

THE SQUIRE'S PROLOGUE

THE PROLOGE OF THE SQUIERES TALE

"Ex,° Goddes mercy," seyde oure Hoost tho,
 2420 "Now swich a wyf I pray God kepe° me fro!
 Lo, whiche sleightes° and subtiltees°
 In wommen been!° For ay° as bisy as bees
 Been they, us sely° men for to deceyve!
 And from a sooth° evere wol they weyve.
 2425 By this Marchantes tale it preveth° weel.
 But doutelees, as trewe° as any steel,
 I have a wyf, though that she povre be.
 But of hir tonge a labbyng shrewe° is she.
 And yet she hath an heepe° of vices mo.
 2430 Therof, no fors!
 Lat alle swiche thynges go!
 But wyte° ye what in conseil° be it seyde?
 Me reweth soore° I am unto hire teyd.
 For and I sholde rekenen° every vice
 Which that she hath, ywis,° I were to nyce.
 2435 And cause why? It sholde reported be
 And toold to hire of somme° this meynee°
 Of whom it nedeth nat° for to declare,
 Syn wommen konnen outen swich chaffare.¹
 And eek° my wit suffiseth° nat therto,
 2440 To tellen al, wherfore my tale is do.
 SQUIER, com neer,° if it youre wille be,²
 And sey somewhat of love, for certes° ye
 Konnen theron° as muche as any man."
 "NAY, sire," quod he, "but I wol seye as I kan
 5 With hertly wyl,° for I wol nat rebelle°
 Agayn° youre lust.° A tale wol I telle.
 Have me excused if I speke amys.
 My wyl is good, and lo, my tale is this."

THE SQUIRE'S TALE

HEERE BIGYNNETH THE SQUIERES TALE

AT Sarray,° in the land of Tartarye,³
 10 Ther dwelte a kyng that werreyed Russye,
 Thurgh which ther dyde° many a doughty° man.
 This noble kyng was cleped Cambyuskan,
 Which in his tyme was of so greet renown,
 That ther was nowher in no regioun
 15 So excellent a lord in alle thyng.
 Hym lakked noght° that longeth° to a
 kyng,
 And of the secte° of which that he was born,
 He kepte° his lay° to which that he was sworn.
 And therto he was hardy, wys,° and riche
 20 And pitous° and just alwey yliche,
 Sooth° of his word, benigne° and honorable,
 Of his corage as any centre stable,⁴
 Yong,° fressh,° strong, and in armes
 desirous°
 As any bachelor° of al his hous.
 25 A fair persone he was and fortunat
 And kepte alwey so wel roial estat°
 That ther was nowher swich another man.
 THIS noble kyng, this Tartre Cambyuskan,
 Hadde two sones on Elpheta his wyf,
 30 Of whiche the eldeste° highte° Algarsyf.
 That oother sone was cleped° Cambalo.⁵
 A doghter hadde this worthy kyng also,
 That yongest was and highte° Canacee.
 But for to telle yow al hir beautee,
 35 It lyth nat° in my tonge° nyn° my
 konnyng.
 I dar nat° undertake so heigh° a thyng.
 Myn Englisshe eek° is insufficient.
 It° moste been° a rethor° excellent

1 "Since women know how to display such items for sale."

2 Though Ellesmere runs the Host's reaction to the Merchant's tale and his words to the Squire together, they are separated in other manuscripts and also in modern editions. In Hengwrt, the address is given not to the Squire but to the Franklin, whose tale follows directly after the Merchant's. The numbering in the standard editions of Robinson and Benson starts over with this line, so to keep with the traditional numbering, it does so here as well.

3 Tsarev is in southeastern Russia. In the Middle Ages the empire of Mongolia stretched far beyond the borders of the modern country. There is a picture of the Squire in the margin.

4 "In his courage as fixed as the center [around which anything revolves] ...". There is a Latin gloss in the margin: "centrum circuli" (the center of a circle).

5 The famous Kublai Khan was actually the grandson of Genghis Khan, not his son. The other names of Genghis Khan's family mentioned here are fictitious.

6 Ellesmere has "I." The emendation is from Hengwrt.

- That koude hise colours longynge for that art,¹
 40 If he sholde hire discryven° every part. *should describe her*
 I am noon swich.° I moot speke° as I kan.° *none such, must speak, can*
 AND so bifel° that whan this Cambyuskan *it happened*
 Hath twenty wynter born his
 diademe,° *has worn his crown for twenty years*
 As he was wont° fro° yeer° to yeer, I *accustomed to, from, year*
 deme,° *judge*
 45 He leet the feeste of his nativitee° *the celebration of his birthday*
 Doon cryen° thurgh Sarray his citee, *be announced*
 The laste idus of March,° after the yeer.° *March 15th, year*
 Phebus² the sonne° ful joly was and cleer,° *sun, clear*
 For he was neigh° his exaltacioun° *near, exaltation*
 50 In Martes face° and in his mansioun° *Mars's face, mansion*
 In Aries, the colerik,° hooete signe.° *choleric, hot sign*
 Ful lusty° was the weder° and benigne,° *pleasant, weather, kind*
 For which the foweles° agayn the sonne
 sheene,° *facing the bright sun*
 What for° the sesoun and the yonge°
 grene,° *greenery*
 55 Ful loude songen° hire affeccious.° *loudly sang, their feelings*
 Hem semed han geten hem protecciouns³
 Agayn the swerd° of wynter, keene° and coold. *sword, sharp*
 THIS Cambyuskan, of which I have yow toold,° *told you*
 In roial vestiment° sit on his deys,° *royal clothing, high platform*
 60 With diademe° ful heighe° in his paleys, *crown, very high*
 And halt° his feeste° so solempne° and so
 ryche,° *rich*
 That in this world was ther noon it lyche.° *none like it*
 Of which, if I shal tellen al th'array,° *the arrangement*
 Thanne wolde it occupie° a someres° day. *occupy, summer's*
 65 And eek° it nedeth nat for to devyse° *also, needs not be described*
 At every cours° the ordre° of hire servyse.° *course, order, their service*
- I wol nat tellen of hir strange sewes,° *their exotic soups*
 Ne of hir swannes° nor of hire° heronsewes,° *swans, their, herons*
 Eek in that lond, as tellen knyghtes olde,
 70 Ther is som mete° that is ful deynte *some food*
 holde,° *considered very dainty*
 That in this lond° men recche of it but smal.° *land, consider it but little*
 Ther nys no° man that may reporten al! *is no*
 I WOL nat taryen yow, for it is pryme,⁴
 And for it° is no fruyt but los° of tyme.° *result, loss, time*
 75 Unto my firste I wole have my recours.° *return*
 AND so bifel° that after the thridde° cours, *it happened, third*
 Whil that this kyng sit thus in his nobleye,° *nobility*
 Herknyng hise mynstrals hir thynges pleye,⁵
 Biforn hym° at the bord° deliciously,° *before him, table, delightfully*
 80 In at the halle dore° al sodeynly° *door, suddenly*
 Ther cam a knyght upon a steede° of bras,° *horse, brass*
 And in his hand a brood° mirour° of glas. *broad, mirror*
 Upon his thombe° he hadde of gold a ryng,
 And by his syde a naked° swerd° *unsheathed, sword*
 hangyng.° *hanging*
 85 And up he rideth to the heighe bord.°⁶ *high table*
 In al the halle ne was ther° spoken a word *there was not*
 For merveille° of this knyght hym to biholde.° *wonder, to see him*
 Ful bisily° ther wayten° yonge and olde. *very eagerly, wait*
 THIS strange knyght that cam° thus sodeynly *came*
 90 Al armed save his heed° ful richely, *except for his head*
 Saleweth° kyng and queene and lordes alle *salutes*
 By ordre° as they seten° in the halle *order, sit*
 With so heigh reverence and obeisaunce,° *high reverence and respect*
 As wel in speche° as in contenance,° *speech, expression*
 95 That Gawayn⁷ with his olde curteisye,° *courtesy*
 Though he were comen ayeyn° out of Fairye,⁸ *come again*
 Ne koude hym nat amende with a word.⁹

1 "Who knew his colors [stylistic devices] belonging to that art."

2 In classical mythology, Phoebus was the god of the sun. The following references are to astrological matters, using the specialized vocabulary appropriate to that discipline. The sun was in its position of greatest power, its exaltation, in the astrological sign of Aries (the Ram) which is hot and choleric (that is, associated with choler, one of the four humors). The first ten degrees of an astrological sign were known as its first face, and the first face of Aries was governed by Mars.

3 "It seemed to them as if they had gotten for themselves protection."

4 "I will not delay you, for it is morning."

5 "Listening to his musicians play their things [either instruments or pieces of music]."

6 The lord of a household and his most honored guest would sit at a raised table at one end of the hall.

7 Gawain is King Arthur's nephew, famed for his elaborate good manners.

8 In popular medieval mythology, the kingdom of Fairy is the Otherworld home of the elves.

9 "Nor could he [Gawain] make it [the strange knight's speech] better with a word."

	And after this biforn the heighe bord°	<i>high table</i>	THIS mirour eek, that I have in myn hond, ⁶	
	He with a manly voys seith his message,		Hath swich a myght,° that men may in it see	<i>might</i>
100	After the forme° used in his langage,	<i>style</i>	Whan ther shal fallen° any adversitee°	<i>shall happen, adversity</i>
	Withouten vice° of silable° or of lettre.	<i>deficiency, syllable</i>	135 Unto youre regne° or to youreself also,	<i>reign</i>
	And for° his tale sholde seme the better,	<i>so</i>	And openly who is youre freend or foo.	
	Accordant° to hise wordes was his cheere,°	<i>according, expression</i>	AND overal this, if any lady bright	
	As techeth art of speche, hem that it leere,°	<i>those who learn it</i>	Hath set hire herte in any maner	
105	Al° be that I kan nat sowne° his stile,°	<i>although, imitate, style</i>	wight,°	<i>her heart on any kind of person</i>
	Ne kan nat clymben° over so heigh a stile. ⁰¹	<i>Nor can climb, stile</i>	If he be fals,° she shal his tresoun° see,	<i>false, treason</i>
	Yet seye I this as to commune entente,°	<i>common intent</i>	140 His newe love, and al his subtiltee°	<i>tricks</i>
	Thus muche amounteth al that evere he mente,°	<i>meant</i>	So openly, that ther shal nothyng hyde.	
	If it so be that I have it in mynde.		Wherfore ageyn this lusty someres tyde ⁷	
110	HE seyde, "The kyng of Arabe° and of Inde,°	<i>Arabia, India</i>	This mirour and this ryng that ye may see	
	My lige° lord, on this solempne° day	<i>liege, solemn</i>	He hath sent unto my lady Canacee,	
	Saleweth° yow as he best kan° and may	<i>Salutes, can</i>	145 Your excellente doghter that is heere.	
	And sendeth yow in honour of youre feeste		THE vertu° of the ryng, if ye wol heere, ⁸	<i>power</i>
	By me that am al redy° at youre heeste°	<i>ready, command</i>	Is this, that if hire lust° it for to were°	<i>she wishes, wear</i>
115	This steede of bras that esily° and weel ⁰²	<i>easily, well</i>	Upon hir thombe or in hir purs° it bere,°	<i>her purse, carry</i>
	Kan in the space of o° day natureel,°	<i>one, natural</i>	Ther is no fowel° that fleeth° under the hevене°	<i>bird, flies, sky</i>
	This is to seyn, in foure and twenty houres,°	<i>twenty-four hours</i>	150 That she ne shal wel understonde his stevene°	<i>voice</i>
	Wherso yow lyst, in droghte or elles shoures, ³		And knowe his menyng openly and pleyn°	<i>clearly</i>
	Beren° youre body into every place	<i>carry</i>	And answeere hym in his langage ageyn.°	<i>again</i>
120	To which youre herte° wilneth for to pace,°	<i>heart, wants to go</i>	And every gras° that groweth upon roote	<i>grass</i>
	Withouten wem° of yow thurgh° foul or fair.	<i>harm, through</i>	She shal eek knowe and whom it wol do boote, ⁹	
	Or if yow lyst to fleen° as hye° in the air	<i>you wish to fly, high</i>	155 Al be hise woundes never so depe and wyde.	
	As dooth an egle, whan that hym list to		THIS naked swerd° that hangeth by my syde ¹⁰	<i>unsheathed sword</i>
	soore,°	<i>when he wishes to soar</i>	Swich vertu hath that what° man so ye smyte°	<i>whatever, strike</i>
	This same steede shal bere yow° evere moore°	<i>shall carry you, more</i>	Thurghout his armure,° it wole hym kerve	<i>armor</i>
125	Withouten harm, til ye be ther yow leste,°	<i>where you wish</i>	and byte,°	<i>will cut and stab him</i>
	Though that ye slepen on his bak or reste		Were it° as thikke as is a branched ook.°	<i>if it were, oak with branches</i>
	And turn ayeyn° with writhyng of a pyn.°	<i>again, turning of a pin</i>	160 And what man that is wounded with a strook°	<i>stroke</i>
	He that it wroghte° koude° ful° many a gyn.°	<i>made, knew, very, device</i>	Shal never be hool° til that yow list°	<i>shall never be healthy, you wish</i>
	He wayted° many a constellacioun ⁰⁴	<i>watched for, constellation</i>	of grace	
130	Er° he had doon° this operacioun°	<i>Before, done, operation</i>	To stroke hym° with the plat° in that place	<i>strike him, flat blade</i>
	And knew ful many a seel° and many a bond. ⁰⁵	<i>seal, contract</i>	Ther he is hurt. This is as muche to seyn,	

1 A stile is a set of steps used to climb over a fence or a wall.

2 There is a gloss in the margin: "Of the vertu of the steede of bras."

3 "Wherever you wish, in drought or else in showers."

4 According to astrology, one needs to wait for the proper alignment of the stars and planets before attempting any important action.

5 This is likely a reference to magic spells binding spirits to do the magician's will.

6 There is a gloss in the margin: "Of the vertu of the mirour."

7 "Therefore in preparation for this pleasant time of summer."

8 This and the preceding line both end with "heere." To clarify the matter the scribe has written over the first Latin "hic" (here) and over the second Latin "audire" (hear). There is a gloss in the margin: "Of the vertu of the ryng."

9 "She shall also know and whom it will provide a remedy for."

10 There is a gloss in the margin: "Of the vertu of the swerd."

- Ye moote° with the plat° swerd ageyn *must, flat*
- 165 Strike hym in the wounde, and it wol close.
This is a verray sooth,° withouten glose.° *complete truth, comment*
It failleth nat° whils° it is in youre hooold.° *fails not, while, possession*
AND whan this knyght hath thus his tale toold,
He rideth out of halle and doun he lighte.° *gets down*
- 170 His steede, which that shoon as sonne brighte,
Stant° in the court stille° as any stoon.° *stands, quietly, stone*
This knyght is to his chambre lad anon° *led to his room immediately*
And is unarmed and unto mete yset.° *given food*
THE presentes been ful roially yset°— *very royally placed*
- 175 This is to seyn, the swerd and the mirour—
And born anon° into the heighe *carried immediately*
tour° *high tower*
With certeine officers ordeyned therfore.° *chosen for it*
And unto Canacee this ryng was bore° *carried*
Solempnely ther she sit at the table.
- 180 But sikerly,° withouten any fable, *surely*
The hors of bras that may nat be remewed,° *removed*
It stant° as it were to the ground yglewed.° *stands, glued*
Ther may no man out of the place it dryve° *drive*
For noon engyn° of wyndas ne polyne.° *device, windlass nor pulley*
- 185 And cause why? For they kan nat the craft.° *know not the art*
And therfore in the place they han it laft° *have left it*
Til that the knyght hath taught hem the
manere° *has taught them the manner*
To voyden hym,° as ye shal after heere. *move him*
GREET was the prees° that swarmeth to and *crowd*
fro° *swarms back and forth*
- 190 To gauren° on this hors that stondesth° so, *stare, stands*
For it so heigh was and so brood and long,
So wel proporcioned for to been° strong, *be*
Right as it were a steede of Lombardye,° *Lombardy*
Therwith so horsly and so quyke° of eye, *quick*
- 195 As it a gentil° Poilleys¹ courser were. *noble*
For certes, fro his tayl unto his ere
Nature ne art ne koude hym nat amende° *not make better*
In no degree, as al the peple wende.° *thought*
But everemoore hir° mooste° wonder was *their, greatest*
- 200 How that it koude go and was of bras.
It was a fairye° as al the peple *piece of magic*
semed.° *it seemed to all the people*
Diverse° folk diversely° they demed.° *different, differently, judged*
As many heddes,° as manye wittes° ther been, *heads, opinions*
They murmureden° as dooth° a swarm of *murmured, does*
been° *bees*
- 205 And maden skiles after hir fantasies,° *reasons for their imaginations*
Rehersynge° of thise° olde poetries,° *repeating, these, poetry*
And seyde that it was lyk the Pegasee,² *Pegasus*
The hors that hadde wynges for to flee,° *fly*
Or elles it was the Grekes hors Synoun,³
- 210 That broghte Troie° to destruccioun, *Troy*
As men in thise olde geestes° rede.° *stories, read*
“MYN herte,” quod oon, “is evermoore in drede!° *fear*
I trowe° som° men of armes° been *believe, some, arms*
therinne,° *are in it*
That shapen° hem this citee for to wynne!° *intend, conquer*
- 215 It were right good that al swich thyng were knowe.”
ANOTHER rowned° to his felawe° lowe° *whispered, friend, quietly*
And seyde, “He lyeth! It is rather lyk° *lies, like*
An apparence° ymaad° by som magyk,° *illusion, made, some magic*
As jogelours° pleyen° at these feestes *performers, play*
grete.”° *these great feasts*
- 220 Of sondry doutes° thus they jangle° and *various doubts, chatter*
trete,° *discuss*
As lewed peple demeth comunly° *uneducated people judge commonly*
Of thynges that been maad° moore subtilly° *are made, more cleverly*
Than they kan in hir lewednesse° *their ignorance*
comprende.° *understand*
- 225 They demen° gladly to the badder ende.° *judged, worse conclusion*
AND somme of hem wondred on the mirour
That born was up into the hye tour,° *carried up into the high tower*
Hou° men myghte in it swiche thynges se. *how*
ANOTHER answerde and seyde it myghte wel be
Naturally° by composiciouns° *naturally, arrangements*
- 230 Of anglis° and of slye reflexiouns° *angles, subtle reflections*
And seyden that in Rome was swich oon.° *such a one*
They speken of Alocen and Vituloun⁴

1 “Apulian.” Apulia is a region in southern Italy.

2 Pegasus is the winged horse of Greek mythology. There is a Latin gloss in the margin: “the horse Pegasus.”

3 “Or else it was Synon the Greek’s horse.” Synon is the Greek who convinced the Trojans to bring the Trojan horse into their city.

4 Alhazen (ibn al-Haiyham, d. c. 1039) was an Islamic mathematician and scientist whose book on optics was translated by the thirteenth-century Polish mathematician, Witelo.

And Aristotle, ¹ that writen° in hir lyves°	<i>written, lifetimes</i>	And yet ascendynge was the beest roial°,	<i>royal beast</i>
Of queynte mirours° and of perspectives,	<i>clever mirrors</i>	265 The gentil leoun° with his Aldrian, ⁷	<i>noble lion</i>
235 As knowen they that han hir bookes herd. ⁰²	<i>have heard their books</i>	Whan that this Tartre kyng°	<i>Mongol king</i>
AND oother folk han wondred on the swerd		Cambyuskan°	<i>Genghis Khan</i>
That wolde percen thurghout everythyng,		Roos° fro his bord ther that he sat ful hye.°	<i>rose, very high</i>
And fille in speche° of Thelophus ³ the kyng	<i>fell into speech</i>	Tofor° hym gooth the loude mynstralcye°	<i>before, loud music</i>
And of Achilles with his queynte spere,°	<i>exotic spear</i>	Til he cam to his chambre of parentz,°	<i>reception room</i>
240 For he koude° with it bothe heele° and dere.°	<i>could, heal, harm</i>	270 Ther as they sownen° diverse	<i>sound</i>
Right in swich wise° as men may with the swerd,	<i>such a manner</i>	instrumentz°	<i>different instruments</i>
Of which right now ye han youreselven herd.		That it is lyk an Hevene° for to heere.	<i>Heaven</i>
They speken of sondry hardyng° of metal	<i>various hardening</i>	Now dauncen° lusty Venus° children deere, ⁰⁸	<i>dance, Venus's, dear</i>
And speke of medicynes° therwithal°	<i>substances, for doing so</i>	For in the fyssh ⁰⁹ hir° lady sat ful hye°	<i>fish, her, very high</i>
245 And how and whanne it sholde yharded° be,	<i>hardened</i>	And looketh on hem with a frendly° eye.	<i>friendly</i>
Which is unknowe algates° unto me.	<i>completely unknown</i>	275 THIS noble kyng is set up in his trone.°	<i>throne</i>
THO speeke they of Canacees ryng°	<i>Canacee's ring</i>	This strange knyght is fet° to hym ful soone.°	<i>fetched, very soon</i>
And seyden alle that swich a wonder thyng		And on the daunce he gooth with Canacee.	
Of craft of rynges herde they nevere noon,		Heere is the revel° and the jolitee°	<i>enjoyment, jollity</i>
250 Save that he Moyses° and Kyng Salomoun ⁰⁴	<i>Moses, Solomon</i>	That is nat able a dul° man to devyse.°	<i>slow witted, describe</i>
Hadde a name of konnyng° in swich	<i>had a reputation for knowledge</i>	280 He moste han knowen love and his servyse°	<i>service</i>
art.		And been a feestlych° man as fresshe° as May	<i>party-going, fresh</i>
Thus seyn the peple and drawen hem apart.°	<i>draw themselves apart</i>	That sholde yow devysen° swich array.	<i>describe</i>
BUT nathelees,° somme seiden that it was	<i>nevertheless</i>	WHO koude telle yow the forme of daunces	
Wonder to maken of fern asshen° glas, ⁰⁵	<i>ashes of ferns, glass</i>	So unkouth° and so fresshe contenaunces,°	<i>unusual, fresh faces</i>
255 And yet nys° glas nat lyk° asshen of fern,	<i>is not, like</i>	285 Swich subtil° lookyng and dissymulynges°	<i>such clever, scheming</i>
But for they han knowen° it so fern.°	<i>have known, far</i>	For drede° of jalouse mennes	<i>fear</i>
Therefore cesseth hir janglyng° and hir	<i>they stop their chattering</i>	aperceyvynge ⁰⁶	<i>jealous men's perceiving</i>
wonder.		No man but Launcelot, ¹⁰ and he is deed! ⁰	<i>dead</i>
As soore° wondren° somme° on cause of	<i>sorely, wonder, some</i>	Therefore I passe° of al this lustiheed.°	<i>leave, pleasure</i>
thonder,°	<i>thunder</i>	I sey namoore, but in this jolynesse°	<i>jollity</i>
On ebbe,° on flood, on gossomer,° and on	<i>ebb tide, spider's webs</i>	290 I lete hem° til men to the soper dresse.°	<i>leave them, went to the supper</i>
myst,°	<i>fog</i>	THE styward bit° spices for to hye°	<i>steward commanded, be brought</i>
260 And alle thyng° til that the cause is wyst.°	<i>everything, known</i>	And eek the wyn, in al this melodye.°	<i>music (of the minstrels)</i>
Thus jangle° they and demen° and devyse,°	<i>chatter, judge, imagine</i>	The usshers° and the squiers° been ygoon.°	<i>ushers, squires, are gone</i>
Til that the kyng gan fro the bord aryse.°	<i>rose from the table</i>	The spices and the wyn is come anoon.	
PHEBUS hath laft the angle meridional, ⁰⁶		295 They ete and drynke, and whan this hadde an ende,°	<i>is ended</i>

1 The great Greek philosopher Aristotle wrote a treatise on natural science, his *Physics*.

2 In medieval universities, students, who could not always afford personal copies, would hear lecturers read aloud from books.

3 Telephus is a character in Homer's *Iliad*, whom Achilles wounds with his spear.

4 In medieval legend, both Moses and Solomon were known to be great craftsmen.

5 The ashes of ferns were sometimes added to sand to provide the necessary alkali when making glass.

6 The "angle meridional" is the section of the sky through which the sun passes between 10 a.m. and noon.

7 Phoebus is the sun, Aldrian a star, the lion the zodiac sign Leo. A later hand has written "Aldrian" in the margin.

8 "Venus's children" are those people, such as lovers, who are under her planetary influence.

9 The zodiac sign Pisces.

10 Lancelot, Guinevere's lover, is the foremost knight in many of the stories about King Arthur.

- They thanken hym galpyng^o by two yawning
 by thre,^o in twos and threes
- 355 And every wight^o gan^o drawe hym^o to person, began, draw himself
 his reste.
- As sleepe hem bad^o they tooke it for the beste. commanded them
 HIRE dremes^o shul nat been ytoold for me.^o Their dreams, by me
 Ful were hire heddes^o of fumositee,^o their heads, [alcoholic] fumes
 That causeth dreem, of which ther nys no
 charge.^o there is no significance
- 360 They slepen til that it was pryme large¹
 The mooste part, but it were Canacee.
 She was ful mesurable,^o as wommen be. moderate
 For of hir fader hadde she take leve^o had she taken leave
 To goon to reste soone after it was eve.
- 365 Hir liste nat appalled for to be,^o she did not wish to be pale
 Ne on the morwe^o unfeestlich^o for to se,^o morning, unfeestive, appear
 And slepte hire firste sleepe and thanne awook.
 For swich a joye she in hir herte took,
 Bothe of hir queynte^o ryng and hire mirour, curious
- 370 That twenty tyme she changed hir colour.
 And in hire sleepe right for impressioun^o effect
 Of hire mirour, she hadde a visioun.
 Wherefore, er that the sonne gan up glyde,^o sun began to rise
 She cleped^o on hir maistresse hire called
 bisyde^o her governess beside her
- 375 And seyde that hire liste for to ryse.^o she wished to rise
 THISE^o olde wommen that been^o gladly wyse^o these, are, wise
 As hire maistresse^{o2} answerde hire^o her governess, her
 anon^o immediately
 And seyde, "Madame, whider wil ye goon^o
 Thus erly? For the folk been alle on reste."
 "I WOL,"^o quod she, "arise, for me leste I wish
 No lenger for to slepe, and walke aboute."
 HIRE maistresse clepeth wommen a greet
 route,^o great crowd of women
- And up they rysen wel an ten or twelve.
 Up riseth fresshe Canacee hirselve,
 385 As rody^o and bright as dooth^o the yonge sonne^o red, does, young sun
- That in the Ram^o is foure degrees up Aries (zodiac sign)
 ronne.^o run up
 Noon hyer^o was he whan she redy was, no higher
 And forth she walketh esily a pas,^o easily a pace
 Arrayed^o after the lusty^o sesoun soote,^o dressed, pleasant, sweet season
- 390 Lightly for to pleye and walke on foote,
 Nat but with fyve or sixe of hir meynee.^o her company
 And in a trench^o forth in the park gooth she. path
 THE vapour^o which that fro the erthe glood^o mist, rose up
 Made the sonne to seme^o rody^o and brood.^o seem, red, broad
 395 But nathelees,^o it was so fair a sighte, nevertheless
 That it made alle hire hertes for to lighte,^o lightened all their hearts
 What for the sesoun and the morwenyng
 And for the foweles^o that she herde synge. birds
 For right anon she wiste^o what they mente,^o knew, meant
 400 Right by hir song, and knew al hire entente.^o their meaning
 THE knotte^o why that every tale is toold, point
 If it be taried^o til that lust^o be coold^o delayed, pleasure, cold
 Of hem that han it after herkned yooere,
 The savour^o passeth^o ever lenger^o the taste, passes, longer
 moore,^o more
- 405 For fulsomnesse^o of his prolixitee^{o3} abundance, wordiness
 And by the same resoun^o thynketh me^o reason, it appears to me
 I sholde to the knotte condescende^o get to the point
 And maken of hir walkyng soone an ende.
 AMYDDE^o a tree fordryed^o as whit as chalk, amidst, dried up
- 410 As Canacee was pleyyng^o in hir walk, playing
 Ther sat a faucoun^o over hire heed ful hye, falcon
 That with a pitous voys^o so gan to crye,^o pitiful voice, began to cry
 That al the wode resouned^o of hire cry. resounded
 Ybeten^o hath she hirself so pitously beaten
 415 With bothe hir wynges, til the rede^o blood red
 Ran endelong^o the tree ther she stood.^o all along, perched
 And evere in oon she cryde alwey^o and continuously
 shrighthe,^o shrieked
 And with hir beek^o hirselve so she prighthe,^o beak, pricked
 That ther nys^o tygre ne noon so cruell beast^{o4} is not, beast
 420 The dwelleth outh^o in wode^o or in forest either, woods

1 "They sleep until it was fully prime" (prime is an hour for prayer in the early morning).

2 What Chaucer seems to mean is either "This old woman, that would gladly seem as wise as her mistress ..." or "This governess, that would gladly seem wise, as such old women often do ..." Skeat judged the grammar "incurably wrong." Hengwrt has "As is hire maitresse," which is probably a better reading but does not resolve the problem.

3 "Of them who have listened to it for a long time, the taste (i.e., the desire or interest) fades more and more as time passes."

4 "There is no tiger nor any beast, so cruel ..."

	That nolde han wept° if that she wepe koude	<i>would not have wept</i>	Moot been enchesoun of° youre cruel	<i>must be the reason for</i>
	For sorwe of hire. She shrighthe° alwey so loude,°	<i>shrieked, loudly</i>	dede.°	<i>deed</i>
	For ther nas° nevere man yet on lyve,°	<i>was not, alive</i>	Syn° that I see noon oother wight° yow	<i>since, no other creature</i>
	If that I koude a faucoun wel discryve,°	<i>well describe</i>	chace,°	<i>chase</i>
425	That herde of swich another of fairnesse,		For love of God, as dooth youreselfen grace,°	<i>your noble self</i>
	As wel of plumage as of gentillesse,°	<i>nobility</i>	Or what may been youre helpe? For west nor est	
	Of shape and al that myghte yrekened be.°	<i>might be considered</i>	460 Ne saugh I nevere er now no bryd ne beest	
	A faucoun peregryn° thanne° semed she	<i>peregrine falcon, then</i>	That ferde° with hymself° so pitously.°	<i>did, himself, pitifully</i>
	Of fremde° land. ¹ And everemoore as she stood,	<i>foreign</i>	Ye sle° me with youre sorwe° verrailly!°	<i>kill, sorrow, truly</i>
430	She swowneth° now and now° for lakke°	<i>fainted, now and then, lack</i>	I have of yow so greet passioun! ⁵	
	of blood,		For Goddes love, com fro the tree adoun!	
	Til wel neigh° is she fallen fro the tree.	<i>very nearly</i>	465 And as I am a kynges doghter trewe,	
	THIS faire kynges doghter Canacee,		If that I verrailly° the cause knewe	<i>truly</i>
	That on hir fynger baar° the queynte° ryng	<i>carried, exotic</i>	Of youre disese,° if it lay in my myght,	<i>distress</i>
	Thurgh which she understood wel everythyng		I wolde amenden it° er that it were nyght.	<i>make it better</i>
435	That any fowel may in his Leden ² seyn°	<i>Latin, say</i>	As wisly helpe me, the grete god of kynde, ⁶	
	And koude answeren hym in his Ledene ageyn,		470 And herbes shal° I right ynowe° yfynde°	<i>shall, enough, find</i>
	Hath understonde what this faucoun seyde.		To heele° with youre hurtes° hastily.”°	<i>heal, hurts, quickly</i>
	And wel neigh for the routhe° almoost she deyde! ³	<i>pity, died</i>	THO shrighthe° this faucoun moore yet pitously	<i>shrieked</i>
	And to the tree she gooth ful hastily		Than ever she dide and fil° to grounde anon°	<i>fell, immediately</i>
440	And on this faukoun looketh pitously		And lith aswowne° and deed and lyk a	<i>lies in a faint</i>
	And heeld hir lappe abrood, ³ for wel she	<i>spread wide her skirt</i>	ston°	<i>dead like a stone</i>
	wiste°	<i>knew</i>	475 Til Canacee hath in hire lappe° hire take°	<i>her lap, taken her</i>
	The faukoun moste fallen fro the twiste°	<i>might fall from the branch</i>	Unto the tyme she gan of swough	
	Whan that it swowned° next for lakke of blood.	<i>fainted</i>	awake.°	<i>began to awake from the faint</i>
	A longe while to wayten° hire she stood,	<i>watch</i>	AND after that, she of hir swough gan breyde.°	<i>began to awake</i>
445	Til atte laste° she spake in this manere°	<i>at the last, manner</i>	Right in hir haukes Ledene° thus she seyde:	<i>hawk's Latin</i>
	Unto the hauk, as ye shal after heere.		“That pitee renneth soone in gentil herte,°	<i>noble heart</i>
	“WHAT is the cause, if it be for to telle,°	<i>if it can be told</i>	480 Feelynge his similitude° in peynes	<i>feeling sympathy</i>
	That ye be in this furial pyne ⁴ of Helle?”	<i>furios pain</i>	smerte,°	<i>sharp pains</i>
	Quod Canacee unto the hauk above.		Is preved alday,° as men may see,	<i>proven every day</i>
450	“Is this for sorwe of deeth or los of love?”		As wel by werk° as by auctoritee.°	<i>deed, authority</i>
	For as I trowe, these been causes two		For gentil herte kitheth° gentillesse.	<i>makes known</i>
	That causeth moost a gentil herte° wo.°	<i>noble heart, woe</i>	I se wel ye han of my distresse	
	Of oother harm it nedeth nat to speke,		485 Compassioun, my faire Canacee,	
	For ye youreself upon yourselfe yow wreke,°	<i>avenge yourself</i>	Of verray wommanly benignytee	
455	Which proveth° wel that outhere° love or drede°	<i>proves, either, fear</i>	That nature in youre principles hath yset°—	<i>has set</i>

1 Skeat notes that according to the *Livres dou Tresor* of Brunetto Latini, the peregrine or pilgrim falcon “was so called because no-one ever finds its nest but it is otherwise taken, as it were on pilgrimage, and is very easily fed, and very tame and bold, and well-mannered.”

2 The term “Latin” here can be taken to mean “foreign language,” since in the Middle Ages Latin was the universal second language.

3 That is, she held the folds of her skirt out so she could catch the falcon if it fell.

4 “Furious pain”—like that caused by the classical goddesses of revenge, the Furies.

5 Hengwrt reads “compassioun,” but “passioun” (suffering) also makes sense.

6 “As wisely [may God] help me, the great god of nature.”

	But for noon hope for to fare the bet ^o	<i>better</i>	That save the feend, ^o noon wiste ^o what he	<i>fiend, no one knew</i>
	But for obeye unto youre herte free ^o	<i>generous</i>	mente, ^o	<i>meant</i>
490	And for to maken ^o othere bewar by me. ^o	<i>make, be warned by me</i>	Til he so longe hadde wopen ^o and compleyned	<i>wept</i>
	As by the whelpe ^o chasted ^o is the leoun, ¹	<i>little dog, chastised</i>	And many a yeer his service to me feyned, ^o	<i>pretended</i>
	Right for ^o that cause and for that conclusioun,	<i>just so</i>	525 Til that myn herte, to pitous ^o and to nyce, ^o	<i>too merciful, foolish</i>
	Whil ^o that I have a leyser ^o and a space,	<i>while, leisure</i>	Al innocent of his corouned ^o malice,	<i>crowned (complete)</i>
	Myn harm I wol confessen ^o er I pace.” ^o	<i>confess, before I go</i>	Forferd ^o of his deeth, as thoughte me, ^o	<i>afraid, it seemed to me</i>
495	AND evere whil ^o that oon ^o hir sorwe tolde,	<i>while, one</i>	Upon hise othes ^o and his seuretee, ^o	<i>his oaths, assurance</i>
	That oother weepe as she to water wolde, ^o	<i>would turn to water</i>	Graunted hym love upon this condicioun,	
	Til that the faucoun bad hire ^o to be stille, ^o	<i>commanded her, quiet</i>	530 That everemoore myn honour and renoun ^o	<i>renown</i>
	And with a syk ^o right thus she seyde hir will: ^o	<i>sigh, said her will</i>	Were saved bothe privee and apert. ^o	<i>privately and openly</i>
	“THAT I was bred, allas that harde day,		This is to seyn, that after his desert ^o	<i>according to what he deserved</i>
500	And fostred ^o in a roche ^o of marbul gray ^{o2}	<i>brought up, rock, gray marble</i>	I yaf hym ^o al myn herte ^o and my thought—	<i>gave him, my heart</i>
	So tendrely, that nothyng eyled me.		God woot ^o and he, that ootherwise noght ^o —	<i>God knows, not</i>
	I nyste nat ^o what was adversitee	<i>did not know</i>	535 And took his herte in change ^o for myn for ay. ^o	<i>exchange, forever</i>
	Til I koude flee ful hye under the sky.		But sooth ^o is seyde, goon sithen many a day, ^o	<i>truth, many days ago</i>
	Tho ^o dwelte a tercelet ^o me faste by ^o	<i>there, male falcon, nearby</i>	A trewe wight ^o and a theef ^o thenken nat	<i>person, thief</i>
505	That semed ^o welle ^o of alle gentillesse ^o	<i>seemed, source, nobility</i>	oon! ^o	<i>think not alike</i>
	Al were he ful of tresoun and falsnesse!		And whan he saugh the thyng so fer ygoon, ^o	<i>matters so far gone</i>
	It was so wrapped under humble cheere ^o	<i>expression</i>	That I hadde graunted hym fully my love,	
	And under hewe ^o of trouthe in swich manere, ^o	<i>color, such manner</i>	540 In swich a gyse ^o as I have seyde above,	<i>such a manner</i>
	Under plesance ^o and under bisy	<i>pleasantness</i>	And yeven ^o hym my trewe herte as free ^o	<i>given, freely</i>
	peyne, ^o	<i>anxious attentiveness</i>	As he swoor ^o he yaf ^o his herte to me,	<i>swore, gave</i>
510	That I ne koude han wend ^o he koude	<i>could not have expected</i>	Anon this tigre ^o ful of doublenesse ^o	<i>tiger, deceit</i>
	feyne! ^o	<i>lie</i>	Fil ^o on hise knees with so devout humblesse, ^o	<i>fell, humility</i>
	So depe ^o in greyn ^o he dyed ^o his colours,	<i>deep, grain, dyed</i>	545 With so heigh reverence and as by his cheere, ^o	<i>expression</i>
	Right as a serpent hit hym ^o under floures ^o	<i>hides himself, flowers</i>	So lyk a gentil ^o love of manere, ^o	<i>noble, in behavior</i>
	Til he may seen ^o his tyme for to byte,	<i>see</i>	So ravysshed, ^o as it semed ^o for the joye,	<i>ravished, seemed</i>
	Right so this god of love, this ypocryte, ^o	<i>hypocrite</i>	That nevere Troilus ne Parys of Troye, ⁴	
515	Dooth so hise cerymony ^o es and obeisaunces ^o	<i>ceremonies, rites</i>	Jasoun, ⁵ certes ^o ne noon oother man	<i>certainly</i>
	And kepeth in semblant ^o alle hise observaunces	<i>appearance</i>	550 Syn ^o Lameth ⁶ was, that alderfirst ^o bigan ^o	<i>since, at the first, began</i>
	That sownen ³ into ^o gentillesse ^o of love.	<i>pertain to, nobility</i>	To loven two, as writen folk biforn,	
	As in a toubme ^o is al the faire above,	<i>tomb</i>	Ne ^o nevere syn ^o the firste man was born	<i>nor, since</i>
	And under is the corps, ^o swich ^o as ye woot. ^o	<i>body, such, know</i>	Ne koude ^o man by twenty thousand part	<i>could not</i>
520	Swich was the ypocrite bothe coold and hoot,		Countrefete ^o the sophymes ^o of his	<i>counterfeit, sophisms (deceptions)</i>
	And in this wise ^o he served his entente, ^o	<i>way, intent</i>	art,	

1 According to the thirteenth-century master builder Villard de Honnecourt, lion tamers would fasten down two dogs in sight of a lion and beat the dogs to intimidate the lion. The passage is quoted by Calvin Brown Jr. and Robert H. West, *Modern Language Notes* 55 (1940), 209–10.

2 Skeat suggests that the “marble” refers to a palace and is a hint that the falcon is really a princess who has been transformed into a bird by magic.

3 Ellesmere has “sowneth,” but the plural subject “observaunces” requires the plural verb form. The emendation is from Hengwrt.

4 Troilus and Paris were famous lovers from the story of the Trojan war. Chaucer recounts the tragic love of Troilus and Creseyde in his famous poem named after them.

5 Chaucer recounts the unfaithful love of Jason in his *Legend of Good Women*.

6 In Genesis 4:19, Lamech is the first man to have two wives simultaneously.

- 555 Ne were worthy unbokelen his galoche,
 Ther doublenesse or feynng sholde approche,¹
 Ne so koude thonke° a wight as he dide me!¹ *thank, did to me*
 His manere was an Hevene° for to see, *Heaven*
 Til° any womman, were she never so wys,° *to, wise*
- 560 So peynted° he and kembde° at point *painted, combed*
 devys,° *in every detail*
 As wel hise wordes as his contenaunce.° *expression*
 And I loved hym for his obeisaunce° *obedience*
 And for the trouthe I demed° in his herte,
 That if so were that anythyng hym smerte,° *judged [to be]*
 Al° were it never so lite,° and I it wiste,° *pained him*
 Me thoughte I felte deeth myn herte
 twiste!¹ *although, little, knew* *I thought I felt death twist my heart*
 And shortly, so ferforth° this thyng is went,° *as far as, has gone*
 That my wyl was his willes instrument.
 This is to seyn, my wyl obeyed his wyl
- 570 In alle thyng as fer° as resoun fil,° *far, reason allowed*
 Kepyng° the boundes of my worshippe° evere. *keeping, my honor*
 Ne nevere hadde I thyng so lief ne levere° *beloved or dearer*
 As hym, God woot,° ne nevere shal namo.° *God knows, no more*
 This lasteth lenger° than a yeer or two, *longer*
- 575 That I supposed of hym noght but good.
 But finally thus atte laste° it stood *at the last*
 That Fortune wolde° that he moste twynne° *wished, must depart*
 Out of that place, which that I was inne.° *in*
 Wher me was wo,° that is no questioun. *Whether I was sorrowful*
- 580 I kan nat make of it discripsioun.° *description*
 For o thyng° dar° I tellen° boldly:
 I knowe what is the peyne° of deeth° therby. *pain, death*
 Swich harm I felte,° he ne myghte bileve.°² *felt, could not remain*
 So on a day, of me he took his leve° *leave*
- 585 So sorwefully, eek° that I wende° verrailly *also, thought*
 That he had felt as muche harm as I,
 Whan that I herde hym speke and saugh his hewe.³
 But nathelees,° I thoughte he was so trewe *nevertheless*
 And eek that he repaire sholde ageyn° *should return again*
- 590 Withinne a litel while, sooth to seyn.° *truth to say*
 And resoun wolde eek° that he moste *reason required also*
 go° *had to go*
 For his honour,° as ofte it happeth so,° *honor, as it often happens*
 That I made vertu of necessitee
 And took it wel, syn° that it moste be. *since*
- 595 As I best myghte, I hidde fro hym° my sorwe *hid from him*
 And took hym by the hond, Seint John to borwe,° *to guarantee*
 And seyde hym thus: ‘Lo, I am youre al.
 Beth swich° as I to yow have been and shal.° *be such, shall*
 What he answerde, it nedeth noght reherce.° *needs not to be repeated*
- 600 Who kan sey bet than he who kan do werse?
 Whan he hath al seyd,° thanne hath he *said all*
 doon.° *then has he done*
 ‘Therefore bihoveth hire° a ful° long spoon *she needs, very*
 That shal ete with a feend,⁴ thus herde I seye.
 So atte laste, he moste forth° his weye,° *must [go], way*
- 605 And forth he fleeth° til he cam ther hym *flies*
 leste,° *came where he wished*
 Whan it cam hym to purpos for to reste.⁵
 I trowe° he hadde thilke° text in mynde, *believe, that*
 That ‘alle thyng° repeyryng° to his *everything, returning*
 kynde,° *nature*
 Gladeth hymself° thus seyn men, as *makes himself glad*
 I gesse.⁶ *guess*
- 610 Men loven of propre kynde° *by their own nature*
 newefangelnesse,° *newfangledness*
 As briddes doon° that men in cages fede.° *birds do, feed*
 For though thou nyght and day take of
 hem hede° *take heed (pay attention)*
 And strawe hir cage faire° and softe as silk *place straw in their cage*
 And yeve hem° sugre, hony, breed, and milk, *give them*
- 615 Yet right anon,° as that his dore is uppe,° *right away, open*
 He with his feet wol spurne adoun° his cuppe.° *will kick down, cup*
 And to the wode° he wole° and wormes ete.° *woods, will [go], eat*
 So newefangel° been they of hire mete° *fond of novelty, their food*
 And loven novelrie° of propre kynde.° *novelty, own nature*

1 “Nor was worthy to unbuckle his shoe when it came to deceit or lying.” The line echoes Mark 1:7, where John the Baptist says he is not worthy to unbuckle Christ’s sandal.

2 Ellesmere reads “I ne myghte bileve.” The emendation is from Hengwrt.

3 “When I heard him speak and saw his color [that is, of his face—pale].”

4 “She needs a long spoon who will eat with the devil.” A variation of a common proverb.

5 “When it came [time for] him to intend to rest.”

6 There is a Latin gloss in the margin quoting the line from Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy*, Book 3, meter 2, 39–40: “All things rejoice in returning to their own.”

- 620 No gentilisse° of blood may hem bynde.° *nobility, bind them*
 So ferde° this tercelet,° allas the day! *did, male falcon*
 Though he were gentil born, fressh, and gay,
 And goodlich° for to seen, humble and free.° *pleasant, generous*
 He saugh° upon a tyme° a kyte° flee,^{o1} *saw, at one time, kite, fly*
- 625 And sodeynly he loved this kyte so,
 That al his love is clene fro me ago,° *completely gone from me*
 And hath his trouthe falsed° in this wyse.° *falsified, way*
 Thus hath the kyte my love in hire servyse.° *service*
 And I am lorn,° withouten remedie!" *lost*
- 630 And with that word, this faucoun gan° to crie *began*
 And swowned eft° in Canacees barm.° *fainted again, bosom*
 GREET was the sorwe for the haukes harm
 That Canacee and alle hir wommen made.
 They nyste° how they myghte the faucoun
 glade,° *did not know encourage*
- 635 But Canacee hom bereth hire° in hir lappe *carries her home*
 And softly in plastres gan hire
 wrappe,° *wrapped her in [medical] bandages*
 Theras° she with hire beek° hadde hurt hirselve. *where, beak*
 Now kan nat° Canacee but herbes delve° *knows not, dig*
 Out of the ground and make saves newe° *new salves*
- 640 Of herbes precieuse and fyne of hewe° *of fine color*
 To heelen° with this. Fro day to nyght *heal*
 She dooth hire bisynesse° and hire fulle
 myght,° *makes an effort does all she can*
 And by hire beddes heed° she made a
 mewe° *her bed's headboard perch*
 And covered it with velvettes blewe° *blue velvet*
- 645 In signe° of trouthe° that is in wommen sene.° *sign, truth, seen*
 And al withoute, the mewe is peynted grene,^{o2} *painted green*
 In which ther were peynted° alle these false fowles° *painted, birds*
- As beth° these tidyves,° tercelettes,° *are, these titmice, male falcons*
 and owles.
 Right for despit° were peynted hem bisyde° *in scorn, beside them*
 650 Pyes^{o3} on hem° for to crie° and chyde.° *magpies, them, cry, chide*
 Thus lete° I Canacee hir hauk kepyng.° *leave, keeping*
 I wol namoore as now speke of hir ryng,
 Til it come eft° to purpos° for to seyn *again, purpose*
 How that this faucoun gat hire love ageyn,° *gained her love again*
- 655 Repentant, as the storie° telleth° us, *story, tells*
 By mediacioun° of Cambalus,° *intervention, Kublai Khan*
 The kynges sone, of which I yow tolde.
 But hennes forth I wol my proces holde° *hold my course*
 To speken of adventures and of batailles
 660 That nevere yet was herd so grete mervailles!
 FIRST wol I telle yow of Cambyuskan,° *Genghis Khan*
 That in his tyme many a citee wan.° *conquered*
 And after wol I speke of Algarsif,
 How that he wan° Theodera to his wif, *won*
- 665 For whom ful ofte in greet peril° he was, *great danger*
 Ne hadde he be holpen° by the steede of bras. *had he not been helped*
 And after wol I speke of Cambalo,
 That faught in lystes° with the bretheren° *jousting stations, brothers*
 two,
 For Canacee, er° that he myghte hire wynne.^{o4} *before, might win her*
- 670 And^{o5} ther I lefte, I wol ayeyn bigynne.
- EXPLICIT SECUNDA PARS.
 INCIPIT PARS TERCIA^{o6}
- APPOLLO^{o7} whirleth° up his chaar° so hye,° *whirls, chariot, high*
 Til that the god Mercurius hous° the slye^{o8} *Mercury's house, sly*

1 Skeat quotes the early editor John Jephson: "the kite is a cowardly species of hawk, quite unfit for falconry, and was therefore the emblem of everything base."

2 In medieval lore, blue is a sign of constancy and green of inconstancy.

3 Ellesmere and Hengwrt both read "And pyes." The emendation, made in many modern editions, preserves the sense.

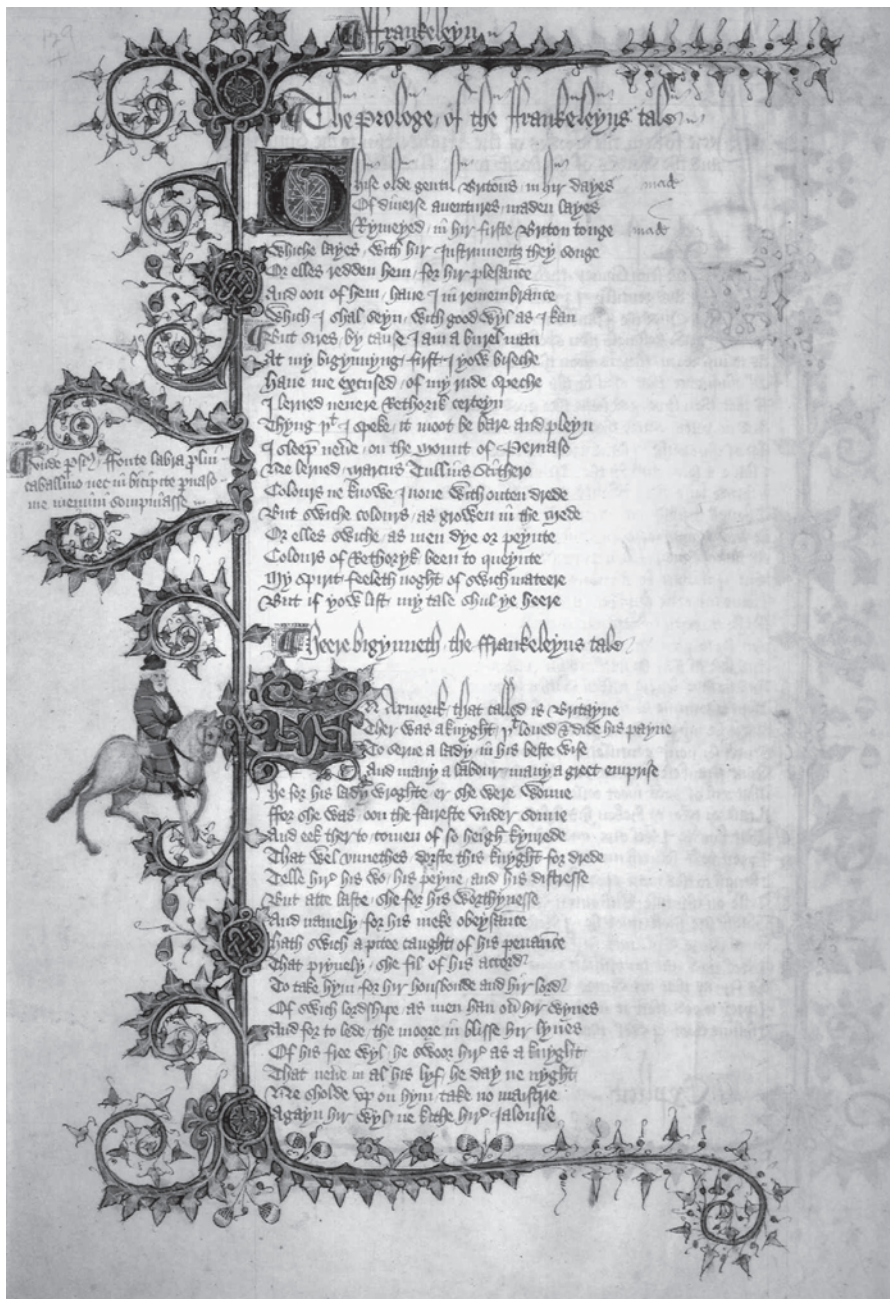
4 The passage has caused critics much difficulty. According to Skeat, this Cambalo must either be a mistake or a different person from Canacee's brother, who is called Cambalo in line 31 and Cambalus in line 656. "Wynne" could possibly mean "reach or get to" (or perhaps "rescue") as A.C. Baugh suggests, but the context makes this unlikely. If all three are the same man, then the Squire has begun to tell a story alluded to by Chaucer's Man of Law, when he says that Canacee "loved her owene brother synfully" (line 79) and that Chaucer does not write about her for that reason.

5 Ellesmere reads "An." The emendation is from Hengwrt.

6 "Here ends the second part. The third part begins."

7 Apollo is the god of the sun, his other name being Phoebus.

8 The Squire's Tale breaks off unfinished here. Ellesmere leaves the rest of the folio (all but the first six lines) blank here, perhaps in anticipation that more of the tale would come to light; it is unusual for vast spaces of folios to be left blank. Hengwrt leaves no blank space. Some critics have surmised that the words that follow in the Franklin's Prologue—or in the case of Hengwrt, the Merchant's Prologue—are an interruption of the Squire to cut short what was shaping up to be an overlong tale.



Opening page of *The Franklin's Tale*. Ellesmere Manuscript EL 26 C9 f. 123v. Reprinted by permission of The Huntington Library.

THE FRANKLIN'S PROLOGUE

HEERE FOLWEN THE WORDES OF THE FRANKELEYN TO
THE SQUIER AND THE WORDES OF THE HOOST TO THE
FRANKELEYN

"IN feith,^o Squier, thou hast thee wel *faith*
yquit^o *you have done well*
And gentilly.^o I preise wel^o thy wit," *nobly, praise well*
675 Quod^o the Frankeleyn,¹ "considerynge thy *said*
yowthe.^o *youth*
So feelyngly^o thou spekest,^o sire, I allowe *sensitively, speak*
the,^o *I praise you*
As to my doom,^o ther is noon^o that is heere *judgment, no one*
Of eloquence that shal be thy peere^o *shall be your equal*
If that thou lyve.^o God yeve^o thee good chaunce^o *live, give, chance*
680 And in vertu^o sende thee continuaunce!^o *virtue, continuing*
For of thy speche I have greet deyntee.^o *great delight*
I have a sone,^o and by the Trinitee,^o *son, Trinity*
I hadde levere^o than twenty pound worth lond,² *rather*
Though it right now were fallen in my
hond,^o *had fallen into my hand*
685 He were a man of swich discrecioun^o *such discretion*
As that ye been.^o Fy^o on possessioun,^o *you are, fie, possession*
But if^o a man be vertuous withal!^o *unless, as well*
I have my sone snybbed,^o and yet shal, *scolded*
For he to vertu listneth nat entende.³
690 But for to pleye^o at dees^o and to despende^o *play, dice, spend*
And lese al^o that he hath is his usage.^o *lose all, custom*
And he hath levere talken^o with a page^o *rather talk, boy servant*
Than to comune^o with any gentil wight,^o *talk, noble person*

Where he myghte lerne gentillesse aright."^{o4} *learn nobility properly*
695 "STRAW for youre gentillesse!" quod oure Hoost.
"What, Frankeleyn, pardee^o sire,^o wel *by God, sir*
thou woost^o *well you know*
That ech of yow moot tellen atte leste^o *each must tell at least*
A tale or two or breken his biheste."^o *break his promise*
"THAT knowe I wel, sire," quod the Frankeleyn.
700 "I prey yow,^o haveth me nat in desdeyn^o *ask you, do not disdain me*
Though to this man I speke a word⁵ or two."
"TELLE on thy tale withouten wordes mo."^o *without more words*
"GLADLY, sire Hoost," quod he. "I wole obeye^o *will obey*
Unto youre wyl.^o Now herkneth^o what I seye. *will, listen to*
705 I wol yow nat contrarien in no wyse,⁶
As fer^o as that my wittes^o wol suffyse.^o *far, wits, will suffice*
I prey to God that it may plesen yow.^o *please you*
Thanne woot^o I wel that it is good ynow."^o *know, enough*

EXPLICIT⁷

THE PROLOGE OF THE FRANKELEYN'S TALE

THISE olde, gentil^o Britouns^o in hir dayes^o *noble, Bretons, their days*
710 Of diverse aventures^o maden layes,^o *various adventures, songs*
Rymeyed^o in hir firste^o Briton tonge,^o *rhymed, original, language*
Whiche layes^o with hir instrumentz^o *songs, their instruments*
they songe^o *sung*
Or elles redden hem^o for hir plesaunce.^{o8} *read them, pleasure*
And oon of hem^o have I in remembraunce,^o *one of them, memory*
715 Which I shal seyn^o with good wyl^o as I kan.^o *say, will, can*
BUT sires, bycause I am a burel^o man, *uneducated*
At my bigynnyng first I yow biseche,^o *I ask you*
Have me excused of my rude speche.^o *rough speech*

1 Hengwrt has the Merchant, not the Franklin, utter these words and engage in the following dispute with the Host.

2 Twenty pounds worth of land is that which provides an annual income of twenty pounds—a considerable sum in the late fourteenth century, equal to half a yearly income for a well-off knight.

3 "Because he does not want (*listneth nat*) to pay attention to virtue."

4 "Gentillesse" is the quality that makes someone a gentleman or woman. In the Middle Ages it normally implied distinguished birth but also refined manners and moral virtue.

5 Ellesmere omits "a word," but it has been added by a later hand in the margin.

6 "I will not contradict you in any way."

7 "Here it ends."

8 The Bretons came from Brittany, the northwest corner of modern-day France. They were a Celtic people, many of whose ancestors had almost a thousand years earlier than Chaucer's time fled from Britain to escape the Anglo-Saxon invaders, joining the earlier Celtic inhabitants. The Breton lay, mentioned here by the Franklin and embodied in his tale, is originally an oral genre. It always involved love and the marvelous and was accompanied by a harp. The twelfth-century poet Marie de France composed in French the oldest, and by most accounts the best, of the surviving Breton *lais*. In fact, Chaucer's source is more likely to be Boccaccio, who tells the story twice, once in the *Decameron* and once in the *Filocolo*.