or Tilley. Lydgate is a master of shaping proverbs with variations, shaping sententious thought.
- 428 *Salomon*. No verse from the books of the Bible attributed to Solomon is an exact source for this translation. The verse that resembles it most closely is Proverbs 15:17: "It is better to be invited to herbs with love than to a fattened calf with hatred."
- 434 *good chere maketh a feste*. Proverbial. Compare line 463. See Tilley, *Dictionary of the Proverbs in England*, G338.
- 437 *Diogenes*. The philosopher Diogenes of Sinope is perhaps best known for carrying a lamp in the daytime, saying he was looking for an honest man. He scorned wealth and power, showing his distaste for worldliness by sleeping in a large barrel. Alexander the Great, who in some versions seeks him out and in others merely happens upon him, is so impressed by his wisdom that he offers the philosopher anything he likes, to which Diogenes responds that the emperor should stop blocking his sunlight.

The story of Diogenes and Alexander, versions of which were written by such classical Latin writers as Cicero and Valerius Maximus, appeared in a number of medieval texts, including Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum Historiale* (3.68 ff.), the Latin *Gesta Romanorum* (chapter 183), and Walter Burley's *De Vita Philosophorum* (chapter 1). Gower writes a version of the story in *CA*, 3.1201–1330.

- 441 *Priamus*. The king of Troy during the Trojan War.
 454 *Aurora*. The Roman goddess of the dawn.
 467 *Bacus*. Bacchus, the god of wine.
Thetis. The goddess of water.

TALE OF THE HOUND AND THE SHEEP

- 532 *boke*. In line 701 Lydgate makes it clear that this book is the “Holy Book,” the Bible.
 582–83 In his edition of *Isopes Fabules* MacCracken places the quotation marks closing the judge’s speech at the end of line 581. However, it seems likely that Lydgate meant for lines 582–83 to be a continuation of that speech, because they are more consistent with the judge’s defense of the impartiality of the law than with the narrator’s concerns about how false witnesses undermine justice. Furthermore, Lydgate undermines the judge’s observations about truth by having the lying dog respond using the words “true” and “truth” four times in only nine lines.
 624 *ram of Colchos*. See note for lines 316–18.
 659 *To a false witnesse*. Lydgate quotes Proverbs 25:18. A man that beareth false witness against his neighbor is like a dart and a sword and a sharp arrow.
 680 *It is remembred by record of auctours*. In *Über Lydgate’s Aesopübersetzung* Paul Sauerstein (p. 33) identified the source of this passage as Lectio 167 B of Robert Holkot’s *Super Libros Sapientiae*:

A perjurer ought to be despised for numerous reasons, but especially because of three. Truly the perjuring person is unnatural for infidelity toward God. [He is] unjust through falsity toward his neighbor and pernicious through his iniquity toward himself. It is a great betrayal if he who has custody of the seal of the king seals a letter of agreement that the king has greatly detested, and if he did this with the seal of the pope, he would be excommunicated for having done it, to be turned over to the secular arm. The name of God is a name committed to us like a certain seal for attesting to and confirming the truth (my translation).

- 730 *Arpies*. Harpies, mythological creatures generally represented as half-woman and half-bird, were often agents of vengeance who inflicted violent punishment upon their victims. Lydgate’s description of them as hounds is evidently metaphorical, because in line 731 he indicates their birdlike characteristics.
 732 *Carberos*. Cerberus is the mythological three-headed dog who guards the gates of Hades.
 733 *Tantalus*. The mythological Tantalus, who killed his son and fed his flesh to others, was punished in Hades by having to stand in a pool of water beneath a fruit tree. Whenever he reached for the fruit or tried to drink the water, they would recede

from his reach. Lydgate's use of Tantalus as a figure for false witnesses is curious because the mythological character is associated with frustrated futility, whereas in the poet's view false witnesses are all too successful in perverting justice to their own ends.

- 798 *my fraunchyse*. Fraunchyse, as the wolf uses the term, defines his "noble privilege"; the crane, by his terms, should thank him for his "genoristry" in permitting the crane to live.

HOW THE WOLF DECEIVED THE CRANE

- 824 *blow the bokks horne*. "To blow the buck's horn" is a conventional metaphorical phrase meaning "to engage in a futile activity." Chaucer uses the phrase in *The Miller's Tale* in relation to Absolon, whose amorous pursuit of Alison is futile because of her love for the clerk Nicholas (I.3387).
- 847 *This tall applyinge agayn folke*. As in several of Lydgate's fables, the moral lies in what does not happen with the tale. Mercy and proper payment of recompense for honest labor are virtues that tyrants (the privileged who imagine that their power gives them franchise to ignore virtue) seem by "nature" (birth privilege) unable to heed.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE SUN

- 848 Lydgate's version of this fable is a departure from both the Latin original and Marie's. In the Latin text of the story of the sun's desire to marry, the fable is framed by the marriage of a woman to a thief, an event that causes a wise man to tell this fable as an exemplum warning against the results of the likely procreation of the couple, i.e., more thieves. A mere eight lines long, the fable mentions Jove in passing but contains no other classicizing elements. Marie abandons both the framing narrative and the classical reference, giving the allegorized figure of Destiny (*Destinee*) the role of judge who hears the complaints of animals who are fearful of the results of the marriage.
- 849 In the later Middle Ages biographies of Aesop began to circulate, some of which stated that he was from Ethiopia. For a discussion of these and their later influence, see Patterson, *Fables of Power*, pp. 11, 21–31.
- 857 *Cancro*. The astrological sign of Cancer, the crab.
Phebus. God of the sun.
- 865 *Tellus*. The Roman goddess of the earth. "Tellus[']s lordship" is the earth itself.
- 873 *Saturne*. Before Jupiter (also known as Jove) became the king of the pagan gods, Saturn was their leader. Lydgate may have chosen him to oversee the case because of his conventional association with the chaos which would ensue if the sun reproduced.

- 874 *Parchas sustren*. The Parcae, three sisters who are named in lines 887–88, are the Fates, classical figures who are roughly analogous to the more generalized Destiny that Marie uses in her fable. Clotho spins out the thread of destiny, Lachesis measures the portion allotted to each person, and Atropos cuts it.
- 881 *Theofrast*. The historical figure of Theophrastus was a contemporary of Aristotle who was also a philosopher. In the Middle Ages, he was credited, almost certainly falsely, with having written *The Golden Book of Marriage*, an antifeminist tract often associated with Jerome's misogynistic *Letter against Jovinian*. Medieval readers familiar with Theophrastus would have expected him to rule against the sun's (or any other) marriage.
- 886 *Cocus Marcial*. Marcus Valerius Martialis, known in English as Martial, was a Roman poet and epigrammatist. For reasons that remain obscure, in the Middle Ages he was known as Cocus Martial, a variant of *coquus* or "cook." See Reeve, "Martial," pp. 239–44.
- 889 *a diffynytyf sentence*. Where Atropos cuts, there is no more. Her measure is definitive.

THE TALE OF THE HOUND AND THE CHEESE

- Title Fable VII: The tale of the dog and the cheese is the only fable to appear in MS Ashmole 79, which was copied by Lydgate's champion John Shirley (see introduction). Shirley heads the fable as follows: "Here begynnethe a notable proverbe of Ysopus Ethiopym in balad by daun Iohan Liedegate made in Oxenford."



TEXTUAL NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS: **A:** MS Ashmole 59, 24v; **H:** British Library, MS Harley 2251, fol. 261v; **M:** MacCracken's edition, 1934; **T:** Trinity College Cambridge, R. 3. 19, fols. 12–16, 236–237.

The fables here are in the order in which they appear in H, which is the only manuscript to contain all seven. However, T is generally more reliable because the scribe generally has a better understanding of decasyllabic lines, whereas the scribe of H frequently writes lines with more than ten syllables. T has been used as the base text for all of the fables except “The Marriage of the Sun,” which is extant only in H. A contains only “The Fable of the Dog and the Cheese.”

Textual variants that potentially change the reading of a line are listed here; minor textual variations in diction, spelling, and grammar that do not influence the text's meaning are not cited. Readers who would like to study these less-significant differences will find them in MacCracken's edition.

Title	<i>Isopes Fabules</i> appears only in H; the heading for the tale of the Cock and the Jewel precedes the Prologue in T and thus serves to introduce the collection as a whole.
8	<i>Unto purpose.</i> H: <i>Unto my purpose.</i>
23	<i>charbuncles.</i> H: <i>rubyes.</i>
24	<i>downe.</i> H: omitted.
25	<i>groweth.</i> H: <i>fyndith.</i>
33	<i>passyd.</i> H: <i>entrid.</i>
37	<i>and.</i> H: <i>I wil.</i>
40	<i>rewe on.</i> H: <i>pardon.</i>
41	<i>compilacioun.</i> Thus in both T and H; MacCracken misread H as <i>translacioun.</i>
54	<i>lybell.</i> H: <i>quayer</i> , “quire,” or a gathering of pages. This textual variant may suggest that H was copied from a text that resembled a pamphlet more than a book, which would indicate that the scribe was aware that the compilation was quite short, much shorter than its source text(s).
60	<i>and.</i> H: <i>of.</i>
64	<i>so.</i> H: <i>ful.</i>
69	<i>justly dothe attende.</i> H: <i>lustly</i> (lustily, energetically) <i>to intende</i>
72	<i>but.</i> So M, T. H: <i>bt.</i>
73	<i>Lucyfer.</i> H: <i>sulphur.</i>
74	<i>Lawgheth in.</i> H: <i>Lowtith to</i> (bows down to).
78	<i>Whos waker callyng thryes tolde.</i> H: <i>Voyce vigour callyng thryes</i> (thrice).
85	<i>joy and all.</i> H: <i>yowre alther.</i>
95	<i>morall.</i> H: <i>mortal.</i>

- 97 *as he his voyce doth reyse. H: that we oure self shuld ease.*
 98 *Howe. H: hat.*
preyse. H: please.
 105 *flok. H: folke. M: omitted.*
 110 *jacynct. H: jaconet.*
 117 *thryve. H: travaille he.*
 125 *In vacant pepyll. H: In vagabundis peple that.*
 139 *Thys. H: Thus.*
 144 *as I rede. H: in dede.*
 145 *Of whyche stone when the cok. H: As I rede of whiche stone whan he.*
 152 *T: marginal note Evax rex Arabinu.*
 174 *Set. H: I set.*
 178 *Hygh. H: Like as. T: secrete. M amends secrete to secree to rhyme with deynté.*
 186 *long. H: strong.*
 191 *in large. H: desireth.*
 196 *gese. H: gees ne ganders.*
 203 *he lyt. H: abidith.*
 After 203 *L'envoy. H: omitted.*
 205 *consider. H: conceyve.*
 218 *Adjacent marginalia in H: Here endith the tale of Isope how that the cok fonde a
 jaconet stone in the dunghill.*
 225 *Adjacent marginalia in H: The secunde tale of Isopos*
 229 *pure innocence. H: providence.*
 238 *agayn H: of reason and ageyne.*
 242 *few. H: for. to. H: no.*
 244 *whyche. H: whiche twayne.*
 262–66 *H originally lacked these lines, which were later filled in by Stow from T.*
 267–322 *These lines are not in H because of a missing leaf that was presumably lost
 after Stow made his corrections above.*
 334 *bak. T: bakis, which was amended by M (see line 252).*
 After 336 *Conclusio. H: omitted.*
 339 *cruell. H: and.*
 342 *Be hit. H: But only.*
 347 *Vertuosly. H: Vertuously liveth and.*
 353 *was thys fable founde. H: this fable I founde.*
 354 *Where ys. H: Whan he. Adjacent marginalia in H: Here endith the secunde tale
 of Isope declaryng how the wolf founde agenst the lambe in a quarel.*
 358 *Adjacent marginalia in H: Here begynneth the third fabul of Isopos. In T the third
 fable is that of the frog and the mouse. Since H is the only manuscript to
 include all seven fables, its order is followed here.*
 363 *dyssimelyng. H: disceyte.*
 368 *fresshe. Omitted in H.*
 375–76 *In H these two lines are transposed.*
 380 *of frendlyhede. Amended from T, which redundantly reads or frenshyp or
 instead of simply of, the reading in H that gives a regular decasyllabic
 line.*
 384 *felle. H: ful.*

- 389 *from.* H: *ferre from.*
 393 *Lad.* H: *After lad.*
 396 *Seyde.* H: *And sayde.*
 397 *greynes.* H: *of dyvers graynes.*
 398 *To shewe him of gentylnes.* H: *Thus of gentilnes the mowse shewid hym.*
 403–04 *Thys cloos all hoole ys in my subjeccion. / Suffisaunce is my possessione.* H: *This is al*
 hooly [wholly] under my possessioun. / In suffisaunce is my condicioun.
 412 *preves.* H: *brefis.*
 420 *hys golde.* H: *his riche gold.*
 429 *A lompe of brede with.* H: *A smal morsel of brede with joy and.*
 431 *frownynge or.* H: *and froward.*
 433 *leste.* H: *beste.*
 437 *tonne.* The spelling of “tun” in H as *tonne* is preferable to T’s *towne* because
 it differentiates Diogenes’s impoverished digs from Priam’s *riche town*
 (town) in line 441. See explanatory note for the story of Diogenes’s tun.
 440 *lust and.* H: *a.*
 445 *As in theyr paleyse byn prynces.* H: *As princis with delicatis in theyr paleys.*
 457 *of.* H: *of good.*
 460 *the.* H: *the straunge.*
 461 *deyntees to a.* H: *metis* (meats, foods) *to.*
 462 *men.* H: *gestis* (guests).
 464 *of good drynke habundance.* H: *requirith drynk suffisaunce.*
 466 *suffisaunce.* H: *haboundaunce.*
 468 *discure.* H: *discord.*
 472 *soylyd.* H: *wet.*
 489 *sore be knyht.* H: *be knyht fast.*
 After 504 *Conclusio.* H: omitted.
 506 *in comparyson.* H: *so paralous of reason.*
 507 *To.* H: *As is.*
 525 Adjacent marginalia in H: *Here endith the fifth fable of Isopos discernynge the*
 myschief that the frosch for his ingratiud shewed to the mowse.
 After 525 *Explicit.* H: omitted.
 535 *Ryghtfull.* H: *Rightwis; travers and.* H: *transgres.*
 539 *Of olde Isopus whylom.* H: *Of old date Isopos.*
 543 *toke.* H: *to.*
 546 At the end of this line the scribe of T stopped copying. Only the previous
 two stanzas appear on fol. 16r; the remainder of the page is blank, as is
 its verso. Given the layout of the pages — two columns of five stanzas
 each — eighteen more stanzas could have been accommodated in the
 blank space on the pages, not enough to complete the fable. However,
 because folio 16 is at the end of a gathering, the lack of space here would
 not have precluded the scribe continuing in another gathering. H is the
 sole extant witness for lines 547–740.
 747 Adjacent marginalia in H: *Here endith the third fable of Isopos, what perel it is to*
 be forsworn wetyngly (knowingly) *as was the wolf and the kyte for synguler love*
 that they hadde to the hounde, and to have the sheepe ded and slayn, as iurours
 dampne the triewe and save the false.

- Before 750 *Title.* H: omitted.
- 758 *and a.* H: *royal and grete.*
- 761 *Despeyred relyvyd.* H: *Stondyng in dispayre rekoveryd.*
- 762 *knew.* H: *coude.*
- 763 *enteryd.* H: *impressed and entred.*
- 769 *perlowys.* H: *perilous and diligent.*
- 771 *brought.* H: *take.*
- 773 *court.* H: *wolf; being in presence.* H: *by craf of his science.*
- 774 *Axid his reward.* H: *The Cranes gwerdoun axith.*
- 775 *wolffe.* H: *wolf ever.*
- 789 *eyen.* H: *hede.*
- 791 *Thy lyffe in jubardy, the truthe was.* H: *With thy lyf parted it is.*
- 808 *dothe.* H: *ever redy.*
- 818 *of very.* H: *and yit.*
- 820 *was chese to be a surgon.* H: *chase a surgeon to be.*
- 822 *myghte.* H: *mighe.*
- 826 *ostetyme.* H: omitted.
- 837 *fowll.* H: *false.*
- 838 *Thus connsellynge.* H: *Wherfor I counseile.*
- 840 *Remembre that with tyrauntes merci is uncothe.* H: *Bourd nat to large with hym that is unkouth.* In T Stow reproduces this line as a variant reading in the margin next to 840, introduced by *vel* (Latin “or”).
- 846 *maneshed.* H: *manyfold.*
- 847 H: omits Stow’s colophon.
- 848 Because “The Marriage of the Sun” is missing in T, H is the only witness.
- Before 848 *The Marriage of the Sun.* A: *Here begynneth a notable proverbe of Ysopus Ethiopym in balad by daun Iohan Liedegate made in Oxenford.* H has no title.
- 933 *grete.* H and A: *gredy.*
- 937 *grete hownd.* A: *grehounde.*
- 941 *As hym thought.* H: *As he dempte* (deemed, judged); A: *As Isopus dempte.*
- a chese.* A: omitted.
- 943 *in his.* A: *grehounde had.*
- 944 *whan he.* A: *the grehounde.*
- 946 *conceyve and.* A: *here.*
- 947 *By experience prevyd.* A: *The xpanyence is proeved.*
- 948 *saylyth offt.* A: *leseth al.*
- 952 *suffisaunce.* H: *litel suffisaunce.*
- 958 *hownd.* A: *grehounde.*
- 959 *bothe he dyd.* A: *therefore he dothe bothe.*
- After 959 *Conclusion in H: Here endith the seventh fable of Isopos declaryng what damage fatwith on covetise.*



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Boethius, Anicius Manlius Severinus. *The Theological Tractates; The Consolation of Philosophy*. Ed. and trans. H. F. Stewart and E. K Rand. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Third ed. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1987.
- Connolly, Margaret. *John Shirley: Book Production and the Noble Household in Fifteenth-Century England*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998.
- Dean, James M., *Medieval English Political Writings*. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1996.
- Gower, John. *Confessio Amantis*. Ed. Russell A. Peck, with Latin translations by Andrew Galloway. 3 vols. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000–13.
- Henryson, Robert. *The Complete Works*. Ed. David J. Parkinson. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2010.
- . *The Poems of Robert Henryson*. Ed. Denton Fox. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981.
- Lydgate, John. *Lydgate's Order of Fools*. In *A Booke of Precedence*. Ed. F. J. Furnivall. EETS c.s. 8. London: Oxford University Press, 1869. Pp. 79–84.
- MacCracken, Henry Noble. *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate, Part II: Secular Poems*. EETS o.s. 192. London: Oxford University Press, 1934.
- Mankind*. Ed. Kathleen M. Ashley and Gerard NeCastro. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2010.
- Marie de France. *Fables*. Ed. and trans. Harriet Spiegel. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.
- Mooney, Linne R. "Scribes and Booklets of Trinity College, Cambridge, Manuscripts R.3.19 and R. 3.21." In *Middle English Poetry: Texts and Traditions: Essays in Honour of Derek Pearsall*. Ed. A. J. Minnis. York: York Medieval Press, 2001. Pp. 241–66.
- Norton-Smith, John, ed. *John Lydgate: Poems*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.
- Patterson, Annabel. *Fables of Power: Aesopian Writing and Political History*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991.
- Pearsall, Derek. *John Lydgate*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1970.
- The Peterborough Lapidary*. In *English Medieval Lapidaries*. Ed. Joan Evans and Mary S. Serjeantson. EETS o.s. 190. London: Oxford University Press, 1960. Pp. 63–118.
- Pepin, Ronald E., trans. *An English Translation of Auctores Octo, a Medieval Reader*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999.
- Reeve, M. D. "Martial." In *Texts and Transmissions: A Survey of the Latin Classics*. Ed. L. D. Reynolds. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983. Pp. 239–44.
- Renoir, Alain. *The Poetry of John Lydgate*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967.
- Sauerstein, Paul. *Über Lydgate's Aesopübersetzung*. Halle a.d. Salle: Ehrhardt Karras, 1885.
- Saul, Nigel. *Richard II*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997.
- Sponsler, Claire, ed. *John Lydgate: Mummings and Entertainments*. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2010.
- Tilley, Morris Palmer. *A Dictionary of Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950.

Wheatley, Edward. *Mastering Aesop: Medieval Education, Chaucer, and His Followers*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000.

Whiting, Jere, and Helen Wescott Whiting. *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases: From English Writings Mainly before 1500*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968.